



Five Marks of a Catholic School



Holy Spirit Catholic Schools

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“Let it be known to all who enter here that Jesus Christ is the reason for this school, the unseen but ever present teacher in all its classes, the model of its faculty, and the inspiration for its students.”

Mark 1

Grounded in Christian Anthropology

Standard One: An excellent Catholic school is driven by a mission which views all men and women with an inherent dignity as sons and daughters of God.

BENCHMARKS

1. The school mission statement includes a clear commitment to its Catholic identity with specific language referencing Jesus Christ and His Church.
2. The school's mission statement recognizes the dignity and worth of all members of the Catholic school community as sons and daughters of God.
3. The mission statement can be recited or paraphrased by all stakeholders of the Catholic school community.
4. Founded in a Catholic Christian anthropology, the school's mission statement is clearly distinguishable from the mission statements of other public, independent, or charter schools.
5. The mission statement is frequently communicated to the community in newsletters, reports and official correspondence.
6. The mission statement is displayed in prominent areas of the school facility and is reviewed and updated regularly.
7. All school policies, and especially the discipline policy, are grounded in the mission statement. It is used as the foundation and reference point for strategic planning and evaluation of the school staff and students.



Mission Statement

We are a Catholic Faith Community, dedicated to providing each student entrusted to our care with an education rooted in the Good News of Jesus Christ.

Guided by the Holy Spirit, in partnership with home, parish and society, our schools foster the growth of responsible citizens who will live, celebrate and proclaim their faith. Our Catholic Faith is the foundation of all that we do.

Mark 2

Imbued With a Catholic Worldview

Standard Two: An excellent Catholic school has a visible and tangible Catholic vision evident in its physical space, liturgical celebrations, and prayer life.

BENCHMARKS

1. The school's Catholic worldview is evident in the art and architecture of the school's exterior and signage as well as in hallways, classrooms, offices, library, cafeteria, gymnasium and auditorium.
2. The school has a chapel or a specific space for community prayer that is used by the school community for the purpose of prayer and worship.
3. Students have opportunities to pray every day in school, and at numerous times during the day, such as:
 - To begin the school day in the morning
 - A blessing before lunch
 - A prayer at the end of the day
 - A prayer to begin each class
4. Every classroom has a prayer centre with the following standard items:
 - Cross or Crucifix
 - Candle
 - Bible
 - Cloth with the appropriate liturgical colour
5. The school community gathers for liturgical celebrations at least once a month, two of which are celebrations of the Eucharist.
6. Whenever possible, Eucharist is celebrated in the local parish.
7. The school works with the local parish to support the immediate preparation for the sacraments of Eucharist, Reconciliation, and Confirmation.
8. The school and the local parish collaborate in preparing children who have not received the sacraments of Initiation, including Baptism, First Communion and Confirmation, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
9. Service projects reflect and articulate Catholic teaching on social justice and charity.
10. All students and staff have opportunities for age-appropriate faith experiences, such as retreats, at least once during the school year.



Mark 3

Animated by a Faith-Infused Curriculum

Standard Three: An excellent Catholic school has an academic curriculum that integrates a vision of faith within the learner outcomes and teaching strategies.

BENCHMARKS

1. The curriculum reflects the Church's understanding of the unity of truth and the harmony between faith and reason.
2. When relevant, the curriculum reflects the social teachings of the Catholic Church.
3. The school offers a Catholic faith-infused curriculum (the lessons of which could not be duplicated in a non-Catholic school).
4. The curriculum addresses the spiritual, moral and ethical life of the student, either explicitly or implicitly.
5. Teachers are knowledgeable on Church teaching as it applies to the subject areas in which they teach.
6. Appropriate funding is allocated, and concrete initiatives are in place, to assist schools in the theological training of staff.
7. Gospel values and Church teaching are regularly and consistently incorporated into planning and instruction.
8. Teachers meet on a regular basis to discuss methods of infusing faith in their subject areas.
9. Religious education is a core subject area. Teacher assignment, learner outcomes and delivery of instruction are given the same professional requirements and rigor as in all core subjects.

*“Lead me in your truth, and teach me,
for you are the God of my salvation;
for you I wait all day long.”*

Psalm 25:5



Mark 4

Sustained by Gospel Witness

Standard Four: An excellent Catholic school hires and nurtures teachers that are living witnesses to the Gospel, and intentional disciples of Jesus Christ and his Church.

BENCHMARKS

1. Teachers and administrators are active members of the parish to which they belong.
2. Teachers and administrators witness their life in Christ through their relationships with parents, students, and each other.
3. Teachers and administrators demonstrate their faith through their active involvement in the school's Catholic culture, especially in liturgy, prayer, and justice activities.
4. Teachers and administrators form proper and prudent bonds of friendship with students in order for authentic formation to occur.
5. Teachers and administrators are supported in their ongoing faith formation through the allocation of time and resources.
6. The school and district have effective and consistent faith formation plans.
7. As part of their professional development, teachers and administrators create a personal faith formation plan, which is reviewed throughout the year.
8. Hiring practices place the faith life and the willingness to grow in faith of the prospective candidate as a priority.



But grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

2 Peter 3:18

Mark 5

Shaped by a Spirituality of Communion

Standard Five: An excellent Catholic school recognizes that each and every stakeholder is responsible for the common good.

BENCHMARKS

1. Roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in the Catholic school are articulated in approved documents.
2. The school has an active and vibrant parent advisory council working with a shared purpose.
3. The Catholic school has a plan to increase involvement of parents in the life of the school and parish.
4. The Catholic school and the district have policies in place to resolve conflict in a manner consistent with the Gospel values.
5. The school recognizes the role of the local bishop in ensuring that the education and formation in his jurisdiction are based on principles of Catholic doctrine.
6. The school and the local parish work together to create evangelization teams committed to nurturing the faith life of families who send their children to the Catholic school.
7. The Catholic school frequently invites the local parish priest to school functions and encourages him to be an active member of the school community.

“...make my joy complete; be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.”

Philippians 2:2

RESOURCES

Based on *Five Essential Marks of Catholic Schools, The Holy See's Teachings on Catholic Schools* by Archbishop J. Michael Miller, C.S.B. (2005) as presented in *Growing Forward-2014 Alberta Catholic School Trustees' Association Catholic Education Symposium Final Report*, Michael Marien, author.

Prayer for Catholic Schools

*Dear Jesus,
let your light shine in our Catholic schools.*

*Let your grace rain down,
bringing hope to each person we encounter,
bringing wisdom to our teachers
and leaders,
bringing strength in times of trial.*

Protect us from harm.

*Let the children come to You,
for the kingdom of God is theirs.*

*St Thomas Aquinas,
patron saint of Catholic schools,
pray for us.*

Amen

