**Primary Religious Education Curriculum**

**Purpose**

The purpose of the curriculum is to guide and inform the teaching of primary religious education being offered to children. It informs the knowledge and understanding which they can acquire, and the ways in which the curriculum aims to foster Christian faith commitment.

A set of faith-formation goals has been provided for each level of the curriculum across the primary school.

The primary focus of faith-formation goals in the school is on fostering an encounter with the person of Jesus and on enabling the experience of intimacy and communion with him. Children are invited to learn from Jesus’ actions, his teaching, the teaching of his Church, and to think and judge like him. It is hoped that children will develop a commitment to participate in the mission and ministry of Jesus, living their Christian faith, in the church community.

**Four-fold Structure**

The content is divided into four inter-related strands:

Christian Faith; The word of God; Liturgy/Prayer; Christian Morality. Together, these four strands outline the knowledge and understanding, skills and processes that make up the learning to be achieved at each level of the curriculum.

**1 Christian Faith**

This strand enables children to learn the key truths, doctrines and practices of the Catholic religious tradition. The children are invited to a deeper understanding and appreciation of what it means to be a disciple of Jesus, and how to participate in the life and mission of the church.

**2 The Word of God**

This strand introduces children in an age-appropriate way to Sacred Scripture in the life of the Church. Sacred Scripture is the story of God’s past blessings on the people of God, as well as an inspired Word for the present to enable the Church community to recognise God’s presence among us. Religious education is rooted in the central stories of Scripture and, in particular, the story of Jesus Christ. By listening to and understanding Sacred Scripture, children come to know the person of Jesus Christ and begin to relate to him and to his salvific mission.

**3 Liturgy and Prayer**

The Liturgy and Prayer strand enables children to engage with liturgical signs, symbols and rituals which

Nurture Christians’ relationship with God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and to develop their capacity for personal prayer and for participation in the liturgy of the Church. Liturgy involves learning by doing. They learn the language of religious ritual as they participate in the liturgies celebrated in the local Church, the most important of which is the Sunday Eucharist.

**4 Christian Morality**

The Christian morality strand enables children grow in awareness of their identity as persons created in the image and likeness of God and called to live in loving, respectful relationships with God, other human persons and the whole of Creation. They are introduced to Jesus as the model for living an ethical life and to the moral teachings of the Church that teach them how to live as his disciples. They learn to cultivate an upright and informed conscience and develop their ability for moral reasoning as they confront moral dilemmas.

**Skills of religious literacy are divided into five categories.**

**1 Understanding**

Children learn how to listen, learn from and respond to what has been revealed by God and they are invited to judge and decide what this might mean for their lives.

**2 Communication**

Learning how to communicate in the Christian religion involves learning how to appreciate and respond to sacred texts, stories, music and poetry. It includes learning how to pray, how to communicate in liturgy, and how to respond artistically to religious experience.

**3 Participation**

There is something about the process of ‘coming to know’ in Christian faith that is intimately tied to practice. When children participate in experiences of prayer, silence and meditation it develops their capacity for personal prayer and for participation in the Church’s liturgy.

**4 Developing Christian spiritual literacy**

Outcomes involve understanding that Christian spirituality is “the whole of life guided by the Holy Spirit.

Aspects of a Christian spirituality that are developed include: learning to pray, to participate in sacraments, developing a sacramental imagination and developing a prophetic imagination. Finally, children are enabled to understand how a Christian spirituality is sustained in the community of faith, the Church.

**5 Inter-religious learning**

Outcomes enable children to be able to speak the public language of religion, to comprehend and appreciate the place of religious and philosophical beliefs and practices in human life, to understand the need for dialogue among Christians, to develop powers of empathy for and sensitivity towards people of other religions and cultures, to explore the beliefs and practices of other world religions, to enter into dialogue with people of other religions and beliefs and to foster awareness of shared values such as justice, peace, solidarity, tolerance and freedom.

**Fundamental Principle**

A fundamental principle of the curriculum is that children’s current religious understanding should form the basis for new learning. The curriculum promotes an incremental approach to teaching and learning by increasing the complexity of concepts and skills of religious literacy as the child progresses through the school. The outcomes outlined in each of the strands observe a spiral progression from Junior Infants to 6th class.