

## *Our Language, Our Story - Character Development through the Virtues*

### **About the project ...**

The purpose of the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario project was to design and deliver in-service sessions for elementary school teams about the Eastern Ontario Catholic Curriculum Cooperative resource (EOCCC), *Our Language, Our Story – Character Development through the Virtues* and, in collaboration with the Algonquin and Lakeshore Catholic District School Board, to develop supplementary resources to support the EOCCC resource. The school teams then returned to their schools to introduce the resource to their colleagues at Catholic professional learning community meetings and to build familiarity with the resource within both board and school contexts. All school communities received board-designed resources including Virtues posters and prayer cards. All families in the board received the *Becoming People of Virtue* family resource. Students participated in the project by engaging in character development activities at their schools as part of the board-wide *Education to Virtue* initiative.

### **Impact on student learning and school culture ...**

- Through use of the EOCCC resources in all elementary schools, students deepened their understanding about the Catholic Virtues (faith, hope, love, temperance, fortitude, justice and prudence).
- Use of the *Our Language, Our Story – Character Development through the Virtues* resource strengthened student skills in using common language about the Virtues and developed their understanding of character within Catholic contexts.
- Students gained a stronger understanding of how the Virtues and character development connect with other initiatives, such as bullying prevention.
- Through the *Becoming People of Virtue* family resource, parents are engaged in character development activities and are supported in the use of common language about the Virtues and their focus on the development of Catholic character in the home.

### **Lessons learned for moving forward ...**

- Both administrators and teachers affirmed and rediscovered the place of Virtues education in the character formation of their students.
- Working with a regionally developed Catholic resource in partnership with another Catholic board increased opportunities for board staff to collaborate and share best practices.
- Through this project and related initiatives, all board staff are now able to identify the seven Virtues and articulate related connections and themes, powerful components of Catholic education.
- The *Our Language, Our Story* resource has been a valuable resource in bringing Virtues education to life within the context of the board theme, *We walk in good company!*