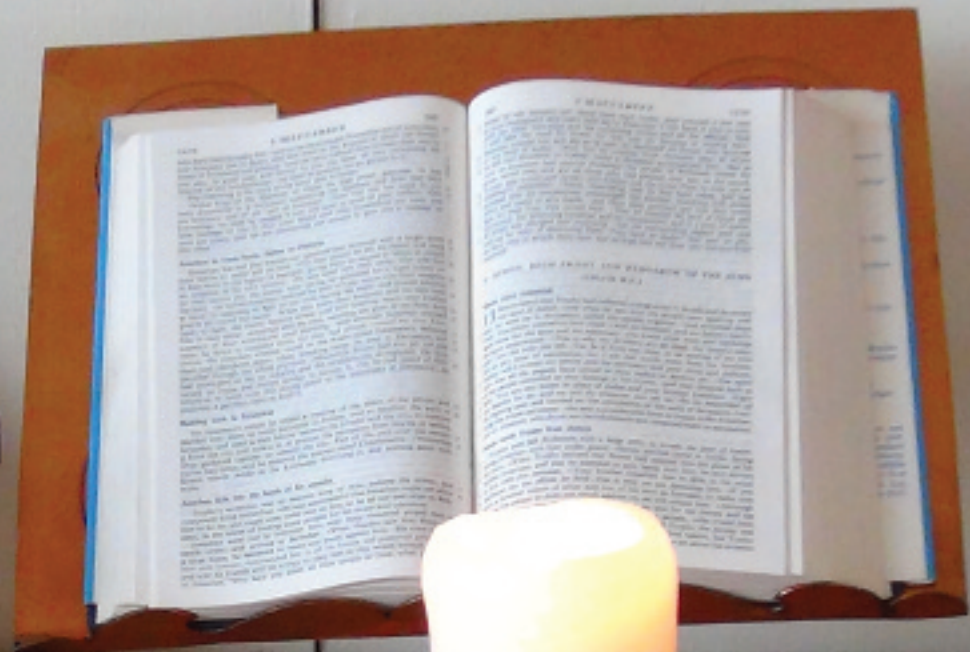


Faith Formation Goals



The development of lived Christian faith, in discipleship of Jesus, is the ultimate horizon within which Religious Education is carried out in Catholic schools. While Religious Education ‘does not require the assent of faith,¹⁸ nevertheless, it is expected that many children in Catholic preschools and primary schools will be baptised Catholics, and good Religious Education will aim to help them to grow towards maturity in faith (CS 51). Teachers will always be conscious of the need to support the on-going faith development of these children when planning lessons (SGN 38–9). Faith formation goals are provided here to guide teachers in this important work.

The relationship between teaching and faith development is different from the way teaching relates to knowledge and skill development in Religious Education. This is because of the complexity of spiritual development and of the complex ways in which it may or may not be related to classroom teaching/learning processes. Therefore, it is important to acknowledge that our hopes or goals in the area of faith development will not be assessed, as it is inappropriate to formally assess personal or spiritual change in students. Faith is always a gift from God and no person’s faith can be determined by another (GDC 55). Nevertheless, the aforementioned distinction should not lead to a false dichotomy between a holistic approach to Religious Education and faith formation in Catholic schools. It simply means that Religious Education outcomes are distinguished from faith formation goals in such a way that the distinct nature of Religious Education as a discipline is respected (GDC 73).

The primary focus of faith formation goals in the primary school is on fostering an encounter with the person of Jesus and on enabling the experience of intimacy and communion with him (worship). Children are taught to learn from Jesus, to think and judge like him, in the Religious Education curriculum (sound instruction in the content of the Faith). It is hoped that children will develop a commitment to participate in the mission and ministry of Jesus, our Saviour, living their Christian faith, in the Church community, for the Kingdom of God (ethical living as Jesus’ disciples) (GDC 122).

The following is a list of faith formation goals appropriate to young children engaged in the Catholic preschool and primary school Religious Education curriculum. This is not a prescriptive or exhaustive list and teachers may add goals more suitable to the unique circumstances in which they teach. Teachers/ programme writers will return to the faith formation goals outlined for earlier levels, at every level, adding a deeper dimension of complexity and richness as the curriculum progresses.

¹⁸ Congregation for Catholic Education, ‘Religious education in Schools fits into the Evangelizing Mission of the Church’ (Vatican City, 8 September 2009), nos 17–18. This is the first Magisterial document dedicated to Religious Education in the school.

Preschool

Children will:

- begin to develop a relationship with **God the Father**.
- begin to develop a relationship with **Jesus**.
- begin to develop a relationship with the **Holy Spirit**.
- come to know God's love for them.
- appreciate that **Jesus** loves them in a special way.
- desire to act like **Jesus**.
- develop a sense of being cared for by **God**.
- appreciate their dignity and worth as created and loved by **God**.
- know themselves as unique and that God calls them by name.
- recognise **God's** presence and action in their lives and give thanks.
- appreciate signs of **God's** care and providence in the seasons.
- develop a sense of wonder and awe in the created world.
- develop a sense of gratitude to God for the blessings of creation and all of **God's** gifts (family etc).
- learn to trust the dependability of those who love and care for them as a basis for the attitude of faith.
- recognise **God's** presence in their own family.
- desire to respect others and the natural environment as created by **God**.
- develop a sense of belonging to the Catholic Church community.
- honour **Mary** the Mother of Jesus and Our Mother too.
- become enriched by the lives of **saints** and by their faith and trust in God.
- connect their own experience of death and loss with the Christian message of eternal life.
- develop a sense of wonder in relation to Bible stories.
- show respect for the Bible as a sacred text.
- deepen their love for Bible stories.
- relate to the person of **Jesus** in Bible stories.
- develop their relationship with the **Trinity** through prayer.
- value the importance of praying.
- develop a sense of reverence in prayer.
- relate celebrations in their lives to their Christian faith.
- enter into the spirit of Advent (waiting/preparing).
- welcome **Jesus**, the light of the world, at Christmas.
- link their experience of celebrating Christmas with the birth of **Jesus**.
- experience the joy of the Easter story.
- appreciate that they belong to **God's** family through Baptism.
- respect the Church as a place of prayer and celebration.
- develop a Christian spirituality and identity.

Level 1

Children will:

- know themselves as unique and that God calls them by name.
- come to know **God's** love for them.
- develop a sense of being cared for by **God**.
- recognise **God's** presence and action in their lives and give thanks.
- develop a growing awareness of the dignity of being children in light of Christian beliefs.
- appreciate their dignity and worth as created and loved by **God**.
- begin to develop a relationship with **God**.
- grow in trust that God will be with them at all times.
- come to know and love **Jesus Christ**.
- begin to develop a relationship with **Jesus**.
- appreciate that **Jesus** loves them in a special way.
- relate to **Jesus** as their friend.
- desire to act as a follower of Jesus.
- develop their faith in the **Risen Jesus**.
- develop a passion for fairness and justice following **Jesus'** example.
- celebrate **God's** gift of **Jesus**.
- develop a sense of wonder and awe in the created world.
- develop a sense of gratitude to **God** for the blessings of creation and all God's gifts (family etc).
- appreciate their feelings as gifts of **God**.
- become aware that **God** is with them however they feel.
- appreciate that **God** is involved in the creation of each new life.
- appreciate signs of **God's** care and providence in the seasons.
- desire to respect others and the natural environment as created by **God**.
- appreciate the love and care of people around them which helps them to know the love of God.
- recognise **God's** presence in their own family.
- develop a sense of belonging to the local Catholic Church community.
- appreciate the call to live in community with others.
- develop an attitude of reverence for the Church building.
- honour **Mary** the Mother of Jesus and Our Mother too.
- become enriched by the lives of **saints** and by their faith and trust in God.
- connect their own experience of death and loss with the Christian message of eternal life.
- develop a sense of wonder in relation to Bible stories.
- show respect for the Bible as a sacred text.
- deepen their love for Bible stories.
- relate to the person of **Jesus** in Bible stories.
- be inspired to love **God** and to live the way **God** wants them to through the Bible.
- develop their relationship with **the Trinity** through prayer.
- become aware of **God** dwelling within them.
- develop a sense of reverence in prayer.
- value the importance of praying.
- relate celebrations in their lives to their Christian faith.
- enter into the cycle and rhythms of the Liturgical year.
- enter into the spirit of Advent (waiting/preparing).
- welcome **Jesus**, the light of the world, at Christmas.

- Welcome Jesus, the **Son of God**, at Christmas.
- link their experience of celebrating Christmas with the birth of **Jesus**.
- enter into the spirit of Lent.
- participate fully in an Ash Wednesday ritual.
- participate fully in class prayer services.
- experience joy that the risen **Jesus** is still with us.
- appreciate that they belong to **God's** family through Baptism.
- respect the Church as a place of prayer and celebration.
- remember to pray for those who have died belonging to them.
- develop Christian virtues (e.g., truthfulness, prayerfulness, thankfulness, obedience, a sense of wonder and reverence for God's creation, respect, courtesy, helpfulness, chastity).



Level 2

Children will:

- learn to trust in **God**.
- encounter **God** in the stillness and quiet of prayer.
- value **God**'s commandments in their own lives.
- appreciate their own growth and development as a sign of **God**'s providence in their lives.
- appreciate that the people who help us are signs of **God** and they reveal his love, care, wisdom and justice.
- encounter **Jesus** in Bible stories.
- experience **Jesus**' healing presence in their own lives.
- experience **Jesus**' forgiving presence in their own lives.
- become aware that **Jesus** is calling them personally to be disciples.
- desire to love **God** and love others as **Jesus** taught.
- come to value **Jesus**' teachings in word and deed.
- relate their Christian actions to those of **Jesus**.
- respond to the commandment of **Jesus** (Love one another...).
- develop their relationship with **Jesus** in prayer.
- decide to follow **Jesus** in their moral lives.
- be able to respond to the promptings of the **Holy Spirit** to love as **Jesus** asks.
- seek to emulate **Mary**'s obedience and trust in God.
- seek to emulate the **saints** and to ask their help in prayer.
- desire to share the 'Good News' of **Jesus** with others.
- identify their own role in the Church community.
- develop an appreciation of the unity between themselves and others in the community of faith.
- show respect for people of other faiths.
- appreciate the 'deeper meaning' conveyed by Biblical texts.
- reverence the Bible as the inspired **Word of God**.
- celebrate their identity as baptised children of **God**.
- appreciate that **God** called them at Baptism to be a follower of **Jesus**.
- appreciate the connection between their own baptism and that of **Jesus** in the Jordan.
- desire to keep the **Lord's Day** holy.
- participate more fully in the celebration of the Eucharist.
- reverence the presence of **Jesus Christ** in the Eucharist.
- become aware of Jesus as the '**Bread of Life**'.
- express gratitude to **God the Father** for everything and especially for the gift of **Jesus** at Mass.
- appreciate the importance of the Mass.
- participate in school/class Masses.
- see Lent as an opportunity to turn back to **God**.
- enter into the spirit of Lent by undertaking a Lenten sacrifice.
- enter into the spirit of the Church's celebration of Holy Week.
- enter into the Stations of the Cross.
- develop an understanding of their sins and their need for **God**'s forgiveness.
- appreciate **God**'s forgiveness and love and celebrate it in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- experience **God**'s mercy in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- relate to **Jesus** as the Good Shepherd in the context of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- desire to say sorry when they do what is wrong.

- desire to change as Zacchaeus did.
- celebrate the feast days of **Mary**.
- associate their own behaviour with Christian moral values and teachings.
- Identify moral failure (sin) in their own lives.
- desire to complete the steps to conversion.
- appreciate and desire to follow Christian moral precepts, maxims and rules (e.g. love one another as I have loved you).
- appreciate that their gifts and talents have been given to them by **God**.
- respect their bodies and the bodies of others because they were created by **God**.
- appreciate their interdependence upon one another, upon the earth, and upon **God**.



Level 3

Children will:

- experience the 'Good News' of the Kingdom of **God**.
- realise that they are called to cooperate with **God** in the building of his Kingdom.
- experience the faithful, strong and ever present love of **God** (as a basis on which their moral response to God will rest).
- become aware of **God's** covenant love and desire to respond to that love.
- desire to live their faith in **God** through prayer and action.
- believe in **Jesus'** promise to be with us forever.
- celebrate **God's** saving action through **Jesus**.
- value peace and see it as a gift of **Jesus**.
- believe and hope in their own Resurrection with **Jesus**.
- be willing to witness to their faith in **Christ** in word and deed.
- unite themselves with **Jesus'** way of love and faithful loyalty to the Father.
- enter imaginatively into **Jesus'** parables of the Kingdom of God.
- be aware of the presence of the **Holy Spirit** in their lives.
- appreciate the gift of the **Holy Spirit** in their lives.
- become more aware of their membership of the Church.
- appreciate their dependence on others in the community of faith.
- desire to take part in the life and worship of the domestic and local church.
- have a sense of belonging to a diocese.
- value their part in the Church's mission to the world.
- be inspired by the faith of their Christian ancestors.
- engage with people of other Christian faiths and thereby foster the coming of **God's Kingdom**.
- show sensitivity and respect for people who hold beliefs different from their own.
- journey with **Jesus** through Holy Week.
- appreciate the cross as a symbol of salvation.
- experience the joy of the Easter season.
- enter into sacraments as special meetings with the **Risen Jesus**.
- come to a deeper appreciation of the presence of the **Risen Jesus** at Mass, especially his presence under the appearances of bread and wine.
- appreciate the gift of grace received at baptism, which helps them to follow Jesus.
- appreciate Lent as a liturgical season of conversion.
- appreciate the coming of **God's Son** at Christmas.
- desire to enter into the Church's liturgical events at Easter.
- appreciate the importance of the Liturgy of the Word at Mass.
- integrate the meaning of **God's Word** into their lives.
- accept the gift of the real presence of **Jesus** at Mass.
- trust in the Eucharist as nourishment for them as followers of **Jesus**.
- come to a deeper appreciation of the reconciling love of **God** for each one of them.
- accept the mission and challenge that the **Risen Jesus** gives to us as we go out from Mass.
- persevere in prayer.
- develop an appreciation of the rosary.
- honour **Mary** as God's Mother through prayer.
- choose to use their freedom responsibly in moral decision-making.
- incorporate prayer into their decision-making.

- respond to the ten commandments in their lives as children.
- desire to extend forgiveness to others as **Jesus** taught.
- encounter the **Lord Jesus** in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- identify actions of stewardship of creation and carry them out.
- reflect on how s/he can relieve the suffering and misery of others.
- desire to use their talents in the mission given to the Church by the **Risen Jesus**.
- desire to follow **Jesus** in relating to others in peaceful, tolerant, and non-discriminatory ways.
- see their role in organisations that care for the poor.
- be inspired by contemporary Christian models in their moral lives.
- grow in appreciation of the sacredness of human life.



Level 4

Children will:

- develop a growing awareness of the mystery of **God**, of **Jesus Christ** and of the **Holy Spirit**.
- value themselves as precious in **God's** eyes.
- relate to **Jesus** as the role model.
- become aware of belonging to the **communion of saints**.
- respond to the call to live in relationship with **God**, with other people and with the earth.
- appreciate the work of the **Holy Spirit** in creation.
- realise that they are personally called to be partners with **God** in the on-going work of creation.
- recognise and respond to **God's** covenant call in their own lives.
- appreciate their dependence on **God** and respond with thanks.
- reflect on the presence of the **Holy Spirit** in their own lives and of how the **Holy Spirit** allows them to respond to the needs of others.
- recognise the **Holy Spirit** dwelling within them.
- See the **Holy Spirit** as an advocate/consoler.
- desire to receive the gifts and charisms of the **Holy Spirit**.
- desire to express the fruits of the **Holy Spirit** in their lives as children.
- be aware of the gifts and charisms of the **Holy Spirit** in their own lives.
- desire to model their lives on **Mary**, the perfect disciple.
- see themselves as part of a Church community, the People of God, that nourishes and supports faith.
- see themselves as part of the Body of Christ.
- desire to show people the love, compassion and forgiveness of **Jesus**.
- discern their own gifts of the **Holy Spirit** in carrying on Christ's work of making **God's Kingdom** present here and now (vocation).
- desire to enter into dialogue with people of other faiths and beliefs.
- extend respect and love to those who think or act differently than they do in religious matters.
- be inspired to work together with people of other faiths to promote human rights, social justice, good morals, peace and freedom.
- desire to direct their lives towards God, to love God and others, and to seek the truth.
- appreciate the importance of **God's word**.
- appreciate that the Bible contains wisdom for their lives.
- be open to receiving wisdom for their lives from the Bible.
- grow in confidence in their ability to read the Bible.
- come to a deeper appreciation of the layers of meaning in Biblical texts.
- be inspired by the prophets to witness to the truth in their own lives.
- invoke the help of the **Trinity** in striving to live like **Jesus**.
- recognise God's call to them to pray.
- appreciate that **God** is always present in their experiences of suffering.
- consider how sacraments contribute to their life journeys.
- develop their appreciation of the role of symbols in sacramental celebration.
- examine their conscience.
- renew their baptismal promises.
- celebrate the fulfilment of the promise to send the **Messiah** into our world at Christmas.
- wait in hope for the coming of **Immanuel, God with us**.
- renew their commitment to the mission of **Jesus** in Lent.

- become aware of Jesus as the **Lamb of God**.
- enter into the Easter Vigil in their local church.
- become aware that they are united with the **Risen Jesus**.
- prepare carefully to celebrate the sacraments.
- appreciate how the sacraments help them to become more holy.
- desire to be united more firmly to **Christ**, to strengthen their bond with the Church, to take part in her mission, and to bear witness to Christ in words and deeds.
- strengthen their relationship with **Jesus Christ** through the Sacrament of Reconciliation.
- desire to participate fully and actively in the Mass.
- participate in the preparation for a class Mass.
- respond to **Jesus Christ's** presence in the Eucharist.
- respond to **Jesus Christ's** presence in others by loving and serving them.
- participate as fully as possible in the Confirmation liturgy.
- appreciate their need for **God's grace** to live as his children.
- desire to live and act with justice and love towards **God** and neighbour.
- reflect on how they can contribute to the well-being of others.
- promote and protect the dignity of every person.
- cherish their own difference as **God's** way of creating them.
- reflect on **God's** providence in their own lives.
- be a responsible steward of the earth.
- explore how they can respond to **God's call** in their lives.
- be inspired to follow the example of a **saint**.
- use the gifts of the **Spirit** in their daily lives in making moral decisions.
- reflect on what their personal relationship with **Jesus** might mean for their moral behaviour.
- develop the attitudes mandated by **Jesus** in the Sermon on the Mount.
- respond to the invitation to love and justice as laid out in the Beatitudes.
- appreciate how they should respect the world, themselves, other people and **God**.
- begin to incorporate Christian moral ideals of conduct into their identity.
- choose practices to support their Christian spirituality.
- deepen their awareness of belonging to the diocese.
- continue to develop an ecumenical spirit.
- engage with contemporary culture with a Christian consciousness.
- develop confidence in their ability to respond to make Christian choices in their lives.
- desire to counteract influences that damage or destroy the natural world.