
Include or Embrace

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As educators, we participate in many on-going professional development sessions. Earlier this year, I virtually attended a Canadian Christian Schools Leadership Conference and the focus of many of the sessions that I attended was on diversity. They shared an analogy that resonated with me and helped sharpen my focus on embracing all people, rather than just including them.

Imagine what happens when a family has a baby. They have two choices. The first is that the parents continue mostly in the way they have always done things. The baby is now included while mom and dad go out to the same restaurants, attend the same parties, and live the same lifestyle as before the baby was born. The second choice is to recognize and to respond to how the baby completely changes the dynamic of the family. Routines change. Ideas change. Priorities change. Simply including the baby in the familiar way of life would neither be welcoming nor be nourishing for the baby. In reality, what usually happens when a baby enters a family is that the family embraces the child - they change, they shift, and they celebrate the newness that the baby offers.

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In the conference sessions, we were encouraged to think about community in a similar way. When new members enter the school community, should the goal be to only include them - bringing them along in all the things we have previously done? This session led me to consider that simply including new people in the familiar ways of CCS may neither be welcoming nor be nourishing for anyone. Instead, we should look to embrace our community members by changing, by shifting, and by celebrating the newness that is offered. We have the opportunity to learn and be exposed to different perspectives, languages, foods, and ways of celebrating. As we make connections with people, our routines should change, our ideas should change, and our priorities should change.



As members of the Calgary Christian School community, we have the opportunity to embrace diversity. As Romans 12:5-6 says, "So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. We have different gifts, according to the grace given us." God has richly blessed our school by bringing people from all over the world to be part of this body. In the elementary school, there are 55 flags hanging in the gym, each one representing a country from which students have moved. This means that we have the firsthand opportunity to learn about and from 55 different cultures (and this number continues to grow!). We have the opportunity to make meaningful connections with people from a variety of different backgrounds, each made in the image of our Creator. Join me in celebrating the diversity of CCS and embracing our chance to learn from each other's gifts, so that together we become an even stronger body of Christ.



There are 55 flags from around the world hanging in the gym representing CCS families!