



SYLLABUS

for

CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

in

Grades 9 and 10



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Approved by the Catholic Bishops Conference
of Papua New Guinea and Solomon Islands

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GRADES 9 & 10 SYLLABUS

PREAMBLE

The first and basic way of proclaiming to others the Good News of Christ occurs when each Christian or group of Christians live good lives and so give witness to Christ by their example. This is a silent but very powerful way of spreading the Christian message. However, it is not sufficient, *"because, even the finest witness will not have an effect if sometimes it is not explained, and people are not told clearly about the Lord Jesus... there is no true evangelization if the name, the teaching, the life, the promises, the Kingdom and the Mystery of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of God, are not proclaimed."* (E.N. p.21-22)

Catechetical instruction is one way of telling people about Jesus Christ. The Catholic Bishops of Papua New Guinea have seen the necessity for having such a program of Religious Instruction in their Catholic Agency Schools, or also in all Agency schools.

The aspects of faith, covered in the two years that this syllabus entails, are contained in four basic themes. These themes are further teased out in greater detail in various texts used through the two years of the courses. However, the overall program follows a common scope that underpins the whole of the religious education program from the Elementary Grades to Year 12.

Each year of the course includes some treatment of:

1. Revelation and Redemption
2. Church, Community and Sacrament
3. Discipleship and Christian Living
4. Courageous Christians and Life Everlasting.

Through this syllabus, students and teachers are challenged to go out from themselves and communicate to the world the Good News. Pope John Paul II suggests *"Evangelization is a duty for all people who have been given the news that Christ is among us."*

In following the command of Jesus, *"to go out to the whole world and preach the good news to all nations"* (Mt. 28.19-20), the apostles began the mission of the Church. We follow the same command in taking the good news out to others. But those who evangelize need first to be evangelized themselves. As the 1972 Syllabus observed, *"If we are not willing to explore our own existence and our own relationships, then we are not really ready to listen to God's word, nor explain it to others."*

It is only by real experience of life and reflection that we can find meaning for our life in the teachings of Christ.

This syllabus looks at the question of enculturation, how the Christian message and the Melanesian culture can be married into an acceptable way of life. While the Gospel challenges some aspects of traditional culture, other aspects of traditional culture may deepen and enrich our understanding of the Gospel.

The syllabus refers to the Melanesian beliefs and cultural practices of Melanesian society; students should be encouraged to reflect on the meaning of their ancestor's religious traditions so as to be able to carry them into their lives and preserve what is best for posterity.

The syllabus addresses the various problems that secondary students are confronted with, acknowledging that the pressure of the media and their peers to conform is quite powerful. Problems as well as behavioural ones should be confronted. Student's faith should be developed till they can take a critical stance against what people tell them or they can become critical of their own beliefs.

Teachers in the Religious Education Department of the school have the privileged responsibility of helping produce the next generation of Catholic men and women for the country: the problem of making the subject relevant, vibrant and interesting cannot be underestimated. But the oft-repeated maxim is as relevant today as it was when it was first coined: *"You teach by what you are, not by what you say."* This refers to all members of staff of our Catholic Agency Schools and especially to our Religious Education teachers.

INTRODUCTION TO TWO APPROACHES TO RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

1. The Praxis Approach to Religious Education

This catechetical process invites students to discover the meaning of God's activity in their lives and to encounter and know the faith of our Catholic Christian community.

Praxis follows the methodology that Jesus usually used in his teaching. His approach was to touch the life experiences of his listeners, recall their corporate story through reference to and explanation of the Scriptures and then provoke reflection and transforming action. The impact of Jesus' message was far greater, because his listeners, rather than being preached to, were involved in verbal exchanges with him.

Praxis incorporates sound educational strategies and leads students to an authentic knowledge of content. Further dialogue with the teacher, with one another, with God and possibly their families can be used to help students come to a genuine lived faith response.

The actual process has four main steps, which incorporates five movements. These will be described in the paragraphs that follow, and then the process will be illustrated diagrammatically.

Step One: LOOKING AT LIFE

In the first movement students look at the theme of the lesson as it is already present in the experiences of life. Actions or situations are recalled or questions posed.

The second movement is a progression of the first. The everyday life experiences of the students are acknowledged and they are encouraged to express aspects of this experience, including problems or stories.

Step Two: KNOWING OUR FAITH

The third movement.

The Christian story and vision related to the topic at hand is then made available to the students. In the process of recalling the story, a range of effective classroom approaches can be used, including research, presentations, role plays, mimes which suit the theme and the group, and other activities which actively involve the class. Importantly, students should be able to dialogue with, reflect upon, question and personally encounter what is being presented.

Step Three: DISCOVERING THE MESSAGE

The fourth movement.

At this stage, students are asked to reflect on the Christian story in the light of their own experience; in essence this is a call to reflect on how the Christian Community's story and vision affirms, questions, and challenges each person's own story. In this way, students are asked to pass judgments on the story and the vision and hopefully to make their own aspects which add meaning to their own lives.

If students are not encouraged to ask and reflect on the "WHY" of reality and dream about what might be, it is likely they will settle for reality uncritically in adulthood.

Step Four: FOR MY LIFE

The fifth movement.

In the final stage of Praxis, students are invited to express a faith response in light of their reflection and new insights; this could be in the form of a simple prayer service or some action to be done in their local Christian Community.

Activities may be used at any stage of the lesson presentation; essentially activities or an activity are used to teach a particular point. A selection of one activity that makes a strong impact is far better than trying to use all the activities mentioned in a lesson plan.

**1. Identifying Students' life Experiences,
Problem posing and questions on the Topic**

I
V

2. Knowing Our Faith

I
V

**3. Appropriation of the Story and Vision
In Light of the Students' Experience**

I
V

4. Transformation and Expression

Monologue by the teacher or providing all the clues in the Discovery Stage is ruinous to the Praxis method.

"In emphasising the subject status of Religious Education, many programs and classroom approaches concentrate on measurable objectives such as knowledge and skills, thereby allowing the students to be assessed on a common basis. Personal judgments, reflection and expressions may not figure prominently or may be entirely absent from classroom approaches or programs which leave little room for anything other than objective observation and description. Praxis argues strongly for the inclusion of these important processes of reflection and personal judgment as a part of sound educational approach."

(Tony Bracken: "The Praxis Approach", Word in Life, Nov 1989:5)

2. The Shared Praxis Approach to Religious Education

The Praxis Approach as presented by Tony Bracken is related to the "Shared Praxis Approach" developed by Thomas Groome, a lecturer at Boston College, USA. For more information about this approach Groome's work 'Christian Religious Education Sharing Our Story and Vision' (Dove Communications, Melbourne, 1980) should be consulted, especially chapters 9 and 10.

The term "shared" is fundamental to this approach, as pupils/students/adults are required to share their experiences and reflections in groups, during steps one, two, four and five (five steps rather than four as in Bracken's outline). Where there are difficulties in sharing or where faith is absent, it may be judged unsuitable. It should be regarded as one approach amongst many which can be used with great profit to the participants.

THE GRADE 9 & 10 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SYLLABUS

GENERAL AIMS

1. To lead the students to an ever-deepening relationship with God, through knowing Jesus Christ, a relationship which is fully integrated into their lives.
2. To help the students form a Christian interpretation of life which takes into account their traditional values.
3. To help students develop a personal framework of Christian beliefs and values in which they find the meaning of life.
4. To enable students to make mature decisions which lead to a personal commitment and effective Christian living.
5. To promote the personal growth and development of the students in a holistic way, particularly relating to human development and sexual maturity.

STRATEGIES

Formal programs of work and associated resource materials are prepared for the school and students. Resource material has been prepared in printed books to be used over a unit of work, normally a term in length.

Catholic Agency Schools teach religious education as a formal program within the normal school subjects. Formal lessons are programmed as normal components of the school timetable.

SPECIFIC AIMS: GRADE 9 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. To help the students to develop a personal framework of beliefs, attitudes and values, based on Christianity and traditional experiences.
2. To lead the students to a greater realisation of "God with us" through Scripture.
3. To help the students enrich their own faith through a study of significant development of Christianity.
4. To lead the students to a more meaningful appreciation and prayerful participation in the Liturgy and the liturgical seasons of the Church.
5. To lead the students to a deeper understanding of the meaning of Sacraments.

SYLLABUS: GRADE 9

The content for the Grade 9 Syllabus will be presented through a series of books prepared for the students and teachers. These books cover the following units of work:

CHURCH HISTORY:

- A Time of Persecution
- A Legal Religion
- The Need for Renewal
- Growth and Expansion
- Christianity in PNG and the Solomon Islands

UNDERSTANDING THE NEW TESTAMENT:

- The Land of Israel
- Reading the Bible
- The Gospel of Mark
- St Paul's Letter to the Ephesians
- The Book of Revelation

SACRAMENTS:

- About the Sacraments
- Baptism
- Confirmation
- Eucharist
- Reconciliation
- Anointing of the Sick
- Holy Orders
- Marriage

PRAYER AND FAITH:

- Faith
- Christians and Prayer
- Faith and Prayer
- Styles of Prayer
- The Psalms
- The Mass
- Activities and Assignments

SPECIFIC AIMS: GRADE 10 RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

1. To lead the students to respond to the God who lives in them.
2. To help the students to understand what it means to be Church, particularly Catholic Church in Papua New Guinea.
3. To help students to develop skills to respond as Christians to the social values and issues of today, and major social justice issues in Papua New Guinea.
4. To lead the students in a study of the Sacraments, especially the Sacrament of Marriage, leading to a deeper appreciation of the need of the Sacraments in their lives.
5. To Use Scripture as a basis for further development of the integration of God's Word in one's life.
6. To assist students in the formation of a Christian conscience and in the processes of making moral decisions.

SYLLABUS: GRADE 10

The content for the Grade 10 Syllabus will be presented through a series of books prepared for the students and teachers. These books cover the following units of work:

CHURCH:

Background to the Study of Church
Introduction to the Book of Acts
Life in the Early Church
Our Local Church, Our PNG Church, Images of Church
New Religious Groups
Activities and Assignments

MADE IN THE IMAGE:

Discovering the Person I Am
What the Bible Says About Who I Am
Making Decisions
Marriage
Activities and Assignments

PROMOTING HUMAN DIGNITY:

Made in the Image of God
The Dignity of the Disabled
Racism and Prejudice
The Dignity of Women
Being a Peace-Person
People, Our Best Resource
Catholic Social Teaching and Human Rights

