

HOLY FAMILY *Catholic Regional Division #37*

Peace River-Grimshaw-Manning-Valleyview-McLennan-High Prairie

When Your Child Attends A Catholic School



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Catholic schools are ***faith-filled*** learning communities. This booklet briefly explains the basics of our Catholic faith tradition and how you will hopefully experience this being lived out in your child's school. Faith is the organizing principle for space, time and activities in our community.

Faith, a life-long gift received in baptism, is in its core, relational. It is not intended to be a purely academic subject taught in religion class. It has two dimensions - the vertical – our relationship with God explored and developed in prayer and the horizontal - our relationships with one another.

In partnership with parents and the Parish Community, Catholic schools attend to and nurture the faith of the children and young people entrusted to us within the total lived experience of the school community. We refer to this as ***permeation of the faith***.

“Jesus Christ is the unseen and ever-present teacher in our midst. He is the model of our faculty and the inspiration of our students.” We believe that Jesus Christ is the center of the universe and human history.

God, a mystery beyond human understanding, is revealed by deeds and words gradually through the course of history. Jesus, is the fullness or culmination of that revelation.

As Catholic Christians we share a ***Common Creed***, or ***Statement of Faith*** at the heart of which is our belief in God as Three Persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit which we call the Holy Trinity.



Common Christian Beliefs

- *God is Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*
- *God the Father almighty is creator of heaven and earth.*
- *Christ, the Son of God, Our Lord, is the full, final revelation of God.*
- *Humanity and creation are saved through Christ's life, suffering, death, and resurrection – He is the sole mediator of salvation.*
- *Salvation is pure grace accepted by the gift of faith.*
- *Christ inaugurated God's Kingdom.*
- *We await Christ's return and the judgment of the living and the dead.*
- *The Church is the Body of Christ the People of God, a priestly people constituted by Christ's Spirit.*
- *God gives the Church the Holy Spirit, the charisms and ministries needed for its mission.*
- *The Bible speaks God's Word and Revelation; it is inspired and without error.*
- *The commandments are summarized in the great commandment to love.*
- *We are sent by Christ to all to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.*



The Catholic Worldview

Some specifically Catholic beliefs include:

The basic goodness of human beings –

Although sinful, we remain created in God's image and likeness. We value whatever is true, good and beautiful.

The basic goodness of creation –

In creation we experience God. Creation is intimately connected to God's law and the ten commandments.

Finding God's grace in the ordinary – in persons, things, places and events.

Christ touches us in the good things of creation – they are "sacramental", they mediate grace. We use oil, water, light, touch, song, candles and images to encounter the Lord.

The seven sacraments are distinct moments in the life of an individual when we recognize that God is with us and in us. Each of these moments is celebrated with its own sacred and tangible sign. It is an inpouring of the Holy Spirit that heals us and makes us holy. (Catechism of the Catholic Church #2023)

Sacraments are a special way by which we participate in the saving event of Christ's life-death-resurrection.



The sacraments can be categorized as:

Sacraments of Initiation

Baptism,

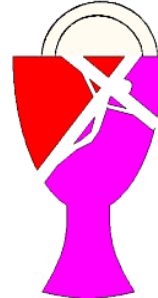


Confirmation,



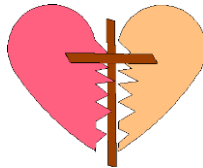
and Eucharist (Communion)

DO THIS
IN MEMORY
OF ME

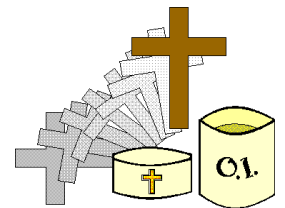


Sacraments of Healing

Reconciliation
(Confession)



and Anointing of the Sick
(sometimes called the Last Rites)



Sacrament of Anointing

Sacraments of Service

Holy Orders (Ordination)



and Marriage



Students who are not Catholic or belong to another Denomination or Religion still learn about the sacraments in their religious education classes, however, respecting their own Faith Tradition they are to receive their sacraments or Religious rites and rituals in their own Faith Community.

The Value of Human Relationships and Society

God saves us as a community and as a church; salvation is not only a “me” event. Salvation consists of a continual process of conversions, not just a one-time event – with grace we come to accept more perfectly the precious gift God has given us we call Salvation. We are hopeful about human organizations, including local, national, and international government – we pray that God works through them.

The Positive Connection Between Faith and Reason

Whatever is true, good and beautiful comes from God and is to be respected as such. Between faith and reason there can be no contradiction; faith seeks understanding through reason and theology. Truth can be found in all branches of knowledge and over time can help us to understand what God has revealed. When appropriate the insights of faith are put into dialogue with the academic disciplines that are being taught. We honor and respect that truths can be found in various religious traditions.

Spirituality

For 2000 years Catholic Christians have practiced meditation and contemplation. We pray with body, mind, memory and imagination. God reaches us in whatever is truly human – there are many forms of prayer and communicating with God.

Mediation

We see Christ as the one mediator between God and humanity. Priests, liturgies, and sacraments do not replace Christ. They and the whole church, as members of His body, are participants in Christ’s mediation. Thus we reverence and respect them and their role in the Church.



The Principles in Action

Symbols and religious artwork in classrooms and hallways remind us of the stories, peoples and truths of our faith tradition and the invisible realities that surround us.

Liturgical Year – The Church year has different seasons which help us to celebrate and meditate on the central mysteries of our faith – the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus.

The principal Liturgical Seasons are:

Advent – 4 weeks before Christmas – start of the Church’s Liturgical Year and with a focus on the “Coming of Christ” and the end of time and his birth at the Feast of Christmas.

Christmas – Birth of Christ

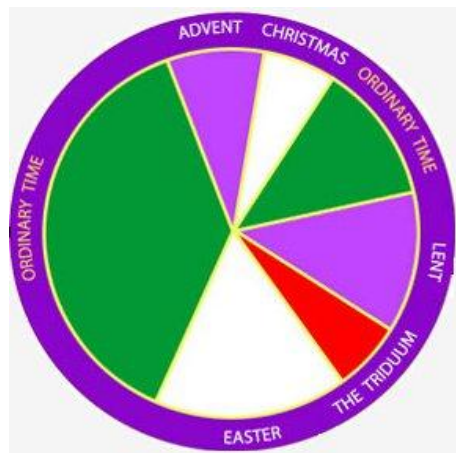
Lent – A word meaning “Spring”, a 40 day preparation for Easter marked especially by prayer, fasting and almsgiving.

Easter – starting with Easter Sunday, the celebration of the most important event for our faith – the Resurrection and the Easter Season lasts until the Feast of Pentecost (50 days). The Triduum begins with the celebration of the Lord’s Supper on Holy Thursday evening and ends on the evening of Easter Sunday.

Ordinary time - the sequential days and weeks between the major seasons of Easter and Christmas.

The poets of the Church have described the circle of the year as the wedding band we wear as a sign of our fidelity to Christ.

The curriculum objectives for the elementary program are built around the flow of the liturgical year.



The Bible and Tradition



We see the Bible primarily as the Word of God and secondarily as a book of personal inspiration. To interpret it, we turn to the Church. We believe the Spirit has guided the Church's interpretation over the centuries. We trust that Tradition. We believe that the books of the Bible teach us many truths about who we are as a people of God and about how God has been wanting to save us from the beginning of time. We recognize and acknowledge that the many books of the Bible have various literary forms some historical, some mythological, some poetic, some chronological, etc. Scripture is taught in all the religious education programs and used in the prayer life of the school.

Prayer



We sanctify the day through prayer. Key times for prayer are morning, noon and evening or close of day. We draw on the many forms of prayer available to us in our 2000 year old tradition.

The Sign of the Cross

In the Catholic church and other Christian churches the Sign of the Cross is an important part of personal and public prayer. It originated in the earliest days of Christianity and so it is centuries old. It is the first sign made on us at Baptism and the last sign made as we pass to our future life. It is a vital part of liturgical prayer and the sacraments. With the Sign of the Cross we begin and end our prayers. When we bless ourselves with the Sign of the Cross we remember the One who blesses us: the triune God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Anyone who believes in the triune God can make this prayer their own, all are welcome to pray and engage in it.

The Rosary



The rosary is a form of prayer within the Catholic tradition which is a way for us to meditate on moments in Christ's life through the eyes of his mother Mary. The events of Christ's life are divided into four sets of



mysteries – Joyful, Luminous, Sorrowful and Glorious. The meditation on the mysteries is accompanied by a series of prayers – The Apostle’s Creed, The Lord’s Prayer, The Hail Mary and The Glory Be. The opening lines of the Hail Mary prayer are Scriptural and taken from the Angel Gabriel’s greeting to Mary as recorded in the Gospel of Luke.

Catholics honor Mary as the Mother of God because she bore Jesus who we believe is God’s only begotten son. We also honor Mary for having said “Yes” to God’s plan of salvation by accepting to be the Mother of the Savior.

Catholics see all members of Christ’s Body, living and dead, as carrying on his saving mission in a mutually supportive communion of love. Just as we ask each other to pray for needs, we ask Mary and the saints to pray for our needs.

Liturgy

Liturgy is the public prayer of the church. The highest form of this public prayer is the Mass. When we participate in the Mass we are not only remembering but participating in the central mystery of our faith the life-death and resurrection of Jesus. The Mass has two parts – The Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist. In the first part we listen to God’s word proclaimed from Scripture and in the second part in obedience to Christ’s command we remember and make present in a special way Jesus’ saving event of the cross and resurrection. Through the power of the Holy Spirit Jesus is truly made present under the appearance of bread and wine.

Because of this reality taking Communion in the Catholic Church is a profound moment. The “Amen” at Communion is a faith statement that says: “I believe that Christ is **really present** in this Eucharist. This is why those who are members of other Churches, not in full communion with the Catholic Church are invited to partake in this sacred moment by means of blessing rather than receiving the host. To indicate desire for a Blessing instead of Communion one crosses one’s hands over the chest as they come forth.

Religious Education Classes

As faith is the organizing principle for our Catholic school community all students are expected to respectfully participate in religion classes to learn about Jesus and to understand the Catholic Church's tradition and teaching.

Parish and School Relationships

Parishes are the basic unit of the Church, with the parish priest as leader. A parish either covers a specified geographical territory or is an ethnic community.

The parish is the life-long faith community for a Catholic believer. Each of our schools is in a parish community which is part of a collection of parishes known as a diocese. In our case it is the Archdiocese of Grouard-McLennan under the authority of Archbishop Gerald Pettipas as the chief shepherd.

Schools co-operate with the local parish in many ways particularly in the area of sacramental preparation. The local parish priest and other parish workers may be present at school celebrations or invited to visit classrooms.

More in-depth information about many of these topics is available on the Holy Family Catholic Website.

Sources:

- Catechism of the Catholic Church
- When You Teach in a Catholic School – Judith Dunlop
- Catholicism Confronts Modernity, a Protestant View – Langdon Gilkey
- Catholicism – Richard P. McBrien
- Educating for Life – Thomas Groome
- www.cptryon.org/prayer/sign.html
- Based on preliminary work done by Charles Weckend, Fort McMurray Catholic Schools
- Booklet created by **Christ The Redeemer Catholic Schools** used with permission by Holy Family Catholic School



