

Profile of a Second Grade Student

Characteristics

Second-graders are beginning to develop socially. They enjoy increasing involvement in group activities such as team projects, singing and joint recitation. Seven-year-olds need to learn to respect others as created and loved by God, and to treat others as they would want to be treated, with love & respect.

Second-grade children are more cognizant of right and wrong and of their power to choose. They begin to develop a set of action patterns based on those they observe in adults they admire.

Seven year olds have a short attention span (about 10 to 20 minutes) and tire easily if lesson segments are too long or if too many ideas are presented at once.

They can memorize simple prayers, verses from the Psalms and Scripture, as well as other prayer forms such as the response in a litany.

Their ability to think in the abstract is very limited. They still learn best through concrete experiences. They grasp concepts like “unity” and “belonging” from doing things such as sharing, listening, eating together, giving, thanking and celebrating.

They show interest in how things are made, especially living creatures. This interest readily transfers to prayers of praise, awe, and thanksgiving.

Young people long for and need security, understanding, and supportive love from adults and peers in spite of their inability to respond openly and consistently. Through prayer and encouragement from respected adults, young people learn to accept themselves, and their good characteristics together with their weaknesses.

Faith Development Needs

Children are to be helped to grow in Faith, Hope and Charity. Leading the children to a deeper friendship with Jesus will take place through learning Bible Stories, learning the teachings of the Church and taking time for daily prayer.

Learning to live as Jesus wants us to will require training. The way that we make good and holy choices is through the exercise of virtue. A virtue is a good moral habit. We develop the Cardinal Virtues (moral virtues) of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance through education, deliberate acts and perseverance in struggle. These efforts are purified and elevated by God’s grace.

Prudence is making a right judgment. Justice is being fair. Fortitude or courage is to do what is right. Temperance is acting with self discipline or self control.

The catechist can help the children to choose to be good out of love for God by loving and respecting others. This will require that children be helped to develop the virtues so as to become habits in order to guide their conduct.

Implications

In helping children form their consciences through charitable, yet firm discipline, the parents and catechist should be careful to react consistently to an action, incident, or situation. Thus second-grade children will realize that there are differences between what is dangerous, what is improper, what is annoying, what is accidental, and what is sinful.

Parental Support

The home is the most important place to hand on the Faith to the children God has entrusted to us. We must pass on the Story of the Bible, which is the Story of God's family, given to us through the Scriptures and Tradition of the Church. Through Baptism, we become children of God and our family Story allows us to know where we have come from, our purpose in life and the direction to our ultimate destiny of union with God in Heaven. Without knowledge of and ongoing formation in the family Story, we can be ignorant of the meaning of life and lose our way, which can lead to a life of misery. God will help us with this responsibility.

Bible stories are great teaching tools. In the story of the Prodigal Son, the son chose to leave home and have fun making bad choices rather than living with his family and performing his chores. After carelessly spending all of the money, he was in extreme misery. The son realized what he had lost and decides to return home to his father as a servant, thinking he was unworthy to return as his son. The father welcomes him home as a son and forgives him for all his mistakes and even celebrated with a huge feast.

This story is really about our Heavenly Father and how He welcomes us back after we have left Him through sin. This forgiveness and welcoming happens in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Our Father heals our soul through the gift of sanctifying grace and we are filled with joy and peace.

As responsible parents, we want to raise our children to be healthy, respectful, joyful and holy so that they may one day be united with Our Father in Heaven. It is essential to grow in your own faith as an adult in order to pass the truth on to your children. The Catholic Church is here to guide and support us in this most noble task. The key is to be faithful to God through living the Catholic Faith as a family.

Remaining part of the Church community is essential. This is achieved through:

- **Prayer:** receiving Jesus at Mass every weekend as a family; going to the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis; making time for family and individual prayer, such as: Reading the Bible, praying a decade of the Rosary at the dinner table, reading the life of a saint etc.
- **Faith Knowledge:** teaching the Creed, Sacraments, Morality, Prayer and Scripture; having faith conversations with your son/daughter. The following pages provide key points for this work.
- **Community:** being supported by the Church family; sharing your talents and gifts; living out the Christian life; participating in parish activities
- **Service:** taking the time as a family to serve those in need

With regard to ongoing formation of your child in the Faith, please read the condensed version of the enclosed Second Grade Curriculum from the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization. For a complete Curriculum, Virtue Program and other helpful resources, visit the Diocesan website at www.dioceseoflacrosse.com, click on Office & Ministries in the upper right-hand corner, click on Catechesis and you will find the various links located on the left side.

The Office of Family Life and the Natural Family Planning Program offer parent & family seminars and resources. The family seminar called *Teaching the Way of Love* is a series of three presentations. The first presentation, entitled *Embrace Parenthood*, is designed for parents with children in grades K-2. The second presentation, entitled *Growing in Love*, is designed for parents and the children who are entering puberty (typically grades 4-6). The final presentation, entitled *Bodies and Boundaries*, is designed for parents and youth who are in middle or high school (grades 8-10). To learn more about the *Teaching the Way of Love* series and additional information on these topics please visit [The Parent's Place](http://www.dioceseoflacrosse.com) – a website connected to the Diocese of La Crosse website: www.dioceseoflacrosse.com. Just go to the home page and click on [The Parent's Place](http://www.dioceseoflacrosse.com).

Faith Formation Curriculum Guidelines

Curriculum is what is taught. Teaching the Faith includes the four aspects of the Christian Life: Creed, Sacraments, Life in Christ (living according to the Ten Commandments) and Christian Prayer. These four aspects are based upon Sacred Scripture. Your child's Religion textbook generally emphasizes specific themes. Faith formation in the home, Catholic school and parish program are to include all four aspects of the Christian Life each year. What is presented below is a condensed version of the Religion Curriculum. The full Curriculum can be viewed online at www.dioceseoflacrosse.com / click on Office and Ministries / Catechesis / Religion Curriculum.

“The definitive aim of catechesis (teaching the Faith) is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ; only He can lead us to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make us share in the life of the Holy Trinity” (*On Catechesis in Our Time*, Pope John Paul II, n. 5).

The primary goal for the second grade year is dedicated to preparation for and formation in regular reception of the Sacrament of Reconciliation and Jesus in the Holy Eucharist. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is to precede First Eucharist so that the child may be fully prepared to receive Holy Communion (In accord with the Universal Church discipline and the mandate of the Fourth Diocesan Synod). After receiving the Sacrament of Confession/Reconciliation, children are to receive the Sacrament regularly. Mother Church encourages us (especially parents taking their children) to frequent the Sacrament of Confession. This helps us to be purified, strengthened, and enlightened to live the Christian life and to grow in our love for Jesus Christ.

This preparation for and formation in the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Holy Eucharist are to always include the parents who have the primary responsibility for the education and formation of their children. It is necessary that families participate in Mass each Sunday and all Holy Days of Obligation. There is no meaning in being taught the Faith without the corresponding practice of the Faith.

I. Creed - Profession of Faith

1. There is only one God. The three Persons in one God is the Blessed Trinity. God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit made everything out of nothing.
2. God reveals to us in Sacred Scripture that there is only one God. The Bible is the written Word of God and needs to be read in the classroom and at home.
3. God is our Father Who loves us and cares for us. God made everything from His love and takes care of all that He has made. The Holy Spirit is a Divine Person. We receive the Holy Spirit in Baptism.
4. God created angels as spiritual beings. Angels are God's messengers. We all have our own personal guardian angel. Our guardian angel keeps constant, watchful care over us and guides us and protects us on our journey to God in Heaven.
5. All of the angels were put to a test to see if they would be faithful to God. Lucifer and some of the angels completely rejected God and they became Satan and his demons. Revelations 12:7-9
6. God created Adam and Eve and the whole human race to know, love and serve Him so that we can be united with Him both here and forever in Heaven. By the power of knowing and loving God, we have a special worth over other earthly creatures. This worth is called “dignity.”
7. Satan tempted Adam and Eve and they disobeyed God. The first sin of Adam and Eve (the Original Sin) separated them from God. They and all their descendents lost the union with God that they had been created for. They no longer had sanctifying grace within their souls.
8. God alone could fix the problem of sin and reunite mankind with Himself. Thankfully, God promised a Savior. Only the Savior could restore us to the purpose for which we were created, being united with God.

9. Jesus is God and came as our Savior. Jesus grew to be a man so He could share in our human life. He suffered and died on the cross to offer Himself as a perfect sacrifice to His Father to show His love and to make up for our sins.
10. Mary's "yes" to God to be the Mother of Jesus made our salvation possible. Since Mary is the Mother of Jesus and Jesus is God, we rightly call Mary the Mother of God.
11. Jesus founded the Catholic Church. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to the Apostles to help them and give them grace. The Church, like Jesus, teaches us about God. Like Jesus, the Church feeds the poor, cares for the sick, and helps us to know how to act.
12. Jesus is with us through the Church. Through the Church we receive the Sacraments, in which Jesus shares His love and strength with us.

II. Sacraments – Celebration of the Christian Mystery

Section two focuses on the Sacraments. Sacraments communicate God's grace, which unites us with Him and strengthens us to remain in communion with Him. Through the Sacraments God communicates a share in His Divine Life out of love for us. We are to approach the Sacraments with expectant faith and proper dispositions so as to receive the grace that Christ intends to give. Sanctifying grace transforms our hearts and will lead to a way of life that is lived in imitation of Christ.

1. A Sacrament is a physical sign given to us by Jesus through which Jesus shares Himself and His love with us. Through the Sacraments we receive sanctifying grace. (CCC 1131, 1210, 1114-1115)
2. Grace helps us to treat people the way God wants us to (to live by His Commandments) and to say yes to God's love. (CCC 1889)
3. Due to the effects of original sin, we need sanctifying grace (a participation in God's Divine Life) to know, love and serve God. Sanctifying grace is received in the Sacraments. (CCC 1116-1117, 1129)
4. The seven sacraments are: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation (also called Confession and Penance), Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony. (CCC 1210, 1423-1424)

Sacrament of Reconciliation / Penance

1. The sacrament in which we confess our sins and ask to receive Jesus' mercy and forgiveness is called the Sacrament of Confession or Forgiveness or Penance or Reconciliation or Conversion. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we confess to the priest who acts in the person of Christ, because Jesus gave to priests the authority to absolve us from sin in His name. John 20:19-23 Jesus instituted the Sacrament.
2. Sin is primarily turning away from God (an offense against God) that damages our relationship with Him, and at the same time, damages the Church and our relationship with others. We are healed and strengthened in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. (CCC 1440, 1849-1852, 1443-1445)
3. Only God is able to forgive sins. However, Jesus entrusted His own exercise of the power of forgiving sins to His Apostles on Easter Sunday night. The Apostles handed on this power to their successors, the bishops and to the priests who share in the ministry of the bishop. John 20:19-23
4. In the Sacrament of Reconciliation, we can tell Jesus, in the person of the priest, that we are sorry for our sins and receive His forgiveness.
5. There is mortal (deadly) and venial sin. Mortal sin is saying no to our friendship (a serious disobedience to God's laws of love) that destroys our friendship with Jesus (loss of sanctifying grace). It results in the loss of charity. For a sin to be mortal, three conditions must be present: serious matter, full knowledge of

- the evil act, and full consent of the will. Mortal sin completely separates us from God. Venial sin is breaking a commandment in a less serious matter that hurts our friendship with Jesus. (CCC 1855).
6. The guaranteed way to be reconciled with God after committing a mortal sin is the Sacrament of Reconciliation. When we are sorry and seek forgiveness through the Sacrament of Reconciliation, God forgives us. Contrition is sorrow for sin and a firm commitment not to sin again. (CCC 1496)
 7. A priest can never reveal what is heard in confession. There is no exception. This is called the sacramental seal of Confession. (CCC 1467)
 8. Steps to make a good confession: (CCC 1491-94)
 - Pray to the Holy Spirit to help me know my sins (examination of conscience) (CCC 1448, 1454)
 - Pray for the grace to be sorry for my sins (CCC 1448, 1451)
 - Make up my mind not to sin again (contrition) (CCC 1448, 1451)
Contrition involves sorrow for sin and firm purpose to change.
 - Go to confession
 - Make the Sign of the Cross.
 - Tell my sins to the priest. (Each mortal sin must be confessed - trying to remember the number of times the sin was committed). (CCC 1448)
 - Listen to the guidance of the priest to help me break sinful habits.
 - Pray the Act of Contrition (with true sorrow and a firm purpose to change).
 - Prayerfully listen to the words of absolution:
God, the Father of mercies, through the death and the resurrection of His Son has reconciled the world to Himself and sent the Holy Spirit among us for the forgiveness of sins; through the ministry of the Church may God give you pardon and peace, and I absolve you from your sins in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit. Amen. (CCC 1449)
 9. After leaving the confessional, pray or do the penance the priest gives you and thank God for forgiving your sins. The penance given by the priest is an act (such as a prayer or an act of charity) whereby the sinner makes amends for sin, especially in reparation (to show sorrow for) to God for offenses against Him. (CCC 1459-1460)
 10. We need to understand that the Sacrament of Confession / Reconciliation is important for preparing to receive the other sacraments, especially the Eucharist. We must be in the state of grace to receive the Holy Eucharist. (CCC 1415, 1421, 1468-1470, 1865-1869)

III. Life In Christ

Moral Development is about how we need to respond to God by the way we live. As His children, we need to live as God has asked. The Ten Commandments are God's laws of love for all His people. Knowing God's laws helps us to do what is right and good.

1. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments. The Ten Commandments are for each person to know how to live as a child of God: to love God and our neighbor. The Ten Commandments are God's laws of love for all His people. Knowing God's laws helps us to do what is right.
 - The First Commandment: There is only one God. You shall not have other gods besides Me.
 - The Second Commandment: God's name is Holy. You shall not use God's name in vain.
 - The Third Commandment: Remember to keep God's day holy.
 - The Fourth Commandment: Honor your father and mother.
 - The Fifth Commandment: You shall not kill.
 - The Sixth Commandment: You shall not commit adultery.
 - The Seventh Commandment: You shall not steal.
 - The Eighth Commandment: You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor (lying).
 - The Ninth Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's wife.
 - The Tenth Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor's goods.

2. God has loved us first. The Ten Commandments are a gift from God. (Students need to memorize the Ten Commandments and understand their meaning.)
3. Jesus summed up the Ten Commandments in the Two Great Commandments:
 - Love God with all your heart.
 - Love your neighbor as yourself.
4. It is important to examine our conscience and pray a sincere Act of Contrition every night. In examining our conscience, we ask ourselves:
 - What did I do today that pleased God?
 - Did I pray to God today?
 - Did I listen to and obey my parents and teachers?
 - Was I kind to everyone or how was I selfish?
5. Living the Christian life includes serving our neighbor in their need. In preparing to receive Jesus in First Holy Communion, second grade children are to participate in a service program with their parents, which include discussion and follow-up.

IV. Prayer Life

Prayer is an essential way we respond to God who loved us first. Prayer is necessary if we are to know God personally and to do His will. In order to know God and His specific plan for our lives, we must take time to pray, that is to talk, listen and be with God and His Family, the Church. Praying is essential for growing as a child of God in the Family of God. A life without prayer is like a life without breath.

1. Children are to be helped by their parents to memorize and recite with reverence the following prayers:

Sign of the Cross	Act of Contrition (the focus for the first part of the year)
Prayer Before Meals	The Apostles' Creed (the focus for the second part of the year)
Angel of God	Hail Mary
Our Father	Glory Be
2. Prayer is talking with and listening to Jesus. Prayer is an encounter and friendship with Jesus. We are called to pray every day with our families.
3. In the Bible, Jesus invites us to talk with Him and God the Father just like we talk with anyone else. We can pray everyday first of all by listening to God and then, by responding in our singing and praising, telling Jesus that we love Him and that we are sorry. We can thank Him and ask Him to help us to be good.
4. We show our love for Jesus by being devoted to His Sacred Heart. This is a devotion to the love of God, in which the symbol of this love is the Sacred Heart of Jesus.
5. We can pray to Mary when we need help. The Rosary is a wonderful form of prayer by which we meditate upon the mysteries of Christ's life and ask for Mary's intercession.
6. We need to participate fully in mind and heart in the prayers of the Sunday Mass. Each person is called to actively participate in the Mass by praying and singing. The Mass is the highest form of prayer.
7. In a Catholic Church, Jesus is truly present in the tabernacle and we want to speak to and listen to Him. We also want to show respect for those who are praying in Church by maintaining an atmosphere of prayerful silence.
8. Children need the help of parents to develop a habit of personal prayer both in the morning and the evening. Spiritual reading helps us to think about God. Children can enjoy reading the stories of the saints and also of good modern day Christians as models of living the truths of the Gospel. A list of recommended spiritual reading for this age level is available on the Diocesan Website.