

St. Joseph's Academy
Catholic Identity Plan
2011-2012

The mission of SJA is to challenge each student to achieve academic excellence and to live the Gospel message in the school, the community and the world.

Catholic Identity Goal

St. Joseph's Academy is proud of our Catholic identity. We provide an educational environment rooted in Catholic values and tradition. We are committed to sharing in a life of faith and service. The administration, faculty, staff, and parents of SJA partner to nurture and promote Catholic values from Pre-K through 8th grade. Our Catholic identity flows through the school's philosophy, educational environment, and mission. At St. Joseph's Academy, our catholic identity is the most vital aspect our children's education. This identity is formed when the values, practices and norms of the Catholic faith have become intertwined with our sense of self-identity. This identity becomes the beacon of light that guides us in our choices and challenges us to live the gospel message in the school, the community and the world.

The guidelines that we will be using to help each student become more informed about the Catholic faith and, more importantly live out that faith in their relationship with Christ include...

Daily Activities

- Morning assembly - Each day begins with the students gathering in the dining hall for Morning Prayer with the pastor or priest, which sets the tone and leads us on the daily path of faith and works as we dedicate our day to God. As a school family we pray the Morning Offering, the Lord's Prayer, Holy Mary, Glory Be, prayer to our Guardian Angel and the Divine Mercy. The students pray before and after meals and at the end of the day with their teacher.
- Prayer in the classroom including personal intentions - Every homeroom classroom has a prayer area that includes a prayer table, rosaries, bibles and other religious materials for the children to use. These prayer areas are utilized, not only during religion instruction, but during the times when students just need a moment to say personal prayers.
- Meal blessing in the dining hall

Weekly

- Friday morning mass – The year begins with a faculty mass. Then classes rotate taking turns to host the masses each week. All families are invited and encouraged to participate in the weekly mass.
- The faculty begins and ends all meetings with a prayer and during Catholic Schools Week we have a staff liturgical gathering.

Monthly

- Christian Virtues – this year the theme will be The Fruit of the Spirit. Each month one of the classes will create a bulletin board for the “Fruit” that month. Various scripture verses on the fruit will be shared along with activities to engage the students at an appropriate age level to help them learn to live it in their daily lives. The teachers will carry smiley face stickers in their name tags so they can “catch” a student being caught living out the fruit of the spirit for the month.
- Recognizing Feast Days of the Saints – Teachers will be reminded of the Feast Days each month and provided with activities they can share with their students to help them learn more about the saints.
 - August 15: Assumption of Mary
 - September 8: Feast of the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary
 - September 15: Feast of Our Lady of Sorrows
 - September 29: Feast of the Archangels
 - October 4th: St. Francis of Assisi – Blessing animal photos
 - October 7th: Our Lady of the Rosary
 - November 1: All Saints Day
 - November 27: First Sunday of Advent
 - December 8: Immaculate Conception
 - December 25: Christmas
 - January 1: Mary Mother of God
 - February 3: Feast of St. Blaise – Blessing of the throats
 - February 22: Ash Wednesday
 - April 1: Palm Sunday
 - April 5: Holy Thursday – Last supper/Washing of the Feet
 - April 6: Good Friday
 - April 7: Holy Saturday
 - April 8: Easter Sunday
 - April 15: Divine Mercy Sunday
 - May 17: Ascension
 - May 27: Pentacost
 - June 3: Trinity Sunday
 - June 7: Corpus Christi

Seasonal

- Classrooms blessed at the beginning of the school year
- Students make rosaries and learn about how to pray the rosary as a way to celebrate and remember the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ
- Reconciliation during Advent and Lent
- Jesse Tree
- Praying the rosary daily in October and May
- Catholic Schools Week
- Mass and Distribution of ashes on Ash Wednesday
- Stations of the Cross

- May Crowning and Living Rosary
- Nursing Home liturgies
- Service Projects – As a school community, the students participate in a weekly food collection for St. Joseph Church food bank and Catholic Charities. They raise monetary donations for victims of natural disasters. The middle school students collect items for the elderly and spend time with them during the Christmas season. All the students are asked to participate in the Rice Bowl Campaign.

Retreat Programs

Catholic based day retreats are offered throughout the year for teachers and students through Cathy Lausell at St. Joseph's Church.

Catholic Artifacts

As Catholics we use statues, paintings, and other artistic devices to help us remember Jesus, Mary and other important people in the Church. We also use statues as teaching tools. With that in mind, we will place some emphasis on improving the way our statues and other artifacts are displayed around the campus. In particular, the bulletin case and the display cases in main hallway by the school office and the display case just down the hall from the auditorium will be improved, focusing on our Catholic Identity.

Website

All information on our Catholic Identity will be located on the website for all families to access. In particular, we will offer Catholic links to help our non-Catholic families become familiar with the information and activities their children will be participating in.

Our Catholic Identity has made much progress, but we continually strive to nurture each child in their faith and personal relationship with Christ. Our Catholic Identity Committee meets monthly to discuss and plan school wide activities for upcoming feast days, holy days and any ways we can help the entire SJA community grow and live out their faith.