

On Being a Community of Faith Reflecting as Catholic School Staff

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Virtue Link: Faith, Hope, Love
Catholic Character Themes: Discipleship, Reverence

On being a community of faith –some points to consider

1. *Our lives are rooted in mystery.* Every one of us is a unique dwelling place of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit. We can trust that God is working through us despite our limitations, to build up our community in ways more wonderful than we can imagine.
2. *Our unity in Christ through Baptism.* In Baptism, we are joined to Jesus in his death and resurrection. In Him, our lives are intimately connected as one body: When we are in doubt, someone else is given the gift of faith to reassure, help us trust and believe; when we are overburdened, others bear our suffering with us and help us carry our crosses in ways we do not know. Together in Christ, we have the gifts to be a living, thriving community.
3. *God is in control.* When struggles and preoccupations threaten to isolate or divide us from one another, our faith reminds us that God can and will bring good out of any situation, raising it to life in surprising ways, for the benefit of the body. We should never be afraid to turn our community's difficulties over to God in prayer.

Some Suggestions:

Trust – we do our limited part in a bigger plan, and entrust it to God, who can accomplish all good things through our work.

Surrender – by giving our lives and work to God unconditionally, over and over, we become messengers of peace, trust and joy for one another.

Allow God's Word to Speak to our Lives – reading and reflecting on the Scriptures each day will nurture the seeds of God's Kingdom, planted in our hearts at Baptism, transforming us in the process.

Prayer – simply placing the deepest desires of our hearts before God. We can do this any time –in the car, in the shower, the hallway or classroom, the sky's the limit.

Spiritual Reading – even a few minutes at the end of the day with the wisdom of someone else's reflections on a life of faith will help our love for God and neighbour stay kindled.

Be an Active Member of Your Worshipping Community – our faith community is rooted in the parish, which is there to sustain us in our baptismal journey. Here, Christ Himself meets us in Word, Sacrament and prayer, to transform our hearts and make the vision of His Kingdom our own. This is especially true in the Eucharist, where He is present: in the praying assembly (the assembled *body*), the person of the minister (the *body's head*), the sacramental elements of bread and wine, and in God's Word.

Be Fed by the Grace of the Sacraments (especially Reconciliation and Eucharist) – living a life of faith is not so much about what we do for God, but rather, what we allow God to do in and through us. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is Christ's compassionate kiss that heals and restores our hearts and souls as we seek to live and work as His disciples. Eucharist nurtures and strengthens us with the body of Christ to *live* as body of Christ in our relationships with one another: It is the sacrament of communion and community par excellence.

Bear the Paschal Mystery – we live in the shadow of the cross, cast by the brilliant light of the resurrection. By trusting God's abiding love through both suffering and joy, we can become bearers of God's reconciling love: in compassionate solidarity with the suffering, forgiveness, kindness, and celebration with those who rejoice.

Questions for Group Reflection

1. What strengths do we associate with being part of a community of faith?
2. What struggles accompany and confront us in our classrooms, hallways and staff room?
3. What keeps our Catholic school community going through these struggles?