

Tapu

Religious Studies Teachers Association
of Aotearoa New Zealand



2014 Term 3 September

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

Martin Luther
King

Introduction

We're hoping that the term has gone well for you. Have a lovely break and enjoy the flowers!

Two important items:

Chris Duthie-Jung of NCRS here relays some important information for you, both on Religious Studies and what counts for UE literacy and on the matter of developing the RSTA.

- 1) The literacy situation has been clarified by NZQA after some initial confusion with their earlier notifications this year. Basically, no Religious Studies standards count toward UE Literacy in writing and, as of next year, only the following three Level Three standards count toward UE Literacy in Reading: 90826 V2, 90827 V2, & 91725. This last, of course, replaces 90824 which expires at the end of 2015 — but note that in 2015, although 90824 can be used, it **will not attract literacy credits**. Religious Studies teachers are advised to consult the NZQA notification carefully when planning their 2015 standards. Refer: <http://tinyurl.com/RSStandards-Literacy>
- 2) The Catholic *National Centre for Religious Studies* (NCRS) is keen to assist all RS teachers in NZ to develop the RSTA into a subject association that provides practical help in the teaching and assessment of RS Achievement Standards. Our consultation with members indicates that there is real interest in the shaping of a RSTA website that provides a sharing platform for tasks, moderated assessments, exemplars, etc. NCRS recognises that it cannot adequately represent the interests of the Association to NZQA (being a Catholic office) but wishes to stimulate interest for the benefit of all RS teaching schools. A strong and representative Association has far more chance of success in influencing future NZQA decisions around RS standards, e.g. literacy issues and the proposed application for RS Scholarship in 2016. We ask you to discuss among your peers the value of this development and be ready to indicate your thoughts and expectations as the Association begins to get more organised.

Please contact Chris direct at c.duthie-jung@tci.ac.nz, on these matters.

PTO

News from two of our member schools:

A number of our members are not yet "doing" Religious Studies Achievement Standards, either because, as with Elim (below), they have not yet reached that stage or because, like Mahurangi, they have not yet developed a secondary campus. Nevertheless, they are part of our strength. I have sought brief reports from a number of you for this newsletter. Elim and Mahurangi were kind enough to reply. I hope in future newsletters to get news from other schools, including religious schools that are not Christian, and state schools that are not teaching Religious Education but are using Religious Studies standards in their Social Sciences programmes. I welcome any information you might care to send me.

Christian Living at Elim Christian College, Auckland
Murray Burton, Principal

Christian Living at Elim is a vibrant combination of Biblical exploration with practical application. Students are invited to explore topics such as Ethics, World Religions, Dating and Marriage, Identity, Careers, the Digital World and more through the lens of their faith, through the lens of the Bible and fuelled by their questions.

At Elim, we do not offer the Religious Studies standards at this stage, however we are very interested in what others are doing and would love to keep the conversations going as we move forward. The concept of Hauora is important to us and we aim to communicate that every aspect of our lives is spiritual and Jesus is redeeming the whole person. Although Christian Living at Elim is not formally assessed, we aim for authentic outcomes for learning such as teaching junior students, letters to their future children, producing advertisements, and "hometalk" (conversations with parents) rather than "homework".

Our greatest challenge as teachers is to respond with timeless truth to where students are at in the 21st century, to be ready to engage with and to encourage the deep questions of our faith at every level of inquiry.

Christian Living at Mahurangi Christian School,
Snells Beach, Auckland
Helen Pearson, Principal

Next term we are holding our second Bible Fair. This is looked forward to by the children in Years 4-8 who last year researched a Bible character of their choice. They each investigated the setting (time and place) of the story, the character(s), the plot and the theme or lesson learned, and presented their information attractively on large boards similar to a Science Fair. Some children used their iPads to provide slideshows or selfmade movies using Lego or

modelling clay in stop-motion to supplement their boards.

An evening was held to which families were invited and learner-made soup was provided. The Bible Fair boards were set up around the school in chronological order so that the families "walked through the Bible story" with their families, answering quiz questions as families.

This year the children are investigating a parable of their choice, using a range of reading skills to assist them in explaining their parable and drawing links to other messages and stories in the Bible.

We were thrilled to hear the enthusiasm of the children when we suggested we might repeat the Bible Fair this year.

You might enjoy this:

Let Your God Love You Edwina Gateley

Be silent
Be still
Alone
Empty before your God
Say nothing
Ask nothing
Be silent
be still
Let your God look upon you
That is all

God knows
God understands
God loves you
with an enormous love
And only wants to look upon you
with that love
Quiet
Still
Be
Let your God
Love you.

