

Abstract

To compare and contrast the views of parents of Junior Infant class children in two different types of Catholic primary school located in the suburbs of Cork City in the south of Ireland, to the new religious programme – *Grow in Love*.

The purpose of this study is to examine the similarities and differences in the views of eighty-seven parents of Junior Infant regarding the new religious programme – *Grow in Love*.

The overall investigation sought to establish the perceived strengths and weaknesses within the content of the *Grow in Love* religious education programme. The study investigated and analysed the extent to which the new religious programme actively involves parents in their child's religious education programme. The willingness of parents to participate in the new religious programme – *Grow in Love* was reviewed and analysed accordingly as per the parameters of this study.

The study draws on findings from concurrent mixed methods – inquiry using both questionnaires which is quantitative and interviews which are qualitative. Eighty-seven parents completed and returned surveys. Six people were interviewed as a means of triangulation. The interviewees comprised of four parents and two principals.

The findings were positive in nature regards this new programme. The majority of respondents agreed that Jesus Christ is central to the premise of this RE programme. There were positive responses to the methodologies of scripture and bible stories, written/drawing activities, music and song, and also the use of prayer as means of helping develop the child's understanding of their Christian faith. Sections entitled "Chat About" and "Pray Together" were effective in encouraging parental involvement. Better systems of communication between home and school was a factor identified as necessary to improve the provision of the programme.