



Information about Religious Education

'The Catholic school is first and foremost a place to encounter the living God who in Jesus Christ reveals his transforming love and truth. Its primary goal is above all a question of communicating Christ, of helping to form Christ in the lives of others. That is the reason for their existence.'

From **The Catholic Education of School-Age Children**
(NZ Catholic Bishops Conference 2014)

Our Catholic character is the beating heart of St Mary's College. The Faculty of Religious Education is a vibrant and engaging community of learners. Our mission is to ignite and fan the flames of whakapono/faith in Te Atua/God and to educate ākonga/students in a wide range of dimensions of the Catholic Church.

The Special Character of St Mary's College is lived out each day in many ways. As a community we attend regular Mass, we pray frequently, we are knowledgeable about our Mercy charism, and we consciously aim to reflect Jesus in our actions. Every student partakes in retreat every year and attends regular Religious Education classes.

We have a range of Special Character service and co-curricular opportunities and groups in which we wholeheartedly encourage the students to participate. These include:

Sacramental Programme * Servant Leaders * Liturgical Representatives * Young Vinnies * Gospel Choir * Liturgical Dance * Adoration * Rosary Group * Year12 Quest Retreat * Mission Representatives * Halo Club

Religious Education Teaching

The 2026 Religious Education Programme includes the following topics:

Years 7 & 8

- Mercy Value: Āwhinatanga - Service
- Curriculum Themes and Phases of Learning: Te Atua/God, Te Rongopai/Good News, Ā Tātou Whakapapa/Our Story, Kia Noho Hāhi/Being Church
- Sacred Days and Seasons: Ash Wednesday and Lent, Holy Week and Easter, Transfiguration, Ascension, Pentecost, Annunciation, Assumption, Advent and Christmas
- Relationships and Hauora

Year 9

- Mercy Value: Āwhinatanga - Service

- Curriculum Themes and Phases of Learning: Te Rongopai/Good News - Creation & Co-Creation, Te Atua/God – The Trinity, Karakia, Ā Tātou Whakapapa/Our Story - Our History: From Persecution to Power, Kia Noho Hāhi/Being Church.
- Relationships and Hauora.
- Sacred Days and Seasons: Ash Wednesday and Lent, Holy Week and Easter, Transfiguration, Ascension, Pentecost, Annunciation, Assumption, Advent and Christmas

Year 10

- Mercy Value: Āwhinatanga - Service
- Curriculum Themes and Phases of Learning: Te Rongopai/Good News – Creation and Covenant, Ā Tātou Whakapapa/Our Story - Our History: From Persecution to Power – The Medieval Church, Te Atua/God - Images of God: Study of Religious Art, Kia Noho Hāhi/Being Church, Karakia.
- Relationships and Hauora.
- Sacred Days and Seasons: Ash Wednesday and Lent, Holy Week and Easter, Transfiguration, Ascension, Pentecost, Annunciation, Assumption, Advent and Christmas

Senior Religious Education

At Year12 and Year13 students complete 3 x NZQA 6 Credit Internal Achievement Standards. Students can achieve Religious Education with Endorsement. Some Level 3 RE Assessments are worth 6 Reading Literacy credits. Religious Education is an approved subject and can be used for University Entrance. Each senior level begins with a Mercy Value focus.

In 2026 St Mary's College will continue to implement the new Level 1 Religious Studies Achievement Standards. This will comprise two 5 credit Internal Assessments and a 5 credit External Assessment.

Year 11

- Mercy Value: Āwhinatanga - Service
- Curriculum Themes and Phases of Learning:
 - Theology – Te Atua God: Beliefs and Believing
 - History - Ā Tātou Whakapapa Our History: In Aotearoa
 - Scripture – Te Rongopai Good News: The Gospels – Matthew's Gospel
 - Ethics - Kia Noho Hāhi Being Church: Being Human
- Relationships and Hauora.
- Sacred Days and Seasons: Ash Wednesday and Lent, Holy Week and Easter, Transfiguration, Ascension, Pentecost, Annunciation, Assumption, Advent and Christmas

Year 12

- Mercy Value: Āwhinatanga - Service
- Curriculum Themes and Phases of Learning:
 - Theology - World Religions
 - Ethics – Social Justice
 - Scripture – Mary Model of Faith
- Relationships and Hauora.

- Sacred Days and Seasons: Ash Wednesday and Lent, Holy Week and Easter, Transfiguration, Ascension, Pentecost, Annunciation, Assumption, Advent and Christmas

Year 13

- Mercy Value: Āwhinatanga - Service
- Curriculum Themes and Phases of Learning:
 - Ethics – Bio Ethics
 - History – Church in Aotearoa since Vatican II
 - Philosophy - Making Meaning
- Relationships and Hauora.
- Sacred Days and Seasons: Ash Wednesday and Lent, Holy Week and Easter, Transfiguration, Ascension, Pentecost, Annunciation, Assumption, Advent and Christmas.

Frequently Asked Questions about Religious Education at SMC...

Q: Do all students at St Mary's HAVE to take Religious Education?

A: ALL students at St Mary's College take part in regular Religious Education classes.

Q: How often do the students have Religious Education?

A: All Year 7 and Year 8 classes have 5 lessons of Religious Education in a 10-day cycle. All Year 9 and Year 10 classes have 6 lessons of Religious Education in a 10-day cycle. All Year 11 and Year 12 classes have 7 lessons of Religious Education a 10-day cycle. Year 13 classes have 8 lessons of Religious Education a 10-day cycle

Q: Who teaches Religious Education?

A: RE teaching positions are Special Character positions (S464) by the NZ Catholic Education Office. All teachers are trained in teaching Religious Education, mostly to a Post Graduate level. Senior classes are taught by specialist Theology teachers.

Q: What do the students learn in Religious Education?

A: We follow The Religious Education Curriculum for Catholic Schools in Aotearoa: Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith. This is a continuation of the same curriculum that NZ Catholic Primary Schools use. Students are educated in the Catholic faith, Church teaching, aspects of worship, Church history, and Christian ethics. The Religious Education Curriculum for Catholic Schools in Aotearoa: Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith site

<https://www.totatouwhakapono.nz/curriculum/>

Faith Alive site for Years 7/8 <http://www.faithalive.org.nz/>

Faith Central site for Y9-13 <http://www.faithcentral.co.nz/>

Q: Is it all really Catholic?

A: Yes! We are proudly and unapologetically *Catholic*. The Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith curriculum is designed to educate students about *Catholicism*, and its place in the world. Whanau who choose St Mary's College should have a desire for their child to receive an education in Catholic Church teaching.

Q: Will they learn about other religions?

A: In Year11 and Year12 there is a unit of work, giving an overview of world religions, then focusing on comparing and contrasting key beliefs with Catholic Church teaching. In Year10 students learn about Islam in the Middle Ages history topic. Due to Christianity's shared history with Judaism, there are elements of Jewish practice and tradition woven through the curriculum at most year levels. In Year9 and Year11 students learn about Māori spirituality.

Q: What if the students have never done Religious Education before?

A: The Tō Tātou Whakapono Our Faith Curriculum is a Year1 to Year13 course. Learning objectives at Year7 assume the student has already completed 6 years of this curriculum. Because of this, students who are new to Religious Education at Year7 will be introduced to a lot of new concepts. The Year7 programme has been adapted to support all Year7 students. Teachers of Year7 will support your daughter so she can access the curriculum, however your support and input is vital.

Q: What if we are not Catholic?

A: First and foremost - we love and appreciate all ākonga in our classrooms and are very inclusive. Parents are the first teachers of their children in matters of faith, and it is our job to work in partnership with you. It is important to note that Catholic Church teaching will be presented to your daughters as Religious Truth, therefore it is vital that you discuss religious concepts with your daughters - particularly if your family are members of a different Faith Tradition, or don't prescribe to a particular Faith Tradition.

