

ST RAPHAEL'S PRIMARY WEST PRESTON



Religious Education Policy

February 2017/18

Religious Education Policy

INTRODUCTION

St Raphael's Parish Primary School uses an integrated approach to Religion, as a model of learning and teaching in Religious Education. The model ensures that rich concepts are the beginning of authentic learning experiences combining Faith and Life education. As a Catholic school, St Raphael's Primary School is dedicated to promoting and living out the values of the Gospel as clearly expressed in our Mission and Vision Statement.

RATIONALE

St Raphael's is a Catholic Primary School and an integral part of West Preston Parish. By virtue of our identity as a Catholic school and in light of the Gospel we acknowledge Jesus as the Way, the Truth and the Life. Through our lived experiences, we recognise and respond to Jesus' call to faith as we actively bring the Kingdom of God into our world.

Within this context, the Parish of West Preston has commissioned the staff of St Raphael's Parish Primary School, with the responsibility of engaging the children in a living faith. In our role as Religious educators we understand that Religious Education occurs in a partnership; families supported by the parish and school, for the initiation and formation of our children into the life of the church.

Religious Education is central to the curriculum and culture of St Raphael's School. We acknowledge the diversity of beliefs and cultures within our school, the broader community and world and so aim to implement a Religious Education Program which develops:

- appreciation and deep understanding of the richness of the Catholic Tradition
- religious self-understanding and spiritual awareness
- openness to religious questions and to a religious interpretation of the world
- awareness of the diversity of voices in society and within the school
- discernment and participation informed by the Catholic Tradition

(Draft Religious Education Curriculum Framework, 2018, p. 5)

IMPLEMENTATION

The Draft Religious Education Curriculum Framework describes learning and teaching for Religious Education from Foundation – Year 6 at St Raphael's Parish Primary school. This framework sits within the Horizons of Hope Education Framework and is supported by the use of *To Know, Worship and Love* – the major resource for the Archdiocese of Melbourne.

The learning structure described in the framework consists of three strands of learning and five content areas which are embedded across the learning progression and achievement standards. The three strands of learning are:

- Knowledge and Understanding (seeking truth)
- Reasoning and Responding (making meaning)
- Personal and Communal Engagement (living story)

The five content areas, which have their origins in the *To Know, Worship and Love* student texts, are:

- Scripture and Jesus
- Church and Community

- God, Religion and Life
- Prayer, Liturgy and Sacrament
- Morality and Justice

(Draft Religious Education Curriculum Framework, 2018, p. 4)

LINK TO THE MISSION AND VISION

(Refer to the school's Mission and Vision statement)

With this mission and vision in mind, the Religious Education program at St Raphael's encompasses the formal religious education curriculum. Our work focuses on the whole child.

In developing a rigorous religious education program for the students, we are conscious of the need to support teachers by building on their knowledge of the Catholic Tradition, their pedagogical skills and attending to adult faith formation opportunities.

STRATEGY

Overview: Foundation – Year 2

From Foundation to Level 2, students engage with the stories about Jesus, some of the teachings of Jesus, and learn about historical figures in the history of the family of God. They explore biblical texts as story and as sources of prayer and inspiration. They reflect on and develop relationship with God and self-understanding. They engage in personal and communal prayer and liturgical experiences and develop reflective skills and dispositions of respect for the sacred. They develop heightened awareness of awe and wonder and delight in creation. They grow in appreciation of the other, understanding their impact on others and such concepts as fairness and justice.

Overview: Levels 3-6

Students extend their learning about the background and person of Jesus and his relationships with the Father, his disciples and the people he came to serve. They explore old and new testament text, learning skills of interpretation by drawing on growing knowledge of context and genre. They learn about the structures of the Church, its foundations in community and its mission of service in the world. They consider the actions of God in the world and begin to explore ways other religious traditions celebrate this. They learn about and may receive the sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation, as well as learning about the seven sacraments and their significance for today. They engage with the liturgical celebrations of the church year and the life of the faith community, past and present, exploring ways they can participate in and contribute to the church. They continue to develop their personal prayer life, spirituality and appreciation for the sacred. Students develop their understanding of Catholic teaching on the dignity of the human person and its implications for their choices personally and in community, learning to build just and compassionate relationships based on love and respect for self and others.

(Draft Religious Education Curriculum Framework, 2018, p. 20, 22)

The Learning and Teaching Process

Learning and teaching experiences in religious education support students and teachers to engage in a Pedagogy of Encounter. This pedagogy “acknowledges the grace of God at work in the teachings of the Church, in learning relationships, and particularly in dialogue. It asks teachers, to create opportunities for dialogue that use the Catholic Tradition as a point of concrete reference with what matters most in the minds and hearts of the students and the big questions of life and culture.” (Draft Religious Education Curriculum Framework, 2018, p. 8)

In implementing this pedagogical approach teachers design experiences for students to enter into dialogue with the Catholic Tradition drawing on five key areas:

- What do I think and sense?
- What do others think and why?
- What does the Church teach and why?
- How am I called into deeper relationship with others and God?
- What do I think now and why?

Evaluation/Monitoring of the P-6 Program

The Religious Education Leader, in collaboration with homeroom teachers, monitors the effectiveness of the formal P-6 in the Religious Education Program. This is an ongoing process which occurs at the beginning, at fortnightly planning sessions and at the conclusion of each unit.

The Religious Education Leader also monitors the religious dimension of St Raphael’s Parish Primary School. The religious dimension includes those times when students are engaged in the prayer, sacramental and liturgical life of the school and the social justice programs (in collaboration with the Wellbeing Leader) that at times occur outside the school context.

Planning, Programming and Assessment

Religious Education is to be timetabled for 150 minutes per week. The specific time allocation over the days of the week is dependent on the content of the unit and the age of the students.

Unit planning in Religious Education is a dialogical process which involves year level teachers and the Religious Education Leader. The content of each unit is guided by the Learning Progression of the Draft Religious Education Curriculum Framework and must take student questions, current issues, the Liturgical Year, local diocesan initiatives and parish and school events into consideration. In the interests of good learning and teaching it is important to integrate the curriculum as much as possible, giving a holistic rather than fragmented perspective. Units are planned using a consistent format.

Assessment in Religious Education at St Raphael’s Parish Primary School “focuses on the ongoing and continuous growth in a student’s ability to engage in the deep dialogue between the Catholic tradition, the issues of the day and students’ self-understanding. A student’s personal faith is not the subject of assessment or reporting in Religious Education.” (Draft Religious Education Curriculum Framework, 2018, p. 28). Judgements about student learning, to identify opportunities to further progress student learning and for reporting to parents, are informed by the Learning Intentions taken from the Achievement Standards.

GUIDELINES/IMPLEMENTATION

Sacramental Program

We recognise parents as the “primary and principal educators” of their children (Gravisimum Educationis, n. 3). Therefore, we seek to work in partnership with families in preparing children to celebrate and receive Catholic sacraments.

The Parish of St Raphael’s West Preston provides a school-based program for the children who are preparing to celebrate the Sacraments of Penance, First Communion and Confirmation in the current year.

Therefore we:

- Provide a school based program, which acknowledges the responsibility for teaching children about the Sacraments, shared across all year levels. This program includes both learning about the Sacraments prior to particular celebrations as well the understanding of sacramentality “where the sacred is encountered in the everyday” (Draft Religious Education Curriculum Framework, 2018, p. 18). All students, regardless of their religious tradition, participate in this learning
- Utilise units from ‘To Know, Worship and Love’: as the basis of our exploration and supplement these units with a range of resources
- Provide opportunities to inform parents and encourage them to share their faith with their child
- Celebrate the Sacrament of Penance in Year 3 and Eucharist in Year 4
- Celebrate the Sacrament of Confirmation in Year 6

As a school we express our sacramentality by living the mission of Christ in our world and reaching out to others, within and outside our school community. Specific opportunities include:

- As a whole school we are committed to fundraising for Caritas Australia (Project Compassion), Catholic Missions (Mission Week) and St Vincent de Paul (Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus).

Liturgy and Prayer

Prayer is the turning of our awareness to the presence of God within our lives. It can be in words, thoughts, and action through informal prayers, traditional prayers, ritual expressions and liturgy. In the homerooms at St Raphael’s Primary School, prayer takes place on a daily basis.

Therefore we:

- Provide the students with a variety of ways to express themselves through formal prayer, dance, song and meditation
- Give the experience of prayer in Liturgy
- Provide regular times for prayer both in homerooms and as a whole school
- Encourage students to discover their preferred way of praying
- Use symbols and liturgical artefacts to focus attention and to evoke a response
- Share, read, reflect and role play scripture stories
- Explore scripture through song and using multimedia resources
- Reflect on Scripture through prayer and meditation
- Use Scripture as a reference to enrich the learning and teaching of the story of God’s people

- Develop student's understanding of Scripture in order for them to fully participate in liturgical celebrations
- Create opportunities for students to gather in homerooms, as a whole school and Parish communities
- Provide experiences which help students develop an understanding of their sacredness
- Encourage students to creatively respond to their faith
- Explore and deepen student's understanding and knowledge of Catholic heritage and traditions
- Explore with students the use and meaning of signs and symbols in Liturgical celebrations

“Prayer, liturgy and sacraments are vital ways that the Church community meets, interacts with and responds to the Word of God. As the source and summit of the seven sacraments, participating in the Eucharist leads members deeper into the communal life of the Church and the mystery of Christ's life, death and resurrection, providing nourishment for Christian living.”
(Draft Religious Education Curriculum Framework, 2018, p. 18)

Eucharistic Liturgies

The Eucharistic Liturgy - P-6 The homeroom teachers in collaboration with the Religious Education Leader is responsible for the planning and development of units of work and daily prayer.

	Whole School Masses	Personnel Responsible
F - 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Opening of the School Year/Teacher Initiation (sometimes combined with Ash Wednesday) Ash Wednesday Initiation/Commitment -Sacramental Students Feast of the Sacred Heart Feast of the Assumption-Mary, Mother of Jesus St Raphael's Feast Day Year 6 Graduation End of Year Thanksgiving 	Religious Education Leader and teachers meet plan this mass in consultation with the Parish Priest and Principal Mass Planning Template <i>PowerPoint</i>
	Level Mass - Weekday 9.30am	Personnel Responsible
F - 6	One level per term as timetabled across the year. Each Year Level attends mass once per term.	Level teachers Timetable <i>Mass days</i> Mass template <i>to be completed and handed in to Parish Priest to view prior to date of Mass</i>
	Assembly/Staff Prayer	Personnel Responsible
F-6	Timetabled weekly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Allocated homeroom teacher and students plan and facilitate Yr 6 School Captains & House leaders facilitate Religious Education Leader to provide a term roster with allocated dates.
Staff	PD/School Closure Day/Conferences	Religious Education Leader to plan

Non-Eucharistic Liturgies

These celebrations may be held with individual homerooms, in level groups or as a whole school. Non-Eucharistic Liturgies are another opportunity to open students up to encounter the sacred. These liturgies may be directly connected with the concepts explored as part of the formal Religious Education Curriculum or the Liturgical Year. Non-Eucharistic Liturgies to celebrate and call to mind the seasons of Lent and Holy Week, Advent and Christmas are a particular feature of the St Raphael's Parish Primary school calendar.

Professional Learning

Homeroom teachers and the Religious Education Leader working collaboratively to design Religious Education Units at allocated planning sessions and presents an important opportunity for professional learning. This regular dialogue facilitates deep engagement with the religious dimension of student learning and encourages a focus on the formation of the teacher (Draft Religious Education Curriculum Framework, 2018, p. 9). The needs of teachers, identified through these planning sessions, determine necessary foci for staff Professional Learning.

Resources

The Religious Education budget is requested by the Religious Education Leader and approved by the principal. Resources are kept in the Religious Education Leader Office and the teacher resource room. Resources are purchased, maintained and monitored by the Religious Education Leader.

Policy Review 2020.