

Middle School Grades 6-8

Young Adolescents:

- Learn faith identity through experience of community customs and traditions.
- Are in a period of rapid growth: physical, mental, and emotional.
- May experience awkwardness, uncertainty, and self-consciousness.
- Change from a strong interest in the group to an interest in one or two “best” friends.
- Find peer acceptance more important than adult approval.
- Experience an increase in sexual awareness.
- Are capable of reflective thinking.

Practical Tips:

Attend Mass every Sunday and Holy Day of Obligation. When possible, attend as a family.

Get to know your child’s friends.

Talk with your child about the values he or she sees reflected in the media and in his or her daily surroundings.

Take every opportunity to affirm your child’s gifts and talents.

Encourage your child to become involved in some Church activity, for example, youth group, altar server, lector, choir member, or altar server at school Masses.

Provide your child with books or videos about the lives of the saints.

Participate with your child in a program sponsored by the parish: food and clothing collection, parish festival, a political action, or a spiritual retreat.

Encourage your child to take some “private time” each day for personal prayer.

As a family, celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation on a regular basis especially during Advent and Lent.

Read your youngster’s religion textbook and talk about what the class is studying.

Give your child a Bible that is written specifically for his or her age and understanding.

Prayers and Practices:

Sign of the Cross

Glory Be Prayer

Spontaneous Prayer

Nicene Creed

Liturgy of the Word

Order of Mass

Stations of the Cross

Theological/Cardinal Virtues

The Lord’s Prayer

Meal Prayers

Act of Contrition

Ten Commandments

Liturgy of the Eucharist

Sacraments

Benediction

Hail Mary

Guardian Angel Prayer

Apostles’ Creed

Reconciliation

Communion

Mysteries of the Rosary

Precepts of the Church

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Creed

Family: Parents communicate their values to their children through family participation in the life, mission, and work of the parish community. Frequent reference to Jesus and the Gospels and the Church helps keep them in relevant the life of the young adolescent.

Parish/School: In addition to curriculum-based catechetical sessions, the parish provides opportunities for young people to discuss life and faith issues in a Catholic Christian context with a catechist and their peers.

Sacraments

Family: Parents set standards for family involvement in parish liturgical celebrations including: attending regularly, speaking positively about them, dressing with care, arriving on time and participating fully. Family encouragement for young people to take on the responsibility of liturgical ministries is essential in their decision to do so.

Parish/School: The parish provides opportunities for young people to participate in liturgical ministries as appropriate to age and situations. Listening, understanding, patient teaching, and responding pastorally to the sacramental needs of this age group help them feel a sense of belonging.

Christian Living

Family: Families who open their hearts to those in need, and put their faith into action witness Christian service to their young adolescent child. Parents discuss moral decision-making and human sexuality with their children in light of the Catholic tradition.

Parish/School: The parish lives and teaches the scriptural vision of life that encompasses justice, peace, equality, charity, and stewardship. Special attention needs to be made to assist parents on how to communicate this vision. The parish calls families to conversion and offers catechetical, worship, community, and service opportunities to support this call.

Prayer

Family: The family participates in a variety of prayer experiences at home, at church, or on retreat. Prayer is regarded as a natural expression of faith and is frequently experienced in the home. Young adolescent children are given responsibility for planning and implementing special family prayer services.

Parish/School: Students are trained to be prayer leaders and active participants through regular practice in classroom prayer. Parish leadership supports student prayer by attending services planned by the youth. Families are exposed to a variety of prayer styles at parish functions.