

How I Believe My Catholic Education Will Benefit Me in Life

By, Austin Swanson

“Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge Him, and He will make your paths straight (Proverbs 3:5-6).” I have attended St. Vincent de Paul Grade School for the past nine years and I am enrolled at Peoria Notre Dame High School to complete my Catholic Education at the high school level. This quote had an impact on me because it speaks of education my mind, heart, and soul in the Lord and my faith and not relying on the world around me. By doing this my way to salvation will be shown clearer. I can draw a parallel to this quote by studying my faith in a formal setting to prepare me for life as a Catholic leader/adult.

Over the years my Catholic Education has shown me many ways to acknowledge the lord in my life, my faith, my family, and my friendships. I have always enjoyed studying and learning about the saints because I can apply their personal experiences to mine. For example, I share the same compassion and love for animals as Saint Francis of Assisi. Also I have deep admiration for Saint Juan Diego. He always prayed at the same spot on a hill for years. He had a dream of Mary telling him to build a church in her honor at that spot. In my life I pray at night, and I dream of Mary telling me what I need to do each day for her. Examples are: talking to kids who do not have many friends, giving them my friendship, or adding ten Hail Marys to my nightly prayers. At our weekly school masses and in our Religion classes I hear stories of our Lord’s life. When listening to what He endured, I feel I need to spend my life learning about Him in order to live a more Christ-like life. My family has had some difficult times, but in my Catholic

Education I've seen the harder times Jesus has gone through. I pray to Him that he give me grace so that I can have the strength and courage He did to get through my hardships. Jesus always acknowledged His Father in the hard times and thanked Him for them. He knew God had a plan for Him. This gives me great comfort in my dark moments that God has a plan for me and that if I am thankful; in the quiet I will hear His plan for me.

I see the Lord in my friendships in many ways. My friends and I are careful not to do anything inappropriate and always think of "what would Jesus do". We learned to make these smart decisions and use quick saves like those in religion class and from our priests and pastors. My religious education helps me at my age in many significant ways. Some of the ways are; I always hear of kids at schools who are experimenting with smoking and drinking. They think it is so cool. But I know from my prayers and my teachers that it is not that cool at all. Sure you will be called "cool" on Earth, but if you do not smoke or drink you will be called "cool" in Heaven. Another significance is now that I am starting to get busy with sports, I think about blowing off homework or prayers. Then I hear my teacher's voice in my head saying, "do everything to impress God, not yourself." That always gets me motivated to get homework done and save time for prayers. My teenage life would be a wreck without my religious education. Without it I would be leaning on my own understanding rather than trusting in the Lord with all my heart and acknowledging him in all my ways.

My education does not only affect my past and present but it will definitely affect my future. Even more so I know it will be important because of my quote, "He will make your paths straight." What that says to me is if I live my life for God, my future will be clear. The path will be directly in front of me and it will lead me right to my Father, God.

If I keep my Catholic Education close, it will help me in times of discrimination, being made fun of, and hardships in life. For example, if someone would judge my faith, I will pray for them. Some of those hardships in my future could include family members dying. I now know that it is not the end of the world. It is just a new beginning for them and I will see them again in Heaven. With my Catholic Education I can see how my life will be lived with trust, knowledge and a thankful heart for my faith.

As you can see, my education at St. Vincent de Paul Grade School has affected me in all aspects of my life. Without it I'd be suffering and have a huge hole in my heart that would never be filled. I have learned many sides of my faith, and how to keep God close to my heart. I can turn to the sacraments, the celebration of the mass, the lessons of the gospels, Benediction, the Rosary, Stations of the Cross and the simplicity of prayer. That is why my Catholic Education is beneficial to me and everyone around me.