

# PASTORAL PLAN

**School:** St. Helen Separate School

## **School Mission Statement:**

St. Helen School is a community living the Gospel Values. Our mission 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:** *Enlightened by Knowledge. Enriched by Faith.*

**Our Parish:** St. Christopher

**Pastor:** Rev. Steven Kwon

**Parish website:** <https://stchristophersmi.archtoronto.org/en/>

## **Message from the Pastor:**

St. Helen Catholic Elementary School is under the pastoral care of St. Christopher's Parish under the direction of Rev. Joseph Rodrigues. We encourage families to register with the parish, visit our parish website for updates and to join us for mass.

*"One of my special ministries as 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 help to bond the school community to the parish community, because of friendship and because of faith."*

## **Message from the Catholic School Council:**

*The St. Helen Catholic School Council is an integral part of our school community. Through the active participation and collaboration of parents/guardians, we strive to support school*

*initiatives that ensure that all students reach their full potential in an inclusive faith filled and safe environment.*

### **Catholic Education Week Theme: We Are Called to Love**

Catholic Education Week is held each year in May in our 29 Ontario Catholic School Boards. Catholic Education Week 2024 is scheduled to take place during the week of May 5 – May 10. It is our pleasure to announce the theme for Catholic Education Week 2024:

#### **Catholic Education: *We are Called to Love* L'éducation catholique: *Appelés à aimer***

Our spiritual quote for Catholic Education Week 2024 is:

*"If we love one another, God lives in us." 1 John 4:12  
Si nous nous aimons les uns les autres, Dieu demeure en nous. (1 Jean 4, 12)*

#### **Sub-Themes for Catholic Education Week**

The five sub-themes for Catholic Education Week are:

Monday:	As people of hope / Dans l'espérance
Tuesday:	As people of faith / Dans la foi
Wednesday:	As people of mercy / Avec compassion
Thursday:	As people of justice / Dans la justice
Friday:	As people of joy / Dans la joie

Activities or events planned for the week: Daily Scripture Readings, Theme Song and Prayers Catholic Education Week Classroom Activities.

*Throughout the week St. Helen students will be participating in a variety of activities that will continue to focus on the CEW theme and daily sub-themes. These include daily scripture readings, theme song and prayers and Catholic Education Week Classroom Activities and Literature.*

### **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.*

**The 2019-2023 Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP).**

St Helen school will support the continued implementation of the 2019-2023 Multi-Year Strategic Plan (MYSP). This five-value framework that was established for the MYSP reflects:

- DPCDSB's identify as a Catholic institution

Ministry of Education focus on achievement, equity and inclusive education, well-being, and public confidence in publicly funded Catholic education, particularly modernizing classrooms and modernizing learning.

The MYSP will see St Helen seek to improve the experience of students, parents and teachers in our school and expand their capacity within the following areas:

- A Belief – in Catholic social teaching and the importance of human dignity
- To Excel – in the ability to gain, understand and apply curriculum content
- To Respect – that all persons are made in the image of God and see this as the foundation for equity
- To Thrive – through the support of mental health and well-being
- To Trust – in the responsible management of human and financial resources made available to St Helen.

We have been purposeful in our daily prayer to assist students learn the Hail Mary, Glory Be, Apostles Creed and Our Father. In line with the MYSP, we continue to focus on Catholic teachings and daily life as an intentional effort throughout the year. We will also engage virtually with the Rosary Apostolates to support youth faith formation. Additionally, we have the following opportunities for our community:

- School Masses: Opening/Thanksgiving, Advent, Lent, Graduation/Year End
- Daily Gospel Reading and Gospel Reflections
- Daily Land Acknowledgement
- Eco Team
- Virtual Rosary Apostolate
- Bullying Prevention and Awareness Campaign
- Thanksgiving Food Drive
- ShareLife and Terry Fox Contributions

**Prayer and Scripture**

*Prayer is an essential component in experiencing God's presence and in developing a relationship with God, Mary and following in Jesus' footsteps. Various forms of prayer are used both in class and school-wide through:*

- *Daily school wide prayers, in class and virtually.*
- *In class prayers, including Grace, and end of day prayer*
- *Building Religious Literacy through, gestures as prayer such as; the sign of the Cross, appropriate responses and gestures during scripture and Gospel reading.*
- *Participating in Scripture readings, songs and reflections as prayer.*
- *Encouraging students and staff to pray throughout the day, including virtual meetings*

**Parish and Home and School Connection**

*St. Helen is fortunate to belong to St. Christopher's Parish and have Father Joseph as our spiritual leader. He partners with our school community and adds to the development and celebration of our faith.*

*Ongoing and effective communication between the home, school and parish is essential for supporting our students' faith formation and creating successful learning experiences. Parents are welcome to attend school Mass Celebrations within the parameters of public health guidelines and recommendations. Parents can participate during various liturgical celebrations such as Thanksgiving and Advent Masses, participate in sacramental preparations, to support our efforts in creating a strong sense of stewardship among our students by supporting school outreach projects and community charities.*

**Catechesis**

*The subject of Religion is taught for approximately 150 minutes per week. Religion is also taught and integrated into all subject areas. All teachers teach the Canadian catechism which is the official programme of the Canadian church which includes:*

- *The Family Life, Fully Alive programme.*
- *Grades two and seven sacramental preparations.*
- *Grade four child sexual abuse prevention.*
- *Divisional and classroom opportunities for liturgies and other faith related activities.*





**Pastoral Partnership**

*St. Helen School will continue to form a partnership with St. Christopher's Parish. Father Joseph continues to partner with us and lead us virtually during important liturgical celebrations which include Advent, sacramental celebrations and graduations.*

**Sacramental Preparation:**

*As Catholics, 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
<b>Sacrament of First Holy Reconciliation &amp; Communion</b>	<p><b>First Holy Reconciliation</b> Wednesday February 7, 2024 @6:30pm @ St. Christopher Parish</p> <p><b>First Holy Communion</b> Saturday June 1, 2024 @5:00pm Sunday June 2, 2024 @ 8:30am, 10:00am, and 12:00pm @ St. Christopher Parish</p>	
<b>Sacrament of Confirmation</b>		<p><b>Confirmation</b> Tuesday May 21, 2024 @7:00pm Thursday May 23, 2024 @7:00pm @ St. Christopher Parish</p>
<b>School Confessions/Sacramental of Reconciliation</b>	<p><b>Gr. 3-8 School Confessions</b> Friday February 9, 2024 @ 1:00pm @ St. Helen School</p>	

**Liturgical Celebrations:**

*The Liturgical calendar is marked by the fellowship in community to celebrate the Eucharist and share in prayer. Our school mass dates are as follows:*



<b>School Masses</b>
<b>Auxiliary Bishop Ivan Camilleri Visit</b> Friday November 10, @ 11:00am @ St. Helen School
<b>Advent School Mass</b> Friday December 15, 2023 @ 1:00pm @ St. Helen School
<b>Ash Wednesday Liturgy</b> Wednesday February 14, 2024 @ 11:00am @ St. Helen School
<b>Easter School Mass</b> Friday April 5, 2024 @1:00pm @ St. Helen School
<b>Year-End School Mass</b> Friday June 14, 2024 @1:00pm @ St. Helen School
<b>Grade 8 Graduation Mass and Ceremonies</b> Tuesday June 25, 2024 @ St. Christopher's Parish 6:30pm Mass 7:30pm Grad Ceremonies (Parish Hall)

**Rosaries:**

Once again, we are grateful to have our Rosary Apostolate Team from St. Christopher's Parish come to St. Helen to teach our students how to pray the Rosary on the following dates:



- October 16<sup>th</sup>
- November 20<sup>th</sup>
- December 11<sup>th</sup>
- January 15<sup>th</sup>
- February 26<sup>th</sup>
- March 18<sup>th</sup>
- April 8<sup>th</sup>
- May 6<sup>th</sup> Celebration of Mary

**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.*

*As a community of faith, we show our compassion and respond in practical ways to the needs of the larger community outreach programs. These include:*

- *Gospel messages are incorporated into daily prayers over P.A. system, in class and through curricula.*
- *Our school participates in ShareLife ministries.*
- *Being welcoming and inclusive to all.*
- *Following Jesus' example in daily activities.*
- *Social Justice Activities: Thanksgiving food drive, Terry Fox and others*
- *Grade 6-8 Social CGE Justice Initiatives Awards "Being Better Global Citizens."*
- *Observing Orange Day to recognize the experiences of indigenous populations*
- *Land Acknowledgment as a part of our morning prayer*
- *November Book of Remembrance to pray for the Faithful departed in our school community.*

### **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.*

*Students at St. Helen School, participate in ongoing activities that promote the OCSGE, to ensure that they become:*

- *Discerning believers formed in the Catholic tradition – we celebrate the signs and sacred mystery of God's presence through word, sacrament, prayer, forgiveness, reflection and moral living. Some examples of ways to demonstrate this includes knowing the story of our faith, participating in the sacramental life, reflecting on God's word, seeking to be in communion with God and others, respecting our faith traditions, integrating faith in our lives, and recognizing that we all have weaknesses, and we have forgiveness to help us through them.*
- *Effective communicators – we speak, write, and listen honestly and sensitively, responding critically in light of Gospel value. Examples of how we accomplish this include listening, understanding, using and reading oral and written materials effectively, presenting information and ideas clearly, and writing and speaking fluently in Canada's official languages.*



- *Reflective and creative thinkers – we solve problems and make responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good. Examples of this includes creating, adapting, and evaluating news ideas, thinking reflectively and creatively to evaluate situations and solve problems and making good decisions.*
- *Self-directed, responsible, lifelong learners – we develop and demonstrate or full God-given potential. We can accomplish this through demonstrating flexibility and adaptability, setting appropriate and goals and priorities for our work and personal life, and participating in a balanced and healthy lifestyle.*
- *Collaborative contributors – we find meaning, dignity and vocation in work which respects the rights of all and contribute to the common good. Examples include working effectively as a team member, and respecting the rights, responsibilities and contributions of ourselves and others.*
- *Caring family members – we attend to our family, school, parish, and the wider community. This involves relating to family members in a loving, compassionate and respectful manner in our school and home families.*
- *Responsible citizen – we give witness to Catholic social teaching by promoting peace, justice, and the sacredness of human life. Examples of achieving this includes accepting accountability for one’s own actions, seeking and granting forgiveness, respecting and affirming diversity, respecting the environment and using its resources wisely and contributing to the common good.*

*The Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations have contributed in various ways to being a shining light for Catholic schools since 1998. These expectations guide the journey of learning for all students in Catholic schools, therefore, are described not only in terms of knowledge and skills, but also in terms of values, attitudes and actions informed by reason and faith.*



### **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.*



*We pray daily with a focus on the virtue of the month.*

<b>MONTH</b>	<b>VIRTUE</b>	<b>EXPLANATION</b>
<i>September</i>	<i>Faith</i>	<i>God made us to live together as a family community</i>
<i>October</i>	<i>Empathy</i>	<i>God wants us to care about everyone's feelings</i>
<i>November</i>	<i>Conscience</i>	<i>God helps us to choose to be good people</i>
<i>December</i>	<i>Hope</i>	<i>God helps us to keep on working for a more peaceful world even when we feel discouraged.</i>
<i>January</i>	<i>Self-control</i>	<i>God wants us to do what we know, and feel is right</i>
<i>February</i>	<i>Respect</i>	<i>God wants us to treat all people with the respect they deserve</i>
<i>March</i>	<i>Kindness</i>	<i>God wants us to give generously to others around us</i>
<i>April</i>	<i>Love</i>	<i>God wants us to serve and to see the goodness in everyone we meet</i>
<i>May</i>	<i>Acceptance</i>	<i>God wants us to make friends with everyone no matter how different they may look or act</i>
<i>June</i>	<i>Fairness</i>	<i>God wants us to treat each person as we would like to be treated</i>

**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.*

*Visual signs serve as impressions and reminders of our Catholic faith, beliefs and traditions to all who visit our school. These signs include:*

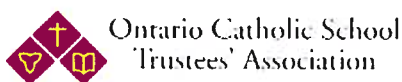
- *Our icon cross of our patron saint, crucifixes, bibles*
- *Stations of the cross, artwork and displays, banners, liturgical season, symbols, sacramental themes and banners*
- *Display cabinets reflecting religious themes according to the season or virtue,*
- *Devotions to Mary with Rosary Apostolates leading virtual rosaries and Celebration of Mary Liturgy*
- *Evidence of Sacred Space in each classroom*
- *Making the sign of our faith and saying prayers to begin the day, before meals and before we leave school*
- *Being inclusive to all and building relationships with others, including our indigenous peoples*
- *Participation during virtual masses*
- *Serving others with love and compassion and helping our wider community through social justice initiatives and acts of kindness.*

### **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](#)**
- **[National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#) - National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation**



<https://iceont.ca/>



<https://www.ocsta.on.ca/>

### **Resource List for Schools:**

#### **Board**


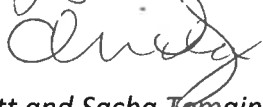


- **[Multi-Year Strategic Plan - Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2019-2023](#)**
- **[Renewing The Promise - Renewing The Promise](#)**

- [Encyclical Letter “Fratelli Tutti” - Fratelli Tutti](#)
- [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation - National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)

### School-Based

- Information on the School Website: <https://www.dpcdsb.org/HELEN>
- WEEKLY Community Update via email
- Twitter @StHelenDPCDSB
- Staff Weekly updates
- Faith specific sections in Staff Meetings
- Faith specific sections in Principal Report of Catholic School Council Meetings
- **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.

The St. Helen 2023-2024 **Pastoral Plan** has been reviewed by the following stakeholders:

- **Pastor:** Fr. Steven Kwon
- **Faith Ambassador(s):** M. Zagalak 
- **Youth Faith Ambassador(s):** O. Jay 
- **Catholic School Council:** Michelle Scott and Sacha Tomaino 
- **Principal:** Ruben Furtado 
- **Superintendent:** Silvana Gos 