

Wellbeing and the Catholic School

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and
the Catholic School

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“All will be well, and all manner of things shall be well”.

– Julian of Norwich



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Be Alive!


A famous saying from the earliest days of Christianity runs: “The glory of God is the human person fully alive”! The founder of Christianity, Jesus of Nazareth, explained his mission saying: “I have come so that you might have life in all its fullness”. Christians have always sought not just to survive, but to live well, recognising that the whole person, body, mind and spirit, flourish in contact with the message of hope and mercy, truth and love, compassion and justice that the Christian vision promotes. Writing to and about young people, Pope Francis has affirmed: “Christ is alive! He is our hope, and in a wonderful way he brings youth to our world, and everything he touches becomes young, new, full of life. The very first words, then, that I would like to say to every young Christian are these: Christ is alive and he wants you to be alive!”

Wellbeing in the sense of flourishing as a human person fully “alive” in one’s relationship with God, with one’s neighbour and with creation, has long been a priority for Catholic schools. Catholic schools strive to promote the

innate dignity of the human person created in the image and likeness of God. In the Catholic tradition, well-being describes the overall health and happiness of the human person. This holistic understanding of wellbeing in a Catholic context appreciates that all facets of the human condition exist in harmony and flourish together. The Catholic understanding of well-being encompasses the physical health, emotional health, mental health, and spiritual health of the person. Yet we hold that the human person is greater than the sum of their parts and that all the constituent parts of the human condition unite under the aegis of the unique person, created, loved, and known by God.

The Church believes that well-being has a very important social dimension. This comes from the Church's own understanding of herself. The word 'Church' comes from the Greek *ecclesia* which means a gathering of

Well-being is not an achievement but a fruit of harmonious relationships with God and others and therefore is something that depends on conditions outside the person rather than something exclusively within the person's own capacity.

A photograph of two children walking away from the camera on a paved path. The child on the left is wearing a white t-shirt, blue jeans, and a large blue backpack with green straps. The child on the right is wearing a blue and white patterned shirt, green pants, and blue shoes. The background is a bright, slightly blurred outdoor setting. The text is overlaid on the right side of the image.

people. The word ‘Catholic’ comes from the Greek *katholikos* which means universal, embracing all peoples. So the Universal Church comprises a community of people gathered all over the world who have been brought together in Christ through the Sacrament of Baptism. Well-being is not an achievement but a fruit of harmonious relationships with God and others and therefore is something that depends on conditions outside the person rather than something exclusively within the person’s own capacity. It pays careful attention to the conditions that ought to exist to make well-being possible. So too does our understanding of well-being include an important moral dimension. Certain behaviours lead to fulfilment and happiness and other behaviours lead to misery and sadness. Finally, based on the Gospel of Christ, the Church understands well-being

not just in the present but as connected to the past and the future. This emphasizes the importance of hope for the well-being of people suffering from negative life experiences such as hurt and disappointment. It holds out the hope that leads people forward towards the ultimate well-being of the human community and the fulfilment of all desire in the kingdom of God.

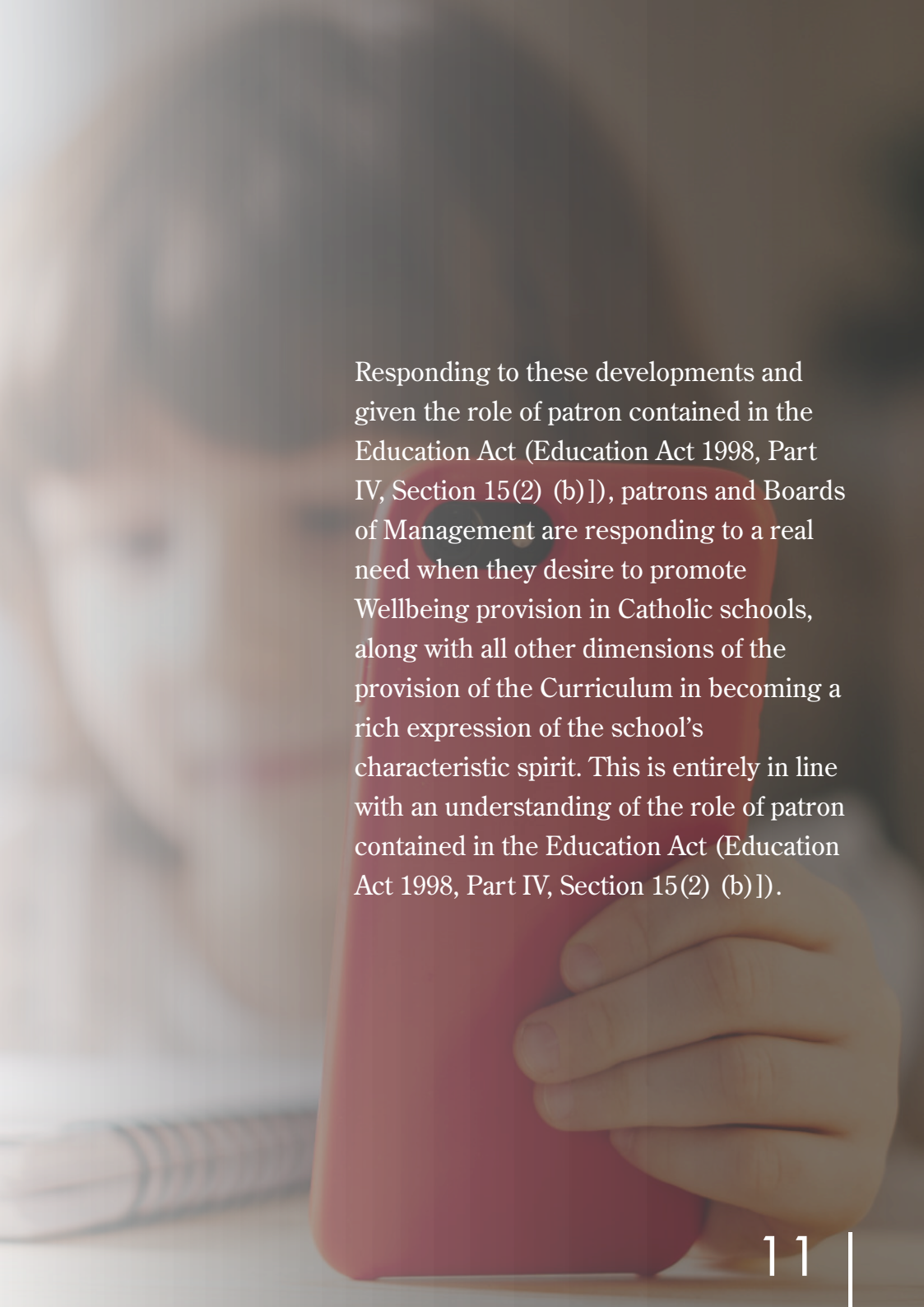
Recognising the importance of wellbeing in Catholic schools and how the promotion of wellbeing is now well-embedded within Government Strategy, the Council for Catechetics and the Council for Education of the Irish Episcopal Conference offer the considerations in this document to parents and to all those responsible for teaching, leading, and ministering in primary and post-primary Catholic Schools including Patrons and Boards of Management.



Remember the Wider Context

Some might wonder why “wellbeing” is needed today in schools? Yet, there is ample evidence that, while young people enjoy many wonderful facilities and opportunities their parents and grandparents lacked, we are living in an era of unprecedented technological change that is impacting on young people’s self-confidence, self-awareness, and capacity to relate on so many levels expected of them. There has been a well-documented increase in the rates of anxiety, depression, and alcohol, sex, and drug addiction. Mobile phone addiction is a particular issue for many young people. Ireland’s largest and most comprehensive study of youth mental health and wellbeing found increases in anxiety and depression as well as decreases in self-esteem and resilience among young people aged 12 to 25.¹ Ireland’s youth suicide is one of the highest in Europe, with young men being particularly vulnerable to suicide.

¹*My World Survey 2: The National Study of Youth Mental Health in Ireland*, 2019.

A blurred background image of a young child with light-colored hair, wearing a white shirt, holding a red smartphone. The child's face is out of focus, and the phone is held in front of them. The overall scene is softly lit, suggesting an indoor setting.

Responding to these developments and given the role of patron contained in the Education Act (Education Act 1998, Part IV, Section 15(2) (b)]), patrons and Boards of Management are responding to a real need when they desire to promote Wellbeing provision in Catholic schools, along with all other dimensions of the provision of the Curriculum in becoming a rich expression of the school's characteristic spirit. This is entirely in line with an understanding of the role of patron contained in the Education Act (Education Act 1998, Part IV, Section 15(2) (b)]).

What does Government Strategy say about Wellbeing?

A background note

The advent of Wellbeing in its current form in Government Strategy should surprise no one given the Education Act (1998) and its focus on the holistic development of the child. The promotion of wellbeing is now well-embedded within Government Strategy. *Better Outcomes, Brighter Future (2014 -2020) (DCYA)*, *Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan (2021 – 2025, DOH/HSE)*, *Department of Education Statement of Strategy (2021 – 2023, DES)*, and the *Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice (2018-2023, DES)* all speak to a renewed focus on the health and wellbeing of the nation’s citizens.

Specifically, within the educational context, the goal is to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills and competencies to deal with challenges that impact on their wellbeing.

Specifically, within the educational context, the goal is to equip children and young people with the knowledge, skills and competencies to deal with challenges that impact on their wellbeing. In this context, wellbeing is understood as being present when a person (adapted by way of example

for the *Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines* p. 9 from the WHO mental health definition):

- Realises their potential and their limitations
- Is resilient in dealing with the normal stresses of their life
- Takes care of their physical wellbeing and
- Has a sense of hope, purpose, connection and belonging to a wider community.

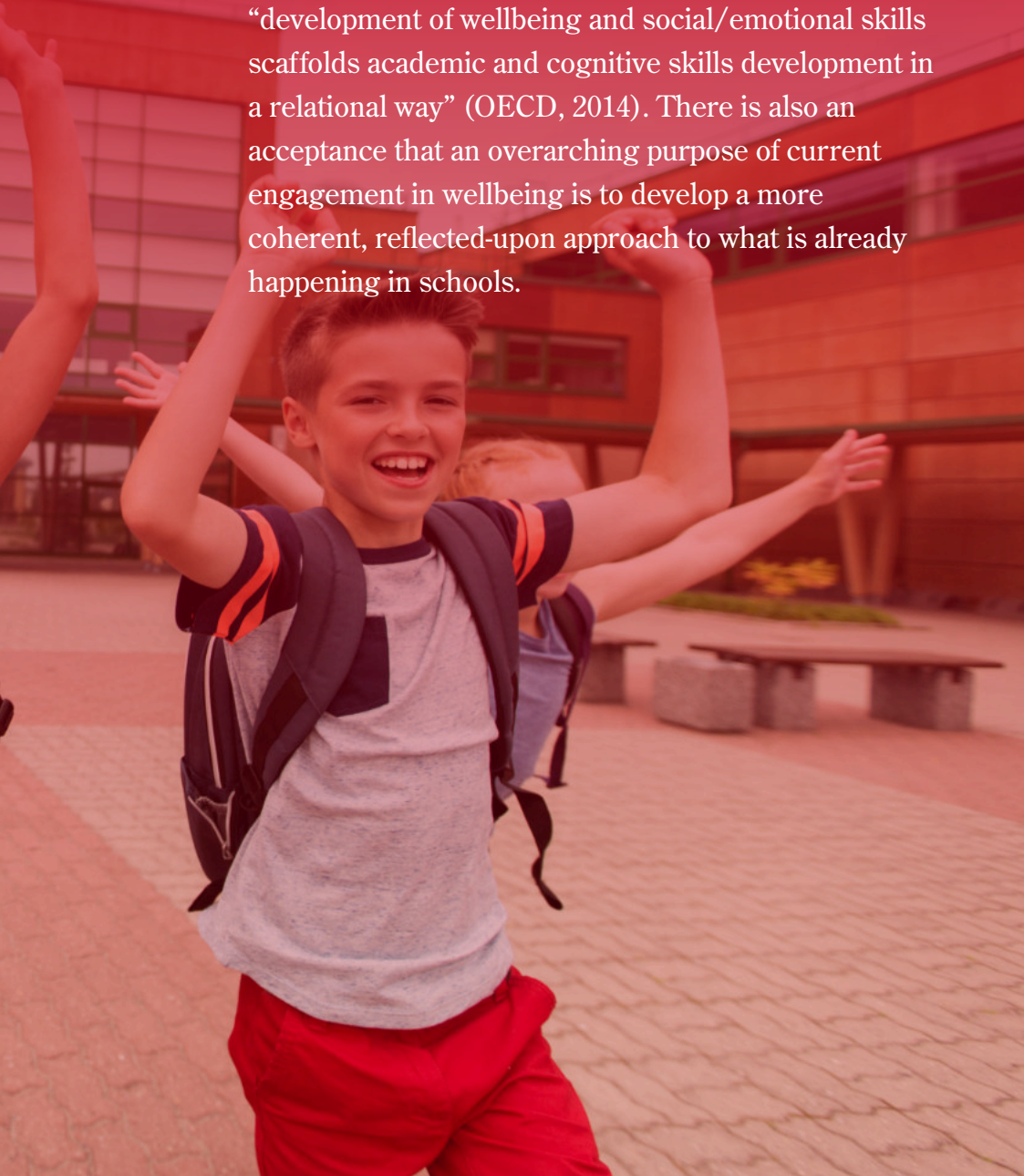
In the Irish educational context, wellbeing in schools is understood as having four inter-related aspects;

1. school culture and social environment,
2. the curriculum
3. policy and planning
4. relationships.

In other words, student wellbeing is both an overarching principle impacting all aspects of school life and as being expressed through specific curricular provision e.g. at Junior Cycle through Social Personal



and Health Education, Physical Education and Civic, Social, and Political Education. Underpinning Well-being provision at both primary and post-primary levels is a broadly accepted understanding that the “development of wellbeing and social/emotional skills scaffolds academic and cognitive skills development in a relational way” (OECD, 2014). There is also an acceptance that an overarching purpose of current engagement in wellbeing is to develop a more coherent, reflected-upon approach to what is already happening in schools.



Elements and Attributes of Wellbeing

The *Junior Cycle Wellbeing Guidelines* (2021) outline seven elements or dimensions of being well. These are:

1. Being healthy, physical and active
2. Being social
3. Being safe
4. Being spiritual
5. Being confident
6. Being positive about learning
7. Being responsible, safe and ethical in using digital technology

Similar dimensions of wellbeing are outlined in the revised **Primary Curriculum Framework**. The seven attributes of the competency 'being well' at primary level are listed as follows:

1. Showing awareness of how to make good choices in relation to wellbeing

2. Participating with growing confidence and skill in physical activity
3. Being self-aware and resilient
4. Acting responsibly and showing care towards self and others
5. Being spiritual and having a sense of purpose and meaning
6. Being persistent and flexible in solving problems
7. Being able to assess risk and respond

We would like to offer some considerations on two important dimensions of wellbeing mentioned in the lists above, the first is the element of ‘being spiritual’ as listed as part of the 7 dimensions of Wellbeing at Junior Cycle and one of the 7 attributes of Wellbeing at Primary. The second is the element of ‘being social’ and the attribute of “Acting responsibly and showing care towards self and others”. Viewed through the lens of the characteristic spirit of the Catholic ethos of a school, these two aspects can contribute much to the fostering of the other elements or attributes identified of ‘being well’. Catholic schools can communicate ways in which the other elements of wellbeing e.g. being confident, being persistent and flexible, being self-aware and resilient can develop in pupils at primary and students at post primary as a result of attending to the two specific dimensions to which we will now turn our attention.

The Spiritual Dimension of Wellbeing and the Catholic School

Definitions of Spiritual Wellbeing

The inclusion of 'being spiritual' and indeed the other elements of 'being well' will not come as any surprise. It echoes the holistic vision of education contained in the Education Act (1998, section 9 (d)) which charges all 'recognised schools' to promote the moral, spiritual, social and personal development of students and provide health education for them, in consultation with their parents, having regard to the characteristic spirit of the school.

In terms of being spiritual, how this is defined is obviously important for all schools. Drawing from the University of Washington's eight spiritual markers, a conference organised by the INTO (2012) proposed this definition: "Spiritual Wellbeing is where one finds meaning and purpose in one's life and in one's place in the greater universe". Later, the NCCA (April, 2015) suggested a number of definitions of 'being spiritual'. These include:



- “A person’s experience of, or a belief in a power apart from his or her own existence” (Mohr 2006).
- “A quality that goes beyond religious affiliation, that strives for inspiration, reverence, awe, meaning and purpose, even in those who do not believe in God” (Murray & Zentner 1989).
- “Spirituality is about the relationship between ourselves and something larger. That something can be for the good of the community or the people who are served by your agency or school or with energies greater than ourselves. Spirituality means being in the right relationship with all that is. It is a stance of harmlessness toward all living beings and an understanding of their mutual interdependence” (Kaiser 2000).
- “Spirituality is the heart of helping. It is the heart of empathy and care, the pulse of compassion” (Canda and Furman 1999).



- Spirituality is finding what Thomas Merton called the ‘hidden wholeness’.

The NCCA guidelines in this area emphasise that ‘being spiritual’ need not be equated in any way with a specific religious affiliation or indeed with being religious more broadly, and for that reason suggest that ‘being spiritual’ is something that extends beyond what happens in the Religious Education classroom.

An Opportunity for Catholics Schools

Catholic schools have much to offer the general definitions of ‘being spiritual’ from the NCCA. For Christians, we are called not into relationship with something nameless that is bigger than myself, we are called into relationship with God, made incarnate through God’s Son Jesus Christ and present with us through the outpouring of the Holy Spirit. We are called into relationship with the One who created us. ‘Being spiritual’ has an ultimate end, that we would know and love God, through Jesus Christ present to us in his Word and in the sacraments and in his community, the Church. The ‘growth mindset’ (NCCA April 2015) referred to in Wellbeing resources provided by the NCCA is, for

Catholic schools, to be understood as a growth mindset focused on love of God and love of others.

For Catholic schools, and especially school leaders, the specific inclusion of 'being spiritual' provides an excellent opportunity to do important thinking – and take concrete steps – in terms of faith leadership around how we care for and nurture the spiritual lives of the young people in our schools.

In a Catholic school, wellbeing embraces both the temporal and eternal dimensions of our human existence (Pope Francis, *Fratelli Tutti* 77). The Irish Bishops Conference statement, *Vision 08* (IEC 2008) frames it richly as 'human flourishing' resulting from a form of education that seeks to look towards the fullness of life with God which makes sense of our whole human existence, framing it within a transcendental plane. In this understanding, life is seen as a pilgrimage in the footsteps of Jesus, who is 'the Way, the Truth and the Life' (John 14:6). Jesus Christ is the model *par excellence* of what it means to be well with self, with God, with creation and with other people. Wellbeing in Catholic education therefore roots itself in Jesus's call to 'fullness of life' (John 10:10).

Jesus Christ is the model *par excellence* of what it means to be well with self, with God, with creation and with other people.



Important Points to underline

A first important point to underline when it comes to considering Wellbeing within the characteristic spirit of Catholic schools is that our full flourishing consists in knowing how to deal with setbacks, failures, and disappointments in life. Everyone is grazed in some way by suffering. Catholic and general Christian anthropology offers a profound understanding of how negativity, woundedness and frailty are not the last word of the human condition. The message of Christian salvation and liberation speaks of hope, potential and the overcoming of what can knock us down. The Sacrament of Reconciliation is a sacrament of mercy. This sacrament, through the forgiveness of our sins, allows us to heal through the examination of our hearts and consciences, and promotes our well-being by bringing us closer into relationship with God.

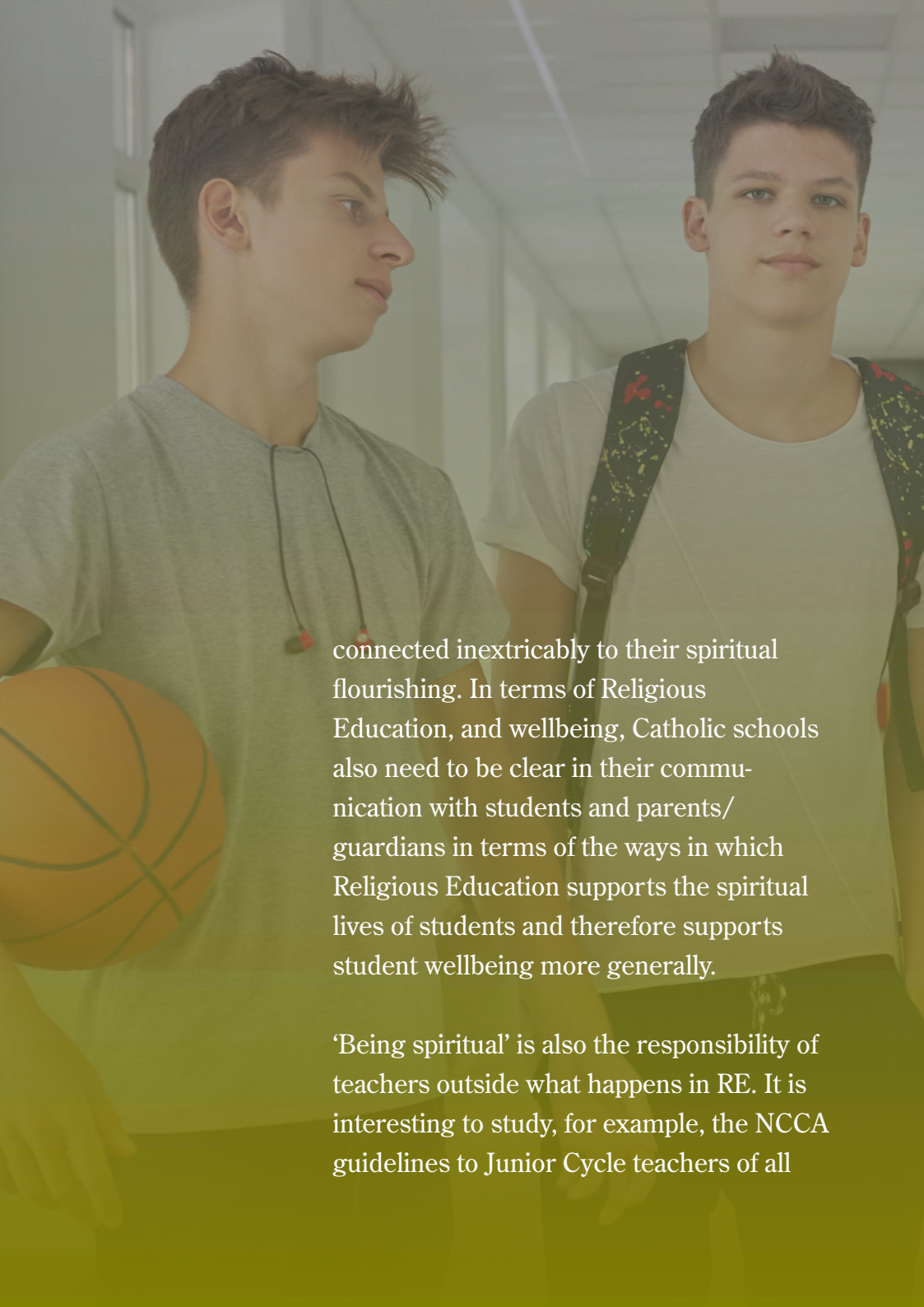
The Christian teaching on mercy reaches us in our profound “why” questions, instilling in us capacity to aspire to nobility, to forgive and be forgiven, to begin again out of failure into new steps forward in life. Ultimately, the vision points to the ultimate horizons of eternity. While some might shy away from the deep truths of the limitations of human existence, Catholic schools embrace them within an uplifting vision of human flourishing in Christ and through the power of the Holy Spirit, the Divine Person of the Holy Trinity who supports, strengthens and inspires.

A very significant aspect of Catholic and general Christian anthropology, which ought to inform how we educate, is a profound understanding of frailty and failures inherent in being human, our capacity to aspire to nobility, to forgive and be forgiven, to be redeemed by Christ, his death and resurrection. Secular understandings of human nature can shy away from these deep truths, but Catholic schools should embrace them.

A second important point to underline is that authentic wellbeing will involve moral living. Both inside and outside of the Christian tradition, both today and in the past, persons seriously engaged with the project of human flourishing have recognised moral integrity and virtue ethics more widely as indispensable components of true human well-being. For well-being we need, for example, self-control, fortitude, moral integrity, coping with disappointments, and hope.


Not just the Role of Teachers of Religious Education

Catholic schools understand the role Religious Education in particular has to play in both primary and post primary Catholic schools in supporting children and young people in being well. Religious Education is an essential way in which Catholic schools assist in maturing young people's understanding of their faith, helping them see how their own human flourishing is



connected inextricably to their spiritual flourishing. In terms of Religious Education, and wellbeing, Catholic schools also need to be clear in their communication with students and parents/guardians in terms of the ways in which Religious Education supports the spiritual lives of students and therefore supports student wellbeing more generally.

‘Being spiritual’ is also the responsibility of teachers outside what happens in RE. It is interesting to study, for example, the NCCA guidelines to Junior Cycle teachers of all

A photograph of two young women in a school hallway. The woman on the left has dark hair with sunglasses on top, wearing a white t-shirt and denim overalls. The woman on the right has bright pink hair, wearing a light blue t-shirt and a yellow backpack. The background shows a hallway with white walls and yellow accents.

subjects on how 'being spiritual' can be experienced and expressed in other subjects; subjects like science, English, Irish, Geography, History and so on. A Catholic school takes seriously this challenge from the NCCA to embed all dimensions of being well into the curriculum, including the call to help students 'be spiritual', while of course, retaining the academic integrity of each subject which has its own set of aims, objectives and/or learning outcomes in line with NCCA curricula or specifications.

Wellbeing and Community

A second important dimension of being well in a Catholic school is being part of a community of faith. The Wellbeing Guidelines (2021) from the NCCA make clear that community is a vitally important expression of collective wellbeing and support for individual wellbeing. In a Catholic school this is particularly the case. Wellbeing is not just about the wellbeing of the *individual*, it is also about the wellbeing of society and increasingly, of late, a renewed sense of the wellbeing of the planet, our common home.

The specific dimension of this Catholic understanding of wellbeing which centres on the role of the community is worth highlighting. There is a risk that if the community dimension is neglected, wellbeing can end up being seen as another achievement to attain by the individual and this can create additional pressure on already burdened students. Such a reading of wellbeing in the school context risks a reductive vision of human flourishing. Professor Sharon Todd's closing keynote address to the JMB/AMCSS Annual Conference in 2019

makes this point well. In this address she suggests that we must be careful not to propose individualised remedies to wider societal ills and challenged educators at all levels to move from a negative understanding of education that seeks to supply individuals with skills to cope ‘in the future’ when in fact we should be changing structures so that everyone can thrive in the here and now. Her concern and that of Catholic educators is that the risk that the individual person (almost regardless of their personal gifts and circumstances) is being made responsible for ensuring their own wellbeing for some future reality while, in reality, it is by living well for the good of others that gives life real meaning and joy. Relationships are key. The Christian vision again reminds each one of us is created as a gift for each other: I love, therefore I am. Todd calls for a rich ‘spaciousness that allows us to grow in and through relationships’. We grow in and through our interdependence within community.

In the Catholic tradition, we are called to nourish and to feed one another. We are called in a particular way to nourish and feed

... in reality, it is by living well for the good of others that gives life real meaning and joy.

those on the margins; those who perhaps do not have the social, emotional or psychological capital to thrive without significant support from others. This Christian understanding is rooted in Jesus's call to 'love one another as I have loved you' (John 13:34). For this reason, every expression of Catholic education at both primary and post primary speaks of the importance of students learning not only how to care for self but also how to love and care for one another and for our planet. In what seems like a real paradox, Christians believe that in giving ourselves in how we care for others we, in fact, find ourselves anew in Jesus Christ.

Indeed, the call to a profound human flourishing within community might well be understood as one of the essential hallmarks of Catholic education. In this context, the sacramental and prayer life of the school is a vitally important basis for and indeed expression of the school's sense of the wellbeing of its members guided in faith by God who wishes that all will be well.

Again the RE class is a particular place where the importance of community and care of others can be explored and promoted. However, as with 'being spiritual' this is a concern for the whole school community. It is a particular concern for school leaders who show in tangible ways how care of the most vulnerable is always prioritised in our Catholic schools.



Conclusion: Wellbeing and Catholic schools Today – An Opportunity and A Task

It is clear that with the embedding of Wellbeing in educational strategies for primary and post primary education in Ireland, there is a significant opportunity for Catholic schools at both primary and post-primary levels to do some rich and worthwhile thinking around what human flourishing looks like in our schools. It provides opportunities for schools to further promote their Christian vision of human flourishing. A Catholic understanding of wellbeing can be an invaluable lens through which important work can be done by school leaders, students, parents, and boards of management.

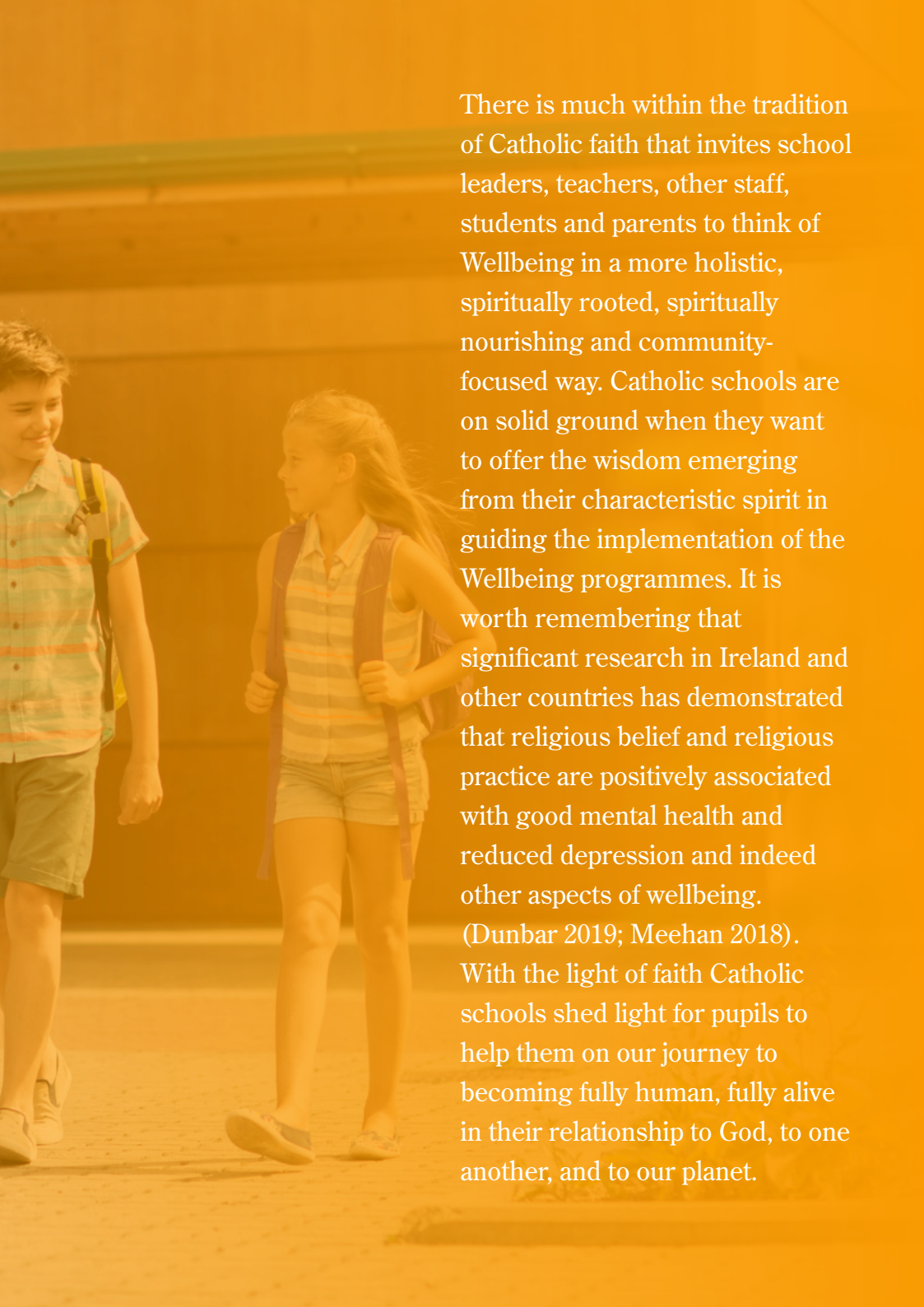
It is further apparent that there will be an expectation from the Department of Education that schools will engage in a very concerted way over the coming years on student wellbeing. It is hoped that planning supports will be put in place for schools to do this work. Inspections will take place on foot of this planning. Catholic schools will need ongoing support to ensure that the very particular view of the human person and human relationships remains at the centre of all that it does.

Specifically in terms of Policy Development work, Catholic schools will need to embed a Catholic vision of wellbeing in their school's Wellbeing Policy, RSE Policy, Anti-Bullying Policy, Code of Behaviour Policy and much more. Work done to date in terms of developing an RSE policy for Catholic post primary schools will have to be further embedded and will need to be built on, in the overall context of wellbeing and what we call human flourishing in a whole myriad of other areas of school life.

The four dimensions of wellbeing mentioned above (school culture and social environment, the curriculum, policy and planning and relationships) can be informed by the charisms of individual congregations, organisations and the Catholic Education Trusts dedicated to Catholic education and their particular understanding of wellbeing as human flourishing. And at primary level, the rich tradition of Catholic primary schools closely linked to and nourished by the wider Christian community of the parish is also an important and particular expression of wellbeing in Catholic education.







There is much within the tradition of Catholic faith that invites school leaders, teachers, other staff, students and parents to think of Wellbeing in a more holistic, spiritually rooted, spiritually nourishing and community-focused way. Catholic schools are on solid ground when they want to offer the wisdom emerging from their characteristic spirit in guiding the implementation of the Wellbeing programmes. It is worth remembering that significant research in Ireland and other countries has demonstrated that religious belief and religious practice are positively associated with good mental health and reduced depression and indeed other aspects of wellbeing. (Dunbar 2019; Meehan 2018). With the light of faith Catholic schools shed light for pupils to help them on our journey to becoming fully human, fully alive in their relationship to God, to one another, and to our planet.

Appendix A

Below are some specific examples of the ways in which primary and post primary schools can give some consideration to wellbeing in their school

	Primary	Post Primary
School Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking at our School Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018–2023 ACE Sacramental and Prayer life Share the Good News Understanding and Living the Ethos in a Catholic Primary School Laudato Si The incorporation of the Green Schools Flag with Laudato Si Student Councils giving pupils a voice within the school, thereby allowing the pupils to feel heard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Looking at our School Wellbeing Policy Statement and Framework for Practice 2018–2023 ACE Sacramental and prayer life Work by Trusts Share the Good News Understanding and Living the Ethos in a Catholic Voluntary Secondary School Laudato Si

	Primary	Post Primary
Curriculum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE • CPPRECI • Grow in Love • SPHE/RSE • Flourish • Ethics and education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RE • SPHE/RSE <p>Guidelines from Council for Catechetics for RE in Catholic schools, Junior Cycle</p> <p>Veritas Programmes</p>
Policy and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetabling • Raft of policies <p>Code of Behaviour</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing a Code of Behaviour underpinned by the act of reconciliation and with restorative practice at its core <p>Anti-bullying policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Writing an Anti-bullying Policy underpinned by the act of reconciliation and with restorative practice at its core <p>RSE policy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff wellbeing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timetabling • Raft of policies • Staff wellbeing
Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Servant leadership and reflective leadership in this context • Care of staff • Care of school leaders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Servant leadership and reflective leadership in this context • Care of staff • Care of school leaders

Appendix B

A note for Post Primary Schools on Timetabling Challenges and Wellbeing

At Junior Cycle, schools are now required to ensure the provision at Junior Cycle for 400 hours. Templates are provided here to Catholic schools demonstrating how 400 hours of Wellbeing need not negatively impact on the provision of two hours of Religious Education a week to all year groups, in line with the requirements of the Irish Episcopal Conference. While schools may not count RE hours towards the 400 hours of wellbeing, it is important, in light of the above, that RE in Catholic schools be understood as an invaluable space where deeply spiritual questions such as suffering, the meaning of life, life after death etc., can be discussed and different religious perspectives shared. It is clear from the NCCA's own Background Paper in preparation for the Junior Cycle RE specification that authentic wellbeing does not bypass or ignore the very religious questions that present themselves to all humanity.

These examples relate to (a) 1 hour classes and (b) 40 minute classes and demonstrate how the 400 hour provision for Wellbeing can be met without compromising the required 2 hour weekly provision for RE in Catholic schools.

Alloc. 1-hour Classes

	No of Classes	Time	No of Classes	Time	No of Classes	Time	Total 3 years	
	Year 1	Hours	Year 2	Hours	Year 3	Hours		
Core Subjects								
Irish	3	3.00	3	3.00	3	3.00	300.60	
English	3	3.00	3	3.00	3	3.00	300.60	
Maths	3	3.00	3	3.00	3	3.00	300.60	
Other Subjects								
History	2	2.00	2	2.00	2	2.00	200.40	
Geography	2	2.00	2	2.00	2	2.00	200.40	
Science	2	2.00	2	2.00	3	3.00	233.80	
RE	2	2.00	2	2.00	2	2.00	200.40	
Modern Language	2	2.00	2	2.00	3	3.00	233.80	
CHOIR/ICT	1	1.00					33.40	
Option Blocks								
Option Block 1	2	2.00	2	2.00	2	2.00	200.40	
Option Block 2	2	2.00	2	2.00	2	2.00	200.40	
Option Block 3							0.00	
Wellbeing								
Wellbeing /ICT	1	1.00	1	1.00			66.80	
CSPE	1	1.00	1	1.00	1	1.00	100.20	
PE	1	1.00	2	2.00	1	1.00	133.60	
SPHE	1	1.00	1	1.00	1	1.00	100.20	400.80
	28	28	28	28	28	28	2,805.60	Wellbeing Hours

Alloc. 40-minute classes

Core Subjects

	1st	2nd	3rd	Total
Irish	5	5	4	311.73
English	4	5	5	311.73
Maths	5	4	5	311.73

Other Subjects

History	3	3	3	200.40
Geography	3	3	3	200.40
Science	3	3	4	222.67
RE	3	3	3	200.40
Modern Language	3	3	4	222.67
CHOIR/ICT		1		22.27

Option Blocks

Option Block 1	3	3	3	200.40
Option Block 2	3	3	3	200.40
Option Block 3				

Wellbeing

Wellbeing/ICT	2	1	1	89.07
CSPE	1	1	1	66.80
PE	3	3	2	178.13
SPHE	1	1	1	66.80

	42	42	42	2805.60
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400.80
Wellbeing Hours

Appendix C

A note for Primary schools on the revised Primary Curricular Framework and the implications for wellbeing in Catholic Primary Schools.

At primary level in the newly agreed Primary Curriculum Framework, increased time has been given to SPHE/RSE as part of what the NCCA have now called Social, Personal and Values Education. In addition, the NCCA suggests that curriculum areas of Wellbeing and Social and Environmental Education present opportunities for incorporating learning relating to ERB and Ethics in the redeveloped curriculum. Catholic primary schools need to be helped to understand that learning being proposed by ERB and Ethics remains philosophically and pedagogically problematic for Catholic schools (see <https://www.catholicbishops.ie/2018/06/14/the-value-of-religious-education-in-our-primary-schools/>).

In terms of Religious Education, and Wellbeing in Catholic Primary Schools, as stated above, Catholic schools need to be clear in their communication with

pupils and parents/guardians in terms of the ways in which Religious Education supports the spiritual lives of pupils and therefore supports pupil wellbeing. They must equally be clear in ensuring RE is timetabled across all years of Primary in terms of the hours provision set out in the Catholic Preschool and Primary Religious Curriculum and in *Grow in Love*.



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