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## Towards a new approach for teaching Religious Education in Catholic schools

Anne-Marie Irwin

*The University of Notre Dame Australia*

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**Towards a New Approach for Teaching Religious Education in  
Catholic Schools**

**by**

**Anne-Marie Irwin**

**A thesis submitted to  
The University of Notre Dame Australia  
in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)**

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**Mr Daniel Madigan**

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**August, 2017**

## Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Anne-Marie Irwin

Date: 15<sup>th</sup> August, 2017

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## Abstract

How should Catholic Religious Education look in the twenty-first century? Today's challenges are many, including diverse student faith backgrounds and levels of teachers' religious knowledge, understanding and commitment. There are differing curriculum structures, time and space constraints, challenges in accessing suitable resources, and the authentic use of proven pedagogical practice.

This study was a journey that explored these challenges. It followed a path opened by Maria Montessori, trodden in turn by Sofia Cavalletti and, more recently, developed by Gerard O'Shea into a way for teaching religious education in Catholic schools. This was a design-based research study that adapted, trialled and refined O'Shea's work, under the name of the Scripture and Liturgy Teaching Approach (the SALT Approach). The journey, following a design-based research structure, was completed in stages. The landscape was first scanned through the review of literature and then preparations were made, with the building of the first prototype. Then the road was trodden for one year, accompanied by teachers and twenty-six Year Two students. During that time, the road was refined and restructured. Following the journey, there was a time of reflection, when conclusions were drawn in preparation for the next stage.

The lenses used on the journey brought valuable confirmations and discoveries: that children, given the opportunity, are drawn to the spiritual and can respond with sensitivity; that teachers can become co-learners alongside the child, as they, themselves, are drawn towards a more personal relationship with God, as well as becoming aware of key pedagogical strategies that will draw out children's contributions, reflect respect for the child, and develop trust in the child's ability to learn through making choices; that accountability demands can be met, even if they run contrary to the holistic approach at the core of the SALT Approach; and that the approach can be successful within a diversely populated school, bringing a fresh response to the call for a new evangelisation.

The results confirmed that the SALT Approach that can offer a paradigm for religious education, involving a move away from the restrictive demands on school and teacher accountability and towards the recognition of religious education's own

valid academic approach, fostering the spirituality, faith and response of both students and teachers. The study points towards further research and the possibility of building a network of academics and educators, working closely together to develop the SALT Approach within a variety of educational climates both within Australia and beyond.

## Table of Contents

Attestation of Authorship .....	i
Acknowledgements .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Table of Contents.....	v
List of Tables .....	viii
List of Photosets .....	x
List of Figures.....	x
<b>CHAPTER 1: TOWARDS A NEW APPROACH FOR TEACHING RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN CATHOLIC SCHOOLS.....</b>	<b>1</b>
1.1    Opening Comments .....	1
1.2    The Background Story .....	2
1.3    O’Shea’s Mystagogical Catechetical Method.....	4
1.4    The Literature Review .....	5
1.5    The Research Objectives .....	6
1.6    The Research Design .....	7
1.6.1    The methodology.....	7
1.6.2    The scope of the study.....	7
1.7    The Journey Begins: Packing the Equipment .....	8
1.8    The Journey Through the Data-Gathering Year .....	9
1.9    Conclusion .....	10
1.10   Post-Script: The Current Situation.....	10
<b>CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW .....</b>	<b>12</b>
2.1    Literature Review Structure.....	12
2.2    Religious Education within the Catholic Church.....	12
2.2.1    Opening comments.....	12
2.2.2    The Catholic Church: Expectations relating to Catholic schools .....	12
2.2.3    Religious education in Australian Catholic schools .....	21
2.3    The Catechetical Approaches of Montessori, Cavalletti and O’Shea .....	23
2.3.1    Opening comments.....	23
2.3.2    Maria Montessori .....	23
2.3.3    Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi.....	26
2.3.4    Berryman’s application of Cavalletti: Godly Play .....	27
2.3.5    O’Shea’s application of Montessori and Cavalletti: The Mystagogical Catechetical Method.....	28
2.4    Review of Aspects of Contemporary Educational Research .....	34
2.4.1    Opening comments.....	34
2.4.2    Core pedagogical research principles informing practice .....	34
2.4.3    Other educational considerations and perceived challenges for twenty-first century education .....	49
2.5    The Literature Review Informing the Development of the Prototype .....	56
2.5.1    Opening comments.....	56
2.5.2    Informing the prototype.....	56
2.6    The Literature Review: Identifying the Objectives of the Study .....	58
2.6.1    Opening comments.....	58
2.6.2    Lens 1: Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today’s child within the SALT Approach .....	58
2.6.3    Lens 2: Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach ...	61
2.6.4    Identified Lens 3: Achieving the accountability requirements of a diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach .....	65
2.6.5    Final comments .....	65

CHAPTER 3: DESIGN OF THE RESEARCH STUDY .....	67
3.1 Introduction to the Chapter .....	67
3.2 The Research Objectives .....	67
3.3 Situating the Research .....	68
3.3.1 The underpinnings of the methodology.....	68
3.3.2 The conceptual framework.....	70
3.3.3 Design-based research methodology.....	70
3.4 The Research Design .....	74
3.5 Participants .....	76
3.5.1 Participant selection .....	76
3.5.2 Informed participation and ethics approval.....	78
3.6 Data Gathering Strategies .....	79
3.6.1 Overview of data-gathering.....	79
3.6.2 Commencement and end of year student interviews .....	82
3.6.3 Semi-structured, open-ended student interviews.....	83
3.6.4 Student focus groups .....	83
3.6.5 Teachers, Principal and REC focus group in the third Iteration.....	83
3.6.6 Interviews and meetings with teachers.....	84
3.6.7 Meetings with the school’s Religious Education Coordinator .....	84
3.6.8 Meetings with CEO representatives .....	84
3.6.9 Interview with School Principal .....	85
3.6.10 Semi-structured parent/ guardian interviews.....	85
3.6.11 Class session observations.....	86
3.6.12 Researcher’s journal notes: audio, electronic and handwritten .....	87
3.6.13 Collection of student work samples: journals, posters, pictures.....	87
3.7 Data Analysis.....	87
3.8 Verification .....	89
3.8.1 Opening comments.....	89
3.8.2 Credibility.....	90
3.8.3 Transferability .....	93
3.8.4 Dependability .....	93
3.8.5 Confirmability .....	95
CHAPTER 4: LENS 1 FINDINGS - EXPLORING THE EMPOWERING AND DISEMPOWERING FACTORS AFFECTING TODAY’S CHILD WITHIN THE SALT APPROACH .....	96
4.1 Introduction.....	96
4.2 Phases of Development for Facilitating Self-Regulated Learning.....	97
4.2.1 Phase 1: The literature review .....	97
4.2.2 Phase 2: Development of solutions relating to empowering and disempowering factors affecting today’s child: the first prototype.....	97
4.2.3 Phase 3: Iterative cycles .....	98
4.2.4 Phase 4: Reflections informing the new prototype.....	165
4.3 Summary and Conclusions .....	168
CHAPTER 5: LENS 2 FINDINGS - EQUIPPING TEACHERS AND SCHOOLS TO IMPLEMENT THE SALT APPROACH .....	170
5.1 Introduction.....	170
5.2 Phases of Development for Equipping Schools and Teachers to Implement the SALT Approach.....	171
5.2.1 Phase 1: Literature review.....	171
5.2.2 Phase 2: Designing the first prototype as relating to equipping schools and teachers to implement the SALT Approach .....	172
5.2.3 Phase 3: Iterative cycles .....	173
5.2.4 Phase 4: Reflections informing the final prototype.....	263



5.2.5	Summary and conclusions.....	265
<b>CHAPTER 6: LENS 3 FINDINGS - ACHIEVING THE ACCOUNTABILITY REQUIREMENTS OF A DIOCESAN CATHOLIC SCHOOL THROUGH THE SALT APPROACH .....</b>		
		267
6.1	Introduction.....	267
6.2	Phases of Development for the SALT Approach and Systemic Accountability	268
6.2.1	Phase 1: Literature review.....	268
6.2.2	Phase 2: Development of solutions relating to the SALT Approach and systemic accountability: the first prototype.....	268
6.2.3	Phase 3: Iterative cycles .....	269
6.3.4	Phase 4: Reflections informing the final prototype .....	295
6.3.5	Summary and conclusions.....	296
<b>CHAPTER 7: DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS 298</b>		
7.1	Introduction.....	298
7.2	Lens 1: Exploring the Empowering and Disempowering Factors Affecting Today's Child within the SALT Approach.....	300
7.2.1	Element 1: Behaviour and self-control issues hampering self-regulated learning	300
7.2.2	Element 2: Literacy and communication issues .....	305
7.2.3	Element 3: The spiritual nature of today's child .....	309
7.2.4	Discussion of Lens 1: Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today's child within the SALT Approach .....	312
7.3	Lens 2: Equipping Teachers and Schools to use the SALT Approach .....	319
7.3.1	Element 1: Equipping and maintaining the learning space .....	319
7.3.2	Element 2: Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach .....	323
7.3.3	Element 3: Teacher expertise .....	329
7.3.4	Discussion of Lens 2: Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach .....	332
7.4	Lens 3: Achieving the Accountability Requirements of a Diocesan Catholic School through the SALT Approach .....	341
7.4.1	Element 1: Systemic accountability .....	341
7.4.2	Discussion of Lens 3: achieving the accountability requirements of a diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach .....	346
7.5	The Way Forward-Through the Issues, Challenges and Contributions, Towards Implications .....	349
7.5.1	Introduction .....	349
7.5.2	Implications for the theoretical framework of the SALT Approach .....	349
7.5.3	Implications for teaching and learning in religious education using the SALT Approach .....	354
7.5.4	Professional development and the leadership link .....	358
7.5.5	Accountability requirements .....	360
7.5.6	Implications for design-based research .....	362
7.6	Final Comments.....	364
	Reference List.....	368
	Appendices .....	384
Appendix 1	O'Shea's Continuum of Religious Experience .....	385
Appendix 2	The first prototype programme .....	402
Appendix 3	Church documents relevant to Catholic education.....	434
Appendix 4	Information sheets and consent Forms.....	436
Appendix 5	Interviews and focus groups.....	447
Appendix 6	Pre- and post- assessment.....	454
Appendix 7	Teacher observation charts.....	458

Appendix 8	Codebooks (a) August 2016 (b) December, 2016 and (c) February	
2017	460	
Appendix 9	O'Shea's booklet: Setting up the RE Classroom .....	480
Appendix 10	Sample of <i>Sharing Our Story</i> Unit: Outcomes.....	497

## List of Tables

<i>Table 1: ESRC's Teaching and Learning Research Programme's core pedagogical principles</i>	36
<i>Table 2: Key elements of design-based research, adapted from Van den Akker et al., 2006</i>	73
<i>Table 3: The design-based research model applied to this study</i>	75
<i>Table 4: Summary profile of student's ethnic backgrounds</i>	77
<i>Table 5: Religious affiliation</i>	77
<i>Table 6: Family arrangements</i>	77
<i>Table 7: Other issues</i>	77
<i>Table 8: Data collection methods and research objectives</i>	81
<i>Table 9: Data collection timeline</i>	82
<i>Table 10: Parent/guardian interviews conducted</i>	86
<i>Table 11: Verification criteria in qualitative and quantitative research based on Guba's construct</i>	90
<i>Table 12: Shenton's (2004) summary of credibility factors as reflected in this study</i>	91
<i>Table 13: Dependability criteria as recommended by Shenton, 2004, and as applied to this study</i>	94
<i>Table 14: Summary of all three elements of Lens 1, and their themes</i>	99
<i>Table 15: Summary of changes to be introduced in the second iteration, addressing the three elements and their themes</i>	128
<i>Table 16: Lens 1, Element 1, Theme (a)</i>	129
<i>Table 17: Planned interventions to address family and cultural issues impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning</i>	136
<i>Table 18: Planned interventions to address literacy and communication skills</i>	139
<i>Table 19: Interventions to address the spiritual nature of today's child</i>	148
<i>Table 20: New refinements considered in the third iteration</i>	155
<i>Table 22: Literacy and communication issues to include in the final prototype</i>	167
<i>Table 23: The spiritual nature of today's child issues to include in the final prototype</i>	167
<i>Table 24: Design-based research project, as applied to Lens 2: Equipping schools and teachers to implement the SALT Approach</i>	171
<i>Table 25: Summary of iterations in relation to Lens 2</i>	173
<i>Table 26: Summary of items required in the first iteration</i>	176
<i>Table 27: All three elements and their themes for consideration in the second iteration</i>	212
<i>Table 28: Summary of second iteration, Element 1, themes and refinements</i>	213
<i>Table 29: Materials needed for the second iteration</i>	213
<i>Table 30: Some of the websites researched and recommended</i>	220
<i>Table 31: Summary of second iteration, Lens 2, Element 2: themes and refinements</i>	221

<i>Table 32: Film transcript, second iteration, April 30, 2015, tracking student choices .....</i>	228
<i>Table 33: Summary of second iteration, Element 3: themes and refinements .....</i>	231
<i>Table 34: Lens 2, all three elements and their themes for consideration .....</i>	235
<i>Table 35: Summary of third iteration, Element 1, themes and refinements .....</i>	236
<i>Table 36: Term 3 materials needed .....</i>	238
<i>Table 37: Term 4 materials required .....</i>	239
<i>Table 38: Comparison of materials recommended by Cavalletti and O’Shea and those requiring new thought and preparation .....</i>	241
<i>Table 39: List of hexagons developed for the study .....</i>	247
<i>Table 40: Summary of third iteration, Lens 2, Element 2: themes and refinements .....</i>	254
<i>Table 41: Summary of third iteration, Lens 2, Element 3: themes and refinements .....</i>	261
<i>Table 42: The final prototype inclusions for Lens 2, Element 1: equipping and maintaining the learning space .....</i>	263
<i>Table 43: Final prototype inclusions for Lens 2, Element 2: key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach .....</i>	264
<i>Table 44: Final prototype inclusions for Lens 2, Element 3: teacher expertise .....</i>	265
<i>Table 45: Design-based research project, as applied to Lens 3: Achieving the accountability requirements of a diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach .....</i>	267
<i>Table 46: Summary of the iterations in relation to Lens 3 .....</i>	269
<i>Table 47: Achievement and effort grades used for reporting at the school .....</i>	277
<i>Table 48: Outcomes used for assessment and reporting in the second iteration (Term 2)..</i>	277
<i>Table 49: Third iteration, Lens 3 summary .....</i>	282
<i>Table 50: Sharing Our Story Year Two outcomes perceived as inappropriate in the current setting .....</i>	285
<i>Table 51: Sharing Our Story Outcomes matched with the SALT Approach .....</i>	286
<i>Table 52: The three levels of Scripture interpretation adopted and recommended by Parramatta’s religious education team .....</i>	292
<i>Table 53: Sample learning intentions and success criteria applied to the Year Two Unit 12C1 .....</i>	293
<i>Table 54: Final prototype inclusions for the element ‘Systemic Accountability’ .....</i>	296
<i>Table 55: Overview of research framework .....</i>	299
<i>Table 56: Comparison chart: The SALT Approach towards behaviour challenges contrasted with other approaches as observed in the study .....</i>	304
<i>Table 57: Recommendations for inclusion in the final prototype .....</i>	308
<i>Table 58: Effective ways of encouraging spiritual awareness in the child .....</i>	312
<i>Table 59: Pedagogical strategies vital to the SALT Approach described and compared to contrary tendencies .....</i>	327
<i>Table 60: Challenges and solutions relating to teacher knowledge, understanding and commitment .....</i>	331
<i>Table 61: Aspects relating to accountability to inform the final prototype .....</i>	345

## List of Photosets

<i>Photoset 1: These shots are moments apart, reflecting how disquieting behaviour could escalate.....</i>	<i>104</i>
<i>Photoset 2: Stationery supplies made easily accessible, paint area set-p, hands-on materials placed around the perimeter .....</i>	<i>133</i>
<i>Photoset 3: These three images show the three ‘pods’ at work. One pod is painting, another is working with the teacher and the third is working with dioramas. ....</i>	<i>135</i>
<i>Photoset 4: Lunch-time visits by children of various grades.....</i>	<i>138</i>
<i>Photoset 5: Students explaining scriptural art to the cameraman.....</i>	<i>142</i>
<i>Photoset 6: A Kaleidoscope of interested participation in Presentation Time .....</i>	<i>143</i>
<i>Photoset 7: Students explaining their work to camera .....</i>	<i>144</i>
<i>Photoset 8: Children praying and reflecting .....</i>	<i>149</i>
<i>Photoset 9: Attending Adoration for the first time in their lives.....</i>	<i>151</i>
<i>Photoset 10: Children study the replica of the Shroud of Turin.....</i>	<i>152</i>
<i>Photoset 11: Captured moments of total absorption .....</i>	<i>154</i>
<i>Photoset 12: The Virtues Wall and Students exploring virtues through SOLO Hexagons ..</i>	<i>157</i>
<i>Photoset 13: Students using SOLO Personal Choice Chart and the Hexagons .....</i>	<i>160</i>
<i>Photoset 14: Engaged and sharing learning .....</i>	<i>161</i>
<i>Photoset 15: Two very different ways of responding.....</i>	<i>162</i>
<i>Photoset 16: Confident verbal communication was a growing phenomenon.....</i>	<i>163</i>
<i>Photoset 17: The Prayer Wall for November and Titles for Christ .....</i>	<i>165</i>
<i>Photoset 18: Aspects of the room set-up.....</i>	<i>190</i>
<i>Photoset 19: Items prepared for the second iteration (Term 2).....</i>	<i>217</i>
<i>Photoset 20: The Cenacle, the Empty Tomb, Mass Moments .....</i>	<i>219</i>
<i>Photoset 21: Children absorbed in their work.....</i>	<i>227</i>
<i>Photoset 22: Students reflecting on Maxims.....</i>	<i>242</i>

## List of Figures

<i>Figure 1: The four phases of design-based research. Adapted from Reeves, 2006.....</i>	<i>71</i>
<i>Figure 2: The four phases of design-based research. Adapted from Reeves, 2006.....</i>	<i>96</i>
<i>Figure 3: Samples of writing, illustrating limited skills .....</i>	<i>117</i>
<i>Figure 4: Sample of the more structured student journal pages .....</i>	<i>118</i>
<i>Figure 5: A sample of weekly sessions.....</i>	<i>131</i>
<i>Figure 6: Personal Choice Chart sample, including hand-writing activity .....</i>	<i>159</i>
<i>Figure 7: SOLO Personal Choice Chart sample.....</i>	<i>160</i>
<i>Figure 8: Sourced on the internet, this image conveniently contained St Josephine Bakhita and St John Bosco next to each other. ....</i>	<i>184</i>
<i>Figure 9: Paddle pop figures for the baptism of Jesus /.....</i>	<i>185</i>
<i>Figure 10: Image of Jesus in the desert, sourced on the internet.....</i>	<i>185</i>
<i>Figure 11: Lenten activity sourced on the internet.....</i>	<i>185</i>

<i>Figure 12: Student engagement observation form.....</i>	<i>203</i>
<i>Figure 13: Student engagement check list .....</i>	<i>204</i>
<i>Figure 14: Samples of Choice Charts, Term 3 .....</i>	<i>244</i>
<i>Figure 15: Samples of SOLO Personal Choice Charts .....</i>	<i>245</i>
<i>Figure 16: SOLO Taxonomy Charts, adapted by the researcher for religious education..</i>	<i>247</i>
<i>Figure 17: Screenshots of www.amiprimaryre.wikispaces.com.....</i>	<i>249</i>
<i>Figure 18: Sample of Honesty Charts developed by the researcher.....</i>	<i>250</i>
<i>Figure 19: HookEd SOLO Hexagon Templates relating to thoughtfulness as prepared by the researcher .....</i>	<i>251</i>
<i>Figure 20: Thoughtfulness Jar slips, prepared by the researcher.....</i>	<i>252</i>
<i>Figure 21: Initial design for a sturdy trolley to house the SALT Approach materials .....</i>	<i>253</i>
<i>Figure 22: Basic content aspect of assessment task: completed by all children at the same time.....</i>	<i>274</i>
<i>Figure 23: A choice activity sample .....</i>	<i>274</i>
<i>Figure 24: Mini assessment tasks.....</i>	<i>275</i>
<i>Figure 25: First information sheet: Principal and teachers.....</i>	<i>437</i>
<i>Figure 26: First parent and caregivers information sheet .....</i>	<i>438</i>
<i>Figure 27: Simplified information sheet, for parents and caregivers to use in explaining the study to children.....</i>	<i>439</i>
<i>Figure 28: First informed consent form for parents and caregivers .....</i>	<i>440</i>
<i>Figure 29: Informed consent form for teachers.....</i>	<i>441</i>
<i>Figure 30: Information sheet: Update for filming: Principal.....</i>	<i>442</i>
<i>Figure 31 Information sheet: Update for filming: parents and caregivers .....</i>	<i>443</i>
<i>Figure 32 Second informed consent form for parents and caregivers.....</i>	<i>444</i>
<i>Figure 33: Third information sheet for parents and caregivers .....</i>	<i>445</i>
<i>Figure 34: Third consent form for parents and caregivers .....</i>	<i>446</i>

# Chapter 1: Towards a New Approach for Teaching Religious Education in Catholic Schools

## 1.1 Opening Comments

There are many ways that religion can be taught, learned and passed on to future generations, but effective and appropriate methods for teaching the Catholic faith within the context of Catholic schools and the new evangelisation are debated. How can one reach the child in a secularist, materialistic, relativistic world? In our twenty-first century, with Western society undergoing a paradigm shift, with its fragile families, and crises of belief, the relatively new dominance of social media presents educators with deep and real challenges. It seems that for many of today's technologically wired children faith itself has lost its relevance. E.M. Standing recognised an impending crisis as far back as 1965 in the foreword to Montessori's posthumous edition of *The Child in the Church*:

... with the upsurge of neo-paganism which attacks the Church evermore and in ever new forms, the need for a vital method of religious training has become ever more urgent. (Montessori & Standing, 1965, editor's foreword).

Can a method built on Montessori principles present a solution for Catholic religious education? Although it is little known or understood, Montessori was deeply committed to Catholic religious education, and it formed an intimate part of her approach (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Sofia Cavalletti explored Montessori principles on the exclusively spiritual plane, successfully applied them in a parish catechetical setting (Cavalletti, 1983). Together with a number of collaborators, she observed, evaluated and analysed these principles in catechetical practice across countries, races and socio-economic settings. Her work began in 1954, just two years after the death of Montessori. Cavalletti had never met Montessori personally but Gianna Gobbi, a teacher who had worked extensively with Montessori, asked Cavalletti, a biblical scholar, to prepare a child for his First Communion. It was after this that together they developed and refined the parish-based method that became

known as *The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. Cavalletti's approach was one of kerygmatic evangelisation in the sense that it brought awareness of Good News of Salvation freshly to each child (Cavalletti, 1983). Cavalletti and Gobbi found that in a carefully prepared educational environment, when the role of the adult is that of accompanying the child in his/her listening to the word of God: "the receivers of the kerygma are the child and the adult; they are simultaneously announcers and listeners" (Cavalletti, 1983, p. 49). Cavalletti's approach maintained a focus on the key events at the heart of Christianity and the adult's role was to introduce the child to the truth through words, life and example (Cavalletti, 2002). Such an approach implies a rich personal interior life on the part of the catechist or teacher.

## 1.2 The Background Story

My first and substantial encounter with, and interest in, Cavalletti's work and the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was in 2012. After 34 years of teaching in independent schools where the Catholic faith is taught and leading teachers in religious education, I had taken up a post as a part-time tutor in religious education in the Education Department at the University of Notre Dame, Sydney. In 2012, Gerard O'Shea became the coordinating professor of religious education. Whereas religious education courses had previously presented a general overview of religious education and a smorgasbord of approaches, with Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd being one among several. O'Shea introduced changes that placed a new emphasis on Cavalletti's work. Over the next few years, in addition to providing an overview of religious education, the courses were built around Cavalletti's approach, with O'Shea's adaptations suggesting ways for making her parish-based Catechesis of the Good Shepherd viable for school use. O'Shea's work had already facilitated an integration of this approach into several schools in Victoria, Australia. In addition, Catholic Education Victoria's text series *To Know, Worship and Love*, was developed under O'Shea's guidance and reflected some aspects of Cavalletti's approach.

Elements of Cavalletti's approach have been introduced across Australian Catholic schools, using some of either Jerome Berryman's Godly Play, the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd itself, or simply as a collection of ideas. Berryman's Godly Play

became the more dominant of the two approaches, even though it was designed for use in an Episcopalian setting, for a number of reasons. It came with manuals and teacher guidelines, and did not require extensive training. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd approach, however, provided fewer resources and guidelines for the untrained. It required teachers to build their own resources and necessitated substantial training. O'Shea's own development of Cavalletti's work, with additions and adaptations, formed the basis of the religious education courses at the University of Notre Dame, and has been described in his forthcoming publication, *To Know Jesus Christ, A Practical Handbook for Developing the Catholic Faith from Childhood to Adolescence* (O'Shea, in press).

As an assisting teacher in O'Shea's university courses, I grew very familiar with the approach, and could see its benefits. However, I wondered how comprehensively O'Shea's adaptation of Cavalletti's parish-based Catechesis of the Good Shepherd could fulfil all the religious education requirements in a Catholic school. It was not something that had been trialled in a design-based empirical study. It was this that led me to undertake this PhD I wanted to apply and adapt O'Shea's method, evaluating its effectiveness in a school setting and formally recording qualitative evidence of the results. It was clear to me that Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd might well work in a faith-filled, parish setting, working with small numbers of children. How would it truly fit in a school's religious education curriculum? Could the approach we were recommending to emerging teachers be effectively and substantially used by them? Additionally, Montessori (1870-1952) and, to a lesser degree, Cavalletti (1917- 2011) worked within societal settings quite distinct to that of Australia today, as will be discussed in the next chapter. How effectively would their principles and practices transfer across to a contemporary, Australian Catholic school setting, given the student, parental and teacher demographics, the demands on teachers and the outcomes-based learning approach?

With these questions in mind, I conducted, in 2013, a quasi-experimental research study, comparing a target Preparatory Class in a Melbourne school, whose teacher was trained in the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd and using it in her religious education programme, with its counterpart, a Parramatta-based Kindergarten using the *Sharing Our Story Curriculum*. The results were interesting, indicating



significant differences between the two groups. The Pre- and Post-Assessments carried out indicated that the children in the Melbourne School had learned significantly more than those in the Parramatta Diocesan School.

It was after this that I decided to take on a doctoral study. Since there were no schools or teachers, in Sydney at least, using O'Shea's adaptation of Cavalletti's *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, the obvious thing to do was to teach it myself - ideally for a full year.

### 1.3 O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method

In the time that lapsed between the conception of the PhD and its eventuation, O'Shea had named his adaptation of Cavalletti's work as the Mystagogical Catechetical Method. O'Shea (2012) in consonance with Cavalletti, describes Mystagogy as "the liturgical catechesis which draws human beings to participate in the mystery of Christ as revealed in the Scriptures and Tradition" (p. 25). *Mystagogy* is a Greek term, used in the early Church to describe the catechetical process offered to new Christians, whereby they were instructed more deeply in the faith through a consideration of the sacraments and the liturgy.

Pope Benedict XVI introduced the term *Mystagogical Catechesis* in his encyclical *Sacramentum Caritatis* (Pope Benedict, XVI, 2007, §64). The mystagogical catechesis equates to drawing people towards a deep understanding of God's plan of salvation through the liturgy itself. It helps people to find meaning in the words and gestures involved in the liturgy, preventing it from becoming mere ritualism, by encouraging a personal and conscious participation. *Sacramentum Caritatis* goes on to emphasise that a mystagogical catechesis should go hand in hand with a systematic understanding of the content of the faith, while being centred on encountering Christ in the sacraments, particularly the Eucharist and that the catechist's role is that of an authentic witness.

Pope Francis also refers to the *Mystagogical Catechesis* in *Evangelii Gaudium* (Pope Francis, 2013) using it alongside the term *kerygma*. This is another Greek term referring to the key proclamation of the gospel message that "Jesus Christ loves you;

he gave his life to save you; and now he is living at your side every day to enlighten, strengthen and free you.” (Pope Francis, 2013, §164). *Mystagogical Catechesis*, as described in *Evangelii Gaudium*, involves the on-going formation of the entire community, a continual appreciation of the liturgical signs of Christian initiation. *Evangelii Gaudium* goes on to say that “many manuals and programmes have not yet taken sufficiently into account the need for a mystagogical renewal, one which would assume very different forms based on each educational community’s discernment” (Pope Francis, 2013, §166.). O’Shea’s Mystagogical Catechetical Method is essentially an application of the *Mystagogical Catechesis*, and one that can form the basis for religious education in schools. For this study, I decided to call my application of O’Shea’s Mystagogical Catechetical Method as the Scripture and Liturgy Teaching Approach (hereafter the SALT Approach or SALT Programme, as appropriate).

#### 1.4 The Literature Review

The literature review, in the first place, identifies the theoretical framework underpinning the study, describing the expectations of the Catholic Church concerning religious education. A clear set of identifying factors is drawn out from a detailed review of relevant Catholic Church documents since the Second Vatican Council. Catholic religious education is to be faithful to the message, belief and practice of the Catholic Church. At its core, religious education should reflect the Catholic Church’s belief in a personal, triune God, the historical person of Jesus Christ, God’s plan of salvation and the place of the sacraments in this. It should be shaped by the Christian anthropological understanding of the human person, recognising each one’s integrity, transcendent value and eternal destiny. Church documents also situated the teaching of the Catholic faith in contemporary society, identifying challenges such as the diversity of faith commitment found in students and their families, the fragility of the family unit, the varying levels of faith understanding and commitment found in teachers. The literature review also identifies how religious education is articulated within the Australian Catholic school context, looking at the expectations of the Catholic Bishops and Catholic Educational bodies.

Secondly, literature directly related to the SALT Approach is reviewed, focusing on the work of Montessori, Cavalletti and O’Shea. Montessori’s core principles and holistic approach are described, with a focus on her perception of religious education, following, as it does, the pedagogy of the Catholic Church (Standing, 1998). Cavalletti’s method of catechesis is explored. It is firmly Christocentric, built around Scripture, the sacraments and the liturgical year, and pedagogically follows Montessorian principles. Jerome Berryman’s application of Cavalletti’s Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is briefly explored before O’Shea’s Mystagogical Catechetical Method is outlined. Finally, the contemporary challenges facing an approach for schools based on Montessori and Cavalletti are explored.

In order to situate the study of the SALT Approach within the twenty-first century educational landscape, the literature review then explores relevant aspects of contemporary pedagogical research, using as a framework the *Teaching and Learning Research Programme* of the Economic and Social Research Council (James & Pollard, 2011), which proposes ten core pedagogical principles for effective teaching and learning. Contemporary pedagogical research is reviewed using this framework. In addition, other relevant aspects of contemporary education likely to impact on the success of the SALT Approach are explored. These are (a) outcomes based education, (b) the holistic paradigm, (c) the literacy challenge, and (d) the behaviour challenge.

## 1.5 The Research Objectives

The literature review clarified the main research objective as:

To design, trial and refine a programme for teaching religious education in a contemporary Catholic systemic school based on the SALT Approach.

The subsidiary objectives arising from this main objective became the three lenses used on the journey. They emerged as:

- Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today’s child within the SALT Approach

- Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach
- Achieving the accountability requirements of a Diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach

## 1.6 The Research Design

### 1.6.1 The methodology

A number of research methodologies were considered, but, with time, the decision to opt for design-based research became apparent. I was committed to conducting an empirically-based study of how O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method could be mentored to other teachers for application in their own classrooms. The controlled experimental approach was unsuitable because this study was to be exploratory, not aiming to prove more than possibility, rather than proving something as more rigorously generalisable. A qualitative study was appropriate, and the design-based research approach fitted the purpose and scope of the study well. Design-based research facilitates the development of educational tools and curriculum, the "engineering" of learning and the learning environment by testing, and refining, revising an educational prototype through a series of iterations (Cobb, DiSessa, Lehrer, & Schauble, 2003, p. 9).

This was precisely what I wanted to do: to unpack O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method, detailing a full year's programme, preparing all the necessary materials, and then implement it in a real-life situation, with a full class of students in a Catholic School. I wanted to evaluate its viability and consider the necessary adaptations. Design-based research was clearly the way to accomplish this. A fuller description of design-based research is found in Chapter Three.

### 1.6.2 The scope of the study

A school in the Parramatta Diocese was selected for the study. The Parish Priest and the *school's* Religious Education Coordinator were supportive of the SALT Approach. The school was using Parramatta's *Sharing Our Story* religious education curriculum. Situated in outer Western Sydney, the school's clientele was multi-

cultural and multi-religious and there were significant and complex family issues. There were real issues that would challenge the SALT Approach's implementation. Year Two was selected primarily because the children were moving into the 6-9-year-old phase, when abstract thinking begins. Because the Montessori style of education is often understood as relevant only for the early school years, this age selection offered an opportunity to explore how the SALT Approach could be adapted to work successfully with children moving beyond the first phase (birth to six-year-olds).

As such, this design-based research study was limited to one class, in one school. Contributing factors to the success of the study were the support of the Parish Priest and the School's Religious Education Coordinator. The researcher would be the leading teacher in the study, bringing to the study a firm knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, as well as commitment. This was essential if the approach was to be adequately trialled, evaluated and refined. Chapter Three is dedicated to the research design.

## 1.7 The Journey Begins: Packing the Equipment

With the purpose and direction of the journey defined, and the method for investigating chosen, the final preparations were made. This involved building the first prototype, the vehicle for the journey, so to speak.

The starting point for the prototype design was O'Shea's *Continuum of Foundational Religious Experience* (O'Shea, 2012) (see Appendix 1). In it, core topics were allocated to three stages or age levels. O'Shea describes Stage One as the Data Gathering Stage, when the child explores things in his/her world (three to six-year-olds), Stage Two as the Synthesising Stage of looking for patterns and the Big Picture (six to nine-year-olds), and Stage Three as the Analysing Stage of studying how the parts all fit into the whole picture (nine to twelve-year-olds). The first task involved allocating the concepts to three stages, namely (i) Kindergarten and Year One, (ii) Years Two and Three, and (iii) Years Four, Five and Six. Since this study would target Year Two, the prototype needed to incorporate essential concepts of the earlier Kinder-Year One stage.

The working document was developed and included a summary of the theoretical and conceptual frameworks, positioning it in relation to Church expectations and presenting the essential approach of building on the Liturgical Spiral Curriculum. It had practical guidelines for all participating teachers, keeping the SALT Approach front and centre, and a draft of the year's programme, with the first term outlined in more detail and a cross-referencing chart matching the SALT Programme with the *Sharing our Story* Units for Year Two (See Appendix 2).

A comprehensive range of 2D and 3D materials were sourced and produced. These are detailed in Chapter 5.

## 1.8 The Journey Through the Data-Gathering Year

The data-gathering journey extended one academic year, and it is described through each of the three lenses in the findings chapters, Chapters Four, Five and Six. Each chapter describes the journey's iterations, exploring the terrain through its own particular lens. In addition to describing how the findings inform the theoretical landscape, each one pinpoints the additions and adjustments needed for the final prototype, which will be built as a result of this study.

Chapter Four looks at implementing and adapting the SALT Approach in the light of empowering and disempowering factors affecting today's child, bearing in mind the Christian anthropological understanding of the person. Three elements are explored: (a) behaviour and self-control (b) literacy and communication, and (c) the spiritual nature of today's child.

Chapter Five looks at equipping schools and teachers so that they can implement the SALT Approach. The three elements explored are: (a) equipping and maintaining the learning space, (b) key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach, and (c) the role of teacher expertise.

Chapter Six looks at accountability issues and explores them within the context of the requirements of Parramatta Diocese's Catholic Education. It looks at the SALT

Approach's ability to (a) meet the Parramatta Diocese's Religious Education Curriculum requirements and content, and (b) assessment and reporting.

## 1.9 Conclusion

The final chapter, Chapter Seven, summarises, reflects upon and discusses the journey, and outlines its significance and the implications. It describes the findings and discusses the radical implications that the SALT Approach, with its student-centred, experiential paradigm, can make a positive contribution to the new evangelisation and be used for teaching religious education within the school setting, despite the complex and diverse nature of Catholic schools in the twenty-first century. It details both challenges and advantages relating to today's child, suggesting solutions for the challenges and ways of building on strengths. Key pedagogical strategies consonant with the SALT Approach are identified, with an emphasis on respecting the person and dignity of the child. The SALT Approach's potential for enhancing teachers' knowledge, understanding of, and commitment to Catholic belief is discussed. While the study demonstrated that the SALT Approach could meet accountability demands, it suggests the need for radical change in the current religious education paradigm.

Finally, the way forward is suggested, recommending design-based research as a valuable instrument through which future developments can be explored, forging a close theory to practice interactivity with academics and teachers working together at the grassroots level, in schools and learning spaces.

## 1.10 Post-Script: The Current Situation

This study is based on data gathered throughout 2015. The momentum has been maintained throughout 2016 and 2017, with work continuing at the same school and with the same students. The project, currently financially supported by Catholic Education Parramatta, has also been extended to include mentoring and guiding teachers in other grades as they implement core aspects of the SALT Approach in their religious education programmes. While the dedicated space continues to be

available, the home room learning spaces are being equipped with the necessary materials.



## Chapter 2: Literature Review

### 2.1 Literature Review Structure

This literature review begins with documents of the Catholic Church relating to expectations of Catholic Schools and religious education, forming the theoretical framework underpinning the SALT Approach and including the Australian Catholic Church and School context. Following this, work related to Montessori and Cavalletti is reviewed as O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method emerged from them, forming the conceptual framework for this study. Finally, the review looks at relevant contemporary pedagogical research with the last section summarising how the literature review will (a) inform the development of the first prototype, and (b) identify the questions delineating the structure of the study. The review of literature relating to the methodology is located in Chapter 3.

### 2.2 Religious Education within the Catholic Church

#### 2.2.1 Opening comments

The theoretical framework for this study is the Catholic Church's expectation of religious education, and this section provides an overview of the Catholic perspective. It reviews the indications and recommendations of the Church as well as providing the Australian perspective, since this study investigates the SALT Approach as implemented in an Australian diocesan school.

#### 2.2.2 The Catholic Church: Expectations relating to Catholic schools

##### 2.2.2.1 Major Church documents relating to Catholic education

The primary reference point is the Code of Canon Law (Pope John Paul II, 1983), which promulgates a framework for schools' existence within the Church community, much like legislation for State schools, making clear the role and mission of Catholic Schools. The Code of Canon Law defines Catholic Schools as

places directed by ecclesial authorities or by representative bodies or persons (Pope John Paul II, 1983, Can 803., §1), stating that religious instruction in Catholic Schools is to be “grounded in the principles of Catholic doctrine; [with] teachers outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life” (*Canon 1983*, Can.803., §2). Furthermore, it states that “Catholic religious instruction and education which are imparted in any schools ... are subject to the authority of the Church” (Canon 1983, Can 804., §1).

A list of major documents relevant to Catholic education issued by the Vatican since the Second Vatican Council’s declaration on Christian Education, *Gravissimum Educationis* (Second Vatican Council, 1965) is included in Appendix 3.

#### 2.2.2.2 Essential indicators for Catholic schools

The key indicators are summarised as (a) the identity, purpose, and role of Catholic Schools, (b) the characteristics of Catholic Schools, (c) goals and responsibilities of Catholic Schools, (d) the means to fulfil goals and responsibilities, (e) pedagogical recommendations offered by the Catholic Church, (f) the essential content of catechesis, and (g) challenges for twenty-first century Catholic religious education.

#### 2.2.2.3 The identity, purpose and role of the Catholic school

The Catholic School’s core *raison d’etre* is to be a faithful pastoral and ecclesial instrument for religious education, evangelisation and catechesis (Second Vatican Council, 1965, §8, §68, §101; Congregation for Catholic Education. 1977, §9, §71-72; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §11-12; Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §51). Religious education is defined as that scholastic discipline which presents Christ, the Christian message and the Christian event. The Christian message is one that influences the understanding of the origins of the world, the sense of history, ethical values, religion and culture, destiny of man and man’s relationship with nature (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §73).

The purpose and role of religious education are to complete and form a basis for catechesis and liturgical celebration, designed to reach students at all faith levels:

believers, doubters, searchers and non-believers (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §74-75). Catechesis educates persons in the living and active faith of the Church and its goal is to facilitate an intimate communion of the baptised person with Jesus Christ (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §79-82). It seeks to ensure that “faith is known, celebrated, lived and translated into prayer, shared and proclaimed” (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §84). All these tasks are considered essential components of religious education (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §84, §95-97).

Of paramount importance for Catholic Schools is the service to, and partnership with, parents, the primary educators of their children (Second Vatican Council. 1965, §3; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §73; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, §34). The researcher was not able to incorporate this vital and core aspect to any significant degree, with its focus being on the design and refinement of the *Mystagogical Approach* in the school setting. It is envisaged that this aspect will be researched in post-doctoral studies.

Taking into account the growing pluralism within Catholic schools, recent Church documents have focussed the school’s role, given this phenomenon. Parents choosing to send their children to Catholic schools may come from other faith backgrounds, and an intercultural dialogue approach, appropriate to the theological, anthropological and pedagogical perspectives of the Church and rooted in the person of Jesus Christ is considered. *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilisation of Love* (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013) provides some guidelines. The Catholic religion itself is “an inspiring sign of dialogue, leading to what is good and true” (§71-72). Intercultural dialogue is to be conducted from the perspective of a “confessional teaching of religion” (§75). The Congregation for Catholic Education’s *Circular Letter to the Presidents of Bishops Conference on Religious Education in Schools* (2009) distinguishes between religious education and catechesis:

... catechesis aims at fostering personal adherence to Christ and the development of Christian life in its different aspects ... whereas religious education in schools gives the pupils knowledge about Christianity's identity and Christian life (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2009, §17).

This statement is reiterated in the Congregation for Catholic Education's *Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools Living in Harmony for a Civilization of Love* (2013). Catholic schools play a unique role within a pluralistic society, inter-relating the disciplines of theology, philosophy and science with religious education (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013, §74). In such a climate, religious education rather than catechesis is suggested as the appropriate term. However, common sense dictates that such a distinction is considered within the perspective of the Catholic school's fundamental purpose as described in previous Church documents. *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979) provides a broader understanding of the nature, place and purpose of catechesis, together with its intimate connection with both religious education and evangelisation, terms often used interchangeably. It states: 'the Church has always looked on catechesis as a sacred duty and an inalienable right' and expresses the need to provide catechesis to people of all persuasions in ways that do not coerce (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 1979, § 14). The Catholic school, along with the parish and the family has an important role, as the following quote illustrates:

... the school provides catechesis with possibilities that are not to be neglected... [concerning] first and foremost the Catholic school: it would no longer deserve this title if, no matter how much it shone for its high level of teaching in non-religious matters, there were justification for reproaching it for negligence or deviation in strictly religious education. Let it not be said that such education will always be given implicitly and indirectly. The special character of the Catholic school, the underlying reason for it, the reason why Catholic parents should prefer it, is precisely the quality of the religious instruction integrated into the education of the pupils. While Catholic establishments should respect freedom of conscience ... they still have a grave duty to offer a religious training suited to the often widely varying religious situations of the pupils... (*Catechesi Tradendae*, 1979, § 69).

In addition, such considerations go hand in hand with the understanding that religious education teachers themselves be well-catechised in the Catholic faith and present living witness to that faith (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013, § 72, 75).

#### 2.2.2.4 The characteristics of Catholic schools

Anchored in the Gospel values, Catholic schools are to be places of witness, where philosophy, curriculum and life are inspired and guided by the Gospel and the person of Christ, the complete model for all persons (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §33, §35, §47, §54, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, §38; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §38, §100; Congregation for Catholic Education 2007, §4).

They are to be places where sacraments and prayer enable a deep, personal experience of the Gospel message and a life in Christ. Thus, Catholic schools provide an environment guiding the development of each student “towards the fullness of baptismal life, which goes beyond the limitations of anything human” (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, §98). They are communities of faith and not merely institutions of learning (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §31).

#### 2.2.2.5 Goals and responsibilities of Catholic schools

Catholic schools should lead their students to a recognition of their dignity as children of God, empowering them to reach their final destiny: a life lived eternally with God (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §56-57, §84; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §9).

They should aim to lead students towards wisdom and knowledge of truth, rather than merely the acquisition of facts and information. This requires a curriculum offering a broad human culture, a sense of history, the arts, science and technology, imbued with the understanding that faith and reason exist in harmony (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §41, §46; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §51, §54, §59-60).

Catholic religious education's goal is to present the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ as historical realities and the history of salvation with its origins in the Bible, continued through the life of the Church faithful to the Gospel message (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §77). It is to offer a systematic presentation of Christian life and faith, embedded in Christ's teachings, faithfully, accurately, clearly and completely through a religious instruction, catechesis and evangelisation appropriate for each age (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §50-51; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §74-82). This entails organically integrating a body of faith knowledge, the sacramental life, prayer, daily living and moral commitment, empowering individual students to transform both themselves and culture in the light of the Gospel. (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §83. 95). Character formation is key, equipping students to live "the demands of baptismal life" and a life in Christ so as to contribute towards building the Kingdom of God, where freedom, infused by grace, leads to love and justice. (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §36, §45, §47, §84; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §88, §95).

#### 2.2.2.6 The means to fulfil goals and responsibilities

The goals and responsibilities can be met if Catholic schools' educational philosophy reflect a sound Christian anthropological understanding of the human person, incorporating the "physical and spiritual aspects of human nature, recognising that each person has intelligence, free will and emotions ... endowed with rights and duties and [are] capable of interpersonal relationships" (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §55, §76).

Religious education teachers are to be professionally well-equipped and open to formation: true role models, living witnesses of faith, committed and living the sacramental life. They need to be well grounded in Catholic doctrine, theology, ethics, philosophy and the social teachings of the Church. (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §40, §43, §61, §83; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, §27-32, §38, §40-70; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §96-97; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §18).

The goals and responsibilities can be met if schools are hubs of trusting relationships, incorporating affection, rapport and respect. The physical environment itself should reflect the warmth of a family, with décor and art reflecting human and Catholic, culture. The proximity of a church or chapel, crucifixes, appropriate images and the opportunities to participate in the liturgical and sacramental life of the Church also assist the achievement of the goals. (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §110).

In summary, curriculum and teaching programmes in Catholic schools are to be spiritually, pedagogically, psychologically and cognitively sound (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §52; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §62- 64).

#### 2.2.2.7 Pedagogical recommendations of the Catholic Church

The core pedagogical recommendation found in the *General Directory for Catechesis* (1997) is that religious education pedagogy in Catholic schools should follow the pedagogies of God, of Christ and of the Church: the pedagogy of God, as Creator and loving Father, who gradually reveals Himself and the Plan of Salvation; the pedagogy of Christ, as Son of the Father and brother to all humanity, showing the way through word, example and humble sacrifice; the pedagogy of the Church, which, as a loving mother, feeds her children with the sap of the Holy Spirit and passes on the fullness of faith. This, in turn, lays the foundations for a life-long catechesis, in close communion with the Church. (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997).

Religious education's pedagogical approaches should facilitate the unpacking of Sacred Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church, incorporating liturgical and ecclesial signs. (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §132). It recommends a kerygmatic pedagogy, bringing the child to a personal encounter with Christ and his message of salvation, and an existential pedagogy, through which human experiences of all types becomes springboards, lifting a person towards God (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §151).

Both inductive methods (by which the teacher fosters learning through the child's investigations) and deductive methods (involving direct teaching techniques) are recommended (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §150). Making relevant use of memorisation for essential formulae is also recommended (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §154-155). Finally, the pedagogical approach should be suited to the needs and circumstances of those being catechised (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §118).

#### 2.2.2.8 The content of religious education and catechesis

The *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §67) states that Catholic education should build a curriculum that offers a comprehensive and structured formation in the faith, an apprenticeship in Christian life, promoting followers of Christ and focused on His person. This implies education in the knowledge of faith and life in such a manner that the entire person, at the deepest level, feels enriched by the word of God.

Education is essentially an apprenticeship for a life in Christ and as such never ends, encompassing parents, teachers and children supporting each other and journeying together towards God. The doctrinal information is to reflect the love of God, incorporating the concepts of a faith-filled and grace-filled life of prayer and service as a loving response to God's life-giving love, as well as the reality of the possibility of rejecting this love, eschatology, clear moral formation, the history of the church and the social teaching of the Church (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §30, §107-117). A balanced presentation of the entire truth of the mystery and message of Jesus Christ is needed, with the Trinity at the centre of faith (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §30, §33, §102, §105). Religious education should forge an intimate link between catechesis, liturgy and sacraments, building up a knowledge and understanding of symbols and rites, reflecting and incorporating popular piety, and affording a special place for Marian devotion (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §30, §196).

The *General Directory for Catechesis* (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997) indicates that respectful recognition is needed of every baptised child as a member of the



Kingdom of God. Catechesis must also be linked with the life and condition of the children receiving a Catholic education. Baptised children usually receive the Sacraments of Reconciliation, and Eucharist for the first time in their primary school years. They also often receive the Sacrament of Confirmation at this time. The sacraments, therefore merit special awareness and preparation. In addition, catechesis at this time is in a special way an educational training in prayer and an introduction to Sacred Scripture.

#### 2.2.2.9 Challenges for twenty-first century Catholic religious education

The Church recognises the very real difficulties that schools encounter in their task of educating children in the Catholic faith. Young people absorb knowledge from many perspectives and are not always equipped to order and prioritise that knowledge in the light of Christian faith and life (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, §9). Many parents are indifferent to the faith, lacking faith education and commitment (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §25-26; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, §42). Young people experience deep instability and wounded human relationships, leading to disorientation and a loss of meaning in life (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §6, §15).

Despite being educated in Catholic schools, many retain little knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith. Globalisation and information technologies have a profound effect on young people, often in a negative way (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007, §1). Many become religiously indifferent, rejecting the Church, displaying a lack of interest in the fundamental truths of life, and maintaining attitudes of moral relativism and utilitarianism (Congregation for Catholic Education 2007, §1).

Teachers, many being young themselves, experience pedagogical exhaustion in the face of challenges and difficulties (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §6). Significant numbers of teachers responsible for day to day Catholic education have inadequate knowledge of the fundamentals of the Catholic belief and the consequent understanding, conviction, commitment and practice (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2014).

The following section outlines key statements by the Australian hierarchy and a brief overview of the Australian Catholic Religious Education frameworks.

### 2.2.3 Religious education in Australian Catholic schools

#### 2.2.3.1 The Pastoral Letter of the Bishops of New South Wales and the Australian Capital Territory

The pastoral letter of the bishops of NSW and the ACT, *Catholic Schools at a Crossroads* (Bishops of NSW and the ACT, 2007) outlines core ideas, emphasising the roles that evangelisation and catechesis play. “The Catholic School ... is there to assist parents and parishes in their educational, evangelical and catechetical mission” (Bishops of NSW and the ACT, 2007, p. 10). The Religious Education curriculum should offer clear knowledge of Catholic faith, Sacred Scriptures, history, culture and tradition. Catholic schools are seen as centres for the new evangelisation, opening opportunities for students to understand and choose a life reflecting a personal relationship with God, nurtured by prayer and sacraments. It points out that “no student should leave our Catholic schools without knowing the essentials of Catholic teaching (Bishops of NSW and the ACT, 2007, p.14). The Religious Education curriculum needs to be “sound, attractive and professionally taught by teachers with appropriate RE qualifications” (Bishops of NSW and the ACT, 2007, p.10).

#### 2.2.3.2 Australian Diocesan Religious Educational Frameworks

Current Australian Catholic religious education frameworks reflect those developed by secular educational policies, this being seen as ensuring professionalism, academic rigour and a clear, cohesive and systematic religious education (National Catholic Education Commission (Australia), 2008). Therefore, curricular frameworks are shaped according to the outcomes-based paradigm, even for values and attitudes, with assessment aspects being a challenge, since values, personal faith development and spirituality cannot be easily measured. A-E reporting is used for religious literacy, as recommended for the general curricula (National Catholic Education Commission (Australia), 2008).

The Religious Education curriculum incorporates the four key strands of Creed, Sacraments, Moral Life and Prayer (National Catholic Education Commission (Australia), 2008). New South Wales, Australian Capital Territory and Victoria build the Emmaus Story into their core frameworks, reflecting the four movements found in the post-resurrection experience of two disciples encountering Christ on the road towards Emmaus: making sense of life and personal experience, gaining access to Scripture, responding to God and celebrating as a community of believers (National Catholic Education Commission (Australia), 2008). The Parramatta Diocese Religious Education curriculum, *Sharing Our Story*, follows Thomas Groome's *Praxis Approach* essentially building on the students' life experiences, linking them to the Christian story and vision, inviting critical reflection and response (Bezzina, 1996; Groome, 1998).

#### 2.2.3.3 The debated intersect between catechesis and religious education

As touched upon in 2.2.2.3, there is a global debate relating to the shape and direction religious education should take in the contemporary setting. The place of catechesis in religious education is seen by some as having diminishing relevance. In the contemporary setting the emphasis is more on the educational aspect of religious education than on catechesis (Buchanan, 2005; Lacey, A, 2011). Franchi (2013) discussed this extensively in the light of Scotland's Catholic religious education programme, *This Is Our Faith*, and suggests that an extensive magisterial document is needed to clarify the shape and direction of religious education in Catholic schools. Graham Rossiter (1982) discussed the distinctive places of catechesis and religious education in schools and the term creative divorce came into being. Others have built on the concept, taking it in directions not necessarily intended by Rossiter. O'Shea (2017) suggests that the appropriate relationship between religious education and catechesis is one of creative tension. He proposes that the perceived incompatibility of religious education, seen as engaging the mind, and catechesis, seen as engaging the heart, is invalid. In reality both concepts are needed elements given the Christian anthropological understanding of the human being, composed of body, heart and mind.

## 2.3 The Catechetical Approaches of Montessori, Cavalletti and O'Shea

### 2.3.1 Opening comments

The Mystagogical Catechetical Method described and developed by O'Shea is built on the work of Montessori and Cavalletti. In the 1930s Montessori built a religious educational approach anchored in the liturgy of the Catholic Church, well described in *The Child and the Church* (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Cavalletti worked with Montessori's ideas, developing the Parish-based programme which became known as the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. Others adopted it to suit the needs and spiritualities of various Christian churches and other faiths. Berryman developed Godly Play, suiting the Episcopalian Church and Catherine Maresca developed an approach suiting the needs of Christian and non-Christian faiths (Maresca, 2005). This section of the literature review outlines the work of Montessori, Cavalletti and, briefly, Berryman, assisting to situate the O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method, which was trialled and refined using a formal design-based model through this study, under the name of the SALT Approach.

### 2.3.2 Maria Montessori

#### 2.3.2.1 Opening comments

Montessori was influenced by the pedagogical theory of Friedrich Froebel, the founder of the kindergarten although Edouard Seguin, Jean Itard and Jacob Pereira mainly influenced her method (Standing, 1998; Thayer- Bacon, 2012). Montessori adapted Seguin's pedagogical method for retarded children, applying it to developmentally regular children (Standing, 1998; Thayer-Bacon, 2012).

Montessori applied theory to practice by scientifically observing children, shaping the learning environment accordingly (Montessori, 1912). She developed a child-centred curriculum framework that was essentially holistic (Grazzini, 1996, Mahmoudi, 2012). Her original writings reveal that this was distinctly linked to religious education (Lillard, 2005; Mahmoudi, Jafari, Nasradadi, & Liaghatdar,

2012; Montessori & Standing, 1965) and built upon recognizing children as self-directed learners, moving through phases governed by distinctive physical, psychological, cognitive and spiritual characteristics (Montessori & Standing, 1965; Standing, 1998; Berryman, 1979). Within this framework, the teacher's main task is to prepare an environment that would facilitate the child's receptiveness to the grace of God (Montessori & Standing, 1965).

### 2.3.2.2 Montessorian principles

Montessori's core principle was that the child chooses freely and is an adult in development (Standing, 1998). The goal of true education is to empower the child to become a 'normalised adult'. By 'normalised' Montessori meant an optimum way of being, a full and balanced maturity (Standing, 1998, p.173). Montessorian principles, described by Standing (1998) included the need for a prepared environment within which a child can grow in a spirit of freedom, with an adult providing an essential link between the child and that environment (Montessori & Carter, 1936; Standing, 1998). Montessori's 'sensitive stages' or phases have characteristics guiding the educational principles. For example, first stage (birth to six years) characteristics include the ability for the mind to be totally absorbed with the material world, a fascination with observed realities, the need for order, security and a love of repetition. The next phase (six to twelve years) sees the development of the abstract mind, the ability to understand the 'big picture', and the development of imagination. The adolescent phase (twelve to eighteen years) is one of social development, critical thinking, self-assessment, and re-evaluation (Montessori & Standing, 1965, Montessori & Carter, 1936; O'Shea, in press).

### 2.3.2.3 Montessori and Catholic religious education

The basic tenets of the Montessori's approach are reflected and supported in many aspects of education today (Standing, 1998; O'Shea, in press). As already mentioned, the religious dimension played a crucial role in Montessori's approach, which is something that the universal appeal of the Montessorian approach tends to eclipse (Standing, 1998). In 1915, Montessori's personal response to the call of Pope Pius X for reform in religious education led to her setting up what she called an Atrium, in a

Montessori school in Barcelona. The Atrium was a space where children could learn about their faith through concrete materials relating to religious education (Montessori & Standing, 1965).

Montessori's works contain allusions to the spiritual world, to Christ, and to Catholic concepts, such as the Mass (Montessori, 1933; Montessori & Carter 1936). Key factors include the belief that a person's soul is divinely created, a deep understanding of baptism, the responsibility to educate a child according to God's plan, and that respect for the child springs from respecting God in the child. She viewed religious education as cooperating with God's grace, the true source of growth in the divine life, reached through the sacraments and prayer (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Montessori aimed to empower the child to help himself in his spiritual journey (Montessori & Standing, 1965).

Montessori was critical of religious instruction methods of the early to mid-20<sup>th</sup> century, with its collectively taught lessons, curriculum and catechism answers learned by heart, which were, at that time, to be rigorously tested. The method she proposed did include a syllabus with collectively taught lessons being one component but her general approach was distinct.

Montessori maintained that a syllabus should respond directly to the laws of each sensitive period. For Montessori, the success of the method was not due to the pedagogic ability of the teacher, or even the method itself, but to the child's own God-given ability: an innate search, with the use of reason, for truth supported by the availability of appropriate materials and resources (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Additionally, she recommended allowing children to do what they could do for themselves (Montessori & Standing, 1965).

Montessori discouraged overt or excessive admiration and praise in the face of the child's spiritual discoveries because they stifled spiritual growth and shifted the child's focus to the adult's reaction rather than the child's own response. However, harshness, stern commands and needless prohibitions also had no place.

Montessori saw the spiritual training of the teacher as essential and this involved an appropriate disposition towards moral order and the recognition of the weakness within each person due to original sin, such as pride, avarice, anger, sloth, gluttony and jealousy (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Her belief regarding original sin was called into question by some, since her pedagogical approach seemed to infer the belief that children were somehow free of sin (Dekker, 2000; O’Conner, 2004). However, Montessori’s own writing clearly reflects that while human nature was wounded by original sin, a great deal of natural goodness remained (Montessori & Standing, 1965).

### 2.3.3 Sofia Cavalletti and Gianna Gobbi

#### 2.3.3.1 Opening comments

Cavalletti came to know of Montessori’s approach when asked by Gobbi to prepare a child for his First Communion. Gobbi, a teacher of Montessori education, had been an assistant of Maria Montessori. Together, over a period of twenty-five years, Cavalletti and Gobbi developed their method (Cavalletti & Gobbi, 1964; Cavalletti, 1983). They set up a carefully prepared environment, which they called the Atrium, as Montessori herself had done (Montessori & Standing, 1965). The method and its curriculum were built by closely observing of children within a parish, not school, setting. Through careful research, they identified foundational assumptions shaping the curriculum. Amongst other things, they observed that children were intuitively attracted towards God and that this encounter brought joy (Cavalletti, 1983). The approach followed a ‘method of signs’. By ‘signs’ Cavalletti meant words, images and actions pointing to the child’s experience of God (Cavalletti, 1983, page 160).

#### 2.3.3.2 The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd

The parish-based Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is so named because the pivotal focus is the figure of the Good Shepherd. Young children are drawn to Jesus, the protective Good Shepherd who always cares for His sheep. The Catechesis of the Good Shepherd represents the culmination of Cavalletti’s work (Cavalletti & Gobbi, 1964; O’Shea, 2012). There are a number of essential distinguishing factors in the

approach. It is (a) Christ-centred, (b) settings and materials are specifically geared to support the curriculum, (c) the recognition of distinct stages of learning: 3-6-year-olds, 6-9-year-olds, 9-12-year-olds and 12-16-year-olds, and (d) an essential liturgically-based spiral curriculum based on the five themes of the Kingdom of God, the Incarnation, the Paschal Mystery, Baptism and the Eucharist (Garrido, 2008; Lillig, 2004; O'Shea, 2012). Through the liturgical spiral curriculum, children and adults alike are drawn deeper and deeper into the mystery of God's plan of salvation: the *Mysterion*. It shapes a perfect plan for religious education within a Catholic context (O'Shea, in press).

Cavalletti kept her focus on fostering the child's living relationship with God. Cavalletti referred to the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd as an evangelisation, leading the child towards an initial awareness of the gospel message (Cavalletti, 1983). Cavalletti saw the adult as a facilitator and co-listener to the word of God, transmitting an inheritance of truth with words, life and example. This implied the adult's rich personal interior life (Cavalletti, 1983). One of the ways that the adult's richness of interior life could be fostered was in the personal preparation of the materials required (Cavalletti, Coulter, Gobbi, & Montanaro, 1995).

The adult's attentiveness encompassed a trust in child's ability to grasp deep spiritual realities, even though he/she may not articulate an understanding in words. This leads to a profound respect for the child, as he/she reflects on great realities, such as the Mass, rather than dwelling on simplistic peripheral ones (Cavalletti, 1983). The adult's role lay in showing the child the door of understanding and leaving him/her there with God (Cavalletti, 2002).

#### 2.3.4 Berryman's application of Cavalletti: Godly Play

Jerome Berryman, an Episcopalian minister, pioneered the Godly Play approach (Berryman, 1994). While stemming from a long study of Montessori's principles and appearing similar to the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, there are key differences, revolving around perceptions of play, creativity, imagination, work and Scripture. Montessori observed that children prefer work to play. A child's work consists in perfecting him/ herself using the environment to do so. Berryman, by contrast, is



more aligned with Froebel, taking up the thread offered by Johan Huizinga, Roger Caillois and Catherine Garvey, all of whom focus on the importance of play rather than of work in the development of the child (Hyde, 2011). Berryman's perspective on fantasy (imagining beyond the boundaries of reality, as opposed to Montessori's understanding that imagination is based primarily in sensed realities) and creativity are also reflected in the Godly Play approach in contrast to the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Berryman, 1980). There may be a degree of semantics in the differing understandings, but there is a significant divergence between Berryman and Cavalletti (Hyde, 2011). The full philosophical and practical implications of definitions of work and play deserve closer scrutiny lying beyond the scope of this review. Within the Catholic context, Godly Play is limited on two counts: it is more suited to early childhood years and leans towards Scripture, perhaps inadvertently detaching it from its liturgical origins, and incorporating liturgy to a lesser degree. (Hyde, 2010).

### 2.3.5 O'Shea's application of Montessori and Cavalletti: The Mystagogical Catechetical Method

#### 2.3.5.1 Opening comments

O'Shea found compelling truths about the way children learn in the work of Montessori and Cavalletti. He adopted their principles and practices, in the context of the new evangelisation (Synod of Bishops, 2012), tailoring them with the contemporary Catholic school in mind, building his Mystagogical Catechetical Method on the work of both Montessori and Cavalletti (O'Shea, in press).

#### 2.3.5.2 Some theoretical and theological considerations

O'Shea situates his approach through discussing the contemporary challenges for religious education in Catholic schools. It is not aligned with the particular type of constructivist approaches of Immanuel Kant, Ernst von Glasersfeld, and Richard Rorty, which transfer into education through theorists such as Jean Piaget, Lev Vygotsky and John Dewey, aligning his position with critics of this type of constructivist theory such as Paul Kirschner, John Sweller and Richard Clark (2006).

In considering the relationship between faith and reason, O'Shea brings the work of Blessed John Henry Newman into the twenty-first century context. Newman's (2010) categories of assent are applied to contemporary religious education. Newman identified six different kinds of "assent" which can be helpful in clarifying the relationship between faith and reason in religious education. He distinguished five types of notional assent: profession, credence, opinion, presumption and speculation. These relate to abstract propositions and are relevant to theology. On the other hand, real assent is given to concrete objects and is relevant to religion, since it occurs when the mind is directed towards real things, represented by the impressions they have left on the imagination through the senses. The implication for religious education is that the real and concrete must be presented prior to abstract propositions (O'Shea, in press).

In terms of moral formation, moral reasoning and the will, O'Shea unpacks the difference between moral formation and ethics. The latter is merely concerned with knowing moral principles so as to then apply them, and the former involves the body, heart and mind (O'Shea, in press). He counterbalances educational theorists based in Kantian moral reasoning, such as Piaget and Lawrence Kohlberg (both failing to recognise both the role of divinely revealed truth in moral reasoning) with Aristotle, and with St Thomas Aquinas, who describes Christian morality as free moral acts perfected by God's grace. O'Shea applies this to religious education, with moral formation developing first through the body, with good habits established without intellectual understanding, then guided by the heart, and finally guided by the intellect (O'Shea, in press).

#### 2.3.5.3 Essential elements of O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method

Three key aspects of O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method are (a) following the pedagogy of God, (b) the authentic use of the liturgical spiral curriculum and (c) unpacking Montessori's phases of development in the context of the liturgical spiral curriculum (O'Shea, in press).

O'Shea (in press) recommends following the pedagogy of God through the Mystagogical Catechetical Method. The pedagogy of God is one of gift, received and

responded to through the body and the senses. The triune God, gradually and increasingly reveals Himself to humankind through the centuries and awaits humanity's response. The culmination is the gift of Himself as God-made-Man, bringing the opportunity of a life in grace and communion with the Trinity. The encounter continues through time, as the Church, which Christ founded, through the sacraments and the action of its members guided by the Holy Spirit, invites each person to a life of union with Him, here on earth and forever within the Trinity.

This pedagogy provides an appropriate way to bring any person to an encounter with God. Its elements are threefold. *Firstly*, the sacraments and the liturgy, the *Mysterion*, through which the mysteries are revealed using words and signs, reaching us through our senses (body). *Secondly*, the Sacred Scriptures, authored by the Holy Spirit, who inspired the members of the Hebrew and Christian communities. It is through Sacred Scripture that one encounters the person of Christ and is drawn to love Him (heart). *Thirdly*, the tradition and doctrine of the Church, through which the treasure of faith and belief, unpacked through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, enables ever deeper understandings (mind). Additionally, O'Shea highlights the crucial role of prayer, each person's intimate dialogue with God, leading to an increase in the life of grace (O'Shea, in press).

O'Shea (in press) proposes the authentic use of the liturgical spiral curriculum. The Church's liturgical year provides a comprehensive framework upon which the essential elements of Catholic religious education can be built, incorporating sacraments, Scripture, doctrine, prayer and the moral life. O'Shea recommends following a liturgical spiral curriculum much more closely than what is currently the practice in Catholic schools: a way of uniting the school to the whole believing community on the journey through life, ever deepening in the essential themes, and including the major feasts of the Church and the liturgical seasons. While this could integrate naturally even with a unit-based curriculum, its strength is in the assumption that the teacher is attending weekly liturgy and attempting to integrate the insights gained from the liturgy of the word into his/her daily life, and to share this with students.

O'Shea (in press) unpacked Montessori's phases of development in the context of the Pre-school-Year 6 renaming and sub-dividing them as (a) The Data Gatherer (3-6-year-olds), (b) The "Big Picture" Seeker (6-9-year-olds), (c) Testing and Analysing (9-12-year-olds) and (d) Personalising and Reconstructing (the adolescent years). The key developmental factors of each phase are considered in the light of Catholic religious education in a school, rather than parish, setting. O'Shea outlines teaching practices, incorporating contemporary pedagogical practices such as formative assessment, microteaching, reciprocal learning, choice-making, intrinsic motivation, peer learning and inquiry/project-based learning. He offers a continuum of religious education, moving through the grades and the terms of the school year, while pointing out the danger of covering the themes in either an overly simplistic way, or presuming the children know and understand more than they really do.

#### 2.3.5.4 Montessori and Cavalletti inspired Religious Education in twenty-first century Catholic school settings: Challenge and Response

Until this study, O'Shea's proposed method has not been trialled through design-based research, and direct scholarly responses have not yet emerged. However, direct and indirect critical comment relating to Montessori and Cavalletti-inspired religious education in the context of Catholic schools do exist, addressing (a) *the relevance of a catechetical approach in contemporary Catholic schools* (b) *the curricular and assessment expectations of schools*, (c) *the demand on teachers in terms of materials, training and levels of faith commitment*.

##### *a) the relevance of a catechetical approach in contemporary Catholic schools*

Critics argue that since Catholic schools today have students of diverse confessional faiths or none at all, a clearly catechetical approach is not appropriate. As Grajczonek (2013, p. 5) puts it "while some do come with a religious context, the reality is that most do not". Children lack prior knowledge of church seasons and church attendance. They have witnessed very little sacramental life and, in such a climate, the anticipated response cannot be presumed (Grajczonek & Truasheim, 2017; Rossiter, 2011). In such environments, it is argued by these authors that religious education should be educational, not catechetical. Since the Cavalletti-inspired approaches are catechetical, and appropriate for a parish setting, some maintain that

they are not suited to the school setting (Grajczonek & Truasheim, 2017). Some researchers point to evidence that all children appear to be spiritually sensitive and respond with joy, wonder and peace in diverse ways, through the lens of their own religious traditions, and that these ways need to be respected (Eaude, 2011; Grajczonek, 2013; Hay & Nye, 2006).

Others, however, maintain that it is important and entirely possible to demonstrate respect and openness from a confessional perspective, and that Catholic educators need to be faith-formed and personally committed in order to express meaningful openness to others (Franchi, 2016; Rymarz, 2016). Leonard Franchi (2013) presents Scotland's *This is Our Faith* programme, which synthesises catechesis and religious education, demonstrating the viability and importance of maintaining the Catholic viewpoint within a plural society and classroom. Such a perspective seems eminently sensible, since the parents' choice of school is made freely, and it is a fundamental right for religious groups to found confessional schools.

*b) The curricular and assessment expectations of schools*

It is argued by some that in the contemporary Catholic school, religious education is to be approached as an academic discipline, shaped along the lines of other disciplines, with programming and assessment requirements that are, by inference, incompatible with the Cavalletti approach (Garrido, 2008; Grajczonek & Truasheim, 2017). In addition, some consider the scope offered by the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is too narrow, suitable only for younger children or only to be considered as a part of the programme (Gibson, 2001, Hyde 2004). By contrast, others argue that the structure and requirements of other disciplines are inadequate on their own for religious education and that the holistic approach is more suited to religious education (Murray, 2012; O'Shea, in press; White & Janowiak, 2012). Moreover, the principle purpose of religious education in Catholic schools is to meet the Catholic Church's intent to lead the child to an encounter with God (Franchi, 2013; Rymarz, 2015).

c) *The demand on teachers in terms of materials, training and levels faith commitment*

Concerns about the viability of the SALT Approach, so far as teachers and schools are concerned, hits several levels. In practical terms, the preparation of materials and the required training would seem to make it impractical (Garrido, 2008; Gibson, 2001).

Incompatibility is also seen in the Montessori-influenced religious education environments which are relatively static, with the same materials available to the students at all times. Jan Grajczonek and Maureen Truasheim (2017), critique Berryman's Godly Play, which, incidentally, cannot be aligned with the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, although many tend to equate it as such. They argue that in today's learning spaces, classroom materials and display are constantly changing in order to meet children's learning needs, stating "Children's imagination must be stimulated and provoked by the provision of creative, open-ended and ever-changing resources, activities and experiences" (p. 179). This seems to reflect a belief that constant change is somehow always necessary, instead of trusting in the spiritual potential of the child, whose capacity to inwardly ponder and imagine does not always need the degree of external stimulation that is currently seen as indispensable.

On the spiritual level, it is widely acknowledged that teacher faith commitment in Catholic schools is on the decline (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017; Rymarz, 2015). Rymarz and Belmonte (2014) found that religious education coordinators frequently did not meet all three conditions required of them, as proposed by D'Antonio, Dillon and Gautier (2013), namely (a) to say that the Church is the most important part of their life, (b) that they would never leave the Church and (c) that they attend Mass at least weekly. There are scant qualitative studies of religious education teachers' levels of knowledge, belief and practice. However, Crotty-Morrison (2015) conducted such a study into the religious knowledge, beliefs and faith practices of Catholic high school teachers. Her study revealed some interesting statistics concerning knowledge and belief. For example, 54.2% had good knowledge of Scripture and 43.6% believed in Scripture; 71.1% had good knowledge of the doctrine of salvation and 75.8 % believed in that teaching. If such statistics match those of primary Catholic schools, or perhaps prove to be even more dramatic, the

SALT Approach faces a challenge. Nevertheless, the hope is that teachers, through being mentored in the SALT Approach, will be inspired to explore their faith and belief more deeply.

## 2.4 Review of Aspects of Contemporary Educational Research

### 2.4.1 Opening comments

This study's theoretical framework is Catholic Education as proposed by the Church, with its conceptual framework being the Mystagogical Catechetical Method of O'Shea. The latter is built on Montessorian guidelines and Cavalletti's parish-based *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. This section of the literature review explores aspects of contemporary educational research to identify points of consonance, perceived challenges and possible contradictions when applied to the SALT Approach.

The basic framework chosen for identifying relevant contemporary educational research findings was the *Teaching and Learning Research Programme* of the Economic and Social Research Council (James & Pollard, 2011). It was a government-financed, economically-driven study aimed to structure twenty-first century education to suit the needs of a materialistic, consumerist society (Mahmoodi, Godde, Reuter, & Voelcker-Rehage, 2012; Miller, 2000). However, while it has this particular perspective, not essentially consonant with this study, it was a large study that listed ten core pedagogical principles for effective teaching and learning. This will be followed by a closer look at other relevant aspects of educational research: (a) outcomes-based education, (b) the holistic paradigm, and (c) issues of student behaviour management and literacy.

### 2.4.2 Core pedagogical research principles informing practice

The *Teaching and Learning Research Programme* (TLRP), presented ten principles for effective teaching and learning (James & Pollard, 2011; Hogan, 2011; Earl, 2011). These are listed in Table 1, below. The first column lists each principle and

the second column provides some indication of the concepts to be considered under each principle, as selected for this literature review.



Table 1: ESRC's Teaching and Learning Research Programme's core pedagogical principles for effective pedagogy as described in *Improving Teaching and Learning in Schools, A Commentary by the Teaching and Learning Research Programme* (James, M., & Pollard, A. (Eds.), 2006)

The principles, as listed and described by TRLP	For this literature review, these principles encompass such concepts as:
<p>1 Effective teaching and learning equips learners for life.</p> <p>Learning should aim to help individuals and groups to develop the intellectual, personal and social resources that will enable them to participate as active citizens, contribute to economic development and flourish as individuals in a diverse and changing society. This may mean expanding conceptions of worthwhile learning outcomes and taking seriously issues of equity and social justice for all.</p>	<p>Lifelong learning: setting up for learning beyond school.</p> <p>Learning how to learn.</p> <p>Learning dispositions and confidence.</p> <p>Recognising opportunities to grow as persons and members of society.</p> <p>Growth in social-emotional relationships, behaviour and participation.</p>
<p>2 Effective teaching and learning engages with valued forms of knowledge.</p> <p>Teaching and learning should engage learners with the big ideas, key processes, modes of discourse and narratives of subjects so that they understand what constitutes quality and standards in particular disciplines.</p>	<p><b>Student focus:</b></p> <p>Ensuring that students are exposed to worthwhile knowledge and big ideas in particular disciplines, in such a way that they clearly understand the value of that knowledge, according to their developmental stage.</p>
<p>3 Effective teaching and learning recognises the importance of prior experience.</p> <p>Teaching and learning should take account of what learners know already in order to plan their next steps. This includes building on prior learning but also taking account of the personal and cultural experiences of different groups of learners.</p>	<p>Taking the time to find out about what students know already, so as to take students from where they are to where they need to go.</p> <p>Overcoming the pressures brought on by the overloaded curriculum, and the lockstep demand of teaching units which can be an obstacle to deep and securely based learning.</p> <p>Do teachers assume levels of prior knowledge and experience of children?</p> <p>Understanding and reaching students from other cultural backgrounds.</p>
<p>4 Effective teaching and learning requires teachers to scaffold learning.</p> <p>Teachers should provide activities and support learners as they move forward, not just intellectually but also socially</p>	<p>Appropriate scaffolding of learning.</p> <p>Allowing time for students to consolidate learning.</p> <p>Allowing students time for meaningful working with others.</p>

<p>and emotionally, so that when these supports are removed, the learning is secure.</p>	<p>Incorporation of peer-supported activities as a type of scaffolding. Using hands-on materials and online resources as types of scaffolding. Demonstrate, model, mentor and coach for learning: involving adults and students in this process.</p>
<p>5 Effective teaching and learning needs assessment to be congruent with learning.</p> <p>Assessment should help to advance learning as well as determine whether learning has taken place. It should be carried out so that it measures learning outcomes dependably and also provides feedback for future learning.</p>	<p>A deep understanding of the value of formative assessment. Identifying new ways of effective assessment. Ways of assessing students who are reluctant or incoherent writers. Assessing deep learning and long-term retention effectively. Recognising that written assessments can undervalue what students really know. Effective ways of assessing formally and informally. The impact of over-assessment on learning.</p>
<p>6 Effective teaching and learning promotes the active engagement of the learner.</p> <p>A chief goal of teaching and learning should be the promotion of learners' independence and autonomy.</p> <p>This involves acquiring a repertoire of learning strategies and practices, developing positive learning attitudes, and having confidence in oneself as a good learner.</p>	<p>Self-regulation and autonomy in learning. Intrinsic motivation in learning. Fostering engagement with learning. The importance of <i>flow</i>. Cultivating good learning practices and dispositions. Project-based-style learning. Allowing relevant personal interests and preferred learning styles to guide learning. What are the constraints that undermine self-regulated learning?</p>
<p>7 Effective teaching and learning fosters individual and social processes and outcomes. Learning is a social activity. Learners to be encouraged to work with others, to share ideas and to build knowledge together. Giving learners a voice is both an expectation and a right.</p>	<p>Peer cooperation and collaboration in learning. Facilitating/ activating appropriate social skills in students. Encouraging self-reflection and reflection relating to deep learning of valued knowledge. Meaningful learning using new technologies: getting past the novelty of technology.</p>

<p>8 Effective teaching and learning recognises the significance of informal learning. Informal learning, such as learning out of school, should be recognised as being at least as significant as formal learning and should be valued and used in formal processes.</p>	<p>Understanding of cultural differences among students.  Students learn effectively when they bring their own cultural contexts to the learning.  Recognising home and school opportunities for learning.  Valuing special expertise and talents of students and their family members.  Explicit home-school knowledge exchange activities.</p>
<p>9 Effective teaching and learning depends on teacher learning. The need for teachers to learn continuously in order to develop their knowledge and skill, and adapt and develop their roles, especially through classroom inquiry, should be recognised and supported.</p>	<p>Importance of teachers' good knowledge &amp; understanding of (a) Domain content knowledge (b) Pedagogical content knowledge &amp; skills and (c) General pedagogical knowledge &amp; skills  Adequate support of teacher learning and professional development.  Recognition that we are all learners.  Finding time for teacher reflection and personal deep learning.</p>
<p>10 Effective teaching and learning demands consistent policy frameworks with support for teaching and learning as their primary focus.   Policies at national, local and institutional levels need to recognise the fundamental importance of teaching and learning. They should be designed to create effective learning environments in which all learners can thrive.</p>	<p>Institutional and system level policies shape the learning environment.  Policy coherence and consistency.  Policies that foster deep learning rather than excessive bureaucratic compliance.  Senior management support for innovation, allowing it to become sustainable.</p>

#### 2.4.2.1 First Principle: Effective pedagogy equips learners for life.

This first general principle sets the scene for education and indicates the ultimate task for educators. Researchers ask how educators can equip learners for life. Countries adopt different approaches to address this. Interestingly, Finland features high on the scale of measured success over the past years, and its approach is a holistic one (Sahlberg, 2013; Tirri & Ubani, 2013). Studies found that fostering autonomy, self-regulation and self-reflection in the classroom prepares students for life and increases motivation, even in contemporary challenging classrooms (Hudley, Graham & Taylor, 2007; Lüftenegger, Schober, Van de Schoot, Wagner, Finsterwald, M, & Spiel, 2012; Meece, Anderman, & Anderman, 2006; Moller, Deci & Ryan, 2011; Schunk & Zimmerman, 2012; Zumbunn, Tadlock, & Roberts, 2011).

#### 2.4.2.2 Second Principle: Effective pedagogy engages with valued forms of knowledge

This principle, as Hogan (2011) attests, reflects the desire to re-focus on content knowledge as a vital aspect of learning. Effectively transferring valuable domain-specific knowledge is important in the twenty-first century and knowledge should play an important part in curriculum design (Hattie, 2012; Young, 2008). Kereluik, Mishra, Fahnoe and Terry (2013) found that disciplinary knowledge remains important for both teachers and students. Learning is movement from factual/ surface learning when students interact and manipulate knowledge, towards deep learning, and finally can use that knowledge in new ways (Frey, Fisher, & Hattie, 2017). These ideas are foundational in John Biggs' development of SOLO taxonomy, which is commonly applied in secondary and tertiary education. Pam Hook, however, applied these ideas, offering materials suitable for K-6 school years (Biggs, 1999; Hook & Mills, 2011).

Linking with this study, Montessori sought to capitalise on two types of interest that lead to learning: personal, subjective interests and universally valued topic interests with a skilled teacher knowing how to unify the two (Lillard, 2005). Lillard (2005) summarises a plethora of studies on interest and learning that support the immense impact of student-interest on learning.

#### 2.4.2.3 Third Principle: Effective pedagogy recognises the importance of prior experience

Prior knowledge opens the way to future learning (Dochy, Segers, & Buehl, 1999), forming deep foundations for learning and instruction. Damage is done, if they are not given due importance (Ambrose et al., 2010; Darling Hammond, 2008). When teachers respectfully encourage students to integrate their existing, often cultural, knowledge, with new knowledge there are significant benefits for learning, particularly in culturally mixed classrooms (Boettcher, 2007; Joy & Kolb, 2009; Schunk, 2005; Villegas & Lucas 2007).

Linda Darling Hammond (2008), basing her work on John Bransford (2000) expands on the principle that *effective pedagogy recognises the importance of prior experience*, indicating that students also need to develop specific competencies with a deep foundation of factual knowledge. They need to know how to organise and use the knowledge meaningfully. Finally, students need to employ meta-cognitive wisdom and become self-directed learners. These aspects, when combined, empower students since they know where they are at, where they are going, and what it looks like (Hattie, 2012). The Montessori paradigm directly involves students in setting goals for learning and deadlines for completion. Teacher-prepared task and check-lists encourage autonomy and personal commitment to learning. All this facilitates intrinsic, rather than extrinsic motivation, reflecting Montessori principles (Lillard, 2005).

#### 2.4.2.4 Fourth Principle: Effective pedagogy requires learning to be scaffolded

Supportive teacher-student interactions include scaffolding learning, along with close monitoring, individualised formative feedback, and timely support (Hau-Fai Law, Joughin, Kennedy, Tse, & Ming Yu, 2007; Kong & Song, 2013; Lucas, Villegas, & Freedson-Gonzalez, 2008; Tharp & Daltonb, 2007). Frey, Fisher and Hattie (2017) found that teachers sometimes “tended to prematurely roll out” metacognitive strategies before acquiring sufficient foundational knowledge. Scaffolding will be ineffective when there is a mismatch of expectations, since students need sufficient

content knowledge before they can proceed to higher order thinking skills, concept mapping, discussion and reciprocal teaching.

The learner's inner aspects of the zone of proximal development are personal knowledge, skills, attitudes and interests and they form the inner scaffolds of learning (Boettcher, 2007; Silver, 2011). The teacher's role is to detect accurately where students are at and ignite students' personal awareness of the same (Boettcher, 2007), facilitating relevant scaffolding. Visible learning is dominant in today's teaching and learning arena, with explicit learning intentions and success criteria, ideally co-constructed with students, common practice (Ambrose, Bridges, DiPietro, Lovett, & Norman, 2010; Black & Wiliam, 2009; Hattie & Yates, 2013; Hattie & Timperley, 2007).

#### 2.4.2.5 Fifth Principle: Effective pedagogy needs assessment to be congruent with learning

Black and Wiliam (1998) set the scene for the assessment revolution, firing up the world of educators to realign assessment priorities, moving 'summative' to the back stalls and 'formative' front and centre. Good formative feedback and assessment are collaborative, with high-quality interactions involving predictions, explanations, justifications and reasoning (Baines, Blatchford, & Chowne, 2007; Clark, 2010).

However, there are challenges, with busy teachers tending to teach to the test, using summative assessment in order to ensure material is covered (Birenbaum et al., 2015; Hogan 2011). Micro-standardised assessments and outcomes-based learning can impede formative assessment, which equips students for effective learning (Clark, 2012; Wiliam & Leahy, 2007). Effective formative assessment incorporates deep discussion and questioning and empowers students to take ownership of their learning (self-regulation), to teach each other (reciprocal learning) (Wiliam, 2012).

Theoretically, formative assessment in Australia follows Black and Wiliam's (1998) work, focusing on feedback, self-assessment, peer assessment and strategic questioning. However, the reality is that, despite the provision of professional development, many teachers do not regularly use assessment for learning, as they

struggle with a plethora of conflicting pressures (Birenbaum et al., 2015). This includes preparing students for national summative assessments: the National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) (Birenbaum et al., 2015).

In discussing Montessorian principles, Lillard (2005) alludes to the studies of Bouffard, Vezeau and Bordeleau (1998), indicating that learning and mastery goals for primary-aged students were intimately related to self-regulation and achievement. Interestingly, one of the more radical beliefs Montessori maintained was that exams stifle true learning (Standing, 1998).

#### 2.4.2.6 Sixth Principle: Effective pedagogy promotes the active engagement of learners

This literature review focuses on this through two perspectives: *fostering engagement with learning through a rich learning environment* and *self-regulated learning*.

*Fostering engagement with learning through a rich learning environment* comes about through establishing a positive and respectful atmosphere, a well-ordered environment, respecting learning time and clear behavioural expectations (Creemers & Reezigt, 1996; Kyriakides, L., Creemers, B., Antoniou, P., & Demetriou, D., 2010; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-Alessandro, 2013; van de Grift & Houtveen, 2006). Learning is hampered by the absence of suitable material and facilities (Likoko, Mutsotso, & Nasongo, 2013). Today's pedagogies encourage learners to control their learning flow (Kong & Song, 2013) and the environment needs to equip individuals and groups with tools, resources and people. While many studies focus on providing new technologies, the availability of two and three-dimensional materials are valuable and important, accommodating students' distinct approaches to learning and reaching an understanding on a personal level (Boettcher, 2007; Kolb, & Kolb, 2012; Parsons & Taylor, 2011). Students still learn through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation. In this, the holistic approach of David Kolb has had significant impact. Students have preferred modes of operating and these need to be accommodated (Boyatzis & Kolb, 1995; Kolb, 2012).

*Self-regulated learning* is intertwined with student motivation and occurs when students value what they are learning and set about the task, attentively thinking, planning, self-monitoring and reflecting on the learning (Deci & Ryan, 2011; Guay, Chanal, Ratelle, Marsh, Larose, & Boivin, 2010; Zumbunn et al., 2011). When this happens, the mind is cleared of distracting thoughts and access to quiet spaces, and quality time to spend on tasks is appreciated (Zumbunn et al., 2011, quoting Winne, 1995). Primary-age students need considerable direct instruction to acquire self-regulated learning skills, involving modelling, scaffolding and feedback (Vandeveld, Van Keer, & de Wever, 2011; Zimmerman, 2008). Poor student behaviour and low motivation severely hamper learning (Thapa et al., 2013). However, concentration and attention can lead to decreased aggression and improved social skills. In fact, some problems stem precisely from inappropriate matching of activity to student skill set, leading to frustration and anxiety, manifested in poor behaviour. Having clear goals, receiving unambiguous feedback, working without worry and a loss of self-consciousness lead to intrinsic enjoyment, total involvement in an activity and automatic self-regulation (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999; Lillard, 2005; Urmston & Hewison, 2014).

#### 2.4.2.7 Seventh Principle: Effective pedagogy fosters both individual and social processes and outcomes

Cooperative and collaborative learning are well embedded in schools, though current research indicates that it is still a challenge for many teachers. Difficulties relate to adequate on-going professional learning, inadequate preparation time, behaviour management, inadequate conflict resolution, and teacher reluctance to forego control (Baines, Blatchford, & Webster, 2015; Gillies & Boyle, 2011).

Galton, Hargreaves and Pell (2009) offer a valuable indicator relevant to this study. Group work needs to compliment, not replace, traditional styles of teaching. Group work is effective if teachers receive ongoing training, incorporating behaviour and conversation guidelines, group decision making, reasoning and explanation skills. Teachers need to understand that all work requires thinking and wait time (time to ponder and reflect). Students need time to share their learning. Lastly, teachers need to avoid taking over the learning.



A distinct angle of looking at individual and social processes in learning is the place of talk in the classroom. Talk is central to learning, and appropriately involving it in today's classroom is described by Alexander (2004) as *dialogic teaching* (Alexander 2008; Dawes, 2004; Mercer & Dawes 2008). Alexander (2004) reminded the teaching world that true dialogue is pivotal in learning and is a powerful pedagogical tool. The teacher's role is to foster opportunities for student talk, while, in fact, much classroom talk is teacher-sided. Effective questioning is vital, with poor questioning failing to foster true learning, because the teacher remains ignorant of the student's true understanding. Alexander (2008) describes the scenario that he encountered in classrooms in America and England in his international study of dialogue in classrooms:

[Yet] was what we recorded really conversation? Like other aspects of the American and English teaching which we observed, such interaction was hedged by ambiguity and dissonance, being conversational in intonation, lexis and syntax, but rather less so in content and control. And in England, the ostensibly heuristic device of mainly open-ended questions, coupled with the genial paralinguistic features of friendly conversation masked an essentially closed agenda, for only certain answers were accepted and teachers would go on asking or paraphrasing their questions and cueing or even mouthing the required answers until these, at last, emerged (Alexander, 2008, p104).

The concept of dialogic learning and democratic classrooms continues to be researched, expanding on the need for worthwhile classroom talk and how to foster it (Flitton & Warwick, 2013; Mitchell, 2010; Pierce & Giles, 2008). Flitton and Warwick (2013) identify that talking can be frightening and requires an atmosphere of trust and confidence and that accountability demands can curtail valuable talk-time.

#### 2.4.2.8 Eighth Principle: Effective pedagogy recognises the significance of informal learning

Informal learning can take many forms and includes tapping into family and cultural heritage, bringing opportunities for relevance, consolidation and richness to formal

learning (Bruner 1996; Eshach, 2007; Vom Lehn, Heath, & Hindmarsh, 2001). The value of informal learning is that it is intrinsically motivating (Czikszentmihalyi & Hermanson 1995; Maarschalk, 1988). Informal learning can be fascinating and engaging, however, when the novelty factor dominates, it can side-track learning (Eshach, 2007; Rennie & McClafferty, 1996). This is a relevant consideration, because the SALT Approach involves student choices, and the introduction of novel ways of reflecting on concepts and topics, and the fascination factor may outweigh the anticipated focus on the learning.

#### 2.4.2.9 Ninth Principle: Effective pedagogy depends on teacher learning

Effective teaching depends on a teacher's own learning and the quality of the teacher is the single most important aspect in a school (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012).

Quality teachers will be proficient in three areas: in *domain content knowledge*, in *pedagogical content knowledge*, and in *general pedagogical knowledge* (Baumert, Kunter, Blum, Brunner, Voss, Jordan ... & Tsai, 2010; Lucas et al., 2008; Reiser, 2004; Rotherham & Willingham, 2010).

Teachers possessing superior *domain content knowledge* are equipped to offer clear learning directions (Hattie, 2012; Tirri & Ubani, 2013). As a critic of micro-accountability, Berlach (2004) points out the mitigating effect of the teacher's own preparation and depth of understanding when faced with the danger of fragmented learning, which is one of the risks of an outcomes-based education. Applying this to the domain of religious education, the research already mentioned above (see 2.6.3.3) indicates that there are challenges in this area, with the declining numbers of teachers who have the depth of knowledge and understanding required (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017; Rymarz, 2015; Rymarz & Belmonte, 2014).

*Pedagogical content knowledge and skills* involve understanding the age appropriate or domain appropriate application of pedagogy (Cerbin & Kopp, 2006; Schulman, 1987). Current research supports that while pedagogical principles can be applied across the K-12 spectrum, they are realised very differently through the years. Pedagogical considerations of this sort impact on the development of self-regulated learning at a lower primary level and they are of particular importance for this study, with its emphasis on self-regulated learning. The research of Adagideli (2015) found

that young children can indeed self-regulate, but appropriate coaching, the use of support materials and the development of attainable meta-cognitive activities all require age-sensitive pedagogical approaches. Much depends on the teacher-activator who plays a crucial role in activating effective learning, by ensuring that the student can personally engage with the experience or concepts (Hattie, 2009). Bausmith & Barry (2011) explored ways of facilitating professional learning communities and proposed the development of online videos geared towards enabling teachers to see precisely what the expert teacher has in mind when suggesting certain skills and strategies.

Also relating to *Pedagogical content knowledge*, Hattie's mega-studies identify that there are elements of effective teaching that are unlikely to change, although there new perspectives can emerge. Hattie's (2009) comprehensive meta-analysis, using data collected globally from 1980 to 2008 presents quantitatively-based effect sizes, identifying levels of success with regard to teaching practices and learning experiences. An effect size of 0.4 marks the basic level of progress: one year of progress in one year of time. Below 0.4 indicates a decrease in basic effectiveness. Above 0.4 marks an increased effectiveness. O'Shea (in press) co-related effective pedagogical practices identified by Hattie with those found in the Montessorian approach. These were (a) self-report grades (effect size 1.44); (b) Piagetian programs (effect size 1.28); (c) formative assessment (effect size 0.9); (d) micro-teaching (effect size 0.88); (e) student classroom behaviour (effect size 0.8); (f) reciprocal teaching (effect size 0.72); (g) positive teacher-student relationships (effect size 0.72); (h) spaced practice as opposed to massed practice (effect size 0.71). These core aspects of Montessori's and Cavalletti's pedagogies, were built into the SALT Approach.

*General pedagogical knowledge* traditionally includes clear presentation and communication skills, well-structured lessons, good pacing and effective classroom management (Hogan, Rabinowitz, & Craven, 2003; Vieluf, Mahmoodi, Godde, Reuter, & Voelcker-Rehage, 2012). Vieluf et al. (2012) found that quality teaching needs to balance teacher-directed and student-regulated learning and that effective and deep learning takes place when (a) students are clear about goals, (b) when group

work is effectively implemented, (c) when students participate in planning, and (d) when students work independently for longer periods of time.

*Professional learning*, encompassing each of these aspects, is an ongoing process and there are distinct ways it occurs. Research validates that the most effective form of professional learning happens ‘on-site’, anchored in the direct teaching experiences of the teacher and the school community (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Du-Four, 2014; Smith, Wilson, & Corbett, 2009; Woodland & Mazur, 2015). Teachers require structured time to work collegially with others (Collinson & Fedoruk, 2001; Hogan, 2011; Murray & Passy, 2014; Lorente Prieto, Salanova Soria, Martínez, & Schaufeli, 2008; Dickie, Elling, Schmeck & Leutner, 2015; Tan, Talaue, & Kim, 2014). Interestingly, Finnish primary teachers spend an average of 15 hours a week in the classroom, as compared to Australia’s 22.5 hours a week (OECD, 2014). These are all valuable pointers for this study, which aimed to involve teachers in a design-based research study, and a consideration of how the SALT Approach could be effectively implemented by teachers.

An additional factor, which cannot be simply overlooked in twenty-first century education, is the effective use of technology in sharing content knowledge, and technological pedagogical content knowledge itself (Handal, Campbell, Cavanagh, Petocz, & Kelly, 2013). Such skills require specialised training, both domain-specific and more generally. Handal et al., (2013) investigated teacher expertise relating to newer technologies and found a need for generic skills acquisition as well as domain-specific ones. Teachers are expected to use these technologies. Already time-poor teachers’ abilities to use technologies effectively, can result in a great deal of lost time and ineffective learning. In addition, inadequate support, location of pedagogically sound digital resources, technical glitches and poor technical support can be time-wasting deterrents (Handal et al., 2013). Such issues are likely to impact, to some extent, on the implementation of the SALT Approach in the school and classroom setting.

#### 2.4.2.10 Tenth Principle: Effective pedagogy demands consistent policy frameworks with support for teaching and learning as its primary focus

Policy frameworks are intimately bound with leadership at all levels. Adequate preparation and peer-collaboration under good leadership lead to high-level opportunities for students. Policy makers need to effectively target enduring and value-added professional development (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012). Furthermore, good leaders support initiatives at the grassroots level (Datnow, 2007; Sahlberg, 2011). Californian District Schools, implementing these concepts, reported significant improvements in learning (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012).

At a government level, policies shape the educational landscape. Birenbaum et al.'s (2015) *International trends in the implementation of assessment for learning: Implications for policy and practice* describes the on-going tensions, with demands for accountability and the push for improved student learning sending contradictory messages to school leaders and teachers. Research indicates that academic results are higher in countries that invest heavily in professional development, and where, as in Finland, there is less government control, teachers are valued and their salaries high, both schools and teachers have much autonomy and there is a more holistic approach to education (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013; Jakku-Sihvonen, Tissari, Ots, & Uusiautti, 2012; Kansanen, 1990; Sahlberg, 2013; Uusiautti & Maatta, 2013).

Here Fullan, 2016, describes the role of the school principal as one of developing professional capital of schools by investing in their human, social and decisional capital. This utilitarian terminology can offer a relevant perspective. The individuals of the school are the human capital, and if they are experts in terms of content and pedagogical knowledge, they are of high capital value. If the school works well collaboratively, the social capital is rich. If those in leadership roles are capable decision makers, there is good decisional capital (Fullan, 2016). Teaching and learning benefits if there is strong investment in each of these capitals. This can occur even if some of the “human capital” is low, so long as the individuals are ready to learn from the “social capital”. By contrast, “high human capital” (i.e. the expert teacher) is unlikely to remain long in a school if overall improvement does not occur (Fullan, 2016, p. 44).

Good, leadership-driven professional development takes place daily in a positive, trusting and collaborative climate rather than through formal appraisals (Brookhart & Moss, 2013; Coldren & Spillane, 2007; Fullan, 2016; Robinson, 2007). However, it can be difficult to reach, given the unending series of demands on busy, time poor teachers and principals (Bryck, 2015, Kennedy, 2010). Bryck (2015) pinpoints the constant introduction of new solutions, terming it as “solutionitis”. He aptly describes the situation: “We become disappointed when promised results do not readily emerge, and then we just move on to the next new idea” (Bryck, 2015, p. 468).

A valuable contribution from the perspective of this design-based research study is that professional learning communities would do better by engaging educators at the grassroots level, using a design-based research approach, where researchers and practitioners work together addressing issues to be explored (Amiel & Reeves, 2008; Bryck, 2015; Coburn & Penuel, 2016; Fishman et al., 2013; Fullan, 2016). Hogan (2011) suggests *in situ* professional development where five or six staff, led by an expert non-executive teacher, work together on priority innovations that are evidence-based, of high value, highly scaffolded and extended over three to five years.

#### 2.4.3 Other educational considerations and perceived challenges for twenty-first century education

##### 2.4.3.1 Opening comments

This section considers aspects of twenty-first century education pertinent to this study, under the headings of (a) outcomes-based education, (b) the emerging *Fourth Way* perceived as inching towards a more holistic approach, and (c) a brief consideration of the implications of an outcomes-based education for Catholic religious education.

#### 2.4.3.2 Outcomes-based education

Outcomes-based (and now standard-based education) are the accepted approach in schools today, Australian Catholic schools included. The SALT Approach, while coming from a holistic perspective, if to be effective in the current context, needs to function within an outcomes-based learning environment. Outcomes Based Education (OBE), stemming from Spady's model of instructional management reshaped the educational paradigm and rapidly became standard (Spady & Marshall, 1991). OBE attempts to build a curriculum upon defined outcomes, precise measurement of achievement, multiple assessment strategies and the provision of sufficient time and assistance for the students (Lorenzen, 1999; Riley, 2012).

However, critics maintain that while OBE presents as a learner-centred approach, it is neither learner-centred nor teacher-centred, but essentially economics-centred. They point out that OBE is a quality-productivity tool rather than a learner-centred one, perpetuating the factory model of education (Berlach, 2004; Berlach & O'Neill, 2008; Capper & Jamison, 1993; Riley, 2012). The curricular reversal that OBE requires, by identifying the required outcomes and then creating the learning experience that will bring it about, can lead to excessive outcomes focus (Holt, 1995; Lorenzen, 1999). Others criticise the complex language, the fragmentation of learning, trivialisation of knowledge and hyper-accountability, binding teachers to a complex world of micro-accounting a myriad of outcomes (Berlach, 2004; Jansen, 1998). Thinking through minutiae in preparation for the learning experience and assessment, together with the administration and follow-up can drain a teacher's energies and consume valuable time (Jansen, 1998; Holt, 1995).

#### 2.4.3.3 The emerging 'Fourth Way': Inching back towards the holistic paradigm

Hargreaves & Shirley's (2009) *The Fourth Way* suggests a revised way of approaching education and educational change. To put this in context, the First, Second and Third Ways refer to approaches since the 1960s. The First Way allowed for teacher independence and innovative approaches, with little accountability. The Second Way of the 1980s introduced ranking, competition and standards-based reforms, with the goal of reaching consistent standards with market-driven

accountability tied in with funding (Harris, 2011). In the late 1990s and into the twenty-first century, the 3<sup>rd</sup> Way unfolded with its data driven decision-making. With it came a sense of loss of freedom, independence and creativity for teachers and students alike and the micro-management approach bore little evidence in results. This loss was rightly criticised, with Hargreaves & Shirley (2009) maintaining that it would lead to “alienating students, corrupting classrooms, manipulating educators, and deceiving the public” (p. 22).

The Fourth Way proposed by Hargreaves and Shirley (2009) aims to take the good and leave the bad of the three ways that have shaped the past sixty years, fostering a sense of vision and purpose. It takes a "bottom up" approach, emphasising democracy and professionalism. "Pointers for Practice" (Hargreaves and Shirley, 2009, p. 200) are based on research findings in Finland, Canada, Singapore and some British and United States initiatives. Hargreaves & Shirley in Preedy, & Open University (2012) propose the essentiality of restoring autonomy in education and a move away from data-driven work and micromanagement. These ideas require partnerships anchored in trust and respect, and mindful teaching and learning (Krokfors, L., Kynäslähti, H., Stenberg, K., Toom, A., Maaranen, K., Jyrhämä, R., et al., 2011). Sahlberg (2011) maintains that the Fourth Way can be implemented across distinct educational systems, facilitating learning in our post-modern knowledge society. Exploration of the Fourth Way approach is growing internationally as countries look to Finland, Singapore and Alberta, Canada for inspiration.

Sahlberg (2011) identified the holistic factors influencing Finland’s success in teaching and learning and these include recruiting academically competent candidates, structuring training around research and reflection, ensuring teachers are knowledgeable and skilled in both theory and practice, as well as in curriculum content. In Finland, teacher evaluation is informal and there are no standardised, outcomes-based student assessments and the pedagogical paradigm is holistic. Finland’s National Curriculum guides content knowledge, while schools attend to curriculum planning. The holistic paradigm influences Finland’s approach to assessment and accountability.



According to Niemi, Toom, & Kallioniemi's (2016) *The Miracle of Education* students are rarely tested at a national level, teachers and instruction are never evaluated, and the school principal is considered to be the pedagogical leader responsible for the quality of the education. Schools engage in annual self-appraisals. Student assessment is criteria-based and mostly formative, with end-of-year summative assessments. There are sample-based national assessments, with a sample size of 5-10% but school rankings are virtually non-existent. These assessments can occur in Years 3, 5, 7 and 9, but more commonly in Year 9. The data from these sample-based assessments are used to ensure basic educational equity. Each school involved receives its own data, together with some reference data.

The Fourth Way carries implications relating to the effective use of outcomes in the curriculum, with deep-learning prominent (Fullan & Langworthy, 2013; Fullan, Langworthy, & Barber 2014). Fullan & Langworthy (2013) articulate the skills of deep learning as linked to character development, citizenship, communication, critical thinking, creativity and imagination, pointing out that these skills require effective and innovative assessment methods. Unless effective assessment procedures are found to measure deep learning, system constraints will oppose innovation (Fullan, Langworthy & Barber, 2014).

The term 'holistic' begins to gain traction, being mentioned eight times in Fullan, Langworthy and Barber's *A Rich Seam* (2014). The Holistic Paradigm, into which The SALT Approach fits, requires a great change in terms of policy direction. Good pedagogy is at risk when the driving factors and financial support come from market-driven forces (Datnow, 2011, Harris, 2011; Sahlberg, 2011).

#### 2.4.3.4 Catholic religious education and outcomes-based education

The use of learning outcomes requires judicious use when it comes to Catholic Religious Education. Outcomes-based education's observable indicators, though valuable, remain only indicators when it comes to the human spirit and intellect at work. The appreciation of the inner person can be at risk of impoverishment, eclipsed by actions and externals (Waghid, 2003). Outcomes-based education, which overly emphasises measurability does not account for the emotional or affective response of

the inner person (Cavalletti, 1983; De Souza, 2003). Cecero (2011) discusses the emerging paradigm shift whereby the universal aspect of human spirituality requires an approach that is not overly focused on micro-assessment of outcomes, requiring an allocation of time not easily built into lock-step learning outcomes assessment procedures.

#### 2.4.3.5 The literacy challenge

The literacy challenge in Australia is well-researched but unsuccessfully addressed. Australia ranked lowest of all English-Speaking countries participating in the 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Thomson, Suchan, Meherrem, Hindryckx, Mudongo, & Mavrodieva, 2011). Buckingham, Wheldall and Beaman-Wheldall (2013) described the problem and offered solutions for the literacy challenge, citing poor theory to practice, the persisting dominance of whole language and the limited effectiveness of costly programmes such as Reading Recovery, a programme embedded in Parramatta Diocesan School policy. Research indicates that Reading Recovery has limited success (Tunmer & Chapman, 2015; Reynolds & Wheldall, 2007; Serry, Rose & Liamputtong, 2014; Slavin, 2015).

Despite mounting research-based evidence, fine motor and handwriting skills receive little attention in a growing number of schools as computer skills and the other curricular demands take precedence (Berninger, Abbott, Augsburger, & Garcia, 2009; Dinehart, 2015; James & Engelhard, 2012; Kiefer, Schuler, Mayer, Trumpp, Hille, & Sachse, 2015). There is substantial evidence to support the claim that spelling and handwriting fluidity liberates the student to express ideas, since mental energy is freed from focusing on correct spelling and legible writing (Alhusaini, Melam, & Buragadda, 2016; Kim, Al Otaiba, Sidler, & Grulich, 2013; Puranik, Al Otaiba, Sidler, & Grulich, 2014; Reutzel, 2015).

#### 2.4.3.6 The behaviour challenge

Within the context of the school as part of the broader community, challenges engendered by twenty-first century society also become challenges for schools themselves. ACER's *Staff in Australia's Schools 2013: Main Report on the Survey*

(McKenzie, Weldon, Rowley, Murphy & Mackmillan, 2014) identified early career teachers' top three support needs as (a) dealing with difficult student behaviour (45.0% primary, 40.6% secondary), (b) supporting students with disabilities (43.2% primary, 36.0% secondary), and (c) teaching students with a wide range of backgrounds and abilities (40.9% primary, 37.4% secondary) (McKenzie, Weldon, Rowley, Murphy & McMillan, 2014).

Behaviour management issues rate high on the reasons for teachers leaving the profession and teacher burnout (Gonzalez, Brown, & Slate, 2008; Buchanan, 2010; Chang, 2009; McConney & Price, 2009; Cha & Cohen-Vogel, 2011). Behaviour and classroom management issues can often be traced back to family and home circumstances (Buchanan, 2010; Harfitt, 2015; Angus et al., 2010; Schneider & Duran, 2010).

McCready and Solloway (2010) identified the most challenging behaviours among black American students in elementary schools as (a) pushing and kicking, (b) yelling and swearing, (c) oppositional defiance and academic disinterestedness and (d) simple opposition, social conflicts and stubbornness. These types of behaviour are also identified by other researchers. Angus, McDonald, Ormond, Rybarcyk, Taylor, & Winterton (2010) describes student behaviour disorders as including aggressiveness, hyperactivity, delinquency and antisocial behaviour and states that problems are exacerbated by a range of home and school issues.

Rydell (2010) identified that oppositional defiant disorders (ODD) and attention deficit hyperactive disorders (ADHD) are frequently linked with fragile and dysfunctional families. Evidence also points to the damaging effect of domestic violence on children impacts negatively on other students in the classroom or school environment (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2009). Self-control is a key related factor impacting on classroom behaviour. The inability to self-control and general disrespect for teachers can often be linked to the family situation (Atici, 2007; Duckworth & Steinberg, 2015). Lewis, Romi, Qui & Katz (2005) in comparing levels of respect across Israel, China and Australia, found that lack of respect was more evident in Australia.

One of the important factors relating to challenging behaviour is complex trauma, common in many classrooms but often misunderstood and inappropriately addressed by teachers (Tucci, Mitchell, & Goddard, 2010; Bath, 2008; McInnes, Diamond, & Whittington, 2014; West, Day, Somers, & Baroni, 2014). Complex Trauma in children traces back to earlier traumatic experiences, often home-based. At school, these children are many times labelled as disruptive and defiant. However, when under threat children experiencing complex trauma revert to earlier behaviour patterns and inappropriate adult response will only prolong the undesirable behaviour pattern. While their behaviours are challenging in the school environment, the solution is distinct to those appropriate for other misbehaviours (Bath, 2008; Brunzell, Waters & Stokes, 2015; McInnes et al., 2014; Mendelson, Tandon, O' Brennan, Leaf, & Jalongo, 2015; Tucci et al., 2010; Vacca, 2008; West et al., 2014).

Another aspect that deserves consideration is that of character development. Clement and Bollinger (2017) identify a scholarly reappraisal of the impact of character development in education, with a particular focus on adolescents. Lickona, 2014, whose work in this area spans 50 years, together with Kevin Ryan pioneered *The Centre for the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Rs* (Respect and Responsibility) to provide schools and teachers with support in character development. They describe character as having three psychological aspects involving thinking, feeling, and behaving and that good character engages the head (knowing good), the heart (loving good) and the hand (doing good) (Ryan & Lickona, 1992). Callina, Johnson, Tirrell, Batanova, Weiner, & Lerner (2017) present quantitative research supporting the positive impact of character development programmes. Mullins (2015) offers strong neuroscientific evidence for the development of virtue following Aristotelian and Thomistic foundations. Pedagogically, his findings support a character building and virtues-based education, based in the Christian Anthropomorphic understanding of the human being, consonant with the objectives of this study.

All of these considerations are likely to impact on the implementation of the SALT Approach, based, as it is, on Montessorian principles, while functioning within a school setting that is not. While the advocates of Montessori such as Standing (1998) and Lillard (2005) would maintain that behaviour issues can be successfully addressed by implementing Montessori principles in a consistent way, there are

likely to be challenges in mainstream settings, when such principles are being consciously and consistently applied only within religious education sessions as is likely to be the case in this study.

## 2.5 The Literature Review Informing the Development of the Prototype

### 2.5.1 Opening comments

The literature review provided key considerations for the development of the first prototype of the SALT Approach, designed for use in a systemic Catholic school. By “systemic” schools the researcher refers to those schools that operate under the umbrella of a governing body, such as Parramatta Diocese’s Catholic Education Office, under which 78 schools operate. The first prototype is comprised of several elements. A written document outlines principles and guidelines for teachers, a correlation between the Year Two SALT Programme content and that of Parramatta’s *Sharing Our Story*, the teaching programme and its supporting documents, the 2D and 3D materials needed, and the set-up of the learning environment.

### 2.5.2 Informing the prototype

A *sine qua non* for the prototype is the incorporation of those recommendations of the Catholic Church relating to the teaching of religious education. This includes the Christian anthropological perspective, recognising the free will and intellect of each person, composed of body and soul, with rights and duties and ultimately destined for eternal happiness with God. It also includes the content that the Church expects a Catholic school to present and explore with the students, in ways that meet students where they are, whether believers, doubters, searchers and non-believers.

The prototype needs to be built on the work of Montessori, Cavalletti and O’Shea. Essential elements to be included are Montessori’s holistic paradigm and core principles, recognising children as self-directed learners, meeting the needs of the child’s sensitive stages and recognising that the spiritual growth of the child is

dependent upon the sacramental life and prayer (Montessori & Standing, 1965). It needs to incorporate Cavalletti's application of Montessori principles and a Christ-centred, liturgically-based, spiral curriculum (Cavalletti, 1983; Lillig, 2004). Finally, it should incorporate O'Shea's (in press) continuum of religious education, applied, as it is, to the classroom setting.

The design of the prototype also needed to consider the challenges that emerged from the literature review. These include

- a) adapting the small group, parish-based catechetical approach, guided by spiritually formed and nurtured adults (Cavalletti, 2002).
- b) providing an alternative to the teacher's complete preparation of all the materials required (Garrido, 2008) and the appropriate incorporation of a wider range of materials (Gibson, 2011).
- c) marrying the essentially holistic approach with the outcomes-based paradigm (Berlach, 2004; Cecero 2011; De Souza, 2003; Fullan, Langworthy, & Barber, 2014; Riley, 2012; Sahlberg, 2013; White & Janowiak, 2012).
- d) building a learning session structure to shape the teacher talk repertoire and foster child talk repertoire, fostering true dialogue and offering deep learning opportunities (Alexander, 2004; Flitton & Warwick, 2013; Grice, 1975; Mitchell, 2010; Pierce & Giles, 2008).
- e) design of appropriate assessment tasks (Niemi, Kumpulainen, & Lankinen, 2012)
- f) consideration of material and approaches that can assist teachers as they deepen in domain knowledge and expertise (Beaumert et al., 2010; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Lucas et al., 2008; Reiser, 2004; Rotheram & Willingham, 2010).
- g) preparation time, considering the implications of time-poor teachers (Birenbaum et al., 2015; Bryck, 2015; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013; Murray & Passy, 2014; Tan et al., 2014)

## 2.6 The Literature Review: Identifying the Objectives of the Study

### 2.6.1 Opening comments

This design-based research study, being the first to focus on implementing O’Shea’s Mystagogical Catechetical Method, under the name of the SALT Approach, considered the many issues identified through the three perspectives (a) the Catholic Church, (b) the work of Montessori, Cavalletti and O’Shea, and (c) contemporary educational research. The study would focus on designing, trialling and refining what this researcher the SALT Approach through three lenses.

The main objective of the study is:

To design, trial and refine a religious education programme in a contemporary Catholic systemic school based on the SALT Approach

The lenses identified the objectives of the study.

- Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today’s child within the SALT Approach
- Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach
- Achieving the accountability requirements of a Diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach

### 2.6.2 Lens 1: Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today’s child within the SALT Approach

Under this lens, the literature review identified three elements requiring close consideration. These were (a) behaviour and self-control issues, (b) literacy issues, and (c) the spiritual nature of today’s child.

#### 2.6.2.1 Lens 1, Element 1: behaviour and self-control issues

The documents of the Catholic Church recognise behaviour and self-control issues are likely to impact on religious education, given family instabilities, wounded

human relationships, and the consequent disorientation and a disconnection from a meaning in life. (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, §10-11; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §6, §15). The SALT Approach will work effectively when children exercise self-control to self-regulate their learning. Fostering these habits will have a significant impact on the effectiveness of the SALT Approach.

Contemporary educational research continues to evidence that student behaviour impacts on teaching and learning (Buchanan, 2010; Ingersoll, 2001; McConney & Price, 2009; Cha & Cohen-Vogel, 2011). Family circumstances have a major impact on student behaviour (Atici, 2007; Duckworth et al., 2016; Harfitt, 2015; Angus et al., 2010). An important and still poorly addressed challenge is complex trauma in children (Australian Childhood Foundation, 2010; Bath, 2008; McInnes et al., 2014; West et al., 2014).

Studies identified students' cultural backgrounds impacting on behaviour and shaping approaches to learning (Joy & Kolb, 2008; Schunk, 2005). Aggressive behaviours and non-conformity can escalate if cultural backgrounds are not understood and harnessed for the good (Hudley, Graham, & Taylor, 2007; Lindsey & Lindsey, 2016; Valenzuela & Codina, 2013). Behaviour challenges may include pushing, kicking, yelling, swearing, oppositional defiance, academic disinterestedness, simple opposition, social conflicts and stubbornness (McCready & Solloway, 2010).

There is a clear link between behaviour and self-regulated learning. The latter requires controlling one's attention, clearing the mind of distracting thoughts, having access to quiet spaces and quality time. Direct instruction, modelling, scaffolded practice and relevant feedback are important in establishing self-regulated learning skills (Vandeveld, Van Keer, & De Wever, 2011; Zimmerman, 2008; Zumbunn et al., 2011). A focus on the development of virtue and character education can assist in changing inappropriate behaviours (Callina et al., 2017; Lickona, 2014, Mullins, 2005).



#### 2.6.2.2 Lens 1, Element 2: literacy and communication skills

The SALT Approach presumes a level of independent literacy skills, involving reading and writing and commensurate with the age of the child. Reading and writing literacy skills are below par in many schools, with Australian schools ranking poorly in international terms. The limited emphasis on handwriting in contemporary education impacts on children's writing fluency (Alhusaini, Melam, & Buragadda 2015; Berninger et al., 2009; Dinehart, 2015; Kiefer et al., 2015; Puranik et al., 2014; Reutzel, 2015).

By contrast, the importance of talk in learning has been researched by Dawes, Mercer and Alexander. Dialogic teaching is a powerful tool for pedagogical intervention, structuring higher order thinking (Alexander, 2004, Alexander 2008, Dawes 2004; Mercer & Dawes 2008). Although learners should do most of the talking in a classroom, teachers tend to dominate. Questions tend to be closed, feedback scant, guesswork frequent and thinking minimal. (Nystrand, Gamoran, Kachur, & Prendergast 1997). Alexander (2004) suggests the need to foster true dialogue in the classroom, including the child talk repertoire.

#### 2.6.2.3 Lens 1, Element 3: the spiritual nature of today's child

The Christian anthropological view of the Catholic Church affirms that every person has the dignity of a child of God and is destined to live eternally with God. The expectation of Catholic schools is to nurture that spiritual nature (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §33; Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, §56-57, §84). The SALT Approach's perspective reflects that of Montessori. Respect for the child springs from respecting God in the child (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Cavalletti observed that the child can grasp deep spiritual realities and are intuitively attracted towards God and that encounter brings joy (Cavalletti, 1983). Contemporary holistic educational research emphasises the need to understand the spiritual nature of the human person, despite the materialistic, consumerist approach such as the one that drives current research (White & Janowiak, 2012).

### 2.6.3 Lens 2: Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach

Under this lens, the literature review led to the identification of three elements requiring close and full consideration. These were (a) *equipping and maintaining the learning space*, (b) *significant pedagogical considerations involving pondering, respect for the child and fostering freedom and choice*, and (c) *teacher expertise in terms of knowledge and understanding of, and lived commitment to the Catholic faith*.

#### 2.6.3.1 Lens 2, Element 1: equipping and maintaining the learning space

The *General Directory for Catechesis*, 1997, §132 stipulates that materials used in religious education should facilitate the unpacking of Sacred Scripture and the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*. Fundamental to the SALT Approach is the equipping and maintaining of the learning space. A person's unique relationship with God comes firstly through the senses, and adult modelling combined with tangible materials are essential. The settings and materials need to be specifically geared towards supporting the curriculum (Cavalletti, 1983; Garrido, 2008). Moreover, teachers of Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd are expected to personally prepare the teaching materials (Cavalletti, 2002). Doing this for all materials, however, is not realistic for many religious education teachers in systemic schools and adaptations will be required (Garrido, 2008).

Contemporary educational research identifies the importance of a well-ordered environment, supporting learning with adequate resources (Boettcher, 2007; Kolb & Kolb, 2012; Kyriakides et al., 2010; Thapa et al., 2013). Students need opportunities to learn through concrete experience, reflective observation, abstract conceptualisation and active experimentation, and while students will use all four approaches, they will have preferred modes of operating and these modes need to be accommodated (Boyatzis & Kolb, 1995).

### 2.6.3.2 Lens 2, Element 2: pedagogies that permit pondering, respect for the child and freedom of choice

The SALT Approach requires pedagogies which (a) *allow the child time to ponder*, (b) *demonstrate respect for the person of each child*, and (c) *allow for freedom and choices in the classroom*. The literature review clarified the importance of identifying these pedagogical indicators in order to include them in the final prototype.

Catholic Church documents emphasise that religious education pedagogies should reflect the pedagogies of God, of Christ, of the Church and of faith (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, Part 3). These pedagogical approaches incorporate pondering, respect, and freedom of the person. Pedagogy should be centred on values and vision, and “on the human person in his or her integral, transcendent, historical identity” (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §10).

In the SALT Approach, pondering, respect and freedom are intimately intertwined. Montessori’s seminal writings indicate *respect* for the child as essential and intimately linked with respecting God in the child. This indicates a pedagogy in which harshness, stern commands and needless prohibitions have no place (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Cavalletti drew attention to the importance of the adult's attentiveness to the child's inner needs and readiness, in order to guide the direction of learning (Cavalletti, 1983).

Contemporary research tangentially referred to *pondering*. Prior knowledge and integrating new knowledge with useful existing knowledge requires reflection, providing a base for future learning and engaging students (Boettcher, 2007; Darling Hammond, 2008). Also linked to pondering is dialogic teaching, which Alexander (2004) and Flitton and Warwick (2013) explore. They identify that talking requires an atmosphere of trust and confidence and extended talk time allows for deep thinking. Galton et al. (2009) discuss group work as *requiring thinking and waiting* giving students *time to reflect*. This equates to giving time to pondering and reflecting.

Cavalletti's profound respect for the depth of the child was reflected in the presentation of great realities, such as the Mass, rather than dwelling on simplistic peripheral ones (Cavalletti & Gobbi, 1964). Such an approach, involving the presentation of essential themes, requires the child's deep, personal and enduring reflection, laying the foundations for a life of exploration and spiritual experience (Cavalletti, 1983). In relation to *respect*, various research studies indicate that a respectful atmosphere classroom climate has a profound effect on learning (Kyriakides et al., 2010; Thapa et al., 2013; Van de Grift & Houtveen, 2006).

The SALT Approach involves student choices and an introduction to novel ways of reflecting on concepts and topics are introduced. Contemporary research touching on informal learning offers relevant angles in this. Informal learning may lead to little learning if the entertainment or novelty factor dominates and side-track learning intentions, with the newness and unfamiliarity generating off-task behaviour (Rennie and Williams, 2002; Shortland, 1987).

In relation to *freedom and choice*, there is an abundance of contemporary research. Twenty-first century education values the facilitation of self-directed learning (Hattie, 2012; Lüftenegger et al., 2012). Self-regulated learning occurs when a student's purposeful actions and processes are directed towards the acquisition of information or skills, requiring intrinsic motivation and a raft of sequential skills such as forethought, planning, performance self-monitoring, and reflection on performance (Zumbrunn et al., 2011). Truly autonomous choice-making facilitates intrinsic motivation and research relating to fostering this abounds (Moller, Deci, & Ryan, 2006; Schunk, 2005; Schunk & Zimmerman 2012; Zumbrunn et al., 2011). *Freedom and choice*-making also link with research about collaborative and cooperative learning. Students who work together motivate and encourage each other to learn through peer modelling and tutoring, while peer practice enhances learning (Slavin, 2015).

### 2.6.3.3 Lens 2, Element 3: teacher's knowledge, understanding and lived commitment

Catholic Church documents clarify that teachers are to be “outstanding in correct doctrine and integrity of life”, offering a living witness of faith (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, §38; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §33, 54; Congregation for Catholic Education 2007, §4). Montessori and Cavalletti indicate the vital importance of the adult's knowledge and faith commitment (Montessori & Standing, 1965; Cavalletti, 1983). Catholic religious education-related research identifies that increasingly fewer religious education teachers have the deep knowledge and understanding required, as well as varying levels of conviction, commitment and practice (Franchi & Rymarz, 2017; Rymarz, 2015; Rymarz & Belmonte, 2014).

Contemporary educational research validates the need for teachers having a solid knowledge base in their discipline (Boyatzis & Kolb, 1995; Kereluik, Mishra, Fahnoe, & Terry, 2013; Pellegrino & Hilton, 2012). Teachers possessing superior knowledge are well positioned to provide clear learning directions (Beauchamp et al., 2014; Tirri & Ubani, 2013; Yuen, 2014).

The importance of adequate out-of-classroom teacher time is identified by research studies. Teachers require structured, focused time to work collegially and collaboratively with others in professional development and in order to reflect upon data emerging from learning (Dickie et al., 2015; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013; Murray & Passy, 2014; Tan et al., 2014). Research has validated that the most effective form of professional learning happens “on-site” and is anchored in the direct teaching experiences of the teacher and the school community network (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Du-Four, 2014; Smith et al., 2009; Strahan, 2003; Woodland & Mazur, 2015).

#### 2.6.4 Identified Lens 3: Achieving the accountability requirements of a diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach

The SALT Approach needs to meet accountability demands of Catholic systemic schools and the themes identified were (a) *matching general requirements*, and (b) *assessment and reporting*. The literature review identified the challenges.

The SALT Approach works within the holistic paradigm and *matching general requirements* within an outcomes-based paradigm may be challenging (Berlach, 2004; Capper & Jamison, 1993; Riley, 2012). The Parramatta Catholic Education aligns itself with the contemporary research of such authors as Fullan, Hargreaves, Hattie, Robinson, Sharratt and Timperley. Their work, therefore, will affect the teaching and learning environment within which this design-based research project will be implemented. Educational leaders aim to ensure that programmes are complete and properly balanced, with appropriate focus on content and the necessary learning support skills (Sharratt & Fullan, 2012).

Accountability in terms of student *assessment and reporting issues* are dominant in the educational landscape (Clark, 2012; Kong & Song, 2013; Lucas et al., 2008; Tharp & Daltonb, 2007). On-going micro-standardised assessment places heavy demands on teachers (Clark, 2010; Wiliam, 2012). Many Australian teachers struggle to reach demands, and tend to prepare students for national summative assessments, such as the National Assessment Program-Literacy and Numeracy (NAPLAN) (Birenbaum et al., 2015). All this could pose a challenge not only for other learning areas but especially for the SALT Approach. Cavalletti focused on the inner life of the child and on fostering the child's relationship with God, rather than on micro-assessment and reporting (Cavalletti, 1983). O'Shea (in press) offers suggestions for nuanced assessment and reporting requiring trialling and refinement within the school setting.

#### 2.6.5 Final comments

This literature review identified issues that would impact upon the successful implementation of the SALT Approach within a Systemic Catholic school setting,

giving form to the objectives of the study. The researcher finds that both contemporary research, and the many insights of Montessori and Cavalletti, underpinned by Church documents, can be effectively framed by three objectives. *The first objective* is focused upon factors empowering and disempowering today's child. Its three identified elements were (a) behaviour and self-control issues, (b) literacy and communication skills, and (c) the spiritual nature of today's child. *The second objective* relates to equipping schools and teachers to use the SALT Approach, focusing on three elements: (a) equipping and maintaining the learning space, (b) Pedagogies that permit pondering, respect for the child and freedom of choice and (c) teachers' knowledge, understanding and lived commitment expertise in terms of religious education. *The third objective* focusses on how the SALT Approach can meet Catholic Education requirements and still function effectively.

The following chapter will present the study's research design.

## Chapter 3: Design of the Research Study

### 3.1 Introduction to the Chapter

Following on from the literature review in Chapter 2, this chapter presents the study's research design. The design-based research model was selected as the most appropriate one for reaching the intended goal: to design, trial, evaluate and refine a working prototype based on the Mystagogical Catechetical Method developed by O'Shea, which was in turn built upon Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. For this study, the name given was the Scripture and Liturgy Teaching Approach (the SALT Approach), with a view to moving towards its implementation in the complex setting of a twenty-first century Catholic Diocesan School. The need to bridge the gap between theory and practice and to work towards offering a viable approach for teaching and learning religious education in contemporary Catholic schools were paramount (Barab & Squire, 2004; Plomp & Nieveen, 2007).

### 3.2 The Research Objectives

The literature review identified gaps to be addressed if the SALT Approach was to work effectively in a contemporary mainstream Catholic Systemic School. Consequently, this research aimed to develop, adapt, trial, evaluate and refine the SALT Approach for teaching religious education.

The main objective was identified as:

To design, trial and refine a programme for teaching religious education in a contemporary Catholic systemic school based on the SALT Approach.

The identified gaps were viewed through three lenses and the three subsidiary objectives articulated for the study were:

- Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today's child within the SALT Approach



- Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach
- Achieving the accountability requirements of a Diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach
- Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach
- Achieving the accountability requirements of a Diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach

### 3.3 Situating the Research

#### 3.3.1 The underpinnings of the methodology

For an authentic Catholic religious education, the metaphysical dimension are essential. Both processes used and conclusions reached must be capable of "transcending empirical data in order to attain something absolute, ultimate and foundational in its search for truth." (Pope John Paul II, 1998, § 83). In his encyclical, *Fides et Ratio*, Pope John Paul II insisted on the importance of the metaphysical dimension. This was not so as to diminish the value of empirical data, but to acknowledge the capacity of the human person to know realities that are beyond what the senses. This spiritual dimension, while true and certain is imperfectly grasped by the intellect through analogy (Pope John Paul II, 1998). Such an understanding validates the role of research in the development of human understanding.

In the same encyclical, Pope John Paul II spoke of humanity's attraction to the true, the beautiful and the good. Through these transcendentals, human beings are able to seamlessly gravitate from a natural to a supernatural dimension, and this encourages research pursued from a Catholic perspective to benefit from discoveries gained through authentic empirical data. As St Thomas states in *De Veritate*: "There is nothing in the mind that is not first in the senses." (Aquinas, 1952, q. 2 a. 3 arg. 19).

With this caveat in place, the study follows a pragmatic methodology. The word pragmatic is not being used here in a philosophical sense, but refers to the data collection approach. In times past, qualitative and quantitative research were

mutually exclusive domains but today the use of both techniques is acceptable. Until fairly recently such an approach was called a mixed method, but the current acceptable term is a pragmatic method. Barab & Squire (2004) speak of design-based research as taking a pragmatic approach stating "As such, design-based research suggests a pragmatic [philosophical] underpinning, one in which the value of a theory lies in its ability to produce changes in the world." (p. 6). The pragmatic approach, in the sense intended for this design-based research study, is concerned with offering practical solutions (Barab & Squire, 2004; Oh & Reeves, 2010; Bradley & Reinking, 2011). It involves empirical research and interventions undertaken in a natural context. It involves a partnership between researchers and practitioners and is concerned with being useful, and being ready to offer solutions. (Bradley & Reinking, 2008; Plomp & Nieveen, 2007).

These factors fitted well with the researcher's intent to undertake a study that would identify how the SALT Approach could be refined and successfully implemented in a twenty-first century Catholic systemic school. The purpose of this study was to identify (a) the challenges found in a complex, real, educational setting, (b) the material needs, pedagogical practices, and teacher expertise required for this to occur (Plomp & Nieveen, 2007).

To do this, the researcher designed a prototype based on O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method. The prototype included (a) written documents including anchor statements relating to what is expected from the perspective of the Catholic Church; a correlation with Paramatta Diocese's *Sharing Our Story* curriculum; a scope and sequence chart for Year Two (the students in this study were in Year Two), and a draft Scope and Sequence for Kindergarten to Year Six and a full year programme, (b) material learning resources, (c) the preparation of a dedicated room. The prototype was to be tested and refined over a year, enabling the development of a new, useful prototype for teachers involved in Religious Education in Catholic Systemic Schools (Cobb, Confrey, DiSessa, Ma & Harmon, 2009; Richey & Nelson, 1996).

### 3.3.2 The conceptual framework

The overarching conceptual framework is the Mystagogical Catechetical Method of O'Shea (in press). This method, described in the literature review (see 2.3.5), involves an invitation into a relationship with God, exploring the mystery of God through the liturgy and through Scripture (O'Shea, in press). Designed by combining Montessorian principles (Standing, 1998) and Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Cavalletti, 2002), O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method aims to lead the child through the the stages of religious development (O'Shea, in press). Furthermore, the Mystagogical Catechetical Method offers a deep and rich response to the recommendations of both Pope Benedict XVI and Pope Frances (Evangelii Gaudium, §165; Sacramentum Caritatis, 207, §64).

The research and practice of both Montessori and Cavalletti have been shown to be replicable, and continue to produce demonstrably successful results when implemented in appropriate settings. Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd is designed for parish use. O'Shea (in press) proposes that these approaches can be successfully implemented in contemporary Catholic Systemic Schools. However, as described in the literature review, there are those who question the suitability of such an approach in contemporary Catholic school setting (see 2.3.5.4). In addition, contemporary pedagogical research identifies other factors likely to affect the implementation of this method such as behaviour and literacy issues, the heavy demands on teachers, and the accountability demands in contemporary schools (see 2.4.3). This research study set out to trial, evaluate and refine a prototype using the Mystagogical Catechetical Method under the name of the SALT Approach in a contemporary Catholic Systemic School setting, with the intention of offering new insights and contributions to both the theoretical landscape and the practical implementation.

### 3.3.3 Design-based research methodology

Design-based research is an essentially pragmatic methodology. Over the past ten years it has significantly advanced as a viable research option, with a growing number of research studies contributing to the model. Design-based research offered

an effective tool for this researcher's study, building upon existing theory, yet being a thoroughly practical research model (Gravemeijer & Cobb, 2006; Sandoval & Bell, 2004). It has, furthermore, become a viable option for doctoral studies (Herrington, McKenney, Reeves, & Oliver, 2007).

Originating in the work of Ann Brown (1992), Design-based research is geared towards (a) contributing to educational practice, facilitating the development of tools and curriculum, and (b) contributing to theory (Barab & Squire, 2004; Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczyc, 2004; Bradley & Reinking, 2008; Sandoval & Bell, 2004). As indicated by Barab and Squire (2004), while it involves observing and identifying, it is primarily concerned with transformation. Design-based research incorporates “embodied conjectures”, a term introduced by Sandoval & Bell (2004, p. 200), referring to the embodying of theoretical conjectures into the design, appraising how the theory can be made to work in practice. This described the structure of this research project well.

Barab and Squire (2004) identified Design-based research as a “methodological toolkit” (Barab & Squire p. 2) involving a series of approaches, with the intention of engineering learning and the learning environment. It involves testing, refining, revising through a series of iterations (Hoadley, 2004, Shavelson, Phillips, Towne, & Feuer, 2003). Thus, design-based research was ideally suited to this study, with its theoretical research, prototype planning and reflective iterative cycles extended over a full academic year. Figure 1 outlines the four phases of design-based research as described by Reeves (2006).

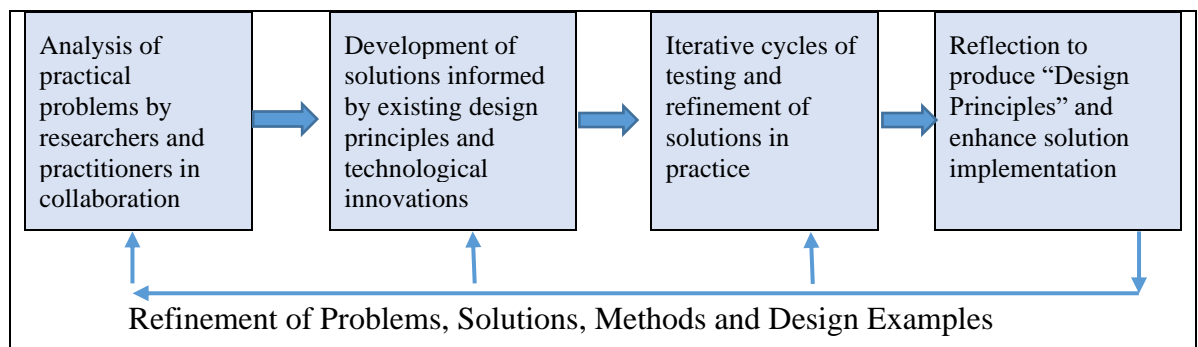


Figure 1: The four phases of design-based research. Adapted from Reeves, 2006

Design-based research is *interventionist* and focused on bringing about change within the context of complex real-world situations, such as schools and classrooms (Brown, 1992; Cobb, DiSessa, Leher, & Schable, 2003; Van den Akker, Gravemeijer, McKenney, & Nieveen, 2006). This study took place in a challenging environment, a Catholic systemic school in the outer western suburbs of Sydney (see 3.2 for details about the selected school).

Design-based research *involves a collaborative team* with practitioners who are actively involved throughout the study (Van den Akker et al., 2006). In this study, the Religious Education Coordinator of the school was involved, and participating teachers worked alongside the researcher. Even the students knowingly contributed to the refinement of the approach being designed.

Design-based research is “*process-oriented*” (Van den Akker et al., 2006, p. 27). It is concerned with understanding the situation and improving it as interventions are applied throughout the iterations. This study set out to do precisely this, seeking to offer a tried, tested and refined prototype to carry forward into the post-doctoral phase of further interventions.

Furthermore, design-based research is intended to be *useful* offering practical educational resources and affecting the professional development of the research participants (Akkerman & Filius, 2011; Van den Akker et al., 2006). This study fulfilled all these requirements, as Chapters Four, Five and Six testify.

Furthermore, to be recognised as design-based research, a study must be significant, and likely to impact beyond the local context and the study itself (Ma & Harmon, 2009). In this, it moves beyond the simpler Action Research model, while incorporating elements of it. Design-based Research *needs to add new knowledge* through improved educational theory. This study was built on theoretical propositions, as presented in the literature review and upon the conceptual framework of O’Shea’s Mystagogical Catechetical Method. The theoretical and conceptual frameworks were ‘put to work’ in a real and complex environment, and the final prototype offered significant new contributions to both educational theory and practice, as described in the findings presented and discussed in Chapters Four,

Five and Six. A summary of the key elements of Design-Based Research is outlined in Table 2, below. The table also includes an indication of this study’s qualification as a Design-Based Research Project.

*Table 2: Key elements of design-based research, adapted from Van den Akker et al., 2006*

<b>Elements</b>	<b>Elements described</b>	<b>This Study</b>
Iterative	Involves cycles of analysis, design and development, evaluation and revision.	Carried out through three iterations, covering one full academic year.
Interventionist	Research that designs an intervention in a real-world setting.	Took place in a complex school setting, taking students for 2.5 hours a week, spread over three days.
Collaborative	Active participation of collaborating practitioners.	Included participating school executive, teachers and children.
Process Oriented	Research that seeks to understand and improve the interventions.	Each iteration was evaluated and new aspects built into the prototype’s design.
Useful	The research offers practical application in real contexts.	Geared towards developing a practical tool, offering materials, pedagogical recommendations and programming possibilities that can be applied in settings beyond the local environment.
Theory oriented, based on a conceptual framework	Based on theory and practice i.e.: theoretical and conceptual frameworks underpin the research.	Built on the theoretical framework of the Catholic Church’s expectation of religious education and the conceptual framework is O’Shea’s Mystagogical Catechetical Method.
Contributing	Contributing to both theory and practice.	Contributed to theory and practice in new ways.

In brief, the Design-Based Research model allowed practical response to emerging issues, refining the SALT Approach as the research moved through the cyclic pattern of three iterations. The cyclic pattern of planning, acting, observing and reflecting and refining took place through the 2015 School Year. In this way, the SALT Approach was tested and refined, transforming theory to practice (Adler & Adler, 1985; Bryman, 2012; Bradley & Reinking, 2011).

### 3.4 The Research Design

Emanating from the researcher's intention to develop an approach for teaching religious education in Catholic schools, this study was designed to offer a practical and effective approach. Taking O'Shea's (in press) *Mystagogical Catechetical Method* as a basis, the study was a qualitative research study, with data gathered through staff, student and parent interviews, focus group discussions and student observations. The extensive data collection facilitated significant triangulation, with many of the data tools offering information relating to all the research questions.

Following the Design-Based Research model, research progressed through four phases. *Phase One* involved the analysis of problems relating to the implementation of the SALT Approach through the literature review. *Phase Two* involved the design of the first prototype. *Phase Three* involved implementation, trialling and refinement of the prototype, focusing through three lenses, each with clearly identified elements and subsequent themes. There was extensive data-gathering through three iterations within the one school year, 2015. *Phase Four* involved the analysis of findings, informing the final prototype design. This is illustrated in Table 3 below.

Table 3: The design-based research model applied to this study

<b>Design-Based Research Project Phases</b>	<b>Phase One Year: 2013</b>	<b>Phase Two Year 2014</b>	<b>Phase Three Year 2015</b>	<b>Phase Four Year 2016</b>
<i>Classical Phases of the Design-based research project</i>	Analysis of practical problems by the researcher and practitioners	Development of solutions informed by existing design principles and technical innovation	Iterative cycles of testing and refinement of solutions in practice	Reflection to produce ‘design principles’ and enhance solution implementation design of the final prototype
<b>Phases of the design-based research model as implemented for this PhD</b>	Literature Review	Design of the first prototype	Data gathering phase through three iterations Commencement and end of year tasks, interviews, observations and focus groups	Analysis of findings informing the design of the final prototype
<i>Lens 1: Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today’s child within the SALT Approach</i>	Three elements identified and explored through the literature review: (a) behaviour and self-control issues, (b) literacy and communication skills, and (c) the spiritual nature of today’s child.	The identified elements within each of the lenses were incorporated into the first prototype.	The elements explored through three iterative cycles:  <i>First Cycle: Term 1 of the School Year:</i> Lens 1, Lens 2	Finding relating to all elements informed the design of the final prototype
<i>Lens 2: Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach</i>	Three elements identified and explored through literature review (a) Equipping and maintaining the learning space, (b) Pedagogical considerations, and (c) Teacher expertise		<i>Second Cycle: Term 2 of the School Year:</i>  Lens 1, Lens 2, Lens 3	
<i>Lens 3: Achieving the accountability requirements of a Diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach</i>	The element identified and explored through literature review: Systemic Accountability		<i>Third Cycle:</i> <i>Terms 3 and 4 of the School Year</i> Lens 1, Lens 2, Lens 3	



## 3.5 Participants

### 3.5.1 Participant selection

The school and selected class provided a purposive sample. It was chosen because the School's Parish Priest was supportive of the SALT Approach, as was the School's Religious Education Coordinator. The School itself followed Parramatta Diocesan guidelines for religious education, using the *Sharing Our Story* curriculum. As described in 2.2.3.3, *Sharing Our Story* follows Groome's Praxis method and an outcomes-based approach. This offered challenges for the implementation of the SALT Approach.

Situated in outer Western Sydney, the school's clientele were multi-cultural and multi-religious. There were a number of fragile families. These factors were compounded by the obligatory diocesan approach of using Agile Learning Spaces. Agile Learning Spaces involved each grade using one large space, with students within that space allocated to homeroom teachers. Every grade was organised in this way, from Kindergarten through to Year 6. Typically, this involved 60-70 students in one space, usually the size of three traditional classrooms. A significant number of students were fairly unharnessed in their behaviour within the open setting, and this undermined the potential success of the holistic nature of the SALT Approach, built, as it was, on Montessorian principles.

These factors offered realistic challenges for this study, aimed, as it was, towards discovering how the SALT Approach could be refined to work effectively in just such situations.

Year Two was selected because these children were moving from the 3-6-year-old phase, described by Montessori as the age of the Absorbent Mind towards the 6-9-year-old phase when abstract thinking begins (O'Shea, in press). This age selection offered an opportunity to discover and demonstrate how the SALT Approach could be adapted to work successfully with children moving beyond the Absorbent Mind stage, often perceived as the ideal age for Montessorian approaches.

There were random elements with regard to the student and teacher selection for the study. These matters were left to the school executive, and ultimately to the Principal. The researcher's approach here was to accept whatever was arranged. The final group included a multi-racial mix of students, many with complex personal and family challenges. There were 26 children in the study at the commencement of the year. In the third iteration, three children left the study, for reasons unrelated to it, moving to other schools. The range of students is summarised in Tables 4-7.

Table 4: Summary profile of student's ethnic backgrounds. Male: 13 Female: 13, Total 26

<i>Ethnicity</i>								
Australian Caucasian	Sudanese	Islander	Indian	Filipino	Vietnamese	Chinese	Part-Aboriginal	Turkish
10	6	2	2	2	1	1	1	1

Table 5: Religious affiliation

<i>Religious Affiliation</i>					
Catholic: Church attending	Catholic: not church attending	Non-Catholic Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim
9	11	3	1	1	1

Table 6: Family arrangements

<i>Family Unit</i>					
Parents together	Separated/divorced	Single parent	Foster Parents	Same sex relationship	Known Parent alcohol/mental illness issues
16	7	1	1	1	3

Table 7: Other issues

<i>Other known Issues</i>			
Behavioural challenges	Children displaying emotional insecurity	Learning difficulties	No great observable issues
6	4	2	14

Two teachers were allocated to the study, as they were co-teaching the class. Neither teacher had significant knowledge, understanding or experience of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd or the SALT Approach. One was somewhat more attuned, while the other was more sceptical. Both were willing to participate in the study. The researcher led the intervention throughout the year, planning, adjusting and facilitating the learning. (Hoadley, 2004; Wang & Hannafin, 2005). This was essential since a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the SALT

Approach was required for its effective implementation. Furthermore, it was important for the researcher to gain first-hand experience using the approach within in the selected environment, experiencing the challenges, and observing student reactions, as well as seeing the gaps, pitfalls and successful aspects of the approach (Collins, Joseph, & Bielaczyc, 2004).

### 3.5.2 Informed participation and ethics approval

Since this study involved children, full ethics approval was sought with the University of Notre Dame's Human Ethics Research Committee. Face to face meetings were held with representatives of the Parramatta Catholic Education Office and the Principal of the participating school, to discuss the study. A formal research application was submitted to the Parramatta Catholic Education Office, once the University of Notre Dame's Human Ethics Research Committee approval was obtained, and so the research study was formally approved by the Catholic Education Office.

Once approved, the Principal of the School informed the parents, by letter, about the study. Research Information Letters and Consent Forms were sent home. There were two consent forms: one for the parents/guardians and the other for the child. The latter was signed by the parents/guardians on the child's behalf. Parents were offered the opportunity to place the child in the parallel Year 2 class, if they were unwilling to participate, although none took this offer. To ensure that participation was purely voluntary, the Participant Information Letters made it clear that students could withdraw at any time from the study. The letters addressed ethical considerations, such as the privacy issues surrounding the audio recording and reporting of the study. The children's true names were not to be used in this thesis. Several Sudanese children participated in the study, and the School's Sudanese Liaison Officer facilitated the process, translating the content of the of the letters and assisting in the completion of the consent forms.

A second consent was required when it became clear that video filming would significantly assist the study because the first letters and consent forms only covered permissions for audio-recordings. A request for amendment was submitted to the

University of Notre Dame's Human Ethics Research Committee. Once this was obtained, new letters were issued to all participants and new consent forms signed.

Yet a third consent was requested, in order to permit the researcher to use the images and film footage more widely (in publications and at conferences) than that which was outlined in the second request. Once again, a request for amendment was submitted to the University of Notre Dame's Human Ethics Research Committee. Once this was obtained, new letters were issued to all participants and new consent forms signed.

Signed consent was required of adults participating in the study. Information Sheets and consent forms were provided to the Principal, the Religious Education Coordinator, the participating teachers and the Parish Priest. All consent forms were signed. Appendix 4 provides samples of letters and consent forms.

## 3.6 Data Gathering Strategies

### 3.6.1 Overview of data-gathering

The researcher took the role of teacher-researcher, taking the children for all their religious education sessions throughout the data-gathering year. There were two accompanying teachers, who shared the role of home-room teacher. The researcher met with the teachers both formally and informally, to discuss the sessions and the students. Formal meetings and work sessions were audio-recorded. Only one of the teachers was present in any one teaching session. Initially, they observed and assisted by taking observational notes. As the year progressed, they worked with individuals or small groups during the *choice times* that were part of every session. The accompanying teachers did not take the *presentation section* of the sessions or prepare the materials.

The allocated religious education time was 2.5 hours a week, spread over three days. There were two 60-minute sessions and one 30-minute session. Classes were conducted on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. In the first term (the first iteration) the 60-minute sessions were conducted on Mondays and Tuesdays, and the 30-

minute session on Thursdays. However, since one of the participating teachers only took the class on Thursdays and Fridays, she was present for just one 30-minute session. This did not assist her deep understanding of the study. Consequently, throughout Terms 2, 3 and 4, the Thursday session became a 60-minute one, with Tuesdays becoming 30 minutes.

A standard-sized classroom was allocated to the study, facilitating researcher access, and enabling the room to be appropriately equipped. This supported learning and the data gathering strategies, as a rich learning environment could be developed and maintained.

A range of qualitative data-gathering strategies were employed. These included commencement and end of year assessment and interviews, semi-structured student, staff and parent interviews; student focus group discussions; a staff focus group discussion; participating teachers, Religious Education Coordinator and Principal interviews, meetings and discussions; evaluative meetings with Catholic Education Office Executive; and student report preparation.

In addition, in the first term, a number of class sessions were audio-recorded. From Term 2 onwards, sessions were filmed once a week. Many of the student interviews and focus groups were also filmed, if not audio recorded. This all provided valuable data, which was transcribed and analysed by the researcher. The researcher's journal notes offered further data, with journaling taking the form of handwritten, electronically written notes and audio recordings. Lastly, there was the extensive collection of student works, posters, journals, art works and assessment tasks. Table 8, below, lists the data-gathering tools and their iterative timing. It also outlines connections between the data research questions and the data-gathering tools, making triangulation opportunities clear. Samples of interview and focus group schedules are provided in Appendix 5.

Table 8: Data collection methods and research objectives

Research questions	Data collection method and iterative timing	Research Objectives informed by data collection tools and used in findings
<p><i>Lens 1: Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today's child within the SALT Approach</i></p> <p><i>Elements:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Behaviour</i></li> <li>• <i>Literacy and communication</i></li> <li>• <i>The spiritual nature of the child</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Lens 2: Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach</i></p> <p><i>Elements:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Materials and room</i></li> <li>• <i>Pedagogy</i></li> <li>• <i>Teacher Expertise</i></li> </ul> <p><i>Lens 3: Achieving the accountability requirements of a Diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach</i></p> <p><i>Element:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Systemic Accountability</i></li> </ul>	Commencement and end of year student interviews and assessments	Lens 1, Elements 1, 2 &3: Behaviour, literacy, spiritual factors Lens 2, Element 1,2 &3: Materials, room, pedagogy, expertise Lens 3, Element 1: Assessment, matching systemic accountability
	Semi-structured and open-ended student interviews Second and third iterations	Lens 1, Elements 1, 2 &3: Behaviour, literacy, spiritual factors Lens 2, Element 1: Materials, room Lens 3, Element 1: Assessment, matching systemic accountability
	Student focus groups First and third iterations	Lens 1, Elements 1, 2 &3: Behaviour, literacy, spiritual factors Lens 2, Element 1,2 &3: Materials, room, pedagogy, expertise
	Teachers, Principal and REC focus group Third iteration	Lens 1, Elements 1, 2 &3: Behaviour, literacy, spiritual factors Lens 2, Element 1,2 &3: Materials, room, pedagogy, expertise Lens 3, Element 1: Assessment, matching systemic accountability
	Interviews and meetings with teachers and executive staff: School Principal interview Meetings with the school's REC Meetings with CEO representatives Throughout the year	Lens 1, Elements 1, 2 &3: Behaviour, literacy, spiritual factors Lens 2, Element 1,2 &3: Materials, room, pedagogy, expertise Lens 3, Element 1: Assessment, matching systemic accountability
	Semi-structured, Open-ended parent/ guardian interviews, conducted with a cross section of parents/ guardians Second and third iterations	Lens 1, Elements 1 &3: Behaviour, spiritual factors Lens 2, Element 1,2 &3: Materials, room, pedagogy, expertise
	Reports prepared for parents and guardians Second and third iterations	Lens 1, Elements 1, 2 &3: Behaviour, literacy, spiritual factors Lens 3, Element 1: Assessment, matching systemic accountability
	Observation of class sessions through film footage and audio recordings Through all iterations	Lens 1, Elements 1, 2 &3: Behaviour, literacy, spiritual factors Lens 2, Element 1,2 &3: Materials, room, pedagogy, expertise Lens 3, element 1: Assessment, reporting
	Researcher's journal notes: Audio recorded, electronically written, handwritten in note books, Through all iterations	Lens 1, Elements 1, 2 &3: Behaviour, literacy, spiritual factors Lens 2, Element 1,2 &3: Materials, room, pedagogy, expertise Lens 3, Element 1: Assessment, matching systemic accountability
	Collection of student work samples: Student Journals, assessment tasks, posters, pictures Through all iterations	Lens 1, Elements 2 &3: Literacy, spiritual factors Lens 2, Element 1: Materials Lens 3, Element 1: Assessment, matching systemic accountability

The data was gathered throughout the 2015 school year, which was considered in three iterations. Table 9 summarises the data collection timeline and includes the number of interventions.

Table 9: Data collection timeline

Data collection instruments	First Iteration	Second Iteration	Third Iteration	
	Term 1, 2015	Term 2, 2015	Term 3, 2015	Term 4, 2015
Commencement and end of year student assessments and interviews	14			16
Semi-structured, Open-ended 1:1 student interviews in the second and third iterations		17		15
Student focus groups in the first and third iterations	5		2	
Teachers, Principal and REC focus group in the third iteration				1
Interviews and meetings with teachers and executive staff	3			4
		Many informal		
Meetings with the School's Religious Education Coordinator		3		4
		Many informal		
Meetings with Catholic Education Office Representatives			1	1
Interview with School Principal				1
Semi-structured, Open-ended parent/guardian interviews.		2	7	
Reports prepared for parents and guardians		26		23
Observation of class sessions through audio recordings (1st Iteration) and film footage (2 <sup>nd</sup> and 3 <sup>rd</sup> iterations)	16	14	11	8
Researcher's journal notes: Audio recorded, electronically written, handwritten in note books	Many	Many		Many
Collection of student work samples Student Journals, assessment tasks, posters, pictures	26 sets	26 sets		23 sets

### 3.6.2 Commencement and end of year student interviews

The commencement assessments and interviews were conducted in the early weeks of the first term, and the end of year assessments and interviews in last weeks of Term 4. The researcher met with as many students as possible, with 14 students

participating in the commencement interviews and 16 students participating in the end-of-year interviews. These were audio-recorded and provided some idea of students' basic religious education knowledge at the commencement of the study, and identified the development of some factual knowledge understanding, and the long-term retention of concepts. Appendix 6 contains the Pre- and Post- Assessments and the Interviews schedules are found in Appendix 5.

### 3.6.3 Semi-structured, open-ended student interviews

Interviews were semi-structured and open-ended, with the researcher adopting a conversational tone, facilitating a relaxed and trusting dialogue. The volunteer camera-man, who also filmed many class sessions, filmed the second and third iteration interviews. Students were relaxed and comfortable in the camera presence, usually forgetting it. The interview schedule included a series of questions, but as each interview progressed, questions varied in order, and sometimes new questions arose. In addition, the open-ended approach, with students being asked to look around the room and select items or topics they would like to talk about and explain lead to the acquisition of rich, thick data. Appendix 5 provides a sample schedule.

### 3.6.4 Student focus groups

These semi-structured, open-ended focus groups were conducted once the children and researcher knew each other quite well and were much enjoyed by the students. This facilitated open, deep contributions providing a wealth of data informing all three questions. Appendix 5 provides a sample schedule, although each focus group took distinct directions, with the researcher following the threads offered by student comments and interests.

### 3.6.5 Teachers, Principal and REC focus group in the third Iteration

This was a single and substantial focus group conducted as the year drew to a close. It began with the participating teachers and the Religious Education Coordinator, with the Principal joining the group once the session was underway. The aim was to



ensure that thoughts and responses of these stakeholders were gathered as the year drew to a close. Appendix 5 provides the schedule.

#### 3.6.6 Interviews and meetings with teachers

Interviews and meetings were held with participating teachers throughout the year. Due to the school's busy nature, many exchanges were brief, practical and informal, occurring in the staff room, in the playground, or by email. Many were unrecorded exchanges but formed an essential part of the research project: clarifying directions and making adjustments, sharing both positive and challenging aspects. Significant content of these exchanges found its way into the researcher's journal or became part of more formal meetings and discussions. Planned meetings were often recorded, facilitating the data-gathering and analysis process.

#### 3.6.7 Meetings with the school's Religious Education Coordinator

Many semi-formal and informal meetings were held with the Religious Education Coordinator. Some were audio-recorded but most were not. These exchanges ensured that the researcher and Religious Education Coordinator were 'on the same page' and that the researcher was informed of relevant issues, challenges and considerations.

#### 3.6.8 Meetings with CEO representatives

There were two occasions when the Catholic Education Office Representatives (CEO) attended the sessions taught by the researcher, along with the Religious Education Coordinator and Principal. Catholic Education Office Representatives also spoke with participating teachers and students. These, together with the discussion that preceded and followed observations of the class sessions, offered opportunities for rich and deep exchanges, sharpening the focus on the core questions of the study even further. The contributions of the Religious Education Coordinator and the Principal provided valuable data. Personal notes were taken and suggestions incorporated into the teaching plans.

### 3.6.9 Interview with School Principal

There were exchanges with the Principal before the commencement of the data-collection year and throughout the year. In addition, the Principal participated in several meetings as mentioned in previous paragraphs. However, there was one major interview, conducted towards the end of the third iteration, in Term 4. This interview offered a valuable perspective and covered the full range of issues from the Principal's perspective. Appendix 5 contains the interview schedule.

### 3.6.10 Semi-structured parent/ guardian interviews

The original intention was to interview all parents and care-givers. However, arranging interviews proved challenging. In many cases, both parents worked and were hard to contact. Other parents were simply unresponsive to the invitation. Many of these were non-English speaking. However, 11 interviews were conducted, offering a representative sample of parents and guardians, as Table 10 indicates. A semi-structured parent/ guardian interview schedule was designed. The questions targeted information that could assist triangulation. The interview schedule can be found in Appendix 5.

Table 10: Parent/guardian interviews conducted.

	Child	Parent/ guardians attending		Some pertinent factors
		Mother	Father	
1	Celia	Yes		Non-Catholic Christian Mother Child not baptised Parents separated. Father has mental illness and alcoholic.
2	Gajara	Yes		Hindu family
3	Sandy	Yes	Yes	Filipino Regular church going Catholic family
4	Zoe	Yes		Parents separated. Mother: Catholic, not church going Mother lives with same sex partner. Child not baptised
5	Mary	Yes		Parent separated Catholic, not church going
6	Michael	Yes	Yes	Foster Parents (Michael's aunt and uncle) Catholic, not church going
7	Nicholas	Yes	Yes	Indian family. Regular church going Catholic family
8	Basem		Yes	Sudanese, Christian Father converted to Anglican Faith while a refugee in Kenya.
9	Kafil	Yes		Sudanese Regular church going Catholic family
10	Sean	Yes		Tongan Regular church going Catholic family Alcohol issues in family
11	Jamie	Yes		Catholic, not church going Mother has bi-polar illness

### 3.6.11 Class session observations

In the first term, the participating teachers observed class sessions using observation sheets targeting Research Objectives 1 and 2. Appendix 7 provides samples of these. Audio recordings were made during several of the first iteration class sessions, and filming captured one session each week in the subsequent two iterations. Audio-recording, while hard to follow, provided valuable data in the first iteration. The filming undertaken throughout the rest of the year was truly invaluable, providing rich and thick data. This was augmented by the camera-man's contributions, being a

thoughtful, quiet, practising Catholic. He was also a public-school catechist. He was well received by the students, and he encouraged many to speak about their work.

#### 3.6.12 Researcher's journal notes: audio, electronic and handwritten

The researcher's journal notetaking took a variety of forms. Many notes were audio recordings made while walking or while preparing the room for sessions. Other notes were taken in hard copy note-books, and yet others recorded electronically in a 'Notebook' App.

#### 3.6.13 Collection of student work samples: journals, posters, pictures

Students' work was collected throughout the year. These included student journal entries, assessment tasks, posters, art works, mini-blackboard writings and drawings. When appropriate they were photographed or filmed with students providing a verbal explanation. These student responses addressed the research questions in a variety of ways and offered effective triangulation. An Analysis of students' work is embedded in the data analysis found in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

### 3.7 Data Analysis

Data analysis was strongly thematic. The themes were integrally linked to the research objectives arising from the literature review. A great deal of the analysis was retrospective (Cobb, McClain, de Silva Lamberg, & Dean, 2003, Sandoval & Bell, 2004), taking place after the intervention phase. This was possible due to the large amount of data gathered by audio and film recording.

The detailed retrospective analysis facilitated accuracy and rigour and data triangulation (Cobb et al., 2003). Audio-recordings and film footage were carefully transcribed by the researcher, with attention being given to the precise words used, as well as visual, non-verbal clues. This is reflected in the extracts used to support findings presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six. The transcription process took place in part during the data-gathering year of 2015 but substantially extended throughout 2016, the year following the data-gathering iterative phase. This task,

completed by the researcher, aided the initial data-analysis and provided insights which only close attention to audio recording and film footage could provide.

The researcher intended to use NVivo, a powerful qualitative analysis tool (Bazeley & Jackson, 2013). However, a great deal of audio and film transcriptions were completed without the NVivo, since training took place in April and August of 2016. Notes were taken throughout the data-transcription process and marked the beginning of a new, rich experience, involving frequent returns to data to pinpoint exactly what was said by the participants.

Once NVivo skills were attained, this computerised analysis package was used extensively. An NVivo project was set up and all the transcriptions were entered in the internal sources section. After some experimentation, the raw data was organised logically, facilitating a clear sequential picture of available material. A checklist ensured that all significant data was entered into the project. Film footage was entered as external data, and some already transcribed material was re-transcribed in NVivo so that video and audio data could be matched with the written transcriptions.

An initial set of theme nodes, matching the research questions, was set up to collect the emerging information. However, during this initial coding phase, many additional nodes and sub-nodes were created to accommodate the rich tapestry of evidence that was emerging.

The researcher began with the substantial transcript of the Principal's interview, which was thoroughly analysed and coded, conscribing the transcript elements generously to one or more nodes as seemed appropriate, keeping the broad picture in mind, but looking out for new nuances. This formed a basis for the transcribing of all significant interviews, focus groups and meetings with the school's executive and participating teachers. Other transcripts were then analysed, working through data sets, such as parent interviews, student interviews, student focus group discussions, and recorded class sessions. The researcher's journal notes were also coded. Lastly, the contents of the student's journals were transcribed and entered, complete with spelling errors. Appendix 8 provides three codebook tables. Codebook 1 summarises

the initial coding, Codebook 2 summarises the expanded coding, and Codebook 3 is the last one used when data has been collapsed into the three main lenses.

Over the months of 2016, the data-analysis year, the final coding pattern emerged, as the data was progressively analysed and re-analysed, grouping the information according to the three objectives of the study as identified in the literature review, creating the necessary sub-nodes, which were in turn grouped according to iterations. Case nodes were also set up for each child and this was used to facilitate accessing, for example, all instances when observations recorded a child's contribution or participation.

Saturation points were reached when the data no longer provided significant new information to support the objectives under each of the three lenses. Once this was done, and saturation point reached for each set of data, the material was reviewed and queries were run to gather the precise information needed to exemplify, substantiate and triangulate the findings from as many perspectives as possible. This final coding substantiated the findings presented in Chapters Four, Five and Six. These chapters each reflect a distinct lens addressing a main objective arising from the literature review.

## 3.8 Verification

### 3.8.1 Opening comments

In qualitative research, the four key criteria described by Guba (1981) and generally accepted by researchers, are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. *Credibility* involves the researcher demonstrating that the findings are based on true data reliably gathered and analysed. *Transferability* relates to whether the study can be applied in other circumstances and requires the provision of enough information to make this possible. *Dependability* involves provision of enough information to allow for replication. *Confirmability* refers researcher's ability to demonstrate that the findings are supported by data, and not distorted by the researcher's predispositions or bias (Shenton, 2004).

These criteria match the positivist, quantitative paradigms criteria as indicated in Table 11.

*Table 11: Verification criteria in qualitative and quantitative research based on Guba's construct*

	<b>Qualitative Research Criteria</b>	<b>Quantitative Research Criteria</b>
1	Credibility	Internal validity
2	Transferability	External validity/ generalisability
3	Dependability	Reliability
4	Confirmability	Objectivity

### 3.8.2 Credibility

Shenton (2004) recommends fourteen provisions to ensure credibility. These are listed in Table 12, together with a brief indication of how this study matches each recommendation. Twelve of the fourteen recommendations could be applied to the study, as the table indicates.

Table 12: Shenton's (2004) summary of credibility factors as reflected in this study

Shenton's Recommendations	This study
1 Use well-established research methods	Followed tried and tested ways to gather data relating to children and adults. Well researched and thought through interview questions, good open-ended questioning techniques and interviewing skills.
2 Familiarity with the culture of participating organisation	There was prolonged engagement, extending for a full year, with the researcher being on-site three days a week, and involved in the day-to-day life of the school, attending staff meetings, in-servicing opportunities, interacting with students at lunch times, meeting parents at the beginning or end of the day, etc.
3 Random sampling of individuals	While the school was purposively selected, the class and the participating teachers were randomly selected, being chosen by the school executive and ultimately by the Principal, with no input from the researcher.
4 Triangulation	Each of the data collection tools provided information relating to most, if not all of the research objectives, offering very powerful triangulation.
5 Tactics to ensure honesty of informants	The long-term nature of the study particularly facilitated this, since the participants almost forgot that this was a research project. Parents were interviewed in a manner that encouraged honesty. Teacher participants and Religious Education Coordinator were encouraged to speak without hesitation and honestly, particularly if it involved anything at all negative relating to the research or the researcher's approach or limitations.
6 Iterative questioning	Gently probing questions were asked in drawing out information from the students in interviews. Focus group questions were phrased in different ways if necessary. The researcher's manner was such that it encouraged adults and children involved to respond candidly.  There were also the questions posed by the cameraman in interviews he conducted with the children during class sessions. These were out of earshot of the researcher and were usually informal, but very informative.
7 Negative case analysis	Not relevant to this study
8 Frequent de-briefing sessions	The researcher regularly met with one or other of three supervisors, and sometimes with all three at the same time. These were opportunities to clarify the direction, as each supervisor contributed according to this own speciality and strength. In addition, the researcher's new ideas were discussed and refined.



9	Peer scrutiny of the research project	The study was scrutinised by participators and other interested stakeholders, such as the Principal, the Religious Education Coordinator, observing teachers, Catholic Education Office executive members. The Religious Education Coordinator, in particular, would inform the researcher of any perceived concerns that were expressed to her, and these were discussed and taken on board. Visiting teachers completed observation sheets, which encouraged honest reflection. Thus, there were many opportunities to explain the project with greater depth and a sense of accountability. They also offered opportunities to identify researcher's bias, and facilitated critical analysis of successes and failures of the SALT Approach and the data analysis.
10	The researcher's reflective commentary	The researcher kept a reflective journal, audio recording thoughts to and from the school, and while setting up or putting order before and after the sessions. As the data was reviewed and analysed, notes were made. Coding was organised and re-organised, and new ways of analysing the data emerged to bring together information from the various sources, offering valuable triangulation.
11	Background qualifications and experience of the investigator	<p>Details of this are supplied in Chapter One.</p> <p>As a student, the necessary courses were taken to qualify the researcher to undertake the PhD</p>
12	Member checks	As far as was possible, transcripts were verified by those taking part in interviews or focus group. On other occasions, the essential content of meetings and discussions led to changes or developments in the approach that were understood by the participants as being consequent to those interviews or focus group discussions.
13	Thick description of the phenomena	The Findings Chapters 4, 5 and 6 demonstrate that thick descriptions back up all of the significant findings. They often reflect verbatim what transpired in interviews, focus groups or class sessions, etc.
14	Examination of previous research findings to assess the project's congruency with past studies	This criterion was not incorporated since this is the first study relating to the design of a prototype built on O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method.

### 3.8.3 Transferability

Transferability, according to Shenton (2004), quoting Merriam is "the extent to which the findings from one study can be applied to another" (Shenton quoting Merriam, 2004, p. 69) This intervention took place in a purposively selected school in the Parramatta Diocese. It was chosen precisely because it offered a substantial set of challenges regarding (a) the student population and (b) the existing *Sharing Our Story* religious education curriculum in use at the time. These factors, combined with the extensive description of experiences throughout the iterations, are likely to strike a chord with religious education teachers in other Catholic schools. The description of the data gathering and data analysis procedures focused on the research objectives will both facilitate and invite replication and further research.

### 3.8.4 Dependability

Lincoln and Guba, (1985) suggest that dependability is closely linked with credibility, in which case the substantial credibility factors offered in 3.6.2 support the dependability of this study. Regardless, the detail provided in this chapter, describing how the study was designed and carried out offers a type of "prototype" (Shenton, 2004, p.72) for others wishing to undertake a similar design-based research study and providing them with enough information to do so. Shenton (2004) indicates three aspects that should be addressed with regard to dependability. These are listed in relation to this study in Table 13, below.

Table 13: Dependability criteria as recommended by Shenton, 2004, and as applied to this study

Shenton's Dependability Criteria		This Study
1	The research design and its implementation	<p>The research design contains enough detail for the study to be replicated.</p> <p>The interview and focus group schedules can be used as a basis, as is, adapted or developed according to local need.</p> <p>The comprehensive materials supplied with the first prototype, and the detailed weekly teaching plans, the <i>wikispaces</i> for students and teachers provide abundant guidance for researchers to replicate the study. The recommendations for the final prototype can be incorporated into a study built upon this one, taking the research to another level.</p>
2	The operational detail of data gathering	<p>The data that was gathered was entered into NVivo, and the various stages of this were saved supplying an audit trail, should it be needed.</p>
3	Reflective appraisal of the project	<p>The researcher's reflective journal recorded in audio, in notebooks, and electronic notebooks provide another angle of the audit trail.</p>

*Progressive subjectivity* was an important element of the research project, offering an important layer to the study's dependability. Projective subjectivity refers to the researcher's *a priori assumptions*. These were well documented as it became clear in the first iteration that the students' behaviour patterns challenged the effectiveness of the SALT Approach. In addition, literacy skills, being unexpectedly low, also provided a significant 'reality check'. These challenges were not glossed over but squarely faced, with adaptations and improvements occurring throughout the three iterations. Both issues required significant refinement of the SALT Approach, bshaping many of the recommendations for the final prototype. The researcher often commented to visiting observers that the sessions could take one of many directions, depending on the students' dispositions on that particular day. Reference to this is obliquely alluded to, particularly in Chapter Four, presenting, amongst other things, findings relating to student behaviour throughout the year. Student behaviour was always a largely unpredictable matter. The researcher's *emerging assumptions* were checked by the expanding list of priorities for the post-PhD research, which were planned for, and discussed with, the Parramatta Diocesan Catholic Education Office on the strength of the 2015 study. These are presented in Chapter Seven, where the recommendations are proposed.

### 3.8.5 Confirmability

Confirmability requires a concern for objectivity on the part of the researcher (Shenton, 2004, p.72). This was fulfilled in this study in a number of ways. The range of participants and data collection strategies, such as interviews, observations and focus groups, involving others beyond the researcher, provided triangulation with ample verbal responses occurring throughout the study's iterations. Film footage offered further confirmability. In addition, the researcher's journal notes recorded reflective responses to the many challenges faced throughout the year.

The researcher did indeed possess a distinct level of expertise with regard to (a) the depth of understanding of the SALT Approach, and (b) understanding of, and commitment to, Catholic belief. These factors could be perceived as bias, but are justified as essential in this particular research study, being the first of many that may follow. In addition, the researcher was keen for the SALT Approach to be a success. This doubtless added a certain readiness to overcome all obstacles, but the researcher frequently noted that the same dedication and time could not be expected of others seeking to implement the approach. This reality was constantly addressed in the study and incorporated into the final prototype design.

This concludes Chapter Three, addressing the design of the Research Study. The findings will be described in Chapters Four, Five and Six.

# Chapter 4: Lens 1 Findings - Exploring the Empowering and Disempowering Factors Affecting Today's Child within the SALT Approach

## 4.1 Introduction

Chapter 4 will present findings relating to exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today's child within the SALT Approach (Lens 1). It was a rich and exciting journey travelling through the three iterations, focusing on the children as persons. Three elements were identified within this lens. These were: (a) behaviour and self-control issues, (b) literacy and communication skills, and (c) the spiritual nature of today's child. Within these three elements, several themes were subsequently identified and explained.

Each of these three elements and their themes as outlined in this chapter were tracked through the three iterations, spanning the school year of 2015. The first iteration (School Term 1) was a fact-finding mission, identifying factors affecting the successful implementation of the SALT Approach in the target school's climate. The second iteration (School Term 2) trialled the solutions. These were evaluated, adjusted and trialled in the third iteration (School Terms 3 and 4). The third iteration also pinpointed additional solutions. Figure 2 describes the four-phase design-based research model developed by Reeves (2006), which supports the iterations.

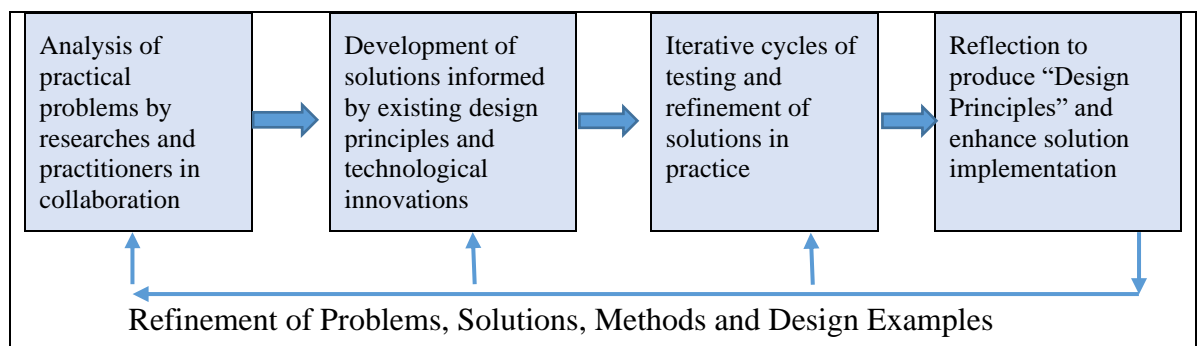


Figure 2: The four phases of design-based research. Adapted from Reeves, 2006

## 4.2 Phases of Development for Facilitating Self-Regulated Learning

### 4.2.1 Phase 1: The literature review

The four phases were followed to develop ways for facilitating self-regulated learning. *Phase 1* involved the literature review, which pinpointed potential challenges for teachers and schools wishing to use the SALT Approach, in which self-regulated learning plays a central role. There were a number of issues impacting on self-regulated learning. Difficulties were likely to be encountered in classroom settings where student's behaviour reflected an inability to self-regulate one's learning. Also, if students experienced difficulty in reading and writing literacy, they would find it hard to work independently. By contrast, students today can display verbal strengths and communication skills that could potentially facilitate the SALT Approach. This Chapter Four explores findings related to these issues in detail.

### 4.2.2 Phase 2: Development of solutions relating to empowering and disempowering factors affecting today's child: the first prototype.

*Phase 2* involved developing the first prototype. The above factors were considered in planning the first prototype to be trialled and refined through three iterations. It was built to reflect as faithfully as possible the Mystagogical Catechetical Method proposed by O'Shea (in press). However, the prototype, targeting Year Two students, needed to incorporate work that would ideally be covered in Kindergarten and Year One. The first iteration allowed the researcher to directly experience and identify the challenges and advantages as they occurred in the particular setting. The second and third iterations explored possibilities for refining the SALT Approach to work effectively in this school setting.

### 4.2.3 Phase 3: Iterative cycles

#### 4.2.3.1 Overview of the iterative cycles

*Phase 3* involved conducting three iterative cycles. Table 14 summarises the three elements of Lens 1 as tracked through the iterations. In turn, each element is described in terms of identified themes.

Table 14: Summary of all three elements of Lens 1, and their themes

<b>Main Objective:</b> To design, trial and refine a programme for teaching religious education in a contemporary Catholic systemic school based on the SALT Approach.			
<b>Lens 1:</b> Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today's child within the SALT Approach			
	<b>First Iteration:</b> Term 1	<b>Second Iteration:</b> Term 2	<b>Third Iteration:</b> Terms 3 and 4
<b>Element 1</b> Behaviour and self-control issues	<b>Fact-finding</b>  <b>Identified themes:</b> a) School and classroom environment impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning. b) Personal, family and cultural issues impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning. c) Attentiveness despite disruptive situations.	<b>Refinements trialled:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Setting tighter boundaries</li> <li>Limiting choices</li> <li>Handling Complex Trauma</li> </ul> <b>Refinements planned for new insights:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporation of the language of virtue</li> </ul>	<b>Refinements trialled</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Incorporation of the language of virtue</li> </ul> Refinements adjusted and consolidated
<b>Element 2</b> Literacy and communication skills	<b>Identified themes</b> a) Limited reading and writing literacy skills. b) Children display verbal confidence. c) Children use auditory, visual and kinaesthetic senses in preference to reading.	<b>Refinements trialled:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compensating for limited literacy skills.</li> </ul> <b>Refinements planned for new insights:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal Choice Chart work</li> <li>Solo Taxonomy</li> </ul>	<b>Refinements trialled, adjusted and consolidated:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal Choice Chart</li> <li>Solo Taxonomy</li> </ul>
<b>Element 3</b> The spiritual nature of today's child	<b>Identified theme</b> Children are spiritually inclined and search for truth.	<b>Refinements trialled:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Filming</li> <li>Broader range of activities introduced</li> </ul>	<b>Refinements trialled, adjusted and consolidated.</b>



#### 4.2.3.2 The first Iterative cycle (Term 1)

In the first iteration, the researcher explored the three elements described above, namely ‘behaviour and self-control issues’, ‘literacy and communication skills’, and ‘the spiritual nature of today’s child’. The purpose was to ‘test the waters’, identifying specific issues that needed consideration when refining the prototype throughout the second and third iterations.

Sessions commenced in the first week of Term 1. Students attended the allocated room. They came over three days, attending 2 x 60-minute sessions and 1x 30-minute session. Two teachers shared the role of Classroom Teacher. Teacher A took the students on Monday-Wednesday. Teacher B took the students on Thursday-Friday. Teacher A attended the two 60-minute sessions and Teacher B attended the 30-minute session. However, it was the researcher who conducted the sessions. Essentially, the accompanying teachers actively observed, regularly using specific observation sheets. Sessions were evaluated and discussed. Throughout Term One, core ideas relating to individual choice as described by Cavalletti and implemented in the parish-based *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* were trialled and adjustments made as necessary. These are briefly described at the commencement of each theme being explored within the Lens 1 elements.

##### 4.2.3.2.1 Element 1: behaviour and self-control issues

Behaviour and self-control issues significantly impacted on self-regulated learning in the *choice time*, which was intended to take up most of the time allocated to these Religious Education sessions (RE sessions). At the outset, students were not well equipped to handle self-regulated learning. When faced with choice, classroom behaviour and self-control were often wanting. Bickering and quarrelling over minor issues frequently disrupted the atmosphere.

Three themes emerged relating to behaviour and self-control issues (first element):

- a) School and classroom environment impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning

- b) Personal, family and cultural issues impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning
- c) Attentiveness within disruptive situations

These themes are discussed below.

#### *4.2.3.2.1.1 Theme (a) School and classroom environment impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning*

The first theme related to the school and classroom environment. Impacting factors included the homeroom environment, the walk towards the learning space, classroom management, student behaviour challenges, student access to, and appropriate use of, materials and room. The researcher intended to experience the challenges as a sole teacher in a systemic school, seeking solutions in accord with the SALT Approach. Therefore, accompanying homeroom teachers were asked not to ‘take-over’, even if things appeared to get out of control.

A dedicated room, called the Atrium is core to the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Cavalletti, Coulter, Gobbi & Montanaro, 1995). Atriums are generally parish-based and attended by small groups of children whose parents are committed to the Catholic Faith. Sessions in them are guided by an adult, with assistants, often reducing the adult/child ratio to 1:4. Children participating in *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* spend most of the time personally exploring materials and concepts that have been introduced.

O’Shea’s booklet *Setting up the RE Classroom* included some practical suggestions for introducing full classes of school students to the Atrium, should one be available (Appendix 9). Presuming the RE teacher is the Homeroom Teacher, it also suggests a timetable of 5 x 30-minute sessions and practical advice for the weeks and terms of the school year, with specific recommendations for each grade. These recommendations were adapted as necessary, with the 2.5 hours allocated to RE distributed over three days with 2 x 60 sessions and 1 x 30-minute sessions.

Challenges emerged due to the *homeroom environments*; the students came from a learning space distinctly at variance with the SALT Approach. Their homeroom was a large, open-plan, shared space equivalent to three classrooms, accommodating two

classes, totalling 55 children. After two school years in this environment, there were behaviour issues that could be all the more exacerbated in a small classroom environment. In addition, the students had two homeroom teachers. Teacher A attended the two 60-minute sessions (Monday and Wednesday). Teacher B attended the 30-minute session (Thursday).

*The walk towards the research space* could assist a re-focus if the accompanying teacher used it as such. However, the two participating teachers approached this walk differently. The children were calmer when Teacher A accompanied them. In addition, and not infrequently, relief teachers replaced the usual teachers, which contributed significantly to inappropriate student behaviour.

The two teachers structured the walk-over in distinct ways and the relief teachers brought the children over without any consistent approach. Teacher A adopted a more structured approach, while Teacher B was less so. Relief teachers often had little awareness of the importance of the walk-over. This is described in the comments of Teacher A and Teacher B found in Text Box 1.

*Text Box 1: Teachers reflect on the walk to the dedicated room during a meeting*

**Teacher B:** In Term 1, there was the behaviour of the children. They would come here and were so excited, so hyped. And you would just think...mmm. Then let them talk a little bit on the way over, and then get them more settled as they got closer.

**Researcher:** There was something Teacher A did, I saw you had two stops.

**Teacher A:** And there is a magic arch, once you go through that...

**Teacher B:** You never told me you have a magic arch!

**Teacher A:** It sets up for the lesson.

Regarding *classroom management*, the researcher waited outside the room and in full view of the children as they approached, usually displaying a small pin-board outlining the session's focus. Despite this, initial student composure could soon disintegrate, with issues simmering beneath the surface. Photoset 1 illustrates disruptive behaviour patterns that could quickly escalate. It should be noted at this point that all the stills supplied are taken from the video footage, and not a still camera (which would have been distracting).





*Photoset 1: These shots are moments apart, reflecting how disquieting behaviour could escalate.*

With 26 children, it was difficult to see and control all that was happening, and to keep the children focused and on track. This was partly because they did not have the range of skills needed to choose from a variety of possibilities and because the more open-ended structure was new to them. Teachers' comments (*Text Box 2*) reflected this.

*Text Box 2: Teachers reflecting back to the first iteration*

**Teacher A:** The weak points would be when the children didn't have enough explanation of the activities and they could be lost. And it is really important to set up the structures and routine within this space. This is where we sit. That they recognise the boundaries. At the beginning of the year they didn't have that.

**Teacher B:** I think the biggest challenge ... is really ensuring that the children are at least doing a few of the tasks, not doing just one of them. It is hard to manage the children and ensure that they are all doing something.

(this last comment does reflect the teacher's partial understanding of the SALT Approach, which allows children to revisit and stay with materials)

There were significant *student behaviour challenges* eliciting the researcher's immediate responses which were far from the ideal with regard to effectively implementing the SALT Approach. (See *Text Box 3*).

**Class Session Transcript, February 9, 2015**

**Researcher** (ringing bell) When you hear that bell absolutely freeze.

You have done well, now everything you use you have to put back to right spot.

**Child:** Miss Irwin...

**Researcher:** Wait, wait... Put your things in your box. Roll mat. see you do it quietly.

Various children: Barry, Barry!

Banging sounds. Owwww. Barry!

I cannot Roll

*(Noise level escalating)*

Miss this is my mat

We have to put this in our box...

Ohhhh...

*(Boys very loud) OWWW*

Look, Look, Look *(progressively louder)*

We have to put this in our box. (Extremely high noise level and pitch.)

(Bell rings again)

**Researcher:** *(exasperated and loud)* I am going to count to three. Shhh. Listen. When I count to three I want total silence 1, 2, 3 *(progressively louder)*

(total silence)

**Researcher:** Now I want you to put things away in your own box. *(children starting to chatter)*  
*(Louder)* Then I want you to take off your lanyard and put it on the red seat. Azzam...

**Azzam:** *(loud grating voice)* I put it at my spot

General Chatter

**Researcher:** And then I want you to sit quietly

**Children:** Whoa Ohh etc ...

**Researcher:** *(loudly over the noise);* With your back straight, looking at me

**Children:** Who took my lanyard? Who is...

Hey Guys

Hey

Guys

**Researcher:** Some mats to roll up here.

**Ben:** I rolled up some people's mats.

**Researcher:** Did you? That's good, but they have to roll their own

*(battling to speak above children)* OK let me see... everyone who hasn't rolled up a mat...

**Clara:** Miss, Miss, Miss whenever are we going to do people like that?

**Researcher:** Some mats here not rolled. Let me see...

**Azzam:** Where do we put these?

**Researcher:** In your box. Shhh. Right. Sit in your same place.

**Child:** I am sitting up here. I am sitting here

Noooo.

**Researcher:** This goes in your box

**Children:** loud voices, sounds of complaint and irritation, banging...

**Researcher:** I am very... shh

**Child:** Ahmed, Ahmed

*(childish singing going on, general shouting, arguing)*

**Researcher:** Okay, okay. One two three. I want everyone sitting down here right now.

*(They are finally, temporarily, silent.)*

**Researcher:** *(Very firmly)* Now quietly and quickly: In your place... Robbie, I will count to three and you had better be there.

*(Some quiet complaints)*

**Researcher:** No, no... *(warning)* Lips together, fold your legs, hands in your lap. Thank you very

much. Now you were noisy at the end: but before that you did many good things: a lot more than I thought you could do. This is just the beginning of many things you will be able to do but there are a couple of points I would like to make.

No, this is not the time to go cross-eyed. No...

You will get time for... shhh ... lots of choices. You will get time to understand how to do them. How to put unfinished work in a box. How to use your bookmark to mark the page of a book you are interested in, in a book you want to read. How to think about something I have introduced to you this week. Like the Annunciation. As time goes by you will get more freedom of choice. I am going to have things on the shelves.

So, in every lesson we will have an introduction on the mat here. Then move into choice activity... quietly, more quietly than today, sometimes working on your own sometimes with others...

The SALT Approach employed new and exciting activities for the students which were met with initial focused absorption. For example, painting was not something these students often did. When water colour painting was introduced, the silence was palpable as all students simultaneously engaged with that particular activity.

However, subsequent sessions were challenging, since painting was available as a choice and most students would opt for it. Several were quickly unharnessed and excited. They chose to use paint, but not with a focus on religious education. The behaviour of these students impacted the others: they needed to be 're-harnessed' and boundaries set in place.

In addition, *student access to materials* was challenging, as was using them independently, sensibly and effectively, returning items clean and ready for others to use. The room was often left in disorder. The audio journal and subsequent class session extracts in Text Box 4 describe the situation.

*Text Box 4: Journal extract and subsequent feedback to students in relation to the use and care of materials*

**Journal extract, Thursday, 19<sup>th</sup> February.**

Researcher reflecting then addressing the group after allowing for choices.

**Pre-session audio journal:** (*as Researcher drags desks around.*) Today is the 19th February. I am rearranging the room because the children cannot work independently without some kind of anchor space in the room. I am setting up places so each child has his or her own space. I think it will work much better.

The following session with students:

**Researcher:** I realise that you are not used to making choices but I did an experiment on Tuesday to see what it would look like if I really gave you choices. It was not a pretty picture. I had to spend a long time cleaning up the room afterwards. If you use something you put it back exactly where you found it. You are going to learn this by sitting in your seats and only coming forward when I am ready and when I see you are doing well. So, you put things back. You do not use anything that has not been taught to you yet. You don't pull out anything and everything. I had to rearrange all the dioramas into the right trays because they were all used by people and left around. I had to find them all over the floor, under the tables. Everything was mixed in together. Do you understand that this is not acceptable?

**Students:** (*woefully*) Yes

**Researcher:** Now about half of you are already controlling yourselves. I know who you are. And I am not being strong to you. I know who you are and you know too. And you know if you are not. You do not let other people learn if you wander around...

The *appropriate use of materials* did not always happen. Models and dioramas were not commonplace for them. Children randomly chose things that sparked interest and often did not use the materials as intended. A group of boys, for example, used the diorama of the Last Supper as a war game rather than anything resembling the events at the Cenacle of Holy Thursday. Since the boys had the diorama, others had no access. It was virtually impossible to control the situation, apart from stopping the activity, causing a tantrum and disrupting the whole class. While the assisting teacher could intervene, this was not an option as the researcher wanted to handle the situation without interference, in order to evaluate it.

*Room set-up* affected behaviour. The Montessori/Cavalletti approach recommends that children find what they need and take it to an available space, or work at the spot where materials are located. This recommendation was trialled, but the constant movement to access materials was not practical, given the number of children. It encouraged excessive noise and disorder, as well as eating into precious time. Clearly, movement would have to be minimised.

This section explored the first theme of the first element, namely, “School and Classroom environment impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning” within



the first iteration. In brief, the SALT Approach could be challenged if students were not used to structures in which authentic personal choices are embedded. In these circumstances, children's behaviour can be unpredictable. Moreover, handling the situation requires pedagogical skills consonant with the SALT Approach. Opting for inappropriate discipline measures would undermine the SALT Approach. This requires a new mind-set, focusing not only on the content and curriculum but also on a philosophical approach that respects the person in the child. This will be more fully explored in Chapter Five, "Equipping schools and teachers to implement the SALT Approach". The final prototype would need to include very practical measures, such as establishing appropriate and common routines for coming to the allocated room, addressing behaviour issues in ways that are consonant with the SALT Approach, finding ways to ensure materials are used appropriately and establishing practical procedures for accessing and using materials.

*4.2.3.2.1.2 Theme (b) Personal, family and cultural issues impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning*

The second identified theme of the first element related to personal, family and cultural issues affecting behaviour and self-regulated learning. Some children were emotionally traumatised, finding it difficult to maintain focus, because of their personal condition or family situation. Indicators of complex trauma were noted. Some of the children were highly dependent on the teacher for guidance, encouragement and direction. Others were verbally aggressive and non-conforming, challenging teachers when the consequences for inappropriate behaviour were set in place. Such behaviours were disquieting for other students. Finally, there was a large proportion of Sudanese students, children of refugees, and they did bring their own sub-culture. Many lived in dysfunctional families, with parents who spoke little English. Parents were often 'strict', but in ways that contrasted with the school's approach and the children were caught between disciplinary cultures. Additionally, children from these backgrounds often clashed with other students and among themselves. These factors affected other children and their learning.

Montessori herself encountered similar challenges, with children being what today would be called 'latch-key kids'. Her approach was to invest a significant time into grace and courtesy exercise (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Cavalletti's Parish-

based Catechesis of the Good Shepherd generally works with small numbers of children, whose families usually practice the Catholic faith. Contemporary educational research identifies a range of family, personal and cultural factors affecting today's children (see 2.4.3.5) Montessori's personalised approach, with its respect for the person, lends itself to offering solutions, but requires a more holistic approach to education and adequate adult-student ratios.

Instability in the personal lives of several students meant that some brought emotional scarring. Discussions with teachers, and information available through school executive, counsellors, parents and foster parents, matched with observations made by the researcher. *Instability within families* was a common factor. At least eleven of the children in the study were from fragile families. The impact of this was reflected in the parent/ carer interviews, as the two transcripts in Text Boxes 5 and 6 illustrate. Michael and his siblings were living with foster-parents. His older brothers could be very aggressive. The foster-parents were Michael's aunt and uncle, with children of their own. Life was not easy, with their own children and the foster children having various difficulties. Text Box 5 contains part of an interview with Michael's foster parents, and Text Box 6 illustrates the effect on Michael within class time.

*Text Box 5: Extract of interview with Michael's foster parents*

**Michael's Foster parents. (Foster mum is Michael's aunt.)**

**Foster-mum:** He lives with his 5 brothers and sister. Our youngest son is at home and our older daughter is married. So, there are 6 altogether including Michael.

**Researcher:** Does he see his mum and dad?

**Foster-mum:** They do but they haven't seen him now for 18 months.

**Foster-dad:** They had the opportunity to but she has not taken it up.

**Foster-mum:** We have had Michael for 6 years, so the others are 'the other parents'.

**Researcher:** Do you go to Mass?

**Foster-mum:** No we don't go now. It's a little bit difficult.

**Researcher:** If he shows interest in Church would you take him?

**Foster-mum:** I have taken them. Well, more the others, but it got more difficult.

**Foster-dad:** It is a case of, if he wants to go and the others don't ... or are not enthusiastic. Chances are he will behave while he is enthusiastic but the others won't, so...

**Foster-mum:** If he asks, I will take him.

**Foster-dad:** It is not always practical for us. Most of the children have things on that day, and three of them have 'issues'.

**Foster-mum:** Three have very big, loud aggressive behaviours. You don't know what the triggers are. Like he will be ok one time and other times refuses... Cameron is hyperactive, swears, antagonises, punches Michael. They are the best of friends when things are okay. There is the whole gamut of things.

**Researcher:** You say Michael picks up on things...

**Foster-mum:** He has to learn that because he sees it, he can't...

**Foster-mum:** That is why Church going stopped, because of that behaviour... can be there ten minutes and then he goes off, because he is bored.

*Text Box 6: Michael expresses the reason for his inability to concentrate*

**Researcher:** Michael, you need to do the activities that relate to religious education

**Michael:** I just can't. I can't think of anything except my real parents. I just want to be with them.

*Complex trauma behaviours* seemed evident in three, if not four, male students. They often reverted to early development behaviour patterns such as throwing tantrums, crawling under desks, speaking incoherently and refusing to follow normal expectations. Many times, they reacted with loud and aggressive language. Conversations with the school counsellor supported the impression that the appropriate adult response to such behaviours is still not well understood by schools and teachers in general and this school was no exception. The school counsellor commented "This school has significant numbers of children with complex trauma issues. There would be several in each class. There are quite simple ways to help this, but teachers need more understanding of the problem." It fell beyond the scope of this study to fully address the issue, but the situation had to be handled. The

transcript sample Text Box 7 illustrates distracting and disruptive nature of behaviours of these students.

*Text Box 7: Sample of behaviour relating to complex trauma*

**Researcher:** Sean, why do you go under the tables?  
**Sean:** Cause when I get angry I don't want anyone to talk to me.  
**Researcher:** Were you angry just now when you got under the table?  
**Sean:** No  
**Researcher:** Oh, so why did you get under the table?  
**Sean:** Because I was playing...

Six children, five of them boys, were second generation Sudanese. *These children brought their own sub-culture*, which clashed with the Australian School environment. These students witnessed older Sudanese boys loudly invade the allocated room without permission, wildly roving around, picking up then dropping or taking away materials, avoiding eye-contact and totally ignoring the requests of the researcher. At times, the students in this study tended to imitate such behaviours, gravitating to each other in the learning space and often having to be separated (See Text Box 8).

*Text Box 8: Handling the behaviour of Sudanese students*

**Researcher:** Now I am quite aware that at lunch time there was a lot of electricity around here with people bashing and being bashed outside this room... the year three boy  
**Azzam and others:** Jack...  
**Researcher:** ...Tried to bash down my door and tried to come in.  
I have had a few words with him. That is why some of you are agitated. Mutasim was on the receiving end. I am not happy with that because it is less than human behaviour.  
We have been talking about human behaviour lately.  
**Teacher B:** I wouldn't be laughing Namir.  
**Researcher:** Namir is laughing because from embarrassment, I think, because he was with me all the time and was helping. He was very good.  
(addressing Namir) Namir, you have to learn to not to laugh if you know it is going to get you into trouble...  
(addressing Teacher B) Sorry but I wanted you to know the mechanics.)  
**Teacher B:** I will have to have a word with Jack tomorrow.  
(June 18, 2015)

In brief, *personal, family and cultural issues impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning* are likely to impact on the SALT Approach's success, since

Australia's Catholic systemic schools invariably include children from fragile families, sometimes having fled from extremely traumatic experiences. In addition, schools are still catching-up with implementing appropriate measures to assist children with complex trauma (see 2.4.3.5). The SALT Approach can offer positive suggestions, but wider school acceptance is needed in adopting a more personalised approach to behaviour management.

#### *4.2.3.2.1.3 Theme (c) Attentiveness within disruptive situations*

The third theme of the first element, namely, *attentiveness within disruptive situations*, was interesting. Unexpected levels of attentiveness became evident, both in the children with behaviour problems and in others. This offered a more optimistic note, even during this first iteration (Term 1). Data indicated that distracted or disruptive children were often interacting relevantly with the ideas and concepts introduced.

The *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* approach is that children participating in the Atrium participate in prayerful ways. They reflect on the topics presented in a way that leads to meditation and contemplation. The teacher is Christ himself, and quizzes and exams play no part (Cavalletti, 1994). This implies a quiet, focused attentiveness on the part of the children. O'Shea's proposals take into account the changing classroom atmosphere through the stages of development. Also taken into account are the class sizes and the varying school environments. *Setting up the RE Classroom* incorporates suggestions for addressing these matters (O'Shea, in press).

The behaviours just described offer a great deal of evidence that children were frequently distracted and unfocused. Some of those inclined to work independently, with a more focused attention, found noise levels difficult, and sometimes upsetting. However, an interesting twist emerged from transcripts evidencing that *children who were distracted in themselves could still be attentive*. They were often relevantly engaged, albeit in undetected ways (See Text Box 9).

*Text Box 9: Reflections of teacher and the students relating to distracted students still being attentive*

**Researcher and teacher discussion, February 9, 2015**

**Teacher A:** If I wasn't listening I would have thought I had to pull Basem into line. But because I could just focus on him and not on the other 20 or more I could hear what he was doing and though he wasn't settled, he was going to the different boys and still focusing on the topic.

**Researcher:** He wasn't wasting time, but actually exploring.

**Teacher A:** He was moving around a lot. I mean at one point he was at the table but he wasn't gone long. He got a book of Moses and with Namir they were talking about all the pictures. So really, he was still achieving the goal.

**Student Focus Group Discussion, April 2, 2015**

**Jamie:** Can I go first? Sean always listens. I know he listens.

**Researcher:** Sometimes he looks as though he is not listening.

**Jamie:** I know he will... he listens. I know he hears... you can see in his eyes.

**Researcher:** What about when he is wandering around the room and crawling under the tables?

**Jamie:** He still hears...

**Student Focus Group discussion, April 2, 2015**

**Celia:** When you ask people to do things they normally do it straight away.

**Researcher:** Doesn't it happen in other classes?

**Celia:** No. Not in Year 2 Class. When Mrs W or Mrs VD asks Basem to be quiet he doesn't stop: he bees more sillier and he just goes around the room or sings. When he is in here he actually listens to you. But he doesn't listen to teachers in class. It normally starts with Kafil, because Kafil likes singing a lot.

Additionally, some students who were able to self-regulate seemed to be able to enter a state of deeper reflection. They were, at times, absolutely oblivious to the distractions. Students themselves expressed an ability to 'switch off' from distractions, as Text Box 10 illustrates.

*Text Box 10: Celia's mum commenting on her daughter's absorption with the work*

Parent Interview extract

**Researcher:** Sometimes with all the choices, it can be very noisy.

**Celia's Mum:** She has never mentioned that she just seems so focused on whatever it is she is doing that she has never actually commented what the other kids are doing or not doing. I really only hear of her personal experience of it. I never even considered the aspect of 27 children running around!

In brief, evidence relating to the theme of *attentiveness within disruptive situations*, indicated that, at least to some degree, the SALT Approach could succeed in difficult situations. Non-conforming children did respond, reflecting it in their own ways. At least some non-disruptive children seemed able to focus despite distractions. Children from different cultural backgrounds explored faith matters in ways that

could be misconstrued by the teacher, and it was important to recognise and harness this.

#### 4.2.3.2.2 Element 2: literacy and communication skills

Element 2, focused on *literacy and communication skills* likely to affect children's learning. Children experiencing what the researcher termed as a "literacy handicap" were indeed hampered in their learning. The SALT Approach, just as any other, requires students to be competent in literacy skills.

Three themes emerged relating to literacy and communication skills: (a) limited reading and writing skills, (b) children's verbal competency, and (c) children's use of auditory and kinaesthetic senses in preference to reading. These are discussed in following sub-sections.

##### 4.2.3.2.2.1 Theme (a) Limited reading and writing skills

The first theme of the second element relates to the *limited reading and writing literacy skills* found in these children. The SALT Approach, if it is to be viable across the range of systemic Catholic schools, would need to work despite this challenge. Data revealed three central ideas: "*aversion towards deciphering basic instructions or writing responses*", "*poor reading and writing skills*" and, by contrast, "*activities that afforded an inner world of peace*".

The literature review indicated literacy as a probable challenge (see 2.4.3.4). Self-regulated learning relies upon age-appropriate reading and writing fluency. The SALT Approach involves a gradual build-up of age-appropriate responses. In the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, many of the responses for 3-6-year-olds involve craft, simple tracing activities, painting, working with the dioramas and other 'hands-on' materials accompanied by simple texts. Materials for the 6-9-year-olds require a certain fluency of reading and writing. O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method presumes a basic level of literacy, especially for students entering the second phase of 6-9-year-olds. In addition, the Montessori principle is that children, given a choice, will opt to engage in activities reflecting their developmental stage and intellectual curiosity (see 2.3.2.2).

Most, if not all, children in this group suffered what the researcher called a ‘literacy handicap’ that debilitated and frustrated students and the researcher. It impacted on effective expression, independent work and choice-making. Furthermore, assessment of learning in the school context required reading and writing.

Given choice, many children displayed an *aversion towards deciphering basic instructions or writing responses*. Students had little opportunity for art response in their usual learning space, and given choice, this was what they opted for. The ‘literacy handicap’ challenged even capable and highly motivated students who also opted for easier activities such as colouring-in and tracing (See Text Box 11).

*Text Box 11: Researcher commenting on the lack of writing fluency*

**March 19, 2015**

**Researcher:** Interesting that they don’t read so much. If you look at the writing...

**Camera-man:** ... it is all over the place

**Researcher:** They are frustrated with writing and with reading

I hit on a phrase upon the other day. Children today are very verbally quite literate, but in writing, they are virtually *handicapped*. They don’t spend the explicit time practising handwriting, it seems boring time, like put your pencil here... They are not getting that because they are doing things all the time.

Early in the iteration, a written pre-assessment task was administered to the class as a whole. Many were not able to complete it, due to limited literacy skills. It was completed verbally and individually with the researcher, who scribed the responses. Most lacked necessary skills such as letter formation, basic spelling accuracy, writing on the lines, drawing margins and using pages sequentially. A number of emergency measures were adopted to compensate for the problem. Figure 3 typifies student writing samples.

Students were provided with a journal at the commencement of the first iteration. The anticipated journaling was beyond the students, and the journal then used more as a record of what was covered. The researcher often glued in prepared sheets, giving students a sense of progress in learning and providing a scaffold for their responses. Not a long-term solution, it served its purpose at the time. Figure 4 provides a sample page prepared for the students.



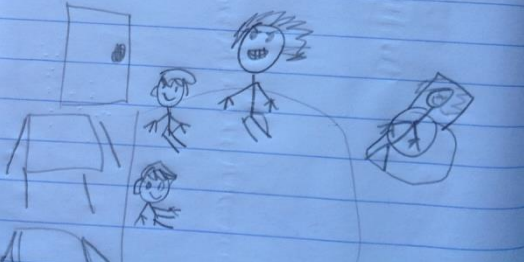
The concept of using Personalised Choice Charts was piloted early in the first iteration as a way of assisting independent work. It was not successful, due to poor reading and writing skills. These were not reintroduced until late in the second iteration (end of Term 2).

Numerous booklets developed by O'Shea, designed to assist Teacher Education students being introduced to the Mystagogical Catechetical Method, accompanied the dioramas and other materials. They set out the steps to be taken and the Scripture passages. These were also to be available for children. Booklets were trialled, but very few of the students had the skills to use them. They would need modification to accommodate limited reading skills.

I tatilltm they ~~Jesus~~  
Jesus wat on wat m p.

I Lerd to be cineder

In the rosary room I Lerne  
• about Jesus and the last  
supper sauper and it is fun  
When im in the rosary room  
I get to do play at Lunch  
time and ~~for~~ LERN.



dear god  
Thank you for  
making NICKOLAS  
my friend  
Then ]

Figure 3: Samples of writing, illustrating limited skills

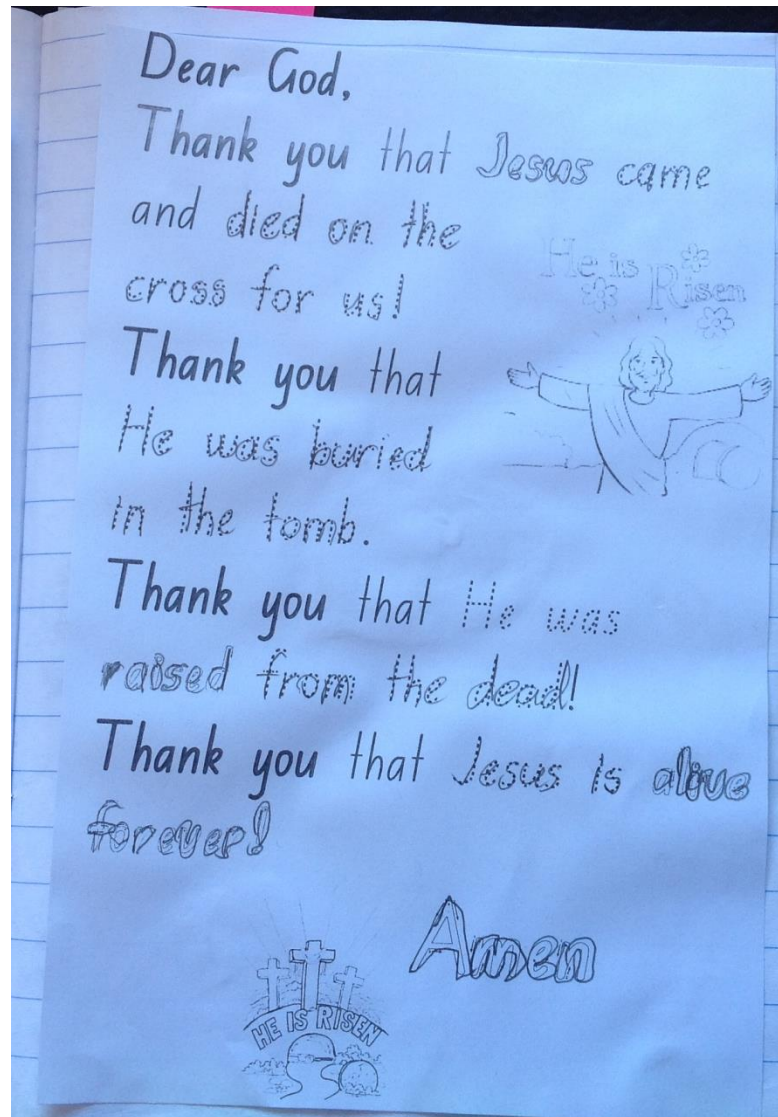


Figure 4: Sample of the more structured student journal pages

The poor reading and writing skills limited the response options for students. Consequently, simpler activities were made available. These fascinated and occupied the students but contained little perceived inherent value. They were neither found in the SALT Approach, nor recommended by current pedagogy. Simple colouring-in was the prime example. The students relished the opportunity to colour-in appropriate pictures. This risked mistaken interpretation by observers and participating teachers, since it was sometimes presumed that the activity was part and parcel of the SALT Approach. In fact, it was an emergency measure offering choice while the range of response activities was built up. However, the children were drawn to colouring-in images relating to the current liturgical moment or the content

of presentations. This was interesting, considering the Montessori principle that children will opt to engage in activities reflecting their developmental stage and intellectual curiosity (see 2.3.2.2).

While some on-lookers would intimate that this choice of activity provided a questionable learning experience, the thoughts of the Religious Education Coordinator (REC) were interesting.

Colouring-in books for both adults and children abound at the current time. It seems that colouring-in provides time to reflect and contemplate, a time to withdraw from the hectic pace of life. (Religious Education Coordinator)

In the context of this study, simple activities afforded an inner world of peace and unhurried quiet for these children who were thirsty for it. Such activities included colouring-in, copying or tracing pictures and making plasticine models, all requiring little literacy. Photograph 1 provides a visual illustration of the engagement of students who were in fact the more disruptive students.



*Photograph 1: Some easily distracted students colouring-in and tracing*

In brief, it was important to consider the theme of “*Limited reading and writing literacy skills*”. These children displayed an aversion to reading and writing,

preferring to opt for other ways of reflecting and expressing their learning. On the other hand, apparently time-wasting activities are calming and seem to offer children the chance to reflect. Building up a range of practical ways to interact with concepts in religious education is important. The final prototype for the SALT Approach needs to accommodate this, allowing children to deepen in their learning and express themselves effectively in religious education despite 'literacy handicaps'.

#### *4.2.3.2.2.2 Theme (b) Children display verbal confidence*

The second theme of the second element relating to literacy and communication skills identified that children display verbal confidence. They were relatively well able to express their thoughts verbally. Many would increasingly verbalise deep thoughts. On the other hand, thoughts and comments could be extremely tangential and sometimes crossed the boundaries of respect. This verbal confidence counterbalanced the weaker reading and writing skills.

Current research indicates that today's children are confident expressing themselves verbally, given the opportunity (see 2.4.2.6). Montessori believed that children of the twenty-first century would be recognised as persons and be listened to with greater respect (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Cavalletti placed an emphasis on the readiness to listen to the child (Cavalletti, 2002). The challenge in a class of 26 children was that of finding effective ways to facilitate educative verbal expression.

In the first iteration, it quickly emerged that students were *well able to express their thoughts verbally*. Students demonstrated an active engagement in the learning environment and in their own learning. They were confident, speaking their mind even if it involved criticism of the adult asking the questions, doing so with respect (see Text Box 12).

*Text Box 12: Students speak their mind!*

Readiness to speak their mind with respect, even if it involves criticism of the adult asking the questions

- I don't like you screaming loud. I don't like it when people are being noisy and you have to ring the bell.
- You do it because there are people in our class that are naughty.
- It is pretty hard to understand you when you are talking and we are on the floor here.
- I don't like it sitting there waiting and waiting until we can go to our desks.
- I don't like being talked to when I work, because it really interrupts me and I want to finish quick.

They displayed *a strong sense of freedom and initiative*, revealing a sense of ownership for the learning environment (see Text Box 13, with comments lifted from the first iteration focus group discussions).

*Text Box 13: Students offer comments and suggestions without qualms*

Ability to express a strong sense of autonomy/ freedom of spirit, a sense of initiative

- I like having choices.
- It would be good to have a blackboard, about the size of a table and coloured chalks.
- We could have a white board. We could try to write things and draw things about the life of Jesus.
- I could go to the IPAD and find things. I could find things and list them and let you know.

Although they were 'handicapped' with regard to writing literacy, they could *effectively verbalise deep thoughts* (see Text Box 14).

*Text Box 14: Verbalising deep thoughts*

Ability to verbally express deep thoughts (in Focus Group Discussion)

- Jesus and God are very special because like Jesus died for our sins and God made Jesus to be our saviour.
- What we learn is very important because when we are older and we want to do university like you. If we don't learn we might teach those people, the wrong thing. If we do listen to you and if we want to do it, we can teach them lots of things. and it can go on and on: like you then me then the next person. It passes on each and each and each.

Their readiness to speak did not, however, always work to advantage. The inclination for spontaneous expression, regardless of the rules of etiquette could undermine a session's focus. Thoughts and comments were sometimes extremely tangential to the learning focus. Furthermore, on many occasions interruptions demonstrated a lack of personal self-control and consideration for other. If the researcher paused for breath,

often a comment or question was inserted into the space. Children felt the right to invade the space and interrupt conversations mid-sentence, crossing the boundaries of respect.

In summary, the theme of children displaying strong verbal confidence offered valuable opportunities for learning through the SALT Approach. Confident in expressing their thoughts, these children could do so with a strong sense of freedom of spirit, vindicating the feasibility of using this approach in contemporary school settings. However, ways of harnessing untrammelled thoughts and comments are also important in order to keep learning on track.

#### *4.2.3.2.2.3 Theme (c) Children use auditory, visual and kinesthetic senses in preference to reading*

The two central ideas relating to the third theme of the second element, literacy and communication skills, were: “readiness to listen in order to learn” and “visual and kinaesthetic learning”.

The SALT Approach relies heavily on the use of the senses. O’Shea (2015) demonstrated how the core Montessori principles are well supported in contemporary research. Furthermore, the literature review identified the effectiveness of presenting children with big and important ideas (Hattie, 2012; Young, 2008). If learning is perceived as important or significant, then children are very ready to listen and learn (Deci & Ryan, 2011; Zumbrunn et al., 2011). In addition, research supports the continued essentiality of visual and kinaesthetic learning (Boettcher, 2007; Kolb, & Kolb, 2012; Parsons & Taylor, 2011).

Students displayed a *readiness to listen in order to learn*. During the *Presentation Segment* of each session students frequently displayed good listening skills, often extending beyond the anticipated concentration time. In fact, it appeared that they were thirsty for such opportunities, all the more so because the focus was on spiritual matters, to which they were deeply drawn (see Text Box 15).

*Text Box 15: Extracts from first iteration focus group discussions illustrating readiness to listen in order to learn.*

Ability to listen in order to learn keen to learn

- I feel very happy every time I go in here and I go back to class I feel like I've learned lots of stuff and I feel like I am gotten less naughty and I feel like I am following Jesus more.
- I like your class because how you teach us about Religion, God and Jesus and how Jesus was crucified and how Jesus is... umm ... in heaven.
- It is a good way to learn about religion, because you learn new things every day.
- It is very important to come to this room because you have all the stuff you can find for us to learn.
- The room is very quiet and we learn about God and Jesus. We learn about new saints and new people of the lamb of Jesus.
- And you explain more things to us and you show different figures and tell us the things more clearly to us.
- Before we met you and learning with you in K and Year 1 in Religion we didn't do that much.
- I feel happy because we can learn new things and come here and learn new things about religion and God.

Additionally, students spoke about their *visual and kinaesthetic learning*.

Contemporary research indicates the value of this, although in practice, teachers often fall back on pen and paper tasks. Students commented on their preference for sensory learning (see Text Box 16). The Principal's comments point to this, and express the hope that this study would assist in breaking the mould (See Text Box 17). This theme will be explored more fully in Chapter 10, "The SALT Approach and Systemic Accountability."



*Text Box 16: Students express thoughts about sensory learning*

<b>Using senses to learn</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• I like it because we get to see and use little figurines like the Last Supper and the Empty Tomb.</li><li>• I like doing the clay because I make things like when Jesus died on the cross.</li><li>• I loved in this classroom. I loved the painting and the drawing and the writing.</li><li>• I like the pictures to look at. They show you what it was like when it happened.</li><li>• I like the candle. It smells holy when you light it.</li><li>• Playing is the best: when we get to build things. Like the city of Jerusalem.</li><li>• I like this way because its better and fun, we learn more things.</li><li>• I had so much fun in here. I would stay here for holidays.</li></ul>

*Text Box 17: The Principal comments on styles of assessment*

<p><b>Partial transcript: Interview with Principal</b></p> <p><b>Principal:</b> I see in the research program what I would want to see across all learning, moving from set teacher directed learning tasks to student centred tasks with much more guidance from the teacher which is intuitive, guidance which is based on really sound knowledge of the content, sound knowledge of what we are trying to achieve and that's what I have observed in the few opportunities that I and knowledge, but they are free to interact with it in different ways...</p>
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The theme relating to children using *auditory, visual and kinaesthetic senses* in preference to reading is a very positive one for the SALT Approach. It opened the way for maximising opportunities wherein children can listen, see and use their kinaesthetic senses in order to mentally engage with important matters for human beings. The SALT Approach working through the senses, engages children with the ultimate spiritual truths at the core of Catholic belief.

#### 4.2.3.2.3 Element 3: The spiritual nature of today's Child

The third element of Lens 1 concerns the *spiritual nature of today's child*. Findings are reflected upon under one single overarching theme: that children are spiritually inclined and search for the beauty of truth. Although reference to this aspect here is brief, it is pivotal in the thesis, since the SALT Approach hinges on the Christian anthropological perspective that the human person is attracted towards spiritual truths. This understanding is supported throughout the works of Montessori,

Cavalletti and O’Shea (Cavalletti & Gobbi, 1964; O’Shea, 2012. Furthermore, contemporary research focusing on holistic education also indicates that children are spiritually sensitive and drawn to seek truths (Eaude, 2011; Grajczonek, 2013; Hay & Nye, 2006).

*4.2.3.2.3.1 Theme: Children are spiritually inclined and search for truth*

These children, despite coming from a great variety of family, social and cultural backgrounds, were spiritually sensitive. They frequently *verbalised a desire to seek truths* relating to God. They displayed a desire and readiness to pray. They were capable of transferring knowledge into personal behaviour (see Text Box 18).

*Text Box 18: Children’s spiritual reflections*

Children seek truth
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Every time you read the bible I like it because the bible is true about Jesus.</li> <li>• I like the bible because it tells me all about Jesus and um... the bible has all the words that Jesus said.</li> <li>• I like that bible you brang [sic] because it has the words of Jesus in it.</li> <li>• I like this room because you decorate it. It has a lot of things that are true in it.</li> </ul>
Children desire to pray
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I was never bored. I was praying when I first got in here. I was praying...</li> <li>• We learn more new prayers.</li> <li>• But definitely not (move) the Lamb of God. That needs to stay there because I want it to be in a separate place ... for praying.</li> </ul>
Children are inspired to make better choices in life
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It feels like you are following the footsteps of Jesus.</li> <li>• I feel like I be blessing in here because you always learn about Jesus and it makes me feel like I am blessed.</li> <li>• I used to be mean to S..... but now I started to be good to her when I came here. Because this room is a really good place and we learn about good things and following Jesus.</li> </ul>

In brief, the theme that *children today are spiritually inclined and search for truth lies* at the heart to the SALT Approach. Despite great differences of background, these children’s spiritual inclinations were strong. Furthermore, they manifested deep yearnings for spiritual truths. Knowing this can empower a teacher working within a

Catholic systemic school wishing to implement the SALT Approach, despite challenges found in contemporary schools. The final prototype needs to offer ways of doing so.

#### 4.2.3.2.4 Concluding thoughts of the first iteration for Lens 1

The first iteration identified challenges and potential advantages relating to Lens 1, *exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today's child within the SALT Approach* and its elements and subsequent themes. Within the first element of "behaviour and self-control issues" the themes explored were "school and classroom environments", "personal, family and cultural issues" and "attentiveness despite disruptive situations". The second element explored "literacy and communication skills". Here the themes were "limited reading and writing literacy", "children's verbal confidence" and "children's use of auditory, visual and kinaesthetic senses in preference to reading". The third element was "the spiritual nature of today's child" and its single theme was "children are spiritually inclined and search for truth". Each section identified in its final paragraph, a number of valuable observations to clarify adjustments needed for the final prototype.

The second iteration needed to implement measures addressing these issues. What measures could be taken to minimise the disempowering and harness the empowering factors in the second iteration? To what degree could a peaceful atmosphere be established, where the inner person could be increasingly in touch with self, be spiritually nurtured, become ever more self-motivated? Was it possible to create a space where they could indeed think, pray and respond to God? It was clear that choices needed to be introduced incrementally, so as to ameliorate unacceptable noise levels and disruptive behaviours. Strengths were identified, including effective verbal, auditory and kinaesthetic inclinations of the children. According to the children themselves, advantages already seemed to outweigh the disadvantages. The second and third iterations were focused on addressing the challenges identified through the themes described above.

#### 4.2.3.3 The second iterative cycle

The second iterative cycle looked for solutions relating to the elements and their identified themes. The three elements were (a) behaviour and self-control issues, (b) literacy and communication skills, and (c) the spiritual nature today's child. Throughout the second and third iterations new insights emerged. As the iterations progressed and needs addressed, a progressive simplification and collapsing of themes took place. This will be evident in the structure of Chapter Four from this point on. Solutions for implementation in the second iteration (Term 2) are summarised in Table 15, below.

Table 15: Summary of changes to be introduced in the second iteration, addressing the three elements and their themes

<b>Element 1: Behaviour and self-control issues</b>	<b>Refinement</b>
Theme: a) School and classroom environment impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning	<i>Control of entry behaviours:</i> Be prepared to wait, despite time constraints. <i>Addressing behaviour issues:</i> Clearly describe issues of concern and explain how they will be addressed at the start of sessions. <i>Establish routine commencement:</i> always begin with a <i>presentation section</i> , assisting student focus. <i>Control movement:</i> Allocate specific personal desk and floor spaces. Place essential items on tables for easy access and limiting need for movement. <i>Introduce rotations rather than fully free choice.</i> Allocate participating teacher to one of the rotational activities to guide the activity. Each group of students called a work pod to distribute options such as using materials and responding through painting more fairly.
Theme: b) Personal, family and cultural issues impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning	<i>Rely school-established guidelines</i> when handling extreme non-conformity, even if not fully consonant with the SALT Approach <i>Address Complex Trauma related behaviour</i> , implementing newly researched ways of appropriately handling this behaviour. <i>Allow conditional student access</i> to the room at lunchtime. This fosters a sense of quiet and focused work. <i>Constant clarification of the unacceptability of inappropriate use of materials</i>
Theme c) Attentiveness within disruptive situations	<i>Select the battles:</i> overlook some behaviours and noise levels if they do not seem affect the others. Address disruptive behaviours steadily and consistently over time. Student use of <i>choice time</i> : be prepared to say 'yes' to requests relating to choices unless a good reason to say no.
<b>Element 2: Literacy and communication Skills</b>	<b>Refinement</b>
Theme: a) Limited reading and writing literacy skills	Expand the amount of 2D visuals, offering students response opportunities not requiring a great deal of reading and writing <i>Prepare materials</i> with bigger simpler texts, matching with pictures. Refine and re-trial Choice Options when students are ready.
Theme b) Children display verbal confidence	<i>Take full advantage of new element of filming</i> in the second and third iterations, enabled by ethics approval sought and gained for filming. <i>Allow Presentation and "I wonder" time to extend</i> , allowing the students to raise questions and introduce topics that seem to be, at first glance, off topic. <i>Display clear openness</i> to suggestions of students, finding ways to implement them.
Theme (c) Children use auditory, visual and kinaesthetic senses in preference to reading.	<i>Harness students' keenness to learn through listening</i> , while limiting the amount of 'teacher talk'. This implies reading the body language and other signals from children that concentration is ebbing. Be prepared to quickly produce and use visuals, 2D and 3D materials, even if they are fairly rough and simple.
<b>Element 3: The spiritual nature of today's child</b>	<b>Refinement</b>
Theme: Children are spiritually inclined and search for truth.	<i>Encourage deep thinking</i> with challenging and intellectually demanding questions sometimes requiring long term thought. Recognise and encourage opportunities for spiritual response and prayer.

#### 4.2.3.3.1 Element 1: behaviour and self-control issues

Following the themes identified in the first iteration relating to behaviour and self-control, the planned interventions listed in Table 11 were implemented.

##### 4.2.3.3.1.1 Theme (a) School and classroom environment impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning

For convenient reading, interventions to accommodate to the school and adjustments within the learning space are re-tabled here (Table 16).

Table 16: Lens 1, Element 1, Theme (a)

Element 1 Behaviour and self-control issues Theme (a)	Refinement
Theme: a) School and classroom environment impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning	<p><i>Control of entry behaviours:</i> Be prepared to wait, despite time constraints.</p> <p><i>Addressing behaviour issues:</i> Clearly describe issues of concern and explain how they will be addressed at the start of sessions.</p> <p><i>Establish commencement routine:</i> always begin with a <i>presentation section</i>, assisting student focus.</p> <p><i>Control movement:</i> Allocate specific personal desk and floor spaces. Place essential items on tables for easy access and limiting need for movement.</p> <p><i>Introduce rotations rather than fully free choice.</i> Allocate participating teacher to one of the rotational activities to guide the activity. Each group of students called a work pod. This would distribute options such as using materials and responding through painting more fairly.</p>

##### *Control of entry behaviours*

Entry Behaviours improved, as both participating teachers worked on the routine and informed, when possible, the relief teachers. In addition, Teacher B's manner of addressing the students became more reflective of the SALT Approach (see Text Box 19).

*Text Box 19: Teacher B now adopts a gentler tone*

**May 28 Outside the room.**

**Teacher B:** We are listening to Miss Irwin. Mutasim you are not even listening to me. Goodness. So, we need to make sure we are listening. and our best manners.

**Researcher:** Thank you. I need you now in two lines. Until we do that we can't go in. Actually, we normally line up this way.

**Teacher B:** They do. Come along. Mutasim off you go...

*Addressing behaviour issues*

The researcher often began sessions with clearly describing concerns. Solutions were made clear. Film footage evidenced that children appreciated and looked forward to these clarifications (See Text Box 20).

*Text Box 20: Transcript illustrating researcher clarifying issues at the commencement of sessions*

**June 4: Commencement of class**

**Researcher:**

I want to tell you about a few issues we have to attend to.

I want you learn and grow a lot this year, so we have to structure our learning a bit more. .

Firstly, if you do some work on a piece of paper, you must name it...

I have a pile of unnamed works here...

Then, you must try to finish what you start. It doesn't have to be finished on the same day. You have to name it and put it in your book or your box.

You don't say 'I wanted to do it then, but I don't want to finish it now'.

I have set my alarm on my iPad: When you hear it, that is a signal to stop working and start to clean up. Especially if you are very engrossed in your work, you have to tear yourself away from that. By the second bell you have to be ready.

Today it is all beautifully clean because I spent a long time doing that, but I can't do that forever. I have to rely on you to put lids on paints and clean the surfaces ... It is your responsibility. You have to grow.

...if people want to work at the art table they don't just go there to paint just anything. A lot of these pictures have got nothing to do with what we are doing. You are old enough to prepare what you want to paint and then do it. So, for example, today I have indicated you can draw and then paint what happened at Pentecost. You may choose to trace and then paint...

*Establish commencement routine*

It was envisaged that the *Presentation Segment* would eventually only occur once a week. However, by the second iteration it was clear that the *Presentation Segment* should always begin sessions, maintaining a steady routine with the *Presentation* followed by *Choice Time*. Session closure could be messy, since children were still learning how to take responsibility for leaving the room in order. Additionally, once

they entered deeply into the flow of involvement (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999) it took mental time to exit. Tearing children from the inner space they had entered was challenging, but inevitable, given that the school's time frames were very precise. The weekly outline in Figure 5, below presents the usual structure of sessions in the second iteration.

Week	Overview of the session	Evaluation
Week 2 Apr 27-May 1	4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday Easter Acts 4: 8-12 John 10:11-18	
April 27 60 m	<b>Present:</b> Good Shepherd and the wolf.  <b>Choice Activities include:</b> Good Shepherd and Wolf Diorama Baptism Materials All previous dioramas and materials Small Blackboards	Students were very focussed. They contributed a lot of thoughts and discussion before and during the presentation  Children then spent time on various activities. Blackboard work: were very interested.  Lunchtime: This was the busiest lunchtime: many children. Some Year Six students did story of Good Shepherd for Kindergarten, others of my class working on things.
Apr 28 30m	<b>Presentation</b> The Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd. Introduced idea of starting with reading the Gospel of the Mass of the Day with candle lit.  <b>Choice Activities:</b> Baptism activities	Presentation went well. Had to borrow from Atrium (no time to make) Much discussion emerged: Heaven and sin, Eucharist. Using today's readings from Mass worked well. Children very receptive.
April 31 60 m	<b>Present:</b> 1. Reading of the day. 2. Liturgical Vessels and Furniture, first and second moment.  <b>Choice activities:</b> Liturgical Vessels and Furniture, first and second moment Eucharistic presence booklet and materials Painting options	Reading of the day went well. Children love it.  Set up a lot of activities: water colours etc. Children worked on various things: Some chose to explore the Ceremony of Light. Most practised genuflection (Class Mass coming up on Friday)

Figure 5: A sample of weekly sessions

Controlling movement by specifying and adjusting specific desk and floor spaces took thought and preparation. Laminated place names were used for both desk and floor spaces. A large piece of sturdy curtain material delineated the floor seating



space. Children were expected to occupy certain floor spots until well in to the second iteration, necessary to prevent disruptive interactions. Students expressed a sense of relief, finding in the structure a way of dealing with tensions. These measures served their purpose at the time, and gradually more flexibility was introduced (see Text Box 21).

*Text Box 21: Student articulates how the sense of order calmed her.*

**Camera-man:** What do you think you have learnt in this place this year with Miss Irwin?

**Clara:** Oh, great, I actually love it. It's helping me to stay calm enough and get out of Jamie's way and keep out of fighting anywhere. I don't want to stay with Jamie any more if he won't stop fighting.

*(Semi-formal interview, June 18)*

*Placing essential items on tables saved time and minimised movement.* These included lead and coloured pencils, rulers, watercolours, cotton buds, a range of small books and individual place mats displaying a map Israel on one side and a close up of Galilee on the other. The art area was permanently set up and accommodated 8 children. Around the room hands-on materials were strategically placed for easy access (see Photoset 2).



*Photoset 2: Stationery supplies made easily accessible, paint area set-p, hands-on materials placed around the perimeter*

The concept of rotating work pods was established, *introducing rotations rather than fully free choice*. ‘Work pods’ was a term used by the researcher to describe the arrangement of students into three groups. One ‘pod’ worked at its table, with the participating teacher guiding the activity. The second ‘pod’ had priority for accessing the paint area. The third ‘pod’ could explore materials around the room according to personal choice. Over the three days of the week each ‘pod’ experienced the range of opportunities. Since one of the sessions was only 30 minutes, there was a risk of ‘short-changing’ one group, so the presentation on this day was kept to a minimum. Students embraced this structure and saw it as fair. It contributed to a more peaceful classroom (see Text Box 22 and Photoset 3)

*Text Box 22: Introducing ‘Work Pods’*

**Commencement of session May 28, 2015**

**Researcher:** I have set things up for a new way of working. I know you all like certain activities. So, you will notice that in your area I have given names to the groups. The Window pod, the centre pod and the red pod. You are going to rotate the activities.

On a Monday, the Window Pod can choose to use the paints. Nobody else can go there on a Monday.

The Red Pod will work at their table, with work I give them or work they are completing.

The Centre Pod can visit any part of the room. In other words, you can choose any activities found around the room: the prayer corner where I have put the baptism materials.; the area with all the maps; the place where the events of Holy Week are kept: The Last Supper, the death of Jesus, the Empty Tomb: the place where there are all things that have to do with the Mass...



*Photoset 3: These three images show the three 'pods' at work. One pod is painting, another is working with the teacher and the third is working with dioramas.*

4.2.3.3.1.2 Theme (b) Personal, family and cultural issues impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning

Interventions to address personal, family and cultural issues impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning are re-tabled here (Table 17).

Table 17: Planned interventions to address family and cultural issues impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning

Element 1	Refinement
Behaviour and self-control issues	
Theme (b)	
Theme:	Rely school-established guidelines when handling extreme non-conformity, even if not fully consonant with the SALT Approach
a) Personal, family and cultural issues impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning	<p><i>Address Complex Trauma related behaviour, implementing newly researched ways of appropriately handling this behaviour</i></p> <p>Allow conditional student access to the room at lunchtime. This fosters a sense of quiet and focused work</p> <p>Constant clarification of the unacceptability of inappropriate use of materials</p>

Relying on school-established guidelines when handling extreme non-conformity, even if not fully consonant with the SALT Approach involved the researcher accepting the need for accompanying teachers to sometimes withdraw the disrupting student, implementing school established steps, rather than always handling the disrupting behaviour alone. At times, the student returned with an apology and the issue was solved, at least until the next time. Only on one occasion was a more extreme measure required, with the student being taken to the main office for time out and an interview with the deputy, following school procedures and resulting in a behaviour modification exercise.

*Addressing Complex Trauma related behaviour* involved following researched recommendations indicating ways to relate to children who regressed behaviourally because of complex trauma (O’Neill, Guenette, & Kitchenham, 2010). Such children, in stressful situations, revert to early childhood behaviours. Usually the regressive behaviour was apparent from the outset of the session, indicating that some prior issue had triggered the regressive, self-protecting behaviour. The accurate identification and appropriate measures for addressing this issue was not deeply or

clearly understood by the teachers, with these students effectively being further traumatised by well-intentioned school-established behaviour modification programmes.

Accordingly, simple measures recommended for these situations were adopted, avoiding the need to follow school prescribed steps. For example, when such a student crawled under desks or moved around the room, the researcher made her awareness of the fact clear, but continued the lesson. The student could well be listening from that



*Photograph 2: This student frequently displayed regressive behaviour*

secure place under the table, even if appearing detached. This often defused the issue and other students continued their work even when there was a child under their table. Invariably, once the child was more at ease and calmer, he participated in activities.

*Allowing conditional student-access to the room at lunchtime* became a frequent norm. Children not participating in the study were also welcome. This had a good effect on the students participating in the study and also seemed to impact on the general school climate. The reputation of the space as a good place to be grew. Even difficult students began to frequent the room, finding it a kind of refuge. Invasion of the space by marauding groups of Sudanese boys or other troubled individuals, decreased with precautions made by locking the door at lunch times even if students were working in the room. Occasionally the door or windows were battered, but frequency decreased.



*Photoset 4: Lunch-time visits by children of various grades*

Accommodating for behaviours relating to personal, family and cultural issues presents challenges. In some circumstances, behavioural issues required taking the school's approach, even if it seemed too lock-step, not tailored for the individual person's needs. However, the SALT Approach, with its focus on respect for the individual person, has the potential to affect the way a school responds to children experiencing, for example, complex trauma.

#### *4.2.3.3.1.3 Theme (c) Attentiveness within disruptive situations*

That students could be attentive within disruptions was a positive theme. The first two refinements identified were essentially incorporated into the two sections above, 4.2.3.3.1.1 and 4.2.3.3.1.2. The third measure is specifically addressed in this section.

*Being prepared to say ‘yes’ to requests relating to choices unless a good reason to say ‘no’*

Had a positive effect when students likely to engage in disruptive activity asked if they could work at this or that activity, as it showed their interest. In the light of a very busy room of 26 children, the activity would occupy them and allow time for some personal thought and reflection. The decision to say ‘yes’ rather than ‘no’, so long as the activity had some connection with topics introduced in the current or previous sessions was perfectly consonant with the SALT Approach. However, this required a degree of latitude and trust on the part of the researcher and a belief that distracted students would, to some degree, be mentally engaged in matters of religious education. Such an approach required a paradigm shift for accompanying teachers and other stakeholders. They were accustomed to insisting that activities match success criteria linked to specific learning outcomes outlined for any particular week. Filming, introduced in the second iteration, offered glimpses of such engagement.

the SALT Approach recognises that the inner world of children is, at best, only glimpsed at through what Cavalletti calls “signs” (Cavalletti, 1983, p. 160). Observing these indicators in individuals who appear off-task was challenging in the busy classroom. For educators, it requires a paradigm shift, accepting an approach not exclusively tied to strictly weekly-based Learning Intentions and Success Criteria.

#### 4.2.3.3.2 Element 2: literacy and communication skills

Interventions to address literacy skills are re-tabled here (Table 18).

*Table 18: Planned interventions to address literacy and communication skills*

<b>Element 2: Literacy and Communication Skills</b>	<b>Refinement</b>
Theme:  a) Limited reading and writing literacy skills	<i>Expand the amount of 2D visuals, offering students response opportunities not requiring a great deal of reading and writing Prepare materials with bigger simpler texts, matching with pictures. Refine and re-trial Choice Options when students are ready.</i>



<p>Theme:</p> <p>b) Children display verbal confidence</p>	<p><i>Take full advantage of new element of filming in the second and third iterations, enabled by ethics approval sought and gained for filming. Allow Presentation and “I wonder” time to extend, allowing the students to raise questions and introduce topics that seem to be, at first glance, off topic. Display clear openness to suggestions of students, finding ways to implement them.</i></p>
<p>Theme:</p> <p>c) Children use auditory, visual and kinaesthetic senses in preference to reading.</p>	<p><i>Harness students’ keenness to learn through listening, while limiting the amount of ‘teacher talk’. This implies reading the body language and other signals from children that concentration is ebbing. Be prepared to quickly produce and use visuals, 2D and 3D materials, even if they are fairly rough and simple.</i></p>

#### 4.2.3.3.2.1 Theme (a) Limited reading and writing literacy skills

*Expand the amount of 2D visuals, offering students response opportunities not requiring a great deal of reading and writing.*

By the second iteration the students had access to a growing range of materials and were equipped to make more responses. As corroborated in section 4.2.3.3.1.1, children worked well in ‘pods’. While one pod was involved in art response, a second pod worked with the teacher on a guided activity, and a third pod visited the 3D and 2D materials around the room. Subsequently, there was less need in the second iteration to lean so heavily on independent reading and writing skills.

An extensive range of art works to match the events of the liturgical year were printed (A4 size) and laminated. As each scriptural event was introduced, relevant images were prominently displayed, providing a visual focus for students even while the presentation was in progress. This was especially necessary when the presentation did not have 3D materials, such as dioramas, to match.

The images were much used both individually and in groups. They sorted them according to whether they recognised them or not, and could speak about them. They used them as inspiration for their own art, sometimes tracing over parts of them, or making their own simplified version.

*Preparing materials with bigger simpler texts, matching with pictures.*

Response materials were introduced that did not require great reading skills. Modified booklets with bigger handwriting and fewer words accompanied the dioramas which were valued by the students. Card matching activities, involving pictures and words to be pinned to a large pin-board were created. Students accessed these in *choice time*. In addition, a range of worksheets were available for students to choose from. Children were not compelled to complete them, but they provided additional choices that some enjoyed. However, over-insisting on the completion of worksheets continued to cause a restlessness and visible agitation in some students, indicating that they simply could not handle the level of analytic reading required, even if simple.

*Refining and re-trialling Choice Options when students are ready*

Choice Options were reintroduced towards the end of the second iteration, with still-limited success. In just the last two weeks of the second iteration a SOLO Taxonomy inspired Choice Charts were introduced. SOLO Taxonomy was designed by John Biggs (1999). SOLO stands for ‘Structure of the Observed Learning Outcome’. SOLO taxonomy, to be discussed more deeply in Chapter 5, provides a simple, reliable and robust model to assess students’ levels of understanding (Biggs & Collis 1982). It offered new possibilities for the third iteration.

For *the SALT Approach* to succeed in contemporary classrooms, reading materials to suit a range of reading and writing literacy levels are needed. Furthermore, easy access to wide range of 2D and 3D materials is essential. Personal ‘Choice Charts’ can assist children to map their own learning experiences.

*4.2.3.3.2.2 Theme (b) Children display verbal confidence*

The theme of verbal confidence of second element of *Literacy and Communication Skills* was explored through refinements introduced in the second iteration. Despite reading and writing limitations, the students were well able to express their thoughts verbally. While the room was not equipped with modern technologies, this iteration brought the added advantage of filming.

*Taking full advantage of new element of filming* occurred with students being encouraged to explain their work to camera. The camera-man was also a quiet, faith-filled volunteer catechist, who was able to engage the children in conversation and who explored many concepts with them on a one-to-one basis (see Photoset 5).



*Photoset 5: Students explaining scriptural art to the cameraman*

*Allowing Presentation and ‘I wonder’ time to extend.*

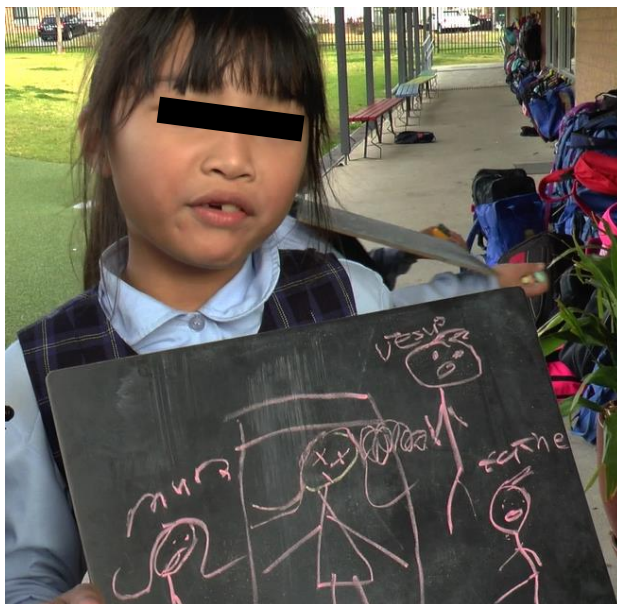
The students’ ability to express deep thoughts was fostered in the *Presentation* and ‘*I wonder*’ segments, now always placed at the beginning of the session. Students raised many questions and introduced topics, which were never avoided. The result was a constant interest of students. Students who appeared distracted would suddenly make deep observations or draw profound conclusions (Photoset 6).



*Photoset 6: A Kaleidoscope of interested participation in Presentation Time*

*Displaying clear openness to suggestions of students, finding ways to implement them.*

At the suggestion of the students, mini-blackboards and whiteboards were introduced offering ways of expression not requiring a great deal of reading and writing but encouraging reflection and response. Students enjoyed responding in this way (See Photoset 7).



*Photoset 7: Students explaining their work to camera*

In conclusion, innovative ways for maximising the benefits of children's verbal skills need to be incorporated. Children ask deep and probing questions and the success of *the SALT Approach* will be limited by the teachers' levels of expert knowledge of

and commitment to the Catholic teachings. In addition, openness to the variety of suggestions that confident students will make regarding learning opportunities can enhance students' own commitment to learning in religious education.

*4.2.3.3.2.3 Theme (c) Children use auditory, visual and kinesthetic senses in preference to reading*

The third identified theme under the second element of *Literacy and Communication Skills* identified that students used auditory, visual and kinaesthetic senses in preference to reading. Two refinements were planned for the second iteration. One addressed the auditory aspect while the other addressed the visual and kinaesthetic areas.

*Harnessing students' keenness to learn through listening, while limiting the amount of 'teacher talk'.*

Students keenness to learn through what the researcher would share about the catholic faith was apparent. Cavalletti (2002) discourages too much explicit explanation of faith matters, preferring children to gradually come to their own realisations. However, in this study children asked questions that could not be discovered by the children alone. Such questions provided opportunities for religious literacy gaps to be filled, paving the way for clearer understanding (See Text Box 23).

Text Box 23: Questions and answers

Class Session, July 23

**Researcher:** What were you going to say Clara?

**Clara:** How come that only men can be priests?

**Researcher:** That's a very good question and I can explain a lot about that. But I can only answer in one sentence right now. It is a power sentence, so it is worth it. The reason why in the Catholic Church only men are priests is because when Jesus made the first priests, even though he loved his mother so much, and she was very holy and special, the ones he gave the priesthood to at the last Supper was only men, even though he had lots of women following him....

**Clara:** I think I know. The answer to that is Jesus is a man and women are, he chose women to be nuns.

**Researcher:** Ah well that is right, but they don't have to be nuns. You can be holy with being a nun, right? But women imitate Mary in a way, and that is a very special role...

**Kafir:** What is that picture?

**Clara:** Who is that man when Jesus was in the desert.

**Researcher:** That was when Satan tempted Jesus because he was trying to find out if Jesus was just a man or God.

Clara: So is that him or just...

**Researcher:** Well, in the bible it says that it was him

**Namir:** Ohhh

**Researcher:** I know we don't say a lot about that but you are asking the question and I am answering. It is there in the bible and you can read it there. But God protects us from the devil. Always, always...

**Namir:** (whispering with Emily) Is the Easter bunny real?

**Chelsea:** Yes, But the devil isn't real

**Researcher:** Angels are real, Mary is real, God is real... what more do you want!

**Fleur:** If Jesus hadn't died would it make a difference now?

**Researcher:** The world would be in a much worse place than it is now. If Jesus hadn't come...

**Celia:** When Satan was one of God's angels what was his name?

**Researcher:** Lucifer

**Children:** Ohhh

**Researcher:** Lucifer, which means most like God, great light

**Celia:** Was he one of the powerful ones?

**Researcher:** Yes

**Azzm:** Is that angel the strongest one?

**Researcher:** Not now. He can never win now. He can't be strong because he turned against God. He might be strong but not strong enough to defend anything that God defends because God is greater. So, you never need to be frightened of that okay?

**Basem:** Why did Lucifer become a devil

**Researcher:** I think it was pride. He wanted to be like God. You see God gave the Angels a moment of Choice. We have a lifetime of choice-making, don't we?

**Trinh:** Oh right. You are right. My dad told me the same thing you said.

**Sandy:** What did Lucifer do after he chose to do evil?

**Researcher:** He chose to separate himself from God. (three hands go up)

**Georgio:** I know why he left God. Because he wanted to be ... um ... he wanted to be God.

**Researcher:** Yes, basically that's it. That is what he tempted our first parents with. Have you heard of our first parents?

(Children respond: yes. ... no)

**Researcher:** Adam and Eve. We call them Adam and Eve.

**Chelsea:** Oh Yeah

**Researcher:** Well Satan told Eve... You will be as good as God.

**Kafir:** It is in that book (pointing to book on table)

**Chelsea:** But if he ... um ... left God, would he go on the devil's side?

**Researcher:** He is the devil That is his name. They call him different names: Devil, Satan, Lucifer, The Evil one... I prefer to call him the evil one, because I don't want to give him the benefit of a name.

(Children laugh and someone repeats name: the evil one)

This approach contained an important caveat: that of limiting the amount of teacher talk. It is a common tendency for teachers to talk too much when faced with a captive audience and the researcher was no exception. Review of film footage and audio recordings provided a painful but effective reminder! Body language and other signals from the children did assist in curtailing the amount of ‘teacher talk’, as did candid feedback from the camera-man and the children themselves.

*Being prepared to quickly produce and use visuals, 2D and 3D materials.*

There were sessions for which no specific materials had been prepared. Realising the significant difference having visual and kinaesthetic materials made to the engagement and understanding of the students, images were printed and simple items were produced, sometimes hobbled together on the day of the presentation. They were always welcomed by the children and played a part in their learning.

The readiness of children to listen in order to learn is not always appreciated in today’s classroom. The emphasis is more often on getting children to do and to talk. However, children display a keenness to listen in order to learn when they sense the topics are of great importance. This needs to be incorporated into the prototype. 2D and 3D materials not currently part of the SALT Approach need to be incorporated, maximising the benefits of children’s inclination towards visual and kinaesthetic learning.

#### 4.2.3.3.3 Element 3: The spiritual nature of today’s child

Interventions to address the spiritual nature of today’s children are re-tabled here (Table 19).



Table 19: Interventions to address the spiritual nature of today's child

<b>Element 3</b>	
<b>The spiritual nature of today's child</b>	<b>Refinement</b>
<p>Theme:</p> <p>Children are spiritually inclined and search for truth.</p>	<p><i>Encourage deep thinking</i> with challenging and intellectually demanding questions sometimes requiring long term thought.</p> <p><i>Recognise and encourage opportunities for spiritual response and prayer.</i></p>

4.2.3.3.3.1 *Theme: Children are spiritually sensitive and search for truth.*

Encouraging deep thinking with challenging and intellectually demanding questions sometimes requiring long term thought

In the second iteration, students continued to explore deep and challenging questions introduced in the first iteration. One example was “Why did John call Jesus ‘the Lamb of God?’”. Students frequently returned to this, offering new ideas and reflections. The researcher encouraged more thought, rather than just give the answer. Once in a while a new ‘big’ question was introduced and they relished the challenge.

*Recognising and encouraging opportunities for spiritual response and prayer*

The children’s spiritual sensitivity and their desire to pray was fostered and encouraged as new opportunities arose. Additions were made to personal prayer albums introduced in first iteration. Spontaneous class prayer came through the children’s initiatives and they engaged in personal prayer during *choice times* (See Photoset 9).



*Photoset 8: Children praying and reflecting*

The local Parish Church, which was some distance from the school, held a weekly 'Morning of Adoration' to the Blessed Sacrament. In addition, it possessed a replica of the Shroud of Turin, displayed only during Lent. Arrangements were made to take the children to the church where they experienced Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament for the first time in their lives. A simple Adoration Booklet was designed. Student attitudes are patently clear in Photoset 10.





*Photoset 9: Attending Adoration for the first time in their lives. The acts of adoration seen here are personal and spontaneous*

The parish priest laid out the replica of the Shroud of Turin in front of the Blessed Sacrament and invited the children to gather around it. They were completely engaged as he explained the image to them, as illustrated in Photoset 11.



*Photoset 10: Children study the replica of the Shroud of Turin*

Prayers were composed and inserted into personal prayer albums and sometimes made available in the prayer space (See Text Box 24).

*Text Box 24: Sample prayer for Prayer Albums*

Prayer of the Vine

**Reflection**

Let's stop for a moment and think:

What good fruits, which are good deeds, have I seen in people around me at home and at school?

Thank Jesus for those good words and deeds.

**My Prayer**

Dear Jesus,

You told us that if we remain attached to you, like the branch is attached to the Vine, then we will bear good fruit.

Those good fruits are the good works we do. Help us to find many ways of bearing good fruits today.

Our kind deeds are like delicious fruit that the people around us can enjoy. They make others very happy, and make me happy too.

Help me, Jesus, to decide to keep you inside me and then to share you with others in all I do and say.

AMEN

In summary, children are today, as children have always been, deep thinkers. They seek coherent answers and teachers need to be increasingly equipped for this, providing space, time and opportunities for questioning, praying and reflecting.

#### 4.2.3.3.4 Reflections to inform the third iterative cycle

The second iteration offered distinct glimmers of hope beyond the chaos. There were student expressions of joy, a keen anticipation of what was to come and a hope that the study would continue in the following year. Newly accessible film footage revealed good things happening, with surprising and encouraging revelations emerging from footage of class sessions. Photoset 12 captures a range of moments.



*Photoset 11: Captured moments of total absorption*

#### 4.2.3.4 The third iterative cycle

The third iteration extended over Terms 3 and 4 of the School Year. During this time, the researcher consolidated the refinements introduced in the second iteration.

In addition, new angles and further refinements emerged. These were:

- a) Under the Element of Behaviour and Self -Control issues one new theme emerged. It was *The Language and Practise of Human Virtues*.
- b) Under the Element of Literacy and Communication Skills, a number of new developments took place. Choice Options were re-trialled effectively, SOLO Taxonomy emerged as a tool for engaging students and filming facilitated verbal communication and was much used by the students.
- c) Under the Element of the Spiritual Nature of Today’s Child, prayer was fostered through opportunities offered throughout the liturgical year.

Consequently, this section does not deal with every one of the themes as in the first and second iterations. Only new considerations are itemised in Table 20, below.

Table 20: New refinements considered in the third iteration

<i>Lens 1</i> : Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today’s child within the SALT Approach	Newly addressed or re-trialled in the third iteration
<b>Element 1</b> Behaviour and self-control issues	<b>A new emerging theme:</b> The Language and Practise of Human Virtues
<b>Element 2</b> Literacy and communication skills	Theme (a) Limited reading and writing literacy skills Refine and re-trial Choice Options when students are ready The use of Solo Taxonomy as a tool to encourage learning Theme (b) Children display verbal confidence <i>Take full advantage of new element of filming</i> in the second and third iterations, enabled by ethics approval sought and gained for filming.
<b>Element 3</b> The spiritual nature of today’s child	Theme: Children are spiritually inclined and search for truth Fostering prayer and spirituality through the great feasts.



#### 4.2.3.4.1 Element 1: Behaviour and self-control issues

The refinements addressed and discussed in the second iteration for behaviour and self-control continued throughout the third iteration. In addition, a new theme emerged: *The Language and Practise of Human Virtue*. Late in the second iteration it became clear that students had little or no understanding of their own human nature. They were not aware of the concept of *personal human virtues* and the empowering possibilities they held. In fact, ‘virtue’ was a totally new word for them. They simply had never heard it. This emerged because, in an attempt to find fresh ways of addressing behaviour issues clearly the researcher introduced the explicit language of virtues. It was, for these children, a ‘light-bulb’ moment. They were galvanised!

Cavalletti’s Catechesis of the Good Shepherd does formally introduce virtues to 9-12-year-olds and O’Shea incorporates the study of virtues for the 9-12 age-group and suggests valuable biblically referenced materials revolving around the classical Aristotelian virtues of prudence, fortitude, temperance and justice (see Appendix 1).

The researcher designed new materials, opening the world of virtues to the children. Ways were developed to explicitly discuss such terms and concepts as virtues being exclusive to human beings, the existence of the conscience, virtues being good habits, strengthened by practise. The four virtues identified as particularly relevant for these children were those of obedience, honesty, responsibility and thoughtfulness.

These were introduced and explored throughout the third iteration using a variety of activities. A Wall of Virtues was established which displayed vocabulary and concepts. SOLO hexagons, reflecting on virtues, were introduced and provided students with opportunities to reflect on virtues in their own lives. Students took pride in identifying virtues when they recognised them in themselves or others. The children relished opportunities to verbalise matters relating to human virtues and responses were positive and personal. As a result, virtues empowered students to exercise self-control with greater frequency. Photoset 13 illustrates the Virtues Wall and children working with hexagons to explore virtues.



The theme of *The Language and Practise of Human Virtue*, as presented in this study, is essentially new for the SALT Approach. It was also new for the school, where Catholic values are incorporated rather than personally applied human virtues. Children showed themselves to be attracted to virtue and opening the world of virtues to children in an age-appropriate way can address behaviour challenges and empower students to become effective learners.

#### 4.2.3.4.2 Element 2: Literacy skills

Refinements addressed in the second iteration for literacy skills continued throughout the third iteration. Only re-trialled aspects and new angles are presented here.

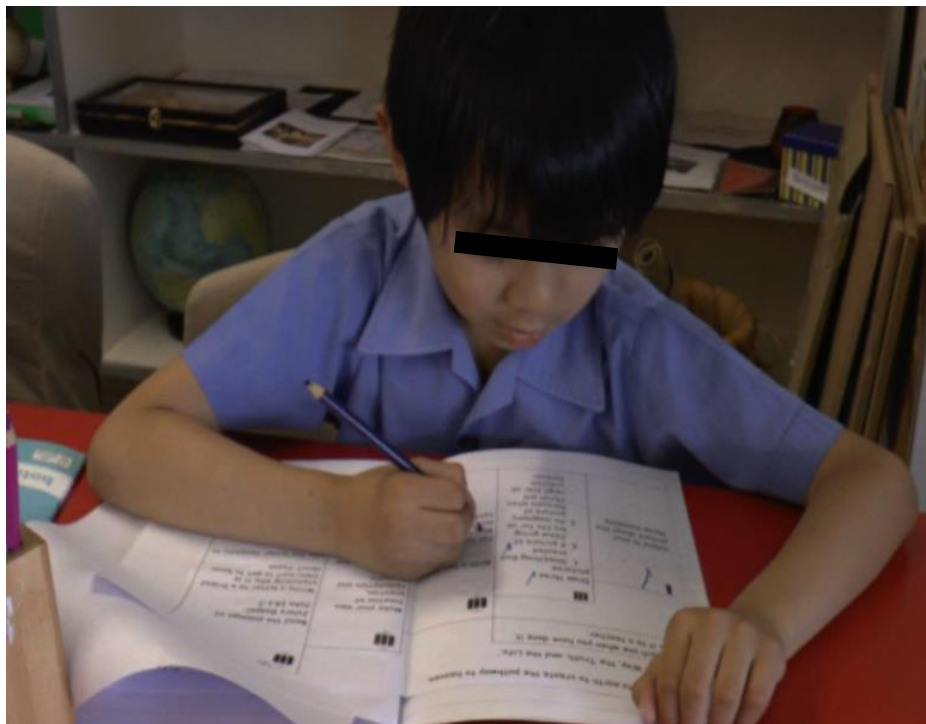
##### 4.2.3.4.2.1 Theme (a) Limited reading and writing literacy skills

*Choice options*, briefly trialled in Term 1, were re-introduced and trialled in the third iteration. Students gradually settled down to work in *choice time* within the boundaries set by choice options. Several Personal Choice Chart layouts were trialled, attempting to match abilities and cater for limitations. Aimed to structure choices more effectively, response activities were embedded into the Personal Choice Charts, assisting students to focus and compensate for limited skills. Electronic Foundation Handwriting fonts offered a variety of relevant tasks such as tracing over dots, drawing letters within lines and completing sentences embedded in the choice chart (see Figure 6).

Ultimately, the most successful Personal Choice Charts reflected *SOLO Taxonomy* (see Figure 7), with levels stepping up and activities matching those levels. *SOLO Taxonomy* had a positive effect on student behaviour, playing a significant role in channelling energies, despite limited literacy skills. Several students presenting behaviour challenges made better choices using the *SOLO Choice Charts*. Doubtless, the novelty played a part in keeping their attention, but students enjoyed displaying their understanding and ability to work at the hexagon walls, and in completing activities described in *SOLO* terms. One of the benefits was the boost in student confidence and a sense of achievement. *Photoset 14* demonstrates this.

Personal Choice Chart, Week 4, Term 3  
\_\_\_ Worked on Loaves and Fish in Journal  
\_\_\_ Worked on Jesus is the Bread of Life  
Journal pages  
\_\_\_ Complete the work below  
\_\_\_ I read one of the books on my table  
Did you visit the website this past week?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_  
Virtues are good habits.  
They make us better  
people. When I follow  
my conscience, I am a  
happier person.

Figure 6: Personal Choice Chart sample, including hand-writing activity





Photoset 13: Students using SOLO Personal Choice Chart and the Hexagons







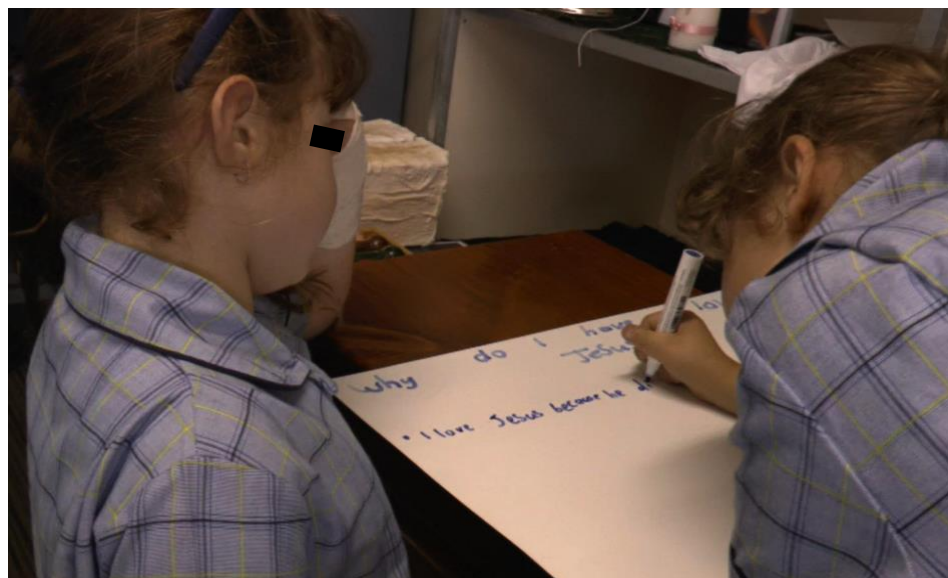
<p>Jesus came to earth to create the pathway to heaven. He said 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life.'</p>			
<p>Tick each one when you have done it. Show it to a teacher.</p>			
 <p>Colour in your picture about the three moments.</p>	 <p>Draw three pictures: 1. Something God created 2. A picture of Jesus giving his life for us. 3. An imaginary picture of Parousia when Christ will reign over all creation forever.</p>	 <p>With a teacher:  Put together the Blue Unity Strip, matching with the control chart.</p>	 <p>Make your own timeline of creation, redemption and Parousia.  Use the time line paper pasted in your own journal.  This is a little project and it will take a bit of time.</p>
		<p>Read the passage of John's Gospel: John 14:1-7  Write a letter to a friend explaining why it is important to get to know about Jesus.  Use the letter template to help you.</p>	

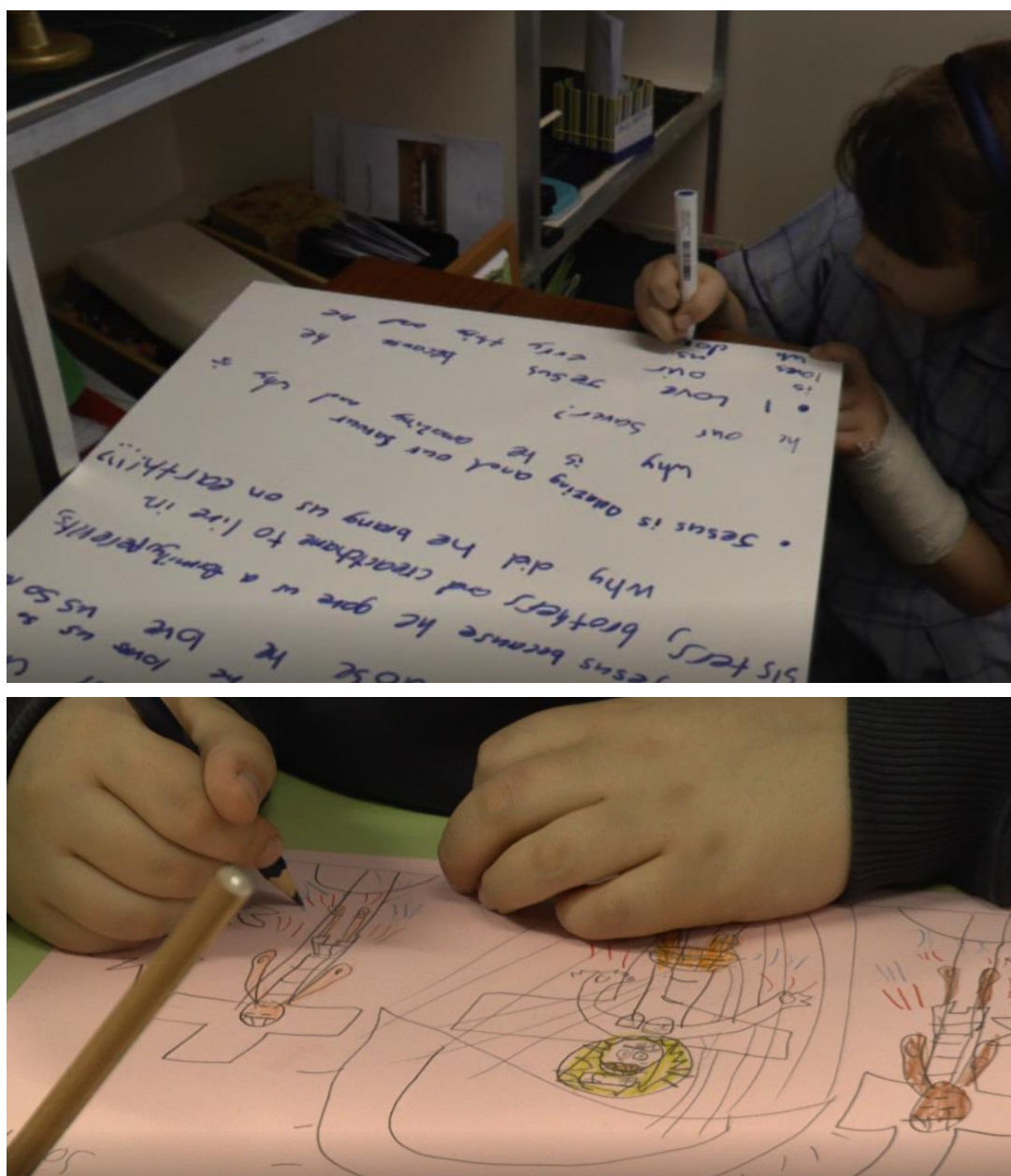
Figure 7: SOLO Personal Choice Chart sample

Inspired by the Personal Choice Charts, diverse responses emerged, some, like Ahmed (student with an expressive language disorder), would draw intricate pictures. Students invented new ways of responding, creating charts and posters,

interviewing other students, gathering collections of responses from other children. Two students set up a learning corner and invited others to participate, using large butcher paper posters pinned to the display wall. Some students conducted explanation sessions at lunch times, showing both older and younger students aspects of the room.



*Photoset 14: Engaged and sharing learning*



Photoset 15: Two very different ways of responding

#### 4.2.3.4.2.2 Theme (b) Children display verbal confidence

Students increasingly gravitated to the camera as a way of sharing and expressing their learning. Students with challenging behaviours were often the ones relishing the idea most, and it produced a calming effect. Photoset 17 illustrates confident verbal communication as students share thoughts.



*Photoset 16: Confident verbal communication was a growing phenomenon*



Structuring children self-regulated learning experiences is an important aspect when considering the SALT Approach for full classes. Student accountability needs to be incorporated in ways that suit students' literacy levels. As children become more accustomed to regulating their own learning, a wide variety of learning emerges, emanating from the children themselves. In addition, modern technologies can offer valuable ways of harnessing children's strong verbal confidence.

#### 4.2.3.4.3 Element 3: The spiritual nature of today's child

##### *4.2.3.4.3.1 Theme: Children are spiritually inclined and search for truth*

In the third iteration children's inclinations to prayer and spirituality were fostered not only through Advent and the coming Christmas season, but also through several feasts of the Church Year, with which these students were unfamiliar: All Souls, All Saints and Christ the King. The month of October with the feast of Our Lady of the Rosary, and the month of November, dedicated to praying for souls departed offered several opportunities. At the beginning of November, students wrote prayer petitions for their deceased family members. A special wall of prayer was set up and some brought photos of deceased relatives. All the students wrote a petition of prayer for deceased relatives and friends. Each day two or three petitions were drawn out of a box and read. One student had the role of pinning the intentions to the prayer wall. Close to the feast of Christ, the King, students reflected on the many titles and names of Christ and worked with a hexagon wall, relating and linking all of these (see Photoset 17).



*Photoset 17: The Prayer Wall for November and Titles for Christ*

#### 4.2.3.4.4 Final reflections from the third iteration to inform the new prototype

The third iteration offered significant new material to include in the final prototype, developing materials to assist teachers in exploring key feasts and remembrances throughout the liturgical year.

#### 4.2.4 Phase 4: Reflections informing the new prototype

##### 4.2.4.1 Element 1: Behaviour and self-control issues

Behavioural issues will pose challenges for successful implementation of the SALT Approach. These are likely to ‘scuttle the ship’ unless suggestions consonant with the SALT Approach are adopted and judicious compromises are made. Initially enthusiastic teachers trying to use the approach without a raft of convincing and practical suggestions are likely to dismiss it as impossible.

Table 21 summarises suggestions for teachers that will be incorporated into the final prototype.

*Table 21: Behaviour and self-control issues to include in the final prototype*

<b>Element 1: Behaviour and self-control issues</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If a special room is allocated, establish a routine entry procedure. If more than one teacher is taking the class on different days ensure all use the same procedure. Make the procedure clear to relief teachers.</li> <li>• Not all schools will have such a room, in which case especially recollected ways for beginning the sessions need to be suggested.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Clearly describe issues of concern and explain how they will be addressed at the start of sessions.</li> <li>• Aim to incorporate suggestions of students.</li> <li>• Limit choices, gradually broadening them according to the needs and abilities of the group.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allocate specific desk and floor spaces.</li> <li>• Be informed and equipped to deal appropriately with behaviours caused by Complex Trauma.</li> <li>• Look for opportunities for children to experience quiet and focused work.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish routines beginning with an initial presentation and prayer segment.</li> <li>• Consider work pods. Introduce rotations rather than fully free choice. This may need to continue all year.</li> <li>• As far as possible include a teacher assistant or a volunteer to assist, allocating them to work with one of the pods or guiding students as needed.</li> <li>• When it comes to choices, be prepared to ‘let go’ and trust that the students will be engaged. Say yes, to requests unless a good reason to say no, in the belief that this activity would occupy them and allow time for thought and reflection.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Select the battles: overlook some behaviours if they do not affect the others. Aim to address them over a period of time.</li> <li>• Be prepared to tolerate apparently inappropriate use of materials in the moment but address the issue at the commencement of a subsequent session.</li> <li>• Rely on the school-established guidelines for handling extremely non-conforming children.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accessibility of materials: Place essential items on tables for easy access and limiting need for movement.</li> <li>• Incorporate Human Virtues, defined, discussed and practised.</li> </ul>

#### 4.2.4.2 Element 2: Literacy skills

Addressing literacy limitations requires patience and ingenuity. The focus of this study lies offering a prototype for the effective implementation of the SALT Approach in a variety of Catholic school settings.

Many children today are verbally confident. They can think deeply and will raise profound questions in their search for truth. They are keen to listen and learn. Table 22 summarises factors that will be incorporated into the final prototype.

Table 21: Literacy and communication issues to include in the final prototype

<b>Element 2: Literacy and communication skills</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Compensate for reading and writing reluctance, equipping students to respond in a variety of ways.</li><li>• Take full advantage of children’s verbal, visual, auditory and kinaesthetic strengths.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide a comprehensive set of laminated art works of A4 size, using them to stimulate verbal and art response.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide booklets with bigger, simpler texts.</li><li>• Provide matching activities with large text and images.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provide samples of a variety of Personal Choice Chart layouts, including SOLO style, but not excluding others.</li><li>• Incorporate a variety of verbal response opportunities.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Suggest avenues for including more than one adult in the room (teacher assistants, volunteers)</li><li>• Include peer and self-recording, using Apps and iPad</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explain the value of being open to student suggestions.</li></ul>

#### 4.2.4.3 Element 3: The spiritual nature of today’s child

Children are spiritually sensitive and, given the opportunity, they will verbalise a deep desire for time to reflect and to seek truth relating to God. Table 23 summarises ways that these factors will be incorporated into the final prototype.

Table 22: The spiritual nature of today’s child issues to include in the final prototype

<b>Element 3: The spiritual nature of today’s child</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Incorporate allowing <i>Presentation</i> and ‘<i>I wonder</i>’ times to extend, permitting students to raise questions and introduce topics that seem to be, at first glance, off topic.</li><li>• Encourage deep thinking with very challenging question requiring long term thought.</li></ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Include suggestions for fostering children’s innate sense of spirituality and desire to pray such as offering personal prayer album</li><li>• Include a variety of suggestions for spiritual response and prayer, using the Liturgical Year.</li><li>• Offer a number of simple and practical ways for students to personally link their families with the church through feasts and times of the Liturgical Year.</li></ul>

## 4.3 Summary and Conclusions

### 4.3.1 Contribution to theory: changing the theoretical landscape

This chapter contributes to the theoretical landscape by suggesting practical ways for the successful implementation of the SALT Approach. It addresses challenges for self-regulated learning stemming from behaviour issues and limited literacy skills, drawing on the attributes of today's child to facilitate this. These contributions can facilitate a viable implementation in contemporary Catholic schools.

It suggests new links between O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method and contemporary contributions to educational theory. These include those of Hargreaves and Shirley who re-emphasise trust and respect in the student-teacher partnership, as described in their *Fourth Way* (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009); contemporary complex trauma brain-body research (Cook et al., 2005; O'Neill, Guenette, & Kitchenham, 2010); and the explicit teaching of human virtues (Callina, Johnson, Tirrell, Batanova, Weiner, & Lerner, 2017; Lickona, 2014; Mullins, 2005). It also suggests links with the SOLO Taxonomy of Biggs and developed by Hook (Biggs & Collis, 1982; Hook and Mills, 2011) bringing a possible new structure to the SALT Approach.

### 4.3.2 Contribution to the prototype

An understanding of behaviour related disruptions, together with strategies to manage them in ways that are compatible with the SALT Approach will be incorporated into the prototype. An important inclusion will be the language and practise of virtues, tailored to match the age of students.

The SALT Approach incorporates ways of engaging children on a spectrum of literacy skills, and the prototype will include a broader range of possibilities, easily accessible for teachers and equipping children to learn and respond despite literacy handicaps. Full advantage of the fact that many of today's children are verbally confident needs to be taken.

The prototype will include contemporary approaches and technologies compatible with the SALT Approach, resonating with teachers and facilitating successful implementation in mainstream Catholic systemic schools. One such approach will be Solo Taxonomy. Another with the use of film and audio recording using Apps and iPad.

Finally, and most importantly, the children in this study displayed deep desires to seek truth, and were attracted towards the spiritual. This goes to the heart of the SALT Approach and the final prototype will need to elucidate this vital element very well.

The following chapter will present and discuss the findings relating to Lens 2: *Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach* through three elements, namely, (a) equipping and maintaining the learning space, (b) key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach and (c) teacher expertise.

## Chapter 5: Lens 2 Findings - Equipping Teachers and Schools to Implement the SALT Approach

### 5.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 will present findings relating to equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach (Lens 2). Three elements were identified within this lens. These were: (a) equipping and maintaining the learning space, (b) key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach, and (c) teacher expertise. Data analysis identified several key themes within these three elements. Working within the scope of this PhD, the three elements identified through Lens 2 were addressed throughout the four phases of the design-based research project as summarised in Table 24, below.

Table 23: Design-based research project, as applied to Lens 2: Equipping schools and teachers to implement the SALT Approach

Design-Based Research Project Phases	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Classical Phases of the Design-based research project	Analysis of practical problems by the researcher and practitioners	Development of solutions informed by existing design principles and technical innovation	Iterative cycles of testing and refinement of solutions in practice	Reflection to produce 'Design Principles' and enhance solution implementation
Phases of the design-based research model as implemented for this PhD	Literature Review	Design of the first prototype	Data gathering, trialling and refining through three iterations	Analysis of findings informing the design of the final prototype
Lens 2: <i>Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach</i>	Three elements identified and explored through literature review: (a) Equipping and maintaining the learning space (b) Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach (c) Teacher expertise	Three elements incorporated in the design of the first prototype	Three elements explored, trialled and refined through the three iterative cycles	Findings relating to the three elements inform the design of the final prototype

## 5.2 Phases of Development for Equipping Schools and Teachers to Implement the SALT Approach

### 5.2.1 Phase 1: Literature review

The literature review identified challenges for schools and teachers. Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd requires teachers to personally make the required materials (Cavalletti, 2002; Garrido, 2008; Gibson, 2001). Additionally, the SALT Approach requires pedagogical practices which, if ignored, would limit its success (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Finally, adequate knowledge, deep understanding



and firm commitment to the Catholic Faith is presumed for teachers using Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd model (Cavalletti, 1983). If the SALT Approach is to be successful in systemic Catholic schools, adaptations were needed in all three areas. Chapter 5 explores findings related to these issues.

### 5.2.2 Phase 2: Designing the first prototype as relating to equipping schools and teachers to implement the SALT Approach

During Phase 2, the 12 months prior to the iterative phase, the researcher accessed and prepared the materials for the first prototype. The time immediately ahead of commencement, (November, December and January) were dedicated to an intense final gathering and preparing materials. Men's Sheds produced wooden figures, trays and boxes. Artefacts for mini liturgical items were sourced from opportunity shops, bargain stores and antique stores. The 'Sister Disciples of the Divine Master' produced mini liturgical linens and a retired seamstress made miniature vestments. The researcher painted 40 essential figures, produced dioramas, raised maps of Israel, charts and booklets. Despite all this, not everything could be prepared prior to commencement: The City of Jerusalem, the Liturgical Wheel and the wooden miniature Bible Collection, for example, had to wait.

As Phase 3 (the iterative phase) approached, the physical environment was set up. While not all schools hoping to implement of the SALT Approach would have a dedicated room, it was essential for this study, enabling the researcher's constant access. It also facilitated evaluation the SALT Approach itself, minimising polluting and compromising factors. The School allocated a standard single classroom, which included a wet area and spare furniture was offered. Two large open shelf units, two cupboards and some compactuses reduced the working space. While the space would be accessed for other purposes, it was to be largely dedicated to the study.

The written component of the first prototype was also prepared in Phase 2, outlining the SALT Approach, the core pedagogical aspects, the actual year's programme and a correlative table aligning the SALT Approach with Parramatta Catholic Education's religious education curriculum, *Sharing Our Story*.

## 5.2.3 Phase 3: Iterative cycles

### 5.2.3.1 Overview of the iterative cycles

Phase 3 involved three iterative cycles. Table 25, below, summarises the three elements of Lens 2, tracked through the iterations. These elements were (a) equipping and maintaining the learning space, (b) key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach, and (c) teacher expertise. Each element is described in terms of identified themes. The three elements were explored, trialled and/or refined throughout all three iterations.

Table 24: Summary of iterations in relation to Lens 2

	<b>First Iteration:</b> Term 1	<b>Second Iteration:</b> Term 2	<b>Third Iteration:</b> Terms 3 and 4
<p><b>Element 1</b></p> <p>Equipping and maintaining the learning space</p>	<p><b>Initial trialling of the prototype</b></p> <p><b>Identified Themes</b></p> <p>a) Preparation and trialling of recommended materials</p> <p>b) Additional resources</p> <p>c) Preparation and maintenance of the environment</p>	<p><b>Refinements</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On-going preparation and trialling of materials</li> <li>• Building an extensive list of useful resources</li> <li>• Identifying ways to facilitate room preparation</li> </ul>	<p><b>Refinements</b></p> <p>Continue</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation and trialling materials, considering mass production options</li> <li>• Building an extensive list of useful resources</li> </ul> <p>New Refinements designed and trialled</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solo Taxonomy</li> <li>• Internet Site</li> <li>• Human Virtues</li> <li>• Mass-Production considerations</li> </ul>
<p><b>Element 2</b></p> <p>Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach</p>	<p><b>Identified Themes</b></p> <p>a) Pedagogy that permits pondering</p> <p>b) Pedagogy that respects the person</p> <p>c) Pedagogy that provides for freedom of choice</p>	<p><b>Refinements</b></p> <p>Identifying, exploring and refining from a pedagogical perspective:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunities for pondering</li> <li>• Respecting the person</li> <li>• Freedom of choice</li> </ul>	<p><b>Continue identification</b> of moments of pondering, of respecting persons and of freedom of choice.</p> <p><b>Furthermore</b>, identify pedagogical implications of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using a rich vocabulary in pondering</li> <li>• Reflecting respect through human virtues</li> </ul>

<p><b>Element 3</b> Teacher expertise</p>	<p><b>Identified Themes</b></p> <p>a) Teacher knowledge and understanding</p> <p>b) Lived commitment</p>	<p><b>Refinements</b></p> <p>Identifying situations where:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher’s knowledge and understanding is important</li> <li>• Teacher’s lived commitment is important</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Balancing freedom with accountability</li> </ul> <p><b>And Lastly:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The positive effects of practised pedagogy, as recognised by participating teachers and school executive.</li> </ul> <p><b>Continue identifying</b> situations where teacher’s knowledge, understanding and lived commitment important</p> <p><b>Furthermore:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perspectives offered by participating teachers as they reflected on their learning, together with observations of the school executive and members of the Parramatta Catholic Education Office.</li> </ul>
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### 5.2.3.2 The first iterative cycle (Term 1)

During the first iteration, the researcher worked with the materials and programme prepared in Phase 2, evaluating, adapting and adding materials as the term progressed. Aspects reflecting key pedagogical elements were identified. The value of teacher expertise was also considered in the first iteration, by noting the impact of faith known, understood and practised by the researcher on students.

#### 5.2.3.2.1 Element 1: Equipping and maintaining the learning space

Constant and easy access to a variety of 2D and 3D materials was core to the success of the SALT Approach, as it becomes virtually impossible without visible, tangible resources. Materials sourced and produced indeed proved invaluable. In fact, from the first moment, they drew students’ attention and were a constant source of fascination. Three themes were explored relating to equipping and maintaining the learning space: (a) preparing recommended materials, (b) additional resources, and

(c) preparing and maintaining the environment. The following sections present findings according to these themes.

#### *5.2.3.2.1.1 Theme (a) Preparing recommended materials*

As described in 5.2.2, materials were prepared in the pre-iterative Phase 2. However, preparation of materials was ongoing and time-consuming throughout all the iterations. Additionally, adaptations and compromises were inevitable and despite the roughshod appearance of some of these, students still gained valuable understandings and insights.

Cavalletti's *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, recommends that teachers prepare their own materials since this invites a deeper personal reflection and commitment (Cavalletti et al., 1995). O'Shea offered a range of suggestions for teachers aspiring to apply the approach in school settings. These included simple diorama settings, easy-to-produce figures, booklets to assist presentations and classroom storage ideas (O'Shea, in press). However, as contemporary educational research indicates, heavy demands on teachers limit the feasibility of being able to produce a large number of complex resources (Birenbaum et al., 2015; Bryck, 2015; Tan et al., 2014).

The researcher aimed to prepare materials with the ultimate intention of supplying ready-made or almost complete materials as part of the final prototype. Comments and concerns of teachers highlighted the importance of this, as is evidenced in Text Box 25.

*Text Box 25: Teacher B expresses concern about the amount of material needed*

**Teacher B:** My biggest question is that this is your whole focus; you are only teaching the Religion. I guess that would be one big thing as a classroom teacher... how do you get all of these resources ready, as well as literacy, maths, and everything else?

**Researcher:** So, that is also what other teachers think?

**Teacher B:** It actually is... If all the things are set up, and we know where they are and we are ready to go... you really can implement it in other grades, and in other years. But if we go back to the beginning of the year... I just walked in and thought, oh, my goodness, that's about 5 hours of work and how does that fit into the normal life of a teacher?

*Preparing the materials* single-handedly was challenging. Fully equipping the room required more time and cost than were available. Even for this study, it was neither possible nor practical to provide the entire spectrum of materials recommended by

Cavalletti. The immediate needs for Term One took precedence over those for subsequent terms. Even so, some items for the liturgical season occurring within the first iteration were not made. These included the Liturgical Wheel, a model wooden set of Bible books and a model of the City of Jerusalem. A summary of items required for the first iteration (Term 1), including those not specifically found in Cavalletti’s recommendations, are listed in Table 26, below.

*Table 25: Summary of items required in the first iteration*

Weeks of Term 1	Materials needed	Cavalletti Recommended	Materials produced, borrowed or replaced
Week 2	Prayer Space Items	Yes	Materials gathered from various sources
	The Presentation of Jesus in the Temple Diorama	Yes	Made in Phase 2
	Saints: Josephine Bakhita and John Bosco	No	Images sourced
	Annunciation Diorama	Yes	Made in Phase 2
Week 3	Sanded Globe, with only 2 places marked	Yes	Ordinary Globe bought. Not sanded, but marked in 3 places (Israel, Sudan, Sydney)
	Raised Map of Israel with flags	Yes	Two made in Phase 2
	Prayer Albums	No	Sourced and purchased
Week 4	Liturgical Wheel	Yes	Wheel not made: Substituted with 2 D Images
	Liturgical Vestments		Liturgical Vestments made in Phase 2
	Mystery of Life and Death Presentation materials: Wheat etc.	Yes	Materials sourced: Wheat, planters, soil
	One Alleluia (for burial in Lent)	Yes	Laminated Alleluias made for children to bury under wheat.
Week 5	John the Baptist, baptises Jesus	No	Images sourced, printed and laminated.
	Jesus goes to the desert for 40 days: Introducing Lent	No	Images sourced, printed and laminated
	Ash Wednesday Support activities	No	Support activities sought on internet.

Week 6	Wooden Bible Set	Yes	Borrowed from a Parish Atrium
Week 7	City of Jerusalem	Yes	Borrowed from the University
	Jesus Enters Jerusalem	No	Story board activity sourced, printed and laminated
	Sacrificial Lamb Materials	No	Images sourced, printed and laminated Carefully thought-through teacher notes prepared.
Week 8	Cenacle Diorama	Yes	Made in Phase 2
Week 9	Empty Tomb Diorama	Yes	Made in Phase 2
	City of Jerusalem booklet for Holy Week events	No	New booklet prepared, to be used with the 3D plan of Jerusalem (borrowed)



*Photograph 3: The Geography of Israel*

The important season of Lent leading up to Easter occurred in the first iteration. *Adaptation and compromise* was immediately necessary to compensate for materials not prepared. Instead of the liturgical wheel, several images were printed and laminated. Additionally, a large laminated print of the liturgical cycle was purchased. These offered at least two-dimensional versions.

The wooden Bible book set and the City of Jerusalem were borrowed and consequently these were only in the room for short periods when absolutely needed. Students loved these items, and were particularly drawn to the City of Jerusalem. Additional labelling activities and booklets relating to Holy Week were designed as further described in 5.2.3.2.1.3. Journal entries in Text Box 26 indicates some of the challenges encountered.

*Text Box 26: Audio-journal entries relating to sourcing and set-up of materials*

**Audio-Journal entry: February 26, 2015**

Have set up the Land of Israel space so students can explore it there. Hope it will be a new step forward.

Also, introducing the colours of the liturgical year today. Don't have the wheel but just using A4 Laminated and including the Lamb as the central to get across the concept of Jesus being the 'Lamb of God' and St John calling Jesus the 'Lamb of God'. Let's see how that goes too.

One of Cavalletti's key presentations in the time leading up to Easter recommended planting wheat at two weekly intervals, facilitating a contemplation of the *Mystery of Life and Death*. While this sounds simple enough, sourcing the wheat seeds, and being sure of their germination, took time. A supplier of Harris Farm wheat sprouts was located, who supplied the researcher with both wheat seeds and a chart outlining how to successfully grow the wheat. Rather than opt for just a small sowing, a planter was placed in the presentation space and the first wheat sown on Ash Wednesday. The impact of seeing an abundance of wheat sprouting and growing rapidly was powerful, offering a valuable contemplative opportunity (see Text Box 27 and Photograph 4). To personalise the experience the children were also able to take some wheat seeds home, together with instructions for sowing. This was noted and would be incorporated into the final prototype.

*Text Box 27: Students react to seeing wheat grow*

**Transcript Monday, February 23, 2015**

Students react to seeing wheat grow

*Students enter the room and sit on the floor space.*

**Basem:** (noticing the wheat and pointing) Wooah...

**Researcher:** Basem has noticed something very special: Our wheat is growing. I don't know if someone else's is growing at home?

**Namir:** Mine is growing...



*Photograph 4: The Mystery of Life and Death, wheat growing*

*Learning was still evident, despite limitations imposed by the inadequacy of materials.* Observations indicating that, at least in the moment, children were making significant links between the materials and the liturgical year or the life of Christ. Children's comments relating to the bible and the liturgical year illustrate how important materials were, allowing children's understanding to escalate (see Text Box 28).



**Partial Transcript: Class session, March 3, 2016:** Introducing the Bible using the borrowed wooden set

**Celia:** So, are the ones in green the ones that were when Jesus came?

**Researcher:** You are so observant! That's right. The colour green is the special colour we use there because it marks when Jesus came.

**Giorgio:** That is like it's growing time.

**Researcher:** That is a great comment. Yes, Jesus is all about showing us how to grow...yes, well done.

**Michael:** How many books in the new time?

**Researcher:** Let's see, one, two three four: that's the four gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, then...

**Zoe:** 11

**Researcher:** then 5,6,7,8,9,10,11. But even some of those are several books together.

**Clara:** You know the way the books are marked: are they the same numbers but in a different language?

**Researcher:** Oh, well done. Yes, look at that, these are called roman numerals. That's how the romans used to write their numbers.

**Ben:** I've got a pack of Star Wars movies, and they are also written like that...

**Fleur:** So, a bible is a book full of books...

**Researcher:** A book full of books... you have got the point.

**Abbrar:** The bible is so we can learn about Jesus and God

**Researcher:** Absolutely. We learn about Jesus and we learn about God.

**Giorgio:** So, God sent himself to Mary ...

**Researcher:** Yes... so that's why we can say that Mary is the Mother of God... Not that she made him to begin with, but he came down into her.

**Child:** Oh, cool...

**Child:** How did he send himself in her?

**Researcher:** Through the Holy Spirit. It's a miracle...

This section explored the first theme “preparing recommended materials”. Clearly, few teachers would be in a position to single-handedly prepare the materials. Unless core resources were readily available, it is unlikely that the SALT Approach would be embraced. In terms of design, the final prototype would need to include already prepared materials and offer practical advice for sourcing others. The worthwhileness of providing some kind of physical, tangible materials to support every liturgical moment needs to be emphasised, requiring additional materials, as discussed in the next section (5.2.3.2.1.2). In addition, the final prototype would need to encourage

personal initiative in adapting ideas and borrowing items, even temporarily if necessary.

#### 5.2.3.2.1.2 Theme (b) Additional resources

The second theme of “additional resources” clarified that in order to engage the students consistently, resources were required that were not specified by Cavalletti’s *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. Working with this Year 2 and using the liturgical year as the backbone, necessitated supplementary materials. Also, providing sufficient material for students in *choice time* was important. A contemporary advantage, non-existent in Cavalletti’s time, was that of Internet sourcing.

Cavalletti’s *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd* identified the essential materials needed to resource the learning environment and suggested a specific range of response activities (Cavalletti et al., 1995). O’Shea (in press) recommends access to an atrium and suggests practical ways of setting up mainstream classrooms with miniature sets of items, storable in limited spaces. He also encourages teachers to seek new and varied responses. From a school’s perspective, Catholic Education Offices generally mandate certain topics to be covered in each year and the Parramatta religious education curriculum is no exception.

As the first iteration proceeded, *additional materials were sought or created as necessary*, as listed in Table 26, above. The diocesan grade recommendations for Year 2 exacerbated the need to provide tangible, multi-sensory materials not provided for in Cavalletti’s *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. In the first iteration alone, these included the Baptism of Jesus by John, the forty days of Jesus in the desert, the entrance into Jerusalem and the encouragement of personal practices during Lent. Working through the term also brought to light other aspects calling for new materials. One instance was that of introducing the students to the concept of the sacrificial lamb, in order to make sense of the reference to Jesus as ‘The Lamb of God’.

For John’s Baptism of Jesus and Jesus in the desert, the gospel stories were recounted, supported by several A4 laminated images, prominently displayed. Students also made their own simple puppet figures, stored in envelopes in their

journals and accompanied by the Scripture passage. They frequently returned to using these in *choice time*. Text Box 29 provides an illustrative transcript extract, and Photograph 5 provides a visual of resources.

*Text Box 29 First iteration extracts of class sessions relating to Lent*

**Partial transcript of Class sessions:**

**23<sup>rd</sup> February 2015**

**Researcher:** Today I will start to tell you some important stories. I don't have a diorama, but I am reading from the Gospel. I am going to let you make a sort of diorama, once I have told you the story. And to help you, I have lots of pictures by lots of artists.  
*(Story of John Baptist read from Bible.)*

**24<sup>th</sup> February, 2015**

**Researcher:** Today we have another story. Here we have what I told you about yesterday *(pointing to images of the Baptism of Jesus)*. And here we have pictures of what happened after: Jesus went into desert, for 40 days, on his own.  
*(Looking at paintings)* He prayed and he fasted, and prepared for the next few years. It was the beginning of his time of preaching... *(researcher continues telling the story in own words and moved on to open a discussion about what we do in Lent, and linking it with the 40 days Jesus spent in the desert)*

**Child:** So, Lent's like Jesus when he spent 40 days in desert...

**Researcher:** What should we do in Lent?

**Children:** Fast... pray... do kind things...



*Photograph 5: Images displayed relating to the Baptism of Jesus, 40 Days in the desert and the Sacrificial Lamb*

Having sufficient material to engage all the students in *choice time* took thought and preparation. *Internet sources, not available in Cavalletti's time*, were explored. Many were found directly related to Montessori's and Cavalletti's approaches.

Nevertheless, often being designed for small groups or home school use, some were not practical for the classroom. The researcher began building a viable resource list, commencing in the first iteration and continuing throughout the year, providing for the liturgical events as they arose. Successful examples in the first iteration included Paddle-pop puppets for the Baptism of Jesus by John, Ash Wednesday activities, hands on activities for Lenten reflections, and a story board for Palm Sunday, all illustrated below. Building an extensive set of printed images proved invaluable but displaying them was sometimes a challenge, as the audio-journal notes in Text Box 30 indicates.

**Journal Notes 23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2015**

Introduced the Baptism of Jesus in the Jordan River yesterday. Used two wall panels putting up pictures sourced on the internet. Went well, but problem is that today the focus is Jesus in desert. I need to spend time undoing pictures of yesterday to make space for new. Aim in future to stick to one panel per topic, providing children with visuals behind me, or have a diorama (at present there are none available of these scenes.) Classical paintings are good. Made available for children to look at individually.

It took time to set up but the wall looks impressive...

Samples of additional materials prepared samples are illustrated in the Figures 8 to 11 below. Newly developed or sourced resources would need to be included in the final prototype.



Figure 8: Sourced on the internet, this image conveniently contained St Josephine Bakhita and St John Bosco next to each other. Both were especially celebrated at the School

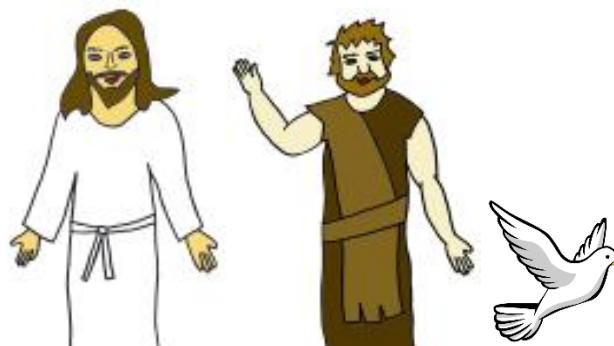


Figure 9: Paddle pop figures for the baptism of Jesus sourced at:  
<https://hubbardscupboard2010.com/2014/07/05/baptism-song-lds-jesus-and-john-the-baptist-art/>



Figure 10: Image of Jesus in the desert, sourced on the internet

CHALLENGE  
20  
GRADE 2

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. Cut out the wheel. Attach the pointer.
2. Decide what you will do each week of Lent to show God and others your love.
3. Move the pointer to the part of the wheel that tells what you will do.

• **Lent is** →

236A Reproducible Master 20

Figure 11: Lenten activity sourced on the internet

In summary, adequately resourcing the SALT Approach, requires a broad range of materials, in addition to those recommended by Cavalletti. Usually, diocesan schools require conformity to their various curricula, and it would be philosophically and pedagogically inconsistent with the SALT Approach to omit suitable supporting materials. Fortunately, technology today offers relevant possibilities for developing an extensive set of reasonably sized, beautiful images. The Internet supplies an ever-growing range of resources. An emerging concept is that of including an organic website as part of the final prototype providing frequent updates of practical materials consonant with *SALT Approach*.

#### *5.2.3.2.1.3 Theme (c) Preparing and maintaining of the environment*

Implementing the third theme identified in Element 1, that of “preparing and maintaining the environment” was time-consuming. Apart from the initial setting up of the room, accessibility of materials needed consideration. Also, the dynamic nature of the learning required frequent re-ordering of the space. Additionally, there was the modification of Cavalletti’s atrium model to be considered.

For Cavalletti, the prepared environment is essential and the Atrium houses very precise and fairly standardised arrangements (Lillig, 2004). In both Montessori classrooms, and Cavalletti Atriums, a great emphasis is placed on the ordered environment. Ideally the children are responsible for this, returning materials once used and leaving places in good order (Cavalletti et al., 1995). O’Shea’s booklet *Setting up the RE Classroom* offers suggestions (Appendix 9).

*Setting up the space* was the initial challenge and sheer magnitude of the task was daunting. Since all the RE sessions for this study were to be conducted in the room, the researcher wanted each student to have a personal desk space. This limited display possibilities and the final basic arrangement restricted the displays to two sides of the room, with the open shelving on the third side also offering some visible storage. Student response materials were stored in some of these and in a cupboard. Initially a single table (Photograph 6) was used to display a number of choices, with response sheets, display board and dioramas gathered one spot.



*Photograph 6: Table with choices*

The need for *high visibility and ready accessibility of materials* was considered. Often changes were made so that the most relevant materials for the liturgical moment were accessible. This took an inordinate amount of time and was justifiable only because of the nature of this design-based research study. In the long term, something more fixed would be necessary if a dedicated room was available in a school. Text Box 31 records the researcher's thoughts relating to this.

*Text Box 31: First iteration audio-journal recording reflecting concerns relating to set-up.*

**Journal Notes, February 16, 2016**

Have set up the Land of Israel Space so they can use as a work space.

I picked up wooden Bible model from Parish Atrium, and am planning to introduce Bible if there is time. It depends.

I needed to declutter their own spaces, so they could focus on gluing their figures for John the Baptist. Their desk space is very small and things get cluttered ... it becomes physically difficult.

Plan is to make a set of chair bags, so that they can put things away immediately rather than getting up and down to their storage.

**23<sup>rd</sup> February, 2015**

Take a long time to set up. e.g. this morning spent time putting on each table a mini set of equipment, valuable because it stops children from moving around... How can this be cut down for teachers? If incorporated into normal home-room it would be part of overall set-up.

There was the *frequent need to re-order the space* preparing it for activities. However, the *dynamic rather than static nature of the space* fascinated and attracted



both children and teachers alike. Photoset 18, below, illustrates aspects of the room's arrangement in the first iteration. The organic development of the room was a source of interest as illustrated by a teacher's comment:

'I just love coming in here, just to see all the new things that keep appearing. It is really interesting.' (JE, Year 3 teacher)

In the first iteration, *organising the space for choices and tidying the room* after sessions took time, even if students had attempted to leave things in order. It was not simply because they were careless: the tight schedule and the fact that the researcher was not the regular teacher also contributed. Students had to leave for other classes, and there was sometimes a sense of rush. They often did their best, but order left a lot to be desired (see Text-Box 32). Issues were discussed with the students and as the term progressed there was improvement.

*Text Box 32: First Iteration Audio-Journal reflecting the challenge of offering choices*

**Audio-Journal: March 2, 2016**

After discussing issues with Gerard (O'Shea) this morning: It's about choices, right? Children need to be able to choose a response they are interested in. With a full class, and a limited amount of time, the popular choices sometimes have to be available to all. If not, it is very frustrating. E.g. the water colour painting idea I want to introduce tomorrow: they all need to have the possibility of choosing that activity. In the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Atrium, the small number of children makes that easier. With a full class, this is difficult. I suppose a class teacher can skill the children in other moments, or avoid offering things like painting.

A final emerging factor in the first iteration was the *need to modify Cavalletti's Atrium model* so as to facilitate acceptance of a dedicated room within the school. The Principal saw it as a temporary set-up, with a view to having each room eventually equipped with all that was needed. The researcher discussed this with him, emphasising the positive benefits of having a special space within the school, where children could experience a quieter environment, conducive to reflection or pondering. Parramatta Catholic Education had been previously considered the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd approach but rejected it, considering comprehensive materials and set-up, as well as the extensive training, prohibitive. As a Catholic Education Office (CEO) consultant commented:

We looked at using the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, but it was impossible. It required so much training for all teachers, and the amount of material needed was simply prohibitive. (JH, CEO consultant)

The school did have materials relating to *Exploring Scripture*, an adaptation of Berryman's Godly Play, but these were boxed and kept in a storage cupboard. The figures were simple and some, made of polystyrene, were easily broken. The boxes were not freely available for students, but used occasionally by teachers. Given that the children had little access to hands-on material, compounded by the fact that relatively few of them came from practicing families, made the need for such a room all the more important. The discussion in Text Box 33 reflects these realities.

*Text Box 33: Researcher and RE Coordinator discuss the challenge and need for hands-on material*

**22<sup>nd</sup> June, partial transcript, discussion with Religious Education Coordinator**

**Researcher:** It was interesting today, one can see the huge gaps... You can show the students a picture of Scripture story, and they have no idea. Even with baptism. They should have covered certain aspects in Kinder and Year One, so you have an expectation, but students will look at a picture of a child being baptised and many of them think that is Jesus being baptised.

**REC:** So many of the kids are not embedded in a family of faith. They have hardly seen a Mass. If they miss one allocated Mass, it is six months before they see another one. ***The teachers can access kits so they can explore the Mass before they attend Mass, but they don't...*** And even across the school, I don't know if you can find an answer ... the students are not really aware of the Sacred Scriptures.



The Prayer Table



Baptism materials, close to the prayer space

*Photoset 18: Aspects of the room set-up*

Briefly summarising key considerations relating to the theme of preparing the environment, the final prototype would need to offer practical, time-efficient suggestions for preparing and ordering materials and room, if one was available. Innovative ways are required to ensure that durable materials be both visible and easily accessible for students. To facilitate this, cleverly designed, feasible and attractive storage to house materials are needed.

#### 5.2.3.2.2 Element 2: Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach

Exploring Element 2 pinpointed and illustrated vital pedagogies for the SALT Approach which were jeopardised within the current educational climate. Three pedagogical themes intimately connected with the SALT Approach were identified: (a) Pedagogy that permits pondering, (b) pedagogy that respects the person, and (c) pedagogy that provides for freedom of choice. These are discussed in following sub-sections.

##### *5.2.3.2.2.1 Theme (a) A pedagogy that permits pondering*

This first theme of Element 2, *a pedagogy that permits pondering* touches the core of the SALT Approach. A number of pedagogical strategies were identified in the first iteration, and these included allowing contributions and questioning during *presentation times*, encouraging deep and diverse participation in *discussions*,

recognising the difference between ‘stabs in the dark’ and purposeful pondering, and putting forward big questions for pondering.

The literature review explored perspectives in relation to pondering. Church documents recommend that proven current pedagogical approaches be used to facilitate unpacking both Sacred Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997). Pedagogical principles recommended by Montessori and Cavalletti, and which underpin the SALT Approach, place pondering at the top of the list (Cavalletti, 1983). Contemporary research-driven pedagogy supports giving children time to reflect (i.e. ponder) (Darling Hammond, 2008, Thapa et al., 2013).

Pondering was encouraged at all moments throughout the sessions. It occurred during the *presentation*, *discussion* and ‘*I wonder*’ sections, when students candidly shared their thoughts, and during the *choice time*, when they found opportunities to ponder alone, with other students or with the adults in the room.

The value of *judiciously allowing contributions and questioning during presentation times* was identified. At the very beginning of the first iteration there were few interruptions in the *presentation section*. However, the children soon became confident and thoughts were voiced with growing frequency. Although this could appear to be a distraction, it was not always so, with questions and comments revealing children’s thinking and understanding. The researcher’s responses could either stifle or encourage pondering, and the importance of the permitting apparently tangential interruptions was recognised. The researcher’s response could either encourage further pondering, allowing the students to voice their trails of thought (Text Box 34), or provide valuable information, briefly and precisely, facilitating later pondering (see Text Box 35).

*Text Box 34: Class Session transcript demonstrating the diversity of comments and questions that could lead to pondering*

<b>Transcript, Class Session February 16, 2015</b>	<b>Focus: Introducing the Liturgical Colours</b>
<b>Researcher:</b> ... soon we are moving into another time: Purple. Two times in the year we have times of preparation. Lent is one, leading to Easter and Advent is the other.	

(Show the children the model of the priest and vestments. All this fascinates them and they are engaged, asking a number of questions)

**Ahmed:** What is Easter?

**Another Child:** What does Easter mean?

**Researcher:** It's the word we use to remember the time when Jesus rose from the dead.

**Child:** He died...

**Researcher:** He died for us and rose on Easter Sunday

**Celia:** Did he die on Good Friday?

**Researcher:** Yes, he died on Good Friday.

**Child:** Did he come back to life?

Researcher: Yes

**Ahmed:** Why is it Good Friday if he died?

**Child:** Is he still alive?

**Researcher:** Why did they call it Good Friday? What a good question. Because it is the day that Jesus saved us and they call it Good Friday because of that.

**Trinh:** But it is very sad that he died...

**Researcher:** Yes, it is sad that he died, but he died so he could save us.

**Ben:** It's not just all about colours. It is about times we spend with Jesus

**Researcher:** And the colours remind us the kind of time it is. So, we have this purple time now to prepare for Jesus death and rising from the dead.

**Trinh:** Is heaven real?

**Researcher:** Oh ... Yes...I just lent a film to Mrs Fuller and it's about just that. It's called 'Heaven is for Real'. ... about a little boy...

*Text Box 35 Sample of researcher's brief precise response*

**Class Session, February 10, 2015** Focus: Identifying places in Israel

**Researcher:** Bethlehem is about 8 kilometres from Jerusalem, where Jesus died.

**Child:** How did he die, but?

**Researcher:** He died on the Cross, and I tell you what, in the next few weeks we are going to learn a lot about how that happened. We are going to learn heaps... Just now we are learning about...

*(Researcher explains about the Dead Sea...The Jordan River, The Sea of Galilee...)*

*Deep and diverse participation in discussion moments was encouraged. Spontaneous discussion increasingly followed presentations, and sometimes sprinkled them. At first sight, contributions seemed mere distractions, and at times they were. However, they often raised important issues for the individual child and were of interest to the group at large. By following the children's threads rather than the teacher's pre-determined course, the inclination to ponder was fostered. However, it was not always a matter of volleying the question back for pondering, since the children sometimes asked for factual information, which could fuel pondering. This organic*

approach permitted a rich tapestry of learning and understanding to develop, colouring the children's spiritual landscape.

*Recognising the difference between 'stabs in the dark' and purposeful pondering* was another aspect. Questions arose during whole group segments, when valuable time was lost if students guessed answers to questions they were not equipped to answer (*stabs in the dark*). Other responses were '*on the mark*' and volleyed back to the children, encouraging further thought. Although much consideration was given to selecting good '*I wonder*' questions that '*hit the mark*' for the children, new questions sometimes arose unexpectedly through the course of a session. When children asked questions, it was often appropriate for the researcher to answer them directly, taking the opportunity to fill lagoons of ignorance. Text Box 36 provides an annotated snapshot of these issues in action.

*Text Box 36: Annotated Class Session, illustrating the difference between 'stabs in the dark' and 'on the mark' responses*

**Transcript Class Session, February 16, 2015.** (After having observed children at Class Mass)

**Researcher:** Last Friday we were at Mass together... I wanted to share some things with you and I couldn't because it was not the time and we were in a sacred place.... One of the things was this. There is a gesture, (a gesture is a sign we make with our body) called the genuflection. At Church, we genuflect towards someone special. I wonder who the special person would be?

**Nick:** Umm the saint (*'stab in the dark'*)

**Researcher:** No (*straightforward answer*)

**Clara:** God (*'on the mark' answer*)

**Researcher:** Yes, How? Where is God in the church?

**Clara:** He is with us all the time, he is right next to us.

**Researcher:** He is...

**Ben:** God is in the box. (*'on the mark' answer*)

**Researcher:** Oh wow, you are so right... God is in the Tabernacle: What is that word?...

**Children:** Tabernacle

**Researcher:** Yes, the tabernacle is often made of gold and keeps a special, special person. It is hard to understand. Who is there?

**Children:** mmm...

**Researcher:** Jesus is there

**Nick:** God (*'on the mark' answer*)

**Researcher:** Jesus and God are the same thing. (researcher throws in possibly new information. With this information, there is a long and pregnant pause... total silence.)

**Researcher:** (*reading facial expressions*) Yes, I know it is a big thing... Jesus and God are the same, because there are actually three persons in the one God. Jesus is there in the form of ...?

**Giorgio:** In the form of three people. (*'stab in the dark'*)

**Researcher:** No, but good try. (truthful but encouraging response)

**Child:** In the form of Jesus? (*'stab in the dark'*)

**Researcher:** In the form of ...

**Clara:** Of the sign of the cross, as an angel (*'stabs in the dark'*)

(*Children offer various possibilities, but this word 'form' is very hard for them to get. Given another opportunity I would cut the guessing short, as soon as clear that they just don't know.*)

**Researcher:** I am going to tell you (*decision made to explain, rather than keep students merely guessing*). In the tabernacle ... in the golden box, Jesus is there because he has come into the host. ... What is the host? What does it look like? It is the bread the priest offers up...so we say that Jesus is there in the form of bread.

**Clara:** Is the bread holy? (*'on the mark' question*)

**Researcher:** Yes, it is holy once the priest has said some special words, and through God's power it has become Jesus. We are going to look at this a lot more, but what I want to show you right now is this: When you genuflect, you go down on the right knee. I am going to demonstrate...imagine the front of the church is there and the tabernacle is there. And I walk into the church and I look at the...

**Children:** Tabernacle

**Researcher:** And I say in my heart Jesus I love you and I put one knee down to the ground. and up again. And that is what I want you to practise in your own time, when you can take your peaceful time with it.

Scripture offered opportunities to *ask very big questions*, encouraging pondering extended over time. An example was provided in Chapter 4 (4.2.3.3.3.1), when the question was asked: 'Why did John the Baptist call Jesus the Lamb of God?' The students took hold of this question, and without prompting, often spontaneously returned to it. Term One Focus Group discussions verified that the children frequently thought about this big question. It did not matter that most had not yet reached a real understanding of the Lamb of God, since the concept required a degree of abstraction that many had not yet reached. They were pondering, and *this* was important, *not* answering the question for them. The concept fascinated and challenged them. Text Box 37 traces the pondering of this big question throughout the first iteration.

*Text Box 37: Pondering a very big question: Why did John call Jesus 'The Lamb of God'?*

**Class Session, February 23, 2015**

The Lamb of God was introduced.

**Researcher:** Now I want to start to tell you some very special stories...

The story is about John. The first thing you need to know is that he was actually the cousin of Jesus...

**Two Children:** Was he Jesus' cousin?

**Researcher:** His mother was Elizabeth... when he saw Jesus going by he said: "there is the Lamb of God, who is the one who takes away the sins of the world..."

I wonder: ... It is hard one ... I wonder why John called Jesus the Lamb of God? Why? Celia?

**Celia:** Maybe it is the Lamb of God... (the child has the confidence to 'give it a go')

**Researcher:** Yes, you are getting something, you are starting...

**Gajara:** What is a lamb? (this very bright Hindu student is not afraid of asking this question. It is likely that children have many 'lagoons' that the teacher may be unaware of, unless the children have time to ask.)

**Researcher:** A baby sheep. Jesus is often called the Lamb. I will give you a hint... (*a child has hand up*) Yes?

**Child:** He is a shepherd.

**Researcher:** Yes, and the Lamb too... this is hard, and I won't tell you the answer. I want you to think about it...

#### **End of Term 1, Focus Group 1**

**Researcher:** ...What happened in that city (Jerusalem)?

**Chelsea:** Jesus died...

**Marisa:** I was learning a lot about the Lamb of God. That the Lamb of God is Jesus.

**Gajara (Hindu Student):** And Jesus died as the same day that they crucified the lamb.

**Researcher:** You mean when they sacrificed the lamb?

**Gajara:** Yes, sacrificed the lamb.

#### **End of Term 1, Focus Group 2**

**Researcher:** What was it like in religious education in this room this term?

**Various Students responses, as relating to the Lamb of God:**

**Ben:** We learn about Jesus and God

**Celia:** We learn all about he is the Lamb of God and that he died for us on the cross, so he can save us from things.

**Ben:** When Jesus died on the cross... umm... another lamb that was also on the son of God that also died at the same time that Jesus was dying. When my brother says 'Baa' I was remembering about the sheep in the story. That's why I want to learn more about the sheep.

**Abrar:** We learn about God and Jesus. We learn about new saints and new people of the Lamb of Jesus

**Researcher:** Can you explain ways RE here is different to way done before?

**Ahmed: (child with aphasia)** We learn about new things like the Lamb of God, John the Baptist, the Guards... The Lamb is God... is the father of Jesus, and John is the cousin of Jesus and God is the Father of Jesus not like Joseph... And so, who is the Lamb of God and who is Jesus? Is he a lamb or is he ...alive?

**Abrar:** Jesus is our saviour...The lamb represented before he came.

**Ahmed:** So, the lamb that God lost was Jesus. And the Shepherd was ...?

**Researcher:** You are thinking on multiple layers. You can think about Jesus as the Shepherd who looks after us or the lamb that was sacrificed for us. It could mean all of these things.

#### **End of Term 1, Focus Group 3**

**Jamie:** I like learning lots and lots about Jesus and God and the Lamb.

**Researcher:** What did you learn about Jesus and the Lamb?

**Jamie:** That the lamb got killed and I remember one of the stories we did in Year One, when Jesus stopped the storm.

**Azzam:** I like learning about Jesus and God and Mary and Joseph and the Lamb



**Basem:** (*looking at a symbolic picture of the sacrificed Lamb of God*) How, wha...Did the lamb get poked in the neck with the cross?  
**Researcher:** No, he is carrying the cross.  
**Basem:** Then how?...  
**Researcher:** It is a symbol: That is when Jesus was pierced in the heart after he died..  
**Basem:** Oh  
**Jamie:** I like all these pictures.  
**Researcher:** Why?  
**Basem:** They show you what it was like when it happened.  
**Jamie:** I like this one  
**Researcher:** What do we see in this picture? What does it all represent?  
**Jamie, Azzam, Namir:** Jesus and God  
**Basem:** Jesus and the Lamb of God  
**Researcher:** Can you think of any new thing you have learnt this year?  
**Basem:** The lamb was new. The Lamb of God. And Jerusalem was new... (*others agree*)

In brief, for the SALT Approach to be successful, it needs to incorporate a pedagogy that fosters pondering. Specific strategies can include: encouraging children to think aloud, allowing discussions to take unexpected turns, recognising discussions can lead to rich understanding, and discerning between ‘time effective questioning’ that leads to ‘*on the mark*’ answers and ‘time-wasting questioning’ that leads to ‘*stabs in the dark*’ answers. Sometimes clear explanations are needed, and achieving the balance requires clear-sighted understanding.

#### 5.2.3.2.2.2 Theme (b) A pedagogy that respects the person

A pedagogy that respects the person recognises and affirms the dignity of each child, and implications relevant to the SALT Approach were sought. Visible signs of respect included such things as truly listening, shaping one’s tone to reflect sensitive awareness, valuing what the child valued and affirming the dignity even of persons causing disruption or distraction. All this fostered a climate that encouraged the children to trustingly express thoughts, and thus develop their understandings.

The literature review presented the Christian anthropological view of the human person as understood by the Catholic Church (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §10). Montessori and Cavalletti alike, recognised that true education should recognise and respect the person at each stage of development (Standing, 1998; Cavalletti, 2002). O’Shea also emphasises this (O’Shea, in press). Moreover, valuing each person is supported by current educational pedagogy and upheld by researchers such as Krokfors et al. (2011).

Analysis of first iteration audio-recordings revealed *demonstrations of respect in daily interactions*. Being ready to *truly listen to the child* was not always easy, given time constraints and the need to reach the session's goal. However, children needed to know they were heard and understood, and ways had to be found to move on without belittling. Generally, and despite challenges, a certain gentleness in speech and meeting the student's eyes demonstrated that each student was respected. These manifestations of respect implied a subtle awareness that within each person lay a raft of life experiences of which one had little or no idea, and presumed a certain vulnerability in each person. Samples are provided in Text Box 38.

*Text Box 38: First iteration class sessions, demonstrating terms of respect*

**Extracts from Term 1 class session transcripts.**

**February 10, 2015** (Map of Israel Session)

**Researcher:** Now listening carefully. The one with the flame represents when the angel came to Mary: we pray it every day in the Angelus...

*(Interruptions)*

Now, you have to learn not to interrupt. I love hearing your voices, but not when I am speaking. And the thing is when I am speaking, I get so absorbed, thinking about these things, I sometimes forget there are other voices in the background. So, I want you to really try not to make those noises because it distracts other children and we waste time...

**February 19, 2015**

**Researcher:** (reminds of the places: Nazareth, Bethlehem, Jerusalem, the Jordan River, The Sea of Galilee, the Dead Sea, the Mediterranean Sea)

This is great background knowledge for you guys, to know the places... and this is only the beginning...

Now you have the maps, labels and glue. You need to name your pages. You are in Year 2 and I am hoping you can write your name fairly neatly at the top of the page.

**Child:** I have done that

**Researcher:** Very good, well done. Now the scissors are there, so you can cut your tags. Now, do you feel you can start?

General response: Yes!

**Researcher:** Can you do it quietly?

General response: Yes!

**Researcher:** Off you go, remember you only allowed to whisper.

**March 2, 2015**

**Researcher:** *(speaking about the Bible)* ...God will be all in all and people will be with God forever... all kinds of people: people from the past and the present and the future, will be with God to live with Him forever.

This is very, very big. Now, when people hold the Bible, one of the things they may think about is who wrote this book.... I mean *who* wrote it? So, the first thing to understand is ...

Children whispering: God

**Researcher:** Yes, I heard somebody say God. Well, yes, God wrote this book firstly by making all the things that happen, happen.

**Robbie:** Aww stop (*to Basem*)

**Researcher:** Mmm...Basem what's happening there?

**Basem:** He is touching my foot.

**Researcher:** Okay Robbie, I want you to move along a little bit and don't come close to him. Ahmed just move a long a little and Robbie move along a little... thank you.

...so, it was written by God, by God doing the things that are ... (*Researcher notices the issue is continuing, briefly and quietly addresses and keeps going*) ... Basem, you have to hold yourself together and close your lips. Don't swing your feet, that is part of the problem...

It tells us firstly what God did. and then God inspired people to write the things down...

Another angle of this was an *attentiveness to the inner person*. In the early stages, it seemed to the researcher that many children were not 'in touch' with their inner self, or at least this 'in-touchness' lay hidden in the classroom context. It was the inner person that the researcher constantly sought to address, whether interacting with the whole group or with individuals. It could be shown in a turn of phrase, or a sharing of a special experience, constantly aiming to speak to the children as persons. Text Box 39 illustrates the researcher's attempts to identify the issue and seek ways of addressing it.

*Text Box 39: Researcher ponders the apparent absence of inner awareness these children seem to have*

#### **Early Term 1 Journal Notes**

Many children, particularly the girls, indicate the desire for quiet focused time. How to create that atmosphere conducive to creating a quiet space, where the inner person can be more in touch with self, and the inner person is nurtured? Many of the children do not seem to be aware of their inner self. It shows on their faces. How to create an inner space where they can think and pray and respond to God?

There were many opportunities to *value things that mattered to the child*. It could be something that was important in the moment, some facts known, a birthday, a pet that had died, a new baby in the family, or a special event. They were small details, but in the context of the SALT Approach they are particularly important. Text Box 40 offers some samples.

*Text Box 40: Ways of responding to matters of importance to the child*

#### **Samples taken from the first iteration**

*Sample 1*

**Child:** I know where the North Pole is...

**Researcher:** Yes, I understand that you know lots of things, but you know, I am very focused on all I want you to find out this year about my subject. It means that sometimes I can't let you have all the questions and comments you would like, but thank you for that information.

*Sample 2:*

**Child:** (*commenting on drawing and painting*) I really messed this up...

**Researcher:** It's not so bad, but I don't mind if you start a new picture.

*Sample 3:*

**Clara:** I am really worried about my mum, she is really sick.

**Researcher:** Well, you pray for her and I will pray for her too...

*Sample 4:*

**Ahmed:** (*on the way back from the Class Mass*) I just don't know if I believe that God is real.

**Researcher:** There are lots of things to help you decide that. We will think about them through the year.

*Affirming the dignity of the person even if he/she is the cause of disruption or distraction* was important. The focus on deep and meaningful topics regularly risked derailment because of class dynamics, as described in Chapter 4. Coming in from the playground where there had been some kind of fracas, or from the classroom with unresolved issues bubbling beneath the surface, the children could be agitated and irritated. There was little time to comprehensively address matters, and it was often not the researcher's place to do so. It was these moments that the researcher found hardest: keeping the flow going, while addressing the issue in some way, without disrespecting the person or persons involved, or over-stepping one's role. It required a kind syncopated rhythm. The very last set of interactions in Text Box 38, above, illustrates this.

Maintaining a gentle tone, really looking at the individual, offering brief, thoughtful responses draws out the children and assists their own self-awareness. Disruptive children especially need to feel the warmth of understanding. While classroom pressures, tensions and difficulties can undermine respect for the individual person, a few 'in principle' guidelines can assist in a return to appropriate practice. Advice pertaining to this should be included in the final prototype.

#### *5.2.3.2.2.3 Theme (c): Pedagogy that provides for freedom of choice*

'On the ground' issues at this Parramatta diocesan school indicated that the theme of providing for freedom of choice was significant. Recommended practice at the school was that of facilitating self-regulated learning, implying freedom of choice. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, student behaviour would often undermine such

pedagogical practice. Teachers tended towards whole class activities in religious education, as the Principal's comment, below, indicates.

This is a real opportunity to open up the pedagogy for these children in RE and to move from the 'shut up sheets' with everyone colouring a picture for Mary's birthday. We are really still moving away from everyone doing the same thing in the same way, from "here is a black-line master, off you go". The real power lies in student choice, variety of experiences, shifting from photocopying to preparing resources that are much more active and engaging learning for the kids. (Principal)

Initial pedagogical understandings relating to freedom of choice, vital to the SALT Approach, were identified. These were (a) establishing boundaries leading to gradual release, (b) laying the groundwork by demonstrating skills facilitating a range of choices, and (c) being ready to 'let go' and recognising one's role as facilitator and observer in *choice time*.

Montessori and Cavalletti make *sine qua non* pedagogical recommendations relating to freedom of choice within relevant boundaries (Cavalletti et al., 1995). Moreover, current research supports a pedagogy that offers a rich slate of student-focused experiences, self-regulated learning, independent work and project-based learning (Deci & Ryan, 2011; Zumbunn et al., 2011). Ways of encouraging freedom of choice, within the boundaries of meaningful activities and of fostering intrinsic motivation are pedagogically important (Lüftenegger et al., 2012; Schunk & Zimmerman 2012; Zumbunn et al., 2011).

As described in Chapter 4, the researcher prepared the students for choice during the first iteration. This chapter, on the other hand, considers *freedom of choice* from a teacher's perspective, identifying pedagogical nuances.

*Establishing boundaries before progressing to gradual release.* The researcher began the first iteration with a pedagogical ideal in mind, involving free-choice and self-regulated learning. As Chapter 4 described, the first days quickly clarified that these students needed firm guidance and tight boundaries. For them, self-regulated

learning was at the pre-natal or, at most, neo-natal stage. What were the pedagogical implications of this? In the short term, tight boundaries were important, while the children acquired the ‘tools of the trade’, so to speak. Too many choices resulted in chaos and disorder, so pedagogically, it was a matter of patience or destruction. Pedagogical thinking involved being content to patiently lay the ground work, while keeping the ultimate goal in mind.

*Being ready to demonstrate skills facilitating a range of choices* was a pedagogical choice. The fray of the first iteration was an obstacle to be overcome, and the researcher experienced first-hand the temptation to balk at the challenge. For example, demonstrating how to use water colours, although sounding simple, required precision planning, personal practice and overcoming the fear of mayhem. However, once the decision was taken, materials prepared and the room set up, the rest was plain sailing. Children responded well, and engaged in the task with professional verve. They were becoming equipped to respond. Simple book-making was another example, and the long-term benefit of skilling the students was substantial, giving them ways of reflecting on their learning. Text Box 41 captures part of the actual session.

*Text Box 41: Demonstration and modelling the skill of water-colour painting*

**March 3, 2015, Partial transcript of Class Session:** Water-colour painting.

*(Researcher ensures children enter and are seated using very few and very quiet words. whatever said is quiet and respectful. Arranging the children so they all see how to paint with water colours. All necessary things are on their desks.)*

**Researcher:** Today is a very important today. I have arranged the paints at your desks, as you can see. You each have a picture to use today, like this one I have here.

Watching me carefully... you each have 5 buds, one for each colour. I am explaining this to you because this is a work you can choose to do in the year. You need to know how to do it and I am explaining it to you so that you can work with water colours on your own through the year.

I will demonstrate with the yellow. This is what you do. Take a cotton bud and make it a tiny-wincy bit wet. Then you get the winsiest bit of colour on your bud and you place it in a tiny blob on your paper palette. Then another colour ... so you have your five colours on your paper.

Then you are ready to paint your picture. These are water colours, so they spread quite a bit. You won't get it perfect right away. You go gently. when you use water, use very little because you don't want it to go everywhere. The more water you add the more it spreads. And you will get to know how you can make different shades of green, for example, just by the amount of water you use.

The first thing you do is put your name on your picture, in you very neatest writing, and to work very, very quietly and calmly. A very important last thing to do at the end is to gather your buds and wrap them in the paper and put them in the bin. If you do it that way I am showing you, you will get better and better at it.

*(Children move very quietly to their place and quickly become engrossed)*

**Child:** What is the sponge for?

**Researcher:** Yes, thank you for that question. They are damp sponges for when you get some paint where you don't want it. It will pull the paint off the page.

... Several of you have asked me how to make orange, the way you make orange is you mix a tiny bit of red and a tiny bit of yellow.

The children do become noisier, hear words like 'awesome'. When the bell is rung, they are immediately quiet. Researcher compliments them on their work.

Clean up runs fairly smoothly, everyone stops what they are doing. Pages are proudly names, students find a safe spot for their work, lid the paints and clean up in reasonable time)

As the researcher-teacher, making the pedagogical decision *of being ready to let go* was crucial, and so was its timing. Participating teachers also found it a challenge, particularly in the first iteration, with its disorder, noise and chaos: boundaries would have to be made clear before '*letting go*', as discussion in Text Box 42 indicates.

*Text Box 42: Discussing when to 'let go'*

**February 17, 2015:** Post-session discussion with Teacher A

**Researcher:** They are not ready for the choices.

**Teacher A:** Montessori is self-directed, isn't it?

**Researcher:** Yes, but guided. We have to decide how much they can do and what is beyond reasonable.

**Teacher A:** Mine had the idea...

**Researcher:** Yes, that side of the class was very clear. On my side, they all wanted to use the dioramas, and then they would take anything they could lay their hands on and so the boys just kind of went wild. So, we can't give them many choices. I am trying to get across the concept that they can choose. they like the idea but they don't have the skills.

**Teacher A:** Can you minimise the choice? Maybe this is too structured, but can it be on a rotational basis where we put them into groups, sit even at same table as in class, and tell them what they are doing.

**Researcher:** But then there is no choice there...

**Teacher A:** No, there is no choice.

**Researcher:** But if that is what it has to be... at this stage. Then... that is what it has to be.

**Teacher A:** Maybe just for the next few weeks. On Thursday, maybe can you just do an activity that everybody does, or is that against the idea?

**Researcher:** No that is fine. If I have to give away choices until they are ready, I will. they all do the same thing.... But they all have to have a place to sit. That is another challenge, there aren't enough tables!

*Appreciating the teacher's role as facilitator and observer in choice time* was given a 'kick-start' for participating teachers in the first iteration, with the observation sheets designed for data collection purposes (see Figures 12 and 13, below). The two

teachers appreciated this opportunity and quickly began to notice the advantages of observing without interfering, so reflecting on the teacher’s role within the SALT Approach. Throughout this, and the future iterations the teachers gradually took a more active role (see Text Box 43).

**Student Engagement Observation Form A: Presentation Session**

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Day/date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

		Very evident	Somewhat evident	Not evident
1	Paying attention (alert, tracking with eyes)			
2	Listening (as opposed to chatting, or sleeping)			
3	Asking questions			
4	Responding to questions			
5	Reacting appropriately (laughing, crying, shouting, etc.)			
6	Participating			
Comment				

*Figure 12: Student engagement observation form*





with a definite intention to establish gradual release, students are gradually empowered to take control of their learning. A risk for teachers implementing the SALT Approach would be a tendency to avoid skilling students because it is perceived as too difficult. A range of interesting choices open up for children if the teacher is ambitious in offering new ways of responding. Additionally, making that pedagogical decision to 'let go' in *choice time* can be a challenge. Offering a range of viable and practical suggestions relating to students making choices will have a place in the final prototype.

#### 5.2.3.2.3 Element 3: Teacher expertise

The third element considered in this chapter is that of teacher expertise. The two identified themes were (a) Teacher knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith, and (b) Lived commitment to the Catholic faith. These are discussed in following two sub-sections.

##### *5.2.3.2.3.1 Theme (a) Teachers' knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith*

The SALT Approach encourages the child to personally explore and deepen in faith knowledge and understanding. In the first iteration, and following the Liturgical Year closely, the researcher sought to identify opportunities to share her knowledge and understanding. Additionally, the children's interest and fascination offered opportunities not be overlooked.

The Catholic Church expects teachers in Catholic schools to be well anchored in the Catholic faith (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, §27-32, §38, §40-70). Montessori and Cavalletti place great importance upon the teacher-facilitator's deep knowledge, understanding, and lived Catholic practice (Cavalletti, 1983). O'Shea (in press) proposes his Mystagogical Catechetical Method as a viable one for systemic Catholic schools, but it needs adaptation in the light of the actual levels of knowledge, understanding and practice of many teachers. More broadly, contemporary research emphasises the need for teacher expertise (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). As in any subject, the teacher's confidence and ability to facilitate learning relates directly to his/her own depth of knowledge and understanding (Hattie, 2012; Tirri & Ubani, 2013).

The liturgical year provided many *opportunities to share faith and belief* with the students. In these moments, the students could appreciate a depth of knowledge and understanding to which they also could aspire. It required a readiness to introduce topics which, while part of the Liturgical Calendar, were not part of the mandated curriculum. For example, the children were patently interested the places where Jesus lived or the lives of the saints. Moreover, the researcher found it essential to shed light on big topics, such as the Trinity, so that the students could begin to grasp the meaning of the Sign of the Cross (see Text Box 44).

*Text Box 44: Opportunities to share faith and belief*

**Partial Audio-Transcript: February 9, 2015**

**Researcher:** Today, I am going to tell you a special thing. I can't tell you all the special days the church has, but today is the feast day of Our Lady of Lourdes. St Bernadette was a little girl about your age who lived about 150 years ago, and she was a girl who found it really hard to learn her prayers and things about Jesus, but do you know what? Mary, Jesus' mother, appeared to her and gave her very special messages to tell the world. She appeared to Bernadette and told her some words she didn't understand. She told Bernadette that she was... now I bet you when I say these words to you now, you won't understand them either... She said to Bernadette 'I am the Immaculate Conception.'

**Child:** What?

**Researcher:** ... tell your priest that I am the Immaculate Conception. And Bernadette didn't know what that meant and she had to keep repeating it over and over so she wouldn't forget before she got to the priest.

She lived a holy life ...you know an amazing thing... I don't know if I should tell you this just yet... but yes, I will, because you are listening, after she died and was buried, a long time after that, the church said that she was a saint. And one of the things they did back then was to open up the person's coffin, I know that this sounds a bit strange, but this is what they do sometimes. So about one hundred years after Bernadette died, they opened up her coffin and she was as fresh as a daisy.

**Child:** Ohhh ...

**Researcher:** In fact, I have seen her myself, when I went to Lourdes. She is lying, like Snow White, in a glass case.

**Partial Audio-Transcript: February 12, 2015**

**Researcher:** As you know, we have little time today and ... I want to bring things together a bit. ...

Firstly, we have been thinking about the Sign of the Cross: thinking about God the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit. We have talked about the Annunciation: the time an angel came to Mary and she would have a special child...

**Children:** Jesus.

**Researcher:** Now you have also thought about the Angelus that we pray every day...

So, I have these albums ... one for each of you...The first prayer we are going to have in it is the prayer of the Sign of the Cross and there is a picture to match it. When we say this prayer, we mark self with the cross and we are remembering three persons in one God ...

*(It is new information for the children and they are very attentive. When new and interesting information is given, the children become quiet and very attentive, as though thirsty. In this case, it provided an opportunity to speak accurately about the Trinity.)*

In summary, the effectiveness of the SALT Approach depends significantly upon the richness of each teacher's own knowledge and understanding of Catholic faith and belief. Experiencing the Liturgical Year first hand, and sharing it with the students offers powerful opportunities for teachers to shed light on Church teachings. The value of touching on topics that are not, strictly speaking, part of the established curriculum can augment children's understanding and vitalise the learning experience. This may be challenging for teachers, and consequently, providing teachers with appropriate recommendations relating to the Liturgical Year and matching these with resources will be an important feature of the final prototype.

#### 5.2.3.2.3.2 Theme (b) *Lived commitment*

The SALT Approach will ultimately be considered successful if it fosters a lived commitment. This comes about largely through the inspiration of significant others: parents and teachers in particular. From the school's perspective, the teacher's own witness is vital. In the first iteration, the researcher sought to capture what this commitment and authentic witness looked like and how it could facilitate children's desires to reflect it in their lives.

The Catholic Church's guidelines for religious educators presumes that teachers are practising Catholics (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §40, §43, §61, §83). Likewise, Cavalletti presumed the lived commitment of those who use the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Cavalletti, 2002). This stands to reason, since the whole purpose of religious education in Catholic schools is to light the path towards faith believed and lived. However, current research points to the fact that this is not the actual reality in many Catholic schools, pointing to a significant difficulty.

From the first iteration, there were moments when the *lived commitment* of the researcher provided *authentic witness*. Taking advantage of the class attendance to Mass, the researcher could at once reinforce what they had been learning, sharing her faith in the Eucharist, and explaining how one can pray (see Text Box 45). It could be sharing knowledge of Scripture, church teaching and application to personal life, all with easy fluidity (see Text Box 46).

**Partial Transcript, February 13, 2015** (on return from the termly Class Mass)

**Researcher:** Did anyone notice around the middle of the Mass the very special words and what the priest did?

**Child:** Mmm ... he was blessing the holy bread

**Researcher:** He was blessing...

**Children:** The holy bread

**Researcher:** The bread that became ... and the wine that became ...

**Children:** ...Jesus... Jesus Christ

**Researcher:** That became the body and blood of ...

**Children:** Jesus Christ...

**Researcher:** And that is an amazing thing, and it is pretty much a mystery. Fr Brendan can only do that because Jesus gave priests permission to do it. This year, in the religion lessons, I am going to be showing you lots about that. In fact, I have got all those things the priest is wearing and using in miniature form: small samples, small tabernacle, small hosts, so you can think about what is happening in the Mass. When I went to holy communion I was praying... do you know what Holy Communion is?

**Children:** No... yes... no....

**Basem:** What is it?

**Researcher:** What is it? That is something you can think about. What do you think I was saying inside me when I went to holy communion?

**Child:** Eat that bread.

**Researcher:** Mmm, but it is not just any bread.

**Child:** You got blessed...

**Researcher,** I did, but what would I be doing in my heart?

**Child:** Praying to Jesus

**Researcher:** Praying to Jesus, talking to Jesus. Talking to him about you. Asking him to help you to learn lots of things...

Did you notice something else the priest said... he said something about God that I have just been telling you. He said that in God there are ...

**Children:** Three... three persons in one God

**Researcher:** Three persons in one God: God the

**Children in unison:** ... Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit.

**Researcher:** and when we pray 'In the Name of the Father' (etc) ...we are thinking about that...

*Text Box 46: Researcher shares knowledge of the Scripture, church teaching and application to life*

**February 24, 2015:** Partial Transcript, Class Session

**Researcher:** ... after Jesus was baptised by John he was drawn into the desert by the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit being the first person of the Trinity. And he spent a long time there. He spent 40 days there.

**Child:** (Audible gasp)

**Researcher:** Forty days and forty nights... on his own: watching the sun rise, thinking, praying to God the Father, who is also God (it is a bit of a mystery). You can see in these paintings that artists tried to capture what it was like... in that time he also prayed and he fasted (which means he didn't eat anything).

**Child:** Ohhh...

**Researcher:** and he prepared for the next few years. What we heard about today is the beginning of Jesus' time of preaching. This is when he started to talk, He also began to work miracles, and started to teach people how to live and how to be. And prepare them to spread the message to us. At the end of that time, after three years, something that seems very sad happened... Jesus was ... crucified. And after three days he rose again.

**Azzam:** That's what I told you!

**Researcher:** You did, well done! So, we started Lent last Wed...

**Child:** Wednesday

**Researcher:** Yes, and Lent is 40 days. I wonder why it is forty days? I think you know the answer...

**Gajara:** It's because Jesus spent 40 days in the desert.

**Researcher:** Were you all going to say that?

**Children:** (Most) Yes, (some) No.

**Researcher:** So, in Lent we try to do the same things Jesus did. Three things. We should...

**Child:** We should give up something we like.

**Researcher:** Yes, what else: Pra...

**Children** (some) Preparation... (others) Praying

**Researcher:** Yes, praying and the Church tells us another thing that is good to do and that is to do nice things for other people...

Such sharing could facilitate the children's own growing belief and their desire personally get closer to Jesus and respond in their lives. Verbal and written thoughts and comments offered glimpses of this. First iteration journal entries, for example, capture ways children were responding in a personal way. While not all their understandings were accurate, they reflected growth. Some examples are provided in

Text Box 47. The journal entries are typed to reflect children’s own literacy and then ‘translated’.

*Text Box 47: First iteration children’s journal entries, providing glimpses of their learning and application*

First Iteration Journal Entries	Translations
<p><b>Marisa</b></p> <p>Jesus is a part of miracals in our life.</p> <p>He died for us. Punchus Pilate told the gard's to nail him to the cross. Jesus wanted to save us and prdect for live.</p> <p>Jesus mad a supper. They were going to eat the bread and drink the wine.</p> <p>He saved a little girl from dying. He even died for us.</p> <p>Jesus blesses every child.</p> <p>Jesus led his deciples to a garden.</p> <p>Jesus was takin to the prict to ask him are you the Son. He said yes. They spat at him and punched him a lot.</p>	<p>Jesus is a part of miracles in our life.</p> <p>He died for us. Pontius Pilate told the guards to nail him to the cross. Jesus wanted to save us and protect us for life.</p> <p>Jesus made a supper. They were going to eat bread and drink the wine.</p> <p>He saved a little girl from dying. He even died for us.</p> <p>Jesus blesses every child.</p> <p>Jesus led the disciples to a garden.</p> <p>Jesus was taken to the priest to ask him: ‘are you the son?’ He said ‘yes’. They spat at him and punched him a lot.</p>
<p><b>Basem</b></p> <p>I lernt a lot about the last supper because Jesus said take this this is my body take this this is my blood.</p> <p>Come Holy Spirit I will listen to you and everything you say.</p>	<p>I learnt a lot about the Last Supper, because Jesus said ‘take this, this is my body. Take this, this is my blood.’</p> <p>Come, Holy Spirit, I will listen to you and everything you say.</p>
<p><b>Clara</b></p> <p>All of my life I thot that I had to fos Jesus to love me but now I no that Jesus allrediy loves me. <i>(caption for a picture of Jesus in Heaven and Clara on earth)</i></p>	<p>All my life I thought that I had to force Jesus to love me, but now I know that Jesus already loves me.</p>
<p><b>Jamie</b></p> <p>I llrt they Jases wot on watmp.</p>	<p>I learned that Jesus walked on water</p>
<p><b>Trinh</b></p> <p>I larned to be cineder</p>	<p>I learned to be kinder</p>
<p><b>Sean</b></p> <p>Jesus tells us to be good and listen to big people and teachers. <i>(scribed by teacher)</i></p>	<p>Jesus tells us to be good and listen to big people and teachers.</p>
<p><b>Ahmed</b></p> <p>I have learnt Jesus is reill.</p> <p>Jesus will always be with us no matter what.</p>	<p>I have learned that Jesus is real.</p> <p>Jesus will always be with us no matter what.</p> <p>(Note: This is the Muslim student who expressed doubt after attending Class Mass, as evidenced in Text Box 5-17)</p>

<p><b>Mutasim</b></p> <p>I have lurt abouot Marr being like jesus. I lurnt that jesus was I the disete for 40 days and lurnt about jesus was praying outside and court by the powerful men and put jesus on the cross. Jesus and God have power</p>	<p>I have learned about Mary being like Jesus. I learned that Jesus was in the desert for 40 days and I learned that Jesus was praying outside and caught by the powerful men and (they) put Jesus on the cross. Jesus and God have power.</p>
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Briefly summarised, the SALT Approach’s success will be measured in the long term by each child’s personal response and lived commitment. Teachers who witness through sharing their belief, and whose lives reflect that belief, will contribute to its success. The SALT Approach offers a myriad of opportunities for authentic witnessing, as teachers demonstrate their own belief and commitment. The final prototype should offer examples of how this can be done.

#### 5.2.3.2.4 Concluding thoughts of the first iteration

The first iteration examined issues relating to Lens 2: *“Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach”* through three elements and their themes. Within the first element of “equipping and maintaining the learning space” the themes explored were “preparing materials”, “additional resources” and “preparing and maintaining the environment”. The second element was “key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach”. Here, the themes were “a pedagogy that permits pondering”, “a pedagogy that respects the person” and “a pedagogy that provides for freedom of choice”. The third element to be addressed was “teacher expertise” with its two themes being “teacher knowledge and understanding” and “lived commitment”. In the final paragraph of each section, a number of observations were identified, clarifying adjustments needed for the final prototype.

#### 5.2.3.3 The second iterative cycle

The second iterative cycle continued gathering data relating to the elements of Lens 2 and their identified themes. These elements were (a) equipping and maintaining the learning space, (b) key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach and (c) teacher expertise. As for Chapter 4, a progressive collapsing of themes under the broader umbrella of elements occurred throughout the second and third iterations.



Second iteration (School Term 2) considerations for all three elements are summarised in Table 27, below.

Table 26: All three elements and their themes for consideration in the second iteration

<b>Element 1</b>	
Equipping and maintaining the learning space	<b>Refinement</b>
Themes:	<i>Continue</i>
a) Preparation of materials	Preparing materials and the learning space throughout the second iteration (Term 2)
b) Additional resources	
c) Preparation and maintenance of the environment	Sourcing and using internet resources compatible with the SALT Approach, building a list of useful, readily available materials.
<b>Element 2</b>	
Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach	<b>Refinement</b>
Themes:	<i>Continue identifying:</i>
a) Pedagogy that permits pondering	Moments when pondering is evident or can be encouraged.
b) Pedagogy that respects the person	
c) Pedagogy that provides for freedom of choice	Ways of respecting persons. Aspects of a pedagogy that provide for freedom of choice: e.g. revisiting materials and keeping students on track
<b>Element 3</b>	
Teacher expertise	<b>Refinement</b>
Themes:	<i>Continue identifying</i>
a) Teacher knowledge and understanding	Times when teacher's knowledge and understanding facilitates learning
b) Lived commitment	Moments when lived commitment provides powerful witness

#### 5.2.3.3.1 Element 1: Equipping and maintaining the learning space

The interventions, re-listed in Table 28 below, were implemented following the themes identified in the first iteration for equipping the learning space.

Table 27: Summary of second iteration, Element 1, themes and refinements

Element 1	Refinement
Equipping and maintaining the learning space	
Themes:	<i>Continue</i>
a) Preparation of materials	Preparing materials and the learning space throughout the second iteration (Term 2)
b) Additional resources	
c) Preparation and maintenance of the environment	Sourcing and using internet resources compatible with the SALT Approach, building a list of useful, readily available materials.

*Preparing materials and the learning space for the second iteration (Term 2)*

Moving into the second iteration, the preparation of materials and of the learning space continued, with an increased need to find ways to quickly fabricate 2D and 3D items. Maintaining the visibility of materials was a priority, with a growing number of items needing display space. Also, consideration was given to streamlining the room preparation and its maintenance. Table 29, below, provides a summary of materials needed for the second iteration.

Table 28: Materials needed for the second iteration

Weeks of Term 2	Materials needed	Cavalletti Recommended	Materials produced, borrowed or replaced
Week 1	Ceremony of Light Materials	Yes	Put together in Phase 2
Week 2	Parable: Good Shepherd and the Wolf (Gospel of the previous Sunday, 4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter)	Yes	Made in Phase 2, except for the wolf and the hireling, which were prepared prior to the session.
	Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd	Yes	Borrowed from Parish Atrium
	Liturgical Vessels and Furniture	Yes	Put together in Phase 2 Additional labelling materials prepared
Week 3	The Parable of the Vine (Gospel of the previous Sunday, 5 <sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter)	Yes	Booklet prepared in Phase 2 Vine sourced
Week 4	Baptism Gestures, Signs and Symbols	Yes	Some materials prepared in Phase 2

Weeks of Term 2	Materials needed	Cavalletti Recommended	Materials produced, borrowed or replaced
			Other materials prepared prior to the session
	The Ascension (Ascension Thursday)	No	Images sourced, printed and laminated.
Week 5	No New Materials needed in Week 5		
Week 6	Pentecost: The Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Following Pentecost Sunday)	Yes	Prepared prior to the session:
	Introducing the Mass: Preparation of the Chalice The Offertory	Yes	Put together in Phase 2
	The Miracle of Blind Bartimaeus (Gospel of Thursday, Week 8, Ordinary Time)	No	Images sourced, printed and laminated prior to the session
Week 7	Trinity Sunday: Materials relating to the Trinity suitable for Year 2.	No	Images sourced, printed and laminated prior to the session
	Mass Moments: The Epiclesis The Lavabo	Yes	Put together in Phase 2
	The Vine: Hexagons	No	SOLO Taxonomy inspired Hexagons created prior to the session, used experimentally and for the first time
Week 8	Corpus Christi (Feast of Body and Blood of Christ: Readings, Mark 14 and 16)	No	Used the diorama of the Cenacle
	Mass Moments: The Offering The Epiclesis and the Eucharistic Presence	Yes	Put together in Phase 2
Week 9	Mass Moments: Gesture of Peace Breaking of the Bread	Yes	Put together in Phase 2
	First Mass Booklet	Yes	Adapted and printed for each person in the class prior to the session.
Week 10	No New Materials needed in Week 10		

The first week of Term 2 was the appropriate time to introduce O’Shea’s adaptation of Cavalletti’s *Ceremony of Light*, which focused on the Easter Feast, and linked it with the Sacrament of Baptism. Term Two also encompassed several great feasts of the Liturgical Year: The Ascension, Trinity Sunday, Pentecost Sunday and Corpus Christi, the latter facilitating a focus on the Eucharist. Additionally, two Gospel readings were particularly appropriate: 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter (The Vine) and Thursday of Week 8 of Ordinary Time 9 (the miracle of healing blind Bartimaeus).

Throughout Term 2, already prepared materials were used and others were borrowed, such as the figures for the *Good Shepherd and the Eucharist* presentation (see Photoset 2). At other times, quick preparation of Cavalletti-recommended materials was needed, as in the case of the parable of the *Wolf and the Hireling*. A cardboard wolf had to make do, and a ‘hireling’ borrowed from a parish *Atrium*. When it came to the gestures, signs and symbols of baptism, additional response materials were prepared, though not laminated, due to time constraints. An adaptation of Cavalletti’s *First Missal* was prepared, incorporating trace-over words in foundation script, rather than expecting the students to write the words unguided. Materials relating to the *Pentecost Ceremony of the Gifts of the Holy Spirit*, were borrowed from a parish *Atrium*, but the words were too difficult for the children. Consequently, a new set of cards was prepared. Photoset 20, below, illustrates some of these materials.



Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd (borrowed)



Student working with the Parable of the Wolf and the Hireling



Quickly fabricated activity relating to baptism



Student works on her First Missal



Gifts of the Holy Spirit cards, simplified for the students.

*Photoset 19: Items prepared for the second iteration (Term 2)*

During Phase 2, housing and displaying the resources, ensuring visibility, required on-going rearrangement of the space. In following the Liturgical Year, maximum impact was sought by arranging the extensive range of resources relating to the Paschal Mysteries, with which the students were becoming familiar. The Term 2 focus on the Eucharist flowed on from the Paschal Mysteries and this was taken into

account when setting up the room. Text Box 48 reflects thoughts shared on this, and Photoset 21 present aspects of the room.

*Text Box 48: Conversation with cameraman relating to set-up of the room*

**Partial Transcript, May 28, 2015:** Pre-session conversation with the cameraman.

**Researcher:** There is always more to do. I spend ages preparing. If I was a classroom teacher, there is no way I could do it...

**Cameraman:** It is .... like .... a museum.

**Researcher:** Is that good or bad?!

**Cameraman:** It's good! You go from one place to the other and you have little panoramas of the things.

**Researcher:** Yes, and it goes from the Paschal Mystery to the Mass... flowing through Passover, to the Mass, to Pentecost, and Baptism over there, in the prayer corner... I think I am happy with this arrangement ... hope I can leave it like this for a while.





*Photoset 20: The Cenacle, the Empty Tomb, Mass Moments*

Increased use of internet-sourced compatible resources and building a list of useful, readily available resources. For every presentation, sourcing materials and responses compatible with the SALT Approach required time. This was important, since twenty-first century technology offers easily available materials. However, careful



selection was needed. Needless to say, internet resources are constantly growing, with the ones suggested in Table 30 being sourced in 2015.

*Table 29: Some of the websites researched and recommended*

Website	Comment
<a href="http://www.catholicicing.com">www.catholicicing.com</a>	A wide variety of Montessori inspired materials relating to the Liturgical Year.
<a href="http://www.thatresourcesite.com">www.thatresourcesite.com</a>	A wide variety of Montessori inspired materials relating to the Liturgical Year
<a href="http://catholicblogger1.blogspot.com.au/">http://catholicblogger1.blogspot.com.au/</a>	A clearing house of ideas and worthwhile websites
<a href="http://www.catholicplayground.com">www.catholicplayground.com</a>	A variety of craft and other activities
<a href="http://www.enroutebooksandmedia.com">www.enroutebooksandmedia.com</a>	A good selection of children's books

The liturgical feasts such as Ascension Sunday and Trinity Sunday required 2D and 3D support material. Materials were sourced through websites, and images were printed and laminated. Film clips for Ascension Sunday were selected, and showing them required a special setup in the room, since it was not technologically equipped. An overhead projector and computer were borrowed for the occasion, but a wireless outage prevented their use, wasting valuable time. In addition, it was interesting to note that the students did not appear to miss the new technologies while in this room, with the other materials powerfully engaging their attention.

In conclusion, as has been long supported by research and practice, students are more likely to be engaged when visual and tangible materials support new learning. Such resources are particularly important in religious education. Time-poor teachers hoping to use the SALT Approach need ready access to a variety of suitable options. Reliable, seamless availability of well selected electronic materials and new technologies are important in religious education, as in any other subject, although the physical materials seemed to have more impact on these children. Building a bank of compatible ideas and resources for inclusion in the final prototype could facilitate matters.

### 5.2.3.3.2 Element 2: Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach

Identifying key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach continued through the second iteration. The first two parts of this segment will use data from a single transcript, Monday, April 27 (Week 2, Term 2). This one session reflected all three themes (See Table 31). It is one of several that could have been selected.

Table 30: Summary of second iteration, Lens 2, Element 2: themes and refinements

Element 2 Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach	Refinement
Themes: a) Pedagogy that permits pondering b) Pedagogy that respects the person c) Pedagogy that provides for freedom of choice	<i>Continue identifying:</i> Moments when pondering is evident or can be encouraged Ways of respecting persons. Aspects of a pedagogy that provide for freedom of choice: revisiting materials and keeping students on track

#### *Moments when pondering was evident and encouraged.*

The children's ability to ponder had increased exponentially since the first iteration. It was often evident and encouraged, even if topics sprang up unexpectedly. In the example below, Ben is prompted to ask a question after the praying of the *Hail Mary*, then Clara jumped in with her ponderings, based on previous sessions. Other children contributed with varying degrees of clarity of thought. The researcher encouraged, prompted and clarified as needed, being careful not to simply supply answers, as illustrated in Text Box 49.

Text Box 49: Encouraging, prompting, clarifying

**Partial Transcript, Monday April 27, 2015**

**Ben:** *(after we prayed an opening 'Hail Mary')* Why is Mary dressed in blue?

**Researcher:** A very good question. I think it is probably because Mary reminds us of heaven... you know there is a book over there that asks that very question: *Why Does Mary Wear Blue?* You might read that, then tell me what you find out.

**Clara:** I think I might have worked out why Jesus is called the Lamb of God.

**Researcher:** Do you? What would you say?

**Clara:** I would say that do you know how every year, years ago, a shepherd always used to have a really nice, really perfect lamb and they killed the lamb, and since the same thing happened to Jesus that he got killed ...because someone... that's why he is called the Lamb of God

**Researcher:** That's fantastic, you are getting to it... I know that some of you haven't worked that out yet, but Clara has basically got it. That is why John called him the Lamb of God...

**Child:** I think I figured out something... You know how Jesus got killed. It's like it all happens over and over (*unclear what is actually said*) until we get the new life...

**Researcher:** Oh, you mean when we get the new heaven and the new earth...

**Child:** Yes...

**Researcher:** That is a very interesting thought you have got there...

**Sandy:** We can't discover heaven as long as we die...

**Child:** I really want to see heaven

**Michael:** Jesus was called a good man because he was good and so the lamb got killed over and over, again like Jesus but they weren't at the same time they, like the lamb died before it.

**Researcher:** The lambs were sacrificed before Jesus came, and Jesus became like the main lamb that they were all pointing towards. Something along those lines...

**Clara:** I have got another thing about God and Jesus... you know how we are the sheep and Jesus is the Shepherd?

**Researcher:** Yes

**Clara:** Well, when Jesus was young and started to become a man, a lamb... well, his Father God is the Shepherd...and since we are still lambs it goes on and on... and we go on and on helping other people...

*After the presentation of the Wolf and the Hireling:*

**Researcher:** Let's have some thoughts about this. Why do you think the hired man is different from the shepherd...What is the difference between the hired man and the man who really owns the sheep?

**Clara:** The hired man didn't care about the sheep ... he cared about money.

**Researcher:** .... and when danger came...

**Children:** He ran away.

**Mary:** He didn't care about the sheep, he cared about himself...

**Ben:** The shepherd leads the sheep along... and when he died he leads to the light...

**Researcher:** Why do you think the wolf doesn't come when the good shepherd is around?

**Sandy:** Oh... maybe because it is afraid of the Good Shepherd?

**Researcher:** Maybe he is afraid of the Good Shepherd, yes.

**Gajara:** Because, um, he knows that if the hired man is in danger he will go away, and the Good Shepherd will die for the sheep.

**Basem:** Why can't Jesus kill the wolf?

**Researcher:** Maybe Jesus doesn't want to kill anything.

**Child:** Did the sheep die, or did they just get hurt?

**Researcher:** Well, in my story they just got hurt...

**Clara:** The reason why the wolf never came when the Good Shepherd was around, was because he knew that he was God and that was Satan posing as a wolf.

**Researcher:** Satan posing as a wolf... you think a lot, don't you! You are thinking more and more...

## *Ways of respecting persons*

The researcher continued identifying moments of respect. It could be a firm but respectful reminder, a refraining from speaking down to the children or a simple turn of phrase, all of which are illustrated in Text Box 50, below. One significant aspect, becoming more frequent as the year progressed, was speaking honestly when children asked big questions, such as the one provided at the end of the Text Box 50, referring to sin and its consequences after death. Topics like this were not in the diocesan syllabus for Year Two. Responding to this type of question required thought and sensitivity, as well as a confident understanding of the Catholic faith. As the transcript reflects, this question involved ‘thinking on one’s feet’, but the children appreciated the response.

### *Text Box 50: Demonstrating respect for each person in a variety of ways*

#### ***Researcher’s firm but respectful reminders:***

... Sitting quietly. Don't blame others when you can't see. Move to a space where you can see. That's probably Okay...Are you all settled... Azzam?

... Michael, usually I want you to do things that we have talked about... Why don't you do a picture of what you love most in life, and what are the most important things in life...

#### ***Researcher refraining from speaking down to the children:***

...Now, I didn't introduce you to this story of the Good Shepherd at the beginning of the year. I could have done, but I chose not to do, because when I came to see you back in Kindergarten that was one story you seemed to know quite a lot about... Jesus, when he came, told many stories of many things and there were quite a few about shepherds and sheep or lambs, because he wanted people to think about what those things meant, and that is the journey that you are on. Now I have three stories. There is the story of the Good Shepherd, the story of the lost sheep... do you know that one?

*(Children respond: Yes)*

That's what I thought. And the parable of the Wolf and the Hireling

... I want to explain these things so you make choices wisely. You know I am trying to teach you how to make choices...How to move around quietly and work in your places quietly... Now I think you are ready for this... You can choose to go with a partner or on your own and choose one of those stories to do together...

#### ***Turns of Phrase:***

... Does that make sense to you?

... I understand what you are saying but I think you are mixing some stories up a little bit. I am going to tell you lots of stories so you can sort it out in your head.

#### ***Allowing tangential comments and questions, using them to deepen knowledge and join the dots:***

**Sandy:** Where did you get this one from? (referring to a plaque of Good Shepherd, from St Callixtus Catacombs)

**Researcher:** I got this one in Rome, from a place where they used to bury the first Christians. They have a statue just like that...

**Children:** Ohhh...

**Researcher:** And that is why our Good Shepherd is just like that one. It is meant to represent Jesus.

*Speaking honestly but respectfully when a child is seemingly off track:*

**Trinh:** Can Jesus hear the animals talking?

**Researcher:** The animals talking?

**Trinh:** Yes

**Researcher:** The animals don't talk like we do...

**Trinh:** But can Jesus hear?

**Researcher:** Yes, Jesus can, but they are not saying much that means anything... Because he made us special.

**Child:** Can he hear us?

**Researcher:** He hears us and he hears what we say, and he knows all the animals too. But they are not saying things to him in the way we can.

*Speaking honestly, responding to big questions:*

**Azzam:** When people die, and they are bad, what happens?

**Researcher:** Well if they, that's... do you really want me to answer that question?

**Children:** Tell us, we want to know about hell...

**Researcher:** Well I will explain it in my words...if people do very, very bad things, (I didn't plan to tell you this, but you are asking so I will explain it in my way... let's see if you can handle this...so this is the way I explain it.)

If people do very, very bad things, there are a few things that are important. One thing is that it has to really be something very bad... if they are going to separate themselves from God forever and ever. Secondly, they have to know that it is very bad. And thirdly, they have to really, really want to do that bad thing. Now, we can do bad things that are not quite as serious as that, that won't separate us from God forever. Okay? These are called venial sins... not quite so serious. They don't take us away from God forever. But if a person makes a big, big offence against God and against other people, like they kill somebody, or they steal a lot of money, they do very serious things or they really hurt other people in some serious way, if it's against God's commands, absolutely and clearly against God's commands, those people have said they don't want to be close to God. 'I don't want to be close to God, I prefer my own company.' So they choose to put themselves apart from God forever and ever.

**Child:** and ever...

**Researcher:** And there's a great deal of suffering when you do that. Okay: but while they are here on earth they can always come back to God, say sorry...and God forgives them...

**Child:** I think I've got it...

**Researcher:** Mmm... It makes sense... So, does that make sense to you?

*(Until now total silence and attention in the room, but at this point there is a great deal of relevant chatter.)*

*Aspects of a pedagogy that provide for freedom of choice.*

An emerging factor in the second iteration was that children chose to *often re-visit activities*. Teacher B had expressed a concern regarding the value of this. However,

in terms of deep reflection, returning to the same choice could often indicate deep pondering. Children would return to certain materials frequently, often in small groups or pairs. The *Mass Moments* (preparation of the Chalice, the lavabo, the epiclesis and consecration, the offering and the gesture of peace), the *Parables of the Good Shepherd* and the *Paschal Mysteries* (dioramas of the Cenacle and the Empty Tomb) were examples, even though the latter had been introduced in the first iteration. The death and resurrection of Christ was of enduring interest throughout the year. Some children revisited these materials many times. They stood out as being deeply absorbed. The following photographs lifted from film footage (Photoset 22) reflect some children in those moments, their body language indicating a quiet focus.



This student returned the Good Shepherd Parables all through the year.



This student returned frequently to the Mass Moments



The Cenacle was revisited countless times



This student often chose the City of Jerusalem

*Photoset 21: Children absorbed in their work*

*Identifying pedagogically acceptable ways for keeping students on track was not always easy. During choice time, it was virtually impossible to know what was happening in all corners, and inevitably, some children were less deeply engaged.*



Assuming an authoritarian approach was tempting and sometimes taken, but pedagogically this was counter-productive. In addition, a pedagogy facilitating the gradual broadening of choices was in keeping with the SALT Approach. Pedagogically, trust was required. Trust, for example, that if the *presentation section* had sufficiently engaged their interest, children would respond relevantly in *choice time* at their own level, and to their own capacity. Trust that, even though some children were far less deeply engaged than others, they were on task to some degree. In practical terms, the accompanying teachers facilitated matters, taking the initiative to work closely with more wayward students. Additional to a trustful ‘*letting go*’, pedagogical choices included recognising one’s role as facilitator, and refining the skill of effectively circulating the room. Table 32, below, tracks the *choice time* on April 30. The film footage managed to capture most, though not all, of the students at work. Comments by the researcher have been included in italics. Only through watching the film could the researcher identify the range of activities students were engaged in. They were clearly motivated and self-engaged, even though this was relatively early (Week 2) in the second iteration.

Table 31: Film transcript, second iteration, April 30, 2015, tracking student choices

Time	Child observed	Description of activity
01:00	Sean	Under table
01:11	Namir, Celia Gajara, Chelsea, Sandy, Clara, Mary, Giorgio, Barry, Jamie	Painting images related to the theme
01:53	Mutasim and Jamie, joined by Clara	Last Supper Diorama
02:43	Kafil	Liturgical Furniture: The Altar
	Namir	Reading a bible
	Michael	‘I want to do this’ (a drawing, not apparently related to RE)
04:07	Zoe	Wandering from item to item, looking at different things, fairly briefly
	Sandy	Working in an involved way with the Cenacle
04:51	Celia, Gajara, Barry, Basem, Mary	Still engrossed painting
05:32	Sean	Now involved, at the Altar materials and manipulating the figure of the priest

Time	Child observed	Description of activity
05:53	Jamie and Zoe (the latter now focused)	Both working at the Empty Tomb
06:47	Sandy, Barry and Mutasim	Working at the Cenacle, re-enacting the events fairly accurately. Mutasim is placing the apostles around Jesus
07:51	Sean and Kafil	Are at the work with the Good Shepherd. Sean says 'you have to take one (sheep) away'. Kafil is saying 'I am the Good Shepherd'
08:48	Jamie, Clara, Zoe	Are re-enacting the story of the Empty Tomb. (Researcher notes that there is a lot of noise in the room, but they are all absolutely engaged.)
09:47	Sandy and Barry then Mutasim returns	Are still on the floor with the Cenacle. Mutasim comes back Now they have arranged the apostles around the table and the items are on the table. Words that can be heard: 'Eat my body', 'Drink my blood. They have lit a big (battery) candle, as well as tea lights on the table of the supper. Mutasim passes the chalice around to each apostle.
10:35	Researcher	'Quieter voices please.' (Researcher makes a note to remind them of the noise level at the start of the next session)
11:00	Kafil and Gajara	Gajara has remained on painting. Kafil is now painting
	Mutasim and Barry.	Are still working on the Last Supper. They have added a background, as they have seen the researcher do. (Researcher notes: some children change activities often, like Kafil and Sandy. Other stay at same activity for considerable time.)
12:33	Trinh	Showing the researcher blackboard work she has been doing. It is the chalice, pall, crucifix. altar, Researcher helps her label the items. She is working on the names, which she is not very clear about yet.
12:33	Fleur	Waiting to show her work to the researcher. (Researcher notes: noise level is high, but all children engrossed in what they are doing, need to be patient with this. Looking at footage with sound it sounds wild, but remove sound and the action reveals great involvement)
13:50	Sandy	Working with the altar items
13:52	Mutasim and Barry Sandy	Still on Last Supper. Sandy joins them
15:12	Jamie and Zoe	At sheepfold and the Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd.

Time	Child observed	Description of activity
16:56	Namir	Now working alone in the prayer corner. He is looking intently at the pictures relating to baptism.
18:02	Chelsea	Is wandering around. She goes to the altar area and investigates all the items, and becomes totally absorbed, despite things going on around her.
20:15	Charmaine	Is colouring in a picture of the Last Supper
	Marisa	Joins Mutasim at the Cenacle diorama
20:30	Jamie and Zoe	Join Chelsea at the altar. Sometime later she starts drawing the items.
20:50	Researcher and Chelsea with cameraman	<b>Researcher:</b> Chelsea is going to tell you about the picture she has done. <b>Chelsea:</b> Miss Irwin is teaching us about the altar. <i>(She has drawn a lot of the items and can't remember the actual names of them. They clearly are the cruets, crucifix, altar, altar cloths, the Chalice)</i>
22:09	Michael and Sean	Are painting now.
	Basem	Basem asks if he can come back at lunch time.

In summary, children's thoughts, comments and questions often revealed their interest and understanding, enabling the researcher to take the children from where each one was, to another level of discovery and appreciation. The discerning teacher will appropriately encourage, prompt and guide discussions while still respecting the child. However, while most teachers value the need for respect, it can be difficult, given the pressures that teachers experience. Additionally, authoritarian classroom management practices can be counter-productive. Respecting children's choices, including their inclination to re-visit activities, and recognising that not all children will engage at the deepest of levels requires teachers to 'let go' of full control. Finding practical ways for monitoring whether students are essentially on task and then guiding them towards good choices requires consideration.

#### 5.2.3.3.3 Element 3: Teacher expertise

Throughout the second iteration, full advantage of the Liturgical Year was taken, introducing the children to the Liturgical Feasts, such as Easter itself, or the Feast of the Ascension. Table 33 outlines the element and themes addressed in the second iteration.

Table 32: Summary of second iteration, Element 3: themes and refinements

Element 3: Teacher expertise	Refinement
Themes: a) Teacher knowledge and understanding b) Lived commitment	<i>Continue Identifying:</i> Times when teacher knowledge and understanding facilitates learning Moments when lived commitment provides powerful witness

The level of the researcher’s knowledge and understanding that enabled her to explain issues with ease, weaving in new information that students would not otherwise know. In Text Box 51, the researcher explains details about the Paschal Candle, which in turn provided a springboard for children to comment and question with confidence, with the researcher able to respond without missing a beat.

Text Box 51: Addressing children’s questions requires confident grasp of Catholic belief

**Sample 1: 23<sup>rd</sup> April: Partial Transcript of Post-Easter Class Session**

**Researcher:** ... If you go to a church, you will see a Paschal candle and it is something that reminds us of Jesus. ... Here I have my Paschal Candle. What do we have on the candle? The sign of the *alpha and omega*. They are the signs of the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. To show us that Jesus is the Beginning and End of everything. We have a cross, but there is no Jesus, because Jesus has...

**Child:** ... risen

**Researcher:** That's right. Jesus has risen. And we also have the year. 2015

**Basem:** Why?

**Researcher:** Because it is the year now and it is helping us think that Jesus is the Light of the World is still with us today.

**Clara:** What I am really confused with is how did Jesus rise from the dead... if he had to lift his body, did he have angel wings?

**Researcher:** That is something very deep ...

**Sean:** He had power

**Researcher:** He did have power. He rose from his own will, as true God and true man. He could do that. No other human being could do that.

**Kafil:** Only God and Jesus.

**Researcher:** God is Jesus, and Jesus is God...

In any one session, a number of issues could arise, and the extent to which things could go depended on the researcher’s grasp of Catholic belief. A rich narrative tapestry occurred, for example, in the session on Ascension Thursday. The researcher was focused on the feast, but was, at the same time, prepared to address issues on children’s minds, coming back on track before the end of the discussion session. This

approach was very different to following the dictates of a unit of work and the level of engagement was facilitated by level of expertise. Text Box 52 provides a partial transcript of Ascension Thursday, illustrating these points.

*Text Box 52: The rich dialogue that took place on Ascension Thursday*

**Sample 2: 14<sup>th</sup> May: Partial Transcript of Thursday Class Session** *(prior to Ascension Sunday)*

**Researcher:** Today is the day when in many places of the world they are celebrating when Jesus went to heaven. It is called Ascension Thursday. It means that Jesus went up to Heaven. In Australia, we celebrate the event on a Sunday: the Sunday that is coming now. So today is a very appropriate day for me to read you a couple of things from the Bible.

The first reading is about a time when Jesus appeared apostles... not the time he went to heaven. *(reads Matthew 28: 16-20, partially transcribed here)* ... The 11 disciples when to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them...and when they saw him they worshipped him....

*(researcher interrupts the reading here with: How would they worship him? They would have bowed down...)* ...make disciples of all nations baptising them, in the name of the Father...

**Children:** and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit *(several children blessing themselves.)*

**Researcher:** You have made the sign to match it ... That's what he told them ... three persons in...

**Children:** One God.

**Researcher:** You know, all but one of the apostles gave up their lives and died for Jesus, but they had enough time to pass on these messages...that's how come I am sitting here giving you these messages... what am I trying to do?

**Clara:** You are teaching us...

**Child:** What Jesus taught...

**Researcher:** Like...

*(Here Clara asks a question: The researcher addresses it rather than not, because Clara will not be attentive to the main thread if this is what she is thinking of. Besides, it's important.)*

**Clara:** Why did Jesus die? My Nan said he died for the bad things we had done, but he didn't do bad things.

**Researcher:** That's right... he took all our offences and as if he was guilty...

**Basem:** Why did they put those spikey things on him?

**Researcher:** The crown of thorns? Because they were mocking him. The soldiers wanted to make fun of him, so they made a pretend crown using thorns and they put it on to his head and then they bowed down and said things like who is worshipping you now and hitting him...

**Basem:** Why were they doing that?

**Researcher:** They were soldiers and didn't know who Jesus was really... and they made fun of him, as they would probably make fun of a lot of people.

**Child:** Why did they do that?

**Researcher:** Well that's the way they were. They were employed, but many of them were what we call 'mercenaries' They came from many places and they worked as soldiers for whoever would pay them.

*(Children are thoughtful. My voice is quiet and gentle.)*

**Researcher:** Jesus did suffer

**Child:** What's 'mocking'?

**Researcher:** It's to make fun of someone

**Child:** Why did one of the disciple the betrayer, hang himself?

**Researcher:** Mmm... you have heard of a lot of things... Judas. How many of you have heard about Judas?

(lot of hands)

**Researcher:** Okay... Judas the betrayer, Yes, it is very sad. We actually don't know what his last thoughts were, but he felt... well, sorry for himself, and that seems to be why he did it. ....

*(Researcher gets back on the track, and reads the Ascension: Acts, Chapter 1, 8-11)*

**Researcher:** Do you know what? He comes back for us all at a certain moment in our life. Which is a bit hard to handle, if we don't have Jesus with us, and that is the moment when we die. He comes back to take us to be with him ...

*(At this point, Michael interjects with a question, and again the researcher responds, rather than dismiss the opportunity)*

**Michael:** Why did he suffer for us?

**Researcher:** Because people had offended God in many ways by behaving in ways they shouldn't and the only way to make up was by a perfect offering ... and the only one who could do a perfect offering was God who became a man himself. So, he took it all on as though he was guilty of it all... That's why, when he as in the garden, it was like He was carrying the weight of all the sins of all mankind...

The researcher's own commitment could provide witness in subtle ways. It could be incidental information indicating regular attendance to Mass, as illustrated in the introductory comment in Text Box 53 or inferred through a prayerful discussion, as illustrated in Text Box 54.

*Text Box 53: Partial transcripts demonstrating the importance of teacher's knowledge and commitment*

Sample 3: 28<sup>th</sup> May: Partial Transcript of Class Session

**Researcher:** I want to share with you what I heard at church today. Listen to this beautiful story which is about one time when Jesus left Jericho... (Jericho is a place we can look up on the map) with his disciples ...

*(the attention of the children is absolute as the gospel about Bartimaeus the blind beggar is read and discussed...the quiet focused atmosphere seems to allow children to think clearly)*

**Researcher:** I wonder what happened in the story?

**Ben:** He was blind and Jesus saw him and healed him

**Researcher:** Now you try and do that for a blind person. Do you think you could do that?

**Child:** Yeah (not thinking clearly at this point)

**Researcher:** Would you? If you saw a blind man in the street and you said "see" would it happen...

**Children:** No!

**Michael:** Because he is the Son of God and ...um... he can heal anyone and he can heal the people who are blind

**Gajara:** *(Hindu student)* Because Jesus and God are One and Jesus is God's son and God has given him the power

**Researcher:** ... it is the mystery of the Trinity you are talking about...

**Celia:** God did a miracle when Jesus was born because Jesus was God's Son and then Jesus does miracles as well and he made the blind man all better, because He could do a miracle like God.

**Fleur:** Because he is caring...

*Later, in the presentation of the preparation of the chalice, demonstrating a great sequence of thinking and an example of their ability to work things out, if encouraged:*

**Researcher:** I wonder what this reminds us of? (*referring to the water and the wine.*)

**Gajara:** It reminds us of how Jesus died for us.

**Researcher:** Yes, it makes me think about that too. Think about it: the strong wine and the drop of water...

**Celia:** It represents the blood of Jesus and that he died

**Researcher:** Yes, and what about the drop of water? A lot of people don't know about this very much. (*lots of hands go up*)

**Chelsea:** The water is that it might be Jesus blood

**Researcher:** The wine is like Jesus blood...

**Gajara:** The wine is Jesus blood and the water is like Jesus body?

**Researcher:** (*the wording, clear but encouraging*) You haven't found it yet... what does weak water remind us of? If the wine reminds us of Jesus blood, what could the water remind us of? (*sharp intake of breath, Sean, who is one of the most apparently distracted children in the class, is clearly thinking, and this was caught on camera*)

**Abrar:** About the water that we use to bless us...

**Sean:** Us

**Researcher:** (*Researcher hears the answer and does not know who it is.*) Who said that? (*other children indicate Sean*) Was that you Sean? Come up and tell everyone what you said...

**Clara:** I was going to say that.

(*Sean repeats his statement*)

**Researcher:** Yes, the water reminds us of us! So, when we go into him, ... Can I take the water out of the chalice without wine or take the wine out without water?

**Children:** No...

**Researcher:** It is all mixed together, now it is like this. We, when we are united to Jesus cannot be separated from him. We are one thing with Jesus, and when we are with him we become strong with him. These are things you can think about when you come to do this. Water, wine, ...

*Text Box 54 Discussing how we can be the Light of Christ in the world today*

**April 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015:** Transcript of the 'Ceremony of Light' Reflection

**Researcher:** ... sit quietly with the candle in front of you... God has a plan for each one of you... how can you be the light of Christ for the people around you. Picture the playground: how can you be the light of Christ in the playground?

**Ahmed:** If someone trips over in playground them help them and take to office.

**Researcher:** Imagine self in the classroom: how can you be the light of Christ?

**Giorgio:** If the maths equipment was on the floor you would help someone to pick it up.

**Barry:** you could listen to the teacher quietly.

**Abrar:** If someone wants to speak to you, you don't ignore them

In brief, as the year progressed, the researcher's own knowledge, understanding and commitment enabled her to guide the children as they began to explore matters personally. Mastery empowers teachers to allow exploration to take place in any one session, weaving questions and contributions in ways that lead to thinking and learning. This is not something that all teachers are equipped to do, and the final prototype needs to consider ways of assisting teachers, such as offering examples of

pathways through sessions. Booklets prepared for the first prototype can be adjusted to include both the basic presentation and include or indicate further reading.

#### 5.2.3.3.4 Reflections to inform the third iterative cycle

The second iteration gathered data addressing the practical implementations for the SALT Approach. It also cast light on ways children can be encouraged to grow in knowledge and understanding, opening a window to lived commitment. The third iteration introduced concepts requiring new materials, and explored pedagogical and expertise matters so as to more fully inform the design of the final prototype.

#### 5.2.3.4 The third iterative cycle

During the third iteration (Terms 3 and 4 of the School Year) the researcher continued gathering data relating to all three elements and their themes. In addition, important new angles emerged. Under the element of “*Equipping and maintaining the learning space*” new materials were introduced. They included SOLO Taxonomy materials, adapted for young children, the resourcing of the developing human virtues component, the development of a *Wikispace*, and considerations relating to mass production of materials. Under the element of “*Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach*” new factors were identified, including the impact of using a rich vocabulary, the importance of introducing human virtues, and the balancing freedom with accountability. Under the third element of *Teacher expertise*, new insights were gained as participating teachers reflected on their own learning. These aspects are summarised in Table 34, below.

Table 33: Lens 2, all three elements and their themes for consideration

<b>Element 1</b> Equipping and maintaining the learning space	<b>Refinements continuing from the previous iterations and new refinements</b>
Themes: a) Preparation of materials b) Additional resources c) Preparation and maintenance of the environment	<i>Continue</i> Preparing materials and the learning space throughout the third iteration (Terms 3-4) Making considerable use of the internet to source compatible resources  <i>Furthermore:</i> Development of Solo Taxonomy materials



	Development of the <i>Wikispace</i> Internet Site Resourcing for <i>Human Virtues</i> Mass-production considerations
<b>Element 2</b> Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach	<b>Refinements continuing from the previous iterations and new refinements</b>
Themes: a) Pedagogy that permits pondering b) Pedagogy that respects the person c) Pedagogy that provides for freedom of choice	<i>Continue identification of</i> Moments when pondering is evident or can be encouraged Ways of respecting persons Aspects of a pedagogy providing for freedom of choice <i>Furthermore, identify pedagogical implications of:</i> Using a rich vocabulary in pondering Reflecting respect through human virtues Balancing freedom with accountability <i>And Lastly:</i> Recognising the positive effects emerging as a result of implementing these pedagogical themes
<b>Element 3</b> Teacher expertise	<b>Refinement</b>
Themes: a) Teacher knowledge and understanding b) Lived commitment	<i>Continue identifying</i> situations where teacher's knowledge, understanding and lived commitment important <i>Furthermore:</i> Perspectives offered by participating teachers as they reflected on their learning, together with observations of the school executive and members of the Parramatta Catholic Education Office.

#### 5.2.3.4.1 Element 1: Equipping and maintaining the learning space

The third iteration followed the themes relating the element of 'equipping and maintaining the learning space', as identified and implemented in the first two iterations, and explored new aspects (See Table 35).

Table 34: Summary of third iteration, Element 1, themes and refinements

<b>Element 1</b> Equipping and maintaining the learning space	<b>Refinements continuing from the previous iterations and new refinements</b>
Themes: a) Preparation of materials	<i>Continue</i>

b) Additional resources	Preparing materials and the learning space throughout the third iteration (Terms 3-4)
c) Preparation and maintenance of the environment	Making considerable use of the internet to source compatible resources
	<i>Furthermore:</i>
	Development of Solo Taxonomy materials
	Development the <i>Wikispace</i> Internet Site
	Resourcing for <i>Human Virtues</i>
	Mass-production considerations

*Preparing materials and the learning space for the third iteration (Terms 3 and 4)*

Preparation of materials and the learning space took a new turn in the third iteration for a number of reasons. While guidelines recommended by both Cavalletti and O’Shea were followed, close links with the Sunday Readings of Liturgical Year B (17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> weeks of Ordinary time), using Chapter 6 of St John’s Gospel, provided rich and deep opportunities for pondering the mystery of Christ and the Eucharist. Other Gospel readings offered opportunities for exploring ways in which Jesus revealed his divinity: miracles of healing, of raising from the dead, and miracles over nature. These were explored under a new title, *Stories from Sundays*. Another factor was the School’s expectation that the contents of the *Sharing Our Story* Unit on Reconciliation would be addressed. Finally, in Term 4, the great feasts of All Souls, All Saints and Christ the King offered opportunities for growing in knowledge and understanding Catholic belief, inspiring personal response. All these required 2D and, if possible, 3D materials, in keeping with the SALT Approach. Additionally, new insights relating to the Solo Taxonomy and Virtues materials required preparation.

Tables 36 and 37 below, summarise the materials that were needed for the third iteration, which encompassed Terms 3 and 4. They included the materials recommended by Cavalletti and those additionally required, the latter being far more extensive in this third iteration.

Table 35: Term 3 materials needed

Weeks of Term 3	Materials needed	Cavalletti Recommended	Materials produced, sourced borrowed or replaced
Week 1	Personal Choice Chart (structured using Solo Symbols)	No	Prepared prior to week
	The Miracle of Jairus' Daughter	No	Images sourced, printed and laminated.
	Prayer maxims	Yes (11 maxims)	Prayer Maxims produced by retired carpenter (30 tablets, additional maxims selected)
	Virtue: Thoughtfulness and kindness	No	Prepared prior to week Virtue Charts Virtue Hexagons. Virtue songs Wikispace page on Virtues Virtue activities (Jar)
Week 2	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	Stories from Sundays: Good Shepherd readings: Good Shepherd and Eucharistic Presence	Yes	Prepared prior to week: Psalm 23 Materials Borrowed: Good Shepherd and the Eucharistic Presence Additional Materials: Music Wikispace Page:
	Virtue: Honesty Hexagons, songs, activities	No	Materials Prepared, sourced, uploaded: Hexagons Songs, Activities
	Revise Baptism	Yes	Prepared in 2 <sup>nd</sup> Iteration
Week 3	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	Sunday 26 <sup>th</sup> July: Miracle of loaves and fish	No	Prepared prior to week
	Parable of the sower (Virtues linked)	Yes	Parable prepared in Phase 2 Prepared prior to week: Virtues Link
	Parable of the Pearl	Yes	Prepared in Phase 2
Week 4	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	Sunday Gospel: August 2 I Am the Bread of Life:	No	Prepared prior to week Wikispace entry
	Mary Mackillop	No	Prepared prior to week
	Transfiguration	No	Images sourced, printed and laminated.
Week 5	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	Sunday Gospel August 9: I am the Bread of Life	No	Prepared prior to week

Weeks of Term 3	Materials needed	Cavalletti Recommended	Materials produced, sourced borrowed or replaced
	Zacchaeus linked with Virtues	No	Prepared prior to week
	Parable of the Lost Coin	Yes	Prepared in Phase 2
Week 6	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	Sunday Gospel August 16: The Bread of Life: Whoever eats this Bread of Life will have eternal life.	No	Prepared prior to week
	Introduce 7 Sacraments: God's Grace for us every step of the way on our journey through life	No	Prepared prior to week
	Reconciliation 1	No	Prepared prior to week
Week 7	Gospel Sunday August 23: The Bread of Life: Will you also go away?	No	Prepared prior to week
	Reconciliation 2	No	Prepared prior to week
Week 8	Virtue: Obedience	No	Prepared prior to week
	Mother Teresa of Kolkata	No	Prepared prior to week
	Reconciliation 3	No	Prepared prior to week
Week 9	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	Gospel Sunday 6 September 6: Healing the dumb and deaf man.	No	Prepared prior to week
	Honesty (link the healing deaf and dumb man)		
Week 10	Gospel Sunday 13 September: Follow me	No	Prepared prior to week
	Guardian Angels: Feast is October 2 Matthew 18: 1-5, 10 (from the Feast of the Guardian Angels)	No	Prepared prior to week

Table 36: Term 4 materials required

Weeks of Term 4	Materials needed	Cavalletti Recommended	Materials produced, borrowed or replaced
Week 1	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	Rosary	No	Prepared prior to week
Week 2	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	Fettuccia	Yes	Borrowed from parish atrium
	Three Moments Chart		Prepared in Phase 2
	Blue Unity Chart	Yes	Prepared in Phase 2
	Jesus the Way Truth and Life: John 15: 1-7	No	Prepared prior to week

Week 3	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	Prophecies: of Light of place	Yes	Prepared prior to week
Week 4	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	Prophecies: of Woman of Emmanuel	Yes	Prepared prior to week
	Carols	No	Prepared prior to week
	Birth of Jesus Diorama	Yes	Prepared in Phase 2
	All Saints Day	No	Prepared prior to week
Week 5	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	All Souls Day	No	Prepared prior to week
	Prophecy of Place	Yes	Prepared prior to week
Week 6	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to the session:
	The Shepherds Diorama	Yes	Prepared in Phase 2
	Prophecy of the Sceptre	Yes	Prepared prior to week
Week 7	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	Prophecy of Names	Yes	Put together in Phase 2
	Christ the King	No	Prepared prior to week
	Art Synthesis of Infancy Narratives	Yes	Prepared in Second Iteration
Week 8	Personal Choice Chart	No	Prepared prior to week
	Diorama of the Magi	Yes	Prepared in Phase 2
Week 9	No New Materials needed in Week 9		
Week 10	No New Materials needed in Week 10		

*Continued preparation of materials and the learning space throughout the third iteration*

The outstanding factor in the third iteration was the dramatic increase of topics for which there were no specific Cavalletti or O'Shea recommended materials. These included 2D or 3D resources, as well as materials to guide and support *choice times* (see Table 38).

Table 37: Comparison of materials recommended by Cavalletti and O’Shea and those requiring new thought and preparation

Iterations/ Terms	Number of Cavalletti/ O’Shea recommended materials	Number of material items requiring new thought and preparation
First Iteration: Term 1	12	5
Second Iteration: Term 2	12	8
Third Iteration: Term 3	7	19
Third Iteration: Term 4	11	7

Most of the Cavalletti or O’Shea materials had either been prepared in the pre-iterative Phase 2, or borrowed from a parish *Atrium*. An exception was the set of Maxims. Cavalletti had a recommended set of 12 maxims for 6-9-year-olds. However, in order to facilitate whole class use, the researcher decided to trial a larger number, scouring the Gospels, and identifying 30 possible maxims. The wooden tablets were made by a retired carpenter, who housed them in a church-shaped box and the maxims were attached to the tablets by the researcher. The advantage of a larger number of maxims was that all children could reflect on a unique maxim over a number of days. In truth, some of these were beyond the children, and it may have been better to remain with Cavalletti’s list, having only duplicates. Nevertheless, they were very popular, and Maxims were frequently found on student’s tables or in personal boxes. They discussed them with each other and many, of their own initiative, copied several into their personal journals (see Photoset 22).



Students discuss their Maxims



This student is building up a page of Maxims in his journal

*Photoset 22: Students reflecting on Maxims*

The Advent Prophecies were introduced to the students in Term 4, and materials similar to those of Cavalletti were prepared. However, additional teaching notes and materials were needed, to support learning. This was the students' first formal introduction to the Prophets, Most children displayed very little understanding of the

concept of time, making it difficult for them to grasp the meaning of the Advent prophecies. Although they were powerfully drawn to them, their grasp of the role and place of prophets was very limited, as the journal notes (see Text Box 55).

*Text Box 55: Researcher reflecting on the children's lack of understanding of prophets and prophecies*

**Audio Journal, November 10<sup>th</sup>, 2015**

When they say 'I think prophesy is about ...' and it is a wrong definition, one has to be patient.

At a Year 2 or younger level, I do wonder what they can really understand about prophecy. In my conversations today, I can see that what *I think* they understand and what they *actually* understand is very different. How often we, as teachers, presume understanding but one can't presume that. How does one respond to that? e.g. You will have to keep thinking about that...let's see what else you can come up with ...

There were no Cavalletti-inspired materials to support many topics introduced over Terms 3 and 4. These included biblical events, such as the raising of Jairus' daughter, the healing of the deaf and dumb man, the miracle of the loaves and the fish and the story of Zacchaeus. Consequently, images were sourced, printed and laminated. The extended reference to Chapter 6 of St John, as presented over five Sundays of Term 3 (17<sup>th</sup>-21<sup>st</sup> weeks of Ordinary time), facilitated a deep reflection about who Jesus is. Weekly *Personal Choice Charts* were prepared. In Term 3, these were a numbered list of choices, while in Term 4 the responses were structured in terms of SOLO Taxonomy. Figures 14-15 provide samples of these.



Personal Choice Chart, Week 3, Term 3

\_\_\_ The Baptism Matching Activity

\_\_\_ One of the Miracle of the Loaves and Fishes activities. (Craft, colour-in or draw a picture)

\_\_\_ I did some of the work from other contracts

\_\_\_ I read one of the books on my table

Did you visit the website this past week?  
Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

Words to write:

Grace Spiritual  
Baptism Jesus Soul  
Conscience Heart

Personal Choice Chart, Week 8, Term 3

\_\_\_ Draw a picture about Zacchaeus in Journal

\_\_\_ Draw and label a picture about Jesus and all in heaven rejoicing because a person repents







\_\_\_ Complete the work below

\_\_\_ Read one of the books in the room.

Jesus said: There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.

Figure 14: Samples of Choice Charts, Term 3

Jesus heals the deaf and dumb man.  
Jesus also said: Let him who has ears listen to my words

Tick each one when you have done it. Show it to a teacher.			Choose at least two sheets about what Jesus said and how you can live his words.	 Jesus said: "Love one another" Make a poster or draw a picture to show how you can make Jesus' words come true in these places: At home In the playground In the classroom
	Put together your jigsaw puzzle of the Jesus healing the deaf and dumb man. Glue it in your book. (Collect an envelope with the puzzle)		Complete the letter to Jesus telling him how you will live his words. Then colour in the picture.	
	Draw a picture of Jesus healing the deaf and dumb man. Write two sentences about the picture. If you use the blackboard, make sure we photograph it!		With a teacher: Put together a Hexagon about words Jesus said telling us how to live our lives. Tell her ways that you can put each one into practise. She will write your thoughts on blank hexagons. Make sure we take a photograph of your Hexagon and record you talking about it!	






Week Four SOLO Personal Choice Chart			
1. Thinking about the Birth of Jesus 2. The Feast All Saints			
Tick each one when you have done it. Show it to a teacher.			
	Read one of the stories of Christmas: They have been placed on the white rack.		Draw a set of pictures telling the story as it happened on blackboards or in your journal
			With a teacher: Birth of Jesus Diorama. Use the Student booklet.
			Pick three pictures or colouring pages that show that the prophecies came true: Light The Virgin The Place Glue the pictures under the words
			You and the Sain If you are namec saint, find out so about him or her If you are not na after a saint, fin you like. Read ab her. When people are or confirmed the the name of a sa like especially an that name as one own. Decorate a doubl page that you cai information to as goes by.

Figure 15: Samples of SOLO Personal Choice Charts

During Term 3 the room set-up required less input, but in Term 4 there were several changes, needed to accommodate November, the month dedicated to the Souls in Purgatory. A panel of purple was prepared to receive children’s prayers for the deceased. This was followed by the final Advent arrangement of the room, with a panel dedicated to the Advent Prophecies, and the room prominently displaying the Infancy narratives.

*Making considerable use of the internet to source compatible resources*

There were frequent and extensive internet searches throughout the third iteration, seeking resources to support *presentations* and *choice times*. A number were used, but many more resources were found and saved. These would be included in the final prototype, offering examples compatible with the SALT Approach. To facilitate access, the researcher set up a Pinterest site,

<https://au.pinterest.com/annemarieirwin/catechesis/>.

*Development of SOLO Taxonomy materials:*

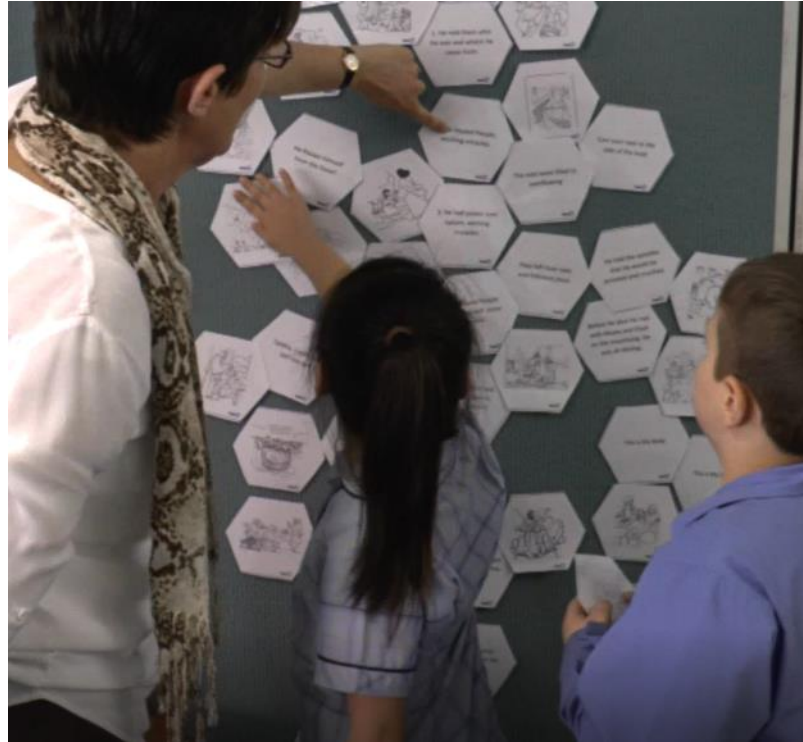
As outlined in Chapter 4 (4.2.3.3.2.1), the third iteration incorporated SOLO taxonomy (Structure of the Observed Learning Outcomes) into the SALT Approach, for reasons described in that chapter. SOLO taxonomy was developed by John Biggs (Biggs & Collis 1982) for analysing levels of complexity that take place in learning. It provided a visual code, enabling levels of learning to be identified, progressing from uni-structured to extended abstract. An internet search indicated that this approach was being used at primary and secondary school levels. However, there was little available at the lower primary level, and virtually none for this age relating to religious education. The researcher adapted the idea, applying it to the topics covered in the third iteration, using it as a self-regulating tool for students, as described in Chapter 4. Figure 16 provides an overview of charts produced by the researcher, adapting SOLO for Year 2 religious education. In addition, extensive application was made of another SOLO related tool, the hexagon template, developed by Pam Hook (Hook and Mills, 2011), and freely available on the internet. A range of hexagon sets were produced and used, as listed in Table 39. Photograph 7 provides an illustration of Hexagons in use. In Text Box 56 a student expresses his thoughts about SOLO and Hexagons.



Figure 16: SOLO Taxonomy Charts, adapted by the researcher for religious education

Table 38: List of hexagons developed for the study

List of Hexagon Sets developed	
1.	Parable of the Vine
2.	Parable of the Good Samaritan
3.	Parable of the Found Coin
4.	Parable of the Sower
5.	Liturgical Colours
6.	Liturgical Furniture
7.	Baptism signs, gestures and symbols
8.	Jesus is the Bread of Life
9.	The Trinity
10.	Pentecost
11.	The Infancy Narratives
12.	The Paschal Narratives
13.	The Advent Prophecies



*Photograph 7: Hexagons in action*

*Text Box 56: Student explains SOLO and Hexagons*

**July, 2015**

**Cameraman:** Do you enjoy the RE lessons?

**Barry:** Yes. I enjoy listening to the stories at the start. I like the SOLO work where you do the steps. and the most I like is the hexagon wall. The Solo Choice Chart is in my book I have to do them step by step.

The hexagon wall is you have separate pictures and separate sentences and you have to put the picture and then put all the sentences around it... Like the miracles: He made people hear and see. The biggest thing is that he raised himself from the dead...

### *Development of a Wikispace Internet Site*

In order to offer both students and teachers a raft of suitable resources, a *Wikispace*, [www.amiprimaryre.wikispaces.com](http://www.amiprimaryre.wikispaces.com) was set up. A simple, practical site, it was easy to maintain. As the iteration progressed, the space was increasingly populated. The use of the *Wikispace* in sessions was limited, since supporting technology was unreliable. However, students gradually turned to the site in their own time, accessing it from home. Screenshots of some of the pages are found in Figure 17.



Figure 17: Screenshots of www.amiprimaryre.wikispaces.com

### *Development of materials for 'Human Virtues'*

As indicated in Chapter 4 (4.2.3.4.1) the decision to incorporate human virtues was very helpful. The students found it uplifting and empowering to explicitly name human virtues and recognise them in their own lives and in the people around them. This fit very well with the personalised aspect of the SALT Approach. Suitable material was sourced, selected and adapted, focusing on four virtues considered most

relevant for the students at the time: thoughtfulness, order, truthfulness and obedience. Materials included simple charts, virtue hexagons, suitable songs, and *choice activities*. Samples of *Virtues* materials that proved effective and popular with the students are provided in Figures 18, 19 and 20.

The image shows a sample of Honesty Charts. It features a central vertical grey line. To the left of this line, there are two text boxes. The top one contains a quote: "The conscience is that voice in your head, and that feeling in your heart, that tells you if something is right or wrong, even when no one is looking." Below this quote is the text "It helps me a lot to be:" with a blue arrow pointing to the central vertical line. The bottom text box on the left contains the text "Honesty means saying or doing what is true. The opposite of Honesty is dishonesty" with a blue arrow pointing to the central vertical line. To the right of the central vertical line, there are two text boxes. The top one contains the text "Honest with Myself", "Honest with God", and "Honest with Others". The bottom one contains the text "Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth." with a small reference "John 3:18" below it, and "All you need to say is a simple 'Yes' or 'No.'" with a small reference "James 5:12" below it.

Figure 18: Sample of Honesty Charts developed by the researcher

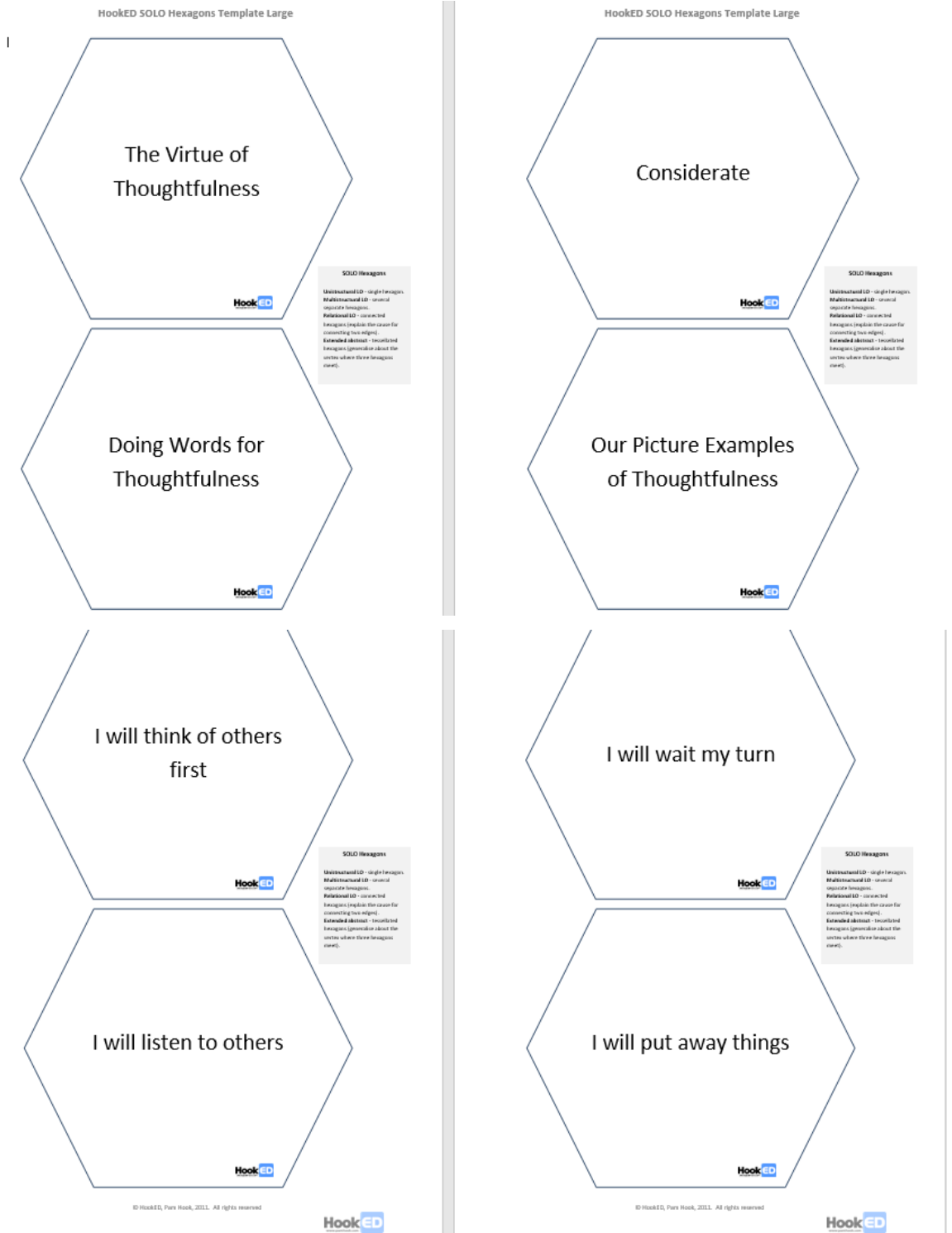


Figure 19: HookEd SOLO Hexagon Templates relating to thoughtfulness as prepared by the researcher



**Thoughtfulness Secret Service Jar**

Hold the door open for those behind you.

Look at people in the eye, with a smile.

Say good morning to your teacher, principal, school officials and classmates.

Offer to let your classmate go first.

Give someone a compliment at least once every day.

Write a thank you note to a parent, teacher, a secretary or someone who has influenced you in a positive way.

Clean up the area around your school picking up papers you notice and putting them in the bin.

Help your teacher clean up the classroom.

Put things away.

Follow requests right away

Write a note to your parent(s) or grandparent(s) and tell them why they are special to you.

Help around the house without being asked to do so, such as cleaning your room, taking out the garbage or helping with the laundry.

Smile. Smiling is easy and happiness is contagious!

Help carry the shopping

Help wash and clean the car

Tidy up the toys

Tidy up your room

Read to a young sibling

Set the table

Thank someone

*Figure 20: Thoughtfulness Jar slips, prepared by the researcher*

*Mass-production considerations*

Throughout the entire project, materials were produced or sourced considering the need to facilitate access for other teachers. In the third iteration, these ideas were consolidated through discussions with the School's Religious Education Coordinator. Initial contacts were made for the production of diorama figures. In addition, draft designs were made for child-friendly, durable diorama boxes, hexagon boxes, and for a compact classroom storage unit (See Figure 21). Prototypes of these were to be built in the post-iterative phase.



pondering, reflecting respect through human virtues and balancing freedom with accountability. Additionally, valuable data emerged through discussions with accompanying teachers and the school executive (see Table 40, below).

Table 39: Summary of third iteration, Lens 2, Element 2: themes and refinements

Element 2 Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach	Refinements continuing from the previous iterations and new refinements
Themes: a) Pedagogy that permits pondering b) Pedagogy that respects the person c) Pedagogy that provides for freedom of choice	<i>Continue identifying</i> moments when pondering is evident or can be encouraged, ways of respecting persons and aspects of a pedagogy providing for freedom of choice. <i>Furthermore</i> , identify pedagogical implications of: Using a rich vocabulary in pondering Reflecting respect through human virtues Balancing freedom with accountability <i>And Lastly:</i> The positive effects of practised pedagogy, as recognised by participating teachers and school executive.

Data analysis revealed that *equipping children with a rich vocabulary, unlocked the power to ponder*. This could be viewed from two angles: the language the researcher used and the language children used. As the third iteration progressed, children increasingly valued, grasped and used expressive, deep and sometimes elegant vocabulary, words giving shape to their thoughts. The researcher frequently exposed the students to a rich vocabulary in class discussions, which began to approach a socratic structure, with students keen to express their thoughts. Furthermore (overlooking writing and spelling limitations), students expressed their thoughts through charts and posters. Interviews and focus group discussions also evidenced their growing ability to express deep concepts. Text Boxes 57 and 58 provide samples and Text Box 59 presents the thoughts of the Principal.

Text Box 57: Children reflect and express thoughts clearly after listening to a Gospel passage

**September 9, 2015: Partial Transcription of Class Session.** Discussion relating to Luke 5:5-10 (Jesus calls the disciples to be fishers of men)

**Researcher:** (*in a whisper*) Please leave me, I am a sinful man... (*entranced faces: Fleur, Azzam, Sean ... The Gospel words captures them*) I wonder what that means: they left everything behind and followed Jesus?

**Abrar:** They left everything behind and followed Jesus

**Researcher:** Just for one day? Or many days?

**Children:** Yes, yes... many days

**Researcher:** So what about leaving the boat behind? What is the boat for?

**Michael:** For catching fish

**Researcher:** So what does it mean when it says Peter left the boat behind?

**Clara:** He left his sins forever.

**Researcher:** I wonder what Jesus meant when he said ‘From now on you are going to be catching

men'?

**Clara:** Ohhh I know...

**Mary:** He was not going to sin any more. He was going to be good. From now on he will be working for God

**Researcher:** Doing what?

**Clara:** To spread the good of the Lord.

**Researcher:** And make people want to...

**Several children:** Follow him.

**Researcher:** Well done! the Holy Spirit is working with you. I wonder why Peter said, leave me Lord....

**Sandy:** Cos he's done a lot of things naughty

**Namir:** He was afraid because he was a sinner. (In front of Jesus) he feels shy

**Ben:** I hope that Simon Peter has the light of Jesus like I did. Jesus will always be with me even though I might be moving. I will always remember everyone that I know.

**Gajara:** When that person was kneeling down in front of Jesus, he was feeling really scared

**Clara:** I think he felt like 'Jesus is going to find out all of my sins'.

**Mary:** Did Jesus control the fish to go into the net

**Namir:** But Simon Peter thought Jesus was God.

**Kafil:** He was scared Jesus was going to tell him to go... like ... GO!!!

*Text Box 58 Children explain pictures, using a growing richness of vocabulary*

#### **Various Class sessions and discussions:**

##### **July 16, 2015**

**Celia:** I drew a picture: that is Jesus. That is the twelve-year-old that died and Jairus told Jesus 'My daughter is dying' and he, Jairus, was begging Jesus to help. So, Jesus was following Jairus over to Jairus house and... um and Jesus stopped to help a lady and when he got there Jesus said 'She is not dead she's only sleeping' and he got her hand and said: 'Little girl wake up. And she stood up and was awake again. But before that, everyone was laughing when Jesus said that she was only asleep because they thought that no one could never, ever, make someone could come back to life. They thought Jesus was just a normal person, but once she came back alive, well... her parents were amazed that she came back alive.

##### **September 1, 2015**

**Fleur:** Jesus is special cause he is technically God, himself. There's like three people in God: God who created the world and us and loves us. Jesus who died on the cross for our sins and the holy spirit who gives us the power to just believe in God and be respectful and do good and they all come together as God. God tries to make Jesus come here and fix everybody now and in the past so everybody can just be nice and be good.

##### **September 3, 2015**

**Chris:** Can you tell me about your picture?

**Fleur:** The bread of life. It is about when Jesus said he is the bread of life. (Reads the quote: 'I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats this bread he will live forever') I think it means that you will stay alive forever. The bread of life... mmm... it's him... it's like his body. He just got the bread from somewhere but it is blessed so...it makes it like the holy bread. Also, it's the bread of life because they make it Jesus' body, its technically the blessed bread by the Holy Spirit plus God. God is three people: The Holy Spirit, with Jesus, plus God. They are the same. The Holy Spirit has put on the bread, which was like Jesus with the bread.

*Text Box 59 The Principal describes what he has observed*

**November 11, 2015:** Interview with Principal

**Researcher:** It would be good to hear from your perspective whatever strikes you most...

**Allan:** Well the first thing for me would be the significance of the language, the insights and the comments of the children. The DVD that you produced was that snapshot over time of children talking about their catholic faith, talking about their religion with a different level of vocabulary, with a different level of confidence, a different level of knowledge but also clearly with some spiritual intelligence that those particular children bring to what they are learning and the nature of what they are learning...

Pedagogical opportunities for *reflecting respect through human virtues* could happen at any moment. The researcher and the participating teachers took advantage of moments as they occurred, and not infrequently children named virtues as they saw them in other children. Some of these are reflected in the snippets provided in Text Box 60.

When it came to pedagogical practices for fostering freedom in making choices, *balancing freedom with accountability* was more difficult. Many worked well with the *Personal Choice Charts* but others would rush activities, so as to move on to what they *really* wanted to do. There was a danger of the *Personal Choice Charts* becoming counter-productive for these children. They provided a useful and structured tool, but danger lay in forcing the structure of the *choice time* too much. Some children felt over-controlled, and expressed frustration. Michael, for example, found using the Personal Choice Chart hard, although he understood they helped him focus (see Text Box 61).

*Text Box 60: Thinking about virtues*

**Thinking about Virtues: In class, in discussions, at home**

Marisa's Term 3 Journal Notes:

Virtues are good deeds I can do: Clean up the school. Be kind. Be respectful. Be a frind (*sic*). Be loving...

**Home Visit Interview with Barry's Parents and older sisters, July, 2015 (Nick is present)**

**Researcher:** Barry, can you tell your parents what 'Virtues' are?

**Barry** like for example if your parents tell you something you don't say I have go to do this and that, you just totally do it.

**Researcher:** Have you noticed anything at home?

**Older Sister:** I have noticed. He has been taking the initiative to help... like parents were cleaning up the garden yesterday Nick came out there before me and my sister got there. he was bringing in the bags,

**Researcher:** Barry, have you got the keys: be quick, be cheerful...?

**Barry:** ... and go the extra mile!

**July 16, 2015: Class session**

**Michael:** Celia is helping others by letting her use her stuff and they give them back to Celia and she says thank-you very much.

**Researcher:** Sean, I have just noticed you and you have been sitting there so quietly all this time. So, you have chosen, and that is about the virtue that we were talking about on Tuesday... We can choose because God gave us a gift of being free to do that: to think and decide, unlike the other creatures that can't choose. When we choose, we cooperate with grace...

**July 20, 2015, Class Session**

**Abrar:** During writing today, Charbel was being really honest to Teacher B.

**Researcher:** That is a virtue isn't it...

**July 30, 2015, Class Session (The Sower Parable)**

**Researcher:** What kind of seeds does God want to grow in the soil of your hearts?

**Barry:** Special Seeds

**Sandy:** The kindness fruit

**Researcher:** What does it look like in your heart?

**Giorgio:** Peaceful and Good

**Ahmed:** Natural and quiet

**Researcher:** What would it look like? Would you go around punching people or stealing teachers... **Children:** No!

**Sandy:** That's not a virtue

**Researcher:** You're right!

**September 1, 2015: Focus Group Discussion**

**Researcher:** What are some of the things you have learnt this year?

**Trinh:** I learnt about the virtue of obedience

**Abrar:** I've learnt about obedience: that we always do it quickly completely, do what's right and go the extra mile.

**October 1, Focus Group Discussion**

**Celia:** When you start talking about the virtues, that was the first time I ever heard of them and so I want to learn more and more about them when you teach me.

*Text Box 61: Michael's thoughts about Personal Choice Charts*

**October 1, 2015: Focus Group discussion**

**Researcher:** What do you think about this: the SOLO idea.

**Michael:** It doesn't help me with Jesus and stuff, but it is helping me to work more. and it sometimes hurts my hand... I can do them all when I get focused. When I think about my old parents and the fun times we had, and I miss them I can't concentrate. I like to do clay because it helps me to focus.

This was a concern, and the issue was not fully resolved, even by the end of the third iteration. However, a combination of factors shed light on possible solutions. One of the ways of balancing freedom with accountability involved taking full advantage of the adults in the room. While the researcher was the core teacher, an accompanying teacher was always present, filling a support role. Additionally, the Cameraman was

present once a week, and he was, in fact, a voluntary catechist in a public school. As the iteration progressed the participating teachers would guide students who needed more help to focus, as this teacher's comment indicates.

Our role has been really good, because we could go and help the students who have the high needs and behavioural needs. We can just quietly work with them and guide them without taking over (Teacher A, reflecting back on the third iteration).

The cameraman was asked to interact appropriately with students, encouraging them to explain their work. The children enjoyed the opportunity to record their work and thoughts on camera, providing a goal for those who could tend to be off-focus. This issue would require further consideration in 2016, as the work was set to continue, supported by the Catholic Education Office. Audio-Journal notes in Text Box 62 reflects the researcher's concerns.

*Text Box 62: Audio Journal notes reflecting on the challenges of Choice Charts*

**Audio-Journal Notes, October 19, 2015**

Regarding guiding choices, and keeping them on track using the Choice Options... good in that they structure choices. Some use it well, but it can stop them making choices as originally intended ... To get involved with the material and go deeper. For some it becomes a 'let's do this as quickly as I can and then what am I going to do next'.

It's hard to get the balance

You get some children, particularly saying 'I don't know what to do next' or 'I don't feel like doing that' or 'I don't need to do that because I already know about that'. That is something I can understand and needs to be considered.

A positive reflection of children's autonomy in *choice time* was that the highly engaged students rarely needed prompting. They always had plenty to do, and were very inventive in ways of responding and exploring. For example, Celia was very keen to record her thoughts on large posters of butcher paper, and this inspired others to do the same. Students developed questionnaires for other students, or conducted surveys on matters relating to relevant topics. Fleur enjoyed getting students to record their thoughts or write short prayers on one topic or another. She even kept records of who had responded so as to carry the activity over to other sessions. Text Box 63 offers the perspective of an executive from the Catholic Education Office.

*Text Box 63: Observations of CEO Representative, after viewing a session*

**December 8, 2015:** Members of the Catholic Education Office, after observing the session and speaking with teachers

**CEO Rep:** Those girls who were making posters: that was a fascinating task there and I found it interesting that at the end of that introductory session, that they all knew exactly what they wanted to do. And they just progressed through their tasks.

The final interviews and discussions with participating teachers and school executive offered valued reflections in the *recognising the positive effects emerging as a result of implementing the pedagogical themes* isolated for this study, namely a pedagogy that permits pondering, respects the person and provides for freedom of choice (see Text Box 64).

*Text Box 64: Teachers, Religious Education Coordinator and Principal reflect on matters relating to pondering, respecting and freedom of choice.*

**November 4, 2015:**

**Focus Group Discussion with participating teachers and Principal**

**Teacher A:** Yesterday in class, we were thinking about the choices we make and that we are constantly growing as persons, Celia said ‘They are the virtues, Mrs W’. I said ‘what do you mean by the virtues? And she gave me an example...I find that what we do here (in this room) can be interwoven with what happens in the classroom on a daily basis. It’s not just this what happens in RE...

**Teacher A:** Just watching the film footage, it amazed me that children who are usually really quiet, are the stars: Marisa never says ‘boo’ in class... but she is a deep thinker.

**Teacher B:** It actually shows the different personalities coming through, which we don’t always see; through the different activities they do. Even Michael, he wants to tell everyone, everything he does in here. You certainly don’t get that in any other subject.

**Teacher A:** It seems to bring out their strengths that we haven’t really noticed in classroom. That has been excellent.

December 9, 2015: After-session evaluative discussion with participating teachers and REC

**Teacher A:** They were all engaged, every single child

**REC:** ...It was really calm and peaceful and they were considerate and thoughtful...

**Teacher A:** no pushing or shoving...

**November 4, 2015:**

**Focus Group Discussion with participating teachers and Principal**

**Researcher:** What difference has it made to the way you would approach teaching Religion?

**Teacher B:** Children are much more engaged in activities they get to choose rather than when the whole class does one activity.

It gives them a lot more freedom to choose. They do in the order they like and I guess that gives them that opportunity in themselves that ‘ I want to start with that one’... not like a class religion lesson where we would normally all complete the same activity.



**Teacher A:** The big difference for me, too, would be that openness in the choice given. In the past (we have) given them a worksheet of a sequencing activity, or a fill in activity. All (the students) on same activity.

Also, with Scripture as the main focus, choice of activities given are based on that Scripture and the choices are at different levels for them to be able to respond.

In the past for me lessons were a bit more scripted. Here there are more opportunities for children to think, to reflect and what you (*the researcher*) are doing here, is also coming in to the classroom.

...I think this concept of choice and the constantly revisiting of concepts, ideas, principles, I think that's really good: it's constantly giving those children those two hundred hits as we would say... constantly giving opportunities across the year.

**Teacher B:** Still have the same sorts of activity, at least some are very similar, like writing a prayer, responding, but it is the structure that's different. It was: 'we being all doing a prayer now'. Not 'here are the choices and you can do it over the next few sessions...'

You know, on Monday, I went to work at St F's and they had all Saints and All Souls and the teacher had left just the colouring and I thought, we are going to talk about it. And for half an hour these children were just talking about what it meant to be a saint and where a saint comes from. and it just went on and on.... until I said, we need to move on and colour in now...

You have to *let it go* and see where it takes you instead of saying write one or two sentences about All Saints and All Soul's Day or 'I'll see if I can get them to help me with the sentence': well we didn't even get to the sentences because they were just discussing it so much.

**Teacher A:** For me it's about the organisation of the classroom, because I am a teacher who likes structure and order, at the beginning it was 'Oh, this is what we do'. running around...it was positive, but we were just... a bit overwhelmed ... And now it's like 'sure, give them painting...' I don't know, it just seems like the norm now. And for the children too...

**Principal:** When they are called to make choices, and called to take more personal responsibility for their learning than they normally would... this then transfers back to the learning experience in the classroom... across to other learning areas.

In brief, the three pedagogical themes (a) a pedagogy that permits pondering, (b) a pedagogy that respects the person and (c) a pedagogy that provides for freedom of choice form a vital base for teachers hoping to implement the SALT Approach.

*Pondering* is crucial, and teachers' pedagogical choices can encourage or discourage it. Fostering *respect* is a 'two-way street', with teachers being conscious of the spoken and unspoken ways for demonstrating respect, and children picking this up, almost by osmosis. Human virtues, understood and verbalised by teachers and children can play a major role in this. Freedom is fostered when children are permitted to make real choices, and building a framework within which this can happen can be challenging, especially considering that it must be balanced with accountability and that with freedom comes responsibility. All three pedagogical understandings need to be expressed and illustrated in the final prototype.

### 5.2.3.4.3 Element 3: Teacher expertise

Identification of examples of teacher’s knowledge, understanding and commitment continued in the third iteration, and the main new contributions were the thoughts and reflections of the participating teachers, the school executive and members of the Parramatta Catholic Education Office. Table 41 summarises the direction for the third iteration.

Table 40: Summary of third iteration, Lens 2, Element 3: themes and refinements

Element 3	Refinement
Teacher expertise	
Themes:	<i>Continue identifying</i> situations where teacher’s knowledge, understanding and lived commitment important
a) Teacher knowledge and understanding	
b) Lived commitment	<i>Furthermore:</i> Perspectives offered by participating teachers as they reflected on their learning, together with observations of the school executive and members of the Parramatta Catholic Education Office.

The participating teachers commented about the way the approach had got them thinking about their faith at all levels: knowledge, understanding and commitment. One of the teachers was completing a Masters in Religious Education at the time. She frequently sought advice throughout the year. In addition, she found that participating in this study assisted her understanding significantly (see Text Box 65). The other participating teacher often shared with others the impact this study made on her faith understanding. The Principal commented a number of times on the positive effect of the SALT Approach as it assisted the participating teachers grow in knowledge and understanding. Text Box 65 illustrates all of these aspects.

Text Box 65: Participating teacher, Religious Education Coordinator, and Principal comment on the impact of the study on the teachers and the School

**November 4, 2015:**

*Focus Group Discussion with participating teachers, REC and Principal*

**REC:** (*addressing teachers*) When you say about your learning over here, do you feel you have been able to connect the dots more in terms of religious education

**Teacher B:** Definitely. And I have just finished my unit on educating young children spiritually and religiously and I think doing it this particularly fits in beautifully. The idea was the unity (between spirituality and religion). I was looking at what we are doing in here and how we actually do those activities to get to that level (of unity). I think that has been valuable.

**Principal:** Do I hear a bit too of ... um... not only pedagogy and the way of learning but also your knowledge of our faith? Would you say that it’s been enhanced? I guess there is the pedagogy

knowledge and the content knowledge. Here we are learning the knowledge of our faith, we are learning the teaching of the church.

**Teacher B:** The knowledge of the faith has definitely been increased this year...

**Teacher A:** Yes, that of a bit of a feature. I have reconnected with the knowledge of my faith. And a bit of the fear is to have enough knowledge or having access to the resources to be able to reconnect with that knowledge. It has been such a positive experience even for my own faith journey and my journey as a religious education teacher. I have learnt so much and I am continuing to learn every day when I am here...

#### **September 14, Discussion with Parramatta Catholic Education Office Executive Staff**

**REC:** Part of the study, too, is looking at the formation of the staff. In terms of their own growth...

**CEO Rep:** Interesting to hear you talk about the teachers, it seems that it is almost being formed by osmosis, they are not only learning about the method but also, there is their own formation as they teach side by side.

**Principal:** Can I add that the teachers have said that they couldn't teach RE in the same way again, having experienced this way. It seems to me that this work involves taking the knowledge of the faith to another level, which is actually helping the teachers. While educating the children, the same applies to the teachers. It is actually building their knowledge.

#### **November 9, 2015**

##### *Interview with Principal*

**Researcher:** What is uppermost on your mind: I have a few questions, but it would be good to hear from your perspective whatever you would like to say.

**Principal:** For me (it) is about the building of teacher capacity in terms of pedagogy and content knowledge of religious education. That's really what's happening... what they are saying to me (is) that they have an increased repertoire of learning experiences for the children, of learning processes that they can use with the kids, but they also have an increased knowledge of our faith and belief and they have learnt that by watching you and observing you teach. I think it has impacted on the two teachers and impacted very directly on the children.

December 8, 2015: Meeting with members of the Catholic Education Office, after observing the session and speaking with teachers

**CEO Rep:** I was just talking to Teacher A... She said this has been good for the kids, but it has been amazing for her. 'It has been huge for me: my faith journey turned a corner,' was what she said.

**Principal:** Glad you got to have a chat with her...

**CEO Rep:** I could see she was 'tearing up' in that intro session with the answers and the questions of the children... it has deeply affected her. And this is December. She has had all year with this process and it is still affecting her on a personal and professional level.

#### **December 16, 2015**

*Meeting with Year 3 Teachers and Principal, preparing for 2016, when the researcher will continue with the students as they move up to Year 3.*

**Principal:** The other thing that Teacher A and Teacher B reflected on just how their own knowledge of the Catholic faith and tradition and liturgy have gone to another level because they have had the opportunity to work with Anne-Marie. In summary, there is the learning about the learning but there is also learning about the faith. This is a very rich opportunity for learning across the board.

#### 5.2.3.4.4 Final reflections from the third iteration to inform the final prototype

The third iteration offered significant new material to include in the final prototype in each of the three elements. For the element of equipping and maintaining the learning space, this included: The development of *Solo Taxonomy materials* for children to use; the development of the *Wikispace* Internet Site; resourcing for *Human Virtues*; and *mass-production considerations*. For the element of pedagogical practice, it included: *Using a rich vocabulary in pondering; reflecting respect through human virtues*; and *balancing freedom with accountability*. For the element of teacher expertise it incorporated perspectives offered by participating teachers as they reflected on their learning and own growth in understanding, together with observations of the School and Parramatta Catholic Education executive staff. These, together with the findings of the first and second iterations, contributed to Phase 4's reflections to inform the final prototype.

#### 5.2.4 Phase 4: Reflections informing the final prototype

##### 5.2.4.1 Element 1: Equipping and maintaining the learning space

Equipping and maintaining the learning space required careful thought, practical advice and, above all, the provision of materials. In the current educational climate, the SALT Approach cannot be implemented to any significant degree if teachers do not have access to ready-made materials. Table 42 summarises materials and resources, as well as suggestions for room organisation that will need to be incorporated into the final prototype.

*Table 41: The final prototype inclusions for Lens 2, Element 1: equipping and maintaining the learning space*

<b>Element 1: Equipping and maintaining the learning space</b>
A full list of materials required and provide access to 2D and 2D ready-made materials. This can take the form of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Purchasable materials: dioramas, booklets, books and other required materials, storage boxes and classroom storage unit</li><li>b) Electronically available 2D Resources such as royalty free images and activities</li><li>c) <i>SALT Approach</i> on-line resources for students and teachers</li><li>d) Additional materials not specifically identified in Cavalletti's approach (e.g. to match feasts of the liturgical year, saints, certain Scripture passages etc.)</li></ul>
Access to specialised material, newly incorporated into the SALT Approach. Specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>a) Solo Taxonomy materials: Chart, Hexagons</li></ul>

b) Human Virtues materials
A suggested list of a variety of <i>Choice Activities</i> that are likely to engage students, including practical tips
Suggestions for accessing additional materials teachers may need, if they are working within this or other dioceses
Recommendations for re-organising and using materials that may be already available in a school, such as ‘Exploring Scripture and ‘Godly Play’ materials
Suggestions for quickly producing visual or hands-on materials
Specific suggestions and practical advice regarding room arrangements, both for home-room and for a specialised room.
A sample one-year programme that could be adapted for Kindergarten, Year 2, Year 1 and Year 2
If possible, an overview programme, showing variations according to the three-year liturgical cycle

#### 5.2.4.2 Element 2: Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach

There are key pedagogical recommendations for the SALT Approach, which if adopted may also contribute positively on a broader scale, beyond religious education. Table 43 summarises pedagogical recommendations to be incorporated into the final prototype.

*Table 42: Final prototype inclusions for Lens 2, Element 2: key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach*

<b>Element 2: Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach</b>
A clear rationale and presentation of the three core pedagogical factors included in this study. These are:
(a) Pedagogy that permits pondering
(b) Pedagogy that respects the person
(c) Pedagogy that provides for freedom of choice.
Recommended pedagogical practices that will facilitate these will include teacher-specific and student-specific indicators of successful practice, as well as a list of possible ‘danger spots’
Staffing suggestions could include:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ The presence of a teacher assistant in religious education Sessions</li> <li>○ The concept of volunteer catechists, similar to those currently working in Public Schools (this idea emerged from the presence of the cameraman, himself a catechist, who contributed effectively throughout the year).</li> </ul>

### 5.2.4.3 Element 3: Teacher expertise

Deep learning is clearly affected by the level of teacher expertise and in the field of religious education this is of paramount concern. A significant depth of knowledge and understanding is required to adequately reflect Catholic belief and encourage personal faith commitment. The SALT Approach offers a pathway for personal development, should a teacher be willing and able to adopt its recommendations. The final prototype will suggest ways in which teachers can grow in knowledge and understanding alongside the child. Table 44 summarises ways this consideration will be incorporated into the final prototype.

*Table 43: Final prototype inclusions for Lens 2, Element 3: teacher expertise*

<b>Element: Teacher expertise</b>
Recommendations to assist teachers in being personally prepared (e.g. experiencing the Liturgical Year moments, when possible, ahead of the students)
Adapted booklets to guide the teachers in their presentations. The adaptations to include added information for teachers and recommendations for additional reading.
A recommended list of teacher-appropriate resources.
Access to reader-friendly informational resources relating to the Catholic faith, including books and electronic materials.
A simply worded, attractive explanations of some of the most vital aspects of Catholic belief, built around the major feasts of the liturgical year.
A sample set of ‘witness’ opportunities, indicators of lived commitment.

## 5.2.5 Summary and conclusions

### 5.2.5.1 Contribution to theory: changing the theoretical landscape

This chapter contributes to the theoretical landscape by attempting to bridge the gap between theory and practice. The SALT Approach has emerged from O’Shea’s application of Cavalletti’s Catechesis of the Good Shepherd. This chapter described the findings in terms of material supply and set-up, pedagogical elements and teacher expertise, refining its application within a systemic Catholic school setting.

A significant contribution to the theoretical landscape relates to the impact of the SALT Approach on the spiritual formation of the teachers adopting it. Both

Montessori and Cavalletti build into their methods the deep and living spiritual input of the teachers. This is nurtured through the teachers making their own materials (Cavalletti et al., 1995). The SALT Approach, as implemented and developed by the researcher, reflects a certain reversal, in that through the teaching and the learning, the teacher is led into deeper understandings and towards a personal spiritual growth, receiving, almost by osmosis, a personal spiritual formation.

In addition, this chapter deepens and consolidates suggested links between the SALT Approach and Biggs' SOLO Taxonomy (Biggs, 1999), as well as the works of Lickona, Ryan and Mullins in the field of human virtues (Lickona, 2014; Mullins, 2015; Ryan & Lickona, 1992).

#### 5.2.5.2 Contribution to the prototype

The contributions of this chapter are particularly important for the development of the final prototype, offering a practical backbone for its implementation. It itemises the material needs and addresses challenges in the set-up and maintenance of the learning environment. In terms of teaching practice, this chapter pinpoints specific indicators of appropriate pedagogical choices, which will be incorporated into the final prototype. As such, it will assist teachers evaluating their own pedagogical practice. Finally, the chapter provides some suggestions for enhancing teachers' knowledge and understanding.

The following chapter will present and discuss the findings relating to Lens 3: Achieving the accountability requirements of a diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach by (a) matching Parramatta Diocese's current religious education curriculum content, demonstrating compliance with scope and sequence, and (b) providing suitable assessment and reporting using the current outcomes based paradigm.

# Chapter 6: Lens 3 Findings - Achieving the Accountability Requirements of a Diocesan Catholic School through the SALT Approach

## 6.1 Introduction

Chapter 6 explores findings relating to *achieving the accountability requirements of a Diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach (Lens 3)*. There is only one element under this lens: ‘The SALT Approach and Systemic Accountability’.

Without systemic accountability, the SALT Approach risks being relegated to a peripheral position. To avoid swamping this aspect in a myriad of other practical and pedagogical concerns, this single element merited a cameo chapter. This element was addressed throughout the four phases of the design-based research project as summarised in Table 45 below.

*Table 44: Design-based research project, as applied to Lens 3: Achieving the accountability requirements of a diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach*

Design-Based Research Project Phases	Phase 1	Phase 2	Phase 3	Phase 4
Classical phases of the design-based research project	Analysis of practical problems by the researcher and practitioners	Development of solutions informed by existing design principles and technical innovation	Iterative cycles of testing and refinement of solutions in practice	Reflection to produce “Design Principles” and enhance solution implementation
Phases of the design-based research model as implemented for this PhD	Literature Review	Design of the first prototype	Data gathering, trialling and refining through three iterations	Analysis of findings informing the design of the final prototype
Lens 3: Achieving the accountability requirements of a diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach	The element identified and explored through literature review: ‘Systemic Accountability’	The element of ‘Systemic Accountability’ incorporated into the design of the first prototype	The element of ‘Systemic Accountability’ explored through the second and third iterative cycles	Findings relating to the element of ‘Systemic Accountability’ informs the design of the final prototype



## 6.2 Phases of Development for the SALT Approach and Systemic Accountability

### 6.2.1 Phase 1: Literature review

The literature review identified matters relating to systemic accountability. By ‘Systemic Accountability’ this researcher refers to the need to be accountable to whichever educational body within which the SALT Approach is implemented. In this case, it is Parramatta Catholic Education. The selected school is one of 52 Primary Schools that diocese.

The SALT Approach, based in the work of Montessori, is holistic and organic (Mahmoudi et al., 2012). Following the liturgical cycle, it is not intended to be restricted by distinct units of study. By contrast, Parramatta Catholic Education’s *Sharing Our Story*, is structured in units. *Sharing Our Story* follows Groome’s *praxis model* and this contrasts, but is not incompatible with the SALT Approach’s hermeneutic model (Groome, 1998). Contemporary religious education programmes aspire to learning and assessment practices ‘on-par’ with approaches that are used in secular subjects and *Sharing Our Story* works within an outcomes-based paradigm (National Catholic Education Commission (Australia), 2008). *Sharing Our Story*’s assessment and reporting inevitably reflect the outcomes-based approach and the SALT Approach needed to work within this paradigm. Chapter 6 will explore this through the three themes of (a) assessment, (b) reporting and (c) matching Parramatta Diocese’s Religious Education Curriculum Requirements.

### 6.2.2 Phase 2: Development of solutions relating to the SALT Approach and systemic accountability: the first prototype.

In developing the first prototype, two of the themes were considered: assessment and matching Parramatta Diocese’s Religious Education Curriculum requirements. O’Shea’s *Liturgical Cycle Plan for the Mystagogical Catechetical Method* formed the programme’s essential base (O’Shea, in press). The content of *Sharing Our Story* was incorporated and a comparative chart cross-referenced the two programmes (See Appendix 2). Suggestions for assessment from both sources were reviewed and

possibilities identified on the basis of compatibility between the SALT Approach and *Sharing Our Story*. Details of the school’s reporting system to parents/ guardians were not available prior to commencing Phase 3, and so plans were not made for this.

### 6.2.3 Phase 3: Iterative cycles

#### 6.2.3.1 Overview of the iterative cycles

The element ‘Systemic Accountability’ was tracked through the second and third iterations, because assessment and reporting took place in those iterations. Matching Parramatta Diocese’s Religious Education Curriculum Requirements took place in the third iteration (see Table 46, below).

Table 45: Summary of the iterations in relation to Lens 3

**Main Objective:** *To design, trial and refine a programme for teaching religious education in a contemporary Catholic systemic school based on the SALT Approach.*

**Lens 3:** Achieving the accountability requirements of a Diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach

	First Iteration: Term 1	Second Iteration: Term 2	Third Iteration: Terms 3 and 4
<b>Element</b>		<b>Trial the themes:</b>	<b>Themes:</b>
Systemic Accountability		<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student verbalisations</li> <li>• Written work and labelled illustrations</li> <li>• Formal assessment</li> <li>• Using <i>Sharing Our Story</i> assessment rubrics</li> </ul> <p><i>Reporting:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Achievement grade</li> <li>• Effort grade</li> <li>• Comment</li> <li>• Consideration of the student profile</li> </ul>	<p><i>Assessment:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student verbalisations</li> <li>• Written work and labelled illustrations</li> <li>• Formal assessment</li> <li>• Using <i>Sharing Our Story</i> assessment rubrics</li> </ul> <p><i>Matching Parramatta Diocese’s Religious Education Curriculum Requirements:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repackaging the teaching programme</li> <li>• Scope and sequence charting</li> <li>• Learning Intentions and Success Criteria</li> </ul>

### 6.2.3.2 The Second iterative cycle (Term 2 of the School Year)

The first iteration was dedicated to establishing the SALT Approach, with elements discussed in the previous two chapters taking precedence. In the second iteration, two themes relating to the element of systemic accountability were explored: assessment and reporting. This was appropriate, since reports were sent to caregivers towards the end of Term 2 and the researcher was expected to follow the school's guidelines, using assessment data gathered in Terms 1 and 2.

#### 6.2.3.2.1 Element: Systemic accountability

The curriculum of Parramatta Diocese's Religious Education curriculum is *Sharing Our Story*. It has been in place since 1989 (revised in 1999) and followed Groome's praxis model. Diocesan curriculum documents outline the core content with suggestions for assessment of knowledge and skills, values and attitudes following the outcomes-based approach (See Appendix 10 for a partial sample). The three themes isolated for exploration were: (a) assessment (b) reporting, and (c) matching Parramatta Diocese's Religious Education Curriculum requirements and content (the latter to be focused upon in the third iteration).

##### 6.2.3.2.1.1 Theme (a) Assessment

This theme was important for teachers and impacted on the way things were taught and learned in religious education, as in all other areas. The outcomes-based approach, discussed in the literature review (see 2.4.3.2) shaped assessment structures and procedures, impacting upon the potential effectiveness of the SALT Approach. Assessment in *Sharing Our Story* is intended to gauge knowledge, understanding, skills, values and attitudes through outcomes. The SALT Approach incorporated a rich slate of assessment opportunities including (a) observations, (aided by audio and video recordings in this study), (b) student contributions in discussions, (c) written work and labelled illustrations, and (d) formal assessment tasks. This study aimed to trial and refine ways that assessment within the SALT Approach can successfully satisfy systemic requirements.

Assessment within Cavalletti's *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, as applied in parish settings, is limited to adult observation of small groups of children with formal reporting not being a requirement. In school settings, the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, if used, does not constitute the full religious education programme, so formal assessment and reporting do not essentially rely upon it. In this study, the researcher implemented the SALT Approach using the full 2.5 hours per week allocated to religious education. In the Parramatta Diocese, assessment is guided by the same criteria used by other disciplines. However, the outcomes-based paradigm complicates the landscape, as discussed in the literature review, placing pressure on teachers, and carrying the risk of limiting deep learning (Berlach, & O'Neill, 2008).

Since in the students in this study, oral communication skills far outweighed their written literacy skills, *student verbalisation* offered insights into each student's knowledge, understanding, values and attitudes. Audio recordings or film footage captured contributions in discussions and responses to '*I wonder*' questions, and in conversations held with each other and teachers. Students increasingly turned to the camera to explain their work or share their thoughts, as discussed in Chapter 5 (5.2.3.4.2). The camera also provided a window into students' non-verbal, expressive responses. Furthermore, small focus group discussions provided rich sources for assessment. While these were designed for the study, it became clear that if teachers could find a way of incorporating them into their assessment plans, they could provide rich assessment material (see Text Box 66). Assessment was also possible through *students written work and labelled illustrations*. Many examples have been provided in previous chapters, and some additional ones are included below, in Text Box 67.

Finally, in order to formally assess students, *specific moments were dedicated to assessment tasks*. In designing these tasks, the researcher's aim was not exclusively to address outcomes of *Sharing Our Story* units, although this was a necessary factor. The tasks were intended to gauge student's knowledge and understanding as relating to content covered, and some topics were not part of the Year Two's *Sharing Our Story*. These gauged foundational learning and complemented aspects required by *Sharing Our Story*.

Formal assessments for *Sharing Our Story* were not expected to address *all* outcomes, although all outcomes were to be assessed in one way or another. The assessment of attitudes, in particular, took place in informal ways, such as observation. In this study, the 30-minute session was used for more formal assessment, with all the students working independently on a written task. Other written tasks were completed as part of *choice times*, with the series of mini-tasks being part of the *Personal Choice Chart*, and students being aware of the need to individually complete them. This strategy worked well, and the individual assessment tasks were completed over a three-week period (Weeks 3-6 of Term 2). The tasks were modelled on O’Shea’s guidelines and they included: (a) a basic content section (Figure 22) and (b) A choice activity (Figure 23) and (c) a series of images that students were asked to explain (Figure 24).

*Text Box 66: Students verbalise their knowledge, understanding and application*

**Clara: April 27**

“I think I might have worked out why Jesus is called the Lamb of God... do you know how every year, years ago, a shepherd always used to have a really nice, really perfect lamb and they killed the lamb, and since the same thing happened to Jesus that he got killed ...because someone... that's why he is called the Lamb of God.”

**Barry, Sandy and Mutasim: April 30, Observation Notes**

Sandy and Barry are on the floor with the Last Supper Diorama. Mutasim comes back to join them. Now they have arranged the apostles around the table and the items are on the table. Words that can be heard: ‘Eat my body’, ‘Drink my blood’. They have lit a big candle (reminiscent of the liturgical candle), as well as tea lights on the table of the supper. Mutasim passes the chalice around to each disciple. Interesting to note that at the beginning of the session there was little order in all this, but as the time progressed the re-enactment of the last supper did get organised.

**Basem: June 11**

“This is a picture about the last supper. Jesus is talking about ... it is his last time. Jesus blesses the bread and the wine. He said ‘take this this is my body and this is my blood’. He broke the pieces and gave it to them. He gave the wine to people and they drank it. He said ‘this is my blood’. The wine became the blood of Jesus. The priest says the same words at the church.”

**Jamie: June 18**

“I have learnt about Jesus, Mary... Mary is one of the nice people. She is really good. And God created the world. He made everyone and everything except the buildings and man-made things. And Jesus died on the cross. He was a really nice man. He was such a good man. He had powers and he is, kind of, like God. He could make a man see and lots. He made... made... um... when there was a storm and the men couldn’t get any fish, he could stop the storm and walk on the water, and it turned into sunlight straight away. He was a good, a great, great Man

... I listen to Miss Irwin every time she says things. When we are sitting at the tables, and when we sit on the floor we are listening.”

**Giorgio, at various dates through the term.** (Video footage confirms that he speaks rarely, but is clearly thinking deeply.)

**March 3:**

*About the bible books that are coloured green:*

**Giorgio:** "... Are the ones with green the ones when Jesus is here? The colour of growing time."

'Out of the blue' comment:

"... So... God sent himself to Mary..."

**June 4: The Hexagon of the Vine and the Branches**

**Teacher:** The Holy Spirit is the sap ... what does that mean?

**Giorgio:** The Holy Spirit is like the blood. Cause the sap is blood inside.

**Teacher:** But how is the Holy Spirit is the sap for us?

**Giorgio:** I know, because the Holy Spirit is inside of us...

**Teacher:** Giorgio why did you put that there? (*hexagon of good deed, that he placed next to hexagon 'fruit'*)

**Giorgio:** (*has to think in order to verbalise.*) I put it there because when I obey my parents I also help at home.

*Text Box 67: Journal entries providing assessment opportunities*

**Student Journals, first and second iteration**

**Ahmed:** (has an expressive language disorder, but has a talent for drawing and uses it to express what he feels and is thinking.)

- Drawing Jesus Last Supper
- Assembled the map of Jerusalem cut and paste: perfectly done.
- Drawing Christ ascending to heaven. Scribed by the teacher: Jesus will always be with us, no matter what. Jesus going to heaven-light is shining to Jesus. 3 girls who were trying to see Jesus. 3 people are Jesus disciples.

**Celia:** (spelling mistakes, with the exception of entry 5, left 'as is')

- Drawing Last supper with words: Jesus said 'take it, this is my body and this is my blod!
- Come Holly sprit I will lisen to you in the quit in my hart from Celia
- I love you Holly Sprit (under a picture of Pentecost.)
- Drawings: chalice and paten with bread. cruets with 'Wine and wartar.
- 'Last Day for Jesus: On the last day for Jesus he had the last spper! He told he's 12 desiples to come. He's words are take this breed and then drink my blod I will retuen and see you agin and Jesus went to a garden to pray t god and went on the cross.'

(*Corrected version:* Last Day for Jesus: On the last day for Jesus he had the Last Supper! He told his 12 disciples to come. His words are 'Take this bread' and then 'Drink My Blood'. I will return and see you again. And Jesus went to a garden to pray to God and went on the cross.)

**Gajara:**

God dose (*does*) miracles.  
 God loves us.  
 God heals people from the dead.  
 God makes people.  
 God gives us live (*life*).  
 God gives us strenth (*strength*) in difficult moments.

Name: .....

1. Put these events of Holy Week in the correct order by writing the numbers from 1 to 7 in the space beside each one.

Event	Order
Jesus celebrates the Last Supper, which is the first Mass	
Jesus rises from the dead	
Jesus rides into Jerusalem on a donkey on Palm Sunday	
Jesus carries his cross to Calvary	
Jesus is placed in the tomb	
Jesus is condemned to death by Pontius Pilate	
Jesus is arrested in the Garden	

1. When did Mary say "yes" to God?

.....  
.....

2. What are the colors the Church uses in the year in these times?

Lent: .....

Easter: .....

Growing time: .....

Pentecost: .....

3. When does the life of grace begin in us?

.....

4. What special thing did Jesus do to the bread and wine at the Last Supper?

.....

.....

5. Where does this happen again and again? .....

6. What are the names of the persons in the Holy Trinity?

.....

.....

.....

7. What event does the Angelus Prayer remind us about?

.....

.....

Figure 22: Basic content aspect of assessment task: completed by all children at the same time

Name.....Date.....

Choose to do one of these

Draw a picture of one of the stories you know about Jesus or another person from the Bible and explain what is happening.

or

Draw a picture of the "Annunciation" and explain what is happening.

Figure 23: A choice activity sample

Name .....Date.....  
Explain what you think this picture means.




Name .....Date.....  
Explain what you think this picture means.




Name .....Date.....  
Explain what you think this set of pictures means.




Name .....Date.....  
Explain what you think this picture means.

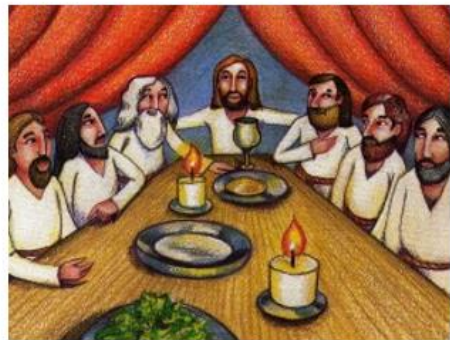



Figure 24: Mini assessment tasks



In summary, assessment is a non-negotiable requirement, and identifying assessment patterns compatible with both the SALT Approach and *Sharing Our Story* needs to form a key aspect in the final prototype. Audio-recording and film-footage facilitated the gathering of assessment data in this study. Finding permissible, non-invasive and practical ways of recording student's verbal contributions within normal circumstances needs consideration. Small focus group discussions can be an effective assessment opportunity. Commonly used formal written assessment tasks can be tailored to fit well with the SALT Approach. Some tasks can be completed concurrently by students, and a series of small tasks be completed in *choice times*. Following Parramatta Diocese *Sharing Our Story* assessment rubrics and marking guidelines need not pose a problem for teachers using the SALT Approach, since there are outcomes in every *Sharing Our Story* unit that can be well addressed using the SALT Approach.

#### 6.2.3.2.1.2 Theme (b) Reporting

The identified theme of *reporting* flows naturally from that of *assessment*. Accountability to parents is of primary importance within any school setting.

The Montessori style of reporting is personalised and, while knowledge, skills and understandings receive gradings in a variety of ways, narrative progress comments form a key part of children's reports (Montesori & Standing, 1965). Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd reporting relies on observation of student response rather than on formal tasks (Cavalletti, 2002). Contemporary reporting styles vary, but in Australia they generally reflect the outcomes-based learning and assessment paradigm (Lorenzen, 1999; Riley, 2012), as exemplified by Parramatta Catholic Education Office's approach.

At the target school, formal reporting took the form of twice-yearly reports to parents and guardians. It was recommended that assessment data be gathered in a variety of ways. Commonly, teachers relied on formal assessment tasks, intended to be completed silently and individually by students, and on teacher observations. There were A-E achievement grades, and effort grades of 'Consistently' (C), 'Usually' (U), and 'Sometimes' (S). Within each class, a bell curve for the achievement grades was usually expected, with the highest proportion falling in the 'C' range. The

achievement grade was based on two or three tasks. In addition, reports contained a 250-word comment, addressing English, Maths and Religious Education. The religious education comment, consisted of one or two sentences and was to include a positively-termed comment, and a specific illustrative detail. The researcher was required to complete the report for religious education, allocating the *achievement grade*, the *effort grade*, and the *comment*. Table 47 outlines the achievement and effort grade structure.

Table 46: Achievement and effort grades used for reporting at the school

Achievement grades		Effort grades	
A	Outstanding knowledge (only 1-2 students expected here)	C	Consistently
B	Grasped nearly all concepts	U	Usually
C	Grasped most concepts	S	Sometimes
D	Has not grasped most concepts (few students expected here)		
E	No concepts grasped (few, if any, students expected here)		

There was an understanding between the school and the researcher that the essential content of *Sharing Our Story* would be addressed through the course of the year, with topics not necessarily being addressed in the same order. Consequently, the unit structure was not followed rigidly in the listed order but topics were addressed at appropriate moments in the Liturgical Year. Therefore, while outcomes from two *Sharing Our Story* units occurring in the first and second iteration were used, two outcomes from a 3<sup>rd</sup> Term unit, *Unit 12C7, The Eucharist, Celebrating God's Love*, were also included in the preparation of the mid-year reports. Table 48 contains the range of outcomes selected, since they related to work covered in the first semester.

Table 47: Outcomes used for assessment and reporting in the second iteration (Term 2)

<p><b>Unit 12C1: Jesus Helps Me to Love: Selected Outcome</b></p> <p>By the end of this unit students should be able to recognise Baptism as a ritual of initiation into God's family, where they are called to love, share with, listen to and accept others.</p> <p>By the end of this unit students should be able to recall gospel accounts and parables which demonstrate how Jesus encouraged others to grow.</p> <p><b>Unit 12C3: The Easter Triduum: Selected Outcomes</b></p>
--

By the end of this unit students should be able to explain why prayer is important in their relationship with God and how prayer can help them in their daily life.

By the end of this unit students should be able to participate in a variety of prayer experiences related to the celebration of Holy Week.

**Unit 12C7: The Eucharist, Celebrating God’s Love: Selected Outcomes**

By the end of this unit students should be able to identify and explain reasons why Jesus celebrated special meals with others, especially the Last Supper.

By the end of this unit students should be able to describe ways in which Jesus is present in the Church’s celebration of the Eucharist revealing God’s wonderful love.

Students’ written and verbal responses and contributions were used to reach an *achievement grade*. The achievement grade for the mid-year report covered Term 1 and the first 5 weeks of Term 2, since the report comments were submitted for checking in Week 6. The concepts covered in that time were listed and relevant student responses charted against them. Thus, it was possible to allocate an A-E achievement grade.

The *effort grade* was based on indicators such as the child being on-task, displaying interest, and levels of attention or distractibility.

Crafting the *comments* following the diocesan recommendations was another aspect of the reporting process. An overarching consideration was that in this group of students was one Buddhist, one Hindu, one Muslem, several non-Catholic Christians and ‘not regular Mass attending Catholics’, with ‘practising Catholics’ being in the minority. Comments were tailored to convey delicacy and respect, while at the same time communicating a valid remark, possibly playing a part in increasing parents’ or care-givers’ own interest. The participating teachers appreciated the depth of the comments (see Text Box 68). The end result is presented in Text Box 69, below.

*Text Box 68: Email from participating teacher, commenting on the submitted reports*

**May 30, 2015: Email from participating teacher**

Thank you so much for these excellent comments. They are superb!! They are precise and describe each child so well.

Thank you, also, for doing them so quickly this weekend so that we could finish our comments and add them onto the reports.

In brief, report writing for a teacher using the SALT Approach was possible in this context. Using the SALT Approach, rich data can be obtained, since students are likely to be engaged, albeit on very different levels. While following the school's approach, achievement grades for children in the early years needs to include perceptive observations of children. If they are engaged and involved, the *effort grade* can offer special encouragement. Importantly, the *comments* section can provide a valuable opportunity to convey respect for the child. If this is genuine, parents and guardians are offered a welcoming window into what is happening in religious education. These aspects need to be reflected in the final prototype.

*Text Box 69: End of Term 2 Reports to Parents and Caregivers*

Religious Affiliations Key		
PC: Practising Catholic		NRMAC: Not Regular Mass Attending Catholic,
NCC: Non-Catholic Christian		NBC: Non-Baptised Christian,
B: Buddhist		M: Muslim H: Hindu

Name	Religious Affiliation	Mid-year comment	Ach'ment
Basem A	NCC	Basem is keen to participate in Religion lessons. He is able to explain that Jesus is present in the Eucharist.	b
Azzam A	NRMAC	Azzam participates enthusiastically in Religion lessons. He demonstrates understanding of the link between the Last Supper and the Mass.	c
Barry A	PC	Barry is interested, attentive and focused in Religion lessons. He expresses clear understanding of the link between the Last Supper and the Mass.	b
Namir A	PC	Namir demonstrates a good understanding of the events of Holy Week and is making links with the celebration of the Eucharist.	c
Sean A	NRMAC	Sean displays a growing ability to focus in RE lessons. He demonstrates an understanding that Baptism helps us to become like Jesus.	d
Zoe B	NRMAC	In Religion, Zoe can explain with some detail why Jesus celebrated the Last Supper. She makes thoughtful contributions in discussions.	b
Jamie B	NRMAC	Jamie is attentive in Religion lessons, striving to give his best. He expresses an understanding that united to Jesus we can do many good things.	c
Ben C	NRMAC	Ben is attentive in Religion lessons. He demonstrates a good understanding of the Last Supper and links it with the celebration of Mass.	b
Abrar D	PC	Abrar participates thoughtfully in Religion lessons. She is able to make links between the Last Supper and the Mass.	b
Charmaine E	B	Charmaine makes every effort in Religion lessons. She can recall gospel events when Jesus showed his love for others.	c
Clara H	PC	Clara participates keenly in Religion lessons. She can explain how Jesus offered His life for all people when he died on the cross.	c
Giorgio I	NRMAC	Giorgio is most attentive in Religion lessons. He demonstrates understanding of the link between the events of Holy Week and the Mass.	b
Ahmed K	M	Ahmed expresses great interest in Religion lessons. He participates thoughtfully in the variety of prayer experiences these lessons offer.	c

Celia K	NBC	Celia displays a deep understanding in Religion lessons. She can explain that united to Jesus we can do good.	b	c
Fleur K	NRMAC	Fleur can explain in detail that Jesus gave himself for all people through the Last Supper and His sacrifice on the Cross, and that Jesus becomes present at Mass.	a	c
Trinh L	PC	Trinh participates enthusiastically in Religion lessons. She recognises that united to Jesus we can do good.	c	c
Sandy L	PC	Sandy works enthusiastically in Religion lessons. She demonstrates an understanding that Jesus' death on the cross brings God's grace to us.	b	c
Kafil L	PC	Kafil is keen to learn in Religion lessons. He demonstrates knowledge of Jesus' death, resurrection and ascension into heaven.	b	c
Chelsea M	NRMAC	Chelsea participates keenly in Religion lessons. She can link the Last Supper with the Celebration of the Eucharist.	c	c
Gajara M	H	Gajara is attentive in Religion lessons. She has been able to identify Jesus as the Lamb of God and light of the world.	a	c
Marisa M	NRMAC	Marisa participates with quiet, focused enthusiasm in Religion lessons. She has explored with attention the events of Holy Week and the Last Supper.	b	c
Tyrone N	NRMAC	Tyrone is attentive in Religion lessons. He demonstrates understanding that Jesus changed bread and wine into his Body and Blood at the Last Supper.	c	c
Michael S	NRMAC	Michael is engaged in Religion lessons. He demonstrates clear knowledge of the events surrounding the death and resurrection of Jesus.	c	c
Trinity S	NRMAC	Trinity works with quiet, focused attention in Religion lessons. She is able to explain that Jesus gave the gift of himself in the Last Supper and on the Cross.	c	c
Mutasim M	NCC	Mutasim participates keenly in Religion lessons. He understands that Jesus gave himself in a special way at the Last Supper.	c	c
Mary W	NRMAC	Mary participates well in Religion lessons. She displays a growing understanding of Jesus as God the Son, who suffered, died and rose from the dead.	c	c

#### 6.2.3.2.4 Concluding thoughts of the second iteration

The second iteration explored two themes relating to Lens 3's element of 'Systemic Accountability, namely *assessment* and *reporting*. Ways for appropriately assessing were trialled, and suitable reporting was built upon those assessments. The SALT Approach offered ways to personalise assessment and reporting, but there are challenges for 'time-poor' teachers. Trialling assessment possibilities would continue in the third iteration. The theme of reporting was considered saturated, and it continued along the same lines in the third iteration.

#### 6.2.3.3 The third iterative cycle

During the third iterative cycle, the theme of *assessment* continued, involving a closer study of the assessment rubrics for *Sharing Our Story*, and evaluating the SALT Approach's compatibility. The theme *Matching Parramatta Diocese's Religious Education Curriculum Requirements* was also explored. The first prototype's teaching programme was reviewed, and 're-packaged' to reflect the school's *Sharing Our Story* programming structure, in anticipation of the study continuing in 2016, not as part of this doctoral study, but as research conducted for Parramatta Catholic Education.

Third iteration explorations, trials and refinements for *Systemic Accountability* are summarised in Table 49, below.

Table 48: Third iteration, Lens 3 summary

<b>Element: Systemic Accountability</b>	
Exploration, trials and refinements in the third iteration	
<b>Assessment:</b>	
<i>Continue with:</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Student verbalisations</li><li>• Written work and labelled illustrations</li><li>• Formal assessment</li></ul>
<i>Furthermore:</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Using <i>Sharing Our Story</i> assessment rubrics</li></ul>
<b>Reporting</b>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Saturated</li></ul>
Matching Parramatta Diocese's Religious Education Curriculum Requirements and Content	

- *Meeting Programming Criteria:* Programming: Repackaging the SALT Approach using *Sharing Our Story* Unit model.
- Matching Outcomes
- Express Learning Intentions and Success Criteria
- Chart Scope and sequence

#### 6.2.3.3.1 Theme (c) Matching Parramatta Diocese’s religious education curriculum requirements and content

The theme ‘Matching Parramatta Diocese’s Religious Education Curriculum Requirements’ was significant, all the more emphasised by the participating teachers, who were accustomed to *meeting criteria in programming*, as stipulated by *Sharing Our Story*. The SALT Approach would need to demonstrate the ability to meet *Sharing Our Story* outcomes, describe matching *learning intentions and success criteria* and meet *scope and sequence* obligations.

Accountability in terms of *meeting criteria in programming* faced issues on a number of levels. This particularly came to light through the exercise of matching and re-packaging the SALT Approach so as to conform to *Sharing Our Story* requirements. The task was to trial a re-packaging of the SALT Approach programming, while retaining its own integrity, in a way that was acceptable to the Religious Education Coordinator and also familiar to teachers. The work covered in the first term of the school year was used, which encompassed Lent and Easter. In terms of *Sharing Our Story* this was addressed in two units, *Units 12C3* and *12C4*. The school’s *Sharing Our Story* programming template was used, and everything that was compatible with the SALT Approach was retained. It was developed in preparation for the first term of the following year, 2016, when it was likely that the participating teachers would teach the programme, mentored and coached by the researcher. While the format remained the same, there were changes. These included:

- A term focus, rather than distinct units.
- The content expressed in ways reflecting the SALT Approach.
- Additional sections were added, such as *Visible Learning and Assessment Opportunities*.



- The section of *Sharing Our Story*'s 'Curriculum Links' were left in place, but not filled, leaving them for teachers to add to, as they saw fit.
- The 'Student Context' and 'Developing the Partnership' sections were left as found in the *Sharing Our Story* programme, pending development by the teachers.
- The actual weekly programme was formatted for the SALT Approach and significantly distinct from that of *Sharing Our Story*. (This changed format, though further refined, is the one currently used at the school, in 2017). It was more detailed and date specific than the *Sharing Our Story* programme structure.

For *meeting 'Sharing Our Story' outcomes*, several factors emerged. From a 'grass roots' perspective, the contemporary inappropriateness of some *Sharing Our Story* unit outcomes became clear. The student/ family profile of systemic Catholic schools had altered since 1989, and this was reflected in the school. The wording of some outcomes assumed that the majority of parents were committed Catholics, and this was no longer common. Consequently, assessable outcomes that presumed the attendance of Sunday Mass could not be used *per se*.

The outcomes described in Year Two's *Unit 12C6: Reconciliation* was also somewhat misplaced in the current climate, since the students were invited to take part in the *Parish Sacramental Programme for Reconciliation* in Year 3. Kindergarten and Year 1 *Sharing Our Story* units indicated, in their *Theological Content Sections*, aspects that would gradually prepare students for the content of Year Two's Reconciliation Unit. However, the entering knowledge and understanding of students in this study indicated that presumptions could not be made. These students seemed to have no understanding of the name, nature and purpose of the Sacraments and there was a need to establish some understanding of the sacraments in general, and of baptism in particular, before proceeding to the Sacrament of Reconciliation. This required an understanding of 'grace', of humanity's damaged relationship with God, of the reason for the suffering death and resurrection of Jesus, and of the ultimate purpose of life. Consequently, the researcher was only able to address the concept of forgiveness very generally, using scriptural passages, and leaving aside the learning outcomes that were more specifically relating to the Sacrament of Reconciliation for the following year.

Year Two’s *Sharing Our Story* Unit Outcomes included five outcomes overall that were more difficult for the researcher to identify as having been achieved. These are listed in Table 50, below, together with an indication of the perceived difficulty.

Table 49: *Sharing Our Story* Year Two outcomes perceived as inappropriate in the current setting

<b><i>Sharing Our Story</i> Unit Outcome</b>	<b>Researcher’s Comment</b>
<p><b>Unit 12C1: Jesus Helps Me to Love</b></p> <p><i>Outcome 4:</i></p> <p>Appreciate that as part of God’s family they are called to seek justice, truth and hope.</p>	<p>Following on from Outcome 1 of the unit, the inclusive language of this outcome implies students are baptised.</p> <p>(<i>Outcome 1: Recognise</i> Baptism as a ritual of initiation into God’s family, where they are called to love, share with, listen to and accept others)</p>
<p><b>Unit 12C4: Easter: Jesus is with Us</b></p> <p><i>Outcome 1.</i></p> <p>Recall and share stories about their family’s and parish’s celebration of Easter.</p>	<p>Challenging because many of the families do not, in fact, experience this.</p>
<p><b>Unit 12C6: Reconciliation</b></p> <p>Outcome 3. Make links between their experiences of reconciliation and the elements of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.</p> <p>Outcome 4. <i>Appreciate</i> that they experience God’s forgiveness in the Church’s celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation.</p>	<p>These two outcomes presume that students are already familiar with the concept and nature of sacraments and the structure the Sacrament of Reconciliation.</p> <p>In addition, the inclusive language (‘<b>they</b> experience God’s forgiveness in the Church’s Celebration of the Sacrament of Reconciliation)</p>
<p><b>Unit 12C7: The Eucharist: Celebrating God’s Love</b></p> <p>Outcome 4. Identify ways in which they and their families can celebrate Sunday as a holy day, especially through their celebration of the Eucharist.</p>	<p>Difficult to grade a student on this outcome if families are not committed to Catholic practice</p>

However, most of the significant outcomes were matched by student responses, while others were met indirectly. Table 51 summarises the ‘match-ability’ of Year Two *Sharing Our Story* outcomes with the SALT Approach. Text Box 70 presents samples of student responses matching specific *Sharing Our Story* outcomes throughout Year Two.

Table 50: Sharing Our Story Outcomes matched with the SALT Approach

Outcomes	Matched	Matched indirectly	Total possible
First 'warm-up' outcomes	4	4	8
Main outcomes	22	1	23
Outcomes considered currently inappropriate for Year 2	0	2	2
Overall Match	26 matched	7 Matched indirectly	33 total

Text Box 70: Samples of student response effectively matching Year Two's Sharing Our Story Unit Outcomes

Year 2 Sharing Our Story Unit Outcomes
<p>12C1: Jesus Helps me to Love</p> <p>By the end of this unit students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>recognise Baptism as a ritual of initiation into God's family, where they are called to love, share with, listen to and accept others.</li> <li>recall gospel accounts and parables which demonstrate how Jesus encouraged others to grow.</li> <li>recognise that Jesus calls them to love one another; and list ways of responding to this call.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Recognise Baptism as a ritual of initiation into God's family, where they are called to love, share with, listen to and accept others:</i></p> <p><b>Marisa:</b> Here is my picture. It is about baptism, when the babies are getting a light in them, and God.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Does it change the way you are?</p> <p><b>Marisa:</b> Yes, it's like you are getting a light and you will never be, like, the bad person you used to be. And I am already baptised, but sometimes, I get into fights...</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Yes, so then what have we got to do?</p> <p><b>Marisa:</b> We have got to make different choices. I never really mean to do them. It because, like, when I am watching something, and my sisters are making a lot of noise... you know, when someone hits you and you just want to hit them back... but I don't do it...</p>
<p><i>The Story of Zacchaeus:</i></p> <p><b>Sean:</b> This man got all the people's money and he gives it back after he meets Jesus. He climbed up a tree when Jesus came, because he wanted to see Jesus.</p> <p><b>Researcher:</b> Does knowing Jesus help us to be better person, like that man?</p> <p><b>Sean:</b> Yes. I was being naughty then I recognised that I was being bad, and I changed my mind.</p>
<p><i>Multiplication of Loaves and Fish:</i></p> <p><b>Clara:</b> This is a story fish and bread. So, what happened was the people were very hungry. They wanted to eat, but there wasn't enough, so a boy came up to Jesus with fish and some bread and gave it to Jesus and Jesus blessed it and there was lots and lots, even more than enough for all of the children and the adults ... 5000 people.</p>
<p><i>Responding to the call:</i></p> <p><b>Abrar:</b> I try to be just like Jesus and help everybody that is upset or hurt.</p> <p><b>Clara:</b> (Being a Christian) means you have to listen to Jesus and trust him because he is always</p>

right.

**Kafil:** (*in journal*) I will love other people by helping them. I will listen to your words by praying, then I can learn to do this. (love one another)

**Fleur:** (*in journal*) Dear Jesus, I think the people in the world should be better people and behave. Help me to be good. Thank you for my life and my family and friends.

**Fleur:** (*in conversation*) What's a special word for being close to God?

**Researcher:** A saint.

**Fleur:** Trying to be like God...I want to be a Jesus person. But I don't know how.

**Researcher:** How do you think you could?

**Fleur:** To be always caring and to say kind things to others...

### **12C2: Lent, Being Alone**

By the end of this unit students should be able to

- appreciate that Jesus prayed to God his father.
- identify prayer as a means of preparing to celebrate Easter.
- recognise Lent as a particular time for repentance.
- participate in a variety of prayerful experiences.

**Fleur:** This is the Mount of Olives where Jesus prayed (*explaining the model of Jerusalem*)

**Kafil: Journal Notes Terms 3-4**

'I am the bread of life.' Has drawn a picture with captions: 'Jesus prayed', 'a little boy came with two loaves of bread and two fish, and Jesus prayed for the bread and fish'

### **12C3: Easter Triduum: Never Alone**

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

- explain why prayer is important in their relationship with God and how prayer can help them in their daily life.
- participate in a variety of prayer experiences related to the celebration of Holy Week.

### **October 8, 2015**

**Fleur:** The way to get to know Jesus is to talk to them, with God and Jesus, in your heart. You get to know them in your heart. God speaks to you in a way that's not talking. Like you and me, in person. But he speaks to you in a different way. He speaks to me, like, he fixes things. Like when I ask him 'please don't let her die.' He talks in a way that he makes it possible, because he can. for her not to die. He answers when he fixes things.

### **12C4: Easter season: Jesus is with Us**

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

- recall and share stories about their family's and parish's celebration of Easter.
- recount stories from John's Gospel which describe the disciples' encounters with the Risen Jesus.
- name ways in which Christians encounter the Risen Christ in their lives.

### **Azzam: Term 2**

**Researcher:** Why did he die on the cross?

**Azzam:** Because he is a King and he asked to be a man. In the garden, he got three people near him, his friends.

This (picture) is when Jesus died on the cross and they arrested him for nothing. And he was a king. He died for us. His friends said they would die for him but they didn't. They ran away from Jesus.

Then he went in the tomb and he was there for three days then he rised (rose) from the dead. And when he rised (rose), God made him come out. And the angel pushed the rock. Mary and the other Marys went in the morning to see if Jesus was in the tomb and he wasn't there. Then Jesus came to them. He showed himself to the Marys. Jesus then went to other people.

**Namir** (*writing a letter telling a friend what Jesus means to him, Term 3*)

Dear Basem. I think Jesus is the best because he loves everybody, he is everywhere, Jesus is on the cross watching. He is even in our hearts. Jesus is important because he is around us, even when in heaven.

**Sean** (*Term 1 Journal, scribed by teacher*) Jesus tells us to be good and listen to big people and teachers.

**Sandy** (*Journal Term 4*) God created us to love him. Jesus came to earth to show us the way. He has made it possible to go to heaven.

**Abrar** (*10 September reads what she has written to camera*) I will love Jesus because he is really important to us and he is the lamp of God in our hearts.

### 12C5: The Pentecost Story

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

- recall the events of the Pentecost story.
- explain how the disciples were empowered by the Spirit in the Pentecost Story.
- recognise that Pentecost is the celebration of Jesus' gift of the Holy Spirit.
- grow in awareness and appreciation of the Church as a gathering of people who celebrate and proclaim the message of Jesus.

**Kafil:** This is a picture of when the disciples got the Holy Spirit ... there... (*touches back of his head*) ... that God sent after Jesus died. It helped them to be good like Jesus said to be... and we say it when we say 'in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit'... (*He puts down the picture and makes the sign of the cross.*)

*How should we be with other people because of Jesus?*

**Celia:** We can, we can, we can actually be like Jesus. We can be Jesus, like that sign over there where Jesus is holding someone it says: 'I will always be with you'. We can be with our parents, our brothers, our sisters we can always stay with them no matter what.

**Ahmed:** But who *is* Jesus, who is God, who is all of the saints?

**Celia:** A saint is a special person like Mrs Fuller said on the microphone: we are all becoming saints.

### 12C6: Reconciliation: Belonging to a Forgiving Community

By the end of this unit students should be able to

- describe how their choices affect their relationships with God and others.
- explain how God is like the shepherd and the woman who lost her coin.

#### September 19, 2015

**Madison:** This is a story about a girl who loses her coin and finds it again...and invites and calls her mates and friends. She wore it at her wedding and the coin was lost and found again...

**Researcher:** How might that relate to our life?

**Madison:** Kind of special... like if you lose your parents in a grocery market and can't find your way back and but the light of God guides you... your parents would be ... a bit disappointed because you weren't following them...

**Researcher:** So how can that be like God and us?

**Madison:** So, like, if we stop following in his footsteps we can get lost in lots of shades of darkness...so you are not following in his footsteps and doing bad things ... so, let's say you are spray painting someone's house and you are not following Jesus' footsteps and God's. It's like you get lost in something...

**Researcher:** And what if you found your way back to him?

**Madison:** You would be quite happy.... Very, very happy...

#### Nov 23, 2016

**Abrar:** This is a picture about a lady that she lost her coin from a band that was around her head.

She lost a coin from it and it was only ten coins. She was sweeping and looking for it. When she found it, she told her friends and she is going to put it back on her band.

**Researcher:** Do you remember what he said at the end of the story?

**Abrar:** It's in that book over there... (*she reads it again*)

**Abrar:** The lady was really happy. Jesus is telling us what the angels do. They don't sing. They ... ohhh... so they are like really happy...But... I don't know what repent means...

**Researcher:** It means to be sorry ...

**Abrar:** ohhh... so one person is sorry for sinning. It means that that they are, like, happy.

**Researcher:** What about when you do something wrong?

**Abrar:** Like fight with my sister?

**Researcher:** Do you make up?

**Abrar:** Yes...

**Researcher:** So, what happens in heaven?

**Abrar:** That the angels are getting, like, happier...

### 12C7: Eucharist

By the end of this unit students should be able to

- identify and explain reasons why family and friends celebrate special meals with each other.
- identify and explain reasons why Jesus celebrated special meals with others, especially the Last Supper.
- describe ways in which Jesus is present in the Church's celebration of God's wonderful love.
- identify ways in which they and their families can celebrate Sunday as a holy day, especially through their celebration of the Eucharist.

*November 17, 2015*

**Antonio:** This picture is when Jesus and his disciples had the last supper and when he said 'this is my body' and the wine is his blood. And he blessed it. He made the disciples believe in him. He did it so he can live in the bodies of other people and make them a better person and make them believe in him. After that Jesus carried a cross to the top of the hill and he got crucified.

**Gajara:** This is a picture of the Last Supper when Jesus had his last feast with his disciples. What he means is he takes bread and wine and says special words and turns the bread into his body and the wine into his blood and he tells his disciples to drink it. He said 'take this and drink it, this is my body and my blood'... He knows that the next day he will be crucified on the cross...So then, yes, the Last Supper is really about what happens in the Mass and what the priest does in the Church to other people. Jesus also told his disciples on the same day that he taught them how to do this (*epiclesis sign*) and on top of the wine you guys also do this (*epiclesis sign*) like blessing, to make the body and blood of Jesus.

(*Note: Gajara is Hindu*)

*Identify ways in which they and their families can celebrate Sunday as a holy day, especially through their celebration of the Eucharist:*

*November 17, 2015*

**Chris:** Do we become part of him too?

**Antonio:** Yes, because God is the one who created us and Jesus is one of the persons in God. The Holy Spirit and the Person ... the sign of the cross... the Father the Son and the Holy Spirit

**Chris:** Are you saying we participate in that?

**Antonio:** Well, older people do, when they go to church and take the bread the wine...

### 12C10: Advent and Christmas Unit

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

- recall and reflect upon their experiences of waiting and be able to relate this to the readings and spirit of Advent.
- recall biblical accounts of how people from the Bible including Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men prepared for the birth of Jesus.
- identify ways in which their families receive and spread God's love, peace and joy as they celebrate the birthday of Jesus each Christmas.

*April, 2015*

**Researcher:** Why did God choose Mary?

**Kafil:** Because she was good and she was listening to the voice of God.

**Researcher:** And if she hadn't listened to the voice of God?

**Kafil:** She wouldn't be chosen.

*November 19, 2015*

**Celia:** This (picture) is about when the wise men saw the star... I mean the shepherds, saw the star... the angel came to them and said 'a saviour has been born and you must go to see him'.

**Researcher:** where did they find him?

**Celia:** In Bethlehem. in a manger: which is what animals eat out of. It is in a stable, a really poor place, and God sent him there because I think he needed, because he was king, he needed to wake up in joy. He was a special king. Not like the king or queen of England.

### **12CE1: Mission: Loving God and others like Jesus**

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

- Recall examples of loving actions.
- Recount 'Jesus and the Blind Beggar' (Lk 18: 35-43) and 'Jesus and Zacchaeus' (Lk 19: 1-10).
- Identify ways they can contribute to the mission of Jesus by loving God and people in their class, school, family, local community and people throughout the world.

*November 23, 2015*

*Recall examples of loving actions:*

**Jacob:** If someone is hurt, you can take them over to the teacher and that would be a great moment in your life. When I was playing handball once I was nice to Mia so she would get a goal

**Abrar:** It was actually a nice 'God Moment', and he was telling Mia to aim straight and she got it.

*Recount 'Jesus and the Blind Beggar' (Lk 18: 35-43) and 'Jesus and Zacchaeus' (Lk 19: 1-10):*

*May 28: Blind Bartimaeus*

**Beau:** Because he is the Son of God and he can heal anyone and he can heal the people who are blind.

**Ben:** He was blind and Jesus saw him and healed him

**Celia:** God did a miracle when Jesus was born because Jesus was God's son and Jesus does miracles as well and he made the blind man all better, because he could do a miracle like God...

**Fleur:** ...because he is caring...

*Identify ways they can contribute to the mission of Jesus by loving God and people in their class, school, family, local community and people throughout the world:*

*April 22, 2015*

**Abrar:** Miss Irwin, when I grow up I want to help people just like Jesus and God. When people are poor I am going to give them food so they don't die and I am going to build houses for them...

**Kafil (Tesm 3 Journal):**

Picture of Jesus healing a deaf man with caption: ephthe (ephphatha)

'Jesus is healing the death (deaf) and dum (dumb) man. I think Jesus would like me to do something good like helping other people.'

Providing a *scope and sequencing chart* was seen as a compliance issue, with the school expected to submit this for diocesan level accountability. It was addressed

retrospectively in the third iteration. In terms of acceptability for the 2015 data-gathering year, a certain leniency mitigated the need to exactly match *Sharing Our Story's* Scope and Sequence. While this was acceptable for 2015, aligning the SALT Approach with the scope and sequencing of *Sharing Our Story* would require further consideration in the final prototype, and would be trialled in the year following this study. The email exchanges in Text Box 71 illustrate the concern of participating teachers with regard to scope and sequencing and the Religious Education Coordinator's response.

*Text Box 71: Email exchange between one of the participating teachers, the Religious Education Coordinator and the researcher addressing the Scope and Sequence issue*

<p>Hi Anne Marie and ... (Religious Education Coordinator),</p> <p>We have to complete the 'Scope and Sequence' for our RE. How do I do this? I started to do it but there are some things I don't have.</p> <p>Please have a look at the attachment that I have started to complete and advise on how to complete it.</p> <p>Thanks, (Teacher A)</p>
<p>Hi ... (Teacher A)</p> <p>On a purely functional note, I would see Year Two in total as being in the one document according to <i>Sharing Our Story</i>. The agreement is that the research work covers all Y2 <i>Sharing Our Story</i> content (and more).</p> <p>For this reason, the <i>Scope and Sequence</i> is the same. It was also agreed that the content may not be covered in the same term. I hope this makes sense and is helpful.</p> <p>In summary, all this 'fill in detail' for the scope and sequence is taken from <i>Sharing Our Story</i>.</p> <p>I hope this helps.</p> <p>Kind thanks,</p> <p>... (Religious Education Coordinator)</p>
<p>Hi Anne-Marie,</p> <p>Teacher A has asked me again for clarification for scope and sequence for RE for Year 2, because of the Research Project. I am saying the content is the same, the methodology is different so we use the same Scope and Sequence as an official record of what has been taught for the purpose of compliance.</p> <p>Does this seem reasonable and adequate to you?</p> <p>Is it a matter of dating things differently on this scope and sequence? Let's chat on Wednesday to clarify what we may need to do.</p> <p>Gracious thanks.</p> <p>... (Religious Education Coordinator)</p>

*Learning Intentions* and *Success Criteria* for religious education were being explored and refined by both the diocese and the school in 2015. It was the focus of the



school's *Staff Professional Learning* in May, 2015. Clarifications relating to *Learning Intentions* and *Success Criteria* in religious education had recently been introduced. They incorporated the classical three levels of reading comprehension: reading on the line, between the lines, and beyond the line. These were applied to students' learning, understanding and application with regard to Scripture, and Catholic Church Teachings and Tradition. Table 52 summarises the approach.

Table 51: The three levels of Scripture interpretation adopted and recommended by Parramatta's religious education team

Levels	General application	Scriptural Interpretation	Involves
<b>Level 1</b>	'On the line': Literal understanding	Aligns with literal understanding of the scriptural text.	The who, what, where, when, why''  Requires understanding of the context within which biblical writers wrote.
<b>Level 2</b>	'Between the lines': Inferential understanding	Aligns with the three spiritual senses of scriptural understanding: allegorical, moral and anagogical.	Inferring the messages and themes of Scripture.  Includes sacraments and Catholic Church traditions, beliefs and practices.
<b>Level 3</b>	'Beyond the line': Application to the Student's world	Involves acting on what has been understood, applying it to one's life.	Involves a reflection on a) one's relationship with Christ, the sacraments and the Catholic Church (allegorical sense applied) b) one's choices and behaviour (moral sense) or how they view the joy of heaven (anagogical)

This concept was applied to *Learning Intentions* and *Success Criteria*, with the intention of building up clear indications of what was to be learned, and what connections could be made between Scripture and Church Traditions. It was intended to empower students to know what they have learned and how they could demonstrate their learning.

The *Learning Intentions* were statements that articulated what the teacher wanted the students to know, do, or understand. In the Parramatta Diocese, they were derived from the *Outcomes* and *Theological Background* found in the *Sharing Our Story*

Units, The *Success Criteria* addressed the three levels of meaning, and were indications that the Learning Intentions had been achieved. They were to be written in student friendly language and be a series of 'I can' statements, ideally co-constructed with the students. An example of how this looks in practice is presented in Table 53.

Table 52: Sample learning intentions and success criteria applied to the Year Two Unit 12C1

<b>Year Two Unit: 12C1: Jesus helps me to love</b>
<p>Outcomes of the Unit:</p> <p>By the end of this Unit students should be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• recognise Baptism as a ritual of initiation into God's family, where they are called to love, share with, listen to and accept others.</li> <li>• recall gospel accounts and parables which demonstrate how Jesus encouraged others to grow.</li> <li>• recognise that Jesus calls them to love one another; and list ways of responding to this call.</li> <li>• Able to appreciate that as part of God's family they are called to seek justice, truth and hope</li> </ul>
<p><i>Learning Intention:</i> Know that Baptism is the way into God's family, where everyone in the family have to love and care for one another.</p> <p><i>Success Criteria:</i> I can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• explain that through baptism we become part of God's family.</li> <li>• reflect on ways we can show love and accept others just as Jesus shows us.</li> <li>• talk about how God becoming a man made it possible for us to be part of God's family.</li> </ul>
<p><i>Learning Intention:</i> To be able to give examples of bible stories and explain how Jesus teaches us how to be a better person, in the story.</p> <p><i>Success Criteria:</i> I can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Retell the story of the Visitation</li> <li>• Identify ways that Mary showed her love for Elizabeth</li> <li>• Retell the miracle of Jesus healing the 10 lepers.</li> <li>• retell the story of the Good Samaritan</li> <li>• identify Jesus' message of helping others</li> </ul>
<p><i>Learning Intention:</i> Understand the loving duty of a Christian towards others.</p> <p><i>Success Criteria:</i> I can</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• List ways I can follow Jesus by being good, kind and fair to others</li> </ul>

Applying *Learning Intentions* and *Success Criteria* to the SALT Approach, while not impossible, held its challenges. In the data-gathering year in particular, with its focus on ascertaining whether the SALT Approach could work with children and yield results over the year, being constrained to Unit Based *learning intentions* and *success criteria* introduced on a weekly basis, was not, according to the perception of the researcher, possible. There was the risk of stripping freedom of choice, harnessing

the mind, limiting learning and reflecting time-specific topics in a restrictive lockstep approach. The question was ‘*could it be appropriately incorporated?*’.

The *learning intentions* and *success criteria* were to be presented and discussed with students, and prominently displayed on a weekly basis. They were very ‘Unit driven’ and time specific, intended to assist a student’s own awareness of learning, offering the opportunity to articulate that learning. At the school, articulation was expected when, for example, the school leadership team or any of its members ‘popped in’ to the classroom. This could present challenges for a teacher fully adopting the SALT Approach in its current form, since learning and response are intended to take place over time, allowing students to ponder, to revisit, and so to deepen in understanding and application. Topics are introduced, and explored, but during *choice times* students are not expected to be strictly bound to achieving the outcomes of a specific unit.

However, there were advantages for the SALT Approach, especially considering the need to provide boundaries for students within the school context. Consequently, over the course of the third iteration, *learning intentions* and *success criteria* were introduced, with thought given to their wording. In addition, the session structure incorporated a new step, that of the required completion of an *activity* prior to moving on to making choices. This activity focused on the *learning intention* and its matching *success criteria*.

In summary, matching Parramatta Diocese’s Religious Education Curriculum requirements and content is possible, but requires time, skill and depth of perception of faith. The outcomes-based and unit-based approach of the Parramatta Diocese is unlikely to change and ways of incorporating outcomes into the SALT Approach’s prototype needs to be considered. The unit-based approach is likely to restrict the effectiveness of the SALT Approach, since it requires outcomes to be addressed within the framework of the unit in question. Non-unit based outcomes would offer greater flexibility, since they can be achieved in any (appropriate) order and open the possibility of being driven by student interest. Another consideration is that if a school adopts the SALT Approach, extending it from Kindergarten to Year 6, some aspects would be covered in Kindergarten and Year One, obviating the need to

'overpack' the Year Two curriculum, as occurred in the research data gathering year. The scope and sequencing compliance needs were not truly addressed in this study, and this aspect requires further consideration. The meeting of expectations relating to *learning intentions* and *success criteria* has been demonstrated, but again, further detailed analysis and refinement is needed.

An emerging consideration is that the SALT Approach could offer a methodology that incorporates not only essential pedagogical practises, but also an andragogical *companion leadership* approach that would lead to teachers learning and growing through the process of teaching and learning.

#### 6.2.3.3.2 Final reflections from the third iteration to inform the final prototype

The third iteration explored findings relating to the last theme with the single element of 'Systemic Accountability', theme (c) 'Matching Parramatta Diocese's Religious Education Curriculum Requirements and Content'. Repackaging the SALT Approach to meet the requirements involved the exploring the possibility of:

- programming in ways acceptable and familiar to executive and teachers
- matching the *Sharing Our Story* outcomes with evidence of student learning;
- providing compliance in terms of scope and sequence charts
- incorporating *learning intentions* and *success criteria*.

While headway was made in terms of understanding the extent of these aspects, they need to be more fully explored in the development of the final prototype.

#### 6.3.4 Phase 4: Reflections informing the final prototype

##### 6.3.4.1 Element: Systemic accountability

That the SALT Approach can demonstrate systemic accountability is a crucial factor. G.K Chesterton coined a maxim "if a thing is worth doing, it is worth doing badly" (Chesterton, 1912, p. 199). In other words, it may not be possible to do a thing perfectly, but if the idea is very good, then even its partial achievement is worthwhile. This can aptly be applied to the SALT Approach. It may be imperfectly

applied, but it cannot fail to achieve some good. While this requires some thought and planning, it is by no means an insurmountable obstacle. Following the identified themes of (a) assessment, (b) reporting and (c) matching Parramatta Diocese’s Religious Education Curriculum Requirements and Content, Table 54 summarises essential considerations to inform the final prototype.

Table 53: Final prototype inclusions for the element ‘Systemic Accountability’

<b>Element: Systemic Accountability</b>
<p><b>Assessment Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Practical and viable recommendations for effective assessment procedures, encompassing oral, written and creative student communication.</li> <li>b) Include the use of focus group discussions and individual conversations</li> <li>c) Filming and audio recording, harnessing the ever-increasing access to digital recording devices.</li> <li>d) The support of suitably qualified volunteers. (i.e. persons with a level of faith commitment.)</li> <li>e) A range of formal assessments samples.</li> <li>f) Suggestions for the timing of formal or written assessment tasks.</li> <li>g) Samples of Marking guidelines and assessment rubrics tailored to reflect the SALT Approach.</li> <li>h) Suggestions for addressing requirements likely within a systemic school setting.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Reporting Support</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Suggestions for gathering and collating student data for reporting purposes in terms of achievement and effort.</li> <li>b) Recommendations and suggestions for providing effective comments, especially considering the varying levels of faith commitment, and students of other faiths.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Matching Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum Requirements and Content</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Address the issue of programming, offering samples of how this can be achieved.</li> <li>b) Address the issue of meeting outcomes-based expectations, providing a range of acceptable student responses.</li> <li>c) Develop a viable scope and sequencing chart</li> <li>d) Provide <i>SALT Approach</i> guidelines for preparing effective <i>Learning Intentions</i> and <i>Success Criteria</i>.</li> <li>e) Provide an outline and charts demonstrating how the SALT Approach could function within a variety of systemic and school settings, albeit in sometimes limited ways.</li> </ul>

### 6.3.5 Summary and conclusions

#### 6.3.5.1 Contribution to theory: changing the theoretical landscape

This Chapter contributes to the theoretical landscape by demonstrating how the SALT Approach can extend beyond theory and move towards practice within a school setting. It explored a range of new ways in which an approach based on Cavalletti’s *Good Shepherd Catechesis* can be adapted to meet systemic requirements, demonstrating that such an approach can find a place in the contemporary educational landscape.

#### 6.3.5.2 Contribution to the prototype

The contributions of the findings relating to systemic accountability are significant in that they clarify accountability issues and offer suggestions for assessment and reporting, as well as ways in which systemic requirements can be met. In these matters, the final prototype is limited to laying the groundwork for further studies.

This chapter concludes those relating to findings. The following chapter will be the final one, presenting recommendations and final conclusions.

## Chapter 7: Discussion of Findings, Implications and Conclusions

### 7.1 Introduction

The goal of this study was to design and refine a prototype using O’Shea’s Mystagogical Catechetical Method. The approach was called the Scripture and Liturgy Teaching Approach or SALT Approach. It did so by following the design-based research study model. It was a qualitative study, with data being gathered over three iterations spanning a full academic year. The first prototype was trialled and refined with a Year 2 Class in a Catholic primary school of the Parramatta Diocese, Sydney, Australia. It was an ambitious project and addressed several key aspects, grouped under three lenses. These lenses were (a) adaptations needed for the successful implementation of the SALT Approach in a Catholic school in the light of empowering and disempowering factors affecting today’s child, (b) equipping schools and teachers to implement the SALT Approach, and (c) systemic accountability. Table 55, below, outlines the three lenses, together with their elements and subsequent themes.

The first chapter identified the challenges. The second chapter reviewed the literature. The third chapter provided the research design. Chapters Four, Five and Six presented the findings.

This final chapter will draw together the findings, suggest implications and present final conclusions. Sections 7.2, 7.3 and 7.4 of this chapter will summarise, reflect upon and discuss the journey through each of the three lenses. Since this design-based study is the first empirical study that focuses on an implementation of O’Shea’s Mystagogical Catechetical Method, with no other local or global studies with which to compare the findings, comparisons will be anchored in the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. Following this, Section 7.5 will discuss the implications, proposing possible ways forward. Finally, Section 7.6 will be dedicated to the concluding thoughts.

Table 54: Overview of research framework

Lenses	Elements	Identified Themes	
<b>Lens 1:</b> <i>Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today's child within the SALT Approach</i>	Element 1 Behaviour and self-control issues	Theme 1 School and classroom environment impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning	
		Theme 2 Personal, family and cultural issues impacting on behaviour and self-regulated learning	
		Theme 3 Attentiveness despite disruptive situations	
	Element 2 Literacy and Communication Skills	Theme 1 Limited reading and writing literacy skills	
		Theme 2 Children display strong verbal competency	
		Theme 3 Children use auditory, visual and kinaesthetic senses in preference to reading	
	Element 3 The spiritual nature of today's child	Theme 1 (of 1) Children are spiritually inclined and search for truth	
	<b>Lens 2:</b> <i>Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach</i>	Element 1 Equipping and maintaining the learning space	Theme 1 Preparation and trialling of recommended materials
			Theme 2 Additional resources
Theme 3 Preparation and maintenance of the environment			
Element 2 Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach		Theme 1 Pedagogy that permits pondering	
		Theme 2 Pedagogy that respects the person	
		Theme 3 Pedagogy that provides for freedom of choice	
Element 3 Teacher expertise		Theme 1 Teacher knowledge and understanding	
		Theme 2 Lived commitment	
<b>Lens 3:</b> <i>Achieving the accountability requirements of a Diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach</i>		Element 1 (of 1) Systemic Accountability	Theme 1 Assessment



## 7.2 Lens 1: Exploring the Empowering and Disempowering Factors Affecting Today's Child within the SALT Approach

### 7.2.1 Element 1: Behaviour and self-control issues hampering self-regulated learning

#### a) Preparing for the journey: behaviour, self-control and self-regulated learning

Before embarking on the journey, the researcher explored the terrain through a comprehensive literature review. Student self-regulation was an essential aspect of the SALT Approach (see 2.3.5). On the other hand, contemporary research indicated that student behaviour is a significant issue in many schools today, and is a major cause, inter alia, of teacher burnout (see 2.4.3.3). Three themes were pinpointed relating to behaviour and self-regulation, and these were (i) *school and classroom environment*, (ii) *personal, family and cultural issues*, and (iii) *attentiveness despite disruptive situations* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). These themes were considered through the three iterations.

#### b) The journey through the iterations: behaviour, self-control and self-regulated learning

At the beginning of the first iteration (Term 1), there was a jolting disconnect between recommendations and the actual *school and classroom environment*. O'Shea's recommendations for establishing behavioural expectations were useful, but general (O'Shea, in press). The researcher's own presumption that the students would quickly respond to the holistic nature of the SALT Approach with a prayerful, reflective disposition initially proved false, and addressing behaviours that were hijacking sessions took time and patience. Issues bubbling just beneath the surface quickly rose to the top, with students often arriving to the space agitated, bickering, physically pushing and shoving, which disrupted the flow of sessions. Equipment was used inappropriately and making choices as intended in the SALT Approach was beyond the capacity of many of these students. They were also accustomed to hearing teachers' raised voices, to student expressions of frustration through tantrums and to running in and around rooms. This was all the more exacerbated as students came from large learning spaces, housing 60-70 students. Accompanying teachers

had been asked by the researcher not to 'take over' by implementing the usual discipline measures, which would taint the research work.

Measures compatible with the SALT Approach were identified and introduced throughout the iterations. These were not all explicitly described in the first prototype, but included such things as describing and discussing behavioural concerns with the students, adjusting and refining the session structure, assigning specific personal desk and even floor spaces, minimising movement by supplying all materials on desks, introducing rotational activities and limiting choices. The latter two are, in fact, indicated by O'Shea (in press), but the length of time it took to reach a point where students could engage in choices sensibly took longer than expected and required a more structured approach for longer than the researcher hoped would be necessary. In addition, the number of students, and the student -adult ratio hampered the implementation of the approach, more suited to smaller groups and low student-adult ratios.

At the beginning of the journey, too, *personal, family and cultural issues* affected behaviour (4.2.3.2.1.2). Personal insecurity, verbal aggression and non-conformity could be traced to family fragility and aggressive behaviours in the home, making it hard for some children to focus, and leading to behaviour issues and agitating other students (4.2.3.2.1.2). Eleven children (almost 50%) came from dysfunctional or single parent families and three, possibly four, students displayed unsettling complex trauma related behaviours (4.2.3.2.1.2). For example, the Sudanese students often clashed with each other and other students. They would witness and sometimes imitate, behaviours of older Sudanese boys, often siblings, who would invade the space, rove wildly, wreaking havoc, while avoiding eye-contact and ignoring the requests to desist (4.2.3.2.1.2).

There was the need to rely on school guidelines once or twice, and things settled through the iterations, with disruptive behaviours diminishing, though never entirely disappearing. Once the accompanying teachers understood the SALT Approach, they could assist by withdrawing the child and addressing the matters appropriately. Recent contemporary research facilitated addressing complex trauma related behaviour, which stood well with the SALT Approach, and this was shared with

teachers. Behaviour issues were minimised particularly by consistently taking the SALT Approach's personalised way, addressing the individual child in clear, quiet and respectful ways, as recommended by O'Shea (in press). Establishing the room as a quiet space, available for students at lunchtimes, offered a kind of 'safe haven' for students and proved to be effective (4.2.3.3.1.2).

On a positive note, student *attentiveness despite disruptive situations* was evident from early on, even in students with significant behaviour and self-regulation difficulties. Students often interacted relevantly with materials and concepts which they found attractive and inspiring. Some students found the noise levels distracting and annoying, but more frequently they appeared to be able to block out the noise as they lost themselves in their work (4.2.3.3.1.3) and Csikszentmihalyi (1999). 'Selecting the battles', overlooking some behaviours and even tolerating raised noise levels, when the latter did not affect the whole class significantly, was important. Filming was introduced in the second iteration and the review of footage revealed that being mindful of saying 'yes' more than 'no' to requests in *choice times*, even if the activity appeared to be somewhat tangential, was very effective in engaging students who could be disruptive (4.2.3.3.1.3). This approach required a conscious latitude, especially on the part of the accompanying teachers, who were used to expecting activities to tie in very closely with each session's focus. This was important because the SALT Approach encourages students to freely explore topics in *choice time*, even those introduced in earlier sessions and not specifically related to the current topic.

Towards the end of the second iteration, and throughout the third, the explicit introduction of virtues had a powerful effect, providing the students with a new language with which to discuss and begin to control their own behaviour (Arthur et al., 2013; Bock & Samuelson, 2014; Lickona, 2014; Snyder, 2014). Montessori, Cavalletti and O'Shea all emphasise the need to establish 'grace and courtesy' behaviours (O'Shea, in press) but this researcher was not in a position to have developed and fostered these throughout the day, not being their regular class teacher. In addition, the school climate somewhat lacked this general tone. Discussing the qualities of human nature, the ability to make choices, the role of the conscience and the exercise of human virtues, recognised as good habits, clearly and

explicitly, played a part in fast-tracking an improvement in behaviour. This was new, not only for the students but also for the teachers.

- c) The journey's end: reflecting on behaviour and self-control issues hampering self-regulated learning

By the end of the intervention, the researcher and accompanying teachers noted that student behaviour had improved a great deal. They had come to understand what was expected of them. They were more consistently focused on the work, which in itself drew their attention and de-escalated behaviour issues. This was achieved by implementing the core recommendations offered by O'Shea, but also moved beyond them, drawing out and describing specific examples of appropriate teacher response to behaviour challenges. Thus, the main issue emerging from this element was the need to describe clearly in the final prototype the problems teachers are likely to encounter in attempting to implement the SALT Approach in a school where behaviours may be so out of control that children will take time to embrace the new message. The SALT Approach is likely to be labelled impossible if teachers attempt to implement it without achieving the basic personalised approach it requires. While this may seem obvious and merely 'good practice', the researcher's observations indicated the need to draw attention to these aspects as particularly essential to the SALT Approach.

Discipline approaches at the target school tended to be lock-step, and even though based on a commendable programme called 'Positive Behaviour Support for Learning' (PBS4L). Teachers appeared to apply the letter of the law more than the spirit of the approach. This posed a problem in implementing the SALT Approach which, based on the Christian anthropological understanding of the person, would need teachers to work flexibly within a standardised approach such as PBS4L. In addition, the researcher's observations of the ways behaviour challenges were sometimes addressed in the school contrasted with what was appropriate within the SALT Approach. The differences are charted in Table 56 and are likely to be included in the final prototype.

Table 55: Comparison chart: The SALT Approach towards behaviour challenges contrasted with other approaches as observed in the study

Addressing behaviour challenges: general observed practice	Addressing behaviour challenges within the SALT Approach
Teachers speaking 'at' children	A consistent attempt to speak clearly, quietly and respectfully to children Looking the individual child in the eye, with a kindly eye
Blanket statements to full class about inappropriate behaviours	Avoiding blanket statements about behaviour
A tendency to quickly jump on the presumed perpetrator of the disruption	Avoiding the voicing judgements of the child unless all the facts are truly understood Finding ways of letting the child know he/she is understood
A tendency to express general and frequent displeasure	'Selecting the battles', overlooking behaviours and even tolerating a somewhat raised noise level, if students are basically on task and other students appear oblivious to it as they are absorbed in their own work
A tendency to limit what the students can choose to do	Saying yes more than 'no' to requests during <i>choice time</i>
A tendency to control or limit choices, seeing them as off-limits	Developing the inner person, attracted to truth and beauty through trusting their choices
A lack of understanding of complex trauma behaviours and how to effectively address them	Incorporating recommendations for addressing complex trauma
Tendency to speak of values, with little application to personalised virtues	Using the language of Virtues

Other aspects of this element needing explicit indications in the final prototype concern the set-up and use of the room and materials. Some of the measures found to be necessary may seem to run contrary to recommendations. For example, the Cavalletti Approach, as in the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, recommends that students gather their materials for personal choice activities. By contrast, due to the numbers and student behaviour there may be, at least initially, a need to minimise movement around the room by supplying essential items on specifically assigned desks, at least when introducing the SALT Approach.

In order to address the very practical problems encountered in implementing the SALT Approach, a section of the prototype handbook would need to provide an expanded set of guidelines, adapted from, and building upon, O'Shea's document

*Setting up the RE Classroom for Mystagogical Catechesis*, addressing the issues discussed above.

## 7.2.2 Element 2: Literacy and communication issues

### a) Preparing for the journey: literacy and communication issues

The second element in this lens was that of *Literacy and Communication*. Contemporary research indicated declining literacy levels with Australia ranking lowest in literacy among the English-speaking countries participating in the 2011 Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Thomson et al., 2011). Angus et al. (2010) refer to Stanovich (1985), in describing children's deficient phonological awareness leading to some being "reading disabled" (p. 13). There is mounting research-based evidence that fine-motor skills, handwriting and spelling are being overlooked in the increasingly technological environment (Dinehart, 2015; Kiefer et al., 2015). On the other hand, educational research also indicated that it was not all negative, with cooperative social skills encouraged in today's classrooms (Slavin, 2015). Talking and listening are greatly valued (Kolb, 2012). These factors are likely to impact positively on the effectiveness of the SALT Approach. Thus, the three themes relating to literacy were identified as (i) limited reading and writing skills, (ii) children's verbal confidence, and (iii) children's use of auditory, verbal and kinaesthetic senses in preference to reading (see 4.2.3.2.2). These themes were considered throughout the three iterations.

### b) The journey through the iterations: literacy and communication issues

The reading and writing fluency of the students was weaker than anticipated, even though the literature had indicated it would be an issue. The school's NAPLAN results in reading and literacy accessed through the My School site confirmed impressions of lower than average performance, and this was perceptible 'on the ground' and in the classroom. As soon as there were activities requiring reading and writing, children displayed significantly limited reading and writing literacy skills. The planned written 'pre-commencement task' had to be supplemented with an oral assessment. *Choice time* tasks involving reading or writing were arduous, not to say tortuous, for most students, with a palpable aversion towards deciphering basic

written texts, as well as writing reluctance, and this significantly limited independent work. Even the more capable students opted for tracing and painting (see 4.2.3.2.2.1). Journaling and choice options, introduced in the first iteration, were beyond most students and had to be temporarily abandoned.

The researcher had seriously over-estimated the children's abilities in this domain, as the frequent journal notes and interchanges indicated. In an attempt to pinpoint the problem, and knowing that these were, on the whole, capable children, the recurring line that best seemed to describe the situation was 'in terms of literacy most of these children are handicapped' (see 4.2.3.2.2.2). This required a serious 'rethink' of any materials requiring reading or writing.

From that point, and throughout the iterations, simpler reading and writing options were devised, booklets adjusted with larger print, and computer foundation script fonts introduced, enabling tracing over words and dotted lines. By the second iteration, a large number of related art works and matching activities offered alternative responses compensating for the literacy challenge. The students were arranged in rotating 'pods', with one of the weekly rotations involving work with a teacher to guide and coach through the reading and writing required (see 4.2.3.3.2.1). Choices were still available within each of the pods, but access to choices varied. By the third iteration, *personal choice charts* were re-introduced, trialled and refined. These provided scaffolding and boundaries, particularly when they offered visualisations of SOLO taxonomy (see 4.2.3.4.2.1). Students, now more confident and productively independent, were able to demonstrate learning in a variety of ways, both individually and in groups. Many of them invented new ways of responding: creating charts and posters, interviewing fellow students, and gathering collections of responses from other children (see 4.2.3.4.2.1).

In contrast to the reading and writing reluctance, *children displayed strong verbal competency*. When it came to speaking, the students blossomed, sensing that their thoughts and opinions would be respected in ways new to them. In *presentation* and '*I wonder*' reflection times they shared deep, indeed profound, thoughts (see 4.2.3.2.2.2), although they sometimes crossed the boundaries of respect in the first iteration. In the second iteration, filming was introduced, providing plentiful

opportunities and evidencing the power of verbal communication. Students gravitated to the camera often to share and record their learning. Behaviourally challenging students were calmed by this opportunity (see 4.2.3.3.2.1). *Presentation* and *'I wonder'* reflection times were extended, as students themselves raised questions and introduced new topics to discuss. The researcher also introduced materials and response possibilities suggested by students, providing new channels for independent and self-regulated work. SOLO taxonomy-inspired hexagons offered verbal interaction opportunities among students (see 4.2.3.4.2.1). Throughout the second and third iterations, student confidence and verbal communication grew exponentially (see 4.2.3.2.2.2).

Also in sharp contrast to reading and writing limitations, the students were keen to listen actively. They were also very observant and loved the hands-on sensory materials. *Auditory, visual and kinaesthetic senses were often used in preference to reading and writing.* Drawn to spiritual topics, the students interacted deeply through listening, seeing and touching (see 4.2.3.2.2.3). By the second iteration, they were asking more and more questions, touching on topics well beyond the *Sharing Our Story* curriculum. Questions asked were discussed and sometimes directly answered, to student's satisfaction, at times filling big gaps in learning (see 4.2.3.3.2.3). The researcher needed to work hard at not replying too extensively, seemingly an endemic teacher trait! During the third iteration, many of the Gospel readings of the liturgical year were very appropriate for these children, and the researcher needed to quickly shackle together all kinds of 2D and 3D materials, so as to tap into the strong visual and kinaesthetic needs of the students. By the end of the intervention, the students had developed numerous ways of sharing and extending their learning, despite continuing limited reading and writing fluency.

c) The journey's end: reflecting on literacy and communication

Cavalletti worked with children from the 1950s to the 1980s, in Italy, refining the parish-based programme which she termed the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. In this context, reading and writing fluency are not paramount, since the approach did not require formal assessment and accountability. O'Shea's *Mystagogical Catechesis Method* booklets were mainly designed for teacher use, although also intended to be



available for children’s use in independent work time. Many of these required a reading fluency beyond the capability of most of these particular students. In addition, the children in this study also displayed limited writing fluency.

There is compelling research-based evidence to indicate that spelling and handwriting fluidity frees-up student expression, and that time is well spent in acquiring these skills (Alhusaini et al., 2016; Reutzel, 2015). Interestingly, Parramatta’s Catholic Education Office is committed to the Reading Recovery Programme, despite some research being mixed on its effectiveness (Tunmer & Chapman, 2015; Serry, Rose & Liamputtong, 2014). However, the challenge for the SALT Approach is not to solve these issues, but to be effective in spite of them. The final prototype would need to suggest scaffolds and modifications that would encourage reading and writing within the context of the SALT Approach.

In addition, indicating specific ways to harness the verbal strengths and the kinaesthetic senses of children would constitute a powerful contribution towards the final prototype. This is much recommended by contemporary research (Flitton & Warwick, 2013; Likoko et al., 2013; Slavin, 2015). These aspects carry practical implications for schools and teachers since the ready availability of suitable material would be crucial to the success of the SALT Approach. Table 57, below, indicates recommendations and materials to be included in the prototype addressing the issue of literacy in ways not already incorporated in the SALT Approach.

*Table 56: Recommendations for inclusion in the final prototype*

Literacy and Communication	Additions to the Final Prototype
Overcoming the reading and writing handicap	Provide adapted versions of materials such as booklets and charts, increasing font size.
	Provide a variety of Choice Charts templates, including, among other, those following a SOLO taxonomy structure.
	Include access to a large range of A4 visuals materials, matching the topics covered throughout the liturgical cycle.
	Suggest a variety of specific response opportunities that do not require a great deal of reading and writing.

Harnessing children's verbal strengths	Provide specific guidelines for <i>Presentation</i> and <i>'I wonder'</i> or <i>Discussion</i> times, recommending the judicious time-extension of these sections of the sessions so as to encourage students to raise questions and introduce topics that even seem to be, at first glance, off topic.
	Recommend contemporary ways of fostering a verbal sharing of learning, especially filming and recording.
	Suggest a range of possibilities compatible with the SALT Approach, such as filming by a volunteer adult, teacher assistant or student teacher.
	Present the advantages and disadvantages of student use of devices such as iPad and Tablets for filming, from a SALT Approach perspective.
	Provide a set of indicators for teachers relating to the encouragement of verbal expression, including such suggestions as displaying openness to suggestions of students, spending sufficient time in student-dominated talking and ways of moving beyond a 'hands-up' approach.
Harnessing visual, auditory and kinaesthetic senses.	Provide guidelines for harnessing students' keenness to learn through listening while limiting the amount of 'teacher talk'. Include guidelines for reading the body language and other signals from children that concentration is ebbing and indicators that will assist teachers to identify when to speak or to refrain from speaking.
	Provide a range of suggestions for the quick preparation of visuals, as well as 2D and 3D materials, clarifying that these, though rough and simple can be very effective.

Throughout the iterations a number of effective ways of maximising the benefits of children's oral, auditory, visual and kinaesthetic skills for learning were developed, and the students responded readily. The final prototype for the SALT Approach would recommend specific ways to foster children's deep learning, through modes of expression that side-step literacy handicaps.

### 7.2.3 Element 3: The spiritual nature of today's child

Considering the spiritual nature of today's child is like entering the heartland of the Church's landscape. Unbeknown to many, it is also Montessori terrain, trodden by Cavalletti and O'Shea alike. It opens a *mystagogical pathway* to the Kingdom of God.

a) Preparing for the journey: the spiritual nature of today's child

Since the theoretical framework for this study was Catholic religious education as outlined in magisterial documents, this perspective was the first one explored in the literature review. The Catholic Church recognises the nature of the human person, composed of body and spiritual soul, complete with intellect, free will and emotions, with an inner life capable of relating to both God and man (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, §55, §76). It recommends a focus on the human person with his or her integral, transcendent identity (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997. §10). Montessori recognised that each child possesses a God-given ability to search for truth and that the task of the educator is to recognise the searchlight coming from the child's mind (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Cavalletti's constant focus was on the inner life of the child (Cavalletti, 1983). Likewise, O'Shea's understanding of the inner life of the child is fundamental to his Mystagogical Catechetical Method (O'Shea, in press). Contemporary research focusing on the spiritual element in the child identifies the need to draw it out (Cecero, 2011; Murray, 2012; White & Janowiak, 2012). The spiritual nature of today's child was an essential element for this study, and it was researched through the theme that *children are spiritually inclined and search for truth*.

b) The journey through the iterations: the spiritual nature of today's child

Truth be told, the researcher came away from the first sessions with the students puzzling over the impression that these children were not in touch with their inner selves. Several journal notes made this sad observation, as for example this one: "Many of the children do not seem to be aware of their inner self. It shows on their faces. How to create an inner space where they can think and pray and respond to God?" (see 5.2.3.2.2.2). It was as though, after two years of schooling, they had already lost a little bit of hope and joy. Since permission had not been sought at this stage for photographs, evidence is only found in journal notes and conversations with the school's Religious Education Coordinator, and research supervisors. Once things got underway, however, the children began to realise the scope of the world opening up to them, and the change was truly rapid. Despite great differences of background and belief, they expressed a profound yearning to seek truths relating to God and ready openness to prayer.

By the second iteration (Term 2 of the academic year) the students were enthusiastically exploring deep and challenging questions posed by themselves, or by the researcher. They returned to certain spiritual questions time and time again and evidently relished new challenges in this domain. Spontaneous prayer came naturally to them, and it was not uncommon to see a child quietly focused in the prayer space, albeit for brief periods. When filming was introduced many such moments were captured by the camera. By Mid-Term 2, in the second iteration, when the opportunity arose for the children to experience a 'Morning of Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament' at the local Parish Church, they displayed the ability to become deeply recollected.

In the third iteration, the students responded with interest, and sometimes manifest joy, to opportunities offered through the liturgical feasts, such as All Souls, All Saints and Christ the King; October as the Month of the Rosary; and the season of Advent leading to Christmas. In the Month of November, dedicated to the Souls departed, they wrote sincere prayers of petition for deceased relatives and friends. Student art responses, although many times simple, provided that glimpse of the inner life of the child often mentioned by Cavalletti (Cavalletti, 1983). Illustrations of the spiritual sensitivity of the children in this study can be found in the photographs in Section 4.2.3.3.2.1 of Chapter 4. They testify to the adage "A picture paints a thousand words."

c) The journey's end: reflecting on the spiritual nature of today's child

The students taking part in this study, while initially seeming to lack an inner personal awareness and apparently insensitive to the spiritual dimension, actually exceeded expectations, time and time again. Their openness, not to say thirst, for spiritual matters, was an inspiration in itself. The Church's understanding of the spiritual nature of the person, and the core principles of the SALT Approach frequently alluded to by Montessori (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Cavalletti (1992) and O'Shea (in press) were supported through this study. It would be true to say that every participating child, no matter what background, demonstrated spiritual sensitivity in one way or another. This was a frequent source of amazement, particularly for the accompanying teachers.

The researcher's observations of the school's daily, weekly and termly schedule made it clear that teachers were unused to fostering such depths. Little time was found to attend to this area, given the hectic pace, driven by slavish obeisance to a crowded curriculum. This, moreover, was coupled with limited teacher confidence and expertise in religious education (to be more fully discussed under the next lens). The main issue here for the final prototype was the need to draw particular attention to the powerful reality of children's spiritual sensitivity and to furnish specific advice as to how to foster and encourage it, some of which are listed in Table 58, below.

Table 57: *Effective ways of encouraging spiritual awareness in the child*

Effective ways of encouraging spiritual awareness in the child
Incorporate allowing <i>Presentation</i> and ' <i>I wonder</i> ' times to extend, permitting students to raise questions and introduce topics that seem to be, at first glance, off topic.
Encourage deep thinking with very challenging questions requiring long term thought.
Include suggestions for fostering children's innate sense of spirituality and desire to pray, such as offering personal prayer album
Include a variety of suggestions for spiritual response and prayer, using the Liturgical Year.
Offer a number of simple and practical ways for students to personally link their families with the church through feasts and times of the Liturgical Year.

Despite the varied backgrounds, children's spiritual inclinations were strong. The SALT Approach can make a significant impact in bringing to the surface the child's innate spiritual leanings. The final prototype can assist teachers, empowering them to foster this, despite challenges found when implementing the approach in schools.

#### 7.2.4 Discussion of Lens 1: Exploring the empowering and disempowering factors affecting today's child within the SALT Approach

##### 7.2.4.1 Discussion Element 1: Behaviour and self-control

The SALT Approach requires children to be focused, to exercise self-control, to make personal learning choices (O'Shea, in press; Standing, 1998). If conditions are right, the child will gravitate to, and select, suitable activities (Cavalletti, 1983; Lillig, 2004; O'Shea, 2017; Montessori & Standing, 1965). However, this cannot be presumed in all contemporary classroom. Factors that pull children's attention in other directions, distracting them from learning, include home and family issues, and

complex trauma experiences (Diamond & Whittington, 2014; Harfitt, 2015). This study sought to establish ways in which the child could be positioned to make good behavioural choices in a prayerful and spiritual environment.

The element focusing on behavioural and self-control factors was placed first because, until it was addressed, the basic and necessary working environment could not be established. The ‘jarring disconnect’ mentioned above (7.2.1.2) required getting the situation under control in ways consonant with the SALT Approach. The Church expects educators to nurture the person, and lead the child towards responsibility and the use of one’s freedom and reason, through a steady process of character development (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, §34, §88, §95; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §12, §36, §45, §47, §84; Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §33). This can occur when teacher-student relationships are trusting and respectful (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, §110). In addition, baptismal grace, if responded to, will affect choices behaviour (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §47; Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, §34; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §12). O’Shea’s Mystagogical Catechetical Method, built on Montessori’s and Cavalletti’s ideas, upholds these principles (O’Shea, in press; Montessori & Standing, 1965; Standing 1998). Montessori recommends avoiding harsh words, stern reprimands and needless prohibitions (Montessori & Standing, 1965).

It is noteworthy that both Montessori and Cavalletti worked in climates very distinct to the current one, though for different reasons. In Montessori's case, the societal climate was one imbued with Christian faith and principles, even if families were under stress. Cavalletti worked with small parish based groups. Both worked within a climate wherein the society, and the clientele could be considered Catholic.

O’Shea (in press) offers valuable guidelines, though not specific advice tailored for religious education in such settings as the one of this study. Initially, a number of students participating in the study found self-regulation difficult because of their poor behaviour choices. By identifying this issue and seeking to address the challenge in the personal and spiritually nurturing ways inherent to the SALT Approach, there was a significant improvement in positive behaviours (see 4.2.4).

This empowered the students in terms of self-regulation in learning. In today's circumstances, one cannot presume the effect of, and responsibility due to, baptismal grace, since many children in Catholic classrooms are not baptised. Contemporary research indicates that behaviour problems affect teaching quality impacting even on teacher burnout and attrition (Gonzalez et al., 2008; McConney & Price, 2009; Cha & Cohen-Vogel, 2011).

Family instability and domestic violence are also major causes of behaviour and classroom management difficulties (Carrell & Hoekstra, 2009; Duckworth et al., 2016; Harfitt, 2015; Lindsey & Lindsey, 2016; Valenzuela & Codina, 2013). Contemporary research recommendations include taking the holistic approach (McCready & Solloway, 2010). In that vein, this study contributes in delineating a pathway moving away from significant behaviour and self-regulation challenges towards a climate within which self-regulation and use of *choice times* are increased, as the children worked within a spiritual environment. In the third iteration, there was a merger between the SALT Approach and character and virtue development incorporating contemporary research findings (Callina et al., 2017; Lickona, 2014; Mullins, 2015; Ryan & Lickona, 1992). This also led to students' increased understanding of the power of virtue, and this impacted on their self-regulated learning.

Contemporary research also identifies the effect of complex trauma in the classroom, and recommends appropriate measures, still largely overlooked and inappropriately addressed (Brunzell, Waters, & Stokes, 2015; Diamond & Whittington, 2014; Mendelson et al., 2015; Vacca, 2008; West et al., 2014). There is nothing in the work of Montessori, Cavalletti or O'Shea that specifically addresses this. Working with children displaying signs of complex trauma, and applying the recommendations of contemporary research resulted in positive changes in behaviour (see 4.2.3.3.1.2). These students recognised that they were understood and valued, leading them to calmer inner spaces, and swifter returns to tasks at hand. In fact, in considering contemporary pedagogical research recommendations while developing the SALT Approach, this study potentially contributes to the overall school approach towards these children (McInnes et al., 2014; West, Day, Somers, & Baroni, 2014).

Additionally, contemporary research links behaviour and self-regulation with clearing the mind of distractions, accessing quiet spaces, and spending quality time on tasks (Vandervelde et al., 2011; Zumbrunn et al., 2011). These recommendations are embedded in the SALT Approach (Cavalletti, 1983; Lillard, 2005; O’Shea, in press; Standing, 1998). This study incorporated such practices by giving students the experience of quiet times, if not always during RE sessions, then at lunch times, and in dedicating increasingly significant time to individual choices as the year progressed.

#### 7.2.4.2 Discussion Element 2: Literacy and communication skills.

In order to self-regulate learning, students require a range of strategies, with reading and writing forming crucial aspects of the skills slate (Pea, 2013; Schunk & Zimmerman 2012). The reading and writing standards of students in this study were not strong (see 4.2.3.2.2.1), and this affected their ability to express their learning through writing. Effective learning in all domains is impacted by the broader literacy skills challenge, stemming from such things as poor theory-to-practice transfer, the persisting dominance of whole language learning methods and the use of ineffective literacy programs (Buckingham et al., 2013; Chapman & Tunmer, 2015; Serry et al., 2014). Current research identifies poor reading and writing literacy as affecting cognitive development, hampering fast and fluid reading comprehension and written expression (Alhusaini et al., 2016; Dinehart, 2015; Kiefer et al.). Religious education is no exception and these realities also impacted on the SALT Approach. That ever important “flow of learning” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, p. 824) was noticeably hampered in the classroom when pressure was brought to bear regarding written instructions and responses. The students' anxiety and frustration were palpable. Despite this, evidence of learning was abundant (6.2.3.3.1). The challenge for the final prototype is to elucidate ways in which teachers can establish and evidence learning when reading and writing is compromised.

In contrast to these challenges, contemporary pedagogical research supports the value of dialogic learning (Alexander 2008, Mercer & Dawes 2008). This is a certain strength of the SALT Approach, while it remains a weakness in many educational settings, where the importance of dialogue is acknowledged, but evidence indicates it



is poorly implemented, with teachers often misconstruing student participation and using a narrow pedagogical repertoire to encourage students' true, deep and reflective dialogic participation (Alexander, 2004; Flitton & Warwick, 2013; Mitchell, 2010; Pierce & Giles, 2008). In this, the SALT Approach offers the wider educational community visible and audible examples of effective dialogue (see 4.2.3.2.1.1). Throughout the iterations, the researcher avoided using inferior language when presenting and discussing concepts with children. The improved level of understanding, expressed through the discussions was observed by accompanying teachers and school and Catholic Education executive visitors (see 5.2.3.4.2). This was combined with students' palpable interest, and ability to illustrate their thoughts through labelled illustrations, mini-blackboards, posters, and their own journals.

While reading and writing reluctance of many students hampered their work, it became clear through the course of the year that the students understood and valued much more than they could express in writing. Verbal skills, captured through audio and film, compensated for the more limited literacy skills and provided ample evidence of deep learning (4.2.3.3.2.2).

#### 7.2.4.3 Discussion Element 3: The spiritual nature of today's child

The perspective of the Catholic Church was of primary importance when it came to considering the spirituality of today's child. Church documents emphasise the Christian anthropological understanding of the human person endowed with intellect and free will, capable of knowing and responding to a personal God. The task of the school is to present the full truth of the mystery of the Trinity in a clear and cohesive way to children who are capable of grasping such truths (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §30, §33, §102, §105). Relevant church documents point to the need to foster in the child an intimate communion with Jesus Christ (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §79- 82).

Montessori supported this understanding when she recommended that the teacher's task was to facilitate circumstances and conditions wherein a child can find God and respond to Him, and to respect the child's nature with regard to the supernatural life. (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Cavalletti also observed that the child is intuitively

attracted towards God and that this encounter brings joy (Cavalletti, 2002). Fostering this living relationship was her focus in developing the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Cavalletti, 1983). These perspectives are all brought together in O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method (O'Shea, in press).

This study found a great deal of evidence to support these assertions, with students of all backgrounds frequently expressing their attraction to the spiritual dimension opened up to them (see 4.2.3.3.3.1). They readily engaged with new opportunities offered throughout the liturgical cycle. The students relished the challenge of delving deep into the meaning of scriptural passages beyond their immediate grasp, returning again and again to such topics (see 4.2.3.3.2.1). They incessantly brought spiritually related thoughts and reflections to discussions and explored them in *choice time*. They spiritually nurtured each other in their spontaneous sharing of understandings, ideas and discoveries (see 4.2.3.3.3.1).

Much of contemporary pedagogical research reviewed for this study had little to say about the spirituality of the child, with the exception of some literature that touched on holistic approaches to education. This points to a significant challenge since religious education is shaped within the context of the broader educational environment. There is a risk of ultimately offering a secular-humanistic approach for Catholic religious education that risks jettisoning the essentially spiritual goal lying at its heart. In this light, understanding the current climate is essential, in order to navigate the waters of contemporary education and establish an authentic and respected position in those waters.

The currently prevailing outcomes-based education mandates supposedly precisely defined measures of accountability and achievement (Berlach, 2004; Riley, 2012, 2014). Such an approach places the spiritual perspective under great pressure, leaving adults and children alike with little time to think and ponder in a truly deep way (De Souza, 2003; Waghid, 2003). Cecero (2011), however, identifies a growing openness to the spirituality of children and the need for an allocation of time not easily built into a learning outcomes approach. There was significant evidence in this study that children are capable of rapidly switching into the spiritual zone, coming

into the room from a tangibly different atmosphere, quickly engaging in opportunities to pray and reflect, and finding quiet spaces within the room to do so.

Recent research, describing what has been dubbed *The Fourth Way* (Fullan & Langworthy, 2013; Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009; Harris, 2011), may offer a window for the SALT Approach. *The Fourth Way* recommends moving away from the top level, micro-management approach, and towards recognising school-level autonomy, combined with personalised, holistic elements (Niemi, Toom, & Kallioniemi, 2016; Sahlberg, 2011). This approach recognises the vital importance of deep learning, and at least some spiritual aspects of the human person, capable of character development, critical thinking, creativity and imagination (Fullan et al., 2014). Furthermore, there is an increasing recognition of holistic approaches (Fullan et al., 2014). While a far cry from the full Christian anthropological perspective of the Catholic Church, it opens a space within the contemporary educational climate. If Sahlberg (2013) is correct in maintaining that the *Fourth Way* can be implemented across distinct educational systems, the same could be applied to the compatibility of the holistic *SALT Approach*. This could occur if a school is afforded sufficient autonomy while functioning within a diocesan system of education. This study certainly demonstrated that given the necessary latitude while functioning in an outcomes-based environment, the spiritual aspect of children's nature could be deeply nurtured.

The overall outcomes of findings relating to the first lens were positive, considering the adaptations needed for the successful implementation of the SALT Approach in a Catholic school and in the light of empowering and disempowering factors affecting today's child. It was possible to pinpoint, describe and implement ways of addressing behaviour and self-regulation challenges. The behaviour of this Year Two Class improved because of the personal and spiritual nature of the SALT Approach, with its Christian anthropological understanding of the human person. Ways were identified to achieve results despite the literacy challenge by harnessing the expressive strengths of today's children. It tapped into children's attraction towards the spiritual. In doing so, it addressed what are likely to be major initial concerns for teachers which could well 'scuttle the ship' before the journey begins, recommending sound practices embedded in the recommendations of the Catholic

Church and those of Montessori and Cavalletti, as well as that of contemporary educational research. Taking O’Shea’s (in press) work as a basis, it incorporated new suggestions to facilitate implementation in behaviourally challenging classrooms, marrying the essentially holistic *SALT Approach* with contemporary research findings.

### 7.3 Lens 2: Equipping Teachers and Schools to use the SALT Approach

#### 7.3.1 Element 1: Equipping and maintaining the learning space

##### a) Preparing for the journey: Equipping and maintaining the learning space

The literature reviewed from the multiple perspectives of (a) the Catholic Church, (b) the contributions of Montessori, Cavalletti and O’Shea, and (c) that of contemporary research, pointed to the need for an extensive range of student-accessible materials. The Catholic Church indicates that the Gospel message be taught as a historical reality, recommending that pedagogical materials and approaches should facilitate the ‘unpacking’ of Sacred Scripture (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, §77; Congregation for the Clergy, 1997, §132).

Facilitating a person’s unique relationship with God, using the senses and tangible materials is fundamental to the SALT Approach (Cavalletti, 1983; Garrido, 2008; O’Shea, in press). Additionally, Cavalletti’s *Catechesis of Good Shepherd* requires teachers to personally prepare the materials (Cavalletti, 2002). Gibson (2001) maintains that a wider range of material needs to be introduced to children than that which Cavalletti suggests.

Contemporary educational research identifies the continued need for materials that can be manipulated and handled by students, and an environment that is suitably equipped with resources (Kolb, 2015; Kong & Song, 2013; Parsons & Taylor, 2011).

These recommendations clarified three themes within the element of equipping and maintaining the learning space, these being (i) preparation and trialling of

recommended materials, (ii) additional resources required and (iii) preparation and maintenance of the environment.

Before the journey through the iterations could begin, the preparation of materials was essential. Preparing them induced a deeply reflective time for the researcher, accompanied by the awareness that this was a joy that many teachers would never experience to the same degree. What Cavalletti (2002) maintained was true: making the dioramas, painting the figures, gathering materials from many sources was almost like being withdrawn from the world and its distractions in order to spend time with God. The materials for the first prototype were prepared over the course of a year, with greater intensity from November to January, before the commencement of the iterations. The room was set up close to the start of the school year. It was abundantly clear that, in the long term, much of the material would need to be produced *en masse* for mainstream teachers, perhaps with some small touches left to facilitate the sense of connection with the materials. Even this was probably not necessary, given that materials, once supplied, would remain in classrooms for subsequent teachers.

b) The journey through the iterations: equipping and maintaining the learning space

Despite behaviour challenges in the first iteration as described in 7.2, above, the materials and the environment of the room fascinated the students, drawing their attention. Full advantage was taken of materials already produced, and others were constantly added, taking an inordinate amount of time. This continued throughout all three iterations, and the researcher's efforts were unstinting, to identify short-cuts, useful recommendations and mass production ideas. The students' insights and observations were directly and powerfully connected to the materials they could see, touch and manipulate, and this patent fact called for generous supply. Sometimes materials were very quickly hobbled together, and at other times materials were borrowed from a Catechesis of the Good Shepherd Atrium, generously made available by its director.

*Additional resources*, beyond those recommended by Cavalletti or O'Shea, were often needed, especially in the light of diocesan curriculum requirements, and in following the age-appropriate Scripture readings of the liturgical year. Materials were prepared to support the main feasts of the church year such as the Ascension, Trinity Sunday and Corpus Christi, All Souls, All Saints and Christ the King. In addition, materials to assist visualisation of the miracles were needed, which are not part of the recommended materials. Another factor was that of working with a full class over the space of 60 minutes for two of the weekly sessions. With *choice time* extending 30 to 40 minutes, insufficient access to materials could lead to student frustration. Internet sourcing of compatible materials and ideas assisted, but accessing and evaluating them for compatibility took time. This was considered as long-term investment to assist to future *SALT Approach* practitioners. In the third iteration, a *Wikispace* was created for students and teachers, which students, in particular, enjoyed in their own time and at home.

In the third iteration, the extended use of the Year B Liturgical Cycle, with its extensive reference St John's Gospel, Chapter 6, provided opportunities for pondering the mystery of Christ and the Eucharist. This also required the preparation of new materials, and the researcher could foresee the need, in time, to plan for materials supporting each of the three years of the liturgical cycle. A new presentation focus with the title of *Stories from Sundays* was introduced in the third iteration, also requiring the development of materials (see 5.2.3.4.1).

Furthermore, the *Sharing Our Story* Unit on Reconciliation needed materials suitable for Year Two students. It was in the third iteration that *Solo Taxonomy* and the *Virtues* were explored, and these needed materials which took time to prepare. In fact, the third iteration required many materials not suggested by Cavalletti or O'Shea and subsequently nor prepared for the first prototype (see 5.2.3.4.1).

*Preparing and maintaining the environment* was constant and time-consuming, particularly in the first and second iterations. As things evolved, the room needed frequent re-arrangement. Given the limited space, it was not possible to maintain a set arrangement, as Cavalletti recommended. The researcher also found that the students needed a personal workspace and this limited display possibilities. The walls and display areas were frequently scanned to evaluate what was not being used

by students. Interestingly, this organic element, not addressed by Cavalletti or O'Shea, was a very positive thing, attracting both students and teachers. A significant challenge throughout the entire year was simply keeping things in order. The students needed to leave as soon as sessions were over, and order was often wanting. As the iterations progressed, however, students became quicker at putting things in place, partly due to growing maturity and also to their increasing sense of responsibility for the space, and so matters marginally improved.

- c) The journey's end: reflecting on equipping and maintaining the learning space

It had been an intense year of preparing additional materials, ensuring that the SALT Approach would not be found wanting due to the paucity of resources. Materials not suggested by Cavalletti for the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd needed to be included in the final prototype, especially if the approach was to be applied across all the religious education classes throughout the school and liturgical year.

*Set up and care for prepared environment* are essential factors in Montessori classrooms and Cavalletti's Atriums. O'Shea (in press) offered useful suggestions, but more specific measures were needed, and these would form part of the final prototype.

Regarding the need for *ready accessibility of materials*, and bearing in mind that not all schools would have a dedicated space, an especially designed storage unit would be built, as part of the prototype's package. Additionally, a relatively stable arrangement for displays would be needed to facilitate shared use, if a dedicated room was to be available in a school. Lastly, allocating finances for the position of a leading teacher, a *companion leader*, who would also keep an eye on room maintenance, could be recommended.

Research strongly recommends the need for visual and tangible materials to support learning. Time-poor teachers hoping to use the SALT Approach would be hampered, and efforts stymied without them. Building a generous bank of compatible materials, ideas and resources for inclusion in the final prototype would be essential.

### 7.3.2 Element 2: Key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach

At this central point of the findings discussion, we come to the pedagogical factors. It seems a fitting place, lying at the heart of the SALT Approach. If teachers cannot embrace the three core pedagogical practices identified through the literature review, they will experience very little success in using the method.

#### a) Preparing for the journey: key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach

The literature touched upon many pedagogical factors necessary for the SALT Approach, but three themes stood out. These were (i) providing time for pondering, (ii) showing respect for the child, and (iii) allowing for freedom and choice-making.

At the heart of the Christian anthropological understanding of the human being held by the Church, lies a profound respect for each person as a child of God, with an inherent ability to reflect and ponder, and a desire to live in freedom (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997, §10). Respect, pondering and freedom are core to the SALT Approach.

Montessori maintained that harshness, stern commands and needless prohibitions are to be avoided. Her pedagogical paradigm was holistic, centred on the person and facilitating a rich personal development and transformation (Lillard, 2005; Mahmoudi et al., 2012; Standing, 1998). Cavalletti also held a profound respect for the child and his/her ability to dwell on spiritual realities (Cavalletti, 1983).

Contemporary pedagogical research refers to the concept of pondering when speaking of giving time to reflect (Darling Hammond, 2008, Thapa et al., 2013). Flitton and Warwick (2013) pointed to teacher reluctance with regard to investing in too much reflective talk time, whereas Galton et al. (2009) emphasise the need for thinking and wait time. Contemporary research speaks of *respect for the individual child* when considering mindful teaching and positive learning environments (Kroffors et al., 2011; Thapa et al., 2013). A great deal of contemporary research relates to autonomy, intrinsic motivation and self-regulation, directly linking to the theme of *freedom and choice* (Lüftenegger et al., 2012; Thapa et al., 2013; Schunk &



Zimmerman 2012). It is noteworthy that Lillard (2005) links Csikszentmihalyi's findings with the 'hush' found in Montessori classrooms, linking the two themes of *pondering* and *freedom of choice*.

b) The journey through the iterations: key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach

From the first iteration, the researcher sought to identify specific pedagogical strategies to *encourage pondering*, and the students began to contribute and question in deep and diverse ways during discussions. This was something that neither the students nor the accompanying teachers were used to. For teachers, it was partly reluctance to navigate uncharted waters, in encountering questions and contributions that could challenge their own knowledge base. Also, teachers were used to asking questions that students could only 'guess answer'. Consequently, students were accustomed to exercising a lot of time-wasting 'guess work' and this was encouraged by teachers. The researcher, herself, initially fell prey to this, but quickly identified the futility of framing questions that encouraged an endless series of guesses. The students were also accustomed to having every statement somehow validated: another derailing and unnecessary distraction.

The identified pedagogy was described as "*recognising the difference between 'stabs in the dark' and purposeful pondering*" (see 5.2.3.2.2.1). Pondering would lead to deep learning throughout the sessions and students soon latched on to the idea, with a candid sharing of thoughts becoming the norm. In addition, children took to pondering alone, with other students, or with the adults during *choice times*. It was a learning curve for the accompanying teachers.

From the second iteration, filming allowed glimpses into what was happening when teachers worked with small groups of students, identifying when they tended to speak too much or use questions that only encouraged guesswork. This enabled the researcher to guide the researcher and the accompanying teachers towards more effective dialogues.

Married to this strategy was that of *judiciously encouraging contributions and questionings during presentation times*. Both teachers and students were accustomed

to highly controlled contributions, with anything else seen as unsolicited interruption. Early on, expressed thoughts could be 'cut off at the pass' by the accompanying teachers, being labelled as unsolicited or rude. The appropriate pedagogy was described as *judiciously encouraging contributions and questioning during presentation times*. The children soon became more confident, and thoughts were voiced with growing frequency.

*Asking big, thought-provoking questions* emerged as another pedagogical strategy. A truly effective question of this type would keep the students thinking all year. Often they would return to the questions with a new thought. The 'yang' of this 'yin' was the researcher's effort to refrain from simply giving the answer. By the third iteration, other pedagogical nuances could be elucidated, such as the importance of *equipping children with a rich vocabulary, unlocking the power to ponder*. This could be achieved by the teacher's unmitigated choice of richly loaded words, shared and explained to the children as needed, and the level of language rose, as the students strove to express their deeper thoughts with increasing ease, and even elegance.

Visible signs for a *pedagogy of respect* were also sought and identified. They were often ostensibly small things, including truly listening, shaping one's tone to reflect sensitive awareness, valuing what the child valued and respecting the dignity even of students causing disruption. These pointers did not equate to pandering to the disruptive child but to a gentler, quieter, more flexible, personalised approach. It was inevitable for the researcher to see and hear many teacher-student encounters throughout the year that ran contrary to this, for a myriad of reasons, pointing to the fact that while there was lip-service for respect, it was not always practised. Another pedagogical sign of mutual respect was the ease with which the researcher could address the student's own 'big questions' about life and death, heaven and hell, sin and evil, and their consequences. Of course, there is an implication here: that the teacher would have the necessary level of understanding of the Church's own stance.

When it came to pedagogical strategies to establish *freedom of choice*, and assisting children to self-regulate their learning, there was much to do, beginning with *establishing firm boundaries* within which worthwhile and interesting choices were

available. As time progressed, students were exposed to new ways of exploring ideas, interacting with new resources as the boundaries were widened. The researcher, with the accompanying teachers, increasingly took on the role of *facilitator-guiding-learning*. This required the pedagogical practice of *demonstrating skills that facilitated a range of choices*. While this may seem obvious, adequately demonstrating them, despite time, space and organisational challenges, was a pedagogical choice. It paid dividends as the children responded well, and engaged in the tasks with verve.

The pedagogical strategy of *letting go of control* at appropriate times was also pinpointed and went hand in hand with *appreciating the teacher's role as facilitator and observer in choice time*. As the year progressed and drilling down, further pedagogical implications were enunciated, including that of consistently allowing children to *re-visit activities*, which was a patent sign of deep reflection. As the year progressed, this was a challenge for the accompanying teachers, particularly in the light of pressures to meet accountability requirements.

Balancing this was the need to *identify pedagogically acceptable ways of keeping students on track*. It was important to *trust in the power of engagement* once the children's interest was piqued, and combine it with working closely with more needy children. Pedagogical practices for *balancing freedom with accountability* became more challenging when some children, having tasted freedom, so to speak, tended to 'buck the system' by rushing through prioritised activities (needed towards the end of the year because of increased accountability pressures), so as to move on to what they *really* wanted to do. The *Choice Options* assisted in a limited way, but some children felt over-controlled and frustrated, particularly if they had literacy difficulties. The presence of three adults (the researcher, the accompanying teacher and the camera-man) in the room assisted in addressing this in this research year, but it would not be the ultimate solution.

c) The Journey's end: reflecting on key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach

By the conclusion of the iterative journey, a significant number of pedagogical strategies had been identified. The core pedagogies indicated by Montessori, Cavalletti and O'Shea had been explored within a contemporary classroom setting, emphasising practices that teachers were likely to find challenging, particularly with the pressures of school life and current accountability requirements. The final prototype would need to describe, in fair detail, what these strategies looked and sounded like. One valuable contribution to the prototype would be the inclusion of filming. A summary of these pedagogies with their potential challenges is presented in Table 59, below.

Table 58: Pedagogical strategies vital to the SALT Approach described and compared to contrary tendencies

Pedagogical Strategies vital to the SALT Approach	Observed teacher tendencies running contrary to recommended pedagogical strategies.
<i>Pedagogical strategies to facilitate pondering</i>	
Regarding 'I wonder' and questioning techniques: Recognising the difference between 'stabs in the dark' and 'purposeful pondering' Avoid endless 'guess work'	Tendency for teachers to use questioning inappropriately
Judiciously encourage contributions and questioning during <i>presentation</i> times	Tendency to cut off contributions, restricting spontaneity by requiring 'hands up' and answering only when called upon by teacher
Once in a while, pose a very big question for the children to 'chew over'	Big questions seen as beyond children, or teachers ill-equipped to recognise suitable 'big questions'
Equip children with a rich vocabulary, by using it, clarifying as needed and unlocking the power to ponder	Over-simplification of biblical language and tendency to keep language 'to the children's level'
<i>Pedagogical strategies to facilitate showing respect for the child</i>	
Authentic listening, using eye contact and appropriate body language	Tendency to 'talk at' children Perceived lack of time to provide a genuine personal touch Tendency to 'tar all children with the same brush' in reprimands

Shape one's tone to reflect sensitive awareness	Tendency to scream in classrooms, use a strong, loud voice, express irritation and frustration
Valuing what the child values	Tendency to miss the signals of what is important to the child
Respect the dignity even of students causing those causing disruption or distraction	Tendency to jump to conclusions about the cause of disruptions Tendency to use a lockstep approach in dealing with behaviour issues
<i>Pedagogical strategies allowing for freedom and choice-making</i>	
Establishing firm boundaries in choice time, particularly at the commencement, with the intention of gradually releasing control as the students demonstrate self-control	Inexperience with the concept of consistently moving towards sessions that incorporate full freedom of choice, while gradually releasing restrictive boundaries
Facilitate, guide and observe	Tendency to over-control the learning environment, too much teacher-talk
Demonstrate skills needed for a wide range of choice activities	Lack of recognition of how important it is to adequately and personally demonstrate a wide range of response activities, and lack of needed response materials
Let go Avoid over-control in <i>choice time</i>	Tendency to over-control children in their choice-making
Permit frequent re-visiting of activities	Perceived difficulty in meeting accountability demands keeping children 'on-task' rather than allowing them return frequently to the same choice
Trust in the child's ability self-regulate and keep on task once engaged.	Inadequate skill in fostering deep engagement through well-planned learning experiences in religious education
Balancing freedom with accountability through the introduction of suitable accountability possibilities, including, for example, film and audio collection and Choice Options.	Inadequate understanding, skill and necessary materials fostering freedom while still gathering data to reflect learning

Identifying the pedagogical implications of an approach heavily dependent upon *pondering, respect for the person* and *truly free choice-making* in learning is important. The prototype's handbook needs to unpack how such pedagogies look and sound in the learning space. Short video clips could offer visual examples.

### 7.3.3 Element 3: Teacher expertise

#### a) Preparing for the journey: teacher expertise

The literature review identified core issues regarding teacher expertise from all perspectives. Catholic Church documents emphasise the importance of teachers' knowledge, understanding and commitment to Church teachings and belief, indicating that teachers are expected to be well-grounded in Catholic doctrine, theology, ethics, philosophy and the social teachings of the Church. They are expected to be true role models in Catholic faith, committed and living the sacramental life, open to spiritual formation (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, §96-97; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §40, §43, § 61, §83; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982, §27-32, §38, §40, §59- 62, §69).

From the SALT Approach's perspective, both Montessori and Cavalletti emphasise the importance of teachers being spiritually prepared (Cavalletti, 2002; Montessori & Standing, 1965). Cavalletti's application of Montessori's approach focused on religious education, and it included an extensive training programme for those using the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd (Cavalletti, 2002).

O'Shea, taking Cavalletti's work forward, adapts it for teachers-in-training, providing scaffolds to assist teachers using his approach. This includes teacher-training materials, videos and booklets. He emphasises the possibility of well-disposed teachers and teachers-in-training gaining both skills and knowledge as they move through the programme with their students (O'Shea, in press). Challenges are identified by others who allude to the level of teacher expertise and required to implement Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd or Berryman's Godly Play, questioning their viability beyond the parish-based approach (Garrido, 2008; Gibson 2001; Grajczonek & Truasheim, 2017).

Contemporary educational research emphasises the importance of teacher expertise, in terms of valued content knowledge and pedagogical practice (Beauchamp et al., 2014; Hargreaves & Fullan, 2012; Tirri & Ubani, 2013). With pedagogical aspects

considered in the previous element, two further themes were identified focusing on the specifically on religious education and these were (i) teacher knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith and (ii) teacher faith commitment.

b) The journey through the iterations: teacher expertise

The integrity of the study required that the knowledge, understanding and commitment of the one implementing the SALT Approach be well anchored, and that the researcher, herself, be the teacher. The iterations focused on identifying specific aspects that required high levels of expertise in religious education and faith matters. At the same time, data would be sought to identify ways of supporting and developing teacher knowledge, understanding and commitment. The main anchor throughout was the liturgical year, which provided *opportunities to share faith and belief* with the students. The researcher's confident, accurate knowledge, as well as faith commitment, provided solid ground for students' own development in knowledge, understanding and personal responses.

The researcher's overall grasp permitted a broad exploration, not simply tied to the mandated curriculum, and yet encompassing it. It facilitated the quick and accurate identification of what was essential, for example, in the Scripture passages used. Children's interest in topics, such as the places where Jesus lived and taught, the origin of sin and evil, the nature of the Trinity and the spiritual aspect of human nature could be confidently explored and kept on track because of the researcher's knowledge-base (see 5.2.3.2.3).

When it came to *lived commitment*, the researcher's purpose was to identify what commitment and authentic witness looked like, and how it could ignite children's desires to reflect it in their own lives. Providing *authentic witness* came through sharing thoughts, practices and personal reflections in relation to the Mass, the Sacraments, Scripture and the main events of the liturgical year. These were woven seamlessly into the sessions, shared briefly, at naturally appropriate moments, almost in passing (4.2.3.3.3). There was a palpable growth in children's own belief and desires (5.2.3.2.3.1).

As the iterations progressed, the sophistication and depth of the children’s enquiries arose from their instinctive understanding that all their questions could be addressed in some way (see 5.2.3.3.3). It was clear that the degree of success in using the approach would depend upon the level of teacher knowledge and faith commitment. By the third iteration, the accompanying teachers were identifying growth and development in their own understanding and faith commitment. They shared this, not only with the researcher, but also with executive staff at the School and Catholic Education Office levels.

c) The journey’s end: reflecting on teacher expertise

There is no doubt that the teacher’s knowledge, understanding and commitment would always play a crucial role in the effectiveness of the SALT Approach. It was also clear that if teachers are open and offered direct and in-depth information, they also grow and develop through the teaching and learning experience. One important tool to be included in the final prototype is that of presenting the liturgical events to the students after the event rather than before it, in so far as this is possible. This facilitates and encourages the teacher’s own learning and reflection, since living the liturgical moment personally sheds light on the *what* and *how* of sharing it with the students.

Other recommendations to be included are clear indications of the vital aspects of the liturgical calendar and Scriptural passages, and the incorporation of attractive and engaging resources suitable for both teachers and students. The adaptation and expansion of the booklets prepared for the first prototype and the inclusion of teaching notes can assist teacher development. The final prototype needs to consider ways of assisting teachers, such as offering examples of pathways through sessions. In a respectful, clear and appropriate manner, the prototype could also provide examples of how teachers can move forward in their own learning, so as to provide authentic witness, emphasising that mastery empowers teachers to guide confident student exploration. Table 60, below, summarises these aspects.

*Table 59: Challenges and solutions relating to teacher knowledge, understanding and commitment*

**Element 3: Teacher Knowledge, Understanding and Commitment**



Identified Challenge	Towards a Solution (include in final prototype)
Limitations in teacher knowledge and understanding	Incorporate the concept of presenting the liturgical events to students in retrospect whenever possible. This will assist teachers in being personally prepared
	Offer clear indications of the essential understandings of the liturgical events and scriptural passages
	Adapt and extend the booklets offered to guide the teachers in their presentations
	The adaptations should include added information for teachers and recommendations for additional reading
	A recommended list of teacher-appropriate resources
	Access to reader-friendly informational resources relating to the Catholic faith, including hard-copy books and electronic materials
Varying levels of teacher commitment	A sample set of ‘witness’ opportunities, indicators of lived commitment
	Expand on the concept of presenting the liturgical events to students in retrospect, describing how it can offer teachers an opportunity for personal growth

The element of teacher expertise is a vital one, which is only briefly explored in this study. It merits deep and extensive exploration, and will be the focus of the next phase of this study which extends beyond the scope of the present PhD dissertation.

### 7.3.4 Discussion of Lens 2: Equipping teachers and schools to implement the SALT Approach

#### 7.3.4.1 Discussion Element 1: equipping and maintaining the learning space

The Catholic Church recommends that Catholic schools seek ways to present salvation history, the sacramental life, and the historical realities of the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ in systematic, integrated, organic and appropriate ways for children (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997). It maintains that religious education

should forge intimate links between catechesis, liturgy and sacraments, building up a knowledge and understanding of symbols and rites (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997).

O'Shea (in press), building on the works of Montessori and Cavalletti, indicates the importance of providing students with a richly prepared environment and a wide range of materials that can be personally manipulated. These are vital, offering a bridge to the both the historical and spiritual worlds, since knowledge is reached, in the first place, through the senses (Cavalletti, 2002; O'Shea, in press; Montessori & Standing, 1965). Providing tangible materials to consistently support the full range of religious education learning was a goal and materials were needed for topics beyond those recommended by Cavalletti or O'Shea. Participating teachers expressed amazement on seeing the amount of material supplied, coupled with a wondering as to whether it was possible for mainstream teachers to prepare such material (see 5.2.3.2.1.1).

The problem of preparing materials and maintaining the environment was both immediately and potentially solved in a number of ways. Taking a pragmatic approach, internet-sourcing solved some issues, such as accessing art works for printing, and providing materials to support choices for 25 children. Materials did not have to be perfect, although a backbone of attractive and durable materials was essential, setting the tone, and firing the children's imagination. The total focus of the researcher, enabling her to unstintingly dedicate the time needed to amass the required materials could be considered a limitation of this study. Further studies are needed, with the SALT Approach being implemented by others, using materials that are supplied, rather than made or amassed by the teacher. The long-term solution lies in the mass production of essential figures, perhaps leaving an optional small element for painting, such as the faces of figures. An open storage unit was designed to facilitate easy access to materials. The environmental set-up took time, and the issue was not satisfactorily resolved even on completion of the study.

Contemporary pedagogical research highlighted the need for two and three-dimensional resources, as well as the generous use of multi-media resources, to accommodate distinct student approaches (Boettcher, 2007; Kolb & Kolb, 2012;

Parsons & Taylor, 2011). Research also indicates that good practice is hampered by the absence of suitable material and inadequate facilities (Likoko et al., 2013). Additionally, contemporary studies evidence the negative effects of high expectations on time-poor teachers (Birenbaum et al., 2015; Bryck, 2015).

Time-poor teachers would need ready access to a variety of suitable options. Relating this to the SALT Approach, all avenues were pursued to facilitate access to sufficient material support for teachers. The use of film and multi-media is not something suggested by Cavalletti and minimally referred to by O'Shea, but this was extensively incorporated, for example by building a *Wikispace* for teacher and student use, gathering together a variety of relevant materials, music and film clips. Contemporary educational research also drew attention to new and compatible ideas requiring material support, such as the work related to SOLO taxonomy (Hook, & Mills, 2011) and human virtues (Lickona, 2014).

#### 7.3.4.2 Discussion Element 2: key pedagogical factors underlying the SALT Approach

Three pedagogical themes were recognised as being fundamental to the SALT Approach, and at the same time were at risk in many contemporary classrooms. The three pedagogical aspects considered closely throughout this study were those that (a) fostered pondering, (b) demonstrated respect, and (c) allowed for freedom of choice.

Church documents indicate that schools should be hubs of trusting relationships, incorporating affection, rapport and respect, reflecting the warmth of a family atmosphere (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988). These indications imply the concept of true families as places *fostering pondering, demonstrating respect and freedom of choice*.

From the perspective of the SALT Approach, Montessori's writings indicate pondering (Montessori & Standing, 1965) and Cavalletti (1983) observed the effect of adult attentiveness to the child's inner depth. Presenting profound scriptural and sacramental realities, for the child's own deep, personal and enduring reflection,

prepares the foundation for a life of exploration and spiritual experience (Cavalletti, 1983). Montessorian principles support children as self-directed learners, who move through phases which are governed by distinctive physical, psychological, cognitive and spiritual characteristics (Berryman, 1979; Montessori & Standing, 1965; Standing, 1998).

The SALT Approach's pedagogical paradigm is holistic, centred on the person, facilitating a rich personal transformation and fostering a climate of reflection (Lillard, 2005; Mahmoudi et al., 2012; Montessori & Standing, 1965). This study pinpointed and described specific pedagogical choices that fostered pondering, such as allowing for contributions and questioning during *presentation times*, encouraging deep and diverse participation, differentiating students' responses in order to gauge when information should be supplied rather than encourage endless, stultifying guesswork. It also involves knowing how and when to pose large questions for long-term pondering.

Contemporary educational research refers to *pondering*, under the term 'reflecting'. Integrating new knowledge with useful existing knowledge requires student reflection (Boettcher, 2007; Darling Hammond, 2008; Dochy, Segers, & Buehl, 1999). However, the reality is that under the guise of encouraging student participation, brief teacher-student interactions are conducted with the intention of maintaining the pace or maximising participation. This militates against sustained thinking and understanding. This can sometimes be traced back to a need to control the learning direction, a fear of silence, and the lack of time (Alexander 2004; Flitton and Warwick, 2013). Galton et al. (2009) discuss effective group work as needing *thinking and wait time*, giving students time to report back and share their learning. This equates to allowing time for pondering and reflecting. Contemporary research suggests ways of shaping teacher-talk and fostering child-talk that can lead to deep *pondering opportunities* (Alexander, 2005; Flitton & Warwick, 2013; Grice, 1975; Mitchell, 2010; Pierce & Giles, 2008).

This study incorporated such recommendations in a number of specific ways, identifying, for example, the importance of encouraging pondering through *equipping children with a rich vocabulary*, both by using it and valuing when

children did the same. Consciously recognising and fostering a Socratic structure in discussion was valuable and effective, as was recognising that pondering takes shape when thoughts, however amorphous, are expressed through the spoken word. These are aspects that many primary school teachers are unfamiliar with, and would need explanation in the final prototype.

Urmston and Hewison (2014) bring together the dimensions of Csikszentmihalyi's "flow" that allow for working without worry, a loss of self-consciousness and the achievement of intrinsic enjoyment (see Csikszentmihalyi's "autotelic experience" in Csikszentmihalyi, 1999, p. 824). This research related such observations to the pondering evident when children were fully absorbed in their work, regardless of surrounding noise as is described in Chapter 4 (see 4.2.3.2.1.3).

Montessori reflected Catholic belief when she spoke of *respect for the child* as springing from respect for God in the child and her belief that a Godless society violates respect for the child (Montessori & Standing, 1965). Both Cavalletti (1983) and O'Shea (in press) incorporate Montessori's (1965) pedagogical approach of demonstrating *respect* for the child by avoiding harshness, stern commands and needless prohibitions. Another facet of respect, which on first glance seems contrary, is that of refraining from excessive admiration and exaggerated praise. These, in shifting the child's focus to the adult's reaction, degrades the inherent value of the child's intuitive search for truth and the enjoyment of the search. Contemporary educational research focuses on respect in identifying positive and respectful atmospheres as vital for effective learning (Kyriakides et al., 2010; Thapa et al., 2013). There are studies that identify the importance of respecting students' cultural backgrounds in order to positively shapes learning attitudes (Lindsey & Lindsey 2016; Valenzuela & Codina, 2013).

Such recommendations found traction in this study. Manifest respect for the person was identified and precisely described, incorporating, for example, the need to consistently demonstrate respect by refining the skill of assuring the child that she/he has been heard and understood, through meeting the child's gaze, in a brief but kind comment and a gentleness in speech. Another indicator of respect included detecting and valuing things that mattered to the child, often revealed through a gesture, a look,

a comment or its absence. The skill of affirming the dignity of the person in differentiated ways, even if the child was causing disruption was challenging but important since it required keeping the flow going, while addressing the issue without disrespecting the person or persons involved.

Respect was shown by responding fully and honestly to questions that often seem to be side-stepped by teachers, such as those relating to heaven, hell, Satan, sin and death. The caveat here is to respond as representing Christ and the Catholic Church. While this was not an issue for the researcher, it needs unpacking for teachers of religious education, which the final prototype will address and future studies will explore. Identifying human virtues, and seamlessly weaving them into the sessions was another pedagogical strategy relating to respect.

A key aspect of the SALT Approach, consequent to that of respect for the child, is *freedom of choice*. Montessori's principles, adopted by Cavalletti (2002) and O'Shea (in press), prioritise the avoidance of doing for the child what he/she can do for him/herself (Montessori & Standing, 1965). O'Shea (in press) stipulates that it takes time to build up the range of responses needed for self-selection of activities and was something this study verified. However, matters were exacerbated and extended by challenges emanating from poor behaviour and literacy skills. Additionally, the researcher was not the home room teacher, and requisite habits could not be established throughout the school day. Widening the boundaries took time, but it was achieved, and gained momentum in the third iteration.

Relating to offering freedom of choice is the need for skills development. The explicit demonstration of skills relating to the presentation of written work, art and craft was effective and appreciated by students. Such skills need to be included in the final prototype. Some responses require precision skills that are decreasingly valued and used by teachers (Berninger et al., 2009; Dinehart, 2015; James & Engelhard, 2012; Kiefer et al., 2015). The increased use of computers is twinned with a discouragement of handwriting skills which are acquired through practice and currently seen by many as time-wasting and unnecessary. Research, however, indicates the importance of such skills (Alhusaini et al., 2016; Kim et al., 2013; Puranik et al., 2014; Reutzell, 2015). In addition, students benefit from them in the

SALT Approach to religious education, because they facilitate pondering, and technology-free responses.

Freedom of choice is also fostered when teachers know how and when to *let go*. Contemporary educational research supports offering truly autonomous choices, rather than controlled pseudo-choices. Through them, persistent, intrinsic motivation is fostered (Lüftenegger et al., 2012; Moller, Deci & Ryan, 2006; Schunk & Zimmerman 2012; Zumbrunn et al., 2011). Contemporary research also finds that teachers find it difficult to foster freedom of choice (Galton et al., 2009; Slavin, 2015). This study identified ways and opportunities for *letting go*. One strategy was that of allowing student to frequently re-visit activities. This was an initial concern for accompanying and observing teachers, who were accustomed to keeping the child's focus only on the immediate content. However, revisiting relates to pondering and going deeper, as children came back to materials introduced in earlier times, as for example, in exploring the Mass Moments, the Parables and the Paschal Mysteries (5.2.3.3.2).

Trust and respect were key factors relating to freedom of choice: trust that, if the *presentation sections* engaged students, then the relevance of their choices was virtually guaranteed; and a respect for students, who for reasons of interest or ability, choose to engage at different levels.

Ways of balancing freedom of choice with accountability were explored and partially resolved through the establishment of *Choice Options*. The danger lay in over-structuring *choice time*, and this could lead to frustration. The camera-man-cum-catechist provided a valuable contribution. The concept of having volunteer catechists, working alongside teachers in Catholic schools merits serious consideration for the final prototype and further studies.

Bausmith & Barry (2011) discuss the provision of expert, peer-reviewed instruction through online videos. Developing this concept and incorporating it into the final prototype may clarify the understanding of what the expert teacher has in mind with regard to the pedagogical strategies relating to pondering, respect and freedom of

choice. It could, furthermore, be accessible to teachers across the educational landscape.

The researcher's own pedagogical inclinations, so much in harmony with the SALT Approach cannot be presumed in all, or even many, teachers. This will limit its success. However, by making and illustrating specific pedagogical strategies, inroads can be made, contributing, not only in pedagogical terms but also towards the personal spiritual development of the teachers themselves, as will be discussed in the next section. In addition, the extent to which a wide variety of teaching styles can harmonise with the SALT Approach is yet to be explored through further studies, and this is proposed as part of the way forward in the recommendations section of this chapter.

#### 7.3.4.3 Discussion Element 3: teacher expertise

The two themes isolated for this element were (a) teacher knowledge and understanding, and (b) experiential knowledge gained through lived commitment.

The Catholic Church stipulates that teachers be grounded in Catholic doctrine, theology, ethics, philosophy and social teaching of the Church (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). The reality is that many of today's religious education teachers in Catholic schools have a minimal, compromised, partial or inadequate knowledge and understanding of Catholic belief. Montessori and Standing (1965) and Cavalletti (2002) saw the spiritual preparation of the teacher as essential. Cavalletti required that adults using the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd be well versed in the key events at the heart of Christianity, so as to transmit them to the child (Cavalletti, 1983). These concepts are embedded in O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method (O'Shea, in press). However, Garrido (2008) identified the challenges of adequate training for those wishing to use the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, and that teachers cannot be easily trained and equipped to use such a method without significant modifications and compromises. This was a recognised challenge for the implementation of the SALT Approach.



Contemporary research validates the need for teachers to be knowledgeable in their teaching domain in order to provide clear learning directions (Hattie, 2012; Tirri. & Ubani, 2013). Additionally, teachers need to be well-equipped and resourced, having access to school programmes, with opportunities for networking, peer-coaching and in-servicing (Beauchamp et al., 2014; Supovitz & Turner, 2000; Yuen, 2014).

This study validated such findings, identifying occasions during which the researcher's knowledge and understanding became a driving factor. This became evident through the analysis of film and audio data, discussions with the Religious Education Coordinator, and the observations of the accompanying teachers. The effectiveness of the SALT Approach would depend upon the depth and breadth of the teacher's faith knowledge. The researcher's knowledge and understanding allowed her to recognise the validity of each child's thoughts and comments, giving them due importance. Recognising children's glimpses of truth allowed the researcher to explain issues with ease, weaving in new information that students would not otherwise come to know. Such comments could go unnoticed by the accompanying teachers, who were likely to see them as 'off track'. Accompanying teachers themselves made this observation and valued the examples they witnessed. This encouraged them to acquire deeper understanding themselves.

When it comes to *lived commitment*, the Church anticipates that teachers of religious education will be committed, open to a personal spiritual formation, and living the Sacramental life (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977; Congregation for Catholic Education 2007; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1997). The participating teachers commented that their involvement in the study got them thinking about their own faith in all three aspects: knowledge, understanding and commitment. One of the teachers was undertaking post-graduate studies in religious education, and she invariably sought advice throughout the year, finding that working with the researcher greatly assisted her understanding.

In the area of teacher development, this study offers a way that could be termed *Companion Leadership*. Contemporary Research has validated the effectiveness of 'on-site' professional development (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Du-

Four, 2014; Woodland & Mazur, 2015). *Companion Leadership* is conducive to a trusting interaction between the *expert teacher*, guiding the other teachers as they implement the SALT Approach, being in the same room when the teaching and learning occurs, contributing and clarifying when appropriate. Such an approach is reminiscent of the pedagogy of Christ, who taught by example, and led the disciples to ask Him: “Lord, teach us to pray” (Luke 11:1).

## 7.4 Lens 3: Achieving the Accountability Requirements of a Diocesan Catholic School through the SALT Approach

### 7.4.1 Element 1: Systemic accountability

The main foci for this third lens were the expectations and requirements of Parramatta’s Catholic Education.

#### a) Preparing for the journey: systemic accountability

With the exception of Canon Law, the Catholic Church documents have little to say about educational accountability, apart from indicating that curricula and teaching programmes should be spiritually, pedagogically, psychologically and cognitively sound (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988, §62- 64; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §52).

Pertinent to this study was the pastoral letter of the bishops of NSW and the ACT, *Catholic Schools at a Crossroads*, which indicated that any religious education curriculum in Australia needed to be sound, attractive and professionally taught by teachers who have appropriate religious education qualifications (Bishops of NSW and the ACT, 2007). Australian Catholic Religious Education frameworks seek to ensure professionalism and academic rigour by taking up each state’s secular educational policies. Addressing accountability, all frameworks are built on the prevailing outcomes-based paradigm. Assessment and reporting aspects are incorporated, but pose a challenge for religious education, since values, personal faith development and spirituality cannot be easily measured and assessed. Reporting on personal faith development and personal spirituality is seen as inappropriate

(National Catholic Education Commission (Australia), 2008). Despite this, several diocesan curriculum documents include these as outcomes and are not opposed to an appropriate reporting.

A closer review of the requirements as articulated by Parramatta's Catholic Education Office identified pertinent challenges. Its religious education curriculum, *Sharing Our Story*, follows a modified version of Groome's Praxis model, with its curriculum documents outlining core content, and suggestions for assessment of knowledge and skills, values and attitudes. By contrast, Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd approach does not follow an outcomes-driven approach to religious education, seeing it as clouding the essential mission of evangelising to the child and opening the door to a personal relationship between the child and God. At most, only signs are sought as indicators of the child's growing understanding and development (Searle in Cavalletti, 1983). O'Shea makes headway towards accountability, assessment and reporting by providing a framework for teaching using the Mystagogical Catechetical Method (O'Shea, in press). These aspects were considered in the development of the first prototype and the three themes identified for consideration during the iterations were (i) assessment, (ii) reporting and (iii) matching Parramatta's Catholic Education's requirements.

#### b) The journey through the iterations: systemic accountability

Since the first iteration focused on getting the study off the ground, there was no pressure brought to bear by the School or Parramatta Catholic Education with regard to accountability, apart from seeking assurance that the content would be covered and assessed through the year, though not tied to the scope and sequence of the *Sharing Our Story* curriculum. An additional mitigating factor was that Parramatta's Religious Education Curriculum was undergoing review with the goal of offering a new approach and this could bear a similarity to the SALT Approach. The outcomes-based paradigm of the Parramatta Catholic Education would continue, however, and it was against this backdrop that the study proceeded.

*Assessment procedures* were considered from the beginning, and the researcher was confident that the SALT Approach would offer rich assessment opportunities

through observations, audio, and video, recordings, student discussions, written work and labelled illustrations, as well as tailored formal assessment tasks. However, since written work was weak, recordings of *student verbalisation* became vital for identifying students' levels of knowledge, values, attitudes and application as described in *Sharing Our Story*. Everything recorded for research purposes offered valuable assessment material, and this was plentiful.

Specific times were dedicated to assessment tasks, although especially in the first iteration, they were not particularly geared towards the *Sharing Our Story* outcomes. This was because groundwork needed to be covered, clarifying in the students' minds the historical reality of Jesus Christ, and covering aspects that would ideally be covered in earlier years, but which were clearly not embedded in their understandings. The researcher sought to address the outcomes of *Sharing Our Story*, all of which were to be assessed, although some 'warm up' outcomes were tangential to important learning, and therefore assessed with some latitude. The 30-minute session offered a convenient, though not exclusive window for *formal and semi-formal tasks*, supplying useful information for the mid-year reports. Some semi-formal assessments, modelled on O'Shea's suggestions, were completed as part of *choice times* with individual assessment tasks being completed over several sessions by individual students when they were ready (see 6.2.3).

In the second iteration assessment and reporting became an important focus, with mid-year reports, based on *Sharing Our Story* outcomes, going home to parents. A close analysis of Year Two's *Sharing Our Story* assessment rubrics enabled the researcher to identify assessable tasks to match outcomes for each unit, demonstrating that *Sharing Our Story* assessment rubrics could be effectively addressed using the SALT Approach. When it came to *reporting* at the target school, A-E achievement grades were required, as well as effort grades of 'Consistently' (C), 'Usually' (U), and 'Sometimes' (S). These were to be accompanied by a 30-word religious education comment. Using the data gathered, the researcher was able to provide adequate and appropriate grades and comments. In fact, the reports became a way of engaging the parents. The involvement of parents is an important aspect, repeatedly recommended in Church documents, and unfortunately this study was not able to address it in a significant way. It remains for future studies to develop the

most powerful and crucial aspect of the parental role in religious education, complementing the *companion leadership* suggested for teachers.

In the third iteration, the theme of ‘Matching Parramatta Diocese’s Religious Education Curriculum Requirements and Content’ received closer attention. The task involved correlating the SALT Approach with Year Two’s *Sharing Our Story* Units. The researcher was in a better position to address this towards the end of the iterative journey. It was done by reviewing the first prototype and re-packaging parts of it in a way that was familiar to teachers, reflecting the *Sharing Our Story* style of programming. This included scope and sequence charting and the inclusion of *learning intentions* with matching *success criteria*. There were challenges, particularly in the light of some outcomes which were shaped using praxis-style phraseology. By contrast, other outcomes seemed to indicate an over-expectation of students. However, most of the significant outcomes were matched by rich and deep student responses. Text Box 70 (see 6.2.3.3.1) presents samples of student response matching specific *Sharing Our Story* outcomes throughout Year Two.

The researcher took part in the school’s professional development, exploring alongside other teachers, the *Learning Intentions* and *Success Criteria* expectations for religious education. These were incorporated into the SALT Approach’s programme. Again, there were challenges impacting on freedom of choice, with the over-prescription of learning directions, reflecting a unit-driven lockstep approach, which potentially limits individual exploration. Thought was given to appropriate wordings for learning intentions and success criteria, and a new ‘set activity’ segment was sometimes incorporated between the *presentation/ discussion* section and the *choice time*. During this time, the students were expected to complete the set activity which was directly related to the learning intention and success criteria.

c) The journey’s end: reflecting on systemic accountability

The issue of accountability was important, and it received particularly close attention throughout the third iteration, which extended across Terms 3 and 4 of the school year. Matching Parramatta Diocese's Religious Education Curriculum at the Year Two level was possible, but more time was required to address it fully. The

outcomes-based approach implemented in the Parramatta Diocese was unlikely to change and the SALT Approach’s final prototype would need to address this. Additionally, achieving scope and sequencing compliance would need further consideration, as would the designing and refining of learning intentions and success criteria. The final prototype will address this retrospectively, and continue in a post-doctoral phase, repackaging the SALT Approach to meet the requirements involving (i) programming in ways acceptable and familiar to executive and teachers; (ii) matching the *Sharing Our Story* outcomes with evidence of student learning; (iii) providing compliance in terms of scope and sequence charts; and (iv) incorporating learning intentions and success criteria. Table 61, below, summarises aspects emerging as a consequence of the study.

Table 60: Aspects relating to accountability to inform the final prototype

<b>Achieving Accountability: The final Prototype should include:</b>
<p>Assessment Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Practical and viable recommendations for effective assessment procedures, encompassing oral, written and creative student communication</li> <li>b) The suggestion of using focus group discussions and individual conversations for assessment purposes</li> <li>c) The increased use of film and audio recordings, harnessing the ever-increasing access to digital recording devices</li> <li>d) The consideration of building a support network of volunteers. (i.e. persons with a level of faith commitment)</li> <li>e) A range of K-6 formal assessments samples</li> <li>f) Suggestions for the timing of formal or written assessment tasks</li> <li>g) Samples of Marking guidelines and assessment rubrics tailored to reflect the SALT Approach</li> </ul>
<p>Reporting Support</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Suggestions for gathering and collating student data for reporting purposes in terms of achievement and effort</li> <li>b) Recommendations and suggestions for providing effective comments, especially considering the varying levels of faith commitment, and students of other faiths</li> </ul>
<p>Matching Diocesan Religious Education Curriculum Requirements and Content</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Addressing the issue of programming, offering samples of how this looks</li> <li>b) Addressing the issue of meeting outcomes-based expectations, providing a range of acceptable student responses</li> <li>c) Developing a viable scope and sequencing chart</li> <li>d) Providing SALT Approach guidelines for preparing effective Learning Intentions and Success Criteria</li> <li>e) Providing an outline and charts demonstrating how the SALT Approach could function within a variety of school settings</li> </ul>

#### 7.4.2 Discussion of Lens 3: achieving the accountability requirements of a diocesan Catholic school through the SALT Approach

The one conditional understanding at the heart of this lens is that the educational bodies themselves are ultimately accountable to the local bishop representing the Catholic Church, under whose auspices such bodies exist. It is for the Church alone to stipulate what its representative bodies undertake, and how they are to fulfil their roles. Catholic religious instruction and education imparted in any school is “subject to the authority of the Church” (*Code of Canon Law* Can 804. §1).

In other words, Catholic schools are obliged to be faithful to their pastoral and ecclesial role in religious education, evangelisation and catechesis, guided by the Gospel and Person of Christ (Pope Paul VI, 1965; Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977; Congregation for Catholic Education, 2007). It is expected that they will present the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ as historical realities within the context of the history of salvation and the sacramental life (Congregation for Catholic Education 1988). The Church stipulates that curriculum and teaching programmes in Catholic schools should be spiritually, pedagogically, psychologically and cognitively sound (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1988, §62- 64, Congregation for Catholic Education, 1977, §52).

The Parramatta Diocese Religious Education curriculum, *Sharing Our Story*, following Groome’s *Praxis Approach*, technically reaches these requirements, particularly considering its theological content and overall scope and sequence, with some caveats, identified in the study. In principle, however, the SALT Approach effectively reached and moved beyond, the outcomes required at the Year Two level.

Parramatta Catholic Education, embracing contemporary educational and pedagogical research, theoretically at least, builds its own framework on cutting-edge research. Consequently, its accountability demands are interwoven with what it considers best pedagogical practice and anticipates evidence of effective practice to be forthcoming in schools. Parramatta’s Catholic Education pedagogical framework

accountability demands for religious education are the same as those for other domains. It looks for (a) collaborative, self-regulated learning, involving meta-cognitive skills empowering students to know where they are at, where they are going, and what it looks like (Vandeveldt, Van Keer & de Wever, 2011; Zumbrunn et al., 2011), (b) deep learning and effective scaffolding skills (Frey et al., 2017; Kong & Song, 2013), (c) evidence of visible learning, incorporating learning intentions and success criteria, constructed or deconstructed with students (Ambrose et al., 2010; Hattie & Timperley, 2007), (d) formative assessment (Black & Wiliam, 1998; Clark, 2012). In addition, teachers at the school were involved in frequent professional learning experiences, much of it on-site, as recommended by research (Darling-Hammond & Richardson, 2009; Du-Four, 2014; Sharratt & Fullan, 2009; Woodland & Mazur, 2015).

These are noble aspirations, but current research also points out very real challenges, which have not yet been fully addressed within Australian schools and their systems. High expectations place pressure on time-poor teachers (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2013; Murray & Passy, 2014; Tan et al., 2014). Bryck 2015, maintains that the ever-mounting demands of accountability leads to a spiralling set of impossible demands. Wiliam and Leahy (2007) suggest that micro-standardised assessments and outcomes-based learning need to be unharnessed from the educational cart if formative assessment is to be truly effective. On an optimistic note, researchers, such as Clark (2010), maintain that implementing good formative assessment will eventually lead to a more reasonable approach in teaching and learning practice. Good pedagogy is also hampered by insufficient professional learning and preparation time, as well as behaviour management issues (Baines et al., 2015; Dickie et al., 2015).

This design-based research study took place within this climate of intense accountability. Cavalletti (1983) was emphatic that the core task of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was to bring the child to a personal encounter with God, there to leave the child. She emphasised an approach that was not goal-oriented or curriculum driven since these forces would cloud the focus. This was identified as an obstacle for school implementation by some (Searle in Cavalletti, 1983; Garrido, 2008; Gibson 2001). For Cavalletti, any indicators were to be considered as *signs of*



*success* more than assessment and reporting items. O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method, while embracing this, built a method that can assess and report within schools in the required ways (O'Shea, in press). This doctoral study developed, and successfully implemented assessment tools as suggested by O'Shea, and these provided the required assessment and reporting data.

The SALT Approach embraces many core understandings supported by cutting-edge research identified by Paramatta's Catholic Education and is positioned to implement them effectively, all the more powerfully because of its holistic paradigm. O'Shea has correlated the Mystagogical Catechetical Method with the most effective teaching and learning practices identified by Hattie's meta-research (O'Shea, in press). The SALT Approach also fosters self-regulated learning, deep learning and good scaffolding skills (Lillard, 2005; Montessori & Standing, 1965; Standing, 1998). O'Shea, (in press) outlines ways for effectively incorporating learning intentions and success criteria. The principles of formative assessment can also be well accommodated.

Moving things to the level of empirical evidencing, this study demonstrated all of the above, with the SALT Approach meeting expectations on paper and in action. In addition, it explored and demonstrated effective ways of gathering assessment data, moving away from summative assessment tasks, by using audio and film as evidence of learning, and by offering students diverse ways of learning. It must be acknowledged, however, that this was possible because the researcher implemented the SALT Approach without needing to juggle its implementation with the myriad of tasks, accountabilities and responsibilities that full-time teachers encounter, and this constitutes a limitation of the study.

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to the SALT Approach's accountability lies in the contrast between its holistic nature and the outcomes-based paradigm when it is poorly implemented. These waters do not mix well, since the latter can place on-going pressure, requiring incessant teacher accountability and micro-standardised data-gathering. This study was limited to one Year Two class, and there was a leniency in terms of accountability pressures. Appropriate assessment and reporting, using outcomes achieved, were not difficult but the pressure on teachers, in general,

was noticed. This can be considered as another limitation of the study, with future studies needed, using the SALT Approach within the full context and with all the demands, perhaps using an action research model.

## 7.5 The Way Forward-Through the Issues, Challenges and Contributions, Towards Implications

### 7.5.1 Introduction

This design-based research study set out to trial and refine an approach for teaching religious education in Catholic schools. Called the SALT Approach, its conceptual framework was O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method. This section presents issues and challenges, as well as contributions and implications for further research and practice. It will do so by first considering implications more directly linked to the theoretical framework of the SALT Approach. This will be followed by considering the SALT Approach as affecting (a) learning and teaching, (b) professional development and the leadership link, and (c) meeting accountability requirements, and finally (d) this study's implications for design-based research.

### 7.5.2 Implications for the theoretical framework of the SALT Approach

Six issues bearing significant implications for the theoretical framework of the SALT Approach can be drawn from this study. *The first issue* is a contributing factor, in that this doctoral research project is pioneer work. It is the first time that O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method, as unpacked by the researcher in the SALT Approach has been empirically trialled, moving away from anecdotal evidence and into a rigorous, design-based research process (Plomp & Nieveen, 2007). As such, it marks the beginning of a long journey, involving on-going research studies. In collaboration with other academics, including post-graduate students, and schools where future studies take place, the second prototype emerging from this study will be further trialled and refined. The way is open to collaborating with other universities, both in Australia and overseas.

*The second issue* emanated from the challenge of contrasting environments, as described under this study's first lens. O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method was built upon Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd, which in turn found its roots in Montessori's holistic approach. This study aimed to trial and refine O'Shea's adaptation of the Catechesis of the Good Shepherd in a twenty-first century Catholic school. Today's demographics differ from those of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and society has vastly changed. Catholic schools reflect this, with a clientele of students and families from many and varied religious perspectives and affiliations (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982). Additionally, there are the challenges brought by a growing number of fragile families (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013).

What is more, Australia of today is a far cry from the Italy of both Montessori and Cavalletti, when and where the Catholic faith, whether lived or not, was woven into the thread of society. Additionally, Cavalletti's Catechesis of the Good Shepherd was designed as a parish-based catechetical method, whereas the centre of gravity for the SALT Approach is the school (Cavalletti, 1983; O'Shea, in press). O'Shea's work brings the continued relevance of both Montessori and Cavalletti to the forefront in proposing the Mystagogical Catechetical Method as a relevant approach that can be effectively implemented in contemporary Catholic schools. This study contributed to the theoretical framework, demonstrating that it can successfully and sensitively establish successful learning in a twenty-first century environment. However, it required adaptation, particularly considering Cavalletti's implicit presumption of children's focused attention and response (Cavalletti, 2002). Such may be possible when working with a small and relatively select group of children, but this is not reflective of contemporary schools and their students. The way forward for the SALT Approach lies in using the refined prototype to continue the study, extending it, while remaining true to its core principles, in a variety of contemporary school settings. This, again, requires the ongoing, collaborative research at all levels, involving like-minded academics, dioceses and schools, as mentioned above.

*A third issue*, coming to light under the first lens, related to the strengths found in today's child. Horizons were opened for the SALT Approach by children's confident verbal communication skills and innate attraction to the spiritual. In this, there are differences with Cavalletti's approach, which, validly enough, focused on the child's

encounter with God, to the exclusion of others (Cavalletti, 2002). In the school environment, however, the element of communication and interaction with others is a fundamental aspect of school life. It cannot be easily suspended, even on entering the dedicated space, such as the one used for this study. While there were moments of deep quiet, this was rarely the norm, and the room by no means resembled the monastery that Cavalletti describes in the *Atrium*. The SALT Approach embraced verbal exchanges and interactions, which, in turn, synergised the individual student's relationship with God. These aspects of the SALT Approach, to be described in the emerging prototype, present new nuances for school application. Thus, teachers will be alerted to ways of harmonising student's verbal skills with their natural spiritual inclinations, as teachers learn to step back from excessively dominating the talk-time (Alexander, 2013).

This latter recommendation adopts Cavalletti's (2002) advice that the teacher is only the bridge between the child and God, but applies it differently, acknowledging the place of discussion within the classroom. Future studies can research this aspect more deeply in other school settings, and across the grades.

*The fourth issue*, springing from the second lens, considered the challenge of suitably equipping schools and teachers. Cavalletti emphasised the teachers' preparation of materials as a means towards deeper spiritual growth, and their role as well-formed guiding catechists (Cavalletti, 2002). O'Shea's work (in press) provides a deep consideration of the theological and spiritual background important for the SALT Approach. This researcher was suitably prepared and applied the recommendations of both, but the study identified that it would be virtually impossible for teachers to prepare materials in their entirety, although even partial preparation can nurture a teacher's own spiritual growth.

O'Shea (in press) suggested ways for teachers to make materials and offered booklets to guide the presentations. This study contributed to the SALT Approach's own framework by identifying the need to forego or minimise Cavalletti's requirement the production of material by making them available and in adapting and extending the booklets offered by O'Shea.

The formation of teachers remains a great challenge. What the study demonstrated was that the accompanying teachers grew in knowledge, understanding and commitment because of their involvement. This points the way forward, with further research studies or simple implementation, carving pathways in schools and working with teachers, mentoring and guiding them on a one-to-one basis.

The *fifth issue*, studied under the third lens, was assessment. One of Cavalletti's key beliefs was that the adult needs to forego every form of control (including quizzes, tests and exams), leaving the Holy Spirit to act in the intimacy of the child's soul (Cavalletti, 2002). O'Shea's *Mystagogical Catechetical Approach*, geared towards school implementation, offered suggestions for suitable student assessment tasks. This study began with the clear understanding that assessment was sine qua non in schools, and as such would impact on the SALT Approach. It successfully identified ways that assessment data could be gathered, using film and audio recordings, now increasingly used in contemporary classrooms using modern technologies, and having attained the required parental permissions. However, Cavalletti's fundamental proposal, that assessment in terms of quizzes, tests or exams are inappropriate, requires possibly the greatest single adaptation to the SALT Approach. This study explored the terrain and was able to evidence viable and compatible assessment and reporting. However, more needs to be done, even to the extent of challenging the status quo.

The question remains as to the suitability of intense and overriding micro-assessment, articulated as *assessment of and for learning*, endemic in many schools across all disciplines, and observed at the school where the study took place. This researcher was not obliged, in the year of application, to accommodate all these requirements and so this challenge was only partially addressed. The proposed way forward would be to extend the study at the same school, subjecting it to the same demands others face in implementing religious education for Parramatta's Catholic Education. This would subject the SALT Approach to assessment, accountability and reporting demands, and test its ability to combine them with its more holistic approach. It is likely that such intense and ongoing assessment demands will impede the effectiveness of the SALT Approach and future studies could aim to offer

assessment and reporting methods more compatible with the nature of the SALT Approach.

Lastly, a *sixth issue* was the scope and extension of the study. As an initiating project, it focused on implementing the SALT Approach in a Catholic school with a group of Year Two children, working through a full year. Implementing it at this level clarified that additional topics were needed so that the SALT Approach's pedagogy could be consistently applied in all religious education sessions. This limitation indicates that if the SALT Approach is to be truly authentic to itself, and effective in the school setting, it needs to include topics not yet fully fleshed out, supporting them with additional materials. Therefore, further research is needed, trialling and refining the SALT Approach to ensure that topics and requisite materials are included while remaining essentially true to the essence of the approach. Furthermore, the study needs to be extended and trialled across the grades, demonstrating its ability to cover all of the religious education, throughout approximately 2.5 hours a week in each grade, while working within the curricular requirements of schools and their authoritative bodies.

In summary, this study began the process of engineering, articulating, mapping out and supplementing materials, enabling the study's final prototype to be developed. This prototype forms the basis of the next step, as the SALT Approach is applied across the grades, firstly in the participating school and then in other schools, in order to work towards generalisability. This study was limited to the one class, in one school in Western Sydney, working with a culturally diverse demographic. In addition, there was good support offered by the Religious Education Coordinator, who had some knowledge and understanding of the *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*. These factors limited the generalisability of the study. Significantly extending the research cannot be achieved without the support and endorsement of some sort of body or foundation, moving it beyond the work of O'Shea and Irwin and involving systematic collaboration across the academic and school communities.

### 7.5.3 Implications for teaching and learning in religious education using the SALT Approach

Six issues emerge relating to teaching and learning in religious education using the SALT Approach. The *first issue* relates to the debate surrounding the concepts of catechesis, evangelization and religious education. Recent church documents have provided some broad reflections, together with simplified definitions of catechesis and religious education, ostensibly setting them in distinct camps (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2009; Congregation for Catholic Education 2013). These need to be considered and applied in the light of significant and comprehensive documents such as *Catechesi Tradendae* (1979), in which a more complex and compatible understanding of catechesis, evangelization and religious education is considered, and the roles and responsibilities of Catholic schools are presented (see 2.2.2.3).

The SALT Approach can contribute to the development of both understanding and practical implementation. It can offer tangible and practical ways of demonstrating that these three perspectives of catechesis, evangelization and religious education can work in harmony. Such possibilities go hand in hand with the understanding that religious education teachers work towards becoming ever more competent experts in the Catholic faith and living witness to that faith. It is this that equips them to present the Christian story and the person of Christ with exquisite sensitivity to the experiences and perspectives of students who are on the road of discovery towards truth and goodness (Congregation for Catholic Education, 2013, § 72, 75).

The *second issue* is the tension between religious education, seen as opening a path for the child, leading him/her towards a lifelong, loving, personal encounter with Jesus Christ (Congregation for the Clergy, 1997), and the constraints imposed by accountability systems essentially designed for other disciplines. This continues to be much discussed by religious educators and academics (Hyde & Rymarz, 2009). Accountability systems in contemporary Catholic schools are usually built upon outcomes-based frameworks. This may be effective for learning domains such as Science, Mathematics, Geography and History. However, the vastness of the human spirit's search for ultimate goodness, absolute beauty and eternal truths cannot be

held captive within the locked steps of a system addressing the material and temporal (Cecero, 2011; Waghid, 2003).

Outcomes-based accountability systems tend towards an intense and time-consuming exercise of boxing knowledge, understanding and skills into measurable chunks (Berlach, 2004; Riley, 2014). As such, it is inappropriate, at least without modification, with Catholic religious education, concerned, as it must be, with the human soul. Contemporary Catholic religious education requires pedagogies that effectively achieve its own unique goals, which reach beyond the physical world.

The implication here is two-fold. In the immediate future, research and practice using the SALT Approach, working hand in hand, need to offer ways of reasonably meeting current accountability requirements. This study has demonstrated that such accountability is entirely possible, although it is time-consuming. Further ‘on the ground’ research is needed in order to discover ways of meeting accountability demands. In the long-term, research involving the SALT Approach can contribute towards religious education by suggesting accountability methods more suited to Catholic religious education. This is all the more important considering the faith diversity found in Catholic schools today, and the need to strike the right balance relating to intercultural relations, while not resorting to relativistic neutrality or “cultural levelling and indiscriminate acceptance of types of conduct and life-styles” (Pope Benedict XVI. Encyclical Letter *Caritas in Veritate*, §26).

*The third issue* for teaching and learning relates to fostering a prayerful spiritual environment, allowing for pondering, meditation and reflection (Cavalletti, 1983). Three aspects can be identified in this regard. One involved the different teaching style to which the students were accustomed. The students came from an environment where the teaching styles were often loud and assertive, controlling the learning environment in ways that tended to overlook the personal and spiritual development of the child. The teaching style in these religious education sessions tended to be much quieter, incorporating the treasure of time for pondering and praying, and being inventive about how to keep up with the curriculum. The study also included consistently trying to speak to children with respect.



A second aspect involved offering students ample time to engage in choice activities. While conditions facilitated a quieter, more prayerful atmosphere, students sometimes chose to engage in ways that worked against that atmosphere. Despite this, other students often seemed able to continue working great absorption, oblivious of the noise around them.

The third aspect is that the SALT Approach proposes a dramatic increase in meaningful student-talk as opposed to teacher-talk (Alexander, 2013). This would also impact on the reflective nature of the sessions. This study, with student-talk facilitated by the researcher, made significant inroads in establishing the required atmosphere, but it required a fine balancing act and determined focus. This points to the need for further studies, incorporating teaching styles that challenge teachers' habits and recognising that effective religious education involves nurturing a space where children's interiority and spirituality can grow. As this study continues with the same children, it will investigate how this aspect can be successfully developed as the children move through the grades. In addition, trialling the emerging prototype in other schools can bring new angles to bear.

*The fourth issue* was that the researcher leading the project had a deep knowledge of, and commitment to, the Catholic faith, as well as a deep understanding of O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechesis, which she adapted under the name of the SALT Approach. Such depth is relatively rare and certainly cannot be presumed. In effect, the SALT Approach's success will be limited by resistance to change, preferring a comfortable status quo, effectively limiting personal growth in understanding and commitment. This study involved other accompanying teachers and a great deal of mentoring took place through the co-teaching, which was well received and did lead to personal growth. The question arises, can this approach work successfully in other situations? Can teachers be taught, for example, by distance education? Are a series of courses taught to under-graduates likely to result in the successful implementation of the approach? It seems to this researcher that the answer lies in beginning small, nurturing its development at the grassroots level, with individuals who can understand it, and in schools that are open to the learning involved (Bryck, 2015).

The leading teacher, or teacher-researcher, would engage in a style of *companion leadership*, mentoring, coaching and guiding other teachers as they implement the SALT Approach. A significant factor is that of having access to a room dedicated to the project, where teachers can experience the environment and establish the required tone at least for one 60-minute session a week, with the other religious education sessions perhaps continuing in their home room, but still pursuing the same approach. A related aspect is that of teacher-apprenticeship, allowing the teachers involved to gradually come to understand that religious education is much more than transferring information and achieving outcomes, but adopting a deeply organic process that turns religious education into a pathway towards religious experience. This requires the teacher's readiness to guide the children while *letting go*, allowing children to lead.

*'Letting go'* allows explorations to go much farther and deeper than the curriculum stipulates, with the confidence that the curriculum requirements will, almost incidentally, be achieved. At its heart, the SALT Approach requires teachers to recognise that the child is a person capable of grasping spiritual realities in ways one usually presumes only possible in adults (Montessori & Standing, 1965). This presumes a teaching approach that is not 'paternalistic', not speaking down to the child. Such a mind-set change also involves understanding that religious education recognises that children's spiritual understanding and development cannot be easily correlated with cognitive phases of development.

*The fifth issue* is that of teacher's own spiritual growth taking place concurrently with the children. The teachers in this study experienced a personal change and it was, in part, due to their own observations of the children's spiritual sensitivities and responses. They witnessed children bringing up deep topics, asking wise questions, and curious about spiritual matters. The spiritual nature of the intervention led to a spontaneously expressed change in the teachers involved. This study demonstrated that becoming an effective teacher of religion involves a personally lived engagement, which awakens new understandings and spiritual awareness.

When teachers are immersed in exploring faith and belief along with the children, new thoughts, connections and ideas emerge, affecting teachers in personal ways.

This was identified by the teachers in this study, and it opened up new horizons for them. They began to move towards a more living and experiential, approach, where the teacher, along with the child becomes a co-learner of the mysteries of God (Congregation for Catholic Education, 1982).

The *sixth issue* is rather tangential, and it concerns the intersect between the SALT Approach and new pedagogies based on multi-media, which are increasingly shaping, for better or worse, the educational landscape. Much of current pedagogical research revolves around these technologies, with researchers identifying a style of learning emanating from them. Handal (2016, pp 15-19) calls the new type of student “the grasshopper learner”- one who quickly connects the dots, potentially outstripping the teacher, at least in terms of knowledge and skills. Multi-media learning does have the power to tap into the human being’s innate sense of curiosity, an inclination that can be harnessed to the advantage or detriment of the human person. Schools have embraced multi-media technologies, although on-the ground technology is still unreliable for a raft of reasons including seamless access, teachers’ skills, student fascination interwoven with inappropriate learning choices, and behaviour management. Nevertheless, in the field of religious education multi-media must play a role. However, while it may be possible for the “grasshopper learner” (Handal, 2015, pp. 15-29) to acquire much information, the SALT Approach is focused on pondering, leading to deep learning and inner awareness of the spiritual. This study did integrate multi-media to a degree, and care is needed to ensure that the right balance is kept. If properly integrated and guided by wise adults, seamless access to multi-media resources can play a valuable part in allowing the child to learn and grow in faith understanding.

#### 7.5.4 Professional development and the leadership link

This study points the way towards a distinctive style of professional development for Catholic religious education, unharnessing it from the established paradigms. The key concept here is that Catholic religious education cannot be simply regarded as a discipline on a par with other disciplines. It over-arches them, moving students and teachers into a sphere beyond them. It is concerned with the whole person, and each one’s search for God. Knowledge and facts may be acquired along the way, and there

is a place for measuring that. However, when the measurement of known facts and understandings outweighs the essential purpose of religious education in Catholic schools, which is to lead the person towards an encounter with God as revealed by Jesus Christ, it is counter-productive.

Consequently, *the first issue* relating to professional development is that outcomes-oriented and large group professional development approaches have limited effect in teaching and learning of religious education, especially when considered from the SALT Approach's perspective. In congruence with contemporary research, the more effective approach involves teachers helping and mentoring each other, sharing experiences in schools where principals are leaders in teaching. Such an approach leads to professional development that works at the grass-roots level (Fullan 2016). This approach was essentially the one that took place throughout this study, as the researcher worked with the accompanying teachers.

This emerging style of professional development can open the way for respecting the SALT Approach's particular professional development style, with the leading religious education teacher working alongside teachers as religious education sessions are in progress. Such a leadership style could be termed *Companion Leadership*, allowing for more immediate understanding and application, as the professional development takes place within the teaching and learning experience itself. This can shift the focus from key performance indicators or success criteria, common in outcomes-based learning, towards a more fitting approach recognising that religious education involves the learner in a deeper, more spiritual experience that cannot be regulated or measured in the usual ways. One might be able to compartmentalise mathematical concepts, or science experiments, but religious education cannot be dissected or fragmented in the same way.

*The second issue* concerns building a professional development paradigm that forges closer collaborative relationships between the university and schools wishing to trial the SALT Approach, thus developing stronger theory to practice application. This collaboration can work in many ways, such as implementing replication or extension research studies, using design-based research, or shorter research projects involving post-graduate students (for example, teasing out further the pedagogical strategies

that make the SALT Approach successful). In addition, targeted undergraduate students could be invited to undertake practicums at schools already using the SALT Approach to some degree. Such collaboration can make a contribution towards identifying the unique elements of religious education's own authentic academic rigour. This collaboration began with the University of Notre Dame University working with Catholic Education of the Parramatta Diocese, leading to this study, with more research expected to flourish. The intention is to create a centre for religious educational research based upon the trialling and refining of the SALT Approach at the selected school, gradually broadening the base to include many schools.

A *third issue* in the field of professional development is that of selective enmeshing with contemporary, cutting edge pedagogical research with the SALT Approach in appropriate ways, keeping abreast of developing research. Pedagogical research driving professional development in schools today is applied to all teaching and learning domains. However, it needs to be applied to religious education in a distinct way, enhancing, not diminishing the achievement of religious education's true goals. Further studies involving the SALT Approach would continue to articulate how contemporary pedagogies align with it. Two examples, briefly explored in this study, involved the suitable and flexible adaptation of SOLO taxonomy for use in primary religious education, and the inclusion of human virtues.

#### 7.5.5 Accountability requirements

Two main issues can be identified with regard to meeting accountability requirements. The *first issue* relates to the implementation of the SALT Approach within an outcomes-driven curriculum, and one which currently mandates a unit structure. This study demonstrated, in a limited way, that implementation was possible. However, the study also indicated that the SALT Approach works best using a liturgically-based, spiral curriculum, more organically aligned with the pedagogy of the Church, and building a continuum of learning that runs independently of distinctive, lock-stepped units. An important factor relating to this was its strength in guiding students from where they are at, to where they need to go.

The *second accountability issue*, looming large in schools, is assessment and reporting. These are already much-debated topics in religious education, with current religious education curricula needing to demonstrate its (i.e. religious education's) rigour and measurability as an academic discipline. Ways have been found over the years to distinguish the various aspects of learning and assessing in terms of knowledge, understanding and application while respecting that personal spiritual faith commitment cannot, and should not, be assessed and reported. While this holds true, the study provided an opportunity to consider the impact of assessment, as it currently stands, when its constant presence casts a shadow on learning about what is truly important. Attempts to measure depths of understanding in religious education will inevitably fall short. Sessions of religious education deserve deeper consideration, offering the student opportunities to breathe deeply the mystery, spirit and essence of God, as presented through the eyes of Catholic belief.

Attaining a balanced view and practice is difficult and this impacts on the student. When results, based many times on written work, grades a student, it constitutes for the child, an evaluation of his/her inner attitude, whether or not it is intended as such. Assessing, using the existing models can hamper the search for goodness, truth and beauty, the developing personal relationship with God, and the work of the Holy Spirit in the soul of the child, which together constitute the declared intent of Catholic religious education (Hyde & Rymarz, 2009).

This study took these unavoidable challenges on board, using a myriad of tools, including filming and audio recording, gathering information from the range of work students chose to do. In this way, the researcher was able to locate assessment data that shaped sensitively written comments for the reports. However, this was a demanding process, and possible only because data was extensively gathered for the study itself.

This study contributed to assessment and reporting by demonstrating that by keeping the focus on the important, spiritual things, the more tangible markers of religious literacy actually follow. Future research studies are needed to identify how similar practices can be embedded effectively as part of a regular teacher's working slate, especially because the demonstration and reporting of visible learning can be

expected for some time to come. In the medium term, related studies can focus on establishing an alternative view to assessment and reporting, moving more in the direction of a comment rather than a grade or mark, although these also have their place when it comes to knowledge assessment. In the long term, studies can take another tack, exploring ways of respectfully recognising the signs of spiritual growth, as Cavalletti puts it, while still ensuring a thorough preparation for participation in the sacramental life of the Church.

Future studies can also look at establishing whether students can come to distinguish their religious literacy, demonstrated in their knowledge and understanding of facts, such as the names objects of worship, and their symbolic meanings, from their personal friendship with the triune God as revealed by Jesus Christ.

#### 7.5.6 Implications for design-based research

This study provides a new and significant example of how design-based research can be successfully used in a PhD study, exemplifying a comprehensive intersecting and enmeshing of theory and practice, and providing a practical study that can have real impact in schools. It lays the groundwork for future studies emerging from it, moving towards research involving other teachers, schools and post-graduate students, applying design-based research to religious education and the spiritual domain.

The main implication for the design-based-research methodology emerging from this study relates to the length of the study and plans for its future development. At this point in time, there are still relatively few doctoral studies opting for design-based research, and possibly none relating to Catholic religious education. Other design-based PhD research projects often focus on shorter iterative cycles ranging from about three to six months, and sometimes to one year. This PhD was ambitious, involving a rich intervention executed over a full year of extensive data collection. Data included weekly video and audio recordings, student journals, student assessment tasks, focus group discussions, and interviews with students, teachers, executive staff and parents. This would not have been possible without the volunteer work of an experienced camera-man, who was also a person of deep faith. Lastly, there was the researcher's audio and written journal-keeping. The abundance of data

facilitated a thick, rich set of data, which was personally transcribed and analysed by the researcher. All of this was necessary, given the vast scope of the study and the challenge of gaining a true overview of how the SALT Approach could viably work in a school setting, and providing information for the refinement of the prototype. The researcher saw it as an initial part of a longer, five-year design-based research project.

In some ways, this study only partially fulfilled the current expectations of design-based research, with much of the research work conducted only by the single researcher, although others, such as the accompanying teachers and the school's religious education coordinator, were sufficiently involved. In addition, the researcher worked as closely with her three supervisors, each one bringing his own expertise to the project. The main supervisor was a professor in theology and education, the second a senior lecturer in education with a firm grounding in theology, and the third a mathematician, associate professor in empirical research, who was of the Bahai faith. This made for a rather complex but very productive team, with the researcher in close contact with all three throughout the process as the methodology was refined, findings were synthesised and plans made for each iterative cycle.

An additional challenge for this design-based research project was that the SALT Approach under investigation concerned the spiritual domain. The largely spiritual nature of the subject, together with the length of the intervention, studied through three lenses, involving multiple elements and themes, made data gathering and analysis especially complex. Despite this, the researcher found the empirical design-based research study a very effective methodology for this essentially spiritual domain. In part, this was due to her interest in spiritual matters combined with a keen desire to support teaching religious education through empirical research. Having made this contribution to design-based research, it would be appropriate for the study to be followed by more research relating to the SALT Approach using the same methodology, encouraging other post-graduate students to undertake design-based research.



## 7.6 Final Comments

*And he sees the vision splendid of the sunlit plains extended,  
and at night the wondrous glory of the everlasting stars.*

(Banjo Patterson, Clancy of the Overflow)

This has been a long journey, although its end only marks the beginning of an even longer one. Teaching Catholic religious education in the twenty-first century presents many challenges. As described in this dissertation, they include respectfully involving, inspiring and motivating students with very diverse needs and faith backgrounds; recognising that teachers have diverse levels of religious knowledge, understanding and commitment; working with sometimes conflicting methods and curriculum structures; handling time and space constraints; accessing suitable, engaging resources; and implementing proven pedagogical practice.

The researcher set out on the journey because, after a teaching career spanning more than 35 years, she took on a part-time tutoring role at the University of Notre Dame with the aim of passing on some of her experience to student teachers, and with a particular interest in religious education. This brought her into contact with O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method, eventually leading to the PhD study presented here. The SALT Approach, following a holistic paradigm, builds on the work of Montessori, Cavalletti and O'Shea.

The study used a design-based research methodology, and it was a pioneer work, being the first time that O'Shea's Mystagogical Catechetical Method was adapted, trialled and refined. Design-based research can be compared to a journey with four stages. The first stage involves scanning the landscape through the review of the literature, and the preparation for the journey, as the objectives are defined, and the first prototype is designed. The second stage is akin to packing for the journey, preparing the materials needed for the adventure ahead, building the prototype. The third stage is the journey itself when the prototype is trialled and refined, viewed through the chosen lenses. The fourth stage is the reflection on the journey when the data is analysed, and conclusions reached. During this particular journey, three lenses scanned the landscape as comprehensively as possible, so setting a basis, a launch-pad, for future studies.

The lenses on this journey brought several discoveries. The first lens seemed to indicate that, while the children may take time to recognise their own inner potential, they were drawn to the spiritual, and this motivates them and changes the way they behave. They responded especially to the personalised approach that lies at the heart of the SALT Approach. Also, when the contemporary, verbally expressive child encounters spiritual vistas, speaking about them, in general, seemed to increase their spiritual awareness and sensitivity.

The second lens identified the need to facilitate the supply of materials but, more importantly, identified key pedagogical strategies that many teachers overlook, or are unaware of: pedagogical strategies that draw out children's contributions, facilitate rich vocabularies, reflect respect for the dignity of the child, facilitate the 'letting go' that teachers need to develop, and trusting the child's ability to self-regulate. It also demonstrated that teachers could become co-learners alongside the child, drawing them to a deeper understanding and towards a more personal relationship with God as they move through the liturgical year with the child.

The third lens demonstrated that accountability demands could be met, although they may run contrary to the holistic approach at the core of the SALT Approach. While assessment and reporting are not part of Cavalletti's *Catechesis of the Good Shepherd*, O'Shea's suggestions, expanded and developed, offer an authentic and acceptable adjustment suited to the expectations of the contemporary school. In this, further research is required, and has, in fact already begun in the two years since the data collecting phase of this study.

This study demonstrated that an approach inspired by Montessori and Cavalletti could work successfully within a contemporary, diversely populated school, despite the differences of time, place and society. The intervention indicated that the core principles of Montessori and Cavalletti are still current with O'Shea's interpretations and adaptations moving them beyond the parish-setting and into schools. In this, the SALT Approach offers a fresh response to the call for a new evangelisation, looking respectfully at the child as a person, and from a deeply Christian anthropological perspective. This study began the articulation and demonstration of what this perspective actually looks like, offering teachers a guiding hand.

However, there are limitations, and these need to be continually explored, applying the SALT Approach in distinct settings. This design-based research was instrumental in creating a research space where things could be implemented, trialled and shared with teachers at a grassroots level, walking alongside them rather than mandating an approach. It demonstrated that good curriculum development, in this case in the spiritual sphere, can be a dynamic, not static, process, always ready to be challenged and adjusted. In this, design-based research design becomes a powerful tool, providing a vehicle for a journey to be undertaken time and again.

The data revealed tangible and sometimes profound spiritual development in the children engaged in the study, regardless of faith background. These results substantiate the suggestion that the SALT Approach can offer a paradigm for thinking about religious educational practice in Catholic schools, suggesting a move away from the restrictive demands on school and teacher accountability, and towards the recognition of religious education's own valid academic approach: one that is more suited to fostering the spirituality and faith of students, empowering them to discover the spiritual dimension for themselves.

It is the way forward that now holds the researcher's attention. In the two years since the data collection year, some of the anticipated opportunities are already in progress, though not, at the present moment as a rigorous research study. The work has continued throughout 2016 and 2017, with the researcher working as a consultant in the same school of the original study, supported by Catholic Education Parramatta, working with the same children, each year with new accompanying teachers. The accompanying teachers of 2015 and 2016 continue using the SALT Approach. All teachers, including the researcher, are expected to meet accountability demands of Parramatta Catholic Education. In addition, teachers from Kindergarten to Year 6 use the dedicated room, with the researcher working alongside them, as they gradually absorb and implement essential aspects of the SALT Approach, carrying what they learn back to the classroom. By the end of 2017, each room from Kindergarten to Year 3 will be equipped with materials currently being produced.

Beyond this, one looks to the future possibilities, with the hope of expanding the research to gradually involve other academics at Notre Dame and at other

universities, building a network of relationships with Catholic Education bodies, schools and individual teachers both within Australia and beyond. The many facets involved in successfully developing and implementing the SALT Approach within the constraints of current social and educational climates will necessarily involve a close collaboration of many people and offers a rich, fertile ground for targeted research.

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## Appendices

Appendix 1 O'Shea's Continuum of Religious Experience

Continuum of Foundational Religious Experiences  
Towards a K-12 Perspective

- Stage 1 – Data Gathering:** *Exploring The Parts One By One.*
- Stage 2 – Synthesising:** *Looking For Patterns And Discerning The "Big Picture".*
- Stage 3 – Analysing:** *How Do The Parts Contribute To The "Big Picture"?*
- Stage 4 – Personalising:** *How Do I Fit Into This Picture?*



## Scripture: Life of Christ

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>Infancy Narratives</b></p> <p><i>God has a plan to bring people to enjoy true happiness. He has sent us Jesus, his son, so that through him – his teaching and his help – we can have true happiness. The infancy narratives in the Bible help us begin to understand who Jesus is.</i></p> <p>Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38)            Visitation (Luke 1:26-38)            Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-12)            Visit of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12)            Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2:22-34, 36-40)</p>	<p><b>Infancy Narratives</b></p> <p><i>We learn a little more about Jesus' early life in the infancy narratives. This helps us to deepen our knowledge of God's plan and about who Jesus is.</i></p> <p>The Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2: 13-15)</p> <p>Art Synthesis of the Infancy Narratives...            Find a variety of art work depicting the early life of Jesus and allow the students to interact with them.            Synthesise these by arranging them in the correct sequence.</p>	<p><b>Infancy Narratives</b></p> <p><i>We continue to ponder the early life of Jesus by reflecting on key prophecies which foretold his birth.</i></p> <p>The Great Light. (Isaiah 9:1)            Emmanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)            Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2)            The Child. (Isaiah 9:5-6)            The Star and the Sceptre (Numbers 24:17)</p>
<p><b>Paschal Narratives</b></p> <p><i>In God's Kingdom, our lives have a meaning. Our life is followed by death, but this is not an end but the beginning of a new and more wonderful life. Jesus shows this through his own life death and resurrection.</i></p> <p>The events of Holy Thursday (Mark 14:12-17, 22-24, 26)            (Mention the crucifixion, but not in detail.)            The Empty Tomb (Matthew 27:57-66; 28:1-10)</p>	<p><b>Paschal Narratives</b></p> <p><i>We continue to explore God's plan and what Jesus did to bring this into reality.</i></p> <p>The Last Supper – Eucharist focus (Mark 14:22-25)            Resurrection Account (Matthew 28:108)            The Ascension (Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:6-11)            Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13)            Art Synthesis of the Paschal Narratives</p>	<p><b>Paschal Narratives</b></p> <p><i>We continue to explore God's plan and what Jesus did to bring this into reality by pondering the suffering of the crucifixion, which Jesus undertook on our behalf.</i></p> <p>The Crucifixion (Mark 15: 1-39)            Revise Art Synthesis of Paschal Narratives during Lent.</p>
<p><b>Biblical Geography</b></p> <p><i>We know that Jesus was a real person, who lived at a particular time and place. He was not just a story-book character.</i></p> <p>Locate the land of Israel on the globe.            Look at the terrain of Israel, and Jerusalem either on a model or by using google maps.</p>	<p><b>Biblical Geography</b></p> <p><i>We know that Jesus was a real person, who lived at a particular time and place. We can learn a lot about the place where Jesus lived from the Bible and by researching what these places look like now.</i></p> <p>Do a detailed study of the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem, locating places mentioned in the Bible.</p>	<p><b>Biblical Geography</b></p> <p><i>We know that Jesus was a real person, who lived at a particular time and place. There have been changes through time in the place where Jesus lived.</i></p> <p>Do a research project on the history of the land of Israel in different time periods.</p>

### Scripture: Parables

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>Parables of the Grace and Love of God</b></p> <p><i>God loves and cares for me</i></p> <p>Parable of the Good Shepherd (John 10:2-5)</p>	<p><b>Parables of the Grace and Love of God</b></p> <p><i>God gives his life for me</i></p> <p>The Found Sheep (Luke 15:4-6)                      The Good Shepherd: Wolf and Hireling (John 10:11-14)                      Psalm 23:1-4                      The True Vine John (15:1-5)</p>	<p><b>Parables of the Grace and Love of God</b></p>
<p><b>Kingdom Parables</b></p> <p><i>The mystery of the Kingdom of God is like the mystery of life, and Jesus draws our attention to this through parables. God's Kingdom starts small and grows. It is of great value like the treasure, and it changes everything around it like the leaven.</i></p> <p>The Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)                      The Pearl of Great Price (Matthew 13:45-46)                      The Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44)                      The Leaven (Matthew 13:33)</p>	<p><b>Kingdom Parables</b></p> <p><i>We continue pondering the mystery of the Kingdom of God, growing within us.</i></p> <p>The Growing Seed (Matthew 4:26-28)</p> <p>Using an art synthesis, draw all of the earlier parables together, and reflect on what they teach</p>	<p><b>Kingdom Parables</b></p> <p><i>We return to ponder the mystery of the Kingdom of God – seeing what it means for us at a new stage of our lives. .</i></p>



### Scripture: The Bible and Salvation History

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>The Bible</b></p> <p><i>The Bible is a special book – when it is read, it is God who is speaking to us through these words.</i></p>	<p><b>The Bible</b></p> <p><i>The Bible is a Book that has been written by people who were inspired by God to write what they did.</i></p> <p>The Bible and the books that comprise it - an outline of the names of the different books of the Bible.</p>	<p><b>The Bible</b></p> <p><i>The Bible is a Book that has been put together bit by bit to explain the way in which God's Plan has unfolded.</i></p>
<p><b>Salvation History and the Plan of God</b></p>	<p><b>Salvation History and the Plan of God</b></p> <p><i>The history of God's Plan is huge, and it is marked by his continued presence at every moment – but there are three key moments in this history: Creation, Redemption and Parousia.</i></p> <p>Three Moments Chart – indicating the three key moments of Creation, Redemption and parousia.</p> <p>Salvation history time line: identifying the major elements of this God's unfolding plan of loving goodness:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation</li> <li>The Story of Abraham and Isaac</li> <li>Moses and the Exodus</li> <li>The Kings of Israel and the Prophets</li> <li>Birth of Jesus</li> <li>Death and Resurrection of Jesus</li> <li>The Heavenly Kingdom to come.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Salvation History and the Plan of God</b></p> <p><i>The presence of God in history points to a plan whereby God reveals himself and his ways little by little. Typology is a study that helps us to see what parts of this plan point to things that are going to happen in the future.</i></p> <p>The Prophets: Isaiah Jeremiah Daniel Exekiel The Minor Prophets.</p> <p>The Bible and the Parousia – What does the Bible tell us about the world to come?</p> <p>The Plan of God – an extended timeline of the action of God in history, both sacred and secular</p> <p>The Jewish People – a timeline of the history of the Jewish People</p> <p>Typologies: Creation The Fall The Flood Abraham Moses</p>

## Moral Formation I

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>Preparing the Body</b></p> <p><i>In its earliest stages, moral formation is about developing self discipline so that we do those things that the mind and heart believe to be right. The focus should be on practical life activities – cleaning, washing, sweeping, tidying.</i></p> <p>Routines for cleaning, washing, sweeping etc. Giving children the opportunity to develop self-discipline as they care for themselves and then the environment they occupy.</p>	<p><b>Preparing the Body</b></p> <p><i>At every stage, moral formation remains concerned with developing self discipline so that we do those things that the mind and heart believe to be right.</i></p> <p>More advanced ways of caring for oneself and the environment – suitable to the age and needs of individual children – should be sought.</p>	<p><b>Preparing the Body</b></p> <p><i>At every stage, moral formation remains concerned with developing self discipline so that we do those things that the mind and heart believe to be right.</i></p> <p>Challenging moral efforts, including self-denial and prudent asceticism – fasting, abstinence, acts of charity etc. – should be encouraged, particularly in the seasons of Lent and Advent.</p>
<p><b>Preparing the Heart</b></p> <p><i>When a person falls deeply in love, he/she will want to do what is right by the other person. Love is the basis of moral action, and should precede it.</i></p> <p>The Parable of the Good Shepherd – emphasising love.</p>	<p><b>Preparing the Heart: Parables of Mercy</b></p> <p><i>God considers each one of us to be very important to him. Jesus told these parables to help us recall this truth.</i></p> <p>The Forgiving Father (Luke 15:11-24) The Lost Coin (Luke 15: 8-9)</p>	<p><b>Preparing the Heart: Parables of Mercy</b></p> <p><i>Not only does God consider us to be very important – he loves other too and calls us to do the same.</i></p> <p>The Debtors The Workers in the Vineyard</p>
<p><b>Preparing the Mind</b></p> <p><i>Explicit moral instruction about the way to behave should be left to the next level. The basic message of love is the one which must be grasped.</i></p> <p>Observation of moral behaviour and being acquainted with the stories of Jesus serves as an implicit preparation of the mind for moral activity.</p>	<p><b>Preparing the Mind</b></p> <p><i>Explicit moral instruction should begin once it is clear that the child has understood the foundation of love. The starting point is a reflection on the Moral Maxims of Christ.</i></p> <p>Begin Reflection on the moral maxims of Jesus – one by one – from the following list:</p> <p>Matthew 5:44; John 13:34; Luke 6:27; Matthew 6:6; Matthew 7:7; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Matthew 5:48; Matthew 5:37; Matthew 7:22; Matthew 7:12; Matthew 5:42; Matthew 5:44; The Summary of the Law: Luke 10:27. Matthew 18:21-22; John 13:34; Luke 6:27; Matthew 6:2.</p>	<p><b>Preparing the Mind</b></p> <p><i>Further moral instruction can take place once the basics have been understood. The social dimension of morality such as the natural law and the Beatitudes can also begin at this time if the child is ready.</i></p> <p>Additional Maxims of Jesus from the following list:</p> <p>Matthew 5:44b; Matthew 7:3; Matthew 5:40; Matthew 6:20a;; Luke 9:62. The Virtues The Eight Beatitudes The Ten Commandments</p>

## Moral Formation II

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
	<p><b>Preparing the Mind: Moral Parables</b></p> <p><i>Belonging to the Kingdom of God comes with responsibilities. If we have been loved, we should respond by loving in return and by spreading the Good News of God's Kingdom.</i></p> <p>The Good Samaritan (Lk 10:30-37)                      The Insistent Friend (Luke 11:5-8)                      The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9-14)                      The Sower (Matthew 13:3-8)</p>	<p><b>Preparing the Mind: Moral Parables</b></p> <p><i>While God wants us to belong to his Kingdom, he will not force us. We are free by our own actions to be happy in his Kingdom or not to accept it.</i></p> <p>The Bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-12)                      The Talents (Matthew 25:14-30)                      The Wedding Feast (Matthew 18:23-34)</p>

## Prayer

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>Prayer of Thanks and Petition</b></p> <p><i>At its most basic level, prayer is about asking God for his gifts and thanking him for what we have received</i></p> <p>Prayers of thanks.                      Prayers of petition.                      Short phrases from the Bible, especially psalms.</p>	<p><b>Language of Prayer</b></p> <p><i>Prayer sustains our relationship with God. As well as asking and thanking God for his gifts, we offer him our praise and worship. Jesus gave us the model of how to pray. The Church offers us a language to frame our prayers.</i></p> <p>Our Father                      Hail Mary                      Act of Contrition                      Glory Be to the Father                      Morning Offering</p>	<p><b>Ways of Praying</b></p> <p><i>There are many different ways to pray, and God helps us to find the way that is best for us.</i></p> <p>Rosary                      Creed                      Lectio Divina</p>

## Sacraments: Sacramentality; Baptism

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>Sacramentality</b></p> <p><i>The ordinary is holy. We meet God through ordinary things that we can see, taste touch, smell and hear.</i></p> <p>Practical life activities</p>	<p><b>Sacramentality</b></p> <p><i>The ordinary is holy. We meet God through ordinary things that we can see, taste touch, smell and hear.</i></p> <p>Draw attention to the presence of God in the ordinary Practical life Activities</p>	<p><b>Sacramentality</b></p> <p><i>The ordinary is holy. We meet God through ordinary things that we can see, taste touch, smell and hear.</i></p> <p>Draw attention to the presence of God in the ordinary Practical life Activities St Therese of Lisieux and the "Little Way"</p>
<p><b>Baptism – The Light and the White Garment</b></p> <p><i>Jesus is the light of the world; his light cannot be extinguished and it even overcomes death itself. Through the sacrament of Baptism, we are given his light and his life.</i></p> <p>The image of light in Baptism The meaning of the white garment</p>	<p><b>Baptism – The Rite</b></p> <p><i>Each of the liturgical signs and gestures of Baptism has a meaning which connects us with the life, death and resurrection of Christ, and the life of the Church.</i></p> <p>Reflection on essential moments of the Rite of Baptism</p>	<p><b>Baptism – The Rite</b></p> <p><i>Each of the liturgical signs and gestures of Baptism has a meaning which connects us with the life, death and resurrection of Christ, and the life of the Church.</i></p> <p>A deeper reflection on the Rite of Baptism, making connections with the Life of Christ and the Church</p>
<p><b>Baptism – The Water, the Gospel, the oil.</b></p> <p><i>Through the water, the scriptures and the holy oil, we receive and take part in the life of Christ.</i></p> <p>The image of water in Baptism The meaning of the holy oils The Scriptures as God's Word to us, received first in Baptism.</p>		
<p><b>Baptism – The Main Gestures of Baptism</b></p> <p><i>Through the sacramental actions, we are drawn into the life of Christ.</i></p> <p>The epiclesis (invoking the Holy Spirit) The pouring of the water The sign of the cross The anointing with oil</p>		

### Sacraments: Eucharist – Moments of the Mass

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>Eucharist – Moments of the Mass</b></p> <p><i>When we celebrate the Eucharist, we ask God the Father to send the Holy spirit to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus.</i></p> <p>The Epiiclesis</p> <p><i>We thank God for the gift of the risen Christ and we join him in offering ourselves to the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit</i></p> <p>The Offering/ Doxology</p> <p><i>We remember how God (represented by the wine) and humanity (represented by the water) have become inseparable in Jesus.</i></p> <p>The Preparation of the Chalice</p> <p><i>We remember that the Church is a communion – we are united to Christ and to each other and, bound by the peace of Christ</i></p> <p>The Sign of Peace</p> <p><i>The priest washes his hands to show that we all want to be made clean in heart – Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God.</i></p> <p>The Lavabo (Washing of the Hands)</p>	<p><b>Eucharist – Linking the Moments of the Mass</b></p> <p><i>The moments of the Mass form a particular order and a united whole. The Eucharist is the great prayer of the Church and the memorial of Christ's life, death and resurrection.</i></p> <p>First Missal – Essential Moments in Order.</p> <p>Synthesis of the Mass</p>	<p><b>Eucharist – Study of the Mass</b></p> <p><i>In the Eucharist, Jesus offers to all the gift of redemption. The Eucharist is the thanksgiving sacrifice of Jesus, offered for the living and the dead.</i></p> <p>Structure of the Mass – Sequencing Prayers of the Mass</p> <p>Detailed Exploration of the Essential Rite of the Mass</p>

### Sacraments: Eucharist – Paschal Mystery; Liturgical Vessels & Furniture

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>Eucharist – Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ</b></p> <p><i>The Eucharist is a celebration of the life death and resurrection of Jesus.</i></p> <p>See also Paschal and Infancy Narratives (above).</p>	<p><b>Eucharist - Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ</b></p> <p><i>In the Eucharist, Jesus feeds us with himself.</i></p> <p>The Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd.</p> <p><i>At the last Supper, Jesus told us to celebrate the Eucharist as a memorial of him.</i></p> <p>Origin of the Eucharist</p>	<p><b>Eucharist - Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ</b></p> <p><i>The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life in which Christ offers to all the gift of redemption.</i></p> <p>Origin of the Liturgy of the Word – Synagogue The Eucharist as Memorial</p>
<p><b>Eucharist – Liturgical Vessels &amp; Furniture</b></p> <p><i>In the celebration of the Eucharist, we use special vessels, furniture. Each of these has its own purpose in unfolding to us the mystery of Christ.</i></p> <p>I. Altar, altar cloth, crucifix, candles, sacristy II. Chalice, corporal, paten, ciborium, purifier III. Cruets (water and wine), finger bowl, finger towel IV. Tabernacle, paschal candle, sanctuary lamp V. Lectionary, lectern, Sacramentary &amp; stand</p>	<p><b>Eucharist – Liturgical Vestments</b></p> <p><i>In the celebration of the Eucharist, we use special vestments. Each of these has its own purpose in unfolding to us the mystery of Christ.</i></p> <p>Alb, stole, chasuble, amice</p>	

### Sacraments: Confirmation

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>Confirmation</b></p> <p><i>Indirect instruction incidentally.</i></p>	<p><b>Confirmation</b></p> <p><i>The Holy Spirit brings special gifts to empower his followers. These gifts are strengthened in the Sacrament of Confirmation.</i></p> <p>Reflect on the Pentecost Story (Acts 2:1-4) Introduce the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit</p>	<p><b>Confirmation</b></p> <p><i>Confirmation gives us special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action.</i></p> <p>Pentecost Story (Acts 2:1-4) The articles, vestments and gestures of Confirmation Saints – models of the Christian life The Rite of Confirmation – essential components The Cardinal Virtues; Service Project The Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2-3) The Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22)</p>

### Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>Reconciliation</b></p> <p><i>Indirect instruction incidentally.</i></p>	<p><b>Reconciliation</b></p> <p><i>Jesus seeks out the lost sheep, and those who have sinned. Jesus gave the Church the power to forgive sins.</i></p> <p>Key Moments in the Sacrament of Reconciliation:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Examination of Conscience</li> <li>2. Confession of Sins</li> <li>3. Absolution</li> <li>4. Penance</li> </ol> <p><i>Many scripture stories show that Jesus loved and forgave sinners who asked to be forgiven.</i></p> <p>Reflection on...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parables of Mercy</li> <li>Moral Parables</li> <li>Maxims of Jesus</li> </ul> <p>(See above)</p>	<p><b>Reconciliation</b></p> <p><i>God wants us to turn back to him after we have sinned. This is called "Repentance".</i></p> <p>Detailed review of the Rite of Reconciliation</p> <p>Further reflection on...</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parables of Mercy</li> <li>Moral Parables</li> <li>Maxims of Jesus</li> </ul> <p>(See above)</p>

### Sacraments of Healing: Anointing of the Sick

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>Anointing of the Sick</b></p> <p><i>Indirect instruction incidentally.</i></p>	<p><b>Anointing of the Sick</b></p> <p><i>Anointing of the Sick is for those who are frail, seriously sick or in danger of death.</i></p> <p>Study of the essential elements of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.</p>	<p><b>Anointing of the Sick</b></p> <p><i>Anointing of the Sick brings strength, reconciliation peace and the courage to endure suffering in a Christian manner.</i></p> <p>Extended study of the meaning of the Rite of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.</p>

### Sacraments at the Service of Communion: Marriage

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>Marriage</b></p> <p><i>Indirect instruction incidentally.</i></p>	<p><b>Marriage</b></p> <p><i>Jesus' love for his people is the model of love for all married people. In marriage, a man and a woman give themselves to each other in love.</i></p> <p>The essential elements of the rite of Marriage</p>	<p><b>Marriage</b></p> <p><i>Marriage between a man and a woman is called a covenant. It is based on God's love, help and forgiveness.</i></p> <p>A more detailed study of the Rite of Marriage The Trinity and Marriage – analogy of love</p>

### Sacraments at the Service of Communion: Holy Orders

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.	Stage 2 - Synthesising Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"	Stage 3 – Analysing How the parts fit into the whole picture
<p><b>Holy Orders</b></p> <p><i>Indirect instruction incidentally.</i></p>	<p><b>Holy Orders</b></p> <p><i>Bishops and priests have been called by God to continue Christ's leadership in his Church.</i></p> <p>The essential elements of the rite of Holy Orders.</p>	<p><b>Holy Orders</b></p> <p><i>Holy Orders gives sacred power to a priest: to teach, to sanctify and to lead the faithful.</i></p> <p>A more detailed study of the Rite of Holy Orders</p>



## Liturgy: Seasons of the Church

<b>Stage 1 - Data Gathering</b> <b>Exploring the things in my world.</b>	<b>Stage 2 - Synthesising</b> <b>Looking for patterns and the "Big Picture"</b>	<b>Stage 3 – Analysing</b> <b>How the parts fit into the whole picture</b>
<p><b>Seasons of the Church</b></p> <p><i>The Life of the Church has its own seasons and feast days, which call us to reflect on key moments in the life of Christ and the saints who have served him throughout history. These reflections help us to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ.</i></p> <p>Liturgical Calendar Wheel                      The Season of Lent                      The Advent Prophecies –                          The Light (Isaiah 9:1)                          The Names (Isaiah 9:5-6)                          The Young Woman (Isaiah 7:14)                          The Star and the Sceptre (Numbers 24:17)</p>	<p><b>Seasons of the Church</b></p> <p><i>The Life of the Church has its own seasons and feast days, which call us to reflect on key moments in the life of Christ and the saints who have served him throughout history. These reflections help us to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ.</i></p> <p>Other Solemnities of the Church                      Solemnity of the Mother of God                      Corpus Christi                      All Saints                      All Souls</p>	<p><b>Seasons of the Church</b></p> <p><i>The Life of the Church has its own seasons and feast days, which call us to reflect on key moments in the life of Christ and the saints who have served him throughout history. These reflections help us to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ.</i></p> <p>Saints of the Church                      St Peter and Paul                      St Augustine                      St Mary MacKillop                      St Francis                      St Thomas Aquinas                      St Therese of Lisieux                      St Teresa of Calcutta                      Saints according to local interest</p>

## Personalising...

Stage 4 - Personalising How do I fit into this picture?		
Developmental Aspect	Needs	Meeting the Needs
<p><b>1. A Social Age</b></p> <p>Peer relationships are crucial; peer group is their first priority.</p> <p>A focus on camaraderie, fellowship, companions, team-mates lies at the centre of the adolescent experience.</p> <p>Adolescents need friends to confide in - the absence of friends is</p>	<p><b>Adolescents need to build and feel part of a community</b></p> <p>They need to learn how to live with each other; those that they like and those that they dislike.</p> <p>They also need to learn to live with adults.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow students the opportunity of working together on differentiated aspects of the same project.</li> <li>• Delve into the meaning and different levels of friendship.</li> <li>• Jesus as the model of the true friend.</li> <li>• Provide a sense of identity without imposing it. Adolescents need to belong, but in their own way.</li> <li>• They will willingly work within existing Religious frameworks if they are given sound and convincing reasons</li> <li>• Work with individuals and small groups rather than large numbers when introducing new and challenging activities.</li> <li>• Allow serious input – ask for their advice on how to achieve the outcome you are seeking.</li> </ul>

Stage 4 - Personalising How do I fit into this picture?		
Developmental Aspect	Needs	Meeting the Needs
<p><b>2. A Thinking and Critical Age.</b></p> <p>Adolescents are critical of themselves, and each other, but especially of adults.</p> <p>It is a time to object, to argue, and to analyze. It is a time when adolescents see the persuasiveness of opposing reasons.</p> <p>Adolescents have a powerful mind, but it is turned toward themselves and the group.</p> <p>They need to know how they feel, what they want.</p> <p>They need to reach their own conclusions.</p> <p>The need to listen to each other.</p> <p>The young child demands, "Help me to do it myself." The adolescent demands, "Help me to think for myself."</p> <p>In early adolescence, this thinking is not detached; it is thinking connected with feelings. They are capable of very mature thought if it is framed within a personal context.</p> <p>They need adults to listen to their reasons. They will not co-operate well unless they agree.</p> <p>They need to be empowered to discuss, to find solutions.</p> <p>The purpose of this critical nature is that it is a time for examining, developing, and/or finding values. Adolescence is a moral and ethical age, at least in the sense that it is a time for developing one's own commitment to moral actions.</p>	<p><b>Adolescents need to be challenged.</b></p> <p>They need challenges because they come to know themselves.</p> <p>They must try many things; they must sample life for themselves.</p>	<p>Apologetics – explain not only the <i>what</i> but also the <i>why</i> in Religious Education. Connect it with their existing sense of identity... How might you explain this to your peers who ask you about your beliefs?</p> <p>Don't discount or put off their questions – Catholic faith is rational; explain the good reasons to them, and find out if you don't know. Don't dismiss them by telling them that they just have to believe.</p> <p>Don't discount the value of their Baptismal faith. If they are baptised they have of a supernatural gift of faith that enables them to believe... so appeal to this with expressions like "we believe".</p> <p>Approach adolescents in a respectful and friendly manner, without trying to be like them. Affirm the good things you see and tell them of the potential you can see in them.</p> <p>Bring in inspiring speakers to challenge them to some ennobling work.</p> <p>Provide inspiring stories of the saints for them to read; or DVDs which inspire them to good things.</p> <p>Give them good models of ethical behaviour – challenging but reachable.</p>

Stage 4 - Personalising How do I fit into this picture?		
Developmental Aspect	Needs	Meeting the Needs
<p><b>3. An Age of Boundless Energy</b></p> <p>Adolescents are constantly going, talking, moving, acting, working, playing, planning, etc.</p> <p>This energy can burn out of control, but if channelled, it can move mountains. It is an age where one has an astonishing capacity to work.</p> <p>This energy can burn out of control, but if channelled, it can move mountains. It is an age where one has an astonishing capacity to work.</p> <p>One purpose for this energy is to sustain the spirit of adventure.</p> <p>An odyssey is a good metaphor for this period of human development. Each adolescent is a young Odysseus; each is on a personal odyssey. Adventure brings challenge. The purpose of adventure is self-discovery.</p>	<p><b>Adolescents need challenging and meaningful work.</b></p> <p>They must come to know how ennobling work is, and they must be "admired" by adults for what they have achieved.</p> <p>Adolescents have a particular need to work with their hands; they need to build and create. The hand and the mind have a special connection in early adolescence.</p> <p>Adolescents need the land, they need the earth because the land is their sensorial and practical life environment.</p>	<p>Create opportunities for adolescents to undertake a challenging pilgrimage – World Youth Day is ideal if possible, otherwise a similar local challenging pilgrimage.</p> <p>Offer meaningful projects for adolescents to work on and plan together.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for them to engage with the natural environment... looking after a garden; undertaking a challenging hike; looking after an environmental project etc.</p>

Stage 4 - Personalising How do I fit into this picture?		
Developmental Aspect	Needs	Meeting the Needs
<p><b>4. A period of developing maturity.</b></p> <p>It is the age of physical changes. It is a time of sexual discovery; what it means/feels like to be a man, what it means/feels like to be a woman.</p> <p>Clearly, boy/girl relationships are critical. Their challenge is a difficult one – to understand profoundly what is expected of them as adult men and women.</p>	<p><b>Adolescents need to develop a personal vision.</b></p> <p>This need is the commanding need of adolescence as a whole. They need to come to terms with their personal place in the world.</p> <p>We need this vision to sustain us, to nourish us throughout our life. It is this vision that defines our great tasks in life.</p>	<p>Discussions of this kind should avoid large groups. Even small groups will only be comfortable for them if they have chosen the members of the group for themselves. One-to-one is best.</p> <p>Chaplains who have a capacity for spiritual direction can be very helpful in these circumstances.</p> <p>Adult guides can be helpful, but only if they have a personal rapport with each individual.</p> <p>Guidance can be offered “safely” through the use of third person strategies – DVDs; discussions of issues and suitable articles etc.in which it is someone else being discussed.</p> <p>Efforts should be made to help the adolescent to perceive their own value in God’s eyes, as conveyed in these lines of Newman ...</p> <p><i>“God has created me to do him some definite service. He has committed some work to me which He has not committed to another. I have my mission – I may never know it in this life, but I shall be told in the next. I am a link in a chain, a bond of connection between persons. He has not created me for baught. I shall do good. I shall do His work. I shall be an angel of peace, a preacher of truth in my own place while not intending it – if I do but keep His commandments. Therefore I will trust in Him. Whatever, wherever I am, I can never be thrown away, if I am sick in sickness, my sickness may serve Him; in perplexity, my perplexity may serv Him; if I am in sorrow, my sorrow may serve Him. He does nothing in vain. He knows what He is about. He may take away my friends. He may throw me among strangers. He may make me feel desolate, make my spirits sink, hide my future from me – still He knows what he is about.”</i> Cardinal Newman</p>

Stage 4 - Personalising How do I fit into this picture?		
Developmental Aspect	Needs	Meeting the Needs
<p><b>5. It is an intensely human age.</b></p> <p>Adolescents must confront and deal with human nature in a way unique in terms of development. They must for the first time deal with the dilemmas, and contradictions of life.</p> <p>It is an age that is <i>I-centred</i>, not just the individual, personal I, but the I as a human being.</p> <p>It is an age that is <i>I-centred</i>, not just the individual, personal I, but the I as a human being.</p> <p>The dramatic physical changes of early adolescence create a heightened self awareness. In this context Chaucer Canterbury Tales might be considered a metaphor of adolescence.</p> <p>The adolescent is on an extended journey (an odyssey, a pilgrimage), and there is the intense sharing of their very human stories (tales).</p> <p>As a result of this sharing there is the possibility for a remarkable growth in understanding and empathy for their companions.</p> <p>Because early adolescence is such a special <i>human</i> time, the adolescent mediates human nature. In the adolescent the dreams, possibilities, and potential of life clash with the present and the past, with the real, with the might-have-beens, with compromises and with weakness.</p>	<p><b>Adolescents need to be empowered to make their own decisions.</b></p> <p>They need the chance to make decisions, plan activities, be leaders. They need to make mistakes.</p>	<p>Adolescents need opportunities to plan activities of their own. These need to begin within safe limits, and increasingly see the winding back of adult supervision until they are ready to take responsibility for their own decisions.</p> <p>They should be offered the opportunity of studying the nature of the human person - theological anthropology.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for adolescents to share their stories with each other – if they feel comfortable with this. This should never be forced, and ought to begin with simple and non-threatening “getting to know you” opportunities. They will select the time and the place of deeper sharing with each other and with trusted adults.</p> <p>They need to have some background in the processes of moral decision making according to the wisdom of the Church.</p> <p>These opportunities can best be done informally in the context of a walk or a hike together, and should not be “stage-managed” by the teacher. It will happen spontaneously.</p> <p>Provide inspiring literature, and avoid dark and depressing themes unless the outcome represents a triumph of humanity over danger and adversity. Offer them beauty and hope; not despair and ugliness.</p>

*Towards a New Approach for Teaching Religious Education Catholic Primary Schools*  
*Programme Structure*

**Introduction**

This programme builds upon O’Shea’s *Continuum of Foundational Religious Experience*. In doing so, the following considerations are made.

- The SALT Approach follows the pedagogy of God, of Christ and of the Church. This implies that the human person delves deeper and deeper into the great mysteries of God and the plan of salvation. These can be pondered anew each year in the life of any Christian, following the liturgical pattern. The journey never ends on earth. There is always more to discover and to which the Christian is called to respond. Catholic Schools provide an opportunity for this.
- Bearing this in mind there is no need to crowd the curriculum with ever new material. The same unchanging mysteries of faith and life are presented and explored according to the age and disposition of the individual. Students at Stage 2 and 3 are increasingly capable of, and need opportunities for, independent work and personal reflection. This method is designed to allow this to occur. The teacher guides the process and assists students to keep on track.
- The Religious Education Curriculum needs to allow time for this personal pondering.

- At the same time the provision of timely, adequate and explicitly presented information has a definite place. It can be introduced in a variety of ways, according to the needs of the age group.
- Following the three-year cycle presentation of the Liturgical Years allows for a different focus for each Year. The themes may be recurring, but the material offered will often be different.
- When the method is introduced within a school, there is the need for the students to follow the research pattern of data gathering, synthesizing and analyzing. The concepts covered in earlier stages need to be presented and covered, albeit adapted for the age group.
- With regard to the current Year 2 Design-Based Research Study, the previous point applies. The group needs exposure to concepts covered in Stage 1 (3-6-year-olds). Sometimes the material can simply be covered in more depth (e.g. The Bible and Geography). At other times, it needs to be covered because otherwise it would be totally omitted (e.g. infancy Narratives). Considering the manner and actual content, it cannot be presumed that the material would have been covered as intended with previous programs.
- The content drafted for Year Two includes the essential presentations of Stage 1. It will also aim to include what is currently recommended for Year Two in the Parramatta and Sydney Diocese curricula.
- It may well become clear that there is more than can be reached. In this case, some content may be omitted.
- The unpacking and refinement as applied to other grades is beyond the scope of this study. It is the researcher's plan to explore, refine and develop these in subsequent studies



Core Recommendations of the Catholic Church, gathered from relevant church documents.

<b>Catholic Church Religious Education Indicators</b>	
<b>Who is involved?</b>	
<b>God: Each of the Three Persons of Trinity</b>	
	Father, Son, Holy Spirit
<b>Parents</b>	
	Work in partnership with parents. Assists and empowers parents in their task of Christian education. Give priority to opportunities for faith to be known, celebrated, lived, prayed and shared.
<b>Students</b>	
	Address the range of participants: believers, searchers, non-believers, doubters. Recognise that many young people live in instability and with fractured human relationships.
<b>Teachers</b>	
	Many teachers of catholic education have, at present, limited knowledge and commitment of the Catholic belief and the consequent understanding, conviction, commitment and practice.
<b>What are key elements?</b>	
	Reflect a Christian anthropological conception of man and of life. Focus on the human person's integrity, transcendent value, and historical identity. Faithful to the message, belief and practice of the Catholic Church. Lead to a growing awareness of the Trinitarian experience of life in Christ as the centre of faith. Present the history of salvation with its origins in the Bible, particularly the New Testament as a historical reality. Present the life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ as historical realities. Facilitate intimate communion of the baptised person with Jesus Christ. Recognise and reflect on the place and shape of popular piety. Marian devotion has a special place. Educate in prayer. Reflect special awareness of the implications of the sacraments that the child usually receives for the first time in these years.

Incorporate character formation and facilitate growth in Christian Virtue.

Collaborate with, and support the parish, drawing the school community towards it, in particular in relation to the reception of the sacraments.

### **How to proceed?**

Follow the Pedagogies of God, of Christ, of the Church and of faith. A Christian pedagogy that provides lays the foundation for a life-long catechesis. Kerygmatic pedagogy that proclaims the message. Existential pedagogy that considers human problems.

Use pedagogical materials and approaches that 'unpack' Sacred Scripture and the Catechism of the Catholic Church.

Provide a systematic presentation of Christian life and faith embedded in Christ's teachings incorporating faith knowledge, sacraments, prayer, daily living and moral commitment.

Intimately link catechesis, liturgy and sacraments, building up a knowledge and understanding of symbols and rites.

Incorporate ways of preparing teachers to be spiritually and professionally well-equipped: living witnesses of the faith.

Incorporating tools of social and mass communication.

## Core Pedagogical Principles and Practices

These Principles are anchored in (a) Montessori Principles, and (b) contemporary pedagogical research.

### **Montessori Principles Identified by Lillard**

Movement and cognition are closely connected.

A sense of control over one's life is vital for each person in order to grow and learn.

Interest facilitates learning.

Effective motivation is intrinsic rather than extrinsic.

Collaboration leads to effective learning.

Learning should take place within a meaningful context.

Adult interaction should essentially scaffold a child's learning.

An ordered environment facilitates learning.

### Contemporary Pedagogical Research: Core Concepts

Follow a holistic paradigm, described in part by Hargreaves's the fourth way, facilitating deep and effective lifelong-learning.

Offer a rich slate of student-focused experiences including co-operative and self-regulated learning experiences, scaffolding, student meta-awareness, cognitive apprenticeship, teacher-mediated learning, independent group discussion, spaced practice opportunities, problem-based and project-based learning.

Offer an adequate level of factual knowledge together with opportunities to organise and use knowledge meaningfully.

Consider a range of intrinsically-motivating factors. This includes building on previous experiences, allowing for freedom of choice, within a boundary of meaningful activities and opportunities to balance personal interests with universally valued topics.

Incorporate flexible and varied assessment structures and procedures. This includes the recognition that some areas of personal growth and deep learning can only be recognised in a limited way, by signs or indicators.

Offer material to facilitate adequate teacher preparation for the task. This encompasses personal mastery of content knowledge, understanding of pedagogical issues and classroom-management skills and strategies. It also requires the adequate provision of time for collegial work, research and reflection.

Recognise that the teacher is a facilitator or driver, enabling the student to assimilate and expand knowledge and understandings in rich and unique ways, applying these to life and enriching his/her own and the lives of others.

Facilitate collaborative work-sessions with teachers, parents, families, community members

Offer a well-ordered, appropriately prepared, environment with sufficient space. There should be easy access to materials, facilitating learners' control of their 'learning flow'.

Provide a positive and respectful atmosphere, where expectations are clear.

### Developmental-age characteristics

These developmental and age characteristics are based in Montessori’s observations as described by O’Shea  
The focus of this study is coloured in pink.

Stage 1	3-6 Years	Data Gathering: <i>Exploring the Parts One by One.</i>
Stage 2	6-9 Years	Synthesising: <i>Looking for Patterns and Discerning the “Big Picture”.</i>
Stage 3	9-12 Years	Analysing: <i>How do the Parts Contribute to the “Big Picture”?</i>
Stage 4	12-18 Years	Personalising: How do I fit into this picture

**3-6-Year-Olds: Data Gathering Phase: *Exploring the Parts One by One***  
The Year Two Students have recently emerged from this stage

**The Absorbent Mind**  
Capable of deep concentration and absorption in real and tangible things in the surrounding world  
Interest focuses on what things are rather than why.  
Interest is in the real and concrete. Imagination and abstraction are not the focus.

**The Sense of Wonder**  
Everything is new to the child. There is a great sense of wonder at it all.

**The vital need for love, care and protection**  
Love, care and protection are provided now, the result is self-confidence in the future  
At this early stage the parables of the Good Shepherd, providing love, care and protection are most appropriate.

### **A Need for Movement: Fine and gross motor movement.**

Concrete materials are essential for learning, rather than abstract concepts

Implications for Religious Education: All work needs to allow for personal and frequent tactile manipulated by the child, not simply demonstrated by the teacher.

### **Need for Order, Routine, Repetition**

Order and routine, externally imposed, is appreciated as the child is not yet able to establish these.

Repetition is necessary to grasp even simple meanings.

Implication for teaching Religious Education: It is enough to name and label rather than spend time on explanations.

Need to grasp what is simple and essential not the complex.

### **Imitation Leading to Independence**

Child learns copying others: adults, other children, peers

At the same time, the child looks towards independence.

‘Help me to do it by myself’

Steps along the way are modelling followed by independent practice. Implication for Religious Education: Model carefully and clearly. Then allow time for imitation and independent practice.

**Note: The Child is in a phase of intense ‘data gathering’. Interest lies in the ‘what’ rather than the ‘why’ of things.**

**6-9-Year-Olds:** Synthesising: *Looking for Patterns and Discerning the “Big Picture”*.

This stage is the one relevant to this study, with most Year Two students aged 7 Years

### **Big Ideas**

Interest in gathering data shifts towards putting the pieces together for themselves.

Development of imagination allows the child to move beyond self.

The abstract notion of time is developed and explored. Time lines are a fascination.

There is a need to grasp the big, overall picture of things, rather than complex detail.

Imaginative is captured through art and literature.

### **Reasoning Mind**

The absorbent mind is replaced by the reasoning mind.

The child is interested in the 'why' of things, where they come from and how they fit into the big picture.

Materials are required that suit the child with a reasoning mind. Such material allows the child to work things out independently.

Facility for self-correcting. The child is able to reason out what is done incorrectly and to correct it.

### **Mental Vs Physical Order**

The earlier need for external order is lost. Consequently, there is a tendency to be physically messy.

However, this is because the focus has turned to an internal, mental ordering of things: sorting out the 'why', 'where' and 'how' of the big picture world they are now interested in.

An implication for the classroom is that of providing structure and routines to allow for organisation and order. Specific times need to be allocated for "tidying" and organising personal work space.

### **Moral Dimension**

The child is drawn towards exploring and applying the moral code. It is the age of "fairness". Rules are black and white rules.

Children like to discuss and solve issues. They appreciate having and using processes allowing them to express themselves and discuss problems.

Implication for Religious Education: The Commandments make special sense to the child at this stage.

### **Herd Instinct:**

Children at this age like being part of a group. They explore social relationships and society. They like to form clubs or play games with many rules.

Communication and contact with others allows them to discover who they are themselves.

They need time for this even in the classroom. Having common supply shelves that they need to access allows for this.

Too many personal materials undermine this need and interest in sharing and negotiating

### **Mental independence**

The child wants to work things out independently

Implication: When children are engaged in working independently, aim to give sufficient background to stimulate thinking rather than give a direct answer. An appropriate answer to most of their questions is "I'm not sure... what do you think?"

## **9-12-Year-Olds: Analysing Stage: *How do the Parts Contribute to the "Big Picture"?***

### **The Intellectual dimension: Advanced abstract reasoning**

Can grasp intellectual ideas and things not seen with the eye.

Implication for RE: Biblical typologies and connections become relevant at this stage, rather than before.

Can grasp the notion of time long past and into the future.

Implication for RE: Studying the Plan of God throughout time and in the Cosmos holds fascination.

They are at a stage when they can begin to grasp the cosmic unity running through history. Creation, Redemption, Parousia

They are concerned with the great mystery of life and death

**Moral Development**

A strong sense of social justice. They are beginning to see that things are not always black or white.

They value opportunities to work out the right thing.

Moral Parables are particularly relevant at this stage

**Something to avoid at this stage**

Excessive handouts with pre-digested information. These are an obstacle to thinking.

Note: The 12-18-Year-Old's Characteristics have not been included



## K-6 Scope (without sequence)

This Kindergarten to Year Six scope and sequence is built from O’Shea’s *Continuum of Foundational Religious Experience*. It enables this particular Year Two programme to be developed considering the full K-6 context.

Stage 1 - Data Gathering Exploring the things in my world.		Stage 2 – Synthesizing Looking for patterns and the ‘Big Picture’			Stage 3 – Analyzing How the parts fit into the whole picture	
K (Age 4-5)	1 (Age 5-6)	2 (Age 6-7)	3 (Age 7-8)	4 (Age 8-9)	5 (Age 9-10)	6 (10-11)
<i>Scripture Life of Christ</i>						
<p><b>Infancy Narratives</b>  <i>God has a plan to bring people to enjoy true happiness.            He has sent us Jesus, his son, so that through him – his teaching and his help – we can have true happiness.            The infancy narratives in the Bible help us begin to understand who Jesus is.</i></p> <p>Annunciation (Luke 1:26-38)            Visitation (Luke 1:26-38) Birth of Jesus (Luke 2:1-12)            Visit of the Magi (Matthew 2:1-12)            Presentation in the Temple (Luke 2:22-34, 36-40)</p> <p><b>Paschal Narratives</b>  <i>In God’s Kingdom, our lives have a meaning. Our life is followed by death, but this is not an end but the beginning of a new and more wonderful life. Jesus shows this through his own life death and resurrection.            The events of Holy Thursday (Mark 14:12-17, 22-24, 26)            (Mention the crucifixion, but not in detail.)</i></p>		<p><b>Infancy Narratives</b>  <i>We learn a little more about Jesus’ early life in the infancy narratives.            This helps us to deepen our knowledge of God’s plan and about who Jesus is.</i></p> <p>The Flight into Egypt (Matthew 2: 13-15)</p> <p><b>Art Synthesis</b> of the Infancy Narratives            Find a variety of art works depicting the early life of Jesus and allow the students to interact with them.  <b>Synthesize</b> these by arranging them in the correct sequence.</p> <p><b>Paschal Narratives</b>  <i>We continue to explore God’s plan and what Jesus did to bring this into reality.</i></p> <p>The Last Supper – Eucharist focus (Mark 14:22-25)            Resurrection Account (Matthew 28:108)            The Ascension (Matthew 28:16-20; Acts 1:6-11)            Pentecost (Acts 2:1-13)</p>			<p><b>Infancy Narratives</b>  <i>We continue to ponder the early life of Jesus by reflecting on key prophecies which foretold his birth.</i></p> <p>The Great Light. (Isaiah 9:1)            Emmanuel. (Isaiah 7:14)            Bethlehem. (Micah 5:2)            The Child. (Isaiah 9:5-6)            The Star and the Scepter (Numbers 24:17)</p> <p><b>Paschal Narratives</b>  <i>We continue to explore God’s plan and what Jesus did to bring this into reality by pondering the suffering of the crucifixion, which Jesus undertook on our behalf.</i></p> <p>The Crucifixion (Mark 15: 1-39)            Revise Art Synthesis of Paschal Narratives during Lent.</p>	

<p>The Empty Tomb (Matthew 27:57- 66; 28:1-10)</p> <p><b>Biblical Geography</b></p> <p><i>We know that Jesus was a real person, who lived at a particular time and place. He was not just a story-book character.</i></p> <p>Locate the land of Israel on the globe. Look at the terrain of Israel, and Jerusalem either on a model or by using google maps.</p>	<p>Art Synthesis of the Paschal Narratives</p> <p><b>Biblical Geography</b></p> <p><i>We know that Jesus was a real person, who lived at a particular time and place. We can learn a lot about the place where Jesus lived from the Bible and by researching what these places look like now.</i></p> <p>Do a detailed study of the land of Israel and the city of Jerusalem, locating places mentioned in the Bible.</p>	<p><b>Biblical Geography</b></p> <p><i>We know that Jesus was a real person, who lived at a particular time and place. There have been changes through time in the place where Jesus lived.</i></p> <p>Do a research project on the history of the land of Israel in different time periods.</p>
<b>Scripture: Parables</b>		
<p><b>Parables of the Grace and Love of God</b> <i>God loves and cares for me</i></p> <p>Parable of the Good Shepherd (John 10:2-5)</p> <p><b>Kingdom Parables</b></p> <p><i>The mystery of the Kingdom of God is like the mystery of life, and Jesus draws our attention to this through parables. God's Kingdom starts small and grows. It is of great value like the treasure, and it changes everything around it like the leaven.</i></p> <p>The Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32) The Pearl of Great Price (Matthew 13:45-46)</p>	<p><b>Parables of the Grace and Love of God</b> <i>God gives his life for me</i></p> <p>The Found Sheep (Luke 15:4-6) The Good Shepherd: Wolf (John 10:11-14) Psalm 23:1-4 The Vine John (15:1-5)</p> <p><b>Kingdom Parables</b></p> <p><i>We continue pondering the mystery of the Kingdom of God, growing within us.</i></p> <p>The Growing Seed (Matthew 4:26-28)</p> <p>Using an art synthesis, draw all of the earlier parables together, and reflect on what they teach.</p>	<p><b>Kingdom Parables</b></p> <p><i>Return to ponder the mystery of the Kingdom of God – seeing what it means at a new stage of our lives.</i></p>

The Hidden Treasure (Matthew 13:44)  
 The Leaven (Matthew 13:33)

**Scripture: The Bible and Salvation History**

**The Bible**

*The Bible is a special book.  
 When it is read, it is God who is speaking to us through these words*

**The Bible**

*The Bible is a Book that has been written by people who were inspired by God to write what they did.*

The Bible and the books that comprise it - an outline of the names of the different books of the Bible.

**The Bible**

*The Bible is a Book that has been put together bit by bit to explain the way in which God's Plan has unfolded.*

**Salvation History and the Plan of God**

**Salvation History and the Plan of God**

*Introduction to the Plan of God:*

*Creation / Redemption / Parousia*

**Salvation History and the Plan of God**

(Year 2: only brief, not detailed)

*The history of God's Plan is huge, and it is marked by his continued presence at every moment – but there are three key moments in this history: Creation, Redemption and Parousia.*

Salvation history time line: identifying the major elements of this God's unfolding plan of loving goodness:  
 Creation

The Story of Abraham and Isaac  
 Moses and the Exodus  
 The Kings of Israel and the Prophets

**Salvation History and the Plan of God**

*The presence of God in history points to a plan whereby God reveals himself and his ways little by little. Typology is a study that helps us to see what parts of this plan point to things that are going to happen in the future.*

The Prophets:

Isaiah Jeremiah Daniel Ezekiel The Minor Prophets.  
 The Bible and the Parousia – What does the Bible tell us about the world to come?

The Plan of God – an extended time- line of the action of God in history, both sacred and secular.

Typologies:

Creation,  
 The Fall,  
 The Flood  
 Abraham,  
 Moses

Birth of Jesus

Death and Resurrection of Jesus The Heavenly Kingdom to come.

### Moral Formation I

#### Preparing the Body

*In its earliest stages, moral formation is about developing self-discipline so that we do those things that the mind and heart believe to be right.*

*The focus should be on practical life activities – cleaning, washing, sweeping, and tidying.*

Routines for cleaning, washing, sweeping etc.

Giving children the opportunity to develop self-discipline as they care for themselves and then the environment they occupy.

#### Preparing the Heart

*When a person falls deeply in love, he/she will want to do what is right by the other person. Love is the basis of moral action, and should precede it.*

The Parable of the Good Shepherd – emphasizing love.

#### Preparing the Mind

*Explicit moral instruction about the way to behave should be left to the next level. The basic message of love is the one which must*

#### Preparing the Body

*At every stage, moral formation remains concerned with developing self-discipline so that we do those things that the mind and heart believe to be right.*

More advanced ways of caring for oneself and the environment – suitable to the age and needs of individual children – should be sought. (requires specification)

#### Preparing the Heart: Parables of Mercy

*God considers each one of us to be very important to him. Jesus told these parables to help us recall this truth.*

The Forgiving Father (Luke 15:11-24)

The Lost Coin (Luke 15: 8-9)

#### Preparing the Mind

(Year 2, only some of the following)

*Explicit moral instruction should begin once it is clear that the child has understood the foundation of love. The*

#### Preparing the Body

*At every stage, moral formation remains concerned with developing self-discipline so that we do those things that the mind and heart believe to be right.*

Challenging moral efforts, including self-denial and prudent asceticism – fasting, abstinence, acts of charity etc.– should be encouraged, particularly in the seasons of Lent and Advent. (requires specification)

#### Preparing the Heart: Parables of Mercy

*Not only does God consider us to be very important – he loves other too and calls us to do the same.*

The Debtors

The Workers in the Vineyard

#### Preparing the Mind

*Further moral instruction can take place once the basics have been understood. The social dimension of morality such as the natural law and the Beatitudes can also begin*

<p><i>be grasped.</i></p> <p>Observation of moral behaviour and being acquainted with the stories of Jesus serves as an implicit preparation of the mind for moral activity.</p>	<p><i>starting point is a reflection on the Moral Maxims of Christ.</i></p> <p>Begin Reflection on the moral maxims of Jesus – one by one – from the following list:</p> <p>Matthew 5:44; John 13:34; Luke 6:27; Matthew 6:6; Matthew 7:7; 1 Corinthians 6:19; Matthew 5:48; Matthew 5:37; Matthew 7:22; Matthew 7:12; Matthew 5:42; Matthew 5:44; The Summary of the Law: Luke 10:27. Matthew 18:21-22; John 13:34; Luke 6:27; Matthew 6:2</p>	<p><i>at this time if the child is ready.</i></p> <p>Additional Maxims of Jesus from the following list:</p> <p>Matthew 5:44b; Matthew 7:3; Matthew 5:40; Matthew 6:20a; Luke 9:62.</p> <p>The Cardinal Virtues The Eight Beatitudes The Ten Commandments</p>
<b>Moral Formation II</b>		
	<p><b>Preparing the Mind: Moral Parables</b> (Year 2 only some of the following) <i>Belonging to the Kingdom of God comes with responsibilities. If we have been loved, we should respond by loving in return and by spreading the Good News of God's Kingdom.</i></p> <p>The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:30-37) The Insistent Friend (Luke 11:5-8) The Pharisee and the Tax Collector (Luke 18:9- 14) The Sower (Matthew 13:3-8)</p>	<p><b>Preparing the Mind: Moral Parables</b> <i>While God wants us to belong to his Kingdom, he will not force us. We are free by our own actions to be happy in his Kingdom or not to accept it.</i></p> <p>The Bridesmaids (Matthew 25:1-12); The Talents (Matthew 25:14-30); The Wedding Feast (Matthew 18:23-34)</p>
<b>Prayer</b>		
<p><b>Prayer of Thanks and Petition</b> <i>At its most basic level, prayer is about asking God for his gifts and thanking him for what we have received</i></p> <p>Prayers of thanks.</p>	<p><b>Language of Prayer</b> <i>Prayer sustains our relationship with God. As well as asking and thanking God for his gifts, we offer him our praise and worship.</i> <i>Jesus gave us the model of how to pray. The Church offers us a language to frame our prayers.</i></p>	<p><b>Ways of Praying</b> <i>There are many different ways to pray, and God helps us to find the way that is best for us.</i></p> <p>Rosary Creed</p>

<p>Prayers of petition.</p> <p>Short phrases from the Bible, especially psalms.</p>	<p>Our Father Hail Mary Act of Contrition Glory Be to the Father Morning Offering</p>	<p><i>Lectio Divina</i></p>
<b>Sacraments: Sacramentality; Baptism</b>		
<p><b>Sacramentality</b></p> <p><i>The ordinary is holy. We meet God through ordinary things that we can see, taste touch, smell and hear.</i></p> <p>Practical life activities</p>	<p><b>Sacramentality</b></p> <p><i>The ordinary is holy. We meet God through ordinary things that we can see, taste touch, smell and hear.</i></p> <p>Draw attention to the presence of God in the ordinary</p> <p>Practical life Activities</p>	<p><b>Sacramentality</b></p> <p><i>The ordinary is holy. We meet God through ordinary things that we can see, taste touch, smell and hear.</i></p> <p>Draw attention to the presence of God in the ordinary</p> <p>Practical life Activities St Therese of Lisieux and the “Little Way”</p>
<p><b>Baptism – The Light and the White Garment</b></p> <p><i>Jesus is the light of the world; his light cannot be extinguished and it even overcomes death itself.</i></p> <p><i>Through the sacrament of Baptism, we are given his light and his life.</i></p> <p>The image of light in Baptism The meaning of the white garment</p> <p><b>Baptism – The Water, the Gospel, the oil.</b></p> <p><i>Through the water, the Scriptures and the holy oil, we receive and take part in the life of Christ.</i></p> <p>The image of water in Baptism The meaning of the holy oils The Scriptures as God’s Word to us, received first in Baptism.</p>	<p><b>Baptism – The Rite</b></p> <p><i>Each of the liturgical signs and gestures of Baptism has a meaning which connects us with the life, death and resurrection of Christ, and the life of the Church.</i></p> <p>Reflection on essential moments of the Rite of Baptism</p>	<p><b>Baptism – The Rite</b></p> <p><i>Each of the liturgical signs and gestures of Baptism has a meaning which connects us with the life, death and resurrection of Christ, and the life of the Church.</i></p> <p>A deeper reflection on the Rite of Baptism, making connections with the Life of Christ and the Church</p>

**Baptism – The Main Gestures of Baptism**

*Through the sacramental actions, we are drawn into the life of Christ.*

- The epiclesis (invoking the Holy Spirit)
- The pouring of the water
- The sign of the cross
- The anointing with oil

**Sacraments: Eucharist – Moments of the Mass**

***Eucharist – Moments of the Mass***

*When we celebrate the Eucharist, we ask God the Father to send the Holy spirit to change the bread and wine into the body and blood of Jesus.*

**The Epiclesis**

We thank God for the gift of the risen Christ and we join him in offering ourselves to the Father in the unity of the Holy Spirit

**The Offering/ Doxology**

We remember how God (represented by the wine) and humanity (represented by the water) have become inseparable in Jesus.

**The Preparation of the Chalice**

We remember that the Church is a communion – we are united to Christ and to each other and, bound by the peace of Christ.

**The Lavabo (Washing of the Hands)**

The priest washes his hands to show that we all want to be made clean in heart – Blessed are the clean of heart for they shall see God.

***Eucharist – Linking the Moments of the Mass***

*The moments of the Mass form a particular order and a united whole. The Eucharist is the great prayer of the Church and the memorial of Christ’s life, death and resurrection.*

**Basic Missal:**

Essential Moments of the Mass in Order

Synthesis of the key moments of the Mass

***Eucharist – Study of the Mass***

*In the Eucharist, Jesus offers to all the gift of redemption. The Eucharist is the thanksgiving sacrifice of Jesus, offered for the living and the dead.*

**Structure of the Mass:**

Sequencing Prayers of the Mass

Detailed Exploration of the Essential Rite of the Mass

**Sacraments: Eucharist – Paschal Mystery; Liturgical Vessels & Furniture**

**Eucharist – Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ**

*The Eucharist is a celebration of the life death*

**Eucharist - Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ**

*In the Eucharist, Jesus feeds us with himself.*

The Eucharistic Presence of the Good Shepherd.

**Eucharist - Life, Death and Resurrection of Christ**

*The Eucharist is the source and summit of the Christian life in which Christ offers to all the gift of redemption.*

and resurrection of Jesus.

See also Paschal and Infancy Narratives (above).

**Eucharist – Liturgical Vessels & Furniture**

*In the celebration of the Eucharist, we use special vessels, furniture. Each of these has its own purpose in unfolding to us the mystery of Christ.*

**Moment 1**

Altar, altar cloth, crucifix, candles, sacristy

**Moment 2**

Chalice, corporal, paten, ciborium, purificator

**Moment 3**

Cruets (water and wine), finger bowl, finger towel

**Moment 4**

Tabernacle, paschal candle, sanctuary lamp

**Moment 5**

Lectionary, lectern, Sacramentary and stand

*At the last Supper, Jesus told us to celebrate the Eucharist as a memorial of him.*

Origin of the Eucharist

**Eucharist – Liturgical Vestments**

*In the celebration of the Eucharist, we use special vestments. Each of these has its own purpose in unfolding to us the mystery of Christ.*

Alb, stole, chasuble, amice

Origin of the Liturgy of the Word – Synagogue The Eucharist as Memorial

**Sacraments: Confirmation**

**Confirmation**

*Indirect instruction incidentally.*

**Confirmation**

*The Holy Spirit brings special gifts to empower his followers. These gifts are strengthened in the Sacrament of Confirmation.*

Reflect on the Pentecost Story (Acts 2:1-4)

Introduce the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit

**Confirmation**

*Confirmation gives us special strength of the Holy Spirit to spread and defend the faith by word and action.*

Pentecost Story (Acts 2:1-4)

The articles, vestments and gestures of Confirmation

Saints – models of the Christian life The Rite of

Confirmation – essential components

The Cardinal Virtues; Service Project

The Gifts of the Holy Spirit (Isaiah 11:2-3)

The Fruits of the Spirit (Galatians 5:22)



### Sacraments of Healing: Reconciliation

#### Reconciliation

*Indirect instruction incidentally.*

#### Reconciliation

*Jesus seeks out the lost sheep, and those who have sinned. Jesus gave the Church the power to forgive sins.*

#### Key Moments in the Sacrament of Reconciliation:

1. Examination of Conscience
2. Confession of Sins
3. Absolution
4. Penance

*Many Scripture stories show that Jesus loved and forgave sinners who asked to be forgiven.*

#### Reflection on

Parables of Mercy, Moral Parables, Maxims of Jesus

#### Reconciliation

*God wants us to turn back to him after we have sinned. This is called 'Repentance'.*

#### Detailed review of the Rite of Reconciliation

Further reflection on... Parables of Mercy; Moral Parables; Maxims of Jesus  
(See above)

### Sacraments of Healing: Anointing of the Sick

#### Anointing of the Sick

*Indirect instruction incidentally.*

#### Anointing of the Sick

*Anointing of the Sick is for those who are frail, seriously sick or in danger of death.*

Study of the essential elements of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

#### Anointing of the Sick

*Anointing of the Sick brings strength, reconciliation peace and the courage to endure suffering in a Christian manner.*

Extended study of the meaning of the Rite of the Sacrament of the Anointing of the Sick.

### Sacraments at the Service of Communion: Marriage

#### Marriage

*Indirect instruction incidentally.*

#### Marriage

*Jesus' love for his people is the model of love for all married people. In marriage, a man and a woman give themselves to each other in love.*

The essential elements of the rite of Marriage

#### Marriage

*Marriage between a man and a woman is called a covenant. It is based on God's love, help and forgiveness.*

A more detailed study of the Rite of Marriage  
The Trinity and Marriage – analogy of love

### Sacraments at the Service of Communion: Holy Orders

#### Holy Orders

*Indirect instruction incidentally.*

#### Holy Orders

#### Holy Orders

*Holy Orders give sacred power to a priest: to teach, to*

	Bishops and priests have been called by God to continue Christ's leadership in his Church.  The essential elements of the rite of Holy Orders.	<i>sanctify and to lead the faithful.</i>  A more detailed study of the Rite of Holy Orders
<b>Liturgy: Seasons of the Church</b>		
<b>Seasons of the Church</b> <i>The Life of the Church has seasons and feast days, calling us to reflect on the life of Christ and the saints, helping us to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ.</i> Liturgical Calendar Wheel <b>The Advent Prophecies –</b> The Light (Isaiah 9:1), The Names (Isaiah 9:5-6), The Young Woman (Isaiah 7:14), The Star and the Scepter (Numbers 24:17)	<b>Seasons of the Church</b> <i>The Life of the Church has its own seasons and feast days, which call us to reflect on key moments in the life of Christ and the saints who have served him throughout history. These reflections help us to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ.</i>  Other Solemnities of the Church Solemnity of the Mother of God Corpus Christi All Saints All Souls	<b>Seasons of the Church</b> <i>The Life of the Church has its own seasons and feast days, which call us to reflect on key moments in the life of Christ and the saints who have served him throughout history. These reflections help us to enter more deeply into the mystery of Christ.</i> Saints of the Church: St Peter and Paul      St Augustine St Mary MacKillop      St Francis St Thomas Aquinas      St Therese of Lisieux, St Teresa of Calcutta Saints according to local interest

### 2015 Year 2 RE Program Overview

- Only new presentations are listed. Allow 10-20 minutes for Presentations and “I Wonder”.
- The presentations and activities follow the Liturgical Year.
- In this draft programme, there are more activities than can actually be reached. This allows for expansion and clarity as to what can feasibly be covered in the year and what can be left for the subsequent year.
- There is focused prayer time and significant Choice Time
- Some weeks have fewer new presentations, allowing sufficient time for personal choices and self-directed work, which is crucial in this approach.
- During *Choice Times* students explore previously introduced materials in a variety of ways that have been demonstrated and practiced.
- Each student has a) a journal b) storage box/ space

<b>Week</b>	<b>Term 1: The Plan of God, Lent Culminating in Easter</b>	<b>Week</b>	<b>Term 2: Pentecost and Ongoing Life of Christ in the Church</b>
<b>1</b>	Introductory Activities, establishment of routines	<b>1</b>	Baptism
<b>2</b>	Salvation History and the Plan of God. Introduction to the Bible Brief Introduction to the geography of Israel Annunciation	<b>2</b>	Baptism Jesus appears to the Disciples and Apostles Jesus the Good Shepherd (Last Sunday's readings) The Month of May: Introduced
<b>3</b>	Geography of Israel Good Shepherd revisited; Psalm 23	<b>3</b>	The Parable of the Vine (Last Sunday) Liturgical Vessels and Furniture
<b>4</b>	The Liturgical Year Ash Wednesday and the Beginning of Lent	<b>4</b>	Jesus appears to the apostles by the Sea of Galilee The Ascension (Feast this coming Sunday) Introduction to the Mass: The Preparation of the Chalice; Epiclesis; Consecration, Lavabo
<b>5</b>	The Bible The City of Jerusalem Parables of the Kingdom #1	<b>5</b>	The Mass: Offertory, gesture of peace, Breaking of Bread Pentecost and the Gifts of the Holy Spirit
<b>6</b>	Lenten Preparations for Easter: The Mystery of Life and death Parables of the Kingdom	<b>6</b>	Mass: The Mystery of Faith Synthesis of the Mass Liturgical Colours
<b>7</b>	Parables of the Kingdom	<b>7</b>	First Mass Booklet
<b>8</b>	Parables of the Kingdom Art Synthesis	<b>8</b>	The Cenacle revisited The Feast of the Sacred Heart of Jesus
<b>9</b>	The Cenacle The Entry into Jerusalem The Feast of the Annunciation	<b>9</b>	Parables of the Kingdom (Last Sunday's Readings) Jesus calms the storm
<b>10</b>	The Empty Tomb The Stations of the Cross	<b>10</b>	The Birth of John the Baptist

<b>Week</b>	<b>Term 3: Ongoing Life of Christ in the Church</b>	<b>Week</b>	<b>Term 4: Advent and Christmas</b>
<b>1</b>	Parables of Mercy: The Forgiving Father The Centurion's Servant	<b>1</b>	Our Lady of the Rosary (School Feast) Revisit maps of Israel Prophecies of Light
<b>2</b>	The Vine The Multiplication of the Loaves and Fishes	<b>2</b>	Annunciation Prophecies of Mary
<b>3</b>	Moral Parables: The Good Samaritan The Insistent Friend	<b>3</b>	Visitation Prophecy of names
<b>4</b>	Moral Parables: the Pharisee and the Tax Collector The Feast of the Transfiguration The Feast of Mary Mackillop	<b>4</b>	Birth of Jesus The Shepherd's story Feast of all Saints
<b>5</b>	'I am the Bread of Life' (Last Sunday) Moral Parables: Sowing of the Seed The Assumption of Our Lady (Feast)	<b>5</b>	Feast of All Souls Prophecies of Bethlehem Announcement to Zachariah
<b>6</b>	The Sacrament of Reconciliation (1 and 2)	<b>6</b>	The Three Magi Art Synthesis of the Infancy Narratives
<b>7</b>	The Sacrament of Reconciliation (3) The Bread of Life (2)	<b>7</b>	Prophecies of the Star and Sceptre Feast of Christ the King
<b>8</b>	Mother Teresa of Calcutta (Feast)	<b>8</b>	Advent and the Advent Calendar
<b>9</b>	Jesus Heals a blind man The Nativity of Mary	<b>9</b>	Second Sunday of Advent: appropriate prophecies, readings etc.
<b>10</b>	Jesus speaks of his death and resurrection (Last Sunday) Exaltation of the Holy Cross (Feast) Guardian Angels (Feast Oct. 2)	<b>10</b>	Third Sunday of Advent: appropriate prophecies, readings etc. Feast of the Immaculate Conception
		<b>11</b>	De-Briefing activities

**Term 1**

**Liturgical Season: Preparation Season: Lent Culminating in Easter**

<b>Weeks/ Days</b>	<b>Session Structure:</b> Warm Up Presentation, exposition, explanation, reminder or discussion Choice Activities/ demonstration Closure	<b>Materials</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
<b>Week 1 Jan 27-30</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time: Mark 1: 14-120</b>		
Mon, 27	Australia Day: No School		
Tues, 27	Staff Day		
Thurs, 29	No Session		
<b>Week 2 Feb 2-6</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time Mark 1: 21-28</b>		
Monday Feb 2 60 mins  <b>Presentation of the Lord</b> 60 mins	<b>Introduction to the year:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What we are doing together.</li> <li>• What we will be covering.</li> <li>• How we will go about it</li> </ul> <b>Discussion:</b> What they remember about RE from previous year and what they would like to know more about <b>Introduce:</b> the room and prayer space	Holy Water Font  LCD and laptop:  Boxes for each student.	
Tues, 3 Feb  60 mins	<b>Set up prayer space, with children</b> <b>Introduce</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some materials they can use</li> <li>• the Bible, briefly (several kept in the Prayer Space/ bookshelf)</li> <li>• Sign of the Cross, with explanation.</li> </ul> <b>Present:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Globe</li> <li>• Map of Israel with 3 places</li> <li>• Annunciation relating to Nazareth.</li> </ul>	Items for prayer space Big Bible Mini Bible Bookcase Mirror for Sign of Cross Personal choice charts Pencils and paint Globe Map of Israel: 3D version with 3 places	

	<p><b>Choice Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sign of Cross activity</li> <li>• Personal prayer choices</li> <li>• Globe and Map of Israel activities,</li> </ul>	<p>Map of Israel with towns Annunciation diorama</p>	
<p>Thurs 29 30 mins</p>	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salvation History</li> <li>• Plan of God: Creation to Parousia</li> <li>• Blue chart</li> <li>• <b>The Bible</b>, using booklet and big book.</li> </ul> <p><b>How to:</b> Colour in pencil or paint and store (Use relevant topic)</p> <p><b>Reminder of some choices</b> Prayer choice                  Sign of Cross</p> <p><b>Choice Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salvation History</li> <li>• Plan of God</li> <li>• Bible activity</li> </ul>	<p>Chart: Creation to Parousia</p> <p>Mini Bible Bookcase</p> <p>Introduction to Bible Booklet</p> <p>Big Bible explanation</p>	
<p><b>Week 3 Feb 9-13</b></p>	<p><b>5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time    Mark 1: 29-39</b></p>		
<p>Feb 9 Mon 60 mins</p>	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map of Israel with Towns (one story of Jesus in one town)</li> <li>• Map of Israel</li> <li>• One diorama or 2D Felt, relating to a waterway or town (tbc)</li> </ul> <p><b>New Choice Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Map of Israel with towns: cards</li> <li>• Map of Israel with waterways and mountains: Cards</li> <li>• Diorama</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Learning Activity choices:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personal prayer time</li> <li>• Plan of God chart</li> <li>• Bible Booklet</li> <li>• Draw or paint</li> <li>• Prayer choice</li> <li>• Sign of Cross</li> </ul>	<p>Map of Israel: 2D maps</p> <p>Chosen Diorama</p>	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Annunciation Story</li> </ul>		
Feb 10 Our Lady of Lourdes Tuesday 60 mins	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good Shepherd</li> <li>Psalm 23: Explain the Psalms and where they are found in the Bible, why they are special etc.</li> </ul> <p><b>New Choice Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Responding to the Psalm</li> <li>Finding the Bible references to Sheep and Shepherd</li> </ul> <p><b>How to:</b> make a booklet</p>	<p>Good Shepherd Parable books Psalm 23</p> <p>Book-making materials</p>	
Feb 12 Thurs 30 mins	<p><b>Present:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Liturgical Year</li> <li>Next week begins a special time: Leading to Easter: time of Lent. Next Wednesday is Ash Wednesday. (Note: Friday 13: Year 2 Parish Mass at 9.15)</li> </ul> <p><b>New Choice Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Liturgical Year: Actual Wooden</li> <li>Paper Learning Activity Liturgical year</li> </ul> <p><b>Other Choice Activities:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal prayer time</li> <li>Plan of God chart</li> <li>Bible Booklet</li> <li>Map of Israel with towns: cards</li> <li>Map of Israel with waterways and mountains: Cards</li> <li>Good Shepherd activity</li> <li>Drawing / painting</li> </ul>	<p>Liturgical year materials</p> <p>Map of Israel with towns: cards</p> <p>Map of Israel with waterways and mountains: Cards</p> <p>Good Shepherd diorama</p>	
<b>Week 4 Feb 16-20</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> Sunday Ordinary Time      Mark 1: 40-45</b>		
Feb 16 Mon 60 mins	<p><b>Present:</b> John Baptises Jesus and Jesus goes to the desert for 40 days</p> <p><b>Introduce</b> Wall Chart reminder of Learning Activity possibilities and Personal Choice Charts</p> <p><b>Choice Activities:</b> As in Week 3</p>	<p>3D: John the Baptist 3D: Jesus in the desert</p>	
Feb 17	<b>18: Ash Wednesday</b>	Life and death booklet	

Ash Wednesday  Tues. 60 mins	<b>Present:</b> Mystery of Death and Life: First Moment <b>New Choice Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lent related Learning Activities (source these)</li> </ul> <b>Other Learning Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	Planting equipment <b>Alleluia</b> plus pot to bury it in. Lenten resolution material	
Feb 19  Thursday 30 mins	<b>Explain:</b> Lenten Resolutions <b>New Choice Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lenten Resolution</li> <li>Mustard Seed</li> </ul> <b>Other Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets		
<b>Week 5</b> <b>Feb 23-27</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Sunday Lent</b> <b>Mark 1:12-15</b>		
Feb 23  Mon 60 mins	<b>Present:</b> The Bible #2 <b>How to use</b> felt version of bible stories. <b>Other Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	Mini Bible Bookcase Large Book of Bible	
Feb 24  Tues. 60 mins	<b>Present:</b> Plan of City Jerusalem <b>New Choice Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Plan of City of Jerusalem</li> </ul> <b>Other Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	3D Plan of Jerusalem Jerusalem Booklet	
Feb 26  Thursday 30 mins	<b>Present:</b> Parables of the Kingdom: #1 Mustard Seed <b>New Choice Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parable of Mustard Seed</li> </ul> <b>Other Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal contract booklets	Mustard Seed Booklet	
<b>Week 6</b> <b>Mar 2-6</b>	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday Lent</b> <b>Mark 9: 2-10</b>		
Mar 2  Mon 60 mins	<b>Staff development Day: No Classes</b>		
Mar 3  Tues. 60 mins	<b>Present:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mystery of Death and Life: Planting 2</li> <li>Parables of the Kingdom #2 Pearl of Great Price</li> </ul> <b>New Choice Activities:</b>	Presentation of Life and Death booklet Planting equipment Making Book equipment	



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parables of the Kingdom Pearl of Great Price</li> </ul> <b>Other Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	Pearl Booklet Treasure Box with pearl	
Mar 5  Thurs 30 mins	No new presentation <b>Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets		
<b>Week 7 Mar 9-13</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Lent                                  John 2: 12-35</b>		
Mar 9  Mon 60 mins	<b>Present:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parables of the Kingdom #3 Parable Grain of wheat</li> </ul> <b>New Choice Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parable Grain of wheat</li> </ul> <b>Other Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	Grain of wheat booklet Planting equipment	
Mar 10  Tues 60 mins	<b>Present:</b> No new presentation <b>Choice Activities</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets		
Mar 12  Thurs 30 mins	<b>Present:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parables of the Kingdom #4 The Hidden Treasure</li> </ul> <b>New Choice Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Hidden Treasure</li> </ul> <b>Other Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	Hidden Treasure Booklet Treasure box with treasure.	
<b>Week 8 Mar 16-20</b>	<b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Lent                                  John 3: 14-21</b>		
Mar 16 St Patrick 17 <sup>th</sup> Mon 60 mins	<b>Present:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Art Synthesis of the Parables of Kingdom</li> </ul> <b>New Choice Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Art Synthesis of the Parables of Kingdom</li> </ul> <b>Other Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	Cards for Art Synthesis of Parables of Kingdom	
Mar 17  Tues. 60 mins	<b>Present:</b> No new presentation <b>Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets		
Mar 19	<b>Present:</b>	The Leaven Booklet	

Thurs 30 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Parables of the Kingdom #5 The Leaven</li> </ul> <b>New Choice Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Leaven</li> </ul> <b>Other Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	Dough, yeast, all necessary materials	
<b>Week 9 Mar 23-27</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Lent John 12: 2033</b>		
Mar 23  Mon 60 mins	<b>Present:</b> The Cenacle <b>New Choice Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Cenacle</li> </ul> <b>Other Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	3D Cenacle Cenacle Booklet	
Mar 24 <b>Feast</b> <b>Annunciation</b> Tues. 60 mins	<b>Present:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mystery of Death and Life: Planting 3</li> <li>• The Annunciation</li> </ul> <b>New Choice Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Annunciation</li> </ul> <b>Other Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	Presentation of Life and death booklet  Planting equipment  Annunciation Booklet	
Mar 26  Thurs 30 mins	<b>Present:</b> Entry into Jerusalem <b>New Choice Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Entry into Jerusalem</li> </ul> <b>Other Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	<b>Design Booklet:</b> 2D or 3D Entry to Jerusalem	
<b>Week 10 Mar 30-Apr 2</b>	<b>Palm Sunday Procession: Mark 11: -10; John 12:12-16 Mass: Mark 14: -15; 47</b>		
Mar 30  Mon 60 mins	<b>Present:</b> The Empty Tomb <b>New Choice Activities:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Empty Tomb</li> </ul> <b>Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	Empty Tomb Booklet 3D Empty Tomb Psalms on cards	
Mar 31 Tues. 60 mins	<b>Holy Thursday: April 2</b> <b>Present:</b> Mystery of Death and Life, Second Moment <b>Choice Activities:</b> As listed above, charted on walls or in personal choice booklets	Presentation of Life and death booklet Planting equipment Stations of Cross	

Cross-Referencing Year Two Programme with *Sharing Our Story* of the with Parramatta Diocese

<b>Sharing Our Story, Year Two</b>				
<b>Term 1</b>	12C1: Jesus Helps me to Love	12C2: Lent: Being Alone	12C3: Easter Triduum: Never Alone	
<b>Term 2</b>	12C4: Easter Season: Jesus is with us	12C5: Pentecost story		
<b>Term 3</b>	12C6 Reconciliation: Belonging to a Forgiving Community	12C7: Eucharist: God's love		
<b>Term 4</b>	12E1: Mission: Loving God & Others like Jesus	12C10: Combined Advent/Christmas		
<b>Term One Sharing Our Story Units</b>			<b>Year 2 Mystagogical-based Programme</b>	
<b>12C1: Jesus Helps me to Love</b> <b>Outcomes-</b> By the end of this unit students should be able to: Recognise Baptism as a ritual of initiation into God's family, where they are called to love, share with, listen to and accept others. Recall gospel accounts and parables which demonstrate how Jesus encouraged others to grow. Recognise that Jesus calls them to love one another; and list ways of responding to this call. Appreciate that as part of God's family they are called to seek justice truth and hope			<b>Term 2:</b> Easter Season, Pentecost and Ongoing Life of Christ in the Church	
<b>12C2 Lent: Being Alone</b> <b>Outcomes-</b> By the end of this unit students should be able to: Recall and reflect upon times of being alone. Appreciate that Jesus prayed to God his father Identify prayer as a means of preparing to celebrate Easter Recognise Lent as a particular time for repentance Participate in a variety of prayerful experiences.				
				<b>Term 1:</b> The Plan of God Lent Culminating in Easter

<p><b>12C3 Easter Triduum: Never Alone</b>  <b>Outcomes-</b> By the end of this unit students should be able to:</p> <p>Describe Jesus' thoughts and feelings when he prayed to his Father particularly in the Garden of Gethsemane and on the cross.</p> <p>Explain why prayer is important in their relationship with God and how prayer can help them in their daily life.</p> <p>Participate in a variety of prayer experiences related to the celebration of Holy Week.</p>	<p><b>Term 1:</b></p> <p>The Plan of God,  Lent Culminating in Easter</p>
<p><b>12C4 Easter Season: Jesus is with us</b>  <b>Outcomes-</b> By the end of this unit students should be able to:</p> <p>Recall and share stories about their own family's and parish's celebration of Easter.</p> <p>Recount stories from John's Gospel which describe the disciples' encounters with the Risen Jesus.</p> <p>Name ways in which Christians encounter the Risen Christ in their lives.</p>	<p><b>Term 2:</b></p> <p>Easter Season,  Pentecost  Ongoing Life of Christ in the Church</p>
<p><b>12C5 The Pentecost Story</b>  <b>Outcome</b> By the end of this unit students should be able to identify and explore</p> <p>People in the community who help others</p> <p>Recall the events of the Pentecost story.</p> <p>Explain how the disciples were empowered by the Spirit in the Pentecost Story</p> <p>Demonstrate an awareness and appreciation of the Church as a gathering of people who celebrate and proclaim the message of Jesus.</p>	

<b>12C6 Reconciliation: Belonging to a Forgiving Community</b> <b>Outcomes-</b> By the end of this unit students should be able to:	<b>Term 3:</b>  Ongoing Life of Christ in the Church
Describe how their choices affect their relationships with God and others.	
Explain how God is like the shepherd and the woman who lost her coin.	
Make links between their experiences of reconciliation and the elements of the sacrament of Reconciliation.	
Appreciate that they experience God’s forgiveness in the Church’s celebration of the sacrament of Reconciliation	
<b>12C7 Eucharist: Celebrating God’s Love</b> <b>Outcomes</b> By the end of this unit students should be able to	<b>Term 2:</b>  Easter Season, Pentecost and Ongoing Life of Christ in the Church  <b>Term 3:</b> Ongoing Life of Christ in the Church
Identify and explain reasons why family and friends celebrate special meals with each other.	
Identify and explain reasons why Jesus celebrated special meals with others, especially the Last Supper.	
Describe ways in which Jesus is present in the Church’s celebration of the Eucharist revealing God’s wonderful love.	
Identify ways in which they and their families can celebrate Sunday as a holy day, especially through the celebration of the Eucharist.	
<b>12E1: Mission: Loving God &amp; Others like Jesus</b> <b>Outcomes</b> By the end of this unit students should be able to	<b>Term 2 and Term 3</b>  Ongoing Life of Christ in the Church
Recall examples of loving actions	
Recount 'Jesus and the Blind Beggar' and 'Jesus and Zacchaeus'	
Identify ways they can contribute to the mission of Jesus by loving God and people in their class, school, family, local community and people throughout the world	
<b>12C10: Advent and Christmas Combined Unit</b> <b>Outcomes</b> By the end of this unit students should be able to	<b>Term 4:</b>  Advent and Christmas

identify ways in which their families receive and spread God's love peace and joy as they celebrate the birthday of Jesus each Christmas	
Recall biblical accounts of how people from the Bible including Mary and Joseph, the shepherds and the wise men prepared for the birth of Jesus	
Recall experiences of waiting and be able to relate this to the readings and spirit of Advent	

Appendix 3 Church documents relevant to Catholic education

Year	Church Documents Relevant to Catholic Education
1965	Vatican Council II Gravissimum Educationis
1975	Pope Paul VI Evangelii Nuntiandi
1977	Congregation for Catholic Education, The Catholic School
1979	Pope John Paul II Catechesi Tradendae
1981	Pope John Paul II, Familiaris Consortio
1982	Congregation for Catholic Education, Lay Catholics in Schools: Witnesses to Faith
1983	Pope John Paul II, Code of Canon Law
1983	Congregation for Catholic Education, Educational Guidance in Human Love: Outlines for Sex Education
1983	Holy See, Charter of the Rights of the Family
1986	Pope John Paul II, Address to the Council, Staff and Students of the Institute of Catholic Education, Melbourne, Australia
1988	Congregation for Catholic Education, The Religious Dimension of Education in a Catholic School
1988	Pope John Paul II, Christifideles Laici
1990	Pope John Paul II, Redemptoris Missio
1997	Congregation for Catholic Education, The Catholic School on the Threshold of the Third Millennium
1997	Congregation for the Clergy, General Directory for Catechesis
1998	Pope John Paul II Fides et Ratio
2001	Pope John Paul II, Ecclesia in Oceania
2005	Pope Benedict XVI Deus Caritas Est
2006	Catechism of the Catholic Church
2007	Congregation for Catholic Education, Educating Together in Catholic Schools. A Shared Mission Between Consecrated Persons and the Lay Faithful.
2007	Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith, Doctrinal Note on Some Aspects of Evangelisation
2007	Bishops of New South Wales and the ACT, "Catholic Schools at a Crossroads"
2008	Pope Benedict XVI, Meeting with Catholic Educators, Conference Hall of the Catholic University of America in Washington, D.C.
2009	Congregation for Catholic Education, Circular Letter to the Presidents of Bishop's Conferences on Religious Education in Schools

2009	Pope Benedict XVI, Address to Catholic Religion Teachers
2010	Pope Benedict XVI, Verbum Domini
2013	Congregation for Catholic Education, Educating to Intercultural Dialogue in Catholic Schools: Living in Harmony for a Civilisation of Love
2013	Pope Francis, Evangelii Gaudium
2014	Congregation for Catholic Education, Instrumentum Laboris: Educating Today and Tomorrow – A Renewing Passion
2014	Bishop Anthony Fisher, Faith in the Future of Catholic Schooling, Address to Priests, Principals and RECs Forum,
2014	Pope Francis, Address to Italian Students and Teachers
2015	Archbishop of Vancouver, Michael Miller, Attitudes for Fostering an Authentic Catholic School Address to Sydney Catholic School Leaders Sydney, Australia
2015	Pope Francis, Address to the Pontifical Catholic University of Ecuador, Quito



#### Appendix 4 Information sheets and consent Forms

1. First Information Sheet provided to Principal and relevant Staff
2. First Information Sheet provided to Parents and Caregivers
3. Simplified Information Sheet, for parents and caregivers to use in explaining the study to Children
4. First Informed Consent Form for Parents and Caregivers
5. Informed Consent Form for Teachers
6. Information Sheet: Update for Filming: Principal
7. Information Sheet: Update for Filming: Parents and Caregivers
8. Second Informed Consent Form for Parents and Caregivers
9. Third Information Sheet for Parents and Caregivers
10. Third Consent Form for Parents and Caregivers

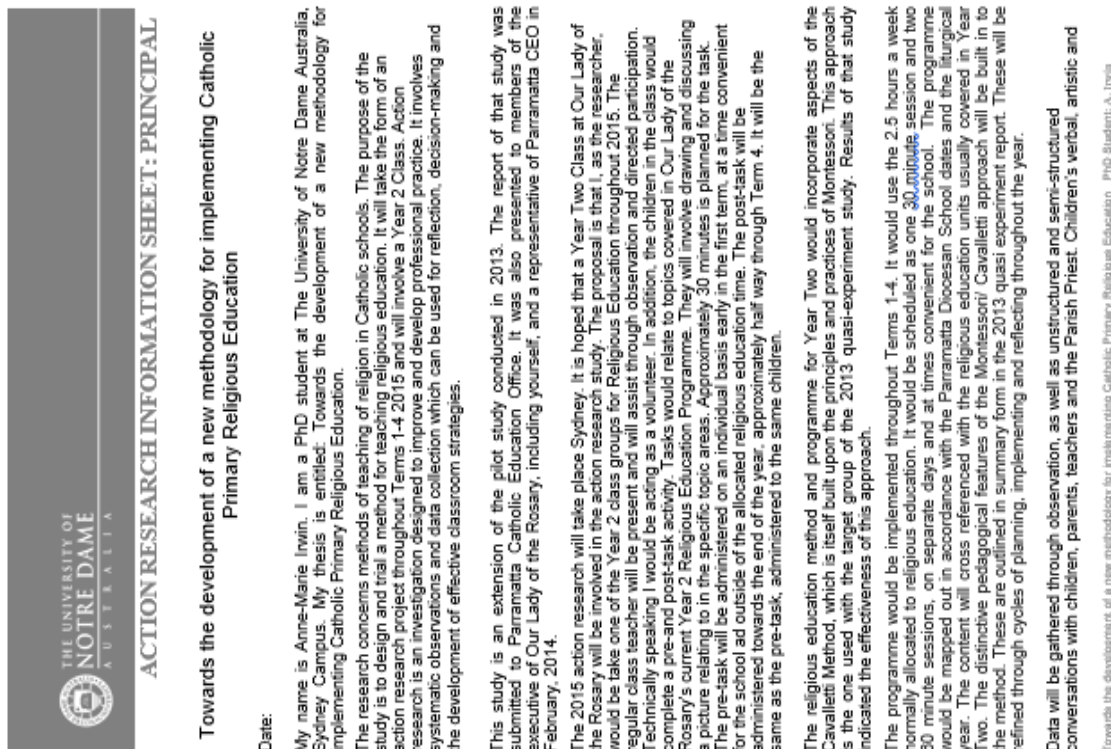


Figure 25: First information sheet: Principal and teachers

written responses will be collected. Impressions and experiences will be gathered in field notes and collated at the end of the day, or as soon as possible.

Towards the end of the study, the teacher, students, the parents and the parish priest will be asked for evaluative feedback through a semi-structured interview.

Should permission be given by the parents/guardians, these tasks and some of the classroom teaching and learning will audio-recorded; enabling the research data to be analysed effectively. The audio recordings can be made available to parents or guardians on request. The audio recordings will be strictly used for the research study. All data will be securely stored and will be destroyed five years after the data has been gathered and analysed. Information collected during the interviews will be strictly confidential except in the instance of legal requirements such as: court subpoenas freedom of information requests or mandated reporting by some professionals. To protect the anonymity of participants in a project with a small sample size, a code will be ascribed to each of the participants to minimise the risk of identification.

Parents/guardians, students, classroom teacher, RE Coordinator and Parish Priest are asked to sign consent forms accepting participation. Copies of information sheets and consent forms are attached. Participants may withdraw from the project at any time and will not be subjected to prejudice.

It would be appreciated if you would complete the attached form, indicating consent or otherwise to your school's participation in this project.

The protocol adopted by the University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee for the protection of privacy will be adhered to and relevant sections of the Privacy Act are available at <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au>. If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it should be directed to the Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee, Research Office, The University of Notre Dame Australia, PO Box 4225 Fremantle WA 6959, phone (08) 9433 0943, [research@nd.edu.au](mailto:research@nd.edu.au). Data collected will be stored securely in the University's School of Education for five years. No identifying information will be used and the results from the study will be made freely available to all participants. Associate Professor Dr Gerard O'Shea of the School of Education is supervising the project. If you have any queries regarding the research, please contact me directly by phone 0412 498 0288 or email at [anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au](mailto:anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au) or Associate Professor Dr O'Shea by phone (02) 8204 4400 or by email at [gerard.oshea@nd.edu.au](mailto:gerard.oshea@nd.edu.au).

The Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Notre Dame Australia has approved the study.

I thank you for your consideration and look forward to your response. I have enclosed a form for your completion, indicating this.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Anne-Marie Irwin

Tel: 0412 490 288

Email: [anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au](mailto:anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au)



**Towards the development of a new methodology for implementing Catholic Primary Religious Education**

Date:

My name is Anne-Marie Irwin. I am a PhD student at The University of Notre Dame Australia, Sydney Campus. My thesis is entitled: 'Towards the development of a new methodology for implementing Catholic Primary Religious Education.'

The research concerns methods of teaching of religion in Catholic schools. The purpose of the study is to design and trial a method for teaching religious education. It will take the form of an action research project throughout Terms 1-4 2015 and will involve a Year 2 Class. Action research is an investigation designed to improve and develop professional practice. It involves systematic observations and data collection which can be used for reflection, decision-making and the development of effective classroom strategies.

This study is an extension of the pilot study conducted in 2013. The report of that study was submitted to Parramatta Catholic Education Office. It was also presented to members of the Executive of Our Lady of the Rosary, including yourseur, and a representative of Parramatta CEO in February, 2014.

The 2015 action research will take place Sydney. It is hoped that a Year Two Class at Our Lady of the Rosary will be involved in the action research study. The proposal is that I, as the researcher, would be take one of the Year 2 class groups for Religious Education throughout 2015. The regular class teacher will be present and will assist through observation and directed participation. Technically speaking I would be acting as a volunteer. In addition, the children in the class would complete a pre-and post-task activity. Tasks would relate to topics covered in Our Lady of the Rosary's current Year 2 Religious Education Programme. They will involve drawing and discussing a picture relating to in the specific topic areas. Approximately 30 minutes is planned for the task. The pre-task will be administered on an individual basis early in the first term, at a time convenient for the school and outside of the allocated religious education time. The post-task will be administered towards the end of the year, approximately half way through Term 4. It will be the same as the pre-task, administered to the same children.

The religious education method and programme for Year Two would incorporate aspects of the Cavalletti Method which is itself built upon the principles and practices of Montessori. This approach is the one used with the target group of the 2013 quasi-experiment study. Results of that study indicated the effectiveness of this approach.

The programme would be implemented throughout Terms 1-4. It would use the 2.5 hours a week normally allocated to religious education. It would be scheduled as one 30-minute session and two 60 minute sessions, on separate days and at times convenient for the school. The programme would be mapped out in accordance with the Parramatta Diocesan School dates and the liturgical year. The content will cross referenced with the religious education units usually covered in Year Two. The distinctive pedagogical features of the Montessori/ Cavalletti approach will be built in to the method. These are outlined in summary form in the 2013 quasi experiment report. These will be refined through cycles of planning, implementing and reflecting throughout the year.

Data will be gathered through observation, as well as unstructured and semi-structured conversations with children, parents, teachers and the Parish Priest. Children's verbal, artistic and

Towards the development of a new methodology for implementing Catholic Primary Religious Education PhD Student: A. Irwin

written responses will be collected. Impressions and experiences will be gathered in field notes and collated at the end of the day, or as soon as possible.

Towards the end of the study, the teacher, students, the parents and the parish priest will be asked for evaluative feedback through a semi-structured interview.

Should permission be given by the parents/guardians, these tasks and some of the classroom teaching and learning will audio-recorded: enabling the research data to be analysed effectively. The audio recordings can be made available to parents or guardians on request. The audio recordings will be strictly used for the research study. All data will be securely stored and will be destroyed five years after the data has been gathered and analysed. Information collected during the interviews will be strictly confidential except in the instance of legal requirements such as: court subpoenas freedom of information requests or mandated reporting by some professionals. To protect the anonymity of participants in a project with a small sample size, a code will be ascribed to each of the participants to minimise the risk of identification.

Parents/guardians, students, classroom teacher, RE Coordinator and Parish Priest are asked to sign consent forms accepting participation. Copies of information sheets and consent forms are attached. Participants may withdraw from the project at any time and will not be subjected to prejudice.

It would be appreciated if you would complete the attached form, indicating consent or otherwise to your school's participation in this project.

The protocol adopted by the University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee for the protection of privacy will be adhered to and relevant sections of the Privacy Act are available at <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au>. If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it should be directed to the Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee, Research Office, The University of Notre Dame Australia, PO Box 1225 Fremantle WA 6959, phone (08) 9433 0943, [research@nd.edu.au](mailto:research@nd.edu.au). Data collected will be stored securely in the University's School of Education for five years. No identifying information will be used and the results from the study will be made freely available to all participants. Associate Professor Dr Gerard O'Shea of the School of Education is supervising the project. If you have any queries regarding the research, please contact me directly by phone 0412 498 0288 or email at [anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au](mailto:anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au) or Associate Professor Dr O'Shea by phone (02) 8204 4400 or by email at [gerard.loshea@nd.edu.au](mailto:gerard.loshea@nd.edu.au).

The Human Research Ethics Committee of the University of Notre Dame Australia has approved the study.

I thank you for your consideration and look forward to your response. I have enclosed a form for your completion, indicating this.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Anne-Marie Irwin

Tel: 0412 490 288

Email: [anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au](mailto:anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au)

Towards the development of a new methodology for implementing Catholic Primary Religious Education PhD Student: A. Irwin

Figure 26: First parent and caregivers information sheet

## ACTION RESEARCH: CHILD INFORMATION SHEET

Towards the development of a new methodology for implementing  
Catholic Primary Religious Education

January 21, 2015

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

Please find below a simplified explanation of the planned action research project. It covers the points that should be explained to each child participating in the study. Please explain the points verbally to your child. Should he/she be happy to take part in the project, the form found on the reverse of this page needs to be completed and returned to the school. Your assistance is much appreciated.

1. Miss Anne-Marie Irwin has prepared a religious education programme for a Year 2 class at Our Lady of the Rosary. She is the same person who visited the school when you were in Kindergarten. At that time she asked some kindergarten students to draw some pictures about Jesus and the Church and to talk about them. You may have been one of those children.
2. She is going to teach Religion to a Year Two class in 2015. In this way she will be able to see how effective the programme that she has developed is.
3. She will be teaching Religion to the Year Two Class throughout the whole of 2015. She would like to invite you to be a member of that class.
4. Your usual Class Teacher will be in the classroom when Miss Irwin teaches Religion. Sometimes she/he will help Miss Irwin.
5. At the beginning and end of the year all the children in the class will draw some pictures and explain them to her.
6. She will gather information to help her see how effective the programme is. This will include thinking about things you say, make, draw or write as part of the Religion lessons.
7. Some activities will be audio-recorded so that she can remember what has been done and think about it.
8. Anything she collects will only be written about without using your real name, so that your privacy is respected.
9. Even if you do accept being a member of this class, you can change your mind at any time in the year. If that happens you will take part in the other Year Two's Religion Lessons.
10. If you agree to being part of the Religion Class that she will take then we, as your parents/ guardians need to sign the form on the other side of this page. |

*Figure 27: Simplified information sheet, for parents and caregivers to use in explaining the study to children*

## ACTION RESEARCH PARENT/ GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Towards the development of a new methodology for  
implementing Catholic Primary Religious Education

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR PARENT OR GUARDIAN

I, (Parent/Guardian's name) \_\_\_\_\_ hereby consent to my child,  
(Child's name) \_\_\_\_\_ being a volunteer participant in the above project.

- I have read and understood the Information Sheet and any questions have been answered to my and my child's satisfaction.
- I understand that my child may participate in this study, realising that I, or my child, may withdraw at any time without prejudice.
- I understand that all information gathered by the researcher will be treated as strictly confidential, except in instances of legal requirements such as court subpoenas, freedom of information requests, or mandated reporting by some professionals.
- I understand that the protocol adopted by the University of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee for the protection of privacy will be adhered to and relevant sections of the *Privacy Act* are available at <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>
- I agree that any research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or my child's name and other identifying information is not disclosed.
- I understand that my child may be audio- taped.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S FULL NAME			
PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE:		DATE:	

RESEARCHER'S FULL NAME:	ANNE-MARIE IRWIN		
RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE:		DATE:	

*If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it should be directed to the Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee, Research Office, The University of Notre Dame Australia, PO Box 1225 Fremantle WA 6050, phone (08) 9433 0043, [research@nd.edu.au](mailto:research@nd.edu.au).*

Figure 28: First informed consent form for parents and caregivers

## TEACHER CONSENT FORM

Towards the development of a new methodology for implementing Catholic Primary Religious Education

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM FOR TEACHERS

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby agree to being a participant in the above research project.

- I have read and understood the Information Sheet about this project and any questions have been answered to my satisfaction.
- I understand that I may withdraw from participating in the project at any time without prejudice.
- I understand that all information gathered by the researcher will be treated as strictly confidential, except in instances of legal requirements such as court subpoenas, freedom of information requests, or mandated reporting by some professionals.
- I understand that the protocol adopted by the University Of Notre Dame Australia Human Research Ethics Committee for the protection of privacy will be adhered to and relevant sections of the *Privacy Act* are available at <http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/>
- I agree that any research data gathered for the study may be published provided my name or other identifying information is not disclosed.
- I understand that I may be audio- recorded.

CLASS TEACHER'S FULL NAME			
CLASS TEACHER'S SIGNATURE:		DATE:	

RESEARCHER'S FULL NAME:	ANNE-MARIE IRWIN		
RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE:		DATE:	

*If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it should be directed to the Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee, Research Office, The University of Notre Dame Australia, PO Box 1225 Fremantle WA 6950, phone (08) 9433 0943, [research@nd.edu.au](mailto:research@nd.edu.au), and Dr Gerard O'Shea, School of Education, University of Notre Dame, PO Box 944 Broadway, NSW 2007, phone: (02) 8204 4400, [Gerard.oshea@nd.edu.au](mailto:Gerard.oshea@nd.edu.au)*

Teacher Consent Form: Towards the development of a new methodology for implementing Catholic Primary Religious Education PhD Student: A. Irwin

Figure 29: Informed consent form for teachers

PRINCIPAL INFORMATION: FILMING UPDATE

Towards the development of a new methodology for implementing  
Catholic Primary Religious Education

Date:

Dear Allan,

As you are aware, the research project at Our Lady of the Rosary is proceeding and progressing well.

The data collection involves systematic observations which can be used for reflection, decision-making and the development of effective classroom strategies. The collection and analysis of data would be greatly assisted by the gathering of film footage of some activities.

The film footage will not be distributed, posted online, or published even for research purposes. It will only be used for data analysis. The film recordings will be stored in a secure place and destroyed five years after the data has been gathered and analysed.

Information Updates for Parents/ Guardian, children and teachers are attached.

A consent form requiring your signature is also attached.

I thank you for your on-going support.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Anne-Marie Irwin

Tel: 0412 490 288

Email: [anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au](mailto:anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au)

*Figure 30: Information sheet: Update for filming: Principal*

Towards the development of a new methodology for implementing  
Catholic Primary Religious Education

Date:

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you are aware, the research project that your child is participating in is proceeding and progressing well.

The data collection involves systematic observations which can be used for reflection, decision-making and the development of effective classroom strategies. The collection and analysis of data would be greatly assisted by the gathering of film footage of the Religious Education sessions.

Some complete religious education lessons will be filmed. This will include filming the children as the teacher presents information and the activities the children do throughout the lesson. These activities will consist of written and art responses to the content delivered by the teacher. For example the children will complete worksheets relating to topics covered in religious education units, draw and colour-in using pencils and water-based paint, cut and paste pictures, trace pictures, use sets of small wooden figures to retell bible stories that have been presented by the teacher, complete maps identifying places in Israel, place wooden blocks on a plan of the city of Jerusalem to identify the places relating to the life of Jesus and to place pictures and paragraphs on the correct spot on charts.

The film footage will not be distributed, posted online, or published, even for research purposes. It will only be used for data analysis. The film recordings will be stored in a secure place and destroyed five years after the data has been gathered and analysed.

If you do not consent to your child being filmed, or your child prefers not to be filmed, then the camera-operator will be explicitly instructed to restrict filming only to the children for whom permission has been received. The classroom activities will be arranged so as to facilitate this. Children for whom consent has not been given will be placed outside of film parameters. Film footage will be checked to ensure that these children are not on the footage. If they are, that part of the footage will be destroyed. Alternatively, parents may prefer to have the children not to be filmed remain with the other Year Two Class, whose Religious Education takes place at the same time in the Year Two classroom.

Additionally, permission for filming can be withdrawn at any time. In this case previous film footage will be promptly reviewed and any visual record of your child will be removed.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would explain this to your child. This means explaining to your child as outlined on the attached page.

A consent form is on the reverse of the Filming Update Information Form. It requires your signature and needs to be returned to the school.

I thank you for your on-going support.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Anne-Marie Irwin

Tel: 0412 490 288

Email: [anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au](mailto:anne-marie.irwin@nd.edu.au)

Figure 31 Information sheet: Update for filming: Parents and caregivers



**PARENT/ GUARDIAN FILMING CONSENT FORM**

Towards the development of a new methodology for implementing Catholic  
Primary Religious Education

**CHILD INFORMED VIDEO-FILMING CONSENT FORM**

My child (*child's name*) \_\_\_\_\_ consents to being  
filmed for data collection purposes.

He/she understands the Information update regarding video-recording and that he/she  
may be videoed. His/her questions have been answered satisfactorily.

He/she understands that some religious education lessons will be filmed and that it will  
involve:

- Filming the children as the teacher presents information.
- Filming children as they do their activities relating to the lessons. These activities  
will consist of written and art responses to the content delivered by the teacher. For  
example the children will complete worksheets relating to topics covered in  
religious education units, draw and colour-in using pencils and water-based paint,  
cut and paste pictures, trace pictures, use sets of small wooden figures to retell  
bible stories that have been presented by the teacher, complete maps identifying  
places in Israel, place wooden blocks on a plan of the city of Jerusalem to identify  
the places relating to the life of Jesus and to place pictures and paragraphs on the  
correct spot on charts.

He/she understands that he/she can choose to opt out of being video-recorded at any  
time film footage previously filmed and that any will be destroyed.

He/she understands how filming will be arranged so that he/she will not be filmed.

He/she understands that he/she will not be personally identified in any way, and that all  
personal information gathered by the researcher will be confidential. This means that film  
footage will not be distributed, posted online, or published even for research purposes. It  
will only be used for data analysis.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE:		DATE:	
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RESEARCHER'S FULL NAME:	ANNE-MARIE IRWIN		
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RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE:		DATE:	
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*If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it should  
be directed to the Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee, Research Office, The  
University of Notre Dame Australia, PO Box 1225 Fremantle WA 0050, phone (08) 9433 0943,  
[research@nd.edu.au](mailto:research@nd.edu.au).*

Figure 32 Second informed consent form for parents and caregivers

Towards the development of a new methodology for implementing  
Catholic Primary Religious Education

10/05/ 2017

Dear Parents and Guardians,

As you are aware, the research project that your child is participating in is proceeding and progressing well. This is the third year that I have been working with your children and the study has been very rewarding, with the students participating fully, and enjoying their learning in Religious Education.

There has been a great deal of interest in what has been happening, with requests for me to present some of the ideas and approaches to others either in presentations or in publications.

In order for me to do this, visuals, in terms of photographs and film footage would be helpful, since seeing the children at work brings the method life. It would facilitate bringing this approach to others, and benefit children beyond the school, reaching others nationally and internationally.

The names of the children would be changed, and film footage would not include the names of children being used.

This can only be offered if you, as parents or guardians, and your child are willing to permit this new step. It would be much appreciated if you would complete the attached consent form, indicating your preference. If you do not consent, photographs and film of your child will not be used.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would explain this to your child. This means explaining to your child as outlined on the attached page.

A consent form is on the reverse of the Filming Update Information Form. It requires your signature and needs to be returned to the school.

I thank you for your on-going support.

Yours sincerely,

Ms Anne-Marie Irwin

Tel: 0412 490 288

Email: [annemarie.irwin1@my.nd.edu.au](mailto:annemarie.irwin1@my.nd.edu.au)

*Figure 33: Third Information sheet for parents and caregivers*

**PARENT/ GUARDIAN FILMING CONSENT FORM**

Towards the development of a new methodology for implementing Catholic  
Primary Religious Education

**CHILD INFORMED PHOTOGRAPHS AND FILMING FOR  
PUBLICATION AND PRESENTATIONS CONSENT FORM**

My child (child's name) \_\_\_\_\_ consents to  
photographs and film footage being used in publications and presentations.

He/she understands the Information update regarding the possibility of photographs and  
film being used in publications and presentations. His/her questions have been answered  
satisfactorily.

He/she understands that he/she will not be personally identified in any way, and that all  
personal information gathered by the researcher will be confidential.

PARENT/GUARDIAN'S SIGNATURE:		DATE:	
------------------------------	--	-------	--

RESEARCHER'S FULL NAME:	ANNE-MARIE <del>EVAN</del>		
RESEARCHER'S SIGNATURE:		DATE:	

*If participants have any complaint regarding the manner in which a research project is conducted, it should  
be directed to the Executive Officer of the Human Research Ethics Committee, Research Office, The  
University of Notre Dame Australia, PO Box 1226 Fremantle WA 6950, phone (08) 9433 0943,  
[research@nd.edu.au](mailto:research@nd.edu.au).*

Figure 34: Third consent form for parents and caregivers

***Interview Schedule: Child***

*Interview questions may differ slightly from those outlined.*

Explain to child

- The purpose is to hear from child what they thought about the Religious Education lessons this term
- Everything they say will help make the method we used even better. All their comments, positive or negative, are important.
- I am audio-recording/ filming so that what is said can be accurately written down. Everything they say is valued, and it is not possible to write fast enough.

**Sample Questions**

Do you find that there is a big difference between what you think and talk about in these sessions and what is going on in other parts of your lives or what other people say or do?

Do some of the things we think and talk about help you in the way you behave and think when you are not here?

How do you spend you free time at home? What do you most like to do?

Do you pray? How do you pray? Have you changed the way you pray since coming here?

What do you think about the things we learn about?

What do you think about the fact that we don't get a lot of time to do computer work in these sessions?

Would it be a good idea to introduce more computer work?

What about the things I let you take home (videos)

What do you think of them?

What are the most important things in life?

What activities do you most like to do?

Are there things you really don't like?

**SOLO:** If a visitor to the room asked you to explain SOLO: what would you say?

Looking around the room, pick some things you would like to talk about.

**Teacher/ Students Discussion Tool: Talking about a Picture: Using SOLO**

What is happening in the picture we have here?

Tell what this picture is it about. [Uni-structural]

Tell me what is happening in the picture [Multi-structural]

Does it make you think about your own life? [Relational]

Is there anything about the picture that you wonder about? What do you think about the story it tells? [Extended Abstract]

Could you write a prayer that somehow relates to this picture? [Extended Abstract]

Could the topic in the picture make you change the way you act or live your life? [Extended Abstract]

***Interview Schedule: Parent or Guardian***

*Interview questions may differ from those outlined. Date, time and place will be arranged according to the interviewee's convenience.*

**Introduction:**

- Inform the interviewee that the purpose of the interview is to explore the interviewee's perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the method designed and implemented throughout 2015.
- Reassure the interviewee that all comments and opinions, positive or negative, are sincerely welcomed. They contribute to the evaluation and further refinement of the method.
- Clarify that if he/she would prefer not to respond to any question, he/she simply needs to indicate that and it will not be pursued.
- Clarify that his/her identity will never be revealed.
- Ask if they are agreeable to being audio-recorded so that what they say can be accurately reported.
- Start the recording device. Say "Interview with \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)"

**Sample Questions:** (Not all questions may be asked. Some may be worded differently)

1. Has your child spoken about Religion Lessons this year?
2. Has your child been happy in this year's Religious Education? Could you expand on that?
3. What has your child gained this year? e.g. Knowledge and understanding of faith matters, personal growth, ways of being with others, choices made...
4. What kinds of changes have you noticed as a consequence?
5. Has your child shown interest in praying or attending Church?
6. What is your understanding of religious education?
7. How would you like your Child to be taught in Spiritual matters?
8. Have you learned anything new relating to spiritual things from your child?
9. Has she/he got you thinking about things?
10. Were there aspects of the approach that you were not happy with?
11. Are there any changes you notice at home?
12. Would you like to be more involved in some way? (volunteer work, involvement through work sent home. helping, etc.)
13. How would you describe a child's life today as compared to your own?
14. Is there anything you would like to add?

## Teacher Interview Schedule

*Interview questions may differ from those outlined.*

Introduction:

- Inform the teacher that the purpose of the interview is to explore the interviewee's perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the method designed and implemented throughout 2015.
- Reassure the teacher that all comments and opinions, positive or negative, are sincerely welcomed. They contribute to the evaluation and further refinement of the method.
- Clarify that identity will never be revealed.
- Ask if they agreed to being audio-recorded so that what they say can be accurately reported.
- Start the recording device. Say "Interview with \_\_\_\_\_ (alias name) on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

### Sample Questions

1. How is this approach different to the one generally used?
2. Have you had from parents?
3. Have the children commented?
4. Have you shared your thoughts with others? How have you found yourself commenting and thinking about the study: to other teachers, at home even, to REC?
5. Have other teachers asked questions or given their impressions?
6. Has it got you thinking about the way to effectively teach RE?
7. What are your thoughts regarding the student involvement?
8. Could you pinpoint strong or weak points of the approach?
9. Would you have suggestions that you would recommend?
10. Do you think the experience will affect the way you would teach? Is this approach one that you would consider using in your own teaching?
11. Is the experience impacting in the school in any way?
12. What would be the 3 most positive aspects of the approach?
13. What would be the three greatest challenges for implementing a method like this?

**Principal Interview Schedule (End of Year)**

What is uppermost on your mind? It would be good to hear from your perspective whatever you would like to say.

How has this study impacted in the school?

Looking to the future how do you see it developing and contributing at the level of the School and perhaps the wider spectrum?

How do you think the study might play a part in collaborating more with parents?

What do you envisage would be the greatest challenges for implementing the program in this kind of school?

Is there anything you would like to add?



### **Focus Group: Children**

#### ***Focus group semi-structured questions for children.***

*Questions may differ from those outlined.*

Reminder introduction: Explain to children

- The purpose of the discussion is to hear from them what they thought about the Religious Education lessons this term
- Everything they say will help make the method we used even better. All their comments, positive or negative, are important.
- Everyone is welcome to say anything, and we need to take turns and listen to each other.
- After the discussion, the things they said will be written down and they will be able to read it or have it read to them. They will be able to change anything, add anything or ask for something to be removed.
- That we will audio-recorded/ film so that what they say can be accurately written down. Everything they say is valued, and it is not possible to write fast enough.
- Start the recording devices. Say “focus group discussion with participating children on \_\_\_\_\_ (date)

*Let them talk. Give scenarios. E.g. If you were a teacher, how would you explain... to your brother?*

#### *Sample questions*

Tell me what it was like for you being in the religious education classes this year.

If your little brother or sister asked you what kinds of things you have learned about this year, what would you tell him/ her?

Are these sessions different to other ways of learning? How are they different?

What is it like being in this class? How would you describe it?

Give me examples of some of the activities you liked most.

Tell me about some of the things you learned this year.

Has it got you thinking quietly inside you?

Do you think about some of the things at other times? When?

I'm wondering if there were some things you didn't like...

How important is it to learn about these things?

Do you ever talk to others about what happens, or what you learn in these classes?

Are there times when you are bored in these classes?

Do you have any suggestions to make, that could make these sessions even better?

**Teacher Focus Group (Term 4)**

What difference has it made to the way you would approach teaching Religion?

Has it got you thinking about the way to approach other areas of learning?

How is this approach different to the one the school uses for RE?

Are there advantages or disadvantages either way?

Looking back, what were your impressions and expectations of the study before the research began? Have those perceptions changed? How?

What about feedback from parents? Can you elaborate?

What about student comments? Tell us about this?

Have you shared your thoughts with others? How have you found yourself commenting and thinking about the study: to other teachers, at home even, to REC?

What about other staff? Can you elaborate on perceptions, impressions, comments, feedback, questions that may have been shared with you?

What are your thoughts regarding the student involvement?

What are the strong or weak points of the approach?

Other suggestions you'd like to make? Or questions you'd like to ask? Statements you'd like to make?

Religious Education Year 2 Quiz Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 1**

1. The 2 parts of the Bible are

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

2. The names of the four gospels are

M \_\_\_\_\_ M \_\_\_\_\_

L \_\_\_\_\_ J \_\_\_\_\_

3. The three persons of the Holy Trinity are

--	--	--

4. Who is Jesus?

--

5. Other names we use to speak about Jesus are:

--

6. Why was Jesus born?

--

Religious Education Year 2 Quiz Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 2**

1. On Easter Sunday, we celebrate:

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Jesus died and rose to new life in order to

\_\_\_\_\_

3. The Ascension is when

\_\_\_\_\_

4. The 'birthday' of the Church is

P\_\_\_\_\_

5. The first Sacrament we can receive is

\_\_\_\_\_

6. The name we give to God's life in us is G\_\_\_\_\_

7. Altogether there are \_\_\_\_\_ Sacraments.

8. The Sacraments give is a share in \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Education Year 2 Quiz Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 3**

1. The three Sacraments we can receive while in primary school are

--	--	--

2. Jesus was born in the town of \_\_\_\_\_

3. Jesus grew up in the town of \_\_\_\_\_

4. Each season of the church year has a special c\_\_\_\_\_

5. The colour of ordinary time in the Church's year is \_\_\_\_\_

6. The colour of Advent and Lent in the Church's year is \_\_\_\_\_

7. The colour used for Pentecost is \_\_\_\_\_

8. The day that begins the season of Lent is \_\_\_\_\_

Religious Education Year 2 Quiz Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Part 4**

1. What day of the week did Jesus die? \_\_\_\_\_

2. He rose again on \_\_\_\_\_

3. The season of \_\_\_\_\_ is when we prepare to celebrate the coming of Jesus.

4. Jesus was crucified in the city of \_\_\_\_\_

5. How many apostles did Jesus choose? \_\_\_\_\_

6. At the last supper Jesus gave us the gift of \_\_\_\_\_

7. We remember and celebrate what Jesus did at the Last Supper when we attend \_\_\_\_\_

8. The Angelus is a prayer that reminds us about when \_\_\_\_\_

9. Who is the Pope? He is a person who \_\_\_\_\_

10. The name of our Pope is \_\_\_\_\_

Appendix 7 Teacher observation charts

**Student Engagement Observation Form A: Presentation Session**

Student 1: \_\_\_\_\_ Day/date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Observing Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

		Very evident	Somewhat evident	Not evident
1	Paying attention (alert, tracking with eyes)			
2	Listening (as opposed to chatting, or sleeping)			
3	Asking questions			
4	Responding to questions			
5	Reacting appropriately (laughing, crying, shouting, etc.)			
6	Participating			
Comment				

Student 2: \_\_\_\_\_ Day/date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Presentation Topic: \_\_\_\_\_

		Very evident	Somewhat evident	Not evident
1	Paying attention (alert, tracking with eyes)			
2	Listening (as opposed to chatting, or sleeping)			
3	Asking questions			
4	Responding to questions			
5	Reacting appropriately (laughing, crying, shouting, etc.)			
6	Participating			
Comment				

## Student Engagement Observation Form B: Choice Activities

Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Day/date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Observing Teacher: \_\_\_\_\_

<p>Evidence of ‘flow’ Indicators of feelings of joy and satisfaction. Loosing track of time. Acutely focused, physically, mentally, and emotionally absorbed in a task. (<u>Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi</u>)</p>		
Very evident	Somewhat evident	Not evident
<p>Comment</p>		

### Choice Activities

Activity	Activity	Activity
Chose activity quickly: Y N	Chose activity quickly: Y N	Chose activity quickly: Y N
Clear goal: Y N	Clear goal: Y N	Clear goal: Y N
Adequate time spent: Y N	Adequate time spent: Y N	Adequate time spent: Y N
Self-recorded contract: Y N	Self-recorded contract: Y N	Self-recorded contract: Y N
Care returning things: Y N	Care returning things: Y N	Care returning things: Y N
Satisfied with work: Y N	Satisfied with work: Y N	Satisfied with work: Y N
With other students: Y N	With other student: Y N	With other student: Y N
<p>Comments</p>		



Appendix 8 Codebooks (a) August 2016 (b) December, 2016 and (c) February 2017

Coding Nodes at August, 2016: The data was analysed closely and coded with a generous allocation to various nodes, created and named as data demanded.

Name	Description	Sources	References
coding choices	The types of coding that I will probably use	1	1
Do I need these	A collection of data that may not be relevant but I want to remember that I did write about it. Go through later.	2	4
emails		0	0
future plans		20	32
Good quotes	Particularly powerful quotes that can be used in the final narrative	6	9
Impact on family		2	2
Impact on Learning		0	0
<b>01 Materials</b>		1	3
concrete material		12	19
IT	includes take home DVDs	6	8
material needed for personal response		17	23
use of Scripture		5	9
working space	problems with room size	16	25
<b>02 Pedagogical Approach</b>		2	3
adaptation of Cavalletti		7	12
atmosphere		6	7
challenges		16	23
choice		22	35
Choice Charts	the choice chart idea: as way of children being accountable. This is ideal in theory but doesn't happen so easily.	5	5
I Wonder and questions		2	2
lesson structure		2	2
Montessori Cavalletti		5	5
music and art	incorporating these into the plans	7	8
personalised learning	aspects that involve reaching the person of the child. Being real about where that child is.	12	24
rich learning environment		7	14

Name	Description	Sources	References
self -regulated learning		10	16
SOLO		7	8
Virtues	explicit teaching of virtues	5	8
what makes method distinct	What does make this approach different to what is currently happening?	14	25
<b>03 Teacher RE Knowledge and Expertise</b>		8	20
on teacher approach		8	23
impact on school		4	14
involved teachers		1	1
other teachers		0	0
Literature		2	2
possible new contributions		5	8
school parish sacraments		1	1
Student Learning	How effectively can this method develop knowledge and understanding of Catholic Doctrine/ teaching/ practice ...	0	0
Application and Practice	That the method can facilitate application of faith to life	17	31
Attitudes and Belief	That the method can foster attitudes and free acceptance	10	21
deep thinking		11	22
development of understanding	track the development of understanding through the year: with examples	5	11
Knowledge and Understanding	That this method can transmit knowledge and bring about deep learning through cyclic approach, personal approach, choice...	20	50
making connections		9	19
presentation of content		1	1
uncovering how children think and learn		7	9
<b>Systemic Accountability</b>		1	1
Assessment and Feedback	That the Approach can provide acceptable assessment and feedback, using the current outcomes based paradigm	14	18
Compliance Issues	That the approach can demonstrate CEO compliance issues (Scope and Sequence)	7	8
SOS Content and Expectations	That the approach can match current SOS content and expectations	8	9
SOS evaluation	My thoughts about the SOS curriculum materials	7	11
Termly cycles	Comments and thoughts about each term	1	1

Name	Description	Sources	References
Term 1		2	8
Term 2		2	2
Term 3		0	0
Term 4		4	4
<b>The Child Today</b>	Adapting the approach to take into account the problems and advantages for using in the twenty-first century child. Includes behaviour and self-control in a self-regulated environment; literacy issues; positive issues such as the fact that children are more verbal, related differently to adults,	0	0
<b>01 Behaviour and self-control</b>	issues can include behaviour, self-motivation, perseverance at a task. This approach involves students making choices and knowing where they are going	17	21
<b>02 Literacy Skills</b>		8	15
Positive elements in children and schools today		5	8
independence		2	2
ready to speak their mind		1	1
verbal skills		3	4
04 School environment	Impact of the actual school: the structure of classroom spaces, the accepted approaches for discipline that are contrary to the approach	2	2
discipline today		3	3
learning today	thoughts and comments about the way they children learn, particularly re today as compared to the past.	8	16
05 Focus	The child's inner awareness, focus and attention	9	16
06 Family issues	the variety of family issues: background, religious, commitment, other faiths	6	8
agnostic		1	1
attitude to RE		3	5
behaviour home		2	5
broken families		4	6
catholic		3	9
GLTBI		1	1
involving parents		1	1
Non-Catholic Christian		2	6
Non-Christian		2	4

Name	Description	Sources	References
NP Catholics		1	4
prayer at home		4	4
Sudanese		3	8
why a catholic school		3	3
engagement	evidence that the child is engaged with the learning, enthusiastic, motivated, not apathetic	18	52
in choice time		6	6
in the zone		0	0
prayer		2	2
questions and discussion		2	3
reading		4	4
response to I wonder		2	3
fun focus	short term commitment, the easy way, entertainment education	3	3
impact of society		3	5
Inner child	What is going on inside the child? How can I detect it effectively, acknowledge depths and then use that to help the child grow even deeper?	7	11
deep reflections	evidence of deep thoughts going on	4	13
need for quiet		6	6
where their thinking is at		9	12
The SALT Approach applied	This is about the elements of the method and any thoughts, adaptations and developments of it.	0	0
Choice time		0	0
end of session		0	0
ordered environment		1	1
Presentation		2	3
The Liturgical Cycle		2	5
types of students		4	4
why this school?		2	3

Coding Nodes, December, 2016: The data is gradually reorganised, grouping it according to the envisaged findings chapters (which were not identical to those that eventually emerged)

Name	Description	Sources	References
I may want to use these quotes		9	14
Good quotes	Particularly powerful quotes that can be used in the final narrative	13	20
building the prototype		2	2
<b>Chapter 07-Student Learning-knowledge-understanding-belief-practice</b>	<b>Data to support findings for finding re learning that actually took place. Has Qualitative and Quantitative sub-nodes</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>
01 pre-iteration		0	0
02 Qual Data-Knowledge-Understanding	Probably organised in iterations. This is about learning and understanding content of religious education.	0	0
first iteration		0	0
second iteration		0	0
third iteration		0	0
03 Qual Data- Application-Practise	This is about students responding to what they learn. expressing belief and commitment	1	1
first iteration		0	0
second iteration		0	0
third iteration		0	0
04 Case studies	A selection of about 6 students' reflections a range of responses, and charting their development	0	0
<b>Chapter 08-Adapting to factors affecting the child of today</b>	<b>This chapter is about three areas affecting self-regulated learning</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
01 Behaviour-self control		1	1
first iteration		24	37
second iteration		16	36
third iteration		12	35
02- Literacy		0	0
first iteration		11	15
second iteration		3	3
third iteration		4	7
03- positive factors		0	0
first iteration		14	22
second iteration		4	5
third iteration		1	2

Name	Description	Sources	References
The Child Today	Adapting the approach to take into account the problems and advantages for using in the twenty-first century child. Includes behaviour and self-control in a self-regulated environment; literacy issues; positive issues such as the fact that children are more verbal, related differently to adults,	0	0
01 Behaviour and self-control	issues can include behaviour, self-motivation, perseverance at a task. This approach involves students making choices and knowing where they are going	35	51
02 Literacy Skills		16	24
03 Positive elements in children and schools today		6	10
Children are children no matter when or where	these children are the same as children of the past	11	15
independence		9	13
ready to speak their mind		13	17
verbal skills		14	18
Will get in and do things		3	4
04 School environment	Impact of the actual school: the structure of classroom spaces, the accepted approaches for discipline that are contrary to the approach	2	2
discipline today		9	10
learning today	thoughts and comments about the way they children learn, particularly re today as compared to the past.	10	19
05 Focus	The child's inner awareness, focus and attention	15	24
06 Family issues	the variety of family issues: background, religious, commitment, other faiths	8	12
agnostic		1	1
attitude to RE		6	8
behaviour home		2	5
Fragile families		8	11
catholic		7	13
GLTBI		1	1
involving parents		2	2
Non-Catholic-Christian		3	7
Non-Christian		2	4
NP Catholics		2	5
prayer at home		4	4

Name	Description	Sources	References
Sudanese		6	11
why a catholic school		3	3
engagement	evidence that the child is engaged with the learning, enthusiastic, motivated, not apathetic	18	52
evidence of interest	From Day 1, evidence of interest and motivation	21	40
in choice time		16	19
in the zone		10	13
prayer		7	8
questions and discussion		14	20
reading		5	5
response to I wonder		7	8
fun focus	short term commitment, the easy way, entertainment education	7	8
impact of society		3	6
Inner child	What is going on inside the child? How can I detect it effectively, acknowledge depths and then use that to help the child grow even deeper?	7	11
deep reflections	evidence of deep thoughts going on	15	28
need for quiet		9	10
where their thinking is at		20	27
<b>Chapter 09- Equipping teachers</b>	<b>three areas: materials, pedagogy, expertise</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
01-equipping and maintaining space	probably need to have sub nodes for iterations	1	1
01-theme a-materials prep		3	3
first iteration		6	7
second iteration		2	3
third iteration		0	0
02-theme b-environment prep		7	11
first iteration		7	12
second iteration		6	9
third iteration		1	1
03-theme c- range of materials		5	7
first iteration		5	8
second iteration		4	4
third iteration		2	3
first iteration		4	5
second iteration		3	7

Name	Description	Sources	References
Third iteration		1	5
02-pedagogy	Identify the core challenging pedagogies.	0	0
01- theme a-permit pondering		0	0
First and second iterations		0	0
01 allow questions contributions judiciously		4	12
01-pondering		1	1
02 deep and diverse participation in discussion encouraged		2	2
03 stab v purposeful		1	2
04 model pondering		1	1
05 ask big questions		3	6
05 Presentation		13	17
06 I wonder almost all 1-2 iterations		5	5
07 discussions		6	6
prayer		2	2
when presentation, discussion and I wonder all get rolled into one		1	1
principal comments		2	3
questions children third iteration		2	2
third iteration		7	12
vocabulary issues		9	21
02 theme b- respect person		0	0
first and second iteration		6	10
01 respect in daily interactions		4	11
04 value what child values		2	3
personal touch		6	11
share honestly with them		2	2
teacher ways to show respect		3	3
understanding children		3	4
third iteration		5	8
virtue language		5	5
03 theme c- freedom choice		0	0
first and second iteration		8	23
01 boundaries grad release		5	8
02 re-visit or continue		1	1



Name	Description	Sources	References
03 demonstrate skills facilitate choice		4	5
04 Ready to let go		4	5
accountability v time to think		3	5
equipping for choice		2	2
signs of contentment		3	4
teacher's role and how to establish it		4	8
third iteration		6	12
third iteration various		1	12
03 Teacher expertise	This is about faith knowledge and understanding	0	0
discussion with REC and others re expertise		2	2
first iteration		20	29
second iteration		9	15
third iteration		8	18
Chapter 10-Systemic Accountability		0	0
01 SOS content and expectations		0	0
01 pre-iteration		1	1
first iteration		2	2
second iteration		2	2
third iteration		10	17
02 Assessment	This is about providing acceptable assessment and feedback, using an outcomes-based paradigm	0	0
first iteration		2	4
second iteration		3	5
third iteration		7	11
03 Reporting	This is about demonstrating scope and sequence compliance	0	0
01 pre-iteration		0	0
first iteration		0	0
second iteration		2	2
third iteration		2	2
Chapter 11 final recommendations		3	4
check where these fit		1	1

Name	Description	Sources	References
Do I need these	A collection of data that may not be relevant but I want to remember that I did write about it. Go through later.	2	4
coding choices	The types of coding that I will probably use	1	1
emails		0	0
Film clips	good clips	2	2
future plans		21	34
Impact on family		2	2
Impact on Learning		0	0
01 Materials		2	4
concrete material		24	37
IT	includes take home DVDs	8	10
material needed for personal response		28	44
use of Scripture		13	19
working space	problems with room size	25	42
02 Pedagogical Approach		2	3
adaptation of Cavalletti		21	32
atmosphere		22	27
challenges		31	48
choice		35	51
Choice charts	children being accountable and following Choice Charts. This is ideal in theory but doesn't happen so easily.	10	11
I Wonder and questions		11	14
lesson structure		5	7
Montessori and Cavalletti		10	10
music and art	incorporating these into the plans	9	10
Approach-delivery of rich content	giving a lot of information, not dumbing down, being explicit, not labouring with questions if they clearly don't know	15	26
personalised learning	aspects that involve reaching the person of the child. Being real about where that child is.	25	43
Repetition and revisiting	Finding ways to make sure they revisit things, through recaps, changes in the room, which keeps stimulating connections and learning	3	5
rich learning environment		17	27
self -regulated learning		19	28
SOLO		13	14

Name	Description	Sources	References
Teacher letting go		2	2
Virtues	explicit teaching of virtues	11	14
what makes method distinct	What does make this approach different to what is currently happening?	21	35
03 Teacher RE Knowledge and Expertise		14	27
on teachers' approach		18	39
impact on school		4	14
involved teachers		4	5
other teachers		0	0
Literature		2	3
possible new contributions		15	22
Quantitative data		3	3
school parish sacraments		1	1
Student Learning	How effectively can this method develop knowledge and understanding of Catholic Doctrine/ teaching/ practice ...	0	0
Application and Practice	That the method can facilitate application of faith to life	21	35
Attitudes and Belief	That the method can foster attitudes and free acceptance	23	37
deep thinking		27	43
development of understanding	track the development of understanding through the year: with examples	23	38
Knowledge and Understanding	That this method can transmit knowledge and bring about deep learning through cyclic approach, personal approach, choice...	37	75
making connections		29	49
outside of class time	Mainly lunch time	2	2
presentation of content		10	11
uncovering how children think and learn		24	32
Systemic Accountability		0	0
Assessment and Feedback	That the Approach can provide acceptable assessment and feedback, using the current outcomes based paradigm	23	33
Compliance Issues	That the approach can demonstrate CEO compliance issues (Scope and Sequence)	7	8
SOS Content and Expectations	That the approach can match current SOS content and expectations	8	9
SOS evaluation	My thoughts about the SOs and Sydney curriculum materials	7	11

Name	Description	Sources	References
Termly cycles	Comments and thoughts about each term	1	1
Term 1		3	11
Term 2		10	19
Term 3		8	17
Term 4		6	7
The SALT Approach applied	This is about the elements of the method and any thoughts, adaptations and developments of it.	0	0
choice time		11	15
end of session		3	3
ordered environment		3	3
Presentation		9	12
Socratic discussion		1	1
The Liturgical Cycle		8	13
Tracking my expectations and adaptations	Starting Day 1. My high expectations, throughout the year, changing realisations and reality checks	10	13
types of students		8	9
why this school		4	5

Coding Nodes: February 2017: The last coding arrangement. This was still not perfect, but familiarity with the data and NVivo at this stage enabled the researcher to work with the data and organise the findings structure. The data is organised according to the three lenses.

Name	Description	Sources	References
<b>01-chapter 1 thoughts</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>01-Lens 1-Adapting to factors affecting the child of today</b>	<b>Element 1: Behaviour. Element 2: Literacy. Element 3: Spiritual Nature of Child</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
01 Behaviour-self control		1	1
first iteration		24	37
second iteration		16	36
third iteration		12	35
02- Literacy		0	0
first iteration		11	15
second iteration		3	3
third iteration		4	7
03- Spiritual		0	0
first iteration		14	22
second iteration		4	5
third iteration		1	2
literacy sample		1	1
The Child Today	Adapting the approach to take into account the problems and advantages for using in the twenty-first century child. Includes behaviour and self-control in a self-regulated environment; literacy issues; positive issues such as the fact that children are more verbal, related differently to adults, spiritual nature of children	0	0
01 Behaviour and self-control	issues can include behaviour, self-motivation, perseverance at a task. This approach involves students making choices and knowing where they are going	35	51
02 Literacy Skills		16	24
03 Positive elements in children and schools today		6	10
Children are children no matter when or where	these children are the same as children of the past	11	15
independence		9	13
ready to speak their mind		13	17
verbal skills		14	18

Name	Description	Sources	References
Will get in and do things		3	4
04 School environment	Impact of the actual school: the structure of classroom spaces, the accepted approaches for discipline that are contrary to the approach	2	2
discipline today		9	10
learning today	thoughts and comments about the way they children learn, particularly in re today as compared to the past.	10	19
05 Focus	The child's inner awareness, focus and attention	15	24
06 Family issues	the variety of family issues: background, religious, commitment, other faiths	8	12
agnostic		1	1
attitude to RE		6	8
behaviour home		2	5
Fragile families		8	11
catholic		7	13
GLTBI		1	1
involving parents		2	2
Non-Catholic Christian		3	7
Non-Christian		2	4
NP Catholics		2	5
prayer at home		4	4
Sudanese		6	11
why a catholic school		3	3
engagement	evidence that the child is engaged with the learning, enthusiastic, motivated, not apathetic	18	52
evidence of interest	From Day 1, evidence of interest and motivation	21	40
in choice time		16	19
in the zone		10	13
prayer		7	8
questions and discussion		14	20
reading		5	5
response to I wonder		7	8
fun focus	short term commitment, the easy way, entertainment education	7	8
impact of society		3	6
Spiritual Inner child	What is going on inside the child? How can I detect it effectively, acknowledge	7	11

Name	Description	Sources	References
	depths and then use that to help the child grow even deeper?		
deep reflections	evidence of deep thoughts going on	15	28
need for quiet		9	10
where their thinking is at		20	27
<b>02-Lens 2-Equipping schools and teachers</b>	<b>Three elements: materials, pedagogy, expertise</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
01-equipping and maintaining space	probably need to have sub nodes for iterations	1	1
01-theme a-materials prep		3	3
first iteration		6	7
second iteration		2	3
third iteration		0	0
02-theme b-environment prep		7	11
first iteration		7	12
second iteration		6	9
third iteration		1	1
03-theme c- range of materials		5	7
first iteration		5	8
second iteration		4	4
third iteration		2	3
first iteration		4	5
second iteration		3	7
Third iteration		1	5
02-Lens 2-Equip School-Teachers	Element 1: Materials. Element 2: Pedagogy. Element 3: Expertise	0	0
01 Materials		2	4
concrete material		24	37
IT	includes take home DVDs and more	8	10
material needed for personal response		28	44
use of Scripture		13	19
working space	problems with room size	25	42
02 Pedagogical Approach		2	3
adaptation of Cavalletti		21	32
atmosphere		22	27
challenges		31	48
choice		35	51

Name	Description	Sources	References
Choice Charts	the choice chart idea: children being accountable. This is ideal in theory but doesn't happen so easily.	10	11
I Wonder and questions		11	14
lesson structure		5	7
Montessori_Cavalletti		10	10
music and art	incorporating these into the plans	9	10
My approach-delivery of rich content	giving a lot of information, not dumbing down, being explicit, not labouring with questions if they clearly don't know	15	26
personalised learning	aspects that involve reaching the person of the child. Being real about where that child is.	25	43
Repetition and revisiting	Finding ways to make sure they revisit things, through recaps, changes in the room, which keeps stimulating connections and learning	3	5
rich learning environment		17	27
self-regulated learning		19	28
SOLO		13	14
Teacher letting go		2	2
Virtues	explicit teaching of virtues	11	14
what makes method distinct	What does make this approach different to what is currently happening?	21	35
03 Teacher RE Knowledge and Expertise		14	27
on teacher approach		18	39
02-pedagogy	Identify the core challenging pedagogies.	0	0
01- theme a-permit pondering		0	0
First and second iterations		0	0
01 allow questions contributions judiciously		4	12
01-pondering		1	1
02 deep and diverse participation in discussion encouraged		2	2
03 stab v purposeful		1	2
04 model pondering		1	1
05 ask big questions		3	6
05 Presentation		13	17
06 I wonder almost all 1-2 iterations		5	5
07 discussions		6	6



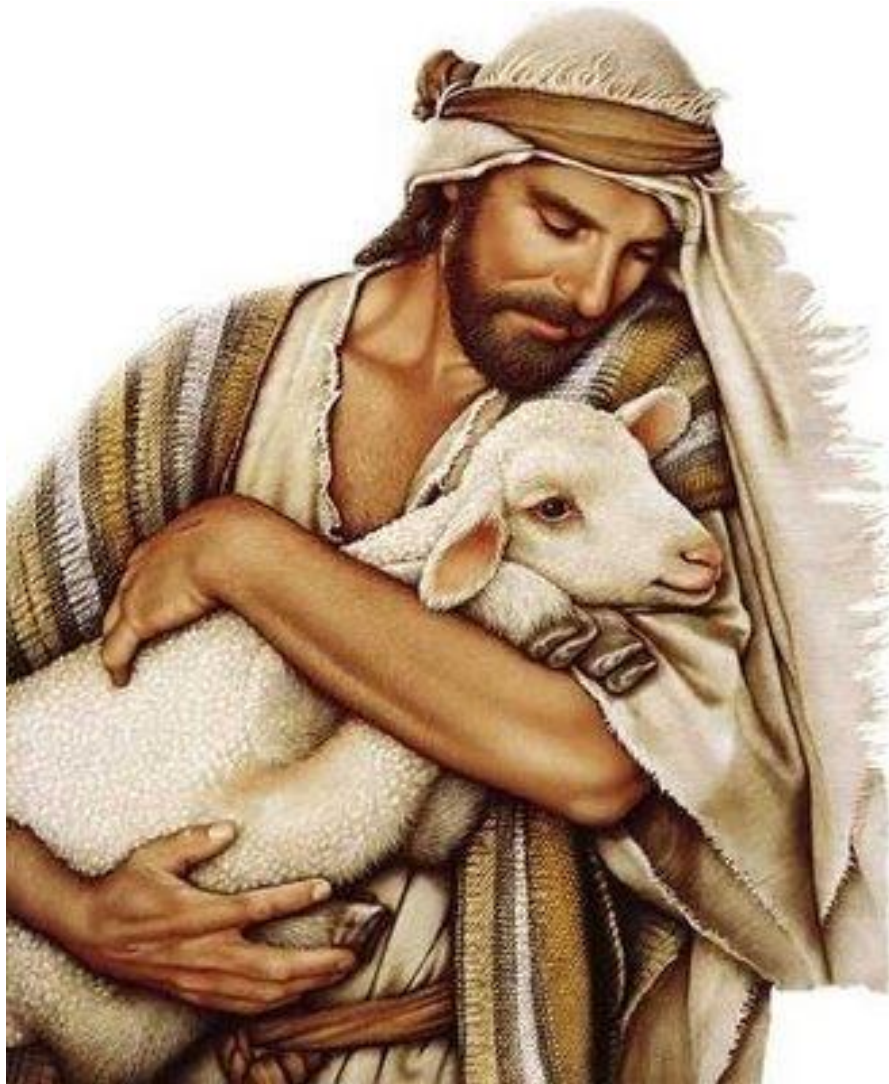
Name	Description	Sources	References
prayer		2	2
when presentation, discussion and I wonder all get rolled into one		1	1
principal comments		2	3
questions children third iteration		2	2
third iteration		7	12
vocabulary issues		9	21
02 theme b- respect person		0	0
<b>first and second iteration</b>		6	10
01 respect in daily interactions		4	11
04 value what child values		2	3
personal touch		6	11
share honestly with them		2	2
teacher ways to show respect		3	3
understanding children		3	4
third iteration		5	8
virtue language		5	5
03 theme c- freedom choice		0	0
<b>first and second iteration</b>		8	23
01 boundaries grad release		5	8
02 re-visit or continue		1	1
03 demonstrate skills facilitate choice		4	5
04 Ready to let go		4	5
accountability v with time to think		3	5
equipping for choice		2	2
signs of contentment		3	4
teacher's role and how to establish it		4	8
<b>third iteration</b>		6	12
<b>third iteration various</b>		1	12
03 Teacher expertise	This is about faith knowledge and understanding	0	0
discussion with REC and others re expertise		2	2
first iteration		20	29
second iteration		9	15

Name	Description	Sources	References
third iteration		8	18
<b>03-Lens 3-Systemic Accountability</b>	<b>Single element: Systemic Accountability Themes: 1. Assessment. 2. Reporting.3. Matching requirements</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Assessment and Feedback	That the Approach can provide acceptable assessment and feedback, using the current outcomes based paradigm	23	33
Chapter 10-Systemic Accountability		0	0
01 SOS content and expectations		0	0
01 pre-iteration		1	1
first iteration		2	2
second iteration		2	2
third iteration		10	17
02 Assessment	This is about providing acceptable assessment and feedback, using an outcomes-based paradigm	0	0
first iteration		2	4
second iteration		3	5
third iteration		7	11
03 Reporting	This is about demonstrating scope and sequence compliance	0	0
01 pre-iteration		0	0
first iteration		0	0
second iteration		2	2
third iteration		2	2
Compliance Issues	That the approach can demonstrate CEO compliance issues (Scope and Sequence)	7	8
SOS Content and Expectations	That the approach can match current SOS content and expectations	8	9
SOS evaluation	My thoughts about the SOs and Sydney curriculum materials	7	11
04-Implications-conclusons-recommendations		3	4
building the prototype		2	2
future plans		21	34
possible new contributions		15	22
09-future research--post PhD	More of a Quantitative study: knowledge, understanding, practise: track actual progress	2	2
01 pre-iteration		0	0

Name	Description	Sources	References
01 Quantitative Results	Pre-and Post-assessments compared (1st and 3rd Iterations, Term 1 and Term 4)	0	0
02 Qual Data-Knowledge-Understanding	Probably organised in iterations. This is about learning and understanding content of religious education.	0	0
first iteration		0	0
second iteration		0	0
third iteration		0	0
03 Qual Data- Application-Practise	This is about students responding to what they learn. expressing belief and commitment	1	1
first iteration		0	0
second iteration		0	0
third iteration		0	0
04 Case studies	A selection of about 6 students' reflection a range of responses, and charting their development	0	0
Quantitative data		3	3
check where these fit		1	1
Do I need these	A collection of data that may not be relevant but I want to remember that I did write about it. Go through later.	2	4
Coding thoughts	Saldana on coding	1	1
Impact on family		2	2
impact on school		4	14
involved teachers		4	5
other teachers		0	0
Literature review thoughts		2	3
Quotes to use		9	14
Good quotes	Particularly powerful quotes that can be used in the final narrative	13	20
school parish sacraments		1	1
Student Learning	How effectively can this method develop knowledge and understanding of Catholic Doctrine/ teaching/ practice ...	0	0
Application and Practice	That the method can facilitate application of faith to life	21	35
Attitudes and Belief	That the method can foster attitudes and free acceptance	23	37
deep thinking		27	43
development of understanding	track the development of understanding through the year: with examples	23	38

Name	Description	Sources	References
Knowledge and Understanding	That this method can transmit knowledge and bring about deep learning through cyclic approach, personal approach, choice...	37	75
making connections		29	49
outside of class time	Mainly lunch time	2	2
presentation of content		10	11
uncovering how children think and learn		24	32
Termly cycles	Comments and thoughts about each term	1	1
Term 1		3	11
Term 2		10	19
Term 3		8	17
Term 4		6	7
The SALT Approach applied	This is about the elements of the method and any thoughts, adaptations and developments of it.	0	0
choice time		11	15
end of session		3	3
ordered environment		3	3
Presentation		9	12
Socratic discussion		1	1
The Liturgical Cycle		8	13
Tracking my expectations and adaptations	Starting Day 1. My high expectations, throughout the year, changing realisations and reality checks	10	13
types of students		8	9
why this school		4	5

## Setting up the RE Classroom



# A Suggested Weekly Time Table

## Term 1

- 30 Minutes per day.
- Prayer

## Week 1

### Monday

#### Set Up Prayer Space

*Each of these items should be kept somewhere else, so that they can be brought “in procession” to the prayer table, and placed there solemnly.*

*Give children something to bring. Preferable, have the children walk together to the place of the prayer table.*

- Small, low table.
- Cloth according to the liturgical season (or changeable napkin in liturgical colours)
- Crucifix
- Statue/ Image of Our Lady
- Stand for displaying seasonal images/ hymn cards
- CD player
- Bible
- Candle (matches should not be kept at the prayer table)
- Candle Snuffer
- Prayer Cards

### Tuesday

#### Set up supply shelf

- Sets of coloured pencils
- Textas
- Large marking pens
- Pencils
- Erasers
- Sharpeners
- Variety of paper sheets and card
- Glue
- Scissors
- Viny mats (for protecting desk tops)
- Clip boards

### Wednesday

#### Set Up Practical Life Stations

- Dusting cloths and brushes

- Dustpan and brush
- Cleaning fluid in spray bottle (e.g. Orange oil)
- Cleaning cloths
- Flower arranging equipment (vases etc)
- Leaf washing sponges
- Plant watering vessels
- Wax scraping equipment
- Polishing equipment – polishing oil and cloths

### **Thursday**

#### **Set Up Art Responses Stations**

- Drawing – Small pieces of paper, rubbers, pencils, sharpeners
- Painting – Water Colours
- Tracing – Line drawings and tracing paper
- Book Making – Two-hole punch, ribbon.
- Collage – Glue & Paper
- Cutting – Have pictures or cards that need cutting up for everybody
- Playdough/ Modelling clay
- Reading material – including the Bible, saints lives and other religious books
- Quiet prayer in the prayer corner

### **Friday**

- *Practise using each of the above appropriately.*

### **For the Rest of Term 1**

- Present a new material every second day (this will take about 15 minutes). On the other days, continue practising how to use the different areas and allow them time to use and respond to the materials already presented.
- *After the material has been presented, make it available to be used – designate a place for it; it will be available for the rest of the year.*
- After each presentation, suggest responses that the children might like to choose for this particular work. (One of the responses can be to use the material)
- If all goes to plan, by the end of the term, the children will have experienced many presentations, and will be desperate to begin making their own choices about what they want to use.
- During this time, the season of Lent will proceed. You should be aware of presenting materials that allow the children to begin focusing on the Paschal Mystery.

- In preparation for Lent, you should have at least one lesson where you talk about “Ashes” indicating efforts and sacrifices they will need to make to come closer to God.

(If they are old enough, you can begin talking about the four traditional practices that people try to undertake during Lent: Prayer, Fasting and Abstinence, Almsgiving and Self-denial.)

- Often, they will be attending Mass on Ash Wednesday – prepare them for this beforehand.
- Good activity for Ash Wednesday include:
  - Solemnly changing the cloth on the prayer table to purple.
  - “Burying the Alleluia” i.e. Make a large card with the word “Alleluia”. Tell the children that this special word of celebration will not be heard for the whole of Lent.
  - Planting seeds. By Easter, the seeds you have planted should have become plants. (Plant new seeds each week so that they will be able to see the progression – this is a good preparation for the Resurrection: the see is transformed into a new and better form of life.)

### **Term 2, 3 and 4**

- On Mondays, make a new presentation in the same way that you have done for the first term.
- For the rest of the week, combine the time allocated to Religious Education into one-hour blocks instead of 30-minute blocks.
  - During these times, the children should be left free to work with any material that has already been presented. They should be required to complete at least two and no more than four activities during this time.
  - You can begin the session by drawing attention to some of the materials that they may not have seen for a while.
  - They should be free either to work with concrete materials or with responses.
  - As they are working, you should keep a check on what they are working on. In the long term, you need to ensure that they work through all of the required materials that you have for them.



- In organising the one-hour sessions, children should begin with these guidelines:
  - 15 minutes of using the materials
  - 15 minutes of quiet reading/ prayer
  - 15 minutes of artistic response
  - 15 minutes of practical life activities or further investigation using computer or other material on hand.

## Processes for A Montessori Approach

### Prep Class

- *Movement around the class.*

Demonstrate to the children yourself how you want them to move. Don't speak more than you absolutely have to – your movement itself will do the teaching. Be aware that you are using two languages in this kind of instruction – gestures and words. The gestures are more effective. Too many words will blunt the effect.

You will need to move more slowly than a normal walking pace. These children learn by imitation. Once you have shown them, ask one child to show you how to do the same. Warmly congratulate them when they succeed, then move on to some other children.

When you are satisfied that they know what to do, invite the children to move around the room at the same time, challenging them to go slowly enough not to bump into each other or anything else in the room. Let them practise a little and then tell them how well they have done.

Return to this activity often during the first few weeks. Safe movement is indispensable for an independently functioning classroom.

In order to maintain the standards that you set in the first week, you must insist on them (gently) every time. If the standard noticeable slips, you need to return to “practice sessions”. Sometimes you may even need to begin these reminder sessions close to the time they are due to go to play or out to lunch. This will make them keen to achieve it well, and it will encourage them not to let the standard slip.

#### ***Work Stations***

Eventually, you will be setting up “work stations” in the classroom, and you will already know where these will be located. Sometimes it is a good idea to practise having children collecting something you have left in the work station and taking it quietly to their table/desk.

Part of practising how to use work stations is the skill of taking turns. Demonstrate this so that they know how to step back and allow someone else to go before them... This is by no means a natural skill.

### ***Organisation of materials – personal and shared***

Children will have arrived at school with a set of materials which need to be organised. They are not generally capable of doing this kind of organisation themselves... you need to show them. The same principle applies here as applies to movement – demonstrate with the smallest number of words possible, and avoid moving and speaking at the same time. You will give them two languages to process instead of one.

Allow them to keep only the materials that they actually need, and put the rest away. Give it back to them as they need it.

You are also advised to set up a common store of materials in association that the children will use. These will be of three types:

1. Art response materials
2. Practical life materials
3. Preliminary developmental materials

Each one of these will need to be demonstrated in detail before the children are allowed to use them. (Refer to the files you have been given if you want a process to follow.)

If you notice that these materials are not being used correctly, calmly tell the child that he/she seem to have forgotten how to use the material properly, and they will not be allowed to use them for the time being. They will need to be shown again (through gestures rather than words if possible). Once they demonstrate that they can do it independently, they will be allowed to use them again.

### ***Levels of noise***

The most effective way of communicating your expectations about noise is to speak very quietly yourself. (This will also protect your own voice.) You will generally be able to make yourself heard, even when speaking very softly, if you articulate each word in a slow deliberate manner – that is, pronounce every consonant, and leave a short space of time between every word.

Allow the children to practise speaking quietly, and then return to this practice often during the first couple of weeks. If the noise levels rise, take them back to structured practice until you get the behaviour you want. \

### ***Signals***

All children (young ones especially) find it very difficult and personally upsetting to be shouted at. There will be occasional exceptions – serious emergencies, for example, in which you have to attract their attention.

There will often be times when you need to attract their attention to do certain things, and the best way of doing this is through gestures rather than words. For example:

Play a “Do this/ Do that” game, where they must copy you when you say “do this” but not when you say “do that”. Even if you speak quietly, the game will quickly spread through the classroom until you have their attention.

A bell can be very useful, especially if you have different ringing routines when you require different routines. The bell should only be used in cases where they are unlikely to hear or see you clearly.

Signals have limited but effective uses – they are only there to attract attention in a non-threatening way; they are not a replacement for personal communication.

If it proves difficult to gain the attention of the children, select one child and tell them what to do, congratulate them and move on to another. The majority will soon notice that something is happening.

### ***Creating an atmosphere for RE time***

Mostly, it will be relatively easy to create the right atmosphere of quiet for a religious education lesson if the rest of the classroom management approach is conducted in a calm and quiet way, with respect and courtesy expressed for the children.

There is one particular moment that should always be more special than any other – reading from the Scriptures. For this activity, it is recommended that you slowly and deliberately light a candle, read from the Scriptures slowly and clearly, and then extinguish the candle when you have finished

Sometimes, if you are changing directly from a vigorous activity (e.g. Phys. Ed., music, drama etc) to the Religious Education class, it may be helpful to have all of the children go outside the room, and call them in by name, making eye contact with and smiling at each one, and pointing to the place where you want them to sit.

### ***Class and school rules***

Every school will have its own set of rules which should be brief, and should be referred to directly whenever you are called upon to correct a child. These rules must be set up and known in the first week of school – probably on the second day rather than the first, which should be reserved for the establishment of the class procedures described above.

### ***Care of the classroom***

Children like to feel like they “belong” and the best way of doing this is to give them a job. This is best done one-to-one while they are working on something else. Call them aside and ask them if they would do something for you... then give them responsibility for the job.

This is not quite the same as setting up the “practical life” activities. You may need to show them again what you want, but it is a personal activity rather than a group one.

There are some tasks that all of them need to do together in common. Show them (with the smallest number of words possible, and none at all if you can manage it) how to tidy up their work space at the end of an activity or at the end of the day.

Also show them how to set up their work space at the beginning of the day... e.g.

- How to put the bag in the rack
- How to put any notes or notices in the “office box”
- Where to put their reader; homework etc.
- Where to put their canteen order... etc.

### ***Relating and working with other children***

Children need to be shown how to work courteously with others. The variety of these procedures is too great to go into here, but there are some basic ones:

- They need to respect the “personal space”, so you can show them how close they may come.
- If they need to attract the attention of another child without disturbing them, they might touch them once on the shoulder and wait for a response.
- There should be no sharing of personal property – the shared stock should be sufficient.

### ***How will you sustain the learning?***

The learning is sustained by allowing children to return to whatever you present in your RE lessons during the year, especially through making the concrete materials available.

- Much of the RE time can be handed over to the choice of the children – they may choose to work on any of the presentations you have made through the year to date.

How will you ensure that you are covering the basic content required in the RE curriculum?

- Check with the “doctrinal overview” to ensure that you know the “essential learning” that ought to take place in association with the material you have presented. The children should hear you repeat these phrases often.

### ***Assessment***

The simplest process for assessing Prep children is to collect a folio of their own response materials.

- Each child should have a document wallet of some description for keeping the materials that they are working on. Take the time while they are working to speak to children individually and ask them to explain to you what they are working on.
- You can make anecdotal notes directly on their work, and keep it as a sample assessment piece.
- You should also ask them to explain to you what they think the “doctrinal statement” means.

- As you are speaking to them, you may discover insightful things that they tell you – this can be recorded.
- Digital photos of the child working intently with some materials go very well in a portfolio. You should ask permission from parents at the beginning of the year if you can have their permission to take photos of their children working in this way.

## Year 2 Class

Most of the processes required for Year 2, 3, and 4 children are identical to those you need to establish with Prep children, with these differences – you cannot rely on the simple process of demonstrating and then expecting them to imitate.

- 6 – 9-year-old children have progressed to a reasoning rather than an absorbent mind.
- They need to be given reasons why they are setting up the processes. They will willingly cooperate with you if you explain things to them.
- These children also have a sense of wanting to be together (the “herding instinct”). If you encourage them to think of themselves as a “team” in which all of them need to cooperate to get things done, they will normally respond very well.
- You can also tap into their desire to understand the “rules”. They are expecting that their class will be organised in a way that is fair and safe, so you can expect their cooperation if you appeal to them in this way.

### *Movement around the class*

Even though the children at this level have progressed beyond the need for very careful and explicit modelling on the part of the teacher, they will continue to see you as the basic model for their own behaviour, and so it continues to be necessary for you to move slowly and calmly yourself as you are establishing this routine.

By this stage, they are more competent with words, so you can explain yourself if you wish, but it remains the case that a smaller number of words, and clear modelling will be helpful – especially if the children have never experienced this approach before, or they are developmentally delayed.

You will need to move more slowly than a normal walking pace – this remains so at every level. When you are satisfied that they know what to do, invite them to move around the room at the same time, expecting the best from them.

- Some are likely to exaggerate their movements to amuse their peers. Immediately call them to order, and separate them from the group (courteously!).
- You need to establish, calmly, that this is the standard you expect, and you will not accept anything else from them.

- If you notice a slackening off in this procedure, return to practising it. It is essential to sustain safe movement if the children are working on a variety of activities in the classroom.

### ***Organisation of materials – personal and shared***

Most (but not all) students at this level tend to go through a shift towards focusing on mental organisation, and there is generally a noticeable decrease in their capacity to keep things tidy.

- This means first of all that you accept this as normal behaviour, not something that you need to spend a lot of time modifying. They will improve as time goes on.
- The best way of dealing with it is to limit the amount of materials they have to deal with to what is essential. If they bring extra personal materials, put it away for them, and allow them to use it as needed.
- The “organisation” of their personal materials needs to be externally imposed – by you, the teacher. This should not be done in a heavy-handed way. You simply structure into the day and into your week a time for organising their materials.
- This is best done at the end of the activity. You will need to tell them (or show them if you have the opportunity) how to tidy their space and make it ready for the next person.
- This process also applies to the tidying up of the shared materials. Have regular updating, re-stocking and tidying up of these materials as you go. Taking small amounts of time frequently will serve two purposes; it will keep things organised, and it will give them a mental break between activities that will prepare them for the next activity.

### ***Work Stations***

As with the younger students, you should set up work stations to house the materials you want them to work with independently. The basic stations that you need will include:

1. Materials for artistic responses (paper, scissors, water-colour sets, coloured pencils, crayons, modelling clay etc.)
2. Equipment for cleaning up after themselves (dustpan and brush; dusters and cleaning cloths; supply of tissues; safe cleaning agents – e.g. Orange oil; broom or small vacuum cleaner.
3. Work stations related to the materials you want to support your learning programme, together with appropriate task cards indicating various ways and

levels in which the materials can be used. (For the less able students, you may need to include simple illustrations as part of your instructions.)

If you notice that these materials are not being used correctly, you need to address it with the child as soon as possible. If necessary, show them individually how it should be used. You may like to get the assistance of one of the other students to complete this task.

### ***Levels of noise***

Most children at this level learn best when they work together. An effective classroom management strategy at this level requires more collaboration and group work.

- You will need to accept that collaboration is a little noisy and this is fine.
- Nevertheless, the noise level should not be “loud” – more a low “hum”.
- To work effectively, children at this level need a lot of training in speaking softly. This will not come naturally; it will need practice.

This practice will need to go on – a little at the beginning of every day, and often during the group work that they are doing in the first term.

Studies indicate that the imprinting of a habit takes about eight to ten weeks of regular practice.

It may be possible to isolate those with very loud voices, and have them practise with you about what level of noise you want.

### ***Signals***

The signals needed at this level are more important than those at the prior level, because the children are more likely to be engaged in work that is noisier.

- Bells, musical instruments, clapping routines, visual cues like holding up a sign... all of these possibilities will serve you well
- Children at this level may also like to be a little creative, and make suggestions for what the signals may be... this use of a “secret language” just for their own class contributes to their sense of being a team and working together.

### ***Creating an atmosphere for RE time***

At this level, the children should readily settle if they have been familiar with the processes at the earlier stage. If not, use the same basic techniques used for younger children...

Speak quietly; move slowly and deliberately; establish benign and encouraging eye contact with individuals etc.

### ***Class and school rules***

Every school will have its own set of rules which should be brief, and should be referred to directly whenever you are called upon to correct a child.

At this level, it will involve a little more than just telling them the rules. You should explain that the rules are there so that all of you can function well as a “team”. The justification for the rules does not need to be long, but it does need to engage their “reasoning” faculty; they need to see the reasons.

### ***Relating and working with other children***

6–9-year-old children are learning to get along with each other as part of their development. They will want very “black and white” rules to begin this process. This is the starting point. As situations come up which demonstrate that the rules need to be tempered, introduce this as the circumstances arise.

### ***Content***

For this level, there are two basic starting points:

1. *Morality*. The establishment of class rules and procedures will nourish this level’s need to know that there are rules and that someone is in charge. The organisational setup of the class is the essential foundation for what follows in Religious Education. The setting up of the prayer table, with their help, should also be done at the very beginning.
2. *Big Picture*. The second major need is for a sense of the “big picture”, particularly, very basic *Timelines*, and some work on the way in which things are related in an overall system.

In the general running of the class, the five Montessori “Great Lessons” are an excellent starting point. In Religious Education, the materials for “Creation, Redemption and Parousia” will help them to get their bearings... you can refer back to it often when you are presenting different aspects of Religious Education.

The different chapters of “To Know Worship and Love” contain elements of all of these things, but an over-arching introduction will work best.

### ***Sustaining the Learning***

As with other levels, learning is sustained in three basic ways:

1. Unobtrusive repetition – particularly the brief doctrinal summaries found in the “Doctrinal Overview” or the “To Remember” section of “To Know, Worship and Love”.
2. Leaving materials that have been presented for them to use again.
3. Creating opportunities for them to continue using what they have learned in other contexts.



## ***Assessment***

You should use a variety of assessment instruments to collect information.

- Simple quiz questions at the end of a unit, and more generally as a preparation for reports will be useful.
- Children who do not do well on the “written test” should be given the chance to answer orally – this usually makes a big difference, and encourages them to see RE as something they are “good at”.
- Art responses and other completed work should be collected for a portfolio to give a more rounded picture of what is actually happening.
- Observations about the way in which children participate in Religious activities should also form part of the assessment process.

## ***Going On/ Going Back***

- Materials from a more advanced level should be available to all – even though they will not be chosen by those who cannot do them competently. The intrinsic desire for success will drive children to select materials at the most appropriate level.
- You also need to avoid telling the students what is advanced and what is not... children at this level often prefer not to be “different” and you risk making them feel “strange” if you single them out for advanced work... You may also find that parents will want to know why their child is not in the “advanced group”.
- Similarly, materials from an earlier level should be left “in the mix” to allow the “less able” to participate without being demeaned.

## **Year 4 Class**

- The approach used for children at this level is not substantially different from that used at Year 2. The range is likely to be wider, and some materials from the levels above and below will continue to be necessary.
- In a multi-aged class, it is even more important to have a variety of materials available, and it is likely that much of the teaching that you do will be in focus groups rather than whole class sessions. In Religious Education, however, it will usually be the case that the whole class will be working from the same RE text on a two-year cycle.
- Parents who want their children to be “challenged” will be satisfied if you can demonstrate the way in which you are meeting this need. You will need to accept the fact that some will never be satisfied, no matter what you do.
- In this circumstance, never act alone. Let the principal or level coordinator know of the difficulties you are facing, and ask for help. If you are doing your job and making attempts to implement what has been asked of you, things will be fine. If you try to *cover up complaints of this kind, it will eventually cause you grief later on.*

- If children are not familiar with hands on materials, you may need to present some major works from the level below in order to get them started effectively.

## **Year 6 Class**

In general, this is a very happy time for children, but it is very likely that by the end of the year, they will be moving on to a different “plane of development”.

- They will also suffer the loss of the stable social environment that they have known. This should not be underestimated, and it should cause you to think carefully about the way you structure the learning experiences within the year.
- The strongly “intellectual” content should be the major focus of the first part of the year; the second half should see an increasing emphasis on social and other kinds of learning.

### ***Setting Up Procedures***

There is a different way in which procedures should be set up at this level in contrast with those that went before – children at the first level are interested in imitating, and need only be shown what you want. At the next level, they want to understand how the rules and procedures contribute to their participation as a “team” within the class.

- By the time children reach this stage, they have already had experience of school, and have formed their own opinions on how the class could work.
- You should have in mind all of the safe procedures that will make the class operate properly, but instead of telling them, ask the children to tell you, and record what they say in full view. Prompt them by asking them about how you should do certain things if they don’t come up with it spontaneously.
- There should be some room for negotiation in these procedures, but there can be no compromise on the standards you want operating. Once the procedures have been set, make sure that they are practised and consistently implemented.
- Remember at all times – you are the adult; maintain a courteous “distance”. You should be courteous but not familiar, particularly at this level. They will resent it if you seem to be giving them permission for them to treat you as a peer, and then suddenly withdraw. Be consistently professional.

### ***Movement around the class***

At every level of the primary school, movement around the room needs to be an established routine, and it must be “practised”.

Once the children have given you what they consider to be the range of circumstances that will need to be dealt with in the classroom, ask them to

demonstrate what they mean, and then get others to practise it to “see if it works effectively.

### ***Organisation of materials – personal and shared***

A greater range of personal materials should be permitted for children at this level – but not so much that they cannot be neatly stored.

Some shared materials should also be available, and these will be similar to those used for the level below – with modifications based on what children of this age need.

In terms of religious education activities, it is valuable to have a variety of “spiritual reading” available to them – lives of the saints, the Bible, articles of interest etc.

### ***Levels of noise***

There can be no lessening of insistence on proper standards in the area of noise level. Children at this level are likely to “test the boundaries”; it is always best to identify the individuals who are doing this, and have them practise before they go to recess or lunch.

### ***Signals***

Signals continue to be important, but you will need to have the children identify which activities need signals, and what the signals should be. Check with the kinds of signals needed at the previous level as a guide to what may be needed at this level.

### ***Creating an atmosphere for RE time***

As with every other level, your own manner and tone will set the scene for religious education lessons.

### ***Class and school rules***

By this stage, children will be ready to see the connection between the rules they have at school and those of the broader society (Natural Law). They should also begin to recognise the basis of the Natural Law in the Ten Commandments.

### ***Care of the classroom***

By this stage, children are not particularly interested in the care of the classroom, but they still need to do it. Make sure that all of the necessary cleaning materials are available, and structure regular cleaning times into the day and the week. Make it seem “matter of fact” and keep it brief.

### ***Relating and working with other children***

This is a time when significant disagreements and problems arise. As part of the process of working out what it means to be human, they are likely to need more complex input than what was offered previously.

Input on the nature of friendships at different levels can be very useful.

## Content

The ideal starting point for this age group in Religious Education for this age group is a further development of “Big Picture” ideas, whereby the children locate themselves in the context of a more complicated time-line. An example of this can be found in the materials for 9-11 accompanying the –12/ adolescent lecture. It is called the Plan of God.

Generally speaking the RE programme for Yr. 6 will follow a tight timetable, based around the Sacrament of Confirmation. Very early in the year, it will be helpful to get the children started on activities that will help them prepare of this...

- Reading lives of the saints
- Work on the Virtues and the Gifts of the Spirit
- Biblical studies centring around the operation of the Holy Spirit
- Challenge them to take responsibility for their own schedule of regular spiritual exercises.
- Study the actual rite of Confirmation and identify its mystagogy, form and matter.

## *Sustaining the Learning*

As with other levels, students of this age need time to reflect and think about things. Leave available the materials about the work that you have done for them to go back over.

You will also need to focus their attention on the doctrinal/ “To Remember” statements from the “To Know, Worship and Love” texts.

## *Assessment*

You should use a variety of assessment instruments to collect information.

- Simple quiz questions at the end of a unit, and more generally as a preparation for reports will be useful
- Children who do not do well on the “written test” should be given the chance to answer orally – this usually makes a big difference, and encourages them to see RE as something they are “good at”.
- Art responses and other completed work should be collected for a portfolio to give a more rounded picture of what is actually happening.
- Observations about the way in which children participate in Religious activities should also form part of the assessment process.

## **Background for Planning...**

<b>General Principles for All Levels</b>
1. Need for Movement
2. Need for Choice and Perceived Control
3. Stimulating Interest – Varying Levels of Complexity
4. Success as the Intrinsic Reward
5. Learning from Peers
6. Acting on The Environment
7. Warmth/ Sensitivity in Adult Interactions
8. Freedom at a Macro-level; Order at a Micro-Level.

<b>Specific 3-6-Year-Old Characteristics</b>
1. Absorbent Mind
2. Sense of Wonder
3. Focus on the Real World
4. Need for Order, Routine, Repetition
5. Spontaneous Vs Systematic
6. Imitation Leading to Independence
<b>Specific 6-9-Year-Old Characteristics</b>
1. Reasoning Mind
2. Need for the Big Picture
3. Imagination/ Creativity
4. Mental Vs Physical Order
5. Need for Repetition/ Dislike of Repetition
6. The Moral Dimension/ Justice Vs Equality
7. The Age of Rudeness/ Need for Grace and Courtesy Structures
8. The Herding Instinct/ Desire for Communication
9. Seeking Independence
<b>Additional 9-12-Year-Old Characteristics</b>
1. Like to make own discoveries – avoid too much direct instruction of the group.
2. Three mysteries are of particular interest: Time (Window of Eternity); Relationships; Life and Death
3. Salvation History – Plan of God – one way of addressing the interest in “time”.
4. Scriptural Typology (Shadow, Image, Reality) also helpful way of addressing “time”.
5. Timelines are of particular interest to this age group.
6. Work on the levels of friendship can begin at this time.
7. Avoid excessive technology and pre-digested handouts: Need to become human by pondering the realities of time and history... leading to life and death.
8. Teachers should be very aware of the Church’s teaching on “life and death” This will come up again and again. Address the matter once in a “matter-of fact” way. Necessary information: <i>Catechism paragraphs 1020-1050</i> .

## 12E Mission: Loving God and others like Jesus

### **Unit Focus**

In this unit, students relate their experience of the loving actions of family members and others to the example of Jesus through a study of 'Jesus and the Blind Beggar' (Lk 18:35-43) and 'Jesus and Zacchaeus' (Lk 19: 1-10). Students will learn how Christians with a sense of mission can love God and others through their relationships with others at a personal, local and global level. Students will be encouraged to identify how they can participate in the mission of Jesus through loving God and other people in imitation of him.

### **STAGE 1 OUTCOME**

Students demonstrate an understanding and appreciation of Christian life as loving God and neighbour.

### **KEY CONCEPTS**

#### *JESUS*

4 one who shows how God wants us to live

#### *SACRAMENT*

1. Baptism where we are welcomed into God's family

#### *CHURCH*

3. a community that tells the Good News of Jesus

#### *CHRISTIAN LIVING*

1. loving God and neighbour

2. making choices and decisions in the light of Jesus' teaching

### **UNIT OUTCOMES**

*By the end of this unit students should be able to:*

1. *recall* examples of loving actions
2. *recount* 'Jesus and the Blind Beggar' (Lk 18:35-43) and 'Jesus and Zacchaeus' (Lk 19: 1-10)
3. *identify* ways they can contribute to the mission of Jesus by loving God and people in their class, school, family, local community and people throughout the world.