

# Teaching Christian Meditation to Children

**St. Anthony's, Toowoomba**



World Community for Christian Meditation



**World Community for Christian Meditation**

**We are bombarded from an early age  
with noise, stimulus and messages to  
keep busy.**

**Jesus says, 'Unless you become like a  
little child, you cannot enter into the  
kingdom of heaven.' (Matt.18:3)**



**World Community for Christian Meditation**

**Through the teaching of Christian  
Meditation we aim to provide teachers  
and students with a space for stillness,  
and silence and simplicity.**



**World Community for Christian Meditation**

**Our set purpose must be to help the children build a loving relationship with Jesus in the flesh and bring them to this same Jesus, present with us now in the Spirit.**

***Sr Madeleine Simon RSCJ – Born  
Contemplative***



**World Community for Christian Meditation**

## Children are born contemplative:

Embrace nature and the wonder it holds

Eagerness to be in the world

Sense of wonder and awe

A Spark for life

Live in the moment

Heart consciousness

‘The Wisdom of innocence’

Simple enjoyment of truth



World Community for Christian Meditation

# Christian Meditation

Enables and nurtures spiritual development

Is experiential

Expands the capacity to share in the Divine presence within us

Reduces anxiety

Reduces nervous tension

Manages and reduces anxiety and stress

Enhances learning



World Community for Christian Meditation



# The Townsville Experience



World Community for Christian Meditation



# The Townsville Process

In 2005 the trial program for primary and secondary schools was introduced. The teachers were chosen for this trial program.

Following the trial program all teachers in the Catholic schools in Townsville learnt Christian Meditation and meditated.

APREs have had an experience of Christian Meditation did further in-servicing in order to introduce the Diocesan Wide Program to all schools.

All primary teachers and secondary teachers were in-serviced and experienced Christian Meditation so that they would introduce Christian Meditation to their classes.

Diocesan Wide program to teach Christian Meditation to Children from Pre-school to Year 12



World Community for Christian Meditation

**Christian Meditation was offered at the  
House of Prayer.**

**This was open to ALL.**

**In 2006 Laurence Freeman OSB, Director  
of World Community for Christian  
Meditation and Bishop Putney  
launched the program.**



**World Community for Christian Meditation**

# Coming Home Program

The person of Jesus is at the heart of this program

Teachers sows seeds for Christian Meditation to take root

Offers practical ways for teachers to introduce meditation

Children find the practice of Christian Meditation like 'coming home'- a place that is familiar, real and comfortable.

Rich harvest of young people who will bloom into contemplative adults

'Be still and Know I am God'



World Community for Christian Meditation



# Fruits of Christian Meditation



World Community for Christian Meditation

**Meditation leads to increased self knowledge  
and self acceptance**

**Meditation increases the desire to build  
community with others**

**Meditation deepens the children's personal  
relationship with God**

**Meditation reduces stress and increases  
children's sense of well-being and harmony**



**World Community for Christian Meditation**

**Teachers report that Christian Meditation  
enables children to be:**

**More considerate and loving**

**Caring for and thoughtful of others**

**Kind to friends**

**Still and silent and experience God in the  
silence**

**In anticipation of their meditation times**

**Calm and relaxed**

**Sitting still for longer periods**





# Christian Meditation A Way of Prayer



World Community for Christian Meditation

# Meditation and Prayer

Learning to pray means much more than learning the theory or doctrine of prayer or how to say prayers i.e how to pray spontaneously or the recitation of formal prayers

It means to enter into the actual experience of praying

Meditation enables children to become present to God

Experiencing God in the depths of their hearts

Meditation is a way of entering into the prayer of the heart

Through repetition of the prayer word or mantra, being faithful to regular times of prayer, children will learn meditative prayer as a journey

It is a commitment, a way of life



World Community for Christian Meditation



The challenge for faith education (catachesis) ...is to discover and design opportunities for faith education .....(so that) ....students may experience that Christian wisdom which gives sense, unity and hope to personal, social and spiritual life.

## Faith Education in Catholic Schools



Diocese of Toowoomba  
World Community for Christian Meditation

# **Christian Meditation**

**Can be taught sequentially from Prep to Year 6**

**Would be taught by teachers who have been trained in the process of teaching Christian Meditation**

**Is a way of prayer and as such should be practiced**

**Can be practised 2 to 3 times a week with the aim to practice daily**



**World Community for Christian Meditation**

**Christian Meditation does  
not replace the Religious  
Education lesson or other  
forms of prayer.**

**It is ONE of the forms of  
prayer children will learn.**



**World Community for Christian Meditation**



# Getting Started



World Community for Christian Meditation

## The Practice for Children

Begin with 1 minute and work up to their  
chronological age

Approximately the child's age.

Eg.        7 years = 7 minutes

15 years = 15 minutes



**Repeat the Prayer Word**

**Silently and interiorly**

**Ma-ra-na-tha (*Come Lord Jesus*)**



**World Community for Christian Meditation**

## **Identify all key stakeholders and gain their support for the introduction of Christian Meditation**

**Choose a time when there will be minimal interruptions**

**Work with another teacher for the purposes of debrief and discussion**

**Do not stop the meditation period if the children are restless, but talk with them after to work out what would help them keep the silence**

**Lead up to asking the children to sit still with a few days of relaxation exercises or Scripture passages (eg Elijah Story for Preps – 3)**

**Discuss with the class and agree on the protocols for the meditation space eg no shoes (depends on age), coughing to move outside etc.**

**Decide where is the best place to meditate**

**Discuss with the children the need to respect each others space**



**World Community for Christian Meditation**

**Choose quiet meditative music to play before meditation**

**Teacher needs to practise before introducing to the class.**

**Minimise distractions during the time of the meditation period**

**Teaching students to be aware of their breathing is a very good way to introduce children to meditation**

**The trust and respect that a teacher builds up with his or her class is one of the pointers to success in introducing Christian Meditation to the students**





## **Working With Parents**

**The concept of and the reasons for the introduction of Christian Meditation needs to be explained to the parents**

**Invite the parents to experience meditating**

**Suggest ways in which the parents may support meditation in the home**

**Establish a meditation group meeting weekly for parents**

**Suggest parents join one of the Christian Meditation groups meeting weekly in Toowoomba**



**World Community for Christian Meditation**

# In teaching children to meditate we..

Embrace joy  
Inspire Hope  
Cultivate love  
Build Intimacy  
Celebrate life

(Thich Nhat Hanh)



World Community for Christian Meditation

**St Augustine said,**

**O Beauty ever ancient, ever new  
Too late have I loved you.  
I was outside and you were  
within me.  
And I found you within myself.**



**World Community for Christian Meditation**