

Celebrate Catholic Schools Week January 30--February 6, 2010

Catholic Schools Week celebrates the rich history, proud tradition, and contribution of Catholic schools in the United States. This week also celebrates the investment and sacrifice of Catholic school parents who make it possible for their children to learn and grow in a faith-based, Christ-centered environment. In these times of economic hardship this year's theme, *Dividends for Life—Faith, Knowledge, Discipline, Morals* recognizes that the “dividends” of a Catholic education are not measured on a balance sheet, but in the treasures of faith, knowledge, discipline and morals that Catholic school students carry with them into their adult lives.

Catholic families celebrate together, forgive one another, sacrifice for each other, learn, grow, serve the community, and pray together. Catholic families are the Church at home—the domestic Church. It is the challenge of every Catholic parent to nurture a Catholic culture or Catholic “way of life” in the home. Parents are supported by the Catholic parish that partners with and supports parents in their primary role of fostering the faith development of their children.

Parents of Catholic school children choose an additional partner in the process of teaching, and nurturing their children in faith—the Catholic school. Catholic school parents make an investment, many at great financial sacrifice, that enables their children to participate, on a daily basis, in a Catholic culture or a Catholic “way of life” while at school. Catholic schools nurture *faith*, treasure the acquisition of *knowledge*, instill *discipline*, and guide young people in making life-giving *moral* choices.

By virtue of his or her Baptism, every Catholic child embarks on the adventure of discipleship—of living as a follower of Jesus Christ. Together, Catholic schools and Catholic parents support young people in this adventure.

Ideas for Celebrating with Your Family

- Participate as a family in the community events at your parish and school celebrating Catholic School's Week.
- Participate in the Sunday liturgy for Catholic Schools Week at your parish on Sunday, January 30.
- At your family meals this week, say a special prayer of thanks for someone who is a part of your child's Catholic school experience.
- Grow in your faith together this week. Read a Scripture story together. Show interest in your child's religious education homework.
- Volunteer as a family to be a part of a community service project with other families from your school.
- Write Thank You notes to your child's teachers. Both parents and students can write them!

Catholic School's Week, 2010

Dividends for Life: Faith, Knowledge, Discipline, Morals

Dividends for Life

Perhaps you associate the word “dividend” with monetary value. Companies pay “dividends” to their investors. However, a dividend can also be defined as a reward or a bonus, something you receive in addition to what you would expect. This year’s Catholic School’s Week theme recognizes that a Catholic education pays out dividends—faith, knowledge, discipline, morals—not only while a student attends a Catholic school, but for the rest of that student’s life. These dividends are one of the primary reasons why parents choose a Catholic education for their children.

Parents make intentional choices and sacrifices with their finances in order to send their children to Catholic schools. They make an investment whose benefit for their children will pay out over the course of a lifetime. In the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus assures us that such an investment is not in vain: “Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Matthew 6:19-21).

Faith A Catholic school is a place where a young person’s faith is supported and nurtured, and most of all treasured. In a Catholic school, faith is a priority. Faith is also a priority in a Catholic home. You are the first teacher of faith for your child.

- What are the simple ways your child knows that *your* faith is a priority?
- How is your home a “Catholic home?”

Knowledge Being Catholic shapes how we see the world, as we learn about the world. Your child will study and learn Catholic beliefs and practices in religion class, but never underestimate the power of what he or she will learn by watching you, the parent.

- As a parent, look at your life right now through a “Catholic” lens. What do you see?
- How are you learning and growing in your own faith?

Discipline Many parents will acknowledge that one of the main reasons they invest in a Catholic education for their children is the discipline that such an education represents. But the school can’t do it alone. You are a partner with the school in helping children understand the value of hard work, and in developing habits that will help them achieve their goals. Catholic parents and schools consider the whole person—body, mind, and spirit. No student benefits from a teacher or a parent who has meager expectations for a child’s learning or behavior.

- How do you hold your child accountable for their learning, for their attitudes, and for their actions?
- How do you help your child learn discipline not only for his or her intellectual life, but for his or her spiritual life as well?
- How are Catholic disciplines or practices a part of your home?

Morals Christian morality is conduct or behavior that reflects faith in Jesus Christ and his principles. Morals are habits for a lifetime, guided by the Law of Love: “Love one another as I love you” (John 13:34). Some people would say that we are living in amoral times, or in times lacking any sort of moral compass. Morality is faith lived, living what we believe. As Catholics, we have many role models in what it means to live a moral life. Saints and holy people, past and present, help us grow in our Catholic faith. For your child, significant adults in their lives such as you and their teachers demonstrate through word and actions what it means to be a moral person. Catholic homes *and* schools are formation in a Catholic way of life, which is a moral way of life.

- Morals are habits for a lifetime. How are you helping your child develop these habits?
How are you an example of Christian morality for your child?