

**Broderick, K, 2005, *Religious Education as an Examination Subject: Teachers' Perceptions of the Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus — Phased Introduction (2000 — 2005).***

## **ABSTRACT OF DISSERTATION**

This dissertation arises out of a significant development in the teaching of Religious Education in this country. The introduction of state syllabi for national certification presents Catholic education in Ireland with both a challenge and an opportunity. This study explores teachers' perceptions of teaching the Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus in schools with a Catholic ethos.

Chapter One — ***Introduction*** - traces the changes that have taken place in Irish society in recent years which have had an impact on the teaching of Religious Education in Catholic schools. It outlines the development of the syllabus for examination as a response to a renewed approach to Religious Education in post-primary schools.

Chapter Two, ***Literature Review***, investigates current writing in the area of Catholic education. Particular emphasis is given to the goals of Catholic education in the context of the mission of the Catholic school. Chapter Three - ***The Design and Method of the Study***- outlines the instrument used in the study. This comprises a three-part questionnaire, which was distributed to teachers who have taught the Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus for more than two years in schools with a Catholic ethos.

Chapter Four - ***Analysis of Results*** - includes a factor analysis, responses, interpretation of statistics and scoring, administration of the questionnaires and the level of response to the questionnaires. Chapter Five - ***Conclusions, Reflections and Recommendations*** — establishes that teachers surveyed share the goals of Catholic education as articulated in Church documents. Teachers have a keen sense of their mission in leading young people to faith and they express overall satisfaction with the Junior Certificate Religious Education Syllabus in helping them to achieve this.