

## Religious Education Curriculum Overview

In years 7-9 students complete the Religious Education Directory (RED) as set out by the Bishops of England and Wales within 'To know You more clearly.'

### **Year 7:**

In this year, pupils revisit some of the most important learning from their study of Catholicism in primary school. For those who have not attended Catholic primary school, this year presents the theological foundations that are the basis for understanding Catholicism. The focus of the entire year is God's revelation and the way in which this has gradually unfolded through salvation history. In the first unit, a distinction is made between general and special revelation, recognising Creation and the existence of human beings as one way in which all human beings can come to know God using their own natural reason. In the second unit, we look at special revelation, introducing (or reintroducing) students to the significance of Sacred Scripture for Catholics. The third unit focuses on Jesus Christ, the incarnation, and the Christian claim that in Christ is the fullness of God's revelation. In this context, the doctrine of the Trinity is explored further, since the recognition of Jesus as very God by the early Church required a recognition of him as the eternal Son of the Father. The fourth unit (desert to garden) focuses on the continued presence of Christ with the Church through the sacraments and the transformative effect of these sacraments on the lives of the faithful. The main emphasis for this unit is the Sacrament of the Eucharist, the 'source and summit' of the Christian life. The final unit gives us the last piece of God's revelation through the sending of the Holy Spirit and the presence of this Spirit with the Church.

**Year 8:**

In this year, pupils will consider some of the existential questions that lie at the heart of the human condition and reflect on both the meaning of suffering and the meaning of death. They begin by looking at the account of the Fall in Genesis 3 and the implications this has for human beings and the world, coming to an understanding of what the Church means when it speaks of 'original sin' and how this is distinguished from 'personal sin'. This is followed in branch 2 by an examination of how God tried to deal with faithless humanity by holding out the promise of a new covenant and a coming messiah who would restore human beings to covenant fidelity. Branch 3 presents us with Jesus who, as the announcer of the reign of God, holds out signs of what this final restoration of all things will look like in his treatment of sinners and outcasts, in his parables of the kingdom, and in his miracles. Branch 4 deals explicitly with the mystery of suffering, or the problem of evil as it is sometimes called, and places this in the light of an understanding of suffering that has been transformed by the passion, death, and Resurrection of Jesus. Finally, in branch 5, students will look to the final consummation of all things and the end to all suffering as death is defeated in the Resurrection of Jesus, the first-born from the dead.

**Year 9:**

The whole of year 9 deals with the mystery of the human person. It begins in branch 1, by revisiting the Creation accounts, focusing particularly on the belief that human beings are *imago Dei* and the implications this has for the principle of the dignity of the human person and the radical equality of man and woman. The nature of human beings as sexual beings, who are made for each other, forms the foundation for a study of the Church's teaching on marriage and the Sacrament of Matrimony. In branch 2, we take the equality of men and women as our starting point and focus particularly on the role of the Blessed Virgin Mary in the salvation history narrative. In branch 3 we return to the Gospel of Mark and look at the call to discipleship that is offered to all human beings in Christ's proclamation of the kingdom, and the relationship between discipleship and individual vocations. In this context students will study the Sacrament of Holy Orders and the vocation to religious life. In branch 4, we look at the mystery of redemption and students will be expected to come to some understanding of how the Church explains the connection between Christ's sacrificial death and individual redemption from sins. Finally, we look to the human person as one member of a community that spans both heaven and earth in the final branch where we look at the Church as the 'communion of saints', the mystical Body of Christ.

In years 10 and 11 students complete the Eduqas Route B GCSE in Religious Studies – comprising of the Foundational Catholic Theology paper, Applied Catholic Theology paper and the Judaism paper.

The Eduqas Route B GCSE in Religious Studies is structured around three key components: Foundational Catholic Theology, Applied Catholic Theology, and a Study of Judaism. Foundational Catholic Theology introduces students to major themes such as Origins and Meaning and Good and Evil, covering Catholic and non religious perspectives on creation, the nature of God, stewardship, the sanctity of life, and the problem of suffering. It also explores how beliefs are expressed through art, symbolism, scripture, and Catholic Social Teaching. These themes form Component 1 of the GCSE and are designed to give students a theological grounding rooted in core Catholic doctrine and tradition.

Applied Catholic Theology, assessed in Component 2, extends this foundation by examining how belief shapes Catholic practice and moral decision making. Key areas include Life and Death—such as eschatology, the Magisterium, Catholic funeral rites, and prayer—and Sin and Forgiveness, which covers crime and punishment, redemption, the role of the Church, missionary work, and the sacraments.

Component 3 focuses on Judaism, studying both beliefs (e.g., the nature of God, covenant, the Messiah, life after death) and practices (e.g., worship, synagogue life, rituals, and festivals). Together these papers help students understand how theological, ethical, and practical dimensions interact within and across religious traditions.

# RE Curriculum

