TREASURES
New and Old

Matthew 13:52

Core Document

Nihil Obstat : Rev Joseph Rheinberger DD, MA

Imprimatur: Most Reverend Francis P. Carroll DD DCL, Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn.

The *Nihil Obstat* and *Imprimatur* are official declarations that the work contains nothing contrary to Catholic Faith or Morals. It is not implied thereby that those granting the *Nihil Obstat* and *Imprimatur* agree with the contents, statements or opinions expressed.

> Religious education is the making accessible of the traditions of the religious community and the making manifest of the intrinsic connection between traditions and transformation. (M. Boys, 1980)
>
> ... a good householder brings forth
> $\qquad$ *TREASURES NEW AND OLD*
> (MT. 13:52)

To appreciate the meaning of Matthew 13:52 it is important to see it in context. The passage occurs towards the end of the chapter after Matthew deals with the parables of the kingdom. A footnote reference in the Jerusalem Bible translation gives an important clue by stating that this is 'perhaps a saying of particular significance to Matthew, a scribe who became a disciple.'

By bringing out of the storehouse treasures both new and old, a person has the ability to see the radically new act of God in Christ in the light of the Old Testament tradition. Such a person will understand the relation between what is new (Christ) and the old (Jewish tradition).

Treasures New and Old endeavours to combine fidelity to our Judaeo-Christian tradition with an awareness of contemporary needs and a faith-filled assurance for the future.

Acknowledgements

Treasures New and Old is the result of the commitment, expertise and diligence of many contributors from within the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn and from other dioceses. Particular acknowledgement and gratitude is extended to the Parramatta Diocese whose generosity in initially inviting collaboration on the Religious Education Guidelines project and ultimately enabling the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn to publish *Treasures New and Old* is witness to genuine collaboration.

The contributors include the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn CEO Religious Education Team and Core Consultative Committee, the Catholic Education Commission Religious Education Permanent Committee, Archdiocesan clergy and principals, various consultants and contracted writers, members of the Australian Catholic University consultancy team which reviewed *Sharing Our Story,* Australian Catholic University, lecturers in religious education and many religious education coordinators and teachers, especially those who drafted unit outlines. The Archdiocese is grateful for the generosity and expertise of these people and pays tribute to the wonderful spirit of collaboration that continues to enrich the development of the various curriculum documents comprising *Treasures New and Old.*

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PREFACE

At the dawn of a new millennium, I am delighted to present these Religious Education Guidelines to our Canberra and Goulburn Archdiocesan Church.
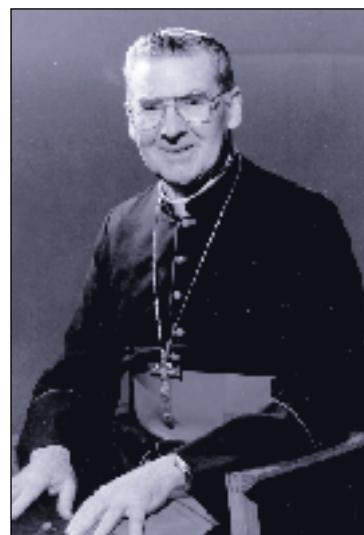
As Chief Pastor, I entrust them to the Catholic Schools as an authoritative guide and as a rich resource to the whole educational community.

As the Church, we are at a truly critical moment of history as we look back on two thousand years of our Christian journey and look forward to continuing the pilgrimage into another millennium. In this Jubilee Year, we celebrate the treasured gift of Christian faith and Catholic tradition we have inherited as a sacred trust. We seek inspiration and guidance as to how we share our gift and hand on this inheritance to future generations.

How timely then, is the publication of our Guidelines and how appropriate is their title *Treasures New and Old*.

All religious education must be faithful to Christ's message and faithful to the people to whom the message is proclaimed. The Guidelines are designed to ensure that twofold faithfulness. They draw from Scripture and the authentic Catholic tradition of the Universal Church, most recently summarised in the Catechism of the Catholic Church. They foster an understanding of young people as they grow and mature in the challenging environment of contemporary society.

I proudly present *Treasures New and Old* as our own Archdiocesan Guidelines. As a particular Church within the Communion of the Universal Catholic Church, Canberra and Goulburn rejoices in its local faith history and spiritual traditions. This unique identity is reflected in the Guidelines and will be strengthened by them.

The Guidelines are the result of a genuinely cooperative effort both within and beyond the Archdiocese. We are especially indebted to the Parramatta Diocese for inviting collaboration on the Religious Guidelines Project and literally *Sharing Our Story*.

The same spirit of collaboration is essential if *Treasures New and Old* is to achieve its desired outcomes. If students are to be nurtured and instructed in their faith, they need and deserve the support of the whole Catholic community. In particular, a close and effective partnership of family, school and parish is essential.

Parents are the primary educators in faith for their children. When there is close co-operation, between school and parish, with parents, teachers and pastors collaborating, young people experience a real sense of belonging to a vital Faith Community. They in turn, learn to appreciate the integration of faith and life, of Christianity and Culture.

This Archdiocese is blessed in the quality of many teachers who are dedicated to the faith education and pastoral care of the students entrusted to them. I call on them again, not only to teach, but to be living witnesses to their belief in Christ and His Body which is the Church. Pope Paul VI's words are at least as true today as when he wrote them twenty five years ago. **"Modern people listen more willingly to witnesses than to teachers and if they do listen to teachers, it is because they are witnesses"**.

Teachers are to be supported in their ongoing education and professional development. I especially encourage them to enrich their lives and educational ministry by seeking to grow in their personal relationship with Jesus Christ and in a spirit of prayer.

I am grateful to all who have worked on the Guidelines and I pray God's blessing on all who will use them. May the Spirit of wisdom and love inform all our efforts to live and share our *Treasures New and Old*.

Yours sincerely in Christ,

+ Francis P Carroll
Archbishop of Canberra and Goulburn
17 March 2000

INTRODUCTION

I am excited to introduce our Archdiocesan Religious Education curriculum K-12 named, *Treasures New and Old*. In chapter 13 of Matthew's gospel some parables on the Kingdom of heaven are grouped together. This parabolic discourse concludes that everyone "who becomes a disciple of the Kingdom of heaven is like a householder who brings out from the storeroom treasures both new and old".

Teachers have the privileged position of drawing out the treasures of the Scriptures, Church teaching and tradition, and human achievements in light of the greatest living treasure, Jesus Christ, our Yesterday, Today and Forever.

Treasures New and Old is a significant contribution to the rich tapestry of Catholic schooling in this Archdiocese and nationally. The history of Catholic Schools in Australia is an epic story spanning 180 years. Today, across the nation Catholic schools:

- enrol some 630,000 students, one of every five school students;
- are staffed by some 37000 teachers and 8000 support staff, who have had better opportunities for pre-service and inservice professional development than ever before; and
- are increasingly better resourced with recurrent funds and capital facilities.

Throughout their history Catholic Schools have had as goals:

- to strive to spread the Good News of God's love for each of us witnessed by Jesus Christ;
- to offer students quality integrated education in spiritual, intellectual, emotional and physical domains.

Central to these endeavours has always been Religious Education. The documents of this new Religious Education Curriculum K-12, *Treasures New and Old*, are part of the constant updating that has been a feature of the long and magnificent history of Catholic schooling in Australia.

Our special thanks go to Anne Benjamin (Director) and the staff of the Catholic Education Office, Parramatta for their invitation to collaborate in the review of the Parramatta Religious Education Guidelines, *Sharing Our Story*, which was the basis for this new curriculum. I gratefully salute all our Archdiocesan personnel who have contributed in so many ways to the creation of this curriculum. In particular I acknowledge Phil Billington, the leader of the review team, whose energy and enthusiasm for the task were boundless.

As we begin this third millennium since Christ's birth, may we use *Treasures New and Old* as a rich resource in helping us to live and present the great Good News of God's love for us and all that means for all our relationships.

Geoff Joy
Director of Catholic Education

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Background and Context

> '*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. 31)*

1.1. For Us and Our Time - Changing Contexts
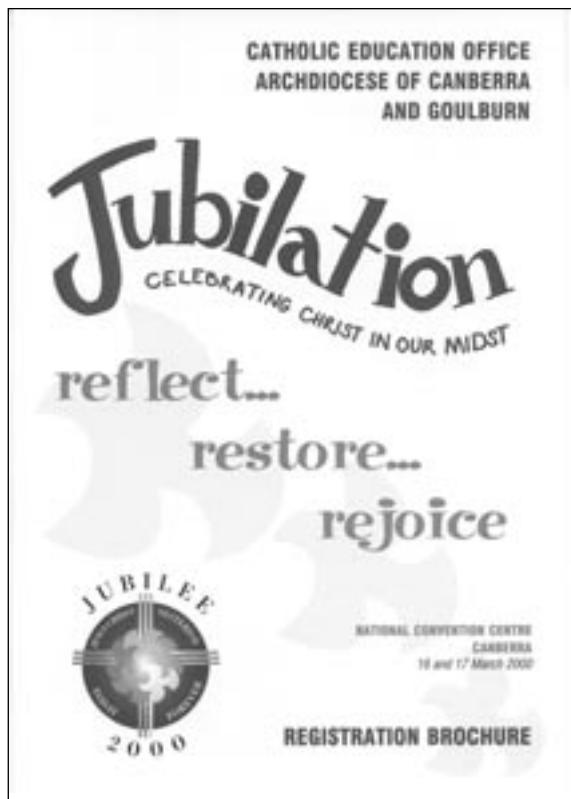
Religious Education is the making accessible of the traditions of the religious community and the making manifest of the intrinsic connection between traditions and transformation.
(Mary Boys, 1980, p.282)

This definition of religious education embodies the vision and methodology of these Religious Education Guidelines. Educators are faced with the twofold challenge of faithfully passing on the Tradition whilst also connecting with teachers and students' lives so that these experiences are transformational. Our mission is to continue bringing forth:

Treasures New and Old
(Matthew 13:52)

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. This historic context coincides with the celebration of the Great Jubilee: a time of graced opportunity for our Archdiocesan, Australian and universal Church.

These Religious Education Guidelines are particularly inspired by a key tenet of Jubilee – Reconciliation. Reconciliation was the deepest mission of Jesus and is a meaningful model for evangelisation in our time. Reconciliation is the transformation of the heart that leads to the unity of all humankind with God through restoring right relationships. Within this Core Document religious education is defined within the contexts of the Catholic School, the world of the student focusing especially on the family, the classroom curriculum and methodology.

Over the last decade of the twentieth century, the local and national educational context has experienced some very significant changes which include:

- a strengthening of Australia-wide collaboration on curriculum frameworks;
- the commitment of the NSW Board of Studies to syllabuses structured on stage outcomes;
- intensive professional development of teachers in working with outcomes-based syllabuses;
- review of the School Certificate and the Higher School Certificate in NSW and Senior Secondary schooling in the ACT;
- the introduction and revision of the syllabus *Studies of Religion* developed by the NSW Board of Studies for use in the senior years of secondary school;
- the introduction and revision of the Board of Studies syllabus *Personal Development, Health & Physical Education* which has particular relevance to Religious Education (see stage specific material);
- the increasing impact of information technology on curriculum.

Within the context of the Church, the 1990s have seen 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). At the diocesan level, there has been an increasing awareness of the importance of the partnership of students, parents, teachers and pastors, and the particular challenges inherent in fostering this. An Archdiocesan policy setting minimum professional requirements for Religious Education teachers has resulted in many teachers pursuing and completing courses in Theology, Scripture and Religious Education.

These various developments are appropriately placed in the context of a broad, multicultural Australian society where Catholic Church membership reflects the diverse cultural and ethnic richness of Australians generally.
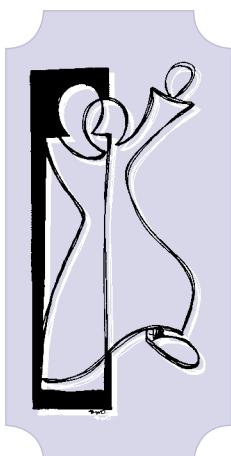
In your experience, how have the various changes identified in this section impacted on Religious Education?

1.2 Church Documents: Educational and Catechetical

Treasures New and Old draws on the wisdom of the universal and local Church in presenting explanations of evangelisation, catechesis, religious education and Catholic schooling.
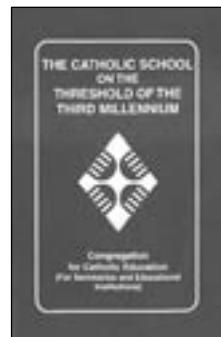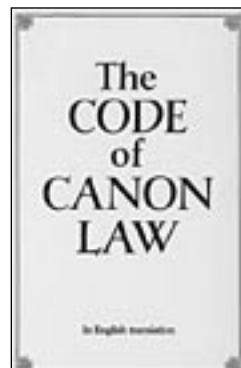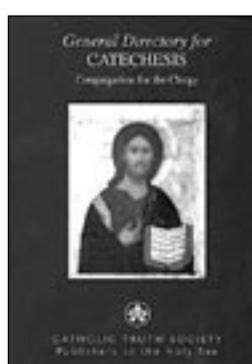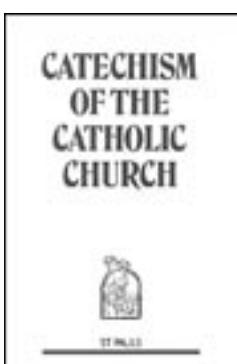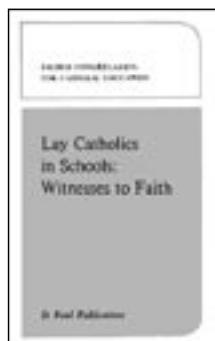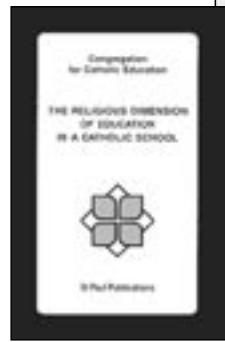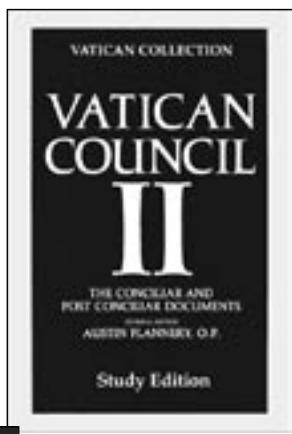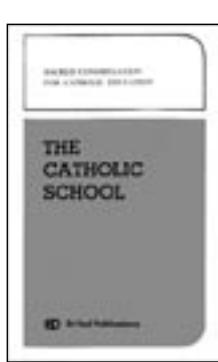
Documents of Vatican 11 (VC11)

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)

The Religious Education Guidelines in Context of Archdiocesan Documents

ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN
A Catholic Education for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Students

Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
Diocesan Synod 1989

Catholic Education Commission
Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
Religious Education In Catholic Schools
PARENT INFORMATION

SACRAMENTS OF INITIATION FOR CHILDREN INTO THE THIRD MILLENNIUM
A Consultation Paper
October 1999

Catholic Education Commission
ARCHDIOCESE OF CANBERRA AND GOULBURN
PASTORAL CARE IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS

Coming Home In Christ
Report on the Developmental Staff Appraisal/ Collaborative Approaches to Professional Learning and Reflection Project
Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
CATHOLIC EDUCATION OFFICE

Catholic Education Commission
Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn

Confraternity of Christian Doctrine

RECONCILIATION

Catholic Education Commission
Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
ABORIGINAL EDUCATION POLICY

Guidelines for the Role of the Religious Education Co-ordinator
Mission and Ministry in Religious Education - A Shared Responsibility

CONTEMPORARY ISSUES
Catholic Education Office
Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
Issued October 1997

Catholic Education Office - Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
SPECIAL NEEDS
Special Needs Education Handbook

1.3 The Process of Developing the Religious Education Guidelines

1995 -96

Parramatta initiated review of the *Sharing Our Story* Religious Education Guidelines comprising:
- Australian Catholic University Review
- Review of scope and sequence
- Commencement of on-going consultation with key groups

1997

CEO Personnel of Archdiocese invited to collaborate in the process with Parramatta CEO, Wollongong and Wilcannia-Forbes dioceses
- Local RECs and school communities surveyed to review the scope and sequence of the units at each year level

1998

Invitation extended to the Archdiocese to publish its own version of the Religious Education Guidelines

Preliminary writing of unit outlines by local RE Coordinators and teachers for Parramatta project

Inter-diocesan inservice presentations on Religious Education Guidelines project

Decision ratified to publish Archdiocesan Religious Education Guidelines and project teams and process established

1999

CEO Project Team and Core Consultative Committee meet on a regular basis to adapt and develop materials and plan consultations with priests, principals, RECs, parents, CEO Executive group, the Archdiocesan censor, Fr Joe Rheinberger and the Archbishop

Unit Outline writing teams established and inserviced

2000

Publication and launch of *Treasures New and Old* Core Document at the Archdiocesan Jubilee Gathering

Inservice of the Core Document and trialling of the Syllabus and Phase 1 Unit Outlines in schools

School-based inservicing of the curriculum

Continued implementation and ongoing evaluation together with school-based professional development

2001

1.4 Features and Components of the Religious Education Guidelines

The Religious Education Guidelines *Treasures New and Old* responds to the contemporary context by having the following features:

- its reference point for *content* is the Sacred Scripture, the Tradition and the Church's Magisterium (GDC, n. 120); particularly as expressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church;*

- the reference point for *methodology* is found in the Church's documents on evangelisation in Catholic education: evangelisation, 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 the NSW Board of Studies curriculum documents and reflected in curriculum practice in both NSW and ACT sectors of the Archdiocese;

- it recognises 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 agencies;

- it is the result of collaboration among all who share responsibility for Religious Education in Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn;

- it is responsive to the particular needs of individuals and groups of students;

- it accepts and recognises the impact on schooling of the cultural and religious diversity of students;

- it gives increased emphasis to the study of various cultural expressions of Catholicism, other Christian traditions and other world religions;

- it is outcomes-based;

- it is open to continuing development at school level;

- it is conscious of the relevance of Board of Studies syllabuses, particularly *Studies of Religion* and *Personal Development, Health and Physical Education;*

- it uses information technology in providing support materials to schools;

- it seeks to reflect the best of current educational theory, research and practice.

1.5 Treasures New and Old Curriculum Documents

Core Document
This is distributed to all pastors, principals, Religious Education coordinators and teachers. It places the Religious Education curriculum in its religious, educational and social context and outlines the curriculum model that is followed.
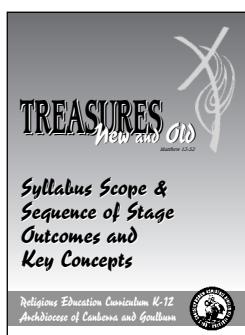
Syllabus
The syllabus is structured around stage outcomes and key concepts in seven (Primary) and eight (Secondary) content areas. The Draft Syllabus Stage Outcomes and Key Concepts organised in strands and stages and the Draft Unit Outlines comprise the syllabus.
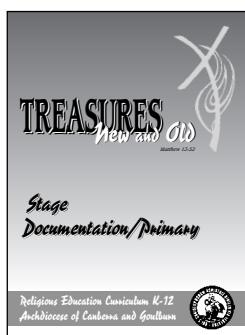
Stage Teacher Support Documentation
This provides stage-specific information and support to teachers working with students in the different stages of schooling.
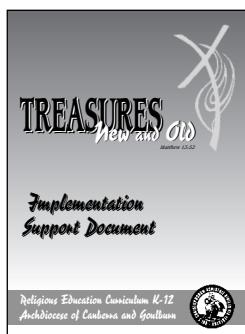
Implementation Support Document
This provides the Executive Team, particularly the Religious Education Coordinator, with advice on the implementation of the Religious Education Guidelines within the school.

Parent Support Materials

These will include regular inserts in the Archdiocesan newspaper, the *Catholic Voice* as well as occasional publications and material for reproduction in school newsletters.

Web Site CEO Home Page

Information technology will enable the editing of unit outlines and the provision of additional sample programs. It also has the capacity to support greater collaboration among schools and the sharing of ideas and resources. (http://www.ceo.cangoul.catholic.edu.au)

1.6 Some Guiding Principles

In developing the various support documents comprising *Treasures New and Old,* every attempt has been made to observe the following principles:

- The Religious Education Guidelines should provoke a reflective understanding of Scripture and the challenge it presents in today's world.

- The syllabus should provide for a systematic and comprehensive education concerning the Faith and Tradition of the Catholic Church which is appropriate to the developmental and individual needs and abilities of students; it should be in accord with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

- Classroom Religious Education should be placed in the context of the community and culture of the Catholic school, integrated within the total curriculum of the Catholic school and promote the partnership that should ideally exist between parents, teachers and pastors.

- The curriculum should provide a framework for the ongoing development of school-based policies and programs that are regularly reviewed to ensure that teaching and learning are most effective, meaningful and enjoyable.

- Religious education 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.

- The curriculum should promote a critical and creative use of Shared Christian Praxis and employ an outcomes-based curriculum framework.

- The syllabus should provide opportunities for the study of the customs and traditions of Roman Catholics of other nations and cultures, and the faith of Catholics of other rites.

- The ecumenical dimension of Religious Education should be affirmed in accord with Church teaching in documents on evangelisation, catechesis and the Catholic school; it should include the study of religion, other world religious traditions and religion in society.

- Aboriginal culture and spirituality should be respected and inform the integration of the Catholic faith within the Australian context.

- The documents should draw on the richness of contemporary theology.

- Usage of terms such as Roman Catholic, Catholic and Christian should be based on a recognition of the Catholic Church as a communion of churches and of the distinctiveness of Catholic Christian Faith and Tradition.

- Students should be encouraged and assisted to develop their ability to use religious concepts and language and to think critically about the use of language.

Core

Religious Education and the Catholic School

'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

The Catholic school shares the Church's mission of evangelisation; that is, to proclaim and spread the Gospel throughout the world so that humanity might be renewed and transformed. Its approach is comprehensive: 'witness and proclamation, word and sacrament, interior change and social transformation' (GDC, n. 46). Exercised in a spirit of cooperation, several complementary roles directly serve the mission of the Catholic school.

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

'Before all others, parents are bound to form their children, by word and example, in faith and in Christian living.'
(Code of Canon Law, 1983, Can. 774 #2)

The bishop is responsible for ensuring that the 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 pastor, 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 guidelines established for the diocese.

'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)
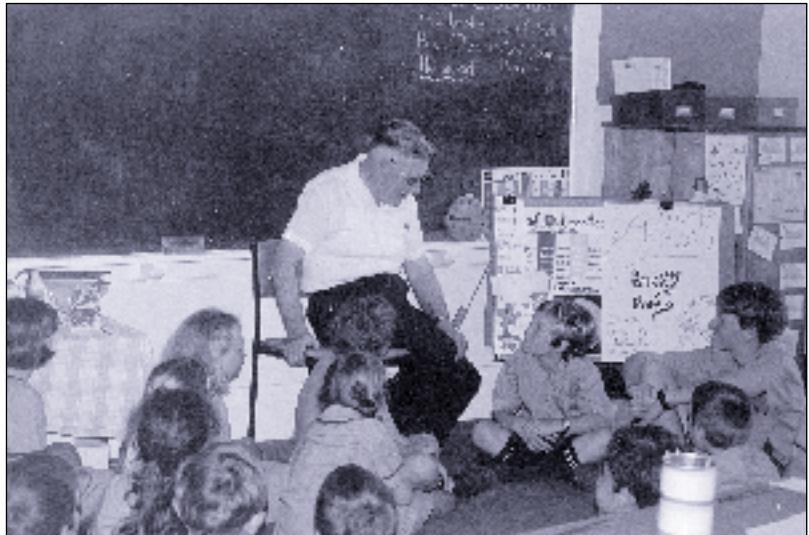
The school staff develops programs that are faithful both to the guidelines and to the needs and maturity of the students.

'Since they share the Church's mission, all Christ's faithful have the right to promote and support apostolic action, by their own initiative, undertaken according to their state and condition.'
(Code of Canon Law, 1983, Can. #216)

'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

2.2 Catechesis in the Process of Evangelisation

As an integral part of evangelisation, catechesis is basically a sharing of faith amongst believers; it seeks to develop a faith that has already been called to life by evangelisation, to nurture it to maturity and a fullness of Christian life. This takes place over an individual's lifetime and finds expression within a Christian faith community, particularly within the family and parish.

Catechesis has an important place in Catholic schooling but it must be undertaken with reasonable expectations. Because of the very nature of catechesis, the degree to which the school can successfully catechise depends on the stage 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.

Evangelisation 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 celebration of special events;

- programs that reach out in service to the wider community;

- classroom Religious Education.

2.3 The Purpose of Catholic Religious Education

Religious education is a lifelong process to which Catholic schooling contributes. Its purposes are:

1. to foster within each individual a growing understanding of and relationship with God;
2. to help individuals to understand themselves and their Catholic faith tradition and to have an appreciation of the faith traditions of others;
3. to enable individuals to participate fully in the life of the Catholic community;
4. to heighten each individual's commitment to bringing the light of their faith to a discerning encounter with the surrounding culture and thus working towards its transformation.
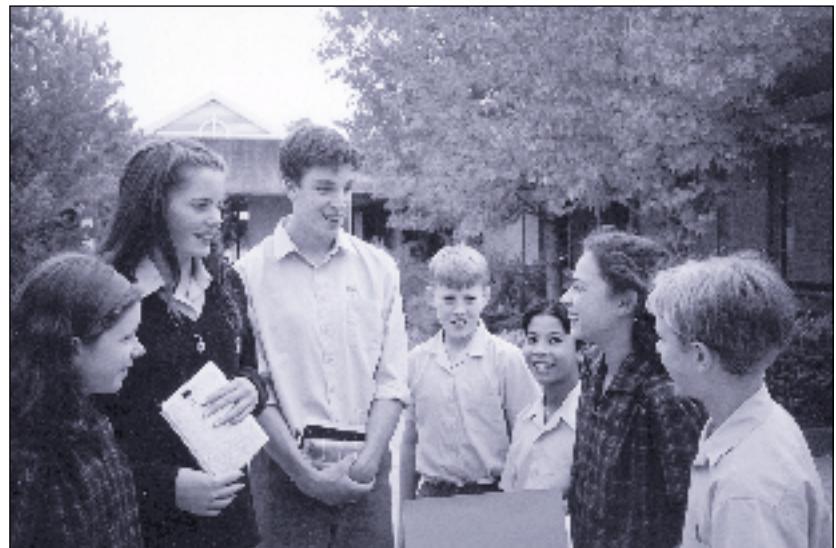
The Catholic school, through its defining culture, its curriculum and its classroom-based Religious Education programs, contributes to the achievement of these purposes. In so doing it seeks to:

- develop an appreciation of the love of God revealed through the person of Jesus Christ, the wonders of God's creation and the dignity of the human person;
- promote growth in self-knowledge and in knowledge of the life, faith tradition and mission of the Catholic Church;
- increase understanding of religion generally and of different religious ways of seeing reality;
- foster skills of reflection, discernment, critical thinking, judging and deciding how to act in accordance with conscience;
- develop the capacity to critique the surrounding culture in the light of the Catholic Faith and Tradition.

2.4 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 syllabus and incorporate the various teaching and learning processes that characterise other contemporary classroom programs.

While Religious Education teachers 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.

While Religious Education in the classroom has a prime focus on knowledge, this knowledge must be understood in its broadest sense; it should not be equated simply with the retention of pieces of information.

> *I have been convinced for some time that the "learning outcome" of Christian religious education should be more than what the western world typically means by "knowledge"; that it is to engage the whole "being" of people, their heads, hearts and life–styles, and is to inform, form and transform their identity and agency in the world.*
>
> *(Thomas H. Groome, Sharing Faith, 1991, p. 2)*

Authentic Religious Education extends and deepens a student's way of knowing. The acquired knowledge is relevant and significant and is internalised as a result of a genuine educational process.

> The Catholic school's core purpose is unashamedly religious. Through the total cultural experience it offers, it shares in the Church's work of **evangelisation**, it provides those elements of **catechesis** that are appropriate to individual students, and it teaches Catholic beliefs and practices in a systematic fashion in programs of classroom–based **religious education.**
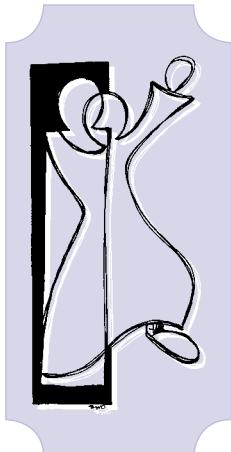
Has your understanding of the distinction between catechesis and classroom-based Religious Education changed over the years? In what ways?

Distinct yet Complementary

Figure 2.1

Evangelisation

'...Evangelisation must be viewed as the process by which the church, moved by the spirit, proclaims and spreads the Gospel throughout the entire world.' (GDC, 1997, n. 48)

Catechesis

'The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ.'
(CT, 1979, n. 5 in GDC, 1997 n. 80)

School Liturgies and Prayer

Special Celebrations

Outreach

Retreats and Reflection days

Classroom Religious Education

'...religious instruction in schools should appear as a scholastic discipline with the same rigour as other disciplines.'
(GDC, 1997, n. 73)

2.5   Community and Partnership

The Catholic school does not function in isolation; it 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, parish and school, 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 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 and related to others in worship and invited to service.

All three are called to **partnership** based on a common vision.

Partnership in Faith

Figure 2.2

PARISH

The Eucharistic community, built around the person and mission of Jesus, where the individual is welcomed and related to others in worship and service.

SCHOOL

The educating community where the learner is given the opportunity to grow in wisdom and faith.

HOME

The domestic faith community where humanity is nurtured and the love of God first experienced.
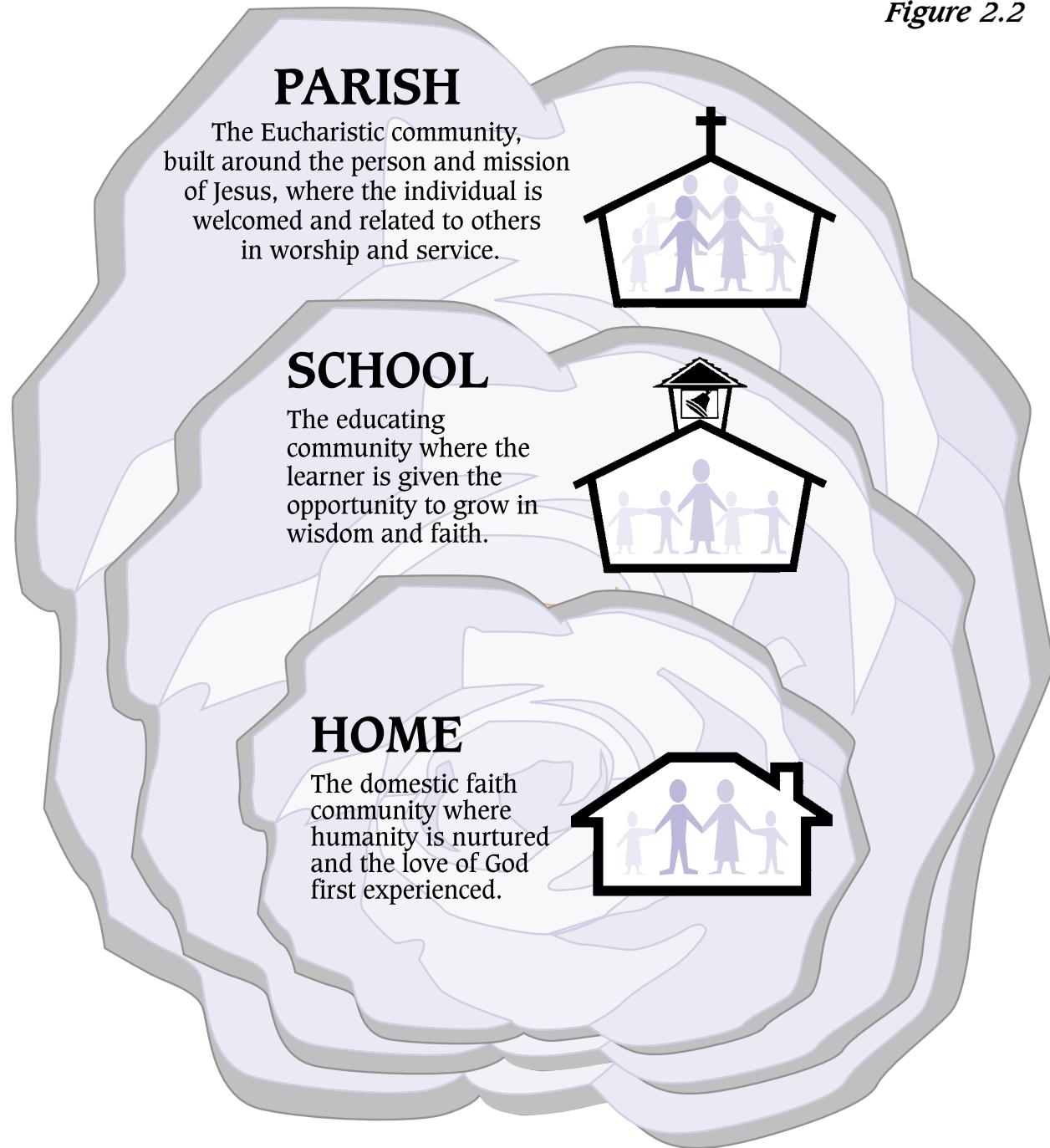
'... be of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind.'

Philippians 2:2

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.

The parish supports the home by providing a more systematic catechesis through parish-based/family-centred programs of sacramental preparation.

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.

'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

2.6 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 orientation that permeates all aspects of school life including relationships, structures, celebrations and routines, as well as the formal curriculum.

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 gospel values;

- a fostering of the **total** development of all its students;

- participating in the evangelising mission of the Church;

- assisting students to integrate their faith, their culture and their experiences of life;

- displaying a fundamental option for the poor and the weak;

- offering a service to individuals, society and the wider culture;

- transforming society, hastening the kingdom which Jesus announced.

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

The Parramatta CEO publication *The Graduate of the Catholic School* describes the competencies, attitudes, values and behaviours seen as desirable in those educated in a Catholic school. Its focus is on:

●   religious faith and development;

●   personal integration;

●   life skills and intellectual competency;

●   social responsibility.
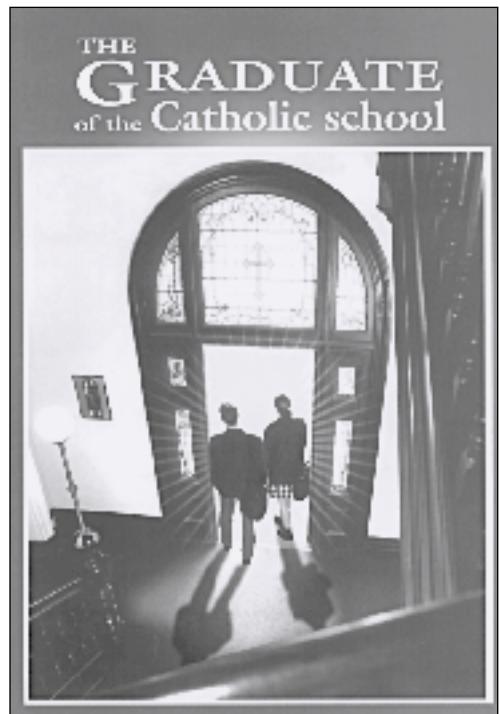
> *'What does the Lord require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?'*
>
> *Micah 6:8*

2.7 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.

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.

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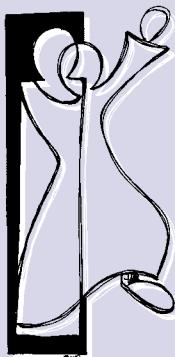
- What is the essence and purpose of each curriculum area?
- What contribution does each one make to the development of the student?
- How can core gospel values transform it?
- How can it be linked to other curriculum areas and, especially, to Religious Education?
- How can this approach lead to a truly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

'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. 39)

Valuable Across-Curriculum Resources

The following documents assist teachers, across a range of learning areas, to integrate faith and life, religion and culture.

Produced by CEO, Archdiocese of Sydney, to provide practical assistance to secondary curriculum Coordinators and teachers seeking to integrate values education across a number of curriculum areas.

Produced by CEO, Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, to provide a simple strategy and practical resources to assist teachers in teaching in a cross-curricular context about a range of contemporary and sensitive issues from a Catholic perspective.
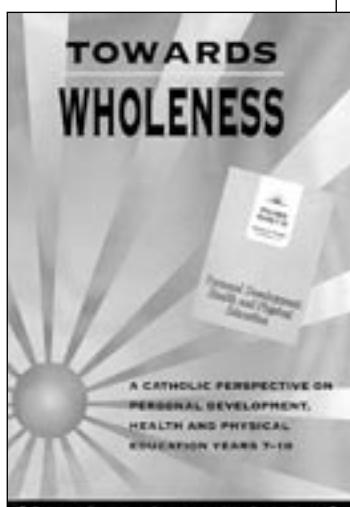
Produced by the NSW Catholic Education Commission to support the implementation of the PD/H/PE syllabus in Catholic schools.

Produced by CEO, Diocese of Parramatta, to assist teachers raise awareness and deal productively with social justice issues.

2.8   Religious Education in Context

Figure 2.3

The Catholic Vision

Catholic Education Philosophy
-the Catholic vision applied to teaching
and learning in an educational setting

Catholic School Culture
-shaped by the Catholic vision
-religious education in the broadest sense

symbols   celebrations
relationships   routines

Formal Curriculum
-all curriculum areas have a religious dimension

**Religious Education
in the Classroom**

Core DOCUMENT

THE
WORLD
OF THE STUDENT

'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)

Influences on the 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 in community, 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.

Figure 3.1

3.1 Our Students

- Each individual student is passing through a series of identifiable developmental stages. At each stage 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 comes from homes where the Catholic faith is regularly practised.

All are influenced by the innate human need for meaning and purpose.
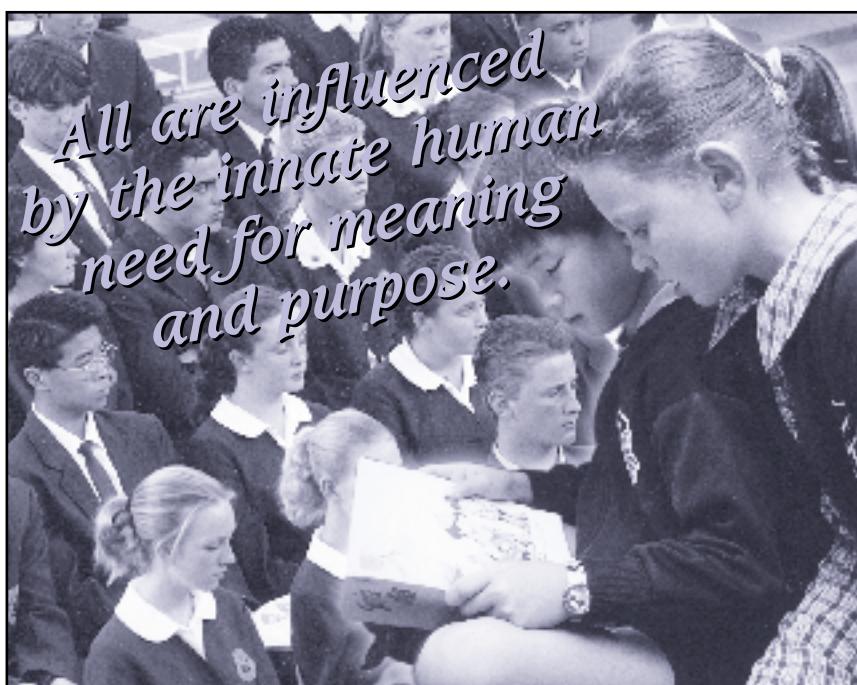
- Families have had a range of experiences, both positive and negative, within the Church.

- For many students, family life is complex and confusing.

'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)

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 Facts

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 the religious development of children may be lacking.

3. While most students live in a traditional family, an increasing number are growing up in step families, 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.

General Implications

- Students can be expected to bring different 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 and spiritual sensitivity.

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, 1993)

3.3 Australian Society

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

Some Relevant Facts

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. Society is increasingly multicultural with one in seven Australian residents having been born in a country where English is not the first language.

4. Immigrants to Australia are from a widening background that includes Asia, South America, Oceania, the Middle East and Africa, as well as Europe.

5. There is much unfinished agenda that relates to reconciliation with indigenous Australians.

6. Societal values and ways of understanding life are greatly influenced by the mass media and advertising.

7. Many people experience an increasing sense of meaninglessness and hopelessness; Australia's youth suicide rate is one of the highest in the world.Technology is having an increasing impact on every aspect of communal life.

8. There is increasing sensitivity to the claims of the natural environment and the need to protect the ecosystem.

9. Population drift towards urban areas has contributed to a decline in rural infrastructures and services.

General Implications

- It can be expected that many students will come from homes where there are significant levels of confusion and uncertainty about societal trends.

- School enrolments will reflect the composition of society. Many cultural backgrounds will 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.

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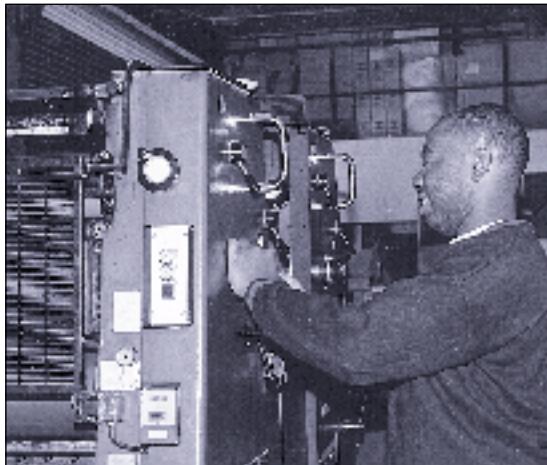
The structure and composition of Australia's workforce is changing rapidly.

Some Relevant Facts

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.

8. Work opportunities in rural areas are in decline.

General Implications

- Many students come from families suffering financial hardship.

- Many adolescents are anxious about their future employment prospects.

- Adolescents in paid casual employment often face conflicting pressures in balancing work and study commitments.

- A strong vocational emphasis has been included in the contemporary secondary curriculum, much of it associated with employment-related competencies.

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 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 Facts

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.

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 Facts

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 stages 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 and individualism.

5. Catholic schools are affected by contemporary social change and by the national remaking of Australian education.

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.

- 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.

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

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

Some Relevant Facts

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 stage to stage.

3. The group provides an important context for interpreting life experiences and for developing new concepts.

4. Failure in peer relationships can have serious effects on the individual.

5. 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 better 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.

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, 1996)

3.8   Growth and Development
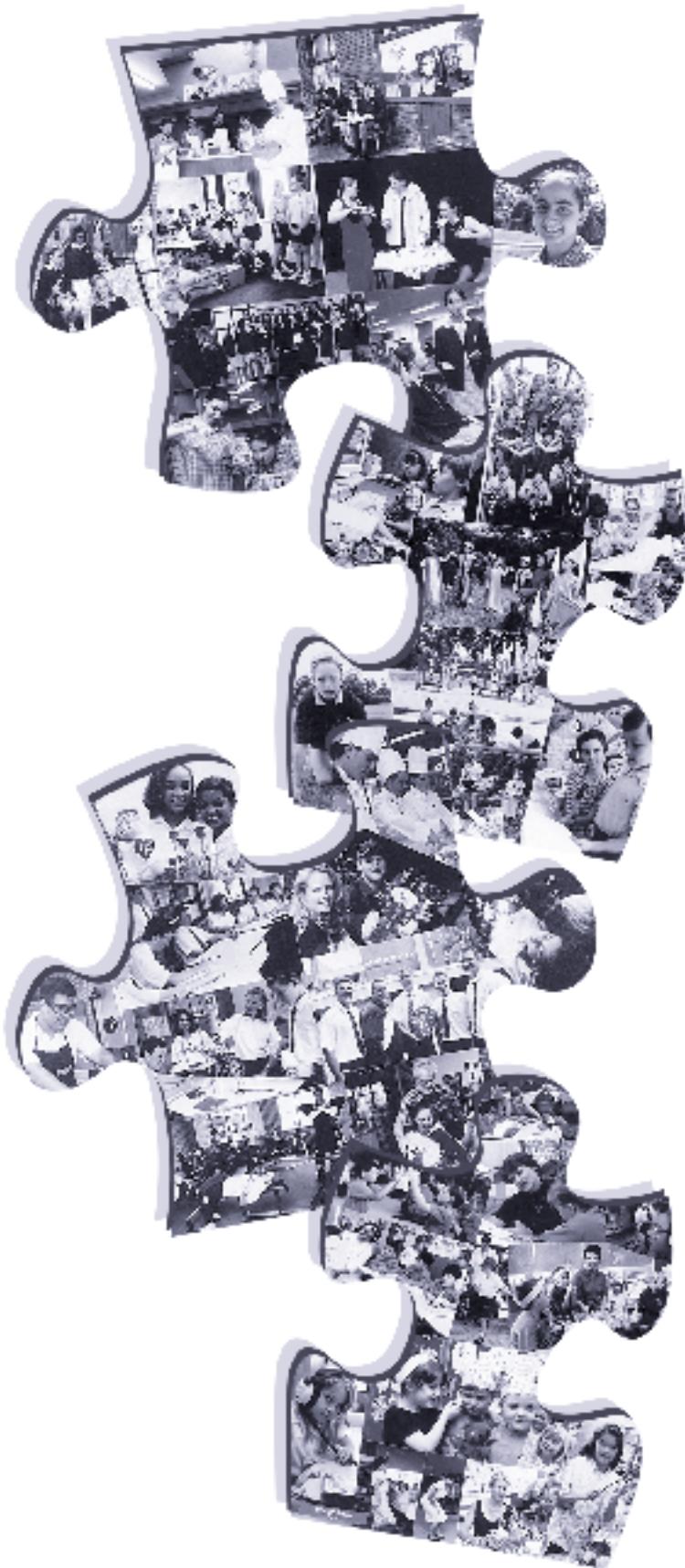
Students differ from each other in temperament, abilities, achievements, maturity, styles of learning and in many other ways. However, they share a common journey towards maturity, passing through recognisable stages of growth.

The developmental stages from early childhood to late adolescence approximately coincide with the six stages around which the general curriculum is organised in N.S.W.

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

A central requirement of good teaching is that it be developmentally appropriate

Descriptions of typical characteristics of learners in the different stages can often stimulate identification of desirable teaching practice. Such descriptions are provided in the Stage Teacher Support documentation and are summarised here.

Stage 1 (Kindergarten to Year 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.

Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4)

Again, 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.

Stage 3 (Years 5 and 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.
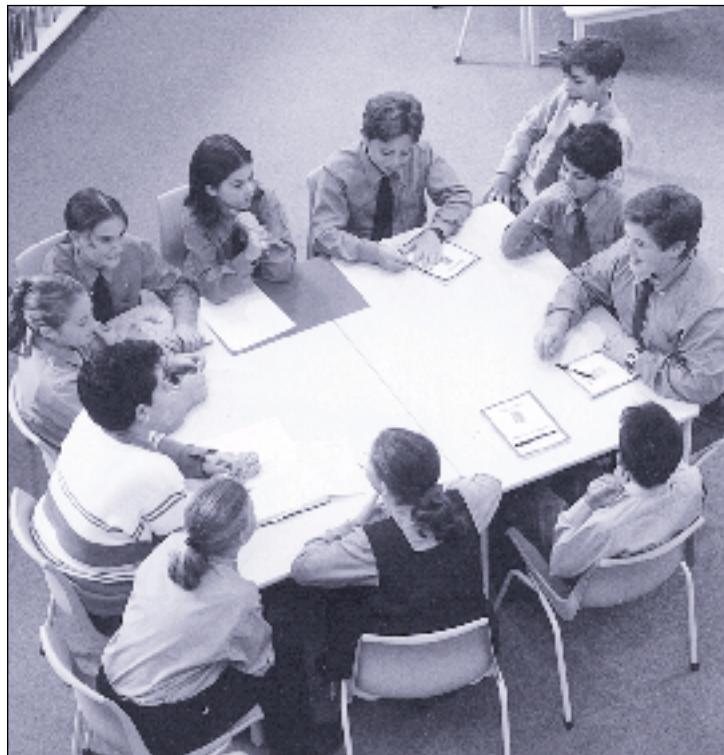
Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8)

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 in 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.

Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10)

Confrontation and questioning characterise many students at this stage 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.

Stage 6 (Years 11 and 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. 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 at All Stages

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 stage of development and the experiences they have encountered in life.

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 generally are 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 stage of development and of their need for acceptance, patience and tolerance.

● Teachers who have a specific responsibility for students with special needs should, where appropriate, be drawn into collaboration by Religious Education teachers.

● School policies that serve students with special needs should include reference to Religious Education.
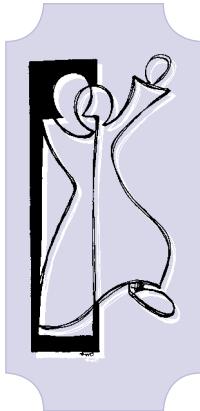
What are the important characteristics and background experiences that must be considered in developing the Religious Education policy and programs for students at your school?

Authentic Religious Education

'The basic criterion... should be that of two-fold fidelity to God and to man (sic), a fundamental principle for the whole Church. This implies an ability to marry perfect doctrinal fidelity with a profound adaptation to man's needs, taking into consideration the psychology of age and the socio-cultural context in which he lives.'

Religious education programs must be:

- 'linked with the real life of the generation to which they are addressed, showing close acquaintance with its anxieties and questionings, struggles and hopes';

- try 'to speak meaningfully to this generation';

- 'really aim to give to those who use them a better knowledge of the mysteries of Christ, aimed at true conversion and a life more in conformity with God's will'.
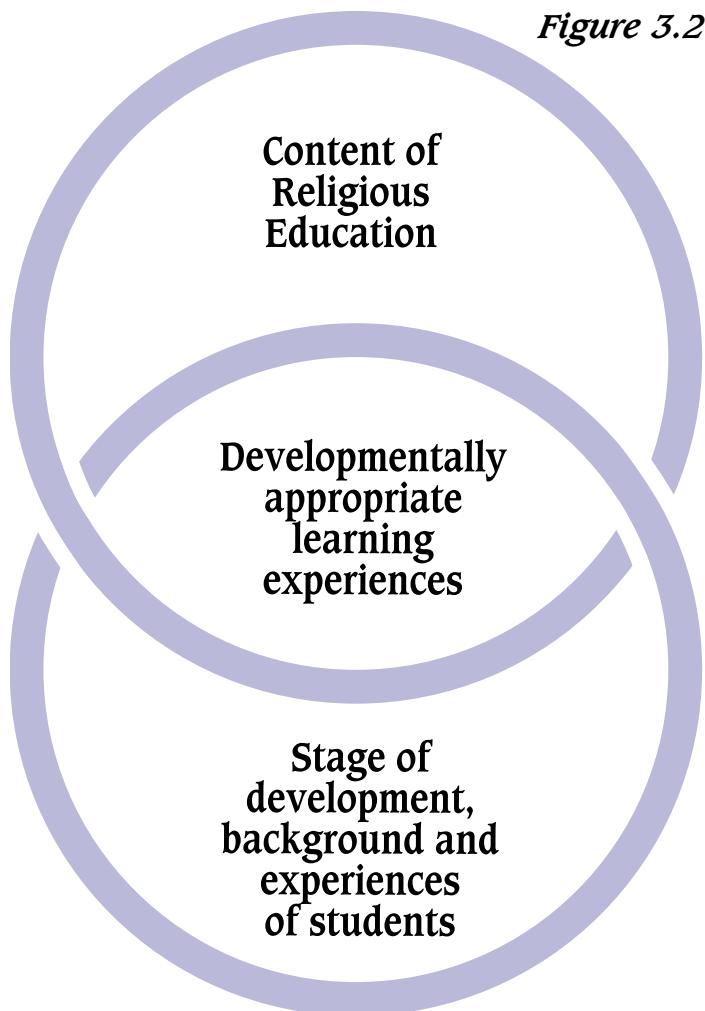
(Catechesis in Our Time, n. 49 in General Directory for Catechesis, n. 283 cf. also nn. 111-113, 203)

Figure 3.2

Content of Religious Education

Developmentally appropriate learning experiences

Stage of development, background and experiences of students

'Hold to the standard of sound teaching that you have heard from me, in the faith and love that are in Christ Jesus. Guard the good treasure entrusted to you, with the help of the Holy Spirit living in us.'
 2 Timothy 1: 13–14

Core

DOCUMENT

CURRICULUM

'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 The Classroom Curriculum

At the heart of the curriculum processes are the students themselves who are growing through developmental stages 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 for which these Religious Education Guidelines provide the syllabus. An appropriate way to make accessible the theological content of the Religious Education curriculum is to draw on current educational theory. Content, methodology and structure contribute to the process of religious education.

Figure 4.1

REVELATION

CREATION

SCRIPTURE   TRADITION

Treasures New & Old

Content
- Organised in Key Content Strands
- Scripture, Tradition and teaching of the church as expressed in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

Structure
Provided by a stage-outcomes approach consistent with NSW curriculum documentation and curriculum practice in the ACT.

Methodology
Influenced by
- Shared Christian Praxis
- Quality teaching and learning research

4.2   Content

The content of the syllabus is given structure by the following **organising strands** or **content areas** which reflect the themes common to Religious Education syllabuses across Australia. Each content strand is given focus and the strands together are given coherence through the following theological statements:

- **God:** Communion of love, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit;
- **Jesus Christ:** Word made flesh, the wisdom, freedom and compassion of God;
- **Church:** Body of Christ, communion in the Spirit, community of disciples, witness to unity and justice, pilgrims in service to the world;
- **Sacraments:** ritual celebrations of the experience of God's Spirit in the midst of life;
- **Scriptures:**   word of God in inspired human words, interpreting the community's foundational experience;
- **Christian Life:** growth in discernment and responsibility, gifted and challenged in the transforming presence of the Spirit;
- **Christian Prayer:** growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God;
- **Religion and Society:** understanding and respecting the role of diverse religious traditions, particularly in the Australian context.

The content of each strand generates statements of **stage outcomes** and **key concepts**. These are served, in turn, by **unit outcomes**.

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)

The church is the gathering of those people who profess faith in the Risen Jesus and his message and who, through the power of the Spirit, try to live their lives in justice and loving service. Christians believe that the Spirit is constantly enlivening and guiding the church, giving its members insight and courage. This conviction in the constant presence of the Spirit in the life and history of the church has led to the Roman Catholic emphasis on Tradition.

In its most basic sense Tradition refers to the living faith experience of the Christian community, a living faith believed, shared, and handed on. Tradition is held by the church and expressed in various ways: in the worship and sacraments of the community, in sacred Scripture, in formal definitions and creeds, in hymns, music and art, in theology, in various spiritualities and devotional traditions, in the life stories of individuals and communities.

As the church struggles to re-express its faith anew in every generation, to clarify its understanding of the meaning and implications of living the Gospel in a particular time and place, the Tradition gradually grows and develops. Tradition is a dynamic reality. Whenever members of the church respond in faith, witnessing and living with integrity, the Tradition grows.

'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)

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

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, n. 104)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

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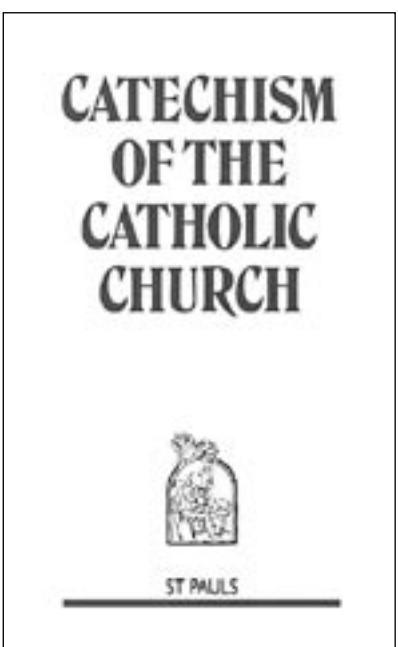
Four fundamentals of Christian life – the profession of faith, the celebration of the Christian mystery, life in Christ, and Christian prayer – provide the Catechism's structure. These elements have one source, *the Christian mystery.*

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).

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). Th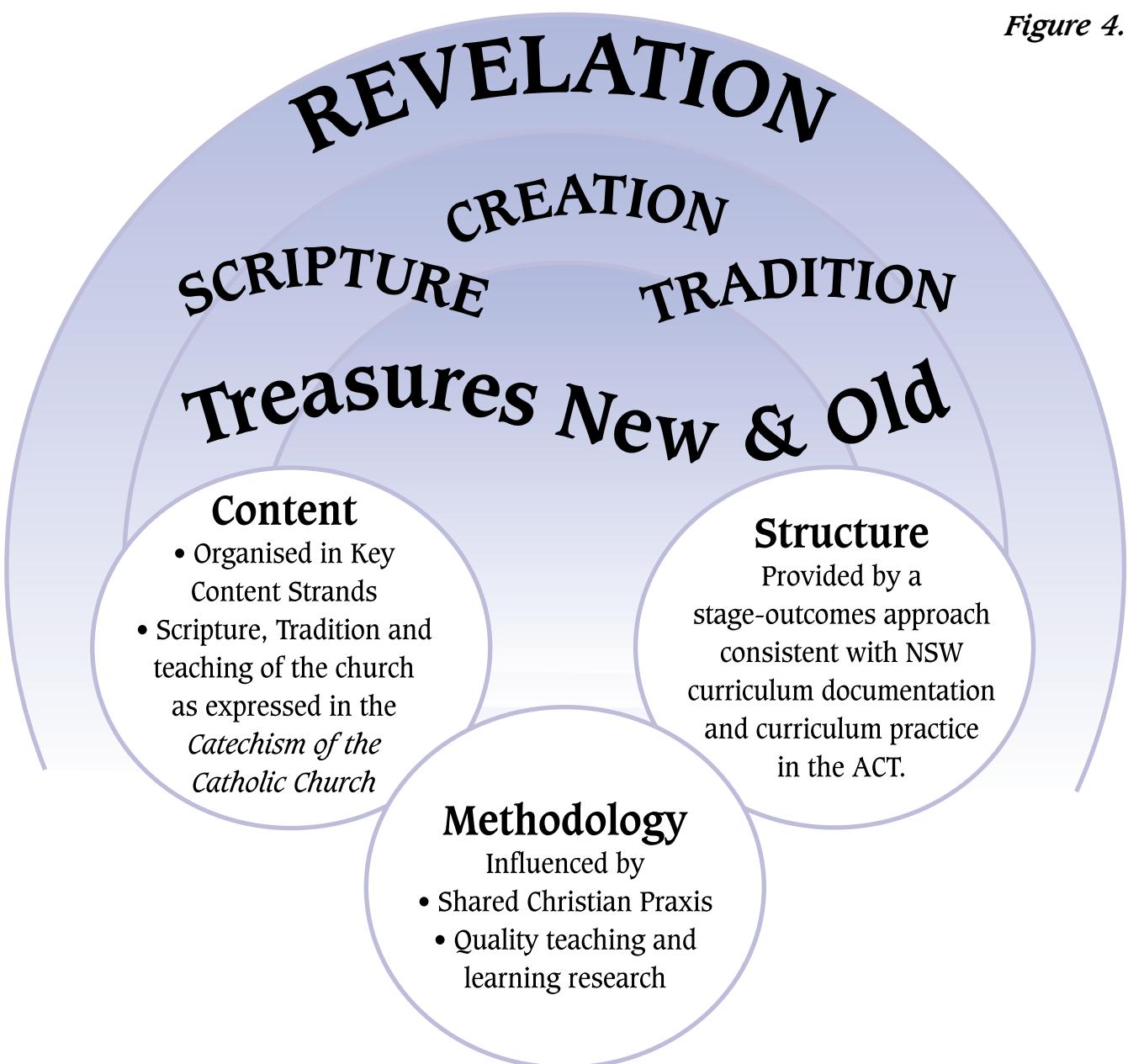is means that contemporary research into quality teaching and learning should make an appropriate impact on the school's Religious Education program. As with all other areas of the curriculum, the teacher is challenged to design classroom learning experiences that respect the integrity of the material to be studied while being appropriate to the developmental stage, background, experience and other personal qualities of the learners.

(A) 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 that 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.
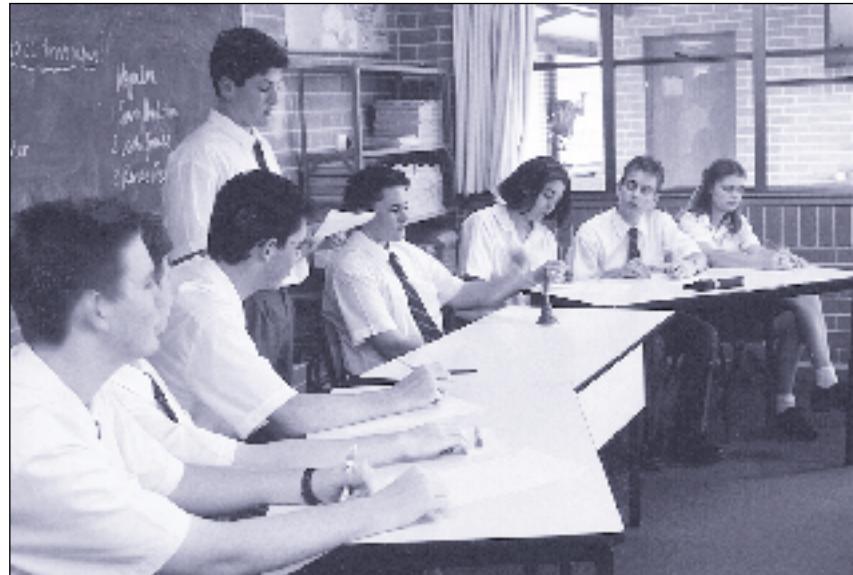
- **Teachers undertaking regular professional development.**
  In the area of Religious Education this includes responding to opportunities for spiritual reflection and growth as well as ongoing development in Scripture, Theology and Religious Education.

'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)

(B) Shared Christian Praxis

The core understandings of how to foster quality teaching and learning are wholly consistent with the overall approach to Religious Education known as Shared Christian Praxis.

The Shared Christian Praxis process is grounded in the understanding that God has been and continues to be present and active in the community of faith, in the Spirit. The expression of the living faith of the community through history is carried in the community's Tradition. Religious education according to the Shared Christian Praxis approach promotes the believing, valuing and acting of the learner who is making meaning of their life now. An important context for this meaning-making activity is this 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.

Around these core understandings Thomas Groome (1991) has developed an overarching approach to religious education and ministry. 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 developing Christian tradition, participants are invited to consider appropriate responses.

Shared Christian Praxis is not simply a teaching method or a series of strategies. Groome describes it as a 'meta-approach', 'a framework', 'a style of ministry', 'a way of being with people'. 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 more general approach to teaching it accommodates well a rich variety of teaching 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 recognise 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.

'Intellectual development and growth as a Christian go forward hand in hand.'
(The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, 1988, n. 51)

Table 4.1

SHARED CHRISTIAN PRAXIS	EMMAUS STORY
NAMING	'Talking with each other about these things that had happened ...'
REFLECTING	Jesus said to them. 'What are you discussing with each other while you walk along?'
CHRISTIAN STORY AND VISION	'Jesus interpreted to them the things about Scriptures.'
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 recognised him.'
RESPONDING	'That same hour they got up and returned to Jerusalem ... they told what had happened ...'

The Local Context

Shared Christian Praxis has been evolving since the late 1970s. It has been particularly influential in Religious Education in Australia where its impact is obvious in curriculum development and classroom practice.

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.

Within the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn, Shared Christian Praxis has provided the overall approach to Religious Education since 1992. Here also it has been evolving: strengths have been built on, weaknesses and misinterpretations addressed. Central to Shared Christian Praxis are the five 'movements' which are preceded by a focusing activity. These are represented in Figure 4.2.

The Movements of Shared Christian Praxis

Figure 4.2

FOCUSING ACTIVITY

The focusing activity establishes a focus for the unit through a generative theme (e.g. creation) or an engaging symbol (e.g. plant)or action (e.g. dramatisation)

Naming

Naming life experience of self, others & world

Responding

Responding in order to authentically live out the Christian Story and Vision

Religious Education seeks to inform, form and transform students' identity, way of being and acting in the world

Reflecting

Critically reflecting on life experience

Integrating

Integrating reflection on life experience with Christian Story and Vision

Christian Story & Vision

Teaching and learning about the Scriptures, Church Tradition and teaching, liturgical experience

- **Focusing**

  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**

  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?

- **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 *Treasures New and Old*, the content of the Christian Story and Vision is structured around the eight organising strands.

- **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 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.

In one sense, the teacher acts as a conductor drawing the different movements into a harmonious and unified relationship.

The movements may occur within one lesson or over a much longer period, during the study of a unit or over several units. The movements are not necessarily focused on in sequence. It is the overall praxis 'style' that informs the teacher's moment–by–moment initiative. In one sense, the teacher acts 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.

'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)

Here is one example of Shared Christian Praxis adapted from a suggestion by Thomas Groome. *(1991, p. 264)*

Students are introduced to the notion of people having particular hopes and dreams for themselves and the world. They are invited to name and share some of their own hopes and dreams. Through discussion they explore and expand on what they and their companions have said.

Having **named** and **reflected**, they are given **access to Jesus' teaching** on the kingdom of God as an empowerment of people's hopes and dreams.

As an aid to **integrating** the various movements, students are invited to engage in the following activity:

Looking back at the hopes and dreams you shared at the beginning of class, and having studied how Jesus invites and empowers us to live into the dream of the kingdom of God, what are the hopes and dreams that you now see us being called to live?

Imagine you hear that Jesus is in a nearby city preaching on the kingdom of God. Write Jesus a short letter telling him your greatest hopes for your family, your neighbourhood, and for the world.

Now write what Jesus might answer you.

Finally, they are invited to **respond** to this challenge:

Examine Jesus' answer to your letter. Choose some things you will try to do this week to help bring about the kingdom of God: in your family, in your parish, in your neighbourhood

In the preparation of the published units, every attempt has been made to model diversity. Teachers at every stage 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 an open-courtyard or market-place which accommodates many diverse teaching and learning strategies.

Figure 4.3

Creative arts

Action research

Games

Literature

Guided reflection, prayer & meditation

Strategies supporting multiple ways of knowing

Values clarification and moral dilemmas

Case studies

Co-operative learning

Graphic organisers

Cross-disciplinary approaches

Lateral thinking

Directed study

Enquiry-based learning

Field study
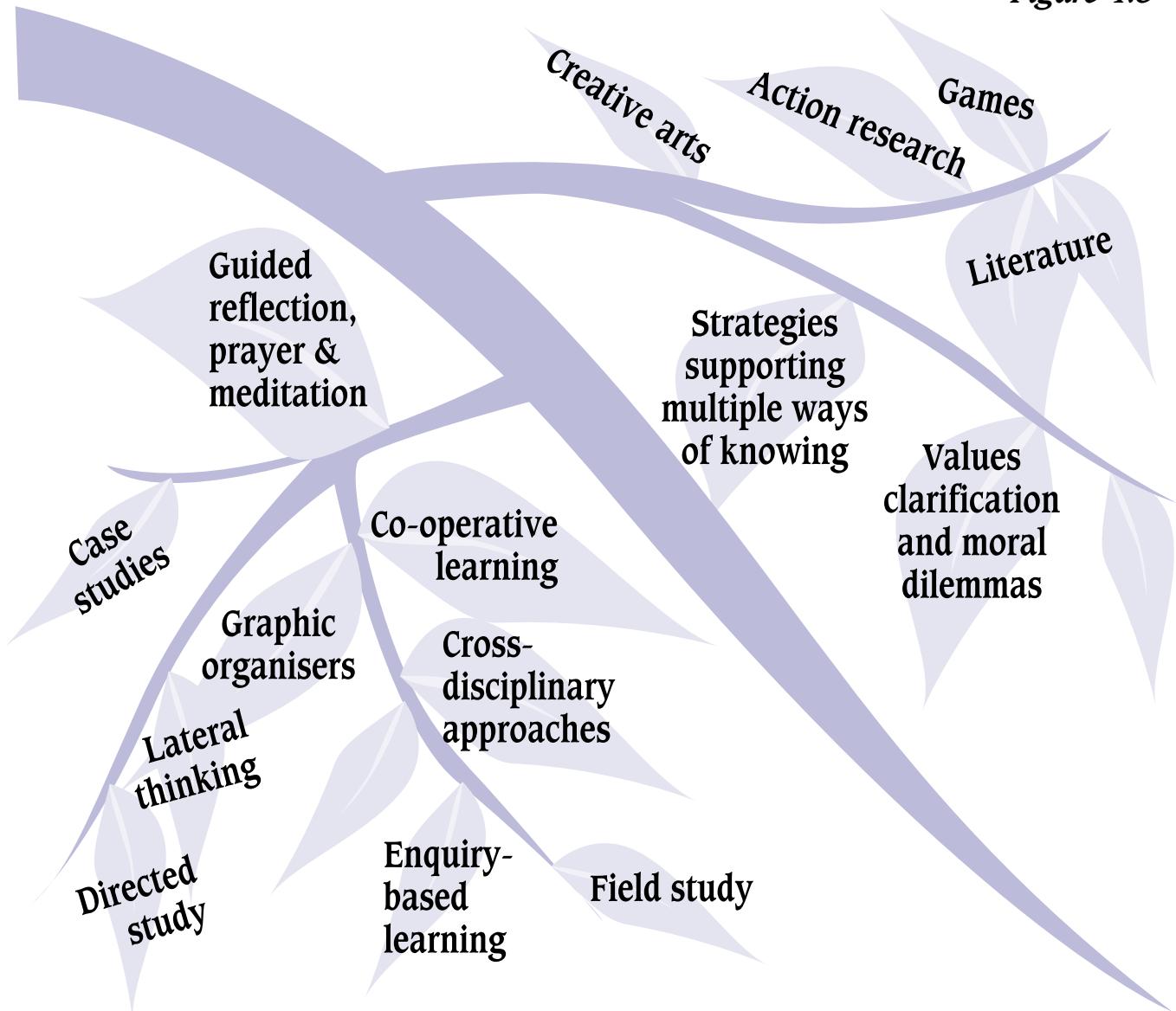
Practical Implications

Conscious of the various complementary perspectives identified in this section, it is suggested that in classrooms faithful to the spirit of *Treasures New and Old,* 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 and the life of the parish
and the wider church.

- Attention to stage and unit outcomes in planning, teaching, assessing and evaluating.

- Appropriate opportunities for students to translate values and beliefs into actions.

CRITICAL REFLECTION

THE LIVING TRADITION OF THE FAITH COMMUNITY

Critical Reflection

Reason
Memory
Imagination

On Life

Actions
Experience
Intuitions
Understanding

'Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.'

Luke 24:35

(C)   *Ways of Learning and Knowing and the Selection of Activities*

Thomas Groome describes the intent of Shared Christian Praxis as 'wisdom in the Christian faith' (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, for Groome, 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.

One researcher in this area is Julia Atkin (1994) whose Integral Learning model provides a synthesis of the many ways of understanding, thinking and learning, and prompts translation into very practical terms.

At its most practical level, this approach encourages the teacher:

- to recognise the different modes of thinking and learning;

- to help students to identify their own preferred thinking and learning style, and become more efficient in using it;

- to expose students to a range of learning experiences that extend their processing style to make personal meaning in a comprehensive way;

- to help students identify and use the most appropriate thinking and learning styles for the task.
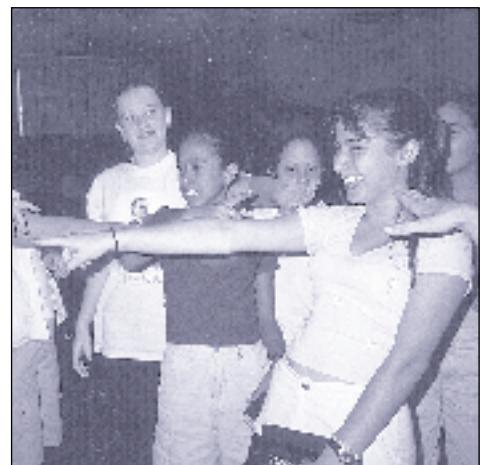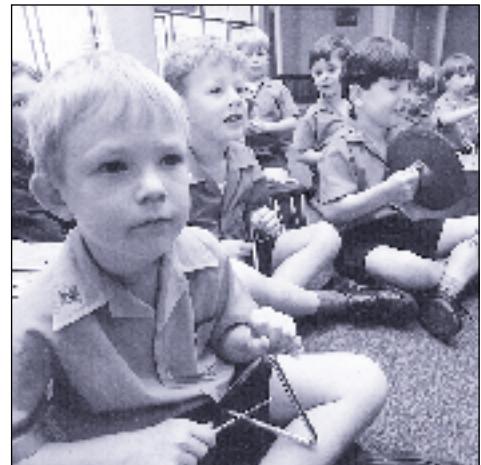
Learning as integration of experience, reflection, imagination, action

Figure 4.4

| Accuracy Efficiency | Cerebral | Meaning Understanding |

PROPOSITIONAL KNOWLEDGE
Language, definitions, rules, symbols

CONCEPTUAL KNOWLEDGE
Grasp in the mind's eye
Image, analogy, pattern, insight, sense of...

represent

THINK REFLECT

Left

Right

apply, practise

express

PROCEDURAL & FACTUAL KNOWLEDGE
Information, routines

EXPERIENCE SENSE

PERSONAL EXPERIENTIAL KNOWLEDGE
Feel, relate to self, engagement of self

© J.Atkin 1999

Limbic

The model is one of a number of educational approaches which have informed the Unit Outline writers in the Religious Education Guidelines project to ensure a richness of suggested learning activities that help students to construct personal meaning in as comprehensive a way as possible.

The application of this is based on the belief that, while individuals have preferred learning styles, 'human learning is deepened and amplified by integrating our multiple ways of knowing'. Effective educators, 'teach to *engage and integrate* all modes of processing regardless of personal thinking style'. (Julia Atkin, 1999)

The model itself has a particular relevance in Religious Education where some lessons will require mainly the exercise of logical, analytical thinking while others will call for a particular empathy or sensitivity and an ability to express oneself in a more artistic manner.

Just as students commit to memory the words of poems and songs, and learn significant formulas in the general curriculum, so the student of Religious Education learns certain prayers, texts from the Bible and the liturgy, and key statements of Catholic belief. Consistent with a contemporary understanding of learning, memorisation and a clear articulation of concepts always follows explanation and is based on understanding.

'After three days, they found him in the temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers.'
Luke 2:46-47

Characteristics of Desirable Classroom Religious Education Programs

By way of summary and as a checklist for possible use in program evaluation, desirable Religious Education programs:

1. develop factual knowledge of the essentials of the Catholic faith: its story, teachings, worship and ways of living the Christian life;

2. 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;

3. 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;

4. are appropriate to the developmental stage of the learner and are sensitive to the claims of individual differences;

5. connect at the point of learners' experience, building on prior personal knowledge and home experiences in recognition of the key role of parents;

6. recognise the significance of the parish community in Catholic life;

7. are attentive and responsive to the local context;

8. challenge students to reflect critically on how they lead their lives;

9. are given appropriate prominence in the school's curriculum; this is reflected in the time allocated to the Religious Education program;

10. 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 programs.

4.4   Structure

The Religious Education Guidelines syllabus is structured around stage outcomes. This is the structural model of syllabuses issued by the NSW Board of Studies, a number of which are in use in schools situated in the ACT. Its use in *Treasures New and Old* ensures consistency in terminology and approaches to planning between Religious Education and other curriculum areas across the Archdiocese.

Context

Since the 1980s curriculum development in general has been strongly influenced by international and national economic restructuring. The attention given to competing market forces in business and industry has been reflected in education where a strengthening interest has developed in indicators of performance, benchmarks and demonstrable outcomes.

The overarching educational approach or philosophy that has arisen in response to this wider political and economic agenda is outcomes–based education.

The NSW Board of Studies introduced stage outcomes into its syllabuses in 1991 in order to meet the requirements of the Education Reform Act 1990. It defines outcomes as 'explicit statements of the knowledge, skills and understandings expected to be learned by students' (NSW Board of Studies, *Syllabus Model Using Stage Outcomes*, Sydney, 1996,   p. 5). In Board of Studies syllabuses, outcomes are related to the stages of schooling and emerge logically from the aims, objectives and content of the syllabus.

Advantages of an Outcomes–based Approach

1.   It makes teaching and learning more precise and explicit.

2.   It helps identify the individual student's progress in learning.

3.   It links planning, teaching, assessing and reporting.

4.   It respects diversity amongst students and allows for a variety of methods of organising
and teaching.

5.   It helps to identify gaps and overlap in the curriculum.

6.   It clarifies expectations and strengthens the instructional dimension of the classroom program.

7.   It provides a useful framework and a language for reporting.

Outcomes–based Approaches and Religious Education

In recent years, a new generation of Religious Education syllabuses 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.
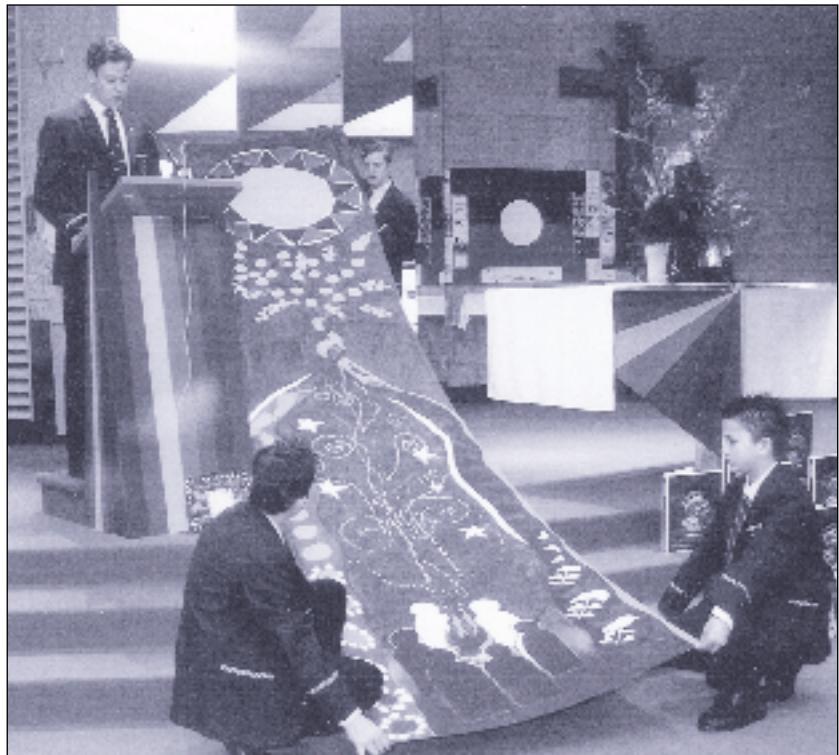
As used in *Treasures New and Old* outcomes are:

- serving syllabus aims;

  - integrated with syllabus content and consistent with a Shared Christian Praxis approach;

    - linked explicitly to named values;

      - developmental, expressed in stages;

        - manageable in number.

Unit Outcomes

Outcomes written for units contribute to progress towards the achievement of stage outcomes. 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 Shared Christian Praxis.

STAGE 2:

UNIT TITLE: Advent Year C: Prepare

DURATION: 2-3 weeks

UNIT FOCUS:
This unit will explore the Advent Readings for Year C. Students will be led to see Advent as a time of preparation for the celebration of Christmas, that challenges us to renew our commitment to being a bearer of Christ's love to others.

STAGE OUTCOME:
Students express an understanding and appreciation of Christian Life as following Jesus and making loving choices.

UNIT OUTCOMES:
By the end of this unit students should be able to:
1. explore their own and others' ideas and experience related to challenge, preparation and commitment and relate to the celebration of the season of Advent.
2. explain the significance of John the Baptist as a prophet who prepared the way for the coming of Jesus.
3. consider the value of committing themselves to some Advent challenges that prepare for the celebration of Christmas.

Outcomes and the Complexity of Teaching and Learning

Figure 4.5

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

DIFFERENT WAYS OF KNOWING

UNFORESEEN OUTCOMES

TEACHABLE MOMENTS

DESIRED OUTCOMES

TEACHER INTUITION

ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES

TEACHING & LEARNING STRATEGIES

AUTHENTIC LEARNING THAT CANNOT BE EASILY DEMONSTRATED

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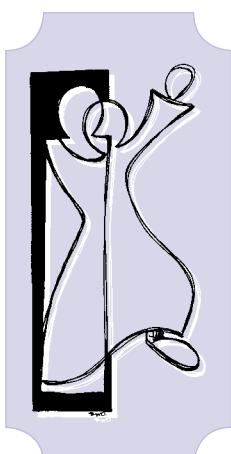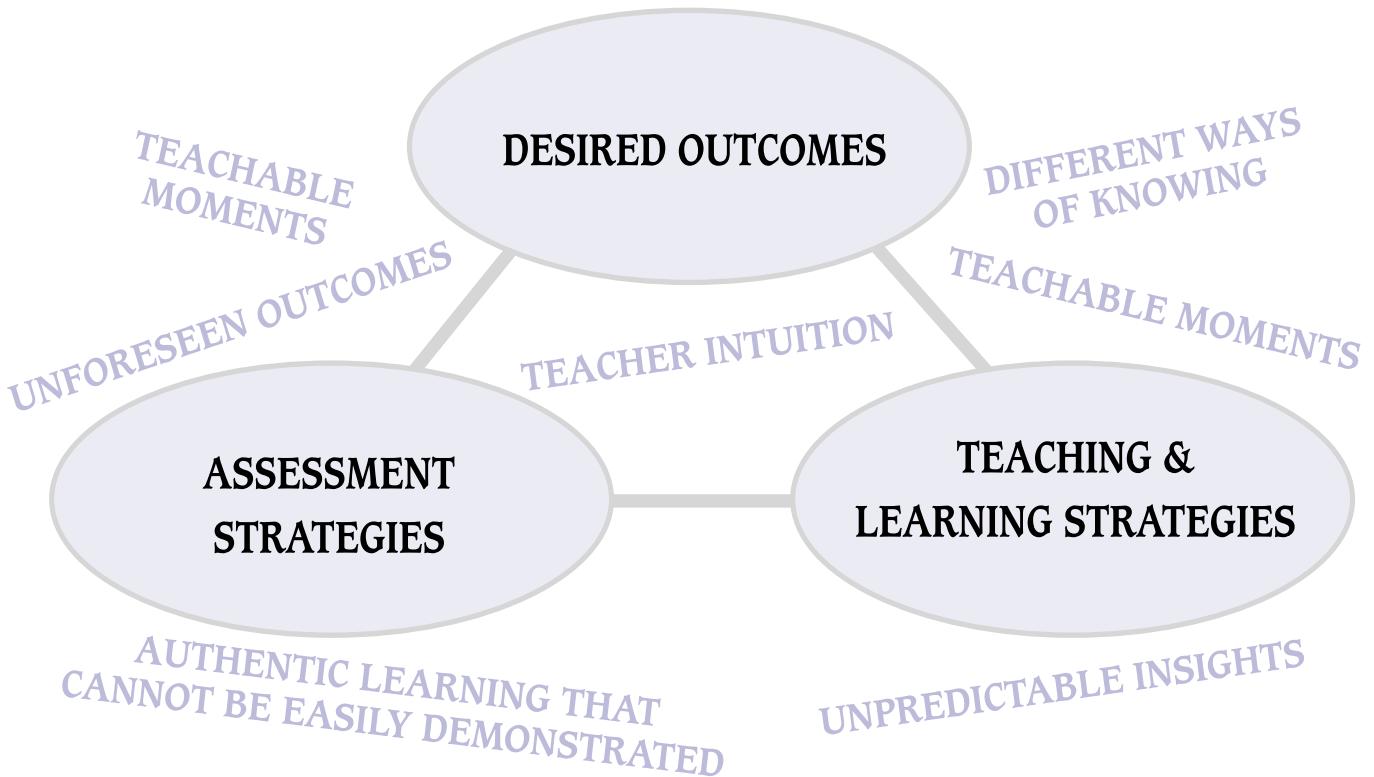
Compose your own diagram indicating how you see the relationship between planning, teaching, learning and assessing. Share with a colleague.

In what ways can your most successful experiences in working with outcomes in other curriculum areas be applied in implementing *Treasures New and Old?*

4.5 Assessment

Assessment is a vital part of any curriculum process. Within the stage–outcomes structure adopted in *Treasures New and Old*, 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 stage 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.

Assessment in Religious Education

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.

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.)

Figure 4.6

Knowledge & understanding

Values

LEARNING

Attitudes

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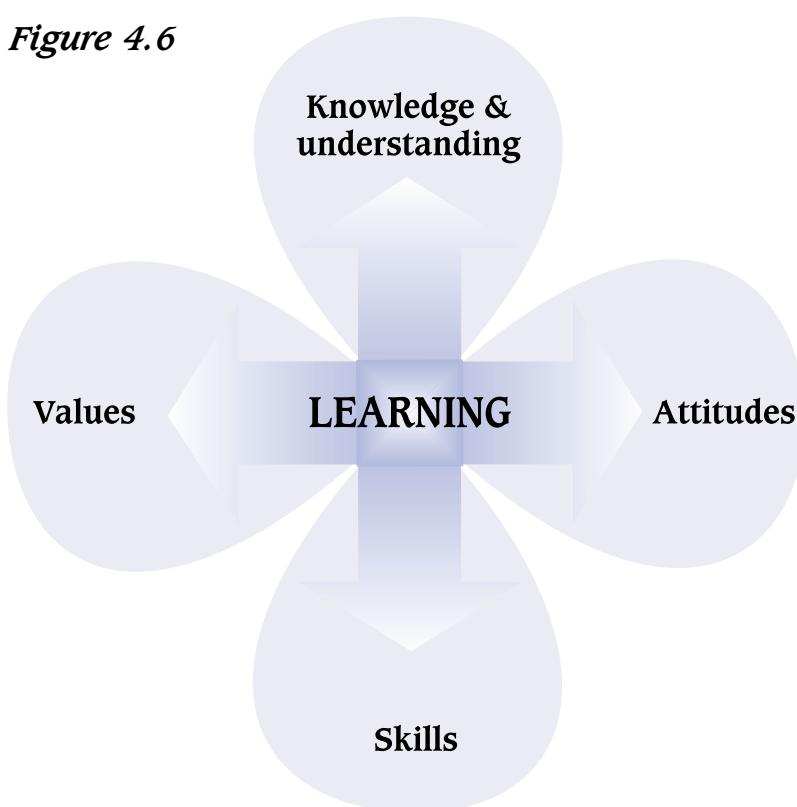
Teachers may gather appropriate data from quizzes and tests, and by requiring students to provide verbal or written recounts, narratives, reports and explanations, to carry out instructions, to create mind maps, to label, match, classify and analyse, to engage in role plays and present visual displays.

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.

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.

> *A student's personal faith is not the subject of assessment or reporting within*
> *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 stage 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, stage 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.

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

Many 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

Assessment 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 syllabus.

Table 4.2

A praxis orientation, in particular, directs the teacher to indications that a student:	Movements of Shared Christian Praxis
• reflects on personal experience, values and prejudices • is willing to respectfully hear and consider another's point of view	**Naming and Reflecting**
• has a knowledge and understanding of the Christian Story and Vision	**Christian Story and Vision**
• makes connections between the experiences and actions of others and his or her own • uses imagination to express insights in words and symbols • brings ideas into a meaningful whole.	**Integrating and Responding**

Some Assessment Procedures

Table 4.3

Ways of Understanding	Typical Outcome Stems	Ways Students Might Demonstrate Achievement e.g. in a Scripture unit
Knowledge based on fact, information, definitions, procedures and rules	gather facts, recognise, name, label, list, recall, tell, recite, locate, identify, explain, recount, question	• complete multiple–choice questions based on facts relating to biblical people or events • analyse the structure of Pauline letters • label a map of Judea in the time of Christ or a diagram of the Temple • match key words with illustrations or definitions • write an account of the passion and death of Christ based on Mark's Gospel • research the role of women in the early Church
Knowledge based on structure, order, planning, following rules and practising	outline principles, design, implement, organise, structure, practise skills, identify patterns in, summarise	• compare and contrast the literary features of parallel Gospel accounts • categorise selected scriptural passages according to their literary genre • locate scripture passages • design a data base to store information on the books of the Bible • sequence key events reported in the Acts of the Apostles
Knowledge based on sharing, discussing, experiencing, sensing, intuiting and relating to self and others	participate in, perform, express, develop an appreciation of, debate, discuss, interview, dramatise, journal, empathise	• dramatise the parable of the Good Samaritan • role play a real-life situation or dilemma related to a gospel value • identify the personal thoughts and feelings of Moses at key points in his life • journal in response to a guided meditation on a Scripture passage • write a psalm using Australian imagery
Knowledge based on designing, connecting, exploring, patterning and metaphor–making	predict, symbolise, visualise, explore, critique, evaluate, synthesise, experiment, integrate	• write a speech outlining a future based on Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God • design a symbol for the Good News • mind map the themes/events of John's Gospel • select music suitable for a Liturgy of the Word • produce a slide/sound sequence on a biblical theme e.g. God's creative love

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 4.7

Peer Assessment • Self Assessment • Teacher Assessment → REFLECTIVE ASSESSMENT → Greater understanding, appreciation & competence

Complementary Assessment
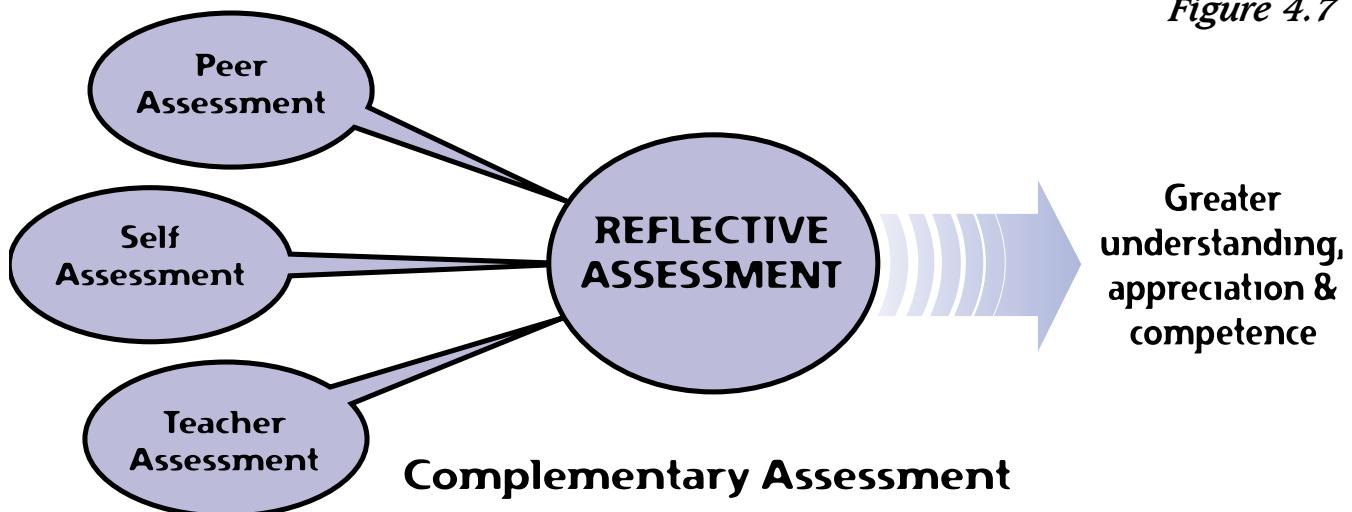
'Other seed fell into good soil and brought forth grain, growing up and increasing and yielding thirty and sixty and a hundredfold.'
Mark 4:8

4.6 Reporting

Reporting 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 executive, 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:

Table 4.4

A written statement	... often abbreviated through the use of scales, brief comments or marks. This provides parents and students with a summary of some learning achievements.
Interviews	... 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.
Information sheets	... provide parents and a more general audience with information about the learning opportunities and achievements of groups of students.
Newsletters and school annuals	... provide a wide audience with general information about major school initiatives taken in Religious Education.
Displays of work	... provide parents and students with demonstrations of achievement: productions, performances, exhibitions and portfolios.

NOTE : For further information on outcomes-based assessment see the NSW Board of Studies publications, *Assessing and Reporting Using Stage Outcomes, (Part 1: Assessing and Part 2: Reporting)*.

If reporting is to reflect the spirit of *Treasures New and Old,* it should be done in ways that:

- are consistent with the school's underlying philosophy and mission statement; 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 stage of student development;

- are sensitive to the individual student's needs, seeking to build on achievements;

- demonstrate links to stage outcomes;

- foster productive school/home understanding and interaction.
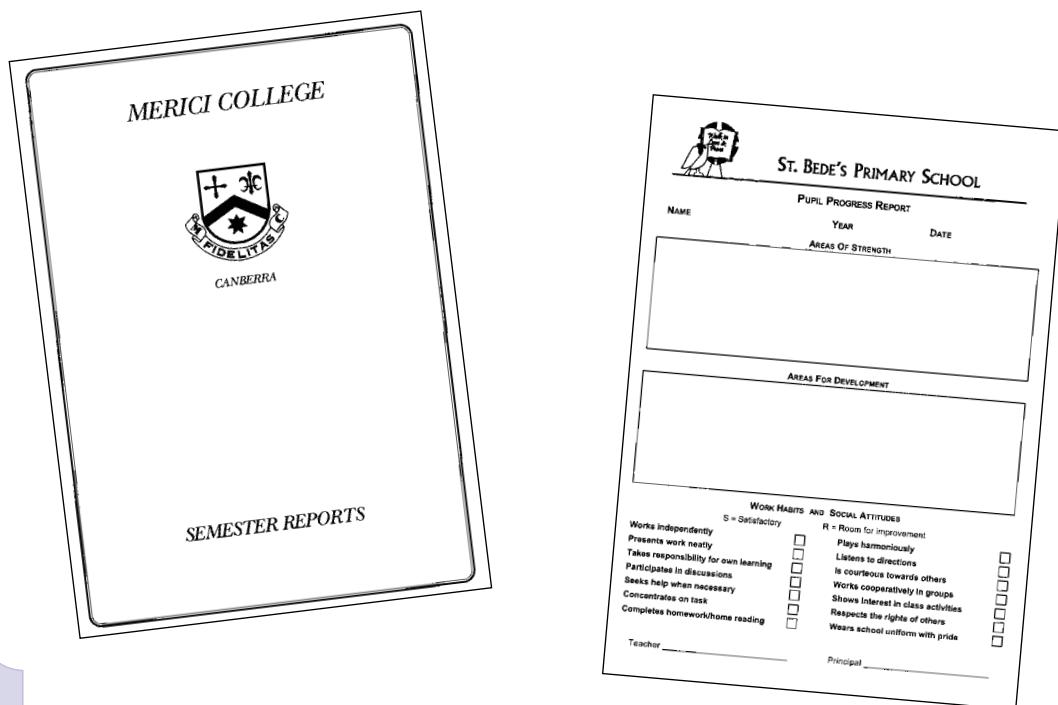
What is the current approach to assessment in Religious Education at your school? What are the strengths and weaknesses of this approach?

A Summary: Assessment and Reporting

Table 4.5

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.**	• make explicit what is valued in the school, particularly in Religious Education. • reveal a comprehensive understanding of learning and development, placing appropriate emphasis on values and attitudes. • are subject themselves to regular evaluation.
2. **Assessment procedures should respect the individual learner, foster self–esteem, encourage personal responsibility and enhance the relationship between teacher and student.**	• focus on individual achievement in moving towards desired outcomes. • are based on criteria of achievement that are clear to the students. • respect different needs, styles, abilities and cultural backgrounds. • are appropriate to the stage of development of the learner. • employ a variety of processes and are flexible in their application. • foster a classroom climate of cooperation and shared responsibility.
3. **Assessment should be part of the teaching and learning process.**	• encourage students to reflect on their progress, to identify new insights, understandings and skills. • clarify desired outcomes and, where appropriate, involve students in the selection of some assessment tasks. • involve students in self–assessment and peer assessment as important components of the learning process. • focus on **how** students are learning and making meaning as well as **what** they are learning. • are flexible and responsive to emerging opportunities for observation and judgement.
4. **Methods of reporting the results of assessment to students and parents should be clear, accurate, meaningful, supportive and sensitive to student needs.**	• respond to parents' right to regular feedback. • communicate clearly. • reflect what is really valued in Religious Education, avoiding the trivialising of desired outcomes. • encourage dialogue between parents, teachers and students.

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 stage 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

Core DOCUMENT

IMPLEMENTING THE
TREASURES NEW AND OLD
CURRICULUM

'(Religious instruction) should have its own syllabus, 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.'

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

5.1 Implementing the Curriculum

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 reorganisation and, sometimes, to modify teaching practices. The successful implementation of *Treasures New and Old,* as with any new syllabus or 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 executive and, particularly, the Religious Education Coordinator. Resource material to support the executive and the REC in this role of leading educational change has been developed and published in the *Implementation Support Document*.
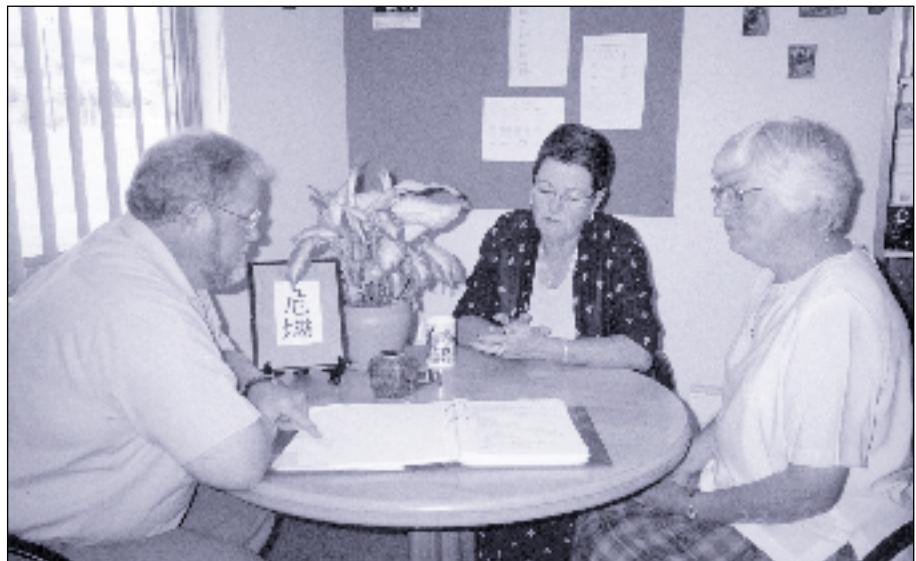
Pastors have a vital contribution to make in ensuring that the content of the Archdiocesan Religious Education curriculum is appropriately included in the Religious Education program. They could support the implementation by participating with staff in developing the program, discussing implementation with principal, REC and staff, and advising teachers with regards to doctrinal and moral questions.

Curriculum documents provide directions and support to school executives and staff in generating systematic and comprehensive school policies and programs. Support may be obtained from CEO Religious Education/Curriculum Officers who are available to work with individuals and groups on the implementation of the curriculum and appropriate local adaptation of the syllabus.

Each school is expected to develop its own overall Religious Education policy, curriculum map or general program within the framework provided by *Treasures New and Old*, the Archdiocesan Religious Education Guidelines. This translates the syllabus 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

ARCHDIOCESAN SYLLABUS
Outlines the courses of study with desired outcomes and content structured in stages

SCHOOL POLICY & PROGRAM
Developed to translate the Archdiocesan syllabus into the setting of the particular school

UNIT OUTLINES
Resources developed to assist teachers to implement the syllabus

CLASSROOM PRACTICE
The teachers' professional application of the school policy or program assisted by the unit outlines & informed by evaluation

The interrelatedness of the different elements of implementation is represented in Figure 5.1. The syllabus is supported by each school's policy/program which translates it into the local context. The syllabus also generates unit outlines which assist teachers to implement its provisions. The school policy/program 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 units themselves.

Methods and formats of planning and recording teaching and learning activities differ markedly between primary and secondary schools. Determining how such records are maintained to meet NSW Board of Studies, ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies, and Canberra and Goulburn Archdiocesan requirements 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.

The *Implementation Support Document* has been designed to assist the implementation process. It focuses on three phases of the process: Introduction, Early Implementation and Continuation. It is based on the conviction that educational change is most likely to be effective when staff members accept the challenge as a learning community, valuing each other, respecting different ideas, sharing strategies and resources as they move together through a cycle of planning, teaching, assessing and evaluating.

5.2 The Religious Education Syllabus and Unit Outlines

The Syllabus

The mandated syllabus is structured around seven (eight in secondary) organising strands. These run through the six stages of schooling across Years K - 12. A central outcome and a limited number of key concepts are identified for each strand at every stage. The syllabus is provided in the *Treasures New and Old* curriculum folders and on the Catholic Education Office website - hhttp://www.ceo.cangoul.catholic.edu.au
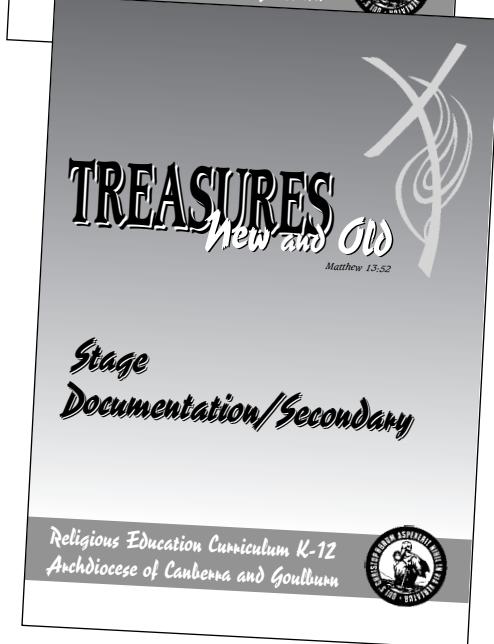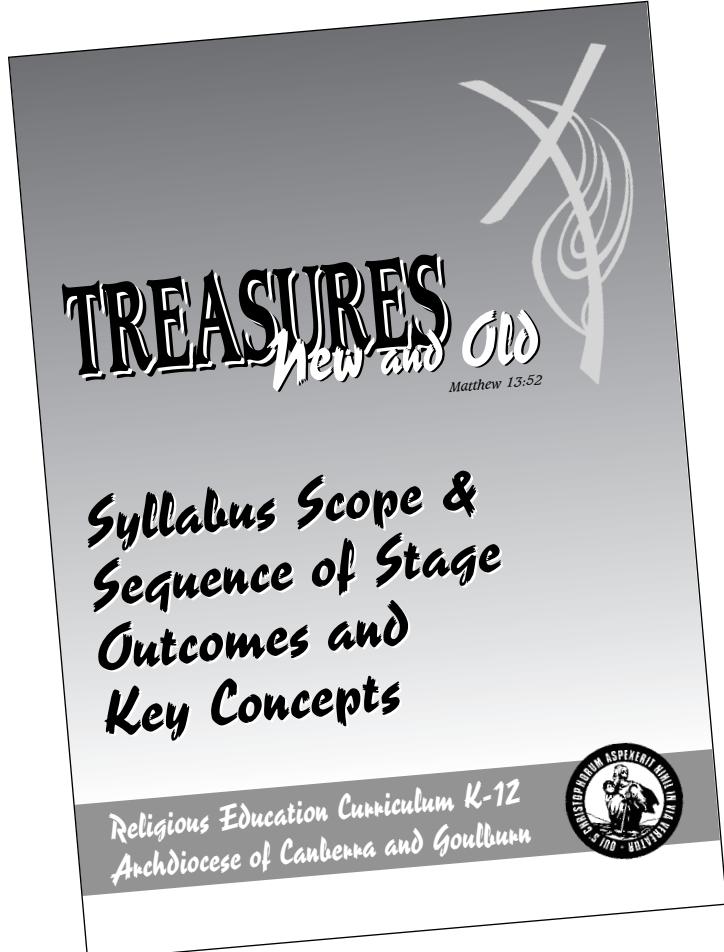
Unit Outlines

The unit outlines developed to accompany the syllabus are provided as resources. Each one describes the unit focus, links unit outcomes to stage outcome/s and key 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 teaching, learning and assessment strategies and resources.

It is assumed that teachers will adapt and develop 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', teachers may also develop their own units, faithful to the spirit and intentions of the syllabus. Such professional initiative is strongly encouraged.

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

Sample Programs

The Unit Outlines that are provided include some Sample Programs. The Sample Program 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 sample programs will be posted on the CEO website. It is anticipated that teachers will adapt these sample programs reflecting their own teaching style and responding to the needs, interests and abilities of students.

'I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth.'
1 Corinthians 3:6

Unit Outline: Cover Page

Photography and artwork
provided by schools of the Archdiocese.

Unit Title

Unit Coding
The first number designates the stage for which this unit has been developed. There are six stages from K to 12.

Stage 1: Years K-2
Stage 2: Years 3,4
Stage 3: Years 5,6
Stage 4: Years 7,8
Stage 5: Years 9,10
Stage 6: Preliminary Year (Year 11)
and HSC Year (Year 12)

The second number or first letter/s (e.g. P or HSC) designates the Year for which this Unit is recommended. Schools may develop the unit for implementation in other Years within the Stage.

The last letter in the code is C or E. It designates the unit as either a Core unit or as an Enrichment unit. Enrichment units may be studied as independent units or aspects of their content incorporated within Core units.

The last number in the code designates the sequence recommended for teaching within a particular Year. The proposed sequencing of Secondary Core units, is responsive to the celebration of the Church's liturgical year.

Initiation and Belonging

Religious Education Curriculum K-12
Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn
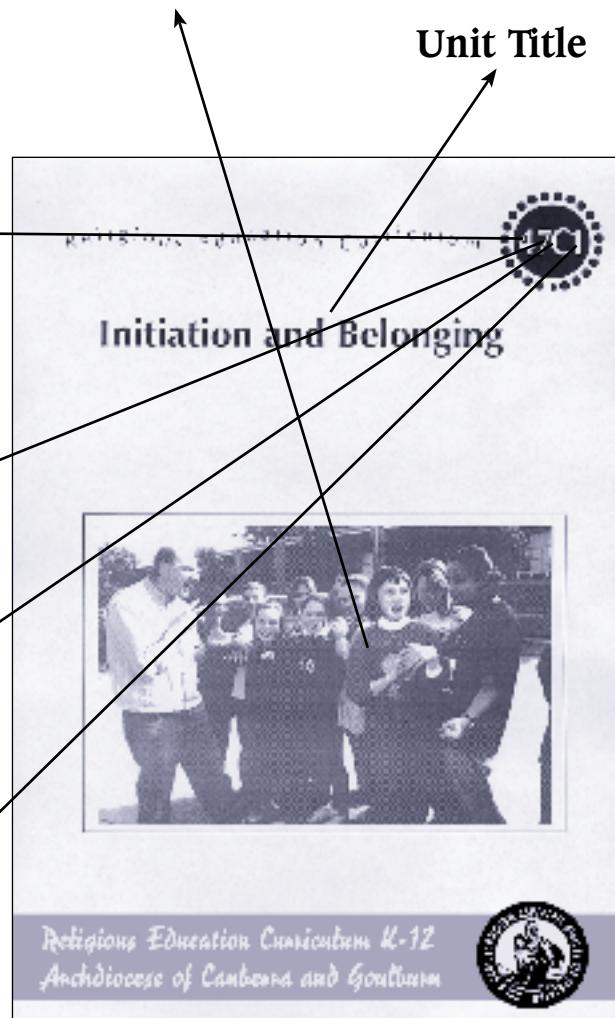
4	7	C	1
Stage 4	Year 7	Core unit	First unit studied

The Writing Process
Unit Outlines were written by Archdiocesan Religious Education teachers in response to the Syllabus Stage Outcomes and Key Concepts. These were edited by members of the CEO Religious Education Team. Unit Outlines were then offered for theological review by Australian Catholic University advisers before being submitted to the Censor for *Nihil Obstat* and to the Archbishop 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.

Unit Outline: Unit Description

Stage Outcomes

The stage outcome/s form this unit's major content strand/s. For example, the Christian Life content strand has been identified as the major content strand for this unit. The Stage 2 outcome has been included to assist the teacher to relate stage and unit outcomes.

Unit Outcomes
- are limited in number
- have been developed within a Shared Christian Praxis framework.
- commence with italicised descriptors that identify what students should be able to know, do and value as a result of effective teaching and learning. Teachers will further develop outcomes in the planning and teaching process.

Key Concepts
- Relevant key concepts from **unit's major** content strand/s
- Relevant key concepts from **unit's minor** content strand/s

These concepts are listed under content strands and stages in the syllabus.

Unit Focus

This describes the essential content and processes of the unit.

R.E.GUIDELINES: UNIT OUTLINE   24C12

Year 4
UNIT TITLE: Advent Year C: Prepare   DURATION: 2-3 weeks

UNIT FOCUS

This unit will explore the Advent Readings for Year C. Students will be led to see Advent as a time of preparation for the celebration of Christmas, that challenges us to renew our commitment to being a bearer of Christ's love to others.

STAGE OUTCOME

Students express an understanding and appreciation of Christian Life as following Jesus and making loving choices.

UNIT OUTCOMES

By the end of this unit students should be able to:
1. explore their own and others' ideas and experience related to challenge, preparation and commitment and relate to the celebration of the season of Advent.
2. explain the significance of John the Baptist as a prophet who prepared the way for the coming of Jesus.
3. consider the value of committing themselves to some Advent challenges that prepare for the celebration of Christmas.

KEY CONCEPTS

GOD
4. God calls us to reach out in love to each other
PRAYER
6. God's faithfulness and goodness are recalled and celebrated in many ways throughout the liturgical seasons
SCRIPTURE
1. The stories from the Scriptures are intended to make us think and reflect about our lives
CHURCH
1. The Church celebrates Jesus' life, death and resurrection in the many feasts and seasons of the liturgical year
CHRISTIAN LIFE
2. We are challenged to reflect on the ways we respond to God's love for us
3. As followers of Jesus we make loving choices and take responsibility for our actions

CURRICULUM LINKS

e.g. **HSIE/SOSE**
Stage 2 Strand: Cultures
Sub-Strand: Cultural Diversity
CUS 2.4 Describes different viewpoints, ways of living, languages and belief systems in a variety of communities.

Students will learn about:
• traditional and religious stories about significant people and entities of major world religions
• major customs and celebrations of religious and other community groups

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Curriculum Links

This section identifies relevant content and processes in other curriculum areas and courses to assist in the process of integrating faith and life, religion and culture. It should serve as a curriculum planning resource for both Religious Education teachers and teachers of other Key Learning Areas.

Unit Outline: Context and Links

Syllabus Context
This section identifies relevant past and future learning in a stage-based spiral curriculum.

Key Understandings
The key understandings identify the main learning of the unit outline.

Student Context
This section, drawing on the wisdom of experienced practitioners and research, identifies relevant student characteristics and life experience. Questions are included to inspire a planning process faithful to the experience, needs and background of students

Scripture
The passages identified are proposed for study and prayer. Passages have been selected to ensure an appropriate range and sequencing of Scripture K-12. The New Revised Standard Version (NRSV) of the Bible is the reference for Scripture.

Related Units from the previous Stage

Related Units from this Stage

Related Units from the next Stage

SYLLABUS CONTEXT

Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
1KC6 A waiting time	24C12 Prepare	35C7 God is with us
11C8 Getting ready for Jesus	23C8 Making Promises	35C8 Mary the mother to be
12C8 waiting for Jesus	24C10 Prophets for Advent	35C9 Why me?
24C11 Be a joyful messenger	36C8 Wake up and be ready	

KEY UNDERSTANDINGS
Advent is a time of preparation for Christmas.
During Advent we reflect on and rejoice in the coming of Jesus.
John the Baptist preached preparation for the coming of the Messiah.

STUDENT CONTEXT
What are the key understandings of this unit?
Why am I teaching this unit to these students at this time using these strategies and resources?
• Who are the students?
• What do I want them to know and be able to do?

SCRIPTURE
Mt 3:1-6 The preaching of John the Baptist
In due course John the Baptist appeared; he preached in the wilderness of Judaea and this was his message: ' Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is close at hand'. This was the man the prophet Isaiah spoke of when he said:
A voice cries in the wilderness:
Prepare a way for the Lord,
make his paths straight.
This man John wore a garment made of camel-hair with a leather belt round his waist, and his food was locusts and wild honey. Then Jerusalem and all Judaea and the whole Jordan district made their way to him, and as they were baptised by him in the river Jordan they confessed their sins.

Mt 3: 13-17 Jesus is baptised
Then Jesus appeared: he came for Galilee to the Jordan to be baptised by John. John tried to dissuade him. 'It is I who need baptism from you' he said 'and yet you come to me!' But Jesus replied, 'Leave it like this for the time being; it is fitting that we should, in this way, do all that righteousness demands.' At this, John gave in to him.
As soon as Jesus was baptised he came up from the water, and suddenly the heavens opened and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and coming down on him. And a voice spoke from heaven, 'This is my Son, the Beloved; my favour rests on him.'

Lk 7:18-30 The Baptist's question. Jesus commends him
The disciples of John gave him all this news, and John, summoning two of his disciples, sent them to the Lord to ask, 'Are you the one who is to come, or must we wait for someone else?' When the men reached Jesus they said, 'John the Baptist has sent us to you, to ask, "Are you the one who is to come or have we to wait for someone else?" It was just then that he cured many people of diseases and afflictions and of evil spirits, and gave the gift of sight to many who were blind. Then he gave the messengers their answer, 'Go back and tell John what you have seen and heard: the blind see again, the lame walk, lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised to life, the Good News is proclaimed to the poor and happy is the man who does not lose faith in me'.
When John's messengers had gone he began to talk to the people about John, "What did you go into the wilderness to see? A reed swaying in the breeze? No? Then what did you go to see? A man dressed in fine clothes? Oh no, those who go in for fine clothes and live luxuriously are to be found at court! Then what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I tell you, and much more than a prophet: he is the one of whom the scripture says:
See, I am going to send my messenger before you;
he will prepare the way before you.
I tell you, of all the children born of women, there is no greater than John; yet the least in the kingdom of God is greater than he is. All the people who heard him and the tax collectors to, acknowledged God's plan by accepting baptism from John; but by refusing baptism from him the Pharisees and the lawyers had thwarted what God had in mind for them.

Unit Outline:
Theological and Educational Background

This section presents a theological summary for the content focus of the unit. It is referenced to Scripture, Church documents and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.
References to teacher backgrounds texts, in addition to the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, may also be included.

Catechism of the Catholic Church
References are made to the relevant sections from the Catechism related to this unit focus. It is recommended that teachers consult the Catechism as part of their preparation for teaching the unit.
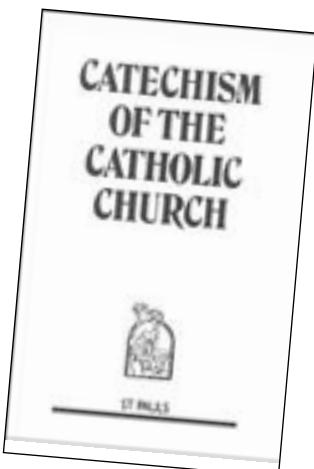
Unit Outline: Teaching, Learning and Assessment Strategies

Teaching, learning and assessment strategies are presented in a generic form and are supported by a resource book in which a summary of effective strategies are presented and referenced to the movements of Shared Christian Praxis. Teachers are encouraged to develop class programs following the Shared Christian Praxis landscape format as exemplified below. It is important to note that the Focusing Activity is a key part of the Shared Christian Praxis approach.

FOCUSING ACTIVITY: Shared meal to celebrate a special event, for example, our class working as a team. Sit in a circle, pass around bread, cheese, juice, grapes, and let children talk quietly among themselves while quiet music is playing.				
Movement One	**Movement Two**	**Movement Three**	**Movement Four**	**Movement Five**
Looking at Life	*Sharing Our Life*	*Knowing Our Faith*	*Making the Faith Our Own*	*Living Our Faith*
1 Children use De Bono's Hats – Yellow (good points), Red (feelings) – to reflect on focusing activity. Think /pair/share about times in their own life experience when they have shared a meal to celebrate. 3 Place ideas from 1 to 2 on a chart. This chart will be added to throughout the topic.	2 Interview family members about what they like best about sharing a meal together. Children bring ideas to No. 3 4 Divide class into two groups. *Group :1* Read *Rose Blanche*. Rose shared bread with those who had none. It highlights a different kind of shared meal. Think/pair/share – What is a shared meal? (white hat) How does the book *Rose Blanche* make me feel? (red hat). *Group 2:* Read *Let the Celebrations Begin.* It highlights a different kind of nourishment. *Both Groups:* Perform tableau. (See appendices). 6 Teacher chooses one image from each of the drama group and invites them to freeze. Think/pair/share: How is Road to Emmaus similar to the other two we have heard? Add any new ideas to chart.	5 Scripture: The Road to Emmaus (Lk.24:13-35) Teacher retells scripture in own words. As retelling, choose some children and mould them into a frozen image which captures the message of the story. Focus particularly on verse 32 – Eucharist should be life changing. 7 Focus on symbol of Bread Children in groups – (i) Rose Blanche, (ii) Road to Emmaus, (iii) Last Supper. What does bread signify in these stories? Brainstorm ideas and present to whole class. Using above ideas ask children to focus specifically on Jesus as the bread of life. Make chart: We show that Jesus is our bread of life when we... act justly, feed the hungry, are kind to others. (See appendices). 8 Tell children background about the origin of Eucharist from *Sharing Our Story*. Discuss together how this fits in with our chart. Make a new chart: In the Eucharist.... we celebrate, we are nourished.	9 Horse shoe debate: Is our experience of Eucharist always like this? Why/Why not? What needs to change? (See appendices). * *Assessment* - anecdotal notes taken regarding the ideas shared and how well children link with life experience.	10 Children think about all that has been learnt so far, especially the information which is on the charts. What is important to them as an 11 year old? What symbols express how they are feeling? In groups, children design their own liturgy of Eucharist to be used in class. * *Assessment* – symbols used, red hat feelings expressed, team work. 11 Groups roster themselves for class prayer and whole class participates in liturgy. After each celebration, children share their red hat feelings. * *Assessment* – written reflections in portfolios. 12 Publish the children's reflections about what they have learnt.

(Melissa King, Word in Life, 46, 2)

Unit Outline: Assessment Strategies

Self Assessment
Some suggested formal and informal strategies that involve students in reflecting on and taking some responsibility for their own learning.

Peer Assessment
Some suggested formal and informal strategies that promote cooperation in and shared reflection on learning.

Teacher Assessment
Some suggested formal and informal strategies that focus on the growth of individuals and groups of students towards greater understanding, appreciation and competence and that increase the effectiveness of both teaching and learning.

Unit Outline: Resources

Community resources
These include parents and other family members, parish priest and community, community organisations and agencies, representatives of other religions, churches and other sacred places, museums and art galleries, commercial educational groups, visiting speakers.

Audio-visual / video resources
Recommended slide packs, slide/sound kits and videos related to the unit content and theme. Most are available for hire or purchase from CEO Sydney, Leichhardt and the Archdiocesan CEP Resource Centre and Library at Curtin, ACT.

Teacher resources
These include reference texts and educational texts which provide teaching and learning strategies and resources.

Student resources
These are generally commercial student texts bearing an *Imprimatur.*

Literature
Recommended literature for primary students with themes directly related to the unit content and themes.

Music
Recommended secular and religious songs and hymns for use with primary students with themes directly related to the unit content and themes.

World Wide Web / Internet
Recommended Internet sites containing information relevant to the unit content or themes. These are regularly updated on the CEO website. (http://www.ceo.cangoul.catholic.edu.au)

Unit Outline: Sample Program

General
The Sample Program models **one way** in which the Unit Outline could be implemented. Teachers wishing to trial the Sample Programs provided will need to review, adapt and/or develop the strategies and their sequence for use with different classes. With the implementation of the curriculum, further Sample Programs modelling effective teaching and learning within an outcomes-based and Shared Christian Praxis framework will be posted on the CEO website.

5.3 Important Considerations

Importance of adequate and appropriate resources.

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 RE/ Curriculum 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.

Significance of 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 Board of Studies course, *Studies of Religion* and the ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies 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 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. These include CEO and Board of Studies curriculum support documents. (cf. *Studies of Religion* Support Document; *Contemporary Issues* produced by Canberra and Goulburn; Diocesan policy on HIV/AIDS education).

Protocols of 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 Archdiocesan Religious Education curriculum, Religious Education Coordinators should seek the advice of CEO Religious Education/Curriculum Officers and the consent of the Head, Religious Education and Educational Services. Where schools are considering significant changes to approved courses, permission must be sought from the approving authority i.e. NSW Board of Studies; ACT Board of Senior Secondary Studies.

Protocols for visiting priests 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.

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Church Documents and References

Bible

1993   *The Harper Collins Study Bible : New Revised Standard Version*, Harper Collins Publishers: London

Church Documents of the Last Twenty-Five Years

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)*

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

Mary

1974   *Devotion to Blessed Virgin Mary (Marialis cultus)*

1987   *The Mother of the Redeemer (Redemptoris Mater)*

1988   *Behold your Mother*

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)*

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*

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 paenitentia)*

1988   *The preparation and celebration of Easter feasts (Paschales solemnitatis)*

1989   *On the sacred liturgy*

1994   *The Roman liturgy and inculturation*

1998   *On keeping the Lord's Day holy (Dies Domini)*

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* Australian Bishops Conference

1996   *Preparation for the sacrament of marriage*

Christian Life, Morality

1968   *On Christian Life (Humane 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 And Peace

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*

1987 *On social concerns (Solicitudo rei socialis)*

1987 *What have you done to your homeless brother?*

1988 *The Church and racism: Towards a more fraternal society*

1988 *The Church and Aborigines in the bicentenary*
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

1990 *Sharing the country through understanding and respect*
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

1992 *A new partnership with our Indigenous People*
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

1991 *On the hundredth anniversary of 'Rerum novarum' (Centesimus annus)*

1992 *Common wealth for the common good*
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference Statement on the distribution of wealth in Australia

1992 *Child protection and child sexual abuse* Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

1993 *Native Title – an opportunity for reconciliation*
Australian Catholic Bishops Conference

1993 *For the celebration of the World Day of Peace*

World Religions / Ecumenism

1988 *Sects, cults and new religious movements*

1993 *Directory for application of principles and norms of ecumenism*

1995 *That they may be one (Ut unum sint)*

Evangelisation, Catechesis and Education

1975 *On evangelisation in the modern world (Evangelii nuntiandi)*

1976 *We preach Jesus Christ as Lord,* Australian Bishops Conference

1977 *The Catholic school*

1979 *Catechesis in our time (Catechesi tradendae)*

1982 *Lay Catholics in schools: Witnesses to faith*

1988 *The religious dimension of education in a Catholic school*

1995 *The Gospel of life (Evangelium vitae)*
1997 *The general directory for catechesis*

1997 *The Catholic school on the threshold of the third millennium*

Some Document Collections, Commentaries and Reference Works

Australian Bishops Conference Education Committee. 1990. *The Word dwells among us: A summary of Catholic beliefs and practices for teachers in schools and parishes,* Burwood, Vic: Collins Dove

Australian Bishops Conference Education Committee. 1999. *Australian religious education - Facing the challenges:* a discussion on evangelisation, catechesis and religious education questions raised for parishes and Catholic schools by the *General Directory of Catechesis*, NCEC

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Komonchak, Joseph et al., (eds.) 1987. *The new dictionary of theology,* Collegeville, Minn: Liturgical Press

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Newport, Mary (ed.) 1997. *Australian Catholic bishops' statements 1985-1995,* Strathfield: St Paul's

1991   *The liturgy documents: a parish resource,* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications

1996   *The catechetical documents: a parish resource,* Chicago: Liturgy Training Publications

1996   *New Catholic encyclopedia.* Washington DC: The Catholic University of America

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Catholic Education Office, Adelaide. 1997. *Doctrinal scope and sequence for use in South Australian schools R-12,* Torrensville: Adelaide Catholic Education

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Further Teacher References and Resource Lists

Go to CEO website http://www. ceo. cangoul. catholic. edu. au

or   http://www. ceo. parra. catholic. edu. au

Appendix B: Glossary

ASSESSMENT	The process of gathering and interpreting information about student learning. This is done for a variety of purposes.
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.
CONSCIENCE	The human capacity to evaluate and choose a 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, Scriptures, 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.
ECUMENISM	The efforts by the Roman Catholic community and other Christian churches to work toward full unity among all baptised peoples in the world.
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.
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.

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 stages. In this curriculum there are unit outcomes as well as stage outcomes.
REIGN OF GOD	The dynamic process towards fulfilment of God's saving activity within all humanity and the universe.
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, revelatio, which means 'unveiling' or 'uncovering').

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.
STAGE	An arbitrary period in the developmental process of schooling. The thirteen years of schooling are divided into six stages.
SYLLABUS	A document which outlines a course of study. It usually includes aims, desired outcomes and content structured within years or stages.
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.
UNIT	An organisational arrangement designed to assist the teaching of the syllabus. Each unit has a title, a focus, unit outcomes that serve stage outcomes and key concepts, teaching/learning activities, sample program, references to Scripture, theology and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

Notes

TREASURES
New and Old

Matthew 13:52

Stage Documentation/Primary

Acknowledgements

TREASURES
New and Old
Matthew 13:52

- **Student Characteristics**
- **Teaching and Learning**
- **Curriculum Integration**

Stage One
Documentation

Stage One

Introduction

Treasures New and Old is structured around six stages of schooling.

Individual students differ considerably in their backgrounds, abilities and general characteristics. However, students in any particular stage share a developmental pattern and have much in common. One of the great challenges confronting the teacher is to provide learning experiences that are *developmentally appropriate*, responding to the emerging capacities of the students themselves.

This section provides a description of students in one particular stage of schooling. The descriptions it offers are, of necessity, quite general and should be used with some caution. Teachers would readily recognise that the stages overlap and that not all the observations made here would apply to every student in this stage.

For this reason, a summary of characteristics of the pre-school child and a synopsis of Stage 2 characteristics have been provided.

Teachers are invited to reflect on the content of this section in the light of their observations and knowledge of their own students. This reflection can form an essential basis for the selection of appropriate teaching and learning activities.

On Starting School

Children come to their first day of schooling from a wide range of cultural, religious and social backgrounds.

Differences in child-rearing practices, and the variety of child-care and pre-school provisions that families may have used, have all provided different kinds of learning experiences.

All children have passed through a period of rapid maturation in which they have acquired mobility, language, socially acceptable ways of expressing emotions and skills in relating to those around them. They have developed vitally important concepts about themselves and their own worth, about their families and about the world in general.

Learning has been fostered by imitation, manipulation, exploration and the asking of endless questions in the context of everyday family life, and through play which has included the impromptu dramatising of lived experiences. Most children have developed a love of story and their lives have been given structure by routines which on many occasions have taken on the elements of ritual.

While all of these have laid the foundation for religious education, the great precursor of religious faith has been a powerful orientation towards trust, love and acceptance fostered by the child's parents and other care-givers.

The Catholic school's task is to build on these experiences.

The Stage 1 Student (Kindergarten and Years 1-2)

In this period of early childhood, children are led by a natural curiosity to engage in a direct, hands-on exploration of their world, expressing themselves through talking, drawing, creating, moving and, above all, playing.

As they develop, they learn to separate fantasy from reality and to understand the meaning behind symbols. Social skills become more sophisticated and there is a progressive recognition of the significance and nature of rules and boundaries.

Social and Emotional Aspects

The movement from home to school, which marks the beginning of Stage 1, brings a number of significant challenges into the social and emotional lives of the children.

Teachers may reasonably expect their students to exhibit some of the following characteristics:
* displaying a predisposition to trust and thriving in a climate of acceptance and praise;

* focusing on themselves but becoming increasingly aware of the requirements of belonging to a class and group;

* accepting adult-imposed boundaries;

* imitating respected and powerful adults, as well as children;

* possessing a driving curiosity and a great capacity for awe and wonder;

* liking routines and rituals;

* struggling with the tension existing between a natural drive for independence and autonomy, on the one hand, and the need to retreat at times to positions of safety, reassurance and predictability, on the other;

* resolving many internal problems through play, fantasy and the imagination.

Intellectual Aspects

Children's reasoning ability takes a significant step forward during this stage which marks a gradual movement away from the world of the pre-school child where fantasy and an extremely ego-centric perspective exercise important influences on children's thinking.

Teachers may expect Stage 1 students to exhibit some of the following characteristics:
* a growing competence in the application of such intellectual skills as sorting, classifying, combining, comparing and establishing relationships between objects and ideas;

* improving language competence by using language in different contexts and for different purposes;

- learning through play, imitation, exploration, interaction with others and the manipulation of solid objects;

- growing in understanding of cause and effect, and gradually mastering the art of sequencing ideas;

- developing the capacity to think symbolically and to use symbols, including words and images, in communication;

- focusing on one aspect of something at a time; thinking very literally.

Faith/Moral Judgement Aspects

School builds on the religious experiences of the home, including the pre-images of God and the concepts of *good* and *bad, right* and *wrong* that are taught by various child-rearing practices.

Teachers may expect Stage 1 students to exhibit some of the following characteristics:
- imitating the behaviours and expressing the attitudes of the significant adults in their lives;

- displaying a vivid imagination which gives rise to lifelong religious images and concepts; incorporating images of God from loving and powerful adults, and from stories and symbols;

- seeing rules governing behaviour as 'owned' by adults who are the arbiters of what is right and wrong;

- moving progressively to greater clarity about what is real as opposed to what is make-believe; this movement giving rise to an increased capacity for religious understanding.

Implications for Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

1. In the effective teaching of R.E. one would expect to see a range of developmentally appropriate teaching and learning strategies. These include play (both in dramatic form and in manipulating materials), 'hands-on' experiences, experimentation, gathering and displaying information, sorting and classifying, connecting facts and ideas, expressing oneself by means of drawing, painting, constructing, modelling, role-playing, singing, dancing, and so on.

2. The integration of Religious Education with other learning areas is particularly appropriate at this stage. Such integration can focus on key concepts, processes, skills or values that cut across Key Learning Areas.

3. Story-telling is a powerful teaching strategy. It stimulates the children's imagination and can help them to form religious images that are appropriate to their age.

4. Stories and symbols should be allowed to make their own impact, touching the imagination without becoming too quickly 'rationalised' by logical explanations.

5. This is a particularly appropriate time for cultivating a sense of wonder and appreciation of a world that reflects the presence and goodness of God.

6. Plenty of opportunities should be provided for the children to work cooperatively and to develop skills of negotiating and planning.

7. Children can be encouraged to take some responsibility for their own learning by being given some choice in activities, or in the order in which they will complete set tasks.

8. At this stage, it is important to recognise the children's tendency to imitate the expressions and behaviour of significant people, especially teachers.

9. This is the time, too, for a strong response to the children's natural appreciation of rituals and symbols, and their liking for repetitive stories, poems, rhythmic sounds and movements.

Stage 1 in Context

Because individual differences amongst students are so great and stage descriptions must, of necessity, overlap, the following summary of Stage 2 is provided. Teachers may wish to consult the expanded description of student characteristics for this stage.

Stage 2 (Years 3 and 4)

Again, the dominant form of learning is hands-on experience: collecting, matching, contrasting, grouping, predicting, drawing conclusions. Language, a major 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.

Consider Your Own Students

1. Which of the *characteristics* listed for this stage are most obvious amongst the children you are teaching?

2. Which characteristics do you consider most significant *in relation to teaching and learning in Religious Education?*

3. What particular *implications* seem to you to be most valid and useful?

4. What *specific teaching practices* or arrangements flow naturally from the implications you have identified?

TREASURES
New and Old

Matthew 13:52

- *Student Characteristics*
- *Teaching and Learning*
- *Curriculum Integration*

Stage Two
Documentation

Stage Two

Introduction

Treasures New and Old is structured around six stages of schooling.

Individual students differ considerably in their backgrounds, abilities and general characteristics. However, students in any particular stage share a developmental pattern and have much in common. One of the great challenges confronting the teacher is to provide learning experiences that are *developmentally appropriate*, responding to the emerging capacities of the students themselves.

This section provides a description of students in one particular stage of schooling. The descriptions it offers are, of necessity, quite general and should be used with some caution. Teachers would readily recognise that the stages overlap and that not all the observations made here would apply to every student in this stage.

For this reason, a synopsis of the stage on either side of the one being addressed has been provided.

Teachers are invited to reflect on the content of this section in the light of their observations and knowledge of their own students. This reflection can form an essential basis for the selection of appropriate teaching and learning activities.

The Stage 2 Student (Years 3-4)

As children move through this stage their understanding of themselves, their community and the wider world expands. They are less self-focussed than previously and enjoy working collaboratively.

They progress gradually beyond the fantasy and make-believe that typifies much of the mental world of the younger child. At the same time, play continues to be an important activity for promoting growth and learning, stimulating them to dramatise, build, solve problems, express themselves, create structures and exercise their imagination.

Social and Emotional Aspects

This stage sees a strengthening of the influence of the peer group as children clarify their identity with increasing consciousness of their membership in a particular age cohort.

Teachers may expect Stage 2 students to exhibit some of the following characteristics:

- being active, talkative and eager to work in groups;

- becoming more vulnerable to the opinions of others; valuing a 'best friend' as a source of help and loyalty;

- gaining self-esteem through success and mastery of tasks;

- still depending on adult approval and responding to praise and acceptance;

- displaying an increasing self-awareness and an ability to reflect on behaviours and achievement.

Intellectual Aspects

Most children's reasoning ability takes an important step forward early in this stage.

Teachers may expect Stage 2 students to exhibit the following characteristics:

- becoming more systematic in thinking, more analytical;

- displaying a new awareness of individual differences, a greater capacity for anticipating consequences;

- still being very literal but developing in ability to understand different levels of meaning;

- having a better understanding of time and the sequence of events; Scripture stories can take on a new significance.

Faith/Moral Judgement Aspects

At this stage, children seek to clarify for themselves the distinctions between what is real (fact) and what is not (fantasy). They readily question and ask for proof. 'Is that true?' 'Did it really happen that way?' "How could that happen?'

Teachers may expect Stage 2 students to exhibit some of the following characteristics:

- having a new understanding of rules and developing a moral framework that stresses fairness and equal treatment; being able to respond to the challenge: 'How would you feel if someone did that to you?'; judging moral responsibility on the intention rather than the outcome: 'He didn't mean to do it.'

- displaying an understanding of time, the sequence of events, and consequences which enables the student to better judge his or her own motivation and responsibility;

- taking on the stories and practices of the community; a 'tribal' Catholicism;

- beginning to understand that individual stories can be parts of a larger story which helps one make sense of life and the world.

Implications for Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

1. Highest priority should be given to the creation of a classroom climate where children work together in an atmosphere of safety and respect. Their strength of 'ownership' is increased when they have classroom responsibilities; for example, setting up displays.

2. Students need guidance in planning, making decisions and working in groups.

3. Students can be helped to deepen their understanding of the reasonableness of rules that govern human behaviour by being involved in the establishment of the rules of the classroom.

4. Appropriate liturgies can be extremely educative. Their educational value is enhanced when students are involved in preparation of the sacred space, music, prayers, readings and so on.

5. This is a stage when story-telling and story-reading can be done with great effect. Care should be taken, however, not to trivialise or sensationalise very significant stories or to present Jesus as a magician.

6. Routines and rituals of classroom prayer, story hearing and quiet time for reflection are all very appropriate.

7. The integration of Religious Education with other learning areas is particularly appropriate. This can focus on key concepts, processes, skills or values that cut across Key Learning Areas.

8. A readiness to place oneself in another's shoes can be fostered through discussions of everyday experiences, or of the lives of fictional characters. Children can role-play some events that reflect tension, disappointment, success, conflict or joy in attempts to appreciate perspectives different from their own.

9. Teaching strategies that are effective in other learning areas are also appropriate in R.E. These include those which develop skills in: researching, communicating according to purpose and audience, solving problems, making judgements and informed choices, responding creatively, working independently and working cooperatively.

Stage 2 in context

Because individual differences amongst students are so great and stage descriptions must, of necessity, overlap, the following summaries are provided. Teachers may find it relevant to consult the expanded description of students provided for these stages.

Stage 1 (Kindergarten to Year 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.

Stage 3 (Years 5 and 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 significantly enhanced by mastery of tasks.

Consider Your Own Students

1. Which of the *characteristics* listed for this stage are most obvious amongst the children you are teaching?

2. Which characteristics do you consider most significant *in relation to teaching and learning in Religious Education?*

3. What particular *implications* seem to you to be most valid and useful?

4. What *specific teaching practices* or arrangements flow naturally from the implications you have identified?

TREASURES
New and Old

Matthew 13:52

- *Student Characteristics*
- *Teaching and Learning*
- *Curriculum Integration*

Stage Three
Documentation

Stage Three

Introduction

Treasures New and Old is structured around six stages of schooling.

Individual students differ considerably in their backgrounds, abilities and general characteristics. However, students in any particular stage share a developmental pattern and have much in common. One of the great challenges confronting the teacher is to provide learning experiences that are *developmentally appropriate*, responding to the emerging capacities of the students themselves.

This section provides a description of students in one particular stage of schooling. The descriptions it offers are, of necessity, quite general and should be used with some caution. Teachers would readily recognise that the stages overlap and that not all the observations made here would apply to every student in this stage.

For this reason, a synopsis of the stage on either side of the one being addressed has been provided.

Teachers are invited to reflect on the content of this section in the light of their observations and knowledge of their own students. This reflection can form an essential basis for the selection of appropriate teaching and learning activities.

The Stage 3 Student (Years 5-6)

By Stage 3, children see themselves as members of a community that extends well beyond their family and immediate surroundings. They have some understanding of the notions of other times, other places and other kinds of societies. Their social skills are developing and they can manage increasing responsibility. Value judgements are increasingly influenced by peers.

The children gradually become more capable of logical and abstract thinking which brings with it a greater understanding of consequences and an increased ability to justify assertions and opinions.

All of this has major implications for Religious Education.

Social and Emotional Aspects

The influence of their peers provides the Stage 3 students with a stepping stone into a wider world of friendship groups, teams, clubs and 'collectives' of various kinds. They become increasingly less dependent on adults and come to rely more on peers for support and for the sharing of interests.

Teachers may expect Stage 3 students to exhibit some of the following characteristics:

- looking for adults, other than (and as well as) their parents, with whom they can identify;

- being more self-motivated but tending to lose interest if blamed or discouraged; self-esteem enhanced by the mastery of tasks;

- enjoying stories of past and present events;

- some of them developing characteristics of puberty; Stage 3 teachers need to recognise these, when and if they occur, as predictable and normal:
  - significant physical, emotional, social and intellectual changes;
  - concerns with own identity;
  - mood swings;
  - conflict with authority figures.

(For a further development of this, see Stage 4 Student Characteristics.)

Intellectual Aspects

This stage witnesses noteworthy developments in skills of reasoning and analysis. These are observable in the following characteristics:

1. being able to deal with conflicting concepts at the one time (e.g. students may be able to explain an event scientifically as well as understanding and using a poetic or allegorical interpretation);

2. generalising beyond specific details and understanding the links between cause and effect;

3. questioning the validity of opinions offered by adults;

4. having some sense of history without this capacity being fully developed.

Faith/Moral Judgement Aspects

Developing intellectual skills and social awareness leads to more sophisticated understanding in the areas of faith and moral reasoning.

Teachers may observe some of the following characteristics:

1.

1. using the underlying motive or intention as a basis for judging the rightness or wrongness of an action;

2. adopting and defending the codes of behaviour of the immediate family or social group rather than trying to apply universal principles;

3. questioning inconsistencies in the beliefs and behaviour of adults;

4. having a strong sense of 'fairness' which may give rise to argument and resentment;

5. developing a more profound empathy with others.

Implications for Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

1. Students should be able to use the processes of inquiry with more precision as they observe, predict, establish and test hypotheses, and reflect on what they have learnt. In practical terms, they can plan questions for interviews, make systematic observations during excursions, gather and organise evidence from print materials, summarise and present conclusions.

2. The capacity to understand different points of view and see situations from different angles can be capitalised upon. Students can explore local issues and questions of responsibility, consider prejudice and its effects, and examine certain social structures and the effects of laws and customs.

3. The interdependence of people, what human beings have in common as well as the rich diversity of individuals and cultures, can be fruitfully studied.

4. By careful attention to group processes in R.E. lessons, students can be helped to communicate their feelings constructively, to manage their interactions with others, and to be open to different points of view and means of expression.

5. This is a very appropriate stage for the communal nature of Catholic life and worship to be explored. Students can appropriately study how their parish functions, the different backgrounds and stories of people in the local Church community, and the international character of the Church.

6. Students can be helped develop skills in decision-making: clarifying intention, reviewing evidence, considering short and long-term consequences and setting goals. This can be accompanied by increased responsibility in managing time.

7. The integration of Religious Education with other learning areas is particularly appropriate. This can focus on key concepts, processes, skills or values that cut across subject divisions.

8. Teaching strategies that are effective in other learning areas are also appropriate in R.E. These include strategies which develop skills in researching, communicating according to purpose and audience, solving problems, making judgements and informed choices, responding creatively, working independently and working cooperatively.

9. Particularly towards the end of this stage, teachers should be sensitive to the early onset of puberty in some of the children. The Stage 4 Student Characteristics deals with the educational implications of this and may be useful to some Stage 3 teachers.

Stage 3 in Context
Because individual differences amongst students are so great and stage descriptions must, of necessity, overlap, the following summaries are provided. Teachers may wish to consult the expanded description of students provided for these stages.

Stage 2 (Years 3 and 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.

Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8)
During these early years of secondary school, 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 in 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.

Consider Your Own Students

1. Which of these *characteristics* listed for this stage are most obvious amongst the children you are teaching?

2. Which characteristics do you consider most significant *in relation to teaching and learning in Religious Education?*

3. What particular *implications* seem to you to be most valid and useful?

4. What *specific teaching practices* or arrangements flow naturally from the implications you have identified?

TREASURES
New and Old

Matthew 13:52

- *Student Characteristics*
- *Teaching and Learning*
- *Curriculum Integration*

Stage Four
Documentation

Stage Four

Introduction

Treasures New and Old is structured around six stages of schooling.

Individual students differ considerably in their backgrounds, abilities and general characteristics. However, students in any particular stage share a developmental pattern and have much in common. One of the great challenges confronting the teacher is to provide learning experiences that are *developmentally appropriate*, responding to the emerging capacities of the students themselves.

This section provides a description of students in one particular stage of schooling. The descriptions it offers are, of necessity, quite general and should be used with some caution. Teachers would readily recognise that the stages overlap and that not all the observations made here would apply to every student in this stage. Stage 4, for instance, coincides approximately with early adolescence and most of the observations made reflect that period of life. Some Stage 4 students, however, will not yet have reached adolescence; others will be developmentally well advanced.

For this reason, a synopsis of the stage on either side of the one being addressed has been provided.

Teachers are invited to reflect on the content of this section in the light of their observations and knowledge of their own students. This reflection can form an essential basis for the selection of appropriate teaching and learning activities.

The Stage 4 Student (Years 7-8)

The commencement of Stage 4 is marked by entry to the secondary school program. It also coincides, in very general terms, with the beginnings of adolescence and the gradual onset of the physical and emotional changes that mark this somewhat turbulent period of growth. The more secure world of late childhood is left behind.

Entry to high school brings new teachers, new learning arrangements, sometimes new friends, and a host of expectations. The natural curiosity that students bring to this can find an appropriate response in the R.E. classroom.

Social and Emotional Aspects

One of the great challenges of this period is the clarification of a concept of self.

During all stages of development, individuals focus on their identity, but for the adolescent the task is more complex. When the Stage 1 child asks 'Who am I?' the answer is found in name, place, family and those around him or her. The adolescent searches for more. 'What qualities do I possess?' 'What does it mean to be me?' 'How am I finding my identity in my relationships with others?'

Teachers may expect the Stage 4 students to exhibit some of the following as they move through this stage:

1. a certain moodiness and displays of temperamental behaviour; at times a student might show admirable responsibility and sense of purpose but then, quite unpredictably, demonstrate the opposite qualities;

2. some rebelliousness and lack of cooperation; a certain hostility towards some authority figures; a testing of the limits;

3. an exploring of different ways of behaving, with associated unpredictability;

4. a search for influential role models who may be found in popular and sporting culture as well as in the day-to-day school life of students;

5. an increasing reliance on the adolescent peer group which becomes the vital reference point and whose opinions and attitudes are often more highly valued than those of adults.

Intellectual Aspects

New intellectual capacities are in evidence during this stage as students move from the more concrete thinking of late childhood to the next stage of cognitive development.

By Year 7 many will exhibit a capacity to engage in formal and more abstract thinking by means of which they become more competent in developing hypotheses, making predictions, interpreting data, generalising and drawing conclusions. Of course, this is not always observable in all students, some of whom will be demonstrating characteristics of an earlier stage.

Teachers may expect Stage 4 students to exhibit some of the following:

- an increasing capacity to reflect on existing knowledge and to better understand cause and effect;

- greater ability to argue more systematically and to see situations from various points of view;

- a deeper understanding of how symbols can be connected to abstract concepts;

- an improved capacity to reflect on self; this cognitive ability has social and emotional consequences which are sometimes seen in self-consciousness, emotional vulnerability and a sense of frustration that may lead to apathy or aggression.

Faith/Moral Judgement Aspects

The growing capacity to reflect on self and to think in abstract terms, along with the importance of the adolescent peer group, contribute to development in moral reasoning and style of faith. This is seen in:

1. a capacity to comprehend images of God that go beyond the purely anthropomorphic and now embody particular qualities such as love, compassion, omnipresence;

2. a strong conformity with the expressed religious views of other adolescents within the particular faith group, as well as those of loved and respected adults;

3. an inclination to 'compartmentalise' — that is, to see the world from the viewpoint of different groups (family, school friends, neighbourhood friends, etc.) at different times;

4. stronger consideration of the intention of the person in determining the morality of an action.

Implication for Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

1. The natural curiosity and enthusiasm of students commencing secondary schooling can be responded to by Religious Education programs that are intellectually stimulating. The disappointed observation, 'We've done all this before!' craves a creative response.

2. Teachers can assist the natural movement from concrete to more abstract thinking by stimulating the development of critical thinking (e.g. identifying qualities or argument, separating facts from assertions, identifying authority for certain viewpoints).

3. The new intellectual awakening of students provides an increased sophistication in understanding time in history, in appreciating alternative viewpoints and in making judgements about competing values.

4. In this context, significant social issues can be appropriately explored: justice, equity, peace, the distribution of wealth, the balance of freedom and responsibility.

5. Teachers should be conscious of the images of God that are presented. The named qualities of God, for instance, will be understood in terms of how those qualities are experienced in others.

6. Recognition of the significance of the peer group will lead to opportunities being provided for cooperative learning, negotiation of roles and responsibilities, and group work generally.

7. The importance of the peer group makes it particularly difficult for adolescent students to work and to express themselves outside the frame of reference of the group.

8. At this stage particularly, students need teachers who are tolerant and supportive yet strong enough to provide boundaries and clear guidance.

9. The fragile self-esteem of many early adolescents can be strengthened by affirmation, encouragement and the active presence of strong role models.

10. The students' growing capacity to reflect on self and on experiences can be a major consideration in devising learning experiences in Religious Education.

Stage 4 in Context

Because individual differences amongst students are so great and stage descriptions must, of necessity, overlap, the following summaries are provided. Teachers may find it relevant to consult the expanded description of students provided for these stages.

Stage 3 (Years 5 and 6)

These children may be less spontaneous than previously 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 significantly enhanced by mastery of tasks.

Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10)

Confrontation and questioning characterise many students at this stage as they 'test the limits' and come to terms with massive physical and psychological change in their lives. The peer group remains very 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.

Consider Your Own Students

1. Which of these *characteristics* listed for this stage are most obvious amongst the children you are teaching?

2. Which characteristics do you consider most significant *in relation to teaching and learning in Religious Education?*

3. What particular *implications* seem to you to be most valid and useful?

4. What specific *teaching practices* or arrangements flow naturally from the implications you have identified?

Notes

TREASURES
New and Old

Matthew 13:52

Stage
Documentation/Secondary

Acknowledgements

TREASURES
New and Old

Matthew 13:52

- *Student Characteristics*
- *Teaching and Learning*
- *Curriculum Integration*

Stage Three
Documentation

Stage Three

Introduction

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Teachers are invited to reflect on the content of this section in the light of their observations and knowledge of their own students. This reflection can form an essential basis for the selection of appropriate teaching and learning activities.

The Stage 3 Student (Years 5-6)

By Stage 3, children see themselves as members of a community that extends well beyond their family and immediate surroundings. They have some understanding of the notions of other times, other places and other kinds of societies. Their social skills are developing and they can manage increasing responsibility. Value judgements are increasingly influenced by peers.

The children gradually become more capable of logical and abstract thinking which brings with it a greater understanding of consequences and an increased ability to justify assertions and opinions.

All of this has major implications for Religious Education.

Social and Emotional Aspects

The influence of their peers provides the Stage 3 students with a stepping stone into a wider world of friendship groups, teams, clubs and 'collectives' of various kinds. They become increasingly less dependent on adults and come to rely more on peers for support and for the sharing of interests.

Teachers may expect Stage 3 students to exhibit some of the following characteristics:

- looking for adults, other than (and as well as) their parents, with whom they can identify;

- being more self-motivated but tending to lose interest if blamed or discouraged; self-esteem enhanced by the mastery of tasks;

- enjoying stories of past and present events;

- some of them developing characteristics of puberty; Stage 3 teachers need to recognise these, when and if they occur, as predictable and normal:
  - significant physical, emotional, social and intellectual changes;
  - concerns with own identity;
  - mood swings;
  - conflict with authority figures.

  (For a further development of this, see Stage 4 Student Characteristics.)

Intellectual Aspects

This stage witnesses noteworthy developments in skills of reasoning and analysis. These are observable in the following characteristics:

1. being able to deal with conflicting concepts at the one time (e.g. students may be able to explain an event scientifically as well as understanding and using a poetic or allegorical interpretation);

2. generalising beyond specific details and understanding the links between cause and effect;

3. questioning the validity of opinions offered by adults;

4. having some sense of history without this capacity being fully developed.

Faith/Moral Judgement Aspects

Developing intellectual skills and social awareness leads to more sophisticated understanding in the areas of faith and moral reasoning.

Teachers may observe some of the following characteristics:

1. using the underlying motive or intention as a basis for judging the rightness or wrongness of an action;

2. adopting and defending the codes of behaviour of the immediate family or social group rather than trying to apply universal principles;

3. questioning inconsistencies in the beliefs and behaviour of adults;

4. having a strong sense of 'fairness' which may give rise to argument and resentment;

5. developing a more profound empathy with others.

Implications for Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

1. Students should be able to use the processes of inquiry with more precision as they observe, predict, establish and test hypotheses, and reflect on what they have learnt. In practical terms, they can plan questions for interviews, make systematic observations during excursions, gather and organise evidence from print materials, summarise and present conclusions.

2. The capacity to understand different points of view and see situations from different angles can be capitalised upon. Students can explore local issues and questions of responsibility, consider prejudice and its effects, and examine certain social structures and the effects of laws and customs.

3. The interdependence of people, what human beings have in common as well as the rich diversity of individuals and cultures, can be fruitfully studied.

4. By careful attention to group processes in R.E. lessons, students can be helped to communicate their feelings constructively, to manage their interactions with others, and to be open to different points of view and means of expression.

5. This is a very appropriate stage for the communal nature of Catholic life and worship to be explored. Students can appropriately study how their parish functions, the different backgrounds and stories of people in the local Church community, and the international character of the Church.

6. Students can be helped develop skills in decision-making: clarifying intention, reviewing evidence, considering short and long-term consequences and setting goals. This can be accompanied by increased responsibility in managing time.

7. The integration of Religious Education with other learning areas is particularly appropriate. This can focus on key concepts, processes, skills or values that cut across subject divisions.

8. Teaching strategies that are effective in other learning areas are also appropriate in R.E. These include strategies which develop skills in researching, communicating according to purpose and audience, solving problems, making judgements and informed choices, responding creatively, working independently and working cooperatively.

9. Particularly towards the end of this stage, teachers should be sensitive to the early onset of puberty in some of the children. The Stage 4 Student Characteristics deals with the educational implications of this and may be useful to some Stage 3 teachers.

Stage 3 in Context

Because individual differences amongst students are so great and stage descriptions must, of necessity, overlap, the following summaries are provided. Teachers may wish to consult the expanded description of students provided for these stages.

Stage 2 (Years 3 and 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.

Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8)

During these early years of secondary school, 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 in 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.

Consider Your Own Students

1. Which of these *characteristics* listed for this stage are most obvious amongst the children you are teaching?

2. Which characteristics do you consider most significant *in relation to teaching and learning in Religious Education?*

3. What particular *implications* seem to you to be most valid and useful?

4. What *specific teaching practices* or arrangements flow naturally from the implications you have identified?

TREASURES
New and Old

Matthew 13:52

- *Student Characteristics*
- *Teaching and Learning*
- *Curriculum Integration*

Stage Four
Documentation

Stage Four

Introduction

Treasures New and Old is structured around six stages of schooling.

Individual students differ considerably in their backgrounds, abilities and general characteristics. However, students in any particular stage share a developmental pattern and have much in common. One of the great challenges confronting the teacher is to provide learning experiences that are *developmentally appropriate*, responding to the emerging capacities of the students themselves.

This section provides a description of students in one particular stage of schooling. The descriptions it offers are, of necessity, quite general and should be used with some caution. Teachers would readily recognise that the stages overlap and that not all the observations made here would apply to every student in this stage. Stage 4, for instance, coincides approximately with early adolescence and most of the observations made reflect that period of life. Some Stage 4 students, however, will not yet have reached adolescence; others will be developmentally well advanced.

For this reason, a synopsis of the stage on either side of the one being addressed has been provided.

Teachers are invited to reflect on the content of this section in the light of their observations and knowledge of their own students. This reflection can form an essential basis for the selection of appropriate teaching and learning activities.

The Stage 4 Student (Years 7-8)

The commencement of Stage 4 is marked by entry to the secondary school program. It also coincides, in very general terms, with the beginnings of adolescence and the gradual onset of the physical and emotional changes that mark this somewhat turbulent period of growth. The more secure world of late childhood is left behind.

Entry to high school brings new teachers, new learning arrangements, sometimes new friends, and a host of expectations. The natural curiosity that students bring to this can find an appropriate response in the R.E. classroom.

Social and Emotional Aspects

One of the great challenges of this period is the clarification of a concept of self.

During all stages of development, individuals focus on their identity, but for the adolescent the task is more complex. When the Stage 1 child asks 'Who am I?' the answer is found in name, place, family and those around him or her. The adolescent searches for more. 'What qualities do I possess?' 'What does it mean to be me?' 'How am I finding my identity in my relationships with others?'

Teachers may expect the Stage 4 students to exhibit some of the following as they move through this stage:

1. a certain moodiness and displays of temperamental behaviour; at times a student might show admirable responsibility and sense of purpose but then, quite unpredictably, demonstrate the opposite qualities;

2. some rebelliousness and lack of cooperation; a certain hostility towards some authority figures; a testing of the limits;

3. an exploring of different ways of behaving, with associated unpredictability;

4. a search for influential role models who may be found in popular and sporting culture as well as in the day-to-day school life of students;

5. an increasing reliance on the adolescent peer group which becomes the vital reference point and whose opinions and attitudes are often more highly valued than those of adults.

Intellectual Aspects

New intellectual capacities are in evidence during this stage as students move from the more concrete thinking of late childhood to the next stage of cognitive development.

By Year 7 many will exhibit a capacity to engage in formal and more abstract thinking by means of which they become more competent in developing hypotheses, making predictions, interpreting data, generalising and drawing conclusions. Of course, this is not always observable in all students, some of whom will be demonstrating characteristics of an earlier stage.

Teachers may expect Stage 4 students to exhibit some of the following:

- an increasing capacity to reflect on existing knowledge and to better understand cause and effect;

- greater ability to argue more systematically and to see situations from various points of view;

- a deeper understanding of how symbols can be connected to abstract concepts;

- an improved capacity to reflect on self; this cognitive ability has social and emotional consequences which are sometimes seen in self-consciousness, emotional vulnerability and a sense of frustration that may lead to apathy or aggression.

Faith/Moral Judgement Aspects

The growing capacity to reflect on self and to think in abstract terms, along with the importance of the adolescent peer group, contribute to development in moral reasoning and style of faith. This is seen in:

1. a capacity to comprehend images of God that go beyond the purely anthropomorphic and now embody particular qualities such as love, compassion, omnipresence;

2. a strong conformity with the expressed religious views of other adolescents within the particular faith group, as well as those of loved and respected adults;

3. an inclination to 'compartmentalise' — that is, to see the world from the viewpoint of different groups (family, school friends, neighbourhood friends, etc.) at different times;

4. stronger consideration of the intention of the person in determining the morality of an action.

Implication for Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

1. The natural curiosity and enthusiasm of students commencing secondary schooling can be responded to by Religious Education programs that are intellectually stimulating. The disappointed observation, 'We've done all this before!' craves a creative response.

2. Teachers can assist the natural movement from concrete to more abstract thinking by stimulating the development of critical thinking (e.g. identifying qualities or argument, separating facts from assertions, identifying authority for certain viewpoints).

3. The new intellectual awakening of students provides an increased sophistication in understanding time in history, in appreciating alternative viewpoints and in making judgements about competing values.

4. In this context, significant social issues can be appropriately explored: justice, equity, peace, the distribution of wealth, the balance of freedom and responsibility.

5. Teachers should be conscious of the images of God that are presented. The named qualities of God, for instance, will be understood in terms of how those qualities are experienced in others.

6. Recognition of the significance of the peer group will lead to opportunities being provided for cooperative learning, negotiation of roles and responsibilities, and group work generally.

7. The importance of the peer group makes it particularly difficult for adolescent students to work and to express themselves outside the frame of reference of the group.

8. At this stage particularly, students need teachers who are tolerant and supportive yet strong enough to provide boundaries and clear guidance.

9. The fragile self-esteem of many early adolescents can be strengthened by affirmation, encouragement and the active presence of strong role models.

10. The students' growing capacity to reflect on self and on experiences can be a major consideration in devising learning experiences in Religious Education.

Stage 4 in Context

Because individual differences amongst students are so great and stage descriptions must, of necessity, overlap, the following summaries are provided. Teachers may find it relevant to consult the expanded description of students provided for these stages.

Stage 3 (Years 5 and 6)

These children may be less spontaneous than previously 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 significantly enhanced by mastery of tasks.

Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10)

Confrontation and questioning characterise many students at this stage as they 'test the limits' and come to terms with massive physical and psychological change in their lives. The peer group remains very 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.

Consider Your Own Students

1. Which of these *characteristics* listed for this stage are most obvious amongst the children you are teaching?

2. Which characteristics do you consider most significant *in relation to teaching and learning in Religious Education?*

3. What particular *implications* seem to you to be most valid and useful?

4. What specific *teaching practices* or arrangements flow naturally from the implications you have identified?

TREASURES
New and Old

Matthew 13:52

- *Student Characteristics*
- *Teaching and Learning*
- *Curriculum Integration*

Stage Five
Documentation

Stage Five

Introduction

Treasures New and Old is structured around six stages of schooling.

Individual students differ considerably in their backgrounds, abilities and general characteristics. However, students in any particular stage share a developmental pattern and have much in common. One of the great challenges confronting the teacher is to provide learning experiences that are *developmentally appropriate*, responding to the emerging capacities of the students themselves.

This section provides a description of students in one particular stage of schooling. The descriptions it offers are, of necessity, quite general and should be used with some caution. Teachers would readily recognise that the stages overlap and that not all the observations made here would apply to every student in this stage.

For this reason, a synopsis of the stage on either side of the one being addressed has been provided.

Teachers are invited to reflect on the content of this section in the light of their observations and knowledge of their own students. This reflection can form an essential basis for the selection of appropriate teaching and learning activities.

The Stage 5 Student

Still closely aligned with their peer group, Stage 5 students use the emergent intellectual skills of adolescence to explore their identity as maturing individuals and their place in the surrounding culture.

Their growing capacity for abstract thought enables them to approach the study of R.E. as an intellectual discipline, similar to and connected with their other subjects, and to apply formal cognitive processes.

Social and Emotional Aspects

The emotional upheaval and temperamental behaviour, the confusion and occasional rebelliousness of the younger adolescent continue to find expression in this stage, although evidence of a growing maturity gradually emerges.

Teachers may expect Stage 5 students to exhibit some of the following characteristics:

- being influenced by the powerful combination of peers, the wider popular culture and the media (including advertising), along with particular sub-cultures built around music, the Internet, video games and various sporting and leisure activities;

- an attraction to novel, sensational and multi-sensory experiences (eg the movements, sounds and lighting of rock concerts);

- a preoccupation with self that tends to see as 'boring' anything that is not sensory or directly relevant to day-to-day life;

- a growing idealism and a quickness to challenge, with some emotion, any perceived shallowness or inconsistency in the adult world; a sensitivity to adult 'phoneyness'.

Intellectual Aspects

The developing capacity for abstract and systematic thinking greatly expands opportunities for learning.

Teachers may expect Stage 5 students to exhibit some of the following:
- expression of a deeper understanding of causes and consequences as they apply to social, political and scientific issues and movements;

- increasing comprehension of how events of one period in history have impacted on other periods, including our own;

- an understanding of how the different backgrounds and beliefs of people give rise to different interpretations of reality;

- ability to gather information from a widening range of sources, especially electronic;

- ability to test the validity of argument and to appreciate and use satire and irony, especially in humour.

Faith/Moral Judgement Aspects

Against the background of general intellectual growth, the different groups to which adolescents belong influence the ways they make sense of their experiences and find more comprehensive meaning in their lives.

Teachers of Stage 5 students may expect them to exhibit some of the following:
- a capacity for introspection and insight which makes the adolescent more aware of his or her own understandings and values, and fosters the formation of more informed opinions;

- a developing social conscience which leads to a new willingness to explore social issues, and may lead to outreach activity;

- a capacity to make one's own, in very particular ways, certain values that have come from different influences.

Implications for Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

1. R.E. is situated within an academic curriculum which seeks to develop every student's capacity to think logically and analytically, and to develop the capacity for abstract thinking. Religion itself should be treated within classroom programs in a manner that respects logic and consistency.

2. R.E. students need help in developing skills of enquiry and critical evaluation, of investigating how decisions are made, on what values they are predicated, and on how they can reflect different perspectives. They also need encouragement to suspend immediate judgement in favour of open and comprehensive exploration of issues.

3. The rich array of teaching methods used with this age group in various subjects is appropriate in R.E. Students can make investigations, debate issues, compile research findings, work collaboratively, express themselves through various media, and use a great variety of formats and conventions — written reports, graphs, maps, tables, diagrams, artwork, music, video and other electronic presentations .

4. The more sophisticated intellectual skills of this stage and the natural idealism of students can serve an exploration of significant social issues (e.g. justice, discrimination, rights and responsibilities, consumerism, materialism).

5. Appropriate Christian outreach programs provide opportunities for a growing idealism and clearer sense of personal values to be expressed in practical ways.

6. Students may often question the behaviour and priorities of adult figures, and express disillusionment when they perceive logical inconsistencies and a mismatch between rhetoric and practice.

7. Students may seriously question religious beliefs and practices; some may reject them as irrelevant to life as they are presently experiencing it.

8. During this stage, many concepts developed earlier can be profitably revisited and students can be helped to deepen their understanding in the light of their own developing capacities.

9. Considering the significance of the adolescent peer group, R.E. activities which call for collaboration, shared responsibilities and group presentations are particularly appropriate.

10. Because of their increased exposure to abstract ideas at this stage, students meet opportunities to relate new ideas to their own experiences and to establish connections between what they are learning in R.E. and the content and methods of other subjects.

11. Students should be helped to feel free to express anxieties, hesitations and doubts, to think aloud about religious issues and to test their understanding.

12. Given the natural appeal of music and movement to students at this stage, liturgical experiences should be well-prepared, engaging, meaningful and relevant.

Stage 5 in Context

Because individual differences amongst students are so great and stage descriptions must, of necessity, overlap, the following summaries are provided. Teachers may find it relevant to consult the expanded description of students provided for these stages.

Stage 4 (Years 7 and 8)

During these early years of secondary school, 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 in 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.

Stage 6 (Years 11 and 12)

Many of these students demonstrate a more 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; students are challenged to organise time and resources more efficiently and are aided by a stronger sense of their own strengths, weaknesses and goals.

Consider Your Own Students

1. Which of these *characteristics* listed for this stage are most obvious amongst the children you are teaching?

2. Which characteristics do you consider most significant *in relation to teaching and learning in Religious Education?*

3. What particular *implications* seem to you to be most valid and useful?

4. What *specific teaching practices* or arrangements flow naturally from the implications you have identified?

TREASURES
New and Old
Matthew 13:52

- **Student Characteristics**
- **Teaching and Learning**
- **Curriculum Integration**

Stage Six
Documentation

Stage Six

Introduction

Treasures New and Old is structured around six stages of schooling.

Individual students differ considerably in their backgrounds, abilities and general characteristics. However, students in any particular stage share a developmental pattern and have much in common. One of the great challenges confronting the teacher is to provide learning experiences that are *developmentally appropriate*, responding to the emerging capacities of the students themselves.

This section provides a description of students in one particular stage of schooling. The descriptions it offers are, of necessity, quite general and should be used with some caution. Teachers would readily recognise that the stages overlap and that not all the observations made here would apply to every student in this stage.

Teachers are invited to reflect on the content of this section in the light of their observations and knowledge of their own students. This reflection can form an essential basis for the selection of appropriate teaching and learning activities.

The Stage 6 Student

Students at this stage are sometimes referred to as 'young adults', reflecting their growing maturity and sophistication. Their school life is now heavily influenced by preparation for examinations, and for meeting the entry requirements of post-secondary courses and for entry to the workforce itself. They often experience increasing pressure regarding their school performance, which may have to be balanced with part-time work commitments. Nevertheless, they are helped by a stronger sense of their own strengths, weaknesses and goals.

Social and Emotional Aspects

Many of the characteristics that distinguish the Stage 5 student persist into this stage but a strengthening maturity is in evidence. Teachers may expect Stage 6 students to exhibit some of the following characteristics:

- a greater understanding of self, accompanied by an increased self-confidence and sense of independence;

- improving interpersonal skills with a greater openness to the perspective of others; relationships are often deeper and more enduring;

- still significantly influenced by peers and youth culture but this influence being now more stable than previously;

- willing to work cooperatively but valuing independence;

- often displaying considerable personal commitment along with a growing concern with social, environmental and ethical issues.

Intellectual Aspects

The capacity for abstract thought and systematic thinking is reflected in the following:

- working with more complex ideas and arguments; critical analysis; testing validity; linking ideas and practices;

- more competently dealing with different conceptual frameworks and ways of looking at the world;

- better understanding of social and historical contexts, and capacity to consider alternative explanations;

- reflecting critically on previous learning and reconsidering values;

- reading texts on a number of different levels.

Faith/Moral Judgement Aspects

The other aspects of maturity impinge considerably on this area in which individuals will vary greatly.

Teachers of Stage 6 students may expect them to exhibit some of the following:

- the still strong, yet moderating, influence of family;

- a willingness and capacity to explore certain ethical issues more fully;

- increasing independence in moral decision making and the development of a more sophisticated moral code;

- a strong sense of idealism and intolerance of perceived hypocrisy.

Implications for Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

1. Recognise that any education which develops rational and critical thinking, and the capacity to reflect on experience and search for meaning, is inextricably linked with education in faith.

2. Religious Education should be as intellectually challenging as any other subject. In R.E., students need to apply their skills of logic, to synthesise and evaluate ideas, to distinguish between authoritative and superficial data, and to separate rational from emotive responses.

3. Students may need help in understanding the connection between their study of R.E. and their study of other subjects.

4. Students need opportunities to exercise their skills in analysing the prevailing ideas and values of the surrounding culture, and to relate this to their own rigorous examination of the Christian faith and their own reflected-upon experiences of life.

5. Students need opportunities and encouragement to reflect on their own experiences and to identify their ways of making sense of everyday life : in their family, their social group, and the wider culture (including youth culture). Some may need help in challenging unhelpful 'life metaphors' — that is, ways of understanding themselves and their place in the world that diminish rather than enliven them.

6. Students can be helped to distinguish *central* elements of the Christian message from the more *peripheral.*

7. The natural idealism of students, along with a capacity for exercising leadership, can be fostered through involvement in various Christian outreach programs.
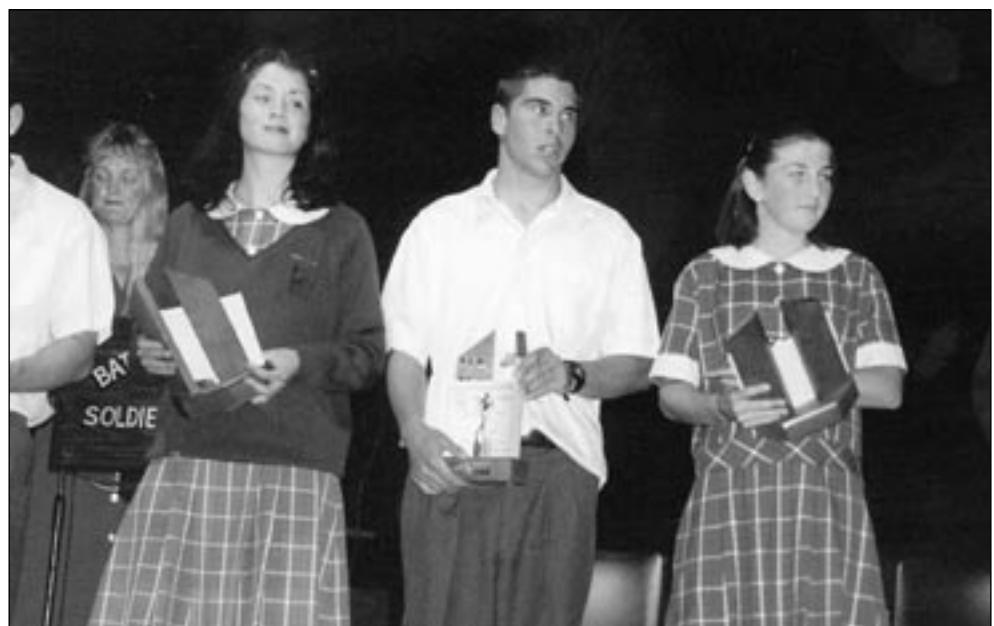
Stage 6 in Context

Because individual differences amongst students are so great and stage descriptions must, of necessity, overlap, the following summary of Stage 5 is provided. Teachers may wish to consult the expanded description of students provided for this stage.

Stage 5 (Years 9 and 10)

Confrontation and questioning characterise many students at this stage as they 'test the limits' and come to terms with massive physical and psychological change in their lives. The peer group remains very 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.

Consider Your Own Students

1. Which of these *characteristics* listed for this stage are most obvious amongst the children you are teaching?

2. Which characteristics do you consider most significant *in relation to teaching and learning in Religious Education?*

3. What particular *implications* seem to you to be most valid and useful?

4. What *specific teaching practices* or arrangements flow naturally from the implications you have identified?

Notes

TREASURES
New and Old

Matthew 13:52

Syllabus:
Scope & Sequence of
Stage Outcomes and
Key Concepts

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Acknowledgements

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Introduction

Religious education is the making accessible of the traditions of the religious community and the making manifest of the intrinsic connection between traditions and transformation.

(Boys, 1989, p. 193)

This definition of religious education embodies the vision and methodology of this *Religious Education Curriculum*. Educators are faced with a twofold challenge of understanding and appreciating the ancient yet dynamic traditions of the religious community and of making these traditions alive and relevant in our context and time, to nurture and challenge us to fullness of life.

The Catholic school, through its defining culture, its curriculum and its classroom-based religious education programs seeks to:

- develop an appreciation of the love of God revealed through the person of Jesus Christ, the wonders of God's creation and the dignity of the human person;

- promote growth in self-knowledge and in knowledge of the life, faith tradition and mission of the Catholic Church;

- increase understanding of religion generally and of different religious ways of seeing reality;

- foster skills of reflection, discernment, critical thinking, judging and deciding how to act in accordance with conscience;

- develop capacity to critique the surrounding culture in the light of the Catholic faith and tradition.
  (*Treasures New and Old Core Document*, 2000, p. 15)

... a good householder brings forth

TREASURES NEW AND OLD

Mt 13:52

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles that underpin the religious education curriculum from Kindergarten to Year 12 are presented in the *Treasures New and Old Core Document* (pp. 9-10). The following principles are critical when interpreting and implementing the syllabus and Unit Outlines:

- The *Religious Education Curriculum* should provoke a reflective understanding of Scripture and the challenges it presents in today's world.

- The syllabus should provide for a systematic and comprehensive education concerning the faith and tradition of the Catholic Church which is appropriate to the developmental and individual needs and abilities of students; it should be in accord with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

- Classroom religious education should be placed in the context of the community and culture of the Catholic school, integrated within the total curriculum of the Catholic school and promote the partnership that should ideally exist between parents, teachers and pastors.

- The curriculum should promote a critical and creative use of Shared Christian Praxis and employ an outcomes-based curriculum framework.

- Religious education 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.

- The syllabus should provide opportunities for the study of the customs and traditions of Roman Catholics of other nations and cultures, and the faith of Catholics of other rites.

- The ecumenical dimension of religious education should be affirmed in accord with Church teaching in documents on evangelisation, catechesis and the Catholic school; it should include the study of religion, other world religious traditions and religion in society.

- Aboriginal culture and spirituality should be respected and inform the integration of the Catholic faith within the Australian context.

- The documents should draw on the richness of contemporary theology.

- Usage of terms such as Roman Catholic, Catholic and Christian should be based on a recognition of the Catholic Church as a communion of churches and of the distinctiveness of Catholic faith and tradition.

- Students should be encouraged and assisted to develop their ability to use religious concepts and language and to think critically about the use of language.

(*Treasures New and Old Core Document*, 2000, pp. 9-10.)

Structure of the Syllabus

The *Treasures New and Old* syllabus is based on stage outcomes and key concepts in seven (Primary) and eight (Secondary) major content areas. Each content strand is given focus and coherence through the following theological statements:

1. **God:** Communion of Love, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit.

2. **Jesus Christ:** Word made flesh, the wisdom, freedom and compassion of God.

3. **Church:** Body of Christ, communion in the Spirit, community of disciples, witness to unity and justice, pilgrims in service to the world.

4. **Sacraments:** Ritual celebrations of the experience of God's Spirit in the midst of life.

5. **Scripture:** Word of God in inspired human words, interpreting the community's foundational experience.

6. **Christian Life:** Growth in discernment and responsibility, gifted and challenged in the transforming presence of the Spirit.

7. **Prayer:** Growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God.

8. **Religion and Society (Secondary):** Understanding and respecting the role of diverse religious traditions, particularly in the Australian context.

Learning in one particular stage consolidates, builds on, and develops learning in previous stages of schooling.

Primary
Stage One (including Early Stage 1)   Years K-2
Stage Two   Years 3-4
Stage Three   Years 5-6

Secondary
Stage Four   Years 7 -8
Stage Five   Years 9-10
Stage Six   Years 11-12

A collaborative process of school-based curriculum development, within the framework provided by the Archdiocesan syllabus, seeks to ensure that religious education programs provide a comprehensive and systematic study of the Catholic faith and tradition appropriate to the experience, abilities and needs of students.

The different requirements of the Stage Six religious education curriculum in schools within NSW and ACT are met by flexible implementation of the syllabus. In the post-compulsory years of schooling the school-based religious education program ensures that faith development, liturgy and other experiences that reflect the Catholic culture and ethos of the school enrich the formal religious education curriculum.

To support school-based curriculum development the syllabus provides:

*   *An Overview of Stage Outcomes.*

*   *The Stage Outcomes and Key Concepts* - Organised in Stages - enabling teachers to integrate the students' learning experiences across the Content Strands.

*   *The Scope and Sequence of Stage Outcomes and Key Concepts Organised in Content Strands* -enabling teachers to track development of concepts across the different stages of schooling.

Supplementary Documents

Separate documents related to the syllabus are:
- *The Scope and Sequence of Unit Outlines* organised across Early Stage 1 – Stage 6.

- *The Unit Outlines* – developed from the Stage Outcomes and Key Concepts and other stimulus materials which guide teachers in the development of their teaching programs.

- *Support Documents* – e.g., Teaching Strategies Resource.

Components of the Unit Outlines

The Unit Outlines have been developed from the Stage Outcomes and Key Concepts and other stimulus material. They confirm that the stage outcomes and key concepts, which are mandatory in the compulsory years of schooling, have been addressed in a comprehensive manner. The Unit Outlines guide teachers in the development of their teaching programs using Shared Christian Praxis (Groome, 1991).

Each Unit Outline describes the **unit focus**, links **unit outcomes** to **stage outcomes** and **key concepts**, summarises **key understandings**, identifies **cross-curriculum links** and contexts the Unit Outline within the *Treasures New and Old* syllabus. The Unit Outline includes references and texts from the **Scriptures** for both teacher reflection as well as student study. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* references and **theological background** components are provided for teacher support. A range of **teaching**, **learning** and **assessment strategies** and **resources** are provided.

Full descriptions of the Unit Outline components and their relationship can be found in the *Treasures New and Old Core Document* on pages 96 – 100.

In responding to local needs, local religious celebrations, special events and the occasional 'teachable moments', teachers may also develop their own units, faithful to the spirit and intentions of the syllabus. Such professional initiative is strongly encouraged.

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

Some Unit Outlines provided will include a Sample Program. The Sample Program presents one possible way of teaching a particular Unit Outline. It is offered as an example of good practice and as support, particularly for teachers who are teaching from the Unit Outline for the first time. It is anticipated that teachers will adapt these Sample Programs, reflecting their own teaching style and responding to the needs, interests and abilities of the students.

Unit Coding: The first number designates the stage for which this unit has been developed. There are six stages from K to 12.

The letters indicate the content strand that this unit principally addresses. There are eight content strands. (God: **G**, Jesus Christ: **JC**, Church: **C**, Sacraments: **Sa**, Scripture: **Sc**, Christian Life: **CL**, Prayer: **P**, Religion and Society (Secondary): **RS**).

Enrichment units will be indicated by the additional code of the letter **E**. Enrichment units may be studied as independent units or aspects of their content incorporated within other units.

Overview of Stage Outcomes: Primary Schooling - Stages 1-3

Strand	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
GOD *Communion of Love, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit.*	Recognise God as giver of all that is good, experienced in people and the world around us.	Understand we are created in God's image and called to membership of a loving community.	Explain ways in which God is inviting us to participate in the growth of the Reign of God.
JESUS CHRIST *Word made flesh, the wisdom, freedom and compassion of God.*	Recognise Jesus as a human being who reveals God's love for us.	Explain that Jesus is present in the Church community and sends us the Holy Spirit to enliven and guide us.	Articulate and understand that Jesus, present in our lives in many ways, offers hope to the world.
CHURCH *Body of Christ, communion in the Spirit, community of disciples, witness to unity and justice, pilgrims in service to the world.*	Name the Church as God's family: a believing, welcoming, caring and celebrating community.	Identify the Church as a community that celebrates the life and work of Jesus.	Describe the pilgrim Church as being empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a sign of hope, reconciliation and service to the world.
SACRAMENTS *Ritual celebrations of the experience of God's Spirit in the midst of life.*	Express that the sacraments are ways by which we are welcomed into the Church community, reconciled and invited to share the special presence of Jesus.	Explain ways the sacraments are celebrations of the presence of God in the lives of Christians.	Investigate the sacraments as ritual celebrations in the experience of God's Spirit in our lives.

Overview of Stage Outcomes: Primary Schooling - Stages 1-3

Strand	Stage 1	Stage 2	Stage 3
SCRIPTURE *Word of God in inspired human words, interpreting the community's foundational experience.*	Recall and reflect on familiar scriptural material.	Explore ways in which scriptural texts apply to their own experiences and are used in prayer and worship.	Distinguish different styles of writing in the Scriptures and connect the scriptural message with everyday life.
CHRISTIAN LIFE *Growth in discernment and responsibility, gifted and challenged in the transforming presence of the Spirit.*	Explore ways that Christians in their lives express love for God and neighbour.	Investigate how Christians make loving choices that are informed by the example of Jesus.	Interpret ways that Christians can respond generously to God's love of us and all creation.
PRAYER *Growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God.*	Understand that prayer is an expression of God's relationship with each of us and a way of responding to this relationship.	Name different forms of prayer and liturgical celebrations.	Describe the many forms of prayer that facilitate the movement of the Spirit in our relationship with God.

Overview of Stage Outcomes: Secondary Schooling - Stages 4-6

Strand	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6
GOD *Communion of Love, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit.*	Articulate an understanding and appreciation of God, revealed in Jesus, as entering into a relationship with humankind and calling each of us to a personal response.	Explore and identify the ways in which humankind recognises God who desires fullness of life for all creation.	Examine the complexities of the human response to the revelation of God's love and truth in human experience, in Jesus Christ, in Scripture and tradition and in other religious traditions.
JESUS CHRIST *Word made flesh, the wisdom, freedom and compassion of God.*	Explore ways in which Jesus Christ offers hope to the world and challenges us to discipleship.	Examine and analyse different images of, and insights into, the mystery of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.	Investigate and evaluate understandings of the mystery of Jesus Christ expressed in the theological perspectives that offer meaning to human life.
CHURCH *Body of Christ, communion in the Spirit, community of disciples, witness to unity and justice, pilgrims in service to the world.*	Identify and describe the Church as being missionary in nature, as having various rites and cultural traditions and an ongoing story.	Investigate the development of the Church, its structures and role in society.	Explore the distinguishing features of the Church and its response to the fundamental questions of meaning and purpose.
SACRAMENTS *Ritual celebrations of the experience of God's Spirit in the midst of life.*	Examine the sacramental presence of God expressed in the Christian community through ritual, sign, symbol and word.	Explain and appreciate Eucharist as an action of the Christian community: reconciling, renewing and calling it to action.	Analyse and evaluate the sacramental nature of Christian lives.

Strand	Stage 4	Stage 5	Stage 6
SCRIPTURE *Word of God in inspired human words, interpreting the community's foundational experience.*	Research the variety of literature in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures and articulate their significance.	Analyse critically the composition of the Synoptic Gospels and identify ways in which they inspire and challenge us to live.	Demonstrate an understanding of biblical interpretation through analysing, interpreting and responding to a range of scriptural passages.
CHRISTIAN LIFE *Growth in discernment and responsibility, gifted and challenged in the transforming presence of the Spirit.*	Express an understanding and appreciation of Christian life as based on the life, teachings and values of Jesus Christ and as requiring informed decisions and appropriate actions.	Examine Christian life as being informed by Church teaching and conscience and inspired by people of faith.	Communicate an appreciation of Christian life as requiring moral decision-making and a discerned response to contemporary culture.
PRAYER *Growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God.*	Identify and explore cultural, traditional and contemporary forms of prayer.	Express an appreciation of prayer as an aspect of growing in faithful relationship to the living God.	Examine prayer as growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God.
RELIGION AND SOCIETY *Understanding & respecting the role of diverse religious traditions, particularly in the Australian context.*	Articulate an understanding and appreciation of the nature and role of religion in society and people's lives.	Recognise and analyse the nature, significance and role of sacred places, persons and ethical codes in the faith and practice of some Christian denominations and world religions.	Express an understanding and appreciation of belief systems and spirituality and how religious experience, traditions and communities serve to engage and support people and their search for meaning.

Stage One: *Kindergarten, Year One and Year Two*

	Catechism Reference

GOD: Communion of Love, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Two students should be able to:
Recognise God as giver of all that is good, experienced in people and the world around us.

	Catechism Reference
Key Concepts 1. God is loving creator.	239, 337, 338
2. God loves each of us.	219, 733
3. God is always with us.	301, 205, 209
4. God is experienced in other people's love for us.	41
5. God invites us to respond in love.	2196, 2822

JESUS CHRIST: Word made flesh, the wisdom, freedom and compassion of God.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Two students should be able to:
Recognise Jesus as a human being who reveals God's love for us.

	Catechism Reference
Key Concepts 1. Jesus is a human being like us.	464, 469
2. Jesus is a member of a family.	531, 533
3. Mary is the mother of Jesus.	488, 508
4. Jesus is our friend.	1972
5. Jesus shows us the way God wants us to live.	1716

CHURCH: Body of Christ, communion in the Spirit, community of disciples, witness to unity and justice, pilgrims in service to the world.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Two students should be able to:
Name the Church as God's family: a believing, welcoming, caring and celebrating community.

	Catechism Reference
Key Concepts 1. The Church is called to be God's family.	1759
2. The Church is a believing, welcoming, caring and celebrating community.	751
3. The Church is a community that celebrates God's love.	752
4. The Church is a community that listens and responds to the Good News of Jesus.	864

SACRAMENTS: Ritual celebrations of the experience of God's Spirit in the midst of life.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Two students should be able to:
Express that the sacraments are ways by which we are welcomed into the Church community, reconciled and invited to share the special presence of Jesus.

	Catechism Reference
Key Concepts 1. We celebrate the wonder and beauty of God's presence in people and the world around us.	337, 341
2. The sacraments are special celebrations in the life of the Church.	1124
3. We celebrate God's healing forgiveness through the sacrament of Penance.	1267, 782
4. Penance celebrates our reconciliation with God and others and God's forgiveness of sin.	1443

SCRIPTURE: Word of God in inspired human words, interpreting the community's foundational experience.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Two students should be able to:
Recall and reflect on familiar scriptural material.

Key Concepts
1. The Scriptures tell us about God's love for us and we learn from and pray with them. 104, 125
2. The Gospels tell us about Jesus' life and the people who believed in him. 125, 126

CHRISTIAN LIFE: Growth in discernment and responsibility, gifted and challenged in the transforming presence of the Spirit.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Two students should be able to:
Explore ways that Christians in their lives express love for God and neighbour.

Key Concepts
1. I am precious, unique and loved by God. 27
2. God invites me to love and care for myself and for others. 27, 2822
3. My choices and actions affect others. 1970
4. Jesus shows us how to live. 561

PRAYER: Growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Two students should be able to:
Understand that prayer is an expression of God's relationship with each of us and a way of responding to this relationship.

Key Concepts
1. God is with me in a special way in prayer. 2560
2. I can talk with and listen to God at any time and in any place, in many different ways. 2660
3. Prayer involves rituals, symbols, celebrations and silence. 2663
4. Prayer is a way of thanking God for life and creation. 2637, 2638

Stage Two: *Year Three and Year Four*

GOD: Communion of Love, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit.

Stage Outcome   By the end of Year Four students should be able to:
Understand we are created in God's image and called to membership of a loving community.

Key Concepts
1. The Scriptures contain many stories and images that give us some insights about the mystery of God.
2. We are created in God's image.
3. God trusts us and forgives us.
4. God calls us to reach out in love to each other.
5. We are gifted and graced, able to share in the transforming life of God.

42, 214

355, 380
219, 220
1706, 1822
2003

JESUS CHRIST: Word made flesh, the wisdom, freedom and compassion of God.

Stage Outcome   By the end of Year Four students should be able to:
Explain that Jesus is present in the Church community and sends us the Holy Spirit to enliven and guide us.

Key Concepts
1. After Jesus' death and resurrection people gathered in communities to remember him and tell the story of his compassion and love.
2. Jesus shares his Spirit with us.
3. Jesus shows us the way God wants us to live.
4. Jesus teaches us about healing, forgiveness and reconciliation.
5. When we make sinful choices Jesus understands and forgives us.

767

729, 747, 743
561
588, 1421
545, 549, 589

CHURCH: Body of Christ, communion in the Spirit, community of disciples, witness to unity and justice, pilgrims in service to the world.

Stage Outcome   By the end of Year Four students should be able to:
Identify the Church as a community that celebrates the life and work of Jesus

Key Concepts
1. The Church is a community of believers called to live as Jesus lived.
2. The Church celebrates Jesus' life, death and resurrection in the many feasts and seasons of the liturgical year.
3. The Church is empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness to unity and justice.

783
1168

791

SACRAMENTS: Ritual celebrations of the experience of God's Spirit in the midst of life.

Stage Outcome   By the end of Year Four students should be able to:
Explain ways the sacraments are celebrations of the presence of God in the lives of Christians.

Key Concepts
1. In the sacraments we celebrate the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
2. Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist celebrate our initiation into the Church.
3. We celebrate God's healing forgiveness through the Sacrament of Penance.
4. The Sacrament of Eucharist celebrates the presence of Jesus: the community remembers what Jesus did; offers sacrifice; gives thanks; shares a meal; and is called to service.

1116
1212, 1285

1422, 1423

1328, 1329,
1330, 1408

SCRIPTURE: Word of God in inspired human words, interpreting the community's foundational experience.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Four students should be able to:
Explore ways in which scriptural texts apply to their own experiences and are used in prayer and worship.

Key Concepts
1. The Scriptures are intended to make us think about and reflect on our lives.
2. The Gospels teach us about the life and love of Jesus.
3. Jesus taught using parables and stories.
4. In our prayer and worship we listen to the Scriptures.

141

515, 125
546
2653, 2654

CHRISTIAN LIFE: Growth in discernment and responsibility, gifted and challenged in the transforming presence of the Spirit.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Four students should be able to:
Investigate how Christians make loving choices that are informed by the example of Jesus.

Key Concepts
1. Jesus challenges us to follow his teachings and example.
2. We are challenged to reflect on the ways we respond to God's love for us.
3. As followers of Jesus we make loving choices and take responsibility for our actions.
4. When we use our gifts we are serving the community and helping to spread the Reign of God.

519
125
1781, 1954,
794, 806
1942

PRAYER: Growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Four students should be able to:
Name different forms of prayer and liturgical celebrations.

Key Concepts
1. People celebrate and pray together at different times and in different ways.
2. The celebration of Eucharist is the heart of our community prayer.
3. When we pray together we celebrate God's presence.
4. We grow in relationship with God through prayer.
5. God's faithfulness and goodness are recalled and celebrated in many ways throughout the liturgical seasons.
6. We honour and celebrate Mary through prayers, feasts and seasons of the Church's liturgical year.

2660, 2691,
2720
2643
2558, 2565
2565
1150, 1151

1172

Stage Three: *Year Five and Year Six*

GOD: Communion of Love, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Six students should be able to:
Explain ways in which God is inviting us to participate in the growth of the Reign of God.

Key Concepts
1. God entrusts us with the world and with the responsibility to reverence, develop, heal and celebrate life.
2. The Reign of God is revealed through Jesus' ministry of reconciliation, healing, justice and peace.
3. God's life and love are active in our world.
4. We are challenged to create and renew our world enlivened by the Holy Spirit.

339

543-550

27
2415, 2441

JESUS CHRIST: Word made flesh, the wisdom, freedom and compassion of God.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Six students should be able to:
Articulate an understanding that Jesus, present in our lives in many ways, offers hope to the world.

Key Concepts
1. Jesus is the Son of God, the Chosen One whom God promised.
2. In his life, death and resurrection Jesus reveals the saving love of God.
3. Jesus identified with the poor, the lonely, the sick and the outcast.
4. The Holy Spirit, gift of Jesus, inspires and renews the Church community to live as Jesus did.
5. The Holy Spirit gifts us and enables us to act with wisdom, understanding, right judgement, courage, knowledge, reverence, wonder and awe.

436
653, 654
544
737

736

CHURCH: Body of Christ, communion in the Spirit, community of disciples, witness to unity and justice, pilgrims in service to the world.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Six students should be able to:
Describe the pilgrim Church as being empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a sign of hope, reconciliation and service to the world.

Key Concepts
1. The Church is empowered by the Holy Spirit and founded on the living faith of the early Christians.
2. During the season of Pentecost the Church celebrates her beginnings and renews her mission to live the Reign of God.
3. The Church honours Mary, Mother of God, and people from all ages who have been inspirational in carrying forward the mission of Jesus.
4. Our local Church community, led by the Bishop, is committed to the mission of the universal church.

764

767

971

849-851

SACRAMENTS: Ritual celebrations of the experience of God's Spirit in the midst of life.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Six students should be able to:
Investigate the sacraments as ritual celebrations in the experience of God's Spirit in our lives.

Key Concepts
1. Sacraments are celebrations in ritual, sign, symbol and word of the risen Christ with us.
2. A sacramental Church nourishes and celebrates key moments of our lives.
3. Through the sacraments we are challenged to ministry and service.
4. The Sacrament of Confirmation celebrates and seals the presence of the Holy Spirit within us.

1147-1148

1210

738
1303

SCRIPTURE: Word of God in inspired human words, interpreting the community's foundational experience.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Six students should be able to:
Distinguish different styles of writing in the Scriptures and connect the scriptural message with every day life.

Key Concepts
1. The Jewish and Christian Scriptures contain different types of writing.   110
2. The Christian Scriptures teach us about Jesus and the early Christian communities.   126
3. The Jewish Scriptures tell the story of the people of Israel's covenant relationship with God.   121
4. The Gospel of God's saving love challenges us to live Christian lives.   2419
5. The four Gospels are central to the Church's prayer and teaching.   125

CHRISTIAN LIFE: Growth in discernment and responsibility, gifted and challenged in the transforming presence of the Spirit.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Six students should be able to:
Interpret ways that Christians can respond generously to God's love of us and all creation.

Key Concepts
1. One way we respond to God's love is through service to others.   1893
2. In our care for creation we are called to be responsible, trustworthy and wise stewards.   2415
3. We respond to God's commandments by treating each other with respect, love and compassion.   1878
4. The witness of good people challenges us to continue to strive for justice and peace.   1807

PRAYER: Growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Six students should be able to:
Describe the many forms of prayer that facilitate the movement of the Spirit in our relationship with God.

Key Concepts
1. In our communities we experience various kinds of prayer: thanksgiving, petition, praise, sorrow and adoration.   2626- 2643
2. Prayer is expressed in different ways through music, movement and meditation.
3. The Scriptures are a rich source of nourishment for personal and communal prayer.   2568-2589
4. Jesus' prayer to God shows us how to pray.   2599-2607
5. Through prayer the Holy Spirit enables us to open ourselves to acknowledging our sinfulness and experiencing the healing, reconciling power of God's love.   2623, 2670
6. The celebration of liturgical feasts is an opportunity for personal and communal prayer.   2655

Stage Four: *Year Seven and Year Eight*

GOD: Communion of Love, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Eight students should be able to:
Articulate an understanding and appreciation of God, revealed in Jesus, as entering into a relationship with humankind and calling each of us to a personal response.

Key Concepts

1. God reaches out to us in loving relationship.	30, 299
2. The Trinitarian mystery of God is revealed in Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.	238-248
3. God has entered into a covenant with humankind.	781
4. Our relationship with God is damaged through sin when we choose to live for ourselves at the expense of others.	1849, 1850
5. Jesus Christ reveals the forgiveness, compassion and mercy of God.	221

JESUS CHRIST: Word made flesh, the wisdom, freedom and compassion of God.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Eight students should be able to:
Explore ways in which Jesus Christ offers hope to the world and challenges us to discipleship.

Key Concepts

1. Jesus Christ showed us in the way he lived for others that he is God's Word revealing who God is and how God wants us to live.	65
2. Jesus Christ lived in a particular historical, social, political and religious context.	423
3. Jesus Christ lived the values of the Reign of God and challenges us to discipleship.	561
4. Jesus Christ relates to others, especially the poor, with justice and compassion.	544, 545

CHURCH: Body of Christ, communion in the Spirit, community of disciples, witness to unity and justice, pilgrims in service to the world.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Eight students should be able to:
Identify and describe the Church as being missionary in nature, as having various rites and cultural traditions and as having an ongoing story.

Key Concepts

1. The life and mission of the Church in our world are inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit.	737
2. The missionary and prophetic nature of the Church is seen in its ongoing and complex human history.	854
3. Through cooperation and dialogue, the Church recognises the presence of God in diverse cultures and traditions.	1202
4. The life, prayer and worship of the Church are expressed in various rites and cultural traditions.	1204

SACRAMENTS: Ritual celebrations of the experience of God's Spirit in the midst of life.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Eight students should be able to:
Examine the sacramental presence of God expressed in the Christian community through ritual, sign, symbol and word.

Key Concepts

1. In showing forth the presence of God, creation is sacramental.	32, 1147
2. Sacraments grow out of and enrich the shared life of the Christian community, celebrating initiation, healing and service.	1210
3. Each sacrament has its own history, symbols and rituals.	1145, 1189

SCRIPTURE: Word of God in inspired human words, interpreting the community's foundational experience.

Stage Outcome
By the end of Year Eight students should be able to:
Research the variety of literature in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures and articulate their significance.

Key Concepts

1. The Scriptures reveal God's creative and covenant love.	50, 68
2. The Scriptures witness to a people's developing experience of and relationship with God.	53
3. The Scriptures contain a library of sacred books in each of which there is a variety of text types or literary forms.	120
4. The authors of the Scriptures wrote with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.	106, 126
5. Scripture texts must be interpreted in their historical, cultural and literary contexts.	109, 110

CHRISTIAN LIFE: Growth in discernment and responsibility, gifted and challenged in the transforming presence of the Spirit.

Stage Outcome
By the end of Year Eight students should be able to:
Express an understanding and appreciation of Christian life as based on the life, teachings and values of Jesus Christ and as requiring informed decisions and appropriate actions.

	1701

Key Concepts

1. The life, teachings and values of Jesus Christ inspire us to lead Christian lives.	386
2. The 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 which is the consequence of original sin.	1700, 1959
3. Christian life calls us to act on the basis of informed and graced decision-making.	
4. Christian life is nurtured and lived within a faith community and is characterised by cooperation and dialogue with other religious communities.	1807
5. Justice calls us to celebrate cultural diversity as a reflection of God's creativity.	

PRAYER: Growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God.

Stage Outcome
By the end of Year Eight students should be able to:
Identify and explore cultural, traditional and contemporary forms of prayer.

	2663

Key Concepts

1. Forms of prayer emanate from the cultural traditions of the community, nourishing and enriching the wider Church.	2659
2. Prayer celebrates the sacredness of time and space.	2608
3. Prayer expresses praise, thanksgiving and intercession and fosters compassion and unity.	
4. Drawing on the spirituality of indigenous Australians enriches prayer.	

RELIGION & SOCIETY: Understanding and respecting the role of diverse religious traditions, particularly in the Australian context.

Stage Outcome
By the end of Year Eight students should be able to:
Articulate an understanding and appreciation of the nature and role of religion in society and people's lives.

Key Concepts

1. The nature and role of religion is integral in society and in people's lives.	27, 28, 44
2. Appreciation of the nature and role of religion in society and people's lives is informed by faith, openness, dialogue and cultural sensitivity.	
3. The examination of religion in historical, cultural and geographical contexts, including the local area, is critical in gaining an understanding of its nature and role.	

Stage Five: *Year Nine and Year Ten*

GOD: Communion of Love, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Ten students should be able to:
Explore and identify the ways in which humankind recognises God who desires fullness of life for all creation.

Key Concepts		
1.	God desires authentic liberation for all and the coming to fulfilment of the Reign of God.	74
2.	We experience God's life-giving grace through the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives, the Church and the world.	703, 737, 738
3.	God calls us to life through the experience of joy, hope, grief and anxiety in our life.	
4.	The gift of God's life empowers us to help bring about the Reign of God.	425

JESUS CHRIST: Word made flesh, the wisdom, freedom and compassion of God.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Ten students should be able to:
Examine and analyse different images of, and insights into, the mystery of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Key Concepts		
1.	Jesus Christ is understood and portrayed in many different ways in the rich history of the Christian tradition.	
2.	Jesus Christ's message of salvation in the Gospel is one of conversion, hope, liberation and love for all.	543-546
3.	Jesus Christ challenges us to recognise the selfishness, greed and unjust structures, which are manifestations of sin in the world.	1869
4.	Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit is the source of the Church's unity.	813, 820

CHURCH: Body of Christ, communion in the Spirit, community of disciples, witness to unity and justice, pilgrims in service to the world.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Ten students should be able to:
Investigate the development of the Church, its structures and role in society.

Key Concepts		
1.	Various images and models are used to understand the nature of the Church.	753-757
2.	Christians are called to engage in the renewal of the Church for its participation in, and transformation of the world.	
3.	The Church, Body of Christ, is called to participate in Jesus' healing and reconciling ministry by reaching out in various ways to those who are suffering and broken.	763
4.	The Church is called to dialogue and cooperate with other Christian traditions and other religions of the world.	839-845, 775
5.	The Church, a prophetic community, exists to proclaim the Word, call the community to worship and offer service.	752
6.	The story of the Australian Church inspires us to participate in the life of the universal Church as community for the world.	

SACRAMENTS: Ritual celebrations of the experience of God's Spirit in the midst of life.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Ten students should be able to:
Explain and appreciate Eucharist as an action of the Christian community: reconciling, renewing and calling it to action.

Key Concepts		
1.	The Eucharist is both the source and summit of Christian life for the individual and community.	1324-27, 1343
2.	The Eucharist celebrates reconciliation, healing and unity.	1391
3.	We are called to service and justice through the Eucharist.	1397
4.	The Church uses signs, symbols, rituals and word to help us express our experience of God's spirit in the midst of life.	1145
5.	The Eucharist celebrates the union of God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.	
6.	The grace and beauty of God in creation is life giving and inspires us to goodness.	

SCRIPTURE: Word of God in inspired human words, interpreting the community's foundational experience.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Ten students should be able to:
Analyse critically the composition of the Synoptic Gospels and identify ways in which they inspire and challenge us to live.

Key Concepts
1. The Scriptures reveal a God of peace, justice and mercy.   210
2. Through the Scriptures God challenges us to a life of faith characterised by compassion, love and service.
3. The Scriptures are central to the life, teaching and worship of the Church.   103, 104, 131, 133
4. The teachings and miracles of Jesus disclose key aspects of the Reign of God.   547
5. The Scriptures contain accounts of men and women who were called to speak prophetically and live out God's call as Mary did.   273

CHRISTIAN LIFE: Growth in discernment and responsibility, gifted and challenged in the transforming presence of the Spirit.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Ten students should be able to:
Examine Christian life as being informed by Church teaching and conscience and inspired by people of faith.

Key Concepts
1. Christian life challenges us to discipleship that shares in the mission of Christ.   618
2. As a community of believers we experience the mystery of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.   776
3. The dignity of the human person requires the pursuit of the common good in a spirit of solidarity.   1905-1912
4. Christian life calls us to make informed decisions based on conscience and the ethical teachings of the Church.   1783
5. The example of Mary, Mother of the Church, and the saints inspires Christian Life.   2030

PRAYER: Growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Ten students should be able to:
Express an appreciation of prayer as an aspect of growing in faithful relationship to the living God.

Key Concepts
1. Prayer is a response to God's relationship with us.   2567
2. Prayer and reflection are integral to making wise decisions.   2690
3. Prayer is central to the life and mission of the Church and its members.   2558
4. The Scriptures are a rich source of nourishment for personal and communal prayer.   2568-2588

RELIGION & SOCIETY: Understanding and respecting the role of diverse religious traditions, particularly in the Australian context.

Stage Outcome By the end of Year Ten students should be able to:
Recognise and analyse the nature, significance and role of sacred places, persons and ethical codes in the faith and practice of some Christian denominations and world religions.

Key Concepts
1. Religious freedom is a fundamental human right.   1907
2. Sacred places and rituals are integral to faith and the practice of religion.
3. The Holy Spirit inspires men and women of different Christian denominations.   843
4. Ecumenism is critical in developing relationships among people of different Christian denominations.   820
5. Mass media is a significant influence on the development of a personal spirituality and moral code.
6. A religious perspective can influence personal and communal codes of ethics and morality.

Stage Six: *Year Eleven and Year Twelve*

GOD: Communion of Love, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit.

Stage Outcome　By the end of Year Twelve students should be able to:
Examine the complexities of the human response to the revelation of God's love and truth in human experience, in Jesus Christ, in Scripture and tradition and in other religious traditions.

Key Concepts
1. God, who is holy mystery, is revealed in and through creation, human experience, Scripture and the developing tradition of the Church.　　50, 54
2. God's grace brings us life and inspires us to goodness.　　1996
3. Suffering and death find meaning in Jesus' life, death and resurrection.　　1006
4. Human destiny finds its fulfilment in God.　　2566
5. God is revealed in Scripture and the developing tradition of the Church.　　97

JESUS CHRIST: Word made flesh, the wisdom, freedom and compassion of God.

Stage Outcome　By the end of Year Twelve students should be able to:
Investigate and evaluate understandings of the mystery of Jesus Christ expressed in the theological perspectives that offer meaning to human life.

Key Concepts
1. Jesus Christ is truly human and truly divine: the Jesus of History and Christ of Faith.　　464
2. Christian theology names the mystery of Christ in various ways: Word made Flesh, the Wisdom of God, the Compassion of God.　　436
3. Jesus Christ is central to our search for meaning and identity.　　459
4. The mystery of evil exists and both conceals as well as reveals God. God does not abandon us in the midst of evil but suffers with us, calling us to struggle against evil.　　312, 324
5. Jesus Christ calls us to discipleship in which the work of liberation for all people is continued.　　1939, 1942

CHURCH: Body of Christ, communion in the Spirit, community of disciples, witness to unity and justice, pilgrims in service to the world.

Stage Outcome　By the end of Year Twelve students should be able to:
Explore the distinguishing features of the Church and its response to the fundamental questions of meaning and purpose.

Key Concepts
1. The Church, as communion in the Spirit, is an expression of our identity as Catholics.　　775
2. The Church is called to embody the Reign of God in its beliefs, rituals and ethical teachings.　　763, 1428, 2045
3. Christians are called to engage in the renewal of the Church for its participation in, and transformation of, the world.
4. The Catholic Church provides a specific religious context for exploring fundamental questions of meaning and purpose.　　2419

SACRAMENTS: Ritual celebrations of the experience of God's Spirit in the midst of life.

Stage Outcome　By the end of Year Twelve students should be able to:
Analyse and evaluate the sacramental nature of Christian lives.

Key Concepts
1. The Church, as sacrament of Jesus, challenges us to give witness to the presence of God.
2. God's grace is made manifest wherever people strive for life-giving experiences of justice, freedom and truth.　　1738
3. Matrimony and Holy Orders affirm a particular mission of service in the Church.　　1617, 1536
4. All Christians are called to be prophetic and witness to the transforming action of God in human life and human affairs.　　1816

SCRIPTURE: Word of God in inspired human words, interpreting the community's foundational experience.

Stage Outcome
By the end of Year Twelve students should be able to:
Demonstrate an understanding of biblical interpretation through analysing, interpreting and responding to a range of scriptural passages.

Key Concepts

1. The Holy Spirit guides the whole Church in the interpretation of Scripture.	108, 109 132
2. The Scriptures nourish spiritual life, prayerful reflection, worship and action.	119
3. The Church is guided by biblical scholarship in interpreting the Word of God found in the Scriptures.	108
4. The Scriptures are the living Word of God for all people and for all generations.	

CHRISTIAN LIFE: Growth in discernment and responsibility, gifted and challenged in the transforming presence of the Spirit.

Stage Outcome
By the end of Year Twelve students should be able to:
Communicate an understanding and appreciation of Christian life as requiring moral decision-making and a discerned response to contemporary culture.

Key Concepts

	2464
1. The Church teaches the importance of honesty and integrity in all aspects of personal, public, corporate and church life.	1783-1785
2. The Scriptures and teachings of the Church inform moral decision-making.	
3. Christians are called to read the signs of the times and to reflect and act on them in ways that bring about the transformation of the world.	
4. Through the Holy Spirit we experience the transforming presence of God in our lives, in the Church and in the world.	1813
5. Christian life finds expression within a particular vocation oriented to service of others: marriage, priesthood, single life, and life in religious community.	863
6. Christian life acknowledges the sacredness, dignity and purpose of work and leisure.	2427

PRAYER: Growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God.

Stage Outcome
By the end of Year Twelve students should be able to:
Examine prayer as growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God.

Key Concepts

1. Different styles of prayer, for example, personal contemplation, lectio divina, liturgy of the hours, devotional practices, are part of the rich heritage of the Church.	2700-2719
2. Prayer celebrates and interprets the life and faith experience of the person and community.	2651
3. Prayer is expressed through different commitments and lifestyles.	2651
4. Personal spirituality is nourished and expressed in prayer.	2697

RELIGION & SOCIETY: Understanding and respecting the role of diverse religious traditions, particularly in the Australian context.

Stage Outcome
By the end of Year Twelve students should be able to:
Express an understanding and appreciation of belief systems and spirituality and how religious experience, traditions and communities serve to engage and support people and their search for meaning.

Key Concepts

1. The human search for meaning and fulfilment is inspired by the Holy Spirit.	
2. **The mystery of God is manifest in world religions.**	839-843
3. **Aboriginal spirituality, beliefs and practices are important in understanding the spirituality of Australians as a whole.**	
4. **The relationship between Church and state raises a number of issues including religious pluralism and tolerance; ethical codes of different world religions and social justice issues.**	

GOD: *Communion of Love, Source of all Being, Eternal Word and Holy Spirit.*

STAGE 1 (K-2)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 1 (Year 2) students should be able to:
Recognise God as giver of all that is good, experienced in people and the world around us.

Key Concepts
1. God is loving creator.
2. God loves each of us.
3. God is always with us.
4. God is experienced in other people's love for us.
5. God invites us to respond in love.

STAGE 2 (3-4)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 2 (Year 4) students should be able to:
Understand we are created in God's image and called to membership of a loving community.

Key Concepts
1. The Scriptures contain many stories and images that give us some insights about the mystery of God.
2. We are created in God's image.
3. God trusts us and forgives us.
4. God calls us to reach out in love to each other.
5. We are gifted and graced, able to share in the transforming life of God.

STAGE 3 (5-6)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 3 (Year 6) students should be able to:
Explain ways in which God is inviting us to participate in the growth of the Reign of God.

Key Concepts
1. God entrusts us with the world and with the responsibility to reverence, develop, heal and celebrate life.
2. The Reign of God is revealed through Jesus' ministry of reconciliation, healing, justice and peace.
3. God's life and love are active in our world.
4. We are challenged to create and renew our world enlivened by the Holy Spirit.

STAGE 4 (7-8)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 4 (Year 8) students should be able to:
Articulate an understanding and appreciation of God, revealed in Jesus, as entering into a relationship with humankind and calling each of us to a personal response.

Key Concepts   1. God reaches out to us in loving relationship.
2. The Trinitarian mystery of God is revealed in Jesus Christ and the gift of the Holy Spirit.
3. God has entered into a covenant with humankind.
4. Our relationship with God is damaged through sin when we choose to live for ourselves at the expense of others.
5. Jesus Christ reveals the forgiveness, compassion and mercy of God.

STAGE 5 (9-10)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 5 (Year 10) students should be able to:
Explore and identify the ways in which humankind recognises God who desires fullness of life for all creation.

Key Concepts   1. God desires authentic liberation for all and the coming to fulfilment of the Reign of God.
2. We experience God's life-giving grace through the gift of the Holy Spirit in our lives, the Church and the world.
3. God calls us to life through the experience of joy, hope, grief and anxiety in our life.
4. The gift of God's life empowers us to help bring about the Reign of God.

STAGE 6 (11-12)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 6 (Year 12) students should be able to:
Examine the complexities of the human response to the revelation of God's love and truth in human experience, in Jesus Christ, in Scripture and tradition and in other religious traditions.

Key Concepts   1. God, who is holy mystery, is revealed in and through creation, human experience, Scripture and the developing tradition of the Church.
2. God's grace brings us life and inspires us to goodness.
3. Suffering and death find meaning in Jesus' life, death and resurrection.
4. Human destiny finds its fulfilment in God.
5. God is revealed in Scripture and the developing tradition of the Church.

JESUS CHRIST: *Word Made Flesh, the Wisdom, Freedom and Compassion of God.*

STAGE 1 (K-2)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 1 (Year 2) students should be able to:
Recognise Jesus as a human being who reveals God's love for us.

Key Concepts
1. Jesus is a human being like us.
2. Jesus is a member of a family.
3. Mary is the mother of Jesus.
4. Jesus is our friend.
5. Jesus shows us the way God wants us to live.

STAGE 2 (3-4)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 2 (Year 4) students should be able to:
Explain that Jesus is present in the Church community and sends us the Holy Spirit to enliven and guide us.

Key Concepts
1. After Jesus' death and resurrection people gathered in communities to remember him and tell the story of his compassion and love.
2. Jesus shares his Spirit with us.
3. Jesus shows us the way God wants us to live.
4. Jesus teaches us about healing, forgiveness and reconciliation.
5. When we make sinful choices Jesus understands and forgives us.

STAGE 3 (5-6)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 3 (Year 6) students should be able to:
Articulate an understanding that Jesus, present in our lives in many ways, offers hope to the world.

Key Concepts
1. Jesus is the Son of God, the Chosen One whom God promised.
2. In his life, death and resurrection Jesus reveals the saving love of God.
3. Jesus identified with the poor, the lonely, the sick and the outcast.
4. The Holy Spirit, gift of Jesus, inspires and renews the Church community to live as Jesus did.
5. The Holy Spirit gifts us and enables us to act with wisdom, understanding, right judgement, courage, knowledge, reverence, wonder and awe.

STAGE 4 (7-8)

Outcome By the end of Stage 4 (Year 8) students should be able to:
Explore ways in which Jesus Christ offers hope to the world and challenges us to discipleship.

Key Concepts 1. Jesus Christ showed us in the way he lived for others that he is God's Word revealing who God is and how God wants us to live.
2. Jesus Christ lived in a particular historical, social, political and religious context.
3. Jesus Christ lived the values of the Reign of God and challenges us to discipleship.
4. Jesus Christ relates to others, especially the poor, with justice and compassion.

STAGE 5 (9-10)

Outcome By the end of Stage 5 (Year 10) students should be able to:
Examine and analyse different images of, and insights into, the mystery of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

Key Concepts 1. Jesus Christ is understood and portrayed in many different ways in the rich history of the Christian tradition.
2. Jesus Christ's message of salvation in the Gospel is one of conversion, hope, liberation and love for all.
3. Jesus Christ challenges us to recognise the selfishness, greed and unjust structures, which are manifestations of sin in the world.
4. Jesus Christ, through the Holy Spirit is the source of the Church's unity.

STAGE 6 (11-12)

Outcome By the end of Stage 6 (Year 12) students should be able to:
Investigate and evaluate understandings of the mystery of Jesus Christ expressed in the theological perspectives that offer meaning to human life.

Key Concepts 1. Jesus Christ is truly human and truly divine: the Jesus of History and Christ of Faith.
2. Christian theology names the mystery of Christ in various ways: Word made Flesh, the Wisdom of God, the Compassion of God.
3. Jesus Christ is central in our search for meaning and identity.
4. The mystery of evil exists and both conceals as well as reveals God. God does not abandon us in the midst of evil but suffers with us, calling us to struggle against evil.
5. Jesus Christ calls us to discipleship in which the work of liberation for all people is continued.

CHURCH: *Body of Christ, Communion in the Spirit, Community of Disciples, Witness to Unity and Justice, Pilgrims in Service to the World.*

STAGE 1 (K-2)

Outcome
By the end of Stage 1 (Year 2) students should be able to:
Name the Church as God's family: a believing, welcoming, caring and celebrating community.

Key Concepts
1. The Church is called to be God's family.
2. The Church is a believing, welcoming, caring and celebrating community.
3. The Church is a community that celebrates God's love.
4. The Church is a community that listens and responds to the Good News of Jesus.

STAGE 2 (3-4)

Outcome
By the end of Stage 2 (Year 4) students should be able to:
Identify the Church as a community that celebrates the life and work of Jesus.

Key Concepts
1. The Church is a community of believers called to live as Jesus lived.
2. The Church celebrates Jesus' life, death and resurrection in many feasts and seasons of the liturgical year.
3. The Church is empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness to unity and justice.

STAGE 3 (5-6)

Outcome
By the end of Stage 3 (Year 6) students should be able to:
Describe the pilgrim Church as being empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a sign of hope, reconciliation and service to the world.

Key Concepts
1. The Church is empowered by the Holy Spirit and founded on the living faith of the early Christians.
2. During the season of Pentecost the Church celebrates her beginnings and renews her mission to live the Reign of God.
3. The Church honours Mary, Mother of God, and people from all ages who have been inspirational in carrying forward the mission of Jesus.
4. Our local Church community, led by the Bishop, is committed to the mission of the universal Church.

STAGE 4 (7-8)

Outcome By the end of Stage 4 (Year 8) students should be able to:
Identify and describe the Church as being missionary in nature, as having various rites and cultural traditions and as having an ongoing story.

Key Concepts
1. The life and mission of the Church in our world are inspired and guided by the Holy Spirit.
2. The missionary and prophetic nature of the Church is seen through its ongoing and complex human history.
3. Through cooperation and dialogue, the Church recognises the presence of God in diverse cultures and traditions.
4. The life, prayer and worship of the Church are expressed in various rites and cultural traditions.

STAGE 5 (9-10)

Outcome By the end of Stage 5 (Year 10) students should be able to:
Investigate the development of the Church, its structures and role in society.

Key Concepts
1. Various images and models are used to understand the nature of the Church.
2. Christians are called to engage in the renewal of the Church for its participation in and transformation of the world.
3. The Church, Body of Christ, is called to participate in Jesus' healing and reconciling ministry by reaching out in various ways to those who are suffering and broken.
4. The Church is called to dialogue and cooperate with other Christian traditions and other religions of the world.
5. The Church, a prophetic community, exists to proclaim the Word, call the community to worship and offer service.
6. The story of the Australian Church inspires us to participate in the life of the universal church as community for the world.

STAGE 6 (11-12)

Outcome By the end of Stage 6 (Year 12) students should be able to:
Explore the distinguishing features of the Church and its response to the fundamental questions of meaning and purpose.

Key Concepts
1. The Church, as communion in the Spirit, is an expression of our identity as Catholics.
2. The Church is called to embody the Reign of God in its beliefs, rituals and ethical teachings.
3. Christians are called to engage in the renewal of the Church for its participation in, and transformation of, the world.
4. The Catholic Church provides a specific religious context for exploring fundamental questions of meaning and purpose.

SACRAMENTS: *Ritual Celebrations of the Experience of God's Spirit in the Midst of Life.*

STAGE 1 (K-2)

Outcome
By the end of Stage 1 (Year 2) students should be able to:
Express that the sacraments are ways by which we are welcomed into the Church community, reconciled and invited to share the special presence of Jesus.

Key Concepts
1. We celebrate the wonder and beauty of God's presence in people and the world around us.
2. The sacraments are special celebrations in the life of the Church.
3. Baptism celebrates my welcome into God's family, the Church.
4. Penance celebrates our reconciliation with God and others and God's forgiveness of sin.

STAGE 2 (3-4)

Outcome
By the end of Stage 2 (Year 4) students should be able to:
Explain ways the sacraments are celebrations of the presence of God in the lives of Christians.

Key Concepts
1. In the sacraments we celebrate the presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
2. Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist celebrate our initiation into the Church.
3. We celebrate God's healing forgiveness through the sacrament of Penance.
4. The Sacrament of Eucharist celebrates the presence of Jesus: the community remembers what Jesus did; offers sacrifice; gives thanks; shares a meal; and is called to service.

STAGE 3 (5-6)

Outcome
By the end of Stage 3 (Year 6) students should be able to:
Investigate the sacraments as ritual celebrations in the experience of God's Spirit in our lives.

Key Concepts
1. Sacraments are celebrations in ritual, sign, symbol and word of the risen Christ with us.
2. A sacramental Church nourishes and celebrates key moments of our lives.
3. Through the sacraments we are challenged to lives of ministry and service.
4. The Sacrament of Confirmation celebrates and seals the presence of the Holy Spirit within us.

STAGE 4 (7-8)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 4 (Year 8) students should be able to:
Examine the sacramental presence of God expressed in the Christian community through ritual, sign, symbol and word.

Key Concepts   1. In showing forth the presence of God, creation is sacramental.
2. Sacraments grow out of and enrich the shared life of the Christian community, celebrating initiation, healing and service.
3. Each sacrament has its own history, symbols and rituals.

STAGE 5 (9-10)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 5 (Year 10) students should be able to:
Explain and appreciate Eucharist as an action of the Christian community: reconciling, renewing and calling it to action.

Key Concepts   1. The Eucharist is both the source and summit of Christian life for the individual and community.
2. The Eucharist celebrates reconciliation, healing and unity.
3. We are called to service and justice through the Eucharist.
4. The Church uses rituals, signs, symbols and words to help us express our experience of God's spirit in the midst of life.
5. The Eucharist celebrates the union of God in Christ through the power of the Holy Spirit.
6. The grace and beauty of God in creation is life giving and inspires us to goodness.

STAGE 6 (11-12)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 6 (Year 12) students should be able to:
Analyse and evaluate the sacramental nature of Christian lives.

Key Concepts   1. The Church, as sacrament of Jesus, challenges us to show forth the presence of God.
2. God's grace is made manifest wherever people strive for life-giving experiences of justice, freedom and truth.
3. Matrimony and Holy Orders affirm a particular mission of service in the Church.
4. All Christians are called to be prophetic and witness to the transforming action of God in human life and human affairs.

SCRIPTURE: *Word of God in Inspired Human Words, Interpreting the Community's Foundational Experience.*

STAGE 1 (K-2)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 1 (Year 2) students should be able to:
Recall and reflect on familiar scriptural material.

Key Concepts
1. The Scriptures tell us about God's love for us and we learn from and pray with them.
2. The Gospels tell us about Jesus' life and the people who believed in him.

STAGE 2 (3-4)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 2 (Year 4) students should be able to:
Explore ways in which scriptural texts apply to their own experiences and are used in prayer and worship.

Key Concepts
1. The Scriptures are intended to make us think about and reflect on our lives.
2. The Gospels teach us about the life and love of Jesus.
3. Jesus taught using parables and stories.
4. In our prayer and worship we listen to the Scriptures.

STAGE 3 (5-6)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 3 (Year 6) students should be able to:
Distinguish different styles of writing in the Scriptures and connect the scriptural message with everyday life.

Key Concepts
1. The Jewish and Christian Scriptures contain different types of writing.
2. The Christian Scriptures teach us about Jesus and the early Christian communities.
3. The Jewish Scriptures tell the story of the people of Israel's covenant relationship with God.
4. The Gospel of God's saving love challenges us to live Christian lives.
5. The four Gospels are central to the church's prayer and teaching.

STAGE 4 (7-8)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 4 (Year 8) students should be able to:
Research the variety of literature in the Jewish and Christian Scriptures and articulate their significance.

Key Concepts
1. The Scriptures reveal God's creative and covenant love.
2. The Scriptures witness to a people's developing experience of and relationship with God.
3. The Scriptures contain a variety of sacred books and literature in which there is a variety of text types or literary forms.
4. The authors of the Scriptures wrote with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit.
5. Scripture texts must be interpreted in their historical, cultural and literary contexts.

STAGE 5 (9-10)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 5 (Year 10) students should be able to:
Analyse critically the composition of the synoptic Gospels and identify ways in which they inspire and challenge us to live.

Key Concepts
1. The Scriptures reveal a God of peace, justice and mercy.
2. Through the Scriptures God challenges us to a life of faith characterised by compassion, love and service.
3. The Scriptures are central to the life, teaching and worship of the Church.
4. The teachings and miracles of Jesus disclose key aspects of the Reign of God.
5. The Scriptures contain accounts of men and women called to speak prophetically and live out God's call as Mary did.

STAGE 6 (11-12)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 6 (Year 12) students should be able to:
Demonstrate an understanding of biblical interpretation through analysing, interpreting and responding to a range of scriptural passages.

Key Concepts
1. The Holy Spirit guides the whole Church in the interpretation of Scripture.
2. The Scriptures nourish spiritual life, prayerful reflection, worship and action.
3. The Church is guided by biblical scholarship in interpreting the Word of God found in the Scriptures.
4. The Scriptures are the living Word of God for all people and for all generations.

CHRISTIAN LIFE: *Growth in Discernment and Responsibility, Gifted and Challenged in the Transforming Presence of the Spirit.*

STAGE 1 (K-2)

Outcome By the end of Stage 1 (Year 2) students should be able to:
Explore ways that Christians in their lives express love for God and neighbour.

Key Concepts
1. I am precious, unique and loved by God.
2. God invites me to love and care for myself and for others.
3. My choices and actions affect others.
4. Jesus shows us how to live.

STAGE 2 (3-4)

Outcome By the end of Stage 2 (Year 4) students should be able to:
Investigate how Christians make loving choices that are informed by the example of Jesus.

Key Concepts
1. Jesus challenges us to follow his teachings and example.
2. We are challenged to reflect on the ways we respond to God's love for us.
3. As followers of Jesus we make loving choices and take responsibility for our actions.
4. When we use our gifts we are serving the community and helping to spread the Reign of God.

STAGE 3 (5-6)

Outcome By the end of Stage 3 (Year 6) students should be able to:
Interpret ways that Christians can respond generously to God's love of us and all creation.

Key Concepts
1. One way we respond to God's love is through service to others.
2. In our care for creation we are called to be responsible, trustworthy and wise stewards.
3. We respond to God's commandments by treating each other with respect, love and compassion.
4. The witness of good people challenges us to continue to strive for justice and peace.

STAGE 4 (7-8)

Outcome By the end of Stage 4 (Year 8) students should be able to:
Express an understanding and appreciation of Christian life as based on the life, teachings and values of Jesus Christ and as requiring informed decisions and appropriate actions.

Key Concepts
1. The life, teachings and values of Jesus inspire us to lead Christian lives.
2. The 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 which is the consequence of original sin.
3. Christian life calls us to act on the basis of informed and graced decision-making.
4. Christian life is nurtured and lived within a faith community and is characterised by cooperation and dialogue with other religious communities.
5. Justice calls us to celebrate cultural diversity as a reflection of God's creativity.

STAGE 5 (9-10)

Outcome By the end of Stage 5 (Year 10) students should be able to:
Examine Christian life as being informed by Church teaching and conscience and inspired by people of faith.

Key Concepts
1. Christian life challenges us to discipleship that shares in the mission of Christ.
2. **As a community of believers we experience the mystery of Jesus' life, death and resurrection.**
3. **The dignity of the human person requires the pursuit of the common good in a spirit of solidarity.**
4. **Christian life calls us to make informed decisions based on conscience and the ethical teachings of the Church.**
5. **The example of Mary, Mother of the Church, and the saints inspires Christian life.**

STAGE 6 (11-12)

Outcome By the end of Stage 6 (Year 12) students should be able to:
Communicate an understanding and appreciation of Christian life as requiring moral decision-making and a discerned response to contemporary culture.

Key Concepts
1. The Church teaches the importance of honesty and integrity in all aspects of personal, public, corporate and church life.
2. The Scriptures and teachings of the Church inform moral decision-making.
3. Christians are called to read the signs of the times and to reflect and act on them in ways that bring about the transformation of the world.
4. Through the Holy Spirit we experience the transforming presence of God in our lives, in the Church and in the world.
5. Christian life finds expression within a particular vocation oriented to service of others: marriage, priesthood, single life, and life in religious community.
6. Christian life acknowledges the sacredness, dignity and purpose of work and leisure.

PRAYER: *Growing in Faithful Relationship, Listening, Trusting and Celebrating the Living God.*

STAGE 1 (K-2)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 1 (Year 2) students should be able to:
Understand that prayer is an expression of God's relationship with each of us and a way of responding to this relationship.

Key Concepts
1. God is with me in a special way in prayer.
2. I can talk with and listen to God at any time and in any place, in many different ways.
3. Prayer involves rituals, symbols, celebrations and silence.
5. Prayer is a way of thanking God for life and creation.

STAGE 2 (3-4)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 2 (Year 4) students should be able to:
Name different forms of prayer and liturgical celebrations.

Key Concepts
1. People celebrate and pray together at different times and in different ways.
2. The celebration of Eucharist is the heart of our community prayer.
3. When we pray together we celebrate God's presence.
4. We grow in relationship with God through prayer.
5. God's faithfulness and goodness are recalled and celebrated in many ways throughout the liturgical year.
6. We honour and celebrate Mary through prayers, feasts and seasons of the Church's liturgical year.

STAGE 3 (5-6)

Outcome   By the end of Stage 3 (Year 6) students should be able to:
Describe the many forms of prayer that facilitate the movement of the Spirit in our relationship with God.

Key Concepts
1. In our church communities we experience various kinds of prayer: thanksgiving, petition, praise, sorrow and adoration.
2. Prayer is expressed in different ways through music, movement and meditation.
3. The Scriptures are a rich source of nourishment for personal and communal prayer.
4. Jesus' prayer to God shows us how to pray.
5. Through prayer the Holy Spirit enables us to open ourselves to acknowledging our sinfulness and experiencing the healing, reconciling power of God's love.
6. The celebration of liturgical feasts is an opportunity for personal and communal prayer.

STAGE 4 (7-8)

Outcome By the end of Stage 4 (Year 8) students should be able to:
Identify and explore cultural, traditional and contemporary forms of prayer.

Key Concepts
1. Forms of prayer emanate from the cultural traditions of the community, nourishing and enriching the wider Church.
2. Prayer celebrates the sacredness of time and space.
3. Prayer expresses praise, thanksgiving and intercession and fosters compassion and unity.
4. Drawing on the spirituality of indigenous Australians enriches prayer.

STAGE 5 (9-10)

Outcome By the end of Stage 5 (Year 10) students should be able to:
Express an appreciation of prayer as an aspect of growing in faithful relationship to the living God.

Key Concepts
1. Prayer is a response to God's relationship with us.
2. Prayer and reflection are integral to making wise decisions.
3. Prayer is central to the life and mission of the Church and its members.
4. The Scriptures are a rich source of nourishment for personal and communal prayer.

STAGE 6 (11-12)

Outcome By the end of Stage 6 (Year 12) students should be able to:
Examine prayer as growing in faithful relationship, listening, trusting and celebrating the living God.

Key Concepts
1. Different styles of prayer, for example, personal contemplation, lectio divina, liturgy of the hours, devotional practices, are part of the rich heritage of the Church.
2. Prayer celebrates and interprets the life and faith experience of the person and community.
3. Prayer is expressed through different commitments and lifestyles.
4. Personal spirituality is nourished and expressed in prayer.

RELIGION AND SOCIETY (Secondary): *Understanding and Respecting the Role of Diverse Religious Traditions, Particularly in the Australian Context.*

STAGE 4 (7-8)

Outcome By the end of Stage 4 (Year 8) students should be able to:
Articulate an understanding and appreciation of the nature and role of religion in society and people's lives.

Key Concepts
1. The nature and role of religion is integral in society and in people's lives.
2. Appreciation of the nature and role of religion in society and people's lives is informed by faith, openness, dialogue and cultural sensitivity.
3. The examination of religion in historical, cultura1 and geographical contexts, including the local area, is critical in gaining an understanding of its nature and role.

STAGE 5 (9-10)

Outcome By the end of Stage 5 (Year 10) students should be able to:
Recognise and analyse the nature, significance and role of sacred places, persons and ethical codes in the faith and practice of some Christian denominations and world religions.

Key Concepts
1. Religious freedom is a fundamental human right.
2. Sacred places and rituals are integral to faith and the practice of religion.
3. The Holy Spirit inspires men and women of different Christian denominations.
4. Ecumenism is critical in developing relationships between people of different faiths.
5. Mass media is a significant influence on the development of a personal spirituality and moral code.
6. A religious perspective can influence personal and communal codes of ethics and morality.

STAGE 6 (11-12)

Outcome By the end of Stage 6 (Year 12) students should be able to:
Express an understanding and appreciation of belief systems and spirituality and how religious experience, traditions and communities serve to engage and support people and their search for meaning.

Key Concepts
1. The human search for meaning and fulfilment is inspired by the Holy Spirit.
2. **The mystery of God is manifest in world religions.**
3. **Aboriginal spirituality, beliefs and practices are important in understanding the spirituality of Australians as a whole.**
4. **The relationship between Church and state raises a number of issues including religious pluralism and tolerance; ethical codes of different world religions and social justice issues.**

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