

## Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith

**PARENTS CHOOSE A CATHOLIC SCHOOL EDUCATION** so their children can benefit from the faith, values and academic excellence the schools provide. Catholic schools are communities of faith in which students, teachers and families experience the celebration of Christian values through worship, study, caring relationships and the development of each child's potential. The goal of all Catholic schools is to form students in faith, to help them grow in knowledge and to teach the students to show their love of God through service to others.

Students come to understand their faith and learn to value and respect others through classroom study of scripture and church teachings, opportunities to participate in religious activities, respect and care for one another each day and through service to the community.

### Growth in Faith Knowledge

Christ is the center and focus of each and every Catholic school. Catholic school students explore and understand their faith through academic classes that focus on the scriptures, sacraments, morality, church history and traditions. Catholic identity is reflected throughout the curriculum. While not all students who attend Catholic schools are Catholic, all do share experiences of faith, values and moral character development in the Catholic tradition.

The school building and classrooms reflect the Catholic identity through religious art, statues, crucifixes and displays of student work that illustrate beliefs and practices of Catholic life. In daily religion classes, students learn the basic teachings of Catholicism. They also learn to respect other faith traditions while developing their own spirituality and commitment to their own faith. Many schools offer families



*St. Raphael School, Rockville, Maryland*

opportunities to grow in their own spiritual life through student homework assignments or faith-formation classes for parents.

### Opportunities to Participate in Religious Activities

Catholic schools invite and challenge the school community to be fully engaged in the life of the Church. Daily prayer, often led by students, and weekly celebrations of Mass and other prayer services provide opportunities for students to practice their faith and take a leadership role in preparing worship activities. Opportunities are provided for reception of the sacraments, retreats, celebrations of the liturgical seasons and prayerful reflection on students' personal faith journeys.

### Respect and Service to One Another

A Catholic school community of faith encourages reverence, respect, concern for others in a spirit of hospitality that welcomes all. Catholic schools create a supportive and challenging climate which affirms the

dignity of all persons as children of the same God. Following the example of Jesus, Catholic educators care deeply about their students and their intellectual, human and spiritual development. Teachers are role models who share their faith, time and talents while creating educational environments that are warm, trust-filled and encouraging.



*Archdiocese of Denver*

Students are taught to be kind and accept others rather than exclude them. Catholic schools live community values by promoting collaboration and teamwork among students in classroom activities that develop habits of listening, valuing other opinions and personal responsibility. Catholic schools strive to create connections among students, the family, the school and the church so that all share in belonging to a caring, faith community.

### **Service to the Community**

Catholic schools have always been places where outreach to others has been evident. Catholic schools promote an understanding that through service to others in the community students are also committing themselves to serving God. They are taught to share

their time, talents and resources with others who are in need. Students are required to engage in service projects as a learning experience and a witness to their Christian faith.

Through food and clothing drives, fundraising for good causes, outreach to homeless and those in hospitals and nursing homes students learn compassion and the importance of supporting others. Students learn to care for

all of God's creation through respect for all of life and earth's creatures as they engage in service activities as part of their education.

Catholic schools are communities of faith that are Christ-centered and seek to provide the best spiritual and academic formation for each child's mind, soul and body. Catholic schools are successful because Gospel values are part of the life of the school and students, teachers, and parents are supported in living the Christian message in school, home and community.

Share this good news about Catholic schools with your friends and neighbors! ✦



*Resurrection Catholic School, Lakeland, Florida*

### **Catholic Schools: Communities of Faith, Knowledge and Service.**

The NCEA National Catholic Schools Week theme highlights the fact that Catholic schools are not only communities of faith in themselves, but also are part of the communities, cities and states where they are located. Catholic schools are known for their focus on academic excellence, faith development and service, which enables students to serve their communities and nation in the future.