

**NEWSLETTER FOR NEW ZEALAND CATHOLIC EARLY CHILDHOOD CENTRES,
KINDERGARTENS, PLAYGROUPS AND INTERESTED PARTIES
MARCH 2016**

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 year has started well for you, and that you are thanking God for the sunshine, and even more, perhaps, for any rain you had in late February! It seems hard to believe that already we are not far from Easter.

Early Childhood Services working with clusters of schools

We are aware that this can be problematic as the vocabulary and thinking can be quite different, and the early childhood representative may feel they are struggling to get their voice heard. However, we would encourage you to join clusters wherever possible and to persevere, as schools do appreciate what the early childhood voice can offer, and may just need to be reminded to leave space for you to make your voice heard. Here is some advice from Iti Rearea:

How to make the ECE voice heard in a new cluster

Believe in yourself; Be prepared to take risks; Stay strong; Talk to people; Make sure you've got a good support network

The vision of an education philosophy extending from ECE right through to the end of secondary school is a really valuable one for our children, and worth putting energy, time, and resourcing into.

Something to Think About

Thoughts from *What Makes a School Catholic*, an article by Thomas H Groome, in *The Contemporary Catholic School: Context, identity and diversity* 1996, Washington D.C., Falmer Press. (I have adapted it a little to the early childhood context.)

The Catholic curriculum of an early childhood service includes the content taught, the process of teaching, and the environment of the early childhood service.

Catholicism has a commitment to tradition – the history of the formation of people, the religious truths, experience and human wisdom which has been lived in Catholicism for 2000 years.

It has a positive anthropology, a realistic but optimistic understanding of people as capable of sin but essentially good, and an emphasis on the communal grace of human existence.

It has a sense of sacramentality, the conviction that God's love and grace comes to us and that we go to God through the everyday things of life.

It is committed to rationality, the place of reason in live and in faith.

It is committed to people's 'personhood' – who children are now, and what sort of people they will become

I think this sounds very relevant to Early Childhood educators. I plan to provide some other snippets from this particular article over the next several newsletters, and hope that you will find them worth pondering.

A Recommendation from Jubilee Early Childhood Centre

Lisa Vedder, at Jubilee in Hamilton, sent me an email in August, which I managed to misplace (apologies to Lisa). She recommends Anika Moa's Songs for Bubbas It has catchy songs in Māori teaching numbers and colours. "The colour song describes the colours of nature and the beauty that surrounds, 'In this way the children are developing a sense of wonder and awe for the mystery of God's creation' Goal 3, Strand 5, Catholic Early Childhood Religious Education Statement." She also notes that the centre received a very positive review from ERO last year, saying that ERO considers it to be "very well placed to promote positive outcomes for all children." Congratulations!

A Prayer

Here is a prayer you might like to share. It speaks to and for all of you who lead children, parents and each other in the joyful and challenging work of early childhood learning. I love its hopefulness and think it would be an inspiring start for a staff meeting.

New Possibilities

For those who lead, there are always new possibilities
It is like seeing a new light before us, among us or in ourselves.
The light may be fragile or strong,
Clear or bright, or just a small spark of insight,
But to be a leader is to expect to see it in each next moment.
Leadership is to participate in a dream
For humankind and all that is.
It is to believe that we see a dream
And can give it shape and voice,
That we can give it energy and courage,
That we can give it freedom and vivid colours.
It is a dream for the present and the future.
It expands the horizons.
It calls us to live with responsibility and joy.
It calls us to allow the light and joy of God to flow to others through us.

FINALLY

Many blessings for Lent and for Easter. May you thoroughly enjoy talking about ne life with your children!

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