

## Textbooks for Use in the Diocese of St. Augustine

The expectation of the Bishop of the Diocese of St. Augustine is that textbooks used in Catholic Schools and parish Schools of Religion be selected from the USCCB's list of textbooks found to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. It is also an expectation that, when there is a parish school and a parish School of Religion, both programs use the same text consistently at all grade levels.

While the textbooks on the list are in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, the presentation of the faith and the methodologies used to develop the faith varies among the publications. For guidance in selecting an appropriate textbook, *The National Directory for Catechesis* (USCCB, 2005) presents a thorough list of expectations for catechetical textbooks (see NDC, pp 283-284). In summary, the NDC states: "All these instructional materials should be in evident harmony with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* and be artistically sensitive, technically up to date, theologically authentic, ecumenically accurate, and methodologically sound." (p. 285)

To help with the textbook selection process, the following is an examination of the strengths and limitations of the textbooks currently in use in the diocese. It is hoped that this resource will be used by parish and schools to collaboratively select the textbook that best meets the needs of the combined parish and school religion program and community. Please note that the augmentations listed for each series must be provided, so that all areas outlined as imperative by the USCCB in the *National Directory for Catechesis* will be met in each religious instruction program in the Diocese of St. Augustine.

Lastly, there is a simple religion textbook series selection instrument attached to assist those parishes and schools that plan to choose a new series. It is the expectation that the copyright date of a particular textbook series be no more than seven years old.

**Catholics United for the Faith**  
**Faith and Life (1985, 2002, various dates**  
**of revision and reprinting up to 2009)**  
**Grades 1-8**

The Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has found this catechetical text to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

**Strengths:**

- Underscores the value and importance of the magisterium
- Centralizes the Eucharist as the “source and summit of all Christian Life”
- Grounds Catholic Tradition in Scripture
- Emphasizes the Church Fathers
- Uses artwork from the rich tradition of the Catholic Church
- Stresses the role of Mary as perfect model of discipleship

**Augmentation Needed:**

In order to fulfill our diocesan curriculum guidelines, those using this textbook will need to:

- Add a unit on social justice and service within the Church and local community utilizing the 7 Principles of Catholic Social Teaching throughout the middle grades
- Adjust the scope and sequence for more gradual and age appropriate catechesis, balancing formation and information.
- Provide additional assistance to students with difficulty with the reading level and vocabulary as this text is written at least two grades above the average student’s reading level.
- Present the Rites for First Penance and First Eucharist in their entirety and in light of Vatican II.
- Provide family activities

[Type text]

- Update all references to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (some are from the new edition, some are from the older edition)
- Find auxiliary materials that relate the faith to the student's life experience and offer a variety of prayer opportunities
- Stress the importance of the local church community for Christian living, so that students know that every Catholic is responsible for building up the spirit of the parish family and sees its ministries as part of the Church's universal mission
- Provide supplemental materials on the following:

Grade 4: Lessons on the Works of Mercy

The scope and sequence of grades 5 -8 do not match our curriculum and much augmentation is needed.

Grade 5: Holy Days of Obligation

Define and discuss the sacraments in terms of initiation, vocation and healing

Define Triduum

Discussion of the Paschal Mystery as celebrated in the liturgy

Ritual actions of the Sacraments, particularly according to current rituals

Stations of the Cross

Ecumenism

Baptismal call

Christ's presence at the liturgy

Parts of the Mass

Grade 6 Importance of the Patriarchs of the Old Testament

Difference between evolution and creation

How is God revealed in the Old Testament

How Catholics interpret Scripture in light of *Divino Spiritu* and Vatican II

Discussion on the literary forms of the Old Testament

Define revelation and Biblical inspiration

Jesus is the fulfillment of the Old Testament

Books of the Bible differ in intention and style to reflect the background of the human author.

God revealed himself in the Old Testament as love and fidelity through his covenant.

Precepts of the Church

Define modesty and chastity

Relate the Old Testament prophets' message of justice and mercy to the poor in history and now

Unit on stewardship

Grade 7: Our relationship to God in light of Jesus' humanity

Jesus' humanity and divinity

Parables and miracles

Development of the New Testament from oral tradition to written

Ways that God is revealed in the New Testament

Compare synoptic gospels with the Gospel of John

Mary's role in the Incarnation in the infancy narratives

Define liturgy

Purpose of liturgy is to give glory and praise to God

Know what the Catechism of the Catholic Church is and how to use it

Marriage requires sacramental preparation

Marriage is a covenant

Secular view of sexuality versus God's view

Know that our bodies are gifts from God and we must respect them

Abortion is contrary to moral law

Artificial contraception is contrary to God's law

Describe ways the Beatitudes are lived in everyday lives

Grade 8: Know and explain the marks, models and images of Church

Importance and detailed information on church councils from Jerusalem to Vatican II

Trace the roots of the Church through Acts and the Letters of Paul (traces through gospels only)

Provide current teaching on ecumenism

Provide more teaching on Church historical events, (covers saints only)

Revelation is complete in Jesus Christ

Liturgy has evolved over time

Update statements on salvation in light of current catechism

Natural family planning

Know that as Catholics we respect and obey civil authority and work to to change unjust, oppressive laws

Major themes of Catholic Social Teaching

Missionary action of the local church and the church universal

Compare the Apostles' and Nicene Creeds

Cardinal virtues and how they are lived in everyday life

## **Our Sunday Visitor Call to Faith**

**Harcourt Religion, 2005**

**Grades 1-8**

The Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has found this catechetical text to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

### **Strengths:**

- Communicates that Jesus' new law of love tells us to love God above all things and to love others of diverse races, ages, cultures and creeds.
- Solid explanation of the Sacrament of Reconciliation; encourages frequent reception of this sacrament.
- Helps students to understand that the mission of Jesus is kept alive in the Catholic Church by the presence of the Holy Spirit.
- Takes into account the various backgrounds of those to be catechized and suggests ways that the Christian message can be lived in the lives of the students.
- Provides a balance of emphasis on the local Church community for Christian living, so that every Catholic contributes to the building up of the parish family and sees its ministries as part of the Church's universal mission.
- Provides additional classroom and family resources on its website.
- Weaves the 7 Catholic Social Teachings throughout all grade levels

### **Augmentation Needed:**

In order to fulfill our diocesan curriculum guidelines, those using this textbook will need to:

- Indicate at all levels that everyone has a vocation to help others, be it a married person, a single person, a religious brother or sister or an ordained priest or deacon.
- Include additional details about Holy Orders

[Type text]

- Provide materials that stress the ideal of living a life based on the gospel
- Suggest additional ways for parents to reflect on the teachings of the Church with their children.

**RCLBenziger – Silver Burdett**

**Blessed Are We**

**(Parish 2002, 2008,  
School 2004, 2008)**

**Grades 1-8**

The Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has found this catechetical text to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

**Strengths:**

- Explains the parts of the Mass well and the various other aspects of the sacramental life
- Addresses moral issues at the age level recommended in our diocesan curriculum guidelines
- Develops topics and themes in the curriculum guidelines in a clear and comprehensive manner
- Sets forth the ideal of living based on the teachings of the gospel
- Includes inspirational role models for the learner such as members of the clergy, lay men and women, religious men and women and a wide range of saints.
- Provides additional classroom and family resources on its website.
- Integrates the use of Scriptural stories, quotes and references and activities

**Augmentation Needed:**

In order to fulfill our diocesan curriculum guidelines, those using this textbook will need to:

- Clarify in some grade levels some aspects related to ecclesiology (in grade 3 the role of the hierarchy and in grade 6 the role of the magisterium).
- Provide additional information: in grade 4 on the precepts of the Church and in grade 5 on the Anointing of the Sick
- Offer supplemental details in grade 6 on ecumenism

[Type text]



- Stress the importance of the local church community for Christian living, so that students know that every Catholic is responsible for building up the spirit of the parish family and sees its ministries as part of the Church's universal mission
- Examine central human values expressed in the world in the arts, science, technology, culture, economic life and social life.

**Loyola Press**  
**Christ Our Life 2009**  
**K – 8**

The Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has found this catechetical text to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

**Strengths:**

- Provides comprehensive treatment of doctrine
- Provides comprehensive treatment of sacraments
- Provides a substantial amount of Scripture at all grade levels
- Develops the liturgical seasons
- Provides an articulate teaching on Mary and the saints and fosters devotion to Mary
- Provides comprehensive and integrated activities for example dramas, journaling
- Contains a strong glossary.
- Offers a variety of supplemental materials
- Provides additional materials on a website

**Augmentation Needed:**

In order to fulfill our diocesan curriculum guidelines, those using this textbook will need to:

- Adapt use of text depending on school or parish setting (no separate text exists specifically for either setting)
- Emphasize examples of social justice
- Make connections to student's own personal life and faith experience

[Type text]

- Stress the importance of the local church community for Christian living, so that students know that every Catholic is responsible for building up the spirit of the parish family and sees its ministries as part of the Church's universal mission
- Provide some minor supplemental materials in some grade levels:
  - Grade 4      Precepts of the Church
  - Moral development
  - Grade 6      Ecumenism and Church unity
- Include liturgical formation and a variety of prayer experiences on junior high level

**Sadlier Publishers**

**We Believe**

**K-6 (2004) 7-8 (2008)**

The Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has found this catechetical text to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

**Strengths:**

- Helps students understand that we are called to believe what the Church teaches emphasizing the role of the Magisterium
- Conveys that God wants us to care for our bodies and respect the bodies of others
- Invites students to a deeper love for the Sacraments by explaining them well, for example:
  - ~ the Eucharist, the center of our sacramental life, is the real presence of Jesus
  - ~ Matrimony celebrates life-long love and commitment between a man and a woman
- Presents pictures and graphics which are age appropriate and reflect cultural diversity and special needs
- Provides catechist development: their faith life, daily prayer and motivates them to continued faith formation
- Maintains a good balance between personal expression and memorization, emphasizing that it is important for both the community and the student to commit to memory selected biblical passages, essential prayer, liturgical responses, key doctrinal ideas and lists of moral responsibilities.
- Provides two websites with family and additional catechist materials

**Augmentation Needed:**

In order to fulfill our diocesan curriculum guidelines, those using this textbook will need to

- Provide additional information on the gifts and talents that lead to various vocations: single life, married life, priesthood, religious brother or sister

[Type text]

- Explain more completely in grade 6 how Saul, David, and Solomon help us to understand why the people of Jesus' time were waiting for the "anointed one"
- Highlight the responsibility of the parish community to support the young to the sacrament of Baptism, as well as to the Eucharistic Table and to celebrating Confirmation
- Find ways to show the various parts of the physical church building: baptismal font, tabernacle, altar, ambo, ambry, etc

## Resources for Christian Living

### Faith First (2000, 2006)

K - 6

The Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has found this catechetical text to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

#### **Strengths:**

- Makes clear that Jesus gave himself in the Eucharist at the last supper and he continues to do so during Mass
- Honors Mary as Mother of God, our mother and model disciple in Christ's Church
- Explains well that the mission of Jesus is kept alive in the Catholic Church by the presence of the Holy Spirit
- Integrates the use of Scriptural stories, quotes, references, and activities
- The teacher manual presents clear and adaptable lesson plans, including ones for the liturgical seasons

#### **Augmentation needed:**

In order to fulfill our diocesan curriculum guidelines, those using this textbook will need to:

- Interweave in all grade levels that we are all called to serve in a vocation, including parent and married person, permanent deacon, sister, brother, single person, priest
- Provide minor amounts of supplemental information in several grade levels e.g.
  - ~ Holy Orders in grades 4-5
  - ~ The role of the Magisterium, particularly in grade 6
  - ~ Ecumenism and the need for Christian unity
- Seek additional materials for the special needs student
- Distinguish between Church doctrine and theological opinion/reflection
- Stress more completely that parents and parishes prepare students for sacraments and that it is within the parish community that sacraments are celebrated

[Type text]

**Benziger**  
**Christ Jesus, The Way**  
**(Parish and School, 2002)**  
**K - 6**

The Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has found this catechetical text to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

**Strengths:**

- Clearly presents the Church as being one, holy catholic and apostolic
- Presents the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist well in the primary grades
- Makes clear the canonization process and defines saints as people who responded well to God's grace and are examples for us to imitate
- Offers activities and aids to choose from for children of different backgrounds and needs
- Maintains a good balance between personal expression and memorization, emphasizing that it is important both for the community and themselves to commit to memory selected biblical passages, essential prayers, liturgical responses, key doctrinal ideas and lists of moral responsibilities.
- Examines central human values expressed in the arts, science, technology, culture, economic life, social life.

**Augmentation needed:**

In order to fulfill our diocesan curriculum guidelines, those using this textbook will need to:

- Introduce the concept of vocations of all types in all grade levels
- Provide families with ways to celebrate liturgical feasts in the home.
- Provide the following clarifications:

In grade 3: Jesus chose Peter as the leader of the Apostles and the first Pope

In grade 4: Emphasize that Jesus calls each one of us to personal conversion through a process of sorrow, forgiveness and reconciliation

In grade 6: Present clearer presentations of the following major themes of Scripture:  
*Revelation, Redemption, Salvation*

In grade 4: Additional details on Mary and her role in the Church

In grade 5: Additional details on the Sacrament of Holy Orders

In grade 6: Provide examples of how the Old Testament is relevant for us today



**Apostolate for Family Consecration**  
**Consecration in Truth, 2001 and 2006**

The Ad Hoc Committee to Oversee the Use of the Catechism, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, has found this catechetical text to be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

**Strengths:**

- Makes clear that the formation of conscience is a lifelong formation task requiring prayer, faithfulness to the Church's teaching and the guidance of the Magisterium.
- Includes resources that can be used at home to assist parents in communication
- Stresses the importance of memorizing key elements of the faith: prayers, Bible verses, etc.
- Impresses upon students that every person has the responsibility of developing both a personal and communal relationship with Jesus.

**Augmentation Needed:**

In order to fulfill our diocesan curriculum guidelines, those using this textbook will need to:

- The developmental stages of children are not taken into account at any grade level. Lessons are all formatted the same at every grade level. Teachers/catechists using this series need to have additional training in faith development, moral development and lesson planning.
- Adjust the scope and sequence for more gradual and age appropriate catechesis, balancing formation and information
- The vocabulary and reading levels do not match the level of the textbook. Most average students will need further work on vocabulary and help with reading the material
- There needs to be a better balance in the lessons between cognitive and affective activity.
- Use current Church terminology in keeping with changes of Vatican II
- The following lessons will need to be added at each grade level:

Realign all texts for age appropriate presentation of concepts.

Provide Supplemental Materials as follows:

Grade 1 Parts of the Bible, additional Bible stories

[Type text]

Rituals and symbols of Baptism

Church as community

Liturgical gestures, Mass responses

Evaluate use of chapters 4-9 as they are not in line with the ability of a first grade student to understand.

Evaluate use of Chapter 14, also not in line with ability of a first grade student to understand.

Grade 2 Move chapters 16-20 to grade 3

Add a unit on the liturgy

Add a unit on the feast days of Mary

Present the Rite the First Penance and First Eucharist in their entirety and in light of Vatican II

Chapter missing on the Real Presence in the Eucharist

Church as the Body of Christ

Liturgical Seasons

Unit on Scripture

Act of Contrition

Appropriate Church behavior

Concept of stewardship

Again, several chapters not in keeping with the developmental stages of the children

Grade 3 All lessons except chapters 17-20 do not match diocesan curriculum

Grade 4 Church hierarchy

Paschal Mystery

All of the Beatitudes

The Church as Trinitarian

The baptismal call of all as priest, prophet and king

[Type text]

Chastity

Corporal and spiritual works of mercy

Right to life

Jesus as human and divine (focus is only on divinity)

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Nicene Creed

Liturgy and the Mass parts

#### Grade 5

Presence of Christ in the Liturgy

Move chapters 5-7 to grades 2-4 where they are missing

Holy Days of Obligation

Stations of the Cross

Titles of Jesus

Catholic and Catholicism

Sacred Triduum

Ritual Actions of the sacraments

Kingdom of God

Define sexuality

Results of sin

Ecumenism

Social Justice concepts

4 elements of Reconciliation

Ability to locate scriptural passages

Ways to live the Beatitudes

## Grade 6

Additional unit needed on Old Testament

Additional unit needed specifically on the Patriarchs

Evolution and creation

Old Testament message of mercy and justice today

How is God revealed in the Old Testament

How Catholics understand Scripture in light of *Divino Spiritu* and Vatican II

Categories of the Old Testament books

Jesus as the fulfillment of the Old Testament

Revelation and biblical interpretation

Consistent ethic of life

Christian response to issues involving the unborn

Days of fasting and abstinence

Unit on stewardship

Eucharist as sacrifice and meal

Precepts of the Church

## Grade 7

Realign all lessons for covering the life of Jesus and the New Testament

Catechism of the Catholic Church—how to use it as a reference

Role of the Church in the world

Purpose of liturgy

Sanctity of life, abortion, marriage, children, natural family planning

Marriage requires sacramental preparation

Marriage as covenant

Compare synoptic gospels to the Gospel of John

Respect for own body and the bodies of others as temples of the Holy Spirit

Unit on morality

Unit on chastity

## Grade 8

Unit on Church History

Unit on Church Councils

Eastern and Western Churches: schism

History of church development in Acts of the Apostles

Literary forms of Scripture

Transubstantiation

Revelation is complete in Jesus Christ

Cardinal virtues

Missionary action of the Church and its history

Precepts of the Church

Some mention of the Sacrament of Confirmation

Infallibility

Church's contributions to the modern world

Major themes of Catholic Social Teaching

*The National Directory for Catechesis (NDC)* states that all catechetical texts should:

- Present the authentic message of Christ and his Church, adapted to the capacity of the learners and in language that can be understood by them.
- Be faithful to the Sacred Scripture
- Highlight the essential truths of the faith, giving proper emphasis to particular truths in accord with their importance within the hierarchy of truths
- Be in conformity with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- Be approved by the local Bishop
- Give to those who use them a better knowledge of the mysteries of Christ
- Promote a true conversion to Jesus Christ
- Inspire and encourage those who use them to live the Christian life more faithfully
- Be culturally appropriate and reflect real-life situations of those who use them
- Promote clarity, appreciation, and respect for persons of all racial, ethnic, social and religious backgrounds
- Present other ecclesial communities and religions accurately
- Employ a variety of sound catechetical methodologies based on the results of responsible catechetical research
- Include appropriate examples of Christian prayer and opportunities for liturgical experiences and incorporate the use of Sacred Scripture as a text for study along with other catechetical texts.
- Offer short passages of Sacred Scripture that can easily be learned by heart
- Contain opportunities to review and measure progress in learning
- Be visually attractive, engage the students, and incorporate a variety of examples of good Christian art
- Engage the intellect, emotion, imagination and creativity of the students

NDC, Pages 283-284)