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## ABSTRACT

The essays in this collection reflect on effective practices conducted in Catholic schools. Essays were written by participants in the 2000 principals' academy. Under "Section 1: Religious Education" are the following essays: "Kingdom Builders" (Sr. M. Joseph); "Sacramental Programs, Parish Programs" (J. Thaler); and "Virtues in Progress" (R. J. Bootz). Under "Section 2: Apostolic Service Programs" are these essays: "Project Joy: Understanding Justice" (S. T. Cruse); "School Community Outreach Program" (J. M. Mugg); and "Service in the Curriculum" (B. Butts). Under "Section 3: Curriculum Practices" are these essays: "Curriculum and the Arts" (E. M. Paul); "Supporting the Academic Curriculum" (P. Brown); "An Adventure in Integration" (T. L. Ewell); "Reading and Flexible Grouping" (S. Renehan); "Computer Program" (J. Ferry); "Changing a Curriculum" (M. Secoda); and "Curriculum Mapping" (M. Abramshe). Under "Section 4: Early Childhood Education" are these essays: "Aiding Transitions in Early Childhood" (C. Guidry); and "A Kindergarten Reading Program" (L. Torrez). Under "Section 5: Early Adolescence Education" are these essays: "Middle School Orientation and Open House" (Y. Deckard); "A Middle School Schedule" (M. Rinaudo); and "Home Base" (N. Vanders). Under "Section 6: Differentiated Instructions" are these essays: "Adapting to Student Differences" (C. A. Williams); "Integrated Thematic Instruction" (J. Pohlman); and "Many Instructional Levels" (Sr. E. M. McGowan). Under "Section 7: Staff Development" are these essays: "Mentoring New Teachers" (M. G. Thomas); "Curriculum and Staff Development" (A. Mitchell); and "Delegation: A Management Tool" (T. Boquer). Under "Section 8: Developing the Self-Disciplined Child" are these essays: "School-Wide Discipline Program" (A. Brand); "The Importance of 'Love and Logic'" (D. K. Repichowski); "Respect and Responsibility Program" (Sr. A. Joelle); "Christian Behavior Program" (A. F. Clough); and "Violence Prevention Program" (N. Kryger). (BT)

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# Programs that Educate

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*Robert J. Kealey, Ed.D.*



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*Programs  
that  
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NATIONAL CATHOLIC EDUCATIONAL ASSOCIATION

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## Preface

The NCEA Department of Elementary Schools has found a valuable resource in the participants of the various principals' academies. For the last several years participants in these academies have shared their knowledge and experience with other principals throughout the country by writing brief essays of programs that take place in their schools. This sharing of ideas reflects what the U.S. bishops meant when they wrote in their 1972 pastoral *To Teach as Jesus Did* that Catholic schools form communities. Not only do individual Catholic schools create communities, but also NCEA has the responsibility of creating a single community among all the Catholic schools in the nation. This sharing of ideas among principals is a high manifestation of this community.

The NCEA Department of Elementary Schools has encouraged all its members to review and update their school programs, curriculum. During the closing year of the last century, it had the program "American Catholic Schools for the 20<sup>th</sup> Century." In the opening years of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it initiated the program "Twenty-first Century Curriculum: Faith, Values, Excellence." Both programs seek to ensure that Catholic elementary/middle schools have educational and spiritual programs that will enable their students "to be Christ-like, searchers for the truth, and engaged citizens" for the 21<sup>st</sup> century and even for the 22<sup>nd</sup> century.

The talents of the participants in the 2000 principals' academy and the programs of the Department of Elementary Schools Executive Committee intersect in this publication. The participants were required to write a brief essay on one effective practice conducted in their schools. *Programs that Educate* presents these practices. The participants describe the religious education programs and how these lead the students to perform apostolic service. A variety of curriculum change processes are described. The principals shared their early childhood programs, early adolescence programs and programs for children with special needs. To conduct a successful school staff development is necessary. Finally, today's society needs students who will become citizens who are responsible for their actions and accountable to themselves and others. Thus the book concludes with a section on developing the self-disciplined child.

The NCEA Department of Elementary School expresses its deep gratitude to all the writers who so willingly shared their ideas with the rest of the Catholic schools community. Many people at NCEA assisted in bringing these essays to the membership in this book. Sister Ann Sciannella, SND, and Kathy Morant worked on the original manuscripts. Mary Hinshelwood proofread the text. Beatriz Ruiz designed the cover and laid out the book. We are grateful to all of them.

The NCEA Department of Elementary Schools presents this publications to its members in the hope that by reading it they will be inspired to adapt one or more of the described programs to their own school. All Catholic schools need to cultivate the faith life of their students, enable them to deepen their commitment to Christian virtues, and provide an excellent education. This book describes some successful programs.

*James Brennan, Ed.D.*  
*President*

*Robert J. Kealey, Ed.D.*  
*Executive Director*

*Department of Elementary Schools*  
*National Catholic Educational Association*  
*Easter 2001*

SECTION 1  
*Religious  
Education*



## *Kingdom Builders*

SISTER MARY JOSEPH, C.K.  
SAINT TERESA SCHOOL  
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

Vocation education is an important component of the religion curriculum. For all eternity, God has chosen a special way of life for each of our students. As we form the children who have been entrusted to us, it is important that we educate them about vocations and help them to open their hearts to God's call. Our world and our Church today need faith-filled married and single people, as well as holy priests and religious. The religious life is a vocation that is not familiar to many children. As educators, we can teach them what a religious vocation is and help them to see the beauty and joy of this way of life. One way in which I have tried to open the hearts of young women in our school to the possibility of a religious vocation is through a project called "Kingdom Builders."

Kingdom Builders evolved out of a desire, on my part, to meet on a regular basis with girls who are interested in growing in the spiritual life while learning more about religious life. I also wanted to familiarize these girls with the spirituality of my religious commu-

nity and the Sisters of Christ the King School. Originally, I called the group “Daughters of Christ the King.” Over time I changed the name to “Kingdom Builders,” to reflect their call and ability to build the kingdom of Christ in their daily lives.

In the fall of the 1998-1999 school year, I visited each classroom (grades 3 through 8) to explain Kingdom Builders and to invite interested girls to meet with me during their lunch recess once a month. Once I have decided on a day that works for me to meet with the girls in subsequent months, I ask their teachers to announce the meeting day and place. It is not unusual for one of the girls to approach me in the cafeteria and ask when we are going to have Kingdom Builders again!

I have been pleased and impressed with attendance of the girls at Kingdom Builders. As can be expected, almost all of the students in third grade are interested in being Kingdom Builders. Although the numbers taper off as they grow older, all of the girls who are a part of Kingdom Builders are fervent and enthusiastic.

Over the course of two years, I have done a variety of things with the Kingdom Builders. We always start with prayer —Our Father and invocations: “Christ the King, reign over us! Mary our Queen, pray for us!” I usually try to talk to them about a spiritual topic which I have chosen ahead of time and encourage them to choose a way to practice what we have discussed on a daily basis during the upcoming month. During Lent, we spoke about Lenten practices and the girls took home a “shield” on which they recorded their daily attempts to be “soldiers for Christ the King” through prayer, sacrifice and deeds of mercy. In the Easter season, we examined the Baptismal promises which we renew at Easter. Each girl took home a copy of the Renewal of Baptismal Promises so that she could use it for a daily prayer. Another time, we talked about different ways to pray at the start of each day.

I give the girls time to ask questions — about our spiritual topic, about religious life or about my community. The fact that all of the girls want to be a part of this group and are serious about their spiritual life, creates a safe climate in which the girls feel free to ask questions openly and honestly without the fear of what others will think. I also share with them stories about our Sisters and various aspects of our community life.

Sometimes I teach the girls about a practice of our community and encourage them to do it in their own lives. One of my favorite activities that I have done with the Kingdom Builders is the choosing of patrons, virtues and intentions (something our Sisters do on January 1<sup>st</sup> each year). The girls randomly select one card from each of three envelopes. The cards contain names of saints, virtues and prayer intentions. We then print these three things on a holy card for each of the girls. For the next year, they are encouraged to learn about and foster a devotion to their new patron saint, to develop their chosen virtue more fully, and to pray daily for their prayer intention. It is rewarding to see the girls get as excited about choosing patrons, virtues and intentions as they would if they were given a piece of candy!

At the end of the first year of Kingdom Builders, I planned a special activity for the girls who had attended on a regular basis. The girls were invited to come to an outdoor workday, during which many eager little hands helped the Sisters to weed, plant, and “beautify” the convent yard. This was followed by a time of prayer and a cookout. What a joy it was to see them give service generously and enjoy each other’s company.

Kingdom Builders has been a rewarding experience for both me and for the girls. It is nice to have an opportunity to share my faith and spirituality with young women who are eager and interested to grow in holiness. It is inspiring to see the depth of their faith and their desire to grow closer to the Lord. The girls feel the support of others who are sincere in wanting to imitate Christ. They are able to be comfortable and straightforward about the possibility that they might have a religious vocation. They also have the chance to interact with me in a role other than that of an authority figure. It has been affirmed in many ways that the Kingdom Builders project is worthwhile. At the end of the first year, I was very pleased to hear a little second grader say, “I am going to be in Kingdom Builders next year.”

I have several ideas in mind for future Kingdom Builders meetings. I would like to take the girls over to Church for a visit to the Blessed Sacrament. Someday I also hope to take them on a field trip to our Mother House. There is much I would like to teach them about prayer. The possibilities for this kind of group are endless.

Likewise, this format can be used for a variety of other purposes. One could establish a mission club or a pro-life club. Meetings like this could be used for other academic disciplines or for social purposes. Once again, the possibilities are limitless.

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize what a wonderful opportunity this project has provided for me to interact in a positive way with some of the children in my school. I meet with students who are experiencing difficulties and try to help them find a solution. I meet with each student in the school at the end of each quarter to go over report cards, to commend and encourage. I visit classrooms each week to talk about different aspects of the faith. This particular project, however, is particularly dear to my heart. Through my interaction with my Kingdom Builders I get a glimpse into the awesome work of God's grace on souls, and I myself can be a part of leading these souls to Him.

## *Sacramental Programs, Parish Programs*

JOYCE THALER  
ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL  
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND

One of the primary responsibilities of the Catholic Church is the faith education of its children. One always reads that today's children are tomorrow's adults—the future of our Church. Religious education is central to the educational programs offered in the parish. Both the parish school and the Christian Formation (CCD) program share in the responsibilities of teaching doctrine, transmitting faith values, demonstrating community service and growing through the sacraments. The sacramental programs of Eucharist, Reconciliation and Confirmation can be wonderful tools to bring families and children of the entire parish together.

At St. Joseph Parish, the sacramental programs are neither the sole responsibility of CCD nor the school. They are joint programs, which bring together the children, the parents, the teachers, and the administrators of the school and CCD. Our programs have blended, meshed and fully developed as one program for Reconciliation and

Eucharist, and one for Confirmation. We have found that by structuring the programs so that all work together, learn together, and celebrate the sacraments together, our parish became a more welcoming and united community. The “we/they” mentality of parish school and public school students has disappeared. Families truly recognize that we are a parish family, not a school group or a religious education group. Families realize that the parish fully supports the religious education of all of its children, not one segment of its parishioners.

Immediate preparation and celebration of the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist takes place in the second grade. Students in the parish school, students who are being home-schooled, and students in the Saturday CCD classes, as well as their parents, take part in the sacramental program from beginning to end. (Confirmation takes place in ninth grade and thus falls to the youth minister and DRE).

In October of the second-grade year, workshops are held for the parents. The parish’s Director of Religious Education conducts these workshops. As DRE and program coordinator, Deacon Bill explains the parish’s philosophy of one program for all children. He reviews the archdiocese’s guidelines for the readiness and reception of the sacraments as well as the parents’ responsibility in the religious education of their children. Our program reaffirms the parents as the primary teachers—the first teachers and the role models for Christian living. At the initial workshop, parents receive a mini-course on Reconciliation and Eucharist. The catechesis of the sacraments was reviewed on an adult level. The unity of our program is demonstrated through the use of the same preparation book by all children. The parents select dates for the reception of the sacraments (maximum numbers are established for each celebration) vs. a school date and a CCD date, and the school-teachers (professionals) and CCD teachers (volunteers) share their roles and responsibilities in the program.

Small group discussions take place under the leadership of the religion teachers, parish deacons, and parish clergy. In these groups, parents share their stories about First Confession and First Communion. Group leaders stress the rite, as it exists today, keep the sharing session positive, and help convey a family-oriented program. The

group leaders also share with the parents the topics of future workshops, distribute lesson booklets, which are to be completed at home with the family, and give out information sheets, that must be completed to arrange the schedules for sacramental celebrations. Because of the numbers involved in our program, approximately 200 children each year, typically three celebrations of each sacrament are scheduled. Reconciliation takes place during Advent, and Eucharist is celebrated on the two Saturdays after Easter at three special Masses.

At the second workshop in November, parent education continues with presentations by a parish priest, who is assigned as chaplain to the program and by the religion teachers. While parent instruction is taking place, the students are working together on activities that center around the sacraments and Mass. By working on activities, the students share the lessons they have learned in formal classes and at home. Here the home instruction is highlighted, as it is the core of the program. The parental involvement assures a healthy understanding of the sacraments.

A third workshop is held in late fall. This workshop is for the children and their parents. At this session, the Mass is dissected and "taught." The vessels, vestments, and prayers of the Mass are discussed in detail. Activities centered on sin, forgiveness, and the steps of true reconciliation make up the second part of the 90-minute session. Again, the unity of the parish program and the unity of family are stressed. The sacrament of Reconciliation is celebrated soon after this workshop during Advent.

In early spring, parents are assembled again to review their progress in teaching their child about the very special sacrament of the Eucharist. Any questions or concerns are addressed by the DRE who conducts this session. Soon after this session, religion teachers interview students to assure their understanding of the Eucharist.

With the guidelines of the archdiocese having been met, rehearsals for First Communion take place. Again the unity philosophy is seen by all. The school's teachers and administrators, along with the CCD teachers and administrators, serve as ushers and greeters for each First Eucharist Mass. Parents from the CCD and school serve as Eucharistic Ministers. Students are assigned a pew by lottery for the special day. The child sits with his or her family, not in a class or group. We feel that this is the more normal situation for a child

during Mass and thus a better way to celebrate First Eucharist.

As an aside, it should also be noted that formal pictures are available for any family that wishes to sit for a collection. But here again, the photographer is scheduled for several evenings, and school, as well as CCD and home-schooled children, take advantage of the opportunity. Although this is only one little item, it further conveys the “we-are-one” parish philosophy.

Our program has evolved over the years because of the parish leadership, the cooperation of the school and CCD faculties, the hands-on guidance of our DRE who has been at the parish for nearly 20 years, and the positive approach of the parish families. Our children interact in so many ways, why should they not be one on the most special day of their elementary school religious education?



## *Virtues in Progress*

ROBERT J. BOOTZ  
SS. PETER & PAUL SCHOOL  
HORTONVILLE, WISCONSIN

**V**isualize walking into the front door of the school. A banner reading “RESPONSIBILITY” is the first thing that the visitor sees. Further down the hall a fourth-grade teacher is reading a story to her class and discussing how the story teaches responsibility. Also note that all correspondence which leaves the school office stresses the virtue of the month, responsibility. Finally, enjoy the positive school climate.

Character education is not new to the educational community. It has been around for years and has been implemented both successfully and unsuccessfully in our schools. We as Catholic educators have a responsibility to both teach and model character education on a continuous basis both in and out of the school environment. Students and parents expect us to maintain only the highest values in our daily lives.

As part of my advanced religion-certification requirement, I took on the task of writing a character education program for my school. The title of this program is “Virtues in Progress,” or the VIP program

for short. My primary sources for this program were Thomas Lickona's book, *Educating for Character*, and William Bennett's best-selling book, *A Book of Virtues*. This program has been used successfully in the three schools in which I have had the opportunity to minister as the school principal.

The VIP program can be modified for use in either an all-school environment, a single classroom, or in a home setting. To receive the most benefit from the VIP program, it is recommended that it be initiated in all three locations simultaneously. The program needs to have the full cooperation and acceptance of the entire school staff in addition to the members of the board of education and the parents. Greater acceptance will equal greater success.

The primary reason I chose William Bennett's *A Book of Virtues* is the support literature that he provides for each virtue. Before I go any farther, I want to list those ten virtues.

- Self-discipline
- Compassion
- Responsibility
- Friendship
- Work
- Courage
- Perseverance
- Honesty
- Loyalty
- Faith

Bennett utilizes literature that highlights each of these ten virtues. Just a few of the examples that Bennett uses are: scripture stories, fables, poems, and stories about historical figures. This is an outstanding collection of literature that can reach each and every person in the VIP program.

Other virtues may be chosen for this program. Listed below are additional virtues that may be used. Several of the examples below are synonyms for those in William Bennett's book.

- Competence
- Respect
- Self-control
- Self-esteem

- Love
- Humility
- Fellowship
- Helpfulness

The decision to use alternate virtues should be based on the individual school's environment.

How do we develop character education in our schools? Thomas Lickona states that, "Schools must help children understand the core values (virtues), adapt or commit to them, and then act upon them in their own lives." This is a heavy responsibility that we as educators have to live up to. Thomas Lickona gives us 12 methods to develop character/moral education in our classrooms. These 12 methods are listed below, and I have provided a short explanation for each.

1. **We need to act as caregivers, models, and mentors.** We need to treat students with love and respect and to set an example for them. When necessary, it becomes our responsibility to make corrections either on a one-to-one basis or in a whole classroom discussion.
2. **Create a moral community.** Help students to get to know each other as well as respect and care for each other. Let them know that they have a responsibility to their schoolmates.
3. **Practice moral discipline.** Let students create and enforce the rules. Let the students realize that they have a moral responsibility to comply with the rules as a way of showing respect to their schoolmates.
4. **Create a democratic classroom environment.** Let the students be involved in the decision-making process and let them realize that the classroom is a good place to be and in which to learn.
5. **Teach values (virtues) through the curriculum.** Make each curriculum area a vehicle for teaching values and permit

them to examine and discuss moral questions that come up.

6. **Use cooperative learning.** This learning method helps students to appreciate others, to look at issues from different perspectives, and to develop the student's ability to work together.
7. **Develop the "conscience of craft."** Allow the students to develop an appreciation for learning and to realize that hard work can and does pay off and can affect the work of others.
8. **Encourage moral reflection.** Allow the students to reflect on issues. This can be done by encouraging students to read, do research, keep a journal, and to debate and discuss issues that can affect them.
9. **Teach conflict resolution.** Allows students to solve conflicts fairly.
10. **Foster care beyond the classroom.** Permit students to look around and get involved in community service. What can a class do to improve the lives of others?
11. **Create a positive moral culture in the school.** Develop a schoolwide philosophy that will support the values being taught in the classroom. Practice what we preach.
12. **Recruit parents and the community as partners in character education.** Let parents know that they are the first and most important moral teacher. We, together with the parents, should set the example and promote ethical values to whomever we come in contact.

In addition to using Lickona's 12 steps, what additional practical methods can be used to implement a VIP program in a school or classroom? Here are just a few practical recommendations.

1. As mentioned earlier, insure that all participants (teachers, administration, staff, and parents) adopt the program with an open mind and are willing to put 100% effort behind it.
2. Inform the staff of the program and train them. Ask for their input as to how to implement the program.
3. Provide an opportunity for the parents to learn about the VIP program. Inform them about their responsibility in the success of the program and remind them that they are the primary educators of their children. Offer a parent-training session.
4. Feature one of William Bennett's virtues per month. The monthly virtue is highlighted throughout the school with banners, posters, badges, etc. Stress to the teachers that they are to feature (with projects, scripture readings, and discussions) the monthly virtue in their classroom activities.
5. The administrator should visit each classroom at least once a month to discuss or read to the classes about the virtue of the month.
6. School personnel will wear a tag/badge highlighting the virtue of the month. This will show the importance of the program and further highlight the monthly virtue.
7. Ask the school mass celebrant to highlight the monthly virtue in his homilies.
8. All school correspondence (newsletters, forms, and outgoing letters) is to highlight the program. For example:  
**VIP \* VIP \* VIP \* RESPONSIBILITY \* VIP \* VIP \* VIP**
9. Review the VIP program monthly. Work with the staff and parents on how to improve the program and make it more effective.

10. Be positive: no program is successful without this virtue/characteristic.

Initiating the Virtues In Progress program is easy. Insuring that the program is effective is vital. The success of such a program may not be visible immediately. The more we as teachers model virtues/values in our everyday life, the more effect we will have on our students. We have all heard the phrase: It takes a village to educate a child. How true this is! What a responsibility we have! That is why the name of this program is "Virtues in Progress." Progress means to move forward, even after the program has ended. The virtues/values that we have taught and modeled for our students will be evident in their future years.

## CHARACTER EDUCATION RESOURCES

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Technomic Publishing Company, Inc., 851 New Holland Ave., PO Box 3535, Lancaster, PA 17604, (800) 233-9936

The MASTER Teacher. Leadership Lane, PO Box 1207, Manhattan, KS 66505, (800) 669-9633.

Young People's Press, 1731 Kettner Blvd, San Diego, CA 92101, (800) 231-9774.



SECTION 2  
*Apostolic Service  
Programs*

## *Project Joy: Understanding Justice*

SHEILA T. CRUSE  
ST. AGNES ACADEMY  
KEY BISCAWAYNE, FLORIDA

**P**roject J.O.Y. is the umbrella under which all of the outreach programs fall at St. Agnes Academy on Key Biscayne, Florida. J.O.Y. is an acronym for Jesus, first, Others, second, and Yourself, last. The administration and faculty embrace a common mission of creating an awareness of social justice issues in all of our students. In many ways, Project J.O.Y. is similar to ministries found in most Catholic schools. It involves: sponsoring students in our inner-city schools; providing food for the poor at Thanksgiving and toys at Christmas; and a variety of other outreach activities. It includes the faculty and staff in a special effort at Christmas to provide as much as possible for residents of the Archdiocesan Home for Children. Perhaps the most meaningful aspect of the program, however, was the Homeless Retreat for the eighth-grade Confirmandi. Our students come from affluent families and our challenge is to teach understanding and compassion to children who have no con-



cept of what it is like to be homeless or hungry. The purpose of the retreat is to expose them to that reality for 14 hours one weekend.

Two weeks before the retreat, the planning team, which consisted of our principal, priest and teachers, met with the eighth-grade parents. We explained our rationale for this activity, the anticipated schedule, answered their questions and responded to their concerns. The most common one was: "How did we plan to keep the boys and girls separated during the night?" The support of the parents was critical to the success of the experience. We found that once we explained why we felt this was important, we could count on enthusiastic cooperation from them.

During the week prior to the retreat, we asked families to donate clothing and blankets to the parish homeless-ministry. On the day of the retreat, parents and teachers sorted through the clothing and selected what they thought would fit eighth-graders; folded the blankets, comforters, etc. What we did not use for the evening retreat was taken directly to the homeless-ministry storage area. That same week, the students were engaged in a variety of learning experiences about the injustice of homelessness. The all-encompassing question was: how can there still be homeless people in this great land in the year 2000, and what can we do to understand, and perhaps help to correct, this grave injustice? They researched statistics, found information on programs available to the homeless in our area, and learned about the myriad of reasons for the problem. They read scripture and discussed what their response should be, as young Catholics about to receive the sacrament of Confirmation.

The 31 students were required to return to school at 5:30 on a Friday evening, as attendance was mandatory. We gathered them in the Parish Hall for an overview of what was in store for the rest of the evening, into the night, and the next morning. We concluded the initial meeting with a prayer service prepared by the priest and religion teacher. After the prayer service, we sent them to the donation area and instructed them to select clothing and a blanket for the evening. Then they were escorted to different classrooms to change from their own clothing into the donated goods. They were also required to remove jewelry and turn in cell phones and beepers—in other words, to remove all vestiges of their identity and assume the identity of a homeless person.

They reconvened in the Parish Hall, to hear the coordinator of the parish homeless-ministry speak about the services they provide and a few of the experiences they have had. The students were then served a meal of soup, bread and lemonade from the back of the truck used by the group. Some found themselves still hungry. After the meal, and after each subsequent speaker or activity, they wrote their impressions and reflections in a journal we made especially for this retreat. Following this first entry, the students heard from a local physician, who had established a health clinic for the homeless in our area and from the director of the nearby Covenant House, which is a shelter for runaway homeless teens.

Their homeroom teacher had assembled a packet of thought-provoking questions to encourage group sharing about social injustices and the role of the young Catholic in alleviating it, and questions about life in general. This proved to be an important component of the retreat, and we adults found ourselves amazed at the depth of their responses. Following this activity, we all went to the chapel to pray for all those less fortunate than ourselves, and for the courage to follow whatever path God might put us on to relieve the suffering of our brothers and sisters in Christ.

After the visit to the chapel, it was time to find supplies and prepare the sleeping area. A parent had arranged for the nearest Office Depot to donate various-sized cardboard boxes; there were a couple of folding tables and perhaps four chairs. The defined sleeping area was a courtyard, partially covered by an overhanging roof, but not enclosed. We insisted that everyone go to bed outside, but listened for any symptoms of a cold (coughing, sneezing, sniffing) and allowed those students to bed down on the floor of the Parish Hall. To ensure authenticity of the homeless plight, no one slept well, for on this night, even in South Florida, it turned a bit chilly. Several even wished for more blankets and warmer clothes.

At 6:00 in the morning, about an hour before sunrise, we woke the students up. After removing all traces of their night in the hall and courtyard, they were served a light breakfast of oatmeal and juice, which a few mothers had come to prepare. Following that, we all went to Mass. Rather than give a homily, the priest requested that each student approach the altar and tell what the experience had meant to them. The responses were quite honest and very moving:

they had indeed learned much from their night of simulated homelessness. They were surprised at the discomfort, at the feeling of shame in wearing cast-off clothing, at the frustration of being hungry with not a morsel to eat. They had been cold; many had backaches; and some even feared the theft of their blankets. Their responses ran the gamut from anger at the injustice to compassion for those who must endure it.

Perhaps, the most important aspect of any such endeavor is the continued response—the follow-through. These eighth-graders wrote letters to the editor of our local newspaper, they told friends and relatives what we had done, and welcomed the invitation to serve breakfast once a week at a soup kitchen operated by the Missionaries of Charity. They earned \$500.00 to give to these Sisters as their graduation gift. Many of them continue to serve each week at the soup kitchen, and have by necessity, involved their parents and older siblings.

It is our firm belief that if we succeed in teaching children to prioritize their lives by putting **Jesus**, first, **Others**, second, and **Yourself**, last, they will truly live a life of **JOY**. Teaching this concept is a work of the heart, a work embraced by the entire school community. It is a work that has a ripple effect, with ever widening circles extending into the future—to people and places we may never see. We hope that our students will take **JOY** with them to high school and beyond. Our fervent prayer is that when these students are confronted with an injustice, no matter how great or how small, they will intuitively know what response is required of them as Disciples of Christ.

# *School Community Outreach Program*

J. MARK MUGG  
ST. JOSEPH CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
DECATUR, INDIANA

## **Overview:**

S.C.O.P.E. (Student Community Outreach Program and Enrichment) is a community-based, religious education program developed for the eighth-grade curriculum at St. Joseph Catholic School for the 1999-2000 school year. The overall goal for the program is to make our religious education come alive for the students, giving them a hands-on approach to stewardship, and allowing them to witness Christ and Christ-like behavior within our school and our local community. A part of the program's goal is to incorporate the spiritual and corporal works of mercy into life experiences. It is through these real experiences that the students identify how their religion (morality, choices, spirituality, and role modeling) makes a difference to others and to the world in which they live.

### Areas of Focus:

**1. Senior Citizens** – students will participate in activities with residents at our local retirement/nursing care facility, Woodcrest. For some students, this will be the first contact that they have ever had with the elderly in such a capacity.

Students will be assigned a resident (done through an inventory of interests completed by the students – assigned by the activities director of the nursing home). Issues to be addressed:

- a) Developing an understanding of emotional, physical, and spiritual needs of the elderly.
- b) Dealing with the issue of Potential loss through death.

### *Assessment of Senior Citizens Program*

This program proved to be a huge success in the lives of the students and residents at Woodcrest Nursing Home. Four planned trips were carried out throughout the school year (October, December, February, and April). At our initial meeting in October, the students were apprehensive at first, since for many of them this was the first encounter they had with a nursing home facility and/or elderly population. It took little time for the students to become involved with the residents by talking, providing nail-care, playing card games, checkers, dominoes, Uno, Skipbo, and so forth. In December, the students performed a re-enactment of the Nativity scene for the residents. The kindergartners accompanied us on this trip, as they were the “angels” in the program. By February, the students had become comfortable going to the residents’ rooms to check in with them or bring them down to the dining facility for cards and conversation.

The students’ love for the residents was evident in their actions—several students chose to write the residents throughout the school year. One particular student broke his collarbone and was not able to return to school for several days until his doctor cleared him. During his days off he chose to go to the nursing home to visit his friend. These were signs that a strong connection had been established through this program.

On the last visit to Woodcrest, the staff talked with the students about future volunteer work in a facility such as theirs, and also

informed the students of the necessary qualifications for people who chose professions in nursing, nursing assistants, activities directors, social services, etc. This gave the students information that they may consider for possible future employment.

**2. Kindergarten “Guardian Angel” Program** – students were partnered with one or two kindergartners in this program. They served as role models each week by taking the children to the all school Mass on Fridays (teaching them appropriate ways to act in church – genuflecting, kneeling, praying, folding hands, participating in liturgy). They were also involved with the students through various activities. One example was “Thanksgiving granola,” a food activity in which each student brings an item such as M&M’s, raisins, cereal, marshmallows, etc., says what they are thankful for, and then places the item in a large container, the contents of which is then shared by all. Other examples include celebrations for Christmas, Valentines Day, and “Warm Fuzzies”—giving and receiving compliments. All of these activities are designed to model Christ-like behavior for the younger students.

### *Assessment of the Guardian Angel Program*

It was a success. The students attended Mass together weekly and each month special activities were planned for the students to be able to get together to share time. Support was shown both ways among the students as kindergartners wrote cards of support for the eighth graders for their Graduation and Confirmation, as well as cards for all the holidays. Eighth graders made cards as well for their kindergartners—a real love was felt and seen between these two groups.

**3. Homebound Parishioners** – students wrote cards as a show of support to those parishioners who were confined to their home. They sent cards for birthdays, anniversaries, or recent operations/recoveries.

### *Assessment of Homebound Parishioners*

This program was a great experience for the students to learn more about the people within our church community. We are a large parish approximately 1,300 families - and students did not know all

of the people we wrote to throughout the year. On occasion, we would discuss to whom we were writing, and we would look up their pictures in the church directory. Students would sometimes comment, "Oh yeah, I used to see them at Mass all the time." This activity created sensitivity to needs of others around us.

The program also developed above and beyond our expectations. Initially, we implemented this phase for support within our community. By Christmas, students had already experienced several losses within their own community. Several students' grandparents died and we attended the funeral masses for them. A student's father died during this time and we attended the funeral home in support of the student and his family. This was a powerful experience for the students – again, a situation that many of them had never encountered.

Throughout the year, we realized the importance of supporting people outside our community. The students wrote sympathy cards to the family members who lost their relatives in a fire in Worcester, Massachusetts. They also attended the funeral home for an eighth-grade student, who died in a community 20 miles away from ours. Though they did not know him personally, they had played basketball with him through CYO, and they felt the need to support his family and school community.

**4. PRAYER SERVICES** – students were involved in the planning and implementing of prayer services throughout the year. This was a direct means for them to share their faith with others within the school community.

### *Assessment of Prayer Services*

Prayer was the essence of our lives throughout the school year. Everything we did we offered in prayer to God. Classes were begun with prayer. The eighth grade planned a prayer service at Christmas time that was a powerful experience for both students and staff. They secretly chose teachers/staff in the building, who became their "Prayer Pals" during the Advent season. The staff, unaware of who was doing this, received crosses or prayers from the students each week. They then planned a prayer service for the last day before Christmas break, at which time they informed the teachers of their identity, by pre-

senting them with a lit candle representing Christ's light.

The students also began a prayer time for the middle-school students on Fridays before leaving for the weekend. All students and staff would come into the hallway and would share prayer requests, concerns, and words of praise and thanksgiving. Everyone would join hands in a circle and then recite the Lord's Prayers together. The true sense of Christian community was present. We were aware how blessed we were to be able to pray and share our beliefs in our school environment.

S.C.O.P.E. has been a powerful learning experience for all involved. It has brought our Christianity into action and helped the students realize that we can make a difference in our world. S.C.O.P.E. will continue for the 2000-2001 school year, as the 2000 graduating class request money from their class account be utilized for the future implementation of this program.



## *Service in the Curriculum*

BOB BUTTS  
ST. JOSEPH CENTRAL SCHOOL  
BRIDGEPORT, OHIO

Part of our philosophy at St. Joseph is that it is in interpersonal relationships that value systems take shape in a person, so each child's growth is dependent on the love, sharing, and support of the whole Christian community. Four programs we include in our religion curriculum that cover these relationships as yearly programs, are Pennies for the Poor, Adopt-a-Grandparent, a Math-a-Thon for St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, and Jump Rope for the Heart.

The Pennies for the Poor Program is a fund established to assist students in the Bridgeport, Ohio, School District, both public and private, to cover expenses that they are not able to pay. The fund provides vouchers for needed books and workbooks, essential clothing, medicines, field-trip expenses, activity fees, dentistry, and provides other help where the need is made known to the fund board of directors. The pastors of the churches in the school district take requests for assistance from certain school officials or from the officers and board of the fund.

We have a 20-gallon milk can outside the principal's office where the students are asked to deposit pennies when they have done good deeds, have good news, or have had any other positive experience. At the end of the year, we turn the money in to the director of the fund to be used for the intended purposes. Our participation in this program has made a positive statement about our school and students to the community at large.

The Adopt-a-Grandparent program for our eighth-graders has been going on for 16 years. Every Thursday afternoon during the school year, no matter what the weather, the teacher and the eighth-grade class visit the Heartland Care Center at 1:00 p.m. With the help of the Activities Director, the students learn about the aging process and how, in giving just a little of their time, they can make a difference in the life of an elderly person. Each student is assigned to an elderly person, and each Thursday time is spent with him or her, talking, playing games, or helping with crafts. There are special activities on holidays and birthdays, and gifts are brought to them.

The impact on some students is so great that some have returned to the Care Center to volunteer, or just to visit on their own time. Visiting Heartland Care Center is another example of how students from St. Joseph reach out to their community and live lives as Jesus teaches in the Gospel.

All students in the school participate in the Math-a-Thon sponsored by St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, located in Memphis, Tennessee. It is the largest pediatric facility in the world established solely for the research of catastrophic childhood diseases.

The Math-a-Thon is an entertaining and enjoyable way for students to review basic math skills through the use of specially designed Funbooks. Each participant is asked to recruit sponsors (family, friends, and neighbors) who will pledge donations based on the number of problems provided (usually 200) and completed by the participant. To make it a complete family effort, a special parent answer-guide is easily detached from the funbook for checking the child's work.

Whatever the amount raised, each participant, every parent and teacher will benefit and grow from the development of a strong sense of social awareness this kind of program can generate.

The program we alternate yearly with the Math-a-Thon is the

Jump Rope for the Heart program for the American Heart Association, sponsored by the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation, and Dance. This program is a nationwide event conducted in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico. The primary purpose of this program is to educate school-aged children about the life-long benefits of aerobic exercise as well as help raise funds for cardiac research.

Jump Rope for the Heart is a dynamic, fun-filled activity promoting cardiovascular fitness through physical education. The skill development and accompanying sense of accomplishment students get through this program helps build their self-confidence. It encourages cooperation and teamwork, and builds team and school spirit by allowing participants to enjoy the camaraderie that comes from working to support a common goal.

Heart disease and stroke is the number one killer in our area and this program helps to educate students about the heart and exercise while raising funds to support research and school-site education programs in the fight against this deadly disease. The program has the students collect a flat donation from family and friends to bring in the day of the jump-rope event. Teams made up of four to six students take turns jumping rope for up to three hours. The students receive rewards for the different amounts of money they collected, but more importantly, they know that they are helping to provide a service to their fellow human beings by helping to fund heart research.

SECTION 3  
*Curriculum  
Practices*

## *Curriculum and the Arts*

EMILY M. PAUL  
ST. LEO THE GREAT SCHOOL  
NEW ORLEANS, LOUISIANA

**S**t. Leo the Great School firmly believes that the role of the arts in education is valuable because music, dance, drama, and graphic art influence each child's development. In the plan for creating a child-centered learning environment, there should be many opportunities for children to express themselves through the various disciplines of the arts. This fosters creativity in the children and enables them to think for themselves. It also strengthens and enhances their self-esteem.

With this in mind, our own Arts in Education Program began as a collaboration between art and music professors from Southern University of New Orleans, local artists (musicians, actors/actresses, storytellers, dancers), teachers from our school, and me. Our main goal was to enrich the academic program in order to make learning experiences meaningful, memorable, and fun for everybody, including the teachers. We believed that the Arts in Education Program would help the children to:

- 1) Express their feelings in healthy ways.

- 2) Gain a sense of accomplishment.
- 3) Become risk-takers and dare to try new ways of doing things.
- 4) Develop their ability to make choices.
- 5) Learn to become more independent.
- 6) Learn to appreciate the use of a variety of manipulations.
- 7) Begin to accept and appreciate the work of others as well as their own.
- 8) Develop their perceptual powers.
- 9) Learn to appreciate art in their environment. For the teachers, they would learn new skills and new techniques for incorporating the arts in the various disciplines, while allowing for discovery and exploration in the classroom.

Our first step to accomplish all of this was a grant, written by one of our teachers, for the 1997-1998 school year. We submitted the proposal to the Louisiana State Arts Council for a Curriculum Enhancement Theater Residency. We received a grant of \$2,357 from the Arts Council, of which we matched \$1,179. Our match was accomplished by collecting from each child, a modest "art fee" of \$8.00. This brought the total award to \$3,536. With this amount, we were able to have a ten-day artists' residency in our school. During that time, the artists worked with the teachers and children, using storytelling, theater performances, and workshops which focused on characterization, voice projection, diction, the creation and performance of original materials from personal experiences, and the enhancement of existing literature. The curriculum goals were: 1) to enhance, enrich, and improve reading and writing skills, and 2) to link personal history to community history through the collecting, telling, and retelling of stories. At the end of this residency, we held a Fine Arts Festival, which showcased the work and accomplishments of the children. Our invited guests included members from the arts council, community leaders, and parents.

Because of a tremendous first year, we have successfully submitted subsequent proposals, and have been funded for three consecutive years. We expanded our Arts in Education Program to include the *Art of Singing* and *Learning through Puppetry*. Two Dominican Sisters, who worked with the children and teachers to enrich the curriculum through song and dance, conducted the program. The

children also learned valuable lessons about life and belief in themselves. Their stage productions included a musical version of *Mufaro's Beautiful Daughters*, an original creation by the two sisters, which was performed at schools throughout our archdiocese.

**Learning through Puppetry** has been an enlightening, entertaining, and educational component for the children and teachers. Our resident artist, a professional puppeteer for over 15 years, used her expertise to teach the children and teachers about masks and the different kinds of puppets—hand, rod, and shadow. Their favorite appeared to be the simplest one—the shadow puppet. The materials used included: construction paper, lightweight cardboard, scissors, tape, straws, an overhead projector for casting the images onto the sheet, a portable stage made of lightweight plastic pipes or tubing, a cardboard front, a white or light-colored sheet, and most important, eager and excited children.

To construct the portable stage, the plastic pipes were connected to make a freestanding frame. The sheet was then draped over the frame to make a backdrop for casting the images. A large cardboard box was cut and designed as a platform to stand in front of the frame. This platform also served as the stage for any performances using hand puppets. Once the stage was set, the children began designing and creating their puppet characters, either from original stories or literature. Since it would be silhouette images cast on the sheet, a great deal of minute detail was not needed.

In all of the projects, there was an integration of disciplines, and attention was given to foundation skills, such as an understanding of citizenship, a development of self-esteem, collaborative learning opportunities, creative thinking, problem-solving, and the development of the ability to generate, link, and apply knowledge across the curriculum. In other words, the focus was on higher-order thinking skills. Some examples of the projects during this past school year included:

### *We Are Community*

- The purpose of this project was to study the significance and responsibility of each individual within a community. Students in grades four and five were selected for this project which integrated social studies, language arts, math, and science.

### ***Together We Are Strong***

- The purpose of this project was not only to help children understand the significance of each individual within a community, but to also see animal habitats as balanced communities. It integrated social studies, science, language arts, and math, and involved students in kindergarten through third grade.

### ***Greek Mythology***

- The purpose of this project was to make the children aware of the differences among cultures, including differences in spiritual beliefs. Focusing on imparting knowledge of stories from Greek mythology, which is one of the literary foundations of the western world, this project integrated the disciplines of language arts, social studies, and science and involved students in grades four and five.

### ***The Emperor's New Clothes***

- This project was designed to teach a lesson about the consequences of being too easily led. Engaging students in kindergarten through grade five, the project was closely linked to real-life issues relative to individual decision making and peer-pressure resistance. It met the standards and benchmarks for language arts, and offered opportunities for creativity through reading, creative writing and thinking, storytelling, and of course, puppetry.

The children recycled empty milk containers, boxes, scrap material, and many other household items. They took their *trash and created art to be treasured*. They had fun doing the various stages of these projects, and we know they will remember their learning experiences.

We continue to promote the arts in our school because of the many children who are given the opportunity to shine. The arts do enhance children's creativity, as well as their creative thinking, imagination and problem-solving ability, but they also do more than that. They tend to increase their communication skills, and enhance basic literacy skills. Where the self-esteem of a child is concerned, as



educators we must do what we can to develop it, and help him or her gain a more positive self-concept. We are committed to the Arts in Education Program because it has consistently shown that children who are exposed to the arts show improved performance in all subject areas.

## *Supporting the Academic Curriculum*

PAM BROWN  
IMMACULATE HEART OF MARY SCHOOL  
ST. LOUIS, MISSOURI

**M**any educators today believe curriculum is material to be taught from the textbook in the classroom to the students. That is not the case at Immaculate Heart of Mary School in St. Louis, Missouri.

We spent the entire year writing up our new curriculum guide for each subject taught in the school. The teachers were asked to write five goals they would want the students to master throughout the course of the year, if there were no textbooks available. They would have to provide also eight to ten skills that would be needed to attain those goals. We completed sections on religion, math, reading/language arts, English, spelling/vocabulary, social studies, science, computer, music and physical education.

We added an Advisor/Advisee Program to our curriculum for the students in grades six through eight. This has enhanced the entire school's curriculum program. Not only have we been successful in

increasing educational experiences, we have become a more faith-filled school working in the spiritual and parish ministry as well. Our students have developed closer relationships with one another, the staff, and the elderly of the community. The students meet three times a week for 40-minute periods with their advisor. We have a sustained reading/meet-with-a-teacher period, an activity period, and a theme period. Once a month during the activity period, (which was extended to 90-minutes) students hold prayer services at a neighboring assisted-skills center, and provide a luncheon with entertainment after a special liturgy for our senior citizens. On special holidays and holy days, they deliver cards and gifts, and participate in activities such as bowling, cooking, art-museum visits, ceramics, first aid at the fire house, and so forth.

Our school has grown immensely. Everyone has become more conscious of one another, and new friendships have developed. Our primary grades have asked to participate in some of the activities in the coming school year. The students have a genuine concern for the welfare of each other, the staff and the community. Not only have the students become closer, but they have also opened up to many of the staff members. Because there is trust and a level of comfort from the students toward the advisors, we have been able to help some students who were in a desperate situation.

The theme days have been equally successful. We worked on peer pressure, manners, etiquette, family connections, respect, getting to know one another, etc. Each month, every advisor participates in activities to strengthen the topic for the month. We have allowed students to do things in our families (a family consists of students from K-8 in 20 different groups), and it is amazing to see our upper-grade students nurture our primary students. It has also helped with staff members who teach primary grades to become acquainted with our older students, and our upper-grade teachers to become acquainted with our primary children. What a blessing for all of us!

Part of our curriculum includes providing team-building training for our eighth-grade students within the first month of school. We have someone from the YMCA come in and assist us with the students in building trust for one another in various events and activities. We also provide a Reap Team retreat within the first two

months of school for the eighth grade. The students often exercise the skills they learned from the team-building and retreat in their advisory groups.

This program is new to our school and will continue to grow as time goes by. However, we have definitely seen an improvement in Christian behavior and attitude of our students. Their spirituality and giving has grown beyond a doubt. We were able to send a \$300.00 check to Our Little Haven, an organization for small children born with AIDS and other serious diseases, just by matching snack-bar purchases to our giving-box.

Anyone who enters the door of Immaculate Heart of Mary school definitely knows they have come into a Catholic school!

## *An Adventure in Integration*

THERESA L. EWELL  
ST. CATHERINE OF SIENA SCHOOL  
ALBANY, NEW YORK

Over the years, we have worked to create meaningful integration of curriculum themes across subject areas, with varied results. In the beginning, trying to create links with other subjects by including an activity in the unit from math or art or music would be superficial. The integration grew to be more of a thoughtful combination of subject matter and a powerful tool for learning. A process evolved this year with our eighth-grade class, in which we began to realize what we were striving toward: an integration of knowledge and skills, inquiry and decision-making. It was accomplished through activities that motivate students to be engaged, thinking participants.

The result came from:

- Building on current practices, teaching and learning styles and traditions.
- Seizing on opportunity and enthusiasm.
- Providing the opportunity for teachers to explore, take a risk, and deviate from the routine.

- Creating some flexible scheduling and time to collaborate.

Through this, we were able to maximize the inherent talents and strengths, willingness and inventiveness of individual teachers and students.

Each year, we open our doors for a Learning Fair during Catholic Schools Week, where the school comes alive with the diversity of student projects in every grade and subject area. It is also a time to do something different and special, and students are delighted to share their work with family and friends.

Also shared at the Learning Fair is the Immigration Project which is a tradition among the eighth-grade social studies class, a time where students research their own cultural heritage over the course of several months. There are three parts to the project, starting with a written report about the ethnic group chosen. In addition to factual information, this report focuses on goals and dreams of the immigrants, as well as the difficulties they faced, such as discrimination and prejudice. The second part is a visual display, accompanied by a written report based on interviews and memorabilia from family members. Knowing this is a tradition in the eighth grade, families often begin to search for pictures and talk about their family history a year or two before the project is actually assigned. Lastly, a timeline is created, noting the particular ethnic group, the historical events and immigration patterns of the era. Family history events are also plotted on the same timeline, so they can be seen in relation to the events of the times.

This project was completed in January, and integrated English language arts and art knowledge and skills. However, it really blossomed when the art, computer and English teachers decided to work together in having students create entries for a contest called the "St. Patrick Classroom Project Grant Competition," which blossomed from the immigration project.

In school we are inundated with mail about contests, local and national, ranging from good causes to outright product-promotion. A few years ago, I became more selective and began to scan them for ideas that would generate interest to expand classroom learning or motivate students to pursue projects outside of school. Instead of flooding mailboxes or tossing them out, I placed them where I

thought they might be well received or used, with an encouraging note about doing so. Students have had poetry published and art work exhibited at the Legislature, won prizes and been taken to lunch. They have worked collaboratively on banners for Albany's Tulip Festival and studied about and created a portrait of Henry Hudson that was made completely from vegetables! The language arts and art teachers even won a \$1,000 prize for creating a legend and crest for St. Patrick, sponsored by a local TV station.

At lunch these two teachers began to discuss the possibilities this contest offered to motivate students and create an opportunity for integration. They approached the computer teacher to add technology as another facet of the project.

Finding common planning times (other than lunch) can be a challenge. One way we have accomplished this was to have a study hall or free reading-period in the cafeteria for two or three classes so that the teachers can meet in the adjacent faculty room while I supervise the students. Much gets accomplished in this time.

Having planned their strategy in English language arts class, the teacher and students began to discuss the characteristics, language, themes and typical character-traits in legends and to read and discuss examples of the genre focusing on the use of: inference, context, characterization, word analogy, exaggeration and dialect-enhanced critical thinking and comprehension. One of our two grammar concepts, conjunctions and prepositional phrases, were chosen for focus during the writing.

The legends studied were compared to the St. Patrick legend, and students began to create a modern-day legend where they or their families were the main characters. They drew from their work on the social-studies immigration project. Exaggerated actions and traits would make the student or his family "legendary." Part One of the students' essays consisted of a discussion of legends in general and then specifically the St. Patrick's legend. Part Two was the students' legends. A rough draft was submitted, discussed and corrected, and the final copy typed on a word processor.

At the same time, the art class worked on creating a crest to represent their legendary family. Students studied the history of heraldry and investigated samples and meanings of famous family crests, including the coat of arms of Pope John Paul II. They had

to decide on traits of their family and study the various charges (symbols) used to depict those traits, and the meaning and artistic value of placing them properly on the coat. Their goal was to show ancestry and family history in an attractive and meaningful manner in a full colored and detailed coat of arms.

Students were engaged by the personal nature and creativity of this project and enriched by the proper use of vocabulary. The limitations students sometimes feel about their drawing skills was not an issue as they focused on choices, placement, background, etc., and were allowed to trace the individual charges from the Dopher Publishers Family Crest book (which gives unlimited copying rights). Although students worked on individual coats of arms, there was a lot of collaboration as they worked. Decision-making skills and techniques were emphasized.

The literature and original crest drawings the students created needed to be combined as a comprehensive display. This was accomplished through the use of the computer lab PowerPoint program for presentation as a slideshow. Digital photos were taken of students as well as artwork and then they were scanned into the computer. The next task was for students to arrange font and format, insert and edit pictures from the digital camera and scanner, create backgrounds, text, animation, transitions and buttons to pull the work together. In the language arts classroom they gave oral presentations, following guidelines of public-speaking skills and in the computer lab they narrated and recorded project summaries as part of the slideshow.

A wealth of New York State Learning Standards was fulfilled in this project. For example:

- Math/Science/Technology Standard 2: Information Systems - Students will access, generate, process, and transfer information using appropriate technologies.
- Social Studies Standard 2: World History - Students will use a variety of intellectual skills to demonstrate their understanding of: major ideas, eras, themes, developments, and turning points in world history and examine the broad sweep of history from a variety of perspectives.
- Arts Standard 2: Knowing and Using Arts Materials and Resources - Students will be knowledgeable about and make use of the materials and resources available for participation



- in the arts in various roles.
- English Language Arts Standard 2: Language for Literary Response and Expression - Students will read and listen to oral, written, and electronically produced texts and performances from American and world literature; relate texts and performances to their own lives; and develop an understanding of the diverse social, historical, and cultural dimensions the texts and performances represent. As speakers and writers, students will use oral and written language that follows the accepted conventions of the English language for self-expression and artistic creation.

The activities were student- and inquiry-oriented and created a process not just of interweaving subjects, but for acquiring knowledge and skills across the curriculum.

It drew from their previous knowledge, activities and background, developed new knowledge and implicit and explicit skills and allowed them to apply them in new ways.

Alas, we were not one of the contest winners, but the project was a wonderful experience for all. As an added bonus, the project and school were highlighted in an article in the Diocesan newspaper, *The Evangelist*, titled “Integrated Classes make Learning Fun.” When interviewed, the art teacher commented, “Projects like this one require a commitment on the part of the teachers involved, as well as a high level of communication among staff. The payoff is that background information is established for three classes allowing students more time to delve into the topic. When you have 40-minute periods and a division of classes, it can make kids think, ‘Time’s up, I can stop thinking about this.’ Integrating allows them to see the big picture.” Students interviewed commented, “This was a lot of fun. It was a good opportunity to put our talents together. I think it’s a good idea to work together in all of the classes.” “I think it enhanced the learning process. Go for it. Try new things. It helps us to understand things better.”

The success of this project was largely due to teachers, and then students, taking ownership and becoming excited about the project. Special-area teachers will now be given copies of tables of contents from other subject areas’ texts from all grade-levels so they will have

a greater familiarity with when and which topics are taught that might also provide opportunity to integrate and grow!

Thanks to the teachers who initiated and implemented this project: Mrs. Mary Lee Quinn, Social Studies teacher; Mrs. Joanne Millis, Art teacher, Mrs. Jane Wingle, English Language Arts teacher and Mrs. Theresa Denn, Computer teacher. Students interviewed were Kathleen Colligan and Timothy Tyrrell. Maureen McGuinness wrote the article in *The Evangelist*.

## *Reading and Flexible Grouping*

SANDY RENEHAN  
ST. ISIDORE SCHOOL  
DIOCESE OF JOLIET, ILLINOIS

**R**eading is our single most important academic skill. It is widely accepted that in grades K-3 we learn to read and in grade 4 and up we read to learn. Dr. Mary Ellen Vogt, of California State University at Long Beach, cites research-based assumptions that:

- Students who read most, read best
- Traditional ability grouping has been largely unsuccessful
- All students benefit from support of more experienced individuals
- There is no set of instructional strategies that is effective all of the time for all students
- Literacy-learning requires social interaction and collaboration

Dr. Vogt further points out that consistent grouping by ability:

- Carries social stigma (academic competency equals social competence)
- Differentiates across socio-economic and ethnic lines
- Promotes differentiated expectations for student's success

Within the skills and strategies instructional framework (teach-model-practice-apply), balanced reading-options of reading to and for children, reading with each other, and reading by children should be offered in a whole-class setting, small-group setting, opportunities for student partnering, and with individual accountability. These concepts blend together to form an integrated reading program with flexible grouping. It is within this contextual framework that we began to examine our own reading instruction practices to determine if we could better serve our students.

At St. Isidore School, we have taught reading from a traditional, phonics-based, word-attack skills approach for many years. We have regularly supplemented this approach with rich literature through trade books and a reading basal. We separated students into three ability groupings. We have learned that we can continue to offer effective reading instruction while addressing several problems that we have identified through a needs-assessment process. We wanted to stop establishing ability groups that tended to stay static through the years. We have found that this grouping also had an adverse impact on student's self-perception. This was consistent with the research conclusions as well. In the same time frame we are, as are all Catholic schools, making a concerted effort to integrate technology into our classrooms and our pedagogy. After a year of study, consideration, and consultation with parents and the school board, we are instituting an integrated reading instruction approach intended to:

1. Allow students in grades one through three to learn reading through a phonics-based, word-attack approach.
2. Utilize computer instruction and materials to supplement this approach.

3. Integrate writing instruction and experiences to enhance the students' comprehension in their reading experiences and to extend thinking beyond the mechanics of reading.
4. Through a team approach to instruction and the use of centers, groupings will be fluid and based on individual need and response. No child should feel that they are ability-grouped, yet we need to be conscious of individual needs. This will require constant assessment through evaluation and student portfolios.
5. The reading team will include the three grade-level teachers (we have one section per grade), the computer teacher, the librarian, and the resource teacher.
6. The teachers will be building on each other's strengths and team teaching wherever appropriate.

Our kindergarten program teaches the essential skills of knowing print concepts, recognizing upper- and lowercase, knowledge of letter sounds, demonstration of basic phonemic awareness, the reading of some high-frequency words, writing at the pre-alphabetic stage, and listening to and telling stories. Our integrated approach will utilize phonics strategies intensely offered in grade one with reinforcement in grades two and three. Basic writing skills are introduced in grade one with application expectations increased in grades two and three. Computer enhancement of both reading and writing will be included at each grade level. The grade-level teachers will provide direct instruction, oral opportunities, integration of phonics, writing, and computer opportunities into the direct reading instruction and guided practice. Acceleration and re-teach/review will be included in the teaching considerations. The writing and computer rubrics are articulated according to our diocesan standards. We piloted this approach last spring and are excited to implement the plan fully this school year.

The classes have 33 students at each grade level. The materials are our basal text (D. C. Heath, phonics strategies based on the

Orton Gillingham methodology), writing materials of *Write Away* and *Write on Track* from Great Source, and a variety of computer software rich in vocabulary and comprehension strategies. The resource teacher teaches phonics lessons and writing. The librarian teaches lessons.

If you have further interest or questions, please feel free to contact our reading team at: St. Isidore School, (630) 529-9323 or [DJSIBPR@impresso.com](mailto:DJSIBPR@impresso.com).

## *Computer Program*

JOSEPHINE FERRY  
ST. PETER SCHOOL  
DANBURY, CONNECTICUT

**T**he computer program at St. Peter School has changed considerably since the early days when there were only 12 Commodore computers in the lab and only grades four through eight were offered computer courses. It has taken 15 years to expand our program. However, today, each classroom, Kindergarten through grade eight, has three CD ROM computers; a computer lab with twenty CD ROM computers and a library that is also equipped with an on-line computer system. Our vision of a computer program became a reality through fund-raising, hard work and dedication. Parents understood and supported our vision.

We began our endeavor by discussing and developing general goals. The entire faculty was involved in this process. As educators looking ahead to an advanced technological world, we formulated the goals that we wanted our students to meet by the time they graduated. Five general goals were developed and they are as follows:

- To have an understanding of computer fundamentals
- To recognize the impact of computer technology on individuals and society

- To use computer programs
- To utilize the computer as a learning tool
- To integrate computer usage with the classroom curriculum

The next step taken was to discuss and develop objectives for grade levels K through two, three through five, and six through eight. The following objectives were developed.

### **Computer Objectives Grades K-2**

- To recognize main parts of a computer
- To learn to recognize that the computer must be given instructions in order to operate, and that instructions are contained in a program
- To identify and discuss computer uses in the home
- To define what constitutes a computer
- To express how a computer receives input
- To state what is the computer's output
- To express how the computer has changed everyday life
- To learn the rules of acceptable computer behavior
- To utilize programs to drill, test, or reinforce classroom curriculum

### **Computer Objectives Grades 3-5**

- To learn computer terminology
- To become familiar with components and their functions
- To learn how the computer receives input
- To discover what is the computer's output
- To learn what sort of information can be obtained from a computer
- To discover how the computer has changed performance of everyday tasks
- To learn how a processor can be used for class notes, summaries, draft copies, and final reports
- To continue to learn the rules for use of the computers and the reasons for them as they are introduced to new programs
- To learn basic word processing as they type and make changes to a paragraph
- To be introduced to keyboarding fingering



- To utilize programs to drill, test, or reinforce the classroom curriculum

### Computer Objectives Grades 6-8

- To learn more about computer peripherals and their functions
- To expand vocabulary of computer terminology
- To learn how a database can be used to compile information that can be presented in a variety of report formats
- To recognize the uses of spreadsheets
- To explore ways of using the computer for research
- To introduce modems to access outside facilities
- To develop procedure for organizing data
- To show various methods for displaying said data
- To focus on applying the procedure to school projects
- To determine applications for a spread sheet and design basic spreadsheets
- To merge database, spreadsheet, and word processing documents
- To utilize programs to drill, test, or reinforce classroom curriculum

From the general goals and objectives formulated, a clearer purpose for our computer program became evident. It is the intention of our computer program to familiarize students with the uses and capabilities of a computer. It is not the intent of the program to teach students how to program computers, but rather to feel comfortable with a computer and, in the upper grades, to develop a working knowledge of databases, word processors, and spreadsheets. A basic understanding of these areas prepare our students for expanded use in high school.

Our computer program also reinforces the specific grade work through the computer lessons designed for each grade. Computer concepts are taught in a combination of on-and-off computer activities. All classes meet weekly in the computer lab, with 30 minutes allotted to students in grades K through five, and 45 minutes allotted to students in grades six through eight.

Students are evaluated, based on their individual progress. Class participation provides an avenue for students to demonstrate what

they have learned. Proficiency is shown by proper handling of hardware and software. As peer tutors, students also demonstrate their level of expertise. Class work, assignments, and projects also aid in evaluating student performance. Computer homework is not assigned in this program since not every student has a computer at home.

The computers in the classroom are used on a daily basis. All computers are loaded with grade-appropriate instructional software. Students who may need extra help or more practice in a particular subject have the opportunity to do so. Also, supplemental instructional software in all subject areas is supplied in order to promote learning as well as engage more student interest. With students learning in a variety of ways, the computer enables teachers to meet the needs of all their students.

Another important facet of this program is the maintenance of and instruction in the use of the hardware and software used in the individual classrooms. The computer teacher works with the individual classroom teachers to monitor the systems and to give instruction to the faculty members when necessary. Staff development is imperative in order to secure and enhance growth in this academic area.

Faculty members also utilize computers to keep grades and to generate student reports. As our entire office system is now computerized, staff development is ongoing and necessary. Because of this factor, teachers are no longer afraid of the computer, and students can observe that their teachers also regard the computer as a tool.

A more recent addition to the program is networking the system. Networking the computers benefits classroom instruction and time-constraints, making the programs more effective. The computer teacher can more easily monitor student understanding and progress from one location.

The success of the technology program is visible as students produce a school newspaper and yearbook utilizing the hardware and software that demonstrates the various skills they have acquired. Other smaller manuscripts are also generated by all grades, either in the computer lab or in their classrooms.

Having online service also enhances our computer program as students retrieve supplemental information from various sites and

sources as needed. Using the computer as a resource enables learning to take on new dimensions for our students as well as connecting them to the entire outside world. A future goal for the program is to have online access available in every classroom.

A regular review of the computer program takes place on an annual basis. The principal and the computer teacher meet to discuss and evaluate the program—is it meeting the needs of the students? It is also at this time that decisions are made to upgrade or purchase more hardware or software.

It is evident to everyone—parents, teachers, and administration—that our computer program has enabled students to be better equipped in a technologically-advanced world. This progress can only continue successfully with constant maintenance, upgrades, and staff development of the computer system.

## *Changing A Curriculum*

MARGARET SECODA  
OUR LADY OF GRACE SCHOOL  
PENNDDEL, PENNSYLVANIA  
*LET A HUNDRED FLOWERS BLOOM*

*"Elementary School has no small place in a child's life after all. Indeed, except for the family, there is no institution so influential."*

(William J Bennett)

**I**n this paper on curriculum development, I will often cite sources referring to the public sector of education. The academic standards of the Catholic schools are and should be similar to, if not more challenging than, the public schools. As a matter of fact, some of our schools in Pennsylvania are agreeing to participate in testing for the standards set by our state's Department of Education (e.g., the Allentown Diocese). However, we know that Catholic schools have an even greater challenge. In addition to providing curriculum that develop skills preparing our student for success in high school and beyond, we teach the Gospel message of Jesus. All Catholic schools' mission statements surely include providing excellent academic opportunities while also developing the students' spiritual life,

neither of which anyone involved in Catholic education takes lightly. Basically, we prepare our students for this life, and hopefully we teach them *how to get to Heaven*.

They hunger and thirst for knowledge and information. Why, then, do some children struggle and even fail? Often it is not what is being taught, it is *how* it is being taught. A school may have the best guidelines (standards), but the latest copyright-dated texts and state-of-the-art lab facilities do not guarantee students' success in learning. Today teachers need to be trained to use a variety of strategies and varied approaches to teach and assess what students learn.

The push in the 1970s and 1980s for hands-on science was a blessing for education. It was a wake-up call for teachers to realize that students have multiple learning styles. Unless some students see, touch, and experience, the concept remains out of reach for them. Looking at a picture or reading a book cannot motivate the spatial, bodily-kinesthetic, and/or naturalistic learner (Nelson 10-12-10).

Stated over a decade ago, this excerpt from the ASCD 1984 is still valid today and will be for future educators: "The pupils in each classroom and in each school deserve to have a live, meaningful curriculum that results from the staff of their school:

- (a) identifying what students are to be helped to learn;
- (b) planning these experiences;
- (c) organizing these experiences;
- (d) appraising the effects (Dr. Taylor)

The following summary by Dr. Hasford cites other important points about successful curriculum development:

- (1) Teachers need to get to know their students.
- (2) Teachers need to understand recent research on "brain-based" learning.
- (3) Students need to be motivated to want to learn.
- (4) Administrators need to know that teachers teach best when they are participants in decision-making.
- (5) Parents are happier when they are involved and better understand. (ASCD)

This seems a sound framework for good curriculum development.

In the Archdiocese of Philadelphia, schools have a set of curriculum developed by committees working directly with the Office of Catholic Education. These committees are continually writing and revising the guidelines for every subject area.

As in most schools, Our Lady of Grace has a coordinator for each subject area. These teachers attend workshops organized by the Office of Catholic Education as well as others offered by the local public school district. Some teachers may even serve at the diocesan level. These coordinators bring information and often provide staff development for the entire faculty. They meet regularly with the principal to make recommendations for texts, materials, and even for weaknesses in their area. It is also recommended by the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education that a faculty set aside time to read, review and analyze standardized test scores. Proper discussion and interpretation of such data can determine schoolwide teaching goals.

While completing a self-study at Our Lady of Grace approximately four years ago, it was noted that math scores were consistently high, while the integrated language arts (reading, writing, and language) were continuing to drop, though only slightly. These scores were from the CAT test. The year after the study was completed, the faculty decided to establish improving reading and writing skills as a goal. In the meantime, the Philadelphia Archdiocesan Office of Catholic Education made a decision to change the standardized testing from CAT to Terra Nova. A *new test*, but with the same results: our students were having a problem with ILA. The faculty met at length and decided that the program in use was not effective. It was a basic reading program with components that looked like an ILA program. Trade books, vocabulary books, phonics, etc., were supplementary. The program was piecemeal and not really providing proper scope and sequence to the skills necessary for students to learn to read properly, especially in the area of comprehension. Students could do all the by-rote activities, i.e. the mechanics, but they were not comprehending or thinking about what they were reading. Our Lady of Grace needed to find an ILA program to meet the needs of our students (especially those struggling, and now even further behind in comprehension).

We needed a program that would be properly sequenced and

spiraled—one that would challenge our self-motivated (intra-personal) learner, while building and catching up the frustrated reader. A program was needed that would stress comprehension development and thinking skills, and would give the teacher adequate tools to meet the needs of all learners through the use of varied teaching strategies. Most importantly, we needed a program that would not embarrass a slower student, yet would provide all the skills called for in our archdiocesan guidelines.

The teachers were completely involved in every step of the selection of the program. They received sample materials from three publishing companies recommended by coordinators, listened to presentations, had examples of lessons, and had the opportunity to ask questions. Materials were timely enough that teachers could try them out. This took a lot of time, but it was necessary because the entire faculty needed to agree on a program.

Once teachers had selected a program, the principal had to get funding. Some government money could be used and the home and school association voted to fund the rest. The pastor supported the purchase of the new program. Teachers were then in-serviced at their grade level in how to use each of the components of the program. This was done before school closed, so that materials could (hopefully) be worked on over the summer break. A meeting has been scheduled for early October in order to have an in-service program for parents, especially the new assessment piece, and to explain how we expect to meet the needs of our students.

In his book, *The Courage to Teach*, Palmer questions, “Could teachers gather around the great thing called teaching and learning and explore its mysteries with the same respect we accord any other subject worth knowing?” He later concludes that, “We need to learn how to do so, for such a gathering is one of the few means we have to become better teachers.”

As an administrator, I need to give my teachers a chance to gather, to discuss, to even groan if need be. There will be time for them to work out the snags and digest this program. It will be a challenge. Our goal is to provide proper educational opportunities for all our students—the ones who come to us so eager—thirsting—to learn.

I end this paper with a point about the most important curricu-

lum in any educational facility: “The silent curriculum is potent. Of all the curriculum—official, real, and silent—it is the one best learned by students.” If the teacher does not possess a desire to learn, students will not want to learn. If the teacher has a poor self-concept, the self-concepts of the students will suffer. If the teacher does not respect him-or herself and others, students will not show respect.” (ASCD Pg. 162) This gives the administrator who hires and or evaluates teachers an awesome responsibility, and that is to weed out teachers who may be content-literate, but who cannot teach from their heart.



## *Curriculum Mapping*

MARILOU ABRAMSHE  
ST. COLUMBANUS SCHOOL  
CORTLANDT MANOR, NEW YORK

The relationship between learning standards practiced in the classroom and the integration of these standards throughout a local curriculum is essential to education. This theory has been emphasized in writing and is in the process of implementation both on the national and state level. The Archdiocese of New York, understanding that maintaining the professional quality of their educational system is vital, created a curriculum committee to revise the *Guidelines for Essential Learnings* that had been in existence for over 10 years.

As a member of the curriculum committee of the archdiocese, for the past three years I have been involved in revising the *Guidelines for Essential Learnings*. The goal has been to create criteria for our Catholic schools that are more in line with the national and state standards.

Attaining this goal, however, did not end the revision process. Integration of the *Essential Learnings* through New York Catholic schools requires the cooperation of all educators, teachers and ad-

ministrators; professional conferences to promote the awareness and integration of the guidelines have proven to be necessary.

As a principal and an educational consultant for both private and public schools, I have become aware of four obstacles impeding the full integration of the standards in the schools. First of all, many teachers tend to follow the *de facto* standards set for them by textbook manufacturers. Secondly, those teachers who follow guidelines may not plan ahead to determine the actual curriculum to be taught including the content, skills and assessment data. Thirdly, teachers in the same school often have limited information about what is being taught in other classes or grades so that curriculum decisions are often made in a vacuum. Finally, administrators often do not follow through with their role in assisting teachers with the integration process.

Answering the needs these problems create requires teachers and administrators to work together to form reasonable and practical solutions. One solution that has proven to be effective is the development of a sequence for creating and working with curriculum maps based on a calendar year.

Heidi Hayes Jacobs in *Mapping the Big Picture* (1997) states, "Teachers always have used the school year calendar to make their plans." They just have not constructed maps to show exactly what content, skills, and performance assessments will be addressed during the course of a school year.

There are various forms of curriculum maps developed to meet the specific needs of a school or district. According to Jacobs (1997), each map, regardless of specificity, should describe the three major elements that comprise the curriculum: **Content**—the material being presented to the student; **Skills**—what the student will be able to do with that material; and **Assessment**—the means that allows us to know if a student has learned the material. In this overview, the teacher records realistic data about what is taught over the course of a year. Figure 1 is an example of a curriculum map, currently being used in St. Columbanus School, which divides the curriculum in monthly segments.

(FIGURE 1)

Month	Standard	Content (Material to be learned)	Skills (What the student should be able to do)	Assessment (Method used to assess student knowledge of content/skills)	Notes
Subject					
Subject					
Subject					
Subject					

Using this “map,” the teacher describes the four major elements that comprise the curriculum:

- The **standard** being addressed
- The **processes and skills** emphasized
- The **content** in terms of essential concepts and topics
- The products and performances that are the **assessments** of learning.

As can be seen, a fourth element, standards, has been added so that the teacher can relate what is being taught to what is required by both NYSED and the Archdiocese. The purpose is to collect authentic data about the classroom and genuine information about what students actually experience, not what others think they are supposed to be doing. It is here where the administration and the teachers work to avoid filling content with just textbook references and use multiple resources for both the content and the skill.

The curriculum map is divided into months; however, it is not rigid; “The point is not to teach to the months, but to use the months as a common reference to plot the classroom curriculum” (Jacobs 1997). In doing so, teachers are able to develop a timeline and review the academic content for the year.

Mapping promotes a living curriculum because it deals with real time. It helps the classroom teacher identify gaps between goals and what is actually taught. Mapping also assists teachers in seeing the commonality of materials and skills within the disciplines. By perusing the maps for potential linkages among subject matter,

teachers discover possibilities for interdisciplinary units of study. Whether the focus is a topic, theme, issue or problem-based study, teachers can use maps to find natural connections to make learning more meaningful.

By looking at the map and considering what is taught and when it is taught, the concurrent teaching of subjects and interplay of skill development among the disciplines becomes more apparent. Figure 2 shows a continuum of options for selecting the degree and nature of integration (Jacobs 1997) which can help teachers determine which option best serves their learners.

(FIGURE 2)

<b>Continuum of Options for Content Design</b>	
Discipline	Parallel
Multi- Interdisciplinary	Integrated
Complete Based Disciplinary	Disciplines
Units/Courses Day	Program

What do students perform and produce that gives evidence that standards are met? Mapping becomes the monitoring device to check whether or not there is sufficient evidence to meet a standard. Mapping the curriculum helps the teacher focus on what resources can be utilized other than the text. In doing so, it becomes essential for teachers to rethink their assessment since the manufactured tests provided by text companies no longer match the curriculum step-for-step. Mapping allows the teacher to clarify what criteria (skills and content) are necessary and sufficient to determine that learners have attained the standards addressed in the unit. Curriculum mapping benefits the teacher because it tangibly reinforces his/her sense of responsibility and the authority he/she has over the curriculum. The teacher paces the development of the map in the areas of

content, skills and assessment. The teacher revises, edits and makes it grow to reflect his/her growth as an educator.

Organized curriculum-mapping allows for self-assessment. Teachers are able to visually monitor their progress as an educator. They are able to change, update and revise their maps as new resources, ideas and activities develop. This is a living curriculum, dealing with real time and providing a means of identifying needs and avoiding redundancies. Mapping helps bring standards to life and reality into the classroom. It helps the teacher develop instructional units that provide clear information regarding student progress toward attaining standards.

On the administrative level, curriculum-mapping clearly demonstrates the scope and sequence of the curriculum and clarifies what topics and skills are actually being taught within the school by each teacher. Administrators have an organized visual aid, which assists them in assessing the scope of the curriculum. Mapping allows teachers and administrators to collaborate, identify gaps and redundancies in the existing curriculum, and find ways to solve these difficulties. Mapping is a tool to help focus on staff-development programs or planning and implementing curriculum revision.

At St. Columbanus, I felt it was important to say to the faculty, "Let's take an authentic look at what we are teaching and to do it by curriculum-mapping." Over the summer the teachers are developing monthly curriculum maps of what is being taught. During the year, besides our regularly-scheduled monthly faculty meetings, there will be meetings of the primary-level teachers (K-grade four) and middle school level (grades five-eight). We will review what we are teaching now and what improvements could be made by focusing on resources other than texts. Maps created by the teachers, will be reviewed by the team to determine how successfully the curriculum meets the standards. We will look to possible points of integration between subjects, including special area teachers, and between grades. Hopefully, gaps in the content will become evident and repetitions easily spotted. With teacher input, revisions to address gaps and repetitions will be based on both developmental ability and proper sequencing. In this way we will be able to reach our goal—a curriculum that prepares our students to reach the highest standards.

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SECTION 4

*Early Childhood  
Education*

## *Aiding Transitions in Early Childhood*

CAROLYN GUIDRY  
OUR LADY OF MERCY SCHOOL  
BATON ROUGE, LOUISIANA

**A**s a parochial elementary school, Our Lady of Mercy marks the beginning of formal educational experiences for the children of the parish, and provides Catholic foundations for a life of prayer, knowledge, and service. It is essential that the early childhood years foster a lifelong appreciation for learning. It is our philosophy that this can only be achieved through a curriculum that recognizes the needs of children at each stage of development. Developmentally Appropriate Practices, as espoused by the National Association for the Education of Young Children, forms the framework for the early childhood program of our school. The definition of Developmentally Appropriate Practices (DAP) is three-fold: it recognizes that young children have certain characteristics at each developmental stage and that these characteristics have implications for the curriculum. Within a group of children of the same chronological age, there will be variations in developmental levels. Young



children must gain an appreciation of the many and varied cultures within the American landscape.

The pre-kindergarten program at Our Lady of Mercy School addresses the development of the whole child: intellectually, physically, emotionally, and socially. The characteristics of four-year-old children in each of these areas provide the basis of curriculum decisions. Intellectually, four-year-old children learn chiefly through sensory experiences. They have not yet developed an understanding of the concept of numbers, and are likely to use numbers incidentally. Their hearing vocabulary is much larger than their speaking vocabulary. While their attention spans are short, they use their vivid imaginations in role-playing and dramatic play-experiences. Purposeful play is the vehicle through which they accomplish their best learning; therefore, activities in the pre-kindergarten classroom are carefully planned to make play a worthwhile learning experience. The activities are open-ended and employ a variety of materials to allow children to explore and develop thinking skills, self-assurance and self-confidence, as they arrive at their own answers. Children have opportunities to count and develop an understanding of quantity, size and shape. They are encouraged to use their language skills, and at the same time develop good listening habits.

Physically, children of this age are very energetic, but are easily fatigued and often shift between active and quiet play. Large muscles are better developed than small ones and they can usually run smoothly and hop on one foot. They enjoy playing with others, but are not yet ready for highly organized team sports. Planned activities, outdoors and indoors, provide for exercise of the large muscles, and attention is given to children whose running, jumping and hopping skills are lacking. Through simple games, they learn to follow the rules, take turns, and encourage the efforts of all members of the group. Activities are balanced between strenuous activities and quiet ones, with ample opportunities for rest.

The capacity to control emotions is developing. They want recognition and may be jealous of others. They are usually dependable, busy, and cooperative, but may be compulsive. Activities provide opportunities to perform using a variety of media such as paints, clay, music, rhythms, games and drama. Each child is encouraged to participate and is recognized for his efforts and accomplishments. A

variety of activities enable a child to move to a more appealing activity as interest wanes.

Socially, these children play well within groups, but they also need opportunities to play alone. Four-year-old children have strong imaginations, but are becoming more realistic. They have developed an awareness of ownership and may be boastful and bossy; they are also eager to please the adults in their lives. Opportunities for fanciful play are provided along with real-world experiences. Planned activities enable children to work individually and in groups to develop the concepts of sharing, cooperation, and respect for each other's ideas and property. The classroom provides activities that address the children's varying abilities, rather than preconceived adult expectations.

The educational experience has often been compared to a three-legged stool. If any one of the legs—parent, child, or teacher—is eliminated, the stool will not stand. Recognizing that parents are the primary educators of their children, a partnership must be established between the school and the home that is trusting and cooperative for the best results from the school experience. Our Lady of Mercy begins building that relationship early on with pre-kindergarten families. Students are accepted to the pre-kindergarten program based on a set of established priorities. As a parish school, we give priority to parishioners and siblings of students in the school. If openings remain, acceptance is offered to other applicants. Students are not screened for acceptance based on academic level. However, it is the philosophy of the school that classes should be heterogeneous in their composition. For this to happen, teachers received the opportunity to become acquainted with the children to determine their developmental levels prior to the assignment to one of the three pre-kindergarten sections.

In order to establish a positive parent-teacher relationship, ensure heterogeneously-grouped classes, and to assure a smooth transition from the home or pre-school experience to the Catholic school environment, a series of activities, known as Pre-Kindergarten Round-Up, was formulated. This consisted of Round-Up Day, summer contact, parent-child orientation, and staggered entry.

**Round-Up Day** – During the spring, of the year preceding entry, parents receive a letter of acceptance including two surveys:

one to be completed by the child's parent and one by the child's caregiver, if the child is involved in a daycare or pre-school program. The letter also invites the parents and their child to the school for Round-Up Day in pre-assigned groups of ten to fifteen. As families gather in the school cafeteria, teachers and assistants greet students and their parents. They share photo albums of the year's activities and samples of work accomplished by students in previous classes. The principal welcomes the group and gives an overview of the process. Then the teachers gather the children and escort them into the pre-K classrooms, where they will be introduced to the classroom environment. They listen to a story, draw a picture of themselves, choose a center to explore, and the group goes outdoors to explore the play yard. These whole group, small group, and individual activities give teachers the opportunity to observe the student and make notes about specific behaviors indicative of developmental levels. Information from the surveys and observations are used as class rosters. Parents remain in the cafeteria, for a presentation by the principal, introducing the concept of a developmentally appropriate early-childhood program; afterwards, characteristics of four-year-old children and the implications these characteristics have for the classroom are discussed. Questions are encouraged, and printed material is distributed for the parents' further information. Parents are then treated to a tour of the classrooms and rejoin their children on the playground.

**Summer Contact** – Three weeks before school begins, parents receive a letter from the principal informing them of the child's class assignment, date and time for the Parent-Child Orientation, and Staggered Entry Day. The teacher mails a separate letter of greeting to the family welcoming the child to her classroom.

**Parent-Child Orientation** – As the parent-child orientation begins, the teacher greets the parents and child at the door of the classroom. The child's name appears on a door poster, along with names of classmates, and there is nametag at the child's assigned cubbie. After a brief tour of the room, the child places his photograph on a bulletin board along with those of the other class members. Sitting at a table, the family is shown a photo album of pre-k activities from previous years. This serves as an introduction to the types of activities that can be expected, and stimulates interest

in school. The teacher explains the staggered entry to the child and family in terms that the child can understand. The child is presented with a nametag, that the teacher has made “especially for him,” to wear the first day of school. The child, with the help of the assistant, completes an art activity as the teacher talks to the family. Parents are encouraged to begin the conversation and to talk about their child. They are asked to share any information they feel is important for the teacher to know: any special family circumstances, medical concerns or allergies, fears, how the child will arrive to and depart from school. This is the opportunity for the teacher to establish a solid parent-teacher relationship by communicating a genuine caring-attitude and sincere wish to insure that the child has the best year possible. They are then given a handbook of information on the school program for future reference.

**Staggered Entry Day** – Students are assigned one of two days to report for their first day of school. Half of the class comes to school each day. Students tour the campus, searching for a missing stuffed pet in the cafeteria, library, gymnasium, and principal’s office. They are introduced to the routines and expectations for each aspect of the school day. Students receive more individual attention and assistance as teachers introduce procedures for assembling into lines, playground behavior, restroom, cafeteria, and naptime. Children become more acquainted with the teachers and assistants and their new classmates. At the end of the day, they go home armed with stories of a great first day of school.

This procedure has been in place at Our Lady of Mercy School for two years. Feedback from early-childhood teachers and families has been overwhelmingly positive. Teachers find students are more comfortable in the classroom environment from the first days of school. They also feel that they are better prepared, from the beginning, to make curriculum decisions that address the developmental needs of individuals in the classroom. Parents understand the goals and objectives of the program and support the teachers’ efforts. Communication between home and school is more open and honest in the trusting atmosphere that is established. Perhaps the most visible change brought about by the new procedures is in those first-day-of-school tears. They are now in the parents’ eyes only.

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## *A Kindergarten Reading Program*

LYDIA TORREZ  
ST. CECILIA SCHOOL  
DALLAS, TEXAS

**S**t. Cecilia School has been providing a Catholic education for the children of the Oak Cliff area of Dallas for over 65 years. During those years, demographics have changed dramatically. Today, St. Cecilia School serves a largely Hispanic population. The statistics for last year showed the ethnic breakdown to be 85% Hispanic, 10% Anglo and 5% African-American. Approximately 20% of the incoming students speak little or no English. The writing and reading comprehension of these children is limited, and this group regularly scores below grade-level on admissions testing and national standardized testing.

During the 1999–2000 school year, Miss Angela, a kindergarten teacher at St. Cecilia School, noticed that some of her students were able to sound-out words easily, that others were able to read words after they were shown once, and some were able to do both. Miss Angela decided it would be interesting to introduce those children

to first-grade books. In no time, the other children in the classroom were yearning to be included in this group of readers.

Miss Angela always regarded her 22 students in a positive manner, and never viewed their lack of English skills as a deterrent to learning. With no bilingual education program in place, she saw a challenge for herself and her students.

She began the year by reading Big Books to the students a minimum of three times a day. She would read the same big books over and over again. Through repetition, the students began to memorize the stories and read along. The teacher encouraged student choice when it was time to read a big book to the class. After the teacher read the book to the students, they would be asked to write a few sentences about the story in their student journal. In addition, the students were asked to draw a picture to accompany their writing. As the students continued their story time, they were also involved in a structured phonics program. Daily lessons were presented with worksheets that were done in the classroom and at home.

The spelling program was coordinated with the phonics program so that the same objectives were taught at the same time. As the children grew in their phonics, they were beginning to apply the rules they were learning to the reading of the big books. Their writing skills were also developing as phonics rules were learned. Inventive spelling was encouraged, because this is a tool to measure phonetic development. Students began to pick out sight-words from the predictable and familiar big books. As the students moved along in their development, she began to use the close technique to discern if a child recognized a particular word, and if that child was truly reading for comprehension. Miss Angela would read aloud from the big books and leave blanks for the children to fill in. This helped her determine the language development of the students. If the children knew which word to fill in the blank or a similar word which would indicate that they knew if the word signified a naming word, an action word, or a describing word, there was a good chance that they were developing their comprehension skills.

After two to three months of this, Miss Angela began to introduce individual books to these kindergarten children that they could read by themselves. These books were pre-primers from an old series

that was outdated and served as a resource. Each student met with her once a day and read aloud for several minutes.

The most important aspect of the reading program is the individualized reading component. Miss Angela assigned books to the students at the level where they were able to meet with success. The book that the students received was as simple or complicated as the child could handle. During the individualized reading session, Miss Angela took notes on the progress of each child, so that a daily journal was kept on the reading development of each student. This reading program takes a minimum of two to three hours of daily instruction, so a teacher's aide is also in the classroom to help facilitate classroom management and work with small groups of children.

Language arts is the most critical part of a child's early development. This foundation will determine a child's success in school. Science and social studies can be turned into language arts lessons. The emphasis in those units of instruction should be on reading development, but the concepts being taught are science or social studies. This reading strategy could be used in other curriculum activities. At this age, students have a strong desire to read, so it is important that the teacher only talk about what the student is doing well. Another important aspect of this program is positive reinforcement.

Building a strong foundation in reading is the single most important thing we as educators can do for our students. Fluency, decoding and reading comprehension, that will lead to the joy of reading, will lead to success.





SECTION 5

*Early Adolescence  
Education*

## *Middle School Orientation and Open House*

YO DECKARD  
ST. CHARLES SCHOOL  
BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA

A parent-initiated request in 1997 for more information and reassurance regarding middle-school expectations led to new features in our middle school at St. Charles, in Bloomington, Indiana. Not only did this parent feel that not enough time was devoted to middle-school material at our annual beginning-of-the-year “Open House” held in September, but she also felt that she and her child had spent some of the summer wondering and worrying about what middle school would bring.

Luckily for me, she volunteered to survey middle-school parents to determine their opinions, needs, and wants in this area. A survey was sent home to the parents of approximately 100 students. She collated the information gleaned from the thirteen returned surveys. Three areas needing emphasis were found: expectations for parent involvement, school/home communications, and how-to’s on living with and loving adolescents. The need for a middle-school orienta-

tion in the spring, as well as a separate middle-school open house also surfaced.

A middle-school orientation was planned for all incoming sixth-grade parents and all new middle-school families. Since it was our first one, it was also open to all of the parents of the current middle-school children. An invitation was sent through the mail to ensure that parents would actually receive the notice. In the meantime, we discussed the agenda at one of our middle-school staff meetings. I asked for volunteers to present short talks on several topics separate from their curriculum areas. A simplified agenda follows:

*Middle-School Orientation*

- 1) Welcome and Prayer – (assistant principal)
- 2) Parish Youth Program
- 3) Mission Statement, Book Fees, Departmentalization – (our principal)
- 4) Purpose of Homeroom, “Adolescence!”
- 5) Discipline and Dress Code Policies – (assistant principal)
- 6) Choir/Band/Art
- 7) P.E. and Extra-Curriculum Activities
- 8) Foreign Language Program
- 9) Curriculum Areas
- 10) Parental Involvement
- 11) Student Orientation, Middle-School Fall Open House, Subsequent Meetings – (assistant principal)
- 12) Question and Answer Session
13. Fellowship (Our P.T.O. Hospitality Committee provided snacks and drinks. Parents were able to ask teachers questions individually and introductory conversations took place.)

Feedback from the Open House was great! Not only had the evening been well received, but also it was the first parent meeting I had conducted! I loved it! The staff presented their materials well and the parents went home feeling more secure about those middle-school years, and perhaps about adolescence as well. Over the past few years, we have, at times, added agenda items. At one point, we decided that in order to boost retention of students from sixth-grade to seventh-grade, (some students enter our public middle schools for

sports and/or other reasons) we would add, among other items, testimonials from graduating eighth-graders and their parents, among other items. We had an overwhelming response from the eighth-graders. A shortened version of this option might have been the high road, however. As we found out, long meetings were not always wise. Our retention rate has improved tremendously, but I think our middle-school program has been the deciding factor.

As our middle school changes, the orientation changes to accommodate new programs, new ideas, and parent suggestions. Our sixth grade has become more transitional over the past few years and therefore the sixth-grade teachers spend more time at the orientation explaining their roles and their expectations for the students. In any case, all middle-school teachers are introduced and often discuss a topic or curriculum issue. Sixth grade is not as self-contained as fifth, but not as completely departmentalized as the seventh and eighth grades are. The parents and students seem to appreciate this transitional year. As new data and books about adolescence appear, our presentation on adolescence changes as well. We try to provide resources, i.e. titles of recommended books, for our parents as well. We include *Get Out of My Life But First Could You Drive Me and Cheryl to the Mall?*, by Anthony E. Wolf, Ph.D.; *How to Really Love Your Teenager*, by Ross Campbell; *You're Grounded Till You're Thirty!*, by Judi Craig, Ph.D.; *Enjoy Your Middle Schooler*, and many more.

The spring of 2000 brought about another big change: The success of the middle-school orientation led to a new family orientation. After this principal-led orientation, new elementary and pre-school parents left, and current incoming middle-school parents arrived. New middle-school families stayed, and I began the middle-school orientation after a short break. Being able to address the needs of two separate groups of parents in one evening was well worth the longer meeting time for those of us who participated in both!

After school has been in session for a week of two, St. Charles holds a pre-school through fifth-grade open house. It coincides with a very short P.T.O. meeting for the whole school family. All of the faculty and staff are requested to attend so that all might be introduced at this meeting. Important announcements follow, and then the teachers of the aforementioned grades spend four 15-minute sessions in their classrooms so that they can meet parents, impart

general class information, and answer common questions. As the second- and fifth-grade science teacher, I participate in this part of the open house as well.

A week later, the middle-school orientation takes place. The agenda is very short because parents follow their child(ren)'s schedule for the next hour and a half. Now, one might think that this following-the-schedule routine would be routine. However, our students do not have each class every day, each subject does not necessarily take place at the same time or in the same place every day, and there are not enough rooms to accommodate individual teachers meeting with parents. To complicate matters, the schedule changes yearly because of student numbers, faculty changes, space requirements, etc.

I begin creating the orientation schedule several weeks ahead of time, using the same spreadsheet for the sixth-grade, and a different one for seventh- and eighth-grades. At least that remains almost constant. Each student is required to fill out blanks in his/her own personal schedule and leave it on his/her desk in homeroom. What fun to watch parents follow their children's schedules as realistically as possible! Each teacher spends as much time as is allotted discussing expectations, providing handouts on those expectations, grading, policies, etc., and answering questions. Five minutes are allowed between periods. My principal and I take turns ringing the bell to announce the end of a session and we spend the rest of the time visiting as many of the classrooms as possible, trying to reach each one between the two of us. During passing periods, we enjoy conversations with parents and try to help the confused ones. I find camaraderie to be extremely high among all participants during this evening. Parental involvement is exceptional and I believe that they come away with an appreciation for our faculty and staff, our middle-school program, and, just as importantly, an appreciation for their child's school life.

Being able to meet the needs of parents by planning and providing a middle-school orientation and an open house has been rewarding. The more we communicate, the more comfortable and confident the parents are. In return, they communicate more and the cycle continues and grows.

## *A Middle-School Schedule*

MARIE RINAUDO  
ST. JOHN BERCHMANS CATHEDRAL SCHOOL  
SHREVEPORT, LOUISIANA

**H**ow do we move toward the new century and meet the needs of the new student while still maintaining the tradition and culture of our K-8 parochial school? This question has concerned our St. John Berchmans Cathedral School staff for a number of years, particularly concerning our middle school. It is the question that has prompted us to work as a team to develop a curriculum that gives our students innovative learning opportunities. With the opening of this fall 2000 term, we have made a major step forward. Both the middle-school teachers and the students have claimed a sense of ownership for a transitional curriculum and schedule.

To appreciate our decision for this year's program, it helps to look at our early experiences. About four years ago, we began to experiment with ideas and reforms that we hoped would prepare and motivate our students and still meet with the requests of our parents for a structured program. Our initial step began with an activity period for the middle school. This period occurred once a week for

forty minutes. Students had an opportunity to elect one of several courses: art, choir, creative writing, computers, science, or library.

One advantage of this curriculum was the multi-age experience as the sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-graders were allowed to select the same courses. However, the disadvantages were greater: teachers felt they had to develop a new curriculum for each course; they also had difficulty adjusting to the sixth-graders being in the same class with the seventh- and eighth-graders. The students regarded that period as an extra-curriculum subject since there were few academic requirements to be met. Finally, the one-day-a-week course was erratic, as it was the first course to be dropped when an unexpected change in the schedule happened.

The next year, we tried an exploratory-advisory program, with the leadership of one of our Notre Dame ACE teachers, who had been trained to facilitate the course. Indeed, the class had merit: the students were able to share their talents and special interests with others, they had the experience of the advisory sessions with their homeroom teacher, and they learned leadership skills and responsibility. However, though the teachers enjoyed the laboratory style of the class, they expressed concern about the loss of academic time to what they regarded as a counseling and guidance activity.

In spite of the concern about these trial runs, we learned one point of major importance: students, teachers, and parents liked and responded to an innovative curriculum and schedule. We were willing and eager to make adjustments as needed.

The initial program served us well as the groundwork for our present middle-school schedule. We now have quarterly courses that meet at the fourth period each day. These courses satisfy both the state of Louisiana curriculum requirements for electives for middle schools, and they also enhance our school mission statement for a strong academic program. The size of our middle school makes the schedule possible with five teachers – three middle-school teachers in addition to the music and the art teachers working as a team. Every nine weeks the students are assigned by grade level to one of the following classes: reading, geography, creative writing, or fine arts. Thus during the year, students have the opportunity to take four mini-courses all designed to extend and be integrated with the core curriculum.

A brief description of the curriculum indicates the academic quality of each of these courses and the active learning-experiences afforded students.

**The reading class** addresses not only literature but also drama, speech, library and research skills. Students are required to complete two book reports and to present three speech activities during the quarter. *Accelerated Reader* is also a component of this class. Computer software addresses basic and advanced writing skills and allows students ample practice time. As enrichment to their oral language experiences gained in the classroom, the students attend one school or community dramatic performance.

**The geography classes** enhance and support each of the mandated social studies curriculum: sixth-graders concentrate on world geography and map skill, seventh-graders take American geography, and eighth-graders take one quarter of Louisiana geography and one-quarter of Asian geography. Students attend at least one field trip in the local area to view waterways and land formations. A research paper using the Internet and related software is required. Students have access to the library and the computer lab during the period.

**The creative writing class** gives students the opportunity to publish the school newspaper, the yearbook, and the literary journal. They have daily use of the computer lab for their writing. Those entering literary writing contests may also work on their entries during this period. Other writing assignments are correlated with the reading, social studies, science, and religion classes. At least one field trip is made to a local newspaper company or television station to gain an appreciation for the work of professional writers.

**The fine arts class** allows students to participate in music, art, and drama activities. The music and art teachers team by alternating days to lead the class. The emphasis here is on preparations for art festivals, school and parish liturgies, community performances, and school productions, which include events such as the Christmas play, the talent show, Catholic Schools Week, and the eighth-grade play and graduation. A major emphasis is correlation with other classes. The course is integrated with religion and creative writing, as students write the script and dramatize the gospel for at least two of the weekly Masses during the nine weeks. Correlation with geography and Spanish makes for a multi-cultural program. Students take one



field trip to a local museum or art gallery, or attend one community musical performance.

The transitional quality of the program has been a major advantage for our school community. One of the benefits is the flexibility in the schedule to address the individual needs of the students—both the advanced and the challenged. The teacher of the gifted students teams up with the middle-school teachers to facilitate independent and small group projects, and to correlate assignments. The resource teacher has time to work with those students having difficulty in the basic skills. Another merit is the transition the schedule allows our students to make. The sixth-graders gradually adjust to a middle-school schedule and our seventh- and eighth-graders prepare for the block schedule in the local high schools. The teachers enjoy the transition time as they learn to team up and refine new strategies.

We are confident that we have a start for a curriculum and schedule for the new century. This approach has some of the elements of the exploratory program, but with greater emphasis on the academics. Our students engage in hands-on, laboratory activities that promote the application of basic literacy skills, but also satisfies their need to be creative and to pursue personal interests and talents. Technology is fully integrated into the basic curriculum as students' complete projects and interdisciplinary assignments. Creative thinking, problem-solving, decision-making, team work—all skills that are needed today and in the future—are integral to the curriculum.

Because student motivation is high, there are fewer discipline problems than with a totally traditional schedule. Students enjoy and value the opportunities to step out of the structured system that forms the rest of their day. They are able to see learning as exchanging ideas, negotiating, and collaborating. They appreciate the links to the real world and life experiences.

Teachers too, now that they have the setting to work together, feel more comfortable about modifying some of their strategies. The schedule is the vehicle for helping them make the transition to performance-based learning, and thematic and integrated units. Cross-discipline instruction and activity-oriented classrooms are easier to accomplish. With the staff training that has occurred, they have gained an appreciation for the importance of active learning, for working as teams to integrate the disciplines, and for addressing

learning styles. They themselves have become active learners as they execute the plans. At least two times after school during the nine weeks, they meet to plot their course for the next quarter and to review or revise plans for projected integrated or thematic units. In addition to the staff meetings, the teachers also attend at least one workshop on integrated curriculum during the school year.

To keep the parents informed, we have extended our communication beyond the weekly folder. We plan to invite parents to an evening event in the spring to see the students' progress and productions—artwork, skits, visual projects, and writing samples. This event, we hope, will give our parents a better understanding of the various approaches used by the teachers and of the ways their children' learning experiences are changing.

With a belief that a willing faculty and gradual incremental changes in the curriculum will lead to the type of program suited for the twenty-first century, St. John Berchmans School looks forward to the future. We have a curriculum that has possibilities for ongoing changes and improvement.

## *Home Base*

NED VANDERS  
HOLY TRINITY CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
DALLAS, TEXAS

### What Is A Middle Schooler?

What is a middle schooler?  
I was asked one day.  
I knew what he was  
But what should I say?

She is noise and confusion.  
She is silence that is deep.  
She is sunshine and laughter,  
Or a cloud that will weep.

He is swift as an arrow.  
He is a waster of time.  
He wants to be rich,  
But cannot save a dime.

She is rude and nasty.  
She is polite as can be.  
She wants parental guidance,  
But fights to be free.

He is aggressive and bossy.  
He is timid and shy.  
He knows all the answers,  
But still asks "why."

She is awkward and clumsy.  
She is graceful and poised.  
She is ever-changing,  
But do not be annoyed.

What is a middle schooler?  
I was asked one day.  
He is the future unfolding,  
So do not stand in the way.

*(An eighth-grade middle-school student)*

Middle School is building the bridge between elementary and secondary schools. It is a transition school that bridges the elementary school and high school for students in the sixth-through eighth-grades, and is developmentally appropriate for young adolescents. Middle school is a small community of learning that is intellectually challenging and supportive of students' needs. It provides information, skills, and motivation for adolescents to learn about themselves and their widening world. Middle school is a home base for emphasis on increasing students' learning capabilities, independence, responsibility, self-discipline, and personal values before moving on to high school.

*Home base* meets daily for 30 minutes. The sixth-, seventh-, and eighth-grade students are under the supervision of their respective homeroom teachers. The whole middle school has home base at the

same time. This permits flexibility in bringing the classes together if necessary.

Below is a brief listing of activities for home base. More information on those activities, along with additional activities, can be found in the references cited.

- Improving organizational skills.
- Studying for tests.
- Holding classroom meetings.
- Planning, organizing, and implementing classroom service projects.
- Doing a personal coat-of-arms.
- Sharing successes and accomplishments.
- Completing the phrases, "If I were older," "My favorite place," "When I make a mistake."
- Displaying "Proud of" bulletin boards.
- Drawing a "class mural" depicting the things the class does together.
- Creating a classroom newsletter
- Making advertisements or commercials, which the students themselves sell.
- Making time for friends.
- Doing student interviews.
- Creating a caring community.
- Taking care of myself.
- Documenting the highlights of my life.
- Spending money.

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SECTION 6  
*Differentiated  
Instructions*

# *Adapting to Student Differences*

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CHRIST THE KING CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

## **D is for Differentiate**

Over the course of the past year, the faculty, school commission, and representatives of the parent and parish populations underwent a self-evaluation for the second round of state accreditation at Christ the King Catholic School. Through this lengthy process, we discovered that there are many things we do quite well, yet there is always room for improvement. Perhaps the most clearly defined area needing our attention was in the implementation of the curriculum in meeting the needs of our diverse learners.

We recognized that we were doing an exceptional job of teaching our students who required remediation, as well as those in our special-needs program. Our high achievers, however, seemed to be lost in the shuffle and left to learn on their own. Knowing that we had to make a change, we put our heads together and realized the obvious. Collectively, we devised the action plan that included the

ideas we formulated to address this particular area of improvement within our five-year plan. We committed ourselves to facing the challenge of diversifying our instruction so that all students in our school will have an equal opportunity to learn. We are now differentiating, or adapting, to student differences, to accommodate the various reading levels, learning styles, and personal interests that our students bring to us. No longer will we expect each child to fit into our boxes. Rather, we will create a space for learning that fits each child.

To differentiate instruction is no easy task. In fact, it can seem overwhelming to teachers who have not experienced it. As was the case at Christ the King, teachers who are accustomed to teaching in a traditional manner may also resist this approach. It is when the results are evident that teachers are inspired to continue differentiating their instruction.

There are three important aspects of the curriculum, as outlined by Carol Ann Tomlinson in *The Differentiated Classroom: Responding to the Needs of All Learners*, 1999 that teachers can differentiate in order to be successful. Tomlinson says that teachers can differentiate the *content, process, and product* in order to effectively differentiate instruction. We have focused on these three aspects of the curriculum when setting priorities in our approach to differentiating.

First, we offer each child access to the same core-content of our curriculum. We never water-down what we teach for our struggling students. Instead, we adjust the degree of complexity, increasing or decreasing it as necessary to make it comprehensible for each learner. By varying the tools we use (texts, supplementary materials, delivery styles), we provide even greater opportunities for individual learning.

We also modify the activities that we use to help students grasp the ideas and skills being taught. Our high-achieving students receive more complex instruction, often requiring a greater challenge of them. On the other hand, when teaching our students with special-needs, we implement a variety of strategies (re-teaching, practical assessment, textbooks on tape, etc.) to make the process effective for these children.

Lastly, we have come to recognize that different students create different products based on where they are in their learning. We no longer expect “cookie-cutter” projects from our students. Some work well within groups, while others prefer to work alone. Assessment



also takes a variety of forms, and is no longer defined as simply a pencil-and-paper test. We have come to accept that children demonstrate their learning in a vast array of products—each one representative of the child's level, interests, and learning style. What we look for is a demonstration that learning has taken place.

Perhaps one of our greatest challenges in adapting to this philosophy was the avoidance of simply creating homogeneous or leveled-groups for instruction. Furthermore, we needed to accept that tracking was not a viable option. In reality, successful differentiating occurs when each child is given equal access to the curriculum and demonstrates progress.

We employ many strategies within the classroom to make this work for us. We employ cooperative learning whenever possible. We always remain mindful of the multiple levels of intelligence and plan our teaching accordingly. We use a variety of grouping tactics, depending upon the activity or area of instruction. At times, we group students of similar ability; there are other occasions during which it has proven much more valuable to group students with different readiness-levels. Flexibility in grouping students is of the utmost importance.

Other successful strategies that we employ include tiered activities, compacting, and agendas. In the use of tiered activities, the concepts and skills are the same for all students, but the teacher varies the complexity with which the students access them. Compacting occurs when the teacher assesses students before the start of a lesson or presentation of a new skill. Students who demonstrate understanding do not have to work on what they already know, and therefore, advance in their study of that skill. Agendas include personalized lists of benchmarks or tasks to be accomplished within a given amount of time. Packets provided by the teacher to individual students often accompany them. While time-consuming to develop, agendas are valuable for high-achieving students and often clearly demonstrative of the child's ability level.

The teachers at Christ the King also employ peer tutoring when possible. Particularly when teaching writing skills, peer tutoring is a valuable way for teachers to monitor student progress as well as to employ the talent of advanced students in working with struggling learners.

In addition to differentiated instruction, we have found that we must also teach children not only *what* they need to learn, but also *how* they learn it best. In other words, we are helping our students to recognize and understand their own learning styles so that they can assist us in differentiating more effectively for them. To do this, we utilize assessments and activities that reveal strengths and weaknesses in the students' learning processes. Once the learning styles are identified, each teacher designs modifications and strategies and lesson plans are written to reflect their implementation. Teachers provide the kinesthetic, auditory, and visual learners the opportunity to grasp the concepts in the way that they learn best.

We recognize that every child is unique. As teachers in a Catholic school, we rejoice in knowing that. At the same time, we realize that this poses a great challenge to us as educators. In our struggle to teach effectively, we at Christ the King know that the only means by which we can truly implement our curriculum for each and every student is through differentiated instruction. For us, it is the way to reach all of our students, thereby accomplishing our ministry to teach according to our mission statement. We are committed to facing this challenge because we have seen the fruits of our labor. It is difficult and time-consuming, yet most rewarding. Children of all levels are successfully progressing at a rate that we had not witnessed before. Perhaps, most important, learning has become accessible to our gifted students, our students with special needs, and *all* the children.

## *Integrated Thematic Instruction*

BY JIM POHLMAN  
MARQUETTE SCHOOL  
TULSA, OKLAHOMA

**T**he process of implementing a new program in a school can be a very negative experience. The fear of change enters into the hearts of every teacher on the staff. But a process of change can be slowly implemented to achieve optimum success. The plan we are using is a three-phase process. But first, an explanation of why we are implementing "Integrated Thematic Instruction."

At our school we are experiencing an influx of students with identified learning-needs not being handled by the traditional methods of teaching. Realizing that this trend will continue, especially as brain research advances, we set out to prepare ourselves for the future. In the fall of 1999 an opportunity arose for us to send three teachers to a three-day workshop on Integrated Thematic Instruction which is based on brain research. The deal was that these teachers had to come back to school and present what they learned to the entire faculty. This was Phase One of the process. Upon review of

the openness of the faculty, I contacted Susan Kovalik and Associates to inquire as to the cost of hosting a workshop for my entire faculty.

Thus began Phase Two. I asked myself, "How do I pay for this?" Well, we had a good fund-raising year and I asked our Home and School Association to fund the workshop for our faculty. They gladly agreed. It was then that I realized that the cost for the workshop was the same for my 25 teachers as it was for 100 teachers. After consultation with our superintendent, I applied for a grant to assist in the funding for the remaining 75 slots. Once we received that money we were able to provide this workshop to any Catholic school teacher in our Diocese. Two of our larger schools hosted this program a year ago. This opportunity would allow the smaller schools to take advantage of the training. We will have 7 of the remaining 10 schools in our diocese sending representatives or full faculties to this training. We have 75 teachers enrolled.

Phase Three of this process is the implementation process. As we begin as a faculty to understand the process, we will decide on which phase of the process we will begin to implement in the fall. Most likely the agenda and procedure phases will be our choice.

That is how we have arrived at this place. Our rationale for beginning this process was to attempt to "tool" teachers in techniques that will assist them in developing lessons that will incorporate the multiple learning-styles of the students in the classroom. Most veteran teachers who have been in the classroom have not been exposed to the information the newly graduated teachers have received in their course work. But the experienced teachers know what good teaching is and understand curriculum. What is great about this Integrated Thematic Instruction is that it incorporates three parts:

1. The Biology of Learning (brain research)
2. Teaching Strategies
3. Curriculum Development

The older teachers were not threatened by the introduction of this concept because they felt confident in their teaching strategies and their curriculum. The rookies felt more confident with the information on brain research, but needed help with strategies and curriculum. On paper, it was a match made in heaven. Only time will tell.

I like this approach because on the front end, we are told that it takes three to five years to fully implement this process. It is not a quick fix for a problem. Rather, it is a process for teaching to open wide the doors for learning. Also, the first component is creating an environment with an absence of threat. At first, I viewed this from the student's point of view within the classroom, and thought, "That sounds great." Then I began to think of my teachers, and what an absence of threat for them with regards to implementing this process would mean. The process gives the teacher time to digest the information and implement at his or her rate—to find that which is comfortable and begin there.

Part of the Instruction Strategy is to teach life skills, use agendas, and establish procedures. The life skills are ideas like integrity, initiative, perseverance, organization, and sense of humor, to name a few. Within our Catholic schools we can translate this into Gospel values. The use of agendas simply tells the students what is to be expected of them during the daily lesson. The procedures are the rules the community within the classroom has agreed upon for the year. Time is spent building a community with the students in the classroom. After all, that is what we do in our schools, create an environment where the goodness of each individual is celebrated as a gift of God.

What are the potential problems with implementing such a program? First, the issue of teacher turnover and the effect on the continuation of training poses a potential problem for future effectiveness. We seem to be always adding new teachers to the staff and needing to catch them up to what we are doing. Of the three teachers initially trained, one is not returning for the new school year. I purposely chose one teacher from each level: K through second grade, third through fifth grade and sixth through eighth grade, for initial training so that smaller groups could be formed to discuss implementation at specific grade levels. We will continue to teach new employees in-house after the initial training. The plus side is that the new faculty would all receive the same training to begin the process (for the 2000-2001 school year). I foresee this becoming a problem down the road, but mentor teachers can be assigned to new employees.

Another concern is the willingness of the whole faculty to work

together to create units which incorporate the different disciplines. There is something about a teacher and his or her domain. "The classroom, it's my space; leave me alone; my students are learning," you can almost hear them thinking. I know none of us have teachers like that in our buildings, but just in case, I see a need to address the cooperative effort with my staff. This can be achieved by breaking the staff into smaller groups to discuss how each individual plans to use the process. Also, support and direction from the administration will be ongoing. School goals and timelines will be mutually agreed upon for the implementation phases. The absence of threat will help with the teacher implementation phase of this process.

It is my hope that this process will help our school meet the needs of all of our students. I feel confident in our phases of implementation. Whetting the appetite of a few key teachers, and having them share how they are using what they have learned is a key component to eliminate fear among the faculty. Paying for the workshop can become a burden but with the help of the Home and School Association and local foundations you can relieve the burden on your budget and provide the most current research in education. Finally, the implementation within our school is a work in progress. As we begin the 2000-2001 school year, the faculty will embark on a journey to provide the best opportunities for our students to learn. For more information on Integrated Thematic Instruction, contact Kovalik and Associates at their web site [www.Kovalik.com](http://www.Kovalik.com). For updates on our school's progress or to share your successes with this program, e-mail me at [marq1@mmind.net](mailto:marq1@mmind.net). I hope to report wonderful achievements and a brighter outlook for the future, in helping all types of learners learn and be successful at identifying their unique gifts.

## *Many Instructional Levels*

SISTER EILEEN MARIE MCGOWAN, D.M.  
ST. JOAN OF ARC SCHOOL  
HERSHEY, PENNSYLVANIA

When I first came to Hershey, Pennsylvania, 13 years ago, I found many students who had both behavioral and learning problems. These students had never been tested to find out why they were having problems. When they were finally tested, over a two-year span, many were advised that their problems required more support than we were able to provide in our small Catholic school. Fourteen students reluctantly went to local public schools for the various kinds of learning support they needed. Several parents refused to take their children out of the Catholic environment in which they, themselves had grown up. They were so committed to Catholic education that they were willing to do anything they could to help their children to remain in a Catholic school. What was I to do?

During my second year at St. Joan of Arc School, my part-time computer teacher was looking for full-time work. She was an excellent teacher, but was not a special education teacher. Knowing that she, herself had a visual disability, I thought she might be the perfect

person to help the students whose parents were so committed to Catholic education. She was always upbeat and had a vivacious way of working with students. I offered to give her full-time employment by having her work with special students whenever she was not teaching computer classes. She began by going to several Catholic and public schools to observe their support programs, and immediately began to work with these students. We wanted the room to have a positive image, so we called it the S.M.I.L.E. Room (Support for the *Many Instructional Levels in Education*), and we were off to a good start. For varying amounts of time, about 30 students made their way to the SMILE Room that first year. We knew we needed more help and, so, an aide was hired. The program continued to grow, and to this day, we still have a full-time SMILE teacher and a full-time classroom aide to work with the students. I have found that a teacher with certification in learning disabilities is not always the best teacher for this program. The best teachers have been patient people who love to work with children on an individual basis. The rewards are many. One teacher was ecstatic when one of the boys jumped up and shouted, "I can read!"

### The Program

The SMILE program is offered to students with a variety of needs:

- **Full-time students** require one-to-one help in several major subjects at their level.
- **Part-time students** require support in only one subject.
- **Temporary students** require help in learning a particular skill.
- **ESL (English as a Second Language) students** learn the basics of English.
- **Middle-School Students in need of organizational skills** require help in organization at the end of each school day.

We presently have five full-time students, ten part-time students, one ESL student, and ten middle-school students involved in the program. Even though a student may be full-time in the SMILE program, we always try to arrange for each full-time student to be mainstreamed for the one content area subject at which he/she is best,



in addition to Religion, art, computer, physical education, and music. At times, the SMILE teacher is also scheduled to go into the classroom to monitor the SMILE students in a typical classroom setting.

Our philosophy is to help the students to experience success in learning. Our goal is to try to get every student back into the mainstream classroom if he or she is able to do so successfully. We aim to teach students the skills they need to function independently in any setting. In the past, we have had several students who were classified as learning-disabled students who made so much progress working in the program that they were able to return to the classroom, and actually attained honors in eighth grade. They are now college graduates. They are our successes! I always tell the SMILE teachers that their job is to work themselves out of a job because there are always students waiting to take the places of previous students.

The state of Pennsylvania is divided into intermediate units to expedite funding and services. In our Capital Area Intermediate Unit, we have the services of a school counselor, remedial math teacher, remedial language arts teacher, speech therapist, and school psychologist. Every Friday morning, we have a Student Support Team (SST) Meeting. Regular members of the team include the principal, SMILE teacher, counselor, remedial math and language arts teachers. Parents or teachers of students are always welcome to attend a student's SST meeting.

If a teacher (or parent) notices that a particular student is experiencing difficulty in a given area, and s/he has tried to work with the child with little or no success, the teacher presents a referral form for an SST meeting to the SST coordinator (usually the SMILE teacher). The referral summarizes the difficulties experienced as well as the strategies already tried. The teacher is slotted into the first available SST meeting, where input is gathered, and strategies are proposed. If interventions are unsuccessful, or if additional information or further evaluation is needed, parents are invited to the SST meeting. One of the proposals could be SMILE room support. If the learning (or behavioral) problems are of a serious nature, psychological testing may be requested, and this may result in full-time or part-time SMILE room services. For a student to receive full-time services, a psychological evaluation is required so that we have more professional direction in attempting to meet the child's needs.

Parents are an important component of success in our SMILE program. They are involved right from the beginning, and often initiate the SST themselves. Their approval is required for every step we take to help the child to experience success. After a psychological evaluation, parents meet with the SST to discuss the results and recommendations of the psychologist. A plan is developed, agreed upon, and implemented. Parents are given a SMILE handbook when they enroll their child in the program. This ensures good communication, and alerts parents to future directions of the program.

When a student is scheduled to participate in the SMILE program, it is usually during the subject of difficulty. If that cannot be arranged, the SMILE teacher will cover the content of the subject being missed, as well as the subject of difficulty. Classroom teachers have learned to become very cooperative in the SMILE process because it assures success for the student, and makes their job less frustrating. They provide lesson plans to the SMILE teacher if they know the student will miss their class. Classroom teachers also provide tests for SMILE students to the SMILE teacher so that they can be adapted to the child's needs.

The SMILE teacher works with the child individually, or in small groups if there are several students on the same level. Attention is given to the various learning styles, so that a child is given every opportunity to learn. Computers are used extensively for drill and reinforcement, as well for multi-media presentations of content. Everyone is happier. Students are much better behaved, because they are not frustrated. They smile at their own success!

Periodic evaluation is always necessary to determine if the child's needs are continuing to be met. A formal re-evaluation is done every two or three years.

The Diocese of Harrisburg provides special grading for students with diagnosed learning disabilities: S (satisfactory), or N (Needs improvement). Most parents prefer that their children receive letter grades A, B, C, or D, and replace the F with an N, with the child's grade-level noted. Again, parents sign permission to grade as special students or as regular grades. Only full-time students are graded by the SMILE teacher, and this is indicated on the report card by checking "modified program." Other students are evaluated by their

classroom teacher in collaboration with the SMILE teacher.

In our school, the SMILE program is one of our greatest success stories. It fosters concern for all students, and assures communication at all levels for the success of all students in the learning process. Students are not labeled, and behavior problems are significantly decreased in number and intensity. Our biggest challenge now is to convince the local Catholic high schools to do something for our graduating students who have special needs and desperately want to continue their education in a Catholic high school.



SECTION 7  
*Staff Development*

## *Mentoring New Teachers*

MRS. MADELEINE G. THOMAS  
RESURRECTION ACADEMY  
FONTANA, CALIFORNIA

**W**hen I became principal of Resurrection Academy five years ago, I was fortunate enough to be in a school with which I was familiar. I had taught in this school for five years, and in the course of these five years, I had cultivated a special bond and camaraderie with staff, teachers, students, and parents. My transition was not difficult because I was very knowledgeable about the myriad of activities involved in running the school. What I found surprisingly difficult was the transition of new teachers that come aboard, especially if it is their first time working in a Catholic school system.

I was a new teacher in a Catholic system ten years ago, and I did experience frustrations and blunders because there was no mentor available at that time. Being a new teacher in a new environment can be intimidating and overwhelming during the first year. There is much to know and learn in a very short time, and without a mentor to talk to during the first month—or even the whole first year—a teacher may feel so disoriented and unsure of him/herself, that he/

she may quit. This is the most important reason why I started a mentoring program for new teachers.

Since I know the teaching staff and their capabilities and areas of expertise fairly well, I appointed three-level coordinators who would implement the mentoring program. I assigned one level-coordinator for K through grade two, another level-coordinator for grades three through five, and a third level-coordinator for grades six through eight. These level-coordinators were chosen because they were willing to mentor new teachers. Furthermore, they had been at the school at least five or more years and could fall back on their experiences.

#### General Description of a Level-Coordinator:

- To assist and support the principal in the administrative duties and functions of the school. The level-coordinator acts as a liaison with their grade-level teachers and provides a line of communication to the principal. The level-coordinator is directly responsible for all activities and projects assigned by the principal.

#### General Description of the level-coordinators duties:

- Communicate frequently with the principal in order to assess the overall functioning of the school.
- Serve in an advisory capacity to the principal.
- Act as a consultant and resource person for their department.
- Attend meetings and take responsibility for reports and other administrative needs.
- Assist/suggest when necessary in planning the agenda for faculty or parent meetings.
- Check attendance registers every three months for their department.
- Assume responsibility for the school in the absence of the principal.
- Assist in maintaining discipline in their departments.
- Act as a liaison between teacher and principal.
- Work closely with the principal in all that concerns their department and keep the principal informed.

- Work with teachers to maintain continuity of curriculum.

The level-coordinator/mentor meets with his/her new teacher informally to discuss a student on classroom behavior, work on in-depth studies, be a support to parent conferences, plan liturgies, and plan mission bake-sales, to mention a few duties. The schedule of these informal meetings would depend on the coordinator's free time. The formal meeting happens once a month and this takes place during the first Friday teachers' meeting. These formal meetings allow the discussions to be heard by all teachers, and allow them to see that their recommendations to and support for new teachers' problems/concerns are brought into the open.

Despite an open-door policy on the part of the principal, the level-coordinators mentoring new teachers is greatly beneficial, because new teachers can immediately discuss issues with their colleague before they get out of hand. By the time the principal intervenes, the problem may have been resolved. As there is ongoing communication between the level-coordinators and their designated mentors, the principal is always in the communication loop.

At the end of the school year, all level-coordinators involved in the mentoring program, along with the principal, evaluate the impact of their overall efforts. Recommendations from this meeting may be implemented during the following school year. The mentoring program was a great help to the new teachers during their probationary first year. It brought encouraged openness and trust in everyone on the staff. Finally, the level of communication is never taken for granted.

## *Curriculum and Staff Development*

ANN MITCHELL  
ST. ANNE SCHOOL  
SOMERSET, WISCONSIN

Curriculum strikes me as one of those terms in educational jargon that simply means what we choose to teach and how we choose to teach it. Implied in these decisions is the probability that meaningful discussion has taken place regarding the why of those choices and that teaching actually results in learning. However, implications and probability aren't enough. Curriculum decisions must be made continuously, reflectively and deliberately, with constant attention given to the actual learning taking place.

Teachers and administrators—let alone parents and other stakeholders—tend to view curriculum development as an ominous and laborious task resulting in a thick, albeit likely unused, manual shelved somewhere in the school office. However, if we engage in the process of curriculum development on a continual basis, with reflection and deliberation, and with a conscientious effort to engage students in authentic learning, the result can be far from stagnant



and unused. In fact, curriculum development has the potential to be the inspiration for staff development, promoting authentic education and lifelong learning.

Engaging staff in quality curriculum development can be likened to the work many of our Catholic schools put into mission and philosophy development and revision. We embark on a process that will take time and soul-searching, faith and some sacrifice. Results do not necessarily emerge overnight, we'll have to answer difficult questions about priorities, and we need to trust our colleagues and stakeholders to contribute something to the process as we reluctantly discard some of the old stuff with which we've become so comfortable.

While educators are inundated with texts, workbooks, hands-on activities, and a plethora of resources to keep children busy, it is more difficult to discover, and put our hands on, a process that engages us in the real and purposeful work of curriculum development. Workshops and seminars spend a great deal of time and money on the *how* of curriculum. Too often, curriculum development is reduced to choosing a new textbook. What we educators need most is time to determine the *why* of curriculum so that our selection of resources and learning activities are purposeful and relevant to our mission. In an effort to provide guidance to this end, perhaps these suggestions will inspire us.

**Step One** — Whether reviewing one subject area as a total staff, or several areas in subcommittees, recognize and plan for the time necessary to develop curriculum meaningfully. Provide a time frame and schedule reasonable goals. It is recommended that administrators plan for a block of time (compensation during the summer or in-service time during the school year) to complete this.

**Step Two** — Include students, parents and support staff in this process of curriculum development. While we may be the educators, these are our stakeholders and teachers.

**Step Three** — To make the process of curriculum documentation more manageable and feasible, establish a database template (which can be later revised) for teachers to use, so that later revisions and networking can be done with ease. The format might include objectives or goals, learning strategies, resources, and assessment strategies.

**Step Four** — To validate the strengths of existing efforts, and to make us more aware of the gaps in our programs, we begin by examining what is currently in place. The process of documenting content, instructional activities, evaluation methods, and resources, (though time-consuming and labor intensive) provides us with a beginning point and begins the self-assessment process.

**Step Five** — Provide each staff member with recent articles, a professional development opportunity, resources to review, and/or time to observe exemplary programs in other schools, within the curriculum area under review. These experiences can serve to increase awareness, recharge instruction, and inspire change.

**Step Six** — In light of the mission, facilitate staff discussions to identify the desired state of affairs (what should be). Together identify gaps, overlaps, hopes and possibilities.

As a staff you might generate criteria by which to evaluate your program. To begin, you might consider that quality Catholic school curriculum meet the following criteria:

- **Learning/teaching addresses a real problem.** Students can see the relevance of what they are learning by making connections to problems they encounter in daily life, or to problems they know others are encountering in daily life.
- **Learning/teaching connects to issues of social justice.** Students are able to identify the issue, alternatives for addressing it, and their role in contributing to social justice.
- **Learning/teaching validates the mission** (of our school, parish, diocese, etc.). It is clear to students why we are learning what we are learning and that learning provides a compass for future efforts and goals.

Our school mission includes three components: faith development, academic excellence, and service to others. To continue our efforts of quality curriculum development, we must ask ourselves at least this question: *Is what we are doing faith-filled, academically challenging, and service-oriented?*

**Step Seven** — Together identify the resources and opportunities to achieve the hopes expressed. Spend time describing ways we will know we've accomplished our goals.

**Step Eight** — Allow teachers to edit, revise and note changes they might include in existing curriculum and arrange for teaming and sharing of current state of affairs and hopes for changes. This critical step promotes articulation and integration and sometimes makes the sacrifice of giving up something less painful.

**Step Nine** — Provide time for additional sharing of ideas, resources, and most particularly the philosophy behind curriculum decisions. Emphasize the tentative nature of the curriculum so that changes of heart and mind are acceptable. This models collegiality and lifelong learning.

**Step Ten** — Celebrate your efforts! Plan an event to share highlights with parents and each other.

When the process of curriculum development is approached comprehensively, reflectively, and deliberately, it is likely that our staff will teach comprehensively, reflectively, and deliberately. Let's walk the talk and model the lifelong learning we want for our students.

## *Delegation: A Management Tool*

TONY BOQUER  
HOLY FAMILY CATHOLIC ACADEMY  
HONOLULU, HAWAII

**A**s I am about to start my sixth year as principal of Holy Family Catholic Academy in Honolulu, Hawaii, I have to look back to the first six months in my new job in August of 1995. I will always remember what my pastor and administrator told me then: "Make use of your corporate management experience; it is a tremendous gift that can bless the entire school."

As a result of that particular reminder, I immediately set up a blueprint for the organizational structure that would be in place during my third year as principal. It was based on an actual marketing-management concept that proved to be very effective and successful. It exceeded the sales projections, gave employees more say in their own departments, and increased productivity due to high morale.

It was a working model using the concept of "macro" management, where supervisors (middle management) were given the opportunity to work closely with their own colleagues in pushing for

reforms and taking responsibility for their actions. The key word was delegation. It encouraged, enhanced and empowered people to go beyond their limits.

It gave each member a true sense of ownership for his teams' success. The use of a "micro" management was frowned upon because it took away from the individual teams the freedom to use creativity in planning, organizing, directing, and controlling their specific team objective. Before I could put the proposed organizational chart into action, I needed to observe what was actually happening in the classrooms. I kept my eyes and ears open without making to many comments or changes. However, I asked a lot of questions.

I noticed that there was a "loose" relationship between the "department heads" in junior high. On this grade level, the core subjects were departmentalized. Each teacher in the two seventh-grade and two eighth-grade classrooms taught only their respective subjects, but taught both seventh-and eighth-grade tracts. The junior high teachers served as the catalysts for bringing in the lower grade-level teachers to curriculum meetings designed to discuss each particular core subject. At these meetings the existing curriculum for each core subject was discussed, and changes were suggested, including the purchase of new textbooks and workbooks, as well as staff-development concerns. While the junior high teacher "acted" as the chairperson for that particular core subject, there was no formal chain of command and no one was held accountable or responsible for the group's action. The existing curriculum committees could be improved without too many changes. The key would lie on how to bring all parties together with a minimum amount of the proverbial "rocking of the boat."

Since I could not increase extra work with extra pay, I decided to initiate this concept by incorporating the blueprints as part of collateral duties assigned to all members of the faculty. After observing the different chairs at work, I chose the science teacher as the chairperson of the Curriculum Committee. After a lengthy discussion, she accepted the responsibility. Upon her acceptance, a new science chair was chosen from the remaining science teachers, and voted upon by their peers. The curriculum chair made sure that all the members of the committee were very dedicated to their respective

subjects. The principal and assistant principal were invited to attend the meetings.

To insure that every faculty and staff person had the opportunity for input in any of the different core subject areas or in any facet of the school, a separate group was set up. The grade-level coordinators' position was put into existence. During the 1995 joint accreditation visit of the Western Association of Schools and Colleges and the Western Catholic Education Association (WASC/WCEA) they recommended a better and more effective use of the grade-level coordinator position. This group was revamped, while assuring everyone that each would have a voice. One person was chosen from the Early Learning Center (preschool), and one each representing grades K through three, grades four through six, and grades seven and eight. In addition, one person was chosen from the cafeteria, traffic, and recess teams. A lunch monitor was also chosen, as well as a person each from performing arts, sports and extra-curriculum activities. The principal and assistant principal were also members of this group. It was the responsibility of this group to facilitate any feedback from the grassroots. The group also discussed and suggested specific topics to be included in the agenda for the biweekly faculty meetings.

As a result of these two new, improved, and enhanced committees, the morale of the teachers was greatly improved. New members of the faculty and staff were encouraged and empowered to serve in these committees giving more opportunities for fresh blood and fresh ideas to flourish. By virtue of these changes, more parents willingly came forward to volunteer in different aspects of school life. It turned out to be a win-win situation.

I strongly recommend this concept of delegation to all administrators who seem to need more time in a school day to get things accomplished. Keep an open mind. You will never know until you go beyond your normal frame of thinking. Trust others. Give it a try—you may be pleasantly surprised.



SECTION 8

*Developing the  
Self-Disciplined  
Child*

# *School-Wide Discipline Plan*

ANNE BRAND  
ASSUMPTION CATHOLIC SCHOOL  
BELLINGHAM, WASHINGTON

## **Discipline Philosophy**

In agreement with the school's Mission Statement, the faculty, staff, students, and parents of Assumption Catholic School strive to create a learning environment that fosters an appreciation of Gospel values, education, and a respectful attitude towards others and their property. Assumption attempts to provide an atmosphere that deepens the student's self-discipline in non-violent ways.

## **Preventative Discipline**

Students are given instruction and experiences that will increase their level of social competence in empathy, impulse control and anger management. Use of a problem-solving strategy that facilitates a student's ability to handle interpersonal problems is taught to every class (K-8) as is appropriate to their age level. At present, this program is called *Second Step*, and was created by the Committee for Children.



### **Classroom Management Plans**

Each teacher has a classroom management plan that is consistent with the school's Mission Statement, the discipline philosophy and preventative discipline instruction as presented. Realizing that each teacher and class will set rules, consequences, and behavior cues that are a part of their classroom and age-level, all classroom-management plans will not be the same. Individual classroom-management plans are approved by the principal, then published and sent to students and parents the first week of school by the teacher.

## *The Importance of “Love and Logic”*

DIANA K. REPICHOWSKI  
RESURRECTION SCHOOL  
LANSING, MICHIGAN

**T**he Cline/Fay “Discipline with Love and Logic” Program has been successfully used at Resurrection School from kindergarten through the eighth grade for the past five years. We have found that children turn into good learners and develop responsibility through the application of Love and Logic strategies. The entire staff chose to be a part of this program and attend conferences from one day to one week in length. In addition, biweekly after-school sessions continue for reinforcement and review of what was emphasized at conferences. After implementing and becoming comfortable with the program, the principal introduced it at the mandatory parent meeting in September, and discussed its merit at PTA monthly meetings. He began sending home two separate weekly parent-lessons (produced by the Love and Logic Institute) for their use with elementary (K through grade five) and middle-school students (grades six through eight). Once parents became interested, the

principal purchased *the Becoming a Love and Logic Parent Program Workbooks* with Safe and Drug-Free funds. Classes were held every year, focusing on kindergarten, first- and second-grade parents, but were always open to all parents. As a result of this program, parents are more supportive, and work hand-in-hand with teachers to help their children be successful. We have accumulated a Love and Logic library of books, videotapes and audiocassettes to lend to parents. The program, first of all, focuses on the staff and parents' understanding that children will NOT learn if certain basic needs are not met:

- Physical well-being and safety.
- Emotional safety.
- Respect or love from important adults.
- Healthy control over one's day-to-day life.
- A sense of being an important and needed member of a group (missing today).
- Self-competence.

Knowing that background, our teachers begin using positive techniques in September for getting started.

- Welcome students to classroom each day—use eye contact, smiles, and a handshake.
- Verbalize how pleased you are to have these particular students in your class and show your own joy at teaching this grade or subject. But remember that the heart of good discipline is relationship. "Kids don't care what you know, until they know you care."
- Exchange biographies with students—the teacher models this process and show a willingness to share personal feelings that is essential for the bonding process. Generate excitement for the year's curriculum and explain your job—to help every student master the curriculum.
- Familiarize daily and weekly routine (flexible but structured).
- Establish a positive group atmosphere. Teachers send "can-do" messages by a pat on the shoulder, smile or a nod that helps children feel good about themselves.

- Emphasize strengths rather than weaknesses. Set group rules with input from the students and set firm limits by using logical consequences.

II. Begin with basic classroom rules—the same in every classroom.

- Treat me with the same respect that I treat you.
- If you make a problem, I'll have to do something.

The following are two important rules of Love and Logic:

Adults take care of themselves by providing limits in a loving way. They avoid anger, threats, warnings or lectures and use enforceable statements.

Example: Don't say, "Don't you talk to me in that tone of voice!"; instead say, "I'll be glad to listen when your voice is as soft as mine. NOT "If you forget your permission slip, you're going to miss the field trip!"; instead say, "All of those who remember permission slips are welcome to go on a field trip."

Children are offered choices within limits—an example: "You're welcome to wear your coat or carry it." "Is your plan to turn in your work on time for full credit or later for partial credit?" "Don't do all the problems on this page, pick out the ten easiest and do them." The more control you give, the more you get back. These limits are maintained with compassion, understanding or empathy.

- Children's misbehavior is treated as an opportunity for gaining wisdom. In a loving way, the adult holds the child accountable for solving his/her problem in a way that does not make a problem for others. Example: Teachers say, "I'm disappointed in the way you have been talking to me lately, because it makes me feel you don't respect me." After allowing time to think about it and nothing is changed, the teacher asks the child if he/she has a solution to the problem. If not, the teacher offers solutions and choices. "You have a choice between buttoning your lip in the classroom or going somewhere else where mutual respect is not that important to the people involved."

The following steps will help in guiding children to solve their own problems:

- Look in empathy—"How sad!" Repeat over and over each time.
- Send the Power Message "What are you going to do?"
- Offer choices—"Would you like to hear what others have tried?" As you offer the choices, keep going back to step 4.
- Have the child state the consequences—"And how will that work?"
- Give permission for the child to solve or not solve the problem. "Good luck, I hope it works out." If the child makes a poor choice he/she may have a double learning-lesson.

The best time to apply a consequence is:

- When the adult and the child are both in a "thinking" state.
- After careful consideration and,
- When an important life lesson is to be learned.

Evaluate the consequence by asking yourself:

- Is it tied to the time and place of the infraction? Can the child make an association between the infraction and the consequence?
- Is it similar to what would happen to an adult in a comparable situation?
- Is it administered with empathy and understanding? (The delivery is very important.)

The following are just a few of the positive strategies that are successful in our school.

1. Consistent misbehavior in the classroom: Give no eye contact—go over to child and whisper, "Mary, would you stop talking for me?" Give that child a lot of one-on-one attention when she is doing well. Try the "Hit and Run Technique:" Write down six things you like about the misbehaving child. Twice a week, whisper one of them to the child, making sure no one else hears. Walk off. Do not wait for an answer or judge it. Example: "I notice you collect baseball cards," or "I notice that you stand up for yourself." Don't

ever argue with a child. Go “brain-dead” repeat: “I know,” “Nice try” or “I like you too much to argue with you.” Put up a sign that says: “I argue at 12:30 or 4 o’clock every day.” Don’t say to parents: “Let me tell you,” say “Let me describe.” Remember that a consequence is more effective if it comes out of the blue, and the more a child is bonded with the teacher, the greater the impact.

Effective teachers and parents have a limited vocabulary and don’t need to discipline much when placing the problem on the child. The child in turn gains in responsibility and respect for self, school work, and others. The Love and Logic Program has really worked at our school and I would recommend its implementation in all schools. For more information on this program, search [www.loveandlogic.com](http://www.loveandlogic.com)

# *Respect and Responsibility Program*

SISTER ANNE JOELLE, C.K.  
ST. JOSEPH SCHOOL  
LINCOLN, NEBRASKA

## **Strategic Planning**

At the end of the 1997-1998 school year, I saw a need for our school to have a more clear direction and focus. Therefore, I invited Fr. Joseph Walsh and Dr. Kathryn Benes of Catholic Social Services to assist us in implementing strategic planning. Fr. Walsh and Dr. Benes have assisted many diocesan schools and organizations in our diocese to effectively put into practice the strategic planning process. We began during the in-service days before the start of the 1998-1999 school year. The entire staff was invited, as well as the members of the Home and School Board.

During the rest of that school year we created our mission statement: *We, the Family of St. Joseph School, build up the Kingdom of God as we work together in faith, knowledge and loving service.* From this statement came our three apostolic priorities: faith, knowledge and loving service. The next step was to write long-term goals for

each apostolic priority. We returned to the information from the initial brainstorming session and decided the greatest need in our school, at that time, was greater respect and responsibility from our students. The following problem-statement was written, as well as our desired outcome.

*Problem Statement:* The students lack an understanding of their personal responsibility.

*Desired Outcome Statement:* Our children will understand and demonstrate respect and responsibility for people and property.

The staff did a problem-analysis of the situation and then brainstormed the solutions. From there, we decided to form an advisory committee. The committee's purpose was twofold: 1) to seek information on established programs for teaching respect and responsibility to students. 2) to design a program tailored to meet the needs of St. Joseph School.

### The Process

The committee, which consisted of one teacher from each of the grade sections, (preschool and kindergarten, first and second grade, third and fourth grade, fifth and sixth grade, seventh and eighth grade), a specialty teacher, three parents and myself, met periodically throughout the school year. I held meetings after-school or took some time from monthly faculty meetings.

The committee compiled a list of social skills and gave the list to our teachers. The teachers checked off the skills that they thought their grade-level needed and returned it to the committee. The committee then took the list and compiled the most needed skills into two grade sections: kindergarten through fourth grade and fifth through eighth grade. The skills were separated into monthly lessons to be taught.

After looking into several programs, the committee found that our current program, Discipline with Purpose (DWP) did cover the skills we wanted to teach. DWP is comprised of 15 skills that are taught in different ways from grades one through eight. We also added two resources, the Boys' Town Model and the *Tough Kids Social Skills*. We were able to get funding from Drug Free money



to purchase the extra lessons needed and the *Tough Kids Social Skills* books for each teacher.

The committee finally compiled the age-appropriate lessons into a three-ring binder for each homeroom teacher, organizing them by a monthly plan of skills to be taught.

### ***The Implementation***

The committee presented the materials and explained the Respect and Responsibility Program at the in-service meeting before the 1999-2000 school year. The teachers had the opportunity to ask questions and discuss its implementation. They agreed to teach a skill one day each week, on a certain day and at a certain time. Skill information went home in the parent bulletin at the beginning of each month, so the parents could reinforce the skills at home.

### **Evaluation**

At the last faculty meeting of the 1999-2000 school year, we evaluated the Respect and Responsibility program. The teachers felt it had gone well for the first year, and want to continue to teach the same skills during the next school year.

What went well:

- The three-ring binder was a great resource.
- The topics were appropriate for the grade level.
- Parents were informed of the skills taught and were given ways to practice them at home.

What needed improvement:

- More role-play situations are needed.
- Time needs to be set aside in the schedule to teach the skills, because it was easy to put it off and not teach it.

What we decided to do to improve the program:

- A teacher was assigned to find more role-play situations.
- Teachers from the following divisions—K through second grade, third through fourth grade, fifth through sixth grade and seventh through eighth grade—will teach the skills at the same time each week.

- A virtue will be incorporated to connect with the skill.
- A bulletin board will be used to recognize students who were observed practicing the virtue.
- TOADS (Jr. High club for *Teens Opposed to Alcohol and Drugs*) will hold a quarterly school assembly to help teach a skill to the younger students.
- A ten-video set has been ordered to cover some of the social skills.
- A scripture-base of the 15 DWP skills was ordered and will be used in the 2000-2001 school year.
- A group of teachers will develop monthly journal topics that deal with the monthly virtue/skill.

### Overall Impressions

This has been an exciting program that our school has developed. The key to its success is that the staff came up with the ideas and took ownership of it.

I believe a program like this takes years of repetition and practice before improvement will be seen in the students' respect and responsibility. I did see, however, some immediate improvement with the students greeting adults in the hallway, as well as students holding doors for others without having to be asked. I even noticed the junior high students making a point to greet me before I greeted them.

I believe we will have more success in the future when we relate a virtue to each skill. This will give a deeper meaning to why we are teaching the skills. I'm blessed to have a dedicated staff who wants to see the best from the students and is willing to take time out of their schedule to teach these very important skills.

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Longmont, CO 80504. [www.sopriswest.com](http://www.sopriswest.com)

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68137. [DWPBVaol.com](http://DWPBVaol.com)

## *Christian Behavior Program*

ANNE F. CLOUGH  
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**I**t has been the policy of St. Joseph School for the past several years to adopt a theme for the school year, and to promote that theme in a variety of ways. Last year we promoted good manners, and the year before we focused on respect. Despite our emphasizing the importance of these qualities, it was apparent to the teachers and staff that more had to be done to improve the behavior of our students.

Although we have not encountered serious discipline problems involving violence, we had noticed a substantial increase in the number of incidents reported by students and parents concerning unacceptable behavior. Bullying, name-calling, excluding students, and generally non-Christian behavior appeared to be on the increase. This trend was noted and discussed at several faculty meetings last year, and ultimately resulted in the formation of a small committee, headed by the principal, to evaluate the problem and formulate some possible solutions.

The committee began by identifying what we considered to be problematic behavior, and what constituted appropriate behavior for students in a Catholic school. These were then prioritized according to the importance we felt should be given each behavior. The initial list of 18 acceptable behavior practices ultimately became the basis for the formation of the St. Joseph School Policy of Christian Behavior.

Once the tentative policy was in place, the next step was to present it to the entire faculty and staff for approval. On Holy Thursday, we had scheduled a work/prayer professional day at a beautiful retreat-house on the ocean. This seemed an ideal opportunity for everyone to meet and discuss the proposed policy, and we did so. That day, we discussed the building of Christian community in St. Joseph School and the prayer services, liturgy, and work sessions all focused on that. At the work session, the committee presented the tentative policy, explained how it had been formulated, and encouraged discussion and suggestions. The staff divided into small groups and each group was assigned several items of the policy to discuss. Eventually, the entire staff undertook the analyzing and refining of all aspects of the policy and ultimately agreed on a list of 10 items, which became the official Christian-Behavior Policy of St. Joseph School.

The next step was to determine how best to implement the policy. The committee continued to meet to discuss possible methods, including the consequences of policy violations, and to examine the Archdiocesan Curriculum Guides to see which standards best fit a variety of proposed actions. Not surprisingly, it was immediately apparent that the philosophy of the behavior-policy coincided perfectly with the Religion standards for every grade, and was the logical place to implement specific lessons. At the close of school in June, the faculty met to plan for the next school year, and the behavior-policy topped the agenda. The committee presented its suggestion for implementing the policy, and the faculty and staff added their comments and suggestions. Consensus was reached on a number of propositions:

- A character "virtue" would be assigned for each month of the school year, and teachers would design lessons, projects, bulletin boards etc., emphasizing the month's virtue.

- Every Wednesday, all classes from kindergarten to eighth grade would be taught a lesson involving the particular character trait chosen for that month. The principal and the pastor would both participate in this endeavor by teaching at least two classes per month.
- Certificates will be given out each month at our school liturgies to students who have particularly demonstrated the virtue during the previous month. Teachers may choose to award these certificates to more than one student.
- A “Good-Character Tree” will be drawn and placed in a prominent spot in our entrance hall. Students who receive a “Good-Character Certificate” will have their name and picture placed on a leaf of the tree. Our goal is to have every student in the school appear on the tree by the end of the year.
- Stickers and buttons will be purchased for teachers to give to students when appropriate, and a variety of character posters will decorate the school halls and cafeteria.
- The principal and the pastor will both address the parents at the Open House in September regarding this new policy. In addition to explaining the policy and the schools plans for implementing it, the role of parents and students will also be emphasized.
- The Policy of Christian Behavior will be printed in the Parent/Student Handbook, as well as the consequences for violation of the policy. Teachers will go over the policy with students on the first day of school, and handbooks will be distributed to parents at the Open House.
- Time will be allotted at the monthly faculty meeting for teachers and staff to evaluate the effectiveness of this new program. Teachers will also be given an opportunity at these meetings to share ideas, successes, failures, etc.
- The principal will strive to acquire a variety of resources for teachers to use, including lesson plans, books, and periodicals.
- A formal evaluation will take place next spring, and plans will then be formulated for the future direction of the program.

Character development and a virtue-based curriculum are intrinsic to Catholic education, and strengthening these very basic concepts has become a priority for our faculty and staff. Recognizing the need to do that has resulted in a program that they are very enthusiastic about, and it is our hope that it will generate enthusiasm in the students and parents as well. Communicating Christian values is part of our Mission Statement, and we hope that this new approach to teaching these values will put our preaching into practice.

## *Violence Prevention Program*

NANCY KRYGER  
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COMSTOCK PARK, MICHIGAN

**D**uring the 1999-2000 school year, Holy Trinity invited Marcia McEvoy to share her Bullying and Harassment Program with our staff, students and parents.

The program involved much role-playing with a variety of classroom, playground and bus situations. Each player reversed the role and the victim soon became the aggressor. We were able to have all staff participate, along with Marcia visiting all classrooms K-8 and sharing her program with our parents during a parent information evening. The excitement generated by Marcia's presentation was the impetus for our school to adapt a prevention program that would be all inclusive for our K-8 building.

Holy Trinity made the decision to become proactive in implementing a program that would be preventative in nature and that everyone would easily become familiar with and feel comfortable using. Our prevention program consists of the following components:

- Violence-prevention policy and procedures.
- Staff training in identification of high-risk students.
- Violence prevention curriculum familiar to all staff, students and parents.
- Training for anger management, conflict resolution, and problem-solving.
- Positive school climate with high expectations and enforceable consequences.
- Parent involvement and support.
- Student assistance follow-up for high-risk students.

We have come to define violence as any mean look, word, action or gesture that hurts a person's body, feelings or things. Bullying is defined as a form of violence that is repeated, intentional, and involves an imbalance of power between the parties involved in a given situation. Bullying also can take the form of a look, word, action or gesture. Types of bullying can encompass mean looks (eye rolling, intimidating stares or giving dirty looks) and mean gestures (insulting gestures with your hands or fingers, holding your nose, flipping someone off, using the "loser" or "crazy" gesture). Bullying may also include mean words (mocking, teasing, taunting or calling names, gossiping or spreading rumors, embarrassing or humiliating someone, threatening to harm or hurt a person, making threatening phone calls, threatening group exclusion). It may also encompass mean actions (pushing, shoving, hitting, punching, kicking, biting, assaulting another, tripping or causing a person to fall, physical cruelty, intentionally excluding someone from a group, setting someone up, writing unkind/insulting words about a person). It is important that these forms of violence/bullying are reviewed with students and that they become familiar with what is defined as unacceptable. It is also imperative that they realize the local board of education has formulated a policy about all types of violence/harassment and that there are specific consequences involved for all grades K-8.

Students also need to learn that there is a difference between a situation that needs "reporting" (adult intervention) and "ratting," more commonly known as tattling. Adult intervention is required if someone is getting hurt whether this is physical or emotional.



Through classroom discussion and role-playing, students will learn conflict resolution among themselves and how to solve a problem without seeking the assistance of an adult every time something doesn't seem to go their way. This is a very important distinction for students to learn—the difference between when are they reporting and when are they ratting. Role-playing on a weekly basis will help them to learn the difference. It may take a while, but eventually students will come to recognize the difference between the two “r” words and will be able to determine when to solve a situation on their own and when to look for adult intervention.

Staff needs to discuss and study why students bully and what they can do to assist in changing behaviors. Bullies need adult mentors who care about them and are willing to set limits to their behavior. Positive reinforcement for acts of caring is also important in assisting a bully to change his/her negative behavior. Leadership opportunities which give bullies a legitimate way for control are key in reversing their behavior. Logical and consistent consequences, along with restitution, are necessary components in assisting bullies to change. By the same token, victims need adult intervention and opportunities that help them to become more assertive in their behavior. They need adults to give them small social victories along with helping victims to identify behaviors that annoy and contribute to the bullying they experience.

Interventions on the part of staff should include:

- Familiarity with the school's violence/harassment policy.
- Providing the school's prevention curriculum and consequences to students on a repeated basis.
- Posting of the definition of violence/bullying in every classroom, hallway, lunchroom, office and bus.
- Increased adult supervision during high-risk times.
- Documentation of complaints and reports so as to track repeated offenders.
- Establishment of schoolwide consequences for violence/bullying.
- Establishment of schoolwide reinforcement for positive behaviors.
- The establishment of weekly class meetings to address unacceptable behaviors.

Holy Trinity has agreed to post the following three rules as suggested by Marcia McEvoy's in-service:

1. We will not bully other students.
2. We will help others who are being bullied by speaking out and by getting adult help.
3. We will use extra effort to include all students in activities at Holy Trinity School.

These rules will be posted in each classroom, hallway, office, lunchroom and bus. Playground aides also need to know and follow these rules and to report daily to classroom teachers when incidents occur. Aides should encourage and assist children in how to play organized games. Staff and students alike should define a NO PLAY-FIGHTING rule. This will greatly help defuse the bully who states, "We were just playing."

After the morning prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance, each class will recite the "Peace Pledge":

I pledge to be a peaceful person. I pledge to be peaceful in my school, family, neighborhood and community. I pledge not to fight with others. I pledge not to encourage others to fight. I pledge to set a peaceful example for others to follow. I pledge to make my world a more peaceful place for all children to be safe and happy. I pledge to move forward with peace in my heart each day and to follow in the way of the Master Peace-Maker, Jesus.

In addition to the creation of a board policy on violence, defining violence/bullying, the posting of rules and the recitation of the morning Peace Pledge, these strategies for bully-proofing will be used by Holy Trinity's staff:

1. Always intervene if you suspect bullying is occurring. Provide support and praise to students who report any type of bullying behavior.
2. Schoolwide consequences should include:  
"Think Time" sheet set up to include the student's name, grade, staff member, date given, and the following questions: The behavior choice did I make that got me in trouble? What other choices could I have made? What are the consequences of the choice I made? What will I do the next time I'm in the same situation?

Classroom Contract - (list the behavior I was confronted on, the behavior changes I agree to make, I understand that if I don't make these changes the following consequences will occur, teacher signature, student signature, date, copy sent to parents).

3. Restitution to victim/school. Consequences that involve Christian service are appropriate and positive in nature.
4. Pair a victim with a more popular student and give him a task that has class value so that the rest of the students can take note of it.
5. Spend five to ten minutes, usually on a Friday, doing an "I Caught You Caring" activity. This can be a "no homework" pass, an extra five minutes at recess, a sticker, or an extra library pass.
6. During a language arts class, read and discuss: *Finding the Green Stone* by Alice Walker, *The Rough-Face Girl* by Rafe Martin, *The Rag Coat* by Lauren Mills, *The Hundred Dresses* by Eleanor Estes, *They Cage the Animals At Night* by Jennings Michael Burch.
7. Use opportunities for cooperative learning and role-playing where children name a problem, name their feelings, share what they need or want from the other person, and pick a positive solution.

Along with these strategies, a schoolwide practice of what to say and do when confronting bullying and harassing behaviors should include:

1. Mark the behavior with your eyes—with a look that means and states "This is unacceptable. Stop the behavior."
2. Approach and confront the student—do this privately rather than in front of an entire group of students.
3. Describe to the student what you observed - "I saw you doing..."
4. Express how you, the observer, feel - "What you are doing is hurtful. Your behavior concerns me. I care about you but what you are doing is not OK. I expect more from you. You're a student who's made a wrong choice."

5. Tell the student what you will do and what you expect him/her to do - "I want you to stop this hurtful behavior. I'm going to be watching this behavior and if it happens again, I will be reporting this to the office and contacting your parents. In the meantime, I want you to fill out a Think Time sheet and give it to me before you leave school today."

Some ideas that can be used as consequences are:

- Filling out classroom Think Time sheets and Classroom

Contracts.

- Calling the parent to explain the behavior.
- Sending home a Caring Act set as a consequence.
- Meeting with parents and principal.
- Coming early or staying late for Christian service.
- Observing younger students during recess and passing out Caring Behavior slips/rewards.
- Missing recess and helping out in the office/library.
- Picking up trash on school/parish grounds.
- Doing something nice for the victim (with adult supervision).
- Writing an apology to the victim (approved by an adult).
- Recording in a journal any acts of kindness seen at school.
- Tutoring another student.
- Making a no-bullying poster for the school hallway
- Role-playing to see what it feels like to be the victim (with the teacher)
- Assigned seating in the lunchroom or bus if behavior took place there
- Meeting with counselor or social worker
- Detention or suspension if warranted

Finally, the Holy Trinity Prevention Program works with resistant parents to bring them on board and garner their full support. Staff is required to meet with parents before bringing in the child. This may take a little time but is well worth the effort in getting parental backing. Intervention works best when school and home

give evidence of a unified front. It's not unusual for parents to be angry and defensive initially. Parent feelings should be acknowledged but stay focused on the situation and student's behavior. Refuse to argue about blame and simply state the school's policy on violence/bullying/harassment.

Remind parents of the school's commitment to a safe environment with respect for all students. Discuss how important parents are in implementing a workable solution. Come to a decision on how to reinforce caring behavior at home and at school.

Remember that statistics tell us bullying increases every year in the elementary school and peaks in the middle school and the early years of high school. Twice as many elementary school students are bullied at school than are bullied before and after school. The most effective deterrent to bullying is adult intervention and authority.

Holy Trinity School has adopted many ideas, strategies and components of Marcia McEvoy's "Bullying and Harassment" program and hopes that by implementing it schoolwide we can provide a nurturing and safe Catholic Christian environment for all of our students.



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