

THE ONTARIO CATHOLIC CURRICULUM: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION, Grades 1 - 8

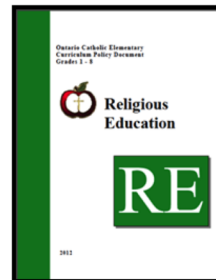
MODULE C: The Program in Religious Education



The Six Strands in the Curriculum



Prepared by the Members of the
Faith in Education Council,
Catholic Curriculum Corporation
for
The Institute for Catholic Education



Learning Goals



We are learning to:

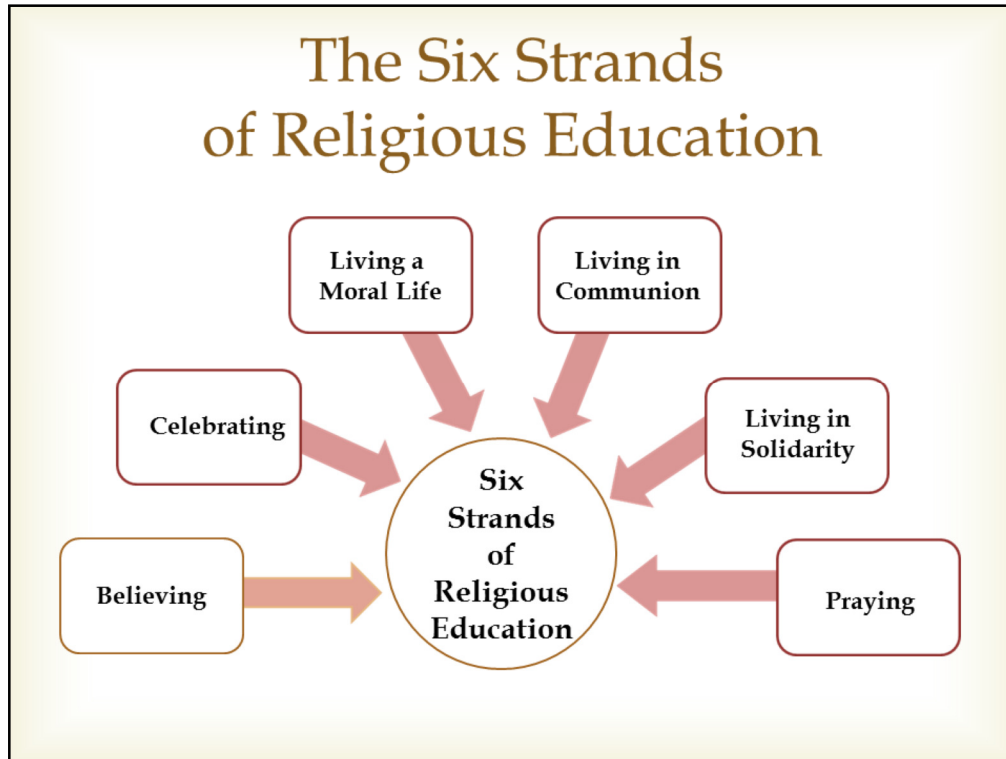
- articulate the key components of each of the six strands of the religious education curriculum
- make connections between the six strands of the religious education curriculum and our current practice
- identify how the program in religious education is similar to and different from that of Ministry of Education curricula

The purpose of this learning session is to deepen an understanding of the Program in Religious Education in the *Ontario Catholic Elementary Curriculum Policy Document, Grades 1-8: Religious Education* (2012)

Specifically, this session will explore each of the six strands of the religious education curriculum.

Together, we are learning to:

(read the learning goals on the slide)



Two church documents were considered when the strands for the religious education curriculum were being chosen:

The *General Directory for Catechesis* (GDC), which is a guide for catechists.

And the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, which contains the official teachings of the Catholic Church. It organizes Catholic doctrine under four distinct yet complementary categories (see page 24 of the curriculum document for the four categories).

The expectations for religious education are clustered into six strands.

The six tasks of catechesis outlined in the GDC were considered (these are listed on page 24 of the curriculum document).

They identify the goals of catechesis and serve to identify areas of knowledge that should be addressed in religious education.

The six tasks served as a natural framework for structuring the strands of the religious education curriculum policy document.

The six tasks of catechesis provided a framework within which to cluster the content of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

The content of the Catechism that is addressed by each strand in religious education is seen in the table on pages 25-26 of the document.

Exploring One Strand



- ✧ Individually read the strand you have been assigned (from pages 26 to 34 of the document)
- ✧ Select ONE WORD that you would use to describe the strand
 - the word cannot be the name of the strand!
- ✧ Write your word on a sticky note

(Materials required: Sticky Notes)

Facilitator Options:

All participants could explore the same strand if this training is to occur over a number of sessions.

Alternatively, participants could number off, 1 to 6, and then be assigned one of the six strands to explore in small groups.

Note: The word that a participant chooses is not as important as the discussion that develops as participants explain why they chose that word and listen to why other people chose their word.

Small Group Discussion



- ❧ The first person reads aloud the selected word on their sticky note but does not share why the word was chosen (no elaboration)
- ❧ Group members, in turn, respond to the word
 - ❧ Did they choose the same word?
 - ❧ What does that word mean to them? (in relation to the strand)?
- ❧ The first person then explains why the word was chosen and the thinking behind it
- ❧ Continue until all group members have had an opportunity to share

Indicate that each group will continue in rounds at their table until each participant takes a turn as presenter.

The steps for each round are indicated in the slide.

You might want to set a time limit on this activity, or modify how the words are shared to accommodate a shortened time frame.

Gallery Walk



- ✧ Travel around the room taking note of the words that were chosen for each strand
- ✧ What do you notice?
- ✧ Are the words on each chart similar or different?
- ✧ This gallery walk will be repeated at the end of this session after each strand has been explored in more detail

(Materials Required: Chart paper, markers & tape)

Distribute chart paper and a marker to each group.

Instruct each group to write their strand as a heading on the chart paper.

Each group member will then affix their sticky note to the chart paper.

When complete, the chart paper will be posted on the wall.

Whole group activity:

Participants will engage in a gallery walk. Instructions are on the slide.

After an appropriate period of time, invite participants to return to their strand groups.

Invite some comments from the large group – what was noticed about the words that had been chosen?

Additional facilitator notes:

Indicate that the purpose of this activity is only to give participants a sense of the types of words that were being selected – not to foster a full understanding of each strand.

Also, after each strand has been explored, there will be an opportunity to participate in the gallery walk again with “new eyes” – informed by the discussion of each strand.

Participants will then select one word from the charts, or a word of their own, that will serve as an anchor word to help to remember each strand.

The First Word



- ✧ Assign one person in your group who will serve as your spokesperson
- ✧ Choose one thing that your group talked about to share with the whole group
- ✧ Each strand group will have approximately two minutes to “have the first word” as each strand is introduced


Each strand will now be discussed in more detail.

As each strand is introduced, each strand group will have the opportunity to have “the first word.”

In two minutes or less, they will share something that they discussed at their table.

Allow each strand group a few moments to choose their table spokesperson and to decide upon what will be shared when their strand is introduced.

Religious Education Placemat

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THE PROGRAM IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION – STRANDS IN THE CURRICULUM

	Strand image	What I am hearing...	Connections I am making to my current practice...	My anchor word...
BELIEVING				
CELEBRATING				

(Materials Required: Religious Education Placemat)

Distribute the Religious Education Placemat to each participant.

Each strand is now to be explored as a whole group.

Each strand has been anchored with a common image, as seen in the placemat.

As participants listen to the information presented for each strand, they can record some of what they are hearing on the placemat.

At participants notice how they are making connections between what they are hearing, and what they are currently doing in their practice, they can record their thinking on the placemat.

After all six strands have been explored, participants will engage in the Gallery Walk a second time.

- given what they have heard, and the connections they have made, they will then select one word for each strand that will serve as their anchor word
- the word may be on the charts around the room, or may be an alternate word that the participant feels is more fitting

BELIEVING – pp. 26-27



- ☞ Focuses on “Promoting the Knowledge of the Faith”
- ☞ Based on Part I of the *Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Profession of Faith*

Title of strand with image – allow the Believing strand group to “have the first word” for two minutes.

Then, click to reveal a general description/definition of Believing as outlined in RE policy (p. 26-27).

BELIEVING FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS



- ✧ God's Self Revelation in the person of Jesus Christ, Sacred Scripture, and Tradition
- ✧ Creed as a summary of Catholic Belief and a Profession of Faith
- ✧ In God's Plan of Salvation Christ founded the Church as One, Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic

Framework of the Fundamental Concepts follows the outline of the Creed (Know God, Jesus' life, and Church Tradition).

God's Self Revelation:

- God reveals Himself in **Creation**, in the person of **Jesus Christ**, in **Sacred Scripture**, and in **Apostolic Tradition of the Church**
- Renewed importance towards Sacred Scripture
- Bible records **covenantal relationship** between God, the Jewish people, and the Christian Church
- Bible is read and interpreted by the Magisterium in continuity with tradition and modern life
- Scriptures are the **inspired word of God** and a **living witness** to the faith experience of other human beings, through which we meet the person of Jesus
- Scriptures are used to develop literacy skills especially religious literacy skills
- **Gospels are the heart of scripture**, need to reflect on them
- Revelation interprets the signs of the times and present life, since it is through these that the God's plan of salvation of the world is revealed

Creed as a summary of Catholic Belief and a Profession of Faith:

- A profession of faith
- Doctrinal statements of faith in 3 parts:
 - a) understanding the Trinity
 - b) Church's teaching concerning the mysteries of the hidden and public life of Jesus Christ
 - c) understanding the ONE Holy, Catholic, and Apostolic Church
- Students should achieve a genuine understanding of the Creed so that their learning is not simply a memorization but an intelligent articulation of their faith (different depending on the age)
- Holds authority in the church

One Holy Catholic and Apostolic Church:

- should be noted that "the task of giving an authentic interpretation of the Word of God, whether in its written form or in the form of Tradition, has been entrusted to the living teaching office of the Church alone" (p. 27)
- Church's teachings helps us understand **Christ's message for us today**
- There is a **call to witness** (i.e., in both mission and catholicity)

- Church formed into a community through **Word, Worship, and Witness**

CELEBRATING – pp. 27-28



✧ The ways that the Church expresses its faith through liturgy and the celebration of the sacraments, with special attention given to the importance of the Eucharist

Title of strand with image – allow the Celebrating strand group to “have the first word” for two minutes

Then, click to reveal a general description/definition of Celebrating.

Further points:

- The Catholic faith is rich in symbols, rituals and prayers that it uses to celebrate **God’s intimate relationship with humanity**.
- This strand focuses on ways that the Church expresses its faith through **liturgy** and the **celebration of the sacraments**, with special attention given to the importance of the Eucharist.
- It refers primarily to the actions that demonstrate **thankful awareness of God’s presence in the world**.

CELEBRATING FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS



- ✧ The Seven Sacraments of the Church
- ✧ The Mass is the source and summit of Christian life
- ✧ The Celebrations of the Church's Liturgical Year

The Seven Sacraments of the Church:

- Baptism, Eucharist, Reconciliation, Confirmation, Matrimony, Holy Orders, Anointing of the Sick
- are **visible signs** of the presence and action of God, in our lives, at significant moments from birth through maturity to death.
- Jesus is the primary sacrament who reveals the action of God in our lives.
- Church is the sacrament of Christ that makes his teachings and his saving grace visible in our world

The Mass is the source and summit of the Christian life:

- The Mass is the principal sacramental celebration of the Church, in which we recall the death and resurrection of Christ, which is the mystery of our salvation.

The Celebrations of the Church's Liturgical Year:

- As the Liturgical Year unfolds, many learning opportunities are provided concerning the use of religious **symbols** (ie. Advent Wreath) and **rituals** (ie. Blessing with Ashes on Ash Wednesday) within the school setting
- The liturgical year also provides opportunities for participation in and study of the Church's sacramental life

LIVING A MORAL LIFE

pp. 28-29



✧ Universal Call to Holiness: Living as a follower of Christ who reveals to us God and God's love for all of creation. We are called, in our words and deeds, to be reflections of God's love.

✧ ...Religious education that promotes moral formation teaches children that happiness is made possible through moral living, and moral living is the path taken in response to God's call to holiness

Title of strand with image – allow the Living a Moral Life strand group to “have the first word” for two minutes.

Then, click to reveal a general description/definition of Living a Moral Life.

LIVING A MORAL LIFE FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS



- ✧ Christian Morality as a living response of our human vocation to life in the Spirit as revealed by reason, the Scriptures and Tradition
- ✧ Freedom and Responsibility, Reason, Conscience, and Conscience Formation
- ✧ Grace, Virtue, Holiness and Sin and Forgiveness

Christian Morality as a living response of our human vocation to life in the Spirit as revealed by reason, the Scriptures and Tradition:

- **Living as a follower of Christ** who reveals to us God and his love for all of creation. We are called, in our words and deeds, to be reflections of God's love
- Gospel Values (applying scripture to life – p. 48)
- Respect Life, Love, Solidarity, Truth and Justice
- Beatitudes (Sermon on the Mount)
- In his ministry, Jesus called all people to a **conversion of the heart**. Moral formation requires such a conversion so that we can walk in the footsteps of Christ (p. 29)
- Moral living is the path taken **in response to God's call to holiness**

Freedom and Responsibility, Reason, Conscience, and Conscience Formation:

- Drawing on the Holy Spirit's grace imparted on us through the **sacraments** and the **Spirit's active participation**
- Development of moral decision making process
- Conscience must be **informed** and moral judgment **enlightened**: Development of an Informed Conscience:
- A well-formed conscience is upright and truthful.
- "The education of the conscience is a lifelong task [that] guarantees freedom and engenders peace of heart." (p. 29)
- "The education of conscience is indispensable for human beings who are subjected to negative influences & tempted by sin to prefer their own judgment and to reject authoritative teachings" (p. 29)

Grace, Virtue, Holiness and Sin and Forgiveness:

- Cardinal and Theological Virtues, especially charity
- Gospel Values (applying scripture to life – p. 48)

Respect Life, Love, Solidarity, Truth and Justice

- Moral living is the path taken **in response to God's call to holiness**

LIVING IN COMMUNION

pp. 30-31



Focuses on our belonging to the Church as the Body of Christ: our involvement within community, our call to vocation and our sharing in the mission of the church

Title of strand with image – allow the Living in Communion strand group to “have the first word” for two minutes.

Then, click to reveal a general description/definition of Living in Communion.

LIVING IN COMMUNION FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS



- ✠ Living in the Church as members of the Body of Christ
- ✠ The Communion of Saints

Living in the Church as members of the Body of Christ:

- **Community is not realized spontaneously** – creating community begins in the home...Catholic families... extended family...larger community experiences of school ...universal church
- Through the Eucharistic feast of the Mass – we are **brought into communion with one Triune God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit**
- **Called to solidarity** (love, respect and care for all) to bring Good News and invite others into communion

The Communion of Saints:

- Prepare children to **participate in the life of the church** (lectors, ushers, musicians etc...)
- **Faith lived out in community – love thy neighbour** (Teachings of Christ, Church's creeds and doctrinal statements bind us in community)
- **Holy Trinity is the model for all community relationships** (God with us, humankind with God, humans with each other and Creation)
- Build historical knowledge and context for a deeper understanding of Catholicism

LIVING IN SOLIDARITY

pp. 31-32



- ✧ Two primary topics:
Catholic Social Teaching
and Mission
- ✧ The responsibilities of all
the baptized to share the
good news and make
Christ's message come
alive
- ✧ Witnessing to the faith

Title of strand with image – allow the Living in Solidarity strand group to “have the first word” for two minutes.

Then, click to reveal a general description/definition of Living in Solidarity.

Further Points:

Two primary topics: Catholic Social Teaching and Mission

- Catholic Social Teaching comes from the Catholic Principles of Social Justice
- Through Mission we learn about **life as a vocation**
- All Christians are called to develop a sense of responsibility

The responsibilities of all the baptized to share the good news and make Christ's message come alive:

- Ordained clergy are responsible for preparing Christians for mission
- **Catholic educators have a unique opportunity to foster this mission**

Witnessing to the faith:

- Calls us to be **examples of Christ's teaching** and model this teaching for non-Christians
- Promote interreligious dialogue
- Interreligious dialogue needs to be integrated into the general religious education of students

LIVING IN SOLIDARITY FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS



- ✧ We are called to live our Christian vocation within the human community (i.e. communal nature of our dignity as human beings)
- ✧ Social Justice Teachings of the Church
- ✧ Our mission is to evangelize (i.e. proclaim the Gospel message) and to witness to Jesus Christ (Grades 4 to 8)

We are called to live our Christian vocation within the human community (i.e. Communal nature of our dignity as human beings):

- Vocation is about saying “yes” to the calling or destiny we have in this life and hereafter. **Our call is rooted in God’s plan for us.**

Social Justice Teachings of the Church:

- the respect for the human person and the rights which flow from human dignity and guarantee it.
- The Principles of Social Justice are entrenched in Scripture. Jesus is a primary example of engaging in Social Justice.

Our mission is to evangelize (i.e. Proclaim the Gospel message) and to witness to Jesus Christ (Grades 4 to 8):

- **Evangelization** refers to the **proclamation of Christ and his Gospel**. Jesus’ life and ministry was universal; it included outreach to believers and non-believers.

PRAYING – pg. 33-34



- ✧ Educates our students in the various ways the Church expresses its faith in prayer
- ✧ There are many forms: blessing, adoration, intercession and petition, thanksgiving and praise
- ✧ These forms can be personal or communal

Title of strand with image – allow the Praying strand group to “have the first word” for two minutes.

Then, click to reveal a general description/definition of Praying.

PRAYING FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS



- ✧ God's universal call to prayer and our human response
- ✧ *The Way of Prayer: Forms and Expressions of Prayer*

God's universal call to prayer and our human response:

- God continually calls us and we respond to His call.
- To respond to God's call we need to have an awareness of how to create a sacred space for prayer, how to read and understand Sacred Scripture and incorporate prayer into our daily lives.

The Way of Prayer: Forms and Expression of Prayer:

- There are many different forms and expressions of prayer: blessing and adoration, intercession and petition, thanksgiving and praise, traditional prayers, conversation with God, Sign of our Faith, Sacraments, journals, reflection, drama, music, meditation.
- Each of these forms of prayer can be personal or communal.

Making Connections



- ❧ Consider what you have heard about the six strands
- ❧ What connections were you able to make to your current practice as we explored each strand?
- ❧ In your small group, takes turns sharing the connections that were made
- ❧ Be prepared to share one or two connections with the large group

Participants should be seated in their small groups according to their assigned strand.

It is hoped that participants were recording what they heard about each strand, and the connections they were making to their current practice, on the Religious Education Placemat provided.

Allow time for the small group to share those connections. Instructions are on the slide.

After a suitable period of time, invite representatives from each table to share a couple of those connections that they found particularly insightful/inspiring, etc.

It is the hope that teachers will come away from the session with a positive, confident attitude of “I can do this”

Gallery Walk Revisited



- ✧ In your group, decide if there are any new words that you feel need to be added to the chart paper for your strand
- ✧ If so, write them on sticky notes and add them to your chart
- ✧ Take a gallery walk once more
- ✧ Select one word from each chart, or a word of your own, that will serve as an anchor word for each strand – record on your placemat

Before inviting participants to take a gallery walk again, ask each strand group if they feel there are any words missing from their charts.

If so, they will add these words to new sticky notes and add them to the chart.

Participants then engage in a second gallery walk with their Religious Education Placemats in hand.

At each chart, participants will select one word that will serve as an anchor word for the strand – this word is intended to help them to remember what the strand is about.

Participants might alternatively choose their own word.

After sufficient time, invite participants to return to their groups for some final information.

A note about the strands...



It should be noted that the six strands are not necessarily representative of six units of study, but represent knowledge about specific elements of the faith and its practice that are to be integrated across the strands (pg. 25)

The strands are unlike strands in some other curriculum documents.

In science, for example, there is normally a unit of study that corresponds to the Understanding Life Systems strand.

In religious education, the strands are to be woven through all units of study – e.g. – it is unlikely that resources will have a unit of study called Celebrating.

As further examples:

Praying and Celebrating are highly related

Living a Moral Life, Living in Solidarity and Living in Community are related

Believing forms the building blocks for examining the church's moral and social teachings (Living a Moral Life; Living in Solidarity)

Extension Activity: For reflection/discussion:

In order to understand the integrated nature of all the strands, consider the following:

Think about the Mass, or about the scripture story, The Road to Emmaus.

Can you see the six strands woven through these “texts”?

The Program in Religious Education consists of...



- ❧ Strands
- ❧ Hope Expectations by Division (pp. 62; 105-6; and 154-55)
- ❧ Curriculum Expectations by Grade
 - ❧ Fundamental Concepts
 - ❧ Big Ideas
 - ❧ Overall Expectations
 - ❧ Specific Expectations

What are the similarities/differences between this curriculum policy document and Ministry of Education curriculum policy documents?

Ministry of Education documents do not have Hope Expectations.

A final thought: Our Hope for Students



Religious Education seeks to develop not only knowledge and skills but also to foster in students the attitudes and values that are part of faith and constitute the Catholic stance within the world. Because they depend on the interaction between God's Spirit and the freedom of the individual student, attitudes and values cannot be listed as expectations, nor can they be evaluated or used for assessment purposes. (pg. 23)

The hope expectations "... represent some of the ultimate hopes of religious educators. They are the seeds we seek to sow and nourish, the holy longings that live in the sacred secrecy of each individual's heart." (p. 23)

The hope expectations that precede the overall and specific expectations for each division "... are drawn from and echo the expectations expressed in the *Ontario Catholic School Graduate Expectations*, primarily under the category of *Discerning Believer Formed in the Catholic Faith Community*". (p. 23)

Acknowledgments



Acknowledgment of Photos

✧ The CCC and ICE express appreciation for the photographs developed to symbolize each strand. They were created under the leadership of Peter Fujiwara, Department Head Communication Technology, St. Roch CSS, Dufferin-Peel CDSB, the artistic efforts of Gr. 11 student Darien Boodan and the students from St. Roch who allowed their hands to be photographed. Sincere thanks to all!