

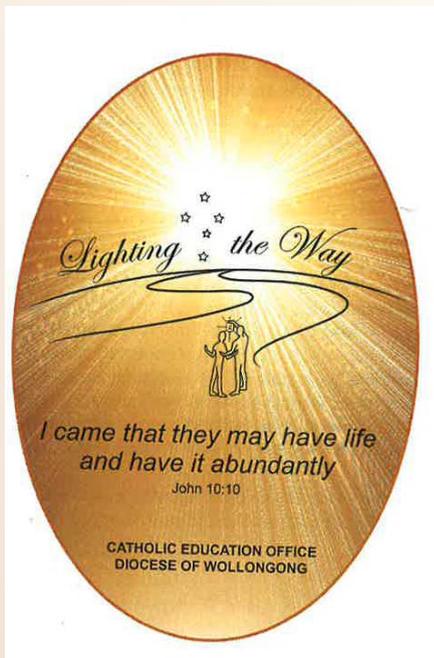


Case Study: Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong Schools committing to Staff Spiritual Formation

Prior to 2009 Wollongong Catholic schools had solid experiences of week-long programs for staff spiritual formation, firstly in collaboration with other dioceses and later through its own highly regarded programs. However, among other things, secondary schools and male teachers were under-represented among participants. Calls for further renewal came from Principals. There was extensive 'ground-up' consultation across the school system along with research into good practice which led to the adoption of key ideas from Brisbane. From 2010 programs were implemented according to what school staffs had requested.

The *Lighting the Way* Spiritual Formation Framework (2011) aligns the four movements of the diocesan Religious Education program's Emmaus paradigm with the *Catching Fire* nine formation capacities:

<i>Making Sense</i>	Presence	Prayer	Journey
<i>Gaining Access</i>	Purpose	Principle	
<i>Celebration</i>	Ritual	Welcome	
<i>Responding</i>	Commitment	Fidelity	

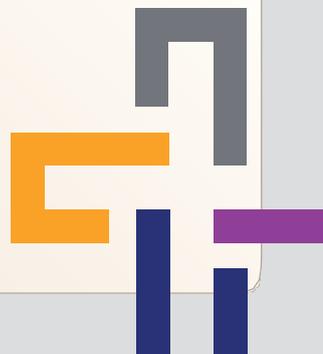


The Lamplighter Spiritual Formation Leadership Program

This program is one of a number of successful and continuing programs that emanate from the *Lighting the Way* Spiritual Formation Framework. The Lamplighter program runs in conjunction with the Shining Lights program. Schools commit to both programs for a period of three years.¹

The Lamplighter program has a two-fold focus: to offer personal spiritual formation and to develop skills for mission within school communities. The key objective is that schools are led and staffed by individuals who are committed to the mission of Catholic education and continue to develop strong Catholic Identity within their communities.

¹ The Shining Lights Program is a three-year program where three teachers from a school attend a series of two-day overnight retreats. In effect there are seven people from each school entering into formation that are then sharing that experience. A third and important program is the *Alight for the World* Early Career Program that is a four year program for teachers in their first years of teaching.



The Principal and three members of staff with the potential to be leaders of in-school staff formation form a core team. This team attends nine days of formation over three years: four days in the first year, three in the second and a two-day overnight retreat in the third. Each Formation Day is based on a different Formation Capacity that sits within the Spiritual Formation Framework. The Formation days are based on prayer and scripture, each day building on the day before. Teams acquire skills and resources to form staff in their place of work based on the model: 'Information leads to Formation which leads to Transformation'.

Some Evidence of Success

- It is significant to note that no advertising or communication has been made to schools since 2013 and programs are over-subscribed. In fact 89% of secondary schools have participated in Lamplighter/Shining Lights.
- There is a discernible change in whole-of-diocese culture about school responsibility for and commitment to staff spiritual formation.
- School annual spirituality days are planned for, not ad hoc. Documentation demonstrates that school teams increasingly run their own without calling for external resources. Likewise, regular staff prayer is more organised and purposeful.
- Several participants in the Lamplighter program have been appointed as Principals.
- Fifty percent of Principals now participate in accredited spiritual direction.
- Analysis of evaluation feedback from the same participants after day one of Lamplighter (in the first year) and the retreat of Days 8&9 (in the third year) demonstrates significant development in spiritual awareness and commitment to mission.
- Some schools have initiated a (nine-year) cycle of spirituality days built on the nine formation capacities.

Some Reasons for Lamplighter's Effectiveness

The leaders of the program identify the following reasons for success:

- The vision of the Director of Schools shared by the Bishop
- Placing initially the responsibility for leadership, consultation, design, implementation and evaluation within the Office of the Director.
- Genuine consultation about staff needs along with research about good practice
- A framework that provides congruence and a shared language among leaders
- A degree of mutual obligation between system and school for program funding
- Modelling Lamplighter formation on 'formation of the heart' as the exemplar for participants' leadership on formation with their school staff.
- The observation that most successful schools have been strategic and 'have taken it slowly' in order to embed real cultural change and commitment to formation.

