

Here are several articles from Corpus Christi School Parents on “Why We Choose Catholic Schools”

Susan and Deacon Robert Waller

During this Catholic Schools Week, we would like to share our experiences with Catholic Schools. First, a little background; our children, Elizabeth, Brent and Anna all attended Catholic Schools: Corpus Christi Grade School and St Mary’s High School, both in Colorado Springs, and others outside the state when we were not living in Colorado. From these experiences, we would say that we would surely do it all over again—in fact, we, parents and children alike, could not imagine any other way!

Why did we choose Catholic schools and why would we do it again? First, we chose Catholic school not to get away from public schools; actually we have been blessed with good public schools in all of our locations. Rather, we chose to make the sacrifice to send our children to Catholic schools for all the benefits which they offered them (basic cost-benefit analysis!). The gift of Catholic schools allowed them to grow in their faith and to see how God is present in all people and in all of our activities and challenges. Their attendance gave them the opportunity to see our call as human beings to serve others and to be active members of the Body of Christ. While teaching the faith begins in the home, the continual presence and discussion of it throughout the school day and in after-class activities gives it a greater chance of taking root. The gift of beginning the school day in prayer, attending frequent school Masses, participating in reconciliation services, having religion classes, and in general, showing concern for our fellow man, is a wonderful, and priceless addition to a normal school day!

Besides the irreplaceable spiritual and faith-building benefits offered by Catholic schools, we also chose them for their academic qualities. The small class setting and personal attention so frequently found in Catholic schools is invaluable! While larger public-funded schools may offer more sophisticated facilities and a wider curriculum, the individual attention offered by the smaller Catholic school setting makes it all worth it! It’s much less likely that a child who has challenges will “fall through the cracks;” the small setting just doesn’t allow it! And, the fundamentals of education are not compromised—just look at the college experience of Catholic school grads!

Lastly, I’d like to mention a family benefit of Catholic schools. Catholic schools have been recognized throughout our nation for their success in getting families involved in the education process—an attribute that is so beneficial to the education process. From our personal experiences we have certainly benefited from this process; not only have we been able to serve as volunteers in many ways in the children’s schools and to serve on their school boards, but we have made our best family friends through this involvement—friendships that will last a lifetime for parents and children alike.

God had blessed us with the gift of Catholic schools; may they continue to serve His Church and our nation!

Bob and Susan Waller have sent three children through Colorado Springs Catholic Schools.

Joe and Veronica Nuvolini

As anyone can imagine, there are many different reasons why people choose to send their children to Catholic schools. First and foremost, my wife and I believe it is our responsibility as Catholics to send our children to Catholic schools. As graduates of Holy Trinity and St. Mary's here in Colorado Springs, we didn't think twice about what type of school our children would attend. The decision to be part of a Catholic school was an easy one – the decision to stay is the real topic of discussion.

There are three core reasons why we chose to raise our children within the Catholic school system: moral teachings throughout curriculum, freedom of religious expression, and the safe environment that comes in a smaller school setting.

Morality can't be effectively taught during one class period a week, or even one class period a day. Moral teachings in Catholic schools are included in every aspect throughout the day. It's not just something that's taught, it's a concept infused in the students' and teachers' daily activities. It's a concept lived, practiced and shared with others. It is a way of life, both at home and at school.

Freedom of religious expression is a freedom far too many of us dismiss as being unimportant. Quite the contrary. People, especially children, should never be discouraged from practicing their faith in a healthy and positive manner. The environment at Catholic schools is one of tolerance and acceptance. Students are encouraged to share any religious belief they may have, Catholic or otherwise. It's part of belonging to a community.

Much like the sense of community we get when we attend Mass at our parish, we get the same sense of community when we walk through the doors of our Catholic schools, but it goes one step further. This school community turns into your family, with all the comforts of being with family. It is through this sense of family, this sense of home, that parents and students feel safe to live and learn.

Our experiences at Catholic schools shaped us in our faith formation. Given the chance to do it again, we wouldn't change anything. We encourage others to choose Catholic schools – the peace of mind that comes with knowing your children are being well cared for and well educated is priceless. That's what all our children are – priceless.

Joe and Veronica Nuvolini have sent two daughters through Colorado Springs Catholic Schools.

Herb and Mary Klopfenstein

I have believed for many years that education is the greatest gift one can give to either oneself or to another. That gift is made more complete when the education includes religious studies. We believe the Catholic sponsored schools provide a strong, well-rounded secular education while in the presence of their faith community.

My *perception* of public schools is that teachers and administrators are afraid to teach morality. In other words, they refrain from teaching “Right vs. Wrong”. This is definitely not the case in Catholic schools. I want my children to have a moral compass and the basis of character to do what is right rather than what is easy. I want them to have the spiritual foundation to avoid expediency at the cost of character.

Sports play an important part in our children’s lives. The Catholic elementary schools are part of the Christian Schools Athletic League (CSAL). The CSAL includes such sports as wrestling, volleyball, basketball, and soccer. Our two sons wrestled in the CSAL. Our daughter played basketball from the 5th through 8th grades and our oldest son has played basketball for the last three years. I’m not certain many public schools provide such opportunities while maintaining the concept that winning is important, but everyone’s participation is even more important. The CSAL is not a “win at all costs” league.

Our daughter is a freshman at St Mary’s High School. This institution has impressive academic credentials, but I am most struck by its Theology department. I was fortunate to graduate from the University of Portland which is affiliated with the Congregation of Holy Cross. All undergraduates were required to take two semesters of theology regardless of their major. My daughter will take four years of theology at St Mary’s and will thus have six more semesters of theology than her father before she enters college.

Our children’s Catholic education has not always been an easy choice. As the cost of tuition increased our contributions to the offertory have been adversely affected. But, we feel that our mission is to provide our children with a moral education that is firmly rooted in Catholic principles. Many tangible items have been forgone so the intangible gift of education could be given.

Herb and Mary Klopfenstein have three children, including two sons who attend Corpus Christi School and a daughter who graduated from Corpus Christi and currently attends St. Mary’s High School.

Jerry and Kim Lachiewicz

As a child I remember once watching a balloon rise up and drift away into the sky. I wondered where that balloon was going and who would find it. Not knowing for certain I imagined that it would eventually pop or come back down.

Nowadays when I see balloons in the sky they are usually tethered to the ground, often pointing to a car sale or some other special event. It flies high, points to one area, and effectively attracts attention for a long time.

For me these two balloons in the sky – tethered and untethered – are an allegory for education: public versus parochial. The untethered balloon will rise very high, very quickly but to what purpose? Not having a tether it will drift with the wind – the currents of modern thought – and eventually come back to earth. Many will have seen it but what effect will it have had? On the other hand the tethered balloon will fly high and never leave its reference point. As it's given more string it will fly higher allowing more people to see it. Ultimately it attracts people to its location, to its reference. So it is with Christian education. The reference point is Christ, the tether is education and the balloon is the student.

Nurtured in the home and affirmed in the school, the faith is able to flourish in our children and, hopefully, animate their lives. The path to their eternal salvation is shown to them and, hopefully, will always be recognized as they grow.

And the price? Some used cars, less dining out, modest family vacations, practical home upgrades, and eBay!

Jerry and Kim Lachiewicz have two children who attend St. Mary's High School and graduated from Corpus Christi School.

Greg and Mary Lou Garcia

Our primary duty as parents is to help our children reach heaven. In today's America this duty pales in comparison to providing food, clothing, shelter, vacations, a college education, a car, a fine wedding and when life is over a small inheritance. For us these worldly objectives have always taken a back seat to teaching our children the Roman Catholic Faith. 15 years ago we picked Colorado Springs in which to reside, in part, because of its Catholic schools. Of the five good Catholic Schools, we chose Corpus Christi and St. Mary's High School to help us reach our God-given goal.

Many times the secular community and even our own Catholic community think it takes wealth to send children to a Catholic school. It doesn't; it takes sacrifice. In our 15 years of paying for Catholic education for our three children, most of the parents were like us, sacrificing some of the other worldly objectives. While our children grew in faith, they did not have the best clothes, cable TV, many vacations, frequent restaurant dining, the latest technological gadgets, or the finest family car. What they did have was a good Catholic education which taught them our Faith, reading, writing, and arithmetic among other important subjects.

Catholic education has been a sacrifice, but in 25 years of marriage all the "Wish we had's" and "Could have gone there's" have vanished leaving only our gratefulness to a good God and the Corpus Christi and St. Mary's High School Communities who helped us raise our children in The Faith. To these parishioners, teachers, principals, janitors, and priests we thank you from the bottom of our hearts and give you much credit in the success of raising Stephen, Kevin and Michael in our Faith to be intelligent, upright young men. May God bless all of you.

For our part, we choose to remain at Corpus Christi and be apart of St. Mary's High School to support the continuing generations of sacrificing families with their Catholic education.

Greg and Mary Lou Garcia of Colorado Springs sent their three children to Corpus Christi School and St. Mary's High School.

Andy and Janice Pico

Janice. I went to 2 years of Catholic High School and then 2 years of public school. That's when I knew that if I had children, they would go to Catholic schools. You don't even realize how much you are tasked by Catholic Schools until you are out of school, but the comparison makes all the difference. Catholic schools are academically excellent.

You are given a solid foundation in the faith. When those children go into the world, they are pulled in many directions. They at least know some of the answers and they know where to get them. This stands them in good stead when they are think of "coming back" if they happen to lose their way.

The school/church start dialogues on faith issues which have a way of coming into the home and can start great faith dialogues when they are young.

Catholic college is excellent if they choose that way. If not, World Youth Day (1-2 weeks) provides a solid week of sharing of Catechesis with peer groups. The youth are open to it (who doesn't want to travel at that age?) and it "brings them back". The experience is worth its weight in gold. Some WYD's are better priced than others.

My children were fortunate enough to have grade school, high school and WYD's. I feel very blessed by their education. And they have done well in their young lives.

Andy. To add to the above, I've seen our children receive a solid education across the board in all areas including their faith. There is no comparison with public education which simply fails to adequately prepare the majority of their students for either life or higher education. The recent vote in District Eleven for mediocrity, union control and "political correctness" in place of solid academic reform is a striking example, but our experience during a military career and since has included DoD schools, public schools and Catholic schools. Again, Catholic schools proved to be academically superior.

I had to be convinced that the extra financial strain was worth it, and I have been convinced. The small number of students in each St. Mary's graduating class has pulled in an extraordinary level of scholarships every year that I have gone to one of the Baccalaureate Masses and awards ceremony. This is the kind of sustained academic excellence that any public school district in the area can only dream about.

In my view, there is no choice of what schools to send our children to. Sustained superior performance and faith life formation are what counts.

Andy and Janice Pico have nine children, all of whom have attended or are attending Corpus Christi School. Seven of the children graduated from St. Mary's High School, one currently attends St. Mary's and the ninth child will enroll there in the fall.