

Parents as Catholic School Marketers

As a parent, you know the importance of making an informed decision. It is not uncommon for you to talk with your neighbors, friends and family about the pros and cons of any choice. Why not talk about your Catholic school experience as well? Parents are a key part of a Catholic school's marketing plan. Your first-hand experience provides a valuable perspective that can help build a strong, vital community. Here are some suggestions on how you can serve as a Catholic school marketer.

Make a connection with teachers: When you volunteer at school, attend sporting events or pick up your students from school, take a moment to ask what's new. Faculty and staff are happy to share the school's accomplishments: notable test scores, acceptances to competitive high schools or colleges, or outstanding service examples. Share these accomplishments with your friends and neighbors. Ask if there are targeted ways to help such as connecting with prospective families by writing notes and/or make follow-up phone calls or you can volunteer at the next open house.

Have a few good news stories that illustrate your school's Catholic identity: "Marketing storytelling" is a great way to engage families not yet enrolled in Catholic schools. By sharing anecdotes about how your school's focus on faith and discipleship has provided a positive impact on your child, you can help friends and neighbors see the return on investment. In addition to touting academic excellence, powerful testimonials can be shown through examples such as older students helping younger students prepare for the sacraments or how all the classes take turns making sandwiches for the homeless.

Know where to find information: Familiarize yourself with the school website and social media. Did you know that a parent is already 57 percent of the way



toward choosing a school by the time they make personal contact with the school? That means much of their research is being done online. Let friends and neighbors know where they can find your school on social media and direct them to the school webpage. If you find yourself in a conversation with someone in a casual setting, send an email later that day with a direct link to the school page.

Groom successors: We know your child will not always be a student. Make connections with the parents of younger students to pick up where you might leave off. Keep the tradition alive by sharing your own stories and relaying the school's mission. As a parent of a younger student, ask these "graduating parents" if there are ways you can help by serving as the next generation of storytellers and marketing champions ready to proclaim the good news of Catholic education.

When it comes to marketing in a Catholic school, we are all stronger and more impactful when we work together! ✚