

High Quality Teaching and Learning

Accreditation Requirements

There are a number of administrative priorities that all schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane need to address in the delivery of a high quality Religious Education curriculum across Prep – Year 12. At St Thomas More, all teachers have Accreditation to teach in a Catholic school, and all teachers of Religion have Accreditation to teach Religion in a Catholic School.

Maintenance of Accreditation

As part of their professional learning, all staff are required to maintain their accreditation status by engaging in the required number of hours of professional learning every five years in order to maintain Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School and to teach Religion in this context. Regular opportunities are provided to ensure that all teachers have the resources to maintain these hours for teacher accreditation.

Time Allocation for the Teaching of Religion

Teachers at St Thomas More school follow the mandated requirement of Brisbane Catholic Education, which is that a minimum of 2.5 hours per week of religion teaching to be provided in primary schools within the Archdiocese of Brisbane. This equates to 92 - 100 hours per year, based on 37 - 40 available teaching weeks per year. This time does not include liturgy, prayer, hymn practice and other religious practices. Each teacher is responsible for developing a timetable that is reflective of the high priority religion classes have within the life of our school.

Teachers as Professional Learners

All teaching staff at St Thomas More engage in ongoing professional learning which focuses on enhancing individual and collaborative practices as well as the capacity to improve student learning. At St Thomas More teachers have regular access to relevant and engaging professional development to increase their capacity to teach the Religious Education Curriculum. Many of these opportunities for professional development arise from areas of interest and areas of need identified by the teachers themselves.

Marist based staff professional learning opportunities allow teachers to strengthen their own faith and prayer life, and are a unique feature of our school community. A yearly professional development calendar is designed to ensure that teachers are given appropriate support in the area of Religious Education.

Each staff member engages in the ongoing process of consistency of teacher judgement, a key strategy for implementing the *Religion Curriculum P-12* and monitoring its effect on students' learning.

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

Examples of Professional Learning Include

- Marist association programs provided for staff each year
- Footsteps 1 and 2 programs
- Combined professional learning days with other Sunshine Coast schools with a focus on the teaching of Religious Education
- Scripture twilight sessions both at our school and other schools
- Assessment in Religious Education 3 part workshop
- School led workshops on topics of interest for the teaching of Religious Education – meditative prayer practices, infancy narratives, Easter scripture
- Lenten group studying Scripture
- BCE led professional learning
- Parish led workshops

Validation of School Religious Education Programs

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

Design Principles for the Teaching of Religious Education

The Religious Education Program at St Thomas More has been developed around the four principles of;

Embracing a Catholic Christian worldview through content that unambiguously reflects a Catholic Christian worldview and integrates faith, life and culture in a contemporary world. This enables students to develop clear perspective in their understanding of the Catholic Christian traditions and how these align with their faith story and experience within our school setting.

Modelling a seamless curriculum by applying the same rigour as found in other learning areas. Religious Education is leading the way in the area of Assessment with the development of clear understandings of the importance of providing assessment tasks that are mindful of the learning needs of all students. At St Thomas More, Religious Education is identified as a learning area that requires careful planning, adequate resourcing, and the use of high yield strategies when teaching Religious Education content.

Setting a clear pedagogical direction by using a planning framework that is consistent with the BCE Model of Pedagogy, aligns closely with the Australian Curriculum and uses an inquiry model. Our planning framework is closely aligned with planning format across other curriculum areas in the school, with this framework used across curriculum areas. The use of an inquiry model is used as part of this planning enables learning to be responsive to student need, creative and engaging.

Strengthening alignment between the two dimensions of Religious Education enables learning to be authentic, focussed and responsive to student need. The reciprocal nature of the two dimensions working together ensures that students within our community have opportunities to not only learn Religion content, but also have the opportunity to learn to be Religious in a particular way.

Learning and Teaching in the Religion Classroom

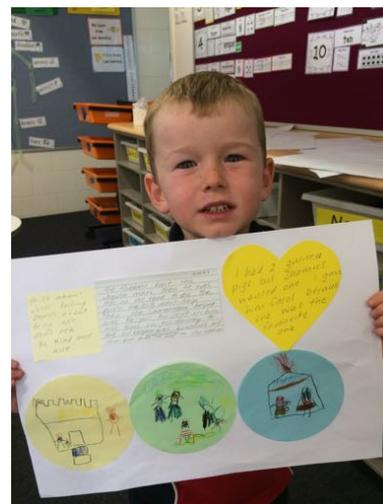
All students are entitled to rigorous, relevant and engaging learning programs in Religious Education that address their individual learning needs. Within the organisation of the Religious Education Curriculum there is the flexibility to cater for the diverse learning needs of all students within the school environment. Learning and teaching in Religious Education at St Thomas More is designed using the following considerations.

Prep – Year 2

Students in the early years of schooling have a natural curiosity about their world and have a strong desire to make sense of it. New learning in Religious Education can be constructed and reviewed by providing opportunities for interactions with others, experimentation, explicit teaching and practice and play within the learning environment.

- Use of simple language with accurate religious terminology
- Use of the senses to explore and demonstrate learning
- Learning experiences and opportunities that are open, flexible and engaging
- Opportunities for exploration, creativity and wondering
- Use of play to explore and develop religious knowledge and understanding
- Exploring Scripture in creative ways – for example, Godly Play
- Integration of the arts and music in Religious Education
- Begin with ‘what they already know’
- Use of non-presumptive language
- Development of a sense of reverence, quiet, stillness and prayer

The Religious Education Curriculum enables students in Prep – Year 2 to learn about Jesus’ life as a Jew, his family and friends, his teachings and actions. During the early years of school, students learn about God’s loving relationship with people and of all creation. They also learn about the ways in which communities of believers nurture their loving relationship with God, others and all of creation.



Year 3 -6

Students in Years 3-6 begin the process of understanding and appreciating different points of view and look for and value learning they see as relevant, consistent with their goals and purposeful. Students also draw on their growing experience of family, school and the wider community in their pursuit of learning more about their world.

- Use of social media and digital tools for self-expression
- Opportunities for reflection and prayer
- Living out faith experiences through social justice and action
- Deepening their knowledge of scripture using the Three Worlds of the Text
- Use of meta-cognitive processes to allow students to explain their thinking
- Connecting to real-world experiences



The Religious Education Curriculum enables students within Years 3-6 to engage in experiences of learning about different communities and the significance of the way that faith has been lived out and celebrated in these communities over time. Students have opportunities to become engaged with sacred texts and begin to understand how the writers shaped these texts for a particular purpose. They also learn about God as Trinity and the significance of Jesus' law of love.

