

Catholic Schools Light the Way

With technological advancements taking place every day, the Catholic School system around the world is taking steps to make sure their schools have the best resources to provide for a 21st century education.

One key technology that hundreds of Catholic schools are investing in is Promethean ActivClassrooms, which give teachers the tools to prepare students for the digital world of their future.

Everyday Catholic schools throughout New Zealand seek to put the message of the Gospel into effect, aspiring them to excellence and calls people to serve others.

This dedication and excellence is reflected across the curriculum and drives the special character of the school and reaches out to the wider community.

Research undertaken across a wide range of Catholic Schools all around the world, shows that the key factor at every school is always the principals, the teachers and the way they use their skills and creativity to convey the message of learning.

ACTIVboardNZ provides world leading technology together with software designed for teachers by teachers and their professional development is all provided by former teachers.

Project ACTIVate and St Mary's School, Northcote, Auckland

Project ACTIVate is an internationally-recognised action research project conceived as part of the Ministry of Education's DigiOps program, set up to test the effectiveness of interactive whiteboards in schools. St Mary's led the project, which involved five Auckland schools and nine in Invercargill. Participants in the scheme took part in their own in-class trials.

Project ACTIVate concluded that interactive whiteboards boost motivation, enhance concentration and improve learning outcomes.

A project participant teacher took two Year 10 science classes of similar abilities and taught a topic to one class with the Activboard and to the other class without it. The class was pre-tested and post-tested and it was found the achievement, understanding and use of science vocabulary of the class using the interactive whiteboard was significantly higher. The procedure was then repeated but the groups were swapped around to make sure it wasn't simply the topic that was making the difference – but the same thing happened.

A major factor in this outcome is that our students are predominantly visual learners, and the bright, colourful world of the Activboard creates a more engaging learning experience.

The interactive whiteboard allows the teacher to incorporate a variety of media into lessons such as video clips, sound files, images, and links to educational websites. This allows one-click, seamless integration of resources into lessons, engaging students and maintaining the lesson flow.

A student participant survey used as a tool to evaluate Project ACTIVate confirmed that all the students understood the lessons better when they were taught using the Activboard and ActivSoftware.



Activboards Around the World

Internationally Catholic Schools have been experimenting with interactive whiteboard technology. There is general agreement that education technology can only be successful if it is implemented thoughtfully, with an understanding of the pedagogical reasons for using it. Above all, interactive whiteboards need to be used flexibly, enabling pupils to work at their own pace and in their own style. The feeling among Catholic Schools using Promethean ActivClassroom technology was that the widespread introduction of interactive whiteboards is not in itself the end of the story, but the beginning: the process of research, training and assessment needs to continue to ensure success.

UK United Church Schools Trust

Geoff Gould, ICT Director and Maths teacher said "Ashford School for Girls joined the Church Schools Company and began to research the marketplace for innovative and cost-effective teaching aids in an effort to provide the best possible education for its pupils.

Promethean were chosen because of their professional and innovative solutions to enhancing the teaching and learning process. Their associated training and support programme was also superior to their competitors.

The Activboard engages all of the senses: pupils physically use the pen, the use of colourful graphics, sound and video keeps them visually engaged and as a result they listen more carefully. Learning becomes easier for everyone. Dyslexic children in particular have found this an easier and more productive environment in which to learn."

Australia St. Michael's Primary School, Kaleen ACT

St Michael's is a Catholic school catering for 240 students from Kindergarten to Year 6.

The staff, students and parish family strive to achieve a curriculum that maximizes opportunity for each child to learn. The school is committed to providing strong quality curriculum in all academic areas and provides an education based on the values of Jesus.

St Michael's School were not the first school in their diocese to get Promethean Activboards, but as they planned to install multiple systems, they wisely decided to do some research...

"Which board should I buy, and who should I buy it from?"

Who to buy from could well depend on what you buy, as some brands are only available from a single supplier. We invited three vendors to demonstrate their product to staff, resulting in our choice of the Promethean Activboard.

The feedback from colleagues suggested they were most impressed by: * Quality and proven durability of the product* The features provided within the software (each board comes with its own software, and it's more important to evaluate this than the actual board)* The knowledge and commitment of Promethean's educational support staff who demonstrated the board and who've since provided excellent training.

Above all, teachers could imagine themselves using the Activboard, unlike some of the other products. Both our product and supplier also came recommended by other schools, who've really led the diocese in IWBs and have been our biggest source of learning and advice."

USA St Richards, Ohio

The recent US interest within education technology over the last 18 months is a direct result of extensive studies in the UK and a real need for change being demanded by teachers in the dated American education system.

Here is a list of reasons why St Richard's chose Activboards (Nov 2008):

1. Interactive whiteboards are a blessing for educators struggling to engage a generation of students weaned on the web.
2. 70% of schools in the UK have interactive whiteboards.
3. Just 16% in the U.S.
4. Students in the U.K. with interactive whiteboards made the equivalent of five months of additional progress in Math over one year.
5. Multiple recent studies suggest that the devices boost attendance rates and classroom participation
6. Students were bored before the Activboards arrived.

"The most important point is that it comes back to the ability of the teachers to leverage this technology. We have to train teachers to use it, otherwise it's just another underused, expensive gizmo.

We are blessed to have dedicated faculty members who integrate our Activboards and software into every lesson they present. Again, St. Richard's is adding to its reputation as an innovative school and taking learning to the next level."

"The Activboard has dramatically changed teaching and learning. Creativity is moving in three dimensions."

Mrs. Donna Feary - Fourth Grade Teacher - Nativity Catholic School in Burke, Virginia.



New Zealand

St Patrick's School, Invercargill

St Patrick's is a Roman Catholic School in which the whole school community, through the general school programme and in its Religious Instructions and Observances, exercises the right to live and teach the values of Jesus Christ.

Invercargill is very fortunate in having a visionary Licensing Trust which funded 18 interactive whiteboards for schools in 2004, then continued spending around two million dollars in 2006 installing a further 120 Activboards. This has been continued so that nearly every primary and secondary school in the area has an Activboard.

Alan Watts, the Principal of St Patrick's was awarded the Southland Primary Principals' Association Study Award to look at interactive whiteboards in England. The focus of the trip was to look at how whiteboards:

- increased efficiency without disruption to lessons
- enable teachers to draw upon a variety of ICT-based resources without a losing pace.
- extended learning, using more engaging materials to explain concepts.
- transformed learning, creating new learning styles stimulated by interaction with the Activboard

During the trip he visited over 40 primary school classrooms. In each school all classrooms had interactive whiteboards, usually 3-4 desktop computers, and each school had a computer suite with up to date computers and another whiteboard. Alan observed that most whiteboard use was teacher dominated.

"This was quite different from St Patrick's school, where the use is very much pupil dominated."

Alan investigated important factors such as where to best site the board, especially for sunlight which is a key consideration in Southland, and the use of portable boards.

"I found portable boards ineffective due to shadow on the board, a constant need for recalibration due to bumps and the danger of tripping over wires. I also investigated the robustness of the boards. The boards proved very robust and over five years had given few, if any problems."

"Professional development, provided by Promethean was a key factor in helping teachers utilise the boards effectively, and with confidence"

St Patrick's School currently have 10 Activboards with DVD players, digital cameras, wireless keyboards and slates, all generously donated by the Invercargill Licensing Trust."

Holy Cross, Papatoetoe

Holy Cross is a decile two Catholic school in South Auckland and had eight Activboards installed in their year 5-8 classrooms and have never looked back.

They originally purchased a few Mimio devices which they found worked well but when it came to their next round of investment they decided to investigate Activboards. They particularly liked the durability of the board and pen as well as the extensive New Zealand focused resources and the user-friendliness of the system.

Principal Bruce Young explained that the results have been many and varied. He believes his students are now more involved in their own learning and that in general, communication skills are much improved across the school. Bruce believes this comes from students feeling that they have a much larger degree of control over their classroom activity and resources.

"The Activboards are great for use in a Catholic school as I have found that it is easy to plan a whole unit on the board using the Catholic Resources as a guideline."

It's very simple to scan pages and then use the camera tool to select what you want to import onto a page. And the great thing is that once a lesson or unit is planned it can be saved for next time.

Activboards have made a big difference to our students. They have been much more engaged in learning and the resources that can be used and displayed using the boards have made it easier to teach concepts and ideas. The students enjoy using the Activboards and all love to have turns with the pens!"

Tania Judge - Teacher - Holy Cross School, Papatoetoe



Former PM Helen Clark visits Northcote Primary, St Marys, Auckland



Promethean Planet is the world's largest interactive whiteboard community website, with over 300,000 teachers registered

Planet members can share teaching materials such as flipcharts, resource packs and weblinks, as well as discuss ideas on the Forum, and read interesting Blogs from leading educators

Here are some examples of Religious Education resource packs freely available from:

www.prometheanplanet.com



Places of Pilgrimage

This is a resource pack for Religious Education lessons with images illustrating famous places of pilgrimage for the major religions of the world.



The Life of Jesus Christ

The Life of Jesus Christ in pictures. This resource pack includes text pages of the parables, a map of the Holy Land and a timeline of events.



World Religions Resource Pack

This resource pack supplements the shipped resources for world religions already within your Activsoftware. The target age is KS3 (ages 11-14), but of course can be useful in other areas and with all ages. This pack covers Christianity, Judaism, Islam, Buddhism, Sikhism and Hinduism.

This resource pack will install to Shared Collections > Resource Packs and once installed, can then be moved using Activresource Manager to a location of your choice.



Religious Figures and Events

This resource pack contains a collection of images depicting figures of significance from various world religions. This resource pack is designed to provide resources and inspiration for religious education at year 7+.

This resource pack will install to Shared Collections > Resource Packs. You can then move it to a location of your choice using Activresource Manager.



Places of Worship Resource Pack

This resource pack is ideal for religious education lessons as it contains a selection of internal and external images of different places of worship.

It includes pictures of: A United Reformed Church, A Muslim mosque, Two Roman Catholic churches and a Methodist Chapel

This resource pack will install into: Shared Collections\Religious education\Religions & life stances\Places of Worship
* There is also another resource pack with images of a Hindu Mandir (temple) available for download.



Beliefs

This resource pack contains a selection of religious images under the category of 'beliefs.' Images range from a nativity scene, a cathedral, church window and a sand sculpture.

These pictures have kindly been submitted by a Planet Featured Teacher, Nadeem Qureshi, from Chevening Primary School in Kent, UK, and were submitted by his pupils as part of a class photography competition.

This resource pack will install to Shared Collections > Resource Packs and can then be moved to a location of your choice.

"Planet helps me to develop myself professionally. When I download resources, I am inspired to work out how other teachers do things. Oh, and I'm also very grateful to those confident souls who share their resources!"

Peta Sparkes - Assistant Science Coordinator - St Columba's HS, Springwood, Australia

"This is potentially the most significant milestone in the history of ICT in education"

Albin Wallace - Group ICT Director - United Church Schools Trust / United Learning Trust"

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