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Fostering a Catholic Identity in Catholic Schools: Strategies for Parents and Educators

In this article, the Ontario Association of Parents in Catholic Education (OAPCE) emphasizes the importance of fostering a strong Catholic identity within Catholic schools. They discuss the role of parents, educators, and Catholic partners in shaping the spiritual and educational experiences of students. The article highlights strategies such as active parental involvement, integration of Catholic values into the curriculum, collaboration with various organizations, and providing platforms for parent engagement. OAPCE is committed to supporting parents and educators in their mission to create an educational environment that nurtures the hearts and minds of children and strengthens their faith.

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ENGAGE



ADVOCATE



ENHANCE



The prayer for peace, attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, is a powerful plea for guidance and transformation. It embodies the essence of compassion, forgiveness, and selflessness, urging individuals to become instruments of peace in a world plagued by hatred, despair, and darkness. As we enter the holy season of Advent, a time of anticipation and preparation for the arrival of Christ, the words of Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta remind us of the importance of love and service to others, as a reflection of God's own love and concern. Together, these prayers and reflections inspire us to embrace the true spirit of Christmas and seek ways to spread warmth and compassion to those around us.

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ENGAGE

We were excited to finally have our first regional committee meetings of the year in person! From York to Dufferin Peel, to Toronto and Halton our OAPCE representatives came together to connect, participate in a presentation workshop and discuss all things Catholic education! J. Perri our Co-Executive Director led the groups in an engaging “Puzzle-building” exercise in which parents worked together to solve the big picture - as we are at a crucial and critical time when we have to come together to put the pieces of Catholic Education together and to find ways to ensure that the parents’ voices are heard, and that it involves participation at home school and beyond to ensure that we continue to have this gift of Catholic Education. The next regional committee meetings are on the individual regional pages as well as on the main page at oapce.org, they are all virtual and we look forward to “Seeing” all of you in December! We welcome our new committee group from Simcoe Muskoka to one of the meetings as well as all regions from across the province!



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ADVOCATE

Advocacy is the backbone of any successful initiative, and last week, our Co-Executive Directors took their advocacy skills to Queen's Park. As active parents in their child's parent council, they have been part of the Chaminade College School building committee advocating for a new school building for the past eight years. Their hard work and dedication finally paid off as they had the opportunity to meet with the Premier, the Minister of Education, and their local MPP. This meeting was a crucial step towards achieving their goal and ensuring a better future for the school community. We as parents can all contribute to all aspects of our child's school journey including the environment in which they are learning, OAPCE is always here to offer support and guidance to anyone who may need to advocate in the same way - we are always parents4parents!



In this parent-to-parent post, Andrew Scarry reflects on the importance of identity and role as parents and guardians of our children's well-being in school and society. He discusses the significance of names and titles, exploring the meanings behind terms like advocates, activists, and lobbyists. Ultimately, he finds peace and satisfaction in identifying himself as an advocate, drawing on the Latin root meaning "to be called to one's aid." As parents, it is crucial to understand our role and how we can speak up for our children.



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ENHANCE

In November, our Co-Executive Directors had the privilege of meeting with Most Rev. Archbishop Leo at the Head office of the Archdiocese of Toronto. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the positive developments in the Catholic school system and address any ongoing concerns. OAPCE emphasized the importance of parental involvement and the value of a faith-centered education. They expressed their gratitude to Archbishop Leo for his support and leadership, and look forward to further collaboration in the future. Additionally, the Archdiocese is seeking feedback from the community to shape its pastoral plans, we are also excited to share that Archbishop Leo will be leading a mass and speaking at our upcoming conference in April 2024.

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PARTICIPATE IN OAPCE'S PARENT SURVEY

Your answers to this survey are important to ensure that the focus of OAPCE is aligned with your needs and to provide the Ministry of Education with data that they frequently request from us. To effectively preserve Catholic education and advocate for its continued support, we need to hear your feedback. Additionally, by demonstrating the power of our numbers, we can show the collective voice of parents in Catholic education. Your participation in this survey will contribute to our ability to advocate on your behalf.

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A blue speech bubble with a white outline, containing the word "SURVEY" in bold, white, uppercase letters. The speech bubble is positioned on a solid blue background.

PARENT SPOTLIGHT: SPECIAL EDUCATION AND YOUR CHILD

In this parent-to-parent post, the author, E. Wylie, shares valuable advice for parents of children with special education needs. They emphasize the importance of building strong relationships with your child, other parents, and school personnel, as well as staying informed about resources and supports available through the school board and the Ministry of Education. By advocating for your child and supporting their education, you can help them achieve their full potential.

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PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



Family Life Education is an important aspect of Catholic Education in Ontario, focusing on the joy and love experienced by families. The Institute for Catholic Education has been working on an update of the elementary Family Life Education curriculum, with the new document expected to be ready later this year. Updates and resources will be provided to parents to help them understand and engage with the new curriculum. The goal is to ensure that students receive a holistic and meaningful education that reflects the teachings of the Church. Please read them from ICE Executive Director Dr. Anne Jamieson.

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FAMILY AND FAITH ZONE



Take some time before Advent starts to form a plan that will prepare your heart to enter into the celebration of the birth of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ on Christmas day. The season of Advent invites us to step back from the hustle and bustle of the pre-Christmas world, urging us to slow down and reflect on the Mystery of the Incarnation. It marks the beginning of a new liturgical year in the Church, gradually gaining momentum towards the Christmas celebration with each passing week. Like any new beginning, this season aims to revive our joy, hope, faith, and love check out this wonderful website for resources for Advent



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OAPCE BOOK NOOK

Welcome to OAPCE's Book Nook, where we provide you with book recommendations that will enrich and deepen your understanding of the Catholic faith.

In this edition of Book Nook, we are excited to introduce the Lego Catechesis–Building Blocks of Faith Series by Kevin and Mary O' Neill.

If you have a child who loves Legos, this series of guides is a perfect way to engage their interest in a fun and educational manner. Presented in an easy-to-read comic-book format, these books feature various Lego figures that help children understand Catholic catechism in a way that both educates and entertains.



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