

Religious education and development education



RELIGIOUS EDUCATION AND DEVELOPMENT EDUCATION

SYLLABUS OVERVIEW

- Section A - The search for meaning and values
- Section B - Christianity: origins and contemporary expressions
- Section C - World religions
- Section D - Moral decision making
- Section E - Religion and gender
- Section F - Issues of justice and peace
- Section G - Worship, prayer and ritual
- Section H - The Bible: literature and sacred text
- Section I - Religion: the Irish experience
- Section J - Religion and science

Section A must be studied, plus *any* two of Sections B, C and D, plus one other from Section E, F, G, H, I, J.

Religious education in the Leaving Certificate programme raises questions such as, what makes for a common good, what is meant by just society, why are people hungry, and what are the implications of scientific progress for our planet? Exploration of such issues takes place in the personal, local and global contexts, and therefore presents clear links with the content of development education. However, it is not simply the content of Leaving Certificate Religious education that is compatible with development education. The skills, attitudes and values which are promoted through Leaving Certificate Religious education are also at the heart of development education.

Religious education, like development education, is concerned with fostering skills of critical inquiry and creative action. Students are invited to assume the role of critical questioner and

reflective searcher, roles that are central to promoting education for active global citizenship. Religious education also has a particular role to play in fostering attitudes of respect for self and others (based on human dignity and human rights), and in the promotion of mutual understanding and respect for the diversity of people, cultures and beliefs that share this planet.

The introduction to the syllabus states, 'Religious education has a particular role to play in the curriculum in the promotion of tolerance and mutual understanding. It seeks to develop in students skills needed to engage in meaningful dialogue with those of other or of no religious traditions.'

Syllabus, p. 3.

The ability to engage in real dialogue with a diversity of people is a key skill needed for understanding our world and how it works.

Active learning methodologies are encouraged in the teaching of both Junior Certificate and Leaving Certificate Religious education. At Leaving Certificate level there is particular emphasis on active learning methodologies which promote critical questioning, discussion and debate. Group work is also promoted in the pursuit of information and research. *The Guidelines for Teachers* offer ideas on how to use ICT in religious education - word processing, the internet, digital cameras, etc. Visits to and from the class may also be appropriate. For example, a teacher could organise a class visit to a sacred place or invite a speaker from a

justice/human rights organisation to visit the class.

Course work comprises 20% of the total assessment of Religious education. Here again, we see a convergence between the skills fostered by development education and those which coursework seeks to develop.

These include:

- Skills of research, including using computers, libraries, surveys or the media
- Ability to select, analyse and evaluate information for a given purpose
- Skills of critical thinking, including the ability to question the authority of different sources of information and the ability to distinguish between fact and opinion
- Skills of communication: the ability to sort and edit information and make it one's own, and the ability to present ideas concisely and cogently
- Skills of reflection: the ability to reflect on one's own learning and the effect of that learning on one's ideas, attitudes and experience
- The ability to interpret, contrast and evaluate different opinions/approaches to a topic (Higher level students.)
- The ability to develop counter-arguments (Higher level students).

Guidelines, p. 143

In summary, Leaving Certificate Religious education provides opportunities for the exploration of a range of global justice issues. In

practice, however, students may not be exposed to the full range of opportunities due to the range of options available for study within the syllabus. If a teacher decides not to teach sections B, D, F or J of the syllabus in particular, then this would result in a huge loss of opportunity to address issues of global justice. However, there is a substantial convergence of aims, values, attitudes and skills which suggests that Leaving Certificate Religious education can support and complement the work of development education (and vice versa).

A CURRICULUM FRAMEWORK FOR SENIOR CYCLE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

An optional framework for senior cycle Religious education has been designed to offer teachers (who are not preparing students for the Leaving certificate examination in Religious education) a structure within which to plan a programme of religious education for senior cycle.

There is much in common between the Leaving Certificate syllabus and the senior cycle curriculum framework. However, the framework offers considerably less detailed specification than the Leaving Certificate course, is shorter, and offers more choice and scope for creativity for teachers and schools. It is designed as a two-year framework, but can be extended to cover a three-year senior cycle if transition year is to be included.

Each section is presented in two parts. The first part sets out the topics to be covered in the section and the expected learning outcomes. The second part offers a range of *exploration options* of each theme.

The explorations have been carefully designed to offer opportunities and support for a variety of learner styles and methodologies, including group work, project work, self-directed learning, investigations, visits and speakers, cross-curricular linkages and the use of ICT, particularly the use of the internet. A development education and justice perspective is strongly embedded in many topics and exploration options in the framework for senior cycle Religious education. The teacher of Religious education at senior cycle would find many development education resources most useful in exploring these topics.

Useful websites:

www.trocaire.org
www.christian-aid.org.uk
www.oxfam.org
www.amnesty.org
www.oneworld.net
www.developmenteducation.ie
www.savethechildren.org.uk
www.bbc.co.uk/education/humanrights/
www.eco-portal.com
www.greenpeace.org.uk/forests
www.yptenc.org.uk
www.friendsoftheirenvironment.net
www.earthcharter.org
www.NewScientist.com/hottopics
www.antislavery.org
www.biodiversity.org
www.earthtrends.wri.org

Curriculum Area	Content links to development education	Attitudes and values compatible with development education	Skills compatible with development education	Methodologies
<p>Leaving Certificate Religious Education</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appreciation of and respect for the richness of religious traditions ➤ Appreciation of and respect for the non-religious interpretation of life ➤ Openness to individual and collective search for meaning ➤ Openness to dialogue and the search for mutual understanding <p>Syllabus, p. 9</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Analysis, application and synthesis ➤ Comparison and contrast ➤ Identification of causes and consequences ➤ Appropriate use of, and critical reflection on, text and resources <p>Syllabus, p. 9</p>	<p>Active learning methodologies are encouraged in the teaching of Leaving Certificate religious education. There is particular emphasis on critical questioning, discussion and debate. Group work is also promoted in the pursuit of information and research. Visits are encouraged from relevant people to the class and to places outside the classroom. The Teachers Guidelines also offer ideas on how to use ICT in Leaving Certificate religious education - word processing, the internet, digital cameras, etc.</p>
	<p>Section B: Christianity</p> <p>Part 5: The Christian message today</p> <p>5.1 Explore how the teaching and work of one Christian denomination sees itself as carrying on the mission of Jesus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Christians faced with violence, intolerance and sectarianism ➤ Christian understanding of a just and inclusive society ➤ Christians and the use and sharing of the earth's resources <p>Students could be encouraged to explore the above examples using both local and global case studies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appreciation of the root causes of violence, intolerance and sectarianism ➤ Respect for those who work to promote justice, equality and care for the earth ➤ A sense of stewardship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ability to recognise prejudice and its effects ➤ Identify the links between violence and injustice ➤ Discern the causes of environmental destruction and explore solutions/responses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Case studies ➤ Photo speak ➤ Collages (using magazine and newspaper clippings) ➤ Discussion ➤ Debate

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Leaving Certificate Religious Education	<p>Section D: Moral decision-making</p> <p>Part 1: Thinking about morality 1.2 The expression of personal and communal values in the UNDHR and similar charters. Discuss the character of human rights and their application in different contexts and places.</p> <p>Understandings of the common good. Discuss how the concept of the common good might contribute to a more just world.</p> <p>Part 2: Morality and religion 2.1 Changes in the understanding of morality in two of the following: morality of slavery, of war, of capital punishment, of child labour Discuss how changes in moral thinking have come about and the influence of different people around the world in that process (e.g. Bartholomew De Las Casas and slavery). Discuss the reasons for the continued existence of slavery or child labour today.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Awareness of, and openness to, the moral dimension of the issues of the day. Syllabus, p. 48 ➤ Openness to different views and perspectives ➤ Appreciation of the universal value of human rights ➤ A sense of social responsibility ➤ Willingness to perceive issues from the point of view of others, both historically and culturally ➤ A commitment to justice and human rights 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ability to express views and listen to/be informed by the views of others ➤ Investigation skills using the internet and library ➤ Analysing information ➤ Challenging assumptions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Case studies ➤ Role-play (with digital camera to capture different perspectives) ➤ Stories ➤ Issue-tracking of a moral debate in the newspapers and other media ➤ Role-play different perspectives on moral issues ➤ Research using the internet ➤ Debate ➤ Discussion
	<p>Section F: Issues of justice and peace</p> <p>Part 1: Reflecting on context 1.1 Social analysis 1.2 Why are people hungry in the world? Describe one country's experience of hunger and identify two causes of the problem at a national and international level and associate each with economic or political or cultural or social structures.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Appreciation of potential questions of justice and peace in a given situation ➤ Commitment to raise such questions when necessary ➤ Sensitivity to issues of justice in the student's own lives and in the lives of others. Syllabus, p. 60 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Identify the links between justice and peace, and the absence of peace ➤ Apply the skills of social analysis to issues of justice and peace Syllabus, p. 62 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Group work ➤ Project work ➤ Use of internet and other media to gather stories and images ➤ Interview someone working to address issues of justice and peace ➤ Guest speaker

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Leaving Certificate Religious Education	<p>Part 2: The concept of justice and peace</p> <p>2.1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Justice as right relationship ➤ Justice as retribution ➤ Justice as fair play ➤ Justice as the promotion of equality ➤ Justice as the upholding of human rights <p>2.2 The links between justice and peace</p> <p>Types of peace</p> <p>Non-violence as lifestyle and form of protest</p>	<p>Openness to, and respect for, groups who campaign for justice, including those who campaign out of religious conviction</p> <p>Syllabus, p. 62</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Awareness of the link between justice and peace ➤ Respect for non-violence as a lifestyle and form of protest 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Social analysis ➤ Identification of causes and consequences ➤ Critical thinking ➤ Reflection ➤ Discussion ➤ Debate ➤ Imagination <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Ability to critique the 'just war' tradition and other justifications for war 	<p>As above</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Listen to songs of protest against war and peace music. For example, John Lennon, U2, etc. ➤ Case studies of conflict around the world
	<p>2.4. Personal and structural violence</p> <p>The 'just war' tradition</p> <p>Compare examples from the developing and developed world</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Awareness that violence can be both personal and structural ➤ Awareness of the root causes of violence 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Case studies of people working to protect the environment
	<p>Part 3: The religious imperative to act for justice and peace.</p> <p>3.1 Religion and the environment.</p> <p>Investigate events and thinkers in the developing world who have contributed to the greening of religion</p>	<p>Appreciation of the role of individuals and movements who work to protect the environment from a range of religious backgrounds</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Invited speakers

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Leaving Certificate Religious Education	<p>Section J: Religion and science</p> <p>Part 2: The relationship between religion and science</p> <p>2.4. The ecological crisis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ the main features of the crisis ➤ the origins of the crisis ➤ attitudes to the crisis from the perspective of theology and science <p>Students might examine the above using examples from both the developing and developed world</p>	<p>Critical evaluation of scientific and technological progress. Syllabus, p. 103</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A sense of stewardship and respect for the environment ➤ Appreciation of the diversity of life ➤ Awareness of the interconnectedness and interdependence of all life 	<p>Identify ethical implications of scientific progress Syllabus p. 98</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Critically assess the extent of ecological crisis and its causes and effects ➤ Imagine future impact on the environment and on the human race 	<p>➤ Consequence mapping. The teacher poses a "what if?" question and probes the consequences. For example, what if, humans in the developed world continue to consume and produce waste at the current rate? Or what if farmers in the developing world no longer own the seeds for growing their food?</p>
	<p>Part 4: Current issues for religion and science: life and death</p> <p>4.2 The genetics debate</p> <p>Explore the pros and cons of genetically modified food from the perspective of both the Western consumer and the farmers/producers of the developing world</p>	<p>Awareness of the ethical issues and values surrounding the debate on genetic engineering, patenting of seeds, etc.</p>	<p>➤ Assess the positive and negative implications of genetically engineered food</p> <p>➤ Critically evaluate the arguments for and against</p>	

Assessment

80% of the total mark is assigned for the written examination. 20% of the total mark is assigned for coursework. Coursework provides an opportunity for students to engage in extended research, analysis and reflection on a chosen topic. Coursework aims to develop skills of research, analysis, evaluation, critical thinking, communication and reflection.

Note: Bold font indicates direct reference to the Syllabus or Teacher's Guidelines

