

Ten Fundamental Principles of a Jesuit Education at Chicago Jesuit Academy

Adapted from *Go Forth and Teach: The Characteristics of Jesuit Education*

“Our ideal is the well-rounded person who is intellectually competent, open to growth, religious, loving, and committed to doing justice in generous service to the people of God.”

– **Peter-Hans Kolvenbach, S.J.**
Superior General of the Society of Jesus

1. **GOD** is present in our lives, “laboring for us” in all things. God is especially revealed in the mystery of the human person, “created in the image and likeness of God.”

Education in the Jesuit tradition affirms the radical goodness of the world, tries to create a sense of wonder and mystery in learning about God’s creation, probes the meaning of human life and is concerned with the total formation of each student as an individual personally loved by God.

Tactics:

Chicago Jesuit Academy offers a superior educational opportunity, using the most effective learning-teaching methodologies, measured against the most rigorous standards.

The components of that experience are specific programs that promote and monitor students’ academic, spiritual, emotional and social growth. The goal of this growth is the development of an Academy graduate who is striving to become intellectually competent, open to growth, loving, religious and committed to doing justice in the service of others.

Chicago Jesuit Academy recruits a student body that reflects the needs of the underserved communities of the West Side of Chicago and has special concern for the poor and marginalized.

The Academy has advisory, counseling and mentoring programs that insure that all students are known and supported. These programs engage faculty, staff and parents in mutually instructive and supportive ways to the benefit of the students of the Academy.

2. **GROWTH** in the responsible use of freedom is facilitated by the personal relationship between student and teacher.

Adult members of the educational community guide Academy students as they develop a set of values that will lead the students to life decisions that will cause

them to press themselves “beyond their comfort zone,” beyond their concern for “self.” This guidance will include a special concern for the needs of others.

Tactics:

These principles are reflected in the general curriculum of the Academy and receive special attention in the Academy’s religious studies courses, weekly chapel services and student advisory sessions. The Jesuit ideal of *cura personalis*, personal care for the whole student, should define the relationship between a teacher and his or her student.

3. **FREEDOM** requires a genuine knowledge, love and acceptance of self, joined to a determination to be unfettered by any excessive attachment. True freedom also requires a realistic knowledge of the various forces present in the surrounding world. It includes liberation from distorted perceptions of reality, warped values, rigid attitudes or surrender to narrow ideologies.

Chicago Jesuit Academy is concerned about the total human development of each child of God. This is “Christian humanism” in the Jesuit educational tradition. It is founded upon a study of the classics of literature and human achievement in eloquence, science and service. It emphasizes the happiness in life that is the result of the responsible use of freedom. It recognizes the reality of sin and its effects in the life of each person. An education in the Jesuit tradition, therefore, encourages each student to honestly confront sin as an obstacle to freedom. In doing this, students grow in awareness that forgiveness is possible through the redemptive love and help of God.

Tactics:

This principle is made accessible to students through programs that examine racism, sexism, socio-economic inequities, consumerism and self-preoccupation by promoting a counter-narrative defined by respect, understanding, compassion, service and generosity. These programs encourage students to explore and confront sinful structures in society.

Adult members of the educational community at Chicago Jesuit Academy model this counter-narrative through their relationships with their students and one another. These relationships are defined by a level of personal care for the “other” that involves discipline, generosity and a substantial investment of time and creative energy.

4. **CHRIST** is the model for human life. Every person can draw inspiration from the life and teachings of the historical Jesus, who served as a witness to the love and forgiveness of God, lived in solidarity with those who suffer, and poured out his life in the service of others.

Education in the Jesuit tradition promotes a faith that is centered on the life of Jesus, the Christ. His saving work inspires an Academy education, which leads to a commitment to imitate Jesus as the person for others.

Tactics:

Students are taught the Catholic beliefs and practices that serve as the basis of the Roman Catholic faith.

Adults working at the Chicago Jesuit Academy model faith-filled lives for the students of the Academy. They actively encourage the development of the faith life of each student and support the religious and community service programs of the Academy.

The academic program includes examples of people of faith (i.e. Pedro Arrupe, St. Francis Xavier, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Malcolm X) who have contributed to and been signs of hope in their communities.

The retreat program serves all students, faculty and staff by offering faith-oriented reflections in the Catholic tradition that respect all faith traditions.

The Academy offers faith-formational catechesis in the Catholic tradition to all students in a systematic way.

A pastoral ministry program arranges and offers involvement in weekly chapel services and other prayer opportunities to both students and adults.

5. **SERVICE** One's faith becomes credible when it promotes justice for all God's people. An Academy education asks students—as well as alumni and the adult members of the educational community—to make a generous commitment to the struggle for a more humane world and a community of love.

Tactics:

The curriculum of Chicago Jesuit Academy provides students and faculty with the opportunity to reflect on the Jesuit commitment to a faith that does justice in the service of others.

All students are afforded developmentally appropriate opportunities to be of service to the poor and marginalized. The Academy believes that all of its students have been made in the image and likeness of God. Therefore, the adult members of the educational community seek to seed within the hearts of all students a fundamental appreciation for the gifts God has entrusted to them. Students are asked to consider how God is calling them to serve others with their gifts.

6. **THE CATHOLIC CHURCH** is an instrument through which Christ is present sacramentally in the world. Loyalty to and work in the service of the church, the people of God, is characteristic of all Jesuit works. Jesuit education respects the conscience, convictions and religious affiliations of all students as well as the adult members of the school community while remaining faithful to the teachings of the Catholic Church, especially in moral and religious formation.

Jesuit schools are part of the apostolic mission of the church in building the Kingdom of God. The aim of an education in the Jesuit tradition is the formation of principled, value-oriented persons for others after the example of Jesus. Teaching in a Jesuit school is therefore a ministry.

Tactics:

Chicago Jesuit Academy seeks to maintain a positive and supportive relationship between the Academy and the Archdiocese of Chicago.

Outreach to students, families and alumni reflects the Academy's religious values and a Catholic faith that does justice in the service of others.

The Jesuit provincial, Board of Members, Board of Directors, its officers and the president of the Academy regularly make occasion for supportive communication and sharing of values and needs. The Academy seeks to make these relationships ones of fellow servers in the ministry of teaching.

7. **THE MAGIS** St. Ignatius of Loyola habitually insisted on the *magis*. Latin for the *more*, the concept of the *magis* was originally understood by St. Ignatius as a call to be of increasingly greater service to God and closer imitation of Jesus. Chicago Jesuit Academy understands the *magis* as a call to fully develop each person's individual capacities at each stage of life in the service of others.

Excellence—like all Ignatian criteria—is determined by “circumstances of place and persons”... To seek the *magis*, therefore, is to provide the type and level of education for the type and age-group of students that best responds to the needs of the community in which a school is located.

Tactics:

Through their own work, the adult members of the Academy community model personal and professional growth and development oriented toward the *magis*. Creativity and a willingness to continually change for the better characterize their teaching and interaction with students and adults.

The Academy sponsors diverse co-curricular activities that enable students to explore and develop their individual athletic and academic talents.

8. **COLLABORATION** Early in his ministry, St. Ignatius realized that he could do more to build the Kingdom of God if he worked in partnership with others. Thus, collaboration in support of a common purpose became a hallmark of the Jesuit understanding of service. True collaboration requires that the adult members of a school community willingly assume appropriate responsibility for the mission of a Jesuit school and support the mission enthusiastically.

Tactics:

All employees of Chicago Jesuit Academy have channels through which they can offer their input into the governance of the Academy.

Relationships between adults and students at the Academy are marked by personal concern and compassion.

Teachers, new employees and directors are afforded opportunities to better understand the Academy's religious and academic mission as well as the Jesuit commitment to "a faith that does justice in the service of others."

The Academy encourages the adult members of the school community to pursue opportunities that promote their personal, spiritual and professional growth.

The Academy works in partnership with parents to educate and form their sons as "persons for others" in the Jesuit tradition.

9. **DISCERNMENT** involves actively listening for God's voice in the world. Prayerful and reflective decision making involves a constant search for that which promotes the greater service of God. In order to remain effective as educators and discern concrete responses to God's call, all adult members of the educational community must take advantage of opportunities for continuing education and personal development—especially in the areas of professional competence, pedagogical techniques and spiritual formation.

The educational community in a Jesuit school considers the needs of the society it serves; reflects on the ways school policies, structures and current pedagogical methods address the society the school serves; and, finds responses that will best accomplish the purposes of the school and implement its educational philosophy.

Tactics:

The Academy provides adult members of the school community with opportunities for personal, spiritual and professional development.

A major component of teachers' annual performance evaluations are a goals-to-growth reflection.

10. **IGNATIAN PEDAGOGY** The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius provide the framework for the Ignatian Pedagogical Paradigm, a pedagogy rooted in the study of the classics of literature and human achievement in eloquence, science and service. Like the Spiritual Exercises themselves, Ignatian Pedagogy asks teachers to play the role of guide to their students. This relationship fittingly describes the continual interplay of experience, reflection and action in the teaching/learning process; moreover, it ideally portrays the dynamic interrelationship between teachers and learners in the latter's journey of growth in knowledge and freedom.

Tactics:

The curriculum for Chicago Jesuit Academy focuses on teaching the classics of human thought and achievement. The curriculum provides opportunities for students to develop the eloquence they need to express their thoughts with clarity and passion.

Opportunities for reflection—whether they be discussions, essays or directed prayer—are an integral part of the classroom instruction afforded students at the Academy. This reflection challenges students to integrate the principals of ethics, morality and compassion with the content of each academic discipline.