**Early Childhood (Ages 3-5/K) OVERVIEW** (6.5.19)

Beginning of the Year Activities: (Minimum of 3 Sessions)

* Get-acquainted/ Sample Introduction Activities:
  + “All-about-Me” Pages – (with help from home) – send a page home asking parents to add their child’s favorite things (See *Pinterest* for options.)
  + “Show and Tell” - picture of the child with his/her family (and pets).
  + Beach Ball Toss – Write simple questions on the ball; sit in a circle and toss the ball, asking the “catcher” to answer the question. (e.g., How many in your family? How old are you? What is your favorite food? Animal?)
  + Sing “get to know you” and welcome songs to help the children to learn each other’s names. (See your publisher’s CDs for ideas.)
* Catechist Testimony: See “Beginning of the Year” activities on the website.
* Building a Sacred Space/ Prayer Table:
  + [Key Learning Target: A3.1.2.5 – The Bible is a special and holy book about God.] (CCC#97; 105-07)]
  + Together build a prayer table. Ask learners to carry and place an item on the table. Begin with 2-3 items and add a few over the year to reflect the liturgical seasons.
  + Have a prayer basket on the prayer table; ask parents to help their children contribute intercessory prayers for the basket.
  + Explain to children that religious icons and items help us to focus on God who is invisible to our human eyes.
* Administrative Procedures - (e.g. classroom management – entering and exiting room, opening and closing prayer time, restroom/body break procedures, etc.):
  + Create classroom rules together the first couple of classes. Emphasize WHAT TO DO, rather than WHAT NOT TO DO. For example, “When in our prayer space, we should all be quiet and listen.”
  + Write rules on a large chart paper and hang them in the room each day, if possible.
  + Follow the same gathering routine and closing routine each session. Follow the same pattern of events each session; young children find comfort in a predictable routine.
* Creating a Community of Faith Learners:
  + Take time to ask *some* of the Essential Questions for the faith formation year of study to “inquire”/pre-assess what children already know. Do not take time to teach, if no one can answer an EQ; you will facilitate this new learning during the year. DO take time if a response is doctrinally incorrect; clear up misconceptions and clarify them immediately with a mere “teach told.” [Example: “Lucy, that is not quite correct….*then state the truth of the faith concept in a quick sentence or two…*We will learn more about \_\_\_\_ during this year.]
* Discernment/ Observation of Current Learners’ Faith:
  + - [Age 3-5/K]…making the Sign of the Cross & knowing why Catholics do this action
  + Key Learning Target: K.4.1.5 – Catholics pray to God the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. (CCC#2659-2660)]
    - [Age 3-5/K]…folding hands when praying to show reverence (great love, honor & respect) to God
    - [Age 5/K; possibly for Age 3-4, too]….Lesson 1 – “What is a Circle of Grace?” (*Circle of Grace*, pp. 8-10)
    - Key Learning Targets:
* K.1.2.2 – The Holy Spirit lives in every person. (CCC#733; 738; 747; 809)
* A4.3.6.1 – A person’s body is a gift from God. (CCC#364-65; 2319; 2393)
  + Introduce the Concept of “The Circle of Grace”:
    - Prepare a poster of the *Circle of Grace* visual. [See *CoG,* pages 26-27.]
    - Ask: *What is grace?* [Grace *is a special gift from God, You can’t see it. Grace lives in our hearts and makes us feel good. Grace makes us a child of God; He is our Father.*]
    - *Only* “Getting Started” – p. 9
    - Then, “Activity” – p. 9 – teach body actions
    - Next, “Discussion” – p. 10 – *Jesus told us that he would always love us and always be with us. We are always in a special, holy place because God loves us and wants to be our friend. That place is our Circle of Grace. This is a place the Holy Spirit is with us and within us.* [*Grace* is a gift from God because God loves us and everyone.]
    - Repeat this action each session throughout the year as part of your routine to begin each session; the remainder of this lesson and lessons 2-3 are best done during Unit #3 in the spring.
* **Big Idea - Unit #1- Who is Jesus Christ?**
* Essential Question #1: ***Who is God?***

Focused Theme/Topic: Divine Love/ God is love! (Overarching Theme for the Year)

* Essential Question #2: ***Why did God make you and me?***

Focused Theme/Topic: Divine Love/ Creator of Mankind

* Essential Question #3: ***Why did God make everything?***

Focused Theme/Topic: Creator of the World

* Essential Question #4: ***Who is Jesus Christ?***

Focused Theme/Topic: Holy Family/ Divine Love

* Flexible Essential Question: ***Why do we celebrate (Advent and) Christmas?***

Focused Theme/Topic: *Liturgical Seasons of Advent*---We await the birth of Jesus---*and Christmas –* Jesus is born of the Blessed Virgin Mary.

* **Big Idea - Unit #2 – How do we get to know and love Jesus Christ?**
* Essential Question #1: ***Why do we pray?***

Focused Theme/Topic: Introduction and Purpose of Prayer

* Essential Question #2: ***When and how do we pray?***

Focused Theme/Topic: Times, Places and Ways to Pray

* Essential Question #3: ***Why do we go to Mass?***

Focused Theme/Topic: Mass/ Introduction to Sacraments, God’s special gifts to us

* Essential Question #4: ***What happens at Mass?***

Focused Theme/Topic: Mass/ Introduction to Sacraments, God’s special gifts to us

* Flexible Essential Question: ***Why do we read the Bible?***

Focused Theme/Topic: The Holy Bible, the Word of God

* **Big Idea - Unit #3 – How does Jesus Christ help us to live a moral life?**
* Essential Question #1: ***Why does Jesus want me to love myself and others?***

Focused Theme/Topic: *Circle of Grace* Lesson 1 (review) and Lessons 2-3

* Essential Question #2: ***Why does Jesus want me to make good choices?***

Focused Theme/Topic: Moral choices to act like Jesus

* Flexible Essential Question: ***Why do we celebrate (Lent and) Easter?***

Focused Theme/Topic: Liturgical Seasons of Lent & Easter – importance of the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus

* **Big Idea - Unit #4 – How are we called to become missionary disciples of Jesus Christ?**
* Essential Question #1: ***Why does Jesus want me to help others?***

Focused Theme/Topic: Discipleship, to be a “follower” of Jesus