

Make Jesus Real

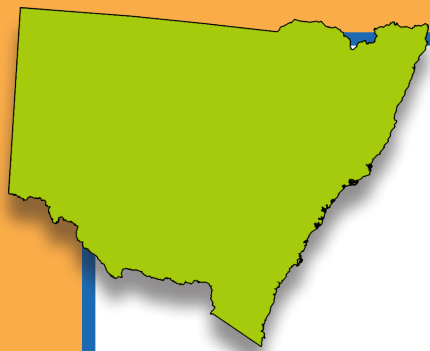
JULY 2019
BULLETIN



WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND AUSTRALIA WITH MJR?

Last bulletin I asked for feedback from MJRers from around Australia and it is so gratifying to see and hear the amazing things that are taking place.

So, let's get straight into looking at what MJRers are doing ...



'Starting Afresh'

St Patrick's Primary School, Lochinvar, Newcastle

Earlier this year I was privileged to present for two days at the Catholic Schools Office at Maitland- Newcastle and then took a day session with the staff at **St Patrick's at Lochinvar**.

The enthusiasm from Maryanne Hacker and the staff was infectious and in little over six months, the school has taken huge steps to bring MJR into the playground, classroom and homes of their school community.

They began with a grand opening MJR day where show bags were presented to students.

Since then, the school has embraced the MJR 'Way of Life'. It culminated in this extraordinary drone photo of the school community in their playground.

Congratulations to the whole of St Patrick's community and it will be fantastic to see what comes next!

Marty



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Big Happenings in the Rockhampton Diocese

When I first met Catherine Simmonds, Faith Education Project Officer at the Rockhampton Catholic Education Office, I knew BIG things were afoot.

Mitch recently visited this diocese and reported, 'I have been blown away with the "buzz" that the MJR people have generated in their schools in such a short time since the MJR Conference.

Di-Anne Rowan and Leesa Jeffcoat, the Director, made the decision in 2018 to implement MJR Champions and asked Catherine Simmonds to be in charge to help and support each school.

Catherine has set up a brilliant MJR website linking many SOJ and MJR lessons to support their RE, with video clips links etc. The address is in her report on the next page.

Speaking with the MJR Champions, they said that apart from the Conference – which they all got so much from, the best part are the "Zoom meetings" they have for one hour each term to listen to ideas as they do in Wilcannia-Forbes – they feel empowered by the Zoom meetings.

I visited four of the schools last year and the difference has been enormous. All have the MJR books, signs around their schools and big screens outside their schools flashing MJR messages to parents as they drop off and pick up their children. Congrats to the whole diocese and especially to Catherine who is unstoppable.

Marty



From left to right
Catherine Simmonds, Melissa Collins APRE Sacred Heart Yeppoon,
Lisa List MJR Champion Sacred Heart Yeppoon

Please see next page for Catherine's report that explains how they are shining.

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MJR in the Diocese of Rockhampton



This year, in the Diocese of Rockhampton, each primary school nominated an MJR Champion to continue to support the implementation of MJR or begin to introduce MJR to their school community. The Champion is the contact person for MJR in the school and is tasked with supporting teachers to integrate MJR into their classroom practices. They also play a pivotal role in working with members of the school leadership team to embed MJR into the culture of their school in such a way that it complements the charism and Catholic culture already established in the school community.

No two schools are the same in their implementation of and integration of MJR.

Following the success of the Sharing Platform concept developed by the Wilcannia-Forbes Diocese, once a term all MJR Champions or school representatives are invited to attend a one-hour video conference via Zoom. Champions are invited to add to or set the agenda for the Zoom meeting which is facilitated by Catherine Simmonds, Faith Education Project Officer (Catholic Education Office Rockhampton).

The MJR linkups are an opportunity for all Champions across the diocese to gather in a virtual space which enables new resources to be viewed, successes to be celebrated and challenges to be discussed. The linkups are a way of keeping the MJR flame burning and inspiring new ideas and possibilities.

A centralised bank of resources is available and continues to grow to support our Champions, teachers and school leaders in particular, who are working with MJR for the first time. The Google site can be accessed directly from a link on the Rockhampton Religion curriculum site. The site provides ideas and resources to assist in facilitating the MJR way of life in their school. This resource is freely available on the web and can be accessed at the web address <http://rokreligiouseducation.com>.

Regular MJR social media posts are released from the Catholic Education Office with the intention that schools like and share these posts on their own social media accounts and with the help of Get Logo'd and the support of Garratt Publishing we have also designed shirts that staff in our Diocese can purchase and wear.



We are committed to Making Jesus Real in our Catholic schools in the Diocese of Rockhampton.

Catherine Simmonds
Faith Education Project Officer, Rockhampton CEO

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LIVING MJR AT ST BRIGID'S EMERALD!

"Is it MJR day? Is it MJR day?" While the students and staff at **St Brigid's Catholic Primary School in Emerald** live MJR in all aspects of their lives everyday, our students are particularly fond of the MJR groups and sessions that are run every week in the school.

Each Wednesday students are divided into mixed age family groups from Prep – Year 6, any siblings in the school are in the same group. These groups move to different classrooms with a different teacher to take part in our weekly MJR session.



During this time the MJR groups complete the same lesson. These lessons are developed in line with the MJR books and are centred on a specific theme for the term – Term 3 being "The Great 8." The students join in discussions about the weekly topic, watch YouTube clips, or listen to songs which enables the students to make real life connections to the topics and complete hands-on activities (games, sport or arts and crafts) to consolidate their understanding.

As the A.P.R.E. I have often questioned whether the MJR groups and sessions needed to change and possibly choose a different path to engage the students. Last year as the Prep



enrolment interviews started, I was privileged to interview the in-coming Preps that were siblings of current students. One common statement that came through from these families was how much the children love the MJR groups. It was so amazing to hear the positive feedback about the MJR groups and how much the children love this time in their school week – it was also wonderful to hear how much the parents enjoyed MJR and hearing about it from their children.

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LIVING MJR AT ST BRIGID'S EMERALD Cont...



As a result of this positive feedback, we have continued with our MJR groups and added even more of the Spirit of Jesus into our everyday lives. We are integrating MJR and the MJR books (every student from Years 3 - 6 receives a book) into Religion and Personal and Social Development Education (P.S.D.E.) lessons.

We have received fantastic feedback from staff, students and parents about the use of these books in the classroom and it is wonderful to be able to make even more

connections to the students' lives through this program – across many learning areas.

The students, staff and families at St Brigid's Catholic Primary School are truly living, each and every day, with Jesus in their hearts, always asking each other 'where was Jesus in your life today'?

Tegan Green

A.P.R.E

St Brigid's Catholic Primary School

Emerald, Queensland



Here is a simple but effective idea – MJR Garden St Therese's Moonah

St Therese's Parish is connected to the primary school next door and we have taken up the idea of making an MJR garden at the front of the church. It is a way to help students connect to

their church, and the same time show the students the process of transforming an empty space into something to celebrate. We will keep you informed in the future with updated photos.

St Therese's Moonah



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MEETING WITH BISHOP DON SPROXTON

Gemma Thomson and myself were lucky enough to meet with Bishop Don in WA. Bishop Don was extremely enthusiastic when we gave him a copy of all the MJR products. He was especially interested in MJR 24/7 and the online teacher website (www.mjr247.com.au).

He and his Archbishop, Tim Costelloe, plus many Principals of Catholic Secondary Schools, are in discussions over the relevance of the Secondary RE curriculum in the lives of the teenagers. This is very interesting considering Archbishop Tim is overseeing:

- a. the framing paper for 'RE in Australian Catholic Schools' NCEC, plus
- b. The Plenary Council.

Marty

MOTHER TERESA CATHOLIC COLLEGE, BALDIVIS

I was lucky enough to visit this new college in Baldivis, 40kms out of Perth.

The *Spirit of Jesus* is flourishing in this school community – every staff member greeted me with smile and welcome at the beginning of the day as did the majority of secondary students – certainly a WEST school!

Marty



IONA PRESENTATION COLLEGE, MOSMAN PARK

It was a special honour to present at my co-author, Gemma Thomson's school, taking Years 7 & 8 RE and presenting to homeroom staff.

Apart from the enthusiasm, it was enlightening to hear from one staff member, who, after I demonstrated a topic from MJR 24/7, said, "This could so easily be used in my health lessons – it connects to ACARA health, but at the same time Jesus."

This is an area Peter Mitchell constantly discusses – bringing MJR into other curriculum areas! This staff member then went on to say, "The girls need to be doing these topics an hour a day!" Not so sure if the timetable will allow this but the positivity was infectious.

Marty

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MITCH'S TRAVELS

For the last 4 weeks I have been working in the Rockhampton Diocese. I have been super impressed with the work that the 34 MJR people who came down to the Melbourne MJR Conference are doing. So many said they didn't know a great deal about MJR, and all I spoke to about the Conference said it was uplifting and inspiring, and they returned to their schools energised.

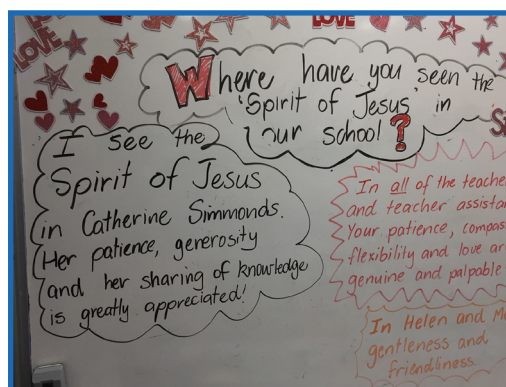
Here are some photos from **Sacred Heart Yeppoon**.



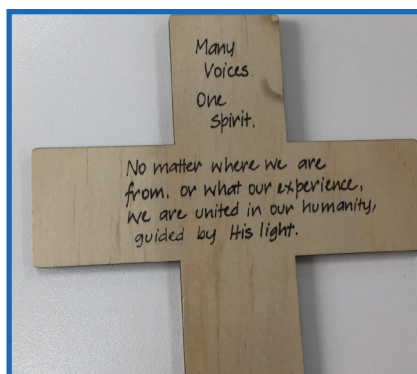
Here's a mirror which the children like looking into to see the face of Jesus.

It's a very simple and effective way to get the idea that Jesus works through them.

The staff white board in the staff room with "encouraging" positive comments – always a winner.



Crosses, St Peter's Rockhampton



Michelle Paterson, MJR Champion at **St Peter's Rockhampton** organised every student to make a cross which will be mounted in a special central place in their school.

I have been doing MJR for over 20 years, and to me having an MJR person in every school is the best idea that works. This has made a huge difference to the culture of these schools since being introduced after their attendance at the MJR Conference in March. Well done Catherine Simmonds and also to the Leadership team in the Rockhampton Diocese, for taking the big step.

I am looking forward to Thursday July 25th, when I am part of a MJR Zoom meeting where the 34 MJR Champions will share ideas. The Zoom meetings have been a wonderful forum for sharing ideas and I have seen these ideas spread across the Diocese.

My prayer and hope is that other Dioceses take this inexpensive step. **A big thank you to Wilcannia-Forbes for showing us the way.**

Cheers Mitch

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BITEABLE

I have been playing with a great app called *Biteable* to explain what MJR covers.

It may be helpful in persuading leadership teams, Dioceses or teachers, to take on MJR.

Click or tap on the image or go to:

<https://biteable.com/watch/values-education-2262464>



LINKS

Steph Curry grants Ashley's selfless wish. What a powerful message, not just from a world reknown basketballer, but also from someone who has every reason to complain, but instead looks out for others.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KRcoOfwmwDM>

I recently took a Year 12 MJR retreat and asked the students what legacy they would like to leave at their school. They voted to strive to improve the high anxiety at their school. Here is an article about this ...

<https://www.kqed.org/mindshift/43049/20-tips-to-help-de-escalate-interactions-with-anxious-or-defiant-students>

Also, if you get the chance, try to catch Michael Grose from *Parenting Ideas* – he is travelling the country presenting ideas on helping those suffering from anxiety.

<https://www.parentingideas.com.au/parent-resources/seminars/anxious-kids-seminar-tour>

Finally, I'd like to leave you with a powerful paragraph from Mitch – that we ALL need reminding about in our daily lives, classrooms and homes.

"I did notice in the Bishop's Plenary Council letter to us all, 'we need to be a Christ-centred Church in Australia' and that is the bottom line of what MJR is about as we promote the Spirit of Jesus across all our schools and for each student to have a relationship with the Resurrected Jesus in the nitty gritty living and reflecting of our daily lives. To me one of the unheralded treasures we have in the Catholic Faith is the Spirit of Jesus who resides in our hearts and we don't promote it enough."

Live Jesus in your Hearts – FOREVER!

The MJR Team ...

Marty, Mitch, Michele, David,
Rose, Karen, Sandy and Charmaine

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