



# Religious Education

Religious Education  
and Active Learning  
Processes

Archdiocese of Brisbane



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### Religious Education and Active Learning Processes

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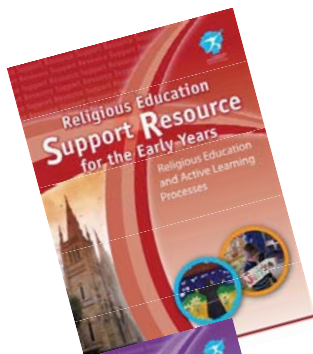


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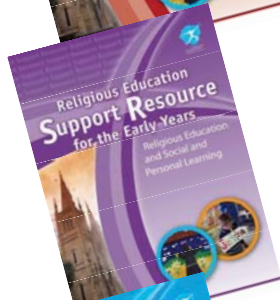
# Religious Education Support Resources for the Early Years

There are five Religious Education Support Resources for the Early Years, one for each of the Early Learning Areas: Religious Education. The purpose of the support resources is to provide guidance to early years classroom teachers. Each resource aligns teaching and learning pedagogy and practice with the document Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines for the Early Years (Archdiocese of Brisbane, 2007). Teachers are encouraged to select, modify, or create learning experiences, assessment and reflection processes from the Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines for the Early Years and the support resources to develop a learner-centred, integrated Religious Education program.



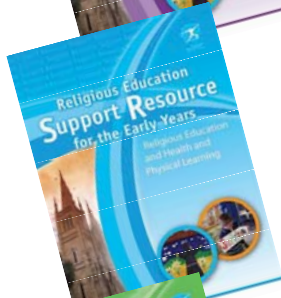
## RE and Active Learning Processes Organising Ideas

- Planning & Problem Solving
- Awe and Wonder and Care for Creation
- Religion and Art



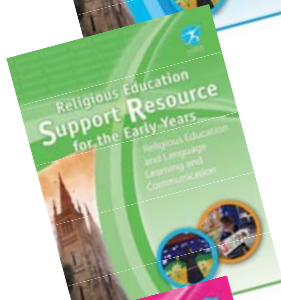
## RE and Social and Personal Learning Organising Ideas

- Love and Compassion
- Reconciliation and Peace
- Respect for Ourselves and Others



## RE and Health and Physical Learning Organising Ideas

- Making Choices
- Understanding Consequences
- Health and Spiritual Wellbeing



## RE and Language Learning and Communication Organising Ideas

- Scripture and Moral Stories
- Prayers and Celebrations
- Church, Seasons and Sacraments

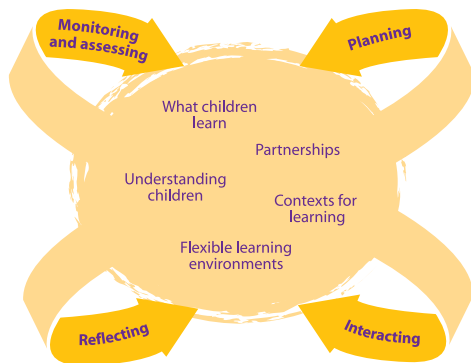


## RE and Early Mathematical Understanding Organising Ideas

- Patterns & Sequences, Movements and Directions in Religious Texts
- Attributes and Quantities in Biblical Stories
- Spatial Understandings in Prayer and Celebration

# Models and Frameworks for Religious Education: Early Years

Each support resource has been shaped by the models and frameworks depicted below.



## Curriculum Decision Making Model

Decision making in relation to the five key components, 'what children learn, partnerships, understanding children, contexts for learning and flexible learning environments' needs to be dynamic, non-linear, integrated and child responsive. Teachers use these five key components as they plan, interact, reflect, monitor and assess.

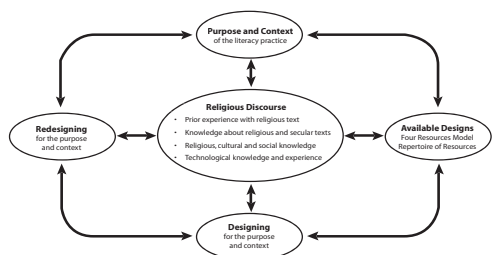


## Learning Framework and Roles for Lifelong Learners

Learning and teaching in Religious Education aligns with the Learning Framework, particularly the Overarching Goal, Empowering learners of all ages to shape and enrich our changing world, by living the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

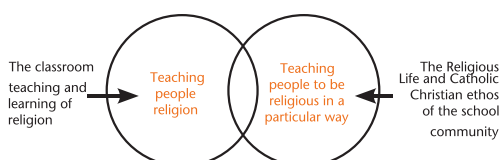
The classroom teaching of religion in the early years contributes to lifelong learning by facilitating the development of the

Roles for Lifelong Learners, which have been adapted in the Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines for the Early Years to support learning and teaching.



## Model for Developing Religious Literacy

In the context of the early years, a core component of the Model for Developing Religious Literacy is the Available Designs Phase. During this phase, teachers prepare activities for learners using the Four Resources Model and its four elements of Code Breaker, Meaning Maker, Text User and Text Analyst that align with the overall purpose negotiated in response to students' needs and interests.



## A Model for Religious Education

Religious Education consists of two distinct but complementary dimensions, an educational dimension and a faith formation dimension. The educational dimension, teaching people religion, focuses on the classroom teaching and learning of religion.

This document focuses on the educational dimension. Other documentation from Brisbane Catholic Education supports the faith formation dimension, teaching people to be religious in a particular way.

# Early Learning Areas: Religious Education

The Early Learning Areas: Religious Education are closely aligned with the Early Learning Areas in the Queensland Studies Authority *Early Years Curriculum Guidelines, 2006 (EYCG)*.

Religious Education Learning Statements are described in terms of what students will know, do and experience. **They are comprehensive statements that guide teachers towards integrated learning and therefore can be used in full, or in part when planning, teaching, learning, monitoring and assessing.**

Early Learning Areas - ELAS <i>Queensland Studies Authority</i>	Early Learning Areas - ELAS <i>Queensland Studies Authority</i>	Religious Education Learning Statements
Active Learning Processes	Religious Education and Active Learning Processes	Students imagine, investigate, and respond to their own and others' ideas about phenomena in the natural world, sustainable environments and technology*, in light of their emerging understandings of Religious texts. <i>* Including Information Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT)</i>
Social and Personal Learning	Religious Education and Social and Personal Learning	Students are introduced to Scripture and Catholic Christian teachings to further their understandings about relationships, diversity and self.
Health and Physical Learning	Religious Education and Health and Physical Learning	Students engage with and reflect upon life experiences and messages within Religious texts to build upon their understanding of physical and spiritual wellbeing.
Language Learning and Communication	Religious Education and Language Learning and Communication	Students explore, interpret and experiment with spoken, written, visual, gestural, spatial, audio and multi-modal Religious texts* to expand their Religious understanding, oral language and early literacy. <i>* Religious texts include: Scripture and moral stories, simple prayers, gestures, celebrations and expressions of belief, Religious symbols, artefacts, art and music.</i>
Early Mathematical Understandings	Religious Education and Early Mathematical Understandings	Students engage with early numerate practices to enhance their understandings of the meaning of Scripture stories, simple celebrations and prayers, moral messages and beliefs.

## Description of Religious Education and Active Learning Processes (RE ALP)

Students imagine, investigate and respond to their own and others' ideas about phenomena in the natural world, sustainable environments and technology\*, in light of their emerging understandings of Religious texts. *\* Including Information Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT)*

This statement describes students' engagement with Religious texts using processes of thinking, investigating, imagining and responding as they develop and inform:

- ideas about phenomena in the natural world
- understandings about sustainable environments and technology
- imaginative responses to Religious texts
- A capacity to make decisions and plan in response to Religious texts.

Thinking processes are embedded in all learning areas. Teachers consider explicitly the types of thinking to be included in particular learning experiences.

Religious literacy is developed in a multi-modal context. In a child responsive curriculum that is directed by the needs and interests of the students, curriculum must offer the opportunity for students to produce items and explore information digitally. Hence the inclusion in this support resource of numerous opportunities for students to engage with technology in ways that are rich and relevant, and which enhance their understanding of religion within their world.

# Religious Education and Active Learning Processes

## Learning Statement Overview

### Religious Education and Active Learning Processes (RE ALP)

Students imagine, investigate and respond to their own and others' ideas about phenomena in the natural world, sustainable environments and technology\* in light of their emerging understandings of Religious texts.

\*Including Information Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT)

#### Suggestions for planning

With students, teachers plan for learning across the five contexts by constructing experiences relevant to local settings, or drawing on the following examples, in which students :

- generate and discuss ideas and plans and solve problems, inspired by Religious texts
- explore, investigate and communicate their own understandings of the wonder and mystery of creation
- explore and investigate sustainable futures and ways of being co-creators
- design and create multi-modal expressions of the meaning of Religious texts
- discuss and respond to the features of their personal and others' representations, experiences and artistic works, inspired by Religious texts.

#### Suggestions for interacting

Teachers create interactions relevant to local settings or draw on the following examples:

- model or teach alternative ways to generate ideas, plan and transfer ideas, processes and knowledge arising from Religious texts
- recognise and build upon student's prior knowledge about natural phenomena and the wonder of creation
- encourage students to think about how they can be co-creators of preferred, sustainable environments
- challenge students to use different modes and designs to express the meaning of Religious texts
- discuss similarities and differences in people's responses to artistic expressions of Religious texts, including their own.

#### Suggestions for monitoring and assessing

In relation to this learning statement, teachers may look for evidence that the student:

- makes simple plans to express ideas and uses known strategies to solve familiar problems that have been instigated by Religious texts
- in discussions, shares personal understandings, poses questions and wonders about creation
- in group discussions, identifies ways to take care of God's creation for future generations
- experiments in different ways (including using ICLT) to imaginatively represent experiences, ideas and designs and meanings of Religious texts
- describes some features of interest in their own or others' artworks and representations of Religious imagination and meaning.

*Teachers monitor a student's learning in relation to the Learning Statement as they:*

- observe and analyse what the student is doing*
- listen to and reflect on what the student says*
- interact with the student*
- record annotations*
- communicate with partners including students, parents/carers and others.*

#### Suggestions for reflecting

- How did we let others know about our ideas and plans?
- What did we learn from some Religious stories?
- How did we learn about different parts of creation?
- How did we find out about being responsible for creation?
- What interesting ways did you use to show what you know?
- What ways did others use to share what they know?

*Teachers also reflect on their practice, in terms of decision making and the five key components, in order to continually improve both their judgements about students' learning and their planning for future learning experiences.*

**A3 INSERT HERE**



## Rubric for Religious Education and Active Learning Processes

The following generic Rubric supports teachers in making judgements about students' learning and development in relation to the four phases of learning for *Religious Education and Active Learning Processes*. The rubric below is to be used by teachers to write their own descriptors in the four phases of learning. These generic descriptors reflect the negotiated planning, interacting, monitoring and assessing processes.

Becoming Aware	Exploring	Making Connections	Applying	Some Level 1 Links
<p>With explicit support, the student randomly experiments and responds to ideas about nature, familiar environments and materials* as they engage with Religious texts.</p> <p><i>* Art and Craft materials</i>  <i>Construction material</i>  <i>Props</i>  <i>Musical and audio equipment</i>  <i>Costumes and dress-ups</i>  <i>Puppets and toys</i>  <i>Models</i></p>	<p>With support, the student begins to investigate, imagine and respond to nature and familiar environments, experimenting with different materials to share their emerging understandings of Religious texts.</p>	<p>With prompts, the student investigates, imagines and responds in collaborative ways, to care for the environment using materials and stimulated by ideas in Religious texts.</p>	<p>The student begins to generate imaginative responses using materials to respond to phenomena in the natural world and develop plans for sustainable environments, stimulated by ideas in Religious texts.</p>	<p>C1.2 Students express ideas and feelings about experiences of prayers and rituals.</p> <p>C1.3 Students describe experiences of mystery and wonder to communicate understandings of spirituality.</p> <p>S1.3 Students share and compare their ideas, feelings and experiences in interpreting familiar scriptural texts.</p> <p>B1.1 Students illustrate personal understandings of Christian beliefs to express their ideas about God and life.</p> <p>M1.2 Students create and reflect on scenarios to identify behaviours they or others regard as right or wrong.</p>

## Learning Strategies ⓘ

Throughout this Support Resource a variety of learning strategies have been suggested. These strategies draw on the bank of strategies provided in the 41 Religious Education Modules for Years 1-10. When a strategy has been suggested, it is identified in bold print accompanied by the information logo ⓘ. For further information regarding these strategies for use in the Early Years, consult the A-Z Strategies Book (copies of which have been made available to all schools) or Brisbane Catholic Education online resources.

## Case Studies

Each Religious Education Support Resource also provides case studies. These are narrative recounts created by Early Years teachers from the Archdiocese of Brisbane. These teachers have used some of the learning opportunities suggested in this Support Resource in designing a program suited to their own classroom contexts.



# Getting Started:

## Planning and Problem Solving

Students generate and discuss ideas and plans and solve problems inspired by Religious texts. [RE ALP (a)]

### Student Responsive Curriculum: A Possible Scenario

The issue of lost property and students' concerns for the retrieval of lost belongings is often a concern in many early years' classrooms. The teaching and learning ideas that follow respond to this concern and provide opportunities for students to explore ideas such as; taking care of ourselves, taking care of our belongings, caring for others, planning strategies to solve problems and exploring problems from multiple viewpoints. From a Religious perspective, scripture stories are used to help students reflect upon and interpret ideas of losing and finding things. The 'lost and found' stories (specifically *The Lost Coin*, *The Lost Sheep* and *The Lost Son*) in the New Testament provide an excellent launch for a wide range of teaching and learning experiences.

### Teacher Background

The Early Learning Area: Religious Education and Active Learning Processes (RE ALP) focuses specifically upon students' ability to imagine, investigate and respond to their own and others ideas about phenomena in the natural world, sustainable environments and technology (including Information Communication Learning Technologies) in the light of their emerging understandings of religious texts. In this part of the support resource, the focus is further refined to challenge students to generate and discuss ideas and plans in a variety of modes and to solve problems appropriate to their age level, inspired by religious texts [RE ALP (a)].

One problem that students in this age-group may experience is of either being lost, or of losing something of value. As the youngest members of a large school community, they may feel lost. Prior to entering school, their experiences of being one of a large group may be limited, and the physical size of their home, kindergarten or childcare centre is likely to be dwarfed by the size of an average primary school. Early years students are also expected, often for the first time, to take ownership of their belongings. Losing things can be a traumatic experience when charged with caring for one's own belongings for the first time.

*Finder's keepers, loser's weepers.* In this old playground chant the finders are the ones doing the chanting and are always happier than the losers. Getting lost can be frightening, and losing others can be even worse. Think of the anguish of a mother who loses her little child in a supermarket or shopping centre. The three most commonly known *Lost and Found* stories in the Gospels are all parables – the parable of the Lost Coin, the parable of the Lost Son and the parable of the Lost Sheep. All three are grouped together in Luke's Gospel. The parable of the Lost (Prodigal) son and the parable of the Lost Coin are unique to Luke whereas the parable of the Lost Sheep is located in both Luke and Matthew.

#### The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:1-7; Matthew 18:10-14)

This is a risky parable. Is it really a rhetorical question with which Jesus begins? Would a shepherd really leave the rest of the flock? A modern understanding demands of prioritisation of needs. You can't save everybody, otherwise nobody is saved. A shepherd risks losing everything unless, of course, there is a very good sheep dog or another shepherd to remain behind!

Note that in the parable the shepherd does all the work - seeking, finding, carrying, rejoicing, and creating a community of joy. What did the sheep do, besides wander off? Place this in tension with the theme of repentance that follows. There is "joy in heaven" over the "one sinner who repents." In Matthew's version of the same parable (18:12-14) this element of repentance is missing. The concern there is with not causing children (believers) to stumble, as well as with reaching out to reconcile those who sin against you. In Luke there is an element of "double seek" included - the lost sheep is found *and* the sinner turns in the right direction. Both are important, though the stress here is upon the prior.

The New Testament emphasises Jesus' concern for the lost, the hurting, the disadvantaged and the marginalized. In this parable, Jesus likens a sinner to one who is lost. Finding that person is more important than many who are not lost. In modern terms, we often see many men and women risking their lives to try to save one person. The person in peril is at that moment more important than those who are not.

### **The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10)**

The question beginning this parable is a no-brainer. The risk is not in the seeking after the lost coin, but in identifying with the one who seeks - a woman, perhaps a poor woman. If God is connected with the shepherd, as above, then what about with this woman? As before, it is the woman who does all the work in the parable - lighting the lamp, sweeping, searching carefully, finding, and creating a community of joy. Likewise, as with the story before it, the element of repentance is included.

Like the other *Lost and Found* parables, this one is teaching the reader something of the kingdom of God. Jesus once again juxtaposes the grandiose expectations in the popular mind regarding how the kingdom is expected to appear in our lives, and how it actually appears. The woman finally finds the coin of modest value. That is the extent of God's intervention. Thus the kingdom is identified with the ordinary. She did not win Gold Lotto! Indeed, Jesus undermines grandiose expectations of all kinds throughout the Gospels.

### **The Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32)**

Jesus touched upon the universal fear of loss when he told the story of the lost son. It is only recorded in the Gospel of Luke and it follows the two other lost and found stories, all of which make up the distinctive fifteenth chapter of this Gospel. First a lost sheep is found and there is rejoicing. Next a coin is lost in someone's home and the neighbourhood throws a party when it is found. And now Luke comes to the climax of this chapter with the story of the lost (prodigal) son. As the father says repeatedly of his boy, *he was dead and is alive again, he was lost and is found*. In this story, being lost is like being dead.

If you spend enough time studying this parable, you will find yourself identifying with one or both of the two brothers. Scripture scholars debate about who is the hero of this parable. Is it the rebellious son who dishonours his father by asking for his inheritance early and then blows it all in a distant country? Does he come home only out of desperation or is he truly repentant? This does not seem to matter to his father. Or is the hero the dutiful older brother, the responsible one who follows the rules and stands to inherit everything. What really bothers him is not his brother's return but the party. Not only is his sorry brother being spared public disgrace, but a feast is being held in his honour. In fact, the elder son is so angry that he refuses to use the word *brother*. When he complains to his father he refers to his sibling as *this son of yours*.

While these two brothers touch our imagination and experience on many levels, it is likely that Jesus intended the father to be the hero of this story. Look at all of the extraordinary ways that Jesus describes this man. The father agrees to his son's request for an early inheritance even though it costs him his own honour in the culture of the time. He yearns for his son's return and when he sees him on the distant horizon, he is filled with overwhelming joy. Remarkably, the father runs all that distance to greet his son, bringing more dishonour on his own name. Culturally, the father was bound to treat his son as shadow for dishonouring him. But the father breaks this cultural taboo out of unconditional love for his youngest son. Further, a Palestinian man would never run in public and reveal his bare legs. It was considered a social taboo. The young man begins his rehearsed apology, but the father cuts him off and calls for tokens of honour for this ragged son: a robe, a ring, and sandals for his feet to show that he is a free man. There is more. In a society where meat was considered a luxury, the father orders his largest animal to be slaughtered for a feast to feed the entire community. There will be no sackcloth and ashes, there will be no shameful hiding, there is to be a celebration; *this son of mine was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found!*

So, all three *Lost and Found* stories depict the kingdom of God as present not in grandiose accomplishments, but in showing practical love in humble ways, day after day, and in refusing to allow our failures and disappointments hide God's love from us. All three stories emphasise the importance of never giving up on anyone, not even on ourselves. Of such is the kingdom of God.

# Learning and Teaching Suggestions

The following learning and teaching ideas are presented within the appropriate Early Years Context for Learning. The ideas described here relate to the previously outlined possible scenario (i.e. lost property and the lost and found stories of the New Testament) and have been shaped by the models and frameworks listed at the beginning of this support resource. Particular reference has been made to the *Model for Developing Religious Literacy* (specifically, the *Four Resources Model*), and the *Brisbane Catholic Education Learning Framework* (specifically, the *Roles for Lifelong Learners*).

## Play

- Provide resources, opportunities and encouragement for students to use the play corner to create, retell and re-enact stories about being lost and found and to re-enact the 'lost and found' stories from the New Testament.
  - Using strategies such as the **Giant Puppet Strategy** <sup>①</sup> provide resources and opportunities for students to retell 'lost and found' stories.
  - Create mazes with outdoor equipment and play maze games by building mazes with blocks or playing an online maze game such as Mixy's Maze [www.abc.net.au/children/mixy/joe/maze/](http://www.abc.net.au/children/mixy/joe/maze/) to introduce the idea of planning in order to solve a problem.
    - As a whole group, search for something hidden, play hide and seek or 'getting hotter, getting colder'. Provide clues to assist students locate a hidden item. Dig for treasure in the sandpit or sand tray using maps or directions to assist in the hunt.
  - With teacher support and guidance, provide opportunities for self directed play on computers using a range of quality software programs and websites that invite children to talk with others as they play. In this context allow students to explore online versions of The Lost Sheep and The Lost Son.

The Lost Sheep: [www.request.org.uk/infants/reonline/jesus/sheep/sheep01.htm](http://www.request.org.uk/infants/reonline/jesus/sheep/sheep01.htm)

The Lost Son: [www.request.org.uk/infants/reonline/jesus/son/son01.htm](http://www.request.org.uk/infants/reonline/jesus/son/son01.htm)

[www.refuel.org.uk/curric/infant\\_topics/new\\_testament/new\\_testament.html](http://www.refuel.org.uk/curric/infant_topics/new_testament/new_testament.html)

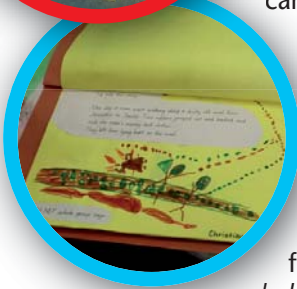
- Produce an animation based on a 'lost and found' story. Using play dough or modelling clay children create the characters of the story. Using a digital camera with a tripod, photos are taken each time the models are moved. Photographs can then be downloaded onto video editing software such as Microsoft Movie Maker. Text and/or audio can be added. The following website <http://education.wichita.edu/claymation/resources.html> gives further information on how to do Claymation animation in the classroom.
- Use Kid Pix (or some other drawing software) to design costumes for a play based on a Bible story. Using simple materials children construct their costumes and then present the play. Digital photographs are taken of the children as they create their costumes. This visual record is then presented in a Photo Story with the children doing the narration. Further information about using Photo Story 3 is available from the website listed on the Useful Resources page.
  - Play a simple 'roll the dice' game based on the 'lost and found' stories in the New Testament using a large cardboard die. On each side of the die, write the name of one of the characters from the stories. Students move forward or back on a large board game strip depending upon whether they correctly identify the story from which the character they roll is drawn.





## Real Life

- Use the opportunities provided during play, routines and transitions, focussed teaching and learning and investigation to add to a **Y chart** ① exploring what being *lost* looks like, sounds like, feels like.
- Students may be encouraged to create feeling charts to capture and illustrate the emotions being lost evokes (e.g. scared, worried, confused)
  - Students may be encouraged to create feeling charts to illustrate emotions generated when something lost is found again
    - (e.g. happy, safe, peaceful, contented, relieved.)
    - Pictograms to assist in the creation of a feeling chart can be found at [www.cranberrycare.org/emotionchart.html](http://www.cranberrycare.org/emotionchart.html)
    - Encourage students to use the digital camera to capture a range of emotions related to being lost and found using facial expressions and body language. Create cards with the captured images to play matching games such as memory and Snap.
    - Create a Flip Book to record real life experiences of having lost or found something. On the top half of each page, students draw a scene depicting a time when they have lost something. On the bottom half of each page, students draw a scene depicting when they found that item. For this strategy to work, the found sections need to be placed in a different sequence so that the page halves do not directly correspond.
    - With prompts and support, students brainstorm and explore some of the following phrases: *keep on trying, never give up, keep looking, stick with it, ask for help, never give up, God is with us always.*
- Create posters such as these incorporating appropriate local images and slogans using the free web based tool at <http://tinyurl.com/pkwyy>.
- Provide opportunities to discuss the problem of lost property around the classroom/school and plan ways to promote care of items (e.g. create posters that encourage labelling of belongings, identify lost property areas).
- As appropriate introduce students to some of the gifts and fruits of the Holy Spirit, and how they connect to planning and solving problems. The Gifts of the Holy Spirit are: Wisdom, Understanding, Right Judgement, Courage, Knowledge, Reverence and Wonder and Awe in God's presence (Isaiah 11:2-3, 1 Corinthians 12:8-10, Ephesians 4:11-12, and Romans 12:6-8). The Fruits of the Spirit are: Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self Control (Galatians 5:22). Students explore stories in picture books, and match some of the Fruits or Gifts of the Spirit to characters in the stories (e.g. who was brave? (courage), who made a good choice? (right judgement), who kept trying to solve the problem? (patience)) Further information for teachers on the Gifts of the Spirit and the Fruits of the Spirit can be found following the links <http://msssbible.com/newtestament/fruits.htm> and [www.silk.net/RelEd/holy\\_spirit.htm](http://www.silk.net/RelEd/holy_spirit.htm)
- Students reflect on times when they or others were like people in the 'lost and found' stories who remained faithful, determined and courageous. Explore times when students have been looking for people or objects, caring for and respecting people, living things and their belongings and when they have rejoiced when what they were searching for is found. Capture the students' stories in a class big book.
  - Provide multiple opportunities for students to imagine and respond to a variety of problem based scenarios by cartooning, painting, constructing and determining possible answers.
    - Jointly construct simple PowerPoint hyperlinking problems with possible solutions. (e.g. The master slide contains a short problem with three buttons, each illustrating a possible solution to the problem. Each of the three buttons on the master slide are hyperlinked to three additional slides. On each of these is the response 'Good Choice' or 'Try Again' depending upon the most appropriate response. As students work through the issues, they can use a **PMI strategy** ① to explore each of the possible solutions. For information on how to hyperlink slides, go to <http://office.microsoft.com/en-us/powerpoint/HA100214791033.aspx> .



## Investigation



- Provide opportunities to share a variety of fairytales in a number of modes with students, and identify the **Top Level Structure** ① common to most (problem/solution).
- Introduce students to the idea of using observation as a strategy to solve problems. Use digital cameras to create mystery pictures. Each student takes a photo of a part of their environment e.g. a bit of the door. These are printed, enlarged and put on display for discussion.
- Students investigate with assistance familiar texts and real life scenarios to identify problems and answers. To enhance this process, use two large signs; one depicting an image for a problem, the other for a solution. Students use the problem sign to discuss a problem from a text or a real life situation another student/s use the solution sign to describe the solution from the text or real life situation.
- Students explore the social, geographical and cultural context for one or more of the key characters in the 'lost and found' stories (e.g. what they wore, what they ate, where they lived, where they travelled etc). Some useful websites include:  
Clipart depicting life in Biblical times.  
[www.biblepicturegallery.com/Free/Life%20Work%20Home%20Worship%20Animals%20Plants.htm](http://www.biblepicturegallery.com/Free/Life%20Work%20Home%20Worship%20Animals%20Plants.htm)  
A craft activity for constructing houses in Biblical times:  
[www.msscrafter.com/crafts/bibletimeshouse/index.htm](http://www.msscrafter.com/crafts/bibletimeshouse/index.htm)
- Students investigate and explore the different ways people solve problems in other Bible stories (see Useful Resources list)
- Create a list of good strategies for planning and problem solving (e.g. make a list, draw a picture, create a table, PMI).

## Routines and Transitions

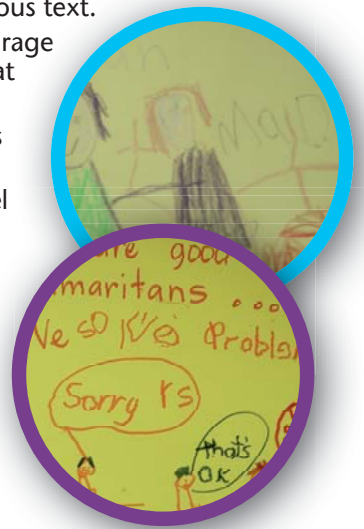
- Immerse students in the ideas and words pertinent to 'lost and found' stories about being persistent and having faith e.g. *'keep on trying, never give up, keep looking, persist, stick with it, be patient, seek help if necessary, tell someone if you need to, try on your own first, have a go, try it out, If at first you don't succeed, try try again, have faith.'*
  - Create simple class prayers and rituals around the themes in the 'lost and found' stories.
  - Encourage students to pack away items safely in their bag each time they use them to minimise the chance of loss.
  - Create a Photo Story about the routines in the classroom. Children take digital photos of each other engaging in routines such as tidy-up times. Audio and/or text can be added to the photos to explain these routines.
  - Negotiate with students the routines and transitions that foster care of personal and classroom items e.g. play a particular song that indicates 'tidy up time'.
  - Play games with students to teach home phone number and address.



## Focused Teaching and Learning



- After sharing the 'lost and found' stories with students brainstorm and list the key characters and events from the stories. Create a word picture wall of these key words in the story. The word picture wall can then be the stimulus for retelling the 'lost and found' stories in the correct sequence (use A4 laminated words and pictures from the wall)
- Use the drawings and labels from the word picture wall to create with students, a simple script to retell the 'lost and found' stories or to innovate on the text.
  - Students create a rebus story to prompt retelling of the 'lost and found' stories.
  - Use story cards of the 'lost and found' stories (available in the BCEC Multi-media Centre) to become familiar with these stories and to make connections with their own life experiences.
  - Make lists of words about searching (e.g. looking, seeking, watching, keeping our eyes open etc), and about feelings evoked when something is lost (sad, confused) and found again (relieved, delighted etc)
  - Provide access and opportunities to read stories such as The Lost Coin and as the story is being read, gather words and symbols displayed on feeling charts to identify and justify the feelings of the characters at different points in the story. Encourage students to relate their own life experiences with similar emotions to those expressed in the stories.
- Jointly construct simple prayers or class prayer books of petition prayers and thanking prayers to God.
- Explore and use the online tool at [www.refuel.org.uk/curric/infant\\_topics/prayer/prayer.html](http://www.refuel.org.uk/curric/infant_topics/prayer/prayer.html) to construct and print prayers of petition or thanks.
- Together, view 'Finding Nemo' or other familiar stories to identify words, phrases and actions that teach about the importance of loving one another and persisting when solving problems.
- Use the **Filmstrip Strategy** ① to chart images from a story that depicts the initial problem, and the ensuing sequence of problems and solutions leading to the final solution. 'Finding Nemo' could be used in this way – moving from the initial problem (Nemo gets caught) to the final answer (Nemo is found) listing in order all of the things Marlin did which showed his persistence in his search for Nemo. The story can then be reversed to record the persistence Nemo demonstrates in attempting to return to his father.
- With students, use a simplified version of the **Consequences Web Strategy** ① to develop simple plans that are a response to a problem in a familiar Religious text.
- Students explore the prayer form 'prayers of petition' and encourage students to design their own prayer of petition for a problem that they have.
- Initiate class discussions predicting "What If?" relating to aspects of the 'lost and found' stories
- Students establish five adults that they can go to should they feel afraid or unsafe (e.g. using outline of hand, drawing or labelling on each finger a different adult).
- Read a wide variety of Lost and Found stories including stories from scripture. (See Useful Resources list) Play simulations of the story of the lost sheep using collections of toys, stuffed animals, etc. The story of the lost sheep is then shared with the students, highlighting the message that Jesus teaches that each person is a treasure, important to God.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage with three stories online. [www.refuel.org.uk/curric/infant\\_topics/new\\_testament/new\\_testament.html](http://www.refuel.org.uk/curric/infant_topics/new_testament/new_testament.html) After students have had the opportunity to navigate through the online versions of The Lost Sheep, The Good Samaritan and Jesus Heals the Blind Man, discuss the problems presented in each of these stories, and how they were resolved. With support students recognise ways in which they enact the message of the stories.
- Teacher note: in each of the three 'lost and found' stories, the 'God' figure is the one that always takes the initiative, initiating the search, and persevering until the lost is found – the Father waits in expectation of the son's return, the Shepherd tenaciously goes in search of the one treasured lost sheep, the old woman searches her house until she finds the coin. Students are reminded that God never gives up on us. They are reminded that in trying to solve a problem, it is good to remember we should keep on trying, and when things are difficult, God is there.





# Case Study

## Planning and Problem Solving

Meet Emma Forrester and Kristy Greenhill. They were the Prep teachers in the inaugural Prep year at St Agatha's School, Clayfield. St Agatha's had never had a pre-school, and so the Prep year was a new adventure for all staff. Part of the learning process as a community was to promote and support Prep children in becoming capable, independent self directed learners in line with the BCE Learning Framework.

*Learning Story*  
ELA:RE



## Introducing the idea of Planning and Problem Solving



As we had recently moved into the new Prep buildings, we saw the opportunity to address the routines and transitions that had changed. We discussed how change may lead to feelings of confusion or anxiety and together began to brainstorm as a class how we could plan for and solve the problem of being lost or feeling confused in new environments. With the students we explored the 'Lost Stories' in the Gospels to identify how others have felt fearful and how they solved the problem of being lost. [RE ALP] From a religious perspective, it was important to support students when they were engaging with ideas and problems of being Lost and Found that they were introduced, in age-appropriate ways to the nature of God's love, the Peace of Christ and beginning understandings of Fruits of the Holy Spirit of joy, peace, patience and courage.

We read together the story of the 'Lost Coin' Luke 15:8-10, to highlight common feelings people experience when they lose things and how the woman in the story was persistent in her search to find the lost coin. Children offered suggestions for ways in which they could tackle problems related to locating items in the new prep environment or in locating items which they have lost. Some of their ideas related to labelling storage boxes and cupboards and using digital photos of items to identify their whereabouts. [RE ALP]

As a class we brainstormed key words from the story and sequenced the story, and designed a word wall which featured not only words from the story but also slogans like 'don't give up!' and 'keep on searching!'

[RE LLC]

Students were given a challenge each day to find a specific item and to be persistent in their search like the woman in the Lost Coin story. Children were then encouraged to share the process they used in locating the item. [RE ALP]

Students made puppets to re-enact the story of "The Lost Son". During their play, the students re-enacted the story of "The Lost sheep" using the classroom puppets.



## Identifying Feelings in a variety of contexts

The students listened to a variety of stories in multi modal formats including DVDs, picture books and Gospel stories that featured characters who displayed a variety of emotions. As they identified the emotions we used a problem solution model to discuss together the problems identified in the story and the ways the characters resolved the problems and we also suggested possible alternatives. When reading and discussing the story of Jesus and the Lost Sheep the students had many alternative solutions to the one Jesus chose. This provided the opportunity to discuss God's love for everyone, particularly anyone who is lost. [RE ALP]

- Children illustrated examples from their own life experiences of being lost or losing an item of value and recounted the sense of joy or celebration felt. With support we made the connections between their sense of celebration and the sense of joy expressed in the bible stories.



## Problems and Answers



Students identified problems and solutions from familiar texts, including their own stories. The students used 3 large signs, one image representing the problem, one image representing an answer and the third representing the person providing support in solving the problem. Whilst holding the problem sign one student identified a problem from a text and then another student holding the answer sign described the answer. A third child then identified the support person in the story. Through discussion we identified the place of God in assisting us in finding solutions. [RE ALP]

Recognising that the value of persistence is important in problem solving, the students viewed the film "Finding Nemo" and discussed all of the actions that Marlin took when persisting in his search for his son, Nemo. They also identified all of the actions that Nemo took to get back to his father. [RE LLC a)-h)]

- After sequencing the events of the film, the students made "motto" posters depicting the phrases "Keep on trying", "Don't give up", "Stick with it" "God is present", "Do not be afraid I am with you."

We jointly constructed a class prayer book including prayers of petition and thanks around themes of being lost and found, having courage, persistence, patience etc using lists of words around the room about the 'lost and found' stories and the following beliefs; God is always with us, God always loves us, Jesus prayed to God for help, God gives people strength and courage etc. [RE ALP, RE LLC]

- We introduced the idea of a network of five adults the students can go to should they feel afraid. Using a hand outline the students drew one adult on each finger.
- Students watched the film "Franklin Gets Lost", and they discussed the strategies the main character used when he was lost in the woods. The students categorised the strategies into good or bad.
- Students role-played a real life situation when they may have been lost in a supermarket and they suggested ways to stay safe and be found.
- The students were given a familiar problem and independently thought about 2 alternative plans to solve the problem

## Taking Responsibility

Students practised packing items away in bags carefully. We developed routines to promote this. [ALP]

A "tidy up" song was played at transition time and some children were rewarded for taking responsibility. [SPL]

## Possible Assessment and Monitoring opportunities

- Students provided a variety of imaginative responses about solving problems of being lost which reflected their engagement and understandings with the religious texts and learning opportunities. This was an ongoing process in which we used observational data, conversations, samples of learning to make judgements, using the rubrics (p53 Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines for the Early Years) to inform which phase of learning children were working in.

'Lost Coin' Luke 15:8-10



## Some Useful Resources



### Scripture and other Sacred Stories

- The Lost Sheep (Luke 15:1-7; Matthew 18:10-14)
- The Lost Coin (Luke 15:8-10)
- The Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32)
- Zacchaeus (Luke 19:1-10)
- The Story of Joseph (Genesis 37:2-36; 39:1 - 46)
- Noah (Genesis 6-7)
- Jesus is Lost in the Temple (Luke 2:41-52)



### Film (all available from the BCEC Multimedia Centre)

- Prayer Bear - Steve Green 75mins DVD
- The Lost is Found 30 mins Book & DVD
- Bob the Wandering Lamb 10 mins VHS
- Parables for kids vol 1 22 mins VHS
- Parables for kids vol 2 22 mins VHS
- Parable Parade 23 mins VHS
- Pete the Sorry Son 8 mins VHS



### Poster/Art (available from the BCEC Multimedia Centre)

- Story Card Set 1 Redemptorist Publications, Hampshire UK



### Children's Literature

- Where Is the Green Sheep? Mem Fox
- Where's My Teddy? Jez Alborough
- Can You Keep a Secret? Pamela Allen
- Where's Stripey? Wendy Binks
- The Pocket Dogs. Margaret Wild
- Dougal and Bumble and the Long Walk Home. Matt Dray
- Where's My Fuzzle? Susanna Gretz
- Finding Jack. Ann James
- Tiddler Julia Donaldson
- Eight Lyn Lee
- Beegu Alexis Deacon
- Brave Charlotte Anu Stohner
- Come on Daisy! Jane Simmons
- Knuffle Bunny Mo Willems



### Music

- Stories And Songs Of Jesus; Sr Paule Freeburg, DC, Compact Disc
- More Stories And Songs Of Jesus; Sr Paule Freeburg, DC, Compact Disc
- The Little Lost Sheep; Sr Paule Freeburg, DC, Sound Recording



### Websites

- Play Hide and Peep! Students sharpen their skills of observation when playing this interactive game, in which they are challenged to recall the hiding places of different characters in the tool shed.  
<http://peepandthebigwideworld.com/games/hideandpeep.html>
- This website has a range of online resources that support the 'lost and found' stories.  
<http://infants.reonline.org.uk/>
- Use this online tool to create posters and postcards depicting themes of persistence and courage.  
<http://bighugelabs.com/flickr/motivator.php>
- Using Photo Story in the classroom.  
[www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photostory/tips/firststory.mspx](http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxp/using/digitalphotography/photostory/tips/firststory.mspx)

# Getting Started:

## Awe and Wonder *and* Care for Creation

Students explore, investigate and communicate their own understandings of the wonder and mystery of creation and students explore and investigate sustainable futures and ways of being co-creators. [RE ALP (b and c)]

### Student Responsive Curriculum

Students' interest in the world around them and in the natural environment is always high. Fascinated with wind and water, and features of the earth and sky, as well as the creatures that live there, students are alive to the awe and wonder of God, and the need to care for this precious gift of Creation. To deepen this understanding, and in response to their interest, students listen to and view diverse sacred stories about creation. They compare aspects of these stories. Students examine the scientific phenomena within creation and contribute ideas about how we use our gifts to create inventions. They take an active role in promoting theirs and others' ideas to take care of creation.

### Teacher Background

#### People – created in God's image

Human beings are an integral part of creation. Humans need to recognise their close links with other creatures, and their interdependence with all of creation. Christian revelation singles the human person out as having a unique place in the universe. Whilst something of God is imaged in every aspect of creation, humans have a unique consciousness of themselves and their universe. With this consciousness comes the freedom to choose and to act. Male and female are created human in the image and likeness of God. Male and female are equal in their dignity before God. In their shared humanity and sexual difference and complementarity, they share with God in the creation and nurturing of life.

#### Human beings as Co-Creators with God

In Christian understanding men and women are to be co-creators with God. The work of creation is never complete, and human beings have a special role in its continuance.

Firstly, male and female are made for each other. Whilst each is complete, they are meant to complement each other and to form community. Only then, when each contributes to the other, is God's creative purpose met. Together a man and a woman also transmit human life. In this they cooperate in God's ongoing creative activity.

As science continues to unravel the mysteries of nature, we are better enabled to preserve what is and to develop new wonders that enhance human living. Examples are the development of more efficient forms of energy, and the combating of disease. But ethical challenges accompany this creative ability. What are the moral limits to cloning and to genetic engineering? How do we make modern developments available to benefit everyone rather than have them remain the preserve of the few?

Each person is challenged to develop their own God-given creativity for the good of the whole of creation.

#### Caretakers in God's creation

The creation narratives in Genesis (1-3) point to the role man and woman play as caretakers in God's creation. The man is asked to name all the animals and birds which God had created to be his helper (Genesis 2:18). With this mastery over creation comes the responsibility to respect its integrity and to care for it. This 'caretaker' role is reinforced as God places the man in the Garden of Eden 'to till it and keep it'.

The Noah story outlines the same role for humans as stewards of creation. When sinful humankind has all but frustrated God's creative purpose, God makes a new beginning. To Noah and his family is entrusted the preservation of every form of living thing. A covenant is entered into, not only with the humans but 'with every living creature that is with you' (Genesis 9:10). The continuance of all creation is God's will, and man and woman have a custodial role in that.

But humankind has abused its trust and misused creation. St Paul speaks of creation having been subjected to futility and bondage, groaning as it waits the revealing of the children of God (Romans 8). And St Mark has Jesus command his disciples to take the good news to 'the whole creation' (Mark 16:15). The good news of Jesus' salvation touches all creation because it restores the proper order of things destroyed by sin. Today the Church is much more aware of ecological responsibility being intimately bound to its mission to proclaim the Gospel. The created universe is a sacred trust placed in humankind's care.

### **Interdependence of God's creation**

The greater our scientific knowledge, the more aware we are of the marvellous inter-relationship between every element of the created universe. Nothing exists of itself. 'Creatures exist only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other.' (Catechism of the Catholic Church 340)

Human interdependence is also increasing. With modern communications comes 'globalisation', stressing the unity of the human family. Organisations such as the United Nations struggle to achieve a proper realisation of the equal human dignity of all people and nations. The challenge is to bring about cooperation that will provide adequately for all on our planet. The social teaching of the modern Church makes a significant contribution to this task.

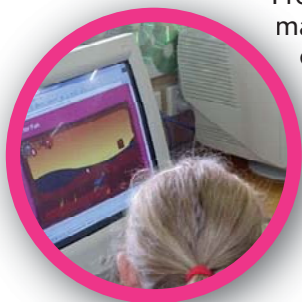
Catholic Social Teaching is the doctrine of the Church on economic and social matters (Catechism of the Catholic Church 2421), and as such it proposes principles for reflection; it provides criteria for judgment; it gives guidelines for action. Among these principles are those of Solidarity, Subsidiarity and Participation, which require Christians work for the common good of all, to allow all to make decisions at their own level, and to ensure that all have equal participation in the events and decisions that shape the destiny of our world. As such, Christians share responsibility for the planet, and all who dwell upon it.



# Learning and Teaching Suggestions

The following learning and teaching ideas are presented within the appropriate Early Years Context for Learning. The ideas described here relate to the previously outlined possible scenario (i.e. Children's interest in the natural world as an introduction to creation stories) and have been shaped by the models and frameworks listed in this support resource. Particular reference has been made to the *Model for Developing Religious Literacy* (specifically, the *Four Resources Model*), and the *Brisbane Catholic Education Learning Framework* (specifically, the *Roles for Lifelong Learners*).

## Play



- Provide materials and opportunities for students to create their own natural and made-worlds using figures, natural objects and blocks that reflect their experiences of natural and built environments.
- Engage in water play to enable students to explore the awesome phenomena of water. (e.g. making bubbles, rainbows, seedpod boats, playing with water droplets under the electronic microscope).
- Provide opportunities for students to explore the online learning object Caring for God's Creation (see Useful Resources list)
- Play card and other games that incorporate animals and living things, their features, homes and characteristics.
- Provide materials and opportunities for students to explore the phenomena of wind through play (e.g. paper airplanes, kites, cloud watching, pinwheels).
- Using the class prop box of masks, materials, costumes for students to enact characters from or parts of creation stories.
- Using puppets and stuffed toys, students play games and enact creation stories and stories showing their roles as co-creators of God's creation.
- Students play with music and sound effects and respond through dance and song to the awe and wonder of God's creation. Similarly students, with a range of musical instruments, create their own music and songs about the need to care for God's creation
- Students learn about God's creation with Dottie and Buzz, through playing interactive online games at [www.dottieandbuzz.co.uk/prog2/index.html](http://www.dottieandbuzz.co.uk/prog2/index.html)

## Real Life

- Provide the stimulus for students to create images and scripted words about their real life experiences of the awe and wonder of God's creation (e.g. a rainbow, the beach, the mountains, a sunrise, the moon and the stars, people and pets).
- Visit diverse and beautiful natural environments (physically and online) and brainstorm with students words that describe the awe and wonder they feel as they view these scenes.
- Use a **Peoplescape Strategy** ① to illustrate in pictures and words someone who is a carer of creation/co-creator.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage with online interactive activities such as 'Taking Care of Our World' at [www.request.org.uk/infants/reonline/world/world13.htm](http://www.request.org.uk/infants/reonline/world/world13.htm)
- Use music, realia, electronic and still images, display items and other relevant resources to enable students to experience creation using all of their senses.
- Provide opportunities for students to design some simple prayers and rituals that respond to the beauty and care of God's creation.
- With assistance, students design and create their own images, posters, paintings, digital or print photo-stories, videos, auditory soundscapes etc stimulated by creation and the need to be co-creators.
- Students explore the natural environment of the school and discuss ways to sustain and conserve the natural resources in this environment and suggest ways that it might be cared for to preserve it for future students (e.g. water).
- Take advantage of opportunities for students to take part in River Festival/Clean up Australia/Brisbane City Council competitions and challenges.



## Investigation

- Introduce students to the **Word Wall Strategy** ①, and use this strategy to develop language and understanding about the awe and wonder of God's creation using a phrase from a creation story (e.g. A phrase from the Genesis creation story *...and God saw it was good* could be used as stimulus).
- Explore and use strategies to help solve the online puzzle called 'God Makes the World' at [www.request.org.uk/infants/reonline/world/sequence01.htm](http://www.request.org.uk/infants/reonline/world/sequence01.htm).
- Using a **What do I do? Strategy** ① with students explore what being a carer of creation or a co-creator means using simple words and pictures.
- Using measuring devices such as a rain gauge and a weather vane, students gather information about the weather.
- Provide opportunities for students to express their understandings about a dimension of God's creation, its protection and/or their role as co-creators through creative use of technology (e.g. with assistance, students take digital photos of classmates in poses that depict caring for the environment. Run these as a slideshow in the school reception area).
- Follow daily weather forecasts (read from the newspaper each day or with assistance access the Bureau of Meteorology) [www.bom.gov.au/weather/qld/](http://www.bom.gov.au/weather/qld/) and record the correlation between predictions and the temperature and weather conditions each day.
- Provide opportunities and direction in conducting simple science experiments to examine natural phenomena such as clouds, rain, wind etc.
- With students, investigate and collect information on systems that help members of the school community sustain the environment (e.g. compost bins; water tanks).
- Engage in technology processes to design and create new tools to conserve water, and suggest strategies for reducing waste and recycling products.
- Provide access to a digital microscope to explore the wonder of things in God's creation



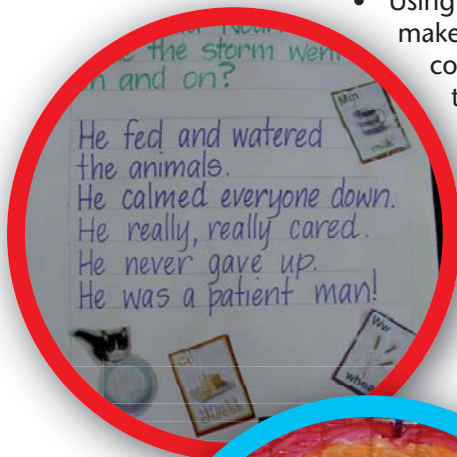
## Routines and Transitions

- Students report daily on the weather, and record the weather on an individual and class chart.
- With assistance, students identify trends in the weather drawn from class weather chart and discuss phenomena such as drought and flood.
- Students devise ways to encourage others to care for God's creation – (e.g. posters, pod cast advertisement, role play show).
- With support, students use Microsoft Word to create signs/posters that indicate ways we are co-creators (e.g. giving thanks for God's creation, caring for each other as children of God, playing peacefully in indoor/outdoor areas etc)
- Decorate the classroom and/or school with the posters that students have created.
- Assist students create a sacred space within their environment for prayer and reflection times.
- Students model to each other ways to share and positively respond to each other's creative expressions and Religious imagination.
- Students participate in the creation of rules and systems that reflect their appreciation of God's creation and their roles as co-creators (e.g. walking on pathways, turning taps off, putting rubbish in the bin, caring for plants and animals).
- Students listen to nature sounds in prayer, rituals, meditations and when moving from one activity to another
- Students create their own understandings and representations of God's creation and their role as co-creators using multi-modal Religious texts to assist (e.g. web versions, DVD versions, book versions).



## Focused Teaching and Learning

- Students use code breaking strategies (e.g. listing unfamiliar words, creating a word wall, drawing pictures to describe different words) with unfamiliar terminology about creation and creating after reading the Hebrew creation stories of the Catholic Christian tradition.
- Draw pictures and use clipart to make rebuses for new technology
- Using a **Y Chart** ①, students identify words and develop ideas around caring for creation and being co-creators.
- With support and modeling, students create a page in PowerPoint or Word that includes a photograph, text and/or audio of the awe, wonder and care for creation. Their page can either be printed to create a class big book or added to the other PowerPoint slides to create a class PowerPoint presentation.
- Students view, discuss, compare and contrast different versions of the same creation story and explore alternative creation stories incorporating diverse modes (e.g. film, audio, and poster)



- Using story cards of *The Creation*, students make meaning of the story and make connections from the Creation story to their life experiences.

- With support, students discuss the fact that the Hebrew story describes creation over a seven day period – examine a calendar and determine how long seven days is, and what this time period is called (a week).
- With assistance, students create simple prayers of inspiration that reflect God as creator, the beauty of God's creation and our role as co-creators.
- Provide opportunities for students to engage with RE learning Objects such as Caring for God's Creation and other online resources (see Useful Resources list )
- Using elements of the Noah story, students create an artistic work to express God's promise, the Religious significance of the rainbow and the gift of water for all living things.



# Case Study – Awe & Wonder & Care for Creation

## Background

Meet Judith Wilson. Judith taught a combined Prep/Year One class at St William's School, Grovely. This case study described here developed naturally out of the children's fascination with air and water, and some outdoor play activities.....

During whole class outdoor time on Wednesday mornings, some of the students started to make paper airplanes. Other students wanted to do this also, but didn't know how to. We therefore started to look at ways to make different paper airplanes, helicopters and wind catchers. This extended into their water play with ways to make different boats and water craft. As part of this process, we started to look at wind and other features of the sky, and water and creatures that live in the water. Religious Education also contributes naturally to these two areas, as our roles of caretaker and co-creator are so important in continuing to celebrate the awe and wonder of God's creation.

## Learning Story

### Introducing Sacred Stories about Creation

We read the Hebrew-Christian Creation story and examined images in different bible versions and a video version (see resources). We made a clipart and drawing rebus story to examine terminology and creation elements in the story. [RE LLC]

We then read some other sacred stories about creation from Indigenous and Chinese perspectives, and made rebus stories to compare them to the Hebrew-Christian story. [RE ALP a) & b)]

### Responding to Creation

The children enjoyed responding to the different creation stories, and some of the new terminology and symbols presented in them, through a variety of media and means of expression: sky watching; meditation to nature's sounds; visual art representations; dance to nature's sounds, and music representing nature's sounds. They shared their thinking about these also. [RE LLC h)]

### Prayer Circle

The Sacred Stories about Creation became the focus of the Scripture element of our Prayer Circle. We collected things from nature for our prayer circle and prayer area. We found songs on one the Monica Brown CD's about Creation and God's love, and used these for prayer circle time. [RE ALP]

- The children also chose another scriptural story they knew in relation to nature: Noah and the Ark (The Flood), and of course 'The Arky Arky Song'!

Later in the term, we used Prayer Circle to have a 'Commitment Ceremony' whereby the children made a promise that they would do their best to look after God's Creation through their everyday activities.

### Considering an Alternate View: Science

We examined features of the Earth and sky, including wind, rain, water, thunder and lightning etc using simple science investigations, the electronic microscope, simple non-fiction texts and kits, and when we could find them, simple web sites. We used child friendly search engines to try and find simple web sites and explanations. [ALP b)]

- We kept an eye on the weather, making a simple weather chart each day to record the weather.



- We visited the Science Centre, where we watched The Water Show which gave the children ideas about water being in many of our foods and drinks, and where water 'comes from'.



The children were very interested in creatures that live in water, so we examined many non-fiction and fiction books and stories. We made 3D models of some of these creatures to make a water-scape in our classroom. The children wrote simple labels with the name and some information about their creature, dependent upon their own ability level. *[ALP a)]*

Book Week fit in well – we examined and responded to the book, *What the Sky Knows*. By Stella Danalis



### Our Talents

We read an easier version of Jesus' parable, The Ten Talents (see Resources). We made a Peoplescape ① of P1W talents using clip art, drawings and Tuxpaint (a free drawing software programme) drawings in response to the story. We made a class chart listing and drawing our talents and how we can use them to help everyone just as Jesus suggests in the parable. *[RE LLC, RE SPL e)]*

- We used new songs from Monica Brown in our Prayer Circle to praise God for these gifts.

### Looking After God's Creation

We talked about how being so talented also meant that we had responsibilities to use these talents for the good of the world. We looked at ways we could use our talents to help look after God's creation. This discussion ended up with the class taking action on 2 fronts: *[RE ALP c)]*

- The children agreed to take on a water challenge. They recorded with help from their parents and us every time they used water over a normal day. We looked at if it was necessary to use water every time that we did, or if we used it for longer than we needed, e.g. spending a long time in the shower.
- The children designed a poster and a slogan to be displayed around the school, and made into a pod cast that could be placed on our blog page. We made use of posters designed by other schools as part of the River Festival Billboard Competition to examine the media of posters and to act as a guide for designing our own.





## Some Useful Resources



### Scripture and Other Sacred Stories

- The story of creation (Genesis 1:1-3)
- God is Like: Three Parables for Little Children
- Creation Story – Hebrew - (available in the BCEC Multi-media centre)
- God and His Creations: Tales from the Old Testament by Marcia Williams
- Australian Indigenous Creation Stories, for example: The Rainbow Bird; Tiddalik;
- The Ten Talents (simple version: Eight Bags of Gold – Arch Books)



### Film

- The Magic School Bus Wonders of Weather
- The Four Seasons, DVD 30 mins
- Ferngully: The Last rainforest DVD 73 mins



### Poster/Art

- Take advantage of art activities and competitions provided through the annual Brisbane River Festival. These resources/possibilities can be accessed at: [www.riverfestival.com.au](http://www.riverfestival.com.au)



### Children's Literature

- Jeannie Baker Books particularly Window, Belonging and The Story of Rosy Dock
- The Wild. Bob Graham
- Rainbow Fish. Marcus Pfister
- Bundoola: A Traditional Dreaming Story from the South Coast, NSW. George Brown
- The Lore of the Land. Children of the Gia and Ngaro Homelands
- Going Bush Nadia Wheatley
- The Creation. Queenie Rikihana Hyland
- Big Mama makes the World Helen Oxenbury
- Oi get off our Train and Whadayamean John Burningham



### Music

- Praise and Blessings Monica Brown
- God Delights In You Monica Brown
- The Pachelbel Canon With Ocean Sounds – classical music cd available through the Multimedia Centre



### Puppets

- Puppets and puppet craft materials can be sourced via [www.helenshandpuppets.com.au/scripts/default.asp?idpage=1](http://www.helenshandpuppets.com.au/scripts/default.asp?idpage=1)



### Websites

- The story of creation in an animated online format. [www.kids4truth.com/eng\\_creation.htm](http://www.kids4truth.com/eng_creation.htm)
- A PowerPoint of the creation story – use this as a stimulus for the children's own creations! [www.teachingideas.co.uk/re/files/creationstory.ppt](http://www.teachingideas.co.uk/re/files/creationstory.ppt)
- A huge list of Creation Stories from all over the world. [www.magictails.com/creationlinks.html](http://www.magictails.com/creationlinks.html)
- Gather information and activities about the features of Earth and Sky from this in-depth Nasa Kids site. [www.nasa.gov/audience/for kids/home/index.htm](http://www.nasa.gov/audience/for kids/home/index.htm)
- Brisbane City Council's water web pages [www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/BCC:BASE:1018111232:pc=PC\\_1254](http://www.brisbane.qld.gov.au/BCC:BASE:1018111232:pc=PC_1254)
- This site explains how to conduct Dadirri - an Indigenous Meditation experience [www.yarrahealing.melb.catholic.edu.au/journeys/c\\_dadirri.html](http://www.yarrahealing.melb.catholic.edu.au/journeys/c_dadirri.html)
- The Clean Up Australia day page for schools [www.cleanup.org.au/au/Kids/](http://www.cleanup.org.au/au/Kids/)
- Caring for God's Creation Learning Object [www.bne.catholic.edu.au/asp/index.asp?pgid=10715](http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au/asp/index.asp?pgid=10715)

# Religion and Art

Students discuss and respond to the features of their personal and others' representations, experiences and artistic works, inspired by \*Religious texts. [RE ALP (e)]

*\*Religious Texts include: Scripture and moral stories, simple prayers, gestures, celebrations and expressions of belief, religious symbols, artefacts, art and music.*

## Teacher Background

This teacher background incorporates some philosophies and ideals from the writing of Janet R Walton in *The Dictionary of Catholic Spirituality* (Downey, 1993) and John Fitzwalter, a well-known and respected art teacher and tutor at Catholic schools in the Archdiocese of Brisbane, Griffith University and Australian Catholic University, Brisbane. This background also features pedagogical approaches aligned with the *Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines for the Early Years*. Many of the Religious education learning opportunities suggested in this support resource refer to visual art. However; the philosophy, principles and purposes suggested below can be applied to other strands of the Arts.

### Purposes of Art

The purposes of art are varied. In whatever form it appears, it is a vehicle that expresses diverse aspects of human experience. There are several purposes of art that many agree are particularly relevant when discussing the ability of an artwork to convey the concept of spirituality and to capture some of the mystical dimension of Religious experience. **These are particularity, meaning, revelation, illusion, awareness conversion and memory.** While these purposes are interrelated, teachers need to be cognisant of them in planning for and providing learning opportunities in religion using art and in sharing and discussing art with children. The following table gives a brief overview of these elements

Particularity	Meaning	Revelation	Illusion	Awareness Conversion	Memory
The diverse ways in which we experience life – contextual understanding.	The capacity to connect with human experiences	The capacity to make connections between human and divine experiences	The capacity to make interpretations beyond the literal	The capacity to respond to art	The capacity of art to evoke memory.

Opportunities for engaging in Religious Education and the Arts exist within each of the five contexts of learning, namely play, real life, routines and transitions, investigating and focused teaching and learning,

## Learning and Teaching Suggestions



- Use the Arts as a means of expression and meaning making across all areas of learning. Use open ended questions and techniques to foster creative expression and informed critique e.g. use four resource questions in the *Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines for the Early Years* p.16 -17. Challenge children to develop an awareness of their roles and responsibilities in caring for others, artistic materials and working spaces e.g. setting up for and tidying up after art, care for the art, music, drama trolley/props
- Gain a sense of students' capacity in the Arts as quickly as possible
- Support and challenge students with learning opportunities that develop their diverse capacities.



- View students as capable young learners and provide them with interdependent roles and responsibilities allowing independence, self direction and responsibility.
- Scaffold and demonstrate a number of approaches to artistic expression providing clear structures to support student success and creativity. Focus less on structured tasks and provide a variety of materials to allow students wide choice for their own artistic expression.
- Foster art as a communal expression. This provides student with a sense of belonging, pride and ownership of quality artistic experience. Where possible provide artists with an audience and develop presentation skills. Model a sensitive approach in discussing artistic works; consult with the creator to determine influences and to fully interpret representations.
- Develop collaborative practices by situating students in pairs or small groups to encourage positive sharing of stories and life experiences, peer tutoring, modelling of artistic skills and expression, easy access to shared interpretations and responses. In such contexts, with support, students will come to realise that the personal experience of each individual is unique, and the expression of this should be respected. They will learn to review and develop familiar and new ways to work collaboratively, listen to each other and critique each others artistic representations respectfully
- Allow time for settling, silencing and reflective practices of review, visioning, contemplation, questioning, imagining, viewing and discussing each others' artistic representations. Allow for interpretation of the gaps in artistic expression which go beyond the literal. Encourage engagement with gaps which constantly invite, provoke, unsettle and support the deep self-involvement of artistic participants.
- Discuss the elements through which artists evoke a response the use of colour, design, texture, light, shade, space, symbols, movement etc.
- Provide opportunities through each of the five contexts for learning to use art as a means of expression when responding to and engaging with religious texts.

Note: Religious texts include: Scripture and moral stories, simple prayers, gestures, celebrations and expressions of belief, Religious symbols, artefacts, art and music



- Introduce vocabulary, ideas and processes that are associated with the Arts for student recognition and use– for teacher background, visit [http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/exploring/ballet/nw/lessons/teacher\\_pak/vocab\\_visual.pdf](http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/exploring/ballet/nw/lessons/teacher_pak/vocab_visual.pdf)
- Model ways to use and reuse existing artistic works e.g. develop artistic works from one time and context to meet new purposes. This demonstrates to students the capacity for artistic expression to be reshaped and evolve.



## Some Useful Resources



### Scripture and Other Sacred Stories

- The story of creation (Genesis 1:1-3)
- God and His Creations: Tales from the Old Testament by Marcia Williams
- Noah (Genesis 6-7)



### Film

- Creation Celebration (2001) 23 mins
- Hermie: A common caterpillar (2003) 40 mins
- Dottie and Buzz (2004) 50 mins
- God's Wacky Animals (1997) 30 mins
- All the Colours of the Early (1997) 7 mins
- Nature's Landscapes (1993) 60 mins
- Possum Magic (2001) 11 mins
- Where the forest meets the Sea (1987) 10 mins
- Bobtales (1997) 65 mins



### Poster/Art

(available through the BCEC Multimedia Centre)

- Story Cards Set 2 Redemptorist Publications, Hampshire UK
- Two By Two
- Exploring The Environment
- Creation Poster Set - Catholic Archdiocese Of Melbourne



### Children's Literature

- All Things Bright and Beautiful. Cecil Frances Alexander
- Lucky Me! Lucky You! Beryl Ayers
- Patterns of Australia. Bronwyn Bancroft
- Gurangatch and Mirragan. Alex Barlow
- Draw Me A Star. Eric Carle
- So Close Your Eyes and Just Imagine. Garry Fleming
- Nature Speaks. Peter Garland
- Luke's Way of Looking Matt Ottley



### Music

- Wherever I Go (2004),
- Great Big God for Preschoolers (2005)
- A very, very, very big God (2004)
- Gospelling to the Beat 2 (1998)
- Five Little Ladybugs (1997)
- All the World is Sacred (1996)



### Websites

- A range of creation stories: [www.magictails.com/creationlinks.html](http://www.magictails.com/creationlinks.html)
- The story of Creation as well as activities and games with popular characters Dottie and Buzz: [www.dottieandbuzz.co.uk/](http://www.dottieandbuzz.co.uk/)
- A child friendly exploration on art and its place in religion: [www.request.org.uk/infants/art/art01.htm](http://www.request.org.uk/infants/art/art01.htm)
- An extensive list of links for Religious Art, preferably for use as a teaching resource: <http://catholic-resources.org/Art/>
- A fabulous resource coving a wide range of ideas and strategies for teaching art to children: <http://www.goshen.edu/art/ed/art-ed-links.html>