

Becoming Disciples

Curriculum Tips

Volume 2

Office for Religious Education, Catholic Diocese of Wilmington

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New Year's Resolutions for Becoming Disciples



1. **Renew your commitment** to be faithful to the use of "Becoming Disciples." The listed curriculum outcomes, along with the textbook, will help to give children and youth a thorough, systematic knowledge of their faith.
2. **Increase your own religious knowledge** by referring to at least two of the references (usually from the Catechism of the Catholic Church) suggested after each outcome statement.
3. **Involve parents** in as many of the outcomes that refer to family as possible.

Celebrate Epiphany!

Every grade level includes the following outcome:

Key Concept 2: Liturgical Education – "Indicate a knowledge of the Christmas season." Gr. K-8

Here are some practical ideas that will engage children and youth:

Blessing the House Ritual – Write 20 + C + M + B + 08 with colored chalk over the door posts of the rooms of one's house (school, or religious education classrooms) to represent the new year and the names of the Three Kings – Caspar, Melchior, and Balthasar. As the room is sprinkled with holy water (fill a little bottle of holy water from the church font and sprinkle the room using a sprig of greenery), ask God's blessing on all that will take place in that space in the coming year. Pray this prayer: "Lord, God of heaven and earth, You revealed Your only begotten Son to every nation by the guidance of a star. Bless this place and all who meet within its walls. Fill us with the light of Christ that our concern for others may reflect your love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen."

Little children will enjoy wearing crowns and following a star in a procession, while singing the following words to the tune of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star."

Three wise kings, three wise kings,
Followed the star, followed the star.
They saw it in the sky so bright
And followed it through the day and night
To find the Lord Jesus who is our light,
The three wise kings, three wise kings.



Older children and youth can sing "We Three Kings" and "The First Noel."
Sharing star-shaped cookies with others is a sweet way to end!

Week of Prayer for Christian Unity Jan. 18-25, 2008

The Week of Prayer for Christian Unity invites the Church throughout the world to pray in communion with the prayer of Jesus "that they all may be one." (Jn. 17:21).

Here are some helpful curriculum guidelines for teaching about Christian unity:

Key Concept 5 **Education for Community Life**

Gr. K – 4 "Understand that Jesus founded the Catholic Church that we might all be one and at the same time to understand that not everyone is a Catholic and that some of our relatives, playmates and neighbors may worship in other Christian religions (denominations) that believe in Jesus Christ."

Gr. 5-8 "Realize that other Christian denominations share elements of faith with Catholicism, among them: Baptism, devotion to the word of God and the practice of charity."

Gr. 4-8 “Recall that we pray with our Church for Christian unity; Christ bestowed unity on his Church from the beginning, thus the desire to recover the unity of all Christians is a gift of Christ and a call of the Holy Spirit.”

Consider visiting a church of another denomination or inviting youth of another Christian denomination to visit your parish church. Spend time with other Christians, talking about what you each enjoy about your faith. Pray together for increased understanding and unity among Christians.

Invite a local minister or the children’s parents who are members of other Christian churches to tell the children about some of the important things we all share in common, such as baptism, scripture, prayer, and the practice of charity. Invite children to share pictures of their Baptism or their favorite Scripture passages with one another and to collaborate in a service project with the wider community.

For young children, piece together a jigsaw puzzle to demonstrate the idea of unity.

Have children and youth write a prayer for unity and to come up with symbols of the unity of the Church.



Engaging Interfaith Families

How we live out our lives as a family influences everything we do in our life time. It affects our value system, our belief system and the manner in which we relate to others. The religious symbols we use in our homes, the traditions we have, how we pray, our manner of forgiving, the outreach we have to those less fortunate than we and the worldview we have regarding social justice and other life issues are the core values that begin in families.

For interfaith families, it is helpful that children have an opportunity to learn about the faith practices of the non-Catholic parent or grandparent.

Some suggestions are:

- Share the story of the faith tradition to which he/she belongs
- Teach a prayer that is meaningful and often prayed
- Display symbols of both faiths in the home and share the meanings
- Pray prayers from both faith traditions
- Both parents pray blessings over the children from his/her tradition



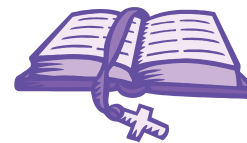
Teaching Love and Scripture with St. Valentine!

-On Valentine’s Day, consider writing a valentine to God! Also, what might a valentine that God sends us say? Words about love from Scripture can be included in the children’s valentines. Select from: Song of Songs 2:4, Isaiah 43:1,4, Ps 36:7, Ps. 40:11, Ps. 106:1, Ps. 136, Jn. 3:16, or Jn. 13:34-35.

-Have the children role play how certain situations may turn out differently, depending on whether one has a stony heart or a soft heart. Refer to Ezekiel 36:26, Jer. 31:33, 2 Cor. 1:20-22, or Rom. 5:5.

-Make valentines and send them to the sick in your faith community.

-Place a re-lighting candle on the children’s cupcakes. Compare the light that won’t go out to God’s Love that never fails!



Curious About Saints Who Lived Nearby?

The Curriculum Guide can help! Turn to the **Introduction p. 10** for tidbits your students will be fascinated to learn on the lives of saints who lived in Delaware, Maryland and Pennsylvania!

On **page 11 of the Introduction**, you will find good websites that provide information on *all* the saints and ideas for nearby pilgrimages! What better way to learn than to plan a trip! Consider visiting as a class or a family the Seton shrine in Emmitsburg, Pa; info at www.setonshrine.org. The National Shrine Grotto of Lourdes at Mount St. Mary's is also 2 miles from the Seton Shrine; info at www.msmary.edu/grotto.

Key Concept 2 "Liturgical Education" **"Identify and celebrate some feasts of saints."** **Gr. K-8**

Each grade level suggests different saints on whom to focus.

These Local Saint Feast Days Are Coming Soon!



**St. Elizabeth
Ann Seton** –
Jan. 4
**St. John
Neumann** –
Jan. 5
**St. Francis
de Sales** –
Jan. 24
(Patron of
the Diocese
of Wilmington)
**St. Katherine
Drexel**
– March 3

Consider inviting one of the Oblates of St. Francis de Sales to come in and talk about the many pearls of wisdom that St. Francis de Sales left for us, profound and simple guides to a spirituality of the everyday. Contacts at Salesianum School 302-654-7767, www.oblates.org/spirituality, or mmurray@osfs.org; also, Mt. Aviat Academy 410-398-2206.

Check out www.AmericanCatholic.org, for "Saint of the Day."



Fun Ways to Learn about Saints

Give out profiles of the saints (or have students research them) and have students try one of the following:

- write a recipe card for living like a certain saint
- create an art gallery of the saints (with posters) to which you can invite other classes
- create a wax museum of saints where students dress up like saints and stand like statues in a wax museum, until a visiting student pushes their "activating button" and they come alive and begin to tell briefly about their life
- design placemats that tell about various saints and have a little party to thank some group of people in the parish who have similar qualities to these saints
- write a letter to a saint and/or write a letter of reply that that saint might return, sharing wisdom or advice from

Becoming Disciples of the Prince of Peace This Lent

During the Christmas season, Christians herald Jesus as the Prince of Peace. World Peace Day is January 1. A celebration of World Peace Day would be appropriate some time in early January.

In his message for the World Day of Peace, entitled "The Human Family, A Community of Peace," Pope Benedict XVI pointed to the family as the first teacher of peace. "In a healthy family life, we experience some of the fundamental elements of peace: justice and love between brothers and sisters, loving concern for the members who are weaker because of youth, sickness or old age, mutual help in the necessities of life, readiness to accept others and if necessary, to forgive them."



“There are many outcomes in this curriculum that are foundational to justice and peace and are vital elements of catechesis,” the Introduction to the curriculum guide reminds us on page 9.

How do we teach children and youth to spread the word of peace to others throughout the whole liturgical year? The Curriculum Guide gives a wonderful outline.

Key Concept 6 - Missionary Initiation

“Realize that Jesus asks us to share the Good News of the Gospel with our family, friends, and those we meet.” Gr. K-2

“Realize that wherever they are, school, home, church, playground, stores, homes of friends, they are followers of Jesus and their behavior should show that they are Christians.” Gr. K-3

“Recognize that we call Jesus the Prince of Peace and Jesus’ words “Blessed are the Peacemakers”, Mt. 5:9, call all to foster peace in the various situations of their lives.” Gr. 2-8

“Recognize the awareness of the need for peace, defined as “the tranquility of order...the work of justice and the effect of charity.” Gr. 4-6

“Realize that peace includes attention and peace.” Gr. 8



evangelizing into freedom, poverty



What are some activities that parents and teachers do to help children and youth learn the ways of peace?

(Adapt according to age)

- Talk about current peace-related issues that are in the newspaper or on TV.
- Especially during Lent, “fast” from violent TV programs or video games
- Count the number of put-downs overheard in a day. Discuss the negative effect on people and other positive alternatives.

- Learn and use a simple process of conflict resolution: While the other listens quietly, each person takes turns telling about what happened in the conflict from their own point of view, how they felt and what they want to happen. The parties brainstorm ways that Each person can get his or her needs met and they decide on a mutual solution which will be tried and evaluated.
- Discuss and sign the Family Pledge of Non-violence, which says that peace must start within ourselves and our families, through actions that show respect and forgiveness, listening, courage and creativity. See the Families Against Violence Advocacy Network c/o Institute for Peace & Justice, www.ipj-ppj.org.
- Look at the lives of great peace –makers such as Martin Luther King, Jr. and Gandhi.
- Do some action that promotes peace on the MLK holiday.
- Sing and/or illustrate the Prayer for Peace of St. Francis of Assisi (“Lord, make me an instrument of your peace...)
- Celebrate the sacrament of reconciliation.
- Research and discuss pacifist religious groups such as the Amish, Mennonites and Quakers.
- Role play alternative ways to respond in potentially violent situations, such as teasing or bullying.
- Discuss Pope Paul VI’s famous words, “If you want peace, work for justice.”
- Invite a speaker to class from Pax Christi .

Raising Consciousness, Developing Gratitude and Helping the Poor This Lent

- Using a newspaper for prayer for peace

per, create a litany and justice.



-Listening to the rain outside when you're in a warm comfy house is fun. Rain, if you have no home, is cold and sad. Put a coin in your Rice Bowl for every umbrella and raincoat in your house.

-In some countries less than half the children complete their basic education. Put a coin in your Rice Bowl for every year of school you have completed.

For each glass or can of something that you drink today, add one coin to your Rice Bowl.

-160 million children go to bed hungry every night. Put one coin in your Rice Bowl for every can of food in your pantry.

-How many people sleep on the ground with no protection from the weather each night? Put one coin in your Rice Bowl for every hour of good sleep you had last night.

-Refugees often flee their homes with nothing but what they are wearing. Soap is a precious gift for them. Put one coin in your Rice Bowl for every bar of soap in your home.

-More than 850 million adults worldwide cannot read or write. Put one coin in your Rice Bowl for every book you own.

-1.2 billion people in the world do not have clean, running water. Put one coin in your Rice Bowl for every faucet you have. (Check in the basement and outside, too!)

-Eat by candlelight one night. Pray for victims of fire and firefighters.

-More than 880 million people do not have medical care when they need it. Wear a band-aid on one finger to remember to pray for those who are sick.

-Tornadoes, hurricanes, earthquakes and war kill thousands of people every year. Pray for victims of war and disaster.

-Put a coin in your Rice Bowl for each good friend who cares about you. Say a prayer of thanks for them.

