



## Renfrew County Catholic District School Board

**We are proudly committed to the distinctive character of our Catholic schools. By delivering quality instruction within a religious and moral framework, we are preparing students to successfully meet the challenges of the twenty-first century in every aspect of their lives!**



What the soul is to the body, let Christians be to the world.  
-St. Augustine



## Renfrew County Catholic Schools **Educating People of Character**

### ***Educating the Whole Person***

Catholic schools educate the character of the whole person: physically, intellectually, socially and spiritually. Our unique mandate allows us to provide students with quality instruction that reinforces a vision of life rooted in the Gospel message of Jesus Christ.

### ***Knowledge in the Service of Love***

While promoting knowledge, skills and abilities, we stress the importance of witnessing a life of faith through commitment to the worshipping community, to family and civic responsibility. We encourage young people's self-discovery through Christ-like self-giving love and service to others:

The Catholic school has as its specific duty the complete Christian formation of its pupils... It knows that this integration of faith and life is part of a life-long process of conversion until the pupil becomes what God wishes [them] to be. Young people have to be taught to share their personal lives with God. They are to overcome their individualism and discover, in the light of faith, their specific vocation to live responsibly in a community with others. The very pattern of the Christian life draws them to commit themselves to serve God in their [brothers and sisters] and to make the world a better place for [humankind] to live in.

*The Catholic School*, Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988. No. 45



## The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations Values and Attitudes

### Defining the Character of Catholic Education

Catholic education in Ontario identifies fifty-two core expectations which shape the character of its schools, the curriculum they deliver, and the students they teach. These *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations* embody the Gospel values at the heart of Catholic education, and portray the ideal characteristics of young men and women graduating from our schools. These fifty-two expectations are divided into seven life-giving arenas:

**A Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic  
Faith Community**

**An Effective Communicator**

**A Reflective, Creative, and Holistic Thinker**

**A Self-directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner**

**A Collaborative Contributor**

**A Caring Family Member**

**A Responsible Citizen**

The fifty-two *Catholic Graduate Expectations* and the Gospel values they embody shape the learning and character of our students throughout the Catholic school curriculum.

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### Religious and Family Life Education

Our Religious Education and Family Life Education Programs form the heart of our school curriculum, shedding light on the true nature and purpose of each subject area of study within the Catholic school, whose function is:

...to create for the school community a special atmosphere animated by the Gospel spirit of freedom and charity, to help youth grow according to the new creatures they were made through baptism as they develop their own personalities, and finally to order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation so that the knowledge the students gradually acquire of the world, life and [humanity] is illumined by faith.

(Second Vatican Council, *Declaration on Christian Education [Gravissimum Educationis]* no. 8)

## Our Vision

INSPIRED BY OUR RICH HERITAGE AND CHALLENGED BY THE STRUGGLES OF OUR PAST, WE ARE AN INCLUSIVE CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL COMMUNITY CALLED TO EXPRESS OUR MISSION AS CHURCH TO PASS ON THE GOOD NEWS OF JESUS CHRIST, TO MAKE IT RELEVANT IN THE WORLD TODAY, AND TO BE THE HOPE FOR THE FUTURE.

### A Rich Heritage

Renfrew County Catholic schools were founded on the hard work and sacrifice of many dedicated priests, religious and laity. Responding to the call *Go out and preach the Good News*, they established schools combining academic formation with instruction in the riches of our Catholic faith.

### Challenges and Blessings

Each of our schools has its own unique history of overcoming the challenges which threatened their existence. Our school communities and board family have consistently rallied to support our schools, convinced of the blessing which Catholic education has brought to their lives, to Renfrew County and beyond.

### An Inclusive Catholic Community

Our Catholic Faith calls us to honour the dignity of every person, made in the image and likeness of God. And so, we strive to nurture the giftedness and self-worth of every student who comes through our doors.

### Sharing in the Church's Evangelizing Mission

Catholic education shares in the Church's mission to preach the Gospel. Working closely with parents and the parish community, our schools provide a distinctive curriculum that is animated by the Gospel of Jesus. Every subject area is a means through which we announce the Good News to our students, to help them live out their call to discipleship responsibly, and grow in the freedom of God's children.

### A Relevant Message for Today's World

The Gospel message of Jesus is ever new, bringing clarity and light to every age. The questions, issues and concerns we address in and outside of the classroom are an opportunity for us to make the Gospel and its values present and relevant to the questions and issues that clamour for our students' attention on a daily basis. We recognize that only in Jesus do we find the answer to every heart's desire for truth, meaning and happiness.

### Hope for the Future

Ours is a message of hope. Empowered by the Spirit of the risen Lord which has been poured into our hearts (Rom 5,5), we strive to love unconditionally, affirming the giftedness, self-worth and potential of every student. We challenge our young people to use their gifts to help transform the world as faith-filled community builders.

## Family Life Education

Our Family Life Education Programs are produced by the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops (OCCB). As with Religious Education, these programs were developed to assist parents in the religious and moral education of their children. The *Fully Alive* program is offered to students in grades One through Eight, followed by the *Reaching Out* and *Turning Points* programs in grades Nine and Ten, Eleven and Twelve respectively.

## Catholic Education's Dual Mandate: A Distinctive Catholic Curriculum

Catholic schools in Ontario educate the character of the whole person through a unique dual mandate. We must implement initiatives and curriculum expectations set out by the Ontario Ministry of Education; we must also provide a distinctive Catholic curriculum based on the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations*. Our distinctive curriculum helps foster a world view shaped by the Catholic understanding of life's meaning and purpose. We invite students to draw on the Catholic faith tradition to form a critical analysis of the arts, media and technology. At the same time, we help them claim their role as global stewards, cherishing the environment, and promoting reverence for God's gift of human life at all stages.

## Our Pursuit of Lifelong Learning

We encourage staff to nurture their faith life, and to further their education on a continuous basis –through prayer, reading, study and professional upgrading. We support one another's efforts to become familiar with the Catholic Church's Social Teaching, and to challenge the consumer culture with lives dedicated to justice in the spirit of the Gospel.

## Servant Leadership After the Example of Jesus

We strive to model a servant leadership style that follows the example of Jesus and helps every student and staff reach their God-given potential. As servant leaders, we promote board policies which seek to ensure the safety of all students with school environments characterized by warmth, hospitality, good humour and joy.

This is what the Lord asks of you: only this,  
to act justly,  
to love tenderly,  
and to walk humbly with your God.

Micah 6:8

## Religious Education

The Religious Education programs taught in Renfrew County Catholic schools are an important means through which we facilitate an active faith journey rooted in prayer and the sacraments. These programs published by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops (CCCB) were designed to support the faith education provided by parents in the home, and by the local parish community. They help students gain a deepened knowledge and understanding of their Catholic faith according to each year's focus, as summarized below:

### Cycle One: JK/SK – Grade Three

*Our primary level Religious Education programs help introduce children to a deeper understanding of our God, who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Grade Two places special emphasis on the Sacraments of Eucharist and Reconciliation.*

### *In God's Image (JK/SK)*

This program affirms the 4-5 year old child as someone who is *made in God's image*. Each area of the child's growth is highlighted as a *trace of God*, reminding them of God's loving presence through the many wonders self-discovery at this stage of their lives.

### *We Belong to God (Grade 1)*

This program seeks to draw children into a sense of belonging to God through a loving relationship with Jesus. Acting in the power of the Holy Spirit, Jesus shows us God the Father's creating, forgiving and caring love. This year seeks to affirm God's unconditional love for all His children.

### *We Belong to the Lord Jesus (Grade 2)*

This program is a catechesis on the Sunday Eucharistic Liturgy. It uses the story of the disciples' encounter with the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus to show how we are to live the mystery of the Eucharist. This year focuses on *meeting the Lord Jesus* in the Christian community as it...Gathers...Listens to the Word of God...Eats and drinks the bread/cup that Jesus takes, blesses, breaks and feeds us...Is sent forth.

### *In the Spirit We Belong (Grade 3)*

The Grade Three program aims to deepen young students' experience of belonging to God through the community of Jesus' followers gathered in the Spirit. The focus of this year is a catechesis on *belonging to the Church gathered and united in the Spirit*.

## **Cycle Two: Grades Four - Six**

*Our junior level Religious Education programs invite students to continue growing in faith and religious knowledge as members of the Church and followers of Jesus.*

### **Come and See (Grade 4)**

The Grade Four program focuses on leading students to a deepened encounter with Jesus in the New Testament. The starting point for this encounter is Jesus' words to the Apostle Andrew, "Come and see." As we meet Jesus in the words of the holy Gospel, we grow as His friends and disciples.

### **May We Be One (Grade 5)**

The focus for Grade 5 is: "I believe in the Holy Catholic Church" (Apostles' Creed). Year 5 is centered on the Church as the community of God's people drawn from all nations on earth. Here, Jesus is present, active and visible in the Church's witness to him in the power of the Holy Spirit. In this way, the Church is sacrament of God's saving love.

### **You Shall be My Witnesses (Grade 6)**

This year focuses on the moral life of young Christians. The program begins with the biblical understanding of ourselves created in God's image. Students explore God's Covenant love for us through the Exodus story, and examine how Jesus' Gospel calls us to be his witness through love, justice and compassion.

## **Transition Years: Grades Seven - Nine**

*Our transition years programs examine how the Apostles' Creed and the Beatitudes call us to live as followers of Jesus and members of his Church.*

### **Believe in Me (Grade 7)**

This program is based on the first part of the Apostles' Creed. Each statement of the creed is examined in light of experiences and challenges students face in striving to live as members of the Spirit-filled community we call the Church.

### **Stand by Me (Grade 8)**

This program continues with the second part of the Apostles' Creed (*We believe in the Holy Spirit...*). Again, students are invited to examine what it means to live a maturing faith as expressed in the second half of the creed with discussion, reflection on what the Church teaches, through prayer and connecting with one's own parish.

### **Be With Me (Grade 9)**

This program continues from the previous two years' considerations on the Apostles' Creed. It invites young people to cultivate the virtues of Christian faith, hope and love according to the Beatitudes and Ten Commandments in order to meaningfully live the faith of the Apostles' Creed as followers of Jesus in the Spirit-filled community of believers.

## **Secondary Program**

*Our secondary level courses challenge students to embrace their identity as followers of Jesus in the world, as witnesses to the transforming power of his Gospel, with respect for all peoples of faith, while holding fast to their Catholic moral heritage.*

### **Christ in Culture (Grade 10)**

The *Christ in Culture* program builds on the Grade 9 *Be With Me* curriculum. Students are invited to reflect on their lives from a Christ-centered perspective. This course will challenge students to bring the values of Christ's Gospel to the culture and society in which they live.

### **World Religions (Grade 11)**

The World Religions courses offered in our Catholic schools invite students to consider how the human search for religious meaning is experienced by members of the world's great faiths: (Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Judaism, Buddhism and Aboriginal Spirituality). This course will help students appreciate the heritage of their Catholic Christian faith, with a deepened respect for the role these great religions have played in the development of the world's civilizations and the faith of their peoples.

### **In Search of the Good. A Catholic Understanding of Moral Living (Grade 12)**

This program focuses on what it means to live a moral life, according to Scripture, Tradition and the ethical theories of key philosophers and theologians. Students are invited to bring core elements of the Christian moral life into dialogue with their lived experience in order to grow as disciples and agents of Christ's transforming presence in the world.

