

## Identity at SPC A Series

These articles were published in the Especean (College Newsletter) over a series of weeks in 2021 as a reminder to all in the community about what we do at the College to reflect our Identity. They are a simple summary for all to understand and to help guide people's involvement.

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Director of Identity

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### Identity at SPC

So what is Identity all about at SPC? This really is a very big question, but essentially it is about ensuring the Catholic identity / direction / essence of the College through the lens of the Edmund Rice Charism or flavour, which is all about putting others at the centre of our lives. It can, at times, be difficult to put into words, but it is all that exists inside and outside the classroom to make St Patrick's College what it is. It encompasses all areas of College life as students are educated in the secular curriculum within the atmosphere of the Spirit, as St Mary of the Cross MacKillop talked about in her day. As a faith community this is the air we breathe while going about everything else. It is inextricably linked to who we are. It is the reason we choose to be at a Catholic school.

In recent years we have tried to summarise Identity at the College in a booklet which can be accessed on the website - [St-Pats-Identity-Publication WEB.pdf \(spc.nsw.edu.au\)](http://spc.nsw.edu.au) Below is the inside of this booklet. It tries to show the connection of all aspects with underlying themes and initiatives in our context. It is not all encompassing as there is always more that can be done and more that can be explained. It is a simple overview.



It was my intention to go through all areas of Identity this term, and now with some more time on our hands for reading (sadly not for everyone, sorry) hopefully it's a chance for everyone to grow in understanding in this area. Our Identity doesn't stop when we go into Lockdown. It only intensifies really, with greater need for ourselves and for others; a greater desire for community connection and belonging. Over the next few weeks in the Especean I will look at the core areas of Formation, Justice & Service Work and Liturgical Life. I will share the structure of each at the College and how all of us are involved, from students to families and Old Boys, as simply as possible.

I wish all of you a positive lockdown and pray that as soon as we can we get out and help those in greatest need again. Reach out to anyone if you need it, including me

As well as this series of articles you will see some articles by students in coming weeks looking at the Alice Springs Immersion and Sustainability Projects. Also if you haven't seen it yet *F W* from the Social Justice Action Group is a good read - [its-Time-Magazine-Semester-1-2021-.pdf \(spc.nsw.edu.au\)](https://www.spc.nsw.edu.au/its-time-magazine-semester-1-2021-.pdf)

## **Identity at SPC: Part 2**

### **Liturgical Life**

The Catholic identity of the College can most prominently be seen through our liturgical life. It is the core of our faith community for it is in celebrating rituals together that we

respect for the sacredness of the occasion, but not frowns and muffled voices or the like.

An increasing number of people seem to think that prayer and ritual are passive events; something that happens **to** them rather than something they **partake in**. There is always time for silent and individual prayer, but communal rituals are about joining as one to deepen our collective and individual relationships with God and to connect with one another through this shared experience. Communal singing in celebrations is really important because “to sing is to pray twice” (St Augustine) and many other components of the ritual reflect our prayers going to God. Quakers are passive in their prayer, Catholics are not.

We celebrate many rituals at the College for a variety reasons, one of which is education (which is best when it is regular), but the most important reason is as pure and simple as worshipping God together. Our collective voices join to show our devotion and remind ourselves of God’s great blessings upon us.

Here is a basic list of events in the St Patrick’s College liturgical life:

Whole School Masses - Opening Mass (start of the year) and Founder’s Day  
Parent Masses – Mothers’ Day and Fathers’ Day Masses

Community Masses - Friday morning Masses in the Chapel at 8.15am nearly every Friday of the year; each led by a year group, house group or other group; open to students, staff, parents and friends

Masses for Significant Events - Year 12 Graduation Mass, Year 6 Thanksgiving Mass, Year 5 Welcome Mass, Junior School Grandparents’ Mass, Junior School Mis-504Q 477.13 Tm0 g0 G[(Commun)-7(i)4(t)-5(y )11(Ma)9(s)5(s)5(

While we would love to be able to hold all liturgies in the Chapel that just isn't practical, so it is important we remember that Christ is where we are gathered with the intention to pray. We can, in turn, receive Christ through Word and/or Eucharist. Both are valid and important, hence why our Sunday obligation involves both – the two peaks of our celebration.

Liturgies are usually student led and often created by students. They show that all of us are called to lead worship of God through our Baptismal promises. As a College we also have a Faith Formation / Spirituality Prefect who helps lead in this area, and the Faith In Action Team (Co-curricular for Years 7 – 9) not only work for justice but contribute greatly to the liturgical life often through leadership. In addition, we are also blessed with a wonderful College Chaplain, Fr Jack Evans, whom leads through

Formation is also not just for the young. We, as adults, continue to be formed through all our life experiences and through particular events we choose to take up. I'm sure none of us would say we are the same person we were at 21. Maybe our values are the same, but our understanding and approach definitely evolve, just as they do for the students and staff at the College.

We offer a graduated formation package outlined in our Formation Vision from Year 5 to Year 12 and for staff. Over the years we have also offered opportunities to parents and Old Boys to varied interest. Each family should have a copy of this document but you can also find it on the website

By the time a student finishes their journey at St Patrick's College they will have covered all areas and be able to apply to life beyond school.

<b>Year</b>	<b>Formation Event</b>	<b>Core Theme</b>
5	Belonging Day	<b>Story</b>

**- Part 4**

## **Justice and Service**

There are so many good causes in the world and so many things we can support. There are more than we can possibly handle so as a college, we have made a choice to focus on issues of injustice and support partners who get very little attention elsewhere. We are committed to our first Australians, our newly arrived Australians, those who live on the margins through poverty and societal rejection, and all of creation, specifically the earth. We need to balance what we do so we do not demand too much or cause 'charity fatigue', hence why often we do not add extra things even when some want them. We need to care for you as if you were our neighbor.



## Service

- Ø Shining Our Light (SOL) Service – Years 5 to 10 on a graduated program of serving your family, your community, your College and our community.
- Ø Social Justice Service (SJS) – Year 11; working with and for various partners the College has, with those who are on the margins.
- Ø Staff also partake in service work throughout the year; modelling to students and contributing to the common good, as is our calling.
- Ø Parents too get involved in various ways, and it is the desire that Old Boys will continue to connect with partners beyond school. It is how our young men live their lives beyond St Patrick's College that is testament to what they have learned and who they are.
- Ø One of the most notable contributions of our staff, parents and Old Boys is donations to and participation in our SVDP Night Patrol service. We go out twice a month and support three evenings with food.

## Co-curricular

Junior School Justice (JSJ) – one afternoon per week all year for boys in Years 5 and 6; working on various initiatives that support Justice at the College

Faith In Action Team (FIAT) – one afternoon per week all year for boys in Years 7 to 9; working for justice with faith as its foundation and learning how to lead formation and liturgy.

Social Justice Action Group (SJAG) – one afternoon per week for boys in Years 10 to 12; lead the College in Justice initiatives and campaigns; the voice of compassion.

All of us, whether adult or child, is called to contribute because it is the right thing to do. It is not about recognition and reward, but about humility and respect.

Mission) is really about the other, and how by understanding who we are we can make lives better for all. We all know that the Mission of the Church is to make Christ known to others.

Wellbeing looks to ensure the care and development of the whole person in a pastoral manner. Our College's Wellbeing Framework looks at the five core dimensions, being Spiritual, Academic, Emotional, Social and Physical, all of which could incorporate elements of our Identity; serving as a foundation in our Catholic context.

I want to stress that everything crosses over both areas at the College but sometimes we need to be reminded that our Identity (Catholic Tradition) calls us to go beyond. As a College, we put a lot of emphasis on Wellbeing, and rightly so. We look at mental health, care for our students in lockdown, matters around gender equality, self-esteem, goal setting, problem solving, getting out of our comfort zone, challenging ourselves, learning life skills and the like. We wouldn't be doing our jobs if we didn't tackle these issues.

However, the realm of Identity is to go beyond. While many issues like gender equality cross both areas, Identity in the field of Justice calls us to look at the big picture, like climate change, homelessness, the rights of refugees and people seeking asylum in our world, the position of and respect we have for First Nations people and more. It is to be outward looking. Nevertheless, you can't look outwards until you have looked inwards (which comes with liturgical practice and Formation, as well as our Wellbeing programs and initiatives), and then once you look outwards you can see better and succeed internally. Thus, both must go hand in hand.

This is difficult to talk about on 'paper', but something I have observed for a while. Often when people are asked to look at Identity at the College they name mental health and issues related to themselves. Without one bit of criticism, it speaks a lot to who we are as a society. Everything is important and all areas need to be covered. I simply raise this to help to remind us to look outwards; to see beyond and to know that some beyond and to