**Religious Education**

**St Thomas More Catholic Voluntary Academy**





**Information for Parents and Carers**

**December 2020**

**A partnership**

The first educators in the faith are parents. By their example in the home and in their participation in the Mass and other sacraments, the foundations of life-long faith and discipleship in their children are laid down.

This partnership between home and parish is enhanced by the role of the Catholic school. Through the pattern of daily prayer, through the celebration of the sacraments of the Church, through works of charity, through a striving for justice in all it does, a Catholic school seeks to be a catechetical community in which the content and the life of faith is shared.

The meaning of life, as understood in the Catholic faith, is explored and experienced by all those taking part in the life of the school, whether they are baptised Catholics or not, practising their faith in their own parish or not. The partnership between home, parish and school is the best setting for the formation of maturing Catholic young people.

**Religious Education**

In the life of faith of the Catholic school, religious education plays a central and vital part. It is the foundation of the entire educational process. The beliefs and values studied in Catholic religious education inspire and draw together every aspect of the life of a catholic school.

We are committed to classroom RE, then, because all pupils have the right to receive an overall education which will enable them, in the light of the faith of the Church, to engage with the deepest questions of life and find reasons

for the hope which is within them. Religious education is, then, the core subject in a Catholic school.

**Expectations of Classroom Religious Education**

As with other core subjects RE is characterised by succinct religious learning objectives and of key content, by appropriate methodologies, rigour, richness of resources, achievement of identified outcomes and accurate methods of assessment. Classroom RE is a challenging educational engagement between the pupil, the teacher and the authentic subject material.

RE is taught, developed and resourced with the same commitment as any other subject. Tasks given to pupils are clearly focused and sufficiently demanding. The objective of religious education is to include analysis and reflection, critical appreciation of sources and examples, and a real sense of progression through the different stages of education.

**Time Allocation**

The allocation for RE teaching is 2 hours 15 minutes at Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 and 2 hours 30 minutes at Key Stage 2. This represents 10% of curriculum time. This time does not include collective worship, hymn practice or assemblies.

**Come and See**

At St Thomas More, in line with most Catholic primary schools in our Diocese we follow a programme for Foundation and Key Stages 1 and 2 called Come and See.

The programme was written by a group of experienced diocesan advisors. It is based on the theological foundations of the Second Vatican Council, the Catholic Catechism and the revised RE Curriculum Directory and includes the Catholic attainment levels.

This programme replaced the Here I Am programme in July 2012.

**The Programme**

Come and See is taught through three main themes:

Church, Sacrament and Christian Living

There are nine topics for each year and there is a specific programme for each year group. If a class has a mixed age group a decision is made by the teacher in conjunction with the RE coordinator as to which year programme is followed.

**Advent Term**

**Topic 1 4 weeks**

**CHURCH Domestic church / Family**

To start the year *Come and See* begins with my story: within a family. The Church honours the family with the title Domestic Church because parents are the first teachers of faith with regard to their children.

**Topic 2 4 weeks**

**SACRAMENTAL Baptism/ confirmation/ belonging**

Following on from an understanding of belonging to a family the theme of Baptism introduces the understanding of being initiated into belonging to the Christian Church during key stage 1. At key stage 2 children will learn about the Sacrament of Confirmation, whereby the baptised are more perfectly bound to the church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit, the Sacrament of Ordination for the service of the Church and the Sacrament of Marriage, perfecting the human love of wife and husband.

**Topic 3 4 weeks**

**CHRISTIAN LIVING Advent/ Christmas /loving**

The Advent – Christmas theme considers the gift of God’s love in Jesus. Christmas and our preparation celebrate the wonderful gift of Jesus and offers the witness of loving as a way of life.

**Lent Term**

**Topic 4 4 weeks**

**CHURCH / Local church /community**

After Christmas the children explore the theme of local Church which is our story. The parish is where people gather together to celebrate and practice care and love for each other.

**Topic 5 4 weeks**

**SACRAMENTAL /Eucharist /relating**

In the Spring term after learning about the local Church community, the Sacrament of the Eucharist is explored. This is the Sacrament of communion with Christ and the Church. This sacrament is at the heart of Come and See since it is at the heart of Christ nourishing his people.

**Topic 6 4 weeks**

**CHRISTIAN LIVING/Lent/Easter giving**

In the Spring season Lent and Easter are explored, Jesus’ love for humankind knows no limit. Jesus offered his life and gave an example of giving as a way of life. ‘Easter is not simply one feast among others, but the feast of feasts.

**Pentecost Term**

**Topic 7 4 weeks**

**CHURCH/Pentecost /serving**

The year finishes with the story of the worldwide community; the universal Church. In the Church, God is calling together his people throughout the world.

**Topic 8 4 weeks**

**SACRAMENTAL/Reconciliation/Inter-relating**

The Sacrament of Reconciliation forms part of the work of the summer term when there an opportunity to learn about the joy and challenge of relationships and God’s love and mercy celebrated in this sacrament. At key stage 2 children will learn about the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick, which strengthens, forgives and unites the ailing person more closely to Christ.

**Topic 9 4 weeks**

**CHRISTIAN LIVING/ Universal Church world**

The study of the Ascension and Pentecost completes the Easter story and shows how the gift of the Holy Spirit strengthens the community and enables Christians to give witness to a life of joyful service.

**The Lessons**

Each topic is opened through - Explore, Reveal and Respond

**EXPLORE**

This is the introduction to the topic where the children’s life experience is explored, the question(s) it raises are wondered at, shared, investigated and their significance reflected upon.

The teacher helps the children to begin to look at and focus on the experience within their own lives – concerning themselves, their relationships and their world. In this way the children are led to a deeper understanding, clearer vision and the discovery of significance and value of the experiential events of everyday life.

This will involve:

• Exploring experiences through story, music, drama, dance, art, etc.

• Investigation

• Story telling

• Consideration of the *big* questions

• Discussion

• Becoming aware of the questions raised

• Reflecting on significance of these experiences.

**EXPLORE** will take one week of Religious Education time to complete.

**REVEAL**

This is the heart of the programme where knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith is revealed through the Word, in Scripture, Tradition, doctrine, prayers, rites and Christian living.
Reveal is the heart of the process. The teacher and the children together discover the Christian understanding of the mystery of the Trinity; Father, Son and Holy Spirit. They explore the mystery of human life as revealed in the person, life and gospel of Jesus Christ Christians. It will involve learning about Scripture, the teaching of the Church, prayers, rites, psalms, hymns and other expressions of Christian faith and the lives of outstanding Christians.
The process of delivery will involve:
• meeting new knowledge of religious education;
• developing an understanding of this new knowledge;
• reflecting on the wonder of the mystery;
• gathering information and collecting facts connected with this knowledge;
• researching, collating and classifying;
• becoming aware of the questions raised;
• working with problems and grappling with puzzling experiences;
• exploring experiences through story, music, drama, dance, art;
• exploring what leads to understanding and meaning;
• asking questions and discussing;

• exploring in creative and practical ways through drama, writing, poetry, song, dance, music, ICT and service of others;
• making links between Christian understanding and the shared life experience;
• valuing life experience;
• acknowledging and respecting difference(s);
• being open to new perspectives.

**REVEAL** will take **two weeks** of Religious Education time to complete.

**RESPOND**

* This is where the learning is assimilated, celebrated and responded to in daily life.
**Remember** is the first part of this section. The children will respond by remembering and celebrating all that they have learnt. This new understanding will enable them to make a personal response in their daily lives. This part begins by reflecting on what the children wonder about. This is followed by providing the opportunity for the children to remember what they have understood and learnt. This may be done through:
* creating a quiet, prayerful atmosphere for reflection

• looking at and thinking about the work done

* drawing attention to different aspects of this work
* sharing thoughts and feelings.

**Rejoice** is the second part of the section. There will be the opportunity to plan and take part in a celebration. It will be essential to involve the children in the choice of material to be used in the celebration.
how the children will begin the celebration.
**WORD – LISTEN**
To some scripture read or enacted
**RESPONSE**
will the children respond to all they have heard?
**GOING FORTH**
will the children take away the message?
**Renew** the teacher helps each child to make an individual response, to hold on to and make
their own, what they have understood of the topic. In this part the children will think about how
they can apply their learning to their lives. Older children can be offered the opportunity to write or draw in their personal notebooks.
There is a reminder that the teacher will undertake an evaluation which will inform future teaching and learning and include assessment for learning.

**RESPOND** will take **one week** of Religious Education time to complete.

**Other Faiths**

During the school year we will also study two world religions One will be Judaism and the other one from Sikhism, Islam and Hinduism on a rolling programme. We also have a programme of visits to other places of worship where children can consolidate what they have learned.

We live in a pluralistic country with people of different races, cultures and religions.

*Within our schools we are seeking to educate all pupils of whatever religion to be able to live a way of life that integrates their beliefs with all other aspects of what it means to be human. As part of this, they must learn to live alongside others who are different and hold alternative views, including religious views.*

Children today live in a fast-changing global world, where communication and travel open them to diversity and challenge. It is important that we prepare them for this.

*Pupils are encouraged not simply to learn facts about other religions but also to reflect upon* *them and gain insights from them*

The teaching of other religions for primary-aged children is about how the members of that faith community live as a family and how they worship. It begins from the faith community’s own understanding of itself and what it is to be a member of a particular community.

**Some Principles**

Each religion is taught separately in order to avoid confusion. Comparison can lead to inaccurate teaching and does not do justice to the integrity of each religion. Comparisons may be noted by the pupils, but that will not be the starting point of the teaching.

 Teaching of Judaism needs special attention because of the intrinsic relationships between Judaism and Christianity – our very roots lie in Judaism. However, while it is important to teach about Jesus’ Jewish background this should be taught separately from modern Judaism as a world faith.

When children handle ritual objects, which are important to people of other religions, they are taught do so with reverence and respect.

We visit places of worship on a rolling programme so that children can also learn about religions from members of that religion.

As with Christianity there are various expressions of any one religion. What is being taught here is *a middle of the road view.* It is too complex and confusing to go into too much detail about variations within religions.

We take care at assemblies or collective acts of worship. A *show and tell* information sharing is acceptable but we cannot worship as people of another religion, to do so would give the wrong message and might compromise the integrity of the Catholic faith.
Each topic has an overview page with some background information for the teacher, a description of the process of the teaching of that religion and a list of possible resources and key words. If teachers wish to assess this work the Levels of Attainment will be applicable.
• **LOOK:** a very short introduction to the topic, starting with the children’s own familiar
experience. This is not a whole session but the opening part of the first session.
• **DISCOVER:** is the main section of teaching and learning about this religion and includes a range of activities which might include a visit to a place of worship, or a video.
• **RESPECT:** is the plenary when children are given the opportunity to reflect on what they
have learnt, appreciated and respected and what it means for the followers of that religion.

**Collective Worship**

We gather together every day in collective worship as a class, as a key stage or as a school.

We pray at regular times daily as a class.

We gather together for assemblies which include prayer and reflection.

We gather together for class liturgies.

We gather for class Masses.

**Child-Led Worship**

When worship is planned and led by children it has a powerful impact on their level of involvement and engagement.

Children planning and leading their own liturgies is an important part of collective worship at St Thomas More and time is made for this in each class.

**Let Us Pray**

To enable children to plan their own collective worship each class uses a resource called Let Us Pray.

Each class has a Let Us pray box and this contains three packs of cards which are labelled:

**Gather**

**Word**

**Response to the Word**

**Mission**

and a planning board. The children decide how they would like to gather, which Gospel to read, how they will reflect on the Word and how they will live out the message of what they have shared. The cards give them a selection to choose from. The children then lead their class through this act of collective worship. The children and the other participants are given time to reflect on their liturgy when they have finished.

As children progress through St Thomas More, they will become skilled at planning, leading, and evaluating their collective worship.

The age and stage expectations for children leading their own liturgy are outlined in a progression of skills document which is included at the end of this document.

**Prayer Journals**

Each child in from Year 2 has their own Prayer Journal. This private book is for children to write down their prayerful thoughts and reflections. They can share these with others or not as they wish.

**Chaplaincy Team**

At St Thomas More we have a pupil chaplaincy team.

These children have applied to join the team and meet regularly to pray, plan and to guide the rest of the school in school and class collective worship.

These children receive regular training at school from our Chaplaincy leader Mrs Cummins with support from Miss Pereira. They learn how to develop their own skills to share with others and so enhance the Catholic life of our school.

They are usually commissioned at a special Mass and are in post for a year. The Chaplaincy team from the previous year act as ‘mentors’ for the new team and share their knowledge.

Our chaplaincy team also help to run lunch time prayer meetings with their peers and provide the pupil voice in decisions about the direction the school is going in terms of our lives as a Catholic community.

**Statements to Live By**

This is a programme which aims:

To promote a positive and caring Christian ethos that is understood and communicated to everyone within the community, child and adult, and one that helps deepen the quality of education and truly helps to nurture human wholeness.

It helps to promote emotional literacy, personal, social and health education, and contributes towards community cohesion and the common good.

The statements are a set of 36 statements in poster form which are displayed each week in all our classes. The same statement is displayed in each class from F2 to Year 6 as well as in our entrance hall.

We as a community, then try to live out the statement during that week. The statement is discussed as a class on a Monday and ways of living it out discussed. The statement is referred to during the week.

Each class has a circle time activity which can be shared by the class at the end of the week.

There are certificates which can be awarded by adults who have noticed children living out the statement.

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|  | **Class collective worship** |  |
| **Year group** | **Expectations: Planning stage** | **Expectations: Delivery stage**  | **Resources** | **Evaluation** |
| **Foundation stage**  | Children to use Let Us Pray proforma and resources to plan liturgies, facilitated and supported by an adult. All children to have opportunity to plan and lead a liturgy by the summer term. Teacher to explicitly model liturgy to children a least once a term. Advent/Lent Term – whole class planningPentecost Term – group planning  | Adult to take the lead and to support children in leading section of the liturgy. The aim is to build towards greater child leadership throughout the year. | Let us Pray cards and liturgy boxLion’s Bible (or another Bible appropriate to age)Scripture can be read from a piece of paper if it is more practical. | * Whole class evaluations lead by adult
* Adults to carry out more in depth evaluations periodically using NDCYS eval form
 |
| **Early Phase (KS1)** | Children to use Let Us Pray proforma and resources to plan liturgies, facilitated by adult. Children to plan and prepare focal point for worship according to liturgical season/Come and See topic/theme. Beginning of Yr1 onwards, all children to plan liturgies in groups, facilitated by an adult. Yr2 to generate their own way of gathering to begin the liturgy. Whole class to evaluate liturgy, recorded on proforma.  | Children to lead liturgy using ‘Let us pray’ resources, supported by the teacher. Children can explain how the prayer focus links to the theme. Teacher is able to support with questions, suggestions and to reiterate what students have said to make the message clearer when needed. | Let us Pray cards (with black cards for children to fill in) and liturgy boxThe Catholic Children’s Bible (St Mary’s Press, or another Bible appropriate to age)Scripture can be read from a piece of paper if it is more practical.Access to music  | * Whole class evaluations lead by adult
* Whole class personal impact gathered on occasion
* Adults and older students to carry out more in depth evaluations periodically using NDCYS eval form
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| **Middle Phase (yr3&4)** | Yr3 to generate their own way of gathering to begin the liturgy, and plan their own mission for children to complete the liturgy. NDCYS planning sheet used, with Let us pray cards as a support.Yr4 – Children to generate their own way of gathering to begin the liturgy, a response to the word, and plan their own mission for children to complete the liturgy. NDCYS planning sheet used, with Let us pray cards as a support.Children to use Extra-Ordo-Nary Liturgical Calendar and Open Bible to support planning of class liturgies from Pentecost Term (if suitable).  | Children to lead supported by the teacher. Children can explain their choices and how elements link to the theme/scripture. Teacher is able to support with questions, suggestions and to reiterate what students have said to make the message clearer when needed. | Let us Pray cards and liturgy box (move away from cards)The Catholic Children’s Bible (St Mary’s Press)Blank cardsAccess to music folder on staff works (from hymn practice)Extra-Ordo-Nary Liturgical Calendar (yr4)Open Bible website (yr4)NDCYS planning document | * Whole class evaluations lead by adult or child/NDCYS evaluation form completed by some children
* Whole class personal impact gathered on occasion
* Adults and older students to carry out more in depth evaluations periodically using NDCYS eval form
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| **Upper Phase (yr5&6)** | Children to use Extra-Ordo-Nary Liturgical Calendar to support planning of class liturgies. Children to use Open Bible online resource to select a reading linked to the theme provided on liturgical calendar. Pupils to then find the passage in Bible to add to their prayer focus.Children to generate their own gather, response, word and mission according to the theme and record it on NDCYS planning sheet. They may use songs, actions, prayers, classroom resources within the liturgy. We encourage active participants throughout. This is overseen by an adult, and guided only when necessary. Evaluation is recorded on NDCYS proforma following whole class/group discussion. Children are encouraged to give reasons for their responses and recommendations.  | Children to lead supported by the teacher. Children can explain their choices and how elements link to the theme/scripture. Teacher is able to support with questions, suggestions and to reiterate what students have said to make the message clearer when needed. | Open Bible websiteThe Catholic Children’s Bible (St Mary’s Press)Liturgy boxExtra-Ordo-Nary Liturgical CalendarAccess to YouTube/music NDCYS planning documentNDCYS evaluation document  | * NDCYS evaluation form completed by some children
* Whole class personal impact gathered on occasion
* Adults to carry out evaluations periodically using NDCYS eval form
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| **Notes** | The aim is for CW to be engaging, vibrant, relevant to the young people and relevant to the liturgical time of the year.Active participation and high levels of engagement from all is a key target. CW can include hymns, secular music, drama, artwork, videos, musical instruments, dancing and different types of prayer.CW must include; the sign of the cross (just at the beginning and the end), a piece of scripture (with the appropriate introduction and response), a whole group action, silence/time to reflect, some kind of prayer, an explanation of the scripture, short explanations of how parts of the liturgy link to the theme/scripture. |
| **Glossary of terms** | * Open Bible website: <https://www.openbible.info/topics/>
* NDCYS planning sheet: <http://chaplaincyblog.aquinas-cmat.org/2019/10/16/collective-worship-resources/>
* NDCYS eval sheet: <http://chaplaincyblog.aquinas-cmat.org/2019/10/16/collective-worship-resources/>
* Liturgy box: Collective worship resource box containing prayer cloths, items to use in prayer, items to use for displays
* Whole class personal impact gathered: students given slips of paper and guided with a set of questions to think about the impact different sections of the liturgy had on them
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