

# Religious Education Newsletter December 2024

## New Follow Me website and logo



We launched the new Follow Me website on 4 November.

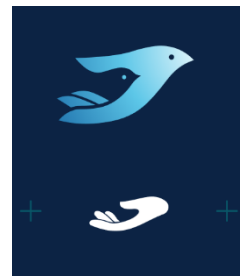
[www.followme.ie](http://www.followme.ie)

This is part of the Follow Me redevelopment project for the General Synod Board of Education. On the website you will also see the new Follow Me logo designed as part of a whole re-brand of the

programme.

As part of this process Carolyn Good (Carrigduff NS) and I spent time with the web designer Stephen Walker and gave him our insights into the programme. He came up with the icon design which we hope you can see has the image of birds but also a hand.

From those beginnings Stephen moved on to work on our new website with its engaging graphics!



This is intended to be a two-layer website. The part you can see at the moment is to be available to you at all times. It is planned to regularly add to the resources and to enable this to be a useful go-to resource for all things RE related. Please contact Jacqui with any suggestions for resources etc.

By next September you will find slide decks for the lessons for Log On and On line (the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class books). They will be in a password protected area of the site.

At the moment teachers are creating slide decks for the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> class books. Thanks to Laura Welch, Robyn Griffin, Alanna Ashe, Glenn Jacob, Jennifer Ward, Elaine Buttimer, Matthew Bater, Frances Shilling and Lorraine Neary for undertaking this task along with Carolyn Good and Jacqui Wilkinson. These will be piloted in schools in the spring- a request will be going to schools to help us with this important element of the development – seeing if the slides meet the needs of the class.

Pupils, teachers and clergy have also been involved in recording audio files for the Bible stories on the slides – again thank you to all who said yes and recorded the scripts – these will be a wonderful resource for the lessons.

We are also looking for teachers to get involved in the next phase of the project – those teaching or with experience **teaching 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> classes**. Contact Jacqui for more information about what is involved.

So, exciting days as we mark the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the beginnings of the Follow Me project next year.

Jacqui Wilkinson

Follow Me committee:

Revd Canon Prof Anne Lodge (chair)

Dr Jacqui Wilkinson

Ms Carolyn Good

Dr Ken Fennelly

Contact: [Jacqueline.wilkinson@dcu.ie](mailto:Jacqueline.wilkinson@dcu.ie)



## Religious Education Certificate 2025

January/March 2025 (online)  
& one face to face session May 2025

*This Certificate is offered to existing teachers in Church of Ireland and other Protestant primary schools who did not undertake their initial teacher education qualifications in CICE or linked with the Church of Ireland Centre in DCU.*

This year's RE Certificate course will be delivered in a 'hybrid' (online and face to face) structure. The course is designed for existing teachers in Church of Ireland and other Protestant primary schools, who are graduates of ITE bodies other than CICE / CIC in the DCU Institute of Education and who **have classroom experience teaching the *Follow Me* RE programme.**

We now invite a new group to complete a series of workshops and accompanying coursework to receive the *Religious Education Certificate (Follow Me)*. An application form accompanies this information. The General Synod Board of Education is again sponsoring this course, which will be taught by Jacqui Wilkinson. Along with general RE teaching resources and methodology surrounding the teaching of the Follow Me programme other special topics will include 'Infants and Play', 'ICT and RE', 'Enquiry based learning in RE', 'Ethos and parish school links' and 'Handling the big questions with senior classes'.

Former participants have reflected: *'I really believe that I walked away with a greater amount of knowledge relating to how to facilitate Religious Education lessons in a fun and creative way'.*

*'...while I understood the books and what they were about, I was nervous of making a mistake, or saying the wrong thing. It led me to spend hours planning my RE lessons to make sure what I wanted to do was correct. I never felt secure in my knowledge of the Follow Me scheme. I always doubted myself. I now feel confident, competent and ready to go'.*

*'I have thoroughly enjoyed attending this course and would highly recommend it to anyone teaching in a Church of Ireland school. My knowledge has increased two fold, I have built up a fantastic bank of resources and I without doubt know my teaching style of the subject has changed for the better'.*

The *RE Certificate Course* is being offered in a hybrid way:

- **4 X 1 ½ hour online afternoon or evening sessions**
- **attendance at 3 afternoon online webinars (these are recorded if attendance is not possible)**
- **one face to face session in May (depending on where people are located this may be run more than once).**

The three online sessions will be on ZOOM on afternoons or evenings. There will be consultation with those who apply to do the course as to the best day and time. There have been enough participants in previous years to run two groups on different days so people can choose between an afternoon or evening session, but that waits to be seen. The group will be consulted when it is formed after 24 January and timetables will be issued.

The **webinars** will be run in 3 sessions on afternoons in February, March and April,

**February: A conversation with Claire O'Neill about neurodivergency, RE and school assemblies.**

**March: A fresh look at the parables of Jesus with junior classes- play and other application ideas**

**April: Art and RE: more than colour the picture**

Teachers from Church of Ireland, Presbyterian and Methodist schools will be invited to attend as part of staff CPD.

Then there will be one **face to face workshop session** on a Saturday after Easter in Christ Church Cathedral in Dublin, which is a lovely central location and easily accessible by public transport. This will be arranged as best works for the group

You will need a computer/ ipad with microphone and camera to participate in the live online sessions. You will be required to have your camera on so as discussion is possible.

Full attendance and completion of all course work are a requirement in order to be awarded the *RE Certificate (Follow Me)*. Only those who are working in primary schools under Church of Ireland, Methodist, Presbyterian and Society of Friends patronage and who have classroom experience teaching the Follow Me programme are eligible to participate in this course. The closing date for receipt of application forms signed by the school principal and Chair of the Board of Management is **24<sup>th</sup> January** and forms will be issued to schools at the start of January.

Further information about the RE Certificate (Follow Me) and a course overview is available by email from Jacqui Wilkinson.

## RE Resources



Did you know there are **dyslexia friendly Bibles**? It is possible to purchase whole Bibles or individual books of the Bible such as shown here can also be bought for about €7 each. It would be good to have some copies available as a support for the Follow Me programme and enable those children who may want to read the text more easily themselves or to read aloud in Assembly. These are easily available in online book shops.

## Music for Assembly

I have had a number of requests for lists of hymns/ songs for school assembly.

It would be very straightforward to create a Spotify playlist or a list on other platforms.

Is music working well in your assembly? Would you have time for a quick zoom chat across a few schools to help me compile a list of songs/ hymns for a playlist to help schools who find it hard to start this process and may not have musicians to play the piano or other instrument. Please let Jacqui know if you would help with this.

