



Religious Education Policy

Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School Springfield Lakes



Religious Education Policy

Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School

Springfield Lakes

Our goal as a Catholic Christian community is to educate all to live the gospel of Jesus Christ as successful, creative and confident, active and informed learners empowered to shape and enrich our world.

Brisbane Catholic Education.

Purpose

The purpose of a Catholic School is for its members to live the mission of Jesus in daily experiences of school life. Consequently, the essential culture of the Catholic School has emerged as being characterised as a community of faith, possessing a religious atmosphere, having positive human relationships, setting educational goals, engaging parental involvement and practising sound organisation and administration. At Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School Springfield Lakes, Religious Education is a key learning area standing alongside the general capabilities which play a significant role in the Australian Curriculum in equipping young Australians to live and work successfully in the twenty-first century.

In the Australian Curriculum, capability encompasses knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions. Students develop capability when they apply knowledge and skills confidently, effectively and appropriately in complex and changing circumstances, in their learning at school and in their lives outside school.

"The Lord Jesus made the deaf hear and the dumb speak. May he soon touch your ears to receive his word, and your mouth to proclaim his faith, to the praise and glory of God."

"Ephphatha – Be Opened" – (Mark 7:31-37)

In the baptismal ritual, the Church commits itself to assist parents in the religious education of their children. The Archdiocese has undertaken to *"promote faith learning that is life-long and life-giving"* and to *"nourish and co-operatively support through education the faith life of families"*. Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School accepts as its mission to promote within its community the Gospel message of Christ and bring all members to a relationship with God.

This policy statement provides a basic description of the nature and aims of religious education that will guide our parents, the parish and teachers in their role as religious educators.

As stated in Good Shepherd's Mission Statement, all people are created *"in the image and likeness of God"*, and so are imbued with a natural spiritual yearning. They seek to understand themselves in the light of the transcendent. Any genuine education must address this religious dimension of life. In addition, initiation into the Christian community carries with it a continuing need to grow in understanding of and participation in the faith heritage that gives it life. Hence every young Christian/person, by reason of humanity and baptism, has a claim to be educated religiously.

Good Shepherd's Goals of Religious Education

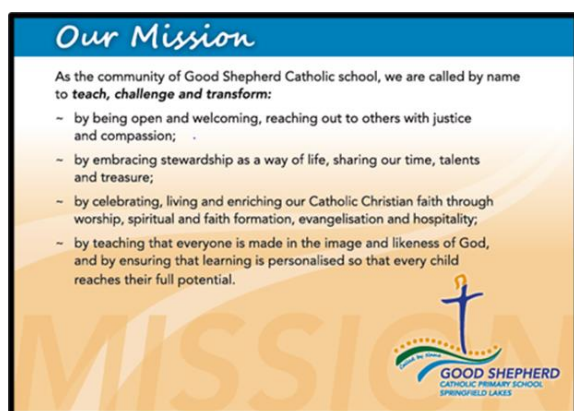
The religious education of our Catholic young people at Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School seeks to foster:

- growth in relationship with God
- knowledge and understanding of God as revealed by Jesus
- understanding of Catholic tradition and their full participation in the life of the community
- critical participation in society and its transformation in light of the gospel and Catholic tradition.

If students are to engage in religious education that achieves the above goals, the following implications require consideration.

- The family is the first place where faith can be nurtured, and ideally provides occasions for education in faith for all its members right through life. Parish-based programs can provide for sacramental preparation, liturgical formation, formal catechesis for some, and many different opportunities for apostolic action and personal spiritual growth. The school is a proper setting for formal instruction in religion and in the teachings of the faith. Adolescents may also find groups and organisations that further contribute in different ways to their overall religious education.
- There is no one form or setting that can usually provide all that is required. Collaboration is needed to ensure a comprehensive, relevant and acceptable religious education of which young people may avail themselves.
- Parents are described as "*first educators of their children in the faith*". In the home they can introduce young people to the lived reality of faith through prayer, moral formation, everyday expressions of love and reconciliation, good example and simple sharing of the faith journey. They also contribute appropriately to their children's formal instruction in the faith.
- Religious Education provide a more formal teaching in matters of belief, values and practice that equips the young person, according to each stage of development, for a free and intelligent expression of personal faith within the family, Christian community and wider society.

Young people should not be seen as merely passive recipients of religious education. Increasingly they have responsibility to choose and actively participate in religious education suited to their age, faith development and personal needs.

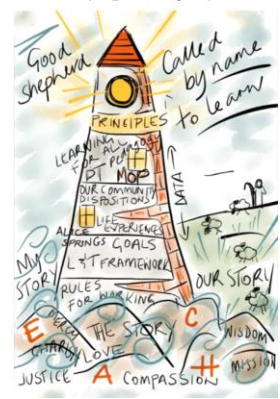


The Catholic school encourages and supports the religious education and faith development of its students in all areas of school life.

The experience of Christian belief and values being lived out within the daily community life of the school and their being explicitly presented in a variety of more structural learning situations (both within the broad curriculum and in formal Religious Education lessons) provide for this development.

Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School’s Religious Education program consciously seeks to identify and provide for a range of activities and situations that will achieve this experience. Furthermore, Good Shepherd also recognises the Catholic University Leuven’s Recommendations, (ECSI Report, November 2019) supporting:

- Systematic Theology (Vision and Mission, Charism, Communication, Principal’s Welcome – Website, School’s history)
- Biblical Studies and Hermeneutics (Scripture)
- Theological Ethics (Christian Values, Distinctly Catholic Character - Charism)
- Pastoral Theology (Liturgy, Sacramental Program and celebrations, Sacramental People, Prayer, Meditation, Pastoral Care)
- Religious Studies (The World of the Texts)
- *Good Shepherd’s Way of Being Community*



GOOD SHEPHERD’S WAY
...of being community

In our community we:

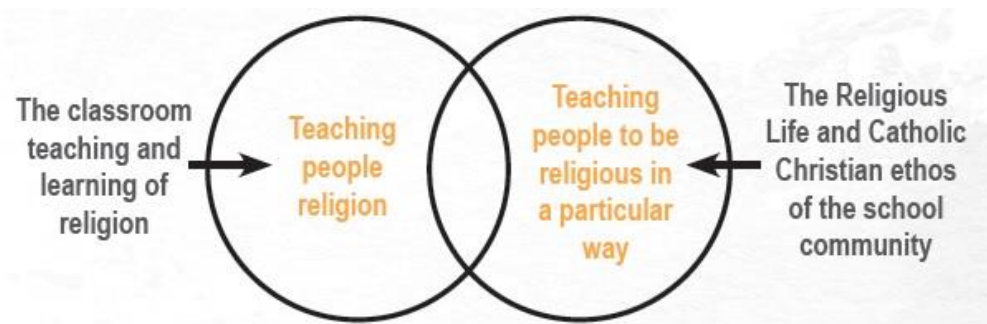
1. Appreciate each other and give thanks and recognition
2. Set clear goals and have time lines for when things need to be decided on and complete
3. Give people time to form opinions and to process ideas
4. Are honest and respectful while acknowledging each other’s feelings
5. Build trust to work collaboratively as a team
6. Challenge yourself to try new things, be open minded, review and modify
7. Give feedback in a constructive and positive manner
8. Listen to others and respect everyone’s ideas
9. Speak up in a considerate and respectful manner
10. Create a welcoming and positive attitude to all
11. Celebrate!

Sacramental Program

The Sacramental program is parish based. Catechesis and sacramental preparation are related though distinct activities. Catechesis is the continuing process of faith education and development. Its goal is growth in maturity of faith. The school is involved in this area of catechesis through the religious education of the child. Sacramental preparation is the specific pastoral activity, involving family and parish community that precedes and accompanies celebration of the sacraments. Notification of the Parish Sacramental program will be given each year through the Parish Bulletin and School Newsletter. For more information, contact the APRE.

Model for Teaching and Learning Religious Education

At Good Shepherd our students are immersed in the distinct, yet complementary dimensions of Religious Education as modelled below:



Each day commences with Good Shepherd’s *School Prayer*, prayed at the morning gathering in each of the Learning Pods. The students pray at various times throughout the day, for example, before break times and at the end of the day. Special occasions are celebrated through *Liturgies of the Word* and the Eucharist (Mass).

Also, of importance to the Religious Education as highlighted through the *ECSI conclusions and recommendations November 2019*:

Catholic Identity

Catholic identity is a keystone for the evangelising mission of all Catholic education communities. It is expressed in structures and processes; in curriculum and the learning environment; in the formation of staff to support, teach and lead; in strategic planning and community culture; the wellbeing of students; and the engagement of parents, parish and wider community as a Dialogue School.

Each BCE School and Office community is called to reflect and live out its Catholic identity in every facet of day to day life and work.

Strengthening Catholic Identity Strategy

Strengthen Catholic Identity is a key strategy of Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE). This is one of three key strategic initiatives in conjunction with *Excellent Learning and Teaching* (ELT) and Drive Responsible Stewardship. The Excellent Learning and Teaching Strategy seeks to inspire high expectations for learning that grow engagement, progress, achievement and wellbeing for each student in literacy and numeracy across Brisbane Catholic Education schools.

The purpose of this strategy is to assist Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School community to better understand how our Catholic identity is expressed and to be intentional about developing that identity through every facet within the community. Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School and BCEO are already engaging in various activities that seek to enhance Catholic identity e.g. [Religious Education Curriculum](#), [Catching Fire Programs](#) and the [Religious Life of the School](#).

This strategy provides an umbrella and integrating design for these activities. In particular, this strategy seeks to support the distinctiveness and vision of Catholic schools as they contribute to the rich cultural and religious diversity of today’s world.

Good Shepherd’s Catholic Primary School places a strong emphasis on the Induction Program for new staff focusing on the four pillars: *Anthropology, Epistemology, Cosmology and the Catholic Christian Tradition* as well as the four external pillars of *Building Catholic Identity, Building a Professional Learning Community, Building a personalized Learning Community and Building a Relational Community*. The visible representation of Catholic Identity is viewed through the school buildings, naming the learning spaces after relevant saints: Venerable Catherine McAuley, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop, Venerable Nano Nagle, St Francis of Assisi, St Ignatius of Loyola and St Hildegard von Bingen. Good Shepherd has been placed under the patronage of Venerable Catherine McAuley. In addition, Good Shepherd Catholic



Primary School has been gifted with or has purchased, a number of religious icons and images to support Catholic Identity and both dimensions of Religious Education model as presented at the beginning of Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School policy.

Good Shepherd's Values

Good Shepherd is committed to ensure that our education and all areas in which our staff minister and our community aspire to being mercy to others, are based on the Mercy Tradition which holds the following values:

- **Mercy:** We act compassionately and courageously, open to others and to their needs, nurturing hope and joy.
- **Hospitality:** we create a community where all feel welcome, through openness to people, ideas and challenges
- **Acceptance:** We embrace unconditionally the uniqueness and diversity of people, fostering quality and fairness in relationships.
- **Excellence:** We are committed to quality, continuous learning and improvement.
- **Dignity:** We treat all people with respect, accepting their right to spiritual, emotional and physical safety and care.
- **Empowerment:** We assist and advocate passionately for and with people, enabling them to make life enhancing choices and to gain control over life shaping decisions.
- **Integrity:** We act ethically, justly and honestly to all including an appreciation for ecology.



Jesus, The Good Shepherd, is a sign of the covenant between staff and the learners placed in our care. Together, we are called to lead the learners, to the love and knowledge of God's own Covenant, united with the "birth gifts" that we bring to Good Shepherd's community.

Social Justice

Students participate in Social Justice activities to support the wider Catholic Christian community. Funds are raised for both Caritas' Project Compassion Appeal and Catholic Mission, as well as supporting both the Winter and Christmas Appeals for St Vincent de Paul.

Religious Education Four Interrelated Strands

Students participate in explicit classroom learning experiences about religion from the moment they enter our school. The Brisbane Catholic Education Religion Curriculum involves four interrelated strands of: **Sacred Texts, Beliefs, Church and Christian Life**.

The Religion Curriculum is aligned with the Australian Curriculum and is taught, assessed and reported on in the same method.

The Year Two Year Level Description is provided below as an example of the learning and teaching experiences within the curriculum:

Year 2 Description

The Religion Curriculum P-12 involves four strands: Sacred Texts, Beliefs, Church and Christian Life. These strands are interrelated and are taught in an integrated way, and in ways that are appropriate to

specific local contexts. In Year 2, students learn about aspects of God's nature and God's relationship with people, as they engage with a variety of New Testament texts depicting the teachings and actions of Jesus and Old Testament texts that describe God's relationship with the Jewish people. They explore contextual information about the first century Mediterranean world, to better appreciate the life and times of Jesus. They learn about Jesus' mission and ministry and explore ways in which Jesus' teachings and actions continue to guide the life of the Church community today. They explore, recognise and appreciate the history of a parish community as it is revealed in many ways. Students learn about the sacredness of all creation, especially human life; the call to be co-creators and stewards of God's creation; and the responsibility to pursue peace and justice out of respect for human life and all creation.

Students develop their understanding of the loving relationship God unconditionally offers to people; and their understanding of sin, as evident in the free choices that harm the individual and their loving relationships with God, with others and with all creation. They explore ways in which believers seek to heal these relationships through reconciliation and prayer. They investigate ways in which believers celebrate reconciliation with God and with others in the Sacrament of Penance. Students examine ways in which prayer and the wisdom of the saints help believers to nurture their loving relationships with God, with others and with all creation. They develop their understanding of prayer in the Christian tradition through an exploration of prayer for forgiveness (acts of contrition and Penitential Act) and meditative prayer.

(Further details regarding the Religion Curriculum can be accessed through the Brisbane Catholic Education Home Page).

Brisbane Catholic Education Vision for Religious Education

The *Vision for Religious Education* emphasises the complementarity of the two dimensions of Religious Education and articulates a school's aspirations for students in terms of their religious literacy and faith formation. In that sense the Vision begins with "the end in mind".

The schools and colleges of the Archdiocese of Brisbane aspire to educate and form students who are challenged to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and who are literate in the Catholic and broader Christian tradition so that they might participate critically and authentically in faith contexts and wider society.

The *Vision for Religious Education* appropriately aligns with the goal for learning and teaching as articulated in the Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) *Learning and Teaching Framework* (2012):

As a Catholic Christian community we educate all to live the gospel of Jesus Christ as successful, creative and confident, active and informed learners empowered to shape and enrich our world.

The *Vision for Religious Education* challenges students to be a religious voice in the world. The Vision gives greater prominence and a renewed orientation to the critical interpretation and evaluation of culture. Through vibrant and engaging Religious Education, students become active constructors of culture rather than passive consumers. In this way, students are challenged to live the gospel of Jesus Christ in their everyday lives. Pope John Paul II (1984) reminds Catholic schools to: ***Develop your culture with wisdom.***

- Religious Education seeks to develop the religious literacy of students in light of the Catholic Christian tradition, so that they might participate critically and authentically in contemporary culture. Students become religiously literate as they develop the knowledge, skills and dispositions to interpret and use language confidently in and for faith contexts and the wider society.

- Religious literacy should not be confused with religious knowledge. The Vision describes students who can articulate their faith and live it in an open and authentic way. Religious literacy encompasses a set of ongoing activities and interactions among people. These include ways of talking, acting, creating, communicating, critiquing, evaluating, participating, ritualising, theologising, worshipping, reading, reflecting and writing with others in a variety of religious and secular contexts. For religious educators, this Vision is framed within a broad and expansive understanding of life that goes a long way beyond education as an end in itself.



The Strategic Plan 2021 – 2025 aligns to Good Shepherd’s understanding of Catholic Identity. We believe a distinct Catholic culture is one that is explicitly celebrated, visible, expressive and lived. We endeavour to realise the potential of being human by developing the Catholic heart, spirit and intellect of our community of students, staff and families. We celebrate our faith, giving witness to God’s hope of promoting the dignity of every person, by embodying a contemporary Catholic worldview.

Catholic Identity - Jesus Christ is the centre of this Vision. While knowledge and understanding of religious concepts is important, the truths and beliefs to which a student adheres must have some consequence in their life. Effective Religious Education requires teachers to be more than purveyors of knowledge and students to be more than consumers of the tradition.

Through engagement with both dimensions of Religious Education, students are challenged to be cultural agents in light of the Gospel, authentic witnesses to the mission of Jesus Christ in the world today.

School Administrative Priorities for Religious Education

The following section is related to Brisbane Catholic Education requirements.

There are a number of administrative priorities that all schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane need to address in the delivery of a high-quality Religious Education curriculum across Prep to Year 12.

Time Allocation for the Teaching of Religion

It is a requirement that a minimum of 2.5 hours per week of religion teaching is provided in both primary and secondary schools from P-12. This equates to 92 - 100 hours per year, based on 37 - 40 available teaching weeks per year. Liturgy, prayer, hymn practice and other religious practices are not included in this provision. Principals need to ensure that the effective timetabling of religion classes is given high priority within the life of the school.

Accreditation to Teach Religion in a Catholic School

All teachers of religion in Archdiocesan schools are required to be accredited to teach religion. This includes teachers of religion in the senior secondary years engaged in Study of Religion, Religion and Ethics and Certificate III in Christian Ministry and Theology. Further information regarding the accreditation to teach religion can be accessed through the Brisbane Catholic Education website.

Teachers as Professional Learners

Religious educators engage in ongoing professional learning focused on enhancing individual and collaborative practices as well as the capacity to improve student learning. Each school will engage in the ongoing process of consistency of teacher judgement, a key strategy for implementing the *Religion Curriculum P-12* and monitoring its effect on students' learning.

Through engagement with this process, within and across school communities, teachers build capacity to understand the curriculum intent, identify evidence of student learning, determine and develop appropriate pedagogical practices and moderate teacher judgements about student learning.

Brisbane Catholic Education Validation of School Religious Education Programs

Each Catholic and ecumenical school is required to have a documented Religious Education Program designed in accordance with the *Religious Education Curriculum* and approved through an Archdiocesan validation process. Regular monitoring and review of the program and its delivery is aligned with approved cyclical review processes. Good Shepherd Catholic Primary School Religious Education Program was successfully validated in 2016.

Consistency of Teacher Judgement

APRE/HOD RE with support from PLL and EORE collaborates with teachers of Religion to plan for learning, teaching, assessing, moderating and reporting using relevant aspects of the achievement standard.

- Teachers participate in professional dialogue to develop assessment opportunities which
 - align with the element/s of the achievement standard being addressed
 - identify clear learning intentions developed from the achievement standard and appropriate success criteria
 - enable students to demonstrate a greater depth of conceptual understanding, a sophistication of skills and an ability to apply essential knowledge
 - provides opportunities for students to participate in collaborative inquiry
 - reflect the *Principles of Assessment*: Assessment is valid, equitable, aligned and evidence based.

Implemented	Reviewed	Reviewed by	Adjustments
2013	2016, 2018	Staff, Terese Shephard.	
	2018	Judith Seery	
	18 August 2020	Judith Seery, James Bradley and Lesley Parry	Updated relevant data re ELT, RE Guidelines, ECSI Recommendations (2019).
	10 March 2021 15 August 2021	Judith Anne Seery	2021-2025 Strategic Plan BCE and Good Shepherd's Vision and Mission, Induction, Good Shepherd's Way of Being Community, Our Saints.