



RE IN THE  
EARLY YEARS  
~ 2018

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## PRAYER

**READING:** Matthew 5: 13-16

### REFLECTION:

If you are a follower of Jesus, you have an important role to play because you are the salt of the earth. Salt preserves and Christians help preserve what is good in the culture. In the ancient world, salt was very valuable: the Greeks thought it contained something almost divine, and the Romans sometimes paid their soldiers with salt. A soldier who didn't carry out his duties "was not worth his salt." You are a seasoning agent. In a sense, you can bring the distinctive flavour of God's values to all of life. You can make life palatable.

Note that salt, to be effective, must be in contact with the meat or fish it is to preserve. To be effective, we must be involved where we work and where we live. This puts us in a tension because the dominant culture doesn't necessarily think like us. It is difficult to live in the world, ready to challenge its ways at any time. But in our contacts with the culture, we must retain our "saltiness," our distinctiveness. It's a balancing act we're called upon to maintain.

"You are the light of the world." The job description of a Christian is not only to maintain personal holiness, but also to touch the lives of everyone around us. At school, we touch many people who do not encounter Christ in church. It may be our most effective place to witness to Christ.

With all these dangers, how can we be salt and light at work? Jesus said our light is not necessarily in the witness of our words, but in the witness of our deeds—our "good works." "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good deeds and glorify your father who is in heaven." When we live as people of blessing, we are salt and light—in the workplace, in our homes, and in our nation.

### PRAYER:

Oh Jesus,  
who gathered children in your lap,  
today we work and pray  
for the children of our class,  
for the children of our diocese,  
for the children of our world.  
May they live without hunger for food or  
love.  
May they live without the shadow of  
violence stunting their growth.  
May each day bring them enough hugs for a  
smile,

enough friends for security  
and enough adults to provide guidance.  
May they grow in faith  
so that they walk as your children -  
children of grace, joy, peace and love.  
Empower us to work with you  
to shape a world of justice  
for all your children.  
May we always be people of salt and light and  
pave the way for letting the children come to  
you.  
Amen.



## WHAT DID YOU SEE AND WHY?

WHAT DID YOU SEE?	WHY?	OTHER IDEAS
PRAYER RITUAL		
THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT		
SACRED STORY – JESUS LOST IN THE TEMPLE		
PARABLE – THE GOOD SHEPHERD		
LITURGICAL ACTION – THE NEW BEGINNING /KNOWING JESUS IN A NEW WAY		

## INCORPORATING PRAYER INTO THE EARLY YEARS CLASSROOM

- Provide a range of bibles in the reading area for children to access in an incidental way.
- Display posters and art works based on religious themes or illustrating life in Jesus' time.
- Visit the Church to investigate symbols and items that relate to the liturgical season.
- Ask your Parish Priest, APRE or REC to speak to the children about symbols displayed in the church and around the school.
- Visit the Church and practise the appropriate behaviours e.g. using the holy water font, making the sign of the cross, kneeling, sitting quietly.
- Involve the children's families in prayer by inviting them to pray and share their prayers with you in the classroom, at assemblies and liturgies.
- Involve the children's families in prayer by sending home material to be shared. This could be in the form of a prayer book to which each family adds a prayer page.
- Choose symbols for a class cross. Construct the cross.
- Plan and execute a prayer celebration with your class.
- Establish prayer routines with the class. Make a list of the times you pray as a class: at the start of the day, before meals, incidentally, at play time, at the end of the day etc. Use symbols to illustrate your list.
- Teach and sing songs to Jesus and God using contemporary artists such as John Burland, Michael Mangan, Andrew Chinn, and Monica Brown.



- Make time each day for students to acknowledge each other's good works during the day.
- Practise using prayers that require responses e.g. Leader: The Lord be with you. Response: And with your spirit. Leader: Peace be with you. Response: And with your spirit.
- Use a prayer mat to create a class prayer space and to pray. A piece of cloth, changed to reflect the colour of the liturgical season, can be used as a shared, whole class prayer mat. Create your own class prayer mat.
- Bamboo place mats make great individual prayer mats.

*From Spirituality in the Early Years – Diocese of Rockhampton*

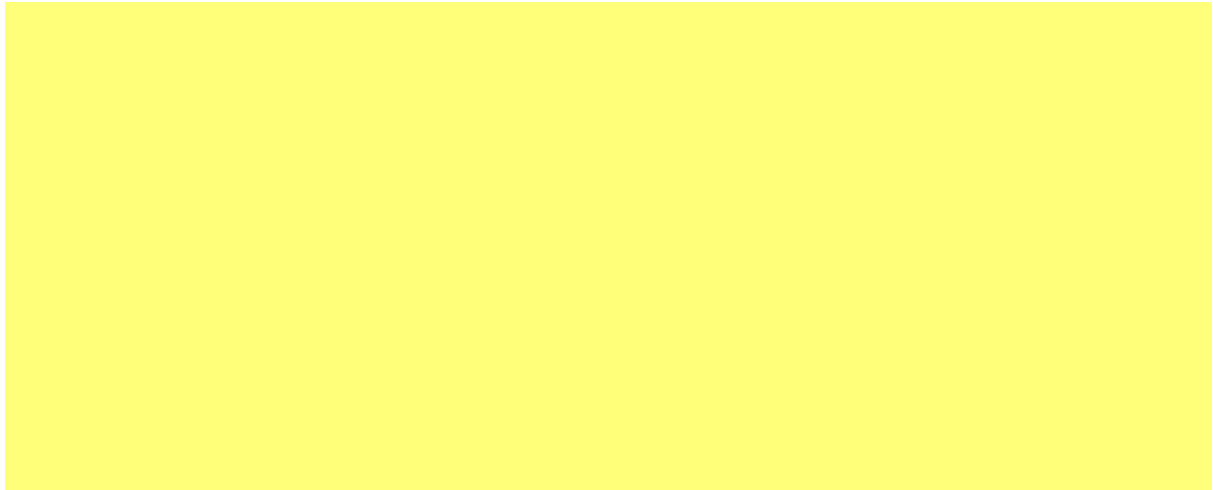


## CONSIDERING THE ENVIRONMENT AS THE THIRD TEACHER

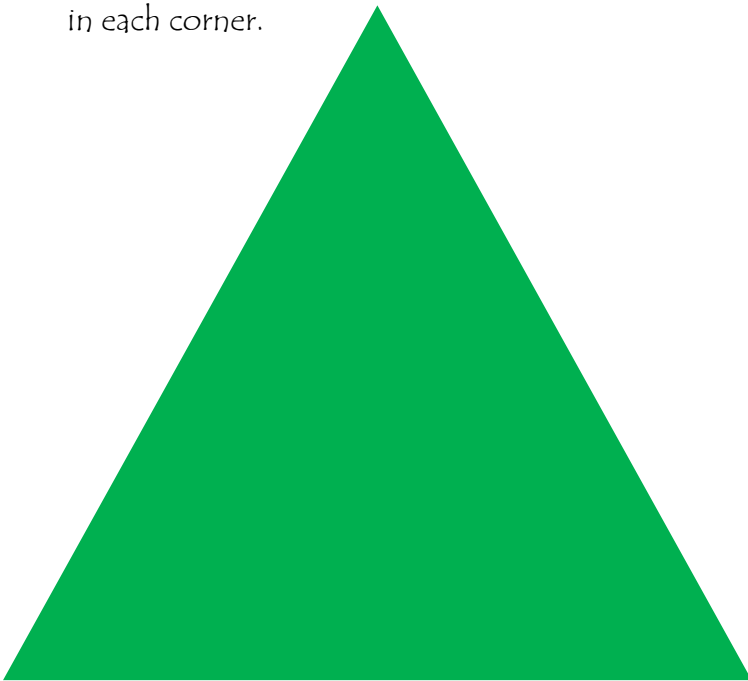
	Each child is a precious and sacred gift from God created as an individual with their own unique talents and abilities. <i>(CECWA Early Childhood Education and Care policy)</i>	Religious Education needs to be the first priority in the Catholic school. (Mandate #61) Everything in a Catholic school revolves around Christ. <i>(Mandate # 89, paraphrased)</i>	The learning environment... shall be inclusive of all children and be developmentally and culturally appropriate. <i>(CECWA Early Childhood Education and Care policy)</i>
What elements in my learning environment demonstrate this value?			
What elements in my learning environment undermine this value?			
What could I do to improve my learning environment in this aspect?			

# MAXIMISING THE POTENTIAL OF THE "THIRD TEACHER": INDOOR DEVELOPMENTAL PLAY ENVIRONMENTS: 3-8 YRS

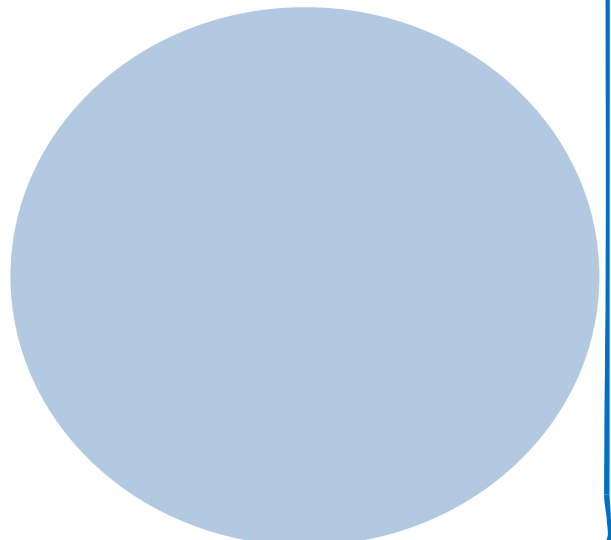
What are four important concepts in the article? Write one in each corner.



What are three ways you can use ideas from this article in your RE classroom? Write one in each corner.



Write one, all-encompassing statement that summarises all of the important concepts and facts from the article in the centre of the circle..



## CREATING A CATHOLIC LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

- Does your environment help to enhance the RE learning outcomes?
  
- Does your environment stimulate play by making available props and resources to act out what they are learning about – scripture stories, sacramental rites etc...?
  
- Does your environment encourage children to wonder at God? Jesus? Their own meaning?
  
- Does your learning environment encourage investigation and inquiry into religious concepts?
  
  
- Are your indoor and outdoor spaces flexible, inviting and vibrant?
- Is your learning environment responsive to the interests and abilities of each child?
- Does your environment encourage children to be active agents in their own learning?
- Does your learning environment provide children with multiple opportunities for engagement with a variety of materials?



## WONDER QUESTIONS

### Ideas for Wondering Questions with Parables

Parables don't look at the world in an everyday sort of way. They prompt us to begin anew to make sense of life without the ordinary cultural limits. With parables there is no single answer. There are many right answers. The fundamental wondering questions for the parables are variations on: "I wonder what this could really be?" The wondering can go on and on, and the direction it takes will depend on the children who are gathered that day and what their needs are.

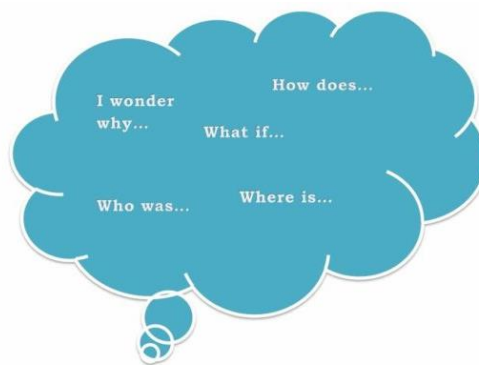
An example: The Mustard Seed (Matt 13: 31-32, Lk 13: 18-19)

- I wonder what the person who put the tiny seed in the ground was doing while the seed was growing?
- I wonder if the person had a name?
- I wonder if the person was happy to see the birds?
- I wonder if the person can take the shrub that grew so big it was like a tree and put it back inside the tiny seed?

### Ideas for Wondering Questions for Sacred Stories (these are the stories of Jesus's life)

The wondering that follows a sacred story is about our deep identity. This type of wondering engages the great story of Scripture to give our own stories context and a larger meaning. When the story is finished there is a pause. The teaching material remains in the centre of the circle for the children to continue looking at as they wonder.

- I wonder what part of this story you like best?
- I wonder what part of the story is the most important?
- I wonder where you are in the story? I wonder what part is about you?
- I wonder if there is any part of the story we can leave out and still have all the story we need?



## Ideas for Wondering Questions for Liturgical Stories

This kind of wondering connects what children learn in a Catholic school and their experience of worship in the church. To probe how things work in the church you might ask:

- I wonder how many places you can find this colour in the church?
- I wonder who put the colour there?
- I wonder which colour is the most important?

## CREATING A BIBLE BOX

Brainstorm a list of the things you would put into your Bible Box, considering the scripture used in your year level/s. Include figures, underlays and cloths (to represent a river etc), objects (such as baskets, rocks, trees etc) and other things you might need to tell the stories.



## WEBSITES

[www.reintheey.weebly.com](http://www.reintheey.weebly.com) – Jo's early years website with all the information, resources, strategies shared and collected over the last number of years.

[www.kimberleyrec.weebly.com](http://www.kimberleyrec.weebly.com) – Jo's Kimberley-based RE website.

<http://flamecreativekids.blogspot.com.au> – a fabulous treasure trove of ideas for prayer, storytelling and religious craft.

[www.prayingincolor.com](http://www.prayingincolor.com) – a great website with printable colouring sheets for prayer and ideas for how to pray using art. Great trauma-informed practice!

<http://allplayonsunday.blogspot.com.au> – another great Australian blog with lots of ideas for biblical storytelling.

<http://www.biblesongsandmore.com/2016/10/02/prayer-bulletin-board/> – great idea for a prayer board.

<https://cathfamily.org/> – you can subscribe to get free emails with ideas for the season, video resources for the Sunday Gospel and other feasts.

<http://www.liturgyritualprayer.com/> – a subscription service that is great value with lots of fabulous resources for staff and class prayer.

<https://www.kidsliturgy.com/> – the Liturgy Brisbane site for ideas for children's liturgy.

<http://www.gpbs.com.au/> – another good site for ideas and resources.

## PROFESSIONAL LEARNING NETWORKS



**YAMMER** (*Office 365 suite*) –  
Religious Education in the Early Years  
RE Teacher Network  
School Prayers and Gospel Reflections

**TWITTER** –  
@joatCEO  
@Pontifex  
Fairydust Teach – all social media as  
Fairydust Teaching

**INSTAGRAM** –  
learning.through.play  
thegraduateteacher\_

**FACEBOOK** –  
Teaching Pre Kindy and Kindy WA.  
Teaching Kindy WA Australia  
Teaching Pre Primary & ECE – WA  
Australia  
TeachMeet WA  
Flame: Creative Children's Ministry  
The Tactile Teacher – peg people  
The Natural Classroom  
Stimulating Learning with Rachel

## GOALS FROM THE DAY

What is a goal that you are going to set yourself from our first session today on prayer and prayer rituals and the learning environment?



What is a goal that you are going to set yourself from our second session today on biblical storytelling?

What is a goal that you are going to set yourself from our third session today on networking and sharing and exploring Yammer and the weebly?

MY HOPE FOR TODAY –

Do not write any notes on this page!!!

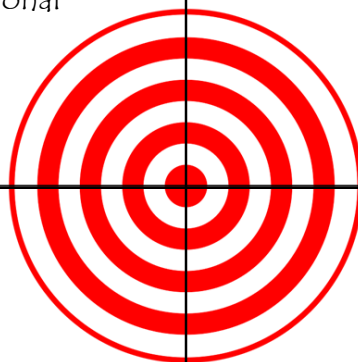
## FEEDBACK FROM RE IN THE EARLY YEARS – 2018

The learning intentions of the day are for participants to:

- to share rituals, ideas and resources useful in the early years RE classroom.
- to explore the importance of the learning environment in the Catholic early years classroom.
- to plan for learning environments that aid in the teaching of the Catholic curriculum and values.
- to explore different strategies for telling scripture stories in the early years classroom.
- to explore the resources on the weebly and in Yammer..
- to create goals for themselves in relation to their learning.

Did you feel that the activities throughout the day met these intentions? Please explain your answer.

I was satisfied with the professional learning today.	The right amount of information was presented.
The information was easy to understand.	I can use this information in my classroom daily and pass it onto others.



What could we have done to improve the day today?

What would you like to see covered in future RE in the Early Years?

Thank you for your participation and feedback ☺