



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Diocese of Salt Lake City

Why do Parents Choose Catholic Schools

National research shows that parents send their children to Catholic schools for four main reasons:

1. Faith formation - The faith formation of children is most effective if children attend a Catholic school
2. Academic excellence – National standardized test results show that students in Catholic schools score much higher than the national average.
3. Discipline – Students are disciplined in behavior and in study skills because of consistent follow through within the school program.
4. Safe Environment – A respectful, caring environment is upheld. Catholic schools strive for a family centered, faith community.

Local statistics were gathered in a survey done in 2001 for the Catholic School Strategic Plan. Listed below, in order of importance, are some of the reasons parents send their children to Catholic schools in the Diocese of Salt Lake City.

1. 98% Discipline and safe environment - good discipline, safe and caring atmosphere
2. 95% Academic excellence – strong curriculum and good teachers
3. 85% Religious dimension Catholic values, integrated curriculum
4. 84% Choice over public schools - a better alternative to the public schools.
5. 63% Family value - family has always chosen Catholic school education
6. 48% Facilities, activities, sports
7. 23% Location - convenience of location

This 2001 survey also gave some data as to why parents do NOT send their children to Catholic schools in the Diocese.

1. Finances 60% of families who have children in parish religious education programs who responded felt that finances is the main reason parents do not send their children to a Catholic school.
2. Class size - 41% of parents whose children do not attend Catholic schools responded that the class size is too large and influences their decision not to send their child to a Catholic school.
3. Special student needs - 21% of parents responding said the special needs of the child is an important reason not to send their child to a Catholic school.

We believe many parents do not send their children to a Catholic school because of the **misperceptions** they have about the Catholic schools in the Diocese of Salt Lake City.

1. Utah Catholic schools are filled and there are long waiting lists. The truth is that most of our schools have short or no waiting list and there is space available in some of the grades.
2. Utah Catholic schools have large class sizes. The truth is that some do have large class sizes of 35 but there is an instructional aide to help the teachers. The Madeleine Choir School has a limit of 25; St. Joseph Elementary has a limit of 28; St. John the Baptist and Blessed Sacrament have a limit of 32. Some schools have smaller class sizes because of lower enrollment.
3. Utah Catholic schools cost too much and there is no financial assistance. The truth is that every school offers financial assistance based on the need of the family. About 50% or more of our students receive some kind of financial assistance.
4. Utah Catholic schools are not able to meet the needs of students with special physical or academic needs. The truth is that we do take students with special needs depending on the individual and the program at each school. Most of the schools have a special education teacher and several classroom teachers with a special education background. We do admit that we cannot meet the special needs of every child. In justice to them we accept students based on the ability to offer a strong program to meet their needs. The schools have responded to special situations and have grown in the ability to educate a more diverse population.
5. Utah Catholic schools do not have quality teachers. The truth is our teachers are all licensed by the State of Utah or are in the process of becoming licensed. We have teachers who have been with us for 15-35 years or more.
6. Utah Catholic schools are not accredited. The truth is that all the Catholic schools (elementary and secondary) are accredited by the State of Utah and the Northwest Association of Accredited Schools (NAAS) and the Western Catholic Educational Association (WCEA). Elementary schools are not required to be accredited but we keep this status because we want to assure a quality education.

If an education integrated with the beliefs of the Catholic faith is a value for you in the formation of your child/children, you might want to consider sending them to a Catholic school. We have a high school in Draper, Ogden and Salt Lake City. We have ten (10) elementary/middle schools (pre-kindergarten to 8th grade) located in Ogden, Bountiful, Salt Lake City, Kearns, Holladay, Sandy and Draper. You can access their websites through the diocesan website – www.dioslc.org or [Utah Catholic Schools.org](http://UtahCatholicSchools.org). Even better – visit our schools and see for yourself the quality Catholic education being offered to parents and their children.