

# Section 1

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## Context

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*'Having tested the ground, the sower sends out his workers to proclaim the Gospel through all the world and to that end shares with them the power of the Spirit. At the same time he shows them how to read the signs of the times and asks of them special preparation which is necessary to carry out the sowing.'*

*(General Directory for Catechesis, n. 51)*



## 1.1 For Us and Our Time -

### Changing Contexts

The Tradition of the Catholic Church is a dynamic reality shaped by every generation as living witnesses respond to the presence of Jesus Christ among them. The challenge for educators is to nurture our own faith response whilst being mindful of the lives of our students and the historical context in which we live. The Second Vatican Council reminded us that the Holy Spirit speaks to us in a variety of ways but especially through Sacred Scripture, through the voice of the Church and through the “signs of the times” – that is, “authentic signs of God’s presence and purpose in the happenings, needs and desires” shared by contemporary people (*Gaudium et Spes* n11).’

Responding to the “signs of the times” in the church and in the world commits this Religious Education Curriculum to an intentional focus on reconciliation. Reconciliation, central to the mission of Jesus and a meaningful model for evangelisation, is the transformation of the heart that leads to the unity of all humankind with God through restoring right relationships. Focus on the spirituality of reconciliation: how reconciliation is experienced, how that experience can become a key to a new way of living, and how that way of living might be shared with and transmitted to others is fundamental to the total experience of God transforming the lives of teachers, parents and students (Schreiter, 1998, p. 5).

Understanding and defining the role of religious education in the Catholic School encompasses understanding the world of the student, focusing especially on the family, the classroom curriculum and methodology within the context of Church. Articulating and expressing Catholic identity in a post modern context of plurality and ambiguity presents the challenge of finding meaningful and authentic ways of connecting with God, self and others. An holistic curriculum needs to be presented to inform about the spiritual wisdom of the Christian faith found in the Scriptures, in Tradition and in the Liturgy. This engages young people’s reason, memory and imagination and leads to a whole way of life reflected in the total life of the school community where family, school and parish work together. Catholic identity is personal but it is lived in community.

Learning and teaching in religious education must respond to changing contexts and circumstances. *Source of Life* offers an invitation, a structured approach and an evaluative framework to teachers and leaders, so that they might respond creatively to the challenges they face. These include:

#### Directions in Australian Society

- more open and vulnerable to global issues and patterns
- more aware of national identity and character
- changes in the structure of work, family and social life
- more diverse ethnically, including religious traditions
- increasing wealth in an increasingly impoverished region



### **Directions in the Australian educational context**

- alignment of national curriculum frameworks around an Essential Learnings approach aimed at promoting deep understanding
- renewed understandings of the dynamics of teaching and learning
- intensive professional development of teachers
- extended learning pathways and alternative learning environments for students, especially in the Post-Compulsory Years
- increasing impact of information and communications technologies in all curriculum areas
- articulation of professional standards of practice for teachers
- focus on reporting to parents and employability outcomes

### **Changes in the Catholic community**

- decreasing participation by Catholics in regular worship and church-based activities
- broader range of beliefs and values held by Catholic people
- greater solidarity with Christians of other traditions and people of other faiths
- fewer clergy and religious women and men providing full-time ministry
- more roles for non-ordained Catholics in pastoral ministry, governance, administration and worship
- stronger focus on community building and belonging

### **Changes in Catholic schools**

- clearer focus on the core business of learning and teaching
- more students and families with little or no explicit religious participation
- greater awareness of accountability and standards
- challenges of securing appropriate staff
- higher expectations to meet a range of student needs
- some anxiety about a perceived diminishment of Catholic ethos of schools
- many teachers pursuing courses in Theology, Scripture and Religious Education

### **Directions in Church teaching on Catholic schools**

- centrality of the development of the human person
- role of the school in the mission of evangelization
- awakening the religious dimension of all curriculum areas
- the contribution of Catholic schools to the common good of society
- the rich vocation of teaching

Within the context of the Church, the publication of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1992, English edition, 1994), the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997), and *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium* (1997) have influenced the development and implementation of religious education curriculum documents across Australia. Ultimately the task is '*to discern how to live the Christian faith in a way that is receptive of the Tradition and alert to the needs of the present. Our ways of acting in the present must remind our culture that humanity's fulfilment can only be in God*'. (Lennan, 2004)



## 1.2 Features and Components of the Religious Education Curriculum

The *Source of Life* Religious Education Curriculum responds to the contemporary context by having the following features:

- its reference points for content are the Sacred Scripture, the Tradition and the Church's Magisterium (*GDC*, n. 120); particularly as expressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- its reference points for *methodology* are found in the *General Directory for Catechesis* and the Church's documents on evangelisation in Catholic education, catechesis and religious education; the commitment to a critical and creative adaptation of Shared Christian Praxis; current research on teaching and learning
- its reference point for *curriculum structure* is outcomes-based education as articulated in contemporary educational documents and reflected in curriculum practice
- it recognizes the essential educational partnership of home, school, parish and diocese, and sees classroom-based Religious Education as one significant component of a broader education in faith provided by all these groups
- its content includes a strong social justice focus, including reconciliation with indigenous Australians and creation theology. 'Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world fully appear as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the gospel'

(Synod of Bishops, *Justice in the World*, 1971, n. 6)

- this curriculum is the result of collaboration among all who share the responsibility for Religious Education in Catholic schools across and within the dioceses of Ballarat, Sale, Sandhurst and the Archdiocese of Hobart
- it recognizes the importance of information and communications technology in planning, delivering and monitoring rich learning experiences.



## 1.3 Guiding Principles

The development of the *Source of Life* Religious Education curriculum is centred on the person and mission of Jesus Christ and has been guided by the following principles:

- Religious Education invites us to meet, experience and develop a relationship with a loving God in the journey of life.
- Religious Education is sharing and experiencing Scripture in order to develop a relationship with Jesus which will be evident in our everyday lives.
- Religious Education is a process of searching which engages the whole person, giving meaning to and purpose for our human existence.
- Religious Education links our Catholic story to our personal story, connecting life and faith, faith and culture.
- Religious Education urges us to reflect upon and celebrate our beliefs within a Spirit-filled community.
- Religious Education seeks to nurture and develop an understanding, sensitivity and acceptance of differences so that we live peacefully and justly.
- Religious Education calls us to respect God's creation and responsibly exercise our creative spirit.

*(Sandhurst School Education Board (SSEB) Religious Education Policy, 2000)*

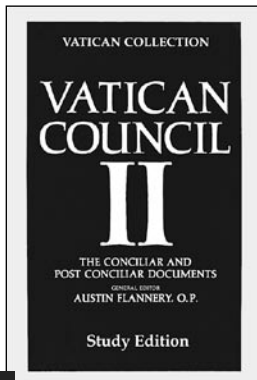
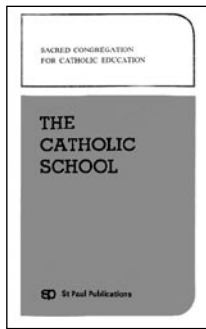
In responding to the 'signs of the times' and the mission of reconciliation, it is the intention of this curriculum to:

- be faithful to the Tradition of the Catholic Church while drawing on the richness of contemporary theology
- belong within the culture of the school, working in harmony with home and parish
- be inclusive in that it respects and responds to differences in culture, background and experiences
- employ effective strategies of teaching and learning, especially those that can most engage students in reflective exploration of Catholic teaching, culture and worship
- be organised within a sequential P-12 framework, supported by appropriate policies and programs



# 1.4 Church Documents: Educational and Catechetical

The *Source of Life* Religious Education curriculum draws on the wisdom of the universal and local Church in presenting explanations of evangelisation, catechesis, religious education and Catholic schooling.



Documents of Vatican II (VCII)

The Catholic School (CS)

Lay Catholics in Schools:  
Witnesses to Faith (LCS)

The Religious Dimension of Education in a  
Catholic School (RDECS)

The Catholic School on the Threshold of the  
Third Millennium (CSTTM)

Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)

General Directory for Catechesis (GDC)

Renewal of the Education of Faith (REF)

The Interpretation of the  
Bible in the Church (BC)

The Code of Canon Law (CCL)

Catechesis in Our Time (CT)

*Catechesi Tradendae*

At the Beginning of the New Millennium (NMI)

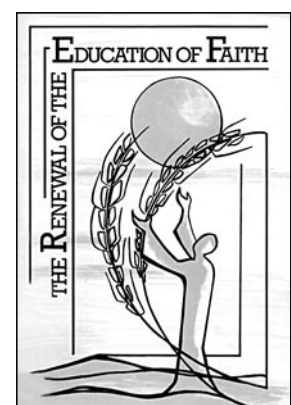
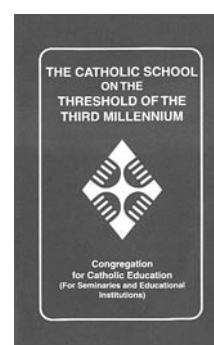
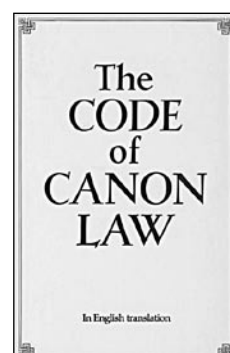
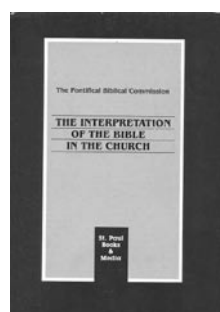
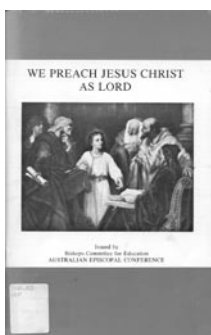
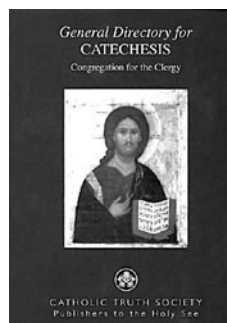
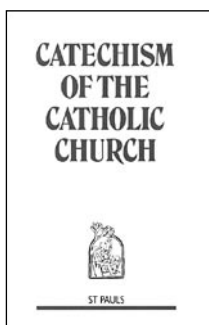
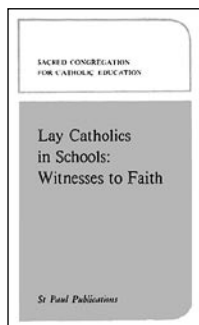
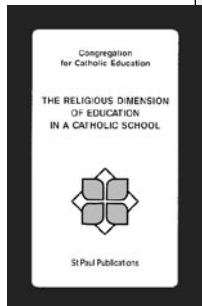
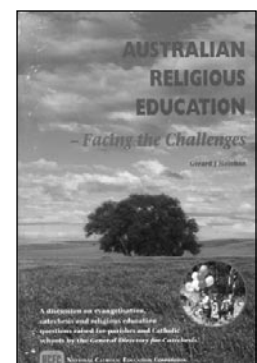
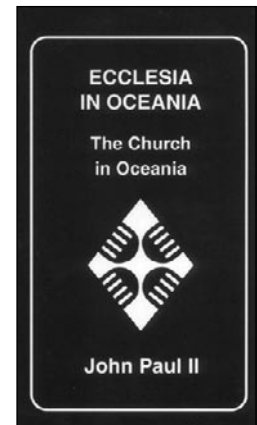
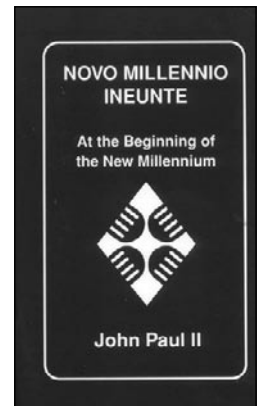
*Novo Millennio Ineunte*

The Church in Oceania (EO)

*Ecclesia in Oceania*

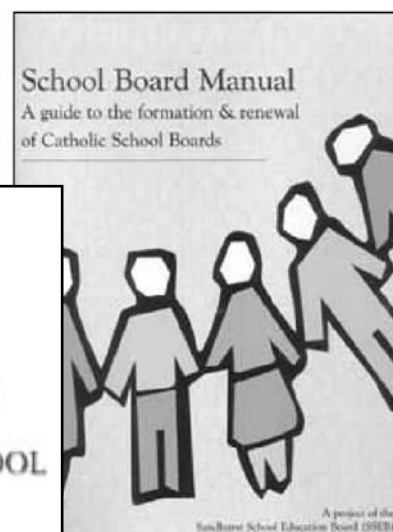
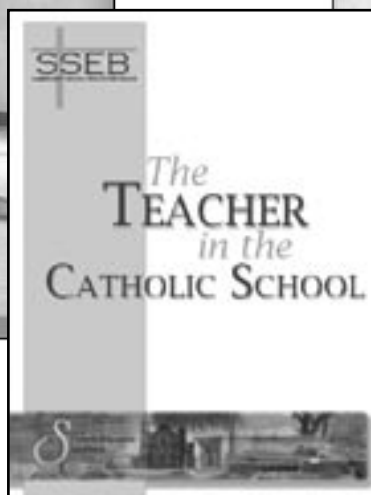
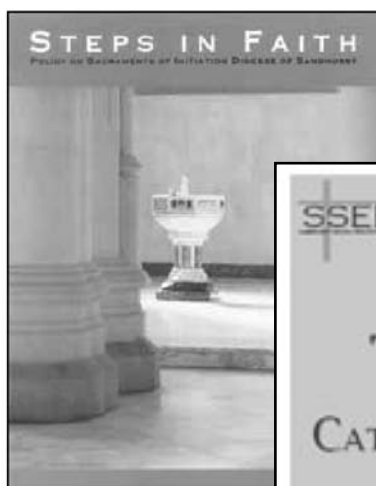
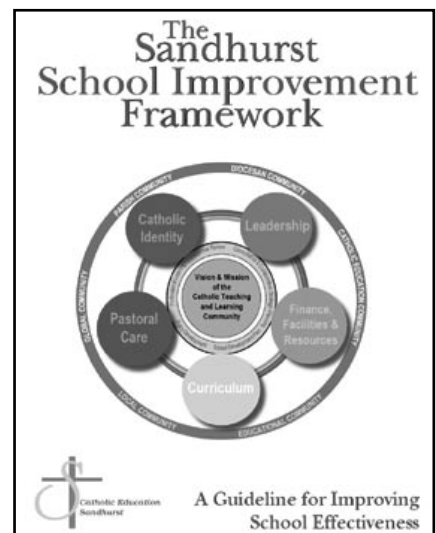
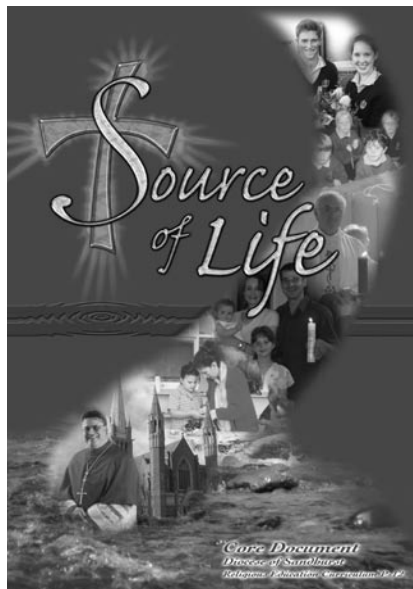
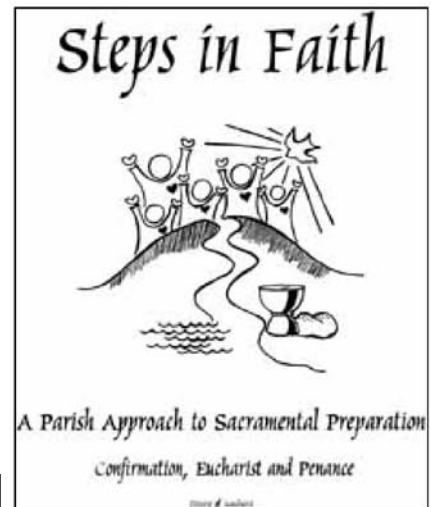
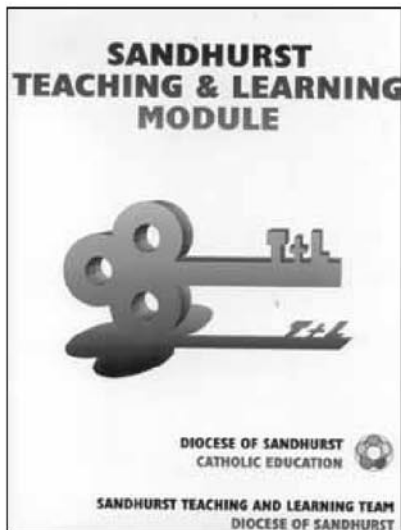
Australian Religious Education –

Facing the Challenges (ARE)

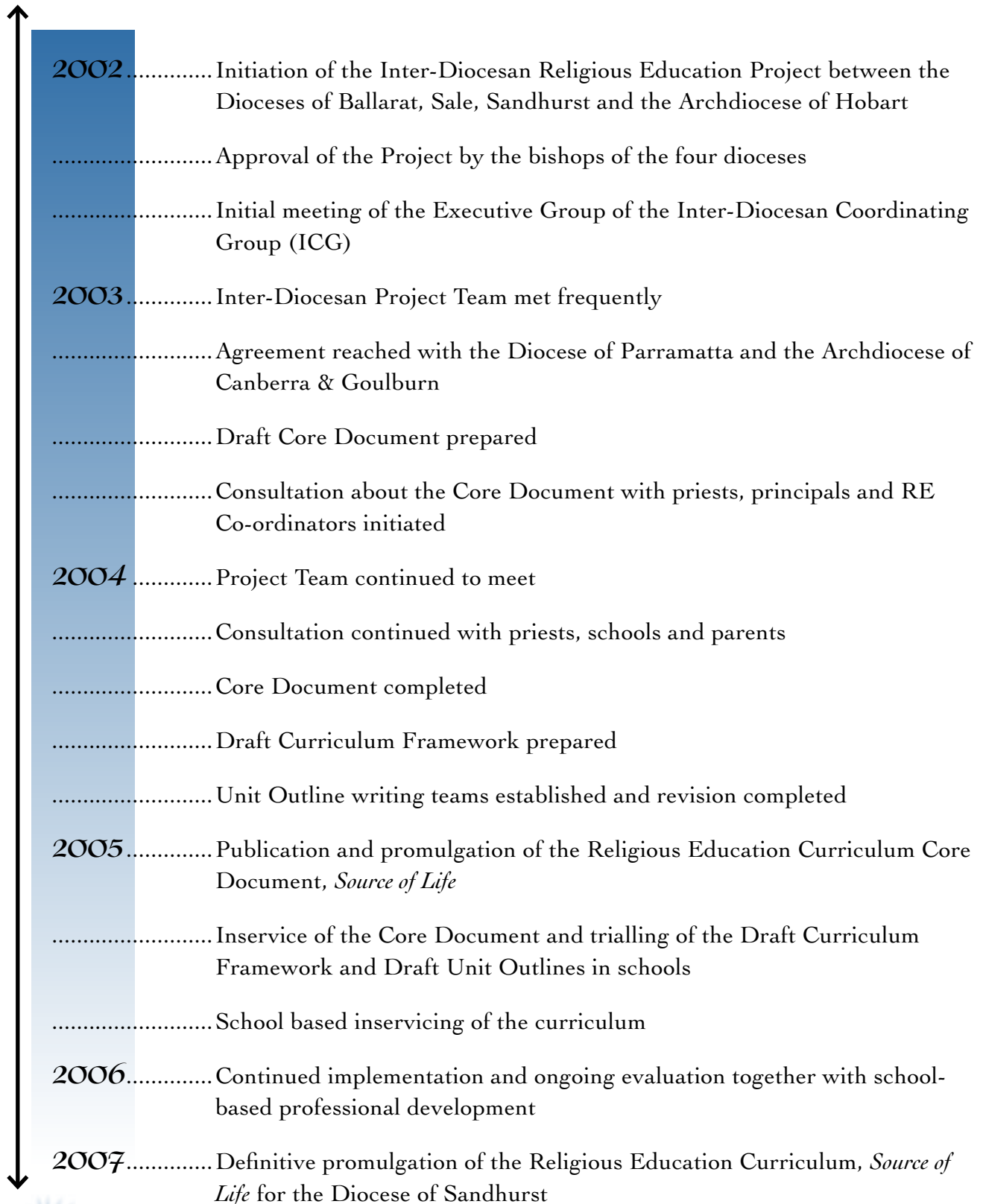




# The Religious Education Curriculum in Context of Diocesan Documents



# 1.5 The Process of Developing the Religious Education Curriculum





## 1.6 Overview of Curriculum Documents

### Core Document

This document provides parish priests, parish leaders, principals, Coordinators of Religious Education, teachers and parents with an overview of the *Source of Life* Religious Education curriculum. It places the Religious Education curriculum in its ecclesial, educational and social context and outlines the curriculum model that is followed.

### Curriculum Framework

The Curriculum Framework is structured around level outcomes and doctrinal concepts in seven (primary) and eight (secondary) content areas. The level outcomes and doctrinal concepts organised in strands and levels, and the unit outlines comprise the Curriculum Framework.

### Support Documentation for Teachers and Parents

This provides level-specific information and support to teachers working with students in the different levels of schooling. It is also valuable for parents in understanding their child's development across a number of areas. Parent support materials will be provided in a variety of formats.

### Professional Learning Materials

These will provide religious educators, particularly those in leadership, with assistance on the planning, implementation and ongoing evaluation of the *Source of Life* Religious Education curriculum within the school. These materials will also assist deeper understandings of the pedagogical process and the development of rich learning experiences.

### Web Site CEO Home Page

Information technology will enable the ongoing editing and updating of Unit Outlines and the provision of additional program exemplars. It also has the capacity to support greater collaboration among dioceses and schools through the sharing of ideas, resources and online materials. The Diocesan Resource Centre also provides web-based support in resourcing the curriculum and in teacher professional learning.

**Website address:** [www.ceo.sand.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ceo.sand.catholic.edu.au)



## Section 2

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# *Religious Education and the Catholic School*

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*'The Catholic school participates in the evangelising mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out.'*

*(The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, n. 11)*



## 2.1 The Mission: Evangelisation

At the heart of the work of the Church is the bringing of the Gospel to all, to renew and transform the world. This is the evangelising mission of the Church, requiring the attention and effort of everyone who belongs to it. To evangelise is to promote the Christian message and a conversion of heart towards Jesus Christ.

*...evangelizing means bringing the Good News into all the strata of humanity, and through its influence transforming humanity from within and making it new. (EN, n. 18)*

Evangelisation is not a one-dimensional process. It occurs in the time, place and reality of the people involved, calling all to conversion. Within this, however, there are two foundational principles, *Christian witness* (EN, n. 21) and *ministry of the word*. (GDC, n. 50)



### Christian Witness

This is usually the first element of any evangelisation, leading to curiosity and questioning of the nature and relevance of Christian living. It involves personal example, but is much more than this. Christian witness is not demonstrated from a distance, but needs to be caught up in the lives and needs of others, based on love and truth, and enacted with respect and solidarity. It is especially concerned with the poor and needy, promotes justice, peace and the social good, and occurs through the vibrant lives and works of Christians.

### Ministry of the Word

Evangelisation is shared by the ministerial priesthood and the priesthood of the laity reaching out to others through any communication concerned with God's work. This involves helping others become aware of the Christian message and move towards an initial faith in Jesus Christ (*primary proclamation*), the maturing of initial faith through Church teaching, sacraments, Christian life and prayer (*initiatorial catechesis or catechumenate*), ongoing formation and growth in faith (*catechesis*), as well as religious education. It will involve, but not be restricted to, scripture, prayer, history, liturgical events, homilies, spiritual exercises, theological insights, personal faith sharing and diverse learning experiences.



## 2.2 *New Evangelisation*

All evangelisation promotes ongoing conversion - or a continual turning towards Jesus Christ - from the first stirrings of a response, through baptism, to a life-long deepening and maturing of faith.

However, for many who are baptised, this conversion does not take place or has ceased to occur. They may:

- *have lost a living sense of faith*
- *no longer consider themselves members of the Church*
- *live lives far removed from Christ and his Gospel*

*(cf. General Directory for Catechesis, n.58(c))*

The Church recognises that this requires a special pastoral focus which it calls *New Evangelisation* (GDC, n.58). It has been identified as the first priority for the Church in Oceania (EO, n.18). New Evangelisation continues the clear and unequivocal proclamation of the person of Jesus Christ, that is, the preaching of his name, his teaching, his life, his promises and the Kingdom which he has gained for us through the Paschal Mystery. New Evangelisation seeks to address a modern world often indifferent to religion and distracted by individualism, consumerism and relativism. Catholic schools, as part of the Church in Australia are challenged to respond to the imperative of *New Evangelisation* as the pastoral strategy for the students and parents within each community.

Whilst accommodating and maintaining respect for human freedom and difference, *New Evangelisation* seeks to:

- raise religious awareness
- promote interest in the Gospel
- promote ongoing conversion to Christ, developing a personal relationship with him
- encourage faith in Christ's basic teachings

Catholic schools, as manifestations of Church, are intimately involved in evangelisation through Word, Witness, Welfare and Worship.



*'The Catholic school participates in the evangelising mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out.'*

*(CSTTM, n. 11)*





**Parents**, as the first teachers of their children, retain prime responsibility for fostering their growth, by word and example, in faith and Christian living.

*'It is particularly in the Christian family... that children should be taught from their early years to have a knowledge of God according to the faith received in Baptism, to worship Him, and to love their neighbour...*

*it is through the family that they are gradually led to a companionship with their fellowmen and with the people of God. Let parents, then, recognize the inestimable importance a truly Christian family has for the life and progress of God's own people.'*

*(Gravissimum Educationis, n. 3)*

The **bishop** is responsible for ensuring that the mission and Tradition of the Church is taught and expressed faithfully throughout the schools.

*'For the particular church entrusted to them, that office (of preaching the Gospel) is exercised by individual bishops, who are the moderators of the entire ministry of the Word in their churches...'*

*(Code of Canon Law, 1983, Can. 756 #2)*



The local **parish priest/canonical administrator**, who has responsibility for the proclamation of the Word of God, ensures that the Religious Education policy is implemented in the school community in conformity with the Religious Education curriculum established by the bishop.

*'The parish priest has the obligation of ensuring that the word of God is proclaimed in its entirety to those living in the parish...'*

*(Code of Canon Law, 1983, Can. 528 #1)*

Leaders of **religious institutes** ensure that schools owned and/or operated by them express and foster their mission in the church, recognising the special spirituality and charism proper to each institute. These schools also work in partnership with the bishop of the diocese in which they are located.

*'The charisms of the various religious communities express this common task (of religious education) but with their own proper emphases, often of great religious, social and pedagogical depth. History demonstrates the vitality which these charisms have brought to the church's educational activity.'*

*(General Directory for Catechesis, n. 229)*







Exercising particular leadership responsibilities in the school community, the **principal** ensures that the school staff develops an ethos and programs that are faithful to the religious identity of the school, to the Religious Education policy and to the needs and maturity of the students.

*'The Catholic School participates in the evangelising mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out. In this way Catholic schools are at once places of evangelisation, of complete formation, of inculturation, of apprenticeship in a lively dialogue between young people of different social backgrounds...'*

*(CSTTM, n.11).*

It is the teacher in the **classroom** who cooperates with the bishop, priest, principal, parents, students, other teachers, school programs and Religious Education curriculum to fulfil the evangelising mission of the Church within each classroom and for each student.

*In the Catholic school, 'prime responsibility for creating this unique Christian school climate rests with the teachers, as individuals and as a community'.*

*(RDECS, n.26)*



*'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.'*

*Luke 4:18-19*





## 2.3 Catechesis in the Process of Evangelisation



Catechesis is a vital element in the Evangelising work of the Church and its schools. It is a life-long process that seeks to continue conversion and deepen faith.

*“The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ”...It proposes to help those who have just converted “to know better this Jesus to whom he has entrusted himself: to know his ‘mystery’, the kingdom of God proclaimed by him, the requirements and*

*comments contained in his Gospel message, and the paths that he has laid down for anyone who wishes to follow him”. Baptism, the sacrament by which “we are configured to Christ”, sustains this work of catechesis with the help of its grace. (GDC, n. 80)*

The primary places in which catechesis takes place are Christian faith communities, particularly within families and parishes (*RDECS, n. 68*). Catechesis is distinct from Religious Education, though very closely related: each complements the other (*GDC, n. 73*). Catechesis has a concern with the experiential and behavioural to form and nurture Christian faith and life amongst baptised believers. Religious Education does not presuppose faith in its students and is predominantly concerned with cognitive and affective learning and understanding.

*‘It is evident that religious instruction cannot help but strengthen the faith of a believing student, just as catechesis cannot help but increase one’s knowledge of the Christian message.’ (RDECS, n. 69)*

This distinction does not mean schools have no part to play in catechesis, quite the contrary. However, the degree to which the school can successfully catechise depends on the level of faith commitment of individual students. In every class, students are at various levels of religious awareness and faith development so the approach to and effectiveness of catechesis will vary from one person and situation to the next. (*RDECS, n. 69*)

Catechesis seeks to promote communion with Jesus Christ by:

- sharing and deepening experiences of God as revealed by Jesus
- helping people recognise experiences of the Holy Spirit within
- helping people grow in awareness of their human questions and yearning through reflection on human experiences in the light of the Gospel
- seeking ‘to form the personality of the believer’ (*GDC, n. 33*)



**E**vangelisation and catechesis take place within the total life of the school as well as within the formal, classroom-centred programs.

Both are most obviously experienced in:

- school and class liturgies and prayers
- retreats and reflection days
- the relationships throughout the school community
- the celebration of special events
- programs that reach out in service to the wider community
- classroom Religious Education
- the witness of the school community.



*'The Church, in transmitting the faith, does not have a particular method nor any single method. Rather, she discerns contemporary methods in the light of the pedagogy of God and uses with liberty "everything that is true, everything that is noble, everything that is good and pure, everything that we love and honour and everything that can be thought virtuous or worthy of praise' (Phil 4:8)*

*(General Directory for Catechesis, n. 148)*

*'...experience, assumed by faith, becomes in a certain manner, a locus for the manifestation and realization of salvation, where God, consistently with the pedagogy of the Incarnation, reaches people with his grace and saves them. The catechist must teach them to read their own lived experiences in this regard, so as to accept the invitation of the Holy Spirit to conversion, to commitment, to hope, and to discover more and more in life God's plan for them.'*

*(General Directory for Catechesis, n. 152)*



## 2.4 The Culture of the Catholic School

The Catholic school responds to its mission by offering a particular cultural experience that is grounded in ‘...a Christian view of the world, of culture and of history’. (*CSTTM, 1997, n. 14*)

This translates into a Christ-centred ethos and worldview that permeates all aspects of school life including relationships, structures, liturgies, celebrations and routines, as well as the formal curriculum.



Its identity reflects the principles of Catholic Social Justice, grounded in the person of Jesus and interpreted and enacted for the ‘common good’ in response to the ‘signs of the times’. These principles require that the dignity and potential of each person be fully respected within a climate that is conducive to peace, security and development. This must find expression in the relationships, structures, curricula, planning, processes and care in the every day life of the school. (*cf. Sandhurst School Improvement Framework, 2005*)

It is reasonable to expect that a school embedded in this Catholic worldview will display certain fundamental and distinguishing characteristics. These should include commitment to:

- being grounded in the local Christian community that is centred on the person of Jesus and guided by the Gospel
- fostering the holistic development of each student
- participating in the evangelising mission of the Church
- being formed in knowledge of the teaching of the Catholic Church
- assisting students to integrate their faith, their culture and their experiences of life
- practising a fundamental option for the poor and the weak
- offering a service to individuals, society and the wider culture
- transforming society in light of the kingdom which Jesus announced
- pursuing opportunities to promote justice, reconciliation and environmental responsibility locally and globally
- integrating policies, practices, curriculum content and delivery, and relationships
- expressing its identity in welcome, word, welfare and worship.





In summary, the Catholic school provides a curriculum, indeed a total cultural experience, within which students have opportunities to hear, experience and witness the Good News and to respond to the person and message of Jesus.

Within the context of school life, students have a variety of opportunities to experience and participate in liturgy and public prayer. Liturgical celebrations enable the Catholic school community to express its relationship with God and with one another. They are central to the expression of the school community's identity and its identity within the local parish.

Catholic schools are focused on educating the whole person so that the total educational experience offered has the potential to inform, form and transform students. The link between the school's Vision and Mission Statements is being made explicit through the articulation of Graduate Outcomes. These outcomes describe the competencies, attitudes, values and behaviours seen as desirable in students educated in a Catholic school.

They focus on:

- religious faith and development
- spirituality and search for meaning in life
- personal integration of beliefs and commitments
- life skills, ethical and intellectual competence
- social responsibility
- Christian values and attitudes, informing and forming conscience.

*'The school must develop persons who are responsible and inner-directed, capable of choosing freely in conformity with their conscience...it is an institution where young people gradually learn to open themselves up to life as it is, and to create in themselves a definite attitude to life as it should be'. (The Catholic School, n. 31)*



*'What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?'*

*Micah 6:8*



## 2.5 *The Teacher in the Catholic School*

Teaching is an activity involving relationships. Through their relationships with their students, teachers teach what they value, what they believe, and something of what they know. Teachers share opportunities and pressures with the rest of society. As single and married individuals, as parents, as people of different ages and backgrounds, they experience, at first hand, much of the world of their various students. There are, however, other considerations that help shape their professional lives. Most important is their need to integrate a range of expectations.

### **Expectations of the Church**

The Church expects its teachers to:

- share its mission of spreading the Gospel of hope by word and action
- work within and for the benefit of the Church community through active participation in parish and church life
- contribute to the creation of the particular religious culture within the school, a culture that teaches through its stories and symbols, its rhetoric and relationships, its celebrations, liturgies and its underlying values
- work in partnership with other teachers, with parents and with relevant members of parish and diocesan communities
- demonstrate professional competence (Victorian Institute of Teaching Standards of Professional Practice)

In responding to these expectations, teachers have great opportunities to strengthen their own faith while serving both church and society.

### **Expectations of parents**

Parents expect their children to be educated in a climate of care and safety. They want competent teaching that is grounded in life-giving values. A great many of them expect their children to have a sound knowledge and meaningful experience of Catholic life and teaching.

The trust that is placed in teachers provides them with powerful opportunities to serve others. The only ongoing formal experience that many families have of Church is the Catholic school attended by the children.

### **Expectations of public policy**

A societal and government led agenda of curriculum change and accountability affects all Australian schools, bringing with it increasing demands on teachers.

Teachers in Catholic schools are challenged to manage this agenda in ways that reinforce the Catholic identity of the school and respond to the needs of all its students.

In bringing a religious perspective to curriculum change, teachers are able to offer a valuable service to education generally.







## Expectations of students

Students look to their teachers for guidance and example. They expect to be treated fairly. They are well served when their teachers inspire them, develop their potential, widen their horizons and catch their imagination. In responding to such expectations, teachers can find special significance in their own lives.

The **teacher of religious education** is expected to display particular personal and professional qualities in relationships with colleagues, parents and with students. Religious educators are knowledgeable and skilled classroom practitioners in the field of religious education, give authentic Christian witness to a living faith and work as collegial members of the school and parish faith community. School authorities can assist teachers to value and enrich their spiritual life in ways appropriate to their stage of life, prior experience, life situation and personal style.

Personal qualities of a competent religious educator include:

- being a person of prayer who is attentive to their own spirituality
- being informed about current issues of faith
- displaying the ability to integrate the faith tradition and life
- being actively involved in parish life
- displaying creativity, openness and a willingness to work in partnership with colleagues

## Pope John Paul II speaks to Australian teachers

‘The life of a teacher, as I know from personal experience, is very challenging and demanding, but it is also profoundly satisfying.

It is more than a job, for it is rooted in our deepest convictions and values. To be intimately concerned in the development of a young person, of hundreds of young people, is a highly responsible task.

As teachers, you kindle in your students a thirst for truth and wisdom. You spark off for them a desire for beauty. You introduce them to their cultural heritage. You help them to discover the treasures of other cultures and peoples.

What an awesome responsibility and privilege is yours in the teaching profession.’

*(Pope John Paul II's address on Catholic Education, Melbourne, 1986)*





## 2.6 Community and Partnership

The Catholic school does not function in isolation. In attending to the religious dimension of Catholic schooling, the most fundamental partnerships are those with parents/guardians and with local Catholic faith communities. The school is part of the wider Church community.

*‘...this ecclesial dimension (of the Catholic school) is not a mere adjunct but a proper and specific attribute, a distinctive characteristic which penetrates and informs every moment of its educational activity, a fundamental part of its very identity and the focus of its mission.’*

*(The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, n. 11)*

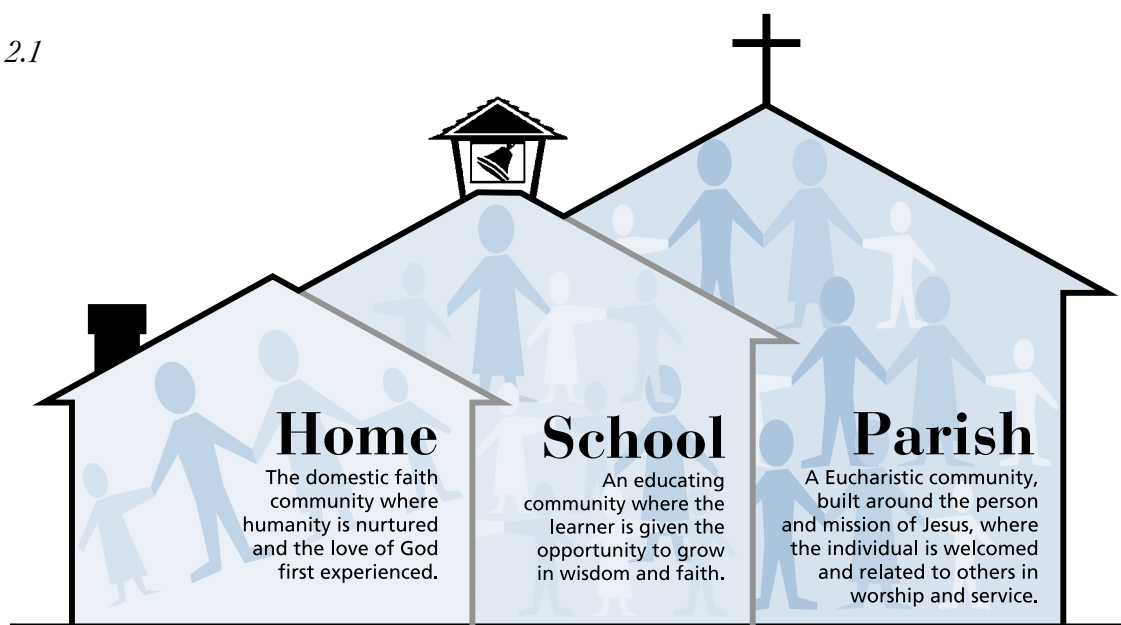
In this context, the tasks of evangelisation, catechesis and religious education are shared by home, school and parish, with each having its own distinct contribution to make in a sense of genuine partnership.

The home is a **domestic faith community** where humanity is nurtured and the love of God first experienced. ‘The childhood religious awakening which takes place in the family is irreplaceable.’ (General Directory for Catechesis, n. 226)

The Catholic school is an **educating community** where the learner is given both formal and informal opportunities to grow in wisdom and faith.

The parish is a **Eucharistic community** where people are welcomed, united in worship and invited to service. All three are called to **partnership** based on a common vision.

Figure 2.1



*‘... be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.’*

*Philippians 2:2*



## PARTNERSHIP IN FAITH

The support and interest of parents/guardians are as vital to successful outcomes in the religious aims of education as they are in literacy, numeracy or health. Many parents need the school's partnership of guidance and encouragement to assist them in the religious awakening and nurturing of their child.

An example of active partnership is seen in developments around the preparation of children for celebrating the Sacraments. The parents, as the children's first and principal educators, provide an introduction to the Sacraments by word and example. In the Secondary context, parents have the opportunity to be actively involved in the Christian outreach and other extra-curricular programs as students discover their identity and their capacity for contribution to society.

The parish supports the home by providing a more systematic catechesis through parish-based/family-centred programs of sacramental preparation. (*Steps in Faith, Sandhurst Diocese, 2nd Edition, 2005*)

The school complements these endeavours by focusing on particular sacramental celebrations, and by including a systematic study of the Sacraments in its Religious Education program.



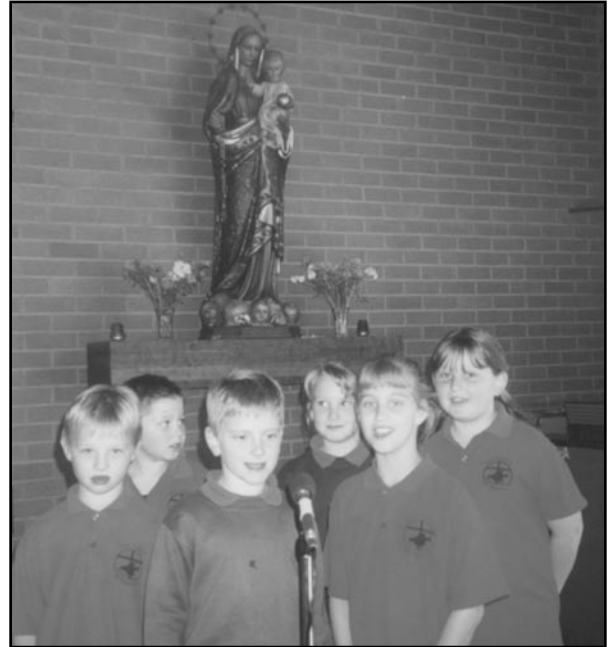
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*'Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.'*

*I Corinthians 12: 4-7*



## 2.7 *The Purpose of Catholic Religious Education*



## 2.8 Classroom Religious Education

Classroom-based programs provide a systematic and comprehensive form of religious education. They emphasise what is often referred to as the **instructional** aspect of education; they have their own Curriculum Framework and incorporate the various teaching and learning processes that characterise other contemporary classroom programs.

While Religious Education teachers give witness to and present the Christian message, they cannot presuppose an **initial** religious faith in their students. What they can do is **foster an understanding** of the teachings of the Gospel, the nature of Christianity and the way Catholics are called to live their lives within the Catholic tradition.



Fostering this deeper understanding and teaching in a way that is relevant to the world in which the students are growing will promote genuine faith development. Teachers are encouraged to take Jesus as their model. In the parable of the sower (Mark 4:3-8) Jesus proclaims that the Kingdom of God is near despite the varying conditions affecting growth.

As religious educators, teachers use a wide range of educational strategies to encourage the learner to reflect on self, the world and God in the light of personal experience, sacred Scripture and Tradition. In so doing they seek to cultivate reflection, discernment, decision-making and action, and to nurture the development of an informed conscience.

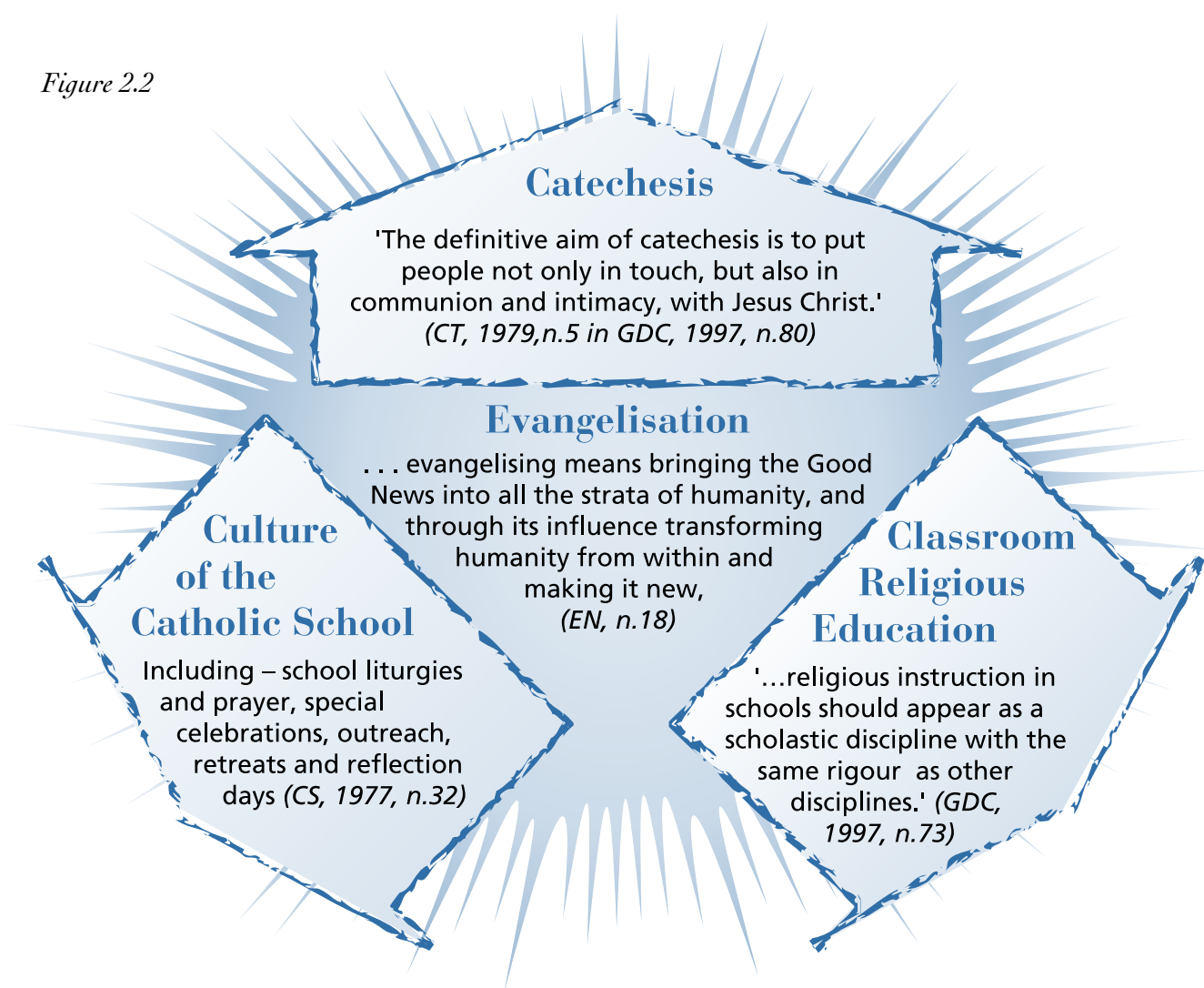
*'What confers on religious instruction in schools its proper evangelizing character is the fact that it is called to penetrate a particular area of culture and to relate with other areas of knowledge. As an original form of the ministry of the word, it makes present the Gospel in a personal process of cultural, systematic and critical assimilation... religious instruction in schools should appear as a scholastic discipline with the same rigour as other disciplines.'*

*(General Directory for Catechesis, n.73)*

At its best, religious education sets out to inform, form and transform learners and teachers by engaging them with the intellectual, ethical and spiritual richness of the Catholic tradition. Religious education invites and enables a lifelong journey of awakening to the deep meaning of human life and community, of the world we inhabit and sustain, and of our cultural and religious heritage, against the horizon of the Reign of God enfleshed in the mission and person of Jesus Christ, and communicated in the Church.



Figure 2.2



*Has your understanding of the distinction between catechesis and classroom-based Religious Education changed over the years? In what ways?*



## 2.9 Religious Education and Other Curriculum Areas

Every curriculum area or subject that is taught within a Catholic school has a religious dimension, a capacity to assist students to examine the world of human culture and the world of religion, providing knowledge and skills, and fostering attitudes and values that are life-giving and that assist young people to search for meaning and truth.

*Religious education 'should have its own syllabus, approved by those in authority; it should also see appropriate interdisciplinary links with other course material so that there is a coordination between human learning and religious awareness. Like other coursework, it should promote culture, and it should make use of the best educational methods available to schools today.'*

*(The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, n. 70)*

Inter-disciplinary links between religious education and other curriculum areas are a vital means of engaging students with the Catholic world-view described earlier. They are also a means of making available the insights, understandings and values derived from the Gospel to the public discourse of society.

Individual curriculum areas contribute to the religious aims of the Catholic school when they foster:

- skills such as reflection, critical thinking, problem solving, analysis and discernment – all of which promote the search for truth and meaning
- a moral sensitivity and a heightened capacity to distinguish between what is life-giving and what is dehumanising
- the gospel values of love, compassion, reconciliation, transformation, justice and hope
- a generosity of spirit that calls forth a commitment to the service of others and of creation generally
- the capacity to shine the light of faith on the surrounding culture - to reflect, to judge and to choose.





The *Victorian Essential Learning Standards* mandated by the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority provide a framework for the development of whole school curriculum that intentionally addresses the various dimensions of the human person. This framework seeks to develop in learners the knowledge, skills and behaviour appropriate to three interconnecting strands of learning: physical, personal and social learning; discipline-based learning; and inter-disciplinary learning.

Each of these strands has its proper and autonomous contribution to make to the development of the whole person. And because of this aim, each strand and each curriculum area already implies a religious dimension. It is the task of religious educators to assist all curriculum areas to recognise and explore the religious dimension proper to them, while ensuring that the distinctive content and purpose of classroom religious education is not lost.

This challenges leaders in Catholic schools to consider innovative approaches to curriculum development whereby teachers can be helped to explore the religious dimension of each area in relation to its own operation and to the curriculum as a whole.



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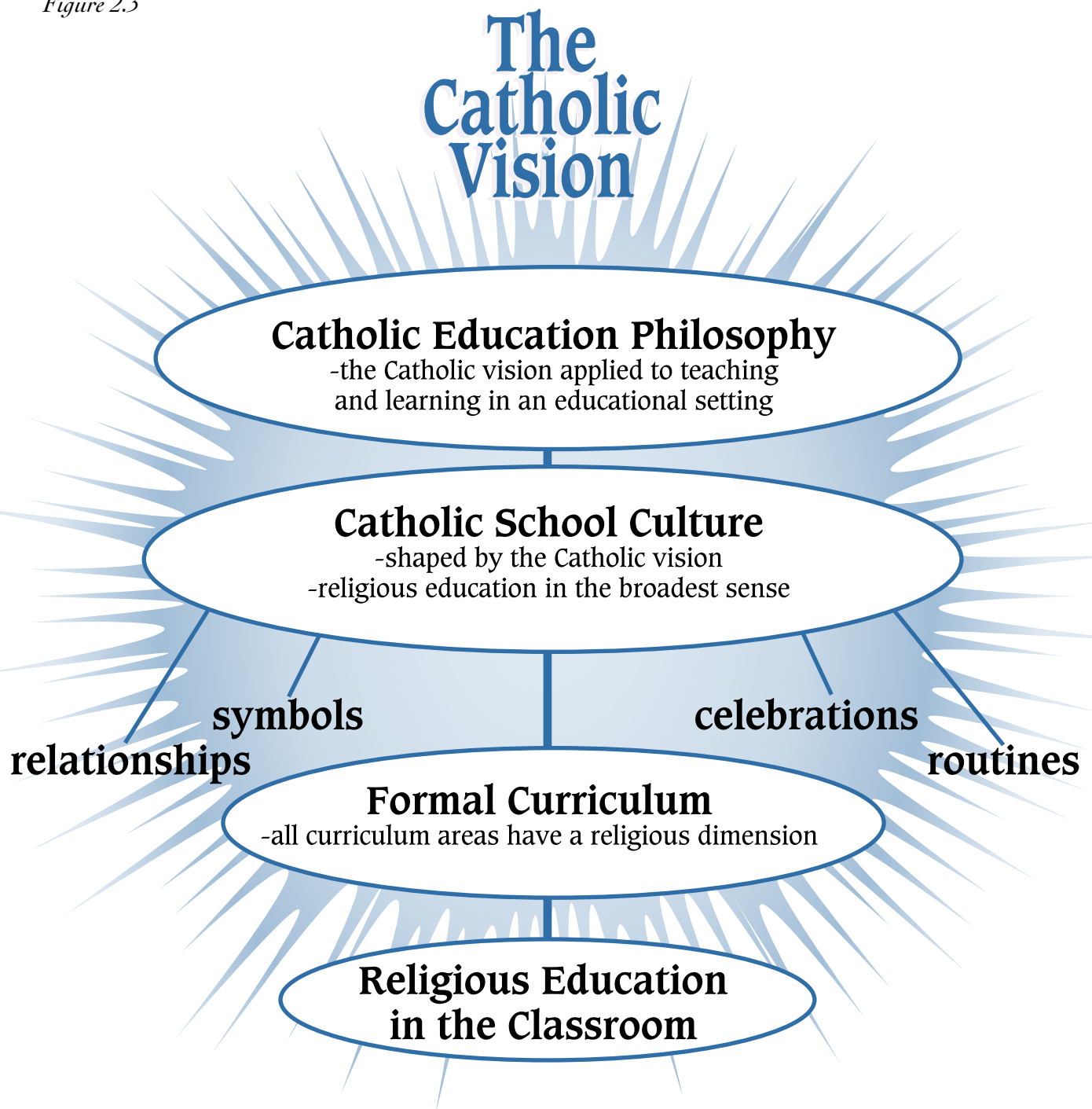
### *Reflection*

- *What is the essence and purpose of each curriculum area?*
- *What contribution does each one make to the development of the student?*
- *How can core gospel values enrich it?*
- *How can it be linked to other curriculum areas and, especially, to Religious Education?*
- *How can this approach lead to a truly integrated curriculum?*



## 2.10 Religious Education in Context

Figure 2.5



## Section 3

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# The World of the Student

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*'We must be aware of and understand the aspirations, the yearnings and the often dramatic features of the world in which we live ... of a real and cultural transformation whose repercussions are felt too on the religious level.'*

*(Pastoral Constitution of the Church  
in the Modern World, n. 4)*



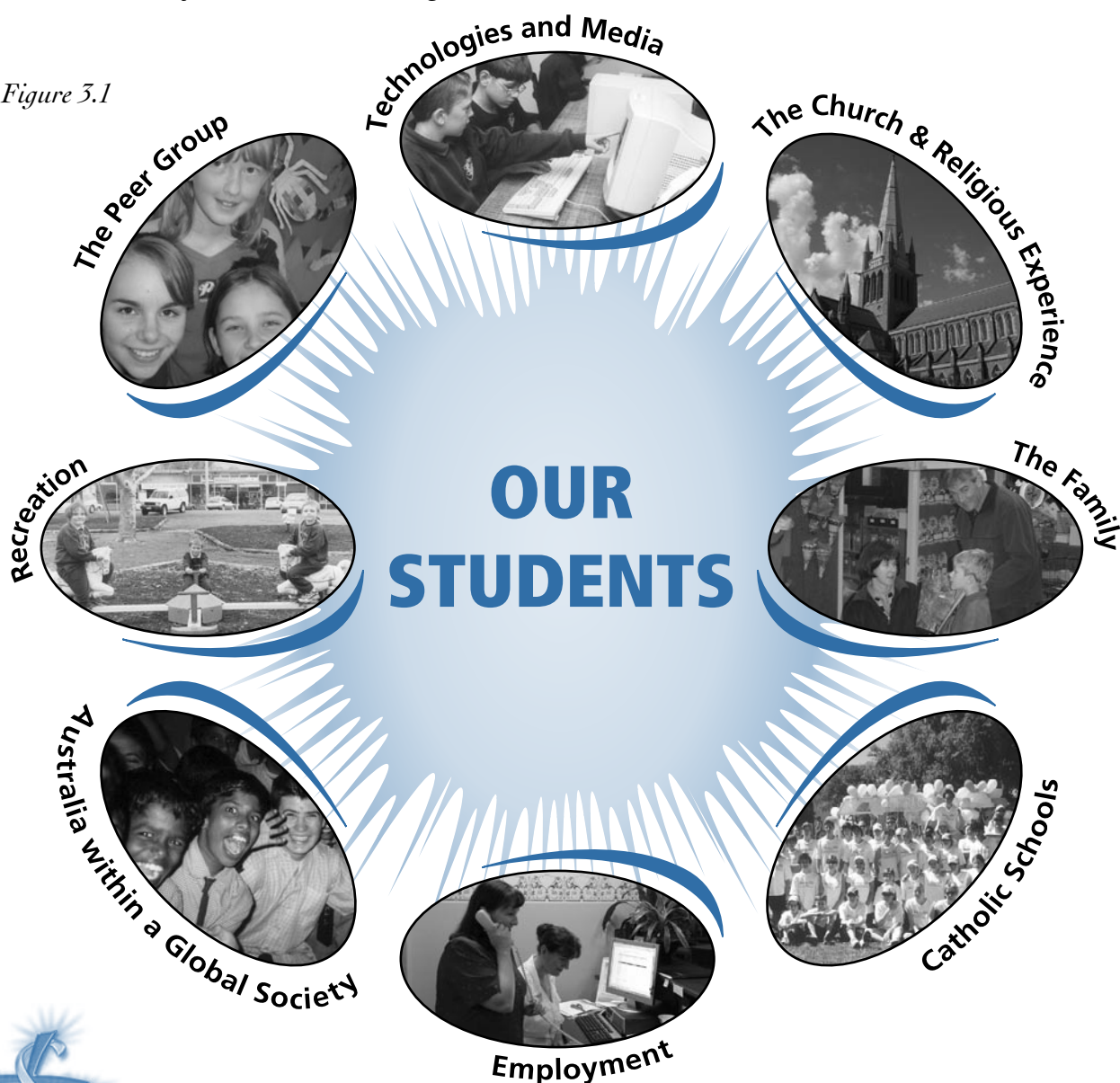
## 3.1 Key Influences on Students

Effective Religious Education is responsive to context and sensitive to the lives of the students. At times the Church stands in solidarity with society and supports movements towards, justice, peace and wholeness. However, there are also practices of oppression, poverty, discrimination and violence that must be challenged. The naming of significant influences on our students prompts us to share a vision of Christian hope: the good news of God's love, incarnated through Jesus Christ in the community of the Church and animated by the power of the Holy Spirit, for the sake of the world.

Students of all ages seek to find personal meaning. This is a difficult task in a world where society's institutions are changing rapidly and ways of making sense are constantly being challenged. If teachers are to help young people to integrate their experiences, their culture and their religious faith, they must be aware of the overlapping 'worlds' within which their students encounter life.

Some of the key influences affecting students are as follows:

Figure 3.1



# Our Students

- Each individual student is passing through a series of identifiable developmental levels. At each level all individuals have much in common.
- At the same time, every one is unique, possessing personal traits, abilities, experiences and readiness for more complex learning.
- A wide range of alternative values and ways of experiencing life are offered by the contemporary mass culture, especially through the communications media and advertising.
- Students come from a variety of cultural, economic, social and educational backgrounds.
- Only a proportion of students come from homes where the Catholic faith is regularly practised.
- Families have had a range of experiences, both positive and negative, within the Church.
- For many students, family life is complex and confusing.
- Adolescence can be a particularly challenging time.



*'The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school.'*

*(Pope John Paul II, The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium n. 9)*



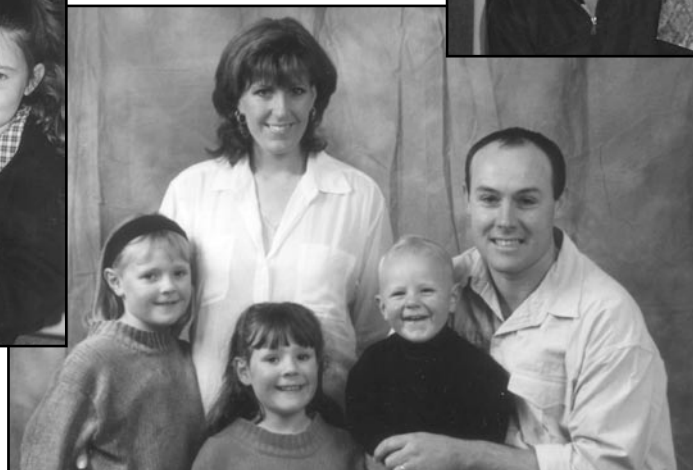


## 3.2 *The Family*

The nature of family life is changing. Today it is difficult to describe an all-encompassing set of family experiences of a typical child and adolescent.

### Some Relevant Considerations

1. It is within the family that each person's religious sensitivities are first called to life. Love, trust, wonder, reassurance, belonging, gratitude, a growing sense of responsibility and commitment – all of these set the foundations for a religious education that will, hopefully, continue throughout life.
2. All families strive to provide rich, nurturing experiences for children. At times, families struggle with pressing social and personal problems. Relationships may be fragile; stability and effectiveness may be limited; an interest in, or understanding of, the religious development of children may be lacking.
3. While the majority of students may live in a traditional family, an increasing number are growing up in blended families, single-parent families or families based on de facto relationships.
4. Marriage remains the preferred arrangement for most people entering a relationship of commitment, but only sixty-five per cent of marriages are first marriages, compared with ninety per cent a generation ago. By the age of sixteen, eighteen per cent of Australian students will witness their parents' divorce.
5. There is an increasing tendency to delay marriage and childbirth, and to have fewer children.
6. There is an increasing diversity in the cultural and religious backgrounds within families.





## General Implications

- Students can be expected to bring a variety of experiences of family life to the study of the Religious Education curriculum. This has relevance for the images we use in presenting religious concepts and for the expectations we have of the students' background, religious knowledge and experience.
- A number of students will be experiencing a sense of confusion and loss because of family dysfunction, conflict and break up.
- Some students will have poor role models and will have experienced limited support in developing an ethical and religious sensitivity.
- Many students will come from very supportive environments; many of these will demonstrate the most positive characteristics of youth: energy, optimism, openness, resilience and spiritual sensitivity.
- Some students will be able to develop the attributes of resilience through the influence of significant adults outside the family, through developing high expectations, and being able to contribute to something beyond themselves.

## Local Implications

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*'... families are treasures in our community: they are the foundations of social, cultural and economic life.'*

*(Australian Catholic Bishops, Family Life in Australia: Our Hidden Treasure, 1995)*



### 3.3 *Australia within a Global Society*

Australian society is being transformed in response to increasing globalisation and accelerating technological change.

#### **Some Relevant Considerations**

1. As in every age, people strive to find a sense of meaning and fulfilment in their lives and a reason to hope.
2. Societal transformation is experienced in all aspects of life: communication, trade, employment, social and political activity. This impacts on core understandings and values.
3. The gap between rich and poor – both individuals and nations – continues to widen.
4. Society is increasingly multicultural and multi-faith with one in seven Australian residents having been born in a country where English is not the first language and Christianity is not always the dominant religion. This, however, is not reflected in all places, particularly in rural Australia.
5. Immigrants to Australia are from a widening background that includes Asia, South America, Oceania, the Middle East and Africa, as well as Europe.
6. There is much unfinished agenda that relates to reconciliation with indigenous Australians.
7. Many people experience an increasing sense of meaninglessness and hopelessness; Australia's youth suicide rate is one of the highest in the world.
8. There is increasing sensitivity to the claims of the natural environment and the need to protect the ecosystem.
9. Rural Australia is facing significant changes and challenges, including a drift in population to cities, declining income, seemingly unusual climatic conditions, the loss of government, commercial and health services, and higher levels of suicide.
10. There is increased awareness of the impact of terrorism and military conflict throughout the world.
11. Sensitivities relating to the maintaining of Australia's national borders are increasing.



## General Implications

- It can be expected that many students will come from homes in which the trends within society are causing significant levels of confusion and uncertainty.
- School enrolments will reflect the composition of society. Many cultural backgrounds may be represented.
- Students will be influenced by the values of consumerism and materialism.
- Schools will be increasingly expected to accept responsibilities previously taken by families and to serve the national economy more directly.
- Students will be influenced by the more immediate reality of terrorist activity and its impact.
- The fragility of peace in the world will be a significant issue for many students, with some feeling a degree of insecurity and others being moved to various forms of action.
- Students will be affected by economic imbalance in both local and global society and may be actively involved in action for justice.
- International and national natural disasters will touch students, families and broader communities and demand a generous response.



## Local Implications

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*'... Australians need to change those attitudes and structures which help to create and maintain serious imbalance in our society. In particular, we need to reform our attitudes towards wealth, poverty, greed and consumerism and the structures that underlie them.'*

*(Australian Catholic Bishops, Common Wealth for the Common Good: Wealth Distribution in Australia, 1992)*



## 3.4 Employment

The structure and composition of Australia's workforce is changing rapidly.

### Some Relevant Considerations

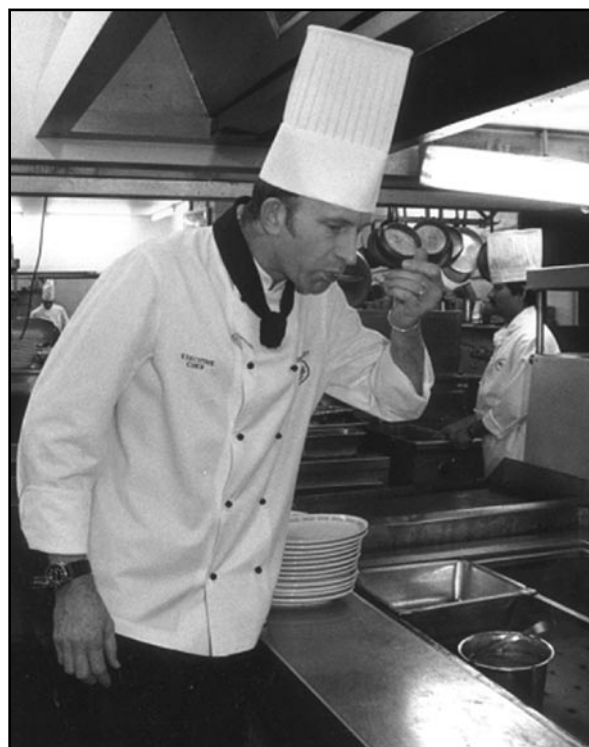
1. Economic conditions are generally uncertain.
2. Many businesses and institutions are restructuring and reducing the number of employees. Work is increasingly unevenly distributed.
3. Many families are affected by unemployment and under-employment, especially in rural areas.
4. Changing work patterns impact on family relationships and lifestyles; in many families both parents are in paid employment outside the home.
5. There is a particularly high level of youth and rural unemployment.
6. Vocational opportunities change quickly with increasing demands for new skills.
7. Many students are in part-time employment whilst continuing their studies at school.





## General Implications

- Many students come from families experiencing long working hours.
- Other students come from families suffering financial hardship, including unemployment.
- Many adolescents are anxious about their future employment prospects.
- More adolescents are in paid casual employment than ever before, and often face conflicting pressures in balancing family, study, work, recreation, community and church commitments.
- A strong vocational emphasis has been included in the contemporary secondary curriculum, much of it associated with employment-related competencies.
- Change in workplaces, including flexible hours and a broadened scope of the nature of work, allows some parents and students to thrive in a globalised work force.
- The provision of before- and after-school care is necessary for an increasing number of families.



## Local Implications

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*'Human labour has a dignity because of the dignity of the person who works. Through work, women and men realise their humanity through using the gifts of the earth, building community and sharing in the work of the Creator.'*

*(Australian Catholic Bishops,  
Statement on Unemployment, 1991)*



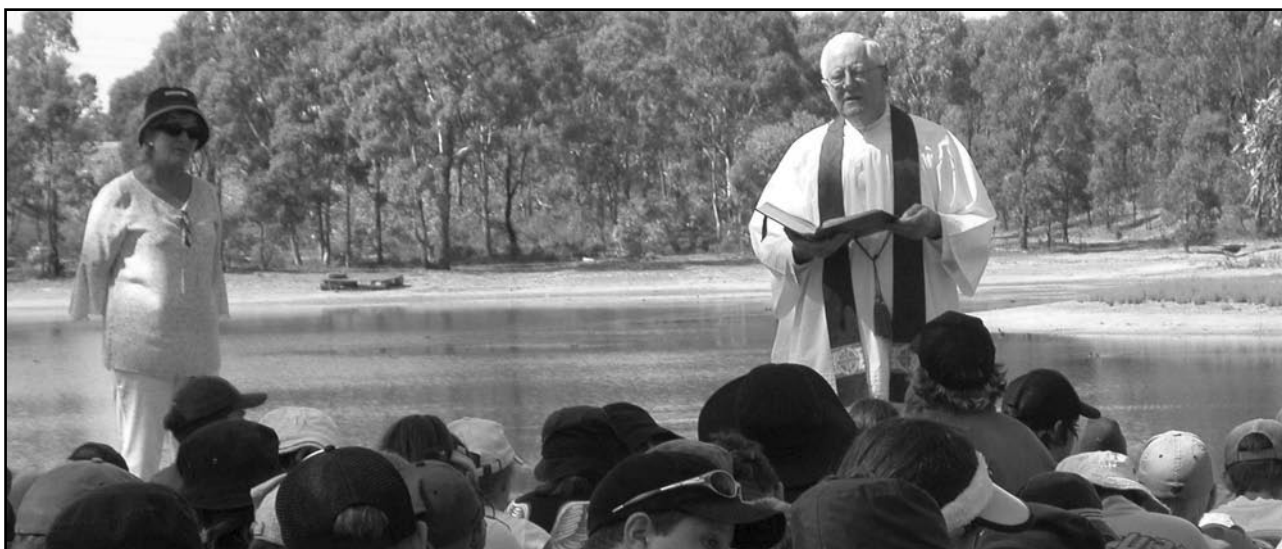


## 3.5 *The Church and Religious Experience*

There is a growing tendency for people to search for spiritual meaning and significance both within and outside the mainstream churches.

### Some Relevant Considerations

1. Families reflect a range of attitudes towards conventional religious practice.
2. While the parish is of great importance to many families, Catholics vary significantly in their current religious beliefs and practices.
3. Some parents and other family members have had negative as well as positive experiences with organised religion.
4. There are tendencies towards more fundamentalist attitudes and practices in all religions.
5. There is a hunger for spiritual experience and an interest in what might be termed 'New Age Alternatives' to mainstream religion amongst some young people.
6. Positive societal forces – 'signs of the times' – stress the dignity of the human person and promote such values as compassion, inclusivity, tolerance, justice and reconciliation. Efforts are made to improve social structures, to value and celebrate cultural cohesion and diversity, to build community and to protect the environment. These reflect a spiritual reality which energises many people, including youth.

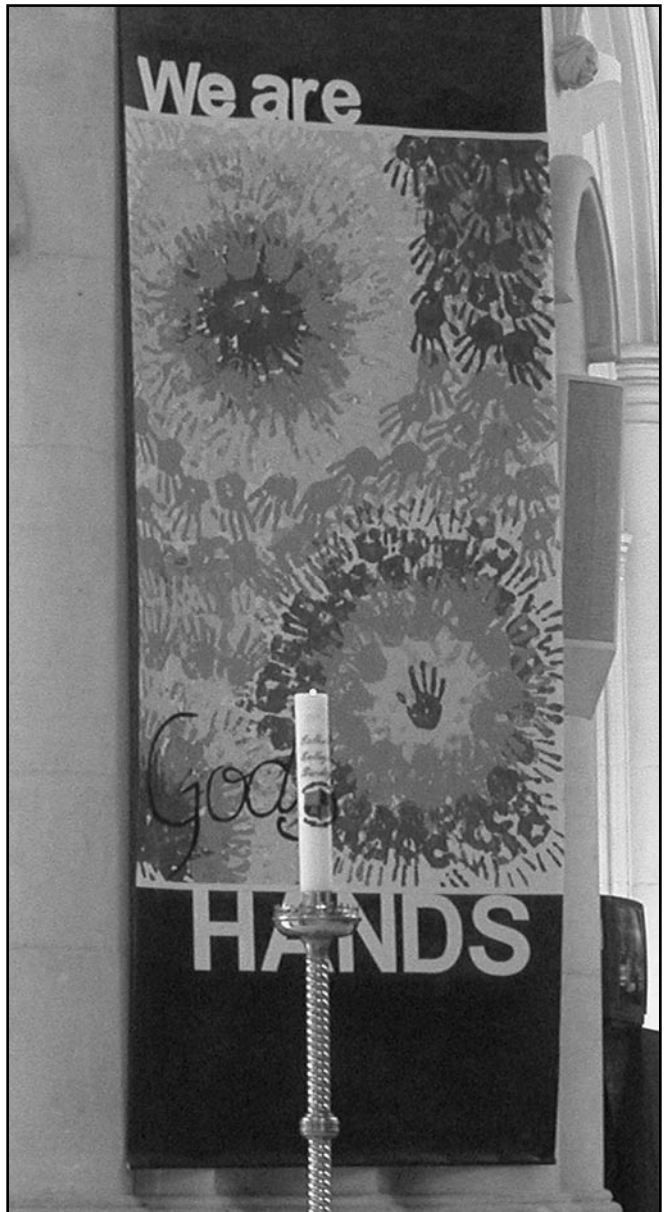


## General Implications

- Many students arrive at school with limited experience of Catholic cultural traditions and symbols.
- While they may lack significant religious background experiences, a number of students wish to explore life questions of meaning and purpose.
- Students coming from a rich religious background and from families involved in parish life need appropriate educational and catechetical support.
- Students can be motivated to explore their own experiences and the major societal issues in the light of faith.
- Teachers are challenged to draw on the range of cultural experiences and expressions of faith of the various students.
- Teachers are challenged to provide opportunities for students to develop their spirituality.

## Local Implications

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*'The diversity of the religious situation should be kept in mind: there are young people who are not even baptised, others have not completed Christian initiation, others are in grave crises of faith, others are moving towards making a decision with regards to faith, others have already made such a decision and call for assistance.'*

*(General Directory for Catechesis, n. 184)*



## 3.6 Catholic Schools

Catholic schools exist as part of the evangelising work of the Church. They have their particular distinguishing characteristics and orientations.

### Some Relevant Considerations

1. One in every five Australian students attends a Catholic school.
2. While the majority are Catholics, students and teachers in Catholic schools are from a range of faith backgrounds, are at different levels of faith development and have various levels of faith commitment.
3. As with all schools, parental expectations of Catholic schools are increasing, so schools are often expected to address many of the personal, social and religious issues once seen as the responsibility of home, parish and the wider community.
4. Catholic schools are constantly seeking to clarify their own identity and purpose amidst the pressures of materialism, consumerism, secularisation, individualism and the privatisation of belief.
5. Catholic schools are affected by contemporary social change and by industrial issues, government educational initiatives and legislation.



## General Implications

- It is important for teachers in Catholic schools to understand and support the purpose of Catholic schooling, to be familiar with Catholic beliefs and practices, to understand the parish context of the school and to be sensitive to the significance of Catholic symbols and celebrations. It is also vital for teachers who are Catholic to be actively involved in parish religious and social life.
- Because it is based on a Catholic educational philosophy, the curriculum should be permeated by a religious dimension in all learning areas.
- Developments in educational practice, especially those designed to improve the quality of teaching and learning, can be expected to exercise a positive influence on Religious Education.
- There are increasing opportunities to create and develop partnerships between parents, teachers, clergy and education authorities in the work of the Catholic school. This is particularly evident in the increasing role of School Boards within Catholic schools.
- There is increasing variation in expectations relating to the purpose of Catholic schools.

## Local Implications

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*'A teacher does not write on inanimate material, but on the very spirit of human beings.'*

*(The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, n. 19)*





## 3.7 *The Peer Group*

**T**heir peers exercise a powerful influence on students at all levels of schooling but especially during the adolescent years. This has a most significant impact on religious development.

### **Some Relevant Considerations**

1. The peer group can contribute to the growth of the individual, strengthening a sense of identity, self-esteem and self-confidence.
2. The group has considerable influence on the individual's development of moral judgement as well as attitudes and values. This influence varies in nature and intensity from level to level.
3. The group provides an important context for interpreting life experiences and for developing new concepts.
4. A very important subset of the peer group is the friendship group, which not only provides a sense of belonging but also contributes significantly to the psychological well-being of the student.
5. Failure in peer relationships can have serious effects on the individual.
6. The peer group itself is influenced by wider cultural forces, including those of the mass media and the entertainment industry.





## General Implications

- Helping students to develop healthy, positive relationships with peers can be of major pastoral significance for school, parish and home.
- Teachers act supportively when they strengthen the communal dimension of the classroom, assisting students to learn together in a safe and respectful atmosphere.
- The provision of opportunities for cooperative learning and group work is particularly appropriate in Religious Education.
- At times it can be most unrealistic to expect students to work and to express themselves outside the frame of reference of the peer group.
- The uniqueness of the individual and the rich variety of human differences should be celebrated and affirmed.

(cf. Blanksby, D. Students-at-risk: the primary connection (2003) & Students-at-risk: the secondary connection (2003) Research Studies Sandhurst Diocese and La Trobe University, Bendigo.)

## Local Implications

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*'Although often surrounded by emptiness, they have a deep hunger for meaning and justice... Australian society has much to gain and to learn from its young people, if only it would listen more often.'*

*(Australian Catholic Bishops,  
Lean On Me, Youth Report, 1996)*

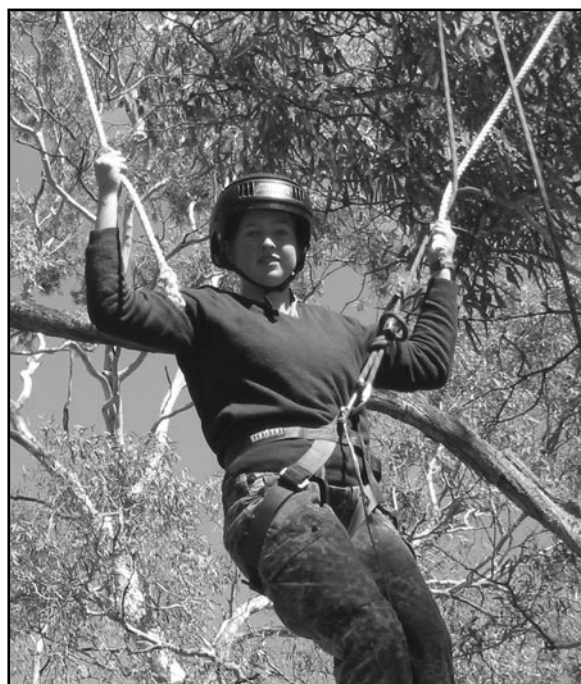


## 3.8 Recreation

In the recent past, options available for recreation and entertainment have increased dramatically. These occupy more space and time, and help define identity. One of the contributing factors has been increased affluence for many Australians and different attitudes to spending and incurring debt. This has also affected interactions within families and within society.

### Some Relevant Considerations

1. Organised team sport can be significant for some students, but is no longer as dominant for all. Less structured and more individual activities such as skateboarding and computer games have increased in popularity.
2. With some exceptions, the reading of books is less common. What reading is done often involves influential pictorial magazines produced for particular interest groups.
3. Music is very important to students, but is now commonly experienced with video imagery, either at home or in entertainment centres.
4. There are more options available to many students to create music and video, both through traditional and electronic means.
5. Options in audio-visual entertainment have been extended beyond television and cinema to videotape, internet, CD, DVD and other digital technology.
6. For senior students, nightclubs have become popular centres for meeting, socializing and recreation.
7. The development of the Internet and mobile telephone technologies has led to an explosion in their usage. It has introduced new, popular means of communication by young people and impacted on written language.



## General Implications

- It is important for teachers in Catholic schools to understand the role of recreation and entertainment in the lives of their students.
- Students today are involved in more unstructured and passive recreational activity.
- Technology is very significant in the recreation of students, particularly audio-visual media and the Internet.
- The written word is less significant in the recreational lives of students with it being largely replaced by visual moving images. This has an impact on how students derive meaning.
- Technology is affecting the ways in which the written word is used and understood.
- Young people are identified and targeted as a market for advertising.



## Local Implications

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## 3.9 Technologies and Media

Much of the reality and experience of students is mediated through electronic technologies and media.

### Some Relevant Considerations

1. Electronic technologies have become central to much of the leisure and work of students, whether it be computers, sound and vision equipment, console games, mobile telephones, calculators or personal organizers. These technologies are becoming more sophisticated, accessible and affordable.
2. Electronic technologies are increasingly important in schools, both as areas of study and as tools for learning.
3. The rate of change in all technologies and media (particularly electronic) has accelerated increasingly, tending to weaken a sense of permanence.
4. Means of communication have been transformed through digital technology, mobile telephones and the Internet.
5. Access to electronic information crosses national and cultural boundaries. Horizons are now both global and local.
6. Electronic information tends to assume a high level of authority and acceptance. It is sometimes difficult to determine its validity.
7. The sources of information, conveyed in both image and sound, have increased in number. Meaning is often conveyed and received in small discrete units, as in advertisements and news stories.
8. Media are being revolutionised through digital technology and the Internet. SMS facilities provide a new mode of communication which may lead to a lessened degree of personal contact.





## General Implications

- Technology is having an increasing impact on every aspect of communal life. In particular, computers have become essential to modern life – home, work and school. Those without access or skills are increasingly at a disadvantage.
- The way electronic technology is valued and discussed often gives it a status greater than that of other tools and instruments of learning, communication and entertainment.
- Societal values and ways of understanding life are greatly influenced by the mass media and advertising.
- Language is changing as the terminology and conventions of the Internet and technology cross over into the general community.
- The availability and access to almost unlimited communication and information may challenge established centres of values and morality.

## Local Implications

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## 3.10 Growth and Development

Students differ from each other in temperament, abilities, achievements, maturity, styles of learning and in many other ways. They share a common journey towards maturity, passing through recognisable levels of growth.

The developmental levels from early childhood to late adolescence approximately coincide with the six levels around which the general curriculum is organised in Victoria/Tasmania.

In each level, individual development results from the interplay of maturation and experience, occurring in the context of a particular society and culture.

Descriptions of typical characteristics of learners in the different levels can often stimulate identification of desirable teaching practice. Such descriptions are provided in the resource booklets – Support Documentation for Teachers and Parents – and are summarized here.



## Level 1 & 2 (P - Grade 2)

In this period of early childhood, children typically approach the world with a sense of natural curiosity and wonder. They have an enthusiasm for fantasy and play; in fact, play and interaction with others provide dominant forms of learning. Learning in general occurs through direct experience and any abstract ideas must be presented in the context of concrete experience.



## Level 3 (Grades 3 & 4)

The dominant form of learning is hands-on experience: collecting, matching, contrasting, grouping, predicting, drawing conclusions. Language, a great tool of learning, now displays greater variation in vocabulary and syntax. There is growing interest in what is literally true (as distinct from 'just a story'). While some children see rules as unchangeable and established at the whim of adults, a growing proportion sees reciprocal fairness as a core moral principle.

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*'The various school subjects do not present only knowledge to be attained, but also values to be acquired and truths to be discovered.'*

*(The Catholic School, n.59)*





## Level 4 (Grades 5 & 6)

These children may be less spontaneous but are generally more self-motivated and capable of absorbing considerable information. More sophisticated reasoning gives them greater understanding of consequences and a greater capacity for using talk to justify assertions and opinions. Values and judgements are now more strongly influenced by peers, and self-esteem is partly determined by mastery of tasks.

## Level 5 (Years 7 & 8)

During these early years of secondary school, many students move into the challenging period of adolescence. The physical and emotional changes of puberty create new opportunities for growth. New intellectual capacities become obvious with students being more capable of formal, logical thinking through which they interpret data, predict, generalise and draw conclusions. They begin to experiment with a range of roles as they seek to clarify personal identity. The conventions of the peer group provide a powerful framework for interpreting the world and making meaning.





## Level 6 (Years 9 & 10)

Confrontation and questioning characterise many students at this level as they 'test the limits' and come to terms with massive physical and psychological change in their lives. The peer group remains extremely significant, providing identity and security yet demanding extreme conformity. The values and expectations of the adult world face critical questioning, and negative attitudes to organised religion are often expressed.



## Post-Compulsory (Years 11 & 12)

Many of these students demonstrate an increasingly sophisticated sense of responsibility concerning social, environmental and ethical issues. The final years of school life are heavily influenced by preparation for examinations and for meeting the entry requirements of post-secondary courses and careers. Students are challenged to organise time and resources more efficiently and are aided by a stronger sense of their own strengths, weaknesses and goals.

*'When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child...'*

*1 Corinthians 13:11*



## *A Guiding Imperative:*

### *Respect for the Individual*

The students in Catholic schools do not comprise an homogeneous group. They exhibit a rich diversity in terms of their most pressing individual needs, their cultural, social and economic backgrounds, their personal qualities, their level of development and the experiences they have encountered in life. They are also from a range of faith backgrounds, are at different levels of faith development and have various levels of faith commitment.

Christians are called to respect the dignity and uniqueness of each person. The gospel imperative directs attention to the just claims of those in need of support, including those who are disadvantaged by societal prejudice and a deficiency in financial or other resources, along with those with language, learning or developmental difficulties.

In response to this, the Catholic school seeks to develop an overall curriculum that will cater for individual differences and build the self-esteem of all its students.

This commitment is particularly appropriate in Religious Education programs which should be genuinely inclusive, responsive to the needs of learners, and employ a wide range of teaching and learning strategies so that all students might participate with a heightened sense of worth and achievement.

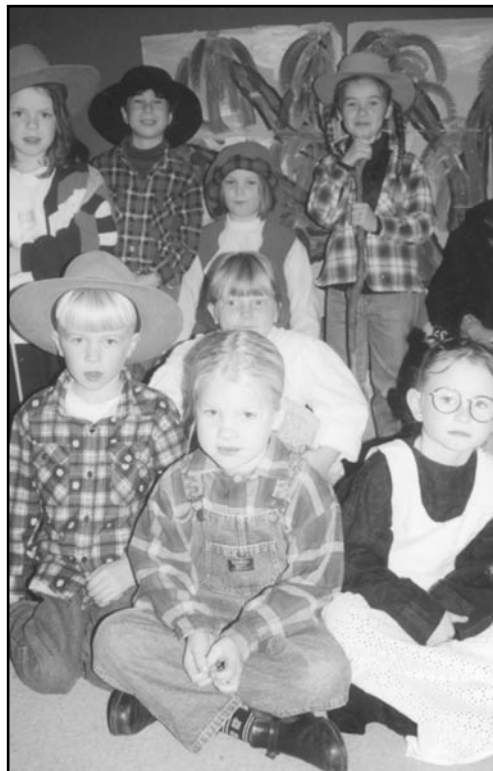
This is especially relevant to students of English as a Second Language (ESL) and students in Special Education programs and to those of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander background.





## General Implications

- Religious Education must work in harmony with the normal maturing processes of the individual.
- Students need help in developing intellectual frameworks by means of which they reflect on experience, and search for personal meaning in the light of the Catholic Faith and Tradition.
- Discussion, story-telling, rituals, symbols and the imagination are generally indispensable elements of Religious Education.
- The peer group exercises powerful influence and can be effectively utilised in Religious Education by means of discussion, collaboration, planning and practical activity.
- The aims of Religious Education cannot be separated from the overall academic program which seeks to develop such truth-seeking skills as reflection, critical thinking, problem solving, analysis and discernment.
- There is need for sensitive awareness of the particular challenges experienced by students at every level of development and of their need for acceptance, patience and tolerance.
- School policies that serve students with special needs should include reference to Religious Education.
- Teachers who have a specific responsibility for students with special needs should, where appropriate, be drawn into collaboration by Religious Education teachers.



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*What are the important characteristics and background experiences that must be considered in developing the Religious Education policy and programs for students at your school?*



# Section 4

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## Curriculum

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*'It is necessary, therefore, that religious instruction in schools appear as a scholastic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines.'*

*(General Directory for Catechesis,  
1997, n. 73)*

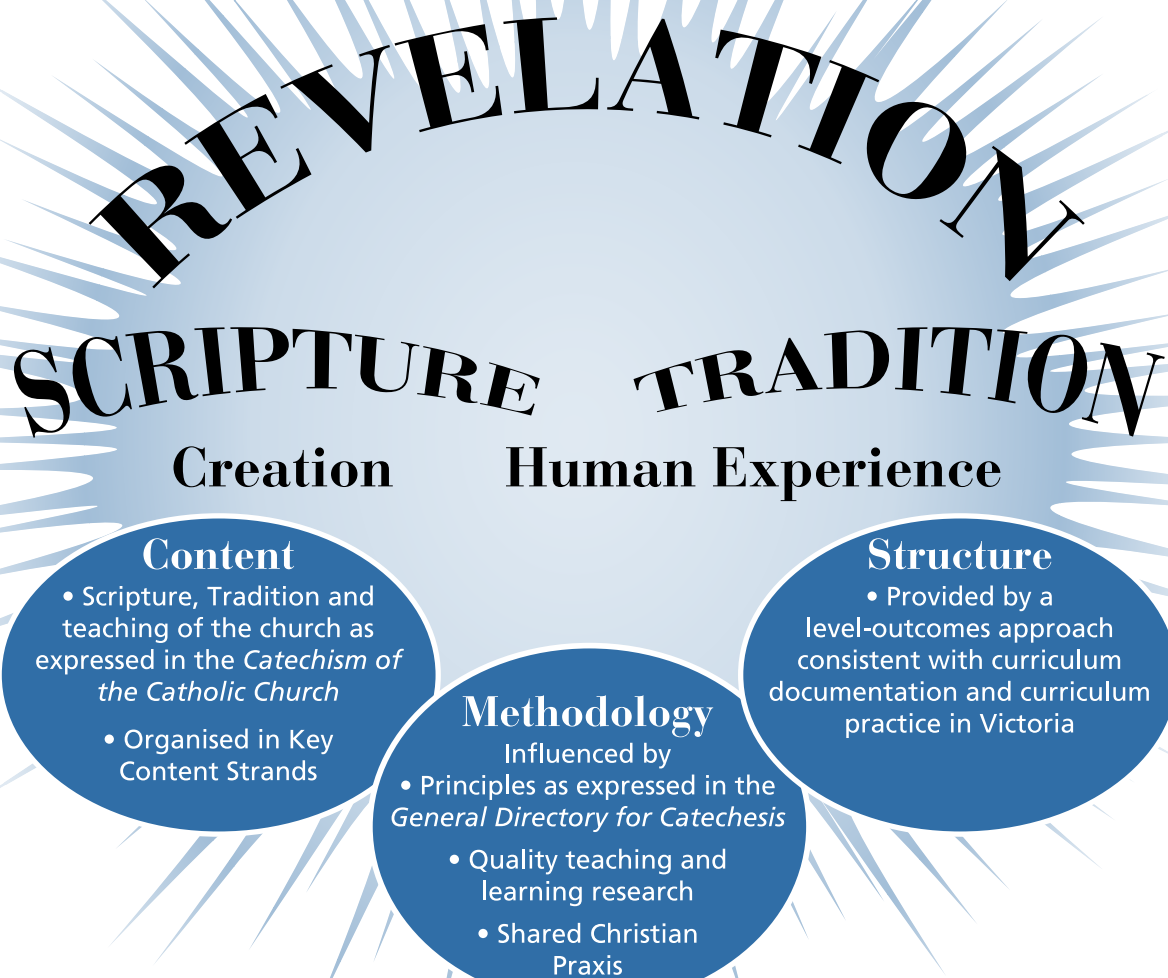


## 4.1 Context

At the heart of the curriculum processes are the students themselves who are growing through developmental levels and have various levels of readiness for learning. They bring to school a variety of experiences, previous learning and preferred ways of making sense of the world. This context was elaborated on briefly in Section 3.

With this as essential background, the focus in this section is the formal, classroom-based Religious Education curriculum, situating it within the context of church documents and theological understandings. An appropriate way to make accessible the content of the Religious Education Curriculum is to draw on current theology and educational theory. Content, methodology and structure contribute to the process of religious education.

Figure 4.1



# Revelation

*God has fully revealed a wonderful saving plan for creation by sending God's own Son into the natural world and by sending God's own Spirit into human hearts.*

*(cf. CCC, 1994, n. 50)*

Revelation is God's free and loving self-communication, gradually emerging in human history and reaching its definitive fullness in the person and mission of Jesus Christ. Here God's own self and the divine will to save are made known, and humanity is called into communion and friendship with God. Indeed, from the beginning God has reached out to humanity in creation, and has spoken in the depths of the human heart and the events of human lives. The Second Vatican Council teaches that scripture and tradition are the two key avenues through which God's divine revelation is passed on to every age. Together they form "a single sacred deposit of the Word of God, which is entrusted to the Church." (DV 10) Revelation is dynamic, for God still speaks to humanity through the manifold presence and action of the Holy Spirit in the church and the world.

## SCRIPTURE

*'In Sacred Scripture, the Church constantly finds her nourishment and her strength...'*

*(CCC, 1994, n. 104)*

The books of Scripture are acknowledged by believers to be the Word of God recorded in human words under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. They emerged in different places and times in response to a community's experience of God in and through historical events and circumstances. Composed by various writers and editors using many literary styles, the Scriptures communicate the indescribable experience of God. They have been collected into what is known as the Bible.

Though written in particular contexts, Scripture continually engages generation after generation of people of different cultures and views. It calls its inspired receivers to respond reflectively and prayerfully, personally and communally 'with an obedience by which the human person entrusts their whole selves freely to God.' (DV 5) Inspired by the Holy Spirit they remain God's living Word to every generation.

Scripture shares the literary characteristics of all texts. That particular people wrote the books of Scripture for specific audiences and settings means we are removed from the original languages, cultures, contexts and purposes. This provides us with the continual challenge of interpretation, in order to receive Scripture intelligently and to be invited by it to respond to our own experience of God's transforming presence. In this way we will reach the fullness of knowledge and understanding when we live by the realities to which the Scriptures witness.

Grounded in faith, the Church reads, reflects upon, teaches and learns from Scripture, and is thereby guided in its worship, its doctrines, its inner life of prayer, and its mission of self-giving love in the world.



## TRADITION

*The Tradition that comes from the apostles makes progress in the Church, with the help of the Holy Spirit. There is a growth in insight into the realities and words that are being passed on. This comes about in various ways. It comes through the contemplation and study of believers who ponder these things in their hearts. It comes from the intimate sense of spiritual realities which they experience. And it comes from the preaching of those who have received, along with the right of succession in the episcopate, the sure charism of truth. Thus, as the centuries go by, the Church is always advancing towards the plenitude of divine truth, until eventually the words of God are fulfilled in her.*

*(Dei Verbum, 1965, n. 8)*

**T**he Church is the gathering of those people who profess faith in the crucified and risen Jesus. Through the power of the Holy Spirit, they have never ceased to pass on this Good News and seek to live their lives in justice and loving service according to the mission they have received from Jesus Christ. Christians believe that the Spirit is constantly enlivening and guiding the Church, giving its members new insight and courage. This conviction of the constant presence of the Spirit in the life and history of the Church has led to the Roman Catholic emphasis on Tradition. Tradition is a work of the Spirit and a gift entrusted to the Church.

In its most basic sense Tradition refers to the living faith experience of the Christian community; a living faith believed, shared, celebrated, and handed on. Tradition is expressed in various ways: in the faith and witness of the Apostles and their successors, in the worship, preaching and sacraments of the community, in sacred Scripture, in formal definitions, dogmas, doctrines and creeds, in hymns, music and art, in theology, in various spiritualities and devotional traditions, in the life stories of holy individuals and communities. Tradition complements Scripture and guards against interpretations that contradict the faith of the Church.

As the Church, the People of God, seeks to express its faith in every generation, to clarify its understanding of the meaning and implications of living the Gospel in a particular time and place, the Tradition is renewed. Therefore Tradition is a dynamic reality which brings forth the depth and meaning of all that the Church has received and hopes for in Christ.

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*Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture, then, are bound closely together and communicate one with the other. For both of them, flowing out from the same divine well-spring, come together in some fashion to form one thing and move towards the same goal.'*

*(Dei Verbum, n. 9 in Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, n. 80)*





## Creation

*'Creation...is almost like another sacred book whose letters are represented by the multitude of creatures present in the universe.'*

*(Social Justice Sunday Statement, John Paul II, 2002)*

Christians believe that the world and everything in it is created by God out of love, freely and willingly. As Scripture says at the very start, 'In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, ... God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good.' (Gen 1:1,31). Christians profess their faith in God as creator each time they recite in the words of the Creed, "I believe in God ... maker of heaven and earth, of all things seen and unseen." Humanity is the crown of God's creation.

God is transcendent and above all creation, but in all that God has made we find reflections of divine wisdom, majesty and power. To ponder the energy and beauty of the universe is to touch the mystery at the heart of all that exists (Ps 19:1). It is the Creator's own gift, one in which God delights (Prov 8:30-31), and is provided in an abundance of love and promise. Just as God is relational in the Trinity of persons, so is the universe relational. All inhabitants and forms of the universe are connected to each other. The sum of this diversity expresses God's continued presence and involvement in creation.

Creation comes to its highest point in the person of Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Word through whom all that exists came into being (1 Cor 8:6). By his saving presence all creation will be set free, renewed, and brought to completion (Rom 8:18-28). Foreshadowed in his miracles, exemplified in his parables and made known in his bodily resurrection, there is a dynamic in creation which links salvation and creation closely together. With faith in the God who makes all things new, the Christian looks forward in hope to the new heavens and the new earth where sin, suffering and death will be no more (Rev 21:1-7).

Creation leads humanity to God and to praise of God. God's gift is immensely rich, and to love and respect its abundance and diversity is to worship God. To abuse this gift is to abuse or destroy a gift of God and frustrate the good that God is bringing about in creation. The dominion over creation given to humanity is one of stewardship – caring for and handing on in partnership with God. (Gen 1:28) There can be no justice without respect, love and care for the created world. Our reverence for all creation shines forth in the liturgy of the Eucharist when we take up bread and wine, "fruit of the earth and work of human hands," and they in turn by God's grace and the Holy Spirit become the body and blood of Christ, our food of everlasting life.



## Human Experience

*'With their openness to truth and beauty, their sense of moral goodness, their freedom and the voice of conscience, with their longings for the infinite and for happiness, human beings question themselves about God's existence. In all this, they discern the signs of their spiritual soul.'*

*(Catechism of the Catholic Church n.33)*

**H**uman beings are characterised by a desire to know. We seek to make meaning of things we see and touch, taste and smell; of other people, of the universe of created things. We also desire to make meaning of things we cannot know through the senses: of love and hate, joy and sorrow, peace and turmoil. Our quest for knowledge reaches beyond the material order, extending to the limits of our capacity to understand.

Unique among creatures, human beings seek to know and to make meaning of the vast array of experiences arising from our own existence, experiences of sensation, affection, cognition, memory, creative imagination. We have a capacity for self-reflective knowledge, and learning to exercise this capacity contributes to our sense of happiness and purpose in living.

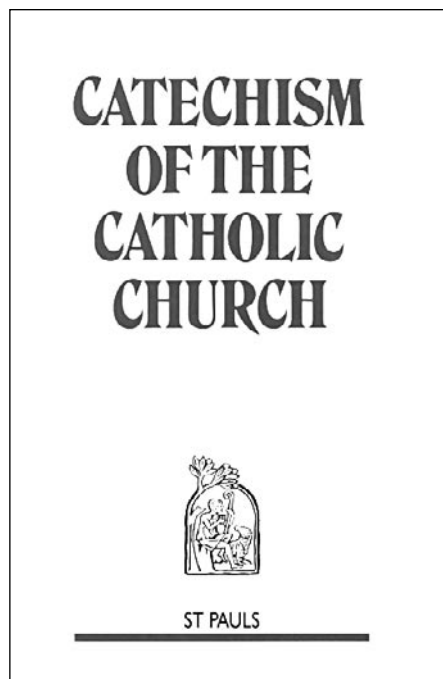
Thus, human experience is recognised as a privileged locus of God's constant self-revelation. It is possible to reflect on all human experiences in a way which draws us into the larger reality of God's creative action: the joy of friendship, the promptings of conscience, the search for truth, the bond of human solidarity, the cry of protest, the wonder of intimacy, the freedom of decision. Some experiences question and challenge us: the pain of guilt and sin, the recognition of evil, and the finality of death. The Christian reflects on all life's experiences in the light of the Gospel narrative of the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus.

The Christian tradition, among other spiritual traditions, values the skills of self-reflection, and the context of solitude and silence, as pre-requisites for the potential encounter with God in the depths of our being. The tradition also witnesses to the possible awareness of God's presence in interpersonal relationships and in acts of social engagement discerned in response to the Gospel. When this encounter with God takes place, human beings experience a sense of fulfilment and satisfaction in regard to the meaningfulness of life. This encounter also gives rise to a sure hope for our ultimate destiny in communion with God beyond death.

Experience can be personal and immediate, but also communal and historical. The communal experience of Christian communities down through the generations is a rich source of knowledge about living in fidelity to the gospel of Jesus. A sense of belonging to this tradition of Christian experience is an important factor in the personal identity of the Christian person.



## Catechism of the Catholic Church



An important influence in the development of this curriculum has been the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The Catechism was promulgated on October 11, 1992, by Pope John Paul II; the Australian edition was published in 1994. It is fundamentally 'a statement of the Church's faith and of Catholic doctrine, attested to or illuminated by Sacred Scripture, the Apostolic Tradition and the Church's Magisterium'. (Pope John Paul II, Apostolic Constitution, *Fidei Depositum*, 1992, Section 3). Its subject matter is the faith as believed, celebrated, lived and prayed.

Four fundamentals of Christian life – the profession of faith, the celebration of the Christian mystery, life in Christ, and Christian prayer – provide the Catechism's structure. These elements have one source, *the Christian mystery*.

The purpose of the *Catechism* is to be an authoritative reference text for the Church as a whole. Within a diocese, the local bishop and those who act on his behalf, make appropriate adaptations of doctrinal presentations and teaching approaches in response to the needs, educational readiness, spiritual maturity and general background of individuals and groups of students. It is not designed to 'provide the adaptation of doctrinal presentations and catechetical methods required by the differences of culture, age, spiritual maturity and social and ecclesial condition amongst all those to whom it is addressed'. These important adaptations are 'the responsibility of particular (local) catechisms and, even more, of those who instruct the faithful'.

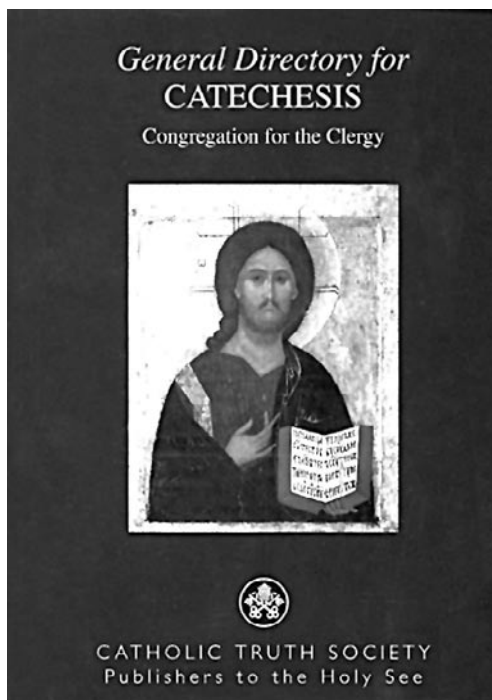
*(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, n. 24)*

For religious educators, then, the Catechism is a doctrinal reference point. It does not impose a particular structure or methodology for teaching. Indeed, 'the best structure for catechesis must be one which is suitable to particular concrete circumstances and cannot be established for the entire Church by a common catechism'.

(Ratzinger, J. and Schonborn C.,  
*Brief Introduction to Catechism of the Catholic Church, Rome, 1994, pp.26–27*).



## General Directory for Catechesis



The Catechism is intended to assist in the preparation of new local religious education materials. To promote the renewal of the processes required for the effective proclamation or sharing of faith, on 11 August 1997 Pope John Paul approved and promulgated the *General Directory for Catechesis*. The *Directory* outlines 'the norms and criteria' for this renewal, which needs to be undertaken by each local Church, i.e. each diocese [GDC 134, 284].

The *Directory* is a challenge and its implications for every area of Church life are immense, with significant implications for evangelisation, catechesis and religious education.

The *Directory* and *Catechism* are intended to complement each other. Each has its own part to play in the renewal of catechesis. Both are meant to serve as 'references' for local Churches as they go about their mission of handing on the faith.

*'For this difficult task, the Catechism of the Catholic Church is a 'point of reference' to guarantee the unity of the faith. This present General Catechetical Directory, for its part, offers the basic criteria which govern the presentation of the Christian message.'*

*(General Directory for Catechesis, n. 134)*



## 4.2 Content

Following theological tradition, the *General Directory (GDC 92)* identifies two dimensions of Christian faith which, while inseparable in the personal act of faith, can be distinguished for purposes of method:

- the act in which a person, assisted by grace, surrenders and entrusts themselves to the self-revealing God (*fides qua*), and
- the content, or objects of knowledge, which proceeds from and deepens that trustful relationship (*fides quae*).

The *General Directory* leaves to local churches the task of organising and sequencing the content of the Christian message for catechetical learning, including Religious Education.

*'It is possible to start with God so as to arrive at Christ, and vice versa. Equally, it is possible to start with the human person and come to God, and conversely. The selection of a particular order for presenting the message is conditioned by circumstances, and by the faith level of those to be catechised.'* (GDC n. 118)

However, the presentation of the Christian message in *Source of Life* respects the following criteria (GDC nn. 97-117)

- the heart and organizing principle of religious education is *the person of Jesus Christ*. The Gospel narrative of his ministry, death and resurrection provides the most fundamental catechetical structure
- the witness of the Christian Scriptures opens up a *trinitarian understanding of God*, and its consequences for the human community
- Jesus' ministry of words and deeds constitute a project of enacting the *Reign of God*
- the *ecclesial nature of the Gospel message* gives the content of Christian faith an historical and trans-generational character
- the *inculturation of the Gospel message* is not simply an external adaptation, but a deep inter-penetration of Christian content with various cultural expressions and forms
- the various aspects of the Christian message are inter-related due to its *comprehensive, hierarchical character*
- The Christian message relates to and illumines *the meaning and destiny of the human person*

The ordering of content in the *Source of Life* Religious Education Curriculum Framework is a response to two governing imperatives:

- the integrity of the Christian message, and
- the circumstances, prior knowledge and developmental level of the learners.

Religious educators are challenged to imitate the 'divine pedagogy,' whereby the Word of God makes itself accessible and communicable in human words and actions. This calls them to 'the never-ending task of finding a language capable of communicating the Word of God and the





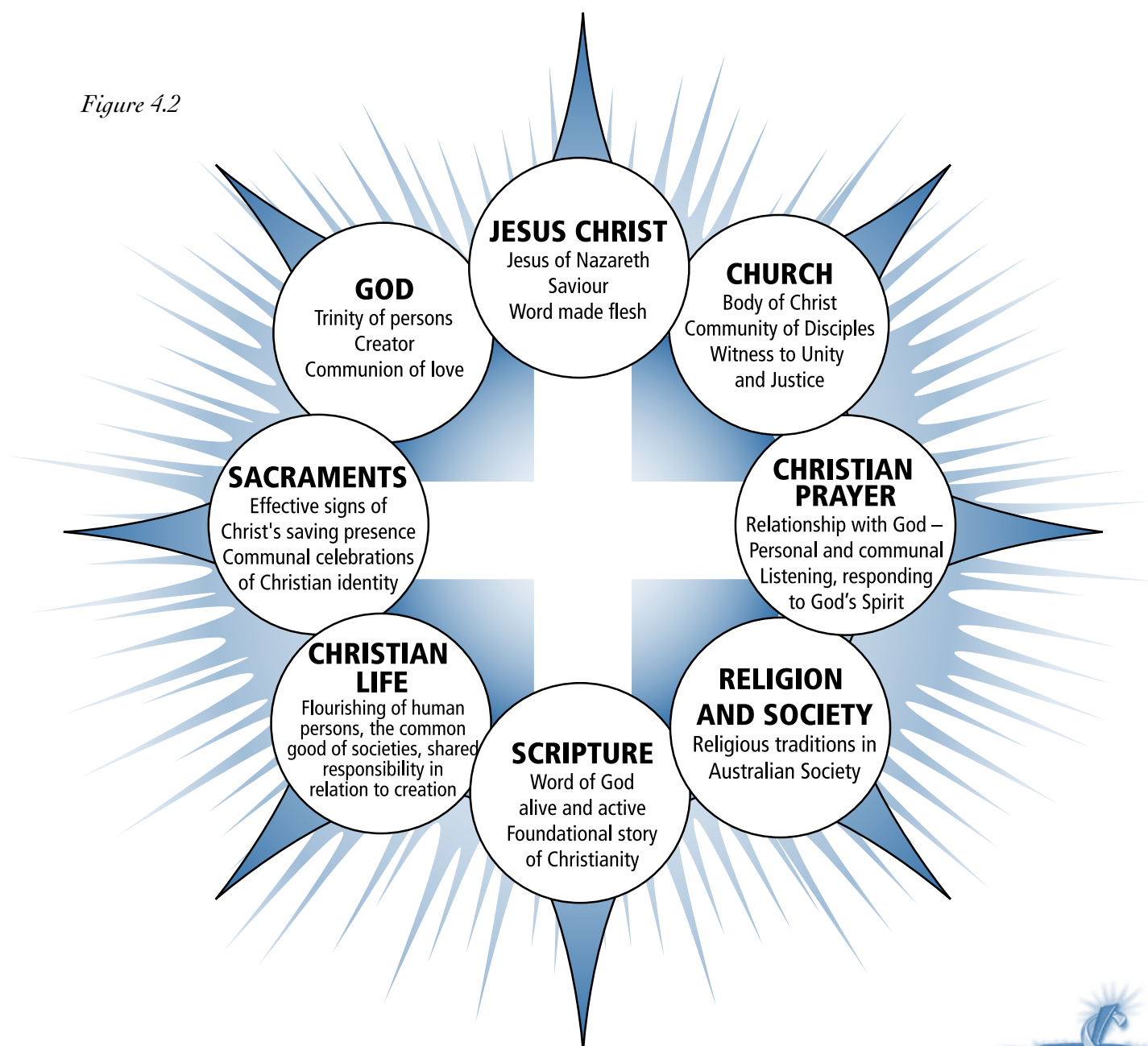
creed of the Church, which is its development, in the various circumstances of those who hear it'. (GDC n. 146)

This Curriculum Framework intends to engage learners in a 'designated educative journey' into the richness of the Christian tradition. (GDC n. 147) It makes use of educational research and the wisdom derived from good practice to present Christian content in a sequenced, age-appropriate process, so that the learner may be 'an active subject, conscious and co-responsible, and not merely a silent and passive recipient'. (GDC n. 167)

The content of *Source of Life* Curriculum Framework is given structure by the following **organising strands** or **content areas** which reflect the themes common to Religious Education frameworks across Australia.

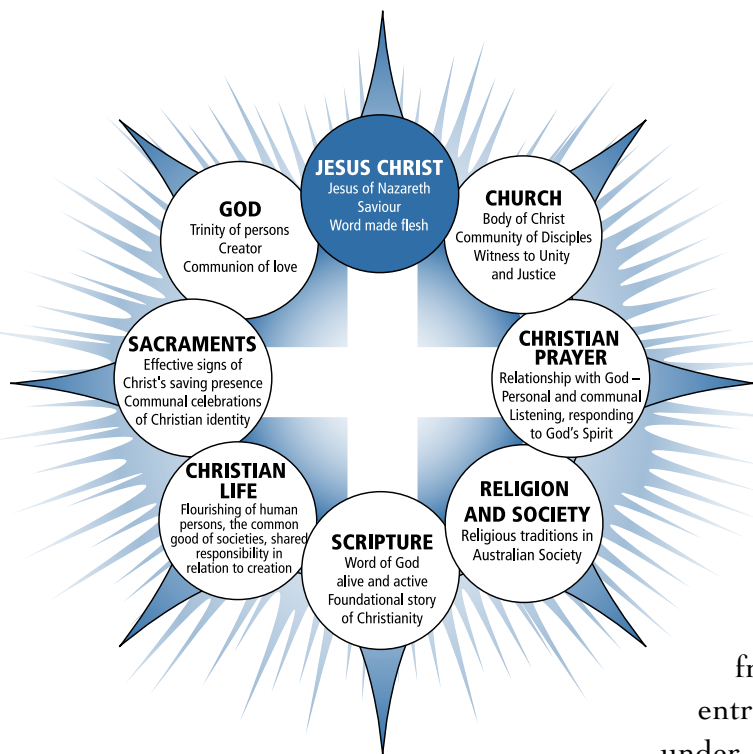
## Organising Strands of the Curriculum

Figure 4.2



## THE THEOLOGY INFORMING THE STRANDS

- Jesus Christ: Jesus of Nazareth, Saviour, Word Made Flesh



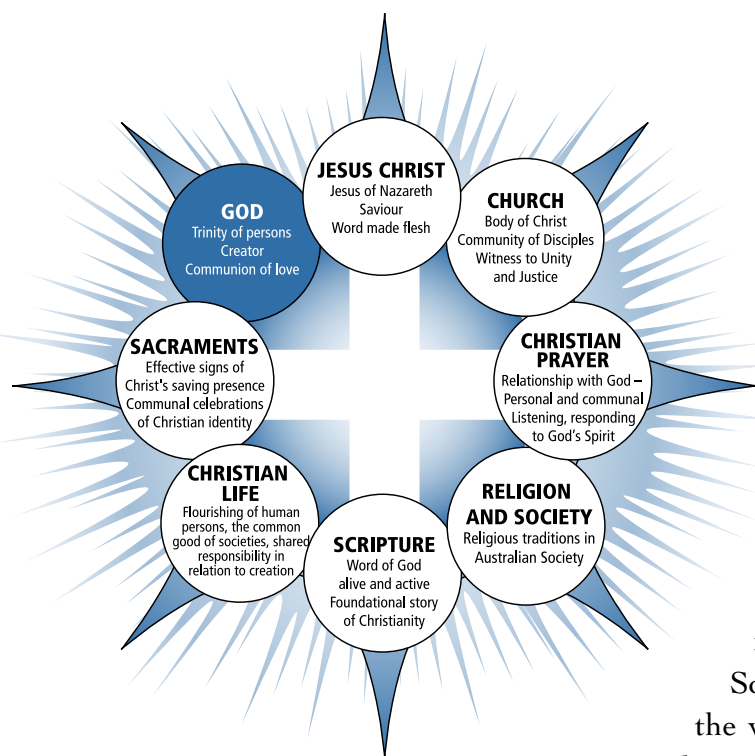
At the heart of Christian faith stands the person of Jesus Christ. Born of the virgin Mary and raised in Nazareth of Galilee, Jesus proclaimed the nearness of the Reign of God. He chose disciples to share in his mission, and travelled the countryside, calling people to repentance and conversion of heart (Lk 5:31-32). In parable and miracle God's presence and saving power was made manifest in him. Brought to trial by the ruling authorities, he was put to death by crucifixion as he gave himself out of love for others. Risen from the dead, he appeared to his disciples and entrusted to them the continuation of his mission under the guidance of the Holy Spirit who would come upon them.

From this moment the Church has never ceased to profess its faith in Jesus as the Christ, the long-awaited saviour of the world, source of forgiveness and new life in God. To humanity caught in self-doubt and the snares of sin and evil, he brings the grace of a loving God who calls us sons and daughters and invites us to share in the divine life (Romans 6:3-4). Now, in Christ, peace, freedom, and joy, are experienced as God's gifts and God's promise. Sin is forgiven and God and humans are reconciled. Empowered by the Holy Spirit, faith discerns God's presence and work in the world; hope looks to its fulfilment as revealed in his death and resurrection; and love gives of itself in response to God who has loved us first.

Jesus Christ is the eternal Son and Word of God who, though divine, took our human nature and came to dwell among us. He shared our life and death, and was raised to glory, victorious over the powers of sin and death. As the Christmas liturgy proclaims, 'In him we see the love of God made visible, and so are caught up in love of the God we cannot see.'



## • God: Trinity of Persons, Creator, Communion of Love



God is the creator of the world and the maker of all that is. There is only one God. As human beings we occupy a special place in God's creation for we are made in God's image and likeness. Like all creatures we depend on God, for everything that exists comes from God and is in God's care and providence. Coming from God, creation itself is good and wondrous. Jesus is the Word through whom the Father created, and the 'firstborn of all creation' (Col 1:15). God not only creates the world, but sends God's Son, Jesus and breathes God's Spirit into the world. God does not remain in transcendent isolation, but relates and gives life.

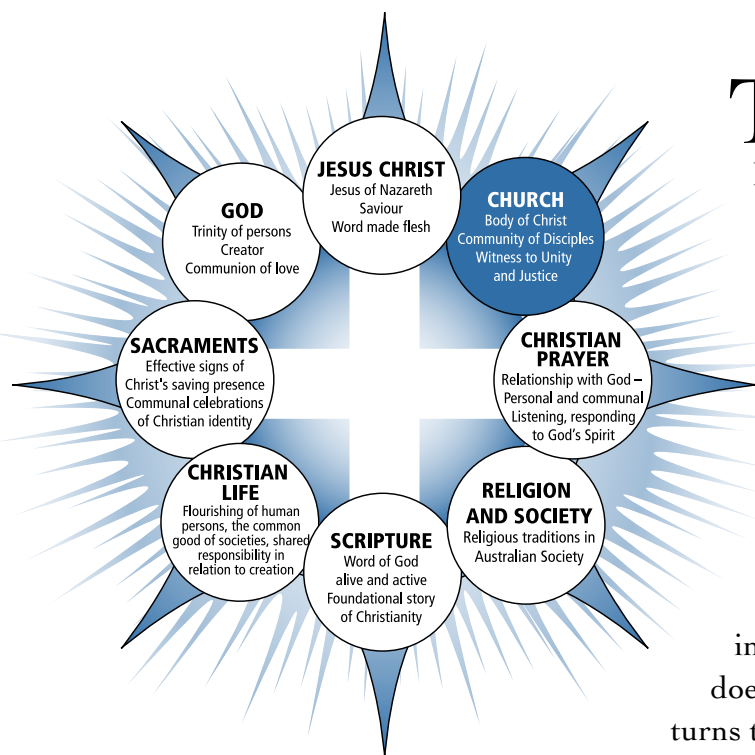
Christianity professes faith in the triune God, revealed as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, three divine persons, equal in nature and dignity, and joined together in one communion of love. This mystery is at the centre of Christian belief and is known to us in faith through divine revelation. It comes from the Christian experience of God who redeems us in Christ and draws us into the divine life through the Holy Spirit. Christians speak of their experience of God in these terms because this is the way God has been revealed to us, and to speak in other ways would not be true to this experience.

In the New Testament Jesus displays a unique intimacy with the Father, whom he addresses as 'Abba', and is presented to us as the beloved Son and unique bearer of the Spirit. 'God is love' (1 Jn 4:8) and the doctrine of the Trinity seeks in the limited language of human beings to give expression to this Being-in-love where, in the unity of the one divine nature, Father, Son and Holy Spirit exist in constant relationship to each other, in one great outpouring of love.

Humanity was made to share in the inner, triune life of God. Unwilling to accept its place as creature, it rejected God's offer of love and friendship, and so sin, and evil entered the world. Each generation experiences the brokenness that sin brings and the attraction to evil. In Jesus Christ, God incarnate, our crucified and risen Saviour, Christian faith sees the true destiny of the human race and finds the grace to become one with God again.



- **Church: Body of Christ, Community of Disciples, Witness to Unity and Justice**



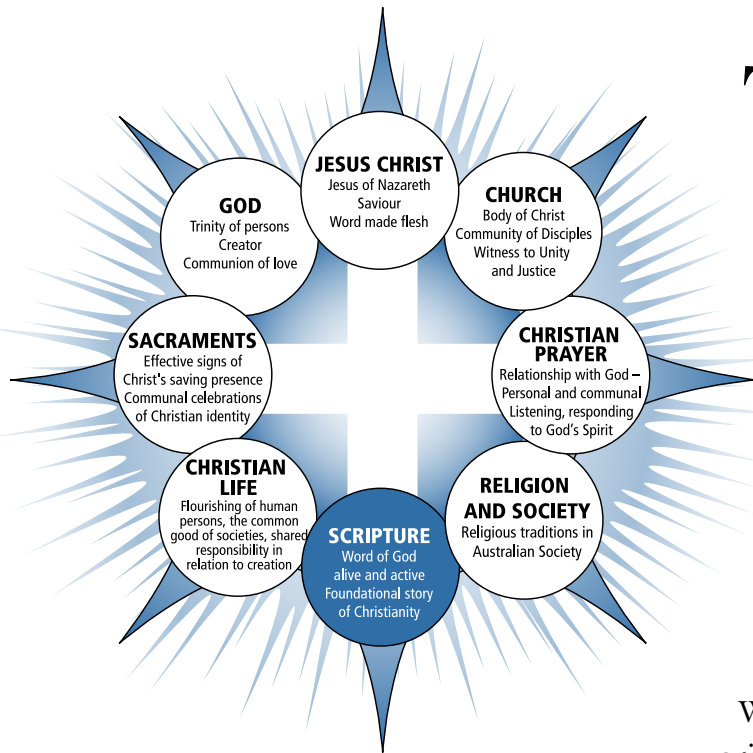
The Church was born from the mission of Jesus Christ entrusted to the apostles in his death and resurrection. At Pentecost the early Christian community was empowered to continue that mission through the gift of the Holy Spirit (Jn 15:16). Since then, the Church is the gathering of all those chosen through baptism in the mysterious ways of God's love. It proclaims Jesus Christ, crucified and risen from the dead, as Lord and saviour of all, and lives as the Body of Christ, where Christ is the head and we his members. The Church flows from the inner life of the triune God, and in all it says, does and is, returns constantly to that source. It turns to Mary, the Mother of God, and the saints as examples of faith and self-giving love, and seeks their intercession that it may remain true to Christ's call.

In the world, under the guidance of the Spirit, the Church strives to bring others to know the love of God as revealed in Christ and to experience the life and hope that only God can give. Committed to the work of Jesus, the Church is spread throughout the world, gathered in local communities around their bishops and united in a common faith under the leadership of the successor of the apostle Peter, the bishop of Rome. In the name of Jesus Christ, the bishops as pastors and servants of the Word, teach and interpret the gospel message with authority.

To be a member of the Church is to belong to a community of disciples, for Jesus has called us to follow him. In lives patterned on his, we hear the Good News that he brought and in turn become messengers of that news ourselves. In this community Jesus himself is present through his Spirit, speaking to us in his word, challenging us in our own sinfulness, and feeding us with his body and blood. In imitation of Jesus' own self-giving and loving service, his disciples seek to serve the poor and needy, and by the strength of God's grace, to overcome the powers of sin and evil in the world by working for justice, peace and reconciliation.



- **Scripture: Word of God, alive and active, foundational story of Christianity**



The Scriptures are those writings recognised by the Church as inspired by God and containing the truth necessary for our salvation. Drawn from the Hebrew Scriptures, inter-testamental literature, the gospels, and early Christian writings, they have been collected in two great libraries known commonly as the Old and New Testaments. They witness to the foundational events of our salvation and in poetry, prose, law, history, saga, letter and gospel, tell the story of what it was that God said and did.

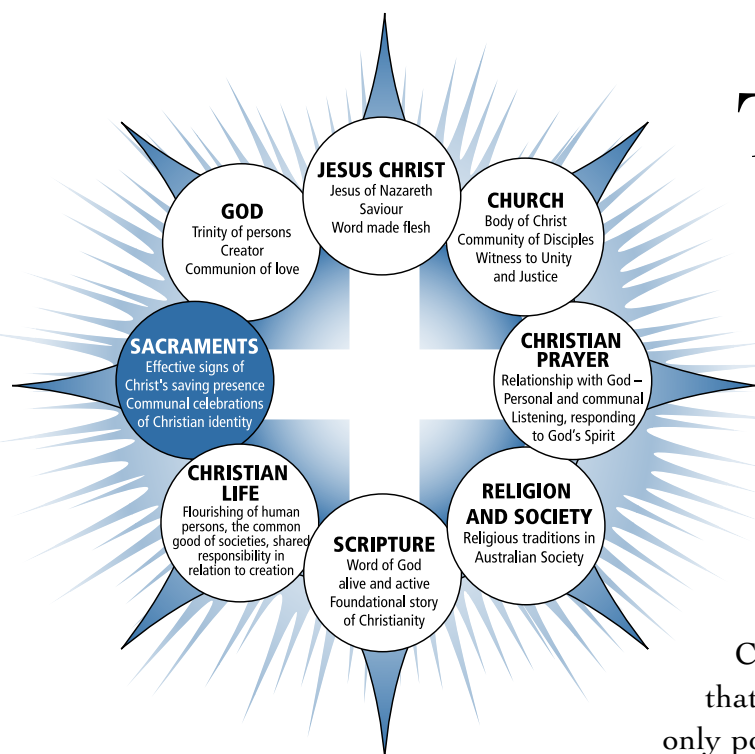
Written by different human hands and in varied circumstances, the Bible points to God who chose a people, set them free from slavery in Egypt and brought them to the promised land of Israel. In covenantal love, God does not forsake his chosen despite their infidelity and sends his messengers, the prophets, to call the people back. Even in exile God does not abandon them. The New Testament finds the fulfilment of this story in the person of Jesus Christ, his life, death and resurrection, and reflects the faith of the early Church in its different communities as they come to know and profess Jesus as Lord.

The Church receives these sacred writings as a living word, which summons us still to repentance and gives us hope. It always reads the Scriptures in the light of Tradition and its own experience of God. Studied and interpreted, they not only inform and teach, but also sustain the prayer life of the Church. Their true and primary place lies in the assembly of the faithful when they are proclaimed as God's living word to us in the liturgy and worship of the Church.





- **Sacraments: Effective signs of Christ's saving presence, communal celebrations of Christian identity**



The Church constantly draws life from Christ at work in its midst. Enlivened by the Holy Spirit, the community of disciples continues the saving mission of Christ to the world. A sacrament makes present the grace of God it signifies. This means that of its very nature the Church and all that it does in Christ is sacramental, for it makes Christ present and effective in the world.

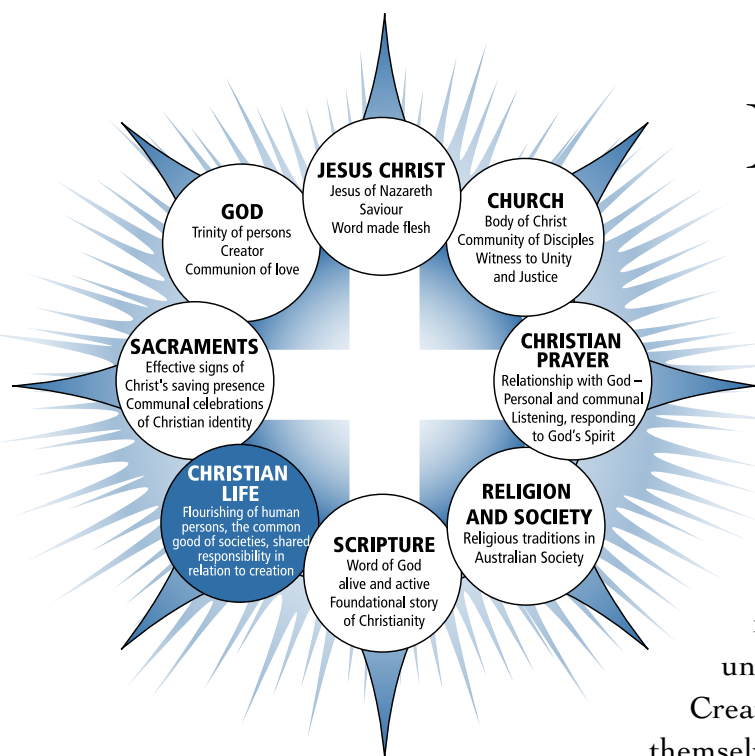
The sacraments come from Christ and emerge as key moments within the Church's common life in Christ. They celebrate that life in symbol and ritual. The sacraments not only point to God's life and remind us of what God has done, but through the action of the Holy Spirit they also become a source of that life, bringing about the very action

of Christ they represent. As celebrations of Christ's saving presence, the sacraments draw together all that the Church says and does in faith, and they renew these efforts in the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection. Central to the life of the Church is the celebration of the Eucharist. Here, in obedience to Christ's command, Christians join together in Christ's self-offering to the Father through the Spirit, and are fed with his Body and Blood that they in turn might be his Body in the world ready to be of service to others.

The seven sacraments have their origin in the ministry of Jesus Christ and they celebrate key moments of our lives. They make visible the mystery of Christ present in the heart of the Church, so that in the celebration of each sacrament the Church as well as the individual draws closer to its saviour and founder. Thus in Baptism, the one who is baptised is plunged into the mystery of Christ's death and resurrection, and the community which initiates, gains a new member, and is itself renewed in this mystery. In this way the sacraments build up the Christian community and celebrate different aspects of its identity in Christ as it is healed, sustained, forgiven and called to service.



- **Christian Life: Flourishing of human persons, the common good of societies, shared responsibility in relation to creation**



Religious communities which are founded on the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures find in them both the imperative and the guidance to discern ways of being and acting in the world which faithfully respond to the creative love of God. Catholic communities also find guidance for living and acting in the traditions of social and moral teaching that have arisen over centuries of gospel-inspired practice.

At the heart of the quest for human flourishing is the fundamental moral understanding of the dignity of human persons. Created in the image of God, persons experience themselves as free agents of thought and action,

among other human agents and in the non-human environment. The subject of inalienable rights to life, liberty, social engagement and self-expression, the person bears responsibility towards self and others for the full realisation of human potential. As creatures, human persons also experience limits, frustrations and failures in achieving the goals that attract them. So the quest for the realisation of human potential involves the experience of human frailty and invites a continual participation in the gracious creativity of God.

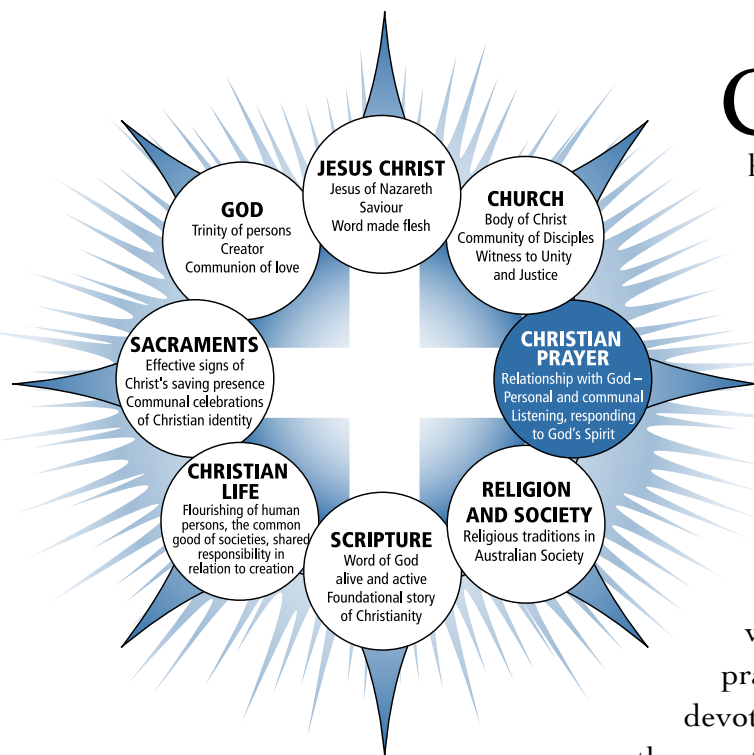
The Scriptures and the social teaching of the Church call people and governments to work for peace, justice and the promotion of the common good of society. Inherently social, human persons develop best in peaceful and just societies, where family life, labour, commerce, the arts, political associations, and other societal structures, all enable the self-expression of each one, and offer ways to serve the good of others.

As with God's creative activity, so human interest and responsibility extend beyond the human community to include relationships with animals, environments, the earth and its atmosphere. As that part of creation endowed with self-consciousness and freedom of decision and action, human persons exercise a particular responsibility in relation to creation, its life-systems, environments and resources.

Christians wait in hope for God's redeeming love to gather all created things into the resurrection of Jesus, to share his glory beyond sickness, sin and death. This waiting is expressed in both prayer and action, in a collaboration with the Spirit of God leading to acts of healing, forgiveness, reconciliation and restoration.



- **Christian Prayer: Relationship with God – personal and communal, listening, responding to God’s Spirit**



Christians live in relationship with God and with one another. God is present in our hearts through the gift of the Holy Spirit, and when we pray we turn to that loving presence to deepen our communion with God, and to allow God to work all the more in us. In prayer we are drawn into the divine life of Father, Son and Spirit, whose mystery lies at the heart of our being. Prayer is an encounter with God.

The ways of prayer are many and reflect the varied times and levels of our relationship with God. They range from a simple, wordless prayer of presence before God, to personal devotions, to meditation on the Scriptures, to the great liturgies of church and cathedral when the community gathers to express all that it is as the Body of

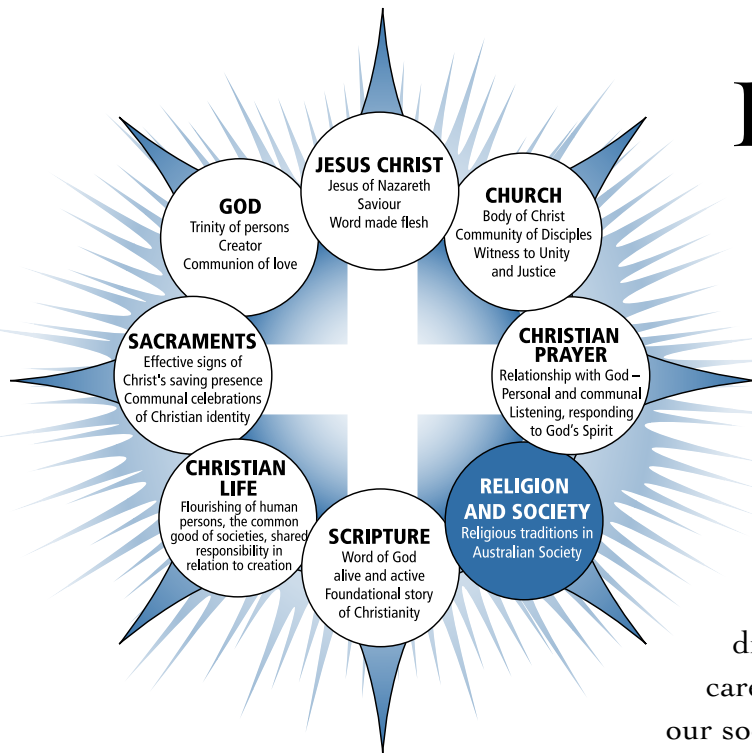
Christ and finds itself renewed in God’s love for the mission it bears. In this communion with God there are moments of praise, wonder, thanksgiving, petition, intercession, repentance, and searching.

Prayer has been described as a conversation with God, but there is also an earlier step where we first listen to God who has already spoken, and continues to speak to us, through the Holy Spirit. Jesus taught his disciples to pray and gave us the Our Father as a model for our prayer (Mt 6:9-15). He told us to ask and to search, and so Christians pray in response with confidence and trust in his words. To pray is not always easy, and a life of prayer requires discipline and takes time.

*Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. (Romans 8:26-27)*



- **Religion and Society: Religious traditions in Australian society**



Religion is a social and communal way of life, which springs out of the human heart in the search for meaning and the need to respond to the divine. It draws on authoritative teachings, stories, rituals, ethical norms, laws and spiritual experience to create a community, which in turn confers identity and purpose on its members.

Australia is a country with its own indigenous people who live in age-old spiritual closeness to the land and its dreaming. Justice for its own people demands careful attention to their culture and place in our society. Australian society also brings together many people from around the world. Each community has its own spirituality, customs and ways of life, often set

within a religious tradition. In particular, Christianity has a deep spiritual bond with Judaism, its history and sacred scriptures, as the people from whom Christ was born. While Christianity is the major religious tradition in Australia, other faiths also make their own contribution to Australian society and ask to be respected and understood. In dialogue with these religions Christians do not lose sight of the uniqueness of Christ, but seek to understand and promote all that reflects God's saving will.

Within Christianity itself there is a variety of traditions. Jesus himself prayed to the Father for his followers, 'so that they might be one as we are one'. (Jn 17:11) This sets a challenge to divided Christians as disciples of Jesus, to work for unity. It requires a commitment to Christian unity and a willingness to walk the path of discipleship on the basis of our common baptism in Christ.

In a global world where many religions and ways of life are in contact with each other, Christians must give an account of themselves if they are to give proper witness to Christ and so fulfil the mission he has entrusted to them. The need for Christian witness and discernment is ever more pressing as the various forms of mass media increase communication and promote multiple and divergent views.



## 4.3 Methodology

The General Directory for Catechesis reminds us that classroom-based Religious Education should ‘appear as a scholastic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines’ (n. 73). This means that contemporary research into quality teaching and learning should make an appropriate impact on the school’s Religious Education program. As with all other areas of the curriculum, the teacher is challenged to design classroom learning experiences that respect the integrity of the material to be studied while being appropriate to the developmental level, background, experience and other personal qualities of the learners.

### (A) Shared Christian Praxis

The approach to teaching Religious Education in the context of the classroom in this diocese represents a critical and creative adaptation of Shared Christian Praxis. (Groome, 1991)

This process is grounded in the understanding that God has been and continues to be present and active, through the Spirit, in the community of faith. The expression of the living faith of the community through history is carried in the community’s Tradition. Religious education promotes the believing, valuing and acting of the learner who is making meaning of his or her life now. An important context for this meaning-making activity is the living Tradition: the faith and life of the community.

The term **Praxis** refers to the process of thinking about life, where God is actively present, and learning from it – reflection on action. People engage in praxis whenever they reflect on what is going on around them, including those events that they have initiated.

Praxis is **Shared** when people reflect together on their lived experience, on the faith and wisdom of their community both now and in the past and, on this basis, shape their own future action.

Praxis is **Christian** when the focus of people’s reflection is their experience of life in Jesus Christ in dialogue with the experiences of Christian faith through history.

In the Shared Christian Praxis process, participants share a life experience which is then reflected upon; and its meaning is deepened in the light of the Christian Tradition. In identifying the relationship between their personal and collective experience and the Christian Tradition, participants are invited to consider appropriate responses.

Shared Christian Praxis is not simply a teaching method or a series of strategies. It is most appropriately understood as an overarching perspective and general way of proceeding that can be easily adapted in a great variety of situations. As a general approach to teaching it accommodates well a rich variety of teaching and learning strategies.





The focus of Shared Christian Praxis is the whole learner – one who thinks, feels, relates, acts – who is making his or her own meaning in the context of a specific faith community. It is concerned with ways of knowing, with an emphasis on critical knowing which results from the critical analysis of ideas and practices in the context of group inquiry.

## Praxis and Scripture

In the areas of catechesis and Religious Education, Shared Christian Praxis has long provided an effective means of creatively bringing together life, culture and faith. The elements of this educative process can be identified throughout the teaching ministry of Jesus and are most obvious in his use of parables.

In the Emmaus story (Luke 24: 13–35) too, the dynamics of Shared Christian Praxis can be discerned. The disciples set out from Jerusalem to Emmaus. They confess their dashed hopes and tell their story to the stranger. Jesus listens before breaking open the Scriptures in relation to himself and his mission. He invites the disciples to renew their own understanding of salvation history and of his own passion and death in this light. They continue the conversation



which culminates in the breaking and sharing of bread. The disciples recognize Jesus and make life-changing connections between their own experience and Jesus' words. With new insights and renewed faith, they return to Jerusalem, rejoining the community to tell their own story of transformation while hearing other stories of the Risen Christ.

Here are key movements: lived experience is reflected upon, the Scriptures are opened, links are made between life experience and the profound story and vision of Christ and the Scriptures, and the participants make a transformative response that is based on their reflection. In practice, of course, the journey in faith of students is both ongoing and recursive. Not every aspect of the Emmaus event will be present in every lesson.

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*'Intellectual development and growth as a Christian go forward hand in hand.'*

*(RDECS, 1988, n. 51)*



Shared Christian Praxis has been evolving since the late 1970s. In the classroom setting, it provides a powerful framework that can guide planning and interaction. Yet it is extremely flexible and open to adaptation in response to the varying cultural, faith and life experiences of different students.

Figure 4.5

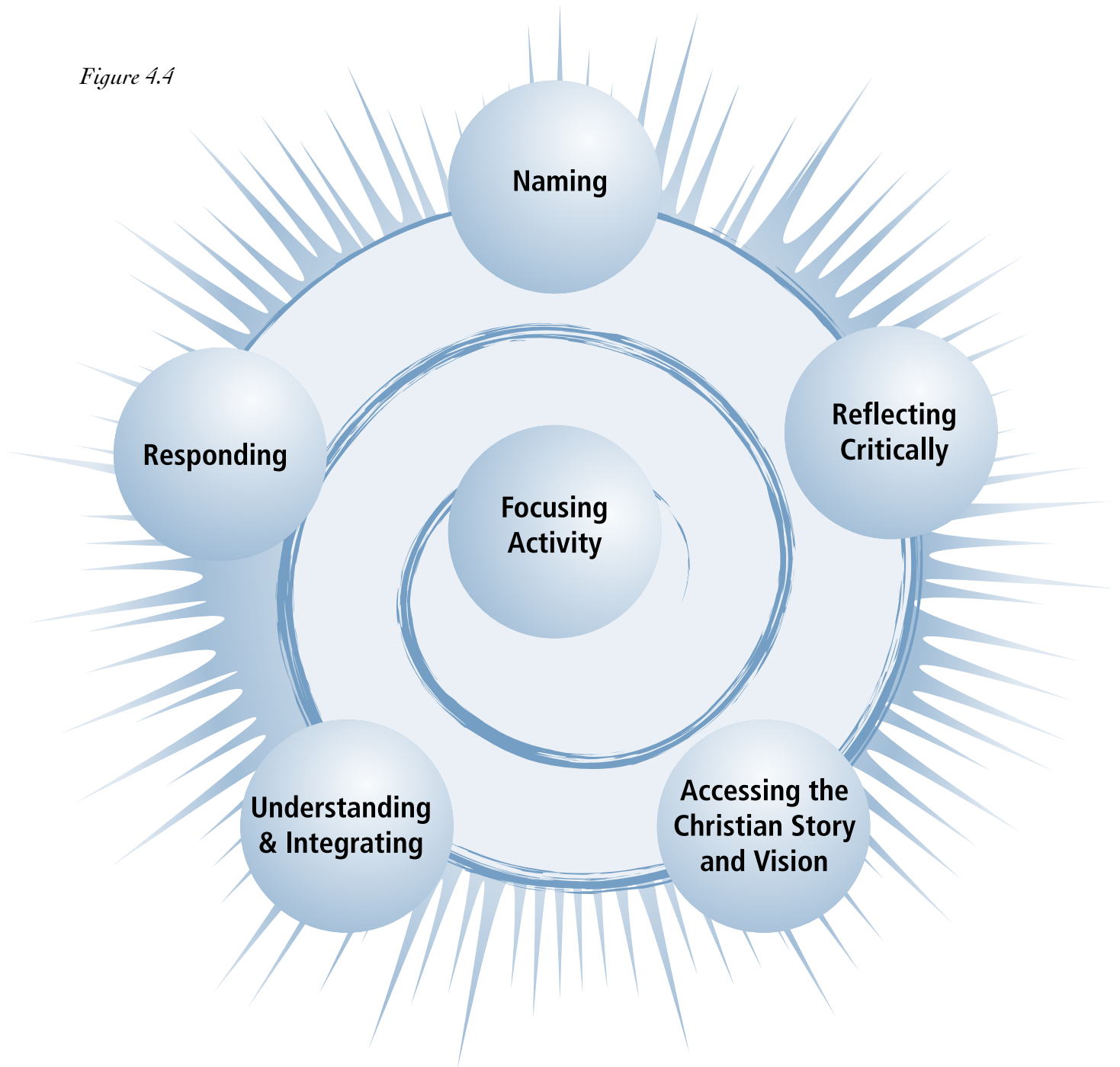
SHARED CHRISTIAN PRAXIS	EMMAUS STORY
NAMING	'Talking with each other about these things that had happened...'
REFLECTING CRITICALLY	Jesus said to them, 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?'
ACCESSING THE CHRISTIAN STORY AND VISION	'Jesus interpreted to them the things about Scriptures that were about himself.'
UNDERSTANDING AND INTEGRATING	'Were not our hearts burning within us while he was talking to us on the road, while he was opening the Scriptures to us?'  'Then their eyes were open and they recognized him.'
RESPONDING	'That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem...they told what had happened...'

Central to Shared Christian Praxis are the five 'movements' which are preceded by a focusing activity. These are represented in Figure 4.4.



# *The Movements of Shared Christian Praxis*

Figure 4.4



*Religious education seeks to inform, form and transform students' identity, ways of being and acting in the world*



The movements of Shared Christian Praxis should not be seen as a series of separate steps. While a particular lesson or strategy might focus on one movement, the others also have some influence, overlapping and blending in a dynamic process that supports the learner's search for deeper meaning.

- **Focusing Activity**

The focusing activity introduces, orientates and motivates students to the study of the unit. It introduces the focusing theme or symbol and facilitates students' entry into the first movement. The focusing (or generative) theme or symbol provides a means of integrating and structuring teaching and learning. It relates both to experience and faith.

- **Naming**

Participants are invited to name or express in some form their own or others' life experience that relates particularly to the topic.

- **Reflecting Critically**

Participants are encouraged to reflect critically on what has already been expressed. Why do we do this? Why do others act the way they do? What options are there?

- **Accessing the Christian Story and Vision**

Here the participants are given access to the Church's Faith and Tradition relevant to the focusing theme and topic. In the curriculum, the content of the Christian Story and Vision is structured around the eight organising strands.

- **Understanding and Integrating**

Participants reflect on their own understandings, experience, views and questions in the light of the Christian Story and Vision; by placing the two in relationship they deepen their understanding.

- **Responding**

In response to this integration, participants are challenged to identify appropriate ways of living the Christian life.





The movements may occur within one lesson or over a much longer period, during the study of a unit or over several units.

*The overall praxis 'style' informs the teacher's moment-by-moment initiative with, in one sense, the teacher acting as a conductor drawing the different movements into a harmonious and unified relationship.*

Actual methodology within or across a number of movements is neither prescribed nor limited. Teachers are encouraged to explore a comprehensive range of teaching approaches, to consider the extensive contribution of the research on quality teaching and learning, and to select learning experiences from as wide a range as possible.

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*'The Catholic teacher... cannot be content simply to present Christian values as a set of abstract objectives to be admired, even if this is done positively and with imagination; they must be presented as values which generate human attitudes, and these attitudes must be encouraged in the students.'*

*(Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith, 1982, n. 30)*





## (B) Quality Teaching and Learning

Many factors contribute to successful learning outcomes: individual ability and motivation, family background, personal choice, temperament, and so on. The school is relatively powerless in influencing these to a marked degree. It is within its scope, however, to intensify its impact on the quality of the teaching and learning in the classroom.

The research literature on quality teaching and learning, along with the lived experience of successful teachers, suggests a number of core principles or understandings which seem to underpin the quest for more successful classrooms. This has obvious implications for classroom-based Religious Education.

### Core Understandings

Quality teaching and learning are fostered by:

- **Quality relationships between teacher and students, and amongst students themselves.**  
Positive relationships based on respect, care and genuine affection help build a supportive classroom community where individuals feel safe enough to respect the opinions and feelings of others, and to challenge themselves.
- **Flexible teaching approaches designed to respond to individual differences in students' needs, abilities, interests and learning styles.**  
Students develop at different rates, come from different social, cultural and domestic backgrounds, and have different abilities, personal traits and preferred learning styles. A variety of approaches and activities maximise opportunities to capitalise on this rich diversity.



- **The encouragement of students to engage in independent planning, thinking and learning.**

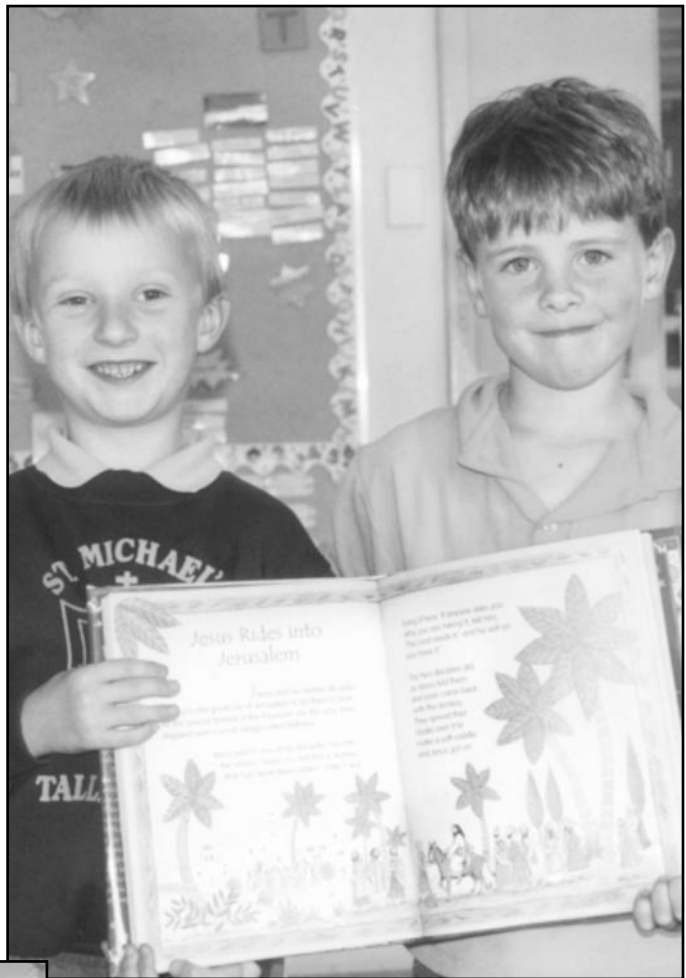
The more students take responsibility for their own learning, the more effective and meaningful this learning is likely to become.

- **The active engagement of students in activities which are purposeful and relevant.**

Students are motivated and helped by having clear goals and in doing tasks that make sense to them.

- **Genuine interest in and enthusiasm about the topic on the part of the teacher.**

Students often take their cues from their teacher who in a number of ways, both overt and covert, defines the significance of a subject or topic.



- **Critical reflection by the teacher on his or her teaching practice, and by the student on his or her progress in learning.**

Learning is likely to be enhanced when teachers and students reflect on what is being taught and learnt, and the conditions that enhance or diminish the teaching and learning processes.

- **A classroom atmosphere that is characterised by interest, challenge and high expectations that are developmentally appropriate.**

Learning occurs when students respond to challenges to question existing ideas, to go beyond their present understanding and to develop new skills.



- **The assessing of student progress.**

Assessment is most effective when it is based on data gathered by a variety of strategies that include self and peer assessment. Students need to know the criteria and receive feedback on their perceived progress .

- **Students being assisted to make connections between old and new experiences and knowledge, and between different areas of knowledge.**

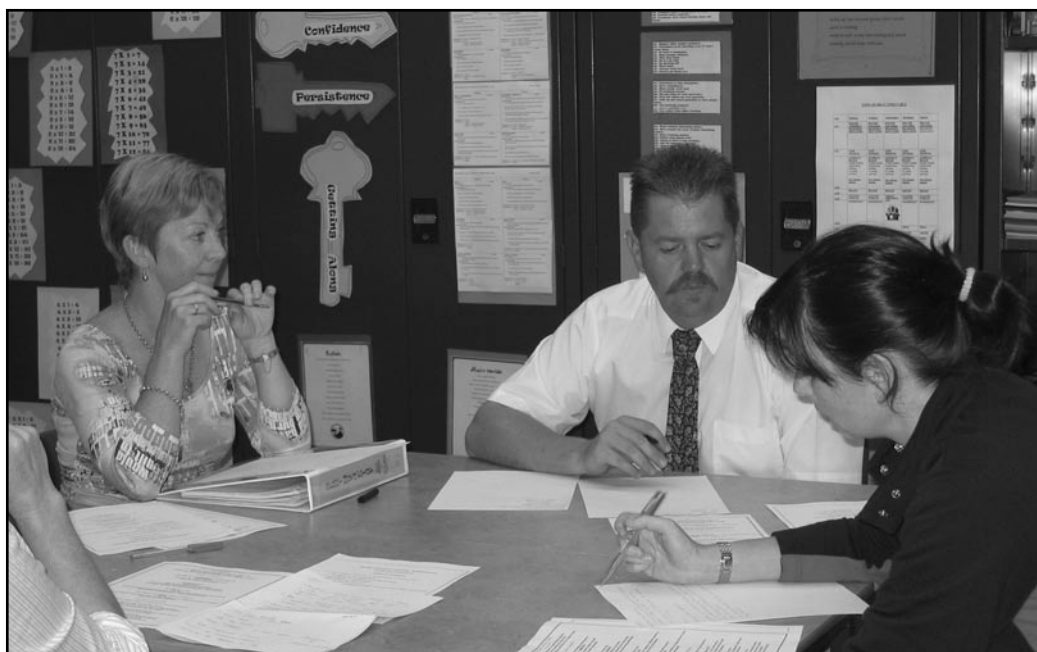
Students develop intellectually by reconstructing mental frameworks to accommodate new experiences and concepts. They need to see their development of knowledge and skills as an integrated whole.

- **Students being encouraged to try new approaches and to solve problems in different ways.**

Students progress as learners by developing a range of thinking and learning styles which enable them to experience and integrate different ways of knowing.

- **Teachers undertaking regular professional development.**

In the area of Religious Education this includes responding to opportunities for spiritual reflection and growth as well as ongoing development in Scripture, Theology and Religious Education.



*'Modern men and women listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers, and if they do listen to teachers it is because they are witnesses.'*

*(Evangelisation in the Modern World, 1975, n. 41)*



## (C) Ways of Learning and Knowing and the Selection of Experiences

The intent of Shared Christian Praxis can be described as ‘wisdom in the Christian faith’ (Groome 1991, p. 296). The *active* and *reflective* aspects of Shared Christian Praxis promote the development within students of a critical consciousness of their own identity and interaction with the world. The creative aspect of Shared Christian Praxis promotes the students’ exploration of a new consciousness and way of being in the world inspired by the Christian Story and Vision. Religious Education is an enterprise of *information* and *formation* that empowers people to *transform* themselves and their world. The insights of Shared Christian Praxis are complemented by the contributions of many theorists and researchers who focus on the different ways in which learners process information and experiences.

Current educational research reminds teachers that learners can be expected to favour different ways of thinking and learning. Some, for instance, have a natural preference for learning through interaction with others, while others prefer to focus on the experience itself and their more personal exploration of it. Some are quite spontaneous, responding readily to challenges and favouring environments that are unstructured where they can pursue goals that are open-ended. Others have a natural preference for tight structures which help them to know exactly what is required and where they can build from parts to the whole in a systematic fashion.





What is important is that learners have access to a range of ways of making meaning, of being more totally engaged in the learning process and therefore in knowing more fully. Understanding preferred styles of processing, and being able to extend different styles through different tasks, is a large part of what learning *how to learn* is all about. The teacher fosters quality learning by helping the student move around the full range of styles or modes of processing thus making personal meaning in a comprehensive way.

In the preparation of the published units, every attempt has been made to model diversity. Teachers at every level are encouraged to extend this creatively so that the best of current classroom practice is in evidence in Religious Education lessons. Shared Christian Praxis is an overall way of approaching Religious Education. It is like a jigsaw which accommodates many diverse teaching and learning strategies depending on the focus of the learning experience (see Figure 4.5).

Figure 4.5





## Practical Implications

Conscious of the various complementary perspectives identified in this section, it is suggested that in classrooms faithful to the spirit of the Religious Education curriculum, the following will be in evidence:

- a faithful presentation of Church teaching
- an overarching praxis mindset and style designed to develop students' capacities to think and know critically and to reflect on experience in the light of knowledge of the Christian Story and Vision
- a general atmosphere of safety, support, respect, enthusiasm and challenge
- student understanding of the nature and purpose of the Religious Education program, specific classroom activities and desired outcomes
- flexibility in teaching styles and a responsiveness to 'the teachable moment'
- new information and concepts being linked to students' existing knowledge and experience
- at different times, students working individually and in groups as well as within the whole class
- ongoing observation of students' progress accompanied by appropriate feedback about progress towards desired outcomes, the evaluation of individual units and the program as a whole
- students taking some responsibility for their own learning, for planning, for exercising some choice in selecting activities and for reflecting on personal progress
- high, but realistic, expectations of behaviour, commitment and achievement
- tolerance of different opinions and encouragement to struggle with challenging ideas and questions
- connections continually being made between the surrounding culture and the vision of the Gospel, and between Religious Education in the classroom, life in the classroom, life in the school, life in the parish and the wider church
- attention to level and unit outcomes in planning, teaching, assessing and evaluating
- appropriate opportunities for students to translate values and beliefs into actions.



## (D) Key Characteristics of Desirable Classroom Religious Education Programs

The following serves as a summary and possible checklist for use in program evaluation.

### **Effective Religious Education programs:**

- seek to develop factual knowledge of the essentials of the Catholic faith: its story, teachings, worship and ways of living the Christian life
- are professionally rigorous, featuring the elements common to all other courses of study: challenging content, continuity, relevance to learners, adequate resources, varied teaching and learning strategies, valid assessment and ongoing evaluation
- reflect a critical discernment in drawing from the surrounding educational culture as they have their own specific aims and strong commitment to reflective practice and Catholic vision of the human person and world
- are appropriate to the developmental level of the learner and are sensitive to the claims of individual differences
- connect at the point of learners' experience, building on prior personal knowledge and home experiences in recognition of the key role of parents
- recognise the significance of the parish community in Catholic life
- are attentive and responsive to the local context
- challenge students to reflect critically on how they lead their lives
- are given appropriate prominence in the school's curriculum; this is reflected in the time allocated to the Religious Education program
- are an integral part of the total curriculum and are linked to other religious activities including school prayers and liturgies, retreats, Christian outreach and social justice initiatives and parish-based sacramental preparation
- utilise information and communication technology (ICT) as a powerful tool providing a new context in which the journey of faith and learning can find valid expression
- recognise that the general principles of good learning and teaching practice likewise apply to the use of ICT.



## 4.4 Structure

The *Source of Life* Religious Education Curriculum Framework is structured around level outcomes. This is the structural model of the curriculum standards frameworks of the state-based documents. Its use in the Religious Education curriculum ensures consistency in terminology and approaches to planning between Religious Education and other curriculum areas across the diocese.

### An Outcomes-based Approach

- makes teaching and learning more precise and explicit
- helps identify the individual student's progress in learning
- links planning, teaching, assessing and reporting
- respects diversity amongst students and allows for a variety of methods of organizing and teaching
- helps to identify gaps and overlap in the curriculum
- clarifies expectations and strengthens the instructional dimension of the classroom program
- provides a useful framework and a language for reporting.

### Outcomes-based Approaches and Religious Education

In recent years, a new generation of Religious Education curricula in Australia has incorporated an outcomes-based structure. This has helped to establish the status of Religious Education within the formal, academic program of the school. At the secondary level, it facilitates the State accreditation of certain courses in the study of religion.

### The Need for Discernment

Religious educators need to place outcomes-based education within a total philosophy that is grounded in a Christian view of the nature of the human person, of culture and society, and of the purpose of Catholic schooling.

If implemented in a narrow and inflexible manner, an outcomes-based approach can fragment learning and distract teachers from holistic approaches so important in Religious Education, which often explores mystery and promotes the search for personal meaning.

Teachers know that very desirable outcomes of learning experiences are often not foreseen, and that the needs and experiences of individual students should be considered as important starting points for planning. They know, too, that an inappropriate preoccupation with assessing outcomes can diminish the significance given to education in values and attitudes which are more difficult to assess than knowledge and skills.

Nevertheless, an outcomes-based framework, when used with discernment and discretion, and in the context of Catholic educational philosophy, can provide a valuable curriculum tool that helps ensure continuity, and that links planning, teaching and learning, assessment, reporting and evaluation in a very productive manner.



As used in *Source of Life* outcomes are:

- serving curriculum framework aims;
- integrated with curriculum framework content;
- consistent;
- linked explicitly to named values;
- developmental, expressed in levels;
- manageable in number.

## Unit Outcomes

Unit Outcomes, written for Unit Outlines contribute to progress towards the achievement of level outcomes and the understanding of the designated doctrinal concepts from each content strand. They have a more specific focus and may require local adaptation and/or extension to ensure that they are relevant, meaningful and manageable. They articulate knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes and are linked to the Shared Christian Praxis methodology.



# Outcomes and the Complexity of Teaching and Learning

Figure 4.7



*Compose your own diagram indicating how you see the relationship between planning, teaching, learning and assessing. Share with a colleague.*

*In what ways can your most successful experiences in working with outcomes in other curriculum areas be applied in implementing the Religious Education Curriculum?*





## 4.5 *Assessment*

Assessment is a vital part of any curriculum process. Within the level-outcomes structure adopted in the Source of Life Religious Education Curriculum, planning, teaching and learning, assessing and reporting are closely linked.

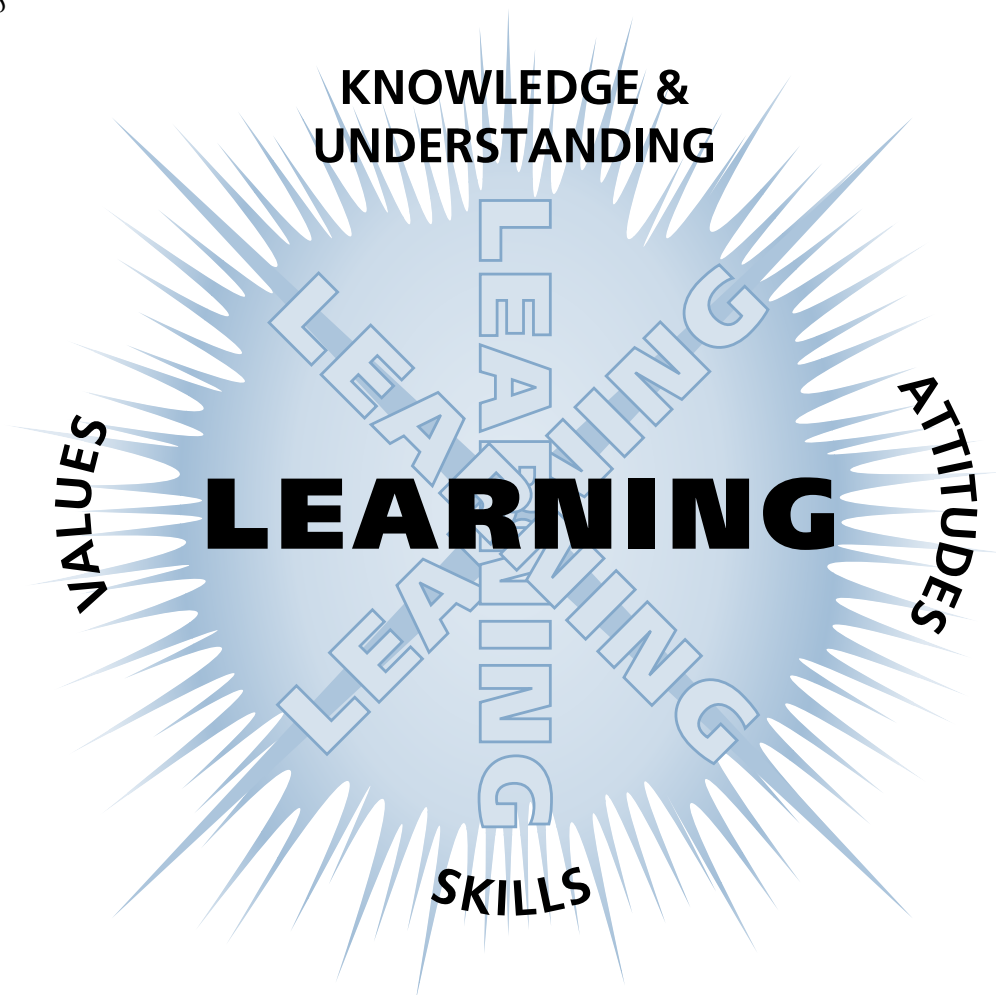
The goal of planning, teaching and assessing is student achievement; reporting is the communication of that achievement. Assessment itself is the process of gathering and interpreting information about student progress for a variety of purposes. These include:

- to encourage more effective learning;
- to foster students' reflection on their learning;
- to indicate the degree to which students are progressing towards the achievement of program aims and level outcomes;
- to highlight the needs of individual students;
- to assist teachers to improve their teaching methods;
- to provide information that will assist in the evaluation of the Religious Education program and of individual units and activities;
- to provide a basis for reporting on student progress to parents and to the students themselves.



As in all other subjects, disciplines and curriculum areas, assessment has an important function in Religious Education. Here, two main areas require consideration: (i) knowledge and skills, (ii) values and attitudes. While there is obvious overlap between the two, each retains its own distinguishing features.

Figure 4.8



Progress in knowledge and skills is appropriately inferred from what students can explain, demonstrate, make or perform. Skills, particularly, can be assessed by observation of the steps taken to reach an insight or solve a problem, or by the quality of a product (e.g. written assignment, illustration, project) or performance (e.g. dramatic presentation, group contribution.)

Teachers may gather appropriate data from quizzes and tests, and by requiring students to provide verbal or written recounts, narratives, reports and explanations, to carry out instructions, to create mind maps, to label, match, classify and analyse, to engage in role plays and present visual displays.

Students should understand that assessment in this area requires the demonstration of knowledge and skills that have been acquired or further developed before or during the course.



## Values and Attitudes

The second area is, in many ways, more challenging. Values and attitudes are integral to every genuinely educative curriculum and are at the heart of Religious Education. However, they do not lend themselves to precise assessment.

Useful observations can be made if teachers are alert to demonstrations of personal values and attitudes in classroom discussions and presentations, as well as in spontaneous comments and suggestions. Role plays and artwork, for instance, and conversations about them, provide valuable insights as do the day-to-day interactions of students working with others in a variety of situations. Also helpful are moral dilemma discussions, surveys, open-item questionnaires, rating scales and open-ended questions in general.

Assessment in this domain requires particular sensitivity since it touches the development of personal awareness, the emotional life and the pathway towards maturity. In general, it does not provide material for comparisons amongst peers, or for reports to parents and others, although it would be appropriate for teachers to discuss and report on students' levels of participation, cooperation and interest in the study of Religious Education.

## Assessment and Outcomes

The advent of outcomes-based education has brought an increased emphasis on assessment. This is particularly relevant to this Religious Education curriculum, the syllabus component of which is given structure by a level-outcomes approach.

The focus of outcomes-based education is the demonstration of measurable achievement of pre-determined outcomes.

This has the advantage of making planning and teaching more explicit. It speaks the language of individual competence and achievement rather than pass and fail, and to that degree, respects the dignity of the learner and celebrates personal achievement.

In this curriculum, level and unit outcomes, which are manageable in number, provide valuable reference points for planning, teaching and assessing.

Religious educators are aware of the limitations of this approach in adequately responding to the less tangible and highly personal aspects of religious development. Certainly, the cognitive aspects of religious education and some behaviours and skills are amenable to this type of assessment.

*A student's personal faith is not the subject of assessment or reporting within Religious Education.*



Certain aspects of 'knowing' and of critical reflection and integration, however, while being open to assessment, defy precise measurement.

The contemporary approach to assessment and the educational philosophy on which it is based, while not defining or dominating Religious Education, can certainly be used to support it.

### **Unforeseen Outcomes**

**M**any of the awakenings, achievements and new insights of students are intensely personal and individual. They may indicate very significant movement towards meeting the more profound aims of Religious Education. If Shared Christian Praxis is being successfully employed, individuals will find and express personal meaning in rich and varied ways.

Outcomes lose none of their significance because they are unforeseen. Such unanticipated outcomes are appropriately identified and incorporated into the assessment process.

### **Assessment and Reflective Teaching**

**A**ssessment is best viewed as an aspect of genuinely reflective teaching based on ongoing observations. It is not confined to formal assessment tasks. Indeed, the most penetrating assessment often takes place during informal discussion or while individuals or groups are going about their normal work. Every activity within an RE lesson provides some data that will help an observant teacher to make some meaningful judgement about what and how learning is occurring.



## Assessment and Shared Christian Praxis

Approaches to assessment should support and strengthen the commitment to Shared Christian Praxis which sets the overarching style in this curriculum.

Figure 4.9

A praxis orientation, in particular, directs the teacher to indications that a student:	Movements of Shared Christian Praxis
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>reflects on personal experience, values and prejudices</li> <li>is willing to respectfully hear and consider another's point of view</li> </ul>	<b>Naming and Reflecting Critically</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>has a knowledge and understanding of the Christian Story and Vision</li> </ul>	<b>Accessing the Christian Story and Vision</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>makes connections between the experiences and actions of others and his or her own</li> <li>uses imagination to express insights in words and symbols</li> <li>brings ideas into a meaningful whole.</li> </ul>	<b>Understanding, Integrating and Responding</b>

*'Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.'*

*Mark 4:8*





# Some Assessment Procedures

Figure 4.10

Ways of Understanding	Typical Outcome Stems	Ways Students Might Demonstrate Achievement e.g. in a Scripture unit
<b>Knowledge based on fact, information, definitions, procedures and rules</b>	gather facts, recognise, name, label, list, recall, tell, recite, locate, identify, explain, recount, question	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>complete multiple-choice questions based on facts relating to biblical people or events</li> <li>analyse the structure of Pauline letters</li> <li>label a map of Judea in the time of Christ or a diagram of the Temple</li> <li>match key words with illustrations or definitions</li> <li>write an account of the passion and death of Christ based on Mark's Gospel</li> <li>research the role of women in the early Church</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge based on structure, order, planning, following rules and practising</b>	outline principles, design, implement, organise, structure, practise skills, identify patterns in, summarise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>compare and contrast the literary features of parallel Gospel accounts</li> <li>categorise selected scriptural passages according to their literary genre</li> <li>locate scripture passages</li> <li>design a data base to store information on the books of the Bible</li> <li>sequence key events reported in the Acts of the Apostles</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge based on sharing, discussing, experiencing, sensing, intuiting and relating to self and others</b>	participate in, perform, express, develop an appreciation of, debate, discuss, interview, dramatise, journal, empathise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>dramatise the parable of the Good Samaritan</li> <li>role play a real-life situation or dilemma related to a gospel value</li> <li>identify the personal thoughts and feelings of Moses at key points in his life</li> <li>journal in response to a guided meditation on a Scripture passage</li> <li>write a psalm using Australian imagery</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge based on designing, connecting, exploring, patterning and metaphor-making</b>	predict, symbolise, visualise, explore, critique, evaluate, synthesise, experiment, integrate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>write a speech outlining a future based on Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God</li> <li>design a symbol for the Good News</li> <li>mind map the themes/events of John's Gospel</li> <li>select music suitable for a Liturgy of the Word</li> <li>produce a slide/sound sequence on a biblical theme e.g. God's creative love</li> </ul>



## Partners in Assessment

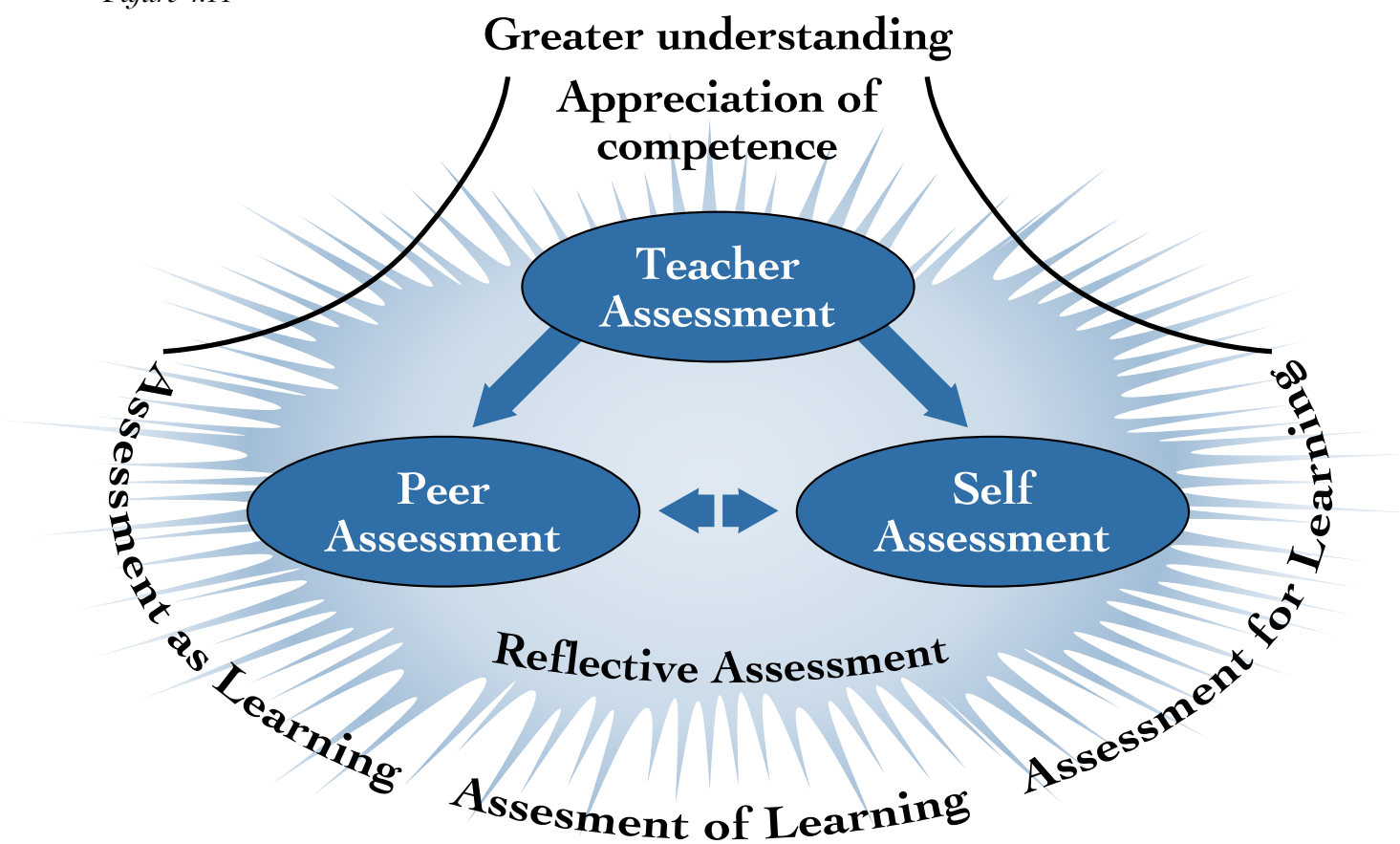
Assessment is not the task of the teacher alone. Self-assessment and peer-assessment perform valuable complementary functions.

Self-assessment involves students in reflecting on and taking some responsibility for their own learning. For this to be effective, they need to understand the desired outcomes of units and specific learning activities and, also, to be open to unanticipated outcomes: personal insights, new knowledge, improved skills, growing appreciation of particular values.

Peer-assessment flourishes in a climate of cooperation and shared reflection. It is fostered by teachers who provide appropriate guidance and critical questions that will give focus to discussion.

The teacher's assessment role draws these other aspects into harmony. Its particular focus is on the growth of individuals and groups towards greater understanding, appreciation and competence and the greater effectiveness and fulfilment of teaching and learning. In reflecting upon the process, the teacher is led to evaluate both the effectiveness of his or her own methodology and the appropriateness of content.

Figure 4.11



## 4.6 Reporting

**R**eporting is the communication of information about student progress. It can be written or verbal, formal or informal. It may have a range of audiences – the student, parents, school leadership team, the wider community – and a number of purposes including that of providing accountability. The form should be relevant to the purpose.

Reporting might take the form of:

*Figure 4.12*

<b>A written statement</b>	... often abbreviated through the use of scales, brief comments or marks. This provides parents and students with a summary of some learning achievements.
<b>Interviews</b>	... provide parents (and students) with opportunity to share observations, concerns and intentions, perhaps using student portfolios as a focus. They can also strengthen a sense of common purpose and partnership.
<b>Information sheets</b>	... provide parents and a more general audience with information about the learning opportunities and achievements of groups of students.
<b>Newsletters and school annuals</b>	... provide a wide audience with general information about major school initiatives taken in Religious Education.
<b>Displays of work</b>	... provide parents and students with demonstrations of achievement: productions, performances, exhibitions and portfolios.



If reporting is to reflect the spirit of the *Source of Life* Religious Education Curriculum, it should be done in ways that:

- are consistent with the school's underlying philosophy and mission as proclaimed in its Vision and Mission statements; for example, its commitment to individual worth, its understanding of 'success' and its attitude towards normative and/or competitive gradings;
- acknowledge parents' rights to be adequately informed of their child's progress;
- are meaningful, appropriate and understandable to the audience;
- are appropriate to the level of student development;
- are sensitive to the individual student's needs, seeking to build on achievements;
- demonstrate links to level outcomes;
- foster productive school/home understanding and interaction.



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*What is the current approach to assessment in Religious Education at your school? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?*



# A Summary: Assessment and Reporting

Figure 4.15

PRINCIPLES OF ASSESSMENT & REPORTING	PROCEDURES WHICH REFLECT THESE PRINCIPLES...
1. Assessment procedures should be in harmony with the school's aims and especially with the aims of classroom-based Religious Education.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• make explicit what is valued in the school, particularly in Religious Education.</li> <li>• reveal a comprehensive understanding of learning and development, placing appropriate emphasis on values and attitudes.</li> <li>• are subject themselves to regular evaluation.</li> </ul>
2. Assessment procedures should respect the individual learner, foster self-esteem, encourage personal responsibility and enhance the relationship between teacher and student.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• focus on individual achievement in moving towards desired outcomes.</li> <li>• are based on criteria of achievement that are clear to the students.</li> <li>• respect different needs, styles, abilities and cultural backgrounds.</li> <li>• are appropriate to the level of development of the learner.</li> <li>• employ a variety of processes and are flexible in their application.</li> <li>• foster a classroom climate of cooperation and shared responsibility.</li> </ul>
3. Assessment should be part of the teaching and learning process.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• encourage students to reflect on their progress, to identify new insights, understandings and skills.</li> <li>• clarify desired outcomes and, where appropriate, involve students in the selection of some assessment tasks.</li> <li>• involve students in self-assessment and peer assessment as important components of the learning process.</li> <li>• focus on how students are learning and making meaning as well as what they are learning.</li> <li>• are flexible and responsive to emerging opportunities for observation and judgement.</li> </ul>
4. Methods of reporting the results of assessment to students and parents should be clear, accurate, meaningful, supportive and sensitive to student needs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• respond to parents' right to regular feedback.</li> <li>• communicate clearly.</li> <li>• reflect what is really valued in Religious Education, avoiding the trivialising of desired outcomes.</li> <li>• encourage dialogue between parents, teachers and students.</li> </ul>





## 4.7 Evaluation

In this context, evaluation is the process of reflecting on classroom practice, units and policies in Religious Education for the purpose of informing planning.

### Classroom Practice

- Is it appropriate to the level of development of students?
- Does it exhibit an understanding of Shared Christian Praxis?
- Does it provide for the demonstration of desired outcomes by students?
- Does it encourage students to ask questions, make tentative formulations, explore ideas?
- Does it facilitate different types of learning and provide for different ways of knowing?
- Does it ensure an appropriate use of resources?

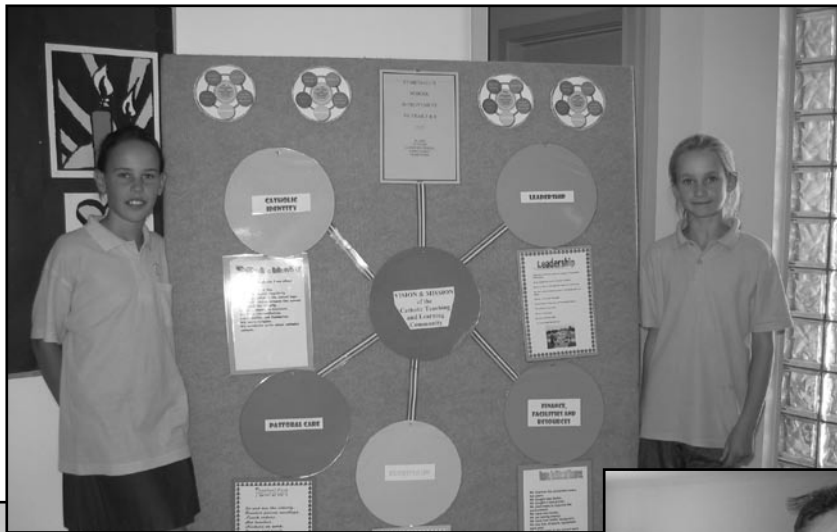
### Unit Outlines and Programs

- Are they practical and relevant?
- Do they generate student interest?
- Do they stimulate a broad range of activities?
- Do they stimulate teacher initiative and allow modification?
- Do they encourage linkage to other units and to learning areas other than Religious Education?
- To what extent were desired outcomes achieved? For which students?
- Do the assessment strategies assist future planning?



## Religious Education Policy

- Were the relevant people involved in its development?
- Does it ensure that syllabus requirements are met?
- Is it responsive to students' needs and to local conditions?
- Is it obviously inspired by the school's educational vision?
- Does it ensure a comprehensive and developmentally appropriate sequence of topics?
- Does it establish links between Religious Education and other areas of the curriculum and provide for the integration of Religious Education within the total curriculum?
- Does it link and identify classroom-based Religious Education with other aspects of Religious Education?



*'The apostles gathered around Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught.'*

*Mark 6:30*



# Section 5

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## Implementing and Planning with the Source of Life Curriculum

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*'Religious instruction should have its own curriculum framework, approved by those in authority; it should seek appropriate interdisciplinary links with other course material so that there is a coordination between human learning and religious awareness.'*

*(cf. The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School,  
1988, n. 70)*



## 5.1 Planning and Implementing *Source of Life*

The publication of any new curriculum calls on the good will of all those involved, especially the teachers. It is a challenge to review existing practice, to identify and build on strengths, to engage in some re-organisation and, sometimes, to modify teaching practices. The successful implementation of *Source of Life*, as with any new curriculum initiative, depends on discernment, sensitivity to individual needs, collaboration, planning and an openness to challenge and change.

The leadership of this change process in every school rests with the principal, the school leadership team and, particularly, the Coordinators of Religious Education. Resource material to support the leadership team and the REC in this role of leading educational change is provided in the *Sandhurst School Improvement Framework (SSIF)* and *Source of Life* professional learning materials.



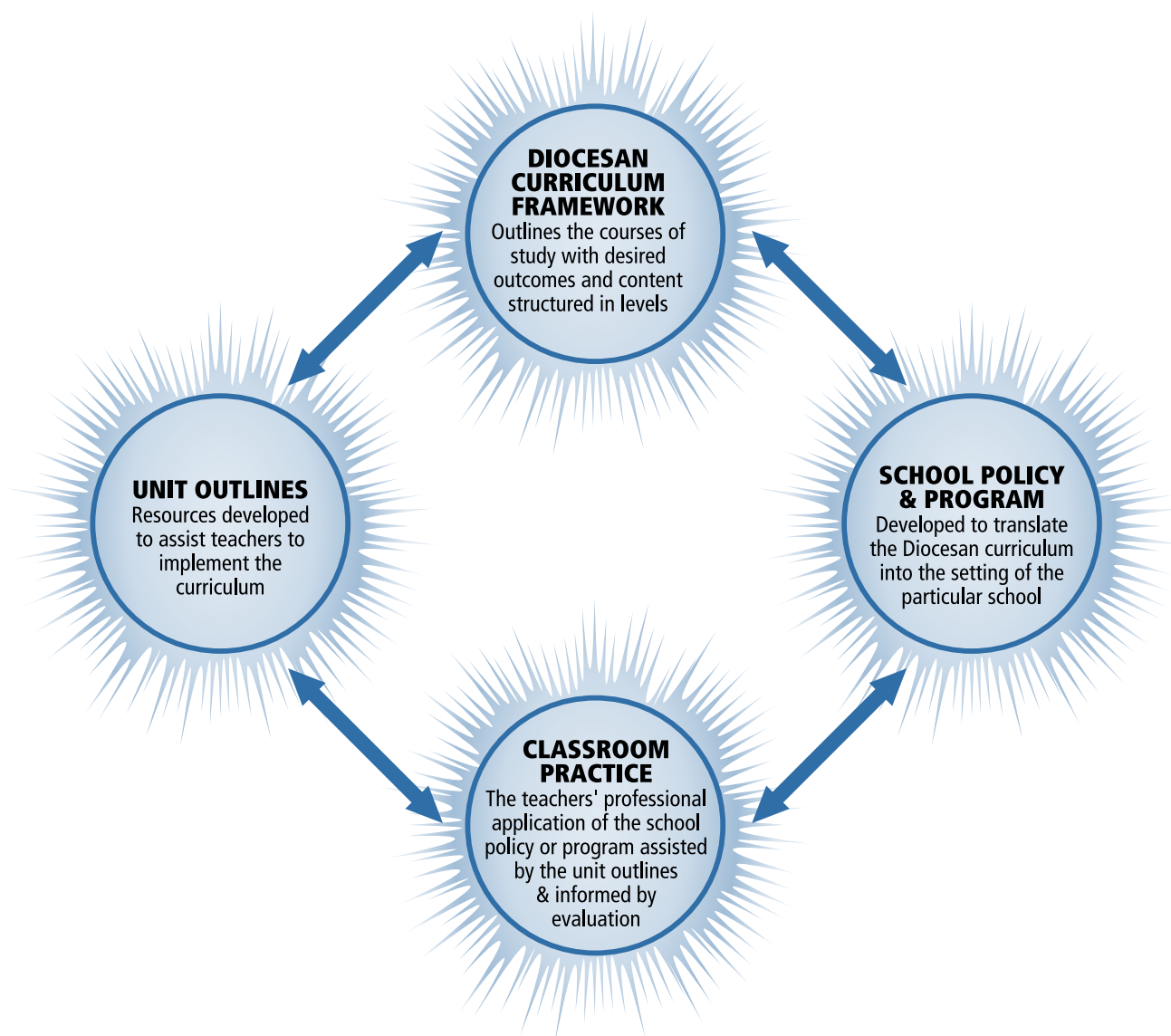
Priests have a vital contribution to make in ensuring that the content of the *Source of Life* Religious Education curriculum is appropriately implemented. They could support the implementation by participating with staff in developing the program, discussing implementation with the principal, REC and staff, and being available to advise teachers on doctrinal and moral matters.

Curriculum documents provide direction and support to school leadership teams and staff in generating systematic and comprehensive school policies and programs. Support may be obtained from CEO Religious Education Officers and Sandhurst Religious Education Team (SRET) members who are available to work with individuals and groups on the implementation of the curriculum and appropriate local adaptation of the *Source of Life* Curriculum Framework.

Each school is expected to develop its own overall Religious Education policy, curriculum map or general program within the framework provided by *Source of Life*, the Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum. This translates the Religious Education curriculum into the context of the school, responding to local needs and conditions. It provides the scope and sequence of the school's instructional program. Individual teachers make adaptations in collaboration with the Religious Education Coordinator and colleagues.



Figure 5.1 The interrelatedness of the different elements of implementation



The curriculum is supported by each school's policy which translates it into the local context. The curriculum also generates unit outlines which assist teachers in planning and implementing the classroom program. The school policy and the unit outlines influence classroom practice. All three are subject to ongoing critical reflection. This evaluation should lead to the improvement of practice, policy and the Unit Outlines themselves.

Methods and formats of planning and recording teaching and learning activities can differ between primary and secondary schools. Determining how such records are maintained to meet the Victorian Registered Schools Board requirements and the Sandhurst School Education Board requirements as documented in policies is a local responsibility.

The implementation, therefore, is dynamic as it seeks continual improvement while reflecting a fidelity to both the needs of students and the integrity of content.





## 5.2 *The Religious Education Curriculum Framework and Unit Outlines*

The *Source of Life* Religious Education Curriculum is structured around seven organising strands in the primary school and eight organizing strands in the secondary school. These run through the six levels of schooling across Years P - 12. A central outcome and a number of doctrinal concepts are identified for each strand at every level.

The curriculum is provided in the *Source of Life* curriculum folders and on the Catholic Education Office website - <http://www.ceo.sand.catholic.edu.au>

### Unit Outlines

The unit outlines developed to accompany the curriculum are provided as resources. Each one describes the unit focus, links unit outcomes to level outcomes and doctrinal concepts, identifies cross-curriculum links, includes references to Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, and provides theological and educational background as well as a range of suggested teaching, learning and assessment strategies and resources.

It is assumed that teachers will adapt and develop the teaching, learning and assessment strategies in the unit outlines as a result of their own professional experience in using them. In responding to local needs, local religious celebrations, special events and the occasional 'teachable moments', schools may also develop their own units, faithful to the spirit and intentions of the curriculum. Such professional initiative is encouraged.

Unit outlines are published on the CEO website and updated regularly. The text itself can be downloaded at school level.

### Program Exemplars

The Unit Outlines that are provided include some Program Exemplars. The Program Exemplar outlines one possible way of teaching a particular unit. It is offered as an example of good practice and as support, particularly for beginning teachers and teachers who are teaching the unit for the first time. Over time additional program exemplars will be available on the CEO website. It is anticipated that teachers will adapt these program exemplars reflecting their own teaching style and responding to the needs, interests and abilities of students.

### The Writing Process

Unit Outlines are written by Diocesan Religious Education teams in response to the Curriculum Level Outcomes and Doctrinal Concepts. These are edited by members of the CEO Religious Education Team. Unit Outlines are then offered for theological review by the critical colleagues to the Inter-Diocesan project before being submitted to the Censor for Nihil Obstat and to the Bishop for Imprimatur. Unit Outlines will continue to be developed in response to evaluation in the implementation phase. Changes will be incorporated in the Unit Outlines available on the CEO website.

*'I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.'*

*1 Corinthians 3:6*



## 5.3 *Important Considerations*

### Policy Development and Review

The development and review of the *Source of Life* Religious Education Curriculum is guided by the *Sandhurst School Improvement Framework (SSIF)* document and the *Sandhurst School Education Board (SSEB) Policy and Guidelines for Diocesan Review of Religious Education P-12 (2005)*. The Sandhurst School Improvement Framework includes a cyclical process of School Review which informs the strategic school improvement planning process and provides accountability to the school community.

School improvement occurs within the context of contemporary expectations, current research and best practice which is found in:

- parish community
- local community
- diocesan community
- Catholic education community
- educational community
- global community.

The *Source of Life* Religious Education Curriculum will be monitored, reviewed and continually developed by the Sandhurst Religious Education Team (SRET) which is a representative group of parents, priests, teachers, RECs, deputies, principals and the CEO Religious Education Team. Diocesan Consultation Days on Religious Education will continue to be held on a regular basis.



The Vision and Mission of the Teaching and Learning Community should be at the centre of school improvement as it is in the Vision and Mission that all other aspects of school life find their origins. In the Sandhurst Diocese the five components of the learning and teaching community which arise from the Vision and Mission are:

- Catholic Identity
- Leadership
- Curriculum
- Pastoral Care of the School Community
- Finances, Facilities and Resources

## **Ecclesial Accountability**

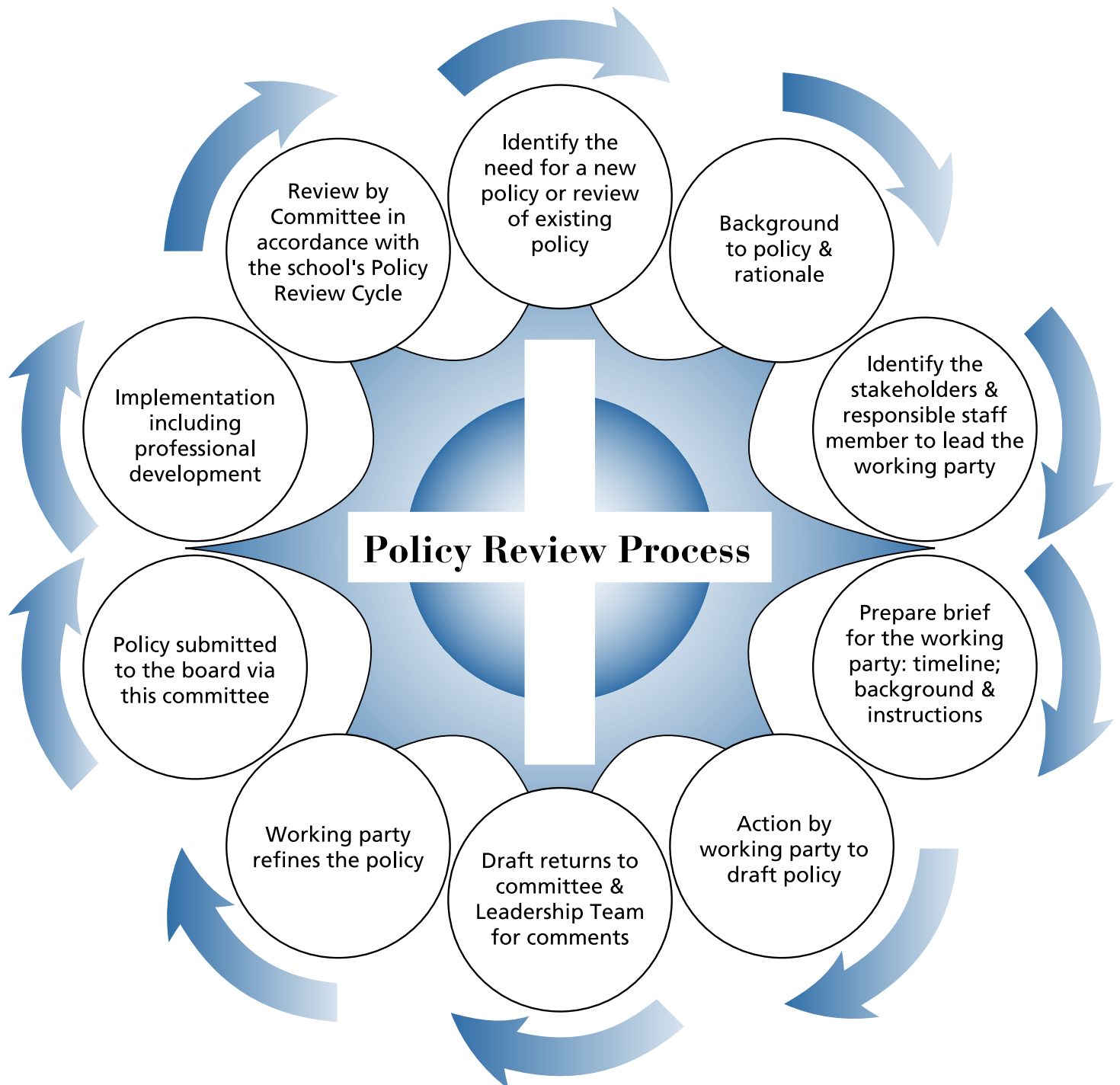
At a diocesan level schools must provide accountability to the Bishop for the Catholic identity of the school and specifically, the Religious Education program. The Sandhurst School Improvement Framework does this through providing evidence that:

- the Catholic identity of the school is manifest in the daily life of the school, its relationships, practices and broader curriculum
- Religious Education arises from the Vision and Mission of the school
- the Religious Education program is renewed and developed on a regular basis
- current practice is of a high standard
- the school's program is aligned with key diocesan documents and statements
- Religious Education is central to the purpose of the Catholic school



## A Process for Policy Review and Development *(Ref. SSIF)*

The following flowchart provides one process for schools to use in developing and reviewing policy.



## Ongoing Professional Learning

Professional Learning is the process by which staff in Catholic schools work to improve their knowledge, skills and attitudes and transfer these into their everyday practice. The ultimate purpose of Professional Learning for all staff in Catholic education is to contribute to the improvement of student learning.

Professional Learning is based on the belief that staff, both teaching and non-teaching, are the critical resource in schools and that the quality of schooling depends largely on the ongoing formation and learning of staff. In school settings it is important to acknowledge the unique characteristics of Catholic education philosophy and the implications these have for Professional Learning programs. By promoting a climate of professionalism and life long learning in schools we are in turn fostering a sense of ministry.

## Accreditation

Academic courses are provided for all staff teaching Religious Education to enable appropriate qualifications to teach Religious Education in accordance with the Catholic Education Commission of Victoria (CECV) Policy 1.7. Ongoing professional learning opportunities are provided by the Catholic Education Office, Faith Education Sandhurst, associated universities and school-based courses and workshops.

## Staff Spirituality

The development of spirituality is core to the faith journey of both staff and students within a Catholic school. Because their profession requires a high degree of personal investment, teachers need to be aware of their own spiritual life. Adults who are spiritually alive and attentive to their interior, moral and aesthetic capacities become transformative mentors for students, and are able to maintain their commitment to their vocation. Spirituality can be defined in many ways but the following is perhaps most appropriate for the context of the school:

*'Human beings are made up of body and spirit. To be spiritual means to live in the presence of God according to the values of the Spirit. Spirituality is concerned with the way people live in relationship with God. For Christians this means living the Christian life of faith in God, of hope in God's goodness and mercy, and of love for God, other people and the world around us.'*

*(Woods, L. 1999: p. 59)*

*'Catholic schools are for the human person and of the human person – embracing holistic education. "The person of each individual human being, in his or her material and spiritual needs, is at the heart of Christ's teaching: this is why the promotion of the human person is the goal of the Catholic school".'*

*(Pope John Paul II, The Coming of the Third Millennium n. 9)  
Sandhurst School Improvement Framework (2005)*





## 5.4 Resourcing the Religious Education Curriculum

Implementation of a quality Religious Education program calls for the careful selection of resources to ensure that they are in accordance with the spirit of the curriculum and appropriate to the various groups of students who will use them. In this context, many schools have policies and established practices guiding, amongst other matters, the use of videos and television programs, especially those which do not have a 'general viewing' classification.

- In recommending websites, teachers are advised to evaluate the suitability of the content and links contained on the site. It may be better to recommend specific pages rather than entire websites. Coded viewing information and classifications can be found on music CDs and websites. The address and contents of recommended sites should be regularly reviewed.
- It would be particularly appropriate to consult parents in the process of selecting certain resources, especially in the area of education about human sexuality and relationships.
- When teachers or RECs are unsure of the suitability of any resource they should consult others in the school community: the REC, principal, parish priest, CEO Religious Education Officers, other colleagues or parents.
- All schools are encouraged to develop policies and to establish practices which guide the selection, purchase, distribution, storage, maintenance and use of a full range of resources.

A variety of resources are available to assist religious educators in developing the learning and teaching process. These include books and written materials, internet and information technology, video images, music, physical resources and materials and especially members of the community and agencies. The classroom teacher should first consider what the chief purpose of a particular resource is within the total learning experience of the students. Is the resource to help students to enter into the learning process, to access or process new information or to respond to their new insights and understandings? Below are some guiding principles to enable the religious educator to select appropriate resources to bring the program to life.



## Guiding Principles for the Selection of Resources

Consider:

- the relevance of the resource to the curriculum
- appropriateness to age levels of users in its style
- the interest level for students
- across - curriculum uses
- appropriateness for more than one use
- the needs of the students
- the cost of the resource and the budget
- the expected lifespan of the resource
- reflection of beliefs and assumptions within the resource
- reflection of current scholarship and good educational practice
- suitability for inclusion in a collection intended for the Catholic School
- is the theology sound?
- is the doctrinal and theological expression current?
- is the content accessible and intelligible?
- does it support diocesan policy on RE?
- does the material have an *Imprimatur* and/or *Nihil Obstat*?
- are there any resources that should now be removed from the collection?



## Significance of an Imprimatur

- Resources such as texts and audio-visuals used in the religious education of students in matters of faith and morals must, in accord with Church law, bear an *Imprimatur*. An *Imprimatur* is usually granted by the bishop of the diocese where the resource is authored or published. In granting an *Imprimatur* a bishop seeks the advice of a censor, appointed by him. The censor who grants the *Nihil Obstat* judges that the resource contains no errors in matters of faith or morals. This process is an exercise of the teaching office of the bishop and serves to support teachers in their ministry.
- The Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority Religion and Society courses include the study of religion and society and other world religions in addition to the study of Christianity and Catholicism. Resources supporting education about other world religions do not require a *Nihil Obstat* or *Imprimatur*, however RECs should seek the advice of CEO Religious Education Officers and/or the Parish Priest when making significant purchases of resources for these courses.

## Sensitive material

- Religious Education teachers are often called upon to respond to questions or teach about what they or others would regard as sensitive issues of faith or morals.
- Teachers are encouraged to prepare themselves thoroughly when teaching Religious Education. A knowledge of the Church's teaching brings a confidence in responding to such issues. Students have a right to be informed of the Church's teachings, their inspiration and application.
- Students may discuss and consider various views on a social or moral issue. However, teachers are to present the Church's teachings on faith and morals in a confident and truthful way, so that the Church's teachings in faith and morals will inspire its own response from students. Therefore, Catholic teaching is never to be presented as just one view amongst others. Teachers should encourage a rigorous study and discussion of Church teaching.
- Teachers should be sensitive to cultural, racial, religious and gender bias in any resources. Resources and materials distributed by community agencies should be previewed so that unsuitable materials are not used.
- Teachers should ensure that students extend to visiting speakers from other Christian churches and other world religious traditions, courtesies of language and behaviour that promote Christian unity and harmonious relationships. These same courtesies should be evident in visiting religious sites.
- Resources do exist to support teaching about contemporary and sensitive issues. A policy to guide schools in the teaching of sensitive issues is in the Sandhurst School Education Board Manual and is reviewed on a regular basis in consultation with Christian Education and Personal Development P-12 staff and reference group.



## Protocols for curriculum development

- When adapting school policies or programs to meet specific needs of students or changing circumstances, teachers should consult and collaborate with colleagues and their Religious Education Coordinator.
- When considering significant changes to or adaptation of the *Source of Life* Diocesan Religious Education curriculum, Religious Education Coordinators should seek the advice of CEO Religious Education Officers and the consent of the Director of Religious Education. Where schools are considering significant changes to approved courses, permission must be sought from the approving authority (i.e. Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority).

## Protocols for visiting speakers and resource teams and groups

- The task of education is enhanced by the use of quality resources, including visiting speakers. This is also appropriate in Religious Education and due care should be taken in the selection of visiting speakers. Appropriate protocols for inviting visitors into the school and classrooms must be developed and followed. Schools are required to follow the *Sandhurst School Education Policy Guidelines – Protocols For Engaging Personnel from Outside the Diocese (March 2002)*.



# *Section 6*

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## *Appendices*





## Appendix A: Church Documents and References

### Bible

1993 *New Revised Standard Version*

### Church Documents

#### General

- 1992 *On the publication of the Catechism of the Catholic Church (Fidei depositum)*
- 1994 *Catechism of the Catholic Church*
- 1979 *Letter on certain questions concerning eschatology*
- 1992 *Dawn of a new era (Aetatis novae)*
- 1994 *On preparation for the jubilee of the year 2000 (Tertio millennio adveniente)*
- 2001 *Close of the Great Jubilee of the Year 2000 (Novo Millennio Ineunte)*

#### God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- 1979 *Redeemer of man (Redemptor hominis)*
- 1980 *The mercy of God (Dives in misericordia)*
- 1986 *On the Holy Spirit in the life of the Church and the world (Dominum et vivificantem)*

#### Scripture

- 1993 *The interpretation of the Bible in the Church*

#### Church

- 1983 *New code of Canon Law (Sacrae disciplinae leges)*
- 1985 *To the youth of the world*
- 1988 *Go into all the world (Euntes in mundum)*
- 1988 *On the dignity and vocation of women (Mulieris dignitatem)*
- 1988 *Lay members of Christ's faithful people (Christifideles laici)*
- 1990 *On the Church's missionary mandate (Redemptoris missio)*
- 1992 *Some aspects of the Church understood as communion*
- 1994 *Letter to children in the Year of the Family*
- 1995 *Letter to women*
- 1996 *Lean on me: Young people speak about Australian society, its future and their own* Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
- 1998 *Lineamenta on Jesus Christ and the peoples of Oceania: Walking his way, telling his truth, living his life*
- 1998 *Young people and the future.* Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
- 2001 *The Church in Oceania (Ecclesia in Oceania)*



## **Mary**

- 1974 *Devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary (Marialis cultus)*
- 1987 *The Mother of the Redeemer (Redemptoris Mater)*
- 1988 *Behold your Mother*
- 2002 *On the Most Holy Rosary (Rosarium Virginis Mariae)*

## **Bishops, Priests, Religious**

- 1976 *Declaration on the question of the admission of women to the ministerial priesthood*
- 1978 *Directives for mutual relations between bishops and religious in the Church (Mutuae relationes)*
- 1981 *The contemplative dimension of religious life*
- 1983 *Essential elements in the Church's teaching on religious life as applied to works of the apostolate*
- 1984 *To men and women religious on their consecration in the light of the mystery of the redemption (Redemptionis Donum)*
- 1992 *The Formation of Priests (Pastores Dabo Vobis)*
- 1993 *On consecrated life (Lineamenta)*
- 1994 *Directory on the ministry and life of priests*
- 1994 *On reserving priestly ordination to men alone (Ordinatio Sacerdotalis)*
- 1996 *Consecrated life (Vita consecrata)*
- 1997 *Instruction on certain questions regarding the collaboration of the non-ordained faithful in the sacred ministry of priests*
- 2003 *On the Bishop (Pastores Gregis)*

## **Sacraments and Liturgy**

- 1980 *The mystery and worship of the Eucharist (Dominicae cenae)*
- 1980 *Instruction concerning worship of the Eucharistic mystery (Inaestimabile Donum)*
- 1980 *Instruction on infant Baptism*
- 1983 *Concerning the minister of the Eucharist*
- 1984 *On reconciliation and penance in the mission of the Church today (Reconciliatio et poenitentia)*
- 1988 *The preparation and celebration of Easter feasts (Paschales solemnitates)*
- 1989 *On the sacred liturgy*
- 1994 *The Roman liturgy and inculturation*
- 1998 *On keeping the Lord's Day holy (Dies Domini)*
- 2002 *On certain aspects of the celebration of the Sacrament of Penance (Misericordia Dei)*
- 2003 *On the Eucharist in its Relationship to the Church (Ecclesia de Eucharistia)*
- 2003 *On of the Fortieth anniversary of Sacrosanctum Concilium (Spiritus et Sponsa)*
- 2003 *On certain matters to be observed or to be avoided regarding the Most Holy Eucharist (Redemptionis Sacramentum)*
- 2004 *For the Year of the Eucharist (Mane nobiscum Domine)*

## **Marriage and Family Life**

- 1981 *The role of the family in the modern world (Familiaris consortio)* John Paul II
- 1983 *Charter of the rights of the family*
- 1985 *When dreams die.* Pastoral letter of Australian Bishops Conference on the pastoral care of separated and divorced Catholics



- 1989 *Guardian of the Redeemer (Redemptoris custos)*
- 1991 *From despair to hope: The family and drug addiction*
- 1994 *Letter to families*
- 1994 *Television and the family: Guidelines for good viewing*
- 1993 *Families: Our hidden treasure*
- 1996 *Preparation for the sacrament of marriage*

### **Christian Life, Morality**

- 1968 *On Christian Life (Humanae vitae)*
- 1975 *On Christian joy (Gaudete in Domino)*
- 1975 *Declaration on procured abortion*
- 1975 *Christian faith and demonology*
- 1975 *Declaration on certain questions concerning sexual ethics (Persona humana)*
- 1980 *Declaration on euthanasia*
- 1981 *To all who work for the disabled (International Year of Disabled Persons)*
- 1983 *Dangers of genetic manipulation*
- 1983 *Educational guidance in human love*
- 1986 *On the pastoral care of homosexual persons*
- 1987 *Faith and reason*
- 1987 *Instruction on bioethics: respect for human life (Donum vitae)*
- 1987 *Concerning A.I.D.S. Australian Bishops Conference*
- 1987 *The A.I.D.S. Crisis. Australian Bishops Conference*
- 1988 *A.I.D.S.: (Pastoral Statement on) A Challenge to Love*  
Australian Bishops Conference
- 1989 *Some aspects of Christian meditation*
- 1989 *Pornography and violence in the communications media*
- 1991 *On combating abortion and euthanasia*
- 1992 *Non-discrimination against homosexual persons*
- 1993 *The splendour of truth (Veritatis splendor)*
- 1993 *True human love reflects the divine*
- 1995 *The truth and meaning of human sexuality: Guidelines for education within the family*
- 1995 *Address to the United Nations*
- 1997 *Ethics in advertising*
- 1984 *On the Christian meaning of human suffering (Salvifici doloris)*
- 1988 *Abortion. Australian Bishops Conference*

### **Justice, Peace & Integrity**

- 1976-9 *Refugees. Australian Catholic Bishops Conference*
- 1978 *Religious and human promotion*
- 1980 *Freedom of conscience and of religion*
- 1981 *On human work (Laborem exercens)*



- 1982 *Negotiation: The only realistic solution to the continuing threat of war*
- 1984 *Instruction on certain aspects of the 'theology of liberation'*
- 1985 *National Aboriginal Land Rights model*. Australian Catholic Bishops Conference
- 1986 *Instruction on Christian freedom and liberation: The truth makes us free*
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## **Further Teacher References and Resource Lists**

Go to CEO website <http://www.ceo.sand.catholic.edu.au>



## Appendix B: Glossary

APOCRYPHA	These are religious writings of the ancient Jews and Christians that are not included in the Bible. There are some books in the Catholic Bible that Jews and Protestants regard as apocryphal.
ASSESSMENT	The process of gathering and interpreting information about student learning. This is done for a variety of purposes.
BEFORE COMMON ERA	An inclusive alternative (B.C.E.) to dating the years before the birth of Jesus. It is used as an alternative to B.C. The partner term to this for the dates after Jesus is C.E. (Common Era)
CANONICAL	This involves two separate though related issues. One refers to the Canon of the Bible, meaning the list of books the Church accepts as sacred because they are inspired by God. The other is Canon Law, whereby the law of the Church recognizes and authorises a teaching or practice of the Church.
CANON LAW	The official collection of Church laws which was last revised in 1983.
CATECHESIS	The process of handing on the Gospel message. It presupposes that the hearer is receiving the Christian message as a saving reality. Moreover, it takes place within a community of faith.
CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES	An alternative naming of what is commonly known as the New Testament of the Bible. This avoids some of the difficulties associated with using the words Old and New and, together with the use of Hebrew Scriptures highlights the origins of the two sections.
COMMON ERA	An inclusive alternative (C.E.) to dating the years after the birth of Jesus. It is used as an alternative to A.D. The partner term to this for the dates before Jesus is Before the Common Era (B.C.E.).
COMMUNION	Communion is derived from the Latin <i>communio</i> , meaning fellowship or a common sharing. It refers to both the sharing of the Eucharist and the sharing of Christian community.



CONGREGATION	The people of a Christian community who gather together for worship. It also refers to a community of men or women who have taken simple vows of poverty, chastity and obedience, e.g. Sisters of Mercy, Marist Brothers. This is sometimes known as a Religious Order.
CONSCIENCE	The human capacity to evaluate and choose a moral course of action that is in accordance with the presence of God's Spirit in our lives.
CONTENT STRAND	A grouping of concepts which helps provide structure to the syllabus. In this syllabus there are eight strands: God, Jesus Christ, Church, Sacraments, Scripture, Christian Life Christian Prayer and (for secondary students) Religion and Society.
CURRICULUM	A term covering all of the arrangements made by a school to foster student learning and development. It is sometimes used more specifically to refer to a particular discipline or organised content area with relevant outcomes and learning experiences, as in the Religious Education Curriculum.
DISCIPLESHIP	This is a term used to mean the following of Jesus in service to his mission. It is a way of life that must involve risk, hope, and a willingness to speak out in urgent, self-sacrificing and counter cultural ways to promote the message and values of the good news of Jesus.
DOCTRINAL CONCEPT	The expression of Church doctrine within a conceptual framework.
DOGMA	An article of faith that is part of the solemn teaching of the Popes and Ecumenical Councils. For example, the teaching that Jesus Christ is both Divine and Human is a dogma of the Church.
ECUMENISM	The efforts by the Roman Catholic community and other Christian churches to work towards the full unity willed by Christ among all baptised peoples in the world.
ESCHATOLOGY	This is the part of theology that considers the final things or the end time – death, the second coming of Jesus Christ, judgment, heaven, purgatory, hell.
EVALUATION	The process of gathering and reflecting on information about the effectiveness of policies, programs, units and teaching practices. Its purpose is to improve the quality of planning and learning.



EVANGELISATION	Bringing the Good News of the Gospel to all aspects of humanity and, through its influence, transforming it from within.
HEBREW SCRIPTURES	An alternative naming of what is commonly known as the Old Testament of the Bible. This avoids some of the difficulties associated with using the words Old and New and, together with the use of Christian Scriptures highlights the origins of the two sections.
INTEGRATION	The purposeful planning by teachers of strategies and learning experiences to enhance the quality and integrity of learning across different curriculum areas.
KEY CONCEPT	A central idea that brings aspects of knowledge into a meaningful whole. It provides a broad 'cognitive map' which is useful in exploring related ideas.
LEVEL	An arbitrary period in the developmental process of schooling. The thirteen years of schooling are divided into six levels and the Post Compulsory Years.
LITURGY	The public worship of the Church, referring to the collection of actions, songs, and words that express the relationship of the assembled community and its relationship with God. This is celebrated in the Eucharist and other Sacraments and Prayer of the Church.
MAGISTERIUM	The communion between the Pope and the Bishops in their ministry of teaching and governing the church.
NEW EVANGELISATION	New Evangelisation continues the clear and unequivocal proclamation of the person of Jesus Christ, that is, the preaching of his name, his teaching, his life, his promises and the Kingdom which he has gained for us through the Paschal Mystery. This is done with new zeal, new methods, new expressions, new form and new strategies.
ORIGINAL SIN	The Christian doctrine of original sin teaches that every person is born into a world greatly affected by sinfulness, and that each person has an inclination to personal sin. The term 'original sin' is not found in Scripture. It is a theological phrase developed during the early centuries of Christianity. In the Book of Genesis, the story of Adam and Eve illustrates symbolically how sinfulness became part of the human story, and how the free choices of human beings, not God, are responsible for the sin and suffering in the human community.



OUTCOME	A specific intended result of teaching and learning. Outcomes are derived from the content of the syllabus and arranged in levels. In this curriculum there are unit outcomes as well as level outcomes.
PHARISEES	This was a group in Judaism who were dedicated to renewal and observances of the Law of Moses. After the destruction of the Temple in 70CE, they became the spiritual leaders of Judaism and were engaged in struggles with Jewish Christian. Some of the difficulties between the two groups at the time are reflected in the gospels
REIGN OF GOD	The dynamic process towards fulfillment of God's saving activity within all humanity and the universe. The reign of God happens wherever people live in harmony with the will of God.
RELIGIONS	Systems of belief in, and response to, the divine mystery, including sacred books, rituals, ethical practices and social organisation.
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION	The making accessible of the traditions of the religious community and the making manifest of the intrinsic connection between traditions and transformation.
RELIGIOUS FAITH	When understood as a verb, religious faith is an active lifestyle of trusting, meaning making, and commitment in relation to God. Some people also use the word as a noun, as in 'the faith', referring to belief in a set of essential doctrines, values and ritual practices related to God.
REPORTING	The communication, written or verbal, formal or informal, of the assessment of student learning and/or the description or evaluation of learning experiences and programs.
REVELATION	God's free and loving self-communication especially through Jesus of Nazareth but also in many other ways – through creation, through human history, through other human beings and cultures, and through God's own words and deeds directed toward the spiritual well-being and salvation of all humanity. (The word itself stems from the Latin, <i>revelatio</i> , which means 'unveiling' or 'uncovering').
SADDUCEES	This group emerged in the second century before Jesus as an upper class and priestly class. They disagreed with some of the Pharisees, most notably not accepting the resurrection of the body.





SAMARITANS	These are the inhabitants of Samaria, between biblical Judea and Galilee. They believe in one God and follow a form of the Mosaic Law, but worship on the sacred mountain, Gerizim, not Jerusalem. In the time of Jesus, there was intense dislike between them and the Jews.
SHARED CHRISTIAN PRAXIS	An overarching approach to religious education and ministry. Participants share life experience which is explored and reflected upon in the light of the Christian Story and Vision. In identifying the unfolding relationship between their personal and collective experience and the developing Christian Tradition, participants are invited to consider appropriate responses.
STEWARDSHIP	This is a principle of justice that founded in the belief that everything God created is good. Every Christian therefore must be a responsible and sharing steward of all creation – recognizing that our relationship with the world must be respectful, conserving and fair to all.
THEOLOGY	A conscious attempt to bring thoughtful and insightful expression to the human experience of faith in God.
TRADITION	The rich and dynamic process by which the entire story of the people of God is handed on to diverse peoples, communities and human cultures. The Christian Tradition includes doctrines and teachings, forms of worship, spiritualities, art, music, customs, in fact, the living and active faith witness of all the baptised through the ages.
TRINITARIAN GOD (Triune God)	This refers to the Catholic teaching of the mystery of God being three persons in one Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.
UNIT OUTLINE	An organisational arrangement designed to assist the teaching of the Curriculum Framework. Each Unit Outline has a title, a focus, unit outcomes that serve level outcomes and doctrinal concepts, teaching/learning experiences, assessment tasks, references to Scripture, theology and the <i>Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> .



