



SRE Update

Ethics Pilot

In late November 2009 the former NSW Premier, Nathan Rees, announced approval of a pilot program of an ethics course proposed by the St James Ethics Centre (SJEC) for Year 5 and 6 government primary school students.

This pilot ethics course is scheduled for the time allocated for Special Religious Education (SRE) beginning in week one of Term 2, 2010 in ten primary schools - Baulkham Hills North, Bungendore, Crown St, Darlinghurst, Ferncourt (South Marrickville), Haberfield, Hurstville, Leichhardt, Randwick and Rozelle.

The original request was for 'Ministerial approval to proceed with a pilot project to test the concept of offering an ethics-based complement to Scripture in NSW Primary Schools' (SJEC, September 2009). This request was based on the interest and concern raised regarding the plight of primary school children who opt out of SRE, commonly known as Scripture. This is described as a 'social justice issue' in the submission.

Through its networks, ICCOREIS has received disturbing reports from SRE coordinators at some of the schools taking part in the ethics pilot. One of the major concerns was that the ethics course is being offered to all children and not just the non-SRE children. In some cases, this has resulted in a dramatic reduction in the number of children in the SRE classes for this term. Another concern was that Department of Education and Training (DET)

teachers would be permitted to teach the ethics course in their school. ICCOREIS has been assured that these arrangements will only be in place in the ten nominated pilot schools for the duration of the pilot period, that is, during Term 2, 2010.



These matters have been brought before the Minister for Education, Verity Firth, by a number of deputations by church representatives, including the Chair and Treasurer of ICCOREIS and were also raised at the last meeting of the Director General's Consultative Committee. A senior advisor to the Minister will be attending the next ICCOREIS meeting to discuss the concerns of approved providers. In addition, ICCOREIS has been offered an opportunity for a further meeting with the Minister.

We are confident that the long established work of SRE providers is appreciated and ICCOREIS pledges to continue to support them at every level.

There will be regular updates on this matter and the work of ICCOREIS to represent the member churches and their SRE teachers on the News page of the ICCOREIS website, www.iccoreis.asn.au.

If you have any information on the ethics trial which you would like to share with ICCOREIS please contact Sue Sneddon on execofficer@iccoreis.asn.au.

*(Mrs) Ann Maree Whenman
ICCOREIS Chair*

Ideas for a Kinder Orientation Day or Parent Information Night

For the SRE Coordinator or SRE Teacher

Invite one of the local authorising clergy and one or two SRE teachers to be present to answer any questions that parents/carers may have. Make sure they are well briefed beforehand.

Ask the Principal to introduce you by giving some background about how SRE fits into the curriculum and the value it has in this particular school. The Principal should point out where SRE is located on the enrolment form (under 'Religion').

SRE as a team ministry

- Introduce yourself.
- Explain what SRE or Scripture is and your role (coordinator/teacher).
- Acknowledge the parents' role in religious education, affiliation and preference.
- Explain that it is only with their permission that children will be attending SRE classes. They may change their child's enrolment at any time.

Who

- Explain that SRE teachers are duly appointed by church leaders and responsible to them.
- Training is given and child protection forms part of this.
- Teachers are given a 'licence' to teach by the authorising church leaders/ministers group.
- Describe the number of teachers and the breadth of religious representation, including other faiths.
- Mention if the classroom teacher is in the classroom or not during SRE lessons.

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10 Essential Skills for Classroom Management

1. **State expectations**
Students need to know what you expect of them. Then when they don't meet expectations you can say, "What are you doing?", "What should you be doing?"
2. **Give clear, short instructions that help students know what to do to stay actively engaged.** The shorter the child the shorter the instruction!
3. **Wait and look at your students for 5-10 seconds after you give an instruction**
This gives you a chance to assess if they have heard and understood. Start with, "When I say..."
4. **Acknowledge those who are doing what's required**
This cues those who are off-task to what they should be doing while remaining positive.
5. **Use your body language to encourage compliance**
A deliberate look may be enough. Walk over and stand beside someone who is off-task. Point to what will redirect them to the learning.
6. **Describe what they're doing well to encourage them in those behaviours that you know will facilitate learning.**
Look out for things to commend.
7. **Selective attending**
Effectively ignore safe, off-task behaviours, for a limited time, that is 'choose your battles'.
8. **Respectfully redirect the off-task student to the learning.** If you're always directing students to 'listen' or 'watch me' it may be that you need to rethink your teaching methods to make lessons more engaging.
9. **Give students a choice to make it clear they own responsibility for their behaviour.** Choose two options which are both acceptable to you. "Which are you going to do - go back to your table and finish it or complete it in your group."
10. **Keep your word**
Follow through on what you say you'll do no matter how tired or rushed. Don't say something you're not prepared to carry out.

These are skills. As with all skills they are developed and mastered by practice.

Getting Started

Put a star beside the one you do best.

Underline the one you think might solve some problems for you.

Circle the one you've been missing out on most.

These guidelines have been produced by the GodSpace team. There is also a PowerPoint presentation that can be used for group training. See the Resources page of the GodSpace website, www.godspace.org.au.



Kinder Orientation/Parent Information

(From page 1)

What

- Have copies of your curriculum on display. Explain that lessons are designed to meet the developmental stages of the children in each class, and correspond with the Early Stage 1, Stage 1, 2 and 3 format used in all public schools.
- Explain that the most well known stories in the Bible are usually told at least once during the years that a child is in primary school.
- Explain how you tell the most important stories like Easter and Christmas every year.
- Describe the special assemblies for these religious commemorations (if you have them) and/or the other occasions such as Education Week and Book Week.
- Show a child's workbook if you use them. (Perhaps you can have the child talk about their favourite lesson).

When

Outline how long a lesson runs, and on which day of the week and whether it goes for the whole term/semester/year.

Where

- Describe where the lessons take place and how the class may be reorganised for SRE.
- Be sure to mention if children attend SRE excursions, such as going to a church for a special service or event.

Why

You may wish to outline to the audience your own experience of teaching SRE, but keep it brief. Something like, "I've been teaching at this school for four years. I enjoy sharing my love of God with the children, especially through songs".

Provide

A pamphlet such as *SRE and Your Child*, available on the ICCOREIS website, or others available through CEP for parents to take home.

Conclude

Thank the school for the opportunity to speak and the parents for their interest. Announce that someone will be available to answer questions afterwards.

Action for the next year

Consider asking SRE teachers to write a letter to distribute to students in their class at the beginning of the year, introducing themselves to the parents of the children and giving their contact details.

See the ICCOREIS website for more information.

This outline is most suitable for a joint denominational Christian setting. If denominational SRE occurs and/or there are other faiths, for example Muslim SRE, then this must be acknowledged and a broad overview given, preferably by the principal. Consider issuing an invitation to all providers to make a short presentation.

Report from ICCOREIS AGM

Leadership Changes

At its Annual General Meeting on 2nd March 2010, ICCOREIS elected its first Catholic Chairperson, Mrs Ann Maree Whenman, who has served on the Commission for nine years. Ann Maree has recently taken up a lecturing position at the Australian Catholic University and specialises in the area of Religious Education. Prior to this she was Director of the Parish Support Unit in the Diocese of Broken Bay and taught Science and Religious Education for many years in secondary schools.



Mr Peter Adamson was elected as Deputy Chairperson. Originally a civil engineer, Peter became a Presbyterian minister and has been employed in church planting both in WA and NSW. Once Director of Scripture Union in WA and most recently Chairman of Scripture Union in NSW, he was also the original Executive Officer for GenR8 (The NSW High Schools SRE Association). He is currently Director of Camping and SRE for Presbyterian Youth in NSW.



The new Honorary Secretary is Mr John Oldmeadow. John is the Executive Director of the Board of Education, Uniting Church in NSW. He has a background in secondary teaching, publishing and educational bookselling.



The Honorary Treasurer is Mr Robert Haddad. He holds qualifications in law, theology and religious education. Currently he is the Director of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine for the Sydney Diocese and lectures in Religious Education at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney.

Amended Constitution

Since the Triennial Heads of Churches meeting held in September 2009, ICCOREIS has been working towards some important changes to its Constitution. At the AGM ICCOREIS endorsed the amended Constitution. These amendments have brought a more streamlined structure to the Commission, which will now operate in two forms: as a full Commission, and as a Board.

The Commission is composed of all representatives appointed by its member religious persuasions and organisations. The Board is made up of the Chairperson and nine representative members, including the members of the Executive. It is expected that this restructure will enable the Board to direct and progress the business at hand in a more efficient and proactive manner.

Members of the Board:

Chairperson	Mrs Ann Maree Whenman		} Executive
Deputy Chairperson	Mr Peter Adamson	(Presbyterian)	
Honorary Secretary	Mr John Oldmeadow	(Uniting)	
Honorary Treasurer	Mr Robert Haddad	(Roman Catholic)	
	Rev Cheryl Clendinning	(Baptist)	
	Mrs Cheryl Hallinan	(Anglican)	
	Mr Tony Deenick	(Christian Reformed)	
	Mrs Jean Evans	(Uniting)	
	Miss Helen C Ryan	(Roman Catholic)	
	Fr Constantine Varipatis	(Greek Orthodox)	

Life Members

Two new names have been added to the list of Life Members.

Dr Grant Maple, former Chair and Rev Dr Mark Hillis, former Deputy Chair, have been awarded this honour for their long and dedicated service to ICCOREIS and to the preservation and promotion of excellent religious education in government schools. Both remain in roles which are integrally linked with education: Grant as Director of the School of Christian Studies at Macquarie University, and Mark with the Board of Education of the Uniting Church in NSW.

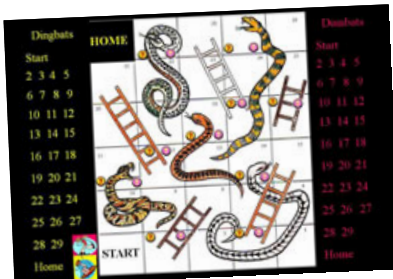
*Sue Sneddon
ICCOREIS Executive Officer*

Resources

Shelley and Son

Owen Shelley, a respected children's ministry presenter and author, and his son Stephen, have developed a wide variety of interactive children's ministry resources. These resources have been designed to be used with a computer and data projector or an interactive whiteboard.

Interactive Revision Quiz Games



These games are designed to allow concepts and knowledge to be revised in a fun and exciting way.

Games include:

- | | |
|------------|------------------|
| Os & Xs | Run Rabbit Run |
| Magnetic-Q | Racetrack |
| Trap-Door | Crazy Quiz |
| Tug-O-War | Snakes & Ladders |

Bible Stories

Bible stories are presented as a series of pictures that will help the presenter to tell stories from the life of Jesus, Moses and others. Each includes notes written by Owen to direct the telling of the story. Revision quiz games have also been produced for some of these stories.

For example:

- Life of Jesus
- The Saviour has Come
- Peter's Denial
- Easter - Witnesses
- The Crucifixion
- The Resurrection



More...

We have featured just a sample of the material available. All resources are available on CD or via email. For more information, email Owen and Stephen on shelleyandson@hotmail.com.

The CD contains a variety of resources to assist with children's ministry:

- 14 interactive revision quiz games
- interactive talks - Life of Joseph, Life of Moses, Life of Jesus, Life of Paul
- puppetry resources
- teaching aids.

Cost: \$17 + postage.

(an order form can be downloaded from the website)

The Shelley and Son website,

<http://sites.google.com/site/shelleyandson>, has a range of other materials that can be downloaded free of charge:

- quick sketch notes
- biblical plays
- children's ministry talk outlines
- puppetry resources
- contacts.



Education Week

Education Week 2010 will run from Monday 2nd to Friday 6th August. This year the focus will be on NSW public schools - leading the way, featuring the Year of Learning for Sustainability.

Information on Education Week events can be found on the NSW Public Schools website at www.schools.nsw.edu.au/events/eduweek/index.php.

The order of service will be available via the Religious Education page of the Curriculum Support website, at www.curriculumsupport.education.nsw.gov.au/policies/religion/index.htm.

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