

---

---

## CATHOLIC CURRICULUM

---

---

Curriculum can refer to that which directs teachers about content: courses of study, guidelines, manuals, resources. Curriculum is much more than policy documents and support materials. At its core, it reveals fundamental beliefs and values about the nature, task, and specific character of the educational enterprise. It incarnates the vision of education from which it originates and the end towards which education is directed. It presupposes and involves a definite understanding of what it means to be human, of how to live together, and the wisdom necessary to sustain life on this planet. The key component that gives direction to curriculum matters is the educational vision which shapes it. And that component is a worldview.

Hence, **for Catholic schools, curriculum is best described**, in its broadest sense, **as a worldview shaped by the Catholic conversation about life's meaning and purpose**. It is a distinctive worldview committed to the enterprise of educating the soul. Implementation of the Common Curriculum in Catholic schools is a distinctive experience. It reflects the understanding that life, learning, career choices and relationships are ultimately spiritual activities that should lead to holiness as much as to success.

The following statements describe some demonstrable intentions of Catholic curriculum. They attempt to embody a set of foundational assumptions upon which all Catholic curriculum must be implicitly or explicitly structured. It is not intended that every piece of curriculum explicate the foundations. What is intended is that all Catholic curriculum be intentionally and implicitly faithful to the foundations. These assumptions are deeply rooted in the belief and practice of the Catholic community and will, at times, differ from the assumptions which underlie general public education.

### **Uniqueness of Catholic curriculum is demonstrable in learning opportunities and materials which intentionally:**

- Support, invite and enhance the faith life of students as a relationship with God the Father, through the Son, Jesus Christ, in the power of the Holy Spirit **BELIEF**
  - How will this curriculum reflect the existence of God, God's relationship with the world, the work and mission of Jesus, or the activity of the Holy Spirit in creation, history, communities and ourselves?
  - What images of God are presented?
- Involve students in community, especially the community of the People of God – church **COMMUNITY**
  - How will this curriculum portray the relationship between individuals and communities?
  - How will the life of the people of God as expressed in Scripture and Tradition be used to examine contemporary ways of living and nurture lifestyles marked by faith, hope and love?
- Challenge students to examine and explore their lives in relation to specific gospel values as reflected in church teaching **LIFE CHALLENGE**

- How will the values, perspectives and examples presented in this curriculum reflect the teachings of the Gospel, our Catholic Tradition and the Church today?
- How will this curriculum attend to issues of peace, social justice and human dignity?
- Encourage and enable the development and use of individual gifts and abilities for the service of the whole community, the church and society **SHARED EXCELLENCE**
  - How will this curriculum help students to recognize the inherent worth of every individual and all of creation as a pure gift of a loving and faithful God?
  - In what ways will this curriculum encourage students to strive for excellence in the use and development of personal gifts to serve the community?
- Offer a view of life, which despite suffering and evil, remains hopeful because it is rooted in God's promise and love in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ **HOPE**
  - What image of the future will this project hold out?
  - How will the material present fearful experiences in relation to Christian hope in God's promises of freedom and life?
- Call students to celebrate the signs and mystery of God's presence among us through liturgy and sacrament, personal prayer, reflection and moral living. **CELEBRATION**
  - How will this curriculum material acknowledge and promote ways of expressing our relationship with God through the transcendent, such as rituals, liturgy, prayer, meditation, spirituality, moral living and celebration?
  - How will this curriculum material acknowledge the gifts of creation and our gratitude to God, especially through the celebration of Sunday Eucharist?

**Catholic curriculum is distinguished from public school curriculum by both additive and constitutive dimensions.** It is distinctive in an additive sense in that it includes subject areas and outcomes for Religious Education and family Life in addition to what is offered in the public school system. Catholic curriculum is different in a constitutive sense through an intentional modification of the existing program areas and essential outcomes.

**At the level of individual planning, the consideration of the Catholic context of all curriculum is a crucial component in personal preparation.** Where appropriate, curriculum connections should be made across the four program areas with the faith life of students and the community. In some cases, this may mean adding, modifying, clarifying or interpreting curriculum in order to put it in context for Catholic schools. Religion and Family Life programs integrate with the other four program areas: Arts, Math/Science, Language & Personal and Social Science. In many cases, no modification may be necessary at all. **What is important is that the teacher allow for the inclusion of the Catholic curriculum context in personal planning of The Common Curriculum implementation.**