

St Francis Xavier, Goodna **Religious Education Program**

2018



'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 Brisbane Catholic Education's *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).





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."

Rubin, S. and Ambrogetti, F. (2010)

Pope Francis: Conversations with Jorge Bergoglio. Penguin: New York





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)

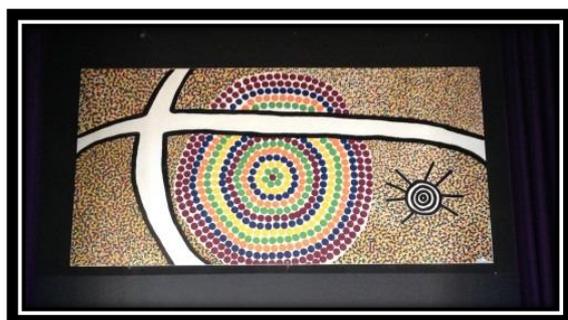
Before Time

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 school's 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 the 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 with 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 require far more pleading from parishioners to the Archbishop, as St Mary's was already established in Ipswich.

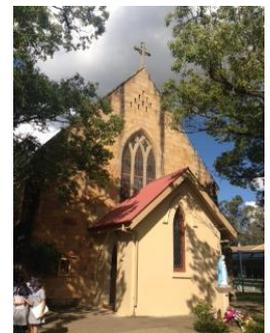


Goodna parish was separated from Ipswich in 1892 and Father Thomas Hayes was appointed Parish Priest.

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, the McAuley Centre and tuckshop facilities were completed in 2011.

In 2015, the Mercy Resource Centre was fully refurbished, creating a collaborative place to teach and learn, in a more contemporary way. An Arts room and Technology room were also built under Year 1, in the Illidge Wing.

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 a current enrolment of 530 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



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.

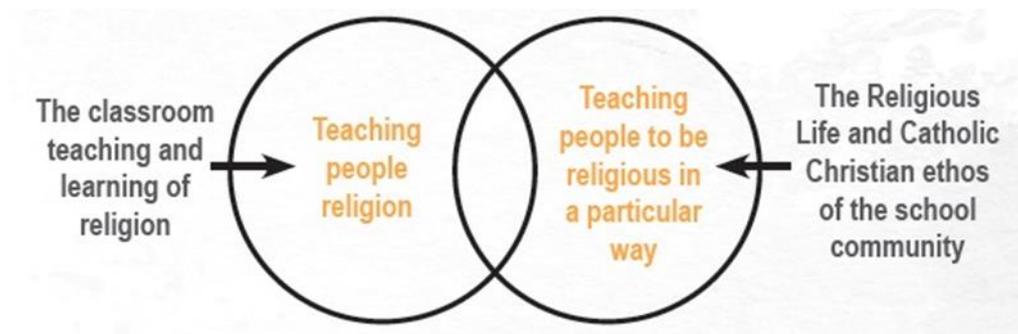
School Logo and Motto



St Francis Xavier's motto, *Kids Who Care* underpins the ethos and values by which the school community endeavours to live and work.

Vision for Religious Education

St Francis Xavier shares and promotes the Vision for Religious Education articulated by Brisbane Catholic education and the wider church. This Vision for Religious Education emphasises two dimensions of Religious Education – religious literacy and faith formation.



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.

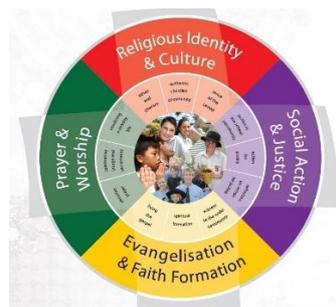
The engagement of both dimensions in the daily life of St Francis Xavier school community includes prayer in every classroom at the beginning of the day and the timetabling of the mandatory hours of Religious Education lessons.

Guidelines for teaching Religious Education

- ✚ A minimum of 2.5 hours per week of Religious Education 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 or week 4 of each term, timetables must be emailed to the Leadership Team for accountability purposes.
- ✚ We use the Religious Education Curriculum as a basis for planning, along with our *line of sight* documents and *year level scope and sequence* documents, to ensure quality of learning and teaching. These documents can be found on the school portal.
- ✚ All units of work are to be written on the Religion template found on the school portal. Our goal is to transfer these by the end of 2017.
- ✚ All teachers of Religion are required to be accredited to teach Religion and to maintain that accreditation over a five-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.

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 instruct students about a value which we encourage them to demonstrate daily. 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 charism from the Sisters of Mercy, which emphasises a Christ-like attitude of compassion and care for all those they serve in the community. We embrace these values and incorporate them in the Religious Life of the School, articulating them in our Christian Behaviours, which for 2017 are; Hospitality, Welcome, Stewardship, Respect, Love, Honesty, Tolerance, Forgiveness, Kindness, Co-operation, Peace and Care. Students learn about Catherine McAuley and the service of the Mercy sisters. The central influence on our Mercy charism is the person of Jesus.

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.

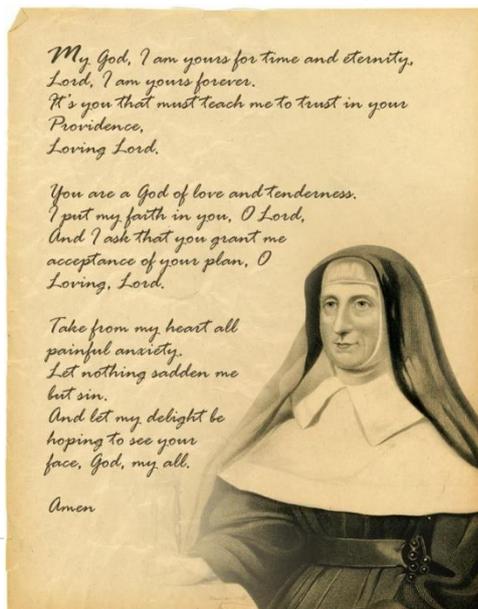
Catherine McAuley and the Mercy sisters have a strong link to the charism of Service and Mercy. It was modelled by Catherine McAuley and is embodied by the continuing work of the Mercy Sisters.

We honour our Mercy tradition in the Religious Life of our School by encouraging teachers to pray the Children's Suscipe each morning with their class. 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. We acknowledge the legacy of the Sisters and recognise the contributions of the Sisters of Mercy to our school by naming our school hall 'McAuley Hall', our resource centre 'Mercy Resource Centre' and by having Catherine McAuley quotes on these buildings.

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.

Patrons

During 2014, we initiated discussion with parishioners to begin to gather information on our patrons Sr Dorothy Clarke, Fr Hayes, Catherine McAuley and Fr Tomasi.

This information will be added to our program, attached to our Belonging unit and shared with the community as it is compiled.

Clarke - House Colour Gold

Sr Dorothy Clarke was a Mercy sister who was very well known in the school community.

Hayes – House Colour Green

McAuley – House Colour Blue

Venerable Catherine McAuley (1778- 1841)

Founder of the Mercy Sisters



Feast Day 11 November

Celebrate Mass on her feast day.

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.

Tomasi – House Colour Red

Father Charles Tomasi's was at Goodna Parish from 1971 to 1975. His family was from Italy. He was known to parishioners as a relaxed person who enjoyed smoking a pipe and having a bet on the horses. His cat and dog joined the congregation for Mass. Fr Tomasi's niece, Liz, taught at St Francis Xavier. When he moved from Goodna to Moorooka, he took Liz with him. Father Tomasi's compassion was very evident when Liz fell ill with cancer and he cared for her.

St Francis Xavier

St Mary of the Cross MacKillop (1842 – 1909)

Patron Saint of the Archdiocese of Brisbane.



Feast Day 8 August

Celebrate Mass during Catholic Education Week.

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 October 17 2010 during a public ceremony in St Peter's Square at the Vatican.

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 everyone 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 our 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 Friday afternoon, each class participates in a meditation practice. Students from Prep to year 6 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.

Spiritual Formation

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> .

Prayer is an integral part of the life of St Francis Xavier School and has the potential to nourish the spiritual growth of students. We offer 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.

Guidelines for scheduled prayer

-  Each teacher will establish and maintain sacred and reflective spaces in the classroom.
-  Each day, opportunities are provided for students to experience a variety of prayer forms in the Christian tradition.
-  Our school day begins with all classes gathering in McAuley Hall
 - Monday – National Anthem
 - Tuesday – School prayer/Core prayers such as Hail Mary and Our Father
 - Wednesday – Christian meditation and mindfulness
 - Thursday – Sacred Singing
 - Friday – School song/Prayer assembly
-  Students in years 3 to 6 attend parish mass once a week.
-  Staff prayer is scheduled for staff meetings.

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. We have a labyrinth, a peace prayer wall, which has the St Francis of Assisi Peace prayer on it and an Indigenous Meeting Place, all completed in 2016. During 2017, plants will be added to the Indigenous Meeting Place and in 2018; we will create ‘thinking spaces’ based on the picture book ‘I Grow in Grandad’s Garden’. Think and Thank Seat (Gratitude), Let it Go Log (Forgiveness), Cross Over Corner (Courage), Dream Table (Generosity). There will be a scripture passage attached to each space.

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).



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. The White Vestments are not worn until the Gloria/Alleluia part of the Easter Vigil (Saturday evening). The colour for Holy Thursday is white, Good Friday is Red and Easter- Gold and white.

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.

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) or prayer chosen by students or teacher
- Daily grace
- Daily afternoon prayer – St Francis Xavier School Prayer or prayer chosen by students or the teacher
- 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:

Opening School Mass, Ash Wednesday Mass, Mothers' Day Mass, St Mary of the Cross MacKillop Mass, Assumption Mass, *All Saints Day Mass*, Mercy Mass, St Francis Xavier Feast Day Mass.

Prayer Celebrations are also held:

Belonging (Covenant celebration), Holy Week; ANZAC Day; Father's Day, Stewardship; Farewell.

At St Francis Xavier, we prepare our students for conscious and active participation in 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.

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.

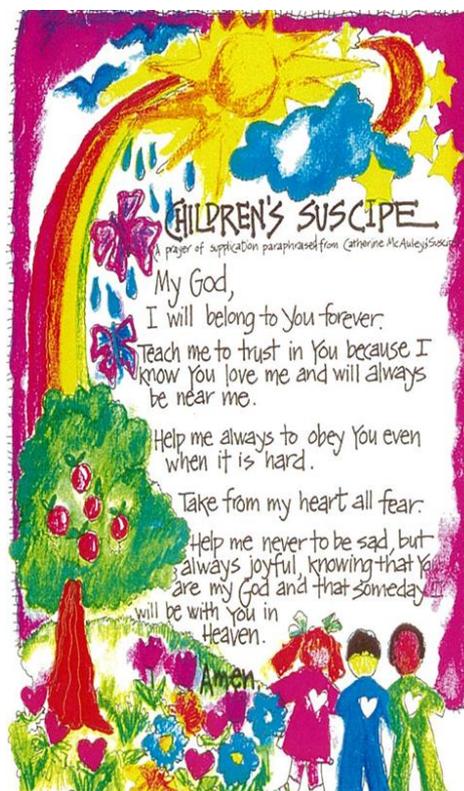
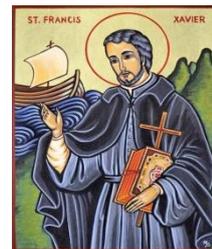
Help us to build a community of faith and a love of learning.

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.



Element One

Our students and Community

Teaching and learning in Religious Education at St Francis Xavier is responsive to the needs and religious backgrounds of students and the contemporary contexts for learning in the Religion classroom.

St Francis Xavier is a Catholic, co-educational P-6 school of approximately 530 students situated in the City of Ipswich. The school has been in existence for over 100 years, having been established in 1910. It is a school which has welcomed children and families from many countries around the world. Over forty nationalities are represented. We are proud of the way that our community blends the best from these cultures to develop and reflect the motto of the school: "Kids Who Care".

In the past four years, we have had a major influx of students from African families moving to Goodna from the Moorooka and Toowoomba/Gatton regions, increasing the number of students to 156. Only 51% of our students are Catholic, many of whom are not practicing Catholics. This has influenced the teaching and planning of Religious Education as well as the way we plan for prayer celebrations. Staff are conscious of the multi-religious make up of their class, and by knowing their learners are respectful of student beliefs while teaching Catholic Christian traditions. We also have 35 indigenous students and a parent group, who have supported the increase of cultural acknowledgements and blessings throughout our school year.

We welcome students from 13 other Religions to our school community

<https://bi.bne.catholic.edu.au/operational/Pages/SA-Student-Religion-Profile.aspx>

At St Francis Xavier, all who seek to share and celebrate our Catholic Christian heritage (parents, students, staff) feel welcome and respected in their own faith journeys both, through 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 school constantly seek to respond to the reality of students' lives by incorporating flexibility in Religious Education classes to ensure that an inclusive and dialogical spirit pervades all Religious Education and prayer celebrations.

At each year level at St Francis Xavier, teachers engage in collaborative planning to develop a year level plan that responds to the reality of our students and families and their diverse needs. Teachers are encouraged to arrange meetings to meet with the APRE before and after school to plan and resource their Religion units as teacher release for planning fluctuates according to the annual school budget.

St Francis Xavier Religion Program and unit plans take into consideration the demographics of the students, their families and the local community.

Vision for Religious Education

The *Vision for Religious Education* is framed within a **broad and expansive understanding** of life that goes a long way beyond education as an end in itself. *The schools and colleges of the Archdiocese of Brisbane aspire to educate and form students who are challenged to live the gospel of Jesus Christ and who are literate in the Catholic and broader Christian tradition so that they might participate critically and authentically in faith contexts and wider society.*

The *Vision for Religious Education* 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 St Francis Xavier 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.

In our school, religious literacy includes ways of talking, acting, creating, communicating, critiquing, evaluating, participating, ritualising, theologising, worshipping, reading, reflecting, and writing with others in a variety of religious and secular contexts.

Teachers and students integrate the two dimensions of religious education, 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 and song as a whole school to start the day and the timetabling of the mandatory hours (2.5 hours per week) of classroom based engagement with the religion curriculum at the school

We feel it is important for staff to be given the opportunity to discuss their understanding of the Vision, so that across the school we are enabling staff to be their authentic self but also have some consistency across year levels about what the Vision means for our school community.

- There is an opportunity for discussion at a staff meeting at the beginning of the year.
- The Vision is revisited at year level planning meetings.

From staff discussion, we have agreed that Jesus Christ should be the centre of what we do, so we challenge students daily to live the Gospel values of Jesus.

- Christian Behaviour Focus.
- Weekly Gospel reading <http://bcewaystopray.weebly.com/>
- Core scripture - linked to the Christian Behaviour Focus where possible.

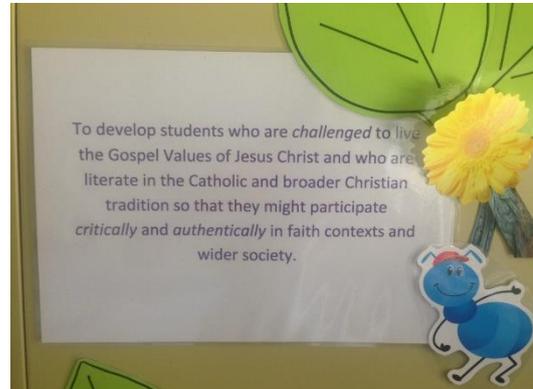
Through engagement with *Visible Learning* and the *Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project* we have recognised two important things;

1. Our students are literal believers, and

2. They like to have their say and feel that they are listened to within our school community, (feedback from Visible Learning student survey).

So, through our Religious Education Program, we do challenge our students to be a voice in the world, but more importantly a religious voice in the world. One that is not afraid to question what is on the surface but is prepared to go deeper.

A copy of the Vision for Religious Education is visible in every classroom, easily accessible to staff for planning, referring to while teaching, and if the opportunity arises, to use at parent teacher interviews.



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 Contemporary Contexts of Religious Education

At St Francis Xavier, recognition is given to the four contexts identified as having a significant impact on Religious Education in contemporary Catholic and ecumenical schools. They are the Societal Context, Ecclesial Context, Educational Context and Digital Context.

Societal Context:

Like all Catholic and ecumenical schools of the Archdiocese of Brisbane, St Francis Xavier operates in a complex and ever-changing environment. Contemporary students are immersed in a global world and from an early age are exposed to a range of values represented through diverse media.

Consequently, our school is continually challenged to engage families in Religious Education in rich and relevant ways. At St Francis Xavier, Religious Education seeks to reflect a Catholic Christian worldview that integrates faith, life and culture. At the same time, it seeks to embrace an recontextualised perspective and reflect the multi-faith context and reality of this school. As identified earlier, we have diverse cultures, religions and belief systems within our school community. This multiculturalism does influence teaching and learning within each classroom and indeed the playground. To support student and staff understanding of who we are, at SFX we begin each year with a *Belonging Unit*. This unit has been developed over the past 5 years from an actual 'unit of work', to a 'block of time' where learning about 'My Story, Our Story, The Story' is the focus. The learning done in this time is demonstrated through a *Classroom Covenant*, which each class produces, and presents to the rest of the school through a whole school prayer celebration. During 2018, while the classroom covenant will stay, the unit will be disbursed across other units to better align with learning outcomes.

Goodna has changed significantly both economically and culturally. We will always cater for the needs of our lower socio-economic families, but now also have more middle class families within our school community. This has had an impact on planning, so for staff to be able to cater to all needs in their complex and ever changing classrooms they are given data, about new arrivals, before

they 'arrive' in their classroom. Initial adjustments can be made to planning, then more significant adjustments when they get to know the student.

The St Francis Xavier community raise a significant amount of money for people less fortunate than us. In 2014, we decided that *raising awareness* of social disadvantage and social justice issues was just as important as the money raised. If we don't support the students to understand why we are doing something, then we feel that we are not developing in them the potential to articulate their faith and participate critically and authentically in society.

Data from Enhancing Catholic School Identity Project, 2012 (ECSIP), supports the fact that we are challenged to engage families in Religious Education in rich and relevant ways.

- Invitation to weekly assembly prayer in newsletter.
- Invitation to whole school masses.
- Send home 'save the dates' so families are aware of what is happening with invitations closer to the date.

Ecclesial Context

At St Francis Xavier, an increasing number of students and their families are less engaged with the formal life of the Church than in the past. Consequently, for many students, the culture and language of religion is underdeveloped.

This school, along with many Archdiocesan schools, increasingly provides the introductory and developmental understanding and experience of Church for students and their families. This is supported when the school is a place where students and their families encounter the mission and outreach of the Church, especially through pastoral care and the experience of Catholic Christian community.

In this community, such activities include the celebration of Anzac Day, Reconciliation Week, Mother's Day, Father's Day, NAIDOC Week, Catholic Education Week, Grandparents' Day, Mercy Day and Remembrance Day as well as fundraising for Caritas, Catholic Missions and St. Vincent De Paul. This enables our school to promote knowledge, deep understanding and skills about the Catholic and broader Christian tradition within the broader evangelising mission of the Church.

ECSIP confirmed for our school community that many of our students and their families are not engaged with the formal life of the church. For many students, the culture and language of religion is underdeveloped.

- We teach the students what we expect in religion lessons and we also teach them how to participate in prayer celebrations in different contexts.

Families are not disinterested in religion or spirituality. They are more comfortable if we 'do that stuff' with their children.

- We guide families about how to participate in prayer celebrations.
- Teachers plan activities to do in religion lessons that have a 'take home' finish, so students can talk to their families about what they have been learning.

We took advantage of feedback from parents and developed a *Prayer Policy*. They want to be connected with the Catholic Christian tradition, so we now have eight school/parish masses a year, as well as a variety of whole school prayer celebrations.

Pastoral care is something we take pride in at St Francis Xavier. We are fortunate to have a Mercy Sister as our Pastoral Worker. Not only does this bring someone into our community who is compassionate and has time to work with, and follow up with students and families, but also someone with knowledge of our Mercy history and traditions. Teachers are aware of this important human resource and do plan when and where they can call on her knowledge and experience in whole class, small group, individual or family situations.

As a whole school, we have timetabled a session each week to allow time for pastoral care. Mercy Matter begins with whole school meditation (or another way to pray) and then, depending on the term, we do lessons with Bounce Back, Beating Bully Bulldozer or Daniel Morcombe Safety Curriculum. This is also a time for Stop, Think, Do and building buddy relationships. This process will be reviewed in 2018.

Educational Context

St Francis Xavier, along with each Archdiocesan school, seeks transformation of the whole person so that those in the school community are empowered to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ in their everyday lives. In the Catholic Christian tradition, education is a work of love and service. At St Francis Xavier, we seek to nurture and develop the faith of individuals in ways that are mindful of their cultural and religious identity. Examples include supporting financial, emotional and daily needs for those families who are experiencing hardship and outreach to the poor and the marginalised in our community through raising money and donations of required items.

Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, including this school, builds on best practice of the broader educational community. The classroom learning and teaching of Religion reflects the philosophy, content, structure, academic rigor, and assessment and reporting modes used in other learning areas. The religious life of St Francis Xavier aims to skill students to negotiate the tension of maintaining Christian integrity when confronted with the complexities of life in contemporary society.

Our Digital Context

Religious Education at St Francis Xavier seeks to engage students in the critical, creative, and responsible use of digital tools as an important component of digital citizenship. It includes provision and use of laptops and iPads, which support teaching and learning in the classroom. This enables them to express their learning in rich and relevant ways. In addition to this, teachers enhance their religious knowledge and teaching using the following:

- Data projectors (in all classrooms).
- Bible Gateway, appropriate online Bible tools and You Tube to support the teaching of religion units.
- The Ways to Pray Calendar to support the Religious Life of the School.
- The BCE Learning Bytes & ResourceLink to support Religion units.

Our Beliefs About Learners and Learning in the Religion Classroom

Fundamental to the shared work of teachers at St Francis Xavier are the beliefs they have of 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” is built into our theme each year.

- 2012 – Stewardship and Mercy;
- 2013 – Unity in our Community;
- 2014 – Promises; Peace; Love and Hope;
- 2015 – Let **Your** Light Shine;
- 2016 – Stewardship – knowing and sharing our time, talent and treasure;
- 2017 – Peace and Equity.
- 2018 – Welcome and Outreach

We also:

- Explicitly remind students of this during assemblies and during class.
- Touch on this during Mercy Matters time and use when addressing behaviours.

Teachers are provided with 2 days planning each year. 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 Support Teachers, EALD teacher, PLL, Indigenous Support Teacher and speech pathologist are available for planning, should their expertise be needed when catering to the diverse needs of students.

We use our school Religious Education Scope and Sequence and line of sight documents to plan from, highlighting as we go, so when evaluating we can see ‘the gaps’ and make adjustments for these in the future. From 2018, we will plan using learning progressions to ensure consistency in learning and teaching across the school, giving Religious Education the academic rigor it deserves.

At St Francis Xavier, we understand that:

- ✚ 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 religious backgrounds and learning needs of students inform the development of work units. Data retrieved from the BI Tool and other sources has been used to inform planning decisions for learning. Teachers use this information to interpret the curriculum flexibly required to meet the individual learning needs of students and to personalise their learning by:

- ✚ Adjusting the way in which students are taught and the means through which they demonstrate their learning.
- ✚ Using the extended general capabilities learning continua from the Australian Curriculum to adjust the focus of learning or to emphasise specific aspects such as higher order cognitive skills.
- ✚ Providing students with opportunities to work with content in depth and breadth.
- ✚ Providing students with additional time and support; and drawing from content at different levels along the Prep to Year 10 sequence.
- ✚ Differentiating assessment tasks to provide for the diversity of the class.

Collaborative Planning

The first year level planning session for a year (which happens at the end of the previous year) is guided as follows:

- Theme for the following year is shared.
- Gospel for the following year is shared and discussed.
- Picture book for the following year is shared and the theme/messages discussed.
- Prayer policy is revisited – including school prayer and Children’s Suscipe
- Yearly calendar is developed. This has whole school events, both liturgical and non-liturgical added so they can be implemented into planning for the classroom enabling more authentic teaching and learning to occur.
- Discussion about units completed the current year, making changes where necessary.
- Look at school Religious Education program and develop an overview of the year ahead.
- Assign terms/units or choose an RE person.
- Plan year level meeting times and let APRE know.

To begin the new year staff are given:

- Assembly prayer roster for the year.
- Christian Behaviour Focus plan for the year.
- A hard copy of students who are Catholic and from other religions as well as students who have received Sacraments of Initiation.
- Order of mass for a weekday at St Francis Xavier Parish (4-6).

Communication to Parents and the Wider Community

At St Francis Xavier, every effort is made to ensure parents are informed and engaged in the Religious Education of students. We do this through:

- Parent Information Sessions which allow parents to have a better understanding of their children's Religious Education Program.
- Newsletter articles which include information about what students are learning in their RE lessons in our classrooms.
- The RE Scope and Sequence is published on the school website.
- A calendar of events is included in our weekly newsletter.
- Information is published on the parent portal.
- Encouraging parents to participate in surveys from time to time.

Impact of System and/or Religious Institute Initiatives

St Francis Xavier is part of the Excellence in Learning Teaching initiative of Brisbane Catholic Education and is in the process of implementing the High Yield Strategies. All teachers have participated in the Professional Learning and fulfil the Effective and Expected Practices in the teaching and learning of Religious Education.

Our journey has focused primarily on establishing visible evidence of progress in Numeracy for each student however; we believe that the skills acquired are being transferred to all areas of learning, including Religious Education.

St Francis Xavier, staff follow the BCE Model of Pedagogy which brings together the principles and practise of learning and teaching that lead to success for all learners. Together with this, teachers use our Line of Sight and Scope and Sequence documents to achieve clear Learning Intentions and Success Criteria to communicate to their students.

Element Two

Curriculum Structure and Organisation for Religious Education

A Catholic View of Learning

At St Francis Xavier a Catholic view of 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. Teaching and learning in Religious Education is intentionally developed on the foundation of a Catholic theology and philosophy of curriculum. Four core themes are central: *Anthropology, Epistemology, Cosmology and the Catholic Christian Tradition.*

Catholic View of Christian Anthropology

Anthropology – centred on the person of Jesus. We recognise each person is created in the image of God. Data from ECSIP shows that St Francis Xavier is a Dialogue school and very supportive of Values Education. Our initial action plan demonstrates how we moved from Values Education to that of Christian Values. We endeavour to link actions back to Jesus.

Our current three-year plan for *Strengthening Catholic Identity* continues to focus on that which enhances our Catholic identity in both learning and teaching, Religious Life of the School and our school environment.

Catholic Perspective on Epistemology

A Catholic perspective on epistemology orients a curriculum towards rationality; holistic knowing; knowing and living; wisdom as the fruit of knowing and life-long and life-wide learning.

The Catholic tradition views the acquisition of knowledge as a lifelong and life wide enterprise. Reflective self-directed learning and teaching provides Sabbath spaces for teachers and students to interiorise knowledge. At St Francis Xavier:

- Every classroom has a sacred space
- Teachers encourage students to question and form their knowledge
- Reflective practices are included throughout the religion unit
- Staff have the opportunity to be involved in weekly prayer and reflection

Catholic Understanding of Cosmology

Stewardship

Cosmology relates to how we understand our place in the universe and the choices we make to live within the integrity of creation. Through the elements of stewardship and sacramentality, Catholic Christians are called to respond to questions like: ‘What is our place in the universe?’ ‘How do we live within the integrity of creation?’ Working with The Three Worlds of the Text has challenged and supported staff and students to question, find out through research, question again and put into action their learning. The belief in something bigger (God) is evident, but being given permission to

engage in robust conversation has been both challenging and rewarding. As mentioned above, Stewardship is our parish focus. At school through both the Religion curriculum and RLOS, all classes have a focus on stewardship over the year. We continue to work on not making religious celebrations or celebrating the everyday, something different, or extra, but develop people's understanding that it is a part of our culture. It is what makes our community who we are.

Sacramentality

Catholic Christians are sacramental people who experience God's presence in their everyday world. In a faith vision of life, God is encountered in community, in the Church and its sacramental life, through nature, human activity and the world at large. At St Francis Xavier, our sacramentality is embedded across the curriculum.

We meet God in our everyday lives and we also meet God in a particular way through our celebration of Eucharist, Liturgies and whole-school Morning Prayer. St Francis Xavier has made a clear decision to celebrate Eucharist as a whole school community at least eight times each year.

Catholic Christian Story and Tradition

From the very beginning of Christianity, the Christian community has been engaged in teaching. The transformative process of learning and teaching is captured in the Vision of Brisbane Catholic Education to *Teach, Challenge and Transform. Teach, Challenge, Transform* – each year we choose one of these as our focus for the year – we align with South West Cluster focus. This Vision is realised at St Francis Xavier through everyday witness; and learning and teaching that challenges and transforms the culture and the world in which we live. St Francis Xavier is strongly committed to transforming the world of those who are less fortunate than us. Each year the students, teachers and community enthusiastically support those who are less fortunate by raising funds for areas of need.

Model for Religious Education

Our Religious Education Program clearly articulates the distinct yet complementary nature of the two dimensions of Religious learning in the school. In 2014, we made a conscious choice to link learning about 'the who' and 'the why' when participating in Social Justice Programs. It was also a clear goal on our *Strengthening Catholic Identity* school plan (for 2018).

In 2016 we developed the *Religious Life of the School Line of Sight Document* for the whole school. This document is used when teachers are planning so they can see what is covered at a whole school level and what elements they must include in their classroom/year level planning. A copy of this document is on our school website, parent portal and staff portal.

The Reconceptualist Approach to Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

Since 2008, the classroom learning and teaching of religion in the Archdiocese of Brisbane has been characterised by a reconceptualist approach. In short, it operates from an educational framework rather than from a catechetical or 'shared Christian praxis' framework. This means that at St Francis Xavier, the classroom religion program becomes a primary arena for dealing with the critical religious issues and concerns of life. There are three key considerations for teachers using

this approach: the *Avoidance of Presumptive Language, Teaching ‘about’ the Tradition and Powerful Pedagogies*.

Staff have engaged in professional learning about the necessary rigour of Religion as a subject and have discussed the need for valid assessment tasks, as in other curriculum areas. As per a recommendation in our ECSIP data, we strongly suggest that teachers do not teach something that has to be untaught. Being a multicultural community it is also important not to assume things about our learners, avoiding presumptive language.

Avoidance of Presumptive Language

In a reconceptualist approach, teachers avoid using presumptive language and do not start with assumptions about students’ faith development based upon their religious affiliation. At St Francis Xavier, teachers are required to use language that is invitational and educational, to better engage students in the religion classroom. Students who can readily identify themselves as Catholics are affirmed by this approach. Further, when using non-presumptive language, teachers provide students with the freedom to respond in ways that do not assume a programmed response.

Teaching ‘about’ the Tradition

A reconceptualist classroom is not simply a place for transferring facts and knowledge. At this school, a reconceptualist approach to teaching religion entails “exploring the meaning of one’s own religious life in relation to both those who share that life and those who do not” (Scott, 1984, p.334). This educational focus requires a critical appreciation of one’s own religious tradition and an empathetic understanding of the religious beliefs and practices of others.

Powerful Pedagogies

The Excellence in Learning and Teaching is a core goal of Brisbane Catholic Education. As noted above, our school supports that initiative through its involvement in the formation of staff in research proven pedagogies:

- The Gradual Release of Responsibility
- Explicit Learning Intentions and Success Criteria
- The Context-Text Model of Language.

An examination of the sample units and the Template for Planning in RE, demonstrates our support of the three practices which provide a common language for planning and reflecting on learning and teaching in the religion classroom: focusing on learners and their learning; activating multiple ways of knowing, interacting and opportunities to construct knowledge; responding with feedback to move learning forward; and evaluating learning with students as activators of their own learning and resources for others.

Focusing on learners and their learning

While some students at this school 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, identifies learners' levels of thinking and builds 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. This is evident in our fertile questions used across year levels.

Establishing clear learning intentions and success criteria

At St Francis Xavier, the starting place for the classroom religion program is the Religion Curriculum P-12. Religion teachers use the curriculum to create and make clear and visible the learning intentions and success criteria for all students. Again, this is clearly evident in the sample units of work provided.

LEARNING INTENTIONS	
Learning Intentions By the end these learning experiences, students <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <u>will</u> identify and explain the meaning of the different symbols that represent the Holy Spirit in the sacrament of Confirmation and in the Pentecost story. • <u>will</u> make connections between the Gifts of the Holy Spirit and the sacrament of Confirmation and understand how these guide and give strength to believers today. • <u>will</u> analyse information from a variety of texts to explain the action of the Holy Spirit in the lives of believers. 	
SUCCESS CRITERIA	ASSESSMENT
Success Criteria How will we know if students have achieved the desired results and met the standard? What will we accept as evidence of student knowledge, understanding and skills?	Consider a range of assessment methods – informal and formal assessments during a unit

Learning Intentions and Success Criteria from Year 5 Planning document

In these units of work, the rigour of our school's approach to learning and teaching in the religion classroom, drawn from the Knowledge and Deep Understanding and Skills of the P-12 Religion Curriculum document, takes account of the capabilities and readiness of students, while at the same time ensuring a classroom that engages and challenges students.

Time allocation and effective timetabling of Religious Education at St Francis Xavier

As is evident in its practices and instructions to teachers in the Staff Manual and as evident in classroom timetables, this school strongly supports the mandated minimum of 2.5 hours per week of religion teaching from P-6. Liturgy, prayer, hymn practice and other religious practices are not included in this provision. The effective timetabling of religion classes is given high priority within the life of the school.

Design principles for Religious Education at St Francis Xavier

The *Religion Curriculum P-12* has been developed around four design principles: embracing a *Catholic Christian Worldview*; modelling a *Seamless Curriculum*; setting a clear *Pedagogical Direction*; and strengthening *Alignment*. These principles have been put into practice at St Francis Xavier.

Catholic Christian Worldview

In alignment with the content of the *Religion Curriculum P-12*, Religious Education at St Francis Xavier reflects a Catholic Christian worldview that integrates faith, life and culture. Where possible, content is responsive to the multi-faith context and reality of contemporary religion classrooms.

Seamless Curriculum

The *Religion Curriculum* at St Francis Xavier reflects the philosophy, content, focus, structure, academic rigour and assessment and reporting modes used in all other learning areas.

Pedagogical Direction, including Line of sight

The pedagogical direction of the *Religion Curriculum* is consistent with the BCE *Model of Pedagogy* (2012) and draws significantly on John Hattie's research, *Visible Learning* (2009), and the visible learning and teaching story outlined in *Visible Learning for Teachers* (2012).

The *Religion Curriculum* promotes inquiry learning, a learner centred pedagogical approach to learning and teaching, that aligns with the directions taken in the Australian Curriculum.

To ensure that St Francis Xavier follows BCE's required pedagogical directions, our school uses the BCE Planning Template for Religious Education, but have adjusted it to suit our school context.

Further, at St Francis Xavier, continuity in the Religion Curriculum is ensured within and between year levels, building on where students' learning in Religion is situated and leading onto where the students are heading in their learning. There is a clear focus on the line of sight in year level planning: Year Level Description, Achievement Standard and Content Descriptions as evidenced in the planning template used for Religious Education.

Element Three

High Quality Teaching

Accreditation Requirements

Professional learning opportunities are offered by the school for enhancing Catholic identity; the Religious Life of the School and the classroom teaching of religion.

Our RE Program contains information, processes and examples regarding:

- the auditing of teachers accredited to teach and to teach religion in a Catholic School
- ensuring teachers gain initial accreditation to teach in a Catholic school - e.g. REAP; Grad Cert in RE; Masters programs
- tracking the ongoing professional learning for teachers to maintain accreditation through i-learn.

Our Principal and APRE track staff accreditation and with advice from EORE work with individuals to support them to full accreditation, and to maintain a log of PD for accreditation which can be uploaded to i-learn.

Accreditation to Teach Religion in a Catholic or Ecumenical School

All teachers of religion in Archdiocesan schools are required to be accredited to teach Religion. Currently, at St Francis Xavier, all teachers have Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic school and all teachers of Religion also 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 (10 hours per year or 50 hours over 5 years) to maintain accreditation to teach and to teach Religious Education. St Francis Xavier provides some opportunities for Professional Learning days each year and teachers participate in other opportunities in their own time to complete the requirements.

Professional Learning

Religious educators at St Francis Xavier engage in ongoing professional learning focused on enhancing individual and collaborative practices as well as the capacity to improve student learning. This includes Consistency of Teacher Judgement participation, Twilight and other Professional Learning provided by BCE.

Powerful Whole School Pedagogies

As stated previously in relation to the Impact of System Initiatives, St Francis Xavier supports the BCEO goal Excellence in Learning and Teaching which focuses on the implementation of Effective and Expected Teaching Practices of all staff.

Effective Assessment

At St Francis Xavier 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 to improve, enhance and plan for further learning. Feedback forms an essential part of assessment for learning: it is, “a process of seeking and interpreting evidence for use by learners and their teachers to decide where the learners are in their learning, where they need to go, and how best to get there” (Assessment Reform Group, 2002).

Teachers at all year levels, as part of their planning, and teaching, employ the five key strategies for formative assessment, namely,

1. Clarifying, sharing and understanding learning intentions and criteria for success
2. Engineering effective classroom discussions, activities and learning tasks that elicit evidence of learning
3. Providing feedback that moves learning forward
4. Activating learners as instructional resources for one another (peer feedback)
5. Activating learners as the owners of their own learning (self-assessment)

At St Francis Xavier, it is believed that evidence of achievement should reflect the knowledge, deep understanding and skills described in the relevant achievement standards and reflected in the success criteria.

Knowledge describes the information, facts and principles specific to a learning area.

Deep Understanding relates to the concepts underpinning and connecting knowledge in a field/discipline and is related to a student's ability to appropriately select and apply knowledge to solve problems in a particular learning area.

Skills describe the way of working specific to a field/discipline, and are therefore focused on specific techniques, strategies or processes in a learning area.

Tools for Assessment

Teachers at St Francis Xavier are encouraged to use a range and balance of assessment [tools](#) that allow 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: observing students and monitoring their progress as they work;
- Student/Teacher consultation: interacting with students either formally or informally.
- Focused analysis: teachers examining in detail student responses to tasks or activities.

Examples of Assessment tools used at St Francis Xavier include:

Assessment tools	Questioning	Reflective tools	Teacher Observation
Running Records	Think Pair Share	Reflective journal	Anecdotal records
Criteria for success	Wait time	Reflective questions and prompts	Checklists
Research projects	Effective questioning	Learning logs	
Annotated work samples	Asking questions	Thinking skills	
Written tests	Question Matrix		
Multiple choice tests			
Extended response		Peer feedback	
Group discussion		Two Stars and a Wish	
Oral presentation		Plus, minus, interesting	
Written tasks		Traffic Lights	
Portfolios			
Graphic organisers			
Concept maps			
Concept mapping			

Making Judgements

As part of the Excellence in Learning and Teaching initiative and the accompanying professional learning, St Francis Xavier staff have incorporated BCE's recommended pedagogical strategies when making judgements:

1. Interpret evidence of children's learning in relation to learning statements by looking at student work, by observing students, and talking to students.
2. Use evidence of student learning to inform decisions about the next steps in student learning.
3. Consider a body of evidence gathered over time in relation to the achievement standards to make overall judgements about how far students have come in relation to achievement standards. (taken from KWeb, Learning and Teaching, <https://kweb.bne.catholic.edu.au/LandT/LearningTeaching/Assessinglearning/Pages/MakingJudgements.aspx>)

Teachers make professional judgements based on the ACARA Achievement Standards and their knowledge of the students.

Moderation

A formal intra-school moderation occurs in Term 3 where teachers bring to a staff meeting annotated samples of work “at standard” and “above standard”.

The school participates in inter-school moderation in October where staff share with other teachers at their year level annotated samples of work.

Feedback to Students

At St Francis Xavier, feedback is a vital component of learning and teaching. Once again, feedback is an important element of Excellence in Learning and Teaching that St Francis Xavier has been actively involved in.

A typical example of feedback in the classroom includes:

- Explicit learning intentions and success criteria.
- Explicitly teaching students how to apply the criteria to their own work.
- Providing students with feedback to help them improve.
- Helping students to set learning targets to achieve that improvement.

Peer feedback occurs when students offer each other advice about their work which incorporates reference to:

- what has been done well in relation to the success criteria
- what still needs to be done in order to achieve the success criteria
- advice on how to achieve that improvement.

Teachers who engage students in self-assessment see the responsibility for learning shifting from them to the students, see an increase in student motivation and are able to use the feedback from their students about how they learn to shape future teaching and learning.

REPORTING STUDENT LEARNING

Whole School Processes

Religious Education is not taught in isolation: it is a curriculum area like all other curriculum areas in



the school. It is taught, assessed, reported and evaluated in the same way as other subject areas.

Student achievement is recognised and celebrated within our school community in a variety of ways including at informal meetings; one on one feedback to students; parent-teacher nights; celebrations of learning.

The Student Reporting System (SRS) is Brisbane Catholic Education's online student reporting tool. SRS facilitates the reporting of student achievement to parents and caregivers by allowing teachers and administrators to create, proofread, edit, verify and publish student reports. As has been noted previously and is evident in the school's Religion Planning Template, Religious Education is taught and assessed with rigour and is flexible to enable each student to achieve and demonstrate what they have learned.

Reporting

Reporting occurs formally, in terms of reports issued, twice a year. The school's reporting processes are as follows:

- Parent/Teacher Interviews take place once a year (compulsory). Throughout the year teachers are available for interviews upon request.
- Written Reports are issued twice a year, at the end of Semester 1 and at the end of Semester 2.

MEANINGFUL, RELEVANT LEARNING EXPERIENCES

St Francis Xavier has a small Religious Education budget for resources. The APRE supports staff regularly with information about relevant online resources and resources currently owned by the school. BCE's ResourceLink, Religious Education site on Kweb and the Learning Bytes also provides the APRE and teaching staff with resources.

ELEMENT FOUR

MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

PROCESSES FOR MONITORING STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

St Francis Xavier's Religious Education Program outlines how student progress and achievement are monitored to ensure high expectations for each student. Data is used to evaluate current practice and inform decision-making and action related to the classroom teaching of Religion and the Religious Life of the School.

Evaluating Student Achievement

At St Francis Xavier, planning and evaluating the effectiveness of assessment processes occurs when:

- Planning a new unit of work; teachers review the previous unit, including assessment tasks and student performance, and reflect on changes that teachers may need to make the next time the unit is used.
- The APRE, AP and PLL use the BI tool to evaluate learning and teaching of religion and other curriculum areas in the school. This leads to whole school discussions and professional learning on assessment.

Processes for Monitoring the Religious Life of the School

At St Francis Xavier, both formal and informal processes are used to monitor how well the components of the RLOS are being addressed and taught. Formally, this occurs when the codified elements of each component being addressed are recorded in the school's RLOS Scope and Sequence document.

This monitoring also occurs as part of the ongoing formal and informal school renewal processes – for example, when:

- The APRE meets with the Parish Priest to review and plan liturgical celebrations and prayer rituals in the school
- The leadership team discusses and reviews the school's Social Justice and Outreach program
- The school undertakes to renew its understanding and commitment to the charism of its founding religious institutes, proposing new ways to connect with the charism and its accompanying spirituality.