

Profile of a Fourth Grade Child

Characteristics

Enthusiasm, self-confidence and activity characterize this year. This is a period of steady growth in both physical and mental ability. Athletic skill is very important in the development of nine year olds for it affects their concept of success in winning and maintaining a coveted place among peers. Intellectually, nine year olds are sharpening study skills and becoming capable of a longer attention span. They continue to be interested in living creatures and how they are made.

Fourth-graders are more concerned about right and wrongdoing at this stage. They want to live by rules, and they want others to live by them too. They want to be accepted and to be part of a community. They experience conflict and need to know how to deal with or resolve conflict. Nine-year olds want to please their parents, teachers and other adults. They want their efforts and achievements to be noticed and complimented. Parents will want to recognize good behavior, achievements in academic, musical, and athletic activities as well as selfless service to others.

Faith Development Needs

Because children at this level are in transition beyond childhood, they may exhibit behavior that is inconsistent and disorganized. They may be prone to quick emotional shifts. They may cry when emotions are overtaxed. They need guidance, understanding, patience and encouragement from adults. Older persons grow in importance to nine year olds, who are inclined toward hero-heroine worship, especially people of action. They need to hear stories about missionaries, saints and contemporary persons involved in living out the call of God in their lives. This is a good age to introduce the idea of vocations to the priesthood and/or religious life.

Related to their need for freedom to make personal choices is the awareness that this freedom carries the personal responsibility for acting in a Christian way. The understanding and formation of conscience begins to take on a more significant role. Conscience becomes the call or invitation of Jesus to follow Him.

Their interest in law and rule keeping lays the foundation for studying the Ten Commandments, the Golden Rule and the Beatitudes as given to us by Jesus. They need to understand that disobedience weakens the entire community and that Christians need to forgive and seek forgiveness. They can gradually realize that each person is to be respected and loved because of his/her inherent goodness and dignity as a child of God.

Implications

Music, art, drama and related activities stimulate the children's creativity and provide an opportunity for them to express and appreciate religious concepts.

Fourth graders desire social approval to such a degree that they are becoming conformists. Parents are to encourage them to do what is right because it is Jesus' way, whether it pleases the group or not. Parents will want to stress the reasons and the values underlying the rules, as well as the importance of right motives. Moral development includes the desire of the heart to love God and to do God's will.

Children can be made aware of social ills and human need by becoming involved, in various ways, in social justice activities— helping those in need through a parish activity, being a friend with someone who is not part of the accepted group, sharing the Faith with friends, learning not to waste natural resources. They are receptive to the fact that all are called to give of their time, talents and earthly goods.

Nine year olds seek and enjoy short periods of time when they can be alone. Parents can support and nurture this desire by leading their children to prayer and by praying with them. This is an important year for children

to develop a daily habit of prayer. Planning prayer times the night before helps to foster a daily routine of prayer.

Parental Support

As Christian parents, we need to realize the profound importance of handing on the faith that we have received. The home is the most essential place to teach the Faith to the children God has entrusted to us. It is the responsibility of each generation to hand on the truth of the teachings of the Faith to the members of the succeeding generations; the primary responsibility here belongs to the parents and godparents. We are assured of the indispensable blessings of God in a covenantal bond that “He is our God and we are His People” to the extent that we pass on the teachings that He has given to us through the Scriptures and Tradition of the Church. God will provide His grace to help us with this responsibility.

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. Therefore, 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 dinner, reading the life of a saint
- **Faith Knowledge:** teaching the Creed, Sacraments, Life in Christ / Moral Life, Christian Prayer and Scripture; having faith conversations with your son or daughter. The following two pages provide key points for this important 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

Bible Stories are great teaching tools. They can help to illustrate important points through the witness of a person’s life. In the New Testament, Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan. The person that was robbed and injured was helped by the Samaritan who was not part of the accepted group. The Samaritan did everything possible to help this person recover. As Christians, we too must recognize those in need, pray for them and offer help when possible.

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 click on The Parent’s Place – a website connected to the Diocese of La Crosse website: www.dioceseoflacrosse.com.

With regard to ongoing formation of your child in the Faith, please take the time to read through the enclosed, condensed version of the 4th Grade Religion Curriculum from the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization. A complete Curriculum is on the Diocesan website www.dioceseoflacrosse.com. Click Office and Ministries / Catechesis / Religion Curriculum.

Curriculum Guidelines

“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 fourth grade year is dedicated to understanding the Kingdom that Jesus established through His Death and Resurrection. Each person is called to enter His Kingdom of Heaven on earth through the Sacrament of Baptism, by which we come to know and love God. We remain part of the Kingdom by cooperating with God’s grace, which helps us to love God and our neighbor as ourselves. Therefore, families should participate in Mass each Sunday and all Holy Days of Obligation. Parents and children will want to receive the Sacrament of Reconciliation regularly.

I. Creed – Profession of Faith

Section one on the Creed pertains to what God, Our Heavenly Father, has revealed about Himself and His Plan for saving us from sin in order to be united with Him forever in Heaven. We believe what God has told us and our personal response to what we believe – His call to us to receive His love and give His love is faith.

1. The Bible, which is God’s Word, contains the writings that were inspired by the Holy Spirit. This complete list is called the “Canon of Scripture.” It includes 46 books for the Old Testament and 27 for the New. The Bible (Sacred Scripture) and the teachings of the Church (Sacred Tradition) are two important sources of our knowledge about God.
2. There is only one God. There are three Persons in one God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. We refer to the three Persons in one God as the Blessed Trinity. (CCC 234, 232, 237)
3. God is our Father Who loves us and cares for us. God created us in His image. This means that He created us with an intellect, a will with freedom to choose good or evil and He created us to be in communion with other persons and most especially Himself. God created us by giving us an immortal soul.
4. God created the angels. Some angels chose to rebel against God and became devils. Then God created Adam and Eve. God gave Adam and Eve everything they needed to live with Him forever. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and lost the gift of grace within their soul (Original Sin). God no longer dwelled within the soul of Adam and Eve through the loss of sanctifying grace. God still loved them and promised that He would send a Savior to reunite us with Himself. (Genesis 3:15)
5. Being a “person” who can know and love God gives man and woman a special worth or “dignity.” All persons have equal dignity and dignity cannot be taken away. However, persons differ in talents and abilities but not in dignity. Dignity is not determined by how productive a person is in society. For example, a mentally handicapped person or a terminally ill person has the same dignity as a healthy person. Animals and plants have value and are important to us but they do not have dignity. Jeremiah 1:4-10 “Before I formed you in the womb I knew you...”
6. Jesus is God. Jesus was born on the first Christmas as our Savior. Jesus is both truly God and truly man; as a man, He has a body like ours. As God he is a Divine Person, the second Person of the Blessed Trinity.
7. 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. Luke 1:26-38 “Hail, full of grace.”
8. Jesus came to bring His Kingdom of truth and love, of justice and peace, of holiness and grace. “The Church is the seed and beginning of this Kingdom.” “*Everyone* is called to enter the Kingdom.”

The Proclamation of the Kingdom of God

Mark 1:14-15 “Jesus said...the Kingdom of God is at hand. Repent, and believe in the Gospel.”

Mark 4:10-20 To enter the Kingdom, one must first accept Jesus' word.
Matthew 21:28-32 To enter the Kingdom, "words are not enough; deeds are required" (CCC 546).

Signs of the Kingdom of God

Luke 7:18-23 "The blind regain their sight, the lame walk, the deaf hear, the dead are raised."
"The miracles of Jesus manifest that the Kingdom is present in Him and attest that He is the promised Messiah" and the Son of God (CCC 547).

The Keys of the Kingdom

Mark 3:13-19 "Jesus appointed twelve [whom He also named Apostles]."
Matthew 16:18 "You are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My Church, and the powers of Hell shall not prevail against it."

The Path to the Kingdom

John 14:6 Jesus said, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life; no one comes to the Father but by Me."

Jesus is the way to Heaven. Only by following Him can we be with Him. Here are some things that we can do to grow closer in our friendship with Jesus:

- Receive Jesus in Holy Communion every Sunday and go to the Sacrament of Confession often.
- Talk with Him every day in prayer.
- Follow Him by keeping the Commandments
- Help others as much as you can – think of others first.

Jesus' call of discipleship

John 1:35-51 "Jesus said to Phillip, 'Follow Me.'" Jesus calls each person to follow Him.

9. Jesus founded the Catholic Church and instituted the seven Sacraments. After He returned to the Father, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to help guide the Apostles and the Church in carrying on His work. We receive the Holy Spirit in the Sacraments of Baptism and Confirmation.

II. Sacraments – Celebration of the Christian

Sacraments communicate to us sanctifying grace. Sanctifying grace is a share in God's life, which unites us with Him and strengthens us to remain in communion with Him. We are to approach the Sacraments with expectant faith and proper dispositions so as to receive the grace that Christ intends to give.

1. A sacrament is a sacred sign instituted by Christ to give grace. Jesus shares Himself and His love with us through the Sacraments. (CCC 1131, 1210, 1114-1115)
2. Due to the sin of Adam and Eve and the loss of sanctifying grace within their soul (and all people born after Adam and Eve), we need God's help to be good. God gives us the help we need in the Sacraments. This help is called sanctifying grace, which is a share in God's life.
3. The seven Sacraments are: Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist, Reconciliation (also called Confession or Penance), Anointing of the Sick, Holy Orders, and Matrimony.

Sacrament of Baptism

1. In the Sacrament of Baptism, the Blessed Trinity comes to dwell within the person's soul, making him/her a child of God and member of His Family, the Church. (CCC 1265, 1267-1270)
2. Through Baptism we receive: Cleansing from original sin and forgiveness of all personal sin committed before Baptism; Sanctifying grace (a share in the life of the Blessed Trinity), which makes us children of God, members of the Body of Christ, and temples of the Holy Spirit.
3. Through Baptism, we receive the three Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity. We come to know and love God by "faith" and "charity." Baptism gives us a new "dignity" (worth) as adopted sons and daughters of God. (CCC 1265)

Sacrament of Holy Eucharist

1. At the Last Supper Jesus changed bread and wine into His Body and Blood (transubstantiation); He ordained the Apostles as His first priests and told them to celebrate this memorial until His return.
2. At Mass, the priest prays the same words that Jesus said at the Last Supper:
“Take this, all of you, and eat it: This is My Body which will be given up for you. Take this all of you, and drink from it: This is cup of My Blood, the Blood of the new and everlasting Covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven. Do this in remembrance of me.” (Mt. 26:26-30)
3. Jesus told us if we eat of His Body and drink of his Blood we shall have eternal life.
4. The Holy Eucharist continues to look and taste like ordinary bread and wine after the consecration even though the substance has changed (transubstantiation) to Jesus’ Body and Blood.
5. The priest acts in the person of Christ (*in persona Christi*) by teaching us about God’s Word (Liturgy of the Word) and by giving us Jesus in Holy Communion (Liturgy of the Eucharist). The priest is a man who has been called by God through the Sacrament of Holy Orders.
6. Only a priest, through the power of the Holy Spirit, can consecrate bread and wine so that it becomes the Body and the Blood of Jesus. (CCC 1120, 1411)
7. There are two main parts of the Mass in which we come together to pray as one family:
The Liturgy of the Word (CCC 1349) and the Liturgy of the Eucharist
8. Jesus addresses an invitation to us, urging us to receive Him in the Sacrament of the Eucharist. To respond to this invitation we must *prepare ourselves* for so great and so holy a moment.
Before Mass when we kneel down in the pew, it is good to
 - close our eyes and remember that Jesus is truly present in the tabernacle.
 - ask the Holy Spirit to help us to pray, letting go of all distractions and plans.
 - pray slowly, an Our Father or another prayer to prepare for Mass.
9. Students are to know what is necessary to receive the Eucharist
 - We must believe in Jesus and that He is truly present in the Holy Eucharist
We must be free from serious (mortal) sin (CCC 1385)
 - A person in the state of mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion until he/she is able to receive forgiveness in the Sacrament of Confession.
 - We must observe the fast required by the Church, specifically not to eat or drink anything other than water for one hour before.
 - Bodily demeanor (gestures, clothing) ought to convey the respect, solemnity, and joy of this moment – being united with the Son of God. (CCC 1387)
10. The way in which we receive Our Lord shows the deep respect and depth of our belief that this is Jesus, truly present in the Eucharist. This should include:
 - Being recollected and focusing on Our Lord
 - In approaching Jesus, we reverence Him with a bow of the head
 - Receiving Him reverently either on our hand, which should form a throne or on the tongue
 - Saying the word Amen (I believe) in response to the priest saying “The Body of Christ”
11. Once we receive Jesus in Holy Communion, we kneel down in prayer and thanksgiving. We may close our eyes to give Him our full attention. We silently pray to Him and He listens. We also want to listen to Him. Jesus is pleased when we share our life with Him. (CCC 2637)
12. We want to realize that Jesus is present in the Church, even after Mass, as the consecrated hosts are reserved in the tabernacle. We may be with Jesus and adore Him in Church at any time. The sanctuary candle that is lit means Jesus is present in the tabernacle.

III. Life In Christ

Section three is about how we are to respond to God’s love by the way we live.

1. God is love. Since we are created in the image and likeness of God and He loves us, He wills that we love ourselves. We show love for our soul by striving to love God and our neighbor. We show love for our body by proper hygiene, by protecting it from harm and through modesty.
2. Since all people are created in the image of God and He loves each person, He wills that we love all people. To love means to be selfless instead of selfish. Jesus wants us to treat others with kindness.
3. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20-2-17). God’s laws of love are for each person to know how to live as a child of God: to love God and our neighbor, ensuring freedom and joy.
4. Students are to memorize and become familiar with the major point of each Commandment.
 - 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 the name of God 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. (CCC 2464)
 - The Ninth Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor’s wife.
 - The Tenth Commandment: You shall not covet your neighbor’s goods.
5. It is important to examine our conscience and pray a sincere Act of Contrition every night. In examining our conscience, we ask ourselves:
 - 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?
 - Pick one thing that you will ask Jesus to help you to avoid.

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. Living the Christian life is almost impossible without prayer.

1. “Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” We are called to pray every day with our families. Prayer is the foundation of a lifelong relationship with God. We can learn about God at home but we cannot know Him personally without prayer. Without prayer, we cannot forgive enemies, understand suffering, and love God above all things.
2. The Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray and helps us to pray with our heart, which strengthens our relationship with Jesus. (CCC 2650, 2670, 2672, 2657)
3. The Mass is the highest form of prayer. Each person is called to actively participate in the Mass by praying and singing.
4. The memorization and understanding of basic prayers offers an essential support to the life of prayer. As the habit of personal prayer develops, students will become comfortable with silence; in meditation, prayer with Scripture, and “listening” to the Holy Spirit.

Students are to memorize the following prayers:

 - Apostles Creed Act of Contrition Our Father
 - The Morning Offering Hail Mary Glory Be