

Tapu

Religious Studies Teachers Association
of Aotearoa New Zealand



Newsletter (2): November 2012

Dear colleagues

The end of a long and tiring year is nearly here, with, I hope, many successes and satisfactions for you.

We hope that in the midst of final paperwork, review of the year's achievements, planning for next year, final liturgies, and all the other activities of the final weeks of the year, that you are able to give thanks for those whose lives you have touched. Thank you for all you do.

Progress on the Association

We held a very satisfactory phone meeting, and this newsletter will update you on that.

We reiterated that our aim is to support the teaching of Religious Studies in general, and provide access to collaboration and support. Structures, documentation and formalities will be developed gradually during 2013. We will take advice from other subject associations, and use whatever useful models come our way, but we want to keep things simple. A proposal will be developed during 2013.

Our Association membership has been invited to attend Soc Con 13 (Social Sciences conference), which will be held in Hamilton in the middle of next year. There will be the possibility of some specific seminars for Religious Studies. The conference organisers asked if we could provide contact details of our membership, so that they could provide information and an invitation to attend direct to you, and we put this to the meeting. There was unanimous agreement that this would be sensible, and not a problem for privacy, so we will do that shortly. You will then get information about Soc Con direct. (If you object to having your email address forwarded please get in touch with me as soon as you get this newsletter.)

There was considerable discussion on how we build up sharing of information, and general collegiality. We'll work on setting up a sharing site/portal, probably through Microsoft 365 for Schools.

Meantime, Julene Kapao, Longburn (julenek@lac.school.nz) has good resources for NCEA and good primary resources. She is willing to share. Julene would love to do moderation with another school. (St Peter's College, PN would be geographically close, but working electronically would mean you don't necessarily have to be close.) Drop Box would work for this. Other possibilities mentioned are Sky Drive and Google Docs.

God is that
to which
your heart
clings and
entrusts
itself.

Martin Luther
King

PTO

More sharing: Gary Mawson, Whangarei, (gary.mawson@crs.school.nz) is writing lots of Achievement Standards tasks and is willing to share.

A generic profile:

It was suggested that each member have a profile established stating the areas and levels of Religious Studies that they teach, and (as appropriate) which Standards they teach. This would facilitate sharing information, seeking help etc. Google forms has the capacity for doing this, and there may be other possibilities. Another item for consideration and development in the New Year.

A bank of powerpoint presentations was suggested as a possibility. Note that tes.co.uk/religious-education-secondary-teaching-resources/ has lots of resources for age 11 upwards. (Quality varies from superb to less so, however).

Professional Development opportunities – sharing regional and local PD. Carolyn Kelly (CEKelly514@gmail.com) is keen for opportunities for teachers to share in other groups' PD.

Kevin and I have quite a number of tasks to work on over the end of this year and during next year, as you can see from the information above. Any help is gratefully received.

Until Kevin, as the techie, gets a sharing mechanism set up, if you want to spread any news just email me and I will flick information out to the whole mailing list.

More from the Ministry of Education

Since our last newsletter we have had a general discussion with Nigel Evans, who will, in due course, be responsible for the review of the Religious Studies Achievement Standards. There is no time set yet for this to take place, and from our discussions with Nigel we know that the process, when it occurs, will be a very co-operative one.

When the time comes, the Ministry will work with, and receive views through, the Association. We will send out information and seek your views at that stage. Nigel has a very good understanding of Religious Studies. He can see that much of the documentation that the Ministry wishes to develop, to match other curriculum statements and support materials on TKI, is already more or less in place, in the work that was done over several years to establish the Standards. Such statements will be very high level. (A good example to look at for comparison could be the statements provided for Philosophy on TKI.)

We are looking forward to this work, knowing that we will find it very stimulating. It will advance our thinking about the subject, which is always good.

Stay in Touch

Please email us, and take up the offers of Julene, Gary and Carolyn.

If you are having professional development that you would be willing to welcome others to, let me know, and I will send your email on to others who might be handy enough to join in.

And while we're on the topic, the Catholic Institute does taster courses and longer courses that have a Religious Education focus. While they are basically provided for teachers in Catholic schools, there have been various teachers of other faiths who have found them useful and stimulating, and everyone is welcome. If you want to find out more have a look at their website: www.tci.ac.nz. The courses are often available online, or online with a face to face component.

I am happy to write about courses offered by other institutions, if you provide me with information.

The End

Not quite the end, of course, but nearly the end of this year, and we wish you wonderful holidays, and a very blessed Christmas season. For myself, I am so looking forward to Advent, and then to the great liturgies of Christmas.

All the best from Kevin and me.

Co-ordinators: Susan Apathy, NZCEO
Kevin Wanden, NCRS

