

ST. JOHN'S CATHEDRAL CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

POLICY STATEMENT

Introduction

This document is a statement of the aims, principles and strategies for the teaching and learning of Religious Education at St. John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School.

Philosophy

The Catholic vision of education promotes the dignity and freedom of every person as created in the image and likeness of God. This vision inspires and encourages the beliefs and values, which are lived out in the daily life of the Catholic school. Within this vision, religious education is very much a journey of formation involving every member of the school community, together with a pupil's family and parish community. It is in this context that the three elements of religious education, catechesis and evangelisation, co-exist, providing mutual support and reinforcement.

For all children religious education is a proper subject in its own right in the school's curriculum. It is to be taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject. For those already engaged in the journey of faith, religious education will be catechesis, and for some children religious education will be evangelisation, the first opportunity to hear the good news of the gospel. (Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools)

AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

Our aims in teaching Religious Education are to promote:

- knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and life;
- knowledge and understanding of the response of faith to the ultimate question about human life, its origin and purpose;
- the skills required to engage in examination of the reflection upon religious belief and practice.
- Knowledge and understanding of other faiths and their beliefs and practices.

Our objective in teaching Religious Education are:

- to develop knowledge and understanding of the mystery of God and of Jesus Christ, of the Church, and of the central beliefs which Catholics hold;
- to develop awareness and appreciation of Catholic belief, understanding of its impact on personal and social behaviour and of the vital relationship between faith and life, life and faith;
- to encourage study, investigation and reflection by the pupils;
- to develop appropriate skills for example, ability to listen, to think critically, spiritually, ethically and theologically; to acquire knowledge and organise it effectively; to make informed judgements;

- to foster appropriate attitudes: for example, respect for truth; respect for the views of others; awareness of the spiritual,; of moral responsibility; of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life and especially the challenge of living in a multicultural multi-faith society.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION TEACHING

As a Catholic School, the teaching of Religious Education is based on the Diocesan Programme of study derived from the agreed Broad Areas of Attainment. “Here I am” is the main resource used to support the delivery of Religious Education. Our teaching incorporates children’s experiences, personal feelings, questions and responses to life.

The Religious Education programme provides the opportunity to deepen and enrich the children’s understanding and living of the Catholic Faith. It also provides an opportunity to share, celebrate, pray and reflect.

A yearly cycle of themes and four yearly cycle of topics are used to ensure continuity, coverage and progression of and within the programme of study.

Although we teach Religious Education as a separate subject it can and should be explored throughout other areas of the curriculum.

Religious Education should inspire and unify every aspect of school life and gives shape to the whole school curriculum. The following extract states this very clearly and upholds our school Mission Statement:

“Catholics believe that Religious Education is not one subject among many but the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values it communicates should inspire and unify every aspect of school life. It should provide the context for, and substantially shape, the school curriculum and offer living experience of the life of faith in its practical expression. Religious Education is not simply a body of knowledge to be ‘fitted in’ after time and resources have been allotted to the ten Core and Foundation subjects prescribed in the Bill. Rather, it stamps the Catholic school in every aspect of its operations with its distinctive Catholic character.” (The Education Reform Bill - a Commentary for Catholics, February 1988)

Recording, Reporting and Assessing

All year groups use books to record their Religious Education work, although it is recognised and encouraged that not all responses to lessons need or should take a written format.

Formal written reporting to parents takes place once a year in line with school policy. Through each year groups termly curriculum newsletter parents are informed about the themes and topics to be covered, as well as invited to attend their child’s liturgy.

When assessing pupils’ work it is the R.E. content that is assessed. This is in line with the school’s policy on marking.

Resources

Resources to support the teaching of Religious Education can be found in the music room, library, corridor, classroom and staffroom. The resources are clearly labelled and include topic boxes to support our teaching of Other Faiths within the programme of study.

Approved Spring 2005

R.E. CYCLE

	Autumn		Spring		Summer	
Cycle	Theme	Topics	Theme	Topics	Theme	Topics
Cycle A	Domestic) Church) Baptism Advent/ Christmas	Myself Invitations Birthdays	Local Church Eucharist Lent/Easter	Journeys Communion Growing	Pentecost Reconciliation Universal Church	Good News Choices Neighbours
Cycle B	Domestic) Church) Baptism Advent/ Christmas	Beginnings Friends Preparations	Local Church Eucharist Lent/Easter	Special People Meals Good and Evil	Pentecost Reconciliation Universal Church	Messengers/ Witness Change Treasures
Cycle C	Domestic) Church) Baptism Advent/ Christmas	Babies Initiation Gifts	Local Church Eucharist Lent/Easter	Books Memories Death and New Life	Pentecost Reconciliation Universal Church	Energy Freedom/ Responsibility Special Places
Cycle D	Domestic) Church) Baptism Advent/ Christmas	Homes and Families Signs and Symbols Visitors	Local Church Eucharist Lent/Easter	Celebrations Thanksgiving Self-Giving	Pentecost Reconciliation Universal Church	Holidays/ Holy Days Building Bridges Difference

R.E. COVERAGE

AUTUMN TERM

3 HIA topics (3 weeks each)

Harvest)	
Mary	)	Time allocation depends on the length of term
All Saints)	
Judaism	)	Year 1-6

SPRING TERM

3 HIA topics (3 weeks each)

Epiphany
Ash Wednesday
Sikhism – Years 2-6 when the term is long

SUMMER TERM

3 HIA topics (3 weeks each)

Ascension
Corpus Christi
Mary
St. Peter and St. Paul

Sikhism Years 2-6 when the term is long

R.E. Timetable 2004/05

Cycle A

September	1 st	) Mission Statement	- also establish
	6 th	)		• class rules
	13 th	)	• school rules
	20 th	) Domestic Church (HIA)	• sign Behaviour Charter
	27 th	) (Myself)	
October	4 th)	
	11 th	) Bishop's Pastoral strategy	
	18 th)	
November	1 st)	
	8 th	) Baptism (HIA)	
	15 th	) Invitations	
	22 nd)	
December	29 th)	
	6 th	) Advent/Christmas (HIA)	
	13 th	) (Birthdays)	

January	4 th	Epiphany
	10 th	) Local Church (HIA)
	17 th	) (Journeys)
	24 th)
February	31 st)
	7 th	) Eucharist (HIA)
	21 st	) Community
March	28 th)
	7 th	) Lent/Easter (HIA)
	14 th	) (Growing)
	21 st)

April	11 th	) Reconciliation (HIA)
	18 th	) (Choices)
	25 th)
May	3 rd	) Ascension
	9 th	) Pentecost (HIA)
	16 th	) (Good News)
	23 rd	) Corpus Christi
June	6 th	) Judaism (HIA)
	13 th	) Universal Church (HIA)
	20 th	) (Neighbours)
	27 th	) St. Peter and Paul
July	4 th)
	11 th	) Sikhism (HIA)
	18 th)

GUIDELINES FOR COLLECTIVE WORSHIP

In line with our Mission Statement, our Collective Worship provides us with opportunities to come together in a variety of ways as a worshipping Christian Community.

The value of these liturgies in helping to give spiritual confidence to our whole school community, and as part of the development of our faith, is of utmost importance. Our collective worship is one way in which we pass on our traditions, beliefs and the teaching of Jesus and provide an opportunity for the children to reflect upon their response to these.

Adequate planning and preparation time should be given to each liturgy to ensure that they will be rich, broad and rewarding experiences for all those involved.

Children should be actively involved in all stages of liturgical preparation so that they feel part of each celebration. Where possible any priests who are presiding should be actively involved in the preparation with the staff and children.

The theme for collective worship will either focus on:

- a) 'Here I Am' theme
- b) An appropriate theme
- Or c) Events in the Liturgical Calendar

Collective Worship will be led by individual staff, classes, groups of children, members of our school community or visitors to the school.

Weekly Pattern of Collective Worship

Monday	Whole School (Merit Assembly)
Tuesday	Hymn Practice and Class Collective Worship
Wednesday	Whole school or Class Liturgy
Thursday	Key stage
Friday	Whole School

A liturgy presided at by one of the clergy from the parish is usually held once a week in the Cathedral. It is prepared by individual classes and the school community are welcomed. Special feast days and the beginnings and ends of term are whole school celebrations.

Services of reconciliation are held during Advent and Lent.

Prayer and Reflection

It is essential to the spiritual life of each individual that school provides the following opportunities for prayer and reflection. Scripture is a central part of collective worship.

Whole School Gathering

Prayer is often more formal, but it is essential to focus on the school as a Catholic Community, to celebrate and share together all the special times and successes of the school.

The Classroom Worship

This is more relaxed and children will have the opportunity to become involved in prayer and reflection in a more personal way. They will be able to value the views of others and the teacher will be able to create a secure and supportive atmosphere to match the children's age and abilities. During the course of the year the children will be encouraged to lead the collective worship themselves.

Collective Worship

This needs time to reflect, respond and revere.

1. REFLECT - attention can be focused through a picture, a slide, music, drama, poem or stillness. Often the teacher starts with the child's experience of home, local environment or school community. This time of reflection needs to be respected and valued by all. The selection of stimulus material must be closely matched to the children's age and abilities.
2. RESPOND - when praying together there is a level of involvement i.e. listening, reciting, singing, meditation, silence/stillness.

For effective worship and response it is better to keep the session short and simple.

3. A SENSE OF REVERENCE - should be seen as the culmination of reflection and response.

We must value the individual's spiritual development by providing a secure and supportive atmosphere. Often the more intimate the setting of the classroom offers greater opportunities for the spiritual development of the children.

Prayer as part of the 'Here I Am' scheme

Prayer is an important part of the 'Here I Am' programme as can be seen from this quote:

'It is important to ensure that our prayer reflects the essence of our lives joy and sorrow, a sense of belonging, a feeling of loneliness, celebration and peace, anger and upset.' (Danny Sullivan R.E. 'The primary Years')

children have a natural aptitude for prayer. The religious programme of the school offers opportunities to sustain and deepen this natural aptitude.

Informal words for prayer

These are the ordinary, everyday language of praising, asking, thanking, saying sorry. The children are able to explore their feelings, thoughts and attitudes in a quiet and peaceful atmosphere.

Formal words of prayer

These are gradually introduced as part of the 'Here I Am' programme.

Introduction of formal prayers

Reception	The Sign of the Cross A simple grace before and after meals A simple morning and evening prayer A sign of peace 'Peace be with you'
Year 1	The Glory be to the Father An Act of Sorrow
Year 2	The Lord's Prayer The Hail Mary
Year 3	Act of Contrition Responses used in Mass e.g. Blessed be God, Holy, holy
Year 4	Gloria Act of contrition Responses used in Mass e.g. May the Lord accept the sacrifice 'I confess' Eternal rest
Year 5	Children's Eucharistic Prayers The Angelus Come Holy Spirit
Year 6	The Rosary The Hail Holy Queen The Apostles' Creed

Introduction to Parts of the Mass

Whether Mass is celebrated or a non-eucharistic service is held, children are introduced to responses at an appropriate level for their participation.

Reception	* the many ways of gathering the community for worship using music, movement and prayers - from the Introductory Rite
Year 1	* The Introductory Rite - participation in gathering activities and prayer * a simplified Gospel acclamation

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|--------|--|
| Year 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Introductory Rites * The Penitential Rite (<i>Have mercy on us</i>) * The Gloria * Prayers of Intercession - composing their own prayers * The short responses used - <i>Thanks be to God, And also with you, We lift them up to the Lord, Amen</i> |
| Year 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * That the Introductory Rites of the Mass are about gathering the Community for prayer * Full participation in the Liturgy of the Word (with simplified texts) and in the Offertory * Familiarity with the priests' actions with the gifts * Aspects of the Eucharistic Prayers (See <i>The Lord Be With You</i> by Jenny Pate) and with the Communion Rite |
| Year 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * The Liturgy of the Eucharist particular attention being paid to Eucharistic prayers * The concluding rite |
| Year 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Responsibility for the bidding prayers, the preparation of the gifts and the Offertory * An appreciation of the elements in the Liturgy of the Word |
| Year 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> * Full participation and leading roles in the Liturgy of the Eucharist |

The Sacraments

Preparation and celebration of the Sacraments is linked closely with our Liturgical celebrations and form an inherent part of the 'Here I Am' programme and its teaching.

Eucharist, Baptism, Confirmation and Reconciliation are focused on every year. Greater emphasis is naturally placed upon Reconciliation and Eucharist in Year 3. The school links with the cathedral where possible to provide support for the children and their families as they prepare to receive their First Holy Communion.

Retreats

Each year, Year 6 are given the opportunity to prepare themselves for transfer to Secondary School, this not only includes visiting their new school, but involves guided reflection on their thoughts and feelings at this time. Whenever possible this reflection involves a retreat, usually led by all of the priests or someone outside the school. The retreats are usually held away from the school premises, but if they are held in school a special area is set aside for them to use.

RELIGIOUS MUSIC AND SONGS

The use of music is an integral part of our Religious Education and is of vital importance. Music in a wide variety of forms can be used for reflecting, celebrating, praising and as part of formal worship.

Music

All types of music can be used for reflection and during times of worship and meditation such as class prayers, masses, liturgies and at quiet sharing times. Music can enhance a reflective atmosphere and provide a prayerful focus.

Music can be any appropriate work from both modern and classical composers as well as religious works.

Hymns

At St. John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School we encourage children to learn a variety of both modern and traditional hymns and religious songs.

Children have regular hymn practice and learn hymns suitable for specific age groups and relevant to their needs, themes studied and any liturgical celebrations.

As a Catholic School, we also encourage children to learn Mass responses and sung prayers such as the Our Father, Alleluia, Holy Holy etc.

Resources

Music recorded on CD is available in the staffroom along with OHT of hymns and songs.

In addition to the CDs, candles, drapes and books for collective worship ideas are found in the staffroom, music room or Headteacher's office.

PARISH AND COMMUNITY LINKS

The priests of St. John's Cathedral regularly visit St. John's Cathedral Catholic Primary School on a formal and informal level.

With regard to the formal, their duties encompass:

1. the offering of Mass on a regular basis, for individual class or the whole school.
2. in accordance with school policy, they lead non-eucharistic services e.g.
 - a) Services of Reconciliation (Penitential)
 - b) Class Liturgies
3. Regular class visitations to reinforce some current aspect of the religious curriculum. On other occasions their visits may be purely pastoral.

On the informal side, the clergy may often be found around and about the school, simply socialising with both children (at break-times) or staff, building links and giving

encouragement. This also happens with parents in the playground at the end of the day and over coffee after liturgies and assemblies.

From the perspective of the school, classes make visits to the Cathedral at the invitation and with the assistance of the clergy, to be shown around and have explained, the various aspects of the Church and its life.

Charities

The school selects a variety of charities to support each year. The support may be practical or spiritual. The charities supported may be local initiatives e.g. Christmas hamper appeal - a collection of tins and packets during Harvest, Diocesan initiatives e.g. Good Shepherd Appeal during Lent.

Overseas initiatives e.g. Bamenda. The school also supports one off initiatives in response to appeals for help.