



Catholic School Councils

Information Manual



**Peterborough Victoria Northumberland and Clarington
Catholic District School Board**

OCTOBER 2008

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This Moment of Promise

A Pastoral Letter on Catholic Education in Ontario
– Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops 1989.

In 1989 the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops released a Pastoral Letter on Catholic Education in Ontario. The Bishops recognized that many groups within the Church, have contributed to the development of Catholic education in Ontario. In particular, the Bishops reminded parents of their critical role in Catholic education.

“You are the primary educators of your children. Catholic schools can only extend and complement the educational process which you have begun and are continuing with your children. We encourage you to take your own faith development as seriously as you take that of your children. We invite you to become more involved in shaping educational policies and directions – particularly those dealing with religious and family life education programs, personal development courses, and child and day care programs. Seek out and insist on ways of becoming more closely related to those who are teaching your children. Consider the opportunities offered by parent organizations in our schools. Catholic schools will be greatly enriched by your efforts to bridge the gap between parish, home and school.

We realize there are times when you are under the kind of stress which makes your task as parents or guardians and educators all the more difficult. In situations where there is only one parent or where both parents are working, there is little energy for anything beyond work and/or home. We have also heard your feelings of confusion and inadequacy when faced with some of the problems your children are going through. Catholic schools do not expect to deal with perfect students or perfect parents. They are there for parents who care enough to want their children to grow in a sense of values and faith.”

Prayer for Catholic Education

O Holy Spirit,
source of truth and grace
for those entrusted with
Christian development of children,
enlighten our minds,
strengthen our wills, and fill our hearts with
generosity so that our homes,
our parishes and our schools may
co-operate effectively with you,
and with one another in the
exalted mission of catholic education.
we make our prayer through Christ,
Our Lord.
Jesus, Mary, and Joseph, pray for us.
Amen.

(with ecclesiastical approval)

April 25, 1972

Expectations of Our Catholic School Graduates
Seven Prayer Services for Staff and School Council Meetings

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Designed and Produced by Curriculum Services

Expectations of Our Catholic School Graduates

Our vision of the learner:

- **A discerning believer** formed in the Catholic Faith community who celebrates the signs and sacred mystery of God's presence through word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection, and moral living.
- **An effective communicator** who speaks, writes, and listens honestly and sensitively, responding critically in light of gospel values.
- **A reflective, creative, and holistic thinker** who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good.
- **A self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner** who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.
- **A collaborative contributor** who finds meaning, dignity, and vocation in work which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.
- **A caring family member** who attends to family, school, parish, and the wider community.
- **A responsible citizen who gives witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice, and sacredness of human life.**

Distinctive expectations for graduates of Catholic schools are determined and shaped by the vision and destiny of the human person emerging from our faith tradition. This Christian anthropology or world view, reveals the dignity and value of the person. Our tradition tells us God creatively and lovingly calls each of us into the wonder of life, sustaining us by the power of the Holy Spirit, throughout the human journey, into life eternal. We acknowledge that the journey includes moments of brokenness and sin. We recognize in the person of Jesus, the risen Christ, the human face of God sharing our life in order to heal us of our brokenness and liberate us from sin.

This Christian vision of the human journey is best understood within the context of relationship. It is accomplished in community, in solidarity with brothers and sisters in the Church and beyond.

Catholic education views human life as an integration of body, mind, and spirit. Rooted in this vision, Catholic education fosters the search for knowledge as a lifelong spiritual and academic quest. The expectations of Catholic graduates, therefore, are described not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but in terms of values, attitudes, and actions.

Session 1

Overview of Expectations

Jesus: "I have come that you might have life, life in abundance."

Opening Prayer:

God of our hope, we give thanks for this day and these people, and for your Gospel that gives this day meaning and provides your people direction. Encourage us; root us in you. Make us desire your life in us. Amen

Facilitator:

Introduce the Catholic Graduate Expectations; supply everyone with a brochure; and explain the plan of talking about them for the next seven months. Tell them why this is being done at this time.

View the entire C.D.

Facilitator:

Move them into small groups and ask them to talk for ten minutes about:

- Do you think the expectations are realistic or unrealistic for students graduating now?
- Is this what you want for your children?
- What is the role of the school, the parish, the home?

Facilitator:

Plenary Session—feedback from people

Closing Prayer:

Through the power of your compelling Spirit, may we grow in courage, that our actions might reflect the love we profess. We ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen

Session 2

#1 – Discerning Believer

Jesus: "When I return will I find faith on earth?"

Opening Prayer:

In gathering here we acknowledge the presence within and amongst us of a Spirit, present in all places at all times in this vast universe. To having the power of the Spirit at work in us we say...Amen

View Expectation #1...Discerning Believer

Facilitator:

Ask those present to sit in silence and read the points in the brochure under Discerning Believer. In the silence have then ask themselves the following questions:

- Who in your life's experience has best exemplified these qualities...identify and name such a person? (For each person...don't have to tell anyone who it is)
- How did that person show a difference between a 'believer' and a 'discerning believer'?
- How has that person shown some or all of these qualities?
- What role did the faith community have in shaping that person's belief system and the living out of it?

Facilitator:

Invites everyone to talk about their ideas of what is a 'discerning believer'?

Closing Prayer:

We experience the Spirit in our lives as a Spirit of truth and goodness, love and beauty, care and generosity. To all that the Spirit can do in each and all of us we say. Amen

Session 3

#2 – Effective Communicator

Scripture: “Go and proclaim the good news to everyone”

Opening Prayer:

We acknowledge the Spirit as the source and sustainer of everything that exists, bonding all things in relationship and connectedness, a Spirit of constant movement and new possibilities. To being filled with the Holy Spirit of God we say...Amen

Facilitator:

Set up the following scenario:

- Arrange people in groups of five to eight...with ten minutes for discussion.

The focus is on pretending to interview a person in order to discover if he/she is an effective communicator.

One group, or half the total group, in groups of five to eight talks about interviewing an applicant for an important position at I.B.M., and the other group or groups, talk about interviewing an applicant for a teaching position in a very Catholic school. Have them discuss:

- What question do you ask of the applicant?
- What information are you looking for?

Plenary Session:

- All groups report on their findings and the facilitator places their answers on a flip chart
- What picture emerges from the material on the two flip charts—sameness, differences, etc?
- Compare!

View: Expectation # 2

Closing Prayer:

We give thanks for the way Jesus has led us to awareness of the Spirit in our everyday living. He set us free so that we would live in peace, in God’s presence all the days of our lives. Amen

Session 4

#3 – Reflective, Creative, and Holistic Thinker

Socrates: " The un-examined life is not worth living"

Opening Prayer:

Indwelling God enable all of us to be women and men enthusiastic for your ministry, contagious in our love, and eager to be among your people as ones who serve. This we ask through Jesus Christ who is brother and servant to us all. Amen

View: Expectation # 3

Facilitator:

Five minutes:

- have people go through the list of qualities in the brochure, and
- pick out and list what each one considers a key word or phrase
- have each share his/her list with the group and tell why it was chosen

Exercise:

Facilitator:

Read the following scenario for discussion in small groups for ten minutes:

You are the Prime Minister of Canada. Your friendly President to the south phones you and asks you, and the people of Canada, to support him in his decision to invade Iraq. What do you say and why?

Based on what Expectation #3 puts forth...what moral reasoning do you use to arrive at an answer to this request?

Plenary Session....group feed back

Closing Prayer:

God of faithfulness we come to you at the end of the school day and find ourselves needing to begin again on new projects and new ideas. We are in need of energy and new hope. Give us the insight to recognize the ever-present possibility for change and conversion and growth. Amen.

Session 5

#4 – Lifelong Learner

Scripture: Jesus said: “You will know the truth and the truth will set you free”

Opening Prayer:

Loving God, we believe you Spirit is at work in our world. Give us eyes of faith that we might see such wonders in our midst and the courage to live in hope. Amen.

View: Expectation # 4

Facilitator:

Ask people present to form groups of five/six and for ten minutes talk about:

- For you, being a lifelong learner is . . . complete this sentence!
- What motivates you to learn?
- What are your resources for learning?

Plenary Session:

Write people’s responses on a flip chart.

Closing Prayer:

We live graciously, filled with wonder, for the marvel of creation that surrounds us. We marvel at the way the Spirit came to expression in this planet, especially in human life form, a life-form giving the Spirit unique ways to express intelligence, love, choice, care, and concern. Amen.

Session 6

#5 – A Collaborative Contributor

Scripture:

Jesus said: “Know that I am with you always until the end of time.”

Opening Prayer:

We give thanks, God our Creator, because you have given us life. You have made us in your image and breathed your Spirit into us. We are alive with divinity and your glory is made manifest in us and all those we work with. We have all been touched by God. Amen.

View: Expectation #5

Facilitator:

Have people move into groups of 5–8 people.

Facilitator gives the following exercise:

The Institute for Catholic Education has just assigned you, a graphic artist, the task of creating a symbol, a symbol and logo, a diagram, (whichever) which will visually communicate what it means to be a collaborative contributor – something to place on the Catholic Graduate Expectations brochure which will say it all.

Facilitator:

People can work alone or in groups of three/four for ten minutes.

Have each person or group, present their work and display for all to see and talk about their work of art.

Closing Prayer:

In the name of our God who shares divinity with us, in the name of our God who shares humanity with us, in the name of our God who unsettles and inspires us let us give praise and thanks. Amen.

Session 7

#6 – *Caring Family Member*

Scripture:

Mary said: “Your father and I have been searching for you with great anxiety.”

Opening Prayer:

God, our creator and sustainer, you loves us long before we knew ourselves to be lovable and love us still. Give us, we pray, a greater awareness of your love for all people, and a confidence in the action of your grace in us, our families, and our school community. Amen.

View: Expectation # 6

Facilitator:

Have people move into small groups.

Ask them to talk and identify and name some of the obstacles...demands...challenges that impact their ability to be a caring family member...ten minutes.

Plenary Session:

Place their responses on flip chart for all to see.

Closing Prayer:

We give you thanks, God of abundant life, for bread and friendship and hope. With these gifts we are nourished. With these signs of your presence, we are able to be faithful. Continue to nourish us, inspire us, and call us that we might help make your kingdom more of a reality in our day. Amen.

Session 8

#7 – Responsible Citizen

Scripture:

Micah: “Love tenderly, do justice and walk humbly with your God”

Opening Prayer:

God of history, we give you thanks for men and women in many places, at many times throughout human history who have opened minds and hearts to the reality of the Spirit in our midst, searching for words and images to express human connectedness with this mystery and with everything that exists. Amen.

View: Expectation # 7

Facilitator:

Have those present move into groups of five to eight for ten minutes, and

Using words paint the following scenario: a teacher, an atheist teaching in a completely atheistic school, engages you in conversation at a social gathering. He/she asks you....when it comes to being a responsible citizen in the city...in the country... will your graduates differ from mine and my school?

If so...why do you say that?

Where's the proof?

Plenary Session:

Feedback from people.

Closing Prayer:

We give thanks for the way Jesus has led us to awareness of the Spirit in our everyday living. Calling us to be neighbour in ways that cross religious, cultural, and social barriers, He challenges us to give the Spirit free reign in our lives so that the human community and our personal lives may be characterized by compassion and a concern for justice. Amen.

The Beatitudes

Matthew 5: 1-12

Seeing the crowds, Jesus went up on the mountain, and when he sat down his disciples came to him. And, He opened his mouth and taught them, saying...

BLESSED ARE THE POOR IN SPIRIT, FOR THEIRS IS THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN.

How truly open are we to God's spirit? Do we seek to discern God's will through prayer, reflection, conversation, and the insights of each other? Are we willing to be shaped, moulded even transformed by the promptings of the spirit of God?

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO MOURN, FOR THEY SHALL BE COMFORTED.

How compassionate are we? Are we willing to walk with the pain of another? Are we building authentic communities of love?

BLESSED ARE THE MEEK, FOR THEY SHALL INHERIT THE EARTH.

Do we practice virtue, unpretentiousness, openness, simplicity, and hospitality?
Would people experience us as living in co-operation with one another and being inclusive?

BLESSED ARE THOSE WHO HUNGER AND THIRST FOR RIGHTEOUSNESS, FOR THEY SHALL BE SATISFIED.

Do we strive to release people from oppression and ensure that everyone has what he or she needs? Do we serve the common good and exercise the social teachings of the Catholic church in daily living?

BLESSED ARE THE MERCIFUL, FOR THEY SHALL OBTAIN MERCY.

Do we show mercy to those who are struggling and misguided? Is our understanding and expression of mercy in keeping with the mercy shown to the prodigal son by his father?

BLESSED ARE THE PURE IN HEART, FOR THEY SHALL SEE GOD.

Are our Catholic educational communications places that foster the human soul and heart? Do we nourish them through prayer and the Eucharist? Are we a living expression of the Body of Christ?

BLESSED ARE THE PEACEMAKERS, FOR THEY SHALL BE CALLED CHILDREN OF GOD.

Are we artisans of shalom? Do we authentically model justice and actively create harmony and peace in our communities?

BLESSED ARE YOU WHEN PEOPLE REVILE YOU AND PERSECUTE YOU AND UTTER ALL KINDS OF EVIL AGAINST YOU FALSELY ON MY ACCOUNT. REJOICE AND BE GLAD, FOR YOUR REWARD IS GREAT IN HEAVEN, FOR SO PEOPLE PERSECUTED THE PROPHETS WHO WERE BEFORE YOU.

Are we courageous enough to accept the prophetic all of Christian baptism?
Do we seek to discern god's voice and follow it as we move through the events of our days?
Are we prepared to challenge that which counters the Gospel message.

Authentic Christian Spiritual Practices

A Way to a Healthy & Joyful Life Style

“I have come that you may have life, life in abundance.” John 10:10

Following are some Authentic Christian Spiritual Practices that release life-giving energy for daily living in the here and now. These certainly do not exhaust the wealth of Christian Spiritual Practices which fill libraries throughout the world.

In this presentation, use is made of the metaphor of the Dance and the Dancer (Anthony deMello S.J.). The Dancer is not the Dance. The Dance is not the Dancer. Although not identical the Dance cannot happen without the Dancer and there is something of the Dancer in the Dance. Exercising self-discipline the dancer must first learn the dance steps, moves and rhythm and only then is he/she able to Dance with beauty and grace. The Dance is the full expression of all that the Dancer practices.

In this document the Dancer is the Disciple of Christ and the Dance is a way of living out one's love of God and Jesus in and through a healthy life style and vocation to ministry.

Thanks to Sister Jean Smith, C.S.J. and Terry Dance-Bennink, C.S.J.A. of the Spirituality Centre, Mount St. Joseph, Peterborough, Ontario, for their ideas; and Shirley Hartwick, typist of the original documents.

It is my hope that this work will equip those who use it to become ever more aware of God's indwelling presence and unconditional love and to be soul makers in and through their ministry.

With prayers,

Father Leo T. Coughlin
Faith Animator - PVNCCDSB

Purpose and Practice – The Dancer

St. Augustine:

“Our hearts were made for Thee, O Lord, and they will not rest until they rest in Thee”

Meister Eckhaart:

“God is at home. It is we who have gone out for a walk”

Father Richard Rohr:

“Christian spirituality is down and in, not up and out”

Christian:

“A path into the mystery of God in union with Christ under the influence of the Holy Spirit”

- ❖ Increase our awareness of the indwelling presence of God and God’s unconditional love
- ❖ Create a sense of mindfulness helping people to live in the “now”
- ❖ Nurture our relationship with God
- ❖ See with new eyes the presence of God in all of creation
- ❖ Experience inner peace and freedom from overwhelming stress
- ❖ Clear away the obstacles that prevent us from sensing our unity with God
- ❖ Know God in and through life’s experience
- ❖ Fashion a life style that is healthy and joyful
- ❖ Learn the dance steps that enable us to dance with God and all of creation
- ❖ Practice and become comfortable with the dance steps in order to dance with grace and joy

A Community of Love

Scripture:

“For where two or three are gathered in my name. I am there among them.”

Matthew 18:20

Living in a Community of Love

- ❖ A community offers partners for the dancer like-minded and like-spirited people as companions on the journey
- ❖ Communal activities include: praying with others, fasting with others, encouraging one another
- ❖ The celebration of liturgies that are nourishing and life giving
- ❖ Participating with others in bible study and adult education programs
- ❖ A community gives us a sense of belonging and being cared for by others
- ❖ It is place to celebrate birth...life...death...and new beginnings
- ❖ A community includes parish...family...friends...co-workers
- ❖ Community furthers the mission of Jesus

Spiritual Reading – The Dancer

Scripture:

“Jesus stood up to read and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him”

Luke 4:16-17

Spiritual Reading

- ❖ The Bible
- ❖ Books and articles that focus on:
 - a. Spirituality and life in the world
 - b. One’s vocation and/or career
 - c. The lives of the saints and holy people living today
 - d. The mystics
 - e. The latest developments in theology

Aesthetics – The Dancer

Scripture:

“Be still and know that I am God”

Psalm 46:10

Aesthetic Experiences

- ❖ Sitting quietly and listening to music that relaxes and touches the heart and soul
- ❖ Playing music and/or singing
- ❖ Engaging in art and poetry and craft making
- ❖ Being embraced by the beauty of creation
- ❖ Experiencing the birth of a baby
- ❖ Listening to a great choir
- ❖ Participating in sacred music
- ❖ Using your creative imagination

Your Body – The Dancer

Scripture:

“Or do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you which you have from God”

Corinthians 6:19

The Body

The body is sacred and calls for proper love and care. We need:

- ❖ A healthy and strong body in order to dance with God
- ❖ Inner harmony – a balance between body, mind, and spirit
- ❖ Exercise: working out, walking, playing games, etc.

- ❖ Proper rest and relaxation
- ❖ A healthy diet and occasional fasting
- ❖ Regular physical examinations
- ❖ To listen to the body and pay attention to what it tells us
- ❖ A healthy sexuality
- ❖ To recognize, honour, and express our emotions in a constructive way

Self Knowledge – The Dancer

Scripture:

“Who is wise and understanding among you? Show by your good life that your works are done with gentleness born of wisdom”

James 3:13

Self-Knowledge

Socrates: “The unreflective life is not worth living”

Self-knowledge can come through:

- ❖ Journaling and dream analysis
- ❖ Experiencing the Myers Briggs, the Enneagram, or other exercises that reveal the true Self
- ❖ Regular examination of consciousness
- ❖ Spiritual direction/companionship
- ❖ Feedback from a friend one loves and trusts
- ❖ Open, honest, and prudent communication with other people

Pruning of Obstacles to a Full Life – The Dancer

Scripture

“I am the vine, and my Father is the vinegrower.
He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit.
Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.”

John: 14:15

Pruning

We must prune whatever is unhealthy for the mind, body, and/or spirit such as:

- ❖ Over indulgence in food, alcohol, drugs, sex, money
- ❖ An addiction to over work and over consumption
- ❖ An unhealthy compulsion to succeed or be popular or wealthy
- ❖ Lack of personal discipline and a chaotic life style
- ❖ Resentment, unforgiveness, bitterness, feelings of revenge
- ❖ Negative generational ties existing in the family tree
- ❖ Stressful or broken relationships

We are called to live from the inside out, not from the outside in.

Solitude

Scripture:

"And after he had dismissed the crowds, he went up the mountain by himself to pray."

Matthew 14:23

Solitude

"The mind is like a great tree inhabited by monkeys, swinging from branch to branch in an incessant riot of chatter and movement."

Sri Ramakrishna

We each need a place and time to be silent and still, to rest awhile, free from noise.

- ❖ it could be a room in our house
- ❖ a darkened church, oratory or chapel
- ❖ a walk in the park or sitting by a stream
- ❖ a day of stillness in a retreat house
- ❖ quiet time while driving to work or riding a train or bus
- ❖ we need healthy, Mary/Martha balance in being/doing
- ❖ our journey is from loneliness to solitude
- ❖ observing the Sabbath
- ❖ only in silence, can we hope to return home. For in silence there is stillness, in stillness, there is unity; in unity there is love; and in love, there is God

Prayer

Scripture:

"Devote yourselves to prayer, keep alert in it with thanksgiving."

Colossians 4:2

Prayer - The Dancer

- ❖ prayer is an essential spiritual practice to keep one in communion with God
- ❖ prayer is a time of grace, growth and transformation
- ❖ prayer renews and rejuvenates the body and soul
- ❖ a soul without regular prayer becomes a desert and the awareness of God is lost
- ❖ models of prayer include:
 - a. meditation, contemplation, centering prayer, the rosary as mantra/reflection
 - b. praying the scriptures ... the Book of Christian prayer
 - c. praying the cosmos, the universe, creation and nature
 - d. lectio divina
 - e. living mindfully moment by moment
 - f. acts of love
 - g. communal prayer such as joining in community workshop
 - h. mystical experiences of the transcendent, of God's presence and compassion
 - i. knowing God ... not just knowing about God

- ❖ the divine can be sensed at any time or place
 - a. in nature ... in a love relationship ... in a moment of ecstasy
 - b. in a community united behind a great cause
 - c. in the midst of suffering and despair
 - d. in a crisis, failure, strained or broken relationship, birth or death –wherever there is courage and new beginnings brought about by the Spirit

The Dance – Fruit of the Spirit

Scripture:

“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness and self control. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.”

Galatians 5:22:26

Fruit of the Spirit

- ❖ a healthy and balanced life style ... personally, with others, and with creation
- ❖ self-actualization and personality development
- ❖ inner transformation through the melting of the ego and the emergence of the True Self
- ❖ compassion, mercy, tolerance and appreciation of differences
- ❖ non-judgmental acceptance of others
- ❖ altruism rather than self-centeredness
- ❖ the courage to commit to person(s) and causes
- ❖ ability to establish healthy and long lasting relationships
- ❖ a simple life style so that others might simply live
- ❖ protection of the environment and all life forms
- ❖ a commitment to social justice, non-violence and reconciliation
- ❖ a sense of humor, playfulness and joy
- ❖ inner peace and peace with others and God
- ❖ a deep awareness of God’s presence and love in all things
- ❖ a life of service within the family, Church, work place and the wider community
- ❖ self-knowledge: who am I/ What gives me meaning and purpose in life?
- ❖ a clear sense of one’s calling or vocation

“Catholic Virtues Into Action”

Catholic education in our jurisdiction has a 157-year tradition of nurturing academic, spiritual, and character development in our students. As such, we welcome the provincial government’s new focus on character education.

Our character education, “Catholic Virtues Into Action” initiative is built on our Gospel values and Catholic Graduate Expectations.

Each academic year, schools will celebrate the following Catholic virtues:

September	- Respect	February	- Compassion
October	- Empathy	March	- Forgiveness
November	- Justice	April	- Stewardship
December	- Patience	May	- Tolerance
January	- Responsibility	June	- Honesty

Each month Principals will receive the following resources to assist with the implementation of the monthly Virtue.

1. Daily Prayers
2. Principal’s Message
3. Parish Bulletin Insert
4. Catholic School Council
5. Prayer Service
6. Eucharist (focus on monthly virtue)
 - a. Introduction to the Mass
 - b. Penitential Rite
 - c. Opening Prayer
 - d. First Reading
 - e. Responsorial Psalm
 - f. Gospel
 - g. Prayers of the Faithful
 - h. Description of the Gifts
 - i. Closing Prayer and Blessing
 - j. Liturgical Hymns
7. Quotes
8. Bulletin Board Ideas
9. Curriculum Connections
 - a. Primary
 - b. Junior
 - c. Intermediate
10. School-based Activities
11. Web Resources
12. Print Resources
13. Professional Resources
14. Multi-media Resources

