

CONNECTIONS

2026
TERM 4

6-7 SPIRITUALITY
8-9 COPY'N'KEEP
10 CURRICULUM
11 STORYTELLING
14 JUSTICE & PEACE



VOL 30
ISSUE 4



Advent and Christmas



Taking the Gospel to the World

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Taking the Gospel to the World

FROM THE

Catechists sharing

As we approach the seasons of Advent and Christmas, it is a perfect time to reflect on the impact of your ministry and the joy you bring to your SRE classrooms.

As the calendar turns towards the final months of 2026, we notice a shift occurring in our classrooms and indeed in our communities and families. The hint of anticipation that comes with the change of season hangs in the Spring air. This season marks a beautiful moment in the ministry of the catechist as we draw closer to Advent - a time of waiting, longing, and preparing our hearts for the profound joy of Christmas.

As we await this time together, it is timely to pause and say two important words to you our devoted SRE catechists – THANK YOU!!!

To be a catechist is to answer a profound call to holiness. Week after week, you generously volunteer your time, your energy and your heart to nurture the seeds of faith in the younger generation of Catholics. You step into the classrooms not merely as SRE teachers delivering a curriculum, but as catechists witnessing to the Gospel.

Through your patience, your creativity and your very presence you make the love of God tangible for the students. You answer difficult questions, comfort anxious hearts, provide hope in a troubled world, and celebrate the growth of understanding and grace in young hearts. Please never underestimate the ripple effect of your generosity. The faith you share today becomes the foundation for a lifetime of relationship with Christ. For every lesson planned, every prayer prayed and every smile extended – we are profoundly grateful.

As we stand on the cusp of Advent, in a world that rushes headlong into the commercial frenzy of Christmas as early as October, your role as a catechist becomes even more necessary. You are called to invite your students into a holy pause....

Advent provides a space for hope, peace, joy and love. By introducing the symbolism of the Advent wreath, sharing the stories of the prophets, and exploring the virtues of patience, you help students build a stable within their own souls to welcome the Christ child at Christmas.

Because of your ministry, the Nativity story will not just be an ancient tale to tell our students, it will be a living, breathing reality. Help them understand that Emmanuel means “God is with us” – right here, right now, in the lived experience of their lives.

As you lead your students towards the manger, my prayer for you is that you also find time to rest in the light of Christ this Advent. May the message of hope, peace, joy and love that you teach the students fill your own homes and hearts this Christmas season.

Thank you for being the hands, the feet, and the voice of Christ to our Catholic students in the public schools of the Diocese of Broken Bay. You are a true blessing, and I pray that God abundantly rewards your generosity.

And last but not least, we farewell Maricel, who has been such an integral part of our CCD team in her role as Admin and Compliance Officer. Maricel has brought so much to our team — her joy, humour, care and prayerfulness have been a gift to us all. Her presence has made a real difference, and we will miss her very much. While we are sad to see her leave CCD, we are delighted that she will remain part of the Diocese as she begins her new role in the Finance team. We wish her every blessing and all the very best for this next chapter!

Alison Newell

**Make sure you read this
important information
about Digital
Declarations**

HEAD OF CCD

in the light of Christ



OUR NEWEST CCD TEAM MEMBER

CCD is delighted to welcome **Joanne Helm** as a new Regional Coordinator for the Central Coast Deanery.

Bringing a wealth of pastoral experience, a deep personal faith, and a commitment to Catholic religious education, Jo is uniquely equipped to lead, support, and inspire our dedicated community of SRE Coordinators and Catechists at the northern end of the Central Coast Deanery. Jo will work alongside Michael Tebbutt who will continue as a Regional Coordinator on the Central Coast looking after the parishes in the southern end of the deanery.



In this new role, Jo will serve as a primary point of contact and support for Parish Priests and Parish Catechist Coordinators. Responsibilities will include facilitating catechist training and formation opportunities, providing curriculum support, and fostering strong collaborative partnerships between parishes and public schools, and the families of Catholic students.

Jo's approach is rooted in the Diocese's mission of proclaiming the Good News of Jesus in our words and actions. She is eager to walk alongside our volunteers, offering both spiritual formation and practical classroom strategies to ensure our SRE programs continue to flourish. Welcome to the CCD team Jo. We look forward to working with you for many years to come.

Keeping Our Students Safe

As the year draws to a close, I'd like to thank every SRE Catechist and Parish Catechist Coordinator for your ongoing commitment to keeping the students in our SRE classes safe.

You may recently have received an email from the Department of Education asking you to complete a digital declaration and provide your Working with Children Check number and date of birth. This is an additional measure to strengthen child safety in our public schools.

We hope this change has not caused confusion. Your parish remains responsible for checking your WWCC, as it is the parish, rather than the school, that engages you in ministry. The Department has introduced this additional process following a change in government legislation.

If you have not yet completed the digital declaration, please check your Inbox for an email from wwcc@det.nsw.edu.au. If you cannot find it, please check your junk or spam folder. Each email is personalised and cannot be shared.

Once you have submitted the declaration, please take **photo ID** with you the next time you visit your school. The school will use this to complete the process in its system. If they don't ask for it, please let them know you have been directed to provide photo ID.

These ongoing improvements to child safety standards help ensure the safety of all students in our schools. We are grateful to work alongside the Department as these measures continue to strengthen.

If you have any questions about the digital declaration, please feel free to give me a call.

TERM 4 SPECIAL DATES

Wednesday 28 October

Feast of Saints Simon and Jude, Apostles

Sunday 1 November

All Saints Day

Monday 2 November

All Souls Day

Monday 9 November

The Dedication of the Lateran Basilica

Sunday 22 November

Our Lord Jesus Christ, King of the Universe

Sunday 29 November

First Sunday of Advent

Monday 30 November

Saint Andrew the Apostle

Sunday 6 December

Second Sunday of Advent

Tuesday 8 December

The Immaculate Conception of The Blessed Virgin Mary



As we enter Term 4, even though the pace is ramping up towards Christmas, perhaps take a moment to pause, give thanks and recognise what God has been doing through you.

Every time you step into a classroom, welcome a student, share Scripture, ask a thoughtful question or listen, you are helping a young person encounter God's love, know that Jesus is real and that they belong within the family of God. Seeds are planted quietly, and God is at work in ways we cannot see.

Things we could reflect on could be: "Did something happen in this child?" Did they become curious? Feel welcomed? Discover something about Jesus? Experience prayer? Ask a genuine question? Choose to forgive? Notice another person's needs? Want to pray? Want to come back?

Recently, students in my class who are preparing in the parish for First Holy Communion, shared what they had been learning. It was so lovely to see them animated and excited about receiving Jesus and telling other students about it – being little Catechists themselves. It made my heart smile and I gave thanks again for this wonderful ministry we serve in.

As we reflect, where have we seen God at work? What seed might He be inviting us to plant next? Perhaps it's helping with recruitment and tapping someone on the shoulder. Trust who God leads you to.

Thank you for your faithfulness and generosity. May Term 4 bring renewed energy and many blessings.

Whilst entering the final term of the year, it is worth taking a moment to stop and reflect on how far our students have come.

Think back to your first SRE lesson of the year. Where did your class begin? What did they know about Jesus, prayer, Scripture and our faith? How have they grown since then? Perhaps there have been moments when a child surprised you with a thoughtful question, remembered something from a previous lesson, joined in prayer, or began to see the connection between Jesus and their own lives.

Growth doesn't always happen in big, obvious ways. Sometimes it is found in a child who becomes more confident, more curious, more compassionate or simply more willing to listen.

And what about you? How have you grown as a Catechist this year? Perhaps you have become more confident in leading prayer, more comfortable with Scripture, better at managing your class or more willing to try something new. Maybe you have discovered that God can work through the lessons and moments you thought had little impact.

A growth mindset invites us to see teaching and learning as a journey. We don't need to have everything perfect. We are continually learning, adapting and growing — alongside the children we serve.

As we approach Christmas and the summer holidays, let's make every lesson count. Our prayer is that the children leave our SRE classes not simply knowing more about Jesus, but knowing Him a little more deeply. Every lesson is another opportunity for growth.

As my time with the CCD team draws to a close, I wanted to take a moment to look back with immense gratitude on my journey with you all.

From my humble beginnings as a Catechist Coordinator of Chatswood Parish and Support Officer of Lindfield Killara Parish, to my time supporting you directly on the CCD team as an Administrative Assistant and eventually Compliance Officer, it has been an absolute privilege to be a part of this wonderful ministry with you. Supporting the CCD team and working alongside such dedicated coordinators and catechists has been an incredibly rewarding experience.

In my roles, I have had the privilege of seeing firsthand the immense passion and dedication you pour into this ministry. Thank you for your shared devotion to nurturing the faith of our children. You do not just teach lessons; you share the living Gospel through your words and actions. The seeds of faith you have planted in this younger generation will continue to grow for years to come.

Thank you for your patience, cooperation, and warmth as we worked together to ensure our program remains safe, organised, and running smoothly. Your unwavering dedication to our students will remain a constant inspiration to me.

While I am stepping away from the daily operations of the CCD team, I am incredibly glad that I am staying within our wonderful Diocese of Broken Bay. I look forward to crossing paths with many of you in my new capacity with the Finance team, and I hope to see you at the upcoming CCD Annual Mass and Presentation of Awards.

Thank you for your support, your friendship, and your shared devotion to this vital mission. Please know that you and your ministries will always remain in my prayers.

With warm regards and every blessing,

Sue-Anne Sherwood
NORTHERN BEACHES

Kristy Komadina
NORTH SHORE

Maricel Malapira
SIGNING OFF!



Winter seems to have gone on forever, and suddenly it is Spring!

For many schools, Term 3 can feel long and uninspiring. For SRE Catechists, however, it is an opportunity to offer lessons of accompaniment and hope. The coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, the healing stories of the Gospels and our lessons on the Sacraments all proclaim the Good News.

I hope you enjoyed a refreshing break over the school holidays and are feeling renewed for the final term. With some schools having only a limited number of lessons remaining, now is the time to plan ahead so that the Good News of Christmas can be shared before SRE finishes for the year.

School Christmas assemblies are also a wonderful opportunity to share the Christian story creatively with larger groups of students. *Walking with Jesus* offers a different perspective on the Nativity for each stage: Kindergarten explores Mary and Joseph's obedience; Stage 1 follows Luke's Gospel; Stage 2 introduces the Magi; and Stage 3 looks at the prophets who foretold the coming of the Messiah and the ministry of John the Baptist.

In our increasingly secular society, we may be proclaiming the Christmas story to children who have never heard it before. As Catechists, we are called to remain faithful to Scripture and Tradition, following the aims and discipleship responses of each lesson. Our own witness and ongoing formation also enrich this important ministry.

May our prayer and participation in parish life continue to nourish our faith as we prepare to proclaim the coming of Baby Jesus to the children and families we serve.

Welcome back to Term 4!

Term Three has been a busy one with the weeks flying by and now it is time to look forward to Term Four. In Term Four we spend a significant time looking forward to Advent and Christmas, with the preparation of the Christmas Assembly to celebrate the year with the children and complete the classes with a celebration of the birth of Christ.

For ourselves, we anticipate the Advent Reflection Day, when we can step out of the busyness of life and reflect on how we, after preparing the children to celebrate the birth of Jesus, can prepare ourselves for the celebration of the coming of the Christ Child into the world.

Now is the time to invite those people of your parish whom you think would be great catechists to join the ministry and to do the CCD MI so they may accompany you into the classroom and share the joy of the Gospel with the children. It is also time for us who have been teaching this year to step back and thank God for the wonders that have been revealed to us by the children's innocence and honesty, and for the insights we have gained of our faith through our lesson preparation and teaching.

I thank you, the Broken Bay catechists, for your generosity and enthusiasm that you give freely to the children and each other in this ministry. May you be blest in Term 4 and refreshed over the summer holidays to continue again in 2027.

Welcome to Term 4. As we swiftly approach the end of the year, it's time to pause, reflect and realise what an impact you have had on the lives of the children you teach.

It was lovely to see many of you at our Ongoing Safeguarding training in the school holidays. Thank you to those who came along to renew this important training. It was a particularly big group due for this unit this year, so we're grateful for your attendance and participation.

Term 3 was a relatively quiet term for training, but we did finish our Level 1 Zoom sessions and Workshops. Twenty catechists completed our Level 1 'Tools for the Classroom' course and will receive their certificates later this year. We're encouraged by their enthusiasm to learn and put their new skills to use in the classroom.

In Term 4, we will be offering our CCD Ministry Induction course again via Zoom on Monday mornings. This course is for new catechists and those with Provisional Authorisation who might need to complete one or more units. Those who need to do this course have been contacted, and I invite them to register by emailing registrations@bbcatholic.org.au or call 02 8379 1643.

Don't forget to head to our website to download our Walking With Jesus Cycle A Powerpoints and Quizzes. Click here to access them: <https://www.bbcatholic.org.au/mission/ccd/curriculum/walking-with-jesus-powerpoint/walking-with-jesus-powerpoints>

Wishing you all a wonderful Term 4

John Donnelly
NORTH SHORE

Michael Tebbutt
CENTRAL COAST

Alicia Klein
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Less Shouting, More Sharing:

Managing your students begins outside the classroom! When your students gather from all over the school to begin their Catholic SRE lesson, they often have to wait for the classroom to empty of the previous group. While they wait, it is easy for them to become rowdy and unsettled. If you let them charge into the room without intervening, you have already set a chaotic tone for your lesson. Instead, you need to calm your students and establish order right from the start.

I find that spending up to five minutes getting the children to settle, form two neat lines, and listen to your directions is incredibly important.

"But that is wasting precious time!" I hear you say. *"We only have 20 or 25 minutes to teach them!"*

Do not think of this as wasting time, but rather as investing it. If you practice this routine—quietening your students and guiding them into the classroom in an orderly fashion to their assigned seats—the children will soon do it automatically. Within a few weeks, it will take less than two minutes to get settled once the previous class leaves.

Now that you are in the room, there is an important step you can take that may not be in the lesson plan, but shows how deeply you care for your students: you need to teach and model your expectations for the lesson.

For example, if you are teaching about how Jesus cared for the sick, ask the students about how they were cared for the last time they were too unwell to come to school. Who looked after them? What did that person do? How did it feel to be cared for? If you always begin your lesson with prayer, include an intention for people you know who are currently sick. You might invite the students to name these people aloud. This creates a beautiful, prayerful way of setting the tone for the day.

I have found that if students receive their workbooks as soon as they enter the room, they tend to get distracted. They start flicking through the pages and solving puzzles while the lesson is being presented and stories are being read. To prevent this, hold onto the books until it is time to complete the specific workbook activity. Removing this distraction helps keep them fully engaged in the core presentation.

For instance, in the **Stage 1 Cycle A** lesson **"Care and Share"**, the topic is based on the story of Jesus visiting Martha and Mary. Martha went to the kitchen to work, while Mary sat and listened to Jesus. The activity for this lesson is a simple coloring page. If the students have their books from the start, some will inevitably begin coloring before this brief story is even finished.

In my class, before I distribute the books, I ask a few comprehension questions to ensure the students have understood the story. Then, I invite three volunteers to dramatize the scene while the rest of the class "directs" the actors by telling them what to do next. This keeps the whole class active in recalling the story and acting it out.



Practical Tips for Peaceful Lessons

While students are busy completing their workbook activities, make sure to move around the room to ensure everyone stays on task. This is the perfect time to answer individual questions, give gentle reminders to anyone drifting off, and scan the room to make sure everything is running smoothly.

As you move about, ask students critical thinking questions to strengthen their comprehension. Use "how" and "why" questions to ensure you are actively working toward the aim of the lesson. When students are paying attention and working well, compliment them. At the end of the lesson, award them a sticker so the whole class can see that engagement is rewarded. Soon, more students will aim for these stickers, and managing the class will become much easier each week.

When preparing your materials, remember that while you must teach to achieve the core aim, you can always add secondary activities that appeal to your specific group. In other words, make the lessons fun. After all, didn't Pope Francis write the apostolic exhortation titled *The Joy of the Gospel*?

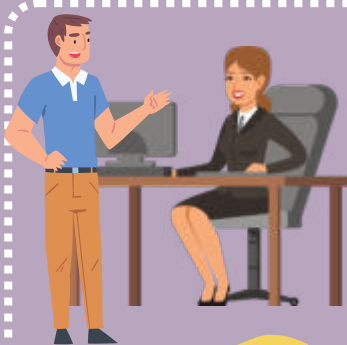
Another excellent way to reinforce a Bible story is to use a selection of pictures depicting different scenes from the text. Once the story is told and briefly discussed, distribute the pictures randomly. Have those students stand at the front of the room, showing their images. The students remaining in their seats must then work together to rearrange their peers into the correct chronological order. To conclude the activity, have each student holding a picture describe what is happening in it, and let the class judge how well the story was retold. This is always a popular activity that involves everyone, leaving very little downtime for students to become disengaged or disruptive.

One final strategy I use to regain attention when students are working individually or in small groups is the clapping attention-grabber. Clapping a simple rhythmic pattern that the students then repeat works wonders. You can repeat the same pattern or introduce a variation for them to copy. Nine times out of ten, this successfully refocuses the room. If they are still a bit chatty, perform a third rhythmic clap, raise your hand to shoulder height, and slowly lower it while wriggling your fingers and whispering, "Shhhh." The class will copy the action, and a calm quiet will fall over the room. You likely know a few variations of this yourself—do not be afraid to use them!

These fairly simple teaching strategies and attention-grabbers are highly effective ways to bring your lessons alive. Best of all, because the students are actively engaged, classroom management becomes much easier. Everyone knows exactly what to do, allowing you—their catechist and the face and hands of Jesus—to guide them without ever having to raise your voice.

Michael Tebbutt

CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL COORDINATOR



A Safeguarding Reminder

Remember, as an SRE catechist, you have a dual reporting responsibility if a child or young person discloses an abuse during your class or if you are concerned that a child or young person is at significant risk of harm.

Please ensure that you go straight to the school office before you leave the school and report to the Principal in person what has been said to you or what your concern might be. Simply mention to the office staff that it's a child protection matter and you will be seen immediately.

Once reported to the Principal, ring the Head of CCD and report. It is important not to email in your initial report to the Principal or the Head of CCD, just in case the email bounces into the wrong mailbox or doesn't get seen immediately. You might then be asked to email with the details, but in the first instance, please report face-to-face to the Principal and by phone to the Head of CCD.

Thank you for your ongoing commitment to Safeguarding children and young people.

Alison Newell - 0424 737 911





1. MARY'S ADVENT STORY

Put the pictures in the correct order by numbering 1-4



God gives Mary a promise.



Mary trusts God.



Mary prays in Nazareth.



Gabriel greets Mary.

2. FAITH MAZE

Help Mary find God's message!

START



FINISH



3. THINK & WRITE

How can you trust God this Advent?



"I am the Lord's servant."

LUKE 1:38



I SPY

The Nativity!

Can you find these things?



Baby Jesus

☐


Mary

☐


Joseph

☐


Angel

☐


Star

☐


Shepherd

☐


Sheep

☐


Wise Man

☐


Gift

☐


Camel

☐


Palm Tree

☐


★ ★ How many can you find? ★ ★















Jesus is the greatest gift of Christmas!



Curriculum Project Update

Walking With Jesus: Your Feedback Is Shaping the Next Chapter

When we began reviewing *Walking With Jesus*, we knew that one of our greatest resources was already sitting in our classrooms: the experience of our catechists. Over the past year, we have been gathering feedback from catechists about what is working well, what could be improved and where they would like to see the curriculum develop. During our recent Ongoing Curriculum training, experienced catechists were invited to share specific and practical feedback about their experience of using *Walking With Jesus*.

The response has been fantastic. So far, we have analysed **501 individual comments from 36 different sources**, including Conversations in the Spirit sessions, evaluation forms, parish feedback and emails. And this is only the beginning—we will continue collecting and analysing feedback over the next two years.

So, what are you telling us?

Perhaps the most encouraging finding is that the feedback strongly affirms the **way** we teach. Storytelling, drama, role-play, props, activities and music consistently emerged as strengths. Catechists told us that these approaches engage students, support memory and bring energy and joy into the classroom. Storytelling, in particular, was one of the most consistently praised elements of the curriculum.

The feedback is not suggesting that *Walking With Jesus* needs to be rebuilt from the ground up. Rather, it points us towards a curriculum that can be **deepened, strengthened and better resourced**.

Some of the clearest requests for development have been around **discipleship, theology, resources, differentiation** and **age-appropriateness**. Catechists are asking for more opportunities to help students move beyond simply knowing about their faith towards actually living it. They want students to **encounter Jesus**, make connections with their own lives and see what faith looks like in practice.

We are listening!

Our curriculum writing has now begun. We started with the Kindergarten lessons, and we are currently working through the Stage 1 Cycle A lessons.

The feedback collected from catechists is being brought directly into this review process. We are looking carefully at the comments, suggestions and observations—not just counting them, but considering what they tell us about the experience of teaching these lessons in real classrooms.

For example, Stage 1 generated the largest volume of positive feedback, with 65 comments identifying things that are working well. Catechists particularly valued the props, PowerPoints with embedded media, sacred space, simple activities, big storybooks, drama, songs and repetition. At the same time, they identified practical challenges such as the amount of content within the available time, the cost and inconvenience of printing, age-appropriate questioning and the difficulty of pitching lessons across mixed-ability classes.



We are also paying attention to the smaller details. Students have told us they enjoy particular videos, songs, mazes, crosswords, drawing activities and stories. Catechists have identified where a song is too long, where a question is too abstract, where a PowerPoint needs adjustment or where an activity could better suit the age group. These seemingly small pieces of feedback are incredibly valuable when we are trying to make lessons work well in an actual SRE classroom.

This is your curriculum too

One of the most important things we want catechists to know is that **your experience matters**.

We cannot improve *Walking With Jesus* from a desk. We need to know what happens when the lesson meets a room full of real children—with different personalities, different levels of faith knowledge, different abilities and sometimes very different ideas about what makes a good SRE lesson! So, as this project continues, please keep talking to us. Tell us what works. Tell us what doesn't. Tell us what your students love. Tell us where you struggle. Tell us what you think is missing.

We will keep listening, gathering the evidence and bringing that wisdom into the review.

***Walking With Jesus* is a living curriculum and its next chapter is being shaped by the people who use it.**

THERE'S MORE THAN ONE WAY TO BE A CATECHIST

When the Classroom Changes: Staying Connected to the Ministry of Catechists

It's that time of year again. The school year is winding down, Christmas is appearing in the shops far too early, and conversations about **"What are you doing next year?"** are beginning.

For some catechists, the answer is an easy one: **"I'll be back in my classroom!"** For others, a new season of life might mean that teaching every week is becoming more difficult, or perhaps no longer possible. But here's the good news: **there's more than one way to be a catechist.** Stepping back from weekly classroom ministry doesn't necessarily mean stepping away from the mission. Our gifts, experience and enthusiasm can continue to bless SRE in all sorts of ways.

Options for Involvement in the SRE Ministry

PRAYER MINISTRY FOR SRE

Pray intentionally for your local schools, the children and young people we serve, and the catechists who bring the Gospel into classrooms each week.

MENTORSHIP & SUPPORT

Your experience is valuable! Accompany a new catechist, help with lesson planning or resources, share your classroom wisdom, or simply be someone they can call when they need encouragement.

ADMINISTRATION & LOGISTICS

Help behind the scenes by sorting and organising student books and curriculum materials, or preparing newsletters, parish bulletin inserts and sacramental program notices.

COMMUNITY & OUTREACH

Prepare Christmas gifts or cards for students and schools. Get involved in recruitment. Encourage someone you know to consider becoming a catechist. Attend and actively participate in parish CCD meetings and help build a strong community around the ministry.



Of course we encourage you to keep teaching for as long as you're willing and able! If doing it alone is becoming more difficult, recruit yourself a helper or another existing catechist so you can co-teach and share the load.

Perhaps you have a particular gift that could be shared — music, drama, storytelling, craft, technology, organising... or simply the gift of making people feel welcome.

Most importantly, tell your story. Share what SRE and the ministry of catechists have meant to you. Your experience might be exactly what inspires someone else to say, "Maybe I could do that too."

There are seasons in ministry, just as there are seasons in life. Sometimes our role changes, but our mission doesn't.

You don't have to be standing in front of a classroom to keep bringing the Good News to others.

Retiring from the classroom doesn't necessarily mean retiring from the mission.

Writing the Word: When Scripture Becomes Art

What happens when students are invited to slow down, take a single Bible verse and turn it into a work of art? Our talented catechist **Michelle Chan** shares how in her Year 7 SRE class at Cheltenham Girls High School, biblical micrography became much more than a creative activity — it gave students a quiet and personal way to pray, reflect on God's Word and consider what it might be saying to them.

In Term 3, I introduced my Year 7 SRE class at Cheltenham Girls High School to a creative way of praying with the Bible: biblical micrography.

Earlier this year, during Lent, we had already explored the topic of prayer. This time, I wanted to reinforce that learning as we reflected on the journey from sin to change to forgiveness. When we have hurt someone or been hurt by others, changing our hearts and finding the courage to forgive or ask for forgiveness is not always easy. We talked about how, through prayer and the help of the Holy Spirit, we can ask God for the wisdom, strength and courage to make those changes.

I then introduced the girls to biblical micrography, an activity I first learnt about at a Secondary Teachers Conference two years ago. I was delighted to have the opportunity to bring the idea into my Scripture classroom.

We began by praying together. Each girl then chose a Bible verse. I asked them to imagine an image that the verse brought to mind. They sketched that image lightly in pencil and then, using a pen, wrote the Bible verse repeatedly in very small letters, carefully following the lines of their drawing. They continued writing the verse until the entire pencil drawing was covered in Scripture. Finally, they erased the pencil lines and, if they wished, added colour to their artwork.

What began as a drawing activity became a quiet opportunity to pray, reflect and engage personally with God's Word. The girls had to slow down, repeat the Scripture many times and think about what the words meant to them. Each finished piece was different, reflecting the individual way each girl had responded to the verse.

I am very happy to share some of their artwork with the community. I am also grateful for the Secondary Teachers Conference two years ago, where I first discovered biblical micrography.



Training and Formation

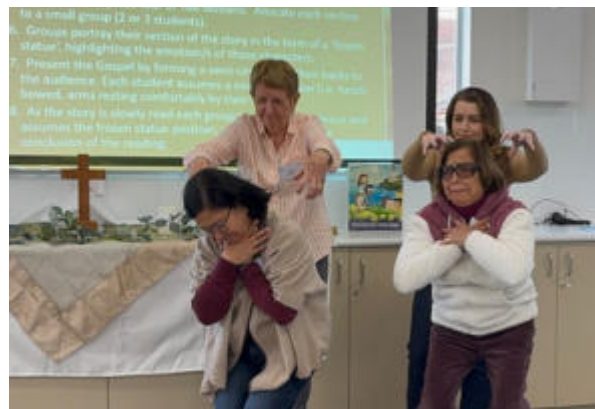
Music, Drama and Storytelling Workshops

Our recent Level 1 workshops across the regions were filled with laughter, creativity and plenty of opportunities to have a go! The joyful faces in these photos are a wonderful reminder that learning can — and should — be fun and engaging. Catechists explored practical skills in Music, Drama and Storytelling, discovering simple ways to bring SRE lessons to life and create memorable experiences for children.

The feedback was fantastic. One long-time catechist told us the training should be compulsory, having learned so many practical ways to enrich their lessons.

Another catechist shared: “It was an incredibly worthwhile commitment, delivered in a format which made it more interesting, more challenging, and more educational than a textbook otherwise would!”

Haven't completed Level 1 yet? Make sure you sign up next time it's offered!



Upcoming Formation & Training

This Advent, take a beautiful, sacred pause
Join us for a morning of peaceful prayer and sacred
crafting as we prepare our own hearts for the coming
of the Prince of Peace

Friday 27 November – Ambrose Centre, The
Entrance Parish

Monday 7 December – Magnificat Room,
Chatswood Parish

TIME: 10:00am – 2:00pm

PROGRAM

- | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|
| 10.00am | Advent Reflection Session |
| 11.00am | Morning Tea (catered) |
| 11.30am | Advent & Christmas Craft Stations |
| | Traditional Wreath Making |
| | Sacred Micrography |
| | Christmas Cards & Ornament Crafting |
| 1.00pm | Lunch (a delicious catered lunch) |

RSVP: REGISTRATIONS@BBCATHOLIC.ORG.AU
02 8379 1643

RSVP no later than 1 week prior to the event for catering and
resource allocation



Justice & Peace: Faith In Action

This term, **Michelle Chahine**, Justice & Peace Facilitator and Diocesan Director, Caritas Broken Bay, invites us to explore how **Catholic Social Teaching** can shape the way we see and respond to the world around us. Michelle reminds us that justice, peace, dignity, belonging and care for creation are not abstract ideas, but opportunities to put our faith into action, beginning with the small, practical choices we make each day.

As a Justice & Peace Facilitator, my role is about helping our Diocese connect our faith with the world around us — noticing what is happening in our communities, listening to the experiences of others, and asking how we, as people of faith, might respond.

At the heart of this work is Catholic Social Teaching, which gives us a beautiful lens through which to see the world. It reminds us of the inherent dignity of every person, our responsibility to one another, our care for creation, and our call to build communities where people experience justice, peace, dignity and belonging.

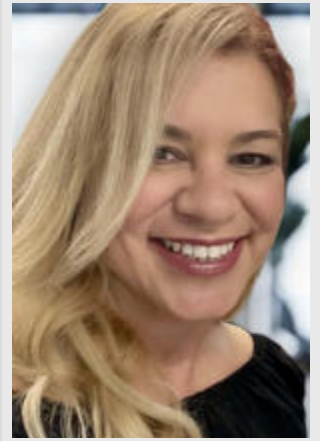
Justice and peace are not separate from our faith; they are part of the way we live the Gospel.

At its heart, this ministry is about honouring and upholding the dignity of each person, building relationships, listening, and responding when people or communities are experiencing injustice, exclusion or disadvantage and asking how we, as disciples of Jesus, might walk alongside them with compassion and hope.

In practice, this might take many different angles. It might be supporting parishes and schools with resources and formation, connecting people with organisations and groups already doing wonderful work in our communities, raising awareness around issues that affect our communities, or simply creating opportunities for people to come together, listen to one another and learn experiences perhaps different from their own.

Justice & Peace invites us to keep asking:

HOW DO WE BUILD COMMUNITIES WHERE EVERY PERSON FEELS THAT THEY BELONG, FEEL VALUED, THAT THEIR VOICE MATTERS AND THAT THEY HAVE A WORTHY PLACE AT THE TABLE?



For me personally, much of this graced ministry is about creating those connections and helping people recognise that our faith can be truly lived even in very simple, practical, and meaningful ways. It is about putting our faith into action, building relationships, and walking alongside one another as we work towards communities that are more welcoming, inclusive, peaceful, and just.

There are many things happening around us, and often the questions we encounter are not simply about issues or policies. They are about people, relationships and how we live together.

How might we remain connected in a time of division?

We could begin by creating spaces for respectful conversation, genuine listening, and dialogue. We may not always agree with one another, but we can continue to listen, remain open to the dignity of another person's experience, and always seek to understand rather than to judge. In doing so, we create communities where people can feel safe, heard, and respected, and where differences do not have to become barriers to relationship.

God calls us to look closely at those who might find difficulty in feeling they belong.

What does it truly mean to be a welcoming parish or school?

It can be as simple — and as profound — as noticing who is standing on the edge of the community, reaching out, making space, learning someone's name, and helping them know that they are genuinely welcome. Belonging is more than being invited through the door. It is knowing that there is a place for you once you arrive.

Our call to Justice & Peace also invites us to consider how we walk together with First Nations peoples through listening, truth-telling, reconciliation, and the building of genuine relationships. We can purposefully carve time to listen to stories and experiences and recognise that walking together is something we continue to learn and grow into. Our care for creation is also an expression of our care for one another.

How do we recognise our responsibility to our common home and to generations yet to come? Do we see ecological responsibility as part of our responsibility to one another and future generations?

Caring for creation is not simply about the environment around us. It is about recognising the interconnectedness of all life and responding with gratitude, responsibility, and hope. We can create awareness in the choices we make, how we lovingly care for creation and how we recognise the impact of our choices on others.

Justice & Peace also creates opportunities for ecumenical, interfaith and community partnerships — opportunities to meet one another with generosity of heart, compassion, and respect. It is about looking beyond statistics and headlines to the person, their dignity, and their story.

It is about moving beyond simply avoiding conflict and choosing to actively build relationships, understanding and, where possible, restoration. Together we can create communities where people feel safe, heard, and respected, and where we are willing to reach across differences, listen deeply and with intention and walk together.

These are not issues that sit somewhere outside our faith. They are part of the everyday life of our parishes, schools, families, and communities.

Catholic Social Teaching helps us to understand and respond to these realities through the heart of our faith. It continually brings us back to the dignity of every person, our responsibility to one another and our call to care for our common home. It gives us the sacred opportunities to ask ourselves, how I live the Gospel in a very real and practical way?

My focus is on helping to connect people, faith, and action across the Diocese of Broken Bay. This includes building the Justice & Peace Network across Broken Bay, supporting parish groups and people who are already putting faith into action, and creating opportunities for Catholic Social Teaching formation helps us connect faith within our everyday lives.

It includes Accessible Masses, Caritas and global solidarity, reconciliation and First Nations engagement, ecological conversion, and Season of Creation, as well as creating opportunities for ecumenical, Interfaith and community partnerships.

Catechists have a beautiful opportunity to help children discover that faith is something we live, not simply something we learn.

Keep it simple. Begin with things children might already understand - fairness, kindness, friendship, belonging, forgiveness, compassion, empathy and caring for others.

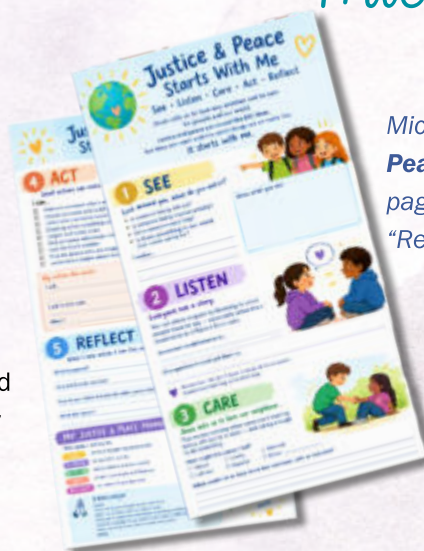
Tell stories. Ask questions. Give them something they can do. Create space for them to wonder, reflect, and share what they notice. Most of all, help children to understand that their actions matter. A kind word to a friend. An invitation to include a classmate. Standing beside a child who is feeling alone. Sharing what we have with others.

When we help children see the dignity and goodness in every person and give them opportunities to put their faith into action, we are helping them discover that they too have an important part to play in building a more compassionate, peaceful, and inclusive world. They are the beginnings of a life shaped by the Gospel.

Michelle Chahine

Justice & Peace Facilitator
Mission Broken Bay

Michelle has created “Justice and Peace Starts With Me” activity pages that you can find on the “Resources” page on our website.



We also have a primary school and high school lesson plans and PowerPoint resources from Catholic Mission available for you to download and use in the classroom on the “Resources” page.



The Very Rev David Ranson PP
Diocesan Administrator of Broken Bay
&
the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine
extends an invitation to
CATECHISTS OF THE DIOCESE,
THEIR FAMILIES AND FRIENDS OF THE CCD

to attend the
2026 CCD Annual Diocesan Mass
& Presentation of Awards
Ceremony

Saturday 7 November 2026 at 11.30am

Please arrive by 11.15am

Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral
23 Yardley Ave, Waitara

Light refreshments to follow

It would be greatly appreciated if you could advise us if you and any family members will be attending.

Please RSVP by Friday 23 October 2026 to:

Email: ccdadmin@bbcatholic.org.au | Phone: 02 8379 1642