



## Connections for Catholic School Districts

The Ministry of Education's **Mental Health Literacy Modules for Grades 7 and 8** students provide a ready-made opportunity to enhance learning about mental health and well-being. They intentionally link with the [Health and Physical Education curriculum](#), and there are many opportunities to highlight the connection between faith and mental health within a Catholic context. Supporting students' well-being and mental health aligns with Catholic Social Teachings by honouring and protecting the dignity of every student. Catholic educators are regularly called to present information through the lens of faith. This document provides some suggestions to integrate faith as you support students' mental health literacy. We encourage you to take a look at faith-based learning through the lens of mental health to find even more ideas.



### STUDENT VOICE

- Before you begin, consider inviting students to review the [Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectation Prompts](#) and highlight the ones they feel support mental health. It's a great way to connect the learning.
- You may also wish to encourage students to engage in scripture by identifying personal passages that resonate with what they have learned.

"The HPE (2019) curriculum introduces mental health literacy as a subtopic within the Healthy Living strand of the curriculum. The overarching focus is on building mental health and resilience. These mental health literacy expectations can be addressed across multiple subject areas in addition to the health classroom and can be further supported through school-based and system level initiatives. In Catholic schools there are very natural opportunities for these important messages to be integrated as part of the Religion and Family Life program, not to replace but to supplement additional resources that may be developed locally, or in conjunction with School Mental Health Ontario."

"Promoting the well-being and positive mental health of all students to reach their God-given potential is a gospel mandate and a moral imperative for Catholic schools which aligns with this important initiative of the Ministry of Education."

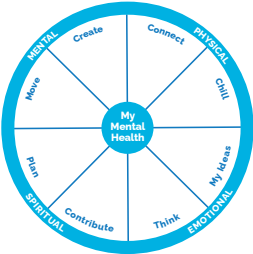
[Well-Being from a Catholic Perspective: Addressing Mental Health Literacy within Religion and Family Life Programs](#) Institute for Catholic Education



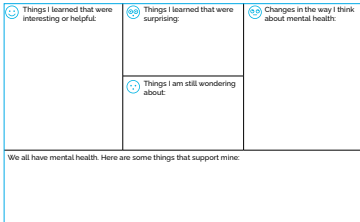
### TRY IT!

As students reflect on the many connections between their faith and their mental health and well-being, consider taking time to reflect, as well. How does faith support you? Which practises are most meaningful in your own life? Are there any you'd like to enhance?



GRADE 7 STUDENT NOTEBOOK		
PAGE(S)	ACTIVITY CONNECTIONS	ADDITIONAL CONNECTIONS
4 & 5	<p><b>My Strategy Circle</b> There is space within the circle for students to identify many aspects of their faith as positive strategies that support their mental health. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the “Connect” section, connections to faith and spirit are highlighted.</li> <li>• The “Chill” section offers connections to prayer and Christian meditation.</li> <li>• The “Contribute” section encourages students to help others and be collaborative contributors.</li> </ul>  <p>The diagram is a circular strategy circle with 'My Mental Health' in the center. It is divided into eight segments, each with a label around the perimeter and an action in the center: 'MENTAL' (Create), 'PHYSICAL' (Connect), 'CHILL' (My Ideas), 'EMOTIONAL' (Think), 'SPIRITUAL' (Contribute), 'PLAN' (Plan), 'MOVE' (Move), and 'CONNECT' (Connect).</p>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b>  <b>[B1.1]</b> Recognize and appreciate the role that human relationships play in each person’s life.  <b>[B3.5]</b> Analyze friendship from the perspective of the lessons it provides and of the qualities of healthy relationships.  <b>[E2.1]</b> Explain the importance of gathering with others for celebration and for support.  <b>[E2.2]</b> Recognize and appreciate the human need to join with others for a variety of purposes.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b>  <b>1 (I)</b> Integrates faith with life.  <b>5 (c)</b> Develops one’s God-given potential and makes a meaningful contribution to society.  <b>5 (d)</b> Finds meaning, dignity, fulfilment and vocation in work which contributes to the common good.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b>                      Beloved, I pray that all may go well with you and that you may be in good health, just as it is well with your soul. <i>3 John 2</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b>                      Faith, hope, love, family</p>

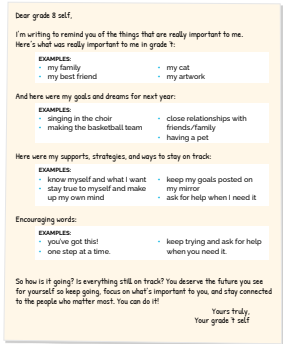


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10	<p><b>Wrapping It Up – Reflection</b>                      Within the last box in the table (“We all have mental health. Here are some things that support mine:”), students have opportunities to identify things that support their mental health (e.g., offering intentions, spending time in the chapel, prayer).</p> 	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b>  <b>[A1.1]</b> Recognize and appreciate the need to express emotions in a way that reflects respect for oneself and for others.  <b>[A2.3]</b> Explain the meaning of emotions and describe some common effects of adolescence on a person’s emotional life.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b>  <b>3 (e)</b> Adopts a holistic approach to life by integrating learning from various subject areas and experience.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b>                      May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.  <i>Romans 15:13</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b>                      Faith, hope, love, family</p>
13	<p><b>My Mood Meter</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The reflection question (“What or who do you think influences the way you feel about some of the emotions found at the opposite ends of the meter?”) could be connected with faith.</li> <li>Students might also be invited to consider how they can draw upon their faith to respond to the everyday ups and downs and challenges we all face.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b>  <b>[A2.3]</b> Explain the meaning of emotions and describe some common effects of adolescence on a person’s emotional life.  <b>[A2.4]</b> Describe some inherited and environmental influences on people.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b>  <b>4 (b)</b> Demonstrates flexibility and adaptability</p> <p><b>Scripture</b>                      Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect.  <i>Romans 12:2</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b>                      Patience, courage</p>



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14	<p><b>Seeking Support</b></p> <p>There are connections to faith within “Who could I talk to?” (e.g., spiritual/faith leaders are noted) and within “Where could I learn more?” (e.g., students might seek more information from their church community, Chaplain, or faith group).</p>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b></p> <p><b>[A2.5]</b> Describe some of the strengths and limitations of persons.</p> <p><b>[B3.4]</b> Examine some everyday challenges and some significant challenges that families face.</p> <p><b>[D2.3]</b> Recognize and appreciate that asking for help with a difficult personal issue is a sign of maturity.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b></p> <p><b>2 (e)</b> Uses and integrates the Catholic faith tradition, in the critical analysis of the arts, media, technology and information systems to enhance the quality of life.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b></p> <p>For I, the Lord your God, hold your right hand; it is I who say to you, “Do not fear, I will help you.” <i>Isaiah 41:13</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b></p> <p>Hope, wisdom, courage</p>
15	<p><b>Wrapping It Up – Reflection</b></p> <p>Students might note connections to their faith in response to the question “What new resources did you discover? Did you find new people, places, or things to add to your circle of support?”</p>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b></p> <p><b>[B1.1]</b> Recognize and appreciate the role that human relationships play in each person’s life.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b></p> <p><b>3 (c)</b> Thinks reflectively and creatively to evaluate situations and solve problems.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b></p> <p>But surely, God is my helper; the Lord is the upholder of my life. <i>Psalms 54:4</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b></p> <p>Hope, wisdom, courage</p>



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18	<p><b>Things I've Heard</b> Students might note that their faith guides them when making important decisions. There are opportunities to integrate faith and values, beliefs, identity, and so on.</p>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b>  <b>[B3]</b> Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing: apply an understanding of the role of relationships in shaping human identity and development in personally relevant contexts.  <b>[D3.1]</b> Analyze and practise a process for decision making</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b>  <b>3 (d)</b> Makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience.  <b>4 (g)</b> Examines and reflects on one's personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b> An intelligent mind acquires knowledge, and the ear of the wise seeks knowledge. <i>Proverbs 18:15</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b> Conscience, self-control, responsibility</p>
19 & 20	<p><b>Letter to my Grade 8 Self</b> Within the letter activity, there are opportunities to link faith and what is important to students, their goals and dreams, and their supports and strategies. In supporting themselves, they also support their own dignity.</p> 	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b>  <b>[A2.2]</b> Describe some dimensions of personality.  <b>[A3]</b> Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing: apply an understanding of the unique and shared aspects of human nature in personally relevant contexts.  <b>[A3.1]</b> Create a short-written description of who they are at this point in their lives  <b>[D3.2]</b> Identify some of their commitments and responsibilities.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b>  <b>4 (e)</b> Sets appropriate goals and priorities in school, work and personal life.  <b>4 (g)</b> Examines and reflects on one's personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b> The human mind plans the way, but the Lord directs the steps. <i>Proverbs 16:9</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b> Perseverance, wisdom</p>



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21	<p><b>Wrapping It Up – Reflection</b>                      Faith might connect with the question “What is one thing you learned that you could use to make healthy decisions for yourself about substance use?”</p>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b>  <b>[D2.2]</b> Recognize and appreciate that some limitations on their freedom are necessary during adolescence.  <b>[D2.3]</b> Recognize and appreciate that asking for help with a difficult personal issue is a sign of maturity.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b>  <b>4 (g)</b> Examines and reflects on one’s personal values, abilities and aspirations influencing life’s choices and opportunities.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b>                      Make me to know your ways, O Lord; teach me your paths.  <i>Psalm 25:4</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b>                      Wisdom, conscience, responsibility</p>



**BRIGHT IDEAS**

The Sacrament of Confirmation: as students prepare for the Sacrament of Confirmation, there are opportunities to connect learnings about mental health literacy to their understanding of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit. The gifts of wisdom, understanding, right judgement/counsel, courage/fortitude, knowledge, reverence, and wonder and awe can be used to support well-being and mental health.



"God calls us to respect the dignity of the whole person, made in the image and likeness of God in both ourselves and others. We must be careful not to stereotype, judge, and attach labels to others. Attaching a label to the person implies that everything about them comes down to that one thing."

Source: Supplemental Resources for Fully Alive to Support Catholic Teachers with the Ontario Curriculum, Health and Physical Education , 2015 - Grade 8

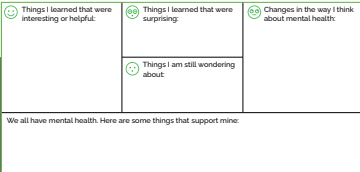
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3	<p><b>Minds On – Understanding Stigma, The Power of Words</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educators might engage students to discuss stigma related to faith practices.</li> <li>• Educators might also engage students in a discussion about why as a Catholic community we need to address stigmas.</li> <li>• Stigma and related stereotypes are an affront to a person’s human dignity.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b></p> <p><b>[A1]</b> Appreciating God’s Goodness: demonstrate an appreciation that humans have been created in the image of a loving God.</p> <p><b>[E2.2]</b> Recognize and appreciate that justice is the virtue that helps us respond to the rights and dignity of each person.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b></p> <p><b>2 (c)</b> Presents information and ideas clearly and honestly and with sensitivity to others.</p> <p><b>7 (c)</b> Seeks and grants forgiveness.</p> <p><b>7 (f)</b> Respects and affirms the diversity and interdependence of the world’s peoples and cultures.</p> <p><b>7 (j)</b> Contributes to the common good.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b></p> <p>Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgement. <i>John 7:24</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b></p> <p>Respect, fairness, acceptance, tolerance, kindness</p>



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5	<p><b>Extension – Taking Action</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Within the “How do you want to share it?” section, students might be offered the opportunity to create a prayer.</li> <li>• Educators may wish to connect the learning and opportunities to take action to faith-based student led initiatives (e.g., Youth Faith Ambassadors).</li> </ul>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b></p> <p><b>[D1.1]</b> Recognize and appreciate the responsibility to be committed family members, friends, and brothers and sisters in Christ.</p> <p><b>[E2.3]</b> Recognize and appreciate the shared responsibility to participate in efforts to protect human rights.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b></p> <p><b>7 (e)</b> Witnesses Catholic social teaching by promoting equality, democracy, and solidarity for a just, peaceful and compassionate society.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b></p> <p>And he said to them, “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation. <i>Mark 16:15</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b></p> <p>Service, stewardship</p>
6	<p><b>Wrapping It Up – What did we learn?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Faith connections might be made with how we treat others and showing kindness, compassion, and empathy.</li> <li>• The concept of “Taking Action” speaks to social justice.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b></p> <p><b>[E1.2]</b> Recognize and appreciate the responsibility to participate in the work of creating a more just society.</p> <p><b>[E3.3]</b> Describe the personal qualities and skills that are essential to contribute to the efforts to create a more just society.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b></p> <p><b>7 (f)</b> Respects and affirms the diversity and interdependence of the world’s peoples and cultures.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b></p> <p>Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. <i>Colossians 3:12</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b></p> <p>Respect, kindness, acceptance, fairness, compassion, empathy</p>





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6	<p><b>Wrapping It Up – Reflection</b>                      Faith might be highlighted within the final reflection question (“We all have mental health. Here are some things that support mine:”).</p> 	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b>  <b>[E3.1]</b> Examine the responsibility to participate in building a just society.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b>  <b>3 (a)</b> Makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b>                      The Lord is my strength and my might; he has become my salvation. <i>Psalm 118:14</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b>                      Faith, family, hope, love</p>
8 & 9	<p><b>Video – Building Skills Through Routines, Relaxation, Reframing, and Relationships</b>                      Many connections could be made to faith (e.g., the routine of going to church or praying each day; Christian meditation as a way to relax, quiet, and centre yourself; relationships with God/a faith community or leader; strategies that involve connecting with faith).</p>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b>  <b>[B2.4]</b> Recognize that some stressful situations in friendship can be avoided.  <b>[B3.2]</b> Practise strategies for managing disagreements between parents and young people. See page 117 <a href="http://iceont.ca">Ontario Catholic Elementary (iceont.ca)</a></p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b>  <b>6 (d)</b> Values and nurtures opportunities for family prayer.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b>                      Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, I will hear you. <i>Jeremiah 29:12</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b>                      Faith, hope, love, family</p>



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10	<p><b>For Reflection</b></p> <p>Faith could be connected to knowing if a stress management strategy is supporting you (e.g., “Does it support your values, goals, and the plans you have for your life, or get in the way of them?”). Do the strategies students are using support and align with their faith?</p>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b></p> <p><b>[A3.2]</b> Analyze aspects of the human ability to create and feel.</p> <p><b>[B3]</b> Reflecting, Responding, and Analyzing: apply an understanding of the role of relationships in shaping human identity and development in personally relevant contexts.</p> <p><b>[B3.3]</b> Describe the abilities that true friends demonstrate in their friendships.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b></p> <p><b>3 (d)</b> Makes decisions in light of gospel values with an informed moral conscience.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b></p> <p>Ask, and it will be given to you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened. <i>Matthew 7:7-8</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b></p> <p>Honesty, truth</p>						
10	<p><b>Extension – Music Matters</b></p> <p>If students are invited to consider music that supports them, they may wish to think about hymns or other faith-based songs, or song lyrics in secular music that support a Catholic world view.</p> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><b>Extension</b> Music Matters</p> <p style="font-size: small;">There are many different strategies that can help impact our mood and help us feel well...music can be one of them!</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="background-color: #e0f0e0;">MY SONG</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Things to think about...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How does this song support you?</li> <li>- Does it inspire you, offer encouragement, boost your energy level, remind you of someone you care about or a meaningful experience, or something else?</li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 50%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>New songs for my playlist</b></p> </td> <td style="vertical-align: top;"> <p>Jot down any songs shared by classmates that interest you so you can add to your playlist later.</p> </td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	MY SONG		<p><b>Things to think about...</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How does this song support you?</li> <li>- Does it inspire you, offer encouragement, boost your energy level, remind you of someone you care about or a meaningful experience, or something else?</li> </ul>		<p><b>New songs for my playlist</b></p>	<p>Jot down any songs shared by classmates that interest you so you can add to your playlist later.</p>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b></p> <p><b>[A2.2]</b> Describe a wonder of the world that reflects the intelligence and creativity of humans.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b></p> <p><b>2 (e)</b> Used and integrates the Catholic faith tradition, in the critical analysis of the arts, media, technology and information systems to enhance the quality of life</p> <p><b>Scripture</b></p> <p>as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making melody to the Lord in your hearts. <i>Ephesians 5:19</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b></p> <p>Hope, joy</p>
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11	<p><b>Wrapping It Up – Reflection</b> Students may connect with their faith and their unique gifts when considering the question “What is one new healthy strategy you could make part of your daily life?”</p>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b> <b>[A1.1]</b> Recognize and appreciate the unique gifts of the human person.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b> <b>4 (b)</b> Demonstrates flexibility and adaptability. <b>4 (d)</b> Responds to, manages and constructively influences change in a discerning manner.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b> I was glad when they said to me, “Let us go into the house of the Lord.” <i>Psalm 122:1</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b> Faith, hope, love, service</p>
12	<p><b>Minds On – Being a Supportive Friend</b> There are many faith connections when thinking about how to be a supportive friend (e.g., praying for a friend/with a friend, acts of kindness).</p>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b> <b>[B1.1]</b> Recognize and appreciate the value of relationships in their lives. <b>[B1.2]</b> Recognize and appreciate the value of the relationship of friendship.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b> <b>6 (e)</b> Ministers to the family, school, parish and wider community through service.</p> <p><b>Scripture</b> Do to others as you would have them do to you. <i>Luke 6:31</i></p> <p><b>Note:</b> We can also interpret this scripture to consider how people with lived experiences that are different from our own would like to be treated.</p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b> Empathy, kindness, compassion, gentleness, mercy</p>



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13	<p><b>Video – Share and Care, Connect and Respect</b></p> <p>Again, there are many possible faith connections to how, as caring family members and responsible citizens, students can strive to help others (e.g., acts of service, helping a friend with missed schoolwork).</p>	<p><b>Family Life Education/Fully Alive</b></p> <p><b>[B1.1]</b> Recognize and appreciate the value of relationships in their lives.</p> <p><b>[B1.2]</b> Recognize and appreciate the value of the relationship of friendship.</p> <p><b>Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations</b></p> <p><b>7 (j)</b> Contributes to the common good</p> <p><b>Scripture</b></p> <p>Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. <i>1 John 4:7</i></p> <p><b>Virtues and Values</b></p> <p>Empathy, kindness, compassion, mercy</p>

## Supportive Transitions/Mindful Practices to Support Your Mental Health

- Consider offering an opportunity to pray or engage in [Christian meditation](#)
- Many additional activities are available through [Faith and Wellness: A Daily Mental Health Resource](#) (created by School Mental Health Ontario and the Ontario English Catholic Teachers’ Association)



## References:

- [Ontario Catholic Elementary \(iceont.ca\)](http://iceont.ca)
- [Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations](#)
- [Bible: New Revised Standard Version Catholic Edition \(NRSVCE\)](#)

