

*Religious Education*

*Suggested Guidelines towards the Formulation of Religious Education Policy for  
Catholic Primary Schools  
(Revised September 2022)*

*'God is love' (1 John 4:8)  
Grow in Love Religious Education Programme*

*Diocesan Advisors for Religious Education in Primary Schools*

*Dublin Archdiocese*

## **Aim of Religious Education**

The aim of the Religious Education curriculum is to help children mature in relation to their spiritual, moral and religious lives, through their encounter with, exploration and celebration of the Catholic faith.<sup>1</sup>

The curriculum distinguishes four interrelated strands of Christian Faith, The Word of God, Liturgy/Prayer and Christian Morality. The strands overlap and interact to form a holistic learning experience for the child.

Christian Faith: Teaching and learning in this strand assists children to become religiously literate in key truths, doctrines and practices of the Catholic religious tradition.

The Word of God: This strand introduces children to an age-appropriate way to Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church.

Liturgy and Prayer: Children are encouraged to engage with liturgical signs, symbols and rituals, which nurture their relationship with God as Father, Son and Spirit, and to develop their capacity for personal prayer and for participation in the liturgy of the Church.

Christian Morality: The teaching and learning in this strand helps children to grow in awareness of their identity as persons created in the image and likeness of God and called to live in loving, respectful, relationship with God, other human persons and the whole of creation. This strand introduces children to Jesus as the example for living an ethical life and are formed in gospel values and in love of God and neighbour.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland, Irish Episcopal Conference, p.31

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, pp. 34-35

**SUGGESTED GUIDELINES TOWARDS  
THE FORMULATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY  
FOR CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

**1.INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT**

The school is a Catholic school under the patronage of the Catholic Archbishop of Dublin.

- State how the policy was formulated and who was involved, e.g. Board of Management, Teachers, Chaplain, Parents/ Guardians, Special Needs Assistants, Ancillary Staff, Student Council etc...
- The Mission Statement of the school
- A brief history of the school
- Rationale
- State the symbols that are on display to identify that the school is a Catholic school, e.g. a crucifix/statue or image of Our Lady/ St Joseph, a holy water font, and a picture or statue of the patron saint of the school

**2. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND PRIMARY RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

- How are staff led and supported in the teaching of Religious Education
- State where *The Schedule of a Catholic School* is on display in a public place within the school
- On the class timetable record where the teacher teaches Religious Education for 30 minutes daily.

**3. AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**

State the aims of the RE policy

**4. GENERAL INFORMATION** (update regularly)

a) **Diocesan Information**

- Name of the Archdiocese
- Name of the Patron/Archbishop
- Name of the Director of the Education Secretariat.

b) **Parish Information**

- Name of the Parish
- Name of the Parish Priest
- Name of the Chairperson of the Parish Pastoral Council
- Name of the Parish Pastoral Worker if applicable
- Name of the Deacon, if applicable

c) **School Information**

- Name of the Patron of School
- Name of Trustees, if applicable
- Name of the Chaplain
- Names of the members of the Board of Management
- Name of the Religious Education Coordinator.

## **5. MATERIALS**

- The *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* (2015) is the foundation document for all Religious Education in Catholic primary schools
- The Irish Episcopal Conference approved the *Grow in Love/InGrá Dé* Religious Education programme (the only programme for use in Catholic primary schools in Ireland)
- Record that each teacher has his or her own *Grow in Love* Teacher Manual, CD and poster set. Ensure that each teacher has registered with the login code for the *Grow in Love* programme and is using the school email address
- State that each child has access to the *Grow in Love* Children's' Book appropriate to the child's class level
- State the day that the children at all class levels will bring home materials from the *Grow in Love* Religious Education programme
- State whether children from third class upwards use journals/copies designated for Religious Education
- State the approved Bibles the school has available (e.g. *Contemporary English Version*, the *Good News Bible*, *New Revised Standard Version* or *The Catholic Children's Bible*)
- State how *monthly memos* sent out by the Education Secretariat are circulated.

## **6. PRAYER SPACE**

Each class should have a designated prayer space, which changes in accordance with the liturgical cycle and as instructed in the *Grow in Love* Religious Education programme.

## **7. PRAYER**

Participation in experiences of prayer (formal and informal), silence and meditation develops children's capacity for personal prayer.

- State times of prayer
  - In class
  - As a whole school community

## **8. STATE THE ARRANGEMENT FOR SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION BETWEEN HOME/PARISH/SCHOOL**

## **9. IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR**

- State how Religious Education and Ethos are integrated with other areas of the curriculum.
- State how the understanding and living of the ethos in your Catholic primary school is being facilitated and developed.

- State the arrangements in place to provide CPD in Religious Education to all staff.
- State who informs and encourages the partners in education in your school community to attend Mass for the opening of each new school year, organised by the Archdiocese.
- State how the school celebrates Catholic Schools' Week.

## **10. ROLE OF PARENTS/GUARDIANS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

State how parents/guardians are encouraged to support their children's Religious Education through prayer at home, home/link in the Religious Education class, parent/teacher meetings in the school.

## **11. PUPILS OF OTHER TRADITIONS OTHER THAN CATHOLIC**

State how your Catholic school is open and inclusive to children who are not of the Catholic faith. State how they are invited to participate in and engage with the Religious Education classes.

## **12. CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS**

State how the school provides Religious Education for children with special educational needs

## **13. ROLE OF THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR**

The principal has overall responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic ethos of the school. The Religious Education Coordinator supports the principal who has overall responsibility.

## **14. REVIEW**

State how and when the school will review the Religious Education Policy.

## **15. RATIFICATION & COMMUNICATION**

State how the Religious Education Policy will be communicated to the Board of Management and to all partners.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHY**

*Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education for Ireland* (Veritas: Irish Episcopal Conference, 2015)

*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, Eng. Trans., (Veritas: Dublin, 1994)

*The Irish Catholic Catechism for Adults* (Veritas: Irish Episcopal Conference, 2014)

*General Directory for Catechesis – Congregation for the Clergy* (Veritas: Dublin, 1998)

*The Catholic Children's Bible* (St. Mary's Press: 2013)

*The Lion Children's Bible* (Lion Children's Books: 2012)

*Read With Me Bible – A Story Bible for Children* (Candlebooks: England, 2004)

*Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland* (Veritas: Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010)

*Catholic Schools in a Changing Ireland: Sharing Good Practice on Inclusion of All Pupils* (Catholic Schools Partnership: 2015)

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*Catholic Primary Religious Education in a Pluralist Environment* by Anne Hession (Veritas: 2015)

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Archbishop Dermot Farrell, *A Pastoral Letter for the Season of Creation: The Cry of the Earth - The Cry of the Poor*, Veritas: Dublin, (2021)

G. Byrne & S. Whittle (eds) *Catholic Education: A Lifelong Journey*, (Veritas: Dublin, 2021)

## **Pope Francis' Publications**

*Understanding and Living The Ethos in a Catholic Primary School* (Veritas Publications, 2019)

*Evangelii Gaudium*, 2013 Apostolic Exhortation on The Joy of the Gospel

*Laudato Si'*, 2015 Apostolic Exhortation on Care for Our Common Home

*Amoris Laetitia*, 2016 Apostolic Exhortation on the Call to Holiness in Today's World