The 
Catching Fire
Framework

The overarching goal of spiritual formation in this framework is to enliven all staff through spiritual formation as lifelong adult learners who nurture education for transformation.

(Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane)

This section outlines the framework itself - The Model and The Matrix

The Catching Fire Framework can be described as a HEAD HEART HANDS approach. It reflects an holistic understanding of formation, respectful of the individual context and journey, and at the same time developed within a communal perspective of mission.

This framework has been designed so that

- current visions, programmes and opportunities may be situated and supported
- new initiatives, whether long term or spontaneous, may find an appropriate fit
- formation pathways can be developed

The framework comprises both the Matrix and Model. The Matrix lays the information out in a linear way with elaboration on the elements. The Model presents Catching Fire in a way that captures visually the symbolic power and dynamic interplay between the framework elements.

The section is in six parts:

- The Catching Fire MATRIX
- The Catching Fire MODEL
- The Catching Fire Capacities
- Head, Heart and Hands Approach
- My Story, Our Story, The Story
- Using the Framework

‘Earth cannot escape heaven, flee it by going up or flee it by going down. Heaven still invades the Earth, energises it, makes it sacred’

Meister Eckhart

The Catching Fire Matrix

TABLE 1 overleaf is a matrix of the different components of the Catching Fire Framework linked together in an integrated, dynamic way.

Across the top row are the different components of the framework in sequential order from left to right and in the respective columns below are the contents for each of the components, as follows:

Responsive to the Jesus Communion Mission vision - the three vital dimensions of the archdiocesan vision

..with HEAD, HEART and HANDS, we undertake spiritual formation for mission in core formation elements - these four formation elements (EXPERIENCE, KNOWLEDGE, PRACTICE, APPLICATION) are arranged in three groups around the Jesus Communion Mission vision.

..further developing as lifelong learners with the confidence, qualities and capacity – nine formation capacities are connected to the three dimensions: developing as persons of PRESENCE, PRAYER and PRINCIPLE; as persons of WELCOME, RITUAL and JOURNEY; as persons of PURPOSE, COMMITMENT and FIDELITY.

..to carry out the Vision for Catholic Education, – to TEACH, CHALLENGE, TRANSFORM.

From page 18, following TABLE 1, further explanation of some of the Matrix components is provided.

Following that, on page 22, the Catching Fire Model is presented and unpacked.
**Table 1 Catching Fire Matrix**

Responsive to the Jesus Communion Mission vision of the Archdiocese of Brisbane

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>JESUS Embracing the Person and Vision of Jesus</th>
<th>.. with HEAD, HEART and HANDS we undertake spiritual formation for mission in core formation elements</th>
<th>.. further developing as lifelong learners with the confidence, qualities and capacity</th>
<th>.. to carry out the Vision for Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>J1 EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>Experience and value the witness of self and others who model lives centred on Jesus</td>
<td></td>
<td>TEACH promoting faith in Jesus Christ, teaching and learning about Jesus, the gospel and the faith of the Christian community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J2 KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>Know about the person and vision of Jesus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J3 PRACTICE</td>
<td>Develop skills and practices, especially in prayer, that nurture and deepen a personal relationship with Jesus</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>J4 APPLICATION</td>
<td>Understand and apply the values in the vision of Jesus to our everyday educational contexts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COMMUNION Building Communion with God and others</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1 EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>Experience and value the witness of self and others who model a spirituality of communion through liturgy and ritual, relationships with others and a sacramental view of the world</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2 KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>Know and understand spirituality of communion as the heart and soul of the Church and its mission, and the centrality of the celebration of eucharist and the other sacraments in this communion</td>
<td></td>
<td>CHALLENGE educating to live in communion with God, others and the whole of creation in prayerful, sacramental, just, peaceful, inclusive and reconciling communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3 PRACTICE</td>
<td>Develop skills and practices that express hall-marks of Christian communion – reverence, respect, hospitality, inclusivity, pastoral care, forgiveness, worship and common prayer</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4 APPLICATION</td>
<td>Apply a sacramental perspective to our everyday educational contexts</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MISSION Engaging in Jesus’ Mission in the world</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>M1 EXPERIENCE</td>
<td>Experience and value the witness of self and others who model different expressions of Jesus’ mission, including social justice outreach, vocational commitment and everyday choices</td>
<td></td>
<td>TRANSFORM educating for a transformed world in communion, nurturing the gifts and potential of each person, enacting shared leadership and exercising a preferential option for the poor and marginalised</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M2 KNOWLEDGE</td>
<td>Know the evangelising mission of the Church and the place of Catholic schools in this mission</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M3 PRACTICE</td>
<td>Develop and practise a sense of personal and communal mission in the context of a vocation within Catholic education</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>M4 APPLICATION</td>
<td>Apply the transformative purpose of Jesus’ mission to our everyday educational contexts</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Matrix components

Jesus Communion Mission

The dimensions of the Archdiocesan Jesus Communion Mission vision embraced in the Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education (2005) provide a comprehensive and relevant conceptual foundation for the framework. These three dimensions: Embracing the Person and Vision of Jesus, ‘Building Communion with God and Others’; and ‘Engaging in Jesus’ Mission in our World provide key content for the core formation elements, and point to formation outcomes or capacity building identified in the framework.

HEAD, HEART and HANDS Formation Process

Anchored by the ‘Jesus’, ‘Communion’ and ‘Mission’ dimensions, formation is seen to involve four elements that reflect a Head, Heart, and Hands approach. These are common to all formation activities, but elaborated more particularly as they are applied to each core dimension (Jesus Communion Mission). Formation for each of these dimensions then aims to grow particular capacities named in the Matrix. The common elements of the formation process are:

Experience: Experience refers to engagement with personal experience or stories of others who model particular ways of being, relevant to key formation elements.

Knowledge: Knowledge refers to information and conceptual understanding of key spiritual formation content.

Practice: Practice refers to skills, practices and disciplines in everyday life that will deepen spiritual growth in an ongoing way.

Application: Application refers to applying key elements of spiritual formation learnings to everyday educational contexts.

In brief, and taking an example, the action ‘Embrace the Person and Vision of Jesus’ elaborates in the following way when the formation elements are applied:

Experience: refers to personal encounter with Jesus eg in prayer and other experiences, moving from knowing about, to a much deeper knowing which can be described by the word embrace.

Knowledge: refers to information about Jesus and his vision of life.

Practice: refers to the trying out for oneself the experience/learnings, understanding and adapting them for one’s own situation.

Application: refers to practices and disciplines integrated into one’s everyday life that will deepen one’s embrace of the person and vision of Jesus.

Knowledge (The ‘Head’) is a vital component of spiritual formation. At the same time, this framework is based on the belief that adult spiritual formation must also include a strong experiential (The ‘Heart’) aspect that allows for reflective learning, and the application of knowledge, skills and practices. (The ‘Hands’)

See p 26 for further information on the Head Heart Hands Approach.

The Core Formation Elements and Capacities

Core Formation Elements and Capacities relating to the ‘Jesus’ Dimension

Core Formation Elements

J1 Experience and value the witness of self and others who model lives centred on Jesus

J2 Know about the person and vision of Jesus

J3 Develop skills and practices, especially in prayer, that nurture and deepen a personal relationship with Jesus

J4 Understand and apply the values in the vision of Jesus to everyday educational contexts
Formation Capacities being developed

The formation capacities developed in the Jesus dimension are identified as Presence, Prayer and Principle. That is, Catching Fire seeks to further develop all involved with Catholic Education across our school and office communities..

.. as persons of **presence** who reflect an incarnational understanding of God

.. as persons of **prayer** who have developed personal prayer styles and are nurtured and sustained by faithfulness to this practice

.. as persons of **principle** who live the gospel values of Jesus’ vision

Aspect of the Vision for Catholic Education being supported

Formation in the above elements and the development of the above capacities will enhance the power to **teach**, promoting faith in Jesus Christ, teaching and learning about Jesus, the gospel and the faith of the Christian community. (*Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education 2005*)

Core Formation Elements and Capacities relating to the ‘Communion’ Dimension

Core Formation Elements

C1 **Experience** and value the witness of others who model a spirituality of communion through liturgy and ritual, relationships with others and a sacramental view of the world

C2 **Know** and understand spirituality of communion as the heart and soul of the Church and Its Mission, and the centrality of the celebration of Eucharist and the other sacraments in this communion

C3 Develop **skills and practices** that express hallmarks of Christian communion – reverence, respect, hospitality, inclusivity, pastoral care, forgiveness, worship and common prayer

C4 **Apply** a sacramental perspective to our everyday educational contexts

Formation Capacities being developed

The formation capacities developed in the Communion dimension are identified as Welcome, Ritual and Journey. That is, Catching Fire seeks to further develop all involved with Catholic education across our school and office communities..

.. as persons of **welcome** who understand and build an ethos of Christian hospitality in every circumstance

.. as persons of **ritual** who understand sacramentality and apply the Christian value of reverence in all relationships

.. as persons of **journey** who understand the ‘people of God’ narrative and have found a place in the wider Church

Aspect of the Vision for Catholic Education being supported

Formation in the above elements and the development of the above capacities will enhance the power to **challenge**, educating to live in communion with God, others and the whole of creation in prayerful, sacramental, just, peaceful, inclusive and reconciling communities. (*Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education 2005*)

Core Formation Elements and Capacities relating to the ‘Mission’ Dimension

Core Formation Elements

M1 Experience and value the witness of others who model different expressions of Jesus’ mission, including social justice outreach, vocational commitment and everyday choices

M2 **Know** the evangelising mission of the Church, and the place of Catholic schools in this mission

M3 Develop and practice a sense of personal and communal mission in the context of a vocation within Catholic education
M4 Apply the transformative purpose of Jesus’ mission to our everyday educational contexts

**Formation Capacities being developed**

The formation capacities developed in the Communion dimension are identified as **Purpose**, **Commitment** and **Fidelity**. That is, *Catching Fire* seeks to further develop all involved with Catholic education across our school and office communities..

- .. as persons of **purpose** with a strong sense of personal and professional vocation
- .. as persons of **commitment** with a passion for making a difference in the world through their vocation and witness
- .. as persons of **fidelity** who live out, through their ministry, the best of the Catholic Christian educational tradition, and identify with all those who work in the name of Catholic schooling.

**Aspect of the Vision for Catholic Education being supported**

Formation in the above elements and the development of the above capacities will enhance the power to **transform**, educating for a transformed world in communion, nurturing the gifts and potential of each person, enacting shared leadership and exercising a preferential option for the poor and marginalised. (*Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education 2005*) See p.24 for a further explanation of the background and understanding of the Capacities.

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**The Catching Fire Model**

The Model on which the Matrix is based sees God (*The Lifelong Creator*) as active and present in every person who is a lifelong learner. In the very heart of each person, the being of the lifelong Creator meets the being of the lifelong learner. *Catching Fire* seeks to facilitate the nourishment of this dynamic relationship within the context of the Catholic Education communities of the Archdiocese of Brisbane. The engagement in spiritual formation is deemed to have a two-fold effect – personal, inner growth connected to relationship with God and visible signs of that growth (formation capacities) which nourish all facets of our educational communities.

**Unpacking the Model**

The model gives a visual sense of the dynamic process and elements that make up the framework.

Embedded in the *Catching Fire* model is the recognised graphic of the archdiocesan *Jesus Communion Mission* vision representing what is required to be a vibrant Christian person, a vibrant Christian community or institution, or a vibrant Christian Church. The model contains several elements, namely: the flame; the words *Jesus, Communion, Mission*; the expanding band of colour outside the flame. Added to these are several other elements, namely: the lifelong learner circle; the words *Teach, Challenge, Transform*; the double-headed arrows; the formation cycle and the formation outcome capacities.

An explanation of each of these elements now follows.

**The Lifelong Adult Learner Circle**

At the centre of this model is the individual. This is, and must be, a person centred framework – not a school centred framework or a system centred framework. Every individual working in any capacity in our communities presents with their own **personal story**, their own **personal**

*‘All our life is a celebration for us. We are convinced in fact that God is everywhere.’*  
St Clement of Alexandria
spirituality and their own community (school/office). This presenting context is the starting point for all spiritual formation. We believe God is present and active in every person’s life. Spiritual formation, then, finds the connecting points with the individual’s personal story, deepens an awareness of it, and offers some new and challenging lenses through which to understand and frame that story.

Thus we approach the individual’s reality bringing with us two key assumptions:
• every person is a lifelong learner
• God is real, present and at work at the heart of each person and in their lives

The individual (and the context of the lifelong learner) is symbolised by the central figures across the flame and the gold circle surrounding the flame.

The Flame

The flame, which is at the centre of this circle and the Catching Fire Model itself, is symbolic of the heart of God burning with love and passion for life. In the Judeo-Christian story, there is a long tradition of the flame representing the presence of God active in the world at highly significant moments as in the burning bush encounter of Moses (Exodus) and the flames of fire at Pentecost (Acts).

The metaphor of fire in describing the power of divine energy is also the old, old language of Christian mysticism, used by the early desert Ammas and Abbas of Egypt and echoed throughout the rich written history of our great spiritual figures including Teresa of Avila, Richard Rolle, St Macarius, Julian of Norwich, Meister Eckhart, Mechtild of Magdaberg, St Columba and Teilhard de Chardin. In this tradition, the flame represents the meeting place between us and God in which we are formed and transformed by the love and life of the God of relationships, the Trinity of life. It is not so much a physical place but an experience of encounter which may be beyond words. This experiential encounter with the Divine, captured so well by the Christian mystics, is very often described by them in terms of fire-like passion which is transformational.

This change may be characterised by comfort, peace or joy. At other times it may be amidst distress, doubt, anger, grief or frustration. Such an encounter may happen anywhere, anytime. In this space, the being of the lifelong learner meets the being of the lifelong creator.

Thus we believe that the spiritual journey is an awakening to that presence and its fire and energy and that the spiritual relationship that develops is characterised by transformation, integration and re-creation. This essentially life-giving, sacred encounter is the mystery we try to facilitate in formation pathways and the Catching Fire Framework seeks to reflect these characteristics in its outcomes.

No one can presume to make the encounter with God happen; this is a personal response to grace which cannot be coerced or manipulated. However, we take seriously a responsibility to support a culture and a professional learning approach where the spark is more likely, rather than less likely, to ‘catch fire.’

The Jesus Communion Mission Action Dimensions

In the Catching Fire model, each of these dimensions intersects with the central circle of the lifelong adult learnerseeker. The model indicates the action of engagement of each of these dimensions with the world of the lifelong adult learner in a way that has an effect on the spiritual growth of the person (represented by the arrow inward and the
The Catching Fire Model

**HEAD • HEART • HANDS**

**CONTEXT OF THE ADULT LEARNER**

The Being of the Life Long Learner meets The Being of the Life Long Creator

**CHALLENGE**

**welcome ritual journey**

**HEAD HEART HANDS FORMATION**

There are 4 elements in the formation process and these reflect a HEAD HEART and HANDS approach. These four elements are:

- Experience
- Knowledge
- Practice
- Application

These are common to all formation in each of the Jesus Communion Mission dimensions.

**FORMATION CAPACITIES**

Formation experiences seek to develop particular qualities and capacities - hallmarks recognised in all those connected to a Catholic Christian foundation and finding expression in the education mission. The two-way arrows reflect the two-fold effect of formation in the heart of the person and in the world.

**CONTEXT OF THE LIFELONG ADULT LEARNER**

in the flame at the centre of the model the being of the lifelong learner - the individual - connects with the being of the lifelong creator. The individual brings their own story, community and spirituality. This context is the starting point for all spiritual formation. The spiritual journey is characterised by re-creation, integration and transformation.

**TEACH**

presence prayer principle

**MISSION**

purpose commitment fidelity

**TRANSFORM**
expanding circle of colour around the flame) as well as an effect on the outwardly visible behaviour that reflects growth in each particular dimension (represented by the arrow outward).

Our work lies in creating and coordinating ways of turning the Jesus ‘lens’, the Communion ‘lens’ and the Mission ‘lens’ on to the life of the individual and tracking an understanding of what this way of seeing the world offers the individual in their personal and work contexts.

Jesus Communion Mission and our Vision to teach, challenge and educate for a transformed world

Jesus Communion Mission - These three words encapsulate three action dimensions that we need to develop if we are to be authentic followers of Jesus who live out of our centre (Flame) in a way that is life-giving and life-engaging.

We need to:

**Embrace the person and vision of Jesus.**
This is about knowing and following the person, vision and way of Jesus Christ. Formation for this action dimension will assist us to **Teach** about Jesus, the gospel, the faith of the Catholic Christian community as proclaimed by the Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education.

**Build Communion with God and others.**
This is about creating bonds of understanding, respect, love and shared commitment within and beyond our Church. Formation for this action dimension will assist us to **Challenge** those we educate to live in communion with God, others and the whole of creation in prayerful, sacramental, just, peaceful, inclusive and reconciling communities, as proclaimed by the Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education.

**Engage in Jesus’ Mission in the world**
This is about making a difference in today’s world by living the vision of Jesus in everything we do in relationships, family, work and society. Formation for this action dimension will assist us to **Educate for a Transformed World** in communion, by nurturing the gifts and potential of each person, enacting shared leadership, and exercising a preferential option for the poor and marginalised, as proclaimed by the Archdiocesan Vision Statement for Catholic Education.

Thus these action dimensions are very much related to the core business which is the context for all engaged in the mission of Catholic education. At the same time, these dimensions are also about personal balance and centering. They provide a way of mapping the essential areas of focus for a Christian, and at the same time, help to identify the balance between the inner and outer life that can so often be knocked out of kilter.

**The Arrows**
The model shows the two-fold effect of developing these three action dimensions.

**Inwardly directed arrow:**
Firstly, as explained above in the ‘The Flame’ section, these action dimensions draw us into closer encounter with God, inasmuch as the actions themselves become our way of life, our heart becomes more receptive to the creative, transforming growth that God wants to nurture in us. This is represented by the arrows leading inwards from the three dimension circles right into the flame.
Outwardly directed arrow: The action dimensions themselves have an outwardly directed impact, but become even more expansive and powerful as a result of the transforming effect of God’s grace bestowed abundantly upon receptive hearts. Well-directed formation assists this process of graced encounter with God, and results in identifiable outcomes or capacities.

The arrows can represent the journey of the individual person - teacher, principal, secretary, teacher-aide, consultant, professional support and so on. The arrows can also represent the journey of a school or office community as a whole (or any other kind of Catholic community).

Expanding Band of Colour
Around the central flame is a band of colour similar in colour to the flame and representing our expanding impact for good in the world around us as a result of commitment to the three action dimensions and the formative/transformative encounters with God that inevitably follow.

Formation Capacities
Each formation focus – the Jesus Lens; the Communion Lens; the Mission Lens – seeks a two-fold outcome. Every initiative offered within this framework seeks to nurture the inner fire – the deep personal connection to God in each person. At the same time, formation experiences seek to develop particular qualities and capacities – hallmarks recognised in all those connected to a Catholic, Christian foundation and finding expression in the education mission.

These capacities are identified in the model as a result of the outward trajectory of each arrow.

For example, in the ‘Embracing Jesus’ Dimension, the formation capacities are identified with the words Presence, Prayer and Principle, illustrated here.

Following is a ‘snapshot’ outline of the capacities in each dimension, identified in the model as a ‘snapshot’ or circle at the end of each arrow.

Snapshots of Formation Capacities in the ‘Jesus’ Dimension
• A person of presence who reflects an incarnational understanding of the world
• A person of prayer who has developed their own personal prayer style and is nurtured and sustained by a faithfulness to this practice
• A person of principle who lives the gospel values of Jesus’ vision

Snapshots of Formation Capacities in the ‘Communion’ Dimension
• A person of welcome who understands and applies the Christian ethos of hospitality in every circumstance
• A person of ritual who understands sacramentality and applies the Christian ethos of reverence in all relationships

• A person of journey who understands a ‘people of God’ narrative and has found their place in the wider church

Snapshots of Formation in the ‘Mission’ Dimension

• A person of purpose with a strong sense of personal and professional vocation

• A person of commitment with a passion for making a difference in the world through their vocation and witness

• A person of fidelity who lives out through their ministry the best of the Catholic Christian educational tradition and identifies with all those who work in the name of Brisbane Catholic Education

Catching Fire Capacities

If spiritual formation in the Christian Catholic tradition is essentially about ‘growing people’, in an holistic way, respectful of where people are at, connective to role and context, and that this happens in community, then we need to be clear about what exactly each person is growing into, and what might be the discernible marks of such a community of people.

The Catching Fire framework identifies nine capacities as these discernible hallmarks within a Catholic educational community growing into God. These capacities are named as ‘presence’, ‘prayer’ and ‘principle’; ‘welcome’, ‘ritual’ and ‘journey’; and ‘purpose’, ‘commitment’ and ‘fidelity’. They have their source in scripture and in the compelling characteristics of the early Christian communities, who first sought to follow in the footsteps of Jesus. What follows now is a brief introduction to each capacity offering background and invitation for a deeper understanding.

Formation Capacities in the Framework’s ‘Jesus’ Dimension

Presence

We are called to be people of presence who reflect an incarnational understanding of God in the world.

Grant me to recognize in other men and women my God the radiance of your own face.
Teilhard de Chardin

To grow the capacity of Presence is to nurture a deep sense that God is present and part of our lives and the life of the world. It is to believe that every encounter, every moment is rich with sacred possibility. It is to look into the eyes of each other and see reflected there God’s own being.

Christians believe that in Jesus Christ, God has entered the world, ‘one like us.’ For the early disciples, Jesus was ‘The Way’ – the way to the heart of God, and the way to fully live. Our central Christian belief remains that in Jesus, the fully human and fully divine are one. This is the theology of incarnation and it changes not only the way we look at each other, but the way we see and live and have our being in the world.

Prayer

We are called to be people of prayer who have developed personal prayer styles and are nurtured and sustained by faithfulness to this practice.

Be Still and Know that I am God. Psalm 46

The simplest description of prayer is one that comes from St Augustine: Prayer is communication with God. And the way we each do this is as unique as we are. To grow the capacity of Prayer is to nurture a personal relationship with Jesus, through the Spirit and held in the Godhead – God the Father. It requires seeking out and regular practice in, a personal prayer style that is connective and real. The place of prayer in Jesus’ life was non-negotiable, even in the midst of demanding crowds. His deep and nurtured connection to God was his centre, his heart. We too are called into relationship to discover the deep peace and wordless reality of God’s ever-present love.
There are many forms of prayer and ways to pray. Here, we are giving focus to the personal rather than public forms, and the best place to go to seek a way to pray for yourself are the prayer traditions within our rich Church history. These include lectio divina, Ignatian prayer, Christian meditation and the contemplative traditions.

**Principle**

*We are called to be people of principle who live the gospel values of Jesus’ vision.*

*Happy are those who love God… they are a light in the darkness for the upright; they are generous, merciful and just… People such as this will be honoured. Psalm 112*

Jesus’ vision of a discipleship of equals, of the reign of God breaking in on the world, was founded on core values. We now call these gospel values, and we believe that they lead us to fullness of life. These gospel values are compassion and justice, love and forgiveness, peace and hope.

To truly live by these values is challenging, as it was when Jesus first spoke of this new Kingdom of God. But Jesus modeled the power of living these values and people witnessed the transforming impact this had. It is no less powerful today when people witness to those same gospel values, and we believe that we are called to do that in our classrooms, our staffrooms, our offices and playgrounds.

**Key questions to ponder…**

- What way of personal prayer might best suit me?
- How do I understand the Jesus vision?
- What Gospel values do I recognize in our school or work community – compassion, love, forgiveness, justice, peace, hope?

**Formation Capacities in the Framework’s ‘Communion’ Dimension**

**Welcome**

*We are called to be people of welcome who understand and build an ethos of Christian hospitality in every circumstance.*

Hospitality is the way we turn a prejudiced world around one heart at a time. Sr Joan Chittester

One of the most compelling features of the early Christian communities was their sense of mutuality and genuine welcome to all. Hospitality and generosity go hand in hand, and certainly these early communities had a long and deep tradition of welcome in the Jewish scriptures. ‘Welcoming the stranger’ was rewarded beyond measure in the great stories of the Hebrew scriptures such as Abraham and Sarai. In the gospels, Jesus’ open welcome to all, including society’s strangers – the tax collectors and sinners, women and the sick – challenged the very structure of society.

It is noteworthy that the great spiritual documents in Western civilization all give priority to this most fundamental of things – welcome. It is acknowledgement that the practice of respectful attentiveness in these small moments of human encounter develops a habit of gratitude and grace that is a hallmark of the Holy, and the pathway to God.

Today, the practice of welcome is still very challenging for us, because still it is the call to be attentive to the daily encounters we have with other staff, with parents and with children, and at the same time in the wider world to reach out to the marginalized, the sick, the outcast and the hurting.
Ritual

We are called to be people of ritual who understand sacramentality and apply the Christian value of reverence in all relationships.

Day after day takes up the story. Night after night makes known the message. Psalm 19

Ritual is fundamental to the meaning-making of human beings and, because of this, is common to both ‘secular’ and ‘sacred’ worlds. Words, actions and symbols are used in a way that requires little or no explanation to those participating because they speak so clearly to a shared ‘knowing’. In the Catholic tradition, liturgy – the formal prayer of the church – developed out of the rituals of the early Christian communities who gathered together to remember, to break bread and to celebrate the living reality of Jesus.

There is a ritual pattern common to most gatherings whether they be secular (e.g., birthday parties, sporting events) or sacred (liturgies of the Church, prayer rituals and devotions). The elements of this pattern are: we gather; we listen; we respond; we go forth. All the official liturgies of the church – including the Eucharist, the other sacraments and the Liturgy of the Hours – have a gathering rite, proclamation of scripture; response in either spoken word, song or ritual action, and a concluding rite that sends us forth. Prayer rituals and other celebrations which allow for more flexibility in structure and style also follow this pattern.

All Catholic ritual is founded on an incarnational understanding of God and the belief in the sacramentality of all things. That God is revealed in the world and in a particular and powerful way through Jesus Christ means that God is revealed and encountered in the real and tangible moments of everyday life. The seven sacraments name and celebrate moments that are key points of this divine encounter.

The power of ritual in our Catholic Christian tradition invites us into a deeper reality that engages all our senses – head, heart and hands – in a way that turns the ordinary into the extraordinary. When we understand this, we cannot help but see the world and each other with eyes of reverence.

Journey

We are called to be people of journey who understand the ‘people of God’ narrative and have found a place in the wider Church.

‘Were not our hearts burning within us as he spoke to us on the road…!’ Luke 24:32

Our understanding of followers or believers being called the ‘people of God’ has its roots in the Old Testament – itself the story or narrative of the journey of a believing people – the Israelites – in their relationship with God. It has three key elements: Faith, kinship and call.

Behind the events and stories in the Old Testament, there is the movement in faith of individuals and a people. It is a narrative of growing in faith. The New Testament follows as the breaking open in faith of the reality of God’s love in the being and action of Jesus Christ. There is a sense of the growing maturity of understanding that culminated in the explosive reality of Jesus’ death and resurrection.

In this journey of faith, the understanding that we only make this journey in community – in kinship with each other – is central to the Catholic tradition. We do not go the journey alone; in fact,
we need each other to know our own deepest truth in God.

The call to return to God is woven through all the scriptures. It was Jesus’ call to us too, and it remains our call today. It is no less difficult, no less compelling than it ever was. In answering that call we remember that we are part of a larger company of travellers that stretches back in time and into the future encompassing the great communion of saints and faithful.

We are the people of God, called to find our place in the wider Church as we journey in community, in faith.

Key questions to ponder….
How do we reflect the deep Christian tradition of hospitality and welcome in our community?
In what ways do we show a sacramental understanding of the world and all that’s in it?
How do we celebrate that sacramental understanding in communal ritual and liturgy?

Formation Capacities in the Framework’s ‘Mission’ Dimension

Purpose

*We are called to be people of purpose with a strong sense of personal and professional vocation.*

Never doubt that a small group can change the world – indeed it is the only thing that ever has. Margaret Mead

The early Christian communities were bound together by a strong sense of what they were about. They were known as ‘people of the Way,’ and they certainly had a strong sense of their call to live in the way that Jesus had shown them. A way they knew was life giving in every sense of the word.

We too are called to have this sense of purpose about who we are and what we do. For baptized Christians, that call is as it was for the early Christians – to follow Jesus in seeking to bring about the reign or kingdom of God in the everyday circumstances of life and work. This is what it means to be disciple.

As people involved in Catholic education, it means that we need to understand the bigger picture of our tasks and roles - that we are part of a Church whose vision is of a transformed world. It means we realize that our work is not an end in itself, but a witness to the vision of Jesus and the enduring love of God.

Fundamentally, being a people of purpose means we have a clear sense that who we are and what we do and how we do it has an impact that echoes in eternity.

Commitment

*We are called to be a people of commitment with a passion for making a difference in the world through our vocation and witness.*

Give and there will be gifts for you: a full measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over, will be poured into your lap; because the amount you measure out is the amount you will be given back. Luke 6: 36 - 38

It is one thing to know what we are about. It is another to be committed to that with passion and conviction. Commitment gives life to the purpose we
have. It is the lived out witness to the vision we carry, and the tangible expression of the deep faith we have. The way we express our commitment is as unique as we are. But it will be nurtured in us all by a personal prayer life, and characterized by engagement with the world that is respectful, empowering and hopeful.

Fidelity

_We are called to be a people of fidelity who live out, through their ministry, the best of the Catholic Christian educational tradition, and identify with all those who work in the name of Catholic schooling._

As people involved in the ministry of Catholic education, we carry out our work of discipleship and witness in a particular way. This ministry of Catholic education is a vital ministry of the Church. It promotes a dynamic vision of God’s faithful love, manifest in the life and mission of Jesus Christ, and these fundamental realities underpin our curriculum, our pedagogy and our professional learning.

Catholic educators have a strong sense of community among their peers and in the unique and valuable nature of the work they do. It is sacred work, because it is precious lives we nurture. In this we are called to honour the ministry of each other and all those in the past and still to come who will have given their head heart and hands to the work as part of the company of travellers we call Catholic educators.

_Key questions to ponder…._

_Do we understand and proclaim our vocation and mission?_
_Do we witness to that in ourselves and others in word and action?_
_Do we take our place in the wider community of Catholic education and Church?_

**Head, Heart and Hands Approach**

The head heart and hands design signals an approach that is holistic in intention. It recognizes that each of us has a different gateway to the spiritual journey that is as unique as we are. Thus, while one person may be nurtured most easily in their spiritual life through focused reading, another may find God more easily in their relational connections with people. Others yet may be drawn to service activities such as street work. Many people find the Eucharist and formal worship their deepest nurturing pathway; still others connect with God most easily in nature, immersed in the beauty of creation. This recognition of different entry points into the dynamic of ‘head heart and hands’ is critical in the process of effective spiritual formation.

The challenge of integrating this recognition into formation processes has never been more important. Too easily have we seen initiatives under the banner of spiritual formation begin and remain in the ‘head’: where people learn a lot about prayer for example, but never actually practise praying …..or tap into the ‘heart’; where people are moved in their own being and feeling;

‘Mission must drive every word we speak, every action we do, whether they be as simple as a smile, or as complicated as protesting about unfair legislation, or the destruction of the environment.’

_Archbishop John Bathersby_
but without it ever having to impact in any action in their lives … or again, where the focus is on the ‘hands’ – doing service work, often with a strong social justice base, but without making any overt connection to Jesus or Church. While we recognize that formation in ‘the head’ element (or the heart or hands) does not preclude deep learning that takes in the other elements, we are saying there is a need to be intentional about an holistic approach being embedded in our formation processes.

Thus in the HEAD, HEART and HANDS approach articulated in the Catching Fire Matrix and expressed in the model graphic, the core formation elements specifically identify key steps that are important in the formation process summed up as embracing ‘head, heart and hands’. All formation, regardless of target audience or mode of delivery, ought incorporate these four steps. This simple process, adaptable for any initiative or experience, both grounds and strengthens the range of pathways of engagement that may be offered. These formation steps reflect best practice adult learning principles.

In the end, the journey to the heart of God is embodied; it is about becoming whole and it calls the whole of us. This is what we honour.

**My Story, Our Story, The Story**

Spiritual Formation is very much about uncovering the narrative of our own lives. In other words, our spiritual journey begins with the meaning making of our own story and experience first. We must start where we are, and where we are in this contemporary time sees individuals often disconnected with their own stories, let alone having resonance with the church story or the Jesus story. Thus this methodology acknowledges the starting point of the individual, connecting to the collective Christian story and into the God narrative.

Richard Rohr elaborates this design in a way that builds into the big story of God’s extraordinary presence through scripture, through our lives and in all creation. It is a journey motif that is proving to be a critical component in the design of formation programmes for our contemporary context. The importance today of meeting people where they are, developing a mutual trust in the journey, and committing to a sustained and sustainable journey recovers three traditional characteristics of formation work that are old but true:

- Meeting people where they are, with a respectfulness for the sacredness of story already there
- Companioning, in whatever shape that takes, to accompany the seeker, open and trusting to where it may lead
- Giving time to the journey

These characteristics have been contemporised in our initiatives, but remain as fundamental to formation as they ever were.

‘The spirit of God, poured into our hearts as love (Rom, 5:5) gathers us together into the body of Christ, transforming us so that we become by grace what God is by nature, namely, persons in full communion with God and every creature … The world is the tabernacle.’

Catherine LaCugna
Using the Framework

The core formation elements in the framework matrix are applicable to all spiritual formation opportunities for all staff across our Catholic school and office communities. In this way, they constitute foundational scaffolding for all initiatives in spiritual formation across directorates, and are tailored to staff roles and contexts. In terms of specific use, elements may be integrated into existing and new professional learning, tailoring them to particular role contexts and needs. Current initiatives can also be checked and/or developed in the light of these elements. New initiatives will use the framework elements as touchstones for content and process.

This task is approached with two more key assumptions:

- Spiritual formation is the joint responsibility of the individual, the school and the archdiocese. Archdiocesan leadership is not responsible – and ought not be responsible – for the total spiritual formation journey of the individual. But it is responsible for creating a culture of expectation and supporting ongoing formation pathways for those employed in the mission of Catholic education.

- The Catching Fire model reflects a Christian world view. More specifically, it shows the Archdiocesan Jesus Communion Mission vision as its conceptual foundation. We believe that the archdiocesan vision ‘Embrace the Person and Vision of Jesus; Build Communion with God and Others; Engage in Jesus’ Mission in the World’ captures the essence of what it means to be a follower of Christ in the contemporary world. These three dimensions, which together constitute a distinctive way of seeing and living in the world, form the foundation of our vision. As partners in the archdiocesan Church’s mission, we seek to teach Jesus’ gospel vision in ways that engage the whole person, to challenge our learners to a communion perspective and to educate for a transformed world.

This is the way we engage in evangelisation.

Concluding Remarks

All in Catholic education share a responsibility to assist staff to access opportunities for spiritual formation. In terms of this framework, that ongoing task means that together we will, within the context of the Jesus Communion Mission vision, provide opportunities for staff to take the journey inwards to transforming encounters with God that they might make the impact in their school or organisational community to which the Spirit calls them. Practically speaking, we will continue our focus on the strategic implementation of the framework through staff formation programmes, system wide resourcing and the integration of spiritual formation into goal setting, induction, succession and leadership. In the context of broader professional learning and linked to the Strategic Renewal Framework, we will continue to facilitate staff becoming lifelong, self-directed learners in formation for mission.

God is ‘communion’ and our destiny is to respond to his gracious invitation to share in that unique set of relationships which characterise the divine life. There, total love and total communication is to be found and God’s life becomes not only our destiny but also the pattern of our lives and for our living” Bishop Crispian Hollis