



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna

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# **Junior Cycle Religious Education**

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# Introduction to junior cycle

Junior cycle education places students at the centre of the educational experience, enabling them to actively participate in their communities and in society and to be resourceful and confident learners in all aspects and stages of their lives. Junior cycle is inclusive of all students and contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and outcome for all.

The junior cycle allows students to make a greater connection with learning by focusing on the quality of learning that takes place and by offering experiences that are engaging and enjoyable for them, and relevant to their lives. These experiences are of a high quality, contribute directly to the physical, mental and social wellbeing of learners, and where possible, provide opportunities for them to develop their abilities and talents in the areas of creativity, innovation and enterprise. The learner's junior cycle programme builds on their learning to date and actively supports their progress in learning, and in addition, supports them in developing the learning skills that will assist them in meeting the challenges of life beyond school.

# Rationale

Religious Education promotes the holistic development of the person. It facilitates the intellectual, social, emotional, spiritual and moral development of students. Religious Education provides a particular space for students to encounter and engage with the deepest and most fundamental questions relating to life, meaning and relationships. It encourages students to reflect, question, critique, interpret, imagine and find insight for their lives. The students' own experience and continuing search for meaning is encouraged and supported.

Religious Education supports the development of students by helping them to explore how religious and other beliefs are expressed; engage with life's big questions; and reflect on moral values for life.

As students learn to live in an increasingly pluralistic world, Religious Education has a critical role to play in the curriculum in providing opportunities for them to consider the variety of religious beliefs found in Ireland and elsewhere, become aware of different understandings of the Divine, and examine other interpretations of life. It encourages respect and understanding of different beliefs, perspectives and ways of living, including both the religious and non-religious response to human experience.

Religion has shaped and been shaped by historical events, something which continues today. Religious Education gives students an important framework for understanding past and present events, actions and beliefs and their impact within the context of people's lives. It also promotes an understanding of religions as dynamic, internally diverse and evolving over time. Religious Education within an Irish context offers students an opportunity to develop an understanding of how different religions, and Christianity in particular, have contributed to the society in which we live.

People today are faced with concerns, many of which require an ethical response. Religious Education has an important contribution to make in encouraging students to engage critically with belief systems and principles of moral behaviour which can serve as a foundation for decisions.

Religious Education helps to equip students with the knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values to support their life journey and enable them to participate in their communities and in the world as informed, respectful, responsible and caring members of society.



Junior Cycle  
Religious Education

## Aim

Religious Education aims to develop knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values to enable young people to come to an understanding of religion and its relevance to life, relationships, society and the wider world. It aims to develop the students' ability to examine questions of meaning, purpose and relationships, to help students understand, respect and appreciate people's expression of beliefs, and to facilitate dialogue and reflection on the diversity of beliefs and values that inform responsible decision-making and ways of living.

# Overview: Links

Tables 1 and 2 on the following pages show how Junior Cycle Religious Education is linked to central features of learning and teaching in junior cycle.

## Statements of learning

**TABLE 1: LINKS BETWEEN JUNIOR CYCLE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND THE STATEMENTS OF LEARNING**

The statement	Examples of relevant learning
SOL 3: The student creates, appreciates and critically interprets a wide range of texts <sup>1</sup>	Students will engage with a wide range of texts in narrative and aesthetic forms and explore the meaning that people assign to certain religious texts.
SOL 5: The student has an awareness of personal values and an understanding of the process of moral decision-making.	Students will identify the values underpinning moral decisions and gain an understanding of how moral decision-making works in their own lives and the lives of others.
SOL 6: The student appreciates how diverse values, beliefs and traditions have contributed to the communities and culture in which she/he lives.	Students will research different communities of faith within Ireland today and also examine how Christianity has contributed to Irish culture and heritage.
SOL 7: The student values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts.	Students will learn about issues of concern to them and the wider world and be challenged to consider how their response in local and wider contexts can contribute to creating a more just and sustainable world.
SOL 8: The student values local, national and international heritage, understands the importance of the relationship between past and current events and the forces that drive change.	Students will learn how religious traditions and beliefs have evolved over time and consider the influence of religion on events, people and society and the influence of these on religion.
SOL 11: The student takes action to safeguard and promote her/his wellbeing and that of others.	Students will consider how their values, decisions and actions impact on their own wellbeing and the wellbeing of others, extending to planet Earth.

<sup>1</sup>'Texts' refers to written texts, audio, music, tactile, electronic and digital.

## Key Skills

In addition to their specific content and knowledge, the subjects and short courses of junior cycle provide students with opportunities to develop a range of key skills. Figure 1 below illustrates the key skills of junior cycle. There are opportunities to support all key skills in this course, but some are particularly significant.

FIGURE 1: JUNIOR CYCLE KEY SKILLS



Table 2 identifies some of the elements that are related to learning activities in Religious Education. Teachers can also build many of the other elements of particular key skills into their classroom planning.

**TABLE 2: LINKS BETWEEN JUNIOR CYCLE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND KEY SKILLS**

<b>Key skill</b>	<b>Example of key skill element</b>	<b>Examples of associated student learning activities</b>
Being creative	Imagining	Students will imagine ways that they can be a force for good in the world and take inspiration from sharing stories of people of courage, conviction and imagination.
Being literate	Exploring and creating a variety of texts, including multi-modal texts	Students will access and engage with oral, written and multi-modal texts to explore a variety of religious beliefs and traditions and develop religious literacy.
Being numerate	Seeing patterns, trends and relationships	Students will examine patterns and trends that influence beliefs and values and engage with data to find out about the diversity of religious beliefs in Ireland today.
Communicating	Listening and expressing myself	Students will learn how to listen actively and respectfully to different perspectives and beliefs and express opinions, feelings and beliefs appropriately.
Managing information and thinking	Being curious	Through classroom activities and research, students will learn how to ask questions and probe more deeply in order to gain knowledge and insights about religion and beliefs.
Managing myself	Knowing myself	Through participation in classroom activities, students will gain awareness of the influences shaping their beliefs, assumptions, values and decisions.
Staying well	Being spiritual	As students explore some of life's big questions they will grow in awareness, grounded in a sense of purpose, meaning and connectedness.
Working with others	Respecting difference	Through discussion and group work, students will consider different experiences and points of view and learn to appreciate diversity as a source of enrichment and learning.

# Overview: Course

The specification for Junior Cycle Religious Education is built around three inter-connected strands: **Expressing beliefs**, **Exploring questions**, and **Living our values**

FIGURE 2: THE STRANDS OF JUNIOR CYCLE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION



## Expressing beliefs:

This strand develops students' ability to understand, respect and appreciate how people's beliefs have been expressed in the past and continue to be expressed today through lifestyle, culture, rites and rituals, community building, social action and ways of life. It enables students to appreciate that people live out of their different beliefs – religious or otherwise. It also focuses on understanding and appreciating that diversity exists within religions.

## Exploring questions:

This strand enables students to explore some of the questions of meaning, purpose and relationships that people wonder about, and to discover how people with different religious beliefs and other interpretations of life respond to these questions. It focuses on students developing a set of knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values that allows them to question, probe, interpret, analyse and reflect on these big questions, in dialogue with each other.

## Living our values:

This strand focuses on enabling students to understand and reflect on the values that underlie actions and to recognise how moral decision-making works in their own lives and in the lives of others, based on particular values and/or beliefs. It also enables students to engage in informed discussion about moral issues and respectfully communicate and explain opinions, values and beliefs.

The three strands are underpinned by a set of cross-cutting elements:

- Enquiry
- Exploration
- Reflection and action

These elements describe both a set of skills and an approach to learning that are important for Religious Education.

## Enquiry

This element focuses on stimulating students' curiosity and prompting their engagement in a topic or question. Through a process of enquiry, students engage with a range of stimulus materials to uncover ideas, facts, information, images and perspectives related to a topic or question.

## Exploration

This element focuses on examining a topic or question in detail, questioning, probing, discussing, listening, imagining, interpreting and drawing conclusions, for the purpose of discovery. It also focuses on encouraging dialogue and appreciation of the diversity of interpretations and responses that may exist.

## Reflection and action

This element focuses on students reflecting on what they have learnt and on their own experience of, and/or response to, the topic. It encourages students to examine what they have learnt in order to gain deeper insight and understanding. It also enables students to consider how the learning relates to their lives and/or to the lives of others, thus prompting active and responsible citizenship.

**TABLE 3: THE INTEGRATED NATURE OF LEARNING ACROSS THE STRANDS AND ELEMENTS OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION**

1. Expressing Beliefs	2. Exploring Questions	3. Living Our Values
Enquiry		
Exploration		
Reflection and Action		

Junior Cycle Religious Education has been designed for a minimum of 200 hours of timetabled student engagement across the three years of junior cycle. The Classroom-Based Assessments will be set at a common level and there will be a common level externally-assessed final examination.

The specification affords freedom for teachers to facilitate learning in a way that reflects students' individual curiosity, choices and convictions. Working with this specification, teachers will plan learning experiences that are relevant and can engage students coming from a range of backgrounds, beliefs and world-views. In using the learning outcomes, teachers should plan for learning that is inclusive, engaging and genuinely responds to students' interests and questions. While students may draw on their own experience in an examination, their personal faith commitment and/or affiliation to a particular religious grouping will not be subject to assessment.

All students, including those with a specific physical or learning need, should be enabled to participate in the learning activities of Religious Education with their peers at the appropriate level and with due consideration to health and safety requirements.

## Progression from primary to senior cycle

### PRIMARY SCHOOL CURRICULUM

Religious education (RE) is one of 7 curricular areas in the 1999 Primary School Curriculum. In this curriculum it was stated that responsibility for providing a programme of RE rests with religious patrons and not the State. Therefore, there is no state-prescribed curriculum for teaching RE across all primary schools. Rather, the Primary School Curriculum recognises the rights of the different church authorities to design curricula in this area of primary education for their schools and to supervise their teaching and implementation (Department of Education and Science [DES], 1999, p. 58). With the development of new forms of patronage, without any religious affiliation, reference is sometimes made in these schools to the patron's programme, during which ethical, spiritual and environmental questions are addressed.

The 1999 curriculum notes, however, that the importance attributed to the child's spiritual development is expressed through a breadth of learning experiences, and through the child's engagement with the aesthetic and affective domains of learning. (DES, 1999, p. 27) The curriculum seeks to support the child's spiritual and moral development through his/her engagement in a range of curricular areas, including within the Social, Environmental and Scientific Education (SESE) curriculum area where children are provided with opportunities to develop their understanding of and sense of care for people in the local community and beyond. Although there is no state curriculum for religious education for all primary schools, junior cycle Religious Education may provide opportunities to progress and deepen the learning that has taken place at primary level.

### SENIOR CYCLE

There are strong links between the aims of the syllabus for Leaving Certificate Religious Education and those set out in the Junior Cycle Religious Education specification. Significantly, there is a strong emphasis on students assuming the role of 'critical questioner and reflective searcher' in Leaving Certificate Religious Education, building on the approach taken with students participating in Junior Cycle Religious Education. Furthermore, Junior Cycle Religious Education prepares those students who progress to taking Religious Education as part of the Leaving Certificate Applied (LCA). LCA Religious Education engages the students in examining questions of interest and meaning and offers them an opportunity to question, reflect on, analyse, understand and interpret these questions.

# Expectations for students

*Expectations for students* is an umbrella term that links learning outcomes with annotated examples of student work in the subject or short course specification. When teachers, students or parents looking at the online specification scroll through the learning outcomes, a link will sometimes be available to examples of work associated with a specific learning outcome or with a group of learning outcomes. The examples of student work will have been selected to illustrate expectations and will have been annotated by teachers. The examples will include work that is:

- Exceptional
- Above expectations
- In line with expectations.

The purpose of the examples of student work is to show the extent to which the learning outcomes are being realised in actual cases.

## Learning outcomes

Learning outcomes are statements that describe what knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values students should be able to demonstrate having studied Religious Education in junior cycle. The learning outcomes set out in the following tables apply to all students.

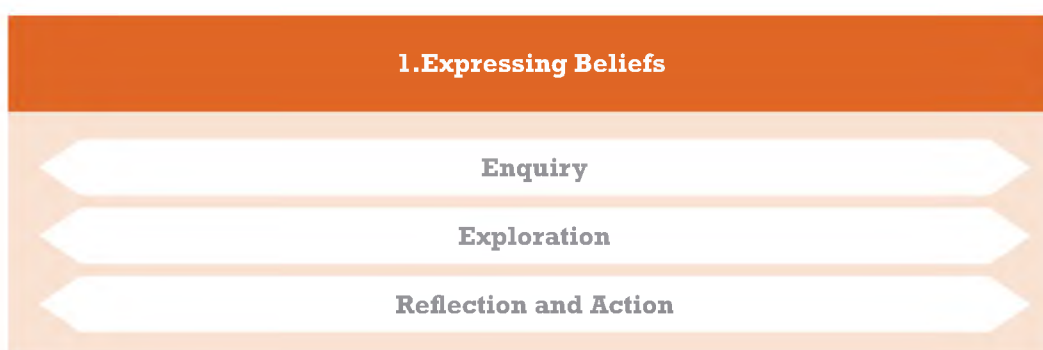
As set out here, the learning outcomes represent outcomes for students at the end of their three years of study. Therefore, the learning outcomes focused on at a point in time will not have been 'completed' but will continue to support the students' learning in Religious Education up to the end of junior cycle.

The outcomes are numbered within each strand. The numbering is intended to support teacher planning in the first instance and does not imply that the outcomes should be followed sequentially. Many of the learning outcomes are inter-related across the strands and therefore a non-linear approach to planning is advised to enable linkages to be made across the learning.

## Strand 1: Expressing beliefs

**Expressing beliefs** develops students' ability to understand, respect and appreciate how people's beliefs have been expressed in the past and continue to be expressed today through lifestyle, culture, rites and rituals, community building, social action and ways of life. It enables students to appreciate that people live out of their different beliefs—religious or otherwise. It also focuses on understanding and appreciating that diversity exists within religions.

**NOTE:** The three elements of **enquiry, exploration** and **reflection and action** are incorporated across all the learning outcomes, to different degrees.



### Learning outcomes

*Students should be able to:*

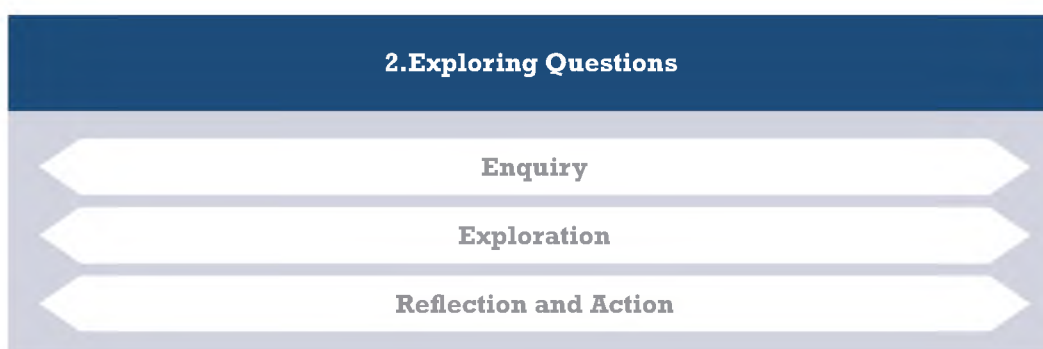
- 1.1 present the key religious beliefs of the five major world religions found in Ireland today
- 1.2 investigate two communities of faith that have a significant presence in their locality/region (the communities of faith chosen must be associated with two of the five major world religions studied in the specification)
- 1.3 engage with members of a faith community associated with one of the five major world religions studied in the specification and show an appreciation of how the religious beliefs of the community influence the day-to-day life of its members
- 1.4 investigate how Christianity has contributed to Irish culture and heritage
- 1.5 explore the presence of religious themes in contemporary culture through an examination of art, music, literature or film
- 1.6 examine and appreciate how people give expression to religious belief in religious rituals, in formal places of worship and other sacred spaces
- 1.7 discuss the significance of non-religious rituals/celebrations for people's lives
- 1.8 describe the role of prayer in the lives of people of faith
- 1.9 explain what was involved in the development of a particular sacred text<sup>2</sup> within a major world religion and consider its continued significance for the lives of believers
- 1.10 discuss the importance of dialogue and interaction between major world religions and within major world religions in promoting peace and reconciliation in the world today
- 1.11 research religious or other organisations, working at a national or international level to promote justice, peace and reconciliation and consider how their work is an expression of their founding vision
- 1.12 synthesise and consider the insights gained about how people express and live out their beliefs, religious or otherwise

<sup>2</sup> As set out in glossary

## Strand 2: Exploring questions

**Exploring questions** enables students to explore some of the questions of meaning, purpose and relationships that people wonder about and to discover how people with different religious beliefs and other interpretations of life respond to these questions. It focuses on students developing a set of knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values that allows them to question, probe, interpret, analyse and reflect on these big questions, in dialogue with each other.

**NOTE:** The three elements of **enquiry, exploration** and **reflection and action** are incorporated across all the learning outcomes, to different degrees.



### Learning outcomes

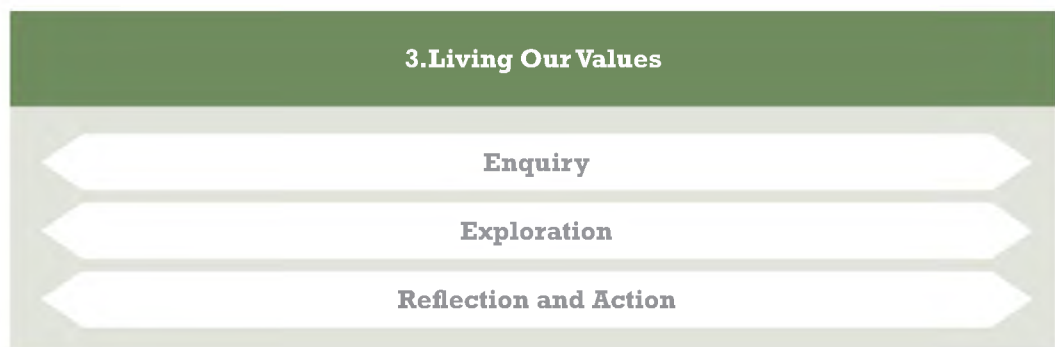
*Students should be able to:*

- 2.1 research artistic, architectural or archaeological evidence that shows ways in which people have searched for meaning and purpose in life
- 2.2 consider responses from one major world religion and from a non-religious world-view to some big questions about the meaning of life, such as, Why are we here? How should we live? What happens when we die?
- 2.3 explore how different narratives/stories, religious and non-religious, express an understanding of creation/the natural world, and consider their meaning and relevance for today
- 2.4 research and present the understanding of the Divine found in two major world religions drawing upon their origins in sacred texts and/or other sources of authority
- 2.5 create a biography of a founder or early followers of a major world religion, using religious and historical sources of information
- 2.6 construct a timeline of one major world religion, making reference to key people, times of expansion and times of challenge
- 2.7 explore how the religious teachings of a major world religion address an issue of concern for the world today
- 2.8 present stories of individuals or of groups in the history of two major world religions that have had a positive impact on the lives of people because of their commitment to living out their beliefs
- 2.9 describe how the faith of a believer can change at different stages in life
- 2.10 synthesise and consider the insights gained about how people with different religious beliefs and other interpretations of life respond to questions of meaning, purpose and relationships

## Strand 3: Living our values

**Living our values** focuses on enabling students to understand and reflect on the norms and values that underlie actions and to recognise how moral decision-making works in their own lives and in the lives of others, based on particular values and/or beliefs. It also enables students to engage in informed discussion about moral issues and respectfully communicate and explain opinions and beliefs.

**NOTE:** The three elements of **enquiry, exploration** and **reflection and action** are incorporated across all the learning outcomes, to different degrees.



### Learning outcomes

*Students should be able to:*

- 3.1 examine different sources of values and ways in which the values of a person relate to their everyday life choices, their relationships, and their responsibilities to others
- 3.2 reflect upon and discuss what it means to be moral, why people living in society need to be moral and what are the influences on and sources of authority for a person's moral decision-making
- 3.3 examine a moral code in two of the five major world religions and discuss how each code could influence moral decision-making for believers
- 3.4 investigate what living a morally good life means with reference to two major world religions and compare with a non-religious world view
- 3.5 examine how a moral decision-making process can help a person decide what is right and wrong in an everyday life situation
- 3.6 debate a moral issue that arises in their lives and consider the influences of two different viewpoints on the issue
- 3.7 research the understanding of compassion, justice, peace and reconciliation found in two major world religions and ways in which these understandings can be seen in action
- 3.8 explain how an understanding of care for the earth found in a major world religion promotes the wellbeing of all people and the planet and discuss its relevance for today
- 3.9 synthesise and consider the insights gained about the norms, values and principles that inform decision-making and actions in the lives of people

# Assessment and reporting

Assessment in education involves gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and can be used in a variety of ways, such as to record and report achievement, to determine appropriate routes for learners to take through a differentiated curriculum, or to identify specific areas of difficulty or strength for a given learner. While different techniques may be employed for formative, diagnostic and summative purposes, the focus of the assessment and reporting is on the improvement of student learning. To do this it must fully reflect the aim of the curriculum.

The junior cycle places a strong emphasis on assessment as part of the learning process. This approach requires a more varied approach to assessment in ensuring that the assessment method or methods chosen are fit for purpose, timely and relevant to the students. Assessment in Junior Cycle Religious Education will optimise the opportunity for students to become reflective and active participants in their learning and for teachers to support this. This rests upon the provision for learners of opportunities to negotiate success criteria against which the quality of their work can be judged by peer, self, and teacher assessment; and upon the quality of the focused feedback they get in support of their learning.

Providing focused feedback to students on their learning is a critical component of high-quality assessment and a key factor in building students' capacity to manage their own learning and their motivation to stick with a complex task or problem. Assessment is most effective when it moves beyond marks and grades, and when reporting focuses not just on how the student has done in the past but on the next steps for further learning. This approach will ensure that assessment takes place as closely as possible to the point of learning. Final assessment still has a role to play, but is only one element of a broader approach to assessment.

Essentially, the purpose of assessment and reporting at this stage of education is to support learning. Parents/guardians should receive a comprehensive picture of student learning. Linking classroom assessment and other assessment with a new system of reporting that culminates in the awarding of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) will offer parents/guardians a clear and broad picture of their child's learning journey over the three years of junior cycle.

To support this, teachers and schools have access to online assessment support material. Along with the guide to the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) process, this focuses on learning, teaching and assessment support material, including:

- formative assessment
- planning for and designing assessment
- ongoing assessments for classroom use
- judging student work – looking at expectations for students and features of quality
- reporting to parents and students
- thinking about assessment: ideas, research and reflections
- an assessment glossary.

The contents of the online support material include the range of assessment supports, advice and guidelines that enable schools and teachers to engage with the new assessment system and reporting arrangements in an informed way, with confidence and clarity.

## Assessment for the JCPA

The assessment of Religious Education for the purposes of the Junior Cycle Profile of Achievement (JCPA) will comprise two Classroom-Based Assessments, **A person of commitment** and **The human search for meaning**, and a final examination. In addition, students complete a written Assessment Task related to the second Classroom-Based Assessment, which is submitted to the State Examinations Commission for marking along with the final examination.

### RATIONALE FOR THE CLASSROOM-BASED ASSESSMENTS IN RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

Classroom-Based Assessments are the occasions when the teacher assesses the students in the specific assessments that are set out in the specification. Classroom-Based Assessments are similar to the formative assessment that occurs every day in every class. However, in the case of the Classroom-Based Assessments, the teacher's judgement is recorded for the purpose of subject learning and assessment review, and for the school's reporting to parents and students. The Classroom-Based Assessments will relate to the students' work during second and third year of junior cycle education.

The Classroom-Based Assessments link to the priorities for learning and teaching in Junior Cycle Religious Education. Therefore, the Classroom-Based Assessments are designed to support students' engagement in **enquiry, exploration** and **reflection and action**.

As they actively engage in practical and meaningful learning experiences that are of personal interest and relevance to them, the Classroom-Based Assessments will provide an opportunity for students to:

- research a topic of personal interest
- use digital technology to learn and to present their learning
- analyse information and draw personal conclusions and insights
- engage in learning beyond the classroom
- make plans, set goals and evaluate their progress in achieving their goals
- communicate clearly and effectively
- collaborate with others on tasks
- reflect on their learning.

Through these Classroom-Based Assessments students will develop their knowledge, understanding, skills, attitudes and values, thereby achieving a range of learning outcomes across the strands.

**CLASSROOM-BASED ASSESSMENT 1**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Student preparation</b>	<b>Completion of assessment</b>
A person of commitment	Individual or group report that may be presented in a wide range of formats	Students will, over a specified time, research and report on a person who, because of their religious beliefs or worldview, has had a positive impact on the world, past or present.	Towards the end of second year

**CLASSROOM-BASED ASSESSMENT 2**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Format</b>	<b>Student preparation</b>	<b>Completion of assessment</b>
The human search for meaning	Individual or group report that may be presented in a wide range of formats	Students will, over a specified time, explore artistic <b>or</b> architectural <b>or</b> archaeological evidence that shows ways that people have engaged in religious belief/the human search for meaning and purpose of life.	During the first term of third year

More detailed information related to assessment of the Classroom-Based Assessments will be available in separate Assessment Guidelines. This will include, for example, the suggested length and formats for student pieces of work, the features of quality to be applied to the assessment, and support in using 'on balance' judgement in relation to the features of quality.

The assessment section of [www.ncca.ie](http://www.ncca.ie) also includes substantial resource material for use and reference in ongoing classroom assessment of Junior Cycle Religious Education as well as providing a detailed account of the Subject Learning and Assessment Review (SLAR) process.

## Assessment Task

On completion of the second Classroom-Based Assessment, students will undertake an Assessment Task which will be marked by the State Examinations Commission and allocated 10% of the marks.

The Assessment Task will assess students in aspects of their learning including their ability to reflect on:

- new knowledge or understanding that has emerged through their experience of the Classroom-Based Assessment and what that means for them
- the skills, attitudes and values they have developed, and their capacity to apply them in the future
- the beliefs and perspectives they have encountered through the experience of the Classroom-Based Assessment and how this will assist them in meeting the challenges of life.

## The final examination

There will be one examination paper at a common level, set by the State Examinations Commission (SEC). The examination will be two hours in duration and will take place at the end of third year. During this assessment, students will be required to engage with, demonstrate comprehension of, and provide written responses to stimulus material.

In any year, the learning outcomes to be assessed will constitute a sample of the relevant outcomes from the three tables of learning outcomes outlined in this specification.

## Inclusive assessment practices

This specification allows for inclusive assessment practices whether as part of ongoing assessment or Classroom-Based Assessments. Where a school judges that a student has a specific physical or learning difficulty, reasonable accommodations may be put in place to remove, as far as possible, the impact of the disability on the student's performance in Classroom-Based Assessments. The accommodations, e.g. access to the Special Needs Assistant or the support of assistive technologies, should be in line with the arrangements the school has put in place to support the student's learning throughout the year.

# Appendix A: Glossary of terms used in Religious Education specification

<b>Archaeological evidence</b>	For the purpose of the specification, the term 'archaeological evidence' refers to material remains of past human life (such as monuments, artefacts and other physical remains).
<b>Architectural evidence</b>	For the purpose of the specification, the term 'architectural evidence' refers to buildings and physical structures.
<b>Artistic evidence</b>	For the purpose of the specification, the term 'artistic evidence' can be taken to mean work produced by an artist/craftsperson/musician.
<b>Beliefs</b>	Beliefs are the ideas and convictions that people hold to be true. For the purpose of the specification, beliefs include religious beliefs and non-religious beliefs, except where religious beliefs are specifically referred to.
<b>Big questions</b>	Foundational questions which relate to the human search for meaning. These questions are common (shared by everybody); central (help us understand ourselves and our world); and contestable (can lead to different and sometimes competing understandings) such as, why are we here? How should we live? What happens when we die? etc.
<b>Community of faith</b>	A group of people who share a religious tradition marked by shared beliefs, practices and histories of interpretation (e.g. denominations, religious organisations, religious orders). In the context of this specification, this term relates to communities of faith linked to the five major world religions named below.
<b>Ethical</b>	This term refers to the appropriate or customary ways to behave within particular cultures/society in order to achieve human flourishing. 'Ethical' is taken to refer to the striving for a good life, more comprehensive than morality which identifies what we owe to others, i.e. moral obligation.
<b>Formal place of worship</b>	A specially-designed building where people gather to worship together, such as a church, synagogue, temple or mosque.
<b>Major world religions</b>	For the purposes of this specification, 'major world religions' refers to Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism.

<b>Moral</b>	Concerned with reflection on what one 'ought' to do; what is right and wrong (often guided by a moral code or set of moral principles). The morality of a person, group or society may derive from a religious motivation, but may also derive from other sources, including internal sources (such as human freedom and conscience).
<b>Moral code</b>	A given rule or set of rules that orients behaviour and that can be followed, challenged and renewed in determining what is moral behaviour.
<b>Moral issue</b>	Those issues which have the potential to affect ourselves or others, for good or for ill.
<b>Non-religious beliefs</b>	Refers to beliefs that are not connected to religion or grounded in belief in a Divine presence (e.g. Humanism and Atheism).
<b>Prayer</b>	A mental or vocal expression to a deity or power beyond the person. Prayer can take many forms—silent (such as meditation) or spoken/sung, individual or communal, formal or informal and can be done as an expression of praise, thanksgiving, petition, sorrow, etc.
<b>Rituals</b>	The traditions, habits and actions that are repeated in a family, community or society.
<b>Religious ritual</b>	A ceremony consisting of a series of actions performed according to a prescribed order which have a religious and a symbolic value attached to them.
<b>Non-religious ritual</b>	A practice that is not religious or spiritual in nature but can still have symbolic meaning (e.g. in sports or in cultural spheres).
<b>Sacred spaces</b>	Places that are considered sacred or holy and fulfil a religious purpose. Sacred spaces encompass a wide variety of very different kinds of places (e.g. rivers, mountains, wells, burial sites, buildings, shrines). In the context of this specification 'sacred spaces' refers to those associated with the five major world religions.
<b>Sacred texts</b>	Texts which religious traditions consider to be foundational and/or central to the practice of their beliefs; thought to be authoritative and to reveal the word of God/the Divine/the Transcendent. In the context of the learning outcome 1.9 sacred text refers to the Bhagavad Gita, the New Testament Gospels, the Qu'ran, the Torah and the Tripitaka.
<b>Spiritual</b>	Indicates a sense of relatedness to something bigger than the self. For some, this may be in relation to their understanding of the Divine. For others the relationship is with a power or presence. All religions seek to foster a spiritual life, although spiritual can also refer to something other than religious affiliation. It refers to a quality beyond the material and the mundane that strives for inspiration, reverence, awe, meaning and purpose.
<b>The Divine</b>	Used in this specification to indicate and include the various ways in which the world's major religions refer to God/gods/the Transcendent.
<b>Values</b>	Motivating ideals or standards of behaviour; one's judgement of what is important in life.
<b>World view</b>	<i>World view</i> is how one perceives and interprets the world and life experiences. World views are coherent, historical and shared outlooks. They can be religious or non-religious and can change over time in response to experience.

# Appendix B: Glossary of action verbs

Action verbs	Students should be able to
<b>Analyse</b>	study or examine something in detail, break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure; identify parts and relationships, and to interpret information to reach conclusions
<b>Appreciate</b>	acknowledge and reflect upon the value or merit of something
<b>Assess</b>	show skills of judgement and evaluation, balancing different perspectives
<b>Compare</b>	give an account of the similarities and/or differences between two (or more) items, perspectives or positions, referring to both/all of them throughout
<b>Consider</b>	reflect upon the significance of something
<b>Construct</b>	bring together different elements to form something whole
<b>Create</b>	bring something into existence; cause something to happen as a result of one's actions
<b>Critique</b>	state the positive and negative aspects of, for example, an idea, perspective or event and give reasons
<b>Debate</b>	set out a viewpoint or argument on a subject on which people have different views, supporting one's stance with evidence
<b>Describe</b>	give an account, using words, diagrams or images, of the main points of the topic
<b>Devise</b>	plan, create or formulate something by careful thought
<b>Differentiate</b>	recognise or ascertain what makes something different
<b>Discuss</b>	examine different concepts, perspectives or opinions on a topic and then come to their own conclusion/viewpoint, supported by appropriate evidence or reasons
<b>Engage</b>	participate or become involved in something, allowing it to occupy your interest or attention
<b>Evaluate (ethical judgement)</b>	collect and examine evidence to make judgements and appraisals; describe how evidence supports or does not support a judgement; identify the limitations of evidence in conclusions; make judgements about ideas, solutions or methods
<b>Examine</b>	enquire into/look closely at an argument or concept in a way that uncovers its origins, assumptions and relationships
<b>Explain</b>	implies more than a list of facts/ideas: the reasons or cause for these facts/ideas must also be given

Action verbs	Students should be able to
<b>Explore</b>	systematically look into something closely for the purpose of discovery; to scrutinise or probe
<b>Identify</b>	recognise and state briefly a distinguishing fact or feature
<b>Investigate</b>	observe, study, or make a detailed and systematic examination, in order to establish facts and provide supporting evidence for conclusions
<b>List</b>	provide a number of points or facts, with no elaboration
<b>Justify</b>	give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion
<b>Outline</b>	set out the main points of information on a topic; restrict to essentials
<b>Present</b>	show something for others to examine
<b>Recommend</b>	put forward something with approval as being suitable for a particular purpose
<b>Recognise</b>	identify facts, characteristics or concepts that are critical (relevant/appropriate) to the understanding of a situation, event, process or phenomenon
<b>Reflect</b>	give thoughtful and careful consideration to their experiences, beliefs and knowledge in order to gain new insights and make meaning of it for themselves
<b>Research</b>	find suitable information, sort, record, analyse and draw conclusions
<b>State</b>	provide a concise statement with little or no supporting argument
<b>Suggest</b>	propose a solution, hypothesis or other possible answer
<b>Survey</b>	examine or measure in a detailed manner
<b>Synthesise</b>	bring together separate elements/ideas in order to arrive at a new understanding
<b>Trace</b>	set out the development of a thought, belief, practice, event, etc. in a chronological manner

