

# Good Shepherd Primary Hoxton Park, NSW

## *“Nurturing Disciples”*



Can you name your school motto? If you asked the children in your school what your motto was, how many would know? And what about your logo? Is it memorable and can the children relate to the symbols that are used on it?

In September 1997 I successfully applied to be the Assistant Principal at Good Shepherd Primary School, a new school located in Sydney's far southwest. On all of the early correspondence I received, the new school's logo featured prominently. I found its simplicity appealing and thought that this was a motto and logo that had a lot of potential to be a powerful symbol for this developing Catholic community.

The foundation Parish Priest designed the logo in consultation with the school's founding principal and foundation committee. Father began by focusing on the relevant Good Shepherd scriptures (Psalm 23 and The Parable of the Lost Sheep, Luke 15:4-7) and while researching thought that the simple style of picture used in many Good News bibles lent itself to a picture of Jesus as the Good Shepherd.

The word nurturing had come up in an educational context at those early meetings, as a founding premise for the style of education that was to be valued in the school. We tend to think of the word disciple as meaning a "follower". But there is more to being a disciple than following. More important is to *believe*. Hence the second word in the motto, "Nurturing Disciples".

As we prepared for our school and parish feast day in May 1998, each class did a form of reflection on our motto and logo. The children were all asked to draw it and say what it meant. The responses were amazing: "We follow Jesus", "Jesus loves us all like the shepherd loves all his sheep". I was struck by tone of the older responses: "It's just what we are" and a teacher who said, "It's what we do".

And therein lay the beauty of the motto: it was what we were or were trying to become as well as what we as teachers and co-learners were trying to lead others to be. The motto was both a noun and a verb (I think there's a very technical and grammatical word for that but we'll move on).

Those combined thoughts of children and teachers inspired me to sit down in the next school holidays to write a song that reflected on that beautiful motto. And thus the song Nurturing Disciples was born. It really surprises me that a song that was written so specifically is now sung so widely.