



ARCHDIOCESE
— OF —
SAINT PAUL &
MINNEAPOLIS

Catholic Identity Standards
Elementary Schools

Approved by Archbishop John C. Nienstedt: June 8, 2011
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“Like the marks of the Church proclaimed in the Creed – One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic – so too does the Holy See identify the principal features of a school as Catholic: a Catholic school should be inspired by a supernatural vision, founded on Christian anthropology, animated by communion and community, imbued with a Catholic worldview throughout its curriculum, and sustained by gospel witness. These benchmarks help to answer the critical question: Is this a Catholic school according to the mind of the Church? (*The Holy See’s Teaching on Catholic Schools*, 2006, Section III, pg. 17)

Introduction

All Catholic schools, including those founded or directed by religious institutes, are approved by and function in relation to the Ordinary (archbishop) of the Archdiocese, the chief shepherd and teacher for Catholics in this See (Canons 803-806). Catholic schools are to provide authentic Catholic teaching, opportunities for worship and participation in the sacraments, and promote evangelization and service to the community. The Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis assists the Archbishop by ensuring that those schools under his care fulfill this mission.

In 2005, the Minnesota Catholic Education Association published broad standards for Catholic Identity in Catholic schools. After engaging and reflecting on these standards, specific indicators in each standard have been identified that will sustain and strengthen the building of discipleship in the Catholic elementary schools of the Archdiocese. Thus, the Archdiocesan Catholic Identity Standards for Elementary Schools rely on the good work of the Minnesota Catholic Education Association while adapting to the specific needs of this local Church. For the purposes of this document, “Elementary Schools” are defined as those Catholic schools that begin with Pre-Kindergarten or Kindergarten and conclude no later than Grade Eight.

Process

Each school will typically complete a Catholic Identity self-study and host an on-site review team from the Archdiocese every seven years. This process will be completed in the same school year as the review by a state-recognized accrediting agency. The date(s) of the on-site review will be determined in consultation with the Office of Catholic Schools. During the intervening years, the school will file an annual report with the Office of Catholic Schools that details progress made toward Catholic Identity goals and/or recommendations from the Archdiocesan review team.

To complete the Catholic Identity self-study, the school should gather a diverse population (canonical and/or other associated clergy, principal, faculty, advisory board members, parents, etc.) and examine the indicators listed in each standard. A narrative should then be crafted that addresses how the school fulfills each of the six standards including any specific strengths or challenges in each standard. The narrative should conclude with a section on overall strengths and challenges and a plan for school improvement in the area of Catholic Identity. The self-

study narrative should be submitted to the Office of Catholic Schools a minimum of one month prior to the scheduled on-site review.

The on-site review will consist of observations of the teaching of religion at each grade level, interviews with the teachers of religion, principal, canonical administrator, parents and students, attendance at an all-school Mass, and a review of documentation to substantiate the narrative. Based on the narrative and the on-site review, the school will receive one of three possible marks (with an accompanying score) in each standard along with specific comments. The marks will be as follows: Distinguished (3), Satisfactory (2), or Unsatisfactory (1). In the conclusion of the final report by the Archdiocesan review team, the marks will be tallied and divided by six to arrive at a Catholic Identity Rating and overall classification. The breakdown of classification is as follows:

16-18 points	2.67 Rating or higher	Distinguished
12-15 points	2.00-2.50 Rating	Satisfactory
0-11 points	1.83 Rating or lower	Unsatisfactory

In addition to the Catholic Identity Rating and overall classification, the final report will include specific recommendations for the school to implement and address during the next review cycle. This final report will be sent to the canonical administrator and principal with copies forwarded to the Superintendent of Schools, the Vicar General and the Archbishop. Principals are encouraged to share the final report with faculty/staff, advisory board members, parents and other relevant constituents.

The expectation is that the vast majority of schools will fall into the “Satisfactory” classification with some rising to the level of “Distinguished” and occasionally some, for a variety of reasons, receiving an “Unsatisfactory” rating. Each school will typically follow the regular seven year pattern of self-study, on-site review, implementation of recommendations and annual reporting to the Office of Catholic Schools. If a school receives an overall “Unsatisfactory” rating or an “Unsatisfactory” rating in any individual standard, that school must craft a plan in conjunction with the Office of Catholic Schools to remedy the issues(s) by the conclusion of the next academic semester.

“Catholic Schools are vital to the Church’s mission of evangelization and catechesis. They exist in order to educate the whole person: mind, body, and soul. They present the totality of the Catholic faith. Whether Catholic schools are part of a parish structure or are regional, diocesan, or private, growth in the Catholic faith for the children and young people who attend them is essential to their identity and purpose.” (*National Directory for Catechesis*, USCCB, 2005, 61.4b)

Catholic Identity Standards for Elementary Schools

- 1. MISSION AND PHILOSOPHY:** The school will have mission and philosophy statements that articulate the Catholicity of the school community's shared vision, principles, beliefs, and core values.

Indicators of Compliance:

The school's mission and philosophy statements clearly reflect a commitment to Catholic identity and to the beliefs of the Catholic Church.

The school's mission and philosophy statements correlate to the mission statement of its sponsoring faith community, where applicable (parish, religious community, etc.)

The school promotes the uniqueness and/or spirituality of its namesake to students, parents, faculty, staff, advisory board members and the broader community.

The mission statement is displayed prominently throughout the school.

The mission and philosophy statements are included in school communications such as handbooks, websites, newsletters, etc.

The mission and philosophy are communicated and modeled by all constituents.

The mission and philosophy statements are used as a standard in decision making.

2. GOVERNANCE AND POLICIES: The school's governing body, policies, documents and management practices will reflect the Catholic mission and philosophy of the school.

Indicators of Compliance:

The hiring process strongly emphasizes the recruitment of practicing Catholics who understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral demands of the Gospel. Non-Catholics are only hired for compelling reasons and never as teachers of religion. (National Directory for Catechesis 54.9a and 54.9d)

School administrators (president, principal, assistant principal, etc.) are active, practicing Catholics who understand and accept the teachings of the Catholic Church and the moral demands of the Gospel. (National Directory for Catechesis 54.9a)

The faculty/staff handbook includes specific mention of the responsibility to adhere, in public life, to the teachings of the Catholic Church.

The NCEA Code of Ethics for teachers, Pastoral Code of Conduct and Justice in Employment are included in the faculty/staff handbook.

The school maintains a School Advisory Committee/Board that acts as a consultative body to the canonical administrator and principal.

The admissions process acquaints students and their families with the mission, beliefs, and philosophy of the school.

Policies related to the mission and philosophy statements are in place to assist financially challenged families with tuition and fees.

Policies related to the mission and philosophy statements are in place to provide just compensation structures for faculty and staff.

The school's discipline policy is directly connected to its mission and philosophy.

3. LEADERSHIP, FACULTY AND STAFF: The school's leadership team, faculty and staff will know, support and model the teachings of the Church as outlined in the *General Directory for Catechesis*, paragraphs 114 – 115 and the *National Directory for Catechesis*, sections 25. A – I, 54.8 and 54.9 a - d. School employees will pursue ongoing religious formation that will enhance the school's Catholic identity. All school employees will adhere to "standards of conduct" that reflect Catholic tradition, Canon Law and current policies (including Articles 12 and 13, *Charter for the Protection of Children and Young People*).

Indicators of Compliance:

School administrators and teachers of religion demonstrate the following characteristics of a catechist: (National Directory for Catechesis 54.8)

- *Love of God, the Church, the Holy Father and God's people*
- *Devotion to prayer and the evangelizing mission of the Church*
- *Fully convinced of the truths of the Catholic Faith*
- *Regular attendance at Sunday Mass and other Holy Days of Obligation*
- *Devotion to Mary and the Most Holy Eucharist*

The canonical administrator and/or other associated clergy are actively supportive of the school.

The school completes background checks on all potential school employees as well as volunteers having regular or unsupervised contact with minors. These files are current and well maintained.

The school has "standards of conduct" in place for school employees that reflect Catholic tradition, Canon Law and other current policies (see above). These standards are provided to parents and legal guardians.

The "standards of conduct", including the Pastoral Code of Conduct/Volunteer's Code of Conduct, are signed annually by all school employees/volunteers who have regular or unsupervised contact with minors.

All administration, faculty and staff as well as volunteers who have regular or unsupervised contact with minors complete Virtus training sessions. Required Virtus attendance is properly tracked.

The principal fosters an atmosphere of community throughout the school.

The principal observes and evaluates the performance of each religion teacher on a regular basis. (National Directory for Catechesis 54.9a)

The school administers the IFG self-assessment tool from the National Catholic Education Association and uses the results to develop a systematic plan for the on-going faith formation of faculty and staff that includes an annual retreat.

4. FORMATIVE SCHOOL CLIMATE & FACILITIES: Catholic schools will display their Catholicity in the physical environment and be welcoming, inclusive, and safe for all who enter the facilities, including families, volunteers and guests. Schools will develop age appropriate standards of conduct for students and implement personal safety curriculum according to Archdiocesan policy.

Indicators of Compliance:

The school adheres to the safe environment training programs for children and young people as required by the Archdiocese.

The school displays evidence of sensitivity to the physical, intellectual, economic, and social-emotional differences of students.

The school displays evidence of sensitivity to race, gender, age, religious traditions and families.

All new families, especially those from immigrant populations, are assisted with their integration into the school community.

A process is in place to ensure that all people who enter the school building during the day are welcomed and verified for security.

A crucifix is clearly displayed in every classroom.

Religious statues, icons and other representations of Catholic artwork are prominently displayed in classrooms and throughout the school.

Portraits of the Pope and the Archbishop are displayed in a prominent position within the school.

5. INFORMATIVE DEVELOPMENT OF FAITH: The school will be a faith community that nurtures the spiritual lives of students, families, staff members and all others having contact with the school. A systematic plan for catechizing students will shape the religion curriculum. A variety of opportunities will be available for the entire school community to worship and pray together.

Indicators of Compliance:

Parents are supported in their role as the primary educator of their children and are encouraged to participate in the liturgies and other religious activities of the school.

There are daily opportunities for prayer as a whole school and in each classroom.

The school actively encourages students to explore potential vocations to the priesthood or religious life.

Written religion curriculum, in alignment with the Archdiocesan K-8 Religion Standards, is included in the curriculum handbook and religion instruction utilizes both Divine and human methodology as outlined in the National Directory for Catechesis 27-29.

All-school and/or grade level Masses are celebrated on a regular basis. (Ideally, once per week)

School Masses are planned and celebrated in accord with the directives of the General Instruction of the Roman Missal, Redemptionis Sacramentum and other documents governing the liturgy issued by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and the Congregation for Divine Worship and Discipline of the Sacraments, as well as any pertinent local legislation regarding the celebration of the sacraments.

Students are provided with regular opportunities to partake in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. (Minimum of twice per year)

Catholic practices and rituals (adoration, benediction, liturgical seasons, Marian devotions, commemoration of Feast Days, the Rosary, etc.) are integrated into the life of the school.

Textbooks used are in conformity with the Catechism of the Catholic Church as determined by the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

The Catholic Social Teachings and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy are systematically integrated into the religion curriculum.

The school communicates with parents concerning the religious and academic education of their children.

The Assessment of Catechesis in Religious Education (ACRE) from the National Catholic Education Association is administered in 5th grade (Level 1) and 8th grade (Level 2). In addition, other evaluation tools are used to assess student mastery of the K-8 Archdiocesan Religion Standards.

6. TRANSFORMATIVE FAITH COMMUNITY: The school will actively promote a Catholic culture in which discipleship in Jesus Christ, evangelization and service are integral elements within the life of the school.

Indicators of Compliance:

Students are given opportunities to work in service for the local, national and global community.

All service activities are directly connected to discipleship in Jesus Christ and the spreading of the Gospel.

Service opportunities are tied to students' understanding of the Catholic Social Teachings and the corporal and spiritual works of mercy.

Students are provided with the opportunity to reflect on how their service experiences relate to discipleship and share those experiences with others.

Archdiocesan Catholic Identity Standards for Elementary Schools

Rubric – Effective September 2013

All Catholic schools, including those founded or directed by religious institutes, are approved by and function in relation to the Ordinary (archbishop) of the Archdiocese, the chief shepherd and teacher for Catholics in this See (Canons 803-806). Catholic schools are to provide authentic Catholic teaching, opportunities for worship and participation in the sacraments, and promote evangelization and service to the community. The Office of Catholic Schools of the Archdiocese of St. Paul and Minneapolis assists the Archbishop by ensuring that those schools under his care fulfill this mission.

- These rubrics will be updated and refined as needed in the future. This updating, when necessary, will always coincide with a new school/review year.
- Please note that a school needs to fulfill all of the bullets in a particular category in order to advance to the next category.
- If a school has not already done so, the Office of Catholic Schools strongly encourages the development of a strand in the school's strategic plan that is focused on Catholic Identity. This strand should include targets to be achieved during the seven year accreditation cycle with progress updates included in the annual reporting process.
- This rubric is primarily designed to assist schools in their self-evaluation and narrative writing process. It will also be used as a tool during the Catholic Identity site review. If there are any questions, please contact the Assistant Superintendent for Religious Education in the Office of Catholic Schools.

Element	Level of Performance		
	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Distinguished
Mission and Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The mission and/or philosophy statements do not clearly reflect the Catholic nature and identity of the school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's mission and philosophy statements clearly reflect the Catholic nature and identity of the school. • The mission and philosophy statements are visible in the school, connected to the supporting parish (if applicable), manifested in the day to day operations, and present in school communications. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's mission and philosophy statements can be articulated and modeled by leadership, faculty and staff. • There is clear evidence that the mission and philosophy statements are used as a standard in decision-making by the pastor, principal and advisory council. • The school actively promotes the uniqueness and/or spirituality of its namesake

<p>Governance and Policies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is little or no evidence that the school's mission and philosophy statements guide governance and policies. • There is no clear process in place that emphasizes the recruitment and hiring of practicing Catholics as outline by the National Directory for Catechesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's governance and policies reflect the mission and philosophy of the school and the directives of the NDC. • The school's policies, documents and management practices are effectively communicated to faculty, staff and families • The school maintains an active Advisory Council to assist the pastor and principal. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's governance and policies are not only in written form but are clearly manifested and lived in the day-to-day interactions with families by the pastor, principal, faculty, staff and advisory council members.
<p>Leadership, Faculty and Staff</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers of religion are not practicing Catholics as defined by the National Directory for Catechesis. • The school has no plan for ongoing faith formation of faculty and staff. • There is no evidence of adherence to: Virtus training, Pastoral Code of Conduct, background checks, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers of religion are practicing Catholics as defined by the NDC. • The school has a timeline to administer "Information for Growth" (IFG) to faculty and staff. • The principal annually conducts informal observations of the teaching of religion • There is documented evidence of adherence to: Virtus training, Pastoral Code of Conduct, background checks, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school uses IFG results to plan ongoing faith formation opportunities. • The principal annually conducts a formal observation of the teaching of religion • The principal actively works to promote an atmosphere of community and mutual respect in the school.
<p>Formative School Climate and Facilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school displays little to no evidence of Catholicity in its physical environment. • There is no evidence of adherence to the safe environment programs for children and young people. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school clearly displays its Catholicity in the physical environment. • The school is welcoming, inclusive and safe for all who enter the facilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school's Catholicity is evidenced by sensitivity to the physical, intellectual, economic, social, emotional, racial and other differences of students. • The school provides on-going training to faculty and staff to heighten the awareness of current issues related to safety and sensitivity.

<p>Informative Development of Faith</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school displays little to no evidence of regular opportunities for prayer and worship. • There is no evidence of the use of the Archdiocesan Religion Standards (ARS) to drive instruction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school provides regular opportunities for prayer and worship. • There is clear evidence of the use of the ARS to drive instruction. • There is a timeline to administer the “Assessment of Catechesis/Religious Education” (ACRE). • Parents are encouraged and supported in their role as the primary educators of their children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school exposes students to a variety of customs and rituals such as Adoration, Marian devotions, Benediction etc. • The teaching of religion relies on the pedagogy as outlined in the <u>National Directory for Catechesis</u> (NDC). • The school uses ACRE results to plan instruction.
<p>Transformative Faith Community</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school does not actively promote a Catholic culture in which discipleship in Jesus Christ, evangelization and service are integral elements within the life of the school. • Service opportunities are done in isolation and not connected to the Catholic Social Teachings or corporal and spiritual works of mercy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school actively promotes discipleship, evangelization and service. • Students are given opportunities to work in service for the local, national and global community. • All service experiences are directly and clearly tied to the Catholic Social Teachings and/or the corporal and spiritual works of mercy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Because of their unique role, parents are actively and strongly encouraged to be involved in a variety of service opportunities. • Students are given opportunities to reflect on and to share their service experiences.
<p>Catholic Identity Improvement Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has not filed an annual Catholic Identity progress report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school files an annual progress report with the Office of Catholic Schools. • The school has a written improvement plan that includes self-identified goals and objectives as well as action steps identified by the OCS. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school has a written Catholic Identity improvement plan that is reviewed annually by a variety of stakeholders for accountability and transparency. • The school reviews and modifies goals based on attainment and/or directives from the Archbishop.