



THE ST. JOSEPH'S WAY

*A Guide to the School's Approach
to Fulfilling Its Catholic Mission*



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*We dedicate and entrust The St. Joseph's Way to the loving
care and protection of St. Joseph.*

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Rooted in the Founders' Vision

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ROOTED IN THE FOUNDERS' VISION

A forty-year prayer for a Catholic high school in the Upstate became a reality in 1993, when the work and prayers of many individuals culminated in the opening of St. Joseph's in Greenville, SC.

Beyond the "gift" of a Catholic high school for the Upstate, the Holy Spirit graced the founders with a particular charism for meeting the needs of its students.

First and foremost they believed that St. Joseph's must receive its sustenance from God and educate its students from the very heart of the Roman Catholic Church.

The founders believed the school was tasked with a missionary outlook in order to welcome and invite students and families from all backgrounds into a life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ.

As Providence would have it, being ecumenical was a necessity from the school's beginnings when it was only through the generosity and encouragement of non-Catholic communities and individuals that the founders dared open the doors of the school in the first place.

Being Catholic, as the word itself suggests, also meant that the school

would be widely accessible to the families and students of the Upstate from wide-ranging socioeconomic and academic backgrounds regardless of a family's ability to pay full tuition.

Founding board chair Margaret Ann Moon envisioned a school community that would always remain dependent on God for its existence and flourishing. She would often say that "we are not doing this, God is." She believed God would provide the people and the dollars the school needed to fulfill its mission at any given time in the school's history.



A Privileged Opportunity

A Privileged Opportunity to Respectfully Engage Teenagers in a Serious Search for Answers to the Ultimate Questions

St. Joseph's Catholic School teachers and staff believe that the teenage years are a privileged time in the life of a person with respect to faith development. During this stage, the needs and desires of the human heart emerge with a force that prompts students to begin to ask "why" in front of the traditions they have grown up with. Answers such as "because this is the way we've always done it" or "because I said so" no longer satisfy. They have a newfound need to know the meaning, purpose, and reasons for the values we propose to them.

This is also the stage of development when teenagers begin to realize that their desires outstrip their ability to fulfill them, which often leads to a serious search for answers to the ultimate questions of life. This new

openness to the big questions is a great opportunity for teachers, coaches, and staff to listen, sensitively respond to questions, and patiently accompany students as they verify that Christ answers life's needs.

Successful religious education of teenagers, therefore, begins by engaging students at the level of their needs. For unless students come to discern through their own experience that they need God in order to be fulfilled and become fully themselves, attempts to pass on religious truths will more often than not fall on deaf ears.

The most effective tools a teacher has for opening students up to their need for God are the students' experiences and reality itself because all that exists comes from

God and provokes one's core being through beauty and mystery. The Catholic school teacher's task, then, is to be authentically and intensely interested-in and fascinated-with his or her subject matter so as to pass on that fascination to his or her students.

Ultimately, the Catholic school teacher is called to witness to the fact that all human questions and longings find their answer and fulfillment in a relationship with Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who became man and continues to dwell among us. This discovery most often happens through an encounter with Christ in a community of people which is animated by his merciful and loving presence.



The St. Joseph's Way

THE ST. JOSEPH'S WAY

As grateful stewards of the gift God gave us through our founders, The St. Joseph's Way is our approach to Catholic education. It is summarized through four categories: ***Infinite Worth, Positivity of Reality, Fulfillment in Christ, and Personal Accompaniment***, along with ramifications of what this looks like in the daily life of our school community.

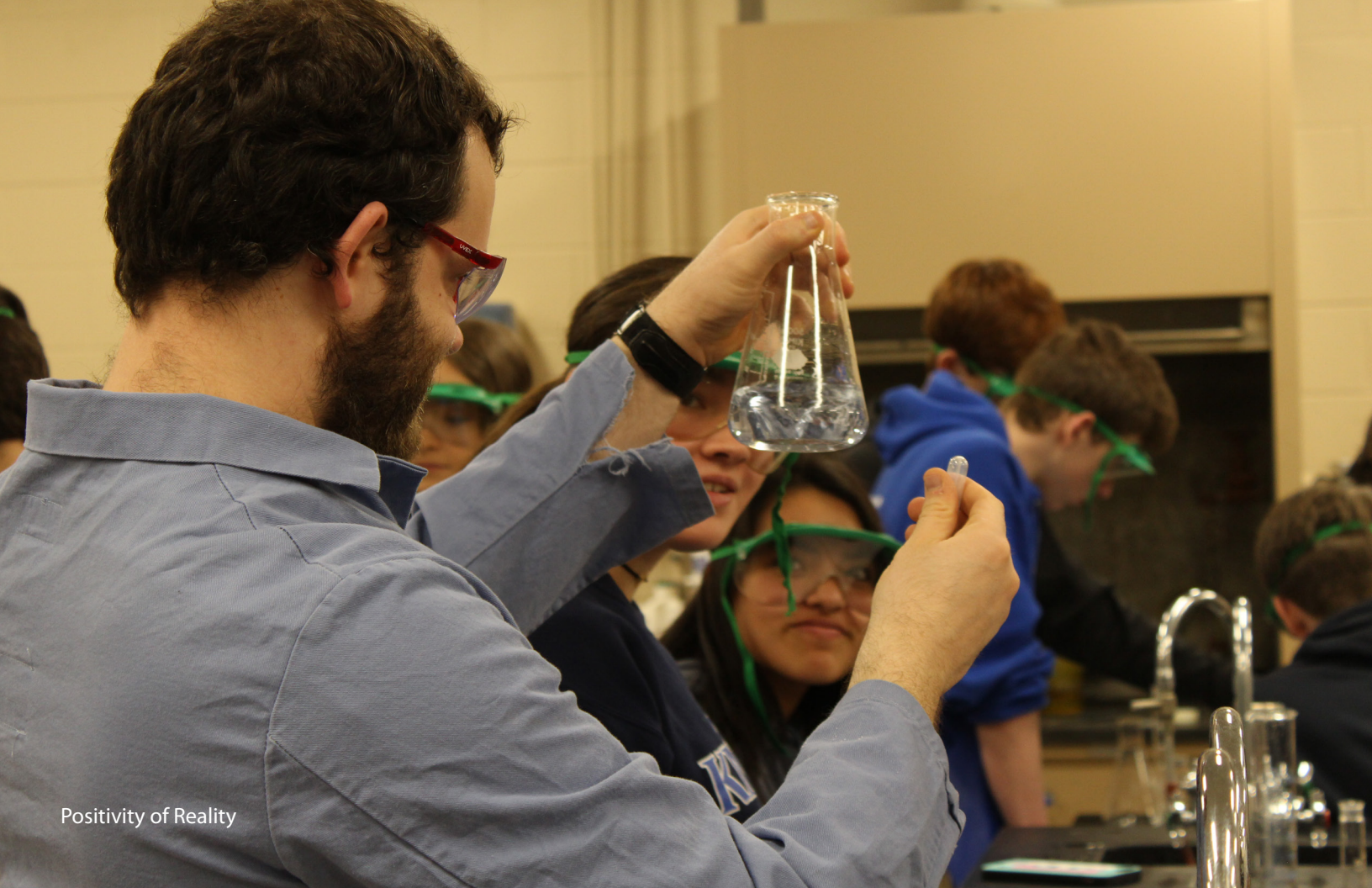


Infinite Worth

The St. Joseph's Way affirms the infinite worth and innate religiosity of each member of the school community.

Ramifications:

- We believe that all students are worthy of an exceptional and excellent Catholic education and therefore give them our best.
- We do not give up on our students, ever.
- We strive to outdo one another in showing honor, courtesy, and professionalism, including in the way we communicate with each other in person or via email.
- We are gracious in our communication to students, their families, and fellow colleagues.
- We seek to understand others who are different from us through charitable dialogue and assuming the best.
- We do not divide people into an acceptable in-group and a rejected out-group.
- We recognize that our students have distinct gifts and capacities, and we encourage them in all their endeavors both in and out of the classroom.
- We do not measure a person's worth or value based upon his/her status, achievements, beliefs, and/or behaviors.
- We do not marginalize students based on reputation, prior achievement, or academic background.
- We reject prejudice, racism, sexism, and classism in all their forms and manifestations.
- We interact with others with the awareness that they are infinitely valued and loved by God and that they are ultimately seeking God, whether they realize it or not.
- We show a preferential option for the poor and those most in need in our community.
- We are committed to going to the margins to enroll and equip students to be successful at St. Joseph's.
- We are passionately committed to fulfilling the Gospel mandate to love our neighbor by our adherence to Catholic Social Teaching.



The St. Joseph's Way embraces all of reality, believing that it comes from God and therefore reveals signs of His presence in the world today.

Ramifications:

- We are intensely interested and curious about everything.
- We approach every academic subject area as worthy of our careful study.
- We are committed, as an institution dedicated to teaching, that everyone involved should be up-to-date on modern research concerning learning and teaching sciences; therefore, we highly value ongoing professional development.
- We believe and teach that there is no contradiction between faith, reason, and science.
- We encourage our teachers to look for ways to introduce students to the ultimate mysteries at the root of their respective academic disciplines in order to point to God's creative and inscrutable handiwork.
- We support, encourage, and celebrate truth, goodness, justice, and beauty wherever it is found.
- We welcome contributions from students of different backgrounds and believe that respectful, honest dialogue is a step toward truth.
- We revere and value arts education and programming as a privileged place for discovering beauty, truth, and goodness.
- We care about the environment, recognizing that God's gift of creation demands our wise stewardship by reducing waste and making good use of what has been entrusted to us.
- We are not crushed by our difficulties and challenges, but rather use them to learn and grow.



Fulfillment in Christ

FULFILLMENT IN CHRIST

The St. Joseph's Way proposes that fulfillment is found in communion with Christ, who remains a living presence today in the friendship of His followers, the Church.

Ramifications:

- We do not assume that our students come to us as believers and/or disciples of Jesus Christ; therefore, our approach is less about forming the already convinced but rather about revealing the beauty of Christ and the reasonableness of faith to the seeking.
- We believe that our students come to us with an innate desire for God as expressed in their relentless pursuit of love, belonging, significance, truth, beauty, goodness, justice, and ultimately happiness.
- We encourage our students to look closely at their human experiences and motivations in order to help them judge what gives life true satisfaction and meaning.
- We aim to show students how faith in Christ and fellowship with His followers makes life more fulfilling and interesting.
- We strive to present the teaching of the Catholic faith in the most pastoral and inviting way possible, emphasizing that it is in a relationship with Christ that human needs and desires find their true fulfillment.
- We set aside moments during the day for prayer to acknowledge Christ's presence in the midst of our daily life.
- We ensure that the sacraments of the Church are readily available to our students, faculty, and staff.
- We provide extended opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to reflect upon their relationship with God through retreat opportunities.
- We encourage and facilitate opportunities for Christian fellowship with the conviction that Christ is encountered in the communion of His people.
- We welcome students and families from other Christian denominations and other faiths, or of no faith at all, with the warmth, hospitality, and love of Christ.
- We rely on God to meet all our needs while working to be good stewards of the gifts and resources He has blessed us with.
- We walk in union with our Bishop and the Pope, looking carefully in the direction that they are pointing and guiding the Church.



Personal Accompaniment

The St. Joseph's Way calls on teachers and staff to accompany their students as they use their freedom to verify the school's Christian proposal.

Ramifications:

- We cultivate a joy-filled, positive environment that signals that we are approachable and open to students and parents.
- We are patient with our students, taking the long view, realizing that human maturity and Christian discipleship is a lifelong journey.
- We respect the freedom of our students by giving them the space that they need to wrestle with the school's Christian proposal.
- We are careful not to send messages of rejection to students who do not adhere to our proposal.
- We correct and discipline our students in a way that ultimately builds them up and improves our relationships with them, refraining from punitive, shaming, or demeaning remarks and behaviors that damage relationships.
- We believe that as adults in this community that we are responsible for setting the example and being the model of grace, mercy, and empathy for our students.
- We set aside time in the schedule for Household gatherings and other activities for the purpose of getting to know our students beyond the classroom.
- We approach sports as a privileged opportunity for personal growth and team building, while viewing winning as a byproduct of doing things well and defeat as an opportunity to build character and learn from mistakes and disappointment.
- We offer one another a generous mess-up factor, realizing that God can and does write straight with our crooked lines and that He heals and even uses brokenness for His loving purposes.

ENTRUSTING EACH STUDENT TO GOD'S LOVING PLAN

In summary, we are grateful for the opportunity to provide a Catholic education to each student entrusted to us by his/her parents. We aspire to work in solidarity with parents to help each student discover and develop his or her particular gifts and talents. We pray for each of our students to experience God's closeness, unconditional love, and particular calling in order to share that love and use their talents for the good of others. We believe that this discovery is the work and journey of a lifetime. We recognize that things will not always go the way we envisioned, and at times, long-suffering may be the order of the day for all involved. However, we believe and know from years of experience that God has a way of writing straight with our crooked lines. Therefore, we set our eyes on the lifelong journey of each person, knowing with great certainty that God in His infinite wisdom and merciful love will bring to completion and fulfillment the good work He has begun in each student.





St. Joseph's School Prayer

Glorious Saint Joseph, spouse of the Immaculate Virgin and Foster-Father of Jesus Christ; obtain for me and all the members of my family, a pure, humble, and charitable mind, and perfect resignation to the Divine Will. Be my guide and model throughout life that I may merit to die as you did in the arms of Jesus and Mary.

Help us, Saint Joseph, in our earthly strife, to fulfill our responsibilities and ever to lead a pure and sinless life. Amen.

To learn more about St. Joseph's Catholic School, visit us online at www.sjcatholicsschool.org

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