

Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools

6. Sustained by Gospel Witness

Catholic schools pay attention to the vocation of teachers and their participation in the Church's evangelizing mission. (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 19; Lay Catholics in Schools, 37) A Catholic educator is a role model for students and gives testimony by his or her life and commitment to mission (Benedict XVI, June, 2005; Miller, 2006, p. 53). As much as possible, Catholic schools should 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, including participation in the school's commitment to social justice and evangelization. (United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, National Directory for Catechesis, 231)

Narrative Summary

One of the most powerful influences on children are their role models. As Catholic teachers in a Catholic School our vocation is to be role models for our students through our words, actions and deeds. St. George takes this seriously and the attention given to ensuring that teachers are role models is evident in many ways.

Long before a teacher is offered a teaching position at St. George, their commitment to the Catholic faith is examined. References to their Catholic Faith are looked for in resumes and candidates are even asked questions about their faith during the interview process. Ninety-five percent of teachers hired, are Catholic and many of the teachers attended Catholic grammar schools and high schools. All teachers, Catholic and non-Catholic are required to participate in MAT classes through the Diocese of Baton Rouge. Additionally, all teachers are required to fully participate in Catholic rights and rituals and our weekly school Eucharist.

Once a person becomes part of the St. George staff they are held to high professional, moral and religious standards. Teacher contracts contain ethical, moral and religious requirements that call for teachers to live up to those standards. Teacher observations both formal and informal e-walks include indicators that focus on the Catholicity of their teaching instruction and their teaching environment.

Teachers have many opportunities to be Gospel Witnesses before our students. Teachers provide countless opportunities for prayer. Teachers fully participate in the Mass as Eucharistic Ministers and Sacristans, Sacraments and retreats. Teachers also moderate the many school service projects St. George sponsors yearly. One of St. George Catholic School's greatest examples of the living Gospel is Father Mike Schatzle, Pastor of St. George Church. Father Mike uses the Mass as a vehicle to teach students and faculty about their faith. At school Masses he has recognized teachers who are receiving the sacrament of Matrimony with blessings, celebrated healing Masses, blessed students who are embarking on trips, and celebrated the Baptisms of teachers' babies. In 2013, one of

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St. George Catholic School's non-Catholic teachers and her husband participated in RCIA. One of her fellow teachers acted as her sponsor. In 2014, she and her husband made their Profession of Faith and joined the St. George Church family.

Examples

- Prayer
- Retreats
- Observations
- Contracts
- Eucharistic Ministers
- Participation in Mass, reconciliation, and retreats
- Service projects
- MAT Classes

Direction

Informal e-walks and formal observations will be used a vehicle to help increase Catholicity in the classrooms so that it is more interwoven into instruction and daily life. Informal e-walks and formal observations will be used to gage the increase.