Religious Education Support Resource for the Early Years

Religious Education and Social and Personal Learning
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Religious Education and Active Learning Processes

Support Resource Writers
Kerry Rush
Anne Marie Pigott
Mark Elliott
Brisbane Catholic Education Centre

Support Resource Series Editing
Kay Cantwell
Graeme Barry
Brisbane Catholic Education

Support Resource Project Coordinators
Kerry Rush
Mark Elliott
Catholic Schools Religious Education Support Team
Brisbane Catholic Education

Acknowledgements
Rev. David Pascoe
Archdiocesan Censors
Maureen Truasheim, Graeme Barry, Kay Cantwell, Kerry Rush
Brisbane Catholic Education
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 Social and Personal Learning Organising Ideas
- Love and Compassion
- Reconciliation and Peace
- Respecting Ourselves and Others

RE and Health and Physical Learning Organising Ideas
- Making Choices
- Understanding Consequences
- Health and Spiritual Wellbeing

RE and Language Learning and Communication Organising Ideas
- Scripture and Moral Stories
- Prayers and Celebrations
- Church, Seasons and Sacraments

RE and Early Mathematical Understanding Organising Ideas
- Patterns & Sequences, Movements and Directions in Religious Texts
- Attributes and Quantities in Biblical Stories
- Spatial Understandings in Prayer and Celebration

RE and Active learning Processes Organising Ideas
- Planning & Problem Solving
- Awe and Wonder and Care for Creation
- Religion and Art
Models and Frameworks for Religious Education: Early Years

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

### Curriculum Decision Making Model

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

### Learning Framework and Roles for Lifelong Learners

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*.

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<th>Early Learning Areas - ELAS Queensland Studies Authority</th>
<th>Early Learning Areas: Religious Education</th>
<th>Religious Education Learning Statements</th>
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<tr>
<td>Social and Personal Learning</td>
<td>Religious Education and Social and Personal Learning</td>
<td>Students are introduced to Scripture and Catholic Christian teachings to further their understandings about relationships, diversity and self.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active Learning Processes</td>
<td>Religious Education and Active Learning Processes</td>
<td>Students imagine, investigate, and respond to their own and others’ ideas about phenomena in the natural world, sustainable environments and technology*, in light of their emerging understandings of Religious texts. * Including Information Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health and Physical Learning</td>
<td>Religious Education and Health and Physical Learning</td>
<td>Students engage with and reflect upon life experiences and messages within religious texts to build upon their understanding of physical and spiritual wellbeing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language Learning and Communication</td>
<td>Religious Education and Language Learning and Communication</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Mathematical Understandings</td>
<td>Religious Education and Early Mathematical Understandings</td>
<td>Students engage with early numerate practices to enhance their understandings of the meaning of Scripture stories, simple celebrations and prayers, moral messages and beliefs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Description of Religious Education and Social and Personal Learning (RE SPL)**

Students are introduced to Scripture and Catholic Christian teachings to further their understandings about relationships, diversity and self.

This statement describes values and teachings in Scripture and Catholic Christian teachings that develop and inform:

- awareness and appreciation of being caring and contributing members of many social groups, including family, as well as cultural and community groups
- an ability to show respect and dignity and to cooperate peacefully with others
- understandings, capabilities and dispositions related to social and cultural identities and relationships
- positive identity, self-esteem, resilience, personal organisation and independence.

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

In seeking to develop religious literacy, it is necessary to address the multi-literacies present in today’s society. In a child responsive curriculum that is directed by the needs and interests of the students, curriculum must offer the opportunity for students to produce items and explore information digitally. Hence the inclusion in this support resource of numerous opportunities for students to engage with technology in ways that are rich and relevant, and which enhance their understanding of religion within their world.
Religious Education and Language Learning and Communication

Religious Education Support Resource for the Early Years

Religious Education and Social and Personal Learning (RE SPL)
Students are introduced to Scripture and Catholic Christian teachings to further their understandings about relationships, diversity and self.

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:

a) identify and express ideas and feelings about what it means to be a friend and sustain relationships, in relation to the values of love and compassion in religious texts
b) explore and use social skills when interacting, collaborating and resolving conflict with others in relation to the value of forgiveness and reconciliation as illustrated in religious texts
c) acknowledge and negotiate rights, roles and responsibilities that are collaborative, peaceful and inclusive reflections of the values in religious texts
d) investigate and communicate the social and cultural practices of people with respect and dignity
e) raise self awareness and personal identity by caring for themselves and others as a part of the goodness of God's creation.

Suggestions for monitoring and assessing
In relation to this learning statement, teachers may look for evidence that the child:

a) with some prompts, can express ideas, feelings and experiences of being a friend in light of familiar gospel stories
b) identifies some obvious links between messages of forgiveness and reconciliation in stories and in decision-making contexts.
c) negotiates peaceful and inclusive practices that consider others’ ideas, feelings and understandings
d) participates in discussion about unfair, stereotypical or biased ideas and practices in light of gospel messages
e) responds positively from their growing awareness of the gifts of self and others as part of the goodness of God’s creation.

Teachers monitor a child’s learning in relation to the learning statements as they:

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

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

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

a) Engage students with religious texts and real life situations that illustrate gospel values and Christian teachings about love, compassion, friendship and/or sustaining relationships.
b) Support students to link messages of forgiveness and reconciliation in stories with some collaborative and personal decisions.
c) Negotiate diverse roles and responsibilities that promote Gospel values of peace and inclusivity.
d) Model language that respects and celebrates the dignity of others from diverse social, cultural and religious groups.
e) Draw the attention of students to the unique gifts of self and others as part of the goodness of God’s creation.

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

• What new things have we learned about getting along with others from the stories about Jesus?
• What things can we do and say to include others?
• What new things have I discovered about myself?

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.
### Connections to the Syllabus Content: Planning Support Table

#### Religious Education Learning Statement

**Students are introduced to Scripture and Catholic Christian teachings to further their understandings about relationships, diversity and self.**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Planning Suggestions</th>
<th>RE Syllabus Content</th>
<th>Elaborations of RE Syllabus Content</th>
<th>Contexts for Learning</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a) Identify and express ideas and feelings about what it means to be a friend and sustain relationships in relation to the values of love and compassion in religious texts. | • Love of God and love of neighbour is the greatest commandment. (M21)  
• Jesus taught that people should treat each other the way they would want to be treated. This is called the Golden Rule. (M21)  
• Gospel stories are central for Christians. (S5)  
• Liturgy is a community celebration. (C36) | Students, with support, know:  
• some things Jesus taught about love and compassion  
• Jesus’ commandment about loving one another as you love yourself  
• the Golden Rule  
• Scripture about love and compassion e.g. The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-41); Healing of the crippled man (Luke 5:17-26); Healing of Jairus’ daughter (Matthew 9:18-26); Jesus loves students (Matthew 19:13-15); Barnabas the friend of Saul (Acts 9:26); Ten Men with Leprosy (Luke 17:11-10; The Loving Father (Luke 15:11-32)  
• prayers and songs of thanks and petition e.g. thanking God for love and asking for help to show love and compassion | Investigation: Use a Y Chart to investigate the messages in the story of The Good Samaritan: e.g. What is it sound like to be a friend? What does compassion look like?  
**Focused Teaching and Learning:** Use code breaking activities to introduce students to the Golden Rule, love, compassion etc.  
**Real Life:** Identity the attributes of family and community members who live a life of love and compassion.  
**Play:** Role play and set up a class hospital centre illustrating contemporary ways to show compassion.  
**Routines and Transitions:** Develop class prayers of petition seeking God’s help to be loving and compassionate. |
| b) Explore and use social skills when interacting, collaborating and resolving conflict with others in relation to the value of forgiveness and reconciliation as illustrated in religious texts. | • God is merciful. (M3)  
• People apply scriptural teachings to their lives today. (S29)  
• Forgiveness involves reconciliation with God and others. It is our mission to forgive. (C6)  
• Prayer uses word, song and bodily action. (C37)  
• Jesus taught his disciples to pray in his name. Christians pray the Lord’s Prayer. (C38) | • God is forgiving  
• the importance of sustaining friendships and relationships by asking for and accepting forgiveness, as well as forgiving others  
• through experimentation, aspects of the reconciliation process e.g. admitting, saying sorry, being forgiven and accepting forgiveness  
• what forgiveness and reconciliation look like at home and at school  
• Scripture about forgiveness and reconciliation e.g. The Loving Father (15:11-32); Zacchaeus (19:1-10); The Good Shepherd (Matt 18:12-14); some parts of the Lord’s Prayer | **Focused Teaching and Learning:** Use meaning-making activities to develop understandings about forgiveness.  
**Play:** Use natural play to develop sustainable relationships.  
**Real Life:** Initiate reflections and class discussions on students’ experiences of the reconciliation process.  
**Investigation:** Create a retrieval chart that identifies forgiveness and reconciliation at home and in the school.  
**Routines and Transitions:** Use a song of forgiveness for moving students from one learning experience to another. Routinely expose them to and practice saying, parts of the Lord’s prayer. |
| c) Acknowledge and negotiate rights, roles and responsibilities that are collaborative peaceful and inclusive reflection of the values in religious texts. | • God’s plan is that people help each other to live safely and happily together. (M37)  
• Respect and dignity for human life always require people to pursue peace. (M37)  
• Peaceful relationships are important to foster. (M37) | • God wants us to live safely and happily together  
• Jesus promoted peaceful relationships and so do Christians  
• all people are equal and to be respected  
• Christians seek justice and fairness  
• peace sustains individuals and groups within a community | **Focused Teaching and Learning:** Use meaning-making activities to develop understandings about God’s wish for people to live safely and happily together.  
**Real Life:** Develop a class covenant that illustrates peaceful strategies for the classroom.  
**Investigation:** Discover the uniqueness of each member of the class and value and promote each child’s uniqueness in diverse ways.  
**Routines and Transitions:** Develop classroom routines that are fair and just e.g. Everybody gets a chance to be the Leader for a Day.  
**Play:** Encourage natural play practices that foster peaceful relationships.  
**Focused Teaching and Learning:** Use meaning-making activities to develop understandings about different religions and what they mean to their believers.  
**Real Life:** Invite a believer of a religion other than Christianity to talk to the students.  
**Investigation:** Explore poster packs/visuals of people practising different religions.  
**Routines and Transitions:** Develop classroom routines that treat boys and girls equally.  
**Play:** Encourage natural play practices that foster tolerance of difference. |
| d) Investigate and communicate the social and cultural practices of people with respect and dignity. | • Respect difference and value all. (M21)  
• Males and females have equal dignity. (M37)  
• All religions can assist believers in understanding the mystery of God. (B20) | • all people are equal and to be respected  
• all religions are important to people who follow the beliefs of that religion  
• girls and boys are equal  
• people’s beliefs are to be respected. | **Focused Teaching and Learning:** Use meaning-making activities to develop understandings about different religions and what they mean to their believers.  
**Real Life:** Invite a believer of a religion other than Christianity to talk to the students.  
**Investigation:** Explore poster packs/visuals of people practising different religions.  
**Routines and Transitions:** Develop classroom routines that treat boys and girls equally.  
**Play:** Encourage natural play practices that foster tolerance of difference. |
| e) Raise self awareness and personal identity by caring for ourselves and others as a part of the goodness of God’s creation. | • God is the creator and sustainer of the world. God created the world out of love and goodness. (B2)  
• God’s presence is revealed in all creation. (B2)  
• The Holy Spirit is active in the world leading people to God. (B13)  
• Human beings are called to respect and be stewards of God’s creation. (B1)  
• All creatures are interdependent and men and women are created for community and share God’s creation. (B3)  
• Respect all life is a teaching that is central to God’s moral law. (M22) | • all of creation is good  
• all people are equal and to be respected  
• the Holy Spirit of God is all around  
• the Holy Spirit gives us gifts  
• God wants us to live safely and happily together  
• Jesus promoted peaceful relationships and so do Christians  
• girls and boys have equal worth and dignity  
• all people are equal and to be respected  
• Christians seek justice and fairness  
• peace sustains individuals and groups within a community. | **Focused Teaching and Learning:** Make full sized cut-outs of students and label physical/spiritual characteristics/gifts of girls and boys that make them special.  
**Real Life:** Invite a doctor/priest to come to the classroom to raise students’ self awareness of the awesomeness of their personal dignity from a physical and spiritual perspective.  
**Investigation:** Use charts and models that depict the body and show ways to care for it.  
**Routines and Transitions:** Develop classroom routines that care for one’s body and spirit.  
**Play:** Encourage natural play that demonstrates ways to care for ourselves and others. |
Rubric for Religious Education and Social and Personal Learning

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 Social and Personal Learning. 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.

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<tr>
<th>Becoming Aware</th>
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<th>Making Connections</th>
<th>Applying</th>
<th>Links Level 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With explicit support, the student identifies Scripture stories and Church teachings that inform their personal understandings of themselves and family members.</td>
<td>With support, the student explores Scripture stories and Church teachings and discusses how they contribute to their personal understanding of relationships.</td>
<td>With prompts, the student connects Scripture stories and Church teachings with their personal and shared understandings about individual and group diversity.</td>
<td>The student discusses Scripture stories and Church teachings and their application to understandings about self, relationships and diversity in real life settings.</td>
<td>B1.1 Students illustrate personal understandings of Christian beliefs to express their ideas about God and life. B1.2 Students make connections between the teaching of Jesus and ways Christians live. B1.3 Students identify and describe characteristics of the Church community. S1.3 Students share and compare their ideas, feelings and experiences in interpreting familiar scripture texts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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:

**Love and Compassion:**
Students explore and use social skills when interacting, collaborating and resolving conflict with others in relation to the values of forgiveness and reconciliation as illustrated in religious texts. [RE SPL (a)]

Students investigate and communicate the social and cultural practices of people with respect and dignity. [RE SPL (d)]

**Student Responsive Curriculum: A Possible Scenario**

Students at this stage have diverse levels of social and personal skills. Some students demonstrate a need to improve their relationships and their understandings of diversity and self e.g. using unfriendly words and hands, excluding others etc. A student responsive curriculum will provide students with opportunities to develop in presenting areas of need. Some of the religious themes and beliefs they will engage with include love, compassion, forgiveness and reconciliation, being collaborative, peaceful and inclusive, respect and dignity for all and caring for self and God’s creation.

This Support Resource will provide many opportunities for students to develop socially and personally from a religious perspective. The religious focus of this section is Jesus' message of love and compassion and inclusion of the marginalised.

Children listen to and/or view the parable of the Good Samaritan to identify and express understandings about the Gospel values of love and compassion in friendships and relationships. Other bible stories identified on page 30 in the Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines for the Early Years (RECGEA) can be used in conjunction with the repertoire of resources provided to achieve the same goal.

**Teacher Background on the story of The Good Samaritan**

**Biblical Context**
This parable provides a powerful lesson about mercy and compassion towards those in need and it also proclaims that non-Jews can observe the law and thus enter into eternal life. It is unique to Luke’s Gospel and reflects Luke’s stress on Jesus’ attitude to the marginalized, here the foreigner.

The parable is triggered by a lawyer trying to catch Jesus out by testing his ability to interpret the Jewish Scriptures and solve the human puzzle of how to receive 'eternal life'. Jesus turns the question back on the lawyer, who in response quotes two Hebrew Bible / Old Testament love commandments:

- Deuteronomy 6:5 to love God fully
- Leviticus 19:18 to love your neighbour as yourself. (The words ‘and with all your mind’ are not in Deut. 6:5).

The lawyer then poses the key question, ‘Who is my neighbour?’ Matthew 22:34-40 and Mark 12:28-34 do not include this parable. A similar dialogue presents the double love commandment, but is introduced by a question about what is the greatest or first commandment.

The lawyer's desire to justify his previous question (v.29) may show he felt foolish for having asked a question that he then had to answer himself. He therefore presses for further clarification. The term translated here as ‘neighbour’ means ‘one who is near’. This does not refer to everyone and Leviticus 19:18 does not advocate love of everyone, although usually it was interpreted as referring to fellow Jews. So there was a legitimate reason for the lawyer to be seeking clarification for the question.

This parable is echoed in Luke 17:11-19 where only the Samaritan leper returns to give thanks for the healing. Again, this is a story unique to Luke. Does it hint at the future reception of the gospel by the Samaritans? (Acts 8:4-25)
The Lawyer
The lawyer would be an expert in Jewish law, the Torah, which was seen as God’s gift to the Jews to instruct them how to live in God’s way. Having a prestigious social and religious position, the lawyer would need to demonstrate his authority and power to the crowd and in attempting to catch Jesus out publicly, he appears arrogant and un receptive to Jesus’ message.

There is subtle irony in the lawyer’s omitting the term ‘Samaritari’ and referring to him as ‘the one who showed him mercy’ (v.37). He may have wished to avoid using the term or he may have realised the label did not matter but the action did!

The Priest
The Priest and the Levite represent archetypal Israelites.

The priest could be returning from a period of duty in the Temple to his home in the country (cf Luke 1:23). Jericho was one of the main country residences for priests.

The priest might have passed by because:

- He feared that he, too, would be ambushed.
- Believing the man was dead, he wished to avoid defiling himself by touching the body (Leviticus. 21:1-3 states that a priest should not defile himself through contact with the dead except nearest kin).

He was heartless. The man was not dead. The Mishnah (Jewish commentary) views a neglected corpse (e.g. one abandoned by the road) as a special case, even for a high priest, so he could have helped.

The Levite
In New Testament times, the Levites (v.32) were an order of cultic officials inferior to priests but still a privileged group in Jewish society. They were responsible for liturgy in the Temple and for policing it. (Numbers 3:5f; 8:23-26; 18).

The Man
The man in the parable (v.30) is not identified by his status or culture. His need is what is important. A Jewish audience would doubtless have identified him as a Jew.

The Samaritan
The third passer-by would be expected to be a Jewish lay person, i.e. going down in rank, and giving the parable an anti-clerical slant. Instead the parable deliberately refers to a person from a community hated by the Jews.

Samaritans were a mixed race of imported Assyrians and Israelites who remained in Israel after most were deported to other parts of the Assyrian empire. Their name came from Samaria, the capital city of the north of Israel at a time when it was separate from the south (Judah).

They had developed their religion independently of the Jews in Judah. The Samaritans had a temple of their own on Mount Gerizim, their sacred mountain. Whilst accepting Moses as their lawgiver and the Torah as their law, they rejected the traditions and rules of the Pharisees.

They observed the rite of circumcision, the Sabbath requirements and the Jewish festivals, but denied the Jewish priesthood and refused to accept Jerusalem as the place where the Temple to God should stand.

In exile, the Jews from Judah had tightened their Jewish practice in an effort to maintain their identity in a foreign land. Returning from exile and encountering the mixed race Samaritans, it was difficult for them to accept them as pure Jews and much bitterness followed.
Other Facts

• The road from Jerusalem to Jericho runs through rocky country and desert, well-suited to bandits. Only by chance does anyone pass by (v.31).

• The use of wine and oil as healing agents was common.

• Payment to the innkeeper would have been sufficient for several days.

Theological Background

Compassion

The Hebrew word for compassion ‘rahamin’ expresses the empathetic attachment of one human being to another. It is a capacity to be attracted and moved by the fragility, weakness, and suffering of another. It is the ability to be vulnerable enough to undergo risk and loss for the sake and good of the other. The human strength required to be ‘vulnerable enough’ to risk for others stems from an acceptance that vulnerability, weakness and suffering are permanent factors of human existence not something to be ignored or denied. It is through this acceptance of the vulnerable nature of human existence that people can become stronger and more constant in their responses to their own and others needs. Compassion involves empathetic movement and action in order to be of assistance to the other, it entails a responsible movement of participation in the experience of the other. When this occurs the relationship status between the one who is suffering and the one offering compassion is changed. Those involved in the act of giving and receiving compassion experience a unified spirit of solidarity and communion. In many situations this change in relationship status is experienced as a form of love. Compassion requires sensitivity to what is weak and or wounded, as well as the vulnerability to be affected by the other. It also demands action to alleviate pain and suffering. Outward signs of Christian compassion are sometimes named acts of mercy and kindness. Compassion must not be confused with sentimentality or pious romanticisation of human suffering. It is it a practical response to suffering and to the consequences of social evil, sin and suffering.

Jesus exemplifies God’s compassion in his preaching providing believers with paradigms of compassion illustrated in the parable of the Good Samaritan when compassion is shown for the wounded traveller and in the Lost Son when the father was so moved with compassion that he ran to meet his son.

Foundational to the Christian acts of compassion are the beliefs in the nature of God as love and God’s presence in all of creation, the witness of Jesus’ compassion for all, and the belief in the power of the Holy Spirit to heal and restore through acts of love, mercy and kindness. From a contemporary Christian perspective the fullness of compassion is known in and through Jesus, who discloses the compassion of God. Today Christians face human suffering and pain in everyday and extraordinary circumstances. How to be a “Good Samaritan” and show compassion in both circumstances can be challenging. It is to be remembered that compassion is a response of the human heart that is fully aware of its own pain, suffering and weakness. It does not stand outside the experience of suffering. It chooses not to instruct and blame but rather actively seeks to strengthen, empower and restore through identification with the weak and wounded at that particular time and context.

Parables

‘Parable’ comes from the Greek meaning ‘to place side by side’. A story from everyday life is placed alongside a spiritual truth. There is one main point to a parable. The detail is not intended to have specific meaning and is not to be seen as promoting a secular moral point. The theme of Jesus’ teaching is the Kingdom of God and the parables describe aspects of what the kingdom of God is like.

Parables were a useful method of teaching because as stories from everyday life they could be easily remembered and repeated. Hearers could interpret them at their own level. Parables have layers of meaning for the hearer to discover.
Self-righteous People and Sinners

At the heart of Judaism and Christianity is the seeking of a relationship with God, which if broken can be restored through repentance on the part of the sinner and restoration or redemption on the part of God.

There is a paradox within Judaism and Christianity. Believers strive to obey God’s will but in so doing miss the mark in relation to what God expects. For the Jew, in struggling to observe the details of the Law to win God’s acceptance, it is easy to lose the spirit of that Law. This means that motivation for keeping the Law becomes its strict, literal observation which is an end in itself and overlooks the belief that the Law is the means by which the Jew can fulfil the spirit of the Law. The prophets tried to communicate a proper understanding of God and the Law in the Old Testament / Hebrew Bible. Those who fail to keep the Law are regarded as sinners who have cut themselves off from God. However, the sinner can turn out to be less hypocritical and more honest and sincere than the successful ‘keeper of laws’. Human perception is different from God’s perception. God sees the heart. The sinner, in contrast to the self-righteous person can be aware of shortcomings and sorry about them and therefore ready to accept God’s forgiveness.

The practice of the Christian faith can be perverted into legalism in exactly the same way as Judaism; the devout Christian can miss the mark by being too rigid in his or her interpretation of God’s will. There is a danger, too, for Christians or members of any other faith, that they will presume that because of their religious insight they alone can dispense God’s wishes.

Inclusivity

This means that everyone matters, that everyone is equal in God’s eyes and everyone can get their relationship right with God, in spite of past sins. As mentioned previously in this parable Jesus provides two powerful lessons about mercy toward those in need, and that non-Jews can observe the law and thus enter into eternal life. This controversial story for its time turns the lawyer’s question on its head: Don’t ask about who belongs to God’s people and thus is the object of my neighbourly attention, but rather ask about the conduct of a member of God’s chosen people. The one who shows mercy, the Good Samaritan the outcast actively demonstrates that he is a neighbour, clearly a member of God’s people.

Jesus’ challenge to the society of his time was his revelation of what the Kingdom of God was like. It was shocking to learn that it embraced all those excluded by society including sinners who were ‘lost’ because they had blatantly broken the Law of God and were unclean. Jesus puts value on everyone. The sinner is not damned but encouraged to repent and restore the relationship with God. The ‘good’ people - in Jesus’ time the righteous religious leaders - are in a more difficult position because they are not able to recognise their guilt. Their pride in their alleged perfection is seen as leading them to believe that they have no need of God and what the Kingdom of God offers. The sinner recognises a need for forgiveness and God’s kingdom.

Repentance, Forgiveness and Celebration

Judaism and Christianity have both focused on God’s dealing with human guilt. In the Christian Old Testament / Hebrew Bible the sacrificial system restored relations with God. After the destruction of the Temple, the Day of Atonement was seen as accomplishing this. God responded to the sinners’ ‘turning back’, repentance with forgiveness. For Christians, Jesus’ death was the final sacrifice and forgiveness awaits the truly repentant. The initiative is with the sinner; the response, in judgment and mercy, is God’s.

This parable highlights God’s joy and the celebration that accompanies the return to the fold of the ‘lost sheep’. There is welcome, not condemnation. God waits in hope for the guilty to respond to his offer of forgiveness.

Good Samaritan Online

www.textweek.com/ art/good_samaritan.htm
(Excellent range of artworks and other links based on the Good Samaritan)
Some Useful Resources for Love and Compassion

Scripture and Other Sacred Stories

- The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-41)
- The Loving Father (Luke 15:11-32)
- The Lepers (Luke 17:11-19)
- Jairus’ Daughter (Matthew 9:18-26)

Film (available from the BCE Resource Link)

- You are Special - Max Lucado
- The Story Of The Good Samaritan VHS
- Are You My Neighbour? VHS and DVD
- Heroes Of The Bible: Stand Up, Stand Tall, Stand Strong - Shadrach, Meshach & Abednego; Joshua; The Good Samaritan DVD
- Jesus: What He Said, What He Did DVD
- Parables For Kids Vol 1 VHS

Children’s Literature

- Fox, M. Whoever You Are Voyager Books
- Milly Molly Books - available from Ashton Scholastic - A unique resource that provides teachers with stories for teaching the social/emotional values in the SOSE and PDHPE curricula.

Websites

- www.dltk-bible.com This site includes modern versions of bible stories, colouring pages and craft activities
- www.textweek.com/ art/good_samaritan.htm (Excellent range of artworks and other links based on the Good Samaritan)

Resource cards and stimulus objects

- The Bear Cards - 48 laminated full colour cards illustrating a variety of feelings and expressions.
- Eggheads – 6 hand-made ceramic eggs with varying expressions in a cardboard egg container.
- Koala Company Cards – 50 laminated circular cards illustrating a variety of expressions
- Pocket of Stones 12 - hand-made ceramic heads illustrating a variety of expressions.
- Strength cards for Kids – 40 laminated full colour cards to use as stimulus for discussing strengths.
Learning and Teaching Suggestions

The Good Samaritan Luke 10:30-37

When Jesus lived on earth, he told lots of stories. One day, he told a story about a man who was walking down a dangerous road towards the town of Jericho.

What do you do when you come to a dangerous road? How would you feel?

Children use the Ideas and Emotions Strategy with prepared masks to identify and express feelings associated with the reading of the “Good Samaritan” story.

The man Jesus told about was Jewish. In those days, Jewish people and Samaritan people were neighbours, but they didn’t like each other. Not one little bit. As the Jewish man was walking down the road, some robbers jumped out, stole all his money, and beat him up. Then they ran away.

Pat your hands on your legs so it sounds like the robbers running away. How would the robbers feel? How would the Jewish man feel?

The poor man lay hurt by the side of the road. He knew that if someone didn’t come to help him, he might die!

What kind of sound do you make when you’re hurt?

Soon the man heard footsteps coming down the road. Let’s make quiet footsteps. It was a priest! Do you think the priest stopped to help? No, he didn’t. He just walked right by. He had rules to follow to keep the temple sacred and he wasn’t allowed to touch any blood.

How do you think the man felt when the priest didn’t stop to help him? How would you have felt?

Pretty soon someone else came down the road. It was someone who had an important job at temple. He was called a Levite. But he just hurried on by because he too, couldn’t touch blood.

Let’s make fast footsteps going down the road.

The hurt man felt so bad. Wouldn’t anyone stop to help him? Finally one more person came down the road. But it was a Samaritan. The hurt man thought, “This Samaritan won’t stop to help me because Samaritans and Jews don’t like each other.”

Who would help you if you were hurt? Let’s make the footsteps of the Samaritan on the road.

When he came to the hurt man, he stopped! The Samaritan gently washed and bandaged the hurt man. Then he put the hurt man on his donkey and took him the nearest town.
The parable of the Good Samaritan starts with a man asking Jesus a question. The man who asks Jesus a question is very smart and was maybe trying to trick Jesus to see if he was a good teacher or not. This is what he asked, "Teacher, what should I do so I can go to Heaven and live forever?"

Jesus replied, "What is written in the Bible? What do you think?" The man answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart with all your soul and with all your strength, and love your neighbour like you love yourself."

"That is right!" Jesus said. "Do this and you will live forever in Heaven."

But the lawyer, thinking he could ask Jesus a question that could not be answered, asked, "But who is my neighbour?" Jesus answered the man by telling him the story of the Good Samaritan.
Focused Teaching and Learning

- Students are encouraged to use the Feelings Faces whenever a learning opportunity arises to illustrate their deepening understanding of the emotions associated with stories and contexts about Loving your neighbour, Being compassionate, Being inclusive and Accepting differences.

- Students use a Peoplescape Strategy to come to understand the concept of a neighbour. Students move beyond the contemporary common usage of this word to refer to the people who live next door towards the Jewish interpretation of the word, people who are near to us… other people we work with, play with, eat with and live with. Students consider neighbours as people who are near to us at any time and place. Students could use pictures or draw pictures of real or possible neighbours that could match a particular time or place described by the teacher. Students could be challenged to imagine neighbours in less familiar times and settings. These images would be placed on the Peoplescape and discussed. Students could dress-up as different possible neighbours to match a particular time and context.

- Students as a whole group complete a Y Chart Strategy by using a sentence starter such as What would it look like, sound like and feel like if I loved my neighbour as I loved myself? Two students could illustrate this strategy for the class. With the teachers assistance they would describe what it would look like, sound like and feel like if they loved the other student ‘neighbour’ as themselves. Sentence starters i.e. if my neighbour fell over and hurt him/herself I would, if my neighbour did not have any lunch I would etc.

- Students are introduced to the meaning of the word compassion with reference to their new understanding of loving a neighbour like you love yourself.

- Students complete a Piecing It Together Strategy on the question Who are our neighbours?

- Students are given a large, blank puzzle piece on which they glue cut out pictures of all kinds of different people from magazines – include elderly, disabled, children, people from diverse ethnic backgrounds. Try to include pictures that are representative of those in and beyond the school community. Students then fit their puzzle pieces together to form a large display entitled Who are our neighbours?

- Students engage in a Curtains Up Curtains Down Strategy to act out the themes in the parable of the Good Samaritan, Recognising and Loving your neighbour, Being compassionate, Being inclusive and Accepting differences.

- Students begin to explore the meaning of the surprise in the parable when the Good Samaritan showed compassion to the wounded man, rather than the priests or the Levites. Students are informed that the Good Samaritan belonged to a group of people who in Jesus’ time were not liked and frequently excluded. Students use the feeling faces to share stories of being excluded from good things and relate these feelings to the parable of the Good Samaritan.

- Students plan short scenarios for Curtains Up Curtains Down Strategy of any of the opposite feelings e.g. feeling of love and dislike of a neighbour, showing compassion and ignoring a neighbour in need, including and excluding a neighbour, accepting neighbours who are different and not accepting them.
• Students use pictures on a felt board or white board to sequence the parable of the Good Samaritan.

• Students use a **Y Chart Strategy** to identify ideas and feelings associated with the events/characters in the parable of the Good Samaritan.
• Students as code breakers, make signs for sight recognition and copying of key words within the story e.g. Jericho, love, compassion. Children, as meaning makers use Y Chart Strategy to explore the concepts of love and compassion.

- Students create a Word Wall of words that are similar to ‘love’ and ‘compassion’.
- Students choose Feelings Face/s to match the feelings of the characters in the parable illustrated in the table below.
Students as text analysts, view, discuss, compare and contrast different versions of the parable of the Good Samaritan.

Students jointly construct a simple play including props for the parable of the Good Samaritan.

These photos illustrate the use of large puppets available for borrowing from the BCE ResourceLink.

**Play**

- Students role play the main characters in the parable of the Good Samaritan through dramatic play, and the use of puppets.
- Students role play contemporary ways to be a good Samaritan/ good friend.
- Students wear appropriate props for role play.
- Students role play in a contemporary hospital play setting in the classroom, eg provide bandages.
- Students paint ‘friendship’ paintings at the easels.
- Students use magazines, photos and other resources to make their own Who are my Neighbours or These are my Neighbours puzzles. (See Focused, Learning and Teaching section)
- Students use the question, “How am I a good Samaritan?” written on a silhouette cut out of a student to list ways of being loving and compassionate to someone in need.
- Students make a TV story of the parable of the Good Samaritan. Students use collage materials to make a TV. This can be simply done by cutting out the base of a box, leaving a narrow margin as a frame. Students then draw sequenced illustrations of the parable on a scroll. The scroll is attached to cardboard rolls and placed within the TV. The story is rolled across the screen for the viewer as the story is told by students.
- Students draw an imaginative, contemporary version of the parable of the Good Samaritan.
Real Life

- Students set up a class hospital centre complete with bandages.
- Students identify the qualities of a Good Samaritan (a good friend) in each other.
- Students visit an institution providing care to people or have health care professionals visit and talk to the children. Emergency services personnel such as ambulance officers, police and fire fighters could also be approached.
- Students plan a walk in the neighbourhood near the school. Students are engaged in a risk assessment of the walk. Students investigate ways to reduce any identified risks. Review the assessment on your return from the walk to add or subtract issues.
- Students experience a visit to or from an emergency response facility such as a fire station, ambulance station or medivac helicopter facility to learn how these services operate. Students discuss the ways germs are transmitted and the need for good personal hygiene. Students brainstorm and then make a poster of class hygiene procedures e.g. We care for our health by: washing our hands etc.
- Students make a class Compassion Chart with the students. Students add a stamp of a smiley face or sticker each time they see someone acting with compassion. At the end of each session or each day the chart is discussed and compassionate acts recounted and rewarded with a round of applause. A short prayer is then said e.g. Thank you God for helping us act with compassion like the Good Samaritan.

Investigation

- Students investigate “What is a friend?” Students make a Concept Spiral to investigate this question and then display the responses in the classroom for future reference. Children nominate a friend and scribe their name in the outer circle. They then nominate a virtue that their friend demonstrates and this is added to the inner circle.
- Students investigate medical practices from the past and the present. Students respond to the following questions. What would happen if you were hurt in an accident on the road today? Who would help you? Were there any ambulances in the Samaritan’s day? Who would help people today when there is an accident on a country road? Australia is a big country and sometimes farmers and other people are hurt. Who might be a Good Samaritan to them?
- Students investigate what they should do in an emergency like the one the Samaritan faced. Discuss sensitively other scenarios in which children may find themselves needing to render aid e.g. a house on fire, someone who is very sick etc. Teach or review making a call to emergency services. Do students know their full name, address and phone number?
- Students make a word wall of all the names of all the health professionals who help us.

Routines and Transitions

- Students set up rules and ways of being that promote the values and teaching of love and compassion.
- Students listen, sing and move from one learning environment to another using a song or rhyme with the theme of love and compassion
- Students sing a familiar rhyme such as “Here we go Round the Mulberry Bush” including verses about hygienic actions prior to going to the toilet, lunch etc.
Case Study

Scripture and Moral Stories: The Good Samaritan; love and compassion in a diverse world.

Meet Clara Bishop. Clara teaches the Prep class at St Pius X Catholic Primary, Salisbury. Clara began her career as an Early Years teacher in 1977. She has taught in State and Catholic pre schools across many year levels and has been in her present position as Prep teacher for the past two years. She finds Prep students inspirational to teach and thoroughly enjoys seeing the development of the students throughout the year.

Background

Clara’s Case Study explores how she taught the students about acceptance, diversity and compassion using the story of The Good Samaritan as a focus. She involved the students in her class in a variety of activities that enhanced their growth as personal and social learners.

The Learning Story

Clara noticed that students’ behaviour reflected a need for development in the area of social and personal learning. She also wanted to explore concepts of diversity and tolerance with her students. She first read the students some stories about children from other countries, showing them pictures of different houses around the world and pictures of a variety of games that children play. Clara then taught the students some different ways to say hello in other languages. They recorded these in a circle of hands poster.

In the activity corner, a display was set up to show images of children from different parts of the world, including their homes, food and words of reading. Prep students had the opportunity to play with items from different countries and to practice their greetings with classmates.

Clara wanted her class to realise that no matter how different we are, we have some things in common- feelings, hearts, smiles and laughter. We can all experience love.

Clara then explored some material from the Green Circle website.
Students made circles and included everyone in the circle. They were shown a visual representation of an inclusive circle and sang a song about including others. They discussed how it felt to be included in the circle.

Feeling masks made from paper plates were used to express feelings about how it felt to be included in the circle or left out.

Some students chose to paint a world with faces of different people from different cultures.

Students then made a map of Australia and covered it with pictures of a diverse range of people from different cultures who now live in this country.

The next step was to explore with the students the concept of love. After brainstorming, the students were able to report a variety of actions that showed love. This was extended into how to be a good friend. Students acted out ways to be a good friend, showing that including others, speaking respectfully and having care for your friends were all ways of being a good friend to those around you.

Students were invited to choose a cardboard heart cut out from the centre of a circle. They then flipped it over to find a symbol on the other side. Students checked each others cards to find a matching symbol. Students with matching symbols became friends for the next activity, making friendship paintings together and playing together.

The students were then introduced to the parable of the Good Samaritan through a bible story, a DVD and a Big Book. Students re-enacted the parable using costumes and props.
Students discussed the ways the stranger was loved and who was showing compassion and care. Oral recounts were recorded in their folios and were illustrated by students.

During Mission Week, the students were given a chart showing a picture of a little child. They were asked to bring in coins to help buy school supplies, food and medicine for this child. The students were able to put a picture of one of these items on the chart each time they brought in some money.

The notion of compassion for others was highlighted in this activity. Students showed their poster to all classes during a school assembly.

Before Christmas, Clara plans to include more ideas about diversity. She will use the different Christmas traditions of class families as a stimulus.

Reflections on the module
Clara enjoyed teaching the module as she could see great benefit to her students coming from exposure to the concept of diversity and the unit helped focus this in a religious sense. The class really enjoyed learning about other cultures and particularly loved hearing other languages in songs and stories. The students learned that we have many things in common with others just as we have many differences. The parable of the Good Samaritan helped students understand that we should treat people who are different in a kind and caring way, showing compassion and love to all.
Case Study

Scripture and Moral Stories: The Good Samaritan

Meet Kelli McAnally, the Year One teacher at St Pius X Catholic Primary, Salisbury. Kelli McAnally has been teaching in Catholic schools for over 14 years, across a variety of year levels. She enjoys teaching Year One as the children are still interested in imaginative worlds, fantasy and creativity. The play based curriculum gives Kelli the chance to revisit her childhood experiences.

Background

Kelli’s Case Study highlights friendship, stories with messages and the theme of ‘Love Thy Neighbour.’ She involved the students in many activities that reflect Year One students’ developing literacy skills.

The Learning Story

Kelli decided to explore the notion of friendship, love and compassion as part of Social and Personal Learning. She wanted to link her other work on Fairy Tales to this module. In these fairy tale stories, there are many examples of friendship and care for others.

When reading Fairy Stories, Kelli encouraged the students to look for the message in the story. Similarly, when introducing the parable of The Good Samaritan, Kelli told the students that Jesus told stories that had messages in them. The students listened to this parable from the Gospel of Mark, and watched a DVD of the story.

After exploring elements of the story, students used feeling masks in different colours to act out the parable of the Good Samaritan, showing the emotions of the characters involved.

They then used the feelings masks to reflect the emotions of the characters in some Fairy Tales.

The students were then encouraged to relate the parable of The Good Samaritan to their lives. They had a Mission Week project where they collected tokens for a child overseas, placing these on a chart whenever they brought money to donate. The poster was shown to the school at assembly. They brainstormed times when they showed compassion and care for others and were particularly aware of sharing at play time.

To further facilitate ideas for showing compassion, students watched the DVD of “Sammy the Good Neighbour” and made connections to the parable of the Good Samaritan. The DVD was about an underwater environment where an unlikely helper solved a problem through care for others. Students formed groups and devised their own scripts for plays involving characters who were assisted by ‘unlikely’ heroes showing compassion and love for others. One of the plays was chosen for further development and was presented to the school at assembly time.
Year One students then made posters entitled ‘Love your neighbour,’ using magazine pictures of a variety of ‘neighbours’ they might meet in real life.

Finally, the class extended the idea of compassion by exploring the concept of diversity of students and how, as students, we are alike and yet different. We all need love and compassion no matter what our differences are. The class made booklets called, “Just Like Me,” where they recorded each other’s likes and dislikes, differences and similarities, after interviewing a partner. These were illustrated and shared with the class.

Year One will continue to look at ways people help each other and show compassion by exploring outreach organisations such as St Vincent de Paul and care groups in our local Church community.

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Year One will continue to look at ways people help each other and show compassion by moving on to discuss outreach organisations such as St Vincent de Paul and our own Church community.

Reflection

Kelli thought the module was particularly helpful to have at this time of year as the students have a deeper understanding of the concept of their ‘neighbour.’ The Support Resource offered the opportunity to focus on compassion which was helpful for playground behavioural issues. The Year One students loved dramatising the story and enjoyed the activities presented. It provided many useful learning opportunities.
**Getting Started:**

**Reconciliation and Peace**

Students identify and express ideas and feeling about what it means to be a friend and sustain relationship in relation to the values of love and compassion in religious texts. [RE SPL (a)]

Students explore and use social skills when interacting, collaborating and resolving conflict with others in relation to the value of forgiveness and reconciliation as illustrated in religious texts. [RE SPL (b)]

Students acknowledge and negotiate rights, roles and responsibilities that are collaborative, peaceful and inclusive reflections of the values in religious texts. [RE SPL (c)]

Students explore and illustrate right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust choices from religious and other texts. [RE HPL (b)]

Please note that this section of the Support Resource covers two Religious Education Early Learning areas.

**Scripture**

Children listen to and/or view the story of The Lost Son to identify and express understandings about the Gospel values of reconciliation and peaceful relationships in friendships. Other bible stories can be used in conjunction with the repertoire of resources provided to achieve the same goal.

**Student Responsive Curriculum: A Possible Scenario**

Students at this stage have diverse levels of social and personal skills. Some students demonstrate a need to improve their relationships and their understandings of diversity and self. Issues include using unfriendly words and hands, excluding others. A student responsive curriculum will provide students with opportunities to develop in relation to such issues. Some of the religious themes and beliefs they will engage with include love, compassion, forgiveness and reconciliation, being collaborative, peaceful and inclusive, respect and dignity for all and caring for self and God's creation.

This Support Resource will provide many opportunities for students to develop socially, personally and religiously. The religious focus of this section is Jesus' message of reconciliation and peace.

**Teacher Background on the parable of The Lost Son**

**Biblical Context**

One of the places we see this most clearly is in the way that Luke tells the parable of the lost (prodigal) son. It's a very familiar story. And it's a story about unconditional love and repentance. The younger of two brothers who runs away, squanders his inheritance living a vile life. Only after he goes into the depths of depression because he has no money and doesn't know where he's going to live, he decides to go home and be a slave in his father's house. But when he returns, his father welcomes saying, "Let's have a great banquet to welcome you back." Now the older brother who had stayed at home all this time becomes jealous because he had been faithful to his father's wishes and desires. He had been doing what his father wanted all along. It's the younger brother who had squandered everything and gone against his father's wishes. This story is really about Luke's perception of the relationship between gentiles and Jews in the household of God. It is Luke's description of the church and its willingness to accept both the older brother, the faithful brother, the Jewish followers of Jesus, alongside of the prodigal son, the Gentiles who were seen as having lived who had lived a terrible life away from the father for so long. But now in the church all are being welcomed back with open arms. Luke's vision is of a unified humanity in the church that brings all of God's children back together.

**Background**

Though the parable of the Lost Son is much more detailed, the climax of its first half is the same as the two parables that precede it (the Lost Sheep, and the Lost Coin). The son was genuinely prodigal: emigrating to a "far country," a Gentile land, he wasted his assets in loose living, ignoring the moral claim which his father still had on his property. When he had exhausted his resources,
instead of seeking charity at a Diaspora synagogue, he worked for a Gentile, rendering impossible the observance of such Jewish ordinances as the Sabbath. Not only did he become a despised herdsman, but a swineherd. He lived in gross impurity and had become, according to the standards of the quest for holiness, a non-Jew, and his father's statement, "This my son was dead," was correct in an important sense: his son had ceased to be a Jew.

Nevertheless, when the son returned, what did the father do? Like the shepherd and the woman, he celebrated his return and, significantly, arranged for a festive banquet.

As responses to the protests of his opponents, these parables were both a defence of Jesus' behaviour and an invitation to his opponents to join in the celebration. Jesus defended his table fellowship as festive celebrations of the return of the outcasts (who were also children of Abraham). The defence, however, was also an invitation to his opponents, as suggested by the parabolic form.

Unlike a straightforward defence or indictment, the parables of Jesus frequently functioned to lead people to see things differently by inviting them to make a judgment about an everyday situation and then to transfer that judgment to the situation at hand.

**Interpretations**

Although the story is traditionally referred to as *The Prodigal Son*, this title is not found in the gospel, and many commentators have argued that it would be better called *The Lost Son*, showing its parallels to the parables of the Lost Sheep and Lost Coin which immediately precede it in Luke 15. In all three the theme is the concern of God for the repenting sinner rather than the unfailingly righteous. Indeed, many people with no other exposure to the word prodigal mistakenly believe it means lost. It actually means extravagant. Others have argued that the parable might be better called the story of *The Two Sons*, to emphasise the role of the elder son, and the lesson against envy and narrow-mindedness that it contains.

From the first consent of the father to the launching of an elaborate party in the end, this story contains many twists and turns (discombobulations) all of which make the point that God's love overcomes the reckless, despairing wanderings of his children. In the end love conquers all, a theme Dante will use in his Divine Comedy.

**Theological Issues**

The time of the telling of this parable was a few months out from the time close to Jesus' crucifixion. Around this time the Scribes and Pharisees were set on discrediting Jesus for eating and associating with sinners. This parable is told for the likes of the Scribes and Pharisees who touted their righteousness and condemned those whom they considered wretched. This parable proclaims a message of great hope to all who have sinned and fallen short of the mark. It declares that the Father of all mankind has a deep and abiding love for his children and desires with all His heart to receive them unto himself.

Jesus responded to those who are asserting their own righteous by offering a trilogy of what is known as the Lost Parables in which the first two (*The Lost Sheep* and *The Lost Coin*). Both of these parables expose the hypocrisy of the Pharisees complaints about Jesus. The third parable *The Lost Son* further drives home the problem of the Pharisees' misjudgement of the nature of God as a forgiving father. This is the great parable of repentance and love. Jesus tells a story about a sinner who repents, a father who forgives, and a brother who, firstly asserts his own righteousness, secondly condemns his sibling for past mistakes and finally questions the wisdom of a father for showing mercy to a sinner while at the same time failing to show honour to him the righteous one.

It is interesting that in this parable the father actually went out to meet both of his sons. The younger son responds by begging for forgiveness and seeking to do penance for his wrongdoing. However, where the story finishes, the older brother refuses to come into the house and rejoice with the father and the family. Now it seems that the older brother is lost and the younger found.

This story of sibling rivalry also illustrates the unconditional love of the parent and the image of God as Loving Father. It features one of the perpetual family problems of sibling rivalry, and demanding offspring seeking to improve their own lot. Because of our familiarity with this basic nature of parent-child relationships, as well as the issue of sibling rivalry, the story has a human poignancy that makes it one of the most touching of all of Jesus' parables. The major issue is
repentance before God and God’s willingness to forgive. The parable is Jesus’ final
defence of the offer of good news in the face of official criticism of his association with
sinners. It challenges believers on so many levels to forgive and seek forgiveness and
rejoice in the power of true reconciliation and God’s unconditional love.

It is to be noted that in this parable the father breaks with accepted cultural codes by
initiating the reconciliation with his son. In Jewish thinking a father should not divide
the estate too early. Sirach 33:19-23 begins, ”To son or wife, to brother or friend, give
no power over yourself while you live; and give not your goods to another so as to ask
for them again." Nevertheless, in this parable the father grants the son’s request. The
note of joy about the son’s return is crucial in the passage, as is the father’s restoration
of sonship privileges. The son has come from destitution to complete restoration. That
is what God’s grace does for a penitent sinner.

The parable has two major points. First, repentance means an absolute reversal of
status. The lost son has become a family member again. The father’s acceptance of
the penitent son is total. This is God’s grace. This is why God pursues sinners. Second,
others should have joy when the penitent returns. Reconciliation involves not only
God and the individual but also the individual and the community.

Some Useful Resources on Reconciliation and Peace

Scripture and Other Sacred Stories
- The Lost Son (Luke 15:11-32)
- The Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25-41)
- The Lepers (Luke 17:11-19)
- Jairus’ Daughter (Matthew 9:18-26)

Film (available from BCE Resource Link)
- Jesus: What He Said, What He Did VHS and DVD
- Parables For Kids Vol 1 VHS

Children’s Literature
- Fairy Tales
- Rainbow Fish and the Big Blue Whale
- Millie
- Where the Wild Things Are

Music
- Our God is so good
- He’s got the Whole World
- Choices

Learning Objects
- Snakes and Ladders Learning Object

Resource cards and stimulus objects
- The Bear Cards - 48 laminated full colour cards illustrating a variety of
  feelings and expressions.
- Eggheads – 6 hand-made ceramic eggs with varying expressions in a
  cardboard egg container.
- Koala Company Cards – 50 laminated circular cards illustrating a variety of
  expressions
- Pocket of Stones 12 - hand-made ceramic heads illustrating a variety of
  expressions.
Learning and Teaching Suggestions

• Students use the images provided and a jointly constructed text to retell the story of The Lost Son (Luke 15: 11-32). For an animated PowerPoint of these images with an embedded voiceover of the story of The Lost Son go to the online version of this RE and the Early Years Support document on the Brisbane Catholic Education K Web in the ResourceLink Portal>Resources>Religious Education.
Play

- Students listen to the parable of the *Lost Son* and use the feeling masks or Feeling Stones/Eggheads (available in ResourceLink) to illustrate the feelings of the characters throughout the story. Students discuss the feelings of the characters.

- Students act out everyday scenarios of forgiveness as times when we say *sorry* to someone and they say *OK or I forgive you*. Students can use the feeling masks to illustrate the feelings in the scenarios. Emphasis should be made on the feelings of joy when the characters are forgiven.

- Students in light of these scenarios and new understandings discuss the belief that *God is forgiving*.

- Students act out scenarios using the Curtain up, Curtain down Strategy to demonstrate wrong choices and their consequences followed by good choices and their consequences, particularly those that involved forgiveness, making peace or becoming friends again.

- Students make puppets to use in imaginative scenarios that illustrate love and compassion, reconciliation and peace.

- Provide students with people and farm animal figures, blocks or collage materials to recreate the setting of *The Lost Son*. Students use the setting they create to retell the story.

Real Life

- Students create a Big Book or digital story which includes digital photos of observations of themselves making good and bad choices, captioning the images appropriately. The focus is on the choices they make and their consequences. Students collect stories of times when they had a disagreement or fight with a friend and how they made peace with each other, forgave each other and became friends again. Students could use the feeling masks to illustrate the change in feelings experienced.

- Students complete a Y Chart Activity on *Showing Forgiveness*. Students explore what words, hands and actions might show forgiveness.

- Students discuss and draw the feelings of peace and joy that forgiveness brings.

- Students use Feeling Stones to describe the different types of feelings they experience in different situations.

- Students discuss ways of acting in class that impact on others e.g. at group times. Students name behaviours that impact negatively on the group. Students name behaviours that show peace, collaboration, showing sorrow and showing forgiveness.

- Students use the Big Ears and Big Eyes Strategy to learn to listen to one another and look at one another throughout group work activities. Students using this strategy can also identify with the feelings expressed on other students’ faces during group work activities.

Investigations

- Students actively investigate ways to be peaceful and be like peaceful people they know.

- Students list the things they do that make them feel peaceful.

- Students investigate the things people do to make friends again.

- Students could investigate processes of becoming friends again by admitting to a wrong doing, saying sorry, being forgiven and accepting forgiveness.

- Students compare ways of moving their body that are peaceful and those that are hurtful.
• Students compare facial expressions that are peaceful and those that are hurtful.
• Students place a tally mark on a sheet of paper headed *The Peaceful Choices I Made Today*. At group times students are invited to explain why they placed tally marks on the chart.

**Routines and Transitions**

• Sing *All Around My Neighbourhood* at tidy away times utilizing the names of children doing the right thing e.g.

  *All Around My Neighbourhood*

  *I see Laura doing good*

  *Helping, helping, in my neighbourhood.*

• Develop classroom routines that are fair and just e.g. Everybody gets a chance to be the *Leader for a Day*. The leader is chosen by means of an agreed upon, transparent process acceptable to the students e.g. Small photos of students are placed on paddle-pop sticks and placed in a container. The leader is chosen by drawing one photo of a class mate each day with that child becoming the leader. Once a student has had a turn their photo is placed in a second container until all have had a turn at which time the process is begun again.

• Routinely demonstrate simple ways of making peace, sustaining friendships, seeking, showing and accepting forgiveness.

• Develop classroom routines that treat boys and girls equally and provide opportunities for students to demonstrate new ways they have learnt to be peaceful, loving, forgiving and collaborative.

**Focused Learning and Teaching**

• Students pick the images in the Lost Son that show love and forgiveness.

• Students discuss and draw ways their mum and dad show love and forgiveness to one another and their children.

• Students make connections with the love and forgiveness of their parents and that of the forgiving father in the parable of the Lost Son.

• Students discuss how everyone at times does the wrong thing and makes bad choices even though they try to always make the right choices.

• Students create a class chart depicting God’s forgiveness and love for everyone who is sorry for the wrong things they have done.

• Students review common fairy tales to identify the good and bad choices made by the characters in the story. Students use coloured copies of characters to sequence the story.

• Students place a crossroad sign when a character in the story had to make a significant choice.

• Students review the story of *The Loving Son* to identify the good and bad choices made by the characters in the story. Students use coloured copies of characters to sequence the story.

• Students use a *What If … Strategy* on familiar stories to identify the consequences of the good and bad choices made by a character/s in the story. Students list their ideas and draw, paint, create a collage of their ideas.

• Students analyse the story of *The Lost Son* to determine the significant elements for reconciliation and peace - admission of a wrongdoing, saying sorry, receiving and accepting forgiveness.
Students are given a sheet of paper divided into three under the headings; the son makes a wrong choice, the son says sorry, the father forgives his son. Students draw images of wrongdoing, saying sorry, receiving and accepting forgiveness in the three parts of the story.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The son makes a wrong choice.</th>
<th>The son says sorry.</th>
<th>The father forgives his son.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Students choose an experience from their own lives. Students draw their story using the three part strategy above.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I make a wrong choice</th>
<th>I say sorry</th>
<th>God the Father forgives me.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Case Study

Reconciliation and Peace: The Forgiving Father

Meet Donna Porteus, a Prep teacher at Our Lady of the Sacred Heart Catholic School, Darra. Donna is an experienced Early Years teacher who has taught in Queensland, South Australia and Victoria. Donna is passionate about teaching in the Early Years. Throughout her work with this case study, Donna marvelled at the Prep students’ ability to engage so wholeheartedly with the material presented and to express themselves so creatively.

Background

The students were introduced to the Gospel story of The Lost Son through a retelling of the story during a quiet reflective meditation time. The students came into the classroom to a peaceful setting with candles, coloured clothes and pillows. After listening to the story of The Lost Son the children were lead through a meditation process by Sr. Sue Walpole the school Pastoral Care worker. With the closing of the meditation the students were asked to draw their favourite image or part of the story that appealed to them.

The next day we re-read the story of The Lost Son and the students sequenced a series of laminated pictures on a board. I sourced these pictures from children’s bibles, photocopied and then laminated them for use.

After a discussion about the choices the son made in the story, the students focussed on making “Wrong Choices”. The students were put into small groups and prepared and acted out scenarios using the Curtain up, Curtain down Strategy. The students enjoyed this activity and came up with their own scenarios without teacher help. They even gave their own instructions for ‘Curtain up, curtain down’.
The students were then asked to draw a picture of themselves making a ‘Wrong Choice’ along with a picture of the Consequence. The students dictated their stories to me with a variety of wrong choices and consequences. Some stories reflected personal experience, some imaginative experiences. Students also reflected on how they were forgiven when they made the wrong choices.

The next day a similar worksheet ‘Good Choices’ gave the students the opportunity to show an example of how they can make good choices at home or school. Once again the students also drew the consequences.

On a daily basis the students used a digital camera to capture class members making ‘Good Choices’. One student was chosen to be the photographer for the day. The students took pictures during Outside Play and Inside Play. The next day, the students who took the photos had to explain to the class why they had taken these particular photos. A class chart was made each day and I would scribe the good choice being made. These photos have been compiled into a Big Book for the children to read and borrow to share at home with Mum and Dad. The photos are surprisingly good. Their subject matter is varied and provides a wonderful record of the daily life of a Prep room.
The class revisited our classroom rules for this year including our chart for good listening. This was a good time to reinforce our classroom rules as our discussions on good and bad choices had highlighted our ability to choose and the fact that our choices have consequences. The class as a whole were much more conscious of doing the right thing than they had been previously.

The students also explored the story of ‘Little Red Riding Hood’. We identified the good and bad choices made by the characters in the story. We used felt characters and props on a felt board to retell the story of Little Red Riding Hood. We also sequenced her journey, breaking into small groups to collaborate on this task.

Throughout this time the students also used play dough with our wooden people and farm animals to retell the story of The Lost Son.

Each day we continued to focus on the Good Choices we were making through our daily photos and making of our big book (making sure each child appeared in at least one photo). These students are making sure they hang up the dress up clothes and don’t just walk away when they are finished playing in this area.

I introduced a ‘Marble Jar’ for making Good Choices. The jar had three levels marked on it and the class together decided on what ‘REWARD’ we would get when we reached each level. The class decide that for the first level reached, each child would receive a ‘Terrific at School’ Card to be put in the Prize Draw Box. At our school assembly three draws take place and the lucky winners gets a pick from the school prize box.

For the second level, the class decided that everyone would get an ice-block as a reward. For the third level, the class decided that they would get to watch a DVD.

This process has encouraged the students to tell me of students doing POSITIVE actions rather than ‘dobbing’ on each other. We also talk about how it is difficult to always make good choices and that when we don’t we can say sorry just like the Lost Son said sorry to his father.
After working so hard on making ‘Good Choices’, we watched a cartoon video of ‘The Prodigal Son’. The students really enjoyed viewing this video and a good discussion followed. Once again I asked the students to make small groups and on a large sheet of paper to draw a ‘Story Map’ of one of the stories we had studied recently. I suggested ‘The Forgiving Father’, ‘Little Red Riding Hood’ or ‘Jonah and the Whale’. The students worked so well together in their groups and the story maps were amazing. A great deal of discussion occurred during this mapping, the story was retold, broken into parts to be illustrated and these parts assigned to group members by consensus within the group scribed the stories for each group in the language the students dictated to me.

Drawing on the message, ‘God is merciful and always forgiving’, I read the students two stories. The first one was about Millie who while always appearing to do the right thing is actually making ‘wrong choices’. When her Mum and dad find out, they ‘still love her’. The second story Where the Wild Thing Are conveys a similar message that even when Mum gets mad with you, she still brings you in your supper. A big discussion followed about how Mum and Dad always forgive and love you and this leads on to how God is always forgiving and always loves us. Many questions from the children including ‘If someone you love dies do you still love them?’ and ‘Does the person who dies still love you from Heaven?’ After our discussion I asked the students to think of and draw two scenarios. The first was a time when they did something wrong but Mum and Dad forgave them and still loved them. The second was a time when God knew that they had done something wrong but they knew that God forgave them and still loved them. Once again the children amazed me with their ideas, drawings and ability to tell me their stories.

Each day we continue with our ‘Photographer of the Day’ and our book is nearly full. As we lead into the season of Advent the children have been encouraged to bring in Christmas food for our Minnie Vinnie’s group to make treat baskets for the poor. The students have internalized this study of The Lost Son and our ability to make choices that they are using and encouraging each other with the language of good choice, wrong choice and consequence every day in the classroom. We also focus on forgiveness, ways of forgiving and ways to sustain our friendships and relate these to the parable of The Lost Son and the image of God as forgiving.

**Reflection**

The Prep children in my class continue daily to talk about making ‘Good Choices’. While I have been gathering their work from the last few weeks I have found that it has been possible to view their work against the rubrics and determine a phase for each child’s samples. Of course, teacher knowledge of each child enables me to make my final judgement. However, it has been interesting to note the children who made the connection to the word “forgives” in their retelling of their pictures and the children who continue to come up to me and give recognition to children who are making ‘Good Choices’ and children who forgive.
Getting Started:

Respecting Ourselves and Others and all of God’s Creation

Students identify and express ideas and feelings about what it means to be a friend and sustain relationships, in relation to the values of love and compassion in religious texts. [RE SPL (a)]

Students explore and use social skills when interacting, collaborating and resolving conflict with others in relation to the value of forgiveness and reconciliation as illustrated in religious texts. [RE SPL (b)]

Students raise self awareness and personal identity by caring for themselves and others as a part of the goodness of God’s creation. [RE SPL (e)]

This support resource learning focuses on caring for self and others as a part of the goodness of God’s creation. An excellent opportunity arises for students to explore the care for the goodness of all of God’s creation. As such learning can extend beyond care of self and others to include Syllabus Content i.e. Human beings are called to respect and be stewards of God’s creation (B1) and All creatures are interdependent and men and women are created for community and share God’s creation (B3) P 30 RECG EY. By extending learning in this area students would also be covering content associated with dimensions of the Religious Education and Active Learning Processes learning statement particularly, RE ALP( b) & c).

Scripture

Students are introduced to the following readings to identify and express understandings about the Gospel values of love and compassion in friendships and relationships.

Matthew 19: 13-15 Jesus blesses the children
Matthew 6: 19-21 Treasure -chest of friends.
Luke 6: 31 Do for others just what you want them to do for you.
Matthew 22: 34-39 Love God and love your neighbour as you love yourself

Student Responsive Curriculum: A Possible Scenario

Students at this stage are developing social skills to handle the diverse social contexts they experience at school and issues they have when there are changes in friendships and other relationships. At times students struggle with these things and can feel excluded and sometimes anxious. Some students demonstrate a need to develop knowledge and skills to improve their understanding and experience of social and personal relationships. This may include building students’ capacity to sustain relationships and to deal with conflict and the pain associated with broken relationships. A student responsive curriculum will provide students with opportunities to develop in areas of need. Some of the religious themes and beliefs that will support this early development include showing love, being compassionate, demonstrating forgiveness and reconciliation, being collaborative, working to be peaceful and inclusive, showing respect and dignity for all and caring for self and all of God’s creation.

This Support Resource will provide many opportunities for students to develop socially and personally from a religious perspective. The religious focus of this section is Jesus’ message of love for children in Matthew 19: 13-15 where Jesus blesses the children. It also provides opportunities for students to be stewards of creation, caring for all of God’s creation.

Children listen to and/or view the story of Jesus Blesses the Children Matthew 19: 13-15 to identify and express understandings about Jesus’ love for children and how people should love one another no matter what their age or circumstance.

To explore this further students may recount stories about times they did not feel loved or included. Students discuss ways in which they can show love and care for each other as Jesus demonstrated through his love for children.
Teacher Background:

Men and women are created both with one and the same dignity “in the image of God.”

 CCC 369

As such human beings are called to care for themselves and each other. Human dignity requires deep self-respect and respect for the other. By caring for the self, believers strive to sustain human physical, emotional and spiritual needs and grow in the likeness of God. Christians are called to love and care for themselves, not in a narcissistic way, but in a way that nurtures their God given gifts and capacities to serve all of God’s creation. Jesus challenges believers to treasure self and others, to sustain relationships, and to love neighbours by doing for them what you would want them to do for you. It is God’s plan that people help each other to live safely and happily together and to pursue peace.

In God’s eyes all are created equal and reflect the Creator’s wisdom and goodness. CCC 369

This means that males and females have equal dignity and believers are challenged to work towards sustaining equality and dignity for all living creatures. In doing so Christians seek justice and fairness when human wellbeing, respect, dignity and equality is being denied. It is also to be remembered that in scripture Jesus teaches men and women about the importance of children by demonstrating that the young are to be treasured, loved and cared for not to be shunned or disregarded. Those who deny the dignity of children deny the kingdom of God.

Men and women are created for community and share God’s creation. CCC372

This suggests that believers strive to collaborate with others and live peacefully in community. At all levels of human development believers are called to care for themselves and others and share God’s creation.

Stewardship of Creation

To be stewards of God’s creation and to accept the goodness of God’s creation requires an understanding of God’s part in all of creation where God enters fully into creation, drawing creation onwards. It is also supported by a belief that through the creative love of God, from whom we come and towards whom we are journeying, all of creation is sustained. This is a view that is completely averse to seeing creation and nature as something to be dominated, fought with or exhausted by humankind.

Pope Benedict XVI states in his Message for the World Day of Peace in 2010 that there are many threats to world peace and authentic and integral human development but one of the greatest arises from the neglect, if not downright misuse, of the earth and the natural goods that God has given us. He believes that it is for this reason, it is imperative that mankind renew and strengthen the covenant between human beings and the environment.

The environment must be seen as God’s gift to all people, and the use we make of it entails a shared responsibility for all humanity, especially the poor and future generations. I also observed that whenever nature, and human beings in particular, are seen merely as products of chance or an evolutionary determinism, our overall sense of responsibility wanes. On the other hand, seeing creation as God’s gift to humanity helps us understand our vocation and worth as human beings. (Benedict XVI, Encyclical Letter Caritas in Veritate, 48.)

Stewardship of creation incorporates a theology that acknowledges Christ’s love of people within the concreteness of their environment. It acknowledges St Paul’s understanding of creation as God’s saving purpose. Beyond this, it can also draw on the Eastern concept of Christ as universal ruler through the iconic representation and interpretation of Christ the Pantocrator or Cosmocrator. Furthermore, Franciscan estimation of God’s graced presence in all of creation provides believers with a holistic view of life in nature and of religious faith. This view is supported in the writings of Teilhard de Chardin.
The scriptural message from Genesis 1:31 God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good invites believers to care for the goodness of God’s creation. Also in Micah believers are called to walk lightly on the earth is another strong point of reference for the importance of stewardship of God’s creation. This message encourages humankind to develop a profound respect for nature and to ensure stewardship of resources and sustainable practices. Today this simply means to care and to replenish renewable resources. It challenges believers to oppose adverse consumerism and rampant development that is unsustainable. It promotes ethics of justice and sustainability that keep related socio-political issues in the foreground of public debate and social action.

Some Useful Resources for Respecting Ourselves, Others and all of God’s Creation

Scripture and Other Sacred Stories

- Matthew 19: 13-15 Jesus blesses the children
- Matthew 6: 19-21 Treasure in heaven
- Luke 6: 31 Do for others just what you want them to do for you.
- Matthew 22: 34-39 Love God and love your neighbour as you love yourself
- The story of creation (Genesis 1:1-3)
- God is Like: Three Parables for Little Children
- Australian Indigenous Creation Stories, for example: The Rainbow Bird; Tiddalik;
- God and His Creations: Tales from the Old Testament by Marcia Williams

Film (available from BCE Resource Link)

- Jesus: What He Said, What He Did VHS and DVD
- The Four Seasons, DVD 30 mins
- Ferngully: The Last Rainforest, DVD 73 mins
- Dottie and Buzz kit
- Eco Connections for Children kit

Poster/Art

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

Children’s Literature

- McRae, R. Why Doesn’t Anybody Like me? Hodder and Stoughton Sydney
- Jeannie Baker Books particularly Window, Belonging and The Story of Rosie Dock
- The Wild. Bob Graham
- Rainbow Fish. Marcus Pfister
- Bundoola: A Traditional Dreaming Story from the South Coast, NSW. George Brown
- The Lore of the Land. Children of the Gia and Ngaro Homelands
- Going Bush. Nadia Wheatley
- The Creation. Quennie Rikihana Hyland
- Big Mama Makes the World. Helen Oxenbury
- Oi get off our Train and Whadayamean. John Birmingham
Websites

- www.dltk-bible.com This site includes modern versions of bible stories, colouring pages and craft activities.
- The story of creation in an animated online format: www.kids4truth.com/eng_creation.htm
- A PowerPoint of the creation story – use this as a stimulus for the children’s own creations! www.teachingideass.co.uk/re/files/creationstory.ppt
- A huge list of creation stories from all over the world: www.magictails.com/creationlinks.html
- Gather information and activities about the features of the Earth and Sky from this in-depth Nasa Kids site: www.nasa.gov/audience/forkids/home/index.htm
- This site explains how to conduct Dadirri - an Indigenous meditation experience: www.yarrahealing.melb.catholic.edu.au/journeys/c_dadirri.html
- To order Franciscan creation products, go to: http://store.franciscanmissions.org/index.php?p=product&sid=103&parent=1

Learning Objects

- Snakes and Ladders Learning Object

Resource Cards and Stimulus Objects

- The Bear Cards - 48 laminated full colour cards illustrating a variety of feelings and expressions.
- Eggheads – 6 hand-made ceramic eggs with varying expressions in a cardboard egg container.
- Koala Company Cards – 50 laminated circular cards illustrating a variety of expressions.
- Pocket of Stones 12 - hand-made ceramic heads illustrating a variety of expressions.
- I Can Monsters Cards – 24 laminated full colour cards illustrating strengths.
- Strength Cards for Kids – 40 laminated full colour cards depicting strengths.
Learning and Teaching Suggestions

Use the following Biblical references with students to enhance their understanding of Jesus teaching about friendship and respect for themselves and one another.

Matthew 19: 13-15 Jesus blesses the children
Some people brought children to Jesus for him to place his hands on them and to pray for them, but the disciples scolded the people. Jesus said, Let the children come to me and do not stop them, because the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these. He placed his hands on them and went away.

Matthew 22: 34-39 Love God and love your neighbour as you love yourself
Luke 6: 31 Do for others just what you want them to do for you.
Matthew 6: 19-21 Treasure -chest of friends.
Do not store up riches for yourselves here on earth, where rust and moths destroy, and robbers break in and steal. Instead, store up riches for yourselves in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and robbers cannot break up and steal. Your heart will always be where your riches are.

Focused Learning and Teaching

Jesus loves us
- Students use the images provided and a jointly constructed text to retell the story of Jesus Blesses the Children. Matthew 19: 13-15. For an animated PowerPoint of these images with an embedded voiceover of the story of The Lost Son go to the online version of this RE and the Early Years Support document on the Brisbane Catholic Education K Web in the ResourceLink Portal>Resources>Religious Education.
Students consider the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How did Jesus show us that he loved us?</th>
<th>How do I show love to others?</th>
<th>When is it hard to show love to others?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

- Students use Feeling Faces facial expressions, body language and words to express their feelings when they respond to the following questions and scenarios.

  *How do I feel when people don’t show love to me? How do I think other people feel when I don’t show love to them? How might visitors to our classroom and our school feel if we greet them when they enter our classroom or school? How might visitors to our classroom and our school feel if we ignore them or are rude to them when they enter our classroom or school? How do I feel when I have helped someone and they do not thank me? How might other people feel if they have helped me and I do not thank them? How do I feel when someone thanks me for helping them?*

- Students build written word banks, audio files and photo galleries around words and actions of thanks, inclusion, love and compassion, greeting, support, peace and collaboration. Students can create these written, audio and visual banks around scenarios of playing games, greeting visitors, learning in the classroom, eating lunch, lining up and walking, being picked up or dropped off by a parent, talking to another teacher or parent, talking to the principal or priest etc.

- Students make connections with these words and actions and the class vision in the light of the school’s Mission Statement.

- Students consider the question, “We know God loves us but do we need to love him in return?” Listen to the student responses. Read Matthew 22: 34-39 to find out what Jesus taught us about this question.

- Review words and actions that show love.

- Students and the teacher list ‘love’ words and make a large heart puzzle. Divide into segments that reflect the number of words to be used. Add a love word to each piece. Place Blu Tac, reversed tape or Velcro on the back of each puzzle piece. Give puzzle pieces to the students. Students read their love word as they assemble the puzzle, one piece at a time until the heart is formed. Display the loving heart puzzle to allow students the opportunity to remake the puzzle at play time, read and copy ‘love’ words.

- Students make a broken heart using the opposites of the love words on the heart puzzle. Students put these words on puzzle pieces to illustrate a broken heart.

- Students role play loving and non-loving words. Distribute puzzle pieces from the loving and broken heart puzzles to pairs of students. Give students time to work out what their word might look like in action. The first pair of students role play what it looks like to act according to the word on their puzzle piece. The pair with the opposite word identify themselves and then role play their word. The game continues until all pairs have had a turn.

- Students are introduced to an interpretation of Matthew 6: 19-21 that identifies the real treasures of life not being things that can break and be stolen but words and actions of love and goodness that make us better and stronger as people. These are the treasures of things of the heart e.g. having good friends, showing compassion and care, helping people who are lost or in trouble, welcoming people, being there for our family and friends when they need us.

- Students are asked the following questions to explore the treasure Jesus is talking about. What kind of treasure is Jesus talking about? Draw a treasure chest on the whiteboard and write the students ideas in the chest. How would you feel if you opened a container and found treasure inside? How would you feel if you could have that treasure? Would you want others to look at it and admire it?

- Students make two treasure chests one with images of material things and the other treasure chest of the heart. Students compare and discuss the two treasure chests and ponder why Jesus says the treasures of the heart are more important.
The Golden Rule

- Students are introduced to The Golden Rule - Jesus taught that people should treat each other the way they would want to be treated. Explore students responses to its meaning using some Four Resource Model questions from P 16 in the Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines for the Early Years. These questions can be adapted to suit the learning context. For example What words are new for you? What words are hard? What does this text mean? What do others think in means? What was the purpose of this text? What message is Jesus trying to tell us? What’s the main idea? Why do you think Jesus taught this message? Could this text help a real-life problem? If you were going to use words from this text how could you show it differently e.g. painting. Who do you know would read a text like this and try to act this way? What sort of text is this? Is it a story? Is it about people, places or things? How do you know? Is this text fair? How would this text be different if told by someone else? What do you think the person who wrote this text is like? Which idea is really strong or good in this text?

- Students learn the song He’s Got the Whole World in His Hands. Students use the Four Resource Model Questions for the Early Years to deconstruct and interpret the meaning of the song. Students draw their meaning of the song. (Information on the Four Resource Model may be located in the publication Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines for the Early Years pp16-17.)

- Students use Drama Strategies to explore ways they can use their hands so that they treat others like they would like to be treated.

- Students explore the idea in scripture and the song of God tenderly holding them in His hands. Students use Feeling Faces to assist them to express their understandings.

- Students relate this idea to the way they may have cared for a small or delicate living creature that they held in the palm of their hand. Students retell stories from their own experience.

- Students make a Word Wall that could also include audio-visual responses with ways we can hold other living people in things in the palm of our hand by being careful, gentle and inclusive.

- Students, as a whole class, generate ideas for a Class Golden Rule. The Class Golden Rule is made into a poster and displayed. Students reflect on it and write one action that they will take to ensure the Golden Rule is lived out in their class e.g. We will treat everyone in our classroom with gentle hands.

Care for Self and Others

Students explore Jesus teaching to Love God and love your neighbour as you love yourself. (Matthew 22: 34-39)

Students explore the ways in which we can show love for ourselves e.g. we care for ourselves by:

- eating healthy foods
- exercising regularly
- dressing appropriately for the weather
- following hygienic practices
- keeping our mind active
- feeding our spirit

Divide children into groups. Each group invents two scenarios, one positive and one negative to express statements related to the ideas above e.g.

We eat healthy food. We exercise regularly.
Care for All of Creation

- Students explore the story of St Francis of Assisi to discover how he cared for all living creatures and how he truly believed that all of God’s creation was good.

- Students make puppets of the key characters and animals in the story of Francis of Assisi and retell the story.

- Students identify key words from the story of St Francis from a word wall.

- Students dress up as St Francis and St Clare and role play care for all of God’s creation.

- Students are introduced to St Francis’ Canticle of Creation. This text will need adaptation and some translation by the teacher to assist students meaning-making. Students need only reflect on St Francis’ personal relationship with all of creation particularly in his naming of part of creation as a brother or sister.

- Students using Four Resource Questions with this text explore its meaning e.g. What words are new or hard to understand? What words are about people, places and things? What words are repeated and why? What do you think this text means? How does it make you feel? What message is St Francis trying to tell us? What pictures do you see in your mind? Can you describe or draw a picture of some scenes in the text? What sort of text is this? What is the purpose of this text? How could you find out more about this text? Who do you know would read a text like this? What words do you like from this text and you know you could use them to create something else? How is the language the same or different from other things you have heard? Is this text important for us today? Why do you think St Francis chose these words? After hearing this text what do you think St Francis might have been like.

- Students create a class collage of the Canticle of Creation.

- Students role play ways of being like St Francis today e.g. being a vet and caring for sick animals. Students wear costumes and use props to re-enact a vet’s surgery.

- Students create a class garden and care for the plants in the garden.
Play

- Students use red card for students to make individual heart puzzles based on the heart puzzle modelled for them at group time.

- Students make hand print paintings at the easels.

- Students draw around their hand (fingers may be splayed or closed) on brightly coloured paper, cut out the shape and use their imagination to turn their hand into something other than a hand within a larger picture e.g. the hand shape may become the fire in a camping picture, a bird soaring into the sky, a fish in a seascape etc.

- Students make Personal Paper-People Chains and write their friends names on the people. A chain naming all the students in the class could be constructed.

- Students make class treasure chests of things and treasure of Jesus or the heart.

- Students use collage materials to make individual treasure boxes. Encourage students to copy words from the Love and Compassion Word Wall outlined above to place in their treasure box. Older students could write a sentence containing a word from the word wall e.g. You share well. Encourage students to open their treasure box and give their word or sentence to a friend or family member who is demonstrating love and/or compassion.

- Students make treasure from collage materials, threading beads to make necklaces, bracelets, ear rings etc. Store and use these in Home Corner.
Real Life

- Students think of problems or situations that arise at school. They reflect on these and how they could have been different if love was shown. Students divide a page in two and draw, paint or collage their ideas.

- Students are given pictures to which they are asked to respond with love, drawing or writing their response. For example:

| ![Students fighting](image1.png) | ![Go away!](image2.png) |

- Students are involved in a **Class Health Day** in which they plan a healthy picnic lunch menu, prepare the food and drink on the menu, prepare for the walk including sunscreen and hat, walk to a local park, have a picnic, play games, return to school for a rest and reflection.

- Set up a tasting table. Students, on a roster basis, bring one food they like and one food they dislike, cut into small tasting portions in lidded containers, for classmates to try. Tastes are discussed once each student has taken the taste test. Students discuss any relationships between tasty and healthy foods.

Investigations

- Students explore how tenderly they are held in the hands of God. Students investigate the image created in the Irish Blessing *May God hold you in the palm of His hand.*

- Students investigate *Who is my Neighbour?* outlined in the Good Samaritan section of this HPL RE Resource.

- Students investigate or review healthy practices with your students. Brainstorm and then make a poster of class hygiene procedures e.g. *We care for our health by: washing our hands etc.*

- Students investigate healthy foods. Source, display and discuss the food pyramid.

- Students investigate or review protective behaviours
Routines and Transitions

- Students establish and follow a greeting and farewell ritual with the class each day.

- Students establish and follow greetings and thank you protocols for visitors to your classroom.

- Students write treasure words on card and place in a treasure chest. Before playtime draw one treasure word from the chest to become the focus for that playtime e.g. helping.

- Students design a Treasure Award for students. At the beginning of each day choose an action that shows love and compassion as a focus for the day e.g. using gentle hands. At the end of each day, in discussion with the class, choose a student who demonstrated the focus action for the award for the day.

- Students play *Doggy, Doggy, Where’s My Bone?* substituting treasure for bone. Children move to next activity when they have had a turn.
Case Study


Meet Sarah Nichols, a P/1 teacher at Christ the King School, Graceville. Sarah undertook this case study at the beginning of Term 4. She found that it came at the perfect time as some of the friendships among her students were a little strained at the time. Sarah’s students found it was a great reminder of how we show our love for others and helped the students to resolve problems and treat each other fairly.

Background
We started with me reading from Scripture Matthew 19:13-15 Jesus blesses the children.

We then brainstormed the ways Jesus showed his love for us, how we show love for others and when it is hard to show love for others. The children then chose one way they were going to show love for others to work on that week.

The Learning Story
The children were encouraged to do a self-reflection at the end of the week by drawing a time that week that showed how they cared for others.

I had the children work in pairs to make a mask from paper plates that had a happy face on one side and a sad face on the other. As a group I then gave them different scenarios and the children discussed with their partner how each character in the story was feeling and showed this with their mask. We have kept the masks at school and we often pull them out at the end of stories and discuss characters feelings.
We brainstormed love words and made the heart puzzle and put it together as a class. The students are going to make their own in playtime.

**Reflection**

Although this study came at the perfect time to sort out some friendship issues in our class, I think it would be really great to do this at the beginning of the year when classes are coming up with class rules and values. It could then be revisited and refreshed when necessary during the year.