



Reading and Reflection Journal

Aspiring Catholic School Leaders

2022-2023

Into Headship Programme

Discernment and the distinctive role and responsibility of the Catholic Leader

If you would prefer to access this information in SWAY, please click [here](#)

Welcome to your “Into Headship” course and the next step in your journey to becoming the Head Teacher of a Catholic school. This pack contains resources to complement and enhance your Local Authority programme. These materials are intended to be used in conjunction with the course that you are following within your school, with your mentor and in partnership with your Local Authority, University and Education Scotland.

There are three different sections:

- [Pre Course Materials](#)
- [Intersession Materials](#)
- [Vocational Reflection Materials](#)

Each section will be used at different points across your first year(s) in post.

Catholic schools are communities of faith and learning. While we may work as an individual within the school, we are part of a wider community, contributing to the Mission of the Church. Therefore, we should see our professional and vocational journey both in terms of our own personal progress AND in terms of the development and contribution to a faith community. These materials are intended to be used *with* others and you will be directed to collaborate with different members of your community in order to complete the directed tasks.

These materials aim to assist you in ‘viewing’ your role through the lens of Catholic-leadership, that is, to help you to see your position as a Catholic head teacher and not as a Catholic who is a head teacher.

SCES, CHAS, CHAPS and your Diocesan RE offices also plan and deliver bespoke CLPL that links the themes of ‘Companion on the Journey’ with your leadership role. The materials that follow can be used in conjunction with those offered from the Catholic education community.

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Section One: Pre-Course Material

Serve the people who are serving the people:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XKrTEEHID50>

Watch this video where Ian Fuhr talks about the profound impact of Servant Leadership. During this talk Ian Fuhr talks repeatedly about the role of the leader to serve those who serve. He also talks about the context of where you serve, knowing the environment of the people who work with you and changing the 'Vision' to meet the needs of his staff as much as the needs of his customers.

Find time to discuss the content of this video with your cohort.

- In what ways does the content mirror the language and practice of Catholic leadership?
- What lessons will you take from this talk and implement in your role?
- Are there any points that he raised that conflict with your role as a Catholic leader? Discuss these.
- Look at the current vision statement of your school – how could this be enhanced to show that it includes staff as well as pupils and families?
- Ian's first question to employees on induction courses is "what is the purpose of work?" – how would you answer that – what is the purpose of your work? What answer would you expect/like from your colleagues?

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Section Two: Intersessional Material

TERM 1

With your cohort, find time to watch the documentary film, made by SCES to mark the centenary of the 1918 Education (Scotland) Act (it is an hour long – so make sure you schedule time to watch and then to discuss the content).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zs-QqGmOyxY>)

You are discerning if you are being called to lead a Catholic school.

Having watched the documentary again, what strikes you about the role of Catholic schools for Scotland?

How would you explain to others why they are important?

What do they offer pupils and families that other schools cannot?

Mentor Conversation: As you embark on your ‘into headship’ journey you will be asked to reflect and evaluate your own role and place within the school (often through a 360 evaluation process). It can be easy to focus on skills and outcomes during such exercises. With your mentor, remember to find time to talk through the relational aspects of your leadership and your role in building community.

You will also be asked to lead a project or change within your school community. When considering what ‘improvement’ can be made, remember to see this change through the lens of a *Catholic-leader*, and consider the holistic implications and consequences for your project. When recording and reporting on the steps of your planning and improvement, take time to include reflection and consideration of how your ‘change’ has served the school; how it has helped to develop the God given talents of others; how it has been #GoodForTheSchool*

(*School: staff, pupils, parents, partners etc)

TERM 2

Read the following article. With your mentor talk through the 7 characteristics named and discuss how these align to the GTCS Standard for Leadership and Management.

Continue your conversation by considering what this article does NOT mention – in your opinion, what aspects of Catholic-leadership and Catholic school leadership has the author missed?

Seven Characteristics Common to Effective Catholic School Leaders

Published on February 23, 2016

As the Associate Superintendent for Leadership Formation in the Archdiocese of New York and a national consultant serving Catholic schools throughout the United States, I am often asked what makes an effective Catholic school leader. While I don't claim to have all of the answers, I can proclaim to have worked in thousands of Catholic schools in more than 120 of the Catholic dioceses throughout the United States and my observations are as follows:

All Effective Catholic School Leaders do these 7 things...

1. Understand that the primary job of a Catholic school “and therefore the primary responsibility of the principal “is to build disciples for Christ. Everything else is secondary.
2. Encourage parents to assume their role as the primary catechists of their children. Parents cannot outsource religious instruction to schools or parish religious education programs. For better or for worse, children will follow their parents' example.
3. Recognize that they are responsible for the spiritual formation of their staffs. This means more than just the occasional diocesan catechist class; it means forming them through prayer, retreats, and spiritual reading, and inviting them to participate in the faith.
4. Ensure that the catechetical textbooks and materials used in their school conform to the teachings of the Catholic Church.
5. Model an example of joyful faith and holiness to their staff, faculty, and students.
6. Hold high expectations for all students, staff and families.
7. Create a climate and culture hospitable to education and embrace a vision of academic success for all students.

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/seven-characteristics-common-effective-catholic-school-virgadamo>

TERM 3

Look at the image below. It summarises a combination of intersecting approaches to Leadership of schools. It details the roles and tasks undertaken by school leaders. You will notice that the 4 columns have the same skills, approaches and responsibilities that you have been learning about and implementing through your University and LA programmes. You will be familiar with the names of the columns that indicate the “secular” or “academic” terminology for the work of the school leader (or the things that they ‘do’) – Organisational Leadership; Political Leadership; Instructional Leadership; Administrative Leadership.

However, while each of these tasks are important, they only identify what a leader does and NOT who a leader IS.

Catholic-leadership invites us to view all of our tasks and roles through the lens of faith and consider the ways we should ‘BE’ a leader, not just what we have to ‘DO’ as one. As Catholic-leaders we should be guardians of what has been entrusted to us, peacemakers within our community, witnesses to our faith and love of God and others, and of service to those who have entrusted us with this role. These four ‘ways of being’ help to summarise what ‘Spiritual leadership’ is and help to identify how we do the same job, but for a different purpose.



Use the image above to stimulate discussion with your mentor, Diocesan adviser or peer group on what it is to “be” a Catholic-leader.



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Section Three: Reflection Material

Read the following blog about ‘Teaching as a Vocation’. Reflect on what the author has said about the calling of teachers and the relationship between teacher and students as ‘disciples’, with schools developing students to “who God is calling them to be”.

As a Senior Leader who is discerning the move to headship, reflect on your own ‘Call to Teach’ and consider how you are now being called to lead. Who influenced you in the past? Who do you aspire to be like today? What values are at the heart of your leadership?

How will you move the emphasis of your work from student to colleagues? As a Catholic leader, how will you be connected with your staff as disciples? How will you help staff become the best version of themselves?

In what ways will you show and encourage generosity of spirit. How will you witness to the fact that the Beatitudes are not only taught but lived in your school?

In recent times, there has much highlighted in the media and professional circles about the shortage of teachers in NSW and beyond. This made me ponder upon the special and unique role teachers play in the lives of our youth. In particular, it made me reflect upon the notion of “*Teaching as a Vocation*” within a Catholic school context.

In my experience, people have entered into the teaching profession primarily because they wish to make a real and deep difference in the lives of our youth. Providing a sense of awakening and nurturing of student learning, character development and faith formation is an altruistic element that is certainly evident in the teaching profession at large. Interestingly, these motives for entering the profession are becoming even more pronounced with Generations Y (27-41) and Z (12-26).

Teaching may be viewed as a calling. It is more than being an expert teacher in a learning space at school. In a Catholic school context, teachers are intrinsically connected with their students as disciples. From a holistic education viewpoint, teachers intertwine Catholic values in everything they undertake on campus – in and out of the classroom. Teachers strive to work in partnership with students and families in order for graduates to leave the school gates as the best version of themselves and be who God is calling them to be. Some ways that this is achieved by teachers is by their great sense of generosity by attending retreats, reflection days and Faith In Action (service learning) projects. A critical element is also to genuinely know their students and partner with them on their school journey.

I reflect upon my own experience as a school student at a local Catholic secondary school and I’m most grateful for the many teachers who nurtured me. In particular, I think of my Year 12 Homeroom and English Teacher, Mr. Olsen. I remember him to be a caring, nurturing, funny and intellectual Catholic man. A man who connected well with me and knew what levers to use in order to get the best out of me as I graduated from school. Recently, I was privileged

to meet up with Mr. Olsen at a Catholic school gathering. This was a real honour for me and my conversation with him was most memorable. Mr. Olsen's approach to holistic teaching contributed much to who I am today.

As a leader in a Catholic school, it excites me to welcome colleagues who are new to the teaching profession. Many arrive fresh out of university and some from a career change. New colleagues commence with a sense of energy, enthusiasm, joy and wish to be in a place where the Beatitudes are not only taught, but actively lived. Above all else – they generally have a strong desire to make a difference to their kids, even if they have not met them yet. Intrinsically, they get the fact that they will need to not only be a good teacher, but also be the face of God to our kids too.

The ministry of Catholic school teaching is truly special and life-giving. Teachers understand and value their partnership with parents and carers in nurturing the education of the heart and mind of students. As such, our Catholic schools remain authentic places of learning and formation, where our teachers are real beacons of hope and evangelisation.

Frank Chiment is the Principal Leader at Patrician Brothers' College, Blacktown.

<https://catholicoutlook.org/teaching-as-a-vocation/>

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Scottish Catholic Education Service, 75 Craigpark, Dennistoun, G31 2HD

www.sces.uk.com E: mail@sces.uk.com T: 0141 556 4727

