

A top-down photograph of a diverse group of people sitting in a circle on the floor. They are all holding their hands together in a circle around a central black book. The book has the words "HOLY BIBLE" printed on its cover in gold lettering. The people are wearing various casual and semi-formal clothing, including white shirts, a grey sweater, and a blue shirt. The background is a plain, light-colored floor.

# Inclusive Catholic Parishes

for consideration by the Parish

All of you are Christ's body,  
and each one is a part of it.

1 Corinthians 12:27



# **The Catholic Archdiocese of Perth**

## **Our Mission**

To give expression to a Christ-centred, faithful, vibrant, welcoming, inclusive and mission-orientated Church, one which will enrich our own lives and the lives of all who we encounter and seek to serve.

## **Our Vision**

We see ourselves, and conduct ourselves, as people called to walk together in the footsteps of the Good Shepherd.



## A Welcoming Church

I am pleased to present this resource to our parish communities as we continue to reflect on our responsibility to foster truly welcoming and inclusive environments.

This document reminds us that creating an inclusive Catholic parish - one that welcomes people of diverse cultures, abilities, and backgrounds - requires intentional commitment across worship, leadership, ministry, and community life. It offers a practical framework to support parishes in strengthening pastoral practice, so that all who seek a place in the Church may encounter dignity, respect, and genuine hospitality.

In the Archdiocese of Perth, we are blessed with a rich diversity of cultures, languages, and life experiences, together with the enduring spiritual heritage of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, whose custodianship of this land we honour. These reflections invite us to nurture communities where all feel seen, valued, and able to participate fully in the life of the Church.

I encourage each parish to receive this resource with openness and courage, allowing it to inspire reflection, dialogue, and concrete action, so that our communities may more fully embody the welcoming heart of Christ.

*+ Donald Sproxton*

**+ Most Rev Donald Sproxton**

AUXILIARY BISHOP OF PERTH

Creating an inclusive Catholic parish that welcomes people of diverse cultures, abilities, and backgrounds requires intentional efforts in worship, leadership, ministry, and community life, grounded in the synodal practices of listening, walking together, and discerning the Holy Spirit as one community. Here are ways to foster inclusivity:

## 1. **Cultivating a Spirit of Welcome**

- **Personalised Welcoming**

Creating an inclusive Catholic parish that truly welcomes people of diverse cultures, abilities, and backgrounds requires intentional commitment across worship, leadership, ministry, and community life.

- **Diverse Representation**

Use bulletin boards, websites, and social media to reflect the diversity of the parish through images, languages, and stories.

- **Inclusive Language**

In homilies, announcements, and publications, use language that acknowledges and respects all cultures, abilities, and life experiences particularly groups represented in the parish.

## 2. **Celebrate the cultures, traditions, and spirituality of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples**

- **Acknowledge the Land and its Traditional Custodians**

Begin significant parish events by acknowledging the traditional custodians of the land on which your parish is located. For example:

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we gather, and we pay our respects to Elders past and present. As we come together to worship, we give thanks for their care of this land and commit ourselves to walking together in justice, reconciliation, and peace.

OR

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of this land, created by God and entrusted to their care. We honour their Elders past and present, and we recognise the continuing spiritual connection of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples to Country. May the Holy Spirit guide us as we journey together toward healing and reconciliation.

- **Learn and Share Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples History and Culture**

Promote understanding of the history and culture of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples within the parish community.

Host cultural awareness workshops and educational events led by Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander elders or specialists.

Highlight the achievements and contributions of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples, including their rich traditions, art, and faith, in parish newsletters or special events.

- **Support Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples Initiatives and Ministries**

Build relationships with local Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander leaders and communities, e.g. support Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples-run organisations, schools, or outreach programs.

Establish or support a reconciliation ministry in your parish that is focused on healing and building positive relationships between the Church and Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples communities. (See Catholic Archdiocese of Perth Reflect Reconciliation Action Plan)

Encourage and invite Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander parishioners to be involved in parish leadership roles and ministries.

- **Cultural Competence in Parish Staff and Volunteers**

Ensure that parish staff and volunteers receive cultural competence training that focuses on the values, needs, and issues facing Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples. (See NATSICC Cross-Cultural Competency in a Catholic Context courses)

If possible, invite Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander elders to speak to the congregation or offer spiritual guidance that acknowledges the unique cultural and spiritual practices of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples.

- **Create a Safe and Welcoming Space**

Ensure that your parish is an inclusive space for all, where Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples feel welcome to participate in worship and community life. Where appropriate, incorporate Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander artwork, banners, or symbols in the parish space.

- **Encourage Intergenerational Dialogue and Sharing**

Encourage Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander youth to get involved in the life of the parish. This can be through youth groups, education programs, or participation in liturgies.

Host events that invite members of the parish and local Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities to share their culture through storytelling, music, art, and food. This promotes mutual respect and understanding.

- **Addressing Social Justice Challenges**

Support and raise awareness about challenges that affect Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander communities.

Stand in solidarity with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples in advocating for justice, equality, and reconciliation.

Establish outreach initiatives that address the specific needs of some Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples such as food insecurity, lack of shelter, or support services for those in need.

- **Integrate the Church's role in Reconciliation in parish life**

Encourage parishioners to reflect on the Church's role in advancing reconciliation with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and its teachings about healing historical injustices. This may include offering specific prayers, preaching homilies focused on reconciliation, or creating moments of reflection within parish life.

Reach out to Aboriginal Catholic Ministry to discuss these matters.  
(See ACM - Aboriginal Catholic Ministry, [acm@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:acm@perthcatholic.org.au) (08) 9328 7529)

- **Participate in National and Local Celebrations**

Actively engage in and promote National Reconciliation Week, celebrating the ongoing journey of healing and unity.

Organise events during NAIDOC Week (including Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Sunday) to celebrate the history, culture, and achievements of Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples. This can include cultural celebrations or prayer services.

### 3. **Multicultural Worship & Liturgy**

- **Diverse Music & Prayers**

Incorporate hymns and prayers from a variety of cultural traditions into parish worship as appropriate.

- **Celebrations**

Celebrate feast days and devotional practices that hold particular significance for various cultural communities within the parish, honouring the richness they bring to the Church's shared life of faith.

### 4. **Accessibility for People with Disabilities**

- **Physical Accessibility**

Ensure the church, parish hall, and toilets are accessible, including:

- ACROD parking, plus Priority Parking for seniors, non-ACROD holders, parishioners with prams etc.
- Ramps and inclusive seating areas that can comfortably accommodate walkers, mobility aids, wheelchairs, and prams.
- Access to the sanctuary for readers, acolytes, altar ministers with mobility challenges.

- **Hearing & Vision Support**

Provide hearing aids, large-print hymn books and screen displays for better visibility. Promote live-stream Mass for those unable to attend in person.

Project Auslan Gospels on church screens

(See PAS - Personal Advocacy Service, [admin.pas@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:admin.pas@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9275 5388)

- **Sensory-Friendly Worship**

Offer "quiet Masses" or liturgies that support individuals with autism or sensory sensitivities, creating a prayerful environment where all can participate comfortably.

- **Adaptive Faith Formation**

Provide faith formation and sacramental preparation for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Programs like SPRED (Special Religious Education) can be helpful.

(See PAS - Personal Advocacy Service, [admin.pas@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:admin.pas@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9275 5388)

## 5. Diverse Parish Ministries & Leadership

- **Inclusive Leadership**

Ensure ministries and leadership reflects the diversity of the parish community with consideration for young people to participate with their gifts and talents in leadership and ministry roles.

- **Instituted and Commissioned Ministries**

Support parishioners in their faith, knowledge and understanding in the commissioned and instituted leadership e.g. acolytes, catechists, lectors, sacramental coordinators, children's liturgy teachers. (See CFE – Centre for Faith Enrichment, [cfe@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:cfe@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9278 0261; CCIL – Centre for Christian Initiation & Liturgy, [oci.ccil@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:oci.ccil@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9207 3350)

- **Multicultural Ministries**

Support cultural communities in forming prayer groups, celebrating their traditions, and engaging in social outreach as part of the parish's shared mission.

- **Mentorship & Accompaniment**

Assign parish mentors to accompany newcomers, especially immigrants, refugees, and individuals with disabilities. (See PAS - Personal Advocacy Service, [admin.pas@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:admin.pas@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9275 5388; WACMRO - West Australian Migrant & Refugee Office, [wacmro@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:wacmro@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9278 0236)

## 6. Social & Community Outreach

- **Intergenerational Opportunities**

Where possible to provide opportunities that serve the diverse age groups and circumstances represented in the parish e.g. parents with young children, youth groups, newly married couples, older parishioners.

- **Intercultural Social Events**

Organise events such as international dinners, multicultural festivals, or heritage celebrations where parishioners can share their traditions.

- **Support for Immigrants & Refugees**

Provide information regarding legal aid, language classes, or employment assistance through Catholic social services. (See WACMRO - West Australian Migrant & Refugee Office, [wacmro@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:wacmro@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9278 0236)

- **Inclusion of LGBTIQ+ Catholics**

Create pastoral support groups that emphasise the Church's call to accompany all with love and respect. (Catholic Family & Justice Support Services: Program Facilitator – Life Services, [lifeservices.cfjss@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:lifeservices.cfjss@perthcatholic.org.au))

- **Mental Health & Disability Awareness**

Host workshops and provide resources on mental health and disabilities in light of Catholic teaching.

- **Grief Support**

Accompany those who are needing support due to change, loss and grief.  
(See Catholic Outreach – [www.outreach.perthcatholic.org.au](http://www.outreach.perthcatholic.org.au),  
[outreach@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:outreach@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9442 7920)

- **Family Matters**

Journey with those facing complex family matters. (Catholic Family & Justice Support Services: Program Facilitator – Life Services, [lifeservices.cfjss@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:lifeservices.cfjss@perthcatholic.org.au))

- **Volunteering**

Provide opportunities for parishioners to share their gifts and talents with the parish community. (Catholic Social Services Western Australia (CSSWA), [csswa.perthcatholic.org.au](http://csswa.perthcatholic.org.au), [csswa@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:csswa@perthcatholic.org.au))

- **Catholic Outreach** (Contact: Marietta Russo)

Catholic Outreach works with Parish Priests and parishioners to develop and maintain volunteer Care Programs, offering practical assistance to people in the local community through visiting, transport, emergency meals, and more.  
(Catholic Outreach – [www.outreach.perthcatholic.org.au](http://www.outreach.perthcatholic.org.au),  
[outreach@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:outreach@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9442 7920)

## 7. Faith Formation & Education

- **Faith Formation**

Provide opportunities to further develop one's faith through programs and experiences.  
(See CFE – Centre for Faith Enrichment, [cfe@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:cfe@perthcatholic.org.au),  
(08) 9278 0261; CCIL – Centre for Christian Initiation & Liturgy,  
[oci.ccil@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:oci.ccil@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9207 3350)

- **Interfaith & Ecumenical Dialogue**

Encourage conversations with other faith communities to promote understanding and collaboration.

- **Ongoing Education for Clergy & Staff**

Provide training on cultural competency, disability inclusion, and welcoming those on the periphery.

(See PAS - Personal Advocacy Service, [admin.pas@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:admin.pas@perthcatholic.org.au),  
(08) 9275 5388; WACMRO - West Australian Migrant & Refugee Office,  
[wacmro@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:wacmro@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9278 0236; Catholic Prison Ministry,  
(08) 6104 3600; Catholic Family & Justice Support Services,  
[admin.cfjss@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:admin.cfjss@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9278 0253)

## **8. Inclusive Parish Communications**

- **Multiple Languages**

Provide bulletins, websites, and social media updates in Easy English and the primary languages spoken in the parish.

- **Sign Language Interpretation**

Offer Auslan interpretation at Mass or provide captioned online services.

(See PAS - Personal Advocacy Service, [admin.pas@perthcatholic.org.au](mailto:admin.pas@perthcatholic.org.au), (08) 9275 5388)

### **Accessible Digital Content**

Ensure the parish website and online resources are accessible for screen readers and have easy navigation.

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### **Conclusion**

An inclusive Catholic parish reflects the universal nature of the Church by embracing all people as part of the Body of Christ. By creating a welcoming environment, offering culturally and physically accessible worship, and inviting parishioners to participate in leadership and ministry, the parish can truly embody Christ's love for all.

## Appendix

### HOW INCLUSIVE & WELCOMING IS MY PARISH?

This self-assessment based on the Inclusive Catholic Parishes document assists parishes in assessing their practices to be welcoming and inclusive.

#### Cover Sheet

Parish	
Parish Priest	
Location	
Date	
Person(s) completing form	
Role(s)	

#### Assessment Scale

Level	Descriptor Explanation	People/Resources
Beginning the Journey	Vision acknowledged but no consistent practices in place yet.	No designated people or supports in place yet.
Growing and Strengthening	Steps taken to shape processes; efforts becoming more regular.	Key people have begun training or involvement; support is emerging.
Living the Practice	Criteria and processes are formally embedded and operating.	Parishioners are equipped, empowered and resourced to carry out the practice.
N/A	Not relevant to the parish's circumstances.	Not required for this area.

#### Checklist

1. Cultivating a Spirit of Welcome & Hospitality	Beginning the Journey	Growing & Strengthening	Living the Practice	Not Applicable	Evidence/Notes
Greeters trained to welcome people.					
Use of inclusive language in announcements and publications.					
Variety of communication means for engagement (bulletins, websites, social media etc).					
Opportunities for people to come together as a parish community.					
Accompanying new parishioners.					

2. Acknowledgement to Country & Engagement with Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Peoples & Culture	Beginning the Journey	Growing & Strengthening	Living the Practice	Not Applicable	Evidence / Notes
Acknowledgement to Country at significant parish events.					
Opportunity to celebrate & acknowledge National Aboriginal & Islanders Day Observance Committee (NAIDOC) week, Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander Sunday.					

<b>3. Multicultural Understanding &amp; Participation</b>	Beginning the Journey	Growing & Strengthening	Living the Practice	Not Applicable	Evidence / Notes
Inclusion of hymns, prayers & readings from various cultural traditions.					
Celebrate Feast Days and devotional practices that hold particular significance for the various cultural communities within the parish.					
Celebration of Multicultural Sunday & World Day of Migrants & Refugees (Australia Catholic Migrant & Refugee Office).					

<b>4. Accessibility for People with Disabilities</b>	Beginning the Journey	Growing & Strengthening	Living the Practice	Not Applicable	Evidence / Notes
Physical accessibility (ramps, ACROD parking, accessible pews, ramps to altar).					
Hearing & vision support (hearing aids, large print, live-stream, Auslan).					
Sensory-friendly Masses or services offered.					
Adaptive faith formation programs (e.g. SPRED).					

<b>5. Diversity in Parish Ministries</b>	Beginning the Journey	Growing & Strengthening	Living the Practice	Not Applicable	Evidence / Notes
Ensure leadership reflects the diversity of the parish community.					
A focus on youth ministry within the parish and the Archdiocese.					
Assign parishioners to accompany new parish members from diverse backgrounds.					

<b>6. Social &amp; Community Outreach</b>	Beginning the Journey	Growing & Strengthening	Living the Practice	Not Applicable	Evidence / Notes
Intercultural social events (e.g. international dinners, festivals).					
Support services for immigrants & refugees in collaboration with West Australian Catholic Migrant & Refugee Office (WACMRO).					
Support for those in pastoral need.					
Opportunities for volunteering with Archdiocesan agencies serving vulnerable people.					

7. Faith Formation & Education	Beginning the Journey	Growing & Strengthening	Living the Practice	Not Applicable	Evidence / Notes
Opportunities for faith formation.					
Opportunities for interfaith & ecumenical dialogue.					
Engagement with Centre for Faith Enrichment to deepen Catholic knowledge, understanding & faith experience.					
Opportunities for those seeking to become Catholic in collaboration with Centre for Christian Initiation & Liturgy.					

8. Inclusive Parish Communications	Beginning the Journey	Growing & Strengthening	Living the Practice	Not Applicable	Evidence / Notes
Bulletins & media available in multiple languages & in Easy English.					
Auslan interpretation or captioned online services as required.					
Parish website is accessible & easy to navigate.					

### Action Plan

List areas that are 'Beginning the Journey' or 'Growing & Strengthening' and record actions to improve conformance.

Item Description	Action	Who	When

# Notes