



October 21, 2005

Dear Friends in Christ:

I am pleased to present these Religious Education Standards for the Diocese of Madison. I am grateful to the staffs of the Office of Religious Education and the Offices of Catholic Schools, along with the many pastors, parents and those working in our Catholic schools and parish religious education programs who have taken part in developing a solid set of standards for grade Pre-K through 8.

Teaching our children the basic, the fundamentals of our faith, is vitally important today. The secular culture competes for their attention and offers a message at odds with the Christian faith, and so we must assume nothing as we thoroughly prepare our young people for their lives as Catholic Christians. Not only must we transmit the living faith, but our children must know that we are living it ourselves. We should never underestimate the value of our own example, as well as the words we profess.

As those charged with the instruction of children in the essentials of the Catholic faith, you are called to teach what the Church has received. We teach the Good News, the call of Jesus to repentance and love. We teach the ways of the Church, her beliefs, her life of worship and celebration, the moral life, and her life of prayer. From the youngest age, children should know that they can receive from us the authentic faith of the Church. Their many questions will often be difficult to answer, and you as parents and catechists will need to seek continuing formation and education to be up to the task.

These standards will assist in ensuring that our children are being taught what they need to know. They have been designed to allow children to learn through repetition and by building upon what they already know.

Jesus taught with steadfastness and love, and so must we. Our faith in Jesus Christ is not merely a set of propositions to memorize, but a way of living in faithfulness to the Gospel call to love God and neighbor. At the same time, there is much to know about the Church's worship, life and history, about the Scripture and the life of Jesus, about the Sacraments, the moral life, the demands of justice and peace, prayer, and many other aspects of Church teaching. It is my hope that these Religious Education Standards will assist all who teach children about their Catholic faith – pastors, parents and catechists – to do so fully and faithfully.

Faithfully yours,

Most Reverend Robert C. Morlino
Bishop of Madison

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