

New Religious Education Curriculum for Catholic Primary Schools (Draft, 2015)

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Before we Begin ...

- ◉ What do you/your teachers enjoy about teaching Religious Education?
- ◉ What do you/your teachers find difficult about teaching Religious Education?
- ◉ What are your challenges as a faith leader in a Catholic school?



Benefits of a Curriculum in Religious Education

- Presents Religious Education with the same rigour as other subject areas
- Outlines a systematic educational approach to Religious Education with a clear scope and sequence
- Distinguishes Religious Education outcomes from faith formation goals

Aim of the Curriculum

- ◉ To help children mature in relation to their spiritual, moral and religious lives, through their encounter with, exploration and celebration of the Catholic faith
- ◉ This aim relates directly to the broad aim of the Primary School Curriculum (1999): 'to enable children to develop spiritual, moral and religious values'.

Overview – (Draft) Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland

1. There are five levels to the curriculum:

- ◉ Preschool level
- ◉ Level 1: Junior and Senior Infants
- ◉ Level 2: 1st and 2nd Classes
- ◉ Level 3: 3rd and 4th Classes
- ◉ Level 4: 5th and 6th Classes



Overview – (Draft) Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland

2. Content is divided into strands:

- Christian Faith
- Word of God
- Liturgy and Prayer
- Christian Morality



3. These strands are further subdivided into strand units:

Christian Faith

◉ Level 1

- ◉ Mystery of God
- ◉ Mystery of Jesus Christ
- ◉ Creation
- ◉ Mystery of the Church
- ◉ Eternal Life



◉ Level 2

- ◉ Mystery of God
- ◉ Mystery of Jesus Christ
- ◉ **Mystery of the Holy Spirit**
- ◉ Creation
- ◉ Mystery of the Church
- ◉ **Mary**
- ◉ Eternal Life
- ◉ **Other Religious Traditions**

Christian Faith



◉ Level 3

- ◉ Mystery of God
- ◉ Mystery of Jesus Christ
- ◉ Mystery of the Holy Spirit
- ◉ Creation
- ◉ Mystery of the Church/ **Kingdom**
- ◉ Mary
- ◉ Eternal Life
- ◉ Other Religious Traditions

◉ Level 4

- ◉ Mystery of God
- ◉ Mystery of Jesus Christ
- ◉ Mystery of the Holy Spirit
- ◉ Creation
- ◉ Mystery of the Church/
Kingdom
- ◉ Mary
- ◉ Eternal Life
- ◉ Other Religious Traditions

Example from Level 1, Christian Faith Strand, Mystery of Jesus Christ Strand Unit:

- ◉ Jesus is called 'Christ'
- ◉ Jesus is the Son of God
- ◉ Jesus is the Good Shepherd
- ◉ Jesus is our friend
- ◉ Jesus loves us
- ◉ Jesus tells us about God the Father
- ◉ Jesus is the Light of the World
- ◉ Jesus was born on Christmas Day
- ◉ Jesus was born in Bethlehem and grew up in Nazareth
- ◉ Jesus was born in a humble stable, into a poor family



Example from Level 1, Christian Faith Strand, Mystery of Jesus Christ Strand Unit:

- ◉ Jesus loves and welcomes little children
- ◉ Jesus helped the sick
- ◉ Jesus loved and cared for the poor
- ◉ Jesus celebrated the Last Supper with his disciples on Holy Thursday
- ◉ Jesus died on the cross for us on Good Friday
- ◉ Jesus rose from the dead on Easter Sunday
- ◉ Jesus appeared to his disciples after he had risen from the dead
- ◉ Jesus ascended into heaven

Word of God

- ◉ **Level 1**

- ◉ Bible
- ◉ Sacred Scripture
 - ◉ God's Loving Plan of Salvation
 - ◉ Jesus' Birth and Youth
 - ◉ Jesus' Public Life
 - ◉ Passion, Death and Resurrection



- ◉ **Level 2**

- ◉ Bible
- ◉ Sacred Scripture
 - ◉ God's Loving Plan of Salvation
 - ◉ Jesus' Birth and Youth
 - ◉ Jesus' Public Life
 - ◉ Jesus' Passion and Death
 - ◉ Jesus' Resurrection and **Pentecost**

Word of God



- **Level 3**

- Bible
- Sacred Scripture
 - God's Loving Plan of Salvation
 - Jesus' Birth and Youth
 - Jesus' Public Life
 - Jesus' Passion and Death
 - Jesus' Resurrection and **Ascension**
 - Pentecost

- **Level 4**

- Bible
- Sacred Scripture
 - God's Loving Plan of Salvation
 - Jesus' Birth and Youth
 - Jesus' Public Life
 - Jesus' Passion and Death
 - Jesus' Resurrection and Ascension
 - Pentecost

Example from Level 2, Word of God Strand, Jesus' Public Life Strand Unit:

- ◉ Mt 4:23-5. Jesus and the sick.
- ◉ Mt 6:9-13. Our Father.
- ◉ Mt 6:25-32. Jesus' teaching apostles to trust in God.
- ◉ Mt 9:1-8; Mk 2:1-12. Healing of man born paralysed.
- ◉ Mt 18:12-14; Lk 15:1-7. The lost sheep.
- ◉ Mt 28:20. 'I am with you always.'
- ◉ Mk 1:14-15. Proclaiming the Good News.
- ◉ Mk 1:16-20, 3:13-19. Appointment of the Twelve.
- ◉ Mk 1:29-31. Cure of Simon's mother-in-law.

- ◉ Mk 1:32-38. Jesus at work.
- ◉ Mk1:40-5; Mt 8:1-3; Leper healed.
- ◉ Mk 2:13-19. Call of Matthew/Levi tax collector.
- ◉ Mk 2:15-17. Tax collectors & sinners.
- ◉ Mk 5:21-24; 35-43. Jairus' daughter.
- ◉ Mk 6:46; Lk 6:12; Mt 14:23. Jesus praying.
- ◉ Mk10: 46-52 Blind Man (Bartimaeus).
- ◉ Mk 14:32-36. Jesus' relationship with God the Father.
- ◉ Lk 3:2-3, 15-18. John the Baptist.
- ◉ Lk 4:1-13; Mt 4:1-11. Jesus in the desert.
- ◉ Lk 5:1-11. Disciples called.
- ◉ Lk 6:12-16. The choice of the twelve.

- ◉ Lk 19:1-10. Zacchaeus.
- ◉ Lk 21:1-4; Mk 12:41-44. The widow's mite.
- ◉ Jn 5:36-37. The Father has sent me.
- ◉ Jn 6:35. 'I am the Bread of Life.'
- ◉ Jn 6:38. 'For I have come down from heaven.'
- ◉ Jn 8:12. Jesus light of the world.
- ◉ Jn 12:1-8. Jesus shares a meal with his friends.
- ◉ Jn 13:34-35. Love commandment
- ◉ Jn 14:9-10. 'Whoever has seen me has seen the Father.'
- ◉ Jn 15:14. 'You are my friends if you do what I command you.'

The Finding in the Temple



Liturgy and Prayer

◉ Level 1

- ◉ Prayer:
 - ◉ Formal prayer
 - ◉ Additional prayers
 - ◉ Spontaneous Prayer
- ◉ Liturgical Year
- ◉ Sacraments
- ◉ Mass

◉ Level 2

- ◉ Prayer:
 - ◉ Formal prayer
 - ◉ Additional prayers
- ◉ Liturgical Year
- ◉ Sacraments
- ◉ Mass



Liturgy and Prayer

- ◉ **Level 3**

- ◉ Prayer:
 - ◉ Formal prayer
 - ◉ Additional prayers
- ◉ Liturgy
- ◉ Liturgical Year
- ◉ Sacraments
- ◉ Mass



- ◉ **Level 4**

- ◉ Prayer:
 - ◉ Formal prayer
 - ◉ Additional prayers
- ◉ Liturgy
- ◉ Liturgical Year
- ◉ Sacraments
- ◉ Mass

Example from Level 3, Liturgy and Prayer Strand, Formal Prayer Strand Unit:

- ◉ *Comhartha na Croise*
- ◉ *Glóir don Athair*
- ◉ Prayer to the Trinity
- ◉ Gloria
- ◉ St Patrick's Breastplate
- ◉ Apostle's Creed
- ◉ Stations of the Cross
- ◉ The Rosary: Sorrowful Mysteries
- ◉ Memorial Acclamations 2 and 3
- ◉ The Angelus
- ◉ Sanctus (Holy Holy)
- ◉ Agnus Dei (Lamb of God)
- ◉ All Mass responses



Prayer with Movement (Level 1)



Christian Morality

- ◉ **Level 1**

- ◉ Human dignity
- ◉ Social teaching of the Church
- ◉ RSE in a Christian context



- ◉ **Level 2**

- ◉ Human dignity
- ◉ **Human freedom and responsibility**
- ◉ **God's graceful presence and assistance**
- ◉ Social teaching of the Church
- ◉ RSE in a Christian context

Christian Morality

◉ Level 3

- ◉ Human dignity
- ◉ Human freedom and responsibility
- ◉ God's graceful presence and assistance
- ◉ Social teaching of the Church
- ◉ RSE in a Christian context



◉ Level 4

- ◉ Human dignity
- ◉ Human freedom and responsibility
- ◉ God's graceful presence and assistance
- ◉ Social teaching of the Church
- ◉ RSE in a Christian context

Example from Level 4, Christian Morality Strand, Human Dignity Strand Unit:

- ◉ All human life is God's gift
- ◉ God has willed that all people should constitute one family and treat one another as brothers and sisters
- ◉ Every Christian is called to develop his/her own gifts and carry out his/her own responsibilities and so become holy
- ◉ Every person, created in the image and likeness of God has dignity and rights
- ◉ Our dignity is a gift of God's love and does not depend on race, sex, economic status, human achievement or our place in society.
- ◉ Christians respect the fundamental rights of each person
- ◉ Every human being has a right to food, clothing, and shelter, education, employment, to respect, to appropriate information, to act according to one's own conscience, to privacy and freedom of religion
- ◉ A person is more precious for who s/he is than for what s/he has.

Human Freedom and Responsibility



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4. The development of ‘Skills of Religious Literacy’ are also included as part of the curriculum. These skills are:

- Understanding
- Communicating
- Participating
- Developing Spiritual Literacy
- Developing Interreligious Literacy



Example from Level 2, Christian Faith Strand

Skills: The child should be enabled to...

- **Understanding:**

- Identify and explain Christian beliefs
- Apply Jesus' actions and teaching to their own lives

- **Communicating:**

- Express feelings, questions, ideas and understandings about Christian beliefs
- Memorise faith summaries, expressing Christian beliefs

- **Developing Spiritual Literacy:**

- Explore awareness of the presence of God in self, others and world

Developing Interreligious Literacy

- ◉ **Timing:**
 - ◉ **Level 2:** One and a half hours of study of other faiths per year
 - ◉ **Level 3:** Two and a half hours of study of other faiths per year
 - ◉ **Level 4:** Five hours of study of other faiths per year



Level 2

- ◉ identify his/her own religious identity and religious and/or cultural identity of others
- ◉ identify Christian and other faith communities in his/her locality
- ◉ listen to and discuss stories about children in a Christian or other faith community (Jewish/Muslim) in Ireland



Level 3



- discuss the importance of religious or philosophical beliefs in the lives of people in his/her community
- investigate the religious practice of children in other Christian, Jewish and Muslim communities in Ireland and relating it to his/her own religious practice

Level 4

- ◉ research one Christian and one other religious faith community (Jewish/ Muslim)
- ◉ investigate ways of respecting and learning about and from people who adhere to other religions or life stances in Ireland
- ◉ engage in ecumenical and interfaith activities



Whole-School Context:

Principles of good Inter-religious learning (Kieran, 2005)

- All children in all Catholic schools have a right to learn about diverse faiths. Teaching about world faith traditions should not be based on the number of pupils who come from diverse faith in a class or school.
- Introducing children to two or more faith traditions simultaneously or consecutively causes confusion. Children should be given accurate, clear, age and ability-appropriate information concerning the faith tradition.

Whole-School Context:

Principles of good Inter-religious learning (Kieran, 2005)

- The positive aspects of the faith tradition should be explored and the teacher should always attempt to avoid stereotypes and superficial understandings. The teacher should avoid focusing excessively on what children may perceive as unusual details of a faith tradition which may give children an unbalance view of the faith tradition.
- Teachers in Catholic schools should show children that there are many living faiths practiced by ordinary people in contemporary Ireland.

An Example Level 3



Also included:

5. Faith Formation Goals

- **Rationale:** While religious education 'does not require the assent of faith' nevertheless, it is expected that many children in Catholic pre-schools and primary schools will be baptised Catholics, and good religious education will aim to help them to grow towards maturity in faith



Some Examples from Level 2

- encounter God in the stillness and quiet of prayer
- appreciate that the people who help us are signs of God and they reveal his love, care, wisdom and justice
- experience Jesus' forgiving presence in their own lives
- become aware that Jesus is calling them personally to be disciples
- relate their Christian actions to those of Jesus
- be able to respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit to love as Jesus asks
- seek to emulate Mary's obedience and trust in God
- seek to emulate the saints and to ask their help in prayer
- identify their own role in the Church community
- develop an appreciation of the unity between themselves and others in the community of faith

Also included:

6. Special Education Curriculum Guidelines

- Aimed at meeting the needs of children with moderate, severe and profound general learning disabilities who have very individual learning needs.
- Guided by the approach taken by the *NCCA Curriculum* content is presented in three bands (NCCA, 2006, 5):
 - Attending
 - Responding
 - Initiating



7. Guidelines for Religious Education in a Catholic Primary School Context

- ◉ Catholic primary Religious Education entails true freedom
- ◉ Catholic primary Religious Education is theocentric
- ◉ Jesus Christ is 'at the centre of all teaching for Christians'
- ◉ Scripture is a primary source for Catholic Religious Education

7. Guidelines for Religious Education in a Catholic Primary School Context

- The Church's liturgy is an essential element of Catholic Religious Education
- The experience of prayer is integral to Catholic Religious Education
- Catholic Religious Education always emphasises moral education
- Music and song are an important part of Catholic Religious Education
- Inculturation is an important principle for Catholic Religious Education

7. Guidelines for Religious Education in a Catholic Primary School Context

- ◉ Memorisation is fundamental in Catholic Religious Education
- ◉ The environment is important for Catholic Religious Education
- ◉ Catholic Religious Education develops ecumenical and inter-religious awareness and respect for the cultures and religions of others
- ◉ Religious Education includes appropriate processes for assessment and evaluation

For you to think about ...

- ◉ From all that you have heard, what appeals to you most?
- ◉ As principal, what concerns do you have about the implementation of this curriculum?
- ◉ What questions still remain?

