

## **Defining Characteristics of Catholic Schools**

### **7. Shaped by Communion and Community**

Catholic school education places an emphasis on the school as community—an educational community of persons and a genuine community of faith. (Lay Catholics in Schools, 22, 41) Catholic schools should do everything they can to promote genuine trust and collaboration among teachers, with parents as the primary educators of their children, and with governing body members to foster appreciation of different gifts that build up a learning and faith community and strengthen academic excellence (Lay Catholics in Schools, 78). The Catholic school should pay especially close attention to the quality of interpersonal relations between teachers and students, ensuring that the student is seen as a person whose intellectual growth is harmonized with spiritual, religious, emotional, and social growth (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 18).

#### **Narrative Summary**

Catholic schools recognize that parents are the primary educators of their children and therefore embrace their families as part of the school community. St. George Catholic School is fortunate to have a large community of families who are active and committed to supporting the school mission of educating the whole child, intellectually, spiritually, religiously, emotionally and socially. St. George Catholic School prides itself in an open door policy where everyone is welcome and valued as a member of the faith community.

St. George Catholic School is a ministry of St. George Catholic Church. St. George Catholic Church is a thriving Catholic community with over three thousand families. Approximately 95 percent of the St. George Catholic School students are members of the St. George Church Parish. St. George School and Church partner for many events such as Parish Appreciation, the annual fair and the annual auction. St. George Catholic Church also has an established Education Commission whose mission is to provide educational opportunities and bridge the gap between St. George Catholic Church and St. George Catholic School.

Preparing and celebrating the sacraments is a shared responsibility between St. George Catholic Church and School. Families play an integral part in the faith formation of their children through the participation of 5th Grade Day of Prayer, Celebrations, Class Masses, School Masses and 8th Grade Human Sexuality meeting.

St. George Catholic School appoints members to a School Advisory Committee (SAC.) In consultation with the principal, the SAC helps to promote the Education Commission of St. George Catholic Church, facilitate communication among parents, faculty and administration, discern the needs of the school community, make recommendations, act as an advisory body to the school administration and hears appeals. The members of the SAC play an important role in fostering relationships among the school community. St. George Catholic School is also proud to have a robust and active Home and School Association (Home and School.) All St. George Catholic School families are

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automatically members of the Home and School Association. Ten dollars of each student's tuition is earmarked for Home and School activities. Home and School oversees school volunteerism and coordinates a tuition raffle fund raiser which raises funds for school improvement projects. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, approximately 25.4 percent of the population volunteers 50 hours a year. Using these statistics, St. George Catholic School families donate about 14,000 volunteer hours to the school each year. They are part of the St. George Catholic School family, a part the school depends on.

The Men's Club is another important group to the St. George Catholic School Community. Members of the Men's Club provide countless hours of preventative and corrective maintenance to St. George Catholic School. Members also raise money for school improvement projects. In 2014 - 2015, the St. George Men's Club saw an increase of over 50 members.

### **Examples**

- Education Commission
- 5th Grade Day of Prayer
- Retreats
- Discipline
- Celebrations
- Class Masses
- 8th Grade Human Sexuality Meeting
- Open Houses
- Parent Nights
- Spirit Day
- Volunteer Opportunities
- Men's Club
- Parish Appreciation
- School Advisory Committee
- Class Masses

### **Direction**

St. George Catholic School will continue to seek a sense of community as educators collaborate together in weekly grade level meetings as well as through the atlas curriculum mapping process. Parents and other stakeholders will be involved in continuing the rich community involvement at St. George Catholic School through the numerous volunteer opportunities offered.