



# Religion Curriculum Priority Standards Review and Reflection Worksheet

This review and reflection worksheet is provided as a tool for catechetical leaders and catechists to use as they meet together to unpack the Religion Curriculum Priority Standards and discuss how to incorporate them in their faith formation sessions. While the following reflections can be used in any way that would be most beneficial for catechists, we recommend that the first two sections be explored as a large group and that the third section be used in smaller groups for grade-level sharing of ideas and strategies.

## Reflection on Catechesis and Evangelization

Catechists participate in the Church's mission of evangelization as they deepen and share their own lived faith experience while accompanying others in their faith journeys. Therefore, when teaching children and youth about the fundamentals of our Catholic Faith with the aid of the Religion Curriculum Priority Standards, it will benefit catechists to first reflect on their personal faith experience and the ways in which their relationship with Jesus Christ will impact their catechetical ministry.

As you consider "Catechesis within the Context of Evangelization," and "Evangelization and Catechesis in the Context of Renew My Church" as described in **Catholic Schools Religion Curriculum Priority Standards** (pages. 2–3), ponder the following aspects of evangelization and catechesis and the ways in which these characteristics are present in your personal faith life and in your ministry as a catechist.

- **The process of evangelization and catechesis is relational**
  - Faith development happens in a community.
  - Personal and communal interaction make the catechetical process come alive.
  - It takes the family and faith community to support the catechetical process.

- **Catechesis and evangelization must also be instructional**

- Catechesis is part of the Church's effort to make disciples and deepen students' belief in Jesus Christ as the Son of God.
- Catechesis is part of the Church's effort to educate and instruct students as members of the Body of Christ.
- Essential relationships are grounded in realities that must be known as students are being formed for missionary discipleship.

- **Evangelization and catechesis is a process**

- The teaching of religion is a process of socialization that draws others into ways of participating in the life of a community.
- Effective learning of the faith is a lifelong process that helps personal discipleship to deepen and grow.

### **PERSONAL AND MINISTERIAL REFLECTION**

1. Take a few moments to recall the community in which your faith development came alive. What types of personal or communal interaction impacted your experience?
2. How do you see yourself as a member of the Body of Christ? In what ways are you living as a missionary disciple?
3. Have you considered evangelization and catechesis as a lifelong process? How has your sense of personal discipleship grown over the years?
4. What have the previous questions revealed to you about your personal faith journey? Think about how you can rely on your experiences to influence your ministry of evangelization and catechesis as you accompany others on their faith journey.

### **GROUP REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION**

1. Take some time to share with one another an awareness that came to you during your reflection of the previous questions.
2. Talk about the *relational*, *instructional* and *process* aspects of evangelization and catechesis. Does one of these resonate with you, or relate to your teaching style, more than another? Discuss how you might develop skills in one of the areas to improve your catechetical ministry.
3. Share some ideas of how you can support one another as a faith community, in terms of both your personal spiritual growth and in your catechetical ministry.

# Reflection on Standard Domains and Priority Standards

As you review the “Development of Religion Curriculum Domains and Priority Standards” as described in **Catholic Schools Religion Curriculum Priority Standards** (page 2) and outlined in the **Religion Curriculum: Standard Domains**, reflect on the following aspects of the Standard Domains and Priority Standards.

- **The six domains are based, in part, on the “Six Tasks of Catechesis” as outlined by the USCCB in the National Directory for Catechesis (NDC)**
  - The six domains are also grounded in the pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and the Directory for Catechesis (including its revision of the Tasks of Catechesis).
  - Each domain correlates to Church teaching in the areas of Sacred Scripture and Tradition, The Creed, Catholic Prayer, Liturgy, and Sacramental Life, Christian Living and Discipleship and Religious Diversity and Christian Unity.
- **Priority standards are those that are representative of knowledge and/or skills that are central to the understanding and practice of the Catholic faith**
  - The priority standards have been identified as most essential to a particular grade level or content area.
  - Focusing on a smaller number of priority standards allows teachers/catechists to provide deeper instruction and more focused support for students.
  - The identified priority standards also serve as building blocks to prepare students for subsequent study and religious formation at the next grade level.

## PERSONAL AND MINISTERIAL REFLECTION

1. Spend some time reading through the description of each Standard Domain. Reflect on your personal faith growth and understanding of the topics as you read through them. Is there anything in the descriptions that challenges your belief? If so, gain a better understanding of the domain by reading through the source references (**use this chart** to write down your reflections for each of the Standard Domains).
2. Consider which Standard Domain areas you feel most confident in teaching about, as well as those areas that you may feel less confident speaking about. It may be helpful to discuss the domain with your catechetical leader or parish priest to increase your confidence related to teaching that topic.
3. Read through the priority standards for the grade level that is most relevant to your ministry. As you do so, engage with and respond to each of the standards in your own words. Think about various ways in which you might help someone else come to a deeper understanding of each priority standard (keeping in mind the age level of your audience).

## GROUP REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. As a group, read through and discuss each of the Standard Domains. Share your faith experiences as they relate to each of the domains. For example, talk about:
  - a. How Sacred Scripture, Tradition and the Creed guide you in your faith.
  - b. Your favorite prayer.

- c. How you live a sacramental life.
  - d. The challenges you face in Christian living and living discipleship.
  - e. Your experience of religious diversity or Christian unity.
2. Discuss with one another any challenges that the Standard Domains may present for you, either personally or in terms of teaching others in your catechetical ministry. Share discussion starters, activity ideas or best practices for catechesis related to each domain (**use this chart** to write down your reflections along with any ideas that come from your discussion).

**Reflecting on Standard Domains and Priority Standards**

\*Use this chart/template to help you engage with and respond to the Standard Domains and Grade-Level Priority Standards. Call to mind your personal faith experiences as you work through the standards and brainstorm ways to help children and youth engage with the faith concepts of each domain.

Domain Heading	Personal Reflection	Faith Formation Ideas
1. Sacred Scripture and Tradition: Who is God?	<small>*Read each heading and develop a short and concise answer to each question, if possible</small>	<small>*Think about your personal faith life and experiences in relation to the Standard Domains</small>
2. The Creed: What is the Church and what do we believe?	<small>*Think about ways to help children and youth engage with each Standard Domain</small>	<small>*Make note of those areas that you are confident in and those that you struggle with</small>
3. Catholic Prayer, Liturgy, and Sacramental Life: How do we worship God?	<small>*Make note of conversation starters, activity ideas, or shared best practices from your discussion with other catechists</small>	

## Utilizing Priority Standards and Textbook Alignment

“In order for the Religion Curriculum Priority Standards to be utilized well, they need to be viewed as tools for student formation. Teachers plan their instruction around how to effectively help students understand, reflect upon, and respond to the encounter of Christ experienced through instruction.”

Teachers/catechists will consider the following questions:

1. What is the intended learning, experience and/or message?
2. What strategies will be implemented to accompany students in their learning and/or encounter?
3. What evidence will students showcase to demonstrate their growth in learning and discipleship?

**Utilizing Priority Standards – GRADE 1 Sample**

\*use this chart/template to plan your instruction around how to effectively help students understand, reflect upon, and respond to the encounter of Christ experienced through each priority standard

Priority Standard	Intended Learning/Experience	Strategies to Accompany Students	Evidence of Growth in Learning and Discipleship	Best Practices
<b>Domain 2: Catholic Creed: What is the Church and what do we believe?</b>				
Recognize that the Church believes in one God and that the three persons of the Trinity act together in union.				
Acknowledge the Paschal Mystery: that Jesus Christ suffered, died on the cross, and rose from the dead.				
Understand that Easter is a holy day when we celebrate Jesus Christ's Resurrection from the dead.				

**Catholic Schools Religion Curriculum Priority Standards, pg. 4**

### GROUP REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION ON UTILIZING THE PRIORITY STANDARDS

- Gather into small groups of similar grade-levels to work with the **Utilizing Priority Standards Template** together and consider the questions above for planning instruction around each priority standard.
- As you explore the priority standards as a group, discuss what each standard means to you personally. (Are you able to articulate an answer for each priority standard, or do you need to explore the concept further? In what ways do you live the faith concepts in your daily life? How does each standard help you to grow as a disciple of Christ?)

- Share some activity ideas or discussion starters that have helped you to present the faith concepts of the standards to children and youth in a way that has made the lesson come alive for them. Space to make note of shared practices around each priority standard has been included on the **Utilizing Priority Standards Template**.
- The publisher correlation samples from Loyola Press, Sadlier and RCL Benziger, as well as religion textbook chapter goals and outcomes will provide additional information for planning instruction around the priority standards.

“Teachers need to assume that not everyone at any age is fully formed and ***use all moments as ‘teachable moments’ for encounter with Jesus Christ and witness***. Teachers and school leaders need to engage parents and families in the faith formation process. ‘Parents are the most influential agents for catechesis for their children.’” **Catholic Schools Religion Curriculum Priority Standards** (page 3)