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PUBLICATIONS

# ABOUT THE THINK **FAITH** SRE CURRICULUM





CHRISTIAN EDUCATION  
PUBLICATIONS

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# ABOUT THE **THINK FAITH** SRE CURRICULUM

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## CURRICULUM **PHILOSOPHY**

The *Think Faith* SRE curriculum provides a learning framework for nurturing, equipping and guiding students in their understanding of the Christian faith. In addition to outlining the areas to be covered over a student's school life, the curriculum also specifies appropriate learning experiences for teachers to use in their classrooms.

The SRE curriculum aims to:

- engage students with the Bible
- encourage students to think more deeply about the beliefs and tenets of the Christian faith
- provide students with opportunities to develop skills in Christian practices
- provide students with the tools to consider issues from a Christian world view
- help students connect their learning with how Christians are called to live.

To achieve these aims, the curriculum:

- uses the Bible as its foundational text
- teaches from a faith perspective
- affirms the voluntary nature of SRE teaching
- connects learning with how Christians are called to live
- values the place of story and storytelling
- recognises the different contexts in which SRE is taught
- supports quality teaching and learning
- acknowledges the relational nature of SRE teaching
- affirms the passion of the SRE teacher
- supports student engagement with text.

## USES THE BIBLE AS ITS FOUNDATIONAL TEXT

Christians believe that the Bible is the word of God; it is therefore important that it is the foundation of all SRE lessons. As the Christian faith is centred on specific content, in particular the saving work of Jesus Christ, it therefore requires an understanding of the Bible. The curriculum teaches the major events, concepts and doctrines of the Bible. While lessons may utilise other material, the Bible informs the Christian world view and is the lens through which issues are seen and addressed in SRE lessons.

This curriculum uses the NIRV (New International Readers Version). This translation has translated the Bible from the original language and, in the process, lowered the reading level by simplifying the words and shortening the sentence length. The NIRV is a clear, readable Bible that is suitable for students in both primary and high school and for students from non-English speaking backgrounds. Because of its relationship with the NIV, well-known verses are easily recognisable.

Teachers may choose to use other translations in their teaching. If they do so, they will need to modify any worksheets and lessons accordingly.

## TEACHES FROM A FAITH PERSPECTIVE

SRE is taught from a position of faith. It does not provide an outsider's view of religion, but is anchored in personal, experienced faith. While teachers must be sensitive to their context, SRE is unashamedly about teaching the Christian faith in a clear and engaging manner.

## AFFIRMS THE VOLUNTARY NATURE OF SRE TEACHING

Each unit of work provides teaching and learning plans to support the teacher. Regardless of whether they have been teaching for many years or are new to the task, the teaching resources provide a clear learning framework.

The SRE curriculum and teaching resources are different to the teaching resources often used by mainstream classroom teachers.

These resources supply the teacher with:

- the content that needs to be taught
- a framework for teaching the content
- the pedagogical content knowledge to support quality teaching and learning.  
Pedagogical content knowledge requires both mastery of the subject content, effective teaching practice, and an understanding of the context and students. It is the knowledge of both the difficulties that students encounter as they learn about a topic and potential strategies for helping students overcome these difficulties. These teaching resources have been developed by experienced SRE teachers using their pedagogical content knowledge with the expectation that the teacher will adapt the general pedagogical content knowledge for their particular context.

## CONNECTS LEARNING WITH HOW CHRISTIANS ARE CALLED TO LIVE

The SRE curriculum aims to help students connect their learning with an understanding of how Christians are called to live. While it is important for students to understand that the Bible is not a moralistic tale and that they can't earn their salvation through good works, it is important that they understand that Christians are called to live in a way that is pleasing to God. The curriculum helps students to consider how the Christian faith impacts the way they relate to God, to one another (community) and to the world.

## VALUES THE PLACE OF STORY AND STORYTELLING

The Bible tells God's story of creation, fall, redemption and consummation. All of human history, all human relations, and all human endeavours are located within this story. Without the Bible's story, humanity would not know what God is like, what his purposes are or what it is to be truly human. The Bible's story of salvation history is the authoritative story that guides the SRE curriculum. Teachers bring their stories and experiences of faith into the classroom to help students make connections between their stories and faith. Telling this story is an essential component of SRE. 'A good story both enlightens and engages; it helps us remember and connect. A clear and compelling narrative can help us find meaning in what may have previously seemed to be abstract or irrelevant.'<sup>1</sup>

## RECOGNISES THE DIFFERENT CONTEXTS IN WHICH SRE IS TAUGHT

Every SRE classroom is different, and the context of SRE differs from school to school and region to region. It is important that the SRE Curriculum provides teachers with the flexibility and resources they need to teach their students in a contextually appropriate way. It is therefore essential that (i) the curriculum is designed with a variety of options for teachers; and (ii) SRE teachers from a range of areas both throughout Sydney and in regional areas are involved in the development and training of this curriculum to ensure that the teaching resources are useful in a range of different contexts.

## SUPPORTS QUALITY TEACHING AND LEARNING

The new SRE curriculum utilises contemporary educational theory and provides a platform for quality teaching and learning that encourages students to use higher order thinking in their lessons. It is a spiral curriculum that returns to, and builds upon, material the students have learned before. Topics are revisited over the course of the curriculum at increasingly complex levels, helping students come to understandings that are age-appropriate. New learning refers back to previous learning, and students are encouraged to apply their earlier learning to later outcomes.

The curriculum is built around units of work that have been developed with the end in mind by identifying what we hope the students will learn in SRE and developing lesson plans accordingly. Each unit of work is guided by a set of essential questions that aim to engage students and encourage them to think, reconsider and act on what they are learning beyond the classroom.

## ACKNOWLEDGES THE RELATIONAL NATURE OF SRE TEACHING

The SRE curriculum acknowledges the importance of relationships in SRE and provides opportunities for developing positive relationships with students. The relationships that teachers develop with their students are important because they help to develop a positive teaching and learning environment. As teachers get to know their students they are able to teach with their students, rather than their lesson plans, in mind. It is therefore important that the SRE curriculum allows SRE teachers the freedom to slow down and dwell in the material the students are learning.

## AFFIRMS THE PASSION OF THE SRE TEACHER

Passion is an important aspect of teaching because this passion often translates into student enthusiasm in the classroom. Christopher Day<sup>2</sup> observes that it is the teacher's passion for teaching, for their students and for their learning that 'marks teachers as good or better than good'. These teaching resources are designed to support the teacher's passion and maximise the engagement with SRE classes.

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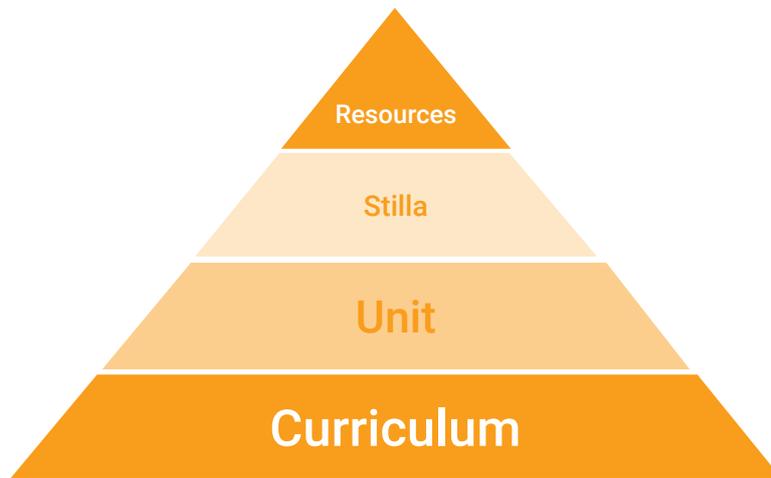
1 Wiggins, G and McTighe, J 2005, *Understanding by Design*, ASCD, Virginia.

2 Day, C 2009, 'A Passion for Quality: Teachers Who Make a Difference', *Tijdschrift voor Lerarenopleiders*, Vol 30, p.6.

## SUPPORTS STUDENT ENGAGEMENT WITH TEXT

Like the other learning that occurs at school, SRE places some literacy demands on students. There is particular vocabulary to be understood, and there are themes and concepts to understand as students make meaning of the text. SRE provides an opportunity for students to practise the important skills of reading, talking and writing about text in a supportive environment. Modelling reading the Bible for understanding, guiding students as they practise these skills themselves, giving ample opportunity for discussions, and allowing time for students to write what they are thinking provides the students with practise in valuable literacy skills. This will of course look different for different SRE classrooms, and the SRE teacher needs to carefully consider how they support their students as they engage with text.

# CURRICULUM STRUCTURE



## MOVEMENT FROM CURRICULUM TO TEACHING RESOURCES



## OVERVIEW OF THE SECONDARY UNITS

High school	Foundation for Christian living—the Bible	Foundation of the Christian world view—the gospel	Living out the Christian life	Living as a Christian in the world
Stage 4	The Bible is the world's most influential book	Mark: Jesus is the powerful Son of God.	Acts part 1: Paul	Genesis 1–12:3: God is at the centre and that is good.
	The Bible tells one big story of creation, fall, redemption, and consummation.	Matthew: God's promises are fulfilled in Jesus.	Acts part 2: Peter	Daniel and Paul: A Christian world view helps to answer the question 'Who am I?'
Stage 5	The Bible as history: Historical salvation themes of Moses and the historical Jesus.	Luke 1–9: Jesus' life is different to expectations.	Luke 10–19	Ecclesiastes and 1 Peter: Jesus gives meaning to our lives.
	The Bible as genre/text: There are a number of different genres in the Bible written by a number of different authors.	John: The signs of John's Gospel	Ephesians: United with Jesus and each other.	Proverbs and James: Living wisely in God's world.
Stage 6	Using Stage 5 in 2016	Using Stage 5 in 2016	Using Stage 5 in 2016	Using Stage 5 in 2016
	Using Stage 5 in 2016	Using Stage 5 in 2016	Using Stage 5 in 2016	Using Stage 5 in 2016

# SRE UNITS

The SRE curriculum is built on units of work. There is one unit per term in high school (four units per year).

Each unit of work in the SRE curriculum is organised around a Launch Lesson, six Stillas, and a Landing Lesson. This approach can be pictured in a similar way to the plan that a tour group makes when visiting one of the great cities of the world.

- Firstly, there is a general excitement as their trip is launched. Everyone is keen to discover new places and experience a taste of the city they are visiting. This is the function of the Launch Lesson.
- Once on their trip, travellers go to a number of places of interest. These places of interest are the ‘must see’ locations that the tour guide has planned for them to visit. Although every tour group will visit the points of interest, some groups will want to linger longer at one or two of the points of interest. They will want to do the regular touristy things, but then because of their interest or extra time, they will stay and get to know that place of interest more. There are also some tour groups who will have to miss a place of interest simply because there is not enough time in the tour. This is the function of the Stillas.
- Finally, there is the end of the tour where the tour group sits together sharing their photos and stories before returning home. This is the function of the Landing Lesson.

## UNIT SUMMARY



### Introduction

An introduction to the unit of work and appreciation for the contribution of the unit to student learning and understanding.

### Essential questions

Three or four thought-provoking questions are provided to foster inquiry, meaning-making and transfer beyond the unit of work.

## UNIT OUTCOMES

### Understanding

These are the themes and concepts that we want the students to understand in the unit. They are based on three questions:

- What are the big ideas that we want students to understand?
- What specific understandings about them are desired?
- What misunderstandings are predictable?

### Key terms

This section identifies key terms that will be taught during the unit.

## Acquisition

A summary of the knowledge the student will acquire as a result of participating in the unit.

## Skills

Identifies what the student should be able to do as a result of what they have learned during the unit.

## Relating

Students are expected to take what they learn in SRE and be able to apply it beyond the classroom. SRE aims to help students connect their learning with their understanding of how Christians are called to live and bear fruit for God's glory. As students participate in SRE over their school life, the following are the aspects of Christian life that we want them to develop in their understanding. These ideas are not the things that Christians do to please God. They are responses to God's grace and forgiveness that is expressed in the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Connections have been organised around three kinds of 'relating': relating to God, relating to others, and relating to the world that Jesus describes in John 15.

### Relating to God

- Christians keep God's commands.
- Christians acknowledge that they are sinners who have fallen short of God's glory.
- Christians love God.
- Christians believe that God's word is living and active.
- Christians believe that they are transformed by God's Spirit through reading God's word.
- Christians are guided in their decision-making and ethics by God's word.
- Christians believe that faith impacts every aspect of a Christian's life.
- Christians trust in what Jesus has done for them and recognise him as Saviour and Lord.
- Christians believe that Jesus' power is working in their lives to change them.
- Christians pursue a relationship with God through prayer, worship, service and reading his word.
- Christians are thankful for what Jesus has done.
- Christians believe that God reveals himself to us through his word.
- Christians acknowledge that sin has broken humanity's relationship with God.

### Relating to others

- Christians love each other.
- Christians care for one another.
- Christians show grace and love to others because of God's action towards them.
- Christians understand the importance of forgiveness and repentance in their relationships with God and others.
- Christians use their gifts to serve others.
- Christians show generous hospitality to all.
- Christians participate in a Christian community.
- Christians believe that they should attempt to do good for all people.
- Christians understand that God does not play favourites.
- Christians acknowledge that sin has broken humanity's relationships.

## Relating to the world

- Christians delight in God's world.
- Christians are good stewards of God's world.
- Christians look at the world through their Christian world view.
- Christians enjoy and cherish the life that God has given them.
- Christians acknowledge that sin has broken humanity's relationship with the world.
- Christians recognise that there is diversity in the world.
- Christians understand that suffering and perseverance are part of God's world.
- Christians care for those who are in need.
- Christians relate to the world in hope of all creation being redeemed.
- Christians often do not feel quite at home in the world.
- Christians understand they need to testify to a world that has rebelled against God.
- Christians understand that they may need to suffer for the profession of their faith in the world.

## SRE UNIT CONTENT STRUCTURE

### Launch Lesson

This lesson establishes the direction of the unit. It aims to motivate and inspire the students to want to learn more by introducing the main idea and essential questions of the unit. At the end of the Launch Lesson, the students should be able to explain what they will have to understand by the end of the unit. This lesson often has more creative 'wow' activities as it inspires and challenges the students for the learning journey they are embarking upon.

### Stillas

The majority of the unit of work is divided into Stillas that provide the teaching and learning plan for each place of interest that the students will visit. Although similar to a lesson, a Stilla replaces the idea of a lesson in SRE to acknowledge that SRE teaching should be guided by what is happening in the classroom and create learning opportunities that hold a clear shape, while still allowing for the flexibility needed to engage with the specific needs of the class. Each Stilla is created to expand or contract to provide the best teaching and learning for students. Stillas are carefully constructed to provide a dynamic sequence of teaching and learning activities to ensure an engaging learning experience for the students. They are designed to allow the teacher the flexibility of spending less or more time visiting each of the places of interest. A rough guide to timing is provided in the Stilla plan, but this may be modified by the teacher due to the length of the lesson, the number of teaching lessons available in the school term, and/or the interest, experience and ability of the students. In this way, both the teacher and the students are able to slow down and dwell in a learning experience if the students' interest or understanding warrants it.

### Landing Lesson

The Landing Lesson provides space for the students to consolidate and demonstrate what they have learned. Like the Launch Lesson, this is written as a stand-alone lesson. The students are given the opportunity to share what they have learned in this lesson, and activities are designed for consolidating the material that has been covered throughout the unit.

# STILLA STRUCTURE

A Stilla is structured with three major elements, and each element consists of one or a number of Stilla Learning Segments.

## STILLA ELEMENTS<sup>3</sup>

### 1. CONNECTING

Students engage with the big idea of the Bible passage, and are motivated to actively participate in the teaching and learning activities. In addition to using connecting activities at the start of a lesson, there are times when the teaching and learning plan includes connecting at other points of the plan. Connecting:

- focuses the students' attention
- establishes expectations for what is going to be learned
- motivates the students to become involved
- helps the students to make meaningful connections to new material.

### 2. EXPLORING

Students explore the material using a variety of Stilla Learning Segments to encourage them to think deeply about the material. This is where the majority of time is spent. Students work as a whole class, in small groups, pairs and individually as they engage with the material.

### 3. FORMING

Students consolidate and reflect on their learning in the Stilla, and in the unit. Forming is an ongoing process that takes place as students form their opinions, attitudes and beliefs. It provides an opportunity for students to consider personal implications of what they are learning.

## Stilla Learning Segment

SRE teachers have the freedom to extend or remove a Stilla Learning Segment to maximise the teaching and learning opportunity for their class. As teachers prepare for their time in the classroom, they may choose to substitute one activity for another one that is more appropriate for their class or their teaching style. Any changes to the lesson must maintain the messages and learning outcomes as outlined in the Stilla.



### Engaging

A teaching and learning activity that engages students in their learning by connecting with their world, reviewing what has been previously taught, and/or drawing on existing knowledge.



### Instructing

A teaching and learning activity that uses direct instruction to provide essential content. While direct instruction is predominantly centred on one person, there may be some interaction with other students. For example, it may include a question–answer format, or an activity that checks for comprehension. Direct instruction can come from the teacher, a student, or outside expert (visiting or via DVD).



## Investigating

A teaching and learning activity where the students explore the Bible to understand the meaning of the text.



## Conversing

A teaching and learning activity where the students discuss ideas, concepts or themes, that is, having a conversation around a particular topic. This is different from a question–answer format and may include small and large group discussions, silent discussions, and think-pair-share. Students learn when they are given the opportunity to talk and share ideas. Two kinds of questions are provided: (i) simple recall questions designated with a single question mark; and (ii) deeper thinking questions designated with a brain icon . The questions provide a helpful guideline but do not have to be followed precisely as the conversation should be guided by students' interactions and not by teacher questions.



## Reinforcing

A teaching and learning activity that reinforces understanding by giving the students the opportunity to engage deeply with ideas, concepts and themes, or to practise a skill.



## Applying

A teaching and learning activity that helps the students to express their understanding, focusing on connecting, meaning and acquiring.



## Reflecting

A teaching and learning activity that draws the Stilla, or Stilla Learning Segment, to a close and helps students to consolidate their learning.

## Link Statements

These are used to transition between ideas or Stilla Learning Segments. A Link Statement should assist students in following the flow of the lesson and recognising how ideas fit together. These are not scripted statements; rather, they are designed to be suggestions for the teacher.



## PowerPoint slides

PowerPoint slides are provided for each lesson, and can be modified for the needs of your students.

## ACTIVITIES

There are a variety of teaching and learning activities in the Stilla Learning Segments. These activities have been designed to engage with students in an age-appropriate way. Students can be challenged and stretched when they are able to demonstrate their learning in different ways such as through drama, art and diagrams; when they are given the opportunity to express their opinions in safe and supportive environments; and when they are given time to reflect on what they are learning. To support this, a variety of approaches are used which have been chosen according to the desired outcome of the activity and the general learning needs of the stage that is being taught.

The first time a learning activity is used in the unit, the full description is included in the text. Subsequent uses of the activity are not described but can be looked up in the Activities Compendium at the end of the unit. Suggestions for different ways to do a particular activity are also included in this section.

The SRE teacher can substitute the learning activity for something more appropriate for their context. Any change should support the learning outcomes of the Stilla. When planning an alternative activity, the SRE

teachers must take into consideration the age-appropriateness of the activity, the learning environment and their capacity to maintain appropriate standards of conduct from the students.

## TEACHER NOTES

Throughout the Stilla important information for the teacher is provided in the teacher notes. These notes are provided to:

- explain the purpose of an activity
- describe new strategies
- flag possible areas of concern.

## PLANNING THE LESSON

Stillas are designed to be flexible. This is to enable the teacher to design a teaching and learning time that is appropriate for their class. Many Stillas could easily run for more than one lesson and the teacher will need to factor this into their planning. The timing in the teaching and learning plan is offered as a guide and can be modified according to the needs of each class.

If the teacher plans to teach a Stilla over more than one lesson, it is important that they do three things:

- Close the current lesson by providing students with the opportunity to reflect on the learning that has taken place.
- Identify the learning outcomes they are seeking to achieve in the next lesson that will bridge what the students have learned and what they will learn in the following lesson.
- Plan an activity to reconnect with the content from the previous lesson.

Student assessment is an integral part of planning lessons, and should take place in an ongoing way throughout a unit of work. This assessment for learning is essential for SRE teachers as they plan their lessons. It also assists the teacher in determining whether the unit outcomes that are expected to be acquired by most students are being met. By taking the time to understand their students' pre-existing understanding and learning needs, an SRE teacher is able to design lessons that are appropriate for students' learning needs. As SRE teachers collect evidence about their students' knowledge, understanding and skills, this informs their teaching. Assessment for learning helps students to learn by ensuring that students are understanding before moving on to the next activity or concept.

Throughout the unit of work, the SRE teacher informally collects evidence of student learning and adapts the Stilla content accordingly.

This evidence may include:

- providing students with opportunities to present their learning
- monitoring student participation in classroom discussions
- checking for understanding within the lesson, for example by using signalled responses
- observing students during learning activities and participation in group activities
- reviewing the Ticket to Leave reflection activities
- reviewing the previous Stilla
- having informal discussions with students during group and individual work.

This evidence enables an SRE teacher to determine what needs to be taught next and at what level of detail; and to monitor the effectiveness of teaching and learning programs.

# TEACHER PLANNING SHEET

Below is a template planning sheet. A planning sheet should clearly identify the following:

- Which unit of work the teacher is engaged in: for example, Launch Lesson, Stilla or Landing Lesson.
- Whether the teacher will teach whole or part of a Stilla, or more than one Stilla.
- The Stilla Learning Segments that the teacher is going to use for their class.
- The time that the teacher anticipates spending on each Stilla Learning Segment.
- The resources that the teacher will use in each Stilla Learning Segment.

Lesson planner

DATE:		YEAR GROUP:
PERIOD:		
TIMING	CONNECTING	RESOURCES
TIMING	EXPLORING	RESOURCES
TIMING	FORMING	RESOURCES

## TEACHING THE LESSON

As students learn new knowledge, skills, and strategies, effective teaching and learning is required to allow them to properly master these skills. There are many skills and new areas of knowledge required of the students in SRE (for example, looking up Bible passages, taking notes from a Bible passage, understanding key terms and concepts). As you introduce new content, you will need to ensure that you give students opportunities to successfully master these skills. A helpful model to use in structuring the introduction, practice and mastery of new skills and knowledge is The Collins Model<sup>4</sup>. It identifies six principles of instruction: three are the responsibility of the teacher and three are the responsibility of the student. As a teacher introduces new knowledge, content or skills, they must:

- **MODEL**—model the task and show how it is to be completed
- **COACH**—guide and prompt the students and provide feedback to them as they engage in completing the task
- **SCAFFOLD/FADE**—provide some cues to remind the students as they complete the task and gradually fade these cues as students become fully independent in the task.

As the student engages in the process of learning, they must:

- **ARTICULATE**—students explain what it is they have learned (the process, skill or knowledge) and when they may be able to apply their new learning
- **REFLECT**—students identify what they know now that they did not know before
- **EXPLORE**—students explain how they might be able to apply their new knowledge in new situations.

Aspects of this teaching/learning model are embedded in the content of the units to ensure a smooth process of introducing, practising and mastering knowledge, skills and strategies as well as thoughtful student engagement in learning.

## TEACHING SRE WITH SENSITIVITY

SRE lessons provide an excellent opportunity for students to explore issues that are relevant to them in a non-threatening and supportive environment. Well-taught SRE can provide students with a safe space to identify and evaluate both what they believe, and the grounds and implications of these beliefs, thus developing their ability to think for themselves. However, class discussions have the potential to move well-planned lessons to unexpected places. It is therefore important that SRE teachers prepare for this possibility. They need to consider how they will respond to questions and comments of a sensitive nature.

Please refer to the SRE Sensitivity Framework ([youthworks.net/sre/authorised-curriculum](https://youthworks.net/sre/authorised-curriculum)) for more information.

## RESOURCES

A 'resource' is the extra teaching content used to support a Stilla Learning Segment. It includes, but is not limited to, worksheets, video, music, books, online games and activities. A number of resources are included in the Stilla Learning Segments and alternative resources can be added or substituted as appropriate to better contextualise the learning for the students.

<sup>4</sup> Collins A, Brown JS & Newman SE, 1989 'Cognitive apprenticeship: teaching the crafts of reading, writing and mathematics', in Resnik, LB (ed.) *Knowing, Learning and Instruction: Essays in Honour of Robert Glaser*, Lawrence Erlbaum, Hillsdale, NJ.

## Multimedia resources

Every SRE teacher using the authorised curriculum of the Anglican Diocese of Sydney must submit all additional multimedia for approval. Multimedia includes video, websites, social media, music, printed published literature, and computer games.

Approved multimedia is added to an online library and is available for primary and secondary SRE teachers who use the authorised Anglican curriculum and resources.

- To request approval for a Primary SRE multimedia resource or to view authorised resources, go to: [www.cepconnect.com.au/myconnect](http://www.cepconnect.com.au/myconnect)
- To request approval for a Secondary SRE multimedia resource or to view authorised resources go to: [www.highschoolsre.net](http://www.highschoolsre.net)

## Open resources

Resources that do not need to be approved include:

- PowerPoint presentations developed from the lesson
- pictures
- worksheets.

Any open resources you use and find helpful can also be added to the online library for the benefit of other SRE teachers. If you would like to add any resources, please submit them to the links above for approval.

When deciding to use an approved or open resource the teacher must take into consideration the age and developmental maturity of the students, as well as the individual needs of the students. If the teacher has any concern regarding the appropriateness of the content for the context, the SRE teacher must choose not to use the resource.