

FAITH IN OUR SCHOOLS

How successfully do TCCES schools integrate and instill the Catholic faith? This is a question that can be fairly asked by school families and parish supporters alike, and the answer is one that all should be happy to hear. In policy and in action, our Catholic school system has made a strong commitment to nurturing the knowledge and practice of our Catholic faith. The fulfillment of that commitment is confirmed by the results of a standardized test that measures religious knowledge and understanding.

A Statement of Faith

One of the priorities identified as a result of the system's recently developed strategic plan was to strengthen and enhance faith development in our schools. As a result, last year, a Catholic identity statement was commissioned and approved by the board of education. This renewed commitment to impart the Catholic faith complements the emphasis on sacramental and worship opportunities, as well as faith education, at every TCCES campus. To see the entire TCCES Catholic Identity Statement, visit "Faith Formation" at www.tcces.org.

Formal Worship and Educational Experiences

Every K-12 TCCES student is involved with frequent prayer and sacramental opportunities. All students' school days and lunch hours begin with prayer, and all campuses have regular liturgies and prayer services that students help to plan and where they serve in ministry roles. Daily religion classes follow the diocesan standards for religious education, and students participate in sacraments with their peers, including First Eucharist, Reconciliation, the Sacrament of Healing and Confirmation. For more specific information about any school's offerings, click on "Faith Formation" on that school's page at www.tcces.org.



Classrooms and Culture

Perhaps the factor with the largest, yet least measurable impact is the Catholic Christian and family atmosphere that permeates every TCCES campus. From the playgrounds to classrooms and co-curricular activities, a standard of Christian behavior, compassion and love is expected. Parents are welcomed

and encouraged to take an active role in their children's school lives, both by volunteering and developing a partner relationship with their children's teachers and administrators. Furthermore, faith education is not limited to religion class, but informs and enhances instruction in all academic areas. Parish outreach and community service are a large part of the culture in all TCCES schools.

It's Working

According to a recent report released by the National Catholic Educational Association

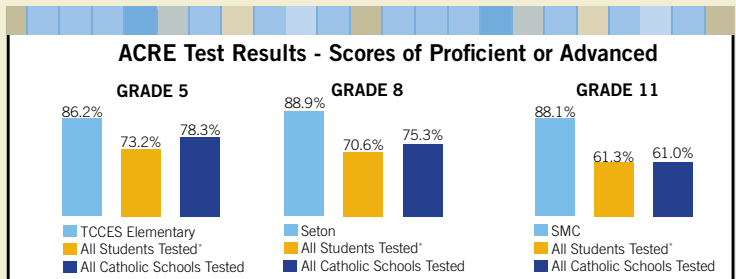
(NCEA), the accumulated data of more than thirty years shows that "students in Catholic schools are learning their religion." This claim is supported by the results of the NCEA's Assessment of Catechesis, Religious Education (ACRE) tests, which are administered to schools across the country each year. More than 133,000 students in fifth, eighth and eleventh graders in 2,500 Catholic schools were tested in 2009, and an additional 17,000 students in 515 parish religious education programs also took the tests.

ACRE, according to the NCEA, "is empirically designed and includes questions under broad topics or domains," such as the nature of the trinity, liturgy and sacraments, Church teachings and history, scripture, prayer, social justice, religious practices, morality and relationships. The assessment is aligned with curriculum developed in cooperation with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops.

"At the foundation of our Catholic schools is Catholic identity. Catholic identity is based in the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Jesus must be the inspiration and guide to our schools in every dimension, in our philosophy, curriculum, community life, the selection and formation of our teachers as well as in the physical environment of each school."
--Beginning of TCCES Catholic Identity Statement

As the accompanying graph shows, TCCES students' knowledge of the Catholic faith significantly exceeds that of students across the nation, even when compared only to other Catholic schools.

The answer to our original question, "How successfully do TCCES schools integrate and instill the Catholic faith?" can be found in many areas—in the system's policies and curricula, the warm and nurturing classrooms, family involvement, service and financial support to community organizations, liturgical experiences and finally in assessment results. "Our Catholic identity," says TCCES President Michael Sullivan, "is the very reason we are here. In conjunction with strong academics, co-curriculars and technology, TCCES schools offer a solid foundation in faith." And that, says Sullivan, is both eternal and priceless.



*All Religious Education and Catholic schools students combined

MOVING FORWARD WITH TECHNOLOGY

This school year has been an extremely busy one for technology at all of the TCCES schools. The next few years are shaping up to be even more exciting as TCCES strives to lead the Fox Cities schools in using technology to enhance the strong curriculum.

Technology highlights from the 2009-10 school year include:

- At the elementary campuses this year, new hardware and equipment were installed in the computer labs at each location, and data projectors and speakers were added to many classrooms.
- At Seton, wireless networks were installed throughout the building, and two SMART boards were obtained and one has been used throughout the year.
- At St. Mary Central, preparing for the laptop program has been the focus this year in the areas of infrastructure, hardware, software and teacher preparation and training.

Each school is working to develop its own technology plan, and parent-organized fundraisers will play a significant role in financing these projects. Over the next 3-5 years, TCCES schools are planning technological improvements in the following areas:

- Although their specific plans differ, the elementary schools will be working toward similar goals, some of which include projectors and speakers in every classroom, SMART boards for classrooms, installation of a wireless network, laptop computers for teachers and mobile computer labs for classes.
- Plans are in place to rebuild the server and improve Internet access speed at Seton over the summer. Sometime thereafter, data projectors and several SMART boards will be purchased and installed.
- At St. Mary Central, the very first one-to-one laptop program anywhere in the Fox Cities will be implemented, providing technology-based instruction for all students. Keeping this system performing optimally and enhancing its use will be the focus at the high school.

CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

St. Gabriel Elementary

The St. Gabriel School community focused intently on almsgiving and the homeless during Lent this year. Students became aware of local homelessness when a temporary shelter was stationed at their parish and became concerned about housing conditions in Haiti following that country's devastating earthquake. The school community felt called to do what they can to help the homeless, both in our local community and the world beyond.

Throughout Lent, the fifth graders kept the school community apprised of the world's housing needs and the progress of the fund drive through posters and daily announcements. Each class competed to see which could raise the most money. To sustain interest in the project and to represent how the money will be used to benefit the homeless, teachers set up a creative display near the school's entrance. It started the first week with a solitary, large cardboard box similar to one in which a homeless person might have to live. Each week of Lent, something was added—first a layer of colored paper and a roof; later, windows, a door and flowers—until it resembled a welcoming place to call home.



The students' Lenten sacrifices resulted in \$1,600 that was given to two representatives from the Fox Valley Warming Shelter. The organization currently provides shelter for homeless people by rotating between several local church facilities. The students' funds were donated to the organization's drive to establish a permanent homeless shelter in our area.

By Holy Thursday, St. Gabriel students had raised \$300 for Father Larry Canavera's Haitian mission, Friends of Haiti, which provides immediate and basic relief to the people of Haiti. On that same day, \$600 was added to the pool by an anonymous donor in "repayment" for the financial and spiritual support the school had given following Hurricane Katrina. Father Larry plans to visit the school in May to share photos and stories of his most recent visit to Haiti, the poorest nation in the Western Hemisphere.

St. Margaret Mary Elementary

In May, as part of the school's health and wellness program, St. Margaret Mary students were introduced to Charlie Wittmack, an adventurer, philanthropist and world-class athlete who will soon embark on an epic adventure. During the 2010-11 school year, the school community will, via technology, follow and interact with Wittmack on his World Triathlon. The yearlong journey will involve an unprecedented 12,000 miles of swimming, biking and running through 13 nations. The school community has a special connection to Wittmack, who is the cousin of a St. Margaret Mary parent.



The focus of the trip is both educational and philanthropic, which is where the students come in. Wittmack and a team of educators have developed a flexible curriculum that touches on social studies, science and math as related to his current location and

circumstances. A daily communication from Wittmack and his entourage will keep students apprised of his progress and will pose questions and challenges for the students to research and respond to. In addition, Wittmack will draw attention to conservation of natural resources, medical concerns and social justice issues.

According to principal Eleanor Healy, St. Margaret Mary students were captivated by Wittmack's presentation and are looking forward to participating in his journey through the program. "In addition to talking about his upcoming trek, Charlie shared a lot about what he has accomplished so far, and had a wonderful message about setting goals and sticking to them," Healy says. "It's just a fantastic learning opportunity for all of us."

St. Mary Elementary

St. Mary students spent six weeks eagerly anticipating the school's Books Awards. This special event takes place only every 4-5 years, and is modeled after the Academy Awards. Each class prepares for the occasion by reading books and then nominating their favorites in a variety of categories including best fiction, best non-fiction, best illustrated, best sports-themed, best series, and so on.



In March of this year, after reading many books and selecting their favorites, students presented their nominees at an all-school assembly. Once all of the nominees had been presented, all students in grades 1-5 voted for their selections in each category through a secret ballot.

On the day of the event, students and faculty gathered in the gymnasium, which was decorated festively for the occasion with cloth tablecloths and a red carpet runway. Special guests included the Most Reverend Bishop Robert Morneau; the mayor of Menasha; a local newscaster and Professor Gizmo; as well as our TCCES president and the principals of Seton and St. Mary Central. Each guest announced the nominees and winner for one of the awards, and the nominating student or students then accepted the award. The wooden, book-shaped awards for all of the event's winning books over the years can be seen in the school's library. This year's program ended with a visit from the children's literary figure, Franklin, who led everyone in singing the song "Read a Book Today."

Seton Catholic Middle School

As part of its commitment to spiritually, intellectually, physically and socially engage and nurture every student, Seton Catholic Middle School provides a well-rounded curriculum and a variety of co-curricular activities. The extra programs encompass the athletic and the non-athletic, the competitive and the non-competitive.



Seton's competitive, non-athletic teams enjoyed great success this year! In the fall, Seton's FIRST Lego League team received the top award at the regional competition for

teamwork and was one of four finalists for the champion's award, the highest recognition given at the regional level. The team advanced to the state competition for the second year in a row and competed well against more than 40 teams from across the state.

Forty-five students competed on the forensic (public speaking and play-acting) team this year. Each individual performer and team participated in three tournaments. At the first tournament in Green Bay, every Seton entrant earned a medal and a certificate with a gold or silver star. At the forensic meet hosted at St. Mary Central, Seton earned the first place trophy in the large middle school division. At the meet in Appleton, every single Seton individual and team was awarded a blue ribbon, and the team was the champion in the large school division.

Seton students represented the school very well in several math competitions during the spring months. In the statewide Math League competition, Seton's sixth grade team took fourth place when competing with 107 other schools from an eight-county area. Zach Parks tied for first place in the individual division. The eighth grade team took fourth place in their nine-county region and Josh Miller tied for second place.

Seton swept the regional math competition hosted at an Appleton high school where each Seton team (sixth, seventh and eighth grade) took first place. Individuals from the Seton seventh and eighth grade teams also took first and second place in both the seventh and eighth grade divisions. Finally, eight seventh and eighth graders competed at the regional level in Math Counts, with two advancing to state.

St. Mary Central High School

The 2009-10 school year was a smooth transition into new leadership for the St. Mary Central High School community. Mr. Patrick Batey joined the SMC team as principal and Mr. Mike Heideman became the school's new athletic director. Both men brought impressive credentials as they each returned to their roots in Catholic education, and both have earned the respect and appreciation of students, faculty and parents alike.

Batey has been a principal for 32 years, the last 19 in Green Bay public schools. He has earned his ten-year master educator license for PreK-12 principalship (one of only a few administrators in the state to achieve this designation), has co-authored a book on successful school administration and chaired Green Bay's instructional technology committee. He brings to SMC a quiet and friendly, yet firm, style of leadership.

Batey, who starts each day welcoming students as they arrive for school, says he recognized during the interview process that SMC is a community where school is an extension of family—that is one of the primary things, he says, that he missed about being in a Catholic school. "Here at SMC, we are all part of something bigger than ourselves—we all have a common mission," Batey reflects. "If we work together and do it well, we can each be our best—in faith and academics, and in developing well-rounded students. My vision

Question:

Where does the money go when I donate to the TCCES Annual Fund?

The actual cost of educating a student is simply more than the amount of tuition that is charged. The Annual Fund is critical in bridging that gap, and also provides much needed tuition assistance to families who qualify financially. This year TCCES is providing over \$420,000 in tuition assistance to 40% of TCCES students and 65% of SMC students.

Your help is needed to bridge the gap. A gift of any size makes a difference for EVERY student at each of our schools.

Donate online at www.tcces.org or by contacting Ann Engelhard at 920-722-7796 ext. 201.

Answer: EVERYWHERE!



for SMC's future is to be known for our strength—strength in faith, service and academics; and to show character in all aspects. It's not just winning or succeeding that counts, it's also the effort you make and how you grow with the experience."

Mr. Michael Heideman, St. Mary Central's new athletic director, is working directly with students, coaches and parents to make further improvements in the school's athletic program. He makes it a priority to get to know SMC athletes, both as team members and as students. Because of the respect he inspires, they are striving to meet his expectations.

Returning to the Fox Cities enabled the Heidemans to be closer to their children and grandchildren, and gave Mike a chance to share with SMC the considerable experience and success he has gained through 40 years of coaching at the high school and collegiate levels. The people, according to Heideman, are what make the SMC community special. "This year has been an interesting and very enjoyable experience. The athletes have made me happy to be a part of the school, and the willingness of parents to give of their time to the program is truly outstanding."

When asked about his goals for St. Mary Central's athletic program, Heideman expressed that he hopes to continue to build on the strong foundation that is here to help SMC teams become even more competitive in the Olympic Conference.



TCCES SUMMER CHILDCARE



Son-Sational Summer

Son-Sational Summer is Twin City Catholic Educational System's (TCCES) summer childcare program. This day camp program is for children 5 to 13 years old. **New this year: TCCES Son-Sational Summer Preschool Program.** This program is for toilet-trained 3 & 4 year olds and will run M-W-F mornings from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Son-Sational Summer day camp runs 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Monday through Friday from June 7 until August 13. A variety of scheduling options are offered.

Contact Katie Rippl, Program Director at krippel@tcces.k12.wi.us for more information. Registration forms are available online at www.tcces.org.



- Athletics
- Theatre
- Computers
- Games
- Field Trips
- Music
- Cooking
- Crafts
- Nature
- Picnics



1050 Zephyr Drive
Neenah, WI 54956



St. Gabriel teacher Chris Benrud accepted her Kohl Teacher's Fellowship award at a reception in April. She appears here with previous St. Gabriel recipient Valerie Vancil, Senator Herb Kohl and principal Mary Jo Brown.



Have you considered naming TCCES in your planned giving strategy?

ST. MARY CENTRAL SUMMER 2010 SPORTS CAMPS



Boys and Girls Soccer

(boys and girls entering grades 4-9)
June 14-17, 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
\$55 per camper (\$50 for registrations received by May 14)

Girls Softball

(girls entering grades 5-8)
June 21-24, 9:00 a.m.-11:30 a.m.
\$50 per camper

Girls Basketball

(girls entering grades 5-8)
July 6-9, T, W, TH 9:00 a.m.-2:00 p.m.;
F 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.
\$60 per camper

Boys Basketball

(boys entering grades 4-8)
June 21-24
10:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m. for grades 4-5 boys
2:00 p.m.-5:00 p.m. for grades 6-8 boys
\$50 per camper

Girls Volleyball

(girls entering grades 5-9)
July 20-22
3:30 p.m.-5:00 p.m. for grades 5-6 girls
5:15 p.m.-7:30 p.m. for grades 7-9 girls
\$50 per camper



All camps are held at St. Mary Central High School, Neenah. Camp t-shirt is included in fee. For general camp information contact Jennifer Miller at jmiller@tcces.k12.wi.us or go to our site to view a brochure/registration form.