



GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF AUSTRALIA



Teacher Basic Training

September 2018 (Revised March 2023)

GO2



My hope is the Father; my refuge, the Son; my protection, the Holy Spirit. Holy Trinity, glory to you

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TEACHER BASIC TRAINING

Background

The Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia is an approved provider of Special Religious Education. It makes every effort at a centralised as well as parish level to ensure that all Scripture Teachers have access to basic training.

For instance, training has been provided annually for almost 40 years and now takes the form of a Basic Accreditation Course, an online Basic Accreditation Course, an Annual Advanced Course as well as specialist in-service training in craft, use of teaching resources, content or teaching skills.

At a minimum the training provided is consistent with the standards set out by the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools. It covers the following:

- The history of Special Religious Education in New South Wales
- The role of the Special Religious Education teacher
- Special Religious Education Procedures, Code of Conduct, Child Protection and Working with Children Check requirements
- School protocols
- Planning for and implementing effective teaching and learning
- Creating and maintaining supportive learning environments
- Reviewing, reflecting and assessing personal feedback
- Engaging in professional training and ongoing learning

The Basic Accreditation Course

The Basic Accreditation Course was the first stage in an effort to provide training and accreditation for school catechists (also known as Scripture Teachers). From 2008 the Basic Accreditation Course has been offered freely.

This course covers details of lesson planning, classroom organisation, teaching methods, child/teenager development, an introduction to the Orthodox Christian faith and elements of spirituality.

There are three broad components in the course:

(a) *Special religious education.* An outline of the rights and responsibilities of the Special Religious Educator; including authorisation to teach, child protection; health and safety.

(b) *Theory and practice of teaching.* A workshop on how to plan, prepare and manage a lesson using the curriculum material. In-service courses will also be organised to help the school catechists with special issues.

(c) *The School Catechist.* An introduction to the mission of the Orthodox Christian as a teacher.

The course comprises modules containing learning activities and revision questions. It culminates in the award of a Basic Accreditation Certificate for teachers who complete the course, provide evidence of their learning and document observation of their teaching.

The content of the Basic Accreditation Course is outlined in the following sections.

Content of the Basic Accreditation Course

1. Authorisation to teach

This section deals with some of the rights, roles and responsibilities of special religious educators in State Schools. It encompasses:

- The *Education Act 1990*
- The details of the special religious education program of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese
- Authorised school catechists
- Benefits of authorisation
- Notifying the School about Authorised Special Religious Education Teachers
- Authority to be in the school
- Code of Conduct

2. Child Protection

This section of the Basic Accreditation course is more than meeting the requirements of the law. It is about teaching in a way that is consistent with the Christian Orthodox faith. It is also about good teaching and classroom management. It places the welfare of the child and young person at the centre of special religious education. It is expected that every catechist will undergo child protection awareness re-training every year. Some of the content in this module is taken directly from Department of Education, *Child Protection Awareness Training*.

- Your role
- Child Protection (Working with Children) Act 2012
- Your behaviour
- What is reportable conduct?
- Indicators of risk of harm
- A child-focused response to disclosure
- Professional conduct for Scripture Teachers

3. Arrangements for Special Religious Education

This section of the course covers the arrangements that are organised by negotiations between the principal of the school and the parish priest. It covers:-

- Arrangements for Scripture
- Timetable arrangements
- Enrolment at schools
- Overcoming problems
- Different patterns for special religious education – block teaching; one term a year; seminars, conferences or one-day programs
- Following school procedures – routine matters

4. Authorising the Curriculum

This section outlines the curriculum developed for the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of Australia. It covers:-

- Curriculum material for religious education
- Authorisation
- Pantanassa Monastery Scripture Lessons
- Using the mixed-themes curriculum
- Hymns for each age group

5. The Religious Education Session

This section of the course provides an introduction to lesson planning and preparation. It covers:-

- Preparation
- Long-range planning
- The religious education session
- Introductory and closing prayers
- Knowing the students
- Respecting the students
- Being aware of how we communicate
- Managing a classroom
- Controversial topics
- Strategies for effective special religious education

6. Managing a group

The aim in Greek Orthodox Special Religious Education is to create a safe, caring, friendly, respectful and stimulating environment for the children. This section covers classroom management and different strategies with different students.

- Being in control
- Showing a good example
- Communication
- Applying strategies appropriate for the group
- How to manage challenging behaviour
- Encouragement and reward

7. The School Catechist

Being a school catechist or Scripture Teacher is a personal calling. This section covers aspects of what is required.

- Essential knowledge
- Selection criteria for teachers
- Supporting the parish

8. Basic Accreditation

This section is specifically for new teachers. It does not apply to existing teachers who have many years of service. In this section the requirements for the achievement of basic accreditation are outlined.

To achieve the Basic Accreditation Certificate requires (a) workshop attendance and course completion, (b) completion of all activities, (c) teacher observation and (d) submission of an assignment. The assignment to obtain the Basic Accreditation has two parts:

Part 1 Answering the following topics:

- comment on your background in scripture teaching
- provide a brief description of your teaching situation
- demonstrate your knowledge of the requirements for child protection
- describe how you will take responsibility for special religious education in your school

Part 2

In Part 2, the teachers shows that at least one person has observed their teaching.

Overlap between training of the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese and ICCOREIS

The training provided by the Greek Orthodox Archdiocese is designed to be consistent with that specified by the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools. The following table shows where the two overlap. All the page references are to the 19th edition of the Basic Accreditation Course Manual (2021). This is updated annually.

Context

ICCOREIS content	Greek Orthodox Basic Accreditation Training
1.1 Outline the history of SRE in schools	Authorisation to teach (pp. 5-6)
1.2 Understand the role and expectations of the SRE teacher within a public school context	Authorisation to teach (pp. 5, 7- 10) Child Protection (p. 11, 15-17)
1.3 Discuss the Code of Conduct	Child Protection (pp. 16-19) Professional Conduct (p. 17)
1.4 Review Special Religious Education Procedures and understand its contents; Review the Annual Assurance document and understand the responsibilities of an approved provider	Authorisation to teach (pp. 5 et seq.) Arrangements for Special Religious Education (p.21)
1.5 Review Child Protection policy inclusive of WWCC	Child Protection (pp. 11-19)
1.6 Examine the safety of the teacher within a WHS context	Arrangements for Special Religious Education (p. 21-25)

Knowledge

ICCOREIS content	Greek Orthodox Basic Accreditation Training
2.1 Discuss what we are doing and why we are doing it	Introduction (pp. 1-3) The School Catechist (pp. 59-62.)
2.2 Explore through discussion “how and when children develop?”	Student development (pp. 45-48)
2.3 Review behaviour management techniques; Identify three behaviour management techniques for Primary and High School students	Arrangements for Special Religious Education (pp. 21, 25) Managing a Group (pp. 49-52)

Practice

ICCOREIS content	Greek Orthodox Basic Accreditation Training
3.2 Identify components of a program/unit of work	The Religious Education Session (pp. 43 et seq.)
3.3 Cater for the diverse learning needs	Authorising the Curriculum (pp. 29 et seq.) Student Development (pp. 45-48) The Religious Education Session (pp. 37-44)
3.3 Plan for an SRE class	The Religious Education Session (pp. 37-44)
3.4 Lesson delivery – introduction, body, conclusion	The Religious Education Session (pp. 37-44)
3.5 Prepare resources	Authorising the Curriculum (pp. 27 et seq.)

Professional learning

ICCOREIS content	Greek Orthodox Basic Accreditation Training
4.1 Reflect and evaluate	Reviewing your teaching (pp. 53-58)
4.2 Discuss the Annual Assurance process	Arrangements for Special Religious Education (pp. 2, 9); Child Protection (p. 11 et seq.)
4.3 Further training and ongoing support (including <i>Further ongoing training and support informed by teacher reflection and evaluation</i>)	Basic Accreditation (pp. 64 et seq.) Reviewing your teaching (pp. 53-58)

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