



AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS EOLAÍOCHTA

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

RELIGIOUS  
EDUCATION  
SYLLABUS

(ORDINARY LEVEL AND HIGHER LEVEL)

# THE JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

## Aims and Principles

1. The general aim of education is to contribute towards the development of all aspects of the individual, including aesthetic, creative, critical, cultural, emotional, intellectual, moral, physical, political, social and spiritual development, for personal and family life, for working life, for living in community and for leisure.
2. The Junior Certificate Programme is designed to meet the needs of all students in second-level education. Arising from this, every subject is offered at two levels, ordinary and higher. In the case of English, Irish and Mathematics a foundation level is also available.
3. The Junior Certificate Programme aims to
  - reinforce and further develop in the young person the knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies acquired at primary level;
  - extend and deepen the range and quality of the young person's educational experiences in terms of knowledge, understanding, skills and competencies;
  - develop the young person's personal and social confidence, initiative and competence through a broad, well balanced general education;
  - prepare the young person for the requirements of further programmes of study, of employment or of life outside full-time education;
  - contribute to the moral and spiritual development of the young person and to develop a tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of others;
  - prepare the young person for the responsibilities of citizenship in the national context and in the context of the wider European and global communities.
4. The Junior Certificate Programme is based on the following principles:
  - Breadth and balance**  
At this stage of their school career, every student should have a wide range of educational experiences. Particular attention must be given to reinforcing and developing the skills of numeracy, literacy and oracy. Particular emphasis should be given to social and environmental education, science and technology and modern languages.
  - Relevance**  
Curriculum provision should address the immediate and prospective needs of the young person, in the context of the cultural, economic and social environment.
  - Quality**  
Every young person should be challenged to achieve the highest possible standards of excellence, with due regard to different aptitudes and abilities and to international comparisons.
5. Each Junior Certificate Syllabus is presented for implementation within the general curriculum context outlined above.



JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

# RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

(ORDINARY AND HIGHER LEVEL)



# CONTENTS

<b>Rationale</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>Religious Education for Junior Certificate</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>Aims of Religious Education</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>Syllabus Outline</b> .....	<b>7</b>
<b>Section A: Communities of Faith</b> .....	<b>8</b>
<b>Section B: Foundations of Religion – Christianity</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Section C: Foundations of Religion – Major World Religions</b> .....	<b>20</b>
<b>Section D: The Question of Faith</b> .....	<b>26</b>
<b>Section E: The Celebration of Faith</b> .....	<b>32</b>
<b>Section F: The Moral Challenge</b> .....	<b>38</b>
<b>Assessment</b> .....	<b>44</b>



## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE CURRICULUM: AN EDUCATIONAL RATIONALE

The White Paper on Education (1995, p.10) sets out the following aims of education:

- to foster an understanding and critical appreciation of the values - moral, spiritual, religious, social and cultural - which have been distinctive in shaping Irish society and which have traditionally been accorded respect in society
- to nurture a sense of personal identity, self-esteem and awareness of one's particular abilities, aptitudes and limitations, combined with respect for the rights and beliefs of others
- to promote quality and equality for all, including those who are disadvantaged, through economic, social, physical and mental factors, in the development of their full educational potential
- to develop intellectual skills combined with a spirit of inquiry and the capacity to analyse issues critically and constructively
- to develop expressive, creative and artistic abilities to the individual's full capacity
- to foster a spirit of self-reliance, innovation, initiative and imagination
- to promote physical and emotional health and well being
- to provide students with the necessary education and training to support the country's economic development and to enable them to make their particular contribution to society in an effective way
- to create tolerant, caring and politically aware members of society
- to ensure that Ireland's young people acquire a keen awareness of their national and European heritage

and identity, coupled with a global awareness and a respect for and care for the environment

It follows that the curriculum of the school should reflect and make provision for the realisation of these aims.

In the context of these aims, human development is the development of the awareness of self as separate and unique, with the capacity for reflection, imagination and creativity and openness to ideas of truth, goodness, and beauty. From earliest times, the experience of the spiritual and the human search for meaning have frequently found expression in a religious interpretation of life. The history of humanity has been indelibly marked by the contributions of religious traditions. In Ireland, Christianity is part of our rich cultural heritage and has played a significant role in shaping our vision of ourselves, our world, and our relationships with others. However, effective functioning in an increasingly complex culture demands that people have an understanding of a variety of religious traditions and an appreciation of the richness of the major religious traditions encountered not just in Ireland but in Europe and in the wider world. Increasingly, modern culture also calls for engagement with the secular response to human experience.

While it is the concern of the whole curriculum, built around the principles of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes, to promote personal growth and to facilitate the spiritual development of students, Religious Education is well placed to provide students with opportunities for reflection on human experience as well as for understanding and interpretation of that experience. Such opportunities encourage the students' participation in their own conscious and critical development.

Religious Education should ensure that students are exposed to a broad range of religious traditions and to the non-religious interpretation of life. It has a particular role to play in the curriculum in the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding. It seeks to develop in students the skills needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other, or of no, religious traditions.

Religious Education, in offering opportunities to develop an informed and critical understanding of the Christian tradition in its historical origins and its cultural and social expressions, should be part of a curriculum that seeks to promote the critical and cultural development of the person in his or her social and personal life.

Religious Education makes a significant contribution to a curriculum that seeks to provide for the moral

development of students. It introduces a variety of ethical codes and norms for behaviour. Students are encouraged to engage critically with these moral systems in an effort to arrive at a thought-through moral stance that will serve as a foundation for the decisions they will face as adults and for the patterns of behaviour and commitment that will mark how they will relate to their local communities and to the world in general.

In summary, Religious Education can justly claim to be an integral part of any curriculum that aims to promote the holistic development of the person in the light of the stated aims of education. The assessment and certification of an Religious Education syllabus at national level would provide students and society with certificated statements of achievement based on the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes implicit in that syllabus.

## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION FOR THE JUNIOR CERTIFICATE

The aim of Junior Cycle Religious Education is to provide students with a framework for encountering and engaging with the variety of religious traditions in Ireland and elsewhere. Such a framework would also prepare students for the Leaving Certificate course in Religious Education.

The syllabus for the Junior Certificate, in common with the range of subjects offered at this level, invites the students to reflect on their own experiences. The students' own experience of religion and their commitment to a particular religious tradition, and/or

to a continuing search for meaning, will therefore be encouraged and supported.

Junior Cycle Religious Education seeks to promote an understanding and appreciation of why people believe, as well as tolerance and respect for the values and beliefs of all. The syllabus is built around a framework of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes. As part of a programme of preparation for the responsibilities of citizenship, the course makes particular reference to the Christian tradition, acknowledging the unique role of this tradition and its denominational expressions in Irish life.



## AIMS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

- **To foster an awareness that the human search for meaning is common to all peoples, of all ages and at all times**
- **To explore how this search for meaning has found, and continues to find, expression in religion**
- **To identify how understandings of God, religious traditions, and in particular the Christian tradition, have contributed to the culture in which we live, and continue to have an impact on personal life-style, inter-personal relationships and relationships between individuals and their communities and contexts**
- **To appreciate the richness of religious traditions and to acknowledge the non-religious interpretation of life**
- **To contribute to the spiritual and moral development of the student**



## SYLLABUS OUTLINE

Syllabus sections may be taught in any order; it is not necessary to follow the sequence outlined below.

The course consists of two parts:

### PART 1

Students take **any two** of the following:

**SECTION A** **Communities of Faith**

**SECTION B** **Foundations of Religion – Christianity**

**SECTION C** **Foundations of Religion – Major World Religions**

### PART 2

Students take **all** of the following:

**SECTION D** **The Question of Faith**

**SECTION E** **The Celebration of Faith**

**SECTION F** **The Moral Challenge**

## **SECTION A**

### COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

#### **Aims**

- To explore the nature and pattern of human communities
- To identify the characteristics of communities of faith/churches
- To examine these characteristics as they occur in communities of faith/churches in local, national and international examples

## Part 1

# COMMUNITY

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 recognise different types of communities and some examples of these;
- 2 identify common and particular characteristics of these communities;
- 3 explore the tension between individual and community responsibility.

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• co-operation/ lack of co-operation</li><li>• sharing</li><li>• communication</li><li>• roles</li><li>• community breakdown</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Forms and types of community</li><li>2. The characteristics of communities</li><li>3. The strengths and weaknesses of community</li><li>4. The human need to live in community and the tension between the needs of the group and the needs of the individual</li><li>5. Community life and the freedom of the individual</li></ol>

## Part 2

# COMMUNITIES AT WORK

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 be able to describe the role of communities in society;
- 2 recognise the variety of roles within communities, including leadership roles.

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>commitment</b></li><li>• <b>service</b></li><li>• <b>vision</b></li><li>• <b>leadership</b></li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Looking at the work done by different types of local, community, national and international organisations</li><li>2. The inspiration for this work and its source</li><li>3. The variety of roles within communities</li></ol>

### Part 3

## COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 be able to name the churches and religious groups found in Ireland today;
- 2 have an understanding of how two of these communities express their vision and commitment and of the variety of roles within each community at local and national levels;
- 3 recognise and be able to retell stories about the founders/earliest followers of Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• founder</li> <li>• inspiring vision</li> <li>• revelation</li> <li>• sacred text</li> <li>• gospel</li> <li>• faith/belief</li> <li>• identity</li> <li>• religions</li> <li>• church</li> <li>• denomination</li> <li>• religious commitment</li> <li>• vocation as calling to serve</li> <li>• preaching</li> <li>• mission</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Communities of faith today; examples of different religious communities, their correct names and titles, including the titles and names of leaders</li> <li>2. The founders/origins of the major world religions</li> <li>3. Stories of the earliest followers and their leaders</li> <li>4. Exploration of the work done by two churches or religious organisations or orders at a local and national level, under the following headings:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>the inspiration for this work and for commitment to service in the community of faith</i></li> <li>• <i>the impact of this work on other individuals and on other communities</i></li> <li>• <i>the variety of roles within communities of faith.</i></li> </ul> </li> <li>5. Challenges for churches/communities of faith in the modern world</li> </ol>

## Part 4

# RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN COMMUNITIES OF FAITH

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **recognise the importance of respecting their own beliefs and the beliefs and convictions of others;**
- 2 **understand the implications of sectarianism, in Ireland and elsewhere;**
- 3 **be aware of the ecumenical movement, especially in their own community;**
- 4 **understand the meaning of inter-faith dialogue.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>ecumenism</b></li><li>• <b>inter-faith dialogue</b></li><li>• <b>sectarianism</b></li><li>• <b>religious conflict</b></li><li>• <b>tolerance</b></li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Exploring the relationships between different communities of faith and particularly between different Christian denominations in Ireland</li><li>2. Looking at some examples of conflict as a result of religious difference, in Ireland and elsewhere</li></ol>



**HIGHER LEVEL ONLY**

**Part 5**

**ORGANISATION AND LEADERSHIP IN  
COMMUNITIES OF FAITH**

**Objectives**

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 be able to identify and describe different styles of leadership in human communities and in religious/church communities;**
- 2 recognise the connection between leadership and authority in religious/church communities, in particular in the Christian churches.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>leadership</b></li> <li>• <b>authority</b></li> <li>• <b>service</b></li> <li>• <b>ministry</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Types and styles of leadership in human communities</li> <li>2. The impact of these styles on communities</li> <li>3. Looking at the leadership types in two local churches or communities of faith</li> <li>4. The nature of leadership and authority in the major world religions, with particular emphasis on Christianity</li> <li>5. Challenges to leadership</li> </ol>

## **SECTION B**

### FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGION – CHRISTIANITY

#### **Aims**

- To explore the context into which Jesus was born
- To identify the Gospels as the main source of knowledge about Jesus
- To examine the meaning of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus for his followers, then and now.

## Part 1

# THE CONTEXT

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **have an understanding of the context into which Jesus of Nazareth was born.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>The Holy Land</b></li><li>• <b>The Roman Empire</b></li><li>• <b>Ancient Judaism</b></li><li>• <b>Messianic expectation</b></li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The historical and geographical background to life in Palestine at the time of Jesus</li><li>2. The impact of these historical and geographical factors on the lives of the people</li><li>3. The political and religious structures at the time of Jesus</li></ol>

## Part 2

# EVIDENCE ABOUT JESUS

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **be able to name some of the sources of information about Jesus of Nazareth;**
- 2 **differentiate between documents of faith and documents of history;**
- 3 **be able to trace the development of the Gospels from oral tradition to written word.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>evidence</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>from oral tradition</b></li> <li>- <b>from written tradition</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>gospel</b></li> <li>• <b>evangelist</b></li> <li>• <b>witness</b></li> <li>• <b>synoptic</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. An overview of the historical sources for evidence of the life of Jesus</li> <li>2. The Gospels as documents of faith rather than history</li> <li>3. The Gospels as good news – from oral tradition to the written word</li> <li>4. The evangelists as people of faith; how the Gospels came to be written</li> <li>5. Different perspectives in the Gospels – some examples from the writings of the evangelists</li> </ol>

### Part 3

## THE PERSON AND PREACHING OF JESUS

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **be able to identify characteristics of the kingdom of God as preached by Jesus;**
- 2 **be able to recognise these characteristics in the words and actions of Jesus and his followers, past and present.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>kingdom of God</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>in parable</b></li> <li>- <b>in miracle</b></li> <li>- <b>in table-fellowship</b></li> <li>- <b>in discipleship.</b></li> </ul> </li> <li>• <b>vocation</b></li> <li>• <b>mission</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying the characteristics and meaning of the kingdom of God as preached and witnessed to by Jesus in word and deed – in parable, miracle, and table-fellowship. Such characteristics might include the treatment of sinners and other outsiders, the treatment of women, the special place of the poor, love of neighbour, and love of enemy</li> <li>2. The disciples of Jesus and the call to follow. How that call is heard and responded to today</li> <li>3. Searching for evidence of the impact of these elements on the lives of Christian believers today</li> </ol>

**Part 4**

**THE DEATH AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS**

**Objectives**

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 be able to recognise moments of conflict in the life of Jesus;**
- 2 have an understanding of the Last Supper as a meal in the Passover tradition;**
- 3 have read and be familiar with the Gospel accounts of the death of Jesus;**
- 4 be aware of the possible impact of the resurrection appearances on the followers of Jesus.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>conflict with authority</b></li> <li>• <b>sacrifice</b></li> <li>• <b>martyrdom</b></li> <li>• <b>memorial</b></li> <li>• <b>Passover</b></li> <li>• <b>Eucharist</b></li> <li>• <b>resurrection</b></li> <li>• <b>transformation</b></li> <li>• <b>presence</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Looking at some of the stories from the Gospels that show Jesus in conflict with the religious and political authorities</li> <li>2. The Last Supper as Passover meal and Eucharist</li> <li>3. The Gospel stories of the events leading up to the death of Jesus and the impact of these events on the followers of Jesus</li> <li>4. Analysing the stories of Jesus’ appearances after his death and the impact of these appearances on the disciples</li> </ol>

**Part 5**

**FAITH IN CHRIST**

**Objectives**

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 have an awareness of the emerging identity and development of the first Christian communities;**
- 2 be able to compare and contrast those early faith communities with modern faith communities;**

**Higher Level Only**

- 3 have an understanding of the meanings attached to the new titles for Jesus.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pentecost</li> <li>• missionary</li> <li>• People of God</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The work of the disciples after the death of Jesus and the formation of the first Christian communities</li> <li>2. The characteristics of those first communities: faith, worship, and way of life</li> </ol>

Higher level only	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Son of Man</li> <li>• Son of God</li> <li>• New Creation</li> <li>• Christ/Messiah</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. An examination of some of the new titles for Jesus and new understandings of Jesus and his life</li> </ol>

## **SECTION C**

### FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGION – MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS

#### **Aims**

- To explore in detail a major world religion\*
- To examine the impact of this religion on its followers today and on other individuals and communities

\*Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam, or Judaism



## Part 1

# THE CONTEXT

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 have an understanding of the historical situation at the time of origin or foundation of the chosen major world religion.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>location</b></li><li>• <b>cultural context</b></li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Identifying the historical and geographical background to life at the time of foundation or origin</li><li>2. Examining the impact of these factors on the lives of people at the time</li><li>3. Exploring any political and religious structures at the time</li></ol>

## Part 2

# SOURCES OF EVIDENCE

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **be able to name the primary source(s) of information about the chosen major world religion;**
- 2 **be able to differentiate between faith documents and historical documents;**
- 3 **be able to trace the development of the tradition from oral to written tradition.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>evidence</b></li> <li>• <b>oral tradition</b></li> <li>• <b>sacred text</b></li> <li>• <b>prophet</b></li> <li>• <b>inspiration</b></li> <li>• <b>revelation</b></li> <li>• <b>founder</b></li> <li>• <b>vision/dream</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Overview of records and sources for the foundation of the chosen major world religion</li> <li>2. Sacred text(s) as documents of faith</li> <li>3. The presentation, appearance or revelation of sacred text or story – how it came to be in its present form</li> <li>4. The biography of the founder or significant person – identifying key moments</li> </ol>

### Part 3

## rites of passage and other rituals

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **be able to identify essential elements of the beliefs and symbols of the chosen major world religion;**
- 2 **be able to recognise these beliefs and symbols in the words and actions of followers, past and present.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• rite</li> <li>• ritual</li> <li>• festivals</li> <li>• pilgrimage</li> <li>• practice</li> <li>• ceremony</li> <li>• sign and symbol</li> <li>• places of worship</li> <li>• creed/ethic</li> <li>• calendar/sacred time</li> <li>• prayer/meditation</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Exploring the ritual events and times of the tradition and the celebration of these in the life of the community, especially in Ireland</li> <li>2. Identifying the key elements of membership of the chosen major world religion – creed and practice</li> </ol>

## Part 4

# DEVELOPMENT OF TRADITION

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **be able to recognise important moments in the story of the chosen major world religion.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>commitment</b></li><li>• <b>persecution</b></li><li>• <b>schism</b></li><li>• <b>development</b></li><li>• <b>expansion</b></li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Examining important people and key moments in the development of the religion</li><li>2. Examining the price of commitment or conversion for followers</li><li>3. Discovering the global distribution of followers with particular reference to Ireland.</li></ol>

**HIGHER LEVEL ONLY**

**Part 5**

**TRADITION, FAITH AND PRACTICE TODAY**

**Objectives**

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 be able to compare and contrast the faith and practice of early communities with that of the modern community, with particular reference to followers in Ireland;**
- 2 have an awareness of the links between the chosen major world religion and other major world religions, including Christianity.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>community structure</b></li> <li>• <b>leadership and education</b></li> <li>• <b>tradition</b></li> <li>• <b>follower/discipleship</b></li> <li>• <b>dialogue</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Examining the identity of the chosen major world religion – early followers and the emerging pattern of community and personal faith</li> <li>2. Examining relationship – conflict and dialogue with other communities of faith</li> <li>3. Comparing the life-style of believers with other communities of faith</li> </ol>

## **SECTION D**

### THE QUESTION OF FAITH

#### **Aims**

- To explore the situation of religious faith today
- To identify the beginning of faith in the asking of questions and the search for answers
- To recognise expressions of human questioning in modern culture
- To identify the characteristics of religious faith
- To examine challenges to religious faith today
- To offer opportunities for the exploration of, and reflection on, personal faith positions

## Part 1

# THE SITUATION OF FAITH TODAY

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **be aware of the changing patterns of religious belief and practice in Ireland and elsewhere;**
- 2 **be able to name and identify the factors that influence the religious beliefs of the adolescent.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>religious belief</b></li> <li>• <b>religious practice</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Exploring religious belief and practice in the locality, in Ireland and throughout Europe at present and over the last century</li> <li>2. Identifying the characteristics of religious belief and practice in other parts of the world and differences between religion in Europe and religion elsewhere</li> <li>3. Identifying factors that influence religious belief throughout Europe and in Ireland</li> <li>4. Identifying factors that influence religious belief and practice in the life of the adolescent</li> </ol>

## Part 2

# THE BEGINNINGS OF FAITH

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 be aware of the facility for questioning as an essential human characteristic;
- 2 be able to name common human questions of meaning and to articulate their own questions of meaning;
- 3 be able to identify evidence of human search in contemporary culture.

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• question/questioner</li> <li>• search</li> <li>• meaning/meaninglessness</li> <li>• reflection</li> <li>• awe and wonder</li> <li>• humanism</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Asking questions; looking at the questions human beings ask at different stages of their development and their expressions in culture, especially in youth culture</li> <li>2. Finding answers; sources of meaning in human life (such as family, work, music, money, success, relationships, etc.)</li> <li>3. Non-religious answers: the position of the secular humanist</li> </ol>



### Part 3

## THE GROWTH OF FAITH

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 have an awareness of the variety of images of God and their sources;
- 2 be able to articulate their own images of God and to identify their sources;
- 3 differentiate between the faith of the child and that of the adult and have a sense of the development from one to the other.

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• trust</li> <li>• faith</li> <li>• personal faith</li> <li>• childhood faith</li> <li>• mature faith</li> <li>• stages of faith</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Imaging God: images of God from a wide variety of sources, including the student's own experience</li> <li>2. The search for God from childhood to adulthood: from simple human trust to religious commitment – stages of faith</li> </ol>

## Part 4

# THE EXPRESSION OF FAITH

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 understand that religious belief can find expression in prayer, worship, and ways of life;
- 2 be able to identify evidence of religious belief in stories from two religious traditions.

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• prayer</li><li>• worship</li><li>• monotheism</li><li>• polytheism</li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Prayer and worship as expressions of religious faith and search for God</li><li>2. Way of life as an expression of religious faith</li><li>3. Stories of faithful people from two religious traditions</li></ol>

**HIGHER LEVEL ONLY**

**Part 5**

**CHALLENGES TO FAITH**

**Objectives**

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 have an awareness of the variety of world views in today’s culture;**
- 2 understand the challenge posed by some of these views to religious belief;**
- 3 be able to identify points of conflict and points of contact between the scientific and religious world views of creation.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>reflection</b></li> <li>• <b>world view</b></li> <li>• <b>experiencing God</b></li> <li>• <b>atheism</b></li> <li>• <b>agnosticism</b></li> <li>• <b>secularism</b></li> <li>• <b>materialism</b></li> <li>• <b>fundamentalism</b></li> <li>• <b>creation</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The variety of world views in modern culture, including their origin</li> <li>2. The scientific world view – at odds with religion? The question of creation</li> <li>3. The technological view of the world and the person</li> <li>4. Challenges to religious experience (such as materialism, individualism, etc.)</li> <li>5. Apathy and religious indifference</li> </ol>

## **SECTION E**

### THE CELEBRATION OF FAITH

#### **Aims**

- To show how ritual and worship have always been part of the human response to life and to the mystery of God
- To identify how communities of faith express their day-to-day concerns in various forms of ritual
- To explore an experience of worship

#### **Higher Level Only**

- To explore the link between patterns of worship and mystery/that which is of ultimate concern to individuals and communities.

## Part 1

# THE WORLD OF RITUAL

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 have an understanding of how particular places and times come to be significant.

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• places of significance</li> <li>• actions of significance</li> <li>• times of significance</li> <li>• sacredness</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying and naming places and buildings in Ireland and elsewhere that are considered to be of special significance</li> <li>2. Exploring how these places and buildings achieve significance</li> <li>3. Examining the common characteristics of some of these places</li> <li>4. The significant times and actions of a variety of communities (such as youth clubs, schools, sports clubs, etc.)</li> </ol>

## Part 2

# THE EXPERIENCE OF WORSHIP

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 be able to identify elements of worship.

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>worship</b></li><li>• <b>ritual</b></li><li>• <b>participation</b></li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Examples of people at worship – identifying the elements of worship</li><li>2. Participating in/observing an experience of worship to experience or see the elements of worship in action</li></ol>

**HIGHER LEVEL ONLY**

**Part 3**

**WORSHIP AS RESPONSE TO MYSTERY**

**Objectives**

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 have an awareness of the impact of the experience of mystery in human life;**
- 2 be able to identify participation in worship as a response to that experience.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>reflection</b></li> <li>• <b>encountering mystery</b></li> <li>• <b>wonder</b></li> <li>• <b>worship as a response to mystery or an expression of ultimate concern</b></li> <li>• <b>encounter with God</b></li> <li>• <b>celebration</b></li> <li>• <b>communication</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Exploring some responses to the encounter with mystery</li> <li>2. Exploring some religious responses to the encounter with mystery or ultimate concern in sacred places, times, and actions</li> </ol>

**Part 4**

**SIGN AND SYMBOL**

**Objectives**

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 be aware of the place of sign and symbol in human life and in religious traditions;**
  - 2 have an understanding of the power and meaning of religious symbols;**
- or**
- 3 be familiar with the Christian understandings of sacrament and have a detailed understanding of the place of sacrament in two Christian denominations.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>sign</b></li> <li>• <b>symbol</b></li> <li>• <b>icon</b></li> <li>• <b>sacrament</b></li> <li>• <b>identity</b></li> <li>• <b>communicating experience</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying the elements of sign in everyday life</li> <li>2. Identifying the elements of symbol and the presence of symbol in everyday life</li> <li>3. The purpose of symbols in human and religious life</li> <li>4. (a) Encountering some religious symbols and their meanings</li> </ol> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>or</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(b) Exploring the Christian understandings of sacrament and the expression of this understanding in <b>two</b> Christian traditions and recognising the religious symbols of other religious traditions</li> </ol>



## Part 5

# PRAAYER

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **have an understanding of the importance of prayer in the lives of individuals and in religious traditions;**
- 2 **be able to differentiate between different types of prayer.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>communication with God</b></li> <li>• <b>meditation</b></li> <li>• <b>contemplation</b></li> <li>• <b>petition</b></li> <li>• <b>praise and thanksgiving</b></li> <li>• <b>penitence</b></li> <li>• <b>personal prayer</b></li> <li>• <b>communal prayer</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Exploring the idea of prayer as a need to communicate with God</li> <li>2. Examination of the nature and function of prayer</li> <li>3. Difficulties with prayer</li> <li>4. Looking at important people in the spiritual traditions</li> </ol>

## **SECTION F**

### THE MORAL CHALLENGE

#### **Aims**

- To explore the human need to order relationships at the personal, communal and global levels
- To explore how this need can be expressed in a variety of ways
- To identify how this need is expressed in civil and other legal codes
- To show how religious belief is expressed in particular moral visions
- To explore the moral visions of two major world religions, one of which should be Christianity
- To analyse the impact of these visions on the lives of believers and non-believers in considering some current moral issues

#### **Higher Level Only**

- To introduce students to some aspects of the relationship between religion, morality, and state law.

## Part 1

# INTRODUCTION TO MORALITY

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **be aware of different descriptions of what it means to be moral;**
- 2 **have an understanding of the consequences of actions and decisions at personal and communal levels;**
- 3 **be able to identify the variety of influences on human behaviour.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>morality</b></li> <li>• <b>influence</b></li> <li>• <b>choice</b></li> <li>• <b>freedom</b></li> <li>• <b>relationships</b></li> <li>• <b>action and consequence</b></li> <li>• <b>society</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Different descriptions of what it means to be moral</li> <li>2. Looking at the nature of human relationships: interpersonal, communal, global</li> <li>3. Exploring the connections between action and consequence, rights and responsibilities</li> <li>4. Exploring the variety of influences on human behaviour and human choices at different stages of life</li> </ol>

## Part 2

# SOURCES OF MORALITY

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **be able to identify sources of morality, especially sources of morality in their own lives;**
- 2 **understand the meaning and implications of a moral vision;**
- 3 **be able to describe the vision articulated in different sets of rules and moral codes.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>moral vision</b></li> <li>• <b>laws</b></li> <li>• <b>religious moral vision</b></li> <li>• <b>authority</b></li> <li>• <b>tradition</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Identifying the main sources of morality (such as home, peer group, school, state, religion, etc.)</li> <li>2. Examining the evolution of formal and informal codes and principles</li> <li>3. Identifying the moral vision within the code</li> <li>4. Authority and tradition – recognising the wisdom of others</li> <li>5. The characteristics of a religious moral vision: what is different about a religious moral vision?</li> </ol>

### Part 3

## GROWING IN MORALITY

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **have a sense of the development of personal morality;**
- 2 **understand the meaning of conscience and its importance in moral maturity.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>moral growth</b></li><li>• <b>conscience</b></li><li>• <b>moral maturity</b></li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Moral development from selfishness to altruism – describing moral immaturity and moral maturity</li><li>2. The human and religious imperative to move beyond selfishness to maturity</li><li>3. Conscience and morality – developing moral maturity</li></ol>

## Part 4

# RELIGIOUS MORALITY IN ACTION

### Objectives

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 **have an understanding of the process of moral decision-making;**
- 2 **know how religious moral visions can influence the moral decisions of believers;**
- 3 **be able to describe the religious visions of moral failure and the understanding of forgiveness.**

Key Concepts	Description of Content
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>decision-making</b></li> <li>• <b>truth</b></li> <li>• <b>justice</b></li> <li>• <b>peace</b></li> <li>• <b>life</b></li> <li>• <b>stewardship</b></li> <li>• <b>respect</b></li> <li>• <b>integrity</b></li> <li>• <b>forgiveness</b></li> <li>• <b>reconciliation</b></li> <li>• <b>sin</b></li> <li>• <b>judgement</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Exploring the process of moral decision-making and the elements of that process</li> <li>2. Examining how two different religious moral visions contribute to the decision-making of believers through exploring particular moral decisions and issues</li> <li>3. Vision and reality – different descriptions of moral failure and its consequences</li> <li>4. Examining the methods by which religious traditions offer the possibility of the restoration of relationships</li> </ol>

**HIGHER LEVEL ONLY**

**Part 5**

**LAW AND MORALITY**

**Objectives**

As a result of studying this section, the students should:

- 1 have a basic understanding of the relationship between state law and personal morality;**
- 2 have a basic understanding of the relationship between state law and religious morality.**

<b>Key Concepts</b>	<b>Description of Content</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>civil law</b></li><li>• <b>constitution</b></li><li>• <b>pluralism</b></li><li>• <b>religious fundamentalism</b></li><li>• <b>libertarianism</b></li></ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Introducing some aspects of the relationship between personal morality and state law and situations where conflict might arise</li><li>2. Exploring different views of the relationship between state law and religious morality</li></ol>

# THE ASSESSMENT OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN THE JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION

## 1. The purposes of assessment in the educational process

Assessment is an integral part of the educational process. Its purposes include fostering learning, improving teaching, and providing valid information about what has been done or achieved. It provides important feedback for students and teachers and information on the education system for society at large. Assessment offers opportunities for the evaluation of curriculums and of students' progress and for the certification of achievement. Certification of achievement can have a positive effect on students' motivation. It rewards students, in a practical way, for time and effort given to the study of a syllabus. Assessment at Junior Certificate level also provides information on decisions that may be taken with regard to pathways at senior cycle.

While it is clear that assessment can have many purposes within the educational process, it should be noted that not all such purposes are compatible. Assessment for certification purposes, for example, may provide important information on students' performance, but it may be less useful in providing feedback for students on the quality of their learning and understanding.

## 2. General principles of quality educational assessment

- Assessment should be used as a continuous part of the teaching-learning process, involving pupils, wherever possible, as well as teachers, in identifying next steps.
- Assessment for any purpose should improve learning by exerting a positive influence on the curriculum at all levels. It must, therefore, reflect the full range of curriculum goals.
- Assessment should provide an effective basis for communication with parents and the other partners in the learning enterprise, in a way that helps them to support students' learning.
- The most valuable assessment takes place at the site of learning.
- A valid assessment of educational achievement must clearly reflect all the elements – cognitive and affective – that it claims to evaluate, and those elements will be identified with the substance of the curriculum that has been followed.
- The choice of different assessment procedures should be decided on the basis of the purpose for which the assessment is being undertaken. This may well mean employing different techniques for formative, diagnostic and certification purposes.
- Assessment must be both valid and reliable. These aspects of assessment are particularly relevant for national assessment for certification purposes.
- Assessment that is equitable will provide a range of indicators that will offer the students multiple opportunities to achieve.

## 3. Implications for the assessment of Religious Education for national certification

Assessment is not new to Religious Education. Teachers of Religious Education currently use a range of formal and informal modes and techniques of assessment for feedback, evaluation and planning purposes. Some schools include information on performance and achievement in Religious Education in the reporting



and feedback arrangements for parents. Effective teaching includes effective assessment, and the effective teaching of Religious Education is no exception.

So far, however, Religious Education has not been assessed for national certification purposes. The introduction of new syllabuses for the Junior and the Leaving Certificate exams offers the option of assessment for this purpose for the first time. In planning for this assessment, the general principles of quality assessment outlined above must be taken into account. Proposals for the assessment of Religious Education for national certification draw on the experiences of assessment for certification in other subject areas, as well as current research and insights into the nature of thinking and understanding and the role of assessment in the promotion of learning and teaching.

In particular, planning assessment arrangements for Religious Education for national certification focused on:

- *linking of modes and techniques of assessment to the aims of the syllabus*

The aims of the syllabus are broad and refer to a variety of broad outcomes; the modes and techniques for the assessment of the syllabus should reflect the same pattern.

- *structuring the assessment around stated objectives*

The specific objectives for each part of the syllabus should guide the design of the assessment procedures.

- *assessment that has a positive effect on teaching and learning*

The assessment procedures adopted should support the use of a variety of approaches to teaching and learning.

- *assessment that is valid and reliable*

The assessment procedures should reflect the aims of the syllabus and have the reliability and credibility required for national certification purposes.

- *assessment that is equitable*

Assessment should afford students a range of opportunities to achieve to their full potential.

#### 4. What will be assessed in Religious Education in the state examinations?

The assessment of Religious Education at Junior and Leaving Certificate levels will be based on the objectives relating to knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes within each section of the course. While students will draw on their own experience in an examination, their personal faith commitment and/or affiliation to a particular religious grouping will not be subject to assessment for national certification.

#### 5. Modes of assessment for Religious Education in the Junior Certificate Examination

##### 5.1 Differentiation: two levels of assessment and certification

In common with other syllabuses examined for the purposes of national certification, Religious Education will be assessed at **Higher** and **Ordinary** levels in the Junior Certificate examination.

##### 5.2 Two components

The assessment will consist of two components. These components – a final written paper and journal work – offer the widest range of opportunities for student achievement within the practicalities of a national examination. These components reflect the breadth of the aims of the syllabus, which include a range of knowledge, understanding, skills, and attitudes.

Component	Mark allocation (O.L.)	Mark allocation (H.L.)
Final written examination	75%	80%
Journal	25%	20%

The award of a grade will be by way of aggregation of marks achieved in the two components. The total number of marks awarded in the examination will be 400.

### 5.2.1 Final written examination

At Junior Certificate level it is proposed that all sections of the syllabus be examined in the written examination paper. However, questions need not be specific to one section but may be based on the objectives of a number of sections. A variety of questions will be included on the papers, comprising photographs, cloze passages, multiple choice, the writing of paragraphs, analysis and interpretation of data, the drawing and labelling of diagrams, etc.

### 5.2.2 Journal work

Students will be required to complete a journal for the examination. A title for journal work will be selected from a set of twelve titles (two from each section), which will be provided to schools in each year of the examination, together with guidelines for the preparation and completion of the journal. While the journal work can support all the aims of the syllabus, it has particular relevance to the third aim of the syllabus:

*To identify how understandings of God, religious traditions, and in particular the Christian tradition, have contributed to the culture in which we live, and continue to have an impact on personal life-style, inter-personal relationships, and relationships between individuals and their communities and contexts (p. 6).*

In support of the broad aims of the syllabus, journal work will:

- facilitate a variety of teaching and learning methods
- promote the development of skills in research, analysis, drawing conclusions, presentation, etc.
- afford the students the opportunity to encounter religion as part of life
- facilitate the exploration of an area of personal interest or concern to the student

The preparation of a journal will involve a wide range of knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes identified in the syllabus. In particular, the work should draw on and promote the development of the following skills:

Skills	Examples of development
Enquiry skills	Enquiring about items, products, people, organisations and aspects of the environment
Observational	Students are encouraged to observe, skills interpret, express and record what they see
Problem-solving skills	Students undertake tasks or activities in which they identify the essential requirements or constraints and decide on appropriate solutions to the problem
Research skills	Students are introduced to and guided in ways of finding, recording, analysing and using appropriate research material
Reflective skills	Students are encouraged to reflect on their findings or observations
Organisational skills	Through organisation of their own time and effort, students are enabled to plan, manage and complete their tasks
Critical evaluation skills	Students are guided in the critical, creative and constructive evaluation of their findings, observations, solutions

(adapted from Design in Education, NCAD/NCCA, 1998)

### 5.2.3 Submission and assessment of the journal

Journal work undertaken by students or groups of students may be a group effort, but each student must submit an individual piece of work. Each student then presents his or her journal to the school authorities on an agreed date. The journal is submitted in a standard form in a booklet supplied for that purpose. On the day of the state examinations in Religious Education, the journals are given to the examination superintendent for inclusion with the written examination papers. The two components will be examined together.

**Given the present arrangements for the Junior Certificate examination, the journal will be submitted and assessed according to the procedure outlined above. In the future it may be feasible to offer option B or C.**

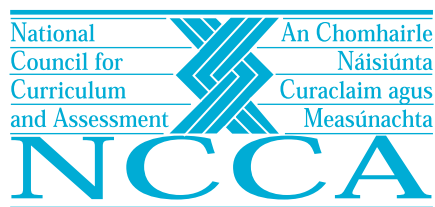
### Option B

The journal is submitted to the teacher in the form of a scrapbook or folder or on a computer disk and may include photographs, diagrams, or charts. While clarity is necessary for assessment purposes, no marks will be awarded for the quality of the design or presentation.

On an agreed date, the mark for the journal is submitted by the teacher to the Department of Education and Science. Journals submitted would be subject to moderation by an external examiner appointed by the Department of Education and Science.

### Option C

A journal is completed by the student. Each student must submit an individual piece of work for assessment by an external examiner on an agreed date. The assessment may take place in the school or at some central location.



## **Procedures for drawing up National Syllabuses**

### Procedures for Drawing up National Syllabuses

The NCCA's Course Committees for the Junior Certificate have the following membership\*:

- Association of Secondary Teachers, Ireland
- Teachers' Union of Ireland
- Joint Managerial Body
- Association of Community and Comprehensive Schools
- Irish Vocational Education Association
- Subject Association
- Department of Education and Science (Inspectorate)

\* In the case of Religious Education, representation also included the National Parents' Council (post-primary), the Episcopal Conference, the Board of Education of the Methodist Church, the Church of Ireland Board of Education and the Presbyterian Church in Ireland.

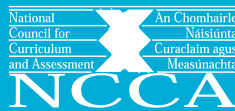
On the basis of the brief provided by Council, the NCCA's Course Committees prepare the syllabuses.

Recommendations of Course Committees are submitted to the Council of NCCA for approval. The NCCA, having considered such recommendations, advises the Minister for Education and Science accordingly.

Further information may be obtained by contacting the NCCA at 24 Merrion Square, Dublin 2.

Ph. 01-6617177 Fax 6617180

e-mail [info@ncca.ie](mailto:info@ncca.ie) [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie)



**Published by The Stationery Office**

To be purchased directly from:

Government Publications Sales Office,  
Sun Alliance House,  
Molesworth Street, Dublin 2.

Or by mail order from:

Government Publications, Postal Trade Section,  
4-5 Harcourt Road, Dublin 2.

Tel: 01-647 6834/5 Fax: 01-475 2760

Or through any bookseller.