

# Diocese of Columbus High School Catholic Culture Visitation Guide



**Diocese of Columbus**

Most Reverend Earl K. Fernandes, Bishop of Columbus

**Office of Catholic Schools**

Dr. Adam Dufault, Superintendent of Catholic Schools

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## I. Introduction

Dear High School Administrators,

Our strategic plan, *Real Presence, Real Future: Our Catholic Schools*, emphasizes the necessity for all schools within the Diocese of Columbus to be authentically and unapologetically Catholic. Accordingly, the first major area of emphasis in the plan is Catholic Identity, guided by the expectation that, “Every school within the diocese must be inspired by faith and imbued with a strong, unwavering Catholic identity. The mission of our schools is to form disciples of Jesus Christ for success in this world and in the next.”

One of the three supporting goals in this area is to, “Accompany our students and families in faith.” And one of the major projects to accomplish this goal is the establishment of a process for high school visitations. The plan reads,

“High School Visitations. Recognizing the unique role of the Bishop in his leadership of ten diocesan owned and operated high schools, a program for annual evaluative visitations of each school’s theology and campus ministry offerings will be developed. The goal of these visitations will be to engage those serving in these ministries, dialogue with them about the Bishop’s vision, and share the best practices for forming our students in their faith.”

Through this document, I am happy to share with you the plan that OCS has developed to undertake our annual high school visitation process. A great treasure of our Diocese is the close relationship between our Bishop and our Catholic high schools. In his role as the chief catechist and teacher of our Diocese, the Bishop has the responsibility to ensure that the faith formation of his high schools is of the highest quality. As such, it is the responsibility of the Office of Catholic Schools to support, to guide, and to supervise the theology and campus ministry programs at the high schools to ensure that they are vibrant, joyful, and active.

To accomplish this goal, OCS has designed the following High School Catholic Culture Visitation process. In this guide, you will find a description of this process, including the rationale for it based on recent Vatican documents, a description of the visitation team, our methodology, and the rubric that will guide the visit. The team will produce a final report for each school and OCS will publish a cumulative report for the Diocese. These visits will become an annual practice that we hope will cultivate collaboration, fruitful discussion of best practices, and a thriving Catholic culture in each school.

This visitation is a chance for schools to demonstrate how they form and shape the students of our Diocese into missionary disciples. It should be seen as a chance to share successes, to express challenges openly, and to build closer relationships. It is not designed to be antagonistic or punitive in any way. Far from it. Catholic education is too important and too crucial to this world to trivialize a process like this one.

Instead, please see this as an opportunity to continue to grow the holiness of your staffs, your students, and your schools. Pope Benedict XVI said, “A good school provides a

rounded education for the whole person. And a good Catholic school, over and above this, should help all its students to become saints.” Accomplishing this lofty goal requires teamwork. Our schools must be united in our purpose and focused intensely on our mission. Working together, the schools of the Diocese of Columbus will be beacons of holiness, bringing every student and family into a powerful relationship with Our Lord Jesus Christ.

I look forward to engaging in the visitation process with you and remain grateful for your participation and cooperation.

Sincerely yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Dr. Adam J. Dufault". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Adam J. Dufault, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Catholic Schools  
Diocese of Columbus

## II. Background

The recent Instruction document from the Congregation of Catholic education, titled, *The Identity of a Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue* (2022), outlines the correct relationship and the resulting duties of the Bishop to ensure the Catholic identity for schools within the territory of his Diocese. This Instruction serves as the guidance for the structure and composition of this visitation process.

According to the Instruction, the Bishop of the Diocese:

- Plays a central role in discerning the Catholic identity of a Catholic school.
- Discerns and recognizes educational institutions established by the faithful (cf. can. 803 §1; 3 CIC and can. 632 CCEO).
- Gives explicit *written consent* for the *establishment* of Catholic schools in his territory by Institutes of Consecrated Life or Societies of Apostolic Life, whether of diocesan/eparchial, patriarchal/or pontifical right (cf. can. 801 CIC and canons 437 §2; 509 §2; 556; 566 CCEO).
- *Issues prescripts* concerning the general organization of Catholic schools in his diocese (cf. can. 806 §1 CIC and can. 638 §1 CCEO). These prescripts include establishing curricula of Catholic schools which are subject to his approval, taking into account binding civil laws and ascertaining violations of Church doctrine and discipline and addressing them. (cf. can. 683 §2 CIC and can. 415 §4 CCEO).
- Has the right and duty to *watch over* all Catholic schools in his diocese, including those founded or directed by Institutes of Consecrated Life, Societies of Apostolic Life or other public or private associations, whether of diocesan right or of pontifical/patriarchal right (cf. can. 806 §1 CIC and 638 §1 CCEO)
- Has the right to *appoint* or at least to *approve teachers of religion* for his diocese and likewise, if reasons of religion or morals require it, to remove them or to demand that they be removed (cf. can. 805 CIC and can. 636 §2 CCEO).
- May also *remove a teacher, since all teachers in Catholic schools share in the Catholic identity of the school*, in the case of a Catholic school run by the diocese. (cf. canons 50; 51 CIC and canons 1517 §1; 1519 §2 CCEO)

Because of the significant responsibility that the Bishop exercises over the Catholic schools within his Diocese, the Bishop also has the requirement to know his schools. The Instruction outlines the structure of a visitation process:

- The Bishop has a right and duty to *visit* all the Catholic schools in his diocese, including those established or directed by Institutes of Consecrated Life, Societies of Apostolic Life or other public or private associations, whether of diocesan/eparchial right or of patriarchal or pontifical right (cf. can. 806 §1 CIC and can. 638 §1 CCEO).

- The Bishop is required to visit them at least every five years personally. The bishop may delegate this role and include both clergy and laity in the visitation who are truly experts in various aspects of Catholic education (cf. can. 396 §1 CIC and can. 205 §1 CCEO).
- The visitation should address various areas: the quality of the curricula/instruction, the ecclesiality of the school, its unity with the Bishop and the universal Church, the pastoral activity of the school which is manifested in communion with the parish, the conformity of the school to the doctrine and discipline of the Church, and the administration of the school in all areas including finances and use of finances. (cf. canons 305; 323; 325; 1276 §1 CIC and canons 577 and 1022 §1 CCEO).
- The visitation can be divided into three phases: the preparatory phase, in which the visitor asks the school to draft a report on its current state; the visitation proper, after which the visitor describes in a report the situation found during the visitation and issues, in an authoritative way, any provisions or recommendations; the third phase, in which the school implements any provisions or recommendations on the basis of the visitor's report.

These requirements form the basis of the visitation process in the Diocese of Columbus. In order to make the process relevant and valuable, a framework for evaluation was created utilizing the Five Marks of a Catholic School. These marks are explained in detail in *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*, written by Archbishop J. Michael Miller, CSB, during his tenure as the secretary of the Congregation for Catholic Education (now part of the Dicastery of Culture and Education) in Rome. The Archbishop's five marks also serve as the framework for the *Real Presence, Real Future: Our Catholic Schools* strategic plan. The plan document summarizes each mark as follows:

1. Has a Supernatural Vision  
Archbishop Miller wrote that a truly Catholic school sees "education as a process that, in light of man's transcendent destiny, forms the whole child and seeks to fix his or her eyes on heaven. The specific purpose of a Catholic education is the formation of boys and girls who will be good citizens of this world, loving God and neighbor and enriching society with the leaven of the Gospel, and who will also be citizens of the world to come, thus fulfilling their destiny to become saints."
2. Be Founded on Christian Anthropology  
The Catholic educator must consciously inspire his or her activity with the Christian concept of the person, in communion with the Magisterium of the Church. It calls for the fullest development of all that is human. Archbishop Miller wrote, "The Gospel of Jesus Christ and His very person are to inspire and guide the Catholic school in every dimension of its life and activity."
3. Be Animated by Communion and Community  
A Catholic school must be a community of faith. This vision of community involves four key aspects: teamwork among all involved, the cooperation between educators

and bishops, the interaction of students with teachers; and the school's physical environment. All of these aspects work together to form a community grounded in faith, strengthened in prayer, and inspired by the love of the Lord.

4. Be Imbued with a Catholic Worldview throughout its Curriculum

A true and complete education should develop every student's intellectual, physical, psychological, moral, and religious capacities, which are all the needs of the human person. All instruction must be authentically Catholic in content and methodology across the entire program of studies, fostering love for wisdom and truth, integrating faith, culture, and life.

5. Sustained by Gospel Witness

Catholic educators are expected to be models and serve as witnesses to Christ and the Gospel. In the words of Pope Benedict XVI: "The central figure in the work of educating, and especially in the education in the faith, which is the summit of the person's formation and is his or her most appropriate horizon, is specifically the form of witness. This witness becomes a proper reference point to the extent that the person can account for the hope that nourishes his life and is personally involved in the truth that he proposes."

N.B. Abbreviations used above:

Can. – refers to a paragraph citation in Canon Law

CIC – *Codex Iuris Canonici*, *Apostolic Constitution Sacred Science Laws*, Pope St. John Paul II, January 25, 1983.

CCEO – *Corpus Canonum Ecclesiarum Orientalium*, 1990.

### **III. Methodology**

#### **Formation of Visiting Team**

The superintendent will develop a visiting team to be composed of between five to seven individuals for each high school visitation. Each of the members of the visiting team will be familiar with the purpose, framework, and structure of this process and will have participated in an orientation to the process.

The Bishop will approve the team for each school. The ideal visiting team will consist of:

- 1 or 2 members of the Office of Catholic Schools
- 1 or 2 theology or campus ministry faculty members from another Catholic high school
- 1 or 2 priests of the Diocese of Columbus
- 1 additional member chosen by the Bishop at his discretion

#### **Logistics**

The Office of Catholic Schools will contact each high school in the territory of the Diocese of Columbus to schedule one day for visitation to each school. Visits will be scheduled at least one month in advance. The visiting team will plan to spend one full day at each school. The hosting school should provide the visiting team with a private, dedicated workroom, access to the theology and campus ministry areas and classrooms, and lunch, beverages, and snack items.

#### Visit

The visiting team will

- Review the submitted prework
- Observe in theology classrooms
- Participate in and observe any and all events and/or activities on that particular day relating to the spiritual life of the school, which could include liturgies, prayer services, service projects, etc. The visit does not have to occur on a special day – it is more valuable to the process to observe a typical day at the school.
- Interview the principal, the chair of the theology department, the campus minister, a teacher who does not teach in the theology department or serve in campus ministry, and any other individual relevant to the visitation. Interviews will be determined and scheduled in advance of the visitation.

#### Report

During the course of the day, the visiting team will complete the evaluation rubric contained in this document. One typed copy of this rubric should be prepared and should capture the collective thoughts of the group. The final version, along with a narrative explaining any observations or feedback, will be submitted for review to the Office of Catholic Schools.

## **IV. Preparation**

The following documents should be prepared at least one week prior to the visitation. A binder or folder containing this information should be provided to the team on the day of the visitation. It will be submitted to the Office of Catholic Schools by the visitation team along with the results of the visit. While it is the principal's responsibility to ensure that all items are provided to the team, he/she may delegate this work to the most appropriate people.

The following items are required:

1. The school's mission statement and any accompanying literature that is regularly circulated as an explanation of the mission or vision of the school.
2. A statement (2-3 pages) giving an account of the school's familiarity with Archbishop Miller's framework of the five marks of a Catholic school, described earlier in this document. Describe all of the activities of the school that exemplify each of the marks. Additionally, schools should explain how the marks have been communicated to the faculty, students, and parents.
3. A statement (2-3 pages) from the chaplain or other designated person to give an account of the role of prayer at the school, including the setting for all-school Masses, the schedule for other Masses, the liturgical schedule, the availability of the Sacrament of Reconciliation, and all other faith activities. This list should also include information about all retreats, service projects, and other campus ministry events.
4. The documents (syllabi, course descriptions, etc.) that give an overview of the school's Theology program, together with a list of the textbooks used in religion classes.
5. A list of all faculty in-services, retreats, formation events, and outside speakers invited to present at the school, held during the past two academic years and those planned for the current one.
6. A schedule for the theology classes taught on the day of the visitation. Team members will observe classes.





**Diocese of Columbus**  
**High School Visitation**

**Part I. Areas of Strength and Areas for Growth**

**Goal:** To affirm the strengths of Catholic identity in our high school religion and campus ministry and provide support for areas of growth using the five essential marks of a Catholic schools as the framework.

<b>Dimension One: Inspired by a supernatural vision.</b> <b>Description: Recognizable Catholic environment which supports the core purpose of Catholic education.</b>		
	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Area for Growth</b>
Facilitates growth in students for a life of Christian service, evangelization, and missionary discipleship.		
Supports the supernatural vision that all are called to be saints and the goal of the Christian life is heaven.		
Communicates a mission that is rooted in the formation of disciples of Jesus Christ.		
Promotes a Catholic spirituality rooted in the dignity of the human person.		

<b>Dimension Two: Rooted in Christian Anthropology.</b> <b>Description: Founded on an understanding of the human person rooted in Christian Anthropology in communion with the teaching Magisterium of the Church.</b>		
	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Area for Growth</b>
The philosophy of the school demonstrates a sound understanding of the human person that addresses the requirements of formation for the whole person: body, mind, and heart.		
Evidence of a sound understanding of adolescent development that is applied to lessons and activities across the curriculum to deliver the content of the Catholic faith.		
Evidence of the consistent teaching across all curricular areas of Christian anthropology standards, including the human person as a unity of body and soul, the understanding of the complementarity of men and women, and other critical elements of Christian anthropology.		

Evidence of a Catholic culture of prayer and faith that permeates all activities within the school.		
Religion instruction, campus ministry activities, and staff formation and professional development are Christocentric.		
<b>Dimension Three: Animated by communion and community</b> <b>Description: Contributes to the strengthening of Catholic community within in the school.</b>		
	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Area for Growth</b>
There is teamwork (collaboration) between religion teachers, campus ministers, other faculty, students, parents, and administrators that promotes the formation of youth in religious, moral, and vocational discernment.		
A collaborative spirit is present which contributes to mutual respect, trust, and dialogue between the religion teachers, campus ministers, and the bishop.		
Religion teachers and campus ministers apply sound catechetical principles and		

methodology in transmission of the Catholic faith.		
Religion teachers and campus ministers practice personal accompaniment of students, within a context of personal involvement, genuine reciprocity, coherence of attitudes, lifestyle, and day to day behavior.		
All classrooms and campus ministry environments express physically and visibly the external signs of Catholic culture through images, symbols, icons and other objects of traditional devotion.		
Integration of sacramentals: There are opportunities for chapel, crucifixes visible in the classroom, religious statues, environment reflects the liturgical seasons, prayer space/sacred space in religion classrooms and campus ministry environments.		
Prayer is a regular part of each classroom and campus ministry environment and is efficacious		

with traditional Catholic devotions, Scripture, the lives of saints, and the celebrations of the liturgical year intentionally included.		
Student participation in the Sacraments of the Eucharist and Reconciliation is frequent and the time devoted is respected.		
Students participate in community service activities that promote Catholic social teaching throughout the school year.		
<b>Dimension Four: Imbued with a Catholic worldview.</b> <b>Description: Through a curriculum founded on the Gospel and Christocentric, the instruction and activities are developmentally appropriate and engage the human faculties of students to help them integrate what they receive into other subject areas, life decisions, and moral formation.</b>		
	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Area for Growth</b>
Education in the intellectual and moral virtues prepares students to live the Christian life and for the life of the world to come.		
Instruction is authentically Catholic in content and methodology.		
There is an intentional fostering of love for wisdom and truth		

with a confidence that the human mind can come to a knowledge of truth.		
The harmony between Faith and culture is evident through developmentally appropriate methods that support essential principles for critique and evaluation, formation in virtues, and practice of faith outside of the school environment.		
<b>Dimension Five: Sustained by Gospel Witness</b> <b>Description: Vocation of the teacher and their participation in the Church's evangelizing mission is demonstrated in outstanding integrity in their life.</b>		
	<b>Strength</b>	<b>Area for Growth</b>
All teachers and staff are committed to the sacramental life of the Church, mission of evangelization and discipleship, and to a life of prayer.		
Evidence that all teachers and administrators are completing the required Catechetical Institute (CI) training on an annual basis and that CI is implemented with fidelity to the directives of OCS.		

Notes:

**Part II. Religion Teacher and Campus Minister Roster and Qualifications**

<b>Name</b>	<b>Position/Title/Roles</b>	<b>Email Address</b>	<b>Qualifications List Degrees, Certifications, Endorsements, Specializations, Youth Ministry Experience, and/or Missionary Experience</b>