

CATHOLICITY

Best Practices

June 2008



ENGLISH CATHOLIC COUNCIL OF ONTARIO DIRECTORS OF EDUCATION

Compiled by

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Director of Education
Ottawa Catholic School Board

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Overview

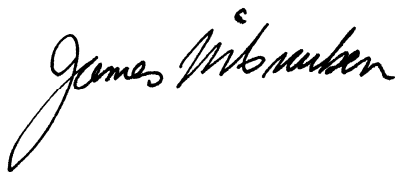
This document provides a brief overview of the faith landscape of Catholic education in Ontario today. There is so much good that is done, not only to promote Catholic faith, but also to respond to the Gospel call of hope, love, community and justice.

It is very encouraging to see that many Catholic Boards have adopted best practices like a Board Spiritual Theme and an annual adult faith day for staff. Look carefully and you will find a wealth of new ideas. By including the contact person, it is easy to gain additional information.

Please share this document with your administrative team and the people in your Board with particular responsibility for faith formation. It is my hope that the new ideas and initiatives found here will enrich Catholic education in Ontario for years to come.

Thank you for your contributions. By sharing and networking our ideas, we inspire each other to respond more deeply to the Gospel call to grow in our faith.

May God continue to bless your work as leaders in Catholic education.



James G. McCracken
Director of Education
Ottawa Catholic School Board

**ALGONQUIN AND LAKESHORE
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: MICHAEL SCHMITT

Best Practice #1: Adult Faith Formation Retreat Series

Contact Information: Bronek Korczynski, Coordinator of Religious and Family Life Education, korczyns@alcdsb.on.ca

Details: The Providence Spirituality Centre, Kingston, has been contracted by ALCDSB to animate a series of retreat days for up to 25 teachers. In its first year, there were 6 sessions – 3 began at noon and ran until 9:00 pm (with the Board providing teacher supply coverage); 3 began at 5:00 pm and ran until 9:00pm. In the second year, the format was changed to 4 full day sessions, with the Board providing supply coverage for participating teachers. In both cases, participation was determined on a first come, first served basis, with preference given in year 2 to teachers who had not participated in the previous year.

Best Practice #2: Faith Life Liaisons

Contact Information: Bronek Korczynski, Coordinator of Religious and Family Life Education, korczyns@alcdsb.on.ca

Details: Faith Life Liaison is a voluntary position at each of our schools. Annually, this group is brought together for a day of prayer, planning and problem solving, all directed at supporting on-going adult faith formation at the school level. A monthly FLL newsletter is provided to all schools and support is provided from the Office of Religious and Family Life Education for school-based activities (e.g. Advent/Lenten evenings of reflection; staff retreats). As well, a central lending library of spiritual reading is coordinated in support of school-based, book clubs.

Best Practice #3: Committee for Social Justice

Contact Information: Bronek Korczynski, Coordinator of Religious and Family Life Education, korczyns@alcdsb.on.ca

Details: ALCDSB Committee for Social Justice includes representatives from all of our stakeholder groups as well as a representative from the Archdiocese of Kingston. The mandate of this group is to provide curriculum supports in the area of social justice to our schools, to promote the social teaching of the Church, and to advise the Board with regard to how such Church teachings inform both our policies and practices. The Committee maintains a web site and annually promotes resources and activities related to particular issues. These have included: a “No Sweat” purchasing policy; *School Guidelines for Ethical Fundraising*; *Earth Day Kit*; *Thirsting for Justice* water campaign; support for the Board’s Eco-Schools initiative; support for secondary school exposure learning trips to developing countries; coordination of disaster response initiatives; liaison with community/Church organizations, including BAN, CCODP, KAIROS, and many more.

Best Practice #4: Catholic Character and Culture Steering Committee

Contact Information: Michael Schmitt, Director of Education, schmitt@alcdsb.on.ca

Details: Formed following the second ICE Symposium (November 2006), this group of stakeholders provides leadership to the Board in the area of our distinctive Catholic character. Beginning with a coordination of the *Our Catholic Schools Consultation* (spring 2007), the committee also has overseen the development of a Board Theme (see below) as well as a resource tool (*Renewing the Vision – Strengthening Catholic Character and Culture*) that seeks to provide schools with opportunities to integrate the CGEs into the fabric of their school communities. As well, the group has been providing leadership with regard to identifying and strengthening linkages between our schools and the broader Catholic community. Examples of successes have included closer liturgical coordination between schools and parishes, between School Councils and Parish Councils, between schools and Church organizations (e.g. Knights of Columbus).

Best Practice #5: Board Theme – Lord, It Is Good For Us To Be Here

Contact Information: Bronek Korczynski, Coordinator of Religious and Family Life Education, korczyns@alcdsb.on.ca

Details: Early in 2007, consultations between the Catholic Character and Culture Steering Committee and school Principals produced our first Board Theme. The theme has created a lens through which schools could sharpen their focus in terms of identifying aspects of our distinctive Catholic character. Supports have included: the creation of a theme logo (featured on a banner which was provided to all school sites); monthly liturgies; and a Board theme song. The theme seems to have galvanized the efforts of all of our partners in celebrating our distinctive Catholic culture.

Best Practice #6: AQ Course in Religious Education

Contact Information: Bronek Korczynski, Coordinator of Religious and Family Life Education, korczyns@alcdsb.on.ca

Details: A long-standing practice of the ALCD SB has been to annually promote and facilitate some part(s) of the OECTA/OCSTA Additional Qualifications Courses in Religious Education.

Best Practice #7: Advent and Lent Resource Packages

Contact Information: Bronek Korczynski, Coordinator of Religious and Family Life Education, korczyns@alcdsb.on.ca

Details: Twice a school year these supplementary resource packages are distributed to schools and feature both curriculum and liturgical materials.

Best Practice #8: Catholic Education Week

Contact Information: Bronek Korczynski, Coordinator of Religious and Family Life Education, korczyns@alcdsb.on.ca

Details: The Board supports both system and school-based celebrations of this important event. Of local interest is the annual presentation of several awards, including the *Archbishop Francis J. Spence Catholic Teacher of the Year* as well as the *Student Volunteers of the Year Elementary and Secondary*.

Best Practice #9: Special Awards

Contact Information: Michael Schmitt, Director of Education, schmitt@alcdsb.on.ca

Details: At the end of the school year, the Board celebrates the careers of its retiring employees, an occasion which also recognizes the special contributions of individuals. *Awards include: Contribution of Catholic Education; Adult Volunteer of the Year.*

Best Practice #10: Prayer Buddy Program

Contact Information: Michael Schmitt, Director of Education, schmitt@alcdsb.on.ca

Details: One of the roles of Trustees is to establish, support and strengthen community linkages. In doing so, our Catholic educational system is understood to be vital and contributing to the overall well being of the communities we serve.

Almost a year has passed since Trustee Turkington approached the Director to enquire about initiating a “Prayer Buddy Program” at St. Thomas More and St. Paul Catholic Schools. In essence, the program works as follows: each week, students are asked if they have intentions for which others in the community can pray in support of these intentions. The intentions are forwarded (no names) to the faith community at St. Joseph Parish, specifically the Knights of Columbus, the Legion of Mary and the Catholic Women’s League. The faith community then includes these intentions in their daily prayers. Students in these schools know that others in their larger Parish community are praying for their personal intentions.

This simple, but powerful “Prayer Buddy Program” has three objectives:

1. To provide comfort, support and inspiration to the members of our Catholic school communities through the provision of prayers in support of their personal intentions;
2. To provide members of the Catholic community the opportunity to become involved in our schools and to feel part of these school communities;
3. To demonstrate a strong and united Catholic community, willing to support each other through the power of daily prayer.

The program is meeting its original objectives and is working well, as demonstrated by the 423 prayer requests that have been forwarded to “Prayer Buddies”. Most recently, the “Prayer Buddy Program” has been expanded to five additional schools and opportunities to expand the program to other schools are planned. In conclusion, the “Prayer Buddies Program” is a simple, but powerful example of bringing the school community and the Parish community into a meaningful relationship. This can only serve to strengthen the community as a whole.

**BRANT HALDIMAND NORFOLK
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: CATHY HORGAN

Best Practice #1: Annual Staff Day

Contact Information: Joyce Young, Religion and Family Life Consultant, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board jyoung@bhncsb.edu.on.ca

Details: Annually, all Board employees gather to celebrate and nurture their faith. This day alternates between a coming together of all employees at a central venue one year and a school-based faith day the other year.

At our large group gatherings, the day begins with a Eucharistic liturgy. Following this is a series of keynote addresses from a well-known national or international speaker. The keynote always focuses on their role as employees in a Catholic system.

In a year when there are school-based faith days, each staff, with the guidance of their principal and Faith Ambassador develop their own format for the day. Most schools incorporate a Eucharistic Liturgy and then some other “faith activities” for the day. In a year when there are school-based faith days, each staff, with the guidance of their principal and Faith Ambassador develop their own format for the day. Most schools incorporate a Eucharistic Liturgy and then some other “faith activities” for the day.

Best Practice #2: Adult Faith Ambassadors

Contact Information: Joyce Young, Religion and Family Life Consultant, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board, jyoung@bhncsb.edu.on.ca

Details: The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board has a group of committed employees called Faith Ambassadors. The group consists of an employee from each elementary school plus two from each secondary school.

The mandate of the group is to assist the principal of each school in nurturing the faith life of school staff. Twice a year the Ambassadors come together for a full day session at the Catholic Education Centre. Prayer is an important part of the day and part of the day is always kept aside for some type of personal faith development. Then, under the guidance of various Board staff or invited facilitators, ambassadors work on developing various skills that they can take back to their schools. In the past, Ambassadors have had workshops on creating a prayer service, compassionate care to adults, ideas for celebrating the liturgical year and resources that will help in creating a school-based Faith Day.

Best Practice #3: Catholic Student Leadership Awards

Contact Information: Joyce Young, Religion and Family Life Consultant, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board jyoung@bhncsb.edu.on.ca

Details: Every year a student from each of the Board's schools is chosen as a recipient of the Catholic Student Leadership Award. The winner from each school is a practicing Catholic who exemplifies Gospel values rooted in loving service. Each winner is also a living example of the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations. The recipients come together in the afternoon for a leadership conference. The students participate in various small and large group activities facilitated by the secondary award winners and the three secondary chaplains along with guest speakers. Then, the trustees at an evening meal host the students. In the evening, there is a prayer service with the Bishop where the recipients reaffirm their commitment to follow the call of Jesus and receive a gift to commemorate this special event.

Best Practice #4: Student Faith Ambassadors for Christ

Contact Information: Joyce Young, Religion and Family Life Consultant, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board jyoung@bhncsb.edu.on.ca

Details: The Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board has begun a pilot project in 2007-08 school year. The focus of the program is to help students develop their faith life and to assist in the development of the faith life of their school communities in the areas of prayer, sacrament, scripture, morality and tradition. Students are involved in activities in their classes, their schools and the wider community. Students in Grades 6 and 7 are the target group but depending on the schools, students in Grade 4 or 5 might also be invited. Each group of Youth Ambassadors has an adult adviser who begins the initial process of recruitment by explaining the program to the target group and then distributing the application form. After students are selected, the teacher acts as a guide and a resource in helping the students to discern what their next steps will be. The responsibility for the program rests with the students and not the teacher—faith is caught not taught. In the 2007-08 school year the program has taken a different face in each of the pilot schools but the focus of prayer and good works are common to all.

Best Practice #5: Catholic Leadership Program for Administrators

Contact Information: Joyce Young, Religion and Family Life Consultant, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board jyoung@bhncsb.edu.on.ca

Details: Over the past three years, the administrators of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board have participated in a programme of certification from ICE. One hour of each Administrator's meeting was *used for faith formation and updating*. A series of guest speakers including Dr. Moira McQueen, Msgr. Dennis Murphy, Father Jim Mulligan, Sister Heather MacKinnon, Michael Higgins, and others spoke to the principals on a variety of topics. At the end of the series the participants received a certificate from ICE.

Best Practice #6: Hands for Heaven

Contact Information: Joyce Young, Religion and Family Life Consultant, Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board jyoung@bhncsb.edu.on.ca

Details: During Lent, the elementary schools of the Brant Haldimand Norfolk Catholic District School Board embark on a social justice outreach program that assists Dr. Andrew Simone's organization, Canadian Food for Children. Each school gathers salt, soap, pasta and sugar. A local transport company has graciously donated one of their trucks for the transport of these goodies to the Canadian Food for Children warehouse in Mississauga. After Lent, the schools box the staples, which are then picked up for shipping. On arrival at the warehouse, one group of intermediate elementary students is on hand to help unpack the transport and experience a day at the warehouse.

**BRUCE-GREY
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: BRUCE MACPHERSON

Best Practice #1: Faith Formation Day

Contact Information: Charlotte Lahey, Consultant, Religious and Family Life

Education: charlotte_lahey@bgcdsb.org

Details: A gathering on the first professional activity day of each school year, dedicated to nurturing the faith of all adults who contribute to the work of our Board. A welcome by our Director of Education and Board Chairperson is followed by a Eucharistic Celebration, presided over by a guest priest, or our Bishop, Representatives from all staff groups participate in the various liturgical ministries. Carried in procession by representatives of each community, are visual symbols, or framed art posters of the theme, signed by individual staffs and taken back to each school as a symbolic reminder of the day. Following break, a motivational keynote speaker addresses us on the theme. The afternoon may feature a second keynote address or a series of faith-centred workshops from which to select. The day is concluded by individual staff gatherings to consolidate key insights and begin a school faith formation plan for the year. All staff members look forward to this day as an opportunity to renew friendships, learn, and celebrate our common faith.

Best Practice #2: Catholic Education Week Dinner & Speaker

Contact Information: Charlotte Lahey, Consultant, Religious and Family Life

Education: charlotte_lahey@bgcdsb.org

Details: For the past three years on the Tuesday evening of Catholic Education Week, Board staff, parents, pastors, and parish community members have been invited to come together to celebrate Catholic education and our important complementary roles in the lives of young people. After a formal dinner, a motivational speaker on a topic related to the Catholic Education Week theme addresses us. For this sold-out event each year, we have been fortunate to have speakers such as Sister Clare Fitzgerald, David Wells, and this year, Father J. Glenn-Murray. A wonderful spirit of collegiality, community and celebration pervades this event.

Best Practice #3: Board-wide Advent and Lenten Retreats

Contact Information: Charlotte Lahey, Consultant, Religious and Family Life

Education: charlotte_lahey@bgcdsb.org

Details: In addition to individual staff opportunities, during the Advent and Lenten season, we offer whole-Board Advent and Lenten twilight retreats, in which all staff are invited to come together for a one, or two-part experience to enter more deeply into these sacred times of preparation. We begin with welcome, a gathering prayer, and Dine together. Following this, is a two-hour evening session with prayer, song, and a homily, facilitated by a variety of retreat leaders. These opportunities are greeted enthusiastically by participants, who enjoy coming together as a community, for spiritual renewal, encouragement and friendship.

Best Practice #4: Lenten Mission Uniting Us in Reflection and Prayer

Contact Information: Charlotte Lahey, Consultant, Religious and Family Life

Education: charlotte_lahey@bgcdsb.org

Details: During the Lenten season for the past three years, we have centrally prepared daily reflections to engage all of our communities in a united prayer and reflection time. These have been inspired by staff insights gathered at faith days, particular virtues, or our upcoming Catholic Education Week theme. Some schools use these as whole-school morning prayers, while other schools engage in them as individual classes. The CEC also participates in the Mission, which includes an introduction, story, reflection, Scripture, prayer, and often, a suggested activity. Large art posters with the week's overall theme, as well as the theme for each day of the current week are sent out to schools, and displayed in a central location in the school, as an ongoing visual reminder of the progression of our communal Lenten journey.

Best Practice #5: Faith Ambassadors

Contact Information: Charlotte Lahey, Consultant, Religious and Family Life

Education: charlotte_lahey@bgcdsb.org

Details: Two representatives from each staff within our Board carry out the ministry of faith ambassador, primarily to foster the faith enrichment of our adult colleagues. The ambassadors come together on a regular basis for half-days to pray and learn, support each other's faith journeys, and share resources and ideas. Within the schools, many of the faith ambassadors have gathered together a faith formation team in cooperation with the principal, to plan staff prayer, retreats, and gatherings – both social and spiritual, and to develop ways to offer personal and spiritual support to fellow staff members.

Although the role of faith ambassador is directed primarily towards adult faith support and formation, faith ambassadors also act as a liaison with the religious education consultant as needed, in planning whole school events. This past year has marked the formal beginning of the faith ambassador programme within our Board, and we are edified by the degree of enthusiasm and faith commitment of our ambassadors.

Best Practice #6: A Study of Monsignor Dennis Murphy's Articles on Catholic Education

Contact Information: Catherine Montreuil, Superintendent,
catherine_montreuil@bgcdsb.org, Charlotte Lahey, Consultant, Religious and Family
Life Education: charlotte_lahey@bgcdsb.org

Details: Successive monthly principal/administration meetings during this current year have begun with a professional learning/reflection opportunity around one of Monsignor Dennis Murphy's articles on Catholic Education published annually in the Catholic Register since August, 2002. The process is a learning/reflection activity accompanied by critical questions, and reporting. A number of principals have in turn, begun to order the articles and carry out a similar process with their staffs. In these days when we are deeply aware of the threats to Catholic education, these articles have provided us with rich dialogue, and an increased ability to understand, and articulate credible responses to the challenges.

**CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD
OF EASTERN ONTARIO**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: BILL GARTLAND

Best Practice #1: Faith Day – September 28th, 2007

Contact Information: Marg Shea-Lawrence, Superintendent of Human Resources and Religious Education marg.shea-lawrence@cdsbeo.on.ca

Details: All education staff – teachers, education assistants, principals and senior administration along with trustees and local clergy attended a one day professional activity day which focused on our **Board Theme – Called to Serve as Disciples of Christ**. This event was held under a big top tent at Upper Canada Village in Morrisburg, Ontario.

We began our day with the Celebration of the Eucharist presided by Most Reverend Brendan O'Brien, Archbishop of Kingston. This was followed by a keynote address by Director of Education Bill Gartland – his focus was on our board theme as it relates to the important service we provide to ensure success for all.

Following a picnic lunch and an opportunity for staff to tour Upper Canada Village we had a keynote address by the Most Reverend Douglas Crosby, Bishop of St. Georges and Labrador City, NFLD. Bishop Crosby provided us with an insightful reflection on the call to discipleship and the important role we play as Catholic educators. Bishop Crosby brought his own experience of having lost Catholic schools in Newfoundland to bear on his reflections and suggestions to us. This day was very well received by all that attended.

Best Practice #2: Catholic Education Coalition

Contact Information: Marg Shea-Lawrence, Superintendent of Human Resources and Religious Education marg.shea-lawrence@cdsbeo.on.ca

Details: The Catholic Education Coalition is a group of partners, including teachers, support staff, parents, clergy, principals, senior administration and trustees from across the eight counties of the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario who meet together on a regular basis to discuss the ways in which we are called to **Preserve, Proclaim and Promote Catholic Education**. The goals of the Catholic Education Coalition are:

1. To strengthen the link between School, Home, and the Parish.
2. To gather system and government support for our Catholic School System

3. To work with our students and staff to preserve, proclaim and promote Catholic education.

Coalition Activities include:

- Regular meetings
- Catholic Education Symposium
- Regional Events – including hockey games, liturgies, and local symposiums
- The development of resource materials for distribution in the wider community
- Catholic Education Week Committee

Best Practice #3: Catholic Education Week Mass

Contact Information: Tom Jordan, Principal of Religious and Family Life Education, tom.jordan@cdsbeo.on.ca

Details: On the first Monday of Catholic Education Week we celebrate the Eucharist together at 11:00 a.m. at the Holy Cross Parish in Kempt Ville. Since the whole school board community cannot be present at this liturgy we invite each school to send a representative group consisting of the *principal, a teacher, a support staff member, parent(s) 2 students, and the local parish priest*. The School Board Trustees and Senior Administration are also in attendance. The Eucharistic celebration is presided by one of our three Archbishops/bishops. Each school community is presented with a symbol to reflect the Catholic Education Week theme, which is blessed and taken back to the local school to be used throughout the week ahead. It stands as a symbol of our unity as a Catholic school board community.

Each year we invite one of our school choirs to lead us in song during the liturgy. Following the Eucharist we host a light luncheon, which gives everyone the opportunity to visit with one another before they had back to school in the afternoon.

Best Practice #4: Board Theme

Contact Information: Marg Shea-Lawrence, Superintendent of Human Resources and Religious Education, marg.shea-lawrence@cdsbeo.on.ca and Tom Jordan, Principal of Religious and Family Life Education, tom.jordan@cdsbeo.on.ca

Details: Every two years senior administration identifies a Board Theme. These have included:

- o Being the Body of Christ as Communities of Hope!
- o People of God....transforming the world!
- o Called to Serve as Disciples of Christ!

The Religious and Family Life Education Department develops resources to support schools to bring the theme to life – these include links to the Religious and Family Life

Education Program, links to children's literature, social justice activities, prayer services, etc. We especially work to ensure that our Board Theme and the resources we develop relate to the Character Education Initiative of the Ministry of Education.

In order to assist schools with promoting the theme each school receives a banner with the board theme and logo on it for display and use in the school throughout the two-year period.

Best Practice #5: Just-Us Youth Symposium

Contact Information: Tom Jordan, Principal of Religious and Family Life Education, tom.jordan@cdsbeo.on.ca

Details: This Symposium is designed for Grade 10 students who will be heading into their senior years at high school and who we rely to provide leadership for younger students. The Just-Us Youth Symposium features speakers on topics that are of concern to youth and it is designed to provide opportunities for youth to consider how they can volunteer in their local communities. Key principles of Catholic Social Teaching are at the heart of this event. We gather over 300 students from each of our high schools across the board in one central location for the day. The Religious and Family Life Education Department provides Chaplaincy Leaders with resources to facilitate **pre** and **post** symposium activities. This ensures that students come to the event aware of what to expect and they go back to their local schools ready to take action.

Presentations and topics have included: the environment, water for third world peoples, uranium mining in Lanark County, Canadian Catholic Organization for Development and Peace, Ryan's Well Foundation, to name but a few. We always end our day with a beautiful liturgy of the Word that is prepared and led by students.

**DUFFERIN-PEEL
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: JOHN B. KOSTOFF

Best Practice #1: System-wide Faith Day

Contact Information: J. B. Kostoff, Director of Education, john.kostoff@dpcdsb.org

Details: Each year, either at the family or board level, we conduct a faith day. This includes a liturgy in the morning and workshops or staff renewal in the afternoon. All employees are invited, as well as school council members, parish priests and religious and retired employees. Approximately 8,000 people attend this year's event. Faith Day takes place near the start of the school year. Alternatively, we have held a family of schools liturgy, using a three-year cycle.

Best Practice #2: Pastoral Planning Day for Secondary Schools

Contact Information: J. B. Kostoff, Director of Education, john.kostoff@dpcdsb.org

Details: Our Secondary Principals, Chaplaincy Team Leaders, Pastors, Bishop, Trustees, Religion-Faith Consultants, Religion Department Heads and Superintendents gather for a one-day meeting to review our board's commitment to the Catholic nature of our school, review our yearly school Pastoral Plans and raise issues of concerns. The meeting serves as a clearinghouse for matters of concern and to share information. The meeting is held yearly at the beginning of the school year.

Best Practice #3: Quarterly Parish Newsletter from the Directors Office

Contact Information: B. E. Campbell, General Mgr., Communications & Community Relations, bruce.campbell@dpcdsb.org

Details: Quarterly, the Director, through the Communications & Community Relations Department, produces an informational newsletter for our pastors. The newsletter provides an overview of school, board and general education-related issues, details of board decisions, and other matters of potential concern or interest.

Best Practice #4: Regular Meeting with the Archbishop and the Directors of the Area

Contact Information: J.B. Kostoff, Director of Education, john.kostoff@dpcdsb.org

Details: Each year, the Directors and Chairs of the Board of the five GTA boards meet with the Archbishop to discuss issues of mutual concern. The meetings last approximately four hours and the agenda is a co-operative process reflecting school, board and diocesan concerns. Minutes are produced and follow-up undertaken.

Best Practice #5: ZONE MEETINGS

Contact Information: J.B. Kostoff, Director of Education, john.kostoff@dpcdsb.org

Details: Monthly Zone Meetings are held by our priests and our local Bishop. If items are related to Catholic education, our schools, etc., the Director is invited to attend. This is a good opportunity to hear and address pastoral concerns about local schools or board issues as well as to explain board decisions on various matters.

DURHAM
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: PAUL PULLA

Best Practice #1: System-Wide Mass

Contact Information: Lisa True, Consultant for Religious & Family Life Education,
lisa.true@dcdsb.ca

Details: An evening joint system-wide Mass hosted by the Board and its OECTA affiliates is held twice annually in the spring and fall in a local parish. Celebration of the Eucharist is followed by a social hour for Board employees, Administration and Trustees.

Best Practice #2: Secondary School Faith Awareness Day for selected student ambassadors.

Contact Information: Suzanne Roche, Superintendent of Education, Resource to the Student Senate Committee, suzanne.roche@dcdsb.ca

Details: An annual opportunity for representative students from each of the secondary schools to participate in a system-wide retreat with a social justice theme and an opportunity to celebrate the Eucharist in community. This is in addition to annual retreat opportunities for our students in each of secondary school.

Best Practice #3: Annual School Faith Development Day

Contact Information: Lisa True, Consultant for Religious & Family Life Education,
lisa.true@dcdsb.ca

Details: Each school community devotes half to a full school day on a designated PA day to a focused faith development day for all school staff. This is planned and co-ordinated to reflect local needs and is integrated into the overall school staff development plan for the year.
School Faith Ambassadors in the elementary schools and Chaplains in our secondary schools play a significant role in assisting and resourcing for this day.

Best Practice #4: Courage to Serve Retreat

Contact Information: Christine Castaldo, Adult Faith Animator,
christine.castaldo@dcdsb.ca

Details: Interested staff is provided with an opportunity to participate in the Courage to Serve program on an annual basis.

Best Practice #5: Adult Faith Formation Programs

Contact Information: Christine Castaldo, Adult Faith Animator,
christine.castaldo@dcdsb.ca

Details: As part of staff development, retreat opportunities including weekend and twilight retreats for employee groups are provided throughout the school year.

**HALTON
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: LOU PIOVESAN

Best Practice #1: Faith Day

Contact Information: Joan Doyle, System Chaplain, Halton Catholic District School Board, doylej@hcdsb.org

Details: Yearly, all teaching and on-teaching staff of each school gather for a day dedicated to faith formation. Each school community plans a day that inspires and draws together a sense of mission and vision for their community. This day of spiritual renewal can include a Eucharistic celebration, liturgy, motivational speakers and retreat format activities.

Best Practice #2: Focus on Faith Initiative

Contact Information: Joan Doyle, System Chaplain, Halton Catholic District School Board, doylej@hcdsb.org

Details: In the Halton Catholic District School Board, faith infuses every aspect of our work. Staff responds to the call to build strong Catholic learning communities.

In 2006, a Focus on Faith Steering Committee comprised of Trustees, Senior Administrators, Parents, School Administrators, Teachers, Support Staff and Union Affiliates, was struck to identify board-wide strategies that support this call.

The following strategies were determined for implementation during the 2007-2008 school year.

A Board Theological Theme for 2007-2009 was identified:

A Focus on Faith Committee chose to focus on an important theological theme for the Board community for 2007-2009, consistent with the Board's Mission Statement and Governing Values, as a means to align and support Catholic initiatives and our call to build strong Catholic learning communities.

The theological theme is, "And God saw that it was good."

The following statements from scripture, Church documents, and the Ontario Catholic Trustees Association highlight key teachings from our faith tradition that are foundational to our theme.

A Board Prayer 2007-2009 was developed:

A prayer in support of the Board's 2007-2009 Theological Theme, "And God saw that it was good", was written for students and staff.

Unifying Catholic Themes for Each Grade, Kindergarten to Grade 12 were adopted:

The Halton Catholic District School Board is rooted in, and envisions education based on the true model of moral character, Jesus Christ. By inculcating gospel values into all of our pursuits, we work for the highest ideal of human character.

Christ-centered character formation in our schools is guided and supported by the Unifying Catholic Themes identified for each grade, Kindergarten to Grade 12.

These Themes are drawn from the Social Teachings of the Catholic Church, and find their source in the Kindergarten to Grade 8 Religious Education and Family Life Education programs, and in the Grades 9 to 12 Revised Ontario Catholic Secondary Curriculum Policy Document for Religious Education.

Catholic Curriculum Core Maps have been developed to support the Catholic Theme for each grade level.

A Multi-Faceted Approach to Support Our Focus on Faith was adopted:

The Halton Catholic District School Board's School Improvement Framework is used to provide a systematic, multi-faceted approach to respond as a Catholic system to Ministry and Board initiatives.

An Image to Support Our Focus on Faith Theological Theme was created:

The Focus on Faith Committee chose the image of rippling water to support the theological foundations of the Board Theme, "And God saw that it was good".

Staff Communication Strategy was determined:

The Board, through its Focus on Faith Committee, issue regular Focus on Faith Updates to provide our Faith Community with information about the Focus on Faith strategies and initiatives.

Best Practice #3: Theological Education Leadership Sessions (T.E.L.)

Contact information:

Sister Mary Heather MacKinnon, SSND, mhmackinnon@cogeco.ca Joan Doyle, System Chaplain, doylej@hcdsb.org

Details: The Theological Education Leadership Sessions are aimed at fostering and advancing the faith of our Catholic leaders with a Catholic philosophy of education and the strategies needed to meet the challenges they face as they serve as Catholic Educational Leaders. The Halton Catholic District School Board has focused on an important theological theme for the Board community for 2007-2009 as a way to support Catholic initiatives and our call to build strong Catholic learning communities. This theological theme is: "And God Saw That It Was Good." All TEL Sessions for 2007-2008 relate to this profound proclamation of our faith. Participants select three sessions from a series of sessions being offered for the current school year. Topics include:

What's good about me?

What can we learn about helping young people to remember who they are and how to live by their highest values? TEL Session #1 will offer participants a chance to become familiar with Roman Catholic teaching on virtues as a basis for disciplinary practices in our schools that are rooted in a gospel vision of the dignity of the human person and in our Christian principles of character education.

Would you mind opening our meeting with a prayer?

This TEL Session will offer participants a chance to learn how (1) to create a spontaneous prayer or blessing; (2) to gain confidence when presiding at a prayer celebration; and (3) to create simple and non-threatening faith-sharing opportunities for staff meetings.

May I please see you for a minute?

This TEL Session will give participants the opportunity to become more familiar with pastoral skills that are more and more critical to the role of an administrator in catholic education today.

Are You Really Listening?

Like Choice #3, this TEL Session will give participants the opportunity to become more familiar with pastoral skills that are more and more critical to the role of an administrator in catholic education today. This TEL Session focuses on how we can more genuinely enjoy our differences and strengthen our personal or professional relationships when we know how to listen and be heard.

Why do Catholics genuflect in church, use holy water, celebrate novenas, or pray to Saint Blaise and Saint Anthony?

This TEL Session will offer participants the opportunity to come to a better understanding of the origin and meaning of various Catholic traditions and customs and their contemporary role in catholic education today.

The Joy of Conflict Resolution

This is a series of **three** TEL Sessions in which participants form a book study club to explore a gospel vision and the practical means for dealing with unresolved conflict that can take its toll on our school communities and our relationships with one another.

Best Practice #4: Faith Fair

Contact Information: Mrs. Kathryn Perrino, Teacher, St. Paul Catholic School, Burlington, Ontario, perrinok@hcdsb.org

Details: For the past 6 years, St. Paul School, Burlington has set aside 1 day for total faith immersion, where the students from JK- grade 8 are involved in activities for the day that revolve around our faith. Activities include: workshops, plays, hands on activities and prayer celebrations. The day is planned around various themes, ranging from: "Saints Alive- Our Catholic Saints", which involved a class play, a science fair type demonstration of the Saints Museum, and the making of school kits for kids in Haiti. Another theme was "Stories Jesus Loved", where students attended workshops on familiar Old Testament stories, and made a craft or had their faces painted at "Daniel and the Lion's Den" and other activities. Also, the theme: "Being the Light of Christ" was used, whereby students were involved in mission work, made candles, bookmarks and fridge magnets that focused on the message of following Jesus. As well as a small rock musical that taught about the foundations of Catholic values was incorporated into the day. Other faith activities have included: creative dancing to hymns, drumming workshops for hymns, recitation of the Rosary and creating posters based on the Faith Fair theme.

Best Practice #5: Home, School, Parish Partnership Initiative

Contact Information: Michael Chiarelli, Vice Principal, St. Dominic School, Oakville chiarellim@hcdsb.org

Details: St. Dominic Parish in Oakville, Ontario has launched an initiative to encourage the entire school community to take a more visible and active role in the life of the Church, and more specifically, at designated Sunday Masses. Working together with its feeder elementary schools, St. Dominic Catholic School and St. Joseph Catholic School, intermediate classes at each school take turns planning and organizing one Sunday Mass per month.

Under the direction of the Parish priest, the Parish Pastoral Animator, and a parent volunteer, the students receive instruction in their classrooms to prepare them to take on the various roles they will fulfill at the Mass, including: student greeters, lectors, general intercessions, gift bearers, and assisting as altar servers. Each month, at the designated Family Mass, the participating students and their families, as well as the entire school community, are invited to witness their faith in this very direct and meaningful way. This has proven to be a wonderful opportunity to build student

theological leadership, encourages greater family participation at Masses, and strengthens the partnership between parish, school and home.

Best Practice #6: DREAMS Program

Contact information: Mrs. Fiammetta Mazzetti, Superintendent of Education,
mazzettif@hcdsb.org

Details: DREAMS stands for Dominican Republic Education and Medical Support. This is an initiative through the Scarboro Missions, whereby students help build homes for the local people. Mr. Dunn, chaplain at Assumption Secondary School, organized the activity. For the first two days the group, along with another group from Bishop Tonno's Catholic Secondary School in Hamilton, stayed at Father Arturo Convent as guests of Sister Mary Joe who hails originally from New Brunswick. She runs the convent school as well as 16 other schools in San Jose de Ocoa, oversees an Orthopedic clinic, as well as a metalworker's training facility and a woodworking facility right on the convent site. The students also stayed at Escuela de la Morita for the remainder of the seven days. The students worked as labourers during the day, shared experiences with the children and local people in the afternoons and spent most of our evenings around a campfire reflecting on our experiences. On the Sunday, students participated in a prayer service out on a cliff surrounded by mountains. The students describe their experience as: "a truly spiritual experience" and "life-altering experience that we will never forget."

Best Practice #7: Adult Staff Retreat Experiences

Contact Information: Mrs. Joan Doyle, System Chaplain/Faith Animator, Halton Catholic District School Board, doylej@hcdsb.org

Details:

HCDSB Annual Staff Retreat

Recognizing the spiritual and personal benefits of taking time away from work and daily activities to reflect and pray, in 1999 the HCDSB decided to offer an Annual Staff Retreat. Generously subsidized by the Board with the participant paying only a nominal fee, this annual retreat experience is open to any employee, from administrators to custodians. Organized around a theme, the retreat offers the opportunity for quiet personal reflection, group discussions, prayer and liturgy, and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. Although the actual time away is only 24 hours, Friday evening to Saturday afternoon, participants always feel as if they have been away much longer and depart the retreat experience refreshed and renewed. This year we will be celebrating our 10th Annual Staff Retreat experience.

Twilight Retreats

Several times throughout the year in our various school communities, staff comes together for a few hours after a school day to pray together and share their faith. These

Twilight Retreat experiences not only benefit the spiritual life of our staff members but help to build community within the school setting.

An annual gathering of Principals at the Mt. Mary Retreat Centre in Ancaster each January provides the opportunity for reflection on their experience as servant leaders in our schools. This twilight retreat, while only for a short time, provides our Administrators with time away from their schools to pray together, to offer each other mutual support and to ask for God's continued guidance in this educational ministry.

Twilight Retreats offer the opportunity to come together as members of a small community, around a common theme or purpose, to break bread together, and to find strength and support as we continue our journey of faith with God's help.

Best Practice # 8: Religious Education Courses

Contact Information: Danielle Ross, Executive Assistant, Director's Office, Halton Catholic District School Board, rossd@hcdsb.org or Andrea Swinden, Administrative Assistant, Director's Office, Halton Catholic District School Board, swindena@hcdsb.org

Details: The Board pays the fees for teachers to enrol and complete Religious Education courses sponsored and offered by the Board. (Part 1 – mandatory for all teachers and Parts 2 and 3 are optional for teachers and mandatory for school administrators). As well, Board funding is provided to teachers enrolling in two Board-approved courses per year at the Masters or Doctorate level in Religious Education, Theology or Divinity.

Best Practice #9: Pastoral Animators and Chaplain Leaders

Contact Information: Joan Doyle, System Chaplain, Halton Catholic District School Board, doylej@hcdsb.org

Details: Full-time Chaplaincy Leaders at each of our Secondary Schools provide spiritual support for all staff and students through a ministry of presence. The following are some of the faith experiences they bring to their school community: daily prayer, pastoral counselling, retreat experiences for both students and staff, prayer services throughout the Church liturgical year, organizing community out-reach projects and social justice activities, arranging with local clergy for Eucharistic celebrations and opportunities for the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and witnessing to their own faith. At each of our elementary schools, one or two staff members are designated as Pastoral Animators, who with the pastoral team, plan Eucharistic celebrations and staff retreat experiences, and assist the school community in planning social justice activities and community out-reach projects. Chaplaincy Leaders and Pastoral Animators meet regularly with the System Chaplain/Faith Animator for regular in-services on topics to assist them in their ministries.

HAMILTON-WENTWORTH CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: MARCEL CASTURA

Best Practice #1: Faith Fair

Contact Information: Nancy DiGregorio, Superintendent of Education

Details: One of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations is that the graduate is expected to be a discerning believer formed in the Catholic faith. In an effort to help students to achieve this expectation, a Faith Fair has been established for the Elementary School students of the Hamilton-Wentworth Catholic District School Board.

A Faith Fair is an exposition of student work based on research of a religious topic. The Faith Fair serves the following purposes:

- to glorify God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit;
- to celebrate and promote fervour for our Catholic faith;
- to encourage and promote increased knowledge of the doctrinal content of the Born of the Spirit and the We Are Strong Together Religious Education programs;
- to unite students with their teachers and their parents as they study topics related to their faith; and,
- to promote ecumenism and vocations.

Elementary students from Junior Kindergarten to Grade Eight are eligible to participate in The Faith Fair. Student presentations are based on research of prescribed, grade-appropriate religious topics selected from the Born of the Spirit and We Are Strong Together Religious Education programs.

Best Practice #2: Diversity

Contact Information: Nancy DiGregorio, Superintendent of Education

Details: All Grade Seven Elementary students and fifteen students from each of the Secondary Schools attend Board-sponsored Diversity Conferences at Tim Horton Onondaga Farms. Pre-Conference, Conference and post-Conference activities address curriculum expectations in Religion, Language Arts, History, Media Literacy and Drama, and focus on issues of peace, social justice and inclusion. Students who attend the Diversity Conference are confronted with the realities of people who are marginalized because of their racial or ethnic background, their physical or intellectual disability, or any other quality that makes them appear “different” to those who do not know them as persons. This insight acts as an encouragement to the students to direct their charitable activities to those people, many of whom are numbered among “the least among us”

that Jesus talked about. Students are also invited to involve themselves in efforts that challenge racism, sexism, ageism, lookism, ableism, classism and all the other issues that act as barriers to the full recognition of every member of society as a person and as a child of God.

Best Practice #3: Christian Service Animators

Contact Information: Nancy DiGregorio, Superintendent of Education

Details: The tradition of Christian Service within the HWCDSB resulted in the establishment, in 1999, of the position of Christian Service Animator within each secondary school. These persons, who provide five hours per week of animation, support, encouragement and documentation of the Christian Service within their respective schools, are part of creating a culture of Christian Service within the HWCDSB. At present, they are primarily retired teachers who combine extensive experience in social justice and international development with student leadership expertise.

In their role as animators, they encourage students to walk on “The Two Feet of Christian Service” by becoming involved in service which both meets the immediate needs of others (charity) and that works to change the structures which create those needs (justice). They are also working to strengthen the element of structured reflection on Christian Service, so that students become more aware of those unjust structures, as well as the action of God in the process of solidarity with those who are poor, disabled, or marginalized in any way.

Best Practice #4: Culture of Life Committee

Contact Information: Nancy DiGregorio, Superintendent of Education

Details: The term “Culture of Life” is taken from Pope John Paul’s 1995 Encyclical, *Evangelium Vitae (The Gospel of Life)*. The purpose of the Committee is to promote a pro-life culture within the HWCDSB by focusing student effort and activities specifically on beginning- and end-of-life issues.

The Committee consists of Board and Diocesan personnel, along with representatives from each high school who heads the Culture of Life student group within each school. In addition to activities within each school, these groups collaborate on such initiatives as the Life Chain Silent Witness against abortion on Respect Life Sunday in early October, the Culture of Life Leadership Conference in February, and the March for Life in Ottawa in May.

The Committee also works to promote student awareness by bringing speakers into the secondary schools to speak to each grade level about a prescribed topic: chastity in Grade 9, pro-life issues in Gr. 10, sexuality in Gr. 11 and bioethical issues in Gr. 12.

Best Practice #5: Pilgrimage

Contact Information: Nancy DiGregorio, Superintendent of Education

Details: The Pilgrimage “Walk with Christ: Justice for the Poor” is an annual Board-wide event that combines the three activities of prayer, fundraising for international development projects, and consciousness-raising about the inequalities between the Developed North and the Developing South. It takes place on a Sunday in late October with Grade 7 and 8 students from all the elementary schools joining with secondary students from all the high schools, along with parents and school staff to begin with prayer and then walk approximately ten kilometers to the site of the Eucharistic celebration which is the “holy place”—the destination of every pilgrimage.

The funds raised from the Pilgrimage support the DREAMS (Dominican Republic Educational and Medical Service) program which is sponsored by three high schools within the HWCDSB, the St. Joseph Family of Homes in Haiti, and the St. Joseph’s Nansana Technical Training School in Kampala, Uganda.

Much of the educational value of the Pilgrimage takes place in the weeks leading up to the event, with special announcements, events, and guests visiting the schools to help make students more aware of the importance of their Walk with Christ: Justice for the Poor.

**HURON-PERTH
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: LARRY LANGAN

Best Practice #1: Staff Retreats – Faith-based

Contact Information: Lori Lynn Stapleton

Details: A staff member from each of our 18 schools is entitled a Catholic Learning Community member. He/she represents their school and assists in planning religious celebrations, acts as a liaison with the school and parish, receives and distributes resources/materials, etc. Huron-Perth Catholic DSB offers a one-day retreat for these individuals to offer a chance for personal faith formation and reflection as well as to introduce and develop board initiatives. This year our focus is on being a Catholic Community of Caring and active Stewards of Creation.

Best Practice #2: Catholic Community of Caring – character education initiative

Contact Information: Lori Lynn Sapleton

Details: System-wide infusion of core values centered on faith is what a Catholic Community of Caring is all about. Christ-like values such as respect, caring, responsibility, trust and family are interwoven into daily life and lessons at each school. System-wide communication and celebrations are pivotal in aligning this program with other board initiatives and cross-curricular areas. Community partnerships and service learning opportunities are developed. **'We Are Called'** to love our neighbour so Huron-Perth Catholic DSB is organizing a system-wide **'Stuff that Bus'** campaign where each school will collect and sort healthy food items for the local St. Vincent de Paul chapters. Student leaders from each school and a staff steering committee assist by infusing the core values centered on faith into the daily life of each school. We have made connections to our Board theme, 'Stewards of Creation', the Catholic Graduate Expectations, Scripture, the Beatitudes, Gifts of Love Prayers Services, the Catholic Curriculum Corporation maps, Religion & Family Life programs, and Literacy to name a few. Our Catholic faith permeates the entire curriculum and daily life of every school in Huron-Perth. We are a Catholic Community of Caring.

Best Practice #3: Student Leadership Forum

Contact Information: Lori Lynn Stapleton

Details: Student leaders from each school (Gr. 6/7/10/11) are chosen for being a positive Catholic role model and leader within their school. A leadership forum is offered to these students to continue building Catholic leadership skills by infusing our Catholic Community of Caring and Stewards of Creation board initiatives into the daily life of each school. Students also discuss our vocation and calling to be Christ-like and to develop core values such as caring, respect, responsibility, trust, inclusion and the importance of family centered on our faith. Cross-curricular lessons/activities and system-wide community service projects are planned, implemented and celebrated. Various reflection and prayers are an important part of the day; team-building and ice-breaker activities are offered to build a sense of belonging; community building exercises, and nutritional and fitness breaks are incorporated into the day; student sharing, discussion, planning and leadership opportunities are part of the day in which students suggest ways to enhance social justice opportunities, community partnerships and ways to become more visible followers of Christ. Student leadership forums offer students an opportunity to have a voice, be responsible members of society and give back to their community.

Best Practice #4: Integration of curriculum into our Catholic Faith – CCC maps

Contact Information: Lori Lynn Stapleton

Details: Allowing opportunities for staff to become more aware of the **CCC core maps** through conversation, adobe connect sessions and modelling. These maps assist with integrating all areas of the curriculum with our Catholic faith. Familiarization with these core maps assists educators with seeing all parts of the curriculum through a Catholic lens. These CCC maps also make connections to the current Religion and Family Life programs and the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations. Huron-Perth Catholic DSB partnered with St. Clair Catholic DSB have developed a more student-friendly wording of these Graduate Expectations. This allows teachers to more easily integrate faith and the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations into all parts of the curriculum.

Best Practice #5: Some other distinctions:

Contact Information: Lori Lynn Stapleton

Details:
Other: to name a few...

Purchasing Catholic Resource materials
Student faith day retreats led by Chaplaincy Leaders, Curriculum
Consultants
Chaplaincy Leaders in schools
Parish/School/Home partnerships
Priest involvement with students/school
Deanery Meetings
Religion Consultant meetings/updates
Board Administration Retreats (CPCO & OECTA)
Participation in Mass – school and board
Weekly Board Office Prayer Services
Distinctively Catholic Religion and Family Life programs in schools
Liaise with Catholic partners:
 Other School Boards, ICE, OCCB, CCCB, Carleo, CCC, etc.

HURON-SUPERIOR CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: JOHN STADNYK

Best Practice # 1: System Wide Opening Day Prayer Service

Contact Information: John Stadnyk, Director, jstadnyk@hscdsb.on.ca

Details: Our opening day is usually a PA day and all Board employees gather (district personnel are linked via video conferencing) at the Mount St. Joseph Centre.

It is an opportunity for the Director to address all employees and introduce the OCSTA educational theme and symbolism for the year and an invitation to implement it in all that we do. This past year we shared the Passover gospel, in which Jesus washed the feet of the disciples. As a sign of our desire to live out our call to serve like Jesus, each Principal and Faith Ambassador were presented with a towel as a reminder to live out of our call in what ever capacity we serve.

During this prayer service we also welcome and commission all new hires into our Catholic community. The community gathered blesses them and promises to support and help nurture their vocation. They received their own individual towels as a symbol of their call to service.

Best Practice #2: Celebrating our Faith Day

Contact Information: Focus on Faith Committee Beth Lozon, blozon@hscdsb.on.ca

Details: A system wide Eucharistic liturgy in which all Board employees are invited along with trustees, parish priests and administration. District personnel come to the city. All staff gathers at Mount St. Joseph Centre, where we join in the celebration of Eucharist. After the liturgy we have a keynote address, which nurtures the mind, body and spirit of those gathered.

Staffs join together for a communal meal, followed by an afternoon of faith-focused reflection and sharing of the heart. The reflections from this afternoon are taken and used to identify areas where we are doing well and where we need support. This faith filled day is held in the fall to support staff in their faith development as we begin the year. It is also an event where the individual and collective talents of our staff are shared throughout the liturgy.

Best Practice #3: Parish School Liaison

Contact Information: Superintendent Maria Esposito mesposito@hscdsb.on.ca Mark Frolick - mfrolick@hscdsb.on.ca

Details: The Parish Council and Superintendent met to discuss the possibility of a teacher being funded equally by the Parish and the Board to work as a liaison between the school and the parish. This individual would work for both the parish and the school board in the effort to bridge the gap between home, school and parish.

This was brought to the Board of Trustees who agreed to the collaborative venture with the church. Both sides recently met to discuss ongoing support for this project again next year. Mark Frolick, a teacher with our Board, has provided the connection between school and parish and has created opportunities that have helped students make connections with the parish.

In discussion with the Parish and the School administrators, the value of Mark's position in supporting the teachers and the religious education program while introducing them to the parish has been invaluable. Mark is doing many of the same things that the High School Leaders of Chaplaincy are doing at an elementary level. This dedicated individual allows increased support in the schools serviced.

Best Practice #4: Board Funded Staff- Student Retreats

Contact Information: Faith Animator Beth Lozon, blozon@hscdsb.on.ca
Stephanie Romiti CSJ - Religious Education and Family Life Consultant, Chaplaincy Leader, Rose Marie Valade, St. Mary's College – smchaplain@hscdsb.on.ca

Details: The Board has provided for the faith formation of both staff and students through the retreat program.

With the hiring of a Faith Animator, the Board has provided individual school staffs with the opportunity to partake in twilight retreats. In our ongoing efforts to support and encourage our staff in their adult faith formation, this opportunity is provided. As well, the Faith Animator is a resource to the High School Leaders of Chaplaincy, who provide for the training for senior students who wish to be Christian Life Day leaders. This is a school student retreat team who facilitate the Christian Life days for junior students in the high school. These teams of trained youth are beginning to use their training in facilitating retreat days for senior elementary students as well.

Our Religious Education and Family Life Coordinator is taking on the organization of the National Evangelization Team who does elementary and secondary retreats for our community of schools in the district and the city. The Board provides direct financial assistance for the elementary schools and the secondary Chaplaincy/Religious Education departments include the financing costs in their budgets. The parishes have provided us with the space to hold these days.

ROCC - Rebuilding our Catholic Church is a pilot school/church program that has been initiated by Our Lady of Good Counsel Parish, which is financially sponsoring the program. ROCC is a retreat training program that trains senior elementary students in the ROCC program with the hopes that they will return to their elementary schools once in high school to assist as leaders with elementary school retreats at all levels. It is a faith development experience for the student leaders. Since its inception two years ago, one of the High School Chaplaincy Leaders has also got her students involved in the training process. This endeavour will hopefully provide for education and faith formation of both the participants and the Leaders. This is another church and school collaborative initiative.

Lastly, the Board in collaboration with CPCO provides opportunity each year for Principals, Vice Principals and the Administrative Team to partake in time for personal and spiritual reflection under the direction of a retreat leader. This provides the school administrators time to bond on a variety of levels as well as prepare them as the spiritual leaders of their schools.

Best Practice #5: Focus on Faith Committee

Contact Information: John Stadnyk, Director, jstadnyk@hscdsb.on.ca

Details: In our ongoing efforts to create a school system that is rooted in Jesus Christ we have re-established the Focus on Faith group which is made up of administration, teachers, principals, chaplains, support staff, OECTA President and Vice- President, all of who are dedicated to our Catholic school system.

Our function is to meet monthly to discuss, promote and provide opportunities to strengthen the faith life of our school system. In the past two years, we have worked at creating a new mission statement and logo, which was a result of our attendance at the ICE Symposium. From our visioning process, we raised awareness of the threat to Catholic Education with our school communities as well as the whole of the Catholic community.

Our focus this year has been the organization of a System Wide Mass during Education Week. This is to celebrate our 10th Anniversary since amalgamation. This is the first time that our total system will be present together - staff, students, Trustees, as one body, celebrating at Eucharist. Our local Bishop will preside with all our priests at the Steelback Centre. We are anxious to celebrate with 6,000 people in one space. We will celebrate our faith and our gathering together as the Body of Christ.

KENORA
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: DR. ALLAN CRAIG

Best Practice #1: Spiritual Development Day

Contact Information: Sister Maria Ciccarelli, snjm, Religious & Family Life Education
Coordinator; mciccarelli@kcdsb.on.ca

Details: A gathering on the first day of a new school year of all teachers, educational assistants, administration, priests, trustees, and representatives from school councils to provide spiritual nourishment and focus to our mission as Catholic school educators.

The day, held in the gymnasium of one of our schools, begins with a Morning Prayer Service, an address by the Director of Education, sessions with a very motivational/inspiring keynote speaker throughout the day, and ends with the celebration of the Eucharist.

Throughout the years we have been blessed with excellent and inspirational resource persons such as Fr. Ron Rolheiser, OMI, Dr. David Roy from the Bioethical Institute in Montreal, Dr. Mark McGowan from the Toronto School of Theology, and many others.

Best Practice #2: System Retreat

Contact Information: Sister Maria Ciccarelli, snjm, Religious & Family Life Education
Coordinator; mciccarelli@kcdsb.on.ca

Details: This is an optional retreat opportunity provided on the first Saturday in May by the KCDSB to all its employees, trustees, priests/pastoral workers, and representatives from school councils, retired teachers, and some community services.

This retreat has been held for a number of years at Andy Lake Resort, a most beautiful place in God's creation, isolated in the bush yet only a half-hour drive from Kenora. It begins at 8:30 a.m. and ends with the celebration of Eucharist at noon followed by lunch. Both body and spiritual nourishment are exceptional. This is always an extremely positive experience for a community that desires to gather, to be nurtured spiritually, to pray, and to celebrate together.

We have had some of the most inspiring retreat directors for this occasion, such as Jamie McCracken from the Ottawa School Board, Archbishop Weisgerber from

Winnipeg, Msgr. Pat Stilla and Bishop Colli from Thunder Bay, and many others. For May 2008 we will have another excellent retreat director in Sister Clare Fitzgerald from Boston, with Bishop Colli able to join us as presider for the Eucharistic Liturgy.

Best Practice #3: Local Symposiums on Catholic Education

Contact Information: Sister Maria Ciccarelli, snjm, Religious & Family Life Education
Coordinator; mciccarelli@kcdsb.on.ca

Details: Following the two provincial symposiums on Catholic education --- in November 2002 on *“Enduring Truths, Changing Realities, Re-igniting the Spirit”* and in October 2006 *“Navigating through Turbulent Waters”* --- the KCDSB held its own local symposiums on those topics, providing an excellent opportunity for dialogue with different representatives of the Catholic community --- educators, parents, students, and clergy.

With the excellent leadership of a symposium committee, and the catering assistance of our high school students and their teacher in the “Hospitality & Tourism” class, we had a wonderful evening of discussions on the distinctiveness, identity, purpose, and vision of Catholic education at the May 2007 local symposium.

The provincial report, which ICE made available at the beginning of this school year, and which Sister Joan Cronin spoke on at the Trustees Diocesan Conference in Thunder Bay earlier this Fall, provides for further reflection, action, and hope for the future of Catholic education.

Best Practice #4: School and System Liturgies

Contact Information: Sister Maria Ciccarelli, snjm, Religious & Family Life Education
Coordinator; mciccarelli@kcdsb.on.ca

Details: Recognizing the need for praying together as a Catholic educational community, the fact that we have only four priests from our three Catholic parishes (2 Roman Catholic & 1 Ukrainian Catholic), the need to empower our Catholic school educators in preparing/leading prayer, as well as the need for meaningful/inspiring/quality liturgies:

- 1) We schedule, as a system, with in-put from school principals and priests, a school liturgical calendar for: Opening School Year/Patron Feast/Closing School Year Eucharistic Liturgies; and School Prayer Services for Thanksgiving,
- 2) Remembrance Day, Advent/Christmas, Ash Wednesday/Lent/Easter, Marian, as well as two Penitential Prayer Services with the Sacrament of Reconciliation for Advent & Lent...

- 3) Prayer Services for Trustees at their monthly board meetings; and a special commissioning rite at the inaugural meeting...sometimes with a Eucharistic liturgy...
- 4) Prayer Services prepared at the board level for all schools and held at the same time for events such as: the victims of the Tsunami and Hurricane Katrina disasters; the death of Pope John Paul II...
- 5) Providing assistance, through the religious education coordinator, to school staffs in preparing/leading school liturgies...
- 6) Providing a chaplain for the high school...
- 7) We end the school year with a system Eucharistic liturgy for all employees of the board. It is hosted alternately by our Catholic parishes.

Best Practice #5: Social Justice Outreach

Contact Information: Sister Maria Ciccarelli, snjm, Religious & Family Life Education Coordinator; mciccarelli@kcdsb.on.ca ; Dean Woodbeck, Chaplain of St. Thomas Aquinas High School; dwoodbeck@kcdsb.on.ca ; school administrators.

Details: Recognizing the gospel imperative that “what you have done to the least of your brothers and sisters, you have done to me” (Mt 25); that “in a world marked by oppression and war, we are commanded to work for justice and peace” (This Moment of Promise, OCCB); that the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations remind us to develop in our students “attitudes and values founded on Catholic social teaching and promote social responsibility...”; some of the ways the schools respond to social justice outreach are the following:

- 1) students from St. Thomas Aquinas high School assisting at Agape Table ...
- 2) students visiting the elderly at Pinecrest Nursing Home ...
- 3) Fundraising for: Development and Peace, Holy Childhood, Holy Cows (schools for orphans in Uganda), Salvation Army hampers/food bank, Operation Christmas Child, Newfoundland Catholic schools, El Salvador “Agua Caliente” village youth centre, food for Agape Table in Kenora, “Locks for Love” for cancer patients, “Youth in Philanthropy” for local community organizations foundation fund, assistance for local family whose house burned down, assistance for one of our students with severe medical needs, Heart & Stroke Foundation (Jump Rope), Cancer Society (Terry Fox Run), etc.

LONDON
DISTRICT CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: WILMA DE ROND

Best Practice #1: Admissions Policy

Contact Information: Mark Weaver, Assistant Superintendent of Business

Details: We have a very specific admissions policy that requires one of the parents to be Catholic and that child will be baptised Catholic. Even though challenges exist in declining enrolment we have maintained this practice with very few exemptions.

Best Practice #2: Spirit Awards/Stewardship Awards

Contact Information: Tamara Nugent, Superintendent of Education

Details: During Catholic Education week, we have a recognition evening of students in elementary and secondary who exemplify the Catholic Graduate Expectations and are nominated by his or her school community. At this awards evening, we also recognize an adult in our community who has continued to support, recognize and exemplify the good news of Catholic Education in our community

Best Practice #3: Spotlight

Contact Information: John Boles, Communication Officer

Details: This is our weekly electronic system newsletter that goes out to all of faculty and staff and is available to parents through our website. It highlights the weekly and upcoming events in our system, which exemplifies Catholic education.

Best Practice #4: Faith Leadership Course

Contact Information: Corrie Gicante, Superintendent of Education

Details: This is an adult faith formation program, which is available to all faculty and staff. We invite after hours guest speakers to bring information on any number of topics relate to our Catholic faith. For example, Father Mulligan will be speaking on Catholic Education. We also emphasize leadership through faith and encourage principals, vice

principals, superintendents, managers, supervisors from all departments to attend a similar program offered during working hours.

Best Practice #5: Open Access – Catholic Graduate Expectations

Contact Information: Wilma de Rond, Director

Details: Our secondary schools have a protocol, where all non-Catholic students registering within the school must meet with a guidance counsellor and a vice principal. These meetings emphasize the Catholic Graduate Expectations and our expectation that all students graduating from one of our schools will meet these expectations. We also provide a strong and vibrant chaplaincy program, which emphasizes community and participation in all faith aspects of our schools by all students.

Other best practices:

1. Partnership with Kings College – lecture series on social justice issues
2. Student Catholic Leadership – we do a variety of things including a very hands on approach to Student Senates with regular meeting with secondary school prime ministers, for Grade 11 female students which promotes Catholic identity, values and leadership etc., students who are not in leadership, but have been identified as having leadership abilities are targeted for a one day conference, Catholic Student Leadership Day provides an opportunity for student leaders across the system to get together for faith, fun and leadership development (we believe in working with students to develop their Catholic identity so when they leave us they'll have had some very specific leadership and direction from us)
3. Catholic School Councils and District Council – have really moved forward on the promotion of Catholic Education and the parents role in a strong Catholic education system
4. Elementary schools – monthly recognition of students who exemplify the virtues emphasized in the gospel, Catholic Graduate Expectations and character development.

**NIAGARA
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: ANGELO DI IANNI

Best Practice #1: System-Wide Faith Day

Contact Information: John Crocco, Superintendent of Education

john.crocco@ncdsb.com; Khayyam Syne, Administrator of Staff Development and
Principal of Religious Education khayyam.syne@ncdsb.com

Details: This day of intense spiritual celebration and community building, is one that brings together all members of the Niagara Catholic District School Board, including Trustees, Senior Administrators, Principals/Vice-Principals, Teachers and non-teaching support staff to highlight and recognize the “gift that is Catholic Education.”

The day is structured around a highly motivational keynote address by a speaker who is well recognized for his/her role, in the tenets of Catholic Education. In addition the entire physical environment is further “electrified” by the music provided by secondary school choirs and bands as well as high-tech audio-visual supports.

Mass is celebrated by the Bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharine’s and formal addresses are made by the Chair of the Board and Director of Education. The day ends with entire school and central office staffs coming together and becoming involved in activities designed to strengthen the formation of their faith as stewards of Catholic Education.

Best Practice #2: Adult Faith Formation – All Staff (Teaching and Non-Teaching) Sr. Admin./Pr. and V-Pr./Managers Faith Formation

Contact Information: Robert Ciarlo, Superintendent of Education

robert.ciarlo@ncdsb.com; Khayyam Syne, Administrator of Staff Development and
Principal of Religious Education Khayyam.syne@ncdsb.com

Details:

i) Through the office of the Adult Faith Animator for the Niagara Catholic District School Board, a series of workshops are organized for all employees of the board to attend. They are scheduled from 5:00 – 8:00 p.m. throughout the year and deal with themes as simple as “Learning how to Pray” to more liturgical like “Lenten Reflections: Preparing for the Passion.” The majority of these themes are submitted by school Faith Formation teams at the beginning of the year and delivered by either board staff, parish priests or other professionals.

The model that is followed at these events, is based on Jesus' behaviour at Emmaus with the Samaritan woman at Jacob's well. There are seven steps adhered to, viz., Adults' Current Life Situations; Scripture; Connection of scripture with the latter two; Connection of Sacraments with the same; Connection with service to others; Personal Prayer and culminating with breaking bread together.

ii) Each year, as part of the Advent celebrations in the Niagara Catholic District School Board, the Bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharines, leads the administrators and parish priests in Faith Formation before the Christmas break. Each participant receives a gift of a book (eg. "In the Footsteps of St. Paul"; "Catholic Education: A Light of Truth"), in order to prepare for the gathering. The Bishop presents his reflections on the book followed by a Prayer Service. A luncheon designed to show appreciation for the strong relationship that exists between the schools in the system and the parish priests.

Best Practice #3: Grades 8 and 12 System Masses

Contact Information: Frank Iannantuono, Superintendent of Education

frank.iannantuono@ncdsb.com; John Crocco, Superintendent of Education

john.crocco@ncdsb.com; Khayyam Syne, Administrator of Staff Development and Principal of Religious Education khayyam.syne@ncdsb.com

Details:

Grade 8 Mass

The Grade 8 Mass occurs each November. Eight masses are celebrated in the location where the Family of Schools' High School celebrates their community mass. The chaplain of the Family of School's High School coordinates the mass with the assistance of the grade 8 teachers. The mass is conducted to introduce the soon to be, High School students to the liturgical life of their high school. This mass permits the grade 8's to witness the form of Eucharistic celebrations common for the secondary level. The increased exposure assists in promoting retention between the elementary and secondary schools

Gr. 12 Mass

The Grade 12 Mass occurs each year in May as a celebration for all of our Secondary School graduates. This event is quite an exciting spectacle as it brings together well over two thousand graduates who have completed in the majority of cases, thirteen years of Catholic Education. In many instances they have been together for their entire elementary and secondary careers and as a result, the sense of community is that much greater.

Students are treated to a rousing welcome by other students, Trustees, Senior Administrators, teachers and members of the community. This event is planned primarily by the Niagara Catholic District School Board's Student Senate and Student Trustees and culminates with an address by the Chair of the Board, Director of Education and the Bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharine's. This half-day celebration of Catholic Education has as its final segment, Mass celebrated by our Bishop.

Best Practice #4: Partners in Catholic Education / Annual Spring Convention

Contact Information: Frank Iannantuono, Superintendent of Education
frank.iannantuono@ncdsb.com; Khayyam Syne, Administrator of Staff Development and Principal of Religious Education khayyam.syne@ncdsb.com

Details:

i) Each year, under the auspices of the Niagara Catholic District School Board's Regional School Council, Catholic School Council Chairs, Clergy, Trustees, Senior and School, Administrators, gather in community to celebrate and appreciate the involvement of both the clergy and parent body in the pursuit of Catholic Education.

This half-day program consists of official addresses by the Bishop of the Diocese of St. Catharine's, Chair of the board, Chair of the Regional Catholic School Council, and Director of Education.

A keynote address by a prominent figure in Catholic Education eg. Fr. Tom Rosica follows and then a Prayer Service led by the Bishop of St. Catharine's. The event culminates with a luncheon.

ii) Another exciting program that reaches out to the Catholic Parent Community and again under the mandate of the Regional Catholic School Council is the annual Niagara Catholic District School Board, Regional Catholic Council Spring Convention. This event held at a local Secondary School, takes place on a Saturday in mid-April and consists of an agenda and list of activities that are designed to attract parents to become more involved in their children's schools. The format of the day, consists of a keynote address by a prominent figure in Catholic Education, eg., Sr. Clare Fitzgerald, Publishers/Community Partners display, lunch (prepared by secondary school Foods Technology Program students) and one workshop in the afternoon. A highlight of the day, in addition to the keynote address is the entertainment provided by students and accompanying prayer service.

Best Practice #5: Catholic Education Week

Contact Information: John Crocco, Superintendent of Education
john.crocco@ncdsb.com; Lee Ann Forsyth-Sells, Superintendent of Education
leeann.forsythells@ncdsb.com; Frank Iannantuono, Superintendent of Education
frank.iannantuono@ncdsb.com

Details:

Grade 7 Mass

i) The Grade 7 Mass occurs annually on the Monday of Catholic Education Week. Eight masses (corresponding to the number of our Catholic Secondary Schools) are celebrated in Parish Churches within the Diocese, gathering together the Gr. 7 students

of each Family of Schools. The Chaplain of each of the Secondary Schools, co-ordinates the mass with the assistance of the Gr. 7 teachers. This mass is conducted with the theme of Catholic Education Week, using uniform readings and prayers. This mass celebrates our Catholicity as well as encourages the collective identity of the students who will attend the same secondary school.

Catch the Spirit Awards

ii):“The future of our church and society depends on young people taking positions of leadership and responsibility. Our catholic educational system calls students to not only achieve a high degree of academic excellence, but also to realize their social responsibility to bring gospel values to the world in which they find themselves leading with a sense of justice and service.”

The Catch the Spirit Award is a recognition that is given to a student in each of the schools of the Niagara Catholic District School Board who embodies the above statement. The students are recognized at an evening celebration with Parents and Family Members, Principals, Vice-Principals, Senior Administrators and Trustees. The students receive a trophy and certificate presented by the Director of Education and local Trustees. In addition, their names are engraved on a plaque, which hangs permanently in their respective schools. The ceremony also features entertainment and talent displays by fellow students.

Celebrating Staff Excellence

iii) Each year during Catholic Education Week and as part of the many activities that characterize this week, the Niagara Catholic District School Board, hosts a celebration for staff in recognition of the great effort expended in the co-curricular programmes that exist its schools. This gala affair allows for performances, keynote addresses and testimonial speeches in appreciation of staff. This event culminates with a dinner that is prepared by the chefs and students involved in the board's Food's Technology programs.

**NIPISSING-PARRY SOUND
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: ANNA MARIE BITONTI

Best Practice #1: Monthly Joint Board of Trustees and Senior Administration Masses

Contact Information: Anna Marie Bitonti, Director of Education

bitontia@npsc.edu.on.ca Msgr. Norm Clement, Board Chaplain

clementn@npsc.edu.on.ca

Details: Prior to the monthly Board meetings, trustees and senior administration participate in a mass celebrated by our Board Chaplain, Msgr. Norm Clement.

Best Practice #2: God Squad

Contact Information: Nancy Ann Hedican, Faith Animator, St. Joseph-Scollard Hall

Catholic S.S. hedicann@npsc.edu.on.ca

Details: The God Squad is a school-wide faith development opportunity open to students in Grades 9 to 12 in our secondary school. The number of student participants in the God Squad range between 40 and 75 each year. Students participate in music ministry, drama, liturgical dance, and liturgical celebrations and in social justice activities. The events organized by the students have included: food drives; school masses including Thanksgiving, Grade level masses, Christmas, Lenten mass, Mother's Day as well as family masses; prayer services; soup kitchen fundraisers; Operation Warmth; Bear Day (a welcome for Grade 8 students event); and a day of silence. The God Squad also provides support through song or dance at Board and local parish events.

Best Practice #3: Faith and Spiritual Development Committee

Contact Information: Karen Fabbro-Cobb, Senior Education Official

cobbk@npsc.edu.on.ca

Details: A committee made up of teachers, principals, a trustee, the Board Chaplain, Board staff and the executive director of the Northern Ontario Catholic Curriculum

Cooperative meet regularly to plan and offer faith development opportunities to the Board community. These have included masses followed by a social, information sessions and networking opportunities. The committee is exploring other avenues such as retreat type activities and faith ambassadors for each school.

Best Practice #4: Retreat for Grade 3 students

Contact Information: Mary Lou Cappadocia, Catholic Curriculum Coordinator
cappadom@npsc.edu.on.ca

Details: As a pilot project, the Grade 3 students from two of our schools took part in a full day retreat coordinated, planned, organized and held by the Grade 3 teachers, the school principals, the parish priests (school chaplains) and the Catholic curriculum coordinator. The students gathered as a community of believers to explore the wonder of God and the actions of the Spirit in the signs of new life through literacy activity, music, art, drama, nature activities, a para liturgical service and prayer. The pilot project was very successful and will now be shared with all schools.

Best Practice #5: Weekly morning masses offered at the Secondary School

Contact Information: Nancy Ann Hedican, Faith Animator, St. Joseph-Scollard Hall
Catholic S.S. hedicann@npsc.edu.on.ca

Details: Every Monday morning a mass is held at 8:00 a.m. in the chapel of our only secondary school. The mass is attended by school and Board staff, as well as community members. Our celebrant is Msgr. Clement, Board Chaplain.

**NORTHEASTERN
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: PAUL TOFFANELLO

Best Practice #1: Tools: Toronto Ontario Opportunities for Learning and Service

Contact Information: Mike Buhler, Pastoral Care Worker, buhlerm@ncdsb.on.ca

Details: Senior students from O’Gorman High School engage in a four-day faith building opportunity through service. Students take a prayerful approach to learn about the issues of people on the streets. Students work in soup kitchens and shelters serving people in need.

Participants stay in a Church and prepare meals together, break bread together and pray together.

Students have a chance to work in the Out of the Cold Shelter doing tasks such cleaning up mats, cleaning bedding and preparing the shelter for those who need to stay there.

Students are afforded the opportunity to go through a walk in different neighbourhoods and hear the story of personal experience through the eyes of the guide who has lived on the streets.

Students go to Mass together as a group before they leave Toronto.

Best Practice #2: September Professional Development Day: The Call to Holiness and Saintliness: Becoming Saints

Contact Information: Liz Mulholland, Supervisor of Student Achievement

liz.mulholland@ncdsb.on.ca

Details: During this first professional development day of the school year, school staffs began the day with a Mass in each of their individual Parishes. The teachers then returned to their schools and were introduced to the theme The Call to Holiness and Saintliness: Becoming Saints by examining the Video clip "Saints: Gospel Artists". Discussion ensued as to how we are called to be Saints. Questions such as: What words / images come to mind when you think of a saint? How do you react to John Paul II’s call to be saints of the new millennium? How do you react to the statement “we are all called to be holy” were pondered.

Research of School Saint or Church name took place. Teachers explored the historical and theological background of the Saint. Brainstorming and planning for the School feast day ensued. Plans were shared with other schools. A discussion as to how the Beatitudes are a blueprint for holiness unfolded. Particular attention was focused on how we can live the Beatitudes in our schools.

The session concluded with an article study, "Families, where are the saints of the third millennium?"

Best Practice #3: Faith Ambassador Program

Contact Information: Mike Buhler, Pastoral Care Worker, buhlerm@ncdsb.on.ca

Details: Representatives from each school come together for fellowship and personal faith development in order to nurture the faith development of the students with whom they work. Our Faith Ambassadors have taken a leadership role in each school. As we meet before each liturgical season they are often instrumental in launching faith based activities for each season (faith based read alouds, social justice campaigns such as food drives to name a few.)

Three of our Ambassadors attended Where Faith Meets Pedagogy and had the opportunity to share their experiences with their colleagues. There is an opportunity for service. The Faith Ambassadors worked in a food bank. This opportunity allowed them to experience the power of service. They were then able to share the experience with their students.

Faith Ambassadors are in constant communication with one another and a source of support. An example of this is illustrated through the connections made between two classrooms in different geographical locations. One classroom writes prayer cards for members of the community and sent cards of prayer to other classroom. The two classrooms are now faith pen pals.

Best Practice #4: School and System Liturgies

Contact Information: Mike Buhler, Pastoral Care Worker, buhlerm@ncdsb.on.ca

Details: This year we launched our board Faith theme: We are the light of the world.

All schools participated in the We are the Light of the World Liturgy at the same time.

Prayer Services take place for Trustees at their monthly board meetings, for principals at their monthly meeting and for Curriculum team members during their regularly scheduled meetings.

Schools participate in liturgies throughout the liturgical year Schools prepared a liturgy based on their saint or Church name and celebrated the feast day.

The high school participated in an Earth Hour liturgy with the lights off and candles used to illuminate the darkness.

The curriculum team has been preparing brochures as a resource for teachers to use during each liturgical season.

Best Practice #5: Engaging Parents: Improving Student Achievement Symposium (November 2007)

Contact Information: Paul Toffanello, Director of Education

paul.toffanello@ncdsb.on.ca

Details: This interactive workshop, sponsored by CPCO, OECTA and OAPCE, for parents, teachers and school leaders allowed for the opportunity for all stakeholders to work as partners in Catholic education.

Participants were able to understand the vital role that each of the partners plays in shaping and sustaining a strong Catholic educational system.

An understand the role of an active, inclusive Catholic School Council in creating caring, welcoming school communities was fostered.

Identification of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations to more deeply appreciate the mission of our Catholic Schools took place.

Strategies for enhancing all types of parental involvement and the benefits to student achievement were shared.

**NORTHWEST
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: MARY-CATHERINE KELLY

Best Practice #1: Board Faith Development Day

Contact Information: Kathleen Mueller, Catholicity Coordinator, kmueller@tncdsb.on.ca

Details: Each fall all staff members are gathered together for our annual Faith Development Day. We begin the day with the celebration of the Mass, with music provided by the host school staff. One of the trustees welcomes the group on behalf of the Board and the director then gives an address. After nutrition break our keynote speaker is introduced and speaks until noon. Lunch is provided and then the keynote speaker engages the group in activity or conversation until dismissal.

Some years we have bussed our outlying school staffs to a central location and other years we have connected via video-conferencing equipment, and have celebrated Mass separately at each end of the Board. Connecting physically is really the best option but also the most costly.

Our staffs have enjoyed a variety of inspirational, intellectual and musical presenters over the years. The day gives us the opportunity to connect with members of our educational community within the context of our Catholic faith.

Best Practice #2: New Teacher Catholicity Workshop

Contact Information: Kathleen Mueller, Catholicity Coordinator, kmueller@tncdsb.on.ca

Details: Each year, as soon as the new teachers have settled into their routines, the Board provides them a Catholicity day. The group is gathered together to meet other new teachers, to pray and to learn.

The day begins with introductions and a prayer service. The Director or Superintendent of Education welcomes the group. The Catholicity Coordinator then animates the day. The following themes are covered over the course of the day: a short history of Catholic education in Ontario, the importance and purpose of Catholic education, expectations of Catholic teachers, Catholic values and the Catholic Graduate expectations, characteristics of a Catholic school, integration of Catholicity into the curriculum, authentic teaching and assessment, available resources and prayer.

The day is interspersed with prayer, music, reflection, sharing and discussions. Treats and lunch are provided, and Board pins are presented to each new teacher.

New teachers genuinely appreciate the day as it very much feels like a retreat and they receive a great deal of helpful information.

Best Practice #3: Commissioning service

Contact Information: Kathleen Mueller, Catholicity Coordinator, kmueller@tncdsb.on.ca

Details: At the beginning of each year a special day is set aside to commission the teachers for their vocations during the parish Mass. After the homily the priest calls the principals forward, and they in turn call each teacher forward. Every person receives a taper, which is lit from the Christ candle, and a short ceremony ensues.

In this way the staff recognizes our dependence on the Lord Jesus to sustain us in our vocations. We also realize that we are part of the larger church community and responsible to that community to spread the Good News and the tenants of the faith.

The ceremony is both meaningful and empowering.

Best Practice #4: Personal Adult Faith Support

Contact Information: Kathleen Mueller, Catholicity Coordinator,
kmueller@tncdsb.on.ca

Details: Our Board purchases for every staff member reflection/prayer books for the liturgical seasons of Lent and Advent. These are given as gifts to support people in their personal prayer and spiritual life.

Best Practice #5: Catholicity Coordinator

Contact Information: Kathleen Mueller, Catholicity Coordinator,
kmueller@tncdsb.on.ca

Details: The Northwest Board hires a half-time Catholicity Coordinator to support Catholicity within the elementary schools.

**OTTAWA
CATHOLIC SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: JAMES G. MCCRACKEN

Best Practice #1: Christian Community Day

Contact Information: Janet Bentham, Religious & Family Life Coordinator, Student Success Dept. janet.bentham@ottawacatholicschools.ca

Details: Early in the fall of each year, the Ottawa Catholic school board community gathers for Christian Community Day. This event sets out the Board vision for the coming year. Over 3,000 teachers, administrators and support staff attend the day. Employees look forward to hearing the messages of the Director of Education, the Archbishop and keynote speakers as well as reuniting with colleagues. Christian Community Day has become a tradition that has strengthened our Catholic educational community. It is an adult faith experience that is valued by employees serving to unite all in a common Gospel vision.

Best Practice #2: Faith Mentors

Contact Information: Janet Bentham, Religious & Family Life Coordinator, Student Success Dept. janet.bentham@ottawacatholicschools.ca

Details: Principals benefit from having a staff member who is committed to the faith life of the school, and is provided with professional development to assist them. Some Catholic teachers welcome the opportunity to deepen their commitment to the Catholic faith and develop their sense of spiritual leadership. Faith mentors have been established in the elementary schools of Ottawa Catholic. After experiencing two full days of formation in adult faith, liturgy and religious education, faith mentors return to their schools to with sound liturgical practice and strategies for strengthening the home-school-parish relationship.

Best Practice #3: Catholic Symposium Conversation

Contact Information: Janet Bentham, Religious & Family Life Coordinator, Student Success Dept. janet.bentham@ottawacatholicschools.ca

Details: The *Our Catholic Schools* conversation began with all principals engaging in the questions, and the implementation of an adult faith package that allowed school staffs, school councils and students to engage in the process. Over 5,000 people participated and documented their responses to the five questions. This material was condensed into a publication with themes that became the basis of the Board's Character Formation model.

What next? In November 2007, the Director of Education hosted a symposium meeting with representatives from all the partners in Catholic education. Speakers were drawn from the Ottawa Catholic educational community including students, priest, principal and teacher. Drawing on the parable of the sower, participants responded to two key questions:

- To develop support for publicly funded Catholic education, what is it that we celebrate in Catholic schools?
- To build support for publicly funded Catholic schools, how do we respond to challenges with creative initiatives?

A resource package was developed to bring this same conversation back to schools and school councils. A DVD of highlights from the day, including statements from the Director of Education, James G McCracken and Archbishop Prendergast. Schools and school councils are using these resources as part of their professional development and adult faith formation.

Best Practice #4: Character Formation

Contact Information: Janet Bentham, Religious & Family Life Coordinator, Student Success Dept. janet.bentham@ottawacatholicschools.ca

Details: Drawing on information from various committees within the Board, and from participants in the Catholic Symposium, a model for character formation was developed, critiqued, and is now being implemented. The Gospel values of faith, hope, love, community, dignity of persons, excellence, justice and stewardship for creation form the foundation of the model. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, as expressed in scripture and Church tradition, is at the centre providing direction, motivation and spiritual depth to each of these values.

A template was developed that breaks open each of these Gospel themes to include a variety of virtues. For example, the value of Community includes welcoming, inclusion, conflict resolution, peace, unity in diversity, respect, honesty, gratitude, and safe schools.

Best Practice #5: Board Spiritual Theme

Contact Information: Janet Bentham, Religious & Family Life Coordinator, Student Success Dept. janet.bentham@ottawacatholicschools.ca

Details: For the last several years, the Board has adopted a Spiritual Theme that provides focus and system support to adult faith formation. Linked to the Character Formation model, one Gospel value is taken, developed and used to form the basis for prayer, liturgy and adult faith development. For example, the theme for the last two years was “Who is My Neighbour?” a question that provoked reflection on themes of dignity of persons and justice. A wide variety of social action projects were initiated and given a faith context through this theme.

A theme banner, logo and power point presentation give visual expression. A theme package provides extensive prayer resources. A theme song is composed, performed and recorded providing musical expression. Board staff and students have embraced the theme and used it in a variety of creative ways.

**PETERBOROUGH VICTORIA NORTHUMBERLAND &
CLARINGTON CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: JOHN MACKLE

Best Practice #1: System Faith Day

Contact Information: John Mackle, Director of Education, jmackle@pvncdsb.on.ca

Details: A gathering of all PVNCCDSB employees takes place every other year at St. Peter's Secondary School, Peterborough. The focus this past October was "Ministering to Youth", and our keynote speaker was David Wells, Director of Religious Education, Plymouth Diocese, England.

Liturgy was celebrated by Father Joe Moran, Rector, Cathedral of St. Peter-in-Chains, Peterborough, and the homily was given by Father Paul Massel, Pastor, St. Alphonsus Parish, Peterborough. We also launched our Catholic Virtues Into Action system initiative that day.

Best Practice #2: Catholic Virtues Into Action Project

Contact Information: John Mackle, Director of Education, jmackle@pvncdsb.on.ca

Details: A system committee identified the following monthly virtues:

September - Respect	February - Compassion
October - Empathy	March - Forgiveness
November - Justice	April - Stewardship
December - Patience	May - Tolerance
January - Responsibility	June - Honesty

Each month, as part of the Director's Meeting, a principal and our Faith Animator present an introduction to the Virtue via gospel reading, reflection, and prayer.

Principals receive the following electronic resources each month:

- Principal Message re – Virtue for school newsletter
- Prayers/Quotes for the month
- Prayers of the Faithful for monthly school liturgy
- Monthly bulletin board ideas
- Resources for classroom teachers
- Virtue discussion points for Catholic School Council meeting
- Message for Parish Bulletin

Our Communications Department has also prepared posters, bookmarks, mugs to promote this Virtues project.

Best Practice #3: “Leaders Today”

Contact Information: John Mackle, Director of Education, jmackle@pvncdsb.on.ca

Details: PVNCCDSB has engaged Leaders Today to present a motivation talk to all students K-12. In addition, selected students (approximately 25 per school) will participate in integrated hands-on workshops to inspire, motivate, and provide students with the tools to be social action leaders. These “volunteer ambassadors” in elementary schools receive a half-day workshop, and secondary students receive three full day workshops.

All grade 10 students’ will also be researching social service/charitable agencies in their local area and presenting background information on the mission/ mandate of the agency they research. Each secondary school will be eligible for a \$5,000.00 grant to present to the agency they believe is most in need of financial support.

Best Practice #4: Catholic Schools: 2007 and Into the Future

Contact Information: John Mackle, Director of Education, jmackle@pvncdsb.on.ca

Details: On April 21, 2007 over 400 employees, priests, parents, and community members gathered to carry forward the provincial dialogue in support of Catholic education. Catholic education is a ministry of the Roman Catholic Church and it is a publicly funded education system in the province of Ontario. This fact was affirmed by His Excellency the Most Reverend Bishop Nicholas De Angelis and the Minister of Education, The Honourable Kathleen Wynne.

The gathering was further inspired by the depth of experience and commitment to Catholic education shared by Noel Martin, Director of Catholic Education, O.C.S.T.A. This presentation funded the imagination for table conversations. All conversation points were gathered and compiled as a report available on our Board website at www.pvncdsb.on.ca.

Best Practice #5: “Administration Retreat”

Contact Information: John Mackle, Director of Education, jmackle@pvncdsb.on.ca

Details: Each year all principals, superintendents, and managers gather for a two-day spiritual retreat at a local resort. This past October Dr. Miriam K. Martin, PBVM, presented our retreat, “Living Eucharist: Tending the Tables of Our Lives”. The retreat included four sessions:

- (1) Exploring Our Tables – Who are we and who is with us at the tables of our lives?

(2) Looking At The Table of Jesus – Do we know about Jesus' table fellowship?

(3) Tables of Catholic Schools – How are we living this vision of our Catholic educational community?

(4) Glimpsing The Table of the World – Where in the world are we sent, what in the world are we sent to do? prayer, group dialogue, social time, and concluding Eucharistic Celebration led by Father Paul Massel, Diocesan Liturgist.

**RED LAKE
ROMAN CATHOLIC SEPARATE SCHOOL BOARD**

SUPERVISORY OFFICERS: KEVIN AND JOANNE DEBNAM

Best Practice #1: Reflection Day (Holy Thursday)

Contact Information: Betty Brush, Consultant, Religious Studies, Religion and Family Life, Suzanne Chartier-White, Principal, 807-727-2365 principal@stjohnsredlake.com

Details: Holy Thursday afternoon, students are placed in multi-age groupings and meet in the various classes for craft and other activities based on scripture and scriptural symbolism. Afternoon activities conclude with a liturgy focussing on Holy Week and the connections between the activities and Christ's passion, death and resurrection.

Best Practice #2: Virtues/Bead program

Contact Information: Suzanne Chartier-White, Principal, 807-727-2365
principal@stjohnsredlake.com

Details: Based on material obtained from Dufferin-Peel CDSB. A virtue is selected for each month. At the beginning of the month, the virtue is "launched" with a short liturgy. Teachers incorporate the virtue into their daily teachings. Students use digital cameras to make "posters: depicting the virtue and post them throughout the school. Adults in the building carry beads that they hand out when they see the virtue (or other behaviours that bear reinforcing) being displayed by students. Beads go into glass jars, and at the end of the month, bead totals are counted up and averaged as beads/student for every class. The class with the highest number of beads per student gets to select a class reward from a classroom menu they have created with their teachers (e.g. extra recess time, pizza for the class, etc.). The winning class is announced at the following month's liturgy, and the process begins anew.

RENFREW
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: MICHELE ARBOUR

Best Practice #1: Yearly Catholic Community & Corporate Focus

Contact Information: Michele Arbour, Director; Andrew Bray, Board Chair

Details: Each year, our board adopts a primary focus, taken from our vision statement, to guide our activities at a system-wide level with a distinctive Catholic orientation. Our 2007-08 Catholic Community Focus is: *Challenge the consumer culture with lives dedicated to the principles of social justice in the spirit of gospel values.* Our Corporate Focus is: *Claim our role as global stewards, cherishing the environment and all life in it.* These are important points of reference for all our system-wide activities throughout the school year. They help ensure what we do is consistent with our Catholic belief and identity.

Best Practice #2: School Faith Portfolios

Contact Information: Michele Arbour, Director of Education; Andrew Bray, Board Chair.

Details: Each year, every school in our system compiles a faith portfolio highlighting its activities, which enhance and celebrate its Catholic identity. These portfolios are put on display for members of our school communities to peruse and review.

Best Practice #3: Annual Christian Community Day

Contact Information: Tony Cosentino, Religious Education & Family Life Resource Teacher

Details: Our annual Christian Community PA Day brings our entire board staff together to address and celebrate the distinctiveness of our Catholic school system. Our guest speakers have included Sister Clare Fitzgerald, Msgr. Dennis Murphy, Dr. Mark McGowan, and Brian McGowan. The highlight of our day is Eucharist with our Bishop, followed by workshops with a special emphasis on enhancing the Catholic dimension of our schools.

Best Practice #4: OECTA/OCSTA Religious Education AQ Courses

Contact Information: Tony Cosentino, Religious Education & Family Life Resource Teacher

Details: The OECTA/OCSTA Religious Education AQ Courses offered in our board continue to have a positive and lasting impact on teaching and non-teaching staff that has taken them. Many course candidates have spoken about the importance these courses have played in their coming to a more adult understanding of their Catholic faith, and a deepened commitment to witnessing this faith as part of the parish worshipping community, with colleagues and with students in the classroom.

Best Practice #5: Strong Diocesan Presence

Contact Information: Michele Arbour, Director of Education; Jason Dedo, Director of Adult Faith Formation and Leadership Development, Diocese of Pembroke

Details: In September 2006, our board entered into partnership with the Pembroke Diocese whereby one of our teachers was seconded to work as *Diocesan Director of Adult Faith and Leadership Development*. A number of our staff and principals have enrolled in our diocesan adult faith development courses, which are now being coordinated by this teacher. This new partnership continues to build greater understanding and closer cooperation between our diocese and board.

**SIMCOE MUSKOKA
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: MICHAEL O'KEEFE

Best Practice #1: Faith Day

Contact Information: Sherry Chapman, Coordinator, Religious Education & Chaplaincy Services schapman@smcdsb.on.ca

Details: Traditionally in September each year, a board-wide staff day of Faith is celebrated. Each year is a different format, such as in families of schools, in regions and all together in one location. In 2005, all staff gathered at the Martyrs Shrine, which included a Pilgrimage, mass, a variety of workshops and other activities. In 2008 the board staff will gather in one of two locations to celebrate our faith through the inspiration of Father Tony Ricard.

Best Practice #2: When Faith Meets Pedagogy

Contact Information: Brian Beal, Superintendent of Programme & Services, bbeal@smcsb.on.ca

Details: We support, through payment of registration and/or accommodation costs, the attendance of as many staff as possible to attend this annual professional development event. This is a joint venture with OECTA. Many of our staff are workshop facilitators.

Best Practice #3: Faith Ambassadors

Contact Information: Joan Gallagher-Main, Adult Faith Animator, jgallagher@smcsb.on.ca

Details: Each school and board office location has representation of two staff members who come together as a whole group and in more frequent regional meetings to share resources, best practices and to nurture their own faith development.

Best Practice #4: Catholic Values

Contact Information: Diane Legg, Director of Corporate Communications & Public Affairs, dlegg@smcdsb.on.ca

Details: This has been an extensive process of gathering key stakeholders and representatives from all partners in our school board community to identify the values inherent to Catholic education in Simcoe County and the District of Muskoka. This spring marked the official launch our Catholic Values at a board-wide evening event which included a Celebration of the Eucharist with His Worship, the Most Reverend Thomas Collins, Archbishop of the Diocese of Toronto, liturgical music and dance and small group discussions regarding the celebration of Catholic values at the local level.

Best Practice #5: Courage to Serve

Contact Information: Karen Connolly, Executive Director of Courage to Serve – Canada
kconnolly@smcdsb.on.ca

Details: Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board is a founding member of this initiative to support Adult Faith development. This is a retreat format offered to teachers and to support staff throughout the year with an introductory retreat and two year cohort programmes that are followed up with alumni retreats.

Best Practice #6: Catholic Education Week

Contact Information: Sherry Chapman, Coordinator, Religious Education & Chaplaincy Services schapman@smcdsb.on.ca

Details: Simcoe Muskoka Catholic District School Board incorporates the theme for Catholic Education Week in our work over the entire school year, including our annual school calendar, our communications and correspondence and as the theme for the year's faith development. Sub themes are introduced in stages throughout the year leading up to the celebration of Catholic Education Week.

Best Practice #7: Religion Professional Activity for New Teachers

Contact Information: Sherry Chapman, Coordinator, Religious Education & Chaplaincy Services schapman@smcdsb.on.ca

Details: Simcoe Muskoka Catholic offers full day professional development sessions for teachers new to teaching Religion.

Best Practice #8: Catholic Education Charitable Foundation

Contact Information: Michael O’Keefe, Director of Education mokeefe@smcdsb.on.ca

Details: This is a new initiative in the developing stages.

Best Practice #9: Technology and Literacy Strategies

Contact Information: Sherry Chapman, Coordinator, Religious Education & Chaplaincy Services schapman@smcdsb.on.ca

Details: The Program Department incorporates technology and literacy strategies into all elementary religious education and family life in-service activities.

**ST. CLAIR
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: PAUL WUBBEN

Best Practice #1: Living Faith Awards

Contact Information: Todd Lozon

Details: On a yearly basis, the St. Clair Catholic District School Board recognizes individuals from across the district that make a significant contribution to the mission of Catholic education. A special evening is set aside, awards are given, photos and biographies are published and unsung heroes are recognized. It is an excellent way to thank those who contribute and at the same time profile our schools and our board.

Best Practice #2: Twilight Retreats

Contact Information: Shirley Eveleigh

Details: Three times a year, forty people gather for supper at a central location and listen to a speaker and then engage in a dialogue on a topic related to the faith. Most recently the Bishop came and spoke on the topic of "Catholic Schools and the Church's Mission of Evangelization". On the most recent occasion, all union presidents (teaching and non-teaching) and representatives, the trustees, the senior administration, and CPCO were represented.

Best Practice #3: Priest/Principal Meetings

Contact Information: Paul Wubben

Details: The Director meets with the Bishop bi-annually, the Episcopal vicars annually and attends the monthly meetings of the deaneries in both counties. Due to this frequent contact there has been greater openness on behalf of the priests to meet with the principals and discuss issues of mutual concern. Past discussions have dealt with declining enrolment, child sexual abuse and the pressures that priests and principals are feeling in their respective leadership roles.

Best Practice #4: Student Support Fund

Contact Information: Shawn Moynihan

Details: CPCO has organized a fund that is supported by all the schools to offer monetary support to students and families in need. The fund has helped families who have experienced tragic events such i.e. fire, death, illness. The fund has also served to help students who needed eye glasses, an epipen, a snowsuit etc. The response time to a request is 24 hours. The fund is intended to be exhausted each year and thus at the conclusions of the school year, excess funds are used to send students to camp in the summer.

Best Practice #5: Welcoming Families with a Childrens' Book

Contact Information: Todd Lozon

Details: The St. Clair Catholic Board has welcomed new families to its schools by presenting them with a faith based children's' book. Most recently we have undertaken to write a book that is based on a child's experience entering the Catholic school system. This is a unique product and one that highlights the mission of Catholic education and the difference that it makes in the lives of our students.

SUDBURY
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: CATHERINE MCCULLOUGH

Best Practice #1: Fair Trade Coffee

Contact Information: Anthony Chezzi, Adult Faith Animator; chezzia@scdsb.edu.on.ca

Details: The Board purchases Fair Trade coffee for use at the Board Office for coffee breaks and Board functions. This is to stand in solidarity with those grow coffee so that they and their families may reap the benefits of their labour.

Best Practice #2: Retreat for Principals and Vice Principals

Contact Information: Anthony Chezzi, Adult Faith Animator, chezzia@scdsb.edu.on.ca

Details: This day was organized to assist principals and vice principals reflect on their call to leadership in the Catholic schools. It gave them the opportunity to listen to a keynote speaker who used Scripture to investigate the call to leadership. It gave them the opportunity to share best practices. A prayer service based on the Beatitudes was celebrated to begin the day.

Best Practice #3: Visit of the Ark of the New Covenant

Contact Information: Anthony Chezzi, Adult Faith Animator. chezzia@scdsb.edu.on.ca

Details: Collaborating closely with the Diocese of Sault Ste Marie, in preparation for the Eucharistic Congress, the Ark of the New Covenant was brought to the four Catholic secondary schools. A short history of the Ark was distributed, classes were brought to the Chapel to see the Ark and discuss its significance and the up coming Eucharistic Congress and a prayer service was celebrated.

Best Practice #4: Antioch Weekend

Contact Information: Steve Callaghan, Chaplain SCC; callags@scdsb.edu.on.ca

Details: This was a weekend retreat for all gr.9 students. It was a compulsory retreat. The students were able to explore what it means to be Catholic today. Many students did not want to be there but at the end of the weekend, their attitude had changed dramatically.

The weekend was attended by religion teachers and volunteer parents. It has helped for forage a stronger sense of Christian community.

Best Practice #5: Faith Development for New Teachers

Contact Information: Anthony Chezzi or Laura Stirrit. laura.stirrit@scdsb.edu.on.ca

Details: For all NTIP mentors and protégés, principals and VPs if they wish to attend; a series of adult faith development workshops on Christian Morality, Liturgy and Prayer Services and Sacraments. The morning sessions will focus in adult faith development and the afternoon session will focus on classroom teaching.

**SUPERIOR NORTH
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: BARBARA SPADONI

Best Practice #1: Faith Development

Contact Information: Barb Spadoni, Director of Education, bspadoni@sncdsb.on.ca

Details: Gerry Fallon, a well-respected, retired principal was hired to provide a faith development in-service for our teachers. They will meet three times for one half day between January and May '08, by school clusters and by division. The program will seek to provide teachers with a fuller understanding of their role as evangelizers through God's Word in Scripture and Tradition. It will provide a further understanding of the spiritual needs of the learners and a knowledge of methodology in imparting the faith to young children.

Best Practice #2: Celebration of Excellence

Contact Information: Colleen Winters, Executive Secretary to Director, cwinters@sncdsb.on.ca

Details: A Celebration of Excellence Banquet is held annually on the Saturday following Education Week. All employees are invited. They are welcome to bring their spouse or partners. Years of service pins are presented. Retirees are honoured. Special presentations are given to individuals who were nominated and chosen for special recognition; Service in Catholic Education and an Award of Merit. For more information regarding the disbursements of costs or other details contact Colleen at the Board Office by calling (807) 825-3209 ext. 24.

Best Practice #3: Faith Day

Contact Information: Barb Spadoni, Director of Education, bspadoni@sncdsb.on.ca

Details: Annually on the last Friday of September, all employees of Superior North Catholic gather in one of our communities to celebrate our faith. The day begins with Mass celebrated by the Bishop of the Diocese we are in. The liturgy is followed by the address of a prominent keynote speaker. We have been fortunate to have Sister Claire Fitzgerald, Father Eugene O'Reilly, and Father Norm Roberts. The keynote speaker also presents to the group after lunch. The gymnasium is decorated with art from across the board. A concluding liturgy takes place in the afternoon sponsored by the staff hosting the Faith Day.

**THUNDER BAY
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: JOHN DE FAVERI

Best Practice #1: System Faith Day

Contact Information: Fr. Ciaran Donnelly, System Faith Animator,
cdonnell@tbcdsb.on.ca

Details: A half-day liturgical celebration for all staff held at St. Patrick's Cathedral. The celebration is presided over by the Bishop of the Diocese of Thunder Bay. Many Pastors concelebrate the Mass.

Next year, the format will change to a full day session with opportunities for workshops, keynote speaker and liturgical celebration

Best Practice #2: Faith Ambassador Program

Contact Information: Fr. Ciaran Donnelly, System Faith Animator,
cdonnell@tbcdsb.on.ca

Details: Using templates from a variety of other Boards, TBC will develop and implement a faith Ambassador Program beginning in September 2008

Best Practice #3: Diocesan Conference

Contact Information: John De Faveri, Director, jdefaver@tbcdsb.on.ca

Details: In partnership with OCSTA, the Diocese of Thunder Bay holds an Annual Conference for the Catholic Community. Attendees include trustees, senior Board staff from Northwestern Ontario, principals, and clergy.

This is an annual opportunity for all stakeholders to dialogue about local issues to ensure the long-term viability of Catholic Education in Northwestern Ontario.

TORONTO
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD CATHOLIC

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: KEVIN KOBUS

Best Practice #1: Religion/Family Life Calendar Outlines

Contact Information: Ralph Peter, Coordinator of Religious Education

ralph.peter@tcdsb.org

Details: The TCDSB provides every year a resource document to help teachers plan out their Religion and Family Life programs. The resource shows teachers where each Unit, Theme and lesson occurs on a week-to-week basis. Major Liturgical seasons and feast days are also highlighted. Teachers are also reminded when the Family Life Theme Letters should go home to parents.

Best Practice #2: Religion Reps for Each School

Contact Information: Ralph Peter, Coordinator of Religious Education,

ralph.peter@tcdsb.org;

Details: Religion Reps gather by region to discuss issues related to the Religion Family Life Curricula three times a year. Reps meet with the Religion/Family Life Resource teachers in order to relay important information to their colleagues.

Best Practice #3: Religion/Family Life Event

Contact Information: Ralph Peter, Coordinator of Religious Education

ralph.peter@tcdsb.org;

Details: Each year Religion Reps and other interested people come to a late-afternoon/early evening event to hear a noted speaker on a variety of theological issues. Issues that have been presented are: Anti-violence and the Theology of Ecology.

Best Practice #4: Religion/Family Life Website

Contact Information: Ralph Peter, Coordinator of Religious Education,
ralph.peter@tcdsb.org

Details: This site is open to all who are interested in discovering the programs, policies and expectations of the Religion/Family Life programs. Frequently asked questions from both teachers and parents are included. Also posted, are the expectations from the Religion/Family Life programs, report card comments and the Family Life Thematic letters.

Best Practice #5: Foundations: Discerning Catholic Leadership

Contact Information: Mark Fenwick, Superintendent Curriculum & Accountability,
mark.fenwick@tcdsb.org

Details: This program invites teachers to discern through a Theological/Spiritual lens whether they feel they are being called to Catholic Leadership. The course is intended to be taken by people who have not yet begun their Principal Qualifications. Some have discerned that they are being called to this ministry while others discern themselves out of this direction at this time in their lives.

Best Practice #6: The Saints of the Toronto Catholic District School Board Calendar

Contact Information: Ralph Peter, Coordinator of Religious Education,
ralph.peter@tcdsb.org

Details: A calendar is created each year highlighting the various feast days of the namesakes of our schools. Those schools that are not named after saints have their feast days celebrated on the anniversary of their birth or death of their patron. Major Liturgical seasons are also highlighted.

Each week the names of the schools that are celebrating their feast days are listed in the Director's Bulletin.

Best Practice #7: Day of Service

Contact Information: Mark Fenwick, Superintendent Curriculum & Accountability
mark.fenwick@tcdsb.org

Details: TCDSB Secondary School Students through Chaplaincy offer a variety of services throughout the city of Toronto. The Student support Share Life Agencies and other charities. This daylong experience connects our students to the social dimension of the Gospel within their communities.

Best Practice #8: Tanzania 2008

Contact Information: Steve Carey, Teacher – Catholic Teachers' Centre,
steve.carey@tcdsb.org

Details: 10 Secondary Students led by Secondary School Teacher, Mr. Steve Carey in conjunction with the Precious Blood Fathers travel to Tanzania for one month during the summer to help construct a windmill to bring water to a remote village. The students will witness the Church in action and will be active participants in proclaiming the Gospel through their service.

Best Practice #9: Catholic Teachers' Centre

Contact Information: Mark Fenwick, Superintendent Curriculum & Accountability
mark.fenwick@tcdsb.org

Details: An Adult Faith Formation Centre has been in place for a number of years to lead prayer, retreats and address the faith needs and questions of the TCDSB staff teachers, support staff etc. The membership of the centre is staffed by both elementary and secondary teachers who have formal post graduate theological and pastoral training to assist them in this ministry.

**WATERLOO
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: ROGER LAWLER

Best Practice #1: Pastoral Care Teams

Contact Information: Glenn Sheculski / Jonathan Wright

Details: Each site identifies a core team who collaborate with the principal to take leadership in issues of Pastoral Care.

Core competencies of the Pastoral Care Teams includes liturgical coordination, adult faith formation, compassionate and critical care responses, as well as fostering communities of inclusion and justice. Teams may also be responsible for introducing system level initiatives such as the Professional Standard of Ethics or the Workplace Discrimination and Harassment Protocol as well as coordinating charitable initiatives, wellness opportunities, and responding to any other of the site's unique needs connected to the core competencies.

Site based teams meet five times a year to celebrate and worship, to network and discuss best practice, to receive system level direction and professional development. They provide feedback from their sites as to the needs of the various communities and to advocate for supports that are necessary to foster Catholic communities of faith, hope, and love.

Best Practice #2: Professional Standard of Ethics

Contact Information: Roger Lawler / Bruce Rodrigues

Details: In 2006-2007 the system introduced a Professional Standard of Ethics, based on the system's mission and guiding principles, which articulates who we are when we operate at our best. The PSE was developed through a lengthy process of discernment and collaboration between all partners in the system.

Based on the six core principles of *integrity, dignity of persons, accountability, fairness, collaboration, and stewardship*, the Professional Standard of Ethics calls us to the daily practice of just behaviour in fulfillment of the Gospel vision of community.

During the 2007-2008 school year, individual sites began the implementation process for the PSE by requesting that all sites engage in a minimum of five or six opportunities for reflection, dialogue, and practice throughout the year. A team, representing the various partners in our communities, developed a support guide, which included liturgical

experiences, kinaesthetic and reflective activities, and case studies for discussion and dialogue. Pastoral care teams took the lead in coordinating implementation at the site level with many electing to devote a major portion of the Spiritual Development Day to the subject.

The PSE will continue to be embedded into our practice in the coming years and has become a major decision screen for site/system planning and response.

Best Practice #3: Celebration of Excellence

Contact Information: John Shewchuk

Details: The Celebration of Excellence programme takes many forms throughout the school year. It aims to identify those people who demonstrate best practice in all facets of Catholic education.

We celebrate those graduates of our system who have provided an outstanding example of the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations in action through the 'Distinguished Graduate Award'. The 'Chair's Award' recognises the significant contributions of an individual to Catholic Education at the local or provincial level while the 'Community Partner Award' celebrates the relationship we have with our local partners. The 'John Sweeney Award' is offered in recognition of a graduate who attend Saint Jerome's University who demonstrates perseverance, loyalty, integrity, as well as academic excellence and a commitment to Church, school, and community.

Individual sites identify staff members of distinction who are recognised at an annual event while teachers and administrators who have served Catholic Education for 15 or 25 years are also recognized.

Best Practice #4: Elementary Chaplaincy Programme

Contact Information: Glenn Sheculski

Details: The commitment of the WCDSB to providing access to pastoral counselling and faith leadership through chaplaincy programmes extends beyond the secondary school into the elementary communities.

A chaplaincy team, dedicated to the elementary panel, works together to provide a ministerial presence for our younger students. They work with staff to provide faith exploration and liturgical experiences. They enhance and supplement the work of the Parish's School Liaisons as well as coordinating the residential retreat programme that every grade eight student has the opportunity to attend.

These experiences become a touchstone for all of our elementary graduates and are a wonderful celebration of the fullness of Catholic Education as moving beyond the comprehension "...of God but rather to be apprehended by God in love."

Best Practice #5: Celebration of WCDSB Commitment To Catholic Education

Contact Information: Carol DeVrieze/ Mary Bender

Details: A series of promotional videos articulates the WCDSB's commitment to providing quality, inclusive, and faith based education. The videos are available on the Board's website, provided to all new teachers, and screened at parent evenings, recruitment sessions, and other community gatherings.

One video provides an overview of the WCDSB's history and current practice by interviewing students, staff, parents, and graduates. A second film examines the various pathways for student success and articulates the system commitment to inclusion, integration, and compassionate decision-making. Another video demonstrates the various successes of our continuing education and international language programme while the final instalment welcomes new teachers and describes the various supports and opportunities for professional growth.

Best Practice #6: Spiritual Development Day

Contact Information: Glenn Sheculski / Jonathan Wright

Details: Annually the WCDSB commits a PD day to the celebration and intentional development of the faith lives of its staff. The day is not an isolated event but rather a dedicated time to draw together the many opportunities for spiritual growth offered through the Pastoral Care Teams, chaplaincy programmes, and faith formation activities.

The day is an opportunity for staff to come together in worship, reflection, and celebration of the gift of Catholic Education. It recognises that educators cannot provide that which they do not first possess and makes a commitment to the holistic growth of all employees. The nature of the day operates on a three-year cycle. Triennially, the entire system gathers together in a massed celebration and the work is then continued at a site level for the following two years.

Sites respond to a system-wide focus, such as the Professional Standard of Ethics, and, through the coordination of the Pastoral Care Teams, provide an itinerary that responds to the unique needs of its members. Activities may include liturgies, guest speakers, reflective activities, and community action. This year the staff of the Catholic Education Centre is spending a half-day going out to various community justice agencies to offer a variety of services. This action not only becomes a living witness of the WCDSB's commitment to the social gospel but also serves as an opportunity for personal growth and connection with the poor and vulnerable.

**WELLINGTON
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: DON DRONE

Best Practice #1: Bishop's Dinner for Catholic Education

Contact Information: Don Drone 519-821-4640 ext. 214

Details: This annual fundraising/awareness dinner attracts over 500 people from the public or private sectors. Its purpose is to highlight the contributions of Catholic education to our community and to raise money for the creation of a new Student Retreat Centre located at the Ignatius Jesuit Centre in Guelph.

Best Practice #2: Spiritual Development Afternoon

Contact Information: Allan Asselin, Catholicity Council Chair 519-323-2586

Details: Our District stages an annual keynote address panel on the many dimensions of Catholic education. Over 800 faculty and staff participate in the session at the River Run Performing Arts Centre. Speakers have included Sister Clare Fitzgerald, Joe Egan, Kathleen Chesto, Monsignor Dennis Murphy, Bishop Grecco and Noel Martin.

Best Practice #3: Memorial Mass

Contact Information: Allan Asselin (as above)

Details: Each year, our Catholicity Council prepares a Memorial Mass that is dedicated to those in our community who have passed away. The meaningful liturgy is followed by a meal in which all participants engage.

Best Practice #4: Advent & Lenten Series

Contact Information: Allan Asselin (as above)

Details: Each year the Catholicity Council sponsors two series of early morning (6:00 a.m.) seminars that feature many aspects of the work of the Church, its clergy and the laity. Sessions are at Loyola House, a Retreat Centre, and have been well attended.

**WINDSOR-ESSEX
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: JOSEPH BERTHIAUME

Best Practice #1: Together in Faith Day

Contact Information: Betty Brush, Consultant, Religious Studies, Religion and Family Life, betty_brush@wecdsb.on.ca

Details: Together with our Director of Education, Trustees, Bishops, local parish pastoral teams, a dynamic keynote speaker, and other friends of Catholic education, all WECDSB employee groups gather for a morning of inspiration and celebration of our Catholic faith. An enthusiastic team of employees, garnering a variety of gifts and talents, coordinates this annual spirit-filled event. In keeping with the church season, an engaging Eucharistic Liturgy is celebrated. Employees are invited and prepared to serve in liturgical ministries. An ensemble of board musicians provides music ministry and prayerfully engages us in lively ritual song. Each year our keynote speaker inspires us to live out the gospel message through word and action.

Past keynote speakers have included Fr. Tony Ricard from New Orleans; Matthew Kelly, author; inspiring people to become the best version of themselves; and Catholic education visionary, Sister Clare Fitzgerald.

Best Practice #2: System-wide Employee Retreats

Contact Information: Mary Heath, B.MA; B.Ed; MA; Adult Faith Animator
mary_heath@wecdsb.on.ca

Details: The tranquil surroundings of Holy Family Retreat Centre in Harrow Ontario, on the spectacular cliffs overlooking Lake Erie, is the setting for our Board sponsored, system-wide, employee retreat days. Through the lens of the current liturgical season of the church year, and the goals of the Pastoral Plan of our Diocese of London, this directed retreat experience inspires retreatants to focus on their personal relationship with God, the Catholic Church, the sacraments, and their living-style as disciples of Christ, and stewards of God's creation. Each retreat includes prayer, faith sharing, and private reflection time and culminates with full, conscience and active participation in a Eucharistic Liturgy. Participants report that the day is both engaging and inspiring. They return to their schools, renewed, encouraged and spiritually charged.

Best Practice #3: Student Retreats

Contact Information: Linda Staudt, Superintendent of Education

linda_staudt@wecdsb.on.ca

Details: Annual retreat days are provided for students from grades 8 through 12. Themes are drawn from each grade religion curriculum or Catholic Education Week resources. Campus ministry leaders and facilitators from the Windsor-Essex Deaneries engage our young people in conversation around life events and our Catholic faith. Campus Ministers come together to plan the high school retreats so that one common retreat is delivered to each grade level system wide. Further, each term grade 11 Catholic Studies students from each of our high schools come together at one location to celebrate the Eucharist, to listen to an inspirational speaker and to share a pizza lunch. All of our retreat days focus our Catholic students on living out the faith as Disciples of Christ and stewards of creation.

Best Practice #4: School visits with Auxiliary Bishop Robert Anthony Daniels

Contact Information: Mary Heath, B.MA; B.Ed; MA; Adult Faith Animator

mary_heath@wecdsb.on.ca

Details: In an effort to enhance the School-Church relationship, Auxiliary Bishop Tony visits with both elementary and secondary students in their school environment. In a series of short assemblies, our Bishop embraces the opportunity to converse with students and answer their questions. He explains his ministry in the Diocese and Universal Church, his liturgical attire, his calling to the priesthood, and his days as a student in our system. With warm and hospitable words, his desire is to meet all the students in the Windsor-Essex Catholic DSB.

Best Practice #5: Catholic School Council Social and Commissioning

Contact Information: Linda Staudt, Superintendent of Education

linda_staudt@wecdsb.on.ca

Details: Board Administration, Superintendents, Supervisors and Trustees gather at the Catholic Education Centre with the Catholic School Council chairpersons, for prayer, a commissioning service, and breaking bread. “Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.” **1Cor 12:27** is the theme for the commissioning of the CSC chairpersons. As a gesture of thanks and a sign of encouragement and support for service volunteered on behalf of parents and the community, our guests of honour, stewards within our Catholic school system, are then treated to a buffet dinner and presentation. Following the time spent networking, our Catholic School Council Chairpersons, standing for all that Catholic education represents, are then sent forth in faith and service.

**YORK
CATHOLIC DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD**

DIRECTOR OF EDUCATION: SUSAN LAROSA

Best Practice #1: Faith Ambassador Program

Contact Information: Les Miller, Coordinator, Religious & Family Life Education
les.miller@ycdsb.ca

Details: Faith Ambassadors work to improve the spiritual climate among the adults in schools and at the Catholic Education Centre through local activities and in partnership with local schools. They are provided with financial, administrative and spiritual resources for their activities. See www.ycdsb.ca/html/Religion/Faith%20Ambassador%20Handbook.pdf for more information. Ambassadors support staffs and host events within their schools. They also meet with other schools in their area to plan larger events such as evenings of reflection, masses, and guest speakers. All staff members are welcome to attend area events.

**Best Practice #2: Fully Subsidized Religious Education
Courses (Parts 1, 2 & 3)**

Contact Information: Denise Dupuis, Consultant Religious & Family Life Education and
AQ Course Director

Details: YCDSB fully funds over 320 teachers each year to take the Religious Education Additional Qualifications Courses (parts 1, 2 and 3). This is part of a strategy of Adult Faith Formation, which nurtures teacher spiritual development. Courses are offered in the Fall (September to December) and in the Summer (June-July)

Best Practice #3: Faith Day

Contact Information: Les Miller, Coordinator, Religious & Family Life Education
les.miller@ycdsb.ca

Details: Faith Days are held annually. All staff members attend events related to faith development in their schools, areas or as a whole board. The faith day themes are associated with Catholic Education Week Themes. Central Religious Education staff supports these activities with logistical support and provision of resources.

Best Practice #4: Prayer Resources

Contact Information: Les Miller, Coordinator, Religious & Family Life Education

les.miller@ycdsb.ca

Details: Religious Education staff provides varied resources for prayer services and other liturgical celebrations for students and staff. These include Gifts of Love, 70 prayer services for adults within the community. (See

www.ycdsb.ca/html/Religion/giftsoflove.html Audiovisual prayer serves and reflections are made available to each school. Prayer services for Elementary and Secondary school students have also been prepared as part of the YCDSB Character program.

YCDSB Prayers for Children was written to meet a need within our board for good Canadian prayers and reflections to be read over morning announcements or in the classrooms. Such prayers are intended to weave together the school year and the liturgical year. Schools in York Catholic District School Board are part of an every increasing set of circles of belonging: the school, the parish, the York Catholic District School Board, the Regional Municipality of York, Archdiocese of Toronto, the Province of Ontario, Canada, The Roman Catholic Church, the earth, and all of God's creation. Any reflections and prayers have to reflect these different communities to which the students belong as well as their personal communities: family, friends, class, and clubs.

We are members of the Roman Catholic Church. Our liturgical calendar is the main temporal thread around which all the others are woven. Our prayer is not only spiritually nourishing but also educational. Teaching students the rhythm of the liturgical seasons, the language of liturgy, and some of the traditional prayers is an important function of a Catholic school. Our prayers bring the prayer of the Church to the students in these ways:

- 1) Recognizing memorials and feast days of saints and other important church events; Celebrating the major seasons of the church year such as Advent, Christmas, Lent and Easter;
- 2) Using familiar prayers of the Church in month long blocks to help students learn the prayer from memory, to unite them with Catholics around the world and in history who have prayed the same words, and for the sheer beauty of these prayers;
- 3) Using scriptural readings extensively that reflect the themes of the month;
- 4) Presenting, on most Fridays, the following Sunday's Gospel in a way that is suitable for children.

Best Practice #5: Virtue Formation in YCDSB (Character Initiative)

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Details: YCDSB has worked with the larger York Region community to create a distinctively Catholic approach to Character formation. Central to the YCDSB program are the Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations and the Theological, Cardinal & Moral virtues that are part of the Catholic tradition. These are seen through the lens of Jesus' teachings in the Gospels. Specific projects associated with this initiative have included:

- 1) The Virtues Book Project. 30 Lesson plans have been created to reflect specific virtues for primary, junior and intermediate divisions. Each lesson plan is focussed on a picture book that reflects themes such as hope, courage, reverence and wisdom.
- 2) Character posters. Two posters which reflect the basic understanding of the YCDSB approach to Character formation have been produced. They are found within YCDSB classrooms.
- 3) Songs, prayer services and curriculum resources continue to be produced to support this aspect of Catholic moral formation.