

A. General Framework

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A. General Framework



RATIONALE

RATIONALE

We are drawing up this document conscious of echoes reverberating from the Teresian Association Plenary Assembly¹, urging us to renew our commitment to handing on the faith, taking into account both the prophetic intuition of our Teresian roots and the times we live in. As a starting point we take a paragraph of that Assembly's working document².

"We live in a world of deep inequality and increasing exclusion, of uncertainty and quest for meaning, of a fragility that affects individuals, social institutions and the very planet itself. But it is also a world where new possibilities are opening up, offering opportunities and encouragement to all who wish to commit themselves to developing an alternative form of globalisation (...)

To live and share the Gospel in today's world invites us to a new way of being Christians: people who can build together in a pluralist society, who can hold onto certainty and tolerate doubt, who can express their faith in terms that address the deepest and most universal human experiences, and who seek, alongside others, a more just and inclusive society, open to the transcendent and interdependent in solidarity. (...)

To stand in solidarity with those who are disadvantaged and excluded has always been an essential responsibility for those committed to announcing the Good News of Christ, and it is even more so today."

These attitudes fly in the face of many dominant features of our culture, ones that have increasingly taken root in today's children and teenagers: materialistic and superficial, possessive and individualistic, consumerist and morally relativist. In the face of this it is pertinent to ask: can we hand on the Christian faith in this cultural context? And if so, how can we do this today in a Teresian school?

This document seeks in some cases to confirm, and in others to redirect, the mission of handing on the faith to which we are committed. The subtitle, **Framework Document for Faith Development and Social Outreach**, is intentionally chosen. In it we wish to clearly state that in our Plan for Faith Development it is important to link up two aspects of the Christian experience in a meaningful way. The first is the experience of meeting the Lord, the Friend always at our side, who draws out our best selves. The second is living out love and service towards our brothers and sisters, being close to and helping the weakest, in a spirit of solidarity, social outreach and transformative action.

1.- Plenary Assembly. Los Negrales, Madrid, Spain. July 2006.

2.- Working Document, TA Plenary Assembly, July 2006, pp 5,6.

We need to start over again in this effort, moving beyond tiredness, routine and the obstacles that prevent us from fully living our mission. Now is the moment to listen to the call to *“Go out and tell the Good News”*.

It is for these pupils and students in our schools today that God has given us our teaching vocation.

A. General Framework



I.

ETHOS AND IDENTITY

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This Plan of Faith development and Social Outreach follows from the document **Identity and Mission of the Educational Centres of the Teresian Association**. As expressed there, the educational ethos of these centres has an axis running through everything: to educate in a Christian way, and to express this in practical action, **linking** the academic dimension with the Christian dimension of handing on the faith.

Teresian schools aim to produce deeply human people, agents for transforming society, through the educational style and spiritual approach of Poveda. **God-become-human in Jesus** inspires our presence in the school, the choices we make, the actions we promote, and the interaction we encourage with society.

We see Catholic Christian education as a **whole** of many components:

- an awareness of being Church,
- an anthropology of Christian inspiration which approaches education as a whole process,
- an educational climate where all students are welcomed and integrated, especially the disadvantaged.

This education

- prioritises religion, spirituality and values,
- affords time and place for encountering oneself and others,
- offers a faith-view of contemporary life, along with education in social and civic responsibility,
- refers explicitly to the Gospel at opportune moments,
- provides spiritual experience,
- encourages volunteer programmes,
- fosters a spirit of solidarity.

We believe that the reference to Jesus Christ brings to education a horizon of meaning for human life, and moral criteria for living together in society. From this basic reference we offer the educational approach of Teresian schools: a Christian-style education, a humanising education, an education for citizenship, and an education appropriate to its social context.

From a Christian perspective we consider it vital to shape persons who take active part in society, who are committed to the human rights of all people, who are sensitive to ecology, able to critically analyse, open to dialogue and cooperation.

In the face of prevailing relativism- while appreciating the minimum morality demanded of all – our plan offers those values which, based on faith in Jesus Christ, make full sense today. We aim to educate free people, believers, with criteria for guiding their lives; who know how to choose *being* over *having*, solidarity over individualism, respect over intolerance, cooperation over competition, critical awareness over passivity, effort over indifference; persons who respect diversity and are prepared for intercultural and inter-faith dialogue.

Love, in its different guises, is the perennial sap of our educational approach, with its plan of faith development and social outreach. We affirm the absolute value of each person, who is capable of loving and being loved, the respect he/she deserves, the transforming power of love, the duty to serve and help each needy person, preference for the weaker, the defence of each one's rights, involvement in changing society for the better.

A. General Framework



II.

**CONTEXT
OF THE STUDENTS**

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If we look *with both eye and heart* at today's students we can see that they experience a degree of difficulty and emptiness, but also reveal many **positive features** to inspire our approach to faith development.

Our children, teenagers and young adults are submerged in a consumerist, materialistic society. Needs are endlessly created, and possessive individualism is on the rise. The alienating effects of this culture make it essential that we develop persons who strive to be autonomous, who continue to grow inwardly and who become socially committed.

On the other hand post-modern youth culture reaffirms the **desire to be oneself**, and encourages young people to **give expression to their personal experience**. Despite some of its negative aspects (self-centred, self-sufficient, and overly subjective) the need to be oneself nonetheless presents **educational moments** for handing on the faith.

Such moments arise

- when we attend to the student's personal fulfilment, respecting his/her dignity and uniqueness,
- when we recognise the values and limitations of each one, using the goal of self-fulfilment as a force for good,
- when we cultivate the affective dimension, the feelings and emotions which faith should generate in our lives.

If we appreciate the value of **lived experienced** we can create many scenarios for handing on the faith to students: the encounter with self and with others, friendship, cooperation, doing a specific service locally or elsewhere, awareness of current affairs and developing a faith view of that reality. Students' desire for experience encourages us to create faith-based social events, and Christian groups which encourage spiritual life, celebrations and a Christian dimension. Groups such as Youth ACIT, (the TA youth movement), solidarity groups, sacramental preparation groups and others are geared towards this.

We are convinced that **the family** is all-important in handing on faith. At the present time we can see a certain emptiness in many children when it comes to understanding and living out a faith dimension. They have had little Christian initiation in their families, due to the busyness or indifference of their parents.

Encouraging faith in a pastoral way in the classroom can be very difficult today because of different mentalities and beliefs in families, with their repercussions on students. Family problems, especially break-ups, also leave their mark on children, situations which always need delicate handling, respect and affective support. Apparently an obstacle, all of this may nonetheless be seen as a challenge and motivation for encouraging a faith approach, since if some children do not get this at school they will never receive it anywhere else.

A. General Framework



III.

**POVEDAN EDUCATIONAL
THEORY IN FAITH
DEVELOPMENT**

III. POVEDAN EDUCATIONAL THEORY IN FAITH DEVELOPMENT

The typical features of Povedan education must always guide the work of handing on the faith, whether in pastoral action in the classroom, at personal level, in Christian groups, or in solidarity groups. Educators will, to borrow Poveda's words,

- Be aware of the fundamental nature of our mission and its demands: *"To bear much good fruit your mission must be built on faith, and on its companion virtue, a willingness to put the other(s) first."*
- Be convinced that each person has good qualities in him/herself that we can foster as educators by creating the right conditions. Students who may seem shallow nonetheless possess *"real treasures"* within, and *"each one must be helped to give the very best of him or herself."*
- Know each student well enough through observation and talking to them. *"If you are to educate you must know your student well; otherwise even the best approach will not bring results."*
- Watch for the moments that daily life constantly offers. *"Each person has a good side that will emerge if you can touch it, a memory you may evoke to positive effect. You can also adopt an attitude that of itself helps elicit a good reaction. Have you tried all of these?"*
- Inspire an essential respect: *"Avoid starting out by making demands on your students, but rather by giving fully of yourself; do not be dependent on their response."* *"When the student feels that she is cared for, that her affairs are of concern, that her progress matters to someone, she will be open to teaching, advice and correction."*
- Realise the educational value of your own life-witness: *"Your example is what your students most readily pick up. If you are everything you should be, they too will become as you want them to be."*
- *Cooperate with others, combining efforts.* These words express a vision of coordinated educational and pastoral action within each school, and within the network of Teresian schools, so that the best experiences can be shared and enrich many.
- Recall how the *early Christians* affected their society. This is a fundamental reference for the Teresian Association. Pedro Poveda admired the quality of presence, the attitudes and behaviour of those early followers of Jesus. He especially highlights the unity and mutual love they lived out in those first Christian faith communities, the way they shared in a spirit of solidarity with the most needy. All of these were for their contemporaries the most eloquent sign of God's presence.

Povedan education has to be especially meaningful through pastoral action, giving attention to specific students, taking into account his/her age, personal history, mind set, ability to relate, ways of thinking and feeling. At all times one should keep in mind three characteristics of effective relationships with regard to faith development: *the affective dimension*, which helps the student to savour spiritual experience, *enjoyment*, needed for living the process, and a *group dimension*, for communicating with each other, where activities happen and questioning can be shared.

A. General Framework



IV.

SHARED MEANINGS

IV. SHARED MEANINGS

There are many basic values shared by all teachers in our Teresian schools, values which, in one way or another, are promoted across all areas and in all school activities:

- Priority care for *the individual person with his/her gifts and limitations*. The theory and practice in our schools, whether for general or for faith education, starts from an understanding of the human person as a rich, complex reality, in a process of growth. It places us before each student with realism, understanding and hope.
- *The positive belief that the human person can arrive at the fullness of personhood*. This process of *becoming* requires much support for students, patiently offered and without pressure for immediate results. They need teachers that never tire of offering educational moments, moral criteria, stimulation, opportunities, a certain closeness and *one to one contact* in the process. All of this in the awareness that the task is to form persons able to take their own life seriously, conscious of their own dignity, autonomous, with moral integrity, able to love, to give freely and be socially responsible.
- *Reference to Jesus Christ* as compass and guide to our educational approach, because in Him the human person finds light by which to understand him/herself, orient their life, and commit themselves to others. He is Jesus, the Friend, with a human face and feelings, who expresses through His life God's plan for humanity, who speaks tenderly to us of God, inviting us to approach Him with trust.
- Awareness of *belonging to the Church*, the People of God, a reality conditioned by ourselves, the people who compose it; a Church that brings us the Good News of the Gospel, teaching that all human beings are brothers and sisters, and encouraging the ecumenical dimension; a Church which works for human rights, a requirement of our commitment to build God's Kingdom in human history.
- *Social outreach* as a consequence of Christian faith, shown in different ways: seeing society with eyes of faith, letting ourselves to be challenged by it, listening to the needs and pain of people, radically changing self-centred attitudes and behaviour. Our goal is to change students' indifference into caring attention and commitment to others, whether that be to individuals, groups, countries or good causes.

A. General Framework



V.

**APPROACH TO
AND COORDINATION
OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT**

V. APPROACH TO AND COORDINATION OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT

The faith development of Teresian Schools has for its ultimate aim to encourage children and teenagers to develop their full selves in the light of Jesus' message; to learn to see all human beings as He sees them, to judge life as He judges it, to think and feel like Him, to live with Him in communion with God the Father.

The faith development plan in our schools links up a number of elements: a humanising education with a Christian focus, the transmission of faith through lived experience, social outreach as a consequence of Christian spirituality, a religious education that gives students a discerning approach to contemporary culture.

1. A humanising education with a Christian focus

Since the Gospel grows in human soil, faith development begins with a humanising education. This education, whose aim is to develop all the dimensions and potential of the human person, affirms the value of certain educational goals and types of learning that need time, methodology and support from teachers.

We see this experience as **an educational threshold**, integrating many dimensions that prepare the student to receive the Christian message: education in human and social values, education for living with others and responsible citizenship, education for questioning and seeking, education for social cooperation and commitment. In reality all that we impart can be seen as creating, more or less explicitly, that necessary threshold for Christian initiation. This work is being carried out in all areas and all teachers are part of it.

The long and complex process of **initiation into faith** requires a variety of actions and strategies, very much geared to the type of students:

- To offer occasions that prompt them to ask **radical questions** about self, current events, the meaning of life and human history; questions that make them seek answers beyond the self, that point towards what is worth living for, committing to, and working for.
- To promote authentic interpersonal relationships in the school, where the student recognises the other person as a **you** to whom they can talk, and whom they must respect, love and help, and with whom they can work.
- To encourage the experience of **freedom** as enabling them to make **fundamental options in life** towards becoming more oneself, more human, more of a person, more responsible for others, to undertake ethical commitments, to opt for the human and social values of the Gospel.

- To help students discover their own capacity for interiorisation, silence, reflection and listening, enabling them to reach self-knowledge, to appreciate the best of themselves, to recognise other people's values, to seek meaning.
- To help students to value their own cultural and religious roots and at the same time to know and be familiar with other Christian traditions, the main world religions, and the secular humanist tradition; to promote in daily life attitudes of respect, listening and dialogue with people of all persuasions; to recognise them as a richness and as a footprint of God in the history of humanity.

2. The transmission of faith through lived experience

Today more than ever we need the conviction that to announce the Christian message in a school context is indeed *good news* for the students, and to put our best efforts into handing on the faith. It is best achieved through lived experience, as well as explicit evangelisation, through offering platforms where students can express doubts, and ideally find in the Gospel convincing wisdom, joy and inspiration. In this way they learn to see and judge the events of life with Christian criteria.

Faith experience is basic in learning to be a Christian, and this should be paramount in faith development planning. We see faith experience as happening in that inner, spiritual and deeply human dimension, where the mysterious presence of God-made-human resides, enabling us to listen to His Word.

To meet Jesus is the starting point of evangelisation, as it was for the early Christians, towards whom Povedan spirituality directs us. For this reason the first task in pastoral action has to be to prepare and encourage this encounter. The aim is to help the student find in his/her own inner self the loving presence of the God of Jesus Christ, and to make it the centre of their life. This is the decisive moment of Christian initiation.

How to prepare a faith experience? How to initiate them into prayer? In today's context one has to prepare the conditions carefully: a calm atmosphere of outer and inner silence, encounter with the self, listening to one's own heart, becoming aware of one's feelings.

As St Teresa suggests, the path of religious experience is one of silence and interiorisation, an attentive listening that prepares one to receive the word of Jesus as Friend. It is, she says, "*relating in friendship to One whom we know loves us*". The obstacles to overcome in this process are many: shallowness, distraction, consumerism, frenetic pace of life, prejudice, previous unsatisfactory experiences, an off-putting image of God.

We can offer a number of things to teenagers and young people: to join groups which aim to build up Christian identity,

in which they can discuss their life experience, have one to one guidance, invitations to personal or communal prayer, courses of preparation for the sacraments, have personal contact with people who live the Gospel, and do some volunteering in the service of others. Two things need highlighting: the process of Christian initiation is necessarily **personal**, yet it demands **Christian groups** that provide a living context for experiencing faith. The witness of educators is much needed.

The Gospel accounts are a perfect model of how faith should be taught: Jesus approaches people, adjusts His teaching to their capacity, and uses examples from their own environment to lead them to a different perspective on daily life and new possibilities.

Before ever it was written down the Gospel was a faith experience, lived and shared by the early Christians. Now we need to reverse the process: to begin by listening to the Gospel text and its parables, to let ourselves be challenged, to feel the mercy of the Lord in our own life and to discover the face of God that Jesus Christ reveals in the Gospel. That God is a God of love, who supports us at all times, encourages our best self, forgives endlessly, and combats evil at our side.

3. Social outreach as a fruit of Christian spirituality

There are two basic aspects of the Christian faith that cannot be separated: on the one hand the call to come to know the Lord, recognising Him as Friend and Saviour, and, on the other, the call to meet and serve other people, in solidarity, to share what one has, especially with the poor.

Our educational ideal, which aims to humanise and transform society, demands that educators be very attentive to the values, deficiencies and needs of each social context. They should know how to critically analyse the structures that condition society, and to, propose remedies, allowing themselves be illumined by the Gospel.

We remember the document drawn up by the Teresian Association *“To Educate in Justice, Solidarity, Peace and Human Rights”* (May 1998), which is very helpful for this work.

To achieve radical change in the students, to move from an individualistic to a social vision, in solidarity and commitment, we must all accept this objective. We work towards it in all areas, plans and school activities, combining our efforts and rowing all in the same direction, with suitable methodology.

The motivation for this we find in the Gospel: Jesus of Nazareth lived like the Good Samaritan of the parable and asks us to do the same. He wants us to teach this life-lesson: to draw close to all those who have fallen by the wayside, the

poor, humiliated and hurt, all the oppressed, exploited or excluded, to have fellow-feeling for them and help in their liberation.

To achieve this behaviour one has to shape *the heart and mentality* of the students, as in the parable: teaching them **to look** at the suffering of others, their poverty, exclusion or exploitation; **to take on the pain** of those wounded by society; **to draw close** to situations of injustice and **to act** to change them.

It's a question of ensuring that problems of injustice, exploitation, social exclusion, and disregard for human rights, touch the hearts and minds of the students; that they interiorise this concern; that an attitude of compassion becomes part of their plans and life commitment; that they grasp the idea that God's plan for humanity goes forward through the contribution and commitment of Christians seeking a solution to these problems.

For this learning to happen different strategies must be linked up: to make students aware of social data, to programme volunteer activities, to suggest actions that can be done in daily life, to invite them to work in international solidarity projects, to stimulate ecologically-aware behaviour, to request respect towards people who are different, to back fair trade and responsible consumption, to be friendly to immigrants, to be present at political meetings and demonstrations. For all of this parental collaboration and support is needed, from parents who are informed and prepared for it.

InteRed, the NGO of the Teresian Association, must have a presence in our schools, so that students and families are familiar with it and collaborate in its programmes. This cooperation, which begins in their time at school, can extend beyond the school stage and be a means of on-going education and commitment in solidarity.

This chapter, the social outreach of the faith, opens up many possibilities and suggests guidelines for faith development teams and teaching teams. Some of the joint actions we should undertake are: to find out the activities already happening in our schools; to make a compendium of the educational actions and materials documented by InteRed and other NGOs, to classify them by age level and give them to all the schools, with good user guides. It is a way of combining energies and motivating people for this socio-educational commitment.

4. The religious education that brings faith to listen and respond to contemporary culture

The aims of religious education may be summed up as follows: to transmit knowledge of the Catholic Christian faith and tradition in a way similar to other academic disciplines; to offer the Christian interpretation of the human condition,

our history and the world; to explicitly announce Jesus Christ and His message of salvation; to offer an informed faith, open-minded and rational, that brings faith to listen and respond to contemporary culture.

In a plural society like ours where different cultures and religions live side by side, we must prepare the students to take plurality on board, to see difference as a value and to engage with it constructively, grounded in a sense of their own identity. Inter-faith dialogue, a challenge of our times, needs to be approached on the basis of a serious Christian education and experience, something that must be addressed in the teaching of religion as a subject and in the faith development plan.

There are multiple means available (books, audiovisuals, materials for tutorials, dynamics for group leadership) and we need to compile between us all a guide to these resources for all to use.

Within the plans for improving our education we should prioritise the teaching of religion in school, since there is a notable lack of religious culture in a great many students, and in some cases, the approach to religion as an academic subject may leave something to be desired. Like every other staff member, the religion teacher should commit her/himself to in-service training in both programme contents and methodologies.

A. General Framework



VI.

**HANDING ON THE FAITH
TODAY: TOWARDS A
SHARED MISSION**

VI. HANDING ON THE FAITH TODAY: TOWARDS A SHARED MISSION

The *raison d'être* of our schools is to carry out the mission of the Teresian Association in the area of education. For this we rely:

- On a clear definition of the school ethos, along with the educational plan we offer to society, and, as part of it, the faith development plan with its social outreach. In this way we make known the kind of person we wish to shape, the model of society we seek to promote, the values we support, the ethical and moral dimensions that guide our education, the mode of addressing faith education, pastoral action and social commitment, the methodologies and processes we follow, the style of educating and of creating an educational climate. Reference to the Incarnation of God as a human being is the basis of this *true humanism* that P. Poveda proposes, and that we adopt as our educational aim.
- On the human and professional qualities of many teachers, who bring to the students the richness of their personality and training, and who support and share the vision, mission and values of the Teresian School.
- On **the commitment of the staff** to fully humanising the students, expressed in a family-like relationship of care and respect for each student, especially those needing more support, and through shaping her/him for personal autonomy and responsibility towards self and others.
- **The building of collaborative and effective relationships** which are so much needed today, given the complexity of school life. Looking at ourselves as a staff of teachers, and looking at the students, it is important that we encourage and revitalise our cohesion, that we meet to discover together where the challenges to education lie, to create communication and collaboration networks, to appreciate the complementarity of teamwork, to share experiences, to recognise together the human richness of the Gospel values, to stimulate each other, to give a hand when someone needs it, to live in a fellowship that is always out-going.
- The need for **witness and coherent living** for transmitting values and fundamental options. We know from experience that coherent living is what convinces more than words. We transmit what we are, since the power to convince comes from what we truly are.
- **Responsible work and preparation.** All are aware of the need to study, to continually update and reflect on one's own teaching practice, so as to continually improve. There is a need for prepared action in faith development,

approved by management, which proposes actions, offers materials and helps tutors and religion teachers in this task.

Tutors play a significant role in animating the school and encouraging social outreach. Tutorial periods should have specific contents and a well planned methodology, and there are excellent materials for this. Tutors also have **the link with the student's family**, with the double aim of information and expressing the ethos. Teachers are responsible to see that subject programmes and school activities are imbued with the educational aims of the school.

Religion teachers are specifically skilled in teaching the contents of the Christian faith. These teachers today need support, since this is a difficult area, posing real challenge.

In schools where catechesis for First Holy Communion and Confirmation is given, support must be given to the **catechists or group animators**, and their action will be incorporated in overall planning.

The plan of faith development and social outreach relies on **the families** for their support and collaboration, for which they must be well informed. Activities together, liturgical celebrations and festivals should be promoted, and all should be invited to take part in solidarity campaigns, volunteer programmes, prayer meetings, and parental education sessions.

Children's experience of the practice of the Catholic faith, which used to happen within the family before, and which still happens in many cases, is often in crisis today. It is becoming increasingly common to meet mother and fathers who don't practice the Catholic faith and who do not support a Catholic formation. The Faith Development Plan should allow for the deficit of religious practice in many students and the management of these situations, while presenting the Gospel and the Christian message in a meaningful and attractive way to the most disaffected students and families with another approach to life.

B. Implementing this approach



I.

WHOLE SCHOOL APPROACH

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Aim of the year

The aim or motto of each school year marks the life of the school to a degree, and serves as an axis for educational activities at all levels: the faith development plan, celebrations, daily work, school atmosphere, campaigns, experiences of faith and solidarity.

There are various participative ways of drawing up this aim. The important thing is that “*between everyone*” we would come up with an idea, a value or a message to be encouraged or reaffirmed throughout the coming year, that we would adopt it and encourage its living out. It helps if a **catchy phrase** can be used. For the whole educational community to welcome it, it must be well launched at the best time, and students should be involved.

To motivate students at the start of the school day

The school day should begin with some minutes of **silence, reflection and prayer** in each classroom. A teacher might read a text and make an encouraging comment, or students themselves might do so. The Faith Development Department takes charge of preparing texts each week.

In doing this our aim is to offer the students a few moments before starting school work to hear and take in a significant message. It might be a Gospel passage, or one from a Church document, something from St Pedro Poveda, Josefa Segovia, Victoria Diez, an inspiring passage from other authors, some life witness worthy of note, the recall of significant dates, news of local or world events, or some news from the Teresian Association.

An educational focus for all subject areas

There are some social problems and challenges so huge that they must be the focus of all our educational endeavour, approached insistently **from all areas and in all educational activities** so that they make a deep impression on the students.

These include problems of injustice, social exclusion, violation of human rights, world poverty and international inequalities, environmental destruction, the challenges posed by immigration, inter-cultural and inter-religious dialogue. This focus should also inform the choice of textbooks.

Faith celebrations

There are dates in the school calendar where the **liturgical celebration of the Catholic faith** is especially appropriate: the opening of the school year, the school feast day, liturgical seasons, feasts of St Pedro Poveda, etc.

If they are to be true celebrations of faith, lived with meaning and joy, these liturgies must be well prepared and geared to the experiential world of children and teenagers. A big challenge today is to celebrate faith in a meaningful, understandable way, so that the students as they grow can learn to identify with the Christian experience. For this, texts and liturgical gestures need to be well explained, and students should be involved as much as possible: proclaiming the Word, making petitions and giving thanks, bringing their lives to the celebration, expressing feelings, using body language and celebratory gestures that involve the whole congregation.

The space, atmosphere and motivation for these celebrations need careful preparation to enable the students to be attentive and involved. On some occasions the whole educational community will take part, on others it will be in stages, and by classes. Each occasion has its own character, but all need special preparation so as to recover **the sign value of the presence among us of the God of love and compassion**.

Living the rhythm of the liturgical seasons

The liturgical seasons of Advent, Christmas, Lent, Easter, and Pentecost mark the life of the Church and of Christians, and also have their expression in school life. Each of these seasons has its meaning, which can be expressed in the decoration of the classrooms and school, at the start of the school day, in the times of reflection and prayer, and in celebrations.

Liturgical seasons are an opportunity to gather and celebrate together the faith of all members of the educational community who wish to take part. The celebrations may vary: Eucharist, Sacrament of Reconciliation, prayer vigil.

These community celebrations of the life and Paschal Mystery of Jesus Christ are a visible sign and expression of our Catholic Christian identity and our mission to hand on the faith.

Celebration of Marian feasts

In Teresian schools we have always lovingly celebrated the feasts which help to reveal Mary at the heart of the Christian mystery, and to receive her as mother, protector and model for believers, remembering her "*Let it be*" at the Incarnation, the mystery of Christmas, her vigil at the foot of the Cross, Mary at Eastertide. Marian sanctuaries are another focus, and there we discover how close Mary is to the people of God, and the depth of popular devotion.

Witnesses to faith

In the face of so many banal role models marketed today, we consider it very educational to offer models of faith and moral values to children and teenagers, and to present the life of these witnesses attractively, making use of them at all levels: early Christians who gave their lives for their faith, St Stephen, St Agnes, St Cecelia; the life story of people of great moral vision who brought about important changes in our world, among others Gandhi, Mother Teresa of Calcutta, Oscar Romero, Martin Luther King...

Among the witnesses to faith who model a truly human life, lived for others, we must in Teresian schools highlight Pedro Poveda in first place. We often note that students find a challenge in the person of Pedro Poveda, and that his message, priorities, and the witness he gave in difficult times, have a positive effect on them. His life can illustrate for them what faith brings to human life and the life of society. We should also make known, as witnesses to faith and an inspiring life, the rich biography of Josefa Segovia and the attractive profile of Victoria Diez.

Learning to pray, alone or together

St Teresa of Avila described prayer as *“relating like a friend to One whom we know loves us”*. Experience has shown that students are open to this, and to learn prayer they need to learn methods, to be encouraged, to see others pray, and if necessary to receive one to one guidance.

There are a number of steps involved: to learn to be comfortable with silence, to discover God’s presence as living within, to learn to focus, remember and listen; to take in the Gospel story, placing oneself in the scene, and also to express and share one’s experience of prayer, to feel human belonging, to discover and live out the values that Jesus of Nazareth offers.

One to one guidance

We have learned in the school of Poveda that *“When the student feels she is cared for, that her affairs are of concern, that her progress matters to someone, she will be open to teaching, advice and correction.”*

This conversation between teacher and student requires of the teacher a certain affective closeness, interest, and warm personal attention, discovering the student’s needs, expectations and fears. It means finding the best moments for this personal dialogue, so that it is not only spontaneous but on-going, offering one to one guidance. Tutors have a fundamental role here.

We consider it important for students to have access to the presence of a priest/chaplain at personal and group level.

Relating to the disadvantaged and social outreach

The disadvantaged are never far away and constitute a strong challenge for Christians and an educational reference point for Teresian schools aware of their Povedan roots and inspiration.

An ongoing lesson at all educational levels is given by people in need, both at home and abroad, and as educators we should live as good Samaritans and teach our students to help anyone in need: to help students **to see** the suffering of others without turning away, the misery, exploitation and dehumanisation; to help them dare to look, observe and question; to feel as their own the situation of deprived people in our city and our world, to feel the pain and injustice of situations which so many people have to live; to **do something** to help those in need, to work at least a little towards making a difference.

We have good experiences in this area, and deserving special attention: Mission Sunday, Christmas, Solidarity Day, Peace Day, volunteer actions of solidarity and service to the most disadvantaged.

Incorporating the pastoral approach of Youth ACIT in the school, and relations with other Teresian Association organisations

In both the pre-teen and teen years relational and group elements play a huge role, as is also the case with religious experience. For this reason faith development should offer group experiences that help young people to live their faith and develop a commitment to it.

The Teresian Association has a youth movement, Youth ACIT, with a long experience and a pastoral plan for teenagers and young people that responds to this need. To achieve participation in Youth ACIT groups, students need to get to know the features of this movement. The invitation to join it should be done in a motivational way, and resulting groups need to be well animated.

Young people should be able to stay in contact with the Teresian Association after graduating from school, and participation in Youth ACIT can be a means to this, as its human and spiritual development programme is very wide. Participation in other organisations and TA movements can also fulfil this objective: actions promoted by InteRed, volunteer work at local level, the Past Pupil Association, Easter gatherings etc.

We must develop more, as a richness for our schools, the awareness that the TA is an international association, encourage twinning of schools between the northern and southern hemispheres, and carry out national and international projects between schools.

Updating of staff in faith and TA spirituality

The educational ethos of our schools, which have the features of Christian and Povedan identity, require ongoing education of staff.

It is important to organise, at least once a year, a meeting to enhance appreciation of the essential Christian vision. TA spirituality is normally shared at appropriate moments and through documentation.

Teachers taking part in the faith development plan need training, stimulus, materials, and concrete support from the team. It is helpful to evaluate what is done, something that can be stimulated by the management and guidance team.

Inviting parents to know and live TA spirituality

Parents have chosen our school for a variety of reasons. Some clearly express that they have chosen our ethos because it coincides with their beliefs and vision of life.

All the families will have some relationship with the school. They all must know, and as far as possible support, the identity and mission of Teresian schools. This should be presented in a clear and attractive way. In this relationship of the school with parents, mutual understanding and shared values begin to emerge. As we wish the participation of everyone, we appreciate all the more the support of those parents closest to the values of the Teresian Association.

Apart from the usual collaborative structures of a school, they can be invited to take part in the wide TA movement through groups, meetings, involvement in TA projects. From this movement, inspired in the Incarnation spirituality of the TA, some ACIT members may emerge (TA members whose commitment differs from that of the core group).

B. Implementing this approach



II.

**APPROACH FOR
EACH STAGE**

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FAITH DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR KINDERGARTEN AND FIRST CYCLE PRIMARY

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILDREN OF THIS AGE

Developmental pattern

- The child of this age is active and expresses him/herself with joyfully, spontaneously, and with imagination, values to be recognised and nurtured.
- The affective dimension is basic to the educational relationship: the child needs to love and feel loved, an experience that builds up self-esteem.
- They depend affectively on parents and teachers, who give them confidence and security.
- This stage is very good for educating the emotions, helping the pupils to know, identify, express and control their feelings.

Social dimension

- Experience leads the child to develop interest in things and events.
- Relating to others is vital for shaping the child's personality, making her/him increasingly aware of others and the environment.
- Relating to peers, at times a source of conflict (through ego-centrism), also offers positive experiences (joy of sharing, solidarity, mutual help).
- Peer conversation, listening with respect to those who are different is a good basis for learning to live together peacefully.
- Faith development work should encourage children to respect others, to be generous, friendly, play in a cooperative way, and work in a team.

Spiritual dimension

- This is the age where the child awakens to the religious level. Faith development work should channel their natural joy, imagination and spontaneity. Gestures and symbols which draw their attention are very important.

- Religious awareness does not emerge spontaneously in the child, but is easily acquired by the atmosphere in the family home and school.
- The image of God depends on the image the child has of its father and mother.
- Prayer to God is done in a very simple way.
- Faith development work should help the child to see God like a good father/mother, to address God in her/his own words, to know special times and places: the chapel, the parish, big liturgical celebrations.

2. FAITH DEVELOPMENT AT THIS LEVEL

Personal development

- It is an age of discovery and new experiences.
- It is a good time to reinforce values like friendliness, sharing and solidarity, to encourage self-esteem, work and team play, to develop the capacity to wonder and hope.
- It is easy to awaken attitudes of admiration, respect for others, gratitude and affection.

Handing on the faith

- The Christian family is irreplaceable in teaching values and religious feelings. It happens naturally. Faith development work in school (which should reinforce, or often supply for, family training in this area) should happen daily in an on-going way. It should be seen **in practice**, through the many occasions of school life.
- It is a good stage for religious awakening:
 - **Present Jesus** as someone who was a child like them: He had his family, friends, home; He had his joys and sorrows.
 - **Bring them close to Jesus** using well chosen Gospel stories so they can know Him as a friend.
 - Encourage their friendship with Jesus, their trust in Him, and a loving relationship to Mary, Jesus' Mother.

Faith life and religious experience

- Children can take part in celebrations and simple occasions where they request, offer and give thanks to the Lord, through word, gestures and symbols.
- It is important for the child to take part in some celebrations on given dates with their family.

Methodology and dynamics

- **Games, music** and all kinds of activity, movement, gestures and symbols are basic tools.
- When using stories refer to **familiar surroundings** to facilitate their understanding: parents, home, school, friends, nature round about.
- Children need **very active faith development activities** that draw their attention, touch their feelings, and offer some situations where they are the protagonists.
- In adults they seek security and **affective support**.
- It is vital that teaching staff of this age **work in coordination** so as to plan together how to draw the children close to the person of Jesus, and to create the best resources for this.

3. PASTORAL AIMS AT THIS LEVEL

The girls and boys come to know Jesus as Friend:

- To create situations where they discover Jesus as friend, a friend to everyone, near at hand, someone who was a child like them; a unique and amazing Friend, though remaining unseen; a Jesus who speaks to us and with whom we speak.
- To present Jesus as generous and in solidarity with everyone; someone with a family background, with a mother, Mary, whom He gives to be our mother; with a special Father, who is also Father of all.

They discover the Church as the family of Jesus

- The Church is the great **family of Jesus**, that His friends belong to; each child in the class, parents, teachers, other children from abroad. In this family we are all equal.
- In the great family of Jesus we love and help each other mutually, and we help those in need.
- As members of this family we gather to celebrate feasts.

They experience a joyful faith

- At this age the children live an imaginative and joyful faith; they believe without conditions or interpretations.
- At these times faith is not so much "believing in" as "**experiencing**" that Jesus is close to us and loves us, as our parents love us.

- Contact with nature, the discovery of what is good and beautiful, can awaken in the children feelings of admiration and gratitude towards the Creator of such wonderful things.

They learn to live together and the value of companionship

- We encourage companionship and the ability to get on together, to learn to be friends, to share what they have, to forgive, to help, to say thanks, to respect others and recognise their own mistakes.
- We encourage admiration, respect and care for nature.
- Given the importance that children see adults practice what they preach, they need to experience that we forgive them, that we help them when they need, that we recognise when they do well and we thank them when they do something for us or give some gift.
- At this stage the children begin learning notions of good and bad; they realise the need for good attitudes and norms for living peaceably together.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR SECOND AND THIRD CYCLES OF PRIMARY

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF PUPILS IN THESE CYCLES

Developmental pattern

- These older children are aware of their **development and personal growth**, which helps them to discover themselves and others.
- They **wonder** about everything. It is a stage characterised by activity and questions.
- They show **curiosity** and a desire to experiment and learn new things. They need **action, participation and movement**.
- In faith development it is good to start from experience, helping them to explore it and to elicit questions about the meaning of what they are doing and what is happening around them; to offer **dynamic and symbolic activities**.
- It is a very good time for **acquiring values** and spiritual habits, respect for others, the care and protection of nature, and a spirit of freely giving, generosity and solidarity.

Social dimension

- At this stage socialisation happens through **the peer group**, and although relationships are still unstable, they experience friendship and mutual relating which increase security and self-affirmation.
- The group helps to reinforce human and social values, including working together, responsibility, honesty, service, group work, ability to forgive.
- They provide solidarity for each other and can collaborate for specific needs. These attitudes can be guided, motivated and reinforced with reference to the Gospel.

Spiritual dimension

- A certain scepticism towards things religious begins to emerge. It is important that they express their doubts and ask about what worries them.
- They perceive God in relation to their needs and have recourse to Him in difficulty. They apply to God attributes that are admirable: goodness, justice, greatness, merciful love.
- Prayer is of petition. They spontaneously pray for the solution to problems.
- Faith development at this stage has the challenge of teaching them to pray at a deeper level, teaching them to recognise God's presence within oneself, in others, in life events.
- Special care is taken with liturgical celebrations teaching children to understand the gestures and symbols. These celebrations should be made attractive as regards music, songs, corporal expression, participation, and the homily. In the celebrations they should feel involved, and not mere spectators.

2. FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN THESE CYCLES

Personal development

- The family, including grandparents, continues to be an important reference. Affective dependence on parents and teachers continues to be strong, although the children show fewer expressions of affection than before, as a sign of self-sufficiency, independence and autonomy.
- Our task is to help them to experience the joy of growing in all dimensions and to discover the world around them in a positive way.

- It is a good moment to lead them into a faith view of life, events and the natural world; in this way they may discover signs of God's presence.
- We continue working to develop human and social values with reference to the Gospel: self-esteem, companionship, solidarity, sharing; the responsibility and demands of belonging to a group, family, school.

Handing on faith

- We help these older children to recognise the loving presence of God in their lives, to discover that God loves them and wants them to be happy.
- They gradually approach the mystery of God-become -human. We present Jesus, the man, good, approachable, who did good to all, who invites us to be like Him and follow Him.
- They discover Jesus as friend, who lived at a given time in history, discovered the world around Him, questioned, did good to people, discovered that God greatly loved Him and loves us all, which was his main message.
- We aim to make Mary, Mother of Jesus and our spiritual mother, someone meaningful to them.
- It is good to offer role models whom they can admire and identify with; they also need the presence of significant adults in their lives.

Faith life and spiritual experience

- We lead them progressively into **sacramental** life, helping them to understand Christian symbols. The sacraments of the Eucharist and of Reconciliation need careful preparation and celebration.
- We help them understand and live the Christian message as good news for them, offering them spiritual experiences of meditation, listening and reflection on the message.
- We teach them to pray, addressing God in a spontaneous way out of the concrete reality of their lives. Prayer can be for them an experience of *"relating in friendship with One whom we know loves us."*

Methodology and dynamics

- We use stories to present Jesus' message. We motivate them to read some Gospel accounts and give them keys to interpret the text.
- We create a climate of trust to encourage communication, expression of feelings and doubts. We try to give convincing reasons for what is presented, so that the Christian message makes sense to them.

- We help them towards a first basic understanding of the Christian message, so they can formulate it in simple language and begin to live it.

3. AIMS OF FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN THESE CYCLES

That older children would come to know Jesus as a close friend, ready to do good

- To present Jesus as a close friend who lived a life like theirs, who wondered about many things just as they do.
- To present Jesus as a friend to their friends, always ready to do good to others, who was very concerned for the poor and those having a hard time, who prayed and in prayer talked with God, his Father.
- They discover that Jesus calls us and tells us to do good to others, to help them and share what we have.
- To present Jesus as Son of God and help them to discover God as Father, the Father of Jesus and our Father, who loves us, is with us and wants us to be happy.

That they would discover the Church as the group of Jesus' friends

- To present the Church as the group of Jesus' friends who gather to celebrate together all that is happening in life and who want, like Jesus, to do good to others; a Church that is welcoming, opening and witnessing.
- To develop their sense of belonging to the Church. Those who make up the group of Jesus' friends, who want to be and act like Him are Church members.

That they would experience faith as a part of their lives, lived along with others

- To transmit a faith that is part of everyday life, a faith that consists less of knowing than of feeling and living. It is a faith that cannot be lived on one's own, but with others.
- A faith that shows in many ways: when we love others, when we help each other, when we celebrate together, when we value ourselves and others, when we are concerned of those most in need, when we forgive, when we want peace in the world, when we pray, when we listen to Jesus and understand what He wants us to do.
- Faith comes alive in a special way in prayer, in celebrating the Eucharist and the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

That they would learn to behave according to moral values

- One of the most important tasks at this stage is to develop a moral conscience, to help the students to have moral criteria and to initiate them into autonomous valuing of right and wrong.

- They discover that God has made us free, that we can choose, and we should choose what is good.
- They can follow Jesus as friend and model of right living.
- To continue working on values: becoming people who are responsible, cooperative, who serve, show friendliness, respect, ability to group-work; people who can forgive, be truthful, tolerant, just, and peace-loving.
- To help them discover needs around them, and based on Jesus' message, we encourage commitment in small actions of solidarity and service to others.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES FOR JUNIOR CYCLE OF SECONDARY SCHOOL

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE STUDENTS

Development pattern

- This is a stage of great change in the students, not only in their own selves but in the educational level they are joining. Their way of dressing, looking, relating, talking has changed. The changes they are living through create feelings, experiences, desires and worries that they find hard to understand and come to terms with. They need space and a **climate of trust** to express and verbalise what they are thinking, feeling and living.
- They tend to **rebel** against the authority of parents, teachers.
- They are driven by feelings. To feel loved gives them security and is a basic element in their decisions.
- They feel a great need for enjoyment and do not readily accept what does not attract them. For this reason pastoral activity should be imbued with creativity and enjoyment. They must be the protagonists in what they do and celebrate.

Social dimension

- Social development is intense, the first gangs and the first pairs emerge. Everything seems to happen in groups, and this in some way can help to cement the spiritual dimension. Faith is either lived as a group or not at all.
- It is a time for trying out new things in the peer group: alcohol, the emergence of sexuality, disobedience, violence, expressions of non-belief.
- Faith development should offer Christian group experiences that help the teenager to integrate the spiritual dimension. It is the moment to present and encourage them to join Youth ACIT groups.

Spiritual dimension

- A great difference can be seen between First and Second Year students. From the religious viewpoint Jesus continues to be a friend for many First Year students; in Second Year signs of rebellion begin in all areas, including that of faith.
- They move from a magic faith to a reasoned faith. The emotional and uncritical spirituality of the child gives way to the first doubts and questions. For this reason it is important to “give the reason for our faith” and to help them interpret their emerging doubts. They continue to experience the religious dimension affectively as relationship to Jesus.
- Faith development must include and relate religious experience to social commitment and help the teenagers to feel that it is a worthwhile experience, at group and personal level.

2. FAITH DEVELOPMENT APPROACH IN THIS CYCLE

Human maturity

- It is a time when their **role-models change**. The family and familiar figures cease to be a reference; they now look to the ‘heroes’ of music and sport and to their own gang. The challenge for faith development at this stage will be, on the one hand, to present Christian role models, and on the other to develop critical awareness and to discover values in those they admire. We need to draw near to their world to be able to understand them.

In our pastoral approach we should encourage:

- **Self-esteem**. To motivate them to accept themselves with all their good qualities, and to accept others with all their qualities.
- **To meet self** at a deeper level. To encourage the experience of silence to encounter oneself.
- **To express their inner life**. To create an atmosphere where they can express what they feel, think, dream and worry about.
- To live **values** in practice: friendship, forgiveness, gratitude and openness to the transcendent; to develop a healthy approach to sexuality.
- To experience **celebratory moments**. Enjoyment is important to the teenager, so it is something to aim for in faith celebrations.

Handing on the faith

- To present the **person of Jesus** as a friend who loves and understands me, accepts and forgives me, is always there for me and never lets me down. A Jesus who loves everyone and has special concern for the most disadvantaged and needy. A Jesus who models a truly human life for his followers.
- To present the Mass as a joyful celebration of meeting Jesus.
- Teenagers need to find meaning in the Sacrament of Reconciliation and to relate it to their lived experience.

Faith life and spiritual experience

- To encourage community living of the sacraments: Eucharist, Reconciliation, as well as the liturgical seasons. It is very important to integrate faith life and daily experience.
- To cultivate prayer as a special time to listen to the word of God and to talk with Jesus.
- It is a good time to start Youth ACIT groups, groups for pre-Confirmation, solidarity groups and to encourage them to take part in Youth Easter gatherings.

Methodology and dynamics

- Faith development demands time for one-to-one contact, patience for listening and inspiration for suggesting, for being where they are and take part in their activities.
- The main purpose here is not so much providing explanations as creating experiences of faith, to open their minds and hearts to the problems and challenges of our world, and lead them to appreciate the Christian commitment to change society for the better.

3. PASTORAL AIMS IN THIS CYCLE

For teenagers to begin to see what following Jesus means

- To present Jesus as a close friend who is always there unfailingly; as a role model of a life given to others, of freedom, of challenging what is wrong; as a model of union with God and other people; as an example of human and social values.
- To present Jesus as one who includes everyone and rejects no one, who forms a group with whom he shares his own life, a group who learn values and the meaning of life from Him.

- To present Jesus as one who calls and invites all to follow Him, to live like Him, to see life as He sees it, and, like Him, to help those in need.

For teenagers to discover that God values them and loves them as they are

- It is important to help the young person of that age to discover that God values each one and loves them as they are. Each person is someone unique and singular, very dear to God.
- Others are equally loved and valued by God. This realisation leads to living the social dimension more deeply.
- Two important issues to be addressed in this cycle are openness to the world and living as sexual beings, areas to be approached positively.
- Values to be developed in this cycle: to accept oneself, to accept others with their differences, to look at and be concerned for the world around them, to cooperate, to learn team work, to appreciate the values of sameness and of difference, to care for nature, to consume responsibly.

To experience a joyful faith

- To discover God as Father-Mother present in daily life, who is us on the way, cares for us and wants us to be happy. To believe in this God means to become aware of His presence, to know and love Him.
- To encourage their ability to interiorise and to feel God's presence in their lives.
- To teach them how to communicate what they feel when they meet the Lord in prayer.

To discover the meaning of belonging to the Church

- To deepen into what being Church means, being the group of friends who follow Jesus, who are His presence in today's world.
- To encourage work, communication, enjoyment, mutual help in the group; to have an experience of a Christian group where affection, friendship and solidarity are possible; to encourage them to take part in Easter gatherings, solidarity campaigns, prayer experiences.
- It is important to draw the students towards Church organisations, going to them or inviting people who belong to them: missionaries, people in charge of social or charitable organisations, etc.
- To live their experience of the Sacraments as participation in the Church. Care is needed with celebrations, participation, language, understanding of the liturgical rite, expressions, symbols.

FAITH DEVELOPMENT GUIDELINES AT INTERMEDIARY CYCLE

1. CHARACTERISTICS OF THESE STUDENTS

Development pattern

- It is a difficult stage in life and students are developing more maturity. The individual student goes through transformation at physical, intellectual, emotional and social levels. The affective element is to the fore at this stage of life, and shows in many ways. The teenager moves from concrete logical thinking to a more formal intelligence, more flexible and abstract.
- The teenager is living through a difficult process of individualisation and is seeking to establish her/his own identity, to know who she is and how she is, what she accepts and rejects as behaviour. She must learn to take decisions.
- The young person behaves in a way that makes her/him seem annoying, critical, capricious, selfish and irresponsible. Deep down, although it may not seem so, she/he can be generous, enthusiastic, grateful, spontaneous and receptive, sensitive and full of tenderness and curiosity.
- The challenge of faith development in this cycle is to help the teenager to recognise the best of her/himself and to channel their vital energy into building themselves up as persons.

Social dimension

- In this stage the peer group is particularly important, offering the teenager the support he or she needs to face reality. In the group they feel among equals who have the same problems and worries, the same desires and tastes.
- The group is the safe place where he/she can build self-esteem and identity. In the group they learn to establish social relations and resolve conflicts.
- Faith development must empower the group/community dimension at this stage, without neglecting one-to-one contact with the students.

Spiritual dimension

- The teenager is often very critical of religion, and finds it hard to accept the image of God presented up to know. The surrounding culture pressurises them and they think that religion is for children and they have moved beyond it.

- In the Church they find things they don't like and criticise.
- The teenager wants to live in authenticity, and they doubt about what and how to believe. Unresolved doubts make it harder for them to develop spiritually.
- Faith development must welcome this search for authenticity as a positive energy, one that can help the teenager to review and deepen his/her faith experience.

2. FAITH DEVELOPMENT IN THIS CYCLE

Human maturity

- The unconditional support of parents, tutors and teachers, not always readily accepted, must be a constant reference point giving security and helping to build his/her self-esteem.
- It is important for the teenager not to close up in him/herself and the group, and to get encouragement towards meeting others, especially those who are different and in need. They should also develop attitudes of cooperation with developing countries, solidarity with the marginalised through some social work, and become sensitised towards peace, human rights and ecology.

Handing on the faith

- To present the figure of Jesus as someone close who has gone through the same problems, doubts and fears as ourselves, someone able to travel an inner path and live in group situations.
- To present Him as a model worth following: He was good, free, brave, affectionate, critical and generous, revolutionary and challenging, able to know himself and to know others, able to accept Himself and others, able to talk to everyone and to love everyone.
- To present Jesus as someone who had an ideal, a dream, and to present examples of people who follow the way of Jesus. The example and coherence of adult Christians are more important than any words spoken.

Faith life and spiritual experience

- Young people need to discover that they can share and celebrate their faith in a group setting. The Church should be presented as a "community of communities", with good Eucharistic celebrations around the liturgical seasons of Christmas, Easter, Pentecost.)
- We create experiences of prayer and reconciliation with oneself, with those around, with God.

- And we aim to create a climate of trust where the students can raise issues and doubts about faith, and where we can answer them in a reasonable way.
- We can invite them to take part in Youth ACIT groups, solidarity groups, groups for preparing and celebrating the Easter gathering, volunteer programmes of solidarity with those in need.

Methodology and dynamics

- Values need to be reinforced right across the curriculum, in a coordinated way, so that the involvement of all teachers is needed for the pastoral plan.
- Tutorials should help students to reflect and take decisions in the academic, family, group and social settings.
- Extra- school activities (camps, campaigns, encounters, solidarity and prayer groups, school celebrations) can be helpful for encouraging the faith dimension.
- Experience of group work is very positive for young people, as is taking responsibility in organising school activities.
- Two-way communication is vital in handing on the faith. Teachers must be very approachable and talk to them on a basis of equality, in order to know their situations and problems. One must give time to understanding their world, (symbols, language, fashions, fears, issues), to know how to listen and be patient.
- It is also good to challenge them with serious demands and commitments based on the Gospel.

3. FAITH DEVELOPMENT AIMS IN THIS CYCLE

The aim is that students would:

Discover the living Jesus, who offers us a way of life

- A Jesus who understands and accepts us as we are. Jesus is a friend, in the deepest sense of the word; a truly happy person, who lived his life for others.
- Someone who wondered, doubted, who prayed to the Father, who always showed himself to be very human, generous, and ready to help in an attitude of solidarity; able to celebrate, to rejoice with those who rejoice and suffer with those who suffer; someone who did not conform, and who was not always understood. Jesus is the incarnate Son of God, deeply human and truly divine.

- Someone free, who was not enslaved by expectations of others; who always denounced what was inhuman and unjust. He calls to be with Him to work together for a more just, more human world. He comes personally to meet us and offers us a way of life.

See the Church committed to the poor and to justice in the world

- The Church is the group of Jesus' friends, the People of God, made up of people who live a truly human life and wish to make life good for all, and transform society according to the values of the Gospel.
- It is the whole people who have discovered Jesus, expressing it in times of celebration and prayer; people united in communion, called to carry out God's plan in daily life in our world.
- The Church is present throughout the world (we remember the work of missionaries, of Christian volunteers and Christian base communities). It is a people made up of vulnerable human beings, often with a history of lights and shadows; a people committed to justice in the world, to the most disadvantaged and the poor.

Live a faith that is committed to Jesus and his Gospel

- To show a God who is father and mother to us, who is present in our hearts, dreams, sufferings, certainties and doubts.
- Faith is trust in Jesus, love for Him and his teaching, as a life attitude. Faith is a free option, and sometimes manifests with questions and doubts that help us to mature and grow.
- Faith embraces our whole life. It is a faith that shows itself in active charity and service to others. We do not believe alone, we believe within the Church.

Open their eyes to the needs of others

- The Christian moral stance is to have one's eyes wide open to the needs of others, as Jesus did. It is a way of thinking, knowing, acting, loving, and feeling, whose model is Jesus of Nazareth. Both moral fundamentalism and relativism are equally to be avoided. It is a morality of the Beatitudes, not just of the Commandments. It is a question of living in depth, being generous and grateful, and not merely complying with rules.
- We do not believe on our own, we believe within the Church. From Jesus we receive guidelines as to how relate to our neighbour, to live together in peace, to behave with solidarity, to respect rights, to be open in a plural society. Jesus took on conflicts, He gave himself to all, especially the poor, He gave His life for those He loved. His love was patient, serving, generous, cheerful, trusting and true. This is the model for all Christians.

PASTORAL GUIDELINES AT SENIOR CYCLE

After a long process of pastoral care lived in the school, we find at Senior Cycle level students with a different sensibility towards religion and society, and we have to continue to sow seeds, through different pastoral actions: times of Christian reflection, Christian groups, Youth ACIT groups, solidarity groups, celebrations of liturgies and prayer, retreats, participation in volunteer programmes.

We propose continued work on the following objectives:

To help them discover the God of Jesus, to see in Jesus of Nazareth the human face of God, a God present in our lives, with whom we can communicate, a God-made-human who dwells deep in each human being and each situation.

To help them to live their belonging to the Church. Community is part of the Church, which is why it is so important to experience faith in a Christian group, open and committed, within the Church. We should also help them to understand how wide, enriching, complex, plural and fragile the Church is, and to feel in communion with the whole Church.

To help them to look at the world with mind and heart. The faith view of life sees its contradictions: its movement forward and backward, love and suffering, liberation and sin. The Gospel calls us to discover the other as my neighbour, as my brother and sister. It calls us to be close and to help whoever most needs it, either as an individual or a group. Faith development should help students to look at today's complex world with its positive and negative aspects and in a special way, to the world that is more wounded, marginalised and excluded. From here we can respond to the call to commitment and to make a difference.

To help them grow in their Christian identity. Each of the young people will be at a different point of human maturity, but it will be good that we help them to:

- To feel God as a Father who knows and loves us as we are, who is for the believer strength in weakness, a good shepherd who puts the wounded sheep on his shoulders, the good Samaritan who draws near, cures our wounds and asks us to do the same.
- To discover the mission that each one has in life: God has a plan for humanity and asks us to cooperate in this plan through work, family, and society. The Gospel speaks of the Kingdom of God that is being built in human history. We cooperate in this plan when we make our own the values of the Gospel, and work for the dignity and human rights of everyone, when we stand with victims to cry for justice, when we know how to share, and try to move from possessive individualism to a spirit of solidarity.