

NEWSLETTER FOR NEW ZEALAND CATHOLIC EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES, KINDERGARTENS, PLAYGROUPS AND INTERESTED PARTIES MARCH 2014

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.

First Graduates in the Certificate in Catholic Early Childhood Education

In an historic occasion at the Dedication Mass for Catholic education held at St Patrick's Cathedral, Auckland on Tuesday 11 February 2014, 16 early childhood educators from Auckland and Hamilton were the first to be awarded the **Certificate in Catholic Early Childhood Education**. This qualification is the first national recognition of the importance of Catholic Character professional development and faith formation for staff in the early childhood education sector within the Catholic education community in Aotearoa.

It is the culmination of two years' work studying 8 modules that explore fundamental aspects of Catholic Character: vision, community, spirituality, faith formation, sacramentality, Sacred Scripture and the liturgical year. All participants were required to develop their programmes within their centres reflecting on course readings, speakers' contributions and discussions at each workshop session. Each session was linked to the Catholic Early Childhood Curriculum Statement (2010). Participants were expected to contribute in discussions, provide documentation of reflection through personal journals and group presentations as part of their assessment.

This certificate has demonstrated the need for a sector-specific qualification and all involved have been delighted at the success of this pilot programme which was formally handed over to the National Centre for Religious Studies/The Catholic Institute on 21 February 2014. The enthusiasm, commitment and openness of participants towards their faith and professional development have been inspiring. The Holy Spirit has been visible and the light of faith has shone brightly. It is hoped that others throughout Catholic early childhood centres in Aotearoa will have access to this qualification for the benefit of staff, families and most especially, children.

Congratulations to the following graduates:

Trudi Lynch, Cyril Siasoco, Toby Chen, Maria Pane, Adelaide Tito, Marian ECC, Panmure.
Julie McClay, Lynette Demiglio, Cluny Kindergarten, Remuera.
Suhair Abdul Meseh, St Peter Chanel ECC, Clover Park.
Seini Stanley, Fetu'u Moana ECC, Papatoetoe.
Lisa Alameida, St Mary's ECC, Avondale.
Kim Jones, Kerry Koko, Karen Jones, St Paul's ECC, Massey.
Lisa Vedder, Valerie Penrose, Angela Hodgkinson, Jubilee ECC, Hamilton.

Our warmest congratulations to all the graduates, for your achievement, and thanks to you all for your continuing dedication. Our congratulations and gratitude to those who developed and taught the course – as I said in the Catholic Schools' Supplement of Lighting New Fires, the Catholic Church in New Zealand owes you deep gratitude for your visionary and pioneering work. Nelson Mandela said it all when he observed, "Education is the only tool which will change the world."

Anne Kennedy of NCRS, who recently worked with certificate students on spirituality, has described how pleased she was to participate, and what riches the students bring to their work with children.

We look forward to more graduates – other teachers will have the opportunity to take the course and receive certification.

Here is a photo taken at the final class.



Finally

May God bless you all in your work!

Susan Apáthy
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