

## Special Interest Articles

Catholic Graduate Expectations.

Family Life Education.

Catholicity in the Curriculum.

Themes of Catholic Teaching.



## Character Education

The Ministry of Education recently asked school boards what they are doing in the area of **“Character Education.”** There has recently been a great deal of work through our public school counterparts on the concept of ‘schools of character’ and we applaud their efforts. Society can only benefit from such initiatives.

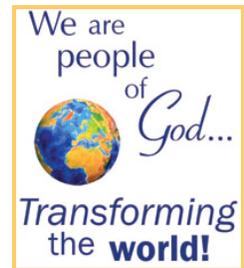
When it comes to character education and Catholic schools, the Catholic Directors of Education recently reaffirmed our **Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations** as our collective and definitive statement on character education. We are, and will continue to be, schools of transformation – transforming not just students, but society as a whole, into the image of Christ.

We have outlined in this special newsletter the graduate expectations and

how we strive to meet those expectations through our Religion and Family Life programs, through our value-based curriculum that fully integrates Catholicity into the classroom, and through the lens of some approaches to social teaching. We view each of these as the “tip of the iceberg” in a sea of many possibilities.

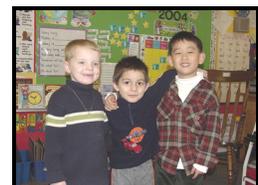
As we celebrate in 2006 our 170<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Catholic Education in Waterloo Region, we wish to honour our past, affirm our present programs and services that demonstrate our distinctiveness, and invite all to continue our hopeful journey of transformation.

~~ **Dianne Moser** (Chair); **Wayne Buchholtz** (Vice Chair); **Roger Lawler** (Director); **Fr. Fred Scinto, C.R.** (Spiritual Animator)



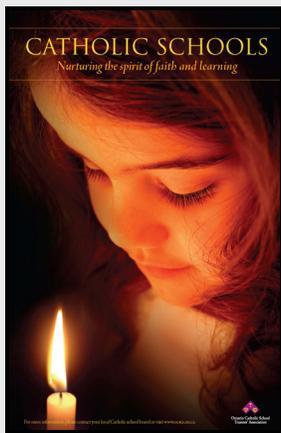
## Family Life Education

*Family Life Education is taught to support families as they educate their children in matters of faith and morals. The family life program **Fully Alive** focuses on God's gift of creation, human sexuality in the context of marital love and growing in relationships with others. These programs – as approved by our Family Life Advisory Committee -- were created with the developmental stage and age of students in mind.*





"Catholic education is dedicated to ensuring that students reach their full potential so that there is success for all."



## Catholic Graduate Expectations

Catholic Education is a holistic education designed to form and inform students -- mind, body, heart and soul. It is committed to excellence as it invites students to respond in the context in which they live in the light of their faith. Catholic education is dedicated to ensuring that students reach their full potential so that there is success for all. This desire is expressed well in the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations* where the vision of the learner is summarized:

- ***A discerning believer formed in the Catholic Faith community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery of God's presence through word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection and moral living.***
- ***An effective communicator, who speaks, writes and listens honestly and sensitively, responding critically in light of gospel values.***
- ***A reflective, creative and holistic thinker who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good.***
- ***A self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.***
- ***A collaborative contributor who finds meaning, dignity and vocation in work, which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.***
- ***A caring family member who attends to family, school, parish and the wider community.***

## Food For Thought...

***"A Catholic school can never be simply a place where students accumulate skills and information, a place where they learn how to get ahead and sell their gifts on the open market. If this were so, our schools would prepare students for nothing more than a shallow life far removed from the profound vision of life revealed in the gospel. A Catholic school must be a place where all knowledge and relationship are transformed by questions of meaning, by the quest for meaning."***

***~~ This Moment of Promise, Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1988***

# Religious Education

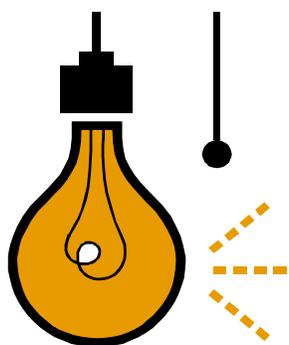
Catholic educators recognize that parents are the primary educators of their children in the areas of faith and morality. This education begins very early in a child's life through the experiences and life lessons they are taught at home and in their local parish. The faith formation that takes place in the Catholic school is designed to support and complement that which takes place in the context of the child's family. Religious Education begins in Kindergarten with the program, *In God's Image*. This thematic approach to faith formation invites the child to develop a self-understanding that he or she has been created in the *image and likeness of God*.

In **Grades 1-6** the catechetical program *Born of the Spirit* is used to deepen the student's faith and knowledge of the *Holy Trinity, the Church, the life of Jesus and the Christian call to social justice*. Catholic educators support parents and work with parish priests by preparing students, in terms of knowledge and understanding, for the completion of the **Sacraments of Initiation – Confirmation and First Eucharist, as well as the Sacrament of Reconciliation**. The celebration of these sacraments always takes place within the context of the local parish. In **Grades 7-9** the catechetical program *We Are Strong Together* is used with a particular

emphasis on the *Apostle's Creed* and on the *Beatitudes* as expressions of how we ought to live our lives each day.

**Secondary Schools offer a 1-credit course in Religious Education in Grades 9 – 12.** Students are expected to enrol in a religious education course in each of their four years in secondary school. These courses, developed in keeping with the *Religious and Family Life Education Policy Document* published by the *Institute for Catholic Education* in 1999, invite students to further develop their faith and understanding in content areas that include Scripture, Prayer and Sacraments, Church, Morality and Ethics.

In **Grade 10** particular emphasis is placed on **Church and Culture**. In **Grade 11** the emphasis is on **World Religions**. This course is designed to assist students to deepen their understanding of their own faith tradition while at the same time gaining an appreciation for, and an awareness of, the faith traditions of others in our world. In **Grade 12**, the curriculum focuses on Christian *morality* and *ethics* with the support of programs such as **In Search of the Good: A Catholic Understanding of Moral Living**.



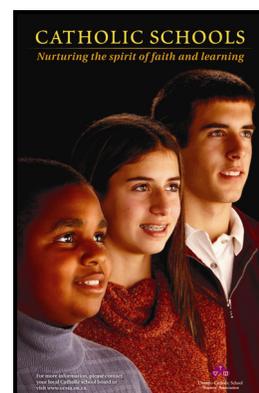
## Catholic Curriculum

Catholic schools are respectful of the initiatives of the Ministry of Education and the implementation of learning expectations and programs designed to provide quality education for all students in Ontario.

Catholic schools are privileged to deliver these programs in light of the message of the Gospel.

All curriculum can be illuminated first by the Religious and Family Life Education programs and secondly, through the integration of the themes of Catholic Social Teaching. For example: Two high schools, one from the public system and the other from the Catholic system, decide to work together to clean up a nearby stream. Both students see this activity within the context of protection of the environment and good citizenship. The Catholic

students should also understand this work as their participation in God's act of creation and their mission to be good stewards of God's creation.



**Waterloo Catholic District School Board**  
 35 Weber St., W.,  
 Unit A – Box 91116  
 Kitchener, ON N2G 4G2

**Phone**  
 (519) 578-3660

**Fax**  
 (519) 578-5291

**E-mail**  
 info@wcdsb.edu.on.ca

*With the gift of the Catholic Faith: Learning, growing and transforming the world together, as faithful disciples of the Risen Lord.*



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[www.wcdsb.edu.on.ca](http://www.wcdsb.edu.on.ca)

## Catholic Social Teaching

Themes of Catholic Social Teaching	The Catholic Student
<b>Faith</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Prayer and Worship / Retreat programs for students</li> <li>❖ Commissioned to go out and serve others</li> <li>❖ Pastoral care in times of grief and in service to those in need</li> </ul>
<b>Hope</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Culture of redemptive assessment</li> <li>❖ Providing outreach to those in our local communities and beyond, examples include:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fundraising for victims of the Tsunami</li> <li>▪ Hurricane Katrina</li> <li>▪ Support for local food banks, soup kitchens and homeless shelters</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Dignity of the Human Person</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Success For All: Learning to Eighteen</li> <li>❖ Support for organizations such as:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Campaign for Life</li> <li>▪ Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<b>Preferential Option for the Poor and Vulnerable</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ St. John's Soup Kitchen / The Working Centre</li> <li>❖ ROOF</li> <li>❖ Volunteer experiences helping the poor and vulnerable in society</li> </ul>
<b>Peace</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>❖ Anti-bullying programs</li> <li>❖ Race Relations – anti-racism programs</li> <li>❖ Peer mediation programs</li> <li>❖ Peer helper programs</li> <li>❖ Peaceful Schools Programs</li> <li>❖ Safe Schools Programs</li> </ul>

## YOUR Catholic Schools...

The Waterloo Catholic District School Board, representing more than 100,000 Catholic school supporters, operates 52 schools and two adult education facilities serving more than 30,000 elementary, secondary and continuing education students in Waterloo Region – continuing a tradition of education excellence first begun in 1836.



### Board of Trustees

**Top (L to R):** Dianne Moser (Chair); Wayne Buchholtz (Vice Chair); Manuel da Silva; Louise Ervin; Michael Higgins; **Bottom (L to R):** Fr. Michael McHugh; Judy Nairn; Carole Reitzel; Marion Thomson Howell