

PASTORAL PLAN

School Name: **St. Helen Separate School**

School Mission Statement: The Mission of St. Helen School, a community living the Gospel Values, is to foster an environment where all students reach their academic potential as determined by Ontario Provincial Standards. Our commitment to a comprehensive system of support and a responsive partnership with family and church will ensure this outcome.

School Motto: Growing Together in Christ

Pastoral Plan Links to Strategic Plan/Catholic Board Learning Plan:

- ▶ **Link: Strategic Plan [2014-2019 Strategic System Plan](#)**
- ▶ **Link: Catholic Board Learning Plan**

Our Parish: St. Christopher

Pastor: Rev. Scott Young

Associate Pastor: Rev. Gerry Dunn

Parish website: www.stchristopher.on.ca

Message from the Pastor: Rev. Gerry Dunn

"One of my special ministries as Associate Pastor at St. Christopher's is to visit St. Helen School regularly. What comes of that is a family atmosphere when I am in the school and when I meet students and their families in the community. I am delighted that the children at St. Helen know me and greet me warmly whenever I am visiting. My visits also help me to understand better the challenges that families in our parish must face. I believe that my frequent visits helps to bond the school community to the parish community, because of friendship and because of faith.

Message from the Catholic School Council: Brian Skrepnek :

The Saint Helen Catholic Elementary School Council, as an advisory body, supports all initiatives within the school to foster a deeper understanding of our faith within the school and the St Helen School Community. Our focus is to promote the vision and values of the Catholic Church and to provide a school wide perspective on issues pertaining to our School Pastoral Plan.

- 1) Our parish representative provides information and updates from the church to the community at large through our Council meetings.
- 2) Invitations are issued to the community to attend our Virtue Assemblies and school Masses held throughout the year via the school newsletter.
- 3) Regular visits take place from our Parish Priest, Father Jerry, to speak to the students.

These initiatives as well as the support from staff and the guidance from our administration brings our community together through Christ and fosters a true sense of Catholicity within our school.

Catholic Education Week Theme:

Throughout Catholic Education Week, we ask you to reflect on the significance of Catholic education's presence and contribution in our Church, and in our society.

April 30- May -5, 2017 is Catholic Education Week. "Walking Forward Together"

For Catholic Education Week our schedule is as follows:

Monday, May 1nd –Rosary Group-Opening Prayers on the PA
 Tuesday, May 2rd- Chapel Chats and Welcome to Kindergarten Evening
 Wednesday, May 3rd – Joe Sax Festival
 Thursday, May 4th – Hats Off 2 Kidz- Sick Kids Walk-Social Justice
 Friday, May 6th – Primary Poetry Festival 1:00 P.M.-Volunteer Appreciation

Faith Formation:

Forming ourselves in our Catholic faith is a foundational element in helping each of us understand and live in the example of Christ.

We believe in faith development, and we continue to support sacramental preparation, liturgical celebrations, community building retreats, prayer services and school wide reflection days. We work together to assist in the faith formation of our entire community. We collaborate with our pastoral team, through pastoral visits, celebrations and prayer, to focus on faith, particularly with our students. Daily morning prayer on the PA system as well as periodic prayers throughout the day in classrooms, social justice projects and formal religious instruction, support the faith development of our students. All assemblies and gatherings are marked with prayer and reflection, keeping us mindful of our journey as people of faith in Christ and professors of Catholic Education.

Sacramental Preparation:

As Catholic we understand sacraments to be "outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace." Together in partnership with our parish, we support the preparation of God's children in receiving the sacraments.

Event	Grade 2	Grade 7 and 8
Sacrament of Reconciliation	22/02/2017	
First Holy Communion	May 7, 2017 until May 28 th Every Sunday	
Sacrament of Confirmation Grade 7		07/12/2016
Sacrament of Confirmation Grade 8		

Liturgical Celebrations:

The Liturgical calendar is marked by the gathering in community to celebrate the Eucharist and share in prayer.

Celebration	Date
10/05/2016	Opening School Mass
14/02/2016	Advent Mass
19/04/2017	Easter Mass
21/06/2016	Year End/Graduation Mass
21/06/2016	Closing School Mass

Social Justice / Outreach Activities / Charities:

Catholic Social Teachings of the Church root our actions in supporting human dignity and the preferential option of the poor which calls us to serve the most vulnerable in the world.

St. Helen School participates in various activities to support our community partners of Share Life, United Way, Compass Food Bank, Canadian Food for Children (Dr. Simone’s Warehouse), Terry Fox Walk, St. Vincent de Paul (through the St. Christopher Parish), and Hats Off 2 Kidz-Sick Kids Walk. St. Helen School community supports a variety of social justice initiatives that affect both local and global needs.

Recognizing Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations:

Framed by the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGE), our graduates will be effective communicators, reflective thinkers, lifelong learners, collaborative contributors, caring family members, responsible citizens and discerning believers formed in the Catholic faith community.

Showing respect for Ontario Catholic School Graduate expectations means infusing them into daily activities and curriculum. We, St. Helen School, have chosen *responsible citizen* upon which to focus. Through social justice programs, student led liturgies, curriculum links and parent education, we highlight the OCSGEs as the central foundation for all our students. Through our home school communication, we support the education of our community in the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations.

Celebrating Virtues:

A virtue is a habit or established capacity to perform good actions according to a moral standard. When we practice these virtues we strengthen them and thereby make the presence of God more and more visible in the world around us.

St. Helen School celebrates the virtues daily as a school community through various activities and visible symbols. We gather together as a community monthly at a Virtue's Assembly led by a host class. Each class takes turns hosting throughout the year. Each class displays a "Big R" as a symbol of our focus on Respect. Random acts of kindness are exemplified throughout the school year. Teachers apply and synthesize classroom activities that highlight the Virtue of the Month every month. Art work is also displayed.

Visible Signs of our Faith:

Through symbol and service, we are instruments of God's love whose work within our communities stands as a witness to our faith.

St. Helen School has visible symbols of the Virtue of the Month. Our front entrance has the Holy Bible, the Cross and Saints' Statues adorning this sacred space for all visitors and members of the community. There is a prayer table within every classroom. The living sacred space makes us mindful of the faith that we share and work to develop each and every day. The St. Helen Chapel is a beautiful representation of our Catholic faith. The chapel is used by staff and students for prayer, saying the rosary, and "chapel chats" when children need a quiet place to reflect and talk. Our TV in the foyer runs continually highlighting students and events taking place at St. Helen School and includes a biography of the life of St. Helen.

Resource List for Parents/Guardians:

- **Religious Education Curriculum** - [Ontario Religious Education Curriculum](#)
- **Family Life Curriculum** - [Ontario Family Life Curriculum](#)
- **Fully Alive Program information** - [Ontario Bishops' information on Fully Alive](#)

Vocations Units

We have Vocations units as part of the Grades 2, 5, and 8 curriculum. The goal of these supplementary units is to deepen one's understanding of God's call – the “*vocare*” – to various forms of life within the Church.

- **History of the Parish**

Through the resource book *Our Story, Our Tradition, Our Journey*, grade 7 students have the opportunity to learn about the history of our parish.

- [Enduring Gift Video](#)