CONTENTS

Course Purpose and Rationale
Course Background
Course Design
Link to Queensland Studies Authority Study Area Specification
Why learn Religion?

Religion plays an important role in the life of local communities and of the Australian nation. Individual communities, and the nation as a whole, are more likely to build a tolerant society when their members are literate in their own religious traditions and have an understanding of the religious traditions of others. (Syllabus for Religious Education in Catholic Schools 1997, p13.)

Why choose The Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) Study Area Specification (SAS) Religion and Ethics?

The Study Area Specification (SAS) is an Authority-registered subject designed for Year 11 and 12 students. It enhances students’ understanding of how personal beliefs, values and spiritual identity are shaped and influenced by factors such as family, culture, gender, race, class and economics. It allows for flexible programs of study that recognise the varied needs and interests of students investigating topics such as spirituality, purpose and destiny, life choices, moral and ethical issues and justice. Within this study area, the focus is on students gaining knowledge and developing an ability to reflect on, critique and communicate this knowledge in relation to their lives and the world in which they live. The learning experiences and assessment tasks (are) practical and experiential. (Religion and Ethics Study Area Specification 2004 QSA p.1)

Why use the Brisbane Catholic Education (BCE) Religion and Ethics units of work?

The BCE Religion and Ethics units of work enhance the SAS program by providing learning experiences that are rich, real and relevant for senior secondary students. These learning experiences reflect emerging directions in the design and direction of contemporary religion curriculum. The course is designed to suit students in years 10, 11 and 12.

Features of the BCE Religion and Ethics units include:

- the use of an explicitly Catholic theological framework
- opportunities to extend religious knowledge and deepen understanding
- the incorporation of the curriculum perspectives of the Brisbane Catholic Education P-12 Syllabus
- opportunities to engage with the practical and experiential nature of the Religious Education Guidelines for the Religious Life of the School (2008), Archdiocese of Brisbane
- opportunities to engage with the seven General Capabilities and three Cross Curriculum Priorities of the Australian Curriculum (2010)
- the capacity to incorporate and encourage the use of existing and effective learning activities from current school programs
- independent learning activities that allow students who are absent, on work experience or traineeships to complete lessons at home or in allocated study time
- inquiry based activities aligned with contemporary teaching and learning pedagogy that includes multiple opportunities to improve ICLT skills for both students and staff
- a reflection of global trends and issues and the way religion interacts with the world today
- the inclusion of quality online resources evaluated by specialist religious education staff from BCEO.
COURSE BACKGROUND

The units of work have been written to comply with the requirements of the Queensland Studies Authority (QSA) Religion and Ethics Study Area Specification (SAS). They implicitly and explicitly reflect the curriculum perspectives in *A syllabus for religious education for Catholic schools* (1997), Archdiocese of Brisbane, and include multiple opportunities to develop the General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum.

Relationship to the QSA Religion and Ethics Religion and Ethics Study Area Specification SAS

The twelve units have been selected from the fourteen Elective topics in the QSA Religion and Ethics SAS. These are: The Australian Scene, Spirituality and Ritual, Good and Evil, Religious Citizenship, Heroes and Role Models, Gender and Spirituality, Social Justice, Origins Purpose and Destiny, Life Choices, Sacred Stories, Peace Studies and Ethics and Morality. The content of the other two elective topics, Religions of the World and Exploring the Meaning of Life has been incorporated into the other units. Core content areas have been selected to reflect the Focus given in the SAS for each Elective Topic with activities designed to develop the Study Area Core Dimensions; Personal, Relational and Spiritual.

A bank of assessment ideas is provided but each school must submit their Study Plan to QSA for approval.

Relationship to the Australian Curriculum and BCE Religious Education curriculum

The table on the following page indicates the relationship between the BCE Religion and Ethics Course, *A syllabus for religious education for Catholic schools the curriculum perspectives and the General Capabilities and Cross Curriculum Priorities of the Australian Curriculum* from the Australian Curriculum Assessment and Reporting Authority.

(Note: The twelve units have been designed so that learners develop all of the General Capabilities of the Australian Curriculum. They have also been designed with the three Cross-curriculum priorities embedded in all units. They are specifically noted in the table when an extensive focus has been given to that area.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>BCE Religion and Ethics Units</th>
<th>ACARA Australian Curriculum General Capabilities and Cross-curriculum priorities aligned with the BCE Religion and Ethics Units.</th>
<th>Religious Education Syllabus curriculum perspectives and Religious Life of the School, Archdiocese of Brisbane.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>The Australian Scene</strong></td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures, Intercultural understanding, Critical and creative thinking, Numeracy, Asia and Australia’s engagement with Asia, Sustainability, ICT</td>
<td>Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, Multicultural, Ecumenical, Multi faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Spirituality and Ritual</strong></td>
<td>Intercultural understanding, Personal and social competence, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures</td>
<td>Prayer and Worship, Church, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good and Evil</strong></td>
<td>Ethical behaviour, Personal and social competence, Critical and creative thinking, ICT</td>
<td>Attitudes and Values, Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Religious Citizenship</strong></td>
<td>Intercultural understanding, Personal and social competence, Critical and creative thinking, ICT</td>
<td>Global, Evangelisation and Faith Formation, Church, Multicultural</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Heroes and Role Models</strong></td>
<td>Critical and Creative thinking, Ethical behaviour, Literacy, Intercultural understanding, ICT</td>
<td>Attitudes and Values, Church</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender and Spirituality</strong></td>
<td>Personal and social competence, Intercultural understanding, ICT</td>
<td>Gender, Disability, Prayer and Worship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Justice</strong></td>
<td>Sustainability, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and culture, Ethical behaviour, Personal and social competence, Intercultural understanding, Numeracy.</td>
<td>Mission and Justice, Social Justice and Action, Environmental, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Origins Purpose and Destiny</strong></td>
<td>Personal and social competence, Critical and creative thinking, Literacy</td>
<td>Prayer and Worship, Attitudes and Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Life Choices</strong></td>
<td>Personal and social competence, Ethical behaviour, Creative and critical thinking</td>
<td>Church, Attitudes and Values, Futures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sacred Stories</strong></td>
<td>Literacy, Intercultural understanding, Critical and creative thinking, ICT</td>
<td>Church, Ecumenical and Multi faith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Peace Studies</strong></td>
<td>Intercultural understanding, Ethical behaviour, Critical and creative thinking, Australia’s engagement with Asia, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander history and culture, Sustainability, ICT</td>
<td>Multicultural, Global, Futures, Attitudes and Values, Church, Mission and Justice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethics and Morality</strong></td>
<td>Ethical behaviour, Personal and social competence, Intercultural understanding</td>
<td>Attitudes and Values</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
WHAT IS A FERTILE QUESTION?

A fertile question places the question at the centre of teaching and learning. It removes a focus on a ‘correct answer’ to a focus on open ended investigations and inquiry learning.

The Criteria for a Fertile Question

Taken from Harpaz, Y. (2005), Teaching and Learning in a Community of Thinking' Journal of Curriculum and Supervision. (Source: https://www.ssatrust.org.uk/achievement/Documents/jcs2005winter_harpaz.pdf)

1. An open question - a question that in principle does not have one definite answer, but actually several answers different from and even contradictory to each other.
2. An undermining question - a question that undermines the basic assumptions and fixed beliefs of the learners; one that casts doubt on the ‘self-evident’.
3. A rich question - a question that requires grappling with rich content; that is impossible to answer without careful research; that tends to break up into sub-questions.
4. A connected question - a question relevant to the life of the learners, to the society in which they live and to the discipline of religion.
5. A charged question - a question having an ethical dimension, such questions have a strong emotional charge to motivate learning and inquiry.
6. A practical question - a question that can be developed into a research question; a question about which information is available to students.

For Example: The fertile question for The Australian Scene is:

How can religious diversity advance Australia fair?

On the following page is an example of the ways in which this fertile question could be evaluated and engaged with during learning processes.
COURSE DESIGN

Table: An evaluation of a fertile question.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Fertile Question for The Australian Scene</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>How can religious diversity advance Australia fair?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Open</td>
<td>There is no one answer as to how something could be done or not done. The phrase Advance Australia Fair has multiple interpretations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undermining</td>
<td>Learners will have preconceived ideas about religion, diversity and what's good for Australia. There is potential for others' ideas to conflict with their own. Australia is often perceived as secular so the question is a little unexpected.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rich</td>
<td>To answer the question effectively, knowledge will be needed to grapple with the complex and sometimes conflicting issues associated with religious diversity and its impact on Australian culture.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Connected</td>
<td>The students are living in Australia and they have an interest in what it means to be Australian. Catholic schools are becoming as religiously diverse as other schools.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charged</td>
<td>Both religion and diversity are charged topics. Since September 11, religion has become associated with war and multiculturalism. Questions about who should call themselves Australian will invite charged debate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical</td>
<td>The issues and knowledge associated with religious diversity in Australia are researchable. Smaller questions can be asked that focus on particular areas or issues of which information is readily available</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Each unit of work has an introductory Movie Clip.

The purpose of the movie clip is to build an inquiry culture and energise and motivate learners and learning. The movie clips are 2-3 minutes in length and are suitable for both teachers and students as an introduction to the unit and the fertile question. The movie clip icon is located on the first page of the unit. To access, simply hover mouse over the icon and click to play.
Each unit of work has a *Unit Map*.

The purpose of the Unit Map is to provide an overview of the unit and to assist students and teachers to choose and or negotiate which learning activities they will use.
COURSE DESIGN

Each unit of work has been written based on an eight week timeframe of four lessons per week.

Typically, a school study plan for Years 11 and 12 would be based on the completion of one unit per term. A Year 10 program would include one or more of the four remaining units.

In each unit:

There are three Content Areas for each unit.

Each Content Area contains three Topics.

Each Topic has three core content lessons.

Each Content Area will also have at least one lesson to extend knowledge on a particular topic and one that deepens understanding.

The three types of lessons are presented with consistent colour coding throughout the course.

Core content lessons - minimum of 27

Extending knowledge lessons - minimum of 3

Depthing understanding lessons - minimum of 3

The activities within the lessons are designed to assist the inquiry. The teacher and or the students can choose which activities to complete but choosing lessons from each of the core content areas will ensure that students have enough material to assist them to answer the fertile question and to cover the focus and the personal, relational and spiritual dimensions of the SAS Elective Topic.

Each Unit of work has Information and Learning Technologies (ICLT) support.

The lessons within the units have been designed to enhance student learning through the use of ICLTs. However non-digital options are available where computer access is limited.
Each lesson has the same format, is student focused and can be printed or copied. As per the SAS, some lessons require interaction with the school community and/or the wider community/Parish in which the school is located.

Features include:

- Each lesson is labeled with the Core Content Area, its topic and a title.
- The section labeled “Before you start” provides the suggested teacher preparation required for the lesson.
- Because the course is inquiry based, the activities provided are suggestions only. Each is designed to provide content that will assist the student to ultimately answer the fertile question and cover the content in the QSA SAS Elective topics.
- In most cases, the lessons are one page in length to assist with copying or printing requirements. The page can be placed in another environment or the students directed to the page number in the PDF.
- The non-digital versions where provided, are several pages in length to accommodate resources.
- There are several navigation buttons provided on each page.
  - Useful Resources: Takes you to an online and paper based resource lists, learning and teaching strategies and ICLT help.
  - Other navigation buttons return you to the Unit Map, the unit overview etc
REFERENCES

Australian Curriculum, Assessment and Reporting Authority (2010). The Shape of the Australian Curriculum, Version 2.0. Sydney: ACARA.

