

CatechistNET

CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE • DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

Keeping Christ
in Christmas

Creating a safe
Church from within

New SRE Procedures
for 2019

& more

**You're making
a difference**



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Message from the Director



Choosing Life to the full

In his newly released
book, *God is Good
for You* – author Greg
Sheridan provides

compelling details of ‘countless studies
showing that religious people are happier
than non-religious people, yet popular culture
would make you think otherwise.’ He uncovers
how if you believe and practice your faith you
have the ‘highest chance of reporting that you
are very happy’(pp28-30).

For many years now, I have written numerous
articles for catechists to encourage them about
the wonderful contribution they make to
public schools by ensuring that parents have
the choice to have their children formed in the
faith of their family. With around 70 per cent
of parents choosing Special Religious Education
(SRE) for their kids, this is a very positive
feature of public education and a choice
for parents that deserves to be celebrated,
particularly given the decades of evidence that
‘God is good for you’.

Towards the end of Term 3, the new Christian
SRE Religious Education brochures were
distributed to families via students who attend
these classes in public schools to ensure that
parents are clear about the choice they were
making. These brochures, the accompanying
posters and letters to Principals, were the
culmination of a project of over 30 Christian
churches responding to the outcomes of
the 2015 Parliamentary review of SRE. That
review placed the responsibility for regular
clear communications with parents about the
nature of SRE in the hands of providers such
as the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong, and
the collaborative efforts of so many providers
across the SRE landscape via this information
campaign is wonderful, because it gives parents
good information enabling them to make an
informed choice.

It is for this reason that I thank Coordinators

and individual Catechists for your assistance in ensuring that the new Christian SRE brochures made it home to parents in big quantities via distribution in your classes.

This resource was developed by member Churches of the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools (NSW) Inc (ICCOREIS). We have had some fantastic feedback about this brochure which is endeavouring to provide appropriate information about SRE to school communities and families. It was important that we worked together to help get these distributed to all families who have already chosen or require information about the SRE program or SRE enrolment process, the result being the distribution of around half a million brochures across NSW.

The vast majority of schools across our Diocese understood the necessity and importance of this distribution of brochures. The handful of schools who were opposed to it have in the main come to understand the valid need for it after some follow up correspondence.

Importantly, the Department of Education was supportive of this information campaign and similar brochures will be distributed from Primary Ethics and the All Faiths SRE (AFSRE) group soon.

Unfortunately, there was some quite unbalanced reporting in the media about the brochure campaign. In the end, this enabled providers to highlight that the Review of SRE Recommendations now requires SRE providers to give this sort of information to parents. The costs, both in production, delivery and distribution were all covered by the Churches and some generous donors. This is important to note, and I'd encourage you to make this point if you are drawn into conversations about the brochure campaign with family, friends or in schools.

Importantly, the document given to parents states upfront that Christian SRE begins with the understanding that we were created by a loving God, who calls us to fullness of life. It explains that in SRE, children are encouraged to see themselves as God sees them, full of gifts

and potential to be a force for immense goodness in our world. The curriculums used by Catholic SRE teachers aim to help children make moral choices that are life-giving for themselves and others. Through the exploration of the teachings of Jesus and stories in the Christian Scriptures, and by encouraging students to pray, Catholic SRE aims to provide children with a framework to help them make choices that recognise the morals and values and importance of our relationship with God, others and our world.

As, such, thank you for your efforts in ensuring that balanced, factual information has made its way into the hands of parents about what we do in schools. I am confident that this will ensure that parents continue to choose Catholic SRE in large numbers, so that you can continue to draw young people into lives of happiness and fulfilment, that comes from a knowledge of and love for Jesus.

*Mr Jude Hennessy
Director of the
Office of Renewal & Evangelisation
Diocese of Wollongong*

DISCOVER SRE IN SCHOOLS

CHRISTIAN SRE 
QUESTION. EXPLORE. DISCOVER.



Benefits of Special Religious Education (SRE)

Connect

SRE builds tolerance in schools around diverse communities and promotes multiculturalism through joint celebrations of different faith groups and the recognition of different cultural heritages.

Succeed

SRE contributes to a well-rounded education and provides students with a values perspective to make informed ethical choices.

Thrive

SRE is community building and helps connect schools with the local community.

- ARTD Review of SRE and SEE

Better Balanced Futures

Better Balanced Futures is about creating and maintaining better training and curriculum standards for SRE, helping to equip our children for a more certain future, by teaching positive values and providing a solid foundation and balance in their lives.

"Spiritual wellbeing relates to our sense of meaning and purpose. It can include our connection to culture, religion or community and includes the beliefs, values and ethics we hold"

- NSW Dept. of Education Framework



THERE ARE:
101
SRE providers



REPRESENTING:
29
faith groups



FOR UPDATES, AND TO SUPPORT SRE,
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FACEBOOK.COM/CHRISTIANSRENSW

www.christiansre.com.au



New SRE Procedures for 2019

In the NSW Education Act of 1990, Sections 32 and 33 provide the legal framework for the provision of SRE (or scripture) in public schools. These two sections consist of seven short paragraphs that bring forward the provisions made by the Public Instruction Act of 1880. This means SRE has played a part in the well-rounded education of children in public schools for nearly 140 years in New South Wales. No small feat!

As you can imagine, with all the systems and processes involved in such a large effort like SRE, seven short paragraphs don't go into much practical depth. This is where the SRE Procedures document steps in. It gives public schools, SRE providers and parents a clear indication of both their rights and responsibilities in the

delivery of SRE. These procedures are developed by the Department of Education in consultation with major SRE providers to ensure the interests of all parties are represented and, ultimately, parents and children are given the opportunity to engage in SRE in a productive and fruitful way.

Over the years the SRE Procedures document has varied in length, scope and complexity. In the recent past we have seen revisions in 2015, 2016 and, after the Government review into SRE and SEE (Special Education in Ethics), new procedures are to be implemented for 2019.

➔ *The points on the right represent a summary of the key responsibilities for schools and SRE providers outlined in the SRE Procedures for 2019*

Key responsibilities in the delivery of SRE

Schools

- Communicate to parents how SRE will be organised each year. (pg 4, 3.1)
- Allow parents/caregivers to enrol or withdraw their child as they wish. Students remain in the chosen class until a written request is received by the school. (pg 5, 3.1)
- Principals must ensure that no academic instruction or formal school activities occur during time set aside for SRE. (pg 5, 3.2)
- On average, not less than 30 minutes and not more than one hour of *meaningful* teaching time per week. (pg 5, 3.2)
- Principals must ensure that adequate learning facilities are provided for the delivery of SRE/SEE including adequate accommodation and access to classrooms. (pg 5, 3.2)
- SRE providers must be notified of any changes to school routines that impact on SRE classes. This advice should be provided well in advance if known. (pg 5, 3.2)
- Schools must protect the confidential information (e.g. names and contact information) about students and SRE teachers from unauthorised persons. (pg 5, 3.2)
- Give information to parents about SRE providers in the school. This information needs to be provided at enrolment, on the school's website and in the school newsletter. (pg 5, 3.2)
- Schools retain responsibility for student behaviour management and duty of care, including for student supervision, health, safety and wellbeing, during SRE. (pg 5, 3.2)

SRE Providers

- Religious persuasions must have the approval of the Minister for Education to deliver SRE. (pg 6, 4.1)
- Only persons authorised by an approved religious persuasion are permitted to teach SRE. (pg 6, 4.1)
- All SRE teachers must have a valid verified *Working With Children Check*. (pg 6, 4.1)
- SRE providers must recruit, train and authorise teachers of SRE. (pg 6, 4.2)
- SRE providers should inform the school of the names, contact details and date of birth of SRE teachers. (pg 6, 4.2)
- SRE providers must ensure that all SRE teachers are provided with a name badge to be worn on a school site. (pg 6, 4.2)
- SRE providers are required to have in place a system of authorised initial training, regular ongoing training and support, including mentoring for their SRE teachers. The training is to include child protection, classroom management, and how to implement the approved provider's authorised curriculum sensitively and in an age-appropriate manner. (pg 6, 4.2)
- Approved providers should conduct regular reviews of SRE teaching. (pg 6, 4.2)
- It is the responsibility of the SRE provider to authorise the curriculum, materials and pedagogy (teaching methods) used by SRE teachers and provide information about lesson content to parents where requested. (pg 7, 4.3)

Keeping Christ in Christmas

Written by Sr Joan Goodwin, RSJ

In the last term of the school year one of the most important feasts in our Catholic Faith occurs—the celebration of the birth of Jesus and the events of his infancy. The lessons are the last in the book and are left to the final weeks of term. In many schools today we find our classes interrupted by swimming, excursions, camps and since Scripture finishes at the end of November, these vital lessons about Jesus are often missed. In the commercial world Christmas sales begin in mid-October, so I am suggesting to all Catechists to begin your lessons on Jesus' birth and infancy at the same time. We need to help our children know and understand what the true meaning of Christmas is and good lessons are vital. You should give 4 to 5 lessons on this important topic.

We need to prepare ourselves with the true facts and events so I invite you to take your Bible or New Testament to study and reflect on these stories in the following order:

1. The Annunciation (Luke 1:26-34)
2. The Birth of John the Baptist (Luke 2:39-45, 57-80)
3. God chose Joseph (Matthew 1:18-25)
4. The Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-7)
5. Angels reveal the good news to Shepherds (Luke 2:8-20)
6. Jesus is named (Luke 2:21)
7. Jesus is presented in the Temple (Luke 2:22-37)
8. The Visit of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12)
9. The Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2:13-18)

Next take your teacher's manual and organise your lessons as they fit into the Christmas story. Move the Advent lesson to the last one. It's the practical one and invites the children to prepare to celebrate what Christmas means. In each class you will find the lessons highlight different parts of the Christmas story. Avoid using the word Christmas when talking about the birth and infancy of Jesus until your last lesson – the children relate the word Christmas to presents, food and holidays – as we are aiming to teach them to know, love and understand the great gift God the Father sent us—his Son, Jesus. One part of Jesus' infancy story that gets overlooked but is very relevant in today's world is the Flight into Egypt. Joseph, Mary and Jesus were refugees. Children in Year 3, 4, 5 and 6 should know this story as today they are familiar with refugees and their plight. Jesus came to take on the whole human condition and being a refugee, not wanted, he accepted this task.

Shower the children with good pictures to help them visualise the story, give them meaningful activities and something to take home to do. Pray to the Holy Spirit to guide you in preparing your lessons, be enthusiastic and you will succeed in helping your children to understand what Christmas truly means and they will never forget it. You are putting Christ back into Christmas.

God bless you all,

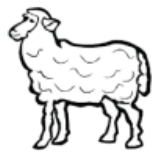
Sr Joan Goodwin.





Christmas Find-a-word!

c	e	t	m	e	h	e	l	h	t	e	b	f	s	p
k	i	n	g	h	e	r	o	d	d	y	r	o	v	e
l	y	s	s	r	i	m	t	d	g	a	j	g	d	e
e	z	h	t	l	w	o	m	q	n	d	s	p	s	h
i	n	e	m	a	e	a	g	k	e	l	b	a	t	s
r	e	p	o	g	r	g	i	v	f	h	a	b	f	e
b	q	h	t	y	p	n	n	w	e	o	c	s	i	r
a	k	e	x	r	c	u	b	a	i	n	n	x	g	e
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w	m	f	b	a	b	y	j	e	s	u	s	h	c	i



- | | | | | |
|------------|---------------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| Baby Jesus | Mary | Joseph | Wise Men | shepherds |
| angels | Angel Gabriel | stable | inn | manger |
| star | frankincense | sheep | myrrh | gold |
| Bethlehem | King Herod | innkeeper | gifts | census |

The Flight into Egypt





Jesus presented in the Temple



M___ and J_____ brought J_____
to the Temple in Jerusalem.
Simeon, who was one of God's friends,
said to Mary,
"This child is chosen by G__!"



Catechist Profile

Kristina Knight

Parish Catechist
Coordinator of

How long have you been a Catechist?

I have been a catechist for 17 years and I have been the parish coordinator for the past 11.

What inspired you to be a Catechist?

I went to a government school myself and was taught scripture by a catechist. In primary school. My mother always took my brothers, sisters and I to church, but I remember more that those ladies came to school every week and how they tried to make the message clearer to us children. When my youngest child went to school, at our local Catholic school, I knew that teaching the children in the local government school about my love of my faith was what I needed to do.

What do you enjoy about teaching SRE?

I get great satisfaction that I am able to teach these children in my care about God especially that I have been able to teach them some of the prayers that have been special to me.

What do you find most challenging?

I think the biggest challenge that I have had is the stage fright of standing in front of a classroom of students and teaching my first lesson. It took me a long time to be confident to be able to answer

questions without wondering if I was giving the correct answers.

Can you tell us about a lesson that went well?

I have always found that the lessons on Christmas and Easter very rewarding to teach. The children are excited to learn about the important times in the life and death of Jesus. I had in my class one year a girl named Veronica and when I taught the children the lesson on the Stations of the Cross she was very proud to have the same name as one of the important people in that story. I learned that day if I could encourage the children to believe they could be part of the story they were much more engaged in the lessons.

Can you share a heart warming experience?

I have had many heart warming experiences over the years. I remember putting on my first Christmas Play with my year 3-4 class and thinking that they would never remember their lines and having it all come together on the day. I also remember one of the students in Kindergarten who answered every question with "Mother Mary". Also to the students in high school who are now student catechists who were in my scripture class many years

ago, it makes me very happy that they are helping teach the next generation as well.

Any final thoughts?

I would encourage as many Catechists to attend the Annual Catechist Mass as I find this to be one of the most inspiring days of the year. I love to see all the award recipients receive their awards especially the lifetime achievers. It warms my heart to see catechists who have given so much time up for the children in our care. It is also a day when we can catch up with the catechists from our parish because we are very rarely in the same place at the same time.

I have also recently been involved with Alpha in my parish and this shows me that I and others also have a thirst to learn more about God, no matter what age, just like the children in my classroom.

Thank you Kristina for taking the time to share with us!



Fr Hans Zollner: Creating a safe Church from within

Written by Lisa Metcalfe

Fr Hans Zollner SJ is based in Rome and heads the Centre for Child Protection. He is also a member of the Vatican's Pontifical Commission for the Protection of Minors. On Friday 31st August, he presented to over 400 people from various agencies within the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong and Parramatta.

Fr Hans touched on key priorities and challenges that face the Catholic Church in Australia in response to creating Child Safe Environments. Some priorities included change that reflects Safeguarding as an integral part of Mission, moving from "on paper" to "in place" in our Church. Part of the response identified within the Church are greater opportunities for formation on the intellectual, spiritual, pastoral and human level. Such growth needs to continue throughout a person's lifetime. Fr Hans reinforced the findings of the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse and the Truth, Justice and Healing Council. Both identified the need to challenge existing structures to include the wisdom of 'outside influence' that includes gender equality in a system of greater transparency.

Furthermore, one particular session was summed up in the following points:

- As a Church, listen to victims and survivors
- Value transparency, accountability and openness

- Prevention and a pro-active approach works
- Formation is vital
- Staying focused on reform that embraces persons, structure, processes and content
- Seek to grow in our capacity for discernment

It may seem a little overwhelming as to how we can respond to such challenges. There is great hope in the tradition of the people of God offering support to those suffering, marginalised and voiceless. Within our faith communities we can respond by welcoming survivors and their families, networking with the Catholic community to share best practice and bring necessary reform to combat harmful behaviour within the Catholic Church.

As Catechists, there is great value in doing the 'little things' like renewing our WWCC on time, 'being aware' of creating safe environments in our classes, adhering to the Catechist Code of Conduct, attending opportunities for formation and growth and embracing self-reflection. Participating in these seeming little things actually makes a BIG difference as we take a pro-active approach to safeguarding and mission of the Church.

Catechist Training Level II Completed

We have been incredibly pleased with how well Level II training has been attended across the Diocese this year. On top of the standard Campbelltown and Wollongong locations, the independently organised Nowra course has also gone very well – a big thank you must go to Frances Fairs (Nowra Parish Catechist Coordinator) for organising that course.

Brian Barlow, a Catechist from West Wollongong has prepared the following summary about his experience of the course:

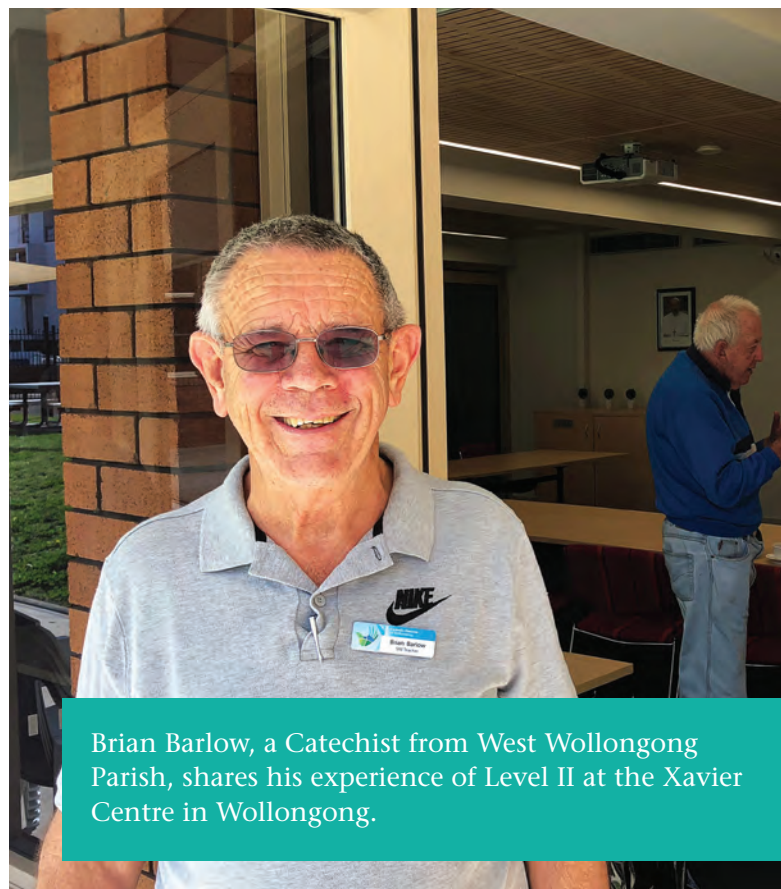
“This course was a bit of surprise for me. When I started, I had not spoken to anyone else about the course content, and assumed that it was more of the “how to teach” or “capture children’s attention”. How pleasantly surprised I was – the program is, in my opinion, about my beliefs and how I can be a better person and let that show in my teaching the children.

A session that stood out was from Fr Mark De Battista and he impressed by speaking for about 2 hrs, without notes, on the History of the People of God. It was fascinating, in depth and explained so much that I had either missed during my education (or maybe I was asleep). I wished that this lesson would have been 4 hours long.

Fr Stephen Varney was a breath of fresh air and he spoke very well on the Christian Initiation of Children – Baptism. He also shared something of his past and what made him take up the priesthood – Saying Grace before Meals with the Family, Talking about God at home with the family and reading Scripture, also with the family.

I feel this course has given me a broader experience in my Faith, strengthened my “God relationship” and if there are any Catechists out there thinking about doing this course then I can encourage you to DO IT – it’s time well spent.”

Thanks Brian for sharing with us!



Brian Barlow, a Catechist from West Wollongong Parish, shares his experience of Level II at the Xavier Centre in Wollongong.

The Bigger Picture



Advent Program

Continuing the tradition from past years, *Saviour* is a 76 page pocket-size book containing short daily reflections from the beginning of Advent (2 December 2018) through to the Baptism of the Lord (13 January 2019) primarily for personal use, but also appropriate for group use such as parish, Church agency, religious community and school staff/class prayer. The program provides an opportunity for us to be still each day and listen to God speaking to us.

The Advent Program can be ordered through your Parish.



LIVE Festival 2018

It was truly inspiring to see how *LIVE Festival* has grown from its humble beginnings three years ago to now attracting over 500 students. The dream has always been to give young people from this Diocese a dynamic, relevant and inspiring experience of the Catholic Faith, and on August 31 this year we saw that dream once again become an exciting reality. The hope for the Festival is that it continues to grow to allow more and more young people the opportunity to encounter Jesus Christ and live their lives according to His plan for them: a life to the full.



LIVE Local

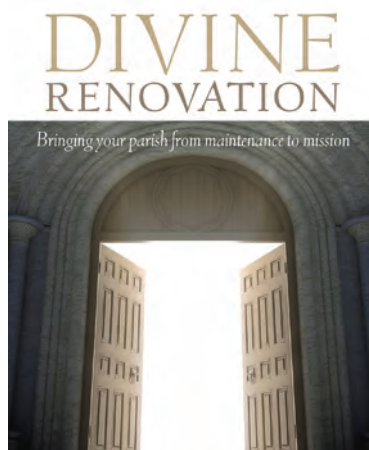
LIVE Local is a new Youth Group launching at St Johns Parish Hall in **Campbelltown** on the 19th of October from 7:00pm-9:00pm and running every Friday night during the school term. *LIVE Local* is run by Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong and invites all young people from Year 7 to Year 12 to join us every week for an incredible night of fun, faith and friendship. It will include music, worship and prayer, games, snacks, inspirational content and much more. *Live Local* is an integral part of the overall Diocesan plan to nurture and support the Catholic faith of youth and young adults.

The ministry of Catechists happens in and contributes to the broader work of the Church to evangelise, renew and support people in their faith. The Bigger Picture is a small spotlight of some of these works.



Alpha

The Diocese continues to embrace *Alpha* as a great beginning step of faith and for renewal. As the name would suggest, *Alpha* refers to both the start of our journey of faith but also the centrality of Jesus in our lives—after all, Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End. A number of parishes have begun to see the fruits of *Alpha* in their community, particularly with how it has drawn people into closer relationship with each other and with God. We are excited to see how the ministry will continue to grow and bear fruit in the Diocese as we move forward.



Divine Renovation

LIVE Local is an incredible new Youth Group launching at St Johns Parish Hall in **Campbelltown** on the 19th of October from 7:00pm-9:00pm and running every Friday night during the school term. *LIVE Local* is run by Catholic Youth Ministry Wollongong and invites all young people from Year 7 to Year 12 to join us every week for an incredible night of fun and friendship. It will include music, worship and prayer, games, snacks, inspirational content and much more.



MenAlive

Men Alive is a movement and strategy being embraced in the Diocese of Wollongong via organisation and support of Parish and regional weekends, enlivening the faith of men and their involvement in serving God and the Church through their vocation in life. Over 100 Men have attended the two regional weekends this year. Six ongoing groups have formed and a father-son weekend called *Growing Good Men* is another exciting initiative. The lives of many men of all ages in our Diocese have been changed for the better because of *Men Alive* in 2018, with more weekend planned for 2019.

Important Calendar Dates for 2018

Coordinator Meetings (10:00-11:30am)

Illawarra-Shoalhaven Nov 23
Xavier Centre

Macarthur-Highlands Nov 26
Micah House

Craft Day/Morning Tea (10:30-12:00pm)

Micah House Oct 22

Annual Catechist Mass (10:30am)

St Francis Xavier Cathedral Nov 10

**BOOKINGS ARE ESSENTIAL
TO BOOK, CALL MRS CINDY OLIVER ON
4640 8550**

YOU'RE INVITED

ANNUAL
Catechist
MASS & AWARDS

SATURDAY
10 NOVEMBER 2018
10:30 AM

St Francis Xavier Cathedral, Wollongong

Advent Ad