

MAJOR THEMES OF GRADE LEVELS

Parents often ask if it is necessary to bring their children to CCD for all eight years. With busy schedules and other commitments, it often becomes a matter of what the parent thinks is more important than what is ultimately most important – our relationship with God. How can one develop a relationship with God without knowledge?

All approved religion series follow the same themes for each grade level. By the time your child has completed the Religious Education Program, s/he should know the basic teachings of the Catholic Church.

The themes build upon each other and expand each year as your child matures. All of the themes are taught in a developmentally age-appropriate way. This is why your child should be enrolled in a program for the entire eight years. **In the Diocese of Pittsburgh, it is mandatory to attend formal Religious Education classes in grades 1 and 2 to receive Eucharist, and in grades 6-8 to receive Confirmation.**

At Assumption we give your children the information that is necessary to be a Catholic. Only with your co-operation is it possible to move this “head knowledge” into the heart. We ask that you give your children formational experiences so that they are able to feel what they know.

The major themes are as follows:

Kindergarten God the Creator, Jesus, and People

God calls us to celebrate his love for us through all gifts of creation. Jesus reveals God’s love for us and teaches us to love God, others, and ourselves. We, God’s family, continue to build God’s kingdom through our worship and by helping other people.

You should begin to take your child to Mass at this age, teach him/her the Our Father and the Sign of the Cross.

First Grade God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, Baptism

God our Father shows his love through the many gifts of creation. Jesus, God’s Son and our brother, teaches us about the Father. Jesus sends his Holy Spirit to be our helper. We become members of the Catholic Church through Baptism.

You should take your child to Mass, teach him/her the Hail Mary and the Glory Be.

Second Grade The Sacrament of Penance and Holy Eucharist

Because second grade students receive two sacraments this year, the focus is on the preparation for these two sacraments. The Eucharist is the source and summit of our faith. In most cases, it cannot be experienced except in the context of the Mass. This special bread and wine, through the action of the priest, the people gathered, and the listening of the Word truly becomes the Body and Blood of Our Lord. God's love and forgiveness is celebrated and reinforced in the sacrament of Penance, or Reconciliation.

At this age, students should be familiar with all Mass responses and be able to say an Act of Contrition.

- In order to receive the sacrament of Penance and Eucharist, all students must be in the second year of catechesis.

Third Grade The Church

The Church is the people of God, guided by the Holy Spirit, sharing in the faith and work of the apostles. The Church continues the work of Jesus today by sharing the Good News, celebrating the sacraments, and serving all God's people.

Students should attend Mass and learn the Apostles Creed.

Grade Four The Commandments, The Beatitudes, and the Works of Mercy.

Everyone has a call to holiness in imitation of Jesus. We respond to this call by living as members of our own church community, by understanding and following the great commandment of love of God and neighbor, as well as the beatitudes and the spiritual and corporal works of mercy. The Holy Spirit enlightens us and gives us the power to live as Jesus did.

Students should actively participate in Mass, be able to examine their consciences, and be able to say the rosary.

Grade 5 The Seven Sacraments

God gave us the ultimate sacrament in Jesus. Jesus instituted the seven sacraments to give us grace. The sacraments are actions of Christ celebrated in the Church. In the experience of the seven sacraments we share the life and person of Jesus in a special and unique way. In the midst of our faith community, Jesus is present to us in word and sacramental actions and signs.

Students should actively attend Mass, know the Prayer to the Holy Spirit, and receive the sacrament of Penance regularly.

Grade 6 The Bible

God, our Creator, loves us deeply and interacts in our lives. The saving actions of God throughout history are most completely revealed in Jesus. God's loving relationship with the chosen people is recorded in the Old and New Testaments that were written by persons of faith under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. The Church is responsible for safeguarding and interpreting the truth we find in the Scriptures. All Christians continue the work of building the kingdom of God. The Old Testament is the focus of sixth grade.

Students should actively participate in Mass and begin to talk to God in personal prayer.

Grade 7 Jesus

Jesus came to show us how to live. Through Jesus we are able to make a personal covenant (agreement) with God. Seventh grade focuses on the life of Jesus as it is found in the New Testament.

Students should actively participate in Mass, volunteer for age-appropriate ministries at Assumption, know all the formal prayers, and be able to articulate biblical stories and how they relate to life today.

Grade 8 The Church and Confirmation

In preparation for the sacrament of Confirmation, the students study the Church to which they belong. They study the sacraments of initiation with the emphasis on the responsibility to recognize a life of service as the most appropriate response. It is expected that the student will assume total responsibility in his/her desire to receive the sacrament of confirmation.

Students should actively participate in Mass, volunteer to serve the Assumption community, develop a deeper prayer life, and come to mature moral decisions based on the Bible and Church Tradition.

Beyond Grade 8

As fully initiated Catholic Christians, it becomes the individual responsibility to become more deeply immersed in God through attending Mass, participating in the sacramental life of the Church, doing acts of service, and learning more about

our gift of faith. In the sacrament of Confirmation, we enter into a life-long covenant with the God who gave us life. It is expected that we will continue to deepen that faith through study and prayer.