



February 2021

Re: The RE Curriculum Resource Contribution 2021 - to Principals of Catholic Secondary Schools

Dear Principal,

I hope 2021 has begun well for you, your staff and the young people in your care. I wish you to know that NCRS continues to support you in your work of nurturing the young people who have just joined, or are returning to, your school. We remain fully committed to supporting Religious Education in Catholic schools on behalf of the New Zealand Catholic Bishops, particularly as we focus fully on completing the draft new RE curriculum and we begin writing associated new resources.

The RE **Curriculum Resource Contribution** (CRC), ensures NCRS retains the capacity to support you, DRs, teachers and young people with a quality RE curriculum and resources. We are committed to ensuring the CRC remains at the current level for the next several years. Our team consists of 4 full-time RE professionals, all with recent classroom experience and holding current Teacher Registration, and 4 part-time ex-teachers with significant expertise in RE. (More detail on NCRS is available at <https://www.tekupenga.ac.nz/nrcs/>)

So what does NCRS do? (Where does your Curriculum Resource Contribution money go?)

Championing Religious Education: NCRS is the major 'champion' of RE in Aotearoa NZ Catholic schools. We are the agency mandated with this task by the NZ Catholic Bishops Conference. No other organisation is 100% committed to RE, to RE teachers & DRs; to supporting the diocesan RE advisors; to developing and resourcing the RE Curriculum; to 'being real' about expectations on DRs and RE teachers; to understanding the complexities of this challenging work. We respond to requests for PD input, we write, co-ordinate, lead meetings, read and research 48 weeks in the year. In 2020 our small team was absolutely committed to this work, not stopping for a moment during Covid-19, and all this mahi is largely funded through the CRC.

Curriculum Website: FaithCentral (www.faithcentral.nz) contains resource material for the Understanding Faith Curriculum and associated Catholic Character material. It will remain in place for several years, and a new site will be developed this year for the emerging draft RE curriculum.

Sexuality Resource Grids: During 2020, developing an initiative from the Palmerston North Diocese, NCRS has produced a *Sexuality Resource Grid Package* (SRP) to help our schools navigate the teaching of human sexuality from a Catholic perspective (see *Framing Document 2019*) and within the guidelines issued by the Ministry of Education in September 2020. (The SRP is available from <https://tinyurl.com/NCRS-SRP>)

NZpray2day App: This is designed for senior primary young people, teachers and whānau to help them enter into the richness of the ancient Christian cycle of seasons, saints and readings. It is available free of charge from Apple Store and Google Play. **Please encourage your community to download and use it.**

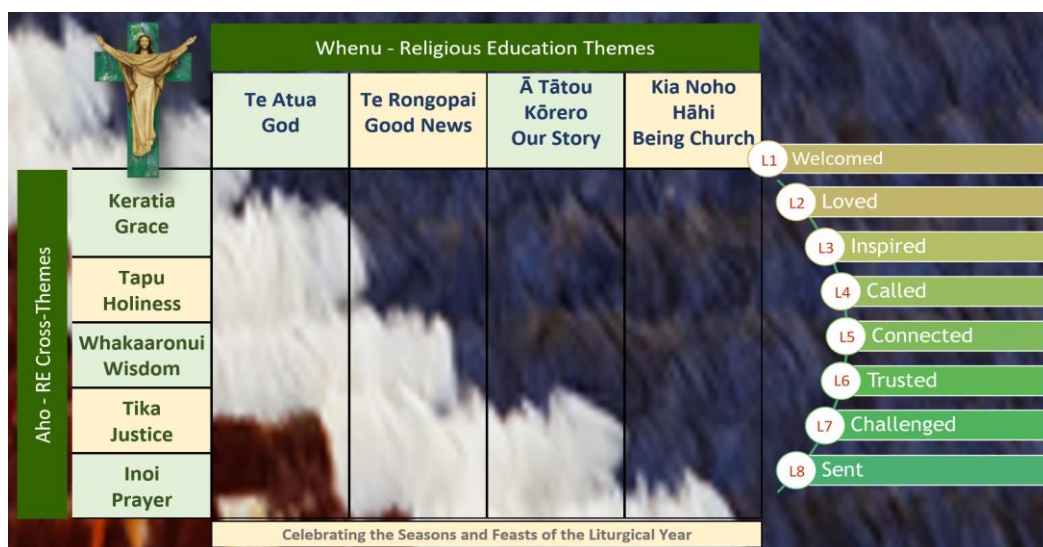
RE Advisors: NCRS and diocesan RE advisors continue to meet and work closely together to support teaching and learning in RE.

Achievement Standards Review: The Ministry of Education continues its review of Achievement Standards (AS) in Religious Studies. I was part of the Subject Expert Group (SEG) in 2020 which drafted



the Level 1 (year 11) assessment rubrics and tasks, and I will be involved this year. There are also 4 other Catholics on the SEG. There seems a genuine openness by the MOE to ensure Catholic schools are not unfairly impacted by the AS review. However, RS is not RE. We use *their* standards to assess components of *our* curriculum. NCRS believes we can sync the new standards with our new draft curriculum content, but it is a complex task. (Please, keep this mahi in your prayers.)

New Curriculum: The draft framework for the new RE Curriculum has been further developed and shared with bishops, principals, DRSs, and diocesan and national Catholic education groups at 15 national or diocesan meetings, and through a range of Zoom and e-mail conversations. Content Areas, Achievement Objectives, and learning foci have all been developed. This is very complex work, involving a huge amount of effort and skill thus far. While there is still work to do, and more consultation to be had, feedback is overwhelmingly positive from all sectors. Thank you, for your support, enthusiasm and wisdom.



Pilot Schools: We are keen to see schools begin to engage with the new concepts and content, it's also important to remind schools that until the final draft is approved by NZCBC the current curricula remain required content for Catholic schools in Aotearoa. Please, contact me if you wish to have a conversation around possibilities in this regard.

2021: We aim to complete the draft new RE curriculum document by the end of this year, and we hope to have significant contact with schools along the way. Please, God, Covid-19 will not disrupt this process as it did in 2020, having said that, I do wish to thank the 75 teachers in schools who did look through the draft and provide excellent feedback. (The proposed timeline is included at the end of this letter.) Please, be assured we will also continue to respond quickly to requests from principals, DRSs and RE teachers – just drop us a line.

Through the Curriculum Resource Contribution NCRS is able to support effective curriculum development, and provision of resources for Religious Education and Catholic Character. We appreciate your support in this important work and remain committed to keeping the amount as low as possible. We also welcome any suggestions from you as principal as to how we can better serve the young people and staff at your school in effective teaching and learning of Religious Education.

I wish you all the very best for 2021.

Kind regards, and blessings in your work,

Colin MacLeod

Colin MacLeod
Director NCRS



Additional Information

1. **Easy links** to two documents sent in 2019 regarding the Curriculum Resource Contribution are available on-line:

- The NZ Catholic Bishops' letter sent to all schools last October regarding the change for 2020 (www.tinyurl.com/NCRS-CRC20a)
- NZCEO's advice on managing payment (www.tinyurl.com/NCRS-CRC20)

2. The proposed Timeline for developing the new RE Curriculum

