



WCEA *Western Catholic
Educational Association*

THE CATHOLIC IDENTITY FACTOR

Indicator: *The school has a mission statement and a philosophy statement which indicate the integration of the Roman Catholic Faith into all aspects of school life.*

- ✦ The mission statement and philosophy are included in relevant school documents such as handbooks, websites, etc.
- ✦ The mission statement and philosophy are often quoted in relevant school publications such as the parent/student/staff handbooks, school newsletters, registration materials, etc.
- ✦ The principal/admissions officer talks about the school's mission and philosophy when interviewing prospective students and their families.
- ✦ Policy established by the Advisory Commission/Board is based upon, and quote from the mission and/or philosophy.
- ✦ Strategic Plans/School Improvement Plans/Action Plans are based upon, and often quotes from the mission and/or philosophy.

Indicator: *The school provides regular opportunities for the school community to experience prayer and the Sacraments.*

- ✦ All staff celebrate Mass with the children.
- ✦ Children have the opportunity to celebrate the Sacrament of Reconciliation during Advent and Lent.
- ✦ Teachers pray with their students often during the day.
- ✦ Students experience a variety of prayer forms including memorized and spontaneous prayer.
- ✦ There are special prayer events throughout the year (e.g., blessing of animals, blessing of throats, etc.)
- ✦ Special attention is paid to the liturgical cycle of the church.

Indicator: *The school uses a Religion curriculum and instruction that is faithful to Roman Catholic Church teachings, and meets the requirements set forth by the USCCB.*

- ✦ The school's written curriculum includes Catholic values infused throughout 'secular' curricular areas (e.g., when discussing the American Civil War values of human rights and economic justice are central to the discussion).
- ✦ Reference to relevant Church documents is made throughout the curriculum. For example, reference could be made to *U.S. Catholic Bishops Pastoral Letter on Racism, 1979* when talking about racism in society, or reference to *Civility in Media, A Statement of the U.S. Catholic Bishops* when talking about communications and the role of media in society.
- ✦ Religion textbooks that are used are in compliance with the Catechism of the Catholic Church and approved for use within the diocese by the Local Ordinary.
- ✦ The teachers understand the mission of the Church and make a special effort to educate the whole child, using a variety of teaching methods and strategies that help the student to "order the whole of human culture to the news of salvation." (*Gravissimum Educationis*, Pope Paul VI, 1965 #8)

Indicator: *The formation of teachers for catechetical and instructional competence is ongoing.*

- ✦ All teachers have current catechist certification according to local Arch/Diocesan norms, or are in the process of obtaining such catechist certification.
- ✦ Staff, as a staff, participate in annual retreat days and other activities that help build a faith community among the staff.
- ✦ Staff meetings include time for prayer and time for discussion about Religion, Catholic values, and the faith formation of the entire school community (parents, students, staff).

Indicator: *The school maintains an active partnership with parents whose fundamental concern is the spiritual and academic education of their children.*

- ✦ Parents are identified as the primary educators in appropriate school documents (e.g., mission statement, handbooks).
- ✦ The school provides formal opportunities for parents to learn about their role as primary educators.
- ✦ A formal, institutionalized part of annual parent-teacher conferences is a discussion of the child's spiritual growth and development.
- ✦ Administration provides opportunities for parents to meet and talk about the faith formation of their children.

Indicator: *The school helps students develop a service-oriented outreach to the Church and civic community after the example of Jesus who said, "I have given you an example so that you may copy what I have done to you." (John 13:15)*

- ✦ Service opportunities are organized by school staff and are age appropriate.
- ✦ Students voluntarily participate in service opportunities for which they receive no credit toward school-mandated service.

Indicator: There is widespread use of signs, sacramentals, traditions and rituals of the Roman Catholic Church throughout the school.

- ✦ Every classroom has clearly displayed crucifixes.
- ✦ Other religious imagery exists in classrooms and throughout the school.
- ✦ Students participate in a variety of traditions and rituals of the Church, e.g., May crowning, Advent Wreath prayers, daily Angelus, etc.
- ✦ Students have opportunities and are encouraged to participate in parish prayer, traditions and rituals.

Indicator: All school personnel are actively engaged in bringing the Good News of Jesus into the total educational experience.

- ✦ The principal builds a faith community that is welcoming, prayerful and makes a clear statement that this is a Catholic faith setting.
- ✦ Prayer permeates the school. It is not limited to morning announcements.
- ✦ Teachers bring Gospel values into their ordinary teaching experiences.
- ✦ Teachers realize that their first responsibility is to be attentive to their own relationship with Jesus Christ.
- ✦ The teacher attempts to relate the moral, ethical or spiritual ramifications to each area of study.