

Catholic Character Theme

Community



Related Virtues: Faith, Hope, Love, Justice, Prudence

Descriptor

The language of our *story* speaks of **community**. Catholic schools are part of the parish faith community. Together with the parish, they are places where we can learn and grow as followers of Jesus. Jesus is the *heart* of our community. In our Catholic school communities, we learn to see and love Jesus in our study, in our prayer, in each other and in everyone. Jesus feeds and heals us so that we can live as a community: through the words of his Gospel and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist. The Holy Spirit unites us as a community, and gives each of us gifts to help one another grow as followers of Jesus. Community is visible whenever the friendship, love and kindness of Jesus are present in our Catholic schools. The character of our Catholic school communities speaks of **community**.

Scripture Quotes

Just as You Did to the Least Of These, So You Did it To Me

Then, the king will say to those at his right hand, 'Come, you that are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, I was naked and you gave me clothing, I was sick and you took care of me, I was in prison and you visited me.' ... 'Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.'

Matt 25: 34-36, 40

No One Was in Need

Now the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul, and no one

claimed private ownership of any possessions, but everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all. There was not a needy person among them, for as many as owned lands or houses sold them and brought the proceeds of what was sold. They laid it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to each as any had need.

Acts 5: 32-35

Members of God's Household

So then, you are no longer strangers and aliens, but you are citizens with the saints and also members of the household of God, built upon the foundation of the apostles and the prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the cornerstone. In him the whole structure is joined together and grows into a holy temple in the Lord; in whom you also are built together spiritually into a dwelling place for God. **Ephesians 2: 19-22**

Let Us Love One Another

Beloved, let us love one another, because love comes from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. God's love was revealed to us in this way: God sent his only Son into the world so that we might live through him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us so much, we also ought to love one another. No one has ever seen God; if we love one another, God lives in us, and his love is perfected in us.

1 John 4: 7-10

Abide in My Love

Jesus said to his disciples, "As the Father has loved me, so I have loved you; abide in my love. If you keep my commandments, you will abide in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love.You did not choose me but I chose you. And I appointed you to go and bear fruit, fruit that will last, so that the Father will give you whatever you ask him in my name. I am giving you these commands so that you may love one another."

John 15: 9-10,16-17

Varieties of Gifts, but the Same Spirit

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ.

1 Corinthians 12: 3b-7, 12

Unity of the Spirit

I call you lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, with all humility and gentleness, with patience, bearing with one another in love, making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all. Each of us was given grace according to the measure of Christ's gift. The gifts he gave were to prepare all God's people for the work of Christian service,

in order to build up the body of Christ.

Ephesians 4: 1-7, 12

Encourage One Another

Encourage one another and build up each other, as you are doing. Respect those who labour among you, and have charge of you in the Lord and admonish you; esteem them very highly in love because of their work. Be at peace among yourselves. And we urge you, beloved, to admonish the idlers, encourage the faint hearted, help the weak, be patient with all of them. See that none of you repays evil for evil, but always seek to do good to one another and to all. Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

1 Thessalonians 5: 11-18

Life Among the Believers

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need.

Acts 2: 44-45

Giving to others

Give liberally and be ungrudging when you do so, for on this account the Lord your God will bless you in all your work and in all that you undertake. Since there will never cease to be some in need on the earth, I therefore command you, "Open your hand to the poor and needy neighbour in your land."

Deuteronomy 15: 10-11

Providing for the Poor

When you reap your harvest in your field and forget a sheaf in the field, you shall not go back to get it; it shall be left for the alien, the orphan and the widow, so that the Lord your God may bless you in all your undertakings. Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt; therefore I am commanding you to do this.

Deuteronomy 24: 19-22

Caring for the Hungry, Poor and Homeless in our Community

Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? Is it not to share your bread with the hungry, and bring the homeless poor into your house; when you see the naked, to cover them, and not to hide yourself from your own kin? Then your light shall break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up quickly ...

Isaiah 58: 6-8a

The Beatitudes

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

EOCCC: Our Language, Our Story 1.0, 2009.

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Matthew 5: 1-12

Parts of the Body

For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in the one Spirit we were all baptized into one body - Jews or Greeks, slaves or free - and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. Indeed, the body does not consist of one member but of many. If the foot would say, "Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body," that would not make it any less a part of the body. And if the ear would say, "Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body", that would not make it any less a part of the body. If the whole body were an eye, where would the hearing be? If the whole body were hearing, where would the sense of smell be? But as it is, God arranged the members in the body, each one of them, as he chose. If all were a single member, where would the body be? As it is there are many members, yet one body. The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you", nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you." On the contrary, the members of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, and those members of the body that we think less honourable we clothe with greater honour, and our less respectable members are treated with greater respect; whereas our more respectable members do not need this. But God has so arranged the body, giving the greater honour to the inferior member, that there may be no dissension within the body, but the members may have the same care for one another. If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honoured, all rejoice together with it.

1 Corinthians 12: 12-26

Correcting and Supporting With Kindness

My friends, if anyone is detected in a transgression, you who have received the Spirit should restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness. Take care that you yourselves are not tempted. Bear one another's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ. For if those who are nothing think they are something, they deceive themselves.

Galatians 6: 1-3

Be One in Love

If then there is any encouragement in Christ, any consolation from love, any sharing in the Spirit, any compassion and sympathy, make my joy complete: be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. Do nothing from selfish ambition or conceit, but in humility regard others as better than yourselves. Let each of you look not to your own interests, but to the interests of others.

Philippians 2: 1-4

Forgiveness and Love

As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Bear with one another and, if anyone has a complaint against another, forgive each other; just as the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must

forgive. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony. And let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, to which indeed you were called in the one body.

Colossians 3: 12-15

The Vine and the Branches

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-grower. He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit. You have already been cleansed by the word that I have spoken to you. Abide in me as I abide in you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit by itself unless it abides in the vine, neither can you unless you abide in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Those who abide in me and I in them bear much fruit, because apart from me you can do nothing.

John 15: 1-5

Love For Enemies; Judging Others

Be merciful, just as your Father is merciful.

Do not judge, and you will not be judged; do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven; give, and it will be given to you. A good measure, pressed down, shaken together, running over, will be put into your lap; for the measure you give will be the measure you get back.

Luke 6: 36-38

Connection to Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

The Catholic Character Theme “Community” relates to the following Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations:

1. A Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic Faith Community who

CGE1a -illustrates a basic understanding of the **saving story** of our Christian faith;

CGE1b -participates in the **sacramental life** of the church and demonstrates an understanding of the centrality of the Eucharist to our Catholic story;

CGE1d -develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic **social teaching** and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good;

CGE1e -speaks the **language of life**... “recognizing that life is an unearned gift and that a person entrusted with life does not own it but that one is called to protect and cherish it.” (Witnesses to Faith)

CGE1f -seeks intimacy with God and celebrates **communion** with God, others and creation through prayer and worship;

CGE1i -integrates faith with life;

2. An Effective Communicator who

CGE2a -listens actively and critically to understand and learn in light of gospel values;

CGE2c -presents information and ideas clearly and honestly and with sensitivity to others;

CGE2e -uses and integrates the Catholic faith tradition, in the critical analysis of the arts, media, technology and information systems to enhance the quality of life.

3. A Reflective and Creative Thinker who

CGE3f -examines, evaluates and applies knowledge of interdependent systems (physical, political, ethical, socio-economic and ecological) for the development of a just and compassionate society.

4. A Self-Directed, Responsible, Life Long Learner who

CGE4a -demonstrates a confident and positive sense of self and respect for the dignity and welfare of others;

CGE4c -takes initiative and demonstrates Christian leadership;

5. A Collaborative Contributor who

CGE5a -works effectively as an interdependent team member;

CGE5c -develops one's God-given potential and makes a meaningful contribution to society;

CGE5d -finds meaning, dignity, fulfillment and vocation in work which contributes to the common good;

CGE5e -respects the rights, responsibilities and contributions of self and others;

CGE5f -exercises Christian leadership in the achievement of individual and group goals;

CGE5g -achieves excellence, originality, and integrity in one's own work and supports these qualities in the work of others;

CGE5h -applies skills for employability, self-employment and entrepreneurship relative to Christian vocation.

6. A Caring Family Member who

CGE6a -relates to family members in a loving, compassionate and respectful manner;

CGE6b -recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God given gifts, to be used as the creator intended;

CGE6c -values and honours the important role of the family in society;

CGE6d -values and nurtures opportunities for family prayer;

CGE6e -ministers to the family, school, parish, and wider community through service.

7. A Responsible Citizen who

CGE7a -acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions;

CGE7b -accepts accountability for one's own actions;

CGE7c -seeks and grants forgiveness;

CGE7d -promotes the sacredness of life;

CGE7e -witnesses Catholic social teaching by promoting equality, democracy, and solidarity for a just, peaceful and compassionate society;

CGE7f -respects and affirms the diversity and interdependence of the world's peoples and cultures;

CGE7g -respects and understands the history, cultural heritage and pluralism of today's contemporary society;

CGE7h -exercises the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship;

CGE7i -respects the environment and uses resources wisely;

CGE7j -contributes to the common good.

Related Concepts

CHURCH	INCLUSIVITY	SERVICE
CITIZENSHIP	INTERDEPENDENCE	SOCIETY
COMMON GOOD	JUSTICE	SOLIDARITY
COMMUNION	LOVE	TRADITION
COOPERATION/COLLABORATION	PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR	TRINITY
DISCIPLESHIP	THE POOR	UNITY
FRIENDSHIP	PREFERENTIAL OPTION FOR	UNDERSTANDING
HUMAN DIGNITY	THE LOST	
	RESPECT FOR LIFE	

Links to Online Resources

The Vatican: Catechism of the Catholic Church

http://www.vatican.va/archive/catechism/ccc_toc.htm

In Part III, Life in Christ, Chapter Two focuses on The Human Community. The Church's teaching on Social Justice is detailed, including sections on the respect for the human person, equality and differences among men (people) and solidarity. Section two deals with the Ten Commandments and the Fourth Commandment, "You Shall Love your Neighbour as Yourself" and the Fifth, "Thou Shall Not Kill" concentrate on themes central to social justice. The Seventh, "You Shall Not Steal" also addresses economic activity such as labour, solidarity among nations, and love for the poor. While the Catechism has no links and is difficult to read at times, it provides a useful resource to the underpinnings of Church teachings on social justice.

Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops

<http://www.cccb.ca/>

The site of Canada's Catholic Bishops under 'Commissions and Organizations' has a deep section under the Episcopal Commission for Social Affairs. Included is a list of letters of both praise and concern written by the Conference to prominent politicians and members of the business and international community. The 'Public Statements' section includes major policy statements on current issues like aboriginal land claims, religious rights and the dignity of life. The CCCB is a valuable resource for those seeking to see where the Canadian Catholic stands on social justice.

Curriculum Support for Catholic Schools

Catholic Theme: *Community and the Common Good*

<http://www.eoccc.org/csfcs/themes/commongood.html>

This site contains helpful links to scripture, Church teaching, educational and other online resources for developing curriculum and school activities around the theme of *Community and the Common Good*. This is part of the Catholic curriculum and school activity development resources available with the EOCCC's CD resource *Curriculum Support for Catholic Schools 2.0*.

Curriculum Support for Catholic Schools

Anchor Concept: *Community*

<http://www.eoccc.org/csfcs/concepts/acommunity.html>

This web page contains a fuller explanation of *Community*, with related concepts and links to the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. This is part of the Catholic curriculum and school activity development resources available with the EOCCC's CD resource *Curriculum Support for Catholic Schools 2.0*.

Character Education From a Catholic Perspective

<http://www.carfleo.org/linkscharacter.htm>

This page has been put together by the Catholic Association of Religious and Family Life Educators of Ontario (CARFLEO) for Catholic educators. Its annotated links will be helpful for educators looking to develop distinctive character education programs for their Catholic schools.

OCCB Publications

<http://www.occb.on.ca/english/publications.html>

Ontario's Catholic Bishops have a number of downloadable letters and resources for school communities on their publications page. They address matters such as educating for justice

and peace, understanding the Mass, intimacy and sexuality, leadership in Catholic schools and boards of education.

Catholic School Prayer Services and Resources

http://www.rccdsb.edu.on.ca/religious%5Fed/prayer_resources.htm

Prayer is an important part of celebrating and strengthening who we are as Catholic school communities. This web page carries ready-to-use prayer services for Catholic schools and staff inservices. These are divided according to month, theme and liturgical season. Also contains helpful links to additional resources for developing further resources in Catholic schools.

L'Arche Canada Foundation

<http://www.larchecanfoundation.org>

The L'Arche community and its founder Jean Vanier have authored many books and video resources aimed at helping readers and viewers become compassionate. The L'Arche movement focuses on building supportive, compassionate communities where all persons can live together to find healing and wholeness. Vanier reminds us that the disabled and vulnerable of our world are a great gift to our communities because they draw us together in compassion and love. Their brokenness reveals our own brokenness and need for one another – something to be celebrated and treasured. Recommended resources: VHS/DVD: *Belonging. The Search for Acceptance*, Vanier's books: *The Scandal of Service*, *Drawn into the Mystery of Jesus Through the Gospel of John*, L'Arche Resources: *More Than Inclusion: Honouring the Contributions of People with Developmental Disabilities*, *Choosing Our Future: Senior Students in Conversation with Jean Vanier (DVD)* *On Becoming Human A curriculum package for Grade 12 Philosophy and Ethics (Teacher Guide & CD)*

Creating a Learning Climate

<http://www.saskschools.ca/~cathcurr/module2.html>

Presentation and reflection module for building community in Catholic schools, online through Saskatchewan Catholic Schools.

A Place of Honour. Reaching out to Students at Risk in Ontario Catholic Schools

<http://www.carfleo.org/Placeofhonour/A%20PLACE%20OF%20HONOUR%20FINAL.pdf>

This 30 page resource is downloadable from www.carfleo.org. Its fundamental focus is on building a distinctive Catholic school community. The central emphasis is on achieving this by reaching out to students at risk, and all who struggle in Catholic schools. Each section is followed by a short series of questions which invite staff to reflect on their experience in light of what the document's contents. Suitable for PLCs, staff or senior administration meetings and work with Trustees.

Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace

<http://www.devp.org>

Development and Peace is the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' international development wing. Catholic school involvement in D&P's education, Fall Action, Share Lent and ongoing relief campaigns can unite a Catholic school community in charitable outreach to persons in the global community who are most in need of our help.

See also D&P's Just Youth section at:

<http://youth.devp.org/aframes.html>

Christian Community and Catholicism

<http://www.americancatholic.org/Messenger/Jun1999/feature1.asp>

Six Ways to be Truly Catholic, by Archbishop Weakland is an article that focuses on the faith community aspects of Catholicism. The article is written in clear, invitational language.

Faith Community and Youth

<http://www.americancatholic.org/Newsletters/YU/ay0803.asp>

Young people put their Catholic faith into action when they pray and worship, when they proclaim God's Word, when they build up the community and when they work for justice.