



**Christ Our Model.
Children Our Focus.**

**LCSD Programs
(March 2019)**

High Quality French Immersion Program At Lakeland Catholic School District

BONNYVILLE - Lakeland Catholic School District has offered high quality French Immersion instruction for over 40 years. Currently, seven out of eight schools in the



District offer French Immersion. In Cold Lake Holy Cross Elementary, St. Dominic Elementary and Assumption Jr/Sr High schools offer French Immersion while in Bonnyville the program is offered at École Notre Dame Elementary, École Dr. Bernard Brousseau and École Notre Dame High schools. French Immersion is offered from K-2 at Light of Christ Catholic School in Lac La Biche. Lakeland Catholic is committed to providing high quality French Immersion

instruction. Nearly one third of the students registered in the District are enrolled in the French Immersion program.

In the early immersion years, students learn to be very good listeners. They are encouraged to speak French all of the time, but during the first couple of years, they may use English to express complex thoughts for which they have not yet learned the required French words. Students may not always speak French outside of the classroom, but may use French sounds and words at play and sing French songs learned during class while interacting with friends. Children will listen to French being spoken by the teacher before they are expected to fully comprehend it.

In a typical French Immersion classroom, the 'gentle approach' is used. The teacher uses French all of the time, speaking in English only if the student's health or safety is at risk. Gestures, mime, pictures and objects are used to help children understand.

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Very quickly, through watching and listening, the students begin to recognize words and phrases, responding appropriately.

In Kindergarten, children are fully immersed in the French culture in order to provide them with the best start to their French language learning. In Kindergarten to grade 2, French instruction accounts for 90-100% of the day, in grades 3-6 around 80%, in grades 7-9 between 70-80%, and in grades 10-12 French instruction accounts for 25% of the school day.

Lakeland Catholic's French Immersion program follows the same Alberta curriculum as its English equivalent, including English Language Arts for French Immersion students. Research shows that students in French Immersion develop enhanced listening and learning skills and improved communication skills. The most positive impact occurs when a student begins their French learning experience at a young age.

Research has shown that second language students score higher on both verbal and non-verbal intelligence, are superior in divergent thinking tasks and in memory ability and attention span. They also have on average, higher test scores in reading, language and mathematics. Learning a second language also helps a child develop cross-cultural skills and have greater cultural sensitivity.

While Lakeland Catholic's French Immersion program begins in Kindergarten, children are still able to enroll at a later date. While it is easiest for them to begin with their peers, a child will never be turned away. Students enrolling at a later grade can find success in the program with the supports needed in place.



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Cultural and Language Learning Opportunities

During a student's educational journey through French Immersion, there is a plethora of opportunities and experiences available to them. Language is only one aspect of the French Immersion experience, with culture being equally important. Students take part in French cultural days, which include multiple activities such as the Cabane à sucre, le Bonhomme Carnaval Winter Carnival and they also get to watch various plays and French movies. At the Junior High and High School levels, students also have cultural trips available to them, such as the Junior High trip to Quebec, which takes place every two years, and the Senior High trip to France.



When students graduate from high school with French Immersion, they are able to receive a bilingual certificate from the school, marking their accomplishment. Following high school, students from our program have been successful in French post-secondary education, with some past students returning to our District to teach French Immersion to current students.

French does not stop at the classroom door. All Lakeland Catholic Schools include French Immersion components in their day-to-day activities, such as during morning announcements, prayer, assemblies, celebrations and even when students are walking down the halls. French posters and displays can be seen on the walls of our schools, helping students learn and appreciate the French language and culture.



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Diplôme d'études en langue française (DELF)

Four of our French Immersion teachers are accredited administrators of the *Diplôme d'études en langue française* (DELF). Chantal Sakowich, Kareen Gilbert, Jilliane Smyl and Anna Laplante completed a course in Edmonton to become certified administrators. With only 8 official writing centers in Alberta for this exam, Lakeland Catholic has affiliated itself with Edmonton Catholic Schools. Lakeland Catholic is the only district in our area with teachers certified to administer this exam to students.

DELF diplomas are francophone diplomas awarded to students from the National Ministry of Education of France, and are recognized around the world. DELF officially certifies the ability of a student to use French in real-life situations, and includes listening, reading, writing and speaking components. The DELF has four different levels (A1, A2, B1, B2) and students can decide beforehand the level they wish to challenge. Once a student receives their DELF diploma, it remains with them for life. It provides students with additional education advantages, such as providing them with the credential to apply for employment positions where there is a French language requirement, and French post-secondary programs.

The DELF exam is available to students in both Cold Lake and Bonnyville. It does not replace the mandatory French Language Arts 30 exam required by French Immersion students. DELF is voluntary and therefore it is only written if the student chooses to do so.

Professional and Experienced Staff

The French Immersion program at Lakeland Catholic Schools is extremely well established. With 40 plus years of experience, we are well aware of the challenges and hurdles, which need to be met in order to have a successful program.

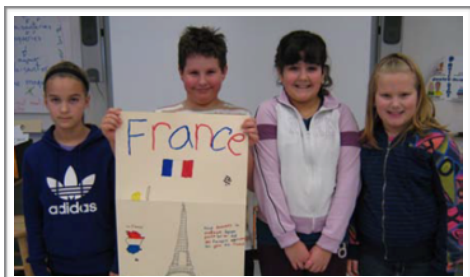
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One of the key factors to the success of our program is our bilingual and experienced teachers dedicated to teaching our students the French language. As previously mentioned, some of our teachers are graduates from our French Immersion program, which is a strong testament to the level of instruction students receive. We recruit French teachers from all over Canada with many being of Francophone backgrounds.



Lakeland Catholic has always seen the benefit of Professional Development, and staff are given every opportunity to keep up-to-date on cutting edge instructional strategies in the classroom. In addition to the experienced and extremely qualified instructional staff, Lakeland Catholic also has a strong support team to help students through the French Immersion program.

Parents of French Immersion Students



Many parents feel they will be unable to help their child at home should they choose to place them in a French Immersion program. At Lakeland Catholic, we ensure parents have all of the resources necessary to help their child succeed in their education. The concepts taught in French Immersion are universal; they are not necessarily language based, which means parents will be able to help their child master many of the concepts that they may be having difficulty with. Parents help by focusing on the concepts being taught and the underlying skills rather than the language learning, which the child will master in the classroom while immersed with their peers.

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Our best resource to help parents along the way is the teaching staff at Lakeland Catholic. They are not only there to teach the students, but to support parents throughout their child's journey. They are always available to answer any questions parents may have and provide advice to parents to help their child enhance their learning away from school.

The French Immersion Experience

From Kindergarten to Grade 12, students in the French Immersion program at Lakeland Catholic are provided with countless learning opportunities to better prepare them for graduation and entry into post-secondary education or the workforce. With the growing demand for multilingual employees, the knowledge of a second language will impact a child's career opportunities immensely. Lakeland Catholic will continue to provide high quality French language instruction to the students of this area. Parents and potential parents wanting more information on our French Immersion program are encouraged to visit our schools. Principals are always willing to provide a tour and show off the many learning tools used in the classroom. Lakeland Catholic Schools truly are the ideal schools for any child entering French Immersion.

For more information, please contact:

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