

Guardian Angels Catholic Primary School



Overview of the Religious Life of the School

There are many opportunities that arise through which students, teachers and parents can engage with the religious life of the school. These include:

Religious Identity & Culture

Ethos & Charism

- Promoting elements associated with the ethos and charism of the school, e.g. Qualities of Angels referred to during weekly prayer assembly and in the daily life of the school
- Celebrating our Mercy heritage and acknowledging the contribution of Catherine McAuley to this faith tradition
- Promoting the school's ethos and charism through visual displays, e.g. use of the 'Mercy Journey Walk' document to highlight significant moments in our school history that are represented visually throughout the school

Authentic Christian Community

- Welcoming, encouraging and supporting the participation of families in the life of the school, e.g. establishing a Patron Parent network each year through which members are responsible for making connections with families, especially those new to the school
- Celebrating the everyday moments in people's lives, e.g. announcing births in the newsletter; celebrating birthdays
- Promoting a spirit of Christian hospitality, e.g. ensuring visitors feel welcomed and included and are offered morning tea/lunch/refreshments
- Building a culture of care and concern, e.g. organising meals for families/staff members experiencing difficult circumstances

Sense of the Sacred

- Engaging students in the prayerful use of local prayer sites, e.g. Mary Immaculate Church; Peace Garden, including a labyrinth
- Providing professional learning for staff on iconography (January 2015)
- Supporting and resourcing staff to create meaningful prayer spaces and experiences in classroom settings, e.g. professional learning for staff about Christian meditation; planned professional learning for staff about different forms of prayer and creation of resources appropriate for use with these prayer forms; provision of items and artefacts for use during classroom prayer

Prayer & Worship

Christian Prayer

- Teaching and using a variety of traditional prayers as required by the religion curriculum
- Using predictable patterns of prayer across the school as noted in the religion curriculum, e.g. We Gather, We Listen, We Respond, We Go; You Who Do Through
- Incorporating appropriate symbols in prayer experiences, e.g. candle, cross, bible, rain stick
- Providing opportunities for staff to pray communally twice each week – led by staff on a rostered basis
- Providing opportunities for staff to participate in voluntary prayer, e.g. Lenten Reflection
- Providing opportunities for students to pray each day, in the morning and before each break

Celebrating Liturgy & Sacraments

- Supporting students and families participating in the Parish Sacramental Program
- Providing clear expectations about procedures and practices for the reverent celebration of liturgy, e.g. teaching students to genuflect when entering and leaving the church and how to receive communion/blessing
- Preparing students for full and reverent participation in liturgies, e.g. practising readings, responses and songs with students as well as actions and movements used during mass; students attending mass meet with priest who shows and discusses some objects and actions they will see during mass
- Providing opportunities for students to celebrate Eucharist, e.g. each class attends Tuesday Parish mass on a rostered basis with the older students sitting with and helping their younger buddy; each year level is invited to participate in one Sunday Mass each year
- Celebrating various special times throughout the year as a school community, e.g. mass/liturgies/prayer for Lent, Easter, Guardian Angels Day, Mother's/Father's Day, beginning/end of school year, etc.

Ritualising Everyday Life

- Incorporating ritual into prayer assemblies
- Using commissioning and blessing rituals, e.g. commissioning of school leaders; blessing of grandparents on Grandparents' Day
- Including prayer rituals in daily procedures, e.g. lighting a candle to begin prayer; using a variety of symbols that enhance reflection
- Incorporating elements/symbols representative of the Church liturgical season, e.g. coloured cloths; ashes during Lent; items reflective of the stations of the cross

Evangelisation & Faith Formation

Living the Gospel

- Identifying and using scriptural texts to promote and support the Christian values of the school, e.g. sacred texts that relate to our Qualities of Angels are sourced, used and connected to everyday life during prayer assembly each week
- Establishing practices that promote a sense of belonging to a Christian community, e.g. implementation of a whole school play-based social skills program that promotes collaboration and fair decision making

Spiritual Formation

- Providing opportunities for students to develop and express spiritual awareness through the arts, e.g. use of music and movement in liturgical celebrations; students create visual representations that express understanding of religious concepts as part of religion units
- Supporting spiritual formation opportunities for staff, e.g. staff visit to Mary MacKillop Centre in Sydney, including opportunities for contemplation and reflection

Witness to the Wider Community

- Building collaborative relationships with the Parish, e.g. priests invited to visit classes; APRE meets regularly with Parish Priest and Associate Priests to discuss and plan joint school/parish celebrations
- Providing opportunities for students to participate in reflection days with students from other schools, e.g. Gold Coast Catholic Schools Year 6 Leadership Day
- Inviting clergy and parish staff to participate in the everyday and significant events of the school, e.g. priests attend Friday assembly and present awards; parish staff are invited to join us for liturgical and other school events
- Communicating to the school community important information about parish events, e.g. providing information about Sacramental Programs and parish-based outreach such as St Vincent de Paul appeals via the school newsletter and website

Social Justice & Action

Justice in the School Community

- Applying Christian stewardship to resources and environment of school, e.g. development of a student managed garden that supplements the school kitchen/cooking program
- Developing and accessing programs that focus on improving and maintaining quality relationships, e.g. peer mediator program; buddy program; Play Is The Way personal and social skills program

Action for Justice

- Implementing policies and practices within the school that nurture a generosity of spirit, e.g. supporting Caritas, St Vincent de Paul and Catholic Mission annually; supporting local organisations, such as Rosies, and individuals, particularly members of our school community, as the need arises
- Promoting the resources and activities of Catholic justice and peace agencies, e.g. staff professional development facilitated by Caritas highlighting their Catholic Social Teaching educational resource
- Facilitating activities that promote better understanding between generational groups, e.g. class visits to parish aged care facilities; Grandparents' Day
- Supporting and encouraging student-initiated justice projects that contribute to the wellbeing of others locally and globally, e.g. establishment of the 'Social Justice Crew' with whom the APRE meets regularly to organise fundraising events for charity appeals and local causes

Reflection on Action for Justice

- Utilising the power of story to assist reflection on social justice issues and themes, e.g. use of videos from Caritas that include focus people/groups telling their story
- Utilising the writings and reflections of prominent advocates for social justice, e.g. accessing the words and writings of St Mary of the Cross MacKillop to enhance students' understanding of social justice issues and reflection on their action

Guardian Angels Catholic Primary School acknowledges that our students and families are incredibly generous in their contributions towards social justice initiatives. Often these responses to social justice issues, coordinated by the students, provide a strong, real-life connection between the religious life of the school and the religious concepts being developed in classrooms.

Our school is a special learning place for children, teachers and parents alike. Through the Religious Life of Guardian Angels members of our community are offered access to a faith tradition that is rich and life giving and that promotes Christ-centred relationships with others. In keeping with the ministry and mission of Jesus, we encourage all to act with empathy, compassion, love and a sense of social justice and to develop a deep sense of the sacred and an optimistic view of the world based on the hope of the resurrection.