

Religious Education at St Augustine's PS

At St Augustine's, Religious Education lies at the heart of our curriculum. Our school has implemented "New Awakenings", the Religious Education Curriculum mandated by our Bishop for the schools and colleges of the Ballarat Diocese.

The title "Awakenings" speaks of both the content and the purposes of religious education.

At its best, religious education sets out to inform, form and transform learners and teachers by engaging them with the intellectual, ethical and spiritual richness of the Catholic tradition. Religious education invites and enables a life-long journey of awakening to the deep meaning of human life and community, of the world we inhabit and sustain, and of our cultural and religious heritage, against the horizon of the Reign of God encompasses in the mission and person of Jesus Christ, and communicated in the Church.

Religious education intends to awaken us *intellectually*

- by encouraging critical thinking and inquiry
- by firing our imaginative capacity
- by enlightening our experiences with reason
- by broadening our perspectives through Scripture and Tradition

Religious education intends to awaken us *ethically*

- by forming moral character
- by arousing our desire for wisdom
- by attuning us to the attitudes of Jesus
- by promoting responsibility and integrity in living

Religious education intends to awaken us *spiritually*

- by relating our life to the mystery of God
- by valuing our interior life and capacities
- by developing prayerful and liturgical habits
- by connecting compassion with justice

Because it articulates intentionally the connectedness of the human person with the whole of reality, human and divine, religious education awakens all disciplines of learning to their

deep potential. It lies at the heart of the curriculum of Catholic Schools, synthesizing, enriching and complementing the learning experiences of students. To be awake intellectually, ethically and spiritually, is to be fully alive and fully human. This is the invitation and challenge of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. *Awakenings* is, therefore, the explicit purpose of religious education, and the graced task of religious educators.

Gaudium et spes the **Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World**, was one of the four constitutions resulting from the Second Vatican Council recognising the, “The Church in the World today”. The decree also makes a sustained attempt both to dialogue with the world and open up further opportunities for such dialogue in the future.

It is now recognised more than ever that society has changed and our Catholic faith must keep up with the sign of the times and change.

STRANDS COVERED IN THE NEW AWAKENINGS:

- God, Religion and Society
- Scripture, Israel and Jesus
- Church and Tradition
- Prayer, Liturgy and Sacraments
- Christian Ethics- Personal and Social

St Augustine’s now and moving into the future will look at all we do through an ECSI lens and then in turn our culture defines our identity as a faith community. This faith community includes staff, students, families and our church and Parish friends.

We will deliver a high quality religious education from a preferred ‘Enhancing Catholic Identity’ viewpoint or stance. We welcome all religions and encourage open dialogue to fully gain understanding of our Catholic faith. A hermeneutical belief attitude is one that will become part of what we do as a natural process of invitation, tension, searching and reflection with a preferred Catholic faith outcome.

...(International Journal of Public Theology, 2011) states, ‘It is not sufficient to simply interpret the sign of the times to bring about change but it requires a theology capable of simultaneously taking seriously the signs of the times and the radical perspective of the gospel message. It must include strategies for change which take into account the interaction between individuals and institutions, inspiration and policy, charity and justice,’

The preferred Post- Critical Belief stance is characterised by belief in a transcendent God and a religious interpretation of the world. However, the transcendent is not presented in a literal way, but symbolically represented. Only through opportunities can students, teachers, parents enter into a relationship with the transcendent reality: via stories, rituals, prayer, traditions. Faith is acquired through our active, creative and interpretative engagement with these mediations. These opportunities need to become a part of our culture.

A hermeneutical belief attitude is knowing that believing is a continuous process of symbol interpretation, of uncovering new layers of meaning. The hermeneutical space of Catholic religion assumes that humans are open to the 'transcendent transcendence', at the essence is a relationship with God. This special relationship can only be recognised through various mediations such a prayer, song, rituals and that teachers must provide students with and they need to be integrated into everyday life.

Post-critical believers are well aware of the many critiques that could be raised against religion, but nevertheless they keep holding on to their faith: they choose to remain confident.

Religious faith always remains profound, it keeps a dimension of mystery that can never be penetrated. So religious answers are never definite, a form of uncertainty, one is prepared to live with.

St Augustine's embraces dialogue and openness to inquire with respect into other religions and beliefs. Bringing the gospel message in a new time requires educators to be open to learn and respect where the other is coming from will require a shift for most. To build community and identity we must go to the excluded and the poor.

God created us all and this requires a reconciliation. Recontextualisation for a community of Post-Critical believers is the normative, while presenting, offering and being witness to the Catholic tradition which is the ultimate reward and most sustainable way of moving forward.

In order to teach young people how to stand in the 'mediation' of the tradition, it is vital for them to have strong models, predecessors, witnesses from within tradition, allies who want to walk with them.