



## Our Lady of the Way Catholic Primary School

# Religious Education Policy

### **Rationale**

The identity and mission of our Catholic school is founded in the person of Jesus Christ. Religious Education at Our Lady of the Way School ensures a thorough integration of identity and mission into the whole of the educational experience of each of our learners.

### **Aim**

We believe each child is created in the image and likeness of God. Religious Education at Our Lady of the Way School aims to support the full flourishing of each student through:

- creating a climate within the school which reflects Gospel Values, where respect, integrity and inclusiveness are visible
- nurturing their development and relationship with God
- bearing witness through the quality of personal relationships
- ensuring that Catholic beliefs, teachings and values permeate all learning experiences
- building community characterised by freedom and love
- inviting learning that integrates the light of faith, the joy of discovery and the richness of diverse cultures
- guiding learners as they make meaning for life and form their identity
- supporting learners to imagine and work towards a world of justice, peace and flourishing for all of creation
- supporting them to be enlightened by faith, animated by love and living with hope.

### **Implementation**

Religious Education at Our Lady of the Way School is implemented through the delivery of an authentic and meaningful learning and teaching program:

#### *Curriculum*

The Religious Education program at Our Lady of the Way School incorporates the new Religious Education Curriculum Framework. Religious Education is taught through an inclusive and contemporary curriculum, with units planned using our 'Religious Education Unit Planner' which incorporates an inquiry approach. The program builds on the experiences of each child and integrates the dimensions of Religious Knowledge and Understanding, Reasoning and Responding and Personal and Communal Engagement.

#### *Prayer*

Prayer is a 'faith experience', where the sacred is acknowledged and celebrated. It is an important part of our faith expression, an expression of the connection between our lives and our relationship with God. Prayer is an essential component of the Religious Education curriculum at Our Lady of the Way School. A variety of ways of praying are encouraged: individual and communal, vocal and silent, informal and liturgical. Prayer occurs each morning and afternoon as well as when opportunities

for spontaneous prayer arise. Formal prayers are taught at each year level and informal prayers are encouraged at all levels. Whole school Christian meditation sessions occur in every classroom each Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

As a community we join together to pray during school assemblies, classroom and school celebrations, school/parish events and other special occasions.

Each classroom has a prayer table which helps to provide a focus for students when praying. Teachers aim to develop a 'sense of the sacred' within our students and also make them aware of 'sacred spaces'.

#### *Liturgy:*

Liturgy is an expression of our faith. The Liturgical seasons and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist, are woven through the school year, forming a pattern of celebrations where God is uniquely and richly encountered. God is revealed to us through the story of Jesus' life and participation in the liturgy. Liturgy provides a focus for the Our Lady of the Way School community to gather in God's presence in both word and sacrament. Through liturgy we aim to assist our students in developing an awareness of the sacred within themselves. The liturgical life of the school enables our students to encounter the Holy Spirit at work in our school community, their families, their parish community and the life of the wider Church and the world.

The opportunity to come together to pray and celebrate feasts and special occasions is an important part of the spiritual life of everyone at Our Lady of the Way School. When we gather together for Masses and Prayer Liturgies, we celebrate our unity as a school and parish family as well as valued members of the Church.

The school gathers during the year to celebrate special Church feast days as well as important times in the Church liturgical calendar including prayer liturgies, which are celebrated each week during the seasons of Lent and Advent. Each Wednesday two year levels have the responsibility to prepare, plan and attend the weekly Parish Mass where parents and families are warmly invited to attend these celebrations.

#### *Sacraments:*

Learning about and participating in the sacraments are an essential part of our Religious Education program. The sacraments celebrate God's presence and activity in the lives of our school community. Because of the continuing revelation of God in our lives, developing an understanding of the Sacraments is a lifelong process. Celebrating sacraments in a sacred place helps students connect to the nourishing, healing, welcoming, loving and embracing presence of God in their lives, and helps families and the parish community to celebrate, remember and renew the sacramental times in their lives.

Our Lady of the Way School students celebrate the Sacraments of Reconciliation in Year 2, Sacrament of First Communion in Year 3 and the Sacrament of Confirmation in Year 6. Each Sacrament is planned and organised by the classroom teachers, the Religious Education Leader, the Principal and the Parish Priest. An important aspect of the school's Religious Education Program is the support from the school and parish community for the children receiving the sacraments.

Parent and child workshop nights for students who are preparing for each of the sacraments within Our Lady of the Way School, are presented by the Parish Priest, the schools' Religious Education Leaders, or external presenters. These workshops act as a forum for discussion between parents and their child, and provide an opportunity for faith development about each of the sacraments and their relevance today.

#### *Assessment*

At Our Lady of the Way School, we assess our students' Religious Education knowledge and skills, and their participation in liturgical celebrations. A variety of assessment tools are used including: rubrics, checklists, anecdotal records, concept maps, questioning, unit pre assessment/post assessment and samples of students' work.

#### **Evaluation:**

The Religious Education Policy will be evaluated biennially.

(April 2019)