



St Bede's Catholic College

Religious Education Curriculum Rationale

Our Religious Education curriculum is rooted in the mission of St Bede's Catholic College and seeks to enable every pupil to encounter the richness of the Catholic faith, deepen their knowledge and understanding of Jesus Christ, and engage thoughtfully with questions of faith, meaning, morality and human dignity. We aim to develop religiously literate young people who can understand and articulate Catholic belief while engaging intelligently and respectfully with other religious and non-religious worldviews.

The curriculum is carefully sequenced so that pupils build progressively on prior knowledge and develop increasingly sophisticated theological understanding. Lessons engage pupils with Sacred Scripture, Catholic teaching and tradition, religious and philosophical perspectives and contemporary ethical questions. Pupils develop their knowledge and understanding through questioning, discussion, retrieval, written work and opportunities to apply and evaluate their learning. Particular emphasis is placed on developing accurate religious and theological vocabulary and enabling pupils to think critically and articulate their ideas with increasing confidence.

Our Key Stage 3 Religious Education curriculum follows *To Know You More Clearly*, the Religious Education Directory (RED) for Catholic schools, academies and colleges in England and Wales. Across Years 7, 8 and 9, students follow six interconnected branches of study: **Creation and Covenant; Prophecy and Promise; Galilee to Jerusalem; Desert to Garden; To the Ends of the Earth; and Dialogue and Encounter.**

These branches form a spiral curriculum. Pupils revisit important theological concepts each year, building increasingly sophisticated knowledge and understanding. They engage with Scripture, Catholic belief and teaching, the sacramental life of the Church, Catholic Social Teaching, philosophy and ethics, and other religions and worldviews.

Across the three years, pupils progress from establishing the foundations of Revelation and salvation history in Year 7, through examining the human condition, suffering and Christian hope in Year 8, to considering the dignity, vocation and ultimate destiny of the human person in Year 9. Throughout every branch, pupils develop the RED's Ways of Knowing: **Understand, Discern and Respond.** They learn to understand religious texts, beliefs, practices and ways of life; discern their meaning and significance through careful interpretation and evaluation; and respond thoughtfully to what they have studied.

By the end of Year 9, pupils will have acquired a substantial foundation in Scripture, Catholic theology, sacramental life, Catholic Social Teaching, philosophy and ethics, and other religions and worldviews. This provides a coherent foundation for the demands of GCSE Religious Studies and for informed engagement with questions of faith, meaning and human life.

In Years 10 and 11, students follow the **Pearson Edexcel GCSE (9–1) Religious Studies A** specification. Building upon the theological knowledge and disciplinary skills developed during Key Stage 3, pupils undertake an in-depth study of **Catholic Christianity**, alongside **Judaism** and **Catholic Philosophy and Ethics**.

The course encourages pupils to develop a detailed understanding of religious beliefs, teachings and practices and to consider their significance for individuals, communities and wider society. Pupils also develop their ability to analyse religious, philosophical and ethical questions, evaluate different perspectives and construct reasoned and well-supported conclusions.

In Years 12 and 13, students follow the Pearson Edexcel GCE A Level Religious Studies Specification A (2016), studying Philosophy of Religion, Religion and Ethics and New Testament Studies. Building upon the theological, philosophical and ethical knowledge developed at GCSE, students engage with arguments, scholarly perspectives and set texts in increasing depth. The course develops students' ability to analyse and evaluate complex claims, interpret biblical texts within their historical and literary contexts, make connections across the three papers and construct coherent, well-supported judgements.



	Autumn Term	Autumn Term	Spring Term	Spring Term	Summer Term	Summer Term
	Term 1	Term 2	Term 3	Term 4	Term 5	Term 6
Year 7	Creation and Covenant: Creation In this opening unit, pupils begin by investigating the two creation stories found within the book of Genesis, before studying how the biblical understanding of the creation of the world fits with science. Pupils continue by reflecting on what the creation stories reveal to us about our own responsibility to each other and the earth, before ending with a case study on Sister Dorothy Stang, an exemplary Catholic who gave her life to God while defending the rainforest and its inhabitants.	Prophecy and Promise: In this second unit, pupils continue to explore the Bible, beginning by studying the structure of the Bible and the relationship between the Tanakh and the Old Testament, before investigating the relationship between scripture and tradition. Pupils finish the unit by exploring how the Bible is used in Catholic worship today	Galilee to Jerusalem: In this unit, pupils explore the person of Jesus Christ and are introduced to key themes in Christology, beginning with understanding the incarnation and studying Christological heresies, before exploring what the different titles attributed to Christ reveal about Jesus, and finishing by reflecting on how we can be Christ-like to those who live on the margins	Desert to Garden: In this unit that leads up to Easter, pupils, having been introduced to Jesus Christ, now go on to study the final events of his life and the gift of the Eucharist. Pupils finish the unit by exploring artistic responses to the Eucharist.	To the Ends of the Earth: In this unit following Easter and leading up to Pentecost, pupils explore the Holy Spirit, its role in guiding the Church and how Catholics continue to encounter it in the sacraments, especially in Confirmation.	Dialogue and Encounter: In this final unit, pupils explore the history of the Church that was established by Christ, beginning with the early Church debates and ecumenical councils, before exploring the schisms of the Church, first the split between the Catholic and Orthodox Churches, and then the Protestant Reformation of the 16th century. Pupils will study a major world religion (Hinduism) and investigate its central beliefs, practices and worship. Through comparison and dialogue, they learn to identify genuine similarities without overlooking important theological differences
Assessment	End of unit test	Peer/Self Assessment, 1:1 feedback and low stakes questioning and tests.	End of unit test	Peer/Self Assessment, 1:1 feedback and low stakes questioning.	End of unit test	Peer/Self Assessment, 1:1 feedback and low stakes questioning and tests.



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Year 8	Creation and Covenant In this unit, pupils build on their prior learning about the Bible, and turn to the creation stories contained within Genesis. Students will distinguish between original and personal sin and consider the consequences of human freedom and the misuse of that freedom. Pupils explore God's covenant with his people, including the Sinai Covenant and the Ten Commandments. They consider the continuing relevance of the commandments and investigate Catholic teaching about conscience, moral responsibility and Baptism.	Prophecy and Promise: Pupils examine the biblical tradition of prophecy and consider what it means to be called by God. They investigate recurring prophetic concerns, including faithfulness to God, repentance, justice and care for the poor. They will explore the expectation of a Messiah and consider how Christians understand Jesus as fulfilling this hope through his role as priest, prophet and king. They also consider examples of prophetic witness in the modern world and how Christians may be called to challenge injustice.	Galilee to Jerusalem: Pupils explore Jesus' proclamation of the Kingdom of God. Through Gospel accounts, they investigate Jesus' relationships with sinners, outcasts and those who were marginalised. Pupils study parables and miracles as signs of the Kingdom and consider what they communicate about God, forgiveness, healing and restoration. They explore how Jesus' example continues to challenge Christians to respond to those who experience poverty, exclusion or suffering.	Desert to Garden: Pupils confront one of the most challenging questions in theology: why is there suffering if God is loving and powerful? They examine biblical and Christian responses to suffering and consider how the Passion, death and Resurrection of Jesus transform the Christian understanding of suffering. Pupils will explore Lent and the Easter Triduum and investigate reconciliation, forgiveness and the Sacrament of Reconciliation. They will also begin to construct and evaluate responses to the philosophical and theological problem of evil.	To the Ends of the Earth: Pupils investigate the Resurrection of Jesus and Christian beliefs about life after death. They examine biblical accounts of the Resurrection and consider evidence and arguments surrounding the Christian claim that Jesus rose from the dead. This leads to the study of Catholic beliefs about death, resurrection, the soul, judgement and eternal life. Pupils consider Catholic funeral practices and compare Christian beliefs about death and the afterlife with other religious and non-religious perspectives.	Dialogue and Encounter: Pupils deepen their understanding of ecumenical and interreligious dialogue. They consider the relationship between the Catholic Church and other Christian traditions and examine areas of shared belief as well as significant differences. Pupils encounter another major world religion (Islam) and investigate its central beliefs, practices, worship and understanding of the human person. Through comparison and dialogue, they learn to identify genuine similarities without overlooking important theological differences.
Assessment	Peer/Self Assessment, 1:1 feedback and low stakes questioning and tests.	End of unit test	Peer/Self Assessment, 1:1 feedback and low stakes questioning and tests.	End of unit test	End of unit test	Peer/Self Assessment, 1:1 feedback and low stakes questioning and tests.



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Year 9	Creation Pupils revisit the Genesis creation accounts through the Catholic understanding of the human person as Imago Dei – created in the image and likeness of God. They examine how this belief provides the foundation for the inherent dignity and radical equality of every human being and consider its implications for Catholic Social Teaching. Pupils explore the equal dignity of men and women, human relationships and the Catholic understanding of marriage.	Prophecy and Promise: Pupils explore the contribution of women within salvation history, with particular attention to Mary, the Mother of Jesus. They examine biblical accounts involving Mary and investigate Catholic beliefs about her place within God's plan of salvation. Pupils consider themes including vocation, discipleship, faith and obedience and explore how Marian beliefs and devotion are expressed within Catholic life and worship.	Galilee to Jerusalem: Pupils undertake a deeper encounter with the Gospel and the Christian call to discipleship and vocation. Through study of the Gospel tradition, particularly Mark, students consider what it means to follow Jesus. They examine how Jesus calls disciples and what the Gospel suggests about the demands, challenges and rewards of discipleship. Pupils then explore the Catholic understanding of vocation. They consider how individuals discern their calling and investigate different expressions of vocation and service within the Church and wider society.	Desert to Garden: Pupils study the mystery of redemption. Building upon their previous learning about the Paschal Mystery, they investigate how Catholics understand Jesus' suffering, death and Resurrection as bringing salvation to humanity. They explore concepts including sin, sacrifice, atonement, forgiveness and redemption and make connections between the sacrifice of Christ and the sacramental life of the Church. Pupils are increasingly expected to analyse theological ideas, recognise different interpretations and construct well-supported responses to questions about salvation.	To the Ends of the Earth: Pupils consider what it means to belong to the Body of Christ and the Communion of Saints. They explore the Catholic understanding that the Church is more than an institution: it is a community united in Christ. Pupils investigate the relationship between individual Christians and the wider Church and consider the Communion of Saints as a community embracing the Church on earth and in heaven. The unit provides opportunities to study the lives and witness of saints and to consider how individuals are called to holiness, service and participation in the mission of the Church.	Dialogue and Encounter: The final Key Stage 3 branch extends pupils' understanding of interreligious dialogue. Pupils consider Catholic teaching about dialogue with people beyond the Christian community and examine how shared concerns such as human dignity, peace, justice and care for others can provide opportunities for cooperation. Pupils encounter another major world religion (Judaism) and investigate its central beliefs, practices, worship and understanding of the human person. Through comparison and dialogue, they learn to identify genuine similarities without overlooking important theological differences.
Assessment	End of unit test	Peer/Self Assessment, 1:1 feedback and low stakes questioning and tests.	End of unit test	Peer/Self Assessment, 1:1 feedback and low stakes questioning and tests.	Peer/Self Assessment, 1:1 feedback and low stakes questioning and tests.	End of unit test



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Year 10	Judaism – Practices Pupils explore how Jewish beliefs are expressed through worship, ritual, family and community life. They study public and private worship, including the importance of the synagogue, prayer and the Torah. Pupils investigate the significance of the Shema and different forms of Jewish prayer. The unit examines important Jewish rituals associated with the family and stages of life, including birth ceremonies, Bar/Bat Mitzvah and marriage. Pupils investigate the importance of Shabbat and consider how its observance expresses Jewish beliefs about God, creation, family and community.	Catholic Beliefs and Teachings Pupils examine the central beliefs and teachings of Catholic Christianity. They explore the Trinity and the Catholic understanding of God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, considering how belief in the Trinity shapes Catholic worship and life. Pupils investigate the biblical accounts of Creation and Catholic teaching about the origins and value of the universe. They consider the relationship between Catholic belief and scientific explanations of creation, including the significance of the Big Bang and evolution.	Catholic Practices Pupils investigate how Catholic beliefs are expressed through worship and sacramental life and will study the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church. They study the nature and significance of liturgical worship and the Mass, considering why the Eucharist occupies a central place within Catholic life. Pupils explore the meaning and importance of the sacraments and the ways in which they accompany Catholics through different stages of life.	Catholic Practices Pupils will also explore prayer, including different forms and purposes of prayer, and examine Catholic funeral rites and beliefs surrounding death. Pupils investigate pilgrimage, including its spiritual significance and the reasons Catholics may visit places of pilgrimage. They also explore Catholic celebrations and practices and consider how these strengthen both individual faith and the wider Catholic community.	Catholic: Sources of Wisdom and Authority Pupils explore the sources Catholics use when making decisions about faith and life. They study the Bible as a source of authority, considering its origins, structure, interpretation and importance within Catholic Christianity. Pupils examine the relationship between Scripture and Tradition and consider why both are important within Catholic teaching.	Catholic: Sources of Wisdom and Authority (continuation of unit) Pupils explore the sources Catholics use when making decisions about faith and life. They study the Bible as a source of authority, considering its origins, structure, interpretation and importance within Catholic Christianity. Pupils examine the relationship between Scripture and Tradition and consider why both are important within Catholic teaching.
Assessment	End of unit test	End of unit test	End of unit test	End of unit test	Revision for mock exams will begin the last week of Term 5 and the first week of Term 6. Year 10 mock exams 21st – 30th June 2027	End of unit test



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Year 11	Catholic Forms of Expression and Ways of Life Pupils investigate the many ways in which Catholic belief is expressed through art, architecture, music, drama and daily Christian living . They explore the purpose and design of Catholic churches and consider how features such as the altar, crucifix, tabernacle and Stations of the Cross communicate theological beliefs. Pupils examine different Christian attitudes towards religious images and consider the ways in which Catholic art and sculpture communicate beliefs about God, Jesus and the saints.	Arguments for the Existence of God Pupils move from the study of religion into explicit philosophical enquiry, examining the question: Does God exist? They consider whether revelation, visions, miracles and religious experiences provide convincing evidence for God's existence. Pupils examine Catholic examples and consider atheist and Humanist challenges to religious interpretations of these experiences. Pupils investigate classical philosophical arguments for God, including the Design Argument and the Cosmological Argument.	Relationships and Families in the 21st Century Pupils explore Catholic teaching about human relationships, marriage and family life and consider how these teachings interact with contemporary society. They examine Catholic beliefs about the purpose and importance of marriage, including marriage as a sacrament, lifelong commitment and the foundation of family life. Pupils consider Catholic teaching about sexual relationships , including the belief that sexual intimacy belongs within marriage.	Judaism revision Beliefs and Teachings and Practices The final stage of the course focuses on consolidation and preparation for the external examinations. Pupils revisit key knowledge from Catholic Christianity, Judaism, and Catholic Philosophy and Ethics , identifying connections between topics and strengthening their understanding of areas requiring further development. Revision includes regular retrieval of key terminology, beliefs, teachings, practices and sources of wisdom and authority. Pupils practise applying this knowledge to different question types.	Pupils revisit key knowledge from Catholic Christianity, Judaism, and Catholic Philosophy and Ethics , identifying connections between topics and strengthening their understanding of areas requiring further development. Revision includes regular retrieval of key terminology, beliefs, teachings, practices and sources of wisdom and authority. Pupils practise applying this knowledge to different question types and refine their extended writing and evaluation. Exams: Paper 1 Catholic Christianity: Thursday, 13th May 2027 (morning) – 1 hour 45 minutes	
Assessment	End of unit test	Revision for Year 11 mock exams will begin in the third week of Term 2. Year 11 mock exams week 30th November – 10th December 2026	End of unit test	End of unit test	Exams: Paper 2 Judaism: Friday 21st May 2027 (morning) – 50 minutes Paper 3: Philosophy and Ethics: Monday 7th June 2027 (morning) – 50 minutes	



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Year 12	Philosophy of Religion and Religion and Ethics Students begin A Level study by extending familiar GCSE questions into more rigorous philosophical and ethical enquiry. In Philosophy they study the Design, Cosmological and Ontological Arguments, distinguishing inductive and deductive reasoning and a priori and a posteriori approaches. In Ethics they examine Environmental Ethics, Equality and Utilitarianism, considering how teleological and deontological approaches shape moral decision-making. Set texts introduce students to sustained engagement with scholarly argument.	Philosophy of Religion and Religion and Ethics Students examine Religious Experience and the Problem of Evil and Suffering, including major theodicies and proposed solutions. In Ethics they study Situation Ethics, Natural Moral Law, War and Peace and Sexual Ethics. Students compare absolutist and relativist approaches, consider agape and pacifism, and practise applying ethical theories to contemporary issues. Set-text study develops precise use of scholars and evidence.	Transition to New Testament Studies Students consolidate and revisit set texts from Philosophy and Ethics before beginning New Testament Studies. They investigate prophecy regarding the Messiah and the religious, political and social world of first-century Palestine, including Roman occupation and religious groups. This contextual knowledge provides the foundation needed to interpret New Testament texts with greater historical and theological understanding.	New Testament Studies: Christology in John Students undertake close study of John's Prologue, the 'I am' sayings, titles of Jesus, and miracles and signs. They explore what these texts communicate about the identity and significance of Jesus and consider their literary and theological context. Set-text work develops students' ability to interpret primary material, engage with scholarly perspectives and support judgements with precise textual evidence.	New Testament Studies: Interpreting the Fourth Gospel Alongside revision and internal examinations, students study approaches to interpreting the New Testament and investigate the purpose and authorship of the Fourth Gospel. They consider claims about John's Gospel, including its presentation of Jesus and its spiritual and theological character, applying contextual and textual knowledge developed across the year.	New Testament Studies: Consolidation Students continue their study of interpreting the text and the purpose and authorship of the Fourth Gospel while consolidating Year 12 knowledge. Retrieval, synoptic connections and extended writing enable students to identify relationships between Philosophy, Ethics and New Testament Studies and prepare for the greater independence and evaluative demands of Year 13.
Assessment	Timed essay and knowledge retrieval. AO1/AO2 feedback, peer/self assessment and targeted redrafting.	Timed essay and application tasks. AO1/AO2 feedback, retrieval and 1:1 feedback.	Set-text and contextual knowledge assessment. Timed analytical response and feedback.	New Testament essay / textual analysis. AO1/AO2 feedback and targeted improvement.	Year 12 internal examinations, followed by diagnostic feedback and targeted revision.	Timed essay, retrieval and consolidation of Year 12 content.

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Year 13	Philosophy of Religion and Religion and Ethics Students return to Philosophy and Ethics with greater conceptual sophistication. In Philosophy they examine Analogy and Symbol, Verification and Falsification, and Language Games, analysing debates about the meaning and cognitive status of religious language. In Ethics they study Meta-Ethics, Religion and Morality and Deontology, including the categorical imperative. Set-text study strengthens scholarly comparison and evaluation.	Philosophy of Religion and Religion and Ethics Students examine critiques of religious belief and compare key set texts, including the Russell-Copleston debate. They then develop their ethical study through Virtue Ethics and Medical Ethics, considering Aristotle's Golden Mean and applying ethical reasoning to issues surrounding abortion, euthanasia, ensoulment and personhood. Students increasingly synthesise scholars and reach sustained evaluative judgements.	Philosophy of Religion and New Testament Studies Students study Life after Death and Science and Religion, revisiting set texts and evaluating competing religious and non-religious perspectives. In New Testament Studies they examine ways of interpreting Scripture, the Kingdom of God and why Jesus had to die. Students consider resurrection, literal and non-literal interpretation and the delayed parousia, making increasingly synoptic connections across the course.	New Testament Studies and synoptic consolidation Students study the Crucifixion and Resurrection, scientific and historical-critical challenges, and New Testament teaching about how Christians should live. They evaluate evidence for and against resurrection claims and consider the continuing significance of biblical teaching for Christian life. The term concludes with structured revision across all three papers, strengthening recall, comparison and examination technique.	Examination Preparation Students undertake systematic revision of all units across Philosophy of Religion, Religion and Ethics and New Testament Studies. Retrieval, timed essays, essay planning and targeted feedback are used to address individual areas for development. Students refine the selection and deployment of scholars, set texts and evidence and practise constructing concise, sustained and well-supported judgements under examination conditions.	
Assessment	Timed essays and set-text assessment. AO1/AO2 feedback, peer/self assessment and redrafting.	Timed essays and applied ethics assessment. Targeted AO1/AO2 feedback and retrieval.	Timed Philosophy and New Testament responses. Synoptic retrieval and feedback.	Full-paper / timed examination practice across all three papers with diagnostic feedback. Revision begins – pupils begin study leave 30 th April 2027	Exams: Paper 1 Thursday, 27th May 2027 (morning) – 2 hours Paper 2: Philosophy and Ethics: Tuesday 8th June 2027 (morning) – 2 hours Paper 3: New Testament: Wednesday 16th June 2027 (morning) – 2 hours	