

JUST FOR PARENTS

A guide for new parents

*Why choose
a Catholic school*

“Community is at the heart of all Catholic education, not simply as a concept to be taught, but as a reality to be lived. . . . Your students will learn to appreciate the value of community as they experience love, trust, and loyalty in your schools and educational programs, and as they learn to treat all persons as brothers and sisters created by God and redeemed by Christ.”

Spoken by his Holiness, Pope John Paul II, in a speech to elementary, secondary, and religious education leaders in New Orleans, Louisiana, September 12, 1987

A choice for education and values

As a parent who is considering a Catholic school for your son or daughter, you are making two very positive statements about yourself and your attitudes toward education.

First, you are saying that education is very important to you and your child. In fact, it is so important that you would rather pay for quality than receive less than that for free.

Second, you are saying that you want a school that will educate the spirit as well as the intellect. You are choosing an environment that emphasizes Christian values; an atmosphere that fosters responsibility and requires courtesy.

Catholic schools were once considered only for Catholic students. Now, however, Catholic schools welcome all students who want an academically challenging education in an environment of love, trust, and loyalty.

A choice for the future

According to the National Assessment of Educational Progress test, students in a Catholic school do better academically than their counterparts in public schools, are much less likely to drop out, and are much more likely to go on to college. This is true in all types of Catholic schools—parochial, diocesan, and private. Whichever Catholic school you choose, you can be assured that your child will receive a strong academic education in an environment structured to provide lasting value.

Peer pressure works for education



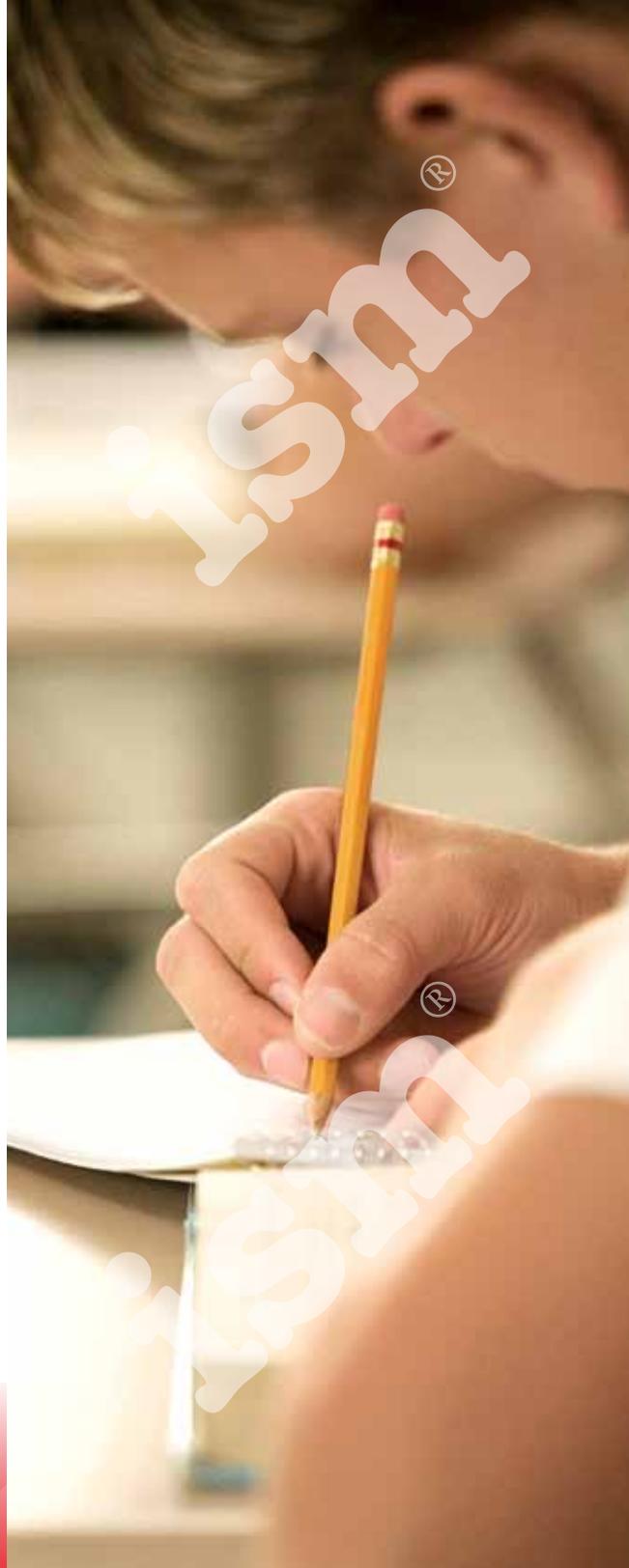
Students in a Catholic school are there because they want to be there—and that makes all the difference. Bound by common goals and aspirations, students find an environment where peer pressure works toward education, an atmosphere where academic achievement is valued, and doesn't conflict with social acceptance. And while intellectual curiosity can't be “taught,” it can be “caught.” Your child's individual interests can be encouraged and rewarded, laying the foundation for a lifetime of achievement.

Your child is in a disciplined environment

Self-discipline, responsibility, and self-motivation are among the benefits of an environment that is both nurturing and structured. A Catholic school is able to provide a disciplined environment because it has control over who is admitted, who stays, and how students are expected to behave. Teaching the “whole” child is a priority, and lessons in courtesy, respect, and responsibility will be part of your child's daily life.

Did you know?

The vast majority, approximately 95% of Catholic school graduates, pursue higher education. Catholic School graduates are often pursued by prestigious colleges. Source: www.archmil.org





Your child can develop sound values

Religious education is part of the curriculum at your Catholic school, and its classes encourage the discussion of faith in practice—stressing Judeo-Christian values. The aim of these classes is the total moral development of each child. To accomplish this, you will find that your Catholic school takes its teachings out of the classroom and into the real world. Students take what they learn and apply it to everyday life through projects, activities, and clubs that emphasize service and social justice. As they learn to be stewards of God's earth, they in turn grow in spirit. When the lessons of right and wrong that they learn in their homes are reinforced at school, the impact is much greater.

Look beyond the facilities

When you are looking for the right school for your child, look most closely at the programs, the teachers, and the services. It is these, combined with the school's leadership and vision, that will create an outstanding educational experience for your child.

Your child won't be lost in the crowd

In a Catholic school, teachers get to know every one of their students well—not just in the classroom, but on the athletic field, in the drama productions, or during after-school programs. And, of course, students and teachers share their faith during morning prayers and at special services. Seeing your child in many different lights gives teachers insights that enhance the whole learning process.

Another important outgrowth of the close teacher/student relationship is trust. Students feel free to discuss ideas and problems with their teachers—teachers whom they look upon as friends. In a Catholic school, every teacher is an adviser.

As a result, your child's school becomes an extension of your family. It provides a safe environment in which your child can explore ideas and feelings, and the guidance that ensures your child won't get lost while exploring.

Catholic school teachers are committed

Once Catholic schools were taught primarily by nuns and brothers in the various teaching orders. Now, however, due to the decline in the number of religious, this is less true than in the past. Yet Catholic schools still attract teachers who look upon education as both a vocation and an avocation.

The majority of teachers are Catholic and highly committed to developing both the spirit and the

intellect. They are chosen for their abilities to serve as role models, as well as for their teaching skills.

Teachers are selected for their knowledge of a subject and their ability to teach it, rather than for the kind of degree they possess. Teachers are often liberal arts graduates, as well as graduates of schools of education. Performance is the key.

Catholic schools are accountable

Your Catholic school is directly accountable to the families it serves. Parents select the school—and keep their children there—on the basis of results: the solid academic preparation and personal growth they see occurring in their children.

Performance—that's what builds and maintains your Catholic school's reputation in the community.

Did you know?

Catholic schools provide a safe, supportive environment—reverence for the human dignity of every person comes from recognizing Christ in self and others. More than “Drug-free zones” or “Gun-free zones,” Catholic schools strive to be “Christ-centered zones.”

Source: www.archmil.org

Catholic schools are responsive

Part of accountability is being responsive to the changing needs of students and to the changing requirements of the “real” world. Your Catholic school responds to your needs as a parent by supplying services to make your life a little less complicated.

When you choose your Catholic school, look for the services that are appropriate for your family and your circumstances. These services may be in the form of after-school enrichment programs, bus transportation to outlying areas, summer programs, or nutritious meals, to name a few. It is up to you to choose the Catholic school that fits your family's needs.

Your participation is important, too

Your Catholic school welcomes—and expects—parent involvement. You will be asked to oversee your child's study time and to regularly review his or her homework. You participate in the social life of the school and help the school advance.

Your Catholic school may have special family liturgies for the school community, and may celebrate special occasions such as graduation and awards assemblies with a special Mass.

You'll find that when you enroll your child in a Catholic school, you join the school family, too.

Which school is right for your child?



As a parent, you know that all children are not alike. Each child has his or her own special talents, interests, developmental patterns, and emotional needs. A school that is right for one may not be the best choice for another.

When you are selecting a school, ask yourself questions such as these:

- Is the curriculum appropriate for my child's talents and goals?
- Will the school challenge without overwhelming?
- Will my child be comfortable in the school's environment? Will I?
- Are there opportunities for my child to pursue special interests?

You are invited to visit

The selection of a school shouldn't be made lightly. Study your options. Send for information; check the Web site; tour the school; observe in classrooms. Let your son or daughter experience a day in class. Talk to administrators, teachers, and current parents.

Then you'll be in a position to make the choice that best reflects your values and meets the needs of your child.



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