



Religious Education Reference Group: Update

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To Know and to Love

Update on the work of the Religious Education Curriculum

Meeting #19 of the Religious Education Reference Group

Friday 26 June 2026

Associate Professor Joel Hodge opened the meeting with an Acknowledgement of Country and led prayer focused on Jesus' ministry of healing, reconciliation, and the commissioning of disciples, highlighting the call to accompany young people in growth and flourishing.

"Sir,' he said, 'if you want to, you can cure me.' Jesus stretched out his hand, touched him and said, 'Of course I want to! Be cured!' And his leprosy was cured at once.' Matthew 8:2-3

Dr Nigel Zimmermann presented the reference group with an update of progress from MACS. Discussion highlighted the importance of presenting theological concepts in developmentally appropriate ways, helping students move from literal understandings towards deeper interpretation and meaning-making.

An update was provided on emerging directions for system-wide implementation. Current planning proposes a multi-year implementation period, supported by significant investment in teacher formation, professional learning, and implementation support structures. Discussion emphasised the importance of principal leadership, regional support networks, and practical resources that enable teachers to engage confidently with the curriculum. Learnings from previous educational reforms and experiences in other dioceses continue to inform planning.

Advisory Groups

The Pedagogy Advisory Group reported continued progress in developing a pedagogical framework informed by theology, neuroscience, child development, and contemporary understandings of learning. Current work explores how identity, relationships, and prior knowledge contribute to student learning.

The Eastern Churches Advisory Group continues to contribute valuable insights into sacramental teaching and ecclesial diversity. Current work includes reviewing Eucharist and Confirmation units and ensuring that the curriculum authentically represents the theology and practice of Eastern Catholic traditions. Members of the group are also contributing to professional learning opportunities connected to the RE Symposium.

The Senior Secondary Advisory Group continues to develop coherent vision for Years 11–12 Religious Education. Discussion has focused on VCE pathways, Vocational Major programs, and school-based Religious Education offerings. The advisory group is exploring a framework that

supports vocational discernment, identity formation, and faith development while providing greater consistency across diverse school contexts.

Curriculum Writing

Year 3 – God is Revealed to Us

Marsha Van Cuylenburg provided a unit called *God is Revealed to Us*, which explores God's self-revelation through creation, Scripture, and human experience. A central theme throughout the unit is the “golden thread” of revelation, helping students connect their own experiences with biblical stories and the wider Christian tradition. The unit was praised for its clear progression from the natural world to Scripture, its effective introduction to the Bible as a collection of texts and voices, and its strong foundations for future biblical learning. Members particularly valued the way biblical figures were connected to contemporary experiences and affirmed the thoughtful progression.

Year 2 – Jesus Returns to His Father

Adrian Mancini presented a unit called *Jesus Returns to His Father*, which focuses on the Ascension and helps students understand Jesus' continuing presence in the Church and the world. Teacher preparation materials received strong praise, along with the use of questioning and wondering pedagogies that help young learners engage with mystery and faith. Members affirmed the unit's developmental appropriateness, particularly its ability to scaffold increasingly complex ideas in accessible ways. Discussion highlighted the importance of supporting students as they move from literal understandings toward deeper theological meaning.

Year 10 – Sin Diminishes Our Humanity

Kyle Hoad presented a unit called *Sin Diminishes Our Humanity*, which forms part of the broader Year 10 moral theology sequence. The unit explores sin as a failure of love that affects human flourishing, relationships, and community life. Feedback strongly affirmed the theological framing of sin as more than rule-breaking and praised the distinction between personal, social, and structural sin. Members welcomed the integration of Scripture, liturgical sources, and broader moral theology. Suggestions included further development of themes such as original sin, moral responsibility, and the consequences of human choices, while ensuring language reflects a compassionate and nuanced understanding of God. Overall, the unit was viewed as highly relevant and well aligned with the wider

Year 9 – Personal Vocation and Sacraments of Service

James O'Brien provided a unit called *Personal Vocation and Sacraments of Service*, which explores Christian vocation alongside the Sacraments of Marriage and Holy Orders as expressions of service within the Church and wider community. The unit received positive feedback for its strong teacher preparation materials, engaging activities, and thoughtful exploration of vocation as a call to flourishing and service. Members commended the treatment of marriage vows and commitment, while also recommending continued sensitivity to the diverse family situations represented in contemporary classrooms.

Year 9 – Sacraments of Healing and Hope

Prof Kath Engebretson provided a unit called *Sacraments of Healing and Hope*, which focuses on the Sacraments of Reconciliation and Anointing of the Sick. Through themes of forgiveness, healing, mercy, and hope, students explore the Church's understanding of restoration and reconciliation. Feedback focused primarily on theological precision, including refining explanations of contrition, absolution, and the relationship between the Penitential Rite and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The unit was widely regarded as a strong contribution to the Year 9 sacramental sequence and an important opportunity for students to deepen their understanding of God's healing presence.