

**'Wot's in a String O'Words?': An Ethnomethodological Study
Investigating the Approach to, and Construction of, the Classroom
Religion Program in the Catholic Preschool**

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**“WOT’S IN A STRING O’ WORDS?”¹ AN
ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL STUDY INVESTIGATING
THE APPROACH TO, AND CONSTRUCTION OF,
THE CLASSROOM RELIGION PROGRAM
IN THE CATHOLIC PRESCHOOL.**

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Doctor of Education

May, 2006.

¹ Dennis, C.J. (1915). “The Play” from *The Sentimental Bloke*.

*Dedicated to my father,
Bill Barrett,
who instilled in me
a thirst for knowledge, authenticity
and perseverance.*

DECLARATION OF ORIGINALITY

This work has not previously been submitted for a degree or diploma in any university. To the best of my knowledge and belief, the thesis contains no material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the thesis itself.

Jan Grajczonek

May, 2006.

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates current teaching practice of the classroom religion program in two preschool settings in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. It also examines the approach to, and construction of, religious education in key Church and Brisbane Archdiocesan documents.

Since the first Catholic school opened in Australia in 1820, research and scholarship have elucidated deeper understandings of the nature and purpose of religious education. Over time, a variety of approaches and curriculum models for the classroom religion program have been implemented in both primary and secondary schools.

Broadly speaking there are two approaches to the Catholic primary school classroom religion program: *educational* and *catechetical*. The *educational* approach does not presume students' faith, and aims to develop students' religious literacy. The *catechetical* presumes student faith and aims to develop it. Currently, the Brisbane Catholic Education *Religious Education Guidelines* (Barry & Brennan, 1997a, 1997b; Barry et al., 2003) adopts an educational approach to the classroom religion program.

However, while the approach to religious education in Catholic primary and secondary schools has received scholarly and professional attention over the years, the *nature* and *purpose* of religious education in early childhood education in the context of the Catholic preschool, have received minimal attention. Although the first preschools in Catholic schools in the Brisbane Archdiocese opened in 1988, there is no set curriculum for the classroom religion program for the preschool sector. However, Brisbane Catholic Education is presently preparing such a document in preparation for the introduction of the preparatory year of schooling into all Archdiocesan Catholic schools in 2007.

The specific focus of the study is to use teachers' talk-in-interaction with their students during classroom religion lessons, as a means to exemplify their approaches to, and constructions of, their classroom religion programs. Underpinned by an Ethnomethodological methodology, the study gathered data in the form of lesson recordings from two preschool teachers. The lesson transcripts are analysed using the ethnomethodological analytic tools of Conversation Analysis and Membership Categorisation Analysis. These analyses reveal deep insights into teachers' practices: the nature of the content they present, their approaches to, and constructions of, their religion programs, as well as the ways in which they construct their students.

In addition to classroom practice, this study also investigates relevant sections of the key Church documents *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) and the *General Directory of Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997), as well as the Archdiocese of Brisbane Catholic Education document, “Religious Education in Preschools”, which is part of the *Preschool Handbook: Towards Continuity of Learning in the Early Years* (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b). Together with the Ethnomethodological methodology, this part of the investigation adopts a functional linguistic methodology using the analytic technique, Systemic Functional Linguistics. Both Systemic Functional Linguistics and Membership Categorisation Analysis are used to explicate these documents. The two Church documents are critical documents, as they contribute to curriculum development and implementation of the classroom religion program in all Australian Catholic schools, whilst the Brisbane document outlines the current policy for religious education in Catholic preschools in the Archdiocese. These analyses elucidate key insights into how the classroom religion program is approached, and reveal that whilst the Church documents maintain an educational approach, aspects of the documents are ambiguous. Analysis of the Brisbane Archdiocesan preschool document reveal it to be at variance with the current educational approach taken by the Archdiocese in its classroom religion curriculum for primary and secondary schools.

This study contributes significantly to the nature and purpose of religious education in the early years. It has implications for the theory and practice of the classroom religion program in early childhood, and for preservice and inservice teacher education programs. It also contributes to policy design that guides and shapes curriculum development and implementation. The use of analytic techniques drawn from two different methodologies, Ethnomethodology and functional linguistics, enables a detailed and in-depth analysis, showing them to be effective techniques to be used together in research. These methodologies complement each other to reveal critical insights into both the document studies and teacher classroom interaction.

The nature and purpose of religious education in early childhood education is evolving. As Catholic dioceses continue to expand into early childhood education, the focus on religious education in this sector becomes more critical. This study provides a significant foundation for future research.

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CHAPTER 1

THE RESEARCH DEFINED

1.1 Introduction

Religious education has been a significant aspect of the Australian Catholic education system since the establishment of the first Catholic school at Parramatta, in 1820. Since then, the understanding of the nature and purpose of religious education has continued to develop, influencing the way it is approached and taught in Catholic classrooms (English, 1991; Groome, 1980; Lovat, 1989, 2002; Malone & Ryan, 1994; Moore, 1991; Moran, 1991, 1997; Rossiter, 1983; Rummery, 1975, 2001; Ryan, 1997, 2002, 2006; Ryan, Brennan, & Willmet, 1996; Ryan & Malone, 1996). This Ethnomethodological study investigating the classroom teaching of religion in Catholic preschools specifically focuses on how preschool teachers approach and construct the classroom teaching of religion, in and through their talk-in-interaction with their students. Although much has been written in recent years about the classroom teaching of religion within an educational framework for primary school students (Malone & Ryan, 1994; Ryan, 2006; Ryan et al., 1996; Ryan & Malone, 1996; Welbourne, 2000), the same cannot be said for the preschool teaching of religion. No studies or scholarly publications adopting an educational frame of reference have been located.

Religious education comprises two dimensions, a faith dimension and an educational one (Moran, 1991). The *faith dimension* is concerned with students' faith development, which is directly nurtured by their participation in liturgical celebrations such as school and class liturgies, class prayer, prayer assemblies, and so on. Faith, as taught by the Catholic Church, is understood to be a personal gift from God and faith response, which cannot be imposed, is understood to be a personal matter and a free act (English, 1991; Vatican Council II, 1965). Schools provide opportunities that nurture and foster students' faith but do not seek to assess that faith response. The *educational dimension* is understood in the school context to be most apparent in the classroom teaching of religion - the actual key learning area - and does not require a faith response. This is not to say that other forms of religious education, such as liturgical celebrations, and the like, do not have an educational dimension, but within the school context the specific educational dimension of religious education is understood to be the classroom religion program (Ryan, 2006) in which students' progress is assessed.

This study's central focus is the classroom teaching of religion in the Catholic preschool. However, a further aspect of the study is concerned with how key Church and

Brisbane Catholic Education Centre (henceforth BCEC) documents approach and construct religious education.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Given the diverse and pluralist nature of their student populations, the challenge facing religious educators in present times in Australian Catholic schools is the relevance of the curriculum for students (Chambers, Grajczonek, & Ryan, 2006; Ryan, 2006; Welbourne, 2004). The issue concerning which approach should underpin and direct the religion program in Catholic schools causes much debate and consternation among Australian diocesan education authorities (English, 1991). Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett, and Farmer (2005) suggest that an approach to curriculum directs planning:

While our philosophy outlines broad perspectives and ideals, our approaches to curriculum articulate the direction we would like our program to take, and the frameworks are the methods that we use to put our approaches into practice. (p. 169)

Throughout this study, the term ‘approach’ refers to the direction that planning the classroom religion program takes. Over the years religion programs in Australian Catholic primary school classrooms have adopted either one of two approaches: a catechetical approach, which seeks to develop students’ faith, or an educational approach, which aims to increase students’ understanding of the subject matter. These approaches have underpinned a number of different religion curriculum models including the doctrinal/devotional, kerygmatic, experiential, and shared Christian praxis models, all underpinned by a catechetical approach and more recently, educational and outcomes-based models underpinned by an educational approach (Buchanan, 2003, 2005; Moore, 1991; Rummery, 1975; Ryan, 1997, 2002, 2006; Ryan & Malone, 1996; Welbourne, 2000). The central elements of the doctrinal/devotional model were a sound knowledge and understanding of the Catholic catechism and regular Church attendance during numerous sacred solemnities and various religious feast days. This model was in practice for over 140 years from 1820 until the 1960s, when the kerygmatic model (Ryan, 2001), which introduced an explicitly joyful method with a greater focus on scripture, particularly the gospels, replaced it. The experiential model, in which a greater emphasis was placed upon students sharing their own faith experiences, rather than learning Church doctrine, was the dominant curriculum model for religious education during the 1970s and early 1980s. In the second half of the 1980s, shared Christian praxis (Groome, 1980) was introduced into Australian Catholic schools. Shared

Christian praxis involved students reflecting on their own experience in the light of the Christian tradition and deciding on ways to respond to that dialogue. The most recent model implemented in Catholic primary schools is an educational one, introduced in the late 1990s by some dioceses in Australia. This model is underpinned by an educational approach (Crawford & Rossiter, 1988; English, 1991; Moran, 1991; Rossiter, 1998; Rummery, 1975, 2001; Ryan, 2006; Welbourne, 2000) that develops students' knowledge and understanding of religion and, unlike the preceding approaches, does not presume a personal faith response.

Further insights into the nature of the educational and faith dimensions of religious education can be gained from the key Church documents, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) and the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997). These two documents name the two dimensions of religious education as *religious instruction* and *catechesis*. Both documents state that religious instruction and catechesis are distinct, but complementary. Further, the document *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) states that the aim of the school is knowledge, which implies that the most appropriate place for religious instruction is in the classroom. It also states that catechesis, whose aim is "maturity: spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, para. 69), occurs most appropriately in the faith community. However, in the same paragraph is the directive, "the school can and must play its specific role in the work of catechesis" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, para. 69). Such directives serve to make the school's role ambiguous. Because the nature and purpose of both religious instruction and catechesis within the school context are not clear in these documents, they form part of the focus of deeper analysis in Chapter 4 of this study. Such an analysis is necessary to understand and appreciate more fully the ongoing debate regarding the nature and purpose of religious education in Australian Catholic dioceses.

Moran (1991) significantly influenced the implementation of the educational approach to the classroom teaching of religion in Australia. He defined two dimensions of religious education: "Religious education teaches people religion and teaches people to be religious in a particular way" (p. 249). The former, "teaching people religion" is best conducted in a classroom, whilst "teaching people to be religious in a particular way" is conducted in the lifelong and life-wide contexts of particular religious communities. Further, Moran contends that it is essential for teachers to distinguish between these two processes: to know in which process they are involved and at which

particular times. He argues that they must remain distinct and separate. “The tragedy would be that, for lack of clarity about this distinction, institutions end up doing neither; their academic inquiry is not challenging enough and their formation is not particular enough” (p. 252).

Those dioceses which have embraced an educational approach distinguish these two dimensions within religious education: the educational dimension, which is nominated as the classroom teaching of religion, and the faith dimension. They argue that the classroom teaching of religion is a key learning area just as English, mathematics, and so on are key learning areas and, as such, requires an educational approach appropriate to the age, development and circumstances of the students. In addition to providing the educational dimension, schools are also required to facilitate the faith dimension of religious education through the expression and articulation of their Catholic identity in both policies and practices. Those who espouse the educational approach to religious education (Crawford & Rossiter, 1988; Moran, 1991; Rossiter, 1998; Rummery, 1975; Ryan, 2006; Ryan et al., 1996) argue that, when religious education is being taught in the classroom as a subject, or key learning area, the same educational practices used in the teaching of other disciplines should be adopted.

The current Brisbane Archdiocesan Religious Education Guidelines (Barry & Brennan, 1997a, 1997b; Barry et al., 2003), implemented in Catholic schools in 1997, distinguishes the two processes but uses the one term *religious education* for both. In this diocese, an educational, outcomes-based approach underpins the religion program which aims to “develop students’ religious literacy in the light of the Catholic tradition” (Barry & Brennan, 1997b, p. 5). This curriculum replaces the previous shared Christian praxis curriculum, a catechetical approach, which required students to make a faith response after engaging with the content of the lesson. The present curriculum was developed specifically for Years One to Twelve; it did not include the preschool level.

The Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic preschool sector does not have its own curriculum or dedicated foundational area for religion. However, at the same time as the Years 1-12 religious education curriculum was developed in 1997, four sample preschool religious education units were developed and offered to preschool teachers. These are not mandatory. In 2002, however, the nature and purpose of religious education in the preschool setting was articulated in BCEC’s policy “Religious Education in Preschools” (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b). During 2005 and 2006, in preparation for the introduction of the preparatory year to all Catholic primary schools in Brisbane in 2007, BCEC personnel are writing an early years’

religion program. However, at the time data that for this study were collected, a curriculum outlining what is to be taught and how it is to be taught in religion was not available. As a result, teachers in Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic preschools are left in an ambiguous position regarding the implementation of religious education in their context.

At the embryonic stage of this project, the intended focus was curriculum development. However, after initial discussions with preschool teachers and observations of teaching practice, it became clear that an investigation into the actual classroom teaching of religion was more critical. Teachers' approaches to, and construction of, the religion program, as revealed in actual teaching practice, has never been investigated or articulated. This raises a series of questions: are preschool teachers aware of particular approaches to the classroom teaching of religion? Are they conscious of the nature of the approach underpinning the current curriculum for Years 1 to 12? Are they aware that the current approach is different from the previous curriculum and, if so, in what ways?

Thus, the specific focus of the study became teachers' actual approaches to, and construction of, the key learning area of religion revealed through their talk-in-interaction with students, and how these approaches relate to those conveyed in the relevant Church and diocesan documents. Moran (1989) focused on the role of language in the teaching of religion, suggesting the use of three different families of languages – homiletic, therapeutic and academic - each having its own distinctive use in the different settings for teaching religion. Homiletic language is used in such contexts as the homily given by the parish priest who preaches the gospel seeking to assist parishioners to live according to the gospel's message. Therapeutic language is used as therapy to heal people who may have encountered some form of fragmentation. The third family of languages, the academic is most appropriate in the formal teaching context of the school classroom, as it neither seeks to preach or heal. Moran (1997) went on to refine this theory, suggesting that academic criticism, which is an element of the academic language family, allows students to engage in learning through language that is neither therapeutic nor homiletic, thus enabling them to understand the topic at hand. On this basis, the analysis of the teachers' language would indicate which family of languages they are orienting: homiletic, therapeutic or academic. Language, as a concrete and clear expression of how teachers and documents approach the classroom religion program and religious education, is central to this study.

1.3 The Research Questions

The central aspect of this study is the classroom religion program. However, this is not to suggest that the Catholic school's role in nurturing the faith dimension through such avenues as liturgies, prayer assemblies, and pastoral activities, is not important. The religious life of the Catholic school is essential to its identity. This study's concern is however, to clarify the educational role and its place in the classroom. This study specifically seeks to explore teachers' approaches to, and their construction of, the classroom teaching of religion. The central questions for this study are:

How are the approaches to, and construction of, the classroom teaching of religion in Catholic preschool settings exemplified through teachers' talk-in-interaction with their students; and,

how do these relate to those approaches described in the relevant Church and Archdiocesan documents?

The guiding questions include:

- What teaching approaches are conveyed in the relevant Church and Archdiocesan documents? Are these approaches clear and consistent?
- How do teachers approach and construct the classroom teaching of religion in and through their talk-in-interaction with their students? What approach/es is/are suggested by their talk-in-interaction?
- How do the teachers' approaches relate to those conveyed by the documents?

To explore these questions this study will analyse:

1. Key Church and Brisbane Catholic Education documents; and
2. Teachers' spoken language as indicators underpinning their approaches and the outcomes and goals for students in religion, as constituted during the lesson in and through the teachers' talk-in-interaction.

The necessity for this study to have a parallel investigation into particular Church and BCEC documents is twofold. First, the approaches to religious education differ both across Australian Catholic dioceses and, in some cases, such as the Brisbane Archdiocese, within the same diocese. On the one hand, BCEC implements an educational approach to the classroom teaching of religion in primary and secondary schools but, on the other, implies a catechetical approach to the preschool religion program. This inconsistency in approaches to the classroom teaching of religion within and among dioceses is a matter of perplexity, as all curricula are informed and shaped by the same Church documents, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic*

School (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) and the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997).

Second, the Church documents themselves present ambiguous understandings of the nature of religious education. Whilst both documents make it clear that *religious instruction*, the educational process, is the school's responsibility, there are aspects within that process which are at times, catechetical. A closer examination of how these two dimensions, *catechesis* and *religious instruction*, are constructed in the documents, is required before any definite conclusions can be made about the nature and purpose of religious education. Therefore, the need to make a rigorous investigation into both Church and BCEC documents beyond a literature review became apparent.

1.4 Significance of the Study

Classroom research in Australia has not specifically focused on the actual teaching practice of the religion program. Further, the Catholic preschool is a relative 'newcomer' (the first preschool opened in 1988) to the Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic education system. The classroom teaching of religion in this setting remains an ambiguous and unclear area (Grajczonek, 2000). Currently the Brisbane Archdiocesan religious education curriculum (Barry & Brennan, 1997a, 1997b) is for Years 1 to 12, although the recently introduced *Religious Education: Years 1 to 10 Learning Outcomes* (Barry et al., 2003) is for Years 1 to 10. Up until December 2002, when the policy "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b) was published, there had been no policy for religious education in Catholic preschools. (The policy, "Religious Education in Preschools", forms part of the document analysis of this study.) Although a policy is now in place, there is no mandatory curriculum specified for the classroom teaching of religion in Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic preschools.

As the philosophy of the preschool religion program has not been articulated, the extent to which teachers are to implement an educational approach is not clarified. Currently, the BCEC early years' religion curriculum is in draft form, and as it is not yet an official publication, is unavailable for public scrutiny. This study then, can only comment on current official documents, and the approaches to, and practices of, classroom teaching of religion in Catholic preschool settings presently in place.

BCEC has been involved in the recently introduced preparatory year by Education Queensland, trialling four such settings in 2004. By 2007, the preparatory year is to be introduced in all Catholic primary schools in the Archdiocese. As the number of primary schools offering a non-compulsory pre-year one education in either a preschool or

preparatory year increases, the need for a clear approach to the teaching of religion becomes more urgent.

This study has significance for a number of areas including theory, methodology, practice, and policy as outlined in the following sections, 1.4.1, 1.4.2, 1.4.3, and 1.4.4.

1.4.1 For Theory

Currently there exists a dearth of educational research in the area of preschool religious education in the contemporary Catholic school setting. The literature suggesting approaches, processes, pedagogy and language is neither recent nor applicable for pluralist Catholic preschools. Current theory does not suggest any clear or specific insights into appropriate approaches for religious education in the preschool settings of Church related schools. Specific literature (Berryman, 1990, 1992; Cavalletti, 1992; J. M. Lee, 1988; Ratcliff, 1988) available on this topic is more appropriate for local Church communities or Sunday Schools, as it comes out of a confessional approach, seeking conversion and direct faith development on the part of the participants. This theory is limited and the approaches outlined are suited to particular audiences in different contexts. It does not go far enough for contemporary Catholic preschools because of the diverse and pluralist nature of their students. Students attending Catholic schools come from a wide variety of backgrounds: some belong to the local Catholic faith community; some are Catholic but are not part of the faith community; some are from different Christian traditions; some are from religions other than Christianity; and other students claim no religious affiliations. This study will contribute significantly to theories about the nature and purpose of preschool religious education in the specific context of the contemporary pluralist Catholic preschool and preparatory year settings, which in turn will have implications for theories regarding content and practice in early years' religious education.

In addition, the insights gained into the nature and purpose of religious education regarding how the approaches taken by the teachers affect classroom practices, will also be significant for postulating approaches to primary school religious education. With its focus on actual classroom practice, findings from this study will contribute to, and deepen understanding of, the nature and purpose of religious education in the contemporary primary school setting.

This study will also have significance regarding theories concerned with the relationship between classroom interaction and student learning (Austin, Dwyer, &

Freebody, 2003; A. D. Edwards & Westgate, 1994; McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1979a, 1985, 1998). As teachers' talk-in-interaction is its central focus, this study will gain many insights into this relationship, which in turn will contribute significantly to theories of language and religious education (Moran, 1989, 1997) and explicit teaching (Edwards-Groves, 1998, 2003; Ludwig & Herschell, 1995) of the classroom religion program.

1.4.2 For Methodology

This study adopts an Ethnomethodological perspective (described in more detail in Chapter 3, section 3.2.1) implementing the analytic methods of Conversation Analysis and Membership Categorisation Analysis (both described in sections 3.6.2 and 3.6.2). In conjunction with that perspective, it also adopts a functional linguistic perspective, which utilises the analytic method Systemic Functional Linguistics (described in section 3.6.3). Whilst it is acknowledged that the implementation of two different perspectives is not usual, there are precedents for their utilisation (Freebody, 2003; Freebody, Ludwig, & Gunn, 1995) (see Chapter 3, section 3.2). The application of both methodologies will enable a more rigorous and detailed study of the approach to preschool religious education, as enacted in and through teachers' talk-in-interaction, as well as in relevant Church and Brisbane Archdiocesan documents. This in turn, has implications for future application of these methodologies in similar educational studies, which focus on curriculum implementation in classrooms. In addition, the application of these methodologies to documents, as a means of examining the function of language in conveying meanings, will contribute significantly to future policy preparation.

1.4.3 For Practice

With its central focus on teacher talk-in-interaction with students, this study will inform teachers about the *actual* implementation of the classroom religion program rather than its *intended* implementation. The essential elements of the religion curriculum include the philosophy and approach, which in turn inform content and practice of the curriculum. Through the close analysis of teachers' interactions with their students, all of these elements are available for close examination. The insights gained from such investigations will inform future decisions regarding effective and appropriate pedagogy for the classroom teaching of religion in Catholic preschools, as well as future preservice teacher education and inservice professional development for teachers of early years' religion.

1.4.4 For Policy

An important aspect of this study is its analysis of key documents at both Church and Archdiocesan levels. Presently there is only one official policy regarding religious education in Brisbane Catholic preschools, but future policies, as well as curriculum guidelines, will be required as BCEC establishes the preparatory year in all Catholic primary schools in the Brisbane Archdiocese in 2007. Some of these policies are presently being drafted but until they are published, their central concerns and content remain publicly undisclosed. Given these present circumstances, this study is timely, as its investigation into present diocesan educational policy and Church documents, and their impact on the classroom teaching of religion, will make valuable contributions to future policy preparation and curriculum design.

1.5 Preview of the Project

Chapter 1, the first of six chapters, presents an overview of this study describing its central focus, that is, the classroom teaching of religion in Catholic preschools as constructed by teachers in and through their talk-in-interaction with students. It provides a synopsis of the problem, a description of the research questions, as well as a statement of the significance of this study.

Chapter 2 reviews the literature from which this study draws. It includes a review of the development of religious education in Australian Catholic primary schools, as well as an exploration of the theories relating to religious education and religious education language. As early childhood education is an important aspect of this study, Chapter 2 also explores theories of early childhood education, as well as early childhood religious education. The key focus of this study is classroom interaction, and its critical place in educational research is reviewed, together with an overview of the place of document studies within this research.

The research design and methodology, which calls on two methodological perspectives, Ethnomethodology and functional linguistics, are explained in Chapter 3. The analytic methods utilised in this study, Conversation Analysis, Membership Categorisation Analysis, and Systemic Functional Linguistics, are described and exemplified in detail using segments from the data collected. This chapter also explicates the research procedures for the study's sampling strategy, data collection techniques, data validity and ethical considerations.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the analyses and findings of the two sets of data, educational documents and classroom talk. Chapter 4 focuses on the documents and

presents the findings from the Church and BCEC documents. In the first instance, extracts from the two Church documents, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) and the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) are investigated to ascertain how religious education is constructed in these particular documents. Both documents inform and shape religious education curricula in Australian Catholic schools. Following this analysis, the BCEC policy statement, “Religious Education in Preschools” (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b) is also analysed to ascertain how religious education is officially constructed for Brisbane Catholic preschools.

Chapter 5 focuses on the classroom lessons and presents the analyses that utilised Conversation Analysis and Membership Categorisation Analysis of the transcripts (see Appendix I) made from the recorded classroom interaction of two preschool religion lessons. This analysis is explicated from segments of the transcripts which used transcript notation based on Atkinson and Heritage’s (1984, pp. ix-xvi) notation (see Appendix H).

Chapter 6 reviews the study’s purpose and methodology and presents a summary of key findings from analyses of the documents and classroom interactions. It also considers the strengths and limitations of the study’s findings and identifies its implications for theory, methodology, practice, policy and future research.

The next chapter, Chapter 2, reviews the literature, which inform and contribute to the central concerns of this study: preschool teachers’ approach to the classroom teaching of religion in and through their talk-in-interaction with students, and documents’ directives regarding the approach to religious education.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

If I have seen further it is by standing on the shoulders of giants.

Isaac Newton, 1676.

2.1 Introduction

Chapter 1 presented an overview of the significance of this research study for the classroom religion program in Australian Catholic preschools. To fully appreciate and understand the context of religious education in Australian Catholic primary schools, it is helpful to be familiar with the various views concerning its nature and purpose. The discussion in Chapter 1 noted that within Australia, Catholic dioceses across all states approach the classroom teaching of religion in primary schools differently. Some implement a catechetical approach, whilst others implement an educational approach. This chapter reviews the relevant literature that informs and frames this study, the central research questions for which are:

- How are the approaches to, and construction of, the classroom teaching of religion in Catholic preschool settings exemplified through teachers' talk-in-interaction with their students; and, how do these relate to those approaches described in the relevant Church and Archdiocesan documents?

Harris (1989) uses the Greek word *didachē* as the overall term that encompasses all forms of teaching within the Christian Church. She distinguishes three forms of Church teaching, or *didachē*: (1) catechesis, (2) preaching, and (3) the curriculum of schooling, a particular form of curriculum "giving place to verbal instruction, literacy and study" (pp. 110-111). It is with the latter form of teaching, the curriculum of schooling, that this review concerns itself, focusing on theories which show how religious education within the schooling context is distinctive from other forms of Church teaching.

Section 2.2 reviews the historical development and use of the term 'religious education' in Australia. Section 2.3 explicates the nature and purpose of religious education as developed and implemented in Australian Catholic primary schools. Section 2.4 reviews preschool religious education theories, and section 2.5 reviews early childhood education theories. Sections 2.6 and 2.7 explore the significance which document study and classroom interaction have for education, and the final section 2.8, examines language theories specific to religious education.

2.2 The Historical Development and Use of the Term *Religious Education*

For an appreciation of the historical development of religious education in Australia, it is necessary to explore three related areas: a brief overview of its development in the United States of America and Britain (section 2.2.1); an explanation of other terms used interchangeably with religious education (section 2.2.2); and an exploration of how these terms are articulated in Church documents (section 2.2.3). An understanding of these areas contributes to a greater understanding of the nature, purpose and place of religious education in contemporary Australian Catholic primary schools.

2.2.1 The Influence of the United States and Britain

Both the United States of America and Britain have contributed to the shaping and use of the term *religious education* in Australia (Moran, 2001, p. 231). In the United States, the term has never been clearly defined nor used with any consistent understanding (Groome, 1995; Moran, 1987) since it was first used in 1872 as a general reference to the church's education (Moran, 2001, p. 231). In terms of its usage in state laws, the term *religious instruction* is used to refer to sectarian programs whereas, in scholarly writing as well as in popular usage, *religious education* is associated with churches and synagogues (Moran, 1987). Moran concludes, "there is no consensus of meaning of the term within the Catholic Church, though it is used more frequently by Catholics than by Protestants and Jews" (p. 319). Notwithstanding the confusion of the actual term *religious education*, two theories (described more fully in sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2) from the United States that have significantly contributed to the development of religious education in Australia, include Groome's (1980; 1995) shared Christian praxis approach and Moran's (1991) educational approach.

The British context, wherein religious education is a compulsory subject in the public school system, has developed quite differently from that of the United States. In 1944 the term *religious education* was clearly defined for the first time as comprising two sharply contrasting processes: (1) an educational process called *religious instruction*, which was the classroom aspect of the subject implementing an approved syllabus, and (2) a daily assembly for worship (Moran, 1987, p. 319). Later, the term *religious instruction* referring to its educational component was changed to *religious education* as part of the recommendations of the Durham Committee Report of 1970, but the two processes of education and worship remained separated and distinct (Rummery, 1975, pp. 134-136). Increasing doubt regarding the value of compulsory worship in state schools, together with a greater pluralism of religion in many English schools, led to

further refinement and development of religious education; a greater emphasis was placed on the instructional element of religious education and its focus shifted to include studies of world religions (Moran, 1987). This model, which for the first time identified two distinct processes within religious education, was to have significant influence on Australian religious education.

2.2.2 *Other Terms used Interchangeably with Religious Education*

Within the Australian context the ongoing tension regarding the precise meaning of *religious education* influences all aspects of its implementation in Catholic schools and classrooms (Ryan, 1997). Part of this confusion lies in the fact that many terms are used interchangeably with religious education including *catechesis*, *education in faith*, *education in religion*, *religious instruction* and *evangelisation*. Some of these terms describe the process of informing about the Christian faith, others describe the process of forming in the Christian faith, and still others are a combination of both. Each of these terms has its own distinct meaning and a brief exploration of each is helpful in clarifying the nature and purpose of religious education.

2.2.2.1 *Catechesis*

The term *catechesis* was used in the New Testament in its verbal form *catechise* derived from the Greek word *katēcheō* meaning “to hand on what has been received” (Harris, 1989, p. 113). The term was originally used to describe the oral instruction of early converts to Christianity. Harris (1989) noted that three characteristics eventually became fixed within catechesis, “...it was doctrinal, centred on the Creed; it was moral, centred on the behaviours implied by the teaching; and it was set in the context of the liturgical, worship life of the church – not in classrooms” (p. 113). The argument that catechesis does not belong in the school classroom context is supported by English (1991) who argues that when implemented in the school context, “Catechesis presumes that both teacher and student have religious faith” (p. 28). Welbourne (1995) also rejects the place of catechesis in the classroom, arguing:

Given its root meaning, that is ‘to hand down’, and its history, the term has an inability to place religious issues and concerns in an interactive educational framework of critical intelligence. Therefore, the term catechesis, although allied to religious education, has a related but separate identity from religious education and its meaning is too limited to contain the full range of issues related to religious education as a discipline. (p. 93)

Because catechesis is a process of faith sharing among willing and committed participants, its appropriate place in diverse, pluralist contemporary Catholic classrooms is questioned (Malone & Ryan, 1994; Rummery, 1975, 2001; Ryan, 1997, 2000, 2006; Ryan et al., 1996). Indeed the source of the debate concerning what *religious education* should in fact be, focuses on the nature of student populations in contemporary Catholic schools. Some religious educators argue that it is not acceptable to impose catechesis upon those students who are “searchers and non-believers” (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, para. 75), as catechesis invites a free response. Students in schools, particularly young students in the early years who are keen to please ‘significant others’ have little freedom in the compulsory classroom. Warren (1989) cautions Catholic schoolteachers to remain within the educational dimension when teaching young students, those he describes as “too young to resist”. He argues that catechesis is more appropriate for adults:

Properly understood, catechesis is a kind of therapy for fostering the corporate health of the ekklesia, with adult catechesis as its chief form [Par. 20]. Seen this way it is not to be a peripheral endeavour largely affecting those too young to resist. It is rather a multiform activity, the chief agent of which is the community itself. (p. 13)

2.2.2.2 *Education in Religion and Education in Faith*

Other terms used synonymously with *religious education* are *education in religion* and *education in faith*. Rossiter (1983) distinguished between these two terms suggesting that *education in religion* is an educational activity, as it seeks to *inform* the student *about* religion rather than *form* the student *in* that religion. Rossiter (1988) continued to emphasise the need for a more educational approach to the classroom religion program. *Education in faith* however, emphasises the handing on of a particular faith tradition and aims not only to increase a person’s knowledge and understanding of faith, but also requires a commitment to that faith. English (1991) uses the term *religion studies* to describe *education in religion*, suggesting it was influenced by Smart’s (1968; 1979) phenomenological approach, which aims to inform students about the phenomenon of religion. Influenced by this understanding many secondary schools have introduced such subjects as “Study of Religion” or “Religion Studies”, which include a range of religious traditions, and do not require a faith response from students (Buchanan, 2003, 2005; Lovat, 1995, 2005; Ryan, 2006). Lovat (1989, 2002) uses the two terms *enfaithing* and *interfaith* to describe two models of religious education. The

former model, *enfaithing*, refers to a model that focuses on the study of one faith tradition, whilst *interfaith* models include a study of different faith traditions, such as in the phenomenological approach to religious education.

2.2.2.3 *Evangelisation*

Another term sometimes used interchangeably with *religious education* is *evangelisation*, which is derived from the ancient Greek word *evangelion* referring to the person who proclaims good news. Evangelisation is the process of proclaiming the message of the gospel. In 1975 after the Synod had worked to clarify the meaning of this term, Pope Paul VI, in his synodal Apostolic Exhortation *On Evangelisation in the Modern World*, spelt out its meaning which is now accepted by the Church:

For the Church, evangelising means bringing the Good News into all strata of humanity, and, through its influence, transforming humanity from within and making it new ... The purpose of evangelisation is therefore precisely this interior change ... the Church evangelizes when she seeks to convert, solely through the divine power of the message she proclaims, both the personal and the collective consciences of people, the activities in which they engage, and the lives and concrete milieu which are theirs. (Pope Paul VI, 1975, para. 18)

Evangelisation differs from catechesis in that it seeks to convert those who do not necessarily seek conversion themselves, whereas catechesis is the process of developing faith following conversion. Welbourne (1995) rejects evangelisation's connection with religious education because it is about conversion rather than education (p. 92). In the context of the religion classroom, English (1991) claims that evangelisation presumes that only the teacher has faith (p. 28).

2.2.2.4 *Religious Instruction*

In the context of this study, it is important to note that the contemporary term *religious education* as it is used in the Australian Catholic context in curriculum documents, textbooks, course descriptions and so on, is not used in Catholic Church documents. These documents use the term *religious instruction*, which has come to be generally accepted to mean *religious education*. However, Rummery (1975), influenced by the recommendations made in the 1970 Durham report, maintained that there is a distinct difference between these two terms and argues for the term *religious education* rather than *religious instruction*:

Instruction is properly seen as an important part of the content of education but at the service of education; the instructed person who has absorbed certain intellectual information and skills is not necessarily educated, whereas the properly education [sic] person has developed both his [sic] knowledge and skills past the stage of merely passive acceptance of instruction. (p. 136)

Moran (1991) argued that the term *religious education* is not *religious instruction* but that *religious instruction* is part of *religious education*.

Each of the terms, *catechesis*, *education in religion* and *education in faith*, *evangelisation*, and *religious instruction*, may be related to religious education but are much more specific to particular contexts, as each sets out to achieve distinctive aims. To use them interchangeably with religious education is to deny and trivialise the nature of each, as well as the goals each sets out to achieve. “Simply put language matters...Changes in names for religious education result in a shift in the aims, goals, methods, content and outcomes of the whole enterprise” (Ryan, 1997, p. 2). It is therefore critical that all those engaged in religious education, within the various agencies of the Church, implement the most appropriate approach to achieve their particular context’s aims and objectives.

2.2.3 Church Documents and Religious Education

Another factor that contributes to the continued confusion of the term *religious education*, is the language used in Church documents. Ryan (1997) argues that because of its ecclesial nature, “language has tended to marginalize the impact and significance of Church documents among Australian religious educators” (pp. 166-167). Malone and Ryan (1994) traced the development and use of the term *religious education* in three key church documents published between 1977 and 1988 by the Sacred Congregation for Catholic Education (now known as the Congregation for Catholic Education). The first of these, *The Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977) did not focus on religious education as such, but outlined the educational work of the Catholic school (Malone & Ryan, 1994, p. 38). The 1982 document *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith* (Congregation for Catholic Education) acknowledged that there were aspects of the teaching of religion which were not necessarily part of the catechetical process. However, the document *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) clearly and explicitly differentiated religious instruction from catechesis:

68 There is a close connection, and at the same time a clear distinction, between religious instruction and catechesis, or the handing on of the Gospel message. 69 The aim of catechesis, or handing on the Gospel message, is maturity: spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic; this happens most especially in a local Church community. The aim of the school, however, is knowledge. (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, paras. 68 & 69)

Welbourne (1999) argued that the more recent Roman document *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) offered linguistic clarity by echoing the stance of *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*. The directory distinguishes “religious instruction in schools as a scholastic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines” and acknowledges the plurality of the Catholic school in which students are described as “believers, searchers and non-believers” (Welbourne, 1999, p. 1).

The two documents *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) and the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) are foundational texts, which inform, guide and shape curriculum development in religious education in Australian Catholic schools. However, as highlighted in Chapter 1, the Archdiocesan Catholic Education Offices across Australia do not adopt a consistent approach to the classroom teaching of religion. Most dioceses follow a catechetical approach whilst some, including the Brisbane Archdiocese, adopt an educational approach to the classroom teaching of religion. Given that all refer to, and are guided by, the previous documents, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) and the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) the adoption of different approaches by Australian dioceses is confusing. The interpretation of these documents is inconsistent. The various ways these documents are interpreted are due in part to the ambiguous nature of the language used therein. Given their significant place in curriculum development, as well as the ambiguous nature of the language in both documents, they constitute a further aspect of this study, and are examined more closely in Chapter 4.

2.3 The Nature of Religious Education as Developed and Implemented in Australian Catholic Primary Schools

Over the years, a variety of models has been implemented in religious education curricula in Australian Catholic primary schools, including doctrinal, kerygmatic,

experiential, shared Christian praxis and educational (Buchanan, 2003, 2005; Malone & Ryan, 1994; Moore, 1991; Rummery, 1975, 2001; Ryan, 2001, 2006). Two of these models, the shared Christian praxis and the educational models, will be explored more fully in sections 2.3.1 and 2.3.2. According to the way the classroom religion program is interpreted and defined, either one of these is the curriculum model implemented in contemporary Australian primary school religion classrooms. If the classroom religion program is considered to both inform and form, as an integration of faith development and education, then the shared Christian praxis model underpinned by catechesis is implemented. However, if religious education is defined as being two distinct and separate processes, educational and faith nurturing, then an educational approach underpins and directs the classroom religion program and the faith dimension is promoted in and through the religious life of the whole school.

2.3.1 Shared Christian Praxis Model

Thomas Groome in the United States proposed the shared Christian praxis model in 1980 and soon after it gained broad acceptance throughout Australian Catholic dioceses. Groome's (1980) praxis model consists of five movements:

- (1) Naming Present Action: Life experience in which the participants share their own personal life story and experience;
- (2) The Participants' Stories and Visions: The beginning of critical reflection in which participants reflect on and question why do they do what they do;
- (3) The Christian Community Story And Vision: Participants encounter the Christian story and reflect upon it in terms of their own experience;
- (4) Dialectical Hermeneutic between the Story and Participants' Stories: Participants critically engage with the Christian story in terms of what it can offer them; and
- (5) Dialectical Hermeneutic between the Vision and Participants' Visions: Participants take some form of action in their lives to live the Christian message in the future. (pp. 208-223)

Groome (1991) resisted the separation of education and faith development, arguing for the process of shared Christian praxis:

a participative and dialogical pedagogy in which people reflect critically on their own historical agency in time and place and on their socio-cultural reality, have access together to Christian Story/Vision, and personally appropriate in community

with the creative intent of reviewed praxis in Christian faith towards God's reign for all creation. (p. 135)

This model develops and calls for participants' faith commitment; it adopts a catechetical approach. Shared Christian praxis has influenced religious education in all states of Australia and is implemented in a number of dioceses. This approach underpinned the previous Brisbane religious education curriculum, *Education in Faith for the Primary School Child* (Catholic Education Office Brisbane, 1986) implemented from 1986 to 1997.

2.3.2 Educational Model

Because the shared Christian praxis model was developed for committed adult Christians within faith communities, its place as an appropriate model for the classroom teaching of religion in Catholic schools given their diverse and pluralist student populations, was challenged (Buchanan, 2005; Lovat, 2002; Rossiter, 1988; Ryan, 1997; Ryan & Malone, 1996). During the late 1960s and early 1970s in Britain, the phenomenological approach (Smart, 1968, 1979), which proposed the classroom religion program should include the study of many religions rather than one specific tradition, emerged. This approach was embraced in Australia, and underpinned a number of religion programs introduced into both church and state secondary schools (Lovat, 1995, 2002, 2005). The phenomenological approach is entirely educational in nature: it does not require students' personal faith response and its focus is on "planning, curriculum resources, assessment and evaluation" (Ryan, 2006, p. 110). The phenomenological approach showed that an educational approach to the classroom religion program was feasible.

Influenced by the educational developments in Britain's classroom religion programs, Rummery (1975) was the first Australian to differentiate between catechesis and religious education, arguing that the classroom religion program needed to be educational, rather than catechetical, in nature. Rummery's proposal prompted some dioceses to reflect on their approaches to the classroom religion program in Catholic primary schools.

Further impetus for those Australian religious educators advocating a more educational approach to the classroom teaching of religion came in 1991, with Moran's proposal that religious education comprised two distinct dimensions: "teaching people religion" and "teaching people to be religious in a particular way" (p. 249). As discussed

in Chapter 1, section 1.2, Moran clearly differentiates between the educational and faith dimensions.

During the 1990s, some dioceses adopted an educational approach underpinned by outcomes-based education, to the classroom religion programs. Whilst the adoption of an outcomes-based model in the classroom religion program has been beneficial for its focus on knowledge and skills, it has also been criticised for its lack of focus on values, creativity, imagination, mystery, personal meaning and so on (Dwyer, 2002; Rossiter, 1999; Ryan, 2006).

Brisbane Catholic Education has implemented an educational approach to the classroom religion program, which is underpinned by Moran's understanding of the educational dimension of religious education, "teaching people religion". Brisbane Catholic Education does not use the more precise term the *classroom religion program* in the titles of its guideline documents to distinguish its curriculum from the religious life of the school (Barry & Brennan, 1997a, 1997b; Barry et al., 2003). However, the aim of this curriculum is "to develop students' religious literacy in the light of the Catholic tradition" (Barry & Brennan, 1997b, p. 18). Barry and Rush (1998) emphasise that the curriculum is the classroom religion program and that the educational dimension is central to the curriculum: "Development of the cognitive skills of knowledge, process and communication in relation to content studied is foundational to religious literacy" (p. 39). Dwyer (2001) comments on the emergence of the term religious literacy in Australian schools during the later 1990s:

Religious literacy, in a significant section of the nation at least, has taken its place at the literacy table. Here it may be seen as a metaphor for an approach to religious education that is strictly *educational* as distinct from catechetical. (p. 119)

The Brisbane Archdiocesan religious education curriculum adopts an outcomes-based model in which the outcomes to be achieved by students are clearly and explicitly stated in the *Religious Education: Years 1 to 10 Learning Outcomes* (Barry et al., 2003).

As stated in Chapter 1, these outcomes are listed for students from Years 1 to 10; the preschool level is not recognised in this document; preschool religious education in the Brisbane Archdiocese does not have a dedicated, official curriculum. The nature of preschool religious education is described in the recently published *Preschool Handbook: Towards Continuity of Learning in the Early Years* (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b) specifically in the policy statement, "Religious Education in Preschools". This statement essentially outlines the roles and

responsibilities of the key participants, who are involved in students' religious education: BCEC, families, teachers and school administration teams.

However, the description of religious education proposed in this document is not clear, as many terms including *spiritual development*, *religious development*, *faith* and *religious literacy* are used interchangeably with religious education (pp. 11-12). Furthermore, the emphasis is on student's religious development, rather than the development of their religious literacy. For these two reasons: (1) the ambiguous nature of the language of this document, and (2) the variance of its catechetical approach to the educational approach underpinning the primary and secondary school religion programs, this document also forms part of the specific document analysis of this study as explicated in Chapter 4.

The emphasis on faith development in preschool religious education is also evidenced in the "Philosophy of Preschool Education within Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane" which is included in the same *Preschool Handbook: Towards Continuity of Learning in the Early Years* (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002a). In the section "Educational Goals Specific to Preschool", the goals to which teachers are directed to work towards include: Faith Development, Curriculum, Partnerships, and Professional Development. Those listed under Faith Development are:

- To guide children in relating their spiritual development to their lives;
- To guide children in understanding God's unconditional love;
- To guide children's understanding of the uniqueness and centrality of God in their lives;
- To provide opportunities for children to express love for and thankfulness to God;
- To foster children's appreciation for the gift of God's creation and our responsibility to care for and nurture it;
- To support children in forming sound attitudes for Christian community living;
- To foster children's spiritual development and learning;
- To develop children's religious literacy;
- To centre the preschool community on gospel values. (pp. 8-9)

Apart from "to foster children's learning" and "to develop children's religious literacy", there are no educational goals in the above list. Essentially, these goals are oriented to catechesis. Preschool religious education as set out by Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane, adopts a catechetical approach, thus making it inconsistent with the educational approach of the primary and secondary religious education

curricula. Not only are the approaches to religious education inconsistent across the Australian Catholic dioceses, but also different approaches are implemented within the one diocese.

Today in Australia, the ongoing debate regarding the meaning of *religious education* seems to centre on which of the two dimensions, educational or faith, it emphasises. Within this continued debate two contesting views have emerged. One view adopts a catechetical approach, arguing that religious education is a combination of both education and faith development as one process. Another view argues that religious education comprises two separate processes, faith nurturing and education. This view contends that the classroom religion program be clearly distinguished from the religious life of the school.

The most one could say for the term *religious education* is that its meaning is still evolving and its definition will only continue to be sharpened, as ongoing discussion and debate seek further clarification. It is within the milieu of ongoing debate, that this study seeks to explore the approach exemplified in the preschool setting within the Brisbane Archdiocese. This study's examination into how the classroom teaching of religion is approached and constructed includes two corpuses of data: Church and Archdiocesan educational documents and transcripts of teachers' talk-in-interaction with their students.

2.4 Theories of Preschool Religious Education

The place of religious education in the Catholic preschool setting is not as clearly defined as in primary and secondary schools. Specific literature available on this topic is more appropriate for local Church communities or Sunday Schools whose participants are seeking faith sharing and development.

Early theories regarding young children's religious development and subsequent religious education were influenced by Goldman (1964; 1965) and Fowler (1981). Goldman proposed the term *religious readiness* and argued that religious education for young children should focus more on real-life experiences rather than complex religious concepts, which he concluded should be omitted from religious education curricula. Influenced by Piaget, Erikson and Kohlberg, Fowler (1981) suggested seven stages of faith development through which individuals move, as they grow and develop religiously. The first of these stages, infancy and undifferentiated faith stage, begins at birth and continues until infants reach the age of about three years. As infants move onto the early childhood years at the ages of three to about seven, they enter the intuitive-projective faith stage, which is most pertinent to the preschool setting. Fowler

summarises this phase as an imitative one, “in which the child can be powerfully and permanently influenced by examples, moods, actions and stories of the visible faith of primally elated adults” (p. 133). In addition, during this stage, imagination is significant and young children find it difficult to differentiate between fact and fantasy.

Available literature concerning the actual content of, and approach to, early years’ religious education is catechetical in nature and reflects a confessional viewpoint that requires a faith commitment from teachers of religion, who in turn require conversion of students (Ratcliff, 1988). Lee (1988) clearly and comprehensively outlines teaching foundations, processes and procedures for religion, which he defines as “a holistic lived experience which a person has with the Holy”, and that the aim of religion is to “constitute an enriched métier for a person to live as full a religious lifestyle as possible” (p. 152). For Lee, the most important desired learning outcome for young children is to love God in a personally committed manner. He argues that the source for religious education lies no longer with theology but in educational theory which provides the starting point, total process, context and goals of religious education (p. 178). This educational theory is helpful for religious educators but Lee's theory includes behavioural outcomes which require students’ personal commitment to God, suggesting catechetical aims.

Montessori (as cited in Berryman, 1992), advocated the use of sensory materials with which children play as a means of engaging them with others and with God. Whilst young children are learning about characters and events in scripture, the ultimate aim of Montessori’s program is to develop their faith. Berryman (1992), influenced by Montessori, suggests the way of learning religion is through language, but his goal for religion is to nourish “one all life long, contributing to better relationships among self, others, earth and God” (p.40) - a catechetical goal. Cavalletti’s (1992) program *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, which seeks to develop children’s religious formation, is another catechetical program.

More recently Hay and Nye (1998; Nye & Hay, 1996) argue that children have an innate spirituality that is not necessarily religious. Disagreeing with Goldman’s claims that children are incapable of experiencing anything extraordinary in the spiritual sense, they go on to claim that children’s innate spirituality must be nurtured if it is to develop. They also challenged Fowler’s stages of faith development arguing that it depended on children’s previous religious experiences within a Christian context and therefore is not applicable to all children. Hay (1998) claims that spiritual education is the reverse of indoctrination and suggests that teachers have four major responsibilities: help children

to keep an open mind; explore ways of seeing; encourage personal awareness; and become personally aware of social and political dimensions of spirituality (pp. 163-175). He also emphasises that spirituality “is not the preserve of Religious Education” (p. 173).

Others who argue for a spiritual rather than a doctrinal approach include Bradford (as cited in Crompton, 1998) who proposes that the fundamental needs of children include, “love, security, new creative experiences, affirmation of others, and taking part in and contributing to the social well-being of family and neighbourhood, expressed also as love, peace, wonder, confidence and relatedness” (p. 42). Bradford further argues that these fundamental needs should be nurtured ahead of religious development. He suggests that nurturing and satisfying these needs - that is nurturing the “human spirituality” - can lead to the development of a more “devotional spirituality” (p. 46). Turner (2000) echoes similar thoughts when she offers her pathways for developing children’s souls or as she writes *hambre del las almas* – the starving souls. She believes that by providing safety, celebration, respect, acceptance, dreaming and laughter, children’s souls will be cared for (2000, pp. 31-33). However, she is not referring to religious understandings of soul:

In using the term *children’s souls*, my reference is not limited by traditional religious training. Neither am I thinking of moral discipline or character formation. I refer to the essence of uniqueness, the spark of fire in each human person. (p. 31)

Australian religious educators who also advocate more emphasis on spiritual development within religious education include Hyde (2003; 2005), Liddy (2002) and de Souza (2005).

More recently, Ashton (2000) writing from the English preschool context where religious education adopting a phenomenological approach is compulsory in the public school system, argues that the term *education in religion* is more effective than *religious education*. Ashton rejects a doctrinal approach, arguing that it is sinister, but adds that the phenomenological approach (see section 2.2.2.2) may promote indifference (p. 12). She favours a conceptual approach to education in religion for young children.

Although they focus on religious education in the early years, these theories are limited in that they are related to specific contexts, either catechetical where the development of young children’s faith is the explicit goal, or spiritual where students’ innate spirituality is to be nurtured. A third proposal relates to a public school context where multi-faith education, similar to religious studies, is the aim. There are no specific

theories for preschool education in Church related schools whose student populations are increasingly more diverse and pluralist in nature.

2.5 Early Childhood Educational Theory

Up until recently, early childhood education in Australia had been significantly influenced by Developmentally Appropriate Practice (henceforth DAP) (Dahlberg, Moss, & Pence, 1999). DAP (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997) originated in the United States of America guiding and shaping early childhood curriculum during the late 1980s and 1990s. Piaget's theories of cognitive development underpinned DAP. Piaget advocated a constructivist theory of learning in which he emphasised the role of the individual in constructing his/her own learning, believing that a child's inner psychological structures controlled learning (MacNaughton, 2003). Piaget believed that child development moved in a linear fashion through four stages: the sensorimotor, preoperational, concrete operational and formal operational stages (Vialle, Lysaght, & Verenikina, 2000). This theory has been criticised in recent times for its neglect of the critical role of verbal communication in the learning process (Briggs & Potter, 1999), and its limited consideration of the significance of children's social and cultural contexts (Arthur et al., 2005; Lambert & Clyde, 2000; MacNaughton, 2003).

Rather than the Piagetian notion of "children actively constructing their *own* understandings, the sociocultural perspective emphasises that it is through involvement in activities *with* others that development occurs" (Robbins, 2003, p. 3). Vygotsky's (1967) sociocultural theory has strongly influenced contemporary early childhood theory and practice. Whilst Vygotsky shared Piaget's theory of constructivism, he placed more emphasis on the role of social interaction in learning (Hammond, 2001). This view sees learning as "social in origin and transferred through the mediation of cultural tools (e.g. language, books, symbols) to the individual where the learning is internalised in thought" (Hedges, 2000). Sociocultural theory argues that development is not universal and that learners' social and cultural contexts must be recognised and acknowledged. Wong (2005) encourages early childhood practitioners to recognise each child as a unique individual who is shaped by a diverse range of settings and to provide responsive, reflective and valuable learning experiences for them. Arthur, Beecher, Death, Dockett, and Farmer (2005) add, "Sociocultural perspectives suggest that children learn best when the curriculum is connected to their everyday lives and interests" (p. 11).

Vygotsky valued the role of the adult in supporting children's move to a higher level of performance, which he called the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and

used the two interrelated concepts, *interpsychological* functioning and *intrapsychological* functioning to explain interactions and progression in learning. Flear and Robbins (2006) elaborate: interpsychological functioning refers to the level at which children participate in an activity of the community by imitating others around them but not yet fully understanding it; whereas intrapsychological functioning is the level they reach once they make personal connection to the activity fully understanding its significance (p. 28).

Lambert and Clyde (2000) challenge Vygotsky's theories arguing that his work cannot be taken out of the communist context of the USSR during the 1920s: "Our concern lies with the fact that many early childhood researchers and writers ironically, have *decontextualised* Vygotsky's work, and in doing so have almost rendered it meaningless" (p. 68). They propose an "authentic" curriculum that: is process-oriented; facilitates child empowerment; involves perceptive observation of the child; implements authentic evaluation; and values parental input (p. 20).

These elements are prominent in the Reggio Emilia approach, which has influenced preschool teaching throughout the western world (Ardzejewska & Coutts, 2004; Hedges, 2000). This approach is based on the philosophy of Malaguzzi, who believed that children need to be understood as "producers, not just consumers" (Millikin, 2003, p. 81). Lois Malaguzzi, founder and director of early childhood education in Reggio Emilia, Italy, encouraged children to create their own material representations of their understanding by using many types of media such as drawing, sculpture, stories, and puppets (C. Edwards, Gandini, & Forman, 1998). Investigations and projects in real-life contexts, a pedagogy of listening and documentation of children's learning, are other key features of the Reggio Emilia approach.

Other philosophies and approaches that continue to influence current practice in early childhood include play-based learning, emergent curriculum, and inclusive curriculum (Arthur et al., 2005; Hedges, 2000; MacNaughton & Williams, 2004; Sandberg, 2002). In contrast, an adult-centred, transmission curriculum in which the teacher makes all curriculum decisions is not encouraged. A transmission curriculum constructs the child as an empty vessel or *tabula rasa* to be filled with,

knowledge, skills and dominant cultural values which are already determined, socially sanctioned and ready to administer – a process of reproduction or transmission – and to be trained to conform to the fixed demands of compulsory schooling. (Dahlberg et al., 1999, p. 44)

The central concern for a transmission curriculum is the imparting of knowledge; it values content over process, as well as over students' learning styles, dispositions and sociocultural contexts.

Contemporary researchers in early childhood education are increasingly critical of both transmission curriculum and Developmentally Appropriate Practice (Dahlberg et al., 1999), favouring a transformational model of curriculum which has been inspired by critical theory (Arthur et al., 2005; MacNaughton, 2003). The anti-bias approach (Dau, 2001; Dermon-Sparks & the Anti-Bias Task Force, 1989) to early childhood education is one expression of critical theory (MacNaughton, 2003), which when implemented, enables and empowers all students to construct a knowledgeable, confident self-identity and group identity, irrespective of how the dominant society views their group and their particular distinguishing characteristics (Glover, 2001, p. 12). Lovat and Smith (2003; 1995) explain that critical theory, associated with Habermas's theories of ways of knowing, is a third form of knowing, that is, knowing from the inside. It is only when a person is moved to action, as a result of critical reflection, that they are said to have profound knowledge (Lovat, 2003). Within a transformational curriculum model, Sandstrom and Tonkin (1999) maintain:

Knowledge is constructed by a process of inquiry and moving into the realm of facilitating personal and social change. Transformation occurs when concepts of equity and justice combine with inquiry and action in an attempt to realise and expose that which is oppressive and dominating. (p.329)

Transformational curriculum is influenced by sociocultural, postmodernist and poststructuralist theories (Arthur et al., 2005; MacNaughton, 2003). Postmodernism, which is strongly influenced by Foucault's beliefs that truth is not absolute and fixed at all times, focuses on the individual within a particular social and cultural context (MacNaughton, 2003). Poststructuralism argues that people are agents in their own lives; that they "are not merely shaped by the environment" but rather, can also "act on and shape their own identities" (Arthur et al., 2005, p. 13). The notion of poststructuralism challenges those beliefs which view childhood as somewhat deficient, that is, on the way to becoming an adult (Arthur et al., 2005; Austin et al., 2003; Flear & Surman, 2006). MacNaughton (2003) argues that a transforming model of a learner: "sits within a postmodern view of society and a poststructuralist view of the child" (p. 73). A transformational model of curriculum, which considers students' sociocultural contexts and is focused on giving agency to students, has much to offer the area of religious education.

2.6 Document Studies

A further key component of this study is the critical and significant role that texts command within the field of education. Schools' administrative procedures and practices, curricula documents, teachers' classroom interactions and so on, are informed and guided by texts. Analysing texts that lie behind schools' and classrooms procedures and practices affords key insights into the workings of such places.

A critical aspect of this study is to investigate key documents, including extracts from:

- (1) the official Church documents, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) and *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997); and the
- (2) Archdiocesan Brisbane Catholic Education document, "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b).

The focus of the investigation is the "realities" of religious education presented by these documents. Silverman (2000) maintains that qualitative researchers "are more concerned with the processes through which texts depict 'reality' than with whether such texts contain true or false statements" (p. 128). Whilst document materials are "social facts", Atkinson and Coffey (2004) caution researchers not to consider them as "transparent representations of organisational routines, decision-making processes or professional diagnoses" (p. 58). They go on to outline the key place document materials have in ethnographic research:

We have to approach them for what they are and what they are used to accomplish. We should examine their place in organisational settings, the cultural values attached to them, their distinctive types and forms...We would urge that documentary materials should be regarded as data in their own right. They often enshrine a distinctively documentary version of social reality. (p. 58)

Atkinson and Coffey claim that documents should be approached as texts and questions should be asked about their "form and function" (p. 73).

To this end, then, the language of texts provides critical starting points for analysis in terms of the categories of people, places or things raised by the texts (Austin et al., 2003; Baker, 2004; Prior, 2004), and how the language functions (Freebody, 2003; Halliday, 1985) in the texts to present a particular document's reality (P. Atkinson & Coffey, 2004; Silverman, 2000). Language in any text is chosen and written in order to communicate a particular stance, or outline a particular practice, which is representative

of an author who may or may not be made known explicitly. Text is not an incidental representation of a person's or persons' viewpoint/s - the language chosen is intentional. Language is one device used "to construct the distinctive and special mode of documentary representation" (P. Atkinson & Coffey, 2004, p. 59-60). Ball (1994) argues that words are ordered and combined in particular ways and other combinations are displaced or excluded; and that discourses are not only about what can be said, and thought, but also about who can speak, when, where and with what authority (pp. 21-22). Indeed, Gill (1996) rejects the notion that "language is simply a neutral means of reflecting or describing the world" and argues that discourse has a "central importance in constructing social life" (p. 141). She goes on to suggest "discourse is involved in establishing one version of the world in the face of competing versions" (p. 143). The version of the world to be established is confined within a particular context and is constructed with specific reader/s in mind (P. Atkinson & Coffey, 2004). It is the "particular versions" of religious education, presented in the nominated documents, which are pertinent to this study. Chapter 4 presents the analysis and findings of these documents.

2.7 Classroom Interaction

Classroom interaction is a central and essential aspect of this study, as it is a means by which the actual construction of the religion lesson can be concretely examined. The status of classroom talk has become a prominent topic of research only since 1970 (A. D. Edwards & Westgate, 1994). Mehan (1979a) noted that earlier educational studies in the form of correlational or field studies did not focus on the actual accomplishment of education in interaction, concluding: "Because educational facts are constituted in interaction, we need to study interaction in educational contexts" (p. 6). The status of classroom interaction within education has been recognised and acknowledged by such studies as the National Oracy Project and National Curriculum English projects in the United Kingdom (A. D. Edwards & Westgate, 1994). A key part of the Report to the Commonwealth Department of Employment, Education and Training, Australia, *Everyday Literacy Practices in and out of Schools in Low Socio-economic Urban Communities* (Freebody et al., 1995), included a focus on classroom interaction and its critical importance in understanding literacy events (Freiberg & Freebody, 1995; Ludwig & Herschell, 1995).

Research studies focusing on classroom interaction have afforded crucial insights into the institutional nature of classroom talk including how lessons are structured, and

the ways teachers constitute such structures with their students to facilitate learning through distinctive turn-taking sequences and unique features (Drew & Heritage, 1992; McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1978, 1979a, 1979b, 1985, 1998). Other key insights highlighted by research into classroom interaction are that students:

- learn and show what they have learnt in terms of content knowledge (A. D. Edwards & Westgate, 1994);
- learn how to interact in ways that are distinctive to classroom interaction (McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1979a, 1985); as well as
- learn how to become students (Austin et al., 2003; Austin & Freebody, 2001; Austin, Freebody, & Dwyer, 2001; Freiberg & Freebody, 1995).

Classroom talk is central to the learning process and is the public display of that process, as constituted by teachers and students (Austin et al., 2001). The study of classroom interaction as the “central source of the inputs and outcomes of educational practice” (Freebody, 2003, p. 93), provides an invaluable resource in which to explore educational practice. Chapter 5 presents the analysis and findings of the classroom interaction, which formed the data corpus of this study.

2.8 Theories of Language and Religious Education

The type of language used by teachers can indicate the approach that underpins their classroom religion program. Moran (1989) focused on the role of language in religious education. He proposed that three families of languages – homiletic, therapeutic and academic are used in religious education, and claims that academic language is the most appropriate language in the classroom teaching context. Moran (1997) elaborated on this theory arguing that the homiletic family includes storytelling, lecturing and preaching, and is “one where the community has a goal in view and helps the individual to move forward to that goal” (p. 124). Preaching is the most used form of homiletic language in the context of liturgical celebration. The therapeutic family is appropriately used “where the community is fragmented and the individual needs healing” and includes language that praises/condemns, welcomes/thanks, and mourns/comforts (p. 124). Finally, the academic family of languages, which includes dramatic performance, dialectical discussion and academic criticism, is a powerful teaching language. Moran argues that it assists avoiding the temptation of “sliding into storytelling, lecturing and preaching on the one side, or else toward therapeutic opinionating on the other side” (p. 217).

The use of academic criticism does not preach, nor heal students, and deserves further investigation as a means of teaching students. It is inappropriate to preach to students who may hold different religious beliefs or have no religious beliefs. Moran's theory of language in religious education provides a useful conceptual framework that assists in revealing teachers' approaches to religious education, as it suggests that an educational approach would make use of academic language that can be differentiated from other types.

2.9 Conclusion

This chapter has reviewed the literature that informs the approach to, and implementation of, classroom teaching of religion in contemporary Australian Catholic primary schools. It began by acknowledging the influence the United States of America and Britain have had on the Australian context. In addition, this chapter underlined the ambiguous nature of religious education and traced a number of terms used interchangeably with the term religious education. The key Church documents, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) and *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) were briefly reviewed, and because they are significant documents which inform and shape curriculum, an analysis of them is included in Chapter 4.

This chapter also highlighted the absence of studies or scholarly publications which have adopted an educational frame of reference for the preschool teaching of religion. Whilst no official curriculum is presently in place for Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic preschools, the policy statement, "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b) offers some guidance on the practice of preschool religious education and forms part of the document analysis in Chapter 4.

Classroom interaction is central to the learning process and an analysis of it affords particular insights into how preschool teachers approach and construct the classroom teaching of religion. How they constitute the religion lesson with their students in and through their talk is examined in Chapter 5.

The following chapter, Chapter 3, outlines the research design of this study. The findings of this study contribute to a greater clarity towards an appropriate approach to the classroom teaching of religion by preschool teachers within their specific contexts.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Ethnomethodology's standing task is to examine social facts, just in every and any actual case asking for each thing, what makes it accountably just what that social fact is?

Garfinkel, 2002, p. 251.

3.1 Introduction

This research study is located in the context of the developing nature of religious education in Australian Catholic preschools, as outlined in the literature review (Chapter 2). Its aim is to explicate how preschool teachers approach and construct the classroom teaching of religion in and through their talk-in-interaction with students, and determine how those relate to the teaching approaches exemplified in the specified documents. The central concern of this study is the actual event: the teaching of religion as evidenced in and through the teachers' talk-in-interaction with their students as it is happening *in situ*, *in vivo*. It is not interested in the teachers' intentions or in why the teachers are doing what they are doing; its focus is "the actual happening as being constituted by the people causing the happening" (ten Have, 2004, p. 15). This chapter outlines the study's methodological perspectives and methods in sections 3.2 and 3.3. Sections 3.4, 3.5 and 3.6 explicate the sampling strategy, data collection techniques and procedures, as well as the analytic techniques, consistent with the methodologies' underlying theoretical tenets. Sections 3.7 and 3.8 explain matters of validity, rigour, and ethical considerations.

3.2 Methodological Perspectives

It is to be recalled that the central research question for this study is: How do teachers approach and construct the classroom teaching of religion in and through their talk-in-interaction with their students, and how do these approaches relate to those exemplified in the relevant specified documents? Language, understood from both sociological and linguistic perspectives, is fundamental to this study. Drawing on two or more compatible perspectives within qualitative research can be mutually informative, as illustrated with Miller and Fox's (2004) "bridging metaphor":

Bridges link distinctive land formations, making it possible for people to traverse between them. While opening new opportunities for residents on each side, bridges do not blend the formations or otherwise make them indistinguishable. Where possible, bridges are also built to span the shortest distance between the land formations.... Our purpose is to show how two or more analytic formations

may be linked and made mutually informative, while also respecting the distinctive contributions and integrity of each perspective. (p. 35)

Sociology, as it is respecified in its Ethnomethodological perspective in the context of this study, focuses on language-in-use as it is used in talk-in-interaction to accomplish classroom lessons. In addition, key aspects of this study adopt a functional linguistic perspective, which has an interest in “how people use language to produce meaning” (Ludwig & Herschell, 1995, p. 3). Ludwig and Herschell (1995) showed that using Systemic Functional Linguistics analysis alongside Conversation Analysis with classroom interaction enabled further rigorous insights into educational practice.

Relevant official Church and diocesan systemic education documents, as outlined in section 3.5.2, also inform this study. In addition to drawing on the Ethnomethodological perspective, the functional linguistic perspective afforded further insights into how these crafted texts communicate key policies and understandings regarding religious education in Catholic schools. In other words, this study investigates both the social and functional aspects of language. First, language as it is used to accomplish social action (Francis & Hester, 2004) is analysed using the Ethnomethodological methods of Membership Categorisation Analysis and Conversation Analysis. Second, language is also an abstract system of grammar which, according to Freebody (2003), when analysed using Systemic Functional Linguistics, can afford insights into how language functions in crafted texts. In respect to the documents studied in this study, the Ethnomethodological method, Membership Categorisation Analysis, establishes how the text in those documents accomplishes the description of the ‘reality’ (Silverman, 2000, p. 128) of the teaching of religion. This accomplishment is at the heart of the study. In addition though, applying Systemic Functional Linguistics to the documents affords insights into how the language in them functions in accomplishing the teaching of religion. Therefore, it is from theoretical perspectives of both sociology and functional linguistics within an Ethnomethodological perspective (Austin et al., 2003) that this study seeks to investigate the phenomenon of the classroom teaching of religion in the Catholic preschool.

The Ethnomethodological and functional linguistic perspectives are outlined in the following sections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2.

3.2.1 Ethnomethodology

The central concern of this study is the actual production of the teaching event, as it is happening and evolving between the teacher and students within the classroom

setting, thus situating the study within a Cultural Science framework (Freebody, 2003). One of the most widely used forms of Cultural Science in educational studies is Ethnomethodology (henceforth EM) (Freebody, 2003, p. 63), a distinctive perspective and style of social research that emerged from Harold Garfinkel (Button, 1991; Garfinkel, 1967, 2002; Lynch, 1993; Rawls, 2002; ten Have, 2004). EM is the underpinning framework or perspective for this study in that it provides “both theoretical and analytic procedures for reconsidering the relationship between social structure and everyday social practice” (Austin et al., 2003, p. 9).

Unlike sociology, of which EM is a subfield and whose central focus is social facts, EM’s central focus is the actual accomplishment of those facts:

Ethnomethodological studies analyse everyday activities as members’ methods for making those same activities visibly-rational-and-reportable-for-all-practical-purposes, i.e., ‘accountable,’ as organisations of commonplace everyday activities. The reflexivity of that phenomenon is a singular feature of practical actions, or practical circumstances, of common sense knowledge of social structures, and of practical sociological reasoning. By permitting us to locate and examine their occurrence the reflexivity of that phenomenon establishes their study. (Garfinkel, 1967, p. vii)

EM recognises that social phenomena are locally constituted through the activities of participants rather than seeing them “coming to terms with some phenomenon” (Sacks as cited in Silverman, 2001, p. 74). The key tenets of EM are indexical expression, accountability and reflexivity (Garfinkel, 1967; Heritage, 1984; Lynch, 1993; ten Have, 2004). Garfinkel (1967; 2002) maintains that actors within a particular setting know what they can and cannot do; this knowledge is common sense knowledge and because they do what they know, the components of their actions are available to see and analyse; they are accountable.

Their [EM studies’] central recommendation is that the activities whereby members produce and manage settings of organised everyday affairs are identical with members’ procedures for making those settings ‘account-able.’ The ‘reflexive’ or ‘incarnate’ character of accounting practices and accounts make up the crux of that recommendation. (Garfinkel, 1967, p. 1)

Two things are happening in and at the same time: actions are expressed sensibly and because they are expressed sensibly, they are observable, recognisable and understandable; they are both reflexive and accountable. “The understandability and expressibility of an activity as a sensible action is, at the same time, an essential part of

that action” (ten Have, 2004, p. 20). Teachers go about their essential activity of teaching their students in particular ways; we recognise those ways as being sensible because that is how they are accomplished. Heritage (1984) emphasises Garfinkel’s insistence:

that the analysis of action must take account of the actor’s use of common sense knowledge, namely, that the social constitution of knowledge cannot be analysed independently of the contexts of institutional activity in which it is generated and maintained. (p.6)

We know that it is teaching and learning in which teachers are engaged, because the procedures they are putting in place indicate that. Reflexivity is an incarnate property that enables actors’ procedures to be recognised through the successful accomplishment of their activities by enacting those procedures. As ten Have (2004) maintains, “for Garfinkel, then, *reflexivity* refers to the self-explicating property of ordinary actions” (p. 20). Further, indexical expression, another tenet of EM, requires that the production of an event must be analysed *in situ*. Indexical expression recognises that people’s production of action is both contextual and temporal. In other words, “action is through and through a *temporal* affair which is *reflexively accountable*” (Heritage, 1984, p. 308). In order to observe, analyse and understand the actual event of teaching, then, it must be observed from within, *in situ*, as it occurs.

A further requirement of EM inquiry is “unique adequacy”. For an analyst or investigator to:

recognise, or identify, or follow the development of, or describe phenomena of order in local production of coherent detail the analyst must be *vulgarly* competent to the local production and reflexively natural accountability of the phenomenon of order he [*sic*] is ‘studying’. (Garfinkel, 2002, p. 176)

Related to this requirement is Garfinkel’s insistence on the fact that EM is concerned with the “just-thisness” or what he originally termed the “quiddity” (Garfinkel, 1967) of a phenomenon, that is, its specifics. Garfinkel (2002) later identified the “just-thisnesses” as the “haecceities” (p. 99). ten Have (2004) maintains that for researchers to capture the haecceities of a particular trade, they must develop deep competencies in that trade. This has involved ethnomethodologists having to spend long periods of time within a site prior to collecting their data (Rawls, 2002). In this sense, I as researcher, comply with this requirement. My previous experience of twenty-five years teaching in Catholic schools places my vulgar understanding and competency

above and beyond the necessary “unique adequacy” required to enter preschool settings as research sites in order to identify and describe their haecceities.

The concern of this study is teachers’ accomplishment of the classroom teaching of religion in and through their talk-in-interaction with their students in their preschool settings. It is not concerned with what the teachers intended to teach, or why they taught it; nor their reflections on what they taught after the event, nor what they could have taught. It is the actual *what* and *how* of the lesson at this time – the event itself as it is constructed, constituted, produced, and accomplished mutually between teachers and their students. The actual *what* and *how* of the construction of their religion lessons are revealed as they are studied (ten Have, 2004). EM provides a way of elucidating the construction of the activity as it evolves; it recognises the *mutuality* of the *construction*, and its application to educational research is most appropriate, because the actual action or phenomena of education is temporal, indexical and accountable (Freebody, 2003).

Central to this study’s focus on interaction, is language. Francis and Hester (2004) argue that social life is permeated by language at every level and that without language there would be no social life, and conversely, without social life there would be no need of language. “The relationship between language and social life is thus a mutually constitutive one” (Francis & Hester, 2004, p. 8). EM’s interest is in how people use language to accomplish their activities, that is, language-in-use. Garfinkel made it quite clear that understanding language is not according to a set of rules of grammar, but rather “understanding language is understanding actions – utterances – which are constructively interpreted in relation to contexts” (Heritage, 1984, p. 139). Ethnomethodology with its central concerns on the constitutive nature of action through language and interaction is the underpinning perspective for this study.

3.2.2 *Functional Linguistics*

A further aspect of this study is its concern with key Church and educational documents (as specified in Section 3.5.2) relevant to the specific nature of the teaching of religion within the Catholic preschool. In addition to understanding how language is used to constitute their construction of the classroom teaching of religion through interaction, it is also significant for this study to appreciate and analyse the function of language in these documents. Hence, this study also draws on a functional linguistic perspective. This study acknowledges the ongoing tensions between sociological and linguistic models regarding the relationship of language to culture (J. R. Lee, 1991). Sociologists argue that linguistic models with their emphasis on “the excessively

cognitive” do not pay attention to “the *social* character of language – its *social organisation*” (p. 196). However, Freebody (2003), who describes texts as having “an indeterminate, slippery relationship to the realities they depict”, makes a strong argument for using both sociological and linguistic models in the analysis of such texts (p. 175). When used in conjunction with Ethnomethodology, functional linguistic analyses of crafted texts afford insights into understanding their various representations (p. 175)². Freebody’s concern is with the ways in which experienced reality comes to be represented in textual format:

texts are necessarily ‘purposeful distortions’ of, and abstractions from, that experienced reality:

1. texts need to look from somewhere (visually, conceptually, motivationally, ideologically);
2. texts shape experienced reality into the form that makes it usable for some activity – that is, texts both arise from and afford certain practices;
3. this shaping process necessarily results in ‘purposeful distortions’ – omissions, additions and systematic mis-representations; and
4. these distortions have consequences for textual depiction and thus our understanding of reality. So what we can do, and what we do, with texts about some phenomenon in the world reflexively shape our understandings. (p. 177)

This study then, also utilises the functional linguistic method, Systemic Functional Linguistics, as explicated in the following section 3.3.2, to illuminate how language functions in the specified relevant Church and Brisbane Catholic Education documents. It is recognised that the methods utilised in this study have different underpinnings, but Freebody, Ludwig and Herschell (1995) and Freebody (2003) have demonstrated how these two methodologies illuminate each other in productive and insightful ways. The distinctive features of each perspective reveal unique and, at the same time, complementary insights into the reality of the religion program as presented in both classroom interaction and relevant documents. These unique insights are mutually informative, as they complement each other in providing a deeper and more comprehensive overall picture of the nature of how the teaching of religion is approached and constructed in the Catholic preschool setting.

² Freebody (2003) provides a comprehensive illustration of how the earth is represented using two different formats, the Mercator Projection of Earth and the Peters Projection of Earth. Each format has as its starting point a different purpose for the ways the earth is represented and in so doing either the shape or the size of the land masses is altered. In showing these different representations, Freebody illustrates the point that texts also offer different representations of reality according to their starting points of analyses.

3.3 Methods

The methods used in any research study must be consistent with the tenets, characteristics and policies of that study's informing methodologies (Silverman, 2001). The followings sections, 3.3.1 and 3.3.2 describe the methods from both the Ethnomethodological and functional linguistic methodologies employed in this study.

3.3.1 Ethnomethodological Methods

EM is not itself a method. However, Ethnomethodological research must make use of methods that "preserve the details of local order production 'over its course' for the analyst" (Rawls, 2002, p. 6). Garfinkel (2002) insists that EM's policies and discipline-specific methods must be "work-site-specific" and are called "members' methods" (p. 72). By members' methods Garfinkel (2002) means:

that in their workplace enactment and therein with alternately readable descriptive/instructional documentary orders of procedure, that can be disengaged and are transportable from work sites of their embodied use, they are uniquely adequate, and they are uniquely suited to the phenomena whose accountable production they describe. (p. 72)

EM's key assumption is that the production of observable social activities involves the local or situated use of members' methods for doing such activities. In other words as argued by Gubrium & Holstein (1997) meaning and detail are located in talk-in-interaction. Two key methods, which emerged from Ethnomethodology, include Conversation Analysis and Membership Categorisation Analysis, both of which are introduced in the following sections, 3.3.1.1 and 3.3.1.2.

3.3.1.1 Conversation Analysis

Conversation Analysis (henceforth CA) emerged from EM initially through the work of Sacks, who was interested in turn-taking and sequential organisation in talk-in-interaction. According to Silverman (2001), CA "is based on an attempt to describe people's methods for producing orderly social interaction" (p. 167). From its very beginnings, CA became the means by which details of the actual practices of people in interaction could be analysed (ten Have, 1999, p. 6). The basic objective of CA is to "describe and explicate the competences which ordinary speakers use and rely on when they engage in intelligible, conversational interaction" (Heritage, 1984, p. 241). Together with Schegloff and Jefferson, Sacks (1974) developed basic properties of conversation that rely on a system of turn-taking (Freebody, 2003; Heritage, 1997;

Hester & Eglin, 1997b; Sacks, 1984b; Silverman, 1993; Travers, 2001). A detailed account of this method's structure, rules of application, and analytic moves is outlined in section 3.6.1.

3.3.1.2 *Membership Categorisation Analysis*

Sacks focused on talk-in-interaction in terms of turn-taking procedures and sequence organisation. Turn-taking procedures, afforded insights into “how knowledge was organised in terms of categories of people, either in general terms (as in ‘children’) or in reference to the speaker (as in ‘my husband’)” (ten Have, 2004, p. 23). Over the time working with such categories, Sacks developed Membership Categorisation Analysis (henceforth MCA) which offers “a useful entrée to analysis of the social knowledge which people use, expect and rely on in doing the accountable work of living together” (ten Have, 2004, p. 24). A more detailed outline of this method's analytic moves appears in section 3.6.2.

Essentially, both ‘sequences’ and ‘categories’ are “members’ methods for doing social life” (Francis & Hester, 2004, p. 21). Both CA and MCA are consistent with the essential tenets and policies of EM in that they are accountable, reflexive and indexical and can be applied *in situ* and *in vivo*.

3.3.2 *Functional Linguistic Methods*

Originating from linguistics, Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) is the third method utilised by this study (Eggins, 1994; Freebody, 2003; Halliday, 1975, 1985; Ludwig & Herschell, 1995; Titscher, Meyer, Wodak, & Vetter, 2000). Proposed by Halliday (1975), SFL is a way to analyse text through focusing on the function of grammar. The three general functions (Bloor & Bloor, 1995; Collerson, 1994; Halliday, 1985) considered when focusing on the function of language include:

1. The interpersonal function also known as the tenor, describes the roles and relationships of people involved and the tone of the language used. It is the active and interactive part of language;
2. The ideational function also known as the field, describes the human activity which is involved; and
3. The textual function or the mode describes the type of communication engaged in, whether it is spoken or written.

The specific features of SFL analysis used in this study are detailed in section 3.6.3. SFL, when used in conjunction with Ethnomethodological methods, explicates

another way that ‘reality’ is represented through how language functions in the documents under study. This, in turn, allows for greater insights into what they are conveying to educationalists and teachers regarding religious education.

3.4 Sampling Strategy

As the phenomenon of the classroom teaching of religion is the focus of this study, purposive sampling wherein researchers “seek out groups, settings, and individuals where and for whom the processes being studied are most likely to occur” (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 370) was employed. Silverman (2001) argues that purposive sampling, “demands that we think critically about the parameters of the population we are interested in and choose our sample case carefully on this basis” (p. 250). Nomination of participants was based on consultation with staff from Brisbane Catholic Education Centre (henceforth BCEC). In the first instance, BCEC was asked to generate a list of possible preschool teachers who met the essential criteria: (1) that the classroom teaching of religion is a specific area regularly taught by these teachers; and (2) teachers to have taught at least four years in the Catholic preschool sector. The second criterion recognises that new teachers in Catholic schools may not have completed their accreditation to teach religion as it was important for the study that participants had the capacity to teach religion.

From this generated list, a further selection or typology was made to include other essential criteria, thus ensuring balance and variety within the study. Stake (1994) contends, “...selection by sampling of attributes should not be the highest priority. Balance and variety are important; opportunity to learn is of primary importance” (p. 244). Further criteria applied to teachers in BCEC’s list was made according to (1) their proportional representation of geographical settings within the Brisbane Archdiocese (inner city / outer lying suburban / rural settings), and (2) gender. The final criteria assigned to teachers were according to their interest in, and energy for, the inquiry. Originally, it was envisaged that four teachers representative of the typology would form part of this study. However, due to the intense nature of both the CA and MCA analyses, which revealed each source to be very rich data, the study was restricted to include only two teachers. A further consideration in coming to this decision was the fact that CA and MCA do not try to be quantitative – rather, they are interested in the detailed construction of reality. The matrix, representing the final typology shown in Table 3.1, was thus adjusted to graphically represent the actual participants involved in the study.

Total number of preschool teachers	Teachers with > 4 years experience in Catholic preschool.	Inner city settings	Outer suburbs settings	Rural settings	Female	Male	Interested in and have energy for study
2	2	0	2	0	1	1	2

Table 3.1: Typology of Catholic Preschool Teachers.

3.5 Data Collection Techniques and Procedures

A key requirement of EM is that data are collected *in situ*, *in vivo* (Garfinkel, 1967); in other words EM requires ‘naturally occurring’ data. According to Heritage (1984) EM’s insistence “on the use of data collected from naturally occurring occasions of everyday interaction is paralleled by a corresponding avoidance of a range of other research methodologies as unsatisfactory sources of data” (p. 236). In accordance with its EM perspective then, this study collected naturally occurring data, as opposed to “researcher-provoked” data (Silverman, 2001, p. 159). Silverman goes on to describe “researcher-provoked” data as data that would not exist without the researcher’s intervention such as that actively created in interviews or focus groups. In contrast, naturally occurring data are derived from “situations which exist independently of the researcher’s intervention” (Silverman, 2001, p. 159), such as audio or video recordings of ‘real life’ events.

The aim of this study was to specifically focus on how teachers produce the phenomena of the classroom teaching of religion in and through their talk-in-interaction with students during classroom lessons. Because the study was not focused on teachers’ intentions, their beliefs and so on, it was felt that questions regarding their thoughts and/or feelings (Silverman, 2001) before the lessons, would pre-empt them to produce what they understood to be a preferred teaching approach, that is, what they perceived the researcher was looking for. This in turn could interfere with or contaminate the natural processes in which they would normally be engaged. In the same manner, interviews with teachers following the lessons were not collected because their reflections of what they did or did not do were not the focus of the study. Indeed as Austin, Dwyer and Freebody (2003) point out,

In Ethnomethodological studies, people’s *reports* of what they did or did not do and say in a particular situation cannot be substituted for *what* they did or did not do. Similarly, interviews of interactions about a particular

incident cannot stand in the place of observations, recordings and transcriptions of the incident. (p. 38)

To that extent then, two sets of data as tangible realities (Titscher et al., 2000), were collected and include:

- Transcripts of taped audio recordings of preschool teachers' religion lessons; and
- Official Church and Archdiocese of Brisbane Catholic Education systemic education documents.

Each of these is outlined in sections 3.5.1 and 3.5.2.

3.5.1 Audio Recordings and Transcripts of Teachers' Lessons

Teachers in this study were asked to teach lessons from their classroom religion programs and audio taped recordings of these lessons were made. Recognising that the seating of class groups could be quite dispersed, three tape recorders were placed strategically around each classroom setting before the recordings of the lessons. This was to ensure that most of the interaction was recorded. The audio recordings provided direct access to both teachers and students' talk. As Sacks (1984a) claimed:

So the work I am doing is about talk. It is about the details of talk. In some sense it is about how conversation works. The specific aim is, in the first instance, to see whether actual single events are studiable and how they might be studiable, and then what an explanation of them would look like (lecture, fall 1967, Intro.). (p.26)

He goes on to say that conversation is the means that provides access to "what happened' from a matter of a particular interaction done by a particular people, to a matter of interactions as products of a machinery" (pp. 26-27). In classrooms, teachers' talk-in-interaction with their students provide access to the products of their lessons (Sacks, 1984a); in this case their interactions provided access to the ways they constituted the classroom teaching of religion with their students.

These recordings were transcribed initially without any notation (see Appendix G) and then a second time using transcript notation based on Atkinson and Heritage's notation (1984, pp. ix-xvi) (see Appendix H). The notated transcripts (see Appendix I), became the bases of the analysis (explanations of the various analytic techniques are outlined in the following section 3.6). Transcripts of teachers' recorded lessons were the prime sources of data in analysing their construction of the teaching of religion in and through their talk-in-interaction with students. Recording teachers' lessons and then

transcribing them allowed the event of their lessons to be repeatedly accessed and evaluated. ten Have (2004) suggests that:

the purpose of the processes of *recording* and *transcribing* is to produce a non-perishable, transportable and manageable representation – an ‘immutable mobile,’ as Bruno Latour [1987, p.228] calls it – to assist in the later processes of *understanding* and *analysis*. (p. 43)

Silverman (2001) offers three advantages that transcripts have over other kinds of qualitative data:

In the first place, tapes are a public record, available to the scientific community, in a way that fieldnotes are not. Second, they can be replayed and transcriptions can be improved and analyses can take off on a different tack unlimited by the original transcript... A third advantage of detailed transcripts is that, if you want to, you can inspect sequences of utterances without being limited to the extracts chosen by the first researcher. (p. 162)

A further significant point regarding the “close and continual examination” of recordings and transcripts is the nature of the familiarity a researcher has with the event and setting which could possibly result in an omission of noticing and appreciating “the intricacy and artfulness of ordinary social experience” (Freebody, 2003, p. 92). In other words, a researcher could inadvertently forget something or, because of their close familiarity with the situation, fail to notice obvious points. Continual re-examination of transcripts may assist in alleviating this problem.

Although the reality of institutions such as classrooms are invoked in talk – “talked into being” (Heritage, 1984) - that reality “is not confined to talk. These institutional realities also exist in and as documents, buildings, legal arrangements, and so on” (Heritage, 2004, p. 222). In acknowledging Heritage’s claim regarding institutional realities invoked in documents, this study also examined Church and Brisbane Catholic Education documents for further insights into the reality of the classroom teaching of religion in Catholic preschools.

3.5.2 *Relevant Documents*

As noted in section 2.7 in Chapter 2, the collection of documents is an important component of this study. The documents specific to this study included official Catholic Church statements, outlined in the following section 3.5.2.1, as well as the policy statement on preschool religious education published by the Archdiocese of Brisbane Catholic Education, outlined in the following section 3.5.2.2. These particular

documents were chosen intentionally, as they are directly related (each in its own way as discussed in the following sections) to the concerns of this study. The analysis is focused on the reality each document presents: how is the development of, and approach to, religious education constituted in these documents?

3.5.2.1 Official Church Documents

Extracts from official Church documents collected for the study included:

- *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988)
- *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997).

These documents are authoritative texts emanating from the Congregation for Catholic Education and the Congregation for the Clergy respectively, both of which are official voices in the Vatican for the Catholic Church. As such, these documents are essential to this study in that they provide normative underpinnings guiding the approach to, as well as practice of, religious education in both school and church settings. Within the context of Catholic schools, these documents make specific and explicit reference to religious education, as it is meant to be enacted in Catholic schools in both its forms: *catechesis* and *religious instruction*. Both of these documents are foundational texts that inform and shape policy and curriculum within the Catholic Church.

3.5.2.2 Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic Education Documents

The specific Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic Education document included in this study is “Religious Education in Preschools” (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b), which is included in BCEC’s *Preschool Handbook: Towards Continuity of Learning in the Early Years* (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002a). This document is the first, and to this point in time, the only official text / statement concerning policy and practice of religious education in Brisbane Catholic preschools. This document is analysed in its entirety, as all sections in it pertain directly to the concerns of this study.

3.6 Analytic Techniques

As explained in section 3.2, this study draws on two methodological perspectives, Ethnomethodology and functional linguistics. Each requires its own analytic tools that reflect the distinctive characteristics and tenets of each methodology (Miller & Fox, 2004; Silverman, 2001). In line with the underpinning methodological perspectives for

this study, analyses of the collected data were achieved by applying (1) the Ethnomethodological analytic methods, Membership Categorisation Analysis and Conversation Analysis, and (2) the functional linguistic method, Systemic Functional Linguistics. The procedures for the analysis of both teachers' transcripts and relevant documents, together with descriptions of the analytic tools employed, are outlined in the following sections, 3.6.1, 3.6.2 and 3.6.3.

3.6.1 Conversation Analysis

An initial analysis of the lesson transcripts was made using Conversation Analysis (henceforth CA), (Freebody, 2003; Heritage, 1997; Sacks, 1984b; Silverman, 2001). CA is an analytic tool that locates its meaning in talk-in-interaction. Alasuutari (1995) notes CA's 'specimen perspective', "Unlike data seen from the factist perspective, a specimen as a form of research material is not treated as either a *statement about* or a *reflection of* reality; instead, a specimen is seen as *part of* the reality being studied" (p. 63). Specifically, this study focused on the actual classroom talk-in-interaction, the turns it took, as well as the nature of talk between students and teachers. This interaction is institutional interaction that involves the special turn-taking organisation as outlined in Heritage (2004). CA by its very nature allows very intricate and detailed meaning to be explicated within the transcript (Freebody, 2003). It is through the analysis of the teachers' questions, emphases, lexical choices, responses to students' answers, as well as the students' subsequent replies, other interruptions and such like, that the constitutive nature of the classroom teaching of religion can be revealed. CA reveals what is done in and through the talk (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973).

According to Heritage (1984), the fundamental assumptions of CA are:

1. All aspects of social action and interaction can be found to exhibit organised patterns of stable, recurrent structural features;
2. Contributions to interaction are contextually oriented; and
3. No order of detail in interaction can be dismissed *a priori* as insignificant. (pp. 241-244)

CA affords key insights into the realities of how institutions are invoked. Heritage (1984) argued that it is only in locally produced sequences of talk that "these institutions are ultimately and accountably talked into being" (p. 290). CA has been effectively applied to the analysis of institutional interaction in several research projects including Austin, Freebody and Dwyer (2003) with classroom talk, Keogh (1999) with

parent/teacher interviews, and Freiberg (2003) in general medical practice. According to Baker (1991), the benefits of applying CA to educational phenomena are that it:

1. situates the study of learning in concrete interactional events available for observation, rather than in ‘processes’ that no one can see;
2. acknowledges that students work out what it is to ‘learn’ by participating in discourse, as a speaker, listener, or analyst in ongoing conversational scenes, just as teachers’ assessments of students’ learning can only come from witnessing particular instances of student performances. Thus an Ethnomethodological study of learning recognises and traces those same conversational practices and procedural clues that participants use in conducting and characterising learning;
3. provides for principled analyses of the pedagogic point and effect of talking in particular ways. From this perspective, the activities of learning are shown to occur in the organisation of classroom discourse: they are given procedural visibility. (pp. 163-164)

Specifically this study focuses on how preschool teachers’ accomplish the classroom teaching of religion in and through their talk-in-interaction with their students. Heritage (2004) proposes six basic places through which to probe the “institutionality” of interaction:

1. Turn-taking organisation;
2. Overall structural organisation of the interaction;
3. Sequence organisation;
4. Turn design;
5. Lexical choice; and
6. Interactional asymmetries. (pp. 225-240)

Noting these features in transcripts of the teachers’ lessons under study reveals critical insights into the production of classroom teaching of religion. The following sections 3.6.1.1, 3.6.1.2, 3.6.1.3, 3.6.1.4, 3.6.1.5 and 3.6.1.6 describe and exemplify each of these features within extracts of teachers’ transcripts.

3.6.1.1 Turn-taking Organisation

Heritage (2004) suggests that the first element to consider when analysing interaction is to decide whether it involves the use of a special turn-taking organisation (p. 225). The critical significance of special turn-taking organisation had been previously noted by Heritage (1984): “Conversation analysis is therefore primarily concerned with the ways in which utterances accomplish particular actions by virtue of their placement

and participation within sequences of actions. It is sequences and turns-within-sequences which are thus the primary unit of analysis” (p. 245). Together with Schegloff and Jefferson, Sacks (1974) noted that basic features exist in conversation and developed a system of turn-taking which refers to speaker change, turn order and size, distribution of turns, turn-allocation techniques, and repair mechanisms (Sacks et al., 1974). All interactions involve turn-taking organisation but institutional interaction such as that used in classrooms (detailed previously in Chapter 2, section 2.8), involves “very specific and systematic transformations in conversational turn-taking procedures” (Heritage, 2004, p. 225).

Focusing on the special turn-taking systems of a particular institutional interaction reveals the distinctive nature of activity within that institution. Drew and Heritage (1992) refer to this phenomena as:

contributing to a unique ‘fingerprint’ for each institutional form of interaction – the ‘fingerprint’ being comprised of a set of interactional practices differentiating each form both from other institutional forms and from the baseline of mundane conversational interaction itself. (p.26)

In other words, special turn-taking systems shape the activities constituted in institutional interaction. These systems impact on both the design of actions as well as the sequences of actions (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 39). By investigating the special turn-taking systems in the transcripts of teachers’ lessons, the unique ‘fingerprint’ of the classroom teaching of religion, or how the classroom teaching of religion is “talked into being” (Heritage, 1984, p. 290) is elucidated. The special turn-taking system common to classroom interaction during the instructional phase of lessons is “question-answer sequences in which the third turn is often partly occupied with some form of evaluation” (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 40). Mehan (1979a) refers to these sequences as initiation-reply-evaluation, or I-R-E sequences.

The following segment of classroom interaction exemplifies this special turn-taking system:

1. Teacher: Now holy week is a very spe::cial ti::me of the year °Nicholas you need to sit down keep your hands to your self please.° Holy Week is a very special time of the year for the school >and for the< ↑church (0.4) because it's when we get rea::dy (0.3) ↑ for (0.7) ?
2. Students: EASTAA::H
3. Teacher: Easter. We've talked about Easter before. Hands up if you can te:ll me (0.3) why Easter is so ↓spe::cial? °Have a think. Hands up° if you can tell° ↑me (0.1) why Easter is so spe:cial? (.) Yasmin?
4. Yasmin: Um (0.2) because you get ↑Easter ↓eggs.
5. Teacher: >Well that's one reason of course< isn't it? You get Easter eggs at Easter time. Hands up if you like Easter ↑eggs?

6. Students: ME. ME. ME.
7. Teacher: Just about everybody likes Easter eggs. Fantastic. Hands down for me. (0.2)
There is another reason why Easter is special. Have a think about it. (1.0) Susan?

In turn 1, the teacher introduces the topic of Holy Week and asks the question regarding the significance of Holy Week:

1. Teacher: Holy Week is a very special time of the year for the school >and for the< ↑church (0.4) because it's when we get rea::dy (0.3) for (0.7) ?
2. Students: EASTAA:::H
3. Teacher: Easter.

In turn 2, the students answer the question as “Easter”. The teacher evaluates their response as correct in turn 3 by repeating it. Continual evaluation of a response is a distinctive element of classroom interaction; it is not normally part of the special turn-taking system of personal conversation (Drew & Heritage, 1992). Further, Drew and Heritage (1992) claim that it is through their evaluations of students’ answers that teachers “repeatedly reaffirm both their claim to superior knowledge and their role as testers of students” (p. 41). The claim that teachers are testers of students is another feature exemplified in classroom interaction. Often within their evaluation in these third turns, teachers pose another question. Turns 3, 5 and 7 where the teacher evaluates students’ answers, all conclude with a further question asked by the teacher.

Another feature to identify within special turn-taking systems is the organisation of turn allocation. How are turns allocated? Do subsequent speakers self-select or are they allocated a turn by another speaker (as in hosted panel discussions or debates) or by the present speaker (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2004; Sacks et al., 1974)? Turns 1-2 is an example of teachers allocating turns to students generally wherein they are constructed as a single cohort (Austin et al., 2003):

1. Teacher: Holy Week is a very special time of the year for the school >and for the< ↑church (0.4) because it's when we get rea::dy (0.3) for (0.7) ?
2. Students: EASTAA:::H

At turn 1, the teacher asks the question generally to all students as a single cohort and they answer as a single cohort, “Easter”.

Turn 3 is an example of teachers allocating turns specifically where an individual student is nominated to answer:

3. Teacher: Hands up if you can te:ll me (0.3) why Easter is so ↓spe:::cial?
°Have a think. Hands up° if you can tell ↑me (0.1) why Easter is so
spe:cial? ((some students raise their hands.)) (.) Yasmin?

Initially, in turn 3, the teacher directs a question generally to all students noted by use of the lexical choice “you”, “Hands up if you can tell me why Easter is so special? Have a think. Hands up if you can tell me why Easter is so special?” At the beginning of this turn, the teacher has addressed the group as a single cohort asking individuals within the cohort to self-identify (by raising their hands) as knowledgeable (Austin et al., 2003). However, once students have signalled that they know the answer by raising their hands, the teacher specifically selects a particular student, in this case Yasmin, to answer. The interaction continues with the teacher asking questions both generally of all students, and specifically of nominated individual students.

A distinctive feature of special turn-taking is that departures from it can be sanctioned (Drew & Heritage, 1992) such as in classroom interaction, when students, uninvited by the teacher, call out. Heritage (2004) maintains that these sanctions are important analytically, as they demonstrate how the turn-taking organisation “is being oriented to normatively *in its own right*” (p. 226). When violations or troubles such as interruptions or errors occur, “repair mechanisms” are instigated to deal with or repair such violations and errors (Sacks et al., 1974, pp. 723-724; Silverman, 2001). The following segment of classroom interaction illustrates an example of repair mechanism within the special turn-taking system of classroom interaction:

19. Teacher: And I've got two (teacher places an egg and a baby chicken into the middle of the circle onto the prayer cloth) two () - °↑Wh::y do you think I would put (0.3) an egg and a BABY ↑CHICKEN into our pra:yer ci:rcle? ↑Yasmin?
20. Yasmin: New life?
21. Teacher: Because (0.1) they (0.1) rem:ind us of ↓n::ew (0.2) li::fe. (0.3) ↑Why >new life?< Why are we talking about (0.1) new life?
22. Student: Because they [
23. Teacher: Cindy
24. Cindy: Because um ()
25. Teacher: ↑Who had new life?
26. Student: Jesus.
27. Teacher: And did you think of that on Easter Sunday ↓morning?
28. Student: Yeah

The teacher had not completed her question in turn 21 when a student at turn 22 interrupted with an answer. The teacher continued speaking over this interruption by nominating Cindy as the student she wanted to respond. The student who interrupted did not complete the response. Such repairs serve to both establish the ‘norm’ and rely on the norm for sense. Students calling out or talking out of turn is not generally an accepted practice within classroom interaction.

A further instance of repair in classroom interaction involving a student's use of a repair device, such as the interruption marker "Excuse me" (Sacks et al., 1974), is exemplified in the following example:

65. Teacher: Thank you for sharing that. Thank you for making us. So many things we'd probably=
66. Student: [Excuse me]
67. Teacher: =think about at the time to say thank you to. °Hey, can it wait till after prayer?° Preschoolers I thought we might pray today.

The repair mechanism dealing with the student's interruption in turn 67 shows the teacher interrupting her own talk to explicitly address the student, "Hey, can it wait till after prayer?", before continuing with her initial talk. The student's use of the interruption, "Excuse me," suggests perhaps, that it has been established in the class routine, as a way of getting a turn at talk. In her insertion, the teacher orients to a breach – in that, the bid for turn is not granted – an account is given. Further, this establishes another classroom talk feature – some moments are 'interruptible', others are not.

A different instance of repair mechanism occurs when speakers repair a violation they themselves make within their own talk. The following example illustrates this type of repair:

38. Teacher: Did you? Well preschoolers I'm glad that you thought about Jesus on Easter Sunday morning ↑because that's why the Easter Bunny - >remember he didn't want to bring< ↑you:: (0.2) crocodile eggs did he?
39. Students: NO! NO! NO WAY! He'd be an idiot.
40. Teacher: He didn't want (0.1) to bring you:: (0.2) ↓dinosaur eggs?
41. Students: NO NO NO NO NO! NO WAY!
42. Teacher: Remember the Easter Bunny brought you °chocolate eggs° ((whispered)) >°cause you can eat them°< and they will remind us of Jesus having new life.

In turn 38 the teacher was talking about Jesus and then began to explain why the Easter Bunny leaves eggs, when she interrupted herself and introduced another notion about what the Easter Bunny does. Hearably, this repair allowed the teacher to reinforce the Easter Bunny's activity of leaving eggs, thus assisting students to make the connection between that and the religious significance of Easter. A more in-depth analysis of this example is continued in Chapter 5, section 5.3.1. The examples cited exemplify how teachers use repair mechanisms within the special turn-taking systems of classroom interaction not only to sanction students' turns, but also to correct themselves.

3.6.1.2 Overall Structural Organisation of the Interaction

Once it is established that a special turn-taking system operates, Heritage (2004) suggests that the overall structural organisation of the interaction should be broken into its typical ‘phases’ or ‘sections’ that focus on a task orientation normally central in institutional interaction, such as a classroom interaction (p. 227). Within a lesson, a teacher seeks to accomplish a particular goal, and in so doing, may move through several phases, each of which orients itself to the achievement of a task or sub-goal, that in turn contributes to the accomplishment of the overall goal of the lesson. The following extract exemplifies the development of a typical phase or section within lesson one of this study. In this particular phase, the teacher is working to establish how Jesus died.

24. Teacher: He died. He did die at Easter time. Can you remember (0.1) how he died?
25. Thomas: (0.1) No.
26. Teacher: >Hands up if you know °how he died? °< (0.1) Luke?
27. Luke: Um (0.1) he's dead.
28. Teacher: How did he ↑ di::e?
29. Student: I don't know.
30. Teacher: Yvonne?
31. Yvonne: Um (.) because he was on the red cross.
32. Teacher: >Because he was on the red cross.< Okay he was on the cross. He was nailed on the cross and he died on the cross.

In the previous phase, the teacher had established with students that Jesus died at Easter. In turn 24 above, he evaluates a student’s response that Jesus died at Easter as correct, thus bringing to completion the previous phase. In that same turn, he goes on to his next phase within the lesson, which seeks to establish *how* Jesus died. This phase continues until turn 32 at which point the teacher affirms the previous reply given in turn 31, as correct by repeating the student’s answer and adding further information, “Because he was on the red cross. Okay he was on the cross. He was nailed on the cross and he died on the cross”, before going onto the next goal orientation. This lesson moved through a number of phases some of which are analysed more fully in section 5.2.1 in Chapter 5.

3.6.1.3 Sequence Organisation

Heritage (2004) argues that sequence organisation, which refers to how utterances are sequentially organised in an interaction, is the central aspect of CA work. Essentially, analysis of sequence organisation focuses on how particular courses of action in an interaction are “initiated and progressed and, as part of this, how particular action opportunities are opened up and activated, or withheld from and occluded”

(Heritage, 2004, p. 230). Each and every utterance that is made during the course of an interaction, “sets up expectations about what is to follow either immediately afterwards or later on in the interaction” (Gumperz, 1992, pp. 304-305). Within each phase or section of a lesson are ‘interactional sequences’ in which smaller parts of the information are initiated. As noted previously, Mehan (1979a) identifies a common classroom sequence as the ‘three-part teacher-student sequences’, which takes the form of initiation-reply-evaluation acts. Once an interactional sequence has been initiated, interaction continues until the symmetry between the initiation and reply acts is obtained (Mehan, 1979a, p. 52). If the reply does not occur, there is an “extended sequence” of interaction until a satisfactory reply act is forthcoming. The interactional sequence used in the previous section 3.6.1.2 shows how each of the teacher’s utterances is sequentially organised to initiate and progress the topic at hand, that is, the way in which Jesus died:

24. Teacher: He died. He did die at Easter time. Can you remember (0.1) how he died?
25. Thomas: (0.1) No.
26. Teacher: >Hands up if you know °how he died? °< (0.1) Luke?
27. Luke: Um (0.1) he's dead.
28. Teacher: How did he ↑ di::e?
29. Student: I don't know.
30. Teacher: Yvonne?
31. Yvonne: Um (.) because he was on the red cross.
32. Teacher: >Because he was on the Red Cross.< Okay he was on the cross. He was nailed on the cross and he died on the cross. (0.1) Just like the one we saw up in the ↑ church.

At the beginning of turn 24, the teacher confirms Thomas’s response to a previously asked question about what happened to Jesus. In the same turn, the teacher then seeks to find out if Thomas knows *how* Jesus died. Thomas does not know and so the sequence continues with the teacher asking Luke, who does not know either. The teacher directs the question to another student in turn 28 and again to Yvonne in turn 30. Yvonne replies at turn 31 that he died on the red cross at which point the teacher concludes the sequence, as symmetry has been obtained. This particular sequence took nine turns to be finalised and exemplifies an extended sequence that features an ‘insertion’ between the parts of an adjacency pair, question-answer (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2004; Sacks et al., 1974).

The concept of adjacency pairs, as a feature of interaction, is a major instrument for analysis of sequence organisation (Heritage, 1984; ten Have, 1999). An adjacency pair refers to that feature in interaction whereby an initiated utterance requires a response such as in a greeting-returned greeting, question-answer, charge-rebuttal, and so on

(Freebody, 2003, p. 116). Sacks, Schegloff and Jefferson (1974) termed the first component of such a pair as the ‘first pair-parts’ and noted their significance in the conversation,

they set constraints on what should be done in a next turn, but do not by themselves allocate next turn to some candidate next speaker. They are, nonetheless, the basic component for selecting next speaker, since it is primarily by affiliation to a first pair-part that the apparently most effective device for selecting next speaker – addressing someone – in fact works. (p. 717)

In the lesson extract above, the initiation-reply acts formed the first adjacency pair and when completed, this pair became the first part of the second adjacency pair when coupled with the evaluation act (Mehan, 1979a, 1985). For example, at turn 24 wherein a previous reply at turn 23 was evaluated, the teacher also initiated a further question to Thomas, “Can you remember how he died?” Thomas answered at turn 25, “No.” These two speech acts, turns 24 and 25 together formed the first adjacency pair. The teacher followed Thomas’ reply with the same question to Luke at turn 26. Luke’s reply, “Um he’s dead” at turn 27 completed another adjacency pair. And so, the sequence continued until turn 32.

3.6.1.4 Turn Design

Turn design pays attention to what specific action a turn is designed to accomplish. Two distinct aspects of interaction are the focus of turn design: (1) the selection of an activity that a turn is designed to perform; and (2) the details of the verbal construction through which the turn’s activity is accomplished (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 32). How a turn is designed is a meaningful choice as explained by ten Have (1999),

meaningful choice that is, informed by a speaker’s knowledge of the situation in general and the participants in particular. In designing a turn’s format, the speaker fits the utterance to the evolving momentary situation as well: the preceding utterances, for instance by using previously used expressions and compatible pronouns, and the attention given by the hearers at the moment the utterance is being produced of the interaction. (p. 120)

The use of preference systems are associated with turn-design wherein the alternative pair part of an adjacency pair, (discussed in previous section 3.6.1.3) can either be a “preferred” or “dispreferred” option; “actions which are characteristically performed straightforwardly and without delay are termed ‘preferred’ actions, while those which are delayed, qualified and accounted for are termed ‘dispreferred’”

(Heritage, 1984, p. 267). Austin, Dwyer and Freebody (2003) suggest that when an instance of a “non-preferred” action is produced by speakers they accompany it with “features that function to ‘soften’ the effect of hearing a ‘non-preferred’ but mark it as an ‘out of the ordinary’ utterance” (pp. 189-190). A set of descriptions of such softeners or markers include speakers doing the following:

- pausing prior to saying the non-preferred;
- prefacing the non-preferred with ‘Hmmm’, or ‘Um’, ‘Well’, and the like;
- prefacing the non-preferred with agreement, e.g. ‘Yes, but ...’;
- qualifying the non-preferred. e.g. ‘Now you’re not going to like this, but...’;
- providing an account or explanation for their provision of a non-preferred;
- using a mitigated ‘declination component’ e.g. ‘Probably not, because ...’.

(Goodwin & Heritage, Levinson, Psathas, Taylor & Cameron as cited in Austin et al., 2003, p. 190).

The following extract of classroom interaction previously used, exemplifies the features to note in turn design.

1. Teacher: Now holy week is a very spe:cial ti::me of the year °Nicholas you need to sit down keep your hands to your self please.° Holy Week is a very special time of the year for the school >and for the< ↑church (0.4) because it's when we get rea::dy (0.3) ↑ for (0.7) ?
2. Students: EASTAA:::H
3. Teacher: Easter. We've talked about Easter before. Hands up if you can te:ll me (0.3) why Easter is so ↓spe:cial? °Have a think. Hands up° if you can tell° ↑me (0.1) why Easter is so spe:cial? (.) Yasmin?
4. Yasmin: Um (0.2) because you get ↑Easter ↓eggs.
5. Teacher: >Well that's one reason of course< isn't it? You get Easter eggs at Easter time. Hands up if you like Easter ↑eggs?
6. Students: ME. ME. ME.
7. Teacher: Just about everybody likes Easter eggs. Fantastic. Hands down for me. (0.2) There is another reason why Easter is special. Have a think about it. (1.0) Susan?
8. Susan: Because the Easter bunny ↑ comes.
9. Teacher: Yes. The Easter bunny comes. Just a sec there is another rea::son why Easter is very spe:cial. Alice?
10. Alice: Um because um it um, I don't know.
11. Teacher: >You don't know, can't remember.< ↑ Ann?
12. Ann: Um because we must go to the church.
13. Teacher: >We go to the church.< Yes a lot of people go to the church (0.1) during Holy Week and at Easter ti::me.
14. Student: () egg.
15. Teacher: >Yeah we've talked about the egg.< We talked about that. (0.2) Okay. (.) There is another reason why Easter is spe:cial. April?

This example of classroom interaction contains several instances of dispreferreds which have been softened. Students at turns 4, 10 and 12, make use of the marker “Um” to preface their answers, indicating their uncertainty about the status of their answers. The teacher also displays his use of such markers at turns 5, 7, 9, and 15 by prefacing his dispreferreds with agreement. These indicate that he has heard the students’ responses as incorrect but ‘softens’ his dispreferred negative evaluations with his own markers.

Austin, Dwyer and Freebody (2003) identify another important feature of conversation that is used to maintain its smooth progression: “prefatory comments”. These include:

- pre-sequences, such as, “Can I ask you a question?”;
- pre-closers, such as, “Anyway”, “Well”, and “Right” indicating that “a current topic is exhausted thus making accountable ending a sequence of talk” (Heap as cited in Austin et al., 2003, p. 190); and
- pre-topic shifts, such as, “Now”, “Okay” and “Right” indicating that what is to follow is an “accountable and normal ‘next’ option”. (p. 190)

Turn 15 exemplifies an example of a prefatory comment by the use of both a pre-closer, “We talked about that”, indicating the teacher will not continue with the topic, and a pre-topic shift, “Okay”, indicating a topic change, which is actually a return to the current topic:

15. Teacher: >Yeah we've talked about the egg.< We talked about that. (0.2) Okay. (.) There is another reason why Easter is spe:cial. April?

3.6.1.5 Lexical Choice

Speakers show that they orient themselves to the particular context of their talk through the specific descriptions they select. For example a teacher in an ordinary conversation may use the term “kids” when speaking about his/her class, but in a more formal institutional context, such as an interview with the principal may use the term “students”. Another use of lexical choice is when speakers select descriptive terms that indicate their role within an institutional setting by referring to themselves as “we” rather than “I” (Drew & Heritage, 1992). In doing this “speakers invoke an institutional over a personal identity, thereby indicating that they are speaking as representatives, or on behalf, of an organisation” (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 30). An example of this is in the first lesson transcript at the conclusion of the lesson.

101. Teacher: Happy. She is very very happy ‘cause now Jesus her son (.) has risen from the dead (.) and that's how we feel on Easter Sunday too. And then Jesus went and he visited ↑ his ?

The teacher is referring to an illustration of Mary confirming a student's response in the previous turn 100, that she looks happy. In his evaluation of that response the teacher adds, "and that's how we feel on Easter Sunday too," indicating that all students also feel this way. The use of the pronoun "we" is an instance of the teacher deliberately constructing all present in the classroom as members of the same institution (Austin et al., 2003), that is, the school and the Church, and therefore all are happy. The "we" is heard the way it is as in turn 1:

1. Teacher: ... Holy Week is a very special time of the year for the school >and for the<
↑church (0.4) because it's when we get rea::dy (0.3) ↑ for (0.7) ?

3.6.1.6 Interactional Asymmetries

Interactional asymmetries are places wherein the specific institutionality of interactions can be examined (Heritage, 2004). Whilst there are a number of such asymmetries, two are particularly relevant to this study's focus on the specific institutional interaction of the classroom: asymmetries of participation as well as epistemological caution.

The first of these, asymmetries of participation, refers to the level of participation speakers in institutional interactions either take or are given. To what extent speakers take or are assigned participation in the interaction, depends on whether they are engaged in ordinary conversation or institutional interaction (Drew & Heritage, 1992). In institutional interaction, "there is a direct relationship between institutional roles and tasks on the one hand and discursive rights and obligations on the other" (Heritage, 2004, p. 231). Teachers' participation in classroom interaction is significant. As the institutional representatives, teachers commonly ask questions securing the initiative to determine: (1) when the topic is satisfactorily concluded; (2) what the next topic will be; and (3) through the design of their questions how that new topic will be shaped (Mishler, & Drew & Heritage as cited in Heritage, 2004, p. 237). The following extract from lesson one exemplifies these three aspects of asymmetry:

32. Teacher: >Because he was on the red cross.< Okay he was on the cross. He was nailed on the cross and he died on the cross. (0.1) Just like the one we saw up in the church. (0.2) Remember what the cross looks like?
33. Students: Yeah. Yeah. Yes.
34. Teacher: Okay. I'll get that pen here (0.2) and I'll draw the shape of a cross up here. °It has a lo:ng straight part (0.2) and it has a cross part that goes like that (0.5) and there's the mountain (.) the crosses are on top of.° Now we're going to be talking about holy week. Lots and lots of things happened in holy week (0.2) and one of my friends told me befo::re what yesterday was called. (0.2) Yesterday had a special name. Something Sunday? (0.2) Lindsay?
35. Lindsay: Sunda::y.
36. Teacher: Yeah a special name. (0.2) Something Sunday. What Sunday was it? Nikki?

37. Nikki: ()
38. Teacher: No. Yolanda?
39. Yolanda: ()
40. Teacher: No. Amanda?
41. Amanda: ()
42. Teacher: Thomas?
43. Thomas: Palm Sunday.
44. Teacher: Palm Sunday. Can you say that?
45. Students: Palm Sunday.
46. Teacher: Yesterday was Pa:lm Sunday. Palm Sunday was a very special time when Jesus came into Jerusalem. Now I've got a book here and it's got a picture of different parts of holy week (0.2) and I'll show you what Palm Sunday might have looked like. Have a look at that. (5.0) Now what's happening there is Je::sus is in the middle there and he's >riding on a donkey< and everyone in the town was so happy to see him that they came out to greet him and they are waving palm leaves in the air (0.2) and they are laying them down on the ground for his donkey to walk on as well and that was when Jesus came into Jerusalem. And they were so happy to see him. Palm SUNDAY.

At the commencement of turn 32, the teacher confirms a student's response as correct and in turn 34 seeks to give additional information about the cross. During this turn, he concludes the topic dealing with Jesus' death on the cross and introduces the next topic, Palm Sunday. He then makes the proper name for the Sunday that begins Holy Week his next specific topic, and asks the question of several students, "A special name. Something Sunday. What Sunday was it?" in turns 34 through to 42. The teacher does not change the focus of this question; his central concern is the actual name of this Sunday. Another alternative could have been for him to open this sequence by giving the actual name, Palm Sunday, and then asking students to brainstorm all they know about Palm Sunday. His shaping of this sequence remained on the name until turn 46 wherein he himself added the description of the day. In this sequence the institutional nature of 'asymmetry of participation' is evidenced in the teacher's control throughout the sequence – he has determined the topic and focus, as well as when to open/close the topic.

The second of these asymmetries, epistemological caution, refers to the "kind of epistemological 'cautiousness' in which professionals avoid committing themselves to taking firm positions" (Heritage, 2004, p. 238). According to Drew and Heritage (1992) literature suggests that "professional participants in institutional interactions design their talk so as to maintain cautiousness, or even a position of neutrality with respect to their co-participants" (pp. 46 & 47). This 'cautiousness' is pertinent in the Catholic school setting as teachers, deemed representatives of the Catholic Church, exhibit a certain kind of cautiousness in that they cannot be perceived to be taking firm positions that

contradict Church teaching. In addition, the extent to which teachers in Catholic schools can maintain a position of neutrality can be ambiguous. The following excerpt taken from Teacher B's lesson, exemplifies the nature of this cautiousness:

72. Teacher: °You've probably just forgotten how to pray. Did you remember to pray over Easter time too?°

73. Students: Na. Yes. No.

74. Teacher: Did you remember that? ↑It's not just at this time we pray. Preschoolers I've chosen our song...

This sequence came at the end of the Teacher B's lesson when the class had finished praying. During prayer, the majority of students had elected not to pray. The teacher referred to this limited participation at turns 72, "You've probably forgotten how to pray. Did you remember to pray over Easter time too?" Here she is excusing the way morning prayer has progressed by suggesting that it is due to the fact they did not pray over the Easter break. This is further substantiated in her next statement in turn 74, "Did you remember that? It's not just at this time we pray." Her last statement was emphasised noticeably more than her other statements, as indicated by the underlined words. In this short exchange, the teacher is being cautious in the sense that she knows the Catholic stance on prayer and is explicitly supporting this stance. However, in doing this, she is not remaining neutral as shown by the use of the lexical choice of the pronoun "we" in turn 74. In choosing the pronoun "we", the teacher is presuming that all of her students are Catholic and therefore should be practising Catholic beliefs. Whilst this matter is examined more fully in chapter 5, section 5.3.2.1.2, this exemplifies how institutional representatives, when speaking for the institution as part of their roles, can display various ways of epistemological caution.

By applying each of these steps to the notated transcripts of teachers' lessons, CA afforded critical and significant insights into those teachers' constructions of and approaches to the classroom teaching of religion. In addition to CA, Membership Categorisation Analysis was used to analyse both lesson transcripts and the documents.

3.6.2 Membership Categorisation Analysis

Following the analysis of the notated lesson transcripts using CA, Membership Categorisation Analysis (henceforth MCA), an analytic tool that investigates how knowledge is organised in interaction and texts (ten Have, 2004), was applied to the lesson transcripts. Sacks (in ten Have, 2004) found that a large part of such knowledge is organised in terms of categories of people referred to by speakers or writers, and the category predicates in the forms of activities and attributes assigned to those categories.

Sacks (1992) devised an apparatus that provided for “how it is that any activities, which Members do in such a way as to be recognisable as such to Members, are done, and done recognisably” (p. 245). In building this apparatus, he introduced several terms to describe what it was that he was doing or employing to understand Members’ descriptions of culture. The first term he introduced was Membership Categorisation Device (henceforth MCD), which Sacks used to refer to any collection of membership categories:

Any collection of member categories, containing at least a category, which may be applied to some population containing at least a Member, so as to provide, by the use of some rules of applications, for the pairing of at least a population Member and a categorisation device member. A device is then a collection plus rules of application. (p. 246)

An example of a collection of categories, that is an MCD, would be School Community where Teachers and Students would routinely be taken as categories.

Another term Sacks (1992) introduced was “Category Bound Activities” which refers to those activities, properties, identifications, obligations, rights, concerns, beliefs, expectations, habits, knowledge, needs, typical haunts, and other attributes and competencies (Baker, 2004, p. 164; Freebody, 2003, p. 157; Jayyusi, 1984, p. 103), in which members are engaged as members of a Category. For the purpose of this study, the term Category Bound Activities (henceforth CBAs) is used as an inclusive term encompassing all the activities and properties as listed above, in which members of a Category are engaged. Sacks (1984b) argues that our understanding of people and how they act is dependent on to which Category they belong. In his classic description using the first two sentences of a young child’s story, “The baby cried. The mommy picked it up”, Sacks (1992, pp. 243-251) makes several observations regarding how these sentences are heard. The first observation is that the mommy is heard not just as any mommy, but as the mommy of this baby, that is, they are both heard as Categories belonging to the same MCD of ‘family’. ‘Crying’ is a CBA for the Category Baby just as picking up the baby is a CBA for the Category Mother. A convention used to identify category names is to capitalise category names – a convention used in this study. In addition to the CBAs explicitly stated in any description, there are also those that are implied.

The rules of application proposed by Sacks (1992, pp. 246-251) allow for commonsense analysis of descriptions raised in interaction and texts. Following is an explanation of the rules specifically relevant to this study:

1. The economy rule, which is a ‘reference’ satisfactoriness’ rule: “A single category from any membership categorisation device can be referentially adequate” (Sacks, 1992, p. 246). In the previous example of mommy and baby, the single category Mommy was used. It is also recognised that a woman can be referred to in many other ways such as Teacher, Wife, Woman, and so on, but these extra categories were not needed for us to understand the sentences concerning the mommy and baby. The single category Mommy provided all we needed.
2. The consistency rule, which is a ‘relevance’ rule: “If some population of persons is being categorised and if a category from some device’s collection has been used to categorise a first Member of the population, then that category or other categories of the same collection may be used to categorise further Members of the population. In other words, if one person is identified from a collection, then a next person may be identified from the same collection (Silverman, 2001, p. 149). The first category (in the example of the mommy and baby) raised was Baby, which is from the MCD of family, and so Mommy can be categorised as a member of the same MCD.
3. Hearer’s maxim: This rule is a corollary of the consistency rule: “If two or more categories are used to categorise two or more Members to some population, and those categories can be heard as categories from the same collection, hear them that way” (Sacks, 1992, p. 247) . Any category can belong in more than one MCD. Baby can belong to the collection of ‘family’ as well as to the collection of ‘stage of life’ (Silverman, 2001) but in this example we hear baby as a member of the MCD of ‘family’ because the next category is a member of the same MCD.
4. Duplicative organisation: “When such a device is used on a population, what is done is to take its categories, treat the set of categories as defining a unit, and place members of the population into cases of the unit” (Sacks, 1992, p. 247). In other words, “When categories can be heard as a team, hear them that way” (Silverman, 2001, p. 149). In the “mommy and baby” example we heard not only that the mommy and baby belonged to the MCD of family, but also they belonged to the same family unit; the mommy is this baby’s mommy.
5. Standardised relational pair: When members are more than co-incumbents of a team or device in that they are “a pair of positions with mutual rights and obligations”, then that pair is referred to as a standardised relational pair

(Silverman, 2001, p. 143). Examples of standardised relational pairs (henceforth SRPs) include husband-wife, mother-baby, teacher-student, and so on. Members can also be paired as SRPs when they are constructed as incumbents through contrasting activities which Baker (2004) terms contrasting pairs. In other words, by ascribing attributes to one is to implicatively not ascribe them to its pair (Eglin & Hester as cited in Austin et al., 2003). Austin, Dwyer, and Freebody (2003) give examples of such pairs, Mother/Father, Sister/Brother, Boy/Girl, explaining, “to say that the category Girl has the attributes ‘sugar and spice and all things nice’ is to implicatively say that the category Boy does not” (Austin et al., 2003, p. 40).

The lesson transcripts were analysed applying the above rules of application based on Baker’s (2004, p. 174) procedure:

1. locate the central Categories in the talk or text;
2. work through the CBAs associated with each Category to identify attributes, obligations, characteristics and so on, both stated and “hinted-at”, that is, inferred; and
3. examine the Categories plus CBAs to find the “descriptions of how categories of actors do, could or should behave.”

This analysis is explicated in the following excerpts:

46. Teacher: Yesterday was Pa::lm Sunday. Palm Sunday was a very special time when Jesus came into Jerusalem. Now I’ve got a book here and it’s got a picture of different parts of Holy Week (0.2) and I’ll show you what Palm Sunday might have looked like. Have a look at that. (5.0) Now what’s happening there is Je::sus is in the middle there and he’s >riding on a donkey< and everyone in the town was so happy to see him that they came out to greet him and they are waving palm leaves in the air (0.2) and they are laying them down on the ground for his donkey to walk on as well and that was when Jesus came into Jerusalem. And they were so ↑happy to see him. Palm SUNDAY.
57. Teacher: Okay have look at this book here. It’s got lots of pictures from the movie. We can also see Jesus going into the temple or the church and there he is telling stories and then we have these people here. Now these people they weren’t very happy with Jesus. We’ve talked about this before. Can you remember why, can you remember why these people weren’t happy with Jesus? Some people weren’t happy with him. Yasmin?

The first step involves locating the central categories involved in the talk. In the above sequences, the central categories raised included: “everyone in the town” who came out to greet Jesus and “was so happy to see him” at turn 46; another category, “these people” who “weren’t happy with Jesus” at turn 57. Employing the economy rule (Sacks, 1992) explained above, “everyone in the town” and “Jesus” can be heard as belonging to the same collection or MCD, “people in Jerusalem”. As the teacher told the

story he referred to illustrations from the book *Jesus of Nazareth: The Easter Message* (1978) and the image, Figure 3.1, accompanied turn 46.



Figure 3.1: The crowd welcomes Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

Then at turn 57 another group of people nominated as “these people” are also heard as member Categories of the MCD, “people of Jerusalem”. As the teacher introduced these people, he showed the illustration, (see Figure 3.2), from the book to which he was referring, as he told the story. This illustration showed the Sanhedrin, which was the Jewish Council consisting of Sadducees and Pharisees during the time of Jesus.



Figure 3.2: “These people were not happy with Jesus.”

The key feature to notice about both groups of people is that they have been assigned contrasting CBAs, which are qualified by their respective treatments of Jesus. The first group was happy to see Jesus but the second group was not. The teacher has structured these two categories as a Standardised Relational Pair (henceforth SRP), that is, they are incumbents through contrasting activities (Baker, 2004). He did this explicitly by ascribing attributes to the first group, “everyone in the town was so happy to see him” and then to the second group, “these people weren’t happy with Jesus” (Eglin & Hester as cited in Austin et al., 2003). As the SRP has been set up through the assigned contrasting CBAs, “happy to see/not happy to see” all other CBAs of each group are implicatively not of the other. Thus, these two Categories can be heard as Good People and Bad People and in addition, because of the Duplicative rule (Sacks, 1992), Jesus can be heard as also belonging in the Category Good People.

The next step is to work through the CBAs assigned to the Categories or implied in the talk. The teacher’s description assigns the following CBAs to the Categories: Jesus is riding on a donkey, everyone in the town was so happy to see him, they came out to greet him, they waved palms in the air and they laid them on the ground for his donkey to walk on. These predicates imply³ that for this group of people, Jesus is an important

³ The implied attributes are those that can be inferred commonsensically from the CBAs assigned to the Category member by the speaker or in the text.

person because of the way he has been welcomed into the town and that everyone regards him well. Whereas, the second group of people, the Bad People, were not happy to see Jesus. The implication is that for this group Jesus is not an important person; they do not regard him well. These categories together with their CBAs are summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Categories, Category Bound Activities & Implied Attributes.

Membership Categorisation Device	Categories	Category Bound Activities	Implied Attributes (Inferred from the assigned CBAs.)
People in Jerusalem	➤ Good People (Jesus & everyone in the town)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is riding on a donkey • was so happy to see him • came out to greet him • waved palms in the air • laid palms on the ground for his donkey to walk on 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good People think Jesus is an important person • not all Good People are important, just Jesus • regard Jesus well
	➤ Bad People (these people)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • weren't happy with Jesus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • do not think Jesus is an important person • do not regard Jesus well

According to Baker (2004), MCA is a way of showing how identities, social relationships and even institutions are produced (p. 164), whilst Freebody (2003) claims that focusing on particular CBAs associated with the various categorisations within a text “affords a particular line of reasoning that describes, locates, accounts for, and elaborates on the topics in the text” (p. 10). By investigating the Categories raised in the transcripts of teachers’ lessons, as well as those raised in the documents, together with their CBAs those both stated and those implied by those stated, this study has gained additional insights into the nature of the content taught within the teaching of religion, as it is accomplished in the classroom interactions of both lessons. These insights are elucidated in Chapter 5 specifically in sections 5.2.2 and 5.3.2. In addition to the lesson transcripts, this study also used MCA to analyse key Church and school documents nominated in the previous sections 3.5.2.1 and 3.5.2.2.

3.6.3 Systematic Functional Linguistics

In addition to MCA, official Church and Brisbane Catholic Education documents were analysed using Systematic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) (Halliday,

1975). SFL is concerned with how people use language to produce meaning. Ludwig and Herschell (1995) argue that SFL analysis, “is concerned with describing the meanings which are produced as different kinds of structures are used and put to different kinds of work” (p. 3). SFL analyses the function of grammar as a means of gaining insight into how the interpersonal, ideational and textual functions are constructed by the language (Bloor & Bloor, 1995; Collerson, 1994; Eggins, 1994; Freebody, 2003; Halliday, 1985; Titscher et al., 2000). Freebody (2003) explains that SFL directs our attention to these three sets of “metafunctions” of language-in-use ideational, relational and textual, as well as to two contexts in which language-in-use operates – the context of culture and the context of situation.

When any instance of language is evident in any situation, SFL approaches its analysis by documenting how the metafunctions are realized, made concrete, in that situation by analyzing the three variables related to the metafunctions – the ‘field’, the ‘tenor’, and the ‘mode’. (Freebody, 2003, p. 186)

The interpersonal or relational function, also known as the tenor, describes the roles and relationships of people involved and the tone of the language used. It is the active and interactive part of language. The ideational function, also known as the field, describes the human activity that is involved. The textual function or the mode describes the type of communication engaged in, whether it is spoken or written. Freebody (2003) offers a procedure involving working through a set of steps as a means of applying SFL to the analysis of text:

1. Who or what is in it? Who or what are the participants? We start here by looking at the nouns or nominal functions. Who or what are the active or working subjects or objects – the participants – in the text. What kinds of work do they do? What is done to them? This initial step explores how the text builds its field.
2. What gets done? What are the verbal processes that the text shows ‘getting done?’
3. Are some of the ‘doings’ ... the processes... shown here as nouns, as things, rather than processes?
4. What participants are shown to act in the text – who does the ‘doings’? In other words, what participants are in the foregrounded agent position of active verbs or processes? (pp. 188-189)

These steps are exemplified in a brief example of the data collected from the BCEC document, “Religious Education in Preschools” (Catholic Education Archdiocese

of Brisbane, 2002b). This extract includes two paragraphs, which appear in the section “The Role of the Teacher in the Religious Development of the Preschool Child”,

The teacher nurtures the spiritual development of the child through establishing and maintaining effective relationships and collaborative partnerships with the children, parents, families, centre staff, school and parish community. The teacher actively supports the family’s role as the primary faith educators of their children, while maintaining the ethos of the school.

The teacher strives to align professional practices with Christian values. This occurs primarily through the respect and understanding the teacher develops for each child as a complex individual within a community of learners. It also occurs through the development of a shared vocabulary, shared understanding and a shared vision. (p. 11)

Table 3.3: Foregrounded Agents in Paragraphs 8 & 9.

Participants	Processes	PROCESS TYPE
The teacher	Nurtures... establishing and maintaining	<i>material - action</i>
The teacher	supports	<i>material - action</i>
The teacher	strives to align	<i>material - action</i>
This (alignment of professional practices with Christian values)	occurs	<i>behavioural</i>
the teacher	develops	<i>behavioural</i>
It (alignment of professional practices with Christian values)	occurs	<i>behavioural</i>

Table 3.3 lists the foregrounded agents from these paragraphs, together with their processes. There were six participants nominated in these paragraphs including the teacher, nominated four times, and “this (alignment of professional practices with Christian values)”, nominated twice. Three of these, all teachers, are in the foregrounded agent position engaged in active processes. The language makes it quite clear what is happening and who is doing the happening – “the teacher nurtures (the spiritual development of the child)”, “the teacher actively supports (the family’s role)”, and “the teacher strives to align (professional practices with Christian values).” The SFL analysis of these paragraphs shows that the responsibilities of the teacher are to do with fostering faith development, placing the teachers’ activities in the faith dimension of religious education, indicating that this section of the document promotes and supports a catechetical approach rather than an educational one. It is to be recalled that religious education comprises two dimensions, education and faith as discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3. This document is examined in more depth in Chapter 4 section 4.3.1.

The interaction of both SFL and MCA were mutually informative in revealing the particular viewpoints of the texts, and their detailed analyses are included in Chapter 4, sections 4.2.1, 4.2.2 and 4.3.1.

3.7 Data Validity

Freebody (2003) argues strongly for authenticity of research:

The seed of the productivity of a research programme or project in education lies in the nature of its publicly knowable and inspectable procedures ... the validity of the findings is of prime concern. Validity is fundamentally about the adequacy of the representation of the social events and practices to which the research project refers. (pp. 68-69)

In line with EM's characteristics and tenets, this study facilitated *limited* researcher interference by collecting naturally occurring data and tangible realities, which included transcripts of audio taped lessons between teachers and their students, as well as relevant documents. The taped recordings of the lessons were teachers' own lesson constructions, and whilst every endeavour was made not to influence their planning and teaching of these lessons in any way, it must be acknowledged that teachers were aware that they were being recorded. To what extent this awareness may have, or may not have, affected their usual teaching cannot be evaluated, other than their exhortation that this was 'just like normal'. However, the student interaction showed no apparent evidence of a breach of normal routine, that is, students seemed to participate, as if this was routine.

Notated lesson transcripts include transcription symbols of CA as suggested by Atkinson and Heritage (1984) (see Appendix H). Silverman (2001), following analysis of doctor-patient interviews, maintained that such notation allowed for a much more detailed transcript as it involved "a shift of focus from coders' readings to how participants demonstrably monitor each others' talk" (p. 231). MCA was also applied to the analyses of these transcripts. The structured and standardised features associated with these analytic tools assisted in limiting personal and subjective researcher interference. Silverman (2001) argues that using both CA and MCA "shows how Ethnomethodology can put meat on the bare bones of representation" (p. 39). SFL, another standardised structured analytic tool, and MCA were applied to the analysis of the Church and Archdiocesan educational documents which, because of their public and tangible natures, also limit researcher interference.

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Researchers have two concerns when studying people's behaviours: their own values and their responsibilities to the those being studied (Silverman, 2000, p. 200). As argued by Bogdan and Biklen (1998), ethical decisions ultimately reside with the researcher, "with your values, and with your judgments of right and wrong" (p.46). Two key issues that dominate traditional official guidelines of ethics in research involving human subjects are "informed consent and protection of subjects from harm" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1998, p. 43).

To facilitate informed consent, this study enacted clear guidelines suggested by Silverman (2000), including the giving of adequate information about the nature, purpose, and scope of the research to the prospective participants in such a way that they understood that information, and ensuring that participation was voluntary (p. 201). The focus of teachers' lessons was their talk-in-interaction with students during lessons, as means of describing their approach to the classroom teaching of religion. In addition to these considerations, Silverman (2000) suggests that, if recordings are to be made, further consent is needed regarding the use/s of the data. Following acceptance to the invitation to participate in this study, wherein they understood that transcripts of their lesson recordings would be used in this research project, participants were also asked to respond to the following invitation:

In participating in this study, you have agreed to transcripts of your lessons in religious education to be used in this project. I would like you to indicate below what further uses of these transcripts you are willing to consent to. This is completely up to you. I will only use the transcripts in ways that you agree to. In any use of these transcripts, names will not be identified.

- 1. The transcripts can be used for educational publications and/or meetings*
- 2. The transcripts can be shown in public presentations to educational groups (As adapted from ten Have, 1998 by Silverman, 2000, p. 202).*

(For copies of all correspondence sent to schools and participants, please see Appendixes A-D.)

Participants' identities were protected using pseudonyms and all identifying elements of the schools involved are omitted.

Although students were not direct participants in this research, their voices were recorded during the lessons and, to that end, letters of consent (see Appendixes E-F) were sent home to parents and carers informing them of the nature of the research. These letters sought permission for them to be part of the class during the lessons and assured them that their children would not be identified, as pseudonyms would be used in the

transcripts. Indeed, with regard to researcher responsibility to the researched, every endeavour was made to protect the subjects' identities and confidentiality through the use of pseudonyms and the omission of any identifying elements of local school documents. It was also made clear to the participants that they were able to withdraw at any time during the study without penalty.

An extensive part of the data corpus in this study are relevant Church and Archdiocesan educational documents that are already in the public sphere, thus eliminating ethical considerations (Silverman, 2000, p. 200).

Application for ethical clearance was submitted to, and subsequently authorised by, Griffith University's Human Research Ethics Committee before data were collected. Because this study was conducted within Catholic preschool settings in the Brisbane Archdiocese, ethical clearance was also sought from, and granted by, Brisbane Catholic Education Centre, before data were collected.

3.9 Concluding Comments

This chapter has detailed the nature of the methodologies adopted by the research, as well as providing a rationale for their application. Two methodological perspectives, Ethnomethodology and functional linguistics, underpin the study in order to gain further and different insights into both the classroom interaction and Church and educational documents. This chapter has also explained and explicated the analytic methods consistent with the tenets of each of these methodologies, Conversation Analysis, Membership Categorisation and Systemic Functional Linguistics. Procedures for the study's data gathering, its adopted sampling strategy, and matters of validity, rigour, and ethical considerations have been described.

The following chapter is the first of the two chapters that present the analysis and findings of the data corpus. Chapter 4 presents the analysis and findings of extracts from the relevant documents to this study: the Church documents *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) and the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997); and BCEC's policy document "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b).

CHAPTER 4

DOCUMENT STUDY: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Contemporary educational practice is saturated with texts... It is through texts, therefore, that the reasoning practices that support, or that make thoroughly unremarkable, certain educational activities are legitimated and transmitted from generation to generation.

(Freebody, 2003, p. 204)

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter outlined the methodological perspectives underpinning this study and the analytic methods and procedures used in the analysis of the data corpus, which include relevant Church and Brisbane Catholic Education Centre documents and transcripts from two preschool religion lessons. As explained in the previous chapter, although classroom talk is the major focus of the study, a further core component is the investigation of key documents which guide and shape the development of religious education in Australian Catholic schools. This chapter presents the findings of the analyses of those documents.

The key documents relevant to the study, outlined in sections 3.5.2.1 and 3.5.2.2, include extracts from the two significant official Church documents *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988), and the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997), as well BCEC's policy statement "Religious Education in Preschools" which is part of the document *Preschool Handbook: Towards Continuity of Learning in the Early Years* (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b). Chapter 3 exemplified the analytic methods to be applied to the documents: Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) (Collerson, 1994; Derewianka, 2000; Freebody, 2003; Halliday, 1975, 1994; Martin, 1990) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (henceforth MCA) (Baker, 2004; Hester & Eglin, 1997a; Sacks, 1992; Silverman, 2001). The analytic methods, SFL and MCA described in Chapter 3, sections 3.6.2 and 3.6.3, afford examination of how the two dimensions of religious education: (1) *religious instruction* and (2) *catechesis* are constructed in the documents. These same analytic methods also examine the roles of the key participants involved in religious education: the Catholic school, teachers and students.

This chapter presents the findings and discussion of the analysis of these documents: Section 4.2 explicates the relevant sections from the 1988 document *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education); section 4.3 explicates relevant sections from the 1997 document *General*

Directory for Catechesis (Congregation for the Clergy); and section 4.4 presents the discussion of the findings of these documents. Sections 4.5 and 4.6 present the findings and discussion of BCEC's policy statement "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b) and section 4.7 concludes this chapter.

4.2. Church Document 1: *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*

The Congregation for Catholic Education (1988), responsible for *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School*, is an authoritative body within the Catholic Church, originally formed in 1588 by Pope Sixtus V under the name "Congregatio pro universitate studii romani". It was renamed the Congregation for Catholic Education in 1988 by Pope John Paul II and has authority over "all seminaries (except those falling within the jurisdiction of the Congregations for the Evangelisation of Peoples and for Oriental Churches) and houses of formation of religious and secular institutes; over all universities, faculties, institutes and higher schools of study, either ecclesial or civil dependent on ecclesial persons; over all schools and educational institutes depending on ecclesiastical authorities" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1996). *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (1988), the third document written by the Congregation for Catholic Education following the publications in 1977 of *The Catholic School* and in 1982 *Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith*, was a critical document for religious education, as it distinguished the two processes of religious education: *catechesis* and *religious instruction*. Religious instruction is not a term commonly used in Australian Catholic schools; however, it is understood to refer to the classroom teaching of religion, that is, the actual key learning area or the curriculum area. Distinguishing between the two processes was a significant breakthrough for religious educators in Australian Catholic schools, noted by Ryan (1997):

This document, in contrast to the trend in the catechetical documents, describes a definite separation – though close connection – between catechesis and the classroom teaching of religion, the religion program: the fullest expressions of catechesis are to be found in the parish faith community which provides the conditions for lifelong and diverse forms for coming to maturity of faith. The document implicitly acknowledges that the Catholic school does not fulfil all the requirements to be considered a community of faith; while most appropriate in a

parish, some catechetical activity is possible and even required of the Catholic school. (p. 87)

The relevant section of the document *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) for this study are paragraphs 68, 69 and 70 from “Part IV: Religious Instruction in the Classroom and the Religious Dimension Formation”, as outlined in Table 4.1. Section 4.2.1 presents the SFL analysis and findings and section 4.2.2 presents the MCA analysis and findings of this document.

Table 4.1: *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School.*

Part IV: Religious Instruction in the Classroom and the Religious Dimension Formation

68. There is a close connection, and at the same time a clear distinction, between religious instruction and catechesis, or the handing on of the Gospel message. The close connection makes it possible for a school to remain a school and still integrate culture with the message of Christianity. The distinction comes from the fact that, unlike religious instruction, catechesis takes place within a community living out its faith at a level of space and time not available to a school: a whole lifetime.

69. The aim of catechesis, or handing on the Gospel message, is maturity: spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic; this happens most especially in a local church community. The aim of the school, however, is knowledge. While it uses the same elements of the Gospel message, it tries to convey a sense of the nature of Christianity and of how Christians are trying to live their lives. It is evident, of course, that religious instruction cannot help but strengthen the faith of a believing student, just as catechesis cannot help but increase one’s knowledge of the Christian message.

The distinction between religious instruction and catechesis does not change the fact that a school can and must play its specific role in the work of catechesis. Since its educational goals are rooted in Christian principles, the school as a whole is inserted into the evangelical function of the church. It assists in and promotes faith education.

70 Recent Church teaching has added an essential note: ‘The basic principle which must guide us in our commitment to this sensitive area of pastoral activity is that religious instruction and catechesis are at the same time distinct and complementary. A school has as its purpose the students’ integral formation. Religious instruction, therefore, should be integrated into the objectives and criteria which characterise a modern school.’ School directors should keep this directive of the Magisterium in mind, and they should respect the distinctive characteristics of religious instruction. It should have a place in the weekly order alongside the other classes, for example: it should have its own syllabus, approved by those in authority; it should seek appropriate interdisciplinary links with other course material so that there is a coordination between human learning and religious awareness. Like other course work, it should promote culture, and it should make use of the best educational methods available to schools today. In some countries, the results of examinations in religious knowledge are included within the overall measure of student progress.

Finally, religious instruction in the school needs to be coordinated with the catechesis offered in the parishes, in the family, and in youth associations. (pp. 61-63)

4.2.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics

As described in Chapter 3, section 3.6.3, SFL, with its focus on the function of grammar, affords insights into how the ideational function, which describes the human activity involved, the interpersonal function describing the roles and relationships of the people involved and the tone of the language used, as well as the textual function, are

constructed in these documents (Bloor & Bloor, 1995; Collerson, 1994; Freebody, 2003; Halliday, 1985, 1994). As explained in section 3.6.2.1, an initial approach suggested by Freebody (2003), to explore how a text builds its ‘field’, is “to examine who or what it is that are the active or working subjects or objects – the participants - in the text” (p. 188). What do they do? What is done to them?

We can begin the analysis of this document by asking such questions as who or what are doing things: “what participants are in the foregrounded agent position of verbs or processes” (Freebody, 2003, p. 189). The foregrounded agents and their associated processes from the relevant paragraphs are summarised in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2 Foregrounded Agents & their Associated Processes.

Agent	Process
catechesis	takes place
aim of catechesis	is
this (catechesis)	happens
the aim (of the school)	is
it (the school)	uses
it (the school)	tries to convey
religious instruction	cannot help but strengthen
catechesis	cannot help but increase
a school	can and must play
its (school’s) educational goals	are rooted
the school	is inserted
it (the school)	assists in and promotes
recent Church teaching	has added
religious instruction and	are
catechesis	has
a school	should be integrated
religious instruction	should keep
school directors	should respect
they (school directors)	should have a place in
it (religious instruction)	should have its own syllabus
it (religious instruction)	should seek appropriate interdisciplinary
it (religious instruction)	links
it (religious instruction)	should promote culture and make use of
religious instruction	needs to be coordinated

A noticeable aspect of these paragraphs is that direct human activity is significantly limited. Of the twenty-two foregrounded agents only one is a human participant, *school directors*. All other foregrounded agents are abstractions and nominalisations, thus promoting it as formal and authoritative (Collerson, 1994, p. 82) specifically directed to Catholic school educators.

Noting the frequency of the foregrounded agents provides further insights into the specific subject matter of these paragraphs (Freebody, 2003). The key participants in this section of the document, as outlined in Table 4.3, are the school, including school directors, accounting for 40% of all foregrounded agents; religious instruction for 36%;

together accounting for 76% of the total. Catechesis, referred to only 20% of the time, is a minor element of this section.

Table 4.3: Frequency of Foregrounded Agents

AGENT	Numerical Frequency	Percentage Frequency
School	8	32%
School directors	2	8%
Religious instruction	9	36%
Catechesis	5	20%
Recent church teaching	1	4%
TOTAL	25	100%

A closer examination of the processes and circumstances of the *school* and *school directors*, in section 4.2.1.1, *religious instruction* in section 4.2.1.2 and *catechesis* in section 4.2.1.3 further exemplifies their function as either agents or recipients in this document.

4.2.1.1 The School and School Directors

To understand how the school is constructed in these paragraphs, the processes and circumstances with which it is associated when in the foregrounded agent position, is explored. Table 4.4 summarises these processes and circumstances.

Table 4.4: The School and School Directors' Associated Processes & Circumstances.

Participants	Processes	Process Type	Circumstances
The aim of the school	is	<i>Relational - attributive</i>	knowledge.
(While) it (the school)	uses	<i>Material - action</i>	the same elements of the Gospel message, ...
▼ it	tries to convey	<i>Mental - thinking</i>	a sense of the nature of Christianity, and of how Christians are trying to live their lives.
A school	can and must play	<i>Material - action</i>	its specific role in the work of catechesis.
(Since) its (the school's) educational goals	are rooted	<i>Material - action</i>	in Christian principles
▼ the school	is inserted	<i>Material - action</i>	into the evangelical function of the church.
It (the school)	assists in and promotes	<i>Material - action</i>	faith education.
A school	has	<i>Relational-</i>	as its purpose the students'

		<i>possessive</i>	integral formation.
School directors	should keep	<i>Material – action</i>	this directive of the Magisterium in mind and
▼ they	should respect	<i>Mental – feeling</i>	the distinctive characteristics of religious instruction.

An initial noteworthy point is that whilst the school is always placed in the active voice, that is, having agency throughout these paragraphs, only one of its processes is associated with circumstances related directly to religious instruction: “tries to convey a sense of the nature of Christianity and of how Christians are trying to live their lives”. However, this is not a clearly articulated statement as the verbal process “tries to convey”, with the inclusion of the modal verb “tries”, indicates that a successful conveyance is not guaranteed. Modality indicates an author’s degree of certainty about the information (Collerson, 1994). In its position as foregrounded agent, the school is mostly associated with processes and circumstances that are catechetical, as constructed in the following statements: “uses the same elements of the Gospel message”, “can and must play its specific role in the work of catechesis” and “assists in and promotes faith education”. These processes and circumstances do not specifically develop knowledge, which was the earlier stated aim of the school in paragraph 69, “The aim of the school, however, is knowledge”. Knowledge, as an assigned attribute to the school’s aim, is significant, because other attributes such as faith development or religious formation were not explicitly assigned. In addition, while the school’s aim for religious instruction at this point was not stated specifically as catechesis, the link to catechesis was made in a less direct way through the school’s later association with the mental process ‘convey’ in “tries to convey a sense of the nature of Christianity, and of how Christians are trying to live their lives”. These statements are crafted in far less specific and direct ways through the inclusion of the processes “tries” and “are trying”. A further significant point is the inclusion of the word “sense”, which presents an ambiguous interpretation of what the school or teachers are actually trying to convey about the nature of Christianity. There is no explicit clarity regarding the state of “sense”.

Although the school’s aim was not stated as catechesis, it is expected to play its role in catechesis: “A school can and must play its specific role in the work of catechesis.” The inclusion of the active verb “play” was modified initially by the modal adjunct “can” indicating a proposal of probability, but in its later use was further modified by the modal adjunct “must”, thus shifting the proposal from one of probability to one of obligation (Collerson, 1994; Derewianka, 2000; Halliday, 1985). Herein lies an

ambiguity. In paragraph 69 the aim of catechesis was assigned the attributes “spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic” as defining “maturity and associated with the active processes and circumstances of “happening most especially in the local church community” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988). The appropriate place of catechesis had specifically been assigned as belonging to the parish. The school’s aim was earlier specified as knowledge, but now it is required to play its role in the work of catechesis, the aim of which is not knowledge, and its place of development was not stated as the school, but rather as happening in the parish. What then, is the *nature* of the school’s role in catechesis? Nowhere in these paragraphs is this specified.

The statement then went on to expand the school’s goals associating them with the active process, “are rooted in Christian principles”. So in addition to the quality of knowledge, the school’s goals stem from Christian principles. The school is recognised as an arm of the Church by the inclusion of the active process “is inserted” with the circumstances “into the evangelical function of the church”, but its role in faith education is described only as “assists in and promotes faith education”. The precise nature of how the school is to accomplish its evangelical role is not qualified.

Overall, the precise nature of the school’s aims and goals, as well as its role is not entirely explicit in these paragraphs. One statement clearly outlined its aim as knowledge, but this was later made ambiguous with the addition of other goals that associated the school with catechesis, which was previously stated to be most fully the work of the parish.

Examining the specific ways school directors have been constructed and placed in these paragraphs, allows their roles within the processes of religious instruction and catechesis to be realised and understood. School directors’ roles have been acknowledged as critical elements within the work of the school. They are referred to twice in the section and in both instances given agency directly over the work of religious instruction: “School directors should keep this directive of the Magisterium in mind, and they should respect the distinctive characteristics of religious instruction”. The directive of the Magisterium to which this statement refers is that made by Pope John Paul II in 1981: “Religious instruction, therefore, should be integrated into the objectives and criteria which characterise a modern school”⁴. School directors are responsible for both integrating religious instruction into the school’s curricula and maintaining it as a

⁴ Address of John Paul II to the priests of the diocese of Rome, March 5, 1981, *Insegnamenti*, IV/I, pp. 629 f.

distinctive curriculum area. Significantly, they are not charged with any responsibilities related to catechesis.

4.2.1.2 Religious Instruction

Religious instruction, as a foregrounded agent together with its associated processes and circumstances are outlined in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: *Religious Instruction's* Associated Processes & Circumstances.

Participants	Processes	Process Type	Circumstances
Religious instruction	cannot help but strengthen	<i>Material - action</i>	the faith of a believing student,
Religious instruction (and catechesis)	are	<i>Relational - identifying</i>	at the same time distinct and complementary.
Religious instruction	should be integrated	<i>Material - action</i>	into the objectives and criteria which characterise a modern school
it (religious instruction)	should have	<i>Relational – attributive possession</i>	a place in the weekly order alongside the other classes
it (religious instruction)	should have	<i>Relational - attributive possession</i>	its own syllabus, approved by those in authority
it (religious instruction)	should seek	<i>Mental - perceiving</i>	appropriate interdisciplinary links with other course material
it (religious instruction)	should promote	<i>Material - action</i>	culture
it (“ ”)	should make use	<i>Material - action</i>	of best educational methods available to the schools today
Religious instruction in the school	needs to be coordinated	<i>Material - action</i>	with the catechesis offered in parishes, in the family, and in youth associations.

Religious instruction in its foregrounded agency position is associated with mostly material processes of action indicating its active - rather than passive – role, and is directly linked to circumstances related to the school. Whilst the school is not directly linked to religious instruction, religious instruction is clearly associated with the school in the following ways:

- should be integrated into the objectives and criteria which characterise a modern school;
- should have a place in the weekly order alongside the other classes; and
- should make use of best educational methods available to schools today.

Religious instruction is never linked explicitly to the parish, although the religious instruction in the school is to be “coordinated with the catechesis offered in parishes, in the family, and in youth associations”. Religious instruction then, belongs in the school. A noteworthy point is that seven of the nine processes have been modified by the modal adjuncts, *should* and *needs to*. Halliday (1985) explains that modal adjuncts serve to “express the speaker’s (author’s) judgement regarding the relevance of the message” (p. 50), while Derewianka (2000) argues that, “someone with a high degree of authority, status, power or expertise may choose to use high modality in order to convince someone to do something or to believe something” (p. 66). The modal adjuncts *should* and *needs to* express medium degrees of modality (*must*, *ought to* and *has to* are the stronger degrees expressing high modality). These statements regarding religious instruction are in fact commands, proposals of obligation (Halliday, 1985). The authors clearly outline the place of religious instruction within the school, and in using the modal adjuncts *should* and *needs to*, have expressed their judgement regarding the degree of obligation with which these commands are to be enacted. They have quoted from the address of Pope John Paul II and charged the school directors with the responsibility of “respecting the distinctive characteristics of religious instruction”. They then go on to issue the following commands regarding both the nature and role of religious instruction:

- it should have a place in the weekly order alongside the other classes;
- it should have its own syllabus, approved by those in authority;
- it should seek appropriate interdisciplinary links with other course material;
- it should promote culture;
- it should make use of best educational methods available to the schools today;
- and
- it needs to be coordinated with the catechesis offered in parishes, in the family, and in youth associations (§70).

In Table 4.5, the processes associated with religious instruction are either: (1) action processes indicating its agency as an active one in the school curriculum; or (2) relational, possessive attributive processes which serve to describe its possessive qualities. Further, these are not suggestions; they are commands which the school directors are obliged to put in place. Without exception, these commands are focused on education; not one is concerned with catechesis, referred to only in a minor way at the end of the section, when it is noted that religious instruction needs to be coordinated with catechesis.

Religious instruction has been described by quite specific processes and expectations, which are directly linked to the school and its curriculum. Clearly it is an educational enterprise that has not been linked with students' faith development. So whilst the school's role is not made explicitly clear with regard to religious instruction, the Congregation for Catholic Education (1988) has stated that religious instruction is the work of the school. A notable point regarding the description of religious instruction in this section, is that neither its aim nor its characteristics are explicitly articulated anywhere in these paragraphs. All that can be concluded is that religious instruction is an educational enterprise as it belongs in a school; it should have an approved syllabus and make links with other disciplines; it should implement appropriate pedagogy and it should promote culture. The references to a syllabus and other disciplines indicate that it is a curriculum area, but the precise nature of religious instruction has not been articulated.

4.2.1.3 Catechesis

Catechesis appears only five times as a foregrounded agent in these paragraphs, as outlined in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Associated Processes & Circumstances for *Catechesis*.

Participants	Processes	Process Type	Circumstances
catechesis	takes place	<i>Material - action</i>	within a community living out its faith at a level of space and time not available to a school: a whole lifetime.
The aim of catechesis	is	<i>Relational – attributive</i>	maturity: spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic;
catechesis	can(not) help (but) increase	<i>Material - action</i>	one's knowledge of the Christian message.
(religious instruction) and catechesis	are	<i>Relational – attributive circumstance</i>	at the same time distinct and complementary.
catechesis	offered	<i>Material - action</i>	in the parishes, in the family, and in youth associations.

In its association with the material process, “takes place” and circumstances, “within a community living out its faith at a level of space and time not available to a school: a whole lifetime”, catechesis is acknowledged to be principally the work of the parish. The significance of this statement is that it has been officially recognised that a

school does not have the wherewithal and time (a whole lifetime) that a faith community has to facilitate catechesis. Yet later in the same paragraph the school's active role in catechesis is explicitly stated. The aim of catechesis is clearly articulated as "maturity: spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic". The qualities of the assigned attributes, "maturity: spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic" are significant on two counts: first, they are not assigned to the aim of the school and second, they are not stated as taking place in the school but rather the parish: "this happens most especially in a local church community". The attributes "distinct and complementary", assigned to both catechesis and religious instruction in paragraph 70, re-emphasise their distinct natures and at the same time deem them to complete each other. Finally, catechesis is stated as being offered in the contexts of the parish, family and youth associations – not the school. Overall then, the authors have made explicit and clear statements regarding the nature of catechesis. Unlike religious instruction, whose aim and characteristics (in other words, its nature) were not qualified definitively, the aim for catechesis is clearly stated as maturity and its characteristics or attributes are clearly stated as spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic.

SFL has revealed several critical points regarding the processes of religious instruction and catechesis in this section of the document *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988). First, whilst the processes of both religious instruction and catechesis have been specified as distinct and complementary, only the aims of catechesis are precisely defined. The aim of religious instruction is not articulated. Second, whilst catechesis had been stated as belonging most appropriately in the parish, the school is obliged to play its role in the work of catechesis, but the precise nature of this role is not articulated. In addition, the matter of who is directly responsible for seeing that catechesis is part of the school's role is not addressed. Third, school directors are charged with the responsibility of implementing religious instruction into the school curriculum.

For further insights into how the school and school directors, religious instruction and catechesis are constructed in this document, MCA is applied to these paragraphs, as explicated in the following section 4.2.2.

4.2.2 Membership Categorisation Analysis

As explained in section 3.6.2, MCA focuses on Membership Categories, Membership Categorisation Devices and Category Bound Activities (henceforth CBAs), which include activities, properties, identifications, attributes, obligations, rights and so

on, in which members of a Category are engaged (Baker, 2004; Freebody, 2003; Hester & Eglin, 1997b; Jayyusi, 1984; Sacks, 1992; Silverman, 1993). The nominated paragraphs, 68, 69 and 70, in this document *Religious Dimension of Education in Catholic School*, (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) refer to institutions and people, as well as to the activities of religious instruction and catechesis. Categories can then be linked together to form a Membership Categorisation Device (henceforth MCD), a classification to which all Categories could belong. This document orients to a number of different Categories, which can be collected into three MCDs:

1. Institution – in which the Categories School and Local Church Community (Parish) belong;
2. School Personnel – in which Category School Directors belongs; and
3. Religious Education Activities – in which Categories Religious Instruction and Catechesis belong.

Finally, MCA takes note of the particular CBAs, which are assigned to, or implied about, each Category.

Table 4.7 outlines the Categories together with their assigned CBAs, as well as those attributes that are *implied* by the CBAs.

Table 4.7: Categories, Category Bound Activities & Implied Attributes

MCD	Categories	Category Bound Activities	Implied Attributes (Inferred from the assigned CBAs.)
Institutions	School	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • its aim is knowledge. • uses the same elements of the Gospel message • tries to convey a sense of the nature of Christianity, and of how Christians are trying to live their lives • can and must play its specific role in the work of catechesis • goals are rooted in Christian principles • is inserted into the evangelical function of the church • assists in and promotes faith education • has as its purpose the students' integral formation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intellectual • knows and supports the Gospels • describes Christianity; does not impose Christian beliefs; • catechetical • a Christian institution • evangelical
	Local church community - Parish	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • place in which catechesis happens • has level of space and time not available to school – a whole lifetime • especially facilitates spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic aspects of catechesis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • catechetical • forming and informing
School Personnel	School directors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should keep the directive of the Magisterium in mind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obedient and knowledgeable of Church directives

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should respect the distinctive characteristics of religious instruction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • obedient and respectful
Religious Education Activities	Religious instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strengthens the faith of a believing student • and catechesis are at the same time distinct and complementary • should be integrated into the objectives and criteria which characterise a modern school • should have a place in the weekly order alongside the other classes • should have its own syllabus, approved by those in authority • should seek appropriate interdisciplinary links with other course material • should promote culture • should make use of best educational methods available to the schools today • needs to be coordinated with the catechesis offered in parishes, in the family, and in youth associations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • faith developing • has its own qualities and characteristics (not specifically articulated) but complements catechesis • follows contemporary curriculum development requirements • same status as other curriculum areas • distinct curriculum area in its own right • relates to other curriculum areas • is part of society • pedagogically excellent • related to catechesis in parish and family
	Catechesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • takes place within a community living out its faith at a level of space and time not available to a school: a whole lifetime. • The aim of catechesis is maturity: spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic; • can(not) help (but) increase one's knowledge of the Christian message. • and religious instruction are at the same time distinct and complementary. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • church centred • intellectual • has its own qualities (spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic.) but complements religious instruction

Table 4.7 shows that the distinct nature of the Category Catechesis is described as “maturity: spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic”. No educational CBAs have been assigned to Catechesis. Category Religious Instruction’s role and characteristics in the school have been described through its CBAs, which are all educational, but not one distinctive attribute describes the actual nature of what religious instruction is. Religious Instruction’s assigned CBAs are descriptions of what it should *do* or *be*, but not what it *is* or *how* it should do what it does. It is as though Religious Instruction has been assigned *secondary descriptors*, that is, its primary or essential characteristics have not been assigned (such as one clear definition or description regarding its nature).

Several implied attributes can be made from the CBAs of Category School. The School’s role is particularly ambiguous, as not only is it assigned intellectual and educational CBAs but also formational, catechetical and evangelical ones. On the one hand, the School’s aim is stated explicitly as knowledge, that is, an educational role informing students about religion. On the other hand, it is obliged to play its role in

catechesis, an activity that directly aims to develop faith. Further, the school is to “try to convey a sense of Christianity and of how Christians are trying to live their lives”, an informational role; and yet is to have as its purpose “the students’ integral formation”. These conflicting CBAs make it difficult to define with any sense of clarity the exact nature of a school.

Category School Directors’ CBAs however, are outlined more clearly. They are to “keep the directive of the Magisterium in mind” and “respect the distinctive characteristics of religious instruction” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, para. 70). Because the distinctive nature of religious instruction is not clarified, the latter responsibility is further cause for ambiguity, as the school directors cannot know what it is that they are to respect. As noted above and in Table 4.7, whilst the CBAs of Religious Instruction are specified clearly in terms of its outcomes, or *secondary descriptors*, “should be integrated into the objectives and criteria which characterise a modern school”, “should have its own syllabus approved by those in authority”, and “should make use of best educational methods available to the schools today”, the distinct characteristics and aims of Religious Instruction are never outlined (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, para. 70).

The findings of MCA support those of SFL. Religious instruction, whilst clearly designated as the work of the school, is not in itself clearly described. The school’s role is ambiguous in terms of its core business, which seems to include both religious instruction and catechesis, but catechesis itself was only directly linked to the parish. Although catechesis is the only category to be explicitly described and its aim clearly specified, the process of its implementation in the school is not.

The most that can be said of this document is that it states that religious education has two dimensions: catechesis and religious instruction, two distinct and yet complementary processes. It can also be inferred that religious instruction is the sole work of the school, as in the document it is never linked to the parish or the family. The school is also required to play its role in catechesis – a role that is not specified in any way. School directors are required to implement the religious instruction program, the exact nature of which is not described. Initially, the aim of the school is stated as knowledge, but later other goals and purposes to do with catechesis are added, thus making the school’s aim ambiguous. The aim of catechesis is clearly articulated but the aim of religious instruction is not. Teachers then, can assume that whilst their core work is religious instruction, they are also required to assist in catechesis, that is, students’ direct faith education. Religious instruction is to have its own syllabus but teachers are

left unclear as to how to promote catechesis. However, the document does acknowledge that believing students' faith is strengthened by religious instruction, implying that teachers' religious instruction programs may indirectly complement students' faith development; put another way religious instruction has a faith dimension for those who seek it. Many questions are still left unanswered in this document. A more recent document, the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) which also informs and shapes religious education in Catholic schools, is examined in section 4.3.

4.3 Church Document 2: *General Directory for Catechesis*

The *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) was written by the Congregation for the Clergy, a different organisation from the Congregation for Catholic Education. The roles of the Congregation for the Clergy are divided among three Offices, the key one in relation to this document being the Catechetical Office. The Catechetical Office provides for the religious formation of the faithful of all ages and states of life; it issues appropriate norms so that catechetical teaching is imparted in a suitable fashion; it ensures that catechetical formation is properly executed; it grants the prescribed approvals for national Catechisms and Directories; it assists catechetical offices and follows initiatives regarding religious formation and international events dealing with such issues; it coordinates activities and offers help if necessary (Congregation for the Clergy, 1999). Ryan (1998) notes the significance of this document:

for the first time, the Congregation for the Clergy is accepting the view of the Congregation for Catholic Education that there is a distinct, though complementary, role for the Catholic school's religion class in a student's total religious education. (p. 4)

The document's relevant section to this study is "Catechesis and Religious Instruction in Schools", paragraphs 73, 74 and 75 as outlined in Table 4.8.

In the same manner that relevant paragraphs of the previous document, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) were analysed, the relevant paragraphs of this document will also be analysed using SFL, explicated in section 4.3.1 and then MCA in section 4.3.2.

Table 4.8: *General Directory for Catechesis*.

Catechesis and Religious Instruction in Schools.

The proper character of religious instruction in schools

73. Within the ministry of the word, the character proper to religious instruction in schools and its relationship with the catechesis of children and of young people merit special consideration.

The relationship between religious instruction in schools and catechesis is one of distinction and complementarity: "there is an absolute necessity to distinguish clearly between religious instruction and catechesis". (220)

What confers on religious instruction in schools its proper evangelising character is the fact that it is called to penetrate a particular area of culture and to relate with other areas of knowledge. As an original form of the ministry of the word, it makes present the Gospel in a personal process of cultural, systematic and critical assimilation. (221)

In the cultural universe, which is assimilated by students and which is defined by knowledge and values offered by other scholastic disciplines, religious instruction in schools sows the dynamic seed of the Gospel and seeks to "keep in touch with the other elements of the student's knowledge and education; thus the Gospel will impregnate the mentality of the students in the field of their learning, and the harmonization of their culture will be achieved in the light of faith". (222)

It is necessary, therefore, that religious instruction in schools appear [*sic*] as a scholastic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines. It must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and the same depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge. It should not be an accessory alongside of these disciplines, but rather it should engage in a necessary inter-disciplinary dialogue. This dialogue should take place above all at that level at which every discipline forms the personality of students. In this way the presentation of the Christian message influences the way in which the origins of the world, the sense of history, the basis of ethical values, the function of religion in culture, the destiny of man and his relationship with nature, are understood. Through inter-disciplinary dialogue religious instruction in schools underpins, activates, develops and completes the educational activity of the school. (223)

The school context and those to whom religious instruction in schools is directed

74. Religious instruction in schools is developed in diverse scholastic contexts, while always maintaining its proper character, to acquire different emphases. These depend on legal and organizational circumstances, educational theories, personal outlook of individual teachers and students as well as the relationship between religious instruction in the schools and family or parish catechesis.

It is not possible to reduce the various forms of religious instruction in schools, which have developed as a result of accords between individual states and Episcopal Conferences. It is, however, necessary that efforts be made so that religious instruction in schools respond [*sic*] to its objectives and its own characteristics. (224)

Students "have the right to learn with truth and certainty the religion to which they belong. This right to know Christ, and the salvific message proclaimed by Him cannot be neglected. The confessional character of religious instruction in schools, in its various focuses, given by the Church in different countries is an indispensable guarantee offered to families and students who choose such education". (225)

When given in the context of the Catholic school, religious instruction is part of and completed by other forms of the ministry of the word (catechesis, homilies, liturgical celebration, etc.). It is indispensable to their pedagogical function and the basis for their existence. (226)

In the context of state schools or non-confessional schools where the civil authorities or other circumstances impose the teaching of religion common to both Catholics and non Catholics (227) it will have a more ecumenical character and have a more inter-religious awareness.

In other circumstances religious instruction will have an extensively cultural character and teach a knowledge of religions including the Catholic religion. In this case too and especially if presented by teachers with a sincere respect for the Christian religion, religious instruction maintains a true dimension of "evangelic preparation". (228)

75. The life and faith of students who receive religious instruction in school are characterized by continuous change. Religious instruction should be cognizant of that fact if it is to accomplish its own ends. In the case of students who are believers, religious instruction assists them to understand better the Christian message, by relating it to the great existential concerns common to all religions and to every human being, to the various visions of life particularly evident in culture and to those major moral questions which confront humanity today.

Those students who are searching, or who have religious doubts, can also find in religious instruction the possibility of discovering what exactly faith in Jesus Christ is, what response the Church makes to their questions, and gives them the opportunity to examine their own choice more deeply.

In the case of students who are non-believers, religious instruction assumes the character of a missionary proclamation of the Gospel and is ordered to a decision of faith, which catechesis, in its turn, will nurture and mature.

4.3.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics

In order to determine the field built by these paragraphs the SFL analysis commences with listing the key foregrounded agents with their associated processes as in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Foregrounded Agents & their Associated Processes.

Agent	Process
The relationship	Is one of distinction and complementarity
it (religious instruction)	is called to penetrate and to relate
it (religious instruction)	makes present
religious instruction	sows and seeks to
the Gospel	will impregnate
religious instruction	appear [<i>sic</i>]
It (religious instruction)	must present
it (religious instruction)	should (not) be
it (religious instruction)	should engage
this dialogue	should take place
The presentation of the Christian message	influences
religious instruction	underpins, activates, develops and completes
religious instruction	is developed
These (different emphases)	depend
religious instruction	respond [<i>sic</i>]
students	have the right
this right	to know
The confessional character of religious instruction	cannot be neglected
instruction	is
Religious instruction	is part of and complemented by
It (religious instruction)	is indispensable
It	will have
Religious instruction	will have and teach
Religious instruction	maintains
The life and faith of students	are characterized
Religious instruction	should be cognizant
religious instruction	assists
Those students	can also find
religious instruction	assumes and is ordered

From the above table, it can be seen that *Religious instruction* is clearly the focus of these paragraphs, accounting for 18 of the 28 foregrounded agents or 64% as shown in Table 4.10. Students are referred to three times whilst other agents including gospel, rights, different emphasises and so on, account for 7 of the foregrounded agents or 25%.

Table 4.10: Frequency of Foregrounded Agents

AGENT	Numerical Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Religious Instruction	18	64%
Students	3	11%
Others	7	25%
TOTAL	28	100%

In light of its central place in these paragraphs, only *religious instruction*, as a foregrounded agent will be examined in the SFL analysis. Section 4.3.1.1 will explicate its function in the text.

4.3.1.1 *Religious Instruction*

To understand how religious instruction functions in these paragraphs, the processes and circumstances with which it is associated when in the foregrounded agent position are listed in Table 4.11.

Table 4.11: *Religious Instruction's* Associated Processes & Circumstances.

Participants	Processes	PROCESS TYPE	CIRCUMSTANCES
it (religious instruction)	is called penetrate ▼ to relate	to <i>Material - action</i>	a particular area of culture and with other areas of knowledge.
it (religious instruction)	makes present	<i>Material - action</i>	the Gospel in a personal process of cultural, systematic and critical assimilation.
religious instruction in schools	sows ▼ seeks to “keep in touch	<i>Material – action</i> <i>Material - action</i>	the dynamic seed of the Gospel and with the other elements of the student’s knowledge and education
It ▼ religious instruction in schools	is appear [<i>sic</i>]	<i>Existential</i> <i>Mental - perception</i>	necessary therefore that as a scholastic discipline with the same systematic demands and the same rigour as other disciplines.
It (religious instruction)	must present	<i>Material – action</i>	the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and the same depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge.
It (religious instruction) ▼ it	should (not) be should engage	<i>Relational – attributive</i> <i>Material - action</i>	an accessory alongside of these disciplines but rather in a necessary inter-disciplinary dialogue.
(Through inter-disciplinary dialogue) religious instruction in schools	underpins, activates, develops and completes	<i>Material – action</i>	the educational activity of the school.
Religious instruction in schools	is developed	<i>Material - action</i>	in diverse scholastic contexts, while always maintaining its proper character, to acquire different emphases.
It religious instruction in schools	is respond [<i>sic</i>]	<i>Existential</i> <i>Material - action</i>	however, necessary that efforts be made so that to its objectives and its own characteristics.

(When given in the context of the Catholic school,) religious instruction	is part of and completed by	<i>Relational - attributive</i>	other forms of the ministry of the word (catechesis, homilies, liturgical celebration, etc.).
It (religious instruction)	is indispensable	<i>Relational - attributive</i>	to their pedagogical function and the basis for their existence.
Religious instruction	should be cognizant	<i>Mental - cognition</i>	of that fact (the life and faith of students are characterised by continuous change) if it is to accomplish its own ends.
(In the case of students who are believers) religious instruction	assists (them) to understand	<i>Mental - cognition</i>	better the Christian message, by relating it to the great existential concerns common to all religions and to every human being, to the various visions of life particularly evident in culture and to those major moral questions which confront humanity today/
Those students (who are searching, or who have religious doubts)	can also find	<i>Material - action</i>	in religious instruction the possibility of discovering what exactly faith in Jesus Christ is, what response the Church makes to their questions, and gives them the opportunity to examine their own choice more deeply.
(In the case of students who are non-believers,) religious instruction	assumes	<i>Relational – attributive</i>	the character of a missionary proclamation of the Gospel and
	is ordered		to a decision of faith, which catechesis, in its turn, will nurture and mature.

In this document, religious instruction in its foregrounded agent position is mostly associated with material actions, clearly indicating it is to play an active part in the school’s core business of education rather than a passive one. Other processes include relational attributes identifying characteristics of religious instruction, thus clarifying its nature more explicitly, and mental processes of perception and cognition indicating its intellectual function. A further critical observation is that most of the processes are modulated by the adjunct modals, “should” and “must” signifying these processes as proposals of obligation (Derewianka, 2000; Halliday, 1985) (section 4.2.1. 2). A more

focused examination of paragraphs 73, 74 and 75 reveals both the characteristics assigned to religious instruction, as well as its designated active roles in schools.

Paragraph 73, entitled “The proper character of religious instruction in schools”, begins by stating that the nature of religious instruction in schools and its relationship with catechesis, “merit special consideration”. This relationship, described as “one of distinction and complementarity”, is further qualified in the next sentence by an existential process, “there is an absolute necessity to distinguish clearly between religious instruction and catechesis.” The use of the existential process in “there is” is one way an author can show that this is the way the world ‘is’ (Freebody, 2003; Halliday, 1985). The construction of this static and unchanging view of the world wherein religious instruction and catechesis are distinct, is one of high obligation shown by the addition of the modal adjuncts “an absolute necessity”. So from the outset of this section, the authors have left no doubt that while complementing catechesis, religious instruction is to be distinguished from it; it is a distinct, separate process. The paragraph then goes on to outline the character of religious instruction in more specific ways.

Initially, religious instruction is placed in a passive participant position when it is assigned an evangelising character: “What confers on religious instruction in schools its proper evangelising character is the fact that it is called to penetrate a particular area of culture and to relate with other areas of knowledge”. In the second part of this sentence religious instruction is then placed in the foregrounded agent position associated with the material actions “is called to penetrate and relate with other areas of knowledge.” The noteworthy points here are twofold: religious instruction is recognised as acting in diverse cultural contexts and it is to relate “with other areas of knowledge”, an element specific to schools rather than to the parish or family, both of whom are more fully and directly concerned with faith development. The following sentences go on to outline more fully the nature of religious instruction’s evangelistic role through the use of material actions and circumstances: “makes present the Gospel in a personal process of cultural, systematic and critical assimilation”. Whilst it is acknowledged that religious instruction does have an evangelistic character, the manner in which it is to fulfil this evangelistic role is described as educational and academic, compatible with other scholastic elements. In other words religious instruction’s evangelistic role is recognised as being achieved in a different way from catechesis.

The second part of paragraph 73 clearly articulates the role of religious instruction in schools in specific and highly obligatory language. The section opens with another existential statement of obligation “It is necessary therefore, that religious instruction

should...” and the list of what it is to achieve is explicitly stated through material active processes that are modulated with obligatory modals in most cases:

- appear [*sic*] as a scholastic discipline with the same systematic demand and the same rigour as other disciplines;
- must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and the same depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge;
- should not be an accessory alongside of these disciplines;
- should engage in necessary interdisciplinary dialogue;
- underpins, activates, develops and completes the educational activity of the school.

Without exception, all of these processes emphasise both the academic nature of religious instruction and the active role it is to take in schools. It is to be planned, prepared, and taught in the same way as other academic key learning areas in the school’s curriculum. It is not simply to be “an accessory alongside of these disciplines.” In addition, religious instruction is to “engage in necessary interdisciplinary dialogue”, and it is through this dialogue that religious instruction “underpins, activates, develops and completes the educational activity of the school.” In this section of the document, the Congregation for the Clergy has unambiguously stated that religious instruction is not only to exhibit all the necessary attributes associated with any school discipline, but equally critical is the statement that religious instruction, “underpins, activates, develops and completes” all other disciplines. In other words, not only is religious instruction to be an educational subject in similar ways as other subject areas are educational, but also that other subjects are defined in terms of religious instruction.

Paragraphs 74 and 75 develop the next section: “The school context and those to whom religious instruction in schools is directed.” A significant point for teachers of religion acknowledged in these paragraphs, is that religious instruction can be adapted to suit the specific school context in which it takes place, as long as it maintains its proper character: “Religious instruction in schools is developed in diverse scholastic contexts, while always maintaining its proper character, to acquire different emphases”. The Congregation of the Clergy thus acknowledges and sanctions not only the diversity of school contexts, but also, that such contexts shape, guide and determine the development and implementation of religious instruction, as long as it maintains its proper character. (This proper character has previously been described in paragraph 73.) Religious instruction can therefore be adapted to specific local circumstances. The text goes on to

elaborate the nature of what determines these different contexts: “legal and organisational circumstances, educational theories, personal outlook of individual teachers and students as well as the relationship between religious instruction in the schools and family or parish catechesis”.

Of particular relevance for this research study is the nature of religious instruction in the context of the Catholic school (as distinct from state schools or non-confessional schools also described in this paragraph):

When given in the context of the Catholic school, religious instruction is part of and completed by catechesis, homilies, liturgical celebrations, etc. It is indispensable to their pedagogical function and the basis for their existence. (¶ 74)

The use of the attribution processes of identification “is part of and completed by catechesis, homilies, liturgical celebrations, etc.” and “is indispensable”, outlines religious instruction as an essential element of all aspects of the Church and moreover, because of its distinctive educational nature, facilitates the existence of such aspects.

Paragraph 75 focuses on the students who receive religious instruction and notes that they “are characterised by continuous change”. The authors point out that religious instruction “should be cognizant of that fact if it is to accomplish its own ends”. This is a critical statement for teachers of religion, as it endorses the right of religious instruction programs to consider, acknowledge, and cater for students’ diverse backgrounds. Students are described as believers, searchers and non-believers. For believers, religious instruction “assists them to understand better the Christian message”. The use of the mental process, “understand,” outlines the cognitive characteristic of religious instruction given in the school context. Implied here is that these believing students who have already received the Christian message in a faith context through other forms of the ministry of the word, will now be able to understand this message better because of the educational function of religious instruction. In the case of those students who are searching, the text does not give religious instruction agency; rather it gives the students agency:

Those students who are searching, or who have religious doubts, can also find in religious instruction the possibility of discovering what exactly faith in Jesus Christ is, what response the Church makes to their questions, and gives them [*sic*] the opportunity to examine their own choice more deeply. (¶ 75)

Paragraph 75 acknowledges that religious instruction cannot impose faith; it does not have that function. It acknowledges that students’ faith formation is a personal choice. It has been left to the students themselves: “Those students who are searching, or

who have religious doubts,” to find or not find faith in the program, “Those students ... can also find in religious instruction the possibility of discovering what exactly faith in Jesus Christ is, what response the Church makes to their questions, and gives them the opportunity to examine their own choice more deeply”. And finally, for those students who are non-believers, religious instruction “assumes the character of a missionary proclamation of the Gospel and is ordered to a decision of faith, which catechesis, in its turn, will nurture and mature ”. Here again, no specific task is assigned to religious instruction, as it is simply described as “assuming the character”. Nothing explicit is expected of religious instruction and it appears that again it is left to these students themselves to take from it what they need, and if they decide to seek faith it is left to the role of catechesis, not religious instruction, to nurture and mature such faith. The reference to catechesis in this section of the document is significant, as it is the one and only time it is referred to, and the reference is to faith not knowledge, thus the text further strengthens the distinct natures of both religious instruction and catechesis.

Insights gained from the SFL analysis of paragraphs 73, 74 and 75 of the document *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) centre on the nature and roles of religious instruction in schools, its place in the context of the Catholic school and its effects on students. Religious instruction as the dominant foregrounded agent in these paragraphs is associated with mainly material action processes, which serve to clearly outline its active task in schools, the main one being, that, as a “scholastic discipline” it presents the Christian message. Its characteristics described through the use of attribution processes of identification, are academic and educational. Within the context of the Catholic school, religious instruction is shown to provide the educational function for other aspects of the Church including catechesis, homilies, and liturgical celebrations. Finally, it is acknowledged that the level of religious instruction’s impact on students’ faith development is left to them. In other words, religious instruction cannot be held accountable for students’ faith development and commitment.

4.3.2 Membership Categorisation Analysis

Table 4.12 outlines the Category Religious Instruction as it is constructed in these paragraphs with its CBAs and implied attributes. Two MCDs are nominated as ways of collecting or grouping the Categories:

1. The MCD Religious Education Activities – in which Category Religious Instruction belongs; and

2. The MCD Students – in which Categories Believer, Non-believers and Searchers belong.

Table 4.12: Categories, Category Bound Activities & Attributes

MCD	Categories	Category Bound Activities	Implied Attributes (from the assigned CBAs.)
Activity	Religious instruction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evangelising character • is called to penetrate a particular area of culture and to relate with other areas of knowledge • an original form of the ministry of the word • makes present the Gospel • sows the dynamic seed of the Gospel • seeks to ‘keep in touch with the other elements of the student’s knowledge and education’ • appear (sic) as a scholastic discipline with the same systematic demand and the same rigour as other disciplines • must present the Christian message and the Christian event with the same seriousness and the same depth with which other disciplines present their knowledge • should not be an accessory alongside of these disciplines • should engage in necessary interdisciplinary dialogue • underpins, activates, develops and completes the educational activity of the school • is developed in diverse scholastic contexts • respond (sic) to its objectives and its own characteristics • has a confessional character for those whose families and students seek it • is part of and completed by other forms of the ministry of the word (catechesis, homilies, liturgical celebrations, etc.) • is indispensable to their (catechesis, homilies, liturgical celebrations, etc.) pedagogical function and basis for their existence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evangelical • is contextual and academic • academic • evangelical • academic • academic • academic • important and critical component of the educational program in its own right • interdisciplinary • vital to school curriculum • diverse and flexible educational nature that can be adapted according to its context • is authentic • catechetical • vital to other forms of the ministry of the word • distinct and educational nature facilitates other forms of the ministry of the word
Students	<p>Students</p> <p>Believing students</p> <p>Searching students</p> <p>Non-believing students</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have the right to learn with truth and certainty the religion to which they belong • the right to know Christ and the salvific message proclaimed by Him • are characterised by continuous change • religious instruction assists them to understand better the Christian message • can also find in religious instruction the possibility of discovering what exactly faith in Jesus Christ is, what response the Church makes to their questions, and gives them the opportunity to examine their own choice more deeply • religious instruction assumes the character of a missionary proclamation of the Gospel and is ordered to a decision of faith, which catechesis, in its turn, will nurture and mature 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • students’ lives and faith are diverse and pluralistic • religious instruction offers a cognitive process • religious instruction offers a critique • religious instruction proclaims but cannot nurture or mature

Table 4.12 shows the majority of CBAs for Religious Instruction to be educational and academic activities. Also listed are some CBAs which are evangelical “makes present the Gospel”, and “sows the dynamic seed of the Gospel”. No assigned CBAs are explicitly catechetical in nature.

The table also summarises five further CBAs, which describe attributes (Baker, 2004; Jayyusi, 1984) of Religious Instruction:

1. that it has an evangelising character when it presents the Gospel;
2. that as an original form of the ministry of the word, it
3. appears as a scholastic discipline and not an accessory alongside other disciplines;
4. that it has a confessional character for those families and students who seek it; and
5. is part of and completed by other aspects of the Church ministry of the word.

It is important to explore these attributes more closely.

Whilst attributes 1 and 2 acknowledge religious instruction’s evangelical role, it is important to realise that these attributes are further qualified by attribute 3, which articulates the specific nature of this evangelistic role as academic. Inferred here is that although religious instruction does have an evangelical character, the nature of this character is different from the evangelical character of other forms of the ministry of the word, such as catechetical forms found in liturgical celebrations, homilies and so on. Attribute 4 is specifically catechetical, but within this is recognised that the catechetical nature of religious instruction can only be so, if that is what families and students intentionally seek. It is to be recalled from section 2.2.2.1, that catechesis can only be a form of faith development if intentionally sought by its recipients. And finally, the last attribute assigned to religious instruction acknowledges its complementary character with other aspects of the Church ministry of the word, indicating its particular function within the ministry of the word as pedagogical and educational.

These assigned CBAs imply further attributes, which are mostly academic and educational in nature:

- important and critical component of the educational program in its own right;
- interdisciplinary;
- vital to school curriculum;
- diverse and flexible educational nature that can be adapted according to its context;
- is authentic;

- vital to other forms of the ministry of the word;
- distinct and educational nature facilitates other forms of the ministry of the word.

Catechetical and evangelising attributes are also implied, but within religious instruction's educational role according to its context and type of students to whom it is given.

The MCD of Students acknowledges diversity of students' lives and faith commitments by raising the Categories, Believing Students, Searching Students and Non-believing Students. The CBAs assigned to each of these groups are different in that they are directly dependent upon students' faith commitments. This is a further significant revelation for teachers of religion who have been only implicitly aware of the diverse nature of students' faith commitments. The official recognition and acknowledgement of this diversity, and the implications such diversity has for the religion program, sanctions teachers to approach the discipline of religious instruction in the same way as other key learning areas in the curriculum, that is, educationally.

The findings of MCA in these paragraphs support those of SFL. Religious instruction is defined by explicit CBAs that are mostly educational and academic in nature. Whilst its evangelistic and catechetical characters are referred to, these are set within religious instruction's distinct academic role. The specific category bound activity "underpins, activates, develops and completes the educational activity of the school" assigned to religious instruction, is a key one for all teachers in Catholic schools, as it makes explicit the status of religious instruction as the defining subject or key learning area to which all others must refer. The majority of religious instruction's attributes are academic. The only time a catechetical attribution has been assigned to religious instruction is when the document refers to its confessional nature if that is what families specifically seek.

MCA has also described categories of students with orientation to the nature of students' relationship with religious instruction, identifying three types of students in the assigned categories – non-believers, searchers, and believers, and has stated that the students' level of commitment determines the faith impact of religious instruction upon them.

Section 4.4 discusses the findings regarding the two Church documents *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988), and the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997).

4.4 Discussion of Findings - Church Documents

Religious education comprises two dimensions: (1) religious instruction, and (2) catechesis. The specific paragraphs from each of these documents seek to clarify the place of both dimensions within the context of the school. It is made clear in both documents that catechesis and religious instruction are distinct, but at the same time they are complementary. Two further aspects are also made clear in both documents: first, religious instruction is the work of the school, as it is not linked to either the family or the parish; and second, religious instruction for the most part is an academic, educational process (although both imply catechetical overtones through the attributes assigned to religious instruction). In saying this though, the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) presents a clearer understanding of religious instruction than was presented in the earlier 1988 document *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education), as it directly assigns agency to religious instruction. It explicitly describes and qualifies its nature and purpose by linking academic and educational CBAs directly with religious instruction.

The aim of catechesis is clearly articulated in *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988): “The aim of catechesis, or handing on the Gospel message, is maturity: spiritual, liturgical, sacramental and apostolic” (§68). As for the place of catechesis however, this same document presents an ambiguous position. On the one hand, it acknowledges that the school is unable to provide the necessary conditions to facilitate catechesis (§68), but on the other, it is expected to play its specific role in catechesis (§69), a role that is not explicitly outlined. However, the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) upholds that the school’s role in catechesis is according to how it is received by students (who are categorised as believers, searchers and non-believers, being instructed).

The relationship between catechesis and religious instruction is articulated explicitly in both documents: they are each distinct but at the same time complementary. *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) refers to this complementarity in terms of students’ own faith, indicating that for believing students religious instruction will strengthen their faith, just as at the same time their knowledge of the faith is increased by catechesis. The *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) goes further than this, suggesting that religious instruction’s confessional character (§74) is dependent on how the message is received and responded to by students.

Neither document clarifies clearly and specifically the precise nature and purpose of the two dimensions of religious education - catechesis and religious instruction - in the context of the Catholic school. To educate is clearly the role of the school. However, the school is also required to play its part in the work of catechesis, but how it is to achieve this remains ambiguous. Overall though, according to both documents, religious instruction is the prime responsibility of the school, and catechesis the prime responsibility of the parish.

4.5 BCEC's Policy, "Religious Education in Preschools"

The statement "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b) forms part of the document *Preschool Handbook: Towards Continuity of Learning in the Early Years* which focuses on a number of issues within the Catholic preschool system. Brisbane Catholic Education is the authoritative body of Catholic systemic schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane. This handbook comes about some years after the establishment of Catholic preschools within the BCEC system. One could almost say that the development of these preschools has been somewhat *ad hoc* - not in the sense of haphazard or disorganised, but more that as a system, BCEC has only recently developed policy to guide and make consistent the evolving practices of preschools.

The authorship of the statement "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b) is implied, as it comes from BCEC, a central authoritative body, and the statements made are without explicit reference to the personal agent responsible for its writing (P. Atkinson & Coffey, 2004, pp. 70-72). As for the readership of texts, Atkinson and Coffey suggest that at one level any reader of English can make sense of texts, but in the document presented in this paper, the intended readership is the staff of Catholic primary schools that have attached preschools.

"Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b) is presented in Table 4.13 and is analysed using both SFL, explicated in section 4.5.1 and MCA, in section 4.5.2.

Table 4.13: BCEC Policy Statement: “Religious Education in Preschools.”

Within Catholic Education, Archdiocese of Brisbane, preschool learning forms part of the wider community within the Catholic Church. It includes children and their families, staff members, school administration team members, parish community and BCEC support personnel. Within BCE the preschool environment presumes an all-encompassing Catholic atmosphere that supports and nurtures the spiritual development of children. It has an open, welcoming atmosphere where children are guided in understanding the uniqueness and centrality of God in their lives.

The following factors require consideration when creating a preschool environment responsive to the spiritual needs and unique circumstances of individual children.

Child Development

Whilst acknowledging that preschool children develop their religious self at varying rates and in different ways, the child’s spiritual development must be considered in relation to real life events within their family life and preschool experiences.

The Place of God in the Life of the Preschool Child

While the child’s spiritual development is closely dependent upon the spiritual climate of the family, consideration and respect needs *[sic]* to be given to the fact that there is a wide diversity in the faith lives of families. The child experiences God through the events of everyday living within the family, community and preschool environments.

The Role of the Family in the Religious Development of the Preschool Child

Parents are encouraged to initiate their children into the parish worshipping community. This community includes a lifestyle that fosters and reflects the Gospel values of peace, honesty, truthfulness, justice, tolerance, mutual respect, courage, forgiveness, thanksgiving, celebration, hospitality, friendship, kindness, helpfulness and citizenship.

Parents work in partnership with the school staff to nurture the religious development of the preschool child. Preschool liturgies, rituals and the Preschool Religious Education program support the family in the religious development of the child.

The Role of the Teacher in the Religious Development of the Preschool Child

The teacher’s personal faith, principles, Christian values and beliefs are an important model for the spiritual development of the child, evident in the teacher’s attitude of reverence for life and activated primarily in informal ways. While maintaining professional competence through opportunities for professional and personal development in areas including spirituality and religious education, the teacher actively fosters the notion of a loving and caring God through the development of a welcoming and respectful Catholic Christian learning community.

The teacher nurtures the spiritual development of the child through establishing and maintaining effective relationships and collaborative partnerships with the children, parents, families, centre staff, school and parish community. The teacher actively supports the family’s role as the primary faith educators of their children, while maintaining the ethos of the school.

The teacher strives to align professional practices with Christian values. This occurs primarily through the respect and understanding the teacher develops for each child as a complex individual within a community of learners. It also occurs through the development of a shared vocabulary, shared understanding and a shared vision.

The Role of the School in the Development of the Child

The Archdiocese of Brisbane Religious Education Guidelines provides direction regarding the development of children’s religious literacy. In the preschool years this is fostered through introductory exposure and immersion in areas including the following:

- Scripture – New and Old Testament Bible Stories
- Belief - God as Creator and we as caretakers of Creation
- An introduction to the life of Jesus Christ
- Morality – Building relationships with God, self and others
- Celebration and Prayer – Introduction to simple prayers and rituals

The school actively encourages the link between home, parish and school in the spiritual development, growth and education of the child. Parents and teachers are supported in a positive and respectful way in their role as faith educators of their children. Support is also available for teachers and parents, primarily through the role of the Principal and the APRE⁵.

The teacher strives towards establishing mutual links with the APRE, working collaboratively with him/her in the implementation of the preschool religious education program. The preschool teacher, principal and APRE discuss the participation and involvement of preschool children in various liturgies and celebrations during the course of the school year.

The Role of the Parish in the Development of the Preschool Child

The parish supports the school and its teachers, journeying with them in the spiritual education of the child. Enriched by the involvement of its preschool children, the parish encourages and supports the parents in the religious education of the preschool child.

⁵ APRE is the Assistant Principal Religious Education, a senior administration position in all Catholic schools in the Brisbane Archdiocese whose essential responsibilities include implementing the school’s religion program and organising the school’s religious life

4.5.1 Systemic Functional Linguistics

The SFL analysis begins by focusing on the field, that is the participants and their associated processes, which is built in this document. This statement concentrates on the roles that the various participants hold in relation to religious education and the preschool child. This analysis is interested in two aspects of the document: the nature of the roles, that is who is doing what; and the nature of the religious education, that is, how it is described.

Table 4.14 lists the document’s foregrounded agents and their associated processes. This allows for an overview of the document’s field. Of the twenty-eight participants that are in the foregrounded agent position, fifteen are human or institutions, such as parish and school, which represent collections of humans. The remaining thirteen participants are abstractions and nominalisations (Collerson, 1994), such as *preschool learning*, *preschool environment*, *Catholic atmosphere*, *factors* and so on.

Table 4.14 Foregrounded Agents and their Associated Processes.

Agent	Process
<i>preschool learning</i>	forms part of the wider community
<i>It (preschool learning)</i>	includes
<i>the preschool environment</i>	presumes
<i>that (an all-encompassing Catholic/Christian atmosphere)</i>	supports and nurtures
<i>It (the preschool environment)</i>	
<i>The following factors</i>	has
<i>preschool children</i>	require
<i>the child’s spiritual development</i>	develop
<i>the child’s spiritual development</i>	must be considered
<i>the child</i>	is closely dependent
<i>parents</i>	experiences
<i>This community (parish)</i>	are encouraged to initiate
<i>parents</i>	includes
<i>preschool liturgies, rituals and the Preschool Religious Education program</i>	work ... to nurture
<i>the teacher’s personal faith, principles, Christian values and beliefs</i>	support
<i>the teacher</i>	
<i>The teacher</i>	are
<i>The teacher</i>	fosters
<i>The teacher</i>	nurtures... establishing and maintaining
<i>This (professional practices with Christian values)</i>	supports... maintaining
<i>The teacher</i>	strives to align
<i>The Archdiocese of Brisbane RE Guidelines</i>	occurs
<i>This (direction regarding children’s religious literacy)</i>	develops
<i>The school</i>	provides
<i>The teacher</i>	is fostered
<i>The preschool teacher, principal and APRE</i>	
<i>The parish</i>	encourages
<i>the parish</i>	strives
	discuss
	supports
	encourages and supports

As this document essentially focuses on the roles of the key participants involved in religious education, it is worthwhile noting who is doing the activity. In other words which human participants are assigned agency in this statement? Table 4.15 lists the frequency of the fifteen human participants listed as foregrounded agents.

Table 4.15: Frequency of Foregrounded Agents

AGENT	Numerical Frequency	Percentage Frequency
Teacher	6	40.0%
Parish	3	20.0%
Children	2	13.5%
Parents	2	13.5%
School	1	6.5%
Teacher, Principal & APRE	1	6.5%
TOTAL	15	100 %

An initial point of note regarding this document is that the term *religious education*, which is the title of the document, is not constructed as a foregrounded agent anywhere in this document. In addition, a number of other terms are used rather than religious education, including religious development, spiritual development, spirituality, religious literacy, but none in the foregrounded agency position. The document describes the roles of the key participants in relation to “the religious development of the child”. As indicated in Table 4.15, the teacher is clearly a significant person in the preschool. A closer examination of the processes and circumstances of the each of these participants further exemplifies their function as either agents or recipients in this document. Each participant’s role in relation to the religious development of the child is explicated in the following sections: the school, which includes the preschool environment, as well as the roles of the teacher, principal and APRE, in 4.5.1.1, the family in 4.5.1.2, and the parish in 4.5.1.3.

4.5.1.1 *The School including Preschool Environment, the Teacher, Principal and APRE*

Table 4.16 lists the school’s (including preschool, teacher, principal and APRE) associated processes and circumstances.

Table 4.16: The *School's* Associated Processes & Circumstances.

Participants	Processes	Process Type	Circumstances
preschool learning	forms	<i>relational – attributing</i>	part of the wider community within the Catholic Church.
It (preschool learning)	includes	<i>relational – attributing</i>	children and their families, staff members, school administration teams, parish community and BCEC support personnel.
The preschool environment	presumes	<i>mental – cognition</i>	an all-encompassing Catholic/Christian atmosphere
▼ that (an all-encompassing Catholic/Christian atmosphere)	supports and nurtures	<i>material – action</i>	the spiritual development of children.
It (the preschool environment)	has	<i>existential</i>	an open, welcoming atmosphere where
▼ children	are guided	<i>relational – attributing</i>	in understanding the uniqueness and centrality of God in their lives.
factors	require	<i>mental – cognition</i>	consideration when creating a preschool environment responsive to the spiritual needs and unique circumstances of individual children.
The teacher's personal faith, principles, Christian values and beliefs	are	<i>relational - attribution</i>	an important model for the spiritual development of the child, evident in the teacher's attitude of reverence for life and activated primarily in informal ways.
the teacher	fosters	<i>material - action</i>	the notion of a loving and caring God through the development of a welcoming and respectful Catholic Christian learning community.
The teacher	Nurtures... establishing and maintaining	<i>material - action</i>	the spiritual development of the child through establishing and maintaining effective relationships and collaborative partnerships with the children, parents, families, centre staff, school and parish community.
The teacher	(actively) supports	<i>material - action</i>	the family's role as the primary faith educators of their children, while maintaining the ethos of the school.
The teacher	strives to align	<i>material - action</i>	professional practices with Christian values.
This	occurs	<i>behavioural</i>	primarily through the respect and understanding
▼ the teacher	develops	<i>behavioural</i>	for each child as a complex individual within a community of learners.
It	occurs	<i>behavioural</i>	through the development of a shared vocabulary, shared understanding and a shared vision.
The R. E Guidelines	provides	<i>material - action</i>	direction regarding the development of children's

			religious literacy.
this	is fostered	<i>material - action</i>	through introductory exposure and immersion in areas including: ...
The school	actively encourages	<i>material - action</i>	the link between home, parish and school in the spiritual development, growth and education of the child.
(Parents and) teachers	are supported	<i>relational - attribution</i>	in a positive and respectful way in their role as faith educators of their children.
Support	is also available	<i>relational - attribution</i>	for teachers and parents, primarily through the role of the Principal and the APRE.
The teacher	strives towards establishing,	<i>material - action</i>	mutual links with the APRE,
	▼ working collaboratively	<i>material - action</i>	with him/her in the implementation of the preschool religious education program.
The preschool teacher, principal and APRE	discuss	<i>verbal</i>	the participation and involvement of preschool children in various liturgies and celebrations during the course of the school year.

The introduction to this document outlines the context of religious education in the Catholic preschool. The only human participant in this section is *children* but this is not in an active position. Rather, *children* in the passive voice is being acted upon, “are guided in understanding the uniqueness and centrality of God in their lives” by an unnamed participant understood to be the teachers within the preschool and school. There is one active agent in these paragraphs, *an all-encompassing Catholic/Christian atmosphere* that “supports and nurtures the spiritual development of children.” Direct human activity is nowhere referred to in this introduction. These paragraphs serve to list the participants who form part of preschool learning and set the context of religious education within the domain of preschool learning. A significant feature of this introduction is that the term *religious education* does not appear anywhere, and references to religious education are within the faith dimension of religious education, that is, “the spiritual development of children”, “in understanding the uniqueness and centrality of God in their lives” and “responsive to the spiritual needs and unique circumstances of individual children.”

The school, named explicitly towards the end of the document, is in the foregrounded agent position engaged in the active process “actively encourages the link between home, parish and school in the spiritual development, growth and education of the child.” It is not made clear who in the school is responsible for encouraging this link,

but the nature of the link in relation to religious education is “spiritual development”, rather than religious education or religious literacy.

The teacher, when in the foregrounded agent position, is associated with mostly material processes of action: “actively fosters the notion of a loving and caring God”, “nurtures the spiritual development of the child”, “actively supports the family’s role”, “strives to align professional practices with Christian values”, “strives towards establishing mutual links with the APRE working collaboratively with him/her in the implementation of the preschool religious education program.” What is significant here is that a closer examination of these circumstances reveals that they are faith related; not one of them is an educational activity. Whilst two educational circumstances, “the Archdiocese of Brisbane Religious Education Guidelines provides direction regarding the development of children’s religious literacy” and “in the preschool years this is fostered through introductory exposure and immersion in areas including the following...”, are inserted into this section, the teacher is not the foregrounded agent in either activity. The teacher’s responsibility in fostering children’s religious literacy is implied but it is not explicitly stated. A further noteworthy point is the reference to a curriculum, which does not include the preschool and is not mandatory in the preschool (sections 1.2 and 2.3.2).

Later in the document, under the heading “The Role of the School in the Development of the Child”, the teacher, along with the APRE, is more explicitly charged with an educational activity, “working collaboratively with him/her in the implementation of the preschool religious education program.” Other aspects of this collaboration include: “The preschool teacher, Principal and APRE discuss the participation and involvement of the child in various liturgies and celebrations during the course of the school year”, which is in the faith dimension of religious education. Also in this section, the teacher is again associated with catechetical roles being placed in the first instance, in the passive voice, along with parents, “are supported ... in their role as faith educators” - but by whom has not been made explicit. This same offer of support is reiterated in, “Support is also available ... primarily through the role of the Principal and APRE.” The nature of this support implicatively refers to teachers’ roles as faith educators.

The roles of the principal and APRE in this document are to support teachers and parents in their roles as faith educators, as well as to discuss the liturgical celebrations with the preschool teacher. The APRE’s specific role is to “work collaboratively” with the teacher to implement the religious education program.

Clearly, the text constructs the teacher as playing a pivotal role within the religious education of the preschool child with a number of responsibilities articulated explicitly. However, the majority of these responsibilities have catechetical, rather than educational, aims.

4.5.1.2 *The Family including Parents*

Processes and circumstances associated with families and parents are listed in Table 4.17. The role of the family in the first section of this document is described in terms of the child’s spiritual development. The explicit articulation of these circumstances is significant for teachers of religion, as they acknowledge that the development of children’s spirituality is not solely the responsibility of teachers and the school. This responsibility has been explicitly stated as residing with the families, who are also acknowledged as having “a wide diversity of faith lives”.

Table 4.17: *Families & Parents’ Associated Processes & Circumstances.*

Participants	Processes	Process Type	Circumstances
preschool children	develop	<i>relational – identification</i>	their religious self at varying rates and in different ways,
▼ child’s spiritual development	must be considered	<i>mental - cognition</i>	in relation to real life events within their family life and preschool experiences.
child’s spiritual development	is (closely) dependent	<i>relational – attributing</i>	upon the spiritual climate of the family
▼ consideration and respect	needs [sic] to be given	<i>behavioural</i>	to the fact that
▼ there	is	<i>relational - identification</i>	a wide diversity in the faith lives of families.
child	experiences	<i>mental -sensing</i>	God through the events of everyday living within the family, community and preschool environments.
Parents	are encouraged to initiate	<i>relational - attribution</i>	their children into the parish worshipping community.
This community	Includes	<i>relational – identification</i>	a lifestyle
▼ that (lifestyle)	fosters and reflects	<i>material - action relational - attribution</i>	the Gospel values of peace, honesty, truthfulness, justice, tolerance, mutual respect, courage, forgiveness, thanksgiving, celebration, hospitality, friendship, kindness, helpfulness and citizenship.

Parents	work	<i>material – action</i>	
▼ (in partnership with) the school staff	to nurture	<i>material - action</i>	the religious development of the preschool child.
Preschool liturgies, rituals and the preschool religious education program	support	<i>material - action</i>	the family in the religious development of the child.

In the next section of the document, parents’ roles are described more explicitly. In the first instance *parents* is placed into the passive voice, being acted upon: “parents are encouraged to initiate their children into the parish worshipping community”. It is significant that an agentless passive, which functions “to avoid mentioning the agent – perhaps because it is unknown or can be taken for granted or perhaps because it is being concealed” (Collerson, 1994, pp. 51-52) has been utilised in this statement. The agentless passive makes ambiguous the issue of whose responsibility it is to encourage parents to take their children to mass: teachers, principal, or APRE. Also this same statement is an intriguing directive to parents, as in the previous paragraph it was clearly stated: “consideration and respect needs [*sic*] to be given to the fact that there is a wide diversity in the faith lives of families.” So, on the one hand, families’ personal faith lives are to be respected, but on the other, they are to be encouraged to initiate their children into the parish worshipping community. Parents are then placed into the foregrounded active position to “work in partnership with the school staff to nurture the religious development of the preschool child”, and will be supported in this role by preschool liturgies, rituals and the Preschool Religious Education program. Overall, this document requires families and parents to be active in their children’s religious and spiritual development, but this requirement is made confusing by the acknowledgment that families have diverse faith lives. Parents are placed into contradictory roles by this document.

4.5.1.3 The Parish

The associated processes and circumstances associated with the parish are listed in Table 4.18.

Table 4.18: The *Parish’s* Associated Processes & Circumstances.

Participants	Processes	Process Type	Circumstances
The parish	supports	<i>material - action</i>	the school and its teachers, journeying with them in the spiritual education of the child.
The parish	encourages and supports	<i>material - action</i>	the parents in the religious education of the preschool child.

The parish is the last participant to be named in the document. It is foregrounded as an active agent engaged in processes of action, “supports the school and teachers ... in the spiritual education of the child” and “encourages and supports the parents in their religious education of the preschool child.” However, the precise nature of this support and encouragement is not articulated. For the school and teachers, it is ambiguously qualified as “journeying with them” (the school and its teachers). A further point of note is that in nominating the parish as the active agent to encourage and support parents “in the religious education of the preschool child”, this document again contradicts itself regarding families’ personal faith lives.

Overall, religious education in the preschool has been delegated as the responsibility of the school, the teachers, parents and the parish. The function of the language is centred on teachers and the roles they are expected to perform. Teachers are named in foregrounded agent positions, engaged mainly in material processes of action which are catechetical in nature. The most significant aspect of this document, highlighted by the SFL analysis, is that teachers are never directly engaged in any material action processes to do with the development of educational outcomes, that is, religious literacy or religious instruction. The function of the language indicates that interpersonal function focuses on teachers, the school, family and the parish and the ideational function is within preschool learning, more specifically religious education within *the faith dimension*. There is no human foregrounded agent engaged in any active process of developing children’s religious literacy, which is the educational aspect of religious education. The only reference to religious literacy was that the *Archdiocese of Brisbane Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines* provides direction in the development of children’s religious literacy.

4.5.2 Membership Categorisation Analysis



As in the previous Church documents, this document orients to a number of different Categories, which belong to different MCDs - people and activities. This statement names several Categories of people concerned with the central activity of religious education: Children, Parents, Families, Parish, BCEC support personnel, and Staff Members, which itself consists of two Categories: (1) Staff Members – Teachers; and (2) Staff Members – School Administration (of which Principal and APRE are members of the Category). All of these Categories of people can be collected into the MCD of the Community of the Catholic School. The Categories referred to in the document pertaining to the activity of religious education are Spiritual Development,

Faith, Religious Development, Religious Literacy, Religious Education and Spiritual Education. Table 4.19 lists the Categories together with their CBAs and attributes.

The Categories belonging to the central organising MCD of Community of the Catholic School are Children, Families, Parents, School Staff-Teachers, School Staff-Administration (including Principal, APRE), and Parish. In this case, the first Category belonging to the MCD Community of the Catholic School is Children. However, at other times in this text, Families and Parish act as MCDs that include the Category Children. Children then are oriented to as a Category in the MCDs Community of the Catholic School, Families and Parish. In the document, they are specifically bound by such activities as “experiencing God through family, community and preschool”, “developing religious selves at varying rates and in different ways” and “developing religious literacy”. Only one of these CBAs, “developing religious literacy”, is an educational one. Children’s attributes are that they have “spiritual needs” and “unique circumstances”.

Table 4.19: Categories, Category Bound Activities & Implied Attributes

MCDs	Categories	Category Bound Activities	Implied Attributes (Inferred from assigned CBAs)
Community of Catholic School	Children	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are guided in understanding the uniqueness and centrality of God in their lives • have spiritual needs • have unique circumstances • experience God through family, community and preschool • develop religious selves at varying rates and in different ways • develop religious literacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All children believe in God
	Families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have wide diversity of faith lives • provide children with experiences of God • supported in role of religious development of children by preschool liturgies and RE Program • develop their children’s faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May have different faith backgrounds • All families experience God
	Parents	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • are encouraged to initiate their children into the parish worshipping community • work in partnership with the school staff to nurture the religious development of the preschool child • are faith educators • supported by Principal & APRE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All parents are Catholic

Community of Catholic School 	Staff Members - Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> models personal faith, principles, Christian beliefs and values evidences reverence for life maintains professional competence through opportunities for professional and personal development in areas including spirituality and religious education actively fosters the notion of a loving and caring God through the development of a welcoming and respectful Catholic Christian learning community nurtures the spiritual and religious development of the children in their care actively supports the family's role as the primary faith educators of their children, while maintaining the ethos of the school establishes and maintains effective relationships and collaborative partnerships with the children, parents, families, BCEC staff, school and parish community strives to align professional practices with Christian values are faith educators strives towards establishing mutual links with the APRE, working collaboratively with him/her in the implementation of the preschool religious education program discuss (with Principal & APRE) the participation and involvement of preschool children in various liturgies and celebrations during the course of the school year 	
	Staff Members - School Administration (which itself includes the Categories, Administration Staff, Principal & APRE.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> actively encourages the link between home, parish and school in the spiritual development, growth and education of the child support teachers & parents discuss (with teacher) the participation and involvement of preschool children in various liturgies and celebrations during the course of the school year support teachers and parents in their roles as faith educators 	
	Parish community	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> its lifestyle fosters and reflects the Gospel values of peace, honesty, truthfulness, justice, tolerance, mutual respect, courage, forgiveness, thanksgiving, celebration, hospitality, friendship, kindness, helpfulness and citizenship supports the school and its teachers, journeying with them in the spiritual education of the child encourages and supports the parents in the religious education of the preschool child 	
	BCEC Personnel	None assigned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> provide the RE Guidelines
Religious Education 	Spiritual Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> must be considered in relation to real life events is closely dependent upon the spiritual climate of the family teacher's personal faith, principles, Christian values and beliefs are important models for children's spiritual development nurtured by the teacher through effective relationships and partnership with children, parents, families, BCEC staff, school and parish. 	
	Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> wide diversity in the faith lives of families 	
	Religious Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> nurtured by parents in partnership with school staff preschool liturgies, rituals and the Preschool Religious Education program support the family in religious development of child 	
	Religious Literacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> RE Guidelines provides direction for development of children's religious literacy Includes areas of Scripture, Beliefs, Jesus Christ, Morality and Celebration & Prayer 	
	Religious Education Spiritual Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implemented by teacher Parish supports school and teachers in the spiritual education of the children 	

Throughout the document, the Categories of Families and Parents are used interchangeably. The Membership of Category Families is actively engaged in the CBAs of developing their children's faith, working in partnership with the school, being faith educators and having diverse faith lives. The two CBAs for Parents as the named Membership Category are first, to nurture their children's religious development and second, to take their children to mass. However, who is to encourage them to do this is not made clear. The CBAs assigned to Families and Parents are ambiguous. On the one hand, it is acknowledged that Families have diverse faith lives, implying that they are either not Catholic, or not practising members of a religious community. On the other hand, Parents "are encouraged to initiate their children into the parish worshipping community", implying that not only are they all Catholic, but they are all practising Catholics. Also implied is that Families and Parents want their children to be educated in the faith, an attribute substantiated by the assigned CBA of being faith educators.

Staff Members are the next Category and include specifically Staff Members – Teachers, and Staff Members - School Administration Staff. Within this document, Staff Members - Teachers are bound by most activities including:

- nurturing the spiritual and religious development of the children;
- maintaining professional and personal competence;
- establishing and maintaining effective relationships and collaborative partnerships with the children, parents, families, centre staff, school and parish community;
- actively supporting families; establishing mutual links with the APRE, working collaboratively with him/her in implementing the religious education program; and
- discussing with the principal and APRE children's participation and involvement in liturgies and celebrations.

Their attributes are clearly and distinctly set out: "the teacher's personal faith, principles, Christian values and beliefs are an important model for the spiritual development of the child, evident in the teacher's attitude of reverence for life and activated primarily in informal ways". The majority of the CBAs assigned to the Category Teachers are focused on the faith dimension of religious education more so than on the educational dimension. An assumed set of CBAs and attributes associated with an MCD of educators include: professionalism; knowledge of curriculum development, implementation and evaluation; pedagogy; and so on. None of these activities is assigned explicitly and specifically to the Category Teachers in this

statement. The only references made to teachers' professionalism are in terms of maintaining professional competence, and working collaboratively with the APRE in the implementation of the religious education program.

Staff Members - School Administration Team Members, as Category Members of the MCD Community of the Catholic School, are the Principal and APRE. The specific activities assigned to these members include supporting teachers and parents, and discussing the participation and involvement of preschool children in various liturgies and celebrations during the course of the school year. No attributes are assigned to this Category.

The Category Parish Community has been assigned the CBAs of supporting the school and teachers, "journeying with them in the spiritual education of the child", as well as encouraging and supporting the parents "in the religious education of the preschool child". These are confusing CBAs, as the notion of spiritual development is not restricted to any particular faith (Tacey, 2000). It would seem therefore, for the given attribute "have diverse faith lives", assigned to Parents and Families earlier in the text, a more appropriate CBA would be spiritual education rather than religious education. It is to be recalled that religious education comprises two dimensions: (1) development in a particular faith, in this case Catholicism; and (2) education about the faith (Catholicism). Assigning religious education in its catechetical function to the parents, rather than to the school and teachers is inappropriate, as those parents or families who are not Catholic or Christian, may not wish to develop their children's Christian faith. Assigning the educational function is also inappropriate, as it belongs to the school. This statement would make more sense if spiritual education had been assigned to the parents and religious education to the school and teachers.

Finally, the last Category referred to in the opening paragraph is BCEC Support Personnel to whom no explicit CBAs are assigned. The only times they are referred to in the statement are in terms of the teachers who are expected "to establish and maintain collaborative partnerships" with them, and in their (BCEC's) implied role of providing the curriculum in religious education.

The central activity of this document is religious education and a number of different terms have been used in reference to it. The Category Members of the MCD of religious education are: Spiritual Development, Faith, Religious Development, Religious Literacy, Religious Education, and Spiritual Education. None of these is defined distinctively in the document as in Table 4.19. In fact, these Categories seem to be used interchangeably. For example, the document refers to both children's Spiritual

Development as well as their Religious Development, but does not make it clear how these two are different, nor that they are in fact different. Spirituality and religiosity are very different notions; for example, a person can be spiritual without being religious (Goosen, 2000; Ryan, 2006; Tacey, 2000).

The MCD set up in the opening paragraph, the Community of the Catholic School, includes the Categories School, Teachers, Children, Families, Parents, Parish Community and BCEC personnel. The document's implied authorship is BCEC. However, BCEC, whilst assigning CBAs to all Categories named, does not do so for itself, even though it also is a Category within the Community of the Catholic School engaged in preschool learning. The document makes quite clear the activities of each of the other members of the MCD, particularly the Category Teachers. However, most of the CBAs outlined for the Categories are associated with the faith development of children, rather than with their educational development in religious literacy.

4.6 Discussion of Findings - BCEC's Policy, "Religious Education in Preschools"

When the two analytic tools are considered together, the intention or purpose of the document "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b) is explicated. It concerns itself with religious education that forms part of preschool learning. Both SFL and MCA show that the focus of religious education as outlined in this document, is the spiritual and faith development of children, and that there are several participants involved in this development.

However, as Ball (1994) has pointed out, no document stands alone and intertextuality needs to be taken into account when analysing this particular document. "Religious Education in Preschools" states that religious literacy is to be "fostered through exposure and immersion" in BCEC's Religious Education Guidelines. As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.3.2, the current BCEC religious education guidelines (Barry & Brennan, 1997a, 1997b) state that the aim of religious education is "the development of children's religious literacy" (Brisbane Catholic Education, *A Syllabus for Religious Education*, p. 18). This curriculum is underpinned by Moran's (1991) definition of religious education, "Religious education teaches people religion and teaches people to be religious in a particular way" (p. 249), adopting an educational approach. Implied attributes within an educational approach include knowledge of: curriculum development, preparation and implementation, assessment and evaluation, pedagogy, teaching content, students' learning styles and so on. These are all critical attributes of teaching, but are not explicitly named or referred to in the document

“Preschool Religious Education” (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b). Billig (as cited in Gill, 1996) argues that it is not only what is stated that is critical, but also what is not said is equally critical (p. 146). The roles of the teachers as shown by SFL are concerned with the spiritual development of the children, not their religious literacy. In addition, the CBAs of the Category Teachers shown through MCA all orient to the faith dimension of religious education. No educational activities are assigned to the Category Teachers.

Herein lies the problem: the preschool is not officially recognised or included in BCEC’s religious education guidelines (as discussed in Chapter 1, section 1.2 and Chapter 2, section 2.3.2). The areas referred to in the document, *scripture*, *beliefs* and so on, are found in sample units of work that have been offered to preschool teachers, but these are not mandatory. However, the dilemma for teachers is that it is stated in the document “Religious Education in Preschools”, that children’s religious literacy is to be fostered, but teachers’ roles in this requirement are not articulated. By not specifically naming the direct responsibilities of the teachers within the educational dimension, it would appear that Brisbane Catholic Education is avoiding making any directive regarding the preschool teachers’ role in the delivery of a curriculum that officially does not exist. The teachers cannot enact a role that is not clearly expressed.

Analysing the document using SFL and MCA, the interpreted message of this document is: religious education in the Catholic preschool is, for the most part, contained within the faith and spiritual development dimension. An educational dimension has been overlooked. The preschool is an educational institution, part of the community of the Catholic primary school to which it is attached; its role within the educational dimension is critical. Teachers, who form a significant section of the intended readership of this document, can interpret their role as being more concerned with faith development, rather than educational development, but this is not in line with other Church and Catholic education documents. On the one hand, this document requires that children’s religious literacy be fostered, but on the other, teachers’ roles in this development are unclear. In essence, the preschool religion program as outlined in this document, remains an ambiguous area for preschool teachers. The preschool year is an important one, and part of its role is to introduce and prepare students for future learning. However, the approach to preschool religious education, as it is conveyed in this policy document, is at variance with that taken in primary and secondary school religious education.

4.7 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the analysis and findings of the three key documents that form a critical aspect of this study. These findings provide particular views regarding the structures of religious education and its place in the school context, as well as affording insights into the nature and purpose of religious education, as it is enacted in the school context. The Church documents, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988), and the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997), provide the foundations that underpin approaches to religious education in schools. Both documents make it explicitly clear that the two dimensions of religious education, *catechesis* and *religious instruction* are distinct and at the same time complementary. However, as shown through the close analysis of the two Church documents, the precise nature and purpose of school religious education is not clearly articulated. It is stated that the school is responsible for the religious instruction, which is described as an academic, educational pursuit, and that the parish is responsible for catechesis. However, the school is also required to play its part in catechesis, but it is not stated how it is to achieve this.

BCEC's documents impact on teachers in the Brisbane schools more so than the Church documents. However, their documents present competing views, which seem also to place teachers in ambiguous positions. The analysis of the BCEC document, "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b) revealed that the preschool approach to religious education is a catechetical one in which the overriding concern is with children's faith development. This approach is at variance with BCEC's curriculum guidelines implemented in the primary and secondary schools (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.2).

The following chapter presents the next level of religious education - its actual implementation at the classroom level. The central concern of this study is to investigate teachers' classroom interaction during their religion lessons, so as to gain insights into how they approach and construct their classroom teaching of religion. Chapter 5 presents the analysis and findings of the transcripts of two recorded religion lessons, which form another part of the data corpus.

CHAPTER 5

CLASSROOM INTERACTION: ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

Talk is a tool that shapes classroom thinking. It is the major resource that teachers draw upon to shape any episode into a learning experience. It is the main mechanism by which the curriculum is delivered and negotiated.

(Edwards-Groves, 2003, p. 15)

Because educational facts are constituted in interaction, we need to study interaction in educational contexts.

(Mehan, 1979a, p. 6)

5.1 Introduction

The focus of this chapter is the analysis and findings of teachers' talk-in-interaction with their students during their classroom teaching of religion lessons. It is to be recalled from Chapter 1, section 1.2, that the nucleus of this study is teacher talk-in-interaction with their students as articulated in the first part of the central research question:

How are the approaches to, and construction of, the classroom teaching of religion in Catholic preschool settings exemplified through teachers' talk-in-interaction with their students?

The questions guiding this central research question include:

How do teachers approach and construct the classroom teaching of religion in and through their talk-in-interaction with their students? What approach/es is/are suggested by their talk-in-interaction?

This chapter presents the analysis and findings of the data corpus collected from two lessons in two different schools, School A and School B, during the Easter liturgical season. Both teachers in the study are the regular classroom teachers for their respective preschool groups. The first lesson, in School A, was taught in Holy Week, the week leading into Easter and the second lesson, in School B, was taught immediately after the Easter break on the first day school resumed. Following the recordings of these two lessons, lesson transcripts were initially transcribed without any notation (see Appendix G). This allowed for an overall familiarity with the data. Some sections of each transcript were then transcribed a second time using the transcript notation based on Atkinson and Heritage (1984, pp. ix-xvi), as outlined in Appendix H, and analysed using the analytic tools, Conversation Analysis (henceforth CA) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (henceforth MCA) as outlined in Chapter 3, sections 3.6.1 and 3.6.2.

It is to be recalled from Chapter 3, section 3.6.1.1 that CA is an analytic tool, which affords key insights into what is done in and through the talk (Schegloff & Sacks, 1973). The analysis of these lessons involves identifying the specific features of institutional interaction suggested by Heritage (2004, pp. 225-240). These include: turn-taking organisation, overall structural organisation of the interaction, sequence organisation, turn design, lexical choice, and interactional asymmetries, as explained and exemplified in sections 3.6.1.1, 3.6.1.2, 3.6.1.3, 3.6.1.4, 3.6.1.5 and 3.6.1.6 of Chapter 3.

MCA, as detailed in Chapter 3, section 3.6.1.2, affords further insights into how knowledge is organised in interaction and texts (ten Have, 2004). Such knowledge is organised in terms of Categories and the Category Bound Activities (henceforth CBAs) and characteristics, attributes, rights, obligations (Baker, 2004; Freebody, 2003) and so on (see Chapter 3. section 3.6.2) assigned to those Categories by speakers and writers (Sacks, 1992). By analysing the following lessons in terms of the categories and their CBAs raised in teachers' classroom talk, a closer examination of the topics covered in the lessons is facilitated (Freebody, 2003).

In addition to these analytic methods, Systemic Functional Linguistics (henceforth SFL) analysis explained in Chapter 3, section 3.6.2.1, is used to interrogate particular processes associated with each of the Categories of lesson 1. The CBAs assigned to Jewish members within the Easter story as told by Teacher A, were shown to be religiously sensitive (see section 5.2.2 following), and so a closer examination of them is warranted. It is to be recalled from section 3.2.2, that SFL with its focus on the interpersonal and ideational functions of language, affords insights into understanding the various representations of crafted texts (Freebody, 2003, p. 175). This study acknowledges that talk is not crafted text; however, further analysis using SFL enabled the explication of another representation of the talk in terms of the participants, and the particular processes in which they were involved as assigned by that teacher.

The findings and discussion of Teacher A's lesson are outlined in section 5.2, and Teacher B's lesson in section 5.3.

5.2 Teacher A

In preschool setting A, the teacher separates prayer from the classroom teaching of religion, the latter usually taking place during mid-morning. The focus of this lesson was the Christian liturgical event of "Holy Week". In this lesson, the teacher was telling the Christian story of what Holy Week celebrates: the main events of Jesus' last week here on earth before his crucifixion on Good Friday, and resurrection on Easter Sunday. The

teacher told the story in his own words, illustrating each event within Holy Week with images from the book *Jesus of Nazareth: The Easter Message* (1978)⁶. He also had a series of smaller black and white individual pages that contained images and small amounts of text⁷. These images were used to revise and reinforce the key events of the story at the end of the lesson. These smaller pages were then given to the students throughout the week for them to colour and staple in sequential order to make their own Easter Story book, and are found in Appendix J. This lesson is the introductory lesson for the topic of Easter and it was held on the first Monday of Holy Week, that is, the day following Palm Sunday. The teacher did not offer any written plans. This analysis commences with CA in section 5.2.1, after which MCA is applied as outlined in section 5.2.2 and finally, for reasons explained in the Introduction in section 5.1, SFL analysis is described in section 5.2.3.

5.2.1 Conversation Analysis

Following close and careful listening to the tapes several times during the initial transcribing periods of the analysis, two sections or phases (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2004; Mehan, 1979a, 1985) of the lesson were selected for further investigation. These particular phases were selected on the basis that they were “virtuoso moments” in which some “particular interactional or, more broadly, educational accomplishment” was evident in the talk (Freebody, 2003, p. 98). The analysis and explication of these “virtuoso moments” is outlined in the following section 5.2.1.1 and a discussion of the findings follows in section 5.2.1.2.

5.2.1.1 Analysis

The exchange in Table 5.1 occurred at the opening of this lesson.

⁶ Images from this book are inserted with the relevant text sections as they are analysed.

⁷ These images were not referred to until the end of the lesson. They are in Appendix J.

Table 5.1: Teacher A's Lesson Introduction

1. Teacher: Now Holy Week is a very special time of the year °Nicholas you need to sit down keep your hands to your self please.° Holy Week is a very special time of the year for the school >and for the< ↑church (0.4) because it's when we get readdy (0.3) ↑ for (0.7) ?
2. Students: EASTAA:::H
3. Teacher: Easter. We've talked about Easter before. Hands up if you can tell me (0.3) why Easter is so ↓special? °Have a think. Hands up °if you can tell ↑me (0.1) why Easter is so special? (.) Yasmin?
4. Yasmin: Um (0.2) because you get ↑Easter ↓eggs.
5. Teacher: >Well that's one reason of course< isn't it? You get Easter eggs at Easter time. Hands up if you like Easter ↑eggs?
6. Students: ME. ME. ME.
7. Teacher: Just about everybody likes Easter eggs. Fantastic. Hands down for me. (0.2) There is another reason why Easter is special. Have a think about it. (1.0) Susan?
8. Susan: Because the Easter bunny ↑ comes.
9. Teacher: Yes. The Easter bunny comes. Just a sec there is another rea::son why Easter is very special. Alice?
10. Alice: Um because um it um, I don't know.
11. Teacher: >You don't know, can't remember.< ↑ Ann?
12. Ann: Um because we must go to the church.
13. Teacher: >We go to the church.< Yes a lot of people go to the church (0.1) during Holy Week and at Easter ti::me.
14. Student: () egg.
15. Teacher: >Yeah we've talked about the egg.< We talked about that. (0.2) Okay. (.) There is another reason why Easter is spe:cial. April?
16. April: Um because you have a (0.3) ne:w li:fe.
17. Teacher: You have a new life. Now what do you mean by that?
18. April: [[A new Easter]]
19. Teacher: Very tricky A new Easter. Okay. Yeah. Lots of people thinking ↑carefully about it. Ned do you know why Easter's special? No. (.) Reece?
20. Reece: Um (.) because (0.1) it's (0.1) when Jesus was ↓ bo::rn.
21. Teacher: Oh now other people have told me this before. They've said Easter is when Jesus is born (.) and that's very good thi:nking Reece (.) but actually Christmas is when Jesus was born. (.) Something else happened to Jesus at Easter time. He was born at Christmas time (.) then something else happened to him at Easter time (0.2) Thomas?
22. Thomas: He he died.
23. Teacher: He died. He did die at Easter time. Can you remember (0.1) how he died?
24. Thomas: (0.1) No.
25. Teacher: >Hands up if you know °how he died? °< (0.1) Luke?
26. Luke: Um (0.1) he's dead.
27. Teacher: How did he ↑di::e?
28. Student: I don't know.
29. Teacher: Yvonne?
31. Yvonne: Um (.) because he was on the red cross.
32. Teacher:>Because he was on the Red Cross.< Okay he was on the cross. He was nailed on the cross and he died on the cross. (0.1) Just like the one we saw up in the church. (0.2) Remember what the cross looks like?
33. Students: Yeah. Yeah. Yes.
34. Teacher: Okay. I'll get that pen here (0.2) and I'll draw the shape of a cross up here. °It has a lo:ng straight part (0.2) and it has a cross part that goes like that (0.5) and there's the mountain (.) the crosses are on top of.° ((Teacher draws a cross on a mountain onto the small white board beside him as he explains it.))



Now we're going to be talking about holy week. Lots and lots of things happened in holy week (0.2) and one of my friends told me befo::re what yesterday was called. (0.2) Yesterday had a special name. Something Sunday? (0.2) Lindsay?

Heritage (2004) suggests that CA should begin by noticing the turn-taking organisation within a speech exchange. Throughout the exchange in Table 5.1 are examples of three-part teacher-student sequences, I-R-E structure as outlined in section 3.6.1.1.1, indicating its instructional nature within the particular institution of the classroom (Freebody, 2003; Mehan, 1979a, 1985). This is exemplified in the following example:

1. Teacher: Now Holy Week is a very spe:cial ti::me of the year °Nicholas you need to sit down keep your hands to your self please.° Holy Week is a very special time of the year for the school >and for the< ↑church (0.4) because it's when we get rea::dy (0.3) ↑ for (0.7) ?
2. Students: EASTAA::H
3. Teacher: Easter. We've talked about Easter before. Hands up if you can te:ll me (0.3) why Easter is so ↓spe:cial? °Have a think. Hands up° if you can tell ↑me (0.1) why Easter is so spe:cial? (.) Yasmin?
4. Yasmin: Um (0.2) because you get ↑Easter ↓eggs.
5. Teacher: >Well that's one reason of course< isn't it? You get Easter eggs at Easter time. Hands up if you like Easter ↑eggs?

At turn 3, the teacher initiates a question, which is replied to by Yasmin at turn 4. Then, at turn 5 the teacher evaluates Yasmin's response. He then goes on to ask another question in the same turn and so the I-R-E structure continues and becomes an extended sequence (Heritage, 2004; Mehan, 1979a), as symmetry of the original question has not been achieved, indicated by the teacher's continued questioning at turns 7, 9, 11, 15, 19, regarding the significance of Easter. The interaction in Table 5.1 shows that there were two such extended sequences, each oriented to different topics introduced in the following turns:

1. The first extended sequence went from turn 3 where the teacher asked why Easter was so special, to turn 22 where Thomas answered that it was when Jesus died.
2. The second extended sequence commenced at turn 23 where the teacher confirmed Thomas' answer as correct and introduced his next topic orientation, which was how Jesus died. This sequence was completed at turn 31, when Yvonne answered that he died on the "red cross". The teacher confirmed this answer, added more information about the way Jesus died, and then continued to turn 34 where he oriented to a new topic, Palm Sunday.

Table 5.2 outlines the first extended sequence within this phase, which extended from turn 3 through to turn 22.

Table 5.2: Extended Sequence 1 within Phase 1 of Teacher A's Lesson

1. Teacher:	Now Holy Week is a <u>very spe:cial</u> ti::me of the year °Nicholas you need to sit down keep your hands to your self please.° Holy Week is a very special time of the year for the school >and for the< ↑church (0.4) because it's when we get rea::dy (0.3) ↑ for (0.7) ?
2. Students:	EASTAA::H
3. Teacher:	Easter. We've talked about Easter before. Hands up if you can te:ll me (0.3) why Easter is so ↓spe:cial? °Have a think. Hands up° if you can tell ↑me (0.1) why Easter is <u>so spe:cial</u> ? (.) Yasmin?
4. Yasmin:	Um (0.2) because you get ↑Easter ↓eggs.
5. Teacher:	>Well that's one reason of course< isn't it? You get <u>Easter</u> eggs at Easter time. Hands up if you like Easter ↑eggs?
6. Students:	ME. ME. ME.
7. Teacher:	Just about everybody likes Easter eggs. Fantastic. Hands down for me. (0.2) There is another reason why Easter is special. Have a think about it. (1.0) Susan?
8. Susan:	Because the Easter bunny ↑ comes.
9. Teacher:	Yes. The Easter bunny comes. Just a sec there is another rea::son why Easter is very <u>special</u> . Alice?
10. Alice:	Um because um it um, I don't know.
11. Teacher:	>You don't know, can't remember.< ↑ Ann?
12. Ann:	Um because we must go to the church.
13. Teacher:	>We go to the church.< Yes a lot of people go to the church (0.1) during Holy Week and at Easter ti::me.
14. Student:	() egg.
15. Teacher:	>Yeah we've talked about the egg.< We talked about that. (0.2) Okay. (.) There is another reason why Easter is <u>spe:cial</u> . April?
16. April:	Um because you have a (0.3) ne:w li:fe.
17. Teacher:	You have a new life. Now what do you mean by that?
18. April:	[[A new Easter]]
19. Teacher:	[[Very tricky]] A new Easter. Okay. Yeah. Lots of people thinking ↑carefully about it. Ned do you know why Easter's special? No. (.) Reece?
20. Reece:	Um (.) because (0.1) it's (0.1) when Jesus was ↓ bo::rn.
21. Teacher:	Oh now other people have told me this before. They've said Easter is when Jesus is born (.) and that's very good thi:ning Reece (.) but actually <u>Christmas</u> is when Jesus was born. (.) Something else happened to Jesus at Easter time. He was born at Christmas time (.) then something else happened to him at Easter time (0.2) Thomas?
22. Thomas:	He he died.
23. Teacher:	He died. He did die at Easter time. Can you remember (0.1) <u>how</u> he died?

The first feature to notice in this sequence is the establishment of the various groupings, referred to as parties, who participate in the talk (Freebody, 2003, p. 109; Sacks et al., 1974, pp. 712-713). During this lesson, the teacher establishes the students in different cohorts: one that places them, himself, the school and the Church as a single cohort, another that establishes all students collectively as a single cohort (Austin et al., 2003; Freebody, 2003; Freebody & Herschell, 2000) and finally, at other times, the students are constructed as individuals. An instance of the latter construction occurs at turn 1:

1. Teacher: Now Holy Week is a very spe:cial ti::me of the year °Nicholas you need to sit down keep your hands to your self please.° Holy Week is a very special time of the year for the school >and for the< ↑church (0.4) because it's when we get rea::dy (0.3) ↑ for (0.7)?
2. Students: EASTAA::H.

At the opening of this exchange, the teacher establishes his use of constructing students as individual parties in his specific and public address to Nicholas about his behaviour. In the same turn, the teacher then constructs a single cohort that includes four

members: the school, the Church, the students and himself. His lexical choice “we” following the named categories “the school” and “the Church”, indicates that the teacher has deliberately aligned himself and the students with the school and Church, thus constructing a single cohort in which all individuals are members. The use of the lexical choice “we” in this particular example, not only indicates that the teacher is speaking on behalf of the institution (Drew & Heritage, 1992), but also on behalf of the students who, as members of the school, are implied members of the wider institution of the Church of which the school itself was named as a member. This construction was mutual, indicated by the students’ reply in which they oriented themselves to reply as shown at turn 2.

An example of the second type of construction in which the teacher constructs the students as a separate single cohort (Austin et al., 2003; Freebody, 2003) that excludes himself, is indicated by the teacher’s use of the lexical choice, “you”, exemplified at turn 3.

3. Teacher: Easter. We've talked about Easter before. Hands up if you can tell me (0.3) why Easter is so special? °Have a think. Hands up° if you can tell ↑me (0.1) why Easter is so special? (.) Yasmin?

One significant feature of this first extended sequence, shown in Table 5.2, is the number of turns it took before the teacher’s initial question, regarding the meaning of Easter, was answered. By tracing the trajectory of these I-R-E sequences within the extended sequence (as detailed in section 3.6.1.1.4), the teacher’s use of turn-design (Heritage, 2004; Sacks et al., 1974) shows that he continues to redesign his questions to elicit students’ “preferred” answers. Throughout this exchange there are several examples of preference (Austin et al., 2003; Freebody & Herschell, 2000) identified by the softeners or markers used by both the teacher and students (previously discussed in section 3.6.1.4). The teacher softens his dispreferred options with two identifiable markers (Goodwin & Heritage in Austin et al., 2003) including: prefacing his evaluations with agreements at turns 5, 9, 13, and 15; and providing an explanation for his dispreferred at turn 21. The students also make use of softeners by prefacing their answers with “Um” at turns 4, 10, 12, 16, and 20, indicating their uncertainty.

The teacher continues to redesign his questions until he gets his preferred answer, which does not happen until turn 22:

20. Reece: Um (.) because (0.1) it's (0.1) when Jesus was ↓ bo::rn.
21. Teacher: Oh now other people have told me this before. They've said Easter is when Jesus is born (.) and that's very good thi:inking Reece (.) but actually Christmas is when Jesus was born. (.) Something else happened to Jesus at Easter time. He was born at Christmas time (.) then something else happened to him at Easter time (0.2) Thomas?
22. Thomas: He he died.

23. Teacher: He died. He did die at Easter time. Can you remember (0.1) how he died?

And even then, this occurs as a result of the teacher's scaffolding of the previous answer given by Reece:

21. Teacher: ...that's very good thi:king Reece (.) but actually Christmas is when Jesus was born. (.) Something else happened to Jesus at Easter time. He was born at Christmas time (.) then something else happened to him at Easter time (0.2) Thomas?

The teacher builds upon Reece's response, which enables Thomas' correct response at turn 22.

A further point of interest regarding turn-design occurs between turns 5 and 7:

5. Teacher: >Well that's one reason of course< isn't it? You get Easter eggs at Easter time. Hands up if you like Easter ↑eggs?

6. Students: ME. ME. ME.

7. Teacher: Just about everybody likes Easter eggs. Fantastic. Hands down for me. (0.2) There is another reason why Easter is special. Have a think about it. (1.0) Susan?

At turn 5, in response to Yasmin's answer, "Um because you get Easter eggs", the teacher orientates to the topic of eggs by redesigning his turn changing from the previous focus at turn 3 on why Easter is special, to introducing another focus - Easter eggs. In doing this, he receives an enthusiastic response at turn 6 from the students. Acknowledging everyone's liking for Easter eggs, he evaluates this response at turn 7. "Fantastic. Hands down for me," indicating that this orientation to the topic Easter eggs is exhausted. This utterance acts as a pre-closer (Austin et al., 2003, p. 109). He then, in the same turn, reintroduces the previous topic, "There is another reason why Easter is special. Have a think about it." Turn 5 gives students the opportunity to have their say about eggs, which they do at turn 6, and then at turn 7 the teacher is heard to bring *that* particular notion of Easter to an end, and proceeds with the topic of the lesson. That, "Fantastic. Hands down for me," was to be heard as a closing of the topic, is available in a later teacher evaluation of another student's answer, which focused on eggs, "Yeah we've talked about the egg. We talked about that. Okay." At turns 8 and 14 students are heard to be maintaining the topic focus on the Easter Bunny and eggs. The student at turn 14 maintains the topic focus on eggs, and has not orientated to the teacher's topic shift away from eggs at turn 7.

Throughout this interactional sequence, it is heard that students are struggling for relevance, trying to guess what the teacher wants (Ludwig & Herschell, 1995). The teacher has not made the specific nature and reasons for his questions clear to the students. Edwards-Groves' (1998) study associates students' problems of relevance

directly with teachers' implicit, rather than explicit teaching. Hearably, the teacher in turn recognises the students' relevance problems, and in his turns he constantly designs and redesigns his questions until they elicit the preferred responses. His subsequent choices are heard as seeking to scaffold students through the interaction so that the goal of the questioning is accomplished.

A noteworthy three-part sequence within this opening phase occurred at turns 11, 12 and 13:

11. Teacher: >You don't know, can't remember.< ↑Ann?
12. Ann: Um because we must go to the church.
13. Teacher: >We go to the church.< Yes a lot of people go to the church (0.1) during Holy Week and at Easter ti::me.

At turn 11, the teacher asked Ann for another reason why Easter was special to which she replied at turn 12, "Um because we go to the church." It was the teacher's evaluation act of this that is worth noting, because it indicates quite clearly that he was not, in this instance, using a catechetical approach. He repeated Ann's response rather quickly and continued, "Yes a lot of people go to the church during Holy Week and at Easter time." What is significant here is his lexical choice (discussed in section 3.6.1.1.5) of the specific words, "a lot of people" rather than "we". After repeating the student's reply, the teacher then explicitly changed two aspects of it – "we" to "a lot of people", and omitted the modal adjunct "must". The change of "we" removes the present class cohort (Freebody & Herschell, 2000) from the activity "can go to church", and assigns another different cohort, that is, "a lot of people" to that activity. If he had used "we", the teacher would have assembled the students and himself into a single cohort as all going to church, which is what the student had done in her turn. The teacher's omission of the modal adjunct "must", can be heard as him not linking any personal authority to requiring students to go to church (Derewianka, 2000; Halliday, 1985, 1994). The formulation of this utterance does not make a judgment about who goes to church and who does not, nor does it imply that people should in fact be going to church. He simply made the observation. A catechetical approach might have used this as an opening to develop the students' personal faith.

Another point worthy of examination occurred at turns 16 to 20.

16. April: Um because you have a (0.3) ne:w li:fe.
17. Teacher: You have a new ↑ life. Now what do you mean by that?
18. April: A new Easter.
19. Teacher: [[Very tricky.]] A new Easter. Okay. Yeah. Lots of people thinking ↑carefully about it. Ned do you know why Easter's special? No. (.) Reece?

April's reply to why Easter was special was that you have a new life, to which the teacher sought further clarification before he evaluated, "Now what do you mean by that?" The instance of simultaneous utterances at turns 18 and 19 indicates the presence of a repair mechanism (see section 3.6.1.1). The teacher's beginning response at turn 19, "Very tricky" is continuing on from his turn 17 during April's reply, "A new Easter." The two subsequent pre-closures used by the teacher at turn 19, "Okay. Yeah," can be heard as indicating that he is satisfied with her reply and that he is ready to move on. The topic concerning new life has been terminated by the teacher.

Finally, at the end of this sequence, a further point of interest occurred at turn 32 where the teacher has made another lexical choice:

32. Teacher: >Because he was on the Red Cross.< Okay he was on the cross. He was nailed on the cross and he died on the cross. (0.1) Just like the one we saw up in the church. ((Teacher turns his head to look out of the window on his left and extends his left arm to point with his hand towards the church.)) (0.2) Remember what the cross looks like?

As he made this turn, the teacher turned his gaze to the windows on his left, and using his outstretched arm pointed his fingers in the same direction, indicating the church that is situated within the school grounds. It was his words, "Just like the one we saw up in the church" that are significant. His use of the word "we" is inclusive of all present; an example of a single cohort of which he is also a member (Freebody & Herschell, 2000, p. 48). In addition, using the process 'saw' indicates he is referring to a past time, when the group was together in the church during a school day. The teacher "thereby has oriented to the members of the cohort as having a shared trajectory" (Austin et al., 2003, p. 65), that is, a shared past. It is not a statement that infers students would see the cross if *they* went to church themselves, nor that *they* would see the cross when they go to the church on weekends. This teacher did not make any presumptions regarding the students' attendance at church and the statement did not exclude anyone. Together the group had clearly been to the church during a school day at some time.

At the end of this phase, the teacher changed the topic at turn 34, which oriented to the events of Palm Sunday:

34. Teacher: Now we're going to be talking about holy week. Lots and lots of things happened in holy week (0.2) and one of my friends told me before what yesterday was called. (0.2) Yesterday had a special name. Something Sunday? (0.2) Lindsay?

The lesson continued to the last phase, which oriented to Jesus' resurrection. After the teacher had told the story including the main events of Palm Sunday, the Last Supper, Jesus' arrest and trial, and his crucifixion (as shown in the transcript of the entire lesson in Appendix I), he oriented to Jesus' resurrection on Easter Sunday. This is shown

in Table 5.3 at turn 93 where the teacher used the pre-topic shift “Now” to indicate a change of topic to Easter Sunday.

Table 5.3: Easter Sunday Exchange

93. Teacher:	Now Easter <u>SU:NDA::Y</u> is the last day of our holy ↑ week. (1) Something <u>very special</u> happened on Easter <u>Sun day</u> (1) and it (0.5) <u>shows</u> how magical and how ↑ <u>mi::ghty</u> >just like in our song< how <u>mighty</u> Jesus was. (2) Hands up if you know what happened on Easter Sunday? He <u>die:d</u> on Good Fri↑day °on the cross° and then something magical happened on Easter <u>Su:n day</u> . (4) Somebody? Angela?
94. Angela:	He (0.5) Umm (0.5) He
95. Teacher:	(7) Can't remember? (0.2) Nicole, (.) can you remember?
96. Nicole:	He was alive again.
97. Teacher:	He was <u>ALIVE AGAIN!</u> EXCELLENT! (0.2) He <u>ro::se</u> from the <u>dead</u> . (0.3) And there's Mary when she ↑ <u>reali:ses</u> that Jesus had risen from the dead. How does her face look now?
98. Students:	Ha::ppy.
99. Teacher:	Susan?
100. Susan:	Happy.
101. Teacher:	Happy. She is very very happy 'cause now Jesus her son (.) has risen from the <u>dead</u> (.) and that's how we feel on Easter Sunday <u>too</u> . And then Jesus went and he visited ↑ his ?

In this interactional sequence, the teacher is heard to explain Jesus' resurrection as magical. In turn 93, the teacher oriented to the final topic of the lesson, Jesus' resurrection. He began the initiation by referring to Easter Sunday and then proceeded to qualify the reason for its significance - Jesus being magical and mighty. He repeated this significance at the end of the turn, “and then something magical happened on Easter Sunday.” Section 5.2.1.2 discusses the implications of this form of explanation.

A further example of this teacher's use of the lexical choice “we” (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2004) occurred at turn 101:

101. Teacher: Happy. She is very very happy 'cause now Jesus her son (.) has risen from the dead (.) and that's how we feel on Easter Sunday too. And then Jesus went and he visited ↑ his ?

During the evaluation of Susan's reply, the teacher again used cohorting language, “She (referring to Mary) is very very happy 'cause now Jesus her son has risen from the dead and that's how *we* feel on Easter Sunday too.” This use is similar to the use of “we” at turn 1, in which the teacher aligned himself with the group as a single cohort that also included the school and the Church; for the second time, the teacher has created a cohort deliberately constructing the individuals as insiders in a particular group.

5.2.1.2 Discussion of Findings

CA has identified this lesson as teacher-directed. A specified amount of content regarding the people and events of Holy Week was imparted to the students by means of three-part teacher-student sequences: the teacher initiated all questions, to which the students replied and, in turn, the teacher evaluated their replies. He has implemented a

transmission curriculum approach: content was valued over process and students had little direct opportunity to initiate and construct their own learning (Arthur et al., 2005; Arthur, Beecher, Dockett, Farmer, & Death, 1996; Sandstrom & Tonkin, 1999) (see Chapter 2, section 2.5). The teacher's interaction demonstrated that it was characteristic of classroom instructional, asymmetrical interaction in that he, as the teacher, controlled the topics, when each topic would be introduced and satisfactorily concluded, and what the next topic would be (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2004).

CA also identified the trajectory of the students' participation in the lesson. Students' sequential understanding of the concepts and content presented is traceable throughout the lesson, specifically in their individual utterances in response to the teacher's questions. It was shown that, initially, their understanding of Easter was oriented to Easter eggs and the Easter Bunny, and it took a considerable number of turns, within the opening of the lesson, before the teacher's desired goal regarding the religious significance of Easter was eventually accomplished. It is clear from the transcript of this lesson that students were struggling for relevance to the teacher's specific topic of the religious significance of Easter. The issue of relevance, that is, students' difficulty in orientating to the teacher's topic, affords two insights into this lesson: first, the teacher in his introduction, has not made clear his intentions regarding the purpose of the lesson; and second, students in trying to guess what the teacher wanted, were calling on their own cultural and social experiences and knowledge of Easter.

The first insight concerns explicit teaching. In research focusing on literacy learning and classroom interaction, both Ludwig and Herschell (1995) and Edwards-Groves (1998; 2003) concluded that students often seek to *guess* the teacher's specific topic orientation, as teachers themselves do not make the purpose of the lesson clear from the beginning nor throughout the lesson. Without access to the purpose of the lesson from the outset, students are left unclear what is required of them.

The second insight illustrates a significant issue specifically for early years teachers of religion: the issue of relevance in an increasingly pluralist and diverse society. It can be assumed that four and five year olds are very aware of the Easter Bunny and eggs, as they are surrounded by them everywhere they go - in the shopping centres, on their radios and televisions, in advertising left in their letter boxes and so on. They are constantly reminded about Easter eggs and the Easter Bunny. Both are everyday aspects and experiences of their social and cultural contexts. The fact that it took them so long to provide the *right* answer for the purposes of this lesson indicates that the orientation to a secular meaning of Easter is more readily available in their lives

than the religious meaning. The interaction showed students orienting continually to Easter eggs and the Easter Bunny, and the teacher continually designing and redesigning his questions to orient them to the religious significance of Easter. Throughout this phase, the students were learning what is relevant for the purposes of being a student at *this* time in *this* site. They were learning that their responses were incorrect, as indicated by the teacher's evaluations. Perhaps young students in the early years' religion classrooms have not been at school long enough to have learnt teachers' intentions, when a topic is introduced with a particular question, such as "Why Easter is so special?" Whereas a student in year 7 who has been at the Catholic school since preschool, might have been socialised in this context long enough to realise the purpose of a teacher's question regarding the significance of Easter.

CA has also explicated the teacher's use of specific language. For the most part of the lesson, the teacher did not make use of language that indicated he was adopting a catechetical approach. However, at both turn 1, "Holy Week is a very special time of the year for the school and for the Church because it's when we get ready for?", and at turn 101, "and that's how we feel on Easter Sunday too", the teacher constructed the students and himself in a single cohort that included the school and the institution of the Catholic Church. This was shown by his lexical choice "we", where he constructed himself and all students as agreeing with these proposals and as sharing the same religious beliefs, that is, Catholic. The use of such cohorting language indicates that a catechetical approach, which assumes that both the teacher and the listeners have faith and are seeking faith development (English, 1991), underpins both of these particular interactional sequences. However, students in Catholic schools are acknowledged as believers, non-believers or searchers (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) as discussed in sections 4.2.2.1 and 4.2.2.2, in Chapter 4. Non-believers and searchers may not seek faith development and so should not be part of the process of catechesis. At no other time was it shown that the teacher sought to tell students how they should act or respond to the content. In other words, a personal faith response was not required from the students. It was only in these small instances that a catechetical approach was identifiable. Overall, however, a catechetical approach was not implemented in this lesson.

CA also highlighted key issues regarding the suitability and appropriateness of certain topics and religious concepts within early years' settings. These included the difficulty faced by early years' teachers regarding the relevance of the religious significance of certain church liturgical seasons, such as Easter, within the reality of

students' lives, as well as trying to explain such difficult theological concepts as new life and Jesus' resurrection. At turn 17 analysed in section 5.2.1.1, the teacher did not pursue the issue of new life raised in April's answer at turn 16 and he accepted April's restated reply, "A new Easter." However, this issue had the potential to become quite a teaching point if she had answered differently. We will never know what could have been, but the point is a complex and critical one for early years' teachers of religion. How does a teacher explain the theological complexities of new life to children as young as these? Given that teacher education is strongly influenced by developmental psychology, it is perhaps possible to speculate that the teacher is aware of the theological complexity of the concept, and has chosen to seemingly dismiss it as heard in his response, "A new Easter. Okay. Yeah. Lots of people thinking carefully about it."

The teacher faced this issue again at the end of the lesson when he introduced the notion of resurrection and described Jesus as "magical and mighty". Again, developmental psychology would inform us that young children would find it difficult to fully appreciate the nature of Jesus, as they are unable to be given the full complexity of church teaching. Speculatively, this teacher has used this language to link Jesus to children's worlds. However, Fowlers' (1981) stages of faith development theory (see Chapter 2. section 2.4), suggests that young children at this age have entered the intuitive-projective faith stage in which they find it difficult to differentiate between fact and fantasy. Fowler's theory cautions us about the use of such a strategy, as he found that images and stories provided by significant adults could have powerful and permanent influence on young children. So using an image of "magical and mighty" to describe Jesus could have a potent influence on impressionable minds. This highlights yet another issue regarding the nature of appropriate religious concepts for the early years' religion programs: teachers have many initial contexts and concepts to build with their students.

The nature of Jesus' resurrection creates a dilemma for preschool teachers of religion – how to explain Jesus' death and resurrection to four and five year olds in terms they can understand. What language can they use to describe such complex theology? Church teaching is that Jesus was not a magician; he is both fully human and divine (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, ¶464 & ¶480), and to reduce this to some form of magical power is to misrepresent Church understanding of the person of Jesus Christ. However, the teacher is likely to be oriented to the theological complexity of the concept, and further, to the age/developmental stage of the students. This creates a complex teaching site, but one which teachers routinely face and solve – in this case, the

solution was to use terms and concepts relevant to students' sociocultural context by suggesting that Jesus was magical and mighty.

To enable a closer examination of the nature of the content and concepts presented in the lesson, Membership Categorisation Analysis is applied to the actual teaching content in section 5.2.2. MCA exemplifies the specific activities in which the various members of the Holy Week and Easter story are engaged, as told by this teacher.

5.2.2 Membership Categorisation Analysis

As detailed in Chapter 3, section 3.6.2, MCA (Sacks, 1984a, 1992) is a way of explicating how speakers draw on and reconstruct common cultural sense in specific situations (Freebody, 2003, p.156). It is to be recalled from section 3.6.2 that Teacher A constructed an SRP (Austin et al., 2003; Sacks, 1992) of Bad People and Good People according to their treatment and relationship with the central character of the story, Jesus. This analysis is explicated in section 5.2.2.1 and the discussion of findings follows in section 5.2.2.2.

5.2.2.1 Analysis

Table 5.4 sets out the categories constructed during the lesson, together with their CBAs and implied attributes. It is to be noted that Table 5.4 lists Jesus with the Good People. In this lesson, Jesus is constructed in two ways.

First, within the MCD People in Jerusalem, the teacher has constructed the two Categories, Good People and Bad People. These Categories have been paired as an SRP, (see Chapter 3, section, 3.6.2), in which they are constructed as incumbents through contrasting CBAs (Austin et al., 2003; Baker, 2004). Good People have been assigned CBAs including being happy to see Jesus and listening to his stories about being nice to each other. In contrast Bad People, who included the Sadducees, Pharisees, Roman soldiers and Temple guards, have been assigned the CBAs: were not happy to see Jesus and not wanting to be nice to each other. The difference in the Category work between Good People / Bad People is that by implication, all members of the category Bad People potentially have the attributes of each Category Member 1, 2, 3, (see Table 5.4) that is, (1) members of the Sanhedrin, (2) Temple Guards and (3) Roman soldiers. Jesus is a member of the Category Good People, however, he is a special case because not all Good People share his attributes, that is, "telling people to be nice to each other", "you have to love each other", "rose from the dead", "is magical and mighty". In the first interactional sequence during which the teacher was showing students the illustration of

Jesus arriving on a donkey (see Figure 5.1), Jesus was specifically bound by such activities as: coming into Jerusalem, riding on his donkey, being greeted by the people of Jerusalem, and having palm leaves waved at him as well as being thrown on the ground for his donkey to walk on. In the illustrations, Jesus was always in the middle of the activity, implying that he was an important and popular person who was to be welcomed to Jerusalem and listened to. Jesus is the ultimate example, *par excellence*, of the Category Good People.

Table 5.4: Categories, Category Bound Activities & Implied Attributes

MCD	Categories	Category Bound Activities	Implied Attributes (Inferred from the assigned CBAs)
People in Jerusalem	Good People including: 1. Jesus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is in the middle • riding on a donkey • going into the temple or church • is telling stories • was saying some things • was telling people some things • telling people you have to be nice to each other • you have to love one another • was put on the cross • he got in lots of trouble there • was put on the cross • he died • rose from the dead • visited his friends • magical and mighty 	1: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • popular and important • a story teller • kind • loves everyone • an exemplary member of Good People
	2. Everyone in the town	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • came out to greet him • are waving palm leaves in the air • are laying them down on the ground for his donkey to walk on as well • so happy to see him • and they were so happy to see him 	2: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • good people who recognise, appreciate and love Jesus
People in Jerusalem	Bad People including: 1. these people (shown in illustration to be the Sanhedrin)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • they didn't want to do that (that is, be nice to each other, love each other) • they didn't want to be nice to each other • weren't very happy with Jesus • are talking to Jesus asking him why did he keep asking people to be nice to each other? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • not kind • did not love each other • annoyed, angry with Jesus
	2. bad people (Temple Guards)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • bad • came and got him and they took him away 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • powerful
	3. those people (Roman Soldiers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • were so mean • they even whipped Jesus • whipped him put crown of thorns on top of his head 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cruel

In the second construction of Jesus, Good People functions as an MCD in which the members are the Crowd and Jesus. In this construction, Jesus and the Crowd are paired as an SRP which exhibits mutual rights and obligations (Silverman, 2001) such as teacher-students, idol-fans, and messiah-followers. Jesus has been paired with the Crowd in terms of the following paired CBAs: he arrives in Jerusalem, they welcome him; he is in the middle, they surround him; he walks on palms, they wave palms and put them on the ground; he tells stories, they listen to the stories.



Figure 5.1: The crowd welcomes Jesus into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday.

As the story continued through the week, Jesus became more *active* telling people stories, telling them to be nice to each other and to love one another (see Figure 5.2). These activities implied he was a kind person concerned for the welfare of all.

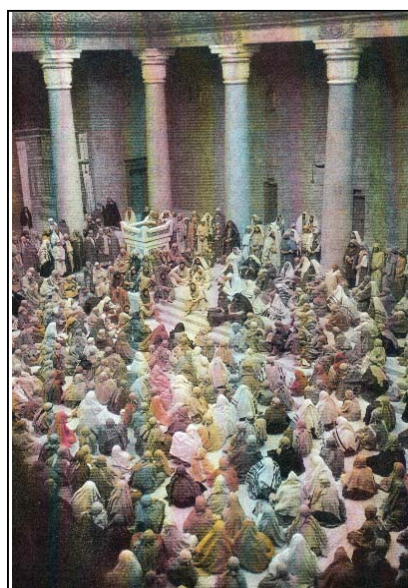


Figure 5.2: Jesus telling stories.

In contrast to Jesus as *active*, as the story continued on to the arrest, trial and crucifixion of Jesus, Jesus was *acted upon* by others (the Bad People) who took him away, questioned him, whipped him, and finally put him on the cross where he died. These CBAs were in direct contrast to the Good People who welcomed him into Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. The Bad People's CBAs were also centred on the activities of Jesus but in very contrasting ways. The Bad People included initially "these people" shown to be the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Council made up of two Jewish groups, the Sadducees and Pharisees, (see Figure 5.3), in the illustration from the book.

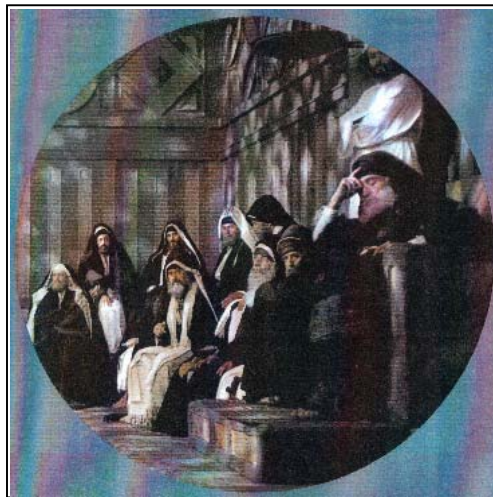


Figure 5.3: "These people were not happy with Jesus."

57. Teacher: Okay have look at this book here. It's got lots of pictures from the movie. We can also see Jesus going into the temple or the church and there he is telling stories and then we have these people here. Now these people they weren't very happy with Jesus. We've talked about this before. Can you remember why, can you remember why these people weren't happy with Jesus? Some people weren't happy with him. Yasmin?
58. Yasmin: Because they didn't know what they were doing.
59. Teacher: They didn't know what they were doing. I think that's correct yes but Jesus was saying some things. He was telling people some things. Can you remember what that was?
60. Student: ()
61. Teacher: What was he telling people? Nigel?
62. Nigel: Stories.
63. Teacher: Yeah and he was asking them to be?
64. Student: Quiet.
65. Teacher: To be good yes. He was telling people you have to be nice to each other and you have to love one another and these people they didn't want to do that. They didn't want to be nice to each other and so that's why Jesus was put on the cross but before he was put on the cross he had supper with his friends. Now his friends had special names..... Okay he had supper with his friends but his friends had a special name? Does anyone know what they were called? Liam?

In direct contrast to the former Category, Good People, These People (the Sanhedrin) “did not want to be nice to each other” implying that unlike Jesus, they were unconcerned about the welfare of others and were unkind. This group is referred to again at turn 79, “Here they are” (see Figure 5.4), when Jesus is brought to them after he was arrested to be questioned about why he keeps asking people to be nice to each other.

79. Teacher: And that's when the bad people came and got him and they took him away. Here they are talking to Jesus again asking him why did he keep asking people to be nice to each other? He got in lots of trouble there and those people were so mean that they even they even whipped Jesus. So you can see some marks there on his body. They whipped him. That wasn't very nice was it?

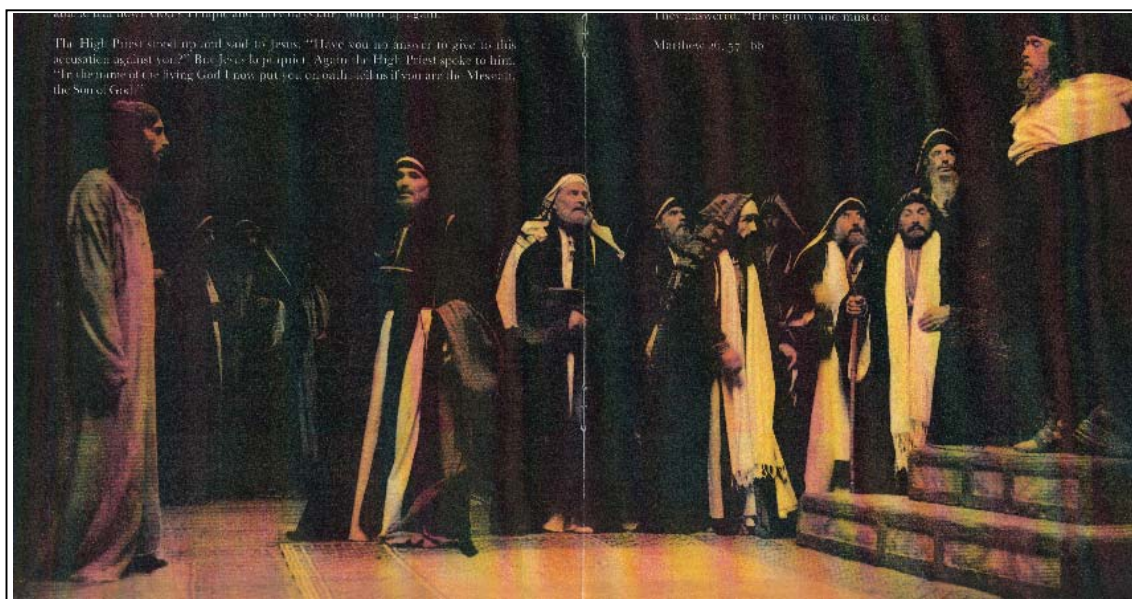


Figure 5.4: “Here they are, asking Jesus why does he keep telling people to be nice to each other?”

The maxim rule (Sacks, 1992) explained in section 3.6.2 in Chapter 3, enables the Sanhedrin to be heard as belonging in the Bad People group along with the Temple guards and Romans soldiers. This is substantiated by the reference to the Bad People made at the beginning of turn 79, which was referring to the Temple guards, “they took him away” (shown to be Temple guards – see Figure 5.5). In this next sentence at turn 79, “Here they are talking to Jesus again asking him why did he keep asking people to be nice to each other?”, *they* are shown in the accompanying illustration to be the Sadducees and Pharisees of the Sanhedrin (see figure 5.4), implying that, like the Temple guards they are not treating Jesus as he should be treated. The Temple guards are directly referred to as Bad People when the illustration is shown (see Figure 5.5) and it is they who came and took Jesus away.

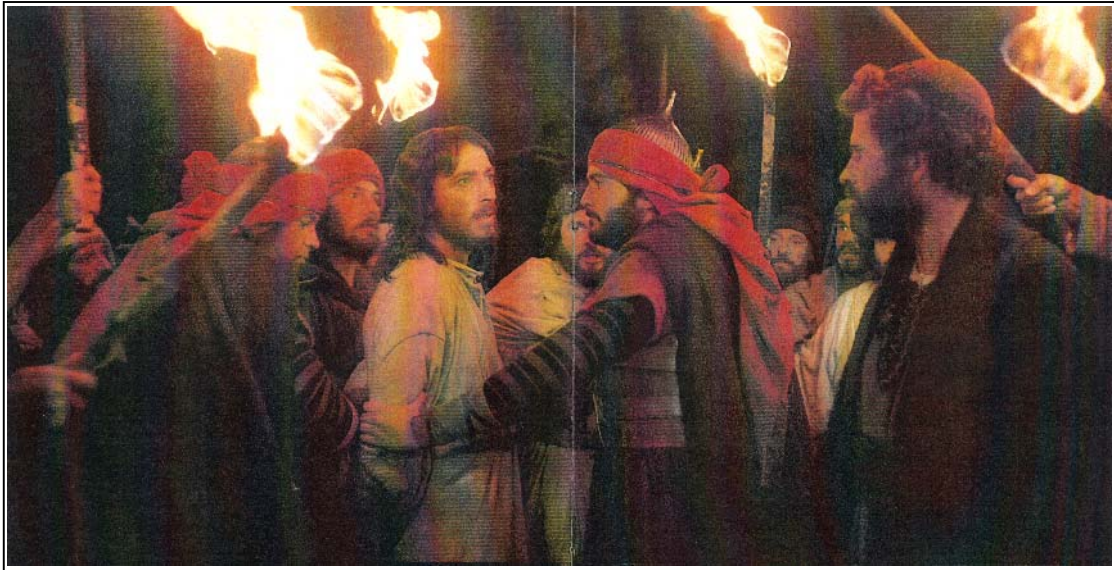


Figure 5.5: “That’s when the bad people came and got him and took him away.”

The Roman soldiers, another group shown in the book (see Figures 5.6 & 5.7) signalled as “those people” in the second part of turn 79 below, are assigned the CBAs of whipping Jesus, which is further described to be an unacceptable act substantiated by the words, “That wasn’t very nice was it?”

79. Teacher: And that’s when the bad people came and got him and they took him away. Here they are talking to Jesus again asking him why did he keep asking people to be nice to each other? He got in lots of trouble there and those people were so mean that they even they even whipped Jesus. So you can see some marks there on his body. They whipped him. That wasn’t very nice was it?

At the teacher’s next turn, 81, he continued to describe the actions of the Roman soldiers, “So they, they whipped Jesus they put some thorns, crown of thorns on top of his head and then very sadly he was put on the cross and that’s where he died.”

81. Teacher: But just remember this isn’t the real picture of Jesus. This is an actor. So those red marks on his body that’s probably from some special makeup. Don’t forget this is an actor. This is somebody pretending to be Jesus. Okay. So they they whipped Jesus they put some thorns crown of thorns on top of his head and then very sadly he was put on the cross and that’s where he died. Okay. Now there’s a couple of ladies down here. This lady here what do you think her name might be?

The teacher did not directly accuse the soldiers of placing Jesus on the cross (see turn 81) but by inference, they are responsible for putting him there where he dies. This issue is further analysed using Systemic Functional Linguistics in the next section, 5.2.3.

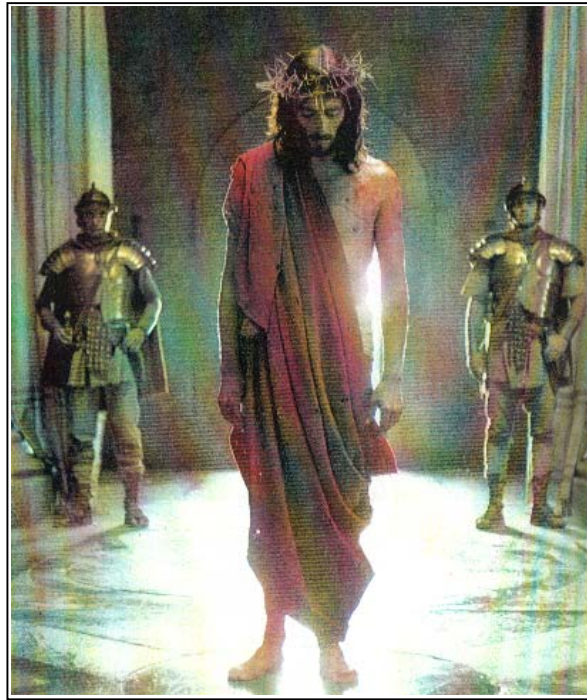
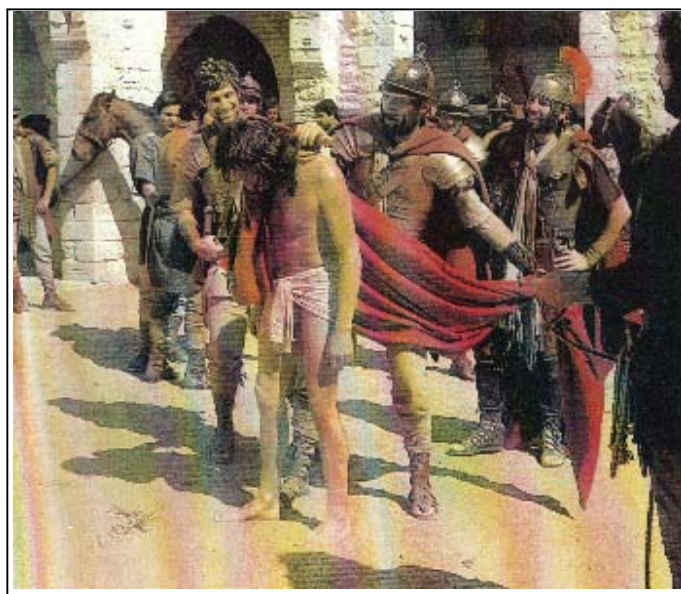


Figure 5.6: Jesus being questioned.



Figures 5.7: “And those people were so mean that they even, they even whipped Jesus.”

The CBAs associated with the three groups of participants, either named explicitly or implied as Bad People: the Sanhedrin, the Temple guards and the Roman soldiers, are in direct contrast to the first group of people, who welcomed Jesus onto Jerusalem, the crowd. These three groups are not happy with Jesus. By implication we hear that these people who did not “come out to greet Jesus”, did not “wave palms in the air or lay them on the ground for his donkey to walk on”, must all be bad, as they were involved in such CBAs as taking Jesus away, questioning him, whipping him, placing the crown of thorns

on his head, putting him on the cross and by implication are responsible for his death (Figure 5.8).

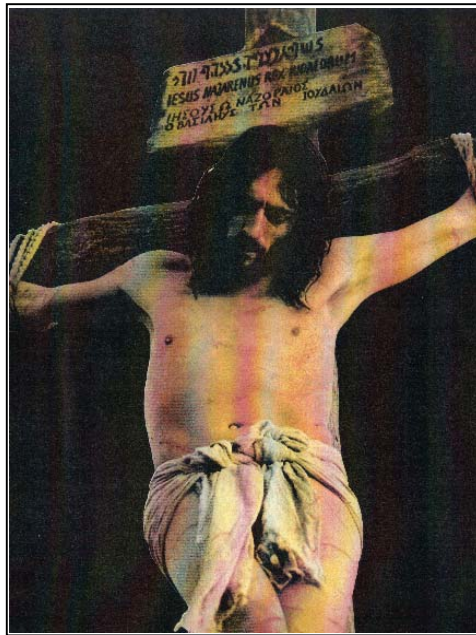


Figure 5.8: "...and then very sadly he was put on the cross and that's where he died."

The construction of the central character, Jesus, deserves further examination as the story continues.

93. Teacher: ...that's another picture for our book. Okay. That was Good Friday when Jesus died on the cross. Now Easter SU:NDA::Y is the last day of our holy ↑ week. (1) Something very special happened on Easter Sun↓day (1) and it (0.5) shows how magical and how ↑ mi::ghty >just like in our song< how mighty Jesus was. (2) Hands up if you know what happened on Easter Sunday? He die:d on Good Fri↑day °on the cross° and then something magical happened on Easter Su:n↓day. (4) Somebody? Angela?
94. Angela: He (0.5) Umm (0.5) He
95. Teacher: (7) Can't remember? (0.2) Nicole, (.) can you remember?
96. Nicole: He was alive again.
97. Teacher: He was ALIVE AGAIN! EXCELLENT! (0.2)He ro::se from the dead. (0.3) And there's Mary when she ↑reali::ses that Jesus had risen from the dead. How does her face look now?

The CBAs associated with Jesus after his death include, “comes alive again”, “he rose from the dead” and “visited his friends”. He was able to do this because he was “magical and mighty”. These latter attributes necessitate further examination. Through these attributes, it is inferred that Jesus was a magician with power.

MCA has highlighted the specific nature of the content presented in the lesson: it afforded a greater examination of the people and events of the week in which Jesus was crucified. A discussion of MCA’s findings is outlined in the following section, 5.2.2.2.

5.2.2.2 Discussion of Findings

From the CBAs assigned to each of these groups by the teacher, clear insights are afforded into how he constructed each group connected with Jesus during that last week. It was through his eyes that the students were able to visualise the social world of Jerusalem around 30CE. Baker (2004) refers to the critical nature of speakers' constructions of social worlds:

When speakers 'do describing' they assemble a social world in which their categories have a central place. These categories are in a sense the speakers' 'puppets', which they can dress up in different ways and make believe in various ways (category-associated activities). These are powerful statements about what *could be the case*, how the social order *might be arranged*, whether or not it really is. (pp. 174-175)

The social world visualised by these students is one that is inhabited by two main groups of people: Good People who supported Jesus the exemplar of Good People; and Bad People who did not. The second group, the Bad People, through inference, was constructed to be responsible for his death.

The teacher has constructed a particular view regarding Jesus' lifeworld. Habermas (1981) describes lifeworld as "the transcendental site where speaker and hearer meet, where they can reciprocally raise claims and where they can criticize and confirm those validity claims, settle their disagreements, and arrive at agreements" (p. 126). Lifeworld is the immediate world in which we live; it is where we interact with each other, and through that interaction we grow, we learn; the interaction is both part of, and shaped by, a specific culture and society. Habermas (1981) describes the structural components of the lifeworld as culture, society and personality:

culture is the stock of knowledge from which persons draw interpretations as they come to understand something in their world, society is the legitimate orders through which participants regulate their memberships in social groups and thereby secure solidarity, and personality as the competences that make a subject capable of speaking and acting that put him [*sic*] in a position to take part in processes of reaching understanding and thereby to assert his [*sic*] own identity. (p. 138)

Jesus' participation in his lifeworld, as constructed by this teacher, was most significantly affected by the more powerful 'bad' social group. In the end, this group's desires regarding Jesus were realised. Jesus was constructed as their "puppet"; he was given no agency when relating with these groups. This notion is explored more fully

with the use of Systemic Functional Linguistics analysis in section 5.2.3, which, through its central focus on more intricate functions of language, sheds greater light on this constructed lifeworld.

The common sense attributes of a magician include his or her mastery of illusion. Recent television documentaries have unveiled the illusion – told us the trick. It is made quite clear during such programs that there is no magic; it is indeed illusion. Therefore, if Jesus is a magician, is he simply an illusionist? It would be quite plausible if the students in this class conceived such a notion of Jesus: he didn't really die in the first place or that he used a trick to come back to life. In addition, a very popular character with young people in today's culture is Harry Potter, himself a magician / wizard learning and practising the intricate and complex ways of magic. The notion of magic, as conveyed by Harry Potter, is a notion with which these students are familiar and could therefore by association, perceive Jesus' magic to be the same. Fowler's (1981) theory suggests that these students who are in the projective-intuitive stage of faith development (section 2.4 and 5.2.1.2), may be left with a particular image of Jesus. As discussed in section 5.2.1.2, this image is at variance with Church teaching, which teaches that Jesus is both fully human and divine (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, ¶464 & ¶480). Sections 5.2.4.2 and 5.4.2 discuss this notion further.

5.2.3 Systemic Functional Linguistics

The content concerning the treatment of Jesus by the Bad People, a group shown to include Jewish religious leaders, contradicts recent Church teaching regarding the nature of the Jews' involvement in Jesus' death; it must not to be inferred in any way that Jews are responsible for Jesus' death (Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews, 1974, 1985). A deeper probing of the processes and circumstances associated with the main participants in the story is therefore warranted. Further, the complex and intricate issues regarding the presentation of theological concepts to young children, such as resurrection and new life, may be elucidated through additional analysis. So in addition to CA and MCA, the analytic tool SFL, with its focus on the function of grammar, as explained in section 3.6.2.1 of Chapter 3, is implemented below. SFL affords insights into how the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions were constructed by the teacher's language (Bloor & Bloor, 1995; Collerson, 1994; Freebody, 2003; Halliday, 1985, 1994). The following section 5.2.3.1 presents the SFL analysis.

5.2.3.1 Analysis

In order to ascertain a more exact and precise understanding of the field constructed by the teacher, each of the main groups' positions within the text is analysed (Freebody, 2003). What do they do? What is done to them? Tables 5.5, 5.6 and 5.7 show when the teacher placed the participants in the foregrounded agent positions and when they were in the recipient positions. Through the SFL analysis, it is clear that the main participants involved in the events of Holy Week were Jesus and two groups of people: the 'good' group, that is the townspeople of Jerusalem who supported him, and the 'bad' group which included the Sanhedrin, the Temple guards and the Roman soldiers (as shown in the accompanying illustrations, Figures 5.3-5.7); it was implied that the latter were responsible for Jesus' death. The following sections, 5.2.3.1.1, 5.2.3.1.2, and 5.2.3.1.3, treat each group specifically.

5.2.3.1.1 *Jesus*. Table 5.5 lists the processes and circumstances associated with Jesus.

Table 5.5: *Jesus'* Associated Processes & Circumstances.

Participants	Processes	Process Type	Circumstances
Jesus	came	<i>Material - action</i>	into Jerusalem.
Jesus	is	<i>Relational, existential</i>	in the middle there and
he	's (is) riding	<i>Material - action</i>	on a donkey and
Jesus	came	<i>Material - action</i>	into Jerusalem
Jesus	going	<i>Material - action</i>	into the temple or the church.
(and there) he	is telling	<i>Verbal</i>	stories
Jesus	was saying	<i>Verbal</i>	some things.
He	was telling	<i>Verbal</i>	people some things.
He	was telling	<i>Verbal</i>	people
you	have to be	<i>Behavioural</i>	nice to each other
(and) you	have to love	<i>Behavioural</i>	one another
Jesus	was put	<i>Material - action</i>	on the cross
he	had	<i>Material - action</i>	supper with his friends.
he keeps	asking	<i>Verbal</i>	
people	to be nice	<i>Behavioural</i>	to each other?
He	got	<i>Material - action</i>	In lots of trouble there
it	shows	<i>Mental - perceiving</i>	how magical and mighty just like in our song
how mighty Jesus	was.	<i>Relational - existential</i>	
He	died	<i>Material - action</i>	on Good Friday on the cross and then
something magical	happened	<i>Material - action</i>	on Easter Sunday
He	rose	<i>Material - action</i>	from the dead

■ Foregrounded agent position.

□ Recipient Position.

In the four analysed sequences summarised in Table 5.5, Jesus is in the foregrounded agent position fifteen times and he is engaged in eight material processes such as coming into Jerusalem, riding his donkey, going into the Temple, dying on the cross and rising from the dead. He is placed in the recipient or beneficiary position (Halliday, 1985, 1994) of material and verbal processes some seventeen times, thirteen of which are negative and include such actions as being taken away, questioned, whipped, and put on the cross. These negative actions were done to him by a number of participants including: “these people” or “some people”, shown to be Sadducees and Pharisees in the illustrations (Figures 5.3 & 5.4): “bad people” identified as Temple guards in the illustration (Figure 5.5): and “these people” identified as Roman soldiers in the illustrations (Figures 5.6 & 5.7). Jesus was the beneficiary of positive material processes involving the general townspeople some four times only at the beginning of the lesson, when he was greeted happily on his arrival into Jerusalem.

5.2.3.1.2 *The crowd*. Table 5.6 lists the processes and circumstances associated with the crowd.

Table 5.6: The *Crowd's* Associated Processes & Circumstances.

Participants	Processes	Process Type	Circumstances
everyone (in the town)	was (so happy) to see (him)	<i>Mental</i>	in the town so happy
(that) they	came out to greet	<i>Material - action</i>	him and
they	are waving	<i>Material - action</i>	palm leaves in the air and
they	are laying	<i>Material - action</i>	them down on the ground for
his donkey	to walk on	<i>Material - action</i>	as well.
(And) they	were ... to see (him)	<i>Mental</i>	so happy
He	was telling	<i>Verbal</i>	people
you	have to be	<i>Behavioural</i>	nice to each other
(and) you	have to love	<i>Behavioural</i>	one another

Foregrounded agent position.

Recipient position.

Overall this specific group is referred to in two sections of the lesson – in the Palm Sunday interactional sequence where they were involved as foregrounded agents in three positive material processes of greeting Jesus, waving palms and laying them on the ground, as well as twice in the positive mental process “were happy to see him”. In the second sequence, Jesus’ teaching during Holy Week, they are in the passive voice as receivers of Jesus’ stories and teachings being told, “you have to be nice to each other”

and “you have to love one another”. As a group, the crowd is only ever involved in positive processes aimed at Jesus.

5.2.3.1.3 *The Sanhedrin, Temple guards and Roman soldiers.* Table 5.7 lists the associated processes and circumstances for these groups.

Table 5.7: The Sanhedrin (Sadducees and Pharisees), Temple Guards, & Roman Soldiers’ Associated Processes & Circumstances

Participants	Processes	Process Type	Circumstances
Now these people, they	weren't	<i>relational</i>	very happy with Jesus.
Some people	weren't	<i>Relational, existential</i>	happy with him.
(Because) they	didn't know	<i>Mental</i>	what
they	were doing.	<i>Material - action</i>	
(and) these people	didn't want to do	<i>Behavioural</i>	that.
They	didn't want to be	<i>Behavioural</i>	nice to each other
(and so) that	's	<i>Relational, existential</i>	why
Jesus	was put	<i>Material - action</i>	on the cross
<u>the bad people</u>	came	<i>Material – action;</i>	and
(<u>the bad people</u>)	got	<i>Material – action;</i> <i>Active voice</i>	him and
<u>they</u>	took	<i>Material – action;</i>	him away.
Here <u>they</u>	are talking	<i>Verbal</i>	to Jesus again
(<u>they</u>)	asking	<i>Verbal</i>	why
he keeps	asking	<i>Verbal</i>	
people	to be nice	<i>Behavioural</i>	to each other?
and <u>those people</u>	were	<i>Relational, existential</i>	so mean that
<u>they</u> even	whipped	<i>Material – action</i>	Jesus.
So you	can see	<i>Mental – perceiving</i>	some marks there on his body.
That	wasn't	<i>Relational</i>	very nice
	was	<i>Relational</i>	it?
So <u>they</u>	whipped	<i>Material – action</i>	Jesus,
<u>they</u>	put	<i>Material – action</i>	some thorns, crown of thorns on top of his head and then very sadly
he	was put	<i>Material – action</i> <i>Passive voice</i>	on the cross and
that	's	<i>Relational</i>	where
he	died.	<i>Material – action</i>	

Foregrounded agent position.

Recipient position.

These three groups, the Sanhedrin, the Temple Guards and the Roman Soldiers, were never explicitly named by the teacher, but identified by the illustrations in the book as he referred to them. They were involved in the third and fourth interactional sequences of the lesson, and were in the foregrounded agent position a total of fourteen times, and were never placed in the passive voice. They were engaged in a total of ten material and verbal processes such as taking Jesus away, questioning him, talking to him, whipping him, putting the crown of thorns on his head, and putting him on the cross. They were engaged in four mental and behavioural processes such as not being happy with Jesus and not wanting to be either nice to each other and / or to love each other. In contrast to the crowd this group's actions were negatively aimed at Jesus. They were also the implied agent responsible for Jesus' death on the cross, substantiated by the statements, 'and that's why Jesus was put on the cross and he was put on the cross and that's where he died'.

SFL has revealed specific and distinct insights into the construction of the key participants in terms of agency, that is, who had agency, what they did, and who was acted upon. It was shown that Jesus only had agency when he was relating to the crowd. For the most part, however, the "bad people" acted upon him in negative ways. The grammatical construction served to place Jesus at the mercy of these "bad" people, as he did not have agency at all during the exchanges with them. The only times he was in the foregrounded agent position was when he was with the crowds. The "bad people" shown to be the Sanhedrin (Sadducees and Pharisees), Temple guards and Roman soldiers in the illustrations, had agency over Jesus throughout the exchange in negative ways.

The grammatical and vocabulary moves (Freebody, 2003) made during this lesson not only provided information concerning the key participants, but they also contributed in building a particular version of those people. The construction of the various people created two distinct groups, "good people" who were happy to see Jesus and "bad people" who were not.

5.2.3.2 Discussion of Findings

Whilst this teacher does not approach the classroom teaching of religion in a catechetical way, that is, seeking to develop their faith, it cannot be concluded that he is therefore using an educational approach that requires the use of an academic language which does not seek to persuade (Moran, 1997). This teacher is, to an extent, imparting knowledge (the aim of an educational approach), but is doing so from a discriminatory viewpoint quite contrary to the 'anti-bias approach' that underpins early childhood

pedagogy. The anti-bias approach is a form of critical pedagogy that underpins a transformational curriculum model in contemporary early childhood education (Arthur et al., 2005; MacNaughton, 2003) (see Chapter 2, section 2.5). The anti-bias approach was put in place to explicitly discourage bias in any form (Dau, 2001; Dermon-Sparks & the Anti-Bias Task Force, 1989; MacNaughton & Williams, 2004); in other words, “to counter stereotypes and discrimination” (Arthur et al., 2005, p. 182). The many material, verbal, and mental processes assigned to the particular groups of people connected with Jesus by this teacher do not reflect an anti-bias philosophy, as substantiated by such statements as, “These people, they did not want to do that. They did not want to be nice to each other”; the presentation of these people, shown to be Sadducees and Pharisees, is one that is discriminatory against the Jewish people during the time of Jesus.

The relationship between Jews and Christians has received increased interest since 1965 with the Church’s Second Vatican Council document, *Nostra Aetate*. Paragraph four of this document focuses specifically on Jewish-Christian relations repudiating “the false Christian teaching of supersessionism – the belief that the Christian church replaced Judaism because of the crucifixion of Jesus” (Ryan, 2004, p. 175). In several church documents since 1965, including the 1974 document *Guidelines and Suggestions for Implementing the Conciliar Declaration Nostra Aetate, (no. 4)* (Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews), and the 1985 document *Notes on the Correct Way to Present the Jews and Judaism in Preaching and Catechesis in the Roman Catholic Church* (Vatican Commission for Religious Relations with the Jews) the Church has condemned any form of antisemitism and prejudice towards the Jews, making it clear that the Jews are not to be held responsible for the death of Jesus. The gospels cannot be interpreted as supporting the simplistic view that the Sadducees and Pharisees, Temple Guards and Roman Soldiers were *bad* people. This is a complex theological area, which includes several layers of interpretation. Crotty (2004) captures the essence of these gospels:

The narratives of Jesus’ rejection by the ‘Jewish authorities’ and the narratives of ‘Jewish’ involvement in his condemnation and death are theological constructs written into the gospel stories and they require interpretation. They are not history, they are theological statements that confirm the growing separation of the Jesus-movement people from mainstream Judaism. The Jews were not responsible for the historical death of Jesus. He was the victim of the imperial Roman system. (p. 23)

Herein lies another dilemma for early years' teachers of religion. Previously noted in section 5.2.1.2 in the discussion of findings regarding CA, the dilemma was associated with the issue of the complex theological concepts of Jesus' resurrection. In this and the previous sections, both MCA and SFL have highlighted the problems associated with the issue of Jesus' death, which involves many layers of complexity: the particular circumstances, the influence and impact of various social, political and religious groups, and the culture of the time. These many layers continue to be argued and debated. Whereas the issue of his resurrection is one of concrete/abstract notions, this issue of who was responsible for Jesus' death is one of straightforward/complex notions. Developmental psychology, which informs education/pedagogy, asserts that young children need to be presented with concrete, straightforward understandings because of their unique stages of development; but many religious concepts, including the death and resurrection of Jesus, are not concrete and straightforward.

5.2.4 Teacher A Conclusions

When the three analyses CA, MCA and SFL of this teacher's talk-in-interaction are considered, two remarkable and noteworthy insights are made explicit. These insights include: the teacher's approach to the classroom teaching of religion, and the nature of the content and religious concepts taught. Each of these is considered separately in the following sections 5.2.4.1 and 5.2.4.2.

5.2.4.1 The Teacher's Approach to the Classroom Teaching of Religion

All three analytic tools revealed that this teacher's overall goal was to familiarise the students with the events of Holy Week, as well the people involved in Jesus' last week leading up to his death and resurrection. He implemented a teacher-directed lesson in which he constructed the knowledge through a typical classroom interactional structure of I-R-E. His focus was on the students' knowledge and understanding rather than on their personal faith responses, indicating his aim was religious literacy, not faith development. The teacher implemented a transmission curriculum model in which he was both informative and interrogative. Students' participation consisted of answering the teacher's questions; they had minimal opportunity to initiate and construct their own learning.

Throughout this lesson, students were constructed as recipients of knowledge concerning the events in Jesus' life between Palm Sunday and Easter Sunday. They were held accountable for knowing the religious significance of Easter. At the end of the

lesson they were also held accountable for knowing the sequential order of the main events, as told in the story. The individual pages of the smaller booklet showing black and white illustrations of the story, referred to in section 5.2 (see footnote 7) were given to individual students (see Appendix J). These students then placed the illustrations into sequential order. (This activity was not included in the analysis.)

5.2.4.2 The Nature of the Content Taught

The nature of the content and religious concepts taught in this lesson, the teacher's construction of cultural groups and their activities at the time of Jesus' death and resurrection, is cause for interest on two levels. First, given the age and circumstances of these students, there were a number of problematic theological concepts introduced, which included the notion of new life and Jesus' resurrection. The notion of new life did not become an explicit issue, as the teacher did not pursue its meaning. However, the meaning of Jesus' resurrection was explained as magical: a concept inappropriate to Catholicism (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994). This indicates that the business of teaching such issues in a way appropriate to early years is problematic for teachers. As the analysis of the classroom interaction revealed, relevance was a significant issue in this lesson, particularly at the beginning where students were struggling for relevance regarding the teacher's question, "Why is Easter special?"

On another level, the sensitive nature concerning who was responsible for the death of Jesus is further cause for interest, as the social, cultural and religious contexts of the time were extremely complex and involved – certainly developmental psychology would consider to be too complex and involved to explain in simple language that could be understood by these young students. In seeking to simplify these matters in terms that students could understand, the teacher constructed a simplistic account with basic "goodies" and "baddies". In his telling of this story, the teacher has presented a version that is at variance both with Church teaching as well as "to the biblical texts and the understandings of contemporary scholarship" (Ryan & Goldberg, 2004, p. 129). It is also potentially damaging for contemporary Jewish-Christian relations. This indicates more careful thought is needed regarding some of the concepts presented to this age group, as there are many complex implications associated with the account given in this lesson. These crucial issues and what teachers can, and cannot say about them, are not addressed in any policy nor curriculum guidelines regarding content in religion programs; clarity is called for. The implications of the critical nature of this area are discussed in more detail

in Chapter 6 of this project. The following section, 5.3 is an account of the analysis and findings for the second lesson.

5.3 Teacher B

In this preschool setting, prayer and religious education are combined. The teacher begins the day with a greeting and then goes into her integrated religion and prayer session. The focus of this session, which was the first one after the Easter break, was the symbols associated with Easter, namely the bread and wine, the cross and the egg. The teacher had arranged for an incubator in which there were a number of chickens that had recently hatched, to be in the preschool during this time. She asked the students to settle onto the carpeted area where she always begins her day. She then moved into the religious education session by asking the students to form a circle, in the centre of which she placed a cloth. She then asked two students to place some symbols onto the cloth. The two girls chose flowers and candles from an adjacent prayer table and put them into the middle of the circle. The teacher explained that she had brought in four other special symbols that she would add to the circle during the course of the lesson. This lesson was conducted between the teacher and the class as a whole, class interaction being the prime means of teaching.

Following close and careful listening to the audio recordings of this lesson, an initial transcript of this lesson, which did not include notation, was made (see Appendix G). As outlined in section 3.5.1, a second notated transcript was made based on Atkinson and Heritage (1984) (see Appendix H). The notated transcript (see Appendix I) was then analysed using CA, explicated in section 5.3.1, and then using MCA, explicated in section 5.3.2.

5.3.1 Conversation Analysis

Two phases (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2004; Mehan, 1979a) from this lesson were chosen for analysis using CA, on the basis that they presented “virtuoso moments” (Freebody, 2003, p. 98) exemplifying particular aspects of this teacher’s approach to, and construction of, the classroom teaching of religion. The analysis is explicated in the following section 5.3.1.1 and the key findings are discussed in section 5.3.1.2.

5.3.1.1 Analysis

The interactional sequence from turn 19 to turn 44 was the final one focusing on symbols (following the symbols of the wine and bread, as well as the sign of the cross). It opened with the teacher placing an egg and one of the hatched chickens from the incubator into the centre of the circle at the end of turn 19.

Table 5.8: Sequence 1 of Teacher B's Lesson.

19. Teacher:	And I've got two (teacher places an egg and a baby chicken into the middle of the circle onto the prayer cloth) two () - °↑Wh::y do you think I would put (0.3) an egg and a BABY ↑CHICKEN into our pra:yer ci:rcle? ↑Yasmin?
20. Yasmin:	New life?
21. Teacher:	Because (0.1) they (0.1) rem:ind us of ↓n::ew (0.2) li::fe. (0.3) ↑Why >new life?< Why are we talking about (0.1) <u>new</u> life?
22. Student:	Because they [
23. Teacher:	Cindy?
24. Cindy:	Because um ()
25. Teacher:	↑Who had new life?
26. Student:	Jesus.
27. Teacher:	And did you <u>think</u> of <u>that</u> on Easter Sunday ↓morning?
28. Students:	Yeah.
29. Teacher:	↑Because (0.1) preschoolers (0.1) on Easter Sunday morning remember that Easter Bunny - he's such a clever thing that Easter Bunny - >I better not put that chicken in there, hey?< He might walk away. I'll put him back in here. ((Teacher places chicken back into incubator.)) Preschoolers (0.2) when you got those eggs on Easter Sunday ↓morning (0.3) °it was: to rem::ind you of Jesus' <u>new life</u> °. Wade did you get some eggs on Easter Sunday morning? Hands up if the Easter Bunny came to you? Nick did the Easter do you remember did the Easter bunny come to ↑you? Isn't that Easter Bunny clever?
30. Student:	I got lots of eggs.
31. Student:	I got money.
32. Teacher:	Did you?
33. Student:	The Easter Bunny came to me.
34. Teacher:	He remembered.
35. Student:	I got eggs.
36. Teacher:	Did you?
37. Student:	()
38. Teacher:	Did you? Well preschoolers I'm <u>glad</u> that you thought about Jesus on Easter Sunday morning ↑because that's <u>why</u> the Easter Bunny >remember he didn't want to bring< ↑you:: (0.2) <u>crocodile eggs</u> did he?
39. Students:	NO! NO! NO WAY! He'd be an <u>idiot</u> .
40. Teacher:	He didn't want (0.1) to bring you:: (0.2) ↓dinosaur eggs?
41. Students:	NO NO NO NO NO! NO WAY!
42. Teacher:	>Remember the Easter Bunny brought you °chocolate eggs° ((whispered)) >°cause you can eat them°< and they will remind us of Jesus <u>having new life</u> . ↑Preschoolers (0.3) °I've got a <u>special</u> Bible today° and in this (0.1) Bible are ↑lots of stories about Jesus. I've chosen one that <u>happened</u> =
43. Student:	[()]
44. Teacher:	=JU:ST (0.2) A:FTER (0.4) Easter Sunday morning °when Jesus came to life.° >So we've read all the stories up to< when Jesus (0.1) die:d and we knew Jesus was coming alive. >↑This is a story< of what happened (0.2) just after Jesus came alive. I might read (0.2) read the story and show you the pictures (as I go) so be watching.

It is during this exchange, particularly in the extended sequence between turns 21 and 42, that the teacher made the connection between the egg, the chicken and the Easter Bunny, with Jesus' new life. This was a long extended sequence in which the students interrupted the interactional asymmetry by calling out their responses together (as indicated by the overlapping symbol '[' beside turns 30 to 37, below) (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2004).

- [30. Student: I got lots of eggs.
 31. Student: I got money.
 32. Teacher: Did you?
 33. Student: The Easter Bunny came to me.
 34. Teacher: He remembered.
 35. Student: I got eggs.
 36. Teacher: Did you?
 37. Student: ()
 38. Teacher: Did you? Well preschoolers I'm glad that you thought about Jesus on Easter Sunday morning ↑because that's why the Easter Bunny >remember he didn't want to bring< ↑you:: (0.2) crocodile eggs did he?

Because students' interaction was noticeably increased, this section appears as a symmetrical exchange in which all participants had equal rights to speak. The normal flow of an institutional interaction (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 49) such as in this classroom, in which the professional representing the institution, the teacher, takes and retains the initiative in interactions, had been disrupted. An asymmetrical structure exemplifies an unequal power speech exchange system typical of institutional interaction (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2004; Markee, 2000). This extended sequence commenced in the turn change 30 in response to the last part of the teacher's turn 29, where she shifted *her* topic focus of Easter - Jesus' new life - to a different topic focus, the eggs, asking the students if they got eggs on Easter Sunday morning and did the Easter Bunny come to them.

29. Teacher: ↑Because (0.1) preschoolers (0.1) on Easter Sunday morning remember that Easter Bunny - he's such a clever thing that Easter Bunny - >I better not put that chicken in there, hey?< He might walk away. I'll put him back in here. ((Teacher places chicken back into incubator.)) Preschoolers (0.2) when you got those eggs on Easter Sunday ↓morning (0.3) °it wa:s to rem::ind you of Jesus' new life°. Wade did you get some eggs on Easter Sunday morning? Hands up if the Easter Bunny came to you? Nick did the Easter do you remember did the Easter bunny come to ↑you? Isn't that Easter Bunny clever?

The students responded enthusiastically at turns 30, 31, 33, 35 and 37. Then, at turn 38 the teacher returned to her original focus on Jesus:

38. Teacher: Did you? Well preschoolers I'm glad that you thought about Jesus on Easter Sunday morning...

However, her evaluation act did not relate to the students' reply acts between turns 30 and 38, in which they referred to their gifts of eggs or money, as well as to the fact that the Easter Bunny came. Their answers were direct responses to her question at the end of her turn 29, "Hands up if the Easter Bunny came to you", and their focus was what they got for Easter; not one student referred to Jesus in any way. But the teacher evaluated these responses at turn 38, "I'm glad you thought about Jesus on Easter Sunday morning." At first reading it seems as though the teacher reformulates the relevance of her question. She is, by the interaction, demonstrating to students that the appropriate response to Easter Eggs is "thinking about Jesus". The teacher seemingly dismissed all students' comments with her response, which was incongruent with their responses. Indicated by her lexical choices of such words as "glad", which was emphasised and "thought" in her evaluation act at turn 38, the teacher's response is heard as equating students' emphases on the eggs and the Easter Bunny with thinking of Jesus. The teacher is heard as constructing students in a particular religious and moral way.

38. Teacher: Did you? Well preschoolers I'm glad that you thought about Jesus on Easter Sunday morning ...

However, any claims made regarding the interpretation of a single utterance, as in turn 38, must be situated within the interaction itself, as that is where it was produced (Forrester & Pike, 1998; Heritage & Atkinson, 1984). In order to make sense of the teacher's evaluation act, we need to trace the trajectory of this turn-taking sequence so that we can see how this utterance came to be produced within the sequence. To do this we need to return to turn 21:

21. Teacher: Because (0.1) they (0.1) rem:ind us of ↓n::ew (0.2) li::fe. (0.3) ↑Why >new life?< Why are we talking about (0.1) new life?

22. Student: Because they[

23. Teacher: Cindy?

24. Cindy: Because um ()

25. Teacher: ↑Who had new life?

26. Student: Jesus.

27. Teacher: And did you think of that on Easter Sunday ↓morning?

28. Students: Yeah.

At turn 21 the teacher explained the meaning of the Easter eggs as reminding "us of new life" and added the question, "Why are we talking about new life?" A student attempted a reply at turn 22, "Because they" but is unable to complete as the teacher signalled for another student, Cindy, to reply at turn 23. Cindy was unable to do so. In her next turn at 25 the teacher changed the question from "Why are we talking about new life?" to "Who had new life?" This turn was successfully accomplished as shown by

a student's reply at turn 26, "Jesus." The teacher is heard as maintaining the goal orientation of this sequence, that is, the symbol of eggs representing Jesus' new life, when she further expanded on the topic by asking at turn 27, "And did you think of that on Easter Sunday morning?" Many students replied "Yeah" at turn 28. It is at turn 29 that the teacher then reinforced the understanding and significance of the symbolism of the Easter eggs by emphasising through stretching and increased volume, "It was to remind you of Jesus' new life." She then follows on with questions to students about the Easter Bunny and what he left for them. Here she is heard as possibly reinforcing the symbolic understanding and making the link more personal, by relating it to the students' own experiences of receiving Easter eggs.

It is only through following the trajectory of the turn-taking closely, that we can see the demonstration of the participants' productions in their utterances. The teacher's evaluation act at turn 38 is actually the second part of an agency-pair commenced at turn 28, where the students indicated that they did think of Jesus' new life on Easter Sunday morning.

27. Teacher: And did you think of that on Easter Sunday ↓morning?

28. Students: Yeah.

29-37.....

38. Teacher: Did you? Well preschoolers I'm glad that you thought about Jesus on Easter Sunday morning...

What is noteworthy and remarkable here is that the students' responses regarding their actual experiences on Easter Sunday morning, between turns 30 and 37, did not substantiate their affirmative reply at turn 28. The teacher's turn at 38 is heard as seemingly disregarding the students' responses between turns 30 and 37, as her turn was not a direct evaluation of these turns. Because the teacher kept reiterating the connection between Easter eggs and Jesus' new life, a hearing of this evaluation act at turn 38 is that her goal-orientation for this sequence was for students to make symbolic links between the Easter eggs left by the Easter Bunny and Jesus' new life.

Another significant feature to be noted in turn 38 is the presence of a repair mechanism, which is used to overcome an error or violation within a turn (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2004) as detailed in section 3.6.1.1.1.

38. Teacher: ... because that's why the Easter Bunny - >remember he didn't want to bring<
↑you:: (0.2) crocodile eggs did he?

39. Students: NO! NO! NO WAY! He'd be an idiot.

40. Teacher: He didn't want (0.1) to bring you:: (0.2) ↓dinosaur eggs?

41: Students: NO NO NO NO NO! NO WAY!

42. Teacher: Remember the Easter Bunny brought you °chocolate eggs° ((whispered))
>°cause you can eat them°< and they will remind us of Jesus having new life.

The teacher used a repair when she interrupted herself halfway through turn 38, to reopen the initiation regarding the symbolism of eggs, indicated by the speech repair “Remember he didn’t want to bring you crocodile eggs, did he?” Such a repair indicates that the topic is not closed; possibly she felt she had not successfully completed the specific goal orientation, the symbolic meaning of the eggs, of this sequence. However, it is the construction of both her repair at turn 38 “... remember he didn’t want to bring you crocodile eggs did he?” and at turn 40: “He didn’t want to bring you dinosaur eggs?” that is significant. Both of these statements referred to the types of eggs the Easter Bunny would *not* bring – *not* crocodile eggs and *not* dinosaur eggs. She then opened her turn at 42, referring to the types of eggs the Easter Bunny *did bring* – “chocolate eggs, cause you can eat them.” A possible hearing of this final statement is that the Easter Bunny would not bring eggs that you could not eat. Her focus throughout this part of the sequence is the *types* of eggs the Easter Bunny would or would not bring. However, she did not continue referring to the types of eggs left by the bunny; rather, she shifted the focus away from the *types* of eggs to *why* the bunny left eggs, “and they will remind us of Jesus having new life.” The Easter Bunny is occupying an interesting place in this story as constructed by the teacher, and is examined more closely using MCA in the following section, 5.3.2.

It is also worth noting the teacher’s lexical choice of the word “us” in this statement. As discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.6.1.5, in this turn 42 the teacher has constructed a single cohort that includes both her and the students (Austin et al., 2003; Freebody & Herschell, 2000); she has constructed herself and the students as insiders in a particular group, in this case the institution of the Catholic Church. In addition, this could also be heard as an example of epistemological caution as discussed in section 3.6.1.6, in that the teacher is emphasising with the students the religious significance of Easter over the secular significance. The use of the lexical choice “we” in this particular example, not only indicates that the teacher is speaking on behalf of the institution (Drew & Heritage, 1992) but also on behalf of the students, who as members of the school, are implied members of the wider institution of the Church. In constructing the students as insiders of the Church, the teacher is assuming that everyone present does indeed accept this understanding and that all share the same religious beliefs, that is, Catholic. Such a construction indicates that a catechetical approach underpins this exchange sequence. Whilst the teacher is revising important content and understandings

regarding the significance of the Easter period during this exchange, she is achieving this in a catechetical way, indicating her goal is both faith development and religious literacy, as substantiated in the lesson transcript included in Appendix I.

A further notable point in this phase is that the teacher did not attempt to explain the notion of new life in any of her initiation or evaluation acts. The only comments she made regarding new life were that the egg and the chicken remind us of new life, that Jesus had new life, and that the Easter Bunny left eggs on Easter Sunday morning to remind us that Jesus gave us new life. She then went on at turn 44 to explain that Jesus came to life, that he was coming alive, and that the story she was about to read tells about what happened just after Jesus came alive.

44. Teacher: =JU:ST (0.2) A:FTER (0.4) Easter Sunday morning °when Jesus came to life.° >So we've read all the stories up to< when Jesus (0.1) die:d and we knew Jesus was coming alive. >↑This is a story< of what happened (0.2) just after Jesus came alive. I might read (0.2) read the story and show you the pictures (as I go) so be watching.

There was not an explanation about the notion of new life or of how Jesus came alive again. Nor did the students ask about the concept. It is possible, as inferred in turns 19 through to 26 that the class had previously spoken about new life, as Yasmin knew the answer to the question regarding the egg and the chicken.

19. Teacher: And I've got two (teacher places an egg and a baby chicken into the middle of the circle onto the prayer cloth) two () - °↑Wh::y do you think I would put (0.3) an egg and a BABY ↑CHICKEN into our pra:yer ci:rcle? ↑Yasmin?

20. Yasmin: New life?

21. Teacher: Because (0.1) they (0.1) rem:ind us of ↓n::ew (0.2) li::fe. (0.3) ↑Why >new life?< Why are we talking about (0.1) new life?

22. Student: [Because they

23. Teacher: Cindy?

24. Cindy: Because um ()

25. Teacher: ↑Who had new life?

26. Student: Jesus.

This same issue was raised in lesson 1 as discussed in section 5.2.1.1. The nature of Jesus' resurrection and how to explain that in terms young students can comprehend, is a dilemma for preschool teachers of religion. What language can they use to describe such complex theology? Resurrection, as previously discussed in lesson 1, section 5.2.1.2, is a complex theological concept.

This lesson then continued with the teacher reading the gospel story, which was followed by further discussion. This discussion, from the end of turn 44 to turn 63 (see

Table 5.9), centres on the gospel story and provides a further “virtuoso moment” in which other insights regarding this lesson are displayed.

Table 5.9: Sequence 2 of Teacher B’s Lesson.

46. Teacher:	Imagine that. Imagine if you were walking along a road and someone came up beside you. I wonder if you would know it was Jesus? What do you think you would say to Jesus if he came to our preschool? What do you think you would say to him? Anita what would you say to Jesus if he came to our preschool?
47. Anita:	()
48. Teacher:	Have you ever thought about that? Who knows? What would you say?
49. Student:	I don't know.
50. Teacher:	What would you say to Jesus if he came? Hollie what would you say?
51. Hollie:	Umm hello?
52. Teacher:	Hello. I think he would love us to say hello. What else would we say to Jesus? Neville what would you say?
53. Neville:	I would say hello and thank you for new life.
54. Teacher:	That would be lovely. What would you say Max?
55. Max:	Goodbye.
56. Teacher:	What was that?
57. Max:	Goodbye.
58. Teacher:	Goodbye when he's ↑going. Would you say, (0.2) would you say (0.1) how mu:ch you love all the things he <u>made</u> for ↑you?
59. Students:	Yeah! Yeah! Yes!
60. Student:	No (whispered)
61. Teacher:	↓Probably, because we do love all those things. I wonder what else we would say to him? Lea, what else would you say?
62. Lea:	Umm, ahh, thank you for coming.
63. Teacher:	Thank you for coming would be lovely. I wonder if he came to our preschool preschoolers he'd share the bread and wine when he came to our preschool? What about you, Allie?
64. Allie:	Umm, thank you for (sharing the bread and wine)
65. Teacher:	Thank you for sharing that. Thank you for making us. So many things we'd probably=

Following the reading of the gospel story, at turn 46, the teacher asked the students to imagine if Jesus arrived at their preschool, what would they say to him? This sequential exchange between turns 46 and 65 again shows students struggling for relevance to this specific orientation. They struggle to find what the relevant answers could be. A possible hearing of students’ struggling with the relevance of the topic orientation, is that they have no experiences of imagining themselves talking with Jesus; this is not a routine event for them; not part of their sociocultural contexts.

Towards the end of this exchange after listening to several responses from the children, the teacher at turn 56 makes a suggestion of her own:

56. Teacher: Goodbye when he's ↑going. Would you say, (0.2) would you say (0.1) how mu:ch you love all the things he made for ↑you?
57. Students: Yeah! Yeah! Yes!
58. Student: °No° (whispered).
59. Teacher: ↓Probably, because we do love all those things.

It is at this point that she orients the talk to another topic – that students should tell Jesus how much they love the things he made for them. At turn 56 the teacher is teaching students what to think and feel: “Would you say how much you love all the things he made for you?” This is not an educational goal, but rather a behavioural goal. This is another identifiable feature within institutional interactional asymmetry, in which the professional person has the role of the principal speaker and as such determines the topic and how that topic is to be shaped (Drew & Heritage, 1992, p. 49). A hearing of this discussion indicates that the teacher is adding another dimension to the students’ knowledge and understanding regarding the nature of Jesus, which is that he made all things for them, implying that Jesus is the creator. However, Catholic teaching is that God is the creator (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, para. 317) whilst Jesus is Lord of creation (*Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 1994, para. 668).

In addition, in her turn at 56, “Would you say how much you love all the things” with her lexical choice of the word “you”, the teacher has constructed all students collectively as a single cohort (Austin et al., 2003; Freebody & Herschell, 2000), all of whom would say they “love all these things”. This statement is an emotional one that does not give new knowledge, but rather, teaches the students what to think and feel as a single cohort. Further, it is a catechetical statement that requires a particular affective response from students; it constructs them as loving all the things Jesus made for them. So, not only are they told to acknowledge that Jesus made all things (which, in Catholic teaching, he did not) but also that they must love all these things. At turn 59, “Probably because we do all love these things”, through her lexical choice of “we” the teacher has this time, constructed *herself* with the students as a single cohort (Austin et al., 2003; Freebody & Herschell, 2000) that includes the school and the Church; she has constructed all individuals as insiders in a particular group who “love all these things”, indicating a catechetical approach .

Turn 58 included a further point of significance when a student responded to the teacher’s question, “Would you say, would you say how much you love all the things he made for you?” by whispering, “No.” The teacher did not verbally respond to this statement (perhaps she did not hear it). We therefore cannot say how she would have responded, or if indeed she would have chosen to respond. A hearing of the reply as being whispered indicates that the student is possibly aware that it is perhaps an inappropriate response (as far as the teacher may be concerned). The remark is not wrong educationally. However, it can be inferred that this student might sense some “wrongness” or inappropriateness. What needs to be kept in mind though, is that this

student may not be a “believer”; may not, in fact, be part of a faith community, such as the local parish; s/he could belong to a religion that is not Christian; or not belong to any religion at all. In any of these cases it would be quite legitimate for this student to reject the notion that s/he must be thankful for the things Jesus made. A further point regarding this comment is that if it was heard by the teacher, an authentic curriculum approach (Lambert & Clyde, 2000) (see Chapter 2, section 2.5) would have taken up the comment and used it for further discussion or investigation.

5.3.1.2 Discussion of Findings

Conversation analysis has revealed a number of critical insights regarding this lesson. It was very much a teacher-directed lesson, in which the teacher implemented a transmission curriculum, which values content over process in the program (Arthur et al., 2005; Arthur et al., 1996; Sandstrom & Tonkin, 1999). As in lesson 1, this teacher’s interaction demonstrated that it was characteristic of classroom instructional, asymmetrical interaction in that she, as the teacher, determined the topics, when each topic would be introduced and satisfactorily concluded, and what the next topic would be (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2004). The educational goals oriented to the meaning of the symbols the chicken and egg in relation to the liturgical season of Easter. The teacher, who developed each sequence within an I-R-E structure, achieved this in an interrogative and informative way. At times these sequences were expanded until a satisfactory reply was produced (Mehan, 1979a).

As in lesson 1, the students’ interaction in this lesson was oriented to Easter eggs more than to the religious significance of Easter. In both lessons students struggled to find what the relevant answers to the teachers’ questions concerning the significance of Easter could have been. Both lessons indicated that for these students the relevance of Easter is the Easter Bunny and Easter eggs. In both lessons, the teachers were continually reiterating their questions and statements, seeking to scaffold students to realise the religious significance of Easter. Freiberg and Freebody (1995) refer to the notion of *epistemological trouble* as being the most evident form of “interactive trouble” experienced by students when struggling to answer teachers’ questions, “because it entails a simple lack of knowledge of the answer on the part of the students” (p. 298). They go on to suggest teachers’ questions that lead up to or follow up on those questions:

do not provide the explicit guidelines for the kind of answer that is expected.

Often this leads to reformulations of questions by teachers until some acceptable

form of a right answer is provided... the less explication there is in the question about the form of the preferred answer, the more the teacher is relying upon cultural congruence between herself/himself and the students. (pp. 298-299)

In both lessons the teachers initially oriented students to the religious significance of Easter, but this orientation was not explicit. Students struggled to find relevance for the teachers' particular focus, as they were oriented to their own social and cultural contexts, which were shown to be incongruent with the teachers'. Teachers then tried to connect students' learning to their lifeworlds, but this was not entirely successful.

Two problems have been elucidated regarding this issue of relevance: first, the implicit nature of the teachers' interactions had not made the purpose of the lesson clear to students, and therefore they were left to guess what each teacher wanted to know; and second, students' own social and cultural knowledge and experiences of Easter were oriented to the secular significance rather than the religious significance.

Both teachers tried to introduce the theological concepts of new life and Jesus' resurrection, theological concepts that were shown not to be relevant to students' everyday experiences. Statements such as "Jesus had new life" or "Jesus was coming alive" are complex and challenging for young students, and present challenges for teachers at two levels of theoretical underpinnings of early childhood education. As discussed in Chapter 2, section 2.5, early childhood education is underpinned by a number of theories, including sociocultural theories and developmental psychology. Contemporary early childhood education criticises a total dependence on developmental psychology, arguing that a greater account must be taken of children's social and cultural contexts: "Sociocultural perspectives suggest that children learn best when the curriculum is connected to their everyday lives and interests" (Arthur et al., 2005, p. 11). Analysis of both these lessons revealed that students were presented with concepts outside their usual social and cultural contexts. Both lessons showed that a gap exists between students' lived social and cultural contexts, and the religious context of the school and Church. Theological concepts of Jesus' resurrection and new life had little relevance for these students, and teachers had to work hard to help students make connections between their secular Easter experiences and the religious Easter significance. The theological concepts of resurrection and new life are complex and abstract, and developmental psychology suggests that young children would find it difficult to fully understand and comprehend such abstract concepts.

In contrast to the first lesson, CA showed the second lesson was underpinned by a catechetical approach in which the teacher sought to develop students' faith, and

required a personal faith response from all students, constructed as a single cohort for the purpose of this lesson. Catechesis is appropriate only when all involved are believers freely seeking faith development (section 2.2.2.1), as catechesis is the process of faith sharing / development between or among believers, all of whom are voluntarily seeking that faith development. The school is an educational setting in which teachers explicitly aim to develop educational aims and outcomes. Such outcomes are assessable, as students can be said either to achieve or not achieve the outcome. However, such statements as, “Would you say, would you say how much you love all these things?” seek behavioural outcomes rather than educational ones and assessment of such outcomes becomes ambiguous. For instance, if students reply that they would not say this, (as one student in this lesson did), would they be assessed as not achieving the outcome? They could legitimately reply that they do not love snakes because they are dangerous, or they do not love tsunamis or earthquakes because they cause so much damage. Would these answers be assessed as wrong? This is complex.

Throughout the lesson, the teacher displayed her catechetical goal-orientations, demonstrated by her continual use of cohorting language and her comments regarding the nature of the students’ thoughts and actions in relation to their feelings about Jesus, and the place of Jesus in their personal lives.

For further insights into this lesson, Membership Categorisation Analysis (henceforth MCA) is applied to the lesson and is elaborated in section 5.3.2.

5.3.2 Membership Categorisation Analysis

It can be recalled from Chapter 3, section 3.6.1.2 that MCA (Sacks, 1984a, 1992) affords insights into how speakers draw on and reconstruct common cultural sense in specific situations (Freebody, 2003, p. 156). The analysis is detailed in section 5.3.2.1 and key findings are discussed in section 5.3.2.2.

5.3.2.1 Analysis

MCA was applied to this lesson to investigate two aspects of categorisation constructed by this teacher: (1) the construction of the two members of the participants in the Easter story: Jesus and the Easter Bunny; and (2) the categories of Teacher and Student during the course of the lesson. The former analysis is explicated in section 5.3.2.1.1 and the latter in section 5.3.2.1.2.

5.3.2.1.1 *Two categories of participants of the Easter story: Jesus and the Easter Bunny.* MCA affords further insights into the teacher's construction of the religious significance of Easter, Jesus' resurrection and new life. The two members she constructed as participants of the Easter story in the interactional sequence turns 19 to 44, were the Easter Bunny and Jesus. However, whilst they are members because they are participants in this story, it cannot be said that the Easter Bunny and Jesus are Categories, as they are not representative of any category or categories – they are the only two participants in the Easter Story. But in this lesson the teacher, by making them both participants in the Easter Story, treats them as Categories. This analysis will treat them in that way, that is, as both Categories in this Easter Story. MCA demonstrates the attributes attached to each, and Table 5.10 provides an overview of these Categories together with the assigned CBAs and inferred attributes.

Table 5.10: Categories, Category Bound Activities & Implied Attributes

MCD	Categories	Category Bound Activities	Implied Attributes (Inferred from the assigned CBAs.)
Participants in the Easter Story	Jesus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • had new life • gave us new life • died • was coming alive • having new life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus is responsible for us being alive • There was a time of some form of metamorphosis after his death
	Easter Bunny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • came to you • he's such a clever thing that Easter Bunny • didn't want to bring you crocodile eggs did he? • didn't want to bring you dinosaur eggs? • Brought you chocolate eggs cause you can eat them and they will remind us of Jesus having new life. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • works for Jesus

This teacher focused on Jesus' new life by stating in various ways that he had a new life, gave us a new life, died and was coming alive. She did not qualify these activities by assigning specific attributes to Jesus. However, from the activities she gave Jesus some implied attributes could be made. If Jesus gave "us" new life, can it then be assumed that "we" also have died and come back to life? This is an extremely complex and abstract concept for young students and one that was not explained. According to Catholic Church teaching, the new life referred to by the teacher is not a physical phenomenon that is part of people's earthly life; it is a complex theological

understanding referring to eternal life. Young children cannot know this. What then are they left to understand by this statement? Also the CBA of “was coming alive” raises some further questioning images. What does this activity entail? Was there an actual moment when this happened? How did it happen? What happened? Was it some form of metamorphosis similar to a caterpillar turning into a butterfly, with which young children are familiar? Or was it similar to a hatching chick, a process they had watched everyday in the incubator that had been placed into the setting? Again this was left unexplained. What images of Jesus were conveyed to young students in an attempt to teach about new life?

Table 5.10 also highlights the dilemma of the place of the Easter Bunny, an extremely significant character for young children at Easter time. The Easter Bunny is not a symbol of the Christian Easter religious story; nor has this teacher suggested that it is. However, her statement at turn 42 that the Easter Bunny left chocolate eggs so we could eat them and remind us of Jesus having new life, implies that the Easter Bunny is an integral part of the religious significance of Easter. The Easter Bunny has always been a secular symbol originating from ancient spring festivals, and is an integral part of most Australian households, which may not necessarily be religious, every Easter. This is not a straightforward issue, as young children are faced with many contesting ways of celebrating not only Easter, but also Christmas. It is left to early years’ teachers to struggle with combining the reality of young children’s lives with the reality of religious festivals.

This teacher has dealt with the dilemma by linking the Easter Bunny with Jesus, explaining that the Easter Bunny’s job in leaving the eggs is to remind them about Jesus’ new life. She has set up two Categories of participants in Easter: Jesus and the Easter Bunny, implying that they are part of the one and same story and that the Easter Bunny works for Jesus. Fowler’s (1981) theory of faith development (section 2.4) informs us that young children in the projective-intuitive stage of faith development cannot differentiate between fact and fantasy. If teachers in higher grades do not clearly differentiate between the two Categories set up by this teacher, speculatively these young children may carry questionable images and understandings into adulthood. In this transcript, the teacher “marries” the two worlds, secular and religious, perhaps without knowing or realising that is what she is doing.

5.3.2.1.2 The construction of the categories of teacher and student in this lesson. Throughout this lesson, students were constructed as members of two cohorts and as

individuals: (1) as part of a single cohort which included all students but not the teacher such as in the first part at turn 48, “What would you say to Jesus if he came?” (2) as part of another single cohort which included herself together with the students as insiders in a particular group, in this case the institution of the Catholic Church as shown at turn 59

59 Teacher: Probably because we do love all those things. I wonder what else we would say to him?

and finally (3) as individuals when named specifically and publicly, such as in the second part at turn 48,

48 Teacher: What would you say to Jesus if he came? Hollie, what would you say?

In some cohorts, the teacher and students are grouped together when constructed as members of the institution of the Catholic Church.

Table 5.11 (over page) outlines the CBAs and attributes, as well as the implied attributes assigned to the Categories of the class community by the teacher throughout the whole lesson as revealed in the lesson transcript in Appendix I. The MCD for these Categories is Class Community, and in this lesson is bound by the central category bound activity of “learning about the symbols of Easter”. The constructed Categories are Teacher and Students, recognising that the Category Student is assembled in different ways including being members of different cohorts: Class Cohort excluding Teacher, and the Institutional Cohort that includes students, teacher and school, as members of the institution of the Catholic Church. In these two cohorts, students are always held accountable to the Category Student.

Each of the Categories will be analysed separately.

Teacher. If we attend to the teacher’s role within the MCD of class community, some intriguing insights become evident. The Teacher’s CBAs are not totally centred upon the normal CBAs associated with teachers in classrooms. When we turn to the Teacher’s CBAs implied by her interaction, we note that attributes normally associated with classroom teaching exist: can plan and teach a lesson; knows most of the content; informs students about key concepts and content associated with the key learning or foundational area; and manages class confidently and effectively. However other activities, such as telling students they should be praying during school vacations or divulging her own personal prayer life, as substantiated in turns 70 and 72, are faith development activities.

70. Teacher: °You've probably just forgotten how to pray. Did you remember to pray over Easter time too? °

71. Students: Na. Yes. No. Yes.

72. Teacher: Did you remember that? ↑It's not just at this time we pray.

Table 5.11: Categories, Category Bound Activities & Attributes

MCD	Categories	Category Bound Activities	Implied Attributes (Inferred from the assigned CBAs.)
Class Community	Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • puts symbols into prayer circle • has a story to read • reads story • tells students about the symbols • tells students about Jesus • glad preschoolers thought about Jesus on Easter Sunday morning • tells students Jesus made all the things • prays with preschoolers • tells students they should pray at home as well as at school 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • is knowledgeable - knows about Easter, Jesus and these symbols • doesn't know Jesus is not the creator • prays herself outside school • is concerned for, as well as directs, students' faith development
	Students (as single cohort excluding teacher) Institutional Cohort (including teacher)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • listen to teacher • answer questions • tell teacher that they got eggs and money for Easter and that the Eater Bunny came • held accountable for thinking of Jesus over Easter • some pray / some do not • held accountable for not praying in prayer session • held accountable for praying at home • listens to teacher • answers questions • would not say to Jesus that s/he enjoys all the things he made for them • make the sign of the cross • think about when Jesus died on the cross • talk about new life • love things Jesus made • should pray at home not just at preschool 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • can listen • can think • assumed to actively belong to the same faith • all celebrated Easter and Easter Bunny came to them • don't pray at home • not all agree with teacher • all have same beliefs and are prayerful outside of preschool • love creation

These additional CBAs, not usually associated with the professional or secular nature of classroom teaching, include explicitly being concerned for, and judgemental of, students' faith practices, and implicitly implies own 'correct' prayer life. At turn 72, "It's not just at this time we pray", the lexical choice of "we" is hearable as including herself as well as the students. All of these CBAs orient to a different relevance, such as to those whose roles are to catechise and develop faith: Parish Priest, faith coordinator, the RCIA (Rite of Christian Initiation for Adults) team members or Sacramental team members.

Noteworthy also, in this particular I-R-E sequence, is the fact that the teacher did not evaluate the students' response at turn 71 where some responded negatively to her question, "Did you remember to pray over Easter time too?" She simply repeated her

question and reinforced her catechetical stance, “It’s not just at this time we pray.” The teacher is using homiletic language (Moran, 1989) in which she is preaching more than teaching. This is language used by ministers of religion when delivering sermons or homilies following the reading of Biblical texts. As outlined in Chapter 2, section 2.8, Moran (1989), argues that homiletic speech is appropriate only within certain circumstances:

Homiletic speech requires a precise set of conditions if it is to be morally appropriate and educationally effective. Lacking these conditions – a community freely gathered, an agreed upon text, a speaker designated by the community to inspire the rest – homiletic speech can be morally offensive and educationally futile. (p. 70)

In other words, Moran is arguing against the use of homiletic speech in any setting lacking the conditions he has outlined. The conditions within the educational context of this preschool setting do not provide such “precise set of conditions”. The young students present are not “freely gathered”: their parents enrolled them for a variety of reasons, of which receiving a Catholic religious education may not necessarily have been their overriding or first priority. These students do not represent a community gathered to celebrate Eucharist; that is the parish community. Moran’s reference to “an agreed upon text” suggests the sacred or prayer texts that are set down for a particular liturgical celebration, such the mass of the day, to which all present ascribe. Students in the classroom may not ascribe to the text of the gospel story read nor the prayer, or may have no experience of prayer at home. Indeed children at such a young age, four and five year olds, are not usually held responsible regarding their personal prayer life. Moran (1989) goes on to argue, “However, in the special setting of the classroom, the homily becomes peripheral. And when the classroom teacher is engaged in instruction, the homily has almost no part to play” (p. 72). Instruction requires the use of an academic language, not a homiletic one.

Students. MCA shows the students are engaged in CBAs that are relevant to a preschool setting: listening to the teacher; answering her questions; sharing understandings; and so on. They are also associated with activities that are a normal part of the Catholic classroom: learning about Jesus, prayer and liturgical seasons; listening to Bible stories; praying. However, praying is a very different activity from learning about prayer formally. Praying is considered a personal response to God and is not assessable within the Catholic classroom in the Brisbane Archdiocese, as it is a faith

activity. This teacher however, is hearably disappointed that some children chose not to pray as shown at turn 70:

70. Teacher: °You've probably just forgotten how to pray. Did you remember to pray over Easter time too? °

71. Students: Na. Yes. No.

72. Teacher: Did you remember that? ↑It's not just at this time we pray. Preschoolers I've chosen our song...

The teacher has implied that praying at home is a further activity in which these students should also be engaged, “Did you remember to pray over Easter time too?” And at turn 72 she reinforces this CBA, “It’s not just at this time we pray.” Here is a shift in orientation; a shift to a responsibility to a specific cohort attribute, that is, to the cohort “Catholic Church”, which in this orientation, includes students as members.

The attributes given to students by the teacher are for the most part, appropriate: they can listen and think, and they can answer questions. However, it is notable through her choice of particular language that there are some further attributes the teacher expects of these students. The attributes implied by the CBAs “love the things he made” and “Did you remember to pray over Easter time too? It’s not just at this time we pray”, suggest that the teacher has made certain assumptions regarding the students’ beliefs, as well as faith and religious practices: they love creation because Jesus made it (a misconception according to Christian teaching) and they belong to Christian families who would pray all the time. These are not the usual attributes associated with students in an educational lesson within a classroom setting. Further, it was presumed that the students all thought about Jesus’ resurrection when they received their Easter eggs. “I am glad you thought about that over Easter” implies their reflective and religious attributes, even though not one response during these turns, 28 to 35, referred to Jesus in any way.

Students as members of cohort of Catholic Church. Through her use of the pronouns, “we” and ”us”, the teacher had also constructed the single cohort (Austin et al., 2003; Freebody & Herschell, 2000), which included all students and herself as insiders in a particular group, the institution of the Catholic Church. The CBAs assigned to this single cohort as summarised in Table 5.11, included: making the sign of the cross; thinking about when Jesus died on the cross; talking about new life; loving things Jesus made; and not just praying at preschool during the school terms. The implied attributes are that all are insiders in the institution, accepting and sharing the same religious beliefs and loving creation.

5.3.2.2 Discussion of Findings

Overall MCA has elucidated two key aspects of this lesson, that it has both catechetical and educational dimensions. The teacher is engaged in educational activities exhibiting attributes associated with teaching in a classroom, as well as those associated with other vocations such as a priest or faith coordinator. She instructs the students about the symbols, describing them in terms of their association with Jesus during the time he died, the first Easter. In addition to this she makes explicit links between the symbolic natures of these symbols within Jesus' life to the personal lives of the students. She goes beyond an educator's role by catechising the students about the religious meanings these symbols should hold for them personally.

The interaction also revealed the teacher's ongoing catechetical approach throughout the session in which she sought to develop students' faith. Through her continued use of cohorting language she constructed students at different times as all members of the same faith sharing community, namely the Catholic Church. As students, she makes them answerable to this cohort, which is inappropriate in the school context. She went beyond the confines of the classroom to state that the students should be praying at home in addition to praying at preschool. Harris (1989) argued that prayer (among other elements), as part of the church tradition,

is often taught better through worship or preaching than through classroom instruction. The tradition itself is handed on more fully when it is done in the midst of the people, the community, who are the tradition in their own persons. The life of prayer educates us most not when we read books about it but when we fall on our knees. (p. 44)

Harris' argument is a valid one, particularly when the diverse and pluralist populations of contemporary Catholic schools are considered. Some of these young students would not experience prayer on a regular basis, as revealed in their discussions with the teacher. Some would not be part of the worshipping faith community, and their only experience of prayer would be at this Catholic school. Praying as a community such as this preschool group, is a form of worship; it is being "religious in a particular way" (Moran, 1991, p. 249). As previously discussed (section 2.3.2), Moran (1991) distinguishes between two contrasting processes within religious education, arguing that these two processes, " (1) teaching people religion, and (2) teaching people to be religious in a particular way", should remain two distinct and separate processes (p. 249). The former is an educational process whilst the latter is a faith-nurturing process. The structure of religious education within this preschool setting combines these two

processes. A lesson which is an educational activity, seeks to develop knowledge and understanding. A worshipping activity such as prayer seeks to develop people's participation within a tradition, as well as to develop their faith; it teaches them "to be religious in a particular way." In this instance, the teacher displayed CBAs more appropriate for a Sunday school teacher, a faith coordinator or a Parish Priest. Working within a faith community is a more appropriate setting for catechesis, than a teacher teaching in the context of an educational setting.

5.3.3 Teacher B Conclusions

When CA and MCA are considered together, particular insights regarding this lesson become clear: the teacher's catechetical approach; and the nature of the content related to the religious and theological concepts of Easter for young students. Each of these issues is considered separately in the following sections, 5.3.3.1 and 5.3.3.2.

5.3.3.1 The Teacher's Approach to the Classroom Teaching of Religion

Both CA and MCA highlighted the catechetical approach implemented by this teacher throughout the lesson. Her continued use of cohorting language indicated her presumption that all students together with her, belonged to the faith sharing community of the Catholic Church sharing the same beliefs.

CA clearly showed that this teacher's concern for the students' understanding of the religious symbolism of the egg was of central importance. It is apparent in the lesson talk that the catechetical aim of developing students' faith concerning the religious nature of the symbol of the egg, took precedence over students' more secular interests regarding the Easter Bunny and Easter eggs.

The teacher's catechetical role was further substantiated by MCA, which revealed the teacher's construction of herself as a catechist. The attributes associated with her teaching showed that she took on attributes associated more with catechists than with classroom teachers. She was not only concerned with the students' academic development, but also with their faith development. Religious literacy was not her only aim.

The lesson concluded with class prayer centred on Easter. The teacher herself initiated the prayer session with her own prayer at turn 65:

65. Teacher: Dear God thank you for the special things that happened over Easter I want to thank you for the Easter Bunny coming to us and reminding us of the new life you had. Jesus please help us to be more like you in the special times after Easter.

This teacher commences each school day with religious education, which concludes with prayer. Prayer is integral to the lesson for it takes place within the lesson. This format is a key step within Groome's (1980) shared Christian praxis model of religious education (see Chapter 2, section 2.3.1), which was previously implemented in the Brisbane Archdiocese (Catholic Education Office Brisbane, 1986). The teacher voiced her disappointment regarding the small number of students who prayed, commenting that they must have forgotten how to pray and, further, added that it was not only at this time they should pray. This evaluation act clearly revealed her goal orientation that these students not only know and understand the religious symbols of Easter, but also realise that those understandings influence the ways they should live when not at school.

5.3.3.2 The Nature of the Content

As in the first lesson, the problematic issue of how to explain complex and involved theological and religious concepts to young children has been raised. Both CA and MCA revealed ways the teacher constructed the concept of new life. Whilst she did not elaborate on the actual meaning of the concept, she has left students with some ambiguous images. This is not a criticism of teachers, but is evidence that they have not been provided with inservice or background, to deal with such concepts with young students; it is also evidence that teachers should be provided with such inservice.

5.4 Summary of Both Teachers' Lessons

This chapter has presented the analysis and findings of the two lessons which formed the focus of this study. These analyses have revealed three significant insights into the classroom teaching of religion: underpinning teaching approaches, nature of content and teaching practice. Each of these is outlined in the following sections 5.4.1, 5.4.2 and 5.4.3.

5.4.1 Teaching Approaches

The analyses of both teachers' lessons revealed that their approaches to the teaching of religion are different. Teacher A's approach, apart from some small instances of catechesis, was for the most part an educational one focused on students' knowledge and understanding of the events in Jerusalem in the week leading up to, and including Jesus' death and resurrection. This was demonstrated by the teacher's overall use of an academic language that did not seek to persuade or heal (Moran, 1989). He did not require a faith response from the students, nor did he comment on or seek to develop

students' faith. The analysis of the interaction showed his instructional comments and questions sought to develop students' knowledge of the Easter events, indicating that his aim was to develop religious literacy (Barry & Brennan, 1997b; Dwyer, 2001). This teacher separates the teaching and learning of religion, or religious instruction, from catechesis. His religion program in which he introduces students to religious and scriptural content and concepts, is separated from class prayer. His religion lessons are held in the middle session of the school day, whilst prayer is conducted each morning at the commencement of the school day.

Teacher B however, approaches the teaching of religion in a catechetical way as indicated by her construction of the students as a single cohort as members of the institution of the Catholic Church demonstrated by her continual use of the word "we". MCA demonstrated the ways in which this teacher constituted herself as a catechist more than as a teacher. In addition to using cohorting language, she also used homiletic language (Moran, 1989) as she went beyond the telling of the various parts of the story focusing on Jesus' death and resurrection, by preaching to students about how they should pray at home, not just at preschool. This teacher does not make the two dimensions of religious education distinct. In her preschool setting, they are not separate processes. Her lessons are part of the prayer sessions, which begin the school day. The structure of her lesson follows the shared Christian praxis model (Groome, 1980) described in Chapter 2, section 2.3.1, which is underpinned by a catechetical approach. This model was implemented in Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic schools in its previous classroom religion program, *Education in Faith for the Primary School Child* (Catholic Education Office Brisbane, 1986) from 1986 until 1997, when the current curriculum guidelines, underpinned by an educational approach, were introduced.

When viewed from an Ethnomethodological perspective with the question, "What counts as a religion lesson at this site?", two different views emerge. Lesson A reveals that a religion lesson imparts particular concepts about the religious story of Easter to be remembered by the students. Students are held accountable for knowing the key events of the story of Jesus' last week on earth in sequential order. Lesson B however, reveals that although a religion lesson imparts particular concepts regarding the religious significance of the Easter symbols, students are also held accountable for faith responses to aspects of the lesson, such as telling Jesus how much they love the things he made for them and praying at home.

5.4.2 Nature of the Content

Both lessons revealed the problematic nature of the content presented on three counts. First, the nature of the concepts presented in both lessons in terms of their theological complexity. A clear, straightforward explanation of the concepts of resurrection and new life were not forthcoming in either lesson. The teachers resolved the problem in different ways: one presented a somewhat simplistic version, such as Jesus being magical, perhaps in an attempt to simplify the complexity of the concept in recognition of the developmental stage of his young students; and the other did not attempt to explain the concepts at all, simply stating that Jesus came back to life: “So we’ve read all the stories up to when Jesus died and we knew Jesus was coming alive.”

Second, some of the content presented was at variance with Catholic teaching and biblical scholarship: the position of the Jews in relation to the death of Jesus and Jesus as creator and magician. Third, the content presented was irrelevant for the students’ own social and cultural contexts, as revealed in students struggling for relevance to the religious significance of Easter; their responses continually focused on Easter eggs and the Easter Bunny. This in turn raised further problems, more so for the second teacher who resolved the dilemma by combining the Christian religious story with the secular one.

5.4.3 Teaching Practice

Both teachers implemented a transmission curriculum which values content over process in a program (Arthur et al., 2005; Lambert & Clyde, 2000; Lovat & Smith, 1995; MacNaughton & Williams, 2004; Sandstrom & Tonkin, 1999). These lessons were teacher-directed with a specified amount of content regarding religious significance of Easter imparted to the students. The students had little direct opportunity to initiate and construct their own learning. The interaction in both settings was typical of institutional interaction’s asymmetrical structure, in that both teachers controlled the topics, when each topic would be introduced and satisfactorily concluded, and what the next topic would be (Drew & Heritage, 1992; Heritage, 2004). In both lessons the teachers took dominating roles, typical of institutional interaction, controlling a significant part of the discussion. Their roles were interrogative and informative. The students’ roles were restricted and constrained to producing knowledge previously acquired. Their engagement was neither lengthy nor insightful.

5.5 Concluding Remarks

This chapter has presented the analysis and discussion of findings of the two lessons' transcripts central to this study's focus on the classroom teaching of religion in preschool settings. The key findings summarised in the above section, 5.4, have significant implications for religious education theory, policy and practice, as well as for methodology and future research. Following a review of the key findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5 of this study, the final chapter, Chapter 6, discusses the implications raised by these findings.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Introduction

The central focus of this study was to investigate preschool religious education, specifically the classroom teaching of religion, in Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic preschools. The central research questions were:

How are the approaches to, and construction of, the classroom teaching of religion in Catholic preschool settings exemplified through teachers' talk-in-interaction with their students; and, how do these relate to those approaches described in the relevant Church and Archdiocesan documents?

The questions guiding this study were:

- What teaching approaches are conveyed in the relevant Church and Archdiocesan documents? Are these approaches clear and consistent?
- How do teachers approach and construct the classroom teaching of religion in and through their talk-in-interaction with their students? What approach/es is/are suggested by their talk-in-interaction?
- How do the teachers' approaches relate to those conveyed by the documents?

Chapter 1 introduced the context of the study, set within the area of Catholic preschool religious education and provided a brief overview of the nature and purpose of religious education, both as it evolved and developed in Australia, and as it is understood at the present time. According to Church documents (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988; Congregation for the Clergy, 1997), religious instruction is the responsibility of the school while catechesis occurs most fully in the parish. However, both documents make it explicitly clear that while each dimension is distinct, they are at the same time complementary – that is, the school has some responsibility in catechesis. The nature of that complementarity is not defined and neither, in fact, is the school's role in catechesis. This lack of clarity has contributed in part to the ambiguous interpretations of how religious education is approached in schools, as diocesan Catholic Education offices have striven to ensure schools' classroom religion programs contribute to faith development. Some dioceses have adopted an overall catechetical approach, and implemented the shared Christian praxis model of religious education (Groome, 1980) in which the two dimensions are combined. Other dioceses maintain the distinctiveness of the two dimensions by separating them, and have adopted an educational approach to classroom religion programs (Malone & Ryan, 1994; Moran, 1991; Rossiter, 1983;

Ryan, 2006; Ryan et al., 1996; Ryan & Malone, 1996). These religion programs are complemented by the school's religious life which nurtures students' faith development.

Chapter 2 provided an overview of the literature from which this study draws. An historical account of the development of religious education revealed that religious education in the Australian Catholic school sector was influenced by developments in both Britain and the United States of America. More recently a number of Australian religious educators (Crawford & Rossiter, 1988; Rummery, 1975, 2001; Ryan, 2006; Ryan et al., 1996; Ryan & Malone, 1996) have called for an educational approach to religious education, citing the increasingly pluralist and diverse student populations in Catholic schools (see section 2.3.2).

This study also drew on theories of early childhood education, as well as early childhood religious education. Contemporary perspectives on how young children learn, support authentic, transformational curriculum practices that identify postmodernism, poststructuralism, sociocultural theory, critical theory, play-based learning, and social constructivism (Arthur et al., 2005; Dahlberg et al., 1999; Fler, 2006; Lambert & Clyde, 2000; MacNaughton, 2003; MacNaughton & Williams, 2004).

The central aim of this study was to investigate how teachers in Catholic preschools approach and construct the teaching of religion, as exemplified in and through their talk-in-interaction with students. As elaborated in Chapter 3, Ethnomethodology (Garfinkel, 1984, 2002; Heritage, 1984; ten Have, 2004) was the overriding perspective adopted in this investigation (see section 3.2.1) and it applied the analytic techniques, Conversation Analysis (Freebody, 2003; Heritage, 2004; Sacks, 1992; Sacks et al., 1974; ten Have, 2001) and Membership Categorisation Analysis (Baker, 2004; Freiberg, 2003; Sacks, 1992). In addition to EM, a functional linguistic perspective (Freebody, 2003) was also adopted (section 3.2.2). The decision to draw on two different perspectives was made on the basis that Systemic Functional Linguistics (Collerson, 1994; Halliday, 1985, 1994) analysis with its focus on the function of language, would afford insights into another representation of the data corpus (Freebody, 2003; Ludwig & Herschell, 1995; Miller & Fox, 2004).

This study also included a parallel investigation into particular relevant Church and Brisbane Catholic Education Centre (henceforth BCEC) documents (Chapter 4) because they present ambiguous understandings of the nature of religious education. Whilst both Church documents make it clear that religious instruction is the school's central responsibility, they also state that the school can and must play its part in catechesis, a direction not qualified clearly. To what degree this catechetical role impacted on the

educational dimension required further investigation. Chapter 4 explicated the analysis, using MCA and SFL, of the extracts from these relevant documents (sections 4.2, 4.3 and 4.4).

Chapter 5 presented the analysis of the transcripts of teachers' lessons, which were analysed using the analytic methods of CA (section 3.6.1) and MCA (section 3.6.2), both consistent with EM.

This concluding chapter reviews the major findings of Chapters 4 and 5 in section 6.2, identifies the study's limitations in section 6.3, and discusses implications of the research findings for theory, methodology, practice, policy and future research in section 6.4. Finally, section 6.5 concludes this research study.

6.2 Summary of Key Findings

This study involved two investigations: one, of lesser emphasis, investigated Church documents; and the other, of major interest to this study, investigated classroom interaction. The document study included two sets of data: Church documents, because of their foundational influences on religious education curricula, and the BCEC document, "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b) as an indicator of the Archdiocese of Brisbane Education's approach to religious education in the preschool sector. The central focus of the study was the implementation of the classroom religion program in preschool settings, as exemplified in and through teachers' talk-in-interaction with students. By drawing together the key findings presented in Chapters 4 and 5, this section elucidates five critical insights afforded by the study into the teaching of religion in the Catholic preschool:

- 1) (a) Although they maintain that an overall educational approach should underpin the classroom religion program in the context of the Catholic school, aspects of the Church documents present ambiguous and inconsistent views regarding the nature and purpose of religious education in schools; and (b) the current BCEC document, "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b), is inconsistent and ambiguous with regards to the nature of the relationship between preschool religious education and primary school religious education;
- 2) Teachers' approaches to the classroom teaching of religion are inconsistent and ambiguous;
- 3) Teaching practice in religious education is inconsistent with recommended early childhood practice;

- 4) The nature of the content of teachers' lessons is at times at variance with Church teaching, and the complex theological concepts presented are problematic for students who struggled to determine the relevance of aspects of the classroom program;
- 5) Teachers' approaches in relation to the approaches presented in the Brisbane documents cannot be judged as either appropriate or inappropriate because, the documents themselves are both ambiguous and inconsistent.

The following sections, 6.2.1, 6.2.2, 6.2.3, 6.2.4 and 6.2.5 review each of these insights and conclusions.

6.2.1 The Documents Present Ambiguous and Inconsistent Views

Regarding the Nature and Purpose of Religious Education in Schools

Both Church documents, *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, ¶68) and the *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, ¶73), clearly and explicitly state that religious education is comprised of two distinct dimensions: religious instruction and catechesis. However, they also emphasise that these two dimensions are complementary. It is the conclusion of this study that herein is the source of the ambiguous nature of religious education in schools. As demonstrated in the analysis in sections 4.2 and 4.3, the documents do not explicitly define and qualify: (1) the distinct nature of both dimensions; (2) the exact nature of the school's role in catechesis; or (3) the specifics of the notion of complementarity. This lack of clarity thus necessitates that diocesan education offices and schools interpret for themselves: (1) the nature of this complementarity; (2) the precise nature of their role in catechesis; and (3) how to implement both dimensions.

On the one hand, both Church documents studied make it quite clear that religious instruction is an academic pursuit. They do this by assigning educational activities and attributions to it, as detailed in Chapter 4, sections 4.2.2 and 4.3.2. Religious instruction is only linked to the school context; it is neither stated nor implied that the dimension religious instruction, is associated with either parish or family roles. On the other hand, whilst these documents state that catechesis takes place in the faith community in a time and place not available to the school, they also state that the school can and must play its part in the work of catechesis. However, the precise nature of this role is not described or qualified, and schools themselves are left to clarify how this will be enacted. Consequently, diocesan decisions regarding the appropriate approach to religious

education in both the implementation and teaching of the classroom religion programs, are made according to how diocesan education offices interpret the ambiguous directives.

In the Brisbane Archdiocese, a clear direction has not yet been set for preschool religious education, and current official practice is guided by the policy statement “Religious Education in Preschools” (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b), which provides some direction with regards to roles and responsibilities of key participants including teachers, school administration teams, families and parish members. As shown in Chapter 4, section 4.3.1, this document suggests a catechetical approach, which is inconsistent with the educational approach underpinning BCEC’s curriculum for primary and secondary religious education. However, in preparation for the compulsory introduction of the preparatory year in all Brisbane Catholic primary schools in 2007, BCEC is presently designing and preparing specific religious education guidelines for the early years. These documents are still at draft stage and therefore cannot be evaluated. Early indications (personal correspondence) indicate that an educational approach will be taken, but the nature of both the directions to be provided for schools and teachers concerning religious education in the preparatory year and the content to be covered, are presently unavailable for public scrutiny. Further, the exact nature of the professional development to be offered is yet to be decided. (The issue of inservice is discussed in Implications for Practice, section 6.4.3.)

6.2.2 Teaching Approaches to Religious Education

The approaches to the teaching of religion displayed in the two preschool settings investigated by this study, were inconsistent. The interaction from lesson 1 indicated that Teacher A adopted an overall educational approach to the teaching of religion (section 5.2). He did not seek to develop students’ faith or make judgements about their personal religious beliefs and practices. The lesson was focused on the story of Jesus’ death and resurrection and did not include a prayer session.

However, the interaction from lesson 2, indicated that Teacher B adopted a catechetical approach (section 5.3). This catechetical approach was demonstrated in the teacher’s continual cohorting of the students as insiders in a single particular cohort, that is, as members of the institution of the Catholic Church and assigning faith developmental activities and attributes to them. In this setting, the religion program includes prayer time, and the teacher combines catechesis and religious instruction, that is, she combines the educational dimension with the faith-nurturing dimension. Moran

(1991) argues against such practice. He contends that the role of the teacher in knowing which of the two processes s/he is engaged in any particular time and place, is a crucial one. Moran continues, “The tragedy would be that, for lack of clarity about this distinction, institutions end up doing neither; their academic inquiry is not challenging enough and their formation is not particular enough” (p. 252).

Herein lies the dilemma for this particular teacher. She is trying to both educate and catechise. However, as displayed in the interaction of this lesson (section 5.3), students have not only been left unclear about the religious concepts of new life and resurrection, which have been ambiguously dealt with, but also, they indicated (as displayed in the classroom interaction) that their personal attention to prayer outside of school is minimal. Neither of the dimensions, education nor catechesis, has been developed satisfactorily.

6.2.3 Teaching Practice in Religious Education is Inconsistent with Recommended Early Childhood Practice

This study has shown through the analysis of the lesson interactions that both teachers implemented a transmission curriculum approach to the teaching of religion, in which the transmission of content regarding the religious significance of Easter dominated all interaction. The emphasis in both lessons was on content rather than process. It can be recalled from Chapter 2, section 2.5, that contemporary early childhood practice is influenced by social constructivism, an anti-bias curriculum, sociocultural theory, postmodernism and poststructuralism in which students’ social and cultural contexts, as well as their current experiences and understandings, are acknowledged and considered (Arthur et al., 2005; Dahlberg et al., 1999; MacNaughton, 2003; MacNaughton & Williams, 2004). The interaction was: (1) teacher dominated as all topics, topic changes and turn-transitions were controlled by the teachers (sections 5.2.1.2 and 5.3.1.2); (2) overall informative, as the teachers imparted knowledge concerning the topic of the religious significance of Easter to students who were passive recipients (sections 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.3.1 and 5.3.2); and (3) interrogative as the teachers continually asked a series of questions requiring specific student replies – students did not contribute spontaneously to the discussion (sections 5.2.1.1 and 5.3.1.1).

A further issue highlighted in this study was that of explicit teaching. In both research sites, analysis of the interaction revealed that students were struggling for relevance several times in the course of the lessons. It was heard in the interaction of both lessons that, in answering teachers’ questions, students were trying to “guess what’s in my head” (Ludwig & Herschell, 1995, p. 44). The teachers had not made their aims

explicitly clear from the outset of the lessons, and students were heard to be continually reaching into their own sociocultural experiences for their answers, which were shown to be at variance with what the teachers actually wanted.

6.2.4 The Nature of the Content of Teachers' Lessons

This study also highlighted several key issues regarding the suitability of certain topics and religious concepts within early years' religion programs. The first issue concerns the difficulty faced by early years' teachers regarding the relevance of the religious significance of certain Church liturgical seasons, such as Easter, within the reality of students' social and cultural contexts. Second, teachers faced difficulties when trying to explain complex theological concepts such as: who was responsible for Jesus' death and the nature of Jesus' resurrection, which includes the concept of new life. The third issue regarding the nature of the content taught related to its correct reflection of Catholic tradition. As explicated in Chapter 5, sections 5.2.4.2 and 5.3.3.3, a reader familiar with Catholic teaching on the nature of Jewish-Christian relations, particularly on the subject of the death of Jesus, as well as on who created the world, would find inaccuracies in the content presented in both lessons.

Whilst this research notices these inaccuracies as an issue, it does not suggest it as one that resides with the teacher as an individual. Both participants in this study are committed and dedicated teachers, highly regarded by BCEC, and these inaccuracies act as an indication of the need for preservice and inservice education that recognises and responds to these issues, as discussed in section 6.4.3.

6.2.5 The Relationship between Teachers' Approaches to the Teaching of Religion and Approaches conveyed in the Documents

This study cannot, nor does it attempt to, evaluate the correctness or otherwise of these teachers' approaches, for BCEC (at the time the data were collected) does not have an official policy clearly stating its approach to the preschool religion program. As shown in Chapter 4, section 4.4, the one official statement on preschool religious education "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b), suggests a catechetical approach in which teachers' roles are primarily focused on students' spiritual and faith development, rather than on their religious literacy. However, the following conclusions regarding these contrasting approaches can be made. Teacher A's approach is more consistent with the Church documents' directives concerning the two dimensions being distinct, as he clearly

distinguishes between the two - he does not combine the teaching of religion with class prayer (section 5.2.4.1). Teacher B does not clearly distinguish between the two dimensions (5.3.3.1). However, it could be argued that she does show their complementarity by combining the two. A further pertinent point regarding these two teachers' contrasting approaches is that neither, in the context of the Brisbane Archdiocese, is technically correct or incorrect. Teacher A's educational approach is consistent with that adopted for religious education in the Catholic primary school by the Brisbane Archdiocese, whilst Teacher B's catechetical approach is consistent with BCEC's statement, "Religious Education in Preschools" (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b). This research has concluded that current practice as revealed in these two lessons in Catholic preschools in the area of teaching religion, may be inconsistent and ambiguous.

The implications these key findings have for theory, methodology, practice and policy are discussed in section 6.4 together with recommendations for further research. The limitations of this study are outlined in the following section, 6.3.

6.3 Limitations of the Study

The significance of the findings of this study must be considered within, and take account of, the limitations of the study, including its sampling process, size, and methodology, as well as its specific focus on religious education. As discussed in the following sections 6.3.1, 6.3.2, 6.3.3 and 6.3.4, these aspects restrict the extent to which findings can be generalised.

6.3.1 Sampling

As outlined in Chapter 3, section 3.4, this study implemented purposive sampling (Silverman, 2001) in which the teachers chosen had to have at least four years teaching experience in Catholic preschools, and the teaching of religion was a specific and regularly taught area in their programs. As this study's interest is in how teachers approach and construct their religion lessons, sites where religion was not a regular inclusion were not considered. This study, then, is not representative of all teachers in Catholic preschools and nor can it claim that the findings are representative of a typical teacher of religion in Catholic preschool settings; it is therefore difficult to make generalisations.

6.3.2 Size

Four teachers were to be selected for this study but as outlined in Chapter 3, section 3.4, initial analysis of data collected from the first two sites clearly showed the practicality of a study this size. The richness of the analytic methods CA, MCA and SFL involved significant amounts of time and space. As this study was particularly interested in a detailed construction of the reality of the classroom, it was limited to two sites. Therefore, findings of the interaction cannot claim to represent all classroom religion lessons in Catholic preschools.

6.3.3 Methodology

This study had a focus that required data to be analysed in particular ways. The specific aspects of the analytic methods CA, MCA and SFL (sections 3.6) were utilised to examine these questions regarding the data corpus. However, this is not to say that there is not a lot more to find by further application of these and other methods.

6.3.4 Specific Focus on Religious Education

This study's central concern was the teaching of religion in Catholic preschools and it therefore collected data from only religion lessons. The data collected are not the problematic aspect of the study, but to what extent the findings of this study can be confined to the teaching of religion cannot be concluded. Both teachers in this study are recognised as effective early years' teachers by BCEC, but this study did not collect lesson interactions from other foundational areas in the curriculum. Therefore, it cannot claim that the findings regarding teaching practice and teachers' own content knowledge either are, or are not, only specific to the area of religious education, nor can it claim that they are representative of teachers teaching in all curriculum areas.

6.4 Implications for the Research Findings

Within the limitations of this study, critical and key findings into the teaching of religion as both conveyed in the relevant Church documents, and displayed in classroom interaction from both lessons, were revealed. These findings have relevant implications for theory, methodology, practice, policy and further research, each of which is discussed in sections 6.4.1, 6.4.2, 6.4.3, 6.4.4 and 6.4.5.

6.4.1 Implications for Theory

The findings of this study contribute to several fields of theory including religious education in the early years, the nature and purpose of religious education in Catholic schools, and theories concerning the relationship between classroom interaction and effective pedagogy. Sections 6.4.1.1, 6.4.1.2, and 6.4.1.3 discuss these implications. Implications for EM and functional linguistic theory are discussed in section 6.4.2, Implications for Methods.

6.4.1.1 Religious Education in the Early Years

Preschool religious education is evolving in Australian Catholic schools and as diocesan Catholic Education Offices embrace more fully early childhood education, such as the Brisbane Archdiocese with its introduction of the preparatory year into all Catholic primary schools in 2007, the need to clarify the nature and purpose of religious education in these early years gains increasing significance.

As discussed in Chapter 2, theories regarding early years' religious education in the context of the Catholic school are for the most part unhelpful for the Catholic school context. Most theories (Berryman, 1992, 1994; Cavalletti, 1992; J. M. Lee, 1988) regarding early years' religious education, focus on faith communities and local parish initiatives including Sunday school and children's liturgy, rather than on the Catholic school, and therefore, seek to develop young children's faith; they are confessional and catechetical. Such theories are underpinned by the premise that the participants and their families belong to a faith community. The reality of contemporary Australian Catholic schools is that significant numbers of students are from diverse and pluralist backgrounds (Chambers et al., 2006; Ryan, 2006). This demographic is acknowledged in the Church document, *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997), which describes the religious affiliation of students as believers, searchers and non-believers (¶75).

The findings from this study have highlighted two critical insights regarding religious education theory in early years' settings:

- (1) The documents' overall statements regarding the approach to religious education in the context of the Catholic school is that an educational approach should be taken (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988; Congregation for the Clergy, 1997). It is to be recalled from Chapter 4 that although aspects of these documents were ambiguous, generally it was concluded that catechesis

was most appropriate in faith community settings. Whilst it was stated in *The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988) that the Catholic school can and must play its role in *catechesis*, its essential role was stated as *religious instruction* (§ 69).

- (2) Students' responses in the classroom interaction revealed that they were unable to call upon experiences of being regular members of faith communities to participate successfully and meaningfully in a catechetical approach to the lesson. Their own experiences did not enable them to contribute to discussions concerning the religious significance of Easter, nor did they exhibit their own on-going faith development at home.

Such insights imply that theory regarding religious education in Catholic schools' early years' settings must consider a more explicit educational approach in which the sociocultural backgrounds of students are genuinely considered. In other words, the sociocultural theory of learning must inform and guide religious education theory, as it does for other areas of the curriculum. The analysis of the classroom interaction in both lessons demonstrated the problematic nature of presenting complex theological concepts and teachings to young students; a surprising yet predictable finding, given early childhood education's foundations in developmental psychology. Whilst contemporary educational practice is cautious of relying solely on developmental psychology, this field of theory could fruitfully inform religious education. Content and concepts within the contemporary classroom religion program in early years' settings needs to be re-evaluated. Some essential Church teachings, which include not only the resurrection, which was the focus of these lessons, but also those complex teachings relating to the Infancy narratives, including the dogma of the Virgin birth, are potentially problematic areas for young students.

In addition to theories of early years' education and the nature of the content of the religion programs, theories regarding best practice in early years' education also require closer attention. Early childhood educational research (Arthur et al., 2005; Fler & Robbins, 2006; Lambert & Clyde, 2000; MacNaughton, 2003; MacNaughton & Williams, 2004) suggests that students learn most effectively when they are involved, participative and socially constructing their own learning. Early years' teachers in Catholic schools have a repertoire of teaching and learning strategies that support and facilitate student participation and ensure student learning. This study advocates that early childhood theories of effective teaching and learning pedagogy also inform and guide the teaching and learning of religion. Religious education theories at odds with

theories for other foundational areas in the early years' settings should not be enacted in the religion program.

6.4.1.2 The Purpose and Nature of Religious Education in Catholic Schools

Although this study's central concern was with early years' religious education, the findings also have implications for primary school religious education theory. Diocesan religious education curricula in Australia reflect different approaches to the classroom teaching of religion. As described in Chapters 1 and 2, some implement a catechetical approach and others an educational approach. A catechetical approach presumes that all students are members of the Catholic Church seeking faith development. An educational approach however, makes no presumptions regarding students' religious beliefs and does not seek to develop faith. It aims to develop religious literacy (Barry & Rush, 1998; Dwyer, 2001; English, 1991). This study showed how cohorting language used in classroom interaction constructed students as members of one single cohort, that is, the institution of the Catholic Church, and presumed not only that all students were Catholic, but also that they were members of a practising faith community (section 5.3.1.1). Students were constructed in particular and specific ways that may not have been the reality of their personal lives.

As highlighted by this and other studies of classroom interaction (Austin et al., 2003; Edwards-Groves, 1998, 2003; Ludwig & Herschell, 1995), a significant aspect of curriculum implementation is teacher language. Teacher language, as reflective of a specific approach in the religion program, requires closer examination. Cohorting language placed students in the one cohort as members of the institution of the Catholic Church, indicating a catechetical underpinning. The purpose of religious education in the context of the Catholic school must be re-evaluated in the light of the stance of Church documents, student diversity and student relevance. As discussed in section 6.2.2, Moran (1991) argues that the two dimensions of religious education, "teaching people religion" and "teaching people to be religious in a particular way" must be separate processes in the classroom; if they become blurred then the school achieves neither "challenging academic inquiry" nor "particular formation" (p. 252). The reality of this argument was shown in the analysis of the second lesson where students were neither clear about the content of the lesson, nor did they demonstrate their religiosity in terms of their personal prayer life at home (sections 5.3.2.1 and 5.3.2.2). Religious education theory must be informed by the reality of the context of the Catholic school and Church documents. The purpose of religious education in the context of the Catholic school must be aligned with

these theories, and its nature must accommodate and achieve its purpose. Once the issues of purpose and nature are clarified, curriculum issues of content and practice can then be aligned with these theories. Further, this study also argues that Moran's (1989; 1991) theories regarding the three languages of religious education (academic, homiletic and therapeutic, see sections 2.8 and 5.4.1) must inform both religious education theories and theories of educational practice in religion. When religious education theory considers these elements, then religious education in the Catholic school can be defined and qualified more explicitly; each dimension's - *catechesis* and *religious instruction* - characteristics can be understood and implemented distinctly and their complementarity defined unambiguously.

6.4.1.3 The Relationship between Classroom Interaction and Effective Pedagogy

Much educational theory informing teaching pedagogy is at the macro level. Theories at the micro level of the classroom practice, particularly a focus on a relationship between teachers' classroom interaction and effective pedagogy, need to inform educational theory in more determined and deliberate ways. The critical role classroom interaction plays in teaching and learning has been researched extensively (Austin et al., 2003; Austin et al., 2001; Edwards-Groves, 1998; Freiberg & Freebody, 1995; McHoul, 1978; Mehan, 1979a, 1985). More specifically a focus on the notion of explicit teaching in teachers' interactions during literacy lessons has received close investigation (Edwards-Groves, 1998, 2003; Ludwig & Herschell, 1995). This study has highlighted the critical role explicit teaching also plays in religion lessons and theories regarding teaching practice: religious education must consider, and be informed by, the notion of explicit teaching.

6.4.2 Implications for Methodology

This study used the two methodologies, Ethnomethodology and functional linguistics. In investigating the research questions, it was found that these methodologies which have different theoretical foundations, complemented each other in investigating the research questions (section 3.2). EM with its focus on the actual constitution of social events by the participants themselves *in situ, in vivo*, affords insights into the event as it is happening, rather than as it might have been intended. This study has demonstrated how EM, applied through the analytic methods of CA, with its specific interest in classroom interaction as to how the lessons under study were "talked into being" (Heritage, 1984, p. 290), and MCA, afforded key and critical insights into the micro

levels of teaching. SFL with its focus on how people use language in both interaction and text to produce meaning, afforded further layers of insights into classroom interaction, as well as into Church and Brisbane Catholic Education documents.

CA specifically allowed, not only a view of the actual construction by both the teachers and their students of each lesson, but also enabled examination of the teachers' language, as an indicator of their approach to the teaching of religion, the structure of the lessons and the nature of the topics. The study's focus was documenting the approach to, and construction of, religion as it happened in current Catholic preschools; teachers' reflections were not relevant to this particular study. However, future follow-up with teachers' reflecting on their interaction, and further use of CA, would be beneficial in allowing teachers to see how their teaching could be made more explicit and therefore more effective, similar to other studies (Edwards-Groves, 1998; Freiberg, 2003). CA reveals for teachers the effects that specific features of classroom talk have on the role of student learning.

The role of MCA in classroom teaching research also offers specific and concrete benefits for research, as it afforded insights into the specific nature of topics, as well as into how students were constructed as students, or as members of particular communities through teachers' cohorting language. To what extent teachers use cohorting language in and across all key learning areas, has implications for their underlying philosophies and approaches to those key learning areas.

SFL proved to be a particularly revealing method of analysing the document study component of this research project. Educational practice is saturated with, and enacted by, such documents (Freebody, 2003), and their significant place can neither be diminished nor dismissed. SFL was critical in revealing that documents central to religious education in the context of the Catholic school do not present definite and unambiguous understandings of essential concepts. SFL analysis has much to offer policy designers and writers, by enabling them to decide if in fact such documents convey what they intend. Does the construction of the language convey clear descriptions and understandings, thus avoiding ambiguities and misinterpretation?

The nature of the detailed and intricate analytic features of all methods enabled in-depth analysis; that these in turn revealed critical insights at both the classroom and administration levels of education, rendered them as effective methods.

6.4.3 Implications for Practice

The findings of this study have significant implications for teaching practice in the classroom religion program. In the first instance, this study advocates an alignment between recommended contemporary early childhood practice and the practice of teaching religion in Catholic preschool and preparatory year settings. Teaching practice that involves all students as active and interactive participants, rather than passive recipients, must be enacted. Models, which include social-constructivism, play, and transformational and authentic curriculum approaches, all of which are more appropriate to contemporary early childhood education (Arthur et al., 2005; Lambert & Clyde, 2000; MacNaughton, 2003), need to be enacted in the religion program. Religion cannot be taught in ways that are at variance with early childhood practice.

Second, teachers must recognise within their practice, the direct and critical relationship between their classroom interaction and the teaching and learning process. In the first instance then, this research project proposes that the study of the analytic methods, CA and MCA be considered as integral parts of both preservice and inservice teacher education. Educating teachers about tools that enable them to interpret their own classroom interaction and language, would facilitate teaching practice that is more reflective, and in turn, more effective. As shown by this study, the nature of teachers' language affects two aspects of classroom practice: explicit teaching and student relevance. If teachers do not make it explicitly clear from the outset of their lessons, what they are aiming to develop through their interaction and questioning, students are left to guess the specific nature of the topic, as well as the specific requirements of their answers.

A further aspect of the nature of teaching language is that of cohorting language, which constructs students as all practising members of the institution of the Catholic Church. Student diversity must be acknowledged, and language that constructs them as all members of the Church must not be used. An academic language (Moran, 1989, 1997) that does not seek to persuade or preach or convert must be consciously and explicitly used in all classroom interaction. As in other areas, teaching practice must acknowledge and consider students' sociocultural contexts in the religion program.

Third, teachers must have a deep knowledge and understanding of all religious content and concepts that are included in the topics of the curriculum. Both preservice and inservice education must recognise and respond to: first, the complex theological concepts within curriculum guidelines; and second the challenging nature such concepts present early years' teachers. This study recognises the complex and therefore

challenging nature of some topics in early years' religion programs, and indeed advocates that some of these topics, (considered essential by some), be omitted from early years' religion programs. Teachers need to feel confident not only about the content, but also to question the appropriate or inappropriate nature of some of the content included in the programs. This study recognises the challenges this recommendation may have for some teachers, but teachers must develop the professional acumen to confidently request professional development in this area, as well as question the appropriateness and relevance of complex theological topics/concepts in the early years' religion program.

Fourth, this study strongly advocates that deliberate and determined reflective practice is regularly employed to enhance the teaching of religion in early childhood settings. Teachers need to be provided with opportunities and necessary support, including time and collegial mentors, to audio-tape their lessons and examine them for the following specific features:

- Lesson structures that have introductions which make it clear and explicit to students what they will be learning and doing; conclusions that summarise, revise and assess the key teaching and learning concepts;
- Lesson content and topics that are correct according to Catholic teaching, appropriate to the sociocultural contexts and age of students, made relevant through explicit and unambiguous language, and developed explicitly throughout the lesson;
- Students' participation rights are facilitated and their contributions are listened to and valued;
- Students' sociocultural contexts are considered and acknowledged; and
- Cohorting language that constructs students as practising members of the institution of the Catholic Church is not used.

In other words, teachers need to examine and reflect on their lesson transcripts and then “orient to reconceptualisation of ‘what counts as a lesson’” (Edwards-Groves, 1998, p. 384), at *this site* with *these students* in the religion program. For many students in Catholic schools what they learn about religion is based on experiences encountered in their religion lessons. What they learn about being students of religion is directly related to what they are held accountable for during the lesson. Are they held accountable for their knowledge and understanding of the religious concepts and teachings presented; that is, does an educational approach underpin this lesson? Or are they held accountable for their own personal faith response to concepts presented; that is, does a catechetical

approach underpin this lesson? Teachers' language in the course of their interaction is a critical aspect to be considered at the curriculum implementation stage.

6.4.4 Implications for Policy

The findings of this study have significant implications for policy that informs and guides religious education at a number of levels. First, policy that seeks to clarify the nature and purpose of religious education in the context of the Catholic school must be consistent at all levels and consider the realities of students' backgrounds and experiences. Local diocesan educational policies that inform and shape religious education curricula at all levels of schooling, including preschools, preparatory year, primary and secondary schools, must convey consistent and clear understandings to ensure consistent and effective practice at all levels of schooling.

The nature of student populations in contemporary Catholic schools reflects Australia's diverse and pluralistic population (Chambers et al., 2006; Lovat, 2002; Ryan, 2006); as highlighted in this study, the religion program cannot presume that all students are practising members of local faith communities. Whilst some students are Catholic and members of faith communities, others are not; other students who are not Catholic, may be Christian, but may also be from traditions that are not Christian; still other students may have no religious affiliations. At both the universal and local levels of the institutional Church, education policies which guide and shape religious education in the context of Catholic schools, must consider and reflect these realities.

Second, at the level of curriculum policy and design, the issues of appropriate and relevant content for early years' students, as well as effective teaching practice, must also receive serious and deliberate consideration. Curricula documents and guidelines must articulate the nature of the specific topics in the religion program that are both considerate of students' sociocultural contexts and appropriate to their developmental stages.

Third, policy that informs and shapes teacher education at preservice and inservice levels must also address the nature and purpose of religious education in Catholic schools, specifically at the early years' level, and ensure that theory that determines early childhood educational practice also informs and determines the implementation of early childhood religious education. Policy at this level must also make provision within preservice and inservice teacher education programs, for the inclusion of teaching background that is correct according to Catholic teaching and appropriate for the sociocultural contexts of students. In addition, the study of classroom interaction and its

relationship to the teaching and learning process should be included in preservice and inservice teacher education.

Finally, educating policy makers and curriculum designers about the analytic methods SFL and MCA at a theoretical level, would allow them to review and evaluate policy and curriculum documents and hence, present clearer statements, which in turn would afford unambiguous interpretations of guidelines and curriculum. Given the nature and structures of the universal Catholic Church, these implications for policy makers not only apply to Catholic education personnel, but also to Church policy makers at both local diocesan and Vatican levels.

6.4.5 Implications for Future Research

This study elucidates significant findings for early years' religious education and consequently recommends specific areas for future research. The focus of this study was teachers' approaches to, and construction of, the teaching of religion in Catholic preschools, as well as how approaches to the teaching of religion are conveyed in Church and local diocesan documents. Therefore, the study did not go beyond collecting data of teachers' classroom interaction and hence, teachers' own reflections on the data analysis and findings were not part of the study. Future study following up on teachers' reflections on the insights gained from the analysis of their classroom interaction, would afford further insights into the notion of reflective practice in the teaching of religion. Teachers could then apply this reflection and modify their practice accordingly (Edwards-Groves, 1998, 2003).

A critical area requiring further investigation is that of curriculum design specific to the teaching of religion in the early years. In particular, the nature of the content and concepts for curriculum documents needs close, careful and critical investigation to ensure that they are appropriate to students' sociocultural contexts, as well as for their developmental stages. Specific areas for such research include an investigation into the types of topics, which are both relevant and suitable in early years' religion programs, as well as the specific nature of such topics. Presently there exists a disjunct between the nature of other curriculum areas and the religion program. In the light of this study's findings regarding complex theological concepts and student relevance, some topics, such as Jesus' death and resurrection, presently included in teachers' religion programs, necessitate determined and deliberate re-examination and re-evaluation.

An equally critical element, which compels further research, is effective and appropriate pedagogy. Productive pedagogical models underpinned by contemporary

early childhood education theory that consider young students' social and cultural contexts and learning styles, must be examined for their place in the early years' religion program. The religion program cannot remain an isolated entity approached quite differently from other areas of learning.

In terms of the relationship between teacher classroom interaction and effective teaching and learning practice, it would be useful for future research to gather data from other foundational and/or key learning areas. This would enable educational research to clarify to what extent the insights gained are applicable across other curriculum areas.

6.5 Conclusion

The specific focus of this study is the classroom teaching of religion in the Catholic preschool. Its conclusions have highlighted a number of inconsistencies and problems at three key levels of preschool religious education: policy, curriculum and practice. Overall, Church documents state that the school's role is essentially religious instruction, but that the school can and must also play its part in catechesis (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988; Congregation for the Clergy, 1997). Present BCEC policy guiding the classroom religion program in preschool religious education (Catholic Education Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2002b) contradicts that which guides the primary school religion program (Barry & Brennan, 1997a, 1997b; Barry et al., 2003). In addition, this study found teaching approaches exhibited in the two lessons are inconsistent and that teaching content is, at times, inappropriate and irrelevant for students, as well as at variance with Church teaching.

This study's findings have implications for a number of areas outlined in section 6.4: a concerted and deliberate discernment of the nature and purpose of religious education in the early years' sector lies at the heart of the study. Religious education must acknowledge and respond to the diverse and pluralist student populations of contemporary Catholic schools. The place of the two dimensions of religious education, education and faith, must be clarified and articulated unambiguously for schools, so that each dimension is enacted distinctly and at the same time authentically in Catholic schools in ways that complement each other. Curriculum documents must specify with clarity, a teaching content relevant for students, and aligned with early childhood education philosophy and practice. The language in such documents must be unambiguous, so that clear and consistent practice is implemented. Both preservice and inservice levels of teacher education must recognise these critical issues and respond to them.

Preschool religious education is a critical and significant aspect of Catholic education in all Australian dioceses. As the number of schools offering preschool and preparatory year schooling increases, the nature and purpose of the early years' religion program must be clarified precisely, so that curriculum design and implementation are appropriate and relevant for all students.

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APPENDIX A

Letter to Principals regarding the Proposed Research Study in Preschool

Dear (*Name of principal*),

I am a lecturer in Religious Education at Australian Catholic University, McAuley @ Banyo Campus, Brisbane currently pursuing doctoral studies in Education at Griffith University, Brisbane. I have consulted with Brisbane Catholic Education regarding the selection of preschool teachers who are experienced early years' teachers of religion. Personnel at Brisbane Catholic Education suggested the teacher at your preschool as a possible participant and I am now seeking your permission for this teacher to participate in this study.

The focus of my dissertation entitled "*Wot's in a string o' words?¹T*": *An ethnomethodological study exemplifying approaches to the classroom teaching of religion in Catholic preschools* is approaches to the teaching of religion in Catholic preschool settings. Specifically it explores the approaches that are exemplified in relevant Church, diocesan and local school documents and in teachers' talk and texts during their religious education lessons.

As you would be aware, presently there does not exist an official curriculum for religious education in Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic preschool schools, but teachers are provided with four units in religious education and are free to implement those if they wish. The current Brisbane Archdiocesan Religious Education Guidelines for Years 1 to 12 are underpinned by an educational approach but to what extent this approach is applied in preschool settings is yet unclear. The nature and purpose of religious education in these settings is ambiguous.

This study is seeking to identify and describe the approach implemented in contemporary preschools as exemplified by the teachers through their interaction with students during lessons and also in relevant documents. I believe it is important to document this so that a more comprehensive understanding of religious education can be gained and this in turn may assist in the preparation of an appropriate curriculum.

If you agree for the teacher to participate in this project, that participation would involve the audiotaping of no more than two religion lessons, a copy of any print texts as resources used in that lesson, such as children's Bible stories, and a copy of your

¹ Dennis, C.J. (1915). "The Play" from *The Sentimental Bloke*.

planning (in whatever form that may take). As interviews are not necessary for the purpose of this study, I do not envisage that I will take up much of your time.

This research will form the basis of my dissertation and I would be happy to share the findings with you after the research is completed. I would also like to report aspects of it in academic journals and particularly to preschool religious educators in other Australian dioceses who are seeking to clarify the purpose and nature of religious education in these settings. However, please be assured that all information you provide would be considered confidential and that the teacher's and students' anonymity would be protected through the use of pseudonyms. Any identifying information of either you or the school would be omitted from all publications.

I also wish to emphasise that the school's participation is entirely voluntary and the teacher would be free to withdraw from the research project at any time throughout its progress. However, your participation would provide valuable insights into the teaching of religion in preschool settings and extend understandings of its nature and purpose in this context. Furthermore, by participating in this research your preschool teacher would be making a significant contribution to local knowledge about preschool religious education that might well serve as a guide for future decisions about curriculum planning and implementation within this area.

If you are willing for your preschool teacher to participate in this research I will provide him/her with an invitation followed by an information sheet detailing the nature of the research and further details of the procedures. In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a preliminary decision about participation, please do not hesitate to email me at jgrajczonek@optusnet.com.au or phone 3623 7178 (Wk) or contact my supervisors Dr Glen Palmer at g.palmer@griffith.edu.au or phone 3875 5660, or Dr Alan Cunningham at a.cunningham@griffith.edu.au or phone 3875 5782.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Grajczonek.

APPENDIX B

Letter Inviting Teachers to Participate in Study

Dear (*Name of participant*),

I am a lecturer in Religious Education at Australian Catholic University, McAuley @ Banyo Campus, Brisbane currently pursuing doctoral studies in Education at Griffith University, Brisbane. I have consulted with Brisbane Catholic Education regarding the selection of preschool teachers who are experienced early years' teachers of religion. Personnel at Brisbane Catholic Education suggested your name and I am now seeking your participation in this study.

The focus of my dissertation entitled "*Wot's in a string o' words?¹*": *An ethnomethodological study exemplifying approaches to the classroom teaching of religion in Catholic preschools* is approaches to the teaching of religion in Catholic preschool settings. Specifically it explores the approaches that are exemplified in relevant Church, diocesan and local school documents and in teachers' talk and texts during their religious education lessons.

As you would be aware, presently there does not exist an official curriculum for religious education in Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic preschool schools, but teachers are provided with four units in religious education and are free to implement those if they wish. The current Brisbane Archdiocesan Religious Education Guidelines for Years 1 to 12 are underpinned by an educational approach but to what extent this approach is applied in preschool settings is yet unclear. The nature and purpose of religious education in these settings is ambiguous.

This study is seeking to identify and describe the approach implemented in contemporary preschools as exemplified by the teachers through their interaction with students during lessons and also in relevant documents. I believe it is important to document this so that a more comprehensive understanding of religious education can be gained and this in turn may assist in the preparation of an appropriate curriculum.

If you decide to participate in this project, that participation would involve the audiotaping of your religion lessons, a copy of any print texts as resources used in that lesson, such as children's Bible stories, and a copy of your planning (in whatever form

¹ Dennis, C.J. (1915). "The Play" from *The Sentimental Bloke*.

that may take). As interviews are not necessary for the purpose of this study, I do not envisage that I will take up much of your time.

This research will form the basis of my dissertation and I would be happy to share the findings with you after the research is completed. I would also like to report aspects of it in academic journals and particularly to preschool religious educators in other Australian dioceses who are seeking to clarify the purpose and nature of religious education in these settings. However, please be assured that all information you provide would be considered confidential and that your anonymity would be protected through the use of pseudonyms. Any identifying information of either you or the school would be omitted from all publications.

I also wish to emphasise that your participation is entirely voluntary and you would be free to withdraw from the research project at any time throughout its progress. However, your participation would provide valuable insights into the teaching of religion in preschool settings and extend understandings of its nature and purpose in this context. Furthermore, by participating in this research you would be making a significant contribution to local knowledge about preschool religious education that might well serve as a guide for future decisions about curriculum planning and implementation within this area.

If you are willing and available to participate in this research I will provide you with an information sheet detailing the nature of the research and further details of the procedures. In the meantime, if you have any questions or would like additional information to assist you in reaching a preliminary decision about participation, please do not hesitate to email me at jgrajczonek@optusnet.com.au or phone 3623 7178 (Wk) or contact my supervisors Dr Glen Palmer at g.palmer@griffith.edu.au or phone 3875 5660, or Dr Alan Cunningham at a.cunningham@griffith.edu.au or phone 3875 5782.

Thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Grajczonek.

APPENDIX C

Information Sheet for Teachers

“WOT'S IN A STRING O' WORDS?”¹: AN ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL STUDY EXEMPLIFYING APPROACHES TO THE CLASSROOM TEACHING OF RELIGION IN CATHOLIC PRESCHOOLS.

Chief Investigators:	Dr Glen Palmer, PhD MEd BEd TCert Lecturer, Early Childhood Education, School of Cognition, Language & Special Education, Mt Gravatt Campus Griffith University BRISBANE Q 4111 Ph: 3875 5660 Email: g.palmer@griffith.edu.au	Dr Alan Cunningham PhD ADFA MEd BEd Senior Lecturer, Primary School Education, School of Vocational, Technology & Arts Education, Mt Gravatt Campus Griffith University BRISBANE Q 4111 Ph: 3875 5782 Email: a.cunningham@griffith.edu.au
Researcher:	Jan Grajczonek MRE GradDipRE DipT EdD Candidate School of Cognition, Language & Special Education Mt Gravatt Campus Griffith University Brisbane Q 4111 Ph: 36237178 (Work) Email: jgrajczonek@optusnet.com.au	

Thank you for considering my request to participate in this research study. This information sheet describes the nature and conduct of the study and should assist you in making an informed decision about your involvement.

The current Brisbane Archdiocesan Religious Education Guidelines have been specifically written for Years One to Twelve. The preschool is not included in these guidelines, but has been provided with four sample units of work that are not mandatory. The nature and purpose of religious education in the preschool setting has never been clearly articulated. This study specifically seeks to explore the teaching approaches to the classroom teaching of religion as expressed by preschool teachers' spoken and written texts and how these relate to the approaches conveyed in the relevant Church,

¹ Dennis, C.J. (1915). "The Play" from *The Sentimental Bloke*.

Archdiocesan and school documents. It is being conducted in partial fulfilment for the researcher's doctorate in education at Griffith University, Brisbane.

As part of the focus of this study is on the teaching of religious education, as a participant you will be asked to have your religious education lessons audiotaped. In addition copies of the accompanying lesson/unit plan (this maybe the Brisbane Catholic Education sample unit or whatever other forms you generally use) and teaching print resources, such as bible stories, will be requested for analysis. Also I would appreciate copies of any specific policies or documents relating to religious education that your setting or school may have.

All of these documents will be analysed to exemplify their suggested approach/es to religious education. I do not wish to disrupt your normal teaching routines in any way and will make myself available for lesson recordings at your convenience. As no other data such as interviews are required for this study, I do not expect to be in your setting for much more than a couple of days.

There are no foreseeable risks associated with this study. The knowledge gained from this project will contribute significantly to the understanding of the nature and purpose of religious education in the Catholic preschool settings. Participation in this study is strictly voluntary and you may terminate your involvement at any time without penalty. All aspects of this will be treated confidentially and neither you nor the school will be identified by name in the thesis or any other publication resulting from this study.

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of the study, you may contact the chief investigators or the researcher at the contact addresses provided. In addition, Griffith University requires that I inform all participants that if they have any complaints concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted they can contact either The Research Ethics Officer, Office for Research, Bray Centre, Griffith University, Kessels Rd, Nathan, 4111, Ph: 3875 6618 or The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Bray Centre, Griffith University, Kessels Rd, Nathan, 4111, Ph: 3875 7343.

Thank you for your interest in and assistance with this research study. On completion of the thesis a summary of its findings will be made available.

.....
Jan Grajczonek, Researcher.

.....
Date

APPENDIX D

Teachers' Consent Form

“WOT'S IN A STRING O' WORDS?”¹: AN ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL STUDY EXEMPLIFYING APPROACHES TO THE CLASSROOM TEACHING OF RELIGION IN CATHOLIC PRESCHOOLS.

Chief Investigators: Dr Glen Palmer, PhD MEd BEd
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Researcher: Jan Grajczonek MRE
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University
Brisbane Q 4111
Ph: 3623 7178 (Work)
Email:
jgrajczonek@optusnet.com.au

I agree to participate in the research being conducted by Jan Grajczonek under the supervision of Dr Glen Palmer, Lecturer, Early Childhood Education, School of Cognition, Language & Special Education, and Dr Alan Cunningham, Senior Lecturer, Primary School Education, School of Vocational, Technology & Arts Education, Griffith University, Queensland. I understand that this study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the researcher's Doctor of Education degree. My decision to participate is based on the information provided in the attached information sheet.

I am aware that the study will focus on the teaching approaches to the classroom teaching of religion as expressed by preschool teachers' spoken and written texts and how these relate to the approaches conveyed in the relevant Church, Archdiocesan and school documents. As a participant I realise the researcher will spend two or three days in my school during which time she will audiotape my religious education lessons and collect relevant documents such as lesson/unit plans, and other print resources. In addition to the lesson transcripts being used in the thesis I understand that the researcher may wish to use them in future publications subject to my further consent below.

¹ Dennis, C.J. (1915). "The Play" from *The Sentimental Bloke*.

Furthermore, I expect that a copy of the study's summary of findings will be made available on completion of the thesis.

It is my understanding that the information I provide will be held in confidence and neither my school nor I will be identified in the thesis or any subsequent publication associated with it. I also understand that the study has been reviewed and cleared by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Griffith University and that I may contact this office if I have any concerns or questions about my participation in this study.

I have read the information sheet and the consent form. I understand that the study will be carried out as described in the information statement, a copy of which I have retained. I realise that whether or not I decide to participate is my decision and that refusal to participate will involve no penalty. I also realise that I can withdraw from the study at any time without penalty and that I do not have to give any reasons for withdrawing. I have had all questions answered to my satisfaction.

Signatures:

.....
Participant Date

.....
Investigator Date

In participating in this study you have agreed to transcripts of your lessons in religious education to be used in this project. I would like you to indicate below what further uses of these transcripts (in which neither you nor your school will not be identified) you are willing to consent to. This is completely up to you. I will only use the transcripts in ways that you agree to. In any use of these transcripts, names will not be identified.

1. I agree that the transcripts can be used for educational publications and/or meetings.

.....
Participant Date

.....
Investigator Date

2. I agree that the transcripts can be shown in public presentations to educational groups.

.....
Participant Date

.....
Investigator Date

APPENDIX E

Letter to Parents/Carers Regarding their Children's Participation in the Research Study

“WOT'S IN A STRING O' WORDS?”¹: AN ETHNOMETHODOLOGICAL STUDY EXEMPLIFYING APPROACHES TO THE CLASSROOM TEACHING OF RELIGION IN CATHOLIC PRESCHOOLS.

Chief Investigators: Dr Glen Palmer, PhD MEd BEd
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Researcher: Jan Grajczonek MRE
GradDipRE DipT
EdD Candidate
School of Cognition, Language & Special Education
Mt Gravatt Campus Griffith University
Brisbane Q 4111
Ph: 36237178 (Work)
Email: jgrajczonek@optusnet.com.au

Dear Parents/Carers,

I am a lecturer in Religious Education at Australian Catholic University, McAuley @ Banyo Campus, Brisbane currently pursuing doctoral studies in Education at Griffith University, Brisbane. The focus of my research entitled “*Wot's in a string o' words?*”¹: *An ethnomethodological study exemplifying approaches to the classroom teaching of religion in Catholic preschools* is the teaching of religion in Brisbane Archdiocesan Catholic preschool settings. Specifically the project is seeking to identify and describe the approach implemented in contemporary preschool settings as exemplified in teachers' interactions with their students during religion lessons, as well as those approaches exemplified in relevant Church, Archdiocesan and school documents. I have

¹ Dennis, C.J. (1915). “The Play” from *The Sentimental Bloke*.

permission from Brisbane Catholic Education and the principal to conduct the study at this school.

The teachers are actually the focus of the study in the classroom and audiotapes of their lessons will be made. To this end your child's/children's voices may also be recorded. After the recording I will be transcribing the tapes but will not be identifying the teachers or the students by name. Your child's/children's anonymity will be protected through the use of pseudonyms and any remarks that may reveal the identity of the school will be omitted. The tapes will only be heard by me and possibly my supervisors and will not be used in the study nor in any subsequent studies. The transcripts will be published in the study but I can assure you that your child's/children's identities will not be made known.

This study will contribute significantly to the understanding of the nature and purpose of religious education in preschool settings and may well serve as a guide for future decisions regarding curriculum design and implementation in this area.

If you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of the study, you may contact the chief investigator or the researcher at the contact addresses provided. In addition, Griffith University requires that I inform all participants that if they have any complaints concerning the manner in which a research project is conducted they can contact either The Research Ethics Officer, Office for Research, Bray Centre, Griffith University, Kessels Rd, Nathan, 4111, Ph: 3875 6618 or The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Administration), Bray Centre, Griffith University, Kessels Rd, Nathan, 4111, Ph: 3875 7343.

If you are willing for your child/children to participate in this research, please sign the consent form attached and return to your school.

I thank you for your attention.

Yours sincerely,

Jan Grajczonek.

APPENDIX F
Parents’/Carers’ Consent Form

I agree for my child/childrenas part of the class to participate in the research being conducted by Jan Grajczonek under the supervision of Dr Glen Palmer, Lecturer, Early Childhood Education, School of Cognition, Language & Special Education, and Dr Alan Cunningham, Senior Lecturer, Primary School Education, School of Vocational, Technology & Arts Education, Griffith University, Queensland. I understand that this study is being conducted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the researcher’s Doctor of Education degree.

I am aware that the study is investigating teaching approaches to the classroom teaching of religion and that the teachers are the central focus. I realise that my child’s/children’s voice/s may be recorded during the audio recording of the religion lesson but that their identities will not be made known in the transcripts of those lessons.

It is my understanding that the actual tapes will not be used in any way apart from being transcribed. I also understand that the study has been reviewed and cleared by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Griffith University and that I may contact this office if I have any concerns or questions about my child’s/children’s participation in this study.

I have read the information contained in the accompanying letter. I understand that the study will be carried out as described in the information statement, a copy of which I have retained. I realise that whether or not I decide if my child/children can participate is my decision and that refusal to participate will involve no penalty. I also realise that I can withdraw my child/children from the study at any time without penalty and that I do not have to give any reasons for withdrawing. I have had all questions answered to my satisfaction.

Signatures:

.....
Parent/Carer

.....
Date

.....
Investigator

.....
Date

APPENDIX G
UN-NOTATED LESSON TRANSCRIPTS

Teacher A's Transcript

- Teacher: Now holy week is a very special time of the year Nicholas in need to sit down keep your hands to yourself please. Holy Week is a very special time of the year of the school and for the church because it's when we get ready for Easter.
- Students: Easter.
- Teacher: We've talked about Easter before. Hands up if you can tell me why Easter is so special? Have a think. Hands up if you can tell me why Easter is so special? Yasmin?
- Yasmin: Um because you get Easter eggs.
- Teacher: Well that's one reason of course isn't it? You get Easter eggs at Easter time. Hands up if you like Easter eggs?
- Students: Me.
- Teacher: Just about everybody likes Easter eggs. Fantastic. Hands down for me. There is another reason why Easter is special. Have a think about it. Susan?
- Susan: Because the Easter bunny comes.
- Teacher: Yes. The Easter bunny comes. Just a sec there is another reason why Easter is very special. Alice?
- Alice: Um because um it um, I don't know.
- Teacher: You don't know, can't remember. Ann?
- Ann: Um because we must go to the church.
- Teacher: We go to the church. Yes a lot of people go to the church during Holy Week and at Easter time.
- Students: Egg.
- Teacher: Yeah we've talked about the egg. We talked about that. Okay. There is another reason why Easter is special. April?
- April: Um because you have a new life.
- Teacher: You have a new life. Now what do you mean by that?
- April: A new Easter
- Teacher: Very tricky
- Teacher: A new Easter. Okay. Yeah. Lots of people thinking carefully about it. Ned do you know why Easter is special? No. Reece?
- Reece: Um because it's when Jesus was born.
- Teacher: Oh now other people have told me this before. They've said Easter is when Jesus is born and that's very good thinking Reece but actually Christmas is when Jesus was born. Something else happened to Jesus at Easter time. He was born at Christmas time then something else happened to him at Easter time Thomas?

Thomas: He he died.

Teacher: He died. He did die at Easter time. Can you remember how he died?

Thomas: No.

Teacher: Hands up if you know how he died? Luke?

Luke: Um he's dead.

Teacher: How did he die?

Students: I don't know.

Teacher: Yvonne?

Yvonne: Um because he was on the red cross.

Teacher: Because he was on the Red Cross. Okay he was on the cross. He was nailed on the cross and he died on the cross. Just like the one we saw up in the church. Remember what the cross looks like?

Students: Yeah. Yeah. Yes.

Teacher: Okay. I'll get that pen here and I'll draw the shape of a cross up here. It has a long straight part and it has a cross part that goes like that and there's the mountain the crosses are on top of. Now we're going to be talking about holy week. Lots and lots of things happened in holy week and one of my friends told me before what yesterday was called. Yesterday had a special name. Something Sunday? Lindsay?

Lindsay: Sunday.

Teacher: Yeah a special name. Something Sunday. What Sunday was it? Nikki?

Nikki:

Teacher: No. Yolanda?

Yolanda:

Teacher: No. Amanda?

Amanda:

Teacher: Tyler?

Tyler: Palm Sunday.

Teacher: Palm Sunday. Can you say that?

Students: Palm Sunday.

Teacher: Yesterday was Palm Sunday. Palm Sunday was a very special time when Jesus came into Jerusalem. Now I've got a book here and it's got a picture of different parts of holy week and I'll show you what Palm Sunday might have looked like. Have a look at that. Now what's happening there is Jesus is in the middle there and he's riding on a donkey and everyone in the town was so happy to see him that they came out to greet him and they are waving palm leaves in the air and they are laying them down on the ground for his donkey to walk on as well and that was when Jesus came into Jerusalem. And they were so happy to see him. Palm Sunday. Okay now I need to explain this picture. This

picture isn't a real picture of Jesus. Now this is a picture from a movie. There's a movie called Jesus of Nazareth and that's an actor; that's somebody dressed up. We don't really know what Jesus looked like because it was 2000 years ago and we didn't have a camera. People didn't have a camera to take a photo of you. So these are actors; they're people dressing up. If I dressed up as Superman would that mean that I was Superman?

Students: No.

Teacher: No I'd be just pretending. What if I dressed up as Spiderman? Would I be Spiderman?

Students: No

Teacher: No I'd be just pretending. That's what these people in this book are doing. There's Jesus on the front there. He's just an actor dressed up. We don't know if Jesus was tall or short. We don't know if he was fat or thin. We don't know if he was if he had dark skin or light skin. We don't even know if he had a beard like this person does here. We presume he did because lots of people used to have beards back then but we don't know that these are just people pretending. So there's Palm Sunday. And I've got a picture of Palm Sunday here also. Now we're going to be making a book all about holy week and these are the pictures we're going to be using. So there's my first picture. There's Jesus riding on a donkey and the people in Jerusalem coming out

Student: I can't see him on the donkey

Teacher: with their palms on Palm Sunday. I'll put that over here.

Student: I can't see him on the donkey.

Teacher: The donkey - he's riding on the donkey. He's sitting on top of the donkey.

Student: Okay. I can see it now.

Teacher: Okay have look at this book here. It's got lots of pictures from the movie. We can also see Jesus going into the temple or the church and there he is telling stories and then we have these people here. Now these people they weren't very happy with Jesus. We've talked about this before. Can you remember why, can you remember why these people weren't happy with Jesus? Some people weren't happy with him. Meg?

Meg: Because they didn't know what they were doing.

Teacher: They didn't know what they were doing. I think that's correct yes but Jesus was saying some things. He was telling people some things. Can you remember what that was? What was he telling people? Nigel?

Student: Stories.

Teacher: Yeah and he was asking them to be?

Nigel: Quiet.

Teacher: To be good yes. He was telling people you have to be nice to each other and you have to love one another and these people they didn't want to do that. They didn't want to be nice to each other and so that's why Jesus was put on the cross but before he was put on the cross he had supper with his friends. Now his friend had special names..... Okay he had supper with his friends but his friends had a special name? Does anyone know what they were called? Liam?

Liam: Umm I don't know.

Teacher: No. Jacob?

Jacob: One of them was called Joseph?

Teacher: yes ohh no it wasn't that was his father called Joseph. They had special names. They were he disciples. Can you say that word?

Jacob: Disciples

Teacher: His disciples. So he had supper with his disciples. I don't think we have the picture here. We don't have the picture here but he did something funny before they had supper. He actually washed their feet and I've got that picture over here. Jesus washed all of his friends' feet and he did that to show them that he cared for them and some of them didn't want him to wash their feet 'cause they didn't think that he should do that. But he said I want to that because I care for you and I love you. So he washed their feet. That picture there that's going to go into our books. A picture of Jesus washing his disciples feet. Put that there for the moment. At the end of the supper he got out some bread and he got out some wine and they shared it. Now that's just like when we go to church. Have you seen father at church when he holds up the little round piece of bread and holds it up?

Students: Yeah. Yes. Yeah.

Teacher: That's just like Jesus did at the last supper and he also holds up a goblet with some wine in it too. Have you seen father do that at church?

Students: Yeah

Teacher: Holds up some wine. That's exactly what that's exactly what Jesus did at the last supper.

Student: I went to church

Teacher: Oh when you got baptized. So there's our next picture for our book. There's Jesus with the bread and the wine and he's sharing it with his friends. What are his friends called?

Students: Disciples

Teacher: Disciples. There they are having the last supper. So that was Jesus' last time he had supper. And they call it last supper on Holy Thursday. And then Jesus went to pray. He went to the gardens to say some prayers. We have that picture here. So there's Jesus kneeling down with his hands saying a prayer and his friends fell asleep there. He was in the gardens. That's another picture for our book. And that's when the bad people came and got him and they took him away. Here they are talking to Jesus again asking him why did he keep asking people to be nice to each other? He got in lots of trouble there and those people were so mean that they even they even whipped Jesus. So you can see some marks there on his body. They whipped him. That wasn't very nice was it?

Students: No. No.

Teacher: But just remember this isn't the real picture of Jesus. This is an actor. So those red marks on his body that's probably from some special makeup. Don't forget this is an actor. This is somebody pretending to be Jesus. Okay. So they they whipped Jesus they put some thorns crown of thorns on top of his head and then very sadly he was put on the cross and that's where he died. Okay. Now there's a couple of ladies down here. This lady here what do you think her name might be?

Student: Mary.

Teacher: Hands up okay? Lewis?

Lewis: Mary.

Teacher: Mary. Who was Mary, Paul? Who was she? Can't remember? Does anyone know who

Mary was? Amanda?

Amanda: She was a special person.

Teacher: She was a very special person in Jesus' life. Somebody different may be Yolanda?

Yolanda: Umm his mummy.

Teacher: She was his mum his mummy. How did think how do you think Mary felt when she was seeing Jesus dying on the cross? How do you think she felt? Mitch?

Mitch: Sad.

Teacher: Sad. Very very sad. And she's very very upset. Okay so that happened on Good Friday and here's our picture. There's Jesus on the cross. The soldiers are at the bottom there and you see Mary there also looking she's looking very very sad.

Student: I can't see Mary

Teacher: That's another picture for our book. Okay. That was Good Friday when Jesus died on the cross. Now Easter Sunday is the last day of our holy week. Something very special happened on Easter Sunday and it shows how magical and mighty just like in our song how mighty Jesus was. Hands up if you know what happened on Easter Sunday? He died on Good Friday on the cross and then something magical happened on Easter Sunday. Somebody? Angela?

Angela: Umm

Teacher: Can't remember? Nicole, can you remember?

Nicole: He was alive again.

Teacher: He was alive again! Excellent! He rose from the dead. And there's Mary when she realises that Jesus had risen from the dead. How does her face look now?

Student: Happy.

Teacher: Susan?

Susan: Happy.

Teacher: Happy. She is very very happy 'cause now Jesus her son is risen from the dead and that's how we feel on Easter Sunday too. And then Jesus went and he visited his?

Students: Friends

Teacher: Friends. They had a special name. What were they called?

Students: Disciples.

Teacher: Arial? Remember what his friends were called?

Arial: Cycle.

Teacher: His disciples. Disciples. Okay. Because they were pretty scared. They thought they were going to get into trouble as well like Jesus did so they were hiding. And then Jesus came back into the room and told them do not be afraid and then they were very happy to see what had happened and I've got the last picture. This is a picture of a tomb where Jesus was laid when he died and they put a really big heavy rock in front and when people came to visit Jesus they found that the rock had been pushed aside and his tomb

was empty and that's how they know that's how they knew he had risen from the dead.
So they were very very happy and that's going to be the last page of our book.

Teacher B's Un-notated Transcript

Teacher: Hands down I think it's time to pray. Aaron you're on prayer today. Choose a couple of people to help you. How about how about Cassie would you like to help set up the prayer today? Amy would you like to help set up the prayer today... let's get into a circle guys a quiet circle that we can get now preschoolers I have left our special purple sharing time candle on our God table but special purple sharing time finished on Easter Sunday didn't it? Does that mean we shouldn't share anymore? Does that mean if special purple sharing time finishes we can't share?

Students: No. No. No.

Teacher: No. We'll still certainly try to share. I want to put a purple sharing candle back on the God table but I'm going to light our new candle.

Student: There's another purple candle.

Teacher: It is.

Student: Everyone's purple

Teacher: This one's a blue one. This one's got a lovely smell to it. Students, Amy and Cassie have put down some of our symbols today and I have four symbols to add to the prayer circle and as I add them today I'm going to ask you to tell me why I'm putting this symbol into the prayer circle? See if you're thinking today. Mmmmmmm I might put these two symbols in first. Why would I be putting these two symbols into our prayer circle first?

Student: Because Jesus shared the bread and wine.

Teacher: He did. Remember that was the night before he died that he shared the bread and wine? And I have got a special story for you today He talks about the bread and the wine again because something special happened after Jesus came alive again. I'm going to read that story. So the bread and the wine remind us when Jesus shared the bread and the wine with his special friends. I've got something else that's special. Erin, why would I put the cross into our prayer circle?

Erin: Jesus died on the cross.

Teacher: Jesus died on the cross didn't he? Was that the happy or sad part of Easter?

Students: Sad.

Teacher: That was the sad part of Easter cause preschoolers when we make the sign of the cross we think about that time. Do you see the mirror with the cross on?

Student: It's got numbers on it.

Teacher: I put the mirror there so this term for you to practise making the sign of the cross. So you can follow the number is to practice making the sign of the cross. So we can add the cross to our prayer circle. It's a very important symbol for our church. And I've got two (teacher places an egg and a baby chicken into the middle of the circle onto the prayer cloth.) why do you think I would add a baby chicken to our prayer circle? Yasmin?

Yasmin: New life?

Teacher: Because they reminds us of new life. Why new life? Why are we talking about new life?

Student: Because they

Teacher: Cindy?

Cindy: Because um

Teacher: Who had new life?

Students: Jesus.

Teacher: And did you think of that on Easter Sunday morning?

Students: Yeah.

Teacher: Because preschoolers on Easter Sunday morning remember that Easter Bunny he's such a clever thing that Easter Bunny I better not put that chicken in there, hey? He might walk away I'll put him back in here. Preschoolers when you got those eggs on Easter Sunday morning it was to remind you of Jesus' new life. Matthew did you get some eggs on Easter Sunday morning? Hands up if the Easter Bunny came to you? Damien did the Easter do you remember did the Easter bunny come to you? Isn't that Easter Bunny clever?

Student: I got lots of eggs.

Student: I got money.

Teacher: Did you?

Student: The Easter Bunny came to me.

Teacher: He remembered.

Student: I got eggs.

Teacher: Did you? Did you? Well preschoolers I'm glad that you thought about Jesus on Easter Sunday morning because that's why the Easter Bunny remember he didn't want to bring you crocodile eggs did he?

Students: No! No! No way! He'd be an idiot.

Teacher: He didn't want to bring you dinosaur eggs?

Students: No no no no no! No way!

Teacher: Remember the Easter Bunny left eggs on Easter Sunday morning to remind us that Jesus gave us new life. Preschoolers I've got a special Bible today and in the Bible are lots of stories about Jesus. I've chosen one that happened just after Easter Sunday morning when Jesus came to life. So we've read all the stories up to when Jesus died and we knew Jesus was coming alive. This is a story of what happened just after Jesus came alive. I might read, read the story and show you the pictures so be watching.

Teacher: *Reads story.*
Imagine that. Imagine if you were walking along a road and someone came up beside you. I wonder if you would know it was Jesus? What do you think you would say to Jesus if he came to our preschool? What do you think you would say to him? Anita what would you say to Jesus if he came to our preschool?

Anita:

Teacher: Have you ever thought about that? Who knows? What would you say?

Student: I don't know.

Teacher: What would you say to Jesus if he came? Hollie what would you say?

Hollie: Umm hello?

Teacher: Hello. I think he would love us to say hello. What else would we say to Jesus? Neville what would you say?

Neville: I would say hello and thank you for new life.

Teacher: That would be lovely. What would you say Max?

Max: Goodbye.

Teacher: What was that?

Max: Goodbye.

Teacher: Goodbye when he's going. Would you say, would you say how much you love all the things he made for you?

Students: Yeah! Yeah! Yes!

Student: No (whispered)

Teacher: Teacher: Probably, because we do love all those things. I wonder what else we would say to him? Lea, what else would you say?

Lea: Umm, ahh, thank you for coming.

Teacher: Thank you for coming would be lovely. I wonder if he came to our preschool preschoolers he'd share the bread and wine when he came to our preschool? What about you, Allie?

Allie: Umm, thank you for (sharing the bread and wine)

Teacher: Thank you for sharing that. Thank you for making us. So many things we'd probably

Student: Excuse me

Teacher: Think about at the time to say thank you to. Hey, can it wait till after prayer? Preschoolers I thought we might pray today. So let's cross our legs cross our legs to show we're ready to pray. Crystal do you want to put your glasses down darling? I know some of you have already thought about what your prayer is going to be about this morning but some people probably have not. Dear God thank you for the special things that happened over Easter I want to thank you for the Easter Bunny coming to us and reminding us of the new life you had. Jesus please help us to be more like you in the special times after Easter.
Then students in turn prayed. If student does not wish to pray they simply tap next student on the knee to indicate it is now his/her turn. A number of students prayed and some did not. Some of their prayers included:

Student: Thank you for making me.

Student: Thank you for helping me.

Teacher: You've probably just forgotten how to pray. Did you remember to pray over Easter time too?

Students: Na. Yes. No.

Teacher: Did you remember that? It's not just at this time we pray. Preschoolers I've chosen our song...

APPENDIX H

Transcript Notation

The transcript notation used in this study is based on Atkinson and Heritage (1984, pp. ix-xvi). Following is an explanation of the symbols used to notate the classroom interaction in both lessons.

[[Simultaneous utterances – Double left-hand brackets indicate where utterances start simultaneously.
[Overlapping utterances – Single left-hand brackets are used to show when overlapping utterances do not start simultaneously at the point where an ongoing utterance is joined by another.
]	Overlapping utterances cease shown by single right-hand bracket.
=	Contiguous utterances indicated by equal signs indicate where there is no interval between adjacent utterances, the second being latched immediately to the first (without overlapping it).
(0.0)	Intervals within utterances indicated by numerals in brackets timed in tenths of a second.
co::lons	Colons indicate an extension of the sound or syllable it follows. More colons prolong the stretch.
↑↓	Upward and downward pointing arrows indicate rising and falling shifts in intonation.
_____	Underlining indicates emphasis
CAPITALS	Capital letters indicate an utterance or part thereof, that is spoken much louder than the surrounding talk.
◦ ◦	Degree signs indicate a passage of talk that is quieter than the surrounding talk.
(())	Double parentheses used to describe details of the scene ((telephone rings)) or characterisations of the talk ((whispered)).
()	Single parentheses indicate that what is enclosed is in doubt.. If they are empty, no hearing could be achieved for the talk.
> <	Greater than and less than signs enclose talk that is noticeably faster than the surrounding talk.

APPENDIX I

NOTATED LESSON TRANSCRIPTS

Teacher A

1. Teacher: Now holy week is a very spe:cial ti::me of the year °Nicholas in need to sit down keep your hands to your self please.° Holy Week is a very special time of the year for the school >and for the< ↑ church (0.4) because it's when we get rea::dy (0.3) ↑ for (0.7)
2. Students: EASTAA::H
3. Teacher: Easter. We've talked about Easter before. Hands up if you can te:ll me (0.3) why Easter is so ↓spe::cial? °Have a think. Hands up° if you can tell ↑ me (0.1) why Easter is so spe:cial? ((Some students raise their hands.)) (.) Yasmin?
4. Yasmin: Um (0.2) because you get ↑ Easter ↓eggs.
5. Teacher: >Well that's one reason of course< isn't it? You get Easter eggs at Easter time. Hands up if you like Easter ↑ eggs?
6. Students: ME. ME. ME.
7. Teacher: Just about everybody likes Easter eggs. Fantastic. Hands down for me. (0.2) There is another reason why Easter is spe:cial. Have a think about it. (1.0) Susan?
8. Susan: Because the Easter bunny ↑ comes.
9. Teacher: Yes. The Easter bunny comes. Just a sec there is another rea::son why Easter is very special. Alice?
10. Alice: Um because um it um, I don't know.
11. Teacher: >You don't know, can't remember.< ↑ Ann?
12. Ann: Um because we must go to the church.
13. Teacher: >We go to the church.< Yes a lot of people go to the church (0.1) during Holy Week and at Easter ti::me.
14. Students: () egg.
15. Teacher: >Yeah we've talked about the egg.< We talked about that. (0.2) Okay. (.) There is another reason why Easter is spe:cial. April?
16. April: Um because you have a (0.3) ne:w li:fe.
17. Teacher: You have a new ↑ life. Now what do you mean by that?
18. April: [[A new Easter]]
19. Teacher: Very tricky
20. Teacher: A new Easter. Okay. Yeah. Lots of people thinking ↑ carefully about it. Ned do you know why Easter's special? No. (.) Reece?

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21. Reece: Um (.) because (0.1) it's (0.1) when Jesus was ↓ bo::rn.
22. Teacher: Oh now other people have told me this before. They've said Easter is when Jesus is born (.) and that's very good thi:nking Reece (.) but actually Christmas is when Jesus was born. (.) Something else happened to Jesus at Easter time. He was born at Christmas time (.) then something else happened to him at Easter time (0.2) Thomas?
23. Thomas: He he died.
24. Teacher: He died. He did die at Easter time. Can you remember (0.1) how he died?
25. Thomas: (0.1) No.
26. Teacher: >Hands up if you know °how he died? °< (0.1) ↑ Luke?
27. Luke: Um (0.1) he's dead.
28. Teacher: How did he ↑ di::e?
29. Students: I don't know.
30. Teacher: Yvonne?
31. Yvonne: Um (.) because he was on the red cross.
32. Teacher: >Because he was on the red cross.< Okay he was on the cross. He was nailed on the cross and he died on the cross. (0.1) Just like the one we saw up in the church. (0.2) Remember what the cross looks like?
33. Students: Yeah. Yeah. Yes.
34. Teacher: Okay. I'll get that pen here (0.2) and I'll draw the shape of a cross up here. °It has a lo:ng straight part (0.2) and it has a cross part that goes like that (0.5) and there's the mountain (.) the crosses are on top of.°



Now we're going to be talking about holy week. Lots and lots of things happened in holy week (0.2) and one of my friends told me befo::re what yesterday was called. (0.2) Yesterday had a special name. Something Sunday? (0.2) Lindsay?

35. Lindsay: Sunda:y.
36. Teacher: Yeah a special name. (0.2) Something Sunday. What Sunday was it? Nikki?
37. Nikki: ()
38. Teacher: No. Yolanda?
39. Yolanda: ()
40. Teacher: No. Amanda?

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41. Amanda: ()
42. Teacher: Tyler?
43. Tyler: Palm Sunday.
44. Teacher: Palm Sunday. Can you say that?
45. Students: Palm Sunday.
46. Teacher: Yesterday was Pa:lm Sunday. Palm Sunday was a very special time when Jesus came into Jerusalem. Now I've got a book here and it's got a picture of different parts of holy week (0.2) and I'll show you what Palm Sunday might have looked like. Have a look at that. (5.0) Now what's happening there is Je::sus is in the middle there and he's >riding on a donkey< and everyone in the town was so happy to see him that they came out to greet him and they are waving palm leaves in the air (0.2) and they are laying them down on the ground for his donkey to walk on as well and that was when Jesus came into Jerusalem. And they were so happy to see him. Palm SUNDAY. Okay now I need to explain this picture. (0.4) This picture isn't a real picture of Jesus. Now this is a picture from a mo::vie. There's a movie called Jesus of Nazareth and that's an ↑actor; that's somebody dressed up. We don't really know what Jesus looked like because it was 2000 years ago and we didn't have a camera. (.) People didn't have a camera to take a photo of him. So these are actors; they're people dressing up. (0.3) If I dressed up as Superman would that mean that I was Superman?
47. Students: No.
48. Teacher: No I'd be just pretending. What if I dressed up as Spiderman? Would I be Spiderman?
49. Students: No
50. Teacher: No I'd be just pretending. That's what these people in this book are doing. There's Jesus on the front there. He's just an actor dressed up. We don't know if Jesus was tall or short. We don't know if he was fat or thin. We don't know if he was if he had dark skin or light skin. We don't even know if he had a beard like this person does here. We presume he did because lots of people used to have beards back then but we don't know that these are just people pretending. So there's Palm Sunday. And I've got a picture of Palm Sunday here also. Now we're going to be making a book all about holy week and these are the pictures we're going to be using. So there's my first picture. There's Jesus riding on a donkey and the people in Jerusalem coming out
51. Student: I can't see him on the donkey
52. Teacher: [[with their palms on Palm Sunday. I'll put that over here.
53. Student: I can't see him on the donkey.
54. Teacher: The donkey - he's riding on the donkey. He's sitting on top of the donkey.
56. Student: Okay. I can see it now.
57. Teacher: Okay have look at this book here. It's got lots of pictures from the movie. We can also see Jesus going into the temple or the church and

there he is telling stories and then we have these people here. Now these people they weren't very happy with Jesus. We've talked about this before. Can you remember why, can you remember why these people weren't happy with Jesus? Some people weren't happy with him. Meg?

58. Meg: Because they didn't know what they were doing.
59. Teacher: They didn't know what they were doing. I think that's correct yes but Jesus was saying some things. He was telling people some things. Can you remember what that was?
60. Student: ()
61. Teacher: What was he telling people? Nigel?
62. Nigel: Stories.
63. Teacher: Yeah and he was asking them to be?
64. Student: Quiet.
65. Teacher: To be good yes. He was telling people you have to be nice to each other and you have to love one another and these people they didn't want to do that. They didn't want to be nice to each other and so that's why Jesus was put on the cross but before he was put on the cross he had supper with his friends. Now his friend had special names..... Okay he had supper with his friends but his friends had a special name? Does anyone know what they were called? Liam?
66. Liam: Umm I don't know.
67. Teacher: No. Jacob?
68. Jacob: One of them was called Joseph?
69. Teacher: yes ohh no it wasn't that was his father called Joseph. They had special names. They were he disciples. Can you say that word?
70. Students: Disciples
71. Teacher: His disciples. So he had supper with his disciples. I don't think we have the picture here. We don't have the picture here but he did something funny before they had supper. He actually washed their feet and I've got that picture over here. Jesus washed all of his friends' feet and he did that to show them that he cared for them and some of them didn't want him to wash their feet 'cause they didn't think that he should do that. But he said I want to do that because I care for you and I love you. So he washed their feet. That picture there that's going to go into our books. A picture of Jesus washing his disciples feet. Put that there for the moment. At the end of the supper he got out some bread and he got out some wine and they shared it. Now that's just like when we go to church. Have you seen father at church when he holds up the little round piece of bread and holds it up?
72. Students: Yeah. Yes. Yeah.
73. Teacher: That's just like Jesus did at the last supper and he also holds up a goblet with some wine in it too. Have you seen father do that at church?
74. Students: Yeah

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75. Teacher: Holds up some wine. That's exactly what that's exactly what Jesus did at the last supper.
76. Student: I went to church
77. Teacher: Oh when you got baptized. So there's our next picture for our book. There's Jesus with the bread and the wine and he's sharing it with his friends. What were his friends called?
78. Students: Disciples
79. Teacher: Disciples. There they are having the last supper. So that was Jesus' last time he had supper. And they call it last supper on Holy Thursday. And then Jesus went to pray. He went to the gardens to say some prayers. We have that picture here. So there's Jesus up kneeling down with his hands saying a prayer and his friends fell asleep there. He was in the gardens. That's another picture for our book. And that's when the bad people came and got him and they took him away. Here they are talking to Jesus again asking him why did he keep asking people to be nice to each other? He got in lots of trouble there and those people were so mean that they even they even whipped Jesus. So you can see some marks there on his body. They whipped him. That wasn't very nice was it?
80. Students: No. No.
81. Teacher: But just remember this isn't the real picture of Jesus. This is an actor. So those red marks on his body that's probably from some special makeup. Don't forget this is an actor. This is somebody pretending to be Jesus. Okay. So they they whipped Jesus they put some thorns crown of thorns on top of his head and then very sadly he was put on the cross and that's where he died. Okay. Now there's a couple of ladies down here. This lady here what do you think her name might be?
82. Student: Mary.
83. Teacher: Hands up okay? Lewis?
84. Lewis: Mary.
85. Teacher: Mary. Who was Mary, Paul? Who was she? Can't remember? Does anyone know the Mary was? Amanda?
86. Amanda: She was a special person.
87. Teacher: She was a very special person in Jesus' life. Somebody different may be Yolanda?
88. Yolanda: Umm his mummy.
89. Teacher: She was his mum his mummy. How did think how do you think Mary felt when she was seeing Jesus dying on the cross? How do you think she felt? Mitch?
90. Mitch: Sad.
91. Teacher: Sad. Very very sad. And she's very very upset. Okay so that happened on Good Friday and here's our picture. There's Jesus on the cross. The soldiers are at the bottom there and you see Mary there also looking

she's looking very very sad.

92. Student: I can't see Mary
93. Teacher: that's another picture for our book. Okay. That was Good Friday when Jesus died on the cross. Now Easter SU:NDA::Y is the last day of our holy ↑ week. (1) Something very special happened on Easter Su:n↓day (1) and it (0.5) shows how magical and how ↑ mi::ghty >just like in our song< how mighty Jesus was. (2) Hands up if you know what happened on Easter Sunday? He die:d on Good Fri↑day ° on the cross° and then something magical happened on Easter Su:n↓day. (4) Somebody? Angela?
94. Angela: He (0.5) Umm (0.5) He
95. Teacher: (7) Can't remember? (0.2) Nicole, (.) can you remember?
96. Nicole: He was alive again.
97. Teacher: He was ALIVE AGAIN! EXCELLENT! (0.2)He ro::se from the dead. (0.3) And there's Mary when she ↑reali:ses that Jesus had risen from the dead. How does her face look now?
98. Student: Happy.
99. Teacher: Susan?
100. Susan: Happy.
101. Teacher: Happy. She is very very happy 'cause now Jesus her son (.) has risen from the dead (.) and that's how we feel on Easter Sunday too. And then Jesus went and he visited ↑ his ?
102. Students: Friends
103. Teacher: Friends. They had a special name. What were they called?
104. Students: Disciples.
105. Teacher: Arial? Remember what his friends were called?
106. Arial: Cycle.
107. Teacher: His disciples. Disciples. Okay. Because they were pretty scared. They thought they were going to get into trouble as well like Jesus did so they were hiding. And then Jesus came back into the room and told them do not be afraid and then they were very happy to see what had happened and I've got the last picture. This is a picture of a tomb where Jesus was laid when he died and they put a really big heavy rock in front and when people came to visit Jesus they found that the rock had been pushed aside and his tomb was empty and that's how they know that's how they knew he had risen from the dead. So they were very very happy and that's going to be the last page of our book.

Teacher B

1. Teacher: Hands down I think it's time to pray. Niles you're on prayer today. Choose a couple of people to help you. How about how about Emily would you like to help set up the prayer today? Yasmin would you like to help set up the prayer today... let's get into a circle guys a quiet circle that we can get.. now preschoolers I have left our special purple sharing time candle on our God table but special purple sharing time finished on Easter Sunday didn't it? Does that mean we shouldn't share anymore? Does that mean if special purple sharing time finishes we can't share?
2. Students: No. No. No.
3. Teacher: No. We'll still certainly try to share. I want to put a purple sharing candle back on the God table but I'm going to light our new candle.
4. Student: There's another purple candle.
5. Teacher: It is.
6. Student: Everyone's purple
7. Teacher: This one's a blue one. This one's got a lovely smell to it. ((Teacher crouches in the middle of the circle to light the candle.)) °Students, Yasmin and Emily have put down some of our symbols today and I have (0.2) four symbols to add to our prayer circle° >and as I add them today< I'm going to ask you to tell me (0.2) wh::y I'm putting this symbol into the prayer circle? Let's see if you're think::ing today. Mmm:::mmmm (5.0) ((Teacher goes to bag on bench to select symbols)). I might put these two symbols in first. ↑Why would I be putting the:se (0.1) tw:o (0.1) spe:cial symbols into our prayer circle first?
8. Student: Because Jesus shared the bread and wine.
9. Teacher: He did. >Remember that was the night< °before he died that he shared the bread and wine? ° And I have got a special story for you today during prayer and he talks about the bread and the wine a gain (0.1) because something special happened after Jesus came alive again. >°I'm going to read that story. °< So the bread and the wine ↓re::mind us when Je:sus sha::red the bread and the wine with his special friends. (0.2) I've got something else that's special. ((Teacher goes back to the bench to bring another symbol, the cross into the prayer circle.))
10. Student: (A cross.)
=[
11. Teacher: Erin, ↑why would I put the cross into our prayer circle?
12. Erin: Jesus died on the cross.
13. Teacher: °Jesus died on the cross didn't he?° Was that the (0.1) happy (0.1) or sad (0.1) part of Easter?
14. Students: Sad.
15. Teacher: That was the sad part of Easter ↑and preschoolers when we make the sign of the cross (0.2) °we think about that time. Do you see the mirror with the cross on°?
16. Students: Yeah.
17. Teacher: I put the mirror there so this term for you=
[

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18. Student: It's got numbers on it.
19. Teacher: =to ↑pra::ctise making the si:gn of the cross. So you can follow the numbers to
 ↑pra::ctise making the sign of the cross. So we can add the cross to our prayer circle.
 It's a very important symbol for our church. And I've got two (teacher places an egg
 and a baby chicken into the middle of the circle onto the prayer cloth.) °↑Wh::y do
 you think I would put (0.3) an egg and a BABY ↑CHICKEN into our pra:yer ci:rcle?
 ↑Yasmin?
20. Yasmin: New life?
21. Teacher: Because (0.1) they (0.1) rem::ind us of ↓n::ew (0.2) li::fe. (0.3) ↑Why >new life?<
 Why are we talking about (0.1) new life?
22. Student: Because they ()
23. Teacher: [Cindy
24. Cindy: Because um ()
25. Teacher: ↑Who had new life?
26. Students: Jesus.
27. Teacher: And did you think of that on Easter Sunday ↓morning?
28. Students: Yeah.
29. Teacher: ↑Because (0.1) preschoolers (0.1) on Easter Sunday morning remember that Easter
 Bunny - he's such a clever thing that Easter Bunny - >I better not put that chicken in
 there, hey?< He might walk away. I'll put him back in here. ((Teacher places
 chicken back into incubator.)) Preschoolers (0.2) when you got those eggs on Easter
 Sunday ↓morning (0.3) °it wa:s to rem::ind you of Jesus' new life°. Wade did you
 get some eggs on Easter Sunday morning? Hands up if the Easter Bunny came to
 you? Nick did the Easter do you remember did the Easter bunny come to ↑you?
 Isn't that Easter Bunny clever?
30. Student: I got lots of eggs.
31. Student: I got money.
32. Teacher: Did you?
33. Student: The Easter Bunny came to me.
34. Teacher: He remembered.
35. Student: I got eggs.
36. Teacher: Did you?
37. Student: ()
38. Teacher: Did you? Well preschoolers I'm glad that you thought about Jesus on Easter
 Sunday morning ↑because that's why the Easter Bunny - >remember he didn't want
 to bring< ↑you:: (0.2) crocodile eggs did he?
39. Students: No! No! No way! He'd be an idiot.
40. Teacher: He didn't want (0.1) to bring you:: (0.2) ↓dinosaur eggs?
-

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41. Students: No no no no no! No way!
42. Teacher: >°Remember the Easter Bunny brought you °chocolate eggs° >cause you can eat them< and they will remind us of Jesus having new life. ↑Preschoolers (0.3) °I've got a special Bible today° and in this (0.1) Bible are ↑lots of stories about Jesus. I've chosen one that happened=
43. Student:
44. Teacher: ()]
=JU:ST (0.2) A:FTER (0.4) Easter
Sunday morning °when Jesus came alive.° >So we've read all the stories up to< when Jesus (0.1) die:d and we knew Jesus was coming alive. >↑This is a story< of what happened (0.2) just after Jesus came alive. I might read (0.2) read the story and show you the pictures (as I go) so be watching.
45. Teacher: ((Reads story.))
46. Teacher: Imagine that. Imagine if you were walking along a road and someone came up beside you. I wonder if you would know it was Jesus? What do you think you would say to Jesus if he came to our preschool? What do you think you would say to him? Anita what would you say to Jesus if he came to our preschool?
47. Anita: ()
48. Teacher: Have you ever thought about that? Who knows? What would you say?
49. Student: I don't know.
50. Teacher: What would you say to Jesus if he came? Hollie, what would you say?
51. Hollie: Umm hello?
52. Teacher: Hello. I think he would love us to say hello. What else would we say to Jesus? Neville what would you say?
53. Neville: I would say hello and thank you for new life.
54. Teacher: That would be lovely. What would you say Max?
55. Max: Goodbye.
56. Teacher: What was that?
57. Max: Goodbye.
58. Teacher: Goodbye when he's ↑going. Would you say, (0.2) would you say (0.1) how mu:ch you love all the things he made for ↑you?
59. Students: Yeah! Yeah! Yes!
60. Student: No ((whispered))
61. Teacher: ↓Probably, because we do love all those things. I wonder what else we would say to him? Lea, what else would you say?
62. Lea: Umm, ahh, thank you for coming.
63. Teacher: Thank you for coming would be lovely. I wonder if he came to our preschool preschoolers he'd share the bread and wine when he came to our preschool? What about you, Allie?

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64. Allie: Umm, thank you for (sharing the bread and wine)
65. Teacher: Thank you for sharing that. Thank you for making us. So many things we'd probably=
66. Student: [Excuse me]
67. Teacher: =think about at the time to say thank you to. Hey, can it wait till after prayer? Preschoolers I thought we might pray today. So let's cross our legs cross our legs to show we're ready to pray. Crystal do you want to put your glasses down darling? I know some of you have already thought about what your prayer is going to be about this morning and some people already told me what they're going to pray about today. Dear God thank you for the special things that happened over Easter I want to thank you for the Easter Bunny coming to us and reminding us of the new life you had. Jesus please help us to be more like you in the special times after Easter
- ((Then students in turn prayed. If student does not wish to pray they simply tap next student on the knee to indicate it is now his/her turn. Some students prayed, many did not.)) Some of their prayers included:
68. Student: Thank you for making me.
69. Student: Thank you for helping me.
70. Student: Thank you for making me crocodiles.
71. Student: Thank you God for making me dolphins.
72. Teacher: °You've probably just forgotten how to pray. Did you remember to pray over Easter time too? °
73. Students: Na. Yes. No.
74. Teacher: Did you remember that? ↑It's not just at this time we pray. Preschoolers I've chosen our song...

APPENDIX J

STUDENT BOOKLET THAT ACCOMPANIED TEACHER A's LESSON

