

# Catholic Faith in Action

## Senior Religious Education Curriculum Program Framework



**Catholic  
Education**  
Diocese of Cairns

*Learning with Faith and Vision*

Creator Spirit, we acknowledge Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples as the Traditional Owners of the land, seas and waterways on which we live and work. We pay respect to the Elders both past, present and emerging as we commit ourselves to the ongoing journey of Reconciliation.

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# Our Vision

‘To offer quality Catholic education so that each person may know and come to identify more fully with the living Spirit of Christ’

*Catholic Education Community Strategic Directions 2016–2019*



*“Through your joyful witness and service, help to build a civilization of love. Show, by your life, that it is worth giving your time and talents in order to attain high ideals, it is worth recognizing the dignity of each human person, and it is worth taking risks for Christ and his Gospel.”*

POPE FRANCIS  
(7/28/13, WYD Farewell)



## A message from the Most Reverend James Foley, Bishop of Cairns

In his farewell address to the crowds of young pilgrims at World Youth Day in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, Pope Francis challenged the faithful to take risks and through joyful witness and service help build a civilisation of love.

As the Bishop of Cairns, I have encouraged Colleges to accept the Pope's challenge and in response, a new Religious Education Program, *Catholic Faith in Action*, has been created. It is my hope that the young people in our colleges will experience faith learning within the reality of their own life and be called to positive action in a way that is reflective of the Catholic social teachings and opportunities experienced in this program.

The *Catholic Faith in Action* program framework was co-created by College and Catholic Education Services' senior leaders, clergy and an external consultant, Professor Brother David Hall FMS from the Australian Catholic University. This new program is well aligned to the Catholic Education Community vision:

***To offer quality Catholic education so that each person may know and come to identify more fully with the living spirit of Christ.***

It is my hope that this new expression of religious education in the Diocese of Cairns for students in their final years of Catholic education will enhance their capacity to make meaning in religious education, that they are able to relate it to their own life and positively contribute in building a civilisation of love.

**+ Bishop James Foley**  
**Diocese of Cairns**



## A message from Bill Dixon, Executive Director, Catholic Education Services

With the prayerful support and faithful leadership of Bishop James, I commend this new senior Religious Education curriculum '*Catholic Faith in Action*' program to you.

At a time when society is becoming increasingly secular, and some people even question the existence of God, there is an even greater need for young people to benefit from a dynamic Secondary Religious Education curriculum. Such a curriculum must be a vessel for personal transformation that fosters an intimate relationship with God, through the exploration of the Scriptures, participation in personal and communal prayer and the living out of Catholic social and moral teaching.

The *Catholic Faith in Action* (CFiA) Program provides opportunities for each of our senior students to be an active witness in response to Jesus' great commandment to love God and love others and thus, 'identify more fully with the living Spirit of Christ'.

**Bill Dixon**  
**Executive Director**  
**Catholic Education Services**  
**Diocese of Cairns**



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Education Services**  
Diocese of Cairns  
*Learning with Faith and Vision*

# Catholic Faith in Action Context



From 2019, all students in Year 11 across the Cairns Diocese will undertake a new religious education program, *Catholic Faith in Action*, in their senior secondary years. In essence, this new program reframes and builds on the current religious education offerings. The impending changes to senior secondary curriculum and assessment necessitated a comprehensive review of the current religious education offerings in senior secondary education across the Colleges in the Diocese.

Following discussions with Bishop James Foley, a working party was formed to review religious education in Years 11 and 12 and develop a new program framework for these students. Bishop James challenged the working party to:

- ✦ **develop a new program characterised by faith learning within the reality of young peoples' lives today;**
- ✦ **provide a flexible, enriching and engaging program built on Catholic teachings; and**
- ✦ **create a program which calls young adults to positive action in the world, which is reflective of these teachings and experiences in the program.**

The release of the National Catholic Education Commission's (NCEC) *Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools Framing Paper* in late 2017, provided the working party with a clear point of reference to undertake this review.

The working party is a joint venture comprised of College Principals and Assistant Principals Religious Education, senior staff at Cairns Catholic Education Services, Father Neil Muir – Vicar for Education and Professor Brother David Hall FMS – Dean of the La Salle Academy, Australian Catholic University (ACU).

Professor Brother David Hall was a member of the Faith Formation and Religious Education Standing Committee that consulted and prepared the NCEC Framing paper referred to above. He also facilitated and informed a workshop for the working party as part of this review. In his role at ACU, Professor Brother David Hall is well informed by the latest research regarding student

engagement in religious education. Research shows that religious education programs need to be reframed in order to be more meaningful for young adults.

The *Catholic Faith in Action* program, to be implemented in the Cairns Diocese from 2019, is an integrated program. The elements of the framework include Year 12 Graduate Expectations, Guiding Principles, Components and Accountabilities. The components of this new program will include scripture, Catholic social teaching, Catholic worldview, other religious experiences, worldviews and Indigenous spirituality, Catholic anthropology, ethics and morality, religious identity and culture, evangelisation and faith formation, prayer and worship, social justice and action.

An important feature of the *Catholic Faith in Action* program is the level of flexibility for the integration of its key components, which will be more responsive and reflective of the needs of students within the local context of each College. This allows for an expression of faith learning which reflects the local traditions and charisms of each individual College.

This new program of religious education in Years 11 and 12 is compulsory at each College in the Diocese but does not contribute to a student's Queensland Certificate of Education (QCE) or Australian Tertiary Admission Rank (ATAR). Accountability measures will be in place to ensure meaningful participation and achievement of the Year 12 Graduate Expectations. Colleges will still offer elective courses of religious study, such as Study of Religion, Religion and Ethics and Certificate III/IV in Christian Ministry and Theology, which may contribute to a student's QCE and ATAR.

# Catholic Faith in Action Framework

## Year 12 Graduate

The Catholic Faith in Action program has three key elements. These include:

- + **Year 12 Graduate Expectations**
- + **Guiding Principles**
- + **Components**



### 1

**A discerning pilgrim, formed in the Catholic faith community who experiences the signs and sacred mystery of God's presence.**

- i. Illustrates an understanding of the saving story of the Catholic faith and actively reflects on God's Word as communicated through scripture.
- ii. Experiences the religious and sacramental life of the school and demonstrates an understanding of and appreciation for the centrality of the Eucharist to the Catholic story.
- iii. Develops attitudes and values founded on Catholic social teaching and acts to promote social responsibility, human solidarity and the common good.
- iv. Is open to an authentic relationship with God, others and creation and lives authentically to their discernment of their calling.
- v. Respects the faith traditions, world religions and the life-journeys of others.
- vi. Recognises that human frailty, conflict and forgiveness are part of the human journey and forgiveness, and that compassion and mercy are central to the life of Catholics.



# Expectations<sup>1</sup>

2

**An effective communicator who speaks, writes and listens attentively and sensitively, responding critically in light of a Catholic perspective.**

- i. Presents information and ideas clearly, honestly and with sensitivity to others.
- ii. Uses language, symbols and texts for diverse audiences.
- iii. Can engage in dialogue with diverse audiences, including different cultures and religions.
- iv. Uses and integrates the Catholic faith tradition, in the critical analysis of the arts media, technology and information systems.

3

**A creative and critical thinker who solves problems and makes responsible decisions with an informed moral conscience for the common good.**

- i. Recognises the grace and goodness in our world and that hope is essential in facing all challenges.
- ii. Creates, adapts, evaluates and appreciates new ideas in light of the common good.
- iii. Makes decisions in light of Gospel values with an informed moral conscience.
- iv. With curiosity, imagination, wonder and intellectual flexibility, adopts a holistic approach to life by making new links between various subject areas and experience.
- v. Examines, evaluates and applies knowledge of interdependent systems (spiritual, physical, political, ethical, socio-economic, and ecological) for the development of a just and compassionate society.

4

**A self-directed, responsible, lifelong learner who develops and demonstrates their God-given potential.**

- i. Identifies values, beliefs, abilities and aspirations influencing life's choices and opportunities.
- ii. Respects the dignity and welfare of others, relating to them in a loving and compassionate manner.
- iii. Demonstrates and practises characteristics of Christian leadership.
- iv. Identifies and promotes the need for change in a discerning in the way.

5

**A collaborative contributor who finds meaning, dignity and purpose in work and life which respects the rights of all and contributes to the common good.**

- i. Develops an understanding of God-given potential and makes a meaningful contribution to family, work and community, to find fulfilment in life and work.
- ii. Thinks critically about the meaning and purpose of work. Works with integrity and supports this in the work of others.
- iii. Relates respectfully to others and the environment.
- iv. Recognises and appreciates diverse perspectives and contributions, to work effectively as a team member.
- v. Makes choices that reflect the ethics of the Gospel.



# Catholic Faith in Action Framework

## Guiding Principles

The development and delivery of Catholic Faith in Action has been informed by a set of agreed guiding principles.



### **Making Meaning**

Is the process of how people construe, understand, or make sense of life events, relationships, and self



### **Subsidiarity**

Is the principle that decisions should always be taken at the lowest possible level, or closest to where they will have their effect, for example in a local area rather than nationally



### **Outward looking**

Looking beyond oneself; open-minded and reaching out to other people, organisations, etc



### **Collaboration**

The act of working together with other people or organisations to create or achieve something



### **Dialogue**

An exchange of ideas or opinions on an issue from an ethical perspective, especially a political or religious issue, with a view to reaching an amicable agreement or settlement



### **Student choice**

Grounded in the belief that students have wisdom about their learning needs and interests, it is essential to give this wisdom a central place within the school context: both as a mechanism for listening to students' voices as an end in itself, and as the means or driver for creating educational programs that allow students to make their own choices related to their learning path.



### **Integration**

To combine two or more things to become more effective





# Components

The Catholic Faith in Action program is an integrated program that is underpinned by Christian teachings and contains:

**+ Scripture**

The sacred writings of the Bible

**+ Catholic Anthropology**

Christian anthropology investigates the origin, nature, and destiny of humans and of the universe in which they live

**+ Catholic Social Teaching and Just Action**

The principles of the Catholic Church's teachings on issues of justice and responsibility in society through just action

**+ Catholic Worldview**

A perspective on the reality of the world as revealed by God through Jesus

**+ Ethics and Morality**

Morals are the principles on which one's judgments of right and wrong are based. Ethics are principles of right conduct

**+ Evangelisation and Faith Formation**

Living the kingdom of God through an individual journey

**+ Other Religious Experiences, Worldviews and Indigenous Spirituality**

Other perspectives on the reality of the world

**+ Prayer and Worship**

Encountering God through ritual

**+ Religious identity and Culture**

The unique characteristics of a worldview expressed through beliefs, values and practices

# Catholic Faith in Action

## Overarching Profound Questions

*Catholic Faith in Action* has been developed around four overarching profound questions.

Each profound question is broken down into practical components and possible learning experiences for students.

Each College is able to adapt practical components in the *Catholic Faith in Action* program to reflect its unique school community.





## Who am I?

***“You are the light of the world.”*** (Matthew 5:14)

The Catholic Church teaches that each person is a sacred being, created by God, with a unique calling.

This profound question encourages students to reflect on who they are and who they can be, as an individual, in relation to the world in which they live.

Students will explore the concept of spirituality from a range of perspectives and will develop their own understanding of themselves as valuable and valued individuals.

In exploring the profound question ‘Who am I?’ students will investigate the following sub-questions:

- + ***What does spirituality mean to me?***
- + ***Who am I called to be?***
- + ***How can I serve others?***
- + ***What is my social responsibility?***

## Who is God?

***“He is a God of Justice”*** (Psalm 50:6)

The Catechism of the Catholic Church teaches that God is mystery, *“infinitely above everything that we can understand or say.”* [206]

In exploring this profound question, students are encouraged to search for answers to this mystery. There will be an opportunity for students to be in dialogue with many faith traditions and perspectives as they explore this question.

In exploring the profound question ‘Who is God?’ students will investigate the following sub-questions:

- + ***What do I think about God?***
- + ***How can I experience God today?***
- + ***How do I see God in others?***
- + ***How does knowledge of the world contribute to my understanding of God?***

## What does it mean to be human?

***“In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus”*** (Philippians 2:5)

Each person is made in the image of God, according to Catholic teaching.

This profound question encourages students to examine their own values and beliefs about what it means to be human. The many aspects of human life will be scrutinised in a reflective manner, through the lens of different faith and philosophical traditions. Students will consider the meaning and purpose of human life.

In exploring the profound question ‘What does it mean to be human?’ students will investigate the following sub-questions:

- + ***How do I live well?***
- + ***What happens when I die?***
- + ***Why do I suffer?***
- + ***Do I have free will?***

## What is Truth?

***“I am the Way, the Truth and the life”*** (John 14:6)

In exploring this profound question, students are encouraged to be critical thinkers, to seek understanding and knowledge of the world in which they live and to assess the process by which they accept statements as valid. They will also explore the impact of their own beliefs on their lives.

In exploring the profound question ‘What is truth?’ students will investigate the following sub-questions:

- + ***How do I discern truth?***
- + ***What do I understand to be true?***
- + ***How do I live out what I believe to be true?***
- + ***How does what I understand to be true affect who I am?***



# Reference Documents

*Religious Education in Australian Catholic Schools*  
National Catholic Education Commission Framing Paper

*School Effectiveness Framework*  
Cairns Catholic Education Services



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