



Religious Education in Uniting Church schools

A framework



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD



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Authors: Dr Paul Hedley Jones and Dr Daniel Pampuch

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Uniting Church Queensland Synod office
60 Bayliss Street
Auchenflower QLD 4066

or

GPO Box 674
Brisbane QLD 4001
Phone: 07 3377 9777

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Foreword

Jesus said, “Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for it is to such as these that the Kingdom of God belongs.”
Mark 10:14

The Queensland Synod of the Uniting Church in Australia takes seriously its responsibility to provide avenues for children and young people to encounter the life of the Kingdom of God, as revealed in Jesus Christ.

This religious education framework will offer schools a means by which the riches of the Christian story, as particularly expressed through the Uniting Church, can be accessed by young people.

In the midst of the great transitions that western civilisation is now immersed, an understanding of how the Christian tradition can inform and resource our journey is a vital element of the church’s participation in the education of young people.

As young people explore who they are, their world and what their role in it might be, the Church’s prayer is that they might be encouraged and given hope and purpose by encountering the God revealed in the Church’s witness.

Rev David Baker
Moderator, Queensland Synod





Introduction

Background and rationale

The Uniting Church in Australia values its relationship with a diverse set of schools throughout Australia. Over 40 schools belong to the Uniting Church or have constitutional, informal or historical links with the church. (See Appendix D for a full listing.) Each school has its individual culture, curriculum and co-curricular programs, and all schools form a vital part of the mission and witness to young people and their families.

The church acknowledges and celebrates the significant role schools play in the holistic formation of children and young people and recognises the professionalism, commitment and skill of the staff who make this possible. The church also acknowledges that schools develop and deliver programs relating to Christian learning and living in a range of ways, including chaplaincy, religious education classes, pastoral care and community service programs.

In response to requests from schools for guidance regarding how faith formation and religious literacy might be cultivated sensitively and to the particularities of Uniting Church theology, a small group from Uniting Church schools Australia-wide began working in 2014. The group's intent was to develop an overarching framework that was sufficiently broad to accommodate the diversity of Uniting Church schools while honouring our shared Christian heritage and ethos. The working group sought to identify areas of knowledge, skills and attitudes that have emphasis within the Uniting Church to form the basis of the religious education framework.

This Uniting Church religious education framework is offered as a resource. It is not intended to replace or supersede work that is already happening in Uniting Church schools, nor does it prescribe specific course materials. Rather, it provides guidance to those charged with the responsibility of (re)developing Christian/religious education programs in order that these programs may be more consistent with the ethos of the Uniting Church. For a detailed curriculum, see the *Scope and sequence* in Part B (p.25).

Source materials

Much of the core content and pedagogical process set out here is informed by four Uniting Church documents (in addition to the scriptures): the *Basis of Union* (1977; rev. 1992), the *Statement to the Nation* (1977), the *National Educational Charter* (2002) and the *Uniting Church Schools and Residential Colleges in Queensland Ethos Statement* (2013). Each of these documents are available online and it is recommended that they are read in conjunction with this framework. The documents are introduced briefly here in order to clarify their relevance to the framework.

The *Basis of Union* (1977; rev. 1992) spells out many of the Uniting Church's distinctive theological emphases, and its 18 paragraphs are determinative for many essential units within a Uniting Church school's religious education curriculum. In addition, the *Basis of Union* articulates a number of the key beliefs, values and worship



practices of the Uniting Church. For this reason, its accents undergird much of this framework (see the diagram on p.15).

The inaugural Statement to the Nation (1977) of the Uniting Church in Australia, as the name suggests, makes a series of public declarations about the social concerns and Christian values of the church. Many of these affirmations are central to an educational framework that is explicitly Uniting Church.

The Uniting Church in Australia *National Education Charter* (2002) 'provides foundational reflections on education' for the purpose of clarifying the Uniting Church's stance in matters of educational policy. The charter begins by stating that its principles exist to 'inform all educational ministries', including 'the establishment of its own schools.'¹ The ten principles and eight guidelines set out in the charter are foundational for this framework. These guidelines reinforce values such as holistic education and diversity as well as some of the broader aims of a Uniting Church school education: the discovery of one's gifts, the lifelong nature of learning, and the importance of participation in society beyond school.

The *Uniting Church Schools and Residential Colleges in Queensland Ethos Statement* (2013) articulates guidelines that are particular to working in schools.

Purpose

The religious education framework (Part A) provides a framework or scaffolding for the related *Scope and sequence* (Part B), which is more specific about learning outcomes for religious education across all year groups (pre-school to Year 12). The third Part of this document, *Service learning* (Part C) addresses the need for an intentional approach to service learning in order that a balanced approach to academic learning and faith formation is sustained in Uniting Church school contexts.

Rather than dictating matters of content, this framework sets out a range of undergirding convictions—a theology of education—for the teaching of religious education. The framework establishes explicit baseline expectations for education about the Christian faith which can be expected from Uniting Church schools. As such, it is primarily addressed to teachers of religious education and officers of school governance although it also will be relevant to parents and other interested parties.

Three sections follow this introduction: a discussion about what makes a Uniting Church theology of education distinctive; a presentation of the four key learning domains—texts, values, beliefs, and worship—that permeate the educational vision of Uniting Church schools; and suggested principles of curriculum design. The heart of the curriculum framework is comprised of the four key learning domains represented in the diagram on p.15 and developed later in this document.

Used together, the three parts of this program will facilitate consistency and a distinctive ethos throughout associated schools, and will assist primary and secondary schools in living out the faith and mission of the Uniting Church in Australia.



Part A

Religious Education framework

¹ Uniting Church in Australia National Education Charter (2002), p.1.



RE in a Uniting Church context

A Uniting Church theology of education

Uniting Church schools are learning communities that endeavour to promote the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, psychological and physical development of their students. This commitment to holistic education is born out of the conviction that every person, made in the image of God, is designed to be filled and equipped by the Spirit of God in order to serve the communities of which they are a part (family, church, school, workplace). Accordingly, Uniting Church schools seek to nurture personal responsibilities such as self-understanding, discipline and emotional intelligence as well as communal responsibilities including a reverence for the environment, a sense of social justice and an attitude that respects and celebrates difference.

Issues such as the balance between academic education and spiritual formation, the ultimate goal of school-based learning, the purpose and varied modes of assessment, and the importance of teachers as role models are explored in more detail in later sections.

Faith formation or academic subject?

The question of whether religious education is about faith formation or whether it constitutes an academic subject is not an either/or debate within a Uniting Church context. The answer to such an inquiry is “both”.

In contrast to state schools where intentional faith formation is deemed inappropriate, Uniting Church schools seek to nurture Christian values in all its students and staff quite explicitly. By virtue of their attendance and participation at a Uniting Church school, students may be expected to grow in particular areas of both knowledge and behaviour. By the same token, the learning domains (texts, beliefs, worship and values) will inevitably have wider application than in the classroom alone.

Although a Uniting Church school environment endeavours to inform and enrich the faith/spiritual formation of its students, this does not mean that religious education is less rigorous as an academic subject. Given our multicultural and pluralist society, students will necessarily be exposed to some study of world religions. This is consistent with the *National Education Charter* which states that ‘education helps us to value such things as cultural and religious diversity’. In addition, it is important that religious education be taught, assessed and reported on like any other academic subject, given the complexity of its subject matter and its centrality to a Uniting Church education. (Further rationale for this is set out under Assessment.)

This means that religious education teachers must be prepared to shift between various pedagogies (often numerous times in a single day). Depending on the demands of a particular class or activity, teaching methods are adapted to suit desired lesson outcomes. Both spiritual formation and academic engagement are important.

In their programs and policies, Uniting Church schools reflect a theology of education which nurtures personal and communal responsibility to work for a just society that promotes integrity, sustainability and liberty for all.’

Uniting Church Schools and Residential Colleges in Queensland Ethos Statement (2013)

‘Faith formation in Uniting Church schools is approached intentionally, using age-appropriate pedagogies to deliver a biblically-based Christian education curriculum focussed on issues related to faith and life.’

Uniting Church Schools and Residential Colleges in Queensland Ethos Statement (2013)

Aims and outcomes

Broadly speaking, the aim of a religious education is the attainment of religious literacy; that is, the ability to express one’s understanding and experience of the texts, values, beliefs and worship practices of a religious tradition.

This religious education framework directly informs religious literacy as the aim of religious education in its delineation of the four key learning domains listed (texts, values, beliefs and worship). It also does so by emphasising a holistic approach to learning that attends to the spiritual, intellectual, emotional, psychological and physical dimensions of a person.² Giving accurate expression to a religious experience, be it a profound encounter with God or a simple walk in the forest, requires not just intellectual ability and an appropriate vocabulary, but also a degree of self-understanding, emotional awareness, and a worldview within which to locate such an experience.

Another fundamental notion regarding the aim of the framework is that learning is a skill to be developed. Teaching is intentionally geared towards honing the ability to learn.³ One might say that our school years are about learning to learn.

Measurable learning outcomes are necessary for the purposes of assessment and evaluation. A number of learning outcomes are specific to each year level in religious education. Since these are part of a curriculum proper, they are set out in the *Scope and sequence* (Part B). Learning outcomes include not only subject knowledge and associated vocabulary, but also problem-solving abilities, creative expression, self-evaluation and other developmental skills. It is encouraged that learning outcomes be clear and focussed, and that they cover relational, affective and spiritual dimensions as well as cognitive development (see Appendix B: Learning outcomes; pp.59–61).



² There is no correlation between the fingers and their titles; this ordering was simply chosen to create a memorable acronym: PEPSI. (PIPES is a more healthy alternative!)

³ On this, see esp. the work of Guy Claxton e.g. *What's the Point of School? Rediscovering the Heart of Education* (2008).

Assessment

An appropriate range of assessment modes will prevent religious education from being dismissed as a subject that is less academically rigorous whilst maintaining the importance of personal reflection as part of one’s learning journey. As previously mentioned, religious education in a Uniting Church context is about both faith formation and academic excellence. A variety of assessment strategies will ensure that this is clear.

Especially at secondary level, religious education students increasingly will be expected to engage critically with the scriptures (the required skills are comparable in many ways with literary studies in English) and to demonstrate a sophisticated grasp of interpretive principles as they apply to religious texts. Teachers will need to be sensitive to how such learning correlates with a given year group’s stage of faith and prior understanding.⁴

In any case, assessment remains important in religious education, not just to inform school reports regarding the achievement of learning outcomes, but also because of the church’s emphasis on the importance of engaging with contemporary scholarly interpretations of scripture and other religious documents. According to the *Basis of Union*, ‘the Uniting Church enters into the inheritance of literary, historical and scientific enquiry which has characterised recent centuries, and gives thanks for the knowledge of God’s ways with humanity which are open to an informed faith. The Uniting Church lives within a world-wide fellowship of Churches in which it will learn to sharpen its understanding of the will and purpose of God by contact with contemporary thought.’⁵

In light of this, religious education modules are assessed with the same level of scrutiny as other subjects, even if certain aspects of the curriculum lend themselves to less traditional forms of assessment (e.g. a reflective journal, theology through art).

‘The Uniting Church places a strong emphasis on being informed by respected theological scholarship.’

Uniting Church Schools and Residential Colleges in Queensland Ethos Statement (2013)

Modelling learning

It is worth noting in this context that all teachers—before a word even leaves their lips—model learning for their students. Moreover, much of what is remembered about teachers, for better or worse, is their in/tolerance of other views, their in/ability to listen closely and so on. Therefore it is vital that religious education teachers model the processes and the key learning domains that are being taught by sharing personal reflections on subject material, by embodying the values being taught and discussed and by leading students in meaningful experiences of worship. If it is hoped that learners will adopt qualities of integrity, intelligence, imagination and respect, then teaching must exemplify those same qualities. Appropriate relationships built on trust between teachers and learners facilitate the best possible outcomes in the classroom.

⁴ See for example James Fowler, *Stages of Faith: The Psychology of Human Development and the Quest for Meaning* (San Francisco, Harper and Row, 1981); also more recently, Alexander John Shaia and Michelle L. Gaugy, *Heart and Mind: The Four Gospel Journey for Radical Transformation* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2015)

⁵ *Basis of Union* (1992), paragraph 11.

Key learning domains and guiding principles

The four learning domains at the heart of this framework—**texts**, **worship**, **values** and **beliefs**—support a dynamic learning process that is less compartmentalised than the *Scope and sequence* appears to suggest. In reality, there often will be significant overlap between the four quadrants, since learning activities tend to combine elements from different domains. As the diagram opposite indicates, these four interfacing variables share Christ as their centre and ought not be treated in isolation from one another. In fact, they cannot be. While the *Scope and sequence* treats them as disparate categories for educative purposes, it will become clear that these four categories are fundamentally inter-related.

For example, a learning activity might require students to experience different forms of worship (in or outside of the classroom) and then to think critically about how different prayers and liturgies reflect contrasting beliefs about God. This kind of activity ultimately draws on at least three of the four learning domains (worship, values and beliefs) because they are intrinsically linked. It is important, therefore, to treat the four domains as correlative elements rather than distinct learning areas.

Moreover, since the proposed framework engages both cognitive and affective faculties (see the ‘holistic hand’ diagram p.12), it is intended that students not only gain knowledge but are afforded opportunities to integrate new knowledge with corresponding insights, skills, attitudes and motives.

The diagram on p.15 presents each key learning domain in connection with three related sub-headings. The 12 sub-headings around the periphery of the circle comprise a series of Uniting Church guiding principles which are described in greater detail later in this document.

Together the key learning domains and the guiding principles establish a Uniting Church ethos in which religious education may take place. In many instances these learning foci will apply to all subjects, not just religious education. For example, the *Inclusive Christian spirit* is a value that will be taught drawing on historical events, the life experience of students, scriptural principles and so on. It is also a value that will ideally be promoted and upheld on the sporting field, in music rehearsals, in class debates and a host of other learning contexts. An integrated and holistic approach to education will thereby ensure that a Uniting Church ethos undergirds all learnin.

‘We believe that incorporating the values of the gospel, and faith experiences that affirm that commitment, into tailored learning frameworks will result in the best educational outcomes for students.’

Uniting Church Schools and Residential Colleges in Queensland Ethos Statement (2013)

Key learning domains and guiding principles



Given the centrality of the *Basis of Union* for a proper understanding of the distinctive ethos of the Uniting Church in Australia, a series of 15 guiding principles have been extracted from the *Basis of Union* and other Uniting Church documents. (There are 12 principles in the diagram above, where *Father*, *Jesus* and *Spirit* are grouped together under Trinity.) By remaining alert to these guiding principles, teachers can facilitate a distinctive Uniting Church ethos in the teaching of religious education. In Part B: *Scope and sequence*, the guiding principles are discussed further.

Each of the guiding principles are defined and grouped under the learning domain with which it has the most natural affinity.

TEXTS

- 1. Biblical witness:** We look to the Biblical texts of the Old and New Testaments as a faithful witness to God's love and purposes for the world.
- 2. Interpretation:** We believe the sacred texts of the church should be read alongside contemporary scholarship as a means of understanding God's word for today.
- 3. Documents of the church:** We learn from the faithful testimony of those who have gone before us and apply the teachings of the church in ways that are contextual and relevant.

BELIEFS

4. **Trinity:** We believe in the doctrine of the Trinity—Father, Son, and Spirit—that teaches us to be in community with God and with one another.
 - **God the creator:** We believe that God created people in God's image, and so we seek to treat all people with dignity and respect.
 - **Jesus:** We believe that God is seen and known in Jesus Christ whose life, death and resurrection shows God's purposes and God's compassion for all people; offering freedom, hope, peace and joy.
 - **Spirit:** We believe that God is Spirit who guides and gifts people, and so we value and celebrate people's unique gifts in community and we are open to God's voice today.
5. **Evangelical and Reformed:** We come from a tradition of Protestant churches that is Bible-focussed and Christ-centred, and which stresses the importance of mission and conversion.
6. **Church:** We believe that the church is the body of Christ in the world, called to be in community with one another and with God for the furthering of the gospel. In our endeavours to share the good news of God's life-transforming love for people and society, we are guided by the church's teaching and witness.

WORSHIP

7. **Ministry:** We encourage all Christians to discover and use their God-given gifts and abilities, as we believe in the 'priesthood of all believers'.
8. **Ecumenical:** We are part of the broad family of Christian churches across the world, and we are committed to working with other churches for unity and for the good of all people.
9. **Community:** We believe that as a community worships together in a creative, inclusive environment, they are provided with opportunities to become a part of God's ongoing story of reconciliation and justice in the world.

VALUES

10. **Social justice:** We believe that God is concerned particularly for those who are poor, marginalised or oppressed, and so we work for fairness, justice and the well-being of all people. In particular, we recognise the unique gift and place of Australia's Indigenous peoples and seek reconciliation with them and justice for them.
11. **Environmental and global concern:** We believe that God created a good world and entrusted its care to humanity. Accordingly, we take seriously our care and responsibility for the environment and for all living things.
12. **Inclusive:** We seek to welcome all people, whatever their economic circumstances, age, race, abilities, gender identity and gender orientation. We believe that God created women and men equal, and therefore encourage everyone's gifts and leadership. As a multicultural church in a multi-faith society, we celebrate and learn from the rich diversity of cultures and languages, and seek peace and understanding among religions.

These guiding principles provide the foundations for a set of learning outcomes that students will cover during their years in a Uniting Church school environment. These principles will be revisited time and time again with increasing depth and sophistication as students progress through years of schooling. Topics will be taught with increasing complexity, vocabulary (especially with regards to metaphor and abstract thinking) will be extended and expanded, concepts will become more complex and placed within a wider web of understanding, independent learning will occur more frequently and for more sustained periods of time, and perceptions and critical questions will be articulated with increasing confidence and competence.

Four learning verbs

The four learning verbs in the diagram (explore, examine, experience, exemplify) are 'doing words' that suggest the primary mode of engagement with each domain: texts are examined, beliefs are explored, worship is experienced, and values (ideally) are exemplified. These keywords are not intended to restrict learning tasks to particular activities; rather, they provide a simple and memorable way of keeping the diagram/framework from seeming abstract to both teachers and students. Moreover, they are words that can regularly be used in the classroom to introduce and explore new topic areas. For example, 'How could our class exemplify an attitude of tolerance during class debates?' or 'How might the experience of praying affect a person's beliefs about prayer?' Each of these verbs is expanded upon in the following pages.

Examine TEXTS

In all of the major world religions, core beliefs are derived from sacred texts and Christianity is no exception. Most notably, the 66 books of the Protestant Bible inform Christian faith and a Christian worldview for Uniting Church schools.

As students progress through their schooling, they will be expected to read and interpret biblical texts with increasing proficiency. Young learners, upon reading the Noah's Ark story, might be expected to inquire about the purpose of the flood or the significance of the rainbow, whereas more mature students might be encouraged to compare the flood narrative in Genesis 6–9 to ancient stories about floods from other cultures (e.g. the Babylonian Epic of Gilgamesh).

Through regular engagement with the scriptures, students will grasp how the books of the Bible shape an overarching narrative that directs and instructs today's church, and gain an understanding of how biblical texts need to be read according to their literary forms, among other things.

While the biblical text has a position of primacy, it is by no means the only document that informs the Uniting Church's convictions about God's call upon the church in Australia. Numerous creeds, hymns and other liturgical documents from church history inform Uniting Church theology, in addition to more recent documents pertaining to the Uniting Church in particular (see *Source materials* on p.7). The importance of interpretation is also a key element in the texts learning domain, given the emphasis on being attentive to the ways in which contemporary scholarship continues to sharpen the church's understanding of the will and purpose of God.

Explore BELIEFS

Christian doctrines are not simply a set of beliefs to which Christians give their intellectual assent. Nor are they a bunch of theological conundrums that only make sense to academics. Christian beliefs are core to Christian living. Or to paraphrase James, our behaviour says more about what we actually believe than our words (James 2:18).

In a school context, where students are most attentive to questions and issues that are directly relevant to them, it is essential that beliefs are regularly explored with reference to the question, 'so what?'

How does believing in a Trinitarian God affect one's prayer life? Does the gospel of grace suggest that God is not fair? (E.g. Matt 20:1–16) How should Christians navigate the divide between the world we inhabit and the alternative 'kingdom' that Jesus calls us to embody and proclaim? What is sin?

In addition to the importance of demonstrating the relevance of Christian beliefs to students of all ages, it is increasingly important for students (especially as they progress through secondary school) to understand the relationship between 'mystery' and

'reason' when speaking of one's faith. Religious education ought to expose the false divide between science and faith, and the secular notion often presented in the media that these are mutually exclusive.

Every dimension of the universe, even when adequately explained by science, leaves much room for wonder and curiosity. To take a straightforward example, if a student is convinced by scientific arguments about how the world came into being, they are still left with the arguably more important question of why the world came into being. The existence of God and scientific evidence for a 'big bang' are not mutually exclusive.

Finally, Uniting Church schools value critical thinking and encourage students to follow their own lines of inquiry. Thus the keyword 'explore' for this domain. It is vital for lifelong learning that students develop their abilities to listen carefully to diverse viewpoints, consider these with an open mind, and express themselves in respectful debate and critical dialogue. Related to this is the powerful pedagogical tool of inquiry projects (see p.21), which permit students to take the reins by articulating questions that hold their interest and then going on to solve those questions after identifying an appropriate process and methodology. Rather than noting down simplified answers to complex problems, inquiry projects engage students more deeply by freeing them to genuinely explore all possibilities in the quest for an answer.

In connection with this, many important studies of Christian beliefs can be combined with co-curricular activities and/or field trips in order to situate those beliefs in a wider matrix of 'life application'.

Experience WORSHIP

One of the primary challenges faced by primary and secondary students is the complex relationship between thought and behaviour. Jesus was regularly challenged by the Pharisees, not only about his beliefs ('Is it lawful for a man to divorce his wife?') but also regarding his behaviour ('Why don't you and your disciples wash your hands before you eat?') It is of course inadequate to stop at a discussion of the relationship between belief and behaviour in a classroom without also participating in acts of worship and service. This learning domain gives due emphasis to the importance of experience for learning, and broadens the definition of 'worship' beyond the singing of songs in church on a Sunday morning.

Christian faith is rooted not only in biblical beliefs and values, but in dynamic encounters with a living God. Accordingly, Uniting Church school students will have opportunities to experience prayers, songs and liturgies in different modes, to consider the significance of the sacraments, and to engage in mission trips and/or social action. These kinds of experiences, when complemented by thoughtful reflection and self-evaluation, provide powerful avenues to a deeper understanding of the way worship shapes faith.

Exemplify **VALUES**

The Uniting Church in Australia seeks to be especially alert to the particularities of our social context. Living in a multicultural, multi-faith, postmodern society presents its share of potential problems including racism, sexism, homophobia and other related forms of prejudice. Many core Uniting Church values seek to put an axe to the root of such intolerance, and schools present a unique opportunity to model the radically inclusive spirit of the body of Christ.

This intentional witness hearkens back to the beginnings of the Uniting Church, where three denominations came together under a single umbrella. Of course, there is more at stake here than simply the recollection of an historical memory, and the union of three previously independent denominations in 1977 has much greater significance than that of a ‘compromise’ being made. As the Statement to the Nation (1977) puts it, ‘this unity is a sign of the reconciliation we seek for the whole human race’. In other words, this fundamental commitment to uniting people in Christ through renewal and reconciliation is a living, spiritual dynamic that continues to drive churches, schools, colleges and other institutions. This is why it is so appropriate that diversity is embraced through mutual respect and determined inclusivity in the religious education curriculum (e.g. understanding other world religions, engaging in social justice) as well as at the level of school governance (e.g. providing equitable opportunities for learners).

For the same reason, the Uniting Church encourages its schools to incorporate Aboriginal, Torres Strait Islander and other cultural perspectives into units of work and to recognise and reflect the diverse faith and ethnic backgrounds of the individual school community. In developing teaching and learning programs that include service learning opportunities (Part C: *Service learning*), Uniting Church schools ensure that these perspectives are included.

It is one thing to talk about values, however, and quite another to exemplify them. As well as reward systems, peer assessment and self-evaluation, students are actively encouraged to be exemplars of godly values through engagement in Part C: *Service learning*.

Principles of curriculum design

Some principles of design are suggested here, to be used in conjunction with the *Scope and sequence* and for teachers and heads of departments whose task it is to construct a religious education curriculum.

RE in the timetable

The working assumption in terms of contact hours for this program is two lessons per week (50 mins each) plus one chapel/reflective lesson. Schools will need to adapt materials to their own schedules as required.

Those responsible for the curriculum should be wary of squeezing too many topics into a single term. Studies in the United Kingdom have shown that a fragmented curriculum is harder for students to digest and recall in a meaningful way.⁶ It is better to study a theme or sub-topic for two to three weeks at a time, allowing for both macro and micro perspectives.

Given the range of material that is covered in religious education, and the importance of engaging both cognitive and affective faculties, there will be significant opportunities for one-off outings to theatres or churches, inter-school collaborations and partnerships with Uniting Church agencies (UnitingCare, UnitingWorld, etc.). See Part C: *Service learning*.

Inquiry based learning

Some of the strengths of inquiry based learning (henceforth IBL) projects have been outlined previously (see *Explore BELIEFS*). It is difficult to overstate the potential gains of this kind of learning, since the process of inquiry is essential to so many other important life skills. Long after one’s school years have ended, many of the skills acquired through IBL projects maintain a central place in adult life: open-minded discussion/debate, critical thinking and problem solving, the ability (and self-awareness) to reflect on one’s presuppositions and so on.

The central principle that IBL picks up on is that learning is an inductive process. In other words, learning happens best when we begin with life’s variegated details and work our way towards general judgments or ‘rules’ about the way things are. Sometimes it is appropriate for teachers simply to tell a class what the ‘correct’ judgements are (e.g. established scientific laws), but the problem with a deductive approach is that the student doesn’t own the process and therefore rarely owns the knowledge for the long-term. Students cannot be expected to continuously memorise conclusions that they have not reached for themselves.

Current trends in pedagogy begin with the child rather than the subject. We teach Jack, Rachel and Drew, not ‘Grade 6 RE’. That is to say, learners are not receptacles into which knowledge is poured. Rather, the material to be learned must be adapted to the learner. For this reason, a critical question for any teacher—perhaps *the* critical question—is why a student should want to learn

⁶ OFSTED report; cited in ‘RE in the New Curriculum’ (2015)

about geography, chemistry, music or religion. When this question is not addressed, even the most knowledgeable and eloquent teachers sometimes have little impact because, to put it bluntly, the students simply don't care.

Another way of envisioning this is to regard the content of a lesson as the light from a torch. Rather than staring into the torch, an experience that most people would consider unpleasant, good teaching shines the light (i.e. the knowledge to be attained) upon a life issue to which students can identify and relate. When the relevance or 'life application' of the attainable knowledge or skill is thus illuminated, students become motivated so that learning is facilitated rather than forced. IBL is powerful because it is driven by the curiosity and wonder of the student. Because learning 'sticks' when it is personally meaningful (i.e. relevant), it is essential that students have opportunities to 'own' their discoveries by developing their own questions and grappling with obstacles and challenges in ways that they themselves have freely chosen.

IBL does not preclude the use of direct instruction in delivering the religious education program. It does however place an emphasis on recognising the students' prior knowledge, valuing the questions that they bring and identifying the next step in their learning journey, all of which is valuable in not only growing what they know but what they understand. There are tremendous opportunities for interdisciplinary inquiry-based projects (collaborating with English, history, geography or science), but again, students require a baseline 'language and concepts toolkit' if they are to successfully express what it is that they wish to discover and what kind of progress they make.⁷

Collaborative and co-curricular projects

In relation to IBL there are multiple opportunities for religious education to be linked with other subjects (with teachers working collaboratively) and with co-curricular activities (music rehearsals, sports teams, drama groups, etc.). This is important not only for pragmatic reasons but also for the vital message it conveys concerning the way Christian faith permeates all of learning and all of life. Religious education lends itself to integration within the curriculum as a subject that is not easily compartmentalised. Moreover a collaborative environment honours the reality that students come from diverse backgrounds with distinct priorities and interests.

At the same time, however, the timetabling of religious education ought to ensure that it retains its status as a vital subject within a larger schema.

⁷ See Guy Claxton, *Building Learning Power: Helping Young People Become Better Learners* (Bristol, TLO, 2002)

Forms of assessment

The traditional dichotomy between faith formation and religious education as an academic subject is somewhat overcome by an approach that values both and which endeavours to show that each is enriched by a thorough engagement with the other. Christian faith is not only expressed in the cultivation of godly habits but also by balancing action with reflection. It is therefore important that both action and reflection, and behaviour and beliefs, are accounted for in a religious education curriculum. Similarly, forms of assessment ought to be mindful of different intelligences (Howard Gardner⁸) and ways of knowing (affective/reflective/active/cognitive).

Assessment ought always to be presented with a sense of purpose; if it feels arbitrary to the student, they will lack the motivation to strive for the best possible outcome. Planned, focussed and systematic forms of assessment enable students to understand the purpose of the task and how it fits within a larger scheme of work. On the importance of assessment in religious education, see Assessment on p.8.

Many educational institutions find it helpful to distinguish between formative and summative assessment—otherwise known as 'assessment for learning' and 'assessment of learning'. The former refers to assessment that seeks to identify errors or obstacles to learning with a view to overcoming these and identifying the next steps (these are often done at the beginning of a unit or term). The latter refers to end-of-unit assessments that enable the teacher to form a judgment about how well the student has grasped the material from that term (i.e. whether the student has achieved the learning outcomes; see Appendix B on pp.74–76).



⁸ Howard Gardner, *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* (NY: Basic Books, 1983)



Part B:

Scope and sequence



The big picture

Introduction

As the *RE framework* (Part A) states, faith formation and academic engagement are both important aspects of religious education within a Uniting Church context. In this Scope and sequence, religious education is treated as an academic subject for obvious reasons though this is balanced by Part C: *Service learning* which highlights faith formation. While they are separated for pedagogical purposes in these documents, the reality is that faith formation and academic rigour are inseparable dimensions. Moreover, it is the nature of Christian faith that each is significantly enriched by attention to the other.

The *Scope and sequence* makes further use of the four key learning domains (henceforth KLDs)—*Beliefs*, *Texts*, *Values* and *Worship*—set out in the RE framework. As the framework states, these are inter-related variables that cannot be taught in isolation from one another, though for educative purposes they serve as headers, distinguishing four focal areas for learning.

In the proposed *Scope and sequence* that follows, each KLD is addressed during one school term so that all four areas receive equal attention throughout the year. In addition, each unit covers an entire term (10 weeks) so that students are able to explore topics in some depth with ample time to be assessed appropriately. For example, the proposed Year 10 curriculum covers the following units across the four KLDs:

Year 10			
Term 1	Term 2	Term3	Term 4
God as Trinity	Hymns and creeds	Relational choices and habits	Forgiveness and reconciliation

Whole school planning
















All year groups do not have to follow the same KLD format (e.g. *Beliefs*→*Texts*→*Values*→*Worship*), although there are some distinct advantages in doing so: (i) school chapel services across year groups can be planned to reflect the KLD which is the focus of that term; (ii) training seminars can be arranged for all religious education teachers in the most appropriate terms; (iii) excursions can include multiple year groups and be integrated within curricula; (iv) schools can arrange other co-curricular activities or special events during any given term that link into the current KLD.

In planning for the school it is intended that teachers continuously make links between one unit and the next, referring back to previous studies within the KLD being taught, and anticipating how future studies will complement and develop key questions and content of the present unit. It is also intended that learning be as interdisciplinary as possible so that students are regularly making links between subjects, with co-curricular activities and with service learning opportunities. This document uses the term co-curricular rather than extra-curricular because of the Uniting Church's conviction that education is a holistic enterprise wherein action and reflection have a reciprocal relationship. Activities outside of the classroom are therefore not seen as 'extra', but rather as key elements in a coordinated pedagogical strategy. All of this reinforces a more integrated understanding of the world that awaits students beyond school.

Guiding principles in the curriculum

As the RE framework (Part A) states, the impetus for this project comes from a felt need within Uniting Church schools for greater clarity about what faith formation and religious literacy ought to look like within an educational context that is distinctively Uniting Church. The *Basis of Union*, as a foundational declaration of the church's theological and missional priorities, is therefore central to the *Scope and sequence*. At a basic level, it is expected that all religious education modules or units are consistent with the theological emphases of the *Basis of Union*. But more importantly, the *Scope and sequence* intends to present opportunities for teachers to integrate the *Basis of Union* more explicitly in their lesson planning through the use of a set of guiding principles. The curriculum overview therefore includes a set of symbols to indicate which paragraphs of the *Basis of Union* may be touched on/ expanded upon within each unit. School staff with the responsibility of (re)developing Christian/religious education programs will find this table useful—or may develop their own—for ensuring that curricula are consistent with the ethos of the Uniting Church. In addition, the table in Appendix A specifies where each of the 18 paragraphs of the *Basis of Union* is covered in the 52 units of the *Scope and sequence*. It also includes the 1977 Statement to the Nation.

The guiding principles (defined on pp.16–17) are set out in a table on p.28 which indicates where any given guiding principle is supported in Uniting Church foundational documents. In addition, they are grouped according to their corresponding KLD. (See the diagram on p.15.) In the table on p.28, a symbol is allocated to each guiding principle for easy reference within the *Scope and sequence* overview that follows on p.30. (Again, see Appendix A for cross-indexing between the *Scope and sequence* and the *Basis of Union*.)





Uniting Church guiding principles key		
Principle	Symbol	<i>Basis of Union</i> et al
Biblical witness		BoU: 5,10
Documents of the church		BoU: 9,10,11
Interpretation		BoU: 11,16
Ministry		BoU: 12,13,14,15,16
Ecumenical and reformed		BoU: 1,2,18, Statement to the Nation
Community		BoU: 3,6,7,8,12,16,17,18
Inclusive		BoU: 1,7,13,14,15, Statement to the Nation
Social justice		Statement to the Nation; 2009 Revised Preamble to Constitution; 1994 Covenanting Statement
Environmental and global concern		Statement to the Nation
Trinity		BoU: 1,9
Father		BoU: 9; Statement to the Nation
Jesus		BoU: 3,4,6,7,8,9
Spirit		BoU: 3,6,9
Church		BoU: all
Evangelical and Reformed		BoU: 10





Curriculum overview

The P–12 *Scope and sequence* on p.30 is intended to give a sense of what might be covered in religious education in a single year (or in a student’s journey from P–12) and is simply an example of what is possible. The table states the title of each unit and shows its place within the overall curriculum. The symbols beneath each unit title indicate which guiding principles from the *Basis of Union* are relevant to that unit, providing teachers with a greater awareness of where Uniting Church values may be strategically accented and clarifying where certain paragraphs might even be used in class (as per the guiding principles key).

The duration of all units is one term (10 weeks) and their relation to other units is indicated by their placement in the table. The tables that follow on pp.32–39 offer more detail on the contents of each unit and group them according to their KLDs. (Exemplar unit templates on pp.41–45 contain more information again.)



P-12	Beliefs	Texts
P	Where I belong   	What is the Bible?    
1	What's in a name? 	Who is Jesus?   
2	God the giver  	Types of text  
3	Forgiveness      	Stories   
4	Integrity  	Psalms   
5	Life cycles  	Gospels    
6	World religions           	Prophets     
7	Relationships  	Parables    
8	The existence of God  	Damascus Road (conversion)     
9	Christian apologetics        	Getting the gospel       
10	God as Trinity        	Hymns and creeds     
11	Spiritual gifts     	Jonah (book study)   
12	Discipleship and leadership      	John (book study)    

Values	Worship	P-12
Courage   	Songs of praise     	P
Fruits of the Spirit   	Serving others      	1
Gratitude  	Trusting God 	2
Choices  	Caring for creation  	3
Trust   	Christmas (or Easter)    	4
Family   	Prayer      	5
Unity and diversity      	Sacraments and seasons     	6
Identity and character 	Creativity 	7
Tolerance and prejudice    	The Uniting Church       	8
Christians in society     	Conversation with God  	9
Relational choices and habits  	Forgiveness and reconciliation      	10
Christian ethics      	Social justice and service      	11
Controversial!    	Mission           	12

Unit overview

KLD	Year	Unit	Key question (IBL)	Content
Texts	Prep	What is the Bible?	What kind of book is the Bible?	Trip to the library, noting sections, authors, categories, etc.; Bible is a library, written by 40 authors over 1000 years; OT—God created us; NT —God saves us; [see 4.1 The Bible, St Leonards]
	1	Who is Jesus?	What does Jesus show us about God?	Where is God?; how do we know what he is like? If we want to know who God is, we look at Jesus; what sorts of things did Jesus do and say? Why did he have disciples and what did he teach them? Who are his disciples today? Imitating Jesus.
	2	Types of text	Can words mean different things?	Identify different text types in daily life: shopping list, parking fine, poem, etc.; discuss literary forms in Bible: dreams, laws, parables, songs, etc.; why does God speak in different ways? Write about God, using story, poem, song or list.
	3	Stories	What makes stories important?	What is your personal story? The overarching biblical story; what questions help you to understand someone else's story? (Interview).
	4	Psalms	How do the Psalms help us worship?	Psalms were a hymnbook for God's people in the OT (Israel); what are they about? Can songs say more than words by themselves?; compare psalms with worship songs today; memorise a psalm (e.g. Ps 1).
	5	Gospels	Why were the gospels written?	What is a biography? Why are some details different? (4 perspectives); what do we know about Matthew, Mark, Luke and John?; birth/parables/ miracles/teaching/conflict with religious authorities/12 disciples/crucifixion/ resurrection.
	6	Prophets	What makes someone a prophet?	What is a prophet? Who were some OT prophets? What were they doing? Is prophecy always about the future?; understanding Jesus as fulfilment of some (not all!) prophecy; what does it mean to say the Bible is inspired? Are there prophets today?

KLD	Year	Unit	Key question (IBL)	Content
	7	Parables	How do parables work?	What makes a good story, and how do stories 'work'? Why did Jesus teach with parables? How are stories more powerful than direct teachings? Why use parables instead of direct teaching?; focus on various parables (the kingdom is like a...).
	8	Damascus road	What happens when someone is converted?	What is a faith journey?; what does conversion look and feel like? Biblical stories of conversion: Naaman (2 Kgs 5), Saul (Acts); what changes take place? What is your own faith journey? Where have you been and where are you going? Can people have more than one conversion? (ongoing process)
	9	Getting the gospel	What is the 'good news' of the gospel?	Aussie fair-go culture; consistent character of God in OT and NT (justice and mercy); understanding grace as undeserved blessing; the foolishness of the cross (1 Cor 1); restorative justice vs retributive justice; understanding the aims of punishment systems.
	10	Hymns and creeds	How are worshipping communities affected by different styles of worship?	Why does the church have creeds? Listen and compare old hymns with contemporary worship songs (spot the diff'); why might churches maintain distinct 'worship styles'?; examine hymn lyrics and discuss purpose of singing to one another vs singing to God.
	11	Jonah (book study)	What is the moral of the story in the Book of Jonah?	Literary approach to the Bible; why does Jonah flee? Un-forgiveness and bitterness; Jonah is the opposite of what a prophet should be; how does God teach him? What does God's final question give us to think about? Exclusion and inclusion.
	12	John (book study)	How is John's gospel different to the other gospels?	Compare ordering of events in John with Synoptics; how does John structure his book? (signs); why does John use more 'theological' language? John's target audience and date of composition.

KLD	Year	Unit	Key question (IBL)	Content
Beliefs	Prep	Where I belong	What groups and communities make me feel at home?	Importance of community and friends; diversity in community; how do we show that we're all connected at school and in church?; one human 'family' on earth; how does it feel to belong/not to belong? What groups do you belong to?; stories of belonging.
	1	What's in a name?	In what ways are names important?	What do names mean? Meaning of names in class; God's many names throughout the Bible; what do they tell us about God? Create collage/poster with Bible references and images about God's character or of all the names in your class; what name of God do you connect with most?
	2	God the giver	What are the different kinds of gifts that God gives us?	Christian belief in God who creates and sustains life, answers prayer, gives talents and gifts to each, makes us unique, provides for us and gives us enough to provide for others; value on generosity as godly character; Gen 1:26–28. God has entrusted creation to our care.
	3	Forgiveness	Why is forgiveness so important to Christians?	What does it look/feel like to forgive?; revenge vs forgiveness; Jesus' teaching on being forgiven and forgiving (Lord's prayer); the prodigal son; why is unforgiveness bad for you? Is anything unforgivable?
	4	Integrity	What does it look like to have integrity?	What is integrity? (integer = whole number); biblical perspectives on shalom/wholeness; which self is my true self?; who am I becoming? Proverbs on maximising potential; how to grow in wisdom.
	5	Life cycles	How do Christians celebrate important life events?	Thinking biblically through birth and death; liturgical expression of life events; memory, symbols and celebration; Christian beliefs and biblical/historical perspectives on these events.
	6	World religions	What do the major world religions have in common?	Islam/Judaism/Hinduism/Sikhism/Buddhism; what do religions have in common?; what distinctives? How is Christianity different? Census/surveys; multi-faith society; research project; excursion possibility; what makes a religion grow? Compare holy books.

KLD	Year	Unit	Key question (IBL)	Content
	7	Relationships	What difference can a Christian view of relationships make to a person's life?	Difficulties of family/friends/peers, etc.; trust; biblical perspectives; Psalms as conversations with God; romantic/physical/sexual attractions; forgiveness and reconciliation. Are we fully human without relationships? Communication skills (tone of voice/body language/cultural barriers/respecting difference).
	8	The existence of God	Can the existence of God be proven?	Arguments for the existence of God (teleological/cosmological); Gen 1 and science; theodicy (God, evil and free will); what role does experience play in belief in God? How do people respond to the problem of evil and suffering?; atheism/agnosticism/theism.
	9	Christian apologetics	What reasoned arguments can be used to defend Christian faith?	What is 'apologetics'? Examine most common objections to Christian faith; explore approaches over centuries—apostle Paul, Aquinas, Pascal, Chesterton, C.S. Lewis—to today: Zacharias, Lennox, Lane Craig, etc. History, philosophy and science as sources of evidence; problems posed by the Bible; choose an issue/question to examine and present.
	10	God as Trinity	Why is the doctrine of God as three-in-one important for Christians?	Continuity of God's character from OT to NT; God as Father, Son and Spirit; Jesus is Yahweh in flesh and blood; Spirit is God's empowering presence in the church (the body of Christ); role and gifts of the Spirit; models for Trinity; compare Christian understanding of God with other world religions.
	11	Spiritual gifts	Why does God give Christians spiritual gifts?	Spiritual gifts survey/test; what do you think might be your gifts? Why does the Spirit choose and give spiritual gifts to Christians? Reflect on your gifts and talents—how can you help others to flourish?; can gifts be developed?; list from 1 Cor 12; Rom 12.
	12	Discipleship and leadership	How is the Christian ideal of servant leadership different to secular models of leadership?	Disciples in 1st c. AD as imitators of their rabbis; how do we imitate Jesus today? Models of leadership; Christian counter-cultural ideal of servant leadership; value of mentoring others; aims and purposes of leadership in Christian context.

KLD	Year	Unit	Key question (IBL)	Content
Worship	Prep	Songs of praise	Why do Christians sing to God?	Learning new songs as class; why do we sing to God? How does it feel to sing songs together?; psalms as ancient songs of worship. What makes God worthy of praise?
	1	Serving others	How can I serve the people around me?	Ways of serving others; what did Jesus say about service?; Jn 13:3–20 on foot-washing. How you can volunteer at church and in school; missional groups; opportunity for school visit or class excursion to Christian agencies (e.g. UnitingCare).
	2	Trusting God	What does it mean to trust in God?	Trust games/activities; how do you know if someone trusts you?; what does it mean to trust God? Serving others without reward; the greatest and the least/first and the last; Jesus came to serve us! What kind of actions and words show trust?
	3	Caring for creation	Why is it important for Christians to take care of the Earth?	Uluru/Barrier Reef/12 Apostles, etc.; excursion (nature walk); Gen 1:27–28; psalms express creation's praise; God's presence in creation; ecological concern as act of worship; creation myths, including the Dreamtime.
	4	Christmas (or Easter)	What is the real meaning of Christmas/ Easter?	Traditions associated with Christmas; creation of advent calendar including OT prophecies/story of Jesus' birth; what does 'incarnation' mean? Why is it special that God became one of us? Significance of birth of a king in a manger; ultimate gift; Yeshua = he saves; dramatisation or other reflection on Advent.
	5	Prayer	Why do Christians pray?	How do conversations affect friendships; modes of prayer (contemplative, praise, thanks, petition); prayer in other religions; the Lord's prayer (Mt 6:9–13); practicing stillness.
	6	Sacraments and seasons	How are the two main sacraments practised in different churches?	Definition; two main sacraments: communion and baptism; meaning and purpose of each; biblical perspectives (Acts 8:26–40, 1 Cor 11:23–26); how are these practised? Reflection on experience.

KLD	Year	Unit	Key question (IBL)	Content
	7	Creativity	How can my creative abilities reflect the character of God?	Reflecting God's creative character; how to become more creative; the human capacity for wonder; creativity = making connections; how can making links and connections bless others? Creative projects for assessment; communicating theology through the arts; trip/event to art exhibit or performance.
	8	The Uniting Church	What unites the Uniting Church in Australia?	Process leading to the church's birthday on 22/6/1977; explore core values (e.g. reconciliation); significance of the Uniting Church emblem; distinctive ethos (reconciliation, progressive).
	9	Conversation with God	What happens when people pray?	What ways does God use to speak with us? (Bible/prayer/creation/prophecy/dreams/sermons, etc.) How can we learn to identify his voice? Psalms as Israel's prayer book; how to respond? What kinds of prayer? How to lead others in worship and prayer.
	10	Forgiveness and reconciliation	What is reconciliation and how does it happen?	Christian worldview is shaped by understanding of sin and the centrality of forgiveness; 2 Cor 5:17–21 on the ministry of reconciliation; what family/social/global situations require forgiveness and reconciliation? Matt 18:21–35 on 'how often should I forgive?'; what if I can't forgive? (Christ forgives through us).
	11	Social justice and service	How do acts of service change me?	Human dignity and rights; understanding the needs of the marginalised; opportunities to visit community development projects in collaboration with UnitingWorld; current global politics—how does and how should the church respond to crisis? Write up journal e.g. WonTok conference.
	12	On a mission	What does the world need most?	Cross-cultural mission; the church serves a missional God; the various shapes missional work can take; holistic mission (physical as well as spiritual); liberation theology; how mission work can go wrong; testimonies from short-term missions.

KLD	Year	Unit	Key question (IBL)	Content
Values	Prep	Courage	What makes a person brave?	David and Goliath story (1 Sam 17); what 'giants' do you find scary? 'Encouraging' others means giving them courage; when do you act bravest? Learning to pray when scared and being brave for others.
	1	Fruit of the Spirit	Am I growing the fruit of the Spirit?	What kind of person does God want you to be? How does he help you be that person? Gal 5:22–23; why are they called 'fruit' of the Spirit?; which of these do you want more of?
	2	Gratitude	What do you have to be thankful for?	What makes a good gift? Biblical perspectives on gratitude and thanksgiving; what do you have to be thankful for?; how does an 'attitude of gratitude' make a difference? Act of service: write a thank you card to someone.
	3	Choices	Do my choices make much of a difference?	Integrity; power of speech; how choices impact our friends and families; emotions and actions; good and bad consequences; how do we choose well?
	4	Trust	Who should I trust?	Trusting others; how lies affect relationships; the boy who cried wolf; what does trusting God look like?
	5	Family	What makes my family special?	What kinds of families are there? Cultural differences; what's good and what's difficult about being part of a family; scriptural teaching on family.
	6	Unity and diversity	What's so good about diversity?	Value of working together (teamwork); what unites groups of people? Rom 12:4–5 one body, different members; what divides groups of people? Working in teams with different ideas.
	7	Character	How is Christian character formed?	Questions of identity; do people 'find' themselves or choose a path? Who are you becoming? Communal responsibility; whose character do you respect? Habits for personal formation; Rom 5:3–4.

KLD	Year	Unit	Key question (IBL)	Content
	8	Tolerance and prejudice	Why are people prejudiced, and what difference does it make?	Define prejudice and discrimination; forms of prejudice; impacts of bullying; stories and testimonies. Opportunity for visiting organisations/special school assembly; Prov 13:20 on the company we keep; good Samaritan: who is my neighbour? (Lk 10:25–37); Uniting Church emphasis on inclusive spirit of Christ.
	9	Christians in society	Conduct a research project on an Australian Christian who has had a positive impact on society.	Australian society as historically multi-ethnic and multi-faith; significant Christians in politics/art/sport/business; what makes a positive witness? How religion is portrayed by media in news, film, books, social media, etc.; impact of technology on faith; how did Paul address philosophers of his day in Acts 17?
	10	Relational choices and habits	How can I keep my relationships healthy?	Impact of technology and social media on attitudes to sex and relationships; what habits do to you (TED talks on the brain); addictive habits (pornography/social media/drugs/smoking/celebrity culture); biblical ideals for wholeness and relationships; reflection on relationships (respect/abuse/breakups).
	11	Christian ethics	How do Christian beliefs affect the ethical decisions of individuals and communities?	How do I know what is right and wrong? Philosophical models for making decisions; biblical perspectives that seem counter-intuitive; are OT laws obsolete? How did Jesus know what was morally right? Case studies: e.g. is it ever ok to lie?
	12	Controversial!	IBL project on a controversial issue that impacts both church and society.	Explore controversial topics: same-sex marriage; abortion; divorce; premarital sex; legalising marijuana; radicalisation of youth; LGBTQI issues; develop debating skills, self-awareness and emotional intelligence; explore the value of critical thinking and making judgments; IBL projects in pairs.

Units

Unit examples

The *Scope and sequence* outlines 52 RE units (one per term from P–12) and offers a general indication of each unit’s content. Units obviously require further development in a format that is appropriate to the class and which addresses the following elements:

- a **unit title**
- a **key question** that is addressed throughout to keep the unit coherent. Key questions may also be used as a catalyst for IBL projects
- relevant **references** from the Bible and Uniting Church documents
- a list of **keywords**, indicating dominant themes to be developed in the unit
- specific **learning outcomes**
- **learning** activities
- forms of **assessment** that are appropriate to the subject and tasks
- **links and resources** for use in the classroom and for homework.

The exemplar unit outlines that follow on pp.33–36 contain each of the elements listed above in bold print, representing a cross-section from P–12 and from the four key learning domains. They include:

Grade 1 **Texts** unit on *Who is Jesus?*

Grade 5 **Worship** unit on *Prayer*

Year 8 **Beliefs** unit on *The existence of God*

Year 11 **Values** unit on *Christian ethics*.

Appendix C (p.61) also contains a blank template in the same format.

The importance of clear learning outcomes in educational contexts has been repeatedly affirmed for decades in teacher training. More recently, the research and constructive proposals of Robert Marzano have been particularly influential.⁹ For this reason, Appendix B (pp.74–76) offers a brief summary of learning outcomes and their potential for impact in the classroom.

⁹ See esp. Robert J. Marzano, *The Art and Science of Teaching: A Comprehensive Framework for Effective Instruction* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2007)

Texts			
Year: 1	Term: 2	Unit: Who is Jesus?	Keywords: Christ (=Messiah), miricals, parables, disciples, virgin birth, crucifixion, resurrection, healing, Christmas, Easter, Son of God, cross
Key question: What does Jesus show us about God?			
Scripture and <i>Basis of Union</i> references: selected gospel texts BoU: 5 (Scripture); 11 (Biblical interpretation)			
Unit description: This unit builds on the Prep Texts unit, ‘What is the Bible?’ by zooming in on the gospels and asking, ‘Who is Jesus, and what does his birth, life, ministry, death and resurrection reveal about God?’ This unit seeks to introduce aspects of Jesus’ life that will developed further throughout the child’s religious education; the central importance of Easter and Christmas for understanding the humanity and divinity of Jesus; the idea of followers and discipleship; the way Jesus taught through parables and worked miracles; and his love for children and insistence that they be allowed to come to him (Mark 10:13–16). Many of these sub-topics can be developed from activities and games that introduce central ideas (e.g. follow the leader, show and tell, storytelling, etc.). This topic invites an assessment for learning task at the beginning of the unit to ascertain what children already know about Jesus from their homes and churches. Each lesson about Jesus also should aim to refer back to the key question for the unit—What does Jesus show us about God?—by stressing that Jesus is God in human flesh (Philippians 2:6–11 in <i>The Message</i>). This unit focusses particularly on the skills of listening, imagining, absorption and making links.			
Learning outcomes: At the end of this unit, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify and outline key reasons why Jesus’ life was unique• explain (in basic terms) the importance of Jesus in Christianity• empathise with Jesus’ disciples in different situations• enact gospel scenes from Jesus’ life.			
Learning activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• reading gospel stories; video clips about Jesus (<i>Veggie Tales</i>, BBC series, etc.)• class games (follow the leader, Simon says, show and tell, etc. with links to gospels).			
Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• retelling and/or dramatising gospel stories• quiz about the life of Jesus.			
Links/resources: Numerous films have been made about Jesus’ life. Phillip Yancey’s <i>The Jesus I Never Knew</i> refers to specific scenes that could be used in class.			

Worship			
Year: 5	Term: 4	Unit: Prayer	Keywords: cosmological, teleological, William Paley, theodicy, prayer, empirical, creation, evolution, big bang theory, benevolent, omnipotent, atheist, agnostic
Key question: Why do Christians pray?			
Scripture and <i>Basis of Union</i> references: Psalm 3, Matt 6:9–13, Luke 11:5–13, etc. <i>BoU</i> : 1 (Way into Union); 18 (People on the Way)			
Unit description: <p>This unit builds on the Grade 4 units ‘Psalms’ and ‘Trust’, both of which introduce different dimensions of prayer/conversation with God. The unit begins by exploring in a broad sense the question of why people pray, and then, via an understanding of different approaches to prayer and meditation from multiple traditions and religions, focusses on Christian approaches to prayer. Different modes of prayer are explored, both conceptually and practically, with opportunities for students to reflect on their experiences. Students are encouraged to explore complex questions relating to prayer from biblical and existential standpoints: Does God always answer prayer? Is sin an obstacle to prayer? Does prayer change God’s mind? What is the significance of the Lord’s prayer, and so on. Throughout the unit, student experiences are taken seriously and where possible used as catalysts for exploring the issues.</p> <p>This unit focusses particularly on skills such as application, empathy and critical reflection.</p>			
Learning outcomes: <p>At the end of this unit, students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• identify and categorise different modes of prayer (meditation, petition, thanksgiving, adoration)• discuss how prayer is important within different religions• construct a prayer based on a biblical model (e.g. a psalm; the Lord’s prayer)• reflect meaningfully on their own experiences of prayer.			
Learning activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• practising stillness and silence; use of candle(s) to focus attention• guest speakers from other traditions or from religious orders that focus heavily on a life of prayer• open discussions; encourage questions that arise from student imagination and experience.			
Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• personal reflection at the end of the unit on the value/meaning of prayer• quiz on biblical passages studied and categories of prayer explored• group projects exploring prayers from specific traditions, e.g. creating posters for the room.			
Links/resources: <p>Famous prayers, such as the prayer of St Francis, are a great resource for discussion and meditation.</p>			

Beliefs			
Year: 8	Term: 1	Unit: The existence of God	Keywords: cosmological, teleological, William Paley, theodicy, prayer, empirical, creation, evolution, big bang theory, benevolent, omnipotent, atheist, agnostic
Key question: Can God’s existence be proven?			
Scripture and <i>Basis of Union</i> references: Genesis 1, 1 Cor 8:5-6 <i>BoU</i> : 1 (Creator God); 11 (Biblical interpretation) 1977 Statement to the Nation			
Unit description: This unit builds on the Grade 6 Beliefs unit, ‘World religions’, but hones in on the Christian conception of a good and powerful creator. Arguments for God’s existence are explained and explored (cosmological and teleological) and Genesis 1 is interpreted alongside the scientific theories of evolution and the big bang. The idea of theodicy is introduced (explaining the co-existence of a good God with evil in the world), and personal experience (answers to prayer, miracles, dreams) is evaluated as another means of proving God’s existence. Theism and atheism are ultimately both affirmed as faith positions. Neither can be proven with objective, empirical evidence; they both require trust. This unit focusses particularly on the skills of research and critical thinking.			
Learning outcomes: At the end of this unit, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">recall the two main arguments for God's existence (cosmological and teleological)define and summarise theodicyexplain how Genesis 1 is compatible with scientific discoveries/theoriescompare and evaluate suggested proofs for the existence or absence of God.			
Learning activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">YouTube videos and TED talks on Christian apologetics and arguments for God's existenceclass debates (teams of three); opportunity for inter-class competitionsinterview/survey people about reasons for their beliefs.			
Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">written test (exam style, covering knowledge base)research project on ‘Proofs for God’ presented orally or as written work/posterclass debates: Does God exist? Teams can prepare to argue one side, or preferably bothessay on selected topics: e.g. ‘Why does God permit suffering?’; ‘Does personal experience prove anything?’			
Links/resources: William Lane Craig and John Lennox are both well-known Christian apologists/authors.			

Values			
Year: 11	Term: 3	Unit: Christian ethics	Keywords: pro-life/pro-choice, euthanasia, sanctity of life, cloning contraception, sexuality cohabitation/ marriage, climate change, fair trade, UnitingWorld, war, pacificism/terrorism, etributive vs restorative justice
Key question: : How do Christian beliefs affect the ethical decisions of individuals and communities?			
Scripture and <i>Basis of Union</i> references: Genesis 1:26–28; Exod 20; Gal 3:28 et al <i>BoU</i> : 1 (Creator God); 9 (Creeds); 17 (Law in church) 1977 Statement to the Nation			
Unit description: This unit builds on the previous year Values unit, ‘Relationship choices and habits’, turning the focus from personal decisions to broader, philosophical ethical models. A number of particular topics are addressed, including abortion, euthanasia, fertility treatments and genetic engineering, sex and drug-related issues, divorce, environmental concerns, global poverty and war-related issues. In each case, both sides of the argument are considered and weighed in terms of personal and social responsibilities (i.e. personal holiness and the greater good). Scriptural texts are considered not simply in terms of what they say on a surface level, but how they have been interpreted by groups representing different views. This unit presents multiple opportunities for in-class debates and for IBL projects that explore both sides of an issue before arriving at a well-argued position. This unit focusses particularly on the skills of memorisation, evaluation and critical thinking.			
Learning outcomes: At the end of this unit, students will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• recall scripture reference relevant to various issues and arguments• identify what particular persons and communities stand to lose or gain in each ethical debate• judge the value of Christian perspectives on these debates• construct arguments in an oral debate or written work for at least two major issues			
Learning activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• current news articles/stories/documentaries• class debates (teams of three); opportunities for independent or group research• close study of scripture (e.g. 10 commandments), creeds (e.g. Westminster Confession, ch. 24) or <i>Basis of Union</i> (e.g. paragraph 17).			
Assessment: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• written test (exam style, covering knowledge base)• research projects on a chosen ethical issue, presented as talks in class with visual aids• opportunity for independent/group research, followed by class debates on a range of issues.			
Links/resources: Case studies from Internet, newspapers or scripture (e.g. Ezra 10).			

The *Scope and sequence* overview is intended to enable teachers to see where units are placed within the larger schema so that each unit may be then prepared accordingly. By way of example, the Year 8 Beliefs unit, ‘The existence of God,’ is broken down into 20 sub-topics that take into account the prior learning of students, their (age-related) capacity for reasoning and debate, and so on. Again, note that each of these are worked examples rather than prescriptive documents.

P-12	Beliefs	Texts	Values	Worship	P-12
P	Where I belong	What is the Bible?	Courage	Songs of praise	P
1	What's in a name?	Who is Jesus?	Fruits of the Spirit	Serving others	1
2	God the giver	Types of text	Gratitude	Trusting God	2
3	Forgiveness	Stories	Choices	Caring for creation	3
4	Integrity	Psalm	Trust	Christmas (or Easter)	4
5	Life cycles	Gospels	Family	Prayer	5
6	World religions	Prophets	Unity and diversity	Sacraments and seasons	6
7	Relationships	Parables	Identity and character	Creativity	7
8	The existence of God	Damascus road (conversion)	Tolerance and prejudice	The Uniting Church	8
9	How to be a Christian	Getting the gospel	Christians in society	Conversation with God	9
10	God as Trinity	Hymns and creeds	Relational choices and habits	Forgiveness and reconciliation	10
11	Spiritual gifts	Jerem (book study)	Christian ethics	Social justice and service	11
12	Discipleship and leadership	John (book study)	Controversial	Mission	12

Beliefs

Year: 8

Term: 1

Unit: The existence of God

Key question: Can God's existence be proven?

Scripture and *Basis of Union* references:
Genesis 1, 1 Cor 8:5-6
BoU: 1 (Creator God); 11 (Biblical interpretation)
1977 Statement to the Nation

Unit description:
This unit builds on the Grade 6 Beliefs unit, 'World religions', but hones in on the Christian conception of a good and powerful creator. Arguments for God's existence are explained and explored (cosmological and teleological) and Genesis 1 is interpreted alongside the scientific theories of evolution and the big bang. The idea of theodicy is introduced (explaining the co-existence of a good God with evil in the world), and personal experience (answers to prayer, miracles, dreams) is evaluated as another means of proving God's existence. Theism and atheism are ultimately both affirmed as faith positions. Neither can be proven with objective, empirical evidence; they both require trust.
This unit focusses particularly on the skills of research and critical thinking.

Learning outcomes:
At the end of this unit, students will be able to:

- recall the two main arguments for God's existence (cosmological and teleological)
- define and summarise theodicy
- explain how Genesis 1 is compatible with scientific discoveries/theories
- compare and evaluate suggested proofs for the existence or absence of God

Learning activities:

- YouTube videos and TED talks on Christian apologetics and arguments for God's existence
- class debates (teams of three); opportunity for inter-class competitions
- interview/survey people about reasons for their beliefs

Assessment:

- written test (exam style, covering knowledge base)
- research project on 'Proofs for God' presented orally or as written work/poster
- class debates: 'Does God exist?' Teams can prepare to argue one side, or preferably both
- essay on selected topics: e.g. 'Why does God permit suffering?'; 'Does personal experience prove anything?'

Links/resources:
William Lane Craig and John Lennox are both well-known Christian apologetists/authors.

Outline for Year 8 Beliefs unit: *The existence of God*
20 sub-topics (two periods/week x 10 weeks)

1. General introduction to finding out what others believe, in-class games related to this theme. Homework task: interview family/friends with five open-ended questions about their beliefs about God.

2. If you could ask God anything, what would you ask? What do you think his answer would be? What makes a good question? (Explore open/closed questions.) Ask your question to others and record answers.
3. What reasons do people have for believing/not believing? (Empathy exercise.) If you had to sum up God's nature in a single word, what word would you use? Ask others for their word; discuss perspectives.
4. Explore different views of God; using text, fill out the table with two core beliefs about God from each world religion (Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Sikhism, Buddhism, Hinduism); anything surprising?
5. 'Because' game (link phrases with 'because'); teach cosmological argument (first cause); explain cause and effect, using own examples (dominoes, wind, etc.); any problems with this argument?
6. Make list of facts about image of a watch from looking at it; teach teleological argument (order comes from designer); any problems with this argument? Which is better (cosmo- or teleo-), in your view?
7. Revision: summarise the two arguments on a page, then peer assess; how could your partner improve their communication? What do you need to target in order to improve your answer?
8. Question of theodicy: if God is powerful and loving, why does evil exist? Reflect on an event (e.g. Port Arthur); why did God allow it? List moral/natural evils; which poses a problem for God's existence?
9. Why might God allow suffering/evil to exist in the world? Write your own answer and consider historical answers (textbook resource); discuss your findings with partner and share your view so far.
10. Mid-term test on the three arguments; create mind-maps for revision, including keywords and images; write up answer to 'God does not exist. Discuss'; treat both sides of the question with counter-arguments.
11. 'But' game (rebut the last person's sentence, beginning with 'but ...'); write your own theodicy: 'Perhaps God allows evil to exist because ...'; review where you stand on the belief spectrum.
12. Case study: Copernicus was scientist and religious man; his scientific discovery 'threatened' religious views. Do we have to choose science or religion? Why/why not?
13. Case study: Galileo's dilemma; Bible says earth is 'fixed' or 'established' (e.g. 1 Chr 16:30, Ps 93:1, 96:10, 104:5; Ecc 1:5) but such texts need to be interpreted appropriately. Galileo said the Bible teaches us 'how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go'. Was he right?

14. Revision starter on Copernicus and Galileo; what kind of evidence supports religious ideas (e.g. experience, logic, the Bible)? What supports scientific theories (e.g. repeatable observations, can faith and reason co-exist)?
15. What is a miracle? (defies natural laws and glorifies God); consider four gospel miracles and come up with alternative, scientific explanations (critical thinking); how does the Bible respond to such objections?
16. Understanding Genesis 1 (part i); importance of genre for understanding/interpreting text (e.g. poetry, history; grocery list); what literary form is Gen 1? Highlight problems with Gen 1 if read as scientific account; why do we read it as a scientific account? How does the creation myth relate?
17. Understanding Genesis 1 (part ii); what are creation myths? Compare with Aboriginal Dreamtime and other cultures' creation myths; what is purpose/message of Gen 1 if not a scientific document?
18. Big bang theory in a nutshell (draw from science/other learning); can one believe in both the big bang theory and the Bible? Explain; write a conversation between a theist and an atheist about how the world came into being.
19. Preparation for assessment; revision of major arguments throughout the term; class debates on creation arguments and existence of God arguments; opportunities for students to reflect on their own personal views.
20. Final written assessment: 'It is impossible to be a Christian and believe in science. Do you agree? Show both points of view.'



The Wesleyan quadrilateral

As students develop higher level cognitive abilities (especially in Years 10–12) and gain competence in critical thinking, it is equally important that their capacity to tolerate different and opposing views also develops. A sharp mind can soon become intolerable if no hospitality is shown to other points of view. It is therefore important that maturing students are equipped with a framework for thinking critically through issues, and perhaps more importantly, through differences of opinion.

The Wesleyan quadrilateral is a four-fold schema for determining Christian doctrine that was attributed to John Wesley.¹⁰ It consists of four distinct sources of authority that Wesley used to inform theological judgments. As *The Book of Discipline* affirms, ‘Wesley believed that the living core of the Christian faith was revealed in Scripture, illumined by tradition, vivified in personal experience, and confirmed by reason.’¹¹ Within this formulation, scripture is seen as having primacy over the other three sources (though hermeneutical perspectives differ among Wesleyan theologians).

The Wesleyan quadrilateral has itself been the subject of much writing, but its real value for our context is that it offers a framework for students to engage in theological conversation. Albert Outler, who coined the phrase ‘Wesleyan quadrilateral’, writes that ‘Wesley’s complex way of theologising has the ecumenical advantage of making fruitful linkages with other doctrinal traditions without threatening to supplant any of them ...’¹² In other words, the rigorous application of these four guidelines can not only help students work out what they themselves believe, but also facilitate open-minded discussion and fruitful debate with peers who see things differently.

In connection with this, the *Basis of Union* also stresses the importance of grappling with scripture alongside contemporary patterns of thought for the sake of the gospel:

In particular the Uniting Church enters into the inheritance of literary, historical and scientific enquiry which has characterised recent centuries, and gives thanks for the knowledge of God’s ways with humanity which are open to an informed faith. The Uniting Church lives within a world-wide fellowship of Churches in which it will learn to sharpen its understanding of the will and purpose of God by contact with contemporary thought.

Basis of Union (para 11)

¹⁰ See Albert C. Outler, ‘The Wesleyan Quadrilateral in Wesley’ in *Wesleyan Theological Journal* 20/1 (1985); David W. Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book house, 1989), pp. 1–19

¹¹ *The Book of Discipline of the United Methodist Church* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1992), p. 68.

¹² Outler, ‘The Wesleyan Quadrilateral’, p. 17.

1. Scripture

The priority of scriptural authority in Wesley’s theological schema is appropriate, although the question of how one interprets scripture then becomes the critical issue—and one that is far less straightforward. It is for this reason that the proposed *Scope and sequence* presents students annually with opportunities to read scripture and explore some of the ways it has been understood. As the *RE framework* notes, many of these skills are similar to those learned and applied in the study of English literature. They include historical awareness, questions of authorial intent, discernment of literary form (genre) and other such matters.

2. Tradition

The notion that one ought simply to ‘read the Bible and do what it says’ is a rather unsophisticated one because of its disregard for the fact that Bible readers nearly always belong to one tradition or another. Traditions are adopted patterns of thought and behaviour that shape how we understand scripture, how we ‘do church’, and what life is ultimately all about. Students do well to understand that alternative views on a given topic often simply reflect the emphases of different traditions, each of which is legitimate and grounded in its own nuanced journey of faith.

3. Experience

Second to scripture, personal experience of God is arguably the most powerful authority for demonstrating the truth of one’s faith claims. In our postmodern (i.e. fragmented and pluralistic) context, the ‘so what?’ question is in many ways the most pressing. This is especially so in the latter years of secondary school, where students need to understand what actual difference faith claims make in real life. Wesley stressed the importance of a genuine conversion experience in order that a person may really grasp the theological—or theoretical—promise of the gospel as an ‘insider’. Similarly, in an apologetic context, personal testimony is often the most powerful witness to the reality of Jesus. (Very few people become Christians on the strength of rational arguments alone.) Students working through matters of Christian doctrine will always be impacted by stories of personal testimony and transformation as well as by rational argument—perhaps even more so.

4. Reason

While Wesley stated that reason cannot produce faith, he also insisted that without it we cannot understand the Bible’s teaching. In our age, where science and empirical evidence are highly regarded, the importance of reason hardly needs to be stated. It comes naturally to students to ask critical questions about whether a doctrine ‘makes sense’ or is supported by sufficient evidence. But at the same time, in a postmodern context that is characterised by skepticism and subjectivism, students may well challenge the ideal of objective truth and be more inclined to understand that notions

of truth and identity are often interlinked with a sense of belonging (i.e. community). Moreover, religious education ought to provide opportunities for students to consider the validity of mystery alongside reason as they seek to establish what they believe.

Finally, it is worth noting that the key learning domains and the corresponding learning verbs which have been utilised for the *RE framework*, the *Scope and sequence*, and the *Service learning* guide complement the Wesleyan quadrilateral in important ways, and this is something of which teachers can take full advantage (see the diagram below).

In the teaching of these four key domains in Years 10–12, where critical thinking is stressed in almost every lesson, the Wesleyan quadrilateral will provide a helpful reference point for exploring these four sources of authority or ways of knowing. In the Year 11 and 12 **Values** units *Christian Ethics* and *Controversial!* students will have plenty of opportunities to evaluate differences of opinion by referring to scriptural interpretation, tradition(s), reasonable argument, and personal experience even whilst sustaining an open mind towards those who hold different views.





Part C: Service learning

Service learning

In a Uniting Church context, religious education is both an academic subject and an exercise in faith formation (see p.7). Students are not only expected to grapple with the complexities of religious education as an academic subject in accordance with the *Scope and sequence*, but also to engage in activities and events that foster self-understanding and spiritual development. It is intended that this *Service learning* guide provides balance to the *Scope and sequence* by accenting Christian formation and providing a strategy towards that end. Neither emphasis is intended to outweigh the other; rather, it is fully intended that the *Scope and sequence* and *Service learning* be utilised in conjunction with one another. (See, for instance, the information on pp.56–61, which suggests a number of co-curricular links between the academic curriculum and service learning opportunities.)

Purpose

This guide is intended for use alongside the *Scope and sequence*. Its purpose is to facilitate meaningful coordination of educational goals with relevant service opportunities. Together the two documents may be used in conjunction with one another to ensure that:

- a. Uniting Church schools offer holistic learning opportunities to their students, including social action in particular
- b. positive relationships are developed and sustained between schools and agencies.

Australian schools have long been involved in acts of community service that have obvious positive repercussions for local communities. Such acts of service also serve a range of educational purposes for the student. It is expected that students who participate in these service learning opportunities will gain:

- a. a greater sense of empathy for underprivileged and marginalised members of the community
- b. increased awareness of social issues that may normally remain beyond their purview
- c. a sense of empowerment and joy that comes from self-giving
- d. a more comprehensive grasp of what it means to be a responsible Australian citizen.

A Uniting Church theology of service

What do we mean when we talk about spiritual formation or faith formation? There are literally hundreds of books on the subject and almost as many ways of framing the question. One way to answer this question is by making a distinction between teaching strategies that aim primarily to inform, and service learning which seeks to transform.

Christian formation is a developmental process, and what is ultimately at stake in the journey from infancy to maturity is the ability to love well. The apostle Paul famously makes this point.

Love is patient; love is kind; love is not envious or boastful or arrogant. It does not insist on its own way; it is not irritable or resentful; it does not rejoice in wrongdoing, but rejoices in the truth.

(1 Cor 13:4–6)

Paul's words sound idyllic (which is perhaps why this text is often read at weddings), but the reality is that it is difficult to love others well where there is an absence of godly character. And from a Christian vantage point, opportunities to be patient with others who see things differently or to forgive others who hurt us, are lessons in godliness—and lessons that school life offers on a regular basis. (Paul's letter to Corinth suggests that churches are also a great context for practising patience and forgiveness!) Christian maturity is, to put it simply, about learning to love, and Paul highlights the importance of development or growth:

When I was a child, I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways.

(1 Cor 13:11)

Brothers and sisters, I could not address you as people who live by the Spirit but as people who are still worldly—mere infants in Christ. I gave you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet ready for it. Indeed, you are still not ready. You are still worldly. For since there is jealousy and quarreling among you, are you not worldly? Are you not acting like mere humans?

(1 Cor 3:1–3)

But the point here is not that we should be proud of the fact that we will one day 'arrive' at maturity. On the contrary, Paul's point is that since we 'know only in part' (1 Cor 3:2), we can afford to hold our opinions lightly, with a degree of humility—perhaps even with a sense of humour! After all, whatever new knowledge, technological advancement and theological insight a student gains during school years, Paul reminds us that at the end of the day what really matters is our capacity to love others.

To put it differently, Christian faith that is not enacted is no faith at all. By itself, without action, faith is dead, as James says so bluntly: 'So faith by itself, if it has no works, is dead' (Jas 2:17). Christian formation therefore requires what James calls 'deeds' or 'doing' (Jas 2:18). The path to maturity—from milk to meat—is not one of giving intellectual assent to increasingly complex Christian ideas but one of action. The theological rationale for service learning is thus as weighty as that which undergirds the *Scope and sequence*. For it is in acts of service that students often recognise their God-given gifts and abilities, and in acts of self-giving that they themselves become conduits of the divine love and grace that are often talked about in religious education, chapel assemblies and church.

Since students learn in different ways (to an extent) some will make significant advances in the classroom while others will have their 'aha!' moments in immersive contexts. This is to be expected, though it is hoped that the right balance will provide a holistic religious education that impacts positively on both student knowledge and behaviour.

Finally, it should be noted that the Uniting Church in Australia has historically placed a particular accent on ministries of reconciliation. As the very name of the denomination indicates, Uniting churches, schools and other institutions are wholeheartedly committed to initiatives that reflect God's missional desire for unity and reconciliation, as expressed in 2 Corinthians 5 and in the *Basis of Union*:

So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

2 Cor 5:17-21 (NRSV)

'God in Christ has given to all people in the Church the Holy Spirit as a pledge and foretaste of that coming reconciliation and renewal which is the end in view for the whole creation. The Church's call is to serve that end: to be a fellowship of reconciliation, a body within which the diverse gifts of its members are used for the building up of the whole, an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself.'

Basis of Union (para 3)

The Uniting Church was born out of a desire to embody the profound unity that is made possible by the cross, and as the Statement to the Nation (1977) declares, 'this unity is a sign of the reconciliation we seek for the whole human race'. The integration of religious education with service learning thus reflects the church's core commitment to uniting people in Christ through personal renewal and communal reconciliation. Moreover, the mission of the Uniting Church to bring renewal where life is diminishing is only achieved 'through human witness in word and action, and in the power of the Holy Spirit' (*Basis of Union*, para 4).

Service learning then, is not simply an 'added extra' or 'a good use of time'. Rather, initiatives to build bridges through acts of service and to bring God's love into the lives of others are absolutely central to a Christian vision of holistic education. It is not just that 'we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us,' but also—strikingly—that in Christ we become the righteousness of God (2 Cor 5:21)! Through service learning, students fulfil this biblical mandate by embodying God's righteous response to human need in a range of situations.

Uniting Church agencies operating in Queensland

The Uniting Church is firmly rooted in traditions characterised by social action (i.e. Methodist, Presbyterian and Congregationalist), so it follows that some of the largest community service agencies in Australia are run under the aegis of the church. Listed are a number of major agencies of the Uniting Church. They make excellent collaborative Partners for Uniting Church schools. This is followed by a list of Queensland Synod projects and church-related partnerships and projects.



Frontier Services

frontierservices.org

Frontier Services is a charity and national agency of the Uniting Church in Australia that grew out of the pioneering work begun in 1912 by the Rev John Flynn—the man on the \$20 note.

Frontier Services works on behalf of people living in remote areas which covers 85 per cent of Australia. Its primary purpose is to raise funds to support the Uniting Church through its network of patrol ministers in their pastoral work with Indigenous communities, isolated properties, mining sites and other remotely located communities.

Frontier Services also provides drought relief and other forms of practical community support through its volunteer assistance program, Outback Links.

There are a number of ways school groups can get involved including hosting a Great Outback BBQ to raise money for the work of Frontier Services.



UnitingCare Queensland

unitingcareqld.com.au

UnitingCare Queensland provides health and community services to thousands of people every day of the year through its service streams: UnitingCare Community, UnitingCare Health, Blue Care and ARRCs (Australian Regional and Remote Community Services).

As the health and community service provider of the Uniting Church, UnitingCare Queensland has supported Queensland communities for over 100 years. Their 16,000 staff and 9000 volunteers care for and support people from all walks of life, including older people, people with a disability, children, families and Indigenous people.

There are many volunteering and fundraising opportunities across the UnitingCare Queensland network. Look at each of their websites to find current fundraising campaigns or volunteering opportunities. You could also speak with UnitingCare Queensland Director of Mission, Bruce Moore, or Associate Director of Mission, Rev Peter Armstrong, for more information.

UnitingCare Queensland is Part of the UnitingCare Australia network, one of the largest providers of community services in Australia.

Blue Care

bluecare.org.au

Blue Care is one of Australia's leading not-for-profit service providers of residential aged care, community care and retirement living, operating in more than 260 centres in 80 communities across Queensland and northern New South Wales. From humble beginnings at West End Methodist Mission (now Uniting Church), Brisbane in 1953, Blue Care now offers services ranging from specialised nursing care through to social support and pastoral care with over 10,000 staff and volunteers.

Some of the ways school groups can get involved include visiting a Blue Care retirement village, sponsoring a Blue Care vehicle or donating goods and raising funds for local care homes.

For more information visit bluecare.org.au/Get-Involved



UnitingCare Community

uccommunity.org.au

UnitingCare Community supports vulnerable people and communities that are disadvantaged in some way: supporting people with a disability to lead meaningful lives, working with children and families to keep them safe and supporting people who are in crisis.

Its range of services touch many lives, providing Lifeline services such as 24-hour telephone crisis support 13 11 14 suicide intervention and community recovery, as well as family relationships and mediation, counselling, domestic violence support, disability support, out-of-home care and other intensive family support. Every year UnitingCare Community's 6000 volunteers contribute almost 700,000 hours of time to the organisation—equivalent to more than \$16.7 million dollars in wages. Find out more at uccommunity.org.au/get-involved.



UnitingCare Health

unitingcarehealth.com.au

UnitingCare Health is one of the largest not-for-profit private hospital groups in Queensland and provides professional and compassionate care to more than 109,000 patients each year through its hospitals: The Wesley and St Andrew's War Memorial Hospitals in Brisbane, The Sunshine Coast Private Hospital in Buderim and St Stephen's Hospital in Hervey Bay.

Over 500 people volunteer their time and skills to help these hospitals support patients, their families and staff. For more information on volunteering opportunities in UnitingCare Health hospitals visit unitingcarehealth.com.au/community/volunteer.





ARRCS

arrcs.org.au

Australian Regional and Remote Community Services (ARRCS) was established in 2014 and provides aged care and community services in the Northern Territory. The services were previously managed by Frontier Services.

ARRCS operates eight residential care facilities and 11 community care programs in Darwin, Alice Springs, Tennant Creek, Katherine, Mutitjulu and Docker River. Some of the services are specifically for Indigenous Australians.



UnitingJustice

unitingjustice.org.au

UnitingJustice Australia is the national justice unit of the Uniting Church in Australia, carrying out its commitment to working toward a just and peaceful world. The Uniting Church Assembly's 1977 Statement to the Nation is foundational for much of the social activism of UnitingJustice, which has its Particular impact through research and advocacy to address policy in the areas of environmental sustainability and climate change, economic justice, the human rights of refugees and people seeking asylum, justice for Indigenous Australians and human rights.

UnitingJustice contributes to setting the agenda for the church's reflection and engagement with issues of national and international significance. In practical terms UnitingJustice takes seriously the lived example of Jesus, whose teachings about the identity of one's neighbour and love for one's enemies were radically inclusive. The UnitingJustice website provides educational resources and advocacy briefs that may be used by religious education classes and/or school action groups for raising awareness and fundraising.

In the Queensland Synod, the social responsibility section of our website ucaqld.com.au identifies key areas of concern and what the Uniting Church has said or is doing in these areas.



UnitingWorld

unitingworld.org.au

The catch-cry of UnitingWorld is to 'connect communities for life'. This occurs in overseas contexts through initiatives in education, health and social/economic empowerment. Australian churches are paired with churches in Asia, Africa and the Pacific that require leadership training, theological education and community service. This not only brings hope and courage to churches overseas, but also builds greater understanding and empathy within local churches. The core value of Partnership thereby feeds into other UnitingWorld values such as human rights, inclusion and integrity.

The Schools Engagement Kit (a downloadable pdf) is a 20-page booklet designed to help school groups think creatively about how they might collaborate with UnitingWorld to take action against global poverty. The e-book contains a number of practical

suggestions and is a storehouse of interesting information that can be used in religious education lessons. By working with schools, UnitingWorld seeks to educate young people about international development, cultivate lasting relationships between host communities and visiting groups, create opportunities for meaningful fundraising and much more.

UnitingWorld can work with a school to organise a 7–12 day encounter with a Partner church overseas. These InSolidarity visits provide unforgettable cross-cultural experiences that expose students firsthand to issues of poverty and injustice. Such trips are designed to suit the educational and missional needs of each Particular group and a wide range of destinations and projects are possible.

UnitingWorld collaborates with the Anglican Board of Mission to host the One World WonTok Poverty and Development Youth Conference held annually in each of Australia's major cities and on the Gold Coast. The conference provides students with interactive learning opportunities and teaching and training on leadership and social justice.

Wesley Mission Queensland

wmq.org.au

Wesley Mission Queensland (WMQ) grew out of the Albert Street Uniting Church in Brisbane where it began in 1907. As a leading not-for-profit community service organisation, WMQ supports more than 100,000 people in need every year through aged care, family and youth support, disability and mental health care, hardship and emergency relief and sign language and interpreting services.

WMQ works to Participate in the mission of God towards reconciliation, transformation, justice and hope for all people.

In 2016 WMQ and the Hummingbird House Foundation opened Hummingbird House, Queensland's only children's hospice, providing short stay breaks, family support, creative therapies and care for children with a life-limiting condition, and their families.

Wesley Mission Queensland's child care services include centre-based, Family Day Care, In-home Care and nanny services across South East Queensland. WMQ runs free after school and school holiday programs on the Gold Coast for youth between the ages of 12 and 17 years.

There are plenty of possibilities for school groups wishing to serve their local communities and volunteer with WMQ, including serving meals at the weekly Community Meal, spending time with children at the day care centres, reading, singing and playing games with aged care residents or Participating in a fun run.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of the agencies with which a Uniting Church school can collaborate. As the Reports from Schools and Colleges (2016) indicates, some schools have established links with agencies and it is encouraged that these continue.¹³ There are also a number of statewide projects instigated by the Queensland Synod; some of these are ongoing while others are run on an ad hoc basis. Additional appeals and projects are run nationally by the Assembly.



¹³ The Reports from Schools and Colleges (2016) is available at: schoolscommission.ucaqld.com.au



Yurora

yurora.com

Yuróra has its roots in the National Christian Youth Convention (NCYC) which began in 1955. It is a five-day youth event held by the Uniting Church in Australia every two to three years.

Hundreds of youth aged between 16 and 25 and adult volunteers gather to experience Christian community. It was most recently held in New South Wales in January 2017 and has previously rotated around Australia's capital cities and regional areas.

Yuróra also has a strong focus on the Participation of and relationship between the First Peoples of Australia and the Second Peoples of Australia, multiculturalism, the arts and celebration.



Queensland Synod

The Queensland Synod office has various appeals running at any given time that touch on important environmental and social concerns.

Uniting Church Foundation

missionpossible.ucaqld.com.au

The Uniting Church Foundation has a vision to inspire and mobilise the Uniting Church community in Queensland to make more mission possible. To facilitate this, the Queensland Synod has four key mission areas within which mission projects and fundraising campaigns are delivered. These mission areas are Faith and Families, Indigenous Education, People in Crisis, and Tomorrow's Church. Here are some examples of the types of fundraising projects within these mission areas:

- The \$10 for 10 Appeal in the mission area of Indigenous Education funded Indigenous learning pathways for students in Uniting Church schools across Queensland, to provide assistance with vocational training and/or leadership courses and study resources, with the objective of facilitating their future employment. Grants have been provided by the Foundation to nominated Indigenous students since 2014.
- The Reach Out Appeal in the mission area of People in Crisis funds emergency assistance to displaced individuals and families seeking political asylum in Queensland. Funding includes assistance with emergency medical expenses, food, travel, crisis counselling and personal expenses. Grants have been provided by the Foundation to asylum seekers since 2015.
- The Easter Madness Appeal in the mission area of Faith and Families funds accommodation and registration costs for young people across regional, rural and remote Queensland to enable them to attend a four-day faith and leadership camp, entitled Easter Madness, held during Easter each year. Grants have been provided by the Foundation to eligible young candidates since the camp's inception in 2016.

For more information please visit missionpossible.ucaqld.com.au

Easter Madness

eastermadness.com.au

Easter Madness is a state-wide Uniting Church camp for high schoolers (Grades 7 to 12) and young adults (aged up to 25 years). It is run by a committee of Uniting Church ministers, youth leaders and youth workers who specialise in ministry with young people. Easter Madness usually takes place on the Sunshine Coast and is held over a weekend in the Easter school holidays. Over 100 young people from across the state come together to worship, be creative, learn more about God and faith in a modern context and get to know other young people.

This camp is an extension of a previously run Uniting Church youth camp, Summer Madness, and was run in 2008, 2010 and then annually from 2012. Summer Madness was initiated by the then Synod Youth and Children's Ministry Unit (YACMU).



Local church projects

A number of Uniting Church schools have established links with their local churches. These are bilateral relationships that hold a lot of promise for everyone involved, as the *Reports from Schools and Colleges (2016)*¹⁴ shows. By way of example, Calvary Christian College's close relationship with Logan Uniting Church has led to links between church initiatives and service learning opportunities in these areas:

- closely aligned vision and mission statements for both church and school
- regular opportunities for the school's chapel band to lead worship at Logan
- certain clubs (e.g. the Praise Connect Club) intentionally links youth from the school and the church
- the church's holiday program is supported and attended by students at Calvary
- a college chaplain has been employed to facilitate a closer link between the school and the church
- PD sessions are run for new school staff, familiarising them with the Uniting Church's vision and mission.

¹⁴ The Reports from Schools and Colleges (2016) is available at: schoolscommission.ucaqld.com.au

Co-curricular links between the *Scope and sequence* and *Service learning*

The table overleaf suggests further possibilities for linkage between units in the *Scope and sequence* and co-curricular events/activities geared towards faith formation. (See the 'Whole school planning' section in the *Scope and sequence* for our preference for the term 'co-curricular' rather than 'extra-curricular'.) The suggestions are indicative rather than exhaustive, and only one unit per year group is listed by way of example. As the previous section shows, many schools already have strong links with churches and charitable agencies, and it is appropriate that these relationships will influence decisions regarding co-curricular activities.

Following year level and unit title, the table on pp.64–67 includes the following headings:

- **Chapel service:** some suggested topics and questions to be addressed as a school or year group.
- **Service/mission:** a corporate activity that involves coming together for a shared, meaningful experience.
- **Fundraising:** age-appropriate ideas for fundraising as a class or year group.
- **Child sponsorship:** different approaches to the responsibility of providing for another child's physical and educational needs.
- **Camping:** activities associated with 'the great outdoors' involving new responsibilities, appreciation of God's creation, team-building and so on.
- **Leadership:** age-appropriate opportunities to mature in ways that have a positive influence on others.



Whole school approach to the incorporation of religious education and service learning

P-12	Unit	Chapel service	Service/mission
P	Where I belong	What makes a strong/good friendship?	Children first start to learn about how to take care of their own environment by cleaning up after themselves and helping others in doing tasks for them.
1	Serving others	What's so good about serving others? Jesus' washing of the disciples' feet. Jn 13; Mk 10:45	Visit a nursing home e.g. Blue Care. Students can bring an item they have made or cooked as a gift, or they can perform a song or drama.
2	God the giver	The apostle Paul remembers Jesus saying, 'it is more blessed to give than receive'. Acts 20:35	
3	Caring for creation	God made us to 'rule the world!' But how? Gen 1:26-28	Engage with a local environmental organisation.
4	Christmas/Easter	Have children run/contribute to chapel service for parents and families.	Prepare class presentation of drama or song at local community Christmas service.
5	Life cycles	Celebrate the birth of a new sibling/cousin/family friend with photos/video/stories.	Put together a baby pack for the family. Invite family to visit.
6	World religions	What makes Christianity different? Jn 10:30	Visit Sikh gurdwara or Jewish synagogue. Discuss differences to a Christian church.

Fundraising	Child sponsorship	Camping	Leadership
Introduce notion of raising funds for a charity e.g. students fill a small container over the term and then combine donations.	Each class from Prep to Year 12 could adopt a child of their own age and sponsor them for the entirety of their own school education. Children would journey with the child.	Children can design family trees and mark off who they have pictures of, know, have visited. Students recount stories told to them by relatives about their family. Family should be visited or invited over.	Students should begin with a form of self-leadership or self-management. This includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • clothing • hygiene • packing bag • shoe laces, etc
Fundraising incorporates an act of service/giving (e.g. weeding someone's garden or washing their car for a donation).	Each section of the school to choose a developing country from a particular region: lower primary–Africa; upper primary–Asia; junior secondary–South America; and senior school–the Middle East.	Preschool and Grade 1 notion of 'camping' at grandparents' house, where tasks and challenges revolve around doing small jobs that look to the needs of others.	Being part of a family should see the child contribute by doing household chores. There should be a class roster of responsibilities.
Students run a car boot sale or secondhand toy sale. Profits are given to support the sponsor child or a particular project.	Students learn of children's needs in different geographic locations, creating opportunities for discussion, fundraising and so on.	Stay one night at school or run a day camp. Students bring different elements needed to make 'the camp' a success.	Students work with family to sort clothes and items that can be given to an op shop. Students go with parents to donate items and then discuss the process with class.
Raise funds for a charity that addresses environmental issues (consult Uniting Green or UnitingJustice)		Short-stay local camp in an area of natural beauty. Create appropriate artworks.	Class takes responsibility for school kitchen garden by weeding, watering and tending. Alternatively care for a class pet.
Support local initiatives for people in need.		The Queensland Synod runs an annual Easter Madness camp over the holidays.	Students bring food items from home for class hampers to give to people in need.
Jeans for Genes Day sponsorship.		Offer to assist at a local community event.	Library and computer club leadership
Raise funds for the persecuted church.			Set up a school ISCF group. School and class captain roles to be established. Leaders mentored.

P-12	Unit	Chapel service	Service/mission
7	Relation-ships	School community; anti-bullying and standing up for peers; who is my neighbour? Lk 10:30-37	Students participate in Kids Wise or Mind Matters program.
8	Tolerance and prejudice	Addressing the sources of prejudice; student testimonies Gal 3:28	Volunteer to work at a soup kitchen or in an op-shop.
9	Christians in society	Presentation on a prominent Christian who has had a positive impact on society; invite sports personality to give testimony.	Schools runs its own Queenslander of the Year awards recognising outstanding Christian contributors.
10	Forgive-ness and reconcil-iation	What does it mean that God is reconciling the world to Himself through us? 1 Cor 5:20	Short-term mission trip to an Indigenous community or to Shalom College.
11	Social justice and service	When God hates worship. (Did God really say that?) Isa 1:11-17	Students work with UnitingWorld to plan an InSolidarity trip, or with Assembly to take part in an About F.A.C.E. cultural exchange with Indigenous people.
12	Mission	Invite speaker from a relevant mission agency.	Students attend an "alternative schoolies" week. Students may commit to a Habitat for Humanity project.

Fundraising	Child sponsorship	Camping	Leadership
Students raise money for purple 'friendship seat' and man it during school breaks.	Each class from Prep to Year 12 could adopt a child of their own age and sponsor them for the entirety of their own school education. Children would journey with the child.	As many students may start at the school at this point, camps should be about team building and extending one's friendship circle.	Run conflict resolution and restorative justice programs. Have playground mediators appointed.
Students participate in the "40-hour famine" or similar initiative.	Each section of the school to choose a developing country from a particular region: lower primary–Africa; upper primary–Asia; junior secondary–South America; and senior school–the Middle East.	Students participate in a program for people living with disabilities or assist in a community education project.	Participate in debating, mooted and public speaking as a school. Begin inter-house competitions.
Students purchase items from the Everything in Common UnitingWorld catalogue instead of gifts.	Students learn of children's needs in different geographic locations, creating opportunities for discussion, fundraising and so on.	Send students on an urban camp in their closest CBD. Students learn about local pioneers, leaders and landmarks.	Set up a school United Nations.
Students may commit to raising funds for or donating to a Uniting Church Foundation appeal in the mission area of Indigenous education.	Students learn of children's needs in different geographic locations, creating opportunities for discussion, fundraising and so on.	'Survivor camp' – students carry all own necessities. As a group they must live, function and support each other.	Duke of Edinburgh*. Students may provide spiritual leadership by running a Youth Alpha Course.
Students approach family and friends to sponsor trip.	Students learn of children's needs in different geographic locations, creating opportunities for discussion, fundraising and so on.	Students attend a study camp. Students challenged to think of a vocation, not just an occupation.	Appoint UnitingWorld student ambassador
Students commit to a year-long project to raise funds for a school house, clinic, library, etc.	Students learn of children's needs in different geographic locations, creating opportunities for discussion, fundraising and so on.	Extended service opportunity in the outback to assist teachers, or another cross-cultural summer mission trip. "Alternative schoolies" week.	Students across senior school prepared to be prefects, heads of houses, school captains etc.

* The Duke of Edinburgh's International Award is available to anyone between the ages of 14 and 25. Bronze is available at 14+, Silver at 15+, and Gold at 16+.

Lifelong learning in a church context

One of the purposes—perhaps even the purpose—of a meaningful education is to prepare students for life beyond the school gates. As the National Education Charter (2002) repeatedly makes clear, preparation for lifelong learning is central to a Uniting Church school education, since education is not understood by the church to be a self-serving enterprise but rather a means of equipping people to become active participants in Australian society.

In many ways, IBL projects serve this purpose by honing students' abilities to ask penetrating questions, problem-solve, collaborate with others, present findings, reflect on their success/failure, and so on. All of these are necessary skills for the workplace and for adult life as active members of a community (see the RE framework). In the same way, Service learning is an excellent catalyst for lifelong learning in that students are presented with opportunities to discover their gifts and talents in hands-on settings that may ultimately lead them down Particular career paths. In addition, many of the skills gained in such settings are transferable to the workplace. Service learning grants work-related experience that can make a real difference when it comes to writing CVs and searching for jobs.

In addition to these practical benefits, service learning prepares students for life beyond school in terms of character formation, by facilitating the formation of educated people, of good character who, upon entering society, leave a trail of blessing in their wake and have significant positive influence. Service learning instills in students a deep sense of purpose, enabling them to reach beyond an occupational choice that will simply earn them money so they can get by, to a process of vocational discernment where gifts, passions, and skills are combined with a sense of calling.

As students remain aware of their multiple capacities in new contexts (see the diagram on p.12), their holistic education raises real possibilities for holistic living that sustains integrity (i.e. wholeness). Obviously, the local church can play a key role in this process as another learning organisation that is also committed to lifelong learning. School-leavers are not suddenly bereft of opportunities to sustain lifelong learning habits that have been established during school years. Rather, as new opportunities are afforded by continuing engagement with the local church, the possibilities for lifelong learning are practically endless since the very purpose of the local church is to edify, equip and send its members out to serve Christ, it makes perfect sense that schools and churches work together towards their shared educational goals.



Appendices

Appendix A

Basis of Union index and related units

The following table indicates which units of the *Scope and sequence* present opportunities for the *Basis of Union* to be referred to and/or discussed in the classroom. Needless to say, this index does not guarantee that the *Basis of Union* will be covered in these units, nor that all of the units listed will lend themselves equally to a discussion. Teachers must take their own initiatives to determine which units will best suit inclusion of the *Basis of Union* in lesson plans.

Basis of Union paragraph	Related units:
1	(P) Where I belong, What is the Bible?, Courage (1) Fruits of the Spirit, Serving others (3) Forgiveness, Choices (4) Integrity (5) Prayer (6) World religions, Unity and diversity (7) Relationships (8) Tolerance and prejudice, The Uniting Church (9) Apologetics (10) God as Trinity, Hymns and creeds, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, Controversial!, Mission.
2	(P) What is the Bible? (1) Serving others (6) World religions, Unity and diversity (8) The Uniting Church (11) Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership.
3	(P) Where I belong, Songs of praise (1) Who is Jesus?, Fruits of the Spirit, Serving others (2) Gratitude (3) Forgiveness, Stories (4) Trust, Christmas (or Easter) (5) Life cycles, Gospels, Family, Prayer (6) World religions, Prophets, Unity and diversity, Sacraments and seasons (7) Relationships, Parables (8) Damascus road (conversion), Tolerance and prejudice, The Uniting Church (9) Apologetics, Getting the gospel, Christians in society (10) God as Trinity, Hymns and creeds, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, John (book study), Mission.
4	(P) Songs of praise (1) Who is Jesus?, Serving others (2) Gratitude (3) Forgiveness, Stories (5) Gospels, Prayer (6) World religions, Sacraments and seasons (7) Parables (8) Damascus road (conversion), Tolerance and prejudice (9) Apologetics, Getting the gospel, Christians in society (10) God as Trinity, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, John (book study), Mission.

Basis of Union paragraph	Related units:
5	(P) What is the Bible?, Songs of praise (1) Who is Jesus?, Fruits of the Spirit (2) Types of text (3) Forgiveness, Stories (4) Psalms (5) Gospels (6) World religions, Prophets, Unity and diversity, Sacraments and seasons (7) Parables, Identity and character (8) The existence of God, Damascus road (conversion), The Uniting Church (9) Apologetics, Getting the gospel, Christians in society (10) God as Trinity, Hymns and creeds, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Jonah (book study), Christian ethics (12) John (book study), Controversial!, Mission.
6	(P) Songs of praise (1) Who is Jesus?, Fruits of the Spirit, Serving others (2) Gratitude (3) Forgiveness, Stories (4) Christmas (or Easter) (5) Gospels, Prayer (6) World religions, Prophets, Sacraments and seasons (7) Parables (8) Damascus road (conversion), Tolerance and prejudice (9) Apologetics, Getting the gospel, Christians in society (10) God as Trinity, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, John (book study), Mission.
7	(P) Where I belong, Courage, Songs of praise (1) Who is Jesus?, Serving others (2) Gratitude (3) Forgiveness, Stories, Choices (4) Integrity, Trust, Christmas (or Easter) (5) Life cycles, Gospels, Family, Prayer (6) World religions, Unity and diversity, Sacraments and seasons (7) Relationships, Parables (8) Damascus road (conversion), Tolerance and prejudice, The Uniting Church (9) Apologetics, Getting the gospel, Christians in society (10) God as Trinity, Hymns and creeds, Relational choices and habits, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, John (book study), Controversial!, Mission.
8	(P) Songs of praise (1) Who is Jesus?, Serving others (2) Gratitude (3) Forgiveness, Stories (4) Christmas (or Easter) (5) Gospels, Prayer (6) World religions, Sacraments and seasons (7) Parables (8) Damascus road (conversion), Tolerance and prejudice (9) Apologetics, Getting the gospel, Christians in society (10) God as Trinity, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, John (book study), Mission.
9	(P) What is the Bible?, Songs of praise (1) Who is Jesus?, Fruits of the Spirit, Serving others (2) God the giver, Types of text, Gratitude, Trusting God (3) Forgiveness, Stories (4) Psalms, Trust, Christmas (or Easter) (5) Gospels, Family, Prayer (6) World religions, Prophets, Unity and diversity, Sacraments and seasons (7) Parables (8) The existence of God, Damascus road (conversion), Tolerance and prejudice, The Uniting Church (9) Apologetics, Getting the gospel, Christians in society (10) God as Trinity, Hymns and creeds, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Jonah (book study), Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) John (book study), Mission.

<i>Basis of Union paragraph</i>	<i>Related units:</i>
10	(P) What is the Bible?, Songs of praise (1) Who is Jesus?, Fruits of the Spirit (2) Types of text (3) Forgiveness, Stories (4) Psalms (5) Gospels (6) World religions, Prophets, Unity and diversity, Sacraments and seasons (7) Parables, Identity and character (8) The existence of God, Damascus road (conversion), The Uniting Church (9) Apologetics, Getting the gospel, Christians in society (10) God as Trinity, Hymns and creeds, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Jonah (book study), Christian ethics (12) John (book study), Controversial!, Mission.
11	P) Songs of praise (1) What's in a name? (2) Types of text (3) Stories (4) Psalms (5) Gospels (6) World religions, Prophets, Unity and diversity, Sacraments and seasons (7) Parables (8) The Uniting Church (9) Apologetics, Getting the gospel, Christians in society (10) God as Trinity, Hymns and creeds (11) Jonah (book study), Christian ethics (12) John (book study), Mission.
12	(P) Where I belong, Courage, Songs of praise (1) Who is Jesus?, Serving others (3) Forgiveness, Choices, Caring for creation (4) Integrity, Trust, Christmas (or Easter) (5) Life cycles, Gospels, Family, Prayer (6) World religions, Prophets, Unity and diversity, Sacraments and seasons (7) Relationships, Creativity (8) Damascus road (conversion), Tolerance and prejudice, The Uniting Church (9) Christians in society, Conversation with God (10) God as Trinity, Hymns and creeds, Relational choices and habits, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Jonah (book study), Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, Mission.
13	(P) Where I belong, Courage, Songs of praise (1) Who is Jesus?, Serving others (3) Forgiveness, Choices, Caring for creation (4) Integrity, Christmas (or Easter) (5) Gospels (6) World religions, Prophets, Unity and diversity (7) Relationships, Creativity (8) Damascus road (conversion), Tolerance and prejudice, The Uniting Church (9) Christians in society, Conversation with God (10) Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Jonah (book study), Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, Controversial!, Mission.
14	(P) Where I belong, Courage, Songs of praise (1) Who is Jesus?, Serving others (3) Forgiveness, Choices, Caring for creation (4) Integrity, Christmas (or Easter) (5) Gospels (6) World religions, Prophets, Unity and diversity (7) Relationships, Creativity (8) Damascus road (conversion), Tolerance and prejudice, The Uniting Church (9) Christians in society, Conversation with God (10) Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Jonah (book study), Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, Controversial!, Mission.

<i>Basis of Union paragraph</i>	<i>Related units:</i>
15	(P) Where I belong, Courage, Songs of praise (1) Who is Jesus?, Serving others (3) Forgiveness, Choices, Caring for creation (4) Integrity, Christmas (or Easter) (5) Gospels (6) World religions, Prophets, Unity and diversity (7) Relationships, Creativity (8) Damascus road (conversion), Tolerance and prejudice, The Uniting Church (9) Apologetics, Christians in society, Conversation with God (10) Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Jonah (book study), Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, Controversial!, Mission.
16	(P) Where I belong, Courage, Songs of praise (1) What's in a name?, Who is Jesus?, Serving others (2) Types of text (3) Forgiveness, Stories, Choices, Caring for creation (4) Integrity, Psalms, Christmas (or Easter) (5) Gospels (6) World religions, Prophets, Unity and diversity (7) Relationships, Parables, Creativity (8) Damascus road (conversion), Tolerance and prejudice, The Uniting Church (9) Apologetics, Getting the gospel, Christians in society, Conversation with God (10) Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Jonah (book study), Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, John (book study), Controversial!, Mission.
17	(P) Where I belong, Songs of praise (1) Serving others (3) Forgiveness, Choices (4) Trust, Christmas (or Easter) (5) Life cycles, Family, Prayer (6) World religions, Unity and diversity, Sacraments and seasons (7) Relationships (8) Tolerance and prejudice, The Uniting Church (10) God as Trinity, Hymns and creeds, Relational choices and habits, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Christian ethics (12) Discipleship and leadership, Mission.
18	(P) Where I belong, What is the Bible?, Songs of praise (1) Serving others (2) Forgiveness, Choices (4) Trust, Christmas (or Easter) (5) Life cycles, Family, Prayer (6) World religions, Unity and diversity, Sacraments and seasons (7) Relationships (8) Tolerance and prejudice, The Uniting Church (10) God as Trinity, Hymns and creeds, Relational choices and habits, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Spiritual gifts, Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, Mission.
Statement to the Nation	(P) Where I belong, What is the Bible?, Courage (1) Serving others (2) God the giver, Trusting God (3) Forgiveness, Choices, Caring for creation (4) Integrity, Psalms (5) Life cycles, Prayer (6) World religions, Prophets, Unity and diversity, Sacraments and seasons (7) Relationships, Parables (8) The existence of God, Tolerance and prejudice, The Uniting Church (9) Apologetics, Christians in society (10) God as Trinity, Relational choices and habits, Forgiveness and reconciliation (11) Christian ethics, Social justice and service (12) Discipleship and leadership, Controversial!, Mission.



Appendix B

Learning outcomes

For decades, research in education has strongly suggested that clear learning outcomes (henceforth LOs) have a direct positive impact on student achievement. This appendix outlines some important considerations concerning the rationale and process for writing effective LOs.

What is a LO?

Learning outcomes state as precisely as possible what a student gains from a learning experience. The ‘outcome’ is what the student can now do to demonstrate his or her learning. An example of a LO is the following: ‘At the end of this unit, students will be able to recognise different literary forms in scripture.’

Why use LOs?

Learning outcomes make learning measurable and are therefore indispensable in education. Using LOs enables teachers and students to be precise about the evidence that is required to demonstrate that learning has taken place. For the same reason, they permit greater precision when writing student progress reports.

How to use LOs?

Learning outcomes are stated from the beginning of a unit so that students know what they are going to learn and how they will know that they have reached that goal. As stated above, the key question is: ‘What can the student now do because of the learning that has taken place?’ Therefore, teachers writing LOs are necessarily precise in their selection of appropriate verbs. It is best to avoid ‘students will be able to understand x’, since learning outcomes seek to clarify exactly how such understanding will be measured.¹⁵ So, instead of ‘students will be able to understand the events preceding Jesus’ crucifixion,’ one might have ‘students will be able to name/discuss/recall the events preceding Jesus’ crucifixion,’ or more comprehensively, ‘students will be able to explain the significance of events preceding Jesus’ crucifixion.’

Rather than broadly stating an educational objective (students are going to learn about ...’), LOs enable students as well as teachers to be precise: ‘students will be able to compare x with y’, or ‘to summarise z in their own words’, or ‘to justify their opinion’ and so on. The LO always includes a learning verb that can be assessed, whether informally or formally—bearing in mind that assessments can be light-hearted and fun!

¹⁵ Strictly speaking, Marzano endorses using understand for declarative goals (in contrast to procedural goals). However, declarative goals are arguably much more effective when alternative verbs such as describe or explain are used.

Marzano on learning outcomes:

The following learning principles for writing LOs are derived from the research of Robert Marzano,¹⁶ whose work takes its cues from Bloom’s taxonomy (1956).¹⁷ Marzano’s hierarchy of cognitive skills is similar to Bloom’s (Marzano has effectively compressed Bloom’s six categories into four and added two metacognitive levels). The main difference with more recent developments in educational theory is that they highlight the importance of engaging students personally and creatively with their work, as this leads to more comprehensive and ingrained learning. The addition of metacognitive levels to Bloom’s taxonomy acknowledges the importance of a student’s ability to be conscious of where they are in any given learning process, and what is required for them to move forward—not just in terms of skills and understanding but also emotional drive and motivation.

Like Bloom, Marzano stresses that learning outcomes (or ‘goals’) should be written at different levels of complexity, in accordance with the distinct levels of his taxonomy.¹⁸

Retrieval	Student has a basic recognition of information and execution of procedures.
Comprehension	Student has the ability to identify critical features of knowledge.
Analysis	Student makes inferences that go beyond what was directly taught, sometimes referred to as “higher order”.
Knowledge utilisation	Student is able to use new knowledge to address real-world issues.

As students learn, they start by retrieving knowledge/information and progress up through the hierarchy towards knowledge utilisation. Advanced courses will therefore teach and assess skills that are higher on the taxonomy than introductory courses. In the same way, higher cognitive skills (e.g. analysis) necessarily presuppose some understanding of the preceding categories (retrieval and comprehension).

The table on the following page contains a series of suggested verbs for use in writing LOs according to Marzano’s fourfold taxonomy.

¹⁶ See Marzano, R. J., *Designing a new taxonomy of educational objectives* (Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press, 2000), and esp. *The art and science of teaching: A comprehensive framework for effective instruction* (Alexandria, VA: Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2007).
¹⁷ Bloom, Benjamin (Ed.), *Taxonomy of educational objectives: the classification of educational goals; Handbook I: Cognitive Domain* (New York: Longmans Green, (1956).
¹⁸ Marzano, *Designing & Teaching Learning Goals & Objectives* (Marzano Research, 2009), p.27. The two higher levels of Marzano’s taxonomy, metacognition and self-system thinking, do not lend themselves as easily to assessment, given the skills required (e.g. process awareness, emotional drive, motivation, performance monitoring). Bloom’s taxonomy remains extremely helpful for its hierarchy of six categories of cognitive skills that function as educational objectives: knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, evaluation (and creation).

Marzano’s taxonomy—useful verbs	
Recognise • recognise (from a list) • select (from a list) • identify (from a list) • determine (true/false)	Retrival
Recall • name • list • describe • state • identify who, where, or when • describe what	
Executing • use • demonstrate • show • make • draft • complete	
Integrating • summarize • paraphrase • describe the key parts of • describe the relationship between • Explain the ways in which • describe how or why • describe the effects	Comprehension
Symbolising • use models • symbolize • depict • represent • draw • illustrate • show • diagram • chart	
Matching • compare and contrast • categorize • sort • differentiate • discriminate • distinguish • create an analogy or metaphor	Analysis
Classifying • classify • organize • sort • identify different types or categories • Identify a broader category	
Analysing errors • edit • revise • identify errors or problems • evaluate • identify issues or misunderstandings • assess • critique • diagnose	
Generalising • form conclusions • Create a principle, generalisation or rule • trace the development of • generalise • what conclusions can be drawn • what inferences can be made	
Specifying • make and defend • predict • what would have to happen • develop an argument for • judge • under what conditions • deduce	
Decision-making • select the best among the following alternatives • which of the following would best • what is the best way • decide • which of these is most suitable	Knowledge utilisation
Problem-solving • solve • adapt • develop a strategy • figure out a way • how would you overcome • how will you reach your goal under these conditions	
Experimenting • experiment • generate and test • test the idea that • what would happen if • how would you test that • how can this be explained • how would you determine if • based on the experiment, what can be predicted	
Investigating • investigate • research • find out about • take a position on • how and why did this happen • what would happen if • what are differing features of	

Appendix C

Unit template

Year:	Term:	Unit:	Keywords:
Key question:			
Scripture and <i>Basis of Union</i> references:			
Unit description:			
Learning outcomes: At the end of this unit, students will be able to:			
Learning activities:			
Assessment:			
Links/resources:			

Appendix D

List of Uniting Church in Australia schools (as at December 2016)

Synod of Victoria and Tasmania (12)

Aitken College
 Ballarat Clarendon College
 Billanook College
 Cornish College
 Geelong College
 The Hamilton and Alexandra College
 Kingswood College
 Penleigh and Essendon Grammar School
 Scotch Oakburn College, Tasmania
 The Scots School Albury
 St Leonard's College
 Wesley College

Synod of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory (10)

The Exodus Foundation
 Kinross Wolaroi School
 Knox Grammar School
 Margaret Jurd Learning Centre
 MLC School
 Newington College
 Pymble Ladies College
 Ravenswood School for Girls
 Wahroonga Preparatory School
 Wesley College

Synod of South Australia (7)

Annesley Junior School
 Pedare Christian College
 Pilgrim School
 Prince Alfred College
 Scotch College
 Seymour College
 Westminster School

Synod of Queensland (13)

Brisbane Boys' College [PMSA]
 Calvary Christian College
 Clayfield College [PMSA]
 Emmaus College [Ecumenical]
 Jubilee Primary School [Ecumenical]
 The Lakes College
 The SCOTS PGC College
 Moreton Bay College
 Moreton Bay Boys' College
 Shalom Christian College
 Somerville House [PMSA]
 Sunshine Coast Grammar School [PMSA]
 Unity College [Ecumenical]

Synod of Western Australia (7)

Methodist Ladies' College
 Penrhos College
 Presbyterian Ladies' College
 Scotch College
 St Stephens School
 Tranby College
 Wesley College

Northern Territory (2)

Kormilda College [Ecumenical]
 St Philip's College



ucaqld.com.au

P: 1300 822 753 P: 07 3377 9777

GPO Box 674 Brisbane QLD 4001

The Uniting Church Centre

60 Bayliss St Auchenflower QLD 4066



The Uniting Church in Australia
QUEENSLAND SYNOD