

# THE EXCELLENT CATHOLIC TEACHER

*Educators are called to holiness and wholeness  
of life precisely through their vocational work.*

- THOMAS GROOME, EDUCATING FOR LIFE



## | PURPOSE OF THIS DOCUMENT

This document has been created as a supplementary resource supporting and extending *The Five Marks of a School's Catholic Identity* as presented in the *Growing Forward 2014 Catholic Education Symposium Report*.

## | HOW MIGHT THIS DOCUMENT SERVE CATHOLIC SCHOOLS IN ALBERTA?

This framework regarding the excellent Catholic teacher may be used:

- to offer a role description for Catholic teachers
- to provide indicators and offer exemplars
- to create starting points for conversations around teacher growth
- to assist teachers as they strive for excellence in their Catholic vocation
- to assist administrators as they lead their professional staff
- to serve as a resource for consideration when creating interview questions
- to create avenues for professional faith development and goal setting
- to assist with teacher recruitment and formation



# FIVE MARKS OF AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC TEACHER

*The Catholic educator must consciously inspire his or her activity with the Christian concept of the person grounded in the Gospel and the teaching of the Church. Above all, such a view attributes to the human person the dignity of a child of God. Moreover, it calls for the fullest development of all that is human.*

~ LAY CATHOLICS IN SCHOOLS: WITNESSES TO FAITH, 15

## MARK 1

**AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC TEACHER RECOGNIZES THAT EACH PERSON HAS AN ETERNAL DESTINY AND IS CREATED IN THE IMAGE OF GOD.**

An excellent Catholic teacher recognizes that the human heart is created with an innate yearning to seek, find and rest in God in both this world and the next and will therefore develop the whole person; intellectually, physically, emotionally and spiritually.

The role of an excellent Catholic teachers is to embrace the dignity of humanity by:

- Respecting each child of God
- Preparing his or her students for their eternal destiny
- Developing all aspects of the child: intellectually, physically, emotionally and spiritually.
- Seeking personally to grow in his or her spirituality and faith

*The Church, in her doctrine, life, and worship, perpetuates and transmits to every generation all that she herself is, all that she believes (DV 851).*

CATECHISM 98-100

## MARK 2

### AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC TEACHER EXPRESSES AND DEVELOPS A LIVING CATHOLIC VISION OF THE WORLD.

An excellent Catholic teacher embraces and frames for others a Catholic vision of the world shaped by reflection, action, service, official teaching, sacramentality and prayer. This is expressed and developed through the physical space, choice of activities, allocation of time, and the kind of relationships that are fostered. The teacher draws on the rich moral, artistic, scientific, spiritual, and intellectual treasury of the Catholic church.

The role of an excellent Catholic teachers is to enliven a Catholic vision of the world by:

- Understanding Catholic teachings and doctrine
- Living a sacramental life that reflects Catholic values
- Framing for students, a Catholic perspective of learning and life



*Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth; and God has placed in the human heart a desire to know the truth- in a word, to know himself- so that, by knowing and loving God, men and women may also come to the fullness of truth about themselves.*

SAINT JOHN PAUL II

## MARK 3

### AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC TEACHER PERMEATES FAITH AND WISDOM THROUGH PEDAGOGY AND CURRICULAR CONTENT.

An excellent Catholic teacher recognizes there is a religious dimension to learning. Catholic faith and its values provide the essential principles for students to engage in critical evaluation of contemporary culture. The teacher will infuse faith in content and pedagogy which can be accomplished either inherently, intentionally, or incidentally throughout all curriculum.

The role of the excellent Catholic teachers is to animate a faith-infused curriculum by:

- Fostering love for wisdom and truth, and integration of faith, culture, and life
- Cultivating in themselves and developing in their students a passion for truth that defeats moral and cultural relativism
- Teaching that truth is the fundamental value that is critical in the protection of freedom, justice and human dignity
- Merging consciously 'faith' and life

*Modern man listens more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if he does listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.*

POPE PAUL VI

*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you will be my witness... to the ends of the earth.*

ACTS 1:8

## MARK 4

### AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC TEACHER WITNESSES TO OTHERS A LIFE LIVED IN RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST.

An excellent Catholic teacher is nourished by a personal relationship with Jesus Christ which inspires living a life of integrity, fidelity and holiness. A teacher gives authentic witness to this relationship through faithful participation in the sacramental life of the Church and joyful Christian living.

The role of an excellent Catholic teachers is to witness by:

- Testifying to a relationship with Jesus Christ through words and actions
- Modeling fidelity to truth and virtuous behavior
- Sharing authentically his or her journey of faith
- Living a life of joy and hope

*In order to educate it is necessary to step out of ourselves and be among young people, to accompany them in the stages of their growth and to set ourselves beside them.*

POPE FRANCIS



*... so that they may all be one, as you, Father, are in me and I in you, that they also may be in us...*

JOHN 17:21

*For the Catholic Church, no one is a stranger, no one is excluded, no one is far away.*

POPE PAUL VI

## MARK 5

### AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC TEACHER CONTRIBUTES TO A SPIRITUALITY OF COMMUNION.

An excellent Catholic teacher, as illuminated by the Holy Trinity, lives a life of spiritual unity and harmony in relationship with others while honoring each person as distinct and unique.

The role of an excellent Catholic teacher is to contribute to a spirituality of communion by:

- Creating opportunities for the involvement of all students in classroom-based spiritual activities, being especially conscious of incorporating otherwise marginalized students
- Fostering positive interpersonal relationships among students and staff to promote a sense of mutual trust and belonging
- Striving to identify and call forth the individual gifts of students and inviting them to put those gifts at the service of the common good
- Building partnerships with the home and parish in an effort to create an inclusive, holistic and hospitable Catholic school community



# A CATHOLIC TEACHER'S SPIRITUAL COMMITMENTS

## | AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC TEACHER:

1. Testifies to a relationship with Jesus Christ by his or her life
2. Participates fully as a member of the Church and its evangelizing mission
3. Nurtures a meaningful personal prayer life
4. Employs reflective practices in both personal and professional life
5. Seeks to develop a deeper understanding of the Gospel through personal learning and faith formation opportunities
6. Endorses Catholic education in words and actions
7. Shares authentically his or her journey of faith
8. Lives a passionate and joyful life nourished by hope
9. Works collegially in a spirit of respect and cooperation
10. Seeks reconciliation and responds to situations with charity
11. Employs personal strengths and talents for the good of others and the community
12. Commits to creating a more just society through works of charity and social justice

# A CATHOLIC TEACHER'S PEDAGOGICAL STYLE

## | AN EXCELLENT CATHOLIC TEACHER:

1. Engages students in deep learning and critical thinking
2. Listens, values conversation, and is present to students
3. Asks questions
4. Treats students with respect, integrity and justice
5. Invites students into a relationship with Jesus Christ
6. Invests time in the building of positive relationships with students and between students
7. Embraces all students within an inclusive environment
8. Seeks ways to showcase and involve the talents of all students
9. Ensures understanding and participation in social justice projects
10. Seeks the lost
11. Transforms the school from institution to community
12. Promotes the role of parents as the primary faith educators of their children

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