

Using an Authorised Curriculum and Lesson Planning

The Department of Education (DoE) regulations for SRE have three main requirements:

- ❖ **Churches or SRE Providers must be approved (have the approval of the Minister for Education to deliver SRE)**
- ❖ **SRE teachers (catechists) must be authorised**
- ❖ **Curriculum- materials and pedagogy- must be authorised**

NOTE- The DoE does not approve or authorise people or programs; that is the responsibility of the provider. The Diocese of Wagga Wagga is a provider of SRE.

It is the responsibility of the SRE Provider (Diocese of Wagga Wagga) to:

- ❖ Authorise the materials and pedagogy used by SRE teachers
- ❖ Provide an annual assurance to the NSW DoE that authorised teachers are only using materials and pedagogy authorised by the provider
- ❖ Make lesson content accessible on a website or at least provide a program outline and curriculum scope and sequence documents
- ❖ Provide information about the content of lessons when requested by parents/caregivers/principals

(Religious Education Implementation Procedures document, DoE)

STRUCTURE OF SRE

SRE classes may take the form of Catholic SRE classes or Joint-denominational SRE.

It is preferred that where possible we provide Catholic SRE classes, thus enabling us to teach a Catholic program.

- Catholic programs are based on the Bible and the Catechism. They provide an education not only in Scripture, but also in the Liturgical and Sacramental life of the Church, Mary and the Saints and various aspects of faith that come from Tradition.
- Protestant programs (used for Joint-denominational SRE) are based on the Bible.

The curriculum or program offers a support and framework for SRE teachers. It provides background notes, suggested resources and age appropriate teaching and learning activities for SRE teachers. The programs we use in Catholic SRE have been developed based on the Catholic School RE syllabus. The theological content is based on the Catechism. The programs have been developed by Religious Education professionals who have a good knowledge and understanding of child development and the way children learn. The curriculum is age appropriate in terms of the content and in terms of the pedagogy/methodology; that is, the suggested teaching strategies and activities are suited to developmental stage of the children.

One of the benefits of the curriculum is that it provides a sequence of learning for students as they progress in their knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. By following the authorised curriculum the SRE teacher is building on the previous learning of the child and

avoids repetition for students. When SRE teachers in a parish are following the same curriculum, it is easier for the children transition to the next Year Level or Stage.

By looking at the Scope and Sequence in the Teacher's Manual, SRE teachers can see what ideas and concepts the children have covered in previous years, what they will cover in the present year and what they will do in the future. This should help SRE teachers to see that they can't teach everything to the children in one year, nor are they expected to. Learning happens over time and what some SRE teachers think they should be covering with the children in their class may be something that is covered by another SRE teacher at a different time in the child's development. Another benefit of following the curriculum is that when an SRE teacher is away for a week and has to ask someone to fill in, they are able to go to the next lesson and the outline is there ready to teach.

AUTHORISED CURRICULA FOR THE DIOCESE OF WAGGA WAGGA

For Catholic SRE classes the current authorised programs are:

- Christ Our Light and Life (COLAL)
- Walking with Jesus
- Faith and Life Series

The current recommended Joint-denominational SRE programs are Connect and Godspace.

- No other programs are to be used by SRE teachers in our diocese.
- **SRE teachers are not allowed to develop and teach their own curriculum, they must teach the authorised curriculum.**

THE CURRICULUM- A CLOSER LOOK

Most parishes are currently using Christ Our Light and Life (COLAL) as their program. So, when looking at the curriculum and how to use it we will be using Christ Our Light and Life as our model. The components we look at in Christ Our Light and Life will be present in the other curricula, but they may use different terminology. For the purpose of this training you will need to complete the activities based on Christ Our Light and Life.

It is important that every SRE teacher have a Teacher's Manual and is working from that manual to teach the students. It is important for SRE teachers to develop a good understanding of the curriculum in order to teach it effectively.

Christ Our Light and Life has a Teacher's Manual and Student Workbooks following the NSW Year Levels and Stages:

- Kinder (Early Stage 1)
- Year 1 (Stage 1A)

- Year 2 (Stage 1B)
- Year 3 (Stage 2A)
- Year 4 (Stage 2B)
- Year 5 (Stage 3A)
- Year 6 (Stage 3B)

There are also Teacher's Manuals for High School classes.

The Teacher's Manuals and Student Workbooks can be ordered through the Archdiocese of Sydney.

It is not always possible to teach the Year Levels separately; often classes are combined at least in Stages.

- Kinder (Early Stage 1)
- Stage 1 (Year 1/2)
- Stage 2 (Year 3/4)
- Stage 3 (Year 5/6)

When this is the case you are able to teach the curriculum using a Year A/Year B cycle. This way the children do not repeat the same lessons. For example, in a Year 1/2 class you would teach from the Year 1 Manual the first year and the children would all use the matching Year 1 workbook, and then the following year you would teach from the Year 2 Manual and all the children would use the matching Year 2 workbook.

In smaller places we often find classes combined K-2 and 3-6. We now have access to special workbooks for combined classes of this kind. In this situation, for the K-2 class you would follow a Year A/B cycle using the Year 1 and Year 2 Teacher's Manual alternate years. The children in Years 1/2 would use the same workbook to match the Teacher's Manual, as in a normal 1/2 class. The Kinder children, however, would have a different book that is printed in our Diocese. We now have a Kinder book that matches the Year 1 Manual and a Kinder book that matches the Year 2 Manual. This enables SRE teachers to teach from ONE manual to the whole class, but provides an age appropriate workbook for the Kinder children. The Teacher's Manual and Years 1/2 workbooks are purchased through the Sydney Diocese as usual. The special Kinder books are ordered through the Diocese of Wagga Wagga Catechist Coordinator.

In the case of 3-6 you work through a four-year cycle, again the children will not be repeating. For example, if you teach from the Year 3 Teacher's Manual, the children in Year 3 and Year 4 use the workbook that matches that manual, as in a normal 3/4 class. The children in Years 5/6, however, would have a special book that is printed in our Diocese to match the Year 3 Manual. The following year you would teach the Year 4 Manual, again the Year 3/4 children would have the workbook to match the manual and the Year 5/6 children would have a special book to match the Year 4 Manual. The following year you would teach the Year 5 Manual, the children in Year 5/6 would use the workbook to match the manual and the children in Year 3/4 would have a special book to match the Year 5 Manual, and the same with the following year when you teach from the Year 6 Manual.

The Teacher's Manuals and workbooks to match the manuals need to be ordered through Sydney as usual. The special books can be ordered through the Diocese of Wagga Wagga.

COMPONENTS OF THE CURRICULUM

In the Teacher's Manual you will find:

- **Foundational documents**- background material, philosophy, resources, contributors, processes involved in developing the program (see pages 1-5 of *Christ Our Light and Life Program Documents*)
- **Syllabus**- the systematic outline of intended learning (see pages 6-9 of *Christ Our Light and Life Program Documents*)
- **Scope and sequence**- A matrix or a table of strands, themes and ideas which are developed throughout the various ages and stages and class groups who will be presented the program (see pages 10-16)
- **Lessons**- teaching focus, learning outcomes, Catechism reference, Scripture and resources, lesson activities

LESSON AND PROGRAMMING CONSIDERATIONS:

When planning SRE teachers need to keep in mind the following:

- **For the Year:** consider liturgical seasons, when does Lent start? When does Easter and Pentecost fall? How many lessons do you have at the beginning of the year before Lent begins? How many lessons will you have leading up to Christmas? Are the children preparing for the Sacraments? Which term?
- **For the Term:** take a close look at what is happening in your school- e.g. sports carnivals, pupil free days, NAPLAN testing etc., how many lessons will you have? Are the children preparing for the Sacraments? Liturgical season and feasts?
- **Week by Week-** be responsive to your class and individual students.

Remember:

Most programs provide you with more lessons than you will have in the year. You can select the key lessons that meet the needs of the children in your class. Programs, such as *Christ Our Light and Life*, follow the Liturgical Year and provide a series of lessons for Lent, the Easter Season, Ordinary Time, Advent and Christmas. If you open your Teacher's Manual you should find a Contents page listing 32 Lesson topics. By looking ahead at the beginning of the year you can start to think about which lessons you are likely to teach in each term.

There is also flexibility of lesson order. When you look at the Contents page in your manual remember you don't necessarily have to teach the lessons in the order given. For example, you may be able to teach a series of lessons on a particular topic before the season of Lent begins, so you shift those lessons earlier in the term. Or perhaps Lent starts early, so you start with Lent and Easter and then go back and teach some of the lessons that you skipped at the beginning of the year.

When changing the lesson order, keep in mind that some lessons are designed to be taught together as a series on a 'topic/theme'.

Age Appropriate Plans

Children learn in different ways and have different capacities at different stages in their development. The classroom is made up of children with a variety of abilities and styles of learning and as the teacher we try to cater for their varying needs. This is an area we will explore further at the deanery training days, for the time being it is good for us to be aware that there are many factors that effect and influence the way children engage and learn in the classroom. Most of us would recognize some key differences between young students and older students. There are activities we can do with older children that younger children are not ready for yet. Younger students tend to be more sensorial and respond to things such as visual aids, or tactile objects and music etc.

In terms of lesson delivery, generally the younger the learner the more structured and routine the lesson needs to be and this is something to keep in mind when planning your lesson.

- **Young students-** greeting, presenting a story, directing them back to desks to do some bookwork and concluding the lesson in prayer.
- **Older students-** introduction to the lesson that involves a question and answer, tapping into life experience. Present a teaching of the Church or Gospel, moving on to an analysis of that story or teaching through a written reflection or discussion.

Lesson Structure

The Teacher's Manual provides 32 lesson outlines with suggested teaching and learning activities and strategies that are appropriate to the stage of development. Each lesson has a number and a title.

Please look at Christ Our Light and Life lesson sample: **1A Lesson 26 THE MAN WHO SAID 'THANK YOU'** (download from the website)

You will notice that the first page is background information for the SRE teacher. The Teaching Focus and Learning Outcomes (*highlighted in yellow*) are important for understanding the main focus and purpose of the lesson. The teaching and learning activities in the lesson are designed to meet these key understandings and outcomes. When choosing resources and making any modifications to the lesson you need to ensure that what you are doing is still keeping with the focus and outcomes as outlined in the curriculum for that lesson and is age appropriate.

A catechism reference, Scripture passage and list of highly recommended resources are also included for your information. Sometimes it may not be possible to obtain the suggested resources, but you may have another suitable resource. It is important when choosing a resource to use in a lesson that it be age appropriate and that it meet the key learning focus and outcomes of the lesson. It is easy for teachers to get carried away with a good resource, but the resource itself has little to do with meeting the outcomes of the lesson.

The Teacher's Manual provides a lesson outline with teaching and learning activities/strategies. Sometimes there are choices, for example you could proclaim the Scripture story through telling the story in your own words or through using a story script and simple materials.

There may be some choices as to how the children respond to the Scripture, for example completing the activity in the student workbook or participating in a role-play. As the SRE teacher you are responsible for reading through the lesson as outlined in the curriculum and making choices about which of the suggested teaching and learning activities you plan to use with your particular class. These choices that you make are your way of using the curriculum to create a lesson plan for your class.

You will notice in Christ Our Light and Life that duration of time (*highlighted in green*) is provided for each section of the lesson. This is a guide and does not need to be strictly followed. The lessons in K-2 are broken into four steps: Telling the Story, Reflecting on the Story 'I wonder..', Proclaiming the Word and Response. You may find it easier to follow a simple 3-part lesson structure linking the 'Telling the Story' and 'Proclaiming the Word' together. You may also choose to proclaim more of the Scripture, as found in the teacher's background notes, rather than the small part in the lesson outline, depending on your class and the particular Scripture passage.

Simple Lesson Structure:

Introduction

- Recall what we did the previous week, revision of previous learning helps it to sink in
- Introducing the lesson topic- today we are going to hear about...

Body/development- input and response (develop the topic- eg by proclaiming and reflecting on the story- including the I wonder questions, student's response through an activity such as a page in their workbook)

Conclusion- recall the key points of the lesson, what have we learnt?

Prayer- this can be at the beginning and/or at the end of the lesson

The lessons in the Years 3-6 Manuals are broken into three phases- Orientation Phase, Development Phase and Synthesis Phase. Again, you could follow a simple 3-part lesson structure:

Simple Lesson Structure:

Introduction- revision of previous lesson/learning and introducing the topic for the day

Body/Development- the input and student response- activities from the Development Phase and Synthesis Phase

Conclusion- recapping and summarizing what we have learnt

Prayer- beginning and/or end of lesson

Remember- you don't have to do everything that is in the lesson, there may not be enough time. Most SRE lessons are 30 minutes, but by the time the students come in and settle it is rare to have 30 mins of teaching time. You need to select the activities that will allow you to teach a cohesive lesson within the time frame. You may even choose to teach a particular lesson over two lessons.

Lesson Planning Considerations:

- Think about your students (class, groups within that class, individuals), there may be particular activities that appeal to particular students or groups. With experience this will become easier
- Your own maturity, confidence, experience, formation and training as a catechist will influence your lesson planning and delivery. As you grow in confidence you will be able to try different types of activities with the students
- Setting- local culture, school, Stage or Year Level, class- things can change dramatically from day to day, from week to week; the more attuned you are to what is happening in the school and in the class, the more adaptable you will be to their learning needs
- The program you use- each has a certain style or model of RE, which influences the way teaching happens.
- A good program varies its style from lesson to lesson, varying for you as a catechist and for the learning styles of the students
- Preparation- this is important, it takes time and prayer
- Flexibility- adaptation is important. All the planning can go out the window very quickly. We learn to adapt as we get more confident and have more experience

(CCRESS Online Training Module)

7 Steps Preparation:

1. Be prayerful- pray for guidance, this is God's work, not ours
2. Read the teacher's manual, this is material tried and tested. Read next week's lesson ahead sit with it a day or week before let material soak in.
3. Choose learning activities (most have choices), with experience and as you get to know children you will learn to choose the activities that suit them best.
4. Consider Prayer Opportunities- prayer is fundamental to what we do.
5. Select resources- you're a facilitator not a lecturer, you're not the only resource in the classroom, students engage in visual aids, interactive resources etc.
6. Rehearse storytelling, input and questioning
7. Pray for support as you go to lesson- call upon the Holy Spirit

(CCRESS Online Training
Module)

RESOURCES:

- Need to be selected carefully with the learning outcomes as your criteria
- It's easy to get caught up in a resource, ask yourself- does this resource meet the learning outcomes of the lesson?
- Many programs have specific resources designed for lessons (Program Specific)
- Other resources- when choosing your own, be careful about the selection- is it appropriate for this age group? For this lesson?
- Check resources- especially audio-visual to make sure they work
- Have a back-up plan when using ICT or DVD, just in case the equipment doesn't work
- Some programs have extension material for students to take home, or additional resources on their website

Points to Remember:

- ❖ You're following a curriculum, the student workbook is a resource, they don't have to record everything in the book each week
- ❖ Be mindful of the liturgical season and special feast days in the Church

PRAYER:

Prayer is an important part of every SRE lesson. You can choose to pray at the beginning or conclusion of the lesson, or both.

At the back of the Student workbooks there are two pages titled 'Treasury of Prayers'. You can direct the students to the back of their workbooks when teaching them to pray so they have the words in front of them. There is also a prayer at the bottom of the student workbook page for every lesson.

It is recommended that you create a simple prayer space, using a prayer cloth, candle (possibly battery operated), Bible and one simple picture/image or object that is relevant to the lesson theme. Keep the space simple, not cluttered with too many objects and images.

You could invite the students to help set up the prayer space. If you use it at the conclusion of the lesson, you could ask a student who finishes their work early to set up the space.

EXAMPLE OF WRITING A LESSON PLAN

On the following page is an example of a lesson plan written for a Year 1/2 class using the COLAL **1A Lesson 26 THE MAN WHO SAID 'THANK YOU'** lesson sample (download from the website).

One of the activities you will do on the Response Sheet for this training module is to write a lesson plan (or lesson notes) based on a given lesson sample from COLAL. The following page is a model to help guide you when it is your turn. The lesson notes in the example are detailed, the notes you take to help prepare a lesson become shorter and simpler as you become more confident over time.

Name of Program: Christ Our Light and Life (COLAL)		Stage: 1A Year Level: 1/2
Lesson Number: 26	Lesson Title: THE MAN WHO SAID 'THANK YOU'	
Teaching Focus: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are many times when we can say 'thank you' to express gratitude for a person's actions or words • God loves all people • We should always show genuine gratitude for the blessings God bestows upon us 		Learning Outcomes: Students will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen and respond to the story of The Man Who Said Thank You • Consider and discuss times they have said thank you to others • Name some of the many gifts God has given them and suggest how they can thank God for these gifts
Lesson notes (key points and questions) Introduction: (recall previous learning, introduce the topic for the day) Recall previous lesson- Who can remember what we talked about last week? What did Jesus say the Kingdom of God was like? What was the greatest treasure? Introduce theme of being thankful Show the children a 'Thank you' card Why do you think I bought this card? Who do you think I will give it to? When have you thanked someone or when has someone thanked you? How did it feel to thank someone? How did it feel when someone thanked you? Body: (develop the topic, student response) Today we are going to hear a story from the Bible about Jesus and someone who said thank you. Read the Scripture of the Ten Lepers Lk 17:12-19 (leprosy- a dreaded skin disease) I wonder: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • why people would be afraid to go near a leper • why the lepers asked Jesus to help them • how the lepers felt when they were healed • why only one of them came back to thank Jesus • what you think he said to Jesus • what you would say • how Jesus felt when the man thanked him In the story the man who thanked Jesus praised God. We can see how filled with gratitude he was- he was so grateful. There are many things we can thank God for. I wonder how often we remember to thank God for all His wonderful gifts. Let's make a list of some of the things we can thank God for- invite the children to contribute, list on the board. Students may think of particular times when we thank God, eg grace before meals. How can we thank God for all these wonderful gifts? Prayer Response- worksheet- students make a card either writing or drawing the things they would like to thank God for. May use ideas we listed on the board together. Early finishers can do page 54 and 55 in their workbooks Conclusion: (summarize/recall key learning for the lesson) Invite the children to share their cards with each other and what they would like to thank God for. So, what can we learn from the example of the man who thanked Jesus? That we should remember to always thank God for His gifts. How can we thank God? Prayer		
Resources: Thank-you card, worksheets, Thank-you God song card and stand, Bible, prayer cloth, candle, workbooks, pencils, whiteboard and whiteboard maker		Prayer: Opening prayer- Sign of the Cross and Lord's Prayer Concluding prayer- Thank you God song