



SRE Update

Starting the SRE Year with a Bang!

An Invitation

ICCOREIS takes pleasure in inviting you to an interfaith celebration of SRE

Thursday 29th March

3:30pm - 5:30pm

Parliament House
Macquarie St, Sydney

Hosted by ICCOREIS,
at the invitation of the
Minister for Education,
the Hon Adrian Piccoli MP.

For catering purposes
it is essential to RSVP to
Sue Sneddon on 02 4979 1335,
or email
execofficer@iccoreis.asn.au
by March 19th.

SRE Celebration

Those who attend our interfaith celebration (see left) will be provided with an opportunity to celebrate the many exceptional people who support SRE prayerfully or who commit their time and expertise to organising or actually teaching SRE. Minister for Education Adrian Piccoli MP will address the gathering and there will be time to chat with others from around the state. Representatives from the Director General's Consultative Committee on SRE as well as ICCOREIS will be in attendance.

SRE Month 2012

Are you looking for a way to highlight SRE in your church, especially at the beginning of the year when devoted teachers need inspiration and encouragement? Do you need to replenish your supply of SRE teachers? Do you have enough helpers and people prepared to pray for SRE? ICCOREIS has developed an idea to assist. It's called SRE Month, or SRE Sunday – take your pick.

While this is a pilot scheme it is our hope that it will become an annual

event. So how does it work? Your church simply chooses four Sundays in a row before the end of March, and proclaims it 'SRE Month'. During those four Sundays you will mount a dedicated campaign to raise the profile of SRE.

And you don't have to do it all by yourself! We have put together a pack of ideas containing:

- publicity;
- information about SRE in NSW;
- prayer resources;
- scriptures supporting SRE;
- special events;
- a trivia segment;
- interview questions.

(For a sample, go to page 4. The whole pack is available from www.iccoreis.asn.au).

Sue Sneddon
Executive Officer

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Is Teaching Religion Brainwashing?

This article contains excerpts from an article written by John Gore, entitled 'Religious Education, Brainwashing and Faith'.

What is brainwashing?

(1) *a forcible indoctrination to induce someone to give up basic political, social, or religious beliefs and attitudes and to accept contrasting regimented ideas* (Websters Dictionary)

Teaching religious or secular views could fit this definition if the effect is to forcible indoctrinate or change an existing disposition.

In relation to SRE, all religions, and Christian denominations in particular, need to be sure that their teachers are faithfully presenting their religion without coercion. Christians believe that God's word has its own power to change and, together with the Holy Spirit, can lead people to God. There is no need, or authority, to *forcibly indoctrinate*

(2) *to make someone believe something by repeatedly telling them that it is true and preventing any other information from reaching them* (Cambridge Dictionary)

Here the emphasis is both on repeated telling and the denial of access to alternatives.

The denial of access to alternatives is becoming an issue within the Australian curriculum where the marginalisation of religion is evident. The denial of access to religious knowledge and understanding through the curriculum may well lead to the claim of indoctrination and brainwashing with secular perspectives.

Religious education could be considered brainwashing if it is doctrinally narrow and aims to keep children from knowing about alternatives.

(3) *pressurise (someone) into adopting radically different beliefs by using systematic and often forcible means* (Oxford Dictionary)

This definition emphasises process: pressurise – systematic – forcible. This set of actions can be interpreted as brainwashing and can apply to any form of teaching. They are reminders to teachers of religion to let God do his work through the Holy Spirit and that their task is to be faithful in presenting the Gospel and not to place repeated and forceful emotional pressure on students to commit to Christianity. It is often the latter that leads to cries of indoctrination and brainwashing and not the systematic teaching of religion.

Is teaching religion brainwashing?

Teaching ABOUT religion is not brainwashing. Teaching one religion without any access to alternatives could be brainwashing. Refusing to acknowledge any alternative and using threats, coercion and emotional manipulation to change a person is most assuredly an attempt to brainwash.

The instruction of a child in a religion could be seen to be brainwashing depending on how it is taught and what alternatives are acknowledged. SRE teachers have a huge responsibility to get this right. Threats, coercion and emotional manipulation have no place as they fail to reflect the loving character of God.

John Gore

Raising the Bar

It has been exciting to hear and see the commitment of SRE teachers to present the message of the Bible in our government schools week after week; and even more exciting is to see the commitment of these teachers (most of whom are volunteers) dedicating time to hone their skills and understanding of what it means to be a competent and relevant teacher in today's school environment.

In this day and age where professional development is the norm, it's a testimony to the commitment of being the best we can be for God that people are willing to raise the bar in their skills and understanding. Teachers are encouraged to attend any accreditation training that is available near them.



To support this upskilling, the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools (ICCOREIS) has agreed on a common framework (standard) for all SRE teachers which was ratified by the heads of various denominations, and so many of the approved providers recognise each other's courses.

Not only do teachers benefit by developing their skills but many also comment on how great it is to meet up with other teachers in their local area and sometimes even beyond. The feeling of belonging to a bigger picture is a gift.

So if you have not had any training in the past two years, ask your coordinator to enquire about training near you or contact your provider to see what can be arranged.

Who is the Child?

When we observe the wonder of birth, we are immediately struck by the complete and utter helplessness of a newly born child. The life and the future of the child are in the hands of adults.

Research now shows that how a child is nurtured (or not nurtured) within the first five years of life, will have a significant impact on how a child will behave and survive in society as he or she comes of age.

Children are the most *vulnerable* of all human beings and are totally dependent on the adults around them for their physical, emotional and spiritual wellbeing. After contemplating these facts, one must ask the question "Who is the child?"



God says:

- The Child is made in His image.
Genesis 1:26 *"Let US make man in our image."*
- The Child is wonderfully and fearfully made.
Psalm 138:14 *"I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that well."*
- The Child is a reward from God
Psalm 127:3 *"Sons are a heritage from the Lord; children are a reward from Him."*
- The Child is to be instructed by his or her parents about God.
Deuteronomy 6:6-7 *"These commandments that I give you today are to be upon your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up."*
- The Child is to be instructed to tell his or her children about God.
Psalm 78:6 *"so the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born and they in turn*

would tell their children."

Jesus says:

- The Child is precious in His eyes.
Matthew 18:5 *"And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me."*
 - The Kingdom of God belongs to little children.
Mark 10:14 *"Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to such as these."*
 - The Child is the example of how to enter the Kingdom of God.
Matthew 18:3 *"I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven."*
 - The Child should not be regarded as inferior.
Matthew 18:10 *"See that you do not look down on one of these little ones. For I tell you their angels in heaven always see the face of my Father in heaven."*
 - It is God's will that none of the little ones should be lost.
Matthew 18:14 *"In the same way your Father in heaven is not willing that any of these little ones should be lost."*
 - Death is preferable to causing a little child to sin against Jesus.
Matthew 18:6 *"But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea."*
- As one meditates upon these Scriptures there is no doubt that children are highly valued by God and the Lord Jesus.
- Graham McDonald ICCOREIS Advisor

Additional Yearly Requirement for Approved Providers

In November last year the Department of Education and Communities (DEC) sent out its yearly letter to all approved providers of SRE assuring the DEC that processes are in place that satisfy the requirements for teaching SRE. In the past these have included The Working With Children Check and an assurance that the SRE teacher does not have a criminal conviction for: a crime against a minor, violence, assault, or providing prohibited drugs.

The benefits of child protection training are mentioned in the letter as well as the need for cross authorisation when teachers work in combined arrangements.

IMPORTANT: The additional requirement is online access to the provider's curriculum and/or a curriculum outline. A website link to where this can be found is to be provided to the DEC.

ICCOREIS has fielded a number of enquiries from concerned Christian providers and, in collaboration with its representatives on the Director General's Consultative Committee, has made available a template which satisfies this requirement.

A copy of the template is available from Sue Sneddon, Executive Officer (contact details page 4).

Resources

SRE Pack - Sample

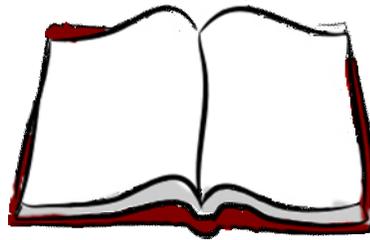
Here's a Bible reference that could be used to support and promote SRE during SRE Month.

2 Corinthians 2.14 – 3.5 (CEV) - Be a letter of love to the children you teach.

¹⁴I am grateful that God always makes it possible for Christ to lead us to victory. God also helps us spread the knowledge about Christ everywhere, and this knowledge is like the smell of perfume. ¹⁵⁻¹⁶In fact, God thinks of us as a perfume that brings Christ to everyone. For people who are being saved, this perfume has a sweet smell and leads them to a better life. But for people who are lost, it has a bad smell and leads them to a horrible death.

No one really has what it takes to do this work. ¹⁷A lot of people try to get rich from preaching God's message. But we are God's sincere messengers, and by the power of Christ we speak our message with God as our witness.

¹Are we once again bragging about ourselves? Do we need letters to you or from you to tell others about us? Some people do need letters that tell about them. ²But you are our letter, and you are in our hearts for everyone to read and understand. ³You are like a letter written by Christ and delivered by us. But you are not written with pen and ink or on tablets made of stone. You are written in our hearts by the Spirit of the living God. ⁴We are sure about all this. Christ makes us sure in the very presence of God. ⁵We don't have the right to claim that we have done anything on our own. God gives us what it takes to do all that we do.



The SRE Sunday Pack is available on the website www.iccoreis.asn.au, or you can phone or email Sue for a copy.

Help for New SRE Teachers

Exciting news: ICCOREIS is producing a leaflet which will outline the basics for new SRE teachers: things like how you become an SRE teacher, what to do before you begin teaching, how to enter school property and using the right language. There's a section on where to get help too! The leaflet will be launched at the SRE Celebration in March and is available from the Executive Officer.

Interactive Whiteboard Activities from Access Ministries

Access Ministries has produced a new CD-Rom containing 10 activities based on pages from their Launch 1 Purple Student Workbook, plus an Easter animation and a review game- 'Matching Pairs'.

10 pages from the Student Workbook have been turned into activities suitable for an interactive whiteboard. For example: the children can draw lines to match pairs, they can draw a route through the maze, they can 'pop' balloons or words to make them disappear or to reappear in the correct place in a sentence.

The pages and activities from the Student Workbook that have been used are:

- 5 Find out
- 6 Seeing God
- 11 Welcome Jesus
- 12 Hooray, Jesus is alive!
- 16 God is like a mother hen
- 19 Maze



21 Let's remember

22 Eyes to see

29 Caring for God's world

30 The man who helped

Each PowerPoint includes instructions on how to use the activity.

The Easter animation comes with a script for the teacher to read.

CD-ROM \$19.99

Each activity, the memory game and Easter animation may be purchased and downloaded individually via the website.

Individual purchases: Activities \$1.99, Game \$1.99, Easter animation \$6.99

Note: This material may also be used as a normal PowerPoint resource.

Contact
www.accessministries.org.au/



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