

ST. FRANCIS DE SALES PARISH
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAM 2009-2010
K – 5 Grades: General Outline, Themes, Suggestions

- * **August, 1st week**
 - Opening prayer/ Attendance.
 - Welcome and introduction.
 - Explanation of room setup.
 - Icebreakers.
 - CLASS RULES (have students participate in this!)

- * Talk about why we are here, and how important the students are as members of the family of God.
 - We study our religion to find out more about God.
 - These classes have different names: “Religious Education,” “Catechism,” “CCD,” etc.
 - Even more important than regular school because they teach us things that regular schools sometimes do not emphasize, like how to relate to other people as members of the same human family and how to relate to God.

- * We are special creations of God!
 - Animals and human beings both have instincts.
 - Human beings are the high point of God’s creation.
 - We can know and love God because he especially created us to be in a relationship with Him.
 - Adam and Eve are called our “first parents,” and all people are descended from them. We are, therefore, all brothers and sisters in God’s family!
 - The people all over the world who are Roman Catholics make up what we call the Church (capital C). All of us make up the Church!
 - Since we are all brothers and sisters we have to take care of each other.
 - * Part of taking care of each other is to respond to the needs of the poor and needy...a natural activity of those who are in God’s family.

- * The building where we celebrate Mass and the Sacraments is a church (small c).

- * Suggested Activity: To reinforce the concept of “Family of God,” each student could be asked to bring a can of food or article of gently used clothing next week to be given to the poor by our Parish St. Vincent de Paul Society.

August, 2nd Week

*Opening prayer/attendance.

*Prayer review: Sign of the Cross, Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary, Doxology ("Glory be...").
-Copies of these prayers, prayer cards, and suggested activities will be available.

*Brief review of "Family of God" which was presented last week.

-Collect food & service items brought by students and, after class, bring them to Maureen's office.

*The Parish: Who does what, etc.

-There will be photos of personnel, church furnishings, vestments, etc. available.

-A parish is a community of Catholics established within specific geographic boundaries to serve the needs of the people in that area.

+St. Francis de Sales Parish is bounded on the north by Broadway, on the east by Houghton Road, on the south and west by the Pantano Wash.

+Fr. Bob Tamminga is the pastor. His job is to lead the parish in the name of the bishop, to promote the Gospel and to care for the people of the parish. He is the "CEO" of the parish.

+Fr. Bill Shuppert and Fr. Bob Carney are also priests of our parish.

+Fr. Shuppert is also in charge of the Liturgy in the parish. (We will cover the liturgy in greater depth in January when we study the Mass).

+Fr. Carney is "in residence" in the parish and helps out wherever and whenever he can, especially in celebrating Mass and the other Sacraments.

+We also have a number of deacons (Collura, Corder, Ferris, French, Kingery, Martin, Scalpone, and Vigil).

+The deacons' job is to SERVE the people. They assist at Mass, visit the sick, help with funeral and baptisms, etc.

+Deacons do *not* preside at the sacraments of Eucharist, Confession, or Anointing of the Sick.

+They *do* preside at Baptism, Weddings, etc.

+Mrs. Marian Gilbert is the Director of Youth Ministry. She is in charge of all programs dealing with those from 6th through 12th grades... religious education, youth group, and other activities involving teens.

+Mrs. Maureen Kingery is Director of Religious Education K through 5th Grades. She supervises preparation for the sacraments of Confession and Eucharist and any other activities in which young children are involved.

+Dr. Julian Ackerley is the Director of Music for the Parish and supervises our choirs and musicians.

+Deacon Bill Vigil is our parish Office Manager: Mr. Fred Guthrie is our parish bookkeeper: Mr. Chumel Gomez is our maintenance supervisor: Mr. Jeff Hubbard is our groundskeeper
 +There are many other people also who make sure our parish runs smoothly!

***The Physical Plant.**

- Our church building was built in 1972 and renovated in 1985.
- Our church building is the special place where our sacramental celebrations take place.
- The church is “God’s House.” Even though God is everywhere, we need special places to honor Him and celebrate our Faith! It is a sacred place, a holy place where we can feel closer to God and a place which demands reverence and respect.
 - +The Altar, the Eucharistic Table. This is where an important part of the Mass is celebrated. (General explanation of the roles of priest, deacon, lector, servers, etc. More detail later when we study the Mass.)
 - +The Tabernacle. This is a special place where the Body of Christ is kept between Masses.
 - +Chalice, ciboria, vestments, linens, pulpit, pews, banners, etc.
 - +Sacramentary, Lectionary, Book of Gospels... identify each.
 - +Baptismal Font.
 - +Stained glass windows.
 - +(3rd through 5th grades): Presiders chair, credence table, alb, stoles, (priests’ and deacons”), chasubles, sacristy.

***Church behavior.**

- Because the church is such a special and sacred place, we have to be on our most respectful behavior when in church!
 - +Point out and explain purpose of holy water fonts.
 - +Genuflection – how and why.
 - +Pews, kneelers; postures of kneeling and standing.
 - +Listening, and participating in prayers and songs in an appropriate manner, being silent when appropriate, no unnecessary potty breaks (go before Mass!), etc.

September, Week 1.

LABOR DAY NO CLASSES

September, Week 2.

***Opening Prayer/Attendance**

***Compliance Session --- All teachers will accompany their students to this session.**

*Time permitting; explain "Children's envelopes."

September, Week 3.

*Opening Prayer/Attendance.

*Prayer Review.

-If you have given them prayers to memorize, please check on this.

-Also remind them to pray before going to bed and in the morning when they get up.

*Scripture: Psalm 139:1-14

***God**

-We can get to know God in many different ways.

+We can look at God's creation and find all around us signs of beauty given to us by God... flowers, trees, water, sun, moon, stars, dogs & cats, horses, lions, birds, the ocean, etc.

+Have the students "Brainstorm" about creation.

+We all come from someone, and that Someone is God.

-There is only one God.

+God exists in Three Persons --- Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. This is called the Holy Trinity and is a great mystery!

-God is my Creator.

+God created all that exists, and He did this all by Himself. He had no help and made everything from nothing!

+God is a pure Spirit Who has no beginning and no end.

+He knows all things and can do all things.

+God is all good, all holy, and all lovable.

+God made me and wants me to be with him forever in heaven!

+God loves me unconditionally!

-God lives in each one of us.

+He helps us to know right from wrong (our conscience).

+He knows everything we do and everything we think... God knows everything!

+God revealed Himself to Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Moses and many other great religious leaders.

+God revealed Himself in the best and clearest way possible by becoming one of us in the Person of His only Son, Jesus Christ! (cf. Hebrews 1:1)

September, Week 4

*Opening Prayer / Attendance

*Review: "Who is God?" Collect Service Items.

*Brief overview of the meaning on "Sacrament."

-Sacraments are much more than "something the priest gives us." They are touchable, "feel-able" signs of God's love for us.

-The Sacraments are special sacred ways of coming into contact with the loving power of God in our lives.

-Sacraments are "outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace."

-We should help the students to develop a sense of and love for the sacred.

***Baptism & Original Sin. (CCC #396-412, 1213-1284)**

-Original Sin refers to the sin that was committed by the first human beings (referred to as Adam and Eve). They made a free choice to turn away from God's love and chose to follow their own will rather than God's will.

-We call their choice "original sin" because it was the first sin.

-As a result of their sin, all of their descendants (except Jesus and Mary) are born with this original sin.

-Through original sin we are all born into a state of weakness and we all need the grace and strength of Baptism to restore us to holiness. Baptism helps to overcome the weaknesses of our human nature.

-Jesus came into the world to free us from original sin and from all of our sins and to give us eternal life...to "redeem" us.

-The Sacrament of Baptism washes away original sin and all sins and makes us children of God, members of His family.

+This is like being "born again." We are born into our regular families, and through Baptism we are born into the family of God and become members of the Church.

-Even though we are Baptized, we are still subject to other bad aspects of our human nature: selfishness, illness, death, etc.

-If *necessary*, we could explain that those who die without Baptism are entrusted to the mercy of God. Remember the ancient teaching of our Church stating that there are three possible forms of Baptism: by water, by blood (martyrdom), and by desire.

+The concept of "Limbo" has no place in our catechesis, as reinforced by the recent statements of Pope Benedict.

-Most students will have received Baptism as infants.

+Ask students if they remember their Baptism.

-We have what we call "sponsors" or godparents, at Baptism. It is their responsibility to help the parents in guiding us in our Faith and way of life in Jesus Christ.

+Ask students to find out who their godparents are, and ask them if they can find and bring a memento of their own Baptisms (photos, candle, outfit, etc.) to class next week.

- The word “baptism” comes from a Greek word meaning to plunge or immerse. Baptism has some of its roots in the Jewish religion where people were symbolically “purified” before becoming Jews.
- Water and the words “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit” are key elements of the Baptism ceremony. The ceremony also normally includes anointing with holy oils.
- Immersing or the pouring of water over the forehead of the one to be Baptized signifies burial with Jesus, the cleansing from sin and the giving of new life.
- A priest or deacon normally administers the Sacrament of Baptism.
- The white garment symbolizes the purity of new life in Christ.
- The candle symbolizes the new life given in Baptism as a share in the light of Christ... the Light of the World.
- Mark 16:16 states: “The one who believes and is baptized will be saved; but the one who does not believe will be condemned.”
 - +The Bible teaches that Baptism is necessary to become a part of the Church and to share in the life of Christ. (CCC #1257)
 - +We follow the command of Jesus: “Go forth and baptize all nations.” (Matthew 28:18-20)
- Jesus began His public life after being baptized by John the Baptist in order to show us how to begin our life in Him.
- Baptism is the first of what we call the Sacraments of Initiation (Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist)
 - +People must be Baptized before they can receive any of the other Sacraments.

*Dismissal.

OCTOBER WEEK ONE

- Opening Prayer/Attendance
- Brief review of Baptism (What it does, Ordinary Minister, godparents, photos, etc) Discuss belonging to a team, a club (Brownies, Cub Scouts, etc.) orchestra, dance groups, and so on. Talk about the things they do as part of the groups. This can be referred to many times –for example when we talk about the Works of Mercy. Being part of whatever group has its benefits also – this will be reflected in the Beatitudes.
- The Sacrament of Confirmation
- The Ordinary Minister
- Effects
- History
- Gifts

OCTOBER WEEK TWO

- Opening Prayer / Attendance
- Review: Confirmation and Baptism are two of the three Sacraments of Initiation. These Sacraments are received only one time! Tell them they will receive Confirmation in high school.
- When we receive Confirmation we receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit – these give us what we need to live as Jesus wants us to live.
- Works of Mercy
- Beatitudes

OCTOBER WEEK THREE

- Opening Prayer / Attendance
- Open with a review of Confirmation using the following: talk about the Works of Mercy and Beatitudes. See how the students have “lives these” since the last class
- The Trinity – God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit
- God is unique. He transcends the world and history. He is the fullness of Being and of every perfection without origin and without end.
- Review the Sign of the Cross / Discuss your class’ illustration of the Sign of the Cross or the Trinity. *Begin the project this week.

OCTOBER WEEK FOUR

- Opening Prayer / Attendance
- Three Persons in One God – continued
- Complete project.

OCTOBER WEEK ONE NOTES

Opening Prayer/Attendance

Still Collecting for the Needy

Acts 19:5-6 / Acts 8:14:17 / 2 Cor 1:21-22 / Eph 1:13 / Hebrews 6:2

- Confirmation is part of God's "recreating" action. (Like and with Baptism, new life is begun and sealed/strengthened. A long time ago, before the times of pens and paper (or the internet! People sent messages to one another by word of mouth. These messages were entrusted to trustworthy people who would travel and deliver the message. To prove that the message was true, the messenger would give his or her personal seal. This seal was a unique emblem or design worn by the messenger as an armband or necklace. When the hearers saw this seal, they knew it was an authentic message. AS time went on and paper and pen were available, the important messages would be placed on paper and the paper was folded and sealed with liquid wax. The person's emblem (or seal) was put into the wax before it hardened. If the seal was unbroken when the message was delivered, it could be trusted. So what has this to do with Confirmation? – Well, in a way we are like the paper on which the important message was written. God's word is the message. Jesus is the messenger and the Holy Spirit is the seal of authenticity. We are sealed with the Holy Spirit in Confirmation!
- Confirmation is a wonderful action of the Holy Spirit. In this Sacrament the Holy Spirit gives us what we need to be happy and complete in living our lives for Him. This Sacrament helps us to know more about God and ourselves.
- Sacrament of Initiation canonically it is the second sacrament of initiation. Like Baptism it is received only once, we have a sponsor (ideally a godparent. Sponsor requirements: fully initiated, practicing Catholic, at least 16 years old, NOT a parent.)
- Confirmation is received ONE TIME ONLY. It puts an indelible mark on your soul forever!
- Confirmation ratifies (Completes) and renews our Baptism. It is a Gift of the Holy Spirit, a completion of the promise of Pentecost, a source of spiritual power (grace), and of spiritual maturity. (*Though it is by no means a graduation or completion of the journey!*) Confirmation is a reflection of catechetical growth. (Canon 889) AS with Baptism, the Sacrament is received only one time. Confirmations must be recorded in the place of Baptism and also in the Confirmation Book of the parish where it takes place.
- The Ordinary Minister of the Sacrament of Confirmation is the Bishop. He can delegate this to a Priest. Red is the color of the Holy Spirit; red vestments are worn. The Candidates are anointed with Chrism oil blessed by conferring clergy. (Explain the mitre and crosier)
- Confirmation strengthens the supernatural life which began with Baptism. Confirmation is a special event of grace wherein we are strengthened for taking part in the active mission of the Church. (That is why the Works of Mercy and the Beatitudes are good things to focus on while we are studying the Sacrament of Confirmation.)

- Confirmation is a call to serve others selflessly – and there is great joy in that! The Gifts and Fruits of the Holy Spirit give us what we need spiritually to do this.
- History of Confirmation: In the beginning, Baptism consisted of the water, oil and laying on of hands. This Initiation was performed differently (See Acts 2:38, 8:17, and 10:47-48 for examples.) How we practice these rites today is similar to what was done in Rome in AD 215. Confirmation began to separate from Baptism when Constantine made Christianity the official religion of the Roman Empire in AD 313. There were so many Christians that it became impossible for Bishops to initiate all, so priests would Baptize but Bishops reserved the right to the anointing and laying on of hands. The word *confirmation* came into vogue in the 5th century. (The history from then through the Council of Trent is well worth looking into – very interesting! Suffice it to say that Vatican II was correct in revising this Sacrament!) Confirmation is celebrated at the Eucharistic Liturgy, illustrating the importance of Eucharist in Christian Initiation. The word *confirmation* means “to establish more firmly” or “to make definite”. (If you have made reservations for dinner, a flight, or a hotel – you call to confirm to indicate that you are serious about the initial reservation!)
- Gifts of the Holy Spirit are: Wisdom, Understanding, Counsel, Piety, Knowledge, Fortitude, and Fear of the Lord.
- Fruits of the Holy Spirit are: charity, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, generosity, gentleness, faithfulness, modesty, self-control, chastity.

OCTOBER WEEK TWO NOTES

Works of Mercy

Matthew 25:31-46, Ephesians 2:8-10, Romans 2:2-8, CCC 2447)

- Corporal (Physical) Works of Mercy: Feed the hungry, Give drink to the thirsty, Clothe the naked, Visit the sick, Visit the imprisoned, Shelter the homeless, and Bury the dead.
- Spiritual Works of Mercy: Admonish the sinner, Instruct the ignorant, Counsel the doubtful (Advising), Comfort the sorrowful, Bear wrongs patiently, Forgive all injuries, Pray for the living and the dead.

Beatitudes

Matthew 5:1-12, Luke 6:20-23, CCC 1024, 1716-1729

- The Beatitudes are written on our hearts by God! It is man’s natural desire to be happy and only God can make man truly and completely happy! Happiness=Blessedness. (Who does not desire these?) Jesus gave/taught these in His Sermon on the Mount as the meaning and the way to true happiness. These teaching reflect the promises made to Abraham; they describe the charity of Christ. As characteristics of the Christian way of living they describe the vocation of all of the Faithful.
- The Beatitudes are: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven-Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted-Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth-Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for

righteousness, for they will be satisfied-Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy – Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God – **Blessed are** the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God – Blessed are those who are persecuted for the sake of righteousness, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven / Blessed are you when men revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.

WEEK THREE NOTES

The Trinity – (The word *Trinity* is NOT found in Scripture)

Exodus 3:14 / Lev 19:12 / John 10:30-33 / CCC 232, 237, 249, 253-6.

-Creeds (Credo, describes what we believe)

There are many creeds in our Church. Our first “profession of Faith” is made during our Baptism.

The Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed occupy special places among those many creeds. The Apostle’s Creed is rightly considered to be a faithful summary of the apostle’s faith. It is considered the “oldest Roman Catechism”.

The Nicene Creed has great authority because it comes from the first two Ecumenical Councils (AD 325 & 381). It remains common to all the great Church’s of both the East and the West to present time. The Creed begins with God and rightly so because God is the first and the last – the beginning and the end of everything – the Alpha and the Omega. The Creed begins with the Father because He is the first divine Person of the Most Holy Trinity; our creed follows this with the creation of heaven and earth because creation is the beginning and the foundation of all of God’s works.

Terms

- *Trinitarian* – All Christian religions are Trinitarian. That means that all Christian religions believe in Three Persons in One God! The CCC defines Trinity as the mystery of One God in three Divine Persons: Father, Son, Holy Spirit. This revealed truth is at the very root of the Church’s living faith as expressed in the Creed. This mystery is “inaccessible” to the human mind and is the object of faith only because it was revealed by Jesus Christ, the divine Son of the eternal Father Trinity.
- *Hypostasis* – a Greek term, is used to describe the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit in their real relation to and distinction from one another within the unity of the Blessed Trinity; it is the union of the Trinity and humanity. It is inseparable.
- *Hypostatic Union* – is the union of the divine and human natures in the One Divine Person. It comes from Greek.
- *The mystery of the most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of the Christian Faith and life.* It is the most fundamental and essential teaching of the “hierarchy of truths of the Faith”. The Trinity is a mystery of Faith in the strict sense, one of the “mysteries that are hidden by God, which can never be known unless they are revealed by God”. The mystery of the Trinity is inaccessible to reason alone or even to Israel’s’ faith before the incarnation of the Son of God and the sending of the Holy Spirit.

- *The Trinity is One.* WE do not profess/confess three Gods, but one God in Three Persons. The Divine Persons do not share the one divinity among themselves but each of the is God whole and entire. They are from one another in their relations of origin – it is the Father Who generates, the Son Who is begotten, the Holy Spirit Who proceeds. They are relative to one another. (Lateran Council IV, 1215) Each Divine Person performs the common work according to His unique personal property.

WEEK FOUR NOTES

The Holy Trinity

Isaiah 45:22-24 / Phil: 2:10-11 / CCC 198-231

The Father

- We talked about the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed – both begin with “I believe in God, the Father Almighty...” This is fundamental to all else. All other articles in the Creed depend on this first one. The beginning of the Nicene Creed is equally fundamental – God is unique and there is only one God.
- God created the universe. Everything that comes from God is good. God is the source of all love. When we call God the Father, we are acknowledging that He is the first origin of everything. He is in a position of authority over us- but it is authority with loving care and goodness. God is our Father- He created us, He cares and provides for us and He loves us. God is our Father! He had no beginning and has no end. He is eternal!
- We can also call God “Abba” which is like the term Daddy. (What a loving and comforting way for most of us to look at God.) God is NOT human. God is perfect in every way.

God the Son

John 1:1, 14-15 / John 8:19, 58-59/ John 10 30-33, 38 / John 12:45 / John 14: 8-12 / John 20:28 / Col 2:9 /Acts 20:28 / Eph 1:7 /1 John 1:7/ Titus 2:13

- Divinity of Jesus. Jesus means “God saves” in the Hebrew language. The name Jesus was given to Him at the Annunciation. “Christ” comes from the Greek translation of the Hebrew “Messiah” and means anointed. Jesus is the Lamb of God.
- Jesus is God. Jesus is the eternal Son of God. This title shows his unique relationship with the Father as the Second Person of the Trinity. Jesus was born of the Virgin Mary, He was crucified for us, He rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. Jesus will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead.

Holy Spirit

John 14:26 / Acts 8:29 / Acts 13:2 / Romans 8:27 / 1 Cor 2:11 / 1 Cor 12:11 /Eph 4:30

- When we think of the word “spirit” many things might come to mind. When we talk about “team spirit”, we are referring to something which means the members of the team possess and also something that is “beyond” the individual members. It is something that all members share, something that energizes them, something that gives them a private goal and vision.
- The Holy Spirit is the Third Person of the Holy Trinity-He is God. The Holy Spirit is God’s breath in us. God’s breath gives our bodies a special (divine) life, energy, and enthusiasm. The spirit makes us not only like the members of a team, but also makes us much more. WE become the members of one body-Christ’s Body.

The Holy Spirit unites us in the Body of Christ so that, with Him, we can call God our Father, actually “Abba”, (Like the term Daddy). It is this Holy Spirit that gives us our identity that tells us who we are in the Body of Christ.

- The Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit, - God is always here for each of us. God is joy!

Saints

October 27, 28, 30

Ephesians 1:22-23, 4:4, 5:21-32. Colossians 1:18, 24, 3:15. Romans 8:35-39, 12:5, 10.

CCC 823, 946, 828

Lives of Saints, Dictionary of Saints

The Catechism of the Catholic Church defines “Saint” as a “holy one” who leads a life in union with God through the grace of Christ and receives the reward of eternal life. The Church (capital C) is called the “communion of saints, of the holy ones.” This communion is made up of the living (“Church militant”), the souls in Purgatory (“Church suffering”) and those in heaven (“Church triumphant”)

Saints:

1. Not only those persons in heaven, whether or not canonized, who lived lives of great charity and heroic virtue, who live now forever with God and share His glory.
2. ... but also, those who have been transformed by the grace of Christ and who reside in full union with God in heaven. Those persons, according to St. Paul, who follow Christ.

We DO NOT pray to Saints! We ask them to help us to follow Jesus Christ as faithfully as they did. Jesus Himself is the one we worship. He is the one to whom we pray. He is the one who will always hear us. He is the one who won salvation for us. We can pray to the Saints and ask their help in following Jesus, but they or any other human being can never take the place of Jesus Himself. Perfect prayer is to the Father, with the Holy Spirit, through Jesus Christ.

A Saint is a person, just like us, who lived an ordinary life and had to do ordinary things. They had the same things to put up with that we do. (Some examples are teasing, school work, temptations, etc.) They did put up with those things in a loving and Christ like manner – and that shows us that we can too.

There are “Patron Saints” for just about everything! Countries, occupations, health problems, Dioceses, Parishes, - you name it! (The Patron Saint of our Diocese is Saint Augustine and the Patron Saint of our Parish is Saint Francis de Sales.) The day you were born even has a Saint “assigned” to it.

There are Patron Saints for Mothers (Gerard, Nicholas of Tolentino, Monica) Students (Thomas Aquinas, Gabriel Possenti), Nurses (Camillus de Lellis, John of God), Athletes (Sebastian), Television (Clare, Gabriel the Archangel), lost things (Anthony of Padua) just about anything you could think of! God gave these “saintly” people to us to be our special examples and models. They are special friends, who we are sure are in heaven with God, to whom we can relate and who can help us follow Jesus.

We *venerate* Mary and the Saints. (veneration means honor. Honor is different from worship and/or adoration. – this is a very important fact to get across to the students). We **worship and adore only God!**

Canonization: the official proclamation by the Pope that a deceased member of the Church is to be recognized as a saint and may serve as a model of the Christian ideal for all believers; also the name of the process by which one is found worthy of such recognition. (The Pope, who makes the formal declaration, can dispense from the usual procedures: two miracles are required for canonization but not in the case of martyrs.)

The process for canonization begins in the local Diocese. There is an official stream the process must follow. The person must be deceased for at least five years. (The Pope can “do away with this” if he likes.) The persons’ life and writings are examined to be sure they were, in fact, holy and revealing a Christ-like life. The Church is very careful to make sure that before a person is named a Saint by the Holy Father, his or her life is found to be worthy of veneration and public imitation. (This public imitation is a reason why we can take a Saint’s name when we are Confirmed – because we want to imitate that person!) There are many, many Saints to read about – we can each find one that has had the same type of things that we have.

In January of 1983, Pope John Paul II simplified the process the Church uses to recognize someone as a Saint. He put into place an academic-historical procedure that has “Theological Consultors” as the principal figures in the process of canonization. A group called the “College of Relators” has the responsibility for determining the truth about a Candidate’s life. They do this by supervising the production of a critical, documented biography called the “position”. The procedure begins with an interested party (or parties) approaching the local Bishop. Then a report is sent to the Congregation for the Causes for Saints. Then additional research is done to ascertain that the person led a virtuous life or died a martyr’s death. Then, if the person is recommended and the Pope accepts, the person is officially given the title of “Venerable”. The following lengthy procedure is a process of scrutiny by the Advocate of God who examines the life, virtues, writings, reputation for holiness and reported miracles associated with the potential Saint. If there are objections, they are now raised. There must be two miracles credited to the person’s intercession with God.

This new procedure was implemented to make the process swifter, less expensive, more scholarly, and more collegial (local Bishops now have the entire responsibility for assembling all the relevant data on a Candidate). The system is geared toward producing results. The ideal is to identify what was distinctive about a life, and trust the skills of historical scholarship to ensure that what was distinctive was also authentically Christian.

The first formally canonized saint was St. Ulrich of Augsburg (by Pope John XV in AD 993)

Canonization is the official proclamation by the Pope that a deceased member of the Church is to be recognized as a Saint and may serve as a model of the Christian ideal for all believers; also the name of the process by which one is found worthy of such recognition.

Beatification allows veneration – canonization requires it.

Seven honors are attached to the canonization:

1. Inscription in the catalog of Saints and public veneration
2. Inclusion in the Church's public prayer
3. Dedication of churches in the saints honor
4. Inclusion in the Mass and Liturgy of the Hours
5. Day assigned in the Liturgical Calendar
6. Pictorial representation
7. Public veneration of relics

A relic is an actual part of the body – for example a piece of bone (first class), article of clothing or some article used by the Saint (second class), any object touched to a first class relic (third class). A relic is a sacramental. They are NOT magic – we do not believe in magic! They (relics) are used to remind us of the holy person and their strength when faced with the situations in life.

All Saints Day is November 1. That is a day when we honor all holy men and women. It is a Holy Day of Obligation. That means we **are obliged** to attend Mass! This year it “falls” on a Sunday. November 2 is All Souls Day. That is a day set aside to honor all of the Holy Souls. It is not a Holy Day of Obligation.

(There is a tradition in the Hispanic community called Dia de Los Muertos – “Day of the Dead”. In that culture they especially honor their deceased loved ones in traditional special ways. I mention this only because a student might ask about it.)

On Sunday, November 1, there will be a Saints party for the children. All should come dressed as a saint to celebrate All Saints Day. On that day all students are invited to Religion Class on Sunday. They can / should come dressed as their favorite Saint. They will process into the 10:30 am Mass with members of the high school youth group. There will be a party following Mass and there will be prizes for the best costumes.

NOVEMBER WEEK ONE

*Opening Prayer/Attendance

Remind them of our semester "Family of God" project- food/clothes/toys/ toiletries, etc.

*Review

*Rules/what is right or wrong / the concept of sin / Sin vs. mistakes

*Unconditional love

NOVEMBER WEEK TWO

*Opening Prayer / Attendance

Collect "Family of God" items

*Review concept of sin

*Contrition and Forgiveness

*Examination of Conscience

NOVEMBER WEEK THREE

*Opening Prayer /Attendance

Collect (and remind them!) "Family of God" project items

*Practice Prayers (Acts of Contrition/K & 1st Lord's Prayer, Hail Mary)

NOVEMBER WEEK FOUR

*OPENING PRAYER/ATTENDANCE

"FAMILY OF GOD" ITEMS COLLECTED. (I KNOW THEY MIGHT THINK THIS IS A L-O-N-G PROJECT BUT PEOPLE ARE COLD AND HUNGRY ALL OF THE TIME. THIS HOPEFULLY IS A VERY GOOD WAY TO REINFORCE THE WORKS OF MERCY.)

*CONTINUE ROLE PLAYING AND PRACTICE EXAMENS, CONTRITION, AND CONFESSION.

NOVEMBER WEEK FIVE

NO CLASS-THANKASGIVING BREAK

DECEMBER WEEK ONE

*OPENING PRAYER / ATTENDANCE

RECONCILIATION RECEPTION

ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS

SECOND SUNDAY IN ADVENT READINGS.

DECEMBER WEEK TWO

DISCUSS THE ADVENT READINGS (THIRD SUNDAY) / ADVENT SEASON

DECEMBER WEEK THREE

NO CLASS – CHRISTMAS BREAK

DECEMBER WEEK FOUR

Christmas Break – No Class

NOVEMBER WEEK ONE NOTES

Opening Prayer / Attendance

CCC 385-87, 978, 1849-50, 1779, 1868, 2858, 761, 431 / 1 John 5:16/Matthew 18:18 / James 5:13-15 / 1 Cor 5: 17-20 / John 20-23 / Matt 9:2-8

- Please review our tour of the church. Reinforce how important it is to know about these special things and to respect them.
- Please review what a Sacrament is. A Sacrament is something made by Jesus and given to us so that we are able to “touch and feel” him, be closer to Him, and receive grace. A Sacrament is a real way to share in the love and the life of Jesus. Grace is getting a share in God’s life and love. OR the old fashioned “A Sacrament is an outward sign instituted by Christ to give grace”. (Talk about Baptism and Confirmation.)
- Reinforce each Sacrament is a very special meeting place with God. We get to experience Him in a very special way when we receive Sacraments.
- Review the “family” that is St. Francis de Sales Parish, our Church, our world.
- Rules: We all have rules in our lives. Discuss rules in school, family, on teams, clubs, in Religion Class, etc. How do we feel about these? Are they good or bad? Are they necessary? Why or why not? When we do something wrong, how does it feel? Is it possible to do something wrong without knowing it? How?
- When we do something wrong and we know it is wrong, how does that make us feel? Prepare and discuss some scenarios.
- What do we do after we have done something wrong?
- Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience. Sin is a failure of genuine love for God and our neighbor. Sin is a division-it is a break in the unity of our Church! Sin is putting ourselves before God. There are many different kinds of sin. There are spiritual sins and carnal sins. Sin is a personal act.
- Sin is a personal act. We have a responsibility for the sins of others when we cooperate in them by protecting sinners, not hindering the sinful act, by ordering or approving the sinful act.
- Bearing the above in mind, please realize that your students may have trouble distinguishing between mistakes and sin. Children often act without thinking – so we must try to remind them to stop and think before they do things. Ask them “why” they do things and “what” they think the results will be. This will help them to eventually realize that the intent to do wrong is essential to a sinful action. – That intent is different from mistakes. Give your students an example of something you did by accident. Explain that you did not want it to happen; it was not your choice. (Like spilling milk, breaking a window while playing ball, taking your friends crayons when you thought they were yours – these are all “accidents” and, therefore, are not sins. (If you dump the milk on purpose, throw a rock through the window, to take crayons knowing they are not yours - well, this shows intent. Remember there must be intent; you must know something is wrong and with that knowledge and intent go ahead and do it. – We want to inform our students – not scare THEM TO DEATH. But we must try to get the point across and instill a “sense of sin”. (That will help them develop morally for the rest of their lives!) God loves us unconditionally and always wants us with Him. Our job is to help them know the difference between right and wrong, that accidents are not sins, that when we deliberately choose to do what is wrong and turn away from God, we sin.
- God loves us so much that He gave us free will and we get to choose whether to accept Him or reject Him. That is why it is so critical to develop the sense of relationship with Him. When we know Him and His love, we will want to be with Him. This will help us always to develop a right conscience!

NOVEMBER WEEK TWO NOTES

Opening Prayer / Attendance

Is 43:25 / Ps 103:12 / Matt 10:26 / John 1:29 / John 20:21-23, (all of the Scriptural references from last week apply.)

- Review the concept of sin. When we sin – do something wrong intentionally – it has an effect on everyone around us. For instance, if one of our friends says something mean to us (something wrong they have done), it makes us sad or grumpy. When we are sad or grumpy, we are not as happy and pleasant to those around us and that makes them sad, etc. – and so it goes. Sin really does have the ripple effect! ***The gift given to us by God to help us know right from wrong is called conscience.***
- Explain Contrition (sorrow) – when we have done something wrong we have hurt our relationship with God. When we do something mean to someone, it hurts that person, God, and many others as well. It hurts us, too. Our conscience is that little voice inside that lets us know that something is wrong – or right. When we do something wrong, we should be sorry. When that happens, we are sorry (have contrition).
- Reconciliation – explain what the word means.
- Forgiveness – STRESS THAT GOD WILL ALWAYS FORGIVE US IF WE ARE TRULY SORRY!
- Explain Examination of Conscience (Perhaps write one as a class. Be sure that they look at the good things they do as well as the not so good!) Help them to develop the habit of doing this every day – a great thing for all of us to do. It helps us to see where we need to improve and it also helps to reinforce, on a regular basis, the things we are doing properly!
Examples: When I make choices, do I think first about what God wants me to do? Have I used the name of Jesus in respectful ways? Have I obeyed the grown-ups who take care of me? Have I been a GOOD FRIEND TO OTHERS? Have I treated others fairly? Have I always told the truth? Have I shown kindness by what I say and do? Have I helped people in need? (I also have a number of “Conscience Exams” – just stop in to look through them.

NOVEMBER WEEK THREE NOTES

Opening Prayer / Attendance

Explain the “Living Nativity” and send home information / permission to participate packets

2 Cor 5:18 / James / 5:16 / Romans 5:20-21

- Review Examination of Conscience
- Discuss what a Penance is for. Attached is a possible example worksheet. It can be adapted for your age group. Discuss what penance they think would be appropriate for various sins.
- Review the form for going to Confession. Role play! Have the students be teacher, penitent, Priest. Make sure they understand that going to Confession is a good and positive activity!
- Practice!
- Remind them that as part of the “family of God” we have to share with our brothers and sisters. Remind them of all we have to be thankful for. Please remind them of our/their endeavor to help – and work on your class “sharing” project.

NOVEMBER WEEK FOUR NOTES

Opening Prayer / Attendance

Jer 33:14-16 / 1 Thes 3:12-4:2 / Luke 21: 25-28, 34-36

- Review and practice the prayers for the week. (K-1 Grace before and after Meals – to reinforce that we have much to be thankful for – and God is the source!. 2-5 the Act of Contrition.) Review what sin is, the “why” for examination of conscience, contrition, and the blessing of the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Have them practice their Act of Contrition and going to Confession. Remind them that the “penance part” is part of the Sacrament and must be done to complete the Sacrament. (A good way to review the prayers on each level may be a prayer relay.)
- Remind them of their food, gently used clothing, toys, toiletries, etc. for the less fortunate.
- Discuss the season of Advent. Talk about how important the season is because it helps us to get ready for the great gift of Jesus on Christmas. Hand out the Advent Calendars and talk about using them every single day during the Advent season. Keep one for yourself. You will refer to these during every class before the Christmas break. Let the children express their thoughts, feelings, etc.

DECEMBER WEEK ONE NOTES

Opening Prayer / Attendance

Grades 3-5 Reconciliation Reception. Please proceed to the assigned location as directed.

Grades K-2 meet in room (TBA) for a discussion of the Advent season.

Grades K-5 practice the Living Nativity. All involved as readers, characters, singers.

DECEMBER WEEK TWO NOTES

Opening Prayer / Attendance

Bar 5:1-9 / Phil 1: 4-6, 8-11 / Luke 3: 1-6

- The Season of Advent – this is a time of anticipation and preparation. Talk about the Advent Wreath and the reason there are differently colored candles (vestments, banners, etc.) and invite input from students.
- We are preparing for a very important Feast. (While it is extremely “BIG”, Christmas is not the most important day of the year. Easter is!) Discuss a Savior who loves us so much that He became one of “us”. Jesus is fully human and fully divine. (Hypostatic Union) Reassure them that they will understand this completely when they are with God in heaven.
- As we see all of the “signs of the season” – like Christmas trees, wreaths, and get excited about the secular parts of the season – let us stress the importance of the true meaning of this holiday! Jesus loves us so much that He became one like us... What an incredible gift!! Let us try to give Jesus a gift – the gift of our love. Discuss ways to do this. How can we be more loving? What can we do for Jesus this Christmas?
- Practice for the Living Nativity

DECEMBER WEEK THREE NOTES

Christmas Break – No Class

Living Nativity Performance and Christmas celebration December

DECEMBER WEEK FOUR NOTES

Christmas Break - No Class