



Faculty and Staff In-Service



THE CARDINAL
NEWMAN SOCIETY

Promoting and Defending Faithful Catholic Education

About the Project

The Cardinal Newman Society's publication of *Principles of Catholic Identity in Education* culminates an extensive review of Vatican documents from the past century to identify essential marks of a Catholic education.

It is our hope that the *Principles* will encourage new awareness of what makes Catholic education special and essential to the Church's mission of evangelization. At the Newman Society, the *Principles* serve as the starting point for all of our work in elementary and secondary education.

Although no project of this scope can capture every aspect of Vatican teaching, the *Principles* faithfully reflect recurring themes and key expectations of the Church for Catholic schools, with regard to their unique mission of evangelization and formation. As much as possible, the five principles cite verbatim the language from Vatican documents.

Introduction

Principles of Catholic Identity in Education: Faculty and Staff In-Service is designed to help a school's faculty and staff reflect upon those elements the Church expects to be present in all Catholic schools and which distinguish them from other schools. The evaluation is structured upon five principles of Catholic identity derived from Church documents related to education. The five principles that help structure the document and questions are: *Inspired by Divine Mission; Models Christian Communion; Encounters Christ in Prayer, Scripture, and Sacraments; Integrally Forms the Human Person* and *Imparts a Christian Understanding of the World*. Each principle includes a summary which is comprehensive, yet concise. It is then followed by a series of questions intended to serve as a general resource to guide the faculty and staff in an effort to enhance and assess their school's Catholic identity.

Intention for Use

Principles of Catholic Identity in Education: Faculty and Staff In-Service helps faculty and staff members conduct an internal formative self-assessment of their school's Catholic identity.

Suggestions for Use

The faculty and staff do not need to answer all questions, although they may. New questions may also arise from their discussions. The process is intended to open up potential lines of inquiry that will spark internal conversation and lead eventually to more targeted focus of the school's particular needs. Because of the integrated and interrelated nature of Catholic education's fundamental mission to evangelize and integrally form students in a Christ-centered community, the distinctive elements found in a school directed toward this end are not easily and exclusively categorized. For instance, Catholic education should form students in virtue; should that element be addressed in a school's purpose, culture, curriculum, spiritual life, or evangelization? The important thing is that the questions are addressed and discussed among

the faculty, often with as basic and important a question as, “How are we doing at forming virtuous students?”

Some schools may choose to use the *In-Service* in a series of faculty gatherings. This would involve dividing the document into individual sections and distributing each section prior to the gathering, so that participants have sufficient opportunity to reflect deeply on each section prior to discussion. Participants should read through the applicable set of questions prior to reading the narrative and quotes. Another alternative is to divide the faculty into smaller groups and give each group one specific section to discuss before coming back together to share their findings. Other schools may want to have a sub-group meet first on a specific topic and then present the topic to the whole faculty for general discussion.

Whatever approach is selected, school administrators should be present at group discussions to answer questions as they arise and to add additional information if needed. The process should include all individuals involved in the learning environment in an open, safe, and positive atmosphere. The process should be slow and allow for fruitful, honest, and nuanced discussions. At minimum, it will take approximately 1-1 ½ hours to evaluate and discuss each of the five principles. These discussions might then provide the opportunity for recording strengths and weaknesses, brainstorming ideas to enhance Catholic identity, and making specific school-wide goals and action plans for growth.

Principle I

Inspired by Divine Mission

Catholic education is an expression of the Church's mission of salvation and an instrument of evangelization:¹ to make disciples of Christ and to teach them to observe all that He has commanded.² Through Catholic education, students encounter God, "who in Jesus Christ reveals His transforming love and truth."³ Christ is the foundation of Catholic education;⁴ He journeys with students through school and life as "genuine Teacher" and "perfect Man."⁵ As a faith community in unity with the Church and in fidelity to the Magisterium, students, parents, and educators give witness to Christ's loving communion in the Holy Trinity.⁶ With this Christian vision, Catholic education fulfills its purpose of "critical, systematic transmission of culture in the light of faith"⁷ and the integral formation of the human person by developing each student's physical, moral, spiritual, and intellectual gifts in harmony, teaching responsibility and right use of freedom, and preparing students to fulfill God's calling in this world and to attain the eternal kingdom for which they were created.⁸ Catholic education is sustained by the frequent experience of prayer, Sacred Scripture, and the Church's liturgical and sacramental tradition.⁹

Reflection on Church Teaching

Vatican II describes a Catholic school's mission as leading all students to salvation by helping them become prayerful, moral, and Christ-like individuals, aware of the gift of faith they have received. They are to conform their lives to the teachings of Christ and strive to develop the Mystical Body of Christ through witness and evangelization, thus contributing to the common good and the growth of a Christian worldview.

A Christian education does not merely strive for the maturing of a human person... but has as its principal purpose this goal: that the baptized, while they are gradually introduced the knowledge of the mystery of salvation, become ever more aware of the gift of Faith

they have received, and that they learn in addition how to worship God the Father in spirit and truth especially in liturgical action, and be conformed in their personal lives according to the new man created in justice and holiness of truth; also that they develop into perfect manhood, to the mature measure of the fullness of Christ and strive for the growth of the Mystical Body; moreover, that aware of their calling, they learn not only how to bear witness to the hope that is in them but also how to help in the Christian formation of the world that takes place when natural powers viewed in the full consideration of man redeemed by Christ contribute to the good of the whole society.¹⁰

These themes are carried forth in subsequent documents, but especially the theme of the evangelizing mission of Catholic education with emphasis on personal sanctification and social reform.

Catholic education is an expression of the mission entrusted by Jesus to the Church He founded. Through education, the Church seeks to prepare its members to proclaim the Good News and to translate this proclamation into action. Since the Christian vocation is a call to transform oneself and society with God's help, the educational efforts of the Church must encompass the twin purposes of personal sanctification and the social reform in light of Christian values.¹¹

How a school accomplishes this mission includes many elements, but chief among them are a focus on Christ, especially His life and His teachings. Church documents on education consistently emphasize a Christocentric dimension for the school's existence.

In a Catholic school, everyone should be aware of the living presence of Jesus the "Master" who, today as always, is with us in our journey through life as the one genuine "Teacher," the perfect Man in whom all human values find their fullest perfection. The inspiration of Jesus must be translated from the ideal into the real. The gospel spirit should be evident in a Christian way of thought and life which permeates all facets of the educational climate.¹²

Essential to the fulfillment of the mission are opportunities for students to encounter His presence in Scripture, in the Sacraments, in

prayer, in each other, and in their studies. As Pope Benedict XVI noted:

First and foremost every Catholic educational institution is a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth. This relationship elicits a desire to grow in the knowledge and understanding of Christ and his teaching. In this way those who meet him are drawn by the very power of the Gospel to lead a new life characterized by all that is beautiful, good, and true; a life of Christian witness nurtured and strengthened within the community of our Lord's disciples, the Church.¹³

A further distinctive element of the mission and experience of a Catholic school is its dedication to integral formation. This integral formation is the unique way the Church responds to the complex and real crisis of the age facing her children and facing the whole world.

Since true education must strive for complete formation of the human person that looks to his or her final end as well as to the common good of societies, children and youth are to be nurtured in such a way that they are able to develop their physical, moral, and intellectual talents harmoniously, acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and right use of freedom, and are formed to participate actively in social life.¹⁴

These elements help create a truly Catholic school experience in culture, climate, community, and academics where all knowledge is illumined by faith.

The Catholic school pursues cultural goals and the natural development of youth to the same degree as any other school. What makes the Catholic school distinctive is its attempt to generate a community climate in the school that is permeated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and love...The Council, therefore, declared that what makes the Catholic school distinctive is its religious dimension, and that this is to be found in a) the educational climate, b) the personal development of each student, c) the relationship established between culture and the Gospel, d) the illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith.¹⁵

Questions to Aid Reflection or Assessment

Below are questions designed to facilitate reflection and begin a discussion of how your school fulfills the mission of Catholic education. Choose the most important questions for your school.

School's Mission

- ◇ What is our school's mission? Do we all know it and follow it? Do our students and families know it? Do they embrace and support it?
- ◇ How much does our mission guide our efforts? Where can we improve?
- ◇ Is our school's mission united with the Church's mission for Catholic education?
- ◇ What in our school's mission statement specifically distinguishes it from local, non-Catholic, and private schools?

Church's Mission – Evangelization and Salvation

- ◇ Does our school's mission advance the Church's mission of salvation and evangelization?
- ◇ In which experiences at our school do students encounter the living God? How adeptly do they recognize these encounters? How can we make these encounters more frequent, evident, and fruitful?

Catholic Identity

- ◇ Is our school proudly and strongly Catholic in its identity? How can we tell? Do we sometimes downplay our Catholic identity or dilute Catholic teachings?
- ◇ Is Christ the foundation of our school? How so? How can we make this more evident?

◇ Does our school transmit a distinctly Catholic culture and worldview? Where? How?

◇ Is our school faithful to the teachings of the Magisterium, especially as expressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*?

Student Formation

◇ Are efforts in student formation sufficiently balanced to accomplish our mission? Do we in any way limit our vision and efforts to utilitarian or worldly purposes?

◇ Does a Christian understanding of the human person, as an integrated body and soul created by God, form the basis for our formational efforts? Do we sufficiently capitalize on the reality that Christ reveals man fully to himself? Where is this evident in our efforts?

Action Item: Specific ideas or plans to work toward fulfillment of our mission.

Principle II

Models Christian Communion and Identity

Catholic education teaches communion with Christ, by living communion with Christ and imitating the love and freedom of the Trinity.¹⁶ This communion begins in the home—with the divinely ordered right and responsibility of parents to educate their children—and extends to the school community in support and service to the needs of the family.¹⁷ It unites families and educators with a shared educational philosophy to form students for a relationship with God and with others.¹⁸ The educational community is united to the universal Church in fidelity to the magisterium, to the local Church, and to other schools and community organizations.¹⁹

The school community is a place of ecclesial experience, in which the members model confident and joyful public witness in both word and action and teach students to live the Catholic faith in their daily lives.²⁰ In an environment “humanly and spiritually rich,” everyone is aware of the living presence of Jesus evidenced by a Christian way of life, expressed in “Word and Sacrament, in individual behaviour, [and] in friendly and harmonious relationships.”²¹ The school climate reproduces, as far as possible, the “warm and intimate atmosphere of family life.”²² As members of the Church community, students experience what it means to live a life of prayer, personal responsibility, and freedom reflective of Gospel values. This, in turn, leads them to grow in their commitment to serve God, one another, the Church, and the society.²³

All teachers and leaders possess adequate skills, preparation, and religious formation and possess special qualities of mind and heart as well as the sensitivity necessary for authentic witness to the gospel and the task of human formation.²⁴ Teachers and leaders of the educational community should be “practicing Catholics, who can understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral

demands of the Gospel and who can contribute to the achievement of the school's Catholic identity and apostolic goals."²⁵

Reflection on Church Teaching: Part 1

Encourages and Participates in Christian Communion

The Church teaches that education cannot be accomplished in isolation, but finds success when all those responsible for the education of the child work together.

Because its aim is to make man more man, education can be carried out authentically only in a relational and community context. It is not by chance that the first and original educational environment is that of the natural community of the family. Schools, in their turn, take their place beside the family as an educational space that is communitarian, organic and intentional and they sustain their educational commitment, according to a logic of assistance.²⁶

The school is an extension of the family and recognizes parents as the primary educators of their children. Therefore, the environment of the school, especially at the primary level, should exemplify the charity and care found among close family members.

Considering the special age group they are working with, primary schools should try to create a community school climate that reproduces, as far as possible, the warm and intimate atmosphere of family life. Those responsible for these schools will, therefore, do everything they can to promote a common spirit of trust and spontaneity. In addition, they will take great care to promote close and constant collaboration with the parents of these pupils. An integration of school and home is an essential condition for the birth and development of all of the potential which these children manifest in one or the other of these two situations - including their openness to religion with all that this implies.²⁷

Through the building up of interpersonal relationships between colleagues, students, and families as well as between the school community and universal Church, the school gives witness to communion.

By giving witness of communion, the Catholic educational community is able to *educate for communion*, which, as a gift that

comes from above, animates the project of formation for living together in harmony and being welcoming. Not only does it cultivate in the students the cultural values that derive from the Christian vision of reality, but it also involves each one of them in the life of the community, where values are mediated by authentic interpersonal relationships among the various members that form it, and by the individual and community acceptance of them. In this way, the life of communion of the educational community assumes the value of an educational principle, of a paradigm that directs its formational action as a service for the achievement of a culture of communion.²⁸

This type of community facilitates openness for the sharing of values and must not remain an ideal, but become a lived and felt reality.

The school must be a community whose values are communicated through the interpersonal and sincere relationships of its members and through both individual and corporative adherence to the outlook on life that permeates the school.²⁹

Church documents give guidance of how this is accomplished.

Some of the conditions for creating a positive and supportive climate are the following: that everyone agree with the educational goals and cooperate in achieving them; that interpersonal relationships be based on love and Christian freedom; that each individual, in daily life, be a witness to Gospel values; that every student be challenged to strive for the highest possible level of formation, both human and Christian. In addition, the climate must be one in which families are welcomed, the local Church is an active participant, and civil society—local, national, and international—is included. If all share a common faith, this can be an added advantage.³⁰

Students are instructed on proper interaction among peers and adults in order to facilitate healthy and wholesome personal growth and flourishing.

In these educational centres [Catholic schools]—which are open to all who share and respect their educational goals—the atmosphere must be permeated by the evangelical spirit of freedom and charity, which fosters the harmonious development of each one's

personality. In this setting, human culture as a whole is harmonised with the message of salvation, so that the pupils gradually acquire a knowledge of the world, life and humanity that is be enlightened by the Gospel.³¹

While the community of the school builds on the family and is lived and nurtured within its walls, the students should also experience a sense of belonging to the community of the universal Church.

Concretely, the educational goals of the school include a concern for the life and the problems of the Church, both local and universal. These goals are attentive to the Magisterium, and include co-operation with Church authorities. Catholic students are helped to become active members of the parish and diocesan communities. They have opportunities to join Church associations and Church youth groups, and they are taught to collaborate in local Church projects.³²

Finally, this ecclesial community is destined not for itself, but to be of service to the common good of the world through evangelization and service.

More than any other program of education sponsored by the Church, the Catholic school has the opportunity and obligation to be unique, contemporary, and oriented to Christian service; unique because it is distinguished by its commitment to the threefold purpose of Christian education and by its total design and operation which foster the integration of religion with the rest of learning and living; contemporary because it enables students to address with Christian insight the multiple problems which face individuals and society today; oriented to Christian service because it helps students acquire skills, virtues, and habits of heart and mind required for effective service to others.³³

Questions to Aid Reflection or Assessment

Below are questions designed to facilitate reflection and to begin a discussion of how well your school encourages and participates in Christian communion. Choose the most important questions for your school.

Communion in General

- ◇ Is our school community open and inviting to all, or can we be considered by some as overly exclusive?
- ◇ How does our school environment evidence a Christian way of life that reproduces, as far as possible, the warm and intimate atmosphere of family life?

Communion with Parents

- ◇ Is our school community welcoming to, and appreciative of, all parents? In what ways?
- ◇ How can we increase parental involvement?
- ◇ How can we better support the efforts of parents as the primary educators of their children?

Communion among Students

- ◇ Do students treat each other with respect and kindness? Do students engage openly and freely with each other? Do cliques or other restrictive social groupings exist? Have we addressed this?
- ◇ Do students help each other grow and flourish? Do students show each other mercy, forgiveness, and acceptance?
- ◇ How do we assist students to heal hurting or broken relationships? Is there any bullying, detraction, or belittling? Do we have a Gospel-based plan to address bullying and conflicts?
- ◇ Do our students actively and joyfully defend the rights of the most vulnerable: the unborn, the elderly, the disabled, the homeless and shut-in, the handicapped and marginalized?

◇ Are students active in service programs for the school and for the community? Do they perform voluntary service? How can we assist in developing concern for others and the common good in our students?

◇ Do our students experience the universality of the Catholic Church and its extent beyond our school walls? Do they feel at home in the Catholic Church and embrace it outside of the school experience?

Communion with the Broader Community

◇ How effectively do we relate with and support other area Catholic schools, our local parishes, the efforts of the diocesan school office, and the efforts of the universal Church? Are there opportunities to do more?

Action Item: Specific ideas or plans to work toward building a more Christian community.

Reflection on Church Teaching: Part 2

Models Communion in Christ

The community of a Catholic school begins with its faculty and staff. Teachers play a special role in creating an enriching atmosphere throughout the school.

In the Catholic school, “prime responsibility for creating this unique Christian school climate rests with the teachers, as individuals and as a community”. Teaching has an extraordinary moral depth and is one of man’s most excellent and creative activities, for the teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirits of human beings. The personal relations between the teacher and the students, therefore, assume an enormous importance and are not limited simply to giving and taking. Moreover, we must remember that teachers and educators fulfill a specific Christian vocation and share an equally specific participation in the mission of the Church, to the extent that “it depends chiefly on them whether the Catholic school achieves its purpose.”³⁴

For this reason, Catholic educators need a “formation of the heart”: they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others, so that their educational commitment becomes a consequence deriving from their faith, a faith which becomes active through love. In fact, even care for instruction means loving. It is only in this way that they can make their teaching a school of faith, that is to say, a transmission of the Gospel, as required by the educational project of the Catholic school.³⁵

The success of the faculty and staff in creating a community that assists in leading students to communion with Christ and His Church depends upon their authentic witness and faithfulness in both word and action.

The more completely an educator can give concrete witness to the model of the ideal person [Christ] that is being presented to the students, the more this ideal will be believed and imitated.³⁶

In light of this, the Church insists that

Instruction and education in a Catholic school must be based on the principles of Catholic doctrine, and the teachers must be outstanding in true doctrine and uprightness of life.³⁷

Because authentic and lived teaching and living in communion is so critical to a Catholic school's mission, the school needs to hire teachers who are formed and willing to participate in the mission of Catholic education to the fullest extent possible.

Recruit teachers who are practicing Catholics, who can understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral demands of the gospel, and who can contribute to the achievement of the school's Catholic identity and apostolic goals...As a catechetical leader in the Catholic school, the principal is called to provide opportunities for ongoing catechesis for faculty members...The distinctive Catholic identity and mission of the Catholic school also depend on the efforts and example of the whole faculty...All teachers in Catholic schools share in the catechetical ministry... While some situations might entail compelling reasons for members of another faith tradition to teach in a Catholic school, as much as possible, all teachers in a Catholic school should be practicing Catholics.³⁸

Also, as life is a pilgrimage of deeper understanding of the faith, and an ever-growing relationship with Christ, ample opportunities for learning, prayer, forgiveness, and growth should be a part of the life of a Catholic schoolteacher.

The preparation and ongoing formation of new administrators and teachers is vital if our schools are to remain truly Catholic in all aspects of school life. Catholic school personnel should be grounded in a faith-based Catholic culture, have strong bonds to Christ and the Church, and be witnesses to the faith in both their words and actions. The formation of personnel will allow the Gospel message and the living presence of Jesus to permeate the entire life of the school community and thus be faithful to the school's evangelizing mission.³⁹

Questions to Aid Reflection or Assessment

Below are a series questions to facilitate reflection and to begin a discussion of how well your school models communion with Christ. Choose the most important questions for your school.

Christian Atmosphere

- ◇ How do we, as a faculty, let students know they are precious to us and to God?
- ◇ Are there ways we, as a faculty, can improve our relationship with our students? Do we spend non-classroom time with them? Do we interact and socialize with them in ways that are both appropriate and joyful?
- ◇ Do we, as a faculty, offer mercy and forgiveness to our students when they fall? To our parents? To our colleagues? Do we ask for forgiveness when we fall?

Christian Vocation

- ◇ Do we experience our teaching vocation as a call from God? What does that mean in the context of our personal and professional lives?
- ◇ The Church holds that all teachers share in the religious formation of students and the catechetical ministry of the school. How fully have we realized this expectation among us? Do the students experience this? How can we help and encourage all teachers in all subjects to get involved in joyful faith formation?
- ◇ Do all faculty members frequently, openly, and naturally pray with students in both formal and informal ways? Do all faculty joyfully attend Mass and other prayer activities of the school?

Christian Witness

◇ How do we, as a faculty, witness the Gospel message? Do we live the Gospel with integrity in the entirety of our lives? Are our personal witness and our life consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church?

◇ How does the school assist faculty and staff with opportunities to grow in faith and in virtue? Do we have faith-formation programs or retreats? Can we pray together more? How do we socialize first-time teachers in a Catholic school?

◇ Since the Catholic mission of the school depends almost entirely on us as a faculty, how might we grow in fellowship as a faculty to more fully achieve unity in mission and strength in camaraderie?

Action Items: Specific ideas or plans to work toward better modeling of communion with Christ.

Principle III

Encounters Christ in Prayer, Scripture, and Sacrament

Rooted in Christ, Catholic education is continually fed and stimulated by Him in the frequent experience of prayer, scripture, and the Church's liturgical and sacramental tradition.⁴⁰ The transmission of faith, catechesis, is intrinsically linked to these living encounters with Christ, by which He nurtures and educates souls in the divine life of grace and the gifts of the Holy Spirit.⁴¹ By their witness and sharing in these encounters, educators help students grow in understanding of what it means to be a member of the Church.⁴² Students discover the real value of the Sacraments, especially the Eucharist and Reconciliation, in accompanying the Christian in the journey through life. They learn "to open their hearts in confidence to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through personal and liturgical prayer," which makes the mystery of Christ present to students.⁴³

Reflection on Church Teaching

The community comprising the Catholic school finds its source of nourishment in the Word, in the Sacraments, and in the traditions of the Church.

No Catholic school can adequately fulfill its educational role on its own. It must continually be fed and stimulated by its Source of life, the Saving Word of Christ as it is expressed in Sacred Scripture, in Tradition, especially liturgical and sacramental tradition, and in the lives of people, past and present, who bear witness to that Word.⁴⁴

The characteristics of a rich faith life include easily identifiable representations of the spiritual life such as crucifixes, statues, or pictures of saints and a place set aside for prayer.

From the first moment that a student sets foot in a Catholic school, he or she ought to have the impression of entering a new environment, one illumined by the light of faith, and having its own unique characteristics.⁴⁵

It also involves introducing students to traditional Catholic prayers, traditions of the Church, and spiritual devotions, especially Marian devotions.

An awareness of Mary's presence can be a great help toward making the school into a "home". Mary, Mother and Teacher of the Church, accompanied her Son as he grew in wisdom and grace; from its earliest days, she has accompanied the Church in its mission of salvation.⁴⁶

As important as these Catholic devotions are, an essential element to any Catholic school is a rich and faithful sacramental life.

An understanding of the sacramental journey has profound educational implications. Students become aware that being a member of the Church is something dynamic, responding to every person's need to continue growing all through life. When we meet the Lord in the Sacraments, we are never left unchanged. Through the Spirit, he causes us to grow in the Church, offering us "grace upon grace"; the only thing he asks is our cooperation. The educational consequences of this touch on our relationship with God, our witness as a Christian, and our choice of a personal vocation.⁴⁷

Especially important in the documents is a rich Eucharistic component.

The essential point for students to understand is that Jesus Christ is always truly present in the Sacraments which he has instituted, and his presence makes them efficacious means of grace. The moment of closest encounter with the Lord Jesus occurs in the Eucharist, which is both Sacrifice and Sacrament. In the Eucharist, two supreme acts of love are united: Our Lord renews his sacrifice of salvation for us, and he truly gives himself to us.⁴⁸

In the life of a Catholic school the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation become frequent, lived, and loving encounters with God.

The teacher will assist students to open their hearts in confidence to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through personal and liturgical prayer. The latter is not just another way of praying; it is the official prayer of the Church, which makes the mystery of Christ present in our

lives—especially through the Eucharist, Sacrifice and Sacrament, and through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Religious experiences are then seen, not as something externally imposed, but as a free and loving response to the God who first loved us. The virtues of faith and religion, thus rooted and cultivated, are enabled to develop during childhood, youth, and in all the years that follow.⁴⁹

As with all elements of the integral formation of its students, the authentic and lived participation of the faculty and staff in liturgies and Sacraments play a critical role in the spiritual life of the school.

As a visible manifestation of the faith they profess and the life witness they are supposed to manifest, it is important that lay Catholics who work in a Catholic school participate simply and actively in the liturgical and sacramental life of the school. Students will share in this life more readily when they have concrete examples: when they see the importance that this life has for believers. In today's secularized world, students will see many lay people who call themselves Catholics, but who never take part in liturgy or sacraments. It is very important that they also have the example of lay adults who take such things seriously, who find in them a source and nourishment for Christian living.⁵⁰

Questions to Aid Reflection or Assessment

Below are a series of questions to facilitate reflection and to begin a discussion of how well your school offers opportunities for encountering Christ through prayer, scripture, and Sacrament.

Choose the most important questions for your school.

Prayer

- ◇ Is prayer a norm in our school? How often do we pray (e.g., start and end of school, before meals, before classes, before athletic events, assemblies, and events)? Do our students know traditional Catholic prayers and practices?

- ◇ Does our school's prayer life facilitate a clear, joyful, and personal communication with God? Do we provide quiet time and space for this encounter?

◇ Are enough retreats available? Are they appropriate and effective? Do students enjoy and attend them and grow in faith? Are they spiritually substantial and well-organized?

Sacraments

◇ How frequently do our students attend Mass as a school? Is this enough? Do they receive the Eucharist worthily and respectfully? How can we provide for greater student attentiveness, reverence, and participation in Mass?

◇ Is there an opportunity for Eucharistic adoration, benediction, and/or processions?

◇ How often is confession available for our students? Do they value it? Is this enough? What do we do to help them prepare? Is quality spiritual direction available to students? Vocational discernment opportunities?

Saints and Devotions

◇ How well do we foster devotion to our Blessed Mother? Do we celebrate her feast days and pray the Rosary?

◇ How well do we celebrate the liturgical year, Holy Days of Obligation, Saints, and feast days?

◇ Do students know, understand, and practice the charism of our school (if appropriate and existing)?

Spiritual Life of the School

◇ How faithful are we as faculty to participation in the school's spiritual life?

◇ How do we assist or account for students who may not have all the spiritual support they need at home (e.g., no access to

Mass, or fallen-away parents)? How do we assist non-Catholics in understanding the faith and participating in all spiritual activities to the fullest degree possible?

◇ How are parents involved in the spiritual and sacramental life of the school?

Sacred Environment

◇ Upon entering the school, does one experience a sense of hospitality and sacredness?

◇ Are sacred works of art (paintings, statues, crucifixes, and other symbols) used to enhance the sense of transcendence and Catholic identity throughout the school?

Action Items: Specific action items or plans to work toward encountering Christ in prayer, Scripture, and Sacraments.

Principle IV

Integrally Forms the Human Person

The complex task of Catholic education is the integral formation of students as physical, intellectual, and spiritual beings called to perfect humanity in the fullness of Christ, which is their right by Baptism.⁵¹ The human person is “created in ‘the image and likeness’ of God; elevated by God to the dignity of a child of God; unfaithful to God in original sin, but redeemed by Christ; a temple of the Holy Spirit, a member of the Church; destined to eternal life.”⁵² Catholic education assists students to become aware of the gift of Faith, worship God the Father, develop into mature adults who bear witness to the Mystical Body of Christ, respect the dignity of the human person, provide service, lead apostolic lives, and build the Kingdom of God.⁵³

Catholic education forms the conscience through commitment to authentic Catholic doctrine. It develops the virtues and characteristics associated with what it means to be Christian so as to resist relativism, overcome individualism, and discover vocations to serve God and others.⁵⁴ “Intellectual development and growth as a Christian go forward hand in hand” where faith, culture, and life are integrated throughout the school’s program to provide students a personal closeness to Christ enriched by virtues, values, and supernatural gifts.⁵⁵ As a child of God, made in his image, human formation includes the development of personal Christian ethics and respect for the body by promoting healthy development, physical activity, and chastity.⁵⁶

In Catholic education, “There is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom”; education and pedagogy inspired by Gospel values and distinguished by the “illumination of all knowledge with the light of faith” allows formation to become living, conscious and active.⁵⁷ The atmosphere is characterized by discovery and awareness that enkindles a love for truth, and a desire to know the universe as God’s creation. The Christian educational program facilitates critical think-

ing that is ordered, precise, and responsible as it builds strength and perseverance in pursuit of the truth.⁵⁸

Reflection on Church Teachings: Part 1

Integral Formation Focused on Intellectual Development

The Catholic intellectual tradition is about much more than maximizing intellectual skills; it is about ensuring that the person is authentically human, integrated, and oriented toward wisdom.

Catholic schools are encouraged to promote a wisdom-based society, to go beyond knowledge and educate people to think, evaluating facts in the light of values. In teaching the various academic disciplines, teachers share and promote a methodological viewpoint in which the various branches of knowledge are dynamically correlated, in a wisdom perspective.⁵⁹

We do not just seek knowledge for the sake of power and utilitarian purposes, but rather for complete human flourishing and complete human formation.

In the Catholic school's educational project there is no separation between time for learning and time for formation, between acquiring notions and growing in wisdom. The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained, but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered. All of which demands an atmosphere characterized by the search for truth, in which competent, convinced and coherent educators, teachers of learning and of life, may be a reflection, albeit imperfect but still vivid, of the one Teacher. In this perspective, in the Christian educational project all subjects collaborate, each with its own specific content, to the formation of mature personalities.⁶⁰

This Catholic understanding of the unity of knowledge and how each branch finds its origin and end in God is complemented by the notion of man's desire and sense of responsibility to pursue and value all that is beautiful, good, and true in God's creation.

The world, in all its diversity, is eager to be guided towards the great values of mankind, truth, good and beauty; now more than ever...teaching means to accompany young people in their search for truth and beauty, for what is right and good.⁶¹

This intellectual work unites all three elements of truth, beauty, and goodness in a pursuit of wisdom sharpening the skills of analysis and precision as well as perseverance and mental fortitude.

Within the overall process of education, special mention must be made of the intellectual work done by students. Although Christian life consists in loving God and doing his will, intellectual work is intimately involved. The light of Christian faith stimulates a desire to know the universe as God's creation. It enkindles a love for the truth that will not be satisfied with superficiality in knowledge or judgment. It awakens a critical sense which examines statements rather than accepting them blindly. It impels the mind to learn with careful order and precise methods, and to work with a sense of responsibility. It provides the strength needed to accept the sacrifices and the perseverance required by intellectual labor.⁶²

The Church does not shy away from a bold claim to know and teach the truth in a modern relativistic culture. St. John Paul II encouraged American educators to realize this point.

The greatest challenge to Catholic education in the United States today, and the greatest contribution that authentically Catholic education can make to American culture, is to restore to that culture the conviction that human beings can grasp the truth of things, and in grasping that truth can know their duties to God, to themselves and their neighbors. The contemporary world urgently needs the service of educational institutions which uphold and teach that truth is "that fundamental value without which freedom, justice and human dignity are extinguished."⁶³

We seek the truth wherever it can be found. Follow it wherever it leads and conform our lives to it.

Respect for those who seek the truth, who raise fundamental questions about human existence. Confidence in our ability to attain truth, at least in a limited way—a confidence based not on feeling but on faith. God created us "in his own image and likeness" and will not deprive us of the truth necessary to orient our lives. The ability to make judgments about what is true and what is false; and to make choices based on these judgments. Making use of a systematic framework, such as that offered by our philosophical

heritage, with which to find the best possible human responses to questions regarding the human person, the world, and God. Lively dialogue between culture and the Gospel message. The fullness of truth contained in the Gospel message itself, which embraces and integrates the wisdom of all cultures, and enriches them with the divine mysteries known only to God but which, out of love, he has chosen to reveal to us. With such criteria as a basis, the student's careful and reflective study of philosophy will bring human wisdom into an encounter with divine wisdom.⁶⁴

Questions to Aid Reflection or Assessment

Below are a series of questions to facilitate reflection and to begin a discussion of how well your school approaches the intellectual development of a student. Choose the most important questions for your school.

Pedagogy

- ◇ Are we, as a faculty, versatile in the areas of both academic content and catechesis? Are we able and willing to enrich discussions in any discipline or on any topic with a spiritual and faith-based perspective naturally and with ease?
- ◇ Where and how do we explicitly relate different academic discipline areas to reflect the unity of truth and interrelationships among various elements of God's creation?
- ◇ Do we fully account for the physical, mental, spiritual, and moral development and capabilities of our students?
- ◇ Are adequate counseling and professional services available to our students with special needs or circumstances?

Philosophy

- ◇ Is knowledge and learning celebrated for its own sake and worth, or is knowledge viewed as a means to an end, a necessary commodity to get to the next level of high school, college, or career?

- ◇ How and where do we see students growing in wisdom as opposed to just knowledge?
- ◇ Where and how do we explicitly and purposefully expose students to beauty? Do they know how to evaluate reality through this lens by asking why something is beautiful, how it attracts, or how the perfection of form shines through something?
- ◇ Where and how do we explicitly and purposefully expose students to goodness? Do they know how to evaluate reality through this lens as they seek to explore what a thing is for and how well it fulfills its potentialities?
- ◇ Where and how do we explicitly teach how to come to know Truth? How to seek it, define it, and embrace it once discovered? How do we train students to appreciate especially those truths that transcends culture and opinion and which are knowable through reason, senses, natural law, and revelation?
- ◇ How and where (at an age-appropriate level) are students introduced to and prepared to respond to relativism and skepticism?

Action Items: Specific ideas or plans to work on the intellectual development of students.

Reflection on Church Teachings: Part 2

Integral Formation Focused on Spiritual Development

All schools focus on developing the intellect, but Catholic schools have a long history of particularly excelling in this academic enterprise. As schools focused on the human person, we have the added advantage of being able to actively form not only the intellect, but the spiritual dimension as well. The spiritual life we model and the spiritual truths we teach must be completely faithful to the Church and should permeate and sit proudly alongside all academic disciplines of a school's program.

The integration of religious truth and values with life distinguishes the Catholic school from other schools. This is a matter of crucial importance today in view of contemporary trends and pressures to compartmentalize life and learning and to isolate the religious dimension of existence from other areas of human life.⁶⁵

A school's religious formation must not be half-hearted, compromised, or an afterthought.

To use the words of Leo XIII: It is necessary not only that religious instruction be given to the young at certain fixed times, but also that every other subject taught, be permeated with Christian piety. If this is wanting, if this sacred atmosphere does not pervade and warm the hearts of masters and scholars alike, little good can be expected from any kind of learning, and considerable harm will often be the consequence.⁶⁶

One component of spiritual development is specific teaching of Catholic doctrine.

Educational programs for the young must strive to teach doctrine, to do so within the experience of Christian community, and to prepare individuals for effective Christian witness and service to others. In doing this they help foster the student's growth in personal holiness and his relationship with Christ.⁶⁷

The presentation of Catholic doctrine through religious instruction is not the whole of the school's efforts; a catechetical component is also involved.

Religious instruction is appropriate in every school, for the purpose of the school is human formation in all of its fundamental dimensions, and the religious dimension is an integral part of this formation. Religious education is actually a right - with the corresponding duties - of the student and of the parents. It is also, at least in the case of the Catholic religion, an extremely important instrument for attaining the adequate synthesis of faith and culture that has been insisted on so often. Therefore, the teaching of the Catholic religion, distinct from and at the same time complementary to catechesis properly so called, ought to form a part of the curriculum of every school.⁶⁸

A result of this process is a religious formation that leads to an active and lived life of faith and worship.

The life of faith is expressed in acts of religion. The teacher will assist students to open their hearts in confidence to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through personal and liturgical prayer. The latter is not just another way of praying; it is the official prayer of the Church, which makes the mystery of Christ present in our lives - especially through the Eucharist, Sacrifice and Sacrament, and through the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Religious experiences are then seen, not as something externally imposed, but as a free and loving response to the God who first loved us. The virtues of faith and religion, thus rooted and cultivated, are enabled to develop during childhood, youth, and in all the years that follow.⁶⁹

Questions to Aid Reflection or Assessment

Below are a series of questions to facilitate reflection and to begin a discussion of how well your school fulfills focuses on the spiritual development of students. Choose the most important questions for your school.

Catechetical Content

- ◇ Are the school's catechetical efforts well thought out, effective, joyful, and targeted toward the development of a fully integrated faith life which engages the students' minds and finds lived expression in their day-to-day lives?

- ◇ How effectively does our catechetical program engage the intellect and will of our students? Is our religion program rigorous enough? Do our students understand the tenets of our Catholic faith with sufficient depth?
- ◇ Do our students know the basics of the Catholic faith and doctrine appropriate to their grade level? Do they know basic prayers and traditions of the Church?
- ◇ How well does our catechetical program present our understanding that God’s revelation – received by means of the gift of supernatural faith – is transmitted to us through Sacred Scripture, the living Tradition of the Church, and the authentic Magisterium?
- ◇ Does our catechetical program adequately reflect the reality of God’s mercy and forgiveness, His call for His disciples to live lives of love and service to others, to seek justice, and to minister to the poor, marginalized, and outcast?
- ◇ Where and how are foundational principles of Catholic Social Teaching explicitly taught?
- ◇ Are all Catholic materials presented in our catechetical coursework without any doctrinal error and completely faithful to Catholic teaching as presented in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*? Do we send any mixed signals to our students or families that “some” Church doctrine is in error or can be ignored?
- ◇ Is Sacred Scripture an integral part of students’ school life?

Action Items: Specific ideas or plans to work on the spiritual development of students.

Reflection on Church Teaching: Part 3

Integral Formation Focused on Moral Development

The intellectual and spiritual formation we provide our students assists them in living a life of virtue guided by a well-formed Catholic conscience and a consistent moral ethic.

While Catholic establishments should respect freedom of conscience, that is to say, avoid burdening consciences from without by exerting physical or moral pressure, especially in the case of the religious activity of adolescents, they still have a grave duty to offer a religious training suited to the often widely varying religious situations of the pupils. They also have a duty to make them understand that, although God's call to serve Him in spirit and truth, in accordance with the Commandments of God and the precepts of the Church, does not apply constraint, it is nevertheless binding in conscience unrestrained liberty, at once illusory and false.⁷⁰

Authentic freedom, the ability to do what one ought in pursuit of the good, requires instruction and practice in virtues.

...the Catholic school tries to create within its walls a climate in which the pupil's faith will gradually mature and enable him to assume the responsibility placed on him by Baptism. It will

give pride of place in the education it provides through Christian Doctrine to the gradual formation of conscience in fundamental, permanent virtues—above all the theological virtues, and charity in particular, which is, so to speak, the life-giving spirit which transforms a man of virtue into a man of Christ.⁷¹

In an age of pluralism and relativism, the Catholic school holds out fundamental goods and teaches clearly about what is right and what is wrong.

Cultural pluralism, therefore, leads the Church to reaffirm her mission of education to insure strong character formation. Her children, then, will be capable both of resisting the debilitating influence of relativism and of living up to the demands made on them by their Baptism...For this reason the Church is prompted to mobilize her educational resources in the face of the materialism, pragmatism and technocracy of contemporary society.⁷²

In forming the moral compass of our students based on Catholic truths, the school works closely with the student's primary educators, the parents.

Partnership between a Catholic school and the families of the students must continue and be strengthened: not simply to be able to deal with academic problems that may arise, but rather so that the educational goals of the school can be achieved. Close cooperation with the family is especially important when treating sensitive issues such as religious, moral, or sexual education, orientation toward a profession, or a choice of one's vocation in life. It is not a question of convenience, but a partnership based on faith. Catholic tradition teaches that God has bestowed on the family its own specific and unique educational mission.⁷³

Questions to Aid Reflection or Assessment

Below are a series of questions to facilitate reflection and to begin a discussion of how well your school approaches the moral development of students. Choose the most important questions for your school.

Virtues

- ◇ How and where do we teach the virtues, and how and where do we encourage a life of virtue?
- ◇ How do we integrate virtues into our student discipline/formation program? Is our discipline program developmentally sensitive and focused on human dignity and the flourishing of the person?
- ◇ How can we help students maintain purity of life and chastity in all relationships in a world which suggests a different path to happiness?

Moral Teachings

- ◇ How confident are we that students' consciences (appropriate to their age and developmental stages) are being fully informed by teachings faithful to the Catholic Church?
- ◇ Are we sufficiently arming them with strong intellectual understanding of objective truth and Catholic dogma that they can bring to bear on their subjective desires when in a moral dilemma? How can we strengthen them against a culture of relativism?
- ◇ How well have we addressed issues of the misuse of technology, influences of the secular media, risky behavior, or activities that compromise chastity?
- ◇ Do we, at the age-appropriate level, confront the moral and ethical flashpoints between Catholicism and the common culture? Specifically, is our witness and instruction clear on issues of the dignity of all human life and the particular evils of abortion and euthanasia; on the sanctity of natural marriage as the indissoluble lifelong union of one man and one woman; the beauty and fullness of human sexuality which can only be

properly exercised by married couples in the service of both love and life?

◇ Which moral issues are our students struggling with most? What are we doing to clearly present Church teaching in this area and with what effect?

◇ Is all our moral formation 100 percent faithful to the teachings of the Catholic faith, especially as articulated in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*?

Partnering with Parents

◇ Are parents involved in any human sexuality programs administered by our school? Are parents allowed to opt out their students from these programs or other sensitive programs or initiatives of the school?

◇ Does our school support or sponsor family-based human sexuality programs? Does our school have a means for assisting parents in this area?

Action Items: Specific ideas or plans to work on the moral development of students.

Reflection on Church Teaching: Part 4

Integral Formation Focused on Physical Development and Expression

The Catholic Church teaches of an intimate unity between body and soul. We are incarnate beings whose physical lives and bodily expression should be in deep and natural accord with our souls and our spiritual life and dispositions. The Catholic school seeks to develop all these facets of the human person.

Since true education must strive for complete formation of the human person that looks to his or her final end as well as to the common good of societies, children and youth are to be nurtured in such a way that they are able to develop their physical, moral, and intellectual talents harmoniously, acquire a more perfect sense of responsibility and right use of freedom, and are formed to participate actively in social life.⁷⁴

This understanding of the human person is based on a Christian anthropology which acknowledges our complete human nature, including our dignity and our brokenness:

Students should be helped to see the human person as a living creature having both a physical and a spiritual nature; each of us has an immortal soul, and we are in need of redemption. The older students can gradually come to a more mature understanding of all that is implied in the concept of “person”: intelligence and will, freedom and feelings, the capacity to be an active and creative agent; a being endowed with both rights and duties, capable of interpersonal relationships, called to a specific mission in the world.⁷⁵

The Catholic school provides assistance for a student’s complete human experience: mind, soul, and body.

Therefore children and young people must be helped, with the aid of the latest advances in psychology and the arts and science of teaching, to develop harmoniously their physical, moral and intellectual endowments so that they may gradually acquire a mature sense of responsibility in striving endlessly to form their own lives properly and in pursuing true freedom as they surmount the vicissitudes of life with courage and constancy.⁷⁶

Mindful of the incarnate nature of human experience, formation at a Catholic school involves helping students carry themselves with integrity and harmony as they interact with God's creation.

The human person is present in all the truths of faith: created in "the image and likeness" of God; elevated by God to the dignity of a child of God; unfaithful to God in original sin, but redeemed by Christ; a temple of the Holy Spirit; a member of the Church; destined to eternal life...In practice, this means respect for oneself and for others.⁷⁷

It also means respect and care for one's physical health and a life lived chastely.

Not a few young people, unable to find any meaning in life or trying to find an escape from loneliness, turn to alcohol drugs, the erotic, the exotic etc. Christian education is faced with the huge challenge of helping these young people discover something of value in their lives...We must learn to care for our body and its health, and this includes physical activity and sports. And we must be careful of our sexual integrity through the virtue of chastity, because sexual energies are also a gift of God, contributing to the perfection of the person and having a providential function for the life of society and of the Church. Thus, gradually, the teacher will guide students to the idea, and then to the realization, of a process of total formation.⁷⁸

Questions to Aid Reflection or Assessment:

Below are a series of questions to facilitate reflection and to begin a discussion of physical development and expression. Choose the most important questions for your school.

- ◇ Do we have programs in place that address the physical development and expression of our students?

- ◇ Do all our programs fully support the Christian integral formation of our students by bringing in spirituality, intellectual growth, and maturing discernment?

- ◇ Do we have sufficient protocols to protect and guide our programs to ensure they are always on mission? How do we address inappropriate issues and events that sometimes sneak by?
- ◇ Does each program explicitly lead our students to a fuller expression of, appreciation of, and participation in Truth, Beauty, and Goodness? Where do we see this?

Extra-Curricular and Co-Curricular Programs

- ◇ Do our extra-curricular programs assist in developing our students into the fullness of their humanity in Christ? As Christ is the model for our school, is He the model of all extra-curricular programs? Is He welcome in each program? Would He feel at home on one of our teams or at our dances?
- ◇ Is all that we present and hold forth in our extra-curricular programs lead to greater spiritual and emotional health and maturity? Is there anything working against our goals for virtue development, especially the virtues of kindness, respect, purity, and modesty?
- ◇ Do we represent our Christian and Catholic faith well in word and deed to audience members, spectators, visitors, and opposing teams?

Student Physical Health

- ◇ What can we do better in terms of drug and alcohol prevention or response? Do we have a faith-based plan to assist student who may be struggling with drugs or alcohol problems?
- ◇ How does our school address the needs of at-risk students (i.e., students living in poverty or with single parents)?

Action Items: Specific actions items or plans to work on physical development and expression.

Principle V

Imparts a Christian Understanding of the World

In the light of faith, Catholic education critically and systematically transmits the secular and religious “cultural patrimony handed down from previous generations,” especially that which makes a person more human and contributes to the integral formation of students.⁷⁹ Both educator and student are called to participate in the dialogue with culture and to pursue “the integration of culture with faith and faith with living.”⁸⁰ Catholic education imparts a “Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture, and of history,” ordering “the whole of human culture to the news of salvation.”⁸¹ This hallmark of Catholic education, to “bring human wisdom into an encounter with divine wisdom,”⁸² cultivates “in students the intellectual, creative, and aesthetic faculties of the human person,” introduces a cultural heritage, and prepares them for professional life and to take on the responsibilities and duties of society and the Church.⁸³ Students are prepared to work for the evangelization of culture and for the common good of society.⁸⁴

Reflection on Church Teaching: Part 1

Traditions, Values, and Evangelization

The Church teaches that the task of a Catholic school is to provide, fundamentally a synthesis of culture and faith, and a synthesis of faith and life: the first is reached by integrating all the different aspects of human knowledge through the subjects taught, in the light of the Gospel; the second in the growth of the virtues characteristic of the Christian.⁸⁵

In this synthesis of faith, life, and culture, culture can be understood as the artistic and intellectual achievements of the surrounding society. Additionally,

...the term culture indicates all those means by which “man develops and perfects his many bodily and spiritual qualities; he strives

by his knowledge and his labour, to bring the world itself under his control. He renders social life more human both in the family and the civic community, through improvement of customs and institutions. Throughout the course of time he expresses, communicates and conserves in his works, great spiritual experiences and desires, that they might be of advantage to the progress of many, even of the whole human family.⁸⁶

Both the current common culture and aspects of cultural history giving rise to it are to be explored and critically analyzed in the light of the Catholic faith. Positive elements that can be brought into harmony with the faith are to be celebrated and expanded. Elements appearing in contradiction to the faith are to be challenged and critically analyzed. This is a role to which Catholic schools are particularly suited.

A school uses its own specific means for the integral formation of the human person: the communication of culture. It is extremely important, then, that the Catholic educator reflect on the profound relationship that exists between culture and the Church. For the Church not only influences culture and is, in turn, conditioned by culture; the Church embraces everything in human culture which is compatible with Revelation and which it needs in order to proclaim the message of Christ and express it more adequately according to the cultural characteristics of each people and each age. The close relationship between culture and the life of the Church is an especially clear manifestation of the unity that exists between creation and redemption. For this reason, if the communication of culture is to be a genuine educational activity, it must not only be organic, but also critical and evaluative, historical and dynamic. Faith will provide Catholic educators with some essential principles for critique and evaluation; faith will help them to see all of human history as a history of salvation which culminates in the fullness of the Kingdom. This puts culture into a creative context, constantly being perfected.⁸⁷

Catholic schools do not approach various cultures and cultural elements from a timid relativistic mindset, but by evaluating them in terms of the Gospel and especially authentic human flourishing.

The transmission of a culture ought to be especially attentive to the practical effects of that culture, and strengthen those aspects of it which will make a person more human. In particular, it ought to pay attention to the religious dimension of the culture and the emerging ethical requirements to be found in it.⁸⁸

In addition to critically examining and transmitting those best elements of human culture in general, the school also embodies and imparts a specific Catholic culture: that is an integrated pattern of knowledge, values, beliefs, behaviors, and traditions that celebrate and pass on to a new generation the unique contributions of the Church in the arts and the intellectual life, enriching the social and faith lives of our students with the great patrimony of the Catholic Church.

Catholic schools provide young people with sound Church teaching through a broad-based curriculum, where faith and culture are intertwined in all areas of a school's life. By equipping our young people with a sound education, rooted in the Gospel message, the Person of Jesus Christ, and rich in the cherished traditions and liturgical practices of our faith, we ensure that they have the foundation to live morally and uprightly in our complex modern world. This unique Catholic identity makes our Catholic elementary and secondary schools "schools for the human person" and allows them to fill a critical role in the future life of our Church, our country, and our world.⁸⁹

Through this transmission of culture, students become Christ for others and work to evangelize both inside and outside the school community.

The mission of the Catholic school is the integral formation of students, so that they may be true to their condition as Christ's disciples and as such work effectively for the evangelization of culture and for the common good of society.⁹⁰

Questions to Aid Reflection and Assessment:

Below are a series of questions to facilitate reflection and to begin a discussion of how well your school imparts traditions, values, and Catholic culture and at the same time evangelizes students, families,

and the surrounding community. Choose the most important questions for your school.

Catholic Culture

◇ Where and how do we transmit the best of our Catholic culture? Where do our students experience the best in Catholic music and art? How well-versed and comfortable are our students with all things Catholic (e.g., imagery, stories, traditions, symbols, language)?

Common Culture

◇ Where and how do we transmit the best of our common human culture? Where do our students experience the best in music, drama, art, and dance? Are they culturally literate? Are they cultured?

◇ How well equipped are our students to stand strong against harmful elements of popular culture?

◇ How well do we harmonize culture and faith, and faith and life, in our classes and in all aspects of our school?

Culture and Curriculum

◇ How do we seek to integrate various disciplines so as to expose deep sympathies between subject matters, using them to clarify and perfect each other and to build a school culture based on wisdom?

◇ Have we unthinkingly conformed to educational paradigms, consumerist parental demands, or societal norms and expectations, thus jeopardizing, or diluting, our mission of Catholic education?

◇ Do secular school standards (such as the Common Core, International Baccalaureate, Advanced Placement, etc.), in whole or

in part, inform the curriculum? What particular Catholic standards are offered instead of, or in addition to, secular standards in each discipline so as to further Catholic culture and a rich intellectual life focused on the pursuit of the true, good, and beautiful?

Evangelization

- ◇ How do we address interreligious issues in theology classes, religious instruction, and throughout academic disciplines and remain faithful to the evangelistic mission of the Church?
- ◇ How well equipped are they to transform those errant elements and evangelize the common culture?
- ◇ Do we as teachers live a life of culture, pursuing the higher things and the good and beautiful in our lives? How do we share a joy for what we read, study, create, watch, and listen to so as to provide an attractive example for our students?

Action Items: Specific action items and plans to work on imparting traditions, values, common culture, and evangelization efforts at the school.

Reflection on Church Teaching: Part 2

Literature, History, and the Arts

The school's curriculum is the vehicle for examining various cultural elements.

From the nature of the Catholic school also stems one of the most significant elements of its educational project: the synthesis between culture and faith. The endeavor to interweave reason and faith, which has become the heart of individual subjects, makes for unity, articulation, and coordination, bringing forth within what is learned in a school a Christian vision of the world, of life, of culture, and of history.⁹¹

A Catholic school curriculum examines issues of culture, meaning, faith, and value in the light of the Gospel. Literature, history, and the arts lend themselves readily to this enterprise.

Literature and the arts are also, in their own way, of great importance to the life of the Church. They strive to make known the proper nature of man, his problems and his experiences in trying to know and perfect both himself and the world. They have much to do with revealing man's place in history and in the world; with illustrating the miseries and joys, the needs and strengths of man and with foreshadowing a better life for him. Thus they are able to elevate human life, expressed in multifold forms according to various times and regions.⁹²

Not only is history analyzed for its content and facts, but also for its comportment to reality and truth. Catholic schools are free to discuss and unravel the numerous historical circumstances where God's hand is seen interjecting itself in temporal affairs. These opportunities are vast and plentiful and add an additional dimension to the study of historical timelines.

Teachers should guide the students' work in such a way that they will be able to discover a religious dimension in the world of human history. As a preliminary, they should be encouraged to develop a taste for historical truth, and therefore to realize the need to look critically at texts and curricula which, at times, are imposed by a government or distorted by the ideology of the author...they

will see the development of civilizations, and learn about progress...When they are ready to appreciate it, students can be invited to reflect on the fact that this human struggle takes place within the divine history [of] universal salvation. At this moment, the religious dimension of history begins to shine forth in all its luminous grandeur.⁹³

The study of human historical and social realities in a Catholic school occurs in the context of a permanent philosophical heritage which must be understood.

Every society has its own heritage of accumulated wisdom. Many people find inspiration in these philosophical and religious concepts which have endured for millennia. The systematic genius of classical Greek and European thought has, over the centuries, generated countless different doctrinal systems, but it has also given us a set of truths which we can recognize as a part of our permanent philosophical heritage.⁹⁴

This heritage includes a rich patrimony of social justice which should also be reflected in the curriculum.

The curriculum must help the students reflect on the great problems of our time, including those where one sees more clearly the difficult situation of a large part of humanity's living conditions. These would include the unequal distribution of resources, poverty, injustice and human rights denied.⁹⁵

Especially in the arts, both auditory and visual, Catholic schools have a rich tradition to draw from for discussions of beauty and harmony and that which fulfills a human soul.

Literary and artistic works depict the struggles of societies, of families, and of individuals. They spring from the depths of the human heart, revealing its lights and its shadows, its hope and its despair. The Christian perspective goes beyond the merely human, and offers more penetrating criteria for understanding the human struggle and the mysteries of the human spirit. Furthermore, an adequate religious formation has been the starting point for the vocation of a number of Christian artists and art critics. In the upper grades, a teacher can bring students to: an even more profound appreciation of artistic works: as a reflection of the divine beauty in tangible

form. Both the Fathers of the Church and the masters of Christian philosophy teach this in their writings on aesthetics—St. Augustine invites us to go beyond the intention of the artists in order to find the eternal order of God in the work of art; St. Thomas sees the presence of the Divine Word in art.⁹⁶

Questions to Aid Reflection and Assessment:

Below are a series of questions to facilitate reflection and to begin a discussion of how well your school understands how a Catholic school passes on culture through history, literature, and the arts. Choose the most important questions for your school.

Literature Curriculum

- ◇ Is literature selected that teaches by positive or negative example what it means to be genuinely and fully human and ethical as understood by the Catholic Church and as modeled by the one perfect man, Jesus?
- ◇ How do we select and use literature to develop a general awareness of a lived Catholic worldview and approach to life? Does the literature we use accurately portray Catholics and the Catholic experience?
- ◇ How do we select and use literature to assist our students to move beyond the self? Are sufficient examples of nobility, imagination, and healthy adventure presented to the students for their inspiration and emulation?
- ◇ How do we evaluate literature for its developmental appropriateness, so as not to offend the sensibilities or growth in virtue of the student?
- ◇ How do we select and use literature to develop a general cultural literacy and familiarity with the great works of the world? Where do our students gain cultural literacy of the great books which have influenced western thought?

◇ Do we promote and present literature and reading for the sheer joy and creativity of the experience? Do we properly feed the imaginations of the students with excellent works and let them grow in wonder and delight?

History Curriculum

◇ What changes and additions, if any, does our program make to secular history materials to account for a Catholic understanding of human history?

◇ How do we present the Catholic worldview that history begins in God and ends in God? That history has and serves a divine purpose?

◇ How and where does our program include an account of the history of the Catholic Church and its impact in human events? How and where does the program include the stories of important Catholic figures and saints in the development of human history?

◇ How do we challenge students to evaluate history in light of Catholic moral norms so as to improve their own moral life and decision-making?

◇ How do we use history to discover the motivating values that have informed particular societies and how they correlate with Catholic teaching?

◇ How does our social studies curriculum help students understand and commit to the common good, particularly the needs of the poor, injustices, human rights and dignity, and threats to religious freedom?

Music and Arts Curriculum

- ◇ Does our school have a robust music and visual arts program?
How can we do more with the arts?
- ◇ How can, or do, we use the visual and performing arts programs to form the human intellect and delight the soul?
- ◇ How does our program assist in the development of discrimination and taste? How do we provide our students with the tools, experiences, and exposure to great works of art and music so they are able to explore harmony, radiance, balance, and perfection?
- ◇ Does our program nurture healthy creativity, mirroring that part of our being that makes us in the image and likeness of God?

Action Items: Specific action items and plans to pass on a Catholic culture through literature, history, music, and the arts.

Reflection on Church Teaching: Part 3

Science and Mathematics

The school's science and math curriculum is the vehicle not just for examining standard scientific content, but also for introducing students to the Catholic intellectual tradition and the specific contributions of Catholics to the world of math and science. It can help the students see the limitations of materialism and open them up to the depths of wonder held in God's creation.

The Catholic school should teach its pupils to discern in the voice of the universe the Creator Whom it reveals and, in the conquests of science, to know God and man better.⁹⁷

By not ignoring the religious dimension, Catholic schools

...help their students to understand that positive science, and the technology allied to it, is a part of the universe created by God. Understanding this can help encourage an interest in research: the whole of creation, from the distant celestial bodies and the immeasurable cosmic forces down to the infinitesimal particles and waves of matter and energy, all bear the imprint of the Creator's wisdom and power. The wonder that past ages felt when contemplating this universe, recorded by the Biblical authors, is still valid for the students of today; the only difference is that we have a knowledge that is much more vast and profound. There can be no conflict between faith and true scientific knowledge; both find their source in God. The student who is able to discover the harmony between faith and science will, in future professional life, be better able to put science and technology to the service of men and women, and to the service of God. It is a way of giving back to God what he has first given to us.⁹⁸

Creation is explored and celebrated as a beautiful and gratuitous gift from God and which has its own end and value in God's plan. Scientific education, like all education,

is not given for the purpose of gaining power but as an aid towards a fuller understanding of, and communion with man, events and things.⁹⁹

Education in science includes the relationship of science to other disciplines in the life of the intellect.

Furthermore, when man gives himself to the various disciplines of philosophy, history and of mathematical and natural science, and when he cultivates the arts, he can do very much to elevate the human family to a more sublime understanding of truth, goodness, and beauty, and to the formation of considered opinions which have universal value. Thus mankind may be more clearly enlightened by that marvelous Wisdom which was with God from all eternity, composing all things with him, rejoicing in the earth and delighting in the sons of men. In this way, the human spirit, being less subjected to material things, can be more easily drawn to the worship and contemplation of the Creator. Moreover, by the impulse of grace, he is disposed to acknowledge the Word of God, Who before He became flesh in order to save all and to sum up all in Himself was already “in the world” as “the true light which enlightens every man” (John 1:9-10). Indeed today’s progress in science and technology can foster a certain exclusive emphasis on observable data, and agnosticism about everything else. For the methods of investigation which these sciences use can be wrongly considered as the supreme rule of seeking the whole truth. By virtue of their methods these sciences cannot penetrate to the intimate notion of things. Indeed the danger is present that man, confiding too much in the discoveries of today, may think that he is sufficient unto himself and no longer seek the higher things.¹⁰⁰

This notion is in line with the Catholic intellectual tradition in which

Catholic schools strive to relate all of the sciences to salvation and sanctification. Students are shown how Jesus illumines all of life—science, mathematics, history, business, biology, and so forth.¹⁰¹

As God is the source of all reality and because all things live, move, and have their being in Him, an understanding of all aspects of creation can assist in understanding and glorifying God in whom all truths converge.

Questions to Aid Reflection and Assessment:

Below are a series questions to facilitate reflection and to begin a discussion of how well your school imparts a Christian understanding

of science and mathematics. Choose the most important questions for your school.

Science Curriculum

- ◇ How does our science curriculum promote the unity of faith and reason and confidence there is no contradiction between the God of nature and the God of faith?
- ◇ How does our science curriculum assist students in appreciating that God manifests Himself in creation to human reason in its natural operation?
- ◇ How does our science curriculum instill a deep sense of wonder about the natural universe and the beauty and goodness of God reflected in the natural sciences?
- ◇ How do we instill a respect for God's role and purpose for creation? How do we insure that scientific knowledge is not used for utilitarian purposes alone or for a misguided manipulation of nature, but rather especially is focused on pursuit of Truth for its own value and for the greater glory of God?
- ◇ Where does our science program present the significant contributions of the Catholic Church and Catholic scientists such as Mendel, Lavoisier, Pasteur, Galileo, Gregor, Volta, and Copernicus? Where and how do we counteract the false narrative that the Church is anti-science?
- ◇ How do we assist students to address complex issues of creation, evolution, care for the environment, and respect for the human person (and the human body) from a Catholic perspective?

Mathematics Curriculum

- ◇ How does our program assist students to see the beauty present in mathematics? How do we use mathematics as a tool to develop intellectual discipline and a love of order?
- ◇ How do we use mathematics to open the mind to the wonders of creation? Do we develop a sense of wonder about mathematical relationships and the glory and dignity of human reason as both a gift from God and a reflection of Him?
- ◇ How do we assist students to develop their reason for precise, determined, and accurate questioning and inquiry in the pursuit infinite and ultimate knowledge and Truth?

Notes

- 1 Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, The Catholic School (Vatican City, 1977) 5-7; Pope Paul VI, Gravissimum Educationis (Vatican City, 1965) 2; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, To Teach as Jesus Did (Washington, National Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1972) 7.
- 2 Matthew 28:19-20.
- 3 Pope Benedict XVI, Meeting with Catholic Educators: Address of His Holiness Benedict XVI (Washington, April 2008); Pope Benedict XVI, Spe Salvi (Vatican City, 2007) 4.
- 4 The Catholic School (1977) 34; Congregation for Catholic Education, Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion (Vatican, 2014) III.
- 5 Congregation for Catholic Education, The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School (Vatican City, 1988) 25.
- 6 Congregation for Catholic Education, Educating Together in Catholic Schools: A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful (Vatican City, 2007) 5, 10; The Religious Dimension of Education 44.
- 7 The Catholic School (1977) 49.
- 8 Canon Law Society of America, Code of Canon Law (Washington, D.C., 1983) 795; Gravissimum Educationis, Introduction; Congregation for Catholic Education, Circular Letter to the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on Religious Education in Schools (Vatican City, 2009) 1.
- 9 The Catholic School (1977) 54.
- 10 Gravissimum Educationis 2.
- 11 To Teach as Jesus Did 7.
- 12 The Religious Dimension of Education 25.
- 13 Pope Benedict VI (2008).
- 14 Code of Canon Law 795.
- 15 The Religious Dimension of Education 1.
- 16 Educating Together 10, 12-14.
- 17 Code of Canon Law 793 §1; Congregation for Catholic Education, Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith (Vatican City, 1982) 12.
- 18 Lay Catholics in Schools 22; The Catholic School (1977) 53; The Religious Dimension of Education 34.
- 19 Educating Together 50; The Religious Dimension of Education 44.
- 20 Educating Together 5; Congregation for Catholic Education, Educating in Intercultural Dialogue in the Catholic School: Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love (Vatican, 2013) 86; Lay Catholics in Schools 18; United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Renewing Our Commitment to Catholic Elementary and Secondary Schools in the Third Millennium (Washington, D.C., 2005) excerpt.
- 21 The Religious Dimension of Education 26, 28.

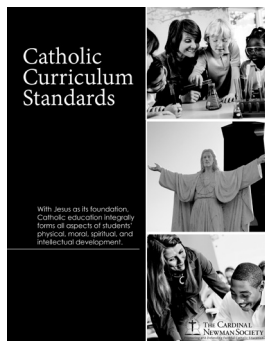
- 22 The Religious Dimension of Education 25-26, 28-29, 40; Educating Together 48.
- 23 Code of Canon Law 795; To Teach as Jesus Did 107; The Religious Dimension of Education 39; Educating Today and Tomorrow, conclusion.
- 24 Gravissimum Educationis 5, 8; Code of Canon Law 803§2; To Teach as Jesus Did 104.
- 25 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, National Directory for Catechesis (Washington D.C., 2005) 231-233; Congregation for Catholic Education, The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium (Vatican, 1997) 19.
- 26 Educating Together 12.
- 27 The Religious Dimension of Education 40.
- 28 Educating Together 39.
- 29 The Catholic School (1977) 32.
- 30 The Religious Dimension of Education 103.
- 31 Circular Letter 6.
- 32 The Religious Dimension of Education 44.
- 33 To Teach as Jesus Did 106.
- 34 The Catholic School on the Threshold 19.
- 35 Educating Together 25.
- 36 Lay Catholics in Schools 32.
- 37 Code of Canon Law 803 §2.
- 38 National Directory for Catechesis 231, 233.
- 39 Renewing Our Commitment 272.
- 40 The Catholic School (1977) 54-55; Pope Pius XI, Divini Illius Magistri (Vatican City, 1929) 15-17, 76; Catechism of the Catholic Church (Vatican City, 1993) 2675; Educating Today and Tomorrow I, 1b.
- 41 Pope Saint John Paul II, Catechesi Tradendae (Vatican City, 1979) 23; Educating Together 17, 26.
- 42 The Religious Dimension of Education 78; Educating Together 26.
- 43 The Religious Dimension of Education 79, 83.
- 44 The Catholic School 54.
- 45 The Religious Dimension of Education 25.
- 46 The Religious Dimension of Education 29.
- 47 The Religious Dimension of Education 79.
- 48 The Religious Dimension of Education 78.
- 49 The Religious Dimension of Education 83.
- 50 Lay Catholics in Schools 40.
- 51 Circular Letter 1; The Catholic School on the Threshold 4; The Religious Dimension of Education 98.

- 52 The Catholic School on the Threshold 9; The Religious Dimension of Education 55, 84.
- 53 The Religious Dimension of Education 95; The Catholic School (1977) 7; Educating Today and Tomorrow III.
- 54 The Catholic School on the Threshold 10; The Catholic School (1977) 12, 45; Educating Together 46.
- 55 The Religious Dimension of Education 51, 63; Educating in Intercultural Dialogue 64-67; The Catholic School (1977) 37; Lay Catholics in Schools 56; Educating Together 24.
- 56 The Religious Dimension of Education 84, 112.
- 57 The Religious Dimension of Education 1; Educating in Intercultural Dialogue 56; The Catholic School on the Threshold 14; To Teach as Jesus Did 102.
- 58 The Religious Dimension of Education 49.
- 59 Educating in Intercultural Dialogue 66-67.
- 60 The Catholic School on the Threshold 14.
- 61 Educating Today and Tomorrow III, 1c, conclusion.
- 62 The Religious Dimension of Education 49.
- 63 Pope Saint John Paul II, Ad Limina Visit of Bishops from Illinois, Indiana, and Wisconsin (Vatican City, May 1998) 3.
- 64 The Religious Dimension of Education 57.
- 65 To Teach as Jesus Did 105.
- 66 Pope Pius XI (1929) 80.
- 67 To Teach as Jesus Did 82.
- 68 Lay Catholics in Schools 56.
- 69 The Religious Dimension of Education 83.
- 70 Pope Saint John Paul II (1979) 69.
- 71 The Catholic School 47.
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- 78 The Religious Dimension of Education 13, 84.
- 79 Lay Catholics in Schools 12; The Catholic School (1977) 26, 36; The Religious Dimension of Education 108.
- 80 The Catholic School (1977) 15, 49; The Religious Dimension of Education 34, 51, 52.

- 81 The Catholic School on the Threshold 14; The Religious Dimension of Education 53, 100; Gravissimum Educationis 8.
- 82 The Religious Dimension of Education 57.
- 83 Gravissimum Educationis 5; Lay Catholics in Schools 12.
- 84 Pope Saint John Paul II (1998); Renewing Our Commitment, excerpt; Educating Today and Tomorrow II-1.
- 85 The Catholic School 37.
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- 89 Renewing Our Commitment, excerpts.
- 90 Pope Saint John Paul II (1998).
- 91 The Catholic School on the Threshold 14.
- 92 Pope Paul VI, Gaudium et Spes (Vatican City, 1965) 62.
- 93 The Religious Dimension of Education 58 - 59.
- 94 The Religious Dimension of Education 57.
- 95 Pope Pius XI (1929) 21.
- 96 The Religious Dimension of Education 61.
- 97 The Catholic School (1977) 46.
- 98 The Religious Dimension of Education 54.
- 99 The Catholic School (1977) 56.
- 100 Pope Paul VI (1965) 57.
- 101 National Directory for Catechesis 233.

Other Resources from The Cardinal Newman Society

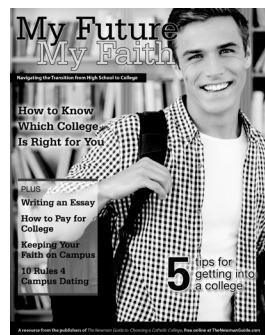
Catholic Curriculum Standards help keep focus on what is unique about Catholic elementary and secondary education: its evangelizing mission to integrally form students in Christ and transmit a Christian worldview. The standards cover English language arts, math, scientific topics, and history, focusing on unique Catholic insights into these curricular areas and complementing the Church's standards for religious instruction



The Call to Teach, with the support of magisterial documents, explicates the teachings of the Catholic Church summarizing the role of lay Catholic teachers and their qualifications; pedagogical, educational, and cultural goals; relationship to the Church; and Gospel witness.



My Future, My Faith, a full-color magazine, features more than a dozen articles designed to help parents and students navigate the transition from high school to college. Each year the New Society distributes free copies to Catholic high schools across the country.



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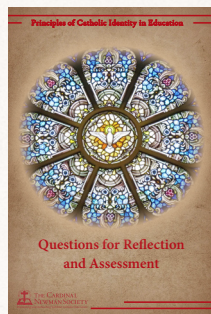
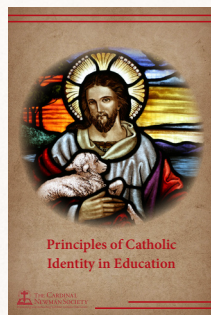
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