

# An Introduction to Your Planner Program

## Welcome

Dear Educators,  
Welcome to the Catholic Faith planner!

As a Catholic educator, you are entrusted with a responsibility to guide your students as they grow academically, socially, and spiritually. The Catholic Faith planner series has been designed to give you the support and inspiration you need to continue to do your best with this important work. The planner provides structure, teaches students to plan, develops academic skills, and nurtures the spiritual life of each student.

## About the Planner

**The planner will help your students:**

- Track and prioritize assignments, homework, and tests
- Set and work toward goals
- Develop strong character traits and academic skills
- Understand the importance of Catholic virtues in daily life

**The planner will help you:**

- Keep students organized and accountable for their responsibilities
- Share students' learning with families and maintain home-to-school communication
- Inspire your students to live out their faith as disciples of Jesus Christ
- Integrate the tenets of the Catholic faith into every aspect of your curriculum

Take a look at the topics you can look forward to discussing with students throughout the year:

Joy  
Faith  
Empathy  
Conscience  
Hope  
Self-Control  
Respect  
Kindness  
Love  
Acceptance  
Fairness  
Gratitude

## Included in the Planner

The student planner has a wealth of information just waiting to be discovered. Take a look below to learn how to uncover and implement the valuable content found in the planner.

## Planning

The planning process included in the student planner is a four-step method that teaches students how to think, record, act, and check for planning and time-management success.

Explore the planning process in the student planner for more information on ways to support the development of students' planning and time-management skills.

## Catholic Content

- Catholic Resource Guide:** This upfront guide includes topics that support and help students as they learn about their Catholic faith. Students learn they are not alone in their journey, that Jesus is their shepherd and that He guides them along the right path.
- Virtue Theme:** Each month is focused on a virtue, or gift, to support your students' character development and faith formation.
- Monthly Content:** Through an exploration of monthly themes, devotions, and quotes, students will become engaged in important faith-based topics and will be encouraged to set goals and make plans that support themes in action.
- Weekly Content:** Weekly planner content aims to help students dive deeper into the monthly themes and includes quotes, spiritual references, and Canadian and Catholic fun facts.

Familiarize yourself with the main ideas, themes, and features covered in the student planner. Keep reading for in-class activities that help students expand and apply their understanding of the concepts presented.

# Implementing Your Planner Program

Incorporating the planner into your busy schedule was designed to be easy and flexible. Review the steps below at your convenience to get started!

## STEP 1: Familiarize yourself with the materials

Review the sections in this guide and additional resources online. Together, they provide a quick orientation to the planner's content and features.

- An Introduction to Your Planner Program (page 1)
- Planner Scope & Sequence (page 3)

## STEP 2: Define your purpose and goals

Review the list below to help define your goals for using the planner in your class, and add some goals of your own.

<input type="checkbox"/> Improve academic performance	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Improve home-school communication	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Track homework	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Encourage accountability	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Improve test-taking skills/results	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Teach goal setting	<input type="checkbox"/> _____
<input type="checkbox"/> Teach time management	<input type="checkbox"/> _____

## STEP 3: Plan how and when you will engage students in the planner's content

The planner is flexible and provides many options for implementation. The content can be broken into sections and examined daily, weekly, or monthly. You also have the option of leading students through the content, or asking them to work through it at their own pace.

Ideas for how and when to use the planner's features and page sections are outlined below.

**Catholic Resource Guide:** Use the 16 pages (starting on page 1 in the planner) at the start of the year to get students excited about and acquainted with the planner's content.

**Monthly InFocus Pages:** Spotlight the planner's monthly themes throughout the year. Monthly implementation can be achieved all in one lesson or day, or may be assigned weekly or semi-weekly.

**Weekly Activities:** Deepen students' understanding of the theme through the weekly activities. Have students complete the activities once a week as a warm up, an early-finisher activity, or as homework.

**Planner Resource Pages:** Highlight these pages, located at the back of the planner, for students at the beginning of the year as a tool they can use in various classes. They provide students a handy reference for quick reminders on math, language arts, science, and more.

The following pages provide you with an overview of the planner's learning outcomes and suggest activities you can use to extend learning about the planner's themes in your classroom. The activities are designed to be used in a classroom setting. While it's recommended time be set aside regularly to encourage planner use and engage with the content covered, the activities can be used as classroom time permits. As a warm-up or sponge activity, during classroom transition times, or even as an emergency lesson are just a few examples.

### Planner Scope & Sequence

This Scope & Sequence chart provides an overview of the monthly themes as they are presented in the student planner. Use this chart for an overview of the planner's themes and learning outcomes, and to assist you in your planning process.

The Catholic Faith Planners were created to educate students about the Catholic faith while preparing, motivating, and inspiring them to do their best every day. Each month introduces students to a virtue theme that helps them live out their faith.

	THEME	LEARNING OUTCOME
AUG.	JOY	Students will explore and discuss the blessing of God's presence in their lives. They will learn how to share joy with others.
SEP.	FAITH	Students will explore how all things are possible with God and how they can deepen their faith through prayer and good works.
OCT.	EMPATHY	Students will identify ways they can express empathy for others and put God's teachings into action.
NOV.	CONSCIENCE	Students will recognize and discuss the importance of following God's instructions and living a moral and healthy life.
DEC.	HOPE	Students will identify and discuss the meaning of Christmas and the hope Jesus' birth brought to the world.
JAN.	SELF-CONTROL	Students will identify positive ways to exercise self-control and handle negative emotions as well as how to handle themselves morally in difficult situations.
FEB.	RESPECT	Students will recognize respectful conduct as a way to praise God and show God's love to other human beings.
MAR.	KINDNESS	Students will identify and discuss ways to help those in need and how to set an example of God's love through kindness to others.
APR.	LOVE	Students will recognize and discuss the gift of God's love in their lives and in the lives of others.
MAY	ACCEPTANCE	Students will honour differences between themselves and others and recognize the importance of welcoming unity in salvation.
JUNE	FAIRNESS	Students will identify how to treat others in an equitable way and understand how fair treatment shows God's love for all.
JULY	GRATITUDE	Students will explore the concept of gratitude and understand how giving thanks acknowledges God's blessings in our lives.

## Extend the Learning of Your Planner Program

Monthly tips and ideas help advance the goals of the planner and make the planner content come alive in the classroom. All tips and ideas are simple, adaptable, and require little-to-no prep time.

### For Lower Grade Levels

#### REINFORCE: JOY

- Begin a class tradition of celebrating everyday joys. At the end of each day, allow each student to say what he or she enjoyed most about the day. Then say a class prayer thanking God for these and all the many joys He gives us.
- Help students appreciate the blessing of good health by beginning each day with stretches and simple exercises.

#### REINFORCE: FAITH

- Discuss the meaning of the word miracle. Tell the stories of Jesus restoring sight to a blind man (Luke 18:42–43) and Jesus calming the waves (Matthew 8:26).
- Have students cut candle flames from yellow paper and write one thing they want to share about their faith. Post students' work on a board, *Lighting the Way to Jesus!*

#### REINFORCE: EMPATHY

- Remind students to follow the Golden Rule. Ask students to make fall leaves out of construction paper. Have students use a gold metallic marker, writing one letter on each leaf, to spell out FOLLOW THE GOLDEN RULE. Students can then glue their leaves in order to a long sheet of paper. This can be laminated to hang on the wall.

#### REINFORCE: CONSCIENCE

- Tell students the Parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37). As a class, discuss how the parable could be told as a modern story (e.g., A student is being bullied. Some students see what is happening but don't do anything to help. Finally, one student helps.).

#### REINFORCE: HOPE

- Ask students to brainstorm ideas for acts of kindness they can do during Advent and Christmas. Record at least one idea for each school day this month, writing each idea on a strip of paper. Each morning, draw an idea for the day and challenge students to carry it out. Ideas may be formed into a chain of kindness as you go, if desired.

#### REINFORCE: SELF-CONTROL

- There are many different types of self-control. As a class, brainstorm a list of examples. Ask each student to think about which type of self-control he or she has. Then have students draw portraits of themselves dressed as superheroes. Underneath their portraits students should write: My superpower is patience [thoughtfulness, etc.].

#### REINFORCE: RESPECT

- Discuss the idea that different situations call for different rules, but that they all have their basis in thinking about God and other people. Divide the class into small groups. Have each group make a list of five rules for an assigned situation (e.g., using a cell phone; attending Mass; being in class; etc.).

#### REINFORCE: KINDNESS

- Give students blank index cards. Ask students to write a positive message on each card (e.g., God loves you!) and decorate. Take the cards to your school library and allow students to hide their cards inside books for other students to discover at a later date.

#### REINFORCE: LOVE

- Write a simplified form of the Easter story on sentence strips. Tell the Easter story to your class. Then, read the sentence strips to students out of order, and ask students to decide on the correct order of events.
- Cut paper of various colours into long strips. Ask students to write one of their blessings on each strip. Display.

#### REINFORCE: ACCEPTANCE

- How do elementary students experience conflict? As a class, brainstorm a list of ideas. Encourage students to think about situations involving classmates, teammates, siblings, etc. Then divide the students into small groups. Ask each group to choose a scenario and write a short skit about it, including how it could be resolved.

#### REINFORCE: FAIRNESS

- Point out procedures in your classroom that were set up to make things fair for students. Ask students to point out something they perceive as not fair and select one answer to focus on. Have students work in small groups to come up with the best way to make this situation fair. Discuss the groups' solutions and choose one to implement.

#### REINFORCE: GRATITUDE

- Give students blank index cards. Ask them to write one thing they are grateful for on each card and decorate. Create a Gratitude Wall and display the students' cards.

## Extend the Learning of Your Planner Program

Monthly tips and ideas help advance the goals of the planner and make the planner content come alive in the classroom. All tips and ideas are simple, adaptable, and require little-to-no prep time.

### *For Higher Grade Levels*

#### REINFORCE: JOY

- Divide the class into groups. Assign each group a season of the liturgical year. Say: Plan a presentation that you will give during your assigned season. Help us learn why we celebrate this season, the corresponding events in the life of Jesus, and what we can learn from this season. Then, plan a class celebration of the season.

#### REINFORCE: FAITH

- The Bible verses (Matthew 8:26 and Luke 18:42–43) tell us about some of the miracles Jesus performed. Divide your class into small groups. Ask students to imagine these miracles are taking place right now. Have each group decide on a medium for reporting these events (TV news report, newspaper article, blog, etc.) and create their report.

#### REINFORCE: EMPATHY

- Ask students to work in groups to create slogans to encourage kids to help others.
- We can be generous with our thoughts, words, and deeds. Ask each student to depict generosity in a drawing or to write about generosity in a poem or paragraph. Put students' work together to create a large collage.

#### REINFORCE: CONSCIENCE

- This month's theme teaches students to listen to their conscience and be guided by their faith to make the best decisions. Remind students that there are many passages in the Bible to help guide our choices. Read some of the verses from the Book of Proverbs to students. Then have students work to write their own proverbs.

#### REINFORCE: HOPE

- Ask each student to create a map of his or her journey in faith. Before students begin, brainstorm ideas for points on the map they've reached (e.g., Baptism, Confirmation, etc.). Encourage students to be creative by including a compass, key, scale, title, etc. Remind students to leave a portion of their maps unfinished since our journeys in faith never end.

#### REINFORCE: SELF-CONTROL

- Luke 4:1–8 tells about the devil tempting Jesus and Jesus resisting. As a class, discuss scenarios in which high school students may be faced with temptation. Then, divide your class into small groups and ask each group to come up with a way teenagers can help one another resist temptation.

#### REINFORCE: RESPECT

- Divide your class into four groups, and assign one of the cardinal virtues to each group. Ask groups to create a poster about their assigned virtue. The poster should have a definition of the word, including any synonyms. It should also be divided into fourths. Have students use the boxes to create a comic-strip story that illustrates living out the virtue.

#### REINFORCE: KINDNESS

- Discuss current words that weren't in use until recently (e.g., selfie). Explain that many new words come about by blending two words together or by creating an acronym for a sequence of words (e.g., radar, laser, etc.). Divide the class into groups. Ask each group to invent a new word that means living out your faith using one of these processes.

#### REINFORCE: LOVE

- Luke 14:13–14 reminds us that all people are God's children and deserve to be welcomed and included. This month, have your class invite another class to an Easter celebration. Ask students to make sure their plans include a way to make each guest feel welcomed and included.

#### REINFORCE: ACCEPTANCE

- Ask students to help you brainstorm a list of historical or contemporary figures who stood/stand for acceptance and equality. Divide students into small groups. Ask each group to select one person from the list you created and write ten questions group members would like to ask that person.

#### REINFORCE: FAIRNESS

- Ask students to try improvisation. Call up a few students at a time, give them an unfair scenario, and ask them to act it out with a fair resolution. Afterwards, discuss as a class the different ways the problem could have been resolved. Point out the difference (if any) that time to reflect made in students' ability to come up with a fair resolution.

#### REINFORCE: GRATITUDE

- Discuss with students the importance of feeling grateful and that God gives us many things to feel grateful about. Have students make a list of some of the Psalms that express gratitude.