

CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF WOLLONGONG

CatechistNET

December 2023

POSITIVE
PLANS FOR
THE NEW YEAR

A YEAR OF
growth
THROUGH
FAITHFULNESS

CINDY
OLIVER'S
FAREWELL

2023 ANNUAL
CATECHIST MASS

INCLUDES 2024 CATECHIST CALENDAR

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Mr Jude Hennessy
*Director, Office of Renewal
& Evangelisation*

Mrs Frances Fairs
CCD Coordinator

Mr Daniel Saliba
Faith Education Officer

Mrs Cindy Oliver
*Resource Centre Manager
& Assistant to the FEOs*

Ms Helen Bennett
Executive Assistant

CONTACT US

02 4222 2400

support@ccdwoollongong.com

www.ccdwoollongong.com

Xavier Centre, 38 Harbour St
Wollongong NSW 2500

Graphic Design by Amy Micallef
Proofreading by Helen Bennett

THE *director's* MESSAGE

I hope you enjoy reading our end of year CatechistNET magazine. Looking at the photos from the Catechist Awards Mass highlighted again for me the impact not only of those in our ranks who were honoured for special milestones of service, but the impact each one of our active Catechists has on young people. Similarly, the commitment of those who have retired from active ministry but remain eager prayer warriors in support of this ministry cannot be underestimated.

I was recently sent an article by one of our SRE Catechists, who in sending it, noted how important it is that young people in NSW Government schools continue to be given the choice to be formed in the faith of their family, and at the same time, it is tragic that some other state governments in Australia have not ensured that it remains a key part of the broad curriculum.

The article, written by Political Commentator Nick Cater, highlighted via hard data, the disastrous impact of unfettered social media on the lives of young people. (Smartphones are driving a youth suicide and self-harm epidemic in Australia and across the Anglosphere – it's time we woke up)

Citing research findings from around the globe of Psychologist Jonathan Haidt, the article notes how the trend lines for depression,

anxiety, self-harm and suicide were steady until 2010, but from around 2012, the rate of incidences start to increase, culminating in increases for girls from 78% (Australia) to approaching 188% (USA). The article goes on to describe it as undeniably the biggest mental health crisis in history, for young people.

Interestingly, perhaps remarkably, it is noted that not all young people are at equal risk. For kids who are religious and have a grounding in traditional values, their rates have remained largely unchanged, while the rates for their peers have skyrocketed.

I have written previously about how faith is good for you and that if you want to inoculate young people from the dangers of modern secularism, give them the gift of faith – a grounding knowledge of a God who loves them, has a plan for their lives and calls them to a rich life of loving service in relationship with him. Such assertions were a mainstay of our arguments as a Church when the place of Special Religious Education was under threat from secularists a few short years ago.

It is for this reason I note the importance of the numerous mentions in NSW Parliament in 2023, about the importance of SRE in the Public School curriculum, which included questions of the

If you want to inoculate young people from the dangers of modern secularism, give them the gift of faith.



Education Minister Prue Carr, in seeking assurance that the NSW Government would not adopt the same anti-faith formation stance that has unfolded in Victoria over the last 10 years. Pleasingly, the answers gave a clear indication that both the current Labor Government and Liberal – National opposition, remain firmly committed to the place of SRE in schools.

Thus, we seem to be in a position where our place in schools is widely welcomed and valued. We have bipartisan political support and gratitude for what SRE brings to our State Schools. It rightly has been cited as a strength of a multi-cultural multi-faith society. The mental health research findings of Dr Haidt, add clear and urgent weight to the importance of these commitments for the well-being of young people and the desire of families for their kids to be formed in the faith of their families, and the traditional values that have stood the test of time.

Importantly, we must recognise that our ability to continue to provide SRE into the future is largely dependent upon our own capacity to do so, and to that end, on vibrant, outwardly focused parishes that are serious about outreach and renewal. As has always been the case, the future of the Church, and the key elements of its mission to make

Jesus known and loved, is dependent upon those who are not currently in it! It is therefore critical that we are bold in our outreach to others, risking being invitational to those we know and love, to invite involvement with the life of the parish, by sharing our own faith and relationship with Jesus, by telling our story and looking for opportunities to explain the basic Gospel message proclaimed, or perhaps reproclaimed to them.

Bishop Brian's exciting new *Come & See, Go & Make: A Vision for Parishes*, released on the Feast of Christ the King 26th November throughout the Diocese, boldly asks parishes to set their sights on embracing principles for welcome, outreach, invitation, leadership, and formation. If embraced prayerfully such principles are our hope for missional impact and creation of missionary disciples, like our Catechists who teach SRE in State Schools. ■



Jude Hennessy
Director
Office of Renewal and Evangelisation



Cindy Oliver's

FAREWELL

BY JUDE HENNESSY

In late November I wrote to all Catechists to inform them of the closure of the Micah House Resource Centre in Campbelltown and the subsequent acceptance of a redundancy package from the Office of the Bishop by Cindy Oliver.

As I noted at that time, the decision was based on a variety of factors, most importantly the growing need for space of CatholicCare, the prohibitive costs of establishing another site for CCD, the declining rates of resource borrowing and the growth in popularity of web-based resources that support our curriculum. Still, the decision to conclude the operations of the CCD Resource Centre was an incredibly difficult one, mainly due to the fact that Cindy has been such an integral part of the CCD Team since 2011.

The CCD Resource Centre has served as a valuable site for training, team building and the borrowing of resources by our Macarthur Special

Religious Education (SRE) Catechists who work in State Schools for over 20 years. Since her commencement in CCD, Cindy has always embraced the tasks associated with the day-to-day running of the CCD Resource Centre with great enthusiasm and diligence.

As a woman of deep faith and prayerfulness, Cindy has served the needs of this ministry, particularly visitors to the centre, with great care, and developed the centre into a very welcoming space. She has always been ready and eager to assist with lesson planning over a cuppa, with good advice on suitable resources, and assisted in the organisation of many CCD training courses and Diocesan events. She has played a key role in the

Cindy has been an asset in so many ways to this ministry, but her skills of welcome and hospitality have been the mainstay of her contribution to CCD, as attested to by those who were able to attend her farewell morning tea on December 18.



administration tasks of CCD, given the increasing administration requirements associated with ongoing training and volunteer safeguarding.

Cindy has been an asset in so many ways to this ministry, but her skills of welcome and hospitality have been the mainstay of her contribution to CCD, as attested to by those who were able to attend her farewell morning tea on December 18. Ever welcoming and encouraging, Cindy has journeyed with the whole ministry through difficult periods, when our future place in schools was under threat between 2010-2016, and she was a brilliant organiser of our Diocesan involvement in and attendance at three SRE NSW Parliamentary celebrations. She has been a big contributor to our annual catechist retreats and catechist awards mass, and even in the running of two successful State CCRESS Conferences hosted by the Diocese of Wollongong.

The decision to opt for a redundancy package was a difficult one for Cindy,

indeed for the whole CCD team, with Cindy having been a much loved and highly valued member of this team, and the Office of the Bishop for the past 12 years. Her desire to ensure that local Macarthur SRE Catechists were able to lay claim to the quality resources of the CCD Resource Centre prior to its closure, is testament to her belief in the impact of the work of our volunteers.

I am sure you join with me in wishing Cindy well, but more importantly in praying that God will open new doors for her as she looks to continue to live out her faith vibrantly and contribute to the mission of the Church in new ways. ■

All ^{THE} Best!





A YEAR OF *growth* THROUGH FAITHFULNESS

BY FRANCES FAIRS

This time of year my garden is thriving, with the many tropical and native plants loving the humid heat of summer. When neglected, this beautiful garden resembles a jungle, resulting in hours of back breaking labour!

Our vegetable garden presents more problems. Daily care to account for hot weather, wind, and our resident possum population is required to produce edible produce. Admitting defeat might be tempting, however consistently working towards harvest time reminds me of the work of CCD; our faithful commitment to the mission of the Church, nurturing the growth of our ministry. The work we do in teaching children and bringing them into a relationship with God is a constant challenge, which when overcome, bears great fruit.

Faithfulness means persevering in the midst of difficulties, maintaining a constant commitment to God, and His people.

For CCD in 2023, we have achieved growth through faithfulness to our mission — to make Jesus known and loved in the hearts of the young people in our State Schools.

Faithfulness is also getting uncomfortable and inviting others to join our ministry through our conversations and recruitment drives. This year we trained 42 new volunteers across the diocese in our Level 1 course in Terms 1 and 3. Through online training, we trained an extra 11 new volunteers throughout the year using OpenLearning. This increase of Catechists has resulted in some parishes being able to reach double the number of students through Catholic SRE this year than in 2022, a fact that is evidence to faithful commitment in the ministry producing good results.

In our courses and even online, it is inspiring to see parish coordinators supporting their new volunteers through welcoming and guiding leadership. As said in the Parable of the Talents (Matt 25:23), 'Well done, good and faithful servant(s)!'

2023 saw the return of the Student Catechist Program in our diocese, a significant step in the growth of our ministry as 30 Catholic secondary students were trained to share their faith in neighbouring state schools. The reboot of this program is only the start, and we look forward to extending the Student Catechist Program in 2024.

All in all, 2023 was a year of growth not because of wishful thinking, but because of consistent, faithful service.

What else did we do in CCD this year?

In May we enjoyed one of the most popular Catechist Retreats that I remember. Fr Aloysius Rego was delightful to host and popular amongst the 130 Catechists who attended the retreat in Campbelltown and Gerringong. Fr Rego showed us St Teresa of Avila's teaching on prayer, brilliantly portraying her understanding of prayer as friendship with God. Fr Rego shared humbly about his own experience of prayer and answered our questions with good humour.

Also in May, we had the opportunity to learn about Aboriginal Catholic culture and spirituality to aid us as Catholic educators. Facilitated by experts from the Catholic Education Office, the sessions in Nowra, Campbelltown, and Wollongong were attended by 85 Catechists in total and received encouraging feedback from Catechists wanting to incorporate the Aboriginal art and examples into their lessons.

In the same three locations in June/July, Catechist Vanesa Evans shared her lesson ideas to inspire creativity in storytelling and craft with 40 enthusiastic SRE teachers and helpers. Thank you for your generosity, Vanesa!

In September, Daniel Saliba presented an in-service on Mary and her significance in Sacred Scripture. We were delighted to welcome 80 Catechists and Parishioners at the in-service and received excellent feedback.

Jude Hennessy and I attended the CCRESS conference in Broken Hill in October this year. We managed the journey by taking our camper/caravans and some of our family members with us. The CCRESS



conference brings together leaders of CCD from all dioceses in the ACT and NSW to discuss current issues in the ministry, share solutions and resources. We were blessed to spend most of the conference with Bishop Columba Macbeth-Green OSPPE. An extraordinary man, Bishop Columba's love for music, hilarious anecdotes, and experience in the police force made him riveting company. On the first evening, Bishop Columba shared what it was like to travel to stations where the families do not see other people for months. Considering the Diocese of Wilcannia-Forbes is more than half the size of NSW, Bishop Columba spends extensive time travelling to fulfil his role. Mass at the Cathedral of the Sacred Heart in Broken Hill was a highlight of the conference; being one of the most remote Cathedrals in the world, Bishop Columba is able to obtain relics more readily than other places and has an extensive reliquary including the artefacts of Blessed Carlos Acutis.

Without hesitation, I would say that the highlight of the year was our Annual Catechist Mass & Awards. Thank you to those who attended and to those who received awards for the years of service that tallies to half of a millennia!

To complete an awesome year, we reached out to families by creating Christmas cards. The Easter and Christmas cards in 2023 were designed so that students could colour them in and take them home with a friendly message and invitation to attend the services in their parish.

Catechists, thank you for your faithfulness in sharing the Gospel and bringing children into relationship with Jesus. The most inspirational part of CCD is spending time with you.

A further word to our Coordinators: You are precious, the backbone of our ministry. Thank you for using your gifts for the work of Catechists in your parish!

May God bless you all abundantly for your faithful and generous service! ■

God does not require that we are successful but faithful.

ST TERESA OF CALCUTTA



A POSITIVE PLAN FOR A *new year!*



BY FRANCES FAIRS

Making resolutions can be a fantastic opportunity to reflect on our spiritual journey and set specific goals to draw closer to God and live in accordance with his will.

There is no reason that we need to wait until the new year to make positive changes in our lives, but I do appreciate the simplicity of the New Year, New Me concept.

From my experience, making a change is easy, but sticking to it is not; and the higher the goal, the harder it will be!

It is comforting to remember that we do not have to be perfect in carrying out our resolutions. If we fall off the horse, we are able to resume our commitment and continue moving in a positive trajectory. It is also important to consider that what is possible for your friend may not be possible for you. We are all unique, as are our circumstances, which is why I recommend searching your own heart in prayer on what small things that you can do each day to become the person that is more attuned to God's will for your life.

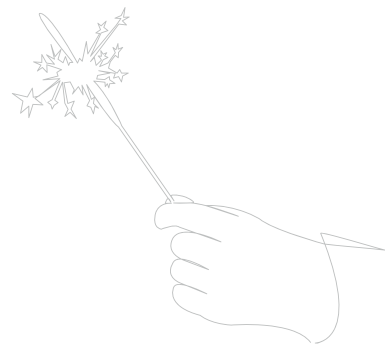
Bobby Angel from Ascension Presents suggests the following spiritual goals for the New Year:

1. Read the Bible: St Jerome said, that "ignorance of scripture is ignorance of Christ." If reading the entire Bible seems intimidating right now, start with the Gospels, or the Psalms.

- 2. Go to daily Mass:** It might only be one extra Mass per week, however as Jude reminded us in our Annual Catechist Mass, God will never be outdone in generosity. If we genuinely believe in Jesus's presence in the Mass, then we will make the time to go to the Sacrament as often as possible.
- 3. Embrace silence:** Fifteen minutes per day is only 1% of the day. You might like to use this time for some spiritual reading or to listen to a daily meditation based on the Gospel. 'Pray as you go' is a favourite of mine.
- 4. Fast:** It is powerful to offer this physical prayer for good intentions and to make room for God. Fasting might be from food or drink, but it also might be from other pleasures such as music, TV shows, and conversations.
- 5. Get involved:** All of these spiritual disciplines fail without community. Getting involved is as easy as showing up to start with. As SRE Catechists, you belong to our CCD community and are welcomed at our events and training. There are likely events and prayer groups in your parish that you can also join.

To this list of spiritual goals, I would like to add two more suggestions:

- 6. Prayer:** Most of us do not pray as we should. We can find time for almost everything else in our lives but are often too busy to pray. Scheduling prayer is one solution. Also, when tired, it helps to pray with others. I highly recommend The Rosary with Bishop Barron, which I listen to when I am driving. His reflections are beautiful, and the pace is perfect for me.
- 7. Learning:** The Catechism in a Year with Fr Mike Schmitz is one of the best things that I have heard all year. I do not listen every day or even every week, but when I do, I feel enriched and grateful for our Catholic Faith. CCD offers courses not only in teaching related topics, but also in adult faith formation—come along! ■



CATECHIST *calendar* 2024

JANUARY

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FEBRUARY

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					31	

MAY

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JUNE

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30						

JULY

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SEPTEMBER

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29	30					

OCTOBER

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NOVEMBER

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NSW school holidays
 X NSW public holidays

APRIL

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28	29	30				

AUGUST

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DECEMBER

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22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30	31				

Coordinator Meetings

10:00am–11:30am

Illawarra-Shoalhaven
Wollongong

February 5, June 24,
November 4

Macarthur-Highlands
Campbelltown

February 2, June 21,
November 1

*Level 1 (Term 1)

9:30am–1:30pm

Illawarra-Shoalhaven
Wollongong

February 12, 19, 26
March 4, 11

Macarthur-Highlands
Campbelltown

February 9, 16, 23,
March 1, 8

**Level 2 (Term 2)

9:30am–2:30pm

Illawarra-Shoalhaven
Wollongong

April 29
May 6, 13, 20, 27
June 3

Macarthur-Highlands
Campbelltown

May 3, 10, 17, 24, 31
June 7

*Level 1 (Term 3)

9:30am–1:30pm

Online via Zoom

August 19, 26
September 2, 9, 16

Catechist Retreat

9:30am–2:30pm

Illawarra-Shoalhaven

September 23

Macarthur-Highlands

September 20

Annual Catechist Mass

9:30am

St Francis Xavier Cathedral

December 7

* Level 1 is a five-week course which is repeated Term 1 at two locations and Term 3 via zoom, online.

** Level 2 is a six-week course which is at two locations.

Dates are correct at time of printing (December 2023)



2023 ANNUAL

Catechist

MASS & AWARDS

BY FRANCES FAIRS

Our Annual Catechist Mass & Awards Ceremony was held this year on Saturday 11th November—*Remembrance Day* and *the memorial of St Martin of Tours*.



Remembrance Day is a day to remember the self-sacrifice of the servicemen and servicewomen who gave their lives for those of us here today. Similarly, Catechists give of themselves for the sake of others. They generously dedicate their time and talents and through their tireless work and sacrifices, bring young people into a personal relationship with Jesus.

St Martin, like our best Catechists, was a great evangelist. St Martin's inspiring words ring true to all men and women of faith who selflessly give of themselves, "Lord, if your people need me, I will not refuse the work. Your will be done."

St Martin's inspiring words ring true to all men and women of faith who selflessly give of themselves, "Lord, if your people need me, I will not refuse the work."

We extend our gratitude to Bishop Brian Mascord, our principal celebrant, who led us beautifully through the liturgy, and to the concelebrating clergy from the diocese for taking the time to support and encourage us by their presence – Fr Leo Duck PP (Albion Park), Fr Patrick Vaughan PP (Northern Illawarra



Parishes), and Fr James Arblaster. Thank you also to Deacon Michael Flew, who proclaimed the Gospel and attentively assisted the Bishop throughout the Mass and to Sacristan, Joseph Bonanno, who served humbly on the altar during the Mass and arrived early to set up.

Many people contributed to making the Catechist Mass & Awards such a special occasion this year. Julia Rafferty, Catechist Coordinator Milton, and Patricia Calabro, Catechist Coordinator Wollongong, proclaimed the Word to us reverently and beautifully.

Bishop Brian Mascord welcomed us warmly and, in his homily, reminded us that our warmth, which can be as simple as smiling, will help us to have more of an impact on the young people that we educate.

The Prayers of the Faithful were

led clearly by Sabrina Peroumal, Catechist Coordinator Eagle Vale. During these prayers, Don Bath of West Wollongong, presented Bishop Brian with our Book of Remembrance wherein the names of SRE Catechists who have died are recorded. This year we remember and give thanks for the lives of Trish McInerney, Kathleen Hilton, Janice Hobday, Vera Cleary, Alison Smith, Michael Young, Benaida Bliss, Margaret Duffy, Anna Cartwright, and Patricia Reynolds.

A big thank you must go to Kristina Knight, Catechist Coordinator Rosemeadow and her husband Dudley Knight, Vicky Stuart (SRE Catechist) and her husband Colin Stuart also from Rosemeadow, who helped to prepare, serve, and pack up the luncheon under the leadership of Cindy Oliver. Thank you also to Gavin Fairs, who helped direct traffic, serve food, and pack up the conference room and to children Caitlin, Henry

and Xavier Fairs who assisted in welcoming, distributing booklets, and taking up the offertory.

A highlight of the Mass was the beautiful music provided by Jude Hennessy.

This memorable day only came together because of the hard work and dedication of the CCD Wollongong team – Frances Fairs, Daniel Saliba, Cindy Oliver, and Helen Bennett – under the leadership of Jude Hennessy, Director of the Office of Renewal & Evangelisation.

Thank you to all for generously sharing your talents and time to make this celebration truly special! ■

2023

Catechist

AWARDS

The awards ceremony at the Annual Catechist Mass is heartwarming and inspiring. As we recognise the years of service and dedication of SRE teachers and helpers throughout our diocese, acknowledging their commitment and the countless number of children that they have taught

because of their generosity, we are encouraged to be more generous with our lives. The awards, as beautiful as they are, are only a token of our deep gratitude for the service and sacrifice that these beautiful SRE Catechists have given—their true reward will be great in heaven! ■

DVV



Bishop's Citation

10 years service

Albion Park—Catherine Heys, **Berkeley**—Sr Thi (Mary) Le FMV
Dapto—Elizabeth Negro, Jennifer Monaro, Elizabeth Harvey
Macquarie Fields—Alan Raisbeck, **Nowra**—Greg Troy
Oran Park—Rosalie Quinlan, **Varroville**—Sr Ines Comiling CM
Warrawong—Giuseppe Arlotta, Sr Thi (Anna) Lu FMV
West Wollongong—Peggy Lee Shoy, Dick Lee Shoy
 Cynthia Ricafuente, **Wollongong**—Laraine Fickers



Bishop's Citation

15 years service

Albion Park—Josephine Pulido
Shellharbour City—Marinko Crnjac



Papal Blessing 20 years service

Albion Park—Aneline Bokenham
Eagle Vale—Bernedette Peiris
Port Kembla—Maria Howe



Mary Mackillop Medal 25 years service

Dapto—Kevin Brennan
Port Kembla—Bernard Howe
Shellharbour City—Irene Gomes
Varroville—Nellie Rafidi
Wollongong—Eugenia De Bortoli



Life Membership 30+ years service

Dapto—Grace Teixeira
Ingleburn—Catherine Walsh
Shellharbour City—Irene Gomes



Training & events in 2024

BY FRANCES FAIRS

Recruiting and training new volunteers will remain a priority for CCD in 2024 as parishes expand and some of the members of our ministry retire. Like this year, the Level 1 course will be offered in Term 1 and in Term 3 to allow parishes to recruit at a time in the year that suits their needs and parish calendar. Please note that the Level 1 course in Term 3 will be a zoom-based course.

In 2024, the Level 1 course will include training in online resources, which will be useful not only for our new volunteers but all those who would like to best use the online resources available to them. As in other years, the first day of the Level 1 course will be Child Protection and Classroom Management training, which is required to be updated every few years by all current SRE Catechist teachers and helpers.

Ongoing training is valued among SRE Catechists and for our CCD team, it is a pleasure to provide it. In Term 2 we invite all SRE teachers and helpers to our Level 2 Catechist Course. The course will run for six weeks from the first week of Term 2.

To better provide Parish Coordinators the support and practical items needed for the end of the year, in 2024, the end of year Coordinator meeting will be held at the beginning of November and the Annual Catechist Mass & Awards will be held in December. This change will also allow for an early November CatechistNET newsletter to be emailed out with ideas and resources for the Advent and Christmas lessons.

Significantly, you will notice on the calendar that all events and training in Wollongong will occur on Mondays

and in Campbelltown on Fridays. This change needs to occur from time to time to allow those who teach on Fridays in Wollongong to be able to come along to CCD events and training. ■



Catholic CHAT

BY DANIEL SALIBA

A great new online resource has been released called **Catholic Chat**.

Catholic Chat is an interactive platform where users can simply type in their questions related to the Catholic faith, and answers are generated from the Catechism of the Catholic Church. While many people find navigating the Catechism of the Catholic Church daunting, this resource makes the Catechism much more accessible.

Catholic Chat is capable of tailoring responses based on the depth of the answer desired by the user, with three possible response levels to choose from: **Child, Adult or Scholar**. It is fun to use and a fantastic resource for Catechists and all Catholics who want to know what the Church teaches on any topic.

Although AI-generated technology is still very new and should be used with prudence, we recommend that you give Catholic Chat a go. When testing Catholic Chat in the office, we found it to be accurate and age appropriate for children if the child setting is selected.

To access Catholic Chat, simply type **catholic.chat** in your browser and type in your question! ■

Catholic
Chat

Get Answers from the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Select a chat experience below and ask your question.



Child

Simple and easy to understand teaching.



Adult

Thoughtful answers for inquiring minds.



Scholar

All the details. No stone left unturned.



Hi! What's your question? The Catholic Church has an answer.

Are God and Jesus the same person?

No, God and Jesus are not the same person. They are related, but they are different. God is the Father, and Jesus is His Son. They are both part of the Holy Trinity, which also includes the Holy Spirit. It's like a family, where God is the Father, Jesus is the Son, and the Holy Spirit is like their special helper. They are all one God, but they have different roles.

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, it says, "The Trinity is One. We do not confess three Gods, but one God in three persons, the 'consustantial Trinity' (CCC 253). This means that even though there are three persons, they are all the same God. So, God and Jesus are connected, but they are not exactly the same person.



What does sin mean?

Sin means doing something that goes against what God wants us to do. It's like breaking a rule or doing something that hurts our relationship with God and others. When we sin, it separates us from God's love and grace.

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, it says, "Sin is an offense against reason, truth, and right conscience; it is failure in genuine love for God and neighbor caused by a perverse attachment to certain goods" (CCC 1849). This means that sin is when we do something that is not right, that goes against what we know is good and loving.



But the good news is that God loves us so much that He forgives us when we are truly sorry for our sins. He wants us to turn away from sin and choose to do what is right.

What should I do if I sin?

If you sin, the most important thing to do is to be sorry for what you have done and ask God for forgiveness. This is called repentance. You can do this by praying to God and telling Him that you are sorry for your actions. Ask Him to help you not to do it again.

In the Catechism of the Catholic Church, it says, "The movement of return to God, called conversion and repentance, entails sorrow for and abhorrence of sins committed, and the firm purpose of sinning no more in the future" (CCC 1431). This means that when we repent, we feel sorry for our sins and make a promise to try our best not to do them again.

It is also important to confess our sins to a priest in the Sacrament of Reconciliation. The priest acts as a representative of God and can offer guidance and absolution, which means forgiveness of our sins. This sacrament helps us receive God's grace and restores our relationship with Him.



Remember, God loves you and is always ready to forgive you when you are truly sorry and seek His forgiveness.

Ask your question or type 'help'



online RESOURCES

BY FRANCES FAIRS

We are delighted to announce that we are now able to provide and increase our provision of online resources for our SRE Catechists for use in schools.

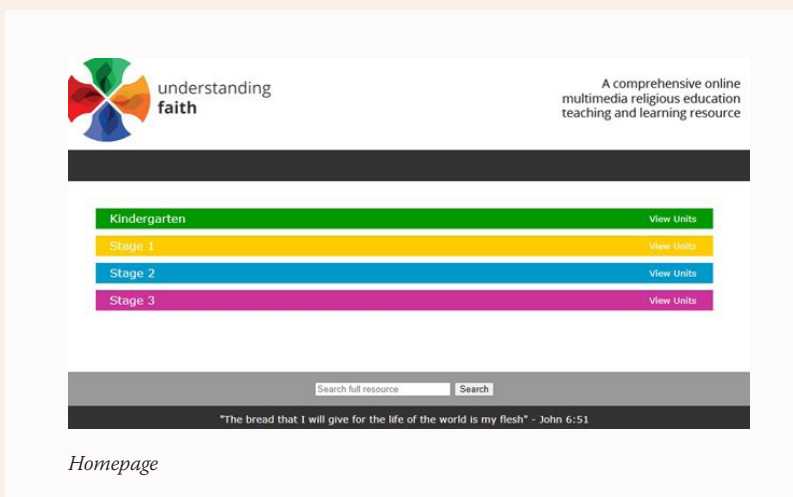
One of these resources is called Understanding Faith, which was developed in the Diocese of Lismore, and is used extensively by Catholic school teachers all over the country.

Understanding Faith is an excellent online resource with loads of age-appropriate videos, stories, songs, activities, and interactive games.

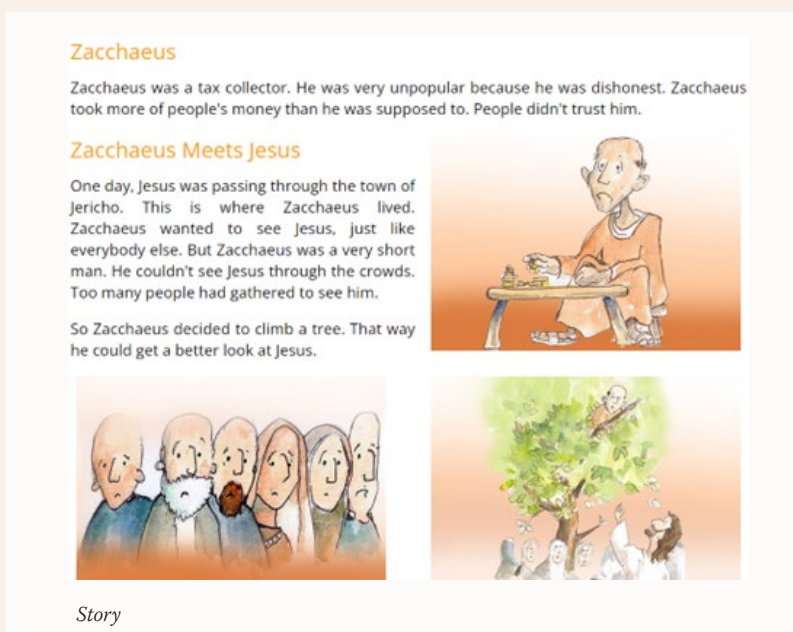
To access Understanding Faith, all you need is an internet connection. After planning lessons at home, those with a screen at school will be able to visit the Understanding Faith website and make use of the resources available.

Planning your lessons is essential when using Understanding Faith as each unit contains an enormous number of resources to pick and choose from. Fast links from our ccdwillongong.com website will be arranged to make using the resource easier and there will be training available as a part of our Level 1 courses in February and August 2024.

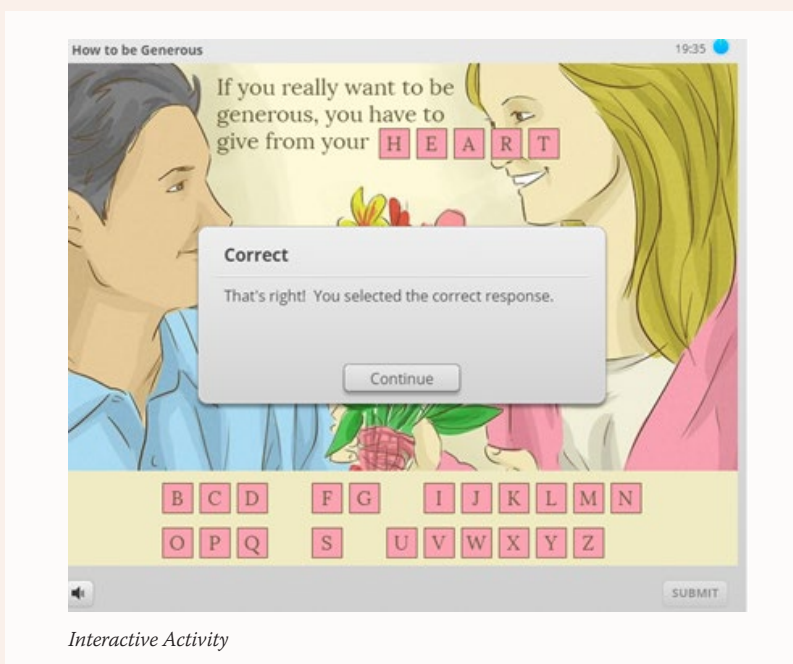
Details of how to log on and use Understanding Faith in 2024, including dates of training sessions, will be provided to you in our next CatechistNET newsletter and through your Parish SRE Coordinator. ■



Homepage



Story



Interactive Activity

Five questions to ask ourselves in 2024

BY DANIEL SALIBA

1. Am I due to renew and WWCC?

Ensuring compliance with all necessary legal prerequisites for classroom access is a vital aspect of ministry responsibilities. Have you checked the expiration date of your WWCC? If you are uncertain please ensure you check this with the Office of the Children's Guardian. If you have renewed it, please inform us, providing your WWCC number and new expiration date.

2. Have I signed the new Special Religious Education Teacher Declaration?

In 2024, all SRE Teachers and Helpers will need to sign the new SRE Teacher Declaration. Equivalent declarations are already asked of other volunteers in schools. This SRE Declaration is aimed at keeping children who are enrolled in SRE and are taught by SRE Teachers safe.

3. Who could I ask to join the ministry?

We're constantly looking for more SRE Teachers and Helpers. If you know someone that would be a great SRE Teacher or Helper, encourage them to check out our website (ccd wollongong.com) and contact the Parish SRE Coordinator or Parish Priest.

4. What training will I do in 2024?

It's crucial for everyone to keep learning, growing, and staying up to date on the Catechist ministry. In 2024, CCD is providing Level 1 training in person at the beginning of the year in Campbelltown and Wollongong, and online training in August. Additionally, we'll be offering in-person Level 2 training in both Campbelltown and Wollongong, starting at the end of April and wrapping up in early June.

5. How am I helping to connect SRE families to parish life?

The essence of this ministry lies in educating children and imparting the Catholic faith to them. It's also about fostering connections between the families of these children and parish life. Some ideas include organising a BBQ or perhaps a Mass dedicated to the families of SRE children, inviting parents to come along.



Please consider giving a gift to help continue the good works of the Church today.

You can make a tax-deductible donation at:
dow.sh/ministrygiving
or by scanning this QR code:



(please ensure you select the Special Religious Education Fund)

Thank you!

On behalf of the Parishes and SRE Teachers of the Macarthur Region, the CCD Team acknowledges with great gratitude the considerable financial support of the Campbelltown Catholic Club for this ministry in State Schools. The generosity of the Catholic Club, enables and greatly enhances the capacity of parishes and the Catholic Diocese of Wollongong to provide SRE, with excellent resources for students and high quality training and support for parishes and individual SRE catechists.





CONTACT US

02 4222 2400

support@ccdwoollongong.com

www.ccdwoollongong.com



**FIND OUT MORE ABOUT
BEING AN SRE CATECHIST**
ccdwoollongong.com

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