

Thursday Thoughts
March 25, 2010
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Principal

As promised last week, I would like to share with you the results of the ACRE test that was given to our 5th and 8th grade students the second week of February. The National Catholic Educational Association publishes a standardized assessment – the Assessment of Catechesis, Religious Education (ACRE) that was developed more than 30 years ago and is used by many schools and parishes to measure the outcomes of instruction in the Catholic faith. The test is broken down into two parts; the first focuses on the eight domains of Catholic teaching, which include: God - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; Church – One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic; Liturgy and Sacraments; Revelation, Scripture, and Faith; Life in Christ – Personal Morality and Catholic Social Teaching; Church History; Prayer/Religious Practices; Catholic Faith Literacy. The second part is concerned with the Four Pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church: Part I: Profession of Faith (Creed); Part II: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (Liturgy and Sacraments); Part III: Life in Christ (Morality); Part IV: Christian Prayer (Prayer).

Following is a comparison of the percentages of our fifth grade students with the national average in the eight domains:

God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – SMS	– 97%	National Ave. 82%
Church – One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic	- SMS – 76%	National Ave. 74%
Liturgy and Sacraments	- SMS – 81%	National Ave. 71%
Revelation, Scripture and Faith	- SMS – 88%	National Ave. 80%
Life in Christ – Personal Morality And Catholic Social Teaching	- SMS – 74%	National Ave. 63%
Church History	- SMS – 68%	National Ave. – 60%
Prayer/Religious Practices	- SMS – 68%	National Ave. – 65%
Catholic Faith Literacy	- SMS – 81%	National Ave. – 76%

As regards the Four Pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the following is a comparison of the percentages of our fifth grade students with the national average:

Part I: Profession of Faith (Creed) - SMS	– 88%	National Ave. 78%
Part II: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (Liturgy and Sacraments)	- SMS – 78%	National Ave. 69%
Part III: Life in Christ (Morality) - SMS	– 77%	National Ave. 68%
Part IV: Christian Prayer (Prayer) - SMS	– 72%	National Ave. 70%

Following is a comparison of the percentages of our eighth grade students with the national average in the eight domains:

God – Father, Son and Holy Spirit -	SMS – 82%	National Ave. 80%
Church – One, Holy, Catholic and Apostolic	- SMS – 76%	National Ave. 71%
Liturgy and Sacraments -	- SMS – 69%	National Ave. 70%
Revelation, Scripture and Faith -	- SMS – 74%	National Ave. 75%
Life in Christ – Personal Morality and Catholic Social Teaching -	- SMS – 81%	National Ave. 78%
Church History -	- SMS – 69%	National Ave. 58%
Prayer/ Religions Practices -	- SMS – 80%	National Ave. 74%
Catholic Faith Literacy -	- SMS – 69%	National Ave. 66%

As regards the Four Pillars of the Catechism of the Catholic Church, the following is a comparison of the percentages of our eighth grade students with the national average:

Part I: Profession of Faith (Creed) -	- SMS 71%	National Ave. 69%
Part II: The Celebration of the Christian Mystery (Liturgy and Sacraments) -	- SMS 72%	National Ave. 69%
Part III: - Life in Christ (Morality) -	- SMS 79%	National Ave. 76%
Part IV: - Christian Prayer -	- SMS 83%	National Ave.- 79%

During a recent study of the data collected over the years, the NCEA has found some inspiring results. The most important is this: Students in Catholic schools are learning their religion and there's a reliable way to prove that this is so. The ACRE test is designed to be used in any Catholic school and is aligned with the curriculum provided by major publishers who work in cooperation with the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops protocol.

While St. Mary School continues to excel in teaching the Three R's, it is most encouraging to know that our greatest success is exactly why we exist – to pass on our Catholic faith to a new generation of believers – and we have the statistics to prove it!

I think a new tradition has started at our school! The first daughter-father dance was a big success! Many thanks to Kellie Boyden and her crew for organizing this event. The fact that it began with daughters and fathers attending the 5:30 Mass fits in with my remarks at the beginning of this week's Thoughts – as parents and teachers we all work together in passing our faith to our children. The decorations in the Spirit Center would rival any I have seen at our junior high graduation dance; the food was tasty and it was fun watching fathers and daughters dancing the night away. I think we are all looking forward to next year's event!