

Guidelines for Interpreting and Scoring Benchmarks

3.1: *Every student is offered timely and regular opportunities to learn about and experience the nature and importance of prayer, the Eucharist, and liturgy.*

I. What does this benchmark indicate for school performance?

This benchmark is about schools providing multifaceted approaches on ways to be Catholic in accordance with its mission, and to help students draw closer to God. Schools should articulate an understanding of Catholicism that is relevant to the lives of its students and create fresh and adaptive experiences that inspire students to encounter God. These approaches should be assessed for their effectiveness with student input to the process.

II. As a review team member, what evidence do I look for?

These are some questions which will help to frame this item:

- Are students initiating and leading prayer in multiple forms?
- Do students openly share ways they witness their faith?
- Do all adults explore prayer with students?
- Do students play an active role in the planning of liturgies?
- Do students enjoy the opportunity to be ministers during the liturgy?
- Do students have a joyful understanding of the Eucharist?
- Do the homilies teach and inspire students to be Christ for others?
- Do homilies illustrate how the Gospel and the scriptures relate to the context of students' lives?
- Does the music selected for liturgies enliven students?
- Is there a process in place to gather input and assess the effectiveness of the various opportunities for prayer, Eucharist, and liturgy at the school?

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III. What are the key differences between the levels of the rubric?

At level 3- Fully Meets Benchmark,

students encounter relevant opportunities to learn about prayer and its relationship to the Eucharistic and larger liturgical life of the Church.

At level 4-Exceeds Benchmark,

students take a leadership role in the prayer life of the school. Students are involved in liturgical planning and evaluation. Liturgy has a special role in the life of the school and is celebrated in a variety of forms on a regular basis.

At level 2-Partially Meets Benchmark,

students pray regularly but prayer is led by adults. The liturgical life of the school exists through its expression on feast days relevant to the school or the Church as a whole.

At level 1-Does Not Meet Benchmark,

the prayer lives of students are absent or are displayed in a way that does not connect with the lives of students or the tradition of the school. Liturgical celebrations are absent, or are a minimal part of the school's routine.

Note: To measure these benchmarks accurately, the *student voice* out to be be a significant part of the process used to evaluate this item.

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IV. What are some key suggestions for improvement?

To move from level 1 to level 2,

- Partner with students to explore online and local resources about praying.
- Interview members of the school community about how and why they pray.
- Find creative projects to collect and share the findings.
- Encourage students to write letters to area priests inviting them to celebrate the Eucharist with them during the year.
- Explore the structure of Catholic liturgy.

To move from level 2 to level 3,

- Develop a shared understanding of the purpose of prayer and invite students to create a prayer book or an online archive of prayers, prayer videos, etc.
- Explore and reflect on the language of the Last Supper with students to help them develop a personal connection to the celebration of the Eucharist.
- Expand students' appreciation of the liturgy by training and designating students in liturgical ministry roles for school liturgies.

To move from level 3 to 4,

- Encourage the presider to visit with the students in advance of the school mass (virtually or in person) to help the presider connect to the joys, anxieties and hopes of the student body.
- Train students to plan liturgies and make this a student leadership opportunity.
- Default to student-composed or student-led prayer at all school-wide prayer times.
- Connect with Catholic college student ministry teams (or alums of the school) to witness ways young adults are leading faith-driven lives.

V. What are key terms for common understanding? (Refer to NSBECS Glossary for the key terms listed below.)

Presider
Joy
Student voice