

Coming to Know, Worship and Love

SECTION 1: The Place of Religious Education in the Catholic School

1 *The Context of Catholic Schooling Within the Mission of the Catholic Church*

The world is the primary context and place of God's self disclosure to all of humanity. It is in the lived reality of our daily lives that we are called to experience God as Creator, Jesus as Saviour and the Holy Spirit as Guide. As Gerard Manly Hopkins wrote, '... *the world is charged with the grandeur of God*'. The Catholic school is part of the world and part of the community of the Church, and invites all the members of the school community to search for God in the world and to live a life framed by the life and words of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Second Vatican Council reminded us that central to the work of schools is that:

'... true education aims at the formation of the human person'

(Declaration on Christian Education, par. 1)

2 *Religious Education: What does it mean?*

Within the context of Catholic primary and secondary schools there are three intersecting areas of school life that are linked under the term 'religious education'. The first and most explicit area is the formal classroom religious education curriculum. It is in this area that the young come **to know** the tradition through the deliberate, systematic and sequential teaching and learning activities and experiences as outlined in this framework.

The second area is the prayer, sacramental and liturgical life of the school. While knowledge about these is taught in the formal religious education classroom, the celebrating of them is a call to faith, and may take place across the school and link directly with parish programs. Such activities are evidence of vibrant **worship** within school life.

The third area is concerned with living within the Catholic tradition. This is a call to build up the reign of God and to live with principles that support the common good. It is a call **to love**, to be bread for the hungry and a light to the world.

In essence the religious education program is a fundamental activity of the Church at work:

'The Church exists in order to preach the gospel'

(Evangelii Nuntiandi, par.14)

3 Religious Education: In the total life of the school

It is important to remember that, while school is a significant time and experience in the education of faith of the students, it is the parents who hold the primary responsibility for education in faith. Moreover, it is in the parish context that catechesis finds a home. The function of the school is to support the parents and the parish in this education in faith.

The totality of school life gives witness to, and supports the growth in faith of, the young people who attend. Within the many formal educational programs which are offered in Catholic schools there are overt areas of religious education and faith development which crisscross the life of the school, and are taught by qualified teachers of religious education. However, the total Catholicity and religious dimension of the school does not rest with the religious education teachers alone. All staff in the school are called to give witness to the importance and primacy of the Gospel. There can be no separation of curriculum into religious and non-religious dimensions. All curriculum builds up the dignity of the human person and an understanding of life. All staff in the school community have the responsibility and the potential to speak of and reveal the love of God by their person, their witness and their teaching.

4 Religious Education: In the religious education classroom

Religious Education is a term which joins the religious dimensions of life (religion) with appropriate pedagogy (education). Religion is about a way of life, a system of beliefs and actions by which people make meaning in life. Education is a process where the student and teacher are engaged in inquiry, deep learning, evaluation and response to the mysteries of life. There is a dance, as it were; an interplay between life and culture and religion; and the religious education classroom is an appropriate setting for this interplay. In this process of religious education students will be at many different stages in their life journey. For some, the learning about the People of God will be new (evangelisation), while for others it will be a further development (catechesis).

‘Without entering into the whole problem of teaching religion in schools it must be emphasised that, while such teaching is not merely confined to ‘religion classes’ within the school curriculum, it must, nevertheless, also be imparted explicitly and in a systematic manner’

(The Catholic School – 1977, par. 50)

The religious education teacher should regard each child as a Christian who has received the gift of faith in baptism. The teacher is called to cultivate this God supernatural gift planted by God, to nourish faith and help this gospel virtue grow towards maturity.

Made a living member of the Church and enlightened by the Spirit in baptism, each child is open to the self revelation of God in Jesus Christ. This fullness of revelation is embodied in the Word of God: the Scriptures and Tradition (cf. *Dei Verbum*, 10). Through catechesis in the Word of God, teachers help each child to *know* the revealed truths of the Faith we share, to *worship* God in liturgy and sacraments, to practise *love* in this world, in hope of eternal life in the Kingdom of Heaven.

Coming to Know, Worship and Love is therefore a process of **‘faith seeking understanding’** – *fides quaerens intellectum*. Throughout the various stages of catechesis, the Church proposes her teachings in the Catholic tradition. Members of the community of the baptised seek to understand these faith concepts and to come ‘to know, worship and love’ God.

The focus of the mission of the Catholic school is evangelisation, the proclaiming and living out of the Kingdom of God and the Good News of Jesus Christ. The Catholic school may be the primary place in which non-Christian students attending Catholic schools encounter the person of Jesus Christ and his teaching. Through the religious education program these students are introduced to the key practices and beliefs of Christian communities of the past and present. For non-Catholic Christian students, every effort should be made to respect the faith and conscience of students who belong to other Churches and other ecclesial communities. (*Directory on Ecumenism*, #141) In both cases it is essential that the teacher is aware of, acknowledges, is sensitive to and respectful of these students and their faith traditions.

5 Religious Education: Readiness of students

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church prologue the Church reminds us that those to whom the Christian message is addressed will differ in 'culture, age, spiritual maturity, and social and ecclesial condition ...' requiring 'indispensable adaptations' to suit their 'maturity and understanding' (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, no. 24). The formal classroom religious instruction recognises this and is a place of 'instruction', of learning and teaching, of coming to know the person and message of Jesus as a prerequisite for responding to the message. The religious education classroom therefore, while assisting in faith development, has a different starting point: the invitation for students to explore, understand and come to know the essential elements of the Christian tradition.

6 The World in Which Students Live

'The school is undoubtedly a sensitive meeting point for the problems which besiege this restless end of the millennium.'

(John Paul II, 1997)

By the time students begin school they have had a multitude of experiences that influence how they understand themselves and their world. They have been immersed in a way of life that is largely urban, modern and secular, and one that is marked by rapid scientific and technological growth (John Paul II, 2001). Successive immigration from the United Kingdom, Europe, Asia, the Middle East, South America and Africa has resulted in a multicultural and multifaith nation. This way of life brings much richness and blessing, but also brings challenges that impact on religious learning. In our secular setting religion can be viewed as a private matter that has little relevance to public life. Sometimes its message is deemed unconvincing (John Paul II, 2001). The spiritual journey is sometimes viewed as undertaken alone by an individual, not within a faith community.

As fewer families identify with parish life, religious learning occurs in isolation from the broader community of faith. The pluralist, multifaith nature of Australian society potentially brings richness of relationships and belief, but also presents challenges in maintaining a living Catholic identity. Those who search for meaning can do so within and beyond mainstream churches. Students can develop their own beliefs and values from a myriad of belief systems. Family life has many expressions and may take on different meanings for different students.

Global, economic and technological expansion bring new insights and challenges for religious learning. Economic prosperity and materialism influence students in this context, and can challenge notions of Christian morality and social justice. There are many competing value systems that influence a student's forming conscience.

At the same time, in the era of Benedict XVI, a distinct sign of hope is the gradual emergence of a stronger Catholic youth culture. Some of its features are an interest in spirituality, meditation and prayer, a search for clear values, a concern for justice in the world and a rediscovery of the sacramental life. The World Youth Days established by John Paul II have become key moments that celebrate, promote and enrich Catholic identity and a sense of community among young people.

It is in this context that the Catholic school is challenged to involve the school community in the life of the community of faith. Indeed, it is essential that religious education in the Catholic school be, in a practical way, an invitation to participation in the life of the Church. Religious education today must support young people in developing a Christian interpretation of life (cf. *The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium*, No. 1), so that they can grow to be faith-filled, hopeful members of the community, actively living out their vocation.

7 Revelation and Religious Education

All people have the capacity to reason that there is a God, a process that is described as natural revelation. But to know who this God is, we depend on the self-revelation of God in human history – Divine Revelation.

God was gradually revealed to his chosen People, Israel, in events and in the lives of people. God's self-revelation was completed in the deeds and words of Jesus Christ, the Son of God who took human nature, who lived among us, died and rose again for us (cf *Dei Verbum* 2).

The content of Divine Revelation is transmitted in and through the Church, the People of God. Within the Church, Revelation is embodied in the Scriptures and Tradition, the two sources of the Word of God (cf. *Dei Verbum* 6).

Revelation is proclaimed and interpreted by the teaching office of the Catholic Church, the Magisterium of the Pope and Bishops. In a believing and worshipping Church, the development of doctrine clarifies, but does not change, the content of Revelation.

Divine Revelation is an invitation to faith. Revelation comes to us basically through 'the word proclaimed', normally through language. Our response in faith is not to formulae, but rather to "the realities they express" (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, no. 170).

Life is the place where we can make sense of Revelation, guided by the teaching Church. Our experience of life is not a source of Revelation. Through our experiences we deepen our understanding of Divine Revelation.

God also reveals the truth about the nature, purpose and destiny of the human person. We are individuals, created in the divine image out of love and for love, called to love as members of a community of faith and service. The moral content of Revelation in the commandments and beatitudes guides us to live justly, to overcome sin and choose virtue. Revelation calls us to a prayerful relationship with God in the service of others.

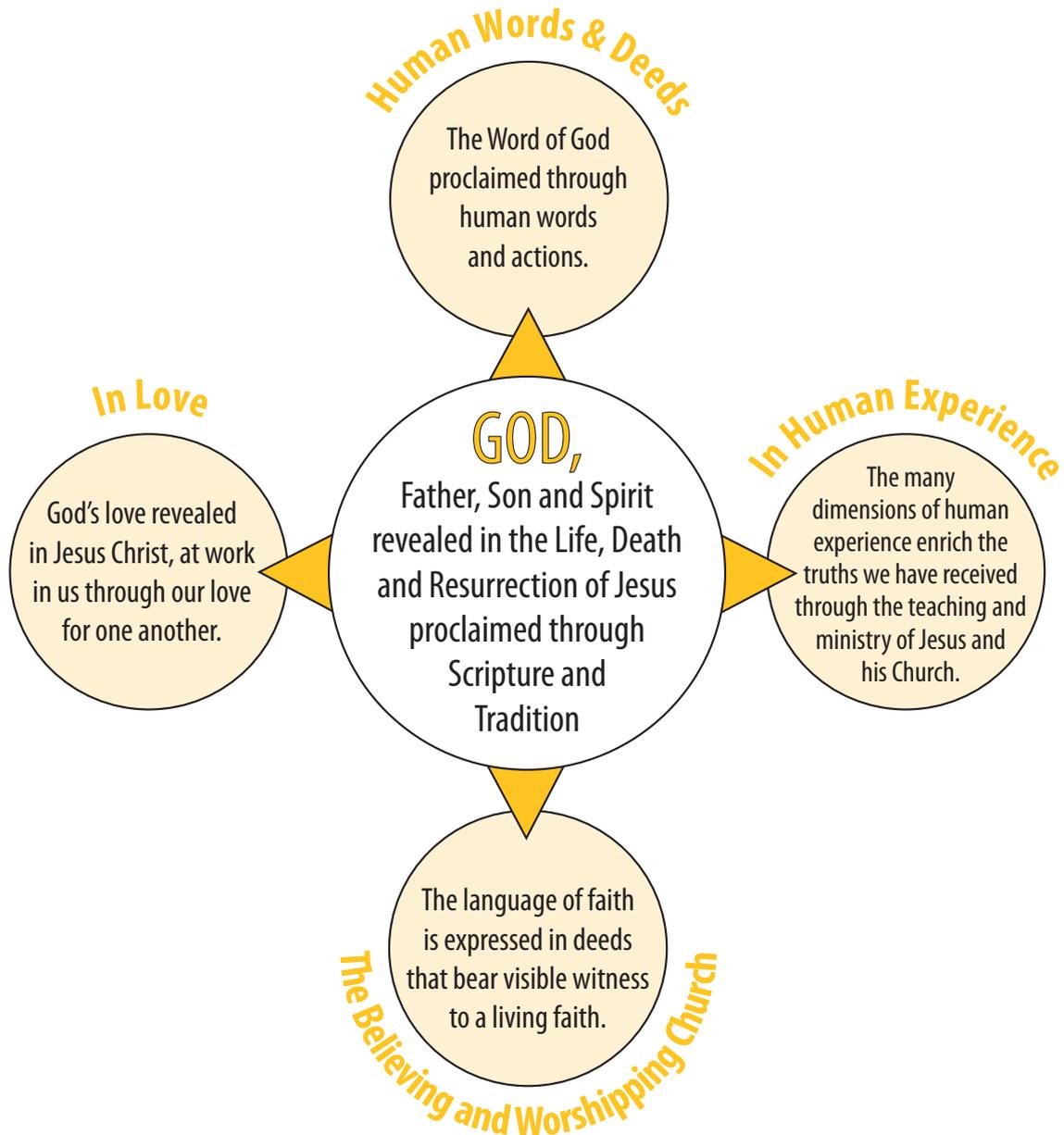
Parents and educators serve Jesus Christ, the complete Revelation of God, as they pass on his word in Scripture and Tradition to the young. Faithful to this Revelation, they are called to:

- provide clear doctrine, according to the teachings of the Catholic Church;
- seek to understand revealed truths more deeply in their own lives so they can be a living witness to truth;
- let the light of the Gospel shine in and through the lives of children and young people;
- help them make sense of their lives through Jesus Christ who is the full Revelation of God.

As we worship and love the God we know through Revelation, we are on a way of conversion from sin to a life of grace, peace and freedom. Revelation lights our path as we journey forward within the Church community towards the fulfilment of God's reign.

Revelation and Religious Education

Revelation is God's self-communication with humanity. Jesus reveals God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit through his life, death and Resurrection. Our Church communicates this, especially through Sacred Scripture and Tradition, and it is evidenced through Christian faith and action.



Religious education should endeavour to enhance students' knowledge of God, as revealed within the believing and worshipping Church, in human experience, words and deeds, and in our loving relationships with others. The task of religious educators then, is to effectively draw from these fields of revelation and to make them meaningful to students, leading them to respond in faith to the God who calls.

SECTION 2: Education and Religious Education

1 *Sound Education in Religious Education*

The religious education curriculum framework contained in this document is designed to assist schools in the further implementation of the series of religious education texts *To Know, Worship & Love*. In addition it situates the religious education curriculum within the educational directions for the State of Victoria as outlined in the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS). In VELS terms, religious education is a domain within the Discipline-based Learning Strand.

In the primary years of schooling (Preparatory year – Year 6) students are exposed to the three dimensions of religious learning (see section below) at every year level. Five content strands that explore the key beliefs and practices of the Catholic tradition are integrated into each dimension. (Note that these content strands are not the same as the VELS strands of learning.)

There is a need to ensure that there is a development of each student’s understandings and competencies across all three dimensions at each year level. In doing so, the following principles of learning apply:

- All students can learn
- All students can learn to think
- Students learn best when the religious education program connects with their cultural background and the practice beyond the classroom
- Students learn in different ways and at different rates; their capacities, backgrounds and interests need to be reflected in the learning program
- Students need to be supported and challenged to develop deeper levels of thinking, reflection and application to their daily life
- Learning builds on prior knowledge, experience and language of the students
- Learning is both a collaborative and individual process
- Learning is deepened when reflection, questioning, creativity and imagination are fostered
- A learning environment builds respectful relationships that value each person’s perspective and experience
- Structuring learning around religious concepts, understandings and questions helps students to make connections and to develop deep understandings
- Learning is strengthened where assessment is integrated into the teaching and learning process
- Understandings are expanded when students apply their learning to life.

2 *The Good Shepherd Experience*¹

The Religious Education Curriculum Prep–2 has been developed with a focus on the particular ways young children learn (Archdiocese of Sydney, 2005). Research on the spirituality and faith development of young children also informed its development.

The curriculum draws on the research and work of Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi (1996) in

¹ The explanation of the elements of the Good Shepherd Experience is based on the work of the Catholic Education Office, Sydney. Archdiocese of Sydney 2006, *Religious Education Curriculum Primary – Kindergarten*, Catholic Education Office, Sydney.

The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and Jerome Berryman (2003) in *Godly Play*, both of which were influenced by the work of Maria Montessori in the early 20th century. It also draws on the work of the Archdiocese of Sydney reflected in their K-2 religious education curriculum that derives from *To Know, Worship and Love* student books and the *Good Shepherd Experience* developed in the Archdiocese of Melbourne in 2001.

The Religious Education Curriculum Prep-2 lays the foundations for later learning and for life-long engagement with the mystery of God. A key part of laying the foundations is telling the stories of the Catholic Church: stories from Sacred Scripture and stories about how the Catholic community celebrates, prays and lives the Christian life.

STORY

Story is a key part of our faith tradition. The activity of God in the lives of people and in all creation as recorded in the scriptures has been handed on to us, firstly through the oral tradition and then in the written Word. In every age people have engaged with these stories and sought to relate their own story to the larger story of faith. In this way people are helped to know God in their lives.

Young children particularly are able to learn and make meaning through story and symbol. Stories carry deep insights which young children are often unable to verbalise. However, these insights help them to relate to the mystery of God and so make sense of their experience of the world. Stories help children, as well as adults, to explore key issues around the meaning and purpose of life and death.

Teachers assist young children to learn about the faith by helping them to engage with scripture, liturgy and Christian life and service. Story and liturgical symbols, words and actions have their own power, which engage the whole person, not only the intellect. In the *Good Shepherd Experience* young children come to know Jesus Christ personally through stories in the Gospels.

The style of biblical stories is particularly suited to young children because it uses only actions and descriptions essential to the story. This engages the imagination and provides opportunity to experience the wonder, mystery and power of these stories.

Stories in this religious education curriculum are of three main types or genres:

Narrative Stories: about people's experience of God's activity in their lives, both individually and communally, as told in the Old and New Testaments and in the Church's tradition. This includes stories of the liturgical seasons which focus on the life, death and resurrection of Jesus and the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Parables: the special teachings of Jesus invite creativity and challenge the listener to understand situations in a new way. Parables cannot simply be decoded or explained. They 'tease the mind into active thought' (Dodd, 1961).

Liturgical signs, symbols and actions: children learn the language of liturgy by experiencing it. As Jerome Berryman explains, 'The liturgical lessons are not the liturgy itself. Children learn the language of liturgy and have an appropriate place to experience it, so they can enter more fully into the liturgical experience of the Church' (Berryman, 2001).

Silence is an essential part of the 'language' of religion. Stillness and silence foster reflection and the capacity to listen to God. 'Be still and know that I am God' (Ps 46:10). Teachers aim to help children value silence as a means of listening and responding to God.

Key Elements of Storytelling

The key elements of storytelling adopted in this curriculum are:

1. Telling the Story
2. Wondering
3. Responding
4. Praying the Word

These key elements assist students to engage with the story and with each other. In using the stories of the Word of God in Scripture and the Tradition, including the signs, symbols and rituals of liturgy, teachers help children bring together faith and life experience. They also teach the importance of the sacred deposit of faith, which the Church seeks to hand on.

1. TELLING THE STORY

There are many ways and styles of telling stories. In this curriculum the main style utilised for initially telling the story is reflective, using concrete or visual material. This style addresses the learning needs of young children and is suited to biblical stories, which tell only essential actions and descriptions. It draws on the work of Jerome Berryman (2003) in *Godly Play* and the work of Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi (1996) in *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. Professional development will assist teachers to tell stories.

- The original setting is the Atrium, a sacred space into which students are brought for catechesis. In the classroom this special place could be a distinct area where the Bible is enthroned and familiar Catholic symbols are set up.
- The ideal seating arrangement is a semi-circle with children on the same level as the storyteller. A circle encourages interaction and signifies the equality of each person. The floor is suggested, but if this is not possible teachers arrange the seating such that storyteller and children are on the same level. The teacher suggests a comfortable posture for children.
- The source of the story is either the *To Know, Worship and Love* student books or a Big Book.
- The story is best communicated by telling rather than reading.
- It should be told, not necessarily 'by heart' but 'from the heart'.
- It is accompanied by the use of visual and/or concrete materials.
- At the initial telling children engage by watching and listening. After the story, children are given time to use the materials.
- The story is told staying close to the biblical words and without embellishment.
- The story itself helps children to understand unfamiliar terms, which can be discussed later. It is not necessary to explain and define terms before or during the story.
- A routine for preparing children for the story needs to be set in place. Young children like repetition and ritual. Routine helps children to move into a different 'space' and settle.
- Some suggestions for preparing for the story:
 - A quietening exercise – see 'Listening', 'Awareness', or 'Breathing' exercises in *To God on a Magic Carpet* (Macdonald, 2004)
 - Music – a piece of music which signals to children that they are moving to a story
 - Lighting a candle
 - Singing a hymn or song.

Facilitating 'Telling the Story'

The teacher:

- needs to become familiar with the story before telling it
- should read the scripture passage and the Scripture: Background Information
- should practise telling the story using the concrete materials before presenting it to the children.

2. WONDERING

- The 'I wonder' statements engage children with the story, invite reflection and elicit the children's ideas and thoughts.
- Wondering together teaches the art of dialogue, of listening to others, accepting and learning from others' ideas and contributions. It lays the foundation for relating to others in community.

- Wondering together allows for learning which comes from within each person. It is important to trust the presence of the Holy Spirit in this process.
- Suggested 'wondering' statements are provided in the *To Know, Worship and Love* books. Teachers select from these and adapt where necessary to suit the needs of the children. Teachers may create their own or follow the children's ideas. Children also may initiate wondering.
- There are no 'right' answers to wondering statements. They are not comprehension questions.
- Wondering statements are not suited to factual information, e.g., 'I wonder how many apostles there were' or key belief statements, e.g., 'I wonder if Jesus really rose from the dead'.
- Each person's response is influenced by their particular life experiences.
- Wondering statements are only the beginning of 'wondering'. This is continued as children expand their wondering in the exploring activities.
- Open wondering statements signal to the children the on-going and life-long process of engaging with the mystery of God.

Facilitating 'Wondering'

The teacher:

- receives and accepts each response
- listens to understand each child's ideas
- reflects back what is said without additional comment
- questions only to understand, not to 'correct' a child's response or steer them in a different direction
- trusts the silence—children often wonder or reflect silently; it is not necessary to force responses
- does not provide answers but encourages the child to develop and articulate ideas
- reminds the child who wishes to talk about unrelated topics that there will be another time for this.

3. RESPONDING

This element provides the opportunity for individual/small group exploration of the story. It gives children the time to focus on and explore aspects which have significance for them.

- Children should choose the story or part of the story on which to focus.
- Young children often find it easier to explore and express their feelings and ideas through art and drama.
- The creative arts provide 'tools' through which children can explore, imagine and express ideas.
- The concrete materials for the story should be available for children to use later. Working with the story is a means of entering it more deeply.
- Children will incorporate their own experience and imagination while engaging with the story. A child's retelling of a story will reflect their experience and understanding.
- The story can be retold in different ways.
- Shared-book experience using Big Books is another way of retelling the story. Teachers make Big Books available for children to use individually or in small groups.
- Children's literature identified in the religious education curriculum supports the stories of scripture, liturgy and the tradition. These books should also be available for children to use.
- For some children writing is a powerful means of responding to and exploring the story. Opportunities to integrate writing should be provided.

Facilitating 'Responding'

The teacher:

- demonstrates the use of visual arts materials and techniques, through which the children explore and express their ideas
- allows an element of choice and openness in what the children do: these are not 'craft activities' with a set finished product
- ensures children have sufficient time for their work. By arranging for storage of incomplete work children can continue in the next session if they wish. Often much is invested in the child's work and it needs to be treated with respect
- responds by engaging in dialogue with children, asking open questions, describing what they see and not interpreting it
- provides for children to share their 'work' only if they wish. The 'work' itself is often an expression of the child's experience or feelings.

4. PRAYING THE WORD

- Young children learn to pray through the experience of prayer. Teachers help the children to pray by praying with them and providing regular opportunities for prayer.
- Routine times for prayer are important. Regular times of prayer need to be established, e.g., morning prayer, prayer before and after lunch, prayer at the end of the day.
- Within religious education teaching there are opportunities to invite children to pray. These prayers offer children the opportunity to pray the prayers of their hearts and to experience silence, stillness, movement, ritual and symbol.
- Teachers can establish simple rituals for bringing children together, perhaps sitting in a circle, lighting a candle and/or singing a familiar hymn or refrain. Introducing the prayer time with words from the liturgy, e.g., 'Let us pray' or 'Let us give thanks to the Lord our God' will help children's familiarity with these words when they hear them in church.
- Research suggests that young children more readily pray prayers of praise and thanks. Frequent opportunities for spontaneous prayer should be provided. This type of prayer needs to be set in the context of simple gathering rituals mentioned above.
- The religious education curriculum introduces children to scripture stories and psalms and to liturgical ritual, symbol and action. 'Telling the story' is one way of proclaiming the Word of God. It provides a language for prayer. The form and words from scripture and the liturgy can be used in prayer, e.g., lines from psalms, such as 'The Lord is my Shepherd'. Suggestions for prayer are provided in the units.
- The Word should also be proclaimed from the Bible. Reading a short passage of the story from the Bible provides a focus for prayer.
- Young children learn through movement, which is also an important part of liturgical action. Prayer with movement includes simple hand or body actions and praying with hands raised or joined. Simple processions provide movement, even when not all children are involved.
- Formal prayers are best taught by praying them regularly. Suggested formal prayers are to be found in the 'Our Prayers' section of *To Know, Worship and Love* student books. Formal prayers, e.g., the 'Hail Mary' and 'Our Father' are introduced gradually, beginning with one or two lines.
- Teachers encourage the children to share their prayers at home with the family, as well as suggesting that the activity at home is done by parents or guardians with the child.

CONCRETE MATERIALS

Young children learn through the senses as well as through the mind. Learning is enhanced through movement, sight, sound, smell, feeling and touch. Concrete materials such as figures and visuals support the telling and retelling of the biblical stories and children's exploration work. Objects, symbols, gestures, movements and words of the liturgy support the telling of stories about the liturgy. Concrete and visual materials help children to picture the story in their minds.

Using Concrete Materials

- The concrete materials should be simple and sturdy and of good quality. Only key figures and objects need to be represented in the story. Materials that are too detailed and elaborate distract from the story and may not engage the imagination.
- The movement of figures should be simple and include only those essential to the story.
- The teacher focuses the children on the story by looking at the materials as the story unfolds. The teacher does not engage with the children during the presentation of the story.
- During the story, movement of materials is done at a slow and reflective pace. The movement of materials is often done after the words are spoken and silences have been created. These silences assist the imagination as the children observe what is happening. It allows time for 'feeling' the story. While young children have a real capacity to enjoy silence, they may need to get used to it in the school context.
- The materials used for the story need to be accessible to the children for their use after the story. They should remain in the room in a designated place.
- The teacher, by collecting the materials, telling the story with them and packing them away demonstrates reverence for the materials as one would demonstrate reverence for the Bible. During the story, figures and objects should be handled carefully to model respect for both the people and the mysteries they represent.
- Signs and symbols used in the Liturgy (e.g., water, bread, oil, Bible, candle, cup) should be used where possible in stories about liturgy. Pictures can be used to support the use of objects but should not replace them.

PLAY

- Play is a natural way children explore their world and experiences.
- Through play and fantasy children investigate, create, role play, critique and construct meaning.
- Play supports the development of creativity, language, social skills and problem solving. In imaginative play children are able to step out of the limits of their real situation to explore other worlds and experiences.
- In this religious education curriculum children are introduced to the Catholic faith through story, symbol and action. They are invited to play through engagement with the story, symbols and actions, through wondering and exploring.
- A secure, safe and organised environment is necessary to support and encourage real engagement, exploration and creativity.

RELATIONSHIPS AND CLASSROOM CLIMATE

‘Contemporary people listen more openly to witnesses than teachers, or if they listen to teachers it is because they are witnesses’ (Pope Paul VI, *Evangelii Nuntiandi*, 41).

In Prep to Year 2 foundations are laid for learning Christian values and living, not only by what is taught but by the climate created in the classroom. Children learn also by the attitudes and behaviour that is modelled and encouraged by the teacher in relating with the students and others in the community. It is a truism that values are caught and not taught.

God’s covenant relationship is a central theme of the Bible and the core of the Christian message. In this covenant relationship God first loved us and called us into relationship with God and with one another. In relationship, young children learn of God’s love for them.

At the heart of Catholic teaching is the belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God. It is in relationship that children come to know and value themselves and others as created in God’s image. Reborn in the image of God the Son, baptised students have received the gifts of faith, hope and love. These virtues enrich their relationship with other members of the People of God.

The quality of relationships in the classroom and in the school depends to a large extent on the teacher. Teachers give witness to and teach Christian values and the Christian way of relating by:

- respecting each child
- valuing each child’s contribution
- listening to each child
- respecting the work of each child
- keeping comments open
- giving children time to explore what is important to them
- providing a secure and organised environment
- handling disruptive behaviour in constructive and non-judgemental ways.

Each child comes to the classroom as a unique individual already loved and cared for in their family home. The school supports the family by reflecting in practice the values of Christian community. This is the privilege and the challenge of those whose vocation it is to teach.

3 Faith Seeking Understanding: The Inquiry Approach and Religious Education

The learning and teaching approach in years 3–6 is inquiry based. In this approach students form understandings about God, themselves and their world through the ongoing exploration of religious truths and through the development of processes and skills that enable thinking, reflecting and acting as a result of this knowledge. In religious education inquiry learning is concerned with engaging with different perspectives of the Catholic tradition to form deep religious understandings. It is concerned with exploring how we can come to know the mystery of God in our lives, and how others in the past have come to know and express this mystery. It begins with a question around which students offer their own experiences and thinking, and then gather and explore new stories and information from Catholic teaching and practice. This knowledge is processed in a way that ideally enhances or develops new ways of thinking and responding to the question. This may lead students to plan and take action in their own context as a result of their new learning.

The learning process in *Coming to Know, Worship and Love* involves providing students with opportunities to name and build upon the personal experience and knowledge they bring to a topic question. They are also given opportunities to wonder about, and name, some of their own questions. Students then gather insights and information from a variety of sources that describe key practices, teachings and stories of the Church. They learn about, and use, processes and tools

that enable them to organise, internalise and reflect on this knowledge and to evaluate their prior thinking and understanding. Some of these processes and tools may include those being developed in the Interdisciplinary strand in the VELS, as well as practices concerned with inner reflection and awareness, such as journals, the creative arts, and preferred ways of praying and reflecting. These skills enable students to form new concepts and understandings about the relationship between God, themselves and the world. The final part of the learning process invites students to take action as a result of their new learning and refined understandings. Integral to this phase is the development of skills and behaviours in order to take that action.

4 LIFE LONG LEARNING AND RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Religious education has a significant role to play in the life of a learning community. An authentic education must address all aspects of life, but particularly the religious dimension.

Life is a search for meaning. For students to understand others and to make meaning of the transcendent, it is the duty of the Catholic school to try to teach them that the person of Jesus gives meaning to life and learning. Every person is a lifelong learner and therefore students are given the opportunity to learn to value the place of Scripture and Church tradition in the process of meaning making and interpreting life.

5 THE THEOLOGY AND PEDAGOGY OF COMING TO KNOW, WORSHIP AND LOVE

The religious education curriculum framework uses the post resurrection narrative in Luke's gospel (the disciples on the road to Emmaus) as the paradigm for developing the broad goals. In this story the confused and questioning disciples leave Jerusalem believing that the life and message of Jesus was of no value.

The Lukan narrative unfolds in three broad movements. The disciples recalled that while on the road Jesus opened the scriptures to them and they came to **know (informed)** about him. When they reached Emmaus they experienced Jesus in the 'breaking of the bread', in sacrament and **worship (formed)**. Finally they returned to Jerusalem and with **love (transformed)** burning in their hearts told 'what had happened on the road and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread'. It is this movement that is reflected in the title of the religious education texts *To Know, Worship and Love*.

THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Now that very same day, two of them were on their way to a village called Emmaus, seven miles from Jerusalem, and they were talking together about all that had happened. And it happened that as they were talking together and discussing it, Jesus himself came up and walked by their side; but their eyes were prevented from recognising him. He said to them, 'What are all these things that you are discussing as you walk along?' They stopped, their faces downcast.

Then one of them, called Cleopas, answered him, 'You must be the only person staying in Jerusalem who does not know the things that have been happening there these last few days.' He asked, 'What things?' They answered, 'All about Jesus of Nazareth, who showed himself a prophet powerful in action and speech before God and the whole people; and how our chief priests and our leaders handed him over to be sentenced to death, and had him crucified. Our own hope had been that he would be the one to set Israel free. And this is not all: two whole days have now gone by since it all happened; and some women from our group have astounded us; they went to the tomb in the early morning, and when they could not find the body, they came back to tell us they had seen a vision of angels who declared he was alive. Some of our friends went to the tomb and found everything exactly as the women had reported, but of him they saw nothing.

Then he said to them, 'You foolish men! So slow to believe all that the prophets have said! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer before entering into his glory? Then, starting with Moses and going through all the prophets, he explained to them the passages throughout the scriptures that were about himself.

When they drew near to the village to which they were going, he made as if to go on; but they pressed him to stay with them saying, 'It is nearly evening, and the day is almost over.' So he went in to stay with them. Now he was with them at table, he took the bread and said the blessing; then he broke it and handed it to them. And their eyes were opened and they recognised him; but he had vanished from their sight. Then they said to each other, 'Did not our hearts burn within us as he talked to us on the road and explained the scriptures to us?'

They set out that instant and returned to Jerusalem. There they found the Eleven assembled together with their companions, who said to them, 'The Lord has indeed risen and has appeared to Simon.' Then they told their story of what had happened on the road and how they had recognised him at the breaking of bread.

WONDERING &
QUESTIONING

COMING
TO

Engaging with

GOD & LIFE

CHURCH &
COMMUNITY

SCRIPTURE
& JESUS

LITURGY &
SACRAMENT

MORALTY
& JUSTICE

REFLECTING
PRAYING
THINKING
DISCOVERING

KNOW

CELEBRATING

WORSHIP

RESPONDING

& LOVE

SECTION 3:

Planning in Religious Education Using the Religious Education Curriculum Framework

1 *Goals of Religious Education*

As mentioned previously in this framework, religious education is not limited to the formalised teaching of religious education in the classroom. The goals, therefore, refer to the total life and work of the school. Thus all elements of the school's religious education program aim to assist students towards:

- making sense of everyday life experiences in the broader contexts of mystery, complexity, confusion and awe
- gaining access to and understanding the scriptures, and the traditions of the Catholic community; its stories, its experiences and its teachings
- celebrating with others the mystery and life of the Risen Christ
- responding to the activity of God in their lives and in the whole of creation.

2 *Dimensions of Religious Education*

The domain of religious education is situated within the discipline-based learning strand. The domain contains three dimensions of religious learning:

(i) Religious knowledge and understanding (TO KNOW)

This dimension develops the knowledge and understanding of the key practices and beliefs of Christian communities, both past and present.

(ii) Reasoning and responding (WORSHIP)

This dimension focuses on the development of particular ways of thinking and acting that arise out of Christian knowledge and understanding. The combination of knowledge and reasoning will enable students to respond to Catholic tradition and its call to contribute to the building of the reign of God.

(iii) Personal and communal engagement (LOVE)

This dimension focuses on the nurturing of the spiritual life, the importance of belonging to the faith community and engagement in community service. It is within this dimension that the religious education curriculum may extend beyond the classroom to include class and whole school prayer and liturgy, retreats, the sacramental life of the Church, community service, leadership formation and contribution to civic and faith communities.

Each dimension of religious learning is integrated into the learning and teaching processes of *The Good Shepherd Experience* and the Years 3–6 inquiry approach. Standards for assessing and reporting on student achievement integrate the dimensions of religious education. Each topic or unit of work in the classroom program will provide learning opportunities that develop specific elements of each standard. Progress towards achieving the whole standard is continually assessed throughout the level and reported to students and parents/carers.

3 Five Content Strands in Religious Education

'The living centre of faith is Jesus Christ'

(The Renewal of the Education of Faith, 1970, par 57)

In the discipline of religious education students form religious knowledge and understandings and ways of thinking and responding through the exploration of five specific areas of church life, teaching and practice. Named as content strands, these five areas emerge from an understanding of the Church and its life where the person of Jesus is central. These content strands are drawn from the goals. They are:

1. Scripture and Jesus
2. Church and Community
3. God, Religion and Life
4. Prayer, Liturgy and Sacraments
5. Morality and Justice

In order for students to form deep understandings of key church beliefs and practices in the context of everyday life it is necessary to integrate the content strands in one unit or topic. Inquiry topics, questions, understandings and key concepts in the classroom religious education program will integrate two or more of these content strands. In this way students make links between these significant areas of church life and teaching and use these to construct meaning around their relationship to God, self, others and their world.

It is also recognised that schools have other particular local foci that need to be included in their religious education curriculum, such as parish directions, feast days, founders of religious orders and their charisms, retreats and Archdiocesan projects such as Family Week and Project Compassion. Schools are encouraged to integrate these life-giving activities into the content strands as appropriate at the local level.

4 Assessment

The primary purpose of assessment is to improve student performance. It is critically important in the cycle of teaching and learning that students can articulate what they have learnt and what still needs to be learnt. In addition teachers are required to demonstrate that they can ascertain what children have learnt and can report credibly on that to the students and their families.

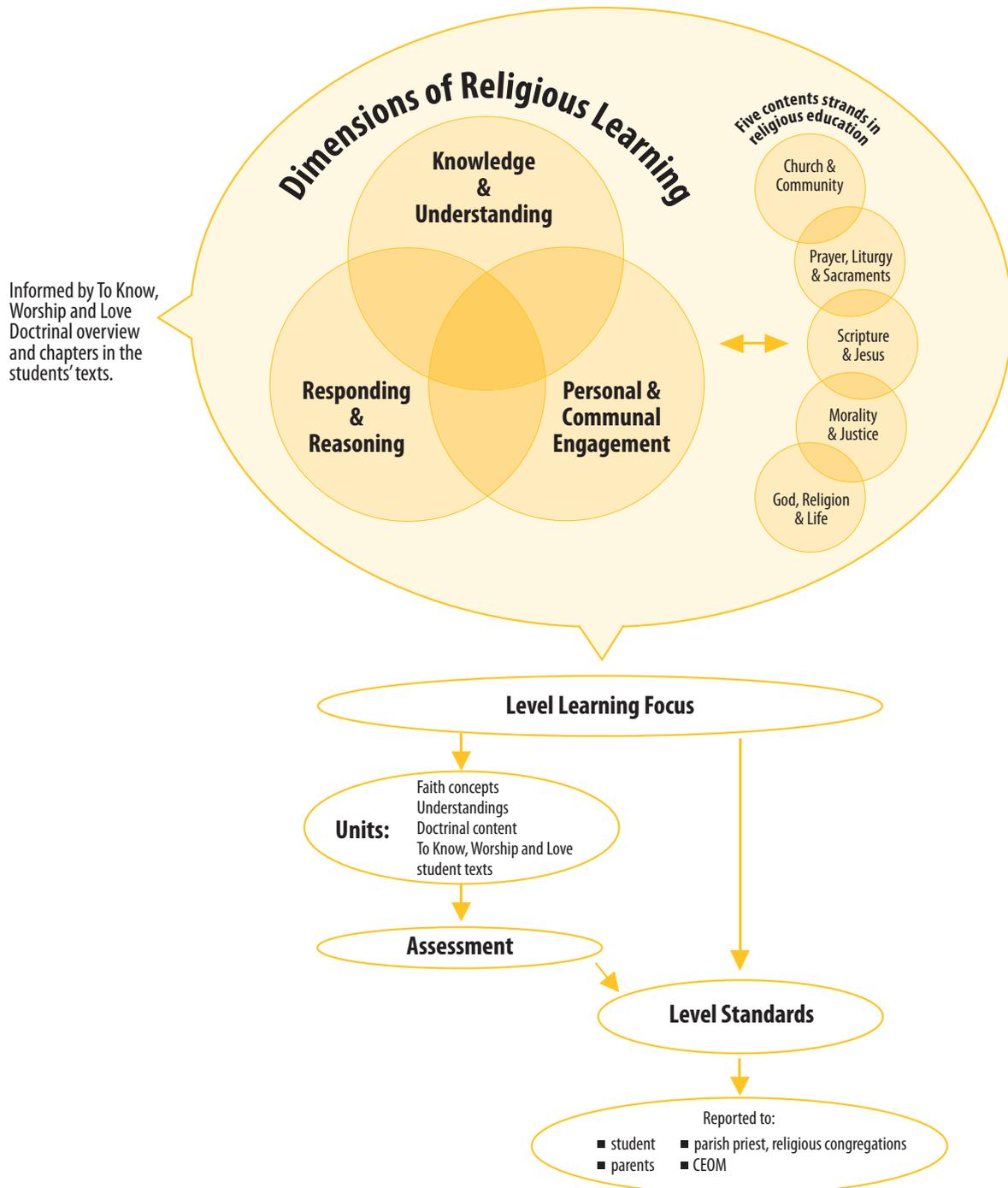
Assessment of student achievement across the three dimensions is an essential component of the educational nature of primary religious education. Assessment has a range of purposes and applications:

- It should encourage and advance learning and be based on an understanding of how students learn
- It needs to be ongoing rather than episodic, therefore it should be an activity undertaken by students (Self Assessment and Peer Assessment) and the teacher (Teacher Assessment)
- It involves a variety of methods and tools
- It caters for a variety of learning preferences so students can demonstrate what they have learned
- It is integrated into unit design rather than an 'add on' activity
- It is based on clear standards and criteria
- It involves assessment as learning occurs
- It involves assessment of learning when the teacher wishes to make a judgement on the student's achievement against established standards and criteria
- It involves assessment for learning when the teacher uses inferences about the student's progress to inform their teaching or when students review their own learning
- It involves feedback and reflection.

Overview of Primary Framework

Goals of Religious Education

- To assist students to:
- To make sense of everyday life experiences in the broader contexts of mystery, complexity, confusion and awe.
- To gain access to and understanding of the Scriptures, the Traditions of the Catholic community, its stories, its experiences and its teachings.
- To celebrate with others the mystery and life of the Risen Christ.
- To respond to the activity of God on their life and in the whole of creations.



**Five content strands in
religious education**

**Church &
Community**

**Prayer, Liturgy
& Sacraments**

**Scripture
& Jesus**

**Morality
& Justice**

**God, Religion
& Life**

5 Stages of Learning, Learning Focus and Standards

Coming to Know, Worship and Love in the primary curriculum is broken up into four stages of learning:

Curriculum Framework Level	Year	To Know, Worship and Love student text
1	Preparatory	Preparatory
Towards level 2	1	1
2	2	2
Towards level 3	3	3
3	4	4
Towards Level 4	5	5
4	6	6

Stages of Student Development²

Level 1

In *Coming to Know, Worship and Love* Level 1 is concerned with the first year of schooling (Preparatory).

Some of the key characteristics of students at this level that are important for religious education include:

- possessing a natural curiosity and capacity for wonder and awe, an openness to God and an enthusiasm for fantasy and play
- responding through direct playful exploration of their world through kinaesthetic, aural and visual modes
- developing a vivid imagination through engagement in story, symbols and ritual as a way of discovering their meaning
- developing an understanding of what the presence and/or absence of significant persons means to them
- beginning to respect boundaries and rules and displaying an increasing ability to interact with others in a meaningful and respectful way beyond the security of the 'familiar'
- continuing to depend upon guidance and encouragement from significant adults
- beginning to develop the capacity to think independently.

Therefore, some implications for Learning and Teaching at this level include:

- providing secure, safe and ordered environments that allow for appropriate freedom so that students may explore, wonder, puzzle and create
- presenting abstract ideas through concrete experiences as learning occurs through direct experience

²The stages of student development have been drawn from the work documented in the following resources: Catholic Education Office, Canberra and Goulburn 1999, *Treasures New and Old*, Catholic Education Office, Canberra and Goulburn, NSW; Catholic Education Office Hobart 2005, *Good News for Living*, Catholic Education Office, Hobart, Tas.; Diocese of Sandhurst 2005, *Source of Life*, Catholic Education Office, Sandhurst, Vic.; Catholic Education Office, Sydney 2005. *Religious Education Curriculum – Primary*, Catholic Education Office, Sydney, NSW.

- providing opportunities through multisensory environments for children to form images of their story and to play their way to transforming insights
- providing opportunities (time and space) for personal meaning-making and personal response
- providing effective modelling to give children confidence which will enable them to take risks.

Level 2

Level 2 is concerned with grades 1 and 2.

Some of the key characteristics of students' spirituality at this level include:

- developing religious belief and practices through story, play, symbol and ritual
- developing a strong sense of self through relationships with significant adults and peers
- living in the here and now, with a sense of wonder, exploration and curiosity
- developing a sense of belonging to a community in which they are able to actively participate and contribute
- investigating the wider world and articulating their story through language.

Therefore, some implications for Learning and Teaching at this level include:

- developing religious concepts and language through co-operative play, drama, visual arts, talking and hands-on tasks
- nurturing the imagination—used to develop a sense of symbol and ritual
- developing their need to express their spirituality through their bodily kinaesthetic self
- developing a sense of self through their relationships with others and the world around them.

Level 3

Level 3 is concerned with grades 3 and 4.

Some of the key characteristics of students' spirituality at this level include:

- moving from a make-believe and literal understanding of the world to developing different levels of meaning
- developing an empathy and value for others and an interest in the wider world
- still exploring their world through play and hands-on experiences
- learning about themselves, others, beliefs, rules and relationships through story
- developing a sense of fairness and respect and an awareness of the consequences of actions.

Therefore, some implications for Learning and Teaching at this level include:

- structuring collaborative group work
- providing opportunities for problem-solving, using imagination, building, creating, collecting, comparing, sorting and drawing conclusions
- offering opportunities for reading and telling scripture stories and exploring their meanings
- providing time for self-reflection and structured discussion
- involving students in preparing prayer and liturgical experiences
- engaging students in hearing, reading, viewing and exploring a range of stories
- integrating the skills and processes of other domains into religious education.

Level 4

Level 4 is concerned with grades 5 and 6.

Some of the key characteristics of students' spirituality at this level include:

- developing the ability to think and engage in the abstract and explore concepts that allow for several points of view
- displaying an increased awareness of personal and communal story
- expressing independence where new values are being shaped and where peer group and significant adults are a strong influence
- developing a deeper empathy for social justice issues.

Therefore, some implications for Learning and Teaching at this level include:

- providing an informed and in-depth presentation of our faith tradition, encouraging an attitude of questioning, but within the confines of significant adult mentors
- creating opportunities for connecting the personal story with the story of faith
- offering active and creative learning situations with peers, where critical thinking on current issues can be addressed
- providing opportunities for practical social action.

6 Learning Focus and Standards

Each level has a learning focus which broadly outlines the learning through which students progress in religious education to achieve the standards in the framework. With the exception of level 1 (prep) each level covers two years of schooling. The learning focus also specifies the key practices and beliefs of the Catholic tradition that students need to engage with at each level. The learning focus does not provide a comprehensive summary of what students are to learn, but rather outlines what is essential for students in the Archdiocese to learn.

The **standards**³ define performances of understanding that are expected of students at each level of the domain of Religious Education. Standards for assessing and reporting on student achievement in Religious Education are introduced at Level 1 and focus on key aspects of the learning focus. Each standard integrates the dimensions of Religious Education. The standards are closely related to the different stages of student development and reflect the pedagogy of each level. They provide valuable information about student growth which can form the basis of further learning and teaching.

Coming to Know, Worship and Love acknowledges that learning in Religious Education is holistic, dynamic and very individual. It does not necessarily progress in specific, sequential ways. The standards, therefore, are to be looked upon not as a series of 'stages' a child must progress through, but rather opportunities to recognise performances of understanding. The Standards enable teachers, parents and students to identify growth as students experience and seek to understand the content of the Learning Focus.

Standards in *Coming to Know, Worship and Love* are set at a challenging level, in age and developmentally appropriate ways. This helps to ensure that students are stretched to learn and are encouraged to reach their full potential.

The standards do not constitute the totality of the program that students receive in Religious Education. Rather, they indicate what is deemed both valuable and assessable across the three dimensions. Schools and teachers plan the curriculum that best accommodates the interests and needs of the students as they work towards the standards.

³ The information on standards has been drawn from the work documented in the following resources: Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority 2007, *Victorian Essential Learning Standards*, Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority, State Government of Victoria; Catholic Education Office, Parramatta 1999, *Sharing our Story, Catholic Education Office*, Diocese of Parramatta

■ *Level 1 Learning Focus:*

Knowledge and Understanding

In *Church and Community* students build an understanding of the Church as the family of God. Through personal stories and scripture narratives students begin to learn about the ways they belong to the family of God. Students gather information about their own family heritage while exploring the heritage of God's family in scripture stories beginning with Abraham and Sarah. Students identify the parish they belong to and learn about key people in the parish and school community. They are given opportunities to become familiar with the church building as a place where God's family gathers to pray using special objects and gestures. Students draw on their own experience of family meals and relate it to the story of the Last Supper. From this students begin to understand how they live as part of the family of God enabled by God's active presence in the world today. Students explore experiences of waiting and begin to develop an understanding of how the Church waits in anticipation for the birth of Jesus through the season of Advent.

In *Prayer, Liturgy and Sacraments* students learn about the presence of Jesus in the world today.

Through engaging in Godly Play:

- Students explore the image of Jesus as the Good Shepherd who feeds his sheep
- Students listen to scripture stories about Jesus and the meals he shared with his disciples, and begin to understand that Jesus is alive and present in the Mass, in their prayer space and in everyday experience
- Students become familiar with the liturgical objects and symbols used in the Mass.

Students learn about why people pray and the ritual actions used in prayer, and explore the elements of a prayer space. They begin to use simple prayer structures and become familiar with the structure of the Mass.

In *Morality and Justice* students begin to learn about what it means to be called a disciple of Jesus. Through immersion in the gospel stories students discover how Jesus called the disciples and how he showed them the way to be his followers.

In *Scripture and Jesus* students are introduced to God's involvement with humanity through selected images from both Old and New Testaments.

Through engaging in Godly Play:

- Students discover how chosen people from the Old Testament experienced God, and how Jesus as the Good Shepherd teaches about the ways of God
- Students become familiar with stories about the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

In *God, Religion and Life* students begin to understand God as Creator by engaging with and drawing on their own experiences of the natural world.

Reasoning and Responding

Students wonder and generate questions and reflections about the many ways of being part of the family of God. They respond to scripture narratives through art, drama and directed play, and make connections with their lived experiences of family, of friendship and of their relationship with Jesus. Students wonder about the ways in which Jesus is present through prayer and the Mass. Through the use of scripture and other resources such as multimedia, and reflection on family members and people in the local community, students explore what it means to be a follower of Jesus: to 'love one another'. Students wonder about the physical world around them and respond with delight, respect and awe.

Personal and Communal Engagement

Students engage with sacred story as a guide for living in right relationship with God, self, others and the world. They use sacred objects and symbols and liturgical gestures to participate in communal prayer celebrations. Students experience the significance of sharing a meal with others. Students share their understanding of Jesus through discussion, role play and visual representation. Students explain ways they care for the natural environment.

Standards

At Level 1 students relate to sacred story including the image of the Good Shepherd by making connections to their personal experiences. Students contemplate and reflect about God, themselves and the world by responding to their wondering, feelings and ideas through prayer and a range of media. They describe sacred objects, signs and symbols in the Catholic tradition by explaining what they are, and when, where and how they are used. Students relate to Jesus as the model for Christian living by applying values such as care, forgiveness and inclusiveness to their own lives.

■ *Level 2 Learning Focus:*

Knowledge and Understanding

In *Church and Community* students continue to learn about the Church as a family made up of many different people. They explore the mission of the church as one of caring for others, expressed in acts of generosity and compassion. They explore significant times in the church year that the church gathers to celebrate, especially at Mass on Sundays. They become familiar with some significant people in the church, particularly Mary the Mother of Jesus, St Patrick and the saints who have contributed to the building of the Kingdom of God.

In *Prayer, Liturgy and Sacraments* students learn about the structure of liturgy: gathering, listening and responding to God's Word. They become familiar with the stories, symbols and actions of Ash Wednesday, Lent, Easter and Pentecost. They become familiar with the symbols and actions of the Sacraments of Initiation. Students begin to understand the experience of feeling close to God in prayer. They explore times, places and ways that they feel close to God.

In *Morality and Justice* students explore their own experiences and scripture stories of love, care, forgiveness and compassion.

In *Scripture and Jesus* students explore how God is involved in humanity through stories in the Old and New Testaments. Throughout this level they:

- begin to learn about the Kingdom of God through parables
- become familiar with images of God and stories of God's People in the Old Testament
- learn about the people of the Old Testament who waited for the birth of their Messiah, and become familiar with Matthew's story of Jesus' birth.

In *God, Religion and Life* students begin to explore the understanding that creation is a gift from God and an expression of God's beauty and goodness. They become familiar with the Genesis story of creation and explore ways in which creation affects awe and wonder of God. Through this learning students begin to become familiar with the call to stewardship.

Reasoning and Responding

Students reflect on family meals and gatherings and make connections to celebrations of the Eucharist. They consider their own experiences of love, care and forgiveness amongst family and friends, and reflect on ways they can be generous and caring towards others. Through Godly Play, drama and the creative arts students reflect on and respond to scripture stories as a way of exploring the meaning of scripture for themselves and connecting it to their own lives.

They reflect on symbols and actions of Ash Wednesday, Lent, Holy Week and Easter, as well as symbols and actions of Baptism, Confirmation and the Eucharist, and relate these to their own experience. Students identify times and places they feel close to and loved by God. They begin to have experiences of guided meditation as one way of being close to God. They reflect on times they have experienced forgiveness in family and experiences of saying sorry. Students identify places in creation that inspire awe and wonder of God in them. They identify ways in which the environment is damaged and investigate ways in which they can care for and improve it.

Personal and Communal Engagement

Students use scripture, liturgical symbols and actions during prayer time. They engage in prayer and liturgical celebrations that involve them using simple responses, song, dance, drama and quiet time. Students are supported to carry out action to care for and improve the environment. They are supported to build caring, positive friendships.

Standards

At Level 2 students interpret biblical stories and stories in Church Tradition by making a response and expressing their own ideas, feelings and perceptions. Students create prayers and responses of praise, thanks, forgiveness and petition with personal expression and insight. They distinguish the key objects, signs, symbols and actions of the sacraments of Initiation and seasons of the Church by explaining what they mean. Students recognise the Christian messages of love and stewardship by identifying the strengths and shortcomings of both their own and others' ideas, actions and feelings.

■ *Level 3 Learning Focus:*

Knowledge and Understanding

In *Church and Community* students build on their understanding of the significance of the Pentecost event as the beginning of the Church. Through story, song, art work and factual texts they investigate the diversity of spirit-filled individuals and organisations in the past and in the contemporary church who contribute to building the Kingdom of God. Students explore the role of Mary in the gospels as the model of discipleship, and consider the meaning and value of discipleship in their own lives. Students begin to examine the roles of Holy Orders and Marriage in building and serving Catholic communities. Students gather information about the profile of the parish to which they belong. They learn about the parishes, organisations, people and events that make up the Archdiocese of Melbourne, e.g., St Patrick's Day, Project Compassion, Centacare.

In *Scripture and Jesus* students explore experiences of God, Jesus and the Holy Spirit through investigation of Old and New Testament texts. They begin to use resources to learn about the background of scripture texts, e.g., online resources and children's non-fiction texts on the time of Jesus. They explore the qualities, motives and actions of characters. They learn about the genres of parable and narrative in scripture. They begin to locate specific passages by chapter and verse.

In *Prayer, Liturgy and Sacraments* students learn about the colours, symbols, events, actions and practices of the Liturgical calendar, particularly Lent, Holy Week, Easter, Advent and Christmas. Students investigate the rite and symbols of Baptism. They explore the concept of the real presence of Jesus in the Eucharist through the four modes, i.e., the priest, the Assembly, the Word and, above all, His Body and Blood. Through the exploration of the two-part structure of the Mass, the Liturgy of the Word and the Liturgy of the Eucharist they develop a knowledge of the key actions, words and symbols and the associated accounts in scripture. Students explore the experiences of forgiveness and healing celebrated in the sacraments of Penance and Anointing. They investigate the First and Second Rites of Penance. Students explore the concept of prayer as listening and building friendship with God. They have experiences of formal prayer and personal reflective prayer; for example, meditation, journaling, praying through music and the arts.

In *Morality and Justice* students examine the commandments in the Old Testament as a way of building

relationships and community. They explore the importance of respecting and sharing belongings, and of being respectful and truthful in the way they speak about and to others. They explore the values of fairness, generosity and hospitality as expressions of Jesus' commandment 'to love God and neighbour'. Students begin to appreciate the dignity of the human person through an awareness of the uniqueness and giftedness of each person.

In *God, Religion and Life* students draw on Old Testament texts and other religious texts such as prayers, songs and artwork to explore the image of God as creator and to consider their lives and all of creation as gifts of God. They explore the Creation accounts in Genesis as they begin to understand that they have the capacity to make choices (free will), and that all choices have consequences. Students explore ways of forgiving and being forgiven. They learn about the Church's teaching on death and everlasting life.

Reasoning and Responding

Students reflect on the gifts that they bring to family, school and parish. They consider the meaning and value of discipleship in their own lives. Students reflect on characters, events and messages found in scripture, and make connections with their own experiences, thinking and values. They wonder and ask questions about the texts. They interpret and make connections between the meaning of liturgical symbols, colours and actions and their own experiences. They identify their preferred forms of personal prayer (for example silence, listening to music, drawing, saying formal prayers, being in nature). Students evaluate their relationships and attitudes to others in light of the values of fairness, respect, generosity and hospitality. They reflect on their feelings and opinions and begin to listen and respond to those of others. Students explore and represent their own images of God. Students reflect on and evaluate their choices in light of their consequences. They begin to monitor changes in their values and thinking as a result of new learning.

Personal and Communal Engagement

Students are supported to take action as disciples of Jesus around areas of need in the local context, e.g., Caritas, St Vincent de Paul and Catholic Missions. Students learn how to proclaim the Word in liturgy. They prepare to participate in the celebration of the Eucharist and Penance. Students use symbols, actions and texts to plan class prayer and liturgy. They are supported to develop relationships based on respect and the valuing of individual differences. Students are supported in developing strategies to make positive choices in their daily lives.

Standards

At level 3 students identify with biblical characters and people in the past and present Church by making inferences about their actions, feelings and motives. Students collaboratively plan liturgy using appropriate symbols, words and actions, following a given liturgical form. They interpret key actions, signs and symbols of liturgy and sacrament by providing a meaningful explanation of their significance. Students evaluate their choices and actions by reflecting on Scripture and Church teaching.

■ **Level 4 Learning Focus:**

Knowledge and Understanding

In *Church and Community* students begin to explore the images of church as People of God and Body of Christ. They learn about the gifts and the fruits of the Holy Spirit and begin to recognise how these are expressed in the diversity of vocations, ministries and organisations in the Catholic Church in Australia. They begin to explore the concepts of faithfulness and service through examinations of the life of Mary and the Saints, of Sacraments of Service, and of the contributions of individuals and groups who work to build the mission of the Catholic Church. They learn about important events, people and religious practices in the history of the Catholic Church in Australia, and how these have contributed to the identity of the Catholic Church in Australia.

In *Scripture and Jesus* students learn about the Bible as a library of different books, classified into Old and New Testaments, through which God speaks to people. They explore ways that scripture inspires and speaks to them. They investigate the cultural and religious mores of biblical times and begin to identify how these are presented in biblical texts. They gather information on scriptural texts using commentaries and other non-fiction resources. With support they begin to explore the ways biblical imagery, characterisation, plot, setting, dialogue and point of view contribute to the meaning of a scripture text. They begin to explore beliefs and values in scripture texts.

In *Prayer, Liturgy and Sacraments* students explore the practices of fasting, almsgiving and prayer in Lent. They begin to understand this time as a reflection on how they live and act. They explore the experience of Easter hope and learn about the symbols, rituals, stories and meaning of the Easter Triduum. They explore the meaning of the Baptismal Promises. They begin to develop the understanding of Reconciliation as healing one's relationship with God, self and others, and understanding sin as 'missing the mark'. They examine the First and Second Rites of Reconciliation. They begin to explore the concept of sacrifice in the Eucharist and examine the parts of the Mass: Gathering and Preparing; Liturgy of the Word; Liturgy of the Eucharist; Dismissal. Students consider the ways and times in which Jesus prayed. They experience and learn about vocal prayer, meditation and contemplation. They explore prayers of blessing, petition, intercession, thanksgiving and praise and are introduced to Eucharistic adoration.

In *Morality and Justice* students explore Jesus' life as the model of love, hope and justice. They draw on scripture and their own experiences of love and compassion to consider ways they can live and act. Students explore the commandment 'You shall not kill' and examine ways of respecting their bodies and physical health as well as investigating individuals and groups in the church that promote and support the wellbeing of others, e.g., Mary of the Cross Centre, Caritas, Centacare, the work of religious orders and missionaries. They begin to develop the understanding that Christian justice is about living and acting justly in community. They explore the Beatitudes and Jesus' commandment to love God and neighbour, and apply insights from this exploration to local and global issues of injustice such as racism, prejudice, stereotyping.

In *God, Religion and Life* students examine the concept of free will and the role of conscience in guiding how Christians live. They develop the understanding that Christian decision making involves reflection on the life and teachings of Jesus and the teachings of the Church, and reflection on the possible consequences of decisions on self, others and the environment. They begin to explore the concept of God as Trinity. They discuss the First Commandment, 'I am the Lord your God', and explore images and experiences that express the wonder and mystery of God.

Reasoning and Responding

Students identify people and experiences that are expressions of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit in their own lives. They identify times when they have drawn on the gifts of the Spirit and times they have been a sign of the fruits of God's spirit. They reflect on the values and beliefs of those in the church, both present and past, who have contributed to the mission of the church, and consider their own lives in light of these beliefs and values. They wonder and reflect on what it means for them to be a member of the Catholic Church, particularly if they are celebrating Confirmation. Students explain why it is important for members of the church to contribute to its mission.

Students continue to use their imagination to respond to scripture creatively. They become aware of biblical characters, words, images or events that evoke wonder, connection, opposition or confusion, and explore these responses. They relate scripture to their own experiences, beliefs and thinking. They begin to reflect on scripture to inform their opinions, attitudes and values.

Students consider the Baptismal Promises and relate them to instances and experiences in their own lives. They make connections between the symbols and actions of the Easter Triduum, stories of the Old and New Testaments and their own experiences. They explain why it is important for members of the Church to participate in sacraments and liturgy.

Students reflect on their own experiences of justice and injustice. With support, they begin to explore contemporary local and global issues of injustice, and form thinking and opinions on these in the light of the Beatitudes and Jesus' commandment to love God and neighbour. They draw on these biblical texts to think critically about community issues such as racism, prejudice and stereotyping, and refine their thinking and values upon reflection. They consider ways they use their strengths and gifts to build just, compassionate relationships in their own personal lives, particularly in the context of dealing with bullying, conflict, difference and diversity. Students identify ways in which they can maintain a healthy lifestyle that expresses respect for their bodies. They consider why it is important for the church to promote and support the wellbeing of all people.

Students evaluate the effects of their choices in light of the impact they have on self, others, the creation and on their relationship with God. Students reflect on experiences of wonder and awe in the mystery of God's presence. They explore their personal images of God, Jesus and the Spirit, and describe the significance of these.

Personal and Communal Engagement

Students explore ways of taking the Gospel message into daily life. They are supported to plan Masses using appropriate symbols, actions and texts, and they plan and lead class and school liturgies. They plan and engage in activities that contribute to the building of a just local or global community. They explore ways to build just, compassionate relationships amongst their own peers. They are supported to address issues that prevent them or others from living a healthy lifestyle. Students are also supported with ways to consider choices informed by church teaching and scripture reflection.

Standards

At level 4 students analyse and reflect on scripture texts and stories in Church Tradition to inform actions, attitudes and values. Students express the significance of ritual in the Catholic Tradition by planning and evaluating prayer, liturgical and sacramental experiences. They explain Christian signs and symbols drawing on personal insights that are informed by Scripture, Tradition, liturgy, culture and life. Students analyse and critique their personal and global worlds in light of the teachings of the Catholic Church seeking to make a difference.

7 *Evaluating a unit*

In evaluating a module or unit teachers may consider the following:

- Did the unit enable each student to make progress towards the standard?
- Was the work appropriate for students at that level?
- Did the learning and teaching tasks lead to new learning and insights?
- Was there a balance in the dimensions of religious learning in the unit?
- Did the work stimulate interest and encourage students to ask questions and to wonder?
- Did students have opportunities for reflection, creativity, self discovery and use of the imagination throughout the unit?
- Did the unit cater for different learning modes and preferences?
- To what extent were students able to work individually and collaboratively?
- Did students use concrete materials? How effective were these in engaging students with the story, with prayer and with ritual, and enabling students to explore their meaning?
- Did students use concrete materials and experiences? How effective were these in engaging students with story, symbol, ritual and Christian living?

**The Content of the Chapter:
To Know, Worship and Love, Levels 3 and 4 (Student Text)**

To Remember	Simply stated points of doctrine to be gradually understood in depth in order to become a source of Christian life on personal and community levels. In this way the doctrine becomes part of each person's memory and the collective memory of the Church. (cf. <i>GDC #154</i>).
Doctrinal Exposition	The doctrinal content stands at the heart of the chapter. The exposition aims to develop the points of doctrine into simple and accurate material for students to form a basis for learning within the chapter.
The Word of God	There are two sources for the Word of God – Scripture and Tradition. The Word of God is presented in the student text (see notes).
In Scripture	The Scriptures are foundational at every level of catechesis. The Jerusalem Bible translation is used as this is the version used in the Lectionary. In this way Catechesis is linked to celebrating Liturgy. Scripture has been selected as appropriate for each chapter to be explored by both educator and students.
In Tradition	This usually takes the form of material from a creed, Liturgy or one of the Sacraments. In this way God's Word is passed on to us within the living Church.
Our Prayer	To respond personally to God, we pray as one People and as individuals. Appropriate prayer takes up the main points of the chapter. What is offered in the text is only a starting point.
Living the Gospel	Reflections, illustrations and stories that in some way relate the basic text to the lived experiences of students at home and at school.
Our Heritage (Year 5 and 6 books)	May contain customs or devotions which reflect and support the theme of the chapter. It may also present the living heritage of the pastoral work of the modern Church.
Did You Know?	Interesting or further information related to the theme of the chapter. It presents possibilities for further research and helps to build the vocabulary of a lived faith.
Reflecting Together at Home and at School	Suggestions as to how families might reflect upon and be involved in the learning which has occurred at school. This section attempts to support, respect and encourage parents as the first educators in faith of their children.