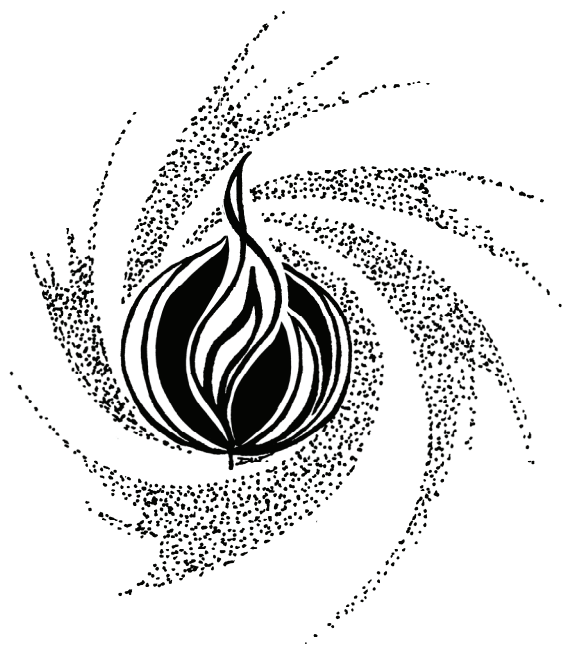


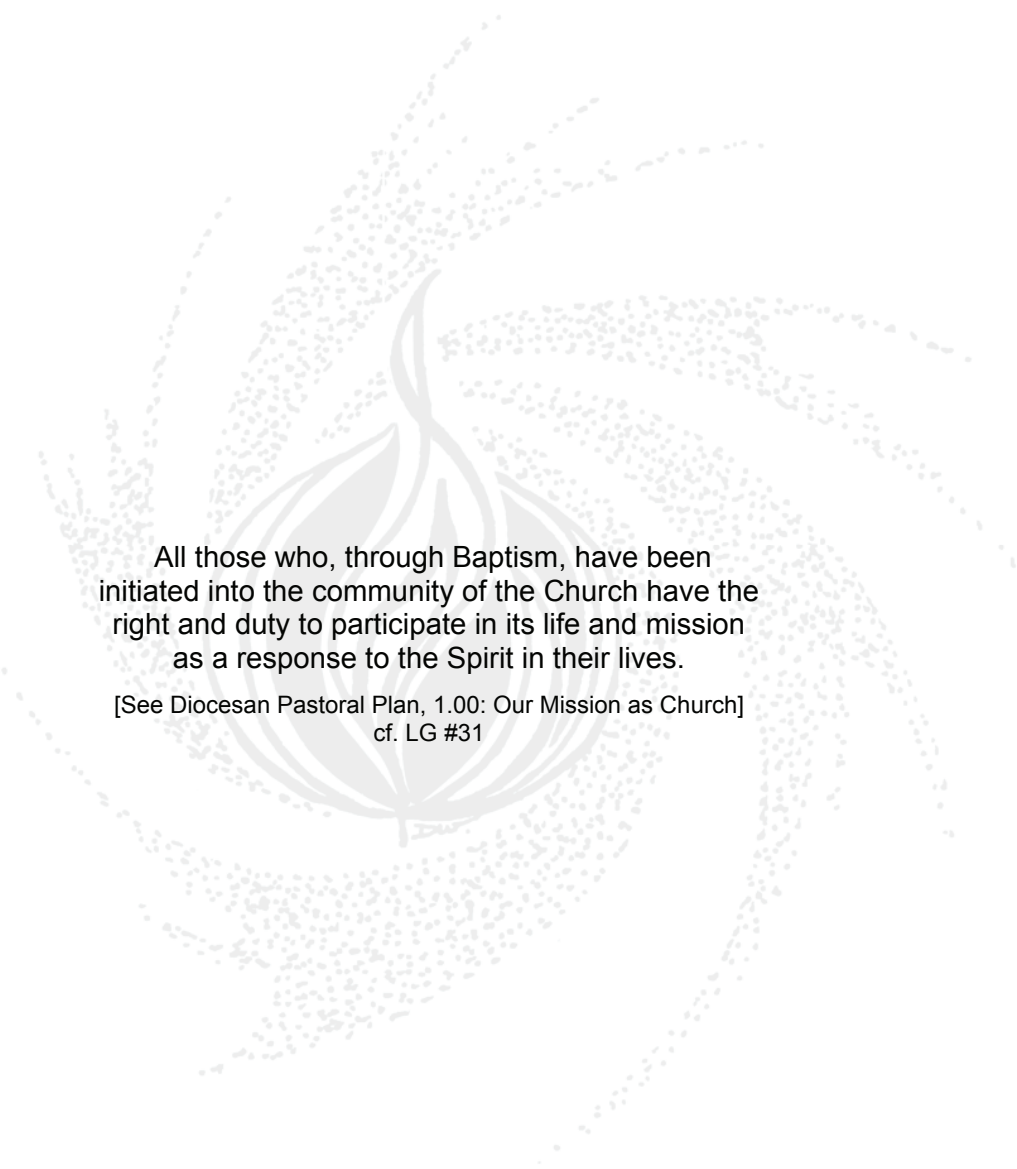
**TENISON WOODS EDUCATION CENTRE
LOCHINVAR**

HANDBOOK



CHRISTIAN FORMATION COURSE

A three-year course offered by
the Sisters of St Joseph of Lochinvar
in collaboration with
The Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle



All those who, through Baptism, have been initiated into the community of the Church have the right and duty to participate in its life and mission as a response to the Spirit in their lives.

[See Diocesan Pastoral Plan, 1.00: Our Mission as Church]
cf. LG #31

CONTACT DETAILS

Course Co-ordinator

Colleen Carney rsj

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Tenison Woods Education Centre
St. Joseph's Convent
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FOREWORD

“What is going on in the Church today?”

“We seem to be in trouble and no-one is doing anything!”

“What’s happening to us?”

These and many other comments and questions are frequently made and asked today. Hardly a day passes when I’m not asked something along those lines.

There is no doubt that the Church is experiencing significant challenges. Rapid change and diminishment is causing anxiety, even fear. Some people in the Church say we have gone too far, others say we must go further! Confusion and bewilderment are often the result.

It is always helpful when we are affected by these challenges to remember that similar things have happened in the past. The destruction of Solomon’s Temple in 597BC was a disaster for the Jewish people – they were forced into exile in Babylon for 70 years and wept over what they had lost.

The death of Jesus was catastrophic for the disciples – what were they to do now?

Different ages of the Church have seen enormous turmoil – the Eastern Schism, the Reformation, loss of Papal power etc.

In every situation things were never quite the same again. Restoration to former glory or former life was not possible. What was possible, however, was **new** life – things were never the same ...they were to be better!

Today the Church is being called into **new** life. We will never return to what was ...we must now build what will be.

The Christian Formation Course presented by the Tenison Woods Education Centre offers us a unique opportunity to reflect on the real issues facing us now. A deep faith in Jesus Christ as found in the Gospels is the essential foundation for all that we are as Church. We must look at him afresh and resolve to be more authentic disciples.

I encourage all members of the diocesan community to seriously consider doing this Course. It is a positive response to the needs of our day and shows us a way forward on our journey as a Christian people.

Bishop of Maitland-Newcastle

Most Reverend Michael Malone



CHRISTIAN FORMATION COURSE

VISION

Come and See!
A journey to discover our divine potential.

MISSION

To allow participants to explore their life's journey and their understandings about Jesus through a program of education within the Catholic Tradition, inspiring them to live more deliberately as his disciples.

VALUES

We believe that ...

Life is sacred

- each voice is a significant voice;
- God is in a loving relationship with each person;
- the Spirit is alive in each person for the good of all.

Faith grows

- human beings ache for God and seek God;
- faith is a trusting journey into mystery;
- doubt and questioning are vital for growth in faith;
- human authenticity is a head-heart-hand reality;
- good news is liberating; knowledge is freedom;
- human experience, reflected upon, is revelatory of God.

Sacred tradition is there to be claimed

- tradition is a living ongoing partnership between the Spirit of God and the community of faith.

Education is a holy enterprise

- all are teachers and all are learners;
- adults come to the course richly resourced in human experience;
- adults have a right to know about their faith heritage and claim it as adults;
- presenters love what they share and share what they love;
- neither distance nor lack of money or formal education ought be barriers to inclusion in the course.

DIOCESAN CONTEXT

In offering to conduct the Christian Formation Course, the Tenison Woods Education Centre places its teaching resources at the service of the continuing pastoral renewal of the diocese of Maitland-Newcastle and its commitment to “hear God’s people and empower them to participate fully in Christ’s mission.” (Diocesan Synod Proclamation. 1993.)

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course provides a continuing response to needs expressed within the Diocesan community for formal, systematic adult faith formation. It is a basic three year, part-time study of key aspects of Catholic living in the context of Vatican II’s ongoing renewal.

In its learning styles, the course respects the rich life experience of adult participants. It hopes to provide a trusting environment in which a group of committed Christian people can explore faith together. It seeks to promote the integration of study with prayerful reflection on life.

The course offers participants opportunities to refresh their commitment to their baptismal call. It encourages their growth in active, conscious participation in the life of the Church at ‘grassroots level’.

COURSE OUTCOMES

By engaging in the course it is hoped participants will

- learn to relish God’s continual invitation: “Come and see”;
- explore their relationship with Jesus and feel the pull of discipleship;
- grow in the capacity to reflect on their life’s journey in the light of Christian faith;
- become more confident in articulating their faith;
- realise that Christian faith is nurtured in community;
- experience together the power of God’s revelation in the sources of Christian Tradition;
- engage in forms of learning which affirm and challenge their baptismal call;
- be affirmed in their gifts for participating in the life of the faith community;
- grow in awareness of what it means to be a responsive member of the community of faith of the Diocese of Maitland-Newcastle.



COURSE PRACTICALITIES

1. ENROLMENT PROCEDURES

To enrol in the course:

- complete a form expressing interest in the course and pay a \$25 non-refundable Administration Deposit;
- complete the enrolment form which will then be sent to you.

Enrolment is finalised when you receive a letter of acceptance and the Course Handbook in the mail.

2. COMMITMENT

The *Christian Formation Course* invites a dual commitment from participants: to their individual learning and to the learning project of the group. This latter commitment is critical because significant learning takes place within the group through exploring personal experience within the context of course work. While extra reading supplements this learning it can never replace it.

3. COURSE STRUCTURE

The *Christian Formation Course* has a multifaceted structure engaging a variety of formation opportunities:

- Weekly classes held from 6.30 pm - 9.30 pm during school terms;
- An annual retreat day with a week-end retreat at the end of third year;
- Optional Snapshot courses, offered at least twice per year.

4. COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Attendance:

As participation is a significant mode of learning, consistent attendance is critical. In particular the **first session of each unit** and **the beginning of each session** are critical learning times.

Formal attendance records are maintained and are used in compiling certificates for the course.

As far as possible, absences are communicated in advance, either to the unit presenter or the Course Co-ordinator.

Colleen Carney rsj
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Participation

The course requires that participants engage in various modes of learning.

Class work

Participants are required to contribute to all activities including prayer, listening, reading, reflecting, sharing experiences, insights and questions, attending to input.

Reading

Personal reading between sessions is an important part of the learning process. Therefore pertinent readings are provided for each unit. Participants are also encouraged to use supplementary texts and library resources.

Ideally, participants would devote 3-5 hours per week to reading. It is recommended that participants using this course as a basis for undergraduate theological study give approximately 8 hours per week to reading.

Assigned tasks

Participants will be required to demonstrate what they have learned by completing the assigned task/s for each unit.

Assignments should reflect

- an understanding of the unit content;
- an effort to critique the material provided;
- an appreciation of the unit's significance for Christian living;
- a willingness to integrate new learnings into life.

Should an assignment not meet the requirements of the unit, the participant will be invited to discuss it with the presenter.

5. CERTIFICATION

Participants who complete the course and satisfy its requirements will receive a Certificate in Christian Formation and a transcript from the Tenison Woods Education Centre.

As the course progresses, those who find themselves unable to complete all the course requirements need to consult with the Course Co-ordinator. Anyone in this situation will receive a Statement of Participation.

6. FEES

The Christian Formation Course is financially supported by the Sisters of St. Joseph and the Diocese. This enables the Tenison Woods Centre to keep the fees to a minimum.

The 2009 fees are:

Annual Administration fee:	\$100.00 (This includes the \$25 deposit paid on enrolment)
Annual Tuition Fee:	<u>\$600.00</u> (\$150 per term to be paid at the beginning of each term)
Full Tuition:	<u>\$700.00</u>



6. FEES (CONT...)

Full and part scholarships are available for those who would find it difficult to pay the full fee. These scholarships are provided by a number of groups including:

The Catholic Development Fund
The Sisters of Mercy
The St. Vincent de Paul
The Catholic Women's League
The Sisters of St. Joseph
... and other anonymous benefactors

If you need to apply for a scholarship contact Colleen Carney.

7. CO-ORDINATION OF THE COURSE

Whilst the **Course Co-ordinator** will be responsible for the overall co-ordination of the program, the presenters share the responsibility for implementing it.

Each **Presenter** will be responsible for the implementation of his/her unit and will be the first reference point for the participants in his/her classes.

Issues of concern within a unit should be raised with the Presenter. The Course Co-ordinator will become involved if issues cannot be resolved.



FURTHER OPTIONS

SNAPSHOTS

Snapshots are **optional units** which focus on skill development, or on issues of interest beyond the scope of the course. They also have a **social** dimension and will conclude with a shared meal. Generally they will involve a three hour session plus a meal.

The first snapshot in Year One is timetabled, but thereafter the time and venue will be determined by participants.

The Year 1 Snapshots are:

- Journaling
- Study Skills

DILLEY LIBRARY

The Tenison Woods Education Centre is home to an excellent theological library which participants are encouraged to use. The library is currently being put 'on-line' through 'Unilink'. This will enable people to search the library catalogue via their own computer. People can contact the library to arrange a loan.

Other libraries which may be of assistance include:

The CSO Resource Centre
St. Lawrence O'Toole Centre,
Broadmeadow Rd
Broadmeadow
Ph: 49029100
Open: Monday – Thursday 2pm – 6pm and Thursday 11am – 1pm
(Felicity Lee is the librarian)

Newcastle Christian Library
163 Parry St
Hamilton
Ph: 49611483
Open: Wednesday 10am-4pm
(Felicity Lee is the contact person)



COURSE OUTLINE

CHRISTIAN FORMATION COURSE STAFF

Course Co-ordinator: Colleen Carney rsj

Presenters: Patricia Boland rsj
Virginia Bourke rsj
Lynette Pearce rsj
Ellen Royan rsj
Patricia Healion RSM
Bridgette Davoren rsj
Louise Gannon rsj
and Guest Presenters ...

Administrative Support: Margaret Smith

COURSE UNITS YEARS 2-3

The Church

its story and how it understands itself today

the local Church

Prayer workshop

The Church's Sacramental life

Ministry in the Church today

Moral Theology

Discipleship

Eucharist

Liturgy

Communication and Life Skills continued



TIMETABLE - YEAR 1

UNIT	DATES	UNIT NAME	PRESENTER
	Sunday Feb 1	Orientation at TWEC 10am for 10.30 - 4.30pm (Lunch provided)	Team Members
1.1	Sunday Feb 1 (afternoon) Feb 5, 12, 19, 26 (Thurs evenings)	Communication & Pastoral Care: Basic Communication Skills	Bridgette Davoren rsj
1.2	March 5, 12	God's True Word	Virginia Bourke rsj
1.3	Mar 19, 26, Apr 2 Wed Apr 8	Journey of Faith	Patricia Boland rsj

AUTUMN HOLIDAYS: APRIL 9 - 27, 2009

1.4	Apr 30 May 7, 14, 21, 28 June 4, 11, 18	Introduction to Hebrew Scripture	Ellen Royan rsj
Optional	Sunday 17 May 3pm - 6pm finishing with a shared meal at 6pm.	Journaling	Lynette Pearce rsj
1.5	June 25, July 2, 9	Introduction to the Christian Scriptures	Patricia Boland rsj

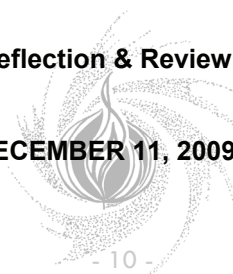
WINTER HOLIDAYS: JULY 10 - JULY 27, 2009

1.5 cont.	July 30 Aug 6, 13	Introduction to Christian Scripture	Ellen Royen rsj
1.6	Aug 20, 27 Sep 3, 10, 17, 24	Jesus of History: Christ of Faith	Patricia Boland rsj
1.7	Oct 1	Creeds and Christian Tradition	Virginia Bourke rsj

SPRING HOLIDAYS: OCTOBER 2 - OCTOBER 19, 2009

1.7 cont	Oct 22, 29, Nov 5	Creeds and Christian Tradition	Virginia Bourke rsj
1.8	Nov 12, 19, 26, Dec 3	Trinity	Lynette Pearce rsj
1.9	Sunday Dec 6 10am - 4pm	Retreat Day	Lynette Pearce rsj
1.10	Dec 10	Reflection & Review	Team

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS: DECEMBER 11, 2009 - JANUARY 28, 2010.



UNIT NUMBER: 1.1

Title: Self Awareness in Communication [Part One]

Duration: Five Sessions [15 hours]

Rationale: This unit focuses on the theoretical and practical issues of ourselves as communicating persons. It explores the self, the other and the process itself, as important factors in communication. The unit provides opportunities both to learn skills and strategies for effective communication and to reflect on one's own communication style.

Outcomes: It is hoped that by the end of the unit, participants will have:

- enhanced their knowledge of the process of communication;
- become aware of some skills and strategies for dealing with blocks in communication;
- practised skills for effective communication;
- developed an awareness of themselves as communicating persons and the factors which contribute to their own effective communication;
- become more self reflective in all forms of communication;
- had opportunities to open to the God within who is present in all the experiences of life.

Content: This course will cover the following content:

- myself as a communicating person: naming my own reality, personal filters and prejudices;
- creating empathy and understanding empathy blockers;
- becoming aware of levels of communication;
- listening with my whole being;
- identifying my feelings and those of others;
- understanding and practising open and closed questions;
- understanding others and their behaviour style;
- understanding conflict and its management.



UNIT NUMBER: 1.2

Title: God's True Word.

Duration: 2 sessions [6 hours].

Rationale: In this unit participants are introduced to basic aspects of the theology of Divine Revelation, as found in Vatican II's Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*. Whereas later units 1.4 and 1.5 will deal with God's word in Sacred Scripture, and unit 1.7 will overview key dimensions of God's revelation through Sacred Tradition, unit 1.2 acts as a bridge between unit 1.1 and unit 1.3, establishing in participants' awareness that Christian faith is profoundly respectful of the revelation of God through human experience.

Outcomes: By the conclusion of this unit, it is hoped that participants will be:

- affirming of God's self-revelation through human experience;
- aware that reflection on human living in the light of faith lies below Christian belief in God's word in both Scripture and Tradition;
- confident of the connection between units 1.1 and 1.3 and all other units in Year 1.

Content: This course will cover the following content:

- a brief, introductory exploration of participants' own experience of God's 'word' in their lives;
- the Christian Formation Course's commitment to faith renewal in the light of Vatican II, hence some background to the writing of Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation, *Dei Verbum*;
- an overview of key aspects of the theology of *Dei Verbum*.



UNIT NUMBER: 1.3

Title: Journey of Faith

Duration: 4 sessions (12 hours)

Rationale: This unit deals with further reflections on the experience of faith. It is hoped that participants will see more clearly where they stand in the whole journey of faith and become even more eager to proceed on this journey while taking part in the course.

Outcomes: It is intended that participants will be able to:

- articulate their understanding of faith and its role in the life of a Christian;
- know more of the way faith develops and the stages of faith according to a variety of theorists;
- identify and deal more effectively with transition times;

Content: This course will cover the following content:

- the experience of the journey of faith;
- the meaning of faith, spirituality, theology and their interconnectedness;
- various stages of faith and transition times;



UNIT NUMBER: 1.4

Title: Introduction to Hebrew Scripture

Duration: 8 sessions [24 hours].

Rationale: This unit approaches the Hebrew Scripture as the story of the Hebrews' understanding of the God who claimed them as God's own people; God's word in dialogue with human experience; a story lived and celebrated before ever it was written down; a story born of a specific time and culture with implications for life now. It is the story that we as Christians have made our own.

Outcomes: It is hoped that the unit will nurture in the participants:

- an appreciation of the scriptures in the context of its Jewish heritage;
- A desire to read the Scripture in the spirit of *Dei Verbum*;
- a responsible readiness to discern with the Holy Spirit, the intent of Scripture's Word for their own lives.

Content: This course will cover the following content:

- The context of the story in the Ancient Near East and in the modern world;
- The experience of exile as a lens to interpret the story;
- The experience of exodus and the covenant;
- the Prophetic Voices that shaped the people ;
- The reflective wisdom of a people born in the crucible of exile and exodus;
- The Guidance of the Church in approaching Scripture through *Dei Verbum*.



UNIT NUMBER: 1.5

Title: The Christian Scriptures

Duration: 6 Sessions. [18 hours]

Rationale: This unit introduces the Christian Scriptures as founded in the Hebrew Scriptures. It seeks to place the New Testament writers in the context of the Mediterranean culture of the first century, writing to specific Church groups under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. There is an emphasis on the Gospels as the way to know Jesus, the Christ.

Outcomes: It is hoped that by the end of the unit participants will:

- have an appreciation of the variety and uniqueness of the writings in the Christian Scripture;
- have an awareness of the growth of the early Church;
- have developed a way to read the Scripture more authentically;
- have a greater understanding of Jesus, the Christ as the Word of God.

Content: This course will cover the following content:

- Judaic Roots;
- Paul: Apostle to the Gentiles;
- early Christianity: Acts of the Apostles;
- Gospels: Four portraits of Jesus of Nazareth, the Christ of Faith.



UNIT NUMBER: 1.6

Title: Jesus of History; Christ of Faith

Duration: 6 sessions (18 hours)

Rationale: This unit is offered to assist participants to grasp the difference between the Jesus of History and the Christ of Faith and to realise that new insights about the historical Jesus can affect one's image of Jesus as man and as God.

Outcomes: It is hoped that participants will:

- develop a more authentic image of Jesus;
- have a deeper understanding of Jesus as a truly human man of his time and culture;
- appreciate that the faith of the Christian Community is based on the early Church's experience of Resurrection;
- understand that Jesus, as God's Son, uniquely reveals God;
- realise that Christ's revelation of God and his presence through the Spirit are active among us now.

Content: This course will cover the following content:

- images of Jesus that I /others have;
- the Quest for the Historical Jesus;
- the Resurrection and its significance for the Christ of Faith;
- the New Testament interpretations of Jesus;
- Jesus and Salvation;
- Jesus: True God and True Man.



UNIT NUMBER: 1.7

Title: The Creeds and Christian Tradition

Duration: Sessions [12 hours].

Rationale: This unit considers the dynamic life of Sacred Tradition in its unifying of the community of faith in the Church's patristic era. It attempts to do so on the basis of integrated learnings from all previous units. The theological focus of the unit relies on participants' own reflections on the human experience of mess, failure and struggle in maintaining valued beliefs and relationships.

Outcomes: By the conclusion of this unit, it is hoped that participants will be:

- more consciously engaged with Jesus Christ, alive in Sacred Tradition;
- more merciful towards personal and communal short-comings in Church life;
- better informed re the role of Councils in the Church's life and history;
- more conscious of the historical background to core beliefs in the Nicene Creed;
- more aware of the contemporary significance of the Creed's beliefs;
- more disposed to a wholehearted praying of the Creed within Sunday liturgy.

Content: This course will cover the following content:

- the relevance of human experience in appreciating the story behind the Creed;
- the nature and significance of "belief" in the life of communal faith;
- Christ's Paschal Mystery in Sacred Tradition's way of prayer, worship and belief;
- overview of Christological heresies provoking the gradual refinement of the Nicene-Constantinopolitan Creed and the declaration of the Council of Chalcedon;
- attention to the Creed's valuing of humanity in the face of ancient gnosticism;
- brief liturgical focus on the meaningful praying of the Creed in Sunday Mass;
- family faith serving Christian Tradition: brief focus on the 'Cappadocian family';
- the continuing significance of core elements of the Creed in contemporary life.



UNIT NUMBER: 1.8

- Title:** Trinity
- Duration:** 4 sessions [12 hours]
- Rationale:** The heart of this unit is an appreciation of the Church's growing understanding of the Mystery of God as Trinity; and the affirmation that this Mystery is integral to the lived experience of God within our Faith Tradition.
- Outcomes:** It is hoped that participants will be attracted by, and invited into, and participate willingly, in the movements of loving, that distinctively characterise the Father, the Son, and the Spirit.
- Content:** Trinitarian theology as it has emerged from looking at:
- the historical experience of salvation which the scriptures record and which teachers in the Church have interpreted through the ages;
 - the testimony of public worship;
 - the experience of discipleship;
 - God's self-disclosure in the whole Easter/Paschal Mystery.

