

OVERVIEW

As we enter the 21st century our children will function in an increasingly complex society that will demand global participation. To be an effective citizen of this new, more complex world, they will need an understanding of the philosophical basis of our American culture. As a Church we assert that each individual is unique and formed in God's image. Therefore, they must also acquire skills for gaining and validating knowledge that will establish their personal and societal standards of ethics, justice, and our democratic way of life based on Scripture, Catholic Tradition, and Church teaching.

The curriculum strives to mesh these two approaches by introducing our students to the concepts that will shape and strengthen their perceptions of self and others as children of God. They will understand that, within the United States, each individual has the right to live in a democracy that guarantees individual rights and freedoms. By studying other systems of government they will understand and appreciate that our democratic form of government is only one of the many forms practiced throughout the world.

In preparing the guidelines the committee used the input from the articulation meetings and the evaluation survey of the strengths and weaknesses of the present guidelines. From these results, three goals established were 1) to place a stronger emphasis on the development of geography skills; 2) to develop concepts in a sequential manner so that our students will see continuity from year to year; and 3) to provide more time in the Eighth Grade program for adequate coverage of the Civil War.

The committee also used the National Standards for Social Studies, History, Geography, Civics and Government, and Economics.* The basic standards for Social Studies, History, Geography, Civics and Government, and Economics are included as an appendix the guidelines and/or a list of websites and addresses is included for acquiring details of the standards. Teachers are encouraged to consult the standards and to remember that empirical learning has greater impact for most students.

Current events is an integral part of the curriculum in each grade level and should be reviewed and discussed on a regular basis, keeping in perspective the suitability of the topic for the grade level. Where possible, current events should be related to curriculum and geography.

Our desire is to educate our students to be socially conscious citizens who will work to maintain the stability of the family, protect the environment, assure just governmental systems for all, and develop a love for God and all that he has made.

The Social Studies Committee

* At the present time the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has proposed standards for Civics and Government only. In the future, as the Commonwealth adopts standards in each of the areas that comprise Social Studies, the guidelines will be revised to reflect these standards.