

CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOLS & FAITH FORMATION

Vibrant parishes nourish adolescent catechesis.

Parishes are the Church's primary community of faith, of action, and of hope. There the Gospel is proclaimed and celebrated and believers are formed. Parishes are the place where God's people meet Jesus in word and sacrament.

At this stage of development, young people need to experience a sense of community – a sense of belonging. The parish should seek opportunities to integrate adolescents into the life, mission, and work of the parish. Young people bring important gifts and talent to the faith community which can be seen as resources. This energy, enthusiasm, and sense of hope should be welcomed and valued as significant contributions to the life of the parish.

Catholic high schools can be an extension of the mission of the parish and should collaborate with parishes whenever possible. For young people, the experience of the Catholic high school can be an enriching and intense opportunity to grow in faith. Parish personnel can also affirm that the Catholic high school is an important resource in the faith development of adolescents. Both institutions have resources and expertise to share.

The parish catechetical leader should foster a relationship with the high schools where their parishioners are enrolled and the school personnel should connect with their students' parishes to further deepen the catechetical initiatives consistently. Clergy and youth ministry leaders from the nearby parishes can be a great resource to the Catholic high school and can be invited to celebrate sacraments with the school community and participate in the liturgical life of the school when appropriate.

Teachers of religion in the Catholic high school must possess a degree in theology or related field (as required by their institution), and must meet the additional diocesan standard of five (5) hours of on-going formation annually. It is highly recommended that all teachers in Catholic schools meet this requirement, not only religion teachers. This helps all faculty to support the Catholic mission of the school. The Department of Lifelong Faith Formation is available to assist schools with meeting this mandate.