

Research/Professional Learning Project - Online Religious Education (RE) Assessment

*Well, we know where we're goin'
But we don't know where we've been
And we know what we're knowin'
But we can't say what we've seen*

*We're on a ride to nowhere
Come on inside
Takin' that ride to nowhere
We'll take that ride*

from *Road To Nowhere* (*Talking Heads* - David Byrne)

Benchmarks: complementing our question writing process by attempting to define what a year's progress might look like – the ninth in a series of articles outlining our research/learning project

Preamble

As an extension to our ongoing [Year 4 online RE assessment research/professional learning project](#), our Directors of Religious Studies (DRSs) requested that we now embark upon a similar process ([see the eighth article in this series](#)) in order to **develop benchmarks for the mandated RE syllabus in Years 5 & 6.**

We aim to succinctly define and make visible that which “students should know and what students should show”, in relation to their Catholic faith at the end of Years 5 & 6.

We used the collective power and wisdom of teacher expertise to develop the enclosed draft benchmarks, which we are pleased to provide for your critique and feedback.

Professor John Hattie’s research confirms the importance of such an approach. Hattie argues that:

[The measure of progress needs to be framed as ‘at least a year’s growth for a year’s input’ or ‘every child deserves a year’s growth for a year’s input’¹.](#)

It goes without saying that there needs to be debate and agreement among teachers about what a year’s progress looks like. Hattie notes:

[In subjects such as arts, music and physical education \(where there is a history of fewer standardised measures calibrated over time\), it is worth conducting standards-setting sessions with teachers as this can lead to decisions about expected yearly growth.²](#)

Of course, we would add RE to the above quote from Professor Hattie!

¹ <https://www.pearson.com/hattie/solutions.html> (p.5)

² [ibid](#) (p.7)

(1) Making the thinking of the writing party visible

Ongoing discussion with DRSs and RE teachers has turned to the desirability of developing and publishing benchmarks for Years 5 & 6.

The aim of such benchmarks would be to make visible for all teachers of RE in Years 5 & 6 the required syllabus coverage in a format that is readily understandable.

Such benchmarks would, hopefully, assist RE teachers in ensuring all the relevant material has been covered throughout Years 5 & 6, thereby ensuring our students are well prepared for their future RE learning as they enter the intermediate years of education.

(2) Who was on our benchmark drafting/writing party?

The following people generously gathered with **Cushla O'Connor** (RE Adviser, Diocese of Christchurch) at the Catholic Education Office on Wednesday 14th June and Thursday 15th June, 2017:

- **Catherine Quinn** (DRS, St Albans Catholic School)
- **Megan Stewart** (DRS, New Brighton Catholic School)
- **Lydia Sula** (DRS, St Teresa's School, Riccarton)
- **Carmel Brosnahan-Pye** (Principal, St Joseph's School, Timaru)

Due to unforeseen circumstances, **Trish McCambridge** (DRS, St Joseph's School, Timaru) was unable to join us for the writing party days.

However, Trish kindly agreed to be our critical friend and edited the initial draft benchmarks the writing party developed ☺ ☺

(3) What process did the writing party follow?

We split into two groups and for each of the two year levels and:

- each group in the first instance read over the theological focus for the strands;
- we then looked at the Achievement Objectives and Learning Outcomes for each strand at a particular level (e.g. God, Jesus, Holy Spirit, Church, Sacrament, Communion of Saints at Year 1) to determine the '**know**' part of the benchmark;
- then looking at the content of the knowledge being taught each group determined the '**show**' part of the benchmark based on the attitudes being developed within each strand;
- the '**prayer**' part of the benchmark was determined using the Family Whanau page from each strand's teacher manual and again by reflecting on the knowledge being taught;
- once each group had worked through this process the two groups came together and discussed and thrashed out what would be included in each section (**know, show, pray**)

This process was repeated for each of the two levels

(4) So what did the writing party come up with as their first draft benchmarks?

Here are our draft Years 5 & 6 benchmarks and we very much welcome receiving your critique and comment on our first draft:

AT THE END OF YEAR FIVE:

(these benchmarks relate to the Year 5 RE programme)

KNOW	SHOW	PRAY Students need experience of:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● in Scripture, God called to people and they responded in different ways ● God never stops loving, and asking us, to love each other ● that if we hurt each other God wants us to be prepared to reconcile ● God calls us to believe in him and establish his Kingdom/Reign on earth. ● the structure of the New Testament ● Jesus lived in a particular culture, society, time and place ● Jesus is fully human (he tino tangata) and fully divine (he tiro Atua) ● we are called to believe in God and build up Te Rangatiratanga- the Reign of God on earth ● that a variety of titles and symbols are used to describe the Holy Spirit ● the Holy Spirit is the bearer of grace, tapu and mana to all God's people ● the Holy Spirit helps us grow in holiness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● faithfulness by being true to God, the teachings of Jesus, and themselves. ● reverence for Scriptures ● respect for people of other faiths. ● tapu and mana in their interactions towards others. ● respect when people gather for worship. ● respect for the dignity of all people. ● compassion and understanding to those who are sick ● respect for all ● forgiveness ● participation in the Eucharist ● respect for those who have died. ● the Gospel Values. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hail Mary ● Prayers of/for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - thanks - care of the earth - healing - Anointing of the Sick - those who have died ● the Scriptures for reflection and prayer. ● praying the Creed ● traditional and personal prayers to the Holy Spirit ● Litany of Saints ● Prayers and responses of the Mass. ● Prayer of St Teresa of Avila ● Act of Sorrow ● Blessing prayers

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">● worship, prayer, and the Sacraments are central to living our faith● the Liturgical seasons of the Church.● Eucharist is central to the life of the Church● The importance of liturgy in enabling Christ's saving work.● the Sacraments of Healing in the Catholic Church are in Penance and Anointing of the Sick.● each Sacrament has its own special grace.● the rites, rituals and symbols of the sacraments of healing.● the Church is God's people in heaven, on earth and in purgatory● Saints and inspiring people are role models for people today.● the traditional and favourite Saints the Church honours | | |
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THE END OF YEAR SIX:

(these benchmarks relate to the Year 6 RE programme)

KNOW	SHOW	PRAY Students need experience of:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the many names and images for God ● That the names and images for God help us to know what God is like ● that we know God through Jesus ● we know and respond to God through worship and action ● the Catholic beliefs about God which are contained in the Creed ● Jesus is the Son of God who revealed God as Abba - loving Father ● the roles and language of the Trinity ● That faith, hope and love are central to our relationship with God, self and others ● Jesus offers people the grace of the Holy Spirit to live with faith, hope and love. ● Jesus lived his life in love for God and people ● that in baptism people receive the Holy Spirit which strengthens people in special ways ● that through Baptism people receive the Holy Spirit which helps 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● respect for the Catholic beliefs about God. ● their love of God through worship and service to others ● respect for people who live by the gifts of faith, hope and love. ● reverence and respect for: parents, families, self and others. ● by their words and actions that the Holy Spirit is working in their lives ● openness to God's call ● respect for others who help us on our journey - te wa. ● reverence for the Eucharist as a sacrifice. ● an awareness that everything in life can be a sign of God's presence. ● devotion to Mary ● concern for justice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A wide variety of prayer forms which may include <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meditation - centring prayer - song - dance and - sacred movement ● the Nicene Creed ● praying the Psalms ● personal prayers using different images of God; ● prayers to the Holy Spirit ● prayers of/for : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - petition - thanksgiving for the gifts of faith, hope and love - thanksgiving for the presence of God in our lives - vocations - intercessions to Mary ● Eucharistic Prayer II ● The Magnificat ● Hail Mary in Maori ● The Angelus ● a Litany to Mary

<p>them to live as children of God in the Church</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● the Holy Spirit within people helps them to know and believe in Jesus ● about the early Christian community ● that people use their gifts for the mission of the Church ● the Church is a Pilgrim people on a life journey, <i>te wa</i>, to God ● the meaning and importance Sacraments in the lives of Catholics ● the purpose of the Sacraments of Initiation ● the rituals, symbols rites and purpose of the Sacrament of Confirmation ● Eucharist is a sacrifice ● Scripture stories tell of Mary's faith journey ● Mary is a model of living and discipleship ● devotion to Mary is expressed various forms. ● Mary, as Mother of God, Mother of the Church and Patroness of Aotearoa New Zealand. 		
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(5) What process did we follow to self-critique our draft benchmarks?

Cushla used the draft NCRS bridging document as a final critique of our draft benchmarks; in that way we believe we have ensured that we have covered all the knowledge across the NZCBC-mandated Years 5 & 6 RE curriculum.

(4) Feedback

We would very much value receiving your comments on the first draft of our benchmarks ☺

Would you be so kind as to meet in your Year 5 & 6 school groupings and provide one combined school feedback/comment on the first draft of our benchmarks?

The feedback form can be found at these links ...

Year 5:

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1NuC_mQaterQGiTdA6KxOjJSxd-_fzYoN3Lomrs46lc/edit?usp=sharing

Year 6:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/19uGVdCyLc0tUqpw7f4BcVnDMcu8IYxCeanCOBlEt4c/edit?usp=sharing>

Would you be so kind as to complete your school's **feedback by Friday 1st December 2017?**

Thanks (in anticipation) ☺

(4) Conclusion

In providing these draft benchmarks we are seeking to make visible for teachers of RE in Years 5 & 6 the required syllabus coverage in a format that is succinct and readily understandable.

Such benchmarks will (*hopefully!*) assist RE teachers in ensuring all the relevant material has been covered throughout Years 5 & 6, thereby ensuring our students are well prepared for their future RE learning as they enter the intermediate years of education.

We seek to use the collective power and wisdom of teacher expertise to refine our draft benchmarks.

We look forward to receiving, and reflecting upon, your feedback.

Cushla O'Connor (RE Adviser)
Megan Stewart (DRS)
Trish McCambridge (DRS)
Mike Nolan (Manager, Catholic Education Office)

Catherine Quinn (DRS)
Lydia Sula (DRS)
Carmel Brosnahan (Principal)

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