Personal, Social and Humanities Education
Key Learning Area

Ethics and Religious Studies
Curriculum and Assessment Guide
(Secondary 4 - 6)

Contents

Membership of the CDC-HKEAA Committee on Ethics and Religious Studies (Senior Secondary)

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Membership of the CDC-HKEAA Committee on Ethics and Religious Studies (Senior Secondary) – Working Group on Ethics

Preamble

The Education and Manpower Bureau (EMB) stated in its report[1] in 2005 that the implementation of a three-year senior secondary academic structure would commence at Secondary 4 in September 2009. The senior secondary academic structure is supported by a flexible, coherent and diversified senior secondary curriculum aimed at catering for students' varied interests, needs and abilities. This Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Guide is one of the series of documents prepared for the senior secondary curriculum. It is based on the goals of senior secondary education and on other official documents related to the curriculum and assessment reform since 2000, including the *Basic Education Curriculum Guide* (2002) and the *Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide* (2007). To gain a full understanding of the connection between education at the senior secondary level and the basic education level, and how effective learning, teaching and assessment can be achieved, it is strongly recommended that reference should be made to all related documents.

This C&A Guide is designed to provide the rationale and aims of the subject curriculum, followed by chapters on the curriculum framework, curriculum planning, pedagogy, assessment and use of learning and teaching resources. One key concept underlying the senior secondary curriculum is that curriculum, pedagogy and assessment should be well aligned. While learning and teaching strategies form an integral part of the curriculum and are conducive to promoting learning to learn and whole-person development, assessment should also be recognised not only as a means to gauge performance but also to improve learning. To understand the interplay between these three key components, all chapters in the C&A Guide should be read in a holistic manner.

The C&A Guide is jointly prepared by the Curriculum Development Council (CDC) and the Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority (HKEAA). The CDC is an advisory body that gives recommendations to the HKSAR Government on all matters relating to curriculum development for the school system from kindergarten to senior secondary level. Its membership includes heads of schools, practising teachers, parents, employers, academics from tertiary institutions, professionals from related fields/bodies, representatives from the HKEAA and the Vocational Training Council (VTC), as well as officers from the EMB. The HKEAA is an independent statutory body responsible for the conduct of public assessment, including the assessment for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE). Its governing council includes members drawn from the school sector, tertiary institutions and government bodies, as well as professionals and members of the business community.

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[1] The report is *The New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education – Action Plan for Investing in the Future of Hong Kong.*

The C&A Guide is recommended by the EMB for use in secondary schools. The subject curriculum forms the basis of the assessment designed and administered by the HKEAA. In this connection, the HKEAA will issue a handbook to provide information on the rules and regulations of the HKDSE examination as well as the structure and format of public assessment for each subject.

The CDC and HKEAA will keep the subject curriculum under constant review and evaluation in the light of classroom experiences, students' performance in the public assessment, and the changing needs of students and society. All comments and suggestions on this C&A Guide may be sent to:

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Acronyms

ApL	Applied Learning
ASL	Advanced Supplementary Level
C&A	Curriculum and Assessment
CDC	Curriculum Development Council
CE	Certificate of Education
EMB	Education and Manpower Bureau
ERS	Ethics and Religious Studies
HKALE	Hong Kong Advanced Level Examination
HKCEE	Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination
HKDSE	Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education
HKEAA	Hong Kong Examinations and Assessment Authority
HKSAR	Hong Kong Special Administrative Region
IT	Information Technology
KLA	Key Learning Area
KS1/2/3/4	Key Stage 1/2/3/4
OLE	Other Learning Experiences
PSHE	Personal, Social and Humanities Education
S1/2/3/4/5/6/7	Secondary 1/2/3/4/5/6/7
SBA	School-based Assessment
SSCG	Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide
VTC	Vocational Training Council

Chapter 1   Introduction

This chapter provides the background, rationale and aims of Ethics and Religious Studies (ERS) as an elective subject in the three-year senior secondary curriculum, and highlights how it articulates with the junior secondary curriculum, post-secondary education, and future career pathways.

1.1   Background

The ERS curriculum is developed on the basis of the recommendations made in the *New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education — Action Plan for Investing in the Future of Hong Kong* (EMB, 2005) and the *Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide* (CDC, 2007). These two documents provide the overall direction for the development of senior secondary education in Hong Kong. They stipulated a combination of core and elective subjects, Applied Learning courses and other learning experiences to suit individual interests and aptitudes.

ERS is one of the electives in the senior secondary curriculum. It is built on the *Religious Studies (Christianity) Curriculum for Secondary 4 – 5* (implemented in 1998), *Buddhist Studies* (HKCE Examination Syllabus) and the *Advanced Supplementary Level Ethics and Religious Studies Curriculum* (implemented in 2001). It also follows the general direction set out in the *Personal, Social and Humanities Education Key Learning Area Curriculum Guide (Primary 1 – Secondary 3)* (CDC, 2002) and extends the prior knowledge, skills and values and attitudes students developed through the Personal, Social and Humanities Education (PSHE) curriculum in basic education.

This curriculum guide sets out the overall aims of the subject, and the learning objectives and outcomes for senior secondary level. It includes detailed explanatory notes, key points and biblical references (for module 2 Christianity in Elective Part I) in the curriculum content and a description of the assessment framework. Normative Ethics and Personal and Social Issues are compulsory components of the curriculum. The study of ethics lays the foundation of values formation and judgement, while the discussion on current and controversial issues prepares students to face related challenges and struggles in the future, and contributes to their social, moral and spiritual development. Choices are provided in the elective parts on "Religious Traditions" and "Faiths in Action". Experiential learning activities are organised so that students have practical experience of how the teachings of religious traditions are manifested in daily life.

As an elective PSHE subject in the three-year senior secondary curriculum, ERS encourages students to explore questions of meaning, value and purpose in life. It seeks to help students develop insights, a capacity for moral and spiritual life and personal autonomy. These qualities make life meaningful individually and in the social, cultural and political contexts of pluralistic Hong Kong.

1.2   Rationale

The ERS curriculum attempts to make a major contribution to the social, moral and spiritual development of students. Young people are frequently challenged by many religious and moral issues such as the origin and purpose of life, identity, sex and marriage, suffering, and life after death. This curriculum, comprising "Religious Traditions", "Ethics" and "Faiths in Action", helps students respond to these issues through a process of enquiry. Students are expected to reflect critically upon their own experience, develop confidence in their religious understanding, and develop an ability to articulate their own beliefs.

This curriculum enables students to examine ways in which religious and moral questions have been formulated and reflected upon throughout history and across the globe. Students are encouraged to articulate their own beliefs and engage in dialogue with others. Students study and apply what they have learnt from religious traditions to ethical issues confronting them in their daily lives, and reflect upon their faiths in action when they are engaged in learning activities in social services and religious practices.

The curriculum has a particularly important contribution in helping students appreciate diversity in pluralistic Hong Kong. The richness in the religious traditions of our society provides many opportunities for the students to compare different religions and study their significance.

1.3   Curriculum Aims

The aims of the ERS curriculum are to enable students to:

(a) acquire knowledge of the religion they study and of other major religions in Hong Kong;
(b) make rational and informed judgements about religious and moral issues;
(c) enhance their spiritual, moral, and social development; and
(d) develop a positive attitude towards people and respect for their beliefs.

1.4 Curriculum Objectives

Students are expected to develop **knowledge** and **understanding** of:

(a) the significance of morality to individuals and society;
(b) the history of major ethical systems and why their tenets have survived the ages;
(c) the origin, precepts, forms and practices of the religion they study;
(d) the founders of the religion they study and why their influence continues to the present days; and
(e) contemporary views about religious and ethical issues.

Students are expected to develop **skills** to enable them to:

(a) reflect upon their own beliefs, values and experiences;
(b) discuss ethical and religious issues with people who hold beliefs and values different from theirs;
(c) understand with empathy why people believe and behave as they do;
(d) debate issues of religious significance on the basis of evidence and rational argument; and
(e) apply the results of their religious exploration for the betterment of themselves and of their community.

Students are expected to develop the following **values** and **attitudes**:

(a) respect for others;
(b) willingness to acknowledge the needs, feelings and aspirations of others and learn from their insights;
(c) tolerance of ambiguities and paradoxes;
(d) appreciation of diversity in religions and cultures;
(e) respect for life; and
(f) eagerness for meaning and truth.

1.5 Broad Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should be capable of demonstrating the following:

(a) an understanding of some basic theories in ethics;
(b) an ability to apply ethical theories to the analysis of personal and social issues and to maintain open-mindedness, consistency and tolerance when tackling ethical issues;
(c) an ability to identify situations which require the prioritising of values and virtues;
(d) an understanding of the complexities involved in making moral decisions;

(e) an ability to apply critical thinking skills to the making of reasoned and responsible moral decisions through discussion of various ethical issues, such as cloning, prostitution and euthanasia;

(f) an understanding of the origin, precepts, forms and practices of the religion they study;

(g) an ability to address problems in their daily lives and tackle contemporary social problems by applying the teachings of the religion they study;

(h) an ability to take care of others by modelling the life of the religious founders they study;

(i) an ability to appreciate the religious understanding of humans and the world, and to enhance their own values;

(j) an ability to apply prior knowledge in ethics studies or religious studies to life experiences and other service experiences; and

(k) an ability to appreciate the diversity in different religions and cultures, and develop a positive attitude towards people having different religions and respect for their beliefs.

1.6 Interface with Junior Secondary Education and Post-secondary Pathways

The study of ERS is built on the knowledge, skills and values and attitudes students have learnt in basic education. These include the concepts and knowledge embedded in the six strands of the PSHE curriculum, in particular the strand "Personal and Social Development". Because of the learning acquired in Key Stage 3, particularly through Religious Education, Biblical Knowledge, Buddhist Studies, Integrated Humanities and History, students are already equipped with a basic understanding of various religious traditions. ERS at Key Stage 4 emphasises the religious concepts, beliefs and values that can be brought to bear on daily living within specific contexts. Teachers are encouraged to refer to previous learning experiences where appropriate.

The ERS curriculum provides a good foundation for further study in disciplines such as Cultural Studies, History, Theology, Philosophy, Public Administration, Human Resources Management, Social Work and Criminal Justice. It is also an excellent start for the preparation of future social workers, counsellors, teachers, clergy and journalists.

Chapter 2　Curriculum Framework

The curriculum framework for Ethics and Religious Studies (ERS) embodies the key knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that students are to develop at senior secondary level. It forms the basis on which schools and teachers plan their school-based curriculum and design appropriate learning, teaching and assessment activities.

2.1　Design Principles

The design of this curriculum is based on principles derived from those recommended in Chapter 3 of the report *The New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education* (EMB, 2005), namely that this curriculum should:

(a) build on the basis of the prior knowledge, skills, values and attitudes, and learning experiences students will have gained through their study of the PSHE curriculum in basic education;

(b) achieve a balance between breadth and depth in the study of ERS to facilitate students' preparation for further studies, entry into the workforce and whole-person development;

(c) expose students to perspectives and concepts essential to the understanding of the religious and ethical issues in shared human experience, while at the same time emphasising students' ability to transfer and apply these perspectives and concepts to the understanding of new issues;

(d) provide a balance between essential learning and a flexible and diversified curriculum, catering for students' different interests, needs and abilities through the provision of different modules in the elective parts and an experiential learning programme designed and organised by students;

(e) allow flexible organisation and progression to cater for the different characteristics and backgrounds of schools and needs of students. Suggestions on possible arrangements in this aspect will be provided in Chapter 3;

(f) aim to develop students' self-directed and life-long learning skills through promoting student-centred enquiry. Students are expected to respect the pluralism of cultures, values and views, and be critical, reflective and independent thinkers; and

(g) ensure that assessment is closely aligned with learning.

2.2　Curriculum Structure and Organisation

Two major approaches to religious education, namely a systems approach (learning about religions) and a life themes approach (learning from religion), are given balanced emphasis in this curriculum. The first involves developing knowledge and understanding of religious beliefs, teachings, practices and lifestyles, while the second promotes the skills of asking questions relating to self-identity, the meaning and purpose of life, values and commitments,

and of responding to them. Students are thus able to understand and reflect on ethical and religious issues and become aware of their own beliefs and values. They will be able to evaluate the influence of religion on their lives, and begin their own spiritual search.

Compulsory Part: Ethics

This is an introductory study on ethics. The emphasis is on value formation and judgement based on rational thinking.

Module 1   Normative Ethics
Module 2   Personal and Social Issues

Elective Part I: Religious Traditions (Choose ONE only)

Module 1   Buddhism
Module 2   Christianity
Module 3   Confucianism*
Module 4   Islam*
Module 5   Taoism*
* To be ready for implementation at a later phase

Elective Part II: Faiths in Action (Choose ONE only)

Experiential learning activities are organised and structured around religious teachings and the way they relate to shared human experience. Teachers can help students to reflect on these learning experiences and to explore their meaning.

Module 1   Learning to serve and serving to learn
Module 2   Learning from religious practices

2.2.1 Compulsory Part: Ethics

This is an introductory study of ethics. The emphasis is on value formation and judgement based on rational thinking. Students have to study certain personal and social issues so as to nurture their abilities to make ethical judgements and informed choices.

Module 1: Normative Ethics

Units	Related Phenomena/concepts	Explanatory Notes
The Nature of Morality	Moral principles	• basic moral principles such as kindness, harm avoidance, respect for autonomy and loyalty • differences between moral principles and moral rules: moral principles are applied universally and moral rules have the meaning of behaviour restraint
	Moral reasoning	• clarification of moral concepts • upholding the value of rational thinking • sustaining an open-minded attitude (without self-interest or prejudice)
	Pluralism	• Chinese and the Western values and morality • Seeking possible consensus and respecting the differences among people who hold various moral principles in a pluralistic society (e.g. tolerance and respect)
	Morality and religion	• relationship between morality and religion: contradictory, mutually supplemented or not related
Theory of Conduct	Consequences	• the priority of the good over the right • judgement of right or wrong depends on the goodness or badness of the consequences (e.g. Utilitarianism: good consequences mean right, bad consequences mean wrong) • Act-Utilitarianism and Rule-Utilitarianism
	Duties	• the priority of the right over the good • judgement of right or wrong according to the nature of the action itself (e.g. Kantian: duties are right regardless of consequences) • the possible incompatibility of duties (e.g. fairness may not be in line with loyalty)

Module 1:   Normative Ethics

Units	Related Phenomena/concepts	Explanatory Notes
Theory of Value and Virtue	Intrinsic value	• definition of intrinsic value: the built-in value of the matter itself • examples to illustrate the meaning of intrinsic value
	Instrumental value	• definition of instrumental value: value desirably judged in terms of achievement of other ends • examples to illustrate the meaning of instrumental value
	Quality	• an essential and distinguishing attribute of something or someone • desirable qualities of loyalty, filial piety, integrity, fairness, honesty, responsibility, prudence, courage etc • undesirable qualities of lies and cheating, selfishness, retaliation, jealousy etc
	Priority	• ranking among competing virtues (e.g. loyalty and filial piety)
	Conflicts	• virtues and values may not be compatible (e.g. honesty may not be compatible with compassion)

Module 2: Personal and Social Issues

Units	Related Phenomena/concepts	Explanatory Notes
Human Rights	Inherent dignity	• why human rights should be respected and how they form an essential constituent or characteristic of being human • situations which deny inherent dignity
	Civil and political rights	• the rights of privacy, access to information, belief, personal expression, association and freedom of person (prevention of slavery and forced labour)
	Economic, social and cultural rights	• the rights to work and just treatment, subsistence, health care, education, housing and enjoyment of culture
	Prevention of discrimination	• the roots of discrimination • different manifestations of discrimination • some past and present examples of discrimination
	Nature of rights	• rights and duties • rights and the rule of law • duties and protecting one's rights
	Self-determination	• ways in which one exercises the right of self-determination
Life and Death	Right to raise a family	• to raise a family or not to raise a family • personal and social considerations
	Birth control	• causes of and reasons for birth control • views on birth control from different cultural, political and religious perspectives
	Abortion	• causes of and reasons for abortion • ethical considerations: pro-life or pro-choice
	Ageing	• legal, cultural, religious and philosophical attitudes towards ageing
	Suffering	• legal, cultural, religious and philosophical attitudes towards suffering

Module 2: Personal and Social Issues

Units	Related Phenomena/concepts	Explanatory Notes
	Suicide	• responsibility to self, to others and to society; consequences of decisions, respect and love for one another • ethical considerations
	Euthanasia	• categories of euthanasia: active euthanasia, passive euthanasia, voluntary euthanasia, non-voluntary euthanasia and involuntary euthanasia • ethical considerations
	Capital punishment	• theories of punishment: deterrence, retribution and transformation • ethical considerations
Sex, Companionship and Family	Heterosexual and homosexual relationships	• love and sexual relationship • values and characteristics of heterosexual relationship • ethical issues in the homosexuality debate
	The single life	• causes of and reasons for having a single life • different attitudes towards the single life • consequences of living a single life
	Premarital and extramarital sex	• different attitudes towards premarital sex • consequences of extramarital sex on spouse and family
	Marriage and divorce	• meaning of marriage • elements of a good marriage • causes of divorce and its consequences
	Pornography	• causes of pornographic activities • reasons for supporting or opposing pornography • attitudes towards pornography

Module 2:   Personal and Social Issues

Units	Related Phenomena/concepts	Explanatory Notes
	Prostitution	• causes of prostitution • reasons for supporting or opposing prostitution • attitudes towards prostitution
	The family	• functions of the family for individuals and society • impact on the family system of modern society • how the family system responds to the issues of companionship • how forms of companionship illuminates one another
Bioethics	Medical ethics	• relationship between health care professionals and patients • rights of patients
	Gender selection	• reasons for gender selection • ethical issues in gender selection
	Genetic engineering	• meaning of genetic engineering • ethical arguments for or against genetic engineering
	Cloning	• the cloning debate • ethical arguments for or against cloning
Environmental Ethics	Pollution and consumerism	• causes of environmental pollution • consumption and its environmental consequences • how materialistic values influence the relationship between human society and the environment
	Use and exploitation of the natural environment	• arguments for or against using and exploiting nature

Module 2: Personal and Social Issues

Units	Related Phenomena/concepts	Explanatory Notes
	Biodiversity and conservation	• instrumental and intrinsic value of nature: maintenance of ecological balance and biodiversity • importance of conservation to environmental protection • arguments for or against using animals for food and experimentation
	Global village and sustainability	• multiple meanings of sustainable development • common goal and conflicts between economic development and environmental protection • need for a global perspective in solving environmental problems
Business and Economic Ethics	Justice/fairness/equality	• meaning of justice/fairness/equality • exploring justice/fairness/equality in policies, such as tax and social welfare • issues from a justice/fairness/equality perspective (e.g. fair trade, syndicated loan, corruption, industrial action)
	Poverty	• the origin of poverty • causes of poverty in a globalized world and its solutions
	Advertising	• ways by which advertisements transmit messages and values • positive and negative effects of advertisements • values that guide advertisements
	Social responsibility of corporations	• profit motive and social responsibility • obligations to stake-holders such as consumers, the community and shareholders • ethical considerations related to the production process and outcomes

Module 2: Personal and Social Issues

Units	Related Phenomena/concepts	Explanatory Notes
Media Ethics	Information and entertainment	• the right of a person to know and to be informed, and the role of the mass media in modern life (e.g. to transmit information, facilitate communication and provide entertainment)
	Freedom of speech and editorial independence	• the significance of freedom of speech in human society and its relations with the mass media • the power of freedom of speech and how the media can abuse it • the need for critical evaluation and public accountability • problems with media owned by corporations or political parties in a globalized world
	Code of ethics and professionalism	• professional conduct in the mass media (respect for the individual and for privacy) • role and mission of media professionals: report the facts, stand for justice
	Media Ethics issues	• the impact of stereotyping on society • dangers of misleading information, indoctrination and emotive provocation • censorship: arguments for and against censorship; balance between protecting freedom, privacy and public interest

2.2.2 Elective Part I: Religious Traditions (Choose **ONE** only)

Module 1: Buddhism

Unit 1: History of Buddhism

Topics	Key Points	Explanatory Notes
Advent of Buddhism • Historical setting	Indigenous Indian culture and the influence of Aryan culture	• life and culture of aboriginal societies in ancient India • social changes after the Aryan invasion • founding of the four caste system and its impacts • the teachings of Brahmanism, revolutionary ideas and practices of the samanas at the time of the Buddha
• Life of the Buddha	Birth Growing up Renunciation Search for teachers Practice of austerity Giving up austerity, enlightenment	• family background and birth • understanding of human life and the world during childhood • education and marriage • the four encounters and renunciation • practising asceticism and meditation • self-mortification • abandoning asceticism • enlightenment
	First turning of the wheel of teaching	• first Sermon on the Four Noble Truths • meaning of the Four Noble Truths in Buddhism

Unit 1: History of Buddhism

Topics	Key Points	Explanatory Notes
	Preaching along the river Ganges Nirvana	• followers of the Buddha from different castes: Ananda, Yasa, Sariputra, Maudgalyayana, Bimbisara, Anathapindada and Upali, etc. • last teachings and nirvana
• Formation of the Buddhist Canon	Reasons behind the Collecting Buddhist Canon The four councils The Tripitaka: its significance and development	• cause, process, outcome and impact of the First Council organised by Maha Kasyapa after the Buddha's Nirvana • cause, process, outcome and impact of the next three councils • contents of Tripitaka, and its different editions
Spreading of Buddhism • Development of Buddhism in India	Early Buddhism (from the time of the Buddha to around one century after the Buddha's nirvana) Schisms and Sectarian Buddhism The rise of Mahayana Buddhism The rise of various Mahayana schools (Prajnaparamita, Madhyamaka, Yogacara, Tathagatagarbha and Esoteric Buddhism) Decline and extinction	• early Buddhist doctrines and the life of the early sangha • Schism and the formation of Sectarian Buddhism • origin and development of Mahayana Buddhism • formation and development of Prajnaparamita philosophy • formation and development of Madhyamaka philosophy • formation and development of Yogacara philosophy • formation and development of Tathagatagarbha thought • formation and development of Esoteric Buddhism • causes of the decline and disappearance of Buddhism

Unit 1: History of Buddhism

Topics	Key Points	Explanatory Notes
• Development of Buddhism in other regions	South Asia East Asia China Western countries	• introduction to and development of Buddhism in South Asia countries, such as Sri Lanka, Thailand, and Burma • introduction to and development in East Asian countries, such as Japan and Korea • introduction to and development in China, (including the periods of introduction, growth, maturity, decline and revival) • Introduction and development of Buddhism in the West
Contemporary Buddhism • Theravada Buddhism, Chinese Buddhism, Tibetan Buddhism, Western Buddhism	The distinctive teachings and organisations	• distinctive teachings and organisations of contemporary Theravada Buddhism • distinctive teachings and organisations of contemporary Chinese Buddhism • distinctive teachings and organisations of contemporary Tibetan Buddhism • distinctive teachings and organisations of contemporary Western Buddhism

Unit 1: History of Buddhism

Topics	Key Points	Explanatory Notes
• Pluralistic development of Buddhism in Hong Kong	Development of Buddhism in Hong Kong The roles of Chinese Buddhism, Theravada Buddhism and Tibetan Buddhism in the development of Buddhism in Hong Kong Social contributions of Buddhism in Hong Kong	• introduction and development of Chinese Buddhism in Hong Kong • introduction and development of Theravada Buddhism in Hong Kong • introduction and development of Tibetan Buddhism in Hong Kong • The services of Buddhism in Hong Kong, including social welfare, medical services and education

Unit 2: Basic Buddhist Doctrines

Topics	Key Points	Explanatory notes
• Four Noble Truths	Truth of Suffering Truth of Arising of Suffering Truth of Cessation of Suffering Truth of methods for ending suffering	• the meaning and value of the Four Noble Truths • the Truth of Suffering: phenomena of unsatisfactoriness in life • the Truth of the Arising of Suffering: defilements and their causes • the Truth of the Cessation of Suffering: extinguishments of defilements – Nirvana • the Truth of the Path: means to the extinguishment of defilements – the Eightfold Paths • the relationships between the Four Noble Truths
• Dependent Origination	Its meaning and development	• the meaning of Dependent Origination • the relationship between Dependent Origination and Dependent Arisen • the explanation of life and existence by Dependent Origination
• Twelve links of Dependent Origination	Meaning of each link Rebirth and liberation	• the name and meaning of each link • explanation of the arising and cessation of life by the Twelve links of Dependent Origination

Unit 2: Basic Buddhist Doctrines

Topics	Key Points	Explanatory notes
• Karma and rebirth	Meaning of karma and rebirth Comparison of the Brahmanic and the Buddhist notions of karma	• the meaning of karma, karmic causes, karmic efficacy, karmic retribution • the relationship between karmic retribution and rebirth • types of karma: determinate karma, indeterminate karma, shared karma and individual karma • have reflection on: taking control of one's destiny; mind as the master of life; one reaps what one sows; treat all sentient beings as equals; rebirth is suffering, etc • similarities: suffering caused by craving; relationship between karma and the past, present and future lives; good deeds cause good results, bad deeds cause bad results • differences: concept of self – Brahminism "permanent self"; Buddhism "non-self"; renunciation
• Five aggregates and non-self	Composition of the five aggregates Meaning of non-self	• the meaning of each aggregate • the characteristics of the five aggregates: non-identical, impermanent, non-voluntary • the abandonment of attachment and the attainment of nirvana
• Three Marks of Existence	Meanings of three marks of existence	• historical background • the meaning of the marks • the meaning of each mark: impermanence, non-self and nirvana

Unit 3: Buddhist Practices

Topics	Key Points	Explanatory notes
• Basic Buddhist practices	Tripod of Buddhist practices: discipline, concentration and wisdom Distinctive practices of the five vehicles	• the meaning of discipline, concentration and wisdom • overcoming the three poisons (desire, hatred and ignorance) by the tripod of Buddhist practice • the vehicles of human beings, celestial beings, sravakas, pratyeka-buddhas and bodhisattvas • differences in motivation, practice and attainment of the five vehicles
• Practices of the vehicles of human beings and celestial beings	The aim of rebirth as human beings and celestial beings Taking the three refuges and practising the five percepts Practising the ten virtues	• the vehicles of human beings and celestial beings are the foundation of Bodhisattva vehicle • the meaning of taking refuge • the meaning of the three treasures: Buddha, Dharma and Sangha • the five precepts: the fundamental precepts (refraining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct and lying); the protective precept (refrain from consuming intoxicants) • the ten virtues: three body virtues (refraining from killing, stealing and sexual misconduct); four verbal virtues (refraining from lying, licentious speech, duplicitous speech and harsh speech); three mental virtues (refraining from desire, hatred and ignorance)

Unit 3: Buddhist Practices

Topics	Key Points	Explanatory notes
• Practices of the sravaka and the pratyekabuddha vehicles	The aims of liberating from rebirth, attaining freedom from suffering, and achieving sravakahood and pratyekabuddhahood	• the way to the rapid cessation of rebirth and personal deliverance • the meaning of sravaka and pratyekabuddha • the meaning of arhatship
	Practising the four foundations of mindfulness	• the meaning of mindfulness • the four foundations of mindfulness: body, feelings, state of mind and dharma
	Realising the truths of impermanence, suffering, emptiness and non-self	• impermanence: the phenomenon of constant change • suffering: suffering associated with the unpleasant; suffering arising from the inevitable destruction of the pleasurable; suffering inherent in sentient life • emptiness: non-identical, impermanent and non-voluntary • non-self: absence of an identical, permanent and voluntary substance
	Practising the Eightfold Paths	• the meaning of the right view, right thought, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration • the relationship between the Eightfold Paths and the tripod of Buddhist practice
	Attaining the four fruits and nirvana	• the meaning of the four fruits: srota-apanna-phala, sakradagami-phala, anagami-phala, arhat-phala • the meaning of nirvana

Unit 3: Buddhist Practices

Topics	Key Points	Explanatory notes
• Practices of Bodhisattva vehicle	The aim of universal liberation Dependent origination and emptiness Practising the six perfections and four all-embracing virtues Practising the four immeasurable minds The mind of great compassion and the mind of enlightenment Attaining the Bodhicitta, the great nirvana and the Buddha-fruit	• the meaning of bodhisattva • realising the truth of emptiness • the six perfections: charity, discipline, forbearance, effort, concentration, wisdom • the four all-embracing virtues: charity, kind words, beneficial acts, and adaptation of oneself to others • the meaning of the four immeasurable minds: compassion, sympathy, empathetic joy and equanimity • the mind of great compassion: help sentient beings to become free from suffering • the mind of enlightenment: pursuit of enlightenment • Bodhicitta: the ultimate, most perfect enlightenment • the great nirvana: cessation of all forms of defilements and rebirths forever • the Buddha-fruit: three bodies (dharma-body, retribution-body, transformation-body)

Module 2: Christianity

Unit 1: Background

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
Textual Background The faith of the Old Testament	The Passover	Ex. 12:21-42	To point out how God acts to save and liberate the Israelites: • the first Passover: salvation and judgement • Pharaoh frees the Israelites
	The Sinai Covenant	Ex. 19:1-8, 20:1-21	To show that Israel became God's chosen people by covenant: • God invites the Israelites to become His chosen people by covenant, and to serve Him as priests
	Exile	Mic. 3:9-12 Ezek. 6:8-10 2 Kings 25: 1-21; 2 Chr. 36: 20-21	To explain the reasons why the Israelite nation fell into ruin: idolatry and social injustice To show the situation of the Israelites when they were exiled to Babylon: • King Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon leads his army to Jerusalem and destroys the Temple, and the Israelites were exiled
	Promise of a New Covenant	Jer. 31:3-4, 31-34; Ezek. 36:22-28	To show how God promises to make a new and better covenant to bring the people into an even closer relationship with Himself: • background: (1) Israel repeatedly breaks the covenant and turn to idols; God punishes them by war, defeat and exile; (2) God's purpose is to change His people so as to demonstrate His holiness to all nations • the new covenant brings purification, forgiveness, a new heart and mind, and an experiential knowledge of God

Unit 1: Background

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
	The Messianic Hope	Isa. 11:1-9	To explain the Jewish hope which was focused on the coming of the Messiah: • the Messiah will come as a shoot growing from the stump of David's dynasty • like David, the Messiah is to be empowered by the Spirit and to rule in justice
History and identity of Israel in the Old Testament	The theme of election • Meaning of the chosen people • Circumcision The theme of covenant • Nature and content of the covenants	Deut. 7:6-9, 14:2; Ps. 33:12; Isa. 14:1, 41:8-9 Abraham in Gen. 12:1-3, 15:1-21, 17:1-22; Moses in Ex. 19:4-5, 20:1-17, 23:20-33, 24:1-8; David in 2 Sam. 7:16, Ps. 89:2-4	To show the rights and duties of the Israelites as God's chosen people To show the reasons for and meanings of circumcision To show the nature of the covenants: • God takes initiatives to set up covenants • people have to obey God so as to obey the covenants To understand the contents and nature of different covenants: • the covenant between God and Abraham • the covenant between God and the Israelites after exodus • the covenant between God and David To understand the relationship between covenant and election
History between the two Testaments	• Hellenization • Independent War of Maccabees • Roman occupation		To understand the measures and effects of Hellenization when Greece seized Palestine To understand the causes, process and influence of the Independent War of Maccabees

Unit 1: Background

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
Socio-political Background • Palestine in the first century A.D.	Roman occupation: To explain the political situation in Palestine • The Procurator • King Herod • Sanhedrin To show the characteristics of some Jewish sects • Sadducees • Pharisees • Zealots • Herodians • Essenes To show the situation of the people and their background • Peasants, fishermen, landlords, craftsmen and businessmen • The officials: tax-collectors, priests, Levites, synagogue elders Important historical event • The destruction of the Temple at Jerusalem in A.D. 70		To introduce the political situation in Palestine in the first century A.D. To understand the background of the Sadducees, Pharisees, Zealots, Herodians and Essenes To understand the situation of the people and officials in Palestine in the first century A.D. To show what happens in the destruction of the Temple and its consequences

Unit 2: The Origin of Christianity - Jesus Christ

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
Jesus' Ministry • Birth and childhood			To introduce Matthew and Luke's accounts of the birth and childhood of Jesus:
	Matthew's accounts of the birth of Jesus: To show that the birth of Jesus is prophesied in the Old Testament	Mt. 1:18-25, 2:1-23	• the coming of the Son of God: descendant of David, born to be King • born of a virgin • to be born in Bethlehem • the killing of children • the escape to Egypt and return to Nazareth • the role played by Mary, Joseph, the angels, the wise men, King Herod, Simeon and Anna
	Luke's accounts of the birth of Jesus	Lk. 1:26-56	• the coming of the Son of God: human, born of a virgin • the role played by Mary, Joseph, the angels and shepherds
	To describe the childhood of Jesus	Lk. 2:1-52	• family background • physical and intellectual development • sense of communion with God the Father
• Ministry 　▪ Preparation 　　– Baptism	John the Baptist	Mk. 1:2-8, 6:14-29	To show the character and work of John the Baptist: • John's appearance and behaviour • John's message, role and ministry • John's imprisonment and death • the importance of repentance and forgiveness

Unit 2: The Origin of Christianity - Jesus Christ

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
	Jesus' baptism	Mk. 1:9-11	To point out the importance of Jesus' baptism: • the meaning of baptism in the days of Jesus and today • Jesus coming to John for His baptism • the signs of God's approval of Jesus
– Temptation	The temptation of Jesus	Mk. 1:12-13; Lk. 4:1-13	To explain the significance of the temptation of Jesus: • the background to the temptation of Jesus • the nature of the temptation • Jesus' replies To demonstrate how it is possible to overcome temptations in daily life: • obedience to God, submission to the teaching of the Bible, and determination to resist Satan
▪ Jesus calls ordinary people to be His disciples	Jesus calls four fishermen to be His disciples	Mk. 1:16-20	To show that discipleship is a call from Jesus: • Jesus calls ordinary people to be His disciples
	Jesus calls Levi, the tax-collector to be His disciple	Mk. 2:13-17	• the meaning of "disciple"
– Jesus sends out the Apostles	Jesus chooses the 12 Apostles Jesus sends out the Apostles to preach	Mk. 3:13-19 Mk. 6:7-13	• the appointment of the 12 Apostles • the meaning of "apostle" • the work, power (authority) and mission of the disciples/apostles

Unit 2: The Origin of Christianity - Jesus Christ

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
• Miracles ▪ Healing	Jesus heals a leper The man with a paralysed hand Jairus' daughter The woman who touched Jesus' cloak A woman's faith Jesus heals a blind man in Bethsaida	Mk. 1:40-45 Mk. 3:1-6 Mk. 5:22-23, 35-43 Mk. 5: 24-34 Mk. 7:24-30 Mk. 8:22-26	To show that Jesus has the power to heal and that it is part of His ministry: • Jesus performs the healing miracles because of His compassion and the people's faith • the different reactions of the people to these miracles • Jesus keeps His identity hidden in some of these miracles
▪ Authority over evil spirits	Jesus heals a man with evil spirits Jesus heals a boy with an evil spirit	Mk. 5:1-20 Mk. 9:14-29	To show that Jesus has the power over evil spirits and that defeating evil spirits is part of His ministry: • Jesus fights to destroy evil spirits because of his compassion and the people's faith • people's reaction to Jesus' words and deeds • Jesus reveals His identity in these miracles
▪ Power over nature	Jesus has power over a storm Jesus has power to feed 5,000 people	Mk. 4:35-41 Mk. 6:30-44	To show that Jesus exercises His power over nature out of His concern for the people's needs, and to point out the importance of faith in facing difficulties: • Jesus calms a storm and feeds a multitude • the disciples are limited by their lack of faith and understanding
▪ Others	The Pharisees set a trap for Jesus by demanding a miracle	Mk. 8:11-13	To emphasise why Jesus performed miracles: • the misunderstanding of people about performing miracles • Jesus' standpoint on performing miracles

Unit 2: The Origin of Christianity - Jesus Christ

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
	Transfiguration	Mk. 9:2-8	To point out the glory of Jesus in His transfiguration: • confirmation of the divinity of Jesus • the appearance of Moses and Elijah, and the voice of God acknowledging Jesus as the Son of God
• Passion ▪ Jesus' predictions about His suffering	Jesus' three predictions about His suffering	Mk. 8:31-33, 9:30-32, 10:32-34	To show why the Messiah has to suffer: • Jesus' three predictions about His suffering • the Messianic Secret • Peter's misunderstanding of Jesus' role • Jesus' preparation of His disciples for His coming suffering
▪ Before suffering	Entrance into Jerusalem	Mk. 11:1-10	To show how Jesus makes His role as the Messiah public, thereby fulfilling the prophecy: • riding on the colt into Jerusalem is a prophetic sign of Messiahship • the way the people welcome Jesus shows their misunderstanding of Messiahship • Palm Sunday
	The anointing at Bethany	Mk. 14:1-11	To show that the anointing is a preparation for Jesus' death: • the Jewish leaders' plot to arrest Jesus secretly • Jesus praises Mary's deed • Judas agrees to betray Jesus

Unit 2: The Origin of Christianity - Jesus Christ

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
▪ Arrest	The Lord's Supper	Mk. 14:12-31	To explain the meaning of the Last Supper: • Jesus foretells His coming suffering and the reaction of the disciples • the Feast of the Unleavened Bread and the Passover • the significance of the Last Supper in the days of the disciples and in the church today • Maundy/Holy Thursday
	Gethsemane	Mk. 14:32-42	To point out how Jesus as a human being shrinks away from His suffering, but finally determines to do the will of God at all costs: • Jesus' example: to pursue the way of God in prayer • Jesus exhorts the disciples to be watchful and to pray for strength to resist temptation
	Arrest	Mk. 14:43-52	To give an account of the unjust arrest of Jesus: • the roles of Judas, the guards, the disciples, the Jewish leaders and the false witnesses
	Before the Council	Mk. 14:53-65	To show how Jesus is condemned for acknowledging His identity as the Messiah: • the Jewish Council

Unit 2: The Origin of Christianity - Jesus Christ

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
▪ Crucifixion and burial	Peter's denial	Mk. 14:66-72	To explain why and how Peter fails and denies Jesus, and to help students learn from Peter's failure: • in spite of Jesus' warning, Peter denies Him • the reasons for Peter's failure • the importance of repentance
	Before Pilate	Mk. 15:1-15	To show how Jesus voluntarily submits to the injustice done to Him: • the unjust and illegal trial • the parts played by Pilate, the Jewish leaders and the crowd
	Crucifixion and death	Mk. 15:16-41	To give an account of the Crucifixion and explain its meaning: • the meaning of "crucifixion" • the fulfilment of prophecies • Jesus' words on the cross To compare the reaction of different people to the crucifixion: • the soldiers, Simon of Cyrene, the two bandits, the priests and scribes, and the bystanders
	Burial	Mk. 15:42-47	To give an account of Jesus' death and burial: • witnesses to Jesus' death: Joseph of Arimathea, the Roman Officer, and some women • Jewish burial • Good Friday

Unit 2: The Origin of Christianity - Jesus Christ

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
• Resurrection and Ascension	The Resurrection	Mk. 16:1-14	To describe the events that took place at the Resurrection: • the message of the Resurrection • the role of the angels and the women, including Mary Magdalene • the reaction of the people concerned To point out the relevance of the Resurrection for Christians today: • Jesus promises His disciples power and authority, and to be with them always • Jesus gives His disciples the mission to spread the Good News • the meaning of Resurrection • Jesus is alive and present with His people • Easter
	The Ascension	Mk. 16:19-20	To explain the meaning of Jesus' Ascension: • Jesus resumes His glory (the meaning of sitting at the right hand side of God the Father) • the Kingdom of God has come • Jesus' followers worship Him and the Lord confirms their work for the Kingdom of God with the signs of the Messianic Age
Jesus' Teachings • Kingdom of God ▪ The coming of the Kingdom of God	The Lamp under the Bowl The Growing Seed	Mk. 4:21-23 Mk. 4:26-29	To point out the characteristics of the Kingdom of God and its citizens: • The Lamp under the Bowl: the secret of the Kingdom of God is to be disclosed • The Growing Seed: the inward invisible growth of the Kingdom

Unit 2: The Origin of Christianity - Jesus Christ

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
▪ Ways to the Kingdom of God	The Mustard Seed	Mk. 4:30-34	• The Mustard Seed: the outward visible growth of the Kingdom
	Repent and believe the Gospel	Mk. 1:15	• demands repentance and faith
	Virtue of love	Mk. 9:41-50	• purity of heart
	Jesus blesses little children	Mk. 10:13-16	• childlike humility
	The rich young ruler	Mk. 10:17-27	• whole-hearted devotion
▪ The Kingdom of God is come – the End of Days	Prediction of the "throwing down" of the Temple	Mk. 13:1-6	• the "throwing down" of the Temple is coming; and many people will pretend to be the Messiah
	No man knows when the Day will come	Mk. 13:32-37	• a man taking a long journey: servants should watch out and get ready for the return of the master
• Will of God ▪ Teachings for His disciples			To understand how to take the responsibilities of a citizen in the Kingdom of God:
– Life style	Humility and service	Mk. 9:33-37	• the least is the greatest in the Kingdom of God
	To be a servant of others	Mk. 10:42-45	• take Jesus as a role model in serving others
	To remember Jesus	Mk. 14:22-25	• take Jesus' body and blood in order to remember Jesus' salvation for all
– Promises	Whoever is not against us is for us	Mk. 9:38-41	• a willingness to accept other servants of God
	Detachment and rewards	Mk. 10:28-30	• to give up what one has in the world will receive God's reward
	Receive the Holy Spirit	Jn. 20:19-23	• the risen Jesus sends his disciples, grants the Holy Spirit and the power of remitting and retaining sins to them
– Cost and mission	Take up one's cross and follow Jesus	Mk. 8:34-38	• renunciation and self-denial
	Go into the world and preach the Gospel to every creature	Mk. 16:15-20	• preaching the Gospel is the mission given by Jesus before His Ascension

Unit 2: The Origin of Christianity - Jesus Christ

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
▪ Parables			To explain Jesus' purpose in using parables, and to introduce some parables and show their relevance to our daily lives:
– Parables about the Kingdom of God	The Sower	Mk. 4:1-20	• The Sower: the different responses to God's message
	The Tenants in the Vineyard	Mk. 12:1-12	• The Tenants in the Vineyard: the Jewish leaders' rejection of the prophets and the Messiah
– Parables about the End of Days	Ten Virgins	Mt. 25:1-13	• Ten Virgins: people have to prepare well for the arrival of the End of Days all the time
	The Sheep and the Goats	Mt. 25:31-46	• The Sheep and the Goats: the qualifications to enter into the Kingdom of God at the End of Day
– Parables about moral conduct	The Unmerciful Servant	Mt. 18:21-35	• The Unmerciful Servant: the basic attitude of forgiveness
	The Good Samaritan	Lk. 10:25-37	• The Good Samaritan: all people are our neighbours
– Other parables	The Talents	Mk. 25:14-30	• The Talents: the need to use our talents well in order to be a good steward of talent
	The Lost Sheep The Lost Son	Lk. 15:1-7 Lk. 15:11-32	• The Lost Sheep and The Lost Son: God's unconditional love and welcome for sinners who repent
▪ Law			To point out the true meaning of the Law and traditions, and correct the misunderstanding of the Jewish leaders:
– Laws and traditions	The greatest commandment	Mk. 12:28-34	• to be a citizen of the Kingdom of God, one should love God and one's neighbours, which is more important than offerings and sacrifices
	Forgiving sin	Mk. 2:1-12	• the true meaning of forgiving sin
– Debates on Laws and traditions	Teachers of the Law condemn Jesus for eating with the outcasts	Mk. 2:16-17	• God also loves sinners, and Jesus states that He comes for sinners

Unit 2: The Origin of Christianity - Jesus Christ

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
	Conflict over ritual fasting	Mk. 2:18-22	• the incompatibility of the old and new spirit
	Conflict over the Sabbath	Mk. 2:23-28	• the Sabbath is made for people's sake, and not as a burden
	Clean and unclean	Mk. 7:1-5, 14-22	• the real source of uncleanness
	Traditions to the elderly	Mk. 7:6-13	• it is wrong to give traditional laws a higher position than the Law
	A question on divorce	Mk. 10:1-12	• the true will of God about marriage
	A question about paying taxes	Mk. 12:13-17	• people have different duties in response to their different roles in the world
	A question about rising from death	Mk. 12:18-27	• resurrection exists
	A question about the Messiah	Mk. 12:35-37	• the Messiah is both man and God
– Sermon on the Mount	Sermon on the Mount: Characteristics of the citizens of the Kingdom		To show that the Sermon is about a God-centred approach to life:
	The Beatitudes	Mt. 5:3-12	(a) ways that lead to true happiness
	The six antitheses	Mt. 5:21-48	(b) to be salt and light in the world
	Emphasis on true piety	Mt. 6:1-18	(c) based on a proper relationship with God rather than religious rituals
	Attitude towards life	Mt. 6:19-7:11	(d) to trust God and not any material thing
	The Golden rule	Mt. 7:12	(e) to maintain good human relationships by forgiving and not by judging others
	Three warnings	Mt. 7:13-27	(f) to build one's life on the teaching of Jesus and not the Jewish tradition
			(g) to strive for absolute morality and impartial love

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Unit 3: The Continuation of Jesus' Ministry

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
Jesus' Identity • Jesus in the eyes of the Jews	Using the power of Beelzebub	Mk. 3:20-22	To show different views of Jesus' identity from different people: • Teachers of the Law accuse Jesus that He is inspired by the devil since He has the power to cast out unclean spirits
	Jesus is rejected at Nazareth	Mk. 6:1-4	• people in Nazareth know Jesus to be a carpenter and do not accept His higher status
	Jesus is regarded as the risen John the Baptist	Mk. 6:14-16	• Herod Antipas regards Jesus as the risen John the Baptist
	Jesus is regarded as John the Baptist, Elijah and one of the prophets		• people other than the disciples regard Jesus as John the Baptist, Elijah and one of the prophets
	Rabbi/teacher	Mt. 23:8-10	• People regard Jesus as a rabbi, teacher
• Jesus in the eyes of His disciples	Son of God	Mk. 1:1, 3:11, 5:7, 14:61, 15:39	• the disciples understand Jesus as Son of God as a result of His miracle-performing
	Messiah	Mk. 8:29, 14:61-62, 15:32	• the Jewish views of Messiah at Jesus' time • Jesus' interpretation of the meaning of Messiah
• Jesus' understanding of Himself	Son of Man	Mk. 2:10, 2:28, 8:31, 10:45, 14:62	• the meanings of Son of Man: (1) has the right to forgive sins; (2) Lord of the Sabbath; (3) has to suffer; (4) the one who serves people; (5) will come back from heaven in glory
Development of the Early Church	The Ascension	Acts 1:6-11	• the promise of the Holy Spirit and the power to witness • the Ascension

Unit 3: The Continuation of Jesus' Ministry

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
	Pentecost – the coming of the Holy Spirit	Acts 2	To show that the Pentecost is the birthday of the church: • the form and gift of the Holy Spirit
	Peter's preaching	Acts 2	To introduce the content of the proclamation of the Early Church: • Peter's proclamation begins the active spreading of the Gospel by the Church
	Persecution of the early believers (Stephen and James)	Acts 5:17-33, 6:8-15, 7:54-8:3, 12:1-5	To show the courage of the apostles as witnesses of Christ: • the apostles, forbidden to preach, choose to obey God and not man • the threat of execution • the faith of Stephen as shown in his arrest and death • Herod executes James

	Conversion of Saul	Acts 9:1-19	To give an account of the conversion of Saul and its importance for the development of the Church:
			• Saul's vision of the Risen Lord on the road to Damascus
			• God reveals His purpose to Ananias and sends him to baptise Saul
			To explain the nature of conversion:
			• the meaning of the conversion of Saul:
			  (a) complete break with his past
			  (b) freedom from the struggle for righteousness
			  (c) displacement of self
			  (d) complete change of values

Unit 3: The Continuation of Jesus' Ministry

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
	Preaching to the Gentiles	Acts 9:20-11:30	To show the source of Peter's power to heal, and to show the Gospel was spread in Judea: • Peter heals in the name of Jesus and many people believe To show how God prepared to reveal His salvation to all: • God gives a vision to Cornelius, a devout Roman centurion • Peter learns in a vision that salvation is for all • Peter explains that the coming of the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles is the proof of God's acceptance To show the work done by the church in Antioch: • Christians from Cyprus and Cyrene preach to the Gentiles in Antioch and many Gentiles turn to the Lord • Barnabas is sent by the church in Jerusalem to help in Antioch, and Barnabas invites Saul to help • the term "Christians" is first used, signifying separation from Judaism • Antioch sends famine relief to Judea

Topics	Key Points	Biblical References	Explanatory Notes
	The Council of Jerusalem	Acts 15:1-21	To explain the reason for calling the Council: • Paul and Barnabas bring the problem of circumcision to the apostles in Jerusalem To explain that the compromise of the Early Church enabled Christianity to become a world religion: • Peter emphasises that salvation by grace is for both Jews and Gentiles • four rules are drawn up to make it easier for Jewish believers accepting Gentiles as Christians
	The Gospel spreads to Rome (Paul's missionary journeys)	Acts 28:16-30	To show that Paul preaches the Gospel to the Gentiles in Rome

Development of basic Christian belief
• Salvation
 	
  ▪ Paul's three perspectives of salvation
 	
  ▪ James' concept of salvation
	
	Change of sovereignty
	
	Mystical transformation
	
	Justification by faith
	Faith and work
		
		1Cor. 7:23
		
		Rom. 6:15-18
		2Cor. 5:14-15
		Rom.1:16-17
		Jas. 2:14-26
			
			The influence of Paul in the development of the Christian faith:
			• people are free from their sins by the precious blood of Jesus, and become servants of God
			• actual and symbolic meaning of death and resurrection of Jesus and His people
			• the meaning of justification by faith
			James' teaching as a complement to Paul's concept of justification by faith

• New Commandment	Love one another	Jn. 13:34, 15:12 1Jn. 2:7-11, 3:11-18	To show how John states that Jesus gives a new commandment to His disciples: • love one another: one has to know how to love another in the way Jesus loves His people

2.2.3 Elective Part II: Faiths in Action (Choose **ONE** only)

Experiential learning activities are organised and structured around religious teachings and the way they relate to shared human experience. Students can either engage in a social service programme or visit a place where religious activities are held. Teachers may help students to reflect on these experiences and to explore their meaning.

Module 1: Learning to serve and serving to learn

- Concrete experience and observation: Plan a service project with others and carry it out
- Reflection: Reflect on the experience of serving
- Synthesis and conceptualisation: Gather information, conceptualise and synthesise it with the service experiences into broader issues
- Testing of concepts in new situations: Apply new understanding to life experiences and other service experiences
- Personal service portfolio: Writing reflective journals and service reports to build a portfolio

Module 2   Learning from religious practices *(e.g. visit a religious venue or observe a religious ceremony)*

- Concrete experience and observation: Experience how a faith community expresses its beliefs and feelings through symbolism/ worship/festivals/rituals
- Reflection: Reflect on the experiences gained during the visit
- Synthesis and conceptualisation: Conceptualise and synthesise information and experiences gained in the visit, and compare with other religious experiences they have
- Evaluate their own beliefs and values with reference to the experiences gained in the visit
- Personal visit portfolio: Writing reflective journals and visit reports to build a portfolio

Remarks: Students are encouraged to visit or observe religious practices that are different from the religious traditions they study in Part II.

Reflecting:
Students try to articulate what they have learnt from their experiences
"What has just happened?"
"What did we do?"

Reflective Journal

Debriefing and exploring meaning from the experiences

Discuss religious teachings, and relate them to ethical issues or shared human experiences

Experiencing:
Concrete experience and observation: Plan and carry out a service project or experience how a faith community expresses its beliefs through various rituals

Synthesising:
Analyse preliminary results of the experience, and seek similar experience along the lines of "What if?" and "So what?"

Personal Experiential Learning Portfolio

Testing of concepts in new situations: Apply new understandings to life experiences and other service experiences
Students transfer what they have learnt in their daily lives

Evaluating and applying:
Students evaluate what they have learnt from the activities, and attempt a new learning behaviour
"If…then?"
"Now what?"

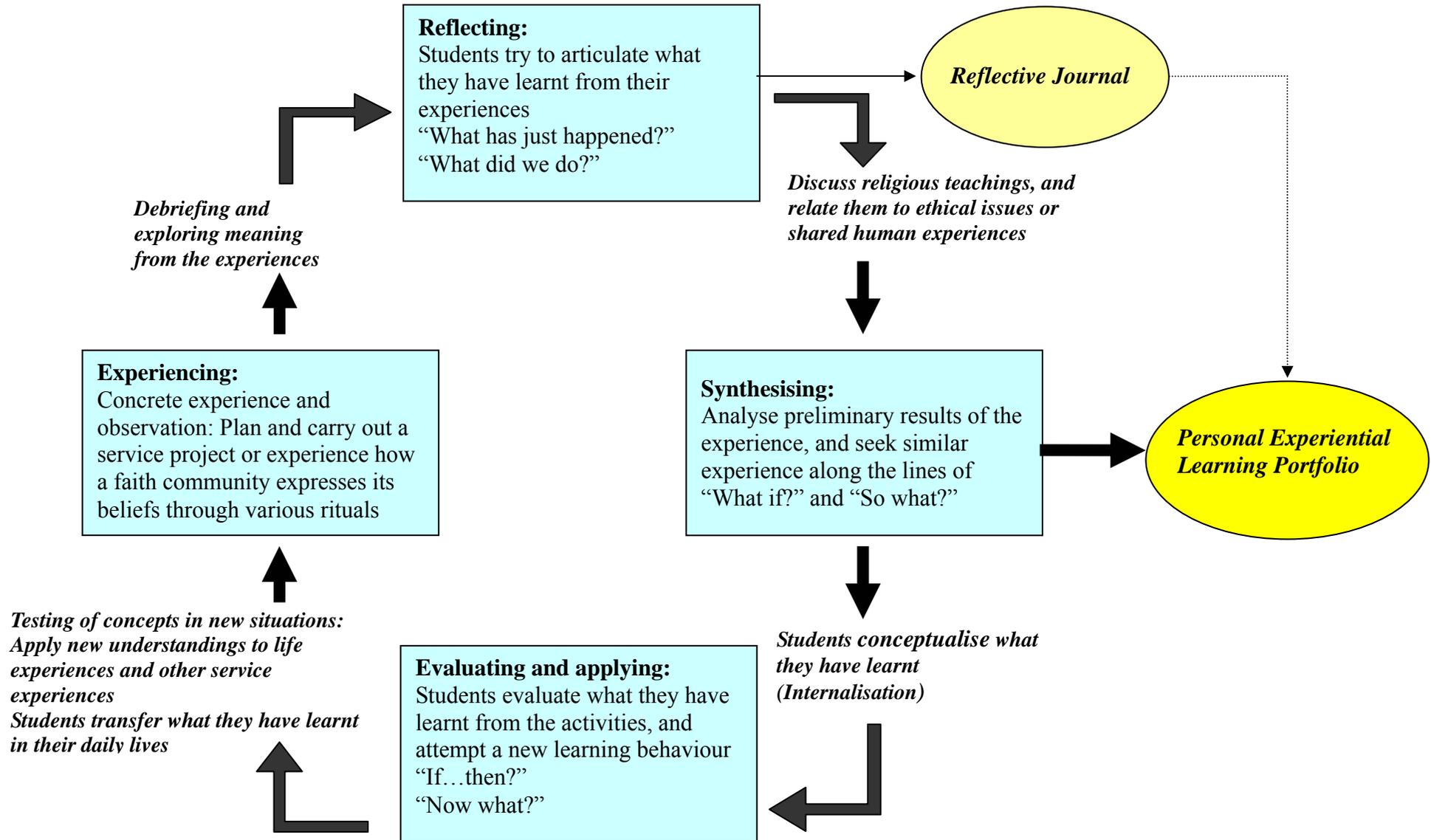*Students conceptualise what they have learnt (Internalisation)*

Figure 2.1   A Pathway for Experiential Learning

2.2.4   Time allocation

The total lesson time for senior secondary ERS curriculum is 270 hours. The curriculum is divided into two parts. About two-fifths of the total lesson time is allocated to the Compulsory Part and three-fifths to the Elective Parts. (including the experiential learning activities: "Faiths in Action")
The specific allocation is as follows:

Compulsory Part: Ethics

Modules	Units	Suggested lesson time (hours)
Normative Ethics	The Nature of Morality Theory of Conduct Theory of Value and Virtue	30
Personal and Social Issues	Human Rights Life and Death Sex, Companionship and Family Bioethics Environmental Ethics Business and Economic Ethics Media Ethics	70

Elective Part I: Religious Traditions

Module 1	Units	Suggested lesson time (hours)
Buddhism	History of Buddhism	30
	Basic Buddhist Doctrines	34
	Buddhist Practices	36

Module 2	Units	Suggested lesson time (hours)
Christianity	Background	16
	The Origin of Christianity – Jesus Christ	64
	The Continuation of Jesus' Ministry	20

Elective Part II: Faiths in Action

Modules	Suggested lesson time (hours)
Learning to serve and serving to learn	70
Learning from religious practices	

Note: For students taking Ethics and Religious Studies as an elective subject, the lesson time can be counted towards that for Other Learning Experiences. (The New Academic Structure for Senior Secondary Education and Higher Education—Action Plan for Investing in the Future of Hong Kong (EMB, 2005), para. 3.48)

Chapter 3   Curriculum Planning

This chapter provides guidelines to help schools and teachers develop a flexible and balanced curriculum that suits the needs, interests and abilities of their students, and the context of the school, in accordance with the central framework provided in Chapter 2.

3.1   Guiding Principles

To enhance the effectiveness of learning and teaching Ethics and Religious Studies (ERS), teachers are encouraged to consider planning a balanced and coherent curriculum that will enable students to take an active role in ethical and religious enquiry.

The following are major principles underpinning curriculum planning for teachers' reference:

(a) The primary considerations teachers need to take into account throughout planning are: curriculum aims, students' needs, the school context, and the characteristics of the discipline of ERS.

(b) Planning should take into consideration what students have achieved in basic education, and provide opportunities to reinforce the knowledge, skills and understanding they acquired in earlier Key Stages.

(c) The planning should take account of possible links with other subjects as well as the broader aims of the three-year senior secondary curriculum, which include the development of generic skills in the Personal, Social and Humanities Education Key Learning Area (PSHE KLA) and the essential learning experiences required of every student in senior secondary education.

(d) Flexibility should be allowed in curriculum planning. The arrangement and sequencing of units or topics can be adjusted, so that the breadth and depth of study suits the ability level and orientation of the students.

(e) The programme should provide sufficient challenge for students of different abilities at senior secondary level.

(f) The learning and teaching activities and evaluation methods should be varied according to the needs and abilities of the students.

(g) The programme should prepare students adequately for further study in Ethics or Religion at tertiary level. It should also provide an equally valuable learning experience for those who leave the subject at the end of the third year.

3.2　Progression

The following modes of curriculum planning show that the ERS curriculum can be implemented with different configurations. As illustrated below, the modules can be arranged in various ways and "Faiths in Action" can be introduced at different stages. It is suggested that teachers should take their students' prior learning experiences, interests, abilities and orientations into consideration, and flexibly develop their learning and teaching plans. The following is some modes of planning for teachers' consideration.

(a) Mode 1

This mode, which builds on the previous religious education experiences gained in junior secondary level, focuses on Religious Traditions in S4, as this will help to consolidate students' learning and facilitate effective progression to later studies. Students will gain confidence in exploring familiar religious themes before proceeding to the study of Ethics. The study of Ethics and experiential learning activities will start in S5.

Features:

- Emphasis is placed on Religious Traditions and Ethics in S4 and S5 which has the effect of widening students' horizons.
- At the beginning of S5, teachers and students start planning experiential learning activities. Through service learning or observing different religious practices, students reflect on shared human experience based on first-hand exposure.
- In S6, students finish the experiential learning activities and complete their learning portfolios for assessment.

Year	Ethics / Religious Traditions	Faiths in Action
S4	**Elective Part: Religious Traditions**	
S5	**Compulsory Part: Ethics** • Normative Ethics • Personal and Social Issues: 4 out of 7 units	Preparation / Experience / Evaluation
S6	**Compulsory Part: Ethics** • Personal and Social Issues: 3 out of 7 units	

Figure 3.1　　Suggested Progression: Mode 1

(b) Mode 2

Experiential learning activities are scheduled throughout S4 to S6. Most of the topics in Religious Traditions (about 2/3) are studied in S4 and the rest are completed in S5. Ethics is studied in S5 and S6.

Features:

• Experiential learning activities are carried out systematically throughout the three years.

• Experiential learning activities have already been started in S4.

• There is greater flexibility in preparing, experiencing and evaluating experiential learning activities.

Year	Ethics / Religious Traditions	Faiths in Action
S4	**Elective Part: Religious Traditions** Buddhism: 2 out of 3 units Christianity: 1 or 2 out of 3 units	
S5	**Elective Part: Religious Traditions** Buddhism: 1 out of 3 units Christianity: 1 or 2 out of 3 units **Compulsory Part: Ethics** • Normative Ethics • Personal and Social Issues: 3 out of 7 units	Preparation / Experience / Evaluation
S6	**Compulsory Part: Ethics** • Personal and Social Issues: 4 out of 7 units	

Figure 3.2   Suggested Progression: Mode 2

(c) Mode 3

Experiential learning activities are scheduled throughout S4 to S6. Both Ethics and Religious Traditions are studied in S4. Religious Traditions and Ethics are completed in S5 and S6 respectively.

Features:

•   The study of Ethics and Religious Traditions in S4 and S5 brings in broad perspectives and helps students widen their horizons, which facilitate their planning and preparation for the experiential learning activities.

•   Experiential learning activities should be planned systematically throughout the three years.

•   Students can start learning Ethics in S4 and engage in experiential learning activities right away.

•   There is greater flexibility in preparing, experiencing and evaluating experiential learning activities.

Year	Ethics / Religious Traditions	Faiths in Action
S4	**Elective Part: Religious Traditions** Buddhism: 1 out of 3 units Christianity: 1 or 2 out of 3 units **Compulsory Part: Ethics** • Normative Ethics • Personal and Social Issues: 1 out of 7 units	Preparation
S5	**Elective Part: Religious Traditions** Buddhism: 2 out of 3 units Christianity: 1 or 2 out of 3 units **Compulsory Part: Ethics** • Personal and Social Issues: 2 out of 7 units	Experience
S6	**Compulsory Part: Ethics** • Personal and Social Issues: 4 out of 7 units	Evaluation

Figure 3.3   Suggested Progression: Mode 3

3.3 Curriculum Planning Strategies

In planning the implementation of the senior secondary ERS curriculum, schools should take advantage of the flexibility allowed in the curriculum design, consider their own strengths and characteristics, and may adopt the following strategies for curriculum planning.

3.3.1 Interfacing Junior Secondary and Senior Secondary Curriculum

The design of this curriculum, like other senior secondary subjects, is based on students learning experiences during basic education. Schools should review the junior secondary curriculum and ensure that students have a solid foundation of knowledge in different disciplines and a sound development of generic skills and positive values and attitudes. The learning experiences in basic education, especially in the PSHE KLA, will support the building of knowledge about religious traditions and ethics and help students make informed decisions and judgements regarding different personal and social issues. Teachers should obtain adequate information about the learning experiences of their students in junior secondary to ensure that they have solid foundations to start with.

3.3.2 Catering for learner diversity

In order to help all students achieve the learning objectives of the curriculum, teachers may vary the degree of support and guidance given to them according to their ability. The cultural and religious diversity among the students should be taken into consideration when planning the curriculum. Some students will have no clearly defined religious background, affiliation or commitment, while others may have deeply held convictions and beliefs. Discussion of religious traditions and ethical issues will be richer where teachers can solicit experiences and views from students with different religious backgrounds. Teachers may also adjust the learning targets, provide a variety of resources and design different learning modes to suit different needs and develop different abilities. In planning the ERS curriculum, teachers should make use of the flexibility allowed in the curriculum design to accommodate differences in students' learning progress.

This curriculum has built in different approaches to religious education and modes of learning. Teachers should capitalise on this and plan for different learning opportunities to cater for students with different styles of learning. For example, experiential learning activities in the Elective Part "Faiths in Action" may be more effective in motivating students with an active personality type to think about religious teachings and moral principles, than studying religious classics or articles.

Differences among students can create good learning opportunities. Teachers may arrange group learning activities that may involve students in playing different roles, which invite them to make different contributions according to their strengths and interests. Students with different religious backgrounds and life experiences can enrich each other's understandings about themes and issues in the curriculum.

3.3.3   Making use of ad hoc issues and life events

ERS curriculum provides ample opportunities for students to apply what they have learnt to what is happening around them and to issues which impact on their lives. Flexibility should be provided in the planning of the curriculum in order to make room for discussion on ad hoc issues and life events which are relevant to the curriculum and have some special significance for students. Teachers should react to those moments when students get excited by local, national or global events. Such themes provide a powerful opportunity for teachers to draw out students' knowledge and to motivate them to learn with commitment. An example is available on the CDI's website, (911 incident and the learning and teaching of the theme "Hatred and Forgiveness", http://www.emb.gov.hk/index.aspx?langno=2&nodeid=3228) to illustrate the opportunities available for discussion of such important issues.

(Please read *Moral and Civic Education*, Booklet 3A in "*Basic Education Curriculum Guide – Building on Strengths" Series* (EMB, 2002), and also visit http://www.emb.gov.hk/index.aspx?nodeid=2397&langno=1 for more information about the Life Event Approach to conduct moral and civic education.)

3.3.4   Linkages to other learning experiences and informal curricula

The three-year senior secondary curriculum provides for some 15-35% of total lesson time for "Other Learning Experiences" (OLE), in which 5% or more are allocated for those related to moral and civic education and community service. These learning experiences can, at the same time, enrich students' learning in ERS. For example, students' participation in service learning during the curriculum time for OLE can be part of their learning of Module 1 in Elective Part II on "Learning to Serve and Serving to Learn".

Schools should note that the lesson time for senior secondary ERS curriculum can be counted towards that for OLE. Therefore, when planning for the curriculum of this subject, schools should take into consideration the moral and civic education programme and students' participation in community service, so as to make the best use of curriculum time and to achieve coherence between different learning experiences.

Schools often use assemblies, form teacher periods and extracurricular activities to enhance the spiritual and moral development of students. Schools might also consider aligning these learning experiences with that of Religious Studies to improve the effectiveness of student learning.

3.3.5 Cross-curricular planning

ERS, with its focus on questions of belief and value, attitude and outlook, behaviour and practice, has a major contribution to make in helping students understand and develop a positive attitude towards diversity in a pluralistic society.

Liberal Studies, as a core subject in the three-year senior secondary curriculum, provides learning experiences related to the exploration of personal and social issues. ERS too can highlight the many interrelationships between religion and significant human experiences and provide students with opportunities for developing their own ideas and values and for making informed decisions. Though the two subjects might adopt different approaches and emphases when exploring these issues, they present opportunities for collaboration and mutually enhancing one another's learning and teaching effectiveness.

ERS is also linked to other subjects in different ways. For example, the study of History and Chinese History might help students understand the historical development of the religious traditions and the impact religions have on the history of the nation and the world. The study of Chinese Language takes character-building as one of its curriculum aims, while ERS also contributes to the development of students' moral reasoning and value judgements. Other academic subjects, such as Biology and Geography, provide the background knowledge for understanding certain units in the ERS curriculum, such as Bioethics and Environmental Ethics.

Students pursuing studies in Social Services; Creative Studies or Business, Management and Law offered in Applied Learning courses may find the study of ERS valuable, as it helps students to understand not only religious practices and basic beliefs, but also the humanistic principles which lie behind rules of behaviour and codes of conduct. ERS also promotes mutual understanding and mutual respect, which are essential in the modern world.

3.3.6 Integrating learning with assessment

Assessment is an integral part of the learning and teaching process. It provides a further opportunity for learning in addition to measuring achievement. The learning tasks in ERS curriculum can also be taken as assessment tasks, and provide information on how learning and teaching can be improved.

3.4 Managing the Curriculum

3.4.1   Areas of work

The curriculum leader of the subject should oversee the professional development of ERS teachers and the selection and use of appropriate learning and teaching resources. In managing the ERS curriculum in a school-based context, teachers should consider the following:

(a) Understanding the curriculum and learning context
- Understand the *Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide* (CDC, 2007) and this Guide with a view to adapting the central curriculum for school-based curriculum development;
- Understand the school's vision and mission, strengths and needs, as well as students' abilities and interests, and align them with the aims of the ERS curriculum; and
- Understand global religious trends, the community culture and the changing needs of society.

(b) Planning and implementing the curriculum
- Design and implement schemes of work to help students achieve the curriculum aims and learning objectives of the ERS curriculum; and
- Design modes of assessment and tasks to promote assessment for learning.

(c) Evaluating and improving the curriculum
- Evaluate continuously the ERS curriculum through collecting data from different sources and analysing evidence of student learning; and
- Review the curriculum in accordance with the learning and teaching context, student experiences, school provision etc. and make adjustments whenever necessary.

(d) Developing resources
- Develop, collect and organise learning and teaching resources. Make all learning supporting materials accessible to students whenever needed. Many of the resources which are currently used for Religious Studies (S4-5) and Ethics and Religious Studies (ASL) will continue to be suitable for supporting senior secondary ERS curriculum. For example, the *Curriculum Supporting Materials for ASL Ethics and Religious Studies* (CDC, 2001) can be easily adapted for most learning units of this curriculum;
- Make effective use of the resources in schools, religious organisations and the community to facilitate student learning ; and

- Expand learning and teaching resources by the use of information technology. Over time, teachers should build up a variety of resources in school, so that students can have access to sacred texts, reference books, religious artefacts, audio-visual resources, maps, posters, computer software and works produced by other students.

(For more ideas on learning and teaching resources, please refer to Chapter 6 "Learning and Teaching Resources".)

(e) Building capacity
- Keep abreast of the latest curriculum development, teaching strategies and subject knowledge; and
- Build networks with other schools, conduct peer lesson observation, share effective practices and strategies with others to foster mutual support.

(f) Managing change and monitoring progress
- Undertake action research, teacher self-evaluation and periodical reviews of learning and teaching. These give teachers valuable data and provide evidence on which to base refinements and improvements to the ERS curriculum; and .
- Make reference to the latest global trends in ethics studies and religious education to adjust schemes of work.

3.4.2   Roles of different stakeholders

Principals, ERS panel chairpersons, ERS teachers and parents play different roles in the planning, development and implementation of the ERS curriculum. Collaboration is vital in developing and managing the curriculum.

(a) ERS teachers
- Keep abreast of the latest changes in curriculum, learning and teaching strategies and assessment practices;
- Contribute to ERS curriculum development, implementation and evaluation, and suggest strategies for learning, teaching and assessment;
- Stretch students' potential in learning ERS, and encourage them to learn actively;
- Participate actively in professional development, peer collaboration and professional exchange; and
- Participate in educational research and projects so as to enhance learning and teaching.

(b) PSHE KLA Co-ordinators / ERS Panel Chairpersons
- Lead and plan ERS curriculum development, and set clear directions for it;
- Monitor the implementation of the curriculum, and make appropriate adjustments to strategies for learning and teaching and assessment to respond to students' needs;
- Facilitate professional development by encouraging panel members to participate in training courses and workshops;
- Hold regular meetings (both formal and informal) with panel members to strengthen coordination and communication among them;
- Promote professional exchange of subject knowledge and learning and teaching strategies; and
- Make the best use of resources available in school, religious organisations and the community.

(c) Principals
- Understand students' strengths and interests, as well as the significance of ethics and religious education;
- Take into consideration students' needs, school context and the central curriculum framework in formulating the curriculum, instructional and assessment policies;
- Coordinate the work of KLA leaders and subject panels, and set clear targets for curriculum development and curriculum management;
- Promote a culture of collaboration among teachers to facilitate the planning and implementation of the curriculum;
- Understand the strengths of teachers and deploy them flexibly and rationally;
- Convey a clear message to parents regarding the significance of ethics and religious education; and
- Build networks among schools, community sectors, and various religious organisations at management level to facilitate the development of the ERS curriculum.

(d) Parents
- Support the development of the ERS curriculum;
- Encourage their children to explore not only various beliefs and values, but their own thoughts and feelings about them; and
- Understand the value of ethics and religious education, and encourage and support their children to pursue their study of this curriculum.

Chapter 4   Learning and Teaching

This chapter provides guidelines for effective learning and teaching of the Ethics and Religious Studies (ERS) curriculum. It is to be read in conjunction with **Booklet 3** of the *Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide* (CDC, 2007) which provides the basis for the suggestions set out below.

4.1   Knowledge and Learning

The senior secondary ERS curriculum aims to help students to develop their personal beliefs through exploring religious traditions, ethical issues and related human experiences. Personal beliefs, religious traditions and human experiences are the three main sources of knowledge for ERS.

Religious traditions encompass a coherent view and provide a distinctive interpretation of life and the world. The history of the development of religions, sacred texts, rituals and stories about religious people are the major areas from which students can acquire knowledge of the subject and develop a basic understanding of the particular religion they are studying. However, simply understanding the facts about a religion is insufficient to enable students to respond to the mysteries and challenges of life.

In the modern world, students encounter a variety of conflicting ideas and values, which prompt them to puzzle over the meaning and value of life, what is right and wrong and the sources of morality. Acquiring ethical knowledge and moral reasoning skills gives students the capacity to develop insights into human issues.

Such knowledge and skills can be drawn from major ethical systems, social norms and past human experience. However, the resources for developing knowledge and skills in ERS can be found not only outside but also within the school. Students and teachers bring their own personal beliefs, religious experiences and moral values into the classroom. These resources are immediately available and worth exploring.

4.1.1   Constructing knowledge through concept development

Knowing depends upon understanding. ERS enables students to develop their understanding by encouraging them to acquire and use a range of concepts, values and attitudes, skills and knowledge. In ERS, students develop concepts, construct their knowledge and acquire

thinking skills by being required to make sense of experiences, information, events and occurrences. In order to bring this about teachers should:

- identify the concepts in a particular topic in the ERS curriculum;
- consider the values and attitudes which the learning experience will promote;
- decide if there are particular skills which students need to develop to help them assimilate the targeted concepts, values and attitudes; and
- select an appropriate issue or event which might help in the development of the concepts, values and attitudes, and skills that have been identified.

Facilitating students' acquisition of crucial ethical concepts through social issues

Cloning has multiple meanings. It may refer to the production of two identical embryos by the splitting of a natural embryo with electric shock. This technique has been adopted by the rearing industry for many years. It may also refer to the cloning of an organism by means of nuclear transfer technology, a technological development which has aroused the whole world in recent years.

Cloning is discussed in great depths, and with different focuses, in the fields of biology, medicine, technology, law, etc. In ethics, the discussing of cloning should focus on its effect as an asexual reproduction method on human relationships, morality and society; rather than the details of nuclear transfer technology, the genetic recombination process, the working of the biological clock, etc.

In discussing with students a highly controversial social issue such as cloning in the realm of the ethics, the teacher helps them understand the focus and content of the controversies around cloning (especially the cloning of human beings), so that they may identify important concepts such as the definition of a human being, nature law, the limitations of life, value of life, human dignity, sacredness of life, right to live, reproductive rights, etc. Thus, students can understand the numerous supporting and opposing views to cloning, analyse the underlying rationale, assess their tenets and justifications, and consolidate and construct personal stance about the issue.

4.1.2 Roles of learners and teachers

In addition to being transmitters of knowledge, teachers have a key role to play in facilitating learners' learning, developing their capacity for independent learning and building their confidence in searching for the meaning of life. To enable learners to assume greater ownership of their own learning and be more confident in making moral judgements, teachers are encouraged to: negotiate learning objectives and content with students; create a supportive and harmonious learning atmosphere; act as role models and leaders of learning; promote quality interaction in the classroom; provide appropriate scaffolding and quality feedback; and promote positive values and attitudes.

As students are relatively more mature at senior secondary level, they should be allowed a degree of autonomy in choosing what and how to learn. They should, therefore, be encouraged to set meaningful and realistic goals for their own learning, engage confidently and meaningfully in learning activities, reflect on their learning experiences, and monitor and evaluate the progress they are making against the set goals.

4.2 Guiding Principles

Outlined below are guiding principles for effective learning and teaching in ERS.

- **Building on strengths:** Hong Kong classroom demonstrates many positive features of Chinese students (such as the attribution of academic success to effort and the social nature of achievement motivation) and teachers (such as a strong emphasis on subject disciplines and moral responsibility). These strengths and uniqueness of local students and teachers should be acknowledged and treasured.

- **Prior knowledge and experience:** Learning activities should be planned with the prior knowledge and experience of students in mind. Teachers need to find out what students know at the beginning of the study of a module or an issue.

- **Understanding learning objectives:** Each learning activity should have clear learning objectives and students should be informed of them at the outset. Teacher should also be clear about the purpose of assignments and explain their significance to students.

- **Teaching for understanding:** The pedagogies chosen should aim at enabling students to act and think flexibly with what they know.

- **Promoting independent learning:** Generic skills and reflective thinking ability should be nurtured. The students should be encouraged to take responsibility for their own learning.

- **Motivation:** Learning is best achieved when students are motivated. Motivation strategies should be used to arouse the interest of students.

- **Resources:** A wide range of teaching resources should be employed as tools for learning.

- **Engagement:** In conducting learning activities, it is important to engage the minds of students actively and to keep them "on task".

- **Feedback and assessment:** Feedback and assessment should be used as an integral part of learning and teaching.

- **Catering for learner diversity:** As students bring a wide variety of experiences, needs, interests and aspirations to the learning process in ERS, teachers should employ a wide range of strategies to cater for student diversity. The diversity among students also provides opportunities for them to co-construct knowledge and share life experiences in a learning community and enrich each other's learning.

4.3   Approaches and Strategies

4.3.1   From enquiry to reflection

This curriculum encourages teachers to adopt an enquiry approach to help students explore religious traditions, ethical issues and human experiences. However, at the end of their enquiry, students should also be motivated to develop their reflective thinking based on what they have learned. Most models of enquiry learning are cyclical and have three basic phases: exploring, understanding and expressing. This should be followed by a reflecting phase where students reflect upon learning experiences and the meanings embedded within them.

Exploring

The basic criterion for the choice of a topic should be its worth as an area of exploration, i.e. whether it has the potential for achieving curriculum objectives and extending students' understanding. Exploring topics with a focus on people and their religious experiences provides students with a meaningful entry point to start their learning about religious beliefs.

How can exploring be a meaningful entry point for learning?

To motivate students to learn and help them to identify what they are going to learn in ERS, teachers are encouraged to give students opportunities to understand human experiences in different aspects of life which take them beyond their own experiences to explore other people's perspectives. For example, they can:

- interview elderly people about their views on ageing and suffering;
- listen to different people's views on what religion brings to them;
- talk to someone who has experience of pilgrimage;
- conduct a survey among adults on the reasons for having religious beliefs, followed by a discussion of their views afterwards;
- participate in a debate about whether religion is necessary for a harmonious society; and
- discuss the pros and cons of ethical issues such as cloning and euthanasia.

Understanding

Through various learning experiences such as data collection, discussion, case studies and interviews, students come to understand ideas and concepts and the complex relationships between them, which they can relate to content knowledge.

Understanding in ERS involves linking new ideas and knowledge to the existing experience of students. This includes making a direct linkage to previous experiences and learning. Teachers should be aware of activities in which students are currently engaged and help them to explore further the knowledge they have acquired.

How can teachers be certain that students have understood something?

When students understand what they have learned and can construct meaning from it, teachers may find that they:

- challenge their previous knowledge and understanding;
- are willing to respond to the challenges of others;
- participate in a variety of formal and informal religious or ethical activities;
- take appropriate risks and learn from their "mistakes";
- critically examine their own and others' knowledge, actions and assumptions;
- achieve success and a sense of achievement in their learning;
- build new knowledge through linking it to what is already known;
- negotiate, make choices in, and take their share of responsibility for learning; and
- discuss the process of learning and teaching.

An interview with S6 students – linking Religious Studies to service learning

A group of S6 students from SKH Kei Hau Secondary School organised the "Integrated Community Carnival" with physically disabled volunteers. They integrated their previous learning in Religion lessons with this service experience, and gained a deeper understanding of religious concepts. One of the students reflected, "We have applied Christian concepts in designing the game booth. I think that the teachings in the Bible, such as "The parable of the lost sheep" and "The parable of the good Samaritan", gave us insights about helping disabled people."

Expressing thoughts and beliefs

In ERS, there is respect for the patterns of belief, feelings, thoughts and experiences of students, all of which are a potential source for learning. They become available for exploration and evaluation only when ample time and opportunity are given for their expression. Teachers are therefore encouraged to design activities which provide the maximum opportunity and freedom for students to express their ideas and responses. To encourage this, a classroom environment in which they are given support in articulating their thoughts and feelings is vital.

How to create a classroom climate which supports students' expression of their ideas

To promote a supportive environment in which students feel confident in expressing their ideas, teachers should ensure that:

- the classroom climate emphasises care, support and quality relationships based on mutral respect for all involved in the learning and teaching process;
- the classroom environment values effort, provides achievable but challenging expectations, builds self-esteem and encourages students to become responsible and independent learners;
- the special needs and abilities of students are identified and active planning is undertaken to meet them;
- opportunities are provided for students to express their ideas based on an informed knowledge base;
- there is effective communication among all students;
- students are able to focus on learning; and
- skills are explicitly taught within relevant contexts.

Reflecting

At the heart of ERS is the human need to formulate a set of beliefs and values. Reflection in this context involves evaluating in an honest and informed way the worth and relevance of beliefs and their accompanying values.

By reflecting on their learning experiences, students create personal meaning, develop and deepen empathy with others, and identify skills to be learned, valued and held for a lifetime. Subsequently, students try to implement their ideas and to test them against real-world experience, through which they develop the capacity to direct and assess their personal development for the rest of their lives.

How to organise reflective activities

Reflective thinking skills enable students to make appropriate life choices. Acquiring these skill is one of the most important objectives in learning ERS. A variety of activities can be used to facilitate reflection. When planning such activities, teachers should note that:

- reflective activities should involve students and their peers, teachers and the people concerned; and
- different types of reflective activities are appropriate for different stages of learning.

Reflective activities can involve reading, writing, doing and telling. For example, teachers can:

- ask students to say what they got out of given details about a phenomenon , or ask questions such as "What do you think was the most important in what you have just learned?" or "If you had to summarise this case in two minutes, what would you say?";
- assign case studies to help students think about what to expect from the study of particular topics;
- use journals to direct students to important issues and reinforce their learning experience by asking them to analyse how different ethical perspectives are presented and what moral values are embedded in a piece of writing;
- encourage discussion among students to introduce different perspectives and to challenge each other to think critically about the issues involved; and
- ask students to present what they have learned in terms of the major concepts related to their studies.

4.3.2 Choosing appropriate learning and teaching strategies

The pedagogy adopted by the teacher is crucial to the quality of learning and teaching ERS. In order to respond to the varied needs, interests, experiences and learning styles of students, teachers are encouraged to adopt a wide repertoire of pedagogical approaches to suit different learning and teaching contexts and purposes. It is true that teachers are also varied in their teaching styles, but it is necessary for them to try out other pedagogical approaches and extend their repertoire.

There are in general three major views of teaching:

Teaching as direct instruction: This view focuses on the teacher as the deliverer of the curriculum. The teacher transmits knowledge and tells learners what to do. Explanation, demonstration or modelling is adopted to enable learners to gain knowledge and understanding of a particular aspect of the subject.

Teaching as enquiry: This view places emphasis on the learners engaging in enquiry. The teacher gives learners a variety of tasks that ask them to search for and process information, and solve problems. In this enquiry, mutual support among learners is encouraged, so that all learners contribute to the construction of knowledge. In debating as well as activities in which learners are required to express their ideas, points of views and feelings, learners explore issues and practise their thinking skills.

Teaching as co-construction: This view focuses on the class as a community of learners. Learners contribute collectively to the creation of knowledge and criteria for assessment through discussion and group tasks. The approach encourages members of the class to negotiate areas of study with the teacher and then work collaboratively to conduct research and make presentations on topics that are of interest to them. In the process, the learners are encouraged to make contributions, propose their own standpoints, apply their learning skills and tap the rich sources of knowledge in the world.

These approaches do not need to be kept apart. They can be intertwined to complement each other. Teachers should try to vary the use of approaches to suit the learning context and to achieve optimal results. The table below identifies key aspects, strengths and limitations of the above views of teaching, and provides recommendations which teachers can refer to when arranging the learning and teaching activities for a specific topic.

Related pedagogies	Strengths	Limitations	Roles of teacher	Recommendations
- Lectures - Didactic questioning - Explicit teaching and practice - Demonstrations - Talk given by guest speakers	- Conveys large amounts of information - Provides detailed information on concepts - Involves step-by-step instruction for skill acquisition - Provides maximum teacher control - Is easier to plan and use	- Emphasises listening only - Students tend to be passive recipients - Little feedback from students to teachers - Requires an effective speaker - Requires an attentive audience - Not very suitable for developing higher-order thinking - Not very suitable for complex materials	- The teacher is an instructor or a lecturer. - The teacher presents the information to be learned. - The teacher directs the learning process. - The teacher identifies lesson objectives and takes the primary responsibility for guiding the instruction. - The teacher is responsible for explaining and demonstrating.	**Compulsory Part: Theory of Conduct** A lecture on the definition of the Act-utilitarianism and Rule-utilitarianism. **Elective Part: Buddhism – Development of Buddhism in India** Invite a guest speaker to give a talk on his/her experience of yoga and explain the relationship between yoga and Buddhism. **Elective Part: Christianity – History between the Two Testaments** A lecture on the measures and effects of Hellenization when Greece seized Palestine.

Figure 4.1   Teaching as Direct Instruction

Related pedagogies	Strengths	Limitations	Roles of teacher	Recommendations
- Reflective discussion - Case studies - Debates - Report writing - Reflective journals - Worksheets - Surveys	- Pools ideas and experiences from a group - Is effective after a presentation, film or video show, or other learning experiences that need to be analysed - Allows everyone to participate actively in the process - Develops students' analytical and problem-solving skills - Allows students to apply new knowledge and skills	- More time-consuming - Outcomes can be unpredictable - Possibility of students not seeing the relevance to their own situations - More demanding on the skills and experience of the teacher	- The teacher is a facilitator, supporter and resource person. - The teacher is encouraged to use open-ended questions and to persuade students to give more explanation or elaboration of their answers.	**Compulsory Part: Business and Economics Ethics – Poverty** Ask students to investigate the ways in which religious organisations alleviate poverty, and evaluate their effectiveness. **Elective Part: Buddhism – Buddhism in China** Ask students to collect pictures, photographs and articles on one of the following for conducting a case study so as to help them have a deeper understanding about the development of Buddhism in China: (i) Statues of Buddha; (ii) Costumes of Buddhist monks and nuns; or (iii) Buddhist architecture. **Elective Part: Christianity – Temptation** Write a report on "The types of temptation which young people in Hong Kong face today".

Figure 4.2   Teaching as Enquiry

Related pedagogies	Strengths	Limitations	Roles of teacher	Recommendations
• Group discussion • Role-play • Group projects • Experiential learning	• Students share in planning and directing their learning. • Students can learn from peers and teachers and develop their social skills. • Individuals' thoughts can be shared in a group. • Provides opportunities for understanding the roles of others and thus appreciating their points of view.	• Heavily dependent on the expertise of the teacher in structuring and developing the dynamics of the group. • Relies heavily on the observation, listening, interpersonal, and intervention skills of both the teacher and students. • Not appropriate for large groups.	• The teachers and students seek knowledge together. • The teachers have to provide a supportive and challenging environment for the exchange of ideas. • The teacher acts as a facilitator who helps to shape the learning paths through questioning or debriefing.	**Compulsory Part: Life and Death – Euthanasia** Organise a debate on the topic: "Euthanasia should be legalised in cases of incurable disease". **Elective Part: Buddhism – Life of the Buddha** Ask students to write a short play on "The life of Buddha", selecting the most important events which highlight his compassion for living things, and his motives for leaving his family in search of ideals. **Elective Part: Christianity – The Last Supper** Ask students to do a group project to investigate the meaning and influence of the Last Supper for non-Christians as well as Christians.

Figure 4.3   Teaching as Co-construction

4.3.3 Experiential learning

Experiential learning is a student-oriented learning mode which enables learning by doing. In the process of experiential learning, students learn through a series of carefully designed activities. Students are encouraged to observe, think, analyse, synthesise, evaluate their experiences, and apply what they have learnt in their daily life.

A meaningful learning journey

Experiential learning plays an important role in the learning and teaching of this curriculum. It is a learning journey with an awareness of human needs, a concern for shared human experience and a willingness to identify with others. This involves awareness that one can act on one's environment to contribute to the welfare of other people.

Students are the primary beneficiaries of experiential learning

The Principal of SKH Kei Hau Secondary School expressed her feelings on experiential learning, "students engaged in experiential learning are called upon to move beyond their individual concerns and the perceived limits of their abilities to embrace the very things that make us human. To know that some people are in need, to know that one is capable of responding, to know that one's response will make a significant difference to individuals and the community – all these are powerful keys to human growth and meaningful learning."

Partnership in learning

Instead of viewing students as passive recipients, experiential learning suggests that students are competent, intelligent and resourceful learners who are willing to contribute to their communities and society. When students take responsibility for their learning, the teacher takes on the role of mentor, guide and facilitator. In experiential learning, teachers are no longer instructors, since it is the students who direct their own experiential learning and determine what meaning to derive from it.

Experiential learning allows the development of a good partnership between students and teacher. As "learning by doing" is the central tenet of this strategy, there are opportunities for teachers and students to learn together and from each other. This fosters good teacher-student relationships. By giving students a sense of responsibility in their own learning, they can become self-directed learners.

Debriefing and reflection

Learning results from students' interpretations of their experiences. Students can be encouraged to give meaning to their experiences through debriefing and reflection.

In debriefing, teachers encourage students to rethink and reconstruct their learning experiences in order to make sense of them, so that they will be able to apply what they have learnt to new situations. Reflection can be carried out through various activities such as peer sharing, group discussion or writing reflective journals. The more students see their learning as personally meaningful and significant, the more they will learn.

Teachers can prepare for the reflection session by developing questions beforehand. However, these questions should be viewed simply as tools for starting a meaningful discussion, which should be modified when the situation changes.

Suggested ways of stimulating reflection

- Review the details of events: who, what and where?
- Review the planning: what could have been done better?
- What was learned? Make a list.
- What went well/wrong? What could be improved?
- How were responsibilities handled?
- Recapture some intense feelings such as anger, joy, worry, satisfaction, etc.
- What were the key findings?

4.3.4   Reading to learn

To develop the habit of reading independently is one of the goals of the school curriculum. "Reading to learn" is also one of the four key tasks recommended by the CDC (2001) to help students develop independent learning capabilities.

The skills involved in "Reading to learn" enhance students' overall capacity for lifelong learning and whole-person development. More specifically, they are important in ERS in the following ways:

- They enable students to develop their reflective thinking skills through understanding and constructing meaning from what they read.
- They cultivate an openness of mind towards different religious beliefs, ideas, values and cultures.
- They enrich students' knowledge and broaden their understanding of life which helps them to face life challenges.

The effective implementation of "Reading to learn" in a school requires a concerted effort by the school head, curriculum leaders, the teacher-librarians and teachers of different subject panels. A suggested reading list for teachers and students can be found in **References**. (pp. 103-118)

4.4　Learning Community

Teachers and students are encouraged to work closely together as a learning community which is characterised by mutual trust. A learning community fosters active over passive learning, cooperation over competition and team spirit over isolation. In a learning community, students are conducive to increasing learners' involvement and motivation. Learners are supported to become increasingly capable of taking responsibility for the choices they make, the actions they pursue and the consequences they encounter. They are encouraged to converse with each other and to examine the meanings they have derived from their learning experiences. In a learning community, students develop their capacity to be responsible for their own learning and learn to care about the learning of their peers.

Apart from promoting partnership among students in learning, an effective learning community also involves a close partnership between teachers and students. In addition to being a manager of class activities and a transmitter of knowledge, in a learning community, the teacher works closely together with the students, forming a mentoring relationship with them.

4.5　　Catering for Learning Differences

Able students who show willingness and capacity for ethical and spiritual development require the teachers to adopt particular learning and teaching strategies. Such learners bring with them a wide variety of needs, hopes and aspirations to their learning process. In order to help them to fulfil their potential, teachers are encouraged to:

- use a variety of challenging questioning strategies to stimulate them to explore religious questions and ethical phenomena;
- set extension tasks that promote greater depth of understanding or reflection;
- direct the focus of learning to the application of ideas and learning in new or unfamiliar contexts;
- build up resources for extended reading in each topic of the curriculum;
- structure groups to enable the most able students to work together at the highest levels on suitable occasions; and
- provide opportunities for students to make connections between their learning in ERS and other subjects.

In designing learning and teaching activities for students who need extra assistance to overcome some barriers in learning, teachers may consider:

- choosing content knowledge from contexts which students are familiar with;
- giving students opportunities to revisit knowledge and skills learned in different contexts;
- providing short, guided and more focused tasks, with support, when introducing new knowledge;
- allowing students to draw examples mainly from their own religious experiences and understanding;
- providing a variety of learning environments for the delivery of content; and
- employing a wide range of teaching approaches to meet their needs.

Chapter 5   Assessment

This chapter discusses the role of assessment in learning and teaching Ethics and Religious Studies (ERS), the principles that should guide assessment of the subject and the need for both formative and summative assessment. It also provides guidance on internal assessment and details of the public assessment of ERS. Finally, information is given on how standards are established and maintained and how results are reported with reference to these standards. General guidance on assessment can be found in the *Senior Secondary Curriculum Guide* (SSCG) (CDC, 2007).

5.1   The Roles of Assessment

Assessment is the practice of collecting evidence of student learning. It is a vital and integral part of classroom instruction, and serves several purposes and audiences.

First and foremost, it gives feedback to students, teachers, schools and parents on the effectiveness of teaching and on students' strengths and weaknesses in learning.

Secondly, it provides information to schools, school systems, government, tertiary institutions and employers to enable them to monitor standards and to facilitate selection decisions.

The most important role of assessment is in promoting learning and monitoring students' progress. However, in the senior secondary years, the more public roles of assessment for certification and selection come to the fore. Inevitably, these imply high-stakes uses of assessment since the results are typically employed to make critical decisions about individuals that affect their future.

The Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE) provides a common end-of-school credential that gives access to university study, work, and further education and training. It summarises student performance in the four core subjects and in various elective subjects, including both discipline-oriented subjects and the new Applied Learning courses. It needs to be interpreted in conjunction with other information about students given in the Student Learning Profile.

5.2   Formative and Summative Assessment

It is useful to distinguish between the two main purposes of assessment, namely "assessment *for* learning" (formative assessment) and "assessment *of* learning" (summative assessment).

"Assessment *for* learning" is concerned with obtaining feedback on learning and teaching, and utilising this to make learning more effective and to introduce any necessary changes to teaching strategies. We refer to this kind of assessment as "formative assessment" because it is all about forming or shaping learning and teaching. Formative assessment should take place on a daily basis and typically involves close attention to small "chunks" of learning.

"Assessment *of* learning" is concerned with determining progress in learning, and is referred to as "summative" assessment, because it is all about summarising how much learning has taken place. Summative assessment is normally undertaken at the conclusion of a significant period of instruction (e.g. at the end of the year, or of a key stage of schooling) and reviews much larger "chunks" of learning.

In practice, a sharp distinction cannot always be made between formative and summative assessment, because the same assessment can in some circumstances serve both formative and summative purposes. Teachers can refer to the SSCG for further discussion of formative and summative assessment.

Formative assessment should be distinguished from continuous assessment. The former refers to the provision of feedback to improve learning and teaching based on formal or informal assessment of student performance, while the latter refers to the assessment of students' on-going work and may involve no provision of feedback that helps to promote better learning and teaching. For example, accumulating results in class tests carried out on a weekly basis, without giving students constructive feedback, may neither be effective formative assessment nor meaningful summative assessment.

There are good educational reasons why formative assessment should be given more attention and accorded a higher status than summative assessment, on which schools tended to place a greater emphasis in the past. There is research evidence that indicates that formative assessment can be beneficial when used for refining instructional decision-making in teaching and generating feedback to improve learning. For this reason, the CDC report *Learning to Learn – The Way Forward in Curriculum Development* (CDC, 2001) recommended that there should be a change in assessment practices, with schools placing due emphasis on formative assessment to make assessment *for* learning an integral part of classroom teaching.

It is recognised, however, that the primary purpose of public assessment, which includes both public examinations and moderated School-based Assessments, is to provide summative assessments of the learning of each student. While it is desirable that students are exposed to SBA tasks in a low-stakes context, and that they benefit from practice and experience with such tasks for formative assessment purposes without pressure, similar tasks will need to be administered soon as part of the public assessment process to generate marks to summarise the learning of students (i.e. for summative assessment purposes).

Another distinction to be made is between internal assessment and public assessment. Internal assessment refers to the assessment practices that teachers and schools employ as part of the ongoing learning and teaching process during the three years of senior secondary studies. In contrast, public assessment refers to the assessment conducted as part of the assessment process in place for all schools. Within the context of the HKDSE, this means both the public examinations and the moderated School-based Assessments (SBA) conducted or supervised by the HKEAA. On balance, internal assessment should be more formative, whereas public assessment tends to be more summative. Nevertheless, this need not be seen as a simple dichotomy. The inclusion of SBA in public assessment is an attempt to enhance formative assessment or assessment *for* learning within the context of the HKDSE.

5.3   Assessment Objectives

The assessment objectives listed below are closely aligned with the curriculum framework and the broad learning outcomes presented in earlier chapters.

Compulsory Part: Ethics

Module 1: Normative Ethics

After studying the topics, students should be able to:

1. understand basic theories in ethics, and apply such theories to analyse ethical problems in a pluralistic society;

2. identify and assess critically the arguments of different ethical theories;

3. make ethical judgements with reference to various ethical principles and methods of reasoning to express personal standpoints;

4. set priorities among various conflicting values and virtues when needed;

5. uphold an open and tolerant approach when dealing with different ethical issues related to daily-life experience; and

6. demonstrate a rational and coherent thinking style when discussing ethical questions.

Module 2: Personal and Social Issues

After studying the topics, students should be able to:

1. recognise the complexity of making moral decisions;

2. understand the relationship between ethical issues and values (e.g. commitment, responsibility, etc.), and apply them to solve personal and social problems;

3. identify ethical problems involved in personal and social issues;

4. analyse ethical issues by applying various theories;

5. understand the ethical standpoints of different religions and individuals; and

6. discuss ethical issues rationally, and make moral decisions with a reasonable and responsible attitude.

Elective Part I: Religious Traditions

Module 1: Buddhism

After studying the topics, students should be able to:

1. show knowledge of Buddha's life and the basic doctrines of Buddhism;

2. recognise the related Indian cultural context of Buddhism at its beginning;

3. understand how Buddhism developed after Buddha's death and describe briefly the development of Buddhism in China and its impact on Chinese culture;

4. apply Buddhist teachings to deal with problems of life and daily-life situations;

5. respond to contemporary social problems through applying Buddhist ethics and values; and

6. understand the Buddhist spirit of compassion, and care for other sentient beings.

Module 2: Christianity

After studying the topics, students should be able to:

1. understand the Old Testament concepts embedded in Christian faith and how God's promises were fulfilled in Christ;

2. understand the life and teaching of Jesus Christ and the essence of the Christian faith;

3. understand the development of the Early Church and its implications for the Church today; and recognise the influence of the teachings of apostles such as Paul, James and John in the development of the Christian faith;

4. respond to social issues with Christian ethical teachings and values;

5. show understanding of the needs of others and demonstrate how Jesus Christ's love can help them; and

6. adopt a positive attitude towards life and the world.

Elective Part II: Faiths in Action

Module 1: Learning to serve and serving to learn

After the service learning, students should be able to:

1. acknowledge the needs, feelings and expectation of others;

2. apply knowledge gained in ERS in life experiences and other service experiences; and

3. demonstrate meaningful reflection on experiences from services and apply such experiences in daily life.

Module 2: Learning from religious practices

After experiencing the religious rituals, students should be able to:

1. show some understanding of the religion which they have just experienced through its rituals and practices;

2. recognise the diversity in religions and cultures; and

3. adopt a positive attitude towards people from different religions and respect for their beliefs.

The majority of the above assessment objectives are applicable to both internal and public assessment, while some may not be applicable to public assessment. Those objectives applicable to public assessment will be listed in the approved Regulations and Assessment Frameworks published by the HKEAA.

5.4   Internal Assessment

This section presents the guiding principles that can be used as the basis for designing internal assessment and some common assessment practices for ERS for use in schools. Some of these principles are common to both internal and public assessment.

5.4.1   Guiding principles

Internal assessment practices should be aligned with curriculum planning, teaching progression, student abilities and the school contexts. The information collected will help to

motivate, promote and monitor student learning, and will also help teachers to find ways of promoting more effective learning and teaching.

(a) Alignment with the learning objectives

A wide range of assessment practices should be used to assess the achievement of different learning objectives for whole-person development. The weighting given to different areas in assessment should be discussed and agreed among teachers. The assessment purposes and criteria should also be discussed and agreed, and then made known to students so that they have a full understanding of the learning expected of them.

(b) Catering for the range of student ability

Assessment practices at different levels of difficulty and in diverse modes should be used to cater for students with different aptitudes and abilities. This helps to ensure that the more able students are challenged to develop their full potential and that the less able ones are encouraged to sustain their interest and sense of success in learning.

(c) Tracking progress over time

As internal assessment should not be a one-off exercise, schools are encouraged to use practices that can track learning progress over time (e.g. portfolios). Assessment practices of this kind allow students to set their own incremental targets and manage their own pace of learning, which will have a positive impact on their commitment to learning.

(d) Timely and encouraging feedback

Teachers should provide timely and encouraging feedback through a variety of means, such as constructive verbal comments during classroom activities and written remarks on assignments with an indication of where improvements can be made. Such feedback helps students sustain their momentum in learning, and to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

(e) Making reference to the school's context

As learning is more meaningful when the content or process is linked to a setting which is familiar to students, schools are encouraged to design some assessment tasks that make reference to the school's own context (e.g. its location, relationship with the community, and mission).

(f)   Making reference to current progress in student learning

Internal assessment tasks should be designed with reference to students' current knowledge, as this helps maintain the students' commitment to learning.

(g)   Feedback from peers and from the students themselves

In addition to giving feedback, teachers should also provide opportunities for peer assessment and self-assessment in student learning. The former enables students to learn among themselves, and the latter promotes reflective thinking which is vital for students' lifelong learning.

(h)   Appropriate use of assessment information to provide feedback

Internal assessment provides a rich source of data for providing evidence-based feedback on learning in a formative manner.

5.4.2   Internal assessment practices

A range of assessment practices suited to ERS, such as open book tests, oral questioning, projects, and fieldwork should be used to promote the attainment of the various learning outcomes. However, teachers should note that these practices should be an integral part of learning and teaching, not "add-on" activities.

Open book tests

Open book tests are suitable for this subject as it is based on a wide range of religious texts. Students are allowed access to the source materials during the tests, so that they do not need to memorise the texts. Questions for this type of test should aim to stimulate the use of reference materials and help students to organise their ideas.

Oral questioning

Oral questioning with feedback need not be seen as a test of spoken language only – it can be helpful for assessment in other subjects also. It is a flexible approach which allows teachers to discuss matters in depth with able students, to tease out the meaning of obscure statements, and to find out reasons for conclusions. Teachers are encouraged to try using oral assessment as it can be a valuable supplement to conventional assessment methods.

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Projects

A project is any piece of extended work from which the constraints of lesson time have been largely removed. Asking students to carry out project work provides them with an opportunity to study a topic of interest in depth, and teachers may encourage students to:

- Clarifying the areas of interest
- Establishing a framework for enquiry
- Selecting resource materials
- Organise data
- Presenting findings.

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Fieldwork

Fieldwork in ERS involves serving people in need and participating in religious rituals, and its specific objectives range from collecting information to reflecting on personal experience. It calls for keen observation, mastery of concepts and skills, and accurate recording. Fieldwork can often contribute significantly to establishing good relations between the school and the community. Also, the results of fieldwork can be very rewarding for students, both in learning the subject-matter and in enhancing their social, moral and spiritual development.

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5.5 Public Assessment

5.5.1 Guiding principles

The principles guiding public assessment are outlined below for teachers' reference.

(a) Alignment with the curriculum

The outcomes that are assessed and examined through the HKDSE should be aligned with the aims, objectives and intended learning outcomes of the senior secondary curriculum. To enhance the validity of public assessment, the assessment procedures should address the range of valued learning outcomes, and not just those that are assessable through written examinations.

The public assessment for ERS will include a written examination to test students' mastery of the expected learning outcomes, together with School-based Assessment (SBA) through which areas such as "Faiths in Action" can be more appropriately assessed.

(b)   Fairness, objectivity and reliability

Students should be assessed in ways that are fair and are not biased against particular groups of students. A characteristic of fair assessment is that it is objective and under the control of an independent examining authority that is impartial and open to public scrutiny. Fairness also implies that assessments provide a reliable measure of each student's performance in a given subject so that, if they were to be repeated, very similar results would be obtained.

(c)   Inclusiveness

The HKALE is designed for a relatively elite group of students, most of whom aspire to university study. However, the assessments and examinations for the three-year senior secondary curriculum will accommodate the full spectrum of student aptitude and ability.

The written examination for ERS will include different types of questions to cover the spectrum of ability, so that all students will be able to demonstrate their achievements. Also, the SBA will provide opportunities for students to show their competence in a variety of learning skills ranging from relatively straightforward tasks (e.g. data collection and reporting) to more sophisticated ones (e.g. evaluation, informed discussion and reflective thinking).

(d)   Standards-referencing

The HKDSE is "standards-referenced", i.e. student performance will be matched against standards, which indicate what students have to know and be able to do to merit a certain level of performance.

(e)   Informativeness

The new qualification and the associated assessment and examinations system should provide useful information to all parties. First, it should provide feedback to students on their performance and to teachers and schools on the quality of the teaching provided. Second, it should communicate to parents, tertiary institutions, employers and the public at large what students know and are able to do, in terms of how their performance matches the standards. Third, it needs to facilitate selection decisions that are fair and defensible.

5.5.2 Assessment design

The assessment design (refer to Table 5.1) is subject to continual refinement in the light of feedback. Full details will be provided in other supplementary documents, in particular the approved Regulations and Assessment Frameworks for the year of the examination.

Component	Papers/Part	Related area	Weighting	Duration
Public Examination	**Paper 1** Short questions and Essay or guided essay questions	Normative Ethics and Personal and Social Issues	40%	1 hr 45 min
	Paper 2 Module 1: essay or guided essay questions or Module 2: essay or guided essay questions	Buddhism Christianity	40%	1 hr 45 min
School-based Assessment (SBA)	**Faiths in Action** Task 1: Proposal for the SBA activity Task 2: Report on the SBA activity, and Overall performance	Faiths in Action	5% 10% 5%	

Table 5.1   Components   of   the   Public   Assessment   for   Ethics   and Religious Studies

5.5.3   Public examinations

The written examination will cover the learning outcomes and provide a variety of questions at different levels of difficulty. It may incorporate various question types, such as:

1. Short questions that aim at assessing basic understanding of related concepts and theories.

> Students may be required, for instance, to illustrate certain concepts with examples, provide simple solutions to non-complex theoretical disputes, discuss the strengths and weaknesses of certain theories, and apply theories appropriately to simple situations, etc.

2. Guided essay questions that allow students to handle problems using a step-by-step approach.

> Students may be required to integrate, refer to and/or apply their answers in different parts of a question.

3. Essay questions that focus on assessment of students' higher-order thinking skills.

> Students may be required to provide critical analysis, evaluation and meaningful discussion on some relatively complicated issues, usually adapted from real-life experience.

The above items are similar to those currently adopted in the HKCE and HKASL examinations. Specimen papers will be provided to schools by the HKEAA to illustrate the format of the examination and the standards at which the questions are pitched.

5.5.4　School-based Assessment (SBA)

In the context of public assessment, SBA refers to assessments administered in schools and marked by the students' own teachers. The primary rationale for SBA in ERS is to enhance the validity of the assessment by including important areas of the subject that cannot be easily assessed through an external examination. e.g. informed reflection based on personal experience, ethical theories and religious concepts SBA is also very suitable for assessing other important qualities in ERS, such as students' initiative, communication skills, and ability to cooperate with others and work independently.

More generally, SBA reduces dependence on the results of one-off examinations, which may not always provide the most reliable indication of the actual abilities of candidates. Assessments based on student performance over an extended period of time and developed by those who know the students best – their subject teachers – are more reliable.

Another reason for including SBA is to promote a positive *"backwash effect"* on students, teachers and school staff. Within ERS, SBA can serve to motivate students by requiring them to engage in meaningful activities and for teachers it can reinforce curriculum aims and good teaching practice, and provide structure and significance to an activity in which they are already involved in on a daily basis, namely assessing their own students.

Some examples of SBA activities and the related assessment criteria are outlined below.

SBA activities

Students are expected to work over a period of time that can be divided into the following stages, each characterised by specific tasks/activities:

Stage	Task	Related activities
1	Identification of the SBA activities and their aims	Through discussion with the teachers, students explore possible SBA activities and identify the aims of the activities.
2	Data collection	Students search for information about the specific organisations/religious groups/rituals and formulate a preliminary proposal for the SBA activities.
3	Preparation	Development of an action plan; identification of personal expectations of the activity; receiving the necessary training and rehearsing the action plan. Students will be required to submit proposals for the SBA activities.
4	Implementation –experiencing	Execution of the action plan; personal involvement in the activity.
5	Follow-up	Summarising the experience; getting feedback; reflection based on the experience gained; seeking further learning opportunities and exploration of the possible impact on personal morality, spirituality and relationship with others; followed by oral reporting and discussion in class.
6	Reporting	Students will be required to submit written reports on the SBA activities covering the tasks in stages 4–5 with an emphasis on personal accounts and reflection based on relevant ethical/religious concepts and theories.

Table 5.2   Stages and activities in SBA

Note:

1. To keep the SBA activities manageable, it is advisable that students should participate together in one SBA activity.

2. A good mix of group activities and individual guidance is needed in order to promote learning through the SBA activities.

3. The above only serves to highlight some key stages and major activities. Teachers are expected to take measures to ensure smooth implementation of the SBA, including liaison with relevant religious groups/social organisations, organising suitable follow-up activities and frequent review of the progress of the SBA activities.

Assessment criteria

In line with the assessment objectives, students' proposals and their reports will be assessed in relation to the following areas:

- Knowledge and understanding of the backgrounds, needs, feelings and expectations of the people they served;
- Application of relevant knowledge in the proposals and in real-life situations; and
- Meaningful discussion on the experience gained.

and/or

- Knowledge and understanding of relevant religious rituals;
- Recognition of diversity in religions and cultures; and
- Understanding of the importance of a positive attitude towards people from different religions and demonstration of respect for their beliefs.

Teachers will judge each student's overall performance in the SBA activities with reference to the following areas:

- initiative;
- communication skills;
- ability to cooperate with others; and
- ability to work independently.

To allow sufficient time for teachers to familiarise themselves with the administration of the SBA in the ERS, the following strategy for phasing it in will be adopted:

Year of examination	Implementation of SBA
2012	Schools are not required to submit SBA marks. Public examination results constitute 100% of the final subject result.
2013	Schools are not required to submit SBA marks. Public examination results constitute 100 % of the final subject result.
Starting from 2014, all schools have to submit SBA marks contributing 20% to the final subject results.	

Table 5.3   Implementation Schedule of SBA

It should be noted that SBA is not an "add-on" element in the curriculum. The modes of SBA are normal in-class and out-of-class activities suggested in the curriculum, and therefore should not unduly increase the workload of teachers and students. The requirement to implement the SBA should take into consideration the wide range of student ability. Detailed information on the requirements and implementation of the SBA and samples of assessment tasks will be provided to teachers by the HKEAA.

5.5.5   Standards and the reporting of results

The HKDSE will make use of standards-referenced reporting of assessments. What this means is that candidates' levels of performance will be reported with reference to a set of standards as defined by cut scores on the variable or scale for a given subject. Standards referencing relates to the way in which results are reported and does not involve any changes in how teachers or examiners mark student work. The set of standards for a given subject can be represented diagrammatically as shown in Figure 5.1.
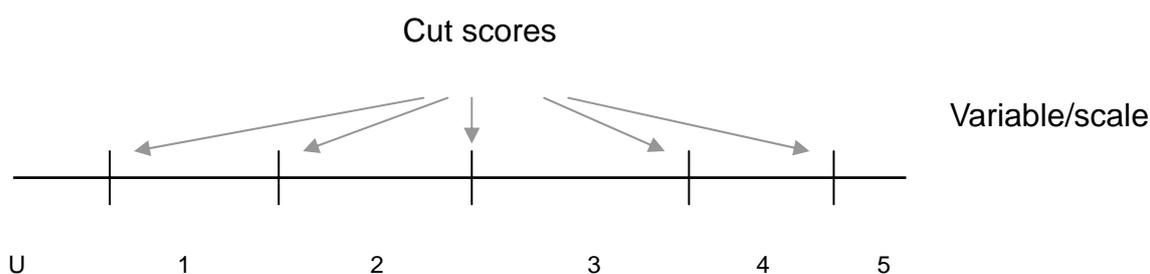

Figure 5.1   Defining levels of performance via cut scores on the variable or scale for a given subject

Within the context of the HKDSE there will be five cut scores, which will be used to distinguish five levels of performance (1–5), with 5 being the highest. A performance below the threshold cut score for Level 1 will be labelled as "Unclassified" (U).

For each of the five levels, a set of written descriptors will be developed that describe what the typical candidate performing at this level is able to do. The principle behind these descriptors is that they describe what typical candidates *can* do, not what they *cannot* do. In other words, they describe performance in positive rather than negative terms. These descriptors will necessarily represent "on-average" statements and may not apply precisely to individuals, whose performance within a subject may be variable and span two or more levels. Samples of students' work at various levels of attainment may be used to illustrate the standards expected of them. These samples, when used together with the level descriptors, will illustrate the standards expected at the various levels of attainment.

In setting standards for the HKDSE, Levels 4 and 5 will be set with reference to the standards achieved by students awarded grades A–D in the HKALE. It needs to be stressed, however, that the intention is that the standards will remain constant over time – not the percentages awarded different levels, as these are free to vary in line with variations in overall student performance. Referencing Levels 4 and 5 to the standards associated with the old grades A–D is important for ensuring a degree of continuity with past practice, for facilitating tertiary selection and for maintaining international recognition.

The overall level awarded to each candidate will be made up of results in both the public examination and the SBA. SBA results for ERS will be statistically moderated to adjust for differences among schools in marking standards, while preserving the rank ordering of students as determined by the school.

To maintain current levels of discrimination for selection purposes, the Level 5 candidates with the best performance will have their results annotated with the symbols ** and the next top group with the symbol *. The level awarded to each candidate will be recorded on the Diploma. There will also be a Statement of Results which will in addition provide level descriptors.

Chapter 6   Learning and Teaching Resources

This chapter discusses the importance of selecting and making effective use of learning and teaching resources, including textbooks, to enhance student learning. Schools need to select, adapt and, where appropriate, develop the relevant resources to support student learning.

6.1   Function of Learning and Teaching Resources

The function of learning and teaching resources is to provide a basis for learning experiences for students. Learning resources include not only textbooks, workbooks and audio-visual teaching aids produced by the Education and Manpower Bureau or other organisations but also web-based learning materials, computer software, the Internet, the media, libraries, resources in the natural environment, and people. All of these should be drawn upon to help students to broaden their learning experiences and meet their different learning needs. If used effectively, they will help them to: consolidate what they have learned; extend and construct knowledge; develop the learning strategies and generic skills they need; and reflect on their values and attitudes – and thus lay a solid foundation for lifelong learning.

In ERS, learning and teaching resources are important for concept building and value clarification in two ways. First, they provide relevant background information and basic knowledge of religious and ethical issues in different contexts. They can supplement students' school-based learning experiences and be the basis for further enquiry and discussion, but it should be ensured that they would not become straitjackets on the direction, scope and depth of learning and teaching.

Second, they can serve to bring out different values, interests, views, opinions and controversies on evolving issues. The provision of materials from a wide range of sources will help students to become aware of and appreciate the diversity in different cultures and the pluralistic nature of society.

There is no need for the teachers to choose or develop all the learning and teaching resources. Students should also be encouraged to identify, propose and select resources to complement the teacher's selection. Their choices may bring in different perspectives, given their varied socio-economic, cultural and religious backgrounds.

Learning and teaching resources should not be treated simply as collections of information and facts to be memorised. They should become objects for critical analysis and evaluation, as they are derived from their different ideological backgrounds, views and values, and therefore may exhibit the authors' biases.

6.2　Guiding Principles

The following are some basic considerations in the selection of learning and teaching resources:

- They should be in line with the curriculum aims and contain core elements of the curriculum.
- They should arouse students' interest, motivate them to engage actively in learning tasks and promote higher-order thinking.
- The choice of materials should take into account students' prior knowledge and experiences; and they should provide access to knowledge, as well as scaffolding, to help students progress in their learning.
- They should cater for students' individual differences by providing a variety of learning activities at different levels of difficulty.
- The language used should be of a good standard and at a suitable level of difficulty to encourage independent reading and the construction of meaning by learners.
- They should present information and ideas accurately and effectively.
- They should promote independent learning by complementing and extending what students have learned in class.
- They should promote discussion and further enquiry.
- They should foster positive values and attitudes.
- They should be affordable in terms of cost and the time and effort required to prepare or acquire them.

6.3　Commonly Used Resources

6.3.1　Textbooks

Textbooks are one of many tools to bring about learning, but they should not be regarded as the curriculum itself. Teachers should exercise their professional judgement in choosing high quality textbooks which allow students to achieve the learning objectives of the curriculum.

Teachers are expected to select relevant textbook materials which cover at least the basic elements, and then decide on the use of supplementary resources to support student learning. In both cases, they should meet students' varied needs and abilities.

Noted below are some tools developed by the EMB to help in the selection of textbooks and other learning and teaching resources.

- *Recommended Textbook List*
- *Guiding Principles for Quality Textbooks*
- *Notes on Selection of Textbooks and Learning Materials for Use in Schools*

(http://www.emb.gov.hk/; then ＞ Kindergarten, Primary and Secondary Education ＞ Curriculum Development＞Textbook Information)

Suggested checklist for ERS textbook selection

1. Content and presentation

    - Is the textbook part of a series, and if so, would using the entire series be appropriate?
    - Does the textbook suit the interests and ability of students and background of school?
    - Does the textbook have a helpful layout, design, and organisation?
    - Is the textbook sensitive to the religious and cultural background and interests of the students?
    - Is the writing style interesting and engaging, while also applying the specific concepts, language and terminology of Ethics and Religious Studies?
    - Does the suggested instructional sequence take into account the prior knowledge and experience of students in my school?

2. Skills

    - Are the skills promoted in the textbook appropriate for the learners?
    - Does the textbook provide learners with adequate guidance to acquire these skills?
    - Do the skills presented in the textbook include a wide range of cognitive skills to challenge students to think?

3. Exercises and activities

    - Do the exercises and activities in the textbook fit the needs of students in my school?
    - Do the exercises and activities reinforce what students have already learned and involve progression from the more simple to the more complex?
    - Are the exercises and activities varied in format so that they will motivate and challenge learners?

4. Organisation and format

- Teacher materials:
    - Do the background materials provide sufficient content-focused information for the study of Ethics and Religious Studies?
    - Do they provide sufficient information and strategies for students of varied ability?
    - Are the directions for conducting and presenting lessons, experiential learning activities and other explorations clear and easy to follow?

- Student materials:
    - Are the print materials for the students well written, logical and compelling in content?
    - Is the overall readability level of the materials appropriate for learners in my school?

6.3.2   Reference materials

The following resources – reference books, journals, policy papers, speeches, reports and documents, surveys, book reviews, newspaper clippings, maps, pictures, cartoons, drawings and slogans – are powerful tools for bringing authentic ethics and religious concerns and problems into the classroom. They can help students see the relevance of what they are learning, and help them achieve a wider understanding of issues.

6.3.3   Technology and web-based resources

The massive increase in the quantity of information available on the Internet has led to the adoption of new approaches to learning and teaching. Teachers can act as facilitators of learning by helping students search for information and work on it in order to turn it into personal knowledge. The strategic use of information technology (IT), with appropriate guidance, enhances student engagement, increases the amount of information that can be accessed and makes learning more convenient.

Technologies help the learning of ERS by:

- providing audio-visual aids for understanding difficult concepts;
- providing access to large quantities of information from a wide variety of sources;
- allowing students to work at their own pace, and enabling the use of specially designed software;
- supporting interaction between the learners, resources and teachers, and collaboration between learners and teachers; and
- facilitating the acquisition of information, the development of critical thinking and knowledge-building.

The use of IT in ERS provides an instant, global platform for the exchange of different ethical and religious values, views and opinions. The interaction and discussion generated are no longer confined to any locality or religious group. Exposure to a multiplicity of beliefs and perceptions is highly beneficial for the learning and teaching of the subject.

The information gathered through IT should, however, be treated with care. Teachers and students need to be aware that information on websites, chat groups, web journals ("blogs") etc. may be culturally or religiously biased, partial or even false. The validity and reliability of any claims should be checked and substantiated by using other sources of information and evidence.

6.3.4   Mass media

As with IT, the media are a very important source of information and a stimulus for teachers and students engaging in the enquiry process. In many respects, the media are also instant and global, and they articulate different ethical and religious traditions, values and opinions which are very valuable for studying ERS. Non-textual materials from the media can help to increase the motivation and learning effectiveness of students with different learning styles.

Again, it has to be pointed out that the messages embedded in information provided by the mass media need to be carefully decoded. Students should be guided to take into account the possible bias of media organisations when judging the accuracy of the information presented. The information provided should never be treated as facts per se.

6.3.5   Community resources

A spirit of partnership is necessary among the many parties who contribute in different ways to helping our students learn effectively.

Religious and social organisations

The richness of the religious traditions in our society provides many opportunities for authentic learning outside the classroom. There are numerous religious, cultural and social organisations such as theological seminaries, Sangha colleges and scholarly societies which can provide relevant resources for the ERS curriculum. They are particularly helpful in providing experiential learning activities. Visiting places of worship such as cathedrals, churches, temples, mosques and synagogues, celebrating religious festivals and observing religious rituals or ceremonies are all valuable experiences which give teachers and students insights into different religious beliefs and practices.

The family and neighbours

Grandparents, parents, family members, other relatives and neighbours can provide valuable resources to support the learning and teaching of this curriculum. Their diversity in ethical views, religious standpoints and personal convictions can contribute to widening students' horizons and enhancing their religious sensitivity.

Religious leaders and believers

Religious leaders and believers can be promising sources of support for the learning and teaching of ERS. Religious leaders such as priests, monks and vicars can often be seen on the TV news or religious programmes; and they can be reached easily in cathedrals, churches and temples on special days. Schools can solicit their help by inviting them to share religious insights, deliver talks and meet with students. Interviewing or visiting religious leaders and believers can provide students with valuable information and learning experiences.

6.4   Flexible Use of Learning and Teaching Resources

6.4.1   Fitness for purpose

The resources used should be fit for purpose. For example, in designing a role-play, background information on the parties involved and the selected scenario should be provided.

Such information may be given to students in the form of newspaper clippings, video clips or role-specification sheets written by the teacher. Good reading materials should be made available to students to promote "Reading to learn"; and in organising life-wide learning activities, suitable community resources such as museums and non-government organisations should be explored.

6.4.2   Catering for learner diversity

The resources selected should meet the varied needs and learning styles of students, for instance, some students may respond well to textual information, others to visual representation, and yet others to resources in other formats. Using a variety of types of resources can help to develop different cognitive faculties.

6.5   Resource Management

A spirit of partnership is necessary for resource and knowledge management. Schools should make arrangements for:

- teachers and students to share learning and teaching resources through the Intranet or other means within the school; and
- teachers to evaluate on the resources used, and form professional groups for the exchange of experience.

A regularly updated resource bank covering the curriculum of ERS is a very important tool for effective learning and teaching. It has to be built up and maintained by the joint effort of teachers. It should also involve students, who can suggest good resources that they have found. Students' good work (especially their experiential learning portfolios) can also be a valuable resource for other students.

Glossary

Term	Description
Applied Learning (ApL, formerly known as Career-oriented Studies)	Applied Learning (ApL, formerly known as Career-oriented Studies) is an essential component of the senior secondary curriculum. ApL uses broad professional and vocational fields as the learning platform, developing students' foundation skills, thinking skills, people skills, values & attitudes and career-related competencies, to prepare them for further studies and / or for work as well as for lifelong learning. ApL courses complement 24 senior secondary subjects, diversifying the senior secondary curriculum.
Co-construction	Different from the direct instruction and construction approaches to learning and teaching, the co-construction approach emphasises the class as a community of learners who contribute collectively to the creation of knowledge and the building of criteria for judging such knowledge.
Core subjects	Subjects recommended for all students to take at senior secondary level: Chinese Language, English Language, Mathematics and Liberal Studies.
Curriculum and Assessment (C&A) Guide	A guide prepared by the CDC-HKEAA Committee. It embraces curriculum aims / objectives / contents and learning outcomes, and assessment guidelines.
Curriculum interface	Curriculum interface refers to the interface between the different key stages/educational stages of the school curriculum (including individual subjects), e.g. the interface between Kindergarten and Primary; Primary and Secondary; and Junior Secondary and senior secondary. The Hong Kong school curriculum, made up of eight key learning areas (under which specific subjects are categorised), provides a coherent learning framework to enhance students' capabilities for whole-person development through engaging them in the five essential learning experiences and helping them develop the nine generic skills as well as positive values and attitudes. Thus when students move on to senior secondary education, they will already have developed the basic knowledge and skills that the study of various subjects requires. When designing the learning and teaching content and strategies, teachers should build on the knowledge and learning experiences students have gained in the previous key stages.

Term	Description
Elective subjects	A total of 20 subjects in the proposed new system from which students may choose according to their interests, abilities and aptitudes.
Experiential learning	Experiential learning is a student-oriented learning mode which enables learning by doing. In the process of experiential learning, students learn through a series of carefully designed activities. Students are encouraged to observe, think, analyse, synthesise, evaluate their experiences, and apply what they've learnt in their daily life.
Generic skills	Generic skills are skills, abilities and attributes which are fundamental in helping students to acquire, construct and apply knowledge. They are developed through the learning and teaching that take place in different subjects or key learning areas, and are transferable to different learning situations. Nine types of generic skills are identified in the Hong Kong school curriculum, i.e. collaboration skills, communication skills, creativity, critical thinking skills, information technology skills, numeracy skills, problem solving skills, self-management skills and study skills.
Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education (HKDSE)	The qualification to be awarded to students after completing the three-year senior secondary curriculum and taking the public assessment.
Internal assessment	This refers to the assessment activities that are conducted regularly in school to assess students' performance in learning. Internal assessment is an inseparable part of the learning and teaching process, and it aims to make learning more effective. With the information that internal assessment provides, teachers will be able to understand students' progress in learning, provide them with appropriate feedback and make any adjustments to the learning objectives and teaching strategies they deem necessary.
Key Learning Area (KLA)	Organisation of the school curriculum structured around fundamental concepts of major knowledge domains. It aims at providing a broad, balanced and coherent curriculum for all students in the essential learning experiences. The Hong Kong curriculum has eight KLAs, namely, Chinese Language Education, English Language Education, Mathematics Education, Personal, Social and Humanities Education, Science Education, Technology Education, Arts Education and Physical Education.

Term	Description
Knowledge construction	This refers to the process of learning in which learners are involved not only in acquiring new knowledge, but also in actively relating it to their prior knowledge and experience so as to create and form their own knowledge.
Learner diversity	Students are individuals with varied family, social, economic and cultural backgrounds and learning experience. They have different talents, personalities, intelligence and interests. Their learning abilities, interests and styles are, therefore, diverse.
Learning community	A learning community refers to a group of people who have shared values and goals, and who work closely together to generate knowledge and create new ways of learning through active participation, collaboration and reflection. Such a learning community may involve not only students and teachers, but also parents and other parties in the community.
Learning differences	This refers to the gaps in learning that exist in the learning process. Catering for learning differences does not mean rigidly reducing the distance between the learners in terms of progress and development but making full use of their different talents as invaluable resources to facilitate learning and teaching. To cater to learners' varied needs and abilities, it is important that flexibility be built into the learning and teaching process to help them recognise their unique talents and to provide ample opportunities to encourage them to fulfil their potential and strive for achievement.
Learning outcomes	Learning outcomes refer to what learners should be able to do by the end of a particular stage of learning. Learning outcomes are developed based on the learning targets and objectives of the curriculum for the purpose of evaluating learning effectiveness. Learning outcomes also describe the levels of performance that learners should attain after completing a particular key stage of learning and serve as a tool for promoting learning and teaching.
Level descriptors	A set of written descriptions that describe what the typical candidates performing a certain level is able to do in public assessments.

Term	Description
Other learning experiences	For whole person development of students, 'Other Learning Experiences' (OLE) is one of the three components that complement the examination subjects and Applied Learning (formerly named as Career-oriented Studies) under the senior secondary curriculum. It includes Moral and Civic Education, Aesthetics Development, Physical Development, Community Service and Career-related Experiences.
Public assessment	The associated assessment and examination system for the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education.
SBA Moderation Mechanism	The mechanism adopted by HKEAA to adjust SBA marks submitted by schools to iron out possible differences across schools in marking standards and without affecting the rank order determined by the school.
School-based assessment (SBA)	Assessments administered in schools as part of the teaching and learning process, with students being assessed by their subject teachers. Marks awarded will count towards students' public assessment results.
School-based curriculum	Schools and teachers are encouraged to adapt the central curriculum to develop their school-based curriculum to help their students achieve the subject targets and overall aims of education. Measures may include readjusting the learning targets, varying the organisation of contents, adding optional studies and adapting learning, teaching and assessment strategies. A school-based curriculum, hence, is the outcome of a balance between official recommendations and the autonomy of the schools and teachers.
Standards-referenced Reporting	Candidates' performance in public assessment is reported in terms of levels of performance matched against a set of standards.
Student learning profile	It is to provide supplementary information on the secondary school leavers' participation and specialties during senior secondary years, in addition to their academic performance as reported in the Hong Kong Diploma of Secondary Education, including the assessment results for Applied Learning courses, thus giving a fuller picture of the student's whole person development.
Values & attitudes	Values constitute the foundation of the attitudes and beliefs that influence one's behaviour and way of life. They help

Term	Description
	form principles underlying human conduct and critical judgment, and are qualities that learners should develop. Some examples of values are rights and responsibilities, commitment, honesty and national identity. Closely associated with values are attitudes. The latter supports motivation and cognitive functioning, and affects one's way of reacting to events or situations. Since both values and attitudes significantly affect the way a student learns, they form an important part of the school curriculum.

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Dr WONG Kun-chun, Eric

Mr YIP Cheong-man

Co-opted Members: Rev KOK kwong

The Rev Mrs Jenny NAM

SR Margaret WONG

Ex-officio Members: Mr LUI Mo-dock (EMB)   (from September 2006)

Mr WONG Ho-chiu (EMB)   (until August 2006)

Mr LEUNG Yat-sum (HKEAA)

Secretary: Ms HUNG Lai-ting, Venus (EMB)

Membership of the CDC-HKEAA Committee on Ethics and Religious Studies (Senior Secondary) - Working Group (Buddhism)

(From December 2003)

Members: Mr CHOI Kai-kwong

Mr LAM Yiu-wing

Ms LAU Ngar-sze

Dr LIU Ming-wood

Ms LOK Wai-ling

Ven SIK WAI-wing

Secretary: Ms HUNG Lai-ting, Venus

Membership of the CDC-HKEAA Committee on Ethics and Religious Studies (Senior Secondary) - Working Group (Christianity)

(From December 2003)

Members:	Ms HO Yin-man
	Mr LEUNG Yat-sum
	Dr WONG Kun-chun, Eric
	Ms WONG Wai-yee
	Mr WOO Wai-ki
	Mr YIP Cheong-man
Secretary:	Ms HUNG Lai-ting, Venus

Membership of the CDC-HKEAA Committee on Ethics and Religious Studies (Senior Secondary) - Working Group (Ethics)

(From December 2003)

Members: Dr CHAN Shun-hing

      Ms CHAN So-wan, Teresa

      Dr KUNG Lap-yan

      Mr LAM Yiu-wing

      Ms LAU Ngar-sze

      Mr LEUNG Yat-sum

      Ms LOK Wai-ling

      Ms NG Yik-man

      Mr YIP Cheong-man

Secretary: Ms HUNG Lai-ting, Venus