

Curriculum Review – *Getting to Know Jesus*

Published by Catholic Archdiocese of Brisbane, Evangelisation Brisbane ©2021

Reviewed April 2021, and September 2022. Version 3 of materials.

RI Curricula are referred to by the Department of Education Qld as RI Program Materials.

Executive Summary

In 2019, the Multi-Faiths RI Peak Body Network commissioned an independent review of common curriculum materials used by Religious Instructors in Queensland Schools. The focus of the review was to assist Principals to be confident that curriculum materials comply with Department of Education Queensland policy requirements. This report is a review of the *curriculum name* curriculum materials used by many Christian Religious Instructors, against 15 policy areas of focus. The review purpose and process is outlined in a separate document on the website multifaithsri.org.au.

Outcome:

Getting to Know Jesus is highly compliant with Department of Education Queensland policy.

There are eight themes, and a total of 47 lessons. The lessons are organised around the themes of Jesus growing up, the ministry of Jesus, His resurrection, the early church, encounters with Jesus, stories Jesus told, stories Jesus knew messages from Jesus and a lesson about Mary MacKillop. The resources are easy to use. Students are encouraged to think about how to grow in kindness, wisdom and strength, how to love family, friends and help those in need.

There are a few lessons or activities in the 2021 edition where an instructor would need to exercise caution. For example there are some Bible stories that required instructors to be sensitive. These aspects of lessons are highlighted in the lesson plan. For example

- a. Instructors are warned to avoid unsettling aspects of the birth of Moses (Lesson 38 - Pharaoh ordering the death of male babies).
- b. Lesson 43 retells the story of David killing Goliath with a stone in a slingshot. Instructors can remind students not to try this at home.
- c. In retelling the crucifixion story in lesson 10, a resource called 'resurrection eggs' is recommended. These eggs contain small items associated with the crucifixion story. Some items like a donkey and stone are not concerning, but instructors may wish to avoid using references to the hammer, and rope or whip especially if students are not familiar with the crucifixion story.

A lesson-by-lesson analysis and details about any areas of concern and recommendations are provided in this report to support RI instructors in complying with Department of Education policy.

Review coordinator:

Dr. Jill Willis, Associate Professor of Education,

Queensland University of Technology. v1 April 2021, v2 May 2022.

Curriculum details

© 2021

Getting to Know Jesus

Getting to Know Jesus is a one-year program for instructors. It has been developed by Evangelisation Brisbane, Catholic Archdiocese Brisbane, for use in Christian religious instruction lessons.

Instructor's manual with detailed instructions

- There are 47 lessons, with each lesson organised in a similar way.
- Each one-page lesson plan contains information for the instructor about
 1. The lesson title
 2. The anchor bible verse
 3. Preparation activities
 4. Background
 5. A chronological outline of activities with the children
 6. Scripture
 7. Retelling the story ideas.
- A variety of creative prayer ideas are suggested in the introduction.
- Optional activities are provided for lower, middle and upper primary classes.

Review Commentary

Strengths

- **The instructor handbook is easy to follow.** The lessons are clearly outlined with scripted suggestions for instructors. These include reminders for instructors to look out for all students to be given opportunities to answer questions, to encourage an atmosphere of acceptance and honesty, and to acknowledge all contributions and respect students' opinions.
- **Acknowledgement of Country.** Each lesson begins with an Acknowledgement of Country, and the relationship of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to this country.
- **The lessons all have suggestions for learning activities that involve students.**
 - a. Activities are suggested for students to engage in craft activities, songs. Each lesson has a number story, echo mime, and 'liquid picture' activity with actions and call and response.
 - b. Little writing is required from students in the optional activities. Most responses required are verbal and auditory.
 - c. No food is shared in the lessons. Pictures of bread and goblet/chalice are used in reference to Passover/ Jesus' last meal with his disciples (Lesson 9).
 - d. All lessons are planned for an indoor classroom with no specialist equipment needed. The usual resources that children would have and regularly use in their classrooms are used such as glue, scissors, pencils, crayons. They are low risk.
- **Lessons support students to grow in faith and social skills:** Students are encouraged to think about how to grow in kindness, wisdom and strength, how to love family, friends and help those in need.

Considerations

- **Sensitivity with some topics required.** There are some topics that require instructors to be sensitive. Some Biblical stories have elements of violence which could be upsetting to children. These aspects of lessons are highlighted in the lesson plan. For example;
 - i. Instructors are warned to avoid unsettling aspects of the birth of Moses (Lesson 39 - Pharaoh ordering the death of male babies). In the second dot point in Preparation, instructors are cautioned to 'Plan to read the Bible story in your own words, being careful not to frighten children with graphic details'.
 - ii. Lesson 43 retells the story of David killing Goliath with a stone in a slingshot. Instructors are reminded to tell students not to try this at home.
 - iii. In retelling the crucifixion story in lesson 10, a resource called 'resurrection eggs' is recommended. These eggs contain small items associated with the crucifixion story. Some items like a donkey and stone are not concerning, but instructors may wish to avoid using references to the hammer, rope or whip especially if students are not familiar with the crucifixion story.

Policy Compliance

The curriculum materials are compliant with the 15 policy areas of focus identified in collaboration with the Department of Education policy advisors, drawn from:

- The Education (General Provisions) Act 2006.
- The Department of Education's Safe, Supportive and Disciplined School Environment Procedure
- P-12 curriculum, assessment and reporting framework
- Student Learning and Wellbeing Framework
- Inclusive Education Policy
- Statement of expectations for a disciplined school environment
- Smart choices - healthy food and drink supply strategy for Queensland schools
- The Code of School Behaviour
- Managing Risks in School Curriculum Activities
- Animal Use in Queensland state schools
- Smart choices - healthy food and drink supply strategy for Queensland schools
- Parent and Community Engagement framework

Overall Comment from the review team:

"Getting to Know Jesus" is a clearly outlined resource. The lessons are appropriate for short lessons with primary-school children. The lessons provide opportunities for children to learn about important bible stories through discussions, reflections and activities.

Lesson by Lesson Review

- Reviewed as compliant.
- Reviewers noted that while these activities are compliant, RI instructors would need to take additional care with these activities.
- Reviewers indicated that caution should be exercised and that this lesson or part of the lesson may cause compliance concerns.

- Sections of this lesson were not compliant.
- N/A Not applicable.
- * Updates in new edition have addressed the issues raised.

Unit	Table 1 of 2																													
Lesson	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
1. Appropriate age and lesson time																														
2. Supporting a cooperative arrangement. No leaving of materials																														
3. No proselytizing or promotion of outside school activities and publications																														
4. No activities or content that would cause harm to a child (physical, psychological or emotional well-being)																														
5. Supports and promotes a safe, supportive and disciplined learning environment																														
6. Responds to diverse learning needs – level and age																														
7a. A safe physical and cyber learning environment - supports wellbeing																														
7b. Fosters behavioural strengths																														
7c. Builds positive relationships (peers, staff, parents, community) and promotes positive social interactions																														
7d, e. Encourages inclusivity, diversity																														
8. Safe supportive environment, free from bullying, discrimination, harassment																														
9. Responsive to school behaviour plan, safe supportive and disciplined learning environment																														
10. Smart choices - healthy food and drink																														
11. Consistent with Code of School Behaviour																														
12. Risk - suggests undertaking an assessment and identifies where risk assessment is needed																														
13. Promotes responsible care and use of animals																														
14. Does not include activities using items that may cause allergic reactions																														
15. Supports effective communication between students, parents communities that is inclusive and valued																														

Unit	Table 2 of 2																		
Lesson	30	31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40	41	42	43	44	45	46	47	
1. Appropriate age and lesson time																			
2. Supporting a cooperative arrangement. No leaving of materials																			
3. No proselytizing or promotion of outside school activities and publications																			
4. No activities or content that would cause harm to a child (physical, psychological or emotional well-being)																			
5. Supports and promotes a safe, supportive and disciplined learning environment																			
6. Responds to diverse learning needs – level and age																			
7a. A safe physical and cyber learning environment - supports wellbeing																			
7b. Fosters behavioural strengths																			
7c. Builds positive relationships (peers, staff, parents, community) and promotes positive social interactions																			
7d, e. Encourages inclusivity, diversity																			
8. Safe supportive environment, free from bullying, discrimination, harassment																			
9. Responsive to school behaviour plan, safe supportive and disciplined learning environment																			
10. Smart choices - healthy food and drink																			
11. Consistent with Code of School Behaviour																			
12. Risk - suggests undertaking an assessment and identifies where risk assessment is needed																			
13. Promotes responsible care and use of animals																			
14. Does not include activities using items that may cause allergic reactions																			
15. Supports effective communication between students, parents communities that is inclusive and valued																			