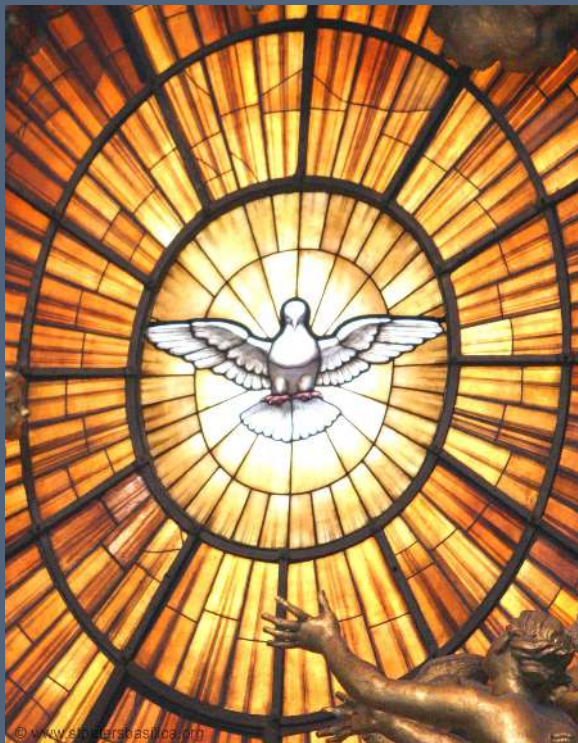




INSTITUTE FOR
CATHOLIC LIBERAL
EDUCATION

Aspiring School Leaders: Parent Education and Faculty Formation

DANNY FLYNN



Come Holy Spirit!

All:

Come Holy Spirit! Fill the hearts of thy faithful and enkindle in them the fire of Thy love.

Leader:

Send forth Thy spirit, and they shall be created,

All:

And Thou shalt renew the face of the earth.

Leader:

Let us pray...

All:

O God, Who by the light of the Holy Spirit, instructed the hearts of Thy faithful, grant us, in the same Spirit, to savor what is right and to ever rejoice in His consolation.

Through the same Christ our Lord. Amen.

Church Teaching on Parents as Primary Educators

YOU must engage with parents in a personal and formal way!

“The family is the first and fundamental school of social living. Therefore there is a special duty to accept willingly and even to encourage opportunity for contact with the parents of students.”

Lay Catholic in Schools: Witness of Faith, #34, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982

Family as the first school of virtue

Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore must be recognized as the primary and principal educators. This role in education is so important that only with difficulty can it be supplied where it is lacking. Parents are the ones who must make a family atmosphere supplied and animated by love and respect for God and man, in which the well rounded personal and societal education of children is fostered. Hence the family is the first school of social virtues that every society needs.

Gravissimum Educationis, Pope Paul VI, 1965, #3

Church Teaching on Parents as Primary Educators

In the first place the Church's mission of education is in the wonderful agreement with that of the family for both proceed from God and in a remarkably similar manner. God directly communicated to the family, in the natural order, fecundity, which is the principle of life, and hence also the principle of education to life, together with authority, the principle of order.

The Angelic Doctor with his wanted clearness of thought and precision of style says: 'The father according to the flesh has in a particular way a share in that principle which in a universal manner is found in God.... The father is the principle of generation, of education and discipline and of everything that bears upon the perfecting of human life. [20]

"Nature intends not merely the generation of the offspring, but also its development and advance to the perfection of man considered as man, that is, to the state of virtue" [22] St Thomas Aquinas

The wisdom of the Church in this matter is expressed with precision and clearness in the Code of Canon Law, can 1113: "Parents are under a grave obligation to see to the religious and moral education of their children as well as to their physical and civic training, as far as they can, and moreover to provide for their temporal well being." [23]

Divini Illius Magistri Pope Pius XI 1929 #30-34

Helping Parents Understand their Role



1. Always encourage and promote the necessity of family prayer and quality time together.
2. Use your mission statement and other resources (school pledge or code of conduct) to communicate to parents what is expected of them.
3. Encourage your parents to engage in the school program-helping students learn poetry, attending mass with the children, volunteering in the school, and reading to the children.
4. Offer Parents' Night Out to encourage communal support and ways to further educate your parents.
 - a. Book Studies
 - b. Discussion Groups
 - c. Speakers to address hardships of parenting.
 - d. Coffee with the headmaster

Parents and Children

- Parents always want what is best for their children
- One challenge is helping them see the balance of Mercy and Justice and that the school is on the same team with parents.
- Challenges of millennial parents:
 - Insecurities in parenting
 - Insecurities in faith
 - Accepting disappointment and failure.
- Restore the proper relationship of parent and child
 - Peer relationships have overcome parents relationships.
- Recommendations from Dr. Leonard Sax:
 - Command, don't ask.
 - Eat Dinner with your kids.



Parent and Child relationship



“Adults who ground their parenting in a solid relationship with the child parent intuitively. They do not have to resort to techniques or manuals but act from understanding and empathy. If we know how to be with our children and who to be for them, we need much less advice on what to do. Practical approaches emerge spontaneously from our own experience once the relationship has been restored. The good news is that the nature is on our side. Our children want to belong to us.” **Hold on to your kids; why parents need to matter more than peers** Gordon Neufeld, Ph D and Gabor Mate, M.D.

Parent relationship to students

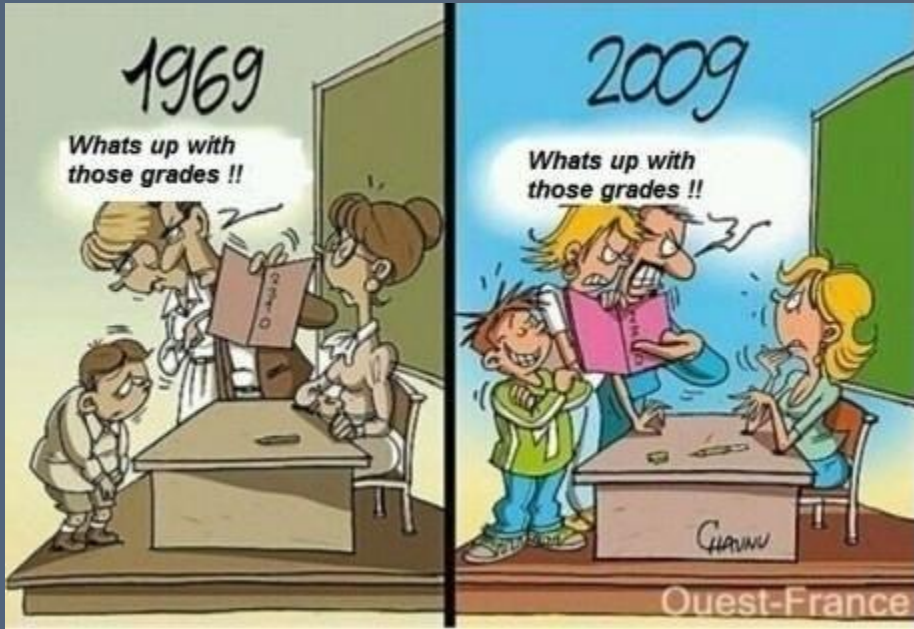
“After spending the better part of two decades micromanaging and choreographing playdates, dance practices, extra tutoring for standardized tests and college entrance exams, music lessons, martial arts, select soccer and travel baseball, track meets, art classes, language enrichment and all the rest, it should come as no surprise that kids have only the vaguest idea of how to make decisions for themselves. All that many of them have ever had to do by age 18 is be dressed and in the care at the appointed hour.”

The Vanishing American Adult, page 46

- Remind parents that is okay for their children to be bored and it is not their vocation to keep their kids entertained 24/7.



Parent Relationship to Teachers



- Our goal is to reestablish the alliance between parents and teachers. Reclaim the nobility of teaching and the respect due to the vocation.
- Set boundaries: Would you ever show up unannounced to your doctor's office and demand that they see you immediately to address your concern?
- The right kind of communication is critical here.
- Teachers should set the expectation of student responsibility.
- Strong relationships allow for honest conversations.
- Build up the communication bank by making deposits of positivity early and often. That way when you have to make a withdrawal they don't feel cheated.

Why the Change?

According to Dr Leonard Sax:

- Overinvestment in technology: “Americans waste an extraordinary amount of tax money on high-tech toys for teachers and students, most of which have no proven learning values whatsoever.”
- Overemphasis on sports: “sports are embedded in American school in a way they are not almost anywhere else. Yet this difference hardly comes up in domestic debates about American international mediocrity in education.”
- Low selectivity in teacher training: being admitted to a teacher-training program in Finland is as prestigious as getting in medical school in the US. In the US, almost any high school graduate can qualify to become a teacher. Ripley writes, “incredibly, at some US colleges, students (have) to meet higher academic standards to play football than to become teachers.”

According to Danny Flynn

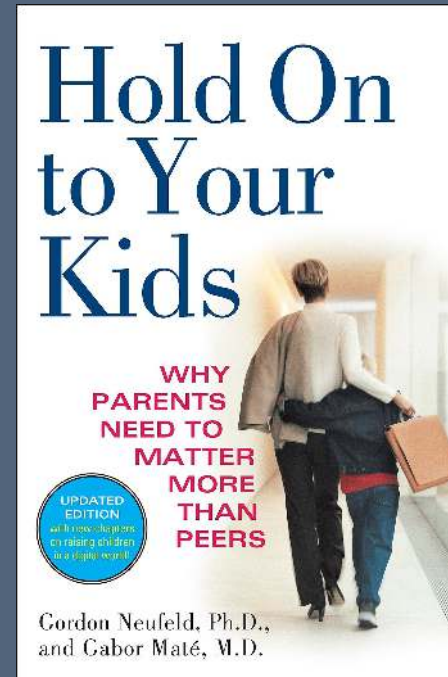
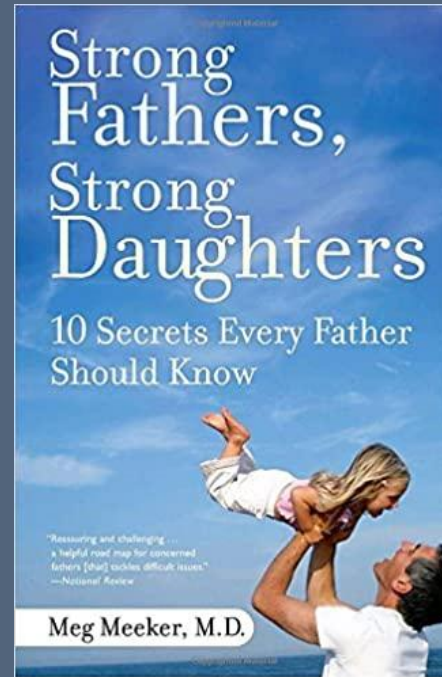
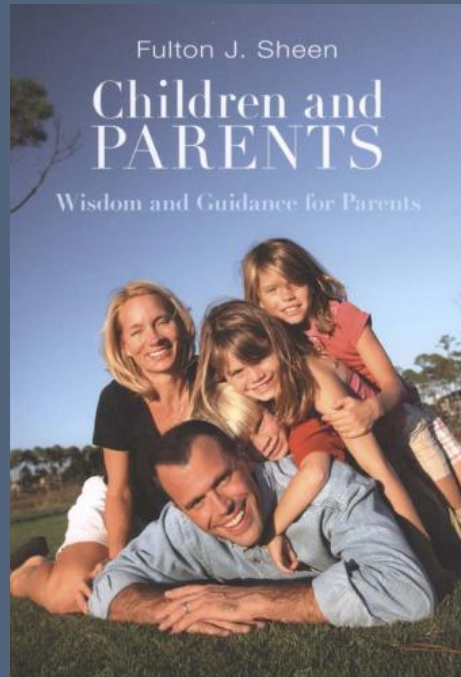
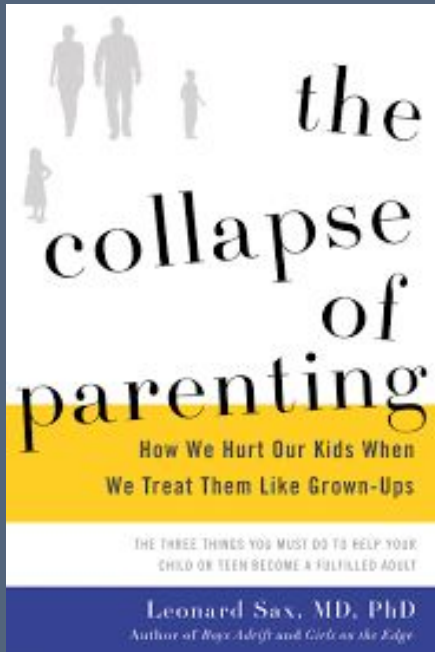
- Cultural Myth- “I can always just go into teaching.” You never hear that about dentistry or engineering?
- Overemphasis is high stakes tests and measured outcomes for students.
- Online grading portals put the focus on grade fluctuation and not wisdom and knowledge.

Strengthening the relationship with Parents

- School Administrators will set the tone for how these relationships are managed, for better or for worse.
- You must aim for trust, integrity and charity in building successful relationships with parents.
- This will include over explaining and apologizing from time to time while also going to work each day knowing groups of parents disagree with you and your decision.
- Restore proper authority for parents. Parents are less comfortable today asserting themselves with their children than previous generations.
- Help them see you are using wisdom and not feelings or emotions to make decisions for their children. If you are a parent share this experience with them.
- Pray in front on them, pray alongside them and pray for them when they are not around.



Recommended Reading for Forming Parents



Principles for Faculty Development

- Set a couple goals/topics to cover each year and drill down deep in those areas. Development can not only be reactionary.
- Gather insight for content by lots of informal walkthroughs and less formal observations. Does staff walk the hallways with a book in hand or staring at their phone?
- Spiritual development is necessary in every circumstance
- Help teachers see that they must become a learner in order to teach. What you love will be transmitted to your students. What you do not love will also become clear.
- Academic Content must be mastered before it can be integrated. This will take time. Know it and use it.

Cycle for establishing effective Professional Development

1. Provide philosophical understanding
2. Encourage Prayer
3. Ensure there is Planning
4. Teach and learn
5. Regular observation and conversation
6. Understand progress
7. Adapt and refine
8. Commit to growth

Faculty Meetings

- Set a couple goals/topics to cover each year and drill down deep in those areas. Development can not only be reactionary.
- Do not hold a meeting and announce things you could have put in an email. Faculty Meetings should be reserved for discussion and getting feedback. Emails work for most updates.
- Set meeting and propose an agenda beforehand. Bounce ideas off a trusted staff member first.
- Beta test things and survey the faculty regularly.
- Praise in public, punish in private.

Having Faculty Present their Loves



- Have staff select their favorite educational topics and offer formal presentations to parents or faculty.
- Have master faculty members lead topics for in-service.
- Best if they incorporate outside sources and not this topic according to.....
- Record these talks and use them in your marketing of training of new staff.

The Value of Staff Seminar

- Good for the soul.
- Intellectual stimulation
- Forces you to slow down and listen
- Puts everyone on a path to being a learner
- Development of a professional learning community.
- Creates great synergy and collaboration of staff
- Can drive what you staff is reading and thinking about.



Teacher Evaluation

Example of Witness

Did you become like a child yourself so that you fell in love with thinking about and becoming gripped by the same fundamental questions that have breathed life into Christian culture? Did you develop what is peculiarly human in the souls of students? Did you have the students ponder and wonder about the beauty of the incarnation? Did I understand the Vision Statement of SJA and am I able to convey this to the students in words and actions? Am I taking the time to foster and develop my own spiritual life?

Classical Pedagogy Utilized

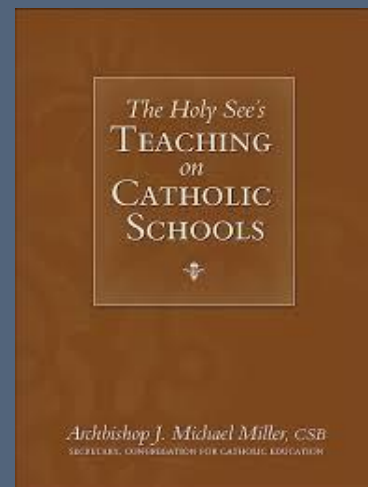
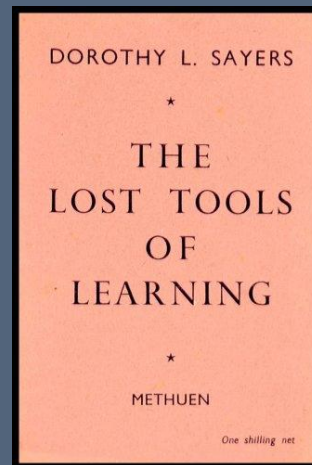
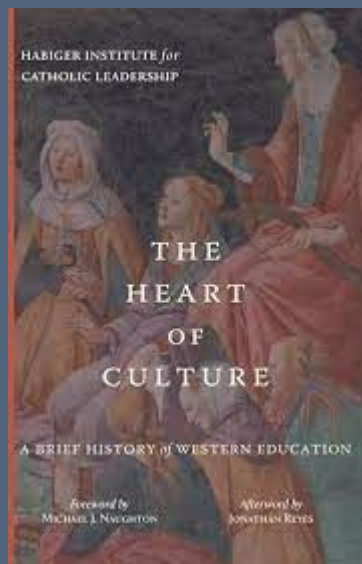
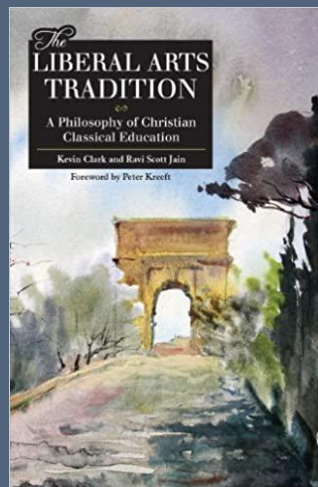
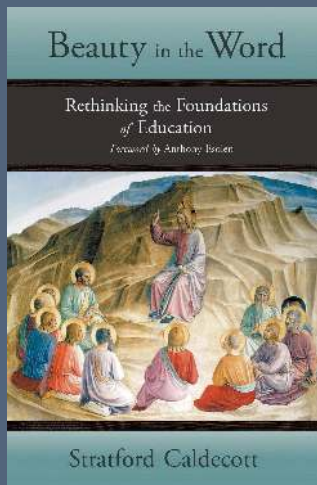
Did I teach students to ponder, to wonder, to discover the truth, and to practice memorization? Did I nurture and develop the ability to think about and discuss stories through Socratic and Mimetic discussions, or through Narration? Did I incorporate students into the great conversation? Am I engaging students through active reading, creative writing, discussions, and continually prompting them with the question: why, or how?

Natural Conversations and Building Rapport

- Observe the faculty on a regular basis
- Informal walkthroughs over formal observations
- Walking the halls before and after school
- Respect their planning periods
- Do you have a minute should mean less than 5.
- Lead with positive. Encourage with specifics.
- If parents compliment or praise let them know immediately.



Recommended Reading for Faculty Development



Assignment for the month

- Write an educational newsletter or parent communication sharing with parents their role as primary educators and incorporating church teaching. If you want a chance for follow up dialogue regarding this topic, what will it look like?

Or

- Propose topics for leading a faculty seminar to meet the needs of the staff, select 2 topics to address with your current staff. Provide the reading selection and offer 3-5 questions that could be used in a seminar format to discuss the reading selection.

Discussion Questions

1. What recommendations would you make to parents when it comes to prioritizing their family time around a liberal arts culture?
2. What are some practical ways to respect parent's authority as the primary educators, while also providing support for their children?
3. What are the best uses of an administrator's time with the faculty and staff?
4. What are the best means of intervention to help a struggling teacher or one who has not bought into the school's philosophy of education?
5. When planning out parent formation and teacher professional development, what questions need to be considering in the planning stage?

Scenarios

1. In the last 2 years you have spent a fair amount of time disciplining students from the school as a result of cyberbullying taking place after hours. How would you address this with students and parents to curb the behavior?
2. Parents are repeatedly blaming the school for their students not receiving high grades and test scores. What will you do to educate them about these goods and how will you maintain a culture that does not value grades and test scores as the highest mark of success?
3. You hired a group a new teachers right out of liberal arts colleges are very enthusiastic to start the school year. By November, they are overwhelmed with classroom management, planning and parent emails. How do you plan to support them?
4. You are hired to transition a school to a classical curriculum in one year. You inherit a staff of 30 teachers which average 18 years teaching at the school. They are not very open to this idea but love the school and want to keep their jobs. How will you build a plan to support them and form them in this model?