

## Catholic Schools: Communities of Personal Excellence

If you ask Catholic school parents why they chose to send their children to a Catholic school, they may tell you because it was the right choice for their children. But, more often than not, they will explain to you that it was the right choice for their families. Parents know that Catholic schools combine academic rigor with high standards of personal responsibility and a commitment to service in safe, nurturing, learning environments. Catholic schools provide a comprehensive and extraordinary experience for children, educating them in spirit, mind and body. Simply put, Catholic schools are known for excellence.

All schools can deliver knowledge or academic excellence, thus educating the mind. Also, through physical activity and athletics, all schools can provide a means to develop the body. However, what about the spirit or soul of the child? That's what sets Catholic schools apart. Catholic schools strive to provide the opportunity for each student to achieve personal excellence by offering a faith-based education thereby developing the whole child.

Catholic schools are devoted to instilling strong values, fostering a life of faith and servant leadership and inspiring each student to shine to the fullest extent of his or her God-given potential. In other words, Catholic schools are committed to developing the personal excellence of each student by encouraging them to do one's personal best every day while striving to go beyond it as well. This excellence is not limited to just the classroom, the athletic fields or the arts. It also relates to the student's character, citizenship and integrity. To be human is to live to one's highest potential - to be the best that one can be. This is what Catholic schools emphasize day in and day out.

Catholic school students learn that excellence is a response to God's blessings. In pursuing the growth of spirit, mind and body, students in Catholic schools learn to nurture their potential and accept the gifts and uniqueness of all individuals. As responsible Christians we are: "Many members, one body. Many gifts, one spirit." By developing prepared, confident, capable and compassionate students who strive for



personal excellence, children who attend Catholic schools embrace the true meaning of servant leadership by learning to help others and making a difference in the world around them.

The Diocese of Reno, along with input from the Diocesan School Board and School Administrators, has truly captured the essence of personal excellence as outlined in their Philosophy for Catholic Schools. Reprinted with its permission and the Superintendent of Catholic Schools, Karen Barreras, the following are the statements of the Diocese of Reno Philosophy for Catholic Schools:

- Catholic schools strive to educate the whole person by promoting the spiritual, moral, physical, and intellectual development of each student in an environment centered on Catholic values.
- Catholic schools help students develop a loving relationship with God, promote spiritual growth, and provide knowledge about and opportunities to practice the Catholic faith.
- Catholic schools challenge the unique individual abilities of each student in such a manner as to enhance self-worth, self-discipline, responsibility, and to attain academic excellence.
- Catholic schools seek to motivate students to live as part of a faith community which works to serve the needs of society; to foster love of life, love of family and love of country.
- Catholic schools seek to enable students to embrace the plurality of cultures and beliefs and to respect and reverence this plurality as a wonder of God.
- Catholic schools are committed to fostering community through careful leadership, competent teaching and cooperative endeavors with parents.

Hall of Fame football coach Vince Lombardi suggests: "The quality of a person's life is in direct proportion to their commitment to excellence." This is a prime reason why parents choose Catholic schools for their children. By exposing students to Gospel values, high academic standards and individual expectations, Catholic schools are committed to preparing and enhancing the personal excellence of each and every student. ✚