

## CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

Sancta Familia Academy makes no attempt to replace or displace parents as the primary providers of character training for their sons and daughters. The faculty and staff do, however, make every effort to provide opportunities for character development. Classroom time is too short and the scope of supervision too large for teachers to even think of being effective "character developers" if parents are not the primary instigators.

*The development of character in children should be the supreme objective of priests, parents, and teachers. As Pope Pius XI described:*

Hence the true Christian, the product of Christian education, is the supernatural man who thinks, judges, and acts constantly and consistently in accordance with right reason illumined by the supernatural light of the example and teaching of Christ; in other words, to use the current term, the true and finished man of **character**. For, it is not every kind of consistency and firmness of conduct based on subjective principles that makes true character, but only constancy in following the eternal principles of justice, as is admitted even by the pagan poet when he praises as one and the same "the man who is just and firm of purpose."

*The word "character" is derived from the Greek word meaning an instrument used to engrave or cut furrows. Character is the sum total of all the qualities that have been engraved upon the soul and that have become part and parcel of a man. Character is life dominated by principle, or in other words the completely formed will.*

Character training must therefore be made the center of the educational scheme from our earliest years. When this has been done then the child, when he comes to the critical years, will readily respond to the appeal of the higher motives to which he has reacted so often before. When this has not been done we can expect ruin. Individuals and nations are brought to ruin not by a lack of knowledge, but by a lack of proper conduct as Pope Pius XI explains: "*particularly in young people, evil practices are the effect not so much of ignorance of intellect as of weakness of a will exposed to dangerous occasions, and unsupported by the means of grace.*"

While grace is all-powerful, it does not relieve us of the duty of developing to the utmost the natural strength of character of which our young people are capable. Priests, parents and teachers need to awaken in young people the spirit of the conqueror. There is a nobility that lies in their soul, dormant, perhaps, but never dead. If we would have them win out in the battle for virtue this nobility must be aroused and spurred on.

Disorderly inclinations must be corrected, good tendencies encouraged and regulated from tender childhood, and, above all, the mind must be enlightened and the will strengthened by supernatural truth and by the means of grace, without which it is impossible to control evil impulses, impossible to attain the full and complete perfection of education intended by the Church, which Christ has endowed so richly with divine doctrine and with the Sacraments, the efficacious means of grace.

*Encyclical on the Christian Education of Youth, Pope Pius XI*

For the full article: *On the Development of Character in Children* by Fr. John F. Fullerton, our website or go directly to [www.edocere.org/articles/development\\_character\\_ds\\_ltr.htm](http://www.edocere.org/articles/development_character_ds_ltr.htm)