

STRATEGIES FOR THE FIRST CHARACTERISTIC

An evangelizing school is a Catholic faith community where all are welcome, opening itself to receive children and parents who desire Catholic religious formation and education, helping them to know they are children of God, made in His image and likeness and, therefore, to be valued.

PRINCIPALS

- Gather the faculty regularly to pray for each other and for the needs of the school.
- Support a parent prayer group that prays for the needs of the school and school families.
- Ensure that the policies guiding the school community reflect the teachings of Christ and His Church.
- Provide a Catholic physical environment in school by displaying good religious art and making sure that crucifixes, the image of Mary, the image of the patron of the school, and other Catholic icons are prominently displayed in the public areas of the school and in each classroom.
- Design school stationary with a Christian symbol, Scripture quote or short prayer reflecting the Catholic nature of the school.
- Schedule the school year, events, classes in such a way that it is obvious that the school is centered in Jesus and the Catholic faith, using the liturgical year and feast days as a guide and resource.
- Focus the yearly theme on some Gospel or Church teaching.
- Market the school as one that puts faith first and is centered in Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church.
- Make the school reception area a place of welcome, e.g., by providing places to sit for those waiting and placing reading materials there that center on various aspects of the Catholic faith or Catholic teaching.
- Make sure the person at the reception desk or answering the school phone is welcoming and able to put people first, in imitation of Jesus.
- Encourage all students and faculty to be hospitable to guests and visitors. Offer specifics like “smile,” and say “hello,” or “may I help you?” etc.
- Interact as principal with students, faculty, and parents in a manner that reflects the reverence and value placed on them as persons made in the image and likeness of God.
- End conversations, by phone, in person or by email, with a blessing, e.g., “Have a blessed day” or “God bless you.”

TEACHERS

- Make it a conscious priority to use a respectful tone when talking to students, parents, and faculty.
- Be an attentive listener, especially when the other person has initiated the conversation.
- Discipline students in a consistent and loving manner that reflects your belief that they are precious in the sight of God and deserve to be treated as such.
- Respect and understand that each student is at his/her own level of faith development when teaching religion and praying with them.
- Call the families of your students before the school year begins to introduce yourself, welcome them into your class, inquire whether there is anything you need to be aware of concerning the student, and remind them of your availability and your prayers for them and their child.
- Speak positively about the school when in a public forum.

STRATEGIES FOR THE SECOND CHARACTERISTIC

An evangelizing Catholic School employs only those leaders and teachers who wholeheartedly and enthusiastically accept the mandate to evangelize young people through their witness to and proclamation of their belief in the Triune God, an incarnate God in the person of Jesus Christ, who established the Catholic Church to complete His mission.

PRINCIPALS

- In interviewing teachers for employment in your school, make sure the applicant understands the meaning of evangelization, and hire only those who are excited about their role as evangelizers and witnesses of Jesus and the Catholic Church.
- Creatively and prayerfully implement the Witness Statement for Those Who Serve in Catholic Education.
- Provide opportunities for faculty to share faith stories with one another.
- Encourage formation of scripture-sharing or faith-sharing groups among the staff, especially during Advent and Lent.
- Schedule faculty prayer daily or weekly.
- Incorporate prayer and reflection into every faculty and staff meeting.
- Schedule required days of reflection for faculty and staff.
- Provide ongoing instruction in the Catholic faith for teachers through in-services, workshops, and conferences.
- Encourage participation in archdiocesan-sponsored catechetical training and formation.
- Use the “Principal as Spiritual Leader Assessment.”

TEACHERS

- Participate in archdiocesan, school and parish sponsored adult faith-formation opportunities.
- Enroll in Paul VI Institute classes to become certified as a catechist, or if already certified, to update your knowledge of the Catholic faith and her teachings.
- Find appropriate opportunities throughout the year to share parts of your faith journey with your students.
- Devote sufficient time each day to the preparation of religion classes with the goal of helping students come to know Jesus and His Church intimately.
- Consciously reflect on how you are a witness and mentor to students in your relationship of faith and fidelity to Christ and His Church.
- Be constantly aware of your faith, witnessing to students in settings outside the classroom.
- Set aside time each day for personal prayer and spiritual reading.
- Participate faithfully in Sunday liturgy and as often as possible in daily Mass.
- Pray with your students, especially at the beginning or end of class.
- Pray for each student by name every day and tell them you are doing so.
- Use the “family” or “at home” pages found in the religion text, and/or online as assignments to help spread the “good news” into the child’s family.

STRATEGIES FOR THE THIRD CHARACTERISTIC

An evangelizing Catholic school must authentically and completely live and teach the Gospel message and the teachings of the Catholic Church. It is a duty incumbent on it by the mandate of the parishioners, past and present, so that children and youth can be socialized into the Catholic community, can believe and be saved.

PRINCIPALS

- Ensure that the religion curriculum guide for the school conforms to the archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Standard and is systematic, authentic, and complete.
- Ensure that the religion series adopted for the school is on the archdiocesan approved list of elementary religion series.
- Ensure that whatever is taught in secular subjects is supportive of the teachings of the faith.
- Insist on the integration of Catholic teachings and values into all the secular subjects.
- Use the Assessment of Children/Youth Religious Education (ACRE) annually in Grades 5 and 8 to evaluate the quality of the religious education program.
- Challenge all faculty members to grow in their understanding of Catholic teachings by taking Paul VI Institute classes and/or participating in other in-service opportunities.
- Use the “Catholic Identity Assessment” to ensure the Catholic nature of your school.
- Use the “Faith formation Standards and Benchmarks Implementation Assessment” to ensure your school authentically and completely lives and teaches the Gospel message and the teachings of the Catholic Church.
- Schedule a workshop annually on the “Catechism of the Catholic Church.”

TEACHERS

- Refer to the archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Standard frequently to ensure that religion lesson plans and classes present the Gospel message and Church teachings authentically and completely.
- In every religion class, attempt to connect faith and life in order to nurture the spiritual life of the students.
- In teaching subjects other than religion, consciously look for ways and take every opportunity to explore how Jesus is the center of history and creation.
- Read religious education journals, church documents, etc. to know and implement authentic teachings of the Gospel message and Church.
- Involve families in the religion curriculum by giving children assignments that promote family discussion of faith and the moral life.

STRATEGIES FOR THE FOURTH CHARACTERISTIC

An evangelizing school is one that celebrates God's action and presence in the lives of people through the sacraments and through prayer.

PRINCIPALS

- Schedule the celebration of Eucharist and Reconciliation for the school community regularly.
- Schedule traditional prayer experiences throughout the year like Benediction, Stations of the Cross, Crowning of Mary in May, recitation of the rosary, etc.
- Help faculty grow in their appreciation of the Eucharist by having faculty gatherings that include the celebration of the Mass.
- Recognize and celebrate liturgical feast days with the same or more enthusiasm as secular days.
- Involve students in planning and celebrating liturgies that speak to the heart.
- Encourage parents to have children experience the celebration of the sacraments of Baptism, Holy Orders, Matrimony, and the Anointing of the Sick.
- Encourage parents to teach their children prayers every Catholic should know. A good resource is "Prayers by Heart," the St. Louis Archdiocesan Catholic Children's Prayer Book from St. Mary's Press.
- Encourage parents to be the primary religious educators of their children by having them sign the Parent Witness Statement. Use this Parent Witness Statement in the prayer at various parent meetings throughout the year and in any creative ways that would keep it in the consciousness of parents.
- Celebrate the baptismal dates of the faculty.
- Give holy cards or rosaries to students and faculty on birthdays, baptism days, etc., raising awareness through some public announcement or bulletin board posting.
- Establish clubs and extra-curricular activities that evangelize, such as a peace club, service club, prayer groups, choirs, etc.
- Schedule vocation days that focus on each of the vocations as a calling from God for every individual.
- Provide bibles for each classroom; ensure that children know how to use bibles.
- Insist that there be a dedicated prayer space in each classroom that has a bible, a crucifix, etc.
- Encourage classroom prayer of different types throughout the day: scriptural prayer, meditation, guided imagery, intercession, spontaneous prayer, etc.
- Encourage the use of the prayer services and Masses in the using the liturgical year and feast days as guides and resources.

TEACHERS

- Celebrate the baptismal dates and patron saints of your students
- Have students write letters of congratulations and welcome to newly baptized members of the parish.
- Have students write letters or make cards and send them to students to congratulate them on their First Communion, First Reconciliation, and Confirmation.
- Teach children to sing good liturgical music with reverence and enthusiasm.
- Gather students in prayer regularly at the classroom prayer space and in visits to Church.
- On occasion, take your children to Church for Adoration before the Blessed Sacrament.
- Change the prayer space in the classroom throughout the year to reflect the liturgical year.
- Call attention to the religious art and symbols throughout the school and the church and use them as occasions for prayer with students.
- Make sure holy water is in the classroom and encourage its use regularly.
- Bless the children at the end of the day
- Say the rosary (or at least part of it) with your class in October and May.

STRATEGIES FOR THE FIFTH CHARACTERISTIC

An evangelizing Catholic school reaches out to students and families with various backgrounds and needs in order to bring God's love into their lives.

PRINCIPALS

- Schedule meetings, workshops, special events with sensitivity to family needs and concerns.
- Provide baby-sitting for school events to which parents are invited.
- Reach out to families to engage them in the religious education of their children.
- Promulgate policies that deal with the importance of respecting everyone as children of God; that celebrate the differences in people as reflections of the infinite God; that eliminate bullying in any form.
- Invite families to participate in special school liturgies, e.g., invite families with a member in the Military to a Veteran's Day Mass with a reception afterwards.
- Schedule Masses on special cultural/ethnic feast days and invite families, e.g., on the feast of Our Lady of Guadalupe, invite those of Mexican heritage to join the school celebration.
- Schedule an "International Day," "Christmas-Around-the-World-Day", or something of this nature, to expand students' awareness of other cultures and peoples.
- Format parent-teacher meetings to include prayer, faith sharing, and information about upcoming events that celebrate the Catholic Identity of the school.
- Use the "Faith Formation of Students with Special Needs Assessment" to ensure your school is reaching out to students with special needs and their families to bring God's love into their lives.

TEACHERS

- Display creatively the Student Witness Statement in your classroom. Use it for prayer and reflection on a regular basis.
- Plan activities that help children empathize with the marginalized, the poor, the ill, etc.
- Invite students in your class of other faiths to share their stories and traditions.
- Teach the truths of our faith about marriage, moral issues, alcohol, drugs, etc. with empathy and sensitivity, recognizing that some students are living in difficult situations that are contrary to the teachings of the Church.
- Consult and follow the IEPs of students with special needs so they are better able to experience the love of God through the school community.
- Follow the school policy against bullying in order to bring Christ not only to those who are bullied but also to those who do the bullying.

STRATEGIES FOR THE SIXTH CHARACTERISTIC

An evangelizing school is actively conscious of forming and transforming children and youth according to the social teaching of the Church.

PRINCIPALS

- Consult the *Compendium of The Social Doctrine of the Church* as a basic resource for implementing the social teachings of the Church.
- Provide workshops for parents to raise awareness of social justice issues and how families can become active participants in meeting the needs of the community.
- Set up a committee of faculty and parents to investigate the needs of the local community and explore ways the school community can be involved in meeting those needs.
- Link school service opportunities to parish efforts to promote charity, peace, and justice.
- Ensure that service is part of the religion curriculum for every grade level.
- Expand service to include not only parish needs but needs at the local, national and global levels.
- Invite speakers from the community to address students on justice and peace issues, giving witness to their own response to the call to service.
- Sponsor annual opportunities for outreach/service to the poor, lonely, and ill of the community.
- Work with the pastor to personally contact school families who are in need to determine how best to be of service to them.
- Use opportunities within the school year to reach out to those people who may need to experience God's love in their lives: e.g., men and women in service to our country, college students who are away from home, the home-bound in the parish.

TEACHERS

- Utilize Catholic resources on peace and justice for classroom and family education.
- Organize a school Mission Carnival to raise money for the missions.
- During Lent, collect money for the missions through the use of Rice Bowls or "mite" boxes.
- Familiarize yourself with and use the videos and DVDs on peace and justice available through the Archdiocesan Religious Education Media Center.
- Include in lesson plans on a regular basis examples of respect for other races, cultures, etc.

STRATEGIES FOR THE SEVENTH CHARACTERISTIC

An evangelizing school is one that makes known the Good News of Jesus to others and invites school families into the Catholic faith community, especially those who are inactive or those who are un-churched.

PRINCIPALS

- In marketing the school, include outreach and invitation to the inactive Catholic families in the neighborhood to more fully experience the faith community in the Catholic school.
- Extend a direct invitation to inactive and un-churched parents to ask if they would like to know more about the Catholic Church.
- Schedule a “Basic Introduction to Catholicism” session for the un-churched and inactive parents and present it in a very personalized, appealing manner, so they can more fully understand what we are teaching the children.
- Intentionally invite parents known to be un-churched or inactive to participate as a volunteer in some project or need of the school, in order for them to have a personal relationship with a Catholic who witnesses to Christ’s love.
- Explain to non-Catholic parents the purpose and meaning of the liturgical year or sacramental celebrations in which the Catholic students are participating. Invite them to participate in appropriate ways.
- Implement creatively and dynamically the Rite of Christian Initiation of Children (RCIC), with the approval and involvement of the families of young catechumens and candidates.

TEACHERS

- Be conscious and respectful of children in your classroom from other religions, while faithfully opening to them the fullness of the Catholic Tradition through your teaching and witness.
- Invite parents, especially the inactive or un-churched, to participate in special classroom events, e.g., seasonal prayer services, a “Read About the Saints Day” where parents read stories about the saints to the class, etc., so they can experience the excitement the students have about being Catholic.
- Have students make spiritual bouquets that include Masses, rosaries, acts of charity, etc., on Mothers’ Day and in anticipation of Fathers’ Day.