Religious Education Program

2016
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Our Story

St Brendan’s is located in Brisbane’s south and serves its diverse community of learners by expecting high standards in a caring, nurturing environment for all, framed in a Catholic faith tradition.

Our school is proud that it provides an inclusive ‘safe harbour’ for all and with this vision, our school Religious Education program is presented.

Background and History

St Brendan’s Church School was established in 1918 by the Sisters of St Joseph with the main school opened in 1929 and is proud to meet the needs of the local Catholic community. St Brendan’s Primary School has been planned to provide primary education from Prep to Year 6 for approximately 200 students. With its central location of Moorooka in the South Brisbane region, students transition to a variety of Catholic, independent and government secondary schools upon completion of Year 6. In the 1950’s it was educating nearly 700 students and ironically currently educates 87 students. A full text of “Faith of Our Fathers” is attached as a chronical of St Brendan’s history.

Parish Pastoral Plan

St Brendan’s Primary School is one of two Catholic primary schools located within the Moorooka-Salisbury Parish. With St Pius X, Salisbury, St Brendan’s Primary School receives pastoral support from the parish.

The school is adjacent to the church and is an integral part of the parish community, celebrating a strong connection with the parish by actively supporting and participating in aspects of parish life. The Parish Priest, Fr Henry Maduka P.P., with the parish community, nurtures the religious life of the school and welcomes opportunities for partnership. St Brendan’s School facilities are also used for parish gatherings and worship.
Teaching and learning in Religious Education at St Brendan’s School is responsive to the needs and religious backgrounds of students and the contemporary contexts for learning in the Religion classroom.

**Faith and Demographics**

At St Brendan’s exists there is a rich cultural and learning diversity. From 2014 we’ve enjoyed a school enrolment of around 90 students. English is a second language for over 50% of students. Cultural backgrounds come from 20 countries from within Africa, Asia, South America, Europe and Australia.

St Brendan's is also inclusive of a significant proportion of verified students (10%). These students are supported through the skills of dedicated classroom teachers, specialist teachers and trained school officers who are provided for through strategic resource planning.

In 2016, comprising 6 general class groupings, there are 6 teachers of Religion among 31 staff, including specialist teachers and other ancillary support staff.

Religious data from the BI Tool indicates that our families are comprised of approximately 50% Catholic families, another 15% from other Christian denominations, 15% other religions (Islamic/Hindu), 10% not religious and 10% not stated.

5% of our children are from indigenous heritage.

This diversity brings a richness to our community as we harmoniously help each other, as our motto states, to “Live in Faith and Love”.

**Planning for Ecumenical inclusivity**

St Brendan’s seeks to incorporate an inclusive and ecumenical spirit that pervades all Religious Education activities and prayer celebrations which are announced through:

- School newsletters
- Website information about the Religious Education program
- Use of school data about who’s coming to school, and
- Non-presumptive language used during religious activities.
Our Vision for Religious Education

St Brendan's School shares and promotes the Vision for Religious Education articulated by Brisbane Catholic Education and the wider church. This vision includes the two dimensions of formation - namely of students' religious literacy and their personal faith:

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.

St Brendan’s Vision for Religious Education appropriately aligns with the Archdiocesan vision and with the BCE Learning and Teaching Framework (2012) by articulating:

St Brendan’s Religious Education Vision:

As a Catholic learning community, St Brendan’s School aspires to educate all children about Jesus Christ, based within the charism of the Josephites, so they might grow to be successful, creative, confident and active people empowered to shape and enrich our world through the values of:

- Faith
- Community
- Courage, and
- Excellence

St Brendan’s mission of our RE program is that:

As partners to Catholic parents, through our Religious Education program, our mission is to develop students who display:

- a positive and faith centred response to life
- a desire to learn about the person of Jesus
- develop a prayerful and sacramental life
- display a welcome approach to all they meet, and
- develop respect for cultural and religious diversity.

(Adapted from St Brendan’s Education Brief - 2015)
To achieve our mission of Religious Education, teachers integrate the two dimensions of religious literacy and faith formation which complement each other for the holistic development of students.

The integration of both dimensions in the daily life of the school is achieved through regular Religious Education lessons, and a commitment to building a prayerful community.

This vision for Religious Education is encompassed by our school vision and mission statements which espouses:

**St Brendan's School Vision:**
Animated by the values of equity, forgiveness, hospitality and inclusion, the St Brendan’s community in its diversity and Catholic tradition, is safe place for people to grow in personal excellence.

**St Brendan's School Mission:**

With this vision, our mission is to:

- facilitate participation in the many aspects of Catholic life
- align highly effective learning and teaching to students
- create genuine opportunities for ongoing learning
- provide a safe and supportive school environment and build personal resilience and
- match human and physical resources to needs.
The Contemporary Contexts of Religious Education

At St Brendan’s School, for the RE program to be successful, recognition is given to four contexts identified as having a significant impact on Religious Education in contemporary Catholic and ecumenical schools. These are the Societal, Ecclesial, Educational and Digital contexts.

Societal Context

St Brendan’s School operates in a complex and ever-changing environment. Contemporary students are immersed in a global, digital world and from an early age are exposed to a range of values represented through diverse media.

As a consequence, our school is continually challenged to engage students in a Religious Education program that is engaging and relevant. Further, St Brendan’s Religious Education program seeks to reflect a Catholic Christian worldview that integrates faith, life and culture. At the same time it seeks to embrace an ecumenical perspective and reflect the multi-faith context and reality of this school by espousing a Catholic perspective through:

- Enrolment meetings
- Parent information evenings
- Teacher letters to parents
- Weekly newsletter information about Religious Education
- School Website Year Overview statements.
- Supporting outreach programs of the Archdiocese and Parish.

Ecclesial Context

At St Brendan’s School, an increasing number of students and their families are less engaged with the Church. Consequently, St Brendan's provides introductory and developmental experiences of the Catholic 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 through education, liturgies and pastoral care and works of mercy so as to be able to experience a Catholic Christian community. This is achieved through:

- Whole school liturgies (observant of the liturgical year)
- Regular invitations to attend parish masses during school time and some weekends where classes are involved.
- Class prayer (formal and informal, individual and group)
- Visible signs of the mission of the Church in the school.
- Visible signs of Catholic Identity throughout the school.
- Actions espousing options for the poor and marginalized.
Educational Context

The classroom learning and teaching of Religion reflects the philosophy, content, structure, academic rigour and assessment and reporting modes used in other learning areas.

The Catholic ethos binds the learning community of St Brendan’s and grounds its purpose in teaching children about Jesus and the Catholic Tradition.

This is evident when:

- The Catholic perspective is combined into learning wherever possible
- Formal planning expectations are fulfilled by teachers
- Provision for professional learning for all staff is maintained
- Articulation of the religious life of St Brendan’s within whole school and unit planning
- Quality assessment and reporting processes are adhered to, and
- Communication with the wider community about Religious Education program is shared.

Digital Context

Religious Education in St Brendan’s School seeks to engage the use of digital tools. This enables teachers to activate multiple ways of learning and for the students to express their learning in relevant ways. This is planned for through:

- Opportunities on Scope and Sequence to identify apps used in units
- Links to Web 2 tools in planning documents
- Use of data projectors and interactive whiteboards encouraged
- iPads and computers at a 1 to 1 ratio if required, and
- Use of technological resources (reference, online primary sources and applications) can be used instead of print material for added activation of learning.
Our Beliefs about Learners and Learning

Recognizing these four contexts which impact on learners from the complex world they engage with, St Brendan’s Religious Education program is founded in the following beliefs about learners and learning:

- We believe every learner is created in the image and likeness of God.
- We believe intelligence can be developed and exhibited in many ways.
- We believe building strong and positive classroom learning relationships empowers each individual to be successful.
- We believe our Catholic Christian tradition inspires global responsibility and stewardship.
- We believe learning is a life long journey involving active and collaborative processes.

Collaborative Planning

Teachers submit their planning to the APRE who provides feedback for unit progression. This planning is finalised at four planning days throughout the year with the PLL and APRE. Planning with teachers is individualized and meeting times are made available to support the implementation of system initiatives as evidenced by:

- Resources for planning situated in year level planning folders for teachers to access on the school RE portal
- Scope and Sequence collaboration for each year level is completed
- Line of Sight documents are collaborated for each year level are checked
- Curriculum content mandated is clarified and accounted for
- Adjusted School Unit plans based on the BCE RE template for units is made available, and
- School unit planning template, structured on the BCE model of pedagogy also available for planning in RE.

Planning for Individual success

St Brendan’s School plans for the interests, religious backgrounds and learning needs of individual students. Teachers interpret the curriculum flexibly to meet the needs of students and strive to personalise learning as evidenced in unit plans by:

- Adjustments made for some learners so they are able to engage in Religious Education
- Providing alternatives through which students can demonstrate their learning
- Use of the general capabilities learning continuua in unit planning
- Providing students with additional time and support; and
- drawing from content at different levels along the Prep to Year 10 sequence to match their needs with the intent of RE curriculum.
Communication to the wider community
As Religious Education involves more than the learning relationship between teacher and student, all stakeholders are informed of its structure and updates about Religious Life of the School are shared through various media.

The whole school:
- The summation of Religious Education Program of St Brendan’s is posted on our school website for the wider community explaining the scope of learning for each year level.
- Celebrations of the Religious Life of the School are also announced on the school website, and newsletters.
- Announcements on the school electronic sign.
- Announcements in Parish Bulletin.

Classes:
- General announcements of class activities are made in the school newsletter.
- Teachers directly inform their class parent community through beginning of the term overview statements / letters.
- Invitations are made to parents of classes to attend masses and celebrations.

For students:
- Work samples are available and shared with parents at reporting.
- Achievement is discussed at parent /teacher interviews.
- Activities such as teach your parents about your RE lessons is utilized by some teachers.

Impact of System Initiatives
Brendan’s incorporates the DELT initiatives into planning for RE. While at St Brendan’s the DELT initiative is focused on increasing literacy and numeracy achievement, its impact is evident in:

- a growth mindset for RE
- the expectation of Learning Intentions and Success Criteria to be articulated, and
- use of effective feedback during and after task completion.
Curriculum Structure and Organisation

At St Brendan’s School, the structure and implementation of the Religious Education curriculum is founded in the vision for Religious Education of the Archdiocese, the priorities of the Teaching and Learning framework of BCE and the vision for learners articulated by the St Brendan’s delivery a Catholic view of learning.

A Catholic view about learning and teaching is reflected through the implementation of both dimensions of Religious Education. Attending to four underlying core themes is integral to a successful program being Anthropology, Epistemology, Cosmology and the Catholic Christian Tradition.

Catholic View of Christian Anthropology

A Catholic view of Christian anthropology is centred on the person of Jesus. It recognises each person is created in the image of God. It emphasises Jesus as a teacher whose Spirit infuses the whole curriculum with a hope-filled vision of life. At St Brendan’s School this is evidenced by:

- Our vision for learning articulating that children are created in God's image
- Our outreach to the marginalized in and beyond our community
- Making Jesus present through sharing the Gospels and staff witness and
- Positive, professional and faith filled teachers of Religion.

Catholic Perspective on Epistemology

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

The Catholic tradition then views the acquisition of knowledge as a lifelong enterprise. Opportunities to internalize this knowledge are evident during:

- Prayer opportunities and spaces within the school and classrooms
- Scope and Sequence plans indicating planning for prayer and reflection
- Mandated prayer being explicitly taught
- Reflection through liturgies from the RLOS is provided, and
- Weekly staff prayer opportunities
Catholic Understanding of Cosmology

Cosmology relates to how we understand our place in the universe and the choices we make to live within the integrity of creation which is a sign of God's love. Through sacramentality manifested in acts of mindful stewardship, Catholic Christians are called to respond to questions like: ‘What is our place in the universe?’ and ‘How do we live within the integrity of creation?’

This understanding of cosmology is evident at St Brendan's school through:

- A strong calling to stewardship by respecting creation and indigenous perspectives
- Social action and justice programs supported when possible
- Responsible use of resources by teachers and students, and
- Through PB4L a strong focus on right relationship content at the beginning of each year in all classes.

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. This Vision is realised at St Brendan’s School through everyday witness and high quality learning and teaching that challenges and transforms the culture and the world in which we live.

Ongoing formation for religious educators is as important as professional and theological learning. At St Brendan’s School formation is supported by:

- Supporting staff attendance in the Spirit Fire Formation program,
- Providing formation at the beginning of each year in the call of Catholic teaching,
- Inviting prayer from members at staff meetings.
- Visible signs of the faith and Josephite charism throughout the school.
Model for Religious Education

At St Brendan’s School we teach students about religion and how to be religious in a particular tradition. We draw upon the Catholic Christian tradition in ways that are mindful of local contexts and the ecumenical and multi-faith realities of contemporary culture. Since 2008, the distinct and complementary nature of both dimensions of Religious Education has been conceptualised in the following Model for Religious Education.

St Brendan’s School seeks to understand and utilise the distinctiveness and complementarity nature of these two dimensions of Religious Education in the holistic education and the formation of our students.

Our School programs activities and experiences for the classroom learning and teaching of Religion and the religious life of the school in ways that are responsive to religious diversity, while being faithful to the Catholic Christian identity of the school. Some evidence includes:

- Planning for the religious diversity in our classrooms from the BI Tool
- Explicit teaching from Year level descriptions and Achievement standards
- Planning for RLOS activities within and as a result of learning
- Acknowledgment of country at all prayers and
- Prominence of classroom sacred spaces.
The Reconceptualist Approach to Teaching and Learning in Religious Education

At St Brendan’s School, the religion program deals with critical religious issues and concerns of diverse learners. There are three key considerations for teachers using this approach: the Avoidance of Presumptive Language, Teaching ‘about’ the Tradition and Powerful Pedagogies.

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 particular religious affiliation. Teachers use language that is invitational and educational to better engage students. Students who can readily identify themselves as Catholics are affirmed by this approach.

In Unit planning, non-presumptive language is planned for by reflecting on the Religious affiliations of learners when planning using the BCE unit planning template and BI Tool data.

Teaching ‘about’ the Tradition

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). All students will be taught about the Catholic tradition by implementing the content from the Religious Education curriculum document by making clear connections with achievement standards.

Powerful Pedagogies

The delivery of excellence in teaching and learning (DELT) is a core goal of Brisbane Catholic Education Office. By using the BCE Model of Pedagogy and the RE Unit template, our school implements the 5 powerful pedagogies of:

1. Focusing on learners’ data and experiences;
2. Establishing clear learning intentions and success criteria for all students;
3. Activation of multiple ways of knowing and expression of learning
4. Feedback that is effective;
5. Evaluating learning with learners.
**Timetabling of Religious Education at St Brendan’s School**

As required by the RE Curriculum, teachers provide timetables to the APRE, that outline the mandated 2.5 hrs of RE needed for the implementation of the curriculum at each year level.

*Examples of timetables provided to the APRE are evidence.*

**Scope and Sequence Accountability**

At St Brendan’s School, teachers engage with a collaboratively designed year level scope and sequence plan. This ensures the implementation of all the year level descriptions, core content, mandated scripture and prayer is marked against the achievement standard. All mandated scripture is engaged with using the Three Worlds of the Text Model of interpretation.

As a small school, the APRE is accessible at all times and offers formal and informal support for RE teachers each term, to assist and guide the effective implementation of the Religious Education Curriculum.

At these meetings, scope and sequence plans are discussed with discernment for assessment adjustments to meet the needs of the children in the class. Formal meetings can occur in planning days in collaboration with the PLL and BCE staff. Planning seeks to implement the BCE learning and teaching framework and follow the BCE model of pedagogy. The implementation of the Religious Education Program is consistent with whole school approach to teaching and learning across the curriculum.

**Line of Sight Accountability**

Additionally, to the creation of Scope and Sequence plans for each year level, the Line of Sight documents are collaboratively checked to ensure explicit planning of all the curriculum content has been ensured.

The Line of Sight documents have further been supported at St Brendan's through the inclusion of the full curriculum documents including elaborations to assist teachers with activity planning for units. Elaborations are added into the content planned for in each unit to assist teachers with keeping to the intent of the curriculum.
High Quality Learning and Teaching in RE at St Brendan’s School

Accreditation Requirements
Professional Learning opportunities are discussed in strategic planning reviews and goalsetting for each school year. Teachers are surveyed about targeted elements of Religious Education and Mission priority of School Strategic Renewal Plan and those of BCE scheduled for the year within the Religious Education and Mission priority.

Professional Learning
The school provides some opportunities on Professional Learning days each year and teachers are expected to find other opportunities in their own time to complete the requirements. This is evidenced by the planning for PL for the 2009-2014 period:

- Timetable for RE PL 2009 – 2014

Accreditation to Teach Religion in a Catholic or Ecumenical School
Currently at St Brendan’s School all teachers have Accreditation to Teach in a Catholic school and all teachers of Religion have accreditation to teach Religion in a Catholic school. All staff are invited to PL to work in a Catholic School and are included in the prayer life of the school.

Powerful Whole School Pedagogies at St Brendan’s School
As stated previously, St Brendan’s School supports the BCE goal of Delivering Excellence in Teaching and Learning (DELT). At this school we are engaged in:

- Focusing on learners’ data and experiences;
- Establishing clear learning intentions and success criteria for all students;
- Activation of multiple ways of knowing and expression of learning;
- Feedback that is effective;
- Evaluating learning with learners.
Effective Assessment
At St Brendan's School assessment is an essential tool for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the Religious Education program. Assessment is seen as a tool:

- for learning,
- of learning, and
- as learning.

Tools for Assessment
Teachers at St Brendan's School are encouraged to use a range and balance of assessment tools, allowing teachers to cater for all learners and learning situations, to measure the impact of their teaching and to plan for further learning and teaching. This is evidenced by:

- Examples of Assessment tools.
- A clear link is made on the scope and sequence and the unit planner, and
- The A-Z resource document is located in each year level folder for teachers to access.

Making Judgements
Teachers at St Brendan's School use approaches such as criteria for correction matrices and quality annotations to make judgements and provide quality feedback to students.

- sample annotated assessment with criteria sheets are provided in the appendix.

Feedback to Students
At St Brendan's School student self-assessment is regarded as vital to success at school. It involves teachers:

- sharing with students the success criteria for each assessment activity
- ensuring that students understand the success criteria
- explicitly teaching students how to apply those criteria to their own work, and
- providing students with feedback to help them improve
CTJ Processes
Religious educators at St Brendan’s School engage in ongoing professional learning focused on enhancing individual and collaborative practices, as well as the capacity to improve student learning. Each year this school engages in the ongoing process of Consistency of Teacher Judgment, a key strategy for implementing the Religion Curriculum P-12 and monitoring its effect on students’ learning.

- Internal moderation is available with the APRE who assists in the design and implementation of assessment tasks
- Assessment tasks tabled at CTJ have sort alignment with our MAC Collaborative School Network for moderation in Term 4 where possible, and
- Regardless of whether RE is part of the formal CTJ process, consistency of teacher judgment at each year level occurs at St Brendan's School when teachers of RE collaborate and moderate with the APRE regarding learning achievements for reporting.

Reporting Student Progress and Achievement
Student achievement is recognised and celebrated within our school community in a variety of ways including at informal meetings; reporting to parents using the SRS reporting tool; one on one feedback to students; parent-teacher nights; open days; and awards on assemblies.

- An example of a school report card is located in the appendix.

 Meaningful, learning experiences - Resourcing in Religious Education
Teachers are encouraged to activate learning through the effective use of resources in Religious Education. This is evidenced by:

- Links on the Scope and Sequence to various online libraries such as BCE Resource Link, Web 2 Tools and other resources.
- Teachers are encouraged, and suggestions made, for the acquisition of resources through the school RE budget.
- Through Oliver, the RE resources are readily accessed by teachers.
- Effective resources are noted on the Scope and Sequence of each year level for each unit.
Monitoring and Evaluation in RE at St Brendan’s School

Processes used at St Brendan’s School for monitoring and evaluating student achievement and development for the whole school, year level, class and individual planning are implemented in the same capacity as other learning areas.

Processes for monitoring Student Achievement

Religious Education is not taught in isolation, it is a curriculum area equal to all other curriculum areas in the school. It is taught, assessed, reported and evaluated in the same way as other learning areas.

- Teachers enter grades through SRS and review through the BI Tool.
- A copy of the school’s report card is included in the appendix.
- Processes of assessment are considered through strategic planning provided in PL opportunities,
- The BI tool data is made available and assessed at the school, class and individual level.
- Moderation occurs with the APRE and at CTJ days.

Processes for Monitoring Planning

Planning is focused around the implementation and review of the scope and sequence plans for each year level on planning days. Work samples are made available to the APRE and PL in term 4 for CTJ moderation. Units are made available to the APRE through the school RE Portal in the year level folders.

Processes for monitoring the Religious Life of the School

The RLOS is planned and shared / announced in the term calendar provided by the APRE at the beginning of each term.

RLOS activities are planned for and shared with the Parish Priest and school community as a result of planning whole school observances, and class activities with the staff.

The RLOS is planned in consideration of the liturgical calendar and the strategic renewal process.

Class RLOS activities are accounted for on the Scope and Sequence of each year level and in more specifically detailed in unit plans.
Appendix

The following evidence has been included as indicators of evidence to support the validation process

- 3 Sample units of work created using the BCE RE School adapted planning template and a unit using the school designed BCE Model of Pedagogy unit template (Prep Unit).
- 2 Student work samples to support judgement processes for intraschool and interschool moderation.
- Extracts from the BI tool.
- School Calendar for Term 3 showing the prayer life of the school and planned liturgies.
- Accreditation to Teach and to Teach RE roster in a Catholic School data from iLearn.
- Copy of a parent letter for a class term overview.
- Webpage summaries of the School RE Program.
- Images to support the school program.
- A copy of a report card;
- Scope and Sequence documents adapted at the school which includes for each year level: short summary of units of work with codes from the RE curriculum and RLOS; Mandated Scripture passages; mandated prayers and meditation practices; evaluation comments
- LoS documents for each year level.
- Samples of class timetables.
- Term 3 Dates of RLOS
- Term 3 Staff Meeting timetable 2016