

Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland

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Irish Episcopal Conference



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4. Developing Christian spiritual literacy: outcomes involve understanding that Christian spirituality is ‘the whole of life guided by the Holy Spirit’ (Saint John Paul II). Aspects of a Christian spirituality that are developed include: learning to pray, to participate in sacraments, developing a sacramental imagination and developing a prophetic imagination. Finally, children are enabled to understand how a Christian spirituality is sustained in the community of faith, the Church.

5. Inter-religious learning: outcomes enable children to be able to speak the public language of religion, to comprehend and appreciate the place of religious and philosophical beliefs and practices in human life, to understand the need for dialogue among Christians, to develop powers of empathy for and sensitivity towards people of other religions and cultures, to explore the beliefs and practices of other world religions, to enter into dialogue with people of other religions and beliefs and to foster awareness of shared values such as justice, peace, solidarity, tolerance and freedom.

A set of faith-formation goals has been provided for each level of the curriculum, illustrating the full scope of faith development across the primary school. The primary focus of faith-formation goals in the



primary school is on fostering an encounter with the person of Jesus and on enabling the experience of intimacy and communion with him. Children are invited to learn from Jesus' actions, his teaching, the teaching of his Church, and to think and judge like him, in the Religious Education Curriculum. Finally, it is hoped that children will develop a commitment to participate in the mission and ministry of Jesus, our Saviour, living their Christian faith, in the Church community, for the Kingdom of God.

Fundamental Principle

A fundamental principle of the curriculum is that children's current religious understanding should form the basis for new learning. The curriculum promotes an incremental approach to teaching and learning by increasing the complexity of concepts and skills of religious literacy as the child progresses through the school. The outcomes outlined in each of the strands observe a spiral progression from preschool to sixth class.

Facilitating Planning

The curriculum provides a clear outline of the scope and sequence of skills and religious knowledge that are taught at each level of the Catholic primary school. Within this framework, teachers will be afforded flexibility to plan a programme that is appropriate to the individual school's circumstances and to the needs, aptitudes and interests of the children. It is recommended that teachers use the curriculum to draw up long term plans and to facilitate whole-school planning. They can also use the curriculum (in conjunction with the *Grow in Love* programme) when drawing up fortnightly plans, weekly plans and Individual Education Plans (IEPS). Religious education is taught for two-and-a-half hours per week in Catholic schools.

