



Learn. Serve. Lead. Succeed.

Catholic Schools Week
January 26 – February 1, 2020

Catholic Schools Essay Contest

Third Place

by Sofia Coury – Junior

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Why Catholic School?

Catholic school (Carmel Catholic High School) has given me so much more than I imagined school could provide. While I have learned about normal subjects such as math, science, and English, I also have learned more about my faith through the religion classes that I've taken. This is important to me because I understand that my faith will take me more places than basic education ever could. Next year, I am excited to be taking two classes of my choice called "Women in Faith" and "Catholic Spirituality." I have already been privileged to take numerous other religion classes to give me a foundation, and I am excited to build on this with these classes because they will help me to explore and learn more about my faith in areas of my choice. Carmel Catholic has not only taught me about my faith, but has also helped me learn more about who I am. I have learned what kind of people I like to surround myself with, what ways I learn and study best, and how to shape my own values (instead of just believing what other people tell me to believe).

Furthermore, Catholic school has provided me with opportunities to help serve my high school and my community. I am an altar-server both at my home parish (St. Joseph's in

Libertyville) and at Carmel Catholic. Recently, I had the amazing opportunity to altar-serve for Cardinal Cupich (Bishop of Chicago). It made me feel joyful that I was able to serve for someone so important in the Church. Catholic school also has mandatory service hours. Unlike some of my classmates, I like that we have required service because it encourages me to help my community. I have worked on a literacy project for a big part of my service. For this project, I have created literacy kits for students that use the Libertyville Township Food Pantry for the past three years which include a book, journal, worksheets and a resource sheet that I made connecting to the book. Because of that project, Eucharistic Ministering, altar-serving, and other types of service, now I have over 300 hours of service! I am extremely proud and happy about this accomplishment because serving is a way that I can make a small but positive impact on the world. Of course, serving is important to those being helped, but I also get the added benefit of feeling helpful and the joy of knowing I did something good for someone else. My brother attends a local public high school, and I believe my Catholic high school provides significantly greater emphasis and opportunities for service to others.

By nature, I am not a natural vocal leader; however, Carmel Catholic has given me the ability to become one. Through my time at Carmel Catholic, I have been able to learn more about the skills I have and how I should apply them. I discovered that I am strong in math and science, I am a hard worker when I am doing something I am passionate about, and that I am good at managing my time. Recently I have used my strengths of math and science to help put on a Fem-in-STEM outreach event for girls in grade and middle school. I have also used my gifts to work hard on my literacy project which I mentioned above.

Overall, by learning, serving, and leading I believe that I have become successful at Carmel Catholic. I chose to go to Catholic school (when I had the choice between Carmel and my brother's public school) and I will never regret my choice. I have had success in learning academically and spiritually. I have succeeded in becoming closer to my community and to Jesus through my service, and I have used my God-given gifts to start to do good in the world. As I think about the future, I am hoping to go to a Catholic college so I can continue learning, serving, leading, and succeeding!