



WELCOME TO KINDERGARTEN

Extraordinary lives start with a
great Catholic Education



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Welcome to Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board!

You and your child are joining a community of faith and learning that stretches back for over 170 years in Ontario.

For generations, religious and lay people along with Catholic parents have served the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, physical and social needs of Catholic children. Our vibrant Catholic Education system stands strong because of Catholic parents, trustees, clergy and educators who have worked and sacrificed to ensure that Catholic schools would remain an enduring gift to the future no matter what political or social pressures arose.

As one of the four publicly funded school systems in Ontario, Catholic schools offer the Ontario curriculum within a rich faith-based context. Our schools are guided by the Ontario Conference of Catholic Bishops through the Institute for Catholic Education and are governed by your elected members of the Ontario Catholic School Trustees Association.

Dufferin-Peel Catholic schools stand together with parents and local parishes to ensure that the next generation of Catholic children is ready to take its place as Gospel witnesses within the local and global community. Our promise is to collaborate with you in guiding your child to become a Catholic school graduate who can fulfill the baptismal call to love God and to follow God's will according to the example of Jesus Christ.

May God bless you and your child as you embark on this journey of learning – this journey of faith.

The Mission of Dufferin-Peel Catholic District School Board, in partnership with the family and the church is to be Disciples of Christ, nurturing mind, body, and soul to the fullness of life.



Changing the world through Catholic Education



Welcome to Kindergarten!

Kindergarten is a time of wonder and imagination. We look forward to the partnership of home, school and parish working together to ensure a successful journey of learning and faith.

Our Catholic schools provide safe, caring, inclusive and healthy environments where learning flourishes. Our program will build upon your child's experiences, cultivate your child's interests, and encourage your child's creativity within a play-based environment.

Kindergarten marks the beginning of an education journey that will successfully transition to post-secondary education or the workplace. Success is attained when our students' gifts and talents, discovered and nurtured, are shared with the local and global community.

Parents/Guardians* as Partners

Catholic schools provide many opportunities for you to participate in your child's academic and faith formation. Active participation reaps great rewards for you and your child.

The following experiences may be offered at your child's school before the first day of school:

- "Journey into Learning" night is held in the spring and allows you and your child to see the school, meet the staff and experience play-based activities together. Details will be provided by your home school
- A classroom visit will allow you and your child the opportunity to share information about your child and initiate the process of building a relationship with the school community.

The following are examples of how you can participate in your child's education during the school year:

- Open House is held early in the school year. This will give you an opportunity to interact with the educators, see your child's classroom and meet other parents.
- Catholic School Council meetings are an excellent avenue for becoming more knowledgeable about the school, as well as providing you with an opportunity to have input into decisions made by the Council for the good of the school.
- Many schools welcome volunteers, with activities ranging from working in classrooms, assisting individual students, committee work and trip volunteers.
- Celebrate your child's learning and progress by attending parent/teacher interviews.
- Check your child's backpack daily and School Messenger for any correspondence from the school.
- Talk to your child about school events and share information from school newsletters or social media feeds with them.
- Continue to support your child's prayer life through participation in the local parish.

Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me..." Luke 9:48

**The word parents is used in this document to refer to parent(s) and guardians. It may also include caregivers or close family members who are responsible for raising the child.*



Preparing Together

The first day of Kindergarten is a special beginning for your child, and for you as a parent. It can also be a time of mixed emotions for your child, who at times will express feelings of excitement as well as fear about coming to school. Be assured that these feelings are to be expected. We will work together to make the transition from home to school a positive experience for you and your child.

Helpful Hints for Preparing Your Child:

- Discuss going to school in a positive, non-threatening way to alleviate fears.
- Help your child prepare for the routines of school by developing morning and lunch routines before school begins.
- Take walks through the neighbourhood during the summer. Show your child the route to school and the school grounds. Take some time to play in the school yard.
- Your initial visit with the educator team is an effective way to ease anxiety. You can communicate any concerns about anxiety or other behaviour of which you feel the educators should be made aware.
- Reassure your child that you will be thinking of them, and looking forward to hearing all about how great the day was at school. When you say good-bye to your child on the first day, make it quick, light and reassuring.



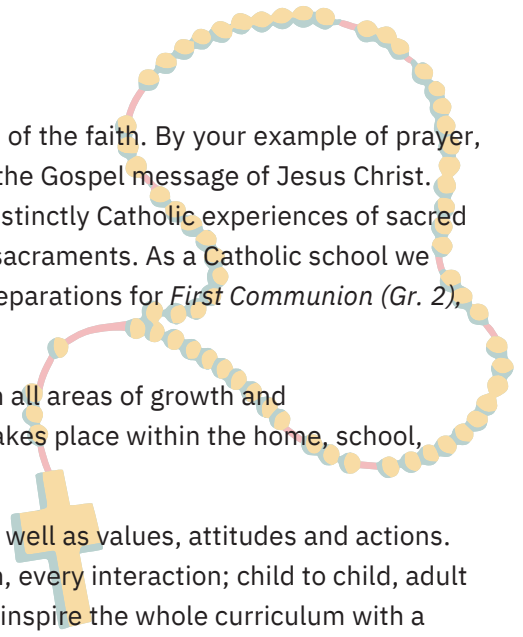
Faith Formation

The Church reminds us that you, as parent, are your child's first teacher of the faith. By your example of prayer, worship and daily living, you have set your child on the road to knowing the Gospel message of Jesus Christ. In Kindergarten, we will offer your child developmentally appropriate, distinctly Catholic experiences of sacred scripture, Church teaching, morality, family life, prayer, liturgy, and the sacraments. As a Catholic school we will have the honour of accompanying you and your child through the preparations for *First Communion (Gr. 2)*, *Reconciliation (Gr. 2)* and *Confirmation (Gr. 7)*.

The Kindergarten Religion Program, *In God's Image*, affirms your child in all areas of growth and celebrates the wonder of childhood as a trace of God. Spiritual growth takes place within the home, school, church and community.

Religion expectations are described in terms of knowledge and skills, as well as values, attitudes and actions. In Dufferin-Peel schools, faith formation is evident in every conversation, every interaction; child to child, adult to adult, and child to adult. Our educators are trained as catechists who inspire the whole curriculum with a sense of the sacred by connecting prayer and personal relationship with God to all learning.

"A Catholic school is one in which God and His truth are integrated into the entire syllabus, curriculum and life of the school." – Archbishop Philip Pocock



The Kindergarten Program

In addition to the core faith formation program, *The Kindergarten Program (2016)*, a Ministry of Education document, provides a framework of four learning areas, including: *Belonging and Contributing*, *Self-Regulation and Well-Being*, *Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics behaviour*, *Problem Solving and Innovating*.

Learning through play and inquiry is an essential and very valuable part of the Kindergarten program. Purposeful play is the child's way of working and learning. Children acquire many skills through play. They try new roles, solve problems, learn how to make sense of the environment, and practice social skills.

Belonging and Contributing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sense of connectedness to others;• relationships with others, and contributions as part of a group, a community, and the natural world;• understanding of relationships and community, and of the ways in which people contribute to the world around them.
Self-Regulation and Well-being	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• thinking and feelings, as well as recognizing and respecting differences in the thinking and feelings of others;• regulating emotions, adapting to distractions, and assessing consequences of actions in a way that enables one to engage in learning;• physical and mental health and wellness.
Demonstrating Literacy and Mathematics Behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• communicating thoughts and feelings – gestures, physical movements, words, and representations, as well as through the use of a variety of materials;• literacy behaviours through the use of language, images, and materials to express and think critically about ideas and emotions, listen and speak, view and represent, and begin to read and write;• mathematics behaviours, evident in the various ways numbers and patterns are used during play; access, manage, create, and evaluate information, and begin to understand mathematical relationships, concepts, skills, and processes;• active engagement in learning and a developing love of learning, which can instill the habit of learning for life.
Problem Solving and Innovating	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• exploring the world through natural curiosity, in ways that engage the mind, the senses, and the body;• making meaning of their world by asking questions, testing theories, solving problems, and engaging in creative and analytical thinking;• the innovative ways of thinking about and doing things that naturally arise through curiosity, and apply those ideas in relationships with others, with materials, and with the environment.



Assessment and Communication of Learning

Ongoing communication between the school and home is a crucial part of the reporting process. Kindergarten educators constantly observe and document student progress. The Kindergarten Communication of Learning, along with an interview, offers parents clear and detailed information about their child's growth and next steps in learning.

At the end of each reporting period, educators will communicate information about the child's learning in three categories, Key Learning, Growth in Learning, and Next Steps in Learning.

These terms are defined as follows:

- **Key Learning** refers to the most important or significant skills and/or understandings (knowledge) that your child has demonstrated during the reporting period.
- **Growth in Learning** refers to positive developments in learning that your child has demonstrated over the reporting period.
- **Next Steps** in Learning refers to ways in which educators will move your child forward in developing knowledge and skills.

(Growing Success: The Kindergarten Addendum, Queens Printer for Ontario, 2016)

Journeying with the Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations

Your child is beginning the journey towards graduation as they enter into kindergarten. Everything that happens between now and then is designed to prepare your child as a member of God's family, loved, appreciated and cared for. A member of faith community who witnesses the gospel message of Jesus in their daily lives.

The following outline of the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations* demonstrates some ways that home and school can complement each other on the faith and learning journey. As your child journeys through the school years in Dufferin-Peel, we promise to do our part in cultivating the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations* – to encourage your child to become...



A Discerning Believer Formed In The Catholic Faith Community

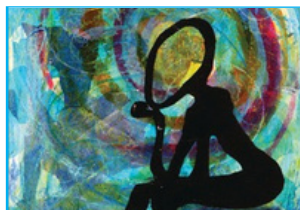
Every child has the capacity for spiritual and religious growth. Children are especially open to experiences of prayer and worship – to conversations about who God is and the signs of God’s presence in the world around them.

In the classroom children will:

- find stories of saints and other faith heroes
- find children’s bibles
- find symbols and images including statues, pictures and rosaries
- identify symbols of life (e.g., plants, pets)
- bring offerings to support the less fortunate

At home you can:

- get to know your parish priest and parish community by attending weekly mass and parish events
- review pictures/videos of significant sacramental celebrations including baptisms, weddings, and liturgical celebrations including Easter and Christmas
- get to know the volunteers who lead the Children’s liturgy at your parish
- create a small prayer space in the home
- share your belief that all life is good and that all can be forgiven



A reflective and creative thinker

A reflective and creative thinker creates, evaluates and adapts ideas and decisions in light of what is good. They act according to a well-formed conscience as a person of virtue.

In the classroom children will understand that:

- have thoughts and opinions that matter
- make good choices
- have hope for the future
- solve problems with knowledge, understanding reconciliation and prayer we are all created equal and special

At home you can:

- provide a wide variety of used and purchased craft materials for children to express themselves
- engage your child in helping others with simple solutions
- allow your child to perform drawing, cutting and assembly tasks on their own



An effective communicator

Communication is a wide ranging set of skills and abilities that encompass listening and reading, speaking and writing. These skills are developmental in nature – that is, they emerge as the child is physically and intellectually ready. No two children develop at the same rate. We look at what we know to be typical at particular ages.

In the classroom children will:

- speak, write and listen as Jesus would want
- care about others and speak up for them
- be honest
- think carefully before reacting or speaking
- respect all people
- listen to the Word of God

At home you can:

LISTENING

- model attentive listening, especially at church
- help your child to be discerning toward messages in ads during favourite TV shows
- remind your child that others deserve to be heard
- talk about what you can learn by listening – What did you hear? Did you hear what I heard?

SPEAKING

- share personal experiences and feelings in relation to daily occurrences
- encourage your child to ask appropriate questions during discussions
- allow your child to retell a story or give information
- encourage your child to speak and watch to see that others have understood him/her
- recite a prayer together

WRITING

- make the shopping list together; ask what is the first sound in words such as milk, butter, and cookie (e.g., /m/ is at the beginning of milk)
- have your child dictate a story about a trip, a family outing, or a special occasion
- make lists, signs, labels and notes together
- demonstrate that writing, in print and digital, should always promote respect for self and others
- write a simple prayer of thanks together



A Self-directed, responsible, life-long learner

Being self-directed means being able to set and pursue life goals that are in keeping with the mission and model of Jesus Christ.

In the classroom children will:

- use and recognize that their gifts and talents are given by God
- always do their best
- build on their strengths and weaknesses; have an “I can” mindset to set goals and accept change
- be proud of the good things they do
- be thankful for the gifts of others

At home you can:

- allow your child to choose his/her clothes
- encourage your child to pick his/her own storybooks
- encourage your child to clean up toys and craft materials
- have your child help to prepare and pack a healthy snack daily
- encourage your child to choose to play outside regularly and develop curiosity toward the natural environment of God’s creation.



A collaborative contributor

A true collaborator shares one’s God-given gifts and talents and acknowledges the gifts and talents that others have to offer.

In the classroom children will learn to:

- co-operate with others in all that they do
- value everyone’s work
- follow rules of fair play
- work hard in school so that they can build their community and make it a better place

At home you can:

- affirm your child by reminding them of what they do well
- encourage your child to ask for help



A caring family member

A caring family member takes a loving, caring and respectful view of all family members and the role that family plays in society.

In the classroom children will:

- understand the love of God, themselves and their family
- understand ways to care about and respect their family at school, Church, in the community and the world
- understand ways to care about and respect God's creation - the Earth

At home you can:

- tell stories about when you were young
- talk about your own family members
- pray with your child
- focus on feelings in conversations about actions and consequences
- participate in family-oriented neighbourhood, community and parish events



A Responsible Citizen

In the Catholic school, children are offered an apprenticeship in Christian living. They learn to prepare themselves to take their place in the local and global community as witnesses to the teachings of Jesus Christ.

In the classroom children will learn to:

- be peacemakers
- follow rules and do their share
- help the less fortunate and care for people in need
- stand up for what is right
- know that all life is precious
- respect and protect the world and all of God's creation

At home you can:

- model and encourage turn-taking
- model and encourage taking responsibility for accidents and mistakes
- encourage conservation and care of the environment
- model courtesy to others



**Dufferin-Peel
Catholic District
School Board**

Changing the world through Catholic Education