



DIocese of LACROSSE
OFFICE OF CATECHESIS & EVANGELIZATION

Reasons to Assess Students in their Knowledge of the Faith

- 1) In education, if we value something, we test it. Assessing our students in their knowledge of the essentials of the Faith underscores the importance of the subject. The message is given to all concerned that our relationship with Christ is of the highest importance.
- 2) Assessment results draw parent's attention and educators to outcomes that describe the effectiveness of the religious education and formation in Catholic schools, Faith Formation Programs as well as education in the home. Note: Students are not being assessed on their faith, but on their literacy, that is knowledge of the Catholic Faith.
- 3) We are able to see if the students are grasping the essentials of the Faith that lead to a deeper relationship with Christ in order to follow Him more closely in living the Christian life.
- 4) Each individual parish will clearly see the strengths and weaknesses of student's knowledge of the Faith, providing the needed information to suggest how teaching efforts may be more effective.
- 5) Assessments provide a method of informing parents and children what specific knowledge the child needs in order to fully appreciate the Sacraments and to receive them with proper devotion.
- 6) Going back over answers with the provided explanations after completing the assessments allows the opportunity for great discussion on the teachings that the students must know. In asking why students chose a specific answer, the catechist can help them to see the truth behind Catholic teaching and correct errors based upon faulty reasoning or unsound ideas promoted by the culture.
- 7) As a diocese, we can determine whether the teaching mission of the Catholic Church is being achieved when assessments—including surveys—confirm that the curriculum is being delivered. It is not enough that the doctrinal elements of the faith are being taught. It is essential that the ideas and values contained in the curriculum have transformed the hearts of our students.
- 8) For Catholic schools, the accrediting agencies that help schools determine how to improve their effectiveness demand that we base our decisions on real data. Assessment data help decision makers at the site make more effective use of resources including choice of curricular materials and use of teacher time.