

# Whakapai kai

12 October  
Recorded by Marie

Today, for the first time, Anthony was joined by his best friend to give the blessing before we ate.

**E Te Atua  
whakapaingia ēnei kai  
hei oranga mō ō mātou tinana  
whāngaia ō mātou wairua  
ki te taro ō te ora  
Amine**



Anthony spoke with confidence and pride, reciting the whakapai kai karakia he had been taught at home and was now sharing with his friends and teachers at Whare Pukeko.

Anthony, it was only a few weeks ago that you shyly introduced “whakapai kai” to your teachers and friends, so this morning when you and Remy said the karakia together with so much confidence and assurance we were all so proud of you.

When Remy said he wanted to tell me a secret earlier today and whispered to me the karakia I was amazed and so pleased. He told me that you had taught him the words. How clever of you. It must be nice to have a friend stand by your side when you give the blessing. I’m sure it won’t be long before everyone knows the full karakia and stands with you too.

Last week your dad wrote the karakia out for me, adding a few lines that you haven’t been taught

yet. I asked for his help because I wanted to get it right before we shared it with everyone else. Did you notice that I had typed up the words and placed them on the window in the café for everyone to see and read?

A few years ago I was also taught a karakia but we sang it. Do you remember telling me off for singing it one day? You told me, “You don’t sing karakia!” This made me somewhat confused because I was taught it by a Māori teacher and believed that it was okay to sing “whakapai kai”. But how right you were, after speaking with your family I found out that it was not tikanga for their iwi, but this is not to say that other iwi might feel differently and follow a different custom.

Anthony, thank you for sharing what you have been taught at home with us. It will always be remembered.

### What learning is happening here?

Anthony has been encouraged to contribute his learning from home with us. We believe that he feels valued as an important member of our family here too.

His self-confidence has soared not only because he can now say the karakia with passion in a clear and strong voice but also because we have encouraged and supported the inclusion of his family's karakia in our daily routine. Therefore, his custom from home has been accepted by everyone here.

As an educator I have learnt to respect the different cultural values of our extended whānau and have a deep admiration for those willing and able to share their customs and language with us, therefore hopefully building deeper meaningful relationships.

Thank you, Rameka and Louise.



### What's happening here?

The teachers have included Anthony's family karakia in their routine. Anthony has taught Remy the words, and on this occasion the two children recite the whakapai kai karakia together.

### What does this assessment tell us about the learning (using a Contribution/Mana Tangata lens)?

This assessment documents how Anthony's self-confidence has developed and how he has taken responsibility for reciting the whakapai kai karakia he had been taught at home and for teaching it to others. Taking responsibility is a learning disposition. It may begin here with the whakapai kai karakia and then become evident in other areas. Anthony has taught the karakia to his friend Remy, and the teacher suggests that Anthony will also go on to teaching the karakia to other children as well.

The teacher's memory of being "told off" by Anthony for singing a karakia rather than speaking it is evidence that Anthony has taken learning his karakia to a higher level – as well as developing the skill of memorising a karakia, Anthony is also demonstrating an awareness of his family's customs and an inclination to follow those customs himself.

The teacher also writes about her own confusion and how she consulted with Anthony's family to clarify some questions. In documenting this

aspect, she is demonstrating her own learning process – when uncertain, consult the right people. She explains that she also asked Anthony's father to write out the karakia because "I wanted to get it right".

### How might this documented assessment support Contribution/Mana Tangata?

This appears to be an ongoing story. Although the assessment describes this as "the first time", the teacher includes past events in the documentation to keep the history of the narrative going, and there will be more to add as Anthony's sense of responsibility becomes more robust and develops greater breadth and complexity.

### What other strands of Te Whāriki are exemplified here?

This aspect of Contribution/Mana Tangata is closely interwoven with Anthony's growing sense of *belonging* in this early childhood community. *Communication* is implicated too, with te reo me ōna tikanga Māori playing an important part in the exemplar. The strand of Exploration/Mana Aotūroa is also included, with the children being encouraged to develop working theories for making sense of the diversity of their social world.

This exemplar also demonstrates the affirmation of Anthony's cultural identity, which is an important aspect of the Well-being/Mana Atua strand.