



**Coimisiún na Scrúduithe Stáit
State Examinations Commission**

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE EXAMINATION 2008

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION

ORDINARY LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

HIGHER LEVEL CHIEF EXAMINER'S REPORT

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1. General Introduction

1.1 The Syllabus

The syllabus for Religious Education at Junior Certificate was introduced for the first time in September 2000 as a new subject in the Junior Certificate programme and was first examined in June 2003. Initially the syllabus was introduced on a phased basis and from September 2002, all schools could offer the Religious Education Junior Certificate syllabus. The assessment of Religious Education at Junior Certificate is based on the objectives relating to knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes within each section of the Junior Certificate Religious Education syllabus. The syllabus is available on the website of the Department of Education and Science (www.education.ie) under the topic headed: 'Curriculum, Syllabus & Teaching Guides'.

The syllabus content is structured around the following parts:

Part 1 – Candidates take any two of the following sections:

Section A Communities of Faith

Section B Foundations of Religion - Christianity

Section C Foundations of Religion – Major World Religions

Part 2 – Candidates take all of the following sections:

Section D The Question of Faith

Section E The Celebration of Faith

Section F The Moral Challenge.

Each of these syllabus sections includes a statement of:

- Aims, which set out the broad purpose of the section and show how the section is related to the overall aims of the syllabus
- Objectives, which give an indication of the direction from which the content should be approached
- Key concepts and descriptions of content which present the areas of study and indicate the expected depth and breadth of engagement.

The syllabus is offered at two levels - Ordinary and Higher. The parts of the syllabus designated only for candidates taking the Higher Level, are highlighted in red within each section of the syllabus.

Journal work is a mandatory component of the Junior Certificate Religious Education syllabus. The inclusion of journal work as an assessment component is designed to give candidates an opportunity to demonstrate a broad range of the knowledge, understanding, skills and attitudes within the objectives of the syllabus sections (Religious Education Syllabus page 45/46 & Guidelines For Teachers - NCCA page 74). Each year, a list of prescribed titles for Journal Work is made available by the State Examinations Commission in a circular to the management authorities of second level schools and posted on the State Examinations Commission website (www.examinations.ie). Twelve titles are issued, two for each section of the syllabus

that are common to Ordinary Level and Higher Level. Candidates are required to submit journal work on one title only from the prescribed list for the year of their Junior Certificate examination.

1.2 The Examination

The assessment of Religious Education in the Junior Certificate examination is based on the aims and objectives of each syllabus section. Candidates' personal faith commitment and/or affiliation to a particular religious grouping are not subject to assessment for national certification. At Ordinary Level and Higher Level, the examination consists of two components:

- Terminal written examination paper for which candidates are awarded a maximum of 400 marks (80%)
- Journal Work for which candidates are awarded a maximum of 100 marks (20%).

The marks for the terminal written examination paper and the journal work component are combined to give the candidate's final mark which is awarded out of a total of 500 marks.

The Terminal Written Examination Paper

At Ordinary Level and Higher Level, questions on all sections of the syllabus appear on the written examination papers. The 2002 sample papers outline the format of the terminal written examination at both Ordinary Level and Higher Level. The duration of the examination at Ordinary Level and Higher Level is 2 hours.

The Journal Work Component

In the final year of the Junior Certificate course the State Examinations Commission provides school authorities with pro-forma booklets for the submission of the journal work component and *General Guidelines for Completion of the Journal Booklet*. A candidate's Journal Booklet is marked at the level at which he/she takes the written examination paper. In undertaking journal work candidates are permitted to work in groups or undertake a visit or investigation as a whole class. However, each candidate must complete and submit an individual Journal Booklet for assessment.

Section One: Introduction (12 marks)

In this section the candidate is required to –

- Indicate whether he/she did journal work on his/her own, or as part of a group/whole class and this is reflected where appropriate in the marks awarded for subsequent sections
- Identify the title he/she chose from their prescribed list for journal work

- Name a personal title for the journal work that is relevant to the prescribed title and indicative of his/her own personal experience
- State the reason why he/she personally chose this title
- Explain how the chosen title generated personal interest or enthusiasm or the way in which he/she had a particular concern about the chosen title
- Describe what he/she hoped to achieve/learn/find out by doing journal work on the chosen title.

Section Two: Getting Started (12 marks)

In this section the candidate is required to –

- Describe the way(s) he/she planned to personally engage with the chosen title
- Identify the skill(s) he/she hoped to use.

Section Three: Work (24 marks)

In this section the candidate is required to –

- Describe the work in which he/she personally engaged. If the candidate did journal work as part of a group/whole class, he/she is required to describe the work in which the group or whole class engaged, as well as the work done by him/her personally
- State the reason why he/she chose this way of doing journal work
- Describe his/her reaction to the work engaged in for the journal. If the candidate did journal work as part of a group/whole class, he/she is required to describe the reaction of the group or whole class, and indicate whether it was similar to or different from his/her own personal reaction.

Section Four: Discoveries (42 marks)

In this section the candidate is required to –

- State what he/she learned from doing journal work on the chosen title
- Describe the effect doing journal work had on him/her
- Identify two skills he/she used in doing journal work on the chosen title and describe how he/she used them
- Identify two links between his/her journal work and other aspects of the Junior Certificate Religious Education course.

Section Five: Looking Back (10 marks)

In this section the candidate is required to –

- Reflect on and evaluate how he/she approached doing journal work on his/her chosen title
- Indicate what went well in his/her journal work

- Identify how he/she would do journal work differently if starting again.

The cues/prompts in each section may be used where relevant to assist candidates in completing their Journal Booklet. Candidates are permitted to draw diagrams/illustrations directly onto the Journal Booklet. They are not permitted to attach or affix material to the Journal Booklet.

When complete the Journal Booklet is sealed by the candidate in a tamper-proof envelope supplied by the State Examinations Commission and submitted to the examining authority on or before a designated date prior to the written examination.

In 2006 and 2007, the State Examinations Commission issued the prescribed titles for the Junior Certificate Religious Education 2008 examination (Circular S103/06 and S86/07). Candidates were required to base their Journal Work on one of the following titles which relate to each section of the syllabus:

Section A. Communities of Faith

1. A profile of how one community of faith serves the needs of people.
2. A survey of the work done by one community of faith to promote respect for its own beliefs and the beliefs of others.

Section B. Foundations of Religion – Christianity

1. A study of what Jesus' parables tell people about the Kingdom of God.
2. An analysis of the impact of the Resurrection on the followers of Jesus.

Section C. Foundations of Religion – Major World Religion

1. An examination of the importance of prayer in the life of a believer in one of the following world religions – Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam or Judaism.
2. All world religions have certain key beliefs or creeds. A case study on the influence of a key belief on a member's way of life in one of the following world religions – Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam or Judaism.

Section D. The Question of Faith

1. A survey of religious practice in my locality.
2. An examination of how the stories of the earliest followers influence believers in one of the following world religions - Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam or Judaism.

Section E. The Celebration of Faith

- e. 1. Religious symbols – An exploration of their meaning and purpose in one of the following world religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism
- e. 2. Research the importance of communal prayer for young people today.

Section F. The Moral Challenge

- f. 1. A study of how *either* a religious group *or* a religious organisation is working for peace.
- f. 2. People of faith have a responsibility to care for the earth. An investigation of the value placed on stewardship by members of one of the following world religion – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism.

1.3 Candidature

The total number of candidates taking Ordinary Level and Higher Level Junior Certificate Religious Education 2005-2008 is illustrated in the following table:

Year	Total Number of Junior Certificate Candidates	% of Total Candidature Taking Religious Education	Number of Ordinary Level Religious Education Candidates	Number of Higher Level Religious Education Candidates
2005	56,640	21,251 (37.5%)	5,775 (27.2%)	15,479 (72.8%)
2006	57,782	23,997 (41.5%)	5,554 (23.1%)	18,443 (76.8%)
2007	57,287	24,605 (42.9%)	5,872 (23.9%)	18,733 (76.1%)
2008	55,940	24, 508 (43.8%)	5,603 (22.9%)	18,905 (77.1%)

Table 1: Number of Junior Certificate candidates taking Religious Education 2005 – 2008.

Exemplar materials, demonstrating the standard applied in the different components of the examination are included at the end of this report. This report should be read in conjunction with the examination papers and the marking schemes for 2008. These are available from the website of the State Examinations Commission at www.examinations.ie.

Ordinary Level

2.1 Introduction

The 2008 Ordinary Level written examination (400 marks)

Section 1 (80 marks)

This section of the examination paper contains twenty short knowledge-based questions designed to assess objectives from all sections of the syllabus. This section includes multiple-choice questions, true/false questions, item-matching questions, completion questions and short answer questions designed to help candidates settle into the paper. Candidates are required to answer any ten of the twenty questions in this section each of which carries 8 marks.

Section 2 (60 marks)

Section 2 of the written examination paper consists of four short-answer questions designed to assess objectives from different sections of the syllabus. The photographs/pictures in each question are designed to act as prompts which aid the candidate in showing evidence of the syllabus objectives being assessed and also help to settle them further into the paper. Candidates are required to answer any three of the four questions. Each question is divided into a number of parts and carries a total of 20 marks.

Section 3 (60 marks)

This section contains a mixture of short-answer and paragraph-type questions which carry a total of 60 marks. Candidates are presented with stimulus material designed to assess syllabus objectives and are required to answer all questions in this section. Some of the questions in this section are based around the stimulus material and other questions are designed to assess objectives from different sections of the syllabus.

Section 4 (200 marks)

Section 4 of the written examination paper contains six questions each of which is designed to assess the objectives of a different section of the syllabus. Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are designed to primarily assess the syllabus objectives in Sections A, B, C, D, E and F respectively. Each question is divided into a number of parts and sub-parts which carry a total of 40 marks each. The parts and sub-parts within the questions in Section 4 contain a mixture of question types which are predominantly short-answer and paragraph style questions. Candidates are required to answer five of the six questions in Section 4 of the written examination paper.

2.2 Performance of Candidates

The number and percentage of candidates achieving each grade in Ordinary Level Junior Certificate Religious Education in 2008 and in the previous three years is illustrated in the following table:

Year	Grade:	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	Total
2005	No.	574	2130	2084	829	91	60	7	5,775
	%	9.9	36.9	36.1	14.4	1.6	1	0.1	100%
2006	No.	748	1951	1756	843	141	98	17	5,554
	%	13.50	35.10	31.60	15.20	2.50	1.70	0.30	100%
2007	No.	692	2254	1966	775	101	71	13	5,872
	%	11.80	38.40	33.50	13.20	1.70	1.20	0.20	100%
2008	No.	604	2017	2037	737	101	97	10	5,603
	%	10.8	36.0	36.4	13.2	1.8	1.7	0.2	100%

Table II: The number and percentage of Ordinary Level Junior Certificate Religious Education candidates achieving each grade 2005 – 2008.

The percentage of candidates who obtained A grades, A+B+C grades, D grades and E+F+NG grades in Ordinary Level Junior Certificate Religious Education 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 is shown in the following table:

Year	No. of Candidates	A %	A+B+C %	D %	E+F+NG %
2005	5,775	9.9	82.9	14.4	2.7
2006	5,554	13.5	80.2	15.2	4.5
2007	5,872	11.8	83.7	13.2	3.1
2008	5,603	10.8	83.1	13.2	3.7

Table III: Summary of outcomes by grade for Ordinary Level Junior Certificate Religious Education 2005 - 2008.

The 2008 Ordinary Level results are from a total candidature of 5,603 which is a 4.6% decrease on the 2007 figure. The grades achieved by candidates in 2008 are within range of those achieved in recent years as illustrated in the following table:

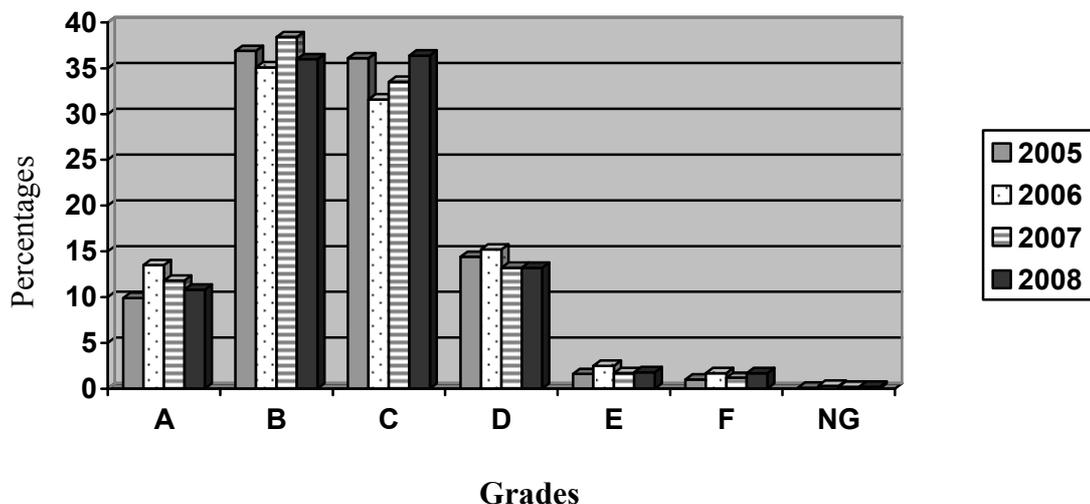


Table IV: Distribution of grades for Ordinary Level Junior Certificate Religious Education 2005 - 2008.

The gender breakdown of the 2008 results in Ordinary Level Junior Certificate Religious Education is illustrated in the following table:

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	Total
Total No.	604	2017	2037	737	101	97	10	5,603
Total %	10.8	36	36.4	13.2	1.8	1.7	0.2	100%
No. Female	337	1003	874	231	31	40	3	2,519
% Female	13.4	39.8	34.7	9.2	1.2	1.6	0.1	100%
No. Male	267	1014	1163	506	70	57	7	3,084
% Male	8.7	32.9	37.7	16.4	2.3	1.8	0.2	100%

Table V: Summary of outcomes by gender for Ordinary Level Junior Certificate Religious Education 2008.

Analysis was conducted on the relative popularity of questions and performance of Ordinary Level candidates in each section of the 2008 examination paper and Journal Booklet. The statistical data in this report relating to the answering of candidates in each section of the written examination paper and each part of the Journal Booklet is based on a random sample of 10.7% of the total candidature.

Table VI below ranks each section of the examination paper and each part of the Journal Booklet in two ways. Firstly, all the sections of the examination paper and Journal Booklet are ranked according to candidate performance and secondly, according to their popularity among candidates. Under the heading 'Performance' the average marks per section of the examination paper and Journal Booklet and corresponding rank order is given. Under the heading 'Popularity' the response rate per section of the examination paper and Journal Booklet as well as the corresponding rank order is given.

2008 Ordinary Level Junior Certificate Religious Education				
Paper	Performance		Popularity	
	Average Mark	Rank Order	Response Rate	Rank Order
Paper Section 1	73 (91.3%)	1	597 (99.7%)	1 (Joint)
Paper Section 2	43 (71.7%)	2	597 (99.7%)	1 (Joint)
Paper Section 3	32 (53.3%)	6	588 (98.2%)	2
Paper Section 4 Question 1	24 (60.0%)	4	549 (91.7%)	4
Paper Section 4 Question 2	25 (62.5%)	3	574 (95.8%)	3
Paper Section 4 Question 3	13 (32.5%)	9	254 (42.4%)	8
Paper Section 4 Question 4	23 (57.5%)	5	475 (79.3%)	7
Paper Section 4 Question 5	19 (47.5%)	7	479 (80.0%)	6
Paper Section 4 Question 6	16 (40.0%)	8	491 (82.0%)	5
Journal Booklet	71 (71.0%)		584 (97.5%)	
Journal Booklet Section One	9 (75.0%)	1 (Joint)	526 (87.8%)	1 (Joint)
Journal Booklet Section Two	9 (75.0%)	1 (Joint)	526 (87.8%)	1 (Joint)
Journal Booklet Section Three	17 (70.8%)	3	525 (87.6%)	2
Journal Booklet Section Four	31 (73.8%)	2	526 (87.8%)	1 (Joint)
Journal Booklet Section Five	6 (60.0%)	4	524 (87.5%)	3

Table VI: Ranking of Ordinary Level Junior Certificate Religious Education examination paper and Journal Booklet sections according to Average Mark and Response Rate

2.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

Examiners noted that candidates performed very well overall in this examination and 83.2% of candidates were awarded a grade C or higher while only 3.7% of candidates were awarded less than a grade D. The majority of candidates performed excellently in Section 1 of the written examination paper and they also gave very good answers in Section 2 of the paper and most of the sections in the Journal Booklet. There were, however, some weak responses to the questions in Section 4 of the paper and the standard of answering was, as a result, disappointing particularly in relation to question 3. A number of candidates failed to complete the required number of sections in the examination paper and Journal Booklet which obviously impacted in a negative way on their overall marks. Many of the candidates who did not present a Journal Booklet for assessment achieved less than a D grade.

SECTION 1 (80 marks)

Average Mark: 73 (91.3%) Response Rate: 597 (99.7%)

The majority of candidates were awarded excellent marks in this section. Examiners reported that the range of question types within the section appeared to benefit the candidates. The multiple-choice and true/false questions were the most popular among the candidates and they performed very well in response to them. Some candidates attempted all 20 questions and many achieved full marks. Some candidates lost marks in response to question 2 (the meaning of inter-faith dialogue) because they identified an example of inter-faith dialogue but failed to describe the meaning of inter-faith dialogue as the question required. Similarly in response to question 18 (the meaning of the term ‘monotheism’), some candidates lost marks because they identified an example of a monotheistic world religion but did not describe how monotheism refers to belief in one God as the question required. Examiners noted that where candidates lost marks in response to questions 4, 6, 13 and 19, it was frequently because they did not read the question carefully or respond to what was required as stated in the question.

In general, candidates demonstrated a good overall knowledge of the syllabus objectives being assessed in this section.

SECTION 2 (60 marks)

Average Mark: 43 (71.7%) Response Rate: 597 (99.7%)

This was one of the most popular sections of the written examination paper. Many candidates gave very good responses to all four questions, even though only three questions are required to be answered in this section. Among candidates who did exercise choice, questions 2, 3 and 4 were the most popular.

A frequent error in response to question 1 (ecumenism) was that candidates confused ecumenism with inter faith dialogue, or they did not show an understanding of the

concept of ecumenism and an awareness of the involvement of different Christian denominations.

Candidates performed very well in response to parts A and B of question 2. Part C (State one thing that Jesus taught his disciples about the Kingdom of God) appeared to be more difficult for some candidates who were not able to accurately identify something that Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God.

In response to question 3, candidates frequently lost marks in part C (State one reason why a person would use meditation to pray) because they identified one general reason why people pray and made no reference to why a person would use meditation to pray as the question required.

Similarly in response to question 4, candidates lost marks in part C (Describe one stage in the process a person goes through in deciding if something is right or wrong) because they simply identified one stage of the process in moral decision making and did not give an account of what is involved in the stage identified as the question required.

SECTION 3 (60 marks)

Average Mark: 32 (53.3%) Response Rate: 588 (98.2%)

The majority of candidates attempted all the questions in this section. The candidates' retrieval of information from the stimulus material was very good in answering question 1 (Outline one example of a moral decision that had to be made by Pat after the above conversation) and question 3b (Give two examples of where moral maturity can be seen in this conversation).

Examiners noted that some candidates lost marks in response to question 2a (Name one moral code that could guide Pat in deciding what is the right thing to do in the situation described above) and question 2b (Explain one reason why a moral code could help a person decide what is the right thing to do in a situation) as they did not appear to have knowledge or understanding of a moral code. Similarly in response to question 3a (What does the term 'moral maturity' mean?) some candidates lost marks because they confused growing older in years with moral maturity.

SECTION 4 (200 marks)

Average Mark: 99 (49.5%) Response Rate: 595 (99.3%)

Many of the questions in Section 4 of the written examination paper were attempted by candidates. Question 2 (Foundations of Religion – Christianity) and question 1 (Communities of Faith) were the most popular among candidates, while question 3 (Foundations of Religion – Major World Religions) was the least popular. As questions 1, 2 and 3 in section 4 of the examination paper are designed to assess the syllabus

objectives in sections A, B and C respectively, the variation in the response rate described above may reflect the choice available to candidates in Part 1 of the Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus.

Section 4 Question 1 Communities of Faith (40 marks)

Average Mark: 24 (60.0%) Response Rate: 549 (91.7%)

Examiners reported that a good knowledge and understanding of the objectives in Section A of the syllabus (Communities of Faith) was evident in the response of candidates to the different parts of this question. Most candidates had no difficulty in answering part A of the question. Many candidates chose to answer part A(a) (Name the founder/earliest followers of the world religion you have ticked above) of this question with reference to either Islam or Christianity. Some candidates named the founder/earliest followers of a different world religion to that which they had ticked at the start of the question.

Part B appeared to be the more difficult part of this question for many candidates. In response to question B(a) (• Commitment • Communication • Co-operation - Choose two of the above and give an example of how each can be seen in a community of faith today) and question Bb (Explain why one of the above is important for a community of faith today) some candidates failed to address all that was required in the questions and some made no reference to a community of faith today.

Section 4 Question 2 Foundations of Religion – Christianity (40 marks)

Average Mark: 25 (62.5%) Response Rate: 574 (95.8%)

This was the most popular question among candidates and the question in which they generally achieved the highest marks in Section 4 of the written examination paper. Candidates displayed a good knowledge and understanding of the objectives in Section B of the syllabus (Foundations of Religion – Christianity) in the response to the different parts of this question. In response to part B(b) (Outline two things that Jesus said to his apostles at the Last Supper), a common error was that candidates merely identified two things that Jesus said to his apostles and failed to set out information on them, as the question required.

Section 4 Question 3 Foundations of Religion Major World Religion (40 marks)

Average Mark: 13 (32.5%) Response Rate: 254 (42.4%)

This was the least popular choice of question among candidates in Section 4 of the examination paper and candidate responses were of varying quality. A common error in response to part A(a) (... Name a title that is given to a religious leader in the world religion you have ticked above) was that candidates named a title that is given to a

religious leader not associated with the major world religion which they had ticked at the beginning of the question.

Similarly, in response to part B(a) (Name one religious festival associated with the world religion you have ticked above), some candidates identified a religious festival associated with one of the major world religions listed above, but not associated with the major world religion they had ticked at the start of the question. Examiners noted that many candidates appeared to have had difficulty in naming a religious festival associated with a major world religion, even though this is a key concept in Section C Part 3 of the syllabus.

Section 4 Question 4 The Question of Faith (40 marks)

Average Mark: 23 (57.5%) Response Rate: 475 (79.3%)

A good knowledge and understanding of the objectives in Section D of the syllabus (The Question of Faith) was evident in the responses of candidates to the different parts of this question. In response to part A(a) (Describe one image of God that you have studied) of this question, most candidates had no difficulty in describing an image of God, but some had some difficulty in part A(b) (Outline one way in which a person's image of God can change from childhood to adulthood). In part A(b), while candidates set out points of information on either a child's image of God or an adult's image of God, some candidates did not give an account of how the person's image of God changes from childhood to adulthood, as the question required.

Section 4 Question 5 The Celebration of Faith (40 marks)

Average Mark: 19 (47.5%) Response Rate: 479 (80.0%)

Candidates generally displayed a fair knowledge and understanding of the objectives in Section E of the syllabus (The Celebration of Faith) in their responses to the different parts of this question. In response to part A(a) (Name another place in Ireland that has religious importance for a community of faith) a large number of candidates identified 'Knock' as a place of religious importance in Ireland. Examiners commented that candidates found part B of the question challenging. In response to part B(a) (Describe one example of a ritual that can be seen in an experience of worship that you have either taken part in or observed) many candidates merely named a ritual and did not give an account of an example of the ritual that can be seen in an experience of worship, as the question required. In response to part B(b) (Explain two reasons why people use religious rituals to express their faith) some candidates identified reasons and did not give an account of the reasons why people use religious rituals to express their faith.

Section 4 Question 6 The Moral Challenge (40 marks)

Average Mark: 16 (40.0%) Response Rate: 491 (82.0%)

Examiners noted some excellent candidate responses to Part A of this question. In response to part B (Outline one way in which members of a community of faith try to bring about reconciliation between people today), a common error was that candidates did not set out information on the way in which members of a community of faith try to bring about reconciliation. The response of candidates to part C (Explain two reasons why members of a community of faith try to bring about reconciliation between people today) was of varying quality. Candidates frequently gave an account of reasons why reconciliation is generally important, but did not always refer to the reasons why members of a community of faith try to bring about reconciliation, as the question required.

2008 Journal Work (100 marks)

Average Mark: 71 (71.0%) Response Rate: 584 (97.5%)

Examiners noted that the general performance of Ordinary Level candidates in completing the Journal Booklet was very good. Some candidates did not complete all the sections required and a number of candidates did not present any Journal Booklet for assessment. Examiners reported that candidates engaged with a broad range of the 2008 Journal Work prescribed titles.

Journal Booklet Section One: Introduction (12 marks)

Average Mark: 9 (75.0%) Response Rate: 526 (87.8%)

The performance of candidates in completing Section One of the Journal Booklet was generally very good. Examiners commented that candidates were competent in giving a personal title and stating why the title was of interest to them. Some candidates did not clearly link their points with the chosen 2008 title.

Journal Booklet Section Two: Getting Started (12 marks)

Average Mark: 9 (75.0%) Response Rate: 526 (87.8%)

Examiners noted that candidates had no difficulty in completing Section Two of the Journal Booklet. Candidates generally gave a very good description of the way(s) they planned to personally engage with the chosen 2008 prescribed title and identified the skill(s) they hoped to use.

Journal Booklet Section Three: Work (24 marks)

Average Mark: 17 (70.8%) Response Rate: 525 (87.6%)

The performance of candidates in completing Section Three of the Journal Booklet was also very good. Examiners noted that the candidates who lost marks generally did so

because they gave very general answers and failed to adequately link their work to the chosen 2008 prescribed title. The weakest part of this section for some candidates was in relation to describing their reaction, which in some cases contained little or no description of what the candidates found most interesting, hardest etc. in working on the chosen 2008 prescribed title.

Journal Booklet Section Four: Discoveries (42 marks)

Average Mark: 31 (73.8%) Response Rate: 526 (87.8%)

Candidates generally produced very good answers in completing Section Four of the Journal Booklet. Candidates were particularly good in giving a detailed description of how they used skills in doing journal work on the chosen 2008 prescribed title. Examiners reported that identifying and explaining the links between their journal work and other aspects of the Junior Certificate Religious Education course seemed to be the most challenging aspect of this section for some candidates.

Journal Booklet Section Five: Looking Back (10 marks)

Average Mark: 6 (60.0%) Response Rate: 524 (87.5%)

The performance of candidates in completing Section Five of the Journal Booklet was generally good. There was evidence of reflection/identification of what went well and evaluation/drawing of conclusions about doing journal work on the chosen 2008 prescribed title. While Examiners noted some very good answers to this section, candidates referred only to the processes involved in doing journal work and made no reference to reflecting or drawing of conclusions about doing journal work on the chosen 2008 prescribed title.

2.4 Conclusions

- The majority of Ordinary Level candidates answered questions in the required number of sections in the examination paper and completed the Journal Booklet in a way that showed a good knowledge, understanding and appreciation of the syllabus objectives being assessed
- The majority of candidates coped very well with the demands of the examination
- Examiners noted that from the evidence of some candidate responses, it appeared that some candidates did not read the questions carefully
- Some candidates did not appear to be familiar with key concepts in the syllabus such as ‘ecumenism’ etc.
- Candidates not completing the Journal Booklet, and/or not attempting all the sections or parts of questions that were required in the written examination paper, had an impact on the number of candidates who are awarded less than a D grade.

2.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- Students should be encouraged to engage with, and have an understanding of, the key concepts in the syllabus
- Candidates should be encouraged to attempt all the required sections of the written examination paper and Journal Booklet
- In responding to multiple-choice questions particularly in Section 1 of the written examination paper, students should be advised to tick one box only
- As part of their preparation for the examination, students should become familiar with the layout of the paper, with the examination paper requirements, and with the mark and time allocations. Attention should also be given to other aspects of examination technique, such as reading the questions carefully and developing answers as required
- Students should be familiar with the commonly used question cues such as ‘describe’, ‘explain’, ‘outline’ etc. that are used in the assessment of Religious Education
- Students should be encouraged to choose a journal title that is of genuine interest to them and to refer to the chosen prescribed title when answering all sections of the Journal Booklet
- In completing the Journal Booklet, students should follow the guidelines specified in the document entitled *General Guidelines for Completion of the Journal Work Booklet* issued annually by the State Examination Commission.

3. Higher Level

3.1 Introduction

The 2008 Higher Level Written Examination Paper (400 marks)

Section 1 (50 marks)

This section contains twenty short knowledge-based questions designed to assess objectives from all sections of the syllabus. Candidates are required to answer any ten of the twenty questions each of which carries 5 marks. This section includes multiple-choice questions, true/false questions, item-matching questions, completion questions and short-answer questions.

Section 2 (30 marks)

Section 2 consists of four questions designed to assess objectives from different sections of the syllabus. Candidates are required to answer any three of the four questions. Each question is divided into a number of parts which carry a total of 10 marks. The photographs/pictures in each question are designed to act as prompts which aid the candidates in showing evidence of the syllabus objectives being assessed.

Section 3 (50 marks)

This section contains a number of short-answer and paragraph-type questions. Candidates are presented with stimulus material designed to assess syllabus objectives and are required to answer all questions in this section. Some of the questions in this section are based around the stimulus material and other questions are designed to assess objectives from different sections of the syllabus.

Section 4 (200 marks)

Section 4 of the written examination paper contains six questions each of which is designed to assess the objectives of a different section of the syllabus. Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 in Section 4 of the written examination paper primarily assess objectives in Sections A, B, C, D, E and F of the syllabus respectively. Candidates are required to answer four of the six questions in Section 4. Each question is divided into a number of parts and sub-parts which carry a total of 50 marks. The parts and sub-parts within the questions in Section 4 contain a combination of question types which are predominantly short-answer and paragraph-style questions.

Section 5 (70 marks)

This section contains six essay-type questions. Questions 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6 are primarily assess the syllabus objectives in Sections A, B, C, D, E and F respectively. Candidates are required to answer one of the six questions in this section. Each question carries a total of 70 marks.

3.2 Performance of Candidates

The number and percentage of candidates achieving each grade in Higher Level Junior Certificate Religious Education in 2008 and in the previous three years is illustrated in the following table:

Year	Grade:	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	Total
2005	No.	2341	6620	4810	1552	117	35	4	15479
	%	15.1	42.8	31.1	10	0.8	0.2	0	100%
2006	No.	2591	7266	6190	2120	206	66	4	18443
	%	14.1	39.4	33.5	11.5	1.1	0.4	0	100%
2007	No.	2303	7339	6517	2320	193	54	7	18733
	%	12.3	39.2	34.8	12.4	1	0.3	0	100%
2008	No.	2613	7287	6380	2322	221	72	10	18905
	%	13.8	38.5	33.7	12.3	1.2	0.4	0.1	100%

Table VII: The number and percentage of Higher Level Junior Certificate Religious Education candidates achieving each grade 2005 – 2008.

The percentage of candidates who obtained A grades, A+B+C grades, D grades and E+F+NG grades in Higher Level Junior Certificate Religious Education 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008 is shown in the following table:

Year	No. of Candidates	A %	A+B+C %	D %	E+F+NG %
2005	15479	15.1	89	10	1
2006	18443	14.1	87	11.5	1.5
2007	18733	12.3	86.3	12.4	1.3
2008	18905	13.8	86.1	12.3	1.6

Table VIII: Summary of outcomes by grade for Higher Level Junior Certificate Religious Education 2005 - 2008.

The 2008 Higher Level results are from a total candidature of 18905 which is a slight increase (0.9%) on the 2007 figure. The grades achieved by candidates in 2008 are within range of those achieved in recent years as illustrated in the following table:

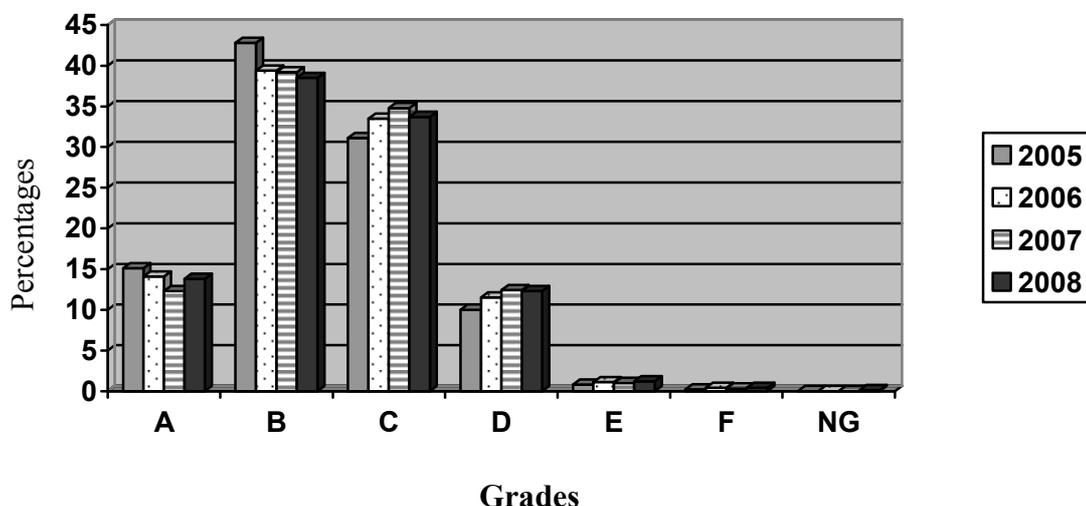


Table IX: Distribution of grades for Higher Level Junior Certificate Religious Education 2005 - 2008.

The gender breakdown of the 2008 results in Higher Level Junior Certificate Religious Education is illustrated in the following table:

Grade	A	B	C	D	E	F	NG	Total
Total No.	2613	7287	6380	2322	221	72	10	18,905
Total %	13.8	38.5	33.7	12.3	1.2	0.4	0.1	100%
No. Female	1770	4458	3166	957	67	31	6	10,455
% Female	16.9	42.6	30.3	9.2	0.6	0.3	0.1	100%
No. Male	843	2829	3214	1365	154	41	4	8,450
% Male	10	33.5	38	16.2	1.8	0.5	0	100%

Table X: Summary of outcomes by gender for Higher Level Junior Certificate Religious Education 2008.

Analysis was conducted on the relative popularity of questions and performance of Higher Level candidates in each section of the written examination paper and Journal Booklet. The statistical data in this report relating to the answering of candidates in each section of the written examination paper and Journal Booklet is based on a random sample of 6.1% of the total Higher Level candidature.

Table XI below ranks each section of the written examination paper and Journal Booklet in two ways. Firstly, all the sections of the written examination paper and Journal Booklet are ranked according to candidate performance and secondly, according to their popularity among candidates. Under the heading 'Performance' the average marks per section of the written examination paper and Journal Booklet and corresponding rank order is given. Under the heading 'Popularity' the response rate per section of the written examination paper and Journal Booklet and corresponding rank order is given.

2008 Higher Level Junior Certificate Religious Education				
	Performance		Popularity	
Paper:	Average Mark	Rank Order	Response Rate	Rank Order
Section 1	49 (98.0%)	1	1159 (99.9%)	1
Section 2	25 (83.3%)	2	1158 (99.8%)	2
Section 3	37 (74.0%)	3	1157 (99.7%)	3
Section 4 Question 1	30 (60.0%)	5 (Joint)	577 (49.7%)	10
Section 4 Question 2	25 (50.0%)	8	641 (55.3%)	9
Section 4 Question 3	30 (60.0%)	5 (Joint)	683 (58.9%)	7
Section 4 Question 4	26 (52.0%)	7	679 (58.5%)	8
Section 4 Question 5	30 (60.0%)	5 (Joint)	938 (80.9%)	6
Section 4 Question 6	34 (68.0%)	4	952 (82.1%)	5
Section 5	39 (55.7%)	6	1101 (94.9%)	4
Journal Booklet	69 (69.0%)		1160 (100%)	
Journal Booklet Section One	10 (83.3%)	1	1160 (100%)	1 (Joint)
Journal Booklet Section Two	8 (66.7%)	3 (Joint)	1160 (100%)	1 (Joint)
Journal Booklet Section Three	16 (66.7%)	3 (Joint)	1160 (100%)	1 (Joint)
Journal Booklet Section Four	30 (71.4%)	2	1159 (99.9%)	2
Journal Booklet Section Five	6 (60.0%)	4	1152 (99.3%)	3

Table XI: Ranking of Higher Level Junior Certificate Religious Education examination paper and Journal Booklet sections according to Average Mark and Response Rate

3.3 Analysis of Candidate Performance

A high standard of answering was evident in the general performance of candidates in this examination. 86.2% of candidates were awarded a grade C or higher and 1.7% of candidates were awarded less than a grade D. The general standard of answering was very good to excellent in Sections 1 to 3 of the written examination paper. Here candidates' responses showed a good knowledge and understanding of the syllabus objectives and an ability to apply that knowledge to the questions asked. Examiners reported that in Section 4 and Section 5 some candidates omitted parts of questions or did not appear to have read the questions properly. Some inaccurate answering would suggest that candidates were not familiar with question cues such as 'outline', 'explain', 'describe', 'profile' etc. and did not appreciate the depth of treatment required in response to such question cues.

Section 1 (50 marks)

Average Mark: 49 (98.0 %) Response Rate: 1159 (99.9 %)

This was the most popular section on the Higher Level written examination paper. The vast majority of candidates attempted more than the required 10 questions in Section 1 and most received full marks for this section.

Question 12 (An example of table-fellowship from the life of Jesus is) was frequently not attempted by candidates and, when answered, was frequently inaccurate. Where candidates lost marks in this section it was usually because they did not address what was required in the question. For example in response to question 13 (In religious traditions 'schism' means) some candidates gave an example and made no reference to what the term 'schism' means, as the question required.

Section 2 (30 marks)

Average Mark: 25 (83.3 %) Response Rate: 1158 (99.8 %)

The performance of candidates in response to the questions in Section 2 was very good with most achieving high marks. This was also a popular section among candidates and many attempted all questions in this section. Some candidates confused ecumenism with interfaith dialogue. Question 2 was generally well answered by candidates. However in part C (State two things that Jesus taught his disciples about the Kingdom of God), some candidates repeated the same point and did not state two different things as the question required. Generally candidates performed well in response to questions 3 and 4 although a small number of candidates did not address all that was required in a question. For example, in response to Question 3C (State two reasons why people use meditation to pray), some candidates identified general reasons why people pray, without making any reference to why people use meditation to pray, as the question required.

Section 3 (50 marks)

Average Mark: 37 (74.0 %) Response Rate: 1157 (99.7 %)

The performance of candidates was very good, particularly in relation to questions 1, 3 and 4 in this section. In response to question 1 (Outline two ways in which this conversation shows people searching for the meaning of life) some candidates did not connect their answer to the stimulus material, as the question required. Similarly in response to question 2a (The term 'reflection' means), some candidates identified an example of reflection but made no reference to the meaning of the term 'reflection'. Question 3b (Explain two reasons why reflection can help people in their search for the meaning of life) was less successfully answered by many candidates and there was frequently repetition in the responses given.

Section 4 (200 marks)

Average Mark: 116 (58.0 %) Response Rate: 1159 (99.9 %)

A wide range of questions was attempted by candidates in Section 4, with questions 5 and 6 being the most popular. Many candidates answered more than the required number of questions in Section 4 and generally displayed a good knowledge,

understanding and appreciation of the objectives for the different sections of the syllabus being assessed in each question.

Section 4 Question 1 Communities of Faith (50 marks)

Average Mark: 30 (60.0%) Response Rate: 577 (49.7 %)

This was the least popular question in Section 4. Candidates who did attempt this question performed best in response to part A(b) (Outline two ways in which people live out their vocation in a community of faith you have studied) and part B(a) (Describe two things that inspire the religious commitment of members in a community of faith you have studied). However, Examiners noted some repetition of points in response to these questions on the part of some candidates. In response to part A, some candidates confused the term 'vocation' and the word 'vacation'. In answering part B(b) (Community breakdown Religious Conflict Tick one of the above and outline the way in which it is dealt with by a community of faith you have studied), some candidates described an example of either community breakdown or religious conflict, but did not make any reference to how either is dealt with by a community of faith, as the question required. Examiners reported that a small number of candidates did not attempt either part B(a) or B(b) of the question.

Section 4 Question 2 Foundations of Religion – Christianity (50 marks)

Average Mark: 25 (50.0%) Response Rate: 641 (55.3 %)

This question elicited a fair response from the candidates who chose it. The majority of candidates were awarded full marks in part A(a) (...Tick the box that most correctly matches each description to the name of a religious group...). Candidates also provided excellent answers for part A(b) (● Pharisees ● Sadducees ● Romans Choose two of the above groups and explain why each came into conflict with Jesus) particularly with reference to the reasons why the Pharisees or Sadducees came into conflict with Jesus. It was evident from the response of candidates to the questions in part B that most were not familiar with the role of the Sanhedrin in Palestine at the time of Jesus. A common error in response to part Bb (Outline what happened when Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin) was that many candidates based their answer on what happened when Jesus was sentenced to death before Pilate and made no reference to what happened when Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin.

Section 4 Question 3 Foundations of Religion – Major World Religions (50 marks)

Average Mark: 30 (60.0%) Response Rate: 683 (58.9 %)

This question elicited a good response from most of the candidates who chose it. Islam was the world religion on which most candidates based their answer to this question. In response part A(a) (Name one religious ceremony that marks an important moment in

the life of a believer...) many candidates identified the Aqiqah/naming ceremony in the Islamic tradition and provided an excellent account of what happens during this ceremony in part A(b) of the question. In response to part A(a), some candidates identified a time of religious importance but neglected to name a religious ceremony, as the question required.

Most candidates appeared to have no difficulty in responding to part B of the question. In response to part B(b) (Describe two ways in which the place you have named above helps believers to pray), some candidates gave a general answer about what helps people to pray and made no reference to the ways in which the building identified helps followers of a world religion to pray. Another common error in relation to this question was that candidates repeated their response and failed to identify two different ways in which the building identified helps followers of a world religion to pray.

Section 4 Question 4 The Question of Faith (50 marks)

Average Mark: 26 (52.0%) Response Rate: 679 (58.5%)

In response to question 4 part A (...Tick ✓ one of the above world religions and outline two points it teaches about the creation of the world), many candidates referred to points from the creation account in Genesis. Some candidates left their answer incomplete and appeared to have difficulty in identifying two points that a world religion teaches about the creation of the world.

Candidates appeared to have no difficulty in responding to part B (Outline two points that science teaches about the creation of the world) with most making reference to the Big Bang theory and the theory of evolution. Many candidates did not attempt part C (Describe one similarity between what a religion says and what science says about the creation of the world) and the majority of those who did attempt an answer found it somewhat challenging. A number of candidates appeared to lose marks because they did not read the question carefully, referring to the differences rather than the similarities between what science and a religion say about the creation of the world as the question required.

Section 4 Question 5 The Celebration of Faith (50 marks)

Average Mark: 30 (60.0%) Response Rate: 938 (80.9%)

Question 5 was a popular question among candidates in Section 4 of the written examination paper and was generally well answered. Of the five major world religion listed at the beginning of this question, most candidates based their answer on either Christianity or Islam. Part A(c) (Outline the religious meaning of one ritual that marks an important time of year for members of a major world religion) was poorly answered by a number of candidates who described a ritual but did not consider the issue of the religious meaning of the ritual. Examiners noted that it appeared that some candidates

were not familiar with the term ‘ritual’ even though it is a key concept in Section E Part 2 of the syllabus.

Section 4 Question 6 The Moral Challenge (50 marks)

Average Mark: 34 (68.0%) Response Rate: 952 (82.1%)

Question 6 was the most popular questions among candidates in Section 4 and good quality responses were in evidence. However, examiners noted that some candidates appeared to have difficulty with part C (Describe one way in which a person’s conscience can develop as he/she grows older). A common error was that the candidates gave an account of how a person’s general thinking changes as he/she grows older, but did not make reference to the development of the person’s conscience.

Section 5 (70 marks)

Average Mark: 39 (55.7%) Response Rate: 1101 (94.9%)

Candidates engaged with the full range of questions in Section 5. Examiners reported that questions 1, 3, 4 and 5 were the most popular choices among candidates in this Section. The majority of the candidates gave good answers to the question they chose in Section 5 and some excellent responses were in evidence. In responding to the more comprehensive, open style questions in Section 5, many candidates demonstrated a capacity to link different elements of the course, to differentiate between disparate elements and to express relevant opinions supported by appropriate evidence. A common error in the essay-type questions in Section 5 was that candidates only partially addressed what was required in a question, or tended to outline what they knew about the subject matter of a question, rather than answer the question as asked. Many candidates did not use the full allocation of space when answering questions in this section.

Section 5 Question 1 Communities of Faith (70 marks)

Question 1 (Outline the way in which leadership within a community of faith involves - i. Authority. ii. Service) was one of the most popular among candidates in section 5. The standard of answering was generally good. Some candidates set out information on either authority or service, rather than the way in which both are involved in leadership within a community of faith.

Section 5 Question 2 Foundations of Religion – Christianity (70 marks)

Examiners reported that question 2 (Examine the way in which Jesus celebrated the Last Supper as both a Passover meal and Eucharist) was one of the least popular questions

among candidates in Section 5. Some candidates gave a description of the Last Supper and did not refer to the Passover meal or Eucharist.

Section 5 Question 3 Foundations of Religion – Major World Religions (70 marks)

Of the four major world religion listed at the beginning of this question, Islam and Judaism were the more popular choices among candidates in response to question 3. (...Profile the way in which one of the above world religions has been shaped by experiencing a time of *either* persecution *or* expansion). Examiners noted that the question yielded some excellent responses, particularly in relation to how Judaism has being shaped by a time of persecution.

Section 5 Question 4 The Celebration of Faith (70 marks)

Examiners noted that many candidates engaged with this question and some excellent responses were in evidence. Candidates produced particularly good answers in relation to part ii (Challenges to religious belief in Ireland today) with many candidates referring to concepts such as materialism, secularism, atheism and sectarianism in their responses.

Section 5 Question 5 The Celebration of Faith (70 marks)

Examiners reported that question 5 (● Prayer of Petition ● Prayer of Praise ● Prayer of Thanksgiving Examine how two of the above types of prayer express the religious beliefs of a major world religion you have studied) was one of the most popular among candidates in this section of the written examination paper. Candidates appeared to have had no difficulty in looking closely at how two of the types of prayer listed in the question express the religious beliefs of a major world religion and many candidates gave excellent answers.

Section 5 Question 6 The Moral Challenge (70 marks)

Examiners reported that Question 6 was one of the least popular choices among candidates in Section 5 of the written examination paper. Those candidates who chose to answer this question performed well in 5a (Outline what libertarianism sees as the relationship between personal morality and a country's law) but many did not attempt to answer 5b (Examine how there might be conflict between the libertarian point of view and a country's law on one moral issue you have studied). Some candidates who attempted 5b did not refer to the way in which there could be conflict between libertarianism and a country's law, as the question required.

2008 Journal Booklet (100 marks)

Average Mark: 69 (69.0%) Response Rate: 1160 (100%)

The general performance of Higher Level candidates in completing the Journal Booklet was very good. The vast majority of candidates completed all sections of the Journal Booklet. Examiners reported that candidates engaged with a broad range of the 2008 prescribed titles. A common error among some candidates was that they failed to engage in all that was required in the 2008 prescribed title they had chosen for journal work. For example, some candidates who chose the prescribed title in Section B b1 (A study of what Jesus' parables tell people about the Kingdom of God) made no reference to what Jesus' parables tell people about the Kingdom of God in their Journal Booklet. Similarly in relation to the prescribed title for Section E e1 (Religious symbols – an exploration of their meaning and purpose in one of the following world religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam and Judaism) some candidates examined religious symbols in a general way and did not refer to their meaning or purpose in one of the world religions listed in the prescribed title. Some candidates did not complete all that was required in each section of the Journal Booklet, as outlined in the *SEC General Guidelines for Completion of the Journal Booklet* that accompany the proforma booklets.

Journal Booklet Section One: Introduction (12 marks)

Average Mark: 10 (83.3%) Response Rate: 1160 (100%)

Examiners reported that the most candidates had no difficulty in identifying a personal title relevant to their chosen prescribed title and gave clear evidence of personal interest/enthusiasm/concern in relation to the chosen 2008 title. Most candidates provided a full and relevant description of what they hoped to achieve.

Journal Booklet Section Two: Getting Started (12 marks)

Average Mark: 8 (66.7%) Response Rate: 1160 (100%)

Many candidates presented very good descriptions of the way(s) they planned to personally engage with their chosen title and identified the skill(s) they hoped to use. Some candidates gave a very general description of the personal planning and the skill(s) they hoped to use with little or no reference made to the chosen 2008 prescribed title.

Journal Booklet Section Three: Work (24 marks)

Average Mark: 16 (66.7%) Response Rate: 1160 (100%)

The majority of candidates gave a general description of the work in which they engaged in relation to the chosen 2008 prescribed title. However, few candidates stated the reason why they chose their particular way of doing journal work on the chosen title. In some instances candidates wrote about why they chose a particular prescribed title, rather than why their journal work was carried out in a particular manner, as this section requires. Some candidates repeated what they had written in Section One of the Journal Booklet, regarding their reasons for choosing the prescribed title, and did not state the reason why they chose their particular way of doing journal work as required in Section Three (see the *SEC Guidelines for Completion of the Journal Booklet* that accompany the pro-forma booklets).

In describing their reaction to the work in which they engaged, a number of candidates gave a general description with limited elaboration as to what they found most interesting in doing journal work, but with little or no reference to the chosen 2008 prescribed title. Most candidates, who identified themselves as doing journal work as part of a group, appeared to have no difficulty in referring to the reaction of the group and how this reaction was similar or different to their own.

Journal Booklet Section Four: Discoveries (42 marks)

Average Mark: 30 (71.4%) Response Rate: 1159 (99.9%)

Candidates' Journal Booklets provided substantial evidence of what they had learned from doing journal work on the chosen 2008 prescribed title and the impact it had on their lives. For example, in relation to the prescribed title for Section D d1 (A survey of religious practice in my locality), candidates frequently gave a list of facts describing what they had learned.

The majority of candidates had no difficulty in identifying two skills they used in doing journal work on the prescribed title and describing how they used them. Research was the skill most frequently referred to by candidates, most of whom gave a general description of how they used their skills in doing journal work.

Most candidates also had no difficulty in identifying two links between their journal work and other aspects of the Junior Certificate Religious Education course and giving a detailed description of these links. However some candidates did not accurately link their journal work with other aspects of the Junior Certificate Religious Education course.

Journal Booklet Section Five: Looking Back (10 marks)

Average Mark: 6 (60.0%) Response Rate: 1152 (99.3%)

While some candidates produced excellent responses to this section, most candidates did not show substantial evidence of reflection / identification of what went well and evaluation / drawing of conclusions about starting afresh in doing journal work title. In

Section Five, Examiners noted that some candidates did not show adequate evidence of how their reflections and conclusions related to the chosen 2008 prescribed title. A frequent error was that candidates based their reflections and conclusions on the processes involved in doing journal work and made no reference to the chosen 2008 prescribed title.

3.4 Conclusions

- Examiners noted very good candidate responses in the written examination paper and Journal Booklet.
- In some cases, candidates did not engage with the specifics of the question or did not appear to have read the question carefully.
- Some candidates did not appear to be familiar with the meaning of question cues such as ‘describe’ and ‘profile’. In some instances, candidates did not appear to be familiar with concepts such as ‘vocation’ in Section 4 Question 1A a. & b and ‘ritual’ in Section 4 question 5Ac).

3.5 Recommendations to Teachers and Students

- Students should be encouraged to engage with and develop an understanding of the concepts that are central to the objectives of the syllabus
- As part of their preparation for the examination, students should become familiar with the layout of the paper, with the examination paper requirements, and with the mark and time allocations. Students should also be encouraged to consider other aspects of examination technique, such as reading the questions carefully and developing answers as required
- Students should be encouraged to answer the required number of sections and parts of sections in the written examination paper and Journal Booklet
- Students should be encouraged to focus on all aspects of the chosen prescribed title in completing the lead statements within each section of the Journal Booklet
- Students should be reminded that the cues/prompts in each section of the Journal Booklet may be used where relevant to assist in completing their journals
- In completing the Journal Booklet, students should follow the guidelines specified in the document entitled *General Guidelines for Completion of the Journal Booklet* issued annually by the State Examination Commission.

4. Exemplars of Standard

The following is a selection of exemplar material from the written examination papers and Journal Work components of candidates in 2008. These exemplars should be read in conjunction with the Junior Certificate Ordinary Level and Higher Level examination papers and marking schemes. The answers of the candidates are typed in italics. The exemplars below are reproduced as they were written except where, because of ambiguity arising from the hand-written script, it has been edited to indicate the likely meaning. Square brackets are used to indicate where such editing has occurred.

A brief commentary on the item appears after each exemplar.

4.1 Ordinary Level exemplar material

2008 Ordinary Level Examination Paper

Section 1 Question: 18 In religious traditions the term ‘monotheism’ means

Answer: *The belief in one God only*

Marks awarded: 8 out of 8 marks

Comment:

The candidate’s answer shows excellent evidence of the marking criteria in that it accurately states that the term ‘monotheism’ refers to belief in one God.

Section 2 Question: 2 C

State one thing that Jesus taught his disciples about the Kingdom of God.

Answer: *That everyone is equal and God will accept everyone even if they have sinned before, he will forgive them.*

Marks awarded: 8 out of 8 marks

Comment:

The candidate’s answer shows excellent evidence of the marking criteria in that it accurately identifies a characteristic of the Kingdom of God as preached by Jesus.

Section: 3 Question: 3 a What does the term ‘moral maturity’ mean?

Answer: *Moral maturity is when a person [thinks] about how the situation is going to affect the people around them and not just themselves. A moral immature person only thinks about themselves.*

Mark awarded: 8 out of 8 marks

Comment:

The candidate's answer shows an understanding of how moral maturity involves thinking of others when making decisions and being aware of the possible consequences of actions.

2008 Ordinary Level Journal Work Prescribed Journal Work Title

Section B. Foundations of Religion – Christianity

b. 1. A study of what Jesus' parables tell people about the Kingdom of God

Journal Booklet Section One: Introduction Beginning

By doing journal work on this title I hoped to ...

Answer: *Find out more things that Jesus did and the miracles he performed.*

Marks awarded: 2 out of 6 marks

Comment:

The candidate's answer presents a general description of what the candidate hoped to achieve/learn/find out by doing journal work. A fuller and more relevant description that is clearly linked with the chosen 2008 prescribed title is required for full marks.

2008 Ordinary Level Journal Work Prescribed Journal Work Title

Section B. Foundations of Religion – Christianity

b. 1. A study of what Jesus' parables tell people about the Kingdom of God

Journal Booklet Section Four: Discoveries Linking

My journal work reminded me of studying ...

Answer: *About the morality and God.*

Because ...

Answer: *Jesus thought us about morality, he said that stealing, violence, perjury and revenge is bad. Helping one another, being a Samaritan, kindness and [non-violent] reactions are good.*

Marks awarded: 4 out of 6 marks

Comment:

The candidate's answer accurately identified a link between the journal work and another aspect of the Junior Certificate Religious Education course.

4.2 Higher Lever Exemplar Material

2008 Higher Level Examination Paper

Section 1 Question: 19 In religious traditions an example of a ritual is

Answer: *Wudu*

Marks awarded: 5 out of 5marks

Comment:

The candidate's answer shows excellent evidence of the marking criteria in that it accurately identifies a symbolic action/movement/gesture through which members of a religious tradition express their faith.

Section 2 Question: 2C

State two things that Jesus taught his disciples about the Kingdom of God.

Answer:

- i. *It is inclusive of all people – rich and poor, healthy and sick, happy and sad.*
- ii. *It is not a place, but is found in the hearts of people who do good deeds.*

Marks awarded: 6 out of 6 marks

Comment:

The candidate's answer accurately identifies two things that Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God.

Section 3 Question 3

Outline the way in which religion can help a person in his/her search for the meaning of life.

Answer: *It gives people answers to things – questions [about] whether they are right or wrong etc. Religion [can] fill people with hope.*

Marks awarded: 4 out of 10 marks

Comment:

The candidate's answer shows fair evidence of the marking criteria in that it identifies the way in which religion can help a person but with limited reference to the person's search for the meaning of life. A fuller account of information on the way in which religion can help a person in his/her search for the meaning of life is required for full marks.

Section 4 Question 2b ● Pharisees ● Sadducees ● Romans
Choose two of the above groups and explain why each came into conflict with Jesus.

Answer:

i. *Pharisees* When Jesus healed people, he often did it by forgiving sins. The Pharisees did not like this because they believed that only God could forgive sins and they did not believe that Jesus was God.

ii. *Sadducees* Jesus healed and worked on the Sabbath. For the Jews this was breaking Jewish law. The Sadducees were enforcers of Jewish law and operated the Jewish court, called the Sanhedrin where they put Jesus on trial.

Marks awarded: 14 out of 14 marks

Comment:

The candidate's answer gives an accurate account of a reason why the Pharisees and the Sadducees came into conflict with Jesus.

Section 5 Question 2

Examine the way in which Jesus celebrated the Last Supper as both a Passover meal and Eucharist.

Answer:

Jesus celebrated the Last Supper as a Passover meal because he celebrated it at the correct time the year. He ate bitter herbs, a lamb, and all the food prescribed to be eaten at a Passover meal. But he also celebrated it as the first Eucharist. He did this in more ways than one:

- *He spoke the words that are not spoken at ordinary Passover meals about his crucifixion which was to come "This is my body....." etc.*
- *He shared wine and unleavened bread just like in [the] Passover [meal], but he celebrated them in a new way. He celebrated the bread as the body he was about to sacrifice for sinners and he shared wine as the blood he will shed for sinners.*
- *He gave a special meaning to the lamb eaten during Passover. Jesus is frequently called 'the lamb of God'. A lamb is sacrificed for Passover and so too will he be sacrificed, - the lamb that God will sacrifice for all Christians in the future.*
- *Jesus also used the Passover meal to express his love for his disciples. He was telling them in advance about what was going to happen. Out of the love he had for them, he washed their feet, hoping that they would then continue to serve others like he served them.*
- *Jesus said at the Eucharist "Do this in memory of me." He used the Passover meal as the last supper to give instruction on how he wanted Christians to follow him. And [how] he wanted the Eucharist to be celebrated by Christians for the rest of time.*

Celebrating both a Jewish and Christian meal together was like him instructing the two religions to participate in activities such as inter-faith dialogue, which would adhere to Jewish and Christian teaching for tolerance and respect for others and their belief.

Marks awarded: 70 out of 70 marks

Comment:

The candidate's answer looks closely at the way in which Jesus celebrated the Last Supper and provides supporting excellent evidence for the conclusions drawn in relation to the Last Supper as a Passover Meal and Eucharist.

2008 Higher Level Journal Work Prescribed Journal Work Title:

Section C. Foundations of Religion – Major World Religion

c. 1. An examination of the importance of prayer in the life of a believer in one of the following world religions – Buddhism, Hinduism, Islam or Judaism.

Journal Booklet Section One: Introduction

Beginning

By doing journal work on this title I hoped to ...

Answer:

I hope to learn all about the Muslim religious beliefs and the routine of a Muslim's daily life. I hope to achieve an insight [into] the respect they have for their god Allah and how they show this respect and love through prayer.

Marks awarded: 6 out of 6 marks

Comment:

The candidate's answer shows excellent evidence of the marking criteria in that it is a full and relevant description of what the candidate hoped to achieve/learn/find out by doing journal work on the chosen 2008 prescribed title and reflects extended engagement with the topic.

Section E. The Celebration of Faith

e. 1 Religious symbols – An exploration of their meaning and purpose in one of the following world religions – Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism

Journal Booklet Section Five: Looking Back

Looking back at my experience of doing journal work on this title ...

Answer: *I think my journal work went very well. It was a very good and enjoyable way of learning. The interview with my parents was really interesting and went well. The internet was also a huge help but it did take some time to find out what information would be best to use as there was so much. If I could change anything I would try really hard to get the interview with ...as his knowledge and thoughts would have been very helpful. I would advise people doing the same journal work as me to make up questions or plan before an interview as it could slow you up otherwise. Overall I was really pleased with how the journal work went.*

Marks awarded: 4 out of 10 marks

Comment:

The candidate's answer shows fair evidence of the marking criteria in that it identifies the processes which went well and draws general conclusions. More substantial evidence of reflecting on the chosen 2008 prescribed title and drawing conclusions on how best to approach journal work on the chosen 2008 prescribed title is required for full marks.