



ICCOREIS

Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in State Schools (NSW) Inc

SRE UPDATE

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Beyond SRE- Connecting with your School

I have been teaching SRE for 20 years and have taught in 11 different schools. Each school is unique and some schools are more supportive of SRE than others, however, I really believe that every school presents the chance to show the love and light of Christ beyond your SRE class, so here are just a few ideas that may help you connect with your school meaningfully:

ALWAYS smile and ask how the office staff member who is present is feeling when you sign in - no matter the response. It takes time - even years - for the school to really trust you, so keep persisting. One day, you'll get breakthrough.

TRY to engage with all the classroom teachers you meet if the opportunity is available. Again ask how they are, ask about their family and remember details to ask them about the next week. Offer to pray if there is a challenge in their lives. Focus on them. Ask if they have school holiday plans and acknowledge the fact that they will spend considerable time each holiday in preparation for school. Teachers get very discouraged by people thinking they get 12 weeks holiday a year, when in fact, most school holidays time is just 'relief from face to face teaching'. It is amazing how much staff will support you if you support them and seek to understand their world.

SEE the opportunities there are throughout the year to bless and encourage the staff of your school. Remember that school staff can face a lot of criticism and receive very little thanks. Everyone responds well to encouragement. Take time to bless your school. A gift to bless could be as simple as a bunch of flowers

for the office, a 'thank you for teaching our kids' card, a box of chocolates for staff to share on staff development day or morning tea for Education Week. Be creative and use your personal abilities to encourage the staff of your school.

OFFER to volunteer outside of SRE lessons if you have time. Schools are always looking for volunteers for reading groups, excursions, the canteen etc. To serve your school without the school seeing you as having an underlying agenda is a great way to connect with them.

UNDERSTAND that there is a huge workload that teachers and students need to get through. In my conversations with staff, I understand more and more the pressure upon them to meet the outcomes they are supposed to meet and how every extra thing they need to fit in can be troublesome for them. Teaching is far beyond reading and maths. There is an expectation that they will meet social, emotional, creative and often parenting needs of kids. Sometimes what we may perceive as lack of support for SRE, is simply staff who haven't covered all the work they wanted to get through. Until you have direct evidence to believe otherwise about the motivation or agenda of another, believe the best. Pray for your school staff as well as your kids.

Pr Allyson Parker

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Education Week



Education Week will be held in Term 3, 27 July – 3 August.

The service sheet is available on the website, along with some suggestions for songs, dramas and ideas for the message. There are two versions: coloured and black and white.



The theme is *Creating the Future* and the Bible reading is from Matthew 25: 14-29, known to most of us as the parable of the talents. Try to encourage participation from the students and give them plenty of time to practise.

STOP PRESS: SRE Celebration 2014

DATE: THURSDAY afternoon, 23 October, Parliament House, Sydney Watch the website for more details.



What's it like to be an SRE teacher?

Here are 2 questions answered by some SRE teachers on the North Coast.
One person has only been teaching for three years and several for over 20 years!

What was your first impression of teaching in a school?

"A bit scary: all those little eyes!"

"I felt at home."

"Exhilarating!"

"It was daunting."

I was a bit apprehensive, then I found myself full of amazement.

"I wasn't impressed at first, then I fell in love with the children - now I'm addicted."

"I was nervous but the loveliness of the kids helps to dispel that."

"I found it challenging."



What do you get out of teaching SRE?

"I get a real sense of helping spread God's message."

"I am able to use my creative gifts."

"My personal faith has grown and so has my enjoyment of children."

"I've developed my faith in God and fellow man."

"I've clarified and reinforced my own beliefs."

"It's a privilege to share God's word and their responses."

"I find it easier than talking in front of adults."

NAIDOC WEEK and the Christian Connection

All Australians are encouraged to participate in NAIDOC Week celebrations, but not everyone knows about the Christian connection.

William Cooper grew up in the early 1900s in NSW, an aboriginal in a time when indigenous people had no citizenship rights in Australia. He was taught to read and write by missionaries who ran a school for aboriginal children. He learned from the Bible that all people are created by God and are children of God. William also learned the words of Jesus 'Treat other people the way you want them to treat you.'

As he grew older he realised that aboriginal people were not being treated this way and he did something about it. He wrote letters to government leaders protesting the inequality he saw around him.

William insisted that the government should give Aborigines the right to vote and be treated the same as Australians who had white skin. Both he and his nephew, Pastor Douglas Nicholls who worked with him, were committed to the teachings of Jesus.

They formed the Australian Aborigines League in 1932,

and in 1938 helped organise a Day of Mourning, held the same day as the 150 year 'celebrations' were being held by the European settlers marking the settlement of Australia.

In 1939, a group led by William approached the National Missionary Council of Australia to help promote an (NMCA) 'Aborigines Sunday'. This became known as 'National Aborigines Day', which was held on the Sunday before Australia Day each year from 1940 to 1955.

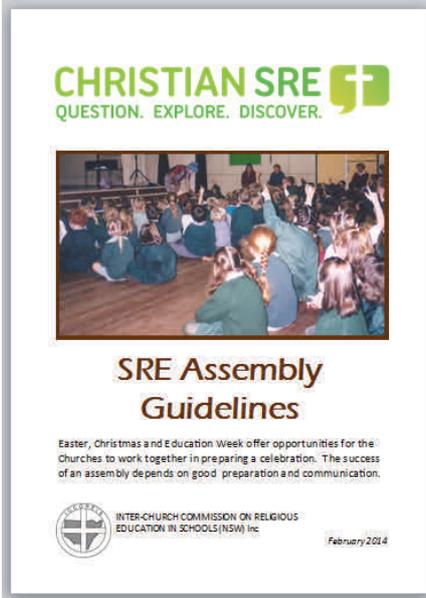
In 1956, a number of aboriginal groups and church groups combined to form the National Aborigines Day Observance Committee. They decided to move the day to July and make it as much a celebration of aboriginal culture as a protest about the bad treatment of aboriginal people. In 1975 the 'Day' extended to a NADOC Week - which now includes the word 'islander' and has become NAIDOC.

Sally Smith

Suggested reading: William Cooper Gentle Warrior:
Author: Barbara Miller www.barbara-miller-books.com

Guidelines for Assemblies

The SRE Assembly Guidelines produced by ICCOREIS is a useful guide and checklist for anyone



arranging a combined event for SRE. It lists things to be aware of and is valuable to give to interested parties to help them see the need for consultation before combined events and evaluation afterwards.

Malcolm Causley who is part of the Singleton Christian Education Association and also the Uniting Church representative on the Hunter SRE Committee says, "The Singleton Christian Education Association (SCEA) has employed a teacher of Special Christian Religious Education since 2008.

"There are six churches represented on our board (Anglican, Baptist, Evangelical, Presbyterian, Uniting and Salvation Army)."

"Apart from SRE for all Year 7 classes, there are assemblies and ISCF in the school."

The assemblies we present usually involve a guest speaker and musicians. They are an opportunity for students from other years that don't have SRE classes to attend. The weekly ISCF (Inter School Christian Fellowship) gives the opportunity for Christian students to meet regularly.

"The Assembly guidelines raise the level of professionalism and accountability for any events sponsored by the board. They allow all church representatives to be aware of what is planned and the school and wider community to be informed."

To receive a copy of the Assembly Guidelines contact the Executive Officer on execofficer@iccoreis.asn.au or 0400 652 505, or check the website www.iccoreis.asn.au.

Enrolling in SRE

As schools begin to advertise enrolment earlier each year, now is the time to get organised for playing your part. Since "SRE" is not a familiar term to many

parents who will come to the school for the first time, SRE providers may need to educate the parents about what is offered at their school.

Families who enrol a new student in either a primary or high school are required to complete a substantial enrolment form. From 2014, new enrolments will only access an SRE class if, at the appropriate place on page 8, a parent or caregiver writes the name of a recognised denomination or faith.

Using this information, the school administration then streams into

SRE classes those students whose enrolment form includes an answer to this question. It is very important that this change is widely understood. If you want your children or grandchildren or the children in your community to have opportunity to be taught the Christian faith, the "Religion" boxes in the enrolment form must be completed.

If a family doesn't complete the "Religion" box and wants their student to participate in an SRE class, they

must apply to the school to have the student included. This is only a matter of notifying the school administration.

If there are families who are unsure of the nature of SRE, Christian SRE has produced a very helpful brochure for just this sort of situation. It is also a useful addition to enrolment packs provided by schools. If you would like to obtain copies for your school, please contact the Executive Officer. Primary and high school versions are available as well as A3 posters.

SRE teachers and coordinators across the State have used the brochure strategically to raise awareness in pre-schools, through enrolment days and, with the permission of the school, giving the brochure to all the students in their classes.

All this assumes there are SRE classes at your local primary and high school. If there aren't classes, then 2014 may be the right time to start planning how to implement SRE and take up the opportunity that is available to Christians to teach their faith and its values to students.



Basic SRE Training



BASIC SRE TRAINING has taken off in Newcastle. Over 60 SRE volunteers attended three days of training to gain accreditation to the new recommended standard.

Existing teachers, new recruits and those considering the ministry came together at St Albans Anglican Church, Charlestown over three Saturdays to explore the nature and practice of SRE in NSW.

A number of presenters using a variety of styles engaged the crowds throughout the 6 modules of the course. Some participants also availed themselves of the flexibility of having prior learning recognised in their certification.

John Donnelly (Hunter Christian SRE Committee)

Resources

These are links to FREE visuals that can be downloaded to print or for use on an interactive white board.

<http://www.freebibleimages.org/>

Old Testament: <http://www.lambsongs.co.nz/bible%20story%20books.htm>

New Testament: http://www.lambsongs.co.nz/Bible%20Story%20new_testament.htm

WILD BIBLE ANIMATIONS – Animations of the stories Jesus told on this interactive website www.wildbible.org.au are suitable for primary students. They will soon be available on DVD.

Contact Rick George (see below) for more information.

Other Resources from the Bible Society

PRIMARY SCHOOL SHOWS - include Easter / Christmas / Book Week / Education Week and themes for any occasion.



HIGH SCHOOL SEMINARS – LIFE CHOICES with Jesus Racing. A fast paced, interactive & educational program designed to challenge young people to think through the consequences of their decisions! www.jesusracing.com.au

THE BIBLE ACCORDING TO GEN Z - Our new e-book explores the reasons why young people aren't reading the Bible...and how to change that, <http://www.unitedbiblesocieties.org/news/4988-why-young-people-arent-reading-the-bible-and-how-to-change-that/>

2014 CHILDRENS MEMORY VERSE CALENDARS - going cheap (\$1.00 each or \$5.50 per pack of 10) great to give away to your students. <http://shop.biblesociety.org.au/Selections/calendars.php>

GET THE WORD OUT IN CHINA - A great way for Australian children to help needy children receive God's Word for their spiritually hungry souls. Free resources are available to help you, including free magazines for your children. Please help change a life for eternity. www.biblesociety.org.au/projects/get-the-word-out-in-china

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