

Mission and Catholic Identity Standard 2

An excellent Catholic school adhering to mission provides a rigorous academic program for Religious studies and catechesis in the Catholic faith, set within a total academic curriculum that integrates faith, culture, and life.

Narrative Summary:

St. George Catholic School reaches and surpasses the minimal compulsory religious education requirements imposed by the Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge in addition to directives from the Bishop. These requirements are outlined in the Administrative Manual of the Diocese of Baton Rouge. The requirements that are compulsory are found within the robust religion curriculum that St. George Catholic School has adopted.

Commendations:

St. George Catholic School meets the religious education requirements outlined by the Diocese. Teachers are guided by Sadlier's We Believe series and the catholic standards outlined by the Archdiocese of Chicago religion curriculum guidelines. Teachers demonstrate an understanding of their curriculum through Atlas curriculum mapping which allows the teachers to align the curriculum vertically. Weekly department meetings allow for open dialogue among and between grade level teachers to ensure alignment. According to the AdvancEd Catholic Identity Program Effectiveness Survey, 99% of parent and community members believe St. George Catholic School provides an academically rigorous catholic religion program taught by qualified teachers.

Master schedules identify formal religious instructional time for all grade levels. Every grade level participates in religious education five days a week. According to the AdvancEd Catholic Identity Program Effectiveness Survey of April 2013, over 91% of St. George Catholic School staff, parents and students state religious instruction as age appropriate, engaging and rigorous. In addition, approximately 90% of staff, parents and students agree that St. George Catholic School understands, promotes, demonstrates and teaches Catholic values and beliefs.

All staff members of St. George Catholic School are considered catechists and continue to work past the minimum standards for religious education as set forth by the Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge. Religious certification status is maintained by the school in RenWeb, the school's online management database, and by the Diocese through School Files. According to the Catholic Identity Program effectiveness survey taken in 2013, 89% of the faculty feels that St. George Catholic School provides opportunities for faith formation for faculty and staff. This is done through the parish mission, faculty retreat, liturgical seasonal prayer services, meaningful group prayer at the start of meetings and courses offered by the Diocese.

St. George Catholic School is a school of excellence where Catholic faith is infused throughout all subjects. The April 2013 AdvancEd Catholic Identity Program Effectiveness Survey states that 97% of St. George Catholic School staff agree that in all subjects, teachers help students think critically and ethically about the world around them using the lens of Gospel values and catholic doctrine and beliefs. Academically, St. George Catholic School students score above the 75% percentile in the nation as seen in the Terra Nova results. Additionally, ACRE (NCEA Assessment of Catechesis Religious Education) results show that 92.6% of 8th graders score at or above the proficient level in their faith knowledge.

Students have the opportunity to express their Catholic culture and faith through multiple and diverse forms of visual and performing arts, music and architecture. Student participation in Liturgy, sacraments, and prayer on a regular basis are integral to student life at St. George Catholic School. Students participate in the Living Rosary, Living Stations, Religion Fair, Litany of the Saints, Epiphany play, May Crowning and St. Joseph Altar. All classroom prayer tables are updated regularly to reflect the appropriate liturgical season and are used to display various sacramentals. The AdvancEd Catholic Identity Defining Characteristics of 2013 survey found that approximately 90% of all staff, students, and parents indicate that this is an area of strength for the school as students act as altar servers, lectors, music ministers and liturgical dancers and are provided many opportunities to live out their Catholic faith.

Service is one of the cornerstones of St. George Catholic School's mission. Students participate in monthly service projects which are determined yearly by the Service Committee and placed on a service project calendar. Projects are chosen while remaining true to Catholic social teachings pertaining to serving the needs of others and focusing on the elderly and those who are sick. Service projects range from collecting money and food, to purchasing toys and bikes, to writing to the homebound of the parish. The 2013 AdvancEd Catholic Identity Defining Characteristics Surveys indicated that over 88% of the St. George Catholic School staff, along with 85% of parents, believes our school instills in students the responsibility to promote Gospel values and social justice in the world.

Recommendations:

Although the Catholic faith is the primary focus of St. George Catholic School only 62% of students believe, “even during subjects other than religion we learn to act according to what Jesus taught and to help make the world a better place for everyone”. St. George can address this by educating teachers, through professional development and spiritual development, on ways to integrate our faith into all that we do. The integration of our faith into all subject areas

can be monitored through E-Walk results that focus on evidence of catholicity in instruction and environment.

It is recommended that St. George Catholic School continue to focus on deeper understanding of our Catholic faith through clear, consistent and effective integration of the Catholic faith across the curriculum ensuring that it continues to meet or exceed Diocesan religion standards. It is also recommended that the Roman Catholic Diocese of Baton Rouge author and adopt religious curriculum standards for use by all Diocesan schools.

Rating of Standard

Based upon the evidence and recommendations for Mission and Catholic Identity Standard 2, St. George Catholic School earns a score of 3 based on the individual benchmark scores.