Catholic Education Week 2012 should be one of the most important weeks on every Catholic school’s calendar. Irrespective of whether it falls within your ‘enrolment period’, it is a time when your school should be more open than usual to the wider community.

I encourage you to maximise this opportunity to proclaim our Catholic identity, celebrate our faith tradition, host and participate in activities which build a sense of community and actively promote Catholic education in the Diocese of Sale.

A frequently asked question by parents considering a school for their child is “What makes a Catholic school different from any other type?”

The answer can be found in this year’s Catholic Education Week theme: ‘Year of Grace: Year of Opportunity.’ As Catholic schools, we recognise and proclaim that we are dependent on God and God’s gifts to us. At the same time, precisely because we are given those gifts, we are challenged to use them to develop each and every one to their full humanity and to contribute to the task of building God’s Kingdom on Earth.

Thus, while each of our 41 Catholic schools has its own identity, we all share the same overarching goal: the promotion of the human person. The student is the centre of all our endeavours in the school, recognising that it is in the person of Christ that the fullness of truth concerning humanity is to be found.

The tagline of the Catholic Education Office in the Diocese of Sale ‘Faith … Learning … Growth’ reflects the three fundamental core purposes of all staff working in Catholic schools.

Faith is about bringing every student to a knowledge and love of God as revealed in Jesus Christ and mediated to us through the Catholic Church. Learning is about enabling every student to learn so that he or she can lead a fulfilling life and contribute positively to the development of a healthy and just society. And growth is about enabling every student to thrive in an environment that enhances his or her social and emotional growth.

Happy Catholic Education Week!
Regards

Peter Ryan
DIRECTOR OF CATHOLIC EDUCATION
DIOCESE OF SALE
Background

Purpose: the goal of Catholic Education Week is to communicate and celebrate the distinctive mission of Catholic education in the Diocese of Sale. It is an opportunity to celebrate and promote not only the great work being done in our schools but also our ethos.

Theme

Each year a theme is chosen to highlight an aspect of Catholic education. In 2012, the theme is ‘Year of Grace: Year of Opportunity.’

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

(2 Cor 13:13)

On Pentecost Sunday, 27 May 2012, the Australian Catholic Church will launch ‘A Year of Grace’ which will focus on starting afresh with Christ. This year’s theme gives us an opportunity to focus on God’s gift of grace in the lives our students and staff.

Timing

Our diocese will celebrate Catholic Education Week between Friday 27 April and Friday 4 May.

As there is already some confusion in the general community regarding the timing of Catholic Education Week (the Archdiocese of Melbourne celebrates it in March each year), we ask that clusters or individual schools do not reschedule the week to suit their own needs, to ensure consistency across the diocese.

Even if you hold Open Days at other times throughout the year, we would like parents right across the diocese to be able to visit Catholic schools during Catholic Education Week.

Audiences

The audience for Catholic Education Week encompasses all those who are part of Catholic school communities as well as those in broader community and political life. It includes:

- Staff
- Students
- Parents, grandparents and family friends
- Parishioners
- Clergy and bishops
- Local, State and Federal politicians
- Feeder school students
- Prospective students and families
- Media
- Catechists / Catholic students in State schools
- Wider community / general public

Key activities

- Leadership Eucharist and Dinner Thursday 26 April in Pakenham
- Diocesan Students’ Mass Tuesday, May 1 at St Mary’s Cathedral
- Spirit of Catholic Education Awards Nominations closed Friday 2 March.
Here is a range of celebratory and promotional activities that could be used during Catholic Education Week to highlight the values of Catholic education and showcase the great things happening in Catholic schools.

**School / community liturgy**
This is a great opportunity to extend invitations to all members of the school, parish and local community.

**Shopping centre display / performance**
These may be static (student work, photos and uniforms attached to a pinboard) or active (featuring a dance, choir, instrumental or debating performance).

**Exchange visits between schools**
Secondary schools may invite Grade 6 students from feeder schools to participate in an afternoon of science or sport activities.

**Fundraising effort**
Even if you already contribute to various charities throughout the year, Catholic Education Week is an excellent week in which to focus your fundraising efforts or introduce a new fundraiser.

**Educational activities / workshops / courses**
Consider tapping into your staff or parent skill base and offering a free workshop or course to the public. If your budget permits, you may also employ a guest presenter on a topic of wide community interest (e.g. parenting teenagers or social networking).

**Open libraries**
Schools may invite parents and parishioners to tour the library and explore books and CD-Roms with students.

**Guest lecturers / speakers**
Prominent or interesting past students or staff may be invited back to present a lecture for parents or speak to students.

**Slideshow or home page**
Place the theme of Catholic Education Week to appear for a few seconds on the school’s homepage and/or on the school computer system screen saver.

**Community service**
If your students’ main form of community service to date has been contributing to fundraisers, consider organising something a little more hands on. Could one of your classes visit an aged care facility to perform songs and interact with the residents? Could students read to children at the local kinder or childcare centre, or people with vision impairment? Could students assist with some garden maintenance at a local community facility? Could students make and deliver gifts for children in hospital?
Below are some key messages that might be useful to include as part of your school newsletter articles about Catholic Education Week 2011.

Our school, along with other Catholic schools in the Diocese of Sale, will celebrate Catholic Education Week from Friday 27 April—Friday 4 May.

The theme for this year’s celebrations is ‘Year of Grace: the Year of Opportunity.’

*The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. (2 Cor 13:13)*

As Catholic schools, we recognise and proclaim that we are dependent on God and God’s gifts to us and we are challenged to use them to develop each and every one to their full humanity and to contribute to the task of building God’s Kingdom on Earth.

Catholic Education Week is an opportunity for all Catholic schools to celebrate our distinctive mission and share things that are special about our schools and ethos with families, parish and the wider community.

Student representatives from our school will attend the Diocesan Students’ Mass at St Mary’s Cathedral, Sale, on Tuesday 1 April, while members of our staff will be part of the Leadership Mass and Dinner held in Traralgon the following evening.

Our school will also hold a number of activities including … [list activities].
Media releases are a professional, proactive way of getting your message across to journalists and increasing the likelihood they will choose to cover your story. They can be written and submitted before an event (inviting journalists to attend) or after an event (as a ready-to-publish article supplied with the best photo from the event).

**Possible topics**
- Activities your school is participating in or undertaking to celebrate Catholic Education Week
- Activities that provide active and colourful photo opportunities
- Nomination of any of your staff members for a Spirit of Catholic Education Award

**Sample text**
(Open Day—before the event)

_Name of School in Suburb / Town_ will hold three Open Mornings next week to celebrate Catholic Education Week in the Diocese of Sale.

Current and prospective families, as well as members of the wider community, are invited to visit _Name of School_ between 9:00am and 11:00am on Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

The Open Mornings will include a welcome address by Principal _Name of Principal_, school tours and a morning tea prepared by Senior students.

“Quote along the lines of how excited the school community is about the event,” said _Name of School Principal, Name of Principal_.

**The top of the page**
- Type your media release on school letterhead and head the page ‘Media Release’

**First (lead) paragraph**
- Must include the _Who, What, When and Where_

**Following (supporting) paragraphs**
- Explain the _How and the Why_

- Include quotes by key personnel (Principal, Subject Coordinator, parent or student representative)

- Include contact details for the relevant person at your school
(Diocesan Students’ Mass—before the event)

Students from Name of School in Suburb / Town will be among more than two hundred students gathering at St Mary’s Cathedral in Sale on Tuesday 1 May to celebrate the launch of Catholic Education Week.

The Mass will draw representatives from the 34 Catholic primary schools and 7 Catholic secondary colleges in the Diocese of Sale. Many students will travel between two and three hours to attend this special Mass, celebrated by the Bishop of Sale, Most Rev. Christopher Prowse.

“Quote along the lines of the wonderful opportunity it is for students,” said Name of School Principal Name of Principal.

The Mass will feature the Lavalla Catholic College choir, a procession of students carrying their school banners and extensive student involvement in the readings and offertory procession.

This theme of Catholic Education Week, which runs from Friday April 27 until Friday 4 May, is ‘Year of Grace: the Year of Opportunity.’

(Diocesan Students’ Mass—straight after the event)

Students from Name of School in Suburb / Town were among more than two hundred students who gathered at St Mary’s Cathedral in Sale today to celebrate the launch of Catholic Education Week.

The Mass drew representatives from the 34 Catholic primary schools and 7 Catholic secondary colleges in the Diocese of Sale. Many students travelled between two and three hours to attend this special Mass, celebrated by the Bishop of Sale, Most Rev. Christopher Prowse.

“Quote along the lines of how well the Mass went,” said Name of School Principal Name of Principal.

The Mass featured the Lavalla Catholic College Choir, a procession of students carrying their school banners and extensive student involvement in the readings and offertory procession.

The theme of Catholic Education Week, which officially commences tomorrow and concludes on Friday 4 May, is ‘Year of Grace: the Year of Opportunity.’
Welcome Introduction (Principal or School leader)

Leader: Welcome to all members of our school community who have come together to celebrate Catholic Education Week 2012. This year’s theme is ‘Year of Grace, Year of Opportunity’. Today we reflect on the gift of grace which helps us to know God better, become stronger in faith and lead a loving and just life.

Gathering Song
Suggestions:
- Gather Together (Burland, 1999 on Let’s Celebrate Too! & 2007 on Move! Pray Celebrate!)
- Gather Us In (Haugen, 1982 on As One Voice)
- God’s Love Is (Burland, 2007 on Move! Pray! Celebrate!)
- Together as One (Chinn, 2002 on This Day)
- We Welcome You to This Place (Burland, 2001 on One Family)
- One Faith, One Hope, One Love (Chinn, 2007 on Many Roads, One Journey)
- Christ Our Light (Burland, 2001 on One Family)
- We Come Together (Burland, 1999 on Let’s Celebrate Too)

Call to Prayer
Leader: As we begin, we would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of this land and pay our respects to the Elders both past, present and future for they hold the memories, the traditions, the culture and hopes of Indigenous Australia.

Opening Prayer:
Loving God, Pour out your blessing on each of us and help us always to know that what we enjoy is your gift to us.
We ask this through Christ our Lord.
All: Amen.

THE WORD OF GOD

Procession of the Word
(The Word can be carried ceremoniously to a place of proclamation. It could be accompanied by either instrumental music or an appropriate acclamation.)
**Song Suggestions:**

- Halle, Halle, Halle ©1990 Caribbean Tradition (As One Voice for Kids)
- ‘Celtic Alleluia’ ©1985 Fintan O’Carroll & Christopher Walker (As One Voice)
- ‘Hallelujah! Praise Ye Lord’ © Traditional (As One Voice)

**READINGS**

**Reader: A reading from St Paul’s letter to the Ephesians (2:8-10)**

For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God—not the result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are what God has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand to be our way of life.

The Word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

**Reader: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to John (John 1: 14, 16-18)**

And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father’s only son, full of grace and truth. From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

OR

**Reader: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 25:14-30)**

Jesus spoke this parable to his disciples: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a man on his way abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one; each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out.
The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. The man who had received two made two more in the same way. But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money. Now a long time after, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them.

The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. "Sir", he said “you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made.” His master said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master’s happiness.” Next the man with the two talents came forward. “Sir,” he said “you entrusted me with two talents; here are two more that I have made.” His master said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master’s happiness.” Last came forward the man who had the one talent. “Sir,” said he “I had heard you were a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered; so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is; it was yours, you have it back.”

But his master answered him, “You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? Well then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have recovered my capital with interest. So now, take the talent from him and give it to the man who has the five talents. For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away.

The Gospel of the Lord. All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

OR

Shorter version:
Reader: A reading from the Holy Gospel according to Matthew (Matthew 25:14-15.19-21)

Jesus spoke this parable to his disciples: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a man on his way abroad who summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one; each in proportion to his ability. Then he set out. Now a long time after, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. “Sir”, he said “you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made.”
His master said to him, “Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master’s happiness.”

The Gospel of the Lord.  

All: Praise to you Lord Jesus Christ.

(Pause for a moment of silent reflection: How do you use the gift of grace which God has freely given to you to help you lead a good life? What opportunities are there for you to develop the ways you use this grace?)

OR

After the reading the leader is invited to relate the meaning of the Scripture passage to the lives of the students and teachers today.

Reflection Song

Lord Teach Me Your Ways (Based on Psalm 25)
(Words and Music © 2005 John Burland, on Lord Teach Me your Ways
Catholic Education Office, Sydney Leichhardt NSW. WOL 824)

Response:

Lord, teach me your ways
Open my eyes
Come let me see your face.
Lord teach me to live
Speaking your truth
Come let me know your grace.
I will always trust in you
I will always trust in you.

Lord, you always hear my cry
And are there to carry me
The days when I could fall
The days when I stand tall
Guiding us on
Keeping us strong.

Lord, the times when I am wrong
And have fallen from the path
Whenever I am in need
I know that you will lead
Guiding us on
Keeping us strong.
Prayers of Intercession

Leader: With gratitude to God for all our gifts, let us now pray for our needs, confident of God’s love.

Reader 1: For Pope Benedict XVI, Bishop Christopher Prowse and for all the leaders of our Church, may their decisions be wise and their judgments reflect the action of God’s Spirit, we pray to the Lord

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader 2: For Catholic education in Australia and across our diocese, both in cities and country. May we strive to provide education for all in the spirit of St Mary MacKillop, we pray to the Lord

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader 3: For our own school communities. May we willingly share our gifts with others and together build a strong future in faith and learning, we pray to the Lord

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader 4: For all staff in our Catholic schools. We give thanks for their calling to share in the work of Catholic education, we pray to the Lord

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader 5: For ourselves, that we may truly appreciate and develop the grace we have been given, we pray to the Lord

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader 6: For those in need, may we be your voice and hands serving all with love and compassion, we pray to the Lord.

All: Lord hear our prayer.

Reader 7: We pray for all who have died and gone before us into the fullness of life in Christ, especially those who have ministered in the schools of our diocese. We give thanks for their lives and we commend their souls into God’s loving care as we pray together the Hail Mary.

All: All pray the Hail Mary together
Leader: Lord God, all that we have is your gift to us. Continue to bless us with your gifts and hear our prayers, spoken and unspoken, through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.

Leader: Let us join together in prayer which is adapted from a Prayer by St Teresa of Avila (1515-1582) entitled Christ Has No Body.

Christ has no body but mine,  
No hands, no feet on earth but mine,  
Mine are the eyes with which he looks  
Compassion on this world.  
Mine are the feet with which he walks to do good,  
Mine are the hands, with which he blesses all the world.  
Mine are the hands, mine are the feet,  
Mine are the eyes, I am his body.  
Christ has no body now but mine,  
No hands, no feet on earth but mine,  
Mine are the eyes with which he looks compassion on this world.  
Christ has no body now on earth but mine.

OR

Use the song St Teresa's Prayer (Mangan, 2001 on Setting Hearts on Fire)

Sign of Peace: As a sign of our care and support for each other, let us share the peace of Christ with our neighbour.

Lord's Prayer
All: All pray the Our Father together

Closing Prayer
God of wonder,  
You are always with us.  
Bless us as we strive to love and serve you through all we do and all we meet.  
Help us to make a positive difference in our world as we respond to the grace which you so generously offer us.  
We ask this through Christ our Lord.

All: Amen.
Prayer Service

Blessing

Leader: May God the Creator bless us as we journey forth.
All: Amen.

Leader: May Jesus the Saviour be at our side through all times and seasons.
All: Amen.

Leader: May we gain a deeper awareness of the grace which God has given us.
All: Amen.

Leader: May we gain strength and courage to be the hands and face of God to all we meet.
All: Amen.

Leader: May the Holy Spirit watch over us now and always.
All: Amen.

Sending Forth

Leader: With gratitude for all God gives us, let us go in grace and peace to love and serve the Lord.
All: Thanks be to God.

Recessional Song

Suggestions:

- Rise Up (Mitchell, 2006 on Ordinary People)
- Tell the Good News (Chinn, 2004 on Wherever I Go)
- People of God (Chinn, 2002 on This Day)
- Shine Among Them (Chinn, 2007 on Many Roads, One Journey)
- We Praise You God (Burland, 2008 on God Loves Me)
- Let our Light Shine (Mangan, 2007 on True Colours Shine)
Prayer is a very powerful tool in developing the understanding of a prayer life for the Christian. “If we remain attentive to the truth of the mysteries that our Lord teaches us in prayer, how happy we will be.” (St Francis de Sales)

The Mission of My Life by John Henry Cardinal Newman

God has created me to do Him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission. I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told it in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons.

He has not created me for naught. I shall do good; I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place, while not intending it if I do but keep His commandments. Therefore, I will trust Him, whatever I am, I can never be thrown away.

If I am in sickness, my sickness may serve Him, in perplexity, my perplexity may serve Him. If I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about.

General intercessions

Jesus built his Church, the people of God, on a solid foundation and that solid foundation is faith. Let us pray to God our rock who always hears our prayers.

That all people will hear your call:
*God our rock, hear us.*

That we will be strong in our faith:
*God our rock, hear us.*

That we will share the good news of Jesus:
*God our rock, hear us.*

That we will lead by word and example:
*God our rock, hear us.*

That we will be open to your call:
*God our rock, hear us.*

That we will give thanks for those who have gone before us:
*God our rock, hear us.*
Learning Activities for Catholic Education Week 2012

In the ‘Year of Grace: the Year of Opportunity,’ we are recognising and celebrating the wonderfully unique gifts that God gives to every person. God’s loving grace is working within our lives, calling us to follow Jesus and empowering us to use and achieve with these unique gifts.

The celebration of Catholic Education Week promotes a special opportunity for showcasing the gifts, achievements, programs and activities within our Catholic school communities that respond to God’s loving grace. We have the opportunity to use and grow with these gifts and fulfil the promise that God’s grace offers in our lives.

Let us acknowledge and celebrate the opportunities that are available within our school communities to bring God’s gifts within us to wonderful fulfilment.

The following broad activities are offered as a guide for celebration. Allow the creativity within your school communities to use and extend these examples to fully reflect God’s loving grace.

Celebration of achievements – within each class, each house or on a whole school basis, acknowledge specific academic, sporting, creative and cultural achievements through rewards, medals, citations, picture galleries and so on.

The categories of achievement need not be limited to students but may also cover staff, families and the broader school/parish community. This celebration could occur as part of a liturgy or Mass, and be followed by a sharing of food and drink.

Guest speakers – a wide range of speakers could be invited to reflect upon their Catholic education and the utilisation of their gifts in later life. These speakers could reflect upon the various opportunities they had through their schooling to learn and grow, and how these experiences shaped their later lives.

The range of speakers could be of past students and staff, local community and other leaders, and members of the wider parish community.

Visual displays – a wide range of collections of student work, reflections, activities and school/community involvements could be prominently displayed through posters, photo and other galleries, and even on web pages.

Themes for these displays could include: creativity, problem solving, growth, stewardship or highlight specific gifts and opportunities. Again, these displays could include the work of staff and the wider school/parish community.
Put a spotlight on effective learning skills and make one or more a focus for a visual display. Examples include:

**Problem solving**
- Maths problem of the day
- Look at the Nrich project website for a range of problem ideas at varying levels

**Working in teams**
- Design a game
- Research a topic
- Work on a science design brief eg: constructing a newspaper tower to support itself

**Contests and challenges** - a variety of challenges, contests and performances could be promoted around the broad theme or some specific themes, incorporating talent shows, the above displays, team and problem solving contests, and so on. The tone would be of celebration and gratitude for the many gifts and opportunities we have in our schools.

With all of these, the performed activities could be captured on film and in writing for promotion on school websites, and for reflection in other ways throughout the school year.
“God offers us his powerful **grace** to help us live as blessed disciples.” (Book 6, page 23)

“Grace is God’s life within us; it is the gift that helps us to live as God’s children. Grace is not forced upon us. It requires our free acceptance, and a desire to know the truth and to do good. We grow in grace through prayer, the sacraments (especially the Eucharist) and good works.” (TKWL  Bk 6 pg 29)

“The Holy Spirit give us the grace to help our faith grow.” (Book 5, page 21)

“Jesus is our Saviour. He has won for us the life of grace. “(Book 4, page 111)

“Jesus gives us new life of grace, God’s own life, power and love with in us. We can use God’s wonderful gift of grace to become more like Jesus. When we do this we are responding to God’s call to friendship.”(Book 4, page 113)

“At Baptism we are freed from sin and given the life of grace. We need God’s grace to help us choose to do what is right.” (Book 3, page 109)

“At Baptism, we share in his new life, the life of grace, free from original sin. Grace is given to us by the Holy Spirit who stays with us and lives in us.” (Book 3, page 111)

**For classes already familiar with Edward deBono’s Six Thinking Hats, reflect on the quotes above and explore God’s grace from different perspectives.**

**White Hat:** Information

What can we learn about grace from the given quotes?

**Red Hat:** Feelings

How do you feel when someone displays /shows the grace of God to others?
How do you feel when you show God’s grace to others?

**Yellow Hat:** Positive aspects

What are the positive/good things that come from living our lives based on the grace of God?
Primary Learning activities

**Verbal-Linguistic**
- Compose an acrostic poem for **Grace** and/or **Opportunity**
- Produce a flyer advertising God’s grace, what it is and how we live by it.

**Logical-Mathematical**
- Research people/saints that show/demonstrate the grace of God in action. e.g. Mother Teresa.
- Create a board game including the attributes of grace.

**Visual-Spatial**
- Create a mural showing God’s grace in action.

**Bodily-Kinaesthetic**
- Perform a curtains up curtains down showing God’s grace in action.
- Mime grace in action.

**Musical-Rhythmic**
- Create a song, poem or rap about grace or opportunity.

**Interpersonal**
- Interview parent, grandparent about what they know about grace.

**Intrapersonal**
- Students create a personal journal about how they are going to live show God’s grace to others.

**Naturalist**
- Design an action plan that follows the grace of God so as to improve the environment for the future.

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For classes already familiar with Gardner’s Multiple Intelligences, here are some activities exploring God’s grace.

- **Black Hats:** Concerns
  - What might happen if we don’t follow God’s commandment to love one another?

- **Green Hat:** Creative
  - How can we creatively show others the grace of God?

- **Blue Hat:** The Big Picture
  - What are the implications for us today in terms of the grace of God and what we can do?
Activities for All Year Levels

Scripture analysis.

The Annunciation (Lk 1:26-38) shows Mary saying “yes” to God’s great gift – to be the mother of Jesus. Mary is presented as the model disciple who does not quite fully understand what is being asked of her but still assents to the invitation from God.

- Using the website “Liturgy Help”, locate the story of the Annunciation (4th Sunday of Advent). Students are to read the story of the Annunciation and analyse what this story teaches us about God’s Grace.
  - Commentaries are available on the same web page to help interpret the meaning of the passage.
  - Worksheets for youth and adults are available on the site to help students break open the Scripture passage.

- Using different images of the Annunciation, how is the Holy Spirit presented? What does this say about the presence of God?

- What challenges did Mary face as a result of saying “yes” to God? How did God help her through these challenges?

Plan, prepare and lead a prayer service showing God’s many gifts to the world.

Junior Middle and Senior Activities

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<td>1</td>
<td>Create a visual presentation (images, music etc) communicating what you understand to be God’s love for you.</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Research an issue (eg refugees) and describe how God assists us to respond and act in a Christian way to that issue.</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>In the classroom create a presentation showing the action of God in the world. This may be a local, national or global events. This can be used as a focus for students’ prayer.</td>
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## Secondary Learning Activities

### Middle

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| 1 | Create a class presentation showing the graces received in the seven sacraments.  
*Reference: Come Follow Me – Year 8 Student Resource, CEO Western Australia, page 189.* |
| 2 | Grace can be described as “the gift that helps us to know God better, become stronger in our faith and live a just life”. Create a class ‘graffiti board’ listing ways in which people can get to know God better, become stronger in our faith and live a just life. |
| 3 | Research the life of a Saint and describe his/her life his/her gifts and how he/she had confidence in God to make a difference in the world. |

### Senior

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<td>1</td>
<td>Invite a panel of speakers, (religious and lay) to speak about how faith has influenced their life and the opportunities that have presented to them in life because of this faith.</td>
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| 2 | Students are to describe experiences of the “Grace of God” in their lives.  
| 3 | Vocations are described as a ‘grace of God’. Research vocations using the website:  
- Identify and describe the different types of vocations  
- List the positives and challenges of the different types of vocations.  
- Reflect upon and articulate your own vocation.  
- Research one of the following enclosed orders:  
  - **Male** - Cistercians, Trappists, Carthusians and some Carmelite branches.  
  - **Female** - Augustinian nuns, Carmelite nuns, Tyburn nuns, Poor Clare sisters, and some convents of Benedictine nuns and Dominican nuns.  
    - What contribution do these orders make to the world?  
    - How are they a gift from God?  
    - What graces do they give the world? |
This echo mime, *The Blessing of Grace*, based on 1 Corinthians 1:1-9, is a good way to involve younger students or bodily-kinaesthetic learners who need something shorter than the Foundation Rap.

**The Blessing of Grace**

Grace to you and peace from God and Jesus Christ

I give thanks to my God always for you

Because of the grace given to you

as a believer in Christ

for in every way you have been enriched

in speech

in knowledge

you grow stronger in your belief in Christ

you have every gift from the Holy Spirit

as you wait for the time when you will meet Jesus in heaven

Jesus will give you strength to be good

God is faithful

God called you to follow Jesus Christ our Lord

move one arm at a time gesturing outward with open palms

hold hands together (as in prayer) moving them up and down

move one arm at a time gesturing outward with open palms

raise arms skyward

nod head wisely

point to mouth

point to head

flex muscles in arms

make a gesture as though ticking off items

point to watch

flex muscles in arms

place hand on heart

make gesture of calling with hands around mouth
Raps or chants are a great learning tool to help students understand material that is difficult or impossible to experience firsthand. Secondary students may be able to write their own rap about ‘Grace’ while primary students may find it challenging enough to perform the rap below, written by Alice Youlenden.

**Giving Amazing Grace a Big Rap**

*The words, or parts of words in bold may assist with rhythm*

Now *we’re* here to talk about *something* called grace, To *talk* about its *meaning*, its *importance* and its *place*. We *cannot* tell you all cause it’s *hard* to *explain*, But we’ll *give* you a little *insight* That might *help* to make it *plain*.

This *year* we have a *theme* that is *set* to *inspire*, A *year* of grace to *start* afresh and to aim *higher*. We *have* a chance to *give* it thought through *Scripture* and through *prayer*, From *Cath* Ed week to *Pentecost* Our *fresh* start’s almost *there*.

Our *bishops* were *inspired* by *Blessed* John Paul II, A *holy* man who *had* a message for the millennium *new*. He *called* us to consider where *Christ* is in our *lives*, In the *people* and the *places* And being *Catholic* we must *strive*.

Now *that’s* no easy *task* to *do* all those *things*, But we *have* a secret *weapon* that *comes* with no *strings*. It’s a *gift* from God with *love* to us and its *very* freely *given*, We *call* it grace, God’s *life* in us from *Baptism* it’s *there* Then *grows* with love of *Jesus* Christ from which *we* are *driven*.

(continued over page)
It cannot be injected in an operating theatre,
It’s a little spark of God in us because he is creator.
We can wake it up and through our lives it will grow and grow and grow.
If we, like Christ, do good and accept this fabulous gift
God’s love can work through all of us then to the world will flow.

We cannot use a watering can or garden fertilizer,
God’s grace to us is everywhere we just have to realise it.
If we take a little quiet time to still our hearts and minds,
We may recognise God’s gift to us and see it as a chance
For God to work through us into the world and human kind.

We talk of grace filled moments and of Mary full of grace
We say a prayer before our meals through which we should not race
We need to recognise grace’s power its potential for the world
For the grace of God’s that’s deep within once it is unfurled
Has a powerful effect on us and round the world it whirls.
Useful Websites

- Catholic Education Office, Diocese of Sale: www.ceosale.catholic.edu.au
- Catholic Diocese of Sale: www.sale.catholic.org.au
- Catholic Mission: www.catholicmission.org.au
- Catholic Church in Australia: www.catholic.org.au
- Catholic Religious Australia: www.catholicreligiousaustralia.org
- The Church in Australia: The Catholic Tradition: http://yuri.netii.net/ecc/mod8.html
- Caroline Chisholm: http://adbonline.anu.edu.au/biogs/A010208b.htm
- Saint Mary of the Cross MacKillop: www.marymackillop.org.au
- St Vincent de Paul Society: www.vinnies.org.au/home-vic
Have you:

☐ Planned at least one whole-school event to be celebrated during Catholic Education Week, preferably one that involves people beyond the school community?

☐ Promoted this event through the school newsletter, parish newsletter, school website or local media (as appropriate)?

☐ Encouraged your Religious Education Coordinator to organise a school liturgy (or Mass) based on the one provided in this booklet?

☐ Encouraged classroom teachers to select appropriate activities from the suggestions provided in this booklet?

☐ Organised for a staff member to take photos of your Catholic Education Week activities?

☐ Prepared and submitted a media release about your main event?

☐ Displayed the enclosed Catholic Education Week posters around your schools?

Towards the end of Catholic Education Week

Have you:

☐ Prepared and submitted (along with a photo) a media release about your main event?

☐ Sent a copy of this to Michelle Cann michelle.cann@ceosale.catholic.edu.au so it can be included as a news story on the Catholic Education Office website as well?
“Grace is being looked upon by God, our being touched by his love.” Pope Benedict XVI

The Good Shephard stained glass window, St Mary’s Cathedral, Sale