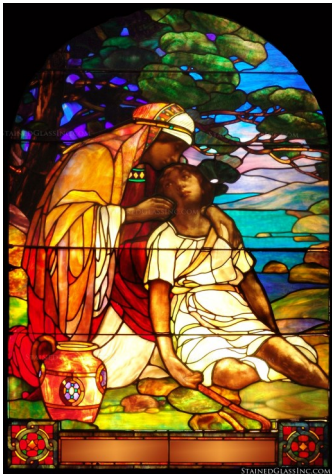


Why is our School Anglican?

Our school accepts people of every denomination, as well as those who follow a different religion. Anglicanism is particularly well positioned to offer this welcome, since it has, for centuries, bridged the divide between Catholics and Protestants. Many denominations find they can feel “at home” within Anglicanism’s foundations in scripture, reason and tradition.

At a time when we are rediscovering the importance of “connection,” students at an Anglican School will find that they are part of a story that reaches both deep into history, and widely across the world. There are Anglican/Episcopalian schools and churches in every corner of the globe. Whether they are visiting Zambia or Columbia, Japan or Canada, our students will meet fellow Anglican schools students and find an immediate connection there.



They will also be part of a community that believes faith in God needs to be not only nurtured, but expressed in service to others, the transformation of unjust structures of society, the challenging of violence, the pursuit of peace and reconciliation, and the safeguarding of creation in order to renew the life of the earth (as expressed in the worldwide Anglican Communion’s 1984 “Five Marks of Mission”). Christian “spirituality” is

never simply a personal or inward thing. We are connected to God and to each other, and as our own lives are enriched by this discovery, we are encouraged to enrich the world.

Understanding the “Special Character” of an Anglican School



Produced by the
Anglican Schools Office.

Preface

Anglicans have always believed that education matters!

Our experience down through the centuries teaches us that education can transform individuals and whole communities. Education is always about so much more than the acquisition of knowledge; it is about nurturing the foundations for a developing wisdom in every individual.

Our hope is that young people in our Anglican Schools will develop a deep awareness that they are profoundly loved by God and that they each have unique and distinctive gifts which they can use for the good of all. We also hope that they discover in our schools an excitement for learning and an expanding sense of wonder for the world around them.

Anglican Christians have been at the forefront of human discovery, and we have never been afraid to acquire new knowledge, insight and understanding. We have always regarded this search to be an essential part of the adventure of faith. "Faith with understanding", is faith excited by all of the possibilities of learning and discovery.

Our world desperately needs wise people, faith-filled people, people committed to building healthy and sustainable community. Communities in which people flourish. Communities marked by justice and mercy, forgiveness and compassion. Such education is marked and shaped by the character of the Sermon on the Mount. And it takes as its guide Jesus whose teaching transformed human history.

We are delighted to endorse this small resource on the special character of our Anglican Schools.

The Most Reverend Philip Richardson

The Most Reverend Winston Halapua

The Most Reverend William Brown Turei.

Archbishops of the Anglican Church in Aotearoa, New Zealand and Polynesia.

Spirituality and Health

Medical researchers, psychologists and sociologists around the world are discovering what the Maori people have been affirming for generations: the doorway to physical, mental and relational health is through spiritual health (See the *"Te Whare Tapa Wha" model for Maori health*). Medical schools in the US are so aware of the importance of spiritual health that they now provide courses on it, and interest is growing in NZ.

Research in this area is accelerating every year, with study after study affirming a positive correlation between religious belief and:

- Wellbeing
- Self-esteem
- Resistance to substance abuse
- Sense of control
- Lowered suicide rates
- Optimism and hope
- Lowered rates of teenage pregnancy
- Lowered rates of anxiety and depression
- Coping with adversity
- School performance

and numerous other factors. We believe this indicates something of how important spiritual health is for our students as whole people.

(The details of some of this research can be provided through the school if you are interested).



Understanding Those of Other Faiths

All students at our school will be given the opportunity to learn about, and from, other religions beyond Christianity. It is vital that the next generation develops an informed respect for those whose beliefs or cultures are different to their own.

We want to go beyond encouraging a spirit of tolerance, however. Tolerance is not a Christian virtue. Love is. It is far more difficult to love people whose differences might threaten us than it is to tolerate them, and it requires a deeper level of understanding, even of empathy.

If we only study the “facts” of a religion, we run the danger of thinking we understand when we do not. To use a musical analogy, a violin performer is better able to understand the musical experience of a concert pianist than a non-musician could be. When we have begun to experience the complexities and wonders of God, we are better able to understand the religious experiences of others, even if their “religious instrument” is different to our own.



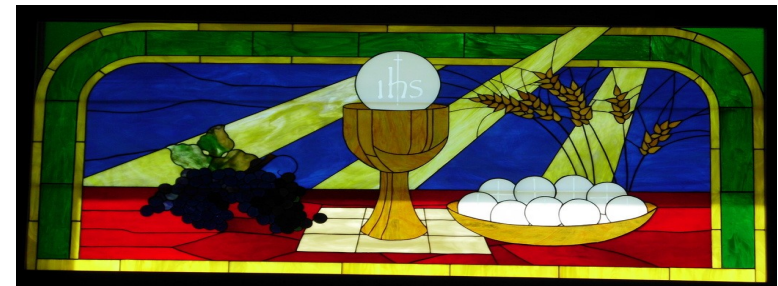
This is why, while our RE classes will respectfully teach about other religions, we will focus on providing opportunities for our students who do not already belong to another religion to explore their own response to Christianity and their own relationship with the God revealed by Jesus.

What Sets our School Apart?

Our school shares with other excellent schools the desire to help every student reach their fullest potential. We strive to enable them to excel in academia, sports and culture in a warm and supportive environment. That we do this exceptionally well is evident not only in our school records but, most importantly, in the quality of our students.

There is something else we offer, however. When we say that we nurture the “whole person,” we mean it. There is a growing realisation in the Western world that we have too often ignored and undernourished our spiritual selves, that vital part of us which seeks meaning and connection, hope and purpose. We believe one of the most valuable things we can do for our young people is to help them to discover and develop this part of who they are.

As a school with strong links to the Anglican Church, our spirituality is grounded in the Christian story of God with us in Jesus.



While we will tell this story and attempt to live the grace and love of God in school life, we do so with deep respect for those who follow a different story. Our role is simply to encourage and equip each student to explore the richness of a spiritual life for themselves and to make their own decisions. The following pages explain something of why we believe this is so important.

Finding Hope

As a parent or guardian, there are many things we want for our children. We want them to be honest, hard-working, generous—all the things we sometimes call “traditional values”. But perhaps the one thing we want most for our children is hope. Hope enables us to push on when the immediate circumstances look discouraging or overwhelming, as they will at different times for almost every child or youth. Hope gives us strength to resist escaping reality through substance abuse. Hope gives us confidence to plan and set goals. It is an essential ingredient in resilience. The lack of hope is a key factor underlying NZ’s tragic rate of youth suicide.

The Christian message is essentially one of hope. We are loved by God, a being intimately involved in every aspect of our lives, yet also transcending them, offering a promise and purpose for every beloved individual. God in Jesus even offers the seemingly impossible: hope beyond suffering, hope beyond what seems final, hope beyond death.

We want to help our students explore the reality of that hope for themselves.



Finding Meaning

There are many ways of finding meaning in life. People invest meaning in their relationships, their work, in projects they are passionate about, in service to others. We will do all we can to nurture such connections in our school. But as a study on spirituality and health in the Australian Medical Journal noted, there is one source of meaning which stands apart from these:

*At the most fundamental, transcendent level, there is spiritual meaning. Spirituality represents the broadest and deepest form of connectedness... **It is the only form of meaning that transcends people’s personal circumstances, social situation and the material world, and so can sustain them through the trouble and strife of mortal existence.***

(Richard M. Eckersley, “Culture, spirituality, religion and health: looking at the big picture,” in Medical Journal of Australia, 186:10, May 2007.)

We seek to provide an environment where our students can begin to understand the possibilities of this powerful, transcendent source of meaning.

