

NEWSLETTER FOR NEW ZEALAND CATHOLIC EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES, KINDERGARTENS, PLAYGROUPS AND INTERESTED PARTIES MARCH 2013

GREETINGS

Tēnā koutou katoa, malo e lelei, talofa lava, ni sa bula vinaka, talohani, kia orana, fakalofa lahi atu and blessings and warm greetings to you all.

We hope that the amazing summer has been a delight for you, and that our prayers for rain for our drought stricken regions will soon be answered.

Catholic Early Childhood Professional Development

We continue to receive reports of the success of the professional development being offered in the Auckland diocese. We wish everyone involved in these courses all the best as they continue through the complete number of papers for teachers to achieve a Certificate in Catholic Early Childhood Education.

Welcome

In Christchurch Mrs Rashan Rayen opened **Sancta Maria Montessori Pre-School** at the start of March, catering for 38 pre-schoolers. While this service does not have an official link to the Christchurch diocese it was blessed before Christmas by Bishop Barry Jones. Rashan says that Montessori education incorporated Catholic teaching until the 1960s, and she believes, as Maria Montessori did, that faith needs to be introduced to children when they are young. The pre-school includes an Atrium – a specially prepared place of prayer which offers hands-on experience with material relating to the life of Jesus as the Good Shepherd, the key events and geographical areas associated with His Kingdom parables, the Sacrament of Baptism, the liturgical year and the Eucharist. Those of you familiar with the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd will find this familiar, as the Catechesis work is Montessori-based. In this approach beautiful materials and children's ability to interact with the materials using their senses, imagination, are important in nurturing children's spiritual and reflective capacity. If you want to know more, either google Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, or use the Sancta Maria website address www.sanctamariamontessori.co.nz.

We have had a number of inquiries this year about the possibility of setting up a Catholic early childhood service:

- Angela Gemmell and Bridie Mawdesley, both trained kindergarten teachers, are looking at the possibility of setting up a service in **Upper Hutt**. We welcome them and wish them every success in their planning!
- There is news of a service being planned for **Frankton, Hamilton** – I have been in email contact, but have not yet spoken with the people concerned - meantime we send our very best wishes for the planning and the journey ahead!

Update on the National Centre for Religious Studies (NCRS)

NCRS currently has an Acting Director part time, Gary Finlay. We are not able to provide interesting website or snippets that staff there have found for you, as there just aren't enough hours in the day up there. However, once a Director is appointed we will hope that there will be time to supplement the current Early Childhood resources on the NCRS website. Of course, if you are aware of any good resources, particularly internet resources, please let me know so I can share them with the group.

A Thought about Easter

Easter can be tricky in the early childhood setting. Tiny children are not at the stage to gain any understanding of the complexity of the events and associated theology of the three days of Easter, and the linkage of religion with Easter bunnies and chocolate eggs is inappropriate. I wish I had some really good resources or ideas to share on this topic. If anyone has anything to share please send it in and I will email it to everyone for whom we have an email address (which is only about half of those on the mailing list).

Material with this newsletter

We also have another edition of Early Horizons for you, with its usual range of interesting material.

Storypark

We have leaflets for Storypark, which I wrote about last year. If you want to know more about Storypark see www.storypark.com, or get in touch with them through help@storypark.com.

Finally

I'd really love to be publishing news from the services, but I simply haven't had time to phone services to ask for news. Please, please, please, do send me some news or phone me to say how things are going at your place (contact details below). This newsletter will do its job of developing a community of Catholic early childhood educators if you share a sentence or two about how things are going for you!

And finally, finally, you might like to email me your email address!

Best wishes and many blessings to you all, in particular, Easter blessings in the Risen Christ!

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