

The background of the cover is a photograph of a classroom. Several students are visible from the chest up, with their arms raised high in the air. They are holding pencils, suggesting they are participating in a lesson or a quiz. The students are diverse in appearance. In the center, a student in a light-colored sweater holds a pencil. To the right, another student's arm is raised. The background is a large window with a grid pattern, letting in bright, natural light. The overall atmosphere is one of active participation and learning.

Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of Catholic Students

Leaving
Certificate
Religious
Education
Syllabus

Religious
Education:
A Curriculum
Framework
for Senior
Cycle

The Irish
Catholic
Bishops'
Conference

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Abbreviations:

CCC: *Catechism of the Catholic Church*; CT: *Catechesi tradendae*; DV: *Dei verbum*;
GCD: *General Catechetical Directory*; GDC: *General Directory for Catechesis*;
NA: *Nostra aetate*; RDECS: *Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*;
SC: *Sacrosanctum concilium*

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The Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of Catholic Students: Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus follows from the Guidelines for the Faith Formation and Development of Catholic Students: Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus (1999).

Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus



Introduction

We welcome the introduction of the Department of Education and Science (DES) *Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus* as a valuable contribution to the religious education of young people in Ireland. It offers young people the language to engage in open dialogue with others of their own faith, with people of different faiths and with those who propose a non-religious worldview. The Syllabus also contributes to the spiritual and moral development of the student. This is in keeping with the Church's central mission of building up the Christian community within the context of the Kingdom/Reign of God. A faith based on genuine knowledge and understanding, as well as reflective attitudes and skills, makes an important contribution to the formation of young people.

Faith is a way of living life, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, based on a loving and trusting relationship with God, who is most fully revealed in Jesus Christ. Our response to the Risen Lord involves developing our Christian faith and spirituality: deepening our knowledge of the faith, liturgical and moral formation, prayer, belonging to community, and engaging in ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue (*GDC* 85–6).

Faith Formation in Religious Education

The 'general aim of Religious Education is to awaken people to faith and to help them throughout their lives to deepen and strengthen that faith' (*Religious Education Syllabus* 1982, p.4).

Faith formation in Religious Education as outlined in the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) identifies the following elements:

Knowledge of the faith

The personal faith of young people is nourished when they are offered the opportunity to engage with questions of meaning and to explore a variety of responses to these questions. By deepening their knowledge of the faith, an opportunity is provided for them to explain their faith to others.

Liturgical education

Young people are invited into a full, conscious and active participation in the various forms of liturgy, and especially in the Eucharist, which occupies a unique place as 'the Sacrament of sacraments' (*CCC* 1211).

Moral formation

Young people are called to conversion, walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. As they mature in the moral life, they discover 'the social consequences of the demands of the Gospel', which is the climax of all saving truth and moral teaching (*GDC* 85).

Prayer

Helping people to learn how to pray as Jesus prayed invites them to discover the action of God in their lives. Prayer is the living relationship between God and humanity; it is the response of faith to the promise of salvation and a response of love to the Son of God.





Community life

Christianity is lived in a community, united in Christ and centred on him. Formation in faith prepares young people to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church, including commitment to the ecumenical dimension of renewal among Christians.

Missionary initiation

Formation in faith prepares young people to live as disciples of Jesus in their professional, cultural and social lives. This discipleship invites them to proclaim the message of Christ to the whole world while joyfully embracing respectful dialogue among religions.

Supporting Faith Formation in Religious Education

The school does not exist in isolation. There needs to be partnership and shared responsibility between home, school and parish in working to support the journey of young people towards maturity of faith. For faith formation to flourish in a school setting, the following factors should be considered:

- The faith formation of Catholic students takes place within the wider context of the whole school environment. In keeping with the spirit of Catholic education, the potential of the students will be attained in such personal, social and spiritual values as honesty, justice, telling the truth, respect, compassion, love and mercy.
- The effectiveness of religion classes is enhanced when entrusted to those teachers who are committed to the faith, professionally qualified to teach religion, and willing to do so.
- School-based Religious Education, like any other subject, should have the support of the whole school. In this regard, diocesan advisers have a key role in supporting religion teachers and school management.
- The role of the school chaplain is fundamental in sustaining the personal and spiritual growth of the young person. The chaplain has a vital contribution to make to the ongoing discussion of the school's characteristic spirit. He/she works with the school principal and authorities, the teachers and, in a special way, the pastoral care team and parent body. Together they can build a truly Christian environment in the school.
- The publishing and use of good quality teaching and learning resources is to be encouraged. These include school textbooks, texts dealing with specific related areas, interactive resources, CD-ROMS, videos, other relevant material, and resource rooms and places of sacred space.
- The parish has the responsibility of *integrating* all Catholic students into the life of the Church. These guidelines draw our attention to the importance of catechesis and its relationship with home, school, parish and the wider Church community.

Section A: The Search for Meaning and Values

‘The human person’s openness to truth and beauty, sense of moral goodness, freedom, conscience and longings for the infinite and for happiness, provokes questions about God’s existence.’ (CCC 33)

Section A of the Syllabus offers a philosophical foundation for the study of religion. It situates religious belief in the context of a universal experience – the quest for meaning and values – and grounds its study in human experience. Study of this section of the Syllabus can, therefore, contribute enormously to an understanding of the place of the Christian religion in conjuring with the questions of meaning asked by humankind throughout the centuries.



Aims of State Syllabus

To present religions as systematic responses to perennial questions common to all peoples about the meaning of life in the world.

To develop an understanding of the nature of this search for meaning through an examination of questions arising in personal experience.

To examine philosophical and religious answers to the questions of the meaning of life and its ultimate grounding.

To examine the philosophical and religious answers to the questions of the existence of God and the nature of divine revelation.

To examine the role of religion in the secular world.

Philosophical Aspects for Catholic Students

There is a common set of questions to be found in each and every recorded culture since the dawn of civilisation.

The history of philosophy is an important reminder that the issues surrounding religious belief are ones that define human nature.

The core issue of the objectivity of values such as justice, goodness, truth and love.

The transcendent dimension of the quest for meaning and values.

The manner in which Christianity can be understood as a response to foundational questions.

The possibility of encouraging students to grapple with non-theistic worldviews within an overall framework that is hospitable to religious belief.

Catholic Guideline References for State Syllabus

- Part 1.1 ‘The contemporary context’, *General Catechetical Directory*, par. 84.
- Part 1.2 ‘The tradition of search’, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, par. 15, Vatican II.
- Part 2.1 ‘The language of symbol’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1146–52.
- Part 2.2 ‘The tradition of response’, *Dei verbum*, pars. 3, 5, Vatican II.
- Part 3.1 ‘The gods of the ancients’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 203–9, 2112.
- Part 3.2 ‘The concept of revelation’, *Dei verbum*, pars. 1–26, Vatican II.
- Part 3.3 ‘Naming God past and present’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 31–5, 39, 43.
- Part 4.1 ‘Religion as a source of communal values’, *General Catechetical Directory*, par. 66; 1 Cor 12:26–27.
- Part 4.2 ‘Secular sources of communal values’, *General Directory for Catechesis*, pars. 171, 193, 194.



Section B: Christianity: Origins and Contemporary Expressions

‘The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ.’ (CT 5)

Section B emphasises the main elements of Jesus’ teaching, his death and his resurrection. In offering a socio-cultural perspective of Jesus, it opens the student to meeting and knowing the historical Jesus and his message. Study of this section of the Syllabus can deepen our understanding of the Christological aspects of Christianity.

Aims of State Syllabus

To present the study of origins as the key to evaluating the present and envisaging an alternative future.

To develop an appreciation of the early Christian movement and to correlate this with contemporary expressions of Christianity.

To identify the distinctive features of Christianity within the historical, social and religious context of both the Palestinian and the Greco-Roman society of the first century CE.

To recognise the diversity and adaptability of the movement in addressing the search for meaning that was a feature of life at that time.

To examine contemporary religious and Christian identity in the light of our understanding of its founding vision and its earliest expressions.

Christological Aspects for Catholic Students

Jesus is the Son of God.

Jesus is divine-human.

Jesus died to save us and unite us with God and one another.

Jesus transformed the value of suffering and death.

Jesus’ choice of his disciples and the foundation of the Church as a way of bringing his message of forgiveness, peace and love to the world.

The understanding that Christians see themselves as called to live the life of Jesus, bringing the Good News to all, guided and challenged by the Holy Spirit.

Christians, moved by God’s Holy Spirit, pray to Jesus and, through Jesus, to his loving Father.

(Section G may be used to look at the various ways in which Christians pray.)

Within Christianity, the support and challenge of community in living the life of Christ, is not only crucial but requires of us all an ecumenical hunger that ‘all may be one’ (Jn 17:21).

Catholic Guideline References for State Syllabus

Part 1.1 ‘The pattern of return’, *General Directory for Catechesis*, par. 32.

Part 1.2 ‘Jesus and his message in contemporary culture’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 477.

Part 2.1 ‘The impact of Rome’, *Populorum progressio*, pars. 7, 10, 11, Paul VI.

Part 2.2 ‘Evidence for Jesus of Nazareth’, *Dei verbum*, par. 10, Vatican II.

Part 2.3 ‘The teachings of Jesus and their impact on the community’, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, par. 8, Paul VI.

Part 2.4 ‘Jesus as Messiah’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 712–16, 840.

Part 3.1 ‘Conflict with establishment’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 574–6.

Part 3.2 ‘The death and resurrection of Jesus’, *Sacrosanctum concilium*, pars. 5, 6, Vatican II.

Part 4.1 ‘The first Christian communities as seen through the writing of Paul’, *Ad gentes*, pars. 13, 14, Vatican II.

Part 5.1 ‘Interpreting the message today’, *Populorum progressio*, par. 81, Vatican II, Paul VI.

Part 5.2 ‘Trends in Christianity’, *General Catechetical Directory*, par. 53.

Section C: World Religions

‘The link between the Church and non-Christian religions is, in the first place, the common origin and end of the human race, as well as the “many seeds of the word which God has sown in these religions”.’ (GDC 86)

Section C involves the study of world religions and is to be welcomed as an important aspect of the Syllabus, adding flavour to the whole programme as well as providing the focus for this section. For the Catholic student, an understanding of other religions contributes to a deeper appreciation of what membership of the Christian community offers. Study of this section shows that the Church expects all its members to engage in inter-faith dialogue. Vatican II underlined an appreciation of other religious faiths when it stated:

‘The Catholic Church rejects nothing of those things which are true and holy in these religions. It regards with respect those ways of acting and living and those precepts and teachings which, though often at variance with what it holds and expounds, frequently reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens everyone.’ (Nostra aetate 2).



Aims of State Syllabus

To identify religion as a living and evolving phenomenon and to examine some of the different types of religion.

To explore at least two of the major living religious traditions and to compare and contrast elements of these.

To examine some contemporary manifestations of religion in major traditions, minor traditions and in new religious movements.

Inter-faith Aspects for Catholic Students

When approaching the study of particular religions, it is important to allow the religious tradition to have its own voice.

Whenever possible, invite a member of the religious tradition to meet the students with a view to dealing with the issues explored in this section.

Emphasis should be placed on the experience and living reality of how the particular religion is practised.

Comparisons and contrasts may be dealt with as they emerge.

The study of other religions enables students to recognise that other faiths provide identity within their respective communities.

Catholic Guideline References for State Syllabus

- Part 1.1 ‘Religion as a worldwide phenomenon’, *General Catechetical Directory*, par. 5.
- Part 1.2 ‘Primary religion’, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, par. 26, Paul VI.
- Part 1.3 ‘The Holy’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2012, 2029. Is 5:6; Nm 28:22; Mk 1:24; Eph 1:4.
- Part 2.1 ‘The vision of salvation’, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, par. 53, Paul VI.
- Part 2.2 ‘The community of believers’, *Nostra aetate*, par. 1, Vatican II.
- Part 2.3 ‘A celebrating tradition’, *General Catechetical Directory*, par. 3.
- Part 2.4 ‘Challenges to the tradition’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2120.
- Part 2.5 ‘Inter-faith dialogue’, *Dignitatis humanae*, pars. 2–8, Vatican II.
- Part 3.1 ‘Cults and sects’, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, par. 52, Paul VI.
- Part 3.2 ‘Some new religious movements’, *Gravissimum educationis*, par. 3, Vatican II.
- Part 4.1 ‘A living tradition’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2104.
- Part 4.2 ‘Traditions in dialogue’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2105.



Section D: Moral Decision-Making

‘The Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus takes up the Decalogue, and impresses upon it the spirit of the Beatitudes, is an indispensable point of reference for the moral formation which is most necessary today.’ (GCD 85)

Section D involves the study of many aspects of morality. For Catholic students this leads to a deeper understanding of morality as accepting self and others as part of God’s plan of creation; Christians act out of love of God and neighbour. In this section students should deepen their understanding that growth in morality requires the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the knowledge and practice of the teachings of the Church.

Aims of State Syllabus

To examine some understandings of ‘morality’ and the implication of these understandings for personal decision-making.

To identify the elements and context of a moral decision.

To introduce and examine the Christian moral vision and the moral vision of other major world religions.

To explore the relationship between morality and law.

Moral Aspects for Catholic Students

In presenting the Hebrew experience of morality, especially the Decalogue, alert students to its specific covenantal context, and highlight morality as a response to a God who has taken the initiative in love.

Morality and the Christian tradition involves discipleship – Jesus invites people to follow him rather than an ethical code or vision.

Following Jesus involves a radical personal conversion (*metanoia*).

Christian morality is not only about what we do, but who we are becoming.

The fundamental response to sin in the teachings of Jesus is one of forgiveness. The Christian Gospel begins with a call to repent and believe.

The statement of the Irish Bishops on Conscience (1998) provides useful clarifications on the objective nature of morality and the role of moral teaching in a pluralist society.

While it is necessary to present different ethical theories critically, it is important not to leave students with the impression that all the theories are equally valid and that moral decision-making is simply a matter of applying one’s preferred theory.

The life of St Thomas More highlights the authority of conscience and the potential conflict that may emerge between the demands of conscience and civil authority.

Catholic Guideline References for State Syllabus

Part 1.1 ‘The meanings of morality’, *Gaudium et spes*, par. 30, Vatican II.

Part 1.2 ‘Why be moral?’ *General Directory for Catechesis*, par. 18.

Part 1.3 ‘The common good and individual rights’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1905–12.

Part 2.1 ‘The relationship between morality and religion’, *General Directory for Catechesis*, par. 23.

Part 2.2 ‘Morality and the Christian tradition’, *General Catechetical Directory*, par. 63. Ex 20:1–7; Jer 32:38; Mt 28:20.

Part 2.3 ‘Religious perspectives on moral failure’, *Veritatis splendor*, pars. 1–120, John Paul II.

Part 3.1 ‘Morality in a pluralist society’, *General Directory for Catechesis*, pars. 193, 194.

Part 3.2 ‘Moral theories in action’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1929–33. Mt 5:13–48.

Part 4.1 ‘Towards moral maturity’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1711–16, Mt 5:3–12.

Part 4.2 ‘Conscience’, *Gaudium et spes*, par. 16, Vatican II.

Part 4.3 ‘Decision-making in action’, *Veritatis splendor*, pars 84–108, John Paul II.

Section E: Religion and Gender

*'God transcends the human distinction between the sexes.
God is neither male nor female, just God.'* (CCC 239)



Section E identifies that human dignity, and its expression in the complementarity of female and male, is, in every generation, a significant issue, both in society and for the Church. Male and female students should be encouraged to understand that their search for meaning and values is of equal importance. This section shows that Scripture, tradition and contemporary teachings of the Church can contribute usefully to a deep understanding of the relationships between people and the significance of gender issues in religion.

Aims of State Syllabus

To develop a knowledge and understanding of the role of gender in religious experience and tradition.

To explore the relationship between gender roles in societies and religions, in particular the Christian traditions.

To develop an awareness of the particular contribution of women to the development of religious traditions.

Gender Aspects for Catholic Students

According to the scriptures, both the Old and the New Testaments, women and men are created with equal dignity. Human beings are created in the image and likeness of God (Gen 1:27). Human beings are equal in the eyes of Christ (Gal 3:28).

The mothers of the faith, alongside the fathers, played their part in the history of salvation. God's revelation comes just as effectively through Eve as through Adam; through Sarah and Hagar (the wives of Abraham) as through Abraham; through Hannah, the mother of Samuel, as through Samuel himself.

Jesus gave women a place of prime importance. Of the woman who washed his feet with her hair, Jesus told those who complained, that what she had done 'would be told in memory of her' (Mk 14:6); he allowed many women who had followed him from Galilee to *minister* to him (Mt 27:55); he showed himself as the Messiah to the Samaritan woman, who would have been seen as outside the community of believers at that time (Jn 4:39); he raised Lazarus from the dead out of his love for Mary and Martha (Jn 11:5); he revealed himself risen from the dead to Mary Magdalene, whom he commissioned as apostle to the apostles (Jn 10:18).

God entered the womb of a woman for the salvation of humankind (Lk 1:30–31). Mary, the mother of Jesus, is a woman of the Church, situated in time and history. She says 'Yes' to God's call, and in Luke she recites the *Magnificat*, glorifying God for his

wonderful deeds (Lk 1:46–56). She gives men and women an understanding of what it means to be a Christian disciple (Paul VI).

In the writings of the Church, the voices of men have been heard to a greater degree than those of women. The role and place of women and men in society and in religion needs to be explored creatively in order to shape a just and mutually respectful future together. In particular, the Church's teaching on Mary is best understood as primarily revealing, to both men and women, the mystery of Christ and his Church.

The baptised share in the priesthood of Christ. The roles of both lay and ordained ministries are important to the life of the Church by contributing to the Reign/Kingdom of God.

Catholic Guideline References for State Syllabus

- Part 1.1 'Gender and society', *Gaudium et spes*, par. 9, Vatican II. Gal 3:28.
- Part 1.2 'The place of women and men in the sacred texts and living traditions of different religions', *Gaudium et spes*, pars. 8, 9, 60, Vatican II. Gen 1:27; Gal 3:28.
- Part 2.1 'Woman and men in the Hebrew scriptures', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 489. Gen 2:1–25; 11:27; 12:10; Ex 2:11–25.
- Part 2.2 'Women and men in the Christian scriptures', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 355, 383. Mt 28:1–9; Mk 16:12–13; Acts 18:26.
- Part 2.3 'Changing perspectives on Mary, mother of Jesus', *Marialis cultus*, pars. 1–58, Paul VI. Lk 1:26–38; 46–56; Jn 2:1–12; 19:25–27.
- Part 2.4 'Gender perspectives on empowerment and exclusion', *Apostolicam actuositatem*, par. 2, Vatican II.
- Part 3.1 'Feminist theologies and spiritualities', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2853. Rom 16:5–7; Phil 4:3; Col 4:15.
- Part 3.2 'The contributions of women', *Mulieris dignitatem*, pars. 28–31, John Paul II.



Section F: Issues of Justice and Peace

'Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world, fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel.' (*Justice in the World*, 1971)

Section F shows that issues of justice and peace are an essential element in the preaching of the Gospel and provide a welcome engagement with faith as a way of living in the world conscious of our relationships with others. In this section, young people are encouraged to show interest in the issues that affect the world and its peoples, and this section provides the possibility of involving them in serious discussion about the practical issues associated with love of neighbour.

Aims of State Syllabus

To introduce the principles and skills of social analysis.

To encourage the application of these principles and skills in the local context and in a selection of national and global contexts.

To identify and analyse the links between religious belief and commitment, and action for justice and peace.

To explore the relationship between the concepts of justice and peace and the challenge to sustain this relationship, particularly in relation to the Irish context.

Justice Aspects for Catholic Students

Familiarise students with the body of documents known as 'Catholic Social Teaching'.

Vatican documents on Liberation Theology (1984 and 1986) will help students to approach the question of 'social analysis' from a perspective hospitable to a faith stance. The main points in this regard might keep in mind that:

- not all injustice can be explained in terms of politics and/or social structures;
- personal sin and personal conversion should be addressed;
- no particular worldview can be seen as the cause of all wrongs in society;
- a valid pluralism of approaches in the human and social sciences is a positive contribution;
- it is difficult to read the Bible as a means of justifying any particular set of political convictions.

Environmentalism should be taught on the basis of accurate scientific knowledge and theory.

Students should be helped to develop sensitivity to a variety of perspectives, while also being alert to the risks of relativism and intolerance.

Catholic Guideline References for State Syllabus

Part 1.1 'Social analysis', *Populorum progressio*, pars. 1-87, Paul VI.

Part 1.2 'Social analysis in action', *The Work of Justice*, pars. 6–129, Irish Bishops. Is 1:17; Lk 4:18; 16:19–25.

Part 2.1 'Visions of justice', *Justice in the World*, par. 5, Synod of Bishops. Jer 5:26–28; Amos 5:1–17; Lk 6:20–26.

Part 2.2 'Visions of peace', *Pacem in terris*, par. 116, Paul VI. Ps 122:1–9; Is 2:4–5; Mt 5:9; Jn 14:27–31.

Part 2.3 'Religious perspectives on justice and peace', *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, pars. 1–49, John Paul II. Pss 7–10.

Part 2.4 'Violence', *Human Life is Sacred*, pars. 45–47, Irish Bishops. Mt 5:43–44; Jn 13:34–35; Rom 7:21–23.

Part 3.1 'Religion and the environment', *Justice in the World*, par. 70, Synod of Bishops.

Part 3.2 'Religious traditions and the environment', *The Work of Justice*, par. 65, Irish Bishops. Lev 25: 23–28; Pss 19, 148.

Section G: Worship, Prayer and Ritual

In the living tradition of prayer, each Church proposes to her faithful, according to her historic, social and cultural context, a language for prayer: words, melodies, gestures, iconography.’ (CCC 2663)

Section G of the programme holds open the possibility of inviting students to a lively encounter with the lived tradition of prayer, ritual and worship in our society. From a Catholic perspective, the Syllabus allows for experiences of prayer and sacrament which are completely integrated into the Catholic tradition. Young Catholics should be given real experience of the variety of prayer, worship and ritual styles available in the Catholic tradition and be helped to understand how the rituals of other religions place their members in relationship with God.



Aims of State Syllabus

- To develop an awareness of the spiritual dimension of human life.
- To explore some of the expressions of this spiritual dimension in a variety of cultures and contexts.
- To examine some of the patterns of ritual and worship found in religions, with particular attention to the Christian traditions.
- To analyse and evaluate the impact of those patterns on Irish society and culture.
- To encourage an openness to personal spiritual development.

Liturgical Aspects for Catholic Students

- Invite the local priest to meet the class to discuss his work (especially the sacramental dimension).
- The sacraments confer the grace they signify when they are celebrated worthily in faith.
- Visit local monastic sites and places of pilgrimage.
- Attendance at baptisms and funerals.
- Encounters with prayer and liturgy preparation groups.
- When the presence of God has been encountered, the person of faith responds in prayer and worship.
- Prayer is the living relationship between God and humanity; it is a response of faith to the promise of salvation and a response of love to the Son of God.
- The Eucharist contains and expresses all forms of prayer.

Catholic Guideline References for State Syllabus

- Part 1.1 ‘Symbol’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1146–9.
- Part 1.2 ‘Ritual’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1153–5.
- Part 1.3 ‘Sacrament’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 1116.
- Part 2.1 ‘The need for reflection’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2725, 2786–8.
- Part 2.2 ‘The human being as pray-er’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2568, 2599.
- Part 2.3 ‘Contexts for prayer’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2628, 2696.
- Part 2.4 ‘The praying tradition’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars 17, 2625, 2698. Pss 1–150; Mt 6:9–15; Rom 1:10.
- Part 3.1 ‘Meditation’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2705–8. Mt 14:23.
- Part 3.2 ‘The contemplative traditions’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2709–19. Mt 26:36–46.
- Part 3.3 ‘The mystic tradition’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2692–6.



Section H: The Bible: Literature and Sacred Text

‘Catechesis will always draw its content from the living source of the word of God transmitted in Tradition and the Scriptures.’ (CT 27)

Section H of the course gives students a rich introduction to the Bible, both as sacred text and as literature. It should help students to appreciate what the Bible is, how it came to be, and why this collection of books is seen as normative for the faith of the Church.

Aims of State Syllabus

To explore how the Bible has functioned as a literary and sacred text since its formation.

To examine the impact of the Bible on contemporary society.

To examine how the Bible was formed as a text.

To introduce the variety of literary genres found in the Bible.

To explore the understanding of the Bible as Word of God and as expression of the relationship between God and humankind.

Biblical Aspects for Catholic Students

Help the students to read the Bible more critically through an appreciation of the traditions that underlie the text, the different literary forms used by the writers and the use of symbolic language. This includes the study of individual texts.

In Sacred Scripture, God speaks to humankind in a human way, and the reader must be attentive to the text and context.

The course as outlined should help to give students an appreciation of the profound influence that the Bible has had on religious thought and on the cultural life of people down the ages (language, literature, art and music).

In a Catholic context, reference to the importance and relevance of the Prophets in the Judaeo-Christian tradition could be addressed. It would, among other things, help students to appreciate how traditions that developed in oral form are preserved in written documents.

The Pauline literature, which has had such a profound influence on Christian theology, should be explored by the students.

The course leaves plenty of scope for the teacher to apply the Bible to the religious life and faith experience of the pupils in a way that supports their religious commitment.

Catholic Guideline References for State Syllabus

Part 1.1 ‘The Bible as living classic’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 101–8.

Part 1.2 ‘The Bible as sacred text’, *Dei verbum*, par. II, Vatican II. Heb 1:1–3.

Part 2.1 ‘The formation of the Hebrew Scriptures’, *Dei verbum*, pars. 14–16, Vatican II.

Part 2.2 ‘The gospels’, *Dei verbum*, pars. 7–8, 10, Vatican II.

Part 3.1 ‘The language of story’, *General Directory for Catechesis*, pars. 71, 95.

Part 3.2 ‘The language of reflection’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2585–9. Pss 4:1–8; 8:1–9; 16:1–11; 19:1–6; 38:1–22.

Part 3.3 ‘The language of symbol’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 1145.

Part 4.1 ‘The Hebrew Scriptures’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 121–3. Ex 20:1–21; 1 Sam 2:1–10; Is 52:13–53:12.

Part 4.2 ‘The New Testament’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 124–7. Mk 9:2–13; Lk 6:20–49, Jn 1:1–18.

Section I: Religion: The Irish Experience

'Catechesis... proposes the Gospel in a vital way, profoundly, by going to the very roots of culture and of the cultures of humankind.' (GDC 204)

Section I focuses on Pre-Christian Ireland, Christianity in Ireland and Contemporary Patterns of Religious Belief, which offers great possibilities for the religious development of Irish Catholics. The Syllabus is deeply rooted in the cultural heritage of the past and it enables the student to appreciate the religious dimension of that past. This is particularly important in these times, when so many people are trying to return to their 'roots', and when many Christians are seeking inspiration in 'Celtic Christianity'.

Aims of State Syllabus

To develop a knowledge and understanding of some of the characteristics of religion in Ireland from ancient times to the present day.

To compare and contrast these characteristics with religious trends and movements in Europe and around the world.

To explore the nature of the Christianity that came to Ireland and its impact at key moments in Irish history.

To become aware of the plurality of religious traditions that have existed, and continue to exist, in Ireland.

Irish, Religious and Cultural Aspects for Catholic Students

Studying our pagan past and the religious insights that may be detected in archaeological and literary remains, bears witness to the religious sensibilities of our pre-Celtic and pre-Christian ancestors.

The focus on early Christian times enables the student to appreciate the rich religious culture of the so-called 'Golden Age' of Irish Christianity.

An awareness of the role of Irish monks on the Continent will remind the student that the Irish have always been part of Europe.

A study of the Reform movements (Céili Dé, twelfth-century reform, reformation and counter-reformation in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, contemporary reform movements) will bring out the strengths and weaknesses of our Christian past in Ireland.

The final part of the section on 'Christianity in

Ireland' brings the student face to face with contemporary issues in Irish Christianity, as well as the changing pattern of belief in Ireland today.

The presence in Ireland today of people from other faith traditions and of people with no faith tradition suggests the possibility of a lively and stimulating debate and the opportunity to engage in ecumenical and inter-faith dialogue.

Catholic Guideline References for State Syllabus

- Part 1.1 'Patterns of change in religious belief', *Evangelii nuntiandi*, par. 25, Paul VI.
- Part 2.1 'Local evidence', *Ad gentes*, par. 6, Vatican II.
- Part 2.2 'National evidence', *Ad gentes*, par. 6, Vatican II.
- Part 3.1 'The coming of Patrick', *General Directory for Catechesis*, par. 58.
- Part 3.2.1 'Religion, spirituality and land', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 295–300. Gen 1:1–31; 2:1–17; Rom 8:19–23.
- Part 3.2.2 'Religion, spirituality and monasticism', *Perfectae caritatis*, pars. 1–5, Vatican II.
- Part 3.2.3 'Religion, spirituality and reforms', *Lumen gentium*, par. 1, Vatican II.
- Part 3.2.4 'Religion and the ideas of the Enlightenment', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2111.
- Part 3.2.5 'Religion in contemporary Ireland', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2087, *Instruction on Christian Liberation and Freedom*, par. 80. Mk 12:13–17.





Section J: Religion and Science

‘The student who is able to discover the harmony between faith and science will, in future professional life, be better able to put science and technology to the service of men and women, and to the service of God.’ (RDECS 54)

Section J points out that it is impossible to live in the world today without being affected, directly or indirectly, by the findings of modern science. New discoveries and the ever-expanding horizons of knowledge are significant sources of awe and wonder about the universe we inhabit. Viewed through the eyes of faith, they have the capacity to deepen our experience and understanding of the mystery of God.

Aims of State Syllabus

To develop an awareness of the changing nature and methods of the scientific and theological enterprises.

To examine some key moments in the history of the relationship between religion and science.

To examine some of the issues and debates concerning the contemporary relationship between religion and science.

To explore the ethical implications of scientific progress.

Religious/Scientific Aspects for Catholic Students

Contrary to popular perception, the relationship between science and religion today is not one of permanent hostility. Many see important points of convergence and complementarity between science and religion, as well as points of divergence and difference.

Equally important is the fact that the dialogue between science and religion reveals that there is no such thing as a value-free, neutral approach to science or theology. The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* (1994) points out: ‘It is an illusion to claim moral neutrality in scientific research and its applications. On the other hand, guiding principles cannot be inferred from simple technical efficiency, or from the usefulness accruing to some at the expense of others or, even worse, from prevailing ideologies. Science and technology by their very nature require unconditional respect for fundamental moral criteria. They must be at the service of the human person, of his/her inalienable rights, of his/her true and integral good, in conformity with the plan and will of God’ (CCC 2294).

What is most important about the module dealing with religion and science is that it offers an opportunity to bring students beyond the standard stereotypes, to enable them to become engaged in this new dialogue, and to discover that faith can be enriched by exchanges between religion and science.

Catholic Guideline References for State Syllabus

- Part 1.1 ‘Questioning in context’, *Gaudium et spes*, par. 36, Vatican II.
- Part 1.2 ‘Community’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2294.
- Part 2.1 ‘Science and religion go their separate ways’, *General Catechetical Directory*, par. 5.
- Part 2.2 ‘Science versus religion’, *Gaudium et spes*, par. 5, Vatican II.
- Part 2.3 ‘Science and religion in tension’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 198, 301.
- Part 2.4 ‘Science and religion in dialogue’, *Octogesima adveniens*, par. 21, Paul VI.
- Part 3.1 ‘The debate about origins’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2293.
- Part 3.2 ‘The new physics and religion – emerging questions’, *Gaudium et spes*, par. 3, Vatican II.
- Part 4.1 ‘The life questions’, *Gaudium et spes*, par. 27, Vatican II.
- Part 4.2 ‘The genetics debate’, *Human life is Sacred*, par. 48, Irish Bishops. Also refer to *Assisted Human Reproductions: Facts and Ethical Issues*, Veritas, and *US Catholic Bishops’ Secretariat for Pro Life Activities* (ref: Cloning, Embryo research, stem cell research).

Religious Education: A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle





Introduction

This document contains the aims and topics from *Religious Education – A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle*. A theological and educational approach to each topic is provided in order to foster the faith formation of Catholic students. Catholic guideline references are also provided.

The introduction of Religious Education as a subject for public State examination at both Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate level is significant in the history of religious education in Ireland.

While it is expected that many students will take Religious Education as a subject for the Junior Certificate, and the majority of students will follow the Junior Certificate RE syllabus, the situation is different with regard to the Leaving Certificate. At this level, not as many students will take Religious Education as an examination subject. Therefore, the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA) has introduced *A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle*, specifically aimed at students who will not take RE as an examination subject for their Leaving Certificate.

Once again, the introduction of the new *Leaving Certificate Religious Education Syllabus* and *A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle* is an opportunity for those involved in Catholic education to reflect on the way in which these studies in faith are offered to Catholic students. It is a chance to consider the various aspects of the religious education that is offered to them: knowledge, understanding, reflective attitudes and skills, encounter and dialogue with those of other faith backgrounds and none, spiritual and moral development. With due care and consideration, the new Syllabus offers a new framework within which all this can be achieved. Properly done, it cannot but encourage the Christian community to live and rejoice in the Reign/Kingdom of God.

This document is offered to those involved in educating Catholic students, as a companion to the NCCA document, *A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle* and to the *Guidelines for Teachers* (NCCA). Specifically, it offers guidelines for the teaching of the NCCA Curriculum Framework to Catholic students attending second-level schools. These guidelines respect the academic aspects of learning offered to all students in general, regardless of faith affiliation. However, they supplement such academic aspects with considerations of faith formation for Catholic students in particular.

These guidelines are offered to assist the partners in education who have the responsibility of guiding students to maturity of faith in Christianity according to Catholic teaching. As educators working with young Catholic students, we seek to offer a catechesis that will develop in them a critical Christian consciousness and response to the presence of the Reign/Kingdom of God.

These partners in education include:

1. **The young people themselves.** It is crucial that young people pay attention to the social and cultural context of their lives, if other partners in education are effectively to facilitate, encourage and nurture the faith journey of these young people.
2. **Parents and guardians.** The rite of Baptism names parents as the first educators in faith of their children. A strong religious identity is normally established in households where religious faith is alive and active.¹

¹ Patrick M. Devitt, *Willingly to School: Religious Education as an Examination Subject*, p. 43.

3. **The school management**, including trustees, boards of management, principals and vice-principals. All those with managerial roles are in a special position to encourage and develop a school policy that is supportive of religious education and that places faith formation on a par with knowledge and information.
4. **Catechists and others who teach Religious Education**. For students with an active Catholic faith, catechists encourage and support what these students already believe. For Catholic students whose faith is underdeveloped, catechists offer vision and a challenge that can help such students to grow in faith.
5. **The rest of the teaching and ancillary staff**. Students are influenced by the ethos of the school community. Even those members of staff who are not in direct contact with students have power to influence them through their contribution to the ethos of the school.
6. **The diocesan advisers**. Through the support and reassurance they offer to teachers, diocesan advisers can help them to find fresh focus in the work of the classroom.
7. **The school chaplain or chaplaincy department**. Times of crisis and tragedy may prove the worth of this aspect of school life. However, such effectiveness can only be proportional to the presence and support of chaplaincy in the regular life of the school.
8. **The wider community**, i.e. the parish and the wider Church community. Local links with the school provide valuable support for the school and its purpose. 'The Christian community is the origin, locus and goal of catechesis.'²



Faith Formation in Religious Education

Religious education empowers young people in their journey of faith. In offering Catholic religious education, the school fulfils part of the mandate of Jesus: 'Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptising them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age' (Mt 28:19–20). Thus, young people are enabled to become a tradition begun with the first communities of Jesus' disciples.

Faith is fundamentally the gift of God. We can nurture that gift in several ways, as outlined in the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997).

- **Knowledge of the faith**

The personal faith of young people is nourished when they are offered the opportunity to engage with questions of meaning and to explore a variety of responses to these questions. By deepening their knowledge of the faith, an opportunity is provided for them to explain their faith to others. Their faith is also informed by studying the tradition to which they belong.

² Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, par. 254.



- **Liturgical education**
Young people are invited into a full, conscious and active participation in the various forms of liturgy, and especially in the Eucharist, which occupies a unique place as ‘the Sacrament of sacraments’ (CCC 1211).
- **Moral formation**
Young people are called to conversion, walking in the footsteps of Jesus Christ. As they mature in the moral life, they discover ‘the social consequences of the demands of the Gospel’, which is the climax of all saving truth and moral teaching (GDC 85).
- **Prayer**
Helping people learn how to pray as Jesus prayed invites them to discover the action of God in their lives. Prayer is the living relationship between God and humanity; it is the response of faith to the promise of salvation and a response of love to the Son of God.
- **Community life**
Christianity is lived in a community, united in Christ and centred on him. Formation in faith prepares young people to live in community and to participate actively in the life and mission of the Church, including commitment to the ecumenical dimension of renewal among Christians.
- **Missionary initiation**
Formation in faith prepares young people to live as disciples of Jesus in their professional, cultural and social lives. This discipleship invites them to proclaim the message of Christ to the whole world, while joyfully embracing respectful dialogue among religions.

Supporting Faith Formation in Religious Education

The school does not exist in isolation. Responsibility for young people is something that is shared with others. Home, school and parish must work together to support the journey of young people towards maturity of faith. For faith formation to flourish in a school setting, the following factors should be considered:

- The faith formation of Catholic students takes place within the wider context of the whole school environment. In keeping with the spirit of Catholic education, the potential of the students will be attained in such personal, social and spiritual values as honesty, justice, telling the truth, respect, compassion, love and mercy.
- The effectiveness of religion classes is enhanced when entrusted to those teachers who are committed to the faith, professionally qualified to teach religion and willing to do so.
- School-based Religious Education, like any other subject, should have the support of the whole school. In this regard, the facilitation of the diocesan adviser by school management is of signal importance.
- The role of the school chaplain is fundamental in sustaining the personal and spiritual growth of the young person. The chaplain has a vital contribution to make to the ongoing discussion of the school’s characteristic spirit. He/she works with the school principal and authorities, the teachers and, in a special way, the pastoral care team and parent body. Together they can build a truly Christian environment in the school.

- The publishing and use of good quality teaching and learning resources is to be encouraged. These include school textbooks, texts dealing with specific related areas, interactive resources, CD-ROMs, videos, other relevant material, and resource rooms and places of sacred space.
- The parish has the responsibility of *integrating* all Catholic students into the life of the Church. These guidelines draw our attention to the importance of catechesis and its relationship with home, school, parish and the wider Church community.

Rationale and Structure of Religious Education – *A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle*

For students who are following the *Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle*, the NCCA rationale for the structure of the Curriculum is as follows:

- There is a strong relationship between this framework and the syllabuses for Junior and Leaving Certificate Religious Education. Such a relationship should make for easier management of the optional examination subject in the senior cycle timetable. It also allows for a follow-through for those students who have taken the Junior Certificate course but have chosen not to take the Leaving Certificate course.
- Because of this relationship, some sections are common to both the Leaving Certificate syllabus and the senior cycle curriculum. However, this framework offers considerably less detailed specification than the Leaving Certificate course. It is shorter, and offers more choice and scope for teachers and schools.
- Each section is presented in two parts. The first part sets out the topics to be covered in the section and the expected learning outcomes. The second part offers a range of possible *explorations* of each theme. It is intended that students would complete at least one of these explorations, but a teacher/school may decide to offer opportunities for students to pursue all explorations of a particular section.³

Religious Education: A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle contains the following sections:

- Section A: The Search for Meaning**
- Section B: Christianity**
- Section C: Religious Faiths in Ireland Today**
- Section D: Morality in Action**
- Section E: God-Talk**
- Section F: A Living Faith – Doing Justice**
- Section G: Celebrating Faith**
- Section H: Story**



³ NCCA, *Guidelines for Teachers*, September 2003, p. 2.



Section A: The Search for Meaning

'The human person's openness to truth and beauty, sense of moral goodness, freedom, conscience and longings for the infinite and for happiness, provokes questions about God's existence.' (CCC 33)

Section A of the Syllabus offers a philosophical foundation for the study of religion. It situates religious belief in the context of a universal experience – the quest for meaning and values – and grounds its study in human experience. Study of this section of the Syllabus can, therefore, contribute enormously to an understanding of the place of the Christian religion in conjuring with the questions of meaning asked by humankind throughout the centuries.

Aims of Curriculum Framework

1. To explore the human need to question, and to identify the great questions.
2. To explore some of the ancient and contemporary answers to the great questions.
3. To identify the pattern of religious faith in response(s) to the great questions.
4. To examine the place of religious faith in contemporary society.

Topic 1: Searching

Content

- Contemporary expressions of the search for meaning.
- The great questions concerning the goal and purpose of life, the meaning of good and evil and the experience of suffering.
- Avoiding the search – the experience of indifference.

Outcomes

- Give some examples of the search for meaning in contemporary culture.
- Describe the great questions and reflect on students' own engagement with these.
- Explain and give examples of indifference to the search for meaning.
- Give examples of ways of escaping the search for meaning.
- Read the testimony of someone's search for meaning or invite someone to tell their story first-hand.

Exploration options

- A. Thinking about searching – philosophy as a search for wisdom.
- B. The search for meaning in art, music and film.
- C. Reflecting on the search for meaning (types of prayer using body, music, meditation, etc.).

Topic 2: Symbol

Content

- Different kinds of symbol.
- The importance of the symbolic in the secular and in the sacred world.
- The power of the symbolic.
- New symbols for a new age.

Outcomes

- Describe different types of symbol.
- Give examples of how symbols are used in the religious and in the secular world.
- Show the power of the symbolic to motivate, influence or inspire.
- Identify new symbols and any relationship they might have to more ancient symbols.

Exploration options

- A. Myth-making – investigate human beings as myth-makers past and present.
- B. Cosmologies – the stories of the universe. Explore two modern cosmologies, e.g. Big Bang and the creationist cosmology.
- C. Encountering symbols – visit places (both religious and secular) where symbols are important.

Topic 3: Religious faith – a response to life's search for meaning

Content

- The meaning of suffering and evil as understood from a religious perspective.
- Examples of people whose lives are influenced by their faith.
- Spirituality – one's way of life.
- Contemporary expressions of a new spirituality.
- The role of religious faith in Ireland today.

Outcomes

- Taking two religious perspectives, present a summary of perspectives on suffering and evil.
- Show the power of religious faith in the life of a particular person or group of people.
- Describe some features of contemporary spirituality.
- Give examples of how religion continues to impact on the lives of people in Ireland.

Exploration options

- A. Why do good people suffer? Investigate different answers to this question through literature (e.g. Elie Wiesel, *Night*).
- B. People of faith – people of hope. Investigate persons or organisations motivated by faith and hope.
- C. Survey patterns of belief amongst young people and compare with national trends.

Philosophical Aspects for Catholic Students of A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle

- There is a common set of questions to be found in each and every recorded culture since the dawn of civilisation. The asking of questions is part of what it is to be human, and the source of meaning for Christians is found in Jesus Christ.
- The history of philosophy is an important reminder that the issues surrounding religious belief are ones that define human nature. It is important to show that religious belief addresses key questions of meaning and values such as truth, goodness, beauty and love.
- The core issue of the objectivity of values such as justice, goodness, truth and love. When approaching this issue, one should endeavour to counter contemporary ideologies that propose a relativist or a subjectivist worldview. This can be found in much of contemporary liberal society.

- The transcendent dimension of the quest for meaning and values. Whenever possible, emphasis should be placed on the viewpoint that happiness or human fulfilment is not achievable by material goals.
- The manner in which Christianity can be understood as a response to foundational questions. It is important to show key themes reflected in Christianity, such as love, forgiveness, conversion, etc.
- The possibility of encouraging students to grapple with non-theistic worldviews within an overall framework that is hospitable to religious belief. Emphasis should be placed on the humanist tradition, which seeks the betterment of humankind – visitation of organisations such as the Simon community, Alcoholics Anonymous or the Samaritans is to be recommended. It should also be noted that, as the titles suggest, one would not want to presume that such organisations advocate a non-theistic worldview.

Catholic Guideline References for Curriculum Framework

- 'The contemporary context', *General Directory for Catechesis*, par. 84.
- 'The tradition of search', *Presbyterorum ordinis*, par. 15, Vatican II.
- 'The language of symbol', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1146–52.
- 'The tradition of response', *Dei verbum*, pars. 3, 5, Vatican II.
- 'The gods of the ancients', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 203–9, 2112.
- 'The concept of revelation', *Dei verbum*, pars. 1–26, Vatican II.
- 'Naming God past and present', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 31–5, 39, 43.
- 'Religion as a source of communal values', *General Catechetical Directory*, par. 66. 1 Cor 12: 26–27.
- 'Secular sources of communal values', *General Directory for Catechesis*, pars. 171, 193, 194.



Section B: Christianity

‘The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch, but also in communion and intimacy, with Jesus Christ.’ (CT5)

Section B emphasises the main elements of Jesus’ teaching, his death and his resurrection. In offering a socio-cultural perspective of Jesus, it opens the student to meeting and knowing the historical Jesus and his message. Study of this section of the Syllabus can deepen our understanding of the Christological aspects of Christianity.

Aims of Curriculum Framework

1. To explore the historical context into which Jesus was born.
2. To develop an understanding of the message and vision of Jesus in the context of his time.
3. To examine the early Christian movement – its identity and vision.
4. To investigate contemporary and historical attempts to return to the original vision.

Topic 1: Jesus – his life and times

Content

- The political, social and religious systems in Palestine at the time of Jesus.
- Historical evidence for Jesus.
- Different expectations of the Messiah at the time of Jesus.
- Jewish understanding of the Reign/Kingdom of God.
- Jesus’ vision of the Reign/Kingdom of God.
- Jesus’ message in conflict with the establishment.

Outcomes

- Describe the political, social and religious systems in Palestine at the time of Jesus.
- Give two historical sources for evidence of Jesus.
- Explain different expectations of the Messiah at the time of Jesus – Priestly, Davidic and Prophetic.
- Describe the Jewish understanding of the Reign/Kingdom of God at the time of Jesus.
- Outline the characteristics of the Kingdom as preached by Jesus.
- Discuss why Jesus was seen as a threat to the establishment.
- Explain why Jesus was put on trial.

Exploration options

- A. Jesus, a man of his time and place – an exploration of the Jewish context into which Jesus was born.
- B. An exploration of Palestine then and now.
- C. Exploration of the theme of ‘waiting’ (in music, film and students’ own lives).
- D. The trial:
 - Re-enact the trial of Jesus.
 - Investigate different concepts of justice and law today.
 - Research and discuss cases of miscarriage of justice in contemporary times.

Topic 2: The early Christian movement

Content

- The death and resurrection of Jesus – a challenge to his followers.
- The first Christian communities as seen through the writings of Paul.
- Belief, behaviour and lifestyle of the early Christian communities.
- Tensions within the community and with the wider world.
- How the community moved from Palestine to Rome – key moments along the way.
- Archaeological evidence of the first Christian communities.

Outcomes

- Outline the response of Jesus’ followers to his suffering and death.
- Explain the impact of the Resurrection on the disciples.
- Give an account of the beliefs, behaviour and lifestyle of the early Christian communities, using Paul’s writings.

- Outline some sources of tension within the Christian community (e.g. inclusion of non-circumcised) and outside.
- Give an account of key moments in the spread of Christianity from Palestine to Rome.
- Give two examples of archaeological evidence of the first Christian communities.

Exploration options

- Investigate non-biblical sources of Jesus' death.
- Research different religious understandings of resurrection and the afterlife.
- Explore the dynamics of Church-State relations – then and now.
- Re-enact a moment of conflict within the early Christian community. Discuss different perspectives.

Topic 3: Returning to origins

Content

- Returning to origins as a pattern in religious and secular institutions.
- The purpose and effect of rediscovering the founding vision.
- Returning to origins as a pattern in Christianity.

Outcomes

- Provide examples of the contemporary trend to return to origins.
- Explain the purpose of return and its effect.
- Discuss at least two attempts at restoring the original vision of Christianity – e.g. monastic movement of the twelfth century; Luther; the evangelical movement in early nineteenth-century Protestantism; the Second Vatican Council; liberation theology.

Exploration options

- Explore in some detail one example of attempting to return to origins in Christianity.
- Prepare a debate in class on the topic 'Christianity has lost its way and needs to go back to its original vision'.
- Interview an older person about the changes they have seen during their lives in a particular religious tradition.

Christological Aspects for Catholic Students of A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle

- Jesus is the Son of God.
- Jesus is divine-human.
- Jesus died to save us and unite us with God and one another.
- Jesus transformed the value of suffering and death.
- Jesus' choice of his disciples and the foundation of the Church as a way of bringing his message of forgiveness, peace and love to the world.
- The understanding that Christians see themselves as called to live the life of Jesus, bringing the Good News to all, guided and challenged by the Holy Spirit.
- Christians, moved by God's Holy Spirit, pray to Jesus and, through Jesus, to his loving Father. (*Section G may be used to look at the various ways in which Christians pray.*)
- Within Christianity, the support and challenge of community in living the life of Christ is not only crucial but requires of us all an ecumenical hunger that 'all may be one' (Jn 17: 21).

Catholic Guideline References for Curriculum Framework

- 'The pattern of return', *General Directory for Catechesis*, par. 32.
- 'Jesus and his message in contemporary culture', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 477.
- 'The impact of Rome', *Populorum progressio*, pars. 7, 10, 11, Paul VI.
- 'Evidence for Jesus of Nazareth', *Dei verbum*, par. 10, Vatican II.
- 'The teachings of Jesus and their impact on the community', *Evangelii nuntiandi*, par. 8, Paul VI.
- 'Jesus as Messiah', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 712–16, 840.
- 'Conflict with establishment', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 574–6.
- 'The death and resurrection of Jesus', *Sacrosanctum concilium*, pars. 5, 6, Vatican II.
- 'The first Christian communities as seen through the writing of Paul', *Ad gentes*, pars. 13, 14, Vatican II.
- 'Interpreting the message today', *Populorum progressio*, par. 81, Vatican II, Paul VI.
- 'Trends in Christianity', *General Catechetical Directory*, par. 53.



Section C: Religious Faiths in Ireland Today

‘The link between the Church and non-Christian religions is, in the first place, the common origin and end of the human race, as well as the “many seeds of the word which God has sown in these religions”.’ (GDC 86)

Section C involves the study of world religions and is to be welcomed as an important aspect of the Syllabus, adding flavour to the whole programme as well as providing the focus for this section. For the Catholic student, an understanding of other religions contributes to a deeper appreciation of what membership of the Christian community offers. Study of this section shows that the Church expects all its members to engage in inter-faith dialogue. Vatican II underlined an appreciation of other religious faiths when it stated:

The Catholic Church rejects nothing of those things which are true and holy in these religions. It regards with respect those ways of acting and living and those precepts and teachings which, though often at variance with what it holds and expounds, frequently reflect a ray of that truth which enlightens everyone. (*Nostra aetate* 2)

Aims of curriculum framework

1. To encourage respect and appreciation for the richness of religious traditions in Ireland today.
2. To explore at least two major living religious traditions and to compare and contrast elements of these.
3. To examine the emergence of cults, sects and new religious movements in Ireland today.

Topic 1: Religion – a rich tapestry of beliefs

Content

- Religious traditions in Ireland.
- Religious trends in Ireland.
- Living with diversity – opportunity or threat?
- Inter-faith dialogue.

Outcomes

- Research the number of different religious traditions in Ireland today and their origins.
- Describe major religious trends in Ireland today.
- Define what is meant by inter-faith dialogue and discuss the nature and purpose of such dialogue.

Exploration options

- A. Debate the topic ‘Religious diversity in Ireland will strengthen the faith of all’.
- B. Survey your local area to find out what religious traditions are in evidence.

- C. Use the Internet to research the current state of inter-faith dialogue. (See Departmental Guidelines pp. 148–9 for web addresses.)

Topic 2: A closer look at two major living traditions

Content

Select two of the following – Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism. In the case of each tradition, explore:

- its origins, founder and location
- its vision of salvation/liberation
- its image of the human person
- the way ‘community’ is organised
- the role of ritual and celebration
- the role of women and men.

Outcomes

- Use the Internet to research the origins, founder and location of two major world religions.
- Compare and contrast the vision of salvation/liberation proposed by each tradition.
- Describe the understanding of the ‘human person’ as presented by each tradition.
- Give an account of how the community is organised at local and global levels.
- Describe how the tradition celebrates key moments in life or seasons.

- Present a comparison of the role of men and women in two world religions.

Exploration options

- Invite a speaker to talk about his/her experience of living the faith.
- Organise a class visit to a place of worship, in consultation with the relevant religious leader.
- Organise a web search to find out more about the major world religions. (See Departmental Guidelines pp. 148–9 for web addresses.)

Topic 3: New religious movements

Content

- What is a cult?
- What is a sect?
- The relationship between traditional religions and new religious movements.
- A study of one new religious movement, including its foundation, major beliefs and lifestyle of members.

Outcomes

- Define ‘cult’ and give examples.
- Define ‘sect’ and give examples.
- Discuss why definitions are often contested.
- Research one new religious movement that is active in Ireland today.

Exploration options

- Organise a debate on the topic ‘All religions start out as cults or sects’.
- New religious movements – threat or opportunity?
- Discuss the characteristics of new religious movements that appeal to young people. Discuss how other faiths can learn from this.

Inter-faith Aspects for Catholic Students of A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle

- When approaching the study of particular religions, it is important to allow the religious tradition to have its own voice.
- Whenever possible, invite a member of the religious tradition to meet the students with a view to dealing with the issues explored in this section.
- Emphasis should be placed on the experience and living reality of how the particular religion is practised.
- Comparisons and contrasts may be dealt with as they emerge.
- The study of other religions enables students to recognise that other faiths provide identity within their respective communities.

Catholic Guideline References for Curriculum Framework

- ‘Religion as a worldwide phenomenon’, *General Catechetical Directory*, par. 5.
- ‘Primary religion’, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, par. 26, Paul VI.
- ‘The Holy’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2012, 2029. Is 5:6, Nm 28:22, Mk 1:24, Eph 1:4.
- ‘The vision of salvation’, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, par. 53, Paul VI.
- ‘The community of believers’, *Nostra aetate*, par. 1, Vatican II.
- ‘A celebrating tradition’, *General Catechetical Directory*, par. 3.
- ‘Challenges to the tradition’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2120.
- ‘Inter-faith dialogue’, *Dignitatis humanae*, pars. 2–8, Vatican II.
- ‘Cults and sects’, *Evangelii nuntiandi*, par. 52, Paul VI.
- ‘Some new religious movements’, *Gravissimum educationis*, par. 3, Vatican II.
- ‘A living tradition’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2104.
- ‘Traditions in dialogue’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2105.



Section D: Morality in Action

'The Sermon on the Mount, in which Jesus takes up the Decalogue, and impresses upon it the spirit of the Beatitudes, is an indispensable point of reference for the moral formation which is most necessary today.' (GCD 85)

Section D involves the study of many aspects of morality. For Catholic students, this leads to a deeper understanding of morality as accepting self and others as part of God's plan of creation; Christians act out of love of God and neighbour. In this section, students should deepen their understanding that growth in morality requires the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the knowledge and practice of the teachings of the Church.

Aims of Curriculum Framework

1. To understand the stages of moral development.
2. To introduce students to a process for moral decision-making and to consider the implication of this for personal decision-making.
3. To understand the elements and context of moral decisions.
4. To reflect critically on a range of moral issues from a religious perspective.

Topic 1: Becoming moral

Content

- Why be moral?
- Historical perspectives on morality.
- Stages of moral development.
- Influences on moral principles: peers, family, media, culture, religion, etc.
- Conscience – how is it developed? What is an informed conscience? The role of religion in informing conscience.
- Personal and structural sin.

Outcomes

- Personal reflection on key influences on personal moral principles and decisions.
- Give examples which show morality as a natural phenomenon.
- Give examples and explain how our understanding of moral issues is evolving through history, e.g. slavery, child labour, death penalty.
- List the stages of moral development as outlined by one theorist.
- Define conscience and explain its role in decision-making.
- Define personal and structural sin.

Exploration options

- A. Use newspapers and other media to trace a current moral debate.
- B. Use newspapers and other media to find current examples of personal and structural sin. Also find examples of human beings acting in a way that is agreed to be 'good' or 'moral'.
- C. Trace the development of understanding on one moral issue over time, e.g. slavery, corporal punishment, child labour.

Topic 2: Morality and religious belief

Content

- Understand the difference between the religious and the moral person.
- Jesus' ethical vision of 'right relationship'.
- The influence of Jesus' Jewish background on his moral vision – e.g. the Golden Rule.
- The Christian understanding of sin and reconciliation.
- The ethical vision of another faith tradition.

Outcomes

- State similarities and differences between a religious and a moral person.
- Give an account of Jesus' understanding of 'right relationship'.
- Discuss with examples how Jesus' Jewish background influenced his moral vision.
- Discuss with examples how sin has personal, social and structural implications.
- Summarise the ethical vision of one major religion other than Christianity.

Exploration options

- A. Compare the Golden Rule as it appears in different religious traditions.

- B. Explore how care for the earth is incorporated into the moral vision of one major religion.

Topic 3: Moral dilemmas

Content

- The process of moral decision-making.
- Examples of moral decision-making in action.
- The role of religion in moral decision-making.

Outcomes

- Suggest a process for mature moral decision-making in a moral dilemma.
- Give examples of the above, taking two of the following:
 - political or economic dilemma
 - interpersonal or sexual dilemma
 - an issue of medical and scientific ethics
- Explain the role of a religious perspective in moral decision-making.

Exploration options

- A. In small groups, discuss how a moral decision-making process might be used in solving a number of different moral dilemmas.
- B. View a contemporary film that addresses the theme of moral decision-making and discuss the different perspectives depicted in the film and what influences them.
- C. Keep a journal to identify own values and influences on personal decision-making.

Moral Aspects for Catholic Students of A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle

- In presenting the Hebrew experience of morality, especially the Decalogue, alert students to its specific covenantal context, and highlight morality as a response to a God who has taken the initiative in love.
- Morality and the Christian tradition involve discipleship – Jesus invites people to follow him rather than an ethical code or vision.
- Following Jesus involves a radical personal conversion (*metanoia*).
- Christian morality is not only about what we do, but who we are becoming.
- The fundamental response to sin in the teachings of Jesus is one of forgiveness. The Christian Gospel begins with a call to repent and believe.
- The statement of the Irish Bishops on

Conscience (1998) provides useful clarifications on the objective nature of morality and the role of moral teaching in a pluralist society.

- While it is necessary to present different ethical theories critically, it is important not to leave students with the impression that all the theories are equally valid and that moral decision-making is simply a matter of applying one's preferred theory.
- The life of St Thomas More highlights the authority of conscience and the potential conflict that may emerge between the demands of conscience and civil authority.

Catholic Guideline References for Curriculum Framework

- 'The meanings of morality', *Gaudium et spes*, par. 30, Vatican II.
- 'Why be moral?', *General Directory for Catechesis*, par. 18.
- 'The common good and individual rights', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1905–12.
- 'The relationship between morality and religion', *General Directory for Catechesis*, par. 23.
- 'Morality and the Christian Tradition', *General Catechetical Directory*, par 63. Ex 20:1–7; Jer 32:38; Mt 28:20.
- 'Religious perspectives on moral failure', *Veritatis splendor*, pars. 1–120, John Paul II.
- 'Morality in a pluralist society', *General Directory for Catechesis*, pars. 193, 194.
- 'Moral theories in action', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1929–33. Mt 5:13–48.
- 'Towards moral maturity', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1711–16. Mt 5:3–12.
- 'Conscience', *Gaudium et spes*, par. 16, Vatican II.
- 'Decision-making in action', *Veritatis splendor*, pars 84–108, John Paul II.
- 'Morality and the unity of love', *Deus caritas est*, Part I, Part II, Benedict XVI.



Section E: God-Talk

'We ought therefore to recall that God transcends the human distinction between the sexes. He is neither man nor woman; he is God.' (CCC 239)

Section E shows how our images of God should change and develop as we grow older. It looks at the images of God in contemporary culture as portrayed in art, music, literature and film. The gendered images of God in Scripture are explored and how these images impact on the roles of men and women in the Church. It also examines how God can be seen in 'the bits and pieces of the everyday', and, in particular, in the sacraments, the special moments of God's presence.

Aims of Curriculum Framework

1. To examine present images of God and compare to childhood images.
2. To examine images of God in art/music/literature and contemporary culture.
3. To examine images of God in two major religions.
4. To explore images of God in Scripture/sacred text.

Topic 1: My image of God

Content

- My image of God.
- Images of God in art/music/literature and contemporary culture.
- 'God of the gaps'.

Outcomes

- Critically reflect on own image of God.
- Give examples of various images of God in art/music/literature and contemporary culture.
- Be able to offer a critique of the 'God of the gaps'.

Exploration options

- A. Explore images of God in art, music or literature.
- B. Explore different accounts of the origins of the universe from science and religion.
- C. Compare childhood images of God with adolescent images.

Topic 2: Images of God in Scripture/sacred text

Content

- Gendered images of God in Scripture/sacred texts.
- The relationship between images of God in sacred texts and the place of men and women in their traditions and worship.

Outcomes

- Research various images of God in sacred text.
- Discuss the possible relationship between gendered images of God and the role of women and men in the tradition and worship.

Exploration options

- A. Explore a contemporary issue of justice and how different images of God might influence one's understanding of that issue.
- B. Trace the role and contribution of women in one Church tradition.
- C. Organise a debate on the topic: 'When God is male, then the male is God.'

Topic 3: God 'in the bits and pieces of the everyday'

Content

- Implications of images of God for life.
- Signs and rituals – special moments of God's presence.
- Non-Christian rituals.

Outcomes

- Discuss the relationship between one's image of God and one's view of life and of relationships with others.
- Outline a Christian understanding of sacraments.
- Give an example of non-Christian ritual and explain its significance for followers of that tradition.

Exploration options

- A. Invite students to keep a journal, noting times when they recognise the 'more' in the midst of the everyday. (Create a space for students to tell stories from their experience of these times.)
- B. Invite students to participate in/observe both Christian and non-Christian ritual.

Aspects of Revelation for Catholic Students of A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle

- Help the students to understand Jesus as the image of the unseen God: 'Then Jesus cried

aloud: “Whoever believes in me believes not in me but in [the one] who sent me. And whoever sees me sees [the one] who sent me”.’ (Jn 12:44–45)

- Human beings, male and female, are made in the image and likeness of God: ‘So God created humankind in his image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them.’ (Gen 1:27)
- All human persons are to be honoured and respected: ‘Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of *a person*, who is not just something, but someone.’ (CCC 357)
- God’s presence in and through nature: ‘Because he is the free and sovereign Creator, the first cause of all that exists, God is present to his creatures’ inmost being: “In him we live and move and have our being”.’ (Acts 17:28) (CCC 300)
- We communicate with God through human words and actions, symbols, silence and rituals. We express and perceive spiritual realities through physical signs and symbols. As social beings, we need signs and symbols to communicate with others, through language, gesture and actions. The same holds true for our relationship with God (see CCC 1146). Students should understand, however, that God is wholly other, transcendent, mysterious and ultimately greater than we can fully grasp.
- Through art, literature and music, many, down the centuries, have found expression for their experience of the Divine, helping others draw close to God. ‘Of their nature the arts are directed toward expressing in some way the infinite beauty of God in works made by human hands.’ (SC 122)
- The Seven Sacraments as encounters with God: ‘A sacramental celebration is a meeting of God’s children with their Father, in Christ and the Holy Spirit; this meeting takes the form of a dialogue, through actions and words’. (CCC 1153)

Catholic Guideline References for Curriculum Framework

- ‘The tradition of search’, *Presbyterorum ordinis*, par. 15, Vatican II.
- ‘The language of symbol’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1146–52.

- ‘The tradition of response’, *Dei verbum*, pars. 3, 5, Vatican II.
- ‘The gods of the ancients’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 203–9, 2112.
- ‘The concept of revelation’, *Dei verbum*, pars. 1–26, Vatican II.
- ‘Naming God past and present’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 31–5, 39, 43.
- ‘Religion as a source of communal values’, *General Catechetical Directory*, par. 66.
- ‘Secular sources of communal values’, *General Directory for Catechesis*, pars. 171, 193/4.
- ‘Gender and society’, *Gaudium et spes*, par. 9, Vatican II. Gal 3:28.
- ‘The place of women and men in the sacred texts and living traditions of different religions’, *Gaudium et spes*, pars. 8, 9, 60, Vatican II. Gen 1:27, Gal 3:28.
- ‘Women and men in the Hebrew scriptures’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 489. Gen 2:1–25; 11:27; 12:10; Ex 2:11–25.
- ‘Women and men in the Christian scriptures’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 355, 383. Mt 28:1–9; Mk 16:12–13; Acts 18:26.
- ‘Changing perspectives on Mary, mother of Jesus’, *Marialis cultus*, pars. 1–58, Paul VI. Lk 1:26–38; 46–56; Jn 2:1–12; 19:25–27.
- ‘Gender perspectives on empowerment and exclusion’, *Apostolicam actuositatem*, par. 2, Vatican II.
- ‘Feminist theologies and spiritualities’, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 2853. Rom 16:5–7; Phil 4:3; Col 4:15.
- ‘The contributions of women’, *Mulieris dignitatem*, pars. 28–31, John Paul II.
- The relationship between tradition and sacred scripture, *Dei verbum*, par. 8–9.
- The Holy Spirit, interpreter of Scripture, CCC 109ff., *Dei verbum* 11–12.
- Divine inspiration and the interpretation of Sacred Scripture, *Dei verbum*, 11–13.
- Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church, CCC 131ff., *Dei verbum*, 6ff.
- The transmission of divine revelation, CCC 78ff. *General Directory for Catechesis*, 42ff.



Section F: A Living Faith – Doing Justice

'Action on behalf of justice and participation in the transformation of the world, fully appear to us as a constitutive dimension of the preaching of the Gospel.' (Justice in the World, 1971)

Section F shows that issues of justice and peace are an essential element in the preaching of the Gospel and provide a welcome engagement with faith as a way of living in the world conscious of our relationships with others. In this section, young people are encouraged to show interest in the issues that affect the world and its peoples, and this section provides the possibility of involving them in serious discussion about the practical issues associated with love of neighbour.

Aims of Curriculum Framework

1. To introduce the basic principles and methods of social analysis.
2. To identify and analyse the links between religious belief and commitment, and action for justice and peace.
3. To explore a range of justice issues from a religious perspective.
4. To engage in action for justice as an expression of faith in action.

Topic 1 – Social analysis

Content

- Reflect on one's own situation and context in the light of questions of power, resources, meaning, values and relationships.
- Identify key economic, political, cultural and social structures.
- Explore how structures function to maintain the status quo.
- Social analysis – a tool in religious and secular teaching.

Outcomes

1. Identify the most significant economic, political, cultural and social structures within own situation that influence:
 - the allocation of resources;
 - the sources and types of power;
 - key personal and interpersonal relationships;
 - the meaning and value accorded to people and their situation.
2. Be able to discuss how structural factors function to maintain specific inequalities, e.g. poverty, gender discrimination.
3. Outline how a community of faith uses social

analysis in addressing a contemporary justice issue.

Exploration options

- A. In small groups, investigate different issues of discrimination today and their causes.
- B. Media watch – look at reports in local and national newspapers to see how issues relating to poverty are reported.
- C. Take a document issued by a community of faith and study how it uses social analysis.

Topic 2: Justice – at the heart of it all

Content

- Different secular understandings of 'justice'.
- Understandings of justice from different faith communities.
- The Judaeo-Christian vision of justice.
- Jesus and justice.

Outcomes

- Be able to compare a secular understanding of justice with a religious understanding of justice.
- Outline key features of the Judaeo-Christian vision of justice.
- Outline key characteristics of Jesus' vision of God's kingdom.
- Give examples of Jesus taking a stand for justice in his own context and relate it to an issue today.

Exploration options

- A. Role-play a situation where Jesus took a stand for justice. Then discuss contemporary situations that might relate to this story.
- B. Explore the relationship between justice and peace through case studies.
- C. Research the lives of people who are working for justice.

Topic 3: Justice in action

Content

- The link between justice and peace.
- Is war ever justified?
- Why are people hungry?
- Human rights – God-given? (Exploration of issues of racism, sexism, etc.)
- Care for the earth.
- Organisations that work for justice from a religious vision.

Outcomes

- Explain and illustrate the relationship between justice and peace.
- Summarise and critique the ‘just war’ theory.
- Explain the causes of world hunger and suggest a religious response.
- Explain the link between human dignity and human rights in religious thinking.
- Explain how racism, sexism and other forms of discrimination are contrary to religious living.
- Explain how care for the earth is linked to religious faith.

Exploration options

- A. Using case studies, discuss the statement, ‘Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.’ (Martin Luther King Jnr)
- B. Organise a class visitor from an organisation working for justice and, as follow-up, decide on an action for justice that students can take.
- C. Using the Internet, books, films, etc., research the life of a person whom you admire because of their work for justice, peace or care for the earth.

Justice Aspects for Catholic Students of A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle

- Familiarise students with the body of documents known as ‘Catholic Social Teaching’.
- Vatican documents on Liberation Theology (1984 and 1986) will help students to approach the question of ‘social analysis’ from a perspective hospitable to a faith stance. The main points in this regard might keep in mind that:
 - not all injustice can be explained in terms of politics and/or social structures;
 - personal sin and personal conversion should be addressed;
- no particular worldview can be seen as the cause of all wrongs in society;
- a valid pluralism of approaches in the human and social sciences is a positive contribution;
- it is difficult to read the Bible as a means of justifying any particular set of political convictions.
- Environmentalism should be taught on the basis of accurate scientific knowledge and theory.
- Students should be helped to develop sensitivity to a variety of perspectives, while also being alert to the risks of relativism and intolerance.

Catholic Guideline References for Curriculum Framework and Exam Syllabus

- ‘Social analysis’, *Populorum progressio*, pars. 1–87, Paul VI.
- ‘Social analysis in action’, *The Work of Justice*, pars. 6–129, Irish Bishops. Is 1:17; Lk 4:18; 16:19–25.
- ‘Visions of Justice’, *Justice in the World*, par. 5, Synod of Bishops. Jer 5:26–28; Amos 5:1–17; Lk 6:20–26.
- ‘Visions of Peace’, *Pacem in terris*, par. 116, Paul VI. Ps 122: 1–9; Is 2:4–5; Mt 5:9; Jn 14:27–31.
- ‘Religious Perspectives on Justice and Peace’, *Sollicitudo rei socialis*, pars. 1–49, John Paul II. Pss 7–10.
- ‘Violence’, *Human Life is Sacred*, pars. 4–6, 45–47, Irish Bishops. Mt 5:43–44; Jn 13:34–35; Rom 7:21–23.
- ‘Religion and the environment’, *Justice in the World*, par. 70, Synod of Bishops.
- ‘Religious traditions and the environment’, *The Work of Justice*, par. 65, Irish Bishops. Lev 25: 23–28; Pss 19, 148.
- See various sections from *Compendium of the Social Doctrine of the Church*.
- Caritas permeates Christian Life, *Deus caritas est*, Part II.



Section G: Celebrating Faith

'In the living tradition of prayer, each Church proposes to her faithful, according to her historic, social and cultural context, a language for prayer: words, melodies, gestures, iconography.' (CCC 2663)

Section G of the programme holds open the possibility of inviting students to a lively encounter with the lived tradition of prayer, ritual and worship in our society. From a Catholic perspective, the Syllabus allows for experiences of prayer and sacrament which are completely integrated into the Catholic tradition. Young Catholics should be given real experience of the variety of prayer, worship and ritual styles available in the Catholic tradition and be helped to understand how the rituals of other religions place their members in relationship with God.

Aims of Curriculum Framework

1. To develop an awareness of how prayer, ritual and worship have always been a part of the human response to life.
2. To explore some of the expressions of prayer, ritual and meditation in a variety of cultures and religious traditions.

Topic 1: The world of ritual

Content

- Human beings as ritual-makers.
- Secular ritual in contemporary culture.
- Religious ritual in contemporary culture.

Outcomes

- Explain the meaning of ritual.
- Name significant times and events in a variety of cultures which generate rituals.
- Name different types of ritual and give an example of each.

Exploration options

- A. Survey the role of ritual in students' own lives.
- B. Research past and present places of ritual (e.g. go on a virtual tour of Newgrange).
- C. Explore different means of expressing ritual – dance, drama, art.

Topic 2: Prayer

Content

- Exploring prayer as a need to communicate with God.
- The nature and function of prayer.

- Examples of prayer from different religious traditions.
- Sacred spaces.

Outcomes

- Discuss why prayer is important in human life.
- Present examples of different kinds of prayer – petition, praise and thanksgiving, penitence, etc.
- Give examples of formal prayer from two religious traditions.
- Give examples of sacred spaces from different religious traditions and say what makes them sacred.

Exploration options

- A. Celtic spirituality – why and how it has relevance today.
- B. Prayer and politics: Can prayer be used as a political tool? Examine 'God-talk' in political discourse.
- C. Allow opportunities for students to participate in/observe different types of prayer.

Topic 3: Meditation and contemplation

Content

- The human need for reflection in a busy world.
- The place of meditation in two major world religions.
- The use of sacred and inspirational texts in meditation.
- The use of mantra in meditation.
- Origins and development of some contemplative traditions.
- Some modern expressions of this tradition.

Outcomes

- Discuss why reflection is important in the life of a young person.
- Explain the term 'meditation' and describe its use in two world religions.
- Experience how sacred texts and mantra are used in meditation.
- Give an account of the origins of one contemplative tradition and its development.
- Discuss how the contemplative tradition continues to have appeal.

Exploration options

- A. Invite different people to talk to the class about ways of reflection/prayer.
- B. Read selections from different authors from the contemplative tradition.
- C. Create a sacred space/quiet space where students can experience stillness and reflection.

Liturgical Aspects for Catholic Students of A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle

- Invite the local priest to meet the class to discuss his work (especially the sacramental dimension).
- The sacraments confer the grace they signify when they are celebrated worthily in faith.
- Visit local monastic sites and places of pilgrimage.
- Attendance at baptisms and funerals.
- Encounters with prayer and liturgy preparation groups.
- When the presence of God has been encountered, the person of faith responds in prayer and worship.
- Prayer is the living relationship between God and humanity; it is a response of faith to the promise of salvation and a response of love to the Son of God.
- The Eucharist contains and expresses all forms of prayer.

Catholic Guideline References for Curriculum Framework

- 'Symbol', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1146–49.
- 'Ritual', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 1153–55.
- 'Sacrament', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 1116.
- 'The need for reflection', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2725, 2786–8.
- 'The human being as pray-er', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2568, 2599.
- 'Contexts for prayer', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2628, 2696.
- 'The praying tradition', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 17, 2625, 2698. Pss 1–150; Mt 6:9–15; Rom 1:10.
- 'Meditation', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2705–2708. Mt 14:23.
- 'The contemplative traditions', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2709–19. Mt 26:36–46.
- 'The Mystic Tradition', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2692–6.



Section H: Story

'Catechesis will always draw its content from the living source of the word of God transmitted in Tradition and the Scriptures.' (CT 27)

Section H looks at the power of story in contemporary culture and Sacred Scripture. This section of the course gives students a rich introduction to the Bible, both as sacred text and as literature. It should help students to appreciate what the Bible is, how it came to be, and why this collection of books is seen as normative for the faith of the Church. It also explores God's unfolding revelation or story in our lives and in the world today.

Aims of Curriculum Framework

1. To understand the power of story to communicate a truth on many levels.
2. To explore the meaning of 'truth' in the Bible or in another sacred text.
3. To explore the transformative power of story past and present.

Topic 1: Story

Content

- Who tells the stories?
- What kinds of story dominate our culture?
- Stories that carry meaning and have transformative power:
 - Examples from contemporary culture.
 - Examples from the sacred texts.

Outcomes

- Give examples of different kinds of story today.
- Describe features of a 'classic'.
- Share a story from your own experience that has meaning.
- Show examples of the power of sacred text as story to motivate and inspire.

Exploration options

- A. Find examples of contemporary story as parable, myth, ideology, satire, etc.
- B. Form a book club in which everyone reads a 'classic' and reports to the class.
- C. Research case studies that illustrate the importance of story in people's lives.

Topic 2: What is truth?

Content

- The meaning of truth in a world of relativism.
- If it's not 'true', does it exist?
- Truth and sacred texts.
- Interpreting sacred texts with adult eyes.

Outcomes

- Be able to define key concepts.
- Understand the difference between a scientific and a religious understanding of 'truth'.
- Be able to give examples from own experience of different kinds of 'truth'.
- Be able to give examples from sacred texts of different kinds of truth.
- Be able to summarise a contemporary approach to reading a sacred text.
- Be able to read a sample of sacred/biblical texts with 'adult eyes'.

Exploration options

- A. Compare scientific notions of truth and concepts of truth found in poetry, music, religion.
- B. Invite students, in groups, to read a selection of sacred texts and uncover the different layers of 'truth'.
- C. Invite a Scripture scholar to talk to the class about modern approaches to reading sacred texts.

Topic 3 – God's unfolding story

Content

- God's story in many forms – the meaning of revelation in religious traditions.
- Where is God speaking today?
- All part of God's story? The student's story.

Outcomes

- Give examples from two major religious traditions of stories of God's revelation.
- Explore different contemporary stories of God's revelation.
- Be able to discuss how a religious interpretation of life can influence a person.

Exploration options

- A. Review the newspapers over a week and identify all the stories that are of religious concern.
- B. Look at different interpretations of God's revelation in contemporary writing, music, drama or film.
- C. Keep a journal to make a note of the places and times where a person would see/experience God's presence in their own life or the life of others.

Scriptural Aspects for Catholic Students of A Curriculum Framework for Senior Cycle

- Invite students to understand Sacred Scripture as central to revelation, that is, to God's self-communication: 'Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit.' (CCC 81)
 - Sacred Scripture is inspired by God. It is the word of God in the words of human beings. God has used the power and abilities of human writers (see DV 11) to speak to generations of humankind.
 - Students must understand that Sacred Scripture is interpreted in the light of the culture and historical context in which it was written. 'In order to discover *the sacred authors' intention*, the reader must take into account the conditions of their time and culture, the literary genres of that time, and the modes of feeling, speaking and narrating then current.' (CCC 110)
 - Recognise story as central to Scripture and to Christian spirituality. Review myth and parable as types of story. Focus on the truths they help us to know.
 - Jesus, God made man, as the high point of God's self-revelation: 'In Jesus, the whole of God's truth has been made manifest' (CCC 2466).
 - Explore the meeting points between the story of Jesus, the stories of the Christian community throughout the centuries, and our stories.
- Offer students the possibility to learn stories, own stories, contemplate stories, pray stories, share stories and celebrate stories of significance within the Christian tradition.
 - Where and how does God speak today? The Church believes that God continues to speak in Scripture, tradition and in the lives of Christians. 'God, in his greatness, uses a pedagogy to reveal himself to the human person: [God] uses human events and words to communicate his plan; [God] does so progressively and in stages, so as to draw even closer to [humankind].' (GDC 38)

Catholic Guideline References for Curriculum Framework

- 'The Bible as living classic', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 101–8.
- 'The Bible as sacred text', *Dei verbum*, par. 11, Vatican II. Heb 1:1–3.
- 'The formation of the Hebrew Scriptures', *Dei verbum*, pars. 14–16, Vatican II.
- 'The gospels', *Dei verbum*, pars. 7–8, 10. Vatican II.
- 'The language of story', *General Directory for Catechesis*, pars. 71, 95.
- 'The language of reflection', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 2585–9. Pss 4:1–8; 8:1–9; 16:1–11; 19:1–6; 38:1–22.
- 'The language of symbol', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 1145.
- 'The Hebrew Scriptures', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 121–3, Ex 20:1–21; I Sam 2:1–10; Is 52:13–53:12.
- 'The New Testament', *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, pars. 124–7. Mk 9:2–13; Lk 6:20–49, Jn 1:1–18.



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