



Annual Pastoral Themes



Algonquin & Lakeshore
Catholic District School Board

2020 - 2025

An Introduction to Our Pastoral Themes 2020-2025

The vision of the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board is that we imagine a world where every person is empowered to reach their full potential through faith and service. Our mission is to build faith-filled learning communities where each member is loved, inspired, and successful. The new annual pastoral themes for the ALCDSB call us to express our faith through our vision and mission statements.

Catholic education is nurtured by the home-school-parish relationship. The annual pastoral themes will support the ALCDSB's Multi-Year Strategic Plan and will continue to nurture the members of home, school, and parish. Each annual theme is enriched with connections to Scripture, song, prayer, the Renewing the Promise pastoral letter, Catholic Social Teaching, the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

The ALCDSB pastoral themes were intentionally selected in a particular sequence. Each subsequent theme is intended to build on the previous theme. The first theme, ***“All Are Welcome in This Place”***, reminds us that as a Catholic education community, our first step is to establish relationships and ensure that every person feels a genuine sense of belonging. Once this is established, we can learn more about what it means to be valued as ***“Beloved Children of God”***, called to celebrate the inherent dignity of each person who is created in the image and likeness of God. We then respond to God's invitation to be ***“Formed in the Faith”***, seeking God, growing deeper in our relationship with God, and accompanying each other along our faith journey. Recognizing that faith is a gift from God, we are ***“Blessed Beyond Belief”***, thankful for all of the gifts and blessings that we receive, which all come from God. Finally, once we are equipped with the tools that we need, we are ***“Called to Witness”***, fulfilling the Church's mission to carry out and continue the work of Jesus Christ on Earth.

Pastoral Theme Overview



All Are Welcome in This Place

2020-2021



Beloved Children of God

2021-2022



Formed in the Faith

2022-2023



Blessed Beyond Belief

2023-2024



Called to Witness

2024-2025



Overview: 2020-2021

All Are Welcome in This Place

Scriptural Connection:

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God.

- Romans 15:7

Theme Song:

All Are Welcome (All Belong)

Jesse & Jenna Manibusan

Renewing The Promise Focus:

A Community That Accompanies

Catholic Social Teaching Focus:

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

OCSGE Focus:

A Caring Family Member

A Responsible Citizen

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Focus:

Gender Equality

Reduced Inequalities

Peace, Justice, & Strong Institutions

2020-2021

All Are Welcome in This Place

Description

The first of five pastoral themes, “All Are Welcome in This Place”, calls us to welcome every person who we encounter in our school communities and beyond. Before we can accomplish any other goal, we must ensure that everyone in our community feels welcomed, feels safe, and feels a genuine sense of belonging.

As a Catholic education community, we welcome each other into God’s loving embrace and meet each other where we are at, just as Jesus did to every person that he encountered in the Gospels.

Hospitality and welcome help lay the foundation for faith. We manifest Christ’s presence in the world by welcoming, inviting, and reverencing the dignity of the people we encounter. We are called to be charitable, to be helpful, and to be encouraging as a people of God.

When a student, a staff member, a community member, or a guest enters an ALCDSB site, do they feel welcomed? Do they feel included in

the school community? Do they feel like they belong? How can we ensure that each person who we encounter experiences God’s love and compassion? Our goal is to ensure that each member of the ALCDSB community feels welcomed and a sense of belonging.

Logo



The “All Are Welcome in This Place” logo is represented by the image of a circle of friends with Christ at the centre. The people remind us that we are all members of the Body of Christ. The circle is essential to the design in that it represents an inclusive community in which everyone belongs.

The cross in the middle of the circle reminds us that Christ is always at the centre of our lives. The diversity of people reminds us that to be welcoming means to be inclusive of all people. As faith-filled communities, we are called to welcome all people into our midst, and it is our duty to ensure that everyone belongs.

Scriptural connection:

Welcome one another, therefore, just as Christ has welcomed you, for the glory of God (Romans 15:7).

The Scripture passage that supports the theme comes from Paul's letter to the Romans. The theme "All Are Welcome in This Place" calls us to follow in Christ's footsteps. As members of the Body of Christ, we are called to welcome each other into God's loving embrace and to meet each other where we are at, just as Jesus, our perfect teacher, did to every person that he encountered in the Gospels. We share the love that God shows us with one another. We do this by loving one another as Christ loves us: with inclusion, acceptance and by ensuring that each person that we encounter feels welcomed.

Theme song:

Each theme song is provided for use at school Masses, liturgies, assemblies, and for use at system events. Music will be provided to the music leads at each site.

Music: [All Are Welcome \(All Belong\)](#)

Artists: Jennah Manibusan & Jesse Manibusan
CCLI Song # 7136329 ©2016 spiritandsong.com

Liturgical Function: Gathering or Processional song

Video: The inspiration behind the Song

The Commons: [All Are Welcome \(All Belong\)](#)

Prayer:

Loving God,
we all belong to your family
as members of the Body of Christ.

Help us to keep you at the centre of our lives,
by welcoming everyone who we meet,
just as Jesus, the perfect teacher,
met everyone in the Gospels.

Guided by the Holy Spirit,
may we be a community of
love, inclusion and acceptance —
being the hands and feet of Christ in this
world.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.

St. Julian, patron saint of hospitality,
pray for us.



Renewing The Promise
A Pastoral Letter
for Catholic Education

Renewing The Promise Focus: A Community That Accompanies

Catholic schools are communities of accompaniment where the story of our salvation is known and shared, offering the encouragement that comes from knowing that Jesus walks with us (7).

It is important to recognize that people are at different stages on [their] journey. Jesus provides the model for how our schools and parish communities need to accompany students and families with great respect,

patience and love, inviting all to deepen their understanding of Christ and his Church (7).

Additional reflections for all partners in Catholic education:

Each day provide a welcoming environment as students arrive to school. Listen to their stories, and help them discover the connection between the larger biblical story that forms us as Christians, and their own lived experience. Create inclusive places of learning that enable each child and young person in your care to grow fully to be all that God knows and hopes them to be (17).

You are the stewards of our physical space and facilities; without your diligence, hard work and attention to detail, our offices and classrooms would be less welcoming. Each of you bring unique expertise, skills and talents that contribute to the creation of learning communities that are places of warmth and welcome. From the scriptures we know that Jesus welcomed children, and your work, alongside educators, to care for children, helps our Catholic schools to fulfill their mission (19).

Together with staff, ensure that it is an environment of welcome and hospitality. Model for your staff how to best minister to children and young people. [...] Welcome and include the local parish priest and the pastoral team in the life of the school community (19).

Catholic Social Teaching Focus:

The Themes of Catholic Social Teaching that connect to the pastoral theme are:

Life and Dignity of the Human Person

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

the seven themes of CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING for children



1 God made each person, so every life is important and should be protected.



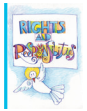
5 Work is important in God's plan for adults and their families, so jobs and pay should be fair.



2 God made us to be part of communities, families and countries, so all people can share and help each other.



6 God made everyone, so we are all brothers and sisters in God's family wherever we live.



3 God wants us to help make sure everyone is safe and healthy and can have a good life.



7 The world was made by God, so we take care of all creation.



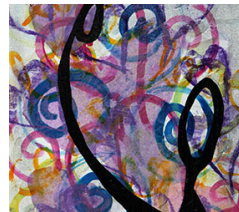
4 God wants us to help people who are poor, who don't have enough food, a safe place to live, or a community.



These themes are based on United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, [Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions](#), 4th Edition, 2016. United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services. All rights reserved.
Photos courtesy of Brother Mike McGinnis, CRS.

OCSGE Focus:

The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations that connect to the pastoral theme are:



A Caring Family Member

A caring family member who attends to family, school, parish and the wider community.

A Caring Family Member Who:

- Relates to family members in a loving, compassionate and respectful manner.
- Recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God-given gifts, to be used as the creator intended.
- Values and honours the important role of the family in society.
- Values and nurtures opportunities for family prayer.
- Ministers to the family, school, parish, and wider community through service.

I CARE!

- I love God, myself and my family.
- I care about and respect my 'family' at school, at Church, in the community, and the world.
- I care about and respect God's creation and everything in it.
- Because I care, I pray for all my families, and I will live my life like Jesus.



A Responsible Citizen

A responsible citizen who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.

A Responsible Citizen Who:

- a) Acts morally and legally as a person formed in Catholic traditions.
- b) Accepts accountability for one’s own actions.
- c) Seeks and grants forgiveness.
- d) Promotes the sacredness of life.
- e) Witnesses Catholic social teaching by promoting equality, democracy, and solidarity for a just, peaceful and compassionate society.
- f) Respects and affirms the diversity and interdependence of the world’s peoples and cultures.
- g) Respects and understands the history, cultural heritage and pluralism of today’s contemporary society.

- h) Exercises the rights and responsibilities of Canadian citizenship.
- i) Respects the environment and uses resources wisely.
- j) Contributes to the common good.

I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES!

- a) I am a peace-maker.
- b) I am fair.
- c) I am forgiving.
- d) I follow rules and do my share.
- e) I help the poor and care for people in need.
- f) I stand up for what is right.
- g) I know that all life is precious.
- h) I respect and protect the world and all that is in it.
- i) Because I accept my responsibilities, I can make a difference, and will live my life like Jesus.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Focus:

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that connect to the pastoral theme are:



Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls.



Reduce inequality within and among countries.



Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.



Overview: 2021-2022

Beloved Children of God

Scriptural Connection:

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are. - 1 John 3:1

Theme Song:

Who You Say I Am
Hillsong Worship

Renewing The Promise Focus:

A Community That Encourages Engagement and Instills Hope

Catholic Social Teaching Focus:

God's Care for Creation
Solidarity

OCSGE Focus:

A Discerning Believer
A Responsible Citizen

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Focus:

No Poverty
Zero Hunger
Good Health and Well Being

2021-2022

Beloved Children of God

Description

The second of five pastoral themes, “Beloved Children of God”, calls us to delight in the understanding that each and every person is cherished, valued and loved unconditionally by God. We are amazed by the love and mercy that God freely offers all of us, without exception. As a Catholic education community, we celebrate the inherent dignity of each person who is created in the image and likeness of God.

The word beloved means completely and fully loved.

This is a declaration of our Christian identity as a part of God’s family. We understand that we belong to a loving, protective Father who is always with us. God sees us as forgiven, saved and full of beauty and hope.

When we engage with a student, a staff member, a community member, or a guest in the ALCDSB, do we see them through God’s soft and loving eyes? How can we ensure that each person who feels alone, judged, marginalized or disconnected sees themselves as unconditionally loved and created in God’s image? Our goal is to ensure that each

member of the ALCDSB community knows that they are precious and loved above all else.

Logo

The “Beloved Children of God” logo is represented by the image of cupped hands holding a heart with the crown of thorns wrapped around the heart. The heart in the centre represents the Sacred Heart of Jesus.

Jesus serves as the model for love and acceptance and is at the

heart of our faith. The thorns represent the Passion,

Christ’s ultimate sacrifice and victory on the cross so we could receive the gift of salvation. The

cupped hands remind us that this gift is freely offered, dearly held, and protected. As faith-filled

communities, we are called to joyously accept this gift. Above

the heart is a flame, representing

Christ’s passionate love for us. Encountering the Risen Christ leaves our hearts burning with his love, similar to the encounter shared by the disciples on the road to Emmaus. We are called to see ourselves as God sees us.

We are called to see Christ in each person we meet. We are called to forgive and share God’s unconditional love with others.



Scriptural connection:

See what love the Father has given us, that we should be called children of God; and that is what we are.
(1 John 3:1).

The Scripture passage that supports the theme comes from the Gospel of John. The theme “Beloved Children of God” calls us first to contemplate this awesome, pure, unconditional love that can only come from God. We then appreciate that this love has been freely offered to all of us, without exception. We are each wonderfully and beautifully made in the image and likeness of God and as such, hold an inherent dignity. Each of us has an invaluable worth not because of who we are, but because of whose we are.

Theme song:

Each theme song is provided for use at school Masses, liturgies, assemblies, and for use at system events. Music will be provided to the music leads at each site.

Music: [Who You Say I Am](#)

Artist: Hillsong Worship

CCLI Song # 7102401 © 2017 Hillsong Music Publishing Australia (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)

Liturgical Function: Gathering or Processional song

Video: New Song Cafe

[Worship Together: Who You Say I Am](#)

Prayer:

Loving God,
you see us and love us as we are,
beautifully and wonderfully made.

Help us to see ourselves and others
with your same loving eyes.

Help us to fully understand
that you are always with us,
even when we feel alone.

Help us to accept your unconditional love,
even on the days when we feel unloved.

Help us to joyously and freely live like we're
loved.

Guided by the Holy Spirit,
may we be a community
that lifts each other up and instils hope
with our words and actions
so we may share God's unconditional love
with everyone we meet.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our Lord.
Amen.



Renewing The Promise
A Pastoral Letter
for Catholic Education

Renewing The Promise Focus: A Community Encourages Engagement and Instils Hope

Catholic education forms communities of faith that helps students experience the love of God. The more our students see and understand themselves as the beloved children of God, the more they will want to love God with all their hearts, minds and souls. This in turn moves them to love of the neighbor which bears witness to justice and charity (10).

The story of Emmaus recounts a very human experience. The disappointment and despair experienced by the two disciples on the road is not unlike the challenges faced by young people today. The message is clear; hope, courage and resolve can be found through a loving encounter with Jesus (10).

Additional reflections for all partners in Catholic education:

God loved us into existence and never stops loving; even though we may sometimes reject that love, God never gives up on us. We see this in our salvation history as people encountered the love and mercy of God. It reached a decisive moment when God, who so loved the world, gave us His only son, so we might have eternal life (7).

The demands of our society and the noise of social media may sometimes lead you to think you are alone. Know that you are never alone. You are the beloved child of God, and he is with you always (16).

While the world may sometimes make you feel like you are not good enough, not attractive enough, or not special enough, Jesus knows you perfectly, and loves you without limits (16).









Just as Jesus heard the words of his Heavenly Father at his Baptism, share these words with your sons or daughters: “You are my beloved child in whom I delight!” (16).

Catholic Social Teaching Focus:

The Themes of Catholic Social Teaching that connect to the pastoral theme are:


Care for God’s Creation
Solidarity

the seven themes of **CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING** for children

 <p>1 God made each person, so every life is important and should be protected.</p>	 <p>5 Work is important in God’s plan for adults and their families, so jobs and pay should be fair.</p>
 <p>2 God made us to be part of communities, families and countries, so all people can share and help each other.</p>	 <p>6 God made everyone, so we are all brothers and sisters in God’s family wherever we live.</p>
 <p>3 God wants us to help make sure everyone is safe and healthy and can have a good life.</p>	 <p>7 The world was made by God, so we take care of all creation.</p>
 <p>4 God wants us to help people who are poor, who don’t have enough food, a safe place to live, or a community.</p>	 <p><small>These themes are based on United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, Catholic Social Teaching: Core Principles and Directions © Copyright 2011, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services. All rights reserved. Photo courtesy of Brother Mickey McQuinn, CCSF.</small></p>

OCSGE Focus:

The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations that connect to the pastoral theme are:



A Discerning Believer
A discerning believer formed in the Catholic Faith community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery of God’s presence through word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection and moral living.

A Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic Faith Community Who:

- a) Illustrates a basic understanding of the saving story of our Christian faith.
- b) Participates in the sacramental life of the church and demonstrates an understanding of the centrality of the Eucharist to our Catholic story.
- c) Actively reflects on God’s Word as communicated through the Hebrew and Christian scriptures.
- d) Develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic social teaching and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good.
- e) 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)
- f) Seeks intimacy with God and celebrates communion with God, others and creation through prayer and worship.
- g) Understands that one’s purpose or call in life comes from God and strives to discern and live out this call throughout life’s journey.
- h) Respects the faith traditions, world religions and the life-journeys of all people of good will.
- i) Integrates faith with life.
- j) Recognizes that “sin, human weakness, conflict and forgiveness are part of the human journey” and that the cross, the ultimate sign of forgiveness is at the heart of redemption. (Witnesses to Faith)

I AM A BELIEVER!

- a) I believe that God is an awesome God.
- b) I believe and have faith in God.
- c) I believe that God is with us always.
- d) I believe that we can talk to God anytime and anywhere, through prayer.
- e) I believe in the stories of the Bible.
- f) I believe in the stories of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.
- g) I believe in the Church community, celebrating Mass, and the seven Sacraments.
- h) I believe in forgiveness.
- i) Because I am a believer, I will live my life like Jesus.



A Responsible Citizen

A responsible citizen who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.

A Responsible Citizen Who:

- a) Relates to family members in a loving, compassionate and respectful manner.
- b) Recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God-given gifts, to be used as the creator intended.

- c) Values and honours the important role of the family in society.
- d) Values and nurtures opportunities for family prayer.
- e) Ministers to the family, school, parish, and wider community through service.

I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES!

- a) I am a peace-maker.
- b) I am fair.
- c) I am forgiving.
- d) I follow rules and do my share.
- e) I help the poor and care for people in need.
- f) I stand up for what is right.
- g) I know that all life is precious.
- h) I respect and protect the world and all that is in it.
- i) Because I accept my responsibilities, I can make a difference, and will live my life like Jesus.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Focus:

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that connect to the pastoral theme are:



End poverty in all its forms everywhere.



End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture.



Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages.



Overview: 2022-2023

Formed in the Faith

Scriptural Connection:

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving.

- Colossians 2:6-7

Theme Song:

The Way

Pat Barrett

Renewing The Promise Focus:

The Breaking of the Bread

Catholic Social Teaching Focus:

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Care for God's Creation

OCSGE Focus:

A Discerning Believer

A Self-Directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Focus:

Quality Education

Life Below Water

Life on Land

2022-2023

Formed in Faith



Description

The third of five pastoral themes, “Formed in the Faith”, calls us to nurture our relationship with God as we continue along our faith journey. God invites us to enter into relationship with Him, and growing in faith is our response to this relationship. Faith formation is an important part of our lives as lifelong learners who are members of a faith-filled community.

It is important to recognize that each individual is on their own faith journey, therefore we must provide faith formation opportunities that meet the needs of all members of our community.

Faith formation includes religious and family life education curricula and programming,

liturgical celebrations and celebration of the Eucharist, faith days, and extracurricular and experiential opportunities. All faith formation opportunities are intended to bring us closer to God and to help us live a Christ-centred life.

Logo

The “Formed in the Faith” logo is represented by a tree with roots below the ground, and a seed that is marked with the cross. The tree is a visible sign of God’s creation, which represents all of us. The roots remind us that as people of faith, we are all rooted in Christ. The seed reminds us that in order for our faith to grow, we must sow on good soil, which is the faith formation that we give and receive throughout our lives.

Scriptural connection:

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, continue to live your lives in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith, just as you were taught, abounding in thanksgiving. (Colossians 2:6-7)

The Scripture passage that supports the theme comes from Paul's letter to the Colossians. The theme "Formed in the Faith" calls us to live a life rooted in Christ. As members of the Body of Christ, we participate in faith formation opportunities to remain rooted in Him. We are called to nurture each other along our faith journey. Faith formation brings us closer to Christ, and for this, we are ever grateful.

Theme song:

Each theme song is provided for use at school Masses, liturgies, assemblies, and for use at system events. Music will be provided to the music leads at each site.

Music: The Way

Artist: Pat Barrett

CCLI Song # 7089024 © Heritage Worship Publishing (Admin. by Bethel Music Publishing), Capitol CMG Genesis (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing), Housefires Sounds (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing), Go Forth Sounds (Admin. by Heritage Worship Publishing), Bread & Wine Sounds (Admin. by Watershed Music Group)

Liturgical Function: Gathering or Processional song

Video: New Song Cafe

Worship Together: The Way

Prayer:

Lord Jesus Christ,
you are The Way, The Truth, and The Life.
We are grateful for your loving presence.

Help us to grow in relationship with you.
We long to learn more about you
as we seek to live Christ-centred lives.

We ask the Holy Spirit to guide us
as we walk with one another
on our journey of faith.
Help us to sow seeds of faith
that are rooted in your love.

We ask this in your name.
Amen.



Renewing The Promise
A Pastoral Letter
for Catholic Education

Renewing The Promise Focus: The Breaking of The Bread

It is in the Eucharist where we find the most perfect ‘faith formation program,’ and we are evangelized, catechized, and made holy as we are drawn into the mystery of our salvation (23).

The Catholic education community is encouraged to support opportunities for faith formation for all members of the community in ways that are inviting, engaging, and purposeful (24).

Catholic education must remain committed to the essential work of forming leaders in our faith tradition for the future. Our apostolic faith is built on the witness of those who have experienced the Risen Christ in their lives and who have shared that truth in the way they live: close to Jesus, receiving the Eucharist, engaged in parish life, serving their families and those most in need (24).

In a rapidly changing world our Catholic schools provide students with firm ground upon which to stand because they are founded on Christ who is the sure foundation. It is in Christ that we will find the wisdom, the courage, the creativity and the integrity to work together in realizing the great promise of Catholic education (25).

Additional reflections for all partners in Catholic education:

Pope Francis also reminds us that to be formed in the faith is not simply to be able to profess it on our lips, we must also live it with love; faith works through love (11).

School councils are opportunities for faith formation and collaboration, where parents and school staff learn from each other, pray together, and work alongside each other to ensure all children have opportunities to grow in faith and in their learning (16).

Guide staff and students to the sacramental life of the parish, with whom we partner, to assist parents in the ongoing faith formation of their children (19).

Pray together; work closely with your local bishop and diocesan staff who can offer support and guidance as you seek to grow in your faith, and deepen your knowledge and understanding of Church teaching (20).

Catholic Social Teaching

Focus:

The Themes of Catholic Social Teaching that connect to the pastoral theme are:

Call to Family, Community, and Participation

Care for God's Creation

the seven themes of **CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING** for children



1 God made each person, so every life is important and should be protected.



5 Work is important in God's plan for adults and their families, so jobs and pay should be fair.



2 God made us to be part of communities, families and countries, so all people can share and help each other.



6 God made everyone, so we are all brothers and sisters in God's family wherever we live.



3 God wants us to help make sure everyone is safe and healthy and can have a good life.



7 The world was made by God, so we take care of all creation.



4 God wants us to help people who are poor, who don't have enough food, a safe place to live, or a community.



These themes are based on United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Living Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions*. © Copyright 2011 United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services. All rights reserved. Photos courtesy of Brother Mickey McGrath, CSFS.

OCSGE Focus:

The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations that connect to the pastoral theme are:



A Discerning Believer

A discerning believer formed in the Catholic Faith community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery of God's presence through word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection and moral living.

A Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic Faith Community Who:

- Illustrates a basic understanding of the saving story of our Christian faith.
- Participates in the sacramental life of the church and demonstrates an understanding of the centrality of the Eucharist to our Catholic story.
- Actively reflects on God's Word as communicated through the Hebrew and Christian scriptures.
- Develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic social teaching and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good.
- 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)
- Seeks intimacy with God and celebrates communion with God, others and creation through prayer and worship.
- Understands that one's purpose or call in life comes from God and strives to discern and live out this call throughout life's journey.
- Respects the faith traditions, world religions and the life-journeys of all people of good will.
- Integrates faith with life.
- Recognizes that "sin, human weakness, conflict and forgiveness are part of the human journey" and that the cross, the ultimate sign of forgiveness is at the heart of redemption. (Witnesses to Faith)

I AM A BELIEVER!

- a) I believe that God is an awesome God.
- b) I believe and have faith in God.
- c) I believe that God is with us always.
- d) I believe that we can talk to God anytime and anywhere, through prayer.
- e) I believe in the stories of the Bible.
- f) I believe in the stories of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.
- g) I believe in the Church community, celebrating Mass, and the seven Sacraments.
- h) I believe in forgiveness.
- i) Because I am a believer, I will live my life like Jesus.



A Self-Directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner

A self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.

A Self-Directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner Who:

- a) Demonstrates a confident and positive sense of self and respect for the dignity and welfare of others.

- b) Demonstrates flexibility and adaptability.
- c) Takes initiative and demonstrates Christian leadership.
- d) Responds to, manages and constructively influences change in a discerning manner.
- e) Sets appropriate goals and priorities in school, work and personal life.
- f) Applies effective communication, decision-making, problem-solving, time and resource management skills.
- g) Examines and reflects on one's personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities.
- h) Participates in leisure and fitness activities for a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

I AM A LEARNER FOR LIFE!

- a) I use my gifts and talents given to me by God.
- b) I always do my best.
- c) I build on my strengths and weaknesses.
- d) I set goals.
- e) I accept change.
- f) I am proud of the good things I do.
- g) I am thankful for the gifts of others.
- h) Because I am a learner for life, I can reach for my dreams, by living my life like Jesus.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Focus:

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that connect to the pastoral theme are:



Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all.



Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, sea and marine resources for sustainable development.



Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss.



Overview: 2023-2024

Blessed Beyond Belief

Scriptural Connection:

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord.

- Psalm 118:26

Theme Song:

10,000 Reasons

Matt Redman

Renewing The Promise Focus:

A Community That Forms Joyful Disciples

Catholic Social Teaching Focus:

Rights and Responsibilities
Solidarity

OCSGE Focus:

A Collaborative Contributor
A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Focus:

Sustainable Cities and Communities
Responsible Consumption and Production

2023-2024

Blessed Beyond Belief

Description

The fourth of five pastoral themes, “Blessed Beyond Belief”, calls us to open our eyes and our hearts to see all of God’s goodness that surrounds us. Recognizing that faith is a gift from God, we are thankful for all of the gifts and blessings that we receive, which all come from God. In response to all of God’s blessings, we offer our worship. We are blessed and chosen and that means God’s arms will always be open to us with mercy, grace, guidance and unwavering strength and love. God walks with us and knows our true heart. God is our lighthouse in the storm and casts away darkness and despair.

Although there are many mysteries, Jesus has never hidden his blessings from us. He is always there. We celebrate the gift of ourselves, each other and the earth all around us. We also need to take the time to celebrate the joy we encounter in the Gospels and the Eucharist. We praise the Lord who gives life

and love to all things, making each day new.

In our Catholic school communities, we are called to worship and praise as Joyful Disciples. How will we raise an alleluia with everything that we have? How will we find a song of joy in the middle of a storm that is stronger than any other sound of doubt or darkness? How will we model joy in our imperfect world? How

will we live out each day reminding ourselves that we are completely loved and accepted by God? How will we be a guiding light to help others see their blessings and to live more fully in Christ?

Logo

The “Blessed Beyond Belief” logo is represented by a sunrise with the silhouette of a person with arms outstretched. There is a shadow of a cross in the distance. This logo reminds us to have open arms and open hearts to receive all of the many blessings of the Lord. When we accept all the Lord has to offer, we are set free. All things are possible when we put our trust in God.



Scriptural connection:

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord. We bless you from the house of the Lord. (Psalm 118:26)

The Scripture passage that supports the theme comes from the Psalms. The theme “Blessed Beyond Belief” calls us to praise and worship God for all that he provides in his unending love for us. When we have a loving encounter with Christ, we are filled with great joy and want to share this gift and worship in communion with others.

Theme song:

Each theme song is provided for use at school Masses, liturgies, assemblies, and for use at system events. Music will be provided to the music leads at each site.

Music: 10,000 Reasons

Artist: Matt Redman

CCLI Song # 6016351 © 2011 Atlas Mountain Songs (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing), sixsteps Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing), Thankyou Music (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing), worshiptogether.com songs (Admin. by Capitol CMG Publishing)

Liturgical Function: Gathering song

Video: New Song Cafe

Worship Together: 10 000 Reasons

Prayer:

Gracious God,
we are in awe of you.
How beautifully you created life for us.
How completely you love us.
How knowingly you provide
everything we need.
How abundantly you bless us.

Help us to fully open our eyes
to see the beauty around us.
Help us to fully open our arms
to accept all that you offer.
Help us to fully open our hearts
to feel your enduring presence and love.

Guided by the Holy Spirit,
we lift our joyful voices together in praise.
For all that you are, for all that you give
we are blessed beyond belief.
In Jesus' name,
Amen.



Renewing The Promise
**A Pastoral Letter
for Catholic Education**

Renewing The Promise Focus: A Community Forms Joyful Disciples

As faithful disciples of Jesus, we celebrate God's joy which longs to break into the world (13).

The joy of the Gospel fills the hearts and lives of all who encounter Jesus. Those who accept his offer of salvation are set free from sin,

sorrow, inner emptiness and loneliness. With Christ, joy is constantly born anew (13).

Additional reflections for all partners in Catholic education:

The Holy Father reminds us that the essence of our vocation is to love. This means that as partners in Catholic education it is not about the great things we do; it is about doing little things with great love. This is the heart of joyful discipleship; it is the foundation of Catholic Education (21).

As Jesus accompanied the disciples on the road to Emmaus, it was at the moment of the breaking of the bread that their eyes were opened and they realized their hearts were burning within them (23).

Catholic Social Teaching

Focus:

The Themes of Catholic Social Teaching that connect to the pastoral theme are:

Rights and Responsibilities

Solidarity

the seven themes of CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING for children



1 God made each person, so every life is important and should be protected.



5 Work is important in God's plan for adults and their families, so jobs and pay should be fair.



2 God made us to be part of communities, families and countries, so all people can share and help each other.



6 God made everyone, so we are all brothers and sisters in God's family wherever we live.



3 God wants us to help make sure everyone is safe and healthy and can have a good life.



7 The world was made by God, so we take care of all creation.



4 God wants us to help people who are poor, who don't have enough food, a safe place to live, or a community.



These themes are based on United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Balance Catholic Social Teaching, Challenge and Promise*. © Copyright 2017, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services. All rights reserved. Photos courtesy of Brother Mickey McGarr, CSFS.

OCSGE Focus:

The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations that connect to the pastoral theme are:



A Collaborative Contributor

A collaborative contributor who finds meaning, dignity and vocation in work which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.

A Collaborative Contributor Who:

- Works effectively as an interdependent team member.
- Thinks critically about the meaning and purpose of work.
- Develops one's God-given potential and makes a meaningful contribution to society.
- Finds meaning, dignity, fulfilment and vocation in work which contributes to the common good.
- Respects the rights, responsibilities and contributions of self and others.
- Exercises Christian leadership in the achievement of individual and group goals.
- Achieves excellence, originality, and integrity in one's own work and supports these qualities in the work of others.
- Applies skills for employability, self-employment and entrepreneurship relative to Christian vocation.

I AM A TEAM PLAYER!

- I co-operate with others in all that I do.
- I value everyone's work.
- I respect and listen to others.
- I think of others before myself.
- I follow rules of fair play.
- I work hard in school so that I can build my community and make it a better place.
- Because I am a team player, I know that 'Together is Better', and we will live our lives like Jesus.



A Reflective, Creative And Holistic Thinker

A reflective, creative and holistic thinker who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good.

A Reflective, Creative, & Holistic Thinker Who:

- a) Recognizes there is more grace in our world than sin and that hope is essential in facing all challenges.
- b) Creates, adapts, evaluates new ideas in light of the common good.
- c) Thinks reflectively and creatively to evaluate situations and solve problems.
- d) Makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience.
- e) Adopts a holistic approach to life by integrating learning from various subject areas and experience.

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

I HAVE IDEAS!

- a) I have thoughts and opinions that matter.
- b) I make good choices.
- c) I have hope for the future.
- d) I solve problems with knowledge, understanding and prayer.
- e) I know we are all equal and special.
- f) Because I have ideas, I have a purpose, and I will live my life like Jesus.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Focus:

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that connect to the pastoral theme are:



Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable.



Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns.



Overview: 2024-2025

Called to Witness

Scriptural Connection:

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses.

- Acts 1:8

Theme Song:

Cry the Gospel

Tom Booth

Renewing The Promise Focus:

A Community that Builds Relationships

Catholic Social Teaching Focus:

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

OCSGE Focus:

An Effective Communicator

A Responsible Citizen

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Focus:

Clean Water and Sanitation

Affordable and Clean Energy

Climate Action

2024-2025

Called to Witness



Description

The fifth of five pastoral themes, “Called to Witness”, reminds us of our baptismal call to share our faith with others and to bring people closer to Christ. The Church’s mission given to us by Jesus Christ is to carry out and continue his work on Earth. To be a witness to Christ means that as Church, our words, actions and attitude reflect that we are members of the Body of Christ.

In Catholic education, we are called to witness to all members of our Catholic community and beyond. We speak about Jesus. We share and explain his teachings, we describe how he lived and what he asked people to do, and we spread his love. As witnesses, we are guided by the Holy Spirit.

We can turn to witnesses that have gone before us, such as the saints, loved ones, the Popes, and many others who have helped us

along our own faith journey, for inspiration. Pope Paul VI once shared: “[People listen] more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if [they do] listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses.”

Logo

The “Called to Witness” logo is represented by a flame in the shape of a cross with the outline of a dove at the centre of the cross. Both the flame and the dove are symbols of the Holy Spirit. This is a reminder that it is the third person of the Trinity, the Holy Spirit, who guides us as we witness to the Catholic faith. The cross reminds us that we are witnessing to Christ, who commanded us to “Love one another, as I have loved you”. Christ loved us so much that he gave his own life so that we may have eternal life.

Scriptural connection:

You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses (Acts 1:8).

The Scripture passage that supports the theme comes from the Acts of the Apostles. The theme “Called to Witness” reminds us of our mission to share our faith with others, which can often seem like a daunting task in a secular world.

We turn to the Sacraments to give us the strength that we need to be witnesses to Christ. It is by receiving the Sacrament of Confirmation, specifically, when we commit being witnesses to Jesus, and we take comfort in the promise of Christ that the Holy Spirit will give us all that we need to accomplish his mission.

Theme song:

Each theme song is provided for use at school Masses, liturgies, assemblies, and for use at system events. Music will be provided to the music leads at each site.

Music: [Cry the Gospel](#)

Artist: Tom Booth

CCLI Song # 2945804

© 1995 spiritandsong.com

Liturgical Function: Gathering or Processional song

Liturgical Function: Gathering or Processional song

Prayer:

Come Holy Spirit,
guide us with your presence
and give us strength
to be witnesses to Christ.

Help us ensure that
our words, our actions and attitudes
reflect the love of Christ.

Help us to live in such a way
that those who we encounter
will know God better
by knowing us.

Amen.



Renewing The Promise
A Pastoral Letter
for Catholic Education

Renewing The Promise Focus: A Community That Builds Relationships

Catholic schools are places where the “New Evangelization” can take root by inviting students and their families into a deeper relationship with Christ. The experience of community within the school can gently fan the embers until they burst into a flame of faith (8).

People often comment that when they enter a Catholic school they feel a special presence. [...] The presence comes from Christ who is proclaimed by word and example, and is evidenced in the way people care for one another – “see how they love one another.” Catholic schools witness to Christ and by doing so help to reveal him to others (9).

Additional reflections for all partners in Catholic education:

The more we foster and nurture Catholic identity, the more we promote the expression of that identity in service and witness to the world. Our faith calls us to be engaged with the world around us, to have hope, and to inspire it in others (11).

In a world that is sometimes beset with negativity and acrimony, remember your example of life, grounded in faith, is a powerful witness for your children, and an antidote to the hopelessness that often permeates our times (17).

You are powerful witnesses to the presence of Jesus in the lives of our students, and you provide the good soil on each school day for the roots of faith to grow in our students (18).

Your model of service, and generosity of spirit offers important witness to the values of the Gospel message (19).

Model for your staff how to best minister to children and young people. Listen to the stories they tell and witness to them the stories of our faith and of your own faith journey (19).

You are called to model a life centred in the person of Jesus, and privileged to give witness, personally and professionally, to the teachings of Christ as you offer your leadership in the service of others (20).

Catholic Social Teaching

Focus:

The Themes of Catholic Social Teaching that connect to the pastoral theme are:

Option for the Poor and Vulnerable

The Dignity of Work and the Rights of Workers

the seven themes of **CATHOLIC SOCIAL TEACHING** for children



1 God made each person, so every life is important and should be protected.



5 Work is important in God's plan for adults and their families, so jobs and pay should be fair.



2 God made us to be part of communities, families and countries, so all people can share and help each other.



6 God made everyone, so we are all brothers and sisters in God's family wherever we live.



3 God wants us to help make sure everyone is safe and healthy and can have a good life.



7 The world was made by God, so we take care of all creation.



4 God wants us to help people who are poor, who don't have enough food, a safe place to live, or a community.



These themes are based on United States Conference of Catholic Bishops, *Basic Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Promises*. © Copyright 2017, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services. All rights reserved. Photos courtesy of Brother Mickey McGah, CSFS.

An Effective Communicator Who:

- Listens actively and critically to understand and learn in light of gospel values.
- Reads, understands and uses written materials effectively.
- Presents information and ideas clearly and honestly and with sensitivity to others.
- Writes and speaks fluently one or both of Canada's official languages.
- 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.

I HAVE A VOICE!

- I speak, write and listen as Jesus would want me to.
- I care about others and speak up for them.
- I am honest.
- I think carefully before I react or speak.
- I respect all people and their languages.
- I listen to the Word of God.
- Because I have a voice, I will use it lovingly, and I will live my life like Jesus.

OCSGE Focus:

The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations that connect to the pastoral theme are:



An Effective Communicator

An effective communicator who speaks, writes and listens honestly and sensitively, responding critically in light of gospel values.



A Responsible Citizen

A responsible citizen who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice and the sacredness of human life.

A Responsible Citizen Who:

- a) Relates to family members in a loving, compassionate and respectful manner.
- b) Recognizes human intimacy and sexuality as God-given gifts, to be used as the creator intended.
- c) Values and honours the important role of the family in society.
- d) Values and nurtures opportunities for family prayer.
- e) Ministers to the family, school, parish, and wider community through service.

I HAVE RESPONSIBILITIES!

- a) I am a peace-maker.
- b) I am fair.
- c) I am forgiving.
- d) I follow rules and do my share.
- e) I help the poor and care for people in need.
- f) I stand up for what is right.
- g) I know that all life is precious.
- h) I respect and protect the world and all that is in it.
- i) Because I accept my responsibilities, I can make a difference, and will live my life like Jesus.

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Focus:

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals that connect to the pastoral theme are:



Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all.



Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all.



Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts.

Acknowledgements

All external resources, including graphics used in this resource have been obtained with the necessary permissions:

Adapted Elementary Wording for Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, The Institute for Catholic Education, Developed by the Huron-Perth Catholic District School Board and the St. Clair Catholic District School Board.

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations, The Institute for Catholic Education, Third Edition: 2019.

Renewing The Promise: A Pastoral Letter for Catholic Education, The Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, 2018, All rights reserved.

7 Themes of Catholic Social Teaching, Sharing Catholic Social Teaching: Challenges and Directions. © Copyright 2017, United States Conference of Catholic Bishops and Catholic Relief Services. All rights reserved. Photos courtesy of Brother Mickey McGrath, OSFS

United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, Copyright © 2019 United Nations, All rights reserved worldwide.



DISCIPLESHIP | SCHOLARSHIP | STEWARDSHIP



Algonquin & Lakeshore
Catholic District School Board