

CatechistNET

eNEWSLETTER

News, Updates & Articles from CCD Wollongong



Called to be a Light in the Darkness

Jude Hennessy

I hope all of you, our wonderful SRE Catechists, have had a great start to 2026. For many of you, 2026 marks another year of steadfast service to the spreading of the Gospel, of making Jesus known and loved, another year added to many others spent in faithfulness to Jesus' command of evangelisation.

For others amongst us, 2026 marks the start of their journey in this ministry, learning the ropes, growing in confidence, experiencing the joy that comes from being obedient to God's call. You are discovering how the power of the Holy Spirit can use you when you step out in faith and boldness.

It has been a joy for me to be a part of our large Level 1 training cohort. It has been a source of great encouragement, indeed amazement to meet so many of the new catechists, hear their stories of what led them to this ministry, what has nurtured their own faith, their backgrounds in work, in family and parish life. Above all, I have loved hearing them explain their 'why' – their relationship with God and love of the Church that has caused them to say yes to teaching SRE to young people.

In his Easter message, Bishop Mascord commences with the Scripture quote from the Gospel of John 1:5,

'The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.'

He goes on to note that this Easter, we find ourselves in unfamiliar territory, in a world of uncertainty and turmoil, but also how strong we can be when we stand together. Bishop points powerfully to the story of Resurrection, the triumph of life over death, of hope over despair, and that 'no darkness is too great for God's light'.

Let us remember that the Resurrection changes everything. It is the source of our salvation and hope, with our Lord pouring out unfathomable mercy and salvation earned by his victory on the cross. But make no mistake, we must remember what was endured, we need to with trembling – ponder the price that was paid by Jesus, enabling us to be brought home to The Father and in turn respond with gratitude, joy and love. It is with this gratitude, joy and love that fuels the work of a catechist – that enables us, with Jesus, to truly be a light that shines in the darkness. People of the light – a Resurrection people.

Have a blessed Easter!

CCD News

Frances Fairs

We have had a wonderful start to the year. Sue Clark mentioned last week that we have already exceeded the total number of new catechists from last year. In addition, Jude Hennessy and I have trained more than double the number of Year 10 students in our Catholic schools to serve as Student Catechists this year.

Processing new volunteers, delivering training, and preparing for our Lenten retreat has made for a busy – but joyful – beginning to the year. I am often buoyed for days after conversations with catechists at our events and training sessions. You are truly extraordinary people. Your generosity, faith in Jesus, and hope in difficult times are deeply inspiring. It is no surprise that Jesus has called you to be his missionaries!

For this reason, in our newsletters this year, I have decided to include interviews and highlight the wonderful things SRE Catechists are doing across the Diocese.

Great catechists are lifelong learners! Please consider attending our CCD Level 2 course, which begins in the first days of May. This course is offered only every second year, and this time we have arranged excellent presenters, including Fr Richard Healey, Fr Mark De Battista and Fr Darren McDowell. Please see below for the course outline and registration details.

I would like to express our sincere gratitude to the Campbelltown Catholic Club for their generous ongoing financial support. Their contribution strengthens our capacity to equip and train catechists, and ensures that families—particularly in the Macarthur region—have access to a high-quality curriculum and an enriching educational program.

May these final days of Holy Week be transformational for you and your loved ones—drawing you close to Jesus in his passion and death and brimming with Easter joy to all those you met!



Great catechists are lifelong learners!

Come to the Level 2 course to enhance your effectiveness as an SRE Catechist, and increase your own understanding of the Catholic Faith.

Due to the ANZAC day public holiday, the course will commence in Rosemeadow on Friday 1 May and in Wollongong on Monday 4 May. Please see the course outline for dates and topics: [Level-2-Course-2026](#)

Details:

Rosemeadow (Parish Martha Room) on Fridays: 1, 8, 15, 22, 29 May & 5 June
9:30am - 1:30pm (2:30pm on 15 May)

Wollongong (Xavier Centre) on Mondays: 4, 11, 18, 25 May, 1 & 15 June
9:30am - 1:30pm (2:30pm on 18 May)

Morning Tea is provided. Please register by following the link:

[Click here to Register](#)



Catechist Retreat 2026

Frances Fairs

Last week we were blessed to join with 54 Catechists in Wollongong, and 62 Catechists in Rosemeadow for a day of spiritual nourishment and retreat.

At the retreat, Fr Aloysius Rego OCD, helped us to understand that Gospel conversion is, paradoxically, not about “growing up”, but “growing down”—becoming like little children, with complete confidence and trust that we are totally acceptable and unconditionally loved by God.

Fr Rego also shared that just as it is with other people in our lives, the deeper the intimacy, the greater we can be ourselves and enjoy communion with the person of Jesus.

Unfortunately, our false understanding or images of God can put limits on our relationship with Him because of how we unwittingly respond to God. Fr Rego spoke about common false images of God including a “Panadol/pain-reliever God” or a “Policeman God”.

Fr Rego encouraged us to turn to the Gospel to help us to form our understanding of God and reflect on the images Jesus gave us, such as the Prodigal Father (Lk.15:11-32), the Crazy Landowner (Mt.20:1-15) and the Good Shepherd (Lk.15:1-8, Jn.10).







Preparing for the Feast of Pentecost

Sue Clark

As we anticipate the great Easter Liturgies which are coming, let also consider how important it is, as catechists, to plan ahead for other important feasts which follow soon after.

The Ascension and Pentecost will be the next important Feasts and, while we need to personally honour each of the special seasons in the liturgical calendar in their own right, it might also be timely to take advantage of the term holidays to reflect on some exciting ways that you can teach these important upcoming lessons to your students.

In planning ahead for Term 2, let us allow the hope-filled aspect of the Easter narratives to stir in us an excitement and anticipation as we prepare lessons that are interesting, engaging and a true reflection of our own personal deep faith.

There is no shortage “drama” in the upcoming events of Feasts of The Ascension and Pentecost! They provide great opportunities to tell engaging stories. Here are some ONLINE suggestions to inspire you:



Kindergarten - Lesson 11: The Spirit Comes

SLIDESHOW: A great visual aid telling the story of Pentecost including a prayer to the Holy Spirit and contemporary images of the symbol of the Holy Spirit.



Year 1 - Lesson 12: The Holy Spirit Comes

VIDEO: A fun animation explaining the event of Pentecost and focusing on the teaching of the Apostles which helped the early Christians to care for those in need, worship together and share their meals.



Year 2 - Lesson 12 Video: Pentecost

VIDEO: Introduces the concept of the Church's Birthday as a relatable event describing the “birth” of the Church.



Year 3 Lesson 13 and Year 4 Lesson 13: Video: Pentecost

VIDEO: Teaches the history of the event of Pentecost and the call to Baptism for the forgiveness of sins. Includes the Ascension.



Year 5 Lesson 12: Come Holy Spirit

VIDEO: Focuses on the powerful gift of the Holy Spirit given to us to become witnesses



Year 6 Lesson 14: The Fruits of the Spirit

VIDEO: Great for children who are attending Confirmation classes, especially as it explains the good fruit that comes from the Holy Spirit



COLAL Online Resources Guide

1. Go to ccdwoollongong.com
2. Select ONLINE RESOURCES in menu bar



3. Select your Diocese
4. Enter password: **COLAL26**
5. Select Year Group and Lesson Number



Inspired by Mona!

Be inspired by Mona, SRE Catechist from the Macquarie Fields parish, who embroidered the sacred heart of Jesus onto a t-shirt years ago and it's still a talking point!

Click on the image below for a tutorial on how to make the t-shirt.



If you have a creative way to help share the Gospel, please let us know by emailing: support@ccdwoolongong.com.

Interview with SRE Catechist: Vicky Stuart



How/why did you come to be a part of the Catechist ministry?

I heard the need for catechists at Mass. At the time, my husband was overseas and so I took our two sons aged 2 and 5 and my very pregnant belly to Mass. As the priest spoke, I felt he was talking to me alone. Surely not, pregnant with young children! A couple of months later, we moved to Rosemeadow. A lady from playgroup mentioned that she taught Scripture and the priest's words returned to my mind. I'm certain that the Holy Spirit spoke to me that day - 33 years ago!

What do you enjoy about teaching SRE?

I love walking into my classroom each week and seeing the beautiful, smiling faces of the children in my class.

I enjoy teaching about the life of Jesus and how He loves us so much.

What do you find most challenging?

The biggest challenge that I have is time – there isn't enough! I want to share so much in such a short time. Also, I take a combined K, 1 & 2 class, where some children experience challenges with literacy, making reading and writing activities more difficult.

Can you share a heart-warming experience?

A few years ago, early in the lesson, a side door that led into a garden slowly opened. No one appeared to be there. The children looked at me and so I said, "Jesus has come to visit us today - Welcome - have a seat." The kids stared at the empty chair. About 10 min later, the door slowly closed. Half of the class waved and said goodbye to Jesus. Then I thanked Jesus for visiting us. After that, some children regularly asked if Jesus would visit us again. I tell them: He's always with us.

I started teaching at St Helen's Park PS 31 years ago with my friend Margaret. We are both still teaching at the school! There have been many changes but what hasn't changed is the thirst that young children have for learning about the love that God has for us all.

Level 1 Course

Frances Fairs

We were blessed to join with 142 SRE Catechists for the safeguarding refresher and Level 1 course at the start of Term 1.

We hope to see everyone at the Level 2 course in May as we delve deeper into understanding our Catholic Faith and effective catechesis!

The next safeguarding update will run in Wollongong and on Zoom on August 3.





Catholic SRE
Diocese of Wollongong

Contact us:
CCD Wollongong
web: www.ccdwollongong.com
email: support@ccdwoollongong.com