

PASTORAL CARE OF OUR

Catholic Schools

GUIDELINES FOR THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN PARISH AND SCHOOL



DIOCESE
OF ST. CATHARINES



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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*Adapted with permission for the Diocese of St. Catharines and
the Niagara Catholic District School Board from the "Diocese of London, Pastoral Care of
Catholic Schools: Guidelines for the Relationship between Parish and School."*

Letter from the Bishop, Chief Executive Officer & Chief Education Officer

Dear Partners in Catholic Education,

It is with a shared sense of purpose and joy that we introduce this new shared resource, ***Pastoral Care of Our Catholic Schools***. This publication represents a profound commitment to the spiritual vitality of our community and stands as a formal testament to the enduring partnership between the Diocese of St. Catharines and the Niagara Catholic District School Board.

As you will read in the message that follows from the Advisory Council for Ecclesial & Educational Collaboration (ACEEC), our mission is anchored in the "sacred triad" of home, school, and parish. While each of these pillars has a distinct role, they are united by a single, transformative goal: to provide our students with a genuine encounter with the person of Jesus Christ.

Education in a Catholic context is never merely the transmission of knowledge; it is an invitation to a way of life rooted in the Gospel. This guideline provides the essential framework to ensure that our schools remain places of authentic witness. By aligning our efforts, from the liturgical life of the parish to the daily accompaniment provided by our staff, we create an environment where faith is not just taught, but lived.

We extend our deepest gratitude to the members of the ACEEC and all those who contributed to the development of this document. It is our prayer that these guidelines will serve as a source of inspiration and a practical tool for strengthening the bonds of faith across Niagara.

May the Holy Spirit continue to guide our work, and may our shared efforts truly set the hearts of our students on fire with a love for God and a desire to serve others.

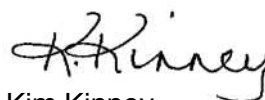
Yours in Christ,



Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.
Bishop
Diocese of St. Catharines



Giancarlo Vetrone
Chief Executive Officer
Niagara Catholic District School Board



Kim Kinney
Chief Education Officer
Niagara Catholic District School Board

Message from the Advisory Council for Ecclesial & Educational Collaboration

Dear Friends in Catholic Education,

We are pleased to present this new guideline, ***Pastoral Care of Our Catholic Schools***, a collaborative effort between the Diocese of St. Catharines and the Niagara Catholic District School Board. This document serves as a roadmap for our shared mission: to "make disciples of all nations" by fanning the embers of faith within our students and their families.

The relationship between the school, the home, and the parish is a sacred triad. Our goal in developing this document is to ensure that our partnership is guided by the principles of solidarity, mutual respect, and open communication. By clarifying our distinct roles, from the spiritual leadership of our pastors to the witness of our teachers and the accompaniment provided by our chaplaincy leaders, we can better serve the young people entrusted to our care.

Whether through the delivery of the Religious Education curriculum, celebration of the sacraments, or the shared experience of retreats and social justice initiatives, we are called to walk together in the footsteps of Christ.

As we seek to empower our young people to respond wholeheartedly to the universal call to holiness, it is our hope that these guidelines will strengthen the bonds between our parishes and schools, in our shared mission to set hearts on fire with love for God.

With faith and hope,



Fr. Paul MacNeil
Vicar for Education
Diocese of St. Catharines



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Director of Evangelization & Faith Formation
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I. Introduction

A future filled with opportunity and hope

“Catholic schools are places where the ‘New Evangelization’ can take root by inviting students and their families into a deeper relationship with Christ. The experience of community within the school can gently fan the embers until they burst into a flame of faith.”¹

The purpose of this document is to clarify expectations and best practices between the parishes of the Diocese of St. Catharines and the schools of the Niagara Catholic District School Board. Both time honoured institutions share the same goal: “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.” (**Matthew 28:19-20**)

This document serves to ensure that we are carrying out this responsibility in a spirit of collaboration and communication between school and parish. This is essential to ensuring effective, consistent and meaningful pastoral care for all schools, as is recognizing the important and distinct roles and responsibilities within this joint effort.

Fulfilling our baptismal promises

The Congregation for Catholic Education, in ***The Catholic School on the Threshold of the New Millennium***, highlights the relationship of the Catholic School and the Church. It is in this relationship that the Catholic School receives her mission and original characteristics. For this relationship to foster growth and communion between the school and parish, the relationship shall be guided by certain principles:

Solidarity: As partners in passing on the faith, this relationship works best when we understand that we need each other;

Mutual respect: Honouring each other’s specific role and vocation;

Subsidiarity: That every group or body has the freedom and the means to do what it can best do for itself without its activity being taken over by a higher body or level of the governing body. In other words:

Collaboration and communication: The work between the parish and school should be one where the parish team and school staff work together as partners in defining the relationship.

¹ Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. *Renewing the Promise*, 8.

These principles should remove any barriers that may exist between the partners, and to work in and with Christian love, it would be helpful that we all be guided by the axiom often used by St. John XXIII: **“In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, freedom in all things, charity.”**

“Communication has the power to build bridges, to enable encounter and inclusion, and thus to enrich society. How beautiful it is when people select their words and actions with care, in the effort to avoid misunderstandings, to heal wounded memories and to build peace and harmony. Words can build bridges between individuals and within families, social groups and peoples.”

Pope Francis, Message for World Day of Social Communications, Jan. 22, 2016

II. Roles and responsibilities

Understanding each other's roles and responsibilities

"Catholic Education is not confined to the school. Catholic education begins in the home, is nourished by the Eucharist and Sacraments and the life of the parish, and is sustained and grounded in the school. Catholic education is intended as a mutually supportive partnership within the specific and respective responsibilities of each partner."²

School

Principals & vice-principals

In our Catholic schools, principals are responsible for ensuring that our Catholic faith is witnessed in aspects of our curriculum and visible in our school environment. In addition, as the person responsible for all aspects of the management and organization of the schools, the principal oversees the instruction and the achievement of the students according to the teachings of the Catholic faith, as well as provincial expectations and school board policies/procedures. This is achieved by:

- Allocating the time required for teaching the religion program;
- Ensuring the prescribed religion and family life programs are taught;
- Providing opportunities for ongoing teacher-training and all the resources required for planning religious education programs;
- Ensuring the integration of Catholic teaching across the curriculum;
- Supporting school communities which find themselves in delicate or difficult situations;
- Promoting and maintaining a good communication network with various stakeholders, especially parents, the parish priest and parish pastoral team members;
- Helping to coordinate parish and school responsibilities for the preparation of students for the reception of First Reconciliation, First Communion and Confirmation;
- Providing the opportunity for parish-school relationships by sharing effective practices and new religious education resources; and,
- Inviting parents to deepen their involvement with the parish community and its social and ecclesial activities.³

Teachers

In living out their baptismal vows, all teachers are called to be witnesses of the faith. Within the Catholic school, the teacher's primary role is rooted within their vocation "... is the transmission

² Ontario Catholic Schools Trustees Association. *Bridge Builders*. 2013.

³ Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. *Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document: Religious education. Grades 1-8*. Institute for Catholic Education for the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, 2012, 10.

of knowledge about the faith. The secondary role is to support the catechetical efforts of the parish and the home”⁴

Teachers teach and transmit the faith to students when they:

- Teach all aspects of the approved religion and family life curriculum;
- Teach not only the content of faith but relate it to the students’ lives;
- Speak with integrity on behalf of the faith-community while being faithful to Church teaching and the message of the Gospel;
- Support and mentor young people in their faith as they strive to understand the value of Christianity and seek to integrate it into their daily lives;
- Assist in their Christian moral formation (of conscience);
- Witness to the Gospel message in their relationship with each student; and,
- Participate in the sacramental life of the Church, especially Sunday Eucharist, and the life of the parish⁵

Chaplaincy leaders

School chaplaincy leaders exercise a ministry for the whole school community to which they are assigned. Their role is ecclesial in its nature and its goal and is shaped by the educational setting in which it is carried out. They exercise a ministry of coordinating and directing a faithful response according to the needs of all students and staff and to the common good of the school. In their role, chaplaincy leaders endeavour to implement the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario’s ***Pastoral Letter on School Chaplaincy***⁶. In part they:

- Give witness to serving in Christ’s love by upholding in word and action an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic Church;
- Seek an increase in the Christian faith-life of all by inviting others, by their word and example, to give a faithful witness;
- Respond to the diverse faith-needs of the young people and the staff;
- Gather the community in fellowship, in prayer and worship, and into catechesis; and,
- Foster the development of the school community as Catholic Christians drawing them into responsible participation in the mission and ministry of the Church.

⁴ Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. *Religious Education*, 11.

⁵ Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. *Religious Education*, 11.

⁶ Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario, Education Commission. *Pastoral Letter on Catholic Secondary School Chaplaincy*. 2009.

Church

Pastors

The pastor is obliged to ensure that the word of God is taught to everyone in his parish, including children who attend our Catholic schools. This is reflected in Canon law.

Canon 528:

§1. A pastor is obliged to make provision so that the word of God is proclaimed in its entirety to those living in the parish; for this reason, he is to take care that the lay members of the Christian faithful are instructed in the truths of the faith, [...] He is to have particular care for the Catholic education of children and youth. He is to make every effort, even with the collaboration of the Christian faithful, so that the message of the gospel comes also to those who have ceased the practice of their religion or do not profess the true faith.

According to Canon Law, one of the most important roles of the pastor and the parish is the catechesis of children in preparation to receive the sacraments.

In a special way, the parish priest is to ensure, in accordance with the norms laid down by the diocesan Bishop, that:

Canon 777:

1° suitable catechesis is imparted for the celebration of the sacraments;

2° through catechetical instruction imparted for an appropriate period of time children are prepared properly for the first reception of the sacraments of penance and the Most Holy Eucharist and for the sacrament of confirmation;

3° having received first communion, these children are enriched more fully and deeply through catechetical formation;

4° catechetical instruction is given also to those with [cognitive and physical challenges];

5° the faith of youth and adults is strengthened, enlightened, and developed through various means and endeavors.

To fulfill this obligation, the pastor will create a bond of cooperation and friendship with all members of the school community: principal, teachers, students, parents, and support staff by:

- Supporting the principal in their role as leader of the school;
- Providing spiritual and religious support and guidance to enable staff and students to grow in their understanding and commitment to the faith;
- Supporting teachers in their responsibility to educate children and youth in the faith by sharing resources, knowledge, and expertise;
- Participating in the religious education class to draw links between various themes in the religious education program and the Gospel (e.g., readings for the Sunday

Mass), thus contributing within the school environment to the faith development of children and youth;

- Providing opportunities for staff and students to participate in liturgical celebrations, including Mass and other forms of prayer and devotion as a community of believers;
- Encouraging a collegial effort on the part of parents, parish catechists, and teachers in the preparation of children to receive the sacraments of Reconciliation, Eucharist and Confirmation; and,
- Creating opportunities for continued evangelization of parents and teachers that will support them in their role as religious educators and witnesses to the faith.⁷

Parish team members

Under the leadership and direction of the pastor, parish team members, including associate pastors, deacons, seminarians, pastoral assistants, and youth ministers, collaborate with school communities to support student faith formation. Parish team members also work to create a bond of community and friendship.

Parish team members can assist in supporting student faith formation by:

- Collaborating with schools to prepare students for the reception of the sacraments of initiation (see notes on IV. **School visits** and VI. **Sacramental preparation**); and,
- Supporting and/or facilitating school retreats, participating in discussion during class time, helping to create and celebrate liturgies, and representing the parish at school meetings, with the approval of the pastor and the principal.

Parish community

Parishioners serve this collaborative relationship by:

- Praying for those who teach the children and youth of our community;
- Giving witness in the world by living the Catholic faith as a comprehensive way of life; and,
- Using their time, talents and treasure to contribute to the faith-development of children.⁸

Religious orders & ecclesial lay ministries

We are blessed within the Diocese of St. Catharines to have several religious orders of men and women along with various ecclesial lay ministries (ie. Legion of Mary, Catholic Women's League, and the Knights of Columbus) who provide prayer, support, and services throughout the diocese, many of whom minister to our Catholic schools. These groups often support specific needs and charisms of the universal and diocesan church and can provide presentations and resources to schools as requested by the pastor or school staff and at the discretion of the school principal and/or chaplaincy leader.

⁷ Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. *Religious Education*, 8.

⁸ Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. *Religious Education*, 9.

School Board & Diocese

Religion & family life consultant

The religion and family life consultant supports teachers with the resources, information, knowledge and guidance needed to deliver the expectations of the religion and family life curriculum. They achieve this by:

- Working with teachers to incorporate and promote good pedagogical practice and the delivery of approved curriculum and resources approved by the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO);
- Working with teachers to incorporate the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations, Catholic Social Teachings and religion curriculum in all subject areas;
- Supporting the development and review of religious education resources, programs, and professional development opportunities through collaboration with the Institute for Catholic Education, Catholic Curriculum Corporation, and the Catholic Association of Religious and Family Life Educators of Ontario;
- Collaborating with the board chaplaincy leader to support religious education and family life curricular connections with faith formation programming;
- Supporting school implementation of Christian Community Service opportunities and ministry guidelines that pertain to it;
- Coordinating and facilitating staff professional development on religion and family life curriculum and resources for principals and teachers;
- Supporting principals and staff in meeting their annual pastoral plan goals; and
- Supporting the faith formation office and chaplaincy team in delivery and implementation of faith formation opportunities for students and staff.

Board chaplaincy leader

The board chaplaincy leader leads, supports and coordinates a team of chaplaincy leaders in elementary and secondary schools to provide pastoral support, faith formation, and faith-based leadership for all students, staff, trustees and school communities throughout the board. Among the board chaplaincy leader's roles are:

- Acting as liaison between the school board and the diocese, together with the vicar for education;
- Serving on various board, diocesan, and provincial committees providing theological insight into Church teachings to support initiatives, resources and events;
- Advising the board of trustees, senior administration, and school administrators on topics concerning the spiritual care of our schools, theology, Church teaching and traditions;
- Co-leading the Niagara Catholic Compassionate Care Response Team to provide and coordinate grief and bereavement support for students and staff;
- Developing the board's theological theme, including resources and materials to ensure its effective implementation across all schools and sites;

- Collaborating with Program & Innovation staff to enhance the understanding of Catholic theology across all curriculums, working closely with the religion and family life consultant to integrate religious education and family life curriculum with lived faith experiences;
- Developing, coordinating and facilitating student and staff faith formation, programing, and retreats; and
- Supervising and coordinating elementary and secondary chaplaincy leaders to provide school-based spiritual support, faith formation, and faith-based leadership.

Vicar for education

The vicar for education serves as the official liaison between the bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharines and both the Niagara Catholic District School Board and Brant Haldimand Catholic District School Board. Acting on behalf of the bishop, the vicar for education's responsibilities to Niagara Catholic include:

- Providing episcopal representation in the development of policies pertaining to school board-diocesan collaborative initiatives
- Representing the bishop at designated liturgical celebrations
- Participating in chaplaincy hiring processes as the bishop's delegate
- Serving as the bishop's representative on various committees and working groups, including but not limited to:
 - Niagara Catholic Board of Trustees meetings
 - Niagara Catholic Parent Involvement Committee
 - Friends and Advocates of Catholic Education
 - Niagara Catholic Ad Hoc Growth and Retention Committee
 - Niagara Catholic School Naming Ad Hoc Committee
- Offering consultation and guidance on matters involving diocesan interests
- Fulfilling additional representational duties as requested by the bishop

While the vicar for education serves in an advisory capacity, their recommendations are not binding on official board policy and require the bishop's final approval. The bishop reserves the right to personally attend any or all of the aforementioned functions at his discretion.

Director of evangelization and faith formation

The director of evangelization and faith formation plays a vital role in inviting students and staff into a closer relationship with Christ. Working closely with the bishop, vicar for education, director of youth and young adult ministry, board chaplaincy leader, and religion and family life consultant, the director of evangelization and faith formation fosters meaningful partnerships between the Diocese of St. Catharines and Niagara Catholic. The director of evangelization and faith formation accomplishes this by:

- Creating and implementing programs and resources that enable staff and students to discover, embrace, and live their faith through meaningful encounters with the Good News;

- Oversees diocesan sacramental preparation policies and provides comprehensive support to parishes and schools, ensuring effective collaboration in preparing students for the reception of sacraments, at the bishop's discretion;.
- Developing and delivering comprehensive faith formation programs for chaplaincy leaders; and
- Participating in quarterly chaplaincy meetings to maintain strong connections between the Diocese of St. Catharines and Niagara Catholic.

This role serves as a bridge between the Diocese of St. Catharines and Niagara Catholic, ensuring consistent and meaningful faith formation across the Catholic community.

Director of youth and young adult ministry

The director of youth and young adult ministry has a pivotal role in strengthening the parish-school-family triad, with a particular focus on engaging students, staff, and families in the life of the local parish. This involves:

- Ongoing communication with the board chaplaincy leader, chaplaincy leaders, and school administrators to share information on upcoming parish and diocesan events, initiatives, and resources;
- Developing opportunities to collaborate with Niagara Catholic on joint events and ventures to further the spiritual growth of students and their relationship to the local church; and
- Participating in quarterly chaplaincy meetings to maintain strong connections between the Diocese of St. Catharines and Niagara Catholic.

This role also serves as a bridge between the Diocese of St. Catharines and Niagara Catholic, ensuring consistent and meaningful spiritual development across the Catholic community.

III. Home-school-parish collaboration

Parents, as partners in faith, are the first educators

The ***Catechism of the Catholic Church*** and Canon Law remind parents of their responsibility in raising their children in the faith. In fact, it refers to the parents as the principal and first educators of their children.⁹ This call to be the first educators is a reminder to all parents of the duty of passing on the faith. They do this primarily through instructing in the faith, modeling habits of faith and being witnesses to the faith. As parents continue to grow in faith and participate in the sacramental life of the faith-community (Church) they set an example for their children.

The late Father James Mulligan discussed how Catholics can lose track of their faith and their duty to pass on the faith. This could be especially true for parents of children attending Catholic schools. Fr. Mulligan offers hope in this regard, as it pertains to what he refers to as the 'faith-option' for families suggesting:

The faith option becomes exactly that – an option among so many other options. But I think faith does remain an option. That sliver of faith is grace: the loving presence of a resilient God who does not abandon us. Furthermore, I see that sliver of faith as a stepping-stone and an opportunity to be present to secular Catholics in the Catholic education world.¹⁰

This presence should include an invitation for parents to claim more ownership of faith, to discover the richness and meaning of their faith and, thirdly and perhaps most importantly, assure parents of the hospitality that awaits them in the Church and on Sunday's at God's table.¹¹

While parents are the first educators, they are not the only educators of their children. The fact they are called first, means that there are others, a community ready to respond: the child's godparents, relatives, the whole faith-community including the pastoral team of the local parish and the teachers in the Catholic school.

Best Practices

- Parental involvement in sacramental preparation: parishes should plan, and school personnel support, the deepest possible participation of the parents in the sacramental preparation of their children;
- The Church should capitalize as much as possible on sacramental preparation for children to also re-engage parents who have been away from the Church;
- Parishes and schools should seek ways to promote adult catechesis, for while Jesus called the children to himself, He spent His time teaching the adults;

⁹ Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1653.

¹⁰ Mulligan, James Terrance. *A Pastor's Journal: Parishes and Schools Working Together*. Novalis Publishing, 2015, 11-12.

¹¹ Mulligan, 12.

- Parishes provide families with resources at the time of Baptism encouraging the ritualizing of daily prayer in the morning, at mealtime, and at bedtime;
- Catholic educators and parish communities consistently reaching out to families in acts of charity, compassion, and mercy;
- Parishes passing on resources/information provided by Catholic schools and school boards, promoting Catholic education to families with newly baptized individuals;
- Parish and schools reaching out to new parents, congratulating them on the birth of the child and offering support;
- Parishes offering Children's Liturgy of the Word as an option;
- Parishes and schools inviting families to the practice of regular participation in the sacramental life of the Church;
- Parishes and schools promoting sacramentals in each home; e.g., crucifixes, Advent wreaths, Christmas crèche; and,
- After reception of the Sacraments of Initiation and Reconciliation, parishes, in collaboration with schools, foster a period of Mystagogy - a period of accompaniment which allows time for one to discover what it means to fully participate in the sacramental mysteries of the Church.

Regardless of the event, the Church should reflect on special occasions where children and their families are continuously invited to take more ownership in their faith. It would seem there is more chance of parents doing this, when their children are continuously being invited and highlighted at Sunday Celebration of the Eucharist. Children will want to be where their friends are, whether at Church or elsewhere.

Parish-school collaboration

Parishes and school communities are called to offer a ministry of presence to one another, so that all involved in Catholic education may come to a deeper relationship with Christ. It is important to build a relationship based on trust and mutual respect. To foster trust and communication, members of both the parish team and school staff must have opportunities to meet face-to-face. Goals of such a meeting could include updating staffing information, exchanging contact information, sharing of the parish and school's respective annual pastoral plans, and establishing a realistic meeting and liturgical schedule.

Best Practices

- Respect the time and the curricular and/or ecclesial responsibilities of your partners;
 - Schools provide to parishes an updated reference guide, including school staff members and duties, the board and school calendars, school day start and end time, parent night, school council members, Professional Activity Day information, Faith Day date and theme, contact information etc.;
 - Parishes provide an updated reference guide, including parish team members, contact information, Mass times, celebration of the sacraments, Rite of Christian Initiation of Adults, parish committees, other parish ministries and events, etc.;
 - Celebrate Catholic education both in our schools and in our parishes – promote creative ways of manifesting the theme of Catholic Education Week in the community and parish throughout the year; and
 - Principals, pastors and chaplaincy leaders are encouraged to gather in late August/early September to prepare for the upcoming school year, including scheduling dates and opportunities for collaboration.

IV. School visits

Curriculum expectations

The curriculum that the teacher must address is directed by the Ministry of Education and the Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario (ACBO). It is the primary responsibility of the classroom teacher to deliver the catechetical materials as provided in ***Growing In Faith, Growing in Christ, Blessed and Beloved***, and ***Fully Alive***. These are the only curriculum resources approved by the ACBO for use in Catholic schools in Ontario.

Clergy visits

In accordance with ***Canon 528*** (see ***Roles and responsibilities: Pastors***, above), pastors are welcome in all Niagara Catholic schools and sites to support the faith formation of students and staff within their parish community.

While respecting classroom instructional time, pastors are encouraged to engage with students and staff to provide spiritual guidance and build communal bonds. Teachers will share current curriculum themes with the pastor to allow for meaningful connections between classroom learning and the life of the Church. Pastors can access more information about each of the lessons in ***Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ*** by signing onto the resources' online portal. Login information and a chart of unit topics can be found in ***Appendix D - Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ Parish Information***.

Guest speakers

"The Niagara Catholic District School Board recognizes that third-party guest speakers enhance and complement the excellent teaching and learning that occurs every day in Niagara Catholic schools supported by administration and staff to enrich students' educational experiences."
(AOP 303.4)

Occasionally, teachers may invite guest speakers into their classrooms to complement religious education curriculum expectations. School staff are expected to consult with the board chaplaincy leader, religion and family life consultant, and school administrators regarding the topic of the guest speaker to determine curricular connections, the faith component, and relevance to the program, course, or activity.

Niagara Catholic's [Administrative Operational Procedure on Guest Speakers in Schools](#) **(AOP 303.4)** must be followed, and the [Request for a Guest Speaker/Performance Form](#) **(Appendix A in AOP 303.4)** must be completed.

The classroom teacher must be in the class throughout the visit. They are responsible for the delivery of curriculum, ensuring classroom management; physical and spiritual safety of the students.

This procedure applies to all guests, excluding diocesan clergy.

Collaborative parish team (non-clergy) visits

Niagara Catholic values a ministry of presence that connects students to their local parish community. Parish team members, approved by their pastor and the school principal, are welcome to visit classrooms to foster a sense of belonging within the life and mission of the Church.

To balance instructional priorities with pastoral and spiritual engagement, these visits must follow a collaborative framework.

Instructional time

- Classroom visits are to be planned in collaboration with the teacher and principal to coincide with moments that benefit from a ministerial presence, such as prayer services, social justice discussions, or community-building activities. These visits must support grade specific curriculum themes and expectations in alignment with the liturgical year.
- Brief, non-catechetical visits (e.g., youth group updates or parish announcements) may occur once per month for up to 40 minutes, with the goal of bridging the school and parish experience.

Ministry of presence

- Beyond formal instruction, parish pastoral team members are encouraged to be present during "non-instructional" times such as lunch hours, recesses, or school assemblies, where they can build authentic relationships with students.
- Parish team members may also support class retreats that draw students into the mission of the local parish in collaboration with teachers and chaplaincy leaders.

Opportunities for engagement

Parish teams, religious orders, and ecclesial lay ministries are invited to support the faith formation of students and staff during recesses, lunch hours, or before and after school. Best practices for these collaborative visits include:

- **Faith leadership:** Leading Bible studies, Rosary clubs, or prayer circles;
- **Student life:** Engaging with Faith In Action Teams(FIAT), Chaplaincy Crews or promoting youth ministry events; and
- **Community building:** Participating in morning announcements, supporting school sports teams, joining school trips, or simply being present during lunch and recess to build rapport.

V. Prayer & worship in schools

Prayer

Prayer is taking time to talk to God, to honour and worship Him and to ask for help, support, and mercy in times of need. In our Catholic schools we pray formally every morning and afternoon to start and end our day as a school community. In classrooms we offer prayers of thanksgiving before meals and find opportunities to pray informally throughout the school day.

Students are encouraged to pray traditional prayers, including the ***Our Father, Hail Mary, Glory Be***, and the ***Apostles' Creed***, while also developing skills to pray spontaneously for personal and community intentions. Schools may also gather throughout the liturgical year to pray as a community, joining together to pray the Rosary, Stations of the Cross, or to light candles on the Advent wreath. Prayers are accessible in the pink binder that was provided to all schools.

Liturgy

Liturgical celebrations in Catholic schools are an important part of the Catholic education experience for all students. “Although some may not be able to share fully in the celebration, Jesus can still touch the hearts and minds of staff and students as they listen to Him and accompany Him on the road, and His presence in the liturgy nourishes all who gather. The Eucharist has the power to heal, to unify, and to inspire our diverse school communities.”¹²

The Eucharist is “the source and summit of the Christian life,” (**CCC, 1324**) and it is important that school administrators and chaplaincy leaders work closely with local pastors to ensure that there are opportunities for frequent liturgical worship. Throughout each academic year, all Niagara Catholic schools are expected to hold at least six liturgical celebrations that align with both the liturgical and academic calendars. Recognizing the infinite value of the Eucharist for the salvation of souls, it is strongly recommended that a minimum of two of these celebrations be Holy Mass.

Liturgies may include, but are not limited to:

- Holy Mass
- Weekly Advent prayer services
- Rosary celebration in May
- Ash Wednesday
- Stations of the Cross during Lent
- Liturgy of the Word during Catholic Education Week

¹² Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. *Renewing the Promise*, 23.

Best Practices

- Schools should consult the [liturgical calendar \(Ordo\)](#) on the Canadian Conference of Catholic Bishops' website when preparing for Mass and prayer services;
- Schools should reach out to their chaplaincy leaders for additional support in planning and preparing for Holy Mass and liturgical celebrations as needed.

Retreats

Retreats are an important and valuable aspect of a Catholic education, fostering spiritual growth outside of the classroom. A retreat allows us to set apart dedicated time for God: to pray, learn, reflect, and build community.

Chaplaincy leaders will facilitate retreats for all students in grades 8, 9 and 12.

Retreats will include the following components:

- Liturgy (Mass, Stations of the Cross, Rosary, prayer)
- Catechesis (on the Catholic Faith)
- Community (solidarity, social justice, evangelization, team building)
- Reflection (letter to self, letter to God, quiet time, meditation, personal or group reflection questions)

(See **Appendix B- School Retreat Plan**)

VI. Sacramental preparation

Sacraments are, first and foremost, actions of Christ and his Church. The Church is, therefore, responsible for determining the specifics of sacramental preparation and celebration. Please refer to Appendix E “**Criteria for the Sacraments of Initiation of Children**” for further information regarding Sacramental preparation in the Diocese of St. Catharines.

While the primary responsibility for Sacramental preparation is that of the Church, all teachers fulfill their responsibilities in supporting sacramental preparation, by teaching the ACBO’s approved curriculum provided through **Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ** and the **Blessed and Beloved** programs. The catechesis provided through grades one to eight in **Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ** and **Blessed and Beloved**, supports the foundation of sacramental preparation as offered thru the parish. Other sacramental preparation programs, though valuable, are not to replace the approved curriculum and resources taught during the instructional time. These programs can be facilitated at the parish or at the school during non-instructional times.

Special considerations

Special care and pastoral understanding should be taken when preparing children with special needs for the reception of the sacraments. Teachers and support staff in our schools are specially trained to work with and adapt materials to meet the unique needs of individual students in all subject matters and as such are also equipped to assist the parish in ensuring students with special needs are properly prepared for the sacraments. All schools across Niagara Catholic are equipped with adaptive kits to support sacramental preparation for first Reconciliation, first Communion, and Confirmation for students with autism and other special needs. These kits can be used at the school level and can also be loaned to families and parishes as requested.

Resources:

[In the Likeness of God: Sacramental Preparation for Students with Special Needs](#)

Direct link for accessibility:

[https://catholiccurriculumcorp.org/wp-content/uploads/Sacramental Preparation for Students with Special Needs.pdf](https://catholiccurriculumcorp.org/wp-content/uploads/Sacramental_Preparation_for_Students_with_Special_Needs.pdf)

Adaptive Kits

[Reconciliation:](#)

Direct link for accessibility: <https://store.loyolapress.com/adaptive-reconciliation-kit>

[First Communion:](#)

Direct link for accessibility: <https://store.loyolapress.com/adaptive-first-eucharist-preparation-kit>

Confirmation:

Direct link for accessibility: <https://store.loyolapress.com/adaptive-confirmation-preparation-kit>

Spiritually Able: A Parent's Guide to Teaching the Faith to Children with Special Needs

By David and Mercedes Rizzo (Loyola Press)

VII. Chaplaincy leadership

The vision of the ACBO statement, ***Pastoral Letter on Catholic Secondary School Chaplaincy***¹³ describes school chaplaincy as a pastoral role carried out in an educational setting, and in a collaborative and cooperative manner to promote the spiritual and human development of the members of the Catholic school community.

Chaplaincy leaders, though employed and paid by the school board, represent the Church in their ministry.

It follows that:

- The local diocesan bishop will be represented or consulted during the selection process for chaplaincy leaders;
- References must include one from the applicant's pastor; and,
- The diocesan bishop is regularly apprised of the ongoing chaplaincy service within the board.

A chaplaincy leader is a theologically educated and pastorally trained person, who helps develop, strengthen and nurture the faith of, and provide care for, the members of a school community. A person aspiring to the role of chaplaincy leadership must be a practicing Catholic who is adequately qualified in academic and theological credentials and, through study and training, in pastoral care and youth ministry.

The pastoral letter proposes a common vision and path for the development and growth of this essential ministry in our Catholic schools. The insights shared can also be used to reflect on the role of chaplaincy leadership in our elementary schools.

Chaplaincy leaders

School chaplaincy leaders exercise a ministry of coordinating the faithful response to the needs of the whole school community to which they are assigned. Chaplaincy leaders provide witness of serving in Christ's love; they uphold in word and action an understanding of the teachings of the Catholic faith and seek an increase in the Christian faith life of all. The role is ecclesial in its nature and its goal and is shaped by the educational setting in which it is carried out.

Responding to the needs of the young people and the staff, the chaplaincy leader gathers the community in fellowship, prayer and worship, and catechesis.

Duties & Responsibilities:

Spiritual Care

- In collaboration with school administrators and local pastors, prepare annual ***School Pastoral Plan*** (see ***Appendix A***);
- Pastoral care of students and staff through a ministry of presence and accompaniment, especially during times of illness or grief; and
- Facilitate, foster, and support an active faith life in the school through prayer and liturgy

¹³ Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario. *Pastoral Letter on Catholic Secondary School Chaplaincy*. 2009.

- Coordinate the celebration of the sacraments throughout the school year (Eucharist & Reconciliation)
- Properly prepare, and as required, facilitate liturgical celebrations in accordance with the norms and traditions of the Catholic Church

Faith formation and catechesis

- Build, sustain, and develop Catholic culture;
- Effectively plan and facilitate Grade 8, 9 and 12 retreat programs;
- Support and provide Catholic leadership opportunities for students and staff;
- Support classroom curricular expectations by providing opportunities for students to experience and explore that which they have been taught;
- Encourage personal and professional faith development among school staff;
- Assist and support teachers of religious education in matters of orthodoxy, background and presentation of catechetical material; and
- Integrate annual theological theme in school life, including but not limited to, prayer, activities, faith formation, retreats, celebrations and liturgies.

Social justice and evangelization

- Promote and encourage social justice initiatives and awareness within the school and broader school community (Pilgrimage, Development and Peace, St. Vincent de Paul, etc.);
- Catholic Education Week; and
- Proclaim the Gospel through witness and word, inviting all members of the school community into a personal encounter with Jesus Christ and a deeper commitment to the missionary life of the Church.

Communication and collaboration

- Foster positive triad relationships between school(s), parish(es), and families;
- Support participation in diocesan and parish liturgical celebrations, events, and initiatives;
- Collaborate and effectively communicate with students, chaplaincy colleagues, school and board-level staff, parents, and community support; and
- Participate in diocesan pastoral zone meetings (when applicable) and board chaplaincy meetings

VIII. Appendices

Appendix A - Annual School Pastoral Plan

SCHOOL PASTORAL PLAN

Please complete and send to the board chaplaincy leader by October 1st.

SCHOOL

Principal

Pastor(s)

Chaplaincy leader

School Faith: Strengths

School Faith: Goals
(Area for Improvement)

SUPPORT

Where do you feel your school needs support from the board chaplaincy leader and religion & family life consultant to meet your faith goals for this year? Please be specific.

SACRAMENTAL LIFE

A community that builds relationships

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

Liturgy

Throughout each academic year, Niagara Catholic schools are expected to hold at least six liturgical celebrations that align with both the liturgical and academic calendars. Recognizing the infinite value of the Eucharist for the salvation of souls, it is strongly recommended that a minimum of two of these celebrations be Holy Mass.

A liturgy can be the celebration of Mass, Liturgy of the Word, Prayer Service, Stations of the Cross, or the Rosary.

Celebration	Type of Liturgy	Location	Date
Opening			
Advent			
Ash Wednesday			
Easter			
Catholic Education Week			
Closing			

Sacraments

		Date(s)
Reconciliation		Advent (or Sept-Dec)
		Lent (or Jan-June)
Elementary	First Reconciliation	
	First Communion	
	Confirmation	

CATECHESIS

A community that accompanies

“Catholic schools are communities of accompaniment where the story of salvation is known and shared, offering the encouragement that comes from knowing that Jesus walks with us. In addition to being places of teaching and learning, Catholic schools live the Emmaus experience as they witnessed the Risen Lord. It is important to recognize that people are at different stages on that Journey. Jesus provides the model for how our schools and parish communities need to accompany students and families with great respect, patience and love, inviting all to deepen their understanding of Christ and his Church.” (Renewing the Promise, 7)

Student Faith Formation

Activity		Date
ELEMENTARY	SECONDARY	
Gr. 8 Journey Retreat		
Chaplaincy Visit 1	Gr. 9 Retreat	
Chaplaincy Visit 2	Gr. 12 Retreat	
Chaplaincy Visit 3		
Theological Theme <i>How will your school community embrace & celebrate this year's theological theme:</i>		

Staff Faith Formation

1 School-based staff faith formation opportunity should be offered annually outside of Faith Day or board facilitated opportunities.

Examples: Weekly Staff Mass or liturgy, Lenten scripture study, social justice project, Food & Faith, Stations of the Cross, Rosary, Catholic guest speaker

OUTREACH

A community that encourages engagement and instills hope

“The Christ-centered mission of each school, by its very nature, contains a call to service in the greater community. Catholic schools form disciples with a social conscience who put their faith into action. Students and staff help to promote engagement with the local and global community through their many acts of charity and by their witness to social justice and environmental stewardship.” (Renewing the Promise, 10)

Solidarity, Social Justice & Evangelization

(Pilgrimage, Development & Peace, food drives, fundraisers, Truth & Reconciliation initiatives)

Connecting with our Parish

CATHOLIC EDUCATION WEEK

Our Catholic schools are, by definition, faith-based schools, firmly birthed in the gospel values of Jesus Christ. It was this conviction, that at the very beginning of publicly funded education in the province, that the Catholic community in the Diocese of St. Catharines and some very dedicated Catholic trustees, doggedly sustained a fight for the right of Catholics to their own publicly funded Catholic schools. What we enjoy today, is due to a history of sacrifice and determination and the extraordinary works of bishops, sisters, brothers, priests, and lay men and women, to build and preserve Catholic education in the face of all forms of opposition, both political and legal. The challenges to the existence of publicly funded Catholic education are alive today. In an increasing secular Ontario, there are those who see publicly funded Catholic education as anachronistic and discriminatory. But Catholic education has contributed significantly to Ontario and to Canada in the contributions of all those wonderful graduates of our Catholic system.

This week we continue to celebrate a school system, which celebrates and defines itself on faith and mercy and embraces the message of salvation for all peoples preached by Jesus.

Niagara Catholic elementary and secondary schools celebrate Catholic Education Week (CEW) in conjunction with Mental Health Week (MHW), during the first full week of May. This is an opportunity to highlight the strong connection between our Catholic faith and mental health and well-being in Niagara Catholic schools.

NOTE: The following Catholic Education & Mental Health Week Planner should be completed and submitted to your superintendent by the third week of April. The theme for Catholic Education Week and its subsequent daily themes, will be announced by OCSTA in the fall.

Niagara Catholic District School Board

**CATHOLIC EDUCATION
& MENTAL HEALTH WEEK PLANNER**

SCHOOL		
	Catholic Education Week	Mental Health Week
SUNDAY		
MONDAY		
TUESDAY		
WEDNESDAY		
THURSDAY		
FRIDAY		

Please submit a completed planner to your family of schools' superintendent by the third week of April.

Appendix B - School Retreat Plan

SCHOOL RETREAT PLAN

Please complete one for each grade level and send it to the Board Chaplaincy Leader.

School			
Chaplaincy Leader			
Grade Level	Date		
Location	Time		
Retreat Components To ensure consistency across all Niagara Catholic schools, all retreats will include the following components:			
Liturgy (e.g. Prayer, Mass, Stations of the Cross, Rosary)			
Catechesis (on the Catholic Faith)			
Community (e.g. solidarity, social justice, evangelization, team building)			
Reflection (e.g. letter to self, letter to God, quiet time, meditation, personal or group reflection questions)			

Retreats are an important and valuable aspect of a Catholic Education which fosters spiritual growth outside of the classroom. A retreat allows us to set apart dedicated time for God- to pray, learn, reflect, and build community. Retreats must be offered for all students in grades 8, 9 and 12, and ideally will take place off school grounds.

Appendix C - Diocesan Guidelines for School Chapels



DIOCESE OF ST. CATHARINES

P.O. Box 875
St. Catharines, Ontario, Canada
L2R 6Z4

THE CHANCERY

905-684-0154
Fax: 905-684-2185

Guidelines for Chapels in the Niagara Catholic District School Board

These guidelines are to be followed for all Chapels in both Elementary and Secondary Schools

1. The Chapel is our sacred space in the schools. All are invited and encouraged to use the Chapel for times of quiet and personal prayer as well as class celebrations. School Chapels are not to be used as a lounge, meeting place, classroom or an area for extra curricular activities.
2. Food and drink are not permitted in the Chapel.
3. The Altar is the "table of the Lord" to which God's people are invited. It is never to be used as a desk or work table. Aside from candles, only the bread, wine and the Roman Missal are placed on the Altar. It is not to be used as a stand for notes, papers or displays of any kind.
4. The Lectern is used for the proclamation of the Scriptures, the responsorial psalm, the homily and the general intercessions. It is reserved for these liturgical actions.
5. The Chapel should be clean and inviting. Appropriate colours and other symbols should mark each liturgical season. All vessels, vesture and altar appointments should be kept in good condition. It is appropriate to have a statue or icon of Our Lady or the Holy Family or the saint in whose name the School or Chapel is dedicated.
6. All chapels in Niagara Catholic schools are specifically designed and furnished for prayer and liturgy within the Catholic tradition and are not to be considered multi-faith chapels. Chapels are open to all people for individual silent prayer or meditation. Non-Catholic liturgies or group prayers will not be held in any chapel.
7. Tabernacles, for the purpose of the reservation of the Blessed Sacrament, are only permitted in Secondary School Chapels and at the Catholic Education Centre. Chaplaincy leaders are entrusted with ensuring the proper reservation and reverence of the Blessed Sacrament.

The tabernacle should be dignified and immovable and placed on a wall niche or other stand.

A Sanctuary Lamp, a single lighted candle or electric fixture should burn at all times. The Blessed Sacrament is not to be reserved in any Chapel during the months of July and August when a Chaplaincy Leader is not regularly present at the school.

Revised February 2025

Approved by Bishop Gerard Bergie, February 2025

CATHOLIC CENTRE: 3400 Merrittville Highway, Thorold, Ontario
www.sainted.com email: chancery@sainted.com

Appendix D - Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ Parish Information

Parish Login Information

www.pearsoncanada.ca/growinginfaith/parish
username: niagaracatholic_Parish
password: Religion1
*Password is case sensitive

The content in ***Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ*** is organized according to the liturgical year. Please note that all dates are approximate, updated yearly by Pearson and the number of weeks and content covered may vary.

The following charts highlight the focus question for each lesson. For more detailed information on the topics included in the lesson please visit the GIFGIC parish portal or speak with your school principal or classroom teachers.

The Grade 9 program runs approximately a lesson each class over the course of the 5 month semester. The monthly timelines provided for this program are approximate, and the number of days and content covered may vary.



**GROWING IN FAITH
GROWING IN CHRIST**

9

Parish Website

Grow the Home-School-Parish Relationship

The **Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ Parish Website** helps parish and pastoral teams stay connected to what is being taught in Religious Education classes in schools and strengthen the faith partnership between the home, school, and parish.



Visit: pearsoncanada.ca/school/growinginfaith/parish/

Username:

Password:

On the website, you will find...



**Message from
our Bishops**

Welcome to the
program



**Sacramental
Content in the
Program**

Explore
sacramental
content



**Media by
Student Book
Unit**

Includes videos, songs, scripture and
prayers



**Program Content
by Media Type**

Questions? Please contact our Technical Support:
retechsupport@pearsoncanada.com

Pearson

GRADE 1 - GIFGIC UNITS CALENDAR & FOCUS QUESTIONS

SEPT	Unit 1: I am a Child of God				
	Pre-lesson: How can I learn more about God through art? 1: Who is God?	2: What is a family?	3: Who is Jesus?	4: Who made me?	5: Why did God create the world?
OCT	6: Why is it important to keep a promise?	7: What does God want me to do?	8: What is a saint?	9: How do the saints do God's work?	
NOV	10: How can I serve others like Jesus did?	11: What is the liturgical year?	Unit 2: The Road to Bethlehem		
			1: What is Advent?	2: How can I say "yes" to God during Advent?	
DEC	3: How can I prepare for Jesus?	4: How does Jesus bring us love?	Christmas	Winter Break	
JAN	5: How can I share the Good News of Jesus?	Unit 3: My Life in Jesus			
		1: Who was John the Baptist?	2: What is Baptism?	3: What is a family?	
FEB	4: How does our parish family help others?	5: How did Jesus teach us to help others?	Unit 4: The Story of Lent & Easter		
			1: What is Lent?	2: How does God show that He loves me?	
MARCH	3: What can I learn from Jesus?	4: What did Jesus sacrifice for me?	March Break	During Holy Week, students engage in celebrations and deepen their understanding of Easter. They will continue to explore the unit activities.	
APRIL	5: What does Easter mean to me?		Unit 3: My Life in Jesus		
			6: How did the saints help others?		
MAY	Unit 5: Jesus Is Always with Us				
	1: How does Jesus stay with me?	2: How can I live my life like Jesus?	3: How can the Holy Spirit help me?	4: How does Mary care for us?	
JUNE	5: How does Jesus show love and mercy?	6: What does Jesus want us to do?	7: How does God show He loves me in the stories Jesus told?	8: How can I celebrate what I have	

GRADE 2 - GIFGIC UNITS CALENDAR & FOCUS QUESTIONS

SEPT	Unit 1: We Belong to God's Family				
	Pre-lesson: How can music and art help me learn more about God? 1: What is special about our classroom community?	2: How do we gather as God's family?	3: What do we believe?	4: Who did Jesus call?	5: How do we celebrate at Mass?
OCT	6: How does living like Jesus help us to be happy?	7: How can we live like Jesus?	8: What can the saints teach us about living like Jesus?	9: How do the sacraments help us?	
NOV	10: Why does God forgive us?	11: How does Jesus forgive us?		Unit 2: The Road to Bethlehem	
				1: What does Advent mean to us?	2: How do we prepare our hearts for Jesus?
DEC	3: How do we spread God's joy?	4: What is God's gift to us?	Christmas	Winter Break	
JAN	5: How does Baptism make us members of God's family?	Unit 3: Jesus Guides Us			
		1: What was Jesus like as a boy?	2: How does Jesus heal us?	3: How does Jesus tell us to love one another?	
FEB	4: What does Jesus teach us about the Blessed Trinity?	5: How does Jesus nourish us?	Unit 4: The Story of Lent and Easter		
			1: How do God's people prepare for Easter?	2: What does Jesus teach us about serving others?	
MARCH	3: What are the events of Holy Week?	4: What gifts did Jesus give us at the Last Supper?	March Break	During Holy Week, students engage in celebrations and deepen their understanding of Easter. They will continue to explore the unit activities.	
APRIL	5: How can we celebrate the resurrection of Jesus?		6: What can the saints teach us about living like Jesus?		
MAY	Unit 5: We Are Blessed in Faith				
	1: How do acts of kindness and love make us like Jesus' followers?	2: How is Jesus' mother our mother, too?	3: What are the four parts of the Mass?	4: How is Jesus still with us?	
JUNE	5: Whom did Jesus promise to send at Pentecost?	6: How do we celebrate the Holy Trinity?	7: How can we share our faith?	8: How do we celebrate our blessings?	

GRADE 3 - GIFGIC UNITS CALENDAR & FOCUS QUESTIONS

SEPT	Unit 1: We Belong to God's Family				
	Pre-lesson: How can I learn more about our faith community through art? 1: What makes us part of a community?	2: How do others help us live out the Beatitudes?	3: How can prayer help me grow in relationship with God and others?	4: How can I take part in Jesus' mission?	5: How does Mary show us how to live in community?
OCT	6: How can honouring Mary help me?	7: Who are the saints?	8: What are All Saints' Day and All Souls' Day?	9: What is free will?	
NOV	10: How do we seek forgiveness?	11: How is Jesus our King?	Unit 2: The Road to Bethlehem		
			1: How can I prepare for Advent?	2: What can the prophets teach me about Advent?	
DEC	3: What can Mary teach me during Advent?	4: How does God fulfill His promise at Christmas?	Christmas	Winter Break	
JAN	5: How can we spread the Good News to others?	Unit 3: Born of the Spirit			
		1: Who is the Holy Spirit?	2: What is our relationship with God?	3: How does the Holy Spirit help us keep God's laws?	
FEB	4: How do we know the Holy Spirit is present?	5: How are we part of the Body of Christ?	Unit 4: Our Lenten Journey		
			1: What is Lent really about?	2: How do we hurt our relationship with God?	
MARCH	3: How do we hurt our relationships with others?	4: How does God show us mercy?	March Break	During Holy Week, students engage in celebrations and deepen their understanding of Easter. They will continue to explore the unit activities.	
APRIL	5: What is the meaning of the Paschal Mystery?		6:How can we fulfill Jesus' mission on Earth?		
MAY	Unit 5: The Promise of the Holy Spirit				
	1: How can we fulfill Jesus' mission on Earth?	2: How does the Holy Spirit help us recognize Jesus?	3: What does the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost mean to us today?	4: How is the Holy Spirit present in the liturgy of the Church?	
JUNE	5: Who is Mary, Mother of the Church?	6: How does the Holy Spirit help us grow in our relationship with God and Jesus?	7: How do we know we are called to serve God?	8: How can we be a witness to Jesus in our community?	

GRADE 4 - GIFGIC UNITS CALENDAR & FOCUS QUESTIONS

SEPT	Unit 1: Called to Be One				
	1: How are we one Body in Christ?	2: How does the Bible help us to be one in our faith?	3: How are we united through prayer and ritual?	4: How do the sacraments unite us with God and one another?	5: What is holiness?
OCT	6: How can following our conscience help us to grow in holiness?	7: How can we grow in holiness through reconciliation?	8: How can we grow in holiness through prayer?	9: How can the lives of saints inspire us to holiness?	
NOV	10: How can we grow in holiness through our actions?	11: How does caring for God's creation help us grow in holiness together?		Unit 2: A New Beginning	
				1: Why is Advent a time for transformation?	2: How does reconciliation transform us during the season of Advent?
DEC	3: How does prayer transform us during the season of Advent?	4: How did the birth of Jesus bring a new beginning?		Christmas	Winter Break
JAN	5: How are we called to spread the Good News?	Unit 3: The Kingdom of God			
		1: What is God's plan of salvation for us?	2: How does Baptism prepare us to participate in the kingdom of God?		3: What did Jesus do to teach people about the kingdom of God?
FEB	4: How did Jesus use His divine authority and power to spread God's Word?	5: Why did Jesus establish the Church?	Unit 4: New Life in Jesus		
			1: How do we renew our relationship with God during Lent?	2: How do prayer and fasting renew our spirits and prepare us to receive new life in Jesus?	
MARCH	3: How can we grow in holiness through giving during Lent?	4: How do scripture and our knowledge of forgiveness help us to be healed during Lent?	March Break	5: How do the sacraments help us to heal during Lent?	6: How does celebrating the Paschal Mystery help us understand the gift of new life in Jesus?
APRIL	7: How do we celebrate and welcome new Church members to share in the gift of eternal life?		6: How can we work in unity with others to be of service to God in building His kingdom?		
MAY	Unit 5: Building the Kingdom of God				
	1: How did the Apostles fulfill their mission and make disciples of all nations?	2: How do we continue to build one holy, catholic, and apostolic Church?	3: How does the Church reach out to all people?	4: How do we grow in faith and holiness to serve God?	5: How can we know, grow, and show our faith so we can serve God as He builds His kingdom on Earth?
JUNE	6: How can we act in faith, hope, and charity to spread the kingdom of God for the good of all?			7: How can we evangelize by sharing our faith journey with others?	

GRADE 5 - GIFGIC UNITS CALENDAR & FOCUS QUESTIONS

SEPT	Unit 1 The Gift of Our Faith				
	1. How does believing, knowing, and trusting God develop our faith?		2. What lessons of faith can we learn from Scripture?	3. How does God demonstrate His unlimited love for us?	4. How does Jesus fulfill God's plan for salvation?
OCT	5. How does Sacred Tradition help us understand our faith?	6. How do the parts of the Mass support our faith?	7. How were people in the Old Testament inspired by the Holy Spirit?		8. How does the Holy Spirit inspire us to love through action?
NOV	9. How do the saints inspire our faith?	10. How do role models of faith draw us to God?	Unit 2 Called to Gather In Faith		
			1. How does waiting for the coming of Christ during Advent bring us hope?	2. How do symbols and prayers draw us closer to God during Advent?	
DEC	3. How does following Mary's example of faith and trust in God lead us to charity and joy?		4. How do Sacred Tradition and rituals gather us in faith?	Christmas	Winter Break
JAN	5. How does our baptismal mission call us to action in our lives?	Unit 3 Called to Live a Moral Life			
		1. How does following God's will make us truly free?	2. How does Jesus guide us to live a moral life?	3. What helps us live as children of light?	
FEB	4. How do we build the living Body of Christ?		Unit 4 Celebrating the Paschal Mystery		
			1. How does the Church guide and support us during Lent?	2. What helps us answer God's call to holiness?	
MARCH	3. Why should we communicate with God through different expressions of prayer?	4. How does God's grace work within us?	March Break	5. How do we remember Jesus' love and sacrifice during Holy Week?	
APRIL	6. What do Easter and Pentecost teach us about our own faith journey?		5. How does the Church work toward the common good?		
MAY	Unit 5 Rooted in Dignity and Living				
	1. How does understanding human dignity help us understand the Catholic social justice principles?	2. How can understanding solidarity help us to respond to the needs of others?	3. How can we live out our responsibilities to God and others?	4. How does the Church teach us to respond to the needs of those who are poor and vulnerable?	5. How does living a life of charity help us grow in our faith?
JUNE	6. How can we respond to human dignity through charity and service?				

GRADE 6 - GIFGIC UNITS CALENDAR & FOCUS QUESTIONS

SEPT	Unit 1: God Calls Us to Know Him				
	1. How does experiencing God's creation help us know God?		2. How does understanding Scripture help us know God?	3. How does our ability to reason help us know God?	4. How does having faith help us know God?
OCT	5. How does Jesus teach us that His Church is for all people?	6. How was the Good News passed on from the early Church to help us know God today?	7. How does understanding the mission and authority of the Church?	8. How does understanding Church teaching and Tradition help us know God?	
NOV	9. How does celebrating the Mass inspire us to know God?	10. How does the Mass prepare us to serve God and others?	Unit 2: O Come, Divine Messiah		
			1. What was Mary's role in the Incarnation?	2. How does following in Mary's footsteps help us grow in holiness and virtue?	
DEC	3. How does the life of Jesus help us understand His mission?	4. How can different forms of prayer help strengthen our relationship with God and bring us peace during Advent?		Christmas	Winter Break
JAN	5. How can the Holy Family inspire us to live a holy life?	Unit 3: Answering God's Call to Serve			
		1. What can we learn about God's call from people in the Old Testament?	2. How does God's grace help us live our baptismal mission?	3. How can we know what God is calling us to do in our lives?	
FEB	4. How do those called to the religious life and the ordained life discern how they will serve God?	Unit 4: Take Up Your Cross			
		1. How does Jesus guide us to know and follow God's will?	2. How do the Paschal Mystery and the rituals and symbols of Lent help us better understand and live by God's will?		
MARCH	3. How can we focus on forming and examining our conscience during Lent?	4. How do God's laws and Church teachings guide our conscience and our communities?	March Break	5. How does following our conscience and developing virtues help us grow in holiness?	
APRIL	6. How do our Easter liturgies, prayers, and rituals help us celebrate God's love and live as God wills?		5. How do the ordained members of the Church guide us in answering God's call?		
MAY	Unit 5: Gather Us Together				
	1. How is dignity part of God's plan as it is revealed in Scripture?	2. What are inequality and injustice, and how do they contradict the Gospel?	3. Why do we respect diversity and dignity?	4. How does dialogue help us respect diversity and dignity?	5. How do we live with love and respect in a diverse world? 6. How do we wit
JUNE	6. How do we witness to justice and service?				

GRADE 7 - GIFGIC UNITS CALENDAR & FOCUS QUESTIONS

SEPT	Unit 1: Preparing for God’s Kingdom				
	1. What does the Sermon on the Mount teach us about God’s kingdom?	2. How does understanding the Law of Love deepen our relationship with God?	3. How does piety help us strengthen our connection with God?	4. How do we keep God first in our lives?	
OCT	5. How does the Lord’s Prayer lead us to God’s kingdom?	6. How does understanding the petitions of the Lord’s Prayer help us lead a Christian life?	7. How does the Lord’s Prayer guide us in a spiritual life of prayer?	8. How does the New Covenant lead us to the kingdom of God on Earth as it is in Heaven?	
NOV	9. How does the celebration of Mass help us remember Christ’s life, death, and resurrection?	10. What is the significance of Christ’s presence in the Mass?	Unit 2: Bringing Christ into the World		
			1. How do Mary’s life and roles guide us to follow her Son?	2. How does Mary inspire us through her relationships with Jesus and the Church?	
DEC	3. How does Mary unite the Church?	4. How do the saints bring Christ into the world?		Christmas	Winter Break
JAN	5. How do the saints inspire us to be witnesses of Christ?	Unit 3: Sacramental Grace for a Life of Service			
		1. How does the Holy Spirit help us live as followers of Jesus?	2. How does Confirmation give us the grace needed to live our vocation?	3. How does the sacrament of Holy Orders help fulfill Christ’s mission?	
FEB	4. How is God’s love reflected in the sacrament of Marriage?		Unit 4: God’s Plan for Salvation		
			1. How does God’s plan of salvation unfold in Scripture?	2. How does Jesus’ death and resurrection accomplish our salvation?	
MARCH	3. How does the Resurrection confirm our faith in Jesus?	4. How did the Holy Spirit guide the Apostles to continue Jesus’ saving mission?	March Break	5. How does the Holy Spirit continue to guide the Apostolic Church today?	
APRIL	6. How do we the Church live out our apostolic mission?		5. How does sacramental marriage help couples on their path to salvation?		
MAY	Unit 5: Acting in Virtue and Solidarity				
	1. What does it mean to be virtuous?	2. How do the virtues help us live faith-filled lives?	3. How does God help us make good and loving choices?	4. How does following God help us stay on the right path?	5. How do we demonstrate solidarity?
JUNE	6. How does solidarity lead us to charity and justice?				

GRADE 8 - GIFGIC UNITS CALENDAR & FOCUS QUESTIONS

SEPT	Unit 1: Seeking Truth and Justice				
	1. How does the Holy Spirit help us as we seek truth?	2. How does the Holy Spirit inspire us to spread and live out Jesus' teachings?	3. How can we use the four senses of Scripture to help us seek and understand truth?	4. How can the four senses of Scripture help us live out the Beatitudes?	
OCT	5. What does Scripture teach us about the common good?	6. What is our personal responsibility to the common good?	7. How do the Holy Spirit and Scripture help us form a healthy conscience?	8. How does the Church guide us in forming a healthy conscience?	
NOV	9. How can we make morally good decisions?	10. How do we exercise our conscience in response to national and global issues?	Unit 2: We Are United as Our Universal Church		
			1. How are all Catholics united as the Universal Church?	2. How does the Nicene Creed deepen our understanding of our faith and unite us as the Universal Church?	
DEC	3. How do the diverse celebrations of our Church bring us together as a community of faith?	4. How is our Church united in faith and service?	Christmas	Winter Break	
JAN	5. How is our Church community united through prayer?	Unit 3: The Person, Presence, and Power of the Holy Spirit			
		1. How do Scripture and Tradition guide us to believe in the Trinity?	2. How can we come to know the mission of the Trinity through its divine Persons?	3. How are we marked, equipped, and sent by the Holy Spirit to support the mission of the Church?	
FEB	4. How are God's people nurtured in their faith and sent forth to share God's love as members of the Church?	Unit 4: The Holy Spirit Inspires and Transforms Us			
		1. How does Jesus bring us closer to God as the promised Messiah?	2. How can we follow Jesus' example to continue His mission during Lent?		
MARCH	3. How does Jesus reveal the power of the Holy Spirit?	4. How does the sacrifice of Jesus bring us God's grace?	March Break	5. How does the Holy Spirit guide us to transformation?	
APRIL	6. How does the Holy Spirit transform us from sinfulness to righteousness?	5. Why are Mass and the celebration of the Eucharist important to Christian life?			
MAY	Unit 5: Our Call to Evangelize				
	1. What does it mean to be an evangelizer?	2. How can we evangelize in culture and with science and technology?	3. How can we evangelize with family and friends and with social communications?	4. How can we evangelize in the economic sector of society?	5. How can we evangelize in the community sector?
JUNE	6. How can we learn and grow in the religion sector to help us continue our mission?				

GRADE 9 - GIFGIC DISCIPLESHIP & CULTURE

SEM. 1	September	October	November	December	January
	Units 1.1-1.3	Units 1.3-2.2	Units 2.3-3.1	Units 3.2	Units 3.3
SEM 2.	February	March	April	May	June

Unit 1: How Does God Reveal His Call To Discipleship				
1.1 The Written Word of God				
1: Why is the Bible important to discipleship?	2: How does the Bible help disciples understand God's Truth?	3: How do the writers of the Bible inspire discipleship?	4: How can the four senses of Scripture help disciples know God's Truth?	5: How can disciples apply the four senses of Scripture to know God's Truth?
1.2 Creation				
6: How do the creation stories help disciples understand God's call?	7: How do the creation stories lead disciples to understand God's call to relationships with one another and with Earth?	8: How can disciples honour and protect God's creation?	9: How can disciples encourage the exploration of God's creation?	10: How does recognizing human dignity help answer the call to discipleship?
11: How is being created in the image and likeness of God a call to discipleship?	12: How does discipleship affect the lives of others?	1.3 Covenants		
		13: How is God's covenant with humanity a call to discipleship?	14: How is free will a gift of discipleship?	15: How does understanding the reality of the devil's presence in the world help discipleship?
16: What does God's reaction to sin reveal about the nature of discipleship?	17: How is recognizing sin important to discipleship?	18: How does sin encroach on God's call to discipleship?	19: How does the gravity of sin affect discipleship?	20: How does social sin contradict discipleship?
21: How can discipleship counter the impact of social sin?	22: How does living a virtuous life affect discipleship?	23: How does an examination of conscience contribute to faithful discipleship?	24: How can disciples live lives of true freedom?	25: How does the New Covenant empower discipleship?

Unit 2: How Does Jesus Model Discipleship?				
2.1 Relationships				
1: How is the Holy Trinity a model of relationships for disciples?	2: What can disciples learn from each Person of the Trinity?	3: What can disciples learn about discipleship from the life of Mary, the Mother of Jesus?	4: How does the Virgin Mary inspire disciples to follow Jesus?	5: What can disciples learn about discipleship from the Holy Family?
6: What can today's disciples learn from the disciples and Apostles of Jesus?	7: How can disciples follow the example of the Apostles?	2.2 Ministry		
		8: Why are the Beatitudes central to a life of discipleship?	9: How can disciples follow the spirit of the Law?	10: What do Jesus' parables teach about discipleship?
11: How do the encounters that Jesus had with people serve as a model for discipleship?	12: How does Jesus' prayer life serve as a model for disciples?	13: Why should disciples follow Jesus' example of prayer?	14: What do Jesus' miracles teach about discipleship?	15: How do Jesus' miracles inspire discipleship?
2.3 Sacrifice				
16: How does Jesus teach His disciples about servant leadership?	17: What can disciples learn from the covenantal sacrifice of Jesus?	18: What can disciples learn from Jesus' prayer in the Garden of Gethsemane?	19: What can disciples learn about love and mercy from Jesus' passion?	20: What can disciples learn from Jesus' model of grace and humility in His suffering?
21: What can disciples learn about Jesus' crucifixion from Old Testament prophecy?	22: How does Jesus' resurrection instill hope and strength in disciples?	23: How are disciples called to follow Jesus' example?	24: How can disciples inspire others to follow Jesus?	

Unit 3: How Does the Church Support Discipleship?

3.1 Authority

1: How is recognizing authority a component of discipleship?	2: How does Sacred Tradition guide discipleship?	3: Why is the Creed important to disciples?	4: Why is humility an important component of discipleship?	5: How did the Apostles Peter and Paul model discipleship?
6: How can the Magisterium guide disciples?	7: How can disciples model respect for authority?	8: What can disciples learn from the leadership of others?	3.2 Sacramental Life	
			9: How do sacraments signify a covenantal relationship with God?	10: How does the sacrament of Baptism welcome and prepare new disciples?
11: How does the Holy Spirit embolden a life of discipleship?	12: How is the sacrament of the Eucharist spiritual nourishment for disciples?	13: How is the celebration of the Eucharist a fulfillment of the story of salvation?	14: How are disciples called to grow spiritually through prayer?	15: How can disciples grow spiritually through devotions within the Church?
16: How are disciples called to ministry?	17: How are disciples called to evangelization?	3.3 The Common Good		
		18: How are disciples called to love?	19: How is the common good a call to discipleship?	20: How are disciples called to be in healthy relationships?
21: How are disciples called to integrate sexuality and chastity?	22: How are disciples called to honour their own dignity and the dignity of others?	23: How can disciples live responsible lives?	24: How are disciples called to be good digital citizens?	25: How can the gifts of the Holy Spirit guide disciples in discernment?
26: How can disciples make good judgments?	27: How are disciples called to uphold the dignity of all people?	28: How are disciples called to mission?		

BLESSED & BELOVED - SCOPE & SEQUENCE

	GRADE 1	GRADE 2	GRADE 3
Unit 1 God's Gift of Self	We are beloved of God, who created each of us to share our gifts and talents as part of His plan.	We are beloved of God, who created each of us in His image and likeness. He gave us families to love us and help us develop and share our gifts and talents.	We are beloved of God, who created each of us unique. We use our gifts and talents to care for creation, serve others, promote belonging, and glorify God.
Unit 2 God's Gift of Family	We belong to God's family through home, school, and church. The family at home is the domestic or little church, which looks to the Holy Family as a model.	We belong to God's family through home, school, and church. Looking to the Holy Family as a model, the special people in our families share God's love and help us grow in faith.	Our families are loving gifts from God. We participate in our families through our loving actions that build strong relationships at home, in school, and at church.
Unit 3 Rooted in Relationship	We have roles and responsibilities within each of our families at home, in school, and at church. A husband and wife make a lifelong promise of love.	From our families at home, in school, and at church, we learn to have healthy relationships with others through respect, love and mercy. Families make promises of love, such as that between a husband and a wife.	Responsibilities, commitments, and promises help form healthy relationships at home, in school, and at church. The relationships in the Holy Family are a model for our own.
Unit 4 Life and Love in Christ	We are created by God, male and female. We grow and care for our bodies by understanding our similarities and differences. New life is a gift from God reflecting His love.	We are created by God, male and female. We value our bodies, practice healthy habits, and share our gifts and talents. New life is a loving gift from God that we celebrate with our families.	We are created by God, male and female, so our bodies can create new life as adults. Through love, connection, and celebrations, families nurture children as they grow. We serve others with our gifts and talents.
Unit 5 Growing in Community	We belong to a wider community that relies on the gifts and talents of all family members, who are to respect and serve one another.	We belong to a wider community that relies on the gifts and talents of all family members, who are to respect and serve one another.	We belong to a wider community that relies on the gifts and talents of all family members, who are to respect and serve one another. Our community relationships are gifts from God.

* This page will continue to be updated as new resources for the remaining grades are released.

Appendix E - Criteria for the Sacraments: The Initiation of Children

Please contact the Diocesan Director of Evangelization and Faith Formation or the Board Chaplaincy Leader if you require a copy of the ***Criteria for the Sacraments: The Initiation of Children*** document.

The most current edition of the ***Criteria for the Sacraments: The Initiation of Children*** document is also available embedded within the digital version of this ***Pastoral Care of Our Catholic Schools*** document.



CRITERIA FOR THE SACRAMENTS

The Initiation of Children

Diocese of St. Catharines
January 2014 rev 2

**CRITERIA FOR THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION OF CHILDREN
DIOCESE OF ST. CATHARINES¹**

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¹The following draft guidelines are adapted from Diocese of Hamilton Sacramental Guidelines the Initiation of Children. Used with permission.

CRITERIA FOR THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION OF CHILDREN DIOCESE OF ST. CATHARINES



My Dear Friends in Christ,

The **Criteria for the Sacraments of Initiation of Children** in the Diocese of St. Catharines is the result of a great deal of preparation and consultation. I sincerely thank all of those who have been involved in creating this fine document. In particular I thank the Ad Hoc Committee on Sacramental Criteria, the members of the Council of Priests, and the Religious Education Office of our diocese. I also wish to acknowledge the invaluable input of priests, deacons and those involved in catechesis and Catholic education in our diocese.

These criteria are provided to assist pastors and all of those involved in helping our youth and their families prepare for the Sacraments of Initiation. It will also help to bring a more unified approach to sacramental preparation across the diocese.

Preparation for the Sacraments of Initiation is indeed a graced period for the students involved, their parish, school and family. It should be a time of joyful anticipation as we prepare to celebrate these unique encounters with God who is love. Sacramental preparation provides a wonderful opportunity to reach out and welcome those who come to encounter Christ. Even though their reasons may vary, they are coming to Christ who says, "Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you." (*Matthew 7:7*)

Asking for a sacrament is the first step in a process that should deepen and strengthen faith. This is why preparation is so important. It is a journey that should, like the sacraments themselves, help to draw us into the mystery of God and the Church. Fundamental to this process is coming to know and love Our Lord Jesus Christ. This is the heart of discipleship and should be the focus of all sacramental preparation.

It is my hope and prayer that the **Criteria for the Sacraments of Initiation of Children** will assist all of us who are privileged to be involved with sacramental preparation. May it help many come to know, love, and serve our Lord Jesus Christ and His Church. Let us continue to fan the flames of faith so that we will set the Diocese of St. Catharines on fire with God's love!

Yours sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverend Gerard Bergie, D.D.
Bishop of St. Catharines

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THEOLOGICAL PREAMBLE

The Gift of Salvation Rooted and Expressed in the Sacraments

The ever living God, the origin and source of all that is, created humanity in his own image and entrusted the care of the world to him, but through the disobedience of Adam and Eve, the first human parents, their relationship with the Creator and consequently their own personal relationship, was severely damaged. But God who is love (1 John 4:8) and who wants everyone to be saved from eternal punishment due to sin and come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Timothy 2:4) reached out to them and to this fallen world and promised that in his perfect time he would rescue humankind from the bondage of sin through a Savior that he would send.

Through the years, God gradually prepared his people through the prophets and covenants until at the fullness of time when a young Jewish girl named Mary said yes to him when asked to be the bearer of this truly human, truly divine person, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, the Savior of the world (Philippians 2:6-8; 1 John 4:14)). Through his teaching, ministry and life he proclaimed the good news of salvation, gave freedom to prisoners, and joy to the sorrowful of heart; and in accordance to God's eternal plan, he ultimately gave himself up to death in atonement for sin, for the consequence of sin is death (Hebrews 2:17; Romans 6:23). But, by rising from the dead, he destroyed death, restored life and in fulfillment of God the Father's promise he sent the Holy Spirit to those who believe; to guide and strengthen them in their life's journey on earth and bring them to the fullness of life in heaven (Roman Missal, 2011, p.634).

Before his ascension to heaven, Jesus gave a great mission to believers (the church), saying "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always until the end of the age." (Matthew 28:18-20).

It is in his life, teaching and this great commission that the Church's celebration of the mystery of salvation is rooted and expressed through the sacraments. That is to say that the sacraments derive their credence and vitality from Jesus Christ himself through the working of the Holy Spirit who makes all things holy. That is to say also that the sacraments make the Church and the Church lives by celebrating the sacraments in the name of Christ for the salvation of all.

Sacraments are, therefore, "efficacious signs of grace, instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church by which divine life is dispensed to us" (Catechism of the Catholic Church, CCC-1131). The restoration or salvation of humanity which God has, therefore, established through Christ, the mediator of the New Covenant, is carried on and continually made present in all generations through the ministry of the Church.

The sacraments tell of the glory of God and his gracious inclination to human well being. They proclaim God's superabundant and everlasting love. They call every human being to respond to God's love by living their lives in Jesus Christ, the light of the world. They bring reconciliation with God and indwelling of God's Holy Spirit.

CRITERIA FOR THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION OF CHILDREN DIOCESE OF ST. CATHARINES

They lead to conversion and sanctification. They offer grace, fuel Christian living and union with God. They bring about eternal salvation. They are in fact the building blocks of a life focused on “Being a Saint” which everyone is called to. In the sacraments, Jesus is present and active to heal, to bless, and to transform by his grace. Such is the richness of these eternal gifts which, though beyond us, are entrusted to us by the Lord of all ages, to whom glory and honor belong now and forever. Amen.

The Church recognizes seven Sacraments which are classified into three categories:

- Sacraments of Christian Initiation, (Baptism, Confirmation, Holy Communion)
- Sacraments of Healing, (Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick)
- Sacraments of Communion, (Holy Orders and Marriage)

Our focus in this guideline is limited to the Sacraments of Christian Initiation of children as well as the one Sacrament of Healing – First Reconciliation. In the Sacraments of Christian Initiation, we are freed from the power of darkness and joined to Christ’s death, burial and resurrection. We receive the Spirit of filial adoption and are part of the entire people of God in the celebration of the living memorial of the Lord’s death and resurrection (*Vatican Council II, decree on the Church’s Missionary Activity Ad gentes, no.14*).

These criteria focus on the worthy celebration of these sacraments in our local parishes of the St. Catharines Diocese. May the Lord, in his eternal wisdom, open the hearts and dispose the minds of those who apply them and lead the recipients closer to the Lord through the charitable celebration of these sacraments.

**CRITERIA FOR THE SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION OF CHILDREN
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GENERAL PRINCIPLES

Sacraments are, first and foremost, actions of Christ and his Church. The Church is, therefore, responsible for determining the specifics of sacramental preparation and celebration. Sacred ministers may not deny the sacraments to those who opportunely ask for them, are properly disposed, and are not prohibited by law from receiving them (Canon 843.1). Sacramental preparation in the Diocese of St. Catharines is rooted in the following three principles:

- All sacraments are ecclesial celebrations, i.e., celebrations of the Church.
- Parents are the primary educators of their children in the ways of faith.
- Catholic schools are an integral part of the on-going religious education of children and provide valuable assistance in the foundational preparation for the sacraments following Baptism.

Foundational and on-going preparation for sacraments ideally includes:

- Participation in the Sunday Eucharist;
- Prayer in the family;
- Daily living of a Catholic manner of life appropriate to one's age and spiritual development;
- Religious education in a Catholic School (or other supplementary education).

SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION IN GENERAL

Immediate Preparation:

Immediate preparation for sacraments includes specific sacramental catechesis prior to the sacrament being celebrated. This is the responsibility of the parish in which the child's family is registered or in which they regularly worship. In the case of a child whose family is not registered in a particular parish, or whose family does not worship regularly, it is the responsibility of the proper geographical parish to facilitate the sacramental preparation. For First Eucharist and Confirmation, this involves the participation of the parents and generally takes place in collaboration with the Catholic School. If, for pastoral reasons, it is desirable to celebrate in another church, a letter of permission may be provided by the proper pastor. (See Appendix 1).

Registration:

Registration for sacramental preparation is the responsibility of the proper parish where the sacrament is to be celebrated. This includes the collection of any necessary documentation. For First Eucharist and Confirmation, this includes a valid certificate of Baptism in the Catholic Church. Documentation attesting to the suitability of godparents and sponsors is not required. (Please note: Where such documentation for suitability of godparents or sponsors is required by another diocese, the letter provided as Appendix 1 may be used.)

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Form of Preparation:

The form of immediate sacramental preparation is determined by the proper parish where the celebration will take place. For First Eucharist, First Reconciliation, and Confirmation, this preparation will generally involve the child's Catholic School community. Meetings between the parish priest or his delegate and members of the staff of the Catholic school to coordinate the preparation of children will be beneficial and will promote a positive experience for all involved.

Types of Preparation Programs:

Immediate sacramental preparation is to be appropriate to the age and spiritual development of the child and ought to take into consideration the child's abilities and family circumstances. The preparation program ought not to be onerous. In general, four to six meetings including meetings with parents only, or with parents and children together, are adequate. Models for preparation for these sacraments are available from the Diocesan Office of Religious Education.

Participation:

Participation in the sacraments is based on the desire of the child and his/her family to celebrate the sacrament and their good will in participating in the preparation program to the best of their ability, in conjunction with the judgment of the pastor. Readiness to receive the sacraments is never to be determined solely by tests or completed projects or by attendance records.

Responsibility:

The liturgical celebration of the sacraments is the responsibility of the parish priest and those who collaborate with him in the preparation. This may include the involvement of the parish minister, the parish liturgy committee, parents, and representatives of the Catholic School community. The liturgical celebration takes place according to the approved ritual books for the Catholic Church in Canada.

Offering:

For the administration of the sacraments the minister may not ask for anything beyond the offerings which are determined by the competent authority. (Canon 848) In the Diocese of St. Catharines there are no fees for the celebration of the sacraments of initiation beyond what the cost of materials such as gown rentals and catechetical material.

CELEBRATION OF INFANT BAPTISM

Theological Preamble:

"Baptism is God's most beautiful and magnificent gift.... We call it gift, grace, anointing, enlightenment, garment of immortality, bath of rebirth, seal and most precious gift. It is called gift because it is conferred on those who bring nothing of their own, grace since it is given even to the guilty; Baptism because sin is buried in the water, anointing for it is priestly and royal as are those who are anointed; enlightenment because it radiates light; clothing since it veils our shame; bath because it washes; and seal as it is our guard and the sign of God's Lordship" (CCC – 1216).

So Baptism incorporates us into Christ and forms us into God's people. This first sacrament pardons all our sins, rescues us from the power of darkness, and brings us to the dignity of adopted children (1John 3:1), a new creation through water and the Holy Spirit. Hence we are called and are indeed the children of God (The Rites, vol.1, p.3).

Pastoral Guidelines:

Minimum Requirements:

For an infant or child who has not reached catechetical age to be baptized lawfully, it is required that:

- the parents, or at least one of them or the person who lawfully holds their place, give their consent; (Note – If joint custody, both parents must consent to the baptism. In situations where there is sole custody, permission from this parent is sufficient. If one parent has full custody, the custody document from the court should be provided and filed with the baptismal records).
- there be a well-founded hope that the child will be brought up in the Catholic Church. If such a hope is truly lacking, the Baptism is, in accordance with the provision of particular law, to be deferred, and the parents advised of the reason for this. (Canon 868)

Personal Contact:

Arrangements for a particular Baptism are always to be made by the parents in a personal meeting with the pastor or one of his associates. Arrangements are never to be made by phone, email, or by simply completing a form.

Sacramental Preparation:

Each parish determines the suitable sacramental preparation required prior to the celebration of the sacrament of Baptism. In addition to participation in the Sunday Eucharist, one or two catechetical meetings may take place, especially for parents who are presenting their first child for Baptism. Depending on their availability, godparents ought to be invited to join the parents for these meetings.

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Special Situations:

When parents are not married or are in an irregular situation, or are not practicing their faith, it is advisable to encourage them to take the first steps in re-establishing a relationship with their parish community. In this case, the Baptism may be delayed; it is never denied. Under no circumstances is the marital status of the parents to preclude the baptism of their child, provided they are receptive to participating in the preparation program and have a firm intention to raise their child in the Catholic Church to the best of their ability.

Godparents:

Godparents must be not less than sixteen years of age. They must be fully initiated in the Catholic Church (Baptism, Confirmation, and Eucharist), and must be living a life of faith which befits the responsibility to be undertaken (Canon 874). Based on these criteria, parents select godparents for their child. There is to be only one male godparent or one female godparent, or one of each (Canon 873). A baptized person who belongs to another Christian denomination may be admitted, together with a Catholic godparent, as a Christian witness. The appropriate notation should be made in the Baptismal Register.

Celebration:

Baptism is normally celebrated on Sunday. It may be celebrated during Mass or at another suitable time.

Celebration of Baptism for Children of Catechetical Age

Catechetical Age:

According to the law of the Church (Canon 852.1), children who have reached the age of reason (7 years of age) are prepared through their participation in the Rite of Christian Initiation for Children (Part II, Chapter 1).

In keeping with this rite, they are to be prepared to celebrate the sacraments of Baptism, Confirmation, and First Eucharist at the same celebration. It is permissible to delay the sacrament of confirmation to a later age for pastoral reasons.

Preparation:

A suitable preparation program in the parish would ideally involve the child's parents. Where possible, members of the child's Catholic School community may also provide support. Parishes will recognize that children in the Catholic School system will have the benefit of ongoing foundational catechesis that will be helpful in their immediate preparation.

Registration:

The full initiation of children of catechetical age is to be recorded in the parish's Baptismal Register.

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Reception of Children into Full Communion of the Catholic Church

Definition:

Children of catechetical age (7 years of age or older), who have been validly baptized in another Christian denomination and who wish to receive their First Communion may be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church. Parents must present their baptismal certificate and a profession of faith is made by their parents or guardians. (See Appendix 2). For these children, the sacrament of Confirmation is celebrated at a later date (i.e. in grade 8). See Appendix 3 for the list of denominations whose baptism is acknowledged as valid by the Catholic Church.

Preparation:

Children of catechetical age (7 years of age or older) who have been validly baptized in another Christian denomination and who wish to be received into the full communion of the Catholic Church are to participate in a program similar to the program provided by the parish for children of catechetical age preparing for full initiation. A suitable preparation program in the parish would ideally involve the child's parents. Where possible, members of the child's Catholic School community may also provide support. Parishes will recognize that children in the Catholic School system will have the benefit of ongoing foundational catechesis that will be helpful in their immediate preparation.

Registration:

The reception of children into full communion with the Church is to be recorded in the parish's Baptismal Register.

NOTE: Baptism in another Rite

Where you are approached by the family of a child baptized in an unfamiliar rite or of uncertain rite, please, having gathered any and all available documentation, contact the Chancellor's Office for direction.

FIRST RECONCILIATION/ CONFESSION/ PENANCE

Theological Preamble:

Those who approach the sacrament of Penance obtain pardon from God's mercy for the offense committed against him, and are, at the same time, reconciled with the Church which they have wounded by their sins and; which by charity, by example and by prayer labors for their conversion" (CCC – 1422).

As we all fall short of the Glory of God and sin (Romans 3:23), but because God's mercy is greater than our sinfulness the Lord constituted the sacrament of Penance for the pardoning of sin committed after Baptism (John 20:21-23, Matthew 19:20, Matthew 18:19) and the church has faithfully celebrated this sacrament through the centuries (The Rites, vol.1, p.523).

Pastoral Guidelines:

Preparation:

The immediate preparation for First Reconciliation is the responsibility of the proper parish where the sacrament is to be celebrated. The involvement of parents and the child's Catholic School community is desirable. All children who are to receive First Eucharist are to be prepared and have the opportunity to celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation prior to their First Communion.

Liturgy:

The sacrament of Reconciliation always takes place in the church. The second form of the sacrament (communal celebration with individual confession and absolution) is preferred. Wherever possible, provision ought to be made for parents and family members to celebrate the sacrament at the same time.

Attendance:

It is not permissible to take attendance or to record those who celebrate the sacrament of Reconciliation in the parish sacramental records, however recognition or certificates may be given.

FIRST EUCHARIST/COMMUNION

Theological Preamble:

The Holy Eucharist is ‘the source and summit of the Christian life.’ “The other sacraments, and indeed all ecclesiastical ministries and works of the apostolate, are bound up with the Eucharist and are oriented toward it. For in the blessed Eucharist is contained the whole spiritual good of the Church, namely Christ himself, our Pasch” (CCC – 1324).

Coming to the Eucharist, we eat the flesh and drink the blood of the Son of Man, so that we may have eternal life (John 6: 54-55) and show forth the unity of God’s people. By offering ourselves with Christ, we share in the universal sacrifice, i.e. the entire community of the redeemed offered to God by their High Priest. We pray for a greater outpouring of the Holy Spirit, so that the whole human race may be brought into the unity of God’s family (The Rites, vol. 1, p.3).

Pastoral Guidelines:

Age:

First Eucharist is celebrated with children who have reached the age of reason (7 years of age) and have completed a program of immediate sacramental preparation.

Readiness:

The decision concerning the individual child’s readiness to receive First Eucharist rests with the child’s parents in consultation with the parish priest. This is particularly the case for parents of children with special needs. A suitable preparation program in the parish should ideally involve the child’s parents.

Time and Place:

It is preferable to celebrate First Eucharist at a regularly scheduled Sunday Mass. However, if there are large numbers that cannot be accommodated in the parish church at Sunday Mass, the celebration may take place at another time.

Liturgical Norms:

The liturgical celebration of First Eucharist is the responsibility of the parish priest and those who collaborate with him in the preparation, and takes place according to the norms found in the General Instruction of the Roman Missal.

Registration:

The celebration of First Eucharist is to be recorded in the parish’s First Communion Register.

CONFIRMATION

Theological Preamble:

Confirmation perfects Baptismal grace; it is the sacrament which gives the Holy Spirit in order to root us more deeply in the divine filiation, incorporate us more firmly into Christ, strengthen our bond with the Church, associate us more closely with her mission, and help us bear witness to the Christian faith in words accompanied by deeds (CCC – 1316).

Pastoral Guidelines:

Age:

Confirmation is celebrated with children who are in Grade 8 and who have completed a program of immediate sacramental preparation.

Preparation:

The purpose of the immediate sacramental preparation program is to dispose the candidate to receive the grace of the sacrament and to participate fully in the liturgy of Confirmation. A suitable preparation program in the parish should ideally involve the child's parents. It is not intended to prepare candidates for a test of their religious knowledge.

Time and Place:

Confirmation is always celebrated during Mass at a time determined in consultation with the Bishop's Office.

Children of Other Denominations:

Children who have been validly baptized in another Christian denomination are received into full communion by their Profession of Faith, Confirmation and First Communion which all take place during the Confirmation liturgy. Appropriate catechesis precedes the celebration.

Sponsor:

A person being confirmed is to have one sponsor who fulfills the same requirements as a baptismal sponsor (that is, a godparent). The sponsor may be male or female and may be one of the child's godparents. A parent cannot be a sponsor. (Canon 893)

Confirmation Name:

The longstanding tradition in the diocese of St. Catharines is to choose a saint's name as a confirmation name, different than their own. However, they may be confirmed with their baptismal name as well.

Registration:

The celebration of Confirmation is to be recorded in the parish's Confirmation Register and notice is to be sent to the parish of the child's baptism where due notation is made in the proper Baptismal Register.

SOME NON-CATHOLIC CHURCH COMMUNITIES WITH VALID BAPTISM

The following are some non-Catholic churches and ecclesial communities that have valid baptism: all Eastern non-Catholics, African Methodist Episcopal, Amish, Anglican, Assembly of God, Baptist, the Christian and Missionary Alliance, Church of the Brethren, Church of Christ, Church of God, Congregational, Disciples of Christ, Episcopalian, Evangelical, Evangelical United Brethren, Liberal Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Metropolitan Community Church, Old Catholic, Old Roman Catholic, Polish National, Presbyterian, Reformed, United Church of Canada, United Church of Christ, United Reformed, Uniting Church of Australia, Waldensian, Zion.

Communities whose baptism is doubtful, and for which is required an investigation into each case, are Mennonite, Moravian, Pentecostal, and Seventh Day Adventist. The ministers in these communities do not observe a uniform practice, or they may have splinter groups whose Trinitarian theology is dubious.

Some ecclesial communities without valid baptism are the Amana Church Society, American Ethical Union, the Apostolic Church (Apostolic Overcoming Holy Church of God), Apostolic Faith Mission, Bohemian Free Thinkers, Children of God ("The Family"), Christadelphians, Christian Community (Rudolf Steiner), Christians of the Universalist Brotherhood, Christian Scientists (no baptism), Church of Divine Science, Church of Daniel's Band, Church of Illumination, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons), Church of Revelation, Erieside Church, General Assembly of Spiritualists, Hephzibab Faith Missionary Association, House of David Church, Iglesia ni Kristo (Philippines), Independent Church of Filipino Christians, Church of the Universal Brotherhood (Doukhobors), Jehovah's Witnesses, Masons (no baptism), Metropolitan Church Association, National David Spiritual Temple of Christ Church Union, National Spiritualist Association, New Jerusalem Church (Swedenborg or "New Age" Church), People's Church of Chicago, some communities of the Plymouth Brethren, Reunification Church ("Moonies"), Salvation Army, Shakers (no baptism), Society of Friends (Quakers, no baptism), Spiritualist Church, Unitarians, United Society of Believers (Shakers), Universal Emancipation Church.

Cf: The Pastoral Companion: A Canon Law Handbook for Catholic Ministry, pages 380-381.

NOTE: Baptism in another Rite

Where you are approached by the family of a child baptized in an unfamiliar rite or of uncertain rite, please, having gathered any and all available documentation, contact the Chancellor's Office for direction.

PASTORAL REFERENCE

[Name Church]

[Address of Church]

Re: _____

Dear Monsignor/Father:

The bearer of this letter is a Baptized Roman Catholic who:

Comments

- ☐ resides in

_____, (Parish)

_____(City).

- ☐ is a registered member of

Comments

_____, (Parish)

_____(City).

- ☐ regularly participates in the Sunday Eucharist at

Comments

_____, (Parish)

_____(City).

He/She:

- ☐ wishes to celebrate the baptism of his/her child(ren) in your parish. Permission is hereby granted.
- ☐ wishes to celebrate First Communion in your parish. Permission is hereby granted.
- ☐ wishes to celebrate Confirmation in your parish. Permission is hereby granted.
- ☐ wishes to be married in your parish. Permission is hereby granted.
- ☐ fulfills the canonical requirements to be a godparent for Baptism.
- ☐ fulfills the canonical requirements to be a sponsor for Confirmation.

Thank you for your kindness to the bearer of this letter.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

Pastor

Date this _____ day of _____ 20_____

PARENTAL DECLARATION OF FAITH FOR RECEIVING CHILDREN INTO FULL COMMUNION

DIOCESE OF ST. CATHARINES IN ONTARIO

DECLARATION OF FAITH IN PREPARATION FOR THE PRESENTATION
OF A BAPTIZED CHILD FOR RECEPTION INTO THE FULL COMMUNION OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

I, _____ reaffirm my faith in Jesus Christ.
name of parent or guardian

I believe and profess all that the Holy Catholic Church believes, teaches, and proclaims to be revealed by God. I further promise to continue living this faith and to support my child in this faith.

I acknowledge that in my child's reception of First Communion in the Catholic Church, he/she is being received into the full communion of the Roman Catholic Church and is therefore no longer a member of another Christian church.

Signature of parent or guardian

Signature of witnessing priest

Date

Place

This declaration is to be kept on file in the parish church.

Appendix F - Directory

Niagara Catholic School List

City	School Name	Street Address	Postal Code	Phone Number
Beamsville	St. John Catholic Elementary School	5684 King St., Lincoln	L3M 1N6	905.945.5331
Beamsville	St. Luke Catholic Elementary School*	4980 Greenlane Rd.		
Beamsville	St. Mark Catholic Elementary School	4114 Mountain St.	L3J 0K9	905.563.9191
Crystal Beach	St. George Catholic Elementary School	3800 Wellington Rd.	L0S 1B0	905.894.3670
Fenwick	St. Ann Catholic Elementary School	832 Canboro Rd.	L0S 1C0	905.892.3942
Fonthill	St. Alexander Catholic Elementary School	26 Regional Road 20 E.	L0S 1E0	905.892.3841
Fort Erie	Our Lady of Victory Catholic Elementary School	300 Central Ave.	L2A 3T3	905.871.3092
Fort Erie	St. John South Centre (Continuing Education)	54 Jarvis St.	L2A 2S3	905.991.8951
Fort Erie	St. Philomena Catholic Elementary School	1332 Phillips St.	L2A 3C2	905.871.1842
Grimsby	Blessed Trinity Catholic Secondary School	145 Livingston Ave.	L3M 5J6	905.945.6706
Grimsby	Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Elementary School	69 Olive St.	L3M 2C3	905.945.5500
Grimsby	St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School	5 Robinson St. N.	L3M 3C8	005.945.4955
Lincoln	St. Edward Catholic Elementary School	2807 4th Ave.	L0R 1S0	905.562.5531
Niagara Falls	Father Hennepin Catholic Elementary School	6032 Churchill St.	L2G 2X1	905.354.4469
Niagara Falls	Loretto Catholic Catholic Elementary School	6855 Kalar Rd.	L2H 2T3	905.356.4175
Niagara Falls	Mary Ward Catholic Elementary School	2999 Dorchester Rd.	L2J 2Z9	905.354.9221
Niagara Falls	Notre Dame Catholic Elementary School	6559 Caswell St.	L2J 1C2	905.358.3861
Niagara Falls	Our Lady of Mount Carmel Catholic Elementary School	6525 Carlton Ave.	L2G 5K4	905.354.2523
Niagara Falls	Sacred Heart Catholic Elementary School	8450 Oliver St.	L2G 6Z2	905.295.3732
Niagara Falls	Saint Michael Catholic High School	8699 McLeod Rd.	L2H 0Z2	905.356.5155
Niagara Falls	Saint Paul Catholic High School	3834 Windermere Rd.	L2J 2Y5	905.356.4313
Niagara Falls	St. Ann Centre (Continuing Education)	5895 North St.	L2G 1J7	905.354.3531
Niagara Falls	St. Gabriel Lalemant Catholic Elementary School	6121 Vine St.	L2J 1L4	905.354.5422
Niagara Falls	St. John Henry Newman Catholic Elementary School	8120 Beaverdams Rd.	L2H 1R8	905.354.9033
Niagara Falls	St. Mary Catholic Elementary School	5719 Morrison St.	L2E 2E8	905.354.7744
Niagara Falls	St. Patrick Catholic Elementary School	4653 Victoria Ave.	L2E 4B8	905.354.6631
Niagara Falls	St. Vincent de Paul Catholic Elementary School	3900 Kalar Rd.	L2H 0K2	905.356.7505
Niagara-on-the-Lake	St. Michael Catholic Elementary School	387 Line 3, R.R. # 2	L0S 1J0	905.684.1051
Port Colborne	Lakeshore Catholic High School	150 Janet St.	L3K 2E7	905.835.2451
Port Colborne	St. John Bosco Catholic Elementary School	191 Highland Ave.	L3K 3S7	905.835.1930
Port Colborne	St. Patrick Catholic Elementary School	266 Rosemount Ave.	L3K 5R4	905.835.1091
Port Colborne	St. Thérèse Catholic Elementary School	530 Killaly St. E.	L3K 1P5	905.835.8082
Smithville	St. Martin Catholic Elementary School	18 Streamside Drive	L0R 2A0	905.957.3032
St. Catharines	Assumption Catholic Elementary School	225 Parnell Rd.	L2M1W3	905.935.5281
St. Catharines	Canadian Martyrs Catholic Elementary School	502 Scott St.	L2M 3X2	905.934.9972
St. Catharines	Denis Morris Catholic High School	40 Glen Morris Dr.	L2T 2M9	905.684.8731
St. Catharines	Holy Cross Catholic Secondary School	460 Linwell Rd.	L2M 2P9	905.937.6446
St. Catharines	Our Lady of Fatima Catholic Elementary School	439 Vine St.	L2M 3S6	905.935.4343
St. Catharines	Saint Francis Catholic Secondary School	541 Lake St.	L2N 4H7	905.646.2002
St. Catharines	St. Alfred Catholic Elementary School	280 Vine St.	L2M 4T3	905.934.9922
St. Catharines	St. Ann Catholic Elementary School	218 Main St.	L2N 4W1	905.934.1755
St. Catharines	St. Anthony Catholic Elementary School	81 Rykert St.	L2S 1Z2	905.685.8859
St. Catharines	St. Christopher Catholic Elementary School	33 Woodrow Ave.	L2P 2A1	905.684.3963
St. Catharines	St. Denis Catholic Elementary School	175 Carlton St.	L2R 1S1	905.682.4156
St. Catharines	St. James Catholic Elementary School	615 Geneva St.	L2N 2J3	905.934.3112
St. Catharines	St. John Centre (Continuing Education)	145 Niagara St.	L2R 4L7	905.682.3360
St. Catharines	St. Nicholas Catholic Elementary School	149 Church St.	L2R 3E2	905.685.7764
St. Catharines	St. Peter Catholic Elementary School	7 Aberdeen Circle	L2T 2B7	905.984.3040
St. Catharines	St. Teresa of Calcutta Catholic Elementary School	125 First Street Louth	L2R 0C9	905.682.6862
St. Catharines	St. Theresa Catholic Elementary School	58 Seymour Ave.	L2P 1A7	905.682.0244
Stevensville	St. Joseph Catholic Elementary School	3650 Netherby Rd.	L0S 1S0	905.382.3822
Thorold	Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Catholic Elementary School	41 Collier Rd. S.	L2V 3S9	905.227.4910
Thorold	Pope Francis Centre (Alternative Learning)	25 Whyte Ave. N	L2V 2T4	905.227.3522
Thorold	Saint Kateri Tekakwitha Centre (Alternative Learning)	3054 Orchard Hill Rd.	L0S 1E6	905.892.9111

Wainfleet	St. Elizabeth Catholic Elementary School	31950 Sugarloaf Street	L0S 1V0	905.899.3041
Welland	Alexander Kuska Catholic Elementary School	333 Rice Rd.	L3C 2V9	905.735.4471
Welland	Father Fogarty Centre (Continuing Education)	269 Thorold Rd.	L3C 3W1	905.734.4495
Welland	Holy Name Catholic Elementary School	290 Fitch St.	L3C 4W5	905.732.4992
Welland	Niagara Launch Centre (Alternative Learning)	800 Niagara St, N.S. Rollup	L3C 5Z4	289.449.1003
Welland	Notre Dame College School	64 Smith St.	L3C 4H4	905.788.3060
Welland	St. Andrew Catholic Elementary School	16 St. Andrews Ave.	L3B 1E1	905.732.5663
Welland	St. Augustine Catholic Elementary School	300 Santone Ave.	L3C 2J8	905.734.4659
Welland	St. Kevin Catholic Elementary School	182 Aqueduct St.	L3C 1C4	905.734.7709
Welland	St. Mary Catholic Elementary School	120 Plymouth Rd.	L3B 3C7	905.734.7326

Parish List (within the boundaries of Niagara Catholic)

City	Parish Name	Street Address	Postal Code	Phone Number
Beamsville	St. Helen Parish	4106 Mountain Street	L3J 0K9	905-562-7427
Crystal Beach	St. George Parish	56 Ridgeway Road	L0S 1B0	905-894-2853
Fenwick	St. Ann Parish	834 Canboro Road	L0S 1C0	905-892-6123
Fonthill	St. Alexander Parish	50 Pelham Town Square, P.O. Box 773	L0S 1E0	905-892-3090
Fort Erie	St. Michael Parish	310 Central Avenue	L2A 3T3	905-871-0692
Grimsby	St. Joseph Parish	135 Livingston Avenue	L3M 5J6	905-945-2661
Niagara Falls	Our Lady of Peace Parish	7021 Stanley Avenue	L2G 7B7	905-358-3791
Niagara Falls	Our Lady of the Scapular Parish	6557 Thorold Stone Road	L2J 1B2	905-358-7611
Niagara Falls	Paroisse Saint-Antoine-de-Padoue	4570 Chemin Portage	L2E 6A8	905-358-5549
Niagara Falls	Sacred Heart Parish	3882 Main Street	L2G 6B6	905-295-4455
Niagara Falls	St. Ann Parish	5740 Buchanan Ave	L2G 3V3	905-358-9333
Niagara Falls	St. Patrick Parish	4673 Victoria Avenue	L2E 4B8	905-354-7451
Niagara Falls	St. Thomas More Parish	6548 Dorchester Road	L2G 5T5	905-356-7533
Niagara-on-the-Lake	St. Vincent de Paul Parish	73 Picton Street	L0S1J0	905-468-7272
Port Colborne	Paroisse Saint-Jean-de-Brebeuf	300 Killaly Street East	L3K 1N9	905-835-0202
Port Colborne	St. John Bosco Parish	375 Main Street West	L3K 3V9	905-835-5418
Port Colborne	St. Patrick Parish	123 King Street	L3K 4G3	905-834-6426
Port Colborne	St. Therese of Lisieux Parish	379 Fares Street	L3K 1W9	905-834-4645
Port Dalhousie	Star of the Sea Parish	34 Elgin Street	L2N 5G5	905-934-1170
Smithville	St. Martin of Tours Parish	166 West Street, P.O. Box 74	L0R 2A0	289-956-0221
Snyder	St. Joseph Parish	3718 Netherby Road	L0S 1S0	905-295-4455
St. Catharines	Cathedral of St. Catherine of Alexandria	3 Lyman Street	L2R 5M8	905-684-3964
St. Catharines	Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish (Polish)	5 Oblate Place	L2M 5C5	905-937-4230
St. Catharines	Paroisse Immaculée-Conception	99 Garnet Street	L2M 5G3	905-934-4266
St. Catharines	St. Alfred Parish	272 Vine Street	L2M 4T3	905-934-9703
St. Catharines	St. Denis Parish	230 Lake Street	L2R 5Z3	905-685-5911
St. Catharines	St. Julia Parish	251 Glenridge Avenue	L2T 3C7	905-684-5603
St. Catharines	St. Mary of the Assumption Parish	169 St. Paul Crescent	L2S 1N4	905-682-3843
St. Catharines	St. Patrick Parish	31 Chestnut Street East	L2T 1G8	905-227-2358
St. Catharines	St. Thomas Aquinas Parish	316 Queenston Street	L2P 2X4	905 687 6971
Thorold	Our Lady of the Holy Rosary Parish	21 Queen Street South	L2V 3M7	905-227-3178
Thorold	St. Aloysius Parish, Latin Mass Apostolate	317 Morton Street	L2V 1C4	289-362-1598
Wainfleet	St. Elizabeth Parish	31928 Hwy.#3, P.O. Box 117	L0S 1V0	905-899-1699
Welland	Our Lady of Hungary Parish	345 Hellems Avenue	L3B 3C2	905-734-3772
Welland	Paroisse Sacré-Cœur	72 Empire Street	L3B 2L4	905-735-5823
Welland	St. Andrew the Apostle Parish	4 St. Andrews Avenue	L3B 1H4	905-732-5046
Welland	St. Anthony Parish (Croatian)	360 River Road	L3B 2S4	905-732-3839
Welland	St. Kevin Parish	303 Niagara Street	L3C 1K5	905-735-5885
Welland	St. Mary Parish	90 Griffith Street	L3B 4G4	905-734-3143
Welland	Sts. Peter & Paul Parish	300 Chaffey Street	L3B 2Y8	905 734-4824

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