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# ORIENTATION PROGRAM FOR STUDENT SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION (SRE) CATECHISTS

CCD PARRAMATTA  
APRIL 2024

“WHOEVER WELCOMES ONE  
SUCH CHILD IN MY NAME WELCOMES ME”

– MARK 9:37

CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE  
DIOCESE OF PARRAMATTA

# WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

***Welcome*** to the Special Religious Education (SRE) ministry!

Good news is for sharing. That is what Special Religious Education is about: sharing the good news of God's great love for us because it's too good to keep to ourselves.

SRE Catechists are privileged to be able to bring to school students this life changing message of God's love and to do this well we need to be joyful, warm, and welcoming to our students.

We hope you enjoy bringing primary students the greatest gift of all – the gift of faith. And we hope and pray that your contribution blesses and enriches your own faith life as it does for us.

*“On the lips of the catechist the first proclamation must ring out over and over: “Jesus Christ loves you; he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.” Pope Francis (EG164)*

Enjoy the journey!

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# PRAYER

Leader: Lord, you call us to share in your mission of spreading the good news of Jesus. Please bless our gathering today. May we grow in readiness to use our gifts and talents to serve you. We ask you this in Jesus' name. Amen

Let us listen to God's word.

## READING

*A reading from the Gospel of Mark (Mark 9:33-37)*

Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, 'What were you arguing about on the way?' But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another about who was the greatest. He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, 'Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all.' Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 'Whoever welcomes one such child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me.'

The Word of the Lord.

**R Thanks be to God.**

*Please pause for a moment and reflect on the Gospel reading.*

Jesus tells us that little children are welcome to come to him and not to stop them (Matthew 19:14). We are called to serve the children in our public schools and we strive to welcome them as we would welcome Christ, and to help them learn and grow as His disciples. As SRE Catechists we plant seeds of faith which with God's grace will bear fruit at some stage in their lives.

## REFLECTING ON MY CALL TO JOIN THIS MINISTRY

Why was I drawn to this Ministry?

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What impact has my faith had in my life?

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What message do I want the students to take with them?

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# OUR MISSION STATEMENT-

## CONFRATERNITY OF CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE (CCD)

The CCD oversees the work of teaching Catholic SRE in public schools. Consider the CCD mission statement and logo below. What ideas does the logo convey?

The Confraternity of Christian Doctrine consists of catechists who are mainly volunteers, dedicated and committed to Special Religious Education (SRE) in public schools.

We strive to ensure that children from Catholic families attending public schools have an opportunity to hear the Good News, to develop a relationship with God and to feel welcomed and valued members of the Church community.

We endeavour, by our living of gospel values, to nourish and support the faith development of students and their families.

We will strive to challenge unjust structures which impede the mission of Jesus. We seek the support of our colleagues and collaborate with other ministries and organisations to enable this mission to emerge.

We commit to engage in ongoing formation, responding to the signs of the times in continuing the mission of Jesus Christ.

We value the opportunity to give witness to our faith and to work alongside other Christians and other faith teachers, in common commitment to enhance the human and spiritual development of students in public schools.



# STUDENT SRE CATECHISTS

Student SRE Catechists are required to be trained and to teach according to the approved curriculum. As a student SRE Catechist you are joining a worldwide network of faith-filled people, committed to bringing children the greatest gift of all – Jesus.

## As a student SRE Catechist you may be asked to:

- lead the opening and/or closing class prayer
- take the roll
- prepare the Prayer Space
- assist with resources
- assist with role play/drama activities
- hand out activity books
- read the scripture passage
- assist with craft activities
- assist individual students as required especially students who work more slowly or need more support
- assist with technology/music
- demonstrate actions for a song
- nominate students for stickers and merit awards to the SRE Catechist
- prepare and present a lesson with assistance from your REC and SRE Catechist.



Examples of ways you can show initiative:

- if you see some students talking when they should be listening, get their attention by giving them a quiet gesture (finger to lips)
- direct a student/s back in their seat if they wander about the classroom

### Remember:

- Wear your authorisation card/lanyard
- On arrival to the school, sign in at the school office and out when leaving
- If you are unsure about anything, please ask - there is a lot to learn.
- Use of praise and encouragement for the right behaviours is important. We never use food as a reward.

**Most of all get involved in the best way you can so it will be a positive experience for you. *Enjoy the Experience!***



## APPROVED CURRICULUM

The curriculum we are approved to teach in public schools is 'Christ our Light and Life (COLAL)'. Whilst we may not cover all lessons in a given year (there is a lot of content in each manual) we cannot teach material outside of the approved curriculum.

### CONTENT STRANDS

These are the main themes covered in the curriculum. Read the description of the 5 content strands and write in your own words what each content strand is about.



**GOD, THE HOLY TRINITY**



**CREATION**



**THE CHURCH**



**THE LITURGY AND THE LITURGICAL YEAR**



**THE MORAL LIFE**

## Steps of an SRE Lesson

Choosing a lesson plan from the Teacher's Manual, make a mind map of the steps and describe what happens in each step.



Lesson Title:



SAMPLE TERM PLANNER

SCHOOL:	GRADE/STAGE:	YEAR:
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TERM 1 OVERVIEW							
School Weeks	Week beginning	School Calendar	Parish Sacramental Calendar	Liturgical Calendar	Content Strand	Lesson	Resources
Week 1	30 January						
Week 2	5 February						
Week 3	12 February	SRE RECOMMENCES		14/3 Ash Wed.			
Week 4	19 February			Lent Week 1			
Week 5	26 February			Lent Week 2			
Week 6	4 March		SACRAMENTS INFO SESSION	Lent Week 3			
Week 7	11 March			Lent Week 4			
Week 8	18 March	NAPLAN		Lent Week 5			
Week 9	25 March	NAPLAN	HOLY WEEK/ EASTER SERVICES	28/3 Holy Thurs			
Week 10	1 April			31/3 Easter Sunday			
Week 11	8 April						
Holidays	15-26 April						

# LESSON PLANNER



<b>CATECHIST'S NAME:</b>		
<b>SCHOOL:</b>		
<b>Stage/Year</b>	<b>Lesson Number</b>	<b>Lesson Title</b>
Before you begin, reflect on the scripture for this lesson.		
Learning Intentions - What will students learn as a result of this lesson?		
Gathering & Welcome - movement into the classroom	1 PRAYING - setting the prayer place	
2 REVIEWING (the last lesson if appropriate)		
3 STORYTELLING (Orientation Phase) Could be dramatisation, song, Exploring Scripture, CCD approved video or begin with Life Experience.		<b>RESOURCES</b> What will I need?
4 WONDERING (I wonder questions) Students may wonder in silence or offer responses to the questions.		

<p><b>5 LEARNING</b> (Development Phase)</p>	<p><b>EVALUATION</b> Next time I will ...</p>
<p><b>6 EXPLORING</b> (Synthesis Phase) Offer some choice in the tasks.</p>	
<p><b>7 REMEMBERING</b> This is in the Teachers' Manual and the Activity Book. See "To Remember"</p>	
<p><b>8 PRAYING</b> Use the prayer from the Teachers' Manual or another appropriate prayer.</p>	
<p><b>CONCUSION OF THE LESSON &amp; DISMISSAL</b> Before they leave ask students one thing they learnt today.</p>	
<p><b>DIFFERENTIATION:</b> How will I help the less able and advanced students?</p>	

## Diocese of Parramatta Code of Conduct - A summary

The opportunity to work with children in the Ministry of Special Religious Education (SRE) is a wonderful privilege. As you will be representing your school and Parish community there are certain behavioural expectations of SRE Catechists and commitments to care for children and yourself. As we work in NSW public schools the NSW Department of Education Code of conduct is also applicable to us.

### PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES

We:

- comply with policies and lawful instructions of the diocese, and parish priest.
- are punctual, diligent and sensitive to young people's needs
- take steps to protect young people from injury or harm
- respect the privacy and confidential information of young people and other adults
- adopt appropriate standards of dress and language

### PROFESSIONAL RELATIONSHIPS

We:

- are caring, respectful, and compassionate
- avoid being alone with a young person and remain removed from personal relationships
- respect cultural diversity
- treat all equally and are equally available to all
- we avoid offering or receiving gifts from individuals
- ensure physical contact is appropriate for a young person's management or care e.g. comforting an upset child; assessing an ill or injured child
- use physical intervention only as a last resort and only to ensure the safety and protection of children or others

We do not:

- use any form of corporal punishment including the use of an object e.g. a book
- use intimidation, humiliation, alienation, fear-based practices or swearing
- hold or restrain other than to prevent injury or harm
- make available, or be under the influence of, any illicit drugs or alcohol or cigarettes
- engage in any conduct of a sexual nature including touching, suggestive remarks or innuendo
- expose young people to violent material or adult concepts

*We are always sensitive to young people's age and level of maturity.*

- *Should there be evidence of inappropriate practices in relation to young people your involvement with the SRE Ministry may be terminated.*

### REPORTABLE CONDUCT

It's possible that in your work as a Student SRE Catechist/Helper you develop concerns that an adult working with children has engaged in 'reportable conduct'. *Reportable conduct is a sexual offence, sexual misconduct, ill treatment, neglect, assault, emotional or psychological harm OR failure to report a child at risk of harm.*

Child safety is everyone's responsibility so please ensure you let someone appropriate know of your concerns - your REC or Supervising teacher or the School Principal. Reportable conduct reports can also be made to Head of CCD (ph: 8838 3486) OR to Safeguarding at People & Culture (ph:8838 3419 or [safeguarding@parracatholic.org](mailto:safeguarding@parracatholic.org)).

# Notification Process for Student SRE Catechists ~ Summary

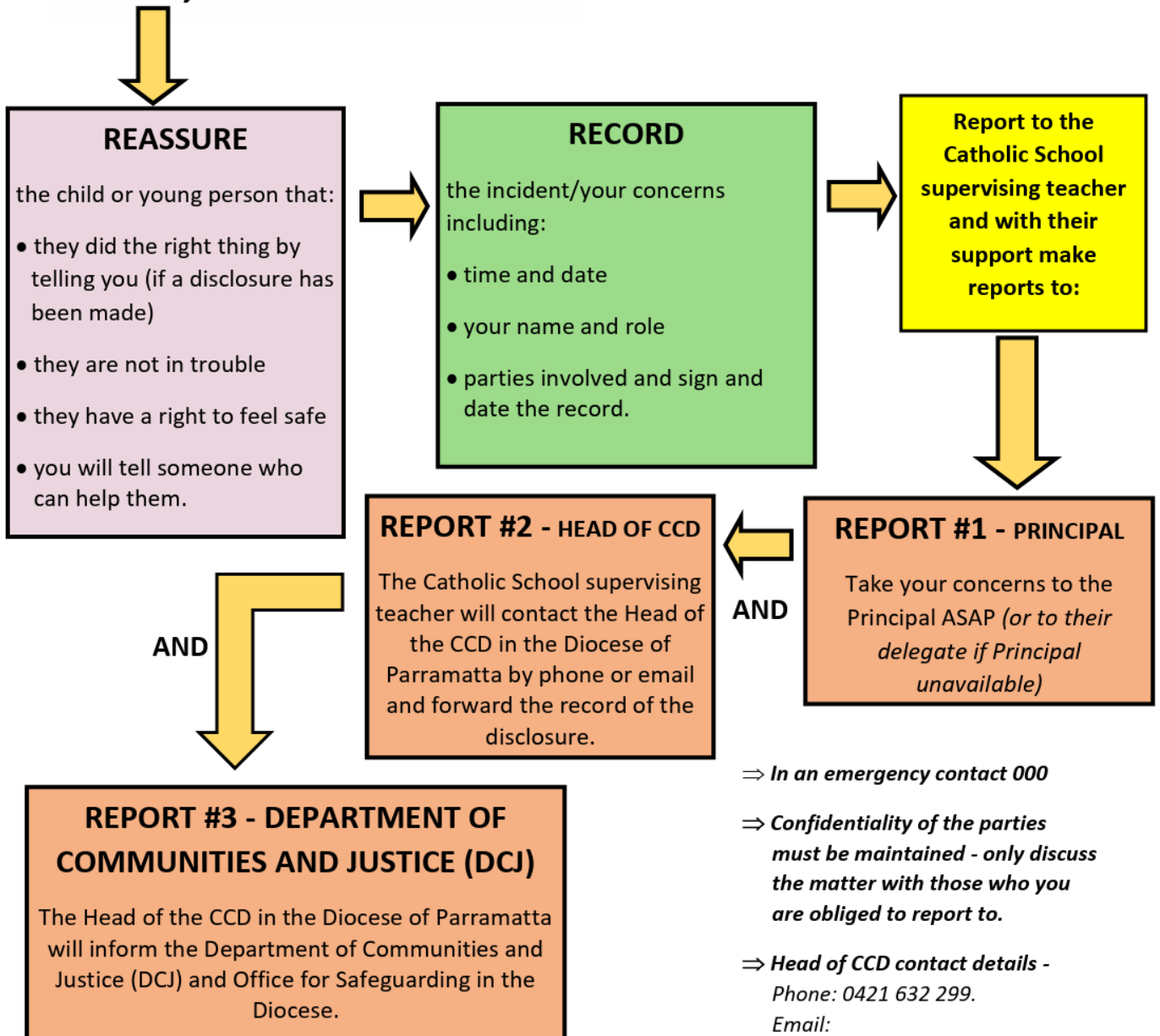


## Risk Of Significant Harm (ROSH)

occurs when needs are not met or are at risk of not being met.

Do you have reason to believe a child or young person is at risk of significant harm because they have been subjected to physical or sexual assault, ill treatment, neglect (medical/educational) or psychological harm OR because they are living in a household with domestic violence?

## IF YES, FOLLOW THE 3Rs



⇒ In an emergency contact 000

⇒ Confidentiality of the parties must be maintained - only discuss the matter with those who you are obliged to report to.

⇒ Head of CCD contact details -

Phone: 0421 632 299.

Email:

[merilyn.hancock@parracatholic.org](mailto:merilyn.hancock@parracatholic.org)

All reports should be made within 24 hours of disclosure.

# PRACTICAL TEACHING TECHNIQUES

## CREATE A POSITIVE CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT

- Get to know the students by name and use their name when speaking to them.
- When students are working on an activity move about the room and praise or encourage them to continue the good work they have started.
- Catch them 'doing good' and praise them for it, so that students see that you will give them the attention they want when they behave well.
- Always speak courteously and with respect to students. When speaking to them keep in mind "We are all made in the image and likeness of God" (Gen 1:26-27).
- Move! Children need to move. Look for ways to incorporate movement in your classes as part of the story telling, the prayer or in the form of brain breaks to help with concentration.

## USE A VARIETY OF METHODS

- Children learn in different ways so try and engage them all: visual, auditory, kinesthetic.
- Vary your storytelling methods - rather than reading the story each week use:
  - drama
  - echo mime where the story is told using actions and the children repeat the story and actions after you;
  - Biblical characters
  - puppets - just to name a few ways.
- There are many different prayer forms that can be used in your lessons e.g. traditional prayers, prayers of gratitude, petitions, guided meditations, prayers with actions, sung prayers, blessing prayers, written prayers etc.
- Remember to include prayer in your lesson whether it is at the beginning, the middle or the end of the lesson - remember to encourage the children to participate in a reflective, prayerful manner.

## QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

- Be enthusiastic about the students' questions. Be glad they asked.
- Commend them for using the good minds that God gave them and encourage them to keep asking questions. Remember their questions give us valuable insight into their thinking and understanding.
- Treat all questions seriously.
- Give simple, child appropriate answers.
- Ask students 'What do they think?'
- Give the students more information if they are unsatisfied with the answer.
- Ask the student to restate the question if you think you have misunderstood what is being asked.
- If you don't know the answer tell them that you will try to find out and invite

them to look into it too. It is far better to say that you don't know than to make something up.

- Always give time for the students to answer a question rather than answer your own question. The students will learn to wait for you to provide the answers.
- Some questions may be important but not appropriate to discuss in SRE. In this case refer them to a more appropriate source e.g. a parent

## WHAT DO YOU DO WHEN.....

1. A student suggests an answer that is incorrect:
  - Affirm that it was good for the student to offer an answer. Refer back to the lesson to point the student in the right direction. Clarify any misunderstandings
2. No-one offers an answer:
  - Give the class some extra information or retell the section of the lesson that contains the answer. If required tell them the answer and move on
3. A student's answer is very lengthy:
  - Affirm that the answer is thoughtful but that others in the class might like a chance to answer. Suggest to the student that you talk to them later (don't forget to do so)
4. A student begins to give you personal details or information that is not appropriate:
  - Follow the Notification Process for Student SRE Catechists.

## ON ARRIVAL AT SCHOOL

- Arrive at the school at least ten minutes before the lesson if possible.
- Go to the office and sign in using either the school SRE attendance book or the electronic sign in process (depending which system your school uses)
- Be punctual to the classroom as the children should not be left alone.

## YOUR FIRST SPECIAL RELIGIOUS EDUCATION LESSON

1. Introduce yourself to the children.
2. Discuss some rules for the class with the children.
3. Use positive language, e.g. 'Listen when others are speaking' rather than 'Don't talk while others are speaking.'
4. Teach the behaviour you want. If the children do something you aren't happy with tell them and teach them what you expect. Always practice this with the students.
5. Give instructions clearly and slowly and only one at a time.
6. Don't allow the children to railroad the lesson. They will want to tell you their life stories. Keep them on task.

# CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

In SRE we strive for a respectful and cooperative classroom. A few important things to help with Classroom Management:

**PREPARATION** Preparing your lessons will help with the management of your class.

- Be organised
- Try not to cover too much in each lesson
- Keep it simple
- Keep it do-able
- Have some useful activities that can be used in spare five minute periods or for children who work quickly and finish before others.

## **CLEAR RULES AND EXPECTATIONS**

- Expect good behaviour and acknowledge it when it happens
- Don't talk/preach at the students - allow time for questions and discussion
- Above all radiate enthusiasm, joy and calm
- Follow school policies including the discipline policy and evacuation policy, lock-down procedures etc.

## **CONSISTENT AND PERSISTENT REINFORCEMENT**

- Calmly insist that reasonable standards are met. Calmly persist until they are
- Make use of the school's reward program e.g. merit cards, points system etc.
- Be consistent and fair in discipline and follow-through with consequences
- Speak quietly and privately to individual students. Never engage in a disciplinary conversation across the room.

## **GET HELP WHEN NEEDED:**

- Ask for advice and support, when needed, from your school appointed supervising teacher, SRE Catechist, or Classroom teacher.



# THE ABC OF SRE

**A**lways be early for your class.

**B**e careful never to be alone with only one or two students.

**C**lass rules/expectations should be set early in the year, preferably in reference to the school rules/expectations.

**D**o find out about school policies covering rolls, behaviour management, mobile phone policy, lock down and emergency procedures etc.

**E**nsure additional resource materials are in line with the approved curriculum.

**F**orm good working relationships with staff at the school and SEE/SRE teachers from other denominations/faiths.

**G**o with confidence into your class knowing God is always with you.

**H**elpers in the classroom are God's gift to teachers, and a good way to start in the ministry.

**I**n all lessons adhere to the approved curriculum – Christ Our Light and Life .

**J**ellybeans, other lollies or food can never be given to students due to the risk of an allergic reaction.

**K**now your students' world. Take an interest by noticing important school events

**L**earn your student's and class teacher's names

**M**ake sure you are aware of and follow your school procedure if you are unable to teach/assist your lesson.

**N**ever take photos of the students in your class.

**O**rganise approval for visual resources e.g. DVDs, YouTube clips in advance with the school SRE Co-ordinator.

**P**ray and Prepare your lessons well - the work put into preparation will be rewarded in the classroom.

**Q**uestions should be encouraged to foster high student involvement and self esteem.

**R**emember to wear your Authorisation Card and lanyard while on school grounds.

**S**elf reflection allows us to review lesson effectiveness and identify new ideas for future lessons.

**T**eaching is about relationships. We can't communicate the Gospel message without supportive relationships. Be mindful to teach with sensitivity and age appropriateness.

**U**nderstand different learning preferences and capabilities. Be mindful of students with additional needs.

**V**isual resources that are bright, interesting and age appropriate are a powerful way to enhance student learning.

**W**hen you are dealing with disruptive behaviour use positive reinforcement techniques and ask for assistance.

**X**plain clearly the behaviour you expect from your students and always give clear instructions.

**Y**ou always need to remember - parents are the first and principal educators of their children in their faith.

**Z**eal and zest inspired by the Spirit will carry the message of God's love to the students.



***SENDING FORTH***  
***MATTHEW 28:19-20***

“GO, THEREFORE, AND MAKE DISCIPLES OF ALL NATIONS, BAPTISING THEM IN THE NAME OF THE FATHER, AND OF THE SON, AND OF THE HOLY SPIRIT, TEACHING THEM TO OBSERVE ALL THAT I HAVE COMMANDED YOU. AND BEHOLD, I AM WITH YOU ALWAYS, UNTIL THE END OF THE AGE.”

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