

## Christian Studies in the Lutheran school

### Context

Christian Studies is a learning area that belongs to the formal curricular program of the Lutheran school and as such should operate within the same parameters as other learning areas, with appropriate assessment and reporting, timetabling, budget, staffing and resourcing. Teachers who have responsibility for the teaching of Christian Studies are supported professionally by meeting the accreditation requirements of the LCA *Staffing Policy for Lutheran Schools* which provides them with the opportunity to reflect on their spirituality and to articulate a personal vision for teaching Christian Studies.

Christian Studies is an essential and distinctive part of the Christian education program, which is the total life of the school and which is expressed through the culture of the school, all teaching and learning activities, the worship program, pastoral care for students and staff, behaviour management policies and practices, voluntary Christian groups and activities that address the personal spirituality of staff and students.

The students who participate in Christian Studies bring a wide range of faith, life and spiritual understandings and experiences embodied in differing worldviews. This diversity has implications for the planning and teaching of school-based Christian Studies programs and the need to accommodate varying levels of biblical literacy and engagement. While faith responses or commitment to Christ are not a general expectation in the formal curriculum, there are areas of the broader framework of Christian education where these can be actively nurtured and expressed.

### Rationale

Christian Studies provides a safe and supportive context in which students can reflect on their experiences of the world and on their own beliefs and spirituality as they attempt to make sense of their rapidly changing and complex global environment, and as they develop their identity as individuals. They do this on the basis of their study of Christianity and their increasing awareness of how the Christian faith relates to all aspects of lived reality.

Christian Studies orients students into biblical literacy and the teachings, culture and history of the Christian church in general, and the Lutheran Church in particular. It provides the opportunity to examine Christian insights, teachings, practices, challenges and responses to issues of justice and ethics in light of other major world religions and philosophical thinking. Christian Studies is a forum for reflecting on, engaging with and responding to the extent of human need, the servant role of the Christian church in society, stewardship for the world, and to the biblical call and challenge to be in relationship with God.

For many students, Christian Studies also provides the opportunity for them to grow in their Christian faith and in the expression of that faith in their lives.

### The Christian Studies Context

Teaching and learning in Christian Studies occurs in a supportive, inclusive and safe environment. Strategies used reflect a respect for the diversity of students' knowledge, faith backgrounds and worldviews and are inclusive of different learning styles and contexts.

Learners are engaged in intellectually challenging experiences that actively involve them in journeys of inquiry and constructing their own meanings. Students pose their own questions, gather, analyse, critique, apply and reflect on content and concepts. It is hoped for outcome of the journey of learning that students broaden and deepen their understanding of the content and concepts, however, there is no assumption that all students will arrive at the same level of understanding at the same time. Responses to learning in Christian Studies open opportunities for a growing spirituality, the nurture of Christian faith and its expression in a variety of ways and contexts.