

Section II: Curriculum Design and Components

Introduction

This section provides:

- information on the curriculum outcomes framework
- essential graduation learnings
- general curriculum outcomes statements
- key-stage curriculum outcomes statements
- an overview of the connection between essential graduation learnings and key-stage curriculum outcomes
- specific curriculum outcomes statements for intermediate religious education
- suggestions for teaching approaches, learning tasks, and experiences, and assessment strategies and activities

Curriculum Outcomes Framework

Essential Graduation Learnings

Essential graduation learnings are statements describing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes expected of all students who graduate from high school. They are:

- cross-curricular
- the foundation for all curriculum development
- found on pages 22-24

General Curriculum Outcomes

General Curriculum outcomes are statements identifying what students are expected to know and be able to do upon completion of study in religious education. These statements:

- contribute to the attainment of the essential graduation learnings
- are connected to the key-stage curriculum outcomes for religious education
- are found on page 25

Key-Stage Curriculum Outcomes

Key-stage curriculum outcomes are statements identifying what students are expected to know and be able to do by the end of grades 3, 6, 9, and 12 as a result of cumulative learning experiences in religious education. The key-stage outcomes:

- contribute to the achievement of the general curriculum outcomes
- are found on page 25

Specific Curriculum Outcomes

Specific Curriculum Outcomes are statements identifying what students are expected to know and be able to do at a particular grade level. These outcomes

- contribute to the achievement of the key-stage outcomes
- are found on page 29

Meeting the Essential Graduation Learnings Through Religious Education

Essential Graduation Learnings are statements describing the knowledge, skills and attitudes expected of all students who graduate high school. These Learnings describe expectations not in terms of individual school subjects but in terms of knowledge, skills and attitudes developed throughout the curriculum. They confirm that students need to make connections and develop abilities across subject boundaries if they are to be ready to meet the shifting and ongoing demands of life, work and study today, and in the future. Essential Graduation Learnings serve as a framework for the curriculum development process.

For graduates of the religious education program, the following connections to the Essential Graduation Learnings apply:

Aesthetic Expression

Graduates will be able to respond with critical awareness to various forms of the arts and be able to express themselves through the arts. Religious education will provide the opportunity for students to develop a growing appreciation for some of the great works of art, architecture, artifacts, literature, and music. In religious education classes, students will be encouraged to express their views on religious and social topics through various avenues which would be classified as aesthetic expression. The religious education program will provide opportunities for students to experience and appreciate artistic works from various ages and cultures. Opportunity will be given for reflection, critical responses and expressions of appreciation.

Citizenship

Graduates will be able to assess social, cultural, economic, and environmental interdependence in a local and global context. Graduates will be able to show an awareness of the importance and contributions of various religions to the global community. In the religious education program, it will be recognized that there is often a relationship between people's actions and lifestyles and their religious beliefs. Human rights, social justice, freedom of religion, and value systems will figure prominently in the religious education program. By considering various views on these topics, students will better understand what it means to live in a pluralistic multi-faith society.

Communication

Graduates will be able to use the listening, viewing, speaking, reading, and writing modes of language(s) as well as mathematical and scientific concepts and symbols to think, learn, and communicate effectively. Religious education requires students to consider many perspectives and beliefs on a wide range of topics. It also requires them to think critically about many current issues. Because of the very nature of the religious education program and the objectives for the courses in which students will be involved, various methods of communicating will be used, such as discussion, written responses, art work and the application of technology.

Some levels of discussion will be at an informal level while others will be more formal in design. There will also be creative writing as well as response papers and research papers at particular grade levels. Many of the courses will encourage the use of media and other forms of modern technology as means of communicating.

The very nature of some of the topics discussed will require students to be precise and clear in their writing and in their oral presentation. Developing the skill of appropriate expression of thoughts and opinions and responding appropriately to others' thoughts and opinions will be an integral part of the religious education program.

Personal Development

Graduates will be able to continue to learn and to pursue an active, healthy lifestyle. Personal development is an area of great importance for the religious education program. Students will be in a position to be given information and be required to reflect on, and discuss, moral and ethical issues. Recognition will be given to the fact that students are collaborative as well as independent learners. However, this program will challenge them to see what it means to live in community while developing a personal system of beliefs by which to live.

Problem Solving

Graduates will be able to use the strategies and processes needed to solve a wide variety of problems, including those requiring language, mathematical, and scientific concepts. An important component in the religious education program is the interpretation of information in a critical manner such that students make informed decisions. The nature of many of the topics covered will require students to acquire knowledge on a given topic or issue and take a position. The problem solving process will take many forms in religious education, including reading, discussion, debate, reflection, research, observation and media viewing.

Technological Competence

Graduates will be able to use a variety of technologies, demonstrate an understanding of technological applications, and apply appropriate technologies for solving problems. There will be many opportunities for students to use a range of technologies in the religious education program and to reflect on and discuss the ethical issues around the use of modern technology. Opportunities will be given for students to use computer and media technology in various areas of the program.

Spiritual and Moral Development

Graduates will demonstrate understanding and appreciation for the place of belief systems in shaping the development of moral values and ethical conduct. A vital component of the religious education program will be the spiritual and moral development of the individual. Development of values, morals, and ethics will be fostered in this program. Being able to express one's beliefs and values while having the ability to listen to and understand other people's beliefs and values contributes to an improved society. The art of expressing and defending appropriately one's own beliefs without degrading or negating those of others is an important part of personal development.

The program will help students understand the belief they are an important part of an unfolding creation with a caring Creator who sustains and interacts with all that has been created. It will support the idea that each person must take responsibility for his/her actions and that a person's actions have direct and indirect effects on both the individual and the community as a whole. Key to the total program will be the recognition that the human being is a spiritual being whose life can encompass religious principles.

General Curriculum Outcomes for Religious Education

General Curriculum Outcomes are statements which describe the contribution (K-XII) of a curriculum area to the Essential Graduation Learnings by defining what students are expected to know, value and be able to do as a result of completing the program in that curriculum area.

The General Curriculum Outcomes for religious education follow:

1. Students will be expected to examine the historical impact of religion on beliefs, cultures and traditions.
2. Students will be expected to develop an understanding of the beliefs, principles and practices of Christianity and other living belief systems.
3. Students will be expected to examine the meaning and relevance of sacred texts.
4. Students will be expected to demonstrate an appreciation for personal search, commitment and meaning in life.
5. Students will be expected to examine moral and ethical issues and teachings.
6. Students will be expected to develop an appreciation for the connectedness of all creation.
7. Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between religion and science.
8. Students will be expected to examine the influence of religion on contemporary issues and events.

Key-Stage Curriculum Outcomes

Key-stage curriculum outcomes for the end of grades 3, 6, 9, and 12 reflect a continuum of learning. While there may appear to be similarities in outcomes across the grade levels, teachers will recognize the increase in expectations for students according to

- the developmental nature of the learning process
- students' maturity of thinking and interests
- students' increasing independence as learners
- the complexity and sophistication of ideas, issues, tasks and resources
- the level or depth of students' engagement with ideas, issues, tasks and resources
- the range of personal and social experiences and the repertoire of strategies and skills students apply to those experiences

The following key-stage curriculum outcomes describe what students should know and be able to do in religious education by the end of grade 9. It should be noted that students work toward achieving these key-stage curriculum outcomes in grade 7 and 8, as well as in grade 9.

Students will be expected to examine the historical impact of religion on beliefs, culture and traditions.

By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to

- examine the historical development of various living belief systems
- examine the contributions of key individuals in the development of various living belief systems (e.g., Moses, Paul, Muhammad)
- explore the role of religion in the development of society's morals and values
- develop an understanding of the political, economic, social and artistic impact on family and community life

Students will be expected to develop an understanding of beliefs, principles and practices of Christianity and other living belief systems.

By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to

- demonstrate an understanding of the fundamental tenets of various religions (e.g., Trinity, salvation)
- develop an appreciation for the diversity among Christian denominations and other belief systems (e.g., Protestant, Roman Catholic)
- examine the nature of relationships among various religions (e.g., Christianity, Judaism, Islam)
- describe the nature of the relationship between the individual and God for various religions
- examine the responses of various religions to stewardship and social justice issues (e.g., Christianity)

Students will be expected to examine the meaning and relevance of sacred texts.

By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to

- examine the development of sacred texts, both oral and written
- explore various interpretations of sacred texts for their adherents
- explore significant issues, events and characters from sacred texts (e.g., Pentecost, Hijrah, John the Baptist, Buddah)

Students will be expected to demonstrate an appreciation for personal search, commitment and meaning in life.

By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to

- examine why humanity has always strived for religious meaning and expression in life
- explore the concept of commitment and its meaning in various religions
- examine the personal faith journeys of individuals (e.g., Martin Luther, William Booth, Mother Teresa, Mahatma Gandhi, the Dalai Lama)
- explore their individual spiritual journey and personal commitment

Students will be expected to examine moral and ethical issues and teachings.

By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to

- analyze moral and ethical teachings from various belief systems (e.g., Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism)
- examine how ethical and moral choices are made
- recognize that society influences the moral and ethical decisions of individuals
- demonstrate an understanding that individuals must accept responsibility for their decisions and actions
- examine issues in various religions related to human sexuality

Students will be expected to develop an appreciation for the connectedness of all creation.

By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to

- examine the relationship of a creator with creation
- develop an appreciation for the mystery and beauty of creation
- explore the ways in which various religions address personal and societal responsibilities in creation
- develop an understanding of humanity's responsibility in creation (e.g., Judaeo-Christian concept of stewardship)

Students will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the relationship between religion and science.

By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to

- develop an appreciation for the nature of religion and the methodology of science (e.g., belief and verifiable evidence)
- explore contributions science brings to the fundamental questions of life and creation
- examine through various belief systems ethical responses to the applications of science

Students will be expected to examine the influence of religion on contemporary issues and events.

By the end of grade 9, students will have achieved the outcomes for entry-grade 6 and will also be expected to

- develop an understanding of the relevance of organized religion for personal living and society
- examine the responses of various living faiths to personal and social issues (e.g., gender equality, developing a personal morality)