

NIPISSING-PARRY SOUND CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

THE CATHOLIC DIMENSION OF OUR CURRICULUM AND OUR CATHOLIC SCHOOL COMMUNITY

C 14.0
NPS 205-98

POLICY:

Roman Catholic Separate School Boards were originally created to allow Catholic parents the choice of providing an education for their children that would fit into their vision of life as revealed by the Gospel. By entering into a partnership with the parish and the school, parents could ensure that their child would experience education permeated with religious values which would prepare them for their journey of Faith through life.

Catholic schools are to be authentic communities of the Catholic Faith where teachers share their Faith through daily prayer and witness to the Gospel values. The school is a caring community of the Church where the dignity of each person is recognized, where social justice is encouraged within and by the Church, and where students are challenged to become "fully alive". It is often the primary place where young people experience the Church as a community shaped by faith, hope and love.

Over the years, the principles of the Catholic Faith were taught with the support of Catechisms and a variety of textbook series. Presently, we have a Family Life program entitled **Fully Alive**, produced by the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops, and a Religious Education series entitled **Born of the Spirit**, produced by the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. These are both superb Catholic educational programs that help the student to see the human person as having a physical, intellectual and spiritual nature. These programs help our teachers and parents, through use of the family booklet, to provide a Catholic education for our children based on the authorized teachings of the Church.

As well, our teachers have received special training in Religious Education, through their original teacher education program; through additional qualification courses in Religious and Family Life Education, spirituality and theology¹; and through on-going in-service education. This training is continually supplemented by our teachers' own deepening Faith awareness, which is supported by the clergy. They are therefore, trained Catechists.

Teaching is a Ministry within the Church. Our teachers have been chosen by the school board, on behalf of our parents in our Catholic school community to educate our children in the Faith. We know that what they teach is within the approved teachings of the Church. At all times, what they teach is also under the direct authority of the Ordinary of each diocese. In fact, the whole area of Family Life, with its many life issues, and Religious Education have been structured within our school system so as to ensure that our Faith and its application to life are taught by highly qualified teachers who work from resources authorized by the magisterium of the Church.

Replaces former Section A10

1. _____ . This Moment of Promise. Toronto: Ontario.
Conference of Catholic Bishops, 1989.

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Our teachers work together with the clergy to provide Catechesis for our children. Priests and other clergy are the visible link to the parish community, bringing the Gospel message to students through direct teaching, informal visits with classes or groups of students, the Sacraments and Liturgies.

The approved Family Life and Religious Education programs form the core of the Catholic curriculum provided in our schools. This core is extended by the liturgical and paraliturgical life of the school, by the charitable projects of the students, by the Catholic tone of the school, the behavioural examples set by the staff, and by the signs and symbols of our Faith community in classrooms and hallways.

There are many subject areas in the curriculum which are filled with value questions that our students need to explore and to discuss from a Catholic perspective. Students need to realize that being Catholic does not mean just going to church on Sunday, but means practising the Gospel message heard on Sunday, all through the week in our daily living and working.

In order to be encouraged to practise their Catholic Faith, students need to be able to see how the Gospel values apply to many aspects of their lives, and within the subjects which they are studying as a preparation for life. Business Studies, Cooperative Education, Economics, Environmental Studies, Geography, History, Language Arts, Music, Science, Technological Studies and Theatre and Visual Arts - the list is almost endless -- all contain opportunities for doing this.

Thus, it is the policy of the Board that our Religion, and its values, its attitudes, and its view points on all modern life issues, shall not only be taught in the core Family Life and Religious Education programs, but shall also be directly taught in as many subject areas of the curriculum as possible. Teachable moments of Catholic theology exist in current Ministry approved guidelines and these must be recognized, surfaced and used for student enrichment.²

Every opportunity shall be taken, by our teachers, to integrate the basic principles of our Faith into the study of appropriate topics and themes. Value issues, in key subject areas, shall be discussed and investigated by students as a part of the application of our Faith to their academic studies.

As well, within the above rationale, it is the policy of the Board, that all aspects of Family Life and Religious Education, including all life issues³ such as birth, death, aging, violence, abortion, pornography, the impact of technology, and unemployment will be dealt with from a Catholic educational view point, solely by our own teaching staff. However, presentations in the presence of teachers may be made by appropriate individuals to support the classroom curriculum (e.g. Public Health nurses for the Sexual Health Curriculum) provided the teacher receives permission from the Principal and the content has received prior Board approval.

². _____. Catholicity in the Curriculum. Toronto: Ontario. Ontario. Supervisory Officers' Association, 1991.

³. Pastoral Team of the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops. In the Name of Life: Workshop on Life Issues. Ottawa: Concacscan, 1990.

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<p>Notwithstanding the above condition, the Board affirms that the teaching of value laden issues is the responsibility of the Catholic school system and its professional teaching staff for the carrying out of this responsibility is the very essence of our reason for existing.</p> <p><u>REGULATIONS:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. All committees and individuals developing local curriculum documents will make every effort to provide direction, teaching and learning strategies, and resources for teachers which directly reflect the Catholic dimension of our curriculum, so that the teachers have help in implementing this policy.2. School principals will make the implementation of this policy part of the criteria for the performance evaluation process for all classroom teachers.3. Superintendents of Education will make the implementation of this policy a part of the criteria for program and principal evaluations.4. Teachers shall be responsible for implementing this policy in their classrooms at all grade levels.5. The school system will provide support in the implementation of this policy through the provision of in-service education for teachers, and through the gathering of helpful resources in school libraries and the Instructional Resource Centre.6. If a teacher wishes to involve outside individuals or groups in the classroom, or school, in discussions or presentations on any issues touching on Catholic beliefs, he/she must seek approval, from the school principal who shall endeavour to inform parents and School Councils when appropriate.	