



# Family – School – Parish Partnerships



Archdiocese of Hobart





# Foreword

Over the years when I have been the Archbishop, I have spoken on many occasions about the importance of the relationship between families, schools and parishes. I am now very pleased to write this introduction to the document that has been prepared, to encourage and to assist those who are involved in the strengthening of the relationships between families, schools and parishes.

Children, of course, are central to these three relationships. Every Catholic child who attends a Catholic school, first of all belongs to a family. Sadly we know that the family structures are not as strong as they used to be, and many children have to manage in situations where they are members of single parent families or blended families. But they still belong to a family.

For a period of time in their lives, the children are attending primary and/or secondary Catholic schools, and for them the school can be the principal way by which they become associated with the Catholic Church.

But in addition to the links with family and school, it is in the parish where everyone is able to participate in the celebration of the Sacraments, in particular the celebration of the Eucharist, which is the “source and summit”<sup>\*</sup> of our Christian lives.

The Catholic School is a community within the parish, with a specific evangelising and educative mission. It is a most important place for human and Christian formation. However, it clearly does not and cannot carry the entire responsibility for

the complete and ongoing catechesis of children and young people. Without strong family-school-parish collaboration, students will be deprived of the range of fundamental experiences needed for their faith development.<sup>†</sup>

There is nothing simple about this relationship, but that is where the document is offering some assistance and encouragement. I am particularly happy with the approach taken in the document, based on the Vision and Mission Statements which were promulgated in the Archdiocese in 2010.

I wish to thank all those who were members of the working party under the leadership of Sr Gabrielle Morgan, and assisted by staff of the Tasmanian Catholic Education Office.

I commend very confidently this document for the careful consideration and implementation of all those who are able to come together because of their association with families, schools and parishes.

Archbishop Adrian L. Doyle AM DD  
Archbishop of Hobart

<sup>\*</sup> *Lumen Gentium*, no. 11.

<sup>†</sup> *General Directory for Catechesis*, 1997, no. 259.

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## Acknowledgments

'Family-School Partnerships Framework', Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations, Commonwealth of Australia, 2008.

Vision and Mission Statements of the Catholic Church in Tasmania, 2010.

Prepared by the Family-School-Parish Partnerships Framework Working Party:

Dr Draško Dizdar,  
Mr Michael Hangan,  
Mrs Helen Healy,  
Fr Chris Hope,  
Mr Stuart Kelly,  
Sr Gabrielle Morgan,  
Fr Peter O'Loughlin,  
Mrs Leanne Prichard,  
Mr Damian von Samorzewski.

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# Vision

Families, Catholic schools and parishes work together as partners in the spiritual formation and education of children and young people.

VISION

## Family

*“The family, as the fundamental and essential educating community, is the privileged means for transmitting the religious and cultural values which help the person to acquire his or her own identity. Founded on love and open to the gift of life, the family contains in itself the very future of society.”*

John Paul II,  
*Message for the XXVII World Day of Peace,*  
1 January 1994, no. 2.

## School

*“The Catholic school participates in the evangelising mission of the Church and is the privileged environment in which Christian education is carried out ... The ecclesial [Church-related] nature of the Catholic school, therefore, is written in the very heart of its identity as a teaching institution.”*

Congregation for Catholic Education,  
*The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium,* 1997, no. 11.

# Parish

*“The parish is not principally a structure, a territory, or a building, but rather, ‘the family of God, a fellowship afire with a unifying spirit’, ‘a familial and welcoming home’, the ‘community of the faithful’. Plainly and simply, the parish is founded on a theological reality, because it is a Eucharistic community. This means that the parish is a community properly suited for celebrating the Eucharist, the living source for its upbuilding and the sacramental bond of its being in full communion with the whole Church.”*

John Paul II, *Christifideles Laici*, 1988, no. 26.







# Introduction

## *What are Family-School-Parish partnerships?*

Family-School-Parish Partnerships are collaborative relationships and activities involving all members of the Tasmanian Catholic community. Effective partnerships are based on mutual trust, respect, shared responsibility and good communication. These foster the spiritual formation and education of the children and young people at a school within the parish community.

With our faith at its centre this framework seeks to provide partnership strategies that can be used to support the development of the whole person.

## *Why are Family-School-Parish partnerships important?*

Families are the first educators of their children and they continue to influence their children's faith formation, learning and development throughout their whole lives.<sup>1</sup>

Effective schools have high levels of family and parish community involvement and this is strongly related to improved student learning, attendance and behaviour.<sup>2</sup>

Effective parishes nurture and greatly benefit from family and Catholic school involvement.<sup>3</sup>

Developing Family-School-Parish partnerships requires commitment and time to enable all to experience deeper, rewarding and more meaningful pastoral relationships.<sup>4</sup>

The Family-School-Parish Partnerships framework encourages sustainable and effective relationships between all members of the Tasmanian Catholic community.<sup>5</sup>

These partnerships:

- have the children *at the centre* of our thoughts and actions
- respect students' needs
- give families and parishioners authentic opportunities to contribute to school decision-making and governance<sup>6</sup>
- support all families to become actively involved in their Catholic community within both school and parish; actively help previously uninvolved families within the parish/es to become involved both in the life of the school and the life of the parish
- provide quality *faith-based* programs, opportunities and learning for children and young people; and provide opportunities to allow all members of the community, but particularly our children and young people, to deepen their faith
- ensure that the Catholic faith and traditions are nurtured across the generations.

## *What does the framework contain?*

The Family-School-Parish Partnership framework contains:

- a vision for improved partnerships between families, Tasmanian Catholic schools and parish communities
- a set of principles to support families, schools and parishes in developing partnerships
- the key dimensions of the framework and a set of suggestions based on the Vision and Mission Statements of the Archdiocese of Hobart.

# Principles which underpin effective Family – School – Parish Partnerships

1. All families, Catholic schools and parish communities want the best for their children.
2. *As a basic right, all children have the opportunity to reach their full potential.<sup>7</sup>*
3. Parents, supported by their parish communities, are the first, foremost and continuing educators of their children. The family is the first educative ‘school’ or ‘community’ to which they belong and in which they have their early formation in their Catholic faith.
4. *Effective Catholic schools provide a nurturing, supportive and inclusive learning environment deeply embedded within the Catholic culture.*
5. Families, schools and parishes value quality teaching. They support teachers in developing their professional expertise in all subject areas, especially religious education.
6. *Families, schools and parishes value the diversity of families, schools and parish communities, a diversity which assists in the building of positive partnerships.*
7. Family, school and parish partnerships are based on mutual responsibility, respect, effective communication and trust.
8. *Collaboration is critical to building, maintaining and renewing partnerships.*
9. Family-School-Parish Partnerships support student motivation for learning and faith development.
10. *Family-School-Parish Partnerships strengthen the connections between families and their school and parish communities.*
11. Partnerships involve all Tasmanian Catholic communities in supporting families, schools and parishes.







## Invitation to action

A successful partnership program needs to involve families and members of the school and parish communities at the local level in its preparation, planning, implementation and review. These communities are encouraged to review their current partnerships and explore new ways of working together where necessary. This may include the establishing of an *action team*.

A Family-School-Parish *action team* consists of families, school leadership, staff and members of the parish community. They develop, lead and coordinate partnership plans and activities, and provide the basis for improving Family-School-Parish links.

# Key dimensions of Family – School – Parish Partnerships

The Family-School-Parish Partnerships framework has identified 9 dimensions. These serve as guidelines for planning family, school and parish participation in all its forms. The foundation for these dimensions is the Vision and Mission Statements of the Catholic Church in Tasmania 2010. These 9 dimensions are:

## We are loved

We respond to God's unconditional love for each of us as

### **We pray**

*The Liturgy, and especially the Mass, is the “source and summit”<sup>8</sup> of our life as a Catholic community. Within the community, opportunities exist for participation in a rich prayer life within the family, school and parish.*

### **We reflect**

*God calls us as a community and each of us personally to the fullness of life, and our response to that call is guided by reflection on the Word of God in Scripture and Tradition.*

### **We share**

*God gives us all that we are and invites us to share with all members of our Catholic community and all people.*

## We are called

We respond to Jesus Christ as a Catholic community of faith as

### **We celebrate**

*As a richly sacramental and liturgical community, we recognise that we are participating in the work that God is doing in and for us.*

### **We collaborate**

*The Holy Spirit builds and sustains us as a community of faith and all members contribute their abilities and gifts in a spirit of collaboration.<sup>9</sup>*

### **We include**

*The diversity of our giftedness enables all members to contribute to the life of the family, school and parish. It enriches the inner life of the community, flowing beyond it to the world.*

## We are inspired

We respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as

### **We evangelise**

*Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we preach God's love embodied in Jesus Christ and lived in an authentic Catholic life which proclaims the "good news to the poor ... release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind ... let the oppressed go free".<sup>10</sup>*

### **We serve**

*The love that enriches our inner life as community impels us all to serve one another and the world. There are varieties of service and a place for all.*

### **We nurture**

*As the Spirit nurtures us body, mind and spirit, we are prompted to seek out and care for those most in need, to help form our youth and future leaders and to care for the earth.*

## We are loved

We respond to God's unconditional love for each of us as

### **We pray**

*The Liturgy, and especially the Mass, is the “source and summit”<sup>8</sup> of our life as a Catholic community. Within the community, opportunities exist for participation in a rich prayer life within the family, school and parish.*

- Explore ways families, schools and parishes can pray together.
- Cooperate in finding opportunities to come together in prayer.
- Ensure that sacred spaces and liturgical resources are available and accessible to all.
- Identify, invite, develop and nurture those who are called to be leaders of prayer.
- ...





## We are loved

We respond to God's unconditional love for each of us as

### **We reflect**

*God calls us as a community and each of us personally to the fullness of life, and our response to that call is guided by reflection on the Word of God in Scripture and Tradition.*

- Open ourselves to the transforming power of God's Word, personally and as a community of faith.
- Read God's Word in the light of the joys and sorrows of our lives and of those of God's people.
- Reflect on the events of our lives, transformed by God's love through our encounter with God's Word.
- Equip ourselves with the skills and resources to enable us to read God's Word intelligently and with discernment.
- Act decisively and courageously in response to God's call.
- ...

## We are loved

We respond to God's unconditional love for each of us as

### **We share**

*God gives us all that we are and invites us to share with all members of our Catholic community and all people.*

- Provide opportunities for all to recognise and have the confidence to share their gifts and talents with one another.
- Investigate ways to enable the sharing of time and resources.
- Deepen knowledge and understanding of our own Catholic faith tradition and of our collective wisdom.
- Ensure that in everything we do we are inclusive of all.
- Welcome and provide opportunities for faith sharing and dialogue with people from other faith traditions.
- ...

## We are called

We respond to Jesus Christ as a Catholic community of faith as

### **We celebrate**

*As a richly sacramental and liturgical community, we recognise that we are participating in the work that God is doing in and for us.*

- “Pray, pray, pray”.<sup>11</sup>
- Rejoice that God is present in the various rituals that are part of life.
- Promote a prayerful awareness of those who are celebrating Sacraments in our community.
- Offer opportunities to deepen understandings and to develop openness to receiving Sacraments as God’s gift.
- “Go into all the world and proclaim the good news to the whole creation.”<sup>12</sup>
- ...



## We are called

We respond to Jesus Christ as a Catholic community of faith as

### **We collaborate**

*The Holy Spirit builds and sustains us as a community of faith and all members contribute their abilities and gifts in a spirit of collaboration.<sup>9</sup>*

- Create opportunities where each person is valued and where individual voices are heard.
- Give priority to developing shared values, shared goals and shared language between partners in the community.
- Help people to recognise the gifts that they have and invite them to participate in community life.
- ...

## We are called

We respond to Jesus Christ as a Catholic community of faith as

### **We include**

*The diversity of our giftedness enables all members to contribute to the life of the family, school and parish. It enriches the inner life of the community, flowing beyond it to the world.*

- Promote the core value of the God-given dignity of every person by our words and actions.
- Encourage and enable all to use their unique gifts in the life of the community.
- Engage in public issues in an informed way by applying the church's social teaching.
- Give priority to the church's preferential option for the poor and marginalised.
- Promote ecumenical and interfaith relationships and dialogues.
- ...

## We are inspired

We respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as

### **We evangelise**

*Inspired by the Holy Spirit, we preach God's love embodied in Jesus Christ and lived in an authentic Catholic life which proclaims the "good news to the poor ... release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind ... let the oppressed go free".<sup>10</sup>*

- Listen to the Word of God, which challenges us to change both as individuals and as church.
- Promote an understanding that we are all called to continue the mission of Christ to share the good news which cost him his life.
- Encourage greater involvement in the life of the church.
- Reach out to anyone who is no longer involved in their family, school or parish community.
- ...



## We are inspired

We respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as

### **We serve**

*The love that enriches our inner life as community impels us all to serve one another and the world. There are varieties of service and a place for all.*

- Raise the awareness of all that our path in life is an expression of our Baptismal call to serve.
- Promote the many ways in our church and local communities through which we can give living witness to our call to love one another.
- Support all aspects of church life, including education, health, welfare, justice and outreach, particularly as they serve those in most need.
- Nurture the vocations and necessary ministries in their various forms that enable the church to fulfil its mission.
- ...

## We are inspired

We respond to the promptings of the Holy Spirit as

### **We nurture**

*As the Spirit nurtures us body, mind and spirit, we are prompted to seek out and care for those most in need, to help form our youth and future leaders and to care for the earth.*

- Awaken in ourselves and in others a deeper awareness of the gifts of the Holy Spirit that are within us.
- Follow the example of Jesus and give priority to those most in need.
- Celebrate the gifts of youth and the “young church of Tasmania”.<sup>13</sup>
- Nurture the development and formation of future leaders.
- Care for the earth by promoting a healthy natural and social environment.
- ...



# Notes

- 1 *“Since parents have given children their life, they are bound by the most serious obligation to educate their offspring and therefore be recognised as the primary and principal educators ...”*  
Paul VI, 1965, *Declaration on Christian Education*, no. 3, ‘The Authors of Education’.
- 2 *“We believe that our school improvement processes, structures and systems should be consultative, collaborative, participative and supportive in recognition of each school’s service to its students and partnership with parents, parish, the Catholic Education Office and the broader Catholic Education community”.*  
*Live, Learn, Grow: A School Improvement Framework for Tasmanian Catholic Schools*, 2007, ‘Guiding Principles for School Improvement, Evaluation and Development’, pp. 1 and 2.  
  
*“Initiatives to foster the relationship between the local parish and the school should be developed. Expertise should be sought and invited from parishioners to assist in curriculum and programs that support student connection with the Christian community”.*  
*Archbishop’s Charter for Catholic Schools*, 2008, no. 2, ‘Links to the Parish Community’.
- 3 *“The Catholic school does not function in isolation. It is part of the wider Church community”.*  
Catholic Education Office Hobart, 2005, *Good News for Living: A Curriculum Framework for Religious Education in the Archdiocese of Hobart*, 2.5, ‘Community and Partnership’.
- 4 *“As a community of Catholic schools, we will strive to work in genuine partnership with our school staffs, parents, caregivers, teachers, parish, students and the wider community”.*  
TCEC (Tasmanian Catholic Education Commission), 2006, *Vision and Mission Statements*.
- 5 *“In this context, the tasks of evangelisation, catechesis and religious education are shared by home, school and parish, with each having its own distinct contribution to make in a sense of genuine partnership”.*  
Catholic Education Office Hobart, 2005, *Good News for Living*, 2.5.
- 6 *“At the 2007 Day of Discernment, a recurring theme that emerged from the workshop discussions highlighted the value and importance of continuing to affirm and build strong relationships between parishes and schools”.*  
*Strengthening Parish-School Relationships: Discussion Paper 15, CTNE (Call to New Evangelisation) Working Party Stimulus Paper – Draft 1*, 2008.
- 7 *Archbishop’s Charter for Catholic Schools*, 2008, no. 3, ‘Curriculum’.
- 8 *“Taking part in the eucharistic sacrifice, the source and summit of the Christian life, they offer the divine victim to God and themselves along with it.”*  
*Lumen Gentium*, no. 11.
- 9 *“Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good.”*  
1 Cor. 12: 4-7 (New Revised Standard Version of the Bible).
- 10 Luke 4:18 (New Revised Standard Version of the Bible).
- 11 Father John Corcoran Wallis (priest of the Archdiocese of Hobart).
- 12 Mark 16:15 (New Revised Standard Version of the Bible).
- 13 *Mission ACT IV8: “To reinvigorate the young Church of Tasmania to build towards a future Church within a vibrant, integrated and involved youth culture”.*  
Archdiocese of Hobart, 2007, *Catholic Youth Ministry Mission Statement*.



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