

**ST. DOMINIC'S SCHOOL
MELTON
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION POLICY**

Religious Education is an ongoing process that is life - long. It is the process of fostering a faith in God upon which each individual's life is based. An essential part of educating the children in faith is the exploration of the teachings and beliefs of the Catholic Church.

The love of God, as expressed through the life of Jesus, is cause for celebration by the whole school and parish community. We believe that the individual should have the opportunity to experience a relationship with a loving God, whose presence can fill their lives with faith, happiness and a sense of eternity.

As parents are the primary educators of their children, our Religious Education Policy is designed to support and compliment what is taught and modelled at home. Therefore we encourage active participation by the whole family.

The Melbourne Archdiocesan Texts and Guidelines for Religious Education of Students, are used as a basis for this education in faith. By using these documents, the following is explored:

- * an awareness of self as loved by God and gifted by Him
- * an awareness of others in relationship to self and to God
- * an awareness of the world where God shows His love
- * an awareness of the Faith Community - how it lives and its message.

AIMS

Our Religious Education Program aims to:

- * foster a personal relationship with God
- * emphasise that Jesus is our model for living the Gospel values and promoting peace and equality in our lives
- * provide children with the environment in which they can develop their Catholic faith through varied experiences
- * lead the children towards an understanding of the doctrine of the Catholic Church
- * develop in children an awareness of different forms of prayer, both formal and informal, through which they can develop a relationship with God
- * provide children with a variety of liturgical celebration experiences, (Class Masses, whole School Masses, paraliturgies, prayer at assemblies and classrooms) in order to develop an appreciation of a variety of celebrations of faith
- * provide the opportunity for Sacraments to be planned and prepared as an ongoing part of the Religious Education Program across the whole school.

The first formal celebrations of the Sacraments of Penance and Eucharist take place every second year for Year 3 and Year 4 students. Confirmation is celebrated for students in Years 5 and 6 every alternate year. (Refer to Parish Sacramental Policy)

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITY OF THE TEACHER

The Teacher is expected to:

1. be committed to the nature of Catholic Education reflected in the school's Vision and Mission Statements
2. be conversant with the Diocesan Religious Education Texts and Guidelines and use these as the basis for the Religious Education Program
3. celebrate and share the Catholic faith within our school community
4. reinforce the education of faith begun at home
5. foster each child's relationship with God
6. develop a classroom atmosphere of love and respect modelled on Gospel values
7. provide the opportunity for prayer
8. display and use appropriate signs and symbols in the classroom, during prayer times and as a constant reminder of God's love for us (eg. a bible, candle, cloth, religious object d'arte etc...)
9. use the Prayer Policy when planning programs
10. cater for different stages of faith development in children
11. share one's faith in a real and positive manner
12. constantly reflect on one's own faith experience and development
13. provide a range of assessment tasks for children
14. formulate programs within classroom theme (where appropriate) using the Religious Education Texts and Guidelines as a basis (see Roles and Responsibility of Teachers - item 5)
15. evaluate the Religious Education Program at the completion of each Unit.

PRAYER AND LITURGY

Prayer and liturgical celebrations are an integral part of Education in Faith.

Children need to:

- * learn about prayer and liturgy
- * participate in prayer and liturgy.

The education of children in prayer requires:

- * an awareness of the teacher's contribution as a person who prays
- * an atmosphere conducive to prayer (with the inclusion of a prayer table and its relevant symbols)
- * an awareness of the children's needs and experiences in their faith development.

The children are to be given the opportunity to pray in a variety of ways.

Experiences in prayer and liturgy currently include:

- * daily prayers to begin and end the day
- * theme based paraliturgies prepared by the teacher and students
- * informal settings, where the students can experience and express their own developing Faith
- * reflection on Scripture
- * formal learning and celebration of traditional prayers using St. Dominic's Prayer Policy as a guide
- * class and whole school Eucharistic and Paraliturgical celebrations
- * Parish celebrations of the Sacraments of First Eucharist, Penance and Confirmation.

SACRAMENTS

The Sacraments stand as unique experiences in the children's growth in faith and in their celebration of the Christian life. They can be points of real contact between.....

- * child and family
- * child and parish community
- * family and parish community
- * child, family, school and parish community

Currently the explicit preparation for the celebration of the Sacraments of Penance, Eucharist and Confirmation takes place within the school. (Refer to St. Dominic's Parish Sacramental Policy)