

Gold Fever and Learning and Teaching in a Catholic School: A deep learning experience with powerful teaching ideas.

Gold Fever is Sovereign Hill's most popular primary school program. It encourages resilience and is an excellent way for Catholic school teachers to facilitate **deep learning**, creating **animated learners** and to deliver **powerful teaching** as expressed in *Learning and Teaching in a Catholic School*.



The educational aims of *Gold Fever* are for students to understand the experiences of the early diggers via a fun, competitive game. Students understand the reason so many people flocked to the goldfields and experience the frustrations and difficulties that led the diggers to revolt at Eureka.

For students the aim is simply to become as rich as possible in one hour. Small groups are given cultural identities including the Irish, the Americans, the Melbourne family and the storekeepers among others. The Chinese cannot speak English and "Mother" must look after the baby doll "Hannah". At One Eye Gully, they dig for *gold* (ball bearings) in Sovereign Hill's mineshafts. They exchange the *gold* for money at the store where two student gold buyers weigh it and calculate the conversion including a fee for their services.

Two students are troopers and they issue licences at the price of 10 shillings each and conduct licence hunts. If caught without a licence, the victim is gaoled until his team can pay the fine to the troopers. The troopers make more money if they fine more students.

When the store closes the game ends. A discussion back in the classroom challenges students to explore the emotions they experienced during the game. Frustration, anger, worry and anxiety are very common responses. We discuss the reason for these emotions and the fact that these emotions were behind the diggers' revolt against the authorities at Eureka.

Learning is strongest when learners feel a sense of belonging. During *Gold Fever* the students are given the opportunity to work collaboratively in a safe and challenging way. They are energised, they catch gold fever and they sense the urgency. They are thoroughly engaged in looking for gold and avoiding gaol. This activity gives the students the opportunity to think creatively and problem solve as a team. It also requires them to be resilient in the face of unfair conditions.

The game fits perfectly into *the Learning and Teaching in a Catholic School Framework*.

LEADING FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING

Deep Learning in *Gold Fever*

Seeks truth through:	<i>Imagining and reimagining to construct meaning and understand the life of a digger and the problems encountered.</i>
Embraces differences by:	<i>Acknowledging that there were different voices, ideas and influences on the diggings.</i>
Invites dialogue by:	<i>considering the complex, moral and ethical questions raised in the game concerning fairness and honesty enabling an appreciation and understanding of the 'Other' and other by experiencing the hardships endured on the goldfields and by appreciating the experience of other groups including the Chinese. involving deep listening to the complex rules of the game and trust of their fellow team members.</i>

Animated learners in *Gold Fever*

Flourish through:	<i>embracing the challenge to become successful miners and team players. being versatile in order to adapt to the harsh laws imposed on the diggings, persevering and taking risks in order to be successful in the game. being problem solvers to overcome the difficulties their team faces.</i>
Demonstrate agency by:	<i>taking responsibility for themselves and their team members. using cognitive and self-regulatory strategies to cope with the unfair conditions. being reflective and critical thinkers when debriefing and discussing how their emotions during the game might be similar to or different from those of the real gold rush diggers.</i>
Know themselves by:	<i>taking responsibility for and articulating their own beliefs within the context of the unfairness and difficult conditions presented by the game.</i>

Make a difference through:	<p><i>building empathy with the 1850s immigrants and also with the authorities and other ethnic groups involved in the game.</i></p> <p><i>respecting diversity in language and culture of other ethnic groups involved in the game.</i></p>
<p>Powerful Teaching in <i>Gold Fever</i></p>	
<p>The program also provides wonderful opportunities for Catholic school teachers to observe and present powerful teaching back at school.</p>	
Intentional by:	<p><i>surfacing issues and big questions about honesty and fairness that matter to the students within the context of the game.</i></p> <p><i>creating experiences to critique, manipulate, form and transform knowledge leading to a personal understanding of the conditions leading to the Eureka rebellion.</i></p>
Forms relationships by:	<p><i>uncovering and valuing the narrative of learners by exploring and respecting the stories of <u>all</u> students involved in the game.</i></p> <p><i>developing connectedness and belonging through a shared experience and shared understandings.</i></p>
Inspires creativity through:	<p><i>emphasising visionary thinking in reflection, analysis in discussion at the end of the game.</i></p>
Builds collaboration by:	<p><i>contributing, exchanging, negotiating, communicating and acting collectively not only in order to win the game but in order to understand the learnings from the experience.</i></p>
Uses evidence to:	<p>Continue to <i>support the growth of the whole person</i> by listening and being <i>inclusive and responsive to learners</i> ideas, experiences, thoughts about what happened to them in <i>Gold Fever</i>.</p>