

Religious Education Reference Group: Update

Important links

- [RE Reference Group Terms of Reference](#)
- [Previous Reference Group Updates](#)
- [The RE Curriculum Report](#)

To Know and to Love

Update on the work of the Religious Education Curriculum

Meeting #15 of the Religious Education Reference Group

Friday 27 February 2026

The fifteenth meeting of the Religious Education Reference Group was held in late February, 2026. The meeting continued to open with shared prayer and acknowledgement of country, prepared by **Dr Mishel Stefanac**. Mishel centred prayer on the Feast of St Gregory of Narek.

O Lord, receive from us the offering of our thoughts, our words, and our work. Enlighten the eyes of our hearts, so that what we consider together may be shaped by wisdom, humility, and love. Where we are uncertain, be our clarity. Where we are divided, draw us toward unity. Where we are weary, renew us in hope. May all that we do be guided by your mercy and directed toward the good of others. Amen.

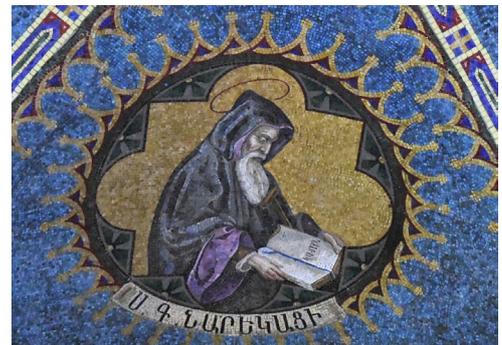


Image Source:
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:San_Lazzaro_degli_Armeni-2023-Gregory_of_Narek-cropped.jpg

Prof Br David Hall FMS offered reflections on the growing theological and pedagogical momentum of the curriculum work. Drawing on Pope Leo's recent address to the Dicastery for the Doctrine of the Faith, he highlighted several themes shaping the direction of Religious Education today. First, he noted the necessity of evangelisation in a context of declining faith, emphasising that evangelisation is ultimately an attraction to the person of Christ rather than institutional promotion. Religious Education, he said, must speak compellingly to contemporary questions with intellectual integrity.

Br David also underscored the need for the curriculum to remain deeply Christ-centred while attentive to the lived experiences of young people, ensuring faith and life remain meaningfully connected. He affirmed that the curriculum project already strongly reflects these priorities.

The main points of the meetings are described below.

Draft Achievement and Reporting Framework

The group reviewed the draft *Religious Education Achievement and Reporting Standards*, designed to help schools meet mandated reporting requirements while preserving flexibility in internal school systems. The proposed structure includes four components: a Year Purpose Statement framing the theological vision; Demonstrated Knowledge describing student understanding for each unit; Learning Dispositions reflecting respectful participation and spiritual attentiveness; and Synthesised Integrated Knowledge that captures whole-year learning.

Feedback highlighted the needs of teachers and assisting their workload. Members discussed the inclusion of learning dispositions in Religious Education and how they can be RE-specific or consistent with whole-school approaches. Additionally, parent readability and expectations were identified as essential in considering reporting and assessment advice.

Alignment with VCEA expectations will be reviewed once the next draft is prepared with members suggesting schools would need adaptable language rather than a mandated template. Br David noted that the synthesis statements remain valuable for teacher formation and planning.

Year 1 – Jesus Grows in Wisdom

Marsha Van Cuylenburg presented the Year 1 unit *Jesus Grows in Wisdom*, which helps students deepen their understanding of Jesus' early life as a faithful Jew in three sequences: *Jesus' Family Life in Nazareth*, *Jesus Learns about God*, and *Jesus' Connection to King David*. The unit draws on Scripture passages including the return from Egypt, Jesus' family life in Nazareth, and the story of Jesus in the Temple (Luke 2). It also reinforces the connection between King David and Jesus as Messiah.

Feedback affirmed the unit's strong contribution to expanding biblical literacy in the early years. Teachers noted the need for additional support in teaching Jewish religious practices, suggesting expanded elaborations in teacher notes. The contemplative prayer activity was enthusiastically supported, though with a recommendation for simplified language. Across the discussion, the importance of teacher formation was highlighted.

Year 6 – Walk in the Light

Mr James O'Brien, on behalf of **Prof Kath Engebretson**, presented the Year 6 Confirmation unit *Walk in the Light*, centred on the Healing of the Man Born Blind in John 9, and the theme of moving from darkness to light across three teaching and learning sequences: *A Blind Man Comes to the Light*, *Jesus: Light of the World*, and *Walk in the Light*. Students engage deeply with Scripture through meditation exercises and exploration of Christ as the Light of the World. The unit concludes by linking the sacrament of Confirmation to the call to live as light for others.

Feedback strongly affirmed the theological richness of the unit, particularly the meditation exercise. Teachers noted that the unit assumes a high level of theological literacy, making professional learning essential. Members recommended grounding the "light vs darkness" motif in everyday experiences relevant to Year 6 students: technology use, digital citizenship, bullying, peer influence, and social dynamics. The inclusion of contemporary figures such as Saint Carlo Acutis was proposed to strengthen relevance.

Year 10 – Human Dignity and the Call to Holiness in Christ

Mr Kyle Hoad presented the Year 10 unit *Human Dignity and the Call to Holiness in Christ*, structured around three learning sequences: *Created in the Image of God*, *God Alone is the Lord of Life*, and *Fulfilled in Christ as Children of God*. The unit was praised for its strong theological foundations and engaging design, with teachers describing it as beautifully written.

Feedback included suggestions to incorporate Psalm 139 to reinforce the theme of human dignity and to include First Nations perspectives, particularly the Stolen Generations, within the discussion of assaults on dignity. Clarification was encouraged around terms such as Imago Dei, original justice, and original grace, with a recommendation for consistent glossary use. Ethical topics such as abortion and euthanasia were discussed; the group suggested offering optional teacher guidance rather than embedding these topics in the core content as these topics will be more appropriate in later units. Members also emphasised pastoral sensitivity and recommended strengthening the representation of women in exemplar figures.