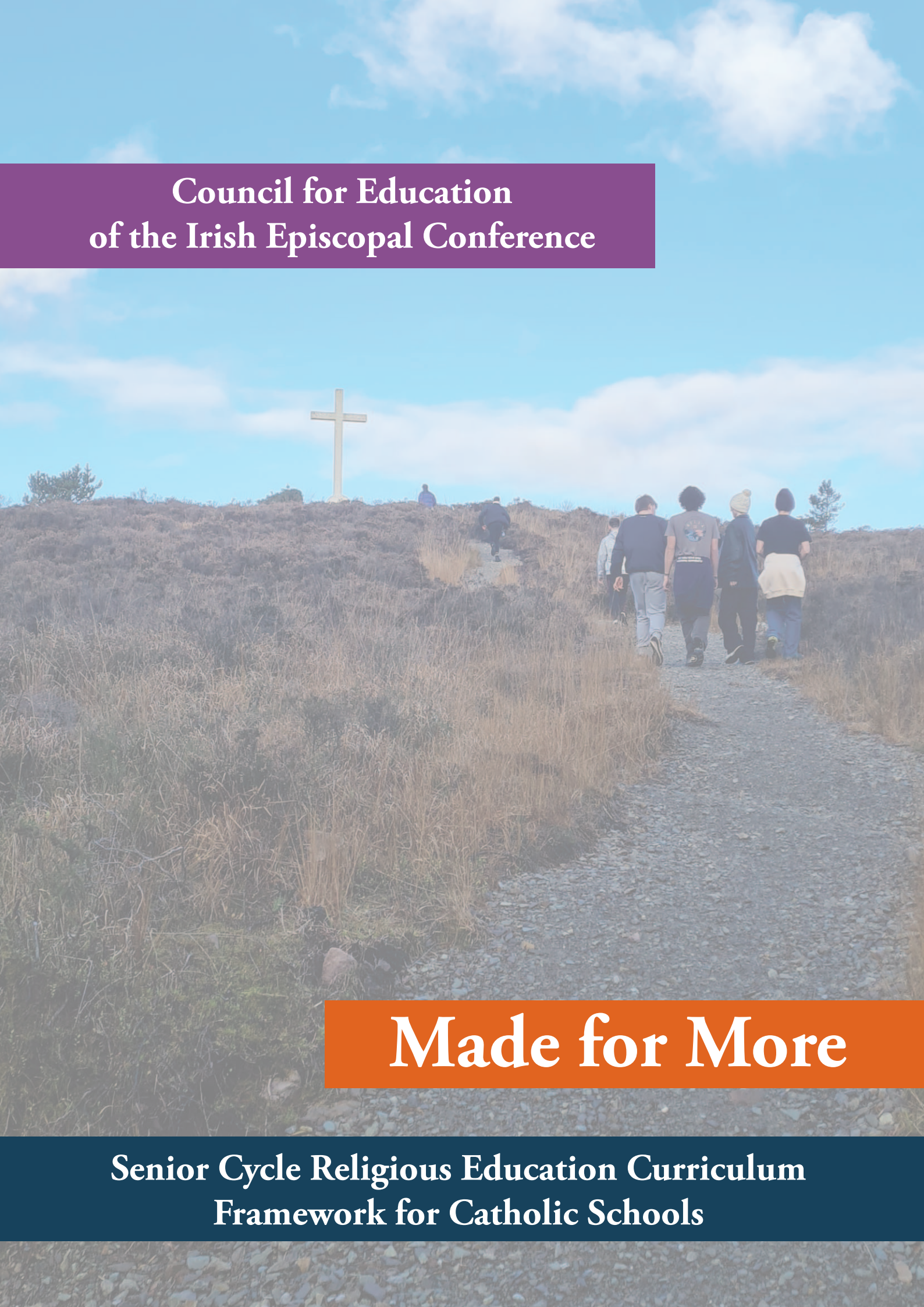


A group of people, including children and adults, are walking away from the camera on a gravel path that leads up a hill. In the distance, a large wooden cross stands prominently on the crest of the hill. The landscape is covered in dry, brownish vegetation. The sky is a vibrant blue with scattered white clouds. The overall scene conveys a sense of pilgrimage or a journey towards a spiritual goal.

**Council for Education
of the Irish Episcopal Conference**

Made for More

**Senior Cycle Religious Education Curriculum
Framework for Catholic Schools**



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Framework for Catholic Schools**

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Rationale

This curriculum framework is intended for Religious Education teachers, trustees and patrons, boards of management and senior leadership teams in Catholic post-primary schools. It serves to offer direction on how Religious Education at Senior Cycle should be planned, delivered and supported.

Religious Education is the cornerstone of mission in a Catholic school. It seeks to help young people become fully alive by forming the whole person and ‘stands as a core subject within a broad, innovative and integrated curriculum’.¹

Young people today are searching for connections, answers, meaning and purpose in a world that offers plenty of fleeting pleasures and false promises. A world where true connection with others feels scarce. We appear to be experiencing a time in history where the culture promotes and celebrates individualism above deep, relational connection. Social media perpetuates the denigration of comparisons related to lifestyle, appearance and ideology, while simultaneously promoting false ideals and unfulfilled promises. These influences often leave young individuals with feelings of inadequacy, diminished self-worth and a pervasive sense of unworthiness.

So many young people are suffering from the pressures society has placed upon them. Where emphasis on consumerism, materialism and obtaining the ‘perfect’, flawless appearance is tragically presented as ‘the crown of life.’ These cultural challenges may leave many young people feeling increasingly isolated and disconnected.

And yet, beneath these pressures, the young people of this generation possess genuine goodness, and are spiritually open and eager to discover true meaning, purpose and real connections in their lives. They desire truth and authenticity above superficial, false or hypocritical promises.

As they navigate life’s uncertainties, where can young people find their true worth and purpose, hope in times of adversity, or faith in something spiritually ‘higher’ than themselves? Where can they find authentic connections, love and support when life feels too tough to handle alone?

The Christian message and tradition offer an experience of faith, hope and most importantly love. It is in the message of the Good News – the Gospel, that each person may find their true worth and identity, as a son and daughter of God, the Father. In Jesus Christ, human beings find their unique, personal strength and deeper meaning in life. Through the Holy Spirit, the young person discovers a sense of belonging, wisdom and inspiration to become the best version of themselves, encouragement in times of tribulation, and ultimately, a personal relationship with God.

Students of all faiths and beliefs are respected, welcomed and valued in the Catholic school. It is here that every student is listened to, accompanied and embraced with compassion. As Pope Leo XIV proclaimed in his first public address, the Church is called to build bridges, encourage dialogue and extend open arms to everyone.² The Catholic school is that place for dialogue, encounter and mission.

Religious Education in a Catholic school aims to help every young person discover their true worth and dignity as a human being, recognise how uniquely valued they are, and understand the responsibility and

¹ *A Vision for Catholic Schools in Ireland*, (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2026).

² Pope Leo XIV, ‘Opening Address at St Peter’s Basilica’, *The Holy See*, 8 May 2025, accessed October 2025, <https://www.vaticannews.va/en/pope/news/2025-05/pope-leo-xvi-peace-be-with-you-first-words.html#:~:text=Dear%20brothers%20and%20sisters%2C%20these,Peace%20be%20with%20you!>

influence they have within their family, community and society. In doing so, it affirms a simple but powerful truth at the heart of our guiding theme: ***Made for More***. This theme expresses our belief that each person is created in the image of God, called to grow into the best version of themselves and to fulfil their unique purpose and God-given potential.

Why Religious Education in Catholic Schools?

Religious Education offers the student the opportunity to delve into some of life's fundamental questions:

- Why am I here?
- Where can I find my purpose and meaning in my life?
- What happens after we die?
- Is there a God?
- Who is Jesus?
- Why through religion?
- How can I live authentic relationships with others?
- Can I find happiness?

RE in a Catholic school strives to equip the student with the necessary tools to critically explore, reflect and analyse such important questions. Each student is encouraged and given the opportunity to journey, discover and encounter God and faith for themselves, in order to positively impact, inspire and enhance their lives. Pope Leo XIV underscores the role of Catholic education not just as a means of imparting knowledge, but as a vital process for formation in truth, love and service. He believes that education should prepare students for both personal success and a commitment to social justice and community engagement. His vision for Catholic education includes fostering a sense of solidarity and discipleship, encouraging young people to live out their faith actively in their communities.³

In modern-day Ireland, we can no longer presume that young people have a true or authentic understanding of the Catholic faith, the life of Christ, or the Gospel. Therefore, as Catholic schools, faithful to our ethos, the primary focus of our pedagogy is the life of Jesus Christ: who He is and what He teaches.

Fundamental to this teaching is the core gospel message: 'the kerygma'. This life-giving message, along with the invitation and opportunity to develop a personal relationship with Jesus Christ, must be the principal goal of Religious Education in Catholic schools.⁴ Therefore, it is imperative to provide students with the space and occasion to reflect, meditate and encounter a personal faith for themselves: where 'opportunities for discernment, silence, prayer, liturgy, and the sacraments are integrated into the rhythm of the school day and liturgical year'.⁵

Since we have the privilege and opportunity to teach the Christian perspective, we must always strive to do so in an invitational, relatable and attractive manner, never presuming or imposing beliefs or teachings on the students. Students from all religions and world views are most welcome and cherished in our Catholic schools. Therefore, it is of utmost importance, that we teach while being cognisant of the multi-faith/worldview and diverse population that exists in the Irish classroom.

³ Cf. Frank Chiment, *From the Heart of Augustine: The Pontificate of Pope Leo XIV* - Catholic Outlook, accessed 27 August 2025.

⁴ St Pope John Paul II, 'Address to the Bishops of Great Britain on their "Ad Limina" Visit,' *The Holy See*, 26 March 1992, accessed 23 July 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1992/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19920326_gran-bretagna-ad-limina.html.

⁵ *A Vision for Catholic Schools in Ireland*, (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2026).

In order to give students a holistic perspective and understanding of the cultures, traditions and religions of all people, the study of world religions plays an important role in the curriculum framework. Through these teachings, we hope to foster a deeper sense of solidarity and respect for all people.

While rooted in the Christian tradition, this framework affirms the study of world religions not as an isolated gesture, but as a vital way of fostering dialogue and engagement with diverse perspectives and beliefs. It permeates all areas of study, affirming shared truths, values and a respect for human dignity across all religious traditions.

Religious Education in a Catholic school provides the environment and occasion for each student not only to learn about God, but to encounter God more fully. Through this encounter, guided by the beauty of the gospel message and its values, students are invited to discover for themselves that their life is irreplaceable and unique, and that they possess the capacity to impact the lives of those around them in meaningful, life-giving and transformative ways.

Aim

This Senior Cycle RE curriculum framework invites students into critical inquiry and reflective dialogue with philosophical, ethical and theological ideas. It aims to build religious literacy by helping students to understand, interpret and engage primarily with the Christian tradition, while also engaging with a wide spectrum of religions and diverse worldviews. In doing so, it nurtures thoughtful, empathetic and informed young people who are prepared to navigate today's pluralist society.

Pope Francis in *Christus Vivit*, a letter he wrote especially to young people, stresses the importance of the holistic ability to integrate the knowledge of head, heart and hands when it comes to teaching young people within Catholic schools.⁶ This framework creates an environment for each student to engage rationally (the head), emotionally (the heart) and practically (the hands), with the foundations of the Catholic faith. This arises through the merging of the educational dimensions of Religious Education, along with the faith development elements of the Christian tradition. In this way, the student is provided the opportunity for a true encounter and transformation in Jesus Christ, to fulfil their calling in the Church and contribute to the common good of society.⁷

Pope Francis affirms: *we cannot create a culture of dialogue if we do not have identity*.⁸ Therefore, the hope is that each young person is personally inspired and enlightened by the wisdom, compassion and solidarity offered by the Christian tradition. The aim is to offer the students the fundamentals of the gospel message, the opportunity to meet Jesus, where they can discern for themselves, through education, reflection and active participation, how they choose to respond.

Ultimately, our hope is that each student will be inspired and enlightened along their own life path to fulfil their unique, God-given purpose and vocation.

⁶ Pope Francis, *Christus Vivit* [*Christ Lives*], apostolic exhortation, 25 March 2019, para. 222,

https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations/documents/papa-francesco_esortazione-ap_20190325_christus-vivit.html

⁷ St Pope John Paul II, 'Address to the Bishops of Great Britain on Their "Ad Limina" Visit', *The Holy See*, 26 March 1992, accessed 23 July 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/speeches/1992/march/documents/hf_jp-ii_spe_19920326_gran-bretagna-ad-limina.html.

⁸ Congregation for Catholic Education, *The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue*, 29 March 2022,

https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html.



Redemptorist Youth Ministry Ireland

Approach

It is imperative that this curriculum is set out and delivered in a way that helps build a bridge between the students' current reality and the Catholic faith. This is no easy task, as the majority of modern young people likely feel distanced from Christian teachings or practices.

However, recent research suggests a major shift is happening with regard to young people's interest in religion and particularly in practicing a Christian faith:

'For the first time in decades, younger adults – Gen Z and Millennials – are now the most regular churchgoers, outpacing older generations, who once formed the backbone of church attendance. This shift signals a new opportunity for ministry. Younger adults are showing spiritual curiosity and a desire for belonging'.⁹

It appears many young people are unsatisfied with the shallow, empty promises often proposed by the secular culture, and in turn are yearning for the truth, beauty and goodness the Christian faith offers.

Relate

In response, Religious Education in a Catholic school should make every effort to present the gospel message to its students in a way that is accessible, relevant and relatable. All effort should be made to communicate this teaching in a creative, interesting and invitational manner, never presuming universal understanding of material. This may be achieved through the various methods and resources identified in this framework, especially the use of contemporary music, art and film. Special attention should be given to sharing videos and/or guest appearances of personal faith stories that are engaging and inspiring. They help connect the Christian message to real life experiences, fostering understanding and connection.

Language

When teaching theological principles and practices, the way in which we communicate is of critical importance. Care must be taken to ensure that students are not alienated or faced with unnecessary barriers to understanding. Both approach and delivery, particularly our choice of language, should be clear and accessible. Technical theological language should be introduced gradually and always accompanied by careful explanation.

Dialogue

Students are encouraged to question, critique and analyse, as they move through the curriculum, with the frequent use of class discussions, group work and collaborative learning. All opinions and beliefs on various topics should be listened to, respected and valued. This approach fosters thoughtful dialogue, deepens understanding of diverse perspectives, and encourages students to engage respectfully with others.

Reflect

For the material to have a meaningful and personal impact on students' lives, each class lesson should allocate time and space for at least one of the following practices: prayer, reflection, meditation, contemplation or journaling. These practices provide students with opportunities to pause and reflect in a world that is often busy and noisy, offering moments of stillness and space to consider what they have learned and how it may shape their values and choices.

⁹ Barna 'State of the Church' research initiative 2025. For a more detailed report see <https://www.barna.com/research/do-americans-think-spiritual-revival-is-coming/>.

Diversity and Integration

As we are living in an intercultural Ireland, it is vital that all ethnic backgrounds, religions and beliefs are represented in the teaching material and resources. Having various cultures, diverse voices, opinions and experiences represented throughout all the methodologies and resources is of utmost importance to the programme.

This ensures that all feel welcomed, valued and included in the dialogue and teaching experience. It also encourages active listening and understanding of diverse cultures and beliefs.

Parents/guardians of children from other religious backgrounds or beliefs appreciate the Catholic ethos of the school they have chosen for their child, while remaining confident that their child's conscience, individual beliefs and views will be respected.

Many are very content to allow their child to embrace all that a Catholic Education can offer. A Catholic school seeks to provide strong values and moral formation within a culture of belonging, expressed through faith, worship, service to others and meaningful dialogue. These are not points of division but common threads that weave a shared tapestry across the world's major religions, fostering mutual respect, understanding and a commitment to the common good.

While promoting an atmosphere of inclusion and solidarity in the classroom, the hope, most importantly, is to effect positive change in the lives of young people. By hearing from many perspectives, it enables students to recognise common values and principles, critically reflect, break down prejudices and biases, and develop compassion for all.

For guidance on the inclusion of students from other beliefs, see *Guidelines on the Inclusion of Students of Different Beliefs in Catholic Secondary Schools* (2nd edition, JMB, 2019).

Additional Educational Needs

The example of Jesus challenges us to build communities where no one is left at the margins. This same spirit should animate our Religious Education classrooms, where diversity is celebrated and each learner is supported to flourish.

In a mainstream Senior Cycle classroom, this means creating an environment where students of all abilities, including those with disabilities, are valued as full participants. It is important that teachers take intentional steps to welcome students of varying abilities into Religious Education, particularly as it affords a unique space for inclusion, reflection and growth. It calls teachers and peers alike to foster patience, empathy and solidarity, ensuring that everyone can engage meaningfully with learning.

This also involves recognising and supporting the specific learning journeys of students following Level 1 and Level 2 Learning Programmes. At the heart of the Senior Cycle Level 1 Programme are four curriculum areas: **Communication and Literacy, Numeracy, Personal Care and Electives**. These areas, designed on a modular basis, explicitly identify and develop the skills needed to support students not only in school but also in their homes, communities and future lives. Within Religious Education, teachers are encouraged to observe the module descriptors in each elective and to support students' progress by gathering evidence of learning for their portfolios. In this way, achievements are acknowledged, recorded and celebrated as part of the broader classroom community.

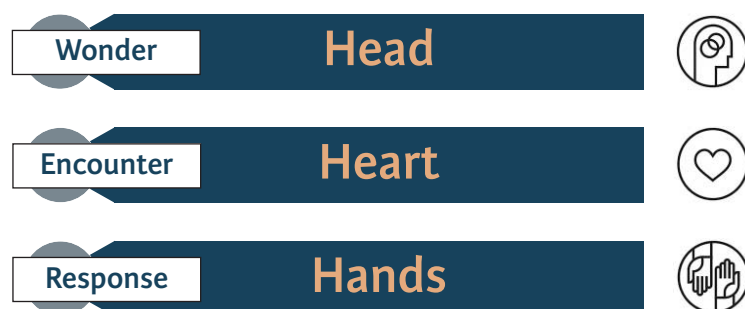
An inclusive RE classroom is not simply about accommodation, but about transformation: reshaping the learning space so that it mirrors the Kingdom of God, where each person is recognised as bearing the image of Christ. In this way, Religious Education becomes not only the study of faith traditions, but also the practice of discipleship, where justice, compassion and belonging are lived out in real time.

Pedagogical Approach

This Senior Cycle Religious Education Curriculum Framework is founded on the following holistic, experiential and constructivist pedagogical approach of: *Head, Heart and Hands*. It aims to educate the whole person by cultivating intellectual, affective and practical development. Widely applied in Christian education, this approach finds particular expression in Ignatian pedagogy, which centres on experience, reflection and action to nurture the integral formation of the person for thoughtful, loving and just living.

‘In short, this means forming the head, hands and heart together: preserving and enhancing the link between learning, doing and feeling in the noblest sense. In this way, you will be able to offer not only an excellent academic curriculum, but also a coherent vision of life inspired by the teachings of Christ’.¹⁰

The three strands of Head, Heart and Hands are interconnected and integrated through the elements of Wonder, Encounter and Response. This structure guides a spiritual and educational journey that moves from curiosity to experience to action. It strives to balance intellectual depth, faith formation and practical action, while providing a dynamic and student-centred learning approach.



The Three Interrelated Strands

- i. **Head:** *Cognitive learning* – knowledge, understanding, critical thinking, analysis
- ii. **Heart:** *Affective leaning* – personal reflection, spiritual engagement, participation in prayer, emotional and relational development
- iii. **Hands:** *Active learning* – service, justice, mission, living faith in community and the world

¹⁰ Pope Francis, *Speech to the Grace Project Participants*, 2022.

<https://www.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/speeches/2022/april/documents/20220420-catholic-education-project.html>.

The Three Integrative Elements

- i. **Wonder:** *Engages imagination* – curiosity about the created world/universe/life; awakening to deep theological questions, philosophical concepts, ethical and moral exploration; opening minds to God; exploring personal meaning, purpose and identity
- ii. **Encounter:** *Engages experience* – deepening understanding; engaging heart and mind; dialogue; exploring faith and worldviews
- iii. **Response:** *Engages response* – transformation; action; service; prayer; living faith in practice

Key Skills

The following identifies the key skills students are encouraged to develop across the three interrelated strands and the three integrative elements, as guided by their teacher's professional discernment.

 Head – Wonder	 Heart – Encounter	 Hands – Response
• Explore key principles, religious wisdom and moral concepts • Understand opposing views and teachings • Critically think about and analyse ideas, beliefs, concepts • Interpret bible stories and texts • Identify key concepts and themes in religious beliefs • Debate moral concepts • Evaluate ideas fairly • Compare and contrast different worldviews • Recognise bias and prejudice in religious and secular arguments • Discern what cause or charity to get involved in	• Engage in personal reflection and journaling • Question ideas about life, death, faith, purpose • Explore the personal invitation to follow Jesus • Participate in prayer, liturgy services and meditation • Grow in spiritual awareness and faith • Empathise with those of other religions, cultures and backgrounds • Express personal beliefs clearly and respectfully • Listen actively and empathetically to others • Appreciate diversity and those from different backgrounds • Develop compassion and respect for all	• Evaluate how beliefs influence behaviour and life choices • Make moral decisions • Respond creatively to meet a need in the community • Participate actively in the life of the local church and faith community • Examine the purpose and role of the Church and sacraments • Develop a fluency in the language of faith/theology that enhances the expression of personal beliefs • Research productive ways to look after and care for the earth and environment • Discover own unique gifts and talents and how these may contribute to building up of God's Kingdom on earth

Teacher Discernment and Classroom Context

While this framework identifies key skills to be developed across the three interrelated strands and three integrative elements, it is important to acknowledge that the specific emphasis and implementation of these skills will vary. Each classroom presents its own unique context, shaped by students' needs, interests and abilities. Therefore, it is ultimately up to the professional discernment of each teacher to determine which

skills to prioritise, how to integrate them effectively and what approaches best support the holistic development of their students.

Teachers are advised to use their professional judgement to adapt, scaffold and extend learning experiences in ways that are responsive to their particular teaching and learning environment. This flexibility ensures that skill development remains meaningful, relevant and authentic to the lived realities of their classrooms.

Teachers of Religious Education are encouraged to form communities of practice. These communities would consist of small, intentional groups that meet regularly (online or in person) for shared reflection, professional dialogue, collaborative enquiry and mutual encouragement/support. These communities of practice would not simply act as networks of support, but also as spaces of mission, whereby teachers can grow in confidence as witnesses of Faith, Hope and Love within their own school and local communities.

Methodology

*‘The deposit of faith or the truths are one thing and the manner of expressing them is quite another’.*¹¹

Active Learning will be the primary methodology used in teaching this Religious Education framework, in order to connect with and respond to the lived realities and experiences of students.

Active learning places the student at the centre of the learning process and is based around discussion. It is:

‘a process in which students actively participate in their learning in a variety of ways. This increases the possibility that students will internalise what they have learned and be able to apply it in their day-to-day lives’.¹²

This methodology creates the atmosphere and scenarios for students to engage with the material and information provided by the teacher, in a relatable and critically reflective way. It encourages exploration, problem-solving and co-operation between the students and the teacher. In this way, each person learns from the other.

Methods, Guidelines and Resource Ideas

These active learning methods support a wide range of intelligences and learning styles, demonstrating particular sensitivity to the needs of students with additional educational needs.

- **Discussion:** class discussion, group work, pair discussion. The students are encouraged to speak freely and openly on the topic at hand. This helps them to critically reflect and explore the content, while connecting it to their own experience and reality. Therefore, creating an atmosphere of trust between the teacher and students is paramount.

¹¹ *Gaudium et Spes* (Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World), no. 62, promulgated by the Second Vatican Council, 7 December 1965.

¹² Intercultural Education in the Post Primary School, NCCA, https://ncca.ie/media/1976/intercultural_education_in_the_post-primary_school.pdf, accessed 23 July 2025.

- **Debate:** walking debate is most advised to facilitate physical, emotional and cognitive engagement with the material.
- **Simulation games, case studies and role-play:** are used to encourage engagement, help deepen understanding, improve communication skills and build confidence.
- **PowerPoint and video:** are encouraged as the main teaching tool, to be both visually engaging and interactive.
- **Music:** the use of contemporary music and lyrics help students to relate and connect to the topic at hand.
- **Film:** true story movies and film clips help to consolidate the learning and content, as well as to provide relatable material for reflection, analysis and discussion.
- **Personal stories:** personal life stories, experiences and testimonies are an excellent way to inspire discussion, personal reflection and engagement, while encouraging positive life choices based on the experiences of others.
- **Narrative stories:** are an exceptional tool to interpret, unpack concepts and make bible stories and teachings more relatable. As an example, this may be achieved through turning a specific gospel story into a modern, contemporary story.
- **Issue tracking:** allows the students to work together, usually through group work, to identify and explore a current real-world news story. It helps the students to develop collaborative, project-based and critical thinking skills. This method enables the students to differentiate between facts and bias in media.
- **Photos, images and art:** teachers may produce an interesting image, photo or artwork to inspire deep reflection and discussion.
- **Surveys and questionnaires:** analysing stats from surveys and questionnaires is a scientific way to enter engagement with a topic, and to develop critical thinking and class discussion. Students may also be given the task of creating their own school survey and questionnaire, to further the study and analysis of a topic.
- **Journaling:** is where each student is given the opportunity to privately reflect and write in their own journal about a specific topic, material or question. It promotes self-reflection and inspires positive change in the student's life. It encourages the student to connect the content provided to their own life experience.
- **Liturgy and prayer services:** the students become active participants in the preparations and delivery of class and whole-school liturgy and prayer services. This may include the opening school mass, the graduation ceremony, November We Remember, Advent, Lent, Christmas and Easter celebrations, Catholic Schools Week and Saint's Day celebrations.
- **Prayer and meditation:** to provide the students the opportunity to pause, reflect, pray or meditate. Time should be allocated once a week to this practice. This can occur in a variety of ways. It could take place in the school prayer room/space, nearby church or in the classroom. It may include Christian music, the reading of scripture, or simply silence.

Note: To connect and relate to the student's own experience, where possible, it is highly advisable to use a range of Irish voices and experiences when choosing material.

It is also important to be cognisant of maintaining a good balance between male and female representatives in the resources.

Guidelines for Teaching Senior Cycle Religious Education in Catholic Schools

The Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference reminds school leaders that in a Catholic school:

- Provision be made for **two hours** of Religious Education per week at both Senior and Junior Cycle.
- Religious Education is always taught by **qualified RE teachers**, ensuring depth, integrity and professionalism.
- School leadership is encouraged to support the CPD of Religious Education teachers in their school.
- Religious Education is understood as one expression among many of the school's **Catholic ethos and faith life**, woven into the daily experience of the school.

It should also be remembered that Catholic parents/guardians who choose Catholic schools have a reasonable expectation that their children's faith will be nurtured and deepened, not only through RE classes but through the wider lived faith life of the school. Therefore, in Religious Education we are called to present the Catholic perspective across all topics covered, while also acknowledging key dimensions of secular thought and providing opportunities for those of diverse beliefs to contribute within a meaningful dialogue.

This Religious Education curriculum framework is designed for Senior Cycle (fifth and sixth years), post-primary education, accounting for two hours of class time per week, over a two-year academic period.

This framework comprises of four modules, with a total of nine units that take the students through a journey of religious and self-exploration discovery and faith development, that will lead to the richest possible experience of RE. As each unit builds upon the other, the modules and units are to be worked sequentially through the content, beginning with Module 1, Unit 1 and working through to Module 4, Unit 2.



Photo: @sjbc_portadown PR Team

St John the Baptist's College, Portadown

Modules

1. The Quest for Meaning
2. Christianity
3. World Religions & World Peace
4. Mission

Units

Module 1	Module 2	Module 3	Module 4
Unit 1: The Question of God Unit 2: Why Am I Here?	Unit 1: God's Revelation Unit 2: Jesus, Who Is He? Unit 3: Personal Relationship with God	Unit 1: World Religions & Religious Freedom Unit 2: Conscience & World Peace	Unit 1: Why the Church? Unit 2: Call to Mission

Learning Outcomes

In this Senior Cycle Religious Education framework, while building on the foundational knowledge established in the Junior Cycle, the learning outcomes aim to deepen students' understanding of moral and philosophical inquiry, key religious themes and faith exploration.

They are designed to guide the students on a journey of further exploration, reflection and encounter with a personal faith in Jesus and to strengthen their understanding of Christian discipleship as a life shaped by Christ's example and teachings. Central topics explored in Junior Cycle, such as the meaning of life, core Gospel teachings, multi-faith worldviews, are dealt with in Senior Cycle in a more complex and mature manner. In this way, the students are reconnecting, progressing and internalising the learning outcomes already achieved in Junior Cycle.

In Senior Cycle RE, all learning outcomes are important; however, the depth and focus on particular outcomes may vary depending on the unique context of each classroom. Teachers are encouraged to exercise professional discernment in selecting which outcomes to explore more fully, taking into account their students' abilities, prior knowledge, interests and the needs of their learning environment. This approach ensures that teaching and learning remain meaningful, relevant and responsive, supporting students' holistic development.

Module 1: The Quest for Meaning

In this module students explore the deep questions surrounding life and their purpose and meaning. They will explore all questions about God, God's existence, the universe, creation and humanity's existence.

Unit 1: The Question of God

1.1 Students learn about	Students should be able to
• Evidence and arguments for God's existence • The characteristics of God, as taught by theologians and philosophers • Science and the relationship to God eschatology	• Explore all questions relating to God's existence and what impact this question has on their personal worldview and life choices • Research arguments for the existence of God • Debate God's existence • Understand the characteristics of God and its implications for their own life and for all of humanity • Analyse the relationship between science and God • Discover how science and faith in God complement each other • Examine different world views on life after death • Develop insight into Catholic eschatology • Explore how these teachings may impact their own life and faith



Photo: Roman@Stillpoint-photo

Unit 2: Why Am I here?

1.2 Students learn about	Students should be able to
• Why religion? • Human dignity and value • Purpose and meaning in life • Well-being: My mental health • Resilience and overcoming adversity • Prayer	• Reflect how humans are, by nature and vocation, religious beings • Unpack and examine the historical and cultural influences of religion and its relationship with 'why am I here?' • Explore the presence of religious themes in contemporary culture, through an examination of art, music, literature and film • Discover their own dignity, value & identity, as made in the image and likeness of God • Recognise the dignity of every person and grow in respect and value for others • Explore what gives life purpose and meaning • Identify specific tools to help improve mental health and well-being • Acknowledge the positive impact a personal faith in God/Jesus has on mental health and resilience • Explore different methods of prayer and how they may positively impact their lives, mental health and overcoming adversity • Engage with protocols and tools to become more resilient and overcome adversity

Module 1 Suggested Resources and Practices:

- **Online resources:**
 - An Tobar Nua: ‘An Dara Saol’ and ‘Saol Sonas’ – <https://saol.antobarnuaretreats.ie/>
 - Nua Films: ‘Fresh Perspectives’ – <https://nuafilms.com/explore-the-collection>
 - Credible Catholic: The 7 Essentials – <https://catholiceducation.ie/credible-catholic/>
 - Teaching Human Dignity Series – <https://mcgrath.nd.edu/about/centers-initiatives-and-programs/life-human-dignity/resources/>
- **Film clips:**
 - *Science and the Evidence of God* – Fr Robert Spitzer: <https://youtu.be/0ARp2TDYOqI?feature=shared>.
 - *Proving God’s Existence From the Rational Order in Nature* (Aquinas 101): <https://youtu.be/IkbuSQDZ-PA?feature=shared>.
 - *How Science Proves God!* (Dr. John Bergsma) | Ep. 477: https://youtu.be/HwRVvZok_dA?feature=shared.
 - Fr Columba, Called to More Teen Series (2025)¹³: Episode 2 – How do I overcome negative and intrusive thoughts? Episode 3 – Overcoming adversity – Christian Hope: <https://vimeo.com/user/109587795/folder/25474534>.
- **Biblical foundations:** Creation stories (Genesis 1-2), Psalms of wonder (Psalms 8, 19, 139), Proverbs 31: 8-9, Galatians 3:28, Ephesians 2:10, John 10:10
- **Contemporary voices:** Testimonies, music, art, poetry
- **Catholic teaching:** Youcat; on religion and science: *Gaudium et Spes* 36, 59 and (CCC 2293-2295), on human dignity (CCC 33, 1700, 1934) and *Gaudium et Spes* 12-22
- **Theological reflection:** *Imago Dei: The Inherent Dignity of the Human Person; Evangelium Vitae, Fratelli Tutti*, Faith and Reason: *Fides et Ratio*.
- **Reflective practices:** Journaling, prayer, liturgy, service activities

¹³ Fr Columba, Called to More Teen Series (2025) was produced in collaboration with the new SPHE resource commissioned by CEP

Module 2: Christianity

In this module the students will embark on a journey to discover God more deeply: how God has revealed himself to humankind in all His fulness in the person of Jesus Christ. Who is Jesus? What does He teach? Is there evidence for His existence, for His Resurrection? What impact can this discovery have personally on one's life and faith? Students of other faiths and beliefs are invited to engage with the moral values and teachings of Jesus, drawing insight and inspiration from their own faith backgrounds.

Unit 1: God's Revelation

2.1 Students learn about	Students should be able to
• Christian understanding of the Bible, as the Word of God • Dead Sea Scrolls • God's revelation to humankind throughout the Bible • The 10 Commandments	• Appreciate the Bible as the Word of God • Examine the findings and history of the Dead Sea Scrolls • Identify God's revelation to humankind, as perceived from the creation stories of Genesis and other Bible stories • Understand the origins of sin and its implications for humankind • Recognise how God never stops pursuing a relationship with all people • Examine the 10 Commandments and recognise these implications on a personal and societal level



Photo: Roman@stillpoint.photo

Unit 2: Jesus, Who Is He?

2.2 Students learn about	Students should be able to
• Historical Evidence for Jesus • Christology: Jesus Christ's identity and mission/work • Signs and miracles of Jesus • Jesus as a revolutionary in His time • Evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus • The Kingdom of God • Catholic eschatology • The Gospel: 'Kerygma' • God revealed as Trinity of persons	• Discover and analyse the evidence for the historical Jesus • Explore Jesus' true identity • Understand Jesus as the prophesied Messiah and the fulfilment of God's covenant • Examine Jesus' signs and miracles and how they reveal his identity and purpose • Identify ways Jesus was a revolutionary in His time, and consider how His countercultural message still challenges today's world of consumerism and individualism • Uncover and debate the evidence for Jesus' Resurrection • Unpack the meaning of Jesus' Gospel and parable stories-relating how His words speak into modern challenges, like loneliness, injustice, greed and anxiety • Recognise Jesus as Alive today • Examine what is understood by the Kingdom of God • Understand the Catholic teaching on life after death, final judgement, salvation, Heaven and Hell, and the Second Coming of Christ • Comprehend the core message of the Gospel – the Good News – and reflect on their personal response to that message • Examine how God is a communion of persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and the connection to humanity's family structure • Connect and relate the love that exists in families, friendships – to the love that exists in the relationship of the Holy Trinity

Unit 3: Personal Relationship with God

2.3 Students learn about	Students should be able to
• God's love for everyone • The mercy and forgiveness of God • Personal faith stories • The Power of the Holy Spirit • Virtue • Famous people and their faith • Lives of the Saints • The question of suffering and evil • Prayer • Modern miracles • Pilgrimages and retreats	• Identify stories in the Bible that specifically reveal the mercy and love of God, especially as Father, and reflect on how these discoveries may impact their own life • Develop listening skills and allow someone's experience to inspire their own life choices • Understand the working and function of the Holy Spirit • Appreciate how the Holy Spirit may become a part of a person's lived faith and relationship with God • Discover what is meant by growing in virtue, and explore how virtues can help them navigate the pressures of modern life • Discover famous people's perspective and sharing of their faith • Discover the role and reason Catholics pray to the Saints • Research the lives of modern-day Saints [St Carlo Acutis, Servant of God – Sr Claire Crockett, Blessed Chiara Luce Badano, St Pier Giorgio Frassati, St Bakhita, St Mother Teresa] • Establish what attributes the Saints have in common; how they can be role models and companions for life today, not just figures from the past • Consider why God allows suffering, in light of Jesus' passion and death • Explore the understanding of evil's existence, in light of God being a good God – and connecting that with humanity's gift of free will • Perceive and experience prayer as a real and living connection with God, offering strength and peace in daily life • Investigate a modern-day miracle • Analyse the basis and history of at least one world famous pilgrimage site • Obtain the opportunity to experience an in-person retreat/pilgrimage, as a chance to encounter God personally

Module 2 Suggested Resources and Practices:

- **Online resources:**
 - Alpha Youth – <https://alphaireland.org/alpha-youth>
 - An Tobar Nua: ‘An Dara Saol’ – <https://saol.antobarnuaretreats.ie/>
 - The Chosen Series – <https://www.youtube.com/@TheChosenSeries/videos>
 - Nua Films: ‘The Way of St James’ – <https://nuafilms.com/explore-the-collection>
- **Film clips:**
 - *Carlo Acutis: Be Original to Become a Saint* documentary, EWTN: <https://youtu.be/wQdvNgFryaM?si=GyCj-tUpBAD6WLvj>
 - Fr Columba, Called to More Teen Series (2025): Episode 1 – What is prayer? & Episode 4 – God’s Mercy. Episode 5 – What does God say about LGBTQ+ people. Episode 10 – Why Christianity?: <https://vimeo.com/user/109587795/folder/25474534>.
 - *Ascension Presents* (Fr Mike Schmitz) Believing in a God Who Allows Evil: <https://youtu.be/WZdf5BIqIHI?feature=shared>.
 - The Chosen video series: www.thechosen.tv.
 - Bishop Barron on Having a ‘Personal Relationship’ with Jesus: <https://youtu.be/w2KZDQSxwF4?feature=shared>.
 - *Ascension Presents* (Fr Mike Schmitz) Which Jesus Is the Real Jesus?: <https://media.ascensionpress.com/video/which-jesus-is-the-real-jesus/>
 - *Ascension Presents* (Fr Mike Schmitz) Fr. Mike’s Prayer for Beginners: <https://youtu.be/BO3YJHZVdxs?feature=shared>.
 - Irish Dominicans, The Rise and Fall of Skellig Michael | Treasure Ireland: <https://youtu.be/-WPHIddnyLM?feature=shared>
- **Biblical foundation:** Gospel narratives – parables, healings, encounters, passion and resurrection: The parable of the Prodigal Son (Luke 15:11-32), The Woman at the Well (John 4:5-30), A Woman Caught in Adultery (John 8:1-11), The Good Thief (Luke 23:42-43), Psalm 103:10-13, Romans 5:8, John 10:14, ‘You are altogether beautiful, my love’ (Song of Songs 4:7)
- **Witness and discipleship:** Lives of the Saints: (Servant of God Sr. Claire Crockett, Saint Carlos Acutis, Saint Pier Giorgio Frassati, Saint Mother Teresa of Calcutta), celebrity role models, modern-day examples. Book: *Faith: In Search of Greater Glory in Sport*, Gerard Gallagher
- **Cultural expressions of faith:** art, music, pilgrimage
- **Catholic teaching:** Youcat; Moral teaching: conversion, forgiveness, love of neighbour: *Veritatis Splendor*, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*. Prayer and celebration: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* and (CCC 2663-2696).
- **Theological reflection:** Christology: *The Case for Jesus: The Biblical and Historical Evidence for Christ*, Brant Pitre, *Jesus of Nazareth*, Pope Benedict IX and (CCC 464-469). Trinity as model for community (CCC 253-256)
- **Encounter with Jesus today:** prayer, Lectio Divina, Eucharist, reconciliation, acts of love

Module 3: World Religions and World Peace

Consistent with the Second Vatican Council's call for inter-faith dialogue, this module explores and researches the five major world religions. Students will discover the similarities and primary differences of teachings and practices between these religions. The study of world religions is essential in supporting students' engagement with diverse beliefs in ways that foster dialogue, respect and understanding. By studying other religions, students come to recognise the shared values, truths and ethical principles that unite these faith traditions. Students may also deepen their understanding of their own faith tradition through the exploration of other religious beliefs and practices. This module also explores the importance of religious freedom and freedom of expression, and how these rights impact society and individual lives. The role and formation of moral conscience is a key element to this module, along with humanity's enduring longing for peace.

Unit 1: World Religions and Religious Freedom

3.1 Students learn about	Students should be able to
• The Second Vatican Council's vision of inter-faith dialogue¹⁴ • Five major world religions • Religious cults • Religious freedom; freedom of expression	• Examine the principal teachings and practices of the five major world religions • Discover the similarities and differences between them • Recognise the shared values, truths and principles common among religions • Approach other religions with esteem and openness, not hostility or ignorance • Engage in respectful dialogue and active listening that fosters mutual understanding, peace and cooperation • Examine historical impacts each religion has had on society throughout the ages • Recognise the main attributes to a religious cult • Examine the importance of religious freedom • Explore the importance of freedom of expression

¹⁴ *Nostra Aetate* https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decl_19651028_nostra-aetate_en.html

Unit 2: Conscience and World Peace

3.2 Students learn about	Students should be able to
• Catholic morality: Conscience and a person's ability to choose • The New Commandment: 'Love one another', as a basic moral norm • The universal Golden Rule • Truth versus relativism • Core principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST) • Ethics • Human dignity and the right to life • War • Just War theory • Humanity's longing for peace	• Understand what is meant by morality and conscience in Catholic teaching • Recognise how to form their conscience and apply strategies to help them make informed and ethical choices • Unpack Jesus' new commandment and its significance to how one chooses to live • Connect the Golden Rule to all major world religions • Differentiate between opinion and truth: between truth and relativism • Explore how following Jesus and His teachings may impact how we treat others and structure society • Explain ethics and role play an ethical dilemma in light of CST • Consider the Church's teachings on the dignity of every human person and their right to life • Grow in empathy and compassion towards all people, especially those who are displaced, in war-torn countries, suffering loss or injury • Explore alternatives to some real-life war situations • Design a resolution to a real-life war dilemma • Examine the Church's teaching on the Just War Theory • Debate the doctrine of the Just War theory • Realise the innate desire within each person to experience peace

Module 3 Suggested Resources and Practices:

- **Online resources:** Trócaire, www.trocaire.org; TrueTube: multifaith perspectives and resources, www.truetube.co.uk Catholic Online School:
- **Film clips:**
 - Catholic Social Teaching in 3 minutes, Trócaire: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ELyLdMlFdZA>
 - Fr Columba, Called to More Teen Series (2025): Episode 9 – How do I listen to my conscience?: <https://vimeo.com/user/109587795/folder/25474534>
 - Pope Francis: Interreligious dialogue brings peace: <https://youtu.be/YbS8IbhjsSw?feature=shared>
- **Biblical foundation:** Call to be peacemakers (Matthew 5:9, Romans 12:18); Reconciliation (2 Corinthians 5), Acts 10:34-35; Jesus as giver of peace (John 14:27, 16:33, Luke 2:14, Ephesians 2:14,); God's peace guards our hearts (Philippians 4:6-7, Isaiah 26:3).
- **Catholic teaching:** Youcat; Declaration on the relation of the Church to Non-Christian religions: *Nostra Aetate*, Pope Francis on dialogue and mission: *Evangelii Gaudium*, Salvation and non-Christian religions (CCC. 839-856).
- **Theological reflection:** Ecumenical and interfaith encounter: *Dignitatis Humanae, Unitatis Redintegratio* https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_decree_19641121_unitatis-redintegratio_en.html
- **Reflective practice:** journaling, meditation, prayer service, celebratory activity of all faiths and religions in class.



Photo: Roman@Stillpoint.photo

Module 4: Mission

In this module, students will examine the mission and purpose of the Church. They will investigate the mission and outreach of the Apostles of Jesus, modern day evangelists, Church disciples and mission workers. They will discover their personal call and responsibility to be good stewards of creation: both people and the Earth. They will explore their own personal gifts and talents and discern how they may respond to the call to serve others and care for the Earth.

Unit 1: Why Catholicism?

4.1 Students learn about	Students should be able to
- Origins of the Catholic Church - Mission of the Church - Catholic being universal in outreach and connection to other Christians and religious beliefs - Celtic Christian Tradition - The Seven Sacraments - Baptism - Sacrament of Reconciliation - Eucharist and Sunday Liturgy - Sacrament of Vocation: Marriage and Holy Orders - Music and Worship - The Role of Mary - Symbolism in the Church: Church architecture, artwork, statues, the crucifix, images	- Identify that the Catholic Church was instituted by Jesus Himself - Explore the role and mission of the Church - Comprehend the Church to continue Christ's mission in the world: to build the Kingdom of God on Earth - Understand Catholicism not as a closed-in religion, but a Catholicism that emphasises its universality in outreach and its relatedness to other Christians and other religions - Examine the history and impact of early Christianity in Ireland - Explore the lives of the Irish saints and the impact they have had on the Irish people and society as a whole - Examine the impact the faith of the Irish people has had across the world, through emigration and missionaries - Explain the elements and purpose of each sacrament - Explain the effects of Baptism and make the connection with identity as a child of God and sharing in the mission of Christ - Recognise the call of every baptised person to become a disciple of Jesus - Appreciate the Sacrament of Reconciliation as a healing sacrament - Comprehend the teaching of the Eucharist and connect it to scripture teaching - Examine some Eucharistic miracles the Church has officially recognised - Recognise and understand the main components to Sunday's Liturgy – Mass - Examine the meaning and call of a vocation: marriage, ordained ministry, consecrated life, single life

- Explore the impact music has as a means of prayer and worship
- Discover the role of Mary in salvation history
- Examine the meaning of devotion to Mary as Mother and as Queen
- Analyse the basis and history of at least two Irish pilgrimage sites
- Examine the various symbols used in Catholicism and Church architecture, and the reasoning behind them



Loreto Secondary School, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin with their game 'A Blob's Rights' exploring human rights.
 Trócaire Game Changers Awards. <https://www.trocaire.org/our-work/educate/game-changers/>
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Unit 2: Call to Mission

4.2 Students learn about	Students should be able to
• Discipleship: The call to enter into relationship with Jesus, to follow Him and in His Church • Work of the Apostles • Modern day evangelists • Stewardship and creation • Care for life • The family as 'domestic church' • Four cardinal virtues • Corporal and spiritual works of mercy • Social Justice • Personal vocation and call to mission	• Explore the personal invitation to a relationship with Jesus, to follow Him with participation in the life and mission of the Church • Reflect on the mission and work of the Apostles of Christ • Examine different ways people spread the Good News of Christ • Recognise, from biblical and Church teaching, each person's call and responsibility to be a good steward in the world: both of people and the Earth • Research effective ways to look after and care for the Earth and the environment • Recognise the dignity and value of every life, from the moment of conception to natural death • Examine how the family is the foundational unit where faith is nurtured, moral values instilled, and love is practised • Discover the call to grow in 'wholeness', by living out the four cardinal virtues in their everyday life • Examine how to live out the corporal and spiritual works of mercy in their own day-to-day lives • Understand justice and truth in relation to how a person lives their life in work, family and friendships • Investigate how specific charities help support and care for those in need, especially the poor, homeless, oppressed and most vulnerable in our society • Determine their own unique gifts and talents • Identify a good cause or charity they would like to get involved with • Discern what their own personal vocation in life may be

Module 4 Suggested Resources and Practices:

- **Online resources:** Sycamore; New Horizons (Veritas).

Film clips:

- Fr Columba, Called to More Teen Series (2025): Episode 12 – Mercy & healing of God:
<https://vimeo.com/user/109587795/folder/25474534>.
- Fr Benedict McGlinchey: Why Irish Young People Are Returning to Faith:
<https://youtu.be/Vo2nBbyRxJg?feature=shared>
- *The Last Priests and Nuns in Ireland*, two part RTE documentary:
<https://programmesales.rte.ie/programme/the-last-priests-nuns-in-ireland>
- Irish Dominicans, Sister Ignatia Gavin: The Angel of Alcoholics Anonymous:
<https://youtube.com/watch?v=Gi8zqjh-q4U&si=SJYFHkiPGD2nMY3O>
- LITTLE BY LITTLE | Fr Columba Jordan CFR: *How to Hear God at Mass*:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8nE7TRpGMFw><https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=8nE7TRpGMFw>
- LITTLE BY LITTLE | Fr Columba Jordan CFR: Christians Need to be Challenged on the Eucharist:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l6sRJNQMWIc> <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=l6sRJNQMWIc>
- *Ascension Presents* (Fr Mike Schmitz), *Going to Confession for the First Time in a Long Time*:
<https://youtu.be/iWxp5BNgmVY?si=yR1Vxk9miT-9i86g>
- LITTLE BY LITTLE | Fr Columba Jordan CFR, *God Needs You (To Find Your Mission)*:
<https://youtu.be/vLZwBuvtrKK?feature=shared>.
- *Sundays with Ascension*, Ascension Press.
- **Biblical foundation:** Body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12), Early Christian community (Acts 2), The road to Emmaus (Luke 24), Good Samaritan (Luke 10), Washing of feet (John 13), 'Whatever you did for one of the least of these..' (Matthew 25:40), Beatitudes (Matthew 5), For God so loved the world (John 3:16-17), the great commission (Matthew 28:19-20), Isaiah 49:6, Luke 2:30-32, Acts 10:34-35
- **Catholic teaching:** Youcat; Synodality: Journeying together as Church: *Final Document of the XVI Assembly*. Participation in liturgy and sacraments (CCC 1136-1144), Communion of saints, global Church (CCC 946-962), family as domestic Church (CCC 1655-1658), Service as expression of faith: *Justice in the World* and (CCC 2419-2425)
- **Theological reflection:** Sacraments as encounter with Christ: *Sacrosanctum Concilium* 6-7; Solidarity with the marginalised: *Fratelli Tutti*, *Caritas in Veritate*; Parish and school as local Church: *Lumen Gentium*; Ecological spirituality: care for creation as moral responsibility: *Laudato Si'*; Catholic Social Teaching: option for the poor, common good, solidarity: *Populorum Progressio*
- **Irish Christian heritage:** St Patrick, St Brigid, St Columba, St Columbanus
- **Irish Pilgrimage sites:** Knock Shrine, Croagh Patrick, Glendalough, Lough Derg
- **Responding to God:** prayer, Eucharist, reconciliation, Lectio Divina, acts of love and service, charity and volunteer work, retreat, pilgrimage

Recommended Online Resources

[to facilitate learning outcomes across all four modules]

- **Credible Catholic** – aims to stimulate dialogue, encourage reflection and critical reasoning, foster religious literacy, build community, and nurture faith, and in doing all of these things, to promote student well-being. Includes free PowerPoint and video resources: <https://catholiceducation.ie/credible-catholic/>
- **NUA Films Fresh Perspectives:** is an engaging eight-part film series designed for students aged 15 and up, tackling life's big questions about faith, science, and purpose (free resource): <https://nuafilms.com/nuafresh-perspective>
- **Alpha Youth Series** – *A new way for young people to explore life, faith and purpose.* Made for this generation, the new series creatively unpacks the real questions young people have. The series, consisting of 10 episodes, run over 8 weeks, introduces and explores the core ideas of the Christian faith, in a relevant and engaging way (free resource): <https://alphaireland.org/alpha-youth>
- **An Dara Saol and Saol Sonas (An Tobar Nua)** – *Humanity's Search for Meaning, Humanity's Search for God, Historical Jesus, Paul's Writings and Morality, Purpose, Peace, Hope, Freedom, Happiness & Love* - are high quality, (free) professional media resources that are available for teachers: <https://antobarnuaretreats.ie/saol/>
- **The Chosen** video series: www.thechosen.tv
- **TrueTube:** world religions, multifaith perspectives and resources: <https://www.truetube.co.uk>
- **New Horizons (Veritas)** – The focus is on exploration and discovery, leading to personal action. Lots of video and audio content, and creative individual and group activities: <https://folens.ie/pages/new-horizons>
- **Sycamore** – is an informal course about the Christian faith and its relevance for life today: <https://www.sycamore.fm>
- **Faithful Science: Integrating Science & Faith, McGrath Institute for Church Life** - This guide addresses the relationship between science and faith through four key questions that dispel the misunderstanding that the two are incompatible: <https://churchlife-info.nd.edu/faithful-science-integrating-science-and-faith>
- **Teaching Human Dignity Series- McGrath Institute for Church Life** – The *Teaching Human Dignity* series is a one of a kind collection of units, learning sequences, lesson plans, and resources that empowers teachers to incorporate life and human dignity issues into existing curriculum. (free classroom resource): <https://mcgrath.nd.edu/about/centers-initiatives-and-programs/life-human-dignity/resources/>
- **Catholic Online School** – Faith, Family & Formation: Free videos, resources, lesson plans: <https://www.catholiconline.school>
- **NUA Films The Way of St James:** an exciting video series exploring matters of life and faith along the Camino de Santiago (free resource): <https://nuafilms.com/the-way-of-st-james>

Liturgical Calendar of Resources

- (September) Harvest <https://www.christianaid.org.uk/get-involved/schools/harvest-school-resources>
- (October) Mission – Daring to Hope (Irish Religious Sisters Embracing the Unknown Home - Daring to Hope)
- (November/December) – NUA Christmas Discover the True Meaning of Christmas | NUA: Christmas — NUA FILMS
- (January) Christian Unity Week? Week of Prayer for Christian Unity | World Council of Churches
- (January/February) Catholic Schools Week? [Www.catholiceducation.ie](http://www.catholiceducation.ie)
- (Lent) Trócaire www.trocaire.org
- (Easter) Nua Easter NUA:Easter — NUA FILMS and Archdiocese of Dublin Easter Resources | Education Secretariat

Recommended Podcasts [to support learning across all four modules]

- *Ascension Presents: The Bible in a Year* and *The Catechism in a Year* podcasts – Fr Mike Schmitz
- *Ave Explores* – Katie McGrady
- *The Word on Fire Show* – Bishop Robert Barron
- *Pints with Aquinas*, Matt Fradd
- *Ignatius Press*

Assessment

Ongoing assessment is an integral part of this Senior Cycle Religious Education Curriculum Framework, *Made for More*. It serves both a formative and developmental purpose by allowing students opportunities to integrate and internalise their learning.

Assessment affords students the necessary opportunity to demonstrate their understanding of key teachings and their ability to reflect critically and personally on moral, religious and philosophical matters. Ultimately, assessment in RE seeks to review students' capacity for thoughtful reflection, understanding, respectful dialogue and meaningful engagement with faith, life and contemporary culture.

Assessment in this context should be inclusive, respectful of students' diverse backgrounds and beliefs, their learning capacity, whilst also being attentive to the personal and spiritual dimensions of their learning.

Given the importance of this subject in forming the whole person, it is essential, therefore, that a report on RE is shared with parents/guardians at the designated times of the school year.

Key Assignments

Assessment will be an ongoing process through various reflective practices and learning activities based on Key Assignments. The Key Assignments are informed by the rationale, key skills and learning outcomes laid out in this framework.

The Key Assignments graded by the class teacher will focus on the progression of:

- Communication and dialogue
- Creativity and initiative
- Independent critical reflection
- Engagement
- Key skills

Key Assignments play a central role in enhancing learning by creating the space and opportunities for students to engage more deeply with the topics being covered in class. They also enable students to personally interact with the material, providing opportunities for it to positively impact them spiritually, morally and ethically.

Therefore, it is advised to complete the Key Assignments linked to each Module while that Module is being taught. Teachers are expected to provide feedback on Key Assignments both during their development and upon completion.

Student Voice

Students should be provided with opportunities to creatively engage with this assessment process by choosing their own Key Assignments. By doing so, students strengthen specific skills and cultivate a greater sense of ownership of their learning.

The Key Assignments can be presented in a variety of forms:

- **Reflective journaling** — Students keep a journal to explore their thoughts, questions and insights arising from RE themes and discussions.
- **Group projects** — Collaborative work on topics such as justice, ethics, faith in action, or religious traditions, allowing students to research, create and present together.
- **Oral presentations** — Individual or small-group presentations on key topics, encouraging confidence, communication skills and personal engagement.
- **Creative work** — Use of art, music, poetry, or digital media, to express understanding of religious themes or personal meaning.
- **Debates or discussion groups** — Facilitated debates or structured conversations on contemporary moral or religious issues, fostering critical thinking and respectful dialogue.
- **Peer and self-assessment** — Opportunities for students to reflect on their own learning and provide constructive feedback to peers.
- **Portfolio of learning** — A collection of students' work over time, capturing their progress, key learnings and moments of personal or spiritual development.

Students must complete a minimum of 8 Key Assignments in total over two years. Students themselves will choose from the list below. They must choose 2 from each Module, ensuring all topics are covered effectively. Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) students may choose 4 from any of the 20 assignments presented in the chart below.

As part of a differentiated assessment approach, teachers are encouraged to use a range of assessment methods within the Key Assignments, including pair, group and whole-class discussion, reflective journaling, debating, group projects and oral presentations. When suitable, students should be given the choice in how they present their work, whether orally, visually, digitally or in other creative formats. They should also have the option, as much as possible, to complete Key Assignments individually, in pairs or in small groups.



Photos: Roman@Stilpoint.photo

List of Key Assignments for students to choose from

No.	Key Assignment	Module Link
1	Produce and present research based evidence on arguments for God's existence, to facilitate a walking debate on the existence of God.	Module 1
2	Research and design a chart, infographic poster or digital creation, displaying the complementary relationship between science and faith.	Module 1
3	Design and conduct a survey (online or hard copy), exploring attitudes to religion among friends and family members. Analyse the data collected and present your findings in a written report.	Module 1
4	Prepare and present a report on the class creed as agreed by the class group.	Module 1
5	Develop a prayer service or meditation, reflecting on the value of human life and the dignity of the human person.	Module 1
6	Devise a Bible timeline, outlining the major events in which God revealed Himself to humankind. Role-play or illustrate one significant event/story. Journal about the impact the drama or art work may have had on your understanding of that event.	Module 2
7	Study the encyclical letter <i>Christus Vivit</i> by Pope Francis. Assess the value and significance of its message for young people and the Church today. Write an essay reviewing its key themes and content. Reflect on any personal insights or impact it may have had on you.	Module 2
8	Research and examine key studies on the historical evidence for Jesus' resurrection. Present your findings to the class.	Module 2
9	Analyse the core message of the Gospel – the Good News. Observe the different elements of the Kerygma. ¹⁵ Journal about your personal response to that message.	Module 2
10	Research the life of one modern-day Saint from the following list: St Carlo Acutis, Servant of God – Sr Claire Crockett, Blessed Chiara Luce Badano, St Pier Giorgio Frassati, St Mother Teresa. Create a digital presentation outlining significant moments in their lives and what led to them becoming Saints (or on the path to Sainthood). Document inspirational quotes or sayings they shared. Journal about the personal impact the Saint has had on your life since you began your research.	Module 2
11	Design a resource, e.g. a poster or video, outlining the principal teachings and practices of the five major world religions. Include a synopsis of the shared values, truths and principles common among these religions.	Module 3
12	Examine the importance of religious freedom and freedom of expression in society today. Create a school survey and questionnaire (online or paper), to further study and analyse your findings.	Module 3
13	Explore different methods for forming your conscience, and create a list of tips and strategies to help you make informed and ethical choices.	Module 3

¹⁵ See appendix with outline of the Kerygma pages 38-39 of this document.

14	Issue tracking: identify and explore a current real-world war issue as reported in the news. Explore alternatives to the situation, and design a resolution to the dilemma.	Module 3
15	Plan, organise and participate in a class or whole-school prayer service that reflects the diversity of beliefs within the school community. The prayer service should be inclusive and respectful of multiple faith traditions and cultures, ensuring that all students feel represented, valued and welcomed.	Module 3
16	Explore the lives of the Irish Saints and examine the history and impact of early Christianity in Ireland. Present your findings to the class, highlighting the influence these Saints had on the Irish people and society as a whole. Include research on the global influence of the faith of the Irish people through emigration and missionary work.	Module 4
17	Design a digital presentation or video for your peers that highlights the main components of three Eucharistic miracles officially recognised by the Church. Journal about any personal impact these findings may have had on you.	Module 4
18	Write a personal letter from Jesus to yourself. Reference real-life issues and concerns you may be facing. Discuss how Jesus views your life path and the gifts and talents He has given you. Include at least three Bible verses in your letter.	Module 4
19	Plan and organise a charity fundraiser for a local organisation or one that is close to your heart (e.g. bake sale, craft sale, bingo night, sponsored walk, silence, fast or 'acts of kindness' challenge). Research your chosen charity, develop a plan, promote the event, execute the fundraiser, and reflect in your journal on the experience.	Module 4
20	Plan, organise and participate in a school or community environmental action event (e.g. clean-up-day, tree planting or awareness campaign). Reflect and journal on the experience.	Module 4

Students are strongly encouraged to complete additional Key Assignments when possible.¹⁶ Key Assignments also inform both students and teachers of appropriate future directions in teaching and learning. Through these assessments, learning is reinforced, student competencies are developed and achievements are recognised and summarised.

Whole-class Key Events

Whole-class Key Events serve to create a meaningful environment that supports faith formation and active engagement with the core teachings of this Framework. They provide space for contemplation, reflection, spiritual encounter and connection with local faith communities. They also foster collaborative, creative and organisational skills. Such opportunities are essential to the holistic development and spiritual growth of each student.

¹⁶ With the exception of LCA students required to complete 4 Key Assignments rather than 8, as indicated previously.

Students must participate in 2 whole-class Key Events. Please choose one option from each Key Event.

Whole-Class Key Event 1*	Option A: Visit one of the following pilgrimage sites: Knock Shrine (Co. Mayo), Croagh Patrick (Co. Mayo), Glendalough (Co. Wicklow), Lough Derg (Co. Donegal), Glenstal Abbey (Co. Limerick), Mount Melleray Abbey (Co. Waterford), St Patrick's Cathedral and Holy Well (Downpatrick), St Brigid's Shrine and Well (Kildare), [or a Cathedral or local Holy Well in your area]. OR Option B: Participate in an organised retreat (for their class or year group).
Whole-Class Key Event 2*	Option A: Plan, prepare and participate in organising of school liturgy. This may be a beginning/end of year or Graduation Mass. Students choose and participate in the readings, prayers of intercession, music, offerings, etc. OR Option B: Plan, organise and participate in a parish prayer service. Identify a theme (liturgical calendar – Christmas, Easter; forgiveness, gratitude, creation). Collaborate with parish and select prayers, readings, music; allocate roles; coordinate logistics; advertise event; participate in service; reflect and journal afterwards.

Journalling

Evidence of journalling will also be a guiding factor for teachers when grading. Journalling and reflective practices are an important component to this Framework. It is vital that students are given opportunities to think deeply and critically reflect on the topics and theories being studied. This is why journalling is included in some Key Assignments, though journalling on all Key Assignments is encouraged.

The content of the journal will not be graded or assessed like other elements of the Key Assignments; evidence that journalling has taken place is sufficient. Students must have the freedom, space and sufficient time to write their thoughts without fear of judgement. Journalling in every class for 3–6 minutes is a way of embedding reflective practice.

Depending on classroom circumstances, teachers may choose for students to keep a hardcopy journal or a digital one.

Due to the sensitive nature of the journalling experience, teachers who choose to use hard copies of journals are advised to ensure that these journals are stored in a secure and private location to protect pupils' privacy and emotional safety.

Made for More Patron's Certificate

Upon fulfilling all the assessment requirements outlined in this Senior Cycle RE Curriculum Framework, *Made for More*, there is an opportunity for students to apply for formal certification through their school's Patron. The *Made for More* Patron's Certificate is endorsed and highly recommended by the Irish Episcopal Conference, school Patrons and Trusts.

Accreditation is designed to recognise the work already achieved during the two-year Senior Cycle RE course. The intention is not to increase teachers' workload, but to acknowledge and link existing learning and assessment.

Assessment is the validation of learning on both an academic and experiential level having taken place. The *Made for More* Patron's Certificate is a formal recognition that such learning has taken place.

Specification for Accreditation

For a student to receive accreditation and be awarded the *Made for More* Patron's Certificate, they must fulfil the following criteria (over the two year Senior Cycle course):

- i. Attend timetabled RE class and achieve at least 80% attendance rate¹⁷
- ii. Complete 8 Key Assignments of their choosing from the provided list
- iii. Participate actively in 2 whole-class Key Events
- iv. Engage in the *Made for More* journalling process

Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA) students may be assessed using the same criteria; however, they are required to complete four Key Assignments rather than eight. These assignments may be adapted to coincide with those already laid out in the document on *Religious Education draft – Leaving Certificate Applied*.¹⁸

At the end of Senior Cycle students will be awarded a certificate on satisfactory completion of the above criteria, which will reflect their personal achievement, subject knowledge, competency and growth throughout Senior Cycle RE.

The *Made for More* Patron's Certificate will be awarded at three levels of achievement:

- i. **Progressing:** Demonstrates basic proficiency in communication and dialogue, satisfactory competence in creativity and initiative, foundational skills in thoughtful reflection and engagement and progression of key skills
- ii. **Established:** Demonstrates effective skills in communication and dialogue, capable of displaying creativity and initiative, consistent reflection and engagement and developing skills effectively
- iii. **Outstanding:** Demonstrates outstanding skills in communication and dialogue, exceptional creativity and initiative, independent critical reflection, strong engagement and mastery of key skills¹⁹

¹⁷ Decisions relating to attendance rates should be informed by teacher discretion and professional judgement, taking into account individual circumstances.

¹⁸ <https://www.curriculumonline.ie/getmedia/e948caca-fa07-4329-9ac1-914225b1f7b3/religion.pdf>.

¹⁹ Key skills are outlined on page 12 of this document

Award Levels	Attendance	8 Key Assignments	Led/Active Participation in 2 Whole-Class Events	Engaged in the <i>You Matter</i> Journalling Process
Progressing	80%	Satisfactory	Basic	Contributed
Established	90%	Effective	Beneficial	Contributed
Outstanding	95% +	Exceptional	Strong	Contributed

*In cases of student sickness or absence during events involving the whole class, alternative arrangements may be made in collaboration with facilitators/parish to fulfil these requirements.

Note: Where a student is participating in for example the JPPI Award, the Amber or the Gaisce Award, they may count their participation in the relevant Key Assignments or Key Events toward these awards or similar programmes.



Photo: John McElroy

Students from the competing schools pull for the winning trophy at the All-Ireland final of the public speaking competition entitled 'Young People Find Language for their Faith' (2025) which was organised by the Knights of Saint Columbanus.

Final Reflection

Teaching Religious Education is both a professional and vocational commitment. It should be presented to students in an open and invitational manner, as a rich and meaningful resource that can illuminate their lives, accompany them in their search for meaning and deepen their sense of identity, purpose and belonging. As we reflect on this shared journey of learning and growth, we hope that each student will be inspired to live with purpose, be guided by faith and encouraged to fulfil their unique, God-given vocation in life. Religious Education invites teachers to walk alongside young people, as they explore life's big questions with honesty, courage and faith, arriving at the profound conviction that they are *Made for More*.

The guidelines in this framework are informed by the following five key documents:

1. *A Vision for Catholic Schools in Ireland*, (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2026)
2. *The curriculum framework for Senior Cycle Religious Education* (National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, 2005)
3. *Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of Catholic Students* (Irish Catholic Bishops' Conference, 2006).
4. *Share the Good News: National Directory for Catechesis in Ireland* (Irish Episcopal Conference, 2010).
5. *Directory for Catechesis* (Vatican: Dicastery for Evangelisation, 2020)
6. *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools. Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love* (Vatican: Congregation for Catholic Education 2013).



Photo: James McLoughlin

Fr Frank McManus leads a graduation ceremony in St Michael's College, Enniskillen.

Appendix A:

Glossary of Key Terms Used in Religious Education

Christian Eschatology: The branch of Christian theology that deals with the ‘last things’ – such as life after death, final judgement, heaven and hell. It explores what Christians believe will happen at the end of time, including the resurrection of the dead and the Second Coming of Christ.

Christology: is the study of who Jesus is and what he came to do.

- Jesus is both fully human and fully divine.
- He is the true God, the Son of God, the second person of the Trinity.
- He is truly man, born of the virgin Mary (like us in all things, except sin).
- Jesus was sent by the Father to save us from sin and death, through his life, death and resurrection.
- Jesus reveals God to us.

Dialogue: Not to be confused with debating. True dialogue, in the Christian sense, demands more listening than speaking. It contains collaborative, constructive and affirmative approach to communicating that is modelled on Christ’s interactions of love and care towards humanity. It aims to listen to opposing views whilst also fostering understanding, respect and peace with others.

Discernment: Discernment is the act of good decision making. Christian discernment is the process of prayerfully seeking God’s Will (desire) in a situation. It involves analysing one’s own inner thoughts, feelings and movements, while listening, reflecting and responding to God. It is important that essential time be given to reflect and listen to ‘what is God calling me to do here?’

Discipleship: The word ‘disciple’ is derived from the Greek ‘*mathetes*’, meaning ‘learner’. Discipleship involves the conscious decision to follow Jesus and allow His teachings and example to shape and impact one’s whole life. A disciple of Jesus is called to participate in the life of the Church, serve others, share the good news, and to accompany others as they grow in their relationship with Him. Discipleship lasts right throughout a person’s life and entails a life-long journey of spiritual growth and learning.

Faith Formation: The art of transforming one’s head, heart and hands, through engagement with scripture, prayer and community so as to be formed in the image and likeness of Christ.

Ignatian Pedagogy: A teaching methodology that is derived from the spiritual exercises of St. Ignatius of Loyola. Ignatian Pedagogy (largely used in Jesuit schools), seeks to form the whole student, rather than just impart knowledge to them. It focuses on active, experiential learning. It is a call to human excellence and a call to develop the whole person: intellectually, spiritually and practically.

Kerygma: Refers to the core message of the gospel of Jesus Christ.

1. **God loves us and has a plan for our life:** God created every human being out of love, in His image and likeness and desires a personal relationship with each of us.
2. **Our relationship with God has been broken through sin:** sin separates us from God by our own choosing.
3. **Jesus died to save us:** Out of love for us, the Father sent His only Son, Jesus Christ into the world to pay the price for our sins, through his death on the cross, to restore our relationship with God, so that we may have eternal life through Him.

- 4 **Repent and believe the Gospel:** In order to mend our relationship with God, we must repent of our sins and radically reorientate our lives to God, believe the good news and trust in Him.
- 5 **Be baptised and receive the Holy Spirit:** Baptism invites us into Christ's body, empowering us with the gift of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit brings forth love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control into our lives.
- 6 **Abide in Christ and His body the Church:** Remain rooted in Jesus through the Church and participation in the sacraments.
- 7 **Go make disciples:** Each of us is called to share the good news with others.

Kingdom of God: In Christianity, the Kingdom of God refers to God's reign over all creation. It is not just a physical reality, but a spiritual one where God's Will is done. Jesus often spoke about this in his teachings, describing it as both a present and future reality – present wherever people live according to God's love and justice, and future in the sense that it will be fully realised at the end of time when God renews all things. Christians believe they are called to help bring about the Kingdom of God on earth by following Jesus' example and living according to God's values.

Mission: Every baptised Christian has a Mission: to Evangelise. To Evangelise is to proclaim the Good News (The Gospel) of Jesus Christ. It is based upon Jesus' message to 'go make disciples of all nations' (Mt 28:19-20). Christian Missionaries aim to introduce people to a living relationship with Jesus and into the life of the Church, while striving to build up the Kingdom of God through acts of love and service to others.

Pluralist Society: A society which views diversity as beneficial to society, and whereby autonomy should be enjoyed by varieties of groups, including cultural, religious, political or others.



Photo: Roman@Stillpointphoto

Salvation History: is the unfolding of God's plan to save humanity – to bring humanity back into communion with Him – revealed gradually through time (Old Testament), fulfilled in Jesus Christ (New Testament), lived out in the Church, and awaiting completion at the end of time.

Solidarity: is not just about feeling sorry for someone or having something in common with them. Instead, it is about coming together with others for a shared cause or belief in something. Solidarity demands support and action concurrently, often for things like injustice or during times of hardship.

Synodality: Journeying together as Church.

This term refers to a way of being Church that emphasizes communion, participation and mission. This process includes:

- Listening sessions with lay people and clergy
- Dialogue among diverse groups
- Reflection on the decision-making process in the Church
- Discerning together what the Holy Spirit is saying
- Walking alongside one another

Trinity: The Christian teaching is that God is a communion of divine Persons – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

- Christians believe in one God (monotheism) – not three Gods.
- God is three distinct Persons within the one divine nature.
- The three Persons are distinct but not separate.
- The Father: Unbegotten source of the Godhead.
- The Son (Jesus Christ): Eternally begotten of the Father.
- The Holy Spirit: Eternally proceeds from the Father and the Son.
- The Trinity is a communion of Persons in an eternal relationship of love.
- Biblical foundations: Matthew 28:19, John 1:1, John 14–16.

Appendix B:

Template for recording necessary criteria for grading

School Name: _____ **Class Group:** _____

Class Teacher: _____ **Date of Submission:** _____

[illegible]

Signed by School Principal: _____ Signed by Class Teacher: _____



Photo: @jbc_portadown PR Team

Appendix C: A Vision for Catholic Schools in Ireland

A Vision for Catholic Schools in Ireland

This vision document outlines the identity and mission of the Catholic School in Ireland. Catholic Schools provide a unique, vibrant, nurturing environment for students, their families, the Church, and wider civil society. The Catholic vision of education, inspired by the Gospel, commits to forming the whole person in a community rooted in reason, faith, hope, love and action. Each Catholic School expresses this vision in its own context and in every aspect of school life.

The Catholic School

INVITES all into a personal relationship with Jesus Christ who with the help of the Holy Spirit, leads us to a life of friendship with a God who is love (1 John 4:8,16). Such friendship is lived out and nourished by participation in the community of believers that is the Church. The Catholic School actively nourishes and accompanies each person in the joys and sorrows of their spiritual journey and in their search for meaning and purpose in life. It respects those who find meaning in other faith traditions and secular worldviews. The school community grows together through shared dialogue and reflection, active listening and a culture of encounter. Opportunities for discernment, silence, prayer, liturgy, and the Sacraments are integrated into the rhythm of the school day and liturgical year.

SHINES gently in a vibrant, interconnected educational constellation. The Catholic School is part of a local and global community of learning where schools, families, parishes, and wider society align for the good of each student and for the common good of all. The Catholic School actively supports and works in partnership with parents as primary educators, to ensure each child flourishes. It is a welcoming, living environment where the Catholic vision respectfully permeates all aspects of life, fostering a profound sense of community and shared mission.

NURTURES a love of learning. Integrating faith and reason, the Catholic School encourages all to find wonder in the world around them. It strives for excellence in learning and teaching for all. It encourages critical thinking, discernment, creativity and discovery through an exploration of truth, goodness and beauty. In a Catholic School, Religious Education stands as a core subject within a broad, innovative and integrated curriculum. Teaching is understood as a sacred art, where all those who work in schools inspire all by their witness and daily example.

DIGNIFIES the person. The Catholic School recognises and affirms the fundamental dignity of each individual person ‘created in the image and likeness of God’ (Gen 1:27) and the capacity of everyone to reach their God-given potential to ‘live life to the full’ (John 10:10). The Catholic School focuses on the holistic development of each person – spiritually, intellectually, emotionally, socially, and physically. It honours the uniqueness of each person, recognising all people to have a shared dignity as infinitely loved children of God.

BUILDS a culture of welcome, inclusion, joy, celebration, and hope, permeated by Gospel values and a spirit of freedom, truth, justice, and love. In the Catholic School, learning happens in community. A sense of belonging, security and connectedness is nurtured. Catholic Schools prioritise cooperation, teamwork and collaboration, understanding every person's complementary gifts, roles and responsibilities in the community and in the Church.

WEAVES Social and Environmental Justice into the life of the Catholic School. Inspired by the Gospel calling to build the Kingdom of God and enlightened by Catholic Social Teaching, a Catholic School inspires all to become agents of change. A sense of collective responsibility and solidarity is cultivated. The poor, those who suffer from injustice and the many who dwell on the margins of life are given special care. All are called to promote peace, forgiveness, reconciliation, and the care of creation.

NAVIGATES new spaces with discernment and creativity. The Catholic School seeks to provide a moral compass and to inspire all to find new ways to live the Gospel in an ever changing and complex world. It recognises that every generation faces new opportunities and new challenges. A Catholic School strives to provide a hope-filled space, where such opportunities and challenges might be understood and navigated for the future flourishing of the individual, the faith community and society as a whole.

