

St Joseph's Special Character Review 2021

The Review topic for 2021 was Christian Witness and took the form of a Google Survey which was sent to four target groups

- Students - Yr 4 - 8
- Teachers
- Parents
- Parishioners

to find out more of how they understand what Christian witness means.

The report presented is the voice from the 7 Teachers, 6 Parents, 63 students and 11 Parishioners.

The Student group responded later due to the intervention of Lockdown and therefore their responses are separate. One class was unable to respond online due to internet problems and so hand-wrote their responses.

It is clear that the people who responded to the survey are fully involved in our Parish and give generously to support our school and parish. In particular, the Sacramental programme, being a Prayer partner, support with Young Vinnies and training Altar servers directly supports our school and our children on their Faith journeys.

People are generally satisfied with their personal participation. They are happy to continue the current level of involvement which includes praying for the well-being and faith of our school.

The responses about possible barriers to participation show how very human people are and are very personal - from their time-poor-ness, age and frailty, and ability to work with others.

Areas of strength that are seen for our school are the feeling that St Joseph's is at the heart of the community (St Patrick's parish) and the school has a good impact and impression on the Parish. Equally shown

here is the appreciativeness of the teachers towards the parishioners and Priest for their support.

Ideas for improvement were positive and varied. Eg, More awareness of the needy in our community, More joy and clapping in church, more connection between parish and school. Supporting new families into the school. Another Idea outside of our direct control is - having a go to contact person in the parish to guide and answer questions.

Finally, positive comments that children are able to share their faith journey learning with others in the community, be it their parents, family or friends.

Some lovely positive comments. E.g. Our daughter loves St Joseph's. Her learning, support and development in her sacramental and faith journey has been wonderful. My children love going to mass and learning so that's why I take them, Teachers giving a good support for children's, They tell me the reasons they got a JJ voucher (sharing how they showed one of the values), discuss what they have learnt and how it relates to god, jesus, holy spirit. (an egg - has the 3 dimensions, the science activities they do and how they relate...)

Student Responses

Every student participates in the parish, for example, Class Liturgies, Attending weekly Mass, receiving Holy communion, preparing for Assemblies, Catholic Schools day and the Food fair, preparing for Sacraments, Altar serving, pray go to church we sing take the candle, I read out passages and teach younger children the stories of Jesus through acting sometimes. I also do young vinnies. I will help by lead mass by doing the offertory. We attend mass each week on Thursday, We sing in mass young vinnies and helping others in the community I participate by knowing most of the song in a parish. I got to church and we help present the gospel, we go to church every thursday and when we come back to school we talk about how we can do the the things that have been asked for us to do.

Asked how they would like to participate responses ranged from - prepare for first holy communion, going to Mass at the weekend, join young vinnies and help others, pray, I like to participate with the school in church and to do the gospel act, Taking the candle up to farther wayne. I would like to become an altar server. I would like to get baptised.

Students replied that Covid 19 was a barrier to their participation. Also, What gets in the way is how there is covid level 2 and we can't go to church to worship God. Getting nervous, Family busy. I'm a bit far away from school. Sports and activities. my religion, I love school and I wouldn't want to miss out on it, and in the weekends I do some activities in the weekends and outside of school. My parents are busy. what are my barriers is i get nervous. distracted, struggling, family busy, rely on parents to take us, I am not baptized but I want to get baptized, where i live it is really far so i try me best in the what i can can do.

Areas of strength for our school that the students see as a Catholic community were: Assemblies, people are kind, We go to (weekly) Mass, Our prayer garden, we do school prayers, supporting others, our monthly cultural day when we celebrate people culture and invite people with us. food fare we get to try different countries food, I see that the strength of the school gets together by going as a catholic community to walk together into the church. knowing that Jesus is around us. We support others and donate to those who are less fortunate. We're unified through God and our practices such as Mass and Choir. We do services such as young vinnies and raise each other up by being inclusive and celebrating everyone's uniqueness. our school join together as a school for mass and be just like Jesus. Join together as a school for mass and morning prayers, School values, Respect, Reverence, Resilience and relationships. The school is very connected to the parish. The school is also open to the community and connect with them in a lot of ways. our schools name is could St Joseph and we have r.e. every day and that helps me recentre myself. The family connections

Suggested areas we could improve upon as a Catholic community are
More awareness of the needy in our community, visit old people because they're lonely, young vinnies visit old people who doesn't get visit that much, donate more money to the church and the poor, Working on donating more for mission money. Do more for those who do not have family members in the community. Do odd jobs (lawns, gardening, groceries or take them to the shops. see old people

The responses from the students to being a 'Christian Witness' are very pleasing. Our students are fully involved in Catholic faith Prayer, and Mass Rituals and show desire to be further involved. The understanding shown by the statements about having Jesus around us and reaching out to others, the elderly, less mobile and the lonely show a growing catholic social lens in the children's wider faith development.

There were disappointingly few responses from the parent body. This is open to interpretation, but perhaps our school parents are confident in the

way their children are developing in the Catholic faith at St Joseph's School Oamaru.

? Families