

Three Approaches to Incorporating Catholic Themes in the Academic Curricula

APPROACH #1

Integration:

*The most desirable of the three approaches, **integration** seeks to create a seamless weave between the subject matter and the appropriate dimensions of the Catholic Tradition.*

EXAMPLE ONE:

Are there expectations or strategies in the Religious Education or Family Life Education programs that lend themselves to the further development in your subject area? The Religious Education program includes many creative opportunities for integration into the arts, both visual and dramatic. For example, in the teacher manuals for the Grade 7 **Believe in Me**, Grade 8 **Stand By Me** and Grade 9 **Be With Me** Religious Education programs, there are charts that outline extensive integration of Religious Education into Language Arts, Science, Art, Social Sciences, Drama and Music.

The Family Life Education program contains many writing and drama opportunities, particularly in the first two units about personal development and relationship. Could these strategies be incorporated and developed further into the Language Arts or Creative Arts program?

EXAMPLE TWO:

Where the starting point is any other subject area, the teacher identifies a specific curriculum expectation. Using this resource, then, the teacher explores how this expectation may relate to the Catholic Tradition using the twenty-one Anchor Concepts and/or the twelve Catholic Themes.

APPROACH #2

Extension:

*Can the topic be **extended** or developed further to include a consideration of Catholic Themes?*

If there are no authentic opportunities for integration, can the area be extended or developed further to include a consideration of Catholic Themes?

EXAMPLE:

A science unit that studies ecology is extended further to consider our responsibility, respect and stewardship for all of God's creation.

EXAMPLE:

In a novel study of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*, the discussion of literary techniques is extended to include a consideration of the dignity and value of all persons, including the elderly, the poor and persons in developing nations. This can be related directly back to the Catholic Theme of the Dignity of the Human Person.

Literature is chosen for the opportunities it presents to explore the human, moral and religious dimensions of life.

APPROACH #3

Infusion:

*Where integration and extension cannot be authentically done, a Catholic Theme is **infused** into teaching strategies.*

Approach #3 Infusion

Where integration and extension cannot be authentically done, a Catholic Theme is infused into teaching strategies.

EXAMPLE:

A math curriculum might include the explicit promotion of the Catholic Theme of Community and the Common Good. Cooperative strategies are developed to create an experience of Christian community in the class setting. This is done as an explicit and intentional part of the curriculum. The Catholic Theme of Community and the Common Good is infused into the teaching strategies of the curriculum.

EXAMPLE:

The Catholic Theme Stewardship for Creation may be infused into teaching strategies of technology courses.

If each of these approaches is considered, one or more of the above approaches will afford opportunities for incorporating the faith dimension into the curriculum development process.

The result will be an authentic Catholic curriculum that will teach and live out the Catholic Themes in all areas of the curriculum.