



*Our Lady's College
Religious Education Program
Approved - 2015*

Our School and Community

Demographics

Our Lady's College was opened in 1964 by the Sisters of Saint Joseph, with students in Years 8 and 9. In 1976 the first lay principal was appointed and the College became part of the Brisbane Catholic Education system. In 2015 Year 7 students joined the community. The College affirms the Josephite tradition through integration and promotion of the core values of service, compassion, justice and integrity within all aspects of College life.

Every effort is made at Our Lady's to ensure that all who seek to share and celebrate our Catholic Christian heritage (parents, students, staff) feel welcome and respected in their own faith journeys. This occurs through both participation in our religion classes and celebrations, and in opportunities to expand their knowledge of and commitment to their own faith traditions.

Teachers and those responsible for leadership in Religious Education in the College constantly seek to incorporate flexibility in Religious Education classes to ensure that an inclusive and ecumenical spirit pervades all Religious education and prayer celebrations.

At each year level, teachers engage in collaborative planning to develop a year level plan that responds to the diverse needs of all students. Religious Education staff were involved in the creation of context statements for each year level that defined the types of students for that particular year level, focusing on their needs and prior learning. These were written before the units were formalized and the learning experiences acknowledge these beliefs about learners.

To assist in the implementation of the RE program a key teacher is appointed for each year level to oversee the organization and coordinate staff. The key teacher is usually the most experienced and becomes a mentor to those new to the year level. These meetings are informal but very regular as there are between two and three staff for each year level making it easy to collaborate with one another. The shared staff room also allows for ease of communication and the APRE is available to assist with planning, resourcing and assessment. Consultation between the APRE and key teachers allows for easier discussion and finalization of assessment dates for the assessment calendar, refinement of assessment tasks, modifications within units and nominations for awards.

Vision for Religious Education

Our Lady's College shares and promotes the Vision for Religious Education articulated by Brisbane Catholic Education and the wider church. This vision includes the two dimensions of formation – namely of students' religious literacy and their personal faith:

Our Lady's College aspires to educate and form students who are challenged to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and who are literate in the Catholic and broader Christian tradition so that they might participate critically and authentically in faith contexts and wider society.

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

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

The Vision for Religious Education challenges students to be a religious voice in the world. The Vision gives greater prominence and a renewed orientation to the critical interpretation and evaluation of culture. Through vibrant and engaging Religious education, students become active constructors of culture rather than passive consumers. Religious Education at Our Lady's seeks to develop the religious literacy of students in light of the Catholic Christian tradition so that they might participate critically and authentically in contemporary culture.

At this College, religious literacy includes ways of talking, acting, creating, communicating, critiquing, evaluating, participating, ritualizing, theologizing, worshipping, reading, reflecting, and writing with others in a variety of religious and secular contexts. Examination of the sample units of work attached, for example, will reveal how, in all units of work teachers and students work to integrate the two dimensions of Religious Education (the classroom teaching and learning of Religion and the Religious life of the school), so that religious literacy and faith formation can complement each other as students seek to find meaning in their place and time. The integration of both dimensions in the daily life of the school includes prayer in every classroom to start the day and the timetabling of the mandatory hours of classroom based engagement with the religion curriculum at the College.

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

The College Mission Statement clearly captures both the Vision and the Learning Framework and enunciate the core Josephite values of the College.

Our Beliefs about learners and learning in the Religion Classroom

At the foundation of the shared work of our teachers at Our Lady's, are the beliefs they possess about the learners they serve. The BCE Learning and Teaching Framework (2012) explicitly articulates the beliefs and the responses that flow from these beliefs within schools in the Archdiocese.

- Every learner is created in the image and likeness of God, and, inspired by the Spirit, responds with passion and creativity to life.
- Every learner seeks to find meaning in life and learning and, in the Catholic Christian Tradition, we find meaning in the person and teachings of Jesus to grow as pilgrim people.
- Every learner is a lifelong learner, with a desire to search for truth and do what is right; accountable for choices and responsible for actions.

- Every learner is in some respect, like all others, like some others, like no other and we respond creatively, flexibly and with a futures orientation to ensure dignity and justice for all.
- Every learner can achieve success in life and learning where diversity is valued and shared wisdom contributes to decision-making that enriches and enlivens our world.
- Every learner brings to the learning experience their own richly diverse life journey to contribute to a community in communion, empowered by the Spirit to be at the service of others.
- At a class and individual student level the interests, religious backgrounds and learning needs of students inform the development of work units. Data retrieved from the BI tool, NAPLAN results, Learning Enrichment information and other sources are used to inform planning decisions in the classroom and teachers interpret the curriculum flexibly to meet the individual learning needs of students.

Collaborative Planning

Our Lady's College has up to four teachers of Religious Education at each year level. Units of work have been written by the APRE and School Implementation Team for Years 7-10. These units are updated and adjusted at RE meetings as they are experienced. Feedback from staff and students informs these adjustments. Teachers at each year level under the direction of a key teacher organize the content into weekly outlines. Assessment tasks are regularly reviewed by the staff and key teacher, usually in conjunction with the APRE. Resources for the units are created by the teachers and shared across classes via LIFE and Mysite. Team teaching is a regular feature within the Religious Education Department allowing staff to support each other in a collaborative and professional manner.

Communication to Parents/Wider Community

At Our Lady's College, every effort is made to ensure parents are informed and engaged in the religious education of students. A report by each Key Learning Area appears at least once a year in the College newsletter, updating parents on developments and activities within that subject. The APRE has a section in each newsletter to educate parents about the curriculum developments and inform parents about activities connected with the Religious Life of the School. As well the annual College magazine features a section on Religious Education that informs parents of the program, approaches and experiences within the classroom teaching of Religious Education.

CURRICULUM STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

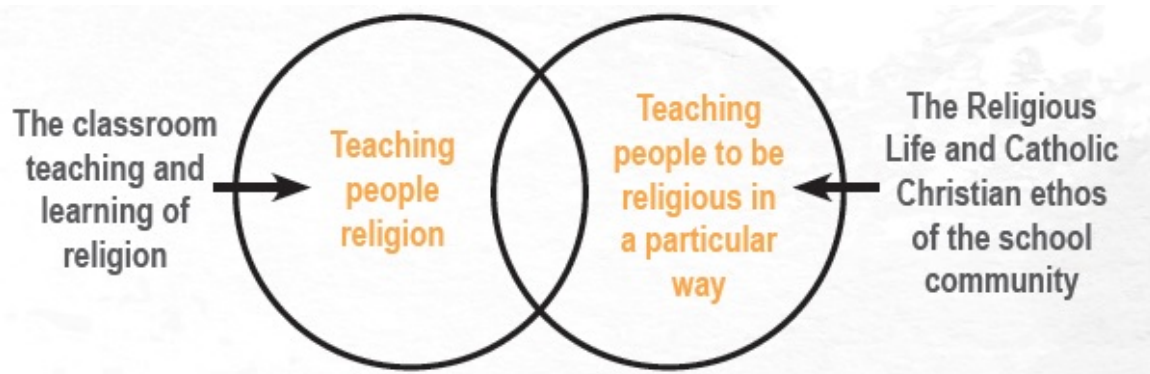
A Catholic view of Learning

At Our Lady's, a Catholic view about Learning and Teaching is reflected in both dimensions of Religious Education, namely the classroom teaching and learning of Religion and the Religious life of the school. Classroom lessons specifically focus on teaching people about religion however, the Religious Life of the College is integrated within lessons and within College life as a whole. The philosophy of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop "We must teach more by example than by word" reflects College beliefs about a Catholic view of learning.

Our Model for Religious Education

At Our Lady's College, as in all schools and colleges of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, teaching people religion and teaching people to be religious draw upon the Catholic Christian tradition in ways that are mindful of local contexts and the ecumenical and multi-faith realities of contemporary culture.

Since 2008, the distinct and complementary nature of both dimensions of Religious Education has been conceptualized in the following Model for Religious Education.



This school community seeks to understand and utilize the distinctiveness and complementarity of these two dimensions of Religious Education in the holistic education and formation of our students. Our school programs, activities and experiences for the classroom learning and teaching of religion and the religious life of the school are responsive to religious diversity, while being faithful to the Catholic Christian identity of the school. This is recognised in the diversity of student faiths in the Religious Education classroom. These faiths are drawn upon at appropriate times to help students to become familiar and tolerant of the varying faiths that make up our society. In addition to this, various units specifically address the beliefs, rituals and values of numerous world religions.

The Religion Curriculum is organized into two main sections being Years 7-10 and Senior options. In Years 7 -10 students study term based units with an integration of strands across Sacred Texts, Beliefs, Church and Christian Life. In Year 11 and 12 students choose from either Religion and Ethics (an approved SAS subject) or Study of Religion and QCAA guidelines are followed.

Focusing on learners and their learning

While some students at this College come from families strongly connected to their local parish community and are literate in the Catholic Christian tradition, a growing number of our students enter the religion classroom with low levels of religious affiliation and at best a tentative familiarity with public expressions of Catholic life.

Using a reconceptualist approach, our religion teachers acknowledge the reality of students lives, identify learners and levels of thinking and build on the attributes each student brings to the religion classroom. It incorporates a powerful questioning pedagogy, within the context of a community of thinking, that stimulates and supports genuine active and authentic student engagement.

Time Allocation and Effective Timetabling of Religious Education at Our Lady's

Religious Education is timetabled as a Key Learning Area (KLA) and receives the same importance as other academic subjects with regards to practices, staffing, budgeting and planning. As evident by the timetable the college supports the mandated minimum of 2.5 hours per week of religion teaching from 7-12. This equates to 92-100 hours per year, based on 37-40 available teaching weeks per year. Liturgy, prayer, and other religious practices are not included in this provision.

All units in Years 7 -10 follow a consistent planning template that includes year level description, achievement standard and content descriptions. Referencing and research approaches are fairly standard across the whole Year 7-10 curriculum. Reporting processes are similar for all subjects.

HIGH QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

Accreditation to Teach Religion in a Catholic School

All teachers of religion in Archdiocesan schools are required to be accredited to teach religion. This includes teachers of religion in the senior secondary years engaged in Study of Religion and Religion and Ethics. Our Lady's teachers have Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic School and all teachers of religious education also have either full Accreditation to Teach Religion in a Catholic school or Interim Accreditation. A number of staff complete the REAP program and move onto Graduate courses to enhance their ability to teach RE.

As part of their professional learning all staff are required to maintain their accreditation status by engaging in the required number of hours to maintain Accreditation to Teach and Accreditation to Teach RE. The school provides some opportunities on Professional Learning days each year and teachers are expected to find other opportunities in their own time to complete the requirements. External Professional Development opportunities are promoted and supported within the college.

Powerful Whole School Pedagogies at Our Lady's

As stated previously, Our Lady's supports the BCE goal of Delivering Excellence in Teaching and Learning (DELT) and new curriculum initiatives. Regular whole school professional development on pedagogical practice is given to update and upskill staff on contemporary issues and use of practical digital technologies within Our Lady's. This

occurs on Professional Development days, during Twilights and during staff meetings. Showcasing the work of different departments at the College occurs at Curriculum meetings and Staff meetings in order to promote best practice and innovation. Consistency across the curriculum is promoted through literacy initiatives, research approaches and common referencing systems.

Internal Consistency of Teacher Judgment sessions are held within year level groups on a regular basis and team teaching features prominently at Our Lady's. Staff work together with classes to ensure students in different classes are taught and assessed consistently. As well, the College is involved in CTJ sessions with other Colleges in October.

Effective Assessment

At Our Lady's assessing student learning is an integral part of the school classroom. It improves learning and informs teaching. It is the process through which teachers identify, gather and interpret information about student achievement and learning in order to improve, enhance and plan for further learning.

At Our Lady's, it is believed that evidence of achievement should reflect the knowledge, deep understanding and skills described in the relevant achievement standards reflected in the success criteria.

Tools for Assessment

Teachers at Our Lady's are encouraged to use a range and balance of assessment tools allowing teachers to cater for all learners and learning situations, to measure the impact of their teaching and plan for further learning and teaching. Assessment revolves around three core practices, namely teacher observation, student teacher consultation and focused analysis.

Examples of assessment tools used at Our Lady's:

- Exams - Short response, Response to Stimulus, Extended Essay writing, multiple choice
- Research Reports or Research Assignments
- Multimodal presentations
- Oral presentations
- Individual and group tasks
- Folios and Journals
- Graphic organisers e.g. Coggles
- Creative presentations e.g. Calendar, prayer mats
- Blogs and Forums

Monitoring and Evaluating in Religious Education

Religious Education is not taught in isolation; it is a curriculum area similar to all other curriculum areas in the school. It is taught, assessed, reported and evaluated in the same way as all other subject areas. There are College processes for monitoring and evaluating student achievement and development for the whole school, year level, class and individual planning.

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