

Integrating Christian Living Education with the Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education Curriculum

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Abstract: The institutionalization of the Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) and Values Education (VE) Act in the Philippine K–12 curriculum has prompted Catholic schools to integrate Christian Living Education (CLE) with these state-mandated subjects. While the Catholic Educational Association of the Philippines (CEAP) proposed a comprehensive integration model in 2017, current policy shifts risk diluting the distinct religious identity and theological foundations of CLE. This conceptual study examines the curricular dilemma of maintaining CLE's unique identity while fulfilling state-mandated moral education outcomes within the CEAP framework. Through a comparative analysis of the pedagogical nature, theological foundations, and core objectives of CLE versus GMRC and VE, this paper delineates the systemic challenges of curriculum convergence. The findings reveal critical points of tension, particularly regarding teacher preparation and the philosophical distinction between secular morality and faith-based formation. Building upon the 2017 CEAP proposal, this paper provides a framework of curricular safeguards and actionable guidelines to prevent the secularization of religious education. This study contributes to the discourse on religious school autonomy, curriculum integration, and institutional policy response in pluralistic educational landscapes.

Keywords: Christian Living Education • Religious Education • Good Manners & Right Conduct • Values Education • Curriculum Dilution • Vocational Tension

Introduction

Historically, Catholic schools in the Philippines implemented Christian Living Education either in place

of or alongside *Edukasyon sa Pagpapakatao* (EsP).¹ In my former school in 2012, I was asked to teach CLE with EsP within a five-day class schedule.² In some other schools at the time, CLE was taught five times a week, and the grades in CLE were also used as grades in EsP. In 2022, the Department of Education (DepEd) asserted the standard implementation of what is now called Good Manners & Right Conduct and Values Education through Republic Act No. 11476.³ This government mandate makes GMRC and VE as required learning areas in the country's Kto12 Education Curriculum. It specifically states that GMRC and VE “shall be taught...as a separate subject with the same time allotment as the other core subjects.”⁴ GMRC and VE are now allocated five learning hours per week, equivalent to the instructional time designated for other core subjects such as Science and Mathematics. This indicates that CLE can no longer substitute for GMRC and VE, as many Catholic schools previously implemented.

Although RA 11476 does not mandate the integration of CLE with GMRC and VE, CEAP indicates that dialogues within the Catholic education sector regarding the alignment of CLE with EsP competencies commenced

¹ Catholic Education Association of the Philippines (CEAP), “Integrated Curriculum of Christian Living Education, Good Manners & Right Conduct, and Values Education for K to 12 Basic Education” (Quezon City: Rex Printing Company, Inc, 2020), 1. EsP is the previous subject title of GMRC and VE.

² Each class is one hour each, like other academic subjects such as Filipino, Science, and Mathematics.

³ Republic of the Philippines, “Republic Act No. 11476: An Act Institutionalizing Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education in the K to 12 Curriculum,” *Official Gazette*, June 25, 2020, accessed July 10, 2025, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/2020/06/25/republic-act-no-11476/>.

⁴ Republic Act No. 11476, Section 4.

as early as March 6, 2018.⁵ CEAP did not discuss the specific reasons for pursuing such integration but practical considerations can be assumed for this endeavor. First, increasing GMRC and VE teaching frequency to 5 times per week and treating it as a separate subject from Christian Living Education necessitates more teaching units and, as a result, additional financial resources for schools. The integration of CLE with GMRC and VE will allow Catholic schools to more effectively manage teaching loads while meeting DepEd requirements. There are also overlapping topics between the two disciplines such as love for God, honesty, respect, and care for creation. It can be argued that integrating the two curricula can be beneficial in delivering a more holistic formation.

However, while recognizing the potential justifications for the integration of CLE with GMRC and VE, this process may lead to significant ramifications for CLE if it is not carefully considered. The GMRC and VE curriculum is standardized and cannot be changed. This means that CLE is forced to modify its curriculum sequence and priorities to accommodate the former's topics and learning outcomes. This situation may create a curricular imbalance that risks turning CLE into general moral instruction instead of a substantive religious education curriculum that is fundamental to the identity and mission of Catholic schools.

This study will examine the implications of integrating Christian Living Education with the GMRC and VE curriculum. It will employ a conceptual and theoretical research approach. This entails the review of Church documents, catechetical texts, curriculum materials, and relevant literature on curriculum integration. The goal is not to test hypotheses or report implement-

⁵ "Integrated Curriculum of Christian Living Education, Good Manners & Right Conduct, and Values Education," 1.

tation outcomes but to offer a theological reflection that may guide future curricular development and research.

Key Differences between CLE and the GMRC and VE Curriculum

Integrating CLE with GMRC and VE requires a clear understanding of their distinct objectives. Analyzing these foundational differences highlights the risks of overlooking CLE during the curriculum integration process.

Christian Living Education

Christian Living Education is the name of the academic subject for religious education in Philippine Catholic Basic Education. While CLE is taught as a subject with structured standards and competencies, its ultimate purpose goes beyond academic achievement. It is primarily a ministry of the Word, a catechetical work within the school system that is deeply rooted in Filipino culture and Catholic spirituality.

The *National Catechetical Directory of the Philippines* (NCDP) highlights that catechesis builds Christian religiosity. This faith is marked by deep devotion and communal celebrations of faith to guide people to mature discipleship in Christ.⁶ It is not merely a values instruction but an educational endeavor that aims to lead people into a confession of faith to the Triune God.⁷ This

⁶ Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, *National Catechetical Directory for the Philippines* (NCDP), par. 114-131 (Manila, Philippines: Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education, 2007).

⁷ Congregation for the Clergy, *General Directory for Catechesis*, par. 82-83, accessed August 13, 2025, Vatican website, https://www.vatican.va/roman_curia/congregations/ccclergy/document/s/rc_con_ccatheduc_doc_17041998_directory-for-catechesis_en.html.

means that CLE, which is catechetical in nature, is inherently Christocentric and Trinitarian. It is a religious ministry that leads students into a communion with God the Father, through Jesus Christ, in the Holy Spirit, so that for the love of God, they will actively participate in the life and mission of the Church.

The development of a personal and loving relationship with Jesus which learners receive in their CLE classes is a process that forms them in faith, values, and life in Christ. The learners are supported to manifest their relationship with Jesus by developing and living out three interconnected dimensions and acts of the faith. The first is their act of believing in God as they deepen their understanding and acceptance of God's revelation. The second is their moral living where they live out the Gospel values through their personal decisions and social responsibilities. The third is their act of worship where they cultivate their intimate relationship with God through personal and communal prayers.

CLE integrates Filipino cultural realities while keeping Jesus as the ultimate norm and foundation of religious formation. While CLE draws on Filipino values such as respect for elders, strong family ties, and *bayanihan* (communal solidarity) to articulate Christian teachings in ways that resonate deeply with students' lived experiences, it also challenges cultural practices that contradict the Gospel to lead the learners toward a renewed Christian Filipino faith that is grounded in dignity, justice, and love, especially for the poor and needy. In other words, CLE forms Filipino students to be Christian believers who are engaged in the Church's mission and committed to building a nation characterized by justice and compassion. It is this distinctive religious and pastoral purpose that differentiates CLE from general moral or civic education. It grounds its efforts

firmly in the Church's mission of forming Christ-like persons for the transformation of the Philippine society.

Several schools recognize the unique distinction of CLE as they teach the subject in different but converging ways. For example, Ateneo de Manila Basic Education presents that their CLE program aims to develop the whole person by instilling knowledge and love of God and others, integrating scripture and faith to promote social justice and assisting students in becoming men and women for others.⁸ The CLE program at St. Paul College Pasig is designed to ground students' spirituality in Catholic teaching, allowing them to become agents of social transformation by integrating doctrine (understanding the truths of faith), morals (embodying faith in loving service), and worship (growing in prayer and sacramental life).⁹ Holy Angel University emphasizes that their CLE program is centered on faith understanding which leads students to loving relationships with God, Christian moral choices, and a prayerful life.¹⁰ These schools demonstrate that CLE is fundamentally oriented to faith formation to foster a Christocentric and Trinitarian life that integrates belief, moral life, and prayer. CLE's primary purpose is to form students to become disciples of Jesus who are engaged in the mission of the Church. This uniqueness of CLE is evident when compared to GMRC and VE's values development orientation.

⁸ Ateneo de Manila University, "Christian Life Education (CLE)," Ateneo de Manila University, accessed July 11, 2025, <https://www.ateneo.edu/k-12/grade-school/cle>.

⁹ St. Paul College Pasig, "Christian Living," St. Paul College Pasig, accessed July 11, 2025, <https://www.spcpasig.edu.ph/christian-formation/christian-living/>.

¹⁰ Holy Angel University, Institute for Christian Formation and Social Integration, "Christian Living Education," accessed July 11, 2025, <https://www.hau.edu.ph/advocacies/christian-learning-education/>.

Unique Features of the GMRC and Values Education Curriculum

GMRC and VE are fundamental academic subjects in the Philippine basic education curriculum. They are designed to promote the formation of morally upright, responsible, and socially aware citizens. These values are grounded in Art. XIV, Sec. 3 of the nation's Constitution that mandates all Philippine educational institutions to "inculcate patriotism and nationalism, foster love of humanity, respect for human rights, appreciation of the role of national heroes in the historical development of the country, teach the rights and duties of citizenship, strengthen ethical and spiritual values, develop moral character and personal discipline."¹¹

According to Republic Act 11476, GMRC and VE become mandatory learning areas that must be given "the same time allotment as the other core subjects." GMRC is taught at the elementary levels from Grades 1 to 6, while VE is taught in junior high school from Grades 7 to 10. These two subjects have distinct emphases while being part of one holistic program. GMRC is focused on teaching the basic etiquette and socially appropriate behaviors for younger learners. On the other hand, Values Education is concerned with deepening this initial character foundation by integrating moral reasoning, civic consciousness, and ethical decision-making skills.

In the GMRC and VE Curriculum, values are not seen as a body of knowledge to be communicated but rather as a lifelong developmental process that is shaped through reflection, experience, relationships, and active participation in the life of family, school, and community. The

¹¹ The Official Gazette of the Republic of the Philippines, "The 1987 Constitution of the Republic of the Philippines," Art Official Gazette, accessed July 11, 2025, <https://www.officialgazette.gov.ph/constitutions/1987-constitution/>.

GMRC and VE curriculum is based on the Whole School Approach which recognizes that values are taught not only through classroom instructions but also through the practices and relationships in the educational institutions and the larger community. The curriculum further draws upon constructivist and experiential learning principles by allowing learners to develop values through meaningful experience, reflection, and responsible action. A more detailed discussion of these theoretical foundations, guiding principles, and pedagogical assumptions can be seen in the 2023 GMRC and VE Curriculum Guide.¹²

The GMRC and VE curriculum is focused on the promotion of four core values found in the Whole School Approach.¹³ The first is the value of being *Maka-Diyos* or God-centeredness. This value aims to foster faith in God that is expressed through prayer, gratitude, moral uprightness, and a sense of accountability to a higher being. While grounded in the Filipino recognition of a Supreme Being, this value is taught inclusively by respecting the religious diversity in the Philippines.¹⁴ This means that the curriculum recognizes religious belief and practice but does so in a manner that remains inclusive of multiple faith traditions rather than oriented

¹² Republic of the Philippines, Department of Education, MATATAG Curriculum: Good Manners and Right Conduct (GMRC) (Baitang 1–6) and Values Education (VE) (Baitang 7–10) (Pasig City: Department of Education, 2023), 3-9, accessed June 16, 2026, <https://www.academ-e.ph/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/GMRC-and-VE-CG-2023.pdf>.

¹³ Department of Education, Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education, 4.

¹⁴ Department of Education, “DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015: Policy Guidelines on Classroom Assessment for the K to 12 Basic Education Program,” 21, accessed July 11, 2025, https://www.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/DO_s2015_08.pdf.

toward a particular confessional commitment. The following table shows this point.

GMRC/VE Competency (Actual Curriculum Guide)	Comparable CLE Goal	Key Difference
<i>“Naisasabuhay ang pagiging matapat” ... bilang indikasyon ng pananampalataya,</i> (Living out honesty as an expression of one’s faith) and other competencies that connect moral conduct with faith practice.	Discern moral choices using Scripture, the Gospel, and Church teaching.	GMRC connects ethical conduct with values formation and responsible citizenship. CLE grounds moral decision-making in revelation and Christian discipleship.
<i>“Nakapagsasanay sa pananampalataya sa pamamagitan ng pagkikilahok sa mga gawaing panrelihiyon o paniniwalang kinabibilangan kasama ang pamilya.”</i> (Cultivates one’s faith by participating with one’s family in the religious practices and traditions of one’s faith community.) ¹⁵	Deepen a personal relationship with Jesus Christ through prayer, Scripture, and sacramental life.	GMRC develops participation in the faith tradition to which the learner belongs. CLE seeks conscious discipleship and communion with Christ.
<i>“Naisasagawa ang wastong pagkilala sa mga simbolo, imahe, at gamit sa pananampalataya o paniniwala ng kapuwa.”</i> (Demonstrates respectful recognition and appreciation of the religious symbols, images, and sacred objects of	Understand and profess the Catholic faith while respecting other religious traditions.	GMRC emphasizes respect for religious diversity. CLE emphasizes formation in a specific faith tradition while promoting

¹⁵ Department of Education, Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education, 136.

people from other faith traditions.) ¹⁶		respect for others.
<i>“Naisasabuhay ang pananalig sa Diyos sa pamamagitan ng pagpapalaganap ng mga kawanggawa sa pamayanang kinabibilangan.”</i> (Lives out one's faith in God by promoting and participating in works of charity within the community.) ¹⁷	Participate in the Church's mission of evangelization and social transformation.	Both promote service, but CLE explicitly frames service as participation in Christ's mission and the life of the Church.
<i>“Naisasabuhay ang pakikiisa sa pamamagitan ng pagkukusang ibahagi ang mga tradisyon at gawain ng sariling pananampalataya at pakikinig sa mga katumbas nito sa kapuwa.”</i> (Lives out solidarity by willingly sharing the traditions and practices of one's own faith and listening to the corresponding traditions and practices of others.) ¹⁸	Participate actively in the ecclesial life and worship of the Church.	GMRC encourages interreligious appreciation and dialogue. CLE seeks ecclesial belonging and participation in the Catholic community.

The GMRC and VE Curriculum contains several competencies that explicitly encourage the practice of faith within family, religious, and community contexts. Such competencies demonstrate that the curriculum does not merely promote generic civility but acknowledges the formative role of religion in Filipino society. However,

¹⁶ Department of Education, “Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education,” 143.

¹⁷ Ibid., 179.

¹⁸ Ibid., 180.

these competencies are framed in an intentionally inclusive manner so that they may apply to learners from different religious traditions. In contrast, Christian Living Education is confessional in nature. While it shares many of the same concerns regarding faith and service, it explicitly aims to form disciples of Jesus Christ through Scripture, doctrine, worship, sacramental life, and participation in the mission of the Church. The difference, therefore, is not that GMRC and VE exclude faith but that they approach it from a broadly inclusive and civic perspective. CLE approaches faith from the specific theological perspective of Catholic discipleship.

The second core value is *Makatao* (Humane).¹⁹ It highlights respect for human dignity, fairness, and compassion. The value of *Makatao* encourages learners to uphold justice and peace in all and in their daily relationships. The third core value is *Makabansa* (Patriotic)²⁰ which nurtures the learners' love of country by instilling patriotism, respect for national symbols and institutions, appreciation of cultural heritage, and a strong sense of Filipino identity. Finally, the value of *Makakalikasan* (Environmentally Caring)²¹ promotes environmental consciousness by fostering in the lives of learners their care for creation and sustainable living practices. It seeks to develop a sense of stewardship for the environment, rooted in the Filipino cultural value of harmony with nature. The four core values are integrated in the learning competencies of GMRC and VE to serve as the foundation of the entire curriculum.

The intention of the government to promote the four core values is somewhat aligned with CLE's religious education aims. In the 2020 CEAP's integrated CLE-

¹⁹ DepEd Order No. 8, s. 2015, 21.

²⁰ Ibid., 22.

²¹ Ibid., 22.

GMRC-VE curriculum model,²² *Maka-Diyos* is related to the individual's relationship with God, *Makatao* is characterized by *malasakit* (compassionate concern) and *pakikipagkapwa* (relating to others that recognizes their shared humanity) stemming from Christian love and dignity, *Makabansa* is associated with responsible citizenship informed by Christian social teaching, while *Makakalikasan* is embodied in the spirit of stewardship of creation, grounded in the perception of the world as a divine gift. Consequently, it is reasonable that numerous Catholic schools consider the integration of CLE with GMRC and VE anticipating that this integration may enhance both subjects by strengthening values formation in students' daily lives. Nevertheless, Catholic schools must maintain clarity regarding the distinctions between each discipline's foundations and learning outcomes although both disciplines can be aligned in this manner.

Unlike CLE which is explicitly Christocentric and rooted in religious formation, the GMRC and VE curriculum is grounded in secular and universal moral frameworks designed to form learners regardless of religious affiliation. CLE seeks to deepen students' personal and loving relationship with Jesus and does so by teaching Christian Scripture, doctrine, moral life, and prayer. The GMRC and VE curriculum, in contrast, focuses on socially accepted behaviors and civic virtues such as basic etiquette, politeness, courtesy, and respect for elders. The main aim is to cultivate proper interpersonal conduct within Philippine society. Furthermore, while the GMRC and VE curriculum emphasizes emotional regulation and decision-making skills grounded in psychological and civic development, CLE endeavors to form in its learners Christ-like moral behaviors and discernment. Moreover, GMRC and VE

²² "Integrated Curriculum of Christian Living Education, Good Manners & Right Conduct, and Values Education," 3-10.

prioritize patriotic values and civic consciousness. CLE forms these same values within the call to live as citizens of both their nation and the Kingdom of God. These convergences and divergences are important to be recognized in discerning whether integration can truly enrich both subjects or whether it risks reducing CLE's religious purpose to general moral instruction. The challenge of integrating CLE with GMRC and VE has intensified when Republic Act No. 11476 mandates the prescribed learning outcomes and content for GMRC and VE. These elements must remain unchanged by schools, and GMRC and VE should receive dedicated class time equivalent to other core subjects, thereby affirming the inviolability of the GMRC and VE curriculum.

Risks of Integrating CLE with GMRC & VE

The standardized and non-negotiable curriculum of GMRC and VE, along with the requirement for a regular five-day weekly class schedule, forces CLE to make all the adjustments in the integration. Two scenarios can emerge from this setup.

The first scenario is the dilution of the CLE curriculum. I refer here to the loss of strength, clarity, and unique purpose of CLE as a religious education subject. It can happen when it is integrated into another curriculum in a way that it adapts its content outside its foundational aims and epistemological structure.²³ Both

²³ This notion aligns with critiques of integrated curricula in professional fields where crossing disciplinary boundaries can diminish depth of disciplinary knowledge and obscure signature pedagogies ultimately risking the erosion of the intellectual rigor and the formative outcomes that a curriculum was designed to achieve. See Marion L. Pearson and Harry T. Hubball, "Curricular Integration in Pharmacy Education," *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education* 76, no. 10 (2012): Article 204, <https://doi.org/10.5688/ajpe7610204>.

CLE and the GMRC and VE possess their own key concepts and organizing frameworks that enable learners to think critically and deeply within their specific discipline. When CLE is forced to adapt to GMRC and VE, the learners may lose the depth of its contents and would not be able to engage with it meaningfully and rigorously. For example, a CLE lesson on Christian forgiveness, which would normally draw from Scripture, religious principles, and invite spiritual reflection, may be forced under GMRC and VE to focus primarily on general social harmony or interpersonal politeness which are key topics in the mandated curriculum.²⁴ While these moral values are not incompatible with Christian teaching, prioritization of the GMRC and VE curriculum that may lead to the reduction or removal of explicit religious discussions to prioritize GMRC and VE's topics and learning outcomes can shift the focus away from transformative faith formation toward generic civic behavior. This situation leaves learners with a fragmented and superficial understanding of CLE rather than a transformative faith educational experience.

It is also important to clarify that unlike authentic interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary integration, which intentionally blends two or more disciplines and allows each to contribute and adapt, the integration of CLE with GMRC and VE is one-sided. It is not a mutual integration. It is rather a situation where only CLE yields. In a genuine interdisciplinary integration, distinct disciplines accommodate and enrich each other to preserve and honor their internal frameworks.²⁵ The

²⁴ Politeness, harmony, and interpersonal relationship are recurring themes in the GMRC and VE curriculum from Grade 1 to 10. See "GMRC and VE Curriculum Guide 2023," 12.

²⁵ Siri Warkentien, Jacquie Goeking, Rita Dilig, Laura Knapp, and Rebecca Stanley, "Preserve disciplinary integrity," in *Interdisciplinary Education: Literature Review and Landscape*

integration does not dissolve the distinct characteristics of each discipline. As Professor in the College of Education at the University of Michigan, Nell Duke said, an interdisciplinary education is “a salad, not a soup.”²⁶ Likewise, in a multidisciplinary approach, knowledge from different disciplines is used but stays within their boundaries²⁷ to ensure that no discipline’s identity or standards are dissolved in the process. However, in the ongoing attempt for CLE-GMRC-VE integration, the arrangement is one-sided. The GMRC and VE curriculum remains fixed and mandated, while CLE is compelled to modify its religious and catechetical content to fit the GMRC and VE framework. This is structurally different from genuine interdisciplinary or multidisciplinary integration as the adaptation flows in only one direction that risks the dilution of the CLE curriculum. This dilution can result in the weakening or watering down of the religious depth and catechetical coherence of CLE to adapt to the immutable GMRC and VE curriculum. Catholic schools in the Philippines must reflect carefully on whether this kind of integration truly serves their mission given this significant challenge.

Another possible scenario is the vocational tension that may be felt by the CLE teachers. This tension is a

Analysis, section II-3 (San Rafael, CA: Lucas Education Research, February 2022), PDF available from Lucas Education Research website, accessed August 14, 2025, <https://www.lucasedresearch.org/research/resources/>. See also Ecctis, *Interdisciplinary Learning in the International Baccalaureate* (2021), PDF available from International Baccalaureate website, accessed August 14, 2025, <https://www.ibo.org/globalassets/new-structure/research/pdfs/interdisciplinary-learning-ecctis-final-report-en.pdf>.

²⁶ *Interdisciplinary Learning: A Literature Review and Landscape Analysis*, II-3.

²⁷ Monica Johannesen and Leikny Øgrim, “The Role of Multidisciplinarity in Developing Teachers’ Professional Digital Competence,” *Nordic Journal of Comparative and International Education* 4, nos. 3–4 (2020): 74, <https://doi.org/10.7577/njcie.3735>.

feeling of discomfort when one is obliged to teach a curriculum that is not aligned with one's training or vocation. CLE teachers are specifically trained to teach Scripture, Christian doctrine, morals, and liturgy and prayer within a faith-based and Christocentric-Trinitarian framework. They are formed to guide learners in the knowledge and life of the Christian faith. They may feel unprepared and uncomfortable to teach an integrated curriculum heavily shaped by GMRC or VE learning frameworks and outcomes. The mismatch can confuse and undermine confidence when teachers are asked to teach outside their subject.²⁸ The critique of educational theorist and curriculum scholar from decades ago, Joseph Schwab, remains relevant to this concern. He expressed dismay at the treatment of professionals who exercise disciplinary expertise and pedagogical judgment as mere technicians delivering externally imposed content.²⁹ For a CLE teacher, being required to teach more as a general moral instructor than as a religious educator who facilitates serious faith formation can be discouraging and diminish confidence. This situation is especially true when it is clear to the CLE teacher that one's vocation and training are intended for fostering a well-rounded faith rather than teaching general civic etiquette.

While deeply personal for individual CLE teachers, this vocational tension also has broader implications for the mission of Catholic education. CLE's catechetical

²⁸ Teachers from a different discipline will encountered difficulties in handling a subject that they do not specialize in. See, for example, Brendan Hyde and Anthony Sylvester Anning, "Religious Education (RE) as a Context: The Subcultures That Shape Teacher's Work When Teaching This Subject in Australian Catholic Secondary Schools," *Religions* 15, no. 12 (2024): 1442, <https://doi.org/10.3390/rel15121442>.

²⁹ Joseph J. Schwab, "The Practical: A Language for Curriculum," *School Review* 78, no. 1 (1969): 5–6.

mission is at risk when the priority is focused on fulfilling generic moral instruction over faith formation. This is not only a matter of professional discomfort but also of safeguarding the Catholic schools' mandate to "go and make disciples" (Matthew 28:19). Deliberate measures to ensure that the integration with GMRC and VE respects and preserves the religious and pedagogical integrity of CLE are needed in this matter.

Ensuring the integrity of CLE in an integrated CLE, GMRC and VE Curriculum

Religious educators and Catholic institutions owe it to the mission they have received from the Lord as teachers of the faith to ensure that the integration of CLE with GMRC and VE will never compromise CLE as a religious education subject. This responsibility includes safeguarding its religious integrity and catechetical depth. To this concern, I propose some guidelines.

1. Maintain the Christocentric focus

The first and most important guideline in integrating CLE with GMRC and VE is to keep the CLE's Christocentric focus. Even when combined with moral and civic competencies from GMRC and VE, the integration must maintain CLE's explicit orientation to Jesus Christ, presenting Him not only as a moral exemplar or model of good manners and right conduct but as the center of salvation history and the fullness of God's revelation. This fundamental task is emphasized in *Catechesi tradendae*. The definitive aim of catechesis is to put people not only in touch but in communion, in intimacy, with Jesus Christ because only He can lead people to the love of the Father in the Spirit and make them share in

the life of the Holy Trinity.³⁰ The *Directory for Catechesis*, citing St. John Paul II, also highlights the same task of catechesis by explaining that it has “the twofold objective of maturing the initial faith and of educating the true disciple of Christ by means of a deeper and more systematic knowledge of the person and the message of our Lord Jesus Christ.”³¹ This means that CLE must continue to present Jesus as “the center of the history of salvation, in whom all things are recapitulated” (Eph 1:10) even when it is integrated with GMRC and VE. CLE must always keep Jesus at the center of its curriculum because Christian living can only derive its meaning and direction from His person, teachings, and Paschal mystery.

For example, the Grade 4 competency, “*Nakapag-sasanay sa pananampalataya sa pamamagitan ng pagkikilahok sa mga gawaing panrelihiyon o paniniwalang kinabibilangan kasama ang pamilya*” (Cultivates one's faith by participating with one's family in the religious practices and traditions of one's faith community),³² may be taught by presenting Jesus as the source of family prayer. While learners are encouraged to participate in faith activities with their families, the CLE integration can deepen the lesson through Scripture passages such as Luke 11:1–4 (Jesus teaches the Lord's Prayer) and guide learners to reflect on how Jesus strengthens their relationship with God through prayer. In this way, the competency is achieved while preserving the Christocentric purpose of CLE.

³⁰ John Paul II, *Catechesi tradendae*, par. 5, accessed August 13, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/apost_exhortations/documents/hf_jp-ii_exh_16101979_catechesi-tradendae.html.

³¹ Pontifical Council for the Promotion of the New Evangelization, *Directory for Catechesis*, Study Edition (Makati, Philippines: Word and Life Publications, 2021), 1.

³² Department of Education, “Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education,” 136.

2. Preserve the Trinitarian nature of the faith

The preservation of the Trinitarian nature of the faith is a non-negotiable matter. The *National Catechetical Directory of the Philippines* emphasizes that catechesis is always through Christ to the Father in the Holy Spirit.³³ It is through the Trinity that people can understand the innermost life of God and how their lives are deeply connected and oriented to this mystery. “This revelation of God’s inner being as a communion of persons indicates that we, created in God’s image and likeness, are called to ‘image’ this communion, both in the Church...as well as civil society.”³⁴ The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* emphasizes the importance of the Trinitarian nature of the faith by proclaiming that “The mystery of the Most Holy Trinity is the central mystery of Christian faith and life.”³⁵ All teachings of the faith flow from and are oriented toward the Trinity. Catholic religious teachings lose their deepest meaning and unity without the Trinitarian grounding. A Trinitarian presentation of the faith shapes how students see their identity and mission. Christians are called to mirror this life of the Trinity in their relationships with others. This challenges learners to move from individualism to the building of communities rooted in love and communal service. When CLE gives up its Trinitarian nature, it loses its specific quality as Catholic religious instruction. Religious educators must consistently communicate that the life of Christians is not solely about human virtues and etiquettes, but is rooted in the Father’s creative love, conformed to Christ in discipleship, and empowered by the Spirit. This life

³³ NCDP 220.

³⁴ NCDP 220.

³⁵ Catholic Church, *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, par. 234, Vatican website, accessed August 14, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/archive/ENG0015/_P17.HTM.

that is grounded in the life and mystery of the Trinity is called to participate in God's act of transforming people and the entire world. Preserving the Trinitarian nature of the faith can be done in the Grade 8 competency, "*Nakapagsasanay sa pakikiisa sa pamamagitan ng wastong pakikitungo sa ibang lahi kung may pagkakataon o pakikisangkot sa mga pandaigdigang gawain na nagsusulong ng kabutihang panlahat*" (Develops solidarity by engaging respectfully with people of different ethnic or cultural backgrounds and by participating in global initiatives that promote the common good).³⁶ This competency can be enriched by introducing the Christian understanding of communion and solidarity as rooted in the life of the Trinity. CLE can explain that authentic communion and solidarity are not merely social cooperation but participation in the self-giving love of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. In this way, active involvement in community life becomes a lived expression of service for the common good that reflects divine relationality.

3. Affirm the reality of sin and human need of God's grace

Another important guide and a non-negotiable in integrating CLE with GMRC and VE is the recognition of the reality of sin and the upholding of the primacy of God's grace. The process of integration must take careful attention not to reduce the concept of sin to mere bad behaviors that can be corrected by self-effort or social conformity. It is a crucial point in CLE to teach that sin is not simply a moral failure or lack of etiquette but rather a rupture in humanity's relationship with God, others, and creation. "Sin is an offense against reason,

³⁶ Department of Education, "Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education," 232.

truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods... it wounds the nature of man [sic] and injures human solidarity.”³⁷ Learners can be led to understand themselves and the world in light of their need for God when they know about the reality of sin and its effects on human life and relationships.

The understanding of the presence of sin leads learners to recognize that only God’s grace can ultimately heal the wounds of sin and save them from this profound rupture. CLE must preserve this focus to proclaim humanity’s need for salvation and the primacy of grace because it is only God who can restore people to true communion with God and with others. Affirming the reality of sin and humanity’s need for God’s grace can be done, for example, in the Grade 6 competency “*Nakapagsasanay sa pagiging mapanagutan sa pamamagitan ng kusang-loob na pagwawasto sa mga nagawang mali at pagtataguyod ng mga mabuting gawi*” (Cultivates personal responsibility by willingly correcting one’s mistakes and consistently practicing virtuous habits).³⁸ While the competency may be taught as personal accountability, the lesson can be deepened through the story of Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1–10). Rather than focusing on the consequences of wrongdoing, it can be a demonstration of how real conversion begins with an encounter with Jesus and ends in a voluntary desire to repair the harm one has done. This approach makes clear to learners that authentic moral transformation is not merely a matter of self-discipline, but of God’s saving grace. While the cultivation of good conduct and socially appropriate behaviors is the primary focus of GMRC and VE, CLE goes deeper by situating moral transformation

³⁷ Catechism of the Catholic Church 1849.

³⁸ Department of Education, “Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education,” 177.

within the context of God's grace and saving love through Jesus who empowers people to become their true selves. Although human beings are called to pursue good manners and right conduct, it is only through God's grace that is freely given in Jesus and the Spirit that the fullness of moral conversion and renewal of life can become possible.

4. Retain the use of the primary sources of the faith

Another important guideline is to ensure that CLE will not lose its grounding in divine revelation and ecclesial wisdom. This can be done by making sure that the integrated CLE-GMRC-VE curriculum still draws from the primary sources of the Christian faith which are the Scripture and Church Tradition. The Scripture is the fundamental source for knowing Jesus Christ and the Triune God. It is also in the sacred Scripture that people may know God's saving plan and liberating works to free humanity and creation from the evils of sin. *Dei verbum* teaches that "in the sacred books, the Father who is in heaven meets His children with great love and speaks with them."³⁹ This encounter enables the learners to know the specific qualities that they must possess to follow Jesus whom the Father told them to 'listen to (him)' (Matthew 17:5). People learn about Christian humility, mercy, forgiveness, justice, and love by listening to Jesus, the Father's Word who continues to be present in the Scripture through the Spirit. Jesus teaches in Scripture that these virtues are not abstract ideas but

³⁹ Catholic Church, *Dei verbum: Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation*, para. 21, (November 18, 1965) Vatican website, accessed August 14, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19651118_dei-verbum_en.html.

lived attitudes empowered by God and modeled by his disciples.

The Church Tradition is also an indispensable source to preserve CLE's nature because it embodies "everything which contributes toward the holiness of life and increase in faith."⁴⁰ The entire life, belief, and practices of the community of believers, encompassing the teachings of the Church fathers, moral living, magisterial teachings, the lived witnesses of saints, and liturgical life, are transmitted by the Church. To remain faithful to its catechetical nature, CLE must faithfully hand on both the Scripture and Church Tradition because "Sacred Tradition and Sacred Scripture form one sacred deposit of the Word of God, committed to the Church."⁴¹ Thus, learners understand and live out Jesus' commandments not only through scriptural study but also by immersing themselves in the faith, worship, and life of the Church community. It is the Church that interprets, safeguards, and embodies these teachings throughout history. Without referring to the primary sources of the faith, the integrated curriculum will deprive learners of the richness and depth of Catholic faith that is needed for them to grow as authentic disciples and witnesses of Christ in the world. The competency "*Naisasabuhay ang pananalig sa Diyos sa pamamagitan ng pagpapalaganap ng mga kawanggawa sa pamayanang kinabibilangan*" (Lives out one's faith in God by promoting and engaging in works of charity within one's community)⁴² can be developed through direct engagement with Scripture and Church teaching. In discussing the lesson, learners may review Matthew 25:31–46 (Parable of the Sheep and the Goats) and choose

⁴⁰ *Dei verbum*, 8.

⁴¹ *Dei verbum*, 10.

⁴² Department of Education, "Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education," 179.

topics from Catholic Social Teaching. Learners can see here that Christian moral action is based not only on social responsibility, but on the Word of God revealed and the tradition of the Church.

5. Teach the three dimensions of the faith appropriately

The integration of CLE with GMRC and VE must also exhibit the appropriate use and teaching of the three dimensions of the Christian faith. The doctrinal, moral, and worship dimensions of the faith form the integral structure of catechesis and religious education. NCDP explains that catechesis must encompass the entire Christian life: “the conviction of the Gospel truths (doctrine), the active commitment to obey God’s holy will (morals), and the personal trust and self-offering of Christian worship (worship).”⁴³ This means that teaching the faith encompasses the truths to be believed, the moral life to be lived, and the means of grace to be received and celebrated.

In general education such as in GMRC and VE, learning competencies are often framed under cognitive, psychomotor, and affective domains.⁴⁴ This framing is designed to bring about knowledge acquisition, skill performance, and attitude formation. While this framework is a valid educational principle, CLE as a religious education subject transcends them. It is not merely about cognitive knowledge of doctrines as abstract information, nor morals as behavioral skills, nor

⁴³ NCDP 119.

⁴⁴ These domains are based on Bloom’s Taxonomy. See Department of Education, “Teacher Education Council, PPST Resource Package: Module 18” (Pasig City: DepEd-Teacher Education Council, 2020), accessed August 14, 2025, https://tec.deped.gov.ph/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/PPST.RP_Module-18.pdf.

worship as emotional or affective expression. Instead, CLE seeks the holistic faith formation of students manifested by their act of believing (doctrine), act of loving (morals), and act of praying (worship).

The integration of CLE with GMRC and VE must also recognize that the three dimensions are not to be taught simultaneously with equal focus in a single lesson. This pedagogical principle is exemplified in the *Catechism for Filipino Catholics* (CFC).⁴⁵ Each chapter or topic focuses on a primary dimension followed by the integration of the two others at the end part of each discussion. For instance, if a lesson is doctrinal in focus, its development centers on doctrinal truths with substantial treatment, after which moral implications and worship expressions are integrated. Likewise, a lesson on morals should focus primarily on moral formation, then integrate doctrinal foundations and worship responses. Similarly, a lesson on worship should focus on worship, then integrate doctrine and moral living.

Designers of CLE-GMRC-VE integration must therefore be careful not to simply distribute the doctrinal, morals, and worship dimensions of the faith to isolated parts of a lesson merely out of a desire to retain them in the integration. There is a correct and pedagogically grounded way of presenting these dimensions, as exemplified in the CFC and explained by its framers. Doing this will ensure that faith formation remains systematic, meaningful, and transformative, rather than fragmented into disconnected educational competencies.

⁴⁵ Catholic Church. Bishops' Conference of the Philippines, *Catechism for Filipino Catholics* (Manila, Philippines: Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education and Word and Life Publication, 1997). See also how this is explained in Joseph L. Roche and Leonardo Legaspi, *A Companion to CFC*, Vol. 1 (Episcopal Commission on Catechesis and Catholic Education and Word and Life Publications: Manila, Philippines, 1998), 41.

An example may be drawn from the Grade 5 competency, “*Nakapagsasanay sa pagiging mapangutanan sa pamamagitan ng paglahok sa mga gawaing nanghihimok sa mga mamamayan na makibahagi sa pangangalaga ng kalikasan.*” (Develops a sense of responsibility through participation in initiatives that encourage citizens to care for and protect the environment).⁴⁶ This competency can serve as a basis for integrating the moral dimension through concrete ecological responsibility, the doctrinal dimension through the Christian belief in God as Creator and the call to stewardship, and the worship dimension through prayerful gratitude for creation and discernment of one’s responsibility before God.

6. Uphold the ecclesial communion of Christians while promoting nationalism

CLE is tasked not only with forming individual believers. As a ministry of catechesis, it must also help learners to participate in the life and mission of the Church. The Church is both the means and the goal of God’s plan “prefigured in creation, prepared for in the Old Covenant, founded by the words and actions of Jesus Christ, fulfilled by his redeeming cross and his Resurrection, and made manifest as the mystery of salvation by the outpouring of the Holy Spirit.”⁴⁷ *Lumen gentium* affirms this by stating that “God gathered together as one all those who in faith look upon Jesus as the author of salvation and the source of unity and peace, and He established them as the Church that for each and

⁴⁶ Department of Education, “Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education,” 153.

⁴⁷ CCC 778.

all she may be the visible sacrament of this saving unity.”⁴⁸

The *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines* (PCP II) underlines an important insight at this point. The council highlights that “We need to envision what we as Filipino Christians have to be and what all Filipinos as a nation should be. For our discipleship must be transformative...we as citizens of this “earthly city” need to be *maka-tao*, *maka-bayan*, and *maka-Diyos*. We need to exercise a healthy nationalism which would require the living of such values as: *pagsasarili* (self-reliance), *pagkakaisa* (unity through mutual cooperation), *pakikipagkapwa-tao* (relating to others that recognizes their shared humanity) and *pagkabayani* (heroic citizenship).”⁴⁹ In integrating CLE with GMRC and VE, the relevance of being Church must be continuously emphasized for the learners to fulfill their calling from God to live not as separate individual believers but one loving community within and for their country.

The GMRC and VE competencies on civic participation and social responsibility can be enriched by helping learners understand the Church as a community called to serve the nation. For instance, when discussing community involvement and relationships,⁵⁰ students

⁴⁸ Catholic Church, *Lumen gentium: Dogmatic Constitution on the Church*, par. 9 (November 21, 1964), Vatican website, accessed August 14, 2025, https://www.vatican.va/archive/hist_councils/ii_vatican_council/documents/vat-ii_const_19641121_lumen-gentium_en.html.

⁴⁹ Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, *Acts and Decrees of the Second Plenary Council of the Philippines*, par. 251 (Manila, Philippines: Catholic Bishops’ Conference of the Philippines, 1992).

⁵⁰ Department of Education, “Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education,” Grade 7 “*Pagtupad ng Sariling Tungkulin Bilang Mamamayan*,” (Fulfilling One’s Responsibilities as a Citizen) p. 190; Grade 8 “*Sariling Pag-iimpok at Pagtitipid Upang Makatulong sa Pamayanan*, (Responsible Saving and Frugal Living in Service of

may study how Catholic organizations respond to poverty, disasters, and social injustice. This approach allows learners to appreciate both their responsibilities as Filipino citizens and their vocation as members of the Church. The GMRC and VE curriculum aims to form the learners to be patriotic citizens who love their nation and contribute to social good. On the other hand, CLE leads the students to love and participate in the Church as the Body of Christ and the People of God.

7. Assert the Catholic sacramental life

The seven ritual sacraments “are ‘powers that come forth’ from the Body of Christ, ever-living and life-giving. They are actions of the Holy Spirit at work in his Body, the Church and ‘the masterworks of God’ in the new and everlasting covenant.”⁵¹ The celebration of the sacraments is not only an expression of the believer’s faith in God. They are saving symbolic acts through which they receive the grace that transforms them into Jesus’ likeness and sustains them in their moral and spiritual journey. The sacraments are not merely optional devotions but constitutive of Catholic identity and discipleship. PCP II affirms this point by reminding Filipino Catholics that their whole life must be an act of worship.⁵² The sacraments are not merely pious add-ons or optional devotions for those who wish to deepen their spirituality. They are at the very heart of what it means to be Catholic. They are constitutive of the Christian life because they shape a person’s Catholic identity by

the Community) p. 218; and Grade 9 “*Sariling Kamalayan sa Pagiging Mabuting Digital Citizen*,” (Cultivating Responsible Digital Citizenship) p. 246.

⁵¹ CCC 1116.

⁵² *Second Plenary Council of the Philippines*, par.167.

enabling them to be transformed by the grace God communicates through the ritual sacraments.

The GMRC and VE curriculum emphasizes the development of socially responsible and morally upright citizens. CLE deepens these values by grounding the moral and spiritual growth of people in the transformative grace of God that they encounter in the sacraments. The integration of CLE with GMRC and VE must not relegate the sacraments to peripheral or purely affective experiences. The curricular integration must uphold the sacraments as the means by which God sanctifies and nourishes God's people, or else, CLE can become a general values education devoid of the Christian sacramental life. For example, the Grade 10 competency, "*Naisasabuhay ang pagiging mabuting katiwala sa pamamagitan ng pakikilahok sa mga adbokasiya at proyektong pangkapaligiran sa paaralan o pamilyanan.*" (Lives out the responsibility of good stewardship by actively participating in environmental advocacy and sustainability initiatives in the school or local community.)⁵³ may be linked to the Eucharist as the source of Christian participation for the good of the community. Learners may reflect on how receiving Christ in the Eucharist strengthens them to serve others. In this way, service is connected not only to values formation but also to the sacramental life of the Church.

Conclusion

This paper does not intend to solve the existing complexity and challenge of integrating Christian Living Education with GMRC and VE. It does not offer a model of how this integration can be done. It rather presents critical considerations and proposes important guidelines

⁵³ Department of Education, Good Manners and Right Conduct and Values Education, 272.

that can help Catholic schools in their effort for this curricular integration. The insights discussed here highlight the possible risks of diluting the religious contents and purpose of CLE and the vocational tension that can be experienced by the teachers if CLE is not carefully considered as it is integrated with the fixed and standardized GMRC and VE curriculum. While these challenges are real, they need not be viewed as insurmountable obstacles. The integration of CLE with GMRC and VE does not necessarily diminish the role of religious educators. Rather, it calls for new forms of professional collaboration and institutional support. The integration process can become an opportunity for Catholic schools to deepen both values formation and faith formation. To achieve this goal, schools must provide concrete mechanisms that enable CLE teachers to navigate the demands of the integrated curriculum while remaining faithful to the catechetical mission of Catholic education.

Many individual Catholic schools continue to work diligently in finding ways to integrate CLE with GMRC and VE. Recognizing and appreciating the efforts of religious educators and Catholic leaders in crafting an integrated model is crucial. Equally commendable is the commitment of the various Catholic schools to live up to the purpose of Catholic education as they comply with government mandates. These efforts show a deep commitment to the holistic formation of Filipino Catholic learners.

However, while this collaboration within the Catholic educational sector is valuable, it is not enough. There remains a crucial need for more open and sincere dialogues among religious educators and with the Philippine Department of Education to better understand why Catholic schools are pursuing this integration despite serious risks to the CLE curriculum and possible

vocational tensions in teaching it. Perhaps, such dialogue can help the framers of the GMRC and VE curriculum to understand the unique nature and mandate of CLE and be moved to consider accommodations to Catholic School's context and situation. It is imperative that government education agencies and Catholic educational institutions work more closely to seek collaborative solutions that help Catholic schools uphold both the quality of values education in the Philippines and the promotion of the Christian faith and life. This is a matter of ensuring that Filipino students in Catholic institutions are formed as both responsible citizens and faithful disciples, capable of building a society rooted in justice, love, faith in God, and the hope that comes from Jesus.

Conflict of Interest Statement

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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