



Melbourne Archdiocese Catholic Schools

The roles of priest and principal in the *Working Together in Mission* charter



Acknowledgement of Country

We acknowledge that MACS offices and Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne are situated on the lands of the five language groups that make up the Kulin Nation, who have walked upon and cared for this land for thousands of years. We acknowledge their continued deep spiritual connection and relationship to Country.

We pay respects to their Elders past, present and future, and commit to the ongoing journey of reconciliation.



School Advisory Councils

Formation for mission is a process that is:

- systematic,
- collaborative,
- graduated and
- ongoing.

Formation for School Advisory Councils supports their roles in:

- articulating and enacting the school's vision and mission.
- promoting the school's Catholic ethos and culture.
- promoting faith formation and development.



Key Principles

- This process holds itself within relationships built on accompaniment centred on the self, others, creation and God.
- Catholic educators need a “formation of the heart”: they need to be led to that encounter with God in Christ which awakens their love and opens their spirits to others, so that their educational commitment becomes a consequence deriving from their faith, a faith which becomes active through love (cf. Gal 5:6)
- [Educating Together in Catholic Schools](#)
#25



Formation for mission in Catholic education:

1. Is “formation of the heart” that is characterised by prayerfulness and reflection.
2. Is respectful, experiential and relevant, building on participants’ personal story and everyday reality.
3. Is explicitly Christological, scripturally rich and ecclesially grounded.
4. Has an affective focus on a person’s faith journey and discipleship.
5. Has substantive theological content.
6. Sets out to build communal Catholic religious identity and culture.
7. Is differentiated according to individual and community needs.
8. Promotes personal vocation, connection with the Catholic tradition and responsiveness to mission.
9. Develops the willingness, confidence and capacities of participants in their roles to serve the evangelising mission of Catholic school education.

[A Framework for Formation for Mission in Catholic Education](#): p14



Prayer

All:

God of love and mercy, You call us to be Your people; You gift us with Your abundant grace. Make us a holy people, radiating the fullness of Your love. Form us into a community, a people who care, expressing Your compassion. Remind us day after day of our baptismal call to serve, with joy and courage. Teach us how to grow in wisdom and grace and joy in Your presence. Through Jesus in your Spirit, we make this prayer.

Amen

Priest and principal: positive parish and school relationships

‘a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation’
Isaiah 28:16.

Positive Parish/School relationships are acknowledged as a critical component of successful MACS schools and a differentiating factor in parents choosing the Catholic system for their children.

Working Together in Mission explicitly promotes a system-wide discussion about achieving positive relationships.



Process:

The creation of spaces and structuring conversations between priests and principals will support Parish/School relationships.

Each session allows us to work through 3 stages:

- **Explore,**
- **Reflect**
- **Respond**





At a glance:

[Working Together in Mission](#) (WTiM) is a charter for parishes and schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne. Its aim in particular, is to outline the course for strong leadership that is required from those in parish and school, particularly parish priests and principals, who are mandated to lead their respective parishes and schools in drawing young people and their families into the knowledge and understanding of Christ.

While the company the Archbishop established, MACS, will govern and operate the schools belonging to the Archdiocese, and will take up the legacy of Catholic education, it will require renewed commitment to collegiality and goodwill from the leaders in parish and school alike for this new model to be a success in the face of these times of great challenge and opportunity in the work of Catholic schooling.

This PowerPoint focuses on the [summary of roles](#) of priest and principal (WTiM, p7) which are the cornerstone of positive parish and school relationships: 'a stone, a tested stone, a precious cornerstone, of a sure foundation' Isaiah 28:16.



Explore:

to travel through (an unfamiliar area) in order to learn about it

The shift in governance does not lessen the spiritual leadership of parish priests, nor reduce the significance of the local parish community.

Parish priests and principals hold distinctive roles of leadership in their parish and school communities, and therefore it is essential that they work collaboratively to ensure that the relationship between parish and school is central to providing the religious leadership necessary for the success of the mission.

Focus:

How is this complementary collaboration outlined in Working Together in Mission?

Explore: collaboration into the future

The priest:

is the custodian of mission

leads and is co-responsible with the principal for the religious life of the school

celebrates liturgy and sacraments

is spiritual guide and mentor to the principal, staff and community

participates in primary school senior appointments by being a member of the appointment panel (principal, deputy principal and Religious Education leader)

represents the parish as the beneficial owner of land and buildings

The principal:

works together with the priest in nurturing the Catholic identity, religious dimension and faith formation of the school

is responsible for the safety and wellbeing of all students in the school

works with others to develop a vision for the school

connects the school to the school's parish or association of parishes

works collaboratively and closely with the priest, meeting regularly to promote unity, common vision and mission, and purpose



Explore: collaboration into the future

The priest ...

participates in the appointment panel for regional college principals and may participate in the panels for other senior appointments

is responsible for the patrimony and good name of the parish and school

is an ex officio member of the school advisory council

forms a collaborative relationship and works closely with the principal in promoting unity, common vision and mission, and purpose

The principal ...

collaborates with the priest in supporting the liturgical and sacramental life of the school
is responsible for the Religious Education program in the school according to diocesan directives

is responsible for promoting a contemporary approach to teaching and learning, and overall educational outcomes of the students

is responsible for the day-to-day managerial, administrative, compliance and statutory tasks of the school



Explore: collaboration into the future

The priest ...

meets frequently with the principal
supports, encourages and guides the
school's Religious Education program
supports the school staff with religious
retreats, and spiritual and theological
formation

works together with the principal in
promoting mutual support and respect

The principal ...

is the educational leader of the school
has overall stewardship for the people and
resources of the school

encourages outreach to the community,
particularly in supporting parent engagement
in the school and involvement in their child's
education

is an ex officio member of the school
advisory council

works together with the priest in promoting
mutual support and respect





Explore: What did I learn?

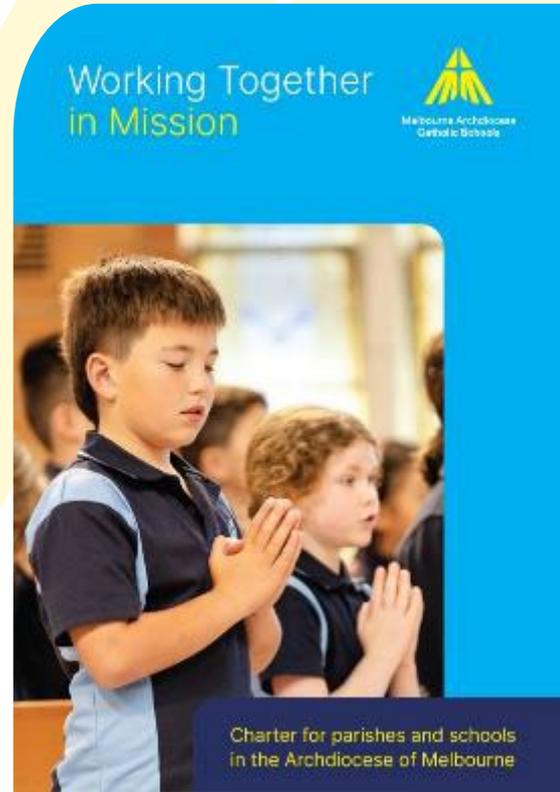
Choose a:

Word that captured your attention or struck you as powerful.

Phrase that moved, engaged, or provoked you.

Sentence that was meaningful to you, that you felt captures the core idea of the text.

Share and identify common themes



Reflect:

to bend back light from a surface

The Catholic school is a centre of life, and life is synthetic. In this vital centre, the formation process is a constant interplay of action and reaction. The interplay has both a horizontal and a vertical dimension, and it is this qualification that makes the Catholic school distinctive from those other schools whose educational objectives are not inspired by Christianity. - [The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School: Guidelines for Reflection and Renewal #109](#)

Focus:

How is this interplay and relationship a reflection of our shared missionary discipleship?

Reflect: One Spirit - Many Gifts

A Reading from 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11

There is a variety of gifts but always the same Spirit: there are all sorts of service to be done, but always the same Lord: working in all sorts of different ways in different people, it is the same God who is working in all of them. The particular way in which the Spirit is given to each person is for a good purpose. One may have the gift of preaching with wisdom, given by the Spirit: another may have the gift of preaching instruction, given by the same Spirit: one the power of miracles; another prophecy, another the gift of recognising spirits; another the gift of tongues and another the ability to interpret them. All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, who distributes different gifts to each person.



Reflect:

Key quotes

We are inheritors of a great gift in Catholic education, and regardless of changes in governance we continue in the trajectory of the best of what has been achieved in the past, even as our schools respond to the new challenges and opportunities that arise at the interface between our teachers and the social contexts of the students and their families.

Reflect

Silently:

- What gifts have I been given?
- How can I use these gifts in my work and in my community?
- How can I encourage others to share their gifts?

Share:

Each member in turn nominates one gift.

“To the school community of
....., I bring the gift of
..... It is a gift
I offer freely and humbly”



Respond: to say something in return

Responding to what we see in the role descriptions will vary from individual to individual.

As a system-wide document that 'brings opportunities for a shared and aspiring quality in how we serve students and their families' Working Together in Mission must cater to a range of contexts.

This shared approach has been undertaken 'for the sake of a fruitful and responsible shared witness to the gospel in Catholic schooling.'

Focus:

To promote evidential reasoning that invites participants to share their interpretations and become aware of alternative perspectives.



Respond:

Key Concepts

Leaders in Catholic schooling faithfully carry forward the mission of sharing the gospel in the particular contexts of Catholic primary and secondary schools.

At the heart of their mission is a living witness to Jesus Christ, whose new life of communion with God is to be shared mercifully and courageously.

The Catholic school is a place of encounter with that divine love, worked out in the education of each student so that they can grow in wisdom?

Considering the side by side lists in the light of *Working Together in Mission's* intent:

1. Why are the roles presented like that? What's going on?
2. What do you see that makes you say that?





In conclusion

Each aspect or session of formation builds on the past and has a context ahead, so each aspect or session builds into the next.

This reflective, developmental process enables participants to apply the experience to their everyday life and their ministry in Catholic education.



The context ahead

- How can the reflective, developmental process (explore, reflect and respond) impact on the experience of your everyday life and your ministry in Catholic education?
- What will you take away?
- What action can we take as a next step to bringing the mission to life?
- Commit to something today that builds on the experience you shared here today.



Closing prayer

Leader:

Prayerfully, humbly, but boldly, we pick up what earlier pioneers have built and we shape it so that it will continue to serve the people of Melbourne with integrity.

All:

Lord, your word is a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. Thank you that we can live in Your light and walk in Your truth. May the things that you have revealed and thoughts that we have shared dwell in our hearts and stir us to action. We ask all this in the precious name of Jesus.

Amen



Melbourne Archdiocese
Catholic Schools

James Gould House, 228 Victoria Parade, East Melbourne VIC 3002

T: +61 3 9267 0228 E: execdirector@macs.vic.edu.au www.macs.vic.edu.au

