



SRE Update

AT LAST: A STANDARD FOR BASIC SRE TRAINING

Over the last two years, ICCOREIS has been creating a framework for training new SRE teachers. Out of the general framework a more detailed standard has been developed. At the November meeting this new standard was formally adopted.

Benefits

SRE teacher training is described in terms of competencies, outcomes and processes. This is a very detailed representation of what is expected from the teaching and learning experience, but it is different to what has gone before. It replaces the description of training in terms of topics and the time required to study them eg 2 hours per module.

Training organisations and churches will be able to compare and contrast their training with what is offered by other churches and organisations.

Training organisations and churches will be able to give credit for the training that is offered by other churches and organisations. Eventually ICCOREIS will be able to offer guidance on Recognised Prior Learning (RPL) to assist this process.

When will it come into Force?

ICCOREIS encourages churches and training organisations to put this training into practice as soon as is practically possible. Check what is required with your authorising body/Church SRE provider.

Important Points to Note

- This Basic SRE Training is intended for NEW SRE volunteers.
- Existing SRE teachers are encouraged to renew their training via the Basic SRE

Training even if their Church SRE provider does not require it.

- Churches that are members of ICCOREIS support the new recommended standard for Basic SRE Training. If you are not sure whether your church is a member, then please check the website:
<http://iccoreis.asn.au/about.htm>
- A template for recording training is available from the Executive Officer:
execofficer@iccoreis.asn.au.
- One aspect of the training is assessment of teaching competencies via lesson observation by a trainer, an SRE coordinator or DEC teacher.

For a copy of the new Basic SRE Training standard, please contact the Executive Officer.

Sue Sneddon

THE PARISH PRIEST AS THE SCRIPTURE (SRE) TEACHER: FR RAY MANUEL



Fr Ray Manuel

Ray Manuel recently retired as Anglican Rector of Harrington Coopernook, and many who farewelled him spoke of his commitment to SRE.

Fr Ray is a great Scripture Teacher. He is such a good storyteller: captivating kids by telling

them a Christmas story using an old hat and a striped towel. A few simple props brought the story alive (and it also brought out the best in the story teller too). The clever use of the pause, the whisper, the quiet; or the sound effects of rushing wind or spitting in the dirt to

heal a blind man; even lifting a carpet to bring in a sick man were all the little added touches which had them listening with rapt attention.

A few years ago Fr Ray asked the students how many had been to church – on average, across six small schools, there were only two. Approached by the Principal, and in

consultation with the Uniting and Catholic Churches, he organised three special ecumenical children's services a year at Christmas, Easter and Education Week. He used the Department of Education guidelines for their Education Week service and involved the students in every way possible. Those at schools near a church walked there, while those some distance away had it at the school. Now it's been going several years and it's a legacy that will far outlive Fr Ray and his ministry.

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HOW THE REVIEW ON SEE (SPECIAL EDUCATION IN ETHICS) WILL AFFECT SRE

In December 2012, the Government released its response to the review into Special Education in Ethics (SEE). There were 14 recommendations in the report issued by the review committee and all are supported by the Department of Education and Communities.

Government Response

For the Government's position on each of the Recommendations see:

[http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/c1102bfece8cff23ca257a0e0006204b/\\$FILE/Government%20Response.pdf](http://www.parliament.nsw.gov.au/Prod/parlment/committee.nsf/0/c1102bfece8cff23ca257a0e0006204b/$FILE/Government%20Response.pdf)



ICCOREIS Response

ICCOREIS has analysed the recommendations and the government's position and gives the following response:

Recommendation 1 (retaining Special Education in Ethics classes)

For students whose parents have opted out of SRE, the offering of SEE classes has provided an option. ICCOREIS recognises the community support for such an option.

Recommendation 2 (no direct financial support for SRE and SEE)

The churches have always invested substantial amounts of their resources to provide SRE in schools and have received no direct government financial support for this endeavour. ICCOREIS advocates a level playing field for all approved providers.

Recommendation 3 (age appropriateness of SEE curriculum)

DEC continues to review the age appropriateness of the SEE curriculum. ICCOREIS supports this because it is crucial for good teaching and learning to take place.

Recommendation 4 (posting curriculum outlines, scope and sequence online)

Curriculum outlines, scope and sequence are currently posted on the websites of approved SRE providers. ICCOREIS views this as a service to parents and caregivers. Published SRE curricula are commercially available. The requirement for curriculum information to be presented in the order in which it is taught is unrealistic. Sometimes it is necessary to vary the order of a particular curriculum to accommodate variations in school routine, when school holidays fall, community celebrations and the literacy needs of children.

Recommendation 5 (other organisations allowed to deliver SEE)

ICCOREIS has no objection to this. It is the prerogative of the DEC to approve all providers of SEE and SRE.

Recommendation 6 (publish data annually – supported in principle)

It is accepted that this data is hard to obtain, varying as it does with regions and parental choice. DEC figures on SRE and SEE enrolments are estimates only. ICCOREIS supports any attempt to improve the collection of reliable statistics that will benefit the organisation and implementation of SRE and SEE.

Recommendation 7 (adequate supervision and activities for non-SRE)

Adequate supervision of students not in SRE or SEE is understood to be the responsibility of the school. Offering suggestions on the DEC website for activities for those children whose parents/carers choose neither option is to be commended.

Recommendation 8 (effective communication with principals)

A thorough understanding of the implementation of the policy and procedures is essential for SRE and SEE to work properly in schools. ICCOREIS believes that the DEC may need to improve its current communication strategies to ensure

information is received and complied with.

Recommendation 9 (system of accredited initial and ongoing training for voluntary teachers)

ICCOREIS takes volunteer training very seriously. Child protection training is part of our requirements for Christian providers. We have undertaken to implement Basic SRE Training among our member churches with ongoing in-service training in classroom management and curriculum knowledge as components.

Recommendation 10 (inclusion of philosophy in secondary schools curriculum)

Including philosophy in the NSW secondary schools as part of the development of the Australian Curriculum is under the control of the Board of Studies. ICCOREIS is committed to maintaining the place of SRE in the curriculum.

Recommendation 11 (fact sheets for parents/carers on enrolment)

The Report comments that it could not establish if parents have enough information to make informed decisions for their children. Fact sheets would go some way to addressing this issue. ICCOREIS supports the provision of fact sheets for both SRE and SEE where providers have significant input.

Recommendation 12 (templates for letters to parents/carers)

In a world of choices, it is imperative that the school ensures that parents/carers are provided with as much information as possible to make an informed choice. The templates for letters suggested in this recommendation are extremely welcome and should be used by principals and SRE coordinators to implement the procedures.

Recommendation 13 (adequate staffing and resourcing)

The staffing of the department responsible for SRE and SEE should be of the highest order. ICCOREIS strongly supports the need for in-servicing for school leadership teams.

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REVIEW ON SEE (CONT'D)

(from page 2)

There is evidence that some school leaders are uncertain about what the school is expected to do in the implementation of SRE (also see Recommendation 8).

Recommendation 14 (review of SRE and SEE)

The concept of an independent review of both SRE and SEE has merit, but an ongoing evaluation and

program of continuous improvement may be preferable. ICCOREIS has repeatedly tried to implement a survey of the current state of SRE in schools but this was not supported

by the DEC. It is crucial that experts in the field carry out the review.

ICCOREIS endorses continued volunteer training as the most important way to support the 10,000 volunteer teachers ...

What will this mean in the Future?

Clear communication with your school will assist in implementing the policy. Ensure that parents/carers are well informed. Websites, letters

and fact sheets are reliable means of communication for such information.

ICCOREIS endorses continued volunteer training as the most important way to support the 10,000 volunteer teachers who deliver Christian SRE each week. ICCOREIS has undertaken to implement Basic SRE Training among our member churches.

Independent reviews of both SEE and SRE will take place during 2014-2015. Clearly the churches ought to be preparing now for such an investigation so that SRE can be seen to best advantage.

new the working with children check

The Commission for Children and Young People (CCYP) is improving the process for verifying that people who work with children (defined as those less than 18 years old) have been screened for violent and sexual offences. Under the new legislation the CCYP will be continuously monitoring those people with a New Working with Children Check (WWCC) and will be able to advise employers of any changes in their status.

There will be a new application process for a WWCC and each person will be responsible for his or her own WWCC number. Without the WWCC number, a person will not be able to work in a direct face to face, supervised or unsupervised role with children in a child-related setting.

...there is no cost to volunteers.

Getting a New WWCC

Obtaining a WWCC is a matter of applying online. For those people without access to the internet there is a telephone help line. The second step is to go to a motor registry or government access centre to have their identity confirmed and pay the

fee, if applicable. While there is an \$80 fee for employed persons, there is no cost to volunteers.

Results of a Check

After an applicant has completed the application process they will receive either a clearance (their own personal number) or a bar (preventing them from working in a child-related role).

Church SRE providers/Employers will be able to verify that a volunteer has a clearance online or through a telephone helpline. The result will usually be provided immediately.

Implementation Date

The implementation of the new WWCC procedure has been moved back and no firm date has been given, although April seems likely. It is expected that a date for compliance by volunteer groups such as SRE teachers will be later this year.

Existing workers and volunteers will need to apply for their WWCC number sometime over the next five years. It will be a gradual process. It will be the responsibility of churches to put policies and processes in place and to advise which of their volunteers and

employees need to have a WWCC and how it is to be managed.



Record Keeping

Records will need to be kept as a WWCC has a five year expiry date. To verify a worker's clearance for working with children the employer will need his/her name, date of birth and WWCC number. This way the currency of each volunteer's clearance may be monitored and reminders sent etc.

For more information go to www.newcheck.kids.nsw.gov.au, phone (02) 9286 7276 or email newcheck@kids.nsw.gov.au.

THE PARISH PRIEST AS THE SCRIPTURE (SRE) TEACHER (CONT'D)

(from page 1)

Fr Ray saw schools as having three communities – the student community, the teacher and staff community, and the parent community and he made every effort to seek out all three. If Scripture was just after recess, he arrived a little early to say hello to the staff or share some comfort or concern. He became a regular friendly face. The parent/carer community was always invited to attend the church services and he always shook their hands, introduced himself and welcomed them with gusto. On Presentation Day, Fr Ray became a regular face

of the church, talking, chatting and sharing with parents.

When someone dies in a small community, everyone knows. Death mystifies children, and the Scripture teacher – particularly the Parish Priest – is in a wonderful position to offer ministry, compassion and understanding. Although not all Scripture teachers are equipped to handle delicate questions, in all the years I've known Fr Ray, I never once saw him back away from a question – no matter how trivial, outrageous or unrelated it seemed.

When kids were in hospital; down the street; at ANZAC Day

celebrations; at a funeral; feeling the pain of separation or divorce, or wanting to share their latest drawing or new toy, Fr Ray, the Scripture teacher, was the person with whom they shared. Sadly, it wasn't Fr Ray the Parish Priest, because this was not the role nor the setting they knew: Fr Ray the Scripture teacher was the man who brought them Bible stories, wisdom, understanding and a deep love of Jesus Christ – the greatest hero of whom they had ever heard.

*Pastor David Freeman
Lower Manning Uniting Church*

RESOURCES

The Sounds of Holy Week

www.barnabasinchurches.org.uk/easter-the-sounds-of-holy-week/

Great idea – even shy children can be involved as no-one is seen – only heard!



Cybersmart News

Cybersmart has developed actions to help Australian children and youth protect themselves and others against the impact of trolling.

Trolling is when a user intentionally causes distress, anger and argument in an online public forum for the purpose of disturbing other users.



Cybersmart Challenge activities are a fantastic way for schools to encourage internet safety and positive online behaviour in the classroom. With Safer Internet Day approaching on 5 February 2013, schools are encouraged to sign up now for these activities which will be offered online throughout the day.

With the recent announcement of the Safe Schools are Smart Schools Competition, there are free online activities designed for upper primary and lower secondary students.

Go to this address for activities suitable for upper primary children www.cybersmart.gov.au/About%20Cybersmart/Newsroom/News%20Article%20List/2012/11/~//link.aspx?id=C6127D373294489DA4DEE8B33201AEC5&z=z

Sheepdog School

www.sheepdogschool.lostsheep.com.au has background materials, history and geography, teaching tips, activities and colouring sheets to download on all these Lost Sheep stories:

Cecil the Lost Sheep, the Good Samaritan, Zac the Taxman, Jed and Roy McCoy, Jonah's Story, The Gardener and the Vine, Dave the Donkey, Jesus and the Children.



Max 7

www.max7.org has all kinds of materials for use with children. You can enter a word to search on such as "Easter" and then select programs, lessons or audio visuals to mention just a few. I found a graph of the number of children in the world. There are also videos and PowerPoints including the story of Palm Sunday and the other events leading up to Easter.



Language Support

The Department of Education and Communities has some excellent material for parents of children in schools who come from a non-English speaking background.

The "Letter to Parents", which describes how SRE is set up in each school, has been translated into 23 languages including Arabic, Chinese, Croatian, Japanese and Korean.

www.schools.nsw.edu.au/languagesupport/documents/specreligious.php
A large number of other documents relating to school life are also translated into over 40 languages:
www.schools.nsw.edu.au/languagesupport/index.php

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