

RELIGIOUS EXPECTATIONS FOR STUDENTS IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Diocese of Salt Lake City

Background and Rationale

Catholic identity in our schools continues to be a focus for our energy and concern. Teachers do well teaching doctrine and Catholic traditions. They provide opportunities for liturgical celebrations, prayer and service. Externals in the classroom and school speak “Catholic” to those outside the school community. We deepen our spirituality and that of the students as we teach and experience the Catholic environment of our schools. To insure our Catholic identity, these guidelines are recommended and are the expectations of our Catholic schools.

Research on Catholic Schools

It has been noted in research that students who attend Catholic schools are more active in their parishes as they begin a family. Their involvement increases with their years of attendance. They assume a high level of parish leadership. They contribute more financially. The fruits of the Catholic education are not always immediately apparent; sometimes they can only be seen at a future time.

In order for the expectations to be realized we hope that:

Religion is not just a class taught nor external practices of prayer, penance and Eucharist. Religion is integrated into the whole curriculum. It includes, but is not limited to, character development, attitudes, social justice issues and service projects. It is a total education and formation of a Christian lifestyle that takes place in home, school and parish.

Parents are the primary teachers of their children and will model Christian behavior, attitudes and values taught at school. They are the first teachers of prayers, church behavior, attendance at Eucharistic celebration, etc. Parents cooperate with the school in teaching the same values, participate in the weekly parish liturgy and support parish activities. The family prays regularly at meals and at night in their homes.

Teachers and principals are responsible for the religion curriculum being taught. They support the parish and parental involvement. Teachers regularly invite priests, deacons and religious to their class for a specific purpose. The school provides educational opportunities and support to parents in the area of faith development.

Priests are essential to our religious education programs. Parish and parish staff also assist in the religious formation of Catholic school students. Priests, religious and deacons are available to schools. This can be for liturgical celebrations as well as visits to the school and classrooms. Priests, deacons and religious

are invited to assist teachers in religious instruction and offer special classes on topics of interest.

Parish members provide the faith community and modeling of Christian living to our students. It is the responsibility of our Catholic communities to support and enhance religious formation of students.

EXPECTATIONS

Eucharistic celebration at School

Elementary There will be at least one all school Mass per month.
Individual class celebration of the Eucharist is encouraged.

Secondary There will be at least one all school Mass per quarter.
Individual class/group/activity Mass is encouraged.

Sacrament of Reconciliation

Elementary Communal penance services with individual confessions
2-8 will be available at least two times a year.
A set formula, including an act of contrition, will be taught and communicated to the priests in the area. This is reviewed with students before each celebration.

Secondary Confession will be made available at appropriate times throughout the year.

Classroom Prayer

Elementary Each day will begin and end with prayer led by teacher or student.
Prayer is said before lunch each day.
Prayers on other occasions, especially liturgical seasons and feast days, are encouraged as appropriate to the situation.
Students pray regularly for vocations.
A variety of prayer forms should be taught and experienced by students.

Secondary Each day will begin with prayer led by teacher or student.
School-wide prayer is encouraged once a day.
Students pray regularly for vocations.

School-wide Prayer

Elementary Along with liturgical celebrations, the school will have seasonal prayer services and prayer for vocations.

Secondary Along with liturgical celebrations the school will have seasonal prayer services and prayer for vocations.

Prayers Taught

Elementary Students are expected to be familiar with all the formal prayers as outlined in the K-8 curriculum. Prayers are taught by use. Meanings are taught and frequently reviewed.

Secondary Students are expected to be familiar with all the formal prayers as outlined in the K-8 curriculum.

Ritual and Symbol

Elementary The following will be taught and modeled to students:
Reverence at prayer and liturgy
Appropriate church behavior
Gestures: kneel, stand, sit, bow, genuflect, etc.
Song: traditional as well as recent church music taught and used
Responses at liturgy: taught and used
Symbols taught and displayed: crucifix, statues, religious pictures, etc.

Devotions

Elementary Rosary: grades 3-8 know how to pray the rosary especially during May and October.
Stations of the Cross: all will pray these at least two times during Lent.
Benediction: all will celebrate this at least two times a year.
Saints: students are able to identify patron saint of the school and will study the well known saints. They will know their own patron saint.
Cultural Devotions are celebrated as appropriate.

Secondary The devotions taught in elementary level will continue.

Social Justice

Elementary Social Justice issues and our Christian response to these issues are taught to students at each level in age appropriate ways. They are integrated into the curriculum and through service projects.

Secondary Church documents and teachings on social justice are taught at every level. The Christian response and responsibilities are taught and reinforced with service and prayer.

Service Learning

Elementary Service projects that involve the whole school are done throughout the school year. Experience with direct hands-on service should be made available when possible.

Secondary Each school has a program for service learning and has certain requirements. Direct service and reflection is a part of the service learning program.

Peer Ministry Program

Secondary High schools have peer ministry programs.

Retreat Experience

Elementary Middle school students participate in one retreat per year. Other retreats are encouraged for all levels.

Secondary Students participate in at least one retreat per year.

Parish Involvement

Elementary Students participate in parish life: Mass on weekends, sacramental programs, reconciliation, etc.

Secondary Students are trained to participate in liturgical ministries. Pastors are notified of students who received training.

Family Life Program

Elementary Each school has a K-8 program for family life and Christian sexuality. This is currently part of the religion and health curriculum.

Secondary Each school has a Christian Life program that includes reverence for life and family, moral teaching, Christian sexuality, etc.