



CATHOLIC EDUCATION
Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn

FOUNDATION STATEMENT

Religious Education



PURPOSE

To be faith filled Catholic learning communities of hope, joy and wonder where all are welcome and inspired to grow to their potential.

VISION

Jesus Christ, our greatest teacher, calls us to share and witness to our Catholic Faith and Tradition, build inclusive communities and deliver contemporary quality learning opportunities for every person.



VISION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Above all, a Catholic school exists to be a community striving for integral education and formation. This journey is a response to the movement of the Holy Spirit calling us in love and truth to flourish in communion with Jesus of Nazareth, fully human and fully divine.

God's love and truth permeates all human experience and is enriched especially in right relationships and reflective action leading to prayer and liturgical celebration. Effective Religious Education is therefore a rich tapestry, an active interweaving between life, culture and faith. While respecting religious freedom, all are invited to engage with the richness of the Catholic tradition and to work for a more just world as they consider becoming missionary disciples, witnessing to the fullness of life 'in Christ'.

I have come that
they may have life,
and have it to the full.

– John 10:10



IMAGINING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Nurture the development of a relationship with God in Jesus Christ, creating moments for transformation where the sacred is encountered and the full flourishing of the human spirit is experienced.

Challenge learners to be cultural agents and a religious voice in the world in light of the Gospel, being authentic witnesses to the mission of Jesus Christ in their everyday lives and the wider world.

Develop religious literacy in light of the Catholic tradition, including ways of talking, acting, creating, communicating, critiquing, evaluating, participating, ritualising, theologising, worshipping and reflecting with others in a variety of contexts.

‘Young people call us to renewed and expansive hope, for they represent new directions for humanity and open us up to the future.’

– Pope Francis

Nourish spiritual attitudes, where one learns how there is a way of living that acts upon God’s will in the world, inviting an attitude of love, humility, reflection and forgiveness and understanding of how to live a Christian way of life.

Reveal the distinctive religious Tradition, beliefs and doctrines that are handed on in the Catholic Church, learning the knowledge, dispositions and skills that illuminate the Catholic faith.

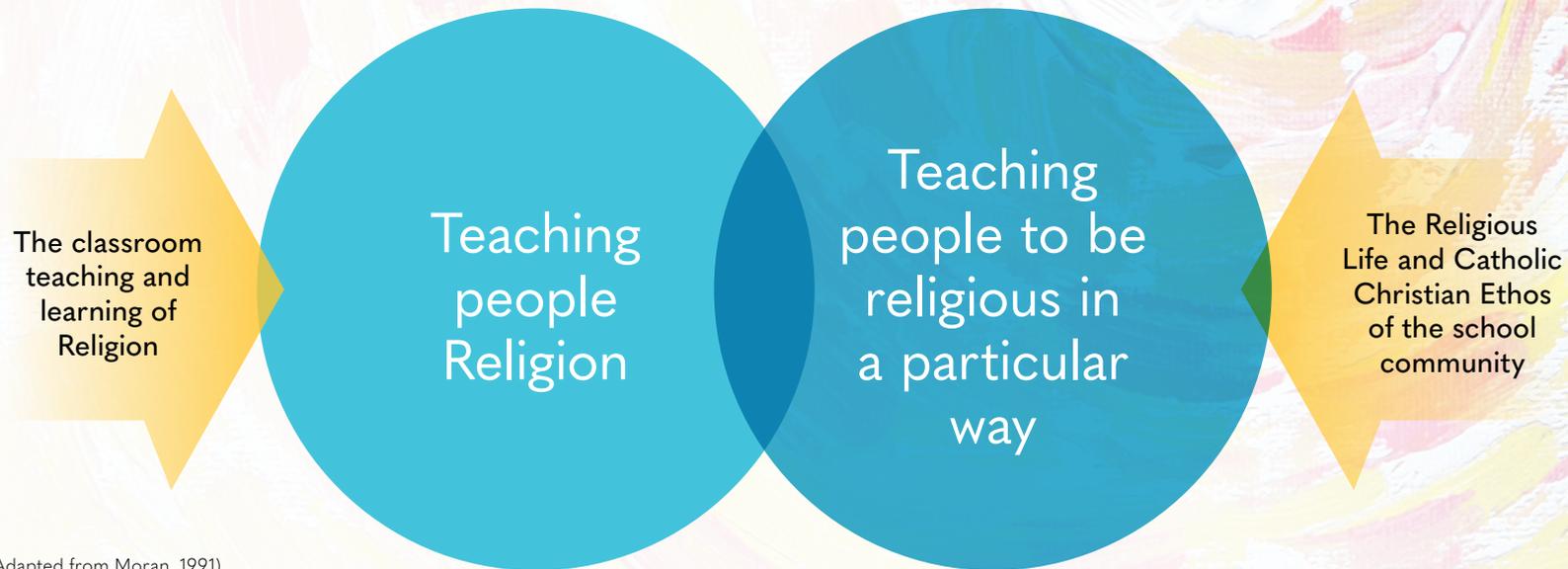
Activate critical and creative wisdom, opening and cultivating a mind capable of caring for today’s world and all its peoples, engaging in dialogue with contemporary culture to affect peace and justice, empowering all to create a better world.



MODEL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

The Vision for Religious Education emphasises the complementarity of the two dimensions of Religious Education and articulates a school's aspirations for learners in terms of religious literacy, faith formation and authentic transformation. In that sense,

the Vision begins with 'the end in mind'. In the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn, the distinct and complementary nature of both dimensions of Religious Education has been conceptualised in the following Model for Religious Education.



(Adapted from Moran, 1991)

MODEL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In the schools and colleges of the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn, teaching people religion and teaching people to be religious draws upon the Catholic tradition in ways that are mindful of local contexts and the multi-faith realities of contemporary culture. School communities seek to understand and utilise, the distinctiveness and complementary nature of these two dimensions of Religious Education, in the holistic education and the formation of learners. The experiences for the learning and teaching of Religion and the Religious Life of the School are responsive to religious diversity, while being faithful to the Catholic identity of the school.

The fullness of the Vision for Religious Education is realised through the intersection of both dimensions. For example, participation in service events without a deep understanding of the related Catholic Social Teachings does not effectively enable the fulfilment of Religious Education. Classroom learning and teaching about Catholic Social Teachings without active participation in, and critical reflection on, social justice initiatives and service learning activities are similarly limited in its effectiveness. Engagement in both dimensions is needed. Recognising the complementary nature of both dimensions requires clarity about the distinctiveness and, at times, sharply contrasting nature of these dimensions.

'Religious education requires that those of us who appropriate the term "teacher" know which of the two processes we are engaged in at a particular time and place. The tragedy would be that, for lack of clarity about this distinction, institutions end up doing neither: their academic inquiry is not challenging enough and their formation is not particular enough. Endless talk about Christianity is not religious education. What deserves that title is teaching people religion with all the breadth and depth of intellectual excitement one is capable of – and teaching people to be religious with all the particularity of the verbal and nonverbal symbols that place us on the way' (Moran, 1991, p. 256).





MODEL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

In summary, the Vision for Religious Education and the Model for Religious Education take a big picture view; for while both take place within the physical and temporal context of a Catholic school, they presuppose a broader context and length of time not available to a school: a whole lifetime.

(Adapted from The Vision of Religious Education, Brisbane Catholic Education, 2013)





CONTEMPORARY CONTEXTS OF SCHOOL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Societal Context

The Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn comprises of Catholic schools in metropolitan, rural and isolated areas and operates in a complex and ever-changing environment. Contemporary learners are immersed in a social global network and from an early age are exposed to a range of values presented through diverse media. Archdiocesan and Congregational schools exist within a broader Australian culture that promotes and 'appreciates Australia's social, cultural, linguistic and religious diversity' (Melbourne Declaration on Educational Goals for Young Australians, 2008, p. 10).

Increasingly, Australian and other western societies are experiencing an erosion of

tradition and authority in religion and society and a diminished ability for one generation to pass on traditions to the next. There are advancements of increasing pluralisation and secularisation, growing indifference and even hostility to religion and a focus on the pursuit of individual meaning making and autonomy. In this current cultural setting, being Catholic, or being religious, effectively becomes only one choice among many (National Catholic Education Committee, 2017).

Catholic schools still continue to be a choice for many parents who enrol their children for a variety of reasons, many of which are not religious. They know that they have chosen a school

that teaches Religious Education and offers a range of Catholic religious actions. Families come from wide-ranging cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds and have diverse family patterns. While Catholic school enrolment gives priority to Catholics, the schools are inclusive and open to all. They are challenged to have a preferential option for the poor and the marginalised (National Catholic Education Committee, 2017).

Therefore, schools in the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn are continually challenged to engage families in Religious Education in rich and relevant ways, integrating faith, life and culture. As they



seek to reflect a Catholic Christian worldview they strive to dialogue with multiple perspectives, reflecting the reality of contemporary schools and society.

(Adapted from Contemporary Contexts of School Religious Education, Brisbane Catholic Education, 2013)

Ecclesial Context

Religious Education serves to provide learners with a religious voice that they can bring to everyday life experience; a lens through which they might view the world. Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn form an integral

part of the mission of the local Church and as such can truly be described as places that endeavour to 'pass the faith and wisdom of the community on to the younger generation in a way that is meaningful for them' (cited in D'Orsa, 2011, p. 32).



Future generations who are 'educated in a Christian way for dialogue, will come out of the classroom motivated to build bridges and, therefore, to find new answers to the many challenges of our times'. – Pope Francis 2016

Catholic schools are:

- an important part of the evangelising mission of the Church, an ecclesial entity where faith, culture, and life are brought into harmony;
- places that meet the needs of their context, continuing to be relevant in today's world by remaining faithful to the Gospel and the faith tradition of the Church (Hindmarsh, 2017, p. 13);
- an integral expression of the Church, supporting learners and their families by connecting them with the Catholic Christian tradition and its spiritual richness;
- a forum in which this tradition can be experienced and explored; and
- places of pastoral ministry.

Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn are faced with the changing context of parish life and distinctive geographical challenges for their Catholic communities. An increasing number of learners and their families are less engaged

with the formal life of the Catholic Church than in the past. Consequently, for many learners, the understanding of the culture and language of religion is underdeveloped. Catholic schools increasingly provide both the introductory and developmental understanding and experience of Church for learners and their families. This is supported when the school is a place where learners and their families encounter the mission and outreach of the Church, especially through pastoral care and the sacramental experience of a Catholic Christian community (Adapted from Contemporary Contexts of School Religious Education, Brisbane Catholic Education, 2013).

The Catholic school is a privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 1997, n. 11). It is from its Catholic character that the school derives its authenticity and becomes a genuine place of authentic and specific pastoral ministry.

Therefore, Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn seeks to promote knowledge, deep understanding and dispositions that characterise the Catholic and broader Christian tradition. 'Catholic education must contribute to the discovery of life's meaning and elicit new hopes for today and the future' (Vatican, 2014, n. 1), expressing the evangelising mission of the Church.

(Adapted from Contemporary Contexts of School Religious Education, Brisbane Catholic Education, 2013)

Educational Context

Each Archdiocesan school seeks transformation of the whole person so that those in the school community are empowered to live the gospel of Jesus Christ in their everyday lives. In the Catholic Christian tradition, education is a work of love and service. Schools strive to nurture and develop the faith of individuals in ways that are mindful of their cultural and religious identities.

The school is primarily a place for learning and teaching. Individually and collectively the Catholic schools of the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn seek to be places where learners:

- are invited to discover the presence of God in their lives;
- encounter positive relationships and experience the message of the Gospels; and
- make sense of their world by connecting to the scriptures, traditions and worship found in Catholic communities.

The scope of education has broadened and become increasingly complex. Rapid and constant social change requires the development of renewed educational frameworks and approaches and the building of new capacities to meet the demands of the present and the future. Educational discourse is increasingly richer and focuses on the learner and on learners being agents in constructing of meaning; on learning to learn, think and collaborate; on pedagogy and individualised learning; and on technologies for learning.

Educators are constantly challenged to respond to the realities they face in the light of their evangelising mission to live and proclaim the good news of Jesus Christ. Schools are called to be relevant; to read the signs of the times by integrating faith, life and culture, with a quest to be counter-cultural.

They are called to challenge societal influences that negatively

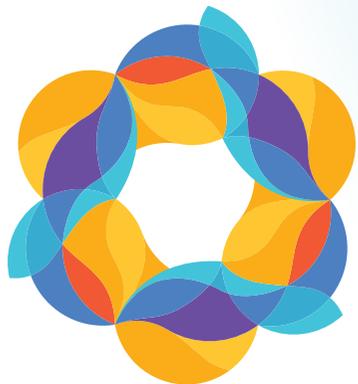
impact upon the spiritual wellbeing of the learner. In doing so, educators in their mission of evangelisation also draw upon positive social values such as care for the environment, justice and peace, outreach to the poor and the marginalised and community service.

Therefore, Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Canberra & Goulburn builds on best practice of the broader educational community, embedding the Catholic perspective into all areas of learning. The classroom learning and teaching of Religion reflect the philosophy, content, structure, academic rigour, assessment and reporting modes used in other learning areas. The Religious Life of the School empowers learners to maintain Christian integrity when confronted with the complexities of life in contemporary society.

(Adapted from Contemporary Contexts of School Religious Education, Brisbane Catholic Education, 2013).







The symbol of Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Canberra and Goulburn has been designed to represent our diverse Catholic Education landscape.

The weaving and interconnection of colour and shape is dynamic, organic and Trinitarian in nature, ensuring that no one shape stands alone, each element influencing the other.

The colours have been specifically chosen and embody the vast expanse of the Archdiocese. The yellow and red colours represent the canola fields and soil of the western farming regions.

The blue and purple signify the ocean of the coastal regions and the bluebell of Canberra. The red symbolises the action of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

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