

# CONNECTIONS

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VOL28  
ISSUE 4



*Advent & Christmas*



Taking the Gospel to the World

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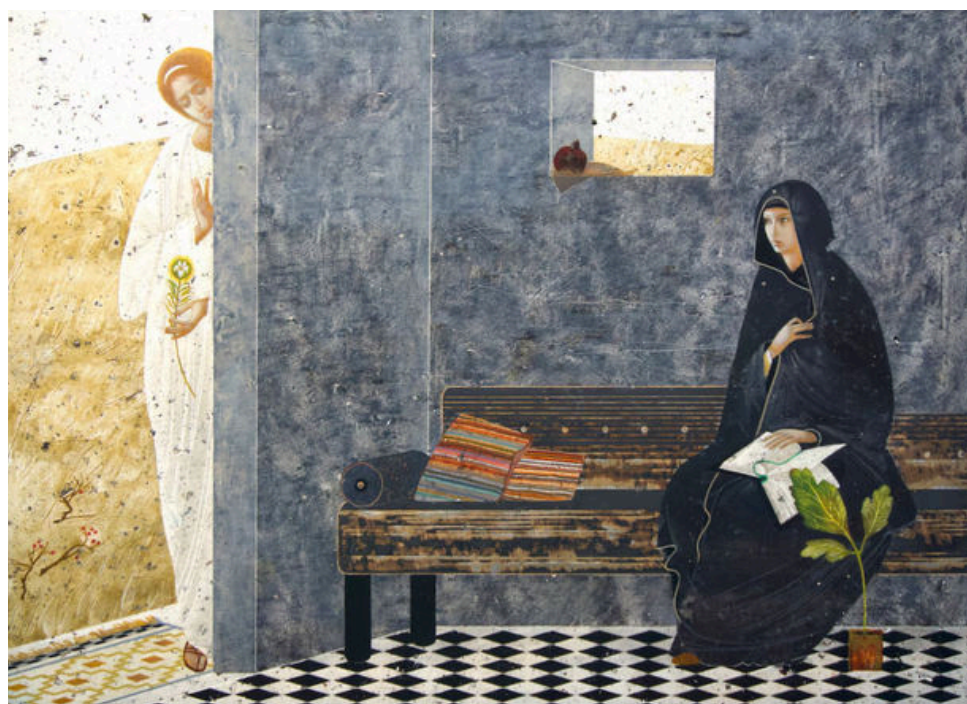


# FROM THE

A time to

Welcome to the final term of 2024. It's that time of the year again when we, the CCD community, celebrate the Ministry of SRE. Our Annual CCD Mass is being held on Saturday 16 November at Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral at Waitara (see back page for invitation). Following our eucharistic celebration, we will be presenting awards for significant years of service (15 years and beyond) and accreditation awards for catechists who have completed all three levels of the CCD training and formation course.

Term 4 is an exciting one in the classroom. There are several opportunities to honour Mary. October being the month of the Holy Rosary and three significant Marian feast days in November and December provide the opportunity to encourage the students to pray to God through the intercession of Mary. This term perhaps you could pray the Hail Mary with the children at prayer time every lesson and encourage them to pray it at home. It is a great opportunity to prepare young children for Mary's "Yes" to the Angel Gabriel, which they will hear about during Advent.



We have the privileged opportunity in SRE classes to break open the real meaning of Christmas and to teach the children how to use their time in Advent to prepare for the birth of Jesus. For all of us Advent is a time to look at our relationships and do some work on them. For the students, kindness and forgiveness in their relationships with their siblings and friends and listening to parents and teachers are relationship building strategies that we could encourage them to focus on during their preparation for Christmas. Another way to help the students to prepare for Christmas during Advent is to have them think of those who are less fortunate and ask them to talk to their families about what they can do to share some of what they have with others. You might explain the work of St Vincent de Paul and how they assist families at Christmas.

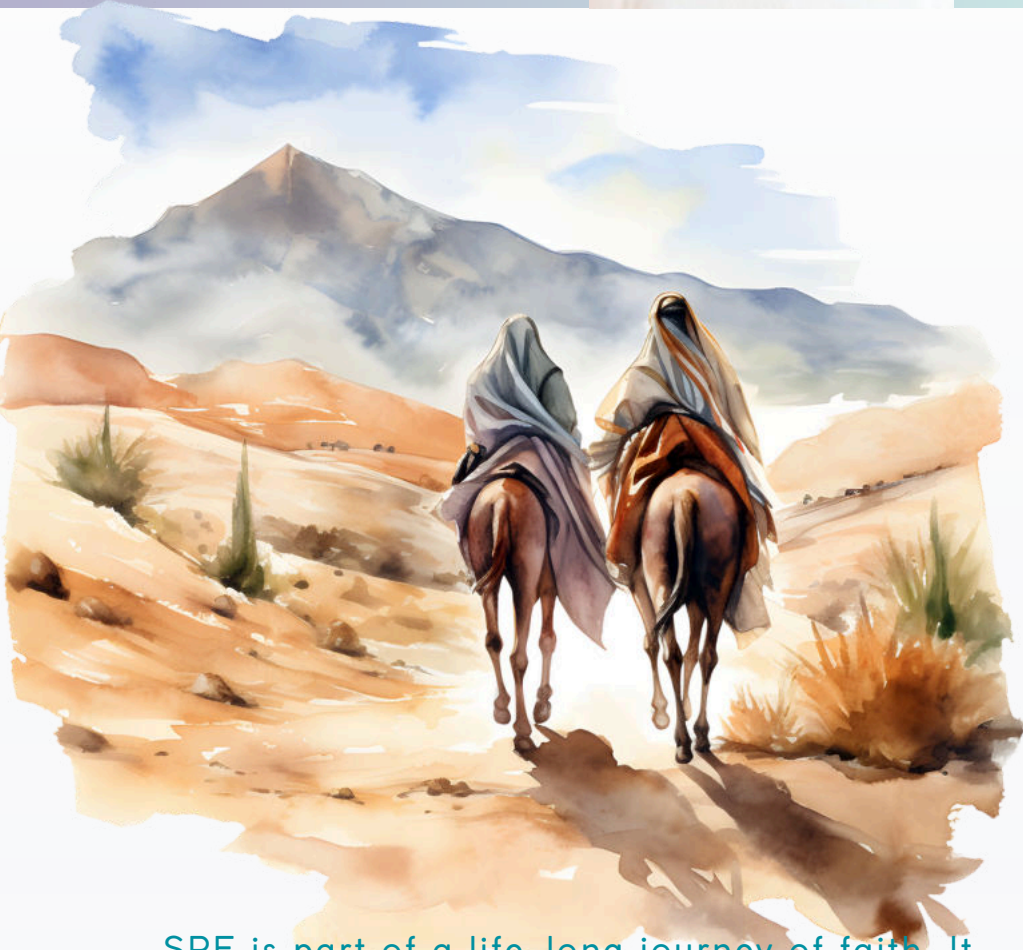
# HEAD OF CCD

Celebrate and Reflect



I encourage you to use the Advent Wreath in your sacred space and to pray with the children for hope, love, joy and peace as you explain the meaning of the four candles. Pray with the students, and for them and their families and take the opportunity in prayer to teach them that real peace begins at home.

Of all the Christian feasts, children seem to know more about Christmas than any other, probably because of the secularisation of the feast which actually provides us with the opportunity to enter into the children's life experience from the perspective of our faith – Jesus being the real reason for the season. The incarnation of Jesus has much to offer children and young people as they ponder in their hearts, like Mary, what it means for them. The Walking with Jesus lessons provide opportunities for familiar songs, craft, drama and other activities that will help bring your SRE lessons to life and assist children and young people to enter the season of Advent with an openness and a willingness to prepare their hearts to welcome Christ at Christmas.



SRE is part of a life-long journey of faith. It is not the whole story, but it does have the capacity to create space for the Spirit to move in the hearts and minds of children and young people who are hungry for a message that will bring them hope.

You are indeed 'preparing a way for the Lord' each time you go into the classroom. Use this time wisely and pray with and for the students and their families that there will always be space in the lives and their homes for the God who loves them.

I cannot adequately express in words my respect and admiration for the catechists of Broken Bay. You are leaders in the field of evangelisation and catechesis as you selflessly take up your role as missionary disciples and spread the Good News of the kingdom of God in your schools with joy. I pray for you each and every day and I thank God for your presence in our schools. I wish you and your families abundant blessings at Christmas and always.

*Alison Newell*





Advent is not just a time of waiting for Christmas, but a season of spiritual renewal, where we open our hearts to God’s presence in our lives. Through our lessons, prayers, and activities, we have the chance to lead students and families into a meaningful experience of this sacred season and a deeper encounter with Jesus.

We can encourage our students to seek Jesus in the quiet moments of reflection and prayer. Teach them that they encounter Jesus in scripture, in acts of kindness, and in the way they prepare their hearts to welcome Him. Simple practices, like lighting the Advent candles, spending time in prayer as a family and creating space for Jesus to enter into their daily lives. Remind them that Advent is a season of hope, where we learn to wait and trust in God’s promises.

We can invite students to see Jesus in others - especially the poor, the lonely, those in need and to reflect His love through service, generosity and gratitude.

By leading them to encounter Christ in these ways, we help them see Advent not as a rush to Christmas, but as a time of deepening their faith and growing closer to the Lord who is always with us.

We hope you enjoy the **Advent PowerPoint Quizzes**, created in response to your wanting some more material for fun, full class participation and engagement. They are a summary of the Unit and each stage is different. If you like these, we’ll create more. Send us your feedback. Download them where you download your lesson PowerPoints.

Blessings on you, your families and your ministry this Advent season!

As we roll towards the end of another year, it’s safe to say – you’ve worked hard! From preparing lessons to sharing the faith with eager (and sometimes not-so-eager) minds, you’ve given it your all. But now, it’s time to pause, breathe, and recharge. After all, even God rested on the seventh day (Genesis 2:2), and if it’s good enough for the Creator, it’s good enough for us!

Advent and Christmas are seasons of anticipation and joy, but they’re also perfect for stepping back, spending quality time with family, and taking care of yourself. Go for a stroll on one of our beautiful beaches, enjoy the sunshine, and soak up the simple pleasures. Maybe even sneak in a little afternoon nap – call it "holy rest."

Speaking of rest, remember that self-care isn’t just about putting your feet up (though that’s a pretty good start!). It’s about tending to your heart and soul, too. Jesus said, “Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest” (Matthew 11:28). So, if you’re feeling worn out, let prayer be your place of refuge. Spend time with God, and let Him refresh you from the inside out.

And while you're at it, don’t be afraid to say no to extra commitments. Catechists are known for their generosity, but even the most devoted among us need a little “me time.” There’s nothing wrong with slowing down, putting your phone on silent, and having a guilt-free day of doing absolutely nothing.

So, as the year wraps up, give yourself permission to take it easy. You deserve it. Merry Christmas, and may your summer be full of rest, peace, and plenty of sunscreen!

As we approach the Annual CCD Mass and the Advent Reflection days, my heart is filled with gratitude for each and every one of you. Your dedication to sharing the Word of God with the younger generation is truly inspiring. Sometimes it can feel like quiet work, but know that it echoes loudly in the hearts of our students, their families, and our parishes.

This year, I want to offer a special prayer for all those who do not have someone to pray for them. As we gather for reflection and celebration, may our prayers extend to those who are alone, struggling, or in need of God’s grace.

I’m especially excited to spend Christmas with my family, following our beloved Filipino traditions. We will, as always, be attending the Simbang Gabi – those beautiful Dawn Masses – leading up to Christmas Day. The joy of waking up early, gathering with our community in the quiet of the morning, fills me with hope and anticipation. And of course, we’ll be enjoying some delicious Filipino treats like bibingka and puto bumbong!

As we continue through this sacred season, may the Holy Spirit guide you in your ministry. I look forward to celebrating with you at the CCD Mass, and to reflecting together during Advent. May you and your loved ones experience the peace and joy of Christmas, and may the love of Christ fill your hearts.

It has been my pleasure to serve you all again this year!

God bless and thank you for all you do!

*Sue-Anne Sherwood*  
NORTH SHORE

*Kristy Komadina*  
NORTH SHORE

*Maricel Malapira*  
ADMINISTRATION



Over the past few years, I have attended a number of funerals of friends and family. Sadly, one of these was for one of our beloved catechists. Some of these events have been in churches or chapels with strong reference to Christian beliefs and in keeping with Catholic traditions of prayer. Other events have farewelled people from this life with no reference to God or anything beyond this world. They were lovely celebrations of the persons life but for me they lacked a sense of hope.

It is difficult for people of faith to comprehend and appreciate how our friends and family cope with the loss of a loved one without the hope of a life after this one. Without the belief that we are bound for better things than this life offers. Some of the Christian funerals I have attended are more than sad recollections of the life well lived, they are also hope filled celebrations of the person's eternal life in heaven.

As Catechists we sow the seeds of this hope by educating children and young people in the Catholic faith. This is never more evident than when we teach the Easter Story of the passion, death and resurrection of Jesus, but this hope and the joy it brings is part of every unit we present in the Walking with Jesus program.

Next term as we prepare the students for Christmas let's be sure they know the difference between the good things this world has to offer - food, gifts and fun and the Good News of this special season. God our Creator and Father in heaven loves us and wants to be with us so much that he sent his son Jesus to be our brother and our saviour. This joy filled Good News is a lasting treasure for the students in our classes which we pray will nourish their spiritual well-being now and sustain them throughout the ups and downs of their lives. It is our privilege as Catechists to share this hope filled message of Christmas.

*John Donnelly*  
NORTHERN BEACHES

Hello to all you wonderful catechists. I hope you have been enjoying the training at whatever level you have been participating. As a presenter, I have been impressed by the active participation the new and experienced catechists have shown. For me the highlight has been Level 3 in which we have been exploring the wonderful wisdom of the Psalms.

At the Level 1 workshops, we enjoyed experiencing the various activities that we use to engage our students in Special Religious Education lessons. As usual, there was a lot of laughing and merriment as we rediscovered our inner child.

Next term it is time to look toward Advent and Christmas and of course that means Christmas Assemblies. If it is your turn to prepare something, do not despair. We have a number of Christmas Assemblies which you can consider or if you have a particular idea in mind you wish to develop, contact CCD and we can help you bring your creative ideas to life.

It has been a a busy year for the team getting new catechists authorised through the CCDMI programme and Term 4 looks like being just as busy. It is great to know that there are generous people in our parishes who want to be part of this ministry and are willing to do the training to be more effect messengers of Jesus' Good News.

I look forward to either seeing you on the Zoom screen for training, visiting your parish to help with recruiting or at the face to face training session in the school holidays.

May the peace of the Risen Lord be with you as you take the Gospel to the children in the classrooms you visit.

*Michael Tebbutt*  
CENTRAL COAST

Hello friends! I hope you are enjoying the Spring school holiday break. What a difference some warm weather makes! I'm looking forward to returning to my evening tennis class in Term 4 after injuring my ankle a few months ago. I'll be loving the warmer weather and longer evenings on the court!

During Term 3, we were busy once again running many training sessions including our Ministry Induction course for new catechists, Level 1 training for those wishing to learn new 'Tools for the Classroom', as well as our Level 3 course on 'The Psalms'. We encourage all our catechists to look for training and formation opportunities, which we advertise in Connections and include on our website at <https://www.bbcatholic.org.au/mission/ccd/training-and-events-calendar>

We also held a High School SRE Conference late in term 3, which was attended by many Broken Bay secondary catechists as well as those from Sydney Archdiocese, Parramatta, Maitland-Newcastle and as far as Bathurst! Maricel and I enjoyed helping with preparations and feeding everyone.

Thank you to those catechists who attended Ongoing Classroom Management training these school holidays. It was great to see you on Zoom or in person, and we appreciate you taking the time to ensure your training is up-to-date.

In term 4, we hope you will join us for an Advent Reflection Day as we prepare for the birth of Jesus. Details to follow next term.

Wishing you all a wonderful Term 4.

*Alicia Klein*  
ADMINISTRATION

# Mary: Our Model For Discipleship for Special Religious Education Catechists

We often think of Mary as a model for mothers or young women, especially if they are religious sisters or contemplative nuns. Let us consider Mary as a model for us, who go into the local state school each week to teach the children there about the Good News that Jesus came to bring us. Yes, that means Mary is a model for women and men, young and old, out there fighting for the under dog or living a quiet life at home and in the local neighbourhood, helping others.

Let us consider what we can learn from Mary considering what she does in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament there are prophecies that a special woman will play a significant role in the salvation of humanity. In the book of Genesis we hear God saying

**I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will strike your head, and you will strike his heel.” (Gen 3:15)**

And in Isaiah there is the promise of a sign,

**Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Look, the young woman is with child and shall bear a son and shall name him Immanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)**

The mention of Mary in the New Testament are much more specific and you can probably name them all. It is Luke’s Gospel that we learn much about Mary, beginning with the Annunciation and the Nativity story. Luke’s telling of the Angel Gabriel appearing to Mary in Nazareth, we learn that Mary has been especially chosen by God to bear the one foretold in the quote from Isaiah.

Initially, she was surprised and somewhat puzzled as ‘she did not know a man.’ The Angel Gabriel explained to her how God would cause this to happen and the child would be the Son of God and He shall inherit the throne of David. This would have been a prophecy with which Mary would have been familiar. Mary, full of faith, calmly responded with her Fiat, “let it be done to me as you have spoken.”

What does this tell us about Mary? Firstly we realise that Mary is a woman who has a very deep relationship with God and is a woman of prayer.

Are we people with a strong relationship with God the Father and Jesus, his son? I think so. And how do we reflect the courage displayed by Mary in our lives?

As we continue to read Luke’s account, we are told that Mary, having accepted this wonderful honour of carrying and giving birth to the Son of God, on hearing that her kinswoman, Elizabeth has also conceived, sets off to assist her in her pregnancy. This is a courageous and unselfish action on Mary’s part as she has to travel to the southern region of the country with little or no planning. Mary shows us her courage.

And how do we reflect the courage displayed by Mary in our lives? As catechists, it seems relatively safe to go into the school and teach the children about their Catholic heritage but think of the first time you walked into the school. How were you feeling? I can remember that I could feel the knot in my stomach, a sign of anxiety. Over the years, it does become easier but every now and then you may come across a class of children who make us wonder if we are doing any good but nevertheless, we summon our strength and courage, and pray for the guidance and strength of the Holy Spirit and place our trust in God, and once more face this troublesome class. This is truly being courageous as Mary was courageous.

After Jesus was born and was presented in the Temple, they were met by Simeon who blessed them and then spoke to Mary, saying

**“This child is destined for the falling and the rising of many in Israel, and to be a sign that will be opposed so that the inner thoughts of many will be revealed—and a sword will pierce your own soul too.” (Lk 2:34-35)**

How would this have affected Mary? I am sure this would have been unsettling for her but still she remained firm in her task. I am sure that there have been many times we have been unsettled in our ministry as SRE Catechists whether by a child in our class or by an adult who thinks we are wasting our time and energy, but we are convinced we are doing God's work and we continue steadfastly, just as Mary did.



Some years later, Mary and Joseph, with Jesus visit the Temple in Jerusalem once more. This time Jesus stays behind and when found by His parents, He astonishes them when they ask Him why is here and what is He doing, he replies,

**“Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father’s house?” (Lk 2:49)**

Mary and Joseph seemingly accept their son's response and return home but Luke gives us another insight into the person of Mary. Luke wrote that Mary pondered all these things in her heart. We learn that Mary is also a contemplative. We too can be contemplatives without being enclosed in an abbey or cloistered in a convent. What things have you 'pondered in your heart' over the years?



“Why were you searching for me? Did you not know that I must be in my Father's house?” But they did not understand what he said to them. Then he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them. His mother treasured, or pondered, all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour. (Lk 2:49-52)

In John's Gospel we learn of Mary's intercessory role in our lives of faith. It was at the wedding feast at Cana. Mary learns that wine is running low and so as not to have the bride and groom embarrassed, she tells Jesus. While Jesus replies that His hour has not yet come, she confidently turns to the servants and tells them to do whatever He asks. Mary once again shows us her faith that her Son will not let her down.



Do we put our prayers into the hand of the Father confidently knowing that our prayer will bear fruit? If we don't, we can always ask Mary to pray with us and for the prayer that we have prayed.

In each of these situations, Mary, who is seen as a model of faith and an example of perfect discipleship. Through our devotion to Mary, we can grow in our faith, grow in holiness, and draw closer to God.

There are many more instances in the Gospels of Mary being a model for us. There is not space here but in your time of prayer, take time to reflect on Mary and the discipleship she shows us. Everything that Mary does, points towards being disciples of her Son, Jesus. May we too ponder these things in our heart and be models of discipleship for the children we teach.

*Michael Tebbutt*  
CENTRAL COAST REGIONAL COORDINATOR

## Word Bank

gifts  
 star  
 born  
 God  
 happy  
 back  
 Bethlehem  
 Nazareth  
 thanks  
 Jesus  
 Gabriel  
 tired  
 stable  
 shepherds  
 myrrh

## Fill in the blanks: The First Christmas

Mary and Joseph lived in \_\_\_\_\_. One day the Angel \_\_\_\_\_ visited Mary. He told her that she would have a baby and that his name would be \_\_\_\_\_. Mary and Joseph were really \_\_\_\_\_. Mary and Joseph travelled to \_\_\_\_\_. Mary was on a donkey's \_\_\_\_\_ because she was pregnant. They were very \_\_\_\_\_ when they reached Bethlehem. Every inn was full. A nice man let them stay in his \_\_\_\_\_ for the night. The Baby Jesus was \_\_\_\_\_ that night in the stable. The \_\_\_\_\_ went to Bethlehem to see the Baby Jesus. Then the three kings saw a big, bright \_\_\_\_\_ in the sky. They followed the star to Bethlehem. They gave three \_\_\_\_\_ to the Baby Jesus, gold, frankincense and \_\_\_\_\_. Mary and Joseph were so happy and gave \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_ for Baby Jesus.

## Christmas Find-A-Word

s t a r s a v i o u r b  
 t w a w s t a b l e y x  
 i n n k e e p e r w v y  
 b e t h l e h e m h a v  
 f r a n k i n c e n s e  
 j k i n g h e r o d d m  
 a r b l e s s i n g d a  
 g s h e p h e r d s k r  
 o n j o s e p h c y c y  
 l f c m i r a c l e r b  
 d g t m y r r h t p w q  
 q h e y l j o u r n e y

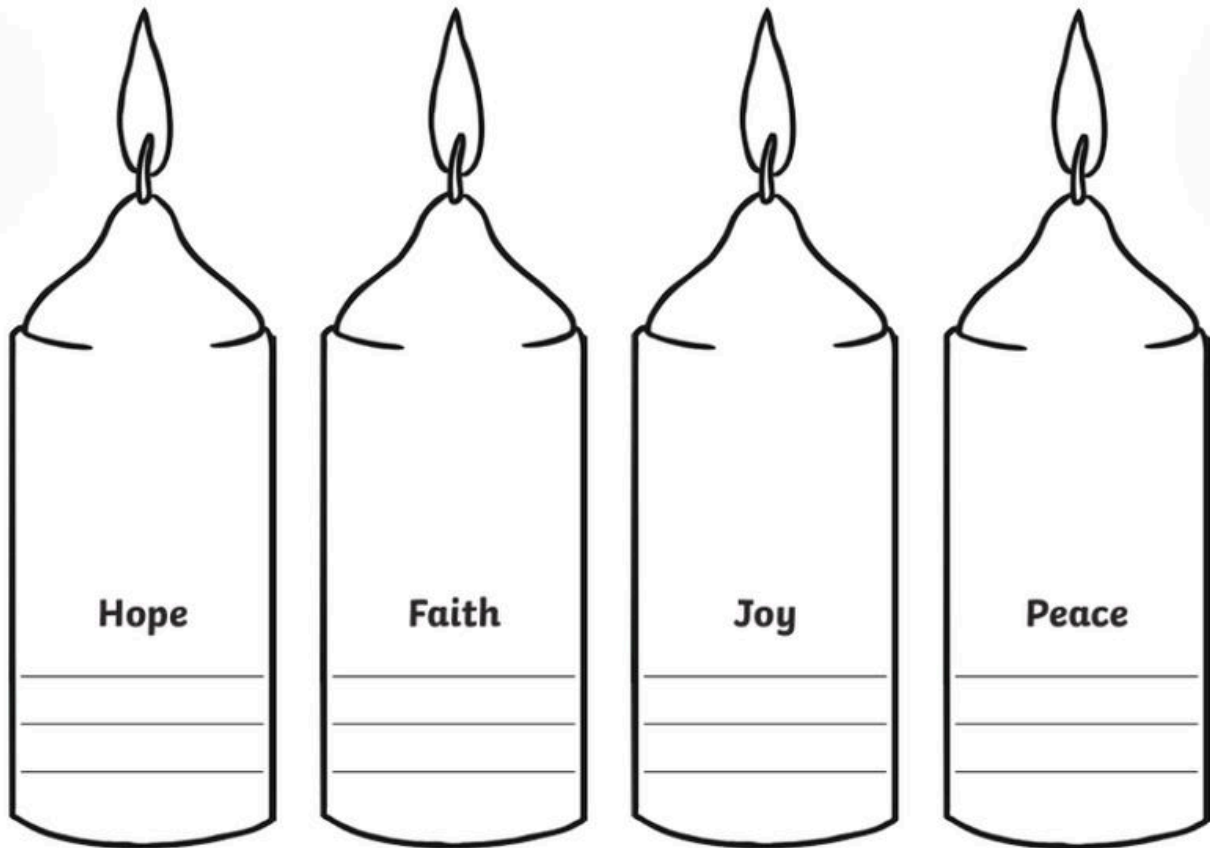


star	Bethlehem	Joseph	gold
Saviour	frankincense	miracle	Mary
stable	King Herod	myrrh	
innkeeper	shepherds	journey	

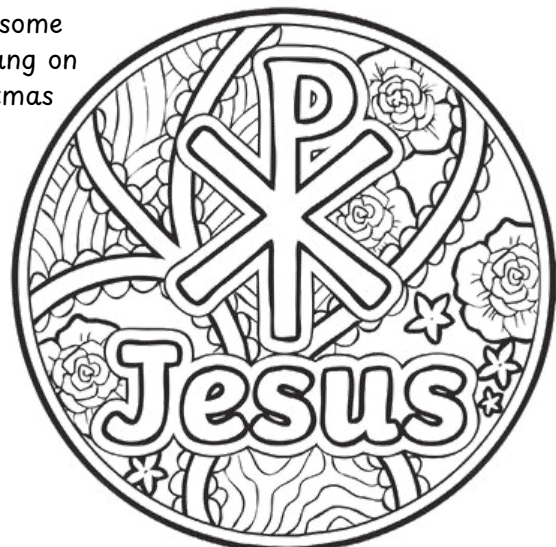




Write and draw about how you show each Advent candle meaning in your every day life.



Print these circles on cardboard, colour, cut them out, attach some string and hang on your Christmas tree!



# Thinking Routines for Participation

Welcome to the fourth part in our series about “Listening to the voice of the child“ and “Giving children a say“.

In order to facilitate more participation, we look to strategies to encourage the students to do the talking and for us, as Catechists to do less talking. We want to engage them in discussions that connect the Scripture teachings to their lives.

One powerful tool that can assist in this process is the use of **thinking routines**.

These are simple, yet effective strategies designed to encourage deeper thinking, improve participation, and help students articulate their thoughts. They provide a structure for reflection, making it easier for students to engage meaningfully with the content and express their ideas.

Implementing thinking routines in our SRE classroom allows students to not only absorb the information but also reflect on it, question it and connect it to their own lives, giving them a voice in the learning process.

## See-Think-Wonder

You help students move from observation to interpretation/reflection and finally to inquiry. This routine is particularly useful when studying scripture or religious artifacts, symbols, and stories.

- **See:** Ask students, “What do you see?” This prompts them to describe the content, imagery, or passages they are looking at without interpretation or judgment.
- **Think:** Follow up with, “What do you think is happening?” or “What do you think this means?” This step asks students to infer meaning or make connections based on their observations.
- **Wonder:** Finally, ask, “What does it make you wonder?” or “What questions do you have?” This step opens up a dialogue, encouraging curiosity and deeper inquiry.

For example, when discussing a parable like *“The Good Samaritan,”* students can first describe the characters and actions (See), consider the moral or message (Think), and then raise questions about how the story applies to their own lives (Wonder). This routine gives students a structured way to process scripture and encourages them to voice their thoughts and questions

*I used this in the Creation Unit in a Yr 5/6 class and was amazed at what they were wondering about and this brought about interesting discussion.*



## Think-Pair-Share

“Think-Pair-Share” is a well-known routine that promotes both individual reflection and collaborative learning. It can be particularly effective in scripture or catechism lessons where students are encouraged to interpret and apply teachings to their personal experiences.

- **Think:** Give students a question or topic related to the lesson and allow them time to think about it quietly. This gives them a moment to formulate their own ideas and reflections.
- **Pair:** After the reflection period, ask students to pair up with a partner and discuss their thoughts. This promotes active participation, as students are more likely to share in a smaller, more intimate setting before speaking in front of the whole class.
- **Share:** Finally, bring the class back together and invite pairs to share their discussions with the larger group. This allows all voices to be heard and creates a sense of community within the classroom.

For example, after reading the Parable of the Prodigal Son, students might first reflect individually on how forgiveness plays a role in their own lives (Think), discuss their thoughts with a partner (Pair), and then share insights with the entire class (Share). This routine encourages every student to participate, even those who may be hesitant to speak up in a larger group setting.

*I’m using this in High School and Primary School and go around the room so that each group shares. Students who never put up their hand, have great ideas and now share.*

# and Engagement in the Classroom

## Claim-Support-Question

This routine encourages students to develop arguments or claims based on scripture or teachings and then back up their ideas with evidence, fostering critical thinking and deeper engagement with the material.

- **Claim:** Students are asked to make a claim or statement about the scripture or religious teaching being discussed. For example, they might claim, “Jesus teaches us that forgiveness is more powerful than revenge.”
- **Support:** Next, students provide evidence from the scripture or lesson to support their claim. This helps them think critically about how teachings are supported by text and tradition.
- **Question:** Finally, students are encouraged to ask questions about their claim. “What else could this mean?” or “How does this apply to modern life?” This step fosters curiosity and deepens the conversation.

This routine can be especially helpful when discussing complex theological or ethical issues, allowing students to voice their interpretations while grounding their ideas in religious texts.

## Circle of Viewpoints

This routine helps students explore multiple perspectives on a topic, making it particularly effective when discussing moral or ethical dilemmas in scripture or religious teachings.

- **Identify a viewpoint:** Ask students to choose a character or perspective in a story or situation.
- **Express the viewpoint:** Have them articulate what that character might be thinking or feeling.
- **Consider other viewpoints:** Encourage students to explore other characters or perspectives and discuss how different viewpoints contribute to understanding the overall message.

For example, when discussing the story of Jesus healing the blind man, students might take the perspective of the blind man, the disciples, or the onlookers, deepening their understanding of the story’s impact.



By using these routines, you empower students to connect their faith with their personal experiences, making the lessons more meaningful and impactful. These routines not only help students engage with the material but also create a space where every voice is heard, respected, and valued.

Sue-Anne Sherwood  
NORTH SHORE

\* Adapted from ideas presented by the Harvard Graduate School of Education

## New Resources

Looking for something fun and engaging for full class participation?

### Download the Advent Powerpoint Quizzes

The quizzes are a summary of the Advent Unit for each Primary Stage. After you have completed the Advent Unit in your class, use these quizzes to re-enforce learning and get everyone thinking in a fun and engaging way.

Go to our [Walking With Jesus Powerpoints](#) page, find the stage you are teaching and the quiz will be available to download at the bottom of the Advent units in each stage.

Over time we hope to develop a quiz for each unit so keep checking back.

In the mean time, we'd love to hear any feedback you have about using the quizzes in your classes so that we can do our best in bringing these to you.

[ccdresources@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:ccdresources@bbcatholic.org.au)



# NEWS FROM THE REGIONS

## **Level Three Course “The Psalms” Exceeds All Expectations.**

After weeks of in-depth study and heartfelt discussion, a dedicated group of catechists has just completed the Level 3 course on The Psalms. Meeting weekly on Zoom, these passionate individuals delved deep into the richness of the psalms and canticles, learning about their various forms and meanings. But beyond the academic side of things, something even more beautiful unfolded.

Each session became an opportunity for deep, thoughtful conversations. The participants generously shared their reflections and personal insights, often leading to moments of breakthrough and inspiration. What started as a study group soon grew into a space for real connection and spiritual growth.

The best outcome of this journey? This group has become a small faith community, united not just by what they've learned, but by the bonds they've formed with one another. We hear that they plan to keep meeting even after the course ends (and we certainly hope they do!). It's a testament to the power of shared faith, the beauty of the psalms, and the profound impact of learning together. Congratulations to all of these catechists on their hard work and their newfound community!

## **Catechist Receives OAM in the General Division**

Big congratulations to **Maureen Rutledge** for receiving the Medal of the Order of Australia (OAM) in the General Division. Maureen is an active member of the Lakes Catholic Parish and has been a catechist for over 35 years. She received this well-deserved recognition for service to the community of the Northern Beaches as listed below.

### **Northern Beaches Creative Leisure and Learning**

- Coordinator, Sunday Activities Program for Adults with Special Needs, 28 years.
- Volunteer Trainer, Sunday Activities Program for Adults with Special Needs. Narrabeen Amateur Swimming Club
- Treasurer
- Time Keeper
- Member, over 40 years
- Life Member

### **Community**

- Scripture Teacher, Public Education through the Lakes Catholic Parish
- Volunteer, Local Studies History Collection, since 1992

### **Awards and Recognition include:**

- Senior Citizen of the Year, Northern Beaches Council, 2019
- Recognition Certificates, NSW Volunteer of the Year, 2019, 2020, 2021
- Volunteer Citizen of the Year, Pittwater Council, 2007

## **A Reflective Prayer inspired by the Historical Psalms**

During our Reflection time in week 8, The Historical Psalms, of the Level 3 Course, I felt inspired and drawn to Psalm 78 and 135 and was led to write the following prayer in the form of a Psalm. - **by Fran van Schie**

Lord I will not hide your word from  
our children, I will pass on your  
faithful love to all that I meet.  
Even though at times I forget you, in  
the everydayness of life, I know that  
you are there.

You constantly give me all that I  
need, you give me bread from heaven  
to sustain me and fill my cup.

You are the Lord full of compassion  
and mercy, I praise you God.  
You keep me safe and help me when I  
feel overwhelmed and afraid.

I praise your name O Lord, for you  
are so good and gracious.

Your name endures O Lord through  
all ages and your steadfast love  
keeps me safe.

You O Lord have the breath of life,  
the breath that come to us through  
your Holy Spirit.

Blessed are you Lord.  
Praise your Holy Name.



Maureen Rutledge

# Training and Formation

## Over 70 Catechists attended our High School SRE Conference

On 23rd September over 70 Catechists gathered at the Caroline Chisholm Centre in Pennant Hills for the Vine and Branches High School Catechist Conference. It was a unique opportunity to learn and network with other Catechists who teach in High Schools, which comes with its own unique set of challenges and experiences.

Participants came from 5 Diocese across NSW and were treated to workshops by experts in topics such as Prayer in the Classroom, Positive Classroom Management, Teaching with a Pastoral Approach, Teaching with a Seminar Model and ended the day with a panel discussion which tackled the subject of Engaging with Students.



Participants gathering for lunch

At the panel discussion



## Safeguarding Broken Bay Has A New Website

Did you know that Safeguarding Broken Bay now has its own website dedicated to everything related to safeguarding?

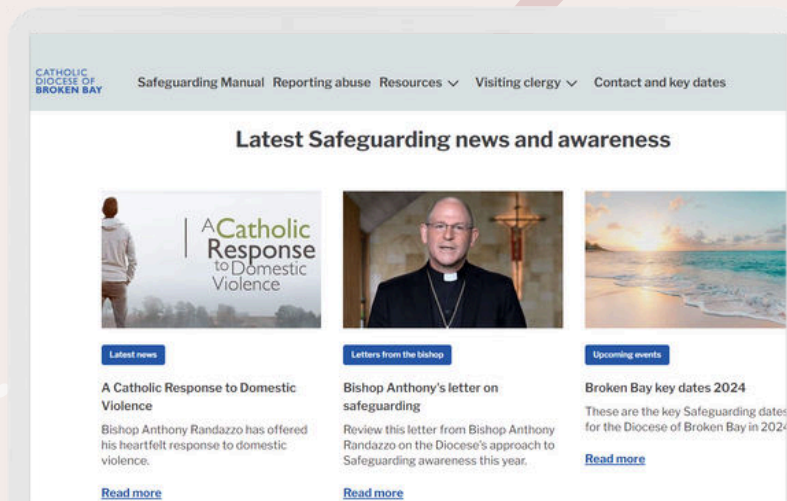
If you haven't checked it out yet, we would encourage you to take a look at

<https://www.dbbsafeguarding.com.au/>

For us Catechists, being proactive about the safety of children and knowing how to respond to a child if they disclose any kind of abuse in is part of our duty as church workers who hold a Working With Children Check (WWCC). That is why it is so wonderful that all the resources we could possibly need are in one convenient place.

If you haven't already checked it out, we would encourage you to read "A Catholic Response to Domestic Violence" which is a wonderful resource that delves into the way that we as Catholics should view and respond to the different forms of Domestic Violence. For those of you who have recently completed our ongoing Safeguarding training, you would have seen that we now explore this document in our training session.

Safeguarding children is everyone's job!



# Christmas Assembly Ideas ...

A large wreath stands at the front of the assembly with children ready to process up and place each of the five candles at the appropriate time. Perhaps the parish has one you can borrow.

As each candle is processed and placed a scripture quote is read and the assembly responds with a brief prayer. Then part of a Christmas carol could be sung.

## Hope Candle (purple)

**Scripture Reflection:** "The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness, on them has light shined." Isaiah 9:2

\*pause for reflection

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, you are the hope in our messy world. This Advent, help us slow down, listen to your voice, and focus on what's really important. We place our hope in you as we prepare our hearts to celebrate your birth on Christmas. Amen.

**Carol:** The First Noel or Go Tell It on The Mountain

## Peace Candle (purple)

**Scripture Reflection:** "And Joseph also went up from Galilee, from the city of Nazareth, to Judea, to the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, because he was of the house and lineage of David, to be enrolled with Mary, his betrothed, who was with child. And while they were there, the time came for her to be delivered. And she gave birth to her first-born son and wrapped him in swaddling clothes, and laid him in a manger, because there was no place for them in the inn." Luke 2:4-7

\*pause for reflection

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, you entered our world on Christmas as the Prince of Peace. This Advent, as we strive to become the-best-version-of-ourselves, fill us with a deep and abiding peace. Help us share that peace with everyone we encounter, especially those who need it most. Amen.

**Carol:** Silent Night or Prince of Peace Song

John Donnelly  
NORTHERN BEACHES

# ... around an Advent Wreath

## Joy candle (pink)

**Scripture Reflection:** And the shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them."

Luke 2:20

\*pause for reflection

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, help us focus on you during this busy season. May we stay aware of the joy you bring into our lives. We want to find you in the everyday moments and come with hearts of gratitude to your manger on Christmas. Amen.

**Carol:** Joy to the World or When I Think Upon Christmas

## Love Candle (purple)

**Scripture Reflection:** "And the angel said to them, "Be not afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which will come to all the people; for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." Luke 2:10-11

\*pause for reflection

**Prayer:** Dear Jesus, may the light of your love always shine in our hearts. As Christmas draws closer, we marvel at your great love for us. Let your love transform every aspect of our lives and touch everyone we encounter. Our hearts are open to you, Jesus. Amen.

**Carol:** Little Drummer Boy or Away in a Manger

## Jesus Candle (White)

**Scripture Reflection:** "While Joseph and Mary were in Bethlehem, the time came for the baby to be born, and she gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room available for them."

\*pause for reflection

**Prayer:** Heavenly Father, your son, Jesus, is your greatest gift to us, a great sign of your love. Guide us as we strive to walk in that love together this Christmas. Amen.

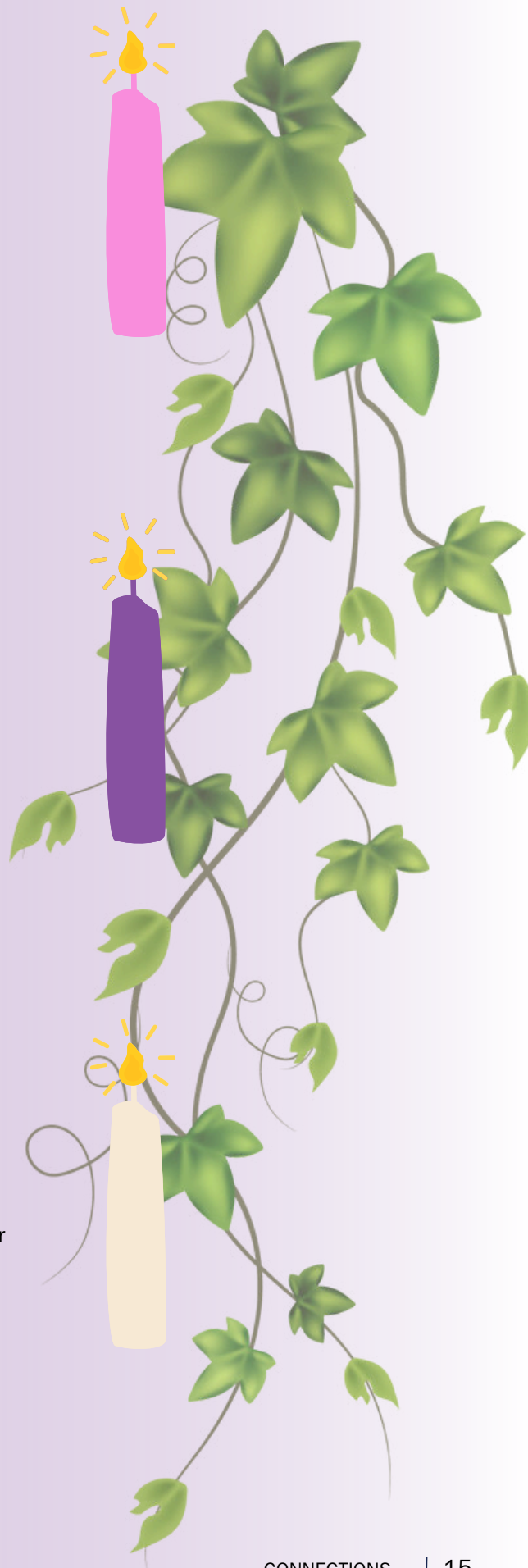
**Carol:** O Come All Ye faithful or Mary's Boy Child

## Preparation

As is common different SRE Classes and Teachers could be assigned parts of the assembly to perform or lead.

Scripture and Prayers sourced from [DynamicCatholic.com](http://DynamicCatholic.com)

Most of the Carols can be found at subscription site [Christmas Songs and Carols](http://ChristmasSongsandCarols.com)



Please join the Diocese of Broken Bay  
Confraternity of Christian Doctrine  
for



# Mass & Annual CCD Awards Ceremony

**11:30am Saturday 16 November 2024**

**Our Lady of the Rosary Cathedral, 23 Yardley Ave Waitara**

***Celebrant:*** Very Rev Dr David Ranson PP VG



For catering and planning purposes we would appreciate you advising how many will be attending in your group of family and friends.

Please arrive by 11:15am

**Please RSVP:**

by Friday 8 November 2024 to  
[ccdadmin@bbcatholic.org.au](mailto:ccdadmin@bbcatholic.org.au) Phone 8379 1638