



Religious Education

Religious Education
and Language
Learning and
Communication

Archdiocese of Brisbane



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Religious Education and Language Learning and Communication

Support Resource Writers

Margaret Connors
Mark Elliott
Brisbane Catholic Education Centre

Bernadette Judd
Sharon Clark
Emma San Martin
Grace Bone
Sue Stevenson
Nicole Russo
Brisbane Catholic Education

Support Resource Series Editing

Patrick Lavercombe
Jane Connolly
Brisbane Catholic Education Centre

Support Resource Project Coordinators

Mark Elliott and Kerry Rush
Catholic Schools Religious Education Support Team
Brisbane Catholic Education

Acknowledgements

Rev. David Pascoe
Archdiocesan Censor
Maureen Truasheim, Graeme Barry, Kay Cantwell
Brisbane Catholic Education Centre
Jan Grajczonek
ACU Brisbane



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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 Language Learning and Communication Organising Ideas

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



RE and Health and Physical Learning Organising Ideas

- Making Choices
- Understanding Consequences
- Health and Spiritual Wellbeing



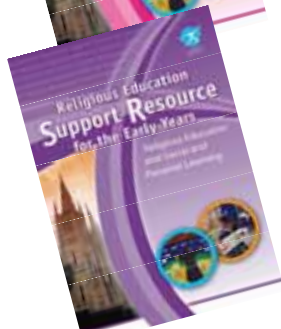
RE and Active Learning Processes Organising Ideas

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



RE and Early Mathematical Understandings Organising Ideas

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

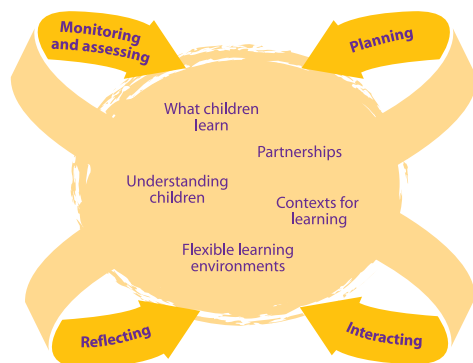


RE and Social and Personal Learning Organising Ideas

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

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, and monitor and assess.



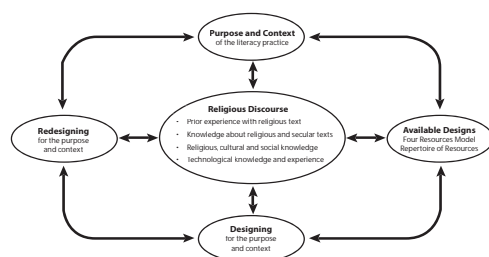
Learning Framework and Roles for Lifelong Learners

Teaching and learning 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 teaching and learning.

Model for Developing Religious Literacy

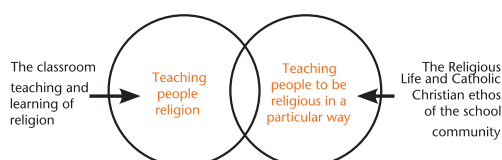
In the context of the early years, a core component of the Model for Developing Religious Literacy is the Available Designs phase. During this phase, teachers prepare activities for learners using the Four Resources Model and its four elements of Code Breaker, Meaning Maker, Text User and Text Analyst 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: Religious Education	Religious Education Learning Statements
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>
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.
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>
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 Language Learning and Communication (RE LLC)

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.

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

This statement describes the ways in which students engage with a range of religious texts to expand their oral language and early literacy to develop and inform:

- religious understanding
- a capacity to construct, communicate and interpret meaning for a range of religious purposes and contexts
- a capacity to speak and listen, to read and view, to write and shape text including religious text
- use of language, its patterns and conventions in texts including religious texts
- concepts of print, phonemic awareness and alphabetical knowledge in texts, including religious texts.

Religious Education and Language Learning and Communication

Learning Statement Overview

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. (RE LLC)

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

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:

- explore, learn and use new religious vocabulary for a range of religious purposes in oral and early literacy modes e.g. to make meaning, to worship, to inspire, to thank and praise, to say sorry and reconcile, to celebrate, to help, to show compassion, to bring peace, to glorify God
- explore simple patterns and conventions in religious stories, prayers and celebrations
- interact, listen attentively and respond to others when engaging with religious texts
- predict possible scenarios, endings or consequences of religious stories
- investigate the text and explore its meaning by completing a simple analysis of a religious text to e.g. use names, ideas and messages in scripture stories, in drawings, prayers and plays
- exchange information and ideas by listening for, and using, explanations, descriptions and prior experiences to make meaning of religious texts
- use religious texts for particular purposes
- experiment through drawing, early reading, viewing, shaping and writing, their emerging understandings of religious texts.

Suggestions for interacting

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

- create word-rich environments for a range of religious purposes that assist early learners to make meaning of religious texts
- make explicit some simple patterns and conventions, while engaging with religious stories, prayers and celebrations
- provide opportunities for students to listen and respond in diverse ways to religious texts
- respond to students' personal experience and imagination to encourage predictions within and beyond religious texts
- model ways of helping students extend their understanding of elements, characters and events in a religious story
- provide environments that encourage and support students' sharing of information and ideas emerging from religious texts
- work along side students as they use religious texts for diverse purposes
- involve students in producing multi-modal texts that demonstrate their emerging understandings of religious texts.

Suggestions for monitoring and assessing

Suggestions for monitoring and assessing

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

- can use spoken, signed or augmentative meaning obscure strategies for religious purposes
- can identify some simple patterns and conventions in religious texts
- responds in diverse ways to simple questions about oral religious texts
- in collaboration, predicts scenarios, endings or consequences within and beyond religious texts
- expresses in diverse ways, their emerging understanding of elements, characters and events in religious stories
- is extending vocabulary and sentence structures to compare, classify, explain, describe, imagine and recount events, while making meaning of religious texts
- with support, uses parts of a religious text for a particular purpose, uses parts of a religious text for a particular purpose
- shows evidence of experimenting with letters, words, symbols and/or drawings in multi-modal form to express their emerging understandings of religious texts.

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.

Teachers gather evidence about a student's learning through the five learning contexts: play, real-life situations, investigations, routines and transitions and focused learning and teaching.

Suggestions for reflecting

Adults and students might reflect on the following questions relevant to this learning statement:

What words could you use to pray?

How did you share a Bible story with others?

Are Bible stories like other stories?

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.

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Rubric for Religious Education and Language Learning and Communication

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

Becoming Aware	Exploring	Making Connections	Applying	Links Level 1
<p>With explicit support, the student participates in early literate practices* involving religious texts.</p> <p><i>* Oral language, reading and viewing, writing and shaping.</i></p>	<p>With support, the student experiments with early literate practices to make meaning in religious texts.</p>	<p>With prompts, the student begins to use early literate practices to make meaning, represent and communicate about religious texts.</p>	<p>The student uses and applies for particular purposes, codes and conventions of early literacy, to interpret messages in religious texts.</p>	<p>S1.1 Students use textual features to explore information and ideas in familiar scriptural texts.</p> <p>S1.2 Students gather and record information about people, places and things in scriptural texts.</p> <p>S1.3 Students share and compare their ideas, feelings and experiences in interpreting familiar scriptural texts.</p> <p>C1.1 Students compare ideas and experiences of rituals, prayers, words and actions in the sacraments of the Church.</p> <p>C1.2 Students express ideas and feelings about experiences of prayers and rituals.</p> <p>M1.1 Students examine actions described in religious and other texts to identify messages about morality.</p> <p>B1.1 Students illustrate personal understandings of Christian beliefs to express their ideas about God and life.</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 forty-one Religious Education Modules for Years 1-10. When a strategy has been suggested, it is identified in bold print with the information logo ⓘ. For further information regarding how to adapt 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 the 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:

Scripture and Moral Stories: Story of Mary and Martha

Students explore, learn and use new religious vocabulary for a range of religious purposes [RE LLC (a)]
Students interact, listen attentively and respond to others when engaging with religious texts [RE LLC (c)]
Students investigate the text and explore its meaning by completing a simple analysis of a religious text [RE LLC (e)]

Student Responsive Curriculum: A Possible Scenario

Prior to school recommencing the local parish had organised a fresh produce market day to raise money for Caritas. This provoked much discussion and interest from students in a prep classroom. Students identified the types of produce on sale, what their parents had bought and which foods they enjoyed eating. The teaching and learning ideas that followed provided opportunities for students to explore some food stories in the New Testament and to imagine what a market place might have been like in the time of Jesus. Students planned a class market day that tried to replicate the market place that Mary and Martha might have visited to source food in preparation for the visit of Jesus.

Teacher Background on the story of *Mary and Martha*

This Text, which is found only in Luke's gospel, occurs within the travel narrative (Luke 9:51-19:27) which begins and ends with passages that focus on the theme of hospitality, specifically in relation to how Jesus and his disciples are received (9:52-56; 10:4-11; 19:1-10). The theme of travel is underlined in verse 38 with the opening phrase, "Now as they went on their way..." Inexplicably, the disciples disappear. In the next phrase, Jesus is alone when he enters a 'certain village' where a 'certain woman' named Martha welcomes him into her home. The specific verb used for 'welcome' (*hypodechomai*) occurs again in Luke only in 19:6 where Zacchaeus welcomes Jesus into his home. Thus we are invited to see Martha as among those who offer respite to Jesus and are responsive to his word. It is important to note that Martha is described as the householder.

In verse 39 we are introduced to Mary. As the verse begins, the story continues to be told in reference to Martha: "She had a sister ..." . This signals that Martha is the one on whom we should keep our focus. The sum total of what we are told about Mary is contained in what follows: she sits at the feet of the Lord listening to his word. The expression "to sit at the feet" describes the relationship between a disciple and teacher (see Acts 22:3), underlined here by the reference to Jesus as "Lord" and the observation that Mary was listening to "his word." Mary is presented as a model for those who, in Luke, are admonished to "listen" to Jesus (8:18; 9:35).

It is Mary's focused attention on the word of Jesus that becomes the pivot point around which the story revolves. The crisis occurs in verse 40. Martha, in contrast to her sister who is sitting quietly and listening, is "distracted by her many tasks". Anyone who has watched others sit 'idly by' while dashing around trying to get done whatever it is that needs to get done will immediately identify with Martha (as the storyteller intends!). The secondary status of Mary as "Martha's sister" may nudge our resentment further: isn't it Mary's responsibility to help her sister? Others may warm to Mary: good for her for taking a break from her many tasks in order to listen and learn.

Martha approaches Jesus (whom she calls "Lord") and asks for his assistance. The verb for "approach" occurs frequently in Luke-Acts to denote an encounter with the divine presence (2:9, 38; 4:39; 21:34; 24:4; Acts 12:7; 23:11). The use of this verb, coupled with the title "Lord," suggests that Martha, like Mary, is being described in words intended to signal discipleship. This is important if we are to avoid inappropriate contrasts between Martha and Mary. Martha, who initially welcomed Jesus, continues to be described as a faithful follower of Jesus too.

There are a variety of ways in which we can hear Martha's request for help: is it a demand? A prayer? A whine? A 'last resort' cry for help? Her question of Jesus, "do you not care?," combined with her complaint that Mary has "left me alone" reveal that Martha feels abandoned, not only by Mary but also by Jesus. It is important to Martha not only that she have Mary's assistance, but also that Jesus take notice of her distress and her need. The threefold repetition of "me" language underlines Martha's self-absorption in her own slice of reality, as well as her sense of isolation.

It is a very human response. As yet, the narrator has not told us with what Martha is preoccupied. Indeed, it is never made explicit. It is reasonable to assume she was involved in preparing a meal.

The story concludes with Jesus' pronouncement. The repetition of Martha's name implies a rebuke, however harsh or mild. Jesus begins by echoing Martha's own words, affirming that she is "worried and distracted by many things". This places Martha's concerns within the larger context of God's world view. It also cautions us against dismissing Martha too readily, since we are likely to face an equal challenge in following Jesus' message. Earlier, Martha asked Jesus to rebuke Mary; Jesus turns this request around stating that only one thing is necessary, the "better part" which Mary has chosen and which will not be taken from her (echoing 8:18). Within the context of Luke's Gospel, this "one thing" is single-minded devotion to Jesus.

This is signaled by another story within the travel narrative, the story of the rich ruler who asks Jesus what he must do to inherit eternal life. Jesus tells him to obey the commandments. When the ruler responds that he has, Jesus tells him that he lacks "one thing": he must sell what he owns, giving all to the poor, and then follow Jesus (18:18). In order to do this, the ruler will have to become like those who "do not worry about your life ..." (12:22); by implication, like Mary.

But what about Martha? Is she, like the ruler, left behind? Probably not. If we hear this story within the context of the community of faith, we hear echoes of the struggle to be faithful to the demands of ministry, and, in that ministry to be faithful to Jesus. It is not a matter of one or the other. It is learning to hold both Martha and her sister Mary in dynamic tension.

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 (the story of Mary and Martha) 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*).

Scripture and Moral Stories: *Mary and Martha Story*

Play

- Encourage socio-dramatic play by providing students with a variety of ideas and props to construct a scene from the village of Bethany, the home of Mary and Martha - cardboard houses, play animals, a water well built from blocks, small figures or Lego people to represent soldiers, farmers, market stall keepers, tax collectors, women collecting water from the well, market stalls built from blocks, the town gates etc.
- Provide students with props to enable them to create a home corner representing the home of Mary and Martha. Provide common props such as old tea towels for head wear, tunics, clay lamps, simple pots, plates, mugs, scrolls and toy coins.
- Display images and examples of homes, furniture and utensils from the time of Jesus. These might include a low table, a bowl and towels at the door for the washing of the feet, a cardboard box for an oven.
- Using strategies such as the **Giant Puppet Strategy** ① to provide resources and opportunities for students to retell the story of Mary and Martha.
- Encourage students to engage in role play as Mary and Martha visiting the village market place to purchase food in preparation for the visit of Jesus.



Real Life

- Provide opportunities to rehearse and practise how to invite and welcome guests to the classroom.
- Students design and create posters that show how to welcome people - greeting (friendly face, friendly voice), during the visit (listening, engaging, being present to the guest) and farewelling (thanking, walking the guest to the door).
- Students reflect on times they have been a special guest using the **Y Chart Strategy** ① and use that information to plan for the arrival of a special guest to the classroom.
- Visit a local fruit and vegetable market as a real life experience of community places and spaces.
- Plan a class market day that tries to replicate the marketplace that Mary and Martha may have visited to source food. Tasks might include sourcing the produce (growing vegetables or bringing some from home), setting up stalls, creating costumes, organising play money, preparing food for display and sale (chopping cucumber, washing grapes, breaking flat bread), making calico drawstring purses for money for the market place, creating baskets using cardboard and arranging tables and organising food in groups (fruit, vegetables, seeds, legumes).
- Create a sequential digital record of the preparations for the market day (digital photos, video).
- Re-create the Mary and Martha meal by preparing to share a meal using the produce from the market place.
- Design a table cloth or place mats that might be used for the sharing of this meal and other special class meal gatherings (printing a calico cloth with potato prints or hand prints, weaving pieces of cloth or paper to create place mats).



Investigation



- Investigate aspects of Mary and Martha's life with their own using a **Flip Book Strategy ①** (e.g. what they ate/what we eat, where they sourced food/where we source food, what their house was like/what our houses are like, what they wore/what we wear).
- Investigate ways of constructing and maintaining a vegetable garden.
- Explore how Mary and Martha would have welcomed Jesus to their house using a ritual of washing feet.
- Students access and use information about houses in bible times to build a typical house using available materials.
- Provide opportunities for students to respond to the story using the five senses (guided meditation) - what would you have seen in the story? What would have you heard/tasted/smelt/ touched?



Routines and Transitions

- Practise greetings and giving thanks to classroom visitors.
- Encourage students to wash hands before preparing food or eating.
- Learn simple prayers to say before meals.
- Create a class set of rules for listening to others.

Focused Teaching and Learning

- Explore the story of Mary and Martha using a variety of spoken, written, visual and multimedia modes (bible text, oral recount, Claymation, rebus story, DVD).
- Use a Big Book version of the Mary and Martha story, discussing illustrations using the **5Ws and H Strategy ①**
- Sequence the story using digital images.
- Illustrate a part of the story and describe what is happening to an adult helper who then transcribes into print text.
- Use giant puppets to retell the story.
- Teach the **Echo Mime Strategy ①** and film an echo mime presentation of the story.

Case Study

Scripture and Moral Stories: *Story of Mary and Martha*

Meet Grace Bone. Grace is the prep teacher at Our Lady of the Way School, Petrie. Grace has a great love of scripture and invites her students to enter into the stories of Jesus and investigate the contexts in which the stories are recorded. Grace places great emphasis on empowering students to plan and create real life responses to the stories explored.

This case study has been designed as a photo story depicting a variety of learning opportunities for students.



- ◀ Drawing the facial expressions of Jesus on paper plates
- ▼ Using the paper plate expressions to retell the Mary and Martha story



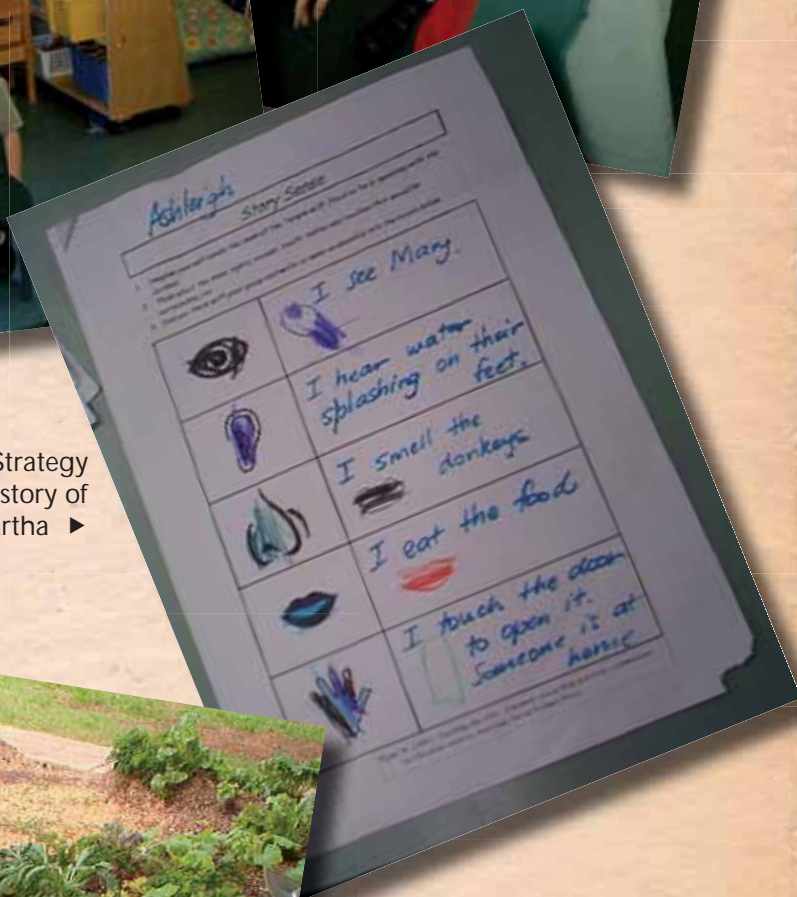
- ◀ Using the paper plate expressions to retell the Mary and Martha story

Dramatising the Mary and Martha story ►

▼ Dramatising the Mary and Martha story



Using the Story Sense Strategy to respond to the story of Mary and Martha ►



◀ Prep students working in the school market garden



◀ Retell of the story of Mary and Martha

Class shared meal using foods from the time of Jesus, some of which were produced in the school market garden ▶



◀ Class shared meal using foods from the time of Jesus, some of which were produced in the school market garden



Caring for the school market garden ▶



Getting Started:

Scripture and Moral Stories: Feeding of the Five Thousand Story

Students explore, learn and use new religious vocabulary for a range of religious purposes [RE LLC (a)]
Students interact, listen attentively and respond to others when engaging with religious texts [RE LLC (c)]
Students investigate the text and explore its meaning by completing a simple analysis of a religious text [RE LLC (e)]

Student Responsive Curriculum

All children love a picnic and real life experiences that include their family and friends. The children's knowledge and personal picnic experiences was a great launching tool to generate interest and a connection to Jesus' life and an introductory understanding of gospel stories, specifically the feeding of the 5000.

Teacher Background for the *Feeding of the Five Thousand Story*

Miracle Stories in the Gospels

The miracle stories of the New Testament can be divided into four fairly distinct groupings: healing miracles, exorcisms, nature miracles and restoration miracles. Put simply, each of the four groupings might be described as follows:

- Healing miracles (curing of physical impairments and illnesses)
- Exorcisms (casting out demons and unclean spirits)
- Nature miracles (calming storms, feeding the multitudes . . .)
- Restoration miracles (raising the dead, restoring to life)

It is important to note that contemporary readers of Scripture would place exorcisms within the healing miracles grouping. To a person living in the first century, anyone with a bodily discharge or suffering an epileptic fit would be viewed as being possessed by an unclean spirit. A more sophisticated understanding would suggest that this is, in reality, a medical condition and not the existence of a demon or spirit.

The Feeding Stories clearly fit into the *Nature Miracles* category. The table below describes some of the other nature miracles featured in the gospels.

Nature Miracles in the Gospels

Story	Mark	Matthew	Luke	John
Catching Unusually Many Fish in the Sea of Galilee			5:1-11	[cf. 21:1]
Stilling a Storm on the Sea of Galilee	4:35-41	8:23-27	8:22-25	
Feeding Five Thousand People	6:32-44	14:13-21	9:10b-17	6:1-15
Walking on the Water	6:45-52	14:22-33		6:16-21
Feeding Four Thousand People	8:1-10	15:32-39		
Finding a Coin in the Mouth of a Fish		17:24-27		
Cursing a Fig Tree near Bethany	11:12-14	21:18-19		
Turning Water into Wine at a Wedding in Cana				2:1-11
Catching Numerous Fish at the Sea of Tiberias			[cf. 5:1]	21:1-14

Before reading the background information provided for this story, take some time to consider the following questions that a reader might ask himself or herself of this text:

Where else in the Bible will you find this story?

Jesus Feeds the Five Thousand (Matthew 14:13-21)

Where might this story have taken place?

¹³When Jesus heard what had happened, he withdrew by boat privately to a solitary place. Hearing of this, the crowds followed him on foot from the towns. ¹⁴When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion for them and healed their sick.

Why do you think Matthew calls them "the crowds" and not "the crowd"?

¹⁵As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food."

What do you think Jesus meant by that?

¹⁶Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat."

What kind of bread was it?

¹⁷"We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered.

¹⁸"Bring them here to me," he said. ¹⁹And he directed the people to sit down on the grass.

Where else in the NT does Jesus say words like these?

Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve baskets full of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children.

Different Feeding Stories

The Feeding Stories appear in the gospels in a number of places. The Feeding of the Five Thousand is recorded in Mark 6:35-44, Luke 9:12-17, and John 6:1-14. The Feeding of the Four Thousand is recorded in Matthew 15:32-39 and Mark 8:1-10.

Whilst these are presented as miraculous events, they are much more than that and are intended to lead us deeper than the mere surface events themselves. Remember, when teaching scripture, the question to ask is not so much, *Did this really happen?* But more importantly, *What does this text mean?*

According to the narrative of the Gospels, the first event (the feeding of the five thousand) happened after Jesus had been teaching in an area away from the towns, and insisted that the people be fed where they were, rather than sending them to the nearest towns. The synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark and Luke) state that the location was a “desert place” near Bethsaida, while John’s gospel does not state a specific location, only specifying that it was very grassy.

All four gospels report that, upon investigating the provisions of the crowd, the disciples were only able to find 5 loaves of bread and 2 fish, and the Gospel of John adds that these came from a single boy in the crowd. The Gospels state that Jesus blessed the food, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, who distributed it to the people present - 5000 not counting women and children - all of them being fed. The disciples, therefore, distributed great multitudes of food among the people, much more than the original 5 loaves and 2 fish, implying that Jesus miraculously created more food. The Gospels also state that after the meal was over, the disciples collected the scraps, filling 12 baskets.

According to Mark and Matthew, the second event (feeding of the four thousand) occurred when Jesus was teaching a crowd of about 4000, not including women and children, in a remote location. As before, Jesus is described as taking the few provisions available, and giving grace, before distributing them amongst the crowd. In this event there are 7 loaves and an unspecified number of fish, and 7 baskets of scraps are collected. The two feeding stories have long been thought to have had hidden meaning, particularly due to Mark’s later cryptic reference to them. In early times the feeding of the 5000 with 5 loaves was interpreted as being a reference to the five books of the Torah *feeding* the Jews, with the 12 scraps being the 12 tribes of Israel or more usually the 12 disciples who, after Judaism, were *left over*. These explanations are somewhat speculative because, for example, at the time of the gospel writing, the Torah was not conceived as five books but rather one book.

To understand this miracle we need to remember the social and cultural context of the time. Those present really formed a significant number of smaller crowds or family groups. Many scholars interpret this miracle as Jesus’ persuasive capacity to encourage inward-looking family groups to share the food they had with other family groups. In teaching this story to younger students the focus needs to be less on the physicality of the miracle and much more on the bigger picture themes implicit in the text such as discipleship (what it means to be a leader/follower), compassion and empathy (looking after the needs of those different from myself) and meal hospitality (sharing food and time with others).

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 (the Feeding of the Five Thousand) 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*).

Scripture and Moral Messages: *Feeding of the Five Thousand*

Play

- Using puppets to retell the story.
- Using stimulus material in the play corner, students set up for picnics. This might also happen outdoors. Provide baskets, small blankets, plastic plates and mugs, toy tea sets and play food, dolls and teddies.
- Provide opportunities for students to create and dress up in biblical clothes.
- Dress dolls and teddies as biblical characters using small strips of material, tunics, tea towels.
- Students engage in imaginative interaction with puppets representing characters in the *Feeding of the Five Thousand* story. What questions would they ask Jesus?
- Students role play what it might be like to share a picnic with a big group of people outdoors.



Real Life



- Use a picnic basket to initiate discussion about picnics. Place a picnic basket on a rug in the middle of the sharing circle. Students predict what may be inside the basket. Explore the contents of the basket and name or list the contents.
- Engage the students in discussions about personal experiences of family picnics (Mother's day) and school picnics (Grandparent's Day, Under 8s celebration, Sports day picnics).
- Create recounts of personal experiences of picnics using photos and photo story of school events. Alternatively, students find pictures from magazines and catalogues of groups of people eating in different social contexts.
- Add teddies sitting around the picnic basket. Talk about their experiences of a Teddy Bears' Picnic. Use the story and the song to discuss what a Teddy Bears' Picnic would look like/sound like/feel like – Y Chart.
- Place the *Big Bible Story Book* (see resource list) on a picnic blanket opened at the story of "Jesus feeding the many." Lead into the discussion about the day when Jesus had an unplanned picnic with lots and lots of people. Listen to the story and discuss possible solutions to the problem.
- Consider what you might do if people arrived at a picnic with no food. How might this problem be solved?
- Plan a biblical times picnic with class buddies. Students create invitations and list things that will need to happen in preparation for the picnic.

Listen to literature based on a picnic experience (see resource list)



Investigation

- Students investigate picnics using the 5 Ws and 1 H strategy
 - What is the difference between a planned picnic and an unplanned picnic?
 - Who might be present?
 - Why might you go on a picnic?
 - Where could you go for a picnic?
 - How would you prepare for a picnic (set a day, choose a time, decide on what to eat, what to wear, what games to play or what to do)?
 - What could be the reason for a picnic e.g. a birthday celebration?
 - When is a good time for a picnic?



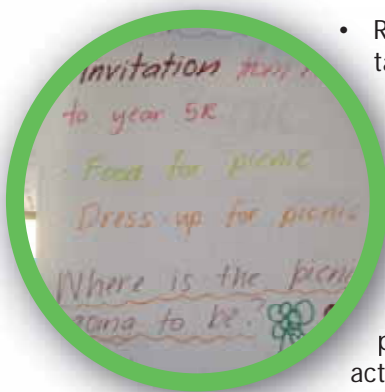
Apply the Four Resources Model to interpreting the Feeding of the Five Thousand story.

- What words are about people/places/things? (Code Breaking)
 - What do you think the characters were thinking and feeling? (Meaning Making)
 - How can we use words from this story to retell in another form? (Text User)
 - What do you think this story is trying to teach us? (Text Analyst)
- Investigate the story in different storytelling modes (DVD, Big Book, Bible picture story books) and discuss with students that this story originally comes from the Bible.
- Investigate necessary preparations for a shared picnic with their class buddies. Use a retrieval chart strategy to record what will happen before the picnic, during the picnic and after the picnic? How would we include good practices of caring for the environment at this picnic?



Routines and Transitions

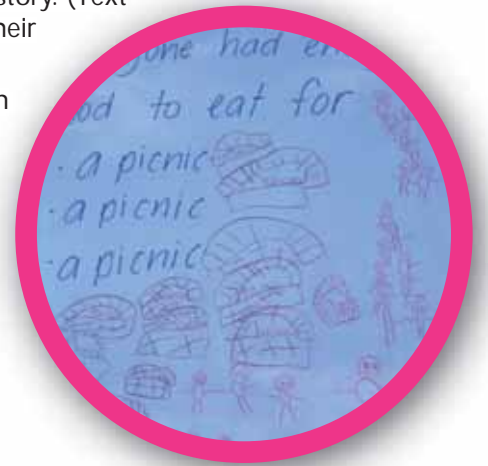
- Blessing prayers before eating and prayers of thanks at the end of lunch
- Reflection times after morning tea and lunch... Who did I share with? Did I take turns? What went well in the play?
- Reflection on the day... one good thing that happened today?
- Play games with students to teach how to share and take turns – waiting for your turn, inviting others to have their turn
- Negotiate with children the routines and transitions in the playground e.g. development of co planned rosters and lists of rotational activities with an emphasis on time frames e.g. ten pushes on the swing, 20 jumps on the trampoline
- Circle time to begin or conclude the day – sign of peace exchanged around the circle .. using the names of the person on your left e.g. N..... peace be with you.



Focused Teaching and Learning



- Use the Four Resources Model to explore multimodal texts about the Feeding of the Five Thousand story. For example, recognising significant words associated with sharing a meal – blessing, grace, please, thank you. (Code Breaker)
 - Capture digital images of shared meals and label according to people, places and things – chair, table, placemats. (Code Breaker)
 - Use the lighthouse strategy to explore the three levels of meaning in the story – literal, inferential, evaluative. (Meaning Maker)
 - After engaging with a visual version of the text (film, images) express feelings and discuss messages relating to the story. (Meaning Maker)
 - Use words from the original text and the student's own language to create a big book retelling of the story. (Text User) This book will be shared with their guests at the Class Buddy Picnic.
- Use information from the text to emphasise the Christian concept that it is in giving that we receive.
- Teach simple prayers for praying grace before and after sharing a meal.
- Group construction of a simple Echo Mime of the story with appropriate actions.
- Teach the social behaviours associated with sharing – managing emotions, positive interactions, using appropriate language, inviting collaboration. Y Chart, Role playing scenarios



Case Study

Scripture and Moral Stories: *Feeding of the Five Thousand (The Big Picnic)*

Background

Meet Sharon Clark and Bernadette Judd. Sharon is teaching prep for the first time at St Matthew's Primary School, Cornubia. Bernadette a prep teacher currently in an acting APRE position. Bernadette and Sharon collaborated to plan the teaching and learning sequence called *The Big Picnic* which was based on the feeding of the five thousand story.

The prep children at St Matthew's had recently been involved in a Grandparents Day picnic and an Under Eights school day picnic. The picnic theme provided an excellent stimulus for introducing the feeding of the five thousand story.

The Learning Story

A large cane picnic basket was used as a prop throughout the picnic exploration. Guessing the basket's contents each day intrigued the children and really captured their interest and imagination. By starting with a familiar topic that the children liked and could relate to helped draw them into the gospel story of "The Feeding of the 5000". By reflecting on the gospel story and making comparisons to a real life event that the children enjoyed was very effective.

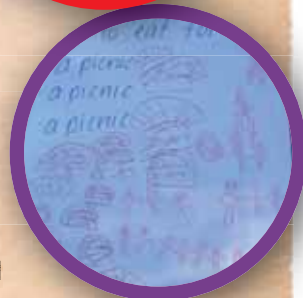
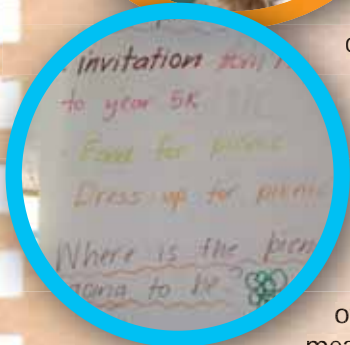
The children were very knowledgeable about picnics and were easily engaged in brainstorming and sharing ideas and experiences when completing the 5w's and H charts on their own picnics and teddy picnics. It was a little harder for them to complete the chart about a picnic in Jesus' time so the class decided to investigate the life of Jesus before making comparisons. The children found information on the clothes, food, games and modes of transport in Jesus' time. They then used their prior experience of picnics and new knowledge of Jesus' time to make meaning out of the Jesus day picnic in the feeding of the five thousand story [RE LLC f].

After their investigations the children planned to have their own picnic day and share the information they had learnt with others. The Year 5 buddy class was invited to the picnic day.

The preps created a plan and listed jobs to be done for their picnic. The focus of the picnic was to share what the preps had learnt about living in the times of Jesus with their buddies; to retell the "Feeding of the 5000" story; to share a meal and join in prayer before and after the meal.

The preps created their own Big Book version of the feeding of the five thousand story. The children contributed to the text and illustrations, they also made up actions for the repetitive text. [RE LLC c, e & h] A picnic prayer for use before the meal and after the meal was decided upon to teach to the buddies. Actions were included in the ritual [RE LLC a & b]. A list of Jesus day clothes, food and games were chosen for the picnic. A picnic destination was decided upon and invitations were made and delivered to the buddies.

The picnic day was a huge success. The activity was simple to plan and execute, yet effective and meaningful for the children and parents who participated.



Getting Started:

Scripture and Moral Stories: The Last Supper

Students explore, learn and use new religious vocabulary for a range of religious purposes [RE LLC (a)]
Students interact, listen attentively and respond to others when engaging with religious texts.[RE LLC (c)]
Students investigate the text and explore its meaning by completing a simple analysis of a religious text [RE LLC (e)]

Student Responsive Curriculum: A Possible Scenario

A Year One class was actively engaged in investigating healthy foods and healthy living. A brainstorm session about when and where meals can be shared uncovered many ideas about different celebrations as well as different locations for sharing food. A student whose sister had recently received the Sacrament of Holy Communion shared her experience of this occasion and the family celebration that followed.

We used this student's experience to make a scriptural connection with what we were investigating about healthy food and eating. We read the Last Supper story in a variety of bibles to introduce the connections between what happens in our church now, and what happened in the time of Jesus.

Teacher Background

The Last Supper

The Last Supper is one of several major events in the life of Jesus that are recorded in the New Testament. The Last Supper is a description of the last meal Jesus had with his disciples prior to his arrest and crucifixion. The Last Supper is described in three of the four New Testament Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. In Luke's gospel, Jesus predicts he will suffer soon after this meal and it will be his last meal prior to finishing his work on behalf of the kingdom of God (Luke 22:15-16). Second, Jesus gives his followers symbols of remembrance for His body and His blood sacrificed on behalf of all mankind. *"And He took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them saying, 'This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me'"* (Luke 22:19). Third, Jesus provides a very important principle for living a Christian life: the greatest are those who serve others, not those who expect to be served (Luke 22:26).

The Last Supper was held on the evening of preparation for the Jewish Passover, a holy time for the Jewish people in remembrance of when God spared the Jews from the plague of death on every firstborn child in Egypt. Jesus arranged the dinner purposely by instructing his disciples where to host it. His twelve disciples were with him during and after the meal. It is here that Jesus makes the prediction that Peter will deny knowing him three times before the rooster crows that morning, which became true. Jesus also predicts that one disciple, Judas Iscariot, will betray Him, which also became true. The Last Supper was a gathering for Christ to fellowship with his disciples one last time prior to His arrest and crucifixion. For Catholic Christians it forms the foundation of the celebration of the eucharist.

Eucharist

Vatican II described the sacrament of Eucharist as, among the liturgies of the Church, 'the source and summit of the Christian life' (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, I, 10*). The primary elements of the Eucharist are bread and wine, symbolic of basic nourishment for life. These core symbols, however, require the necessary interrelationship of the other symbols of the Eucharist: the presider, the Word and the gathered community. By invocation of the Holy Spirit, Jesus, who is the Bread of Life, is present sacramentally. Christians are fed at this table of the Lord.

The word 'Eucharist' is derived from a Greek word meaning 'thanksgiving'. This key concept of thanksgiving is at the heart of Eucharist. It is linked to the Jewish feast of Passover, when the people of Israel gathered as community to remember God's presence in their history, Yahweh's compassion for them in their suffering, their oppression and their persecution and particularly during their liberation from slavery in Egypt and their Exodus and journey through the desert to the Promised Land. Jesus and his disciples ate a Passover meal together before Jesus' passion and death and elements of *thanksgiving, memorial, sacrifice, community and presence*, characteristic of the Passover Meal, have taken on renewed meaning and significance in the Eucharist, focused as it is on the celebration of the Paschal Mystery, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. So in the Eucharist, as a Christian people, followers of Jesus Christ, we give thanks.

Jesus at the Last Supper said “Do this in memory of me” and in the Eucharist as *memorial* we call to mind Christ’s life, death and resurrection. The *presence* of Jesus, the risen Christ, is in the Eucharist in the bread ‘broken’ and the wine ‘poured out’. Jesus is present in the Scriptures, the Word of God proclaimed. Jesus is present in the community of his followers gathered together. Finally, Jesus is present in the person of the priest presiding at the celebration of Eucharist. The understanding of Eucharist as *sacrifice* calls to mind Hebrew understandings of sacrifice in the Old Testament where blood on the altar and on the people signified God’s life. Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, the pouring out of his blood, represented the total giving of his life in love for humankind.

The Christian concept of sacrifice is life giving and relational. The sacrifice of the Mass confronts us all with the real cost of becoming the community of Christ in today’s world. It is the sacrificing of ourselves on behalf of others. The Hebrew people powerfully experienced the presence of God in community. Having been delivered from slavery, they committed themselves to live together as a just and unified nation. Eucharist as *community* is best reflected in service of others and in seeking justice. In the Gospel of John the Last Supper is focused on Jesus washing the feet of the disciples. Jesus says: “So, if I your Lord and teacher have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another’s feet.” (John 13:14).

Washing of the Feet

The religious practice of washing feet appears to be found in the hospitality customs of ancient civilizations, especially where sandals were the chief footwear. A host would provide water for guests to wash their feet, serve the guests by washing their feet, or even provide a servant to wash the feet of the guests. This is mentioned in several places in the Old Testament (e.g. Genesis 18:4; 19:2; 24:32; 43:24; I Samuel 25:41; et al.), as well as other religious and historical documents. A typical Eastern host might bow, greet, and kiss his guest, then offer water to wash his feet. Though the wearing of sandals might necessitate washing the feet, the water was also offered as a courtesy even when shoes were worn.

Christian churches observe foot washing on the basis of the authoritative example of Jesus in John’s account (John 13:1-15). In the Catholic Church the ritual washing of feet is now associated with the liturgy of Holy Thursday, the day that celebrates in a special way the Last Supper of Jesus, before which he washed the feet of his twelve apostles.

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 (the story of the Last Supper) 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).

Scripture and Moral Stories: *The Last Supper*

Students explore, learn and use new religious vocabulary for a range of religious purposes [RE LLC (a)]
Students interact, listen attentively and respond to others when engaging with religious texts.[RE LLC (c)]
Students investigate the text and explore its meaning by completing a simple analysis of a religious text [RE LLC (e)]

Play

- Provide plastic bowls, bread, cups, dolls, battery operated candles and hand towels for use in role play of the Last Supper in the play corner.
- Provide Lego and play dough for the students to create the meal scene and characters from the story of The Last Supper.
- Use strips of cloth and biblical clothing for dressing of dolls to recreate characters.
- Retell parts of the Last Supper story with felt or magnetic story pieces.
 - Decorate paper plates and cups for use in role play.
- Provide children's bibles, paper, colours and staplers for students to create their own books of the bible story. Encourage students to share these in Story Time.
 - Use blocks and large cardboard boxes for the students to make the table from the Last Supper.
 - Role play washing of feet and sharing a meal.
 - Provide a love heart template for the students to trace and make heart shaped notes to take home or give to friends.
 - Invite students to be the photographer for the day to capture images from the play corner to show the story of the Last Supper. These photos can be printed and made into a Story Board or used to create a PowerPoint presentation.



Real Life

- After reading the story of the Last Supper, brainstorm ways in which Jesus shares his love for us.
- Ask the students to draw one or two people who show love for them in their daily lives by e.g. making lunch for them, taking them to school, helping them learn, listening to them when they are upset.
- Use the **Think Pair Share Strategy** ⓘ to answer the question of 'What do we do to show others we love them?'
- Create message cards that they students can take home regularly to tell parents that they love them. The cards might be 'promise' cards, 'I love you and I promise I will try to ...' that the students can complete and give to their loved one.
- Provide opportunities for the students to tell stories and share memories just as the disciples would have done with Jesus at the Last Supper. The students may choose to use photos, pictures or props. These can be used to create a Memory Wall.



- Invite the Parish priest or APRE to talk to the students about the washing of feet that may take place in a school Holy Week celebration or liturgy.
- Visit the church and gather around the altar. Discuss how and why people gather to celebrate the Eucharist.
- Create and laminate placemats showing the phrase 'Love One Another'. Encourage the students to illustrate ways that they show love for others on the placemat. The placemat can be taken home for sharing and discussion at family meal times.
- Engage the students in discussions about what we wear on our feet for protection. Look at different images of biblical footwear.
- Design and create shoes from leather or vinyl strips.
- Create footprints.
- Invite the students to contribute memories of shared special meals and events such as farewells and anniversaries. Use the **5Ws + H strategy** ① to show the key features of these meals or events.
- Discuss the preparations necessary when going on a journey. Read books about preparation and journeys. Encourage students to share stories of going on a journey or holiday. Did they go for a long time? Did they have a farewell party? If they were going away, who would they invite? What would they eat? How would they let their friends know they will miss them?
- Involve the students in making a variety of breads.
- Plan a Bread Sharing celebration. Students create invitations for their parents. Bread that the students have made can be broken, passed around and shared. At the celebration the students wash and massage oil into their parent's hands, telling them, *Thank you for loving me*

Investigation

- Investigate footwear in the times of Jesus and the dry dusty countryside that people journeyed through.
- Compare the different versions of the story of the Last Supper in the bible, and in different bibles.
- Use visual literacy skills and questions to explore artistic representations of the Last Supper. Create works of art depicting the Last Supper to be displayed in the classroom or around the school/church.
- Explore the custom of welcoming. Why did people in Jesus' time wash feet?
- Perform a Google search for images of biblical footwear and biblical landscapes to identify the way that people in Jesus' time travelled. Compare this to how we travel now.
- Investigate different types of breads and the foods that would have been eaten at the Last Supper.
- Discover the types of utensils that would have been used. What would they have used for lighting? What would the table have looked like? What would they have sat on? Provide boxes and construction materials for the students to create some of these items.
- Jesus was Jewish. Discuss the types of food that would have been eaten at the Last Supper.



Routines and Transitions

- Create a Sacred Space area including the symbols of a large jug, a bowl of water and a towel to stimulate discussion.
- Plan the Sacred Space. What will go in it? Where will it be? Where will the bible go?
- Encourage taking turns at school, e.g. listening to one another, tidying up, handing out lunch boxes at meal times.



- Discuss and practise appropriate greetings, welcoming of visitors, goodbye and thank you.
- Encourage the wiping of feet on a mat before entering the classroom. Make connections with this and the washing of feet.
- Involve the students in saying grace before meals.
- Practise washing of hands before meals.
- Engage the students in a prayer circle at the end of each day. Each student turns to the child next to them and says, 'Jesus loves you'. Invite the students to share what they have done to show someone they love them.
- Focused Teaching and Learning
- Use Story Cards of the Last Supper to understand and make connections with the bible stories.

• Stimulate conversation after sharing the story from the bible, by asking the following questions – Who was at the meal? Who was the leader at the meal? What were some of the special words said? Who was there and what did they look like? What was the place like? What happened at the meal? What did they eat? What did they drink? What did the meal look like? What did the disciples learn from Jesus? Who do we learn from at home? Who do we learn from at school?

Case Study

Scripture and Moral Stories: *The Last Supper*

Background

Meet Emma San Martin. Emma teaches year one at Assisi Catholic College, Upper Coomera. Emma's case study describes how she involved the children in a variety of teaching and learning experiences based on the key messages in the story of the Last Supper.



The Learning Story

After listening to the stories, the students participated in a Think Pair Share to discuss their ideas about the messages that Jesus was telling. We created character outlines on which we wrote the emotions that Jesus and the disciples may have been feeling. We discussed how we feel when someone we know goes away for work or holidays. We made a love heart shaped poster of the message, 'Love One Another'.

Together we created a Mind Map of the parts of the story that we wanted to investigate and understand further. We created a Word and Picture Wall from the key words and characters from the different bible versions of the Last Supper.



The students were encouraged to bring items and photos from home to assist them in sharing their stories of family celebrations, including the preparation in which they may have been involved for these celebrations. After presenting their story with the class, the children's items then became part of our class Touch Table that the children explored during play time.



During play, the students made sponge puppets of Jesus and the disciples which they used to re-enact the story of the Last Supper. These puppets were then used as a class resource for everyone to share during retells and during further readings of the Last Supper story as students brought their own bibles from home.

We discussed one of the key elements of the Last Supper story being the Washing of the Feet and that Jesus' message was to look after and care for each other. The students

experienced the act of washing feet by dressing in costume as Jesus and the disciples, and taking turns to wash and dry each other's feet. During our afternoon reflection, the students shared how it felt when their friends did this for them. We talked about who cares for us at school and home, and shared ideas about what the students could do to help the people who care for them.



We investigated different types of footwear to make connections with the story of the washing of feet. We examined images of biblical landscapes on the internet and discussed what it would have been like to travel on the dusty and rocky paths. Some students designed and created their own pair of biblical footwear from card board that they wore in the sand pit to experience the sand and dirt on their feet. We used this opportunity to reinforce the mathematical concepts of left/right, and measurement. A pair of these sandals was made for use as a symbol in our Sacred Space.



The students used Play Dough to create the Last Supper scene drawing on images we explored in a variety of children's bibles as well as internet searches.

A variety of different children's bibles were made available for the students to use for ideas to create their own picture story of the Last Supper. The students made their own booklets that were then shared with the class and displayed in our Sacred



Space for each other to look at and use. Some students utilised the word wall to add text to their stories.



Drawing on the message, 'Love One Another' and connecting it with the act of sharing a meal, the students made placemats with art work depicting ways they show others that they love them. This placemat was used each day when we had Munch and Crunch. While eating their fruit, the children took turns to share something they had done that day to show their friends or family that they love them. Later in the term, the students took the placemats home and were encouraged to use them during family meal times to discuss how, as a family, they show that they love one another.

As Jesus had shared a meal and stories with his friends, together the class planned for a prayer experience to share bread and stories to remember good times. We planned to make bread and also purchase unleavened 'flat' bread for the prayer experience. The students illustrated a love heart shaped message to show what their loved ones do to make them feel loved. The students contributed to writing the procedure for making bread and we had a morning of baking. We selected photos taken during each of our activities to create a Photo Story of The Last Supper. We used this Photo Story as a reflection in our prayer experience. During the prayer experience, the students took turns to break bread and share their story about times when they feel love as they had illustrated on their love heart. These love hearts then went home as a gift to the students families. The students each made a promise about what they would do regularly for a loved one to show their love.



Some Useful Resources for Scripture and Moral Stories

(including Mary and Martha, Feeding of the Five Thousand and The Last Supper)



Scripture and Other Sacred Stories

- The Feeding of the Five Thousand (John 6:8-15)
- Mary and Martha (Luke 10:37-39)
- The Last Supper (Luke 22:7-20; Matthew 26: 17-30-; Mark 14:22-26; 1Corinthians 10:23-26)
- The Big Bible Storybook ISBN 978 1 84437 228 0
- Big Books: James Goold House Publications Melbourne
 - Jesus and his Kingdom
 - Jesus and the Starving Crowd
 - The Last Supper
 - Jesus Cares for People



Film (all available from BCEC Multimedia Centre)

- Jesus for Kids DVD
- Jesus Grows Up/Jesus: What he said, what he did – DVD
- Easter Stories VHS/Kit



Poster/Art (available from the BCEC Multimedia centre)

- Story Cards Set 1 Redemptorist Publications, Hampshire UK
- Story Cards Set 3 Redemptorist Publications, Hampshire UK



Children's Literature

- The Lighthouse Keepers Picnic *Ronda & David Armitage*
- Ebb and Flo and the Greedy Gulls *Jane Simmons*
- Squeak's Good Idea *Max Eilenberg*
- The Picnic *Chris Barnes*
- Let's Eat! *Ana Zamorano (explores understanding of togetherness –The Last Supper)*
- I Will Not Never Eat a Tomato *Lauren Child*
- Froggy Eats Out *Jonathan London*
- Harvey the Baker *Lars Kinting*
- The Friday Nights of Nana *Amy Hest*



Music

- Stories and Songs of Jesus Sr Paule Freeburg (Compact Disc and Book)
- More stories and Songs of Jesus Sr Paule Freeburg (Compact Disc and Book)
- Great Gifts (compact disc kit) Willow publishing
- Great Times with Jesus (compact disc kit) Willow publishing



Websites

- <http://infants.reonline.org.uk/>
This interactive website for young students allows them to find out about God, the Bible, Church, Following Jesus and Family Life

Getting Started:

Prayers and Celebrations

Students explore, learn and use new religious vocabulary for a range of religious purposes in oral and early literacy modes e.g. to make meaning, to worship, to inspire, to thank and praise, to say sorry and reconcile, to celebrate, to help, to show compassion, to bring peace, to glorify God [RE LLC (a)].

Students explore simple patterns and conventions in prayers and celebrations [RE LLC (b)].

Students interact, listen attentively and respond to others when engaging with religious texts [RE LLC (c)].

Students use religious texts for particular purposes [RE LLC (g)].

Student Responsive Curriculum

Prayer and celebration is a daily feature of the early years classroom. Younger students should be encouraged to ritualise and celebrate the big and small events of their lives from losing a tooth to celebrating a 5th or 6th birthday. The following planning ideas and suggestions attempt to cover a variety of possible experiences in the year of a younger student.

Teacher Background

In the early years classroom, prayer may take any form and serve any purpose and is perhaps best described as prayer that does not fit under headings of liturgical or traditional prayer. It is characterised by:

- immediacy rather than being time bound
- creativity and fluidity in form rather than regulated by structure or mandated protocols and rubrics
- spontaneous in response to life situations rather than constrained within the confines of a pre-determined formula or template
- informality rather than formality in celebration, formed from within and led by members of the celebrating community, rather than imposed from without and led by official celebrants
- personal rather than institutional
- relational rather than obligated or procedural.

Spontaneous prayer is frequently more liberated in expression because of the context in which it is celebrated. In schools where many students no longer have a familiarity with formal and liturgical prayer, spontaneous prayer services offer a level of entry into a prayer life that is based on their life experience. But while spontaneous prayer is free to take on a wider range of forms and contexts than set liturgical prayer, it still remains prayer and should contain the basic elements of sacred ritual. (See below)

Sacred Spaces for Sacred Rituals

A 'sacred space' is not only to be equated with a holy or religious space. Neither should the term 'sacred ritual' name only that which is identifiably religious because clues that can be used to assist one to understand or be reminded of God can be found in the created world, in interpersonal and intra-personal relationships and in one's daily life. A prayer or sacred space therefore need not be a church or modelled on the layout of a church any more than a prayer or ritual needs be presided over by a priest or deacon or prepared by an 'expert'. The "realm of the sacred" can also be found in homes, schools and everyday places, people, things and events. These ordinary places, people and things can be used as 'markers' to engender a relationship and understanding of God.

A prayer space for any occasion should be adequate in size, simply and aesthetically prepared, dignified and worthy. Markers such as symbolic, decorative and practical items to signal that something special is about to take place in this space can be used. Such items may include a cross, a scented candle, special furniture or decorations, water, flowers or plants, coloured cloths or banners, the Bible and appropriate music or any number of symbols which suggest an encounter with the sacred. While these may require explanation in the learning context of the classroom, they should by their very placement, composition, colour and symbolism, be allowed to speak clearly for themselves in the ritual space and time. These items must be chosen and used appropriately for the unique prayer context. Certain markers, however, may need to be used consistently and

frequently, especially for more formal and official prayer contexts such as in the Mass, as they are an “instantly recognisable part of a predictable pattern” (Margaret Bick 1998:27) and engender a sense of security and continuity over time.

Sacred Rituals

Rituals are co-evolved (worked on together) symbolic acts. A ritual includes not only the ceremonial aspects of the actual presentation or performance, but the process of preparing for it and responding to it. They may or may not include words, but do have both open (changeable) and closed (unchanging) parts which are “held” together by a *guiding metaphor (or theme or purpose)*. Repetition can be part of rituals, either through the content (words, songs, actions), form (the order of the ceremony & roles) or the occasion. There should be enough space in rituals for the incorporation of *multiple meanings* by various members and leaders as well as a *variety of levels of participation*.

Characteristics of Rituals include:

- Special time/s
- Special place/s
- Special symbols
- Special dress
- Special action/s
- Special music/sounds/words
- Special people
- Special relationships, roles.

Symbols for Sacred Spaces

Symbols are the building blocks of rituals. It is critical that symbols connect and fit with the participants of a ritual. In many cases, participants should be able to connect with/choose from a variety of symbols. Symbols give rituals the power to provide multiple meanings and different levels of participation for individuals and groups.

Symbolic markers for rituals include objects such as water because it can symbolise cleansing or life and candles, because they provide light in the darkness just as Christ is described as the light of the world. A symbol is known to be such if, as something physical, concrete and material, it points beyond itself to another reality, belief or thought, such as a spiritual belief of God's love or Christ's light, without losing its own identity. In ritual, symbols may contain as many meanings as there are participants, but this is all part of their power and purpose.

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 (prayers and celebrations in the early years classroom) 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*).

Prayers and Celebrations

Play



- After a visit to the Church, students recreate in the play space their own idea of the Church and some things they have seen. Provide some props (e.g. stole, alb, altar).
 - Provide a Children's Bible, or Bible Story Cards, coloured scarves and battery operated candles so that students can build a play sacred space.
 - Provide students with props that encourage role play of celebratory events (e.g. wedding, birthday, baptism).
 - Role play giving a gift, receiving a gift, using the words Thank You, saying goodbye and thanks at the end of the celebration.
 - Provide props for students to role play big and small events in their lives such as first sleep over; riding a bike; birthday; turning 5 or 6; losing teeth, new baby; grandparents; holidays.

Real Life

- Talk about times we celebrate with our families, our friends and our community e.g. birthdays, Christmas, Easter, anniversaries, graduations, a new baby, new job, school fete, sports break ups. What happens? What do we need to do to prepare for these occasions? Invitations, shopping, cooking etc. Who comes to the celebrations? What do we talk about? What do we do? Rituals of lighting candles, singing Happy Birthday, cutting the cake, giving of presents, Making a toast etc.
- Explore and create symbols of celebrations using collage e.g. streamers, balloons, signs, cards, gift bags and boxes, birthday candles, pretend presents.
- Brainstorm and list times of celebration in the school community e.g. school masses, class liturgies, feast days, sports days, special days of significance, under eights week.
- Set up a prayer place or a sacred space in the classroom. Explore symbols such as coloured cloth reflecting the season of the liturgical year, cross, candle, images, Bible.
- Create a class prayer cloth, quilt or banner e.g. handprints or names of students.



Investigations

- Listen to stories about when Jesus prayed. Where did he pray? Who was with him?
- Lead students in making a retrieval chart about what happened at a school prayer celebration... singing, music, people reading from the Bible, the priest or principal talking to everyone about God or Jesus, older children carrying symbols, dramatisation of a story from the Bible, dance.
- Make a list of what we need for morning prayer.
- Draw or paint or collage a representation of a family celebration.

- Bring along photos of a family celebration e.g. Christmas, Birthday etc. Scribe for students a description of what is happening in the photo and make a *Family Celebrations* display. Students could present their photo to the class and retell what the special event was and what happened.
- Find pictures from magazines that show people celebrating.
- Play a game "Guess the Celebration" using clues - words or the miming of actions e.g. blowing out the candles.
- Plan for celebrations e.g. blessing for mothers, Grandparents Day etc.

Routines and Transitions

- Establish routines for gathering for prayer – around the class prayer mat, prayer circle.
- Sequence the steps involved in creating the sacred space in the middle of the Prayer Circle. Students are chosen to reverently place the coloured cloth or prayer mat, the unlit candle, the cross, the Bible.
- Develop a ritual for lighting the candle - coming to a silence and stillness and watching the flame grow.
- Change the liturgical colours in the classroom sacred space to match the season (Lent/Green; Easter/White etc).
- Design different prayer mats for special occasions e.g. birthday, sports day.
- Teach breathing techniques to calm the body and bring about stillness.
- Teach students how and when to close their eyes in preparation for prayer.
- Use guided meditations and visualisations as a calming tool for after outdoor play.
- Use instrumental music for relaxation times and rest times.
- Pass the Bible around the prayer circle.
- Pass the cross around the circle.
- Hold a prayer stone ... pass it on to the beat of a simple sacred song.



Focussed Teaching and Learning



- Use simple prayer and hymn structures e.g. Sign of the Cross, Amen.
Demonstrate by showing students a cross and looking at how we can trace this shape upon ourselves. Naming the parts of the body that we touch to do this. Talk about what this special prayer reminds us of –God loves us very much; Jesus is our friend; the Holy Spirit is our helper.
 - Teach students about different ways to pray.
 - Use Circle Thank You Prayers. Students sit in a circle taking turns to pray a prayer of thanksgiving. The teacher models this and gives the structure e.g. Thank you God for
 - Use images of creation as a stimulus for children to compose simple prayers of thanks.
 - Place photos of children on a large class Prayer Dice. Roll the dice and pray simple prayers for the child - Thank you God for N..... or May God bless N.....
- Develop simple Signs of Peace to use at the end of the day.
- Explore with students the meaning of the greeting used to welcome visitors e.g. God bless you, Peace be with you.
- Use simple echo prayers based on the *You Who Do Through* structure. Teacher to read each part of the prayer and students to echo.
- Pray simple prayers of Intercession e.g. *For peace in our world ... Lord hear us.*
- Learn some of the simple liturgical responses e.g. *The Lord be with you - And also with you. The Word of the Lord - Thanks be to God. Lord hear us - Lord hear our prayer.*
- Make a class *Big Book of Prayers* that can go home with the children for family prayer. Families add a prayer and illustrate a family page.

Case Study

Prayers and Celebrations

Meet Nicole Russo. Nicole is a prep teacher at Mary Mackillop School, Birkdale. Nicole is passionate about involving students in a variety of prayer experiences and empowers her students to have a shared ownership in planning for prayers and celebrations. Nicole has provided a range of ideas and suggestions for integrating prayers and celebrations into the life of the early years classroom.



Setting a Sacred Space



When calling young children to pray it is important that they are calm yet engaged. Asking children to set the sacred space as part of the prayer ritual gives the children ownership. In a prep classroom the teacher lays the coloured cloth onto the floor in the middle of the circle. Quiet music is playing in the background as she holds up sacred items such as a candle, Bible or cross and asks 'Why would we place this on our sacred space?'

A child will raise their hand with the appropriate answer and in return is asked to place this item on the mat. This continues until all items are placed and the candle is ready to be lit as a sign that prayer is about to begin.



Monitoring Learning in Religious Education: Liturgical Celebrations

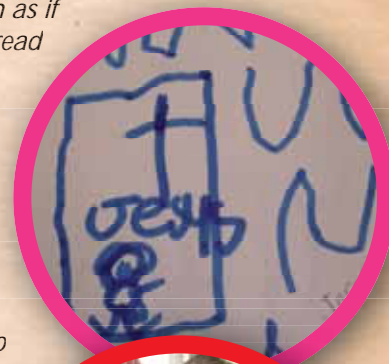
Through a class focus on 'The Easter Story' a prep student made a book about the Easter Story. The teacher observation entry is below:



Robert was reading his Jesus book to me that he had made. He was following the lines that he had drawn as if they were words. He followed each line and read the following to me.

Jesus rode into Jerusalem on a donkey. Some people didn't like him because he wouldn't stop teaching about God. So they dragged him away. Some people made fun of him and killed him.

Jesus was dead. Then the people were sad. They rolled a big rock in the tomb and then the next week the body was gone. Jesus had gone to heaven.



Praying with Prep Parents

In prep, parents are invited to share prayer with the class one morning every week. These prayer circles may be a time to celebrate events like Mother's Day or Grandparent's Day or they may be a themed prayer like Mary MacKillop or Under the Sea. Parents are invited to sit in a circle with the children and share a prayer as well.



The Prayer Circle format that I use is:

- Setting up the sacred space
- Lighting the candle
- Sign of the Cross
- Bible Story
- Children/Parents share a prayer as a special cross or rock is passed around the circle.
- Song
- Final Prayer
- Sign of the Cross



The form of the prayer circle varies depending on the theme or event being celebrated. For Mother's Day the children passed the cross around thanking God for their Mothers and after they each took a flower from the prayer circle and handed it to their Mothers saying 'Thank you God for my Mother. For our Under the Sea Prayer children thanked God for sea creatures or asked God to continue to care for these wonderful creatures.

The Mary MacKillop Cross is a symbol that is passed around the circle during prayer.

The Mary MacKillop Cross is a symbol that is used in all classes P – 7 and is also given as gifts to people in the wider community who are sick or are experiencing difficult times.



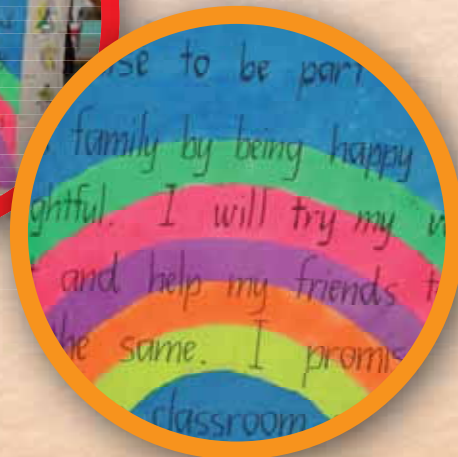
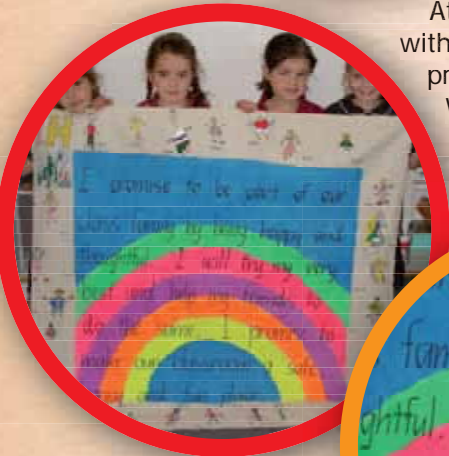
As part of a Celebration and Prayer unit, year 3 students planned, prepared and presented their own Prayer Circle. The students selected their own Bible story, song, prayer and personal sacred space items for this task.

Students invited their parents to join them on their special day.



Creating a Class Prayer Cloth

At Mary MacKillop a Year 1 class created their own prayer cloth with their class promise written in the middle. Each class wrote a class promise at the beginning of the year and presented these on a Whole School Promise Assembly.



Some Useful Resources for Prayers and Celebrations



Scripture and Other Sacred Stories

- The Big Bible Storybook
Praying as Jesus did (Matthew 6: 8-12)
Jesus' prayer (Luke 11:2-4)



Film (available from the BCEC Multimedia Centre)

- The Best of Little Children DVD
- Dottie and Buzz VHS/Kit
- Milo the Mantis Who Wouldn't Pray DVD
- Prayer Bear DVD
- Introducing Sarah and Paul DVD
- Little Things: Serving God DVD
- Move! Celebrate! Pray! Music and Movement for Religious Education DVD Kit John Burland



Poster/Art (available from the BCEC Multimedia centre)

- Traditional Prayers



Children's Literature

- Special Days with Honey and Bear *Ursula Dubosarsky*
- Happy Birthday x 3 *Libby Gleeson*
- Jack's Little Party *Bob Graham*
- A Birthday for Frances *Russell Hoban*
- Alfie Gives a Hand *Shirley Hughes*
- Let the Celebrations Begin! *Margaret Wild*
- Seven More Sleeps *Margaret Wild*
- Mr Rabbit and the Lovely Present *Charlotte Zolotan*
- Children's Everyday Prayer Book: For Four to Seven Year Olds *Sophie Price*
- Prayers for Children *Eloise Wilkin*
- First Prayers Paragon Books Ltd
- Prayers I Pray written and compiled by *Margaret Cummins*
- Glimpses of Heaven written and composed by *Lois Rock*



Music

- Great Times with Jesus – *Willow Publishing*
- A Morning Prayer **Andrew Chinn**
- Go Now in Peace *Andrew Chinn*
- Grace Before Meals *Andrew Chinn*
- Let's Celebrate CD Kit *John Burland*
- Let's Celebrate Too CD Kit *John Burland*



Websites

- Prayer http://www.refuel.org.uk/curric/infant_topics/
- Faith in the Home <http://www.request.org.uk/infants/faithhome/home00.htm>

Getting Started:

Church, Seasons and Sacraments

Students explore, learn and use new religious vocabulary for a range of religious purposes in oral and early literacy modes e.g. to make meaning, to worship, to inspire, to thank and praise, to say sorry and reconcile, to celebrate, to help, to show compassion, to bring peace, to glorify God [RE LLC (a)].

Students interact, listen attentively and respond to others when engaging with religious texts [RE LLC (c)]. Students exchange information and ideas by listening for, and using, explanations, descriptions and prior experiences to make meaning of religious texts [RE LLC (f)].

Students experiment through drawing, early reading, viewing, shaping and writing, their emerging understandings of religious texts [RE LLC (h)].

Student Responsive Curriculum

Recognition and celebration of the Church's liturgical calendar is a regular feature of the early years classroom. Similarly, younger students can make a wonderful contribution to the sacramental life of the school and local parish particularly when older students are preparing to receive the sacraments of initiation. The sacrament of Baptism is given emphasis in the early years. In this section we explore some learning and teaching ideas that are focused on church, seasons and sacraments.

Teacher Background on Church Celebrations

In modern use, the word *celebrate* has strong overtones of festivity and joyful partying. Christians use the word celebrate in its original sense of marking an important event with solemn ritual. For Christians, celebration is at the heart of worship. Church communities gather to worship God and to celebrate their life in Christ. Hence Christians celebrate a Baptism, a wedding or a funeral. The Church marks important occasions in the life of the community and its members with various celebrations. For Catholics, celebration of the sacraments have first place, especially the Sunday celebration of Eucharist. Catholics also participate in various prayer services and processions to celebrate the liturgical seasons and saints' days. The Church is a community that expresses its faith and relationship with God through celebration.

The Church teaches that creatures depend upon God for existence and meaning. Human beings, therefore, have a basic duty to acknowledge this dependence through worship. Worship is an act of reverence and honour shown to God. It encompasses dimensions of adoration, praise, thanksgiving, love and petition. It is both a personal and a community act. Worship can be expressed in many ways. Prayer is one of the most common forms. Because worship deals with the spiritual dimension of life, symbol and ritual are appropriate modes of expression. Through symbol and ritual, Christians express their identity as a worshipping community and participate together in one of the deepest human activities.

The Church's liturgy embodies the basic elements of good celebration. These same elements can be found in secular celebrations as diverse as university graduation and birthday or wedding festivities.

Christians gather. A celebration brings people together. It is a means of expressing what is precious or important to a group. This coming together often involves people in actively preparing the celebration. It also fosters reconciliation, as differences are put aside to allow all to join fully in the celebration.

Christians engage in dialogue. Good celebration gives a voice to all. It allows participants to listen to expressions of meaning and appreciation. It provides a means for each person present to respond and to contribute to the corporate statement of what is being celebrated.

Christians share. Good celebration involves communion in what is being celebrated. This is commonly achieved through symbolic activities, such as a meal or other ritual act. For example, baptism symbolises sharing in Christ's death and resurrection through a ritual of immersion in water.

Christians are sent forth on mission. A community recognises that what it celebrates is of value to others and wishes to make it available to them. Good celebration voices this and usually concludes with a challenge to all present to take the fruit of celebration into the world to others.

A Christian's relationship with God has two dimensions: the personal and the communal. Each Christian needs to foster a personal relationship with God through prayer and a life lived in response to God's grace. But we are also social beings, bound together in various communities that ultimately depend on God for their wellbeing. Church membership provides an important means for expressing and nourishing this social dimension of worship. The Church exists to continue Christ's mission to proclaim and act for the reign of God in the world. The evangelising activity and the worship of the Church are oriented to making the reign of God real and active in the world. As they worship together, Christians gratefully express the supreme value of Christ to humanity, renew their own faith and relationship with God and share in the saving effects of Christ's paschal mystery his life, death and resurrection. To be truly effective, celebration requires the meaningful and active participation of all present and the necessary education about and preparation for worship.

Teacher Background on Church Seasons (The Liturgical Year)

Each year, the Church celebrates its liturgy around a cycle of major themes and events associated with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, the Paschal Mystery. Advent reflects on humankind's need for a saviour and the Incarnation as God's response. Lent holds out Christ's insistent call to conversion and new life. Holy Week celebrates the climax of Jesus' saving action in his suffering, death and resurrection. The Easter season, concluding with Pentecost, explores the mystery of Christ's risen life shared by us in Baptism. Ordinary Time (the major part of the year) leads us to consider what it means to live the Christian life in today's world. The liturgy recalls and celebrates annually the central mysteries of Christian faith and applies them to daily life.

Whilst the central mystery of Christ is the primary focus of the Church's liturgy everywhere, place is given to celebration of a more local nature. Of importance is the annual celebration of saints' feast days in national, diocesan, parish and school contexts. Such celebrations can be accorded high priority and in some cultures, involve not only the liturgy, but also community festivities such as processions and carnivals. The liturgy also provides for community celebration of particular needs. In times of disaster or pressing need, the Church gathers in prayer to offer consolation and to ask divine help. Similarly, there are occasions for expressing gratitude, such as at harvest festival and on days of national remembrance (e.g. Anzac Day). Significant community events such as the opening of a new church, school, or hospital are accompanied by blessing ceremonies. The annual blessing of the fleet is important in some fishing communities. Each day within the Mass and Prayer of the Church, the Intercessions (or Prayers of the Faithful) give voice to the particular needs and circumstances of the celebrating community. Popular devotions also have a role in the local Church's life. The Rosary, Stations of the Cross, Eucharistic Devotion (which is part of the Church's formal liturgy) and Penance Services are examples. These are forms of affective prayer, which appeal to religious feelings and meet the spiritual needs of many people in a way the formal liturgy may not.

Teacher Background on Sacraments (Baptism, Confirmation and Eucharist)

Christian initiation for children is adapted to suit their age and needs. Baptism at infancy is normal. The basic practices of the faith are learned in the home as the child grows. At school age, more formal instruction begins with religious education. If the child and family are ready, at about seven years of age Confirmation and First Eucharist are celebrated at the same time. Education in faith is a life-long task and continues as the young person moves into adulthood and continues in their church ministry, which began with their initiation into the Church's mission at Baptism.

The Sacraments of Initiation are so named because all three of them are necessary for one to be a full member of the Christian community. Baptism is a re-birth of the individual into sharing the life of Christ. According to Church tradition, set free from sin, the baptised now becomes part of God's family. To carry on Christ's mission in the world, the Christian needs the gifts of the Holy Spirit that filled Christ in his lifetime. These are bestowed through Confirmation. The daily living of the gospel is not possible alone. It must be done in union with the whole Body of Christ and relying on the nourishment that God gives. First Communion introduces one to the Eucharist, which, especially among its liturgical celebrations, is the 'summit and source of the Church's life'.

Baptism as Welcoming

Each sacrament is an action of Jesus Christ working through the Church that is the Body of Christ. Thus, the Church acts sacramentally. It is a ritual through which God is present, touching the life of both the recipient and the faith community in some particular way. Baptism is a rich reality in which one is immersed (the Greek *baptizein*) into the life of the Risen Christ. This involves a death to sin and a rising to a new life as son or daughter of God.

The ceremony of Baptism expresses other aspects of the sacrament. It begins at the church door where the community gathers to welcome the candidate. After being named and marked with the sign of the cross, the candidate is led in a joyful procession of welcome into the church. There the community prays for its new member through intercessions, anoints against the power of evil and shares in a profession of their common faith. Sponsors are appointed from the community to assist the neophyte in taking up the responsibilities of membership.

Confirmation as Sealing

Confirmation (or Chrismation in the Eastern Church) is the sacrament through which the baptised are sealed with the gift of the Holy Spirit. The symbol of anointing with oil (chrism) is used. This points to one's consecration as a Christian: sharing more completely in the mission of Jesus and in the fullness of the Holy Spirit with which Jesus is filled. A seal is a sign of authority, of personal ownership. As such slaves and soldiers bore the seal of their master. Confirmation imparts a spiritual seal or character, which marks the Christian as belonging wholly to Christ. It calls one to share in Christ's priestly, prophetic and kingly mission.

Eucharist as Nourishing

No sacrament is richer in meaning and symbolism than the Eucharist. Vatican II described it as especially, among the liturgies of the Church, 'the source and summit of the Christian life' (*Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy, I, 10*). The primary elements of the Eucharist are bread and wine, symbolic of basic nourishment for life. These core symbols, however, require the necessary interrelationship of the other symbols of the Eucharist: the presider, the Word and the gathered community. By invocation of the Holy Spirit, Jesus, who is the Bread of Life, is present sacramentally. Christians are fed at this table of the Lord. The first fruit of their sacramental nourishment is a closer union with Christ. 'Those who eat my flesh and drink my blood abide in me, and I in them.' (John 6:56) Consequently, through Communion, one is bound more closely in charity to all who form the mystical Body of Christ. One is fortified against sin and strengthened to meet the challenges of the Christian life.

Not to be neglected is the nourishment received from the word of God that is proclaimed and broken open during the Mass. 'The Eucharistic table set for us is the table both of the Word of God and of the Body of the Lord.' (Vatican II) When the Scriptures are proclaimed in the community, Christ is present as God's Word, nourishing our minds and understanding, and deepening our faith.

Summary

Baptism, Confirmation and the first reception of Eucharist combine to form the Sacraments of Christian Initiation. Through them, one enters fully into the life of the Church. They are celebrated together for adults as the completion of the catechumenate – the lengthy process of preparation for Church membership. In the Eastern Church, they are also celebrated together in the case of infants. In the Western Church, it is customary to baptise infants; but Confirmation and Eucharist are delayed until later. It is becoming more common for the traditional order of the sacraments to be restored, with Confirmation preceding first Eucharist. Today it is also more common to test the intentions of those seeking Baptism for their children and to offer instruction to them by way of preparation. Thus, children, vicariously through their parents, experience those other elements of initiation that are incorporated into the adult initiation process.

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 (Church, Seasons and Sacraments) 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*).

Church, Seasons and Sacraments

Play

- Set up the home corner to represent inside the church. Students can create their own scenarios of Baptism, Marriage, school celebrations or Mass. Provide small basins or doll bath tubs, towels, white tunics, battery operated candles, plastic oil containers, dolls, certificates designed by the students.
- Role play celebrations and sacraments - e.g. act out a Baptism.
- Make decisions about names for the dolls or puppets in the home corner.
- Provide dress up clothes for playing people attending Church, baptisms, weddings, etc.
- Construct a plan of the church with 3D materials – e.g. wooden building blocks
- Use play dough to make things they have seen in the Church - e.g. cross, altar, font, tabernacle, chalice, statues. Place these inside the model of a Church building. Use Lego people for those involved in the celebration.
- Provide clothing (gowns, cord belts, stoles) for students who may wish to dress up as the priest.



Real Life



- Talk about what it means to belong to a family, a class, a school, a team, a church. Read children's literature with the theme of belonging - e.g. record feelings associated with the sense of belonging using faces and labels e.g. safe, happy, loved etc.
- Discuss with the students the name of the school and the parish. Look for where this is written and become familiar with the signs and logo/motto/image associated with the school and parish.
- Engage in conversation with students about times people go to church. Teacher to talk about own personal experiences and times the school goes to the church. Invite students to share about times that they may have gone to a church. List reasons people go to church e.g. to pray, to be baptised, to get married, for funerals, First Communion, for school prayers and liturgies, Sunday Mass.
- Talk about clothes people wear for special occasions or jobs that they do. Discuss school uniforms and colours. Link this to the special clothes that the priest will wear when celebrating in the Church.
- Plan for a prayer celebration in the Church - writing invitations, preparing food to share after the celebration, getting ready by knowing what is expected when we are in the church e.g. we stand, we sit, we listen, we sing, we pray, etc. Sequence the celebration using photos.

Investigation

- Investigate the symbols of Baptism by creating a Baptism Touch Table – a bowl of water, oils, a candle, a white robe, photos, certificate, etc.
- Invite children to bring videos, photos or memorabilia – e.g. Baptism clothes, Baptism candle, Baptismal certificate etc.

- Send home an interactive questionnaire for parents to discuss their child's Baptism Day.
- Invite the priest to visit the class and talk to the students about the jobs that he does. Have a photo of the Parish priest displayed with his name attached.
- Visit a church online and compare with the church in the parish.
- When visiting a church, gather around the Baptismal font and invite the students to dip their hands in the water and bless themselves with the water.
- Use a simple retrieval chart to enhance students' understanding of Baptism. What happens before a Baptism (parents choose name, organise a day, ask Godparents, invite family and friends, organise special clothes, buy gifts, prepare for the celebration)? What happens during a baptism (gathering, welcome, prayers, story from the Bible, pouring of water, words used by the priest, tracing of the cross, oil, lighting of candle from the Easter candle, promises)? What happens after a baptism (photos, party or celebration meal, gifts)?
- Explore with students the importance of names and how each of them came to be given the name they have. Discuss with them the importance of names. Talk about the meaning of your name and why your parents choose this name for you?
- Visit the church to complete a Church Search that investigates religious art, artefacts, icons and symbols. Review this investigation through a learning object or photo story. Arrange for the parish priest, APRE or parish worker to be present to show special clothes and sacred objects.
- Make a Big Book about the church using digital photos of features in the church e.g. cross, altar, lectern, Baptismal font, etc.

Routines and Transitions



- Trace the sign of the cross on foreheads
- Sitting and listening
- Making the sign of the cross
- Give the sign of peace in the Prayer Circle at the beginning/ end of the day.
- Stilling the body
- Incorporate simple liturgical responses into prayer - e.g. *The Lord be with you. And also with you.*
- Using the word *Amen*
- Blessing at the end of the day
- Using blessings for special occasions - e.g. birthday blessings, blessings for a new baby, blessings for mothers, fathers and grandparents

Focused Learning and Teaching

- Engage with diverse code breaking activities to learn new religious vocabulary associated with the sacrament of Baptism and the church building, both inside and out.
- Teach about the name of the school and the parish.
- Label objects found in the church.
- Retell the story of the visit to the church in a class Big Book. Use photos and/or children's illustrations.
- Teach about appropriate behaviours for when we are inside the church. Role play how we walk, sit, stand, etc.
- Prepare students for a meeting with the priest by informing them of his name and how to greet him. Explore with them titles that people have - e.g. Mr, Mrs, Miss, Doctor, Father. Talk about how people often have more than one name.
- Learning about the different colours that are used for the different liturgical seasons in our Church.
- Visit the church and look for the colour of the season .
- Create class prayer cloths to connect with the liturgical season - e.g. printing with different shades of green, collage with different shades of purple, tie dying calico in the appropriate colour.
- Prepare students to participate in whole school celebrations associated with liturgical seasons or special feast days - e.g. Ash Wednesday, Holy Week, Easter, Advent, School feast day, etc. Participation will need to be appropriate for their age level.

Case Study

Church, Seasons and Celebrations

Meet Sue Stevenson. Sue is a prep/year one teacher at Our Lady of the Way, Petrie. In this case study, Sue shares some teaching and learning ideas she has implemented that focus on Church and the sacrament of Baptism.



The Learning Story

On becoming members of the school community, the participation of early years students in school liturgical celebrations is gradually increased. Over time, students become interested in the church. The birth of a sibling, marriage of an aunt or uncle may also spark interest in church celebrations.

Some ideas for introducing young students to Church celebrations and the sacrament of Baptism:

- Brainstorm gathering and celebration times that we have with our family and friends and record on a people chain – e.g. birthdays, Christmas, Mothers day, Fathers day
- Write/draw characteristics of these celebrations - e.g. invitations, presents, balloons, singing, food, flowers, family, etc.
- Brainstorm special Church celebrations that students have experienced – Mass, liturgies, class prayer times. Write/draw the things that made them special - e.g. prayers, singing, Eucharist, family, etc.
- Identify similarities and differences of a secular celebration (birthday) and a religious celebration. Develop a word bank/picture bank of similarities/differences.
- We're going on a Church Search Activity. After reading My Christian Faith we went on a church search to identify characteristics of our local church and to name any similarities or differences between our church and the one depicted in the book. Students were encouraged to identify characteristics both inside and outside of the church building. They took digital photos of the church, sacred furnishings and images



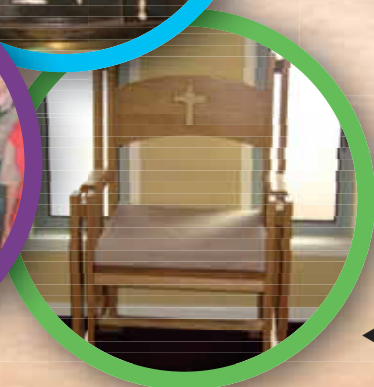
Photos taken by students were then labelled and displayed on a wall chart called *Our Church*



◀ The Tabernacle

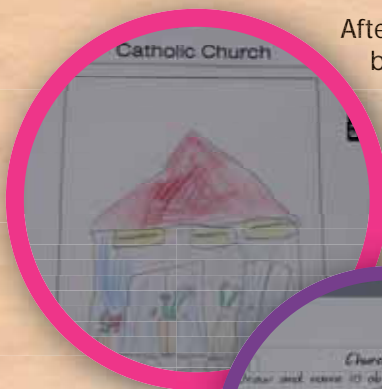


▲ The Baptismal Font

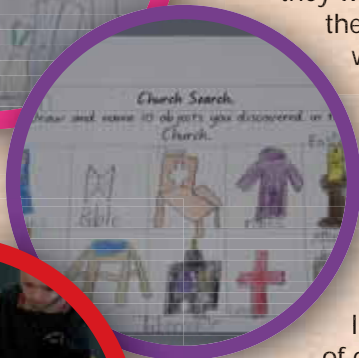


◀ The Presider's Chair

When we returned to class the children drew what they saw.



After reading *My Christian Faith* the children decided that they wanted a book about their own church – the church in *My Christian Faith* was very elaborate with stained glass windows, ornate lectern and large statues – nothing like our church! With the images we had collected on our church search the children, in small groups, selected images to be included in the book. After printing the pictures, the format of the book was discussed and agreed upon. Each group chose the images they would be working on and dictated the text (it was decided the adults should scribe as no-one could agree on the best writer in the group). After scribing the text, the children gradually decorated the pages with colour as we had printed the pictures in black and white.



These are an example of some of the pages that made up the big book.



Interest in church celebrations continued to grow as several opportunities for participation in whole school liturgies arose. The approaching Baptism of a sibling was of great interest. As we prepared for the Baptism, we began bringing objects to create a Baptism Touch Table. We watched some videos on Baptism and spoke to Father Peter about the symbols he would be using. We role played a Baptism



'Father Declan' poured water on the baby's head. The 'Godparents' were given a special candle. The 'parents' were very proud! 'Dad' Joshua declared that he wanted 13 children in his family!



Some Useful Resources for Church, Seasons and Sacraments



Scripture and Other Sacred Stories

- The Big Bible Storybook
John baptises Jesus (Matthew 3: 13-17)



Film

- A Tour of Our Parish Church VHS
- Dottie and Buzz VHS/Kit
- Dottie and Buzz Teacher's Guide and Activity Book



Poster/Art (available from the BCEC Multimedia centre)

- Baptism Poster Set Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne
- Baptism Posters Kathy Horan
- Together at Mass Poster Set Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne



Children's Literature

- Things I do in Church *Julie Stiegemeyer*
- Things I see in Church *Julie Stiegemeyer*
- Things I hear in Church *Julie Stiegemeyer*
- Do you still love me? *Charlotte Middleton* (explores theme of belonging)
- Little Humpty *Margaret Wild* (explores the significance of community gathering)
- Water Come Down! The Day you were Baptised *Walter Wangerin*
- My Baptism Book *Sophie Piper*
- Things I see at Baptism *Julie Stiegemeyer*



Music

- Celebrating the Sacraments *John Burland*
- We are the Church *Christopher Walker*
- Great Gifts *Willow Publications*
- Great Times with Jesus *Willow Publications*
- The Water of Life *Michael Mangan*
- Yes Lord I Believe *John Burland*



Websites

- Church Search Learning Object (see the Multimedia Centre website)
- Church Buildings <http://www.request.org.uk/infants/buildings/building00.htm>
- Church Buildings <http://infants.reonline.org.uk/>
- Church Building <http://tre.ngfl.gov.uk/uploads/materials/17275/churchmatch.swf>
- Church Building <http://www.request.org.uk/infants/infants.htm>
- Kit out a Priest http://www.ukpriest.org/interact_fuzzy.htm
- Dottie and Buzz <http://www.dottieandbuzz.co.uk/>