

Come and See

'and spend the rest of the day with Him'



Early Years

Catholic Primary Religious
Education Programme

COME AND SEE

Religious Education in the Catholic School

1. What is in a name?

Come and See is an invitation to exploration and a promise of life for everyone.

The invitation is open to all.

In response to the question; *'where do you live?'* which was asked by the disciples, Jesus invited them to; **'Come and See.'** (John 1:39) The disciples went with Jesus *'and spent the rest of that day with him.'*

The invitation to **Come and See** is for all and is there even if the question has not been spoken. Zaccaheus, the much despised tax collector; just wanted to glimpse Jesus as he passed by and climbed a tree to do so, but Jesus spotted him and invited him to *'come down, because I must stay at your house today.'* (Luke 19:5)

Later in John's gospel Jesus reiterates the invitation:

Whoever loves me will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and my Father will come to him and live with him.' (John 14:23)

We can invite others.

Those who receive the invitation may also offer it to others. In John 1:43 Philip invites his friend Nathaniel to **'come and see'** Jesus.

Later on in the same gospel (John 4:28-30) Jesus meets the Samaritan woman at the well. She is so inspired by Jesus that she returns to her village as a witness to his love and invites the other villagers to

'Come and see the man who told me everything I have ever done. Could he be the Messiah?' (John 4:29)

The promise offers reassurance.

Children are especially welcome:

Jesus said to his disciples, *'Let the children come to me.'* (Mark 10:14)

Speaking around the time of Sukkot, The Festival of Shelters, Jesus reassures people that he has the living water; when he says:

'Whoever is thirsty should come to me, and whoever believes in me should drink' (John 7:37)

In Matthew's gospel again there are words of support:

'Come to me, all of you who are tired from carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest.' (Matthew 11: 28)

Jeremiah the prophet spoke from experience when he related to the people the word of the Lord: *'You will come and pray to me, and I will answer you. You will seek me and you will find me because you will seek me with all your heart.'* (Jeremiah 29:12-13)

The words of Jesus in Matthew's gospel encourages an active seeking, *'Ask and you will receive; seek, and you will find, knock and the door will be opened to you.'* (Matthew 7:7).

Come and See offers the opportunity to search, to explore, to discover, and to respond; this is part of what it is to be human.

Children
Come and See the wonder of all that is within them and beyond them

GOD
Offers the invitation to **Come and See**

Teachers
Facilitate the opportunity for children to **Come and See**

2. Religious Education in the Catholic School

Catholic schools are guided in all they do by an important and coherent vision of education. This vision is based on the truth revealed by God about ourselves, our life together in community and our ultimate destiny with God. This gives rise to an educational endeavour centred on the person of Jesus Christ, who is our Way, Truth and Life.¹

In January 2000, a National Symposium on 'Expectations of Religious Education in Catholic Schools' was hosted by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. The Bishops' issued a statement highlighting the following points.

What is Religious Education? (4)

- Religious education is about engaging with the deepest questions of life and finding reasons for the hope which is within them (1 Peter 3:15).
- It is about the Christian vision of the human person.
- It is the core subject which is central to the life of the Catholic school.
- Religious education is the systematic study:
 - of the mystery of God, as discovered through the Bible and particularly through the life and teachings of Jesus Christ,
 - the teachings of the Church,
 - the lives of the saints,
 - the relationship between faith and life.

Expectations of Classroom Religious Education (7)

- Classroom religious education in a Catholic school is primarily educational.
- Excellence in religious education is achieved by:
 - clarity of succinct religious learning objectives,
 - key content,
 - by appropriate methodologies,
 - rigour,
 - richness of resources,
 - achievement of identified outcomes,
 - accurate methods of assessment.

¹ Joint Pastoral Letter on Catholic Education; Bishops' Conference, September 2007

The objective of religious education requires: (10)

- analysis and reflection and critical appreciation of sources,
- marked progression through the different stages of education,
- the unequivocal support of the management of every Catholic school,
- 10% of the length of the taught week for each Key Stage of education,
- the encouragement of investigation and reflection,
- development of appropriate skills and attitudes which allows for a free, informed response to God's call in everyday life,
- the use of skills in other areas of the curriculum.

3. Teaching and learning

Outcome of religious education

The outcome of excellent religious education is religiously literate and engaged young people who have the knowledge, understanding and skills – appropriate to their age and capacity – to reflect spiritually, and think ethically and theologically, and who are aware of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

Religious Education Curriculum Directory for Catholic Schools 2012

The following strategies and aims underpin the effective delivery of religious education in the Catholic school.

- Religious education will be taught discretely and developmentally. It will include the deepening of knowledge, and understanding of key theological ideas and their application to life.
- Ample opportunities will be offered for children to apply and use their knowledge and skills in cross-curricular studies to deepen their understanding of religious truths and think creatively.
- Engagement with their own and others' beliefs and values will help to develop good attitudes and dispositions so that children are instilled with a love of learning and a desire to go on learning.²
- Engagement with difficult questions of meaning and purpose which everyone has to face will enable them to think critically about their own questions of meaning and purpose.
- Offer the children a sense of self worth through their experience of belonging to a caring community and an awareness of the demands of religious commitment in everyday life.

² Ibid see also 1.51

4. Inclusion ~ Community cohesion

*Catholic schools... will develop a range of attitudes and activities that promote and support the dignity and worth of everyone.*³

*The commitment of the Catholic Church to interfaith dialogue and to working with other Christians provides a further basis for young peoples' contribution to peaceful social cohesion.*⁴

Our Catholic schools are rich and diverse communities. During Jesus' life on earth he met people of diverse backgrounds and religious groups who were different from himself. He first engaged with all these people by speaking to them. When Jesus met the Samaritan woman at the well he spoke first about the need for water, as he asked her for a drink. This enabled him to tell her about the living water – which is himself. [John 4: 5-42]

Come and See supports and enables the faith experience of all children because it starts with their real life experience and leads them to reflect upon and consider the Christian message in all its richness in that experience. We recognise that many schools will have children of other religions present in their schools and so:

*When pupils of other faiths are present in a Catholic school the task must be to promote their human growth in such a way that they can integrate their particular faith with every aspect of their lives.*⁵

The study 'On The Way to Life' makes clear how necessary it is to have an effective means of transmission of religion, Faith, life experiences which engage all people in today's world.

*To engage in effective transmission, schools, families, parish, and all the formational programme of the faith community must also have a capacity for effective 'translation' between frameworks. This must be developed in members of the faith community if transmission is to continue.*⁶

3 Catholic Schools, Children of Other Faiths and Community Cohesion: CES & Bishops' Conference 2007 page 13

4 Joint Pastoral Letter on Catholic Education:, Bishops' Conference, September 2007

5 Catholic Schools, Children of Other Faiths and Community Cohesion: CES & Bishops' Conference page 7

6 On the Way To Life James Hanvey and David Carroll 8.3 page 29

Theological foundations

5. The foundational documents

'What is the church's view of woman and man? What does it consider is to be commended in constructing today's society? What is the ultimate significance of human activity in the world as a whole? These questions require answers which will show more clearly that the People of God and the human race of which it is a part are of service to each other, and that the Church's mission is seen to be a religious one and by that very fact an outstandingly human one.'⁷

Central to the programme are three basic human questions and the three Christian beliefs that are the Church's response in faith.

Where do I come from? Life – Creation

Who am I? Dignity – Incarnation

Why am I here? Purpose – Redemption

These three doctrines of Creation, Incarnation and Redemption express faith in God as Trinity: Creator, Saviour, Spirit; and personal: Father, Son and Holy Spirit: the Holy One whose love gives life to all (Creation); who makes all holy (Incarnation) and whose purpose is to draw all men and women into one, universal family of God (Redemption). These questions concern the mystery of life, its dignity and purpose and are part of the Christian person's search for meaning in life which finds its response in the life of faith. In *Come and See* these big questions are considered in the light of the Scriptures and Tradition of the Church, as expressed in the documents of the Second Vatican Council and the Catechism of the Catholic Church [CCC] which drew its strength and inspiration from that Council. The Catechism describes them [the questions] as '*decisive for the meaning and orientation of our life and actions*' (CCC, 282).

a. Foundational influences on the theology and pedagogy of *Come and See*

- The four Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council, [see below].
- Catechism of the Catholic Church was published in 1992 begun by the Second Vatican Council' (Apostolic Constitution, *Fidei Depositum*).
- The Religious Education Curriculum Directory published by the Department of Education and Formation of Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in 2012.
- Religious Education in Catholic Schools published by the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales in 2000.
- On the Way to Life: (Catholic Education Service 2005).
- Levels of Attainment in Religious Education in Catholic Schools and Colleges, published by the Bishops' Conference Department for Catholic Education and Formation of England and Wales in 2007.

⁷ The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today-, *Gaudium et Spes*, 11

b. The four Constitutions of the Second Vatican Council

REVELATION: God Speaks – finding meaning in life

At the heart of the programme is the **Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, God Speaks; Dei Verbum (DV)** [1965], which is echoed in part one of *Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Profession of Faith*. When we believe we respond to God with faith. God reveals himself to the human person. God enlightens us with abundant grace, as, with our minds and hearts, we search for meaning in lives.⁸

CHURCH: Christ the light of the nations – Community of Faith

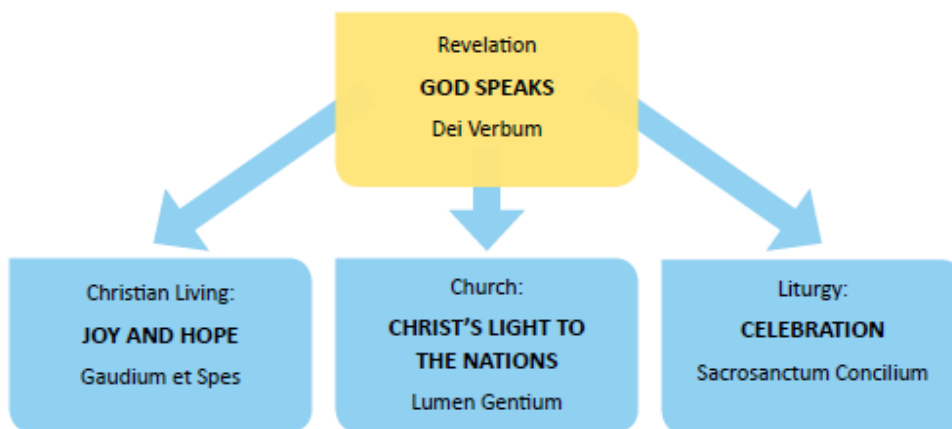
The Dogmatic Constitution on the Church: Christ the light of the nations, Lumen Gentium, (LG) [1964] which is further expanded in *Catechism of the Catholic Church, The Profession of Faith*, refers to the gathering of God's people. The Church can mean the worshipping community, but it also extends to the whole community of believers, local and universal. The Church draws her life from the Word and the Body of Christ, the Eucharist, and so the Church becomes what she already is, Christ's body.⁹

CHRISTIAN LIVING: Joy and hope – Way of life

The Pastoral Constitution on the Church in the World of Today: joy and hope, Gaudium et Spes, (GS) [1965], links into part three of *Catechism of the Catholic Church, Life in Christ*. The dignity of the human person is found in being created in the image and likeness of God.¹⁰ This divine image is found in everyone.¹¹ This life in God through Jesus Christ is celebrated and supported throughout the liturgical year; which follows the journey of Jesus' earthly life

SACRAMENTS: Liturgy: Celebration – Celebration in symbol and ritual

The Dogmatic Constitution on the Liturgy: Sacrosanctum Concilium, (SC) [1963], is further elaborated on in parts two and four of *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, dealing with the Christian Mystery and Prayer. In the liturgy, especially in the Eucharist, the work of our redemption is completed. It is through the liturgy we are able to express the mystery of Christ in our lives¹² and live this out in action.



8 cf. CCC 26

9 cf. 751, 752

10 cf. CCC 1700

11 CCC 1702

12 cf. CCC 1072

6. The Themes

Come and See is developed through three themes based on the above documents of the Second Vatican Council, which are gradually explored each time at greater depths. They are Church, Sacrament and Christian living.

The basic question ↔ belief for each season time is explored through three kinds of themes.

Community of faith ↔ Church

Celebration in ritual ↔ Sacraments

Way of life ↔ Christian Living

a. Church

The Church themes occur in each season time and each theme gradually builds on the understanding of the previous theme.

1. AUTUMN – My story ~ my family ~ **Domestic Church**. To start the year *Come and See* begins with my story: within a **family**. The Church honours the family with the title Domestic Church because it is there that parents 'by their word and example are the first (teachers) heralds of faith with regard to their children.'¹³

2. SPRING – Our story ~ local Community ~ **Local Church**. After Christmas the children explore the theme of local Church which is our story. The **parish** is where people gather together to celebrate and practice care and love for each other.¹⁴ The **diocese** is the community of the Christian faithful.¹⁵

3. SUMMER – The story ~ the worldwide community ~ **Universal Church**. The year finishes with the story of the **worldwide** community; the universal Church. In the Church, God is calling together his people throughout the world.¹⁶ 'The order and harmony of the created world result from the diversity of beings and from the relationships that exist among them'¹⁷

b. Sacrament

The Sacramental themes occur once in every season time and each theme gradually builds on the understanding of the previous theme.

1. AUTUMN – Belonging ~ born into Christ's life. Following on from an understanding of belonging to a family the theme of **Baptism** introduces the understanding of being initiated into belonging to the Christian Church during key stage 1. 'The faithful are born anew by Baptism, strengthen by the sacrament of Confirmation, and receive in the Eucharist the food of eternal life.'¹⁸ At key stage 2 children will learn about the Sacrament of **Confirmation**, whereby the baptised are more perfectly bound to the church and are enriched with a special strength of the Holy Spirit, the Sacrament of **Ordination** for the service of the Church and the Sacrament of **Marriage**, perfecting the human love of wife and husband.

2. SPRING – Relating ~ God's love in our lives ~ **Eucharist**. In the Spring time after learning about the local Church community, the Sacrament of the **Eucharist** is explored. This is the Sacrament of communion with Christ and the Church. This sacrament is at the heart of *Come and See* since it is at the heart of Christ nourishing his people.

¹³ Lumen Gentium 11 and cf CCC1656

¹⁴ cf CCC 2179

¹⁵ cf CCC 833

¹⁶ cf. CCC 752

¹⁷ CCC 341

¹⁸ CCC1212

3. **SUMMER** – inter-relating ~ service to the community ~ **Reconciliation**. The Sacrament of **Reconciliation** forms part of the work of the summer time when there an opportunity to learn about the joy and challenge of relationships and God's love and mercy celebrated in this sacrament. At key stage 2 children will learn about the Sacrament of the **Anointing of the Sick**, which strengthens, forgives and unites the ailing person more closely to Christ.

c. Christian living

The Christian living themes occur in each season time and each theme gradually builds on the understanding of the previous theme.

1. **AUTUMN** – loving – celebrating life – **Advent Christmas**. The **Advent – Christmas** theme considers the gift of God's love in Jesus. Christmas and our preparation celebrate the wonderful gift of Jesus and offers the witness of loving as a way of life. 'The Word became flesh so that we might know God's love.'¹⁹

2. **SPRING** – giving – the cost of life –. In the Spring season **Lent and Easter** are explored, Jesus' love for humankind knows no limit. Jesus offered his life and gave an example of giving as a way of life. 'Easter is not simply one feast among others, but the feast of feasts.'²⁰ 'The Resurrection ... remains at the very heart of the mystery of faith as something which transcends and surpasses history.'²¹

3. **SUMMER** – serving in love – feasts to celebrate – Pentecost. The study of the Ascension and Pentecost completes the Easter story and shows how the gift of the Holy Spirit strengthens the community and enables Christians to give witness to a life of joyful service. 'In this age of the Church, Christ now lives and acts in and with his Church, in a new way appropriate to this new age.'²²

Each theme is explored through different topic in each age group

The themes of each season

AUTUMN

The three autumn time themes are developed in the light of an understanding of Creation:

- Family ↔ Domestic Church focuses on life as gift, myself as a unique and loved creation, the creative love and care that can be expressed in family groups.
- Belonging ↔ Baptism/Confirmation focuses on the call to belong, the creative potential that belonging develops; and Baptism and Confirmation, sacraments of the gift of God's life and friendship.
- Loving ↔ Advent/Christmas focuses on the capacity for entering into loving relationships and the perfect gift and revelation of God's love, Jesus, born of Mary, born as one of us.

SPRING

The three spring time themes are developed in the light of an understanding of Incarnation:

- Community ↔ Local Church focuses on the people of God gathered in Christ, united in the journey of faith, in care for one another; in sharing their story and in celebration.
- Relating ↔ Eucharist focuses on the invitation to know Jesus, to live in communion with him and with one another.
- Giving ↔ Lent/Easter focuses on Jesus' loving self-giving on the cross, the Father's love that raises him to new life and the challenge to Christians to follow Jesus' example of self-giving.

19 CCC 458

20 CCC 1169

21 CCC 647

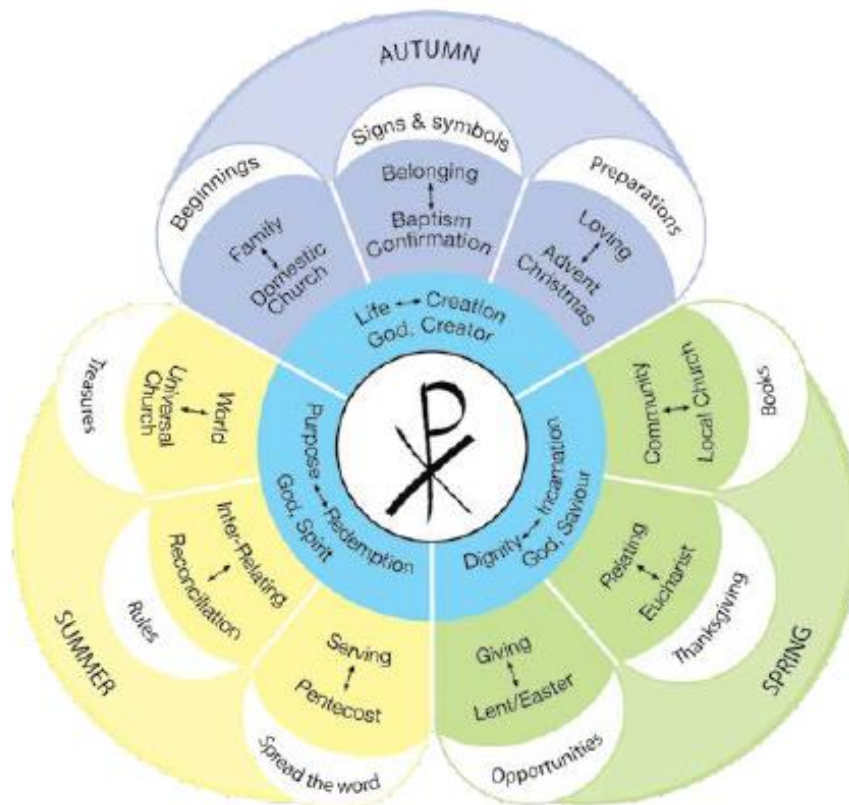
22 CCC 1076

SUMMER

The three summer themes are developed in the light of an understanding of Redemption and the work of the Holy Spirit.

- Serving ↔ Pentecost focuses on the on-going mission of Jesus Christ in the Church through the power of the Holy Spirit.
- Inter-Relating ↔ Reconciliation focuses on the love, compassion and forgiveness of God the Father revealed in Jesus and poured out by the Spirit to bring forgiveness and reconciliation in the sacrament of Reconciliation.
- World ↔ Universal Church focuses on the same love revealed in the diversity of the world and its people, and in the gifts of the Spirit that bear fruit in love, joy, justice and peace for all people.

The icon below which is an example of year 2 shows how the programme develops from the central underpinning of the Word of God, Dei Verbum.



7. The Word of God: Scripture and Tradition

God is revealed to us through Scripture and Tradition. Scripture is the very heart of the Tradition, which has been handed down to us and continues in the Church as a living and developing reality.

The first component of the Bible is drawn from the Jewish Scriptures which we know as the Old Testament. These books were and are of such importance to the Jewish people that they have been carefully preserved and acknowledged to be Holy Scripture. Similarly, the Christian people from the earliest times preserved their own writings concerning Jesus of Nazareth and their faith in him. These are the foundational writings of the Church, known to us as the New Testament.

In the Scriptures God speaks. We acknowledge the Scriptures to be the Word of God to us. The written word of Scripture proclaims the love of God for all the peoples of the world. The message of the inspired word is summed up in Jesus, the Son of God, who is the fullness of God's revelation to us. He is the one who frees us from sin and death, establishes the Kingdom of God here among us and leads us to life.

The writers of the Scriptures used a variety of ways to communicate God's message. They used stories, statements, songs, history and letters. They showed how God was present in the life of the people. Story telling was a particular feature of daily life in Palestine. Jesus would have come to know the stories of what God had done for Israel. When he told his own stories he rooted them in the everyday experiences of his listeners. They tell of ploughing, fishing, sowing seeds, baking, losing and finding.

In the Scriptures God speaks to us in human words, in accessible forms. Tradition is the continuing living transmission of God's word. We see it in the way the good news, taught by Jesus, is passed on by his disciples and throughout the history of the Church.

This Tradition grows and develops, as more and more disciples understand the good news, and as new circumstances require new insights. Scripture and Tradition, which are guided by the Spirit, are living realities. This understanding frees us from a fundamentalist viewpoint which sees Scripture as static. Scripture and Tradition enlighten and transform our lives in a changing world. The Gospel of Matthew reminds us that we are called to be like the householder 'who brings out of his storeroom things both new and old' (Matthew 13:52).

There are grids on pages 44-46 which show the development of scripture and tradition which is used in *Come and See*.

8. Sacrament

A sacramental celebration is a meeting of God's children with their Father, in Christ and the Holy Spirit; this meeting takes the form of a dialogue, through actions and words²³

The approach to sacraments in ***Come and See*** is rooted in a sacramental view of the world which permeates every theme and topic: "the heavens and the earth proclaim the glory of God" (Psalm 19). All creation is a sacrament showing us what God is like, making God's love and goodness present in visible and tangible ways.

"... Catholic imagination has to do with a wonderful capacity for seeing into, and beyond, the mystery of what happens. It allows us first to experience what is presented to us, and to discover within it, more meaning than the basic phenomena would allow."²⁴



God's love and presence are made real and celebrated in the sacraments of initiation – Baptism, Confirmation, Eucharist; healing – Penance, Anointing of the Sick; and at the service of the community – Holy Orders and Matrimony.²⁵ Each of these takes hold of an important moment in life and helps people to appreciate more deeply who God is, what God is like and what God is doing everywhere and at all time, and for all people. It is God's way of saying "I am with you and I love you."

Christians believe that Jesus is the most perfect Sacrament of God. "He who has seen me has seen the Father" (John 14: 9). Jesus is the fullness of Revelation. Throughout the topic work, Jesus is the one who shows us what God is like; in his teaching, his words, his stories, his actions and his person, he makes God present to all.

Jesus founded his Church to spread the good news of God's love for all throughout the world, and to make this love present to everyone in every age. The Church is a sacrament; it shows people what God is like; it brings his loving care to all. The Church themes and topics explore ways in which the Church – domestic, local and universal – makes the love and presence of God a reality at home, in the parish community and in the wider world.