



Preparing
to Teach
in Catholic
Schools:
*Foundations
for Pre-service
Teachers*



Institute for
Catholic Education

www.iceont.ca

Endorsements

“*Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* is an excellent resource created by the Institute for Catholic Education in consultation with a number of Catholic partners. Its purpose is to assist in the formation of teachers for our Catholic schools. This benefits the entire Catholic Education community and for this, I am extremely grateful.”

Bishop Gerard Bergie, Chair, Education Commission, Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario

“The Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association is committed to supporting Catholic School Boards in, ‘placing Christ and the teachings of the Catholic Church’ at the centre of publicly funded Catholic education. We believe that faith formation is a life-long journey and central to the realization of the mission of Catholic school systems throughout Ontario. The *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* Course is an outstanding and valuable opportunity for Catholic teacher candidates to grow in their knowledge, service and love of God as followers of Christ.

Please be assured of our prayers as you continue to grow in knowledge and deepen your faith throughout this course so as to ‘communicate Christ in the lives of others.’ We wish you all of God’s blessings and much joy as you build and nurture your Catholic teacher qualifications.”

Patrick J. Daly, President, Ontario Catholic School Trustees’ Association

“The Pre-Service Foundations course *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* recognizes and celebrates the unique ethos of our Catholic schools, that invites aspiring educators to examine not only in content and pedagogy what makes our schools unique, but also in its very foundation and student expectations. All teachers desiring to serve in Catholic systems will be enriched by the reflection on their own faith journey and benefit from this rich immersion in the principles, values, and lived experience of learning and transformation that defines their vocation and the culture of encounter in our Catholic schools.”

Loretta Notten, Chair, English Catholic Council of Directors of Education and Director of Education, Waterloo Catholic District School Board

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Executive Director, Institute for Catholic Education

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1. Purpose Statement

The Institute for Catholic Education has been responsible for the course guidelines for *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* since its inception. Significant reviews of this course have taken place over the last three decades, the last being in 2012.

Through its Initial Teacher Education Committee as well as its Board of Directors, the Institute gathers input from the many partners in Catholic Education including Catholic Teachers, Principals, Superintendents, Directors of Education, Trustees and Bishops as well as other members of the Catholic community.

The goal of this course is to meet the needs of teacher candidates and school boards alike by ensuring a relevant and rigorous foundation for teaching in Catholic Schools in Ontario.

This is a foundational course in the life of a Catholic Teacher in Ontario. Some Catholic School Boards in Ontario may require successful completion of this course as a pre-requisite of employment.

The objectives of this course propose an ambitious task for both the course instructor and teacher candidate. The commitment of both to this endeavour is a sign in our Catholic education community of the importance we place on having a solid foundation for teaching in Catholic schools as well as the essential nature of the ongoing reflection of what it means to be a Catholic teacher.

This course is the beginning of the ongoing Professional Learning a Catholic teacher will undertake over the lifetime of their teaching career in Ontario Catholic Schools. While the course requirements for the Bachelors or Masters of Education aims to provide the essential skills for all teachers, this course asks the further question:

What is distinctive about preparing to teach in the context of Catholic education in Ontario?

2. Regulations and Governance

The *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* course is an integral part of an initial teacher education program for competency and high standards in the quality of curriculum, teaching and learning in Catholic education for the province of Ontario. The course is made available in all Teacher Education Programs at Faculties of Education in Ontario that are regulated by the government of Ontario, the [Ontario College of Teachers Act](#) and [Regulation 283/13: Accreditation of Teacher Education Programs](#).

The *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* course is directed and supported by the [Institute for Catholic Education](#) in accordance with the approval of the [Assembly of Catholic Bishops of Ontario](#). The Institute for Catholic Education brings together, works with, and assists organizations that share responsibility for English Catholic education in their efforts to promote and maintain publicly-funded Catholic schools animated by the Gospel and reflecting the tenets of the Catholic faith.

This course is rooted in the four pillars of the [Catechism of the Catholic Church](#), namely the Profession of Faith, the Celebration of the Christian Mystery, Life in Christ, and Christian Prayer, and grounded in current research and empirical understandings of professional teacher education with methods that welcome faith, reason, theology, and the integration of theory and practice.

The *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* course advances the collective achievement of the [Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession](#), [Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession](#) and the [Professional Learning Framework for the Teaching Profession](#) (Ontario College of Teachers) as it applies a holistic focus on professional Catholic education and an intentional focus on all of the commitments for ethics and standards of practice for teachers in the province of Ontario as understood through a Catholic lens.

The [Standards of Practice for the Teaching Profession](#) are:

- Commitment to Students and Student Learning
- Professional Knowledge
- Teaching Practice
- Leadership in Learning Communities
- Ongoing Professional Development

The [Ethical Standards for the Teaching Profession](#) are:

- Care
- Respect
- Trust
- Integrity

The tenets of the course are intentionally committed to continued excellence in professional Catholic education. The foundations are directly related to the [Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations](#) for the faith formation of students and high standards in achievement. They give concrete expression to the mission of Catholic schools, in communion with the Church, to address the development of the whole person, incorporating elements of faith in the holistic education of students. The seven overall expectations listed below are supported by 52 specific expectations that articulate the distinctive perspective of Catholic education and our deepest aspirational goals.

The [Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations](#) are:

- A Discerning Believer
- An Effective Communicator
- A Reflective, Creative and Holistic Thinker
- A Self-Directed, Responsible, Lifelong Learner
- A Collaborative Contributor
- A Caring Family Member
- A Responsible Citizen

Relationship to Additional Qualifications Courses in Religious Education:

The *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* course serves as part of initial teacher education programs in Ontario. This course is a first step and a primary source of professional learning for Catholic teachers. The course of study is based on providing beginning teachers with knowledge, instructional strategies and catechesis to support professional excellence in Catholic schools.

This course is not pre-requisite of the [Additional Qualifications Courses in Religious Education in Catholic Schools](#). It is, however, considered a solid preparation course that certified teachers can then proceed to obtain additional qualifications as governed by parameters and regulations of the [Ontario College of Teachers](#). For many teachers, Religious Education AQ, Part 1 will be their important next step in their professional learning and many, again, will continue with Part 2 and the Specialist qualification.

3. Course Design and Requirements

The *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* course provides beginning teachers an opportunity to reflect upon their vocation as a Catholic educator, our covenant with God and a sacramental life of presence, mercy and service for the faith formation and academic achievement of the students entrusted to our care. Teacher candidates will be involved in prayer, collaborative inquiry and personal encounters for professional discernment about evidence-informed methods for the instruction of students and a holistic approach to Catholic education.

Duration:

The intended duration of the *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* course is 36 hours. The breadth of study for quality programming in Catholic schools requires a substantive commitment of time and resources as with all initial teacher education courses at Faculties of Education in the Province of Ontario.

Elementary and Secondary Teacher Candidates:

The course provides the framework and time for meaningful professional learning about Catholic curricula, faith formation and instructional knowledge. This is a course of study that focuses on both elementary and secondary Catholic education. The course can be delivered in a dedicated cohort for elementary teachers or secondary teachers separately or a combined cohort opportunity for professional learning.

Modes of Delivery:

While the *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* course welcomes the differentiated inclusion of digital resources to support the professional learning of contemporary educators, it is grounded in a commitment to the importance of direct encounters among Catholic teachers for dialogue and the quality of ecclesial formation. As the *Directory for Catechesis* states: “Virtual reality cannot . . . replace the spiritual, sacramental, and ecclesial reality experienced in direct encounter

among persons.” (#217)

While virtual resources, tools and meetings have become essential in our increasingly digital culture, they can never completely replace face-to-face meetings. The Christian faith is deeply incarnational and is a profound source of encounter between persons and with God, who is manifest most fully in the person of Jesus Christ. This course intends in-person opportunities as integral to the formation of pre-service Catholic teachers.

Objectives:

The *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* course comprises important objectives to support instructors in the design and delivery of the course of study:

- A fundamental opportunity to celebrate Catholic education in all academic disciplines for a vibrant, integrated and faith-based learning environment.
- A practical application of teaching and learning that is rooted in the categories of knowledge and skills of Catholic curricula and the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations with respect for critical logic and academic integrity.
- A carefully integrated focus on pedagogical skills, instructional design, and effective planning for differentiated learning within a fully inclusive model of support for all persons.
- An informed understanding of how to apply assessment, evaluation and feedback for the faith formation and achievement of students.
- A formative opportunity for collaborative inquiry among teachers to dialogue about barriers to professional practice and the need for continuous professional learning throughout a career as a Catholic educator.

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- Direct experience with professional readings in scripture, prayer, liturgy, catechesis and foundational Catholic resources.
 - An embrace and respect for Indigenous ways of knowing to teach students about our calls to action with commitments for reconciliation with First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities.
 - An ethic that practices anti-oppression, anti-racism, equity, diversity and inclusion rooted in the dignity of the person made in the image and likeness of God.
 - An understanding of the history of Catholic education in Ontario since 1841 and the distinctive value of faith-based learning for students and families.
 - An understanding of the importance of the home, school and parish relationship.

CONSIDER AND REFLECT

Catholic schools remain **essential places for the evangelization of the young**. Account should be taken of a number of guiding principles set forth in *Veritatis Gaudium* for the renewal and revival of missionary outreach on the part of schools and universities. These include a fresh experience of the kerygma, **wide-ranging dialogue, interdisciplinary and cross-disciplinary** approaches, the promotion of a **culture of encounter**, the urgency of creating networks and an **option in favour of those who are least**, those whom society discards. Similarly important is **the ability to integrate the knowledge of head, heart and hands**.

4. Course Content

As we seek to support the prayerful development and vocation of Catholic teachers, we recognize that formation always depends on the interaction between God’s Spirit and the freedom of the individual. The Hope Expectations that precede the specific course expectations throughout this section articulate our deepest hopes for teacher candidates and acknowledges the formative aspect of this course alongside the professional learning. While these hope expectations cannot be assessed or evaluated, we are encouraged that “the Holy Spirit continues to arouse the thirst for God within people, and within the Church.” (DC, 38) Dialogue and encouragement between instructors and candidates and among candidates will support growth in these areas.

The course content for the *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* focuses on providing a framework of professional knowledge for beginning teachers.

The charts below are taken from both the Elementary and Secondary Religious Education policy documents. The course content of this pre-service teachers’ course is aligned with these curriculum strands and incorporates the Big Ideas of Religious Education as shown below.

Curriculum Strands

Elementary Curriculum Strands	Secondary Curriculum Strands
Believing	Profession of Faith
Celebrating	Scripture
Living a Moral Life	Christian Moral Development
Living in Communion	Family Life
Living in Solidarity	Research and Inquiry Skills
Praying	Prayer and Sacramental Life

Big Ideas of Religious Education

Big Ideas - Elementary	Big Ideas - Secondary
Liturgical Year	Religious Knowledge and Literacy
New Evangelization	Catholic-Christian Anthropology
Sacred Scripture	Theological Reflection
Creed	Living Moral Lives
Tasks of Catechesis for Missionary Disciples	Celebrating in the Faith Community

The Hope Expectations and Course Content by Strand

Believing / Profession of Faith

❖ ***Our Hope is that Teacher candidates will:***

- Actively discern the vocation of a Catholic teacher to missionary discipleship in the service of children and youth.
- Proclaim with confidence the reason for their faith as witnesses of their encounter with Jesus Christ.

➤ **Teacher candidates will have the opportunity to:**

- ✓ Understand that personal vocation stems from God's abundant grace through Baptism, Confirmation and the celebration of Holy Eucharist.
- ✓ Understand the duties of a Catholic teacher and conditions of employment.
- ✓ Explore effective teaching strategies to nurture faith and reason by applying knowledge of the stages of faith development.
- ✓ Understand how to collectively embrace both faith and science as stewards of God's creation.

Celebrating / Scripture

❖ ***Our Hope is that Teacher candidates will:***

- Cherish the celebration of the Eucharist as the source and summit of Christian life.
- Embrace the challenge of living a Catholic spiritual life in a secular dominant culture.

➤ **Teacher candidates will have the opportunity to:**

- ✓ Understand the role of the teacher as catechist to celebrate scripture, the sacred deposit of faith and the teachings of Jesus Christ.

- ✓ Understand the sacred scriptures as the story of our salvation, brought to its fulfilment in the person of Jesus, as outlined in the four gospel accounts in the New Testament.

- ✓ Participate in personal and communal prayer, recognizing the importance of symbols, scripture, ritual actions in the celebrations of the Church throughout the liturgical year.

- ✓ Prepare to lead students in prayer and liturgies using foundational Catholic resources, the liturgical calendar, music and the arts.

- ✓ Understand the basic elements of the *Directory for Catechesis* and the role of Catholic schools in the mission of the Church, the spiritual needs of persons across the lifespan while respecting cultural realities and the digital culture that impacts teaching and learning strategies.

- ✓ Understand the tasks of catechesis as outlined in the *Directory for Catechesis* which seek to form the baptised to become missionary disciples. The tasks are:

- » Knowledge of the Faith
- » Celebration of the Mystery
- » Forming for Life in Christ
- » Teaching Prayer
- » Introduction to Community Life

Living a Moral Life / Christian Moral Development

❖ ***Our Hope is that Teacher candidates will:***

- Develop an informed conscience.
- Seek to live a life of charity and justice guided by Catholic Social Teaching.
- Find joy, hope and consolation in the Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ.

➤ **Teacher candidates will have the opportunity to:**

- ✓ Understand the foundations of the moral teachings of the Catholic faith.
- ✓ Practise teaching strategies that support the ability of students to respond to challenging moral questions and ethics.
- ✓ Explore ways of teaching that celebrate the participation of students in the life and mission of the Catholic Church.
- ✓ Develop professional skills in designing learning experiences that respect diversity, inclusion and an intrinsic connection to the life experiences of students.
- ✓ Commit to the Calls to Action from the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls and Indigenous ways of knowing for First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.

Living in Communion / Family Life

❖ ***Our Hope is that Teacher candidates will:***

- Seek to grow in understanding of the Holy Trinity and its centrality in the Christian experience of divine, communal love.
- Recognize the importance of the family and the parish as foundational communities for the nurturing of children and for service to the world.

➤ **Teacher candidates will have the opportunity to:**

- ✓ Understand the role of a Catholic teacher to support a trusting partnership of the home, school and parish.
- ✓ Design professional lessons that nurture the central role of family life using the *Growing in Faith, Growing in Christ, Fully Alive*, and secondary

- ✓ secondary Religious Education course profile resources.
- ✓ Know how to effectively nurture the successful achievement of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.
- ✓ Practise the teaching and application of Catholic Social Teachings.

Living in Solidarity / Research and Inquiry Skills

❖ ***Our Hope is that Teacher candidates will:***

- Seek intimacy with God and celebrate communion with God, neighbours, and Creation through prayer, both personal and communal.
- Accept and appreciate what it means to be a member of the Body of Christ, both the grace that it gives and the responsibilities it entails.

➤ **Teacher candidates will have the opportunity to:**

- ✓ Identify the mission of Catholic schools for pastoral care and Catholic social justice.
- ✓ Identify effective instructional strategies that celebrate ecumenism and interreligious dialogue.
- ✓ Understand the history of Catholic education and the excellence within Catholic schools to nurture respect for critical logic and academic integrity since 1841 in the province of Ontario.
- ✓ Apply knowledge of the leadership, sacrifice and contributions of religious sisters, priests and laity in the history of Catholic education in Ontario.
- ✓ Reflect on key documents of the Catholic Church to foster a practise of professional reading in Catholic teaching.

Praying / Prayer and Sacramental Life

- ❖ ***Our Hope is that Teacher candidates will:***
 - Seek to understand the mysteries of the Catholic faith through participation in the sacramental life of the Church, and through theological reading, reflection, and prayer.
 - Appreciate the sacred scriptures as a cornerstone in a life of prayer.
 - Pursue personal faith formation through prayer, professional reading and ongoing formation opportunities.

- **Teacher candidates will have the opportunity to:**
 - ✓ Prepare to support students in their prayer life especially in the celebration of the Holy Eucharist.
 - ✓ Prepare to work with parents and pastoral teams to prepare students for the reception of sacraments and personal encounters with Jesus Christ.
 - ✓ Understand a variety of forms of prayer including Christian Meditation.
 - ✓ Learn about the role of the Catholic teacher in the pastoral plan of the school, board and diocese.

5. Instructional Practices

The *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* course is based on coherent instructional practices that model a professional commitment to quality teaching and learning. The course is designed to nurture high standards in faith formation and Catholic education with the following elements of professional instruction for teacher candidates at universities in Ontario:

Theories of Learning and Professional Catholic Education

- A Catholic classroom that points to encounters with Jesus Christ in all curriculum areas with integrated planning of Catholic themes and anchor concepts.
- An informed understanding of theories of learning and the manner in which varied learning opportunities can celebrate the gifts of students in everyday instruction.
- Reflections on professional practice in which teachers reflect upon practical evidence to overcome the barriers to effective teaching and learning.
- A mindset in the classroom that values the importance of student inquiry, prayer and discernment to support the regulation, co-regulation and self-regulation of students.
- Critical analysis of the readings for the course and the application of professional learning in Catholic education through collaborative inquiry.

Pedagogy and Lesson Planning

- A focus on constructivist learning in which instructors support students to respond to their God-given desire for knowledge – to know, and to come to know themselves and God.
- Differentiated instruction for content, processes and products that support all students.
- Lessons that activate, explore and

consolidate student understanding.

- Lesson planning that affirms the agency of students and supports differentiated opportunities for focus lessons, guided practice, small group instruction and independent performance tasks in a gradual release of responsibility.
- An informed understanding of how to apply spiralled program planning that monitors the success of students in Religious Education, Family Life and all Catholic education.

Assessment, Evaluation and Feedback

- The creation of performance tasks that provide meaningful opportunities for faith formation, student learning and reflect the differentiated interests, abilities, and God-given gifts of students.
- The professional implementation of assessment ‘for’, ‘of’, and ‘as’ learning that builds on prior knowledge and co-constructs success with students to nurture understanding.
- The use of assessment, evaluation and feedback in a balanced commitment with multiple opportunities for students to demonstrate cognitive and faith formation.
- Assessment practices that intentionally apply observations, conversations and performance tasks for feedback and targeted interventions.
- Pedagogical documentation that demonstrates a comprehensive approach to the consolidation of learning with global competencies that honour the individual gifts of students.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

- A commitment to excellence in equity, diversity and the inclusion of all persons rooted in their Creation in the image and likeness of God.

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- A commitment to excellence in special education and the integrity of Individual Education Plans.
 - A commitment to the mental health and wellness of all persons with learning spaces that are safe places to pray, reflect, make errors and learn about God's infinite love and mercy.
 - Scaffolded opportunities with performance tasks that provide a low floor, high ceiling and varied chances for students to pray and demonstrate achievement in the categories of knowledge and skills.

6. Assessment, Evaluation and Feedback of Teacher Candidates

The *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* course applies an empirical understanding of effective feedback with professional support for the achievement and development of beginning teachers. The assessment and evaluation of teacher candidates is an integral component of professional learning and rooted in meaningful feedback for growth.

The following parameters for assessment, evaluation and feedback are necessary elements of the *Preparing to Teach in Catholic Schools* course:

- The assessment and evaluation of teacher candidates models a balanced approach with formative and summative performance tasks to demonstrate knowledge, thinking, communication and application of concepts.
 - Teacher candidates are evaluated on their ability to integrate Catholic themes, anchor concepts and comprehensive lesson planning with Catholic curriculum expectations and global competencies.
 - Instructors provide multiple opportunities for feedback with cognitive development that is based on assessment ‘for’, ‘of’ and ‘as’ learning.
 - Feedback emanates from the belief that candidates desire meaningful insight and wish to receive feedback in a regular and timely manner to apply in the next iteration of their learning.
 - Teacher candidates are provided feedback on the degree to which they are meeting the competencies for teaching in Catholic schools:
 - Knowledge and understanding of content
 - Use of critical thinking processes
 - Expression of meaning and significance
 - Applied connections to professional teaching practice
- Teacher candidates have the opportunity to apply their development as Catholic teachers with performance tasks that allow flexibility and choice. For example:
 - Formative Opportunities:
 - Reflect upon professional practice in didactic lessons, small group interactions, digital forums and collaborative inquiries with peers.
 - Dialogue within focus groups about theology, theories of learning, everyday instruction and barriers to implementation.
 - Discussions of course readings and resources.
 - Application of faith and reason in scholarly activity.
 - Summative Opportunities:
 - Design professional lesson plans with Catholic curricula, instructional strategies and differentiated learning resources in Religious Education and Family Life.
 - Demonstrate understanding of the integration of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations into professional lessons plans in other areas of curriculum.
 - Demonstrate how Catholic teachers nurture the faith formation of youth in all settings including e-learning platforms with high standards for pedagogy and catechism.
 - Describe how Catholic teachers scaffold learning so that students feel safe to ask challenging questions in an inclusive classroom that connects contemporary issues for youth with their questions of faith.
 - Document growth as a professional Catholic teacher throughout the course to extend and connect concepts of pedagogy and theology in Catholic education.

SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENT RUBRIC: SAMPLE

CRITERIA		Limited	Some	Considerable	Thorough
Knowledge and Understanding	<p>Knowledge and Understanding of Content</p> <p>Comprehension of Meaning and Significance</p> <p>(e.g. connections between curricula, instruction and assessments).</p>	The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge of content.	The candidate has started to align thinking and practices and demonstrates some knowledge of content.	The candidate regularly aligns thinking and demonstrates considerable knowledge of content.	<p>The candidate has deeply embedded the principle in thinking and practices.</p> <p>Candidate demonstrates thorough knowledge of content.</p>
	<p>Use of Critical Thinking Processes</p> <p>(e.g., ideas for teaching, learning, differentiation, barriers to professional practice).</p>	The candidate demonstrates limited use of critical analysis and synthesis.	The candidate demonstrates some use of critical analysis and synthesis.	The candidate demonstrates considerable use of critical analysis and synthesis.	The candidate demonstrates thorough use of critical analysis and synthesis.
	<p>Expression and Organization of Ideas</p> <p>(e.g., clear expression, logical organization).</p>	The candidate demonstrates limited expression and logical organization of ideas.	The candidate demonstrates some expression and logical organization of ideas.	The candidate demonstrates considerable expression and logical organization of ideas.	The candidate demonstrates thorough expression and logical organization of ideas.
	<p>Making Connections Within and Between Contexts</p> <p>(e.g., connections to activating and consolidating understanding).</p>	The candidate demonstrates limited connections and transfer to professional practice.	The candidate demonstrates some connections and transfer to professional practice.	The candidate demonstrates considerable connections and transfer to professional practice.	The candidate demonstrates thorough connections and transfer to professional practice.

7. Professional Learning in Catholic Teaching

The Church acknowledges the essential role of Catholic teachers in the realization of the mission of Catholic schools:

“[L]et teachers recognize that the Catholic school depends upon them almost entirely for the accomplishment of its goals and programs. ***They should therefore be very carefully prepared so that both in secular and religious knowledge*** [emphasis added] they are equipped with suitable qualifications and also with a pedagogical skill that is in keeping with the findings of the contemporary world. Intimately linked in charity to one another and to their students and endowed with an apostolic spirit, may teachers by their life as much as by their instruction bear witness to Christ, the unique Teacher.” (*On Christian Education*, #8)

Catholic teachers, and the organizations and communities that nurture them, have a responsibility to provide ongoing professional learning not only in regards to sound pedagogy, but in the teaching and tradition of the Catholic Church. Catholic schools participate in the evangelizing mission of the Church; therefore, its teachers must be effective witnesses able to give a reason for their hope and dedicated to a deepening relationship with the person of Jesus Christ.

Especially in our increasingly secular dominant culture, Catholic teachers are often facilitators of the relationship between the school and the local parish community:

“Since, therefore, the Catholic school can be such an aid to the fulfilment of the mission of the People of God and to the fostering of the dialogue between the Church and [hu] mankind, to the benefit of both, it retains even in our present circumstances the utmost importance.” (GE, #8)

For these reasons, aspiring Catholic teachers will be introduced to some of the key documents of the Church relating to education and the vocation of the laity. This will support their media literacy in a digital culture that is rife with information from a vast network of sources, resources, perspectives, and ideologies. Aspiring teachers will be supported in developing skills of critical analysis to their evaluation of digital resources used to enhance their own learning and that of students.

Leading Prayer and Liturgy

The Catholic teacher will be called upon to lead classroom communities in prayer. This includes the common prayers of the Church, such as the Our Father, the praying of the Rosary, or novenas, but also opportunities for students to experience meditative and contemplative prayer. Just as there are a variety of learning styles that educators and pedagogues are familiar with, so too are there a variety of prayer styles.

In the life of the Catholic school, prayer frames the school day. We open with prayer; we say *Grace Before Meals*; and we often end the day with prayer. Then, during special occasions or for special intentions, or during the liturgical seasons, we pray specifically or participate in a variety of liturgical celebrations.

Catholic teacher candidates should be encouraged to begin to build their own archive of prayers for different occasions and for different liturgical seasons. Building an awareness of the *Ordo* as an invaluable resource for Catholic teachers, for example, will support teacher candidates in their developing understanding of the rhythms of the liturgical year and the unfolding of scripture in the lectionary.

A reverent focus on our love for God is supported by creating classrooms with centres, prayer tables and resources that integrate Catholic education

throughout all elements of the daily life of teaching and learning. The anchors of all classrooms must provide visible signs of our Catholic faith with immersive and natural opportunities for students to pray.

Selected Readings

The selected readings that follow are intended to be a list from which course instructors can draw to achieve the goals of the course. In each subsection below, brief text selections or video presentations introduce teacher candidates to core texts and resources essential for their ongoing formation and professional learning as Catholic educators.

Sacred Scripture

The selection here touches upon key moments and themes from Salvation History:

The two accounts of creation in the book of Genesis give the foundation for the dignity of the human person created in the image of God, stewardship of creation, and the consequences of human disobedience to the will of God.

The passages from Exodus are an introduction to the core story of the Old Testament involving God's deliverance of the Israelites from bondage in Egypt. God is the promise-keeper of the Covenant.

The passages from the New Testament introduce the beginning of Jesus' public ministry and his central teaching of the beatitudes. They also include Peter's declaration about Jesus that contains the essential question from Jesus to all disciples, past and present: 'Who do you say that I am?' A core Eucharistic story (*Feeding of the 5000*) is included to deepen students' awareness of the various biblical narrative origins of the sacrament

of the Mass. The four Gospel accounts of the Suffering, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus are listed as they form the basis of our understanding of Christ as the Messiah, the one who saves us. Teacher candidates should be encouraged to deepen their awareness and understanding of these Gospels in particular in their celebration of the liturgies of the Easter Triduum.

Finally, the story of Pentecost is included to remind Catholic students of the initiative of the Holy Spirit in liberating and empowering the early Church to go out and proclaim the good news of what God did in Christ Jesus. Additionally, the passage from St. Paul to the Romans highlights the steadfast love of God for humanity in the person of Jesus Christ, especially through times of challenge and tribulation.

- Genesis 1:1 - 3:24 (The Two Accounts of Creation)
- Exodus 1:8 - 3:22 (Moses' birth and call by God)
- Exodus 20:1-18 (The Ten Commandments)
- Mark 1: 1-20 (The Baptism of Jesus and Beginning of his Galilean Ministry)
- Mark 8: 27-35 (Who do you say that I am?)
- Matthew 5: 1-19 (The Beatitudes)
- John 6:1-14 (Feeding of the 5000)
- Matthew 26:36 – 28:10, Mark 14:43 – 16, Luke 22:47 – 24:12, and John 18 – 20:10. (The Betrayal, Crucifixion, and Resurrection of Jesus)
- Acts 2:1-12 (Pentecost "The Birth of the Church")
- Romans 8:18-19, 26-27, 31-32, 35, 38-39 (Nothing can separate us from the love of God)

Directory for Catechesis, Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization
(CCCCB Publications, 2020 - *not available online*)

With the publication of the new *Directory for Catechesis*, the Church offers clarity and direction for all those who are called to teach the faith to the young, as are our Catholic teachers.

The selections below are specifically addressed to those who minister in Catholic schools: Chapter 1: Revelation and Its Transmission: #11-54

- Catholic Schools: #309-312
- The Teaching of the Catholic Religion in Schools: #313-318

Key Documents of the Second Vatican Council

These selections from councilor documents offer teacher candidates some understanding of key teachings from this important ecumenical council for all Christians:

- [*Lumen Gentium*](#) (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church)
 - Chapter 1 - The Mystery of the Church
 - Chapter 4 - The Laity
- [*Sacrosanctum Concilium*](#) (Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy)
 - Chapter 1, paragraphs #5-13
 - Chapter 5 The Liturgical Year
- [*Gravissimum Educationis*](#) (Declaration on Christian Education)
 - #2 Christian Education
 - #5 The Importance of Schools
 - #8 Catholic Schools

The History of Catholic Education

Much has been written about the history of Catholic education in Ontario. Either of these two suggested videos offer a succinct presentation of the topic for teacher candidates:

- [*The Enduring Gift*](#) (2011)
- [*Upon Whose Shoulders We Stand*](#) (2017)

Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGE)

The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGEs) were developed to provide a framework to represent the distinctiveness and purpose of Catholic education in Ontario. A variety of resources are available through the ICE website www.iceont.ca/ocsge/ along with Monographs in the Curriculum Series www.iceont.ca/monographs/

8. *Renewing the Promise*: Reflection and Prayer

The promise is that this true encounter with Jesus can and does take place, each and every day, within our Catholic schools.

**Together, we commit to renew that promise as we work together to strengthen our Catholic schools as communities that exemplify, in word and in deed, the Good News of Jesus Christ.
(*Renewing the Promise*, p.4)**

Renewing the Promise (2018) is situated within a tradition of pastoral letters from our bishops in support of Catholic Education. *This Moment of Promise* (1988) was published following the extension of full-funding to Catholic schools and *Fulfilling the Promise* (1993) followed five years later. These pastoral letters demonstrate a legacy of support for Catholic education from our bishops and help us to celebrate the contributions our schools make to Ontarian society, and how our schools participate in the evangelizing mission of the Church. They also help us to navigate the challenges we face in our contemporary context.

The four central themes of the letter affirm that in Catholic schools we are:

- A Community That Accompanies
- A Community That Builds Relationships
- A Community That Encourages Engagement and Instils Hope
- A Community That Forms Joyful Disciples

The Institute for Catholic Education (ICE) has published a [*Renewing the Promise Discussions Guide*](#) (2018). It is a resource for all Catholic educators, schools/districts, and supporters to use to enter more deeply, prayerfully and reflectively into the core themes of the pastoral letter.

Below is an excerpt from *Renewing the Promise* that gives direction and offers encouragement to Teachers and Education Workers in Catholic Schools:

“You are powerful witnesses to the presence of Jesus in the lives of our students, and you provide the good soil each school day for the roots of faith to grow in our students. Remember that Jesus was a great teacher. In prayer, allow him to inspire you by His example of loving service, and ask Him to support you in your chosen vocation. ...

At the close of the day, send them home to their families with enthusiasm for the opportunities that are present in their lives and with confidence in their own abilities to make this world more loving, and more just, through their good works and witness. Recognize that they return to their families and communities each day reflecting the kindness, love and attention they experienced in your care. Strive to keep Jesus at the centre of your school community and the centre of your lives.”
(RTP, 17)

Letters do invite a response, and a prayerful and thoughtful consideration of this letter will be meaningful for all involved with Catholic education.

In order to model for our newest teachers the centrality of our prayer life, we invite all who participate in their preparation for teaching in Catholic Schools to pray for and with them:

Let us pray +

Almighty and Ever-living God,
We know you never withhold
what we truly need.

We give thanks that you chose to save us by
becoming one of us in your Son, Jesus.
You gave your Son to live with us
so we may know Him in the flesh,
see him, touch him and
be touched by his teaching.

Through the power of the Holy Spirit, you
remain with us, give us your very life,
constantly lead us out to a world in need
and gather us together in our journey towards
our heavenly home.

Grant for all those who seek
to enter into Catholic education
the gift of your Spirit that can inspire,
console and guide in all truth.

Help the newest teachers among us to
be courageous in their witness so that,
through their teaching, they may model
in all they say and do,
in every deed and word,
your love and mercy for all your children.

May all those in leadership and mentorship
shine forth an authentic witness
of joyful discipleship
so we may inspire the generations that
come after us in the vocation of teaching.
May our pastors pray with fervour for and
with us as we participate together in the one
great mission of your church – to proclaim to
the world salvation through your Son, Jesus
Christ.

We call upon the great cloud of witnesses in
heaven that have given such example of their
lives in education to bring our prayers before
you, O Lord.

Saint Thomas Aquinas, great teacher of the
Church and lover of philosophy and theology,
pray for us.

Saint Angela Merici, dedicated to the education
of girls, pray for us.

Saint Marguerite Bourgeoys, who knew the
power of education to liberate, pray for us.

Saint Benedict, who taught us how our work
and prayer are one, pray for us.

St. Kateri Tekakwitha who sought out a good
teacher asking: Who will teach me what is
most pleasing to God, that I may do it? Pray
for us.

Saint Catherine of Sienna, a teacher of and in
the Church, pray for us.

Blessed Carlo Acutis, who as a youth taught us
about the power of the love of the Eucharist and
how to harness the Internet in evangelization,
pray for us.

Saint Joseph, protector of the Holy Family, the
Church, and patron saint of Canada and most
holy Mary, who together were teachers of the
child Jesus, pray for us.

May these great Saints dedicated to education,
and the many more saints who continue to teach
us by their extraordinary witness to holiness,
keep our prayers ever new and present before
you, merciful God.

We ask this in the name of your Son, Jesus
Christ, in the power of your Holy Spirit, God
forever and ever. Amen.

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