



Teacher Accreditation 2024

Module 4

Learning Teaching and Leading in Religious Education

Session 2: February 27, 2024

Let Us Pray

“But you are not to be called teacher, for you have one teacher and you are all brethren.”

Matthew 23: 8

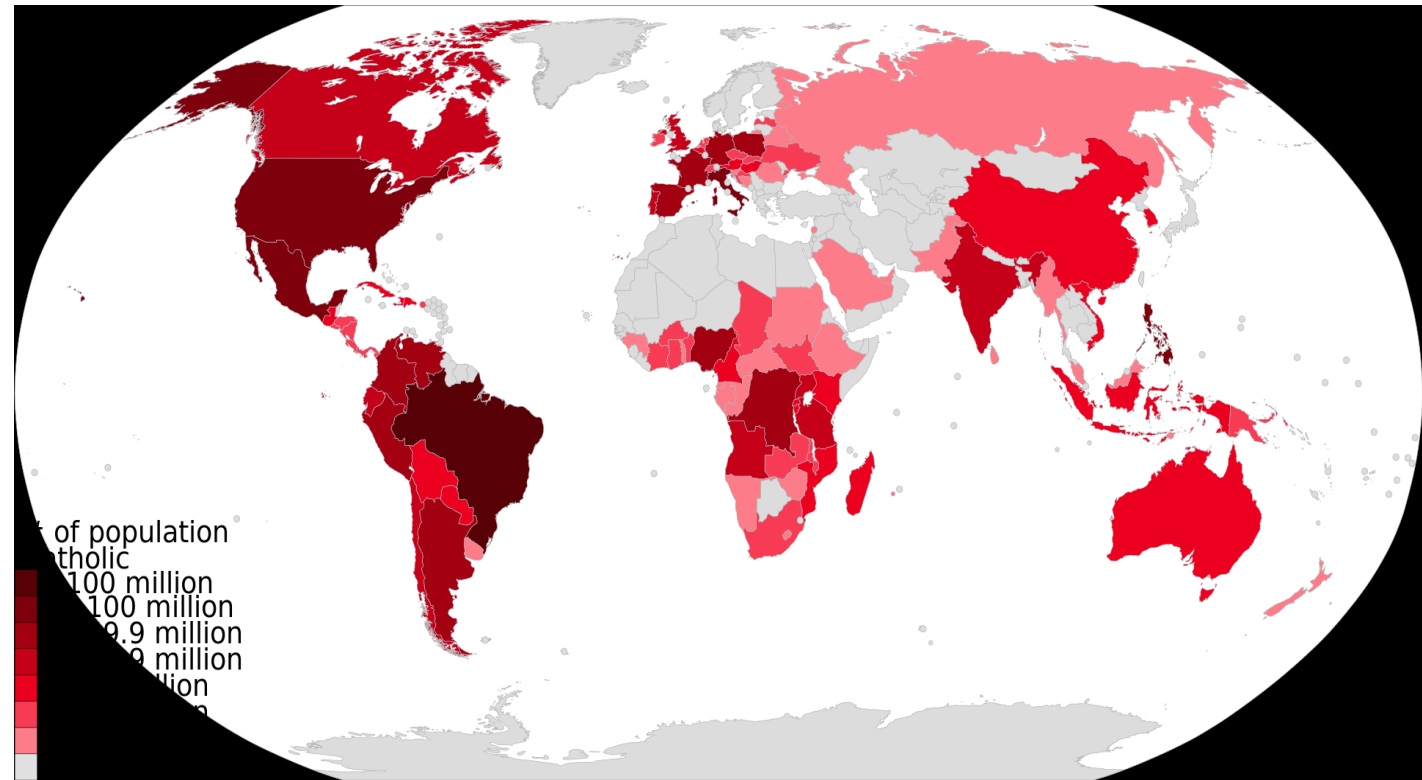
Lord, Make us witnesses, inspired by your love,

We ask this in the name of Jesus our teacher



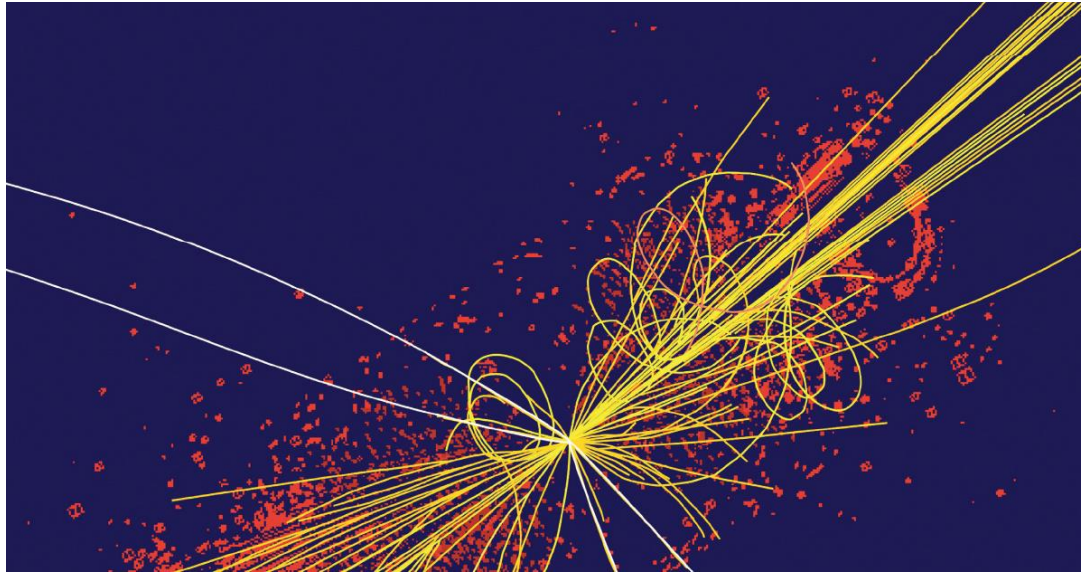
Today

- Why Catholic schools?
- Explicit communication of Catholic offering *in dialogue*
- Enacting a Catholic pedagogy
- Teacher tools



Catholic Education: *why* and *how* are interconnected

Weak 'why'anyhow



**Strong 'why' supports purposeful
method and pedagogical approach**



Why Catholic schools?

Communicated or perceived offering

- Good human values (optimistic humanitarianism)
- Better discipline
- Strong Community
- Personalised/ caring teaching
- Tradition/ nostalgia
- Outreach
- Cheaper 'private' education
- Induction into sacraments

Not so clearly communicated: Offers opportunities to discover and grow relationship with God

- Understanding the world/ life as imbued with God (eco justice...soul deep identification with creation)
- Seeing self and others as made in the image of a loving relational God (respect, belonging and community)
- Called to discover and contribute to God's reign (it's not just about me! Discernment, Responsibility and justice)
- Experiencing Humanity as vulnerable (Humility and vulnerability: search for truth/ God is ongoing, relevant, puzzling and open ended)

The Catholic DIALOGUE school...

- “The Church considers dialogue as a constitutive dimension.” (because Catholic theology understands God to be a God in dialogue with godself and in dialogue with humankind)
- “The Catholic school is ...an educating community in which the human person can express themselves and grow in his or her humanity, in a process of relational dialogue, interacting in a constructive way, exercising tolerance, understanding different points of view and creating trust in an atmosphere of harmony.” (enacting a culture of dialogue)

(The Identity of the Catholic School for a Culture of Dialogue, 2022, no. 30)

How might you clearly enact *the theology of dialogue* to create *a culture of dialogue* in your context?

What does any *religious/ philosophical* education offer?

- Attention to one's own identity...
- Opportunity to encounter difference and model respect and acceptance of it
- Nurture dispositions of openness and sincerity in relationships (with the spirit/ divine or others)
- Experience and understand ritual, symbol, sacred texts and prayer in traditional communities and contemporary settings as ways of relating to the sacred/ spiritual
- Grapple with meaning and truth in life in dialogue with wisdom traditions and philosophies
- Nurture a sense of responsibility for right relationships with others and the world

What does *Catholic* religious education offer?

- Attention to one's own identity... (Christian Anthropology: as made in the image of a trinitarian/ dialogical God who speaks to us as friends, *Dei Verbum*)
- Opportunity to encounter difference (as the other who, as made in the image of God can never be fully known; and God as Other who is ever beyond our grasp, yet reveals Godself in life, the Word, others, etc) and model respect and acceptance of it
- Nurture dispositions of openness and sincerity in relationships (with God and others; and in communities of believers who support each other in faith)
- Experience and understand ritual, symbol, sacred texts and prayer in traditional communities and contemporary settings as ways of relating to the sacred and through these practices grow more deeply in relationship with God/ discipleship with Jesus
- Grapple with meaning and truth in life in dialogue with wisdom traditions: the Old testament and especially the Gospel and lives of saints and other life philosophies
- Nurture a sense of responsibility for right relationships with others and the world, as created by a loving God, and nurture courage in the pursuit of justice and peace (God's reign), with preferential attention to the least powerful

Essentials of a Catholic offering: (the what)

Awareness and relationality

- God as both immanent and Other/ hidden...(there is a God and it's much greater than me! See vulnerability: inquiry, mysticism, prayer, wonder, awe, other religious traditions)
- All of Creation as imbued with the sacred and humankind as made in the image of God (see fulfillment: morality, justice, eco-spirituality)
- Truth seeking/ identity formation/ spirituality as a communal pursuit (see commitment: faith community, gospels, discipleship and saints)
- God as dialogue and in dialogue (trinitarian) is essentially relational, with Christ as God's paramount communication of love to humanity (see life of Jesus and relationship with God, judeo-christian history)
- **Relationship with God through Christ and in the Holy Spirit** as meaningful and to be nurtured and celebrated ritually, communally and personally (See liturgy prayer and sacraments)
- **Revelation/ spirituality as awareness of God/ the sacred in our life which energises us to reach out in service to others.** (See responsibility: discernment, forgiveness, ethics and prayer)

Dialogue begins with inviting student experience

Existential questions to explore in RE:

- Who am I and why am I here?
- How shall I live?
- Where is God/ truth?
- In whom shall I trust?
- Who calls me?
- How must I respond?
- Where do I belong?
- How can I contribute?
- Am I free?



Dialogical approach: Engagement

Start with the student experience *first*

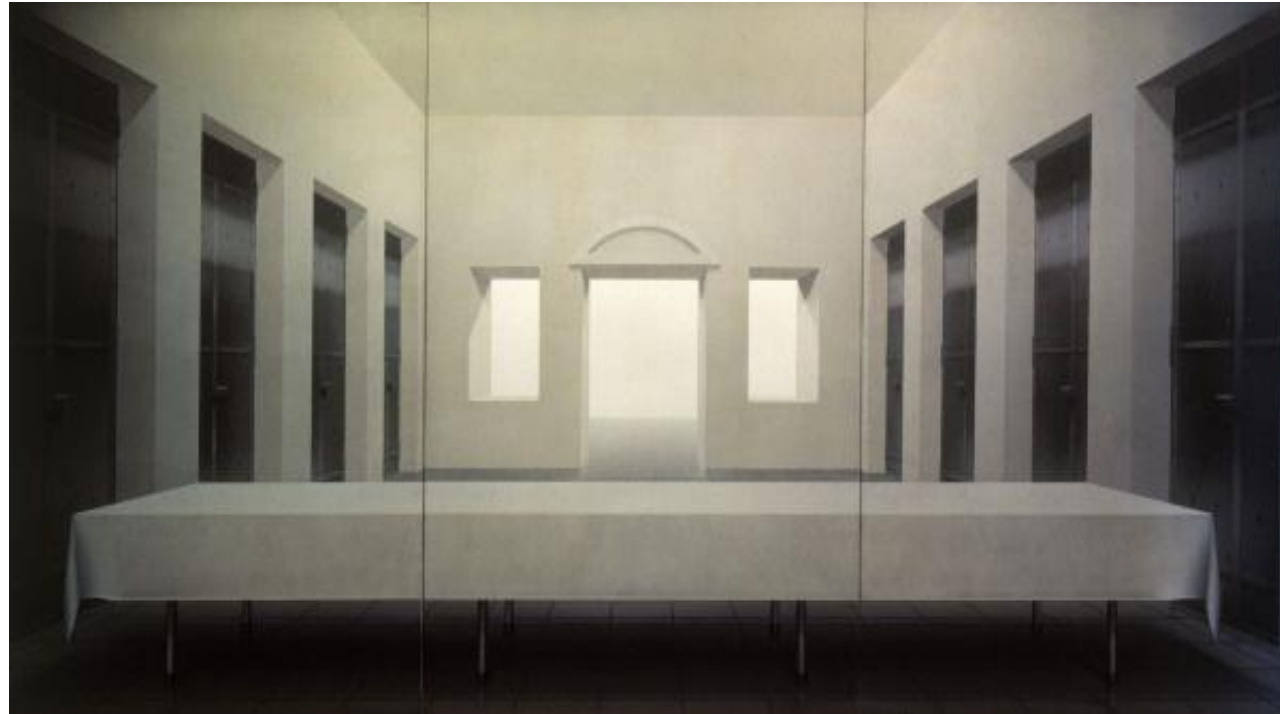
- Wonder and awe: What might this mean?
- What/ who is sacred to me? Why?
- Who am I? What am I called to?
- What are my special relationships?
- How/ why do I celebrate?
- What kind of person do I want to be? Am I free?

Offer Catholic wisdom *in the dialogue*

- God as mystery and creator, prayer
- Made in the image of God, respect
- Community and Jesus, discipleship, saints, church
- Jesus and God's relationship, forgiveness, our relationship with God/ Spirit
- Sacraments/ Rituals past, present and future
- God's reign, discernment, justice

Representing the Church optimistically as...

- Evolving, enculturated, porous
- Relevant
- Challenging, internally plural, dialogical
- 'New' for each generation ... created from a fusion of horizons of the past and the present
- Called to build a new world...the reign of God
- Invitational... to be future Church



Making meaning together

Teacher as

- Shifting from simplicity (Values ed) to complexity: grappling with eternal issues, imagination and metaphor as well as critical thinking and existential questions
- Shifting from role of knowledge transmission to student agency for transformation (power with) and identity formation (power within).
- Shifting from telling to witnessing, listening and inviting
- Shifting from curriculum implementer to co-designing learning with the student



Making meaning together

Student actively

- Building relationships of trust
- Grappling with difference/ belonging and distantiation
- Making new connections between tradition, self and context
- Encountering otherness/ the Other
- Imagining anew, empathising with, and co-creating the tradition
- Experiencing the Spirit at work in: relational learning, dialogue, reflection, prayer



Dialogue enacted:

- Occurs in the liminal space of encounter/ difference
- Acknowledges plurality and diversity
- Is Based on trust and respect
- Is Formative and Transformative





How do I encounter this?

What do I think and sense?

Looking at the concept/issue as it is experienced today and as a religious issue, using a provocation to raise questions.

- What do I think about this?
- What questions does this raise for me?
- Why am I responding in this way?
- How does this impact on who I am in the world, and as part of a Catholic learning community?

How do I encounter this?

How do others encounter this?



How do others encounter this?

What do others think and why?

Seeking different views, including religious perspectives and interpretations, through dialogue. Going deeper into different worldviews to reveal alternative visions of, and for, the world.

- What is at the heart of this topic for each perspective?
- Are there hidden worldviews to uncover?
- What visions for life do these perspectives reveal?
- What connects with my experience or thinking?
- What challenges me? What questions do I have now?

How am I called into commitment and action?

How is this encountered in the Catholic faith?

How am I called into a deeper relationship with others, the world and God?



How am I called into commitment and action?

What do I think now and why?

Reflecting on the integration of knowledge, ways of being, spirituality and action, and the resulting transformation.

- What do I think now?
- How have I grown?
- What influences my thinking and why?
- What further questions does this raise for me?
- What will I do differently now?



How is this encountered in the Catholic faith?

What does the Catholic Church teach and why?

Seeking the Church's perspective and interpretations through dialogue and discussion.

- What's at the heart of this topic for the Catholic Church?
- What might different members of the Church bring to this?
- What visions for life does this perspective reveal?
- Why does the Church hold this view?
- How is this different from other religious perspectives?
- How might it challenge secular positions?
- What connects with my experience or thinking?
- What challenges my thinking?



How am I called into a deeper relationship with others, the world and God?

How have I been transformed by this encounter?

Exploring a different way of knowing through experiences that open us to the sacred: praying and celebrating, using symbol and ritual and reflecting on sacred text and art.

- How does this experience (of prayer, celebration, reflection, theologising about the concept) call me to be more?
- How does this impact on my spirituality?
- How do I explore my inner voice? Who am I in this?
- How am I becoming conscious of a higher, deeper, more valued reality, beyond the senses?

Teacher Dialogue Tool

Part A: Team Dialogue

Purpose: Through this process, teachers attend to their own religious formation and professional development in dialogue. Before planning a unit of learning they explore possibilities in the proposed learning for students as they deepen their own understanding of concepts underpinning a unit.

Process: The planning team elects a facilitator and a scribe.

The role of the **facilitator** is to listen closely and to guide the dialogue, selecting from the questions below, as appropriate, to probe teacher thinking about the concepts underpinning the unit of work proposed.

The role of the **scribe** is to take pertinent notes that may sum up the important insights coming from the dialogue. These will be referred to later in designing learning for students.

The role of the **team** is to engage in dialogue, seeking to explore the religious and deep learning possibilities within the proposed unit of work.

Timing: Substantive time is needed with this process to engage teachers and leaders in deep dialogue (45 minutes would be regarded as a minimum).

Consider Issues and Questions

What is provocative, thought provoking and religious about this unit of work?

- What are the concepts underpinning this unit of work?
- Why are these concepts important for students to grapple with?
- Do they relate to the big questions of life / culture?
- What is an issue here? What is at stake?

How do I encounter this?

- What experiences of this issue have I had?
- How has this issue affected me? What emotions come to the fore?
- What do I think about this issue?
- Do I have any blind spots or biases? Do I need to deepen my understanding of some elements of this issue?

In what ways is the religious dimension relevant and connected to the issue?

- How does faith interact here?
- How does this theme appear in the media, youth culture and in people's common understanding?
- What is taboo in this issue?
- What human images, world views or images of God could play a role here?
- How would I put in words my own position as a believing Religious Education teacher?
- Is truth a matter of concern within this issue?
- How is a deeper dimension of reality evident here?

How do others encounter this?

- Why does this subject evoke so much emotion? Why does the issue affect people?
- What kind of social debates and positions exist with regard to this issue?
- What assumptions are involved here? What are the conflicting principles concerning this issue?
- What questions can I ask in relation to the answers that are usually given on this subject?

How is this encountered in the Catholic faith?

- Are there different perspectives within the Catholic Tradition?
- What stories, experiences and information from Catholic teaching and practice may be explored?
- Are there particular principles, ways of thinking and acting that are unique to / important within the Catholic Tradition?

Consider my Learners

How will we ensure students engage with the unit of work?

- What experiences of strangeness, wonder, even alienation, will be offered to students to capture their attention, draw on their emotions and spark interest or curiosity?
- What opportunities will be offered for students to make new connections with their own identity and self-understanding?
- What opportunities will be provided for students to put forward their own philosophical and/or religious position?
- How will we find out what matters most in the minds and hearts of students with regard to this issue?
- How will students encounter a tradition that is not necessarily theirs?

What questions will we use to locate learners' current understanding?

- How have you experienced...?
- What feelings do you have about...?
- What do you think about...?
- What do you assume to be true about...?

Teacher Dialogue Tool

Part B: Designing Learning for Encounter

Purpose: Through this process, teachers will design learning experiences for students and consider possibilities for learning that will progress student learning in line with achievement standards, tapping into student questions and identifying gaps in their learning.

Process: Teachers bring students' questions and assumptions to the session and the notes from the previous dialogue session. They elect a facilitator and a scribe.

The role of the scribe is to take pertinent notes that may sum up the important insights coming from the dialogue. These will inform the design of learning for students.

The role of the team is to engage in dialogue, seeking to explore the religious and deep learning possibilities within the proposed unit of work.

Timing: Substantive time is needed with this process to engage teachers and leaders in deep dialogue (45 minutes would be regarded as a minimum).

Consider Pedagogical Choices

What are our students telling us about this concept/issue?

- What do they feel/know/wonder about this concept?
- What are the gaps in their understanding? How do we know?

What elements of the Catholic Tradition will take students to the heart of the learning?

- How do the *theological understandings* of the Religious Education Curriculum help identify key elements of the Catholic Tradition connected to this issue?
- What other sources might we investigate to identify key elements?
- How will we invite students to engage with Scripture, liturgy, prayer, Church teaching, art, music, sacramental experiences?

How will we create an environment for dialogue?

How will we enable learners to:

- deepen understanding and focus on encounter?
- search for truth and seek to make progress?
- use both verbal and nonverbal communication?
- enter into a space where they may embrace differing perspectives/worldviews and not seek rapid or shallow agreement?
- disentangle hermeneutical knots/junctions, issues?
- build trusting relationships?
- respect personal witness, challenge and silence?
- critically engage with the Catholic Tradition?
- be inspired by the Word of God and be open to the great 'Other' (God)?

What opportunity will we give students to reflect on their spiritual growth in dialogue with the Catholic Tradition?

Which of the following questions might engage learners in deeper dialogue with the Catholic Tradition?

- How does this text/image/testimony/experience align/not align with my religious or philosophical understanding?
- How would you characterise the world view and relevance of this?

- Why is/isn't this element entitled to appreciation?
- How might people with different perspectives respond to this?
- How do I see this differently today?
- What aspects of this resonate with me?
- Does this result in more faith, hope and love in my life, in the lives of others, and in the life of the local and global communities?

Consider Evidence of Learning

How can the learning come together and be made visible?

Which of the following might we use to enable students to highlight insights into their learning?

- What differences or connections have we discovered within the issue?
- Which aspects of the dialogue are worthwhile paying more attention to?
- What was at stake here?
- Which aspects/topics were not clarified in the dialogue?
- Which new perspective has the dialogue given concerning the Catholic Tradition, culture or the students' self-understanding?
- How does this dialogue relate to learning in other classes?
- What are you unlikely to forget out of this dialogue? Why is this element relevant?
- How does this connect with / extend previous learning?
- How do these new insights align with your understanding of life and the Catholic Tradition?
- How might we follow up some ideas from this learning?
- How is your world view growing/changing?

How does this unit of work link the content descriptors with the achievement standards?

- What opportunities do the achievement standards offer to assist with the design of learning and assessment?
- What opportunities do the achievement standards offer for formative assessment, including peer assessment and feedback to students about future learning?

Chat rooms (15 minutes)

Teacher Dialogue A

Which questions would you find helpful to discuss in order to prepare for classroom dialogue?

Teacher Dialogue B

Which sections would be most helpful for your team to plan for deep learning in RE?



Whole Group Share

- How might these tools assist in enacting a dialogue approach?



Preparation for next week (Session 3)

- Bring a piece of student learning that you have reflected on guided by the following, using learning from this session to inform your judgment

Informing teacher judgment; Reflecting on student learning

Name/ Aim of the unit:

Conceptual understandings to be developed:

Describe Student evidence: What did I ask of the student?	What did I expect to see from this student? Why am I seeing/ not seeing this?	What am I seeing that I value in this learning? (internal accountability)	What am I seeing in relation to the RE standards/ Wiggins & McTighe rubric or Teacher Tools (external accountability)	Where to next for the student?

Reflecting on student learning next week

- If you are a leader without access to students: Please work with a teacher to do this task together....this is an opportunity to keep line of sight to student learning experience in your school
- If you are teaching a humanities subject that is not RE, please swap out reference to 'RE standards' and use the Wiggins and McTighe rubric (from next week's handout)
- If you take a home room session, please apply the reflection task to how you go about engaging students in prayer or other home room activities
- If you still have questions around how to apply reflecting on student learning in your context, please stay online after this session to discuss.