A ‘head, heart, hands’ faith formation framework for staff in Sydney Catholic Schools

‘There are three languages: the language of the head, the language of the heart, and the language of the hands; education must go forward by these three ways.’

Pope Francis on the 50th anniversary of the Second Vatican Council’s Declaration on Catholic Education, Gravissimum educationis
Staff Faith Formation is about...

- opening the person to an encounter with Jesus Christ
- leading the person to a conversion of heart to Jesus Christ
- fullness of life in Jesus Christ in word, action and prayer living out one’s baptism and the Beatitudes as a public witness to Jesus Christ in society
- an informed moral conscience in conformity with Church teaching
- an understanding of the compatibility of faith and reason
- engaging the world in the light of the Church’s social teaching
- sharing responsibility for the Church’s mission.

‘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”

(Gal. 5:6). Educating Together in Catholic Schools, #25.
Staff Faith Formation should be...

- the **responsibility of the individual staff member**, supported by programs offered by the school, the System, the Archdiocese, and the wider Church
- **owned by school leaders and staff**, to ensure that personal and communal needs are identified and addressed
- **well planned** and part of a broader long-term framework
- **adequately and sufficiently funded** in a manner that reflects the high priority of faith formation
- **modelled** on adult learning principles, ensuring a balance between individual/group input, reflection and sharing
- **sustainable and substantive**, a journey of growth and development that explores the full breadth and depth of the Catholic tradition
- **underpinned by Sacred Scripture**
- **sensitive to faith status of individuals**, recognising that people are at different points in their faith journey and have varying degrees of openness to faith formation
- **characterised by meaningful experiences** of individual and communal prayer and reflection, including the celebration of the Eucharist.

Staff Faith Formation through the ‘Head, Heart, Hands’ Approach

The ‘Head, Heart, Hands’ approach to faith formation aims to convert and engage the whole person in a new life in Jesus Christ.

By ‘**Head**’ is meant forming the person in knowledge of who Jesus Christ is, the Scriptures and Tradition which tell his story, the Church he founded, and the teachings of that same Church. This involves learning of the faith, the core beliefs, the ethics and their moral implications.

By ‘**Heart**’ is meant forming the person to love who Jesus Christ is, to form a personal relationship with Jesus through a life of prayer, communal liturgy, retreat experiences, contemplation and the sacraments.

By ‘**Hands**’ is meant forming the person to be Christ in the world, loving and serving neighbour through personal and missionary works of charity, social justice and selfless love.

**A PERSONAL RELATIONSHIP WITH JESUS CHRIST, LIVED IN THE CHURCH, ACTIVE IN THE WORLD.**

**HEART**
- **Liturgy/Prayer**
- **Catholic Life/Culture**
- **Being Church**

*‘For where two or three gather in my name there am I in the midst of them’* (Mt 18:20)

**HEAD**
- **Scripture/Tradition**, knowing, believing **Being Disciple**

*‘Come follow me’* (Mt 10:21)

**HANDS**
- **Encounter, service, living, transforming**, beyond limitations **Being Human**

*‘I have come that you may have life and have it to the full’* (Jn 10:10)
How does Sydney Catholic Schools enable staff to enter a ‘Head, Heart, Hands’ relationship with Jesus Christ?

• assisting schools to develop cohesive and individualised three-year staff faith formation plans providing schools with experienced staff to lead or present at retreats, spirituality days, and staff meetings providing retreat opportunities for Beginning Teachers, Support Staff, Family Educators, and senior leadership

• providing opportunities for staff to build competence and confidence in religious leadership through the Growing In Faith course, and deepen their scripture knowledge through the Ecce Homo course hosting conferences, seminars and courses for staff with high-quality local and overseas presenters enabling staff to participate in overseas immersions, encounters and pilgrimage experiences connecting staff to outreach activities with St Vincent de Paul Society, St Canice’s Kitchen, etc.

Participation in any of the above also enables staff to meet the requirements of the ‘Accreditation to Work, Teach and Lead in Catholic Schools’ policy.

A living faith needs nourishment, which the Christian disciple finds, above all, in union with Jesus Christ,

“I am the way and the truth and the life.”

John 14:6