

CATECHISTNET NEWSLETTER

News, Updates & Articles from CCD Wollongong



Letter to Catechists

Dear Catechists,

At time of writing, my wife Kerrie and I are less than 2 weeks away from the incredible opportunity of attending the World Meeting of Families (WMOF) in Rome to be held from June 22-26. We have been privileged to be members of the Australian Catholic Life Marriage and Family Council (ACLMFC) since 2019 and were invited to attend in that capacity. It is a real honour to have been asked, humbling and at the same time, quite daunting.

Kerrie and I grew up in the same Parish of Our Lady of Fatima Caringbah, where the faith of our families and our personal faith was nurtured. It was a place of family, where we formed lifetime friendships and the place where under the pastoral hand of the wonderful Msg Kerry A Bayada, we were involved in a youth group together and later I was invited with other young people to become a Catechist when I'd just turned 18. I loved it, and sharing my faith as a Catechist, later as a teacher in Catholic Schools and eventually again in the work of the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine in our Diocese, has been a central and incredibly rewarding element of my faith and work.

Kerrie and I have been blessed throughout our lives to be part of families that have strived to embrace the vision for Catholic family living. We have experienced and been supported in Church families that have nurtured a sense of welcome, fun, connection, and support – all the essentials of God's family. It has been in the context of parish life where we have experienced fraternity, friendship, and the guiding hand of wonderful pastors.

For us, family is the place where we are loved and nurtured, where foundations are laid and where we are formed into being the person God calls each one of us to be. I hope for most of you, family has been a place of preparation for living well, for facing together the joys, opportunities and struggles that come our way. Families in all their forms should also be safe places for gentle correction and growth, and always of forgiveness and affirmation, enabling each of us to take our place in the world as witnesses of God's love. In that way, and in all these things, our families have the potential to be the domestic church, little parishes if you like.

Whatever has been your experience of family, one thing is certain - God wants us in his family! He sent his only son to invite and clear the way for us to be drawn into his family, as his sons and daughters, as brothers and sisters, under the guiding hand of the most loving of fathers. It is this family, that you as catechists are in many varied ways, inviting the young people you teach in state schools, to be a part of, encouraging them to enter into it more fully.

I can't wait to share more of my learnings and experiences with you when I return. Please be assured that I will pray earnestly for you, this ministry, and our Diocese in my journeying.

Jude Hennessy
Director
Office of Renewal and Evangelisation



CCD Catechist Training

All of a sudden we are half way through the year! Thank you to all those who joined us in Term 1 for our Level 1 course on Zoom. A special thanks must go to the obliging Parish Coordinators who opened their homes or in some cases, set up parish meeting rooms, to provide the Zoom based course to those requiring updates and initial training as SRE Catechist Teachers and Helpers.

In Term 2, we were fortunate to be able to meet in person and I'm grateful to those who came along to the Catholic Club in Campbelltown and the Xavier Centre in Wollongong. We were able to run a hybrid course from the Xavier Centre and those who wanted to join remotely, were able to join on Zoom each Friday. Thank you to those who took the time to join us either in person or remotely.

For me, one of the best parts of any course is the prayer and sharing time. It is wonderful to hear "good news stories" from those on the ground. Only last week, Mary shared that one of her students came along to Sunday Mass and joyfully pointed her out to the child's family. Monica also shared what a wonderful Kindergarten class she has and just how much they are retaining from her lessons. Jan shared her success in using the online curriculum resources in her last lesson. The children loved the lesson and Jan found the online resources easy to use. These good news stories from the classroom, encourage us all in our mission to share and teach our Faith to those in our SRE classes! Thank you!

In Term 3, we will be running our CCD Level 3 Diploma Course from Campbelltown and Wollongong, with an option to join on Zoom. The Level 3 course is our most popular course as it is taught by a variety of expert presenters who take us on a journey through the Catechism of the Catholic Church. Noting that the course is aimed at deepening our understanding of and forming us in the Catholic Faith, the Level 3 course is open to all within and outside the CCD ministry. Please don't miss the opportunity to come along and invite others in our Church communities to join us as we delve into a deeper understanding of our Catholic Faith.

This year the presenters for the CCD Level 3 course are: Fr Richard Healey, Seminarian Darren McDowell, Bernadette Toohey MGL, Deacon James Arblaster, Katherine Stone MGL and Fr Bernard Gordon VG.

Please keep an eye out in your email for an invitation to register for the course in coming weeks!



Hidden Helpers

CCD in the Diocese of Wollongong is made up of hundreds of generous and hardworking volunteers who coordinate parish teams and deliver lessons to thousands of Catholic kids in our State Schools.

Among these wonderful SRE Catechists, we are fortunate to have Catechist Helpers, who support the SRE Teacher in the delivery of the lessons.

Below, Neville Micallef shares his thoughts on being a Catechist Helper, and Elizabeth Reeves, an SRE Catechist, shares her appreciation of having a helper in the classroom with her. Both Neville and Elizabeth are from Ss Peter & Paul, Kiama.



Neville Micallef

SRE CATECHIST HELPER

How did you become an SRE helper?

I answered a request for a helper in the church bulletin.

What do you enjoy about being an SRE helper? Helping Elizabeth, and although I only contribute in a small way, I do enjoy the interaction with the children and watching them grow in their faith and understanding of Jesus.

What do you find most challenging? Helping to keep some of the children focused and interested.

What warms your heart when in the classroom?

During their colouring in session, how they perceive what Jesus looks like, eg some would see Jesus as being brown, yellow, and even purple.

What would you say to someone considering becoming an SRE helper? Try it as it is very rewarding and satisfying.

Have you considered becoming an SRE teacher?

Not at this stage.



Reflection on SRE Helpers

by SRE Teacher

Elizabeth Reeves

I have been a catechist for many years teaching infant classes, primary and high school students. I also taught in Catholic high schools for about 15 years.

More recently I have been taking Kindergarten for SRE at Minnamurra Public school. It has been a joy to bring them the good news about Jesus Christ and to help them to know and love Jesus.

I always love to have a helper. Last year I had 21 students in Kindergarten. Neville assisted me with the class which I very much appreciated especially with helping to hand out the books, make sure the pupils were on the right page in their work book, give some assistance with the activity, give them a stamp for good work and be supportive to any student who needed some special care.

I know it is a personal choice about having a helper, but for me a helper assists in making the lesson flow well. It is always special to pray with the class and the helper at the beginning of the lesson giving a great sense of unity in loving and serving our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

Do you know someone who might make a great classroom helper? Maybe they are warm, patient, and generous but would never dream of being a "teacher". Consider asking them to give being a helper a go!

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Coordinator Meetings:

- Illawarra-Shoalhaven
Friday 24th June, 10am - 12pm
Xavier Centre, Wollongong
- Macarthur-Highlands
Monday 27th June, 10am - 12pm
Catholic Club, Campbelltown

Term 2 concludes: 1st July

Term 3 commences: 18th July

CCD Level 3 Diploma Course

- Campbelltown
Commencing Monday 1st August
and continuing for six
consecutive Mondays
- Wollongong
Commencing Friday 5th August
and continuing for six
consecutive Fridays

YOU ARE INVITED

Catechist Retreat 2022

Macarthur-Highlands
Varroville
Monday, Sep 12
10am - 2pm

Illawarra-Shoalhaven
Gerringong
Friday, Sep 16
10am - 2pm



Catholic SRE
Diocese of Wollongong

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