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# C.C.R.S.

## Catholic Certificate

in

## Religious Studies

In-School-Hours  
and  
Week-End courses  
at Cathedral House  
2026 - 2027



## MISSION STATEMENT

**BDES serves the Kingdom of God in supporting Catholic schools to provide excellent education where pupils flourish, and Christ is made known to all.**

## INTRODUCTION

The Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies (CCRS) is managed and awarded by the Board of Religious Studies on behalf of the Bishops' Conference of England and Wales. It was introduced in 1991 to replace its predecessors, The Catholic Teachers' Certificate and the Certificate in Religious Education. Any person who is or wishes to be involved in Catholic education and formation may apply for this course. This includes those involved in Religious Education in school, Parish Catechesis and other ministries in the Church and anyone who wishes to follow the course for faith development or personal interest. The course seeks to ensure that participants have at least a basic knowledge and understanding of the beliefs of the Catholic Faith. It also provides a basis for further study.

The course is designed for teachers in Catholic schools; that they may have a basic understanding of the Church, its teaching and way of life to enable them to contribute to the maintenance of the ethos of the Catholic school. It is also for catechists in order to give them a basic understanding of the faith of the Catholic Church as a foundation for their catechetical ministry, and for adult members of the Church to enable them to continue to grow in understanding as they live their Catholic faith.

## COURSE AIMS

Study for the Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies aims to:

- provide teachers and those involved in parish ministry with knowledge and understanding of the teaching and beliefs of the Catholic Faith
- develop an appreciation of the principles of Catholic education at all levels
- employ and encourage sound adult education processes which express Gospel values
- enhance understanding of education within the Church as a life-long process
- enable all participants to make an informed contribution to their chosen field of work in the Church
- highlight the role and function of Religious Education within the school curriculum.

**“We are all the Church: from the recently baptised child to the bishops, to the Pope; we are all the Church, and we are all equal in the eyes of God. We are all called to be educators in faith to proclaim the Gospel.” *Pope Francis***



## ACHIEVING CERTIFICATION

The certificate is normally awarded after two years' study with a maximum of five years to complete from the start of the first module (only exceptional pastoral reasons are acceptable for studying beyond five years). Without a good reason for exemption the modules will cease to be valid. The five-year period starts from when you first start your studies with the centre and not from when you are registered with the National CCRS Database. If you dispute the maximum five years' study with the centre they will need to have any extension of study agreed with the CCRS Regional group first. **It is possible in the Diocese of Brentwood to complete the course within one school year as all 8 modules are offered annually, although it is recognised that to do so requires significant commitment on the part of the participant.**

Certification is awarded following the study and completion of **eight** modules:

- Six **core** modules: Old Testament, New Testament, Christology, Sacraments, Christian Morality and The Church  
*[these modules are common to all centres offering the CCRS in England and Wales]*
- Two **specialist** modules: Relationship and Sex Education and Religious Education  
*[these are the specialist modules currently offered in the diocese of Brentwood; different modules are offered by other centres across England and Wales]*

The Catechism of the Catholic Church begins with its definition of faith, with the human search for meaning, the Divine Revelation of God who comes to meet us, and the individual's response in faith (CCC # 26). This is the process that is adapted in all the modules explored with the participants.

Search  
Revelation  
Response

## ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE CORE AND SPECIALIST MODULES

Each module consists of:

- Engagement with pre-module study material supplied (c. 2 hours)
- Session of lectures by a specialist in the field (8:30am - 12:00pm).
- Guidance session on assignments (1:00pm – 4:00pm).
- Tutorial with opportunity for discussion (4:30pm – c. 6.00pm).
- Further reading and production of written assignment (**1,500 words**).

For those wishing to complete the course and participate in the Presentation of Certificates in July 2027, all compulsory course sessions must have been attended **AND all assignments** must be **submitted by the end of Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2027**. Any submission received after this deadline may not be marked until after the presentation date.



## Core Module 1: THE BIBLE: OLD TESTAMENT

**The Old Testament is an indispensable part of Sacred Scripture. Its books are divinely inspired and retain a permanent value, for the Old Covenant has never been revoked. (CCC#121)**

### Aim

The purpose of this module is to introduce participants to the writings in the Old Testament in order to help them to recognise God's Revelation contained there and its continuing relevance in Christian life today.

### Learning outcomes

Participants should:

- be familiar with the books and types of literature which make up the Old Testament and be able to set them in their context
- be able to make connections between a particular type of literature and the belief the words express
- recognise the diversity of images of God in the Old Testament
- appreciate the significance of the covenant relationship for the people of Israel
- understand the relevance of the Old Testament and its use in the Catholic community today
- be able to communicate what they have learned from an adult stance.

## Assignment

Answer **ONE** question in 1,500 words

Assignments should be sent electronically to [ccrs@brcdt.org](mailto:ccrs@brcdt.org). The assignment should be accompanied by a cover sheet (there is a template on page 27 of this booklet) detailing name, module, assignment title, bibliography, sources and word count.

1. Identify **three** images relating to God in the Old Testament and explain why these images are used.

OR

2. How does the Old Testament inform our understanding of the New Testament?

## Reading

E. Charpentier, *How to Read the Old Testament* (London: SCM Press – 2006)

M. Evans, *Old Testament Introduction* (Oxford: Lion Hudson - 2010)

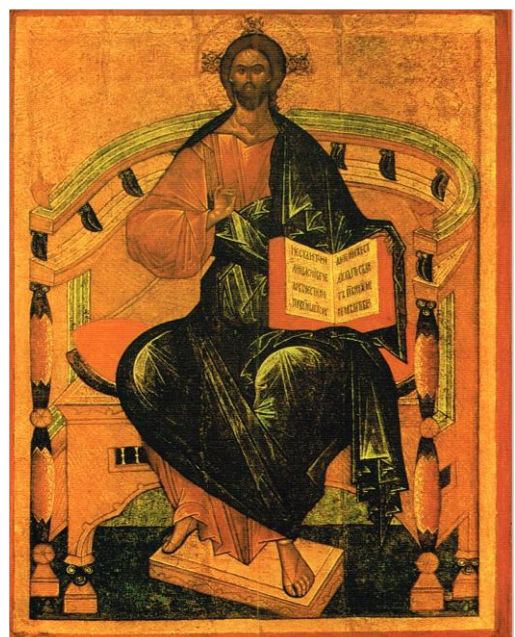
G. Perego, *Interdisciplinary Atlas of the Bible*, (London: St Pauls)

Vatican II document: *Dei Verbum* (available at [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive))

The Holy Bible (CTS New Catholic Bible 2007 reflects text used in English lectionaries)

Catechism of the Catholic Church (available at [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive))

**Ignorance  
of  
Scripture  
is  
ignorance  
of  
Christ.**  
*St Jerome*





## Core Module 2: THE BIBLE: NEW TESTAMENT

**The Word of God, which is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, is set forth and displays its power in a most wonderful way in the writings of the New Testament which hand on the ultimate truth of God's Revelation. Their central object is Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son: his acts, teachings, Passion, and Glorification, and his church's beginnings under the Spirit's guidance. (CCC#124)**

### Aim

The purpose of this module is to familiarise participants with the process through which the New Testament writings came into being and to help them interpret the material presented and understand its significance for the life of a Christian today.

### Learning outcomes

Participants should:

- be familiar with the books and types of literature which make up the New Testament
- appreciate the centrality of the Resurrection experience in Christian belief
- recognise the New Testament writings as the basis for subsequent developments in Christian theology and worship
- understand the use of the New Testament in the Catholic community today
- be able to communicate what they have learned from an adult stance.

## Assignment

Answer ONE question in 1,500 words

Assignments should be sent electronically to [ccrs@brcdt.org](mailto:ccrs@brcdt.org). The assignment should be accompanied by a cover sheet (there is a template on page 27 of this booklet) detailing name, module, assignment title, bibliography, sources and word count.

1. Compare the perspectives of two of the synoptic Gospels with special reference to their portrayal of Jesus.

OR

2. Discuss some of the special characteristics of St John's Gospel.

OR

3. Choose ONE Gospel and show how it teaches about Jesus' mission.

## Reading

E. Charpentier, *How to read the New Testament* (London: SCM Press -2007)

S. Motyer, *New Testament Introduction* (Oxford: Lion Hudson – 2010)

Vatican II document: *Dei Verbum* (available at [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive))

The Holy Bible (CTS New Catholic Bible 2007 reflects text used in English lectionaries)

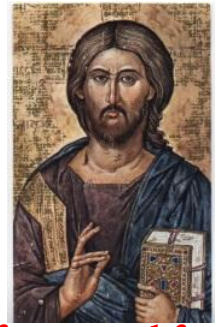
Catechism of the Catholic Church (available at [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive))

**The Bible bears fruit if held with pure hands, read with pure eyes and received with pure hearts.**

*Christian East*

**“The New Testament has put an end to the invisibility of the Father. The Son of God, by His Incarnation, Death and Resurrection has freed us from the slavery of sin, giving us the freedom of sons and daughters of God: He has shown us the face of God, which is love. We can see God, He is visible in Christ.”**

*Pope Benedict XVI (May 2011)*



## Core Module 3: CHRISTOLOGY

All Christ's riches 'are for every individual and everybody's property.' Christ did not live his life for himself but for us, from his incarnation 'for us and for our salvation' to his death 'for our sins' and Resurrection 'for our justification'. He is still 'our advocate with the Father', who 'always lives to make intercession' for us. He remains ever 'in the presence of God on our behalf, bringing before him all that he lived and suffered for us'. (CCC#519)

### Aim

The purpose of this module is to deepen participants' awareness of the significance and centrality of the person and work of Jesus Christ in the daily life of the Christian as well as in the worship of the Church.

### Learning outcomes

Participants should:

- recognise the diversity of images of the Person of Jesus
- relate these images to the social and cultural context in which they were shaped and expressed
- appreciate the mission of Jesus to proclaim the Kingdom of God
- recognise the centrality of the Person of Jesus, both fully human and divine
- be able to communicate what they have learned from an adult stance.

**“There is only one strong prayer: CHRIST  
There is only one voice that rises over the face of the earth:  
the voice of CHRIST.”**

*St Teresa of Calcutta*

**The Church has no other meaning or aim than  
living and bearing witness to Jesus.**

*Pope Francis*

## Assignment

Answer **ONE** question in 1,500 words

Assignments should be sent electronically to [ccrs@brcdt.org](mailto:ccrs@brcdt.org). The assignment should be accompanied by a cover sheet (there is a template on page 27 of this booklet) detailing name, module, assignment title, bibliography, sources and word count.

1. Discuss the titles *Son of God* and *Son of Man*. Did Jesus see himself as either or both?

OR

2. “The Church has no other meaning or aim than living and bearing witness to Jesus.” (*Pope Francis*)  
Discuss the implications of this statement for the Catholic school and teacher.

## Reading

G. O’Collins, *Christology* (Oxford: University Press 2009)

*Dominus Jesus* (available at [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations))

E. Charpentier, *How to read the New Testament* (London: SCM Press – 2007)

[www.newadvent.org](http://www.newadvent.org)

The Holy Bible (CTS New Catholic Bible 2007 reflects text used in English lectionaries)

Catechism of the Catholic Church (available at [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive))

**The witness which the Church brings to the world is the love of Christ. Through Christ is revealed to us both the capacity of humanity to love deeply, and through his Spirit the grace to do so. Christ shows us what redeemed humanity can achieve.**

*Cardinal Basil Hume*

“In Christ you can find the answers to the questions that accompany your journey, not in a superficial or facile way but walking and living with Jesus.

Do not be afraid to face difficult situations, moments of crisis or the trials of life, because the Lord accompanies you, He is with you. I encourage you to grow in friendship with Him through frequent reading of the Gospel and of all Sacred Scripture, faithful participation in the Eucharist as a personal meeting with Christ, committed efforts within the ecclesial community, and follow a good spiritual guide.

Allow the mystery of Christ to illuminate your entire being! Then will you be able to bring others to this novelty which can change relations, institutions and structures, and so build more just and united world animated by the search for the common good.”

*Benedict XVI - 2011*



## Core Module 4: THE CHURCH

**The Church is Trinitarian love and life lived in a structured community by men and women who are sent to give the love and message of Jesus to others. This Trinitarian love is: received in Baptism, celebrated in the Eucharist, taught in Scripture and poured out on the world by the Holy Spirit.**

*Fr. Christopher O'Donnell, O. Carm.*

### Aim

The purpose of this module is to enable participants to reflect on the nature of the Church and its mission in the world today.

### Learning outcomes

Participants should:

- be familiar with the Vatican II teaching on the Church
- be aware of the variety of roles in the Church of today
- recognise the relationship of the Church to the world as one of service
- appreciate the relationship between the Catholic church and other faiths
- be able to communicate what they have learned from an adult stance.

The Church is the **'house of harmony'** where unity and diversity know how to come together to create richness. The Church is like a **great orchestra** we are not all the same, each person offers what God has given to him or her. The Church is a **merciful mother**, who understands, who always tries to help, to give encouragement even when her children have made mistakes or continue to do so. I see the Church as a **field hospital** after battle.

*Pope Francis.*

The Church is the community of those who confess the Lordship of Jesus (that he is "the way, the truth and the life" – John 14:6) and who strive to live their lives in accordance with his example and teachings. The Church is also known as the People of God, the Body of Christ, and the Temple of the Holy Spirit among other names. Those three names, however, accentuate the Trinitarian context for an understanding of the Church, a context that is also employed by Vatican II's Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (*nn.2-4*).

*R McBrien.*

## Assignment

### PRACTICAL ASSIGNMENT

An account of this assignment should be sent electronically to [ccrs@brcdt.org](mailto:ccrs@brcdt.org). The assignment should be accompanied by a cover sheet (there is a template on page 27 of this booklet) detailing name, module, and assignment title. **For this assignment there is no requirement to supply a bibliography, sources or word count.**

Set up a meeting with your local priest. If possible, spend some time with him reflecting on and sharing his vision of “Church”; where he hopes to lead his parish community in terms of his “Model of Church”; what has influenced his views?

Possible questions to ask your priest:

1. What model of ‘Church’ guides and directs your vision for the parish?
2. What influences have shaped your vision?
3. How would you interpret ‘Collaborative Ministry’?
4. What importance do you give to the schools which serve your young people?

### Reading

A. Flannery, *Vatican Council: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church (Lumen gentium)* revised edition, 1996

G. Collins, ‘I have seven dreams’ (article published in *Tablet* 19.9.09 pp8-9)

The Holy Bible (CTS New Catholic Bible 2007 reflects text used in English lectionaries)

Catechism of the Catholic Church (available at [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive))

The Church has her roots in the teachings of the Apostles, authentic witnesses to Christ, but looks to the future and has the fixed awareness of being sent by Christ, of being Christ’s missionary, of bringing forth Christ’s name by prayer, proclamation and witness.

*Pope Francis.*

The Church is the house where the doors are always open not only to welcome everyone in to breathe love and hope so that we can take this love and hope outside. We need the oxygen of the Gospel, the breath of the Spirit of the Risen Christ to reignite hope in our hearts. *Pope Francis*



## Core Module 5: SACRAMENTS



Sacraments are ‘powers that comes forth’ from the Body of Christ, which is ever living and life-giving. They are actions of the Holy Spirit at work in his Body, the Church. They are ‘the masterworks of God’ in the new and everlasting covenant.

*(CCC#1116)*

### Aim

The purpose of this module is to develop participants’ understanding and appreciation of the Sacraments in the life of Catholics as a sign of Christ’s continuing presence with the Church.

### Learning outcomes

Participants should:

- recognise the symbolic use of word and action in daily life
- understand the relevance and purpose of the seven sacraments in the life of the individual and the Christian community
- appreciate Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist as sacraments of Christian initiation
- appreciate the sacraments as celebrations of the covenant relationship between Christ and the Church
- be able to communicate what they have learned from an adult stance.

**God never wearies of forgiving us, never!**

**The Lord forgives and forgets.**

*Pope Francis.*



Our Parishes are centred upon the celebration of the Sacraments and especially the celebration of the Mass. Catholics are rightly orientated toward the centrality of the Eucharist. The Eucharist builds up the Body of Christ but all the Sacraments are essentially communal and are best celebrated in a community. The Sacraments of Anointing, Reconciliation, Baptism, Confirmation are best celebrated in a whole parish setting. The Sacraments of Ordination and Marriage are to be celebrated in such a way as to underline that they too belong to the whole community.

## Assignment

Answer ONE question in 1,500 words

Assignments should be sent electronically to [ccrs@brcdt.org](mailto:ccrs@brcdt.org). The assignment should be accompanied by a cover sheet (there is a template on page 27 of this booklet) detailing name, module, assignment title, bibliography, sources and word count.

1. What are the spiritual effects of the Seven Sacraments in the life of the Christian community?

OR

2. From your study of the Sacraments, choose one, and present the history and key developments of that Sacrament in terms of what the Church believes and how she uses it.

OR

3. Choose a Sacrament and explain its significance with regard to the receiver's life in the Church.

OR

4. Suggest some ways in which young people might be stimulated to more active participation in the Eucharist.

## Reading

C. O'Donnell, *Worship, Prayer & Ritual* (Dublin : Veritas publications, 2004)

*Sacrosanctum Concilium* 1964, revised 1996 (available at [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive))

P. Breen, *The Sacraments of the Catholic Church* (available at [www.carmelites.ie/sacraments](http://www.carmelites.ie/sacraments))

*Catechism of the Catholic Church* (available at [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive))

**The Church gives us life in Baptism: that is, the moment in which she enables us to be born as children of God in which she generates us as a mother. She nourishes us in the Eucharist, she brings us God's forgiveness through the Sacrament of Penance, she supports us in times of sickness through the Anointing of the Sick.**

*Pope Francis*



## Core Module 6: CHRISTIAN MORALITY

St Thomas Aquinas wrote, ‘There is nothing to prevent human nature’s being raised up to something greater, even after sin; God permits evil in order to draw forth some greater good. Thus St Paul says’ “Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more”; and the *Exsultet* sings “ Oh happy fault... which gained for us so great a redeemer!””  
(CCC#412)

### Aim

The purpose of this module is to help participants develop the skills of moral decision-making, to examine Christian teaching in its relation to the universal search for what constitutes “human good”, and to explore the application of Christian understanding to some contemporary moral issues.

### Learning outcomes

Participants should:

- have a knowledge of the foundations of Christian morality and an understanding of the role of the Church as moral teacher
- recognise the importance of individual conscience and understand what is involved in the formation of Christian conscience
- be able to appreciate and respect different, yet conscientiously held, positions in regard to moral questions
- be able to communicate what they have learned from an adult stance.

## Assignment

Answer ONE question in 1,500 words

Assignments should be sent electronically to [ccrs@brcdt.org](mailto:ccrs@brcdt.org). The assignment should be accompanied by a cover sheet (there is a template on page 27 of this booklet) detailing name, module, assignment title, bibliography, sources and word count.

1. What role does the Church play in the formation of conscience?

OR

2. Research the most recent questions raised in medical / social ethics e.g. abortion, cloning, euthanasia, same gender marriage, etc., and explain the position taken by the Catholic Church.

OR

3. 'Christ is the foundation of the whole educational enterprise'. What are the implications of this for the Catholic teacher?

## Reading

P. Hannon, *Moral Decision Making* (Dublin: Veritas publications, 2007)

V. McNamara, *The Call to be Human* (Dublin: Veritas, 2006)

The Holy Bible (CTS New Catholic Bible 2007 reflects text used in English lectionaries)

Catechism of the Catholic Church (available at [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive))

**Our Lord Jesus himself clearly taught us the first principles of Catholic morality:**

**“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it, you shall love your neighbour as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the law and the prophets.”**

***(Mt 22:37-40)***



## Specialist Module 1: RELATIONSHIP AND SEX EDUCATION

**“Everyone, man and woman, should acknowledge and accept his sexual *identity*. Physical, moral, and spiritual *difference* and *complementarity* are oriented toward the goods of marriage and the flourishing of family life. The harmony of the couple and of society depends in part on the way in which the complementarity, needs, and mutual support between the sexes are lived out.” CCC#2333**

### Course content:

- How biblical teaching informs our understanding and vision of the human person.
- Basic conflict – Christian v humanist anthropology.
- Study texts from Vatican II and the Catechism of the Catholic Church which inform, deepen and contribute to our understanding of the theology of the body against a historical, geographical, cultural, political and religious background
- Study key texts from the writings of St John Paul II on the Theology of the Body with attention to current cultural trends and practices.
- How Catholic Theology informs Relationship and Sex Education in Catholic Schools and prepares young people for conflicting models of relationship in the wider world and contemporary materialistic culture.

### Aim

The purpose of this module is to introduce participants to a deeper understanding of Church teaching on what it means to be fully human and ‘fully alive’ with an exploration of its implications for Catholic schools and relevance in Christian life in British society today.

### Learning outcomes:

Reach an understanding of Catholic teaching on the theology of the body

- Identify ways in which policies and programmes in RSE in schools can best facilitate the growth and maturation of individuals
- Identify some important elements in RSE in terms of content, method, assessment and resources
- Be able to assess how the Christian community can best ensure that children receive gradual, positive sexual education that is both age sensitive and age specific
- Establish the role of parents, school, governors in the provision of RSE
- Be able to communicate what they have learned and reflected upon from an adult stance

## Assignment

Answer **ONE** question in 1,500 words

Assignments should be sent electronically to [ccrs@brcdt.org](mailto:ccrs@brcdt.org). The assignment should be accompanied by a cover sheet (there is a template on page 27 of this booklet) detailing name, module, assignment title, bibliography, sources and word count.

1. What guidance can be found in *Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love* to enable the growth and development of positive relationships?

OR

2. Take one aspect of your school's policy for RSE and offer your own thoughts and impressions on it.

## Reading

St John Paul II, *Theology of the Body*.

St John Paul II, *Veritatis Splendor*

The Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education – *Outlines for Sex Education*

(available at [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations))

Pope Francis, *Amoris Laetitia: The Joy of Love*

Pontifical Council for the Family, *The Truth and Meaning of Human Sexuality*, Family

Catechism of the Catholic Church (available at [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive))

**“Sexuality affects all aspects of the human person in the unity of his/her body and soul. It especially concerns affectivity, the capacity to love and to procreate, and in a more general way the aptitude for forming bonds of communion with others.”**

CCC#2332

**“In creating men 'male and female,' God gives man and woman an equal personal dignity.”<sup>119</sup> “Man is a person, man and woman equally so, since both were created in the image and likeness of the personal God.”**

CCC#2334

**“Each of the two sexes is an image of the power and tenderness of God, with equal dignity though in a different way. The *union of man and woman* in marriage is a way of imitating in the flesh the Creator's generosity and fecundity: “Therefore a man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves to his wife, and they become one flesh.”<sup>121</sup> All human generations proceed from this union.”**

CCC#2335

**“Jesus came to restore creation to the purity of its origins. In the Sermon on the Mount, he interprets God's plan strictly: “You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall not commit adultery.’ But I say to you that everyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart.”<sup>123</sup> What God has joined together, let not man put asunder.**

CC#2336



## Specialist Module 2: RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

**The Catholic School in many ways embodies the life of the church in a particular place and time. It is an expression of that life. Its purpose and task arise from a sense of purpose of the whole church. - Cardinal Vincent Nichols**

### Aim

To distinguish the distinctive aims of catechesis, evangelisation and religious education; to appreciate the significance of key Church documents; and to enable participants to have a deeper understanding of the distinctive nature of Catholic education and the mission of the Catholic school in faith formation.

### Course Content

- “Christ at the Centre”
- The history and development of Catholic education in England and Wales
- Pedagogy appropriate to Religious Education
- The aims of Catholic education
- Religious Education courses used in primary and secondary phases
- The distinctive nature of the Catholic school

### Learning outcomes

- explore ways in which RE can best facilitate religious growth and development of all children in the Catholic school.
- discover how liturgy and prayer might contribute to the religious experience of children and to the life of the school.
- examine some important elements of RE in terms of content, method and assessment
- consider ways of applying some of the national strategy guidance to religious education
- overview of pedagogies appropriate for the teaching of religious education
- assess appropriate styles for different types of topic
- address the learning needs of different groups of children
- incorporate assessment for learning effectively.

## Assignment

Answer ONE question in 1,500 words

Assignments should be sent electronically to [ccrs@brcdt.org](mailto:ccrs@brcdt.org). The assignment should be accompanied by a cover sheet (there is a template on page 27 of this booklet) detailing name, module, assignment title, bibliography, sources and word count.

1. Explain the **three terms** Evangelisation, Catechesis and Religious Education, and explore their relationship to one another.

OR

2. Describe how pedagogy might impact RE outcomes.

## Reading

Educating Today and Tomorrow: A Renewing Passion (available at [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia))

P. Purnell, *Our Faith Story* (Chelmsford: Harper Collins 1995)

Evaluating the Distinctive Nature of the Catholic School (available at [www.cesew.org.uk](http://www.cesew.org.uk))

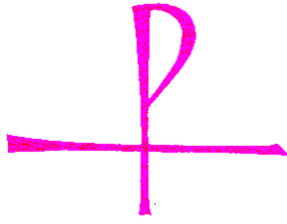
Pastoral letter from Bishops' Conference of England & Wales on Catholic schools (May 2000)

The Catholic School on the threshold of the new millennium (available at [www.cesew.org.uk](http://www.cesew.org.uk))

*Gravissimum Educationis* (available [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive))

The identity of the Catholic school for a culture of dialogue (available at [www.vatican.va/roman\\_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc\\_con\\_ccatheduc\\_doc\\_20220125\\_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica\\_en.html](http://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccatheduc/documents/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_20220125_istruzione-identita-scuola-cattolica_en.html))

**Schools have a key role in the mission of the Church; they exist, as the whole Church does, to communicate Christ to others. Our schools are integral to the life of the Church and are not an 'add on'. Schools must see themselves as a part of the Church community working in partnership with the parishes. Teaching is a ministry within the Church and the vocation of teachers and all those who work in schools, needs to be highly valued.**



## Further opportunities to secure CCRS

**Further to our Diocesan Programme, the following opportunities are available:**

Liverpool Hope University : [ccrsonline@hope.ac.uk](mailto:ccrsonline@hope.ac.uk) - (Tel: 0151 291 3055)

Life-Light Home Study Courses: [info@studylifelight.com](mailto:info@studylifelight.com) – (Tel: 01844 351 514)

We would like to express our gratitude to the Board of Religious Studies for their support and encouragement.

### CCRS Online : Some Useful Web Links

#### A) Old Testament, New Testament, Christology

Catechism of the Catholic Church [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive)

Bishops Conference of England & Wales (2005) 'The Gift of Scripture'  
[www.catholic-ew.org.uk](http://www.catholic-ew.org.uk)

Pontifical Biblical Commission (1993) 'The Interpretation of the Bible in the Church'  
[catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/PBC\\_Interp.htm](http://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/PBC_Interp.htm)

Old Testament Gateway [www.otgateway.com](http://www.otgateway.com)

New Testament Gateway [www.ntgateway.com](http://www.ntgateway.com)

Vatican Biblia Clerus [www.clerus.org/bibliaclerus/index\\_eng.html](http://www.clerus.org/bibliaclerus/index_eng.html)

Catholic Online [www.catholic.org/bible/new\\_testament.php](http://www.catholic.org/bible/new_testament.php)

Electronic New Testament Educational Resources [catholic-resources.org/Bible/](http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/)

Catholic Bible Resources [www.veritasbible.com/resources/articles](http://www.veritasbible.com/resources/articles)

Crossroads Catholic Bible Study Tools  
[www.crossroadsinitiative.com/resource\\_type/15.html](http://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/resource_type/15.html)

Catholic Bible Resources Online  
[www.radionewjerusalem.com/Catholic/resources.html#Bible](http://www.radionewjerusalem.com/Catholic/resources.html#Bible)

Agape Catholic Bible Study [www.agapebiblestudy.com/index.html](http://www.agapebiblestudy.com/index.html)

Thinking Faith articles [www.thinkingfaith.org/](http://www.thinkingfaith.org/)

Oxford Biblical Studies Online [www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com](http://www.oxfordbiblicalstudies.com)

Catholic Resources [catholic-resources.org/index.html](http://catholic-resources.org/index.html)



## CCRS Online : More Useful Web Links

### B) Church, Sacraments, Morality

Catechism of the Catholic Church [www.vatican.va/archive/ccc/index.htm](http://www.vatican.va/archive/ccc/index.htm)

Compendium to the Catechism [www.vatican.va/archive/compendium](http://www.vatican.va/archive/compendium)

Vatican II documents [www.ewtn.com/library/councils](http://www.ewtn.com/library/councils) or [www.vatican.va/archive](http://www.vatican.va/archive)

*Pope Francis (2013) Evangelii Gaudium* (The Joy of the Gospel)

[w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost\\_exhortations](http://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/apost_exhortations)

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales : Cherishing Life [www.cbcew.org.uk](http://www.cbcew.org.uk)

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England & Wales : Choosing the Common Good

[www.cbcew.org.uk](http://www.cbcew.org.uk)

Catholic Bishops' Conference of England and Wales (1996) : The Common Good and the Catholic Church's Social Teaching [www.cbcew.org.uk](http://www.cbcew.org.uk)

Major Councils of the Church [www.dailycatholic.org/history/councils](http://www.dailycatholic.org/history/councils)

Theology Library: Second Vatican Council [www.shc.edu/theolibrary/vaticanii](http://www.shc.edu/theolibrary/vaticanii)

Vatican II The Voice of the Church [www.vatican2voice.org](http://www.vatican2voice.org)

Thinking Faith articles [www.thinkingfaith.org](http://www.thinkingfaith.org)

Catholic Resources [catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/Sacraments](http://catholic-resources.org/ChurchDocs/Sacraments)

Catholics: A Sacramental People [www.bc.edu](http://www.bc.edu)

Catholic Moral Theology [catholicmoraltheology.com](http://catholicmoraltheology.com)

Catholics Come Home [www.catholicscomehome.org/moral-issues](http://www.catholicscomehome.org/moral-issues)

Internet Theology Resources [www.users.csbsju.edu](http://www.users.csbsju.edu)

# BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND & WALES



## Board of Religious Studies

### CCRS Assignment Assessment Sheet

<b>Participant:</b>		<b>Date:</b>
<b>Module:</b>	<b>Title:</b>	
<b>Presentation:</b>		<b>Comments, if any, on presentation:</b>
As per guidelines (paper size/binding) Clear and legible Satisfactory length Word count included Bibliography included		
<b>Organisation:</b>		<b>Comments, if any, on organisation:</b>
Title and module number at beginning Clear introduction and conclusion Logical structure Each paragraph related to title/question All parts given equal consideration Quotations relevant and properly referenced		
<b>Language:</b>		<b>Comments, if any, on language:</b>
Inclusive where possible Not exhortatory ('we should/must/ought')		
<b>Assignment shows evidence of:</b>		<b>Comments, if any, on this evidence:</b>
Adequate reading Understanding of content/area of study Ability to assimilate and criticise this material Necessary skills to communicate from adult stance		
<b>General Comments:</b>		
<i>(Continue overleaf if necessary)</i>		
<b>Marker's Recommendation:</b>		<b>Initials:</b>
<b>Moderated Result (If different):</b>		<b>Initials:</b>

## Marking Criteria

Following guidelines given by the Board of Studies, written work is assessed using the following criteria:

<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Distinction</u></b></p> <p>The work displays all or a significant number of these characteristics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evidence of very good knowledge and understanding of the question and materials</li> <li>● Use of relevant concepts and methodology</li> <li>● Reading beyond the recommended minimum</li> <li>● Independent reflection</li> <li>● Good level of critical analysis</li> <li>● Clear and coherent argument supported by appropriate examples</li> <li>● Good, clear written style within the specified word count</li> <li>● Full and accurate referencing and bibliography.</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b><u>Pass</u></b></p> <p>The work displays all or a significant number of these characteristics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Evidence of some knowledge and understanding of the relevant material</li> <li>● An acceptable range of resources is used</li> <li>● An argument is attempted though the work is largely descriptive, rather than analytical</li> <li>● An attempt is made to organise material logically and to focus on the question</li> <li>● The work is presented clearly and legibly, with an acceptable standard of written English within the specified word count</li> <li>● Appropriate use of referencing and bibliography.</li> </ul>
<p><b><u>Fail / Resubmission</u></b></p> <p>This grade is reserved for work that does not gain a passing standard. Either a significant amount of the work is not the participant's own, or the work displays all or some of these characteristics.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Inadequate understanding of the subject area; misunderstanding of key concept(s)</li> <li>● Poor use of resources</li> <li>● Insufficient engagement with the question</li> <li>● Unfocussed response to the question</li> <li>● Inadequate use of referencing and bibliography</li> <li>● The work is illegible and/or shows an unacceptable standard of written English and/or exceeds or falls below the specified word count.</li> </ul>

## GUIDANCE FOR WRITING CCRS ESSAYS

**Essay writing** is an art in itself and ‘essays’ were a proper field for professional writers and men of letters; collections of essays, still, often bring together different authors on a particular theme. Essays were – and are – sociological, medical, literary, political, philosophical etc. The art of the essay reached a dizzy peak in the mid-18<sup>th</sup> to mid-19<sup>th</sup> century. One of the most (in)famous of these literary essays was Thomas de Quincey’s *On Murder Considered as one of the Fine Arts*, published in 1827.

**Obviously we are** talking about something rather different here! Essays such as those written for CCRS assignments are short (but not brief), to-the-point and intended to show your knowledge and understanding of a particular subject. This being the case, they need to be concise – concentrated, if you like. Even so, there are guidelines which it is fairly important to follow as best you can; they make it easier on the writer and the reader. Some of them are simply common-sense, while one or two others are a little more specific.

**These guidelines** are offered according to the general requirements of the Board of Religious Studies of the Bishops’ Conference of England and Wales. Hopefully, they will prove helpful.

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### PRESENTATION

Obviously, the essay must be **easy to read**; it is very important therefore to use double spacing and a reasonably large font size – depending on which font you use. Essays printed in a font so large that it looks as though it was written for the extremely short-sighted is just as uncomfortable to read as a tiny font that needs a magnifying glass to be seen.

If the requirement for the essay is **1,500 words**, that’s ideally what it should be. We would usually allow a maximum tolerance of 10% either way; that is, between 1,350 and 1,650 words. Always include a word count. The computer will do this for you, of course – otherwise the reader has to count it.

Always, too, include a **bibliography**. This needn’t be the size of the British Museum Library – but one book simply isn’t enough. Obviously, teachers are very busy people and don’t have the luxury of sitting down to read an armful of books, but the CCRS essays are important enough to give a little extra reading time to. Online sites are also okay, but cutting and pasting whole chunks of text isn’t; these cut-and-paste passages usually contain tell-tale reference numbers that make it obvious they aren’t your own work.

It would be great if books outnumbered URLs, but let common sense prevail: a couple of books in the bibliography – including the recommended reading – would be good.

It is important to reference all quotations; if you put something in inverted commas or quotation marks, a reference should always be given, saying where the quotation comes from. These can be in the form of footnotes or endnotes.

A correct form of bibliographical listing is – just for example – this:

Bradley, Ritamary. (1992). *Julian’s Way*. London: Harper Collins.

That is: surname, name, date, title, place of publication and publisher.

What you say should be **relevant** to the assignment subject; this may seem pretty obvious, but sometimes there is a temptation to wander! In an essay that is relatively speaking fairly brief, there simply isn’t time to stray into unrelated areas, however fascinating they might be. The essay should be clearly structured, properly paragraphed and balanced in content. For example, a paper comparing St Mark’s gospel with St Matthew’s, shouldn’t have four pages on St Mark, one on St Matthew, and none comparing the two.

**The issue of plagiarism** is an area to which the Board of Religious Studies draws attention. Please find your own voice in responding to the assignments, and please do not use uncredited the work of others. This covers but is not limited to submissions wholly or partly abstracted from an online source or book, a previously submitted assignment, or a submission relying on overuse of paraphrase. Should there be concern that an assignment submitted is substantially not one's own work, the candidate will be asked to re-submit and there may be a delay in passing the course.

**Language should be inclusive.** So, really, to write about Jesus 'dying to save all *men*' isn't terribly appropriate. And it should not be 'exhortatory' – in other words, it shouldn't sound like a sermon. 'We should' and 'we must' and 'we ought' don't have a place in what is essentially an academic piece – even though they do have a place in this paragraph. This – for example – would not be good:

*'St John's gospel tells us that Jesus commended his mother to the beloved disciple, and the disciple to his mother; therefore we should look to Mary, his mother, as our own mother, and pray to her...'*

Although language is a living thing, some linguistic developments seem less than organic than others. For example, the gospels do not 'reference' the life of Christ, they describe or relate it. Indeed, what they do is *proclaim* it. Also, when one is writing of Catholic teaching, it is probably best simply to say: 'The Church teaches that... ' rather than 'the Church asserts' or 'the Church thinks that', and so on. This is the kind of sentence that would not be appealing to the reader:

*'The Catholic Church asserts there are seven sacraments, each one referencing a stage in life.'*

Also, it is best to check that what you are suggesting the Church teaches, the Church actually does. In the past there has occasionally been a certain *inventiveness*, often in the module on Morality.

And on the subject of Church, it always has a capital 'C' unless one is referring to a particular church, parish or building – then it has a small 'c'.

Points made from **personal experience** are always welcome – for one thing, they make the essay's voice more authentic. This is particularly important when you are writing about school and parish community. Only one caveat: personal experience has its limits; if you're writing about the Synoptic gospels, don't fill the essay with classroom stories. Balance is always the ideal – in presentation, organization and content.

These are only concluding observations based on solid experience of reading and marking CCRS essays. It's a lot less complicated than it sounds: just write a clear, structured essay showing that i) you've done at least *some* background reading or research; ii) you have understood the contents of the module and can express that understanding in good, plain English. No more than that.

Everyone knows that teaching time and family time are precious; the Diocese is more than glad that teachers and interested persons like yourself come forward and generously give of both kinds of time so that they may advance in knowledge and understanding of the Faith. After all, you have in your care the Church of the future.

**Submission of essays** should be electronic – the course is committed to digital literacy - and must always be submitted to the email address [ccrs@brcdt.org](mailto:ccrs@brcdt.org) . The subject of your email must contain 'CCRS essay', your name and module title (not just module number). For example: 'CCRS, John / Jane Doe, Old Testament.' Failure to include this information in the title may result in a delay in the essay being marked.

**Fr David Clemens**  
CCRS consultant and Special Adviser to BDES

**John Adams**  
CCRS Coordinator

**Essays are marked by John Adams, moderated by BDES and may be selected for standardisation by the CCRS Southern Region at its annual conference. Essays will be anonymised for moderation and standardisation.**

## Terms and conditions and additional information

**Registration** is with Brentwood Diocesan Education Service (BDES) as an approved centre by The National Board of Religious Studies to affirm the successful learning of the student on the Catholic Certificate for Religious Studies course; this will commence the month the student attends or is expected to attend their first module.

It is the preference of BDES that students **complete the course within one year** of starting the course, although all students, have a maximum of five years from registration date with the centre to complete the course (referred to as five-year timeframe).

Successful completion of the course is dependent **on all compulsory sessions being attended and all module assignments being satisfactorily completed within that five-year timeframe**. It is the **student's responsibility to sign all attendance sheets/registers** for the lectures and tutorials. Failure to do will be noted in the student's records as 'did not attend'; should the situation arise in which a query occurs over attendance and in which the student avers they have attended the session but did not sign the registration form, the student will not be deemed to have attended and will be required to repeat the session within the five-year timeframe. **Under no circumstances** may any student sign the registration form / attendance list for any other person.

Assignments are expected to be submitted **as soon as possible** after the attendance of each module. Students must adhere to the writing guidelines provided when commencing the course. Failure to do so may result in re-submission being required. Assignments should only be submitted following attendance of the sessions and should not be submitted in advance; the integrity of the process of the assignments being a response to guided learning is a feature of the course. In the event of an assignment not being satisfactorily completed, the student will be advised and a re-submission requested.

Students are asked to notify the centre and (if appropriate) the tutor should they be unable to attend any session.

Failure to attend any compulsory session, or failure to complete a satisfactory assignment for any aspect of the course within the five-year timeframe will result in the student **not completing the course** and, should they still wish to qualify for the Certificate, **having to repeat the entire course**.

A module certificate will only be considered passed by the centre upon satisfactory completion of each of the module's elements (attendance of compulsory sessions and satisfactory completion of the module assignment).

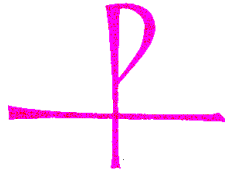
It is not possible to carry over previous attendance in lectures, tutorials or satisfactory completion of essays on to a new course should the course not be completed within the five-year timeframe. In this instance, students would need to reapply, begin the course and pay all fees again.

All fees must be paid to complete the course. If an individual is paying on a modular basis, all fees must be paid before the certificate is awarded, even if the course is fully completed. Payment must be made within the five-year timeframe to ensure that the certificate is received or discussions need to have taken place with the centre within the five-year timeframe regarding any issues relating to fees.

It is the **student's responsibility to keep the centre updated with any change in personal contact information**, in particular, home address, contact number, email address, school address (if applicable). Failure to do so may result in not receiving communications relating to the course, for which the centre cannot be held responsible.

Finally, in the event of any difficulties or issues please let us know and we will do our utmost to help within the conditions laid down. You can contact **BDES** on **01277 265285** or **John Adams** the CCRS Coordinator on **07825 418473** (work mobile), mail us at **ccrs@brcdt.org** or reach us by post at **Brentwood Diocesan Education Service, Cathedral House, Ingrave Road, Brentwood CM15 8AT**.

**BISHOPS' CONFERENCE OF ENGLAND AND WALES**



**Board of Religious Studies**

**CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES**

**COVER SHEET**

**To Be Completed By Student**

Name:..... CCRS Centre: .....  
Module: ..... Module Tutor: .....  
Assignment Title:.....

- BIBLIOGRAPHY INCLUDED**
- SOURCES APPROPRIATELY REFERENCED (i.e. ideas, information or quotations taken from another source have been acknowledged in your assignment through either a footnote/endnote or an in-text citation)**

**Word Count..... (excluding quotes)**

Student Self-Appraisal (optional)

I confirm that the work submitted under this cover is my own.

Signed.....

Date Submitted.....

## Catholic Certificate in Religious Studies : 2026-2027 dates

In school hours (i.s.h.) session times :  
 8.30a.m. – 12.00p.m. Session 1  
 1:00p.m. – 4.00p.m. Session 2  
 4:30p.m. – 6.00p.m. Tutorial

Weekend (w/e) session times :  
 8.30a.m. – 12.00p.m. Session 1  
 1:00p.m. – 4.00p.m. Session 2  
 4:30p.m. – 6.00p.m. Tutorial

1. Old Testament (in school hours)  
**Wednesday 16<sup>th</sup> September 2026**  
 Guest Speaker: Canon S. Myers

1. Old Testament (weekend)  
**Saturday 19<sup>th</sup> September 2026**  
 Guest Speaker: Canon S. Myers

2. New Testament (in school hours)  
**Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2026**  
 Guest Speaker: Canon S. Myers

2. New Testament (weekend)  
**Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2026**  
 Guest Speaker: Canon S. Myers

3. Christology (in school hours)  
**Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2026**

3. Christology (weekend)  
**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> November 2026**

4. Church (in school hours)  
**Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2027**

4. Church (weekend)  
**Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> January 2027**

5. Sacraments (in school hours)  
**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2027**  
 Guest Speaker: Canon S. Myers

5. Sacraments (weekend)  
**Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> February 2027**  
 Guest Speaker: Canon S. Myers

6. Christian Morality (in school hours)  
**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026**

6. Christian Morality (weekend)  
**Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> March 2027**

7. Relationships & Sex Education (i.s.h.)  
**Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> April 2027**

7. Relationships & Sex Education (weekend)  
**Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> April 2027**

8. Religious Education (in school hours)  
**Wednesday 5<sup>th</sup> May 2027**

8. Religious Education (weekend)  
**Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> May 2027**

Deadline for assignments for those completing in 2026/27 is **Sunday 6<sup>th</sup> June 2027**.  
 The CCRS 'Presentation of Certificates' will take place on **2<sup>nd</sup> July 2027**, at **10.30am**,  
 in the presence of **Rt. Hon. Rev. Alan Williams sm, Bishop of Brentwood**.

**All sessions will take place in the Conference Hall  
 at Cathedral House, Ingrave Road, Brentwood CM15 8AT.**

## Further information

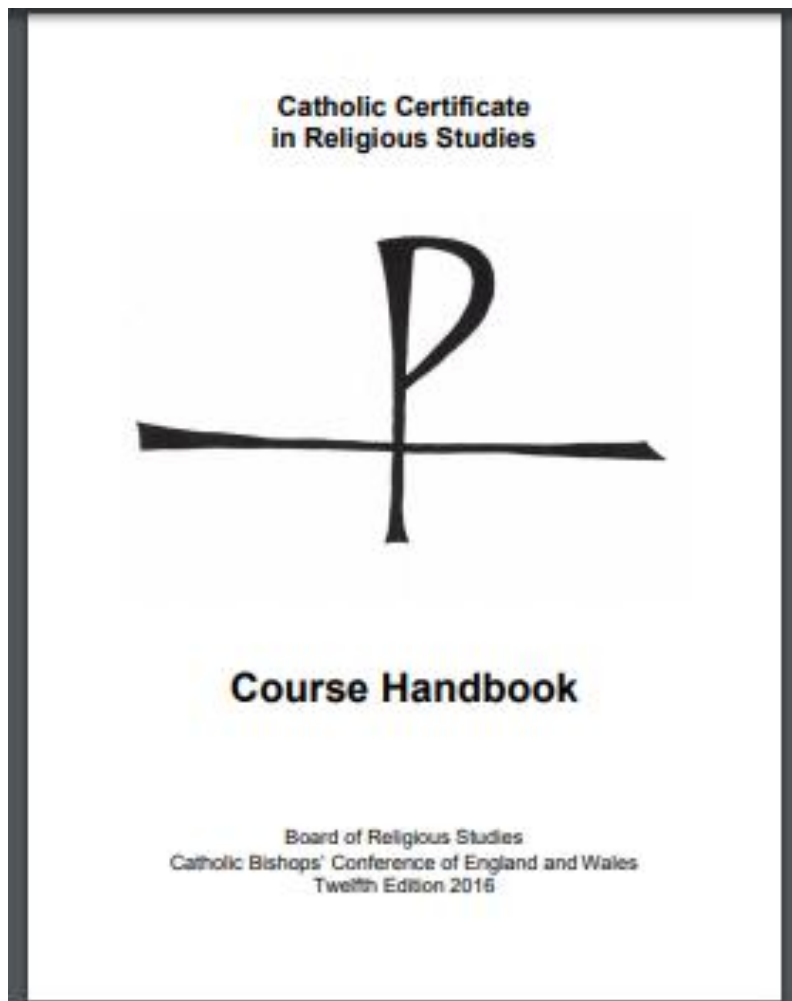
An *electronic* copy of this Diocese of Brentwood CCRS Handbook can be downloaded from website of the Brentwood Diocesan Education Service at

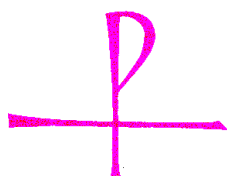
[www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/education/catholic-certificate-religious-studies-ccrs](http://www.dioceseofbrentwood.net/departments/education/catholic-certificate-religious-studies-ccrs)

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A copy of the national 16<sup>th</sup> Edition CCRS Student Handbook can be downloaded from the Board of Religious Studies website at

<https://www.brs-ccrs.org.uk/index.php/downloads>





## CATHOLIC CERTIFICATE IN RELIGIOUS STUDIES

### *PARTICIPANT'S RECORD OF PROGRESS*

Please use this page to record details of your registration and progress towards achieving the CCRS.

Your Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Address: \_\_\_\_\_

The date you registered: \_\_\_\_\_

Your Registration Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Module	Centre Attended	Dates Attended	Date Assignment Submitted
Core Module 1 The Bible: Old Testament			
Core Module 2 The Bible: New Testament			
Core Module 3 Jesus Christ			
Core Module 4 The Church			
Core Module 5 Sacraments			
Core Module 6 Christian Morality			
Specialist Module 1 Title:			
Specialist Module 2 Title:			

Certificate awarded on (date) : \_\_\_\_\_

# SPACE FOR NOTES

