




Room at the Table

How we learn together as a diverse community of Jesus followers.

I love the images of banquet tables and wedding feasts that appear throughout the Bible. The idea that, in the name of Jesus, we intentionally invite and welcome all sorts of people; people with different needs, ideas, traditions, languages, etc. to share in the bounteous goodness that God provides.

I like to think that CCS is setting its own banquet table - a place where diverse peoples come to celebrate and learn together. And, it has to be a very BIG table. Think of all the different people, traditions, and experiences just within our school community: with more than 950 students from pre-K through grade 12, our families represent over 65 countries of origin, speak more than 40 languages in our respective homes, and worship in more than 120 churches in the greater Calgary area. That has to be a BIG table!

It shouldn't be surprising then, that around this table of diverse peoples, that differences of opinion - including differences in biblical interpretation and belief - will arise. These differences are often charged with emotion because the beliefs and faith practices we each hold have deep personal meaning and are anchored within our respective church traditions. So, how do we "keep our cool" and sustain "unity in Christ" when our ideas and practices differ? How do we graciously explore questions that appear to have competing Christian responses?



To encourage the helpful expression of differing ideas, the **Christian Worldview Integration and Oversight Policy** - or CWIP for short - was developed and approved by the CSCE Board. The policy does two things: first, it establishes the requirement for CCS to develop and operate a learning experience that integrates a biblically-informed, distinctly Christ-centered perspective (what we call “Worldview”) into all subject matter and activities. Secondly, it defines a simple approach to respectfully express and explore our differences as a community of Jesus followers.

CWIP states that while a reformed theological position - the philosophical heritage of our school’s mission - might be a starting point for the exploration of a topic, it makes space for other ideas to be intentionally and rigorously explored. We guide that process with this simple reminder: our discussions must be Rooted in scripture, Reflective of Christ’s image, and Respectful of diverse opinions.

On a practical level, the process might look something like this in high school: a discussion arises in class around a social issue. As part of the class discussion, a biblically informed response is shared. For some students this will be in line with what they know or have been taught. For others, it may be new or different from what they’ve known or experienced. In this instance, students are asked to pursue THEIR OWN response through an intentional questioning process that examines the issue by considering it using their intellect (reasoning), experience, the Bible (scripture) and their faith tradition / church teachings. We use the acronym R.E.S.T. (Reason, Experience, Scripture, Tradition) as an easy reminder of these steps.

This means the student will start by reading and reflecting on what the Bible has to say about the matter, and then ask their parents about their personal beliefs and that of their church. They will also reference other authorities who provide insight, data, and commentary on the topic. In this way, the student gets a 360 degree view of the topic informed by the values, beliefs, and mentors shaping their walk as a disciple of Jesus.

In the end, CWIP ensures a continued commitment to pursuing the truth of God’s Word in the context of a supportive community. At our community table, we share these “good manners” - which include graciousness, humility, encouragement, and respect - so that all CCS families can fully join in the community feast of celebration and learning.

