

Profile of a Fifth Grade Child

Characteristics

Fifth graders, though no longer little children, are not yet adolescents. They are at a period in life commonly called pre-adolescence. During this stage physical changes often drain their energy. Great spurts of activity are frequently followed by periods of “laziness” which may have a physical basis in fatigue.

They have a greater desire to know more, especially the world around them. They are open to experimentation and investigation. Pre-adolescents tend to have a wide range of interests; they talk, look, read, listen more than they want to work. They are amenable, cooperative, sincere, poised, and easy-going; they enjoy life. They 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.

Socially, ten year olds are open to close family companionship. They like to help in forming family plans, to be “in on things.” They may make friends easily and cooperate in group activities to which they are increasingly able to make worthwhile contributions. Peer acceptance becomes stronger at this age.

Fifth graders enjoy being of service to others, whether helping younger children, sharing in the ministry of the Church, or taking the initiative in noticing the needs of others.

Faith Development Needs

Pre-adolescents need the security that comes from being accepted by a group of their peers. Therefore, it is essential that friendships should be fostered with a group of people who share the same love for God and the desire to be faithful to Him. From them they develop cooperation, a sense of personal worth, consideration for others, the ability to make and carry out plans without adult help, and a feeling of “finding oneself” through the group. Their orientation toward group activities makes group preparation for celebrations important.

Ten year olds need the help to understand themselves as changing and capable of developing the gifts God has given them. Related to this growth is the need to recognize their responsibility for self-development as cooperating with God in creation. Parents should encourage their children to include everyone in group activities, to respect individual differences and to identify and celebrate personal talents as gifts from God.

Symbols, signs and rituals have a natural place in life at this developmental age. Because children can be led to appreciate the symbolic and the poetic, this is an appropriate time in which to explore the chief symbols and celebration of Catholic life and worship, especially in the Sacraments.

Implications

Helping young people to learn how to pray and to develop a regular schedule of prayer is necessary. Just as they make plans for time with peers, they can plan ahead for their times of prayer. A commitment to a schedule of daily prayer will help them to know Jesus and to love Him as they understand His authentic love in a personal way. To ten year olds Jesus becomes a partner, a Person they can talk to, a Person who affects them individually (personally), a Person with whom they can enjoy periods of silence and reflection.

Parents are to keep in mind that learning to pray is different from learning prayers. Memorized prayers are very important. However, prayer is to be taught so that young people are open to encounter Jesus and speak

with Him with spontaneity and joy, sharing what is on their heart. Family prayer at meal times is especially important.

In accepting pre-adolescent restlessness, and awkwardness, parents need to help their children to experience God's personal love for them. The message of self-worth (dignity) through word and deed should be repeated again and again.

Inasmuch as peer pressure is a reality and pre-adolescents fear peer rejection, liturgical experience rooted in the group is appealing because community is an inviting concept. As the child matures he/she begins to understand that the end of life is not death but eternal life with God. The pre-teen can be helped to understand that sacramental life opens the way to eternal life.

This is a crucial year for helping to understand better a sense of right and wrong through the proper formation of conscience. Parents are responsible for educating and forming students in attitudes and behaviors concerning the dignity of the human person. This is to include the ways of service that we are able to offer to those in need, especially the gift of prayer. Current areas of concern are world peace, world hunger, the rights of the oppressed, the right to life, and a greater awareness of the dignity of the human person. Inasmuch as fifth graders are service-oriented, they can be encouraged to become involved in these issues.

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

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 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](#) – 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 condensed version of the enclosed 5th Grade Religion Curriculum from the Office of Catechesis and Evangelization. A complete Curriculum is on the Diocesan website www.dioceseoflacrosse.com. Click on 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 fifth grade year is dedicated to understanding the Kingdom that Jesus established through His Death and Resurrection. Each person is called to enter His Kingdom 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 strengthens us to love God and our neighbor as ourselves. Bible Stories can help to illustrate these important points through the witness of a person’s life. In the Gospel of John, we read about Peter who was afraid of being hurt by the soldiers because he was a friend of Jesus. Therefore, he denied his friendship with Jesus three times but later he regretted his actions and repented in asking for forgiveness. Jesus forgave Peter and made him the first Pope.

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. Learning the Faith and living the Faith go hand in hand.

I. Creed - Profession of Faith

1. God the Holy Spirit inspired the human authors of Sacred Scripture to write down God’s message to His people. The Catholic Church gathered together these inspired writings into the Bible, which has not changed since its inception. This complete list is called the Canon of Scripture. It includes 46 books for the Old Testament and 27 for the New. The Sacred Scripture and the teachings of the Church (Sacred Tradition) are two important sources of our knowledge about God.
2. There are three Persons in one God: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The three Persons in one God is the Blessed Trinity. God has no beginning and no end. Each of the three Divine Persons of the Blessed Trinity gives Himself totally to the others out of perfect love.
3. God the Father, in His mercy and love that never ends, sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to the world to reveal the Truth about God and about ourselves (Divine Revelation).
4. God is our Father Who loves us and cares for us. Only we, as human persons, are able to know and love our Creator. We are called to share by knowledge and love, in God’s own life. It was for this end that we were created, and this is the fundamental reason for our dignity. (Animals and plants have value and are important to us but they do not have dignity. They do not have an immortal soul in which to know and love God.) We are brought into the family of God through the Sacrament of Baptism.
5. God created us in His image by giving us an immortal soul. 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. This is the foundation of our dignity. Being a “person” who can know God and choose to love Him 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.
Psalm 139 “Lord, You know me; ... You understand my thoughts from afar.”
6. God created Adam and Eve in His image and likeness. He 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. Adam and Eve were united with God through sanctifying grace within their souls – a participation in God’s Divine Life. Genesis 1:27 “God created man in His own image

7. 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.
Revelation 12:7-9 The battle between St. Michael and the Devil
8. Adam and Eve disobeyed God and lost the gift of grace within their soul (Original Sin). Grace is a share in God's own Life. God still loved them and promised that He would send a Savior to reunite us with God. Genesis 3 The Original Sin and Promise of a Savior (Genesis 3:15)
9. Jesus is God. Jesus was born as man on the first Christmas as our Savior. When the Son of God became man, He took on human flesh. This is called the Incarnation.
10. Jesus became man in order to reunite us with Himself by forgiving us of our sins through His death and Resurrection, and by giving us sanctifying grace through the Sacraments. Sanctifying grace is a share in God's own Life. John 1:29 "Behold the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world."

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."

Jesus Proclaims the Kingdom of God

Mark 1:14-15 "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.
"The Kingdom belongs to the *poor and lowly*, those who have accepted it with humble hearts."
Matthew 21:28-32 To enter the Kingdom, "words are not enough; deeds are required."
Matthew 25:31-46 Jesus said, "For I was hungry and you gave Me food..."
Luke 6:27-36 Love of enemies: "Love your enemies and do good to them."

Jesus' invitation to enter the feast of the Kingdom – Parables (short stories)

Matthew 13: 44-50 The Talents: What use have we made of the talents we have received?

Signs of the Kingdom of God

"The miracles of Jesus manifest that the Kingdom is present in Him and attest that He is the promised Messiah" (CCC 547). A miracle is an act above the laws of nature that only God can perform. Sometimes God performs a miracle to prove that a person He has sent is telling the truth. Since Jesus is God, He worked them by His own power.

John 2:1-11 The wedding feast of Cana: the first miracle. "Do whatever He tells you."

The Keys of the Kingdom

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. I will give you the keys to the Kingdom"

The Path to the Kingdom

John 14:6 Jesus said, "I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life."

Jesus is the way to Heaven. In order to stay close to Him we are to:

- Receive Jesus in Holy Communion every Sunday so that He can live in you.
- Talk with Him every day in prayer.
- Follow Him by keeping the Commandments
- Help others as much as you can – think of others first.

John 15:1-17 "...Without Me you can do nothing" (cf. CCC 1108).

The Conditions of Discipleship

Luke 9:23-27 "If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow Me." (CCC 1435)

Through daily prayer and reception of the Sacraments, we are able to cooperate with God's grace in order to resist temptations to sin, to face our difficulties with patience and charity, and to make sacrifices.

II. Sacraments – Celebration of the Christian Mystery

Jesus instituted the seven Sacraments. Sacraments communicate God's grace, sanctifying grace, which is a share in God's life. This union with Jesus strengthens us to be faithful to 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. At Mass, the priest prays the same words that Jesus said at the Last Supper over the bread and wine and the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus. This is the Sacrament of the Holy Eucharist. Jesus said, *“Take this and eat it: This is My Body which will be given up for you. Take this and drink from it: This is the cup of My Blood of the new and everlasting Covenant. It will be shed for you and for all so that sins may be forgiven”* (Mt 26:26-29).
2. Jesus commanded the Twelve Apostles to celebrate this memorial until His return. Jesus told us if we eat of His Body and drink of his Blood we shall have eternal life. Communion with Jesus in the Holy Eucharist prepares us for perfect union with Him in Heaven (John 6:51-58).
3. Holy Communion is Jesus' Body, Blood, Soul and Divinity. The Holy Eucharist continues to look and taste like ordinary bread and wine after the consecration even though the substance has changed. This is called transubstantiation, which means change of substance. This is what we mean when we say Jesus is truly present in the Holy Eucharist. (CCC 1413)
4. 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).
5. The priest is a man who has been called by God through the Sacrament of Holy Orders to represent Jesus in giving us the seven Sacraments and leading us in prayer.
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)
7. There are two main parts of the Mass in which we come together to pray as one family:

Liturgy of the Word (CCC 1349)

- The readings through which we listen to God's Word from the Bible (CCC 1349)
- These readings include: a first reading (usually) from the Old Testament; a second reading mainly from the letters of St. Paul; and the Gospel from Matthew, Mark, Luke or John. We stand for the Gospel reading out of reverence because we are hearing the life and words of Jesus. (At Mass during the weekday, there are only two readings.)
- The Gospel is proclaimed by either the priest or deacon

Liturgy of the Eucharist

- The presentation and preparation of the gifts in which we get ready to thank God and offer ourselves with Jesus to the Father (CCC 1350)
- In the Eucharistic Prayer the priest prays the words of Jesus. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, and the bread and wine become the Body and Blood of Jesus (CCC 1352)
- The Lord's Prayer (Our Father) is “the most perfect of prayers” of the Church given to us by the Lord Jesus (CCC 2774, 2765, 2759)
- The words to prepare to receive Jesus: “Lord, I am not worthy to receive You, but only say the word and I shall be healed.” (CCC 1386)
- The reception of Jesus in the Holy Eucharist (CCC 1331, 1355, 1388)
- We become tabernacles of the living God (CCC 1179)
- Prayer of thanksgiving to Jesus after receiving Him in Holy Communion
- The dismissal in which we are blessed and sent forth in peace to love and serve the Lord and one another (CCC 1332, 1397)

8. The sacrifice of Christ on the cross is commemorated and mysteriously made present in the Eucharistic sacrifice of the Church. The Mass is both a sacrifice and a Sacred Banquet of communion in which we are united with Christ by receiving His Body and His Blood.
9. 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. (CCC 1385, 2670)
10. Know what is necessary to receive the Eucharist:
 - We must believe in Jesus and that He is truly present in the Holy Eucharist (CCC 1355)
 - We must be free from grave (mortal) sin – to be in the state of grace (CCC 1385)

A person in the state of mortal sin must not receive Holy Communion till he/she is able to receive forgiveness in the Sacrament of Confession / Reconciliation. If a person dies in the state of unrepented mortal sin, he/she cannot enter Heaven as mortal sin is choosing against God. (CCC 1415)

 - We must observe the fast required by the Church, specifically not to eat or drink anything other than water for one hour before (CCC 1387)
 - Bodily demeanor (gestures, clothing) ought to convey the respect, solemnity, and joy of this moment – being united with the Son of God. (CCC 1387)
11. 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. (CCC 1061-1065) 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”
12. 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. Jesus is pleased when we share our life with Him. (CCC 2637)
13. The fruits of receiving the Holy Eucharist: (CCC 1391-1401, 1416, 1419)
 - The Eucharist more fully joins us to Jesus and His Family, the Church
 - Frees us from small (venial) sins and preserves us from grave (mortal) sins
 - Sustains our strength to be faithful to Jesus in daily prayer and to live by His commandments
 - Makes us long for eternal life, Heaven
 - Through the Eucharist, Christ unites the Church as one Body
 - Commits us to the poor and needy
14. Realize that Jesus is present in the Church, even after Mass, because the Blessed Sacrament is 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. (CCC 1377-1381)
15. We can offer adoration of the Sacrament of the Eucharist outside the Mass which is one of the most intimate prayers of the Church. The consecrated Host is placed in a sacred vessel that is called a monstrance for us to adore Jesus, truly present in the Blessed Sacrament. “To visit the Blessed Sacrament is . . . a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Christ our Lord” (CCC 1378, 1418)

III. Life In Christ

Section three is about how we are to respond to God 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 for holiness through loving God and our neighbor. We show love for our body by proper hygiene, by protecting it from harm and through modesty. Modesty is decency in dress, thoughts, words and deeds. It means refusing to unveil that which should remain hidden due to the effects of original sin.
2. Since all people are created in the image and likeness of God and He loves each person, He wills that we love all people. To love means to will the good of another. Wishing the good of another means to be selfless instead of selfish. A person is to be loved not a thing to be used. Jesus wants us to treat each and every person with kindness. |(CCC 357, 1766, 2447, 2262)
3. God gave Moses the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20: -17). The Commandments are for each person to know how to live as a child of God: to love God and our neighbor. The Commandments are laws of love given to us by God to ensure our true freedom and happiness in this life and for eternity. The Holy Spirit strengthens us to be faithful to God's love by living according to the Commandments. Prayer is an indispensable condition for being able to obey God's laws.

Obeying the Commandments, God's laws of love, is the only way to be truly happy in this life and the next. Being really and truly good makes you joyful and brings you interior peace.
4. Adam and Eve lost God's life (grace) when they sinned through disobedience (the Original Sin). We all inherit original sin from Adam and Eve. Due to the effects of original sin, we are tempted to sin.
5. We commit personal sin when: 1) we know something is wrong 2) we have the freedom to choose 3) we do the wrong thing anyway. We can be tempted to sin through our own selfish desires, the Devil, what we see and hear from other people, the TV, the radio, and the Internet. We want to take these temptations to Jesus in our regular prayer times. The more good (virtuous) choices we make, the easier it becomes to resist temptation and continue to make good choices. We need the help of God through prayer and the Sacraments to make good choices.
6. As children of God, we are invited to share in God's love and life by treating people the way God wants us to (the Ten Commandments). Like Adam and Eve, we are tempted, which means having thoughts or being urged to do the wrong thing. We do not sin if we refuse to do the wrong thing.
7. We are made to the image of God and deserve dignity and respect. This image of God within us has been marred by original sin and personal sin. Sinful choices are acts of selfishness. Sins wound us personally as well as our relationship with God and others. It is through the grace that Christ won for us through His Death and Resurrection that the divine image has been restored within us.
8. The foundation of the Christian life is the Theological Virtues of Faith, Hope and Charity. The Theological Virtues were infused by God into the soul at Baptism. Faith is our belief in God. Hope is trusting in God's promises. Charity is loving others as God loves us. "The Theological Virtues dispose Christians to live in a relationship with the Holy Trinity." (CCC 1842-1844, 1812-1829)
9. We can grow in the Theological Virtues through prayer, by deliberate acts and by perseverance. We can also lose the Gifts of Faith, Hope and Charity through voluntary doubt, despair and lukewarmness. (CCC 1810-1811, 2087-2094)
10. After we participate in the Sacraments, above all, the Holy Eucharist, we receive the strength to go forth to love and serve the Lord by loving and serving our neighbor. Grace helps us to do what is good and right by being generous and looking for opportunities to help parents, families and others. Thinking about what is right and good before acting on feelings will help us to make good decisions.

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. Learning the Faith, daily prayer, receiving the Sacraments and living the Christian life are inseparable.

1. “Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God.” Prayer is the living relationship with our Father, with His Son Jesus Christ and with the Holy Spirit. We can learn about God but we cannot know Him personally without prayer.
2. Prayer is a gift from God. God longs for us and calls us to respond to His love in prayer everyday. He gives us the strength (grace) to respond to that call. (CCC 2567, 2559, 2591)
3. The Holy Spirit teaches us how to pray and helps us to pray with our heart. Doing the will of God and reaching Heaven is only possible through prayer. We cannot forgive enemies, understand suffering and love God above all things without prayer.
4. God hears every prayer that we make and answers every prayer in a way that is best for us even if we do not always understand God’s ways. He is always faithful and is with us throughout our lives.
5. The Mass is the highest form of prayer. When we participate in the Mass, we share in the priest’s action by offering our obedience and service along with Jesus as a sacrifice to God; this is the best prayer we can offer to God. To offer ourselves with Jesus means to do God’s will and to give up anything that keeps us from giving God obedience and service. Jesus shows us His infinite love by giving Himself in the Holy Eucharist. We need to participate fully in mind and heart at Sunday Mass. To visit Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament truly present in the tabernacle of a Catholic Church is a proof of gratitude, an expression of love, and a duty of adoration toward Our Lord.
6. The Bible is the written Word of God and has an important place in Church, but should also be prayerfully read and meditated upon at home. The Gospels are the most important part of the Bible because they tell us about Jesus’ life, teaching, and how His death and resurrection saved us from sin.
7. The memorization of basic prayers offers an essential support to the life of prayer. It is also important to help students savor their meaning. Students should memorize the following prayers:

Sign of the Cross	Apostles’ Creed
Our Father	Daily Examination of Conscience
Hail Mary	Blessing before and after meals
Glory Be	The Acts of Faith, Hope and Love
Act of Contrition	Prayer before Mass and of Thanksgiving after receiving Jesus
Morning Offering	Prayer of Thanksgiving in the evening
8. Young people should develop a habit of personal prayer both in the morning and the evening.
9. Sacred images, statues, saints’ pictures, a crucifix, holy water, and the rosary are reminders of God’s presence in our lives and help us to pray. It is important to have these blessed objects in our home to be mindful of God’s love for us and His constant presence in our lives. (CCC 478, 1159-1162, 1674)
10. 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.

Recommended Prayer Books

Catholic Prayer Book for Children, Julianne M. Will (Our Sunday Visitor)
The Pieta Prayer Booklet, MLOR Corporation
My Path to Heaven, Caryl Houselander (Sophia Press)