

Hope Expectations for *Family Life Education* in Elementary Schools



What are Hope Expectations?

Family Life Education touches topics which have deeply personal, social and cultural implications. It seeks to help us know what it means to be human, what God calls us to in loving relationships and what our vocation is. In the lives of our students today, there are many factors that influence their understanding in these areas including their own experiences of family living, cultural values, and increasing use of technology and social media for good and for ill.

In Catholic schools, Family Life Education seeks to develop not only knowledge and skills in these areas but also to foster in students the attitudes and values derived from faith and that constitute a Catholic worldview. Hope Expectations cannot be understood as expectations in the same sense as the overall and specific expectations, nor can they be evaluated or used for assessment purposes, yet they speak to our deep aspirations for students.

Hope Expectations are not the list of 'what we teach', rather they are the expression of what we hope students come to value and strive for, what they cherish and appreciate most deeply. Hope Expectations depend on the interaction between God's Spirit and the freedom of the individual student.

“*Family Life Education seeks to help us know what it means to be human, what God calls us to in loving relationships and what our vocation is.*”

How are Hope Expectations developed?

Hope Expectations were first developed in the 2012 Religious Education Curriculum policy document.

In 2022 - 2023, the Institute for Catholic Education engaged a wide variety of voices to inform the Hope Expectations specific to Family Life Education. Parents, students, educators and partners in Catholic Education from across Ontario all helped to shape these expectations.

What are our shared hopes for students?

The overall hopes for students are described as follows:

The partners in Catholic Education hold high hopes for students in Catholic schools. Through Family Life Education, we aspire to work in service to nurture a sense of belonging in our schools and in our Church, and to lead young people to an appreciation of the gifts of sexuality, marriage and the family that come from God. We hope that students discover and develop a healthy notion of body, mind and spirit. We hope that students feel strengthened and supported as they learn to form healthy and life-giving relationships. We hope they come to appreciate the ways in which God is active in family living – binding up wounds, healing what is broken, comforting where there is sadness, rejoicing with us, guiding us. We hope all students come to a deep appreciation that human dignity is grounded in being created in the image and likeness of God. This is the foundation of their own dignity and the dignity of every other person.

We hope that students discover more about their unique gifts and see how these are to be shared in service to others. We hope they have a developing sense of being part of the Body of Christ. We hope they come to see their vocation as nothing less than holiness. Our deepest hope for students is that they know that they are made on purpose for a purpose, and that they come to discover ever more deeply who and whose they are. We support their parents in

affirming that families are our first school of formation – teaching us about love and mercy and service to others; our first experience of church – a place of prayer and worship, sacramentality and a sharing of the Good News; and, at their best, a reflection of the steadfast and unconditional love of God.

Our teaching on marriage and the family cannot fail to be inspired and transformed by this message of love and tenderness; ... The mystery of Christian family can be fully understood only in the light of the Father's infinite love revealed in Christ, who gave himself up for our sake and who continues to dwell in our midst.¹

In the following pages, we present the Hope Expectations as they are listed in the Family Life Curriculum policy document, 2023.

“Our deepest hope for students is that they know that they are made on purpose for a purpose, and that they come to discover even more deeply who and whose they are.”

Primary Hope Expectations

By the end of Grade 3, **it is our hope** that students will be individuals who:

- Seek to grow in understanding and cherish how God is ever-present in their family and in Scripture.
- Recognize the presence of Jesus within their family and appreciate that they belong to a family at home, school, Church, in the community and in the world.
- Reflect on the example of the Holy Family as a model for living in right relationship with God, themselves, others and creation.
- Know and appreciate themselves as children of God who are created by God out of love for love.
- Appreciate how families help them grow and develop with an understanding of how God brings about new life.
- Appreciate how families mirror the love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, calling us to prayerfully and sacramentally build families that are faithful, hopeful and loving.

Junior Hope Expectations

By the end of Grade 6, **it is our hope** that students will be individuals who:

- Continue to deepen their understanding and appreciation of how God is ever-present in their family and in Scripture.
- Recognize the presence of Jesus within their family and realize they are called by God to collaborate in a family at home, school, Church, in the community and in the world.
- Incorporate the example of the Holy Family into living their own right relationships with God, themselves, others and creation.
- Know and appreciate their identity first and foremost as children of God who are made in God's image and likeness out of love for love.
- Appreciate how families help them grow and develop with an understanding of the life giving, loving nature of human sexuality.
- Value the virtues of modesty and chastity and appreciate how living a chaste life helps them develop and maintain authentic friendships, purity of heart and respect for others.
- Appreciate how families mirror and are inspired by the love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, calling us to prayerfully and sacramentally build virtuous families that are faithful, hopeful and loving.

Intermediate Hope Expectations

By the end of Grade 8, **it is our hope** that students will be individuals who:

- Actively reflect upon God's presence in and through Scripture, in their lives, family and the world at large.
- Recognize the presence of Jesus within their family and actively strive to collaborate with others at home, school, Church, in the community and in the world.
- Strive to faithfully integrate the example of the Holy Family into their own relationship with God, themselves, others and creation.
- Know and proclaim with confidence their inherent dignity as children of God who are created in God's image and likeness on purpose and for a purpose.
- Appreciate how families help them grow and develop with an understanding of human sexuality as a gift from God.
- Understand themselves as an integration of body, mind and spirit and appreciate how faith contributes to their health, wholeness and well-being.
- Develop attitudes and values that promote sacramental marriage and the sacredness and dignity of life from conception to natural death.
- Seek to be loving and chaste in all their relationships, whether they are called to be married, single, consecrated or ordained.
- Appreciate how families mirror and are inspired by the love of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit, calling us to prayerfully and sacramentally build virtuous families that are faithful, hopeful and loving.

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Love hopes all things.
- 1 Corinthians 13:7
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As Pope Francis reminds us in his teaching on the family, “Each of us, by our love and care, leaves a mark on the life of others... God has sown so much good in others in the hope that we will help make it grow.”²

“ON
purpose,
 FOR A
purpose.”

“KNOWING
who & whose
 THEY ARE.”

References

- 1 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis, 2016, 59
- 2 Post-Synodal Apostolic Exhortation *Amoris Laetitia*, Pope Francis, 2016, 322

This document also quotes widely from the Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document Family Life Education, Grades 1-8, 2023.