



## The Development and Implementation of Characteristic Two

The Second Characteristic states that: *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.*

It is essential that our educational leadership and other personnel in the parish and school communities understand the importance of carrying on the mission of Jesus Christ entrusted to His Church.

The following process is rather detailed. Do not be afraid! It was designed in such a way that it can be used in a series of gatherings, or for a day of prayer or a retreat and was fashioned in detail so as to minimize additional work on your part.

It is hoped that the Evangelizing Catholic School process and the development and implementation strategies will be of great assistance to you as you journey through this process of becoming an Evangelizing Catholic School.

## **CHARACTERISTIC TWO: SCHEDULE FOR SESSION**

(This service is structured in such a way that it gives you a step-by-step description of what should take prior to the gathering itself.)

### **I. PRIOR TO THE GATHERING:**

#### **A. Invitees**

Decide on who will be invited to this gathering besides your faculty  
(pastor, associate, deacon, pastoral minister, home and school / school board members)

#### **B. Introducing the invitees to “*The Evangelizing Catholic School*” concept (Pg.6)**

1. Use the letter format provided in this packet and personalize it with the individual names of invitees.
2. This should be done several weeks in advance of the planned gathering. (Note: remember that becoming an evangelizing school will not be accomplished in a day, week, or month. It is a journey that will take time and deliberate attention.)

#### **C. Sending out the formal invitation (Pg. 7)**

1. This could be done at the same time that you introduce the invitees to the Evangelizing Catholic School concept but would be more effective as a follow up to the introduction.
2. Use the invitation format provided and personalize, remembering to include a personal invitation to your faculty as well.

#### **D. Sending out the readings in preparation for session (Pgs. 8-9-10-11)**

1. Readings are included with this process and should be sent to participants to give them the time needed to read and reflect on the material in preparation for the gathering.

#### **E. Setting the environment (Pg. 12)**

1. Please refer to the page included with this document on setting the environment.
2. On the table outside the gathering area, since the item(s) on the table will remain the same, it would be preferable to have the quote about Christ in a frame on the table since that sums up the main task of evangelization.
  - If you do not have a copy of this print, perhaps you can have your art teacher or one of your students design the print and take it to Kinko’s to have it enlarged and ready to frame or placed on a sheet of foam board.
  - This is fairly inexpensive and will be used throughout all the processes received by you from this office.

## **II. THE GATHERING – PART I:**

### **A. Opening Prayer:**

- a. You can refer to the separate section at the end of this packet that contains a prayer service.
- b. This section is formatted to make it easy for you to duplicate the session with minimal effort on your part.

### **B. Reflection on Evangelization (Pgs. 13-14)**

- a. Please refer to the sheet on “Reflection on Evangelization.”
- b. These are concepts that need to be put in your own words and delivered in presentation form.
- c. This presentation can be delivered by yourself or someone who is proficient at presenting to a group.

### **C. Small Group Discussion (Pg. 15)**

- a. Whoever prepares the reflection above should also surface a couple of discussion questions or statements that would flow from the reflection or use the ones provided on the section entitled “Small Group Discussion Questions.”
- b. These reflections can be typed up on a separate piece of paper or given verbally to the participants at this time.
- c. The participants should be instructed that these are starting points and that they should not be confined to just those statements or questions given.
- d. Appoint one person from each group to be a recorder.

### **D. Large Group Input:**

- a. Have the individual groups reassemble.
- b. Ask the recorders to submit the questions or comments that were raised during their discussion.
- c. Make certain that you collect those reports as they will be helpful for you in planning at a later date.
- d. Don't forget to allow people to ask questions if they need clarification on a point made.

### **E. Break**

(Give the participants a break if they need one for refreshments or just for relaxing before beginning again)

## **II: THE GATHERING – PART II:**

### **A. Presentation (Pgs. 16-17)**

- a. Refer to the sheet entitled “Witness.”
- b. You can choose a different presenter for this section or use the same presenter from the earlier presentation.
- c. Once again the concepts should be put in the words of the presenter.

### **B. Private Reflection (Pgs. 18-19-20-21-22-23)**

1. Pass out the “Witness Statement for those who serve in Catholic Education.”
2. There is also a section entitled “Worksheet for Witness Statement.”
3. This should be passed out at the same time as the participants will need it for their private reflection.
4. This worksheet and their replies will become the focus for a later meeting with you and possibly the pastor.

### **C. Large Group Process**

- a. When the group reassembles, tell them that their private reflections will not necessarily be shared in the large group unless they so choose.
- b. The purpose of this large group process is to talk and share ideas in general terms about:
  - a) The intent of the Witness Statement;
  - b) The content of the Witness Statement;
  - c) The practicality of the Witness Statement;
  - d) General reaction to the Witness Statement and its implication.

### **D. Introduction to Activity (Pg. 24)**

1. Refer to the section entitled “Introduction to Activity.”
2. This presentation is an introduction to the next group activity.
3. It is intended to give the participants information on what to do in the next activity.

### **E. Small Cluster Activity (Pg. 25-26)**

1. Send the group off to do some work in small clusters. Small clusters can be any combination of the following:
  - a) Grade level: primary, intermediate and junior high;
  - b) Subject matter: science, social studies, language arts, math, etc;
  - c) Any other designated grouping of your choosing that you feel will best suit the needs of your community.

### **F. Conclusion (Pg. 27)**

1. Refer to the section entitled “Conclusion” for your summation remarks.
2. Once again, this presentation can be given by you, by a person of your choosing, or by the person/s who did the other presentations.

**G. Future (Pg. 28)**

- a. Refer to the section entitled “Future.”
- b. Make certain that the participants know that over the next several weeks they are to continue to reflect on the witness statement and the worksheets that accompany it.
- c. Eventually, let each participant know that they will have a sit down meeting with you and possibly the pastor to discuss the witness statement, the implications and what impact the witness statement should have on their ministry as Catholic educators.

**(FOR INVITEES)**

**(Date)**

Dear **(Name)**,

You are entering an *Evangelizing Catholic School!* In the days, months, and years ahead you will find that those three words will be the focal point of everything we do in our faith community.

Our late Holy Father, Pope John Paul II called all Christians to join in what he called a “new evangelization and mission to the nations,” a call he stated “no believer or institution of the Church is exempt from, proclaiming Christ to all people.” This is what we are about in our Catholic school, to help others discover the person, Jesus Christ, so that they may be open to His Way and His Church.

I am privileged to be the spiritual leader of this school and honored to invite you to the first of a series of gatherings focusing on various characteristics that have been identified as integral to an evangelizing Catholic school. These sessions will gather some of the people who are instrumental in helping me evaluate the evangelizing character of the school and assist me in providing guidance and suggestions for ensuring that we lead the people of our faith community into a “deeper and more intimate relationship with the Person of Jesus Christ.”

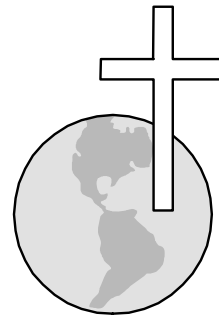
Included with this introductory letter are various short readings that will help you focus on the content of the first session and give you some background information on the Church’s latest thinking on evangelization.

The first session will be held **(Date)** in **(Place)** from **(Time)**. I hope that you will be able to join the other people I am inviting to this session. A formal invitation will be sent within a short period of time giving you additional details.

Sincerely,

**(Name)**

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 Trine God, an incarnate God in the person of Jesus Christ, who established the Catholic Church to complete his mission.



# **Welcome to The Evangelizing Catholic School**

**You are invited to help  
bring others into a deeper  
and more intimate  
relationship with Jesus Christ**

**Date:**

**Time:**

**Place:**

**RSVP by:**

**RSVP to:**

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## **READING #1 IN PREPARATION FOR SESSION**

The following reading is taken from the Administrative Manual for Catholic Education. It is the established philosophy of education in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis and provides the context out of which we minister.

### **PHILOSOPHY (1100)**

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The educational mission of the Catholic Church finds its center in the life and teachings of Jesus, who reveals God's design for all of creation. In Jesus, the Church invites all people into communion with the Father, Son, and Spirit and into the mission of transforming all of life into God's kingdom. Through education, the Church seeks to prepare her members to hear, live, and proclaim the good news of the Gospel. The shared tradition of the Church supports, challenges, and enlightens persons at every stage of human life as they grow toward their full potential as individuals and as members of family, Church, and world.

Catholic education includes all the deliberate, systematic, and sustained efforts of the Church community, in both formal and informal education settings, to develop the skills, knowledge, and values needed for life. In today's pluralistic society, the Church offers the harmonizing perspective of faith to human culture and history. Catholic education sees all knowledge as sacred when human insight is combined with divine revelation in the pursuit of truth, goodness, and beauty.

Catholic education involves the active participation of the learner in studying and interpreting human experience in the light of faith, so as to advance God's glory and the dignity of all peoples. Through methods appropriate to differing age-levels and ways that people learn, the Church provides opportunities for learners to explore, reflect, and integrate a Christian understanding of nature, self, society, and God, and to manifest this in lives of love and service. In this endeavor, the Church recognizes the learner's dependence on grace to bring human nature to completion.

It is the educator--teacher, administrator, pastor--who is preeminent in creating the unique climate in which a Catholic philosophy of education can be realized. Called to a specific ministry in the Church, Catholic educators are committed to professional excellence and spiritual growth in their Christian lives, witnessing to the Tradition and vision they share. Respecting each learner as created and loved by God with special gifts and needs, they direct the learning process as guide and companion.

The Church calls parents, as the first educators of their children in knowledge and faith, to partnership in the mission of Catholic education by taking responsibility for their own life-long learning and supporting the educational opportunities offered for their children. The entire Catholic community, especially the parish family, shares responsibility for providing the learning environment, the resources, the leadership, and the community of faith that supports the educational mission of the Church.



## **READING #2 IN PREPARATION FOR SESSION**

The following reading is taken from the Administrative Manual for Catholic Education. It provides an explanation for our Identity and Mission in Catholic Education.

### **CATHOLIC IDENTITY AND MISSION (1200)**

The Catholic philosophy of education finds diverse expression in the educational programs in the Archdiocese, but central to all is their Catholic identity and faith in Jesus Christ. In a climate of growing secularization that affects much of the United States culture, Catholic schools and parish programs accept the responsibility to evangelize and to transform the life of the individual and the culture with our Catholic faith. This *Administrative Manual* provides the vision and means to help Catholic educational institutions preserve and enhance their Catholic identity and mission.

Of first importance is to seek out individuals to fill the roles of leading and teaching in our Catholic schools and parish programs whose hearts burn with the love of the Trinitarian God and of their neighbor, whose lives witness the faith, and whose commitment upholds the Catholic nature of these educational programs. Of particular help in seeking out these individuals would be the *Witness Statement for Those Who Serve in Catholic Education* (3100). Administrators, principals, and directors/coordinators of religious education, along with all religion teachers, are to be Catholic and to be certified in religious education by the Archdiocese. For the teaching of religion, the *Archdiocesan Religion Curriculum Standard*, the list of approved religious education texts, and the use of the national assessment tool for religion (*ACRE*) are promoted. In addition, all subject areas and extracurricular activities should reflect the Catholic identity of the school and be seen as opportunities to relate religious truths and values to everyday experiences of life.

The evangelizing mission of the Church puts people in touch, in communion, in intimacy with Jesus Christ. This mission permeates the climate and relationships among all members of the Catholic school and parish school of religion, evidenced through a welcoming, compassionate, and Gospel-centered community of faith and service. Priority is given to the liturgical life of the Church, to the celebration of the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, to days of prayer, retreats, and various prayer experiences for faculty, students, and families. Catholic identity is also supported by the physical environment, where sacred images and Catholic models of faith are visible and are utilized in learning activities and celebrations.

It is the Holy Spirit who gives evangelizers the words with which to proclaim the Gospel and who transforms believers into disciples and disciples into witnesses to Christ in the world. With the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit, educators are able to fulfill the primary mission of Catholic schools and parish programs: the saving mission of Jesus Christ and His Church.

### **READING #3 IN PREPARATION FOR SESSION**

The following excerpts are taken from the *General Directory for Catechesis*. They are intended to give you some background information on the theme of evangelization for those who teach in Catholic education.

*Catechesis is a work of evangelization in the context of the mission of the Church. (#4)*

*Jesus Christ, after His Resurrection together with the Father sent the Holy Spirit in order that He might accomplish from within the work of salvation and that He might animate His disciples to continue the mission to the whole world. (#34)*

*Evangelization too, which transmits Revelation to the world, is also brought about in words and deeds. It is at once testimony and proclamation, word and sacrament, teaching and task. (#39)*

*The Christian faith is, above all, conversion to Jesus Christ, full and sincere adherence to His person and the decision to walk in His footsteps. Faith is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, making of oneself a disciple of Him. (#53)*

*Faith is a gift from God. It can only be born in the intimacy of Man's heart as a fruit of that 'grace which moves and assists Him.' (55)*

*The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ. (#80)*

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The following excerpts are taken from the *National Directory for Catechesis*.

*Faith is a gift from God. In His Providence, God has chosen to use human instruments to ensure the growth of the faith received in Baptism.....members of the Church community are called not only to grow in knowledge of the faith but, at the same time, to pass on that faith to others. Like St. Paul, the evangelist and Apostle, catechists exemplify the manner in which we cooperate with God's grace to ensure the growth of faith and remind us that it is God who causes the growth. (#53)*

*All members of the community of believers in Jesus Christ participate in the Church's catechetical mission. Some are called to more specific catechetical roles. Parents, parish catechists, teachers, Catholic school principals, parish catechetical leaders for adults and children, youth ministry leaders, those who work in diocesan and national catechetical offices, deacons, consecrated religious, priests, and bishops are all catechists with distinctive roles. (#53)*

*From the earliest days of the Church, immediately following the apostles' acceptance of Christ's missionary mandate, catechists have made and continue to make 'an outstanding and absolutely necessary contribution to the spread of the faith and the Church by their great work.' Esteemed members of the Church's apostolate, they perform 'a fundamental evangelical service.'* (#53)

*The distinctive Catholic identity and mission of the Catholic school also depend on the efforts and example of the whole faculty.* (#54, B, 9, 9d)

*The integration of culture and faith is mediated by the other integration of faith and life in the person of the teacher. The nobility of the task to which teachers are called demands that, in imitation of Christ, the only Teacher, they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behavior.* (#54, B, 9, 9d)

*All teachers in Catholic schools share in the catechetical ministry. All members of the faculty, at least by their example, are an integral part of the process of religious education...Teacher's lifestyle and characters are as important as their professional credentials.* (#54, B, 9, 9d)

*While some situations might entail compelling reasons for members of another faith tradition to teach in a Catholic school, as much as possible, all teachers in a Catholic school should be practicing Catholics.* (#54, B, 9, 9d)

*The Church entrusts the ministry of catechesis to exemplary followers of Christ with unquestioned personal integrity and moral character: Positive qualities in candidates should be faith that manifests itself in their piety and daily life; love for the Church and communion with its pastors; apostolic spirit and missionary zeal; love for their brothers and sisters and a willingness to give generous service; sufficient education; the respect of the community; the human, moral and technical qualities necessary for the work of a catechist, such as dynamism, good relations with others, etc.* (#55, B)

## SETTING THE ENVIRONMENT

The environment for this session and all subsequent sessions will build, one upon the other. Therefore, this session will be simple in structure and subsequent sessions will build upon the initial setting. However, building upon the environment of the previous sessions will allow the participants to visually connect the content of each session to the others and see each as integral to the main theme of evangelization.

Please remember that these are suggestions for setting the environment. Your own creativity and personal preferences should be the guiding factor in setting the stage for your gatherings.

### Just Outside the Gathering Area

(the items on this table will remain the same for every session):

- Set up a small table covered with a white cloth.
- On the table place some of the following, but not all (make it simple):
  - A baptismal candle;
  - A small fountain that can be plugged in with water running;
  - A white garment representing baptism;
  - A calligraphy print, framed, of the following: *“Be it known to to all who enter here that CHRIST is the reason for this school. He is the unseen but ever present teacher in its classes. He is the model of its faculty and the inspiration of its students;”*
  - The philosophy or mission statement of the school/parish.

### As a Central Focus of the Room where the Gathering will take place:

(the items on this table will build, one upon the other, from session to session)

- Depending upon how you set up the room, a table should be the center of the gathering.
- Place some sort of covering (cloth / rug / drapery / etc) over the table.
- On the table display a crucifix, or art print of your favorite image of Christ, and the scriptures (note: if you do not display a candle on the outside table, you could add that to this display).

### Commentary:

The focus of everyone’s attention should be on the table at the entrance that “makes a statement” about your reason for existence. Once they enter the room, their attention should be drawn immediately to the central display...it should become the focal point of the presentation throughout the entire gathering. Therefore, as much as possible, all other distractions should be minimized and this can be done through dimmer lighting in the room except on the central focus or by some other creative means.

## REFLECTION ON EVANGELIZATION

On the following pages, you will find information that can be formatted into a presentation to the participants. Some of the concepts presented herein are taken from the previous readings so it is essential that these readings get into the hands of the participants prior to the gathering, giving them ample time for reading and reflecting upon the content. The presenter may wish to use some or all of the information provided.

- The term evangelization in its early stages only meant the art of “making new Catholics.” While it is still our desire to invite people into the true Church which possesses the fullness of God’s revelation, the term evangelization, in today’s Church, should be seen in a much broader context.
- The term evangelization means to “help people develop an intimate relationship with the Lord.”
- The evangelizer and the evangelizing community, not separate from the Church but in union with the Church, seek to lead others to accept the person of Jesus and His way.
- Pope Benedict XVI issued a statement that “the first apostles, like today’s, would not have to be heralds of an idea, but witnesses of a person. Before being sent to evangelize, they would have to ‘be’ with Jesus, establishing a personal relationship with Him.”
- The late Pope John Paul II consistently called all Christians to join in what he called a “new evangelization and mission to the nations.”
- Within that call, he stated that “no believer or institution of the Church is exempt from this, to proclaim Christ to all people.”
- As a Catholic school, entrusted to carry on this Mission of Christ, we are not only “not exempt” but also mandated to evangelize.
- Catechesis, and we are all catechists, builds upon this initial relationship, deepens it and brings it to maturity.
- The essential mission of the Church is to evangelize.
- It is legitimate then to say that if the Catholic school, which exists to carry out the mission of the Church, does not evangelize, it cannot call itself a Catholic school.
- The educational mission of the Catholic Church finds its center in the life and teachings of Jesus, who reveals God’s design for all of creation. In Jesus, the Church invites all people into communion (and intimacy) with the Father, Son, and Spirit and into the mission of transforming all of life into God’s Kingdom.
- Evangelization is the essential mission of the Catholic School.
- Bringing others into intimacy and communion with the Person of Jesus Christ is primary, even though somewhat difficult to hear; everything else is secondary even though it might be excellent.

- The work of evangelization that we are mandated to do is not a matter of inventing a “new program” or new effort.
- The program already exists: it is the plan found in the Gospel and in the living Tradition, it is the same as ever.
- Ultimately the work of evangelization has Christ himself at its center. He is to be known, loved and imitated, so that in Him we may live the life of the Trinity and with Him transform history until its fulfillment in the heavenly Kingdom.
- Our situation is not unlike the situation of the first Christians and of the first missionaries to America; we live in a world which has either never heard of Christ and the Gospel, or has forgotten Christ.
- If we are to bring Christ to the world, we must first know Christ and love Christ. We must strive daily for holiness of life. In a world in which holiness of life is counter-cultural, we are called to set aside our hesitations, doubts and fears, and to heed the command of Christ: “Put out into the deep and let down your nets for a catch.”

### SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

It would be more desirable if the person presenting on the theme of evangelization designed his/her own questions for this small group activity. However, in the event that this is not possible a few questions to help the small groups initiate a discussion on evangelization are included here.

- In the selected reading entitled “**Philosophy**” there is a statement regarding teachers that says: “*Respecting each learner as created and loved by God with special gifts and needs, they direct the learning process as guide and companion.*” **In your ministry of teaching, do you see yourself as a guide and companion? How does seeing yourself this way differ from seeing yourself as teacher?**
- “*Faith is a gift from God. It can only be born in the intimacy of Man’s heart as a fruit of that ‘grace which moves and assists Him.’*” **If we believe that faith is indeed a gift, how does that affect the way we teach about Christ and His Church?**
- The General Directory for Catechesis states that “*the Christian faith is, above all, conversion to Jesus Christ, full and sincere adherence to His person and the decision to walk in His footsteps. Faith is a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, making oneself a disciple of Him.*” **As a teacher in a Catholic school are we more concerned with conversion or with knowledge? What should we be more concerned with and why?**

## WITNESS

On the following pages, you will find information that can be formatted into a presentation to the participants. Some of the concepts presented herein are taken from the previous readings so it is essential that these readings get into the hands of the participants prior to the gathering, giving them ample time for reading and reflecting upon the content. The presenter may wish to use some or all of the information provided.

- It is the educator who is preeminent in creating the unique climate in which a Catholic philosophy of education can be realized.
- Catholic educators are committed to professional excellence and spiritual growth in their Christian lives, witnessing to the Tradition and vision they share.
- The entire Catholic community, especially the parish family, shares responsibility for providing the learning environment, the resources, the leadership, and the community of faith that supports the education mission of the Church.
- To fill the roles of leading and teaching in our Catholic schools and parish programs, it is important first of all to seek out individuals whose hearts burn with the love of the Trinitarian God and of their neighbor, whose lives witness the faith, and whose commitment upholds the Catholic nature of these education programs.
- Administrators, principals, and directors / coordinators of religious education, along with all religion teachers, are to be Catholic and to be certified in religious education by the Archdiocese.
- All subject areas and extracurricular activities should reflect the Catholic identity of the school and be seen as opportunities to relate religious truths and values to everyday experiences of life.
- It is the Holy Spirit who gives evangelizers the words with which to proclaim the gospel and who transforms believers into disciples and disciples into witnesses to Christ in the world.
- It is essential therefore, that those who serve in Catholic education proclaim Jesus Christ, His life and ministry, present the Catholic faith in its fullness and be Christ's witnesses to the world.
- ***All who serve in Catholic education in the parish and school programs of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis will witness by their public behavior, actions, and words a life consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.***
- Only those persons who can support this *Witness Statement* are to be employed by pastors, principals, and directors / coordinators of religious education.
- All who serve in Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis should:
  1. believe in God;
  2. support belief in Jesus Christ;
  3. engage in prayer;
  4. respect ecclesiastical authority;



5. possess a basic knowledge of the Catholic Church;
6. not take a public position contrary to the Catholic Church;
7. demonstrate a public life consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church;
8. practice respect and reverence for others and prudence with regard to confidential information related to work and, if Catholic, not have publicly rejected the Catholic Church;
9. be active members of the Catholic Church, or of their own Church if not Catholic;
10. practice exemplary stewardship and ethical behavior with regard to Church property and funds.

As the National Directory for Catechesis states:

- *From the earliest days of the Church, immediately following the apostles' acceptance of Christ's missionary mandate, catechists have made and continue to make an outstanding and absolutely necessary contribution to the spread of the faith and the Church by their great work. Esteemed members of the Church's apostolate, they perform a fundamental evangelical service.*
- *The integration of culture and faith is mediated by the other integration of faith and life in the person of the teacher. The nobility of the task to which teachers are called demands that, in imitation of Christ, the only Teacher, they reveal the Christian message not only by word but also by every gesture of their behavior.*
- *All teachers in Catholic schools share in the catechetical ministry. All members of the faculty, at least by their example, are an integral part of the process of religious education...a teacher's lifestyle and character are as important as their professional credentials.*
- *While some situations might entail compelling reasons for members of another faith tradition to teach in a Catholic school, as much as possible, all teachers in a Catholic school should be practicing Catholics.*
- *Positive qualities in candidates should be:*
  1. faith that manifests itself in their piety and daily life;
  2. love for the Church and communion with its pastors;
  3. apostolic spirit and missionary zeal;
  4. love for their brothers and sisters;
  5. a willingness to give generous service;
  6. sufficient education;
  7. the respect of the community;
  8. the moral and technical qualities necessary for the work of a catechist.
- Finally, teachers must be willing to accept the challenge to be spiritual mentors, spiritual companions, guiding young people in their journey of Christian conversion no matter what subject or position they hold in the school community
- Teachers are often the only face of the Church some people see

## READING #4

The following witness statement is taken from the Administrative Manual for Catholic Education. It is the established “Witness Statement for Those Who Serve in Catholic Education. This statement will be used as a focus for the session.

### **WITNESS STATEMENT FOR THOSE WHO SERVE IN CATHOLIC EDUCATION (3100)**

The mission of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is the mission of the Catholic Church, to reveal God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to all people and to teach them about the fullness of His love. “Indeed the primordial mission of the Church is to proclaim God and to be His witness before the world” (*GDC*). Catholic education shares in a special way in the Church’s mission by proclaiming and witnessing Jesus Christ and His teachings.

Catholic education, which includes education, formation, and transformation, exists in order to evangelize. Two important elements that make up the process of evangelization are proclamation and witness. It is essential therefore, that those who serve in Catholic education proclaim Jesus Christ, His life and ministry, present the Catholic faith in its fullness and be Christ’s witnesses to the world.

Initially those being evangelized will be attracted to and listen to those who are good witnesses. “The Good News proclaimed by the witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*). Some in Catholic education -- religion teachers, PSR catechists, educational and catechetical leaders -- are called to be explicit proclaimers of the Word. But *all* who serve in Catholic education are called to be witnesses to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. Therefore, the following *Witness Statement* applies to all who serve in Catholic education.

**All who serve in Catholic education in the parish and school programs of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis will witness by their public behavior, actions, and words a life consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.**

Only those persons who can support this *Witness Statement* are to be employed by pastors, principals, and directors/coordinators of religious education.

All who serve in Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis should be made aware that support of this *Witness Statement* must be reflected in their public behavior.

All who serve in Catholic education should:

1. believe in God;
2. support belief in Jesus Christ;
3. engage in prayer;
4. respect ecclesiastical authority;
5. possess a basic knowledge of the Catholic Church;
6. not take a public position contrary to the Catholic Church;
7. demonstrate a public life consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church;
8. practice respect and reverence for others and prudence with regard to confidential information related to work; if Catholic, have not publicly rejected the Catholic Church;
9. be active members of the Catholic Church, or of their own Church if not Catholic;
10. practice exemplary stewardship and ethical behavior with regard to Church property and funds.

The above is a thorough but not all-inclusive listing of the implications of this *Witness Statement*.

## WORKSHEET FOR WITNESS STATEMENT

This worksheet and the accompanying *Witness Statement* will serve as the focus for your private reflection. The worksheet is fashioned in such a way that you are able to read a section of the *Witness Statement* and then reflect upon that content making notations as you reflect. This worksheet is for your own personal use and will be used at a later time in a personal meeting with the principal and possibly the pastor.

After spending some time in personal reflection on each of the following sections of the *Witness Statement* you should record your thoughts, any questions you might have from reading the section, and how you fulfill or attempt to fulfill the statement as you carry out your ministry of education.

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The mission of Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit is the mission of the Catholic Church, to reveal God the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit to all people and to teach them about the fullness of His love.

**What is the mission of the Catholic school in which you teach?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**What are some specific ways you teach others about the fullness of God's love?** \_\_\_\_\_

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“Indeed the primordial mission of the Church is to proclaim God and to be His witness before the world” (*GDC*). Catholic education shares in a special way in the Church's mission by proclaiming and witnessing Jesus Christ and His teachings.

**How are you a witness before the world?** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Specifically, how do you witness to:**

**Other faculty** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Your students** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Parents** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**The parish community** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Catholic education, which includes education, formation, and transformation, exists in order to evangelize. Two important elements that make up the process of evangelization are proclamation and witness. It is essential therefore, that those who serve in Catholic education proclaim Jesus Christ, His life and ministry, present the Catholic faith in its fullness and be Christ's witnesses to the world.

**How do you proclaim Jesus Christ, His life and ministry?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Do you believe you can present the Catholic faith in its fullness?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**What do you need in order to be able to do the above?** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Initially those being evangelized will be attracted to and listen to those who are good witnesses. “The Good News proclaimed by the witness of life sooner or later has to be proclaimed by the word of life” (*Evangelii Nuntiandi*). Some in Catholic education -- religion teachers, PSR catechists, educational and catechetical leaders -- are called to be explicit proclaimers of the Word. But *all* who serve in Catholic education are called to be witnesses to the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the Catholic Church. Therefore, the following *Witness Statement* applies to all who serve in Catholic education.

**What do you see as a major difference between a “witness” and a “proclaimer” of God’s Word?**\_\_\_\_\_

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**Which are you? A witness? A proclaimer? Both?**\_\_\_\_\_

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**All who serve in Catholic education in the parish and school programs of the Archdiocese of Saint Louis will witness by their public behavior, actions, and words a life consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church.**

**When others observe you and your actions, do you think they see the face of Christ Jesus?**\_\_

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**When you see others in your school community, do you see them reflect the face of Christ?**\_\_

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**If you observe actions that are not in keeping with the Catholic Church and the teachings of Jesus, what action do you take?**\_\_\_\_\_

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Only those persons who can support this *Witness Statement* are to be employed by pastors, principals, and directors/coordinators of religious education.

**What is your reaction to this statement?**\_\_\_\_\_

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All who serve in Catholic education in the Archdiocese of Saint Louis should be made aware that support of this *Witness Statement* must be reflected in their public behavior. All who serve in Catholic education should:

1. believe in God;
2. support belief in Jesus Christ;
3. engage in prayer;
4. respect ecclesiastical authority;
5. possess a basic knowledge of the Catholic Church;
6. not take a public position contrary to the Catholic Church;
7. demonstrate a public life consistent with the teachings of the Catholic Church;
8. practice respect and reverence for others and prudence with regard to confidential information related to work; if Catholic, have not publicly rejected the Catholic Church;
9. be active members of the Catholic Church, or of their own Church if not Catholic;
10. practice exemplary stewardship and ethical behavior with regard to Church property and funds.

The above is a thorough but not all-inclusive listing of the implications of this *Witness Statement*.

**Does this listing above seem realistic?** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**What assistance can we give you in order to help you comply with the Witness Statement?** \_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## **INTRODUCTION TO ACTIVITY**

After sharing in the large group and allowing every participant the time necessary to voice their reaction to the *Witness Statement*, it is desirable for them to go off in small groups (designated by you in advance of the gathering) to work together on what they have reflected upon, what they have heard in the group sharing and what may come from working together and to put down some “concrete practices” that will allow them to continue the work of evangelization in the school community.

These thoughts and ideas generated in the small group clusters will help you to put a plan of action into effect and to address certain of these ideas at a later time.

Therefore it is imperative that when the small groups return they should give their combined ideas and thoughts to you for later review.



**SMALL CLUSTER ACTIVITY**

1. What are some specific ways that we can witness to Jesus Christ and His teachings outside of what we are already doing?

**IN RELIGION CLASS** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**IN OTHER SUBJECT AREAS** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**IN OUR DAILY INTERACTIONS WITH OTHERS** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**IN PRAYER / LITURGY / SACRAMENTS** \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**IN GRADING** \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**IN THE TEACHING OF RELIGIOUS KNOWLEDGE** \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**IN OUR PRACTICE OF FAITH AND FAITH SHARING** \_\_\_\_\_  
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**IN DISCIPLINING STUDENTS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
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\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**OTHER AREAS:** \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## CONCLUSION

The following concluding comments should be made. The presenter for this section should, no matter who has presented during the main portion of this gathering, be you, the principal.

- This is the first of a series of gatherings that we will have on *The Evangelizing Catholic School*
- The work of becoming a better evangelizing community will need to be ongoing and our efforts will need to be deliberate.
- This evangelizing thrust is not something new. It continues the Mission of Jesus Christ.
- In order to become better evangelizers it is necessary to start with those of us who have been granted the privilege of witnessing to and being proclaimers of Jesus Christ and His teachings.
- From this gathering, we will continue to work on ways and activities that you and I might engage in to more explicitly proclaim Jesus Christ and in doing so to invite others of the school community to enter into a deeper and more intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.
- This does not mean that everything else stops and that we go in a new direction. It means that we shift our focus and allow evangelization to become the umbrella under which everything that we do as a school community fits.
- Our ultimate goal is to be an evangelizing school where the Person of Jesus Christ is the center of everything we do.
- It means that throughout the year, and in future years, we must consciously reflect upon “what we are doing” to ensure that everything we are doing helps to bring our school community closer to Jesus.
- And it means that if we find that there are things we are currently doing that do not bring us closer to Jesus, we must evaluate whether or not they should be promoted in our school community.
- Our students, parents, and parish community look to us to guide and shape the minds and hearts of the students entrusted to us. What better way to fulfill their mandate than by being certain that our every effort brings them closer to Jesus and His Way?

## **FUTURE**

The worksheet and the *Witness Statement* will be crucial as we continue the work of evangelization. Prior to contracts being signed for the coming year, we will utilize the *Witness Statement for Those Who Serve in Catholic Education*, your comments, ideas and the thoughts generated during your private reflection as a basis for our discussion.

Your thoughts and reflections from this gathering will assist me as we become deliberate about continuing the Mission of Jesus Christ and continuing the work of evangelization. So you will continue to hear about some of the results of this gathering and will receive various “reminders” of some of the topics discussed today.

In the weeks and months to come we will have other gatherings, in various formats, to continue the work begun today.