

WHY USE A RELIGIOUS EDUCATION ASSESSMENT TOOL?

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NCEA offers the Assessment of Child/Youth Religious Education, ACRE, as an integrated assessment tool providing faith knowledge questions (cognitive domain) and questions related to religious beliefs, attitudes, practices and perceptions (affective domain).

A multi-level, developmental and age appropriate tool, it is used in grades 5 (level 1), grades 8 or 9 (Level 2) and grades 11-12 (Level 3). All levels are aligned to the six tasks of catechesis as outlined in the General Directory for Catechesis: knowledge of the faith, liturgical life, moral formation, prayer, communal life and missionary spirit.

Here are seven reasons why the ACRE tool can benefit your Catholic school:



1 Evaluates Program Effectiveness

Educators can better understand what areas students know well and what areas need extra attention.

2 Acknowledges the understanding of what students know, believe, and do related to Catholic faith.

Student beliefs, attitudes, practices and perceptions are formed daily through their constant exposure to the secular world. As Catholic educators, we are tasked with working to ensure the faith formation of our students.

3 Identifies areas for professional development.

Educators who are not educated formerly through vocation and catechesis training can determine what professional development opportunities will be most beneficial to their continuing education.

4 Maps religion/faith formation curriculum using national norms.

ACRE is based on the Catholic Church's expectations for an organic, systematic and comprehensive education in Christian discipleship. All levels are aligned to the six tasks of catechesis and levels 2 and 3 are aligned to the U.S. bishops' framework for high schools.

5 Gathers local data that can be tracked over time.

Many schools follow strategic plans or accreditation processes that are reliant on data to track progress and inform decision-making.

6 Offers insight to planning instruction.

ACRE allows for integration across grade levels. For example, when you assess a fifth grade class with NCEA ACRE Level 1 in 2015, you get a baseline on how well you are delivering a solid religion program. By assessing that same group with NCEA ACRE Level II in 2018 in the eighth grade, you are able to track your program's strengths or weaknesses. It will be important to note changes in class members, catechists, and curriculum, when evaluating the strengths and weaknesses of your program.

7 Guide communication with parents about the impact of religious education efforts.

Catholic schools are a community of learning and growing in faith. For Catholic families, the assessment affirms how the faith is integrated throughout their children's learning. For non-Catholic families, the assessment tool can serve as a conversation tool for sharing faith in the home to compare what the students learn in school to what their own family practices.

