



**THIS IS OUR FAITH** is the title of the guidance which teachers in Catholic schools follow when planning and teaching programmes of Religious Education in Catholic schools in Scotland.

This leaflet provides an introduction to it. Further resources will provide more detailed information about what children and young people will learn and experience within Religious Education at various stages of their schooling.



**This Is Our Faith** is the curriculum for Religious Education in Catholic schools. It guides what children and young people are taught about the Catholic faith throughout their time in primary school and secondary school. It offers a vision of life which proclaims the world to be God's creation, and humans to be made in the image and likeness of God:

- God the Father who draws all people to fulfilment
- God the Son who became human to save us and guide us as we journey through life
- God the Holy Spirit who inspires us all towards fullness of life within God.

But it is more than another document. It goes to the heart of what makes Catholic schools distinctive. Not only does it set out the content for Religious Education, it also captures the values and practices that come from the Catholic faith.

**This Is Our Faith** provides a set of experiences for children and young people, experiences that will build their skills and practice in the faith. So it is a rich resource for teachers to use when they are planning how to help children and young people to encounter Jesus, to meet Him in the midst of everything that they are learning at school. It builds on the experience of pupils and helps them to understand, live and celebrate what the Catholic community believe and profess.



There are two reasons for parents to be familiar with **This Is Our Faith**. The main reason is that it is an important part of what their children and young people will learn and experience at a Catholic school.

However, another reason is that it can help you to grow in your own faith and your own understanding of what you believe. Your experience as a parent within the school community will be all the richer if you are able to participate fully in the faith-life of the school.

### STRANDS of FAITH

The content of Religious Education is organised under eight **Strands of Faith**. Woven together, these strands express the main teachings of the Catholic Church. In any one lesson a teacher might cover learning which comes from more than one strand, each of which tells something "of God"

When each of the strands is defined in the text of **This Is Our Faith**, an excerpt of the Creed is included to show that it relates to what Catholics believe. The 8 **Strands of Faith** are:

- » Mystery of God
- » Signs of God
- » In the Image of God
- » Word of God
- » Revealed Truth of God
- » Hours of God
- » Son of God
- » Reign of God

**MYSTERY OF GOD** refers to the mysterious presence of God in our lives.



- We can develop an awareness of the mystery of God through contemplation of the wonders of creation.
- The universe was created in a state of 'journeying' towards its creator.
- Evil has entered the world through the misuse of freedom by God's creatures.
- The Good News of salvation is that God has made it possible, through Jesus Christ, to know him, love him, serve him and be happy with him forever.

*I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, of all things visible and invisible*

## IN THE IMAGE OF GOD



expresses our understanding of each person being created in God's image and likeness, called to live "life to the full".

- All human beings are created in the image and likeness of God and are created equal.
- We are created with talents, characteristics and capacities which are the basis of our unique vocation.
- Through original sin we have the inclination to sin, but through the Holy Spirit we can avoid it.
- Union with God, both now and forever, is possible through Jesus Christ.
- Union with God is the dignity, vocation and purpose of human life.

*Through him all things were made. For us men, and for our salvation, He came down from heaven.*

## REVEALED TRUTH OF GOD



explores how God is revealed in the Trinity of Father, Son and Holy Spirit and how we are called to relationship with Him in and through each other.

- God has revealed himself gradually through history.
- Revelation is complete in Jesus but not explicit.
- The Holy Spirit works through the Church to bear witness to the truth.
- The teaching office of the Church acts with authority in the name of Jesus Christ.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified, who has spoken through the prophets.*

## SON OF GOD



shows the significance of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ

- Jesus is both fully divine and fully human.
- Through baptism we enter into the life of God and are called to continue the work of Jesus.
- The resurrection is central to our Christian faith because, when God raised Jesus from the dead, Jesus overcame sin and death and enabled us to live as God's sons and daughters.

*I believe in the one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. . . begotten not made, consubstantial with the Father; through Him all things were made. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried and rose again on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.*

## STRAND of FAITH

### SIGNS OF GOD



covers learning about the Church and the Sacraments as signs of God's active, continuing and sustaining presence in our lives

- The faith we profess is first professed by the Church, which is our teacher in the faith.
- Through the seven sacraments we enter most deeply into the mystery of the death and resurrection of Jesus.
- The sacraments were willed and instituted by Christ and entrusted to the Church.
- Through the sacraments we receive God's grace to nurture our Christian life.

## THE CREED

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the Giver of Life, who proceeds from the Father and the Son, who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified. I believe in one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church. I confess one Baptism for the forgiveness of sins.*

### WORD OF GOD

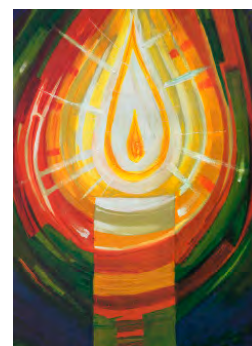


explores the forms and the meaning of the Bible, the texts of Sacred Scripture, as God's message to all people in all times.

- Written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, Sacred Scripture contains the truth of salvation.
- Sacred Scripture and the Tradition of the Church are intimately related because they come from the same source and together constitute the Word of God.
- Through the Word of God we find nourishment and strength and deepen our awareness of the mystery of God.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit. . . who has spoken through the prophets. I believe in one, holy, Catholic and apostolic Church.*

### HOURS OF GOD



considers the importance of prayer, devotion, sacred time and spaces so that we can develop a personal relationship with God.

- We are baptised in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Our prayer is primarily adoration and praise of the Holy Trinity.
- Our prayer is a response to God's love and God's call.
- Liturgy makes present the events which saved us.
- In the Eucharist the sacrifice of Christ is made present in sacrament and unites the praise, suffering, prayer and work of the members of the body of Christ.

*I believe in the Holy Spirit, . . . who with the Father and the Son is adored and glorified.*

### REIGN OF GOD



relates to our belief that we are called to holiness in our lives, to transform the world into God's kingdom of justice, love and peace.

- Jesus brought about the Kingdom of God through his miracles, his teaching and through his death and resurrection.
- The values of the kingdom are summarised in the Beatitudes.
- Christians have a vocation to bear personal witness to the Good News, beginning with an inner conversion from sin.
- Responding to their vocation, Christians make the Reign of God known in the world.
- Conversion is characterised by acts of self-sacrificing love, peace, reconciliation and solidarity with the poor.

*He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead and his Kingdom will have no end. I confess one baptism for the forgiveness of sins and I look forward to the resurrection of the dead and the life of the world*

# HOW PARENTS CAN HELP TO SUPPORT LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT PARENTS TAKE AN ACTIVE INTEREST IN WHAT THEIR CHILDREN ARE LEARNING IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND TRY TO OFFER SUPPORT IN VARIOUS WAYS. SOME OF THE IDEAS SUGGESTED BELOW ARE FOR INDIVIDUAL PARENTS; OTHERS WILL REQUIRE THE INVOLVEMENT OF PARENT COUNCILS.

## HOMEWORK

Ask the school about the Religious Education homework which your child will be expected to complete at different stages. Take an interest in this homework when your child is completing it.

## SCHOOL REPORTS

Make a point of paying attention to teachers' reports on your child's progress in Religious Education. Regards it as important as any other subject.

## SCHOOL PARENTS' MEETINGS

At curriculum meetings and workshops make a point of talking to teachers about Religious Education. Discuss how much time is allocated to Religious Education each week. Look over some of the school's classroom materials.

## PARENT COUNCILS

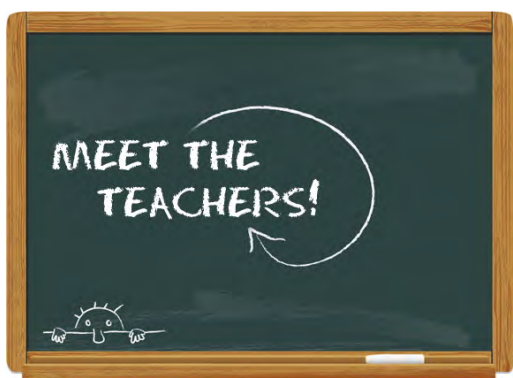
Parent Council members should discuss aspects of the school's Religious Education programmes and offer any support to ensure that these are as good as possible.

## CURRICULUM SESSIONS

In partnership with the school, organise some curriculum sessions to provide parents with information about what pupils are learning in Religious Education.

## ADULT EDUCATION IN FAITH

In partnership with your parish try to organise some sessions in which adults can learn more about their own faith. Some of these could be based on the 8 Strands of Faith.



## POPE FRANCIS FAITH AWARD

Parents of Primary school children should enquire about the school's involvement with this award for pupils in P6 & P7. It promotes active involvement in the local parish and helps pupils to make use of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit.



## CARITAS AWARD

Through this scheme pupils in their final year of secondary are encouraged to offer service to others in school and in their local parish. Parents should enquire about how the school and parish are involved and about how they might offer assistance.



Your children's years in education are the most important years of their lives. No parent can afford not to take a close interest in their education. That starts with keeping yourself informed about what and how they are learning.

This leaflet on [This Is Our Faith](#) will be the first in a series of leaflets about various aspects of Catholic education. It has been produced with the support of the SCES Parental Involvement Working Group (PIWG). PIWG members also organise events to advise parents on important issues affecting Catholic schools.

If you would like to know more about the work of this group, or wish to contribute to it, simply use the contact details below to get in touch (without commitment).

## Scottish Catholic Education Service

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