



St Francis of Assisi  
PARISH PRIMARY SCHOOL

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

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### Rationale

Forming lives of faith, hope and love, in the light of Christ is the shared vision and collective responsibility of all Catholic schools within the Archdiocese of Melbourne. In response to this mission, St Francis of Assisi Primary School embraces its evangelical call to nurture the faith-lives of its staff, students and families and support them in their growing knowledge of Jesus Christ and his Gospel. Drawing upon the theological virtues of faith, hope and love we seek to inspire and guide all members of our faith community to grow in their personal relationship with God our creator, Christ our saviour and the Holy Spirit our source of life and love.

For youth to flourish as children of God, they must be supported, guided, and educated by a strong family of faith comprised of parents, extended family, teachers, parishioners and of course members of the clergy. At St Francis of Assisi Mill Park Primary School, we embrace our calling to work in partnership with parents, parishioners and priests to provide an educational platform and prayerful, loving environment within which each young child can come to know and love God.

Religious Education at St Francis of Assisi School is a rich educational undertaking that contributes in a systematic and structured way to the religious formation of students within the Parish context. The Religious Education program at St Francis of Assisi Primary School promotes a sense of belonging, dignity and sacredness within the context of the Catholic tradition. It does this within the educational setting of the Catholic School and by providing students with learning opportunities that immerse them in the authentic traditions, beliefs and practices of the Catholic Church.

Thus, Religious Education has a developmental foundation, as students grow in their appreciation of themselves as created in God's own image, and as people of both body and spirit, who have intrinsic worth and dignity, they, in turn, find validation and purpose within the Catholic identity and ethos of St Francis of Assisi. Primary School and Parish. At the heart of this experience is the growth of a relationship with Jesus Christ who reveals to us a God who is Trinity, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

### Aims

Religious Education at St Francis of Assisi aims to develop in students:

- a relationship with the person of Jesus Christ as revealed in the Gospels and in the Tradition of the Catholic Church;
- an awareness that all human beings are made in the image and likeness of God and a consequent understanding of the sacredness of life;
- an appreciation of their wholeness as human beings, individuals of body and spirit, with a deep call to eternal life;
- an appreciation of human sexuality as a precious gift from God, our Creator;
- a moral sense and a well-formed conscience based on the life and teachings of Jesus;
- an ability to relate to others with respect, compassion and tolerance;
- a capacity to participate actively and meaningfully in the Liturgical Life of the Church;

- a knowledge of the cycle of the Church's Liturgical Seasons;
- a habit of prayer as a daily expression of a relationship with God;
- an age-appropriate awareness of the theological virtues of faith, hope and love;
- an ongoing understanding of the Sacramental life of the Church and a readiness to participate in it;
- an appreciation of creation as a sacred gift of God for which we share responsibility;
- an awareness of the life, love and legacy of our school's patron saint, St Francis of Assisi;
- a respect for and veneration of Mary, the mother of Jesus;
- an appreciation of family as the context in which we learn and grow as loving, spirit filled people.

## Implementation

In all classrooms, two and a half hours per week is allocated for implementation of the Religious Education curriculum schema.

- The Religious Education framework, To Know, Worship and Love (Catholic Education Office Melbourne/ MACS) is used as a core, developmental resource for planning the Religious Education curriculum schema (Years 3-6) and the Educating in Christ developmental framework (G. O'Shea) is used as a core foundation of Religious Education schema for junior classes (Year Prep-Year 2).
- Scripture is embedded in the Religious Education curriculum following the respective (Prep-Year 2 & Year 3- Year 6) scope and sequence schemas.
- Religious concepts and content related to the traditions and teachings of the Catholic Church are explored through a variety of age- appropriate strategies such as; storytelling, dialogue, digital resources and the practical application of social justice principles.
- Student progress is regularly assessed and reported to parents as part of the school's reporting procedures.
- Teachers assess students according to the Religious Education Curriculum Framework's Learning descriptors under the dimensions of Knowledge & Understanding, Reasoning and Responding and Personal and Communal engagement.
- The relationship with the Parish of Mill Park is fostered specifically through initiatives such as the Year 6 student presentation of the 'Passion Play' Gospel on Good Friday, the planning, preparation of significant liturgical events such as the sacraments of First Reconciliation, First Holy Eucharist and Confirmation, the feast of the Assumption, the feast of the Sacred Heart, St Francis of Assisi Feast Day celebrations and parish Christmas carols.
- Links with other curriculum areas are deliberately and constructively sought. The principles of faith, hope, love, justice, compassion, forgiveness and acceptance which underline the teachings of Christ find expression in all school activities, according to the content and nature of each curriculum area or school event.
- Classes are rostered to join with parishioners to celebrate Mass each term in addition to attending whole school liturgical celebrations (Holy Days of Obligation, Feast Days, Masses and prayer services related to the liturgical seasons/ school year)
- Regular prayer forms part of the routine in each classroom including communal prayer at the beginning and end of each day, before meals and at the commencement of special meetings, assemblies or gatherings.]
- Celebration of the Sacraments such as First Reconciliation (Year 3), Holy Eucharist (Year 3) and Confirmation (Year 6) invites full participation by staff, students and families. (see Sacramental Program Policy).
- The School's Pastoral Care Policy brings to life the spirit of the Religious Education Program in its concern for each individual student. (See Pastoral Care Policy).
- The Religious Education Program strives to acknowledge and to celebrate the diversity of cultures within the school and the breadth of religious expression that this brings.

# PRAYER POLICY

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## Rationale

Prayer in all its forms is ultimately an expression of our relationship with God. As with any relationship, it can be expressed in a variety of ways, including ritualised and spontaneous forms, or even in silence. The style or manner of prayer which is most easily used will vary from individual to individual. God does, in fact, communicate with us through and in, our personality.

Each form of prayer involves a particular set of skills and it is important that students are exposed, not only to the complete range of prayer forms, but are assisted in the development of the skills which pertain to each form.

## Aims

At St Francis of Assisi School we aim to introduce the children to the many ways in which they can express their growing relationship with God in prayer. Therefore, the school program sets out to provide for children:

- an environment in which prayer is a natural expression of both the individual and shared relationship with God;
- a knowledge of the variety of ways prayer can be experienced;
- a structured approach to the teaching of the skills relevant to each form of prayer;
- an approach to prayer which allows students to incorporate visual, kinaesthetic, oral and aural faculties;
- a knowledge and understanding of formal prayer;
- a particular appreciation of the Prayer of St Francis which expresses many of the aspirations of our school community to be a place of peace, acceptance and love.
- an appreciation of, and an ability to participate in, liturgical prayer with special emphasis traditional prayers such as the Our Father, Hail Mary and prayer related to the reception of Holy Eucharist.

## Implementation

- All the significant and many of the routine gatherings in the life of the school begin with prayer.
- Each school day begins with prayer at 8:50am and may last up to 10 minutes in readiness for the start to formal learning at 9:00am.
- Grace is said before lunch is eaten.
- Each school day also concludes with prayer before students are dismissed at 3.15pm.
- In the Religious Education Program at all year levels, a structured approach is adopted to the teaching of a variety of prayer forms, as appropriate to the children's age.
- A scope and sequence learning plan related to prayer based upon the To Come to Know, Worship and Love program is followed.
- Opportunities are provided for the Staff to pray together during meetings as well as opportunities for prayer during the seasons of Lent and Advent.
- Liturgical celebrations are a regular part of school life.
- A crucifix and other significant religious icons related to the Catholic tradition are displayed and a prayer table provides a focus for prayer in each classroom.
- Music, movement, works of art, meditation and reflection are all part of prayerful expression of students.
- Sacramental Programs are marked by an invitation to the whole school community to pray for those involved in the Program.
- Religious icons are strategically displayed within classrooms and throughout school buildings to visually proclaim and reinforce our school's strong Catholic identity.

# SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION POLICY

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## Rationale

The celebration of the Sacraments lies at the heart of the life of the Church. For children and their families they are therefore, significant and memorable occasions. They mark important moments in the life of children and they become part of the story and fabric of the life of the family. As rituals, the Sacraments celebrate the action of God in our lives and use what is visible, audible and tangible to put us in touch with what we cannot see, hear or touch. They therefore communicate to us at a particular time and place the reality of God's love that is always present and always available to us.

This Policy recognises the primary role of parents in the faith formation of their children and attempts to put in place structures that will facilitate that.

## Aims

The Sacramental Preparation Program at St Francis of Assisi aims:

- To develop in students and their families an awareness of the presence of God in Christ.
- To develop in students and their families a sensitivity to the power of the created universe around them, to put them in touch with God.
- To celebrate the many ways in which our lives are filled with the presence of God.
- To prepare students to celebrate moments in their lives of healing and forgiveness in the Sacrament of Reconciliation: empowering by the Spirit in the Sacrament of Confirmation and moments of the real and faithful presence of Christ in the Sacrament of Eucharist.
- To provide families with an opportunity to grow together in faith through the sharing of experience, prayer and learning.
- To lead students to understand and appreciate that the sacramental life of the Church begun in them at Baptism, invites a response of faith and openness to grow in relationship with God throughout their lives.

## Implementation

- As part of the Religious Education Program of the School the students are prepared for the reception of the Sacraments. In Year Three, preparation focuses on the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist and in Year Six, on the Sacrament of Confirmation.
- Sensitivity is extended to the families of students who belong to the Eastern Catholic Rites.
- As part of the preparation program, parent information evenings and parent/child workshops are offered. These assist parents in their role as primary educators of their children in matters of faith. These also offer parents an opportunity to deepen their own understanding of the Sacramental life of the Church and its meaning within their own lives.
- The school maintains a very close liaison with the Parish and in its broader outreach, is inclusive of children from neighbouring State Schools.
- Families of children preparing for the Sacraments are invited and encouraged to attend Mass regularly (Lanyard Programs) to strengthen their connection to the sacramental life of the Church and deepen their understanding of these sacred events.

## POLICY REVIEW

Policy reviewed	May 2025
Approved by	Principal Mark Basile
Next scheduled review date	May 2028