



CATHOLIC SCHOOLS OFFICE

Diocese of Salt Lake City

School/Parent Joint Partnership

Parents have heard repeatedly that they are the primary educators of their children. The Catholic schools have joined parents in supporting their endeavor to educate children. As primary educators, parents make huge sacrifices to send their children to our Catholic schools. Some of the reasons why they make that choice are that the Catholic schools seek to establish academic excellence, a disciplined safe environment, and a loving atmosphere, but most importantly provide support in carrying on Catholic faith development.

Most parents today are extremely busy and often will fail to see themselves as the primary educators. They look to the school to educate the child in all areas. It is important to see the education of children as a partnership in which the parents and the school have responsibility, accountability and a spirit of cooperation. This will be in everything from open communication between home and school to establishing and promoting religious values.

The school is required to communicate clearly and in a timely manner while the parents are expected to read the communications and meet deadlines. When something goes wrong in what is expected, parents should follow the lines of communication, listen to both sides and never show a lack of support for the teacher, administration or school in front of their children. Mutual respect should prevail.

The school provides a strong academic program. Parents should know expectations and support the child with homework, asking what homework was assigned, checking it, and establishing a home atmosphere in which the child may study. In spite of the efforts on both parts, children may not come up to expectations in behavior or academic progress. It is the responsibility of the school to contact parents in a timely manner about behavior and academic issues or concerns when they occur. In cooperation the home and school decide on a course of action together, seeing what role each can play in solutions.

Manners are taught in the home from a young age and the school should enforce the practice of good manners. Children learn more by example than by words so it is important that the parents and the school personnel practice good character traits. Honesty and integrity are hard to find in today's society; partnering to build character is of great importance. When parents choose to send their children to a Catholic school it is understood that they be positive models of Catholic values.

Schools seek to provide an environment where the Catholic faith flourishes because faith development is the main purpose of the Catholic school. In a recent article author, James DiGiancomo, stated that "research has shown repeatedly that the religious illiteracy and tepidity of the young are usually a reflection of their parents' spiritual mediocrity." It is not the intent of this article to make judgments about the faith life of the families whose children attend the Catholic schools but it becomes more and more a concern to challenge the values of society, both for parents and the school. Materialism and secular values tend to erode the moral and religious values of society, making it all the more an imperative to prepare our children to live a Christ centered life. The school and home should never be in an adversarial relationship but seek to maintain a healthy partnership. The children are the beneficiaries of working together. There should be no fear of each other in the great enterprise of educating children. The phrase, "it takes a village to raise a child" can be applied to educating as well. May all of us together, home and school becomes that village, making the child the focus of our efforts.