

The following forms and information are available online ([www.childrensministry.org.au](http://www.childrensministry.org.au)) or by post:

- \* SRE Teacher Engagement Form (EF5)
- \* Volunteer Declaration
- \* Advice for authorising agents
- \* Frequently asked questions

SRE teacher authorisation cards are issued on completion of the authorisation process.

For further information and to download further copies of this booklet visit the Synod Children's Ministry Website:



For further information please contact:

**Uniting Mission & Education**

Level 9, 222 Pitt St, Sydney  
PO Box A2178  
Sydney South NSW 1235

Phone: 02 8267 4290

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UNITING CHURCH in NSW

# SRE GUIDE

*The Little Book of information for SRE Teachers*

Guidelines,  
information,  
hints and ideas for  
SRE Teachers



- You are a Star!
- Things you need to know before you start
- How can my church help me?
- What can I expect from my school?
- The Language of SRE
- How will I manage the class?
- Understanding child development
- How do children learn?
- Creative ideas



**2011**  
**September**

## Welcome Aboard, You are joining a great team!



Your ministry as a Special Religious Education (SRE) teacher makes you a very important person in the lives of many children. In fact you are a star! You have the wonderful privilege of bringing Jesus' love and teaching to the children in your classes.

Fewer than 5% of Australian children are involved in the local church, so SRE teaching is a great opportunity. NSW Government Legislation recognizes the importance of the spiritual element of a child's development and education. In 1990 the Education Reform Act re-affirmed the place of Special Religious Education, allowing space for recognized religious persuasions to be a part of a child's school education, teaching them in the faith their parents identify.

Today SRE teachers form the largest volunteer movement within the church, perhaps even the country. Week by week, volunteer teachers, like yourself, inspired by the love of God, share with students the building blocks of the Christian faith.

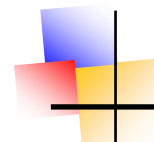
Teaching SRE is not just about telling Bible stories, and preparing lessons. It is about developing relationships of genuine concern and love for the children out of which can grow faith and trust. You present a model of faith for the children which they will remember.

There will be tough times but remember that you are not alone. You are part of a team, you are the one present in the classroom and your church supports you. There are training opportunities available and the prayers of others and yourself will remind you that our God is with you always. You may never know the difference your work in schools has made but the seeds sown are in the hands of our great God who is faithful and can be trusted.

Remember:

**You are a star!**

*Paul says "...you shine like stars in the universe as you hold out the word of life" (Phillipians 2: 15,16)*



UNITING CHURCH

## SAFE CHURCH AWARENESS TRAINING (CHILD PROTECTION)

Everyone who works with children and young people in the Uniting Church (including SRE Teachers) is required to participate in child protection training. The Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT is a Safe Church Training Agreement (SCTA) Training Partner and as such presents child protection training as Safe Church Awareness Workshops. These workshop cover four modules over 6hours, either as one full day or two half days/evenings..

The Safe Church Awareness Workshops topics include:

- \* duty of care,
- \* transparency and accountability;
- \* child and vulnerable person's protection;
- \* understanding and responding to abuse;
- \* protective behaviours;
- \* safe leadership; and
- \* safe programs and environments.

Uniting Church SRE teachers can meet this requirement by attending any SCTA accredited Safe Church Workshop.

For a calendar of all upcoming Safe Church Awareness Workshops, follow the link from:

<http://childrensministry.org.au/safety-and-protection/>

For Further Information see the above website or contact:

Emma Parr - 02 8267 4290; [emmap@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:emmap@nsw.uca.org.au)

## SRE TEACHER BASIC ACCREDITATION TRAINING

Accreditation refers to the level of training completed by the SRE teacher. The Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools (ICCOREIS) and individual denominations offer training.

Each denomination is responsible for the accreditation of their teachers. The Uniting Church Synod of NSW and the ACT awards a certificate when basic accreditation is completed.

Some teachers will have completed components of this basic accreditation through other groups. This is a valid method for participating in SRE training and often the most ideal method as many SRE teachers from different denominations come together to gain new knowledge and skills for SRE teaching. To gain credit for these courses teachers will need to supply details of the courses in which they have participated to the Synod SRE coordinator, Uniting Mission & Education.

### CONTENT OF COURSE

Each Module is 2 hours and covers some basic concepts and skills that are vital for effective SRE teaching. The sessions are also interactive and fun—modeling strategies and tips you can take back to your classroom!

Module One—Why's and How's of SRE; Teaching & Learning styles

Module Two— Effective Communication; communication levels & language

Module Three—Relating Well To Contemporary Kids & Classroom strategies

Module Four— Teaching and Living the Message: Curriculum, Stages of faith, owning our own faith & Classroom management

Module Five - Basic Bible and Beliefs for SRE Teachers

Module Six - Lesson Observation and Reflection

For further details of the SRE Basic Accreditation Training contact:

The SRE Coordinator, Uniting Mission and Education

Level 9, 222 Pitt St, Sydney

PO Box A2178, Sydney South, 1235

Ph: 02 8267 4290; Email: [emmap@nsw.uca.org.au](mailto:emmap@nsw.uca.org.au)

Courses are held at the Uniting Church Centre for Ministry, North Parramatta, and can also be arranged in other metropolitan or country venues by arrangement. This basic accreditation course is also run by the Baptist Kids Ministry Team.

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## What must I do before I start?

Your role as an SRE teacher does not begin when you walk into your classroom on the first day. That is the last step in a process that prepares you to be as effective as you can in your new role as a teacher.

Here are a few things which need to be done or thought about before you step foot into a classroom! They prepare the way for you to be an effective SRE teacher.

1. Talk to your minister or SRE co-ordinator about the expectations for SRE in Schools
2. Arrange to attend a Safe Church Awareness Workshop . Attendance at a workshop is required to fulfill Child Protection requirements.
3. Ensure that you have completed:
  - A.** A *Volunteer Declaration* child protection form, issued by the Commission for Children and Young People.
  - B.** An SRE teacher engagement form (EF5) which includes a Statutory Declaration witnessed by a JP or other authorized person (see [www.childrensministry.org.au/sre](http://www.childrensministry.org.au/sre) for a link to the list of signatories for a statutory declaration)
4. A copy of the SRE engagement form needs to be sent to the Synod Unting Mission & Education. (Both the original *Volunteer Declaration* and SRE Teacher Engagement form (EF5) are to be securely filed in your church office.
5. Ask your Minister or SRE co-ordinator to provide you with an Authorisation Certificate (Green Card) and carry this with you when you go into schools. This is your evidence of authorisation.
6. Find out the starting dates, term dates, class allocation and other school calendar events which may affect your program.
7. Obtain your SRE curriculum material as early as possible. Read ahead so that you have the big picture of where your lessons are going.
8. Start collecting visual aids, pictures, objects etc. in advance.
9. Start praying now for yourself, your class and your school.
10. Get to know some children the same age as your class. Learn as much as you can from them about their interests, concerns, likes and dislikes.
11. Get to know your school and your school SRE co-ordinator (usually a member of staff) and other SRE teachers. As the year progresses you will learn the names of the school principal, secretary and class teacher.
12. Find out about training opportunities throughout the year., via your SRE coordinator or look up the Children's Ministry Website - [www.childrensministry.org.au](http://www.childrensministry.org.au)

## Teaching in Secondary Schools

SRE teachers in secondary schools are often employed by a board made up of the churches in the area. If such a model is to be used it is important to include all churches in the area in the setting up and decision making. Those churches who have volunteers in the secondary schools and who do not wish to be part of the board must have their needs considered.

Further information on SRE Employment Board visit the ICCOREIS website: <http://www.iccoreis.asn.au/>

## Working Co-operatively

### Code of Practice

1. We recognise, respect and affirm the authority of the school in SRE as conferred by the *Education Act 1990*, in particular, its overall duty of care and its responsibility for negotiating the timetable and allocation of rooms.
2. We recognise the prime authority of parents and their right to enrol their children for the SRE of their choice, which we will at all times respect.
3. We agree to abide by the principles of consultation, co-operation and flexibility as defined in the *Report on Religion in Education in NSW Government Schools (1980)* and that SRE is a genuinely educational activity which is to be adequately staffed and competently taught.
4. We seek to promote consultation among the representatives of the religious persuasions, which have been requested by parents to provide SRE in a school, so that a program for SRE can be agreed mutually as a commitment on an annual basis.
5. We affirm the principle that the content of SRE and the appointment of SRE teachers are solely the responsibility of the appropriately designated SRE authority in each Church.
6. We agree to identify, contact and reach agreement with the religious persuasions already providing SRE in a school before beginning something new.
7. We seek to encourage co-operation among local churches, Inter-church councils and associations of ministers in implementing SRE. We will pursue such implementation on a flexible basis by negotiating with schools within the provisions of the *Education Act 1990* and current memoranda issued by the NSW Director-General Education and Training.
8. We seek, when operating in joint-denominational approaches, to prevent SRE from becoming a vehicle for the beliefs of any one denomination or group.
9. We avoid evangelistic appeals requiring a public response from students in SRE to maintain its genuinely educational nature.
10. We seek in language and action to affirm the worth of each individual.
11. We seek to encourage the use of educationally valid terminology and language. Such language takes into account the ages and stages of student development. Our language and terminology will not assume that students share our beliefs in an identical way or to the same extent.

## What is expected of me as an SRE Teacher?

*Often expectations can become a burden, and we need to examine our own expectations to make sure that they are realistic! Our prayer is that the expectations listed below will become a great joy for you.*

- **A loving attitude** towards all the children that you teach, and an understanding and acceptance of their family background, no matter how different it may be to yours.
- **Commitment** to the task that God has given you.
- **Preparation** of each lesson, following the set curriculum.
- **Attendance** at relevant accreditation **training and inservice courses** if possible. Your attendance can be an encouragement to other SRE teachers.
- **A prayerful approach** towards the lessons to be presented and for the children in your class.

## Things to do or think about in the first weeks of SRE

*Your priority in the first few weeks of the year must be in establishing yourself as the teacher and in consistently applying the classroom rules. These things are more important than getting the lesson finished! Here are a few more helpful hints that will get you away to a good start.*

- Sign the attendance book for all visiting SRE teachers/helpers.
- Discover and observe the school rules—discipline policies, children going to the toilet in lesson time. The use of equipment such as pencils, black-board, tape recorders or video records need to be negotiated with the classroom teacher. As a general rule it is better to be self-sufficient!
- Get to know the names of the students as quickly as you can.
- Never leave your class unattended—if you need assistance send 2 children to get the teacher. At the end of the lesson wait for the teacher to return to the class before you leave.
- Establish class rules with the students and be quietly consistent in applying them.
- Leave the classroom tidy and always finish your lesson on time, ready to hand over to the classroom teacher.
- If an emergency arises and you are unable to attend your class try to find someone who could take your lesson. If unsuccessful, make sure you contact the school so that they can make other arrangements for your children.

What can I expect from my school?

*The importance of working together, building relationships with classroom teachers and school administrators cannot be emphasised enough in complementing each other in the important task of the total education of each child. So think of the classroom teacher and other school staff as colleagues. Remember you are all part of the one team.*

As an SRE teacher you should be given:

- \* A class list of the names of the children who will be in your class.
- \* An appropriate teaching space, adequately equipped.
- \* Recognition as a visiting teacher.
- \* Contact with the school SRE co-ordinator, who organises the SRE classes and allocates rooms. He/she is your contact person if you are experiencing any difficulties.

How might my church support me?

*You might need to show this page to your minister or Church Council! Neglect of SRE Teachers is definitely not intended, but sometimes we may need to take the initiative in highlighting the important work and needs of SRE teachers.*

Your Church can support you in ways such as:

- \* A service of commission at the beginning of the year.
- \* Support from your minister and/or church council.
- \* Provision of all the teaching materials you require, the teachers manual and activity sheets for the children.
- \* Support of fellow SRE teachers.
- \* Prayer support.
- \* Encouragement to attend training/in-service courses.
- \* Advice and assistance if ever needed.
- \* Recognition of the work of SRE teachers.
- \* Practical help, where necessary e.g. baby sitting, transport, class helpers etc.
- \* Financial assistance for purchasing extra craft materials, classroom resources, training/in-service costs.



Principles of SRE and Code of Conduct

**ICCOREIS: Policy for Cooperative Special Religious Education (SRE) in Schools (NSW) and Code of Practice Policy Statement**

We affirm the place of SRE in schools in all its approved forms. We affirm our willingness to cooperate in SRE for each generation of students by our commitment to the following principles and code of practice.

**Principles of SRE**

1. We acknowledge that God is already at work in the school through the Holy Spirit.
2. We seek every opportunity to share the Christian message with those enrolled by parents according to denominational preference. We seek to enable students to make their own informed response as part of a genuinely educational activity.
3. We affirm our Christian responsibility to serve the school community.
4. We recognise the importance of a considered long-term ministry in the school community which is best supported by local churches.
5. We are united in purpose and affirm flexibility in the implementation of SRE.
6. We believe in the importance of cooperation with other Christians and other religious persuasions in the school community.
7. We affirm the importance of consultation among the local providers of SRE to achieve co-operation and a flexible basis of implementation.
8. We recognise the need for cultural relevance in our SRE ministry and respect the varied traditions of Christianity in which the Gospel is expressed across many churches.
9. We recognise that the needs, interests and aspirations of students are central to SRE.
10. We take into account the developing capacities of students and their individual differences.
11. We recognise the Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools (NSW) Inc as the body established by the Churches to provide a representative framework for SRE in government schools. The Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools, in formulating policy and co-ordinating action among its member churches, is fulfilling the agreed position of the Churches expressed in the *Report on Religion in Education in NSW Government Schools (1980)*.

Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools inc.

ICCOREIS (formed in 1972) was established by its member Churches to represent them in negotiations with Government and the then Department of School Education in respect of religious education in public schools. It is the churches working together to provide a spiritual and religious dimension in education in Government schools

ICCOREIS aims:

- \* To increase the availability and quality of SRE programs and teaching in NSW government schools.*
- \* To gain a measurable improvement in support of, and involvement in SRE from member churches, clergy and parents.*
- \* To co-operate in the development and implementation of the General Religious Education (GRE) program in NSW government schools.*
- \* To achieve more effective and efficient provision of services to member churches through affiliated groups/committees.*
- \* To provide a fully representative context for inter-church discussion and negotiations on religious education in public schools. This is done through regular meetings of church representatives.*
- \* To provide leadership and structure for consultation between schools and the relevant churches and religious groups.*
- \* To provide representatives on the Consultative Committee on Special Religious Education in Schools - a Department body responsible for providing advice to the Director-General in matters related to SRE in schools.*

The Inter-Church Commission on Religious Education in Schools (ICCOREIS) Website: [www.iccoreis.asn.au](http://www.iccoreis.asn.au)



How should I prepare my lessons?

*Although lesson materials are already prepared, it does require time to make the lesson your own. Some lessons may need to be adapted to suit your particular students and/or the teacher.*

- \* Start preparation well ahead! Give yourself plenty of time to prepare craft, visual aids etc.,
- \* Pray for yourself and for your students.
- \* Read through the lesson plan and student material.
- \* Discover the lesson aims—what the children are to know and understand.
- \* Make any necessary changes e.g. Will the introduction grab the children's attention? What are the key points of the lesson? Are the activities appropriate to the age/stage of the children's development? Does the conclusion draw the theme of the lesson together?
- \* Complete the children's activity yourself.
- \* After the lesson ask yourself:
  - What worked well?
  - What could be improved?
  - Was the lesson aim achieved?

Things you need to know

**Below is a list of policies/procedures you will need to become aware of:**

1. Movement of children from assembly area and entry into classroom.
2. Ways children at your school address the teachers.
3. Leaving the room e.g. If a child needs to go to the toilet it is often suggested that a second student accompanies another.
4. Emergency evacuations e.g. fire.
5. Use and care of classroom equipment.
6. School discipline policy. Find out if there is a reward scheme for the school.
7. Access to equipment you might need for your lesson e.g. overhead projector, CD players, video and TV, maps and pictures.
8. Use of school library resources.
9. Seating arrangements for students with special needs. Do you have a school aide assigned to help?
10. Remember, you don't have to be a parent to attend the school's P&C meetings.

## STAGES OF CHILD DEVELOPMENT: LOWER TO MIDDLE PRIMARY YEARS

*In the early years at school, children may tell us this week that they want to follow Jesus; last week they wanted to fly to the moon and next week they want to be a firefighter! They are unlikely to have developed a moral sense. Bad is what gets punished, what goes unpunished must be OK. They surprise us with their answers to our questions, but they may be trotting them out parrot-fashion rather than understanding. Religious words can easily become confused.*

### Some characteristics

1. Like to play  
*therefore ... include fun elements.*
2. Energetic  
*therefore ... allow opportunities for movement.*
3. Dependent on adults  
*therefore ... avoid abstract language.*
4. Take words literally  
*therefore ... avoid abstract language.*
5. Short attention span  
*therefore ... plan your lessons around short, varied activities.*
6. Enjoy repetition  
*therefore ... re-use songs and activities they have enjoyed.*
7. Need security  
*therefore ... be consistent in your care for students.*
8. Limited vocabulary  
*therefore ... use language they can understand.*
9. Inquisitive  
*therefore ... encourage questions, give short answers.*
10. Imaginative  
*therefore ... encourage creative expression.*



## Safety and Protection Working with Children

Here are some helpful guidelines:

1. Make it an absolute rule never to be left alone with a child of either sex no matter what their age. It is best always to have as many children with you as possible.
2. Never detain a single child if there are no other staff members or children present.
3. Never allow yourself to be alone with a child or two children in the school building before school or after school. A habit can grow up of having senior pupils perform various tasks in the classroom or around the school. It is much safer not to allow children to develop to a privileged position as this can result in a dangerous situation for the teacher.
4. If you have to discuss a personal problem with the pupil, and this may particularly apply in small schools where pupils are in various stages of maturity, ensure that a discussion of this kind takes place in a conspicuous situation in the playground, i.e. out of hearing but in sight of as many people as possible.
5. Avoid at all times conveying pupils in your car. Even where parents have given their consent, should a child be injured due to your negligence you may be liable for such injuries.
6. It would be wise not to get into the habit of touching children. Sometimes a simple touch to comfort a distressed child can be appropriate (but always in full view of others!). However, it is never appropriate to touch a child in anger.
7. If a child responds to you with affection and physical touch, it is best to divert their attention and gently encourage them to go and play/interact with the other children in the playground or classroom.



## Behaviour Management (cont..)

5. For minor disturbances, keep the lesson flowing by:
  - \* Standing near the child
  - \* Establishing momentary eye contact
  - \* Using a simple gesture
  - \* Removing distractions
  - \* Praising positive behaviour
6. For major disruptions be sure the child understands why the behaviour is wrong. Questions such as "What are you doing?" and "What should you be doing?" may help.
7. Share your feelings about the misbehaviour not the misbehav-or. Don't jeopardise your relationship with the child by being negative about them as a person.
8. Outline the choices and the consequences of the misbehaviour, so as to place the responsibility for the student's actions on their shoulders, not yours. Encourage them to make a good choice.
9. Be specific when you are reprimanding a child for poor behaviour. Link their actions to the class rules. Ask the child what rule they have forgotten, and to tell you what they are doing wrong. Describing poor behaviour as 'being naughty' is not specific enough!
10. Always look behind the presenting problem to consider the real reason for the negative behaviour e.g.
  - \* Rejection from friends, not belonging
  - \* Home situations
  - \* Emotional instability caused by grief, loss, etc.
  - \* Lesson not engaging enough



## STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT: MIDDLE TO UPPER PRIMARY YEARS

*Children in their later primary years still struggle to understand abstract concepts like 'truth'; they do, however, believe people whom they trust. We must work hard at turning abstract concepts into concrete teaching. They are normally curious about the world and thirsty for information. They have a remarkably strong sense of justice and loyalty. They leave us breathless with their energy.*

### Some characteristics

1. Influenced by those they admire  
*therefore ... use real-life and biblical role models.*
2. Belonging to a group is important  
*therefore ... look for opportunities for team activities.*
3. Peer pressure is a big influence  
*therefore ... create opportunities for positive attitudes to be expressed.*
4. Influenced by popular culture  
*therefore ... include positive examples from that culture.*
5. Often says "It's not fair!"  
*therefore ... be fair and consistent in all your dealings with children.*
6. Becoming sexually aware  
*therefore ... be sensitive to these physical and emotional issues.*
7. Sometimes hostile to authority  
*therefore ... balance authority with friendliness.*
8. Competitive  
*therefore ... provide occasional opportunities for healthy competition.*
9. Sometimes moody  
*therefore ... acknowledge and respect situations which may be outside your control*
10. Sensitive to criticism  
*therefore ... choose your words carefully.*

STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT :  
LOWER SECONDARY

*Once children enter their teen years they start to struggle with their identity, and are sometimes insecurely balanced between childhood and adulthood. Moods are often inevitable and there can be a sense of conflict between doing what is "right" and tossing authority to the wind! Physical growth spurts are normal and conformity to group norms of behaviour is valued more highly than individualism.*

**Some characteristics**

1. Searching for a sense of identity  
*therefore*—accept and affirm while maintaining established standards. Focus on Jesus public life and relationships with people.
2. At time for testing fixed rules, authority and social order  
*therefore* – Ask for possible alternatives in dilemma situations and explore their implications
3. Anxiety about one's acceptability  
*therefore*—Introduce self awareness exercises and help them to perceive and affirm the good in themselves and others.
4. Growth spurt  
*therefore*—Be willing to listen. Speak to them as young adults. Aim at communicating respect for them as they are.
5. Doubt, questioning and critical judgement developing  
*therefore*—reassure them as they move from a reliance on others to a more reflective & owned faith.
6. Much energy given to teen culture  
*therefore*—give attention to current musical trends and use appropriate modern music in lessons.
7. Ability to think abstractly developing  
*therefore*—provide enjoyable and stimulating learning tasks which balance intellectual and practical interests.

Creative Teaching Ideas (Cont.)

**7. Prayer.**

- \* Keep it short, using inclusive language.
  - \* Invite students to participate.
  - \* Use a variety of styles e.g. spontaneous prayer, responsive prayer, formal prayer, prayer chains, prayer books, prayer circles, etc.
- 8. Games and Activities.** Children love games! Use games that advance the flow of the lesson, are appropriate to the age group, are inclusive, and need not be bound by the classroom setting.
- 9. Linking Lessons to life.** Look for relevant events in the lives of the children that relate to the lesson content e.g. clip from a TV show, pop song etc.
- 10. Talk with other teachers.** Find out what worked, and let them help you! In many areas, encouragement and training are offered to SRE teachers. Take advantage of these special days. You learn so much from others.

Behaviour Management

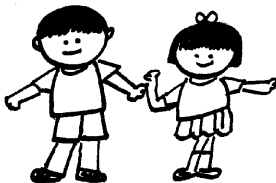
*Many behaviour problems will be avoided if your lessons captivate the students. Therefore good preparation and presentation will form the basis of a good behaviour management strategy. However, instances may still arise where the following hints will be helpful.*

1. Find out the recognised signals for gaining children's attention, or develop your own e.g. one raised hand, hands on heads, clapping rhythm.
2. Reinforce the classroom rules or alternatively set your own with the help of the class. Enforce these rules consistently.
3. When asking questions of the class, expect raised hands before allowing an answer. Discourage children from calling out by ignoring those who do.
4. Ask teachers if there are any students with special needs in the class e.g. hearing impaired, limited reading ability, behavioural issues. Cater for these students in your planning. An extra classroom helper may be an asset to you.

## Creative Teaching Ideas

SRE should never be boring! Here are some ideas to add variety and interest to your lessons.

1. **'Get to know you' Activities.** A short game or activity can help establish relationships with the students. Make a point of learning the names of your children through games and fun activities.
2. **Physical Settings.** Use posters, pictures, banners, or set up a small worship table, with a cloth, cross, bible, vase etc. as a visual focus. Move outdoors etc. to enhance the learning experience and environment.
3. **Stories.** Use a range of stories, personal, bible or children's. Dramatic stories and plays are effective. You can use stories that can be role played, mimed, or told with props. Video stories, felt board stories, and stories told with puppets are all very effective and add variety to the children's experience.
4. **Music.**
  - \* Use tape/CD, video, or play an instrument.
  - \* Display the words so that they can be easily read.
  - \* Explain the words and apply them to your lesson objectives
  - \* Encourage involvement with singing, dancing, movement, body percussion or percussion instruments.
5. **Visual Aids.** The use of videos, overhead projectors, slides or pictures, puppets, personal memorabilia, items of clothing etc. add to the interest that you can create in your lessons.
6. **Use of the Bible.** Let the children see you use your bible. Allow hands on opportunities for children to use bibles as well.



## STAGES OF DEVELOPMENT: UPPER SECONDARY

*In the final years of school the support of peer groups is strong and a more even pattern of relationships develops. There is also increased awareness of and concern for global issues. They swing between attraction and intimacy with one or a few others and wanting to be alone. Tenderness, the urge to protect, idealism, generosity, indignation and righteous anger are all easily aroused.*

### Some characteristics

1. Have greatly developed intellectual skills and experiences *therefore*— affirm gifts and interests in all areas intellectual and sporting, encourage alertness to public affairs. Acknowledge that they may have greater knowledge in some areas than many adults.
2. See the human condition as one of two extremes, wholly irredeemable or essentially perfect. *therefore*— express balanced and compassionate responses to disasters whether from natural causes or human error and acknowledge the human suffering involved. Discuss practical ways to help.
3. Beginning to explore commitment *therefore*—provide opportunities for in-depth exploration of the meaning and demands of the various kinds of commitment open to them. Recognise them as adults.
4. Vulnerable to varied emotions *therefore*— be sensitive to likely emotional responses, enlist the deep positive drive and energy expressed, affirm their willingness to become involved in the world, seek ways of helping them to appreciate the value of understanding and caring service.
5. Developing an owned faith *therefore*— encourage their thinking, provide support & share in the journey.

## The Language in the SRE Classroom

*Students come to your SRE classroom with their own understanding of religious terms and concepts which may be different from your own. Language is a very powerful tool and needs to be used carefully. Therefore when teaching SRE remember:*

- \* It's appropriate to *own* what you say so that students know where you stand on a particular issue e.g. "I believe ...", "I feel...", "I think...". etc.
- \* *Ground* what you say so it's clear from where a statement comes e.g. "Many Christians believe..", "For Uniting Church people ..... " "The Bible says...".
- \* Fact type statements are those which can be scientifically, historically or empirically proven e.g. "Many people worship as part of their religious observance." These do not require *owning* or *grounding*.
- \* Belief type statements are those which require an element of faith to be accepted as true e.g. "There is life after death". These should be *owned* or *grounded*.
- \* Use language that allows students the freedom to consider belief statements and accept them if they wish.
- \* It's appropriate to use *owning* and *grounding* with all year levels.
- \* Explain or simplify religious terms or 'jargon' where appropriate e.g. 'grace'.



## Ways Children Learn

*We should not assume that all children learn in the same way. An understanding of different learning styles and intelligences will help children benefit most from our time spent with them. Children learn best from teachers who love, respect and build relationships with them.*

### 1. Learning Styles

Children have different preferences for the way they learn best.

- \* Auditory—learning by listening
- \* Visual—learning by seeing
- \* Tactile—learning by doing

### 2. The Learning Process

- \* In Early Primary years (5-8 yr olds) the teacher provides children with opportunities to learn from their immediate experiences and activity.
- \* In Middle Primary years (8—10 yr olds) the teacher provides children with opportunities to learn through research and discovery.
- \* In Upper Primary (10-12 yrs) the teacher provides children with opportunities to learn through group work and discussion.
- \* In High School (12-18 yrs) the teacher provides opportunities to learn through programs that are highly relational and based on abstract thinking and life issues.

In all these stages of growth and learning the implications for us as SRE teachers are enormous. Our lessons must appropriately reflect these stages, so that children will learn more effectively and enjoy the process too.

### 3. The Journey of faith

Children are at different places in their faith journey. It helps to be conscious of these different places because different children will know faith differently.

- \* Imitative faith—a view of God and faith adopted from significant others
- \* Affiliative faith—a sense of belonging to, and participation with, a community of faith
- \* Searching faith—seeking integrity between teachings and practice
- \* Owned faith—expressing faith in words and actions