

Catholic Early Childhood Religious Education

CURRICULUM STATEMENT

Acknowledgments

National Centre for Religious Studies

Kevin Wanden FMS, Director
Nuala Dunne, Secretary, design
Joan Parker RNDM, Editing

Development group

Gary Finlay (NCRS)
Susan Apáthy (NZCEO)
Maria Sammons
Lisa Vedder
Hazel Shapcott
Maria Huni
Christina Reymer
Tivise 'Otutoa
Wendy Donald
Lucille Taylor RSJ
Margaret Nicholls
Kevin Wanden FMS (NCRS)

Theological Adviser

Appointed by the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference:
Monsignor Vincent Hunt

Māori Consultants

Pā Henare Tate
Fr Bernard Dennehy

Cover Design

Nuala Dunne

Imprimatur

+John A. Dew DD
Archbishop of Wellington
President New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference
August 2010

© Copyright 2010 by National Centre for Religious Studies.

No part of this document may be reproduced in any way, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted by any means, without the prior permission of the publishers.
NZ Catholic Early Childhood Services may photocopy this material for educational purposes.

Published by

National Centre for Religious Studies
Catholic Centre
PO Box 1937
Wellington 6140
New Zealand

Contents

Letter from the Bishop	2
A prayer of Blessing	3
Foreword	4
1. Introduction	5
2. Developing Christian Attitudes, Relationships and Environment	7
3. Faith Development and Children	9
4. Religious Education	11
5. Planning, Evaluation and Assessment of Religious Education	12
6. Catholic Faith Dimension within <i>Te Whāriki</i> : Foundation Principles	13
Strands and Goals	
• Well-being – Mana Atua	14
• Belonging – Mana Whenua	16
• Contribution – Mana Tangata	20
• Communication – Mana Reo	22
• Exploration – Mana Aotūroa	24
Some Catholic Prayers	28
Major Ecclesial Documents Relating to Catholic Education	30
References	32

Ko te kainga te tāpapa whakatupu kakano.

*A child's faith is received and nurtured first and foremost in the home.
(The Early Childhood Service and parish support the family-whānau
in the religious development of the child).*

Letter from the Bishops

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari he toa takimano.

My strengths are not that of an individual, but that of many.

The Catholic community has a long history of support for children and their families, understanding the importance of the early years as critical for the health and wellbeing of the child. The responsibility for nurturing a baby is recognized as one shared between the parents, Godparents, family and community and that collective task is embedded in the sacrament of Baptism as the new baby is welcomed into our Catholic community.

The Catholic Early Childhood Curriculum is an important part of our collective responsibility to young children and their families as it identifies the diversity of social contexts that children experience and provides clear frameworks for early childhood services to cultivate the spiritual, physical, emotional and intellectual development of young children.

This curriculum document weaves the strands of *Te Whāriki*, the national Early Childhood Curriculum, into the Catholic traditions of faith and echoes the voices of our past, as well as the responses from our early childhood services throughout Aotearoa New Zealand in the collaborative development of this document.

Together with families, as the first educators, early childhood services are vital in the ministry of faith as they awaken and nurture children's spiritual development. We Bishops welcome this unique document, recognising that it holds within it the acknowledgement of our collective responsibilities towards our children from the day they are born. This Catholic Early Childhood Curriculum provides a way that we can support parents to ensure the child grows strong within the context of that faith and the encouragement of us all.

It takes a whole community to raise a child.

+ John A. Dew DD
Archbishop of Wellington
President New Zealand Catholic Bishops Conference

+ Denis G. Browne DD + Colin Campbell DD
Bishop of Hamilton Bishop of Dunedin

+ Peter J. Cullinane DD + Patrick J. Dunn DD
Bishop of Palmerston North Bishop of Auckland

+ Barry P. Jones DD
Bishop of Christchurch

He Karakia Whakapai

A Prayer of Blessing

Gracious and loving God,
te Matua, te Tamaiti, me te Wairua Tapu,
we ask your blessing on all who use this curriculum.
In your great love,
Bless our tamariki, may they be treasured by their families
and all who care for them.
May they grow each day in grace and wonder
and come to know your tender love for them.
Bless our parents, the first educators in faith,
may they nurture the awakening faith
in the hearts of their children.
Bless our whānau, ngā kohanga o te whakapono,
may they be centred in Christ
and animated with love and reverence for God,
so that the seeds of faith will grow in the lives of the children.
Bless our parishes and communities, te Whānau a te Karaiti,
may they encourage and support the families in their midst.
Bless our staff, may your love shine through them
so that they may bring your loving presence to the children.
Bless our Early Childhood Services,
may they be places of aroha and rangimārie.
May all who enter be enriched by the joy of Christian community.
May God who is present in this land,
and in the people of Aotearoa New Zealand,
surround us all in love and peace.
Amen.

Ua aiga e tasi iā Keriso.
One family in Christ.

Foreword

Tena Koutou Katoa, Malo e lelei, Talofa lava, Ni sa bula vinaka, Talohani, Kia Orana, Fakalofa lahi atu and warm greetings to you all.

This curriculum statement is intended to support and guide parents and teachers in the religious education of their children at this most important time in the child's development and to ensure the provision of quality Catholic Early Childhood education.

Catholic Early Childhood Services share in the mission of Catholic education and the teaching ministry of the Church to bring the Good News of Jesus Christ to all people.

The Church acknowledges parents as the first educators of their children and desires to support them in this process. Catholic Early Childhood Services play an important role in fostering the holistic development of children. The primary purpose of a Catholic Early Childhood Service should be to provide an all-encompassing Catholic family atmosphere that supports the awakening and nurturing of faith in the child, bringing them to an awareness of God, gospel values and their place in the world.

The early childhood sector in Aotearoa New Zealand is well served with *Te Whāriki* Early Childhood Curriculum. It provides a clear vision of education and its foundation principles are consistent with Catholic values and beliefs about the education of children. The purpose of this document is to provide a Catholic perspective on *Te Whāriki* Curriculum to support Catholic Early Childhood Services.

A writing party has developed this curriculum statement with considerable assistance from a number of Catholic Early Childhood Services. NCRS would like to thank all those who have contributed their expertise, time support and guidance in the development of this curriculum statement. This document will provide a focus for the ongoing support and enhancement of the Catholic Character of Catholic Early Childhood Services.

This curriculum statement is an exciting development for Catholic education and in particular for Catholic Early Childhood education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

It is the first curriculum statement to cover the religious education of children from birth to age five.

The use of quotations in different Pacific languages reflects the diversity of Catholic Early Childhood Services.

Kevin Wanden FMS
Director
National Centre for Religious Studies

**Children are God's blessing, the hope of the earth
whose wealth and treasure they already are,
and whose strength and glory they will one day become.**

St. Marcellin Champagnat SM

1. Introduction

A Catholic Early Childhood Service is intended to be a community in which the faith and practices of the Catholic Church are experienced, developed, nurtured and passed on.

Catholic Early Childhood Services form part of the wider mission of Catholic Education and therefore a Catholic ethos should be at the heart of the Service infusing everything that the staff and children do throughout the day. It presumes an all-encompassing Catholic environment which supports and nurtures the religious development of children, which is inclusive and welcoming and where children are guided in understanding their uniqueness and the centrality of God in their lives. The Catholic environment of a Service is not an additional compliance, to be carried out at specific times of the day. It is an integral part of the Service.

New Zealand Early Childhood educators are blessed with a very fine curriculum in *Te Whāriki*. Its holistic and spiritual approach to early education means that it is totally in tune with Catholic beliefs and values concerning the education of children. Therefore in preparing a curriculum statement for Catholic Early Childhood Services, it is taken for granted that *Te Whāriki* is in use, and the concepts in that document are not repeated here. This document aims to provide explicit Catholic perspectives and suggested practices in relation to *Te Whāriki* and is designed to be read in conjunction with it.

Because early childhood educators work from an emergent curriculum model, this means that activities should, as much as possible, arise from the individual and collective learning interests and

developmental stage of the particular child. Such a philosophical approach recognises and nourishes the individuality of each child within a social and cultural context.

In terms of concepts and activities, children should not be exposed to a simplified version of the primary school curriculum. The religious concepts, and the activities and behaviour children take part in should be age and developmentally appropriate. In terms of religious development, children are at a pre-evangelisation stage, where the main purpose is the development of a healthy, integrated child within a loving Christian environment.

The social and cultural context within which children's learning and development takes place is believed to be one of the corner stones of *Te Whāriki*. Church teaching acknowledges the important relationship between faith and culture. Religious education in Catholic early childhood services should take place within the cultural and ethnic background of the community which will have a direct impact on children's learning and spiritual development. A Catholic early childhood curriculum should reflect the unique place of Māori as Tangata Whenua and the values and aspirations of Pasifika and other communities. Because all services and communities have differing structures and cultural traditions, beliefs, values and expectations, this Catholic curriculum provides each service with a framework on which to build.

Te au o mātua ko whānau.

Te au o whānau ko mātua.

Children are the treasure of their parents.

Catholic Early Childhood Services in Aotearoa New Zealand assist in fulfilling the teaching mission of the Church by providing an education of the whole person. The environment of a Catholic Early Childhood Service develops within the context of a Catholic vision of education, some characteristics of which may include:

- It is inspired by a supernatural vision: we are called to a life in God.
- The sacred dignity of the person: we are made in God's own image and likeness.
- An awareness of the Sacramentality of life: seeing God's presence in all of creation.
- A communal dimension of life: we are made for each other.
- A commitment to tradition: we share a common story and vision.
- An appreciation of reason and learning: faith seeking understanding.
- The education of the whole person: respecting their dignity.
- A commitment to social justice and the environment.
- An inclusive community: all are welcome.

(Groome, 1996; Miller, 2006)

Most Catholic Early Childhood Services are community based, and it is important to recognise that they enrol children from the community, regardless of their religion. Consequently, parents need to have clearly explained to them the way in which a Catholic Early Childhood Service operates, and the principles on which it is based. Parents need to realise that the individual beliefs and practices of the child and family-whānau will be respected. Nevertheless, all children in the Service will take part in all the activities of the Service, as Catholicism is central to its life. Parents need to indicate that they accept this.

‘Oku Ha’a Tautolu.

It is us. We are the Church.

Bishop Patelisio Finau

2. Developing Christian Attitudes, Relationships and Environment

At the heart of Catholic teaching is the belief that each person is made in the image and likeness of God and that all God created is good. It is in relationship that children come to know and value themselves and others as created in God's image.

Children are greatly influenced by the attitudes of people towards them, especially the attitudes of their family-whānau members. These can have a lasting effect on a child's personal and faith development, self-esteem and wellbeing.

The Catholic Early Childhood Service educators should help the children to begin to develop Christian attitudes through the example of the Christian attitudes that they see around them. Together with parents, educators are role models for children in developing Christian attitudes.

A Christian attitude is an expression in word or action of the way Jesus lived, including:

ata kōrero	speaking with gentleness	tautala ma le fa'aetete	lea mokomoko
mahi atawhai	acting with kindness	fa'a'ali le agalelei	angalelei
tiaki	care	tausi	toka'i
manawanui	patience	onosa'i	fa'a kātaki
aroha	love	alofa	'ofa
hari	joy	fiafia	fiefia
ngāwaritanga	tolerance	fa'apalepale	kātaki'i
kaha	strength	malosiaga	mālohi
arohanui	compassion	loto alofa	manava'ofa
māia	courage	loto tele	loto to'a
pono	integrity	fa'amāoni	'ulungāanga maau
ohaoha	generosity	lima foa'i	loto fie foaki
pēhia ngā hiahia	self-control	āmio pūlea	pule'i kita
tohe	perseverance	taumafai	loto feinga
mahi tika	justice	āmio tonu	faitotonu
rangimarie	peace	filemū	melino
manaaki	showing respect	fa'a'alo'alo	anga faka'apa'apa

Ina tu'u maia o tamaiti e omai ia te a'u.

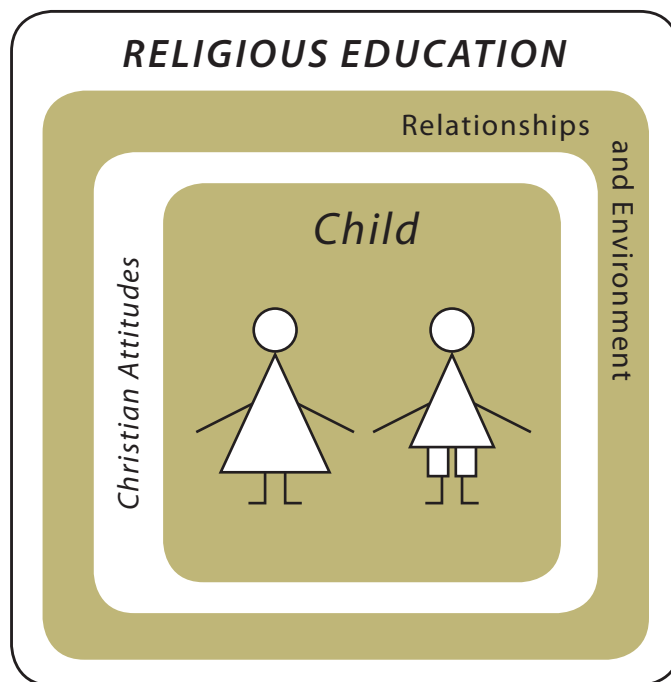
Let the children come to me.

(Luke 18:16)

The quality of relationships depends to a large extent on the educators, who give witness to, and teach gospel values and the Christian way of relating by:

- respecting each child
- valuing each child's contribution
- listening to each child
- respecting the work of each child
- keeping comments open
- giving children time to explore what is important to them
- providing a secure, organised and welcoming environment
- handling unacceptable behaviour in constructive and non-judgmental ways
- celebrating each child's uniqueness
- creating an inclusive environment.

Each child comes to the Service as a unique individual already loved and cared for in their family-whānau home. The Service supports the family-whānau by reflecting in practice the values of the Catholic community. This is the privilege and the challenge of those whose vocation it is to educate.



‘Oku fofola e fala’ kae fai ha talanoa.

Unroll the mat so we can talk.

(It is in relationship that children will come to know God's love for them.)

3. Faith Development and Children

Because a Catholic Early Childhood Service is creating an environment responsive to the spiritual needs and unique circumstances of individual children, the following factors regarding the spiritual characteristics of infants, toddlers and young children require consideration:

- **Infants (birth to eighteen months)**
Infants are developing a sense of trust.
- **Toddlers (one to three)**
By two years old, toddlers are developing a sense of self.
- **Young Children (two and a half to five)**
By age three young children are developing a sense of God's love and goodness by being able to interpret the responses they receive from their caregivers as reinforcement of their own self-worth. Children who are respected and valued will learn to respect and value others. This is the foundation for spiritual development in young children. Four-year-olds are curious about God. They enjoy hearing Bible stories. They are becoming aware of right and wrong, but are still only able to accept things as "all good or all bad." Their projects and artwork should be developed around themes to which they can relate, such as family-whānau, emotions, and creation.

The above points are guidelines. It is important to remember that each child develops at their own pace. These aspects of faith development complement the developmental and learning capabilities of children outlined in pages 19-26 of *Te Whāriki*.

A number of people, organisations or groups have a role in the faith development of children.

- **The Role of the Family-Whānau and Community in the Faith Development of Children**

The Catholic Church recognises that parents are the first and foremost educators of their children and the family-whānau is generally the first place where children come to Christian faith. Faith development in a Catholic Early Childhood Service is therefore a partnership of the home, community, parish and the Service.

Families, whānau and the community work in partnership with the Service to nurture the faith development of children. Liturgy, prayer, rituals and religious education should support the family-whānau in the religious development of the child. Parents are encouraged to initiate their children into the parish faith community. The service may also provide parents with encouragement to assist their own faith understanding and development.

- **The Role of the Educator in the Faith Development of Children**

In a Catholic Early Childhood Service, the educator's personal faith, Christian values and beliefs are an important role model for the religious development of children. Educators who are not Catholic or Christian are to be encouraged to understand the values and beliefs of the Service and to act within this vision. The educator actively supports parents as the primary faith educators of their children, while maintaining the Catholic ethos of the Service and striving to align professional practice with Catholic values. This occurs primarily through the respect and understanding the educator develops for each child. It also occurs through the development of a shared understanding and a shared vision among educators and with parents.

Ko 'Api 'ae 'Uluaki 'Api akó.
Home is the first school.

- **The Role of the Parish in the Faith Development of Children**

The parish supports the Service and its educators, journeying with them in the faith development of the child. Enriched by the involvement of its children, the parish encourages and supports the parents in the faith development of their children.

- **The Role of the Diocese in the Faith Development of Children**

Collaborative links need to be maintained between the Service and the Catholic Education Office, particularly for the development of Catholic Special Character and professional development for staff.

O tama a manufelelei e fafaga i fuga o la'au.
A o fanau a tagata e fafaga i upu ā o latou matua.
Birds feed their young from the seeds of the trees.
Children are nurtured by the words of their parents.

4. Religious Education

The aim of Religious Education in a Catholic Early Childhood Service is to lead children to a loving personal relationship with God. This is an awakening process in which the child experiences the love of God through family-whānau, parish, community, self-identity, the love of other people and creation. Religious Education in a Catholic Early Childhood Service should be aligned to, and integrated with, the Principles, Strands and Goals outlined in Te Whāriki.

Religious Education at Early Childhood level aims to help children:

- develop a sense of trust in others;
- develop a sense of their own identity;
- develop a sense of wonder and awe at the world around them;
- become sensitive to the spiritual;
- come to know God's unconditional love for them;
- develop an awareness that God is present in them, in others, and in all things;
- appreciate that they are a gift from God;
- have a sense of belonging to the Catholic community;
- experience joy and ease in spontaneous prayer;
- become aware of the attitudes and elements of celebration, ritual and worship.

Catholic Early Childhood Religious Education enables children to experience the love of God through the love and care with which each child is treated. This is the basis on which the child can begin to engage with, reflect upon, and explore the mystery of God. Educators make use of opportunities presented by the emergent curriculum and also introduce children to the Catholic faith tradition, its stories, worship, and the life of the Catholic community.

The following guiding principles apply, adapted to the age of the individual child.

Children have a natural capacity for curiosity, imagination and wonder

- Religious Education aims to nurture and engage these natural capacities.

Children learn through story

- Children are introduced to the faith and practices of the Church through stories from both Scripture and Tradition.

Children learn through play

- The religious imagination of children can be fostered through play, which involves kinaesthetic and visual elements.

Children learn through symbols and rituals

- Symbols and rituals nurture the child's curiosity, imagination and sense of wonder.
- Children are introduced to the signs, symbols and rituals of the liturgical tradition through the daily routine and prayer.

Religious Education is about God

- At the heart of Religious Education is the mystery of God.
- God's activity in, and with, all creation is a central concept.

The experience of prayer is integral to the Catholic Early Childhood Service

- Children learn to pray through the experience of prayer.
- Children are introduced to various forms of prayer – including silence, movement, short liturgical responses, some commonly used Catholic prayers, spontaneous, verbal and non-verbal prayer as appropriate.

Ke tau tō ha tenga 'oku lelei, ke hoko mai hono Pule'anga'
We plant the good seed to help the Kingdom grow.
(Religious Education in an Early Childhood service supports the awakening and nurturing of faith in the child.)

5. Planning, Evaluation and Assessment of Religious Education

The planning, assessment and evaluation of high quality programmes contributes to positive outcomes for children. Effective planning, assessment and evaluation are based on the goals of the curriculum.

Planning:

For Religious Education planning may focus on:

- an event, for example, Easter
- a regular occurrence, for example, prayer
- from the children's interests or needs.

The purpose of planning is to provide experiences for children to ensure that the curriculum goals are met. Planning requires the careful observation of the children's interests, strengths, needs and behaviours to ensure that their experiences, development and learning are interconnected.

Evaluation:

The purpose of evaluation is to make informed judgements about the quality and effectiveness of the programme. On-going evaluation will ensure the programme meets the needs of the children within the curriculum goals and will assist future planning.

Assessment:

While Religious Education involves teaching the Catholic faith and nurturing the faith development of the child, there is no attempt to assess the child's faith. In the early childhood context assessment occurs through the interaction with, and observation of the child.

Ko te folau fakatahi ma te Atua i te vaka ko te kamataga tena o te potu.

To sail with God on the canoe is the beginning of all wisdom.

6. Catholic Faith Dimension within *Te Whāriki*: Foundation Principles

Empowerment – Whakamana

Te Whāriki p. 40

The curriculum empowers the child to learn and grow within a family-whānau, a community of faith. It aims to develop an enhanced sense of self worth, identity and confidence as a child of God. Children develop ways to find out about God and how God impacts on their life and to understand their individuality and uniqueness within God's creation.

Holistic Development – Kotahitanga

Te Whāriki p. 41

The curriculum identifies the whole context of each child and creates an environment that celebrates this in culturally, socially, spiritually and individually appropriate ways, respecting different perceptions of the world. God knows each child by name and has entrusted parents, family-whānau and caregivers to provide for their cognitive, social, physical, emotional and spiritual dimensions.

Family and Community – Whānau Tangata

Te Whāriki p. 42

The curriculum builds on what children bring to it and makes links with a diverse range of cultural beliefs, traditions, knowledge, skills and attitudes. All people who have responsibilities for young children are called by God to support, respect and understand the importance of families as the first educators in faith and communities in nurturing faith development.

Relationships – Ngā Hononga

Te Whāriki p. 43

The curriculum encourages responsive and reciprocal relationships with people, places, and things in ways that enable children to learn about God the Father as a loving creator, God the Son as a human like them, and God the Holy Spirit as love in their lives. Through development of relationships children learn that God is in their lives as their friend who cares for them and will never leave them.

**O le talo sa tōtō i le 'ele'ele lelei ma sa tausī e le faifa'ato'aga,
ua fafai, ona toe tōtō ai lea ma 'e fesoasoani iai le Atua 'ina ia ola lelei.**
*The taro that has been planted in good soil and tended by the gardener
is dug up and then replanted and God helps it to grow and it grows beautifully.*

Strand One: Well-Being – Mana Atua

Te Whāriki p. 46

Ko tona mea nui, he tapu.

A person's greatest possession is tapu, the dignity of being that comes from God.

In a Catholic Early Childhood Service children should experience a supportive environment where their spiritual well-being is nurtured and developed.

Goal 1: *Te Whāriki p. 48*

Children experience an environment where their health is promoted.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop an understanding of their bodies as unique and created by God.
- Children learn how to respect and care for themselves and others because everyone is precious to God.

Goal 2: *Te Whāriki p. 50*

Children experience an environment where their emotional wellbeing is nurtured.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop knowledge that they are loved and respected as children of God and that God will love them unconditionally for who they are.
- Children learn to trust God through relationships they develop with those around them. They gain confidence and ability to recognise and respond to their emotional needs, and those of others.

Goal 3: *Te Whāriki p. 52*

Children experience an environment where they are kept safe from harm.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop their knowledge about keeping themselves safe and that they are responsible for caring for others and the world that is God's creation.
- Children learn that they are special to God and they can trust God's love, especially in times of trouble.

Examples of experiences which help to meet these outcomes:

Goal 1:

Help the children appreciate that their bodies are a gift from God who wants them to take care of their bodies by having exercise, rest and healthy food.

Acknowledge our health through prayer, i.e. thanking God for our health, asking God to look after the sick.

Utilise our resources to help children understand they are unique and special.

Provide children with opportunities to come to know God and the world through their senses.

Goal 2:

Treat each child with respect and encourage them to see themselves as a unique child of God.

Make specific links between the loving concern shown in Bible stories and the loving concern shown by parents, staff and other children.

Make sure each child is given the time and opportunity to express themselves and their emotions.

Provide opportunities for children to build trusting relationships.

Respond to children's emotional and spiritual needs and requests for help.

Affirm children's actions and encourage positive behaviour.

Goal 3:

Include basic Service understandings such as:

- We are special
- Our work is special
- Our place is special

Staff role model caring attitudes, being loving and kind, accepting others (staff and children) as unique in God's eyes.

Strand Two: Belonging – Mana Whenua

Te Whāriki p. 54

I te whānautanga mai o te pēpi kua uru kē ia ki roto i te whanaungatanga o tētahi ki tētahi.
Already prior to birth a child has entered a relationship with others.

Dame Whina Cooper

Children and their families in a Catholic Early Childhood Service should experience a welcoming, inclusive community that respects and values the mana, dignity and culture of each person, where a Catholic perspective on life helps them to grow in understanding of their world, and where connecting links with the wider Church community are affirmed and extended.

Goal 1: *Te Whāriki p. 56*

Children experience an environment where connecting links with the family-whānau and the wider Church community are affirmed and extended.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop an understanding of God through their experience of the community in which they live and discover that every person has a part to contribute.
- Children learn positive ways to behave and the impact of their actions on the lives of others through their everyday experiences.

Goal 2: *Te Whāriki p. 58*

Children experience an environment where they know they have a place in the Catholic community.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop an awareness of belonging to a community of faith, the family-whānau of God, which links their everyday experiences together with others in their family-whānau and Service.
- Children learn that they have a contribution to make in the community of faith.

Goal 3: *Te Whāriki p. 60*

Children experience an environment where they feel comfortable with routines, customs and regular events within the Catholic community.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop the knowledge that the Catholic community has special times for getting in touch with God through listening to God's Word and through prayer.
- Children learn that the Catholic community has events, customs and routines that help them to know Jesus as their friend.

Goal 4: *Te Whāriki p. 62*

Children experience an environment where they know the limits and boundaries of acceptable behaviour which arise from treating people according to Christian values and beliefs.

Learning outcomes:

- Children learn that their lives are better when they live with respect, fairness and understanding of others.
- Children develop an understanding that everybody is equal because they are created and loved by God, and an age appropriate understanding of love, trust, justice and truth.

Examples of experiences which help to meet these outcomes:

Goal 1:

Welcome all who seek early childhood education with a Christian / Catholic philosophy for their children.

Educators act in a loving and kind way to all children and adults, at all times.

Ensure that signage and other visuals clearly carry the message of Christian welcome.

Ensure that, as far as possible, educators are united and consistent in their approach to spirituality and Christian behaviour through appropriate professional development.

Value and celebrate family-whānau diversity.

Encourage an awareness and gratitude for the children's family and those who love and care for them.

Provide opportunities for children to find out about and visit the parish church.

Invite the Priest to come in regularly to play and pray with the children.

Share objects / artefacts which link to the wider Catholic community.

Become involved in Church community activities.

Encourage communication between Service, family-whānau, parish, school and community.

Goal 2:

Provide clear invitations and information to parents, so they feel confident to take part in the life of the Service.

Ensure that parents/caregivers and family-whānau know they are welcome at all times, and especially for special occasions within the Church community.

Welcome all family-whānau and encourage them to be part of prayer times.

Give children opportunities to lead others in prayer.

Encourage children to care for others in the community.

Goal 3:

Include special times for prayers in the daily routine.

Include children and family-whānau where possible in Catholic celebrations.

Encourage children to take personal responsibility for routines, roles and tasks.

Help children to understand the significance of ritual and customs.

Encourage respect for, and enjoyment of ritual.

Promote family involvement in liturgical and cultural events.

Goal 4:

Help the children understand the rules of the Service, their purposes, fairness and basis in Christian values.

Develop an age appropriate understanding of love, compassion, peace, justice and truth through books and opportunities to discuss with adults and others.

Provide children with strategies to manage behaviour in appropriate ways.

Behave as role-models by demonstrating, fairness, kindness, etc. to the children.

Empower children to have a voice which is respected.

Encourage an inclusive and accepting environment.

Encourage children to have a forgiving attitude and to say sorry and to start again.

Strand Three: Contribution – Mana Tangata

Te Whāriki p. 64

Nāu te rourou	<i>With your food basket</i>
Nāku te rourou	<i>and my food basket</i>
Ka ora te manuhiri.	<i>the guests will have enough.</i>

Children in a Catholic Early Childhood Service should experience that their learning, their family-whānau and their culture are valued within the faith community. Each child and family-whānau has a contribution to make to the community.

Goal 1: *Te Whāriki p. 66*

Children experience an environment where there are equitable opportunities for learning, while recognising they are all unique children of God.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop an age appropriate understanding of the value of individual differences, caring and equitable relationships.
- Children learn that all children have a right to be nurtured and loved and have positive attitudes as part of their culture, gender, race and ethnicity.

Goal 2: *Te Whāriki p. 68*

Children experience an environment where they are affirmed as children of God.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop self-esteem and self-confidence arising from the knowledge that they are valued within the faith community as God's creation and his children.
- Children learn that they are valued for who they are and their strengths, interests and abilities are nurtured by the faith community.

Goal 3: *Te Whāriki p. 70*

Children experience an environment where they are encouraged to learn with and along-side others in the Catholic community.

Learning outcomes:

- Children learn a range of strategies and skills that assist their understanding of others' attitudes and values, and ways they can contribute to peaceful and constructive relationships.
- Children develop an understanding of being compassionate, sharing and working alongside others as God's children.

Examples of experiences which help to meet these outcomes:

Goal 1:

Praise God for the individual gifts and talents given to members of the early childhood Service's community.

Welcome all family-whānau .

Display cultural artefacts in the Service.

Celebrate diversity.

Treat all children equitably.

Goal 2:

Encourage children to express their ideas, needs and feelings.

Provide opportunities where children are valued.

Goal 3:

Use appropriate stories, role modelling, and activities to establish Catholic values.

Make every opportunity available for parent and family-whānau involvement, and find appropriate ways to encourage faith development in parents and family-whānau .

Foster children's growing capacity for empathy, sharing and working alongside others by reading or telling stories.

Help children to treat one another in the way that they would like to be treated e.g. respect, dignity, fairness, etc.

Give children opportunities to share and co-operate with others.

Strand Four: Communication – Mana Reo

Te Whāriki p. 72

He mana kei te kupu o tēna, o tēna.
The mana of each person's word is to be honoured.

Children in a Catholic Early Childhood Service should experience an environment where their spiritual well-being is nurtured through the stories, symbols and rituals of the Church community.

Goal 1: *Te Whāriki p. 74*

Children experience an environment where they develop non-verbal communication skills to get in touch with their spiritual selves to help them develop a relationship with God.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop a repertoire of gesture and expressive bodily movement for expressing their feeling towards God the Creator, Jesus and the Holy Spirit in their lives.
- Children learn ways to express their feelings, emotions and spirituality in a range of appropriate ways.

Goal 2: *Te Whāriki p. 76*

Children experience an environment where they develop verbal communication skills to enhance their journey of faith.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop language skills to express simple prayers.
- Children develop joy and ease in spontaneous prayer.
- Children learn to express their understanding of, and reaction to, Christian values, attitudes and teaching.

Goal 3: *Te Whāriki p. 78*

Children experience an environment where they encounter stories and symbols of their Catholic tradition.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop familiarity with an appropriate selection of messages, stories, symbols, basic rituals and celebrations of their Catholic heritage.
- Children develop familiarity with the story of our faith through the annual cycle of the liturgical year.
- Children learn respect for, and some knowledge of, the faith/cultural stories and symbols that are important to the universal Catholic community.
- Children develop familiarity with elements of formal rituals of Catholic celebration and worship.

Goal 4: *Te Whāriki p. 80*

Children experience an environment where they discover different ways to be creative and expressive about their spirituality.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop a sense of enjoyment and well-being through activities and language associated with the faith community and Catholic teaching.
- Children learn confidence in their abilities to express their emotions and feelings about their relationship to God through music and movement, drama, prayer and other symbolic interactions in their faith community.

Examples of experiences which help to meet these outcomes:

Goal 1:

Encourage children to participate in rituals at prayer time: blowing out candles; hands joined together in prayer; hands raised in praise; holding hands; shaking hands; gestures in songs; signing each other on forehead with the sign of the cross; holding the Bible aloft to show reverence for the Word of God.

Provide examples of appropriate church etiquette.

Provide opportunities for children to experience individual quiet times.

Goal 2:

Provide opportunities for children to contribute to prayer time when they desire, e.g. spontaneous prayer; story participation.

Encourage children to express emotions, including thanks to God and asking for help, at any appropriate time.

Teach simple prayers/karakia, songs or meditation in order to assist children to develop the ability to communicate individually and communally with their God.

Identify Christian values and encourage children's understanding of them.

Goal 3:

Help children become familiar with Gospel stories.

Celebrate the special events of the liturgical year.

Display visual prompts of the symbols, signs, key messages and people related to the Catholic faith.

Help children to become familiar with the sequence of events in the life of Jesus.

Introduce children to significant people in our Catholic heritage.

Goal 4:

Provide opportunities for children to respond to the Christian message in a variety of ways.

Ensure a wide range of activities, using all five senses and many creative and expressive skills.

Strand Five: Exploration – Mana Aotūroa

Te Whāriki p. 82

Ko te Atua kei kō, kei kō. Tirohia.
God is everywhere. Find him.

Children in a Catholic Early Childhood Service should experience God through active exploration of their world.

Goal 1: *Te Whāriki p. 84*

Children experience an environment where their spiritual well-being and understanding is developed through playful exploration of their world.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop strategies to explore in play their ideas about God and the world in which they live. They make choices about their exploration and develop a basic understanding of God the creator.
- Children learn respect and responsibility for all living and non-living things as part of God's creation that is entrusted to us by him.

Goal 2: *Te Whāriki p. 86*

Children experience an environment where they gain confidence in and control of their bodies as they explore their world.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop increasing knowledge about how to make decisions about caring for themselves and others as children of God as they develop theories about their natural, social, physical and material worlds.
- Children learn ways to respect their bodies as sacred, te tapu o te tangata, and learn respect for one another, reflecting on Catholic values and attitudes.

Goal 3: *Te Whāriki p. 88*

Children experience an environment where they learn strategies for active exploration, thinking, and reasoning about their relationship with God.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop strategies to become competent, confident learners who ask questions and make discoveries about their faith.
- Children develop a sense of wonder and awe for the mystery of God's creation.
- Children learn to think about God in their lives as they explore their world through asking questions, listening to others, and finding explanations for their spiritual understanding.

Goal 4: *Te Whāriki p. 90*

Children experience an environment where they develop working theories about God and their relationship to God within the natural, social, physical, and material worlds.

Learning outcomes:

- Children develop familiarity with stories of the Catholic faith and an understanding of some key events in the Old and New Testaments.
- Children learn through Gospel teachings and exploration of their world, a Catholic perspective about social relationships and concepts, such as friendship, authority, and social rules.
- Children learn that God is the creator of the universe and they are the guardians/kaitiaki, of this creation.

Examples of experiences which help to meet these outcomes:

Goal 1:

Take time every day to notice God in the world.

Incorporate Christian messages and learning in response to the child's individual interests in their natural world.

Help children learn that God is the creator of our wonderful world.

Encourage children to care for and nurture their living environment.

Encourage children to ask questions that lead to an understanding that the world has both physical and spiritual meaning and explanation.

Goal 2:

Give children opportunities to discover the wonder of how their bodies work.

Help children appreciate and respect gender differences.

Encourage children to show care and consideration for others in our community and the wider world.

Encourage children to appreciate what they have and share it with others.

Goal 3:

Provide stories of Christianity which encompass the creation and existence of the world.

Provide such stories arising out of children's emergent curriculum.

Encourage children to ask questions that lead to an understanding that the world has both physical and spiritual meaning and explanation.

Explain other faith traditions positively, when the occasion arises.

Encourage children's questions about religion, and provide an appropriate level of explanation.

Ensure that parents are aware of children's development of interest in faith matters.

Allow children time to ask questions and make discoveries about their faith.

Use the natural environment to draw attention to the wonder and awe of God's creation.

Goal 4:

Provide stories of Jesus which tell the story of God's love for us.

Provide stories of some key events in the Old and New Testaments, as the continuing story of God's world.

Create through the general activities and routines, an understanding that the natural world and its resources are to be enjoyed and to be cared for as gifts of God.

Give children opportunities to develop and explore social concepts, rules and understandings.

Give children opportunities to develop an understanding of their relationship with God through their relationships with others.

Prayer in a Catholic Early Childhood Service

The living Catholic tradition has much to teach about prayer and children have a need and a right to be introduced to its riches (see CCC 2650).

It is traditional in a Catholic community to spend regular time in prayer and prayer plays a vital role in the life of children in Catholic Education Services. Prayer is a natural expression of what it means to be a Catholic Christian, and helping young children to develop prayerfulness becomes a very significant activity (CCC 2565) because children learn to pray by praying.

Where children and educators work together and recreate together, it is necessary that they also pray together and it follows that educators engaging in prayer with children need to believe in the value of what they are doing. Prayer time should be regular, well prepared and modelled as being important to everyone. Jesus is our teacher and model, and we pray because Jesus prayed, alone and with others.

A Sacred Space

Setting up a prayer table is a way to create a sacred space in the service. The colour of the cloth should be liturgically correct and a variety of symbols placed on it could include a crucifix, a candle, a statue or holy picture/icon and also some form of the Word, for example, an open Bible, a short biblical phrase on a card or ribbon, or a prayer. Children may also like to bring in taonga to place on the prayer table for short spells, for example, shells, stones, leaves according to the theme.

Creating an Atmosphere for Prayer

Time set aside for prayer should be prime time, bearing in mind that interruption during a prayer session disrupts the prayerful atmosphere created.

- Prepare a focus on the mat, including a cloth, candle, and other symbols.
- Gather the children in a circle around the focus.
- Gain silence, stillness and peacefulness.
- Prayerfully light the candle, symbolising the presence of Jesus.
- Sign of the Cross – English/Māori and other languages of the children.
Leader: “We come together”. *All:* “In the name of the Father...”
- Opening prayer – together – this can be the same everyday, for example a morning offering, or it can vary.

To Whom do we Pray?

Prayer is about developing a meaningful relationship with God and to do this we have to know to whom our prayer is directed. Prayer with children should promote images of a God who is forgiving, loving, peace filled and understanding, a God of hope, life and light. Educators need to help children to explore and expand their images of God and be conscious of a variety of vocabulary and titles used to address God. For example, ‘Creator of the universe...’ evokes a different image than, ‘Jesus, friend of the poor...’

Praying with Children

Prayer is rooted in an awareness of a vital and personal relationship with the living and true God (see CCC 2558) and the Church has a rich living tradition of a great variety of prayers, but for young children prayer should first of all be ‘real’. Educators should encourage children to offer prayers emerging from their concerns, worries and feelings, as spontaneous prayers expressed from the heart are truly ‘their’ prayers to God.

In general, spontaneous prayers are:

- P** – Petition or asking prayers – for myself and for others.
- A** – Adoration or praising prayers – for God’s glory.
- C** – Contrition or sorry prayers – for forgiveness for any wrongdoing.
- T** – Thanksgiving or thanking prayers – for everything that God has given us.

There are many other forms of prayer to which the children can be introduced including, traditional, devotional, simple Mass responses, meditation, music, songs, simple dance movements, short simple litanies, blessings and simple biblical phrases. It is important to keep in mind that children need to participate in prayer and not just be part of a listening audience.

Some Catholic Prayers

Sign of the Cross

In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Ki te ingoa o te Matua, o te Tamaiti o te Wairua Tapu. Ameme. (Māori)

I le suafa o le Tama, ma le Alo, ma le Agaga Pa'ia. Amene. (Samoa)

I he huafa o e Tamai, mo e Alo, mo e Haumalie, ma' ou'i'oni. Amene. (Tongan)

I te ingoa o te Tamana, te Ataliki, ma te Agaaga Tapu. Amene. (Tokelauan)

I te ingoa o te Metua, o no te Tamaiti, o no te Vaerua tapu. Amen. (Cook Islands)

The Lord's Prayer

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name

your kingdom come,

your will be done,

on earth as in heaven.

Give us today our daily bread.

Forgive us our sins

as we forgive those who sin against us.

Save us from the time of trial

and deliver us from evil.

Amen.

E to mātou Matua i te rangi,

kia whakatapua tōu ingoa,

kia tae mai tōu rangatiratanga,

kia whakaritea tōu hiahia i te whenua,

kia pērā anō i tō te rangi.

Homai ki a mātou aianei he taro mā mātou mō tēnei rā.

Whakakāhoretia ō mātou hara, me mātou e whakakore
nei i ngā hara o te hunga e hara ana ki a mātou.

Kaua mātou e tukua kia whakawaia,

engari whakaorangia mātou i te kino.

Amene.

Hail Mary

Hail Mary, full of grace, the Lord is with you.

Blessed are you among women,

and blessed is the fruit of your womb, Jesus

Holy Mary, Mother of God, pray for us sinners,

now and at the hour of our death.

Amen.

Awe, e Maria, e kī ana koe i te keratia, kei a koe te Ariki.

E whakapaingia ana koe i roto i ngā wāhine,

ā, e whakapaingia ana hoki a Hehu, te hua o tōu kōpū.

E Hāta Maria, e te Matua Wahine o te Atua, inoi koe mō
matou,

mō te hunga hara āianei, ā, a te haora o to mātou
matenga rawa.

Amene.

Glory Be

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now

and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Korōria ki te Matua, ki te Tamaiti,
ki te Wairua Tapu.

He pērā hoki i te timatanga, ā, he pērā anō inaianei,
ā, he pērā tonu ā ake ake,

Amene.

Food Blessing

God

Bless this food

So that it will strengthen us

In your name.

Amen.

E te Atua,

Whakapaingia ēnei

Kia ora ai mātou

Amene.

Grace Before Meals

Gracious God,

We ask your blessing on this food we are about to eat.

Bless all those who prepared and provided it for us.

Bless all who share our food and our lives.

Amen.

Major Ecclesial Documents Relating to Catholic Education

- Documents of the Second Vatican Council

<i>The Dogmatic Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium</i>	1963
<i>The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Lumen Gentium</i>	1964
<i>The Dogmatic Constitution on the Divine Revelation: Dei Verbum</i>	1965
<i>The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the Modern World: Gaudium et Spes</i>	1965
<i>Declaration on Christian Education: Gravissimum Educationis</i>	1965

- Post Conciliar Documents

<i>General Catechetical Directory</i> . Congregation for the Clergy.	1971
<i>On Evangelisation in the Modern World: Evangelii Nuntiandi</i> . Paul VI.	1975
<i>The Catholic School</i> . Congregation for Catholic Education.	1977
<i>On Catechesis in Our Time: Catechesi Tradendae</i> . John Paul II.	1979
<i>On the Role of the Family in Modern World: Familiaris Consortio</i> . John Paul II.	1981
<i>Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith</i> . Congregation for Catholic Education.	1982
<i>The Code of Canon Law</i> . Vatican.	1983
<i>Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education</i> . Congregation for Catholic Education.	1983
<i>The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School</i> . Congregation for Catholic Education.	1988
<i>The Catechism of the Catholic Church</i> . Vatican.	1992
<i>The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church</i> . Pontifical Biblical Commission.	1993
<i>General Directory for Catechesis</i> . Congregation for the Clergy.	1997
<i>The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium</i> . Congregation for Catholic Education.	1997
<i>On the Relationship Between Faith and Reason: Fides et Ratio</i> . John Paul II.	1998
<i>Consecrated Persons and their Mission in Schools</i> . Congregation for Catholic Education.	2002
<i>Circular Letter to the Presidents of Bishops' Conferences on Religious Education in Schools</i> . Congregation for Catholic Education.	2009

A number of these documents can be found on the internet at: www.vatican.va

- Documents of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops' Conference

<i>A Commemoration Year for Aotearoa New Zealand.</i>	1990
<i>Education: For What Kind of Society?</i>	2006
<i>The Parish Priest and the New Zealand Catholic Schools.</i>	2007

These documents can be found on the internet at: www.catholic.org.nz

- New Zealand Documents

<i>Te Kaupapa Mo Iwi Māori Katorika: Māori Pastoral Plan.</i> Te Runanga o Te Hahi Katorika ki Aotearoa.	1993
<i>Catholic Special Character Review and Development.</i> NZCEO.	2007
<i>Handbook for Boards of Trustees of New Zealand Catholic Integrated Schools.</i> NZCEO.	2010

The latter two documents can be found on the internet at: www.nzceo.catholic.org.nz

O le Atua e matuā malosi na te mafaia mea 'uma
Na ia faia le tagata i lona fa'atusa.
God is all powerful, all things are possible,
God created all life.

References:

Berryman, J. (1995). *Godly Play: An Imaginative Approach to Religious Education*. Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg. 0806627859.

Castucci, G. & Dudek, A. (2000). *Good Practice for Young Children: A Guide for Early Childhood Educators*. Washington, DC: National Catholic Educational Association. 155882472

Cavalletti, S. (1983). *The Religious Potential of the Child*. Trans. P. M. Coulter & J. M. Coulter. New York: Paulist Press. 0809123894

Cavalletti, S., (1992). *The Religious Potential of the Child: Experiencing Scripture and Liturgy with Young Children*. Trans. P. M. Coulter & J. M. Coulter. Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications. 0929650670

Cavalletti, S., Coulter, P., Gobbi, G., & Montanaro, S. Q. (1996). *The Good Shepherd and the Child: A Joyful Journey*. Chicago, IL: Liturgy Training Publications. 1568541570

Grajczonek, J., & Ryan, M. (Eds.). (2007). *Religious Education in Early Childhood: A Reader*. Hamilton, QLD: Lumino Press. 0977599302

Gobbi, G. (2000). *Listening to God with Children: The Montessori Method Applied to the Catechesis of Children*. Trans. R. Rojcewicz. Loveland, OH: Treehaus Communications. 1886510148

Groome, T. H. (1996). What makes a school Catholic? In T. McLaughlin, J. O'Keefe, & B. O'Keefe (Eds.), *The Contemporary Catholic School: Context, Identity and Diversity* (pp. 107-125). Washington, DC: Falmer Press. 0750704721

Miller, J. M. (2006). *The Holy See's Teaching on Catholic Schools*. Manchester, NH: Sophia Press. 9781933184203

Ministry of Education. (1996). *Te Whāriki: He Whāriki Matauranga mō ngā Mokopuna o Aotearoa: Early Childhood Curriculum*. Wellington: Learning Media. 0478029802



