

Module 5: Catholic Morality - Themes of Catholic Morality - Character Development Through the Virtues

Work With It

Review the position paper of the Ontario Catholic Bishops: Character Development and the Virtuous Life, a position paper on character education through the virtues.

As you read, reflect on the differences between a value-based character formation program and a virtues-based program.

Do the two complement one another?

Is one more valuable than the other?

Also consider the challenges you face as a Catholic educator trying to instill virtues in your students.

Portfolio icon Place a copy of your thoughts in your Portfolio.

After reading the position paper of the Ontario Catholic Bishops: Character Development and the Virtuous Life it was evident that value-based and virtues-based character formation programs shared similarities but also had their differences. As stated by the Education Commission of the OCCB: "In this perspective, character education is meant to prepare students for an active, productive and responsible role in society, helping them to become concerned, empathetic and engaged citizens. Character development is closely tied to academic achievement." On the other hand, when we look at the virtues based program in Catholic School Boards the Education Commission of the OCCB states there is presence of "synergy between God's grace and human freedom"(p.5). It is clear that value-based and virtue-based character development programs implement a holistic approach, however what makes them unique from each other is their foundation of one being secular while the latter faith based. This does not necessarily mean one is more valuable than the other. However the virtue based character development program provides opportunity to the student to create, establish and grow a relationship with God. The challenge that faces teachers today is that the onus is on the classroom teacher to ground their instructional program in Catholic education to create observable, identifiable, demonstrably Catholic virtues in their classrooms on a daily basis. If we keep God at the centre of our teachings, we can use elements of the Character development initiative with the virtues-based program as the Education Commission of the OCCB states this will offer a "framework in which to better focus our energies and evaluate our ability to attain our goals. The Character Development Initiative is thus a gift for our Catholic school system."(p.7)

References

The Education Commission of the OCCB (2008). *Character development and the virtuous life a position paper*. Retrieved from <http://acbo.on.ca/englishdocs/OCCB%20position%20paper%20on%20CDI%20FINAL-%20August%202008%20.pdf> 5 March 2016.

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