

Religious Studies Department Scope and Sequence

The Religious Studies Department at Mercy High School shares common values with Mercy educators around the world. We seek to educate our students about the values of compassion and service, educational excellence, concern for women and children's issues, world vision and responsibility, spiritual growth and development, and collaboration with others (MSEA Conference XIX, 1990). We aim to facilitate students' cognitive and affective learning: to educate in both academic content and personal appropriation. Providing a common foundation on which to build, we introduce our students to the traditions and values that undergird the Catholic Christian experience across time and cultures. Encouraging students to grow in their own faith and spirituality, we assist them in finding their own voice and developing a personal sense of religious integrity.

9th Grade: Religious Studies I: Understanding Catholic Christianity (two semesters)

ESLR #1: Each student will develop a personal spirituality and demonstrate the Mercy values of compassion, respect and service. She will:

- nurture her spiritual life through student-led prayer at the beginning of every class
- focus on understanding and respecting herself
- use her gifts in the service of others
- come to know and appreciate each of her classmates individually and demonstrate a genuine understanding and concern for their well-being
- develop an appreciation of the variety of religious experiences offered by different wisdom traditions of our world
- cultivate an awareness of Mercy traditions and the larger Mercy community through study of the legacy and heritage of Catherine McAuley, the mission of the Sisters of Mercy, and the history of Mercy—San Francisco
- begin exploration of issues of respect for all people, civil rights, solidarity with those who are suffering, and social injustice
- discern the movements of grace and spirit in her life and grow in her ability to articulate her own spirituality
- learn to reverence the dignity of each person and to act in solidarity with the economically poor of the world, especially women and children

ESLR #2: Each student will grow in intellectual curiosity and creativity and will demonstrate responsibility for her own learning. She will:

- prioritize and set realistic goals for herself by completing her homework for each class meeting and studying for tests
- engage in self-directed research projects which demand locating, synthesizing, and presenting relevant information
- establish a basic knowledge of the academic disciplines of religious studies, theology, and spirituality as a valuable tool to analyze and interpret the world
- ask challenging questions and explore difficult issues
- use the arts, music, movement, and skits to explore and appropriate course content
- begin to integrate her past religious education and tradition with her current experience
- develop a familiarity with Judeo-Christian salvation history, including the patriarchs and matriarchs and the life/death/resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth
- achieve basic Biblical literacy as a foundation for future study

- learn of church structure, liturgy and liturgical calendar, and Catholic doctrines, traditions, and rituals

ESLR #3: Each student will develop a positive respect for self and for others and work cooperatively within the community. She will:

- work on regularly assigned group projects
- be encouraged to collaborate and cooperate with all of her classmates, the teacher, and guest speakers
- focus on the various types of relationships that make for personal wholeness: family, friendship, dating, peer, and all other types of social relationships
- consider issues of gender roles and stereotypes and of cultural attitudes and media images
- gain a greater understanding of her own identity, growth, and development including her physical, emotional, intellectual, social, sexual, and spiritual development
- explore the emotional, physical, social, spiritual, and intellectual dimensions of her life, in light of Christian beliefs regarding God's purpose for all of us as humans
- reflect on the tasks of adolescent development
- view sexuality as a gift of God: understand the consequences of sexual activity (including, but not limited to, STD's and pregnancy) in the context of the Catholic Christian value of chastity

ESLR #4: Each student will communicate effectively in written and oral expression. She will:

- identify and express her authentic thoughts and feelings through regular homework assignments, journal entries, and reflection papers
- articulate her views effectively and respectfully through small group presentations, oral presentations, prayer, and class discussions
- learn the value of listening and thinking before she speaks
- find her own voice and develop a personal sense of religious integrity

ESLR #5: Each student will develop skills to become an independent, critical reader, thinker and problem solver. She will:

- begin the process of understanding how to interpret the Bible contextually rather than literally
- explore the nature of God, re-evaluating images of early childhood and exploring new images and experiences
- evaluate past and present social conditions in light of Gospel values
- formulate and support her own opinions about religion
- value the contribution and perspective of each of her classmates
- analyze, research, and discuss religious, philosophical, and theological issues
- explore social justice issues and be motivated to think globally and work for systemic societal change
- learn to act in harmony and interdependence with all creation
- critique the predominant values of U.S. culture, particularly those promulgated by the media

ESLR #6: Each student will develop skills to become a strong independent woman who can make a difference in the world. She will:

- recognize her own power to make decisions in her life and her power to affect the world in which she lives
- develop the skills to identify and defend her own beliefs and values

- realize her capacity to mediate conflict and create peaceful relationships and communities
- develop and act from a multicultural, international perspective
- gain a basic understanding of Catholic Christian positions regarding scripture, morality, and social justice and translate this into concrete actions/behaviors which better the world

Primary Textbooks:

- Zanzig, Thomas and Allaire, Barbara. Understanding Catholic Christianity. Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 1997.
- Pijacki, Carol and Pijacki, Thaddeus. Sexuality: Connecting Mind, Body, and Spirit. Villa Maria, Pennsylvania: The Center for Learning, 2003.
- Beals, Melba Pattillo. Warriors Don't Cry: A Searing Memoir of the Battle to Integrate Little Rock's Central High. New York: Washington Square Press, 1994.
- The Catholic Youth Bible (New Revised Standard Version). Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 2000

Other resources:

- "The Circle of Mercy" (Video: Mercy International Center; Dublin, Ireland)
- "Global Banquet" (Video: Maryknoll)
- "Jerusalem: Holy, Deadly City" (Video: Arts & Entertainment "Mysteries of the Bible" series)
- "The Year of Grace" (liturgical calendar). Liturgy Training Publications.
- Burns, Helen Marie and Carney, Sheila. Praying with Catherine McAuley. Companions for the Journey Series. Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 1996.
- Ellsberg, Robert. All Saints. Orbis Books, 1997.
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
- "What Am I Doing for Lent?" (personal reflection booklet). Liturgy Training Publications.
- Guest speaker visits from C-JEEP, the Catholic-Jewish Educational Enrichment Program

Sacramental and other Prayer experiences:

- Daily prayer at the start of each class
- Class retreat, integrated with the Religious Studies curriculum
- Seasonal preparation for all-school liturgies; ie, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Ash Wednesday, etc.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation (during Lent)
- Class Eucharistic Liturgy (in May, to conclude the year)

10th Grade: Ethics (one semester)

ESLR #1: Each student will develop a personal spirituality and demonstrate the Mercy values of compassion, respect and service. She will:

- begin conceptual exposure to dynamics of good and evil in the world using the Holocaust along with contemporary world issues
- develop functional understanding of conscience as instrument for determining right and wrong given the imperatives of personal decision using the classic positions on war as a frame of reference
- examine the process of conscience formation and challenge from ultimate concerns as interpreted in historical times of testing and by religious traditions including but not exclusive to the Roman Catholic magisterium

- recognize the basic starting positions along the absolutist-relativist spectrum and illustrating those positions in six categories: personal integrity, human life, violence and war, discrimination, economics and environment
- gain familiarity and competence with the language of moral discourse including the dialectic between the deontological and utilitarian positions and possibilities of alternative modes of discourse

ESLR #2: Each student will grow in intellectual curiosity and creativity and will demonstrate responsibility for her own learning.

ESLR #3: Each student will develop a positive respect for self and for others and work cooperatively within the community.

ESLR #4: Each student will communicate effectively in written and oral expression.

ESLR #5: Each student will develop skills to become an independent, critical reader, thinker and problem solver.

She will:

- immerse herself in a complex moral issue of her choosing
- engage in a research process involving ten reviews on that one topic
- diversify her reviews through the use of a variety of challenging sources
- share these reviews with her peers who take notes on them and develop questions from them
- keep a binder of these reviews by topic, within categories which also include class notes in those categories
- develop a thesis within the research topic and writing a position statement
- build a presentation on a team with students who have different theses under the same topic
- present a full period session with that team of three which includes mandatory segments of audio-visual, small group activity and thesis defense
- compile a portfolio of work including the position statement, ten reviews and bibliography

ESLR #6: Each student will develop skills to become a strong independent woman who can make a difference in the world. She will:

- demonstrate her ability to have an informed and decisive conscience by
- taking a two-hour final exam in which she gets a topic with thesis developed by a peer, interviews that peer (is interviewed by a peer), reads a portfolio and views displays from the presentations
- write an hour-long essay on which she takes an informed and developed position on the given ethical dilemma

Primary Texts:

- Stoutzenberger, Joseph. Morality: An Invitation to Christian Living. Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Religion Publishers, 2001.
- The Catholic Youth Bible (New Revised Standard Version). Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 2000
- Chacour, Elias. Blood Brothers. Expanded Edition. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Chosen Books, 2003.

Other resources:

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
- Guest speaker visits from the National Conference for Community and Justice (NCCJ)
- Guest speaker visits from the Holocaust Center of Northern California

Sacramental and other prayer experiences:

- Daily prayer at the start of each class
- Class service retreat, integrated with the Religious Studies curriculum
- Seasonal preparation for all-school liturgies; ie, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Ash Wednesday, etc.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation (during Lent)

11th Grade: Hebrew and Christian Scriptures *(two semesters)*

ESLR #1: Each student will develop a personal spirituality and demonstrate the Mercy values of compassion, respect and service. She will:

- nurture her spiritual life through student-led prayer at the beginning of every class
- understand the Judaeo-Christian traditions of Biblical spirituality and appropriate these traditions into her own spiritual perspective
- experience a variety of techniques for praying with Scripture
- articulate the Biblical concept of justice and the ways in which this concept can inform our approach to contemporary social issues
- appreciate the value of a Catholic, contextual approach to interpreting Scripture, as distinct from a fundamentalist approach
- understand the enduring relevance of the Bible as a living source of Jewish and Christian faith
- be familiar with the concept of the reign of God as the defining image both of Jesus's ministry and of contemporary Christian efforts towards justice and peace

ESLR #2: Each student will grow in intellectual curiosity and creativity and will demonstrate responsibility for her own learning. She will:

- offer her own interpretations of Biblical texts
- search for answers to questions implicitly or explicitly raised by Biblical texts
- commit herself to reading Scripture regularly
- use the arts (such as drama, painting, and drawing) to bring Scripture passages alive in a contemporary context
- develop competency in Biblical research and exegesis

ESLR #3: Each student will develop a positive respect for self and for others and work cooperatively within the community. She will:

- appreciate the value of interpreting Scripture within the context of a diverse community of faith and study
- engage in cooperative learning activities and projects focused on particular Biblical passages, books, and/or themes
- see herself and all people as bearers of God's image, in the tradition of the Biblical creation stories
- articulate the Biblical value of stewardship
- view participation in a democratic society as a means of bringing God's reign to fruition

ESLR #4: Each student will communicate effectively in written and oral expression. She will:

- write reflective essays, exegetical papers, and creative re-workings of Scriptural passages
- converse intelligently, in both formal and informal settings, about Biblical topics and themes

- formulate and articulate interpretations of Biblical texts which are grounded in the text itself and in responsible, critical research
- display openness to the variety of interpretations which a particular text elicits

ESLR #5: Each student will develop skills to become an independent, critical reader, thinker and problem solver. She will:

- engage in close, critical, and thoughtful reading of Biblical texts
- demonstrate familiarity with the process by which ancient Biblical texts and contemporary events, issues, and concerns can interpret one another
- understand how Scripture has been used both as an instrument of liberation and an instrument of oppression
- use technology in the preparation of oral presentations, research papers, and other projects
- apply skills common to all disciplines of the humanities, such as reading, writing, and researching, to the field of Biblical studies
- bring her knowledge of Scripture to other academic disciplines
- articulate and appreciate the enduring relevance of universal Biblical themes, such as covenant, journey, wisdom, law, fidelity, justice, and conversion

ESLR #6: Each student will develop skills to become a strong independent woman who can make a difference in the world. She will:

- view religious faith as a source of strength available to her now and throughout her life
- derive inspiration from the example of courageous, faithful women of the Bible
- possess the skills needed to continue Scripture studies both formally and informally
- internalize the Biblical mandate to be a voice for justice locally, nationally, and globally
- experience the God of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures as a God who desires her success, independence, and happiness

Primary Texts:

- Newland, Mary Reed. The Hebrew Scriptures: The Biblical Story of God's Promise to Israel and Us. Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 1990.
- Zanzig, Thomas. Jesus of History, Christ of Faith. Third Edition. Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 1999.
- The Catholic Youth Bible (New Revised Standard Version). Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 2000
- Kidd, Sue Monk. The Secret Life of Bees. New York: Penguin Books, 2002.

Other Resources:

- Nolan, Albert. Jesus Before Christianity.
- Heschel, Abraham. Prophets.
- Achtemeier, Paul et al. Invitation to the Gospels. Mahweh, NJ: Paulist Press, 2002.
- Walton, John H. Chronological and Background Charts of the Old Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1994.
- House, H. Wayne. Chronological and Background Charts of the New Testament. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1981.
- Videos from the Arts & Entertainment "Mysteries of the Bible" and "Biography" series:
 - ✓ "Joshua at the Walls of Jericho"
 - ✓ "Samson and Delilah"
 - ✓ "The Execution of Jesus"

- “Jesus of Nazareth” (directed by Franco Zeffirelli)
- “What Am I Doing for Lent?” (personal reflection booklet). Liturgy Training Publications.
- The Catechism of the Catholic Church. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
- Guest speaker visits from C-JEEP, the Catholic-Jewish Educational Enrichment Program

Sacramental and other prayer experiences:

- Daily prayer at the start of each class
- Class retreat, integrated with the Religious Studies curriculum
- Seasonal preparation for all-school liturgies; ie, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Ash Wednesday, etc.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation (during Lent)

12th grade: Electives *(one semester)*

Elective offerings presently include Life After Life, Social Justice, and World Religions.

Although the content of each 12th-grade Religious Studies elective is unique, they are organized around similar ideals. Through analysis and discussion, in collaborative and individual learning, each of these senior electives encourages students to:

- ✓ explore the major themes, ideas, and vocabulary specific to the course content (i.e., Life, Death and Dying; Comparative Religion; or Human Rights/Social and Environmental Justice)
- ✓ develop an understanding of Catholic Christian positions regarding the ethical, moral, social, and religious issues particular to the course material
- ✓ develop respect for differences and appreciation of all faiths, traditions, rituals, stories, and world views regarding the issues relevant to their subject
- ✓ discern the movements of grace and spirit in their lives, articulate their own spirituality, be able to integrate their faith with their current lifestyle and plans for the future
- ✓ focus their attention on the needs of the larger human community and act in solidarity with all creation

ESLR #1: Each student will develop a personal spirituality and demonstrate the Mercy values of compassion, respect, and service. She will:

- engage in some type of service activity connected to the theme of her course, i.e. visit a convalescent home, volunteer for a peace organization, or work with Muslim students on an exchange program

ESLR #2: Each student will demonstrate responsibility for her own learning and grow in intellectual curiosity and creativity. She will:

- think critically, analyze ideas, make connections, draw conclusions, and apply skills and information particular to the course material
- complete self-directed research projects designed to challenge students to locate, synthesize, and present information relating to course content
- learn the importance of asking essential questions and exploring difficult issues
- use the arts, music, movement, and skits to express her understanding of the course content in a variety of ways
- seek out and attend community lectures, events, protests, or other educational activities

ESLR #3: Each student will learn to respect herself and others and to work cooperatively within the community. She will:

- work in collaboration with other students on various group projects

- recognize the image of God in herself through prayer activities which encourage all students to develop a positive self-image

ESLR #4: Each student will communicate effectively in written and oral expression. She will:

- express their thoughts and feelings authentically through regular written homework assignments, journal entries, and reflection papers
- participate in oral presentations, prayer, and class discussions which require students to articulate their views effectively and respectfully
- practice listening and thinking before she speaks
- connect with course material through case studies, guest speakers, role plays, skits, tableau vivants, creating flyers/posters/greeting cards/etc. to educate and communicate ideas, library and internet research, watching or making videos, etc.

ESLR #5: Each student will become an independent and critical reader, thinker, and problem solver. She will:

- make connections between the course material and other subjects and classes she has had at Mercy over the last three years
- identify where she experiences injustice and act in a positive way to rectify the situation
- think globally and to work for systemic change, focusing on problem solving instead of blaming or judging
- learn to act in harmony and interdependence with all creation
- interpret modern media culture and societal norms and their effect/influence on human values
- complete charts, concept maps, timelines, and know geographical areas important to the course content

ESLR #6: Each student will develop skills to become a strong independent woman who can make a difference in the world. She will:

- explore how she would apply the information, ideas, and principles which are specific to the given elective course to current local, national, and global issues
- recognize her own power to make decisions in her own life and for the world in which she lives
- develop the skills to identify and defend her own beliefs and values
- realize her capacity to mediate conflict and create peaceful relationships and communities
- develop and act from a inter-religious, multi-cultural, and international perspective

Life After Life

Primary Texts:

- Marrocco, Nancy. *A Promise in the Storm: Grieving and Dying with Hope*. Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 1997.
- *The Catholic Youth Bible* (New Revised Standard Version). Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 2000.
- Lamott, Anne. *Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith*. New York: Anchor Books, 1999.

Other resources:

- Albom, Mitch. *Tuesdays with Morrie*. (also selected excerpts from the film of the same name)
- *The Catechism of the Catholic Church*. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

Sacramental and other prayer experiences:

- Daily prayer at the start of each class

- Class retreat, integrated with the Religious Studies curriculum
- Seasonal preparation for all-school liturgies; ie, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Ash Wednesday, etc.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation (during Lent)

Social Justice

Primary Texts:

- Windley-Daoust, Jerry. Living Justice and Peace: Catholic Social Teaching in Practice. Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 2002.
- The Catholic Youth Bible (New Revised Standard Version). Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 2000.
- Lamott, Anne. Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith. New York: Anchor Books, 1999.

Other resources:

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church. New York: Doubleday, 1994.
- Participation in Catholic Lobby Day: Sacramento, California

Sacramental and other prayer experiences:

- Daily prayer at the start of each class
- Class retreat, integrated with the Religious Studies curriculum
- Seasonal preparation for all-school liturgies; ie, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Ash Wednesday, etc.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation (during Lent)

World Religions

Primary Texts

- Brodd, Jeffrey. World Religions: A Journey of Discovery. Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 1998.
- The Catholic Youth Bible (New Revised Standard Version). Winona, Minnesota: St. Mary's Press, 2000.
- Lamott, Anne. Traveling Mercies: Some Thoughts on Faith. New York: Anchor Books, 1999.

Other resources:

- The Catechism of the Catholic Church. New York: Doubleday, 1994.

Sacramental and other prayer experiences:

- Daily prayer at the start of each class
- Class retreat, integrated with the Religious Studies curriculum
- Seasonal preparation for all-school liturgies; ie, Solemnity of the Immaculate Conception, Ash Wednesday, etc.
- Sacrament of Reconciliation (during Lent)