

PASTORAL PLAN

School: **St. Stephen Elementary School**

School Mission Statement:

St. Stephen Catholic Elementary School is dedicated to educating the whole child in all domains: intellectual, physical, spiritual and emotional. In our school community, formed by Catholic beliefs and traditions, our mission is to educate our students to their full potential, developing the Gospel values of love, compassion, honesty and respect. We recognize and accept the uniqueness of everyone. We are committed to encouraging life-long learning, recognizing excellence, and doing one's personal best. The school staff, students, family, parish, and the community each share in the responsibility through a collaborative approach.

School Motto: **With Compassion Honesty Love Respect**

Our Parish: St. Leonard

Pastor: **Rev. Paul John Nosan**

Parish website: **<https://stleonardsbr.archtoronto.org/>**

Message from the Pastor:

Our school is under the pastoral care of *St. Leonard Parish*

Jesus told His disciples, "Truly I tell you, unless you change and become like children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Whoever becomes humble like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Mt 18:3-4).

St. Therese of Lisieux reminds us how we need to be like children. On October 15, 2023, Pope Francis issued an Apostolic Exhortation in which he puts before us her example. He begins the letter with her words: “C’est la confiance et rien que la confiance qui doit nous conduire à l’Amour”. “It is confidence and nothing but confidence that must lead us to Love”.

In points 14-16, He wrote: “ One of the most important insights of Therese for the benefit of the entire People of God is her “little way”, the path of trust and love, also known as the way of spiritual childhood. Everyone can follow this way, whatever their age or state in life. It is the way that the heavenly Father reveals to the little ones (cf. Mt 11:25). In the Story of a Soul, Therese tells how she discovered the little way: “I can, then, in spite of my littleness, aspire to holiness. It is impossible for me to grow up, and so I must bear with myself such as I am, with all my imperfections. But I want to seek out a means of going to heaven by a little way, a way that is very straight, very short, and totally new”. To describe that way, she uses the image of an elevator: “the elevator which must raise me to heaven is your arms, O Jesus! And for this, I had no need to grow up, but rather I had to remain little and become this more and more”. Little, incapable of being confident in herself, and yet firmly secure in the loving power of the Lord’s arms.”

He finishes the Exhortation with a prayer, we can make our own:

“Dear Saint Therese, the Church needs to radiate the brightness, the fragrance and the joy of the Gospel. Send us your roses! Help us to be, like yourself, ever confident in God’s immense love for us, so that we may imitate each day your “little way” of holiness. Amen.”

May Our Lady help us in walking along the path of spiritual childhood as we follow her Son, led by the Spirit, full of confidence and trust in our heavenly Father.

We encourage our families to register with the parish, and to join us for mass at the times listed below:

Monday: 9:00 AM, English (Rosary after mass)

Tuesday: 7:00 PM, English

Wednesday: 7:00 PM, English (Rosary after mass)

Thursday: 7:00 PM, English

Friday: 9:00 AM, English (Rosary after mass) 7:00pm (First Fridays Only)

Saturday: 9:00 AM, English (Rosary after mass).

Saturday Vigil: 5:00 PM, English

Sunday: 9:00 AM, English 10:30 AM, English 12:00 PM, English

Message from the Catholic School Council:

The Catholic School Council on behalf of the parents of St. Stephen Catholic Elementary School support the staff in promoting Catholic values and building a sense of Catholic Community.

Catholic Education Week – May 5 – 10, 2024

We Are Called to Love

L'éducation catholique:

Appelés à aimer

Throughout Catholic Education Week, we ask you to reflect on the significance of Catholic education's presence and contribution in our Church, and in our society.

"Behold, I make all things new." (Revelation 21:5)

«Voici que je fais toutes choses nouvelles.» (Apocalypse 21,5)

The sub-themes for Catholic Education Week 2024 are as follows:

Monday:	As people of hope / Dans l'espérance
Tuesday:	As people of faith / Dans la foi
Wednesday:	As people of mercy / Avec compassion
Thursday:	As people of justice / Dans la justice
Friday:	As people of joy / Dans la joie

Highlight activities or events planned for the Week:

During Catholic Education Week we celebrate the power of Reflective Prayer as we are Rooted in Prayerful Mindfulness. We work together to prepare our Peace Garden with our ECO Team. We usually celebrate our faith in community by giving thanks to our Parent Volunteers with an Appreciation Lunch. We invite families of our September Junior Kindergarten students to Journey into an Evening of Learning with our Full Day Kindergarten Teams. Our Jump Rope for Heart fundraiser will have a focus on overall health and wellness through activity. One of our intermediate teachers is planning a school-wide wellness day/retreat where we will infuse prayer, activities, and Christian meditation into a rotation of stations involving every student/class.

Faith Formation:

Forming ourselves in our Catholic faith is a foundational element in helping each of us understand and live in the example of Christ.

Please highlight the school activities that support both adult and student faith formation.

A focus at the board and school level in previous years has been on scripture and its integration into the classroom. We intend to continue with this goal. As a school community, we continue to begin each day with morning prayers, and a focus on scripture. On Monday's we discuss over the announcements the meaning of Sunday's Gospel. Our staff continue to receive support regarding integration of scripture into their classrooms and its connection to sacrament, Catholic social teachings, and daily life. This is done through our monthly staff meetings, professional development opportunities, and support from the Adult Faith and Religious Education Department.

We will participate in school-wide masses with Father John from St. Leonard Parish. Our Grade 2 & 7 students will prepare for the sacraments of Reconciliation, Communion and Confirmation which they will receive in the Spring.

We welcome the Rosary Apostolate from St. Leonard Parish monthly as they lead our students and staff through the Rosary in preparation for the Crowning of Mary in May.

Classes are encouraged to plan liturgies in their classroom as part of covering religion curriculum. Our Safe School Team is called Under The Same Sun. Through our Safe School Team we are organizing food drives and the Christmas outreach projects in conjunction with St. Leonard Parish (food/clothing/gift card/meal kits). We look to use this team to establish an anti-bullying team and continue to organize initiatives that support Social Justice and Anti-Oppression as we strive to be more equitable and appreciate diversity.

Sacramental Preparation:

As Catholics, we understand sacraments to be "outward signs instituted by Christ to give grace." Together in partnership with our parish, we support the preparation of God's children in receiving the sacraments.

Sacrament	Date/Time	Location
<i>First Reconciliation (Grade 2)</i>	<i>Wednesday February 28, 2024 4:00pm – 6:00pm</i>	St. Leonard Parish (drop in)
<i>First Communion (Grade 2)</i>	<i>Saturday April 20, 2024 12:30pm and 2:30pm</i>	St. Leonard Parish
<i>Confirmation (Grade 7)</i>	<i>Thursday May 9, 2024 7:00pm</i>	St. Leonard Parish

Liturgical Celebrations:

The Liturgical calendar is marked by the gathering in community to celebrate the Eucharist and share in prayer.

This school year we will provide masses for the students to experience virtually.

Mass/Liturgy	Date
Thanksgiving Mass	October 11 at St. Stephen CES 12:45pm
Remembrance Day Service	November 10 at St. Stephen CES 10:30am
Advent Mass	December 20 at St. Stephen CES 12:45pm
Ash Wednesday Prayer Service	At. St. Stephen CES: February 14th
Lenten Mass	March 6 at St. Stephen CES 12:45pm
Stations of the Cross Presentation	March 28 th at St. Stephen CES.
Year End Mass	At the Church with Families Monday June 18 th (10:00am)

Social Justice / Outreach Activities / Charities:

Catholic Social Teachings of the Church root our actions in supporting human dignity and the preferential option of the poor which calls us to serve the most vulnerable in the world.

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As a school community, we are committed to supporting those among us who are in greater need. Through our Safe School Team, Teacher Volunteers, classes, and our Eco Team we ensure community participation in social justice activities and programs, and a particular focus on the sustainability of our environment and supporting ShareLife.

Our Safe School Team and our Eco Team programs continue to provide students with a voice and on-going opportunities for student leadership.

Throughout the school year we are involved in social justice initiatives such as ShareLife fundraisers (we have a goal of raising \$1000), St. Louise Outreach Centre Food Bank, Christmas Outreach in support of St. Leonard Parish, Jump Rope for Heart, Stewards of the Earth initiatives, an Anti-Bullying Campaign to support Kids Help Phone and the Terry Fox Marathon of Hope.

We plan to build the awareness of Indigenous Culture and History in Canada in alignment with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada. We will honor Orange Shirt Day, Treaty Recognition Week, include Indigenous in Remembrance Day, and make every effort to use appropriate terminology and lessons. Staff will be provided opportunities for growth and awareness through Board provided in-services and in staff meetings for how to ensure diversity and equitable practices/opportunities for students.

Our Equity Campaign this year will build from the expertise of Flight Unit, an organization dedicated to building equity in schools which we used last year. Our staff will have Social Justice and Anti-Oppression learning in every staff meeting and we plan to continue to ensure that all students are represented in their day-to-day experience while building in mind-set themes to promote reflection and change. Our Diversity Team (Under the Same Sun) will meet regularly to plan using student voice. Monthly Virtue assemblies will continue to be planned by classrooms and will provide opportunity for celebration and review of expected practices that are rooted in the Gospel.

Recognizing Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations:

Framed by the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations (OCSGE), our graduates will be effective communicators, reflective thinkers, lifelong learners, collaborative contributors, caring family members, responsible citizens and discerning believers formed in the Catholic faith community.

The Ontario Catholic Graduate Expectations will be an increased focus this year as we attempt to highlight on a regular basis through visual signs, announcements, and school/classroom experiences. Teachers embed the expectations into daily curriculum learning opportunities, while modeling the same for all students. Students engage in leadership and live our Catholic values through our Teams and clubs, Virtue Assemblies, social justice initiatives and announcements. Our foyer displays including display case and television will highlight monthly themes and visual evidence of our development in this area.

Celebrating Virtues:

A virtue is a habit or established capacity to perform good actions according to a moral standard. When we practice these virtues, we strengthen them and thereby make the presence of God more and more visible in the world around us.

The St. Stephen school community gathers regularly to focus our attention on ten virtues. The virtues are an area of daily focus through our announcements, prayers, and interactions. We celebrate our accomplishments and give thanks for God's presence in our daily lives. We highlight the Monthly Virtues in many forms, from morning announcements, virtue certificates and virtual virtue assemblies. The virtues we celebrate are:

<i>Sept. - Faith</i>	<i>Feb. - Respect</i>
<i>Oct. - Empathy</i>	<i>Mar. - Kindness</i>
<i>Nov. - Conscience</i>	<i>Apr. - Love</i>
<i>Dec. - Hope</i>	<i>May - Acceptance</i>
<i>Jan. - Self Control</i>	<i>June - Fairness</i>

Visible Signs of our Faith:

Through symbol and service, we are instruments of God's love whose work within our communities stands as a witness to our faith.

We promote unity within our St. Stephen school community by gathering in a variety of contexts and sharing common prayers. Prayer is experienced daily as a whole school community, as a class and as an individual. Our School Prayer is read in the morning and is displayed in every classroom. Classroom prayer is also part of dismissal routines for lunch and end of day. Teachers use sacred spaces, virtue signs, as well as faith artifacts in the classrooms, hallways, and front foyer to promote our Catholic values. As a school, we are involved in many student-driven social justice initiatives, eco-school projects and well-being activities (extra-curricular, prayer, liturgical, social activities, and leadership experiences). Virtues Program, Family Life and Religious Education programs are integrated in curricular and extracurricular activities; the Ontario Catholic School Graduate expectations are part of daily school life. Integration of Gospel Readings is being promoted and celebrated once again this year. Our Eco Team highlights a passion for sustainability of our environment, creating school wide initiatives that inform, reflect, and motivate. We will attempt to re-certify as an Ontario Eco School and connect this stewardship to the Gospel.

Resource List for Parents/Guardians:

- Religious Education Curriculum - [Ontario Religious Education Curriculum](#)
- Family Life Curriculum - [Ontario Family Life Curriculum](#)
- Fully Alive Program information - [Ontario Bishops' information on Fully Alive](#)
- Encyclical Letter “Fratelli Tutti”- [Fratelli Tutti](#)
- National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation - [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)
- Catholic Education Week 2021 Video Message – [Catholic Education Week 2021](#)

Resource List for Schools:

Board

- **Multi-Year Strategic Plan** - [Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2019-2023](#)
 - **New Plan to be communicated this school-year.**
- **Renewing The Promise** - [Renewing The Promise](#)
- **Encyclical Letter “Fratelli Tutti”** - [Fratelli Tutti](#)
- **National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation** - [National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation](#)

School-Based

- **Fully Alive and Religion Core Resources**

St. Stephen School utilizes core resources supported by The DPCDSB and the Institute for Catholic Education.