

May 23, 2024

To Whom it May Concern,

It is a great pleasure to recommend Elizabeth Gurney for work in leadership in your organization. I worked with Elizabeth for two years as her mentor teacher at Roanoke Catholic School while she was teaching theology there. Today, I continue to work with her as a ministry leader at Our Lady of Nazareth Catholic Church. A dedicated leader with enthusiasm and passion, Elizabeth is a joy to work with and inspires me to be a better teacher and leader myself.

When we work together, I regularly witness Elizabeth's passion for well-prepared lessons which engage and motivate students. At Roanoke Catholic, I would often hear enthusiastic shouts coming from the other side of the wall between our classrooms as students engaged in vocabulary games and excited discussions about the content of her lessons. And while Elizabeth was always well-prepared, she was also adept at handling the curve balls that frequently come our way as teachers. She was able to pivot when needed, and she always had a back up plan! She applies those same qualities to her work as the Coordinator of Middle School Youth Ministry, and, in addition, she leads a team of volunteers, as well as regularly communicating with parents and families.

Elizabeth's presence at Roanoke Catholic School was life-giving to the students and the faculty. She was the source of community building among the staff, and she made sure we never went too long without a gathering to cheer one another on. The students also enjoyed gathering with her, and they came to her for advice, support, and encouragement.

While Elizabeth adds to her community in so many ways, I think her most exciting contributions at Roanoke Catholic School were our all-school events. Elizabeth has a way of polishing and adding life to large gatherings so they always feel professional and exciting. I saw this happen many times, including our all-school morning gatherings for Catholic Schools Week. Elizabeth brought energy to these large group meetings, and we had preschool through seniors joining together for fun and exciting pep-fests! Elizabeth continues to plan and lead recurring, one-time, and even overnight events at Our Lady of Nazareth, and her work is always thorough and diligent. Participants and leaders can always participate knowing their time will be filled with something meaningful.

I could go on and on about what a well-qualified candidate Elizabeth is for your position. If you have any questions about her suitability, please don't hesitate to contact me at [vanden.eykel@gmail.com](mailto:vanden.eykel@gmail.com). I am pleased to recommend her.

Sincerely,

Ellen Vanden Eykel  
Director of Adult Formation  
Our Lady of Nazareth Catholic Church  
Roanoke, Virginia