Teaching Christian Meditation to Children

St. Anthony's, Toowoomba





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)



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



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



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





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





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 inservicing 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



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.



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'







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



Teachers report that Christian Meditation enables children to be:

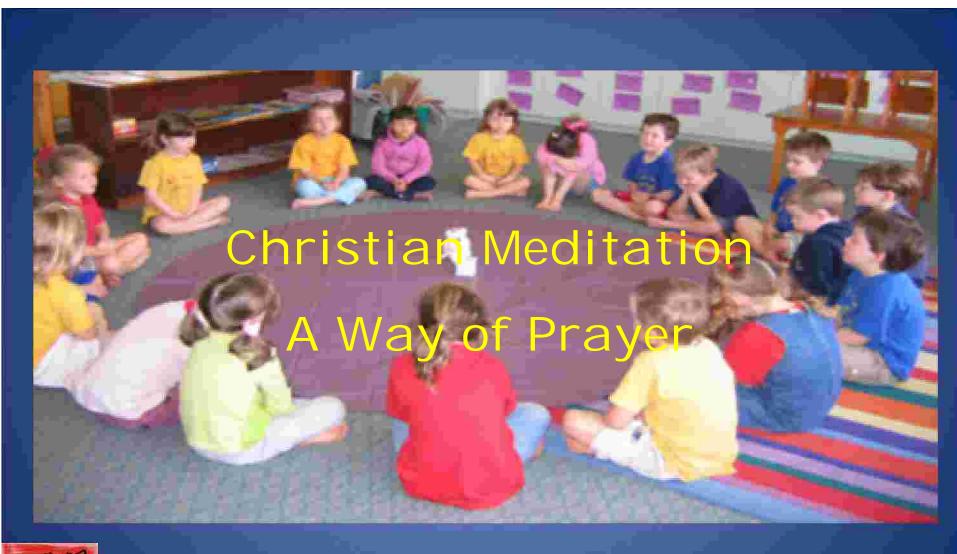
More considerate and loving
Caring for and thoughtful of others
Kind to friends
Still and silent and experience God in the silence

In anticipation of their meditation times

Calm and relaxed

Sitting still for longer periods







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

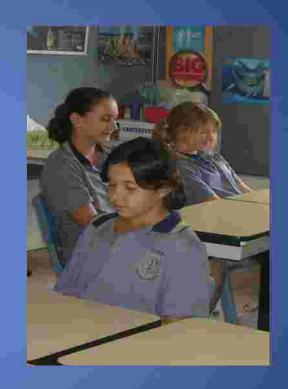
Through repetition of the prayer word or mantra, being faithful to regular times of prayer, children will learn meditative prayer as a journey

It is a commitment, a way of life



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



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.







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)



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

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

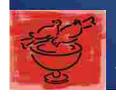
The concept of and the reasons for the introduction of Christian Meditation needs to be explained to the parents

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



In teaching children to meditate we..

Embrace joy
Inspire Hope
Cultivate love
Build Intimacy
Celebrate life



(Thich Nhat Hanh)



