



Religious Education Policy

*Scoil Nano Nagle
Bawnogue*

Aim of Religious Education

We in Scoil Nano Nagle see religious education as giving tools to the children, tools of language and thought that will help them in their search for meaning and God in their lives. It is something that works through the ethos and culture of our school.

The aim of Religious Education is to foster and deepen the children's faith. People of faith perceive themselves and their world in a special way. Faith is active. As people of faith we are aware of God as a presence in our lives. We see things in relation to God. This awareness calls for a response. Our lives become a response to a compassionate and loving God. Faith is our response to God's self-communication to us through revelation. God's initiative is a gift, an invitation. The response we make is our choice, our decision. It is a response that no one can make on behalf of another, neither can it be forced from anyone. What is possible, however, is the creation of a context wherein people have the opportunity to become aware of God's invitation, to hear God's word and to explore how best they can respond in their own lives.

Faith is a personal act – the free response of the human person to the initiative of God who reveals himself. But faith is not an isolated act. No one can believe alone, just as no one can live alone. You have not given yourself faith as you have not given yourself life. The believer has received faith from others and should hand it on to others. Our love for Jesus and for our neighbour impels us to speak to others about our faith. Each believer is thus a link in the great chain of believers. I cannot believe without being carried by the faith of others, and by the faith I help support others in the faith.

(Catechism of the Catholic Church, 166)

The presence of God in our lives is revealed in a unique way through the person and teaching of Jesus Christ. Those involved in the Religious Education of children today are offered the same challenge which Jesus offered his followers:

An argument arose among them as to which one of them was the greatest. But Jesus, aware of their inner thoughts, took a little child and put it by his side, and said to them, 'Whoever welcomes this child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me; for the least among all of you is the greatest' (Luke 9:46-48).

The Apostles judged who was the greatest according to a particular narrow set of values. Jesus, however, pointed out a different way of viewing the situation, which caused the Apostles to review their previously held judgements. He continually challenged the people who were with him to new perspectives. He viewed life from a particular viewpoint – God's viewpoint.

Extract from the Introduction to the Alive-O Programme

1. INTRODUCTORY STATEMENT

- The original policy was a collaborate effort of the parents and teachers of Scoil Nano Nagle.
- It was reviewed at a meeting of staff on 30th August 2016 and with the committee of the parents association in September 2016

2. THE CATHOLIC CHURCH AND PRIMARY EDUCATION

- Staff are supported in their faith development and teaching by
 - Monthly Newsletters that are sent out by the Diocesan Advisors
 - Opportunities to plan together
 - Encouragement to attend inservice as provided by the Diocesan Advisors
- The mission statement was revised and is prominently displayed at the school entrance.

3. AIM OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY

- Our school will have a continuum from infants to 2nd class in religious education
- Our whole school approach is integrating religious education into the life of the school through para liturgies, celebrations and ceremonies, prayer services and supporting each other in times of needs.
- All members of staff are assisted in the teaching of Religion.
- The ethos of the school is built on Gospel values.

4. GENERAL INFORMATION

a) Diocesan Information

- Name of Diocese: Dublin
- Name of Patron: Dr Diarmuid Martin
- Director of Education: Msg. Dan O'Connor

b) Parish Information

- Name of Parish: Bawnogue
- Name of Parish Priest: Brian Starcken

c) School Information

- Name of Patron of School: Dr. Diarmuid Martin
- Name of Chaplain: Brian Starcken
- Name of Chairperson B.O.M. : Mrs Martha Lynch

5. MATERIALS

- The *Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Education Curriculum for Ireland* is the foundation document for all Religious Education.
- The *Grow in Love* programme is used in the teaching of religion
- All the manuals, books and posters that go with *Grow in Love* are provided to all classes as well as online access to other resources
- Each teacher has her own complete kit
- The children use the textbooks from the *Grow in Love* programme
- The children use these books regularly and are encouraged to bring them home and share them with their parents.
- The children have access to colourful and attractive children's bibles.
- Each class has it's own set of posters that are displayed in the classrooms
- Teachers are encouraged to source materials on the Diocesan website.
- The religious education co-ordinator distributes material as the need arises.
- As with all subjects children with special or learning needs are accommodated through in religious education through the differentiation of lessons.

6. SYMBOLS

- Crucifixes are hung up in every classroom
- Classrooms also contain pictures and statues of Our Lady.
- Attention will be paid to having symbols in public spaces.

7. PRAYER SPACE

- Each classroom has a prayer space which reflects the changing liturgical seasons and the material being covered in R.E. at the time.
- Most classes have a purpose built shelf which ensures that the sacred space has a particular and specific area in the classroom
- The sacred space includes bible, candle and statue or picture of our Blessed Lady.
- Communal prayers takes place at assemblies and special celebrations such as the 2nd class graduation.
- The children are encouraged to contribute to the sacred space.

8. PRAYER

- As a class we pray at arrival and dismissal time as well as before and after lunch time. We pray as a school assemblies and ceremonies.
- Each staff meeting starts with a short, reflective prayer.
- We recite the formal prayers as outlined in Appendix 1.

- Children are encouraged to pray reverently and together, whether that be out loud or silently.

9. **DOCTRINE**

- The children are encouraged to learn by rote the questions and answers in the *Now we Know* section of *Grow in Love*.

10. **SACRAMENTAL PREPARATION**

A. **General**

- To ensure preparation for First Confession and Eucharist starts from Junior infants, teachers teach the prayers and take initiatives such as visiting the church with the children. This leads on to going to Mass in 2nd class each Tuesday morning. The chaplain is invited into the class to talk to the children.
- Teachers work and plan together with the priest, parents and parish to prepare for the First Holy Communion in 2nd class.
- Parents come to parish organised meetings where the work of school, home and parish is discussed. A committee of parents is formed to help in the sacramental preparation.
- Parents are encouraged to come with their children to the *Do This In Memory of Me* mass and the children bring home material from school which encourages good linkage between home and school.
- After First Holy communion the children continue to go to Mass on Tuesdays.
- Children dress in their school uniforms for the Sacrament of Reconciliation and in their own special clothes for their First Holy Communion.
- For the First Holy Communion Mass itself children sit with their immediate family only and other friends and relations sit at the back of the church. This is to ensure that the children are as near to the altar as possible

B. **Sacrament of Penance /Reconciliation/Confession**

- Confession is the term used throughout the school in speaking of the Sacrament of Reconciliation
- Preparation for Confession is reflected in the work that goes on in First and Second class and this is communicated to parents through the material that the children bring home.
- The Prayers of Forgiveness are taught in Second Class.

Sacrament of First Holy Communion

- The term First Holy Communion is used throughout the school when speaking of the Eucharist.
- Preparation for Eucharist is reflected in the work that goes on in First and Second class and this is communicated to parents through the material that the children bring home.
- The theme of the preparation is that Jesus is our friend and that we try to have respect and care for others as we are all God's children.
- Mass responses are taught in Second Class.
- The children are involved in the *Do This In Memory of Me* programme which is organised by the Parish.

11. **IMPLEMENTATION OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR**

- While recognizing that the curriculum is integrated and that religious education may take place as part of other areas of the curriculum such as art, drama or English, religious instruction takes place after the early morning break at 10.55am
- Each member of staff is expected to have the Certificate in Religious Studies.
- Feast days such as St Patrick's Day, St Brigid's Day are celebrated with appropriate prayers, songs, stories and activities.
- The school chaplain is encouraged to visit the classes as often as he can.
- The children take part in the *Trócaire* fundraising drive every Easter and in one other charity fundraiser during the year. The reasons for this fund raising is discussed and developed with the children in an age appropriate way.
- When the Diocesan Advisors put on an in-service for teachers the school accommodates staff by releasing them to attend.
- Our school participates in Catholic Schools week in particular by organising a *Grandparents Day*.

12. **PARTNERS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

A. **Home/School**

- Material is sent home and meetings for parents regarding the children's sacramental preparation are organised.
- Religious Education is a subject for homework.
- Parents are invited to attend special services and ceremonies in the school
- Prayers are sent home as they are being taught.

B. **School/Parish**

- *Do This In Memory of Me* is the parish based programme that is used in the children's preparation for First Holy Communion.
- A committee of parents and parish representatives is formed and it liaises with the school

13. **PUPILS OF OTHER FAITHS AND NONE**

- Children of other faiths are allowed to take part in prayers and activities related to the *Grow in Love Programme*.

- Pupils who don't wish to take part can sit apart for the R.E. classes and can study or use material related to their own faith.
- On the occasions when the class is going to Mass these children can stay with another class.

14. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

- The principal will appoint a religious education co-ordinator and her role will be as outlined in appendix 2

15. REVIEW

- This Religious Education Policy will be evaluated by
 - The perceived sense of God, faith, prayer and worship within the school community.
 - The respect for all within the school community.
 - The recognisable links between home, school and parish.
 - By the support given to others in the community in times of need.
- This review took place in September 2016 and should be reviewed again in 2019.

16. RATIFICATION & COMMUNICATION

- This review of our Religious Education Policy will be presented to the Board of Management for ratification.
- A copy of this policy will be posted on the school website www.scoilnanonagle.com and a notice of this will be placed in the school's newsletter.

APPENDIX 1: FORMAL PRAYERS

Title of Prayer	J. Inf	S. Inf	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Sign of the Cross	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Glory be to the Father	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Morning Prayer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Night Prayer	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grace Before Meals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Grace After Meals	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayer to Guardian Angel		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
St. Patrick's Breastplate			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hail Holy Queen					✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayer to Mary					✓	✓	✓	✓
Our Father		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Hail Mary		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayer to Jesus			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Confiteor			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Title of Prayer	J. Inf	S. Inf	1st	2nd	3rd	4th	5th	6th
Act of Sorrow			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayer for Forgiveness				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayer after Forgiveness				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mass Responses			Some	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gloria				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayers before Communion				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Prayers after Communion				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Comhartha na Croise			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
An Paidir			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
'Sé do Bheatha a Mhuire			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Glóir don Athair			✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Angelus (old version)					✓	✓	✓	✓
The Apostles Creed					✓	✓	✓	✓
The Memorare				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
The Magnificat				✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mysteries of the Rosary				Some	✓	✓	✓	✓
Nicene Creed							✓	✓

**APPENDIX 2: THE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION COORDINATOR IN THE
CATHOLIC PRIMARY SCHOOL**

The principal of a Catholic school has overall responsibility for maintaining and strengthening the Catholic ethos of the school. A Religious Education Coordinator should be appointed to support the principal in this role.

The aim is that the Religious Education Coordinator will facilitate the work of the principal and the staff as they strive to enhance the Catholic ethos and charism of the school.

The role of the Religious Education Coordinator should be informed by the fundamental tasks of catechesis (*General Directory for Catechesis, 85-86*):

- Promoting knowledge of the Catholic faith
- Liturgical education
- Moral formation
- Teaching to pray
- Education for community life
- Missionary initiation

Suggested Role:

- To facilitate the formulation of the Religious Education Policy
- To organise the distribution and collection of all necessary resources, e.g. full *Grow in Love/Alive-O* kit, Bibles for senior classes etc...
- To avail of the resources on www.education.dublindiocese.ie
- To facilitate links with chaplains and parish personnel.
- To enable parents to take an active role in the Religious Education and formation of their children, e.g. use of home links in *Grow in Love*.
- To liaise with Diocesan Advisers
- To distribute resources throughout the Liturgical Year.