

Ecclesial Context



Brisbane Catholic Education's research project, *Who's coming to school today?* (2009), confirmed the experience of many teachers and school leaders about the religious engagement of students and their families. An increasing number of students and their families are less engaged with the formal life of the Church than in the past. Consequently, for many students, the culture and language of religion is underdeveloped.

The claim is frequently made that Australians have a hesitancy in matters of religion and spirituality and a limited capacity to articulate and publicly proclaim their religious beliefs and spiritual values. This reluctance to speak about religious matters can lead to perceptions that many are disinterested in religion but this is not necessarily the case. An inconsistent or infrequent involvement in the formal life of the Church does not necessarily equate with a disinterest in religious and spiritual matters. As an integral expression of Church, schools have the opportunity to support students and their families by connecting them with the Catholic Christian tradition and its spiritual richness; providing a forum in which this tradition can be experienced and explored. Religious Education serves to provide students with a religious voice that they can bring to everyday life experience; a lens through which they might view the world.

Catholic and ecumenical schools increasingly provide the introductory and developmental understanding and experience of Church for students and their families. This is supported when the school is a place where students and their families encounter the mission and outreach of the Church, especially through pastoral care and the experience of Catholic Christian community.

It is from its Catholic identity that the school derives its authenticity and form as a genuine place of real and specific pastoral ministry. The Catholic school participates in the evangelising mission of the Church and is a privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out (The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium, 1997, n.11).

Therefore, Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Brisbane seeks to promote knowledge, deep understanding and skills about the Catholic and broader Christian tradition within the broader evangelising mission of the Church (Strategic Renewal Framework for Catholic Schooling, Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2012 - 2016).

St Flannan's School NURTURES the Ecclesial Context through its Mission and Outreach:

St Flannan's is a multicultural community with diverse religious beliefs and spiritual values. We recognise Pope Francis' proclamation that "We are all children of God". Looking through our Christian lens we open the door to others to know the Catholic tradition and its spiritual richness where we are 'at the Service of the Word for One World' (St Arnold Janssen).

This is evident through our participation in Pastoral Care activities including:

- The SVdP Appeals (sleep-out, soup drive, Christmas)
- Student participation in the Parish Anointing masses
- Visits to the residents at the Holy Spirit Aged Care Home
- Choir performances at Symes Grove
- Reciprocal visits with Koobara Kindy students.
- Random Act of Kindness to support the Anderson family
- Annual India Mission in memory of Fr Liam Horsfall SVD

We celebrate the Ecclesial Context by participating in Community (whole school and classroom) activities including:

- Morning prayer
- Masses, liturgies (whole school and classroom) and reconciliation (classroom)
- Assembly prayer
- Student attendance at the Parish Anointing Masses
- Play is the Way games and discussion of guiding principles
- Investigating Scripture through the 3 Worlds of the Text strategy