

welcome

to Christian education

WHY CHRISTIAN EDUCATION?

Whether it's learning how to run a 400m race, learning how to spell 'rendezvous', or learning to factorise a polynomial, all knowing has its ultimate meaning and purpose when framed by God's big picture story anchored in Jesus.

All forms of education will have a particular perspective on life. It may not always be obvious or overtly stated, but it will shape how things are understood and spoken about, how things are done, and what is chosen to be taught. This might be in the form of assumptions about the nature and origins of the world, or it might be evident through suggestions about the purpose of life and indeed what it means to be fulfilled as a human. No form of education is neutral as it will always be providing a particular lens through which students see the world and their place in it.

A different perspective

Christian education invites young people to see and understand the world through the perspective of God's truth. The Bible becomes the lens through which students view what they are learning. The lens focusses their thinking on ultimate truth—a biblical and Christcentred vision for life where the world is created and sustained by God; where God has acted in history to deal with the distortions of creation caused by human rebellion; and where history is advancing towards a new creation in which all things are reconciled to God through Jesus who is not only the climax of the biblical story but is also the focal point of the lens.

A way of living

However, Christian education is not just about a Christian way of understanding. It is also about a Christian way of living. When Jesus said "Follow me", he was expecting people to dedicate their whole lives to serving God. Christian education informs, invites, and inspires young people to live this way. The Christian school offering Christian education seeks to teach this way of life every day through all that is done and taught. It does this in a setting of a unified community of love and learning involving parents, children, and teachers.

Partnership with parents

Parents have the ultimate responsibility to educate their children towards a relationship with Jesus, a biblical way of knowing, and a Christian way of living. The Christian school community is a partnership with parents and the school sharing in this vision.

How can I be involved?

People serve and support Christian schools in many capacities: parents of students, teachers, support staff, proprietors, board members, parent groups, donors, and volunteers. Join in. Find out how you may be involved. Participate. Pray.

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FAQs

Doesn't the Christian school shelter children from the real world?

Yes and no. All education and good parenting, will have an age appropriate, gradual progression from protection from through to engagement with, the ideas of the world. Christian education is no different. However, it seeks to guide the students into a full view of the world and to a discernment about the distortions to God's good design. It can't do this if it shelters.

Do teachers in a Christian school tell the truth?

It might seem like a strange question, but some parents wonder that if by giving a biblical perspective of everyday things it might result in current scientific understanding being at best ignored and at worst denied. Christian education embraces science and human discovery as blessings from God, but seeks to help students discern the assumptions underpinning current understanding. It helps them critique the extent to which conclusions are, and are not, consistent with a biblical worldview. This makes Christian education a more rigorous pursuit of truth.

Are teachers in a Christian school just as professional?

Just as there are well-trained and highly professional Christian teachers working in other schools, the teachers in Christian schools are no less trained and are no less professional. The parents of Christian schools, involved with employing their teaching staff, expect no less.

Can you have academic rigour and Christian education? Isn't there a compromise?

The school embracing Christian education may, in fact, have greater academic rigour. The same state curriculum, with its secular, humanistic, and naturalistic framework, is taught in all schools. The Christian school will seek to equip the student with a critical discernment of the worldview assumptions of this curriculum; a discernment that critiques all that is at odds with a biblically informed view of life and the world. This has a greater academic rigour than accepting uncritically what is taught and learnt.



But surely our children will be okay in a public school?

That we have a society that is committed to education for all children is wonderful and a testimony to God's common grace. A public school may give a good education, but the Christian parent must ask, "what are the starting assumptions of this education and towards what endpoint is this education shaping my child?". Does it promote Biblical principles and recognise God's endpoint? The Christian parent wants an education that equips and inspires their child to be a distinctive, kingdomseeking disciple who acknowledges that Jesus is Lord of all knowable and unknowable parts of this world.

Shouldn't our children (and families) be evangelising in the local public school?

There are lots of arenas for evangelism for Christian children. Certainly, the local public school can be one. However, we would be asking our children to be evangelists in a context where the teacher has authority over them and their peers, and this person of authority is teaching them about life in this world through their own philosophical framework and via a curriculum not shaped by a biblical view of life and the world. Why not, during their most formative years, have a Christian teacher within a Christian community, teach them a Christ-centred view of life and the world which equips them to be powerful evangelists in other arenas of life.

THE NEW ZEALAND ASSOCIATION FOR CHRISTIAN SCHOOLS

Your school belongs to a wider association of Christian Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. This association is a community of schools unified around the common goal of authentic, Bible-based, Christ centred education known as the New Zealand Association for Christian Schools (NZACS).

There are over 13,000 students in around 65 Christian schools across Aotearoa New Zealand which belong to NZACS.

What are our aims?

The aims of the New Zealand Association for Christian Schools are to further the interests of Christian schooling by:

- Providing high quality support to member schools;
- Providing schools with professional development based on a Christian worldview;
- Providing effective leadership development to current and emerging leaders.

What do we offer?

As an association of school communities, we seek to serve Christian education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Through members contributing to the association, we provide:

Support to member schools

- Regional school leaders' networks
- Financial support to help schools access professional development in Christian education
- Disseminating information for school leaders, teachers and parents
- Publication of prayer needs and prayer support

Opportunities for professional development designed to:

- Allow principals, teachers and Board members to share best practice in Christian education
- Learn from others experienced in the practice, strategic thinking and development around Christian education

Leadership development

- Conferences designed to effectively develop leadership in Christian schools

