

# The Benefits of Catholic Education at St. Raphael School

Character Development and Service Work

Academic Excellence

Catholic Identity

Community

Why pay extra for a Catholic education? Whether you are new to the area, to our school, or would just like a nugget to pass on to your friends about the value of Catholic school—and St. Raphael School in particular—this is for you.

## Character Development and Service Work

The Golden Rule is the moral compass that guides the students in a Catholic school and navigates every turn in their educational and emotional development. It gives students the strength to say no at appropriate times and the courage to help those in need while others walk past. Catholic education instills the values to understand right from wrong and works to create engaged citizens who respect the rights and feelings of others. Jesus said, “Whatever you do to the least of my brothers, you do unto me.”

The Archdiocese of Washington website notes: “All students are continuously encouraged to make a difference by serving their community through independent volunteer work and school-sponsored service, such as making sandwiches for the homeless, working with the disabled or aiding emergency relief efforts.”

Woven into the daily school lives of St. Raphael students, outreach opportunities teach the students that others need our attention, care, and compassion.

### *SRS Examples of Character Development and Service Work*



- Serving the hungry** a hot meal at our annual Mother Teresa luncheon
- Donating our own Halloween candy** to those who could use a special treat
- Entertaining and engaging residents** at Raphael House senior home
- Collecting canned goods** for Stepping Stones Shelter
- Making sandwiches for McKenna's Wagon** mobile soup kitchen
- Donating food** to local food banks such as St. Martin's Pantry
- Collecting warm coats for those in need** as part of Catholic Charities' annual Coats of Many Colors drive
- Preparing baskets of complete Thanksgiving dinners** for the families of our own SRS maintenance staff

## Academic Excellence

Catholic education provides a solid academic foundation. Compared with their public-school peers, Catholic school students earn higher scores on standardized tests in every subject area.<sup>i</sup> The Catholic high school graduation rate is a staggering 99%. Of these graduates, 86% go on to college, compared with 49% of public high school graduates.<sup>ii</sup> Catholic elementary schools generally start in kindergarten and continue through the eighth grade, eliminating the need to transfer to a new facility for middle school. Research shows that middle-schoolers who stay in the same school for grades K-8 perform better academically and have fewer absences than their peers who attend a separate middle-school.<sup>iii</sup>

### *SRS Examples of Academic Excellence*



**Differentiated learning and small-group instruction** are woven throughout a rigorous academic curriculum. We accelerate children who are ready to advance, while ensuring that children who require extra help get exactly that. Our lower student-teacher ratios mean your child receives greater attention.



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**State-of-the-art technology:** Promethean boards, 1:1 iPads for middle-schoolers, document cameras for interactive learning, regular Scantron testing (which provides individual skills assessments to assist with small-group placements), devices for an entire class in the media center, and a computer cart for portable technology all work together with our dedicated staff to provide enriched, challenging learning. (Ask us about our coding classes for every grade!)

**Curriculum:** Our curriculum is driven by the Archdiocese of Washington Academic Standards and meets or exceeds the academic standards of Montgomery County Public Schools. SRS is accredited by AdvancED.

**We do not “teach to the test”** but instead employ a creative, thematic approach to learning. Students explore independently and in groups as they accomplish academic milestones.

## Catholic Identity

Catholic identity isn't just engrained in the children when they learn songs and prayers but in all parts of their school day. Weekly Mass, praying for a sick friend, openly thanking God for the beautiful day, or even learning to say a Hail Mary when an ambulance goes by steeps children in Catholic culture. Teaching the students these virtues maintains and passes on the very best of Catholic traditions.

### *SRS Examples of Catholic Identity*



**Morning Prayer:** Students are dropped off and start their day in the church, where the calming influence of prayer and quiet discussion helps them start their day—every day—with God in their hearts. This morning exercise reinforces what is important, how to treat one another, and to respect themselves. Topics discussed range from Catechism to current events.

**Birthday blessing:** SRS students receive a blessing on their birthday from one of our parish priests. This has evolved into one of the highlights of an SRS child's birthday. The special blessing is eagerly awaited!

**Angel of the Month:** Students "caught" doing good deeds are recognized throughout the year.

## Community

A strong sense of community is one of the core reasons many families choose to send their children to Catholic schools. All children, from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds, combine to form a Catholic collective dedicated to helping those both inside and outside the community. Family involvement is critical and results in a close-knit, fun, and loving environment supported by faith, hard work, and solid friendships.

### *SRS Examples of Community*



**SRS is not a mandatory “drive-through.”** Parents may opt to pick up students in the building, where they have the opportunity to speak with teachers and connect with other parents.

**The dedication of parent volunteers** helps create our legendary warm and welcoming culture.

**Events** such as Angels on the Run build community and draw alumni back home.

**Parents are invited into the process of developing the school** and often say that SRS is the school they wish they'd had when they were growing up.

**During COVID-19, we have adjusted our practices to allow us to continue operating in a safe environment. Visit our website for details.**

<sup>i</sup> United States Department of Education, National Catholic Educational Association, Harvard University

<sup>ii</sup> National Catholic Educational Association

<sup>iii</sup> Columbia Graduate School of Business