St Francis Xavier, Goodna
Religious Education Program

Religious Education Curriculum and Religious Life of the School

2015

‘Be great in little things.’

(St Francis Xavier)
The **School Religious Education Program** documents how the school provides the entitlement of each student to knowledge, understanding and skills in Religious Education that provide a foundation for successful and lifelong learning consistent with the Vision for Religious Education:

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

The starting place and primary reference point for the design and development of the school’s Religious Education Program is the approved curriculum: *Religious Education Archdiocese of Brisbane* (2013).

There are four principal audiences for a School Religious Education Program: teaching staff; parents, students and the authority delegated by the Archbishop for the supervision of Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane (BCEO).

"Be great in little things."

St Francis Xavier
Knowing how to let children grow and go is like flying a kite. Pope Francis tells a story of flying kites in his neighbourhood when he was a child.

"There'd come the moment when the kite would begin making the 'figure 8' and begin falling. In order to keep that from happening, you mustn't pull the string. The kids who knew more than us would scream, 'Give it some slack, it's wobbling!'

Flying a kite resembles the approach you need to take regarding a young persons' growth: sometimes you need to give them some slack because they are 'wavering.' In other words, it is necessary to give them time. We have to be able to set limits at the right moment, but other times we need to know how to look the other way and be like to father of the parable, the Prodigal Son, who lets his son move out and squander his fortune so that he learns from experience."

Mark Coleridge - Archbishop of Brisbane

"An inclusive, excellent Religious Education is the right of every student entrusted to our care. Religious Education in this Archdiocese is understood to comprise two distinct yet complementary processes, teaching students religion and teaching students to be religious in a particular way of the Catholic Church. My hope is that students will, through this curriculum, understand the Catholic Faith more deeply but most importantly enter into a profound personal encounter with Christ, crucified and risen, for that is the heart of Christianity.

This project is the beginning of a new era in the way we conceptualise and teach Religious Education. To enter new territory will require imagination, courage and, above all, faith. My prayers are with all of you as we set out on a great adventure of opening the infinite treasures of Jesus Christ to the young people whom we are called to serve."

Pam Betts - Executive Director
Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane

Since 2010 we have been working with schools to explore how we might reconceptualise our Religious Education curriculum to better respond to changing demographics. The Religious Education Curriculum brings into closer alignment the Religion Curriculum P-12 and the Religious Life of the School P-12.

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

This curriculum is one that I hope will engage, inspire and challenge the students in our schools.
St Francis Xavier School History
(Taken from A brief history of Goodna’s Catholic School, by John Browning, 2010)

Before Time

The broad river snaked its way through the bush as always since the Dreamtime, nourishing people and animals who came to its banks. The rhythm of life and the movement of people accompanied the unfolding pattern of the seasons. Women and children spent their days gathering plants and small creatures while the men hunted larger animals, birds and fish.

The dreaming stories were celebrated in dance, song, art and word in the camp along the creek where neighbouring clans gathered and the Yaggera people met with the Turrbal in corroboree. Tools and blades were fashioned from stone and traded. The males of many clans gathered at the Bora Ring to teach the boys how to become warriors, and the elders guided them through the secret steps to manhood. Ceremonies marked the passage from child to adult, and the mysteries of initiation passed down from the ancestors were shared.

At St Francis Xavier, as Indigenous and Non-Indigenous people together we have a sense of the importance of the country upon which we are standing, where learning and ceremony has taken place over many thousands of years. We sense the land beneath our feet and acknowledge to whom it belongs - and pay our respects to their elders and all elders, past, present and future and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. For we too are one in land, one in spirit, one in faith united in God’s love.

Meeting Place by Niketa Law (Sherbourg)

This mural reflects the importance of the schools meeting place.

The large circle in the middle is to show that this our special place within the school. The black symbol is a Traditional Aboriginal Art symbol used for a meeting place. The curved cross is our school cross use in our logo. The colourful dots on the outside are students who will pass through this special place over time.
School and Parish History

In 1874 Andrew Horan, the Ipswich parish priest, invited Mary MacKillop Sisters of St Joseph to Redbank Plains to revive the Catholic school which had opened in 1868. With only eight children at the school and in 1877 and the sisters barely surviving, Mary MacKillop withdrew the sisters for more pressing duties elsewhere and the school was soon forced to close. The school building became a dwelling and was moved to Goodna in 1916 where it can be seen today across from St Francis Xavier, McAuley Centre. It was refurbished in the 1990s.

Many of the local people in and around Goodna were of Irish Catholic origin. The parish priest from 1875 to 1917 was Andrew Horan. He purchased 2.4 hectares of land at Goodna and engaged the services of an architect. In August 1880, Bishop James Quinn, travelled out to Goodna to lay the foundation stone for the new church. John Larkin, a Goodna resident, expressed the wish that a convent school might soon be provided for the children to attend. The church was opened on May 1 1881. It was dedicated to St Patrick. A school for local children to attend would take longer, and far more pleading from parishioners to the Archbishop, as St Mary’s was already established in Ipswich.

Goodna parish was separated from Ipswich in 1892 and Father Thomas Hayes was appointed Parish Priest. Fortunately, Father Hayes knew that the work of every parish priest was to build a presbytery, convent and school. St Patrick’s convent school opened in 1910, run by the Sisters of Mercy, who travelled by train from Ipswich. The opening of the school led to growth of the parish, so the church was extended in 1915.

In 1924 Father Thomas Keating became Parish Priest. He changed the name of the church and parish to St Francis Xavier; however the school continued to be known as St Patrick’s. Between 1933 and 1936 the school was extended. It remained relatively small, four classes, with an enrolment of 100 not being reached until the early 1950s. During the 1960s, numbers rose to 200, with many children from migrant backgrounds. As a result the school developed a reputation for providing excellent education for students from a diversity of ethnic and socio-economic backgrounds. An extension was built at this time, providing two additional rooms.

The name of the school was changed to St Francis Xavier in 1970. An enrolment of just over 200 in 1970 rose to more than 500 in 1980. Father Charles Tomasi, Parish Priest from 1972, was behind the decision to extend the school, moving it closer to the church. This building was named after him, with a sign today stating ‘nearness to God’. The school was extended steadily throughout the 1970s.
The first lay Principal was Jim Toohey, who started in 1979. Sisters of Mercy still served at the school, and lived in the convent until the end of 1985. During the life of the school many physical changes have taken place with new buildings and facilities being added to meet the changing needs of students. The original building was replaced in 1987. In 1988 six new classrooms and an undercover area were built and blessed.

A preschool was opened in 2002. An extension to this building was completed in 2006. Preparatory Year commenced in 2007. In 2009 the Clarke Wing was completed which included Administration offices and an additional four classrooms. The Illidge Wing was completed in 2010 which now houses our year one classes and a prep class. Under the 2009 Building Educational Revolution Project, McAuley Centre and tuckshop facilities were completed in 2011.

During term 2 and term 3, the Mercy Resource Centre will be fully refurbished, creating a collaborative place to teach and learn, in a more contemporary way.

The school has continued with its proud tradition of providing quality education to children in the parish from diverse cultural and socio-economic backgrounds. The school has an enrolment of 510 children. The traditions, hopes and dreams of the original Catholics of the Goodna district inspire the present day school community to continue the faith education of the children in this area.

"It is Jesus Christ you love and serve with your whole heart."

Catherine McAuley

Harmony Day
Vision Statement

All children will realise their full potential, in an atmosphere which reflects Gospel values.

Mission Statement

We will achieve our vision by:

- nurturing an environment in which all people are accepted, valued and supported.
- encouraging in students a sense of dignity, courtesy, compassion and self-discipline.
- providing a distinctive catholic education with a relevant and inclusive approach to religious education and the religious life of the school.
- educating students to be successful, creative, confident, and empowered to enrich our world.
- respecting and celebrating the diversity of our community where all cultures are appreciated.
Religious Education Curriculum

Administrative Priorities

- A minimum of 2.5 hours per week of religion teaching is required.
- Personal development education, Mass, prayer celebrations, prayer, hymn practice and other religious practices are not included in this provision.
- Effective timetabling of Religious Education is given a high priority. By week 3 of each term, timetables must be emailed to the Leadership Team for accountability purposes.

Teachers are provided with 2 days planning each year, with an extra day for Religious Education. Teachers also meet in teaching teams, weekly or fortnightly, and when planning for non-contact time we place staff from the same year level off at the same time. Planning has an agenda, which begins with prayer. The importance of planning from the curriculum and being aware of general capabilities and cross curriculum priorities are explicitly stated by APA and APRE. Our ST-I, ESL teachers and Indigenous teacher are available for planning, should their expertise be needed when catering to the diverse needs of students.
- We use the Religious Education Curriculum as a bases for planning, highlighting Line of Sight documents, so when evaluating we can see ‘the gaps’ and make adjustments for these in the future.
- All planning must be saved on the school portal. The pathway is Planning -> Planning 2014 -> Year level planning -> eg year 1 -> Religious Education -> Term 1, 2, 3 or 4. Planning, including success criteria, must be uploaded each term by week 3.

- All teachers of religion are required to be accredited to teach religion and to maintain that accreditation over a 5 year cycle. Although the school does endeavour to provide PD to cover required hours, it is individual teacher responsibility to track and log their professional development.
- Teachers engage in ongoing professional learning focused on enhancing individual and collaborative practices as well as the capacity to improve students learning. Professional Learning occurs within the Religious Education Curriculum and Religious Life of the School.

- Our School Religious Education Program must be validated. A formal process is followed by all Brisbane Catholic Education Schools. St Francis Xavier went through the process in October 2014, successfully gaining full accreditation.
At St Francis Xavier we strive to understand and utilise the distinctiveness and complementarity of these two dimensions of Religious Education in the education and the formation of students. Staff plan activities and experiences for the classroom learning and teaching of religion and the religious life of the school that are responsive to religious diversity, while being faithful to the Catholic Christian identity of the school.

Each person is created in the image and likeness of

St Francis Xavier, Goodna
Religious Education Evaluation and Assessment Guidelines

Teaching and Learning Opportunities

Teachers of Religious Education are provided with a wide range of resources and strategies for their classes. They are also encouraged to adjust and modify unit activities to suit their preferred teaching style and to cater to student interest. The students are encouraged to be creative, original and adaptive. The lessons provided allow for the wide variety of learning styles and give students numerous opportunities to fulfil success criteria.

Assessment

Assessment in Religious Education is varied. Over the course of the year students are able to express their learning by oral reports, written samples, multi-media presentations, quizzes, 3D creations or tests.

Classes across year levels should be assessed using common assessment items so that consistency in teacher judgement is more streamlined. Students will be assessed and moderated at the end of each term.

Gathering Evidence

The evidence gathered must be relevant to specific learning and drawn from the planned activities in which students have engaged. Evidence should be gathered and recorded for all students across a range of contexts. Judgements about students’ progress should be based on evidence collected in a focussed and systematic way.

The choice of assessment techniques and sources used to gather evidence about students’ demonstrations of learning outcomes will be influenced by the purposes for which evidence is to be gathered.

A variety of assessment techniques and sources should be used to accommodate different learning styles and learning that has taken place in different contexts. Students may demonstrate learning outcomes in different ways.
Year Level Overviews: Evaluation and Assessment

Evaluation and Assessment: Prep – Year 6

Formal assessment of students’ knowledge, understanding of the content taught and evaluation of teaching styles and learning activities is ongoing over each term. Incidental student monitoring occurs continuously. If it is found that some aspects of the content have not been understood by a significant number of children in the class modifications to the content or to the teaching styles and learning activities are implemented with the aim of achieving the desired outcomes.

Assessment techniques and instruments

These include: observation, anecdotal records, criteria-based checklists based on the Religious Education Curriculum, focussed analysis, written reports, projects, oral presentations, role-play and drama presentations, cloze exercises, matching exercises, miscue analysis and multiple choice activities.

Reporting methods

Teachers report periodically in formal and informal ways on their assessment of students’ performance. We have a report card each semester and parent teacher interviews twice each year, with one being formal and one informal.

Why Evaluate?

Evaluation of our Religious Education program enables teachers, School Implementation Team and administrators to review the degree to which the program has met the learning needs of the students and the requirements of the Curriculum.

Celebration of Learning

Celebrations of Learning are held at the end of each term. Celebrations of Learning are a key aspect of the way we report to parents about student achievement in Religious Education. It is recommended that during the Celebration of Learning at least 5 -10 minutes is dedicated to presenting what the students have learnt in Religious Education. At the beginning of the Celebration of Learning, the classroom teacher, students and parents may demonstrate and participate in a prayer celebration and conclude with the students presenting a showcase of their work.
St Francis Xavier

Religious Education Assessment Task

Year 2, 2014

Term 3, Week 10

Student Name

Due Date

Unit Title The Life and Teachings of Jesus

Strand Sacred Texts

Achievement Standard

By the end of Year 2, students analyse some teachings and actions of Jesus depicted in New Testament texts that reveal aspects of God’s nature. They discuss their ideas about God’s relationship with the Jewish people as described in some Old Testament stories. Students pose questions about the life and times of Jesus and use sources provided to answer these questions. They make connections between Jesus’ teachings and actions and the way members of the Church community live today.

Students recognise the sacredness of God and all creation, especially human life. They identify ways in which human beings respond to the call to be co-creators and stewards of God’s creation. Drawing on their own experiences, they suggest ways to pursue peace and justice out of respect for human life and all creation. They recognise choices that harm an individual and their loving relationships with God, with others and with all creation. They explain ways in which believers seek to heal these relationships through reconciliation and how they celebrate reconciliation in the Sacrament of Penance. They recognise that prayer and the wisdom of the saints help the believer to nurture their relationship with God, with others and with all creation. They participate with respect in a variety of personal and communal prayer experiences, including meditative prayer and prayers for forgiveness.

Assessment Task

- Students choose one of the three scripture stories explored in class (Jesus heals a blind man, Jesus walks on water or Jesus heals a crippled woman) and create a picture book to retell the scripture story.
- The students share their book with the class and orally answer questions about the significant elements of their scripture story and how the meaning has changed throughout time.

Questions:
1. How was the life of Jesus different from our current lives? Has the meaning of your chosen scripture story changed?
2. Why is your scripture story still significant today?
3. What moral message can Catholic’s learn from your chosen scripture story?
## St Francis Xavier
### Marking Criteria

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<tr>
<th>Student Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Unit Title</td>
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<td>Year Level</td>
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**Inquiry Question**

How do the stories about Jesus give meaning to our community today?

How was the life of Jesus different to our own?

**Learning Intention**

**Success Criteria**

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<th>Expected</th>
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<tr>
<td>I have retold my chosen scripture story, as a picture book, using the correct detail and appropriate illustrations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have explained how the life of Jesus was different from our own and what this means for understanding my chosen scripture story.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have explained the significance of my scripture story for Catholics today.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I have explained the moral message Catholics can learn from my chosen scripture story.</td>
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**Teacher Feedback:**

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________

**Teacher Signature**

**Parent Signature**
Religious Life of the School

The Religious Life of the School is focused on the second dimension of Religious Education, commonly referred to as “teaching people to be religious in a particular way” (Moran, 1991). It comprises four interrelated components: Religious Identity and Culture; Evangelisation and Faith Formation; Prayer and Worship; and Social Action and Justice. Each of these components, while mutually reinforcing, provides a significant focus on a distinctive aspect of the religious life of the school.

An example of what we do at St Francis Xavier is below.
Religious Identity and Culture

At St Francis Xavier we introduce students to a view of the world founded on scripture. Jesus Christ is and should be central to understanding Christianity. This worldview is expressed through its beliefs, values and practices, quality relationships, the aesthetic, the social and physical environment. At St Francis Xavier we are building on our ethos and charism. They express the assumptions, beliefs and values we share.

Ethos refers to gospel values and Church traditions embedded in the everyday life of the school. We recognise these values in our Christian Behaviour Focus. Teachers teach students about a particular value which we encourage them to demonstrate on a daily basis. Students are given awards on assembly for demonstrating the current Christian Behaviour Focus.

Charism refers to spiritual gifts used for the service of the whole community. At St Francis Xavier we are developing our Mercy charism. Students learn about Catherine McAuley and the service of the Mercy sisters. The central influence on our Mercy charism is the person of Jesus.

A goal moving forward is to increase our ‘sense of the sacred.’ We are looking to improve our physical environment to contribute to the religious identity and culture of our school community. One example of this is the construction of a labyrinth.

Patrons

During 2014, we entered into discussion with parishioners to begin to gather information on our patrons Sr Dorothy Clarke, Fr Hayes, Fr Ron Illidge and Fr Tomasi.

This information will be added to our program, attached to our Belonging unit and shared with the community when we compile it.

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop (1842 – 1909)
Patron Saint of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.

Feast Day 8 August
Celebrated at school/parish Mass.

Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop was an Australian Roman Catholic nun who, together with Father Julian Tenison Woods, founded the Sisters of St Joseph of the Sacred Heart. She is the foundress of a number of schools and welfare institutions throughout Australasia with an emphasis on education for the poor, particularly in country areas. She was canonized on 17 October 2010 during a public ceremony in St Peter’s Square at the Vatican
Venerable Catherine McAuley (1778-1841)
Founder of the Mercy Sisters

Feast Day 11 November
Celebrated at school/parish Mass.

Venerable Catherine McAuley was an Irish nun who entered the formation program of the Presentation Sisters to formally prepare for life as a religious woman. She founded the Sisters of Mercy in 1831. In 1978, she was beatified as the Servant of God Catherine McAuley. In 1990, upon recognition of her heroic virtues, Pope John Paul II declared her Venerable. This places her on the path towards possible sainthood.

Sisters of Mercy Charism

St Francis Xavier School community finds its roots in the tradition of the Sisters of Mercy. The Mercy Sisters worked in the Ipswich Catholic community in 1914 and then founded St Francis Xavier School.

The spirit of the Mercy Sisters was articulated by their founder Catherine McAuley who stressed religious practices focused on “serving Christ in the poor, sick and uneducated.” Catherine saw works of mercy as a direct means of encountering and coming into union with God. This means that when we live in ongoing conversation with Christ, we allow His Spirit to guide our lives. As a Catholic School we recognise him in the poor, the oppressed and the downtrodden.

Catherine McAuley and the Mercy sisters have a strong link to the charism of Service and Mercy. It was modelled by Catherine McAuley and is embodied by the continuing work of the Mercy Sisters.

We honour our Mercy tradition in the Religious Life of our School by praying the Children’s Suscipe each morning. We recognise Catherine McAuley and the Sisters of Mercy’s contributions to our school and are fortunate to have a Sister of Mercy on staff as our Pastoral Worker.
Prayer of Catherine McAuley - Suscipe

My God
I am yours
For time and eternity
Teach me to cast myself entirely
Into the arms of
Your loving providence
With the most lively, unlimited
Confidence in your
Compassionate, tender pity.
Grant me,
O most merciful redeemer
That whatever you ordain or permit
May be acceptable to me.
Take from my heart
All painful anxiety;
Suffer nothing to sadden me but sin,
Nothing to delight me
But the hope of coming
To the possession of you
My God and my all,
In your everlasting kingdom.
Amen.

The History of the Suscipe
Suscipe is the Latin word for ‘receive.’ It also has a special significance for those of the Roman Catholic faith, as the name of a prayer which begins with this word in the Latin mass. See below for original version. Catherine McAuley was said to have prayed this prayer every night. The Mercy sisters found this prayer in her prayer book after she died. Its original source is unknown.
Evangelisation and Faith Formation

Evangelisation means bringing the Good News to all. The church’s understanding of evangelisation includes both proclamation of the gospel message to all people and its challenge to each individual to inner transformation in response to the gospel proclaimed. At St Francis Xavier we encourage our community to express in a simple way who they are and what they do because of their relationship with Jesus Christ. Teachers use scripture with students to teach about Jesus’ story and discuss ways they can live their lives in a good way in today’s world. We encourage out staff and students to recognise the special (sacramentality) of everyday moments in the school day and in their lives outside of school.

Spiritual formation is important for all Christians. During Mercy Matters on a Thursday afternoon, each class participates in a meditation practice. Students from Prep to year 7 are encouraged to recognise the presence of God in daily life. We assist students to live in healthy relationships and be sensitive to the needs and gifts of others.

Staff require ongoing support and formation in understanding prayer and worship in the Catholic and broader Christian tradition, and in developing the knowledge and skills needed to promote experiences of prayer and worship with students. To support staff development our school is a part of the Brisbane Catholic Education Catching Fire Program. Catching Fire is a metaphor for our fundamental evangelising purpose: to help the world be ignited by the transforming reality of God’s love and Jesus’ vision. Each program not only supports staff personal development of spirituality but also gives them knowledge and skills to enhance the Religious Life of St Francis Xavier.

Staff Prayer

Staff prayer is once a week after our staff meeting. Staff are invited to volunteer to facilitate staff prayer and a roster is published.

Prayer is offered on an afternoon twice per term to all staff who wish to attend. This is facilitated by the Catching fire team.
Prayer and Worship

Prayer is the raising of one’s mind and heart to God or the requesting of good things from God. Worship is described as the adoration of God that may be expressed through praise, thanksgiving, self-offering, sorrow and petition. Prayer and worship are integral to the life of all Catholic schools and have the potential to nourish the spiritual growth of all members of the school community. Prayer and worship create a sense of purpose and identity within the school community by drawing its members into an understanding of their shared humanity, linking them with the Church throughout the world and sending them out to share the good news. There are three elements of prayer and worship: Christian prayer; celebrating liturgy and sacraments; and ritualising everyday life.

Here at St Francis Xavier we have a prayer policy. This can be accessed on our school webpage http://www.stfrancisxavier.qld.edu.au/Pages/default.aspx

Children’s Suscipe – morning prayer

School prayer – afternoon prayer

Lord of life,

Bless and guide everyone in St Francis Xavier School community.

Help us to use and develop the talents we have been given,

And help us to grow together in friendship and trust.

Give us a strong and positive outlook, times of hope, laughter and celebration.

Help us to build a community of faith and a love of learning.

Following in the footsteps of Francis Xavier and Catherine McAuley,

Teach us to care for others, especially the sick and all in need.

We ask this through Christ our Lord.

Amen.
St Francis Xavier School Prayer Policy

Education in a Catholic school seeks transformation of the whole person so that those in the school community are empowered to shape and enrich our world by living the Gospel of Jesus in their everyday lives. At St Francis Xavier, we endeavour to further develop the faith of individuals in ways that are sensitive to their cultural and religious identities. Prayer is an integral part of the life of St Francis Xavier School and takes direction from the Prayer Policy of Brisbane Catholic Education, directives on Prayer in the Religious Education Curriculum and the Catholic Education Council’s Religious Education of School Aged Catholics Policy.

Purpose

This policy is designed to support the Religious Life of the School through Prayer and Worship and is applicable to those involved in prayer experiences within the St Francis Xavier school community.

We offer at least three opportunities for our students to experience prayer throughout the school day. All classrooms have a sacred space to foster the prayer experiences of our students.

Prayer and Worship

Integral to the life of a Catholic school, prayer (fostering a personal and living relationship with God) and worship (adoration of God) have the potential to nourish the spiritual growth of all members of the school community. Prayer and worship help create a sense of purpose and identity within the community. The three elements of prayer and worship encouraged at St Francis Xavier are: Christian prayer, celebrating liturgy and sacraments and ritualising everyday life.

The life of faith is expressed in acts of religion. The teacher will assist students to open their hearts in confidence to Father, Son, and Holy Spirit through personal and liturgical prayer (The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School, n.83)

Christian Prayer – contributes to the faith growth of individuals and the building of a Christian community. St Francis Xavier draws on the richness of the Catholic tradition, the wider Christian tradition, Stewardship and our Mercy tradition to nurture prayer life of the school. Students at St Francis Xavier are invited to regular prayer:

- Daily morning prayer – Children’s Suscipe (Catherine McAuley)
- Daily grace
- Daily afternoon prayer – St Francis Xavier School Prayer
- Weekly Mass (Years 4 to 6 attend Mass with parishioners in the church)
- Weekly Meditation – Meditative prayer is a prayerful quest engaging thought, imagination, emotion and desire. This may include readings, reflection, journaling, silence and stillness.
At St Francis Xavier, students will experience a variety of formal and informal expressions of prayer, appropriate to their age and development. We will teach and learn all prayers as outlined in the prayer scope and sequence from the Religious Education Curriculum.

- Each classroom will establish and maintain a sacred, reflective space. Students will be involved in creating these spaces.

- Each class will participate in meditative prayer once a week.

**Liturgy and Sacraments** – are the formal, public prayer and worship of the church. At St Francis Xavier we familiarise students with words, actions and gestures, symbols and structures. Celebration of liturgy both reflects and influences what it is we proclaim, who we are proclaiming and what we do. At St Francis Xavier we celebrate Mass as a school and parish community on at least eight occasions throughout the year:


**Prayer Celebrations** are also held:

- Belonging (Covenant celebration), Holy Week; ANZAC Day; Stewardship; Farewell.

At St Francis Xavier we prepare our students for conscious and active participation in Prayer liturgy. This includes opportunities for instruction about the nature, purpose and structure of liturgical and other ritual celebrations and of appropriate ways to participate.

**Individual classes are encouraged to plan, prepare and celebrate a class Prayer Celebration once per term.** We acknowledge that careful preparation and planning are essential to a quality prayer experience. Each class will have the opportunity to plan, prepare and facilitate *assembly prayer* at least twice per year.

**Ritualising everyday life** – occurs through rituals combining words, actions and symbols that make meaning of the mystery of life in the light of the gospel. At St Francis Xavier we affirm the sacredness of everyday life by recognising and celebrating God in the created world, in relationships with others and in events and experiences. We celebrate prayer rituals acknowledging rites of passage and moments of grief and loss, joy and celebration.

**Staff Prayer and Spiritual Formation**

Prayer cannot be reduced to the spontaneous outpouring of interior impulse: in order to pray, one must have the will to pray. Nor is it enough to know what the Scriptures reveal about prayer: one must also learn how to pray (Catechism of the Catholic Church, 1994, n.2650).

At St Francis Xavier we acknowledge that staff require ongoing support and formation in understanding prayer and worship, and in developing the knowledge and skills needed to deepen their own spirituality, to promote experiences of prayer and worship with students. All staff are encouraged to enter into prayer on a daily basis with their students.

Staff come together regularly for staff prayer. Staff are encouraged to facilitate this prayer individually or in groups. Extended staff prayer is offered twice per term to which all staff are encouraged to attend.
Creating the Environment for Prayer

A Special Place
- Develop a prayer space in a prominent place in the classroom to provide a focus for prayer and a constant reminder of the presence and closeness of God.

The Prayer Table
- Establish a prayer table within the prayer corner.

The Prayer Cloth
- Use different colour cloths for each of the liturgical seasons.

The Bible
- Elevate the Bible on a book stand

The Candle
- Match the colour of the candle to the liturgical season e.g. Lenten Season = purple candle
- Light the candle as a sign of the on-going presence of Jesus in their midst

The Décor
- Consider keeping some fresh flowers, a plant or some greenery on the table as a gift to God as a reminder of God’s beautiful world and the gift of creation.
- Encourage the children to take responsibility for keeping the prayer table neat and tidy. This helps create a sense of ownership and the action itself becomes a prayer.

Other Artefacts and Symbols
- Some examples are:
  - Sacred images - crucifix, statue, picture or icon of Jesus or Mary
  - A variety of interesting objects, shapes, textures from the bush or beach
  - Meaningful picture, posters or photos
  - Books, poems, prose that would help reflection and prayer

KEEP THE PRAYER TABLE SIMPLE AND EYE-CATCHING.
- AVOID CLUTTER.
Features of Sacred Spaces in Schools and Classrooms

Prepared by Pat Lavercombe, BCEO 2013

“Sacred” Spaces are those places in a school where community members are helped to encounter the Divine, through prayer and contemplation, ritual and celebration, alone or with others, with word, symbol, action, music or stillness.

Sacred Spaces are:

**Permanent and Temporary**
Some spaces are permanent- such as chapels, prayer gardens and places where icons may be present: statues, memorials. Most spaces are temporary- e.g. classroom prayer tables, foyer displays, critical incident withdrawal rooms. Change the elements frequently, or the symbolism becomes “stale” or the space becomes ‘lost’.

**Rich and Restrained**
Symbols, words and actions in sacred spaces are multi-valent: (they represent different meanings for different people); are attractive; engaging, yet restrained. Less may be more.

**Formal and Informal**
Sacred spaces may contain “set” symbols and structures- e.g. Christian symbols such as Cross, Scriptures, Candle, images of Divine; altars, ambos; and “optional” or additional symbols and structural elements which can be added by participants (i.e. “building onto” the space).

**Open and Closed**
The space is three dimensional, where placement of symbols can foster creativity; yet is defined in that it has boundaries, limits. There may be “restricted” zones for various participants or for various times within

St Francis Xavier, Goodna
Purposeful and Inviting

Sacred spaces can be used to respond to a need or circumstance; sacred time or event. They are not meant to be merely a decoration or compulsory inclusion. They are cohesive and appropriate for the context of participants. The space allows for expression without words; and a degree of ownership and self-identification within rituals celebrated therein.

Practical and Balanced

Elements of a sacred space “fit” the space; they should not over power or appear crowded. There is “space” in sacred spaces! Many can be assembled and disassembled with relative ease; are flexible in that they accommodate ritual movement and action if required. Spaces/symbols are simple and complex; themed or focused.

Connected and Charged

Symbols used and the structure of sacred spaces help “make meaning” for participants’ lives or needs. They are intended to provoke a response: awe; wonder, reverence, stillness; transformation; reform; repentance; metanoia: devotion; faith; or to give expression to feelings, responses or personal experience. Creating the space can be as powerful for participants as celebrating in it.

Sacred Spaces:

Where? Classrooms, foyers, library, grounds, staff room, Leadership teams’ offices; a desk, a table, the ground, a quiet place, a special place

When? Every day; special days; beginnings, endings, responding to incidents and events; seasons, good times and bad, times of thanks and need.
The Seasons of the Liturgical Year

Advent (Violet)

The liturgical year begins with Advent which always contains four Sundays. A common devotional for this season of preparation is the Advent Wreath that includes four candles. A new candle is lit on each of the four Sundays of Advent. Christmas decorations which appear in the church during Advent are in preparation for the coming of the Christ child.

The church year actually begins with the First Sunday of Advent. The stole and chasuble of the priest is violet or a shade of purple.

Advent is seen as a time for preparation, anticipation and hope. “Prepare ye, the way of the Lord.” Surprisingly, on the third Sunday of Advent, the church celebrates the half way mark and so suggests pink or rose as the colour of the day. Like children, we get excited when we are half way. Pink symbolizes that joy with a colour that holds onto the purple but promises the white of Christmas!

Christmas (White)

The Christmas season, during which we celebrate the birth of Jesus Christ, includes the Feast of the Holy Family, the Feast of the Mother of God and Epiphany. The Church remains ornamented with Christmas lights and decorations during this season.

The Church chooses white for the Feast of Christmas. White is the colour of purity and new life. White is appropriate for a new born infant.

Ordinary Time (Green)

During the season between Christmas and Lent, the readings focus on Jesus’ early ministry of teaching, healing, and the gathering of disciples. Shrove Tuesday (Pancake Tuesday) celebrations often mark the end of this season. Ordinary Time resumes later in the year.

The word “ordinary” in Ordinary Time comes from the word ordinal. “Counted Time” would be a better translation. The occurrence of Easter determines the length of this counted time. Easter falls on the 1st Sunday after the first full moon after the spring equinox. (when the tilt of the Earth’s axis is inclined neither away from nor towards the Sun, the centre of the Sun being in the same plane as the Earth’s equator.) The timing falls between March 22 and April 25.

The Sundays and weeks of Ordinary Time are days of growth and harvest -- days of hope and time to mature in one’s faith. Green is the colour of on-going life in nature: the renewal of spring grass, flowers and trees. Green signifies hope and growth. The green weeks, 1 to 34, provide time to be refreshed with the Sunday Scriptures. It sequentially, follows the life and works of Jesus in his public ministry. The longest liturgical season is that of the weeks following Easter. The last Sunday of the liturgical year is the celebration of the Feast of Christ the King.
Lent (Violet)
Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent which continues until the Holy Thursday. Lent is a time of penance observed with fasting and abstinence. A common devotion for Lent is praying the Stations of the Cross.

Lent is a 40 day fast and penance period in the Catholic Church. The church is draped in violet. This time is a time of penance and self-denial as well as a time to go the extra mile. It is a time of preparation for and renewal of baptism.

ASH WEDNESDAY (The Beginning of Lent)
The mark of ashes, a symbol of repentance, is given to Christians to indicate the start of the penitential season of Lent. Ashes are etched in the sign of the cross on the foreheads of Catholics around the world on Ash Wednesday, symbolizing the beginning of the 40 days of fasting and penance in preparation for Easter.

Paschal Triduum (Red/Violet/White)
The Paschal Triduum is a separate season during what is often called “Holy Week”. This three-day observance begins on the evening of Holy Thursday with the Mass of the Lord’s Supper and ends on Saturday evening with the Easter Vigil. The ceremonies of this special season celebrate the death and resurrection of Jesus.

Red is usually associated with the Palm Sunday celebrations (the Sunday prior to Easter). Palm Sunday is not strictly part of Holy Week but it is common for teachers and students to celebrate it as if it was. Violet is usually associated with Holy Thursday and Good Friday. The White Vestments are not worn until the Gloria/Alleluia part of the Easter Vigil (Saturday evening).

Easter (White/Gold)
The Easter season is 50 days long, with the Feast of Pentecost, the coming of the Holy Spirit, marking its end. Ascension Thursday occurs 40 days after Easter Sunday, although it may be celebrated on the following Sunday. Readings during the Easter season focus on Jesus’ teaching after the Resurrection.

The festive colours used during the Easter season are white and gold. Easter is the most important season in the Church’s calendar.

Pentecost (Red)
Pentecost’s colour is red. It also becomes the colour for all feasts of Apostles, except John, and for feasts associated with the martyrs of the church.
**Social Action and Justice**

Each human person is made in the image and likeness of God and has an inalienable human dignity and worth. There are ten themes of Social Justice that give expression to the human worth and dignity of each individual made in the image and likeness of God. These are: Respect for the human person; Preferential option for the poor; Political and economic rights; Promotion of the common good; Subsidiarity; Political participation; Economic justice; Stewardship; Global solidarity and Promotion of peace.

A Catholic Christian understanding of justice has emerged from the Biblical tradition. This rich Biblical understanding portrays a just society as one marked by the fullness of love, compassion and peace. Social justice obliges people to be active and productive participants in the life of society and insists that society has a duty to enable them to participate in this way (Economic Justice for All, 1986, n.68-71). Social action brings into sharp focus Jesus’ vision for the coming of the Kingdom of God where sinfulness, brokenness and injustice are transformed and peace and harmony are restored.

Applying social action and justice requires two important dispositions: empathy (the capacity to stand in the shoes of another) and solidarity (the capacity to walk with another). Here at St Francis Xavier we work to build these dispositions in our students through programs for service learning, social justice programs and outreach experiences like Project Compassion and supporting the local SVDP chapter and Rosies.