Religious Education
Support Resource
for the Early Years
Religious Education and Health and Physical Learning
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Religious Education and Health and Physical Learning

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

RE and Active Learning Processes Organising Ideas
- Planning & Problem Solving
- Awe and Wonder and Care for Creation
- Religion and Art

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

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

RE and Social and Personal Learning Organising Ideas
- Love and Compassion
- Reconciliation and Peace
- Respect for Ourselves and Others
Models and Frameworks for Religious Education: Early Years

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

Curriculum Decision Making Model

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

Learning Framework and Roles for Lifelong Learners

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

The classroom teaching of religion in the early years contributes to lifelong learning by facilitating the development of the roles for Lifelong Learners, which have been adapted in the Religious Education Curriculum Guidelines for the Early Years to support teaching and learning.

Model for Developing Religious Literacy

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

A Model for Religious Education

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

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

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

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

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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>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>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>
</tbody>
</table>
| Active Learning Processes                                | Religious Education and Active Learning Processes | Students imagine, investigate, and respond to their own and others’ ideas about phenomena in the natural world, sustainable environments and technology*, in light of their emerging understandings of Religious texts.  
* Including Information Communication and Learning Technologies (ICLT) |
| Language Learning and Communication                      | Religious Education and Language Learning and Communication | Students explore, interpret and experiment with spoken, written, visual, gestural, spatial, audio and multi-modal Religious texts* to expand their Religious understanding, oral language and early literacy.  
* Religious texts include: Scripture and moral stories, simple prayers, gestures, celebrations and expressions of belief, Religious symbols, artefacts, art and music. |
| Early Mathematical Understandings                        | Religious Education and Early Mathematical Understandings | Students engage with early numerate practices to enhance their understandings of the meaning of Scripture stories, simple celebrations and prayers, moral messages and beliefs. |

Description of Religious Education and Health and Physical Learning (RE HPL)

Students engage with messages within religious texts and reflect upon life experiences to build upon their understanding of physical and spiritual wellbeing.

This statement describes messages within religious texts and life experiences that build a sense of physical and spiritual wellbeing and develop and inform:

- a capacity to make healthy choices that foster a sense of physical and spiritual wellbeing
- ways of being in daily experience that are life-giving.
**Religious Education and Health and Physical Learning (RE HPL)**

Students engage with and reflect upon life experiences and messages within religious texts to build upon their understanding of physical and spiritual wellbeing.

**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) explore the idea that God gives humans the freedom to choose and this freedom is to be used responsibly

b) explore and illustrate right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust choices from religious and other texts

c) reflect upon and learn from choices and their consequences, from life experiences and religious texts

d) rethink, with support, choices related to their own and others’ physical and spiritual wellbeing

e) identify and experience ways to nurture spiritual wellbeing.

**Suggestions for monitoring and assessing**

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

a) with occasional prompts, can identify occasions when people demonstrated freedom of choice and used it responsibly

b) can express ways characters in religious and other texts demonstrated right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust choices

c) expresses understandings in diverse ways about choices and consequences

d) identifies characters in religious or secular texts who changed their ways positively through the choices they made

e) identifies people in stories or real-life scenarios who incorporate life-giving ways of being into their lives.

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

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

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

**Suggestions for interacting**

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

a) provide opportunities for students to reflect upon and use their God-given freedom of choice, responsibly

b) support students to identify right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust choices in religious and other texts

c) provide a variety of learning experiences where early learners are prompted to examine and discuss choices and consequences that are reflected in real-life experiences, religious and other texts

d) use teachable moments to provide feedback and to identify and consider alternative, life-giving choices made by early learners and others

e) make a class list of ways of doing and being that nurture the spirit.

**Suggestions for reflecting**

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

- What things have we discovered about ourselves and the choices we make?
- What things have we discovered about the choices of others in stories and real-life?
- Who has helped us to learn new ways of making choices that keep us happy, safe and well?
- What new life-giving ways have we heard about and experienced?

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 engage with and reflect upon life experiences and messages within religious texts to build upon their understanding of physical and spiritual wellbeing

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning Suggestions</th>
<th>RE Syllabus Content</th>
<th>Elaborations of RE Syllabus Content</th>
<th>Contexts for Learning</th>
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| a) explore the idea that God gives humans the freedom to choose and this freedom is to be used responsibly | • God gives the human freedom to choose. (M2)  
• God-given freedom is to be used responsibly. (M2)  
• Freedom to choose is influenced by many factors. (M2)  
• Moral choice involves the whole person. (M2) | Students, with support, know:  
• about choice and our freedom to choose  
• about responsibility and ways to use freedom responsibly  
• that many people and things influence the choices we make  
• that people think and feel as they make choices | Play: Make up choosing games.  
Focused Teaching and Learning: Use a Y chart strategy to discuss people’s God-given freedom of choice.  
Real Life: Identify ways of using freedom responsibly.  
Investigation: Complete a list of the people who influence our choices.  
Routines and Transitions: Engage with classroom routines that allow freedom of choice. |
| b) explore and illustrate right and wrong, good and bad, just and unjust choices from religious and other texts | • Morality is about good and bad, right and wrong. (M4)  
• 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) | • some simple comparisons between good and bad, right and wrong, from their life experiences  
• some ways to show love for God and others  
• the Golden Rule | Play: Role play good and bad, right and wrong characters/scenarios in religious and other stories.  
Focused Teaching and Learning: Use code-breaking and meaning-making activities to teach the Golden Rule.  
Real Life: List examples of outdoor play that illustrate the way students should treat each other.  
Routines and Transitions: Learn and sing a song about the Golden Rule for use each time students go outdoors. |
| c) reflect upon and learn from choices and their consequences, from life experiences and religious texts | • Moral choice involves reflection, decision making and action. (M4)  
• Jesus taught in parables. (B38)  
• Stories and ideas in the Bible describe how people have reflected on God’s presence in their lives. (S2) | • about choices and the need to reflect before making decisions and acting  
• some of the parables that Jesus taught  
• some characters in Bible stories who have listened to God in their lives | Focused Teaching and Learning: Use Thinking Bubbles, or Guess What’s in My Head strategies with characters in moral stories.  
Play: Use puppets of biblical characters who love God/Jesus during imaginative play.  
Investigation: Search out words and pictures from Jesus’ parables and place them in a speech bubble.  
Real Life: Recall and discuss some choices made and their consequences.  
Routines and Transitions: Learn a short class saying that encourages thinking before acting e.g. Stop, Think, Act. |
| d) rethink, with support, choices related to their own and others’ physical and spiritual wellbeing | • Moral decisions should be made in light of the common good. (M4)  
• To receive God’s mercy, people must acknowledge their faults. (M3)  
• God gives humanity the freedom to choose and this freedom is to be used responsibly. (M2)  
• Sacraments are sacred actions. Through ritual, prayer and symbol they communicate God’s presence and action. (C1)  
• People can come to know a personal God. God’s presence is revealed in all of creation. (B2)  
• Faith is a gift from God. It is personal and a free response. (B4, B5) | • to think about others when making decisions  
• God forgives when we are truly sorry  
• to endeavour to choose responsibly  
• ritual and prayers support our physical and spiritual wellbeing  
• God is everywhere  
• God is all around us  
• believers trust and have faith in God | Focused Teaching and Learning: Use meaning-making activities on forgiveness.  
Play: Use puppets of biblical characters that say sorry.  
Investigation: Search out and name, or draw healthy alternative choices that improve classroom and outdoor play situations.  
Real Life: Recall and discuss the happiness and wellbeing achieved by saying sorry and showing mercy.  
Routines and Transitions: Learn and use simple sorry prayers at frequent reflection times. |
| e) identify and experience ways to nurture spiritual wellbeing | • Prayer is central to a personal and communal relationship with God. (C37)  
• God’s presence is revealed in all creation. (B2)  
• God is love. (B12)  
• The mystery of God is beyond language, concepts and stories. (B20)  
• The Holy Spirit is active in the world leading people to God. (B13) | • to use words, songs and bodily action in prayer  
• icons and meditation are used to assist prayer  
• explore stillness, silence and simplicity  
• God’s Spirit breathes life into the world  
• the Spirit of God is present everywhere  
• God’s love is everlasting. | Focused Teaching and Learning: Introduction to spirituality through simple prayer and meditation.  
Play: Foster a culture of spiritual wellbeing through creative play that allows for diverse forms of expression.  
Investigation: List ways to nurture spiritual wellbeing with God, self and others.  
Real Life: Share understandings of the ways families or others pray.  
Routines and Transitions: Learn a class prayer. |
Rubric for Religious Education and Health and Physical 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 Health and Physical 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Becoming Aware</th>
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<th>Making Connections</th>
<th>Applying</th>
<th>Links Level 1</th>
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<tr>
<td>With explicit support, the student uses religious contexts to participate in discussions about how the choices people make affect wellbeing.</td>
<td>With support, the student uses religious contexts to express emerging ideas about how the choices people make affect physical and spiritual wellbeing.</td>
<td>With prompts, the student uses religious contexts to represent ideas about their own and others understanding of how personal choices affect physical and spiritual wellbeing.</td>
<td>The student uses religious contexts to reflect upon, identify and express how their own, or community choices affect the physical and spiritual wellbeing of those involved.</td>
<td>M 1.1 Students examine actions described in religious and other texts to identify messages about morality. M1.2 Students create and reflect on scenarios to identify behaviours they or others regard as right or wrong. M1.3 Students illustrate just and peaceful relationships by reflecting on just and unjust ways of acting. S1.3 Students share and compare their ideas, feelings and experiences in interpreting familiar scriptural texts.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Learning Strategies ①

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 ①. 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 Religious Education website.

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

Freedom, Choice and Consequences
Forgiveness and Reconciliation

Students explore the idea that God gives humans the freedom to choose and this freedom is to be used responsibly. RE HPL (a)

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

Students reflect upon and learn from choices and their consequences, from life experiences and religious texts. RE HPL (c)

Students rethink, with support, choices related to their own and other’s physical wellbeing. RE HPL (d)

Student Responsive Curriculum: A Possible Scenario

Students, throughout the activities in this support resource, are encouraged to learn from their own and others’ good deeds and mistakes by reflecting on real life scenarios and religious stories. Students are encouraged to be honest in a non-threatening environment that values truth and forgiveness. Students should be given plenty of opportunities for metacognitive development and reflective practices e.g. thinking about my thinking/stop, being still and reflecting. Students are moving towards becoming Reflective, Self-Directed Learners.

Students at this stage are beginning to explore significant life realities that impact significantly on their own and others’ health, well being and spiritual growth. These realities include freedom of choice, the responsibilities associated with freedom of choice, choices and consequences, reflecting upon choices and their consequences and rethinking choices to improve the well-being of self and others. Students have diverse capacities for understanding and enacting these realities and their associated capacities and skills. Human beings and their interactions are complex and the impact of human free will on life provides continual fuel for positive social interaction and for conflict. As students grow in their understanding of these realities their intrapersonal and interpersonal social skills develop. Reflective practices about the choices and decisions they make and their capacity to rethink choices and actions are high order interpersonal skills and capacities. Providing rich opportunities for students to engage with this knowledge and with these skills early in their school life has the potential to improve their physical and spiritual well-being.

A student responsive curriculum provides students with opportunities to follow areas of interest related to religious education and health, physical and spiritual wellbeing. Everyday real-life scenarios will provide teachers with authentic opportunities for students’ engagement in this area. For example, some students may feel victimized by others who continue to make bad choices. Some students continue to act without thinking of the consequences. Some students continue to make unhealthy choices that impact on everyone. Some students may find it hard to forgive. Some of the religious themes and beliefs students will explore in this support resource include: God gives people freedom of choice; God-given freedom is to be used responsibly; many people and things influence the choices people make; choices involve thinking and feeling; choices impact on others’ thinking and feeling; the need to show love to others and reflect on choices before acting; some stories in the bible show that with God’s help people have changed for the better; God is love; God forgives; God shows mercy and saves; God changes people’s lives; prayer builds a relationship with God; and God is present in all of creation.

The Bible Story of Zacchaeus and other moral stories are the key narrative sources underpinning the learning and teaching suggestions in this section of the support resource.

Teacher Background

Freedom, Choice and Responsibility

Human beings are created in God’s image. Human beings have the right to be recognized as free and responsible beings. All humanity owes dignity and respect to each other. The dignity of the human person is maintained through the right to freedom, especially in moral and religious matters. These rights must be recognised and protected within the limits of the common good and public order.
Humans are rational thinking beings with a capacity to initiate and control actions. This freedom to act is to be used responsibly for the good of all. As thinking beings, people are free to make choices whilst carefully reflecting upon the consequences of choices made.

Human beings' freedom and knowledge is limited and fallible. The exercise of God-given freedom does not give one a right to say or do anything he or she wants. Just exercise of freedom can be violated by human blindness and injustice. It is sinful to disregard others' loss of freedom, dignity and respect and the severe consequences caused by unjust choices and actions.

Forgiveness and Reconciliation
Forgiveness refers to the taking away of obstacles that block intimate union with God and others. For some forgiveness is associated with guilt for sin. Unresolved guilt has the capacity to weaken relationships between God and neighbours. Forgiveness can also be tied up with past sins that continue to affect existing relationships and sometimes incline individuals to repeat behaviours that require further forgiveness. Removal of such obstacles is the key work of forgiveness and as such forgiveness becomes part of the bigger reality of reconciliation with God, self, others and the world.

Forgiveness and reconciliation bring healing, restoration and peace. Christians believe Christ has won salvation for all. Through the Holy Spirit, Christians receive the gifts of the Spirit that set them free. Christians seeking to live God’s word through just choices and responsible actions draw on, and are open to, the gift of wise counsel through the power of the Holy Spirit. Aware of their own capacity to miss the mark, commit sin and make bad choices, Christians are called to seek forgiveness and reconciliation with God, themselves and others in order to restore relationships and make peace.

Biblical Context for the Story of Zacchaeus
This narrative, found in Luke 19:1-10, is the final story in a long account of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem. The story of Zacchaeus, the rich man, comes immediately after the story of the blind beggar receiving sight.

Luke’s gospel was written between 75-85 CE and was published after Mark’s gospel. Although Luke makes use of a great deal of Mark’s material in his gospel, the Zacchaeus narrative is only found in Luke’s gospel. The marginalised in this first century Mediterranean world were women, the poor, Gentiles and sinners, the unclean and tax collectors, who were despised by the religious leaders. Zacchaeus, the rich man, is a tax collector, a sinner in the eyes of Jews. These ‘sinners’ did not observe the detail of the Jewish Law, and therefore were believed to be condemned by God and so ritually unclean and condemned as outcasts.

Tax Collectors
A Jew who collected taxes for the Roman authorities was considered both a traitor and ritually unclean before God. So he was a sinner. Taxes were collected on goods and produce entering or leaving a town. As chief tax collector, Zacchaeus might be head of a group of tax collectors responsible for custom dues in the area, from goods passing from Perea into Judaea. This was called tax farming. It was the custom to buy the right to collect tax for Rome from Palestine – a sort of franchise operation. You recovered your money, plus extra in taxes. Corruption and extortion were common and hence tax collectors were not popular. Jesus’ action in inviting himself to stay with Zacchaeus is contrary to what would have been expected of him as a religious teacher.

Tax Collection
The Romans occupied Palestine during the time of Jesus and imposed a tax system. These taxes were used for many purposes including:

- maintaining government structures and administration in Rome;
- meeting housing, wages and administration costs of Roman officials, for example the governor Pontius Pilate, in Palestine;
- maintaining large numbers of Roman soldiers who were essential to the security of the occupied territories;
- providing infrastructure, such as roads and aqueducts to Palestine.
The Romans contracted chief tax collectors to be in charge of collecting tax in different regions. However, the Romans did not pay these chief tax collectors. They were told that any money they collected over and above what they were to pay the Romans could be kept as their wages. Zacchaeus was one such person and his region was in and around Jericho. Each chief tax collector in turn hired tax collectors who were to collect the taxes from everyone and pay it to the chief collector. The chief tax collector paid each tax collector a sum of money for doing this. Such a system was open to abuse and soon became quite corrupt, as both chief tax collectors and tax collectors sometimes collected much more than the Romans required in order to make themselves rich.

Tax collectors generally sat at stalls at the town gates and took part of a person’s produce as he came to sell it at the markets. The amounts taken may have been recorded onto scrolls. The tax collectors then in turn would have had to pay the chief tax collector in coins. This is why Zacchaeus is referred to as a sinner. He would have been considered defiled because he touched coins, which would have been also touched by Gentiles. The purity laws required that a faithful Jew not encounter anyone who did not keep the purity laws. Zacchaeus was defiled because he constantly touched coins.

Interesting Facts
Zacchaeus’ name means Pure One. Jesus sets out from Jericho [City of Palms] to Jerusalem, a distance of about 24 kilometres, approximately 4-8 hours all up hill. Jericho is 230 metres below sea level and Jerusalem 795 metres above, a total climb of 565 metres. The custom was that you started early morning with rest in the middle of the day. According to the scripture Jesus was on his way to Jerusalem when he came across Zacchaeus.

Salvation, Sanctification and Grace
Zacchaeus experienced what theologians like Augustine and Thomas Aquinas have called sanctifying grace in the presence of Jesus. He becomes a changed man forever.

Jesus said to him, “Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.” Luke 19:9-10

Luke presents Jesus’ message as having universal relevance. Jesus’ message was for everyone, including those marginalized by society like women, the poor and Gentiles and those sinners. Luke also includes narratives where Jesus speaks harshly about wealth and possessions, in contrast to his emphasis on the importance of the poor and their nearness to God. Luke’s narrative is an invitation to all, not only the righteous. All who have sinned or are considered unclean, condemned or outcasts are called to seek salvation, to be transformed and come closer to God.

Kingdom of God
By the time Luke wrote his gospel, Christianity had spread through the Roman Empire, embracing Gentiles as well as Jews. Luke sets the scene for this by emphasising the universality of the gospel which Jesus proclaimed, which included tax collectors, sinners, women, foreigners and other ‘outsiders’. The Gospel proclaimed the message that everyone was eligible for citizenship in God’s Kingdom. Nothing, from God’s point of view would bar a person from entry, providing that person responded to the invitation, recognising their need of God. People, who were so self-righteous that they did not see their need of God could cut themselves off by their blindness, but God’s offer remained open to everyone. The basis of this offer was that everyone was God’s creation and everyone mattered to God because everyone was part of God’s plan and needed to be ‘on board’.

Wealth
Jesus’ teaching about wealth gives pointers rather than a clear code of practice. Wealth comes with dangers, the chief being that wealth can become like a god, demanding allegiance and becoming the main focus of a person’s life. Jesus said that it was necessary to choose between serving God or money. Money makes it harder for a person to get their priorities right and God often takes second place to money. In this encounter, Zacchaeus contrasts with the rich man (Luke 18:18-23) whom Jesus told to sell everything and give to the poor. Wealth in spiritual matters as opposed to material wealth is a thread running through the Bible. Spiritual wealth is eternal, whereas material wealth is part of this material existence.
**Sinners**

‘I have come not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance’ means that for outcasts like Zacchaeus, there is the affirmation of the right to belong to the people of God after repentance. For communities inclined to exclude, there is the challenging reminder of Jesus’ mission and example. For the wealthy, Jesus’ mission is the model of what conversion should mean. Jesus was interested in those in need of God who were ready to change their ways to restore their relationship with God.

**Repentance**

Zacchaeus had everything to keep him from repentance - his wealth, the ‘hardness of his heart’ induced by his unpopularity, his high position. His was a very practical form of repentance, which prepared him to return to God. In response to Jesus’ acceptance of him and willingness to eat with him, he realised his need to repent in order to wipe his slate clean before God. This repentance was shown in practical terms, which enabled him to have a new start with God.

**Discipleship**

The meaning of discipleship is expressed in Zacchaeus’ joyful and immediate response. He took his opportunity, not holding back anything in order to make amends and demonstrate his repentance and determination to lead a new life. His was complete commitment, shown through drastic changes to his lifestyle.

**Table Hospitality**

Here is a very practical example of how Jesus made contact with those considered ‘sinners.’ He took the initiative and invited himself to the sinner’s house. He broke through social convention to ensure he made personal contact with the outcast. He made Zacchaeus feel that he mattered and shared a meal with him. The people of Jericho were unhappy that Jesus invited himself to Zacchaeus’ house for two reasons: Zacchaeus was a sinner and he was working for the Romans to make their own lives harsher. Zacchaeus was seen to make wrong choices at their expense.

**Zacchaeus Online**

http://clipart.christiansunite.com/Pictures_of_Jesus_Clipart/Zacchaeus_Clipart/  
(Clipart images of the Zacchaeus story)

www.sermons4kids.com/zacchaeus-ppt-slides.htm  
(Nine PowerPoint Slide Masters of the Zacchaeus story)

www.bible-history.com/taxcollectors/index.html  
(Tax Collectors section of the Bible History Online website)

http://clipart.crossmap.com/search_images/Zacchaeus.htm  
(Clipart of Zacchaeus for younger students)

http://www.crossroadsinitiative.com/library_article/280/Zacchaeus__Look_Who_s_Coming_to_Dinner.html  
(A very readable commentary on the Zacchaeus story)

www.whosoever.org/v9i3/yeshua.shtml  
(Another very readable commentary on the Zacchaeus story)

www.allojunior.org/english/newz_bd_zacchaeus_01.htm  
(Cartoon story about Zacchaeus for kids)

Zacchaeus learning object  
Some Useful Resources for Scripture and Moral Stories

Scripture and Other Sacred Stories
- Zacchaeus (From Luke 19:1-10)
- The Lost Son (From Luke 15:11-32)
- Jesus and the Cheat Big Book
- Stories about Jesus Big Book
- We Celebrate God’s Word Big Book

Film (available from ResourceLink, Brisbane Catholic Education)
- God’s Little Heroes! VHS
- Dottie And Buzz DVD
- God Wants Me To Forgive Them? Veggie Tales DVD
- King George and the Ducky DVD
- The Flo Show Creates a Buzz DVD
- Ooops! Sorry! Forgiveness DVD
- Forgive Us Our Debts DVD
- People Who Met Jesus DVD
- Treasures in Heaven DVD
- The Awesome Story of Jesus DVD
- The First Easter Surprise DVD
- When Zacchaeus Met Jesus DVD

Literature
- Wild M., Miss Lily’s Fabulous Pink Feather Boa
- Marsden J., Millie
- My Friend Jesus by Julie David and illustrated by Helen Prole
- The Little Red Hen
- I’m Number One! Author: Michael Rosen, Illustrator: Bob Graham
- The Dirty Great Dinosaur. Author: Martin Waddell, Illustrator: Leonie Lord
- India the Showstopper. Author/Illustrator: Kerry Argent
- Jungle Drums Author/Illustrator: Graham Base

Websites
Not all of the following websites are of a religious nature. They may, however, enhance students general Health and Well Being in the early years.

http://www.dottieandbuzz.co.uk/prog5/index.html
Printable emotions cards and posters – teacher gives scenario and students indicate the emotions they would feel by holding up card. For exploring words that hurt, words that heal, students use the emotions cards to express how they would feel when different words are said e.g. She’s pretty, or She’s bossy.

http://www.twinkl.co.uk/resources/class-management/sen-and-pshe
VERY simple game about sharing featuring characters from Clifford the Big Red Dog

http://pbskids.org/clifford/games/sweater.html
Great videos from Sesame Street:

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<th>Topic</th>
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<td>A bully brings an icecream to Bert to say sorry for being mean.</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sesamestreet.org/video_player/-/pgpv/videoplayer/0/5f46dce1-79b2-46fc-80ee-3ecf217058ae/the_beach_bully">http://www.sesamestreet.org/video_player/-/pgpv/videoplayer/0/5f46dce1-79b2-46fc-80ee-3ecf217058ae/the_beach_bully</a></td>
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Other videos on the theme of ‘getting along with others’ available at: http://www.sesamestreet.org/browseallvideos?p_p_id=browsegpv_WAR_browsegpvportlet&p_p_lifecycle=1&p_p_state=normal&p_p_mode=view&p_p_col_id=column-2&p_p_col_count=1&_browsegpv_WAR_browsegpvportlet_elementType=subject&_browsegpv_WAR_browsegpvportlet_subject=Getting+Along+with+Others

Teacher resource suggestion:
Cool Calm Kids: Resources to Help Prep to Year 2 Find Better Ways to Deal with Conflict and Bossy Peers - Amelia Suckling

Abstract: ‘Cool Calm Kids’ aims to help young children explore better ways to handle conflict and bossy classmates. It follows on from the authors’ successful book ‘Bullying: A Whole School Approach’ and provides guidance, resources and activities for teachers and parents. The book helps children from Prep to Year 2 explore better ways to deal with conflict and bossy behaviour in a fun and energetic environment through role-play and participation. It helps to develop social skills, body awareness and appropriate language early in a child’s life. Students will discover a common language through which they can deal with friendship issues and learn a range of non-violent strategies that are aligned with the ethos of the school to deal with peer pressure.

You Can Do It! Education
You Can Do It! Education’s main purpose is to support communities, schools and homes in a collective effort to optimise the social, emotional, and academic outcomes of all young people.

Its unique contribution is in identifying the social and emotional capabilities that all young people need to acquire in order to be successful in school, experience wellbeing, and have positive relationships including making contributions to others and the community (good citizenship).
Learning and Teaching Suggestions
Scripture and Moral Stories: Zacchaeus

In this section of the support resource the learning and teaching suggestions will assist students learning about:

- choice and people’s freedom to choose; RE HPL (a)
- responsibility and ways to use freedom responsibly; RE HPL (a)
- many people and things influence the choices we make; RE HPL (c) (d)
- people think and feel as they make choices; RE HPL (c)
- choices have consequences; RE HPL (b) (c)
- everyone has rights; also everyone has responsibilities; RE HPL (a) (b) (c) (d).

Focused Teaching and Learning

- Students listen to and/or view the story of Zacchaeus. Students use the images and text provided to retell the story of Zacchaeus. For an animated PowerPoint of these images with an embedded voiceover of the story of Zacchaeus go to the online version of this RE and the Early Years Support document on the Brisbane Catholic Education K Web ResourceLink Portal.

Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So he came down at once and gladly welcomed Jesus.

All the people saw this and began to mutter, “Jesus has gone to eat at the house of a ‘sinner.’”

But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, “Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of everything I own to the poor, and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the money I took.”

Jesus said to him, “Today you have been saved, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For I came to seek and to save the lost.”

OR

Zacchaeus was a tax collector who collected money from the people of Jericho to give to the Romans. The people did not like Zacchaeus because he took more money than the Romans needed. He kept this extra money for himself. He became a very rich man.

One day Jesus came to Jericho. Everyone was excited and lined the road to see him. Zacchaeus tried to squeeze into the line. No one would let him in, so Zacchaeus climbed a sycamore tree for a good view of Jesus.

Jesus stopped under the tree and looked up to see Zacchaeus. He called out, “Zacchaeus, come down. I am going to your house today.” Everyone grumbled about Jesus going to Zacchaeus’ house.

Zacchaeus welcomed Jesus and said, “I will give half of my money to the poor, and I will give everyone whose money I took four times more.” Zacchaeus had changed. Jesus then said, “Today you have been saved because I came to seek out and save the lost.”
Bible Story of Zacchaeus

Students as code breakers highlight or make note of all of the new or difficult words and ideas in the stories. Students use labels, maps, pictures and idea bubbles on those words and ideas to make meaning of the story.

Students use a 5W’s + H Strategy\(^1\) using pictures and labels to develop their understandings of tax today e.g. Who pays? What is it? Where does the money go? When does it happen? Why do working people pay tax? How is it collected?

Students use a 5W’s + H Strategy\(^1\) to develop their understanding of tax in the time of Jesus.

Students complete a Then and Now Chart \(^1\) using simple pictures to see how collecting taxes was different in the time of Jesus. (See teacher background and activities in Zacchaeus Investigations.)

Students use Feeling Faces Strategy\(^1\) to identify and describe how the people in the Zacchaeus story would feel about the following:

- a shepherd giving some of his sheep to the tax collector
- a farmer giving some of his fruit to the tax collector
- a weaver giving some of her cloth to the tax collector
- a poultry farmer giving some of his/her eggs or chooks to the tax collector
- a tax collector collecting the taxes from people
- a Roman soldier or official watching the taxes being collected
- a person watching Zacchaeus, a chief tax collector, take more taxes in coins than he should.

Students use Feeling Faces Strategy\(^1\) to identify and describe how the Jewish people felt about tax collectors, particularly those who took more than they should from the workers. Students, with teacher scribing, suggest words or phrases that people in the time of Jesus may have called Zacchaeus.

Students use a Before and After Strategy\(^1\) to identify choices made by Zacchaeus before and after he met Jesus.

Students use a focus chart Jesus forgives to illustrate as a class how Jesus forgave Zacchaeus and how Zacchaeus said he would make up for the wrong things he had done and the bad choices he had made when he took too much tax from the people.

Focus Moral Stories and Videos

Focus Moral Stories and Videos:
Below is a selection of quality children’s literature and religious videos that are focal resources in this section of the support resource.

4. The Flo Show Creates a Buzz - It’s about Saying You’re Sorry Hermie & Friends DVD by Max Lucado (2009)
5. Ooops! Sorry! Forgiveness Episode 8 Cherub Wings DVD by Sunny-Side Up Entertainment.

All the resources are available through ResourceLink.
Moral Story 1: Miss Lily’s Fabulous Pink Feather Boa
Focused Teaching and Learning

Students listen to the story of Miss Lily’s Fabulous Pink Feather Boa.

Students as code breakers discuss any new ideas or words in this story and what the pictures are about. Students make lists of happy words and pictures and sad words and pictures from the story.

Students as text users discuss what happens at the beginning, middle and end of the story. Students discuss their favourite parts of the story presenting their reasons.

Students as meaning makers discuss what the characters are thinking and feeling and how do you know, what is the story about? What did you feel as you read a particular part, what was the surprise in the story, what might the main characters do next?

Students use Feeling Faces, labels and pictures to match students’ developing understandings of how and why the Last Potoroo is feeling sad and lonely at the beginning of the story.

Students use a Peoplescape Strategy (Characterscape - in the shape of Miss Lily) to draw and label her personal attributes e.g. her lively personality and special gifts. As students explore this story and its meaning, additions can be made to the Characterscape of Miss Lily.

Students use a double sided Peoplescape Strategy (Characterscape - in the shape of the Potoroo) to explore the Last Potoroo before and after meeting and staying with Miss Lily in her guest house.

Students record any evidence in the story where the characters had freedom to choose what they wanted to do.

Students explore some possible reasons for why the Last Potoroo chose to snip off a piece of Miss Lily’s boa.

Students discuss the Last Potoroo’s fears after he snipped off a piece of Miss Lily’s boa and hid it.

Students list the good choices the Last Potoroo made in the story focusing on her decision to tell the truth about the boa to Miss Lily.

Students use Feeling Eggheads to assist them to name the feelings in this story. Students may use professionally made Egghead resources (St Luke’s Innovative resources) or borrow them from ResourceLink. Students can make their own feeling stones, shapes etc.

Students analyse and discuss the colours, words and ideas used by the author and illustrator on the page where the Last Potoroo is having bad dreams and is frightened.

Students colour in the ‘look-alike’ frightened Potoroo picture provided.
Students draw a happy and forgiven Potoroo returning to the guesthouse with new Potoroo friends.

Students share ideas about how they know that Miss Lily forgave the Last Potoroo even though she did not say the words I forgive you.

Students explore the similarities in the stories of Zacchaeus and The Last Potoroo drawing students’ attention to the qualities of the people in the stories and their capacity to forgive.

Students reflect upon the change in the characters in the two stories and they share their ideas about why and who influenced the change that took place in the characters.

Students discuss the good choices made by Zacchaeus focusing on his decision to give half his money to the poor and to give everyone whose money he took four times more.

Students use a Venn Diagram to assist students to make connections between the Last Potoroo’s choices and Zacchaeus’ choices. Also, compare and contrast the actions of Miss Lily with Jesus.
Moral Story 2: *Millie*
**Focused Teaching and Learning**


This story contrasts sharply with *Miss Lily’s Fabulous Pink Feather Boa*, as the main character Millie makes many irresponsible choices.

Students listen to the story. Students discuss the choices Millie’s made and how these were reflected through her actions.

Students record any evidence in the story where the character/s had freedom to choose what they wanted to do.

Students in small groups study one choice Millie made in the story. Students decide whether Millie made responsible or irresponsible choices. Students justify their decisions in terms of others’ rights. Students describe Millie’s actions in terms of how others in the story experienced the consequences of her decisions.

Moral Story 3: *King George and the Ducky*
**Focused Teaching and Learning**

Students view the DVD *King George and the Ducky* by Veggie Tales - *A Lesson about Selfishness*.

Students label a character cut-out of King George including his title, wealth, character and likes and dislikes.

Students record any evidence in the story where the character/s had freedom to choose what they wanted to do.

Students as a whole group discuss and list the choices King George made and the consequences of those choices.

Students identify the character in the story that taught King George a lesson about greed and selfishness.

Students as a whole group list the steps King George took to be forgiven by God and Thomas.

Students illustrate two real life situations, the first where people are selfish and make choices that are only good for themselves and the other where people think of others as well as themselves when making choices.

Moral Story 4: *The Flo Show Creates a Buzz – It’s About Saying You’re Sorry*
**Focused Teaching and Learning**

Students view the DVD *The Flo Show Creates a Buzz - It’s about Saying You’re Sorry*.

Students discuss the ideas that *Words are Powerful. Words can make us happy. Words can make us sad.*

Students draw Flo slipping on the banana peels thrown in Flo’s way by Adam. Students discuss why Adam threw the banana peels in her way. Students identify the when and why Adam realised he should say sorry to Flo. Students discuss how Adam felt sad and sorry for what he had done to Flo.
Students draw the insect characters that Flo embarrassed with the words she used and stories she told about her friends in her talk show e.g. Lucy the lady beetle, Hermie, Antonio the strongest ant and Buzz Bee. Students label the mean things Flo said about them in her talk show. Students discuss their new understandings about the ideas that Words are Powerful. Words can make us happy. Words can make us sad. Students discuss the meaning and the problem of Laughing at Friends’ Mistakes.

Students use a Feeling Faces Strategy during a replay of Flo’s talkback show to express the feelings of her friends when she used unkind words.

Students discuss why Flo’s friends did not come to her party after the show to celebrate the launch of her new talk show.

Students record any evidence in the story where the characters had freedom to choose what they wanted to do.

Students reflect upon times when they experienced someone laughing at their mistakes or when they may have laughed at friends’ mistakes.

Students reflect and rethink other ways of using kind words when friends make mistakes or when they feel unsure of themselves.

Students as a whole class, one by one, use kind words, phrases or give a compliment to someone else in the class.

Students discuss the role of God in the video. Students make signs for the classroom Forgiveness Heals and God Forgives Us.

**Moral Story 5: Ooops! Sorry! Forgiveness**

Focused Teaching and Learning

It is recommended that the scenes in this 25min DVD be viewed separately as a stimulus for learning because of the age of the students.

Students view the Chapter 1 Scene 1 in the DVD. Students investigate ways to seek others’ forgiveness and then to ask God for forgiveness.

Students make and use focus charts to stimulate discussion e.g. Jesus asks us to forgive one another. God is forgiving. Forgive others as God forgives us.

Students use Feeling Faces Strategy or Eggheads to discuss the feelings associated with forgiveness.

Students view the parable of the Unforgiving Servant. Students identify who in the parable showed mercy and forgiveness and who was unable to forgive. Students name who Jesus wants us to be like in the parable and why.

Students as a whole group create a class forgiveness prayer.

Students record any evidence in the story where the characters had freedom to choose what they wanted to do.

Students view Scene 4 to discuss the idea that holding grudges is similar to not showing forgiveness.

Students discuss the idea that holding grudges is like pushing a very heavy wheelbarrow around all of the time.

Students discuss ways the grudge rocks could be removed from the heavy load of the wheelbarrow.
Students view Scene 5 and retell the story about Annabel and Julie’s garden and how Terry, the new boy in the town, did something wrong. Students then re-enact the different ways Annabel and Julie forgave. Students illustrate the way Terry made up to the girls. Students use Feeling Faces or Feeling Eggs to express the way people feel when they forgive and when they are forgiven and how the act of making up for a wrongdoing heals friendships.

Students view Scene 6 and discuss how many times people should forgive each other. Students can make a Point of View or I think chart to investigate the challenge Jesus makes for people to keep forgiving.

The following is a bank of Learning Opportunities around the story of Zacchaeus with an emphasis on links to Health and Physical Learning. The focus of this learning is on choice [RE HPL (a)(b)] and responsibility [RE HPL (c)(d)] as it relates to the child’s development rather than on the more physical fine and gross motor aspects of the HPL curriculum.

**Play**

**Zacchaeus**

Students re-enact the story of Zacchaeus with puppets or as a role-play using props.

Students play Zacchaeus using props including a class sycamore tree.

**Miss Lily’s Fabulous Pink Feather Boa**

Students act out the Then and Now body shapes, movements, and feelings of the Last Potoroo. Then being at the beginning of the story and Now being the end of the story.

Students retell and re-enact the story of Miss Lily’s Fabulous Pink Feather Boa using props.

**Millie**

Students play Let's rethink that by replaying an action that has resulted in unhealthy physical and spiritual consequences for individuals or groups.

Step 1

Students use the Millie story or other familiar scenarios involving characters from the Bible, popular characters or real life to enact the bad decisions that were made and the resulting unhealthy consequences.

Step 2

Students during this activity call out: Let’s rethink that.

Step 3

Students in role, stop and think of another alternative good choice with healthier consequences, and act this out.
Step 4
Students may ask other class members to give them some ideas of alternative good choices that match the scenario.

*Students are learning that moral or good choices require reflection, decision-making and action. A catch phrase for this age group to help them remember what they could do is: Stop, Reflect or Rethink and Act.*

Students use Freeze-frame Presentations 📀 to role play other choices Millie could have made that would have been just or healthy choices with good consequences.

Students discuss and role play different ways adults or parents react to choices children make.

**The Flo Show Creates a Buzz**
Students as a whole class create a script and re-enact: Flo slipping on the banana peels thrown in her way three times by Adam; Flo’s injury; Adam’s realising that he had made bad choices with awful consequences; Adam saying sorry to Flo and Flo forgiving Adam.

Students role-play Flo saying sorry to her friends and the subsequent healing of their relationships.

**King George and the Ducky**
Students role-play simple scenarios that involve rethinking bad choices and then acting out good choices.

**Ooops! Sorry! Forgiveness**
Students re-enact any of the six scenes in this DVD e.g. a mock fight between friends and the use of unkind words; The parable of the Unforgiving Servant; Carry Grudges; Heavy Hearts Vs Forgiving Hearts; Annabel and Julie’s Garden; Saying Sorry scenarios; Making-up scenarios; Happy Restored Relationships; The Number of Times Jesus Says We Must Forgive.

**Investigations**
**Zacchaeus**
Students with support, using Google Maps, find Jericho and Jerusalem on a class computer or interactive whiteboard.

Students create a class drawing of Jesus’ journey to Jerusalem and the meeting of Zacchaeus using gathered information and pictures plus the information the teacher sources from the teacher background of this support resource.

Students role-play tax collectors at the gates of Jericho collecting taxes by taking some of the peoples’ goods.

Students role-play the tax collectors giving the value of those goods in coins to Zacchaeus, the chief tax collector.

**Miss Lily’s Fabulous Pink Feather Boa**
Students compare the colours and words on the pages where the Last Potoroo is having terrible dreams and is frightened with the page where Miss Lily gives the Last Potoroo her fabulous pink feather boa.

Students investigate the reasons the author and illustrator may have chosen to change words and colours.

Students complete a Then and Now Strategy 📖 on the character, The Last Potoroo. *Then being The Last Potoroo at the beginning of the story and Now the character at the end of the story.*

Students investigate the power of forgiveness and friendship to change people’s lives in light of the story of Miss Lily’s Fabulous Pink Feather Boa.
Millie
Students listen to the story of Millie. Then as a whole class activity, students complete a *Choices and Consequences* chart on the choices Millie made and their consequences.

Students discuss Millie’s parents’ reaction to her choices. Students share a *Point of View* or *I think* statement about the parents in this story and how they react to Millie’s choices.

Students investigate the question *Who helps us make responsible choices?* Students in pairs in interview genre ask the question of each other *Who helps us make responsible choices?* Students’ responses are to be recorded and used by the class teacher as an early years’ piece for the school newsletter.

The Flo Show Creates a Buzz
Students investigate characters who in stories and films often use unkind words and hurt their friends.

Students choose some unkind words Flo used in her talkback show. Students rephrase those words into kind words to her friends.

King George and the Ducky
Students describe the worst choice King George made and his reason for making this choice.

Students estimate how many rubber duckies King George had collected.

Students discuss why some people think they think they need more things to the point where they will take things away from poor people who have very little. Students discuss whether this is fair and just.

Ooops! Sorry! Forgiveness
Students use a *Y Chart Strategy* to investigate what a forgiving class looks like, sounds like and feels like.

Students compare school life in a forgiving class with school life in an unforgiving class.

Real Life
Zacchaeus
Students describe the way Jesus would have travelled and the flora and fauna, houses and landscape he would have travelled through.

Students create a *Jesus Journey pathway* with fabric in a section of the classroom. Students create a life-like sycamore tree.

Miss Lily’s Fabulous Pink Feather Boa
Students draw on their own life experiences of feeling sad and lonely when they did not seem to have many or any friends at all.

Students use *Feeling Faces Strategy* or *Eggheads* to describe the Last Potoroo’s feelings of sadness or loneliness. Students reflect on their own or others real life experiences of feeling sad and lonely.

Millie
Students discuss the things they have learnt from some bad or irresponsible choices they made.

Students discuss the ways they can rethink bad choices to turn them into good choices.
Students make a class chart of responsible and irresponsible choices and behaviours. Students use photographs and labels to complete this chart.

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<th>Responsible Choices/Behaviours</th>
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**The Flo Show Creates a Buzz**
Students list kind words or compliments/affirmations about class members and the words and actions they use when working or playing with others. Students, as a whole class using the talk show genre where a student is the host and particular class members are the guests, share these affirmations.

**King George and the Ducky**
Students label and draw selfish actions they have read about or seen in films or real life.
Students as a whole class make a *Selfish and Selfless Actions Chart* and illustrate this chart with images.
Students use a class chart of the statement *Jesus shows us how to share* for stimulus discussion and related real life activities about giving to the needy in the community.

**Ooops! Sorry! Forgiveness**
Students view scene two. As code breakers students use words like *holding grudges, sad thoughts about someone, arguing, talking angrily, being mean, blaming* and *fighting* to describe what happens when you have a fight with a friend and how hard it can be to say sorry and forgive.

Students use a *What If Strategy* to predict what might happen if the characters in a story or real life scenario do not forgive each other. Students discuss how things can get very complicated and unhappy for everyone if people cannot or do not want to say sorry or forgive.
Students use the images of the *grudge rocks* and the *wheelbarrow of grudges* as a stimulus to investigating scenarios in stories and real life where people hold grudges and do not forgive.

Students use a *Y Chart Strategy* to describe with words and pictures what it looks like, sounds like and feels like to carry grudges and not say sorry and forgive people when they have hurt or upset you.

Students record grudges or things they find hard to forgive on real rocks or rock shapes and place them over the *Forgiving Heart Chart*. Students place the *grudge or hard to forgive* rocks over the smiley shapes. Students play a game of naming the grudge then lifting up the rocks, saying how they forgave that person and describing the feeling of forgiveness.

Students role play a real life scenario where people say sorry and forgive. Students compare feelings of being forgiven for doing something wrong with not being forgiven.

Students assigned to be the *Photographer of the Day* capture incidental photos and photos of students using helping hands, caring hearts and kind words. Students as a whole class use these photos on a class chart and the teacher scribes comments like these: *This is Sarah helping Sam to tie up his shoe laces. Here is Oliver sharing the Mobilo with Tahlia.*

**Routines and Transitions**

**Zacchaeus**

Students keep a class list of students who act like Zacchaeus and make up for the bad choices they made and the consequences of those choices. Students on the list may be given an award.

**Miss Lily’s Fabulous Pink Feather Boa**

Students listen and move to tango music when moving to new activities. Tango music is the music that Miss Lily liked to dance to each evening with her guests.

Students are awarded a pink feather boa or small pink feather for a period of time if they demonstrate welcoming, forgiving and joyful behaviours with others.

**Millie**

Students discuss and practice ways to move from one class activity to another without annoying or upsetting other children.

Students compare Millie’s ways of moving from one class activity to another and alternative, healthy ways.
The Flo Show Creates a Buzz
Students learn the song, *These Hands* by Andrew Chinn, to assist them to remember, through the song, ways to use helping hands, caring hearts and a kind voice everyday.

King George and the Ducky
Students reflect upon ways they share resources and show kindness during class and play activities.

Students compare selfish *King George* type actions and selfless *Thomas* type actions during class transition times.

Ooops! Sorry! Forgiveness
Students join two broken pieces of one paper jig-saw heart each time a friendship has been restored through the four steps of forgiveness i.e. admit, sorry, make-up and forgive.

General Moral Stories
Below is a selection of children’s literature together with abstracts that feature themes of freedom, choices and consequences, reconciliation and forgiveness. Some general religious education learning opportunities are provided for these stories and other quality children’s literature that schools may have available.

Students listen to and explore the meaning and messages in quality children’s literature and children’s religious videos that present themes on freedom of choice. Such themes include: making good and bad choices and the consequences of these choices; breaking and restoring relationships; human conscience and character transformation.

General Moral Stories:

I’m Number One! Author: Michael Rosen, Illustrator: Bob Graham
How do you deal with a bully? A stellar author-illustrator team shows that a touch of playfulness can go a long way. Little wind-up soldier A-One is in charge. At least that’s what he tells the other toys: Sally, Maddy, and Sid. When he tells them to turn his key, they do it. When he tells them they’re no good, they feel bad. He calls them all kinds of things: no good, hopeless, the worst. Or was that hope-use, good-no, and less-less? Somehow, stringing all those mean words together makes them start to sound, well, silly — and even though A-One doesn’t mean to, he finds himself smiling too. From the incomparable Michael Rosen and Bob Graham comes an insightful, child-friendly tale about learning how to be one of the gang.

The Dirty Great Dinosaur. Author: Martin Waddell, Illustrator: Leonie Lord
Hal is in his backyard when a huge green dinosaur crashes through the fence and demands to eat his family and his dog. Hal politely stands up to the dinosaur, but it cannot be calmed. After an action-packed chase, the dinosaur is eventually subdued, made to apologise and is offered a home cooked meal. A great, fast paced story about calming temper tantrums and saying sorry.

India the Showstopper. Author/Illustrator: Kerry Argent
India is a marvellous musician. When she plays her mouth organ the circus performers do their best but with audiences shrinking it seems their best is not good enough. So Barney the ringmaster brings in a special trainer, Oswaldo, who makes some big changes. India, the star, is resistant and so she is left out. What will she do now? A fine tale about forgiveness, cooperation and compromise.

Jungle Drums. Author/Illustrator: Graham Base
Jungle Drums, concerns a young warthog living in the jungle who is teased for his small size both by the other warthogs and by the rest of the animals in the jungle, who are much more beautiful than him. All he wants is to be left alone and for the teasing to stop. Then he is given a set of magic bongo drums, but his wishes don’t work out as intended. To his horror, the wish he makes while playing the drums does some very strange things to all the animals and it takes another couple of attempts to fix the mess and solve his own problem.
General Moral Stories
Focused Teaching and Learning

Students during the telling of a general moral story hold up choices signs when a character in the story makes a choice. Students explore the belief that God gives people freedom to choose.

Students using diverse general moral stories and real life experience scenarios name the good choices and bad choices made by individuals or groups. Students then look more closely at the consequences in the same stories and scenarios.

Students make connections between the choices and consequences in the stories and scenarios. Students use a choices and consequences chart using words or pictures to assist this process. Students determine whether other choices are good or bad choices by looking closely at the consequences of the choices.

Students explore the belief that God gives people freedom to choose and that freedom is to be used responsibly in light of the theme of freedom presented in the general moral story and religious beliefs.

Students explore the process of reconciliation with God and others that involves admitting a wrongdoing, saying sorry, making up and being forgiven in light of the theme of reconciliation presented in the general moral story and religious beliefs.

Students discuss the importance of accepting forgiveness from others when they are sorry for what they have done.

Play

Students role play or re-enact characters in the picture book India the Showstopper. The characters to be acted out could include the circus clown, the ringmaster or an acrobat. Students act out the different emotions of the characters. For example the students could role play the ringmaster as bossy and loud, the acrobat as selfish and self-centred or the happy and sad clowns who react to the behaviour of the other characters in the story. Students discuss how other people’s actions have consequences for their own and others’ feelings and emotions. Students discuss the importance of Jesus’ teaching about love for one another and forgiveness.

Students role play or re-enact the different animal characters in the picture book Jungle Drums. Students could show the transformations in attitudes and behaviours of the animals because of the magic drums. Students list other characters in Bible stories, films or children’s literature who have listened to the word of God and been transformed or changed e.g. Zacchaeus.

Investigations

Students explore the notion that every choice has consequences by reflecting upon, and naming, examples of choices and consequences in stories and real life scenarios. Students come to understand the choices that people make have an effect on others.

Students complete a Before and After Strategy of the animals in Jungle Drums. Students could show the transformations in attitudes and behaviours of the animals because of the magic drums.

Students investigate the concept of wishes and consequences as explored in Jungle Drums. Students discuss the problems and benefits of some wishes and consequences e.g. wishing for an endless supply of chocolate may result in dire consequences.

Real Life

Students choose words and actions that can diffuse a bully’s power. Students explore how the characters diffused the power of the bull in I’m Number One!

Students list other possible responses to bullying behaviour in diverse real life settings. Students consider these other possible responses in light of Jesus’ teachings about peacemaking and respecting one another.
Routines and Transitions
Students move from one activity to the next as a circus performer, jungle animal, peacemaker, showing a particular feeling or emotion.

Students respond to the teacher’s greeting of peace, thanks, forgiveness with a familiar response e.g. *Teacher: Peace be with you. Students: And also with you.*

Students on leaving the classroom pay a compliment to another student.
Case Study

Study 1: Choice and Responsibility

Meet Kate Marshall, Emma Traversari and Yvonne Amarandos, part of the Early Years team at St. Sebastian’s School, Yeronga. These Prep / Year 1 teachers undertook the case studies for this Support Resource. In doing so they demonstrated the importance of and satisfaction that comes with working as a team, sharing ideas and resources.

The Learning Story – Yvonne Amarandos

Yvonne began by using the Interactive Whiteboard to tell the story of Zacchaeus. The students responded well to this presentation and were particularly receptive to the style of drawing employed by the illustrator. Their subsequent paintings and drawings were often reflective of this influence.

Following this the students made their own Power Point Presentation of Zacchaeus using pictures they had drawn.

The concept of responsible and irresponsible choices was introduced and discussed. Yvonne suggested appointing a Photographer of the Day to take photos of students behaving responsibly and irresponsibly during the day.
Responsible and Irresponsible Posters were made using the students’ photos. The Responsible Behaviour Poster features events such as:
- India putting up her hand to speak at group time
- The class sitting quietly to learn
- A group of students co-operating to build a sandcastle
- Sharing a spade
- Walking quietly down the library stairs.

The Irresponsible Behaviour Poster Features events such as:
- Pulling someone off the playground equipment
- Fighting over a shovel
- Pushing
- Fighting over the camera.

Students were encouraged to make puppets and scenery for the Zacchaeus story. These were then used in small group sessions to re-tell the story.

Giant puppets were also used to recall and re-tell the story, using the Interactive Whiteboard as a backdrop.

The story of Miss Lilly
The students discussed Miss Lily in the light of the responsible and irresponsible choices she made. They illustrated their ideas in paint at the easels.

The Potoroo was responsible because she told Miss Lily she chopped off the feather boa.

The Potoroo was irresponsible because she chopped off the feather boa.
The Prep class made thinks, feels, sees, does charts for the time when Miss Lily gave the pink feather boa to the Potoroo and the time the Potoroo cut the pink feather boa.

A comparison chart for Zacchaeus and Miss Lily was made using Easiteach on the Interactive Whiteboard.

The addition of many pink ‘Miss Lily’ items to dress up corner was well received and led to much role playing and many discussions about choices.

Students delighted in dramatizing Miss Lily’s Fabulous Pink Feather Boa
Students were encouraged to use soft pastels to engage in art work illustrating the Potoroo in Miss Lily’s garden. The provision of a pink feather enhanced the experience for the students.

Yvonne and her students then discussed the fact that the Potoroo had been able to go out into the world because of Miss Lily’s support. The students thought about the people who supported them and each made a support poster to record this network.

My Poppa helps me make things. He helps me when I am sad by asking me to do something fun with him and he loves me.

Mummy always tucks me in at night and when I am cold she gives me a hot water bottle. When I am sad she helps me by cheering me up.

### Study 2: Choice and Responsibility

**The Learning Story - Kate Marshall**

- I began by reading the story of Zacchaeus using felt board pieces that I had made (we discussed tax collectors, the job that they did and why they were so disliked by the people).
- Before each activity during the first week we went through the story, sometimes the students retold the story using the felt board pieces, sometimes I retold it.
- Each time we went through the story we discussed a bit more about the feelings and actions of each of the characters in the story – developing the students understanding for later activities.
- Each student made a puppet of Zacchaeus and Jesus.
• The students then used these puppets to tell the story to a friend and then again to tell the story to their Year 6 and 7 buddies (the students loved this activity).

• In pairs, the students illustrated the story with paintings and we bound the pictures together to make a big book. This is our Big Book Story of Zacchaeus.
• We completed a whole class brainstorm of the thoughts, feelings and actions of Zacchaeus during different parts of the story.
• All of the ‘choices’ that all the characters made during the story were typed up and, as a whole class, we decided whether this was a green (responsible) choice or a red (irresponsible) choice.
• We discussed if there could been a better decision at the time.
• We discussed choices and the fact that it may not always be easy to make a green choice but that we really need to consider the consequences of our actions and the best decision to make.
• Each child illustrated one green choice and one red choice from the story.

Miss Lily
• Read Miss Lily’s Fabulous Pink Feather Boa – discussed the illustrations (colours used, what was happening), characters (facial expressions, actions, emotions, feelings, choices etc).
• Completed character maps as a whole class – what the potoroo thought, felt, saw and did after taking the feather boa and when Miss Lily gave her the feather boa.
• Whole class discussion talking about when we make a bad choice/do something wrong it is still not okay if you don’t get caught because it is still a bad choice. We talked about the sort of feelings that you have when you have done something wrong but no one knows and you continue to worry about getting caught. (This was a really good discussion to have with the Preps because they often have trouble identifying their feelings.)
• Whole class Venn Diagram comparing and contrasting the Last Potoroo’s choices and Zacchaeus’ choices.
• Referring to the Venn Diagram we discussed what other choices Zacchaeus and The Last Potoroo could have made.
• Whole class discussion identifying when we have not made a good choice – how we feel; how people around us feel; looking at body language, facial expressions, emotions.

There are a couple of extra activities that have worked with our study in this area:
⇒ I printed out some nice writing paper using clipart borders and also drew up a postcard template. After some modelled writing, the students began writing and have not stopped since. It has been a fantastic stimulus. The students are writing letters and postcards to family, friends and other staff members.
⇒ Each day I have selected one child to receive a Miss Lily’s Pink Feather Boa Award, with 5 being presented on assembly at the end of each week. We made a really big deal of these awards and chose listening as the responsible choice that we were looking for in Prep. The students are trying really hard and are really excited to receive one of the awards – even the boys! (We have a picture of the potoroo and after gluing to pink cardboard and laminating, we tape a hot pink feather to the front).

Study 3: Choice and Responsibility

The Learning Story - Emma Traversari

Week 1 – Scenario and Zacchaeus

Emma began by creating an Easiteach lesson for her students using an Interactive Whiteboard. This lesson featured the Scenario posed at the beginning of this resource. The working document that the class created during the lesson was added to the Whiteboard content. Emma introduced this scenario alongside the idea of a photographer of the day who would take evidence photos of choices made by students throughout the day. These photos would be viewed and discussed, in the light of the choices made, at the end of each day.
The Interactive Whiteboard was then used to read the story of Zacchaeus.

This was followed by a whole class re-tell of the Zacchaeus story. Captioned sections of the story were then illustrated with drawings.

Week Two – Zacchaeus

Emma continued meditations with her class. In small groups students considered what Zacchaeus thought, felt and did before he met Jesus.

Students created a hand print Sycamore tree and puppets to go with the Zacchaeus story. With a partner they acted out the Zacchaeus story using the puppets and trees.

These puppet plays were shared using the Interactive Whiteboard. The students helped Zacchaeus sort coins, using Australian money.
Week Three – Responsible and Irresponsible Choices

Responsible and irresponsible choices for the scenario and the Zacchaeus story were discussed. Millie’s responsible and irresponsible choices were added when this section had been covered.

In small groups students brainstormed what Zacchaeus thought, felt and acted after he met Jesus.

In the afternoon the students used their photographs to discuss their own choices throughout the day.

The students made wind chimes to symbolize what God sounds like for a Peace Place.

Week Four – Millie

The class discussed Millie’s choices and did freeze frames of the irresponsible choices she made.

A character map of how Millie thought, saw things, felt and acted was created on the freeze frames to consolidate the idea of responsible and irresponsible choices.

Students then created and discussed self portraits showing how they thought about themselves and the choices they usually made. These images were done in charcoal on a background of red handprints reminiscent of Millie. Some students drew themselves alone and others positioned themselves within their families.
An assembly on choices was presented to the school. Work on responsible and irresponsible choices was completed with a reflection Mass entitled “Jesus shows us how to be a good friend”. Zacchaeus, Luke 19:1-10, was used for the gospel, and songs we had learnt throughout the year were incorporated into the Mass. A musical version of the Zacchaeus story by Matt Hannah in the songbook entitled We Believe was also used. (See [www.myspace.com/redlennermusic](http://www.myspace.com/redlennermusic) for your own copy.)

**Reflection**

The students across Prep and Year 1 thoroughly enjoyed exploring choices using Zacchaeus, Miss Lily's Fabulous Pink Feather Boa and Millie. All classes have found the Support Resource helpful and the students were extremely receptive to the ideas presented.
Getting Started

Spiritual Wellbeing

Students identify and experience ways to nurture spiritual wellbeing. [HPL(e)]

Learning and Teaching Suggestions

The following learning and teaching suggestions provide some insight into ways in which prayer may help children identify, and experience ways to nurture their spiritual wellbeing. Prayer may be expressed in many ways but in essence is participation with Jesus in his worship of the Father. (Christie, E. *Coming Home – A Guide to Teaching Christian Meditation to Children* John Garratt Pub. 2008)

Creating a Culture of Prayer

Capturing the Moment

The nature of spiritual wellbeing must be made explicit if students are to identify and experience ways in which spiritual wellbeing may be nurtured. The teacher therefore has a responsibility to take every opportunity to make such learning explicit for the student. This may be done simply, every day, by modelling ‘God talk’ for the students. When commenting on a flower, instead of the usual, *Isn’t that beautiful?* or, *What a magnificent colour*, add *Someone wonderful made that, or, Thank you God*. In this way you give the moment a spiritual focus, providing the students with the opportunity to connect with God. God is a mystery beyond language, concepts and stories. For young students the images of God as *Love* and God as *Creator* help them make connections through prayer, awe, imagination and wonder.

Connecting with Nature

Spiritual development is enhanced when students in the early years are actively encouraged to connect with nature and engage with the belief that God’s presence is revealed in all of creation. When students learn that they are connected to nature and it to them, they begin to understand that all life is connected. They become aware that their behaviour can, and does, have an impact on the world. Students begin to understand the concept of respect for themselves, made in the image of God. This respect extends to all life and God’s world in which they live. A teacher has a myriad of opportunities to connect students with nature as God’s creation each and every day. This can be as simple as teachers actively listening to students at play and capitalising on a teachable moment. As students watch an army of ants co-operate to carry a dead moth to their nest, the teacher could sweep the trail of ants aside with an *Ants are such a nuisance, they’re always getting into my kitchen*, comment and walk on. Alternatively the teacher could squat down and watch the ants with the students, listening to their comments and adding to them, thus making explicit their connection to God and to us. *Imagine making something as tiny as an ant and working out the different kinds of ants one colony needs to survive, the workers, the Queen, the soldiers. Isn’t God clever?* What a wonderful, open ended question to encourage student thoughts and comments. Students may even like to find out just how clever God is by undertaking a follow up study of ants and other insects, charting their findings under the heading *God Is A Clever Designer and Creator*. Drawing student’s attention to nature is rewarded when they make these connections on their own. The following examples are a sample of this process in action.

**God is a clever designer and creator**

Jo: *I think God’s clever because he made the grass. I like it ‘cause it’s soft.*

Sally: *I like chickens best because they give us some eggs, not the rooster though because we don’t want more chickens. God is a clever designer and creator.*
Peace and Calm in God’s Presence

As students experience silence, stillness and simplicity through prayer, meditation, peaceful thoughts and actions, they will come closer to knowing and experiencing the peace of Christ. In this support resource the Bible story of *Calming the Storm* is featured. The storm represents life’s turmoil, worries and fears while Jesus calls believers to live in peace, hope and faith. In this bible story Jesus’ reaction to the storm is the opposite of the fearful reaction of the disciples. He remains peaceful. Jesus’ deep faith and his belief that with God’s help, even in the most terrible circumstances presents believers with a challenging, new way of facing fear. This is a story of great hope for Christians today. It calls believers to strive for inner peace and spiritual well being.

- Students listen to and/or view the story of Jesus Calms the Storm. Students use the images and text provided to retell the story of Jesus Calms the Storm. For an animated PowerPoint of the images provided with an embedded voiceover of the story go to the online version of this RE and the Early Years Support document on the Brisbane Catholic Education K Web ResourceLink Portal.

Jesus Calms the Storm  Mark 4: 35-42

Jesus said to his disciples, “Let’s go across to the other side.” They left the crowd behind them by boat just as they were. When they were out on the sea a great windstorm came and the waves crashed into the boat. The boat was being swamped and the winds were very strong. The disciples were very frightened but Jesus was asleep on a cushion in the boat. The disciples woke him up and said to him, “Teacher do you not care that we are going to die in this storm?” He woke up and called out to the wind and said to the sea, “Peace! Be still!” Then the wind stopped and there was dead calm. Jesus said to the disciples, “Why are you afraid? Have you no faith?” The disciples were filled with awe and wonder and said to one another, “Who is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?”

![Image of Jesus and disciples on a boat](image-url)
Students use **Feeling Faces Strategy** or Eggheads during the retelling of this story to represent the difference in the way the disciples felt and the way Jesus felt in the bible story *Calming of the Storm*.

Students, as a class, discuss reasons why Jesus might have felt differently from his disciples about the storm.

Students use **Y Chart Strategy** to investigate the meaning of class charts like the following: *Stay Calm, Peace Be With You, Have Faith, Do Not Worry*.

**Prayerful Places and Experiences**
These following learning opportunities and experiences combine the Five Contexts for Learning: Focused Learning, Play, Investigation, Real Life and Routines and Transitions.

**Prayer Walk**
Students as a whole class go on a prayer walk around the playground, school or neighbourhood.

A prayer walk involves going on a walk, stopping at stations/points along the way to reflect on something particular to each station. The following is an example of a short Prayer Walk for Early Years students. The walk is in the Prep area at Our Lady of the Rosary School at Kenmore. Prayer walks may be prepared for all age groups. The following steps describe the stages of the early years prayer walk.

**Step 1**
**Gathering place**
Carroll Court in the Prep buildings

We gather at the Prep buildings. This is where students begin their association with the O.L.R. school community. O.L.R. has a long history of providing education for children in the early years. Carroll Court is named after the Parish Priest, Fr Tom Carroll, who first responded to the need to provide for his young parishioners and their parents with a centre for early childhood education.

Prayer: Thank you God for Fr Carroll and all those who help families.
Students are asked to consider:

- How did you feel on your first day at school?
- Who helped you? How?
- Can you help someone in this way today?
- Think about all the teachers and children who have worked in these buildings.
- Let us pray this prayer for them and for ourselves.

Lord, we ask you to watch over and guide all O.L.R. students, past and present. May they always live as children of God. May we, the current students, always remember to help others.

**Step 2**
Creation Mural – lower Prep buildings

- Look at the creation mural. Each of the Preschool students of 2005 helped a talented parent, Megan Campbell, make this mural. It reflects their interest in the Biblical story of Creation.
- What do you see in the mural?
- Choose your favourite part of the mural. Think about why you like this part best.
- Say a thank you prayer to God for this part of His creation.

**Step 3**
The Deck in the Prep Playground

- Sit quietly and look forward. What do you see?
- Think about how big the world is.
- Think of all the elements that make up our world, the sky, the clouds, the mountains, the rivers, the trees, the earth, the grass.
- Think of all the creatures on the earth.

Pray this prayer:

Lord, I thank you for all you have created. Lord, help me care for your creation.

**Step 4**
The Playground

- Now you may quietly go on a walk in the playground. Look about you at all the wonderful things you can see in nature.
- On your walk collect one thing that is special to you. Bring it back to the deck.
- Walk with me back to the classroom.
**Step 5**

The Classroom

- Sit in a circle around the prayer mat.
- When it is your turn, tell us why you chose your special object.
- Place your special object on the prayer mat around the class candle.

**Step 6**

Conclusion

- Sing together: *He’s Got the Whole World*, using during the verses, the names of the items you collected in the playground.

Students create a WOW – Ways of Wondering Book. This book reflects student interactions with nature, each other or adults to whom they are connected.

When making a class WOW Book, encourage students to think, at the end of each day, about a WOW moment that they experienced during the day. Have them share their WOW moments with the class. This may be done verbally or in a quiet, reflective drawing time after lunch each day. At the end of the week, choose by class consensus, one WOW moment and add it to the class WOW Book. Students may like to borrow the WOW Book overnight to share with their families.

Alternatively, students may make their own WOW book each week. On Monday a booklet is made by each child by stapling seven pages together. On the cover page students are encouraged to scribe ‘…………………”s WOW Book. Each day at a regular time, a WOW moment is recorded in some form, on a page in the booklet. The seventh page makes the connection to God explicit by containing a prayer such as, *Thank you God for these WOW times*. The booklet is then taken home to share with family and friends.

Students create a Thank You Book. This is made in the same way as the WOW Book with the focus on something for which we are thankful each day.

Students have a Thank You Place where they place things for which they are thankful.

This may be a table, shelf, pin-board, wherever is available. Objects chosen may range from the natural to the man-made, from leaves, to lizards, to a painting, a paintbrush, collage construction, roll of masking tape, photo, or story of which a student is particularly proud of writing. The choice belongs to the student and is accepted without challenge. Objects displayed in the Thank You Place remain in place for the day, week or longer depending on the space available and students’ frequency of use.

Students learn and say as a whole class or independently simple class prayers through word and song e.g. *Grace, Prayers of Thanks, Prayers of Forgiveness, Peace Prayers, Class prayers* and *School prayers*. See *From Aardvark to Zucchini – My Very Own Alphabet of Prayers Season 1*, and *From Aardvark to Zucchini – My Very Own Alphabet of Prayers Season 2* DVDs available from ResourceLink. See *Catholic Prayers for Young Children*.

Students are involved as much as they are able in Creating Peace Places in the school. Students create a Peace Garden.

This can be simply done by cutting down a box until it resembles a shallow base. At one end place fine, dry sand, follow with tea candles in the centre and smooth rocks at the other end. A rake or saté stick (with the sharp end removed) could be provided for drawing patterns in the sand.

Students create a Real Garden in a quiet place just outside the classroom if possible.
Plant the garden with fragrant plants such as herbs and flowering plants. Provide a mat for students to sit or lie on. Encourage children to water, weed and generally care for the garden. Provide a Bible and other books such as your class WOW or Thank You Book in the garden. Create gentle sounds by making wind chimes to hang in your peace place. Encourage children to sit quietly in the garden to read and pray.

Students create a **Sacred Space outdoors**.

This could involve the students in providing sacred symbols for this space e.g. a cross made of sticks, sand for making sand pictures. Provide a CD player for quiet music and cushions or mats for seating if your space is not naturally comfortable. Encourage your students to sit and reflect in this space without being disturbed or disturbing others.

Students create **Cloud Pictures**.

This is an exercise in being still and putting oneself in God’s presence to experience the awe of God’s creation. Students make cloud pictures as a solitary activity requiring no outside input, apart from initial explanations. It is available to anyone, whenever there is a cloud in the sky. In fact, looking up at a cloudless sky can be just as peaceful and meaningful on occasion.

a) Encourage the children to lie in your outdoor sacred space, or any quiet place, to look at the clouds.

b) Ask the children to be still. Engage them in a simple breathing exercise to help them become restful e.g. ask them to close their eyes and feel themselves breathe. In measured tones ask them to breathe in, breathe out, breathe in, breathe out.

c) Once they are settled ask them to open their eyes and look at the clouds.

d) Ask students *What do they see? Can you see shapes?* In the first instance the children may need to articulate what they see. Allow this as part of the learning process.

e) Ask the children to become quiet again as they focus on the clouds.

f) Allow the quiet stillness to seep into the children.

g) After a reasonable period of time suggest to the children that when they are ready they may quietly leave the area and resume their activities.

**Silence and Stillness**

Students as a whole class create a **prayerful atmosphere** by regularly experiencing a ‘call to prayer’.

The teacher chooses a signal that announces that it’s time to pray. This may be the ringing of a bell, the beating of a drum or playing of a particular piece of music or any signal recognised for this purpose.

Students as a whole class establish a **gathering place**.

For whole class prayer this may be sitting on a mat, at cleared desks or elsewhere in the classroom or outdoors, as long as participants are comfortable and recognize that this is a special time. For individual prayer, this may be on cushions around a prayer table or prayer mat. Students wear a **Peace Cloak** or some other visible sign when praying independently at any time during the busy school day. The Peace Cloak will be made more meaningful and relevant if students are engaged in its design and construction. Alternatively simple class peace mats or kneelers could be used for a similar purpose.

Students as a whole class establish a familiar **prayer focus** for prayer time.
Light a candle and encourage students to become still as you watch the flame grow. Provide a candlesnuffer to blow out the candle reverently so that hot candle wax does not burn or spill. At the end of prayer time the candle is snuffed as the class sit in silence, watching the smoke drift up and out until it stops. Provide carpet squares for children so that they have their own designated space in which to sit.

Students pass a picture of Jesus, a bible, a cross or other religious object from person to person and say a quiet prayer.

The focus of the prayer could reflect the current religious teaching and learning topic within the class. e.g. Jesus who calmed the storm help me to be calm and peaceful.

Students learn to make the Sign of the Cross on their foreheads. Students discuss what this sign might mean.

The focus of the students’ prayer could be the prayer of the Church the Our Father led by the teacher. A phrase or phrases within the Our Father could be the focus of a simple prayer.

Students learn to make the sign of the cross with holy water before going into the church to be silent, still and pray. Students learn how to walk, bow, kneel, stand, act and talk reverently in Church. Students experience simple prayers, silence and stillness in the church.

The focus of the prayers in the church could be the traditional Our Father or the Rosary or parts of those special prayers. Paintings, statues, stained glass windows or hymns could also provide a focus for simple prayers and experiences of silence and stillness.

Students experience the Sign of the Cross as a blessing from the priest on their forehead or palm.

Students in a circle pass around smooth objects e.g. stones, rosary beads and say a simple prayer.

Students use a prayer name stone with the name of a class member on it to pray for that student. Each student prays especially for the person whose name stone they hold that day. Place name stones in your prayer space so that children have access to them for spontaneous prayer at any time.

Students use a prayer mat to create a class prayer space and to pray.

Bamboo place mats cut in half make excellent individual prayer mats. These are particularly helpful for making prayer said at desks a special time. Encourage students to individualize their prayer mat by painting or decorating it with relevant pictures or symbols. A piece of paper or cloth, changed to reflect the colour of the liturgical season, can be used as a shared, whole class prayer mat when students gather in a circle to pray. Add relevant objects such as the class candle, Bible, cross, focus object to the prayer mat.

Students make and use a string of beads during prayer.

Provide 10 large beads and a piece of hat elastic for each student. Students string the beads together and tie them off in a circle. The beads are fingered during prayer to keep hands busy. Although there are ten beads they are not used to mark a decade of the Rosary. If a Hail Mary is said the beads are rotated throughout the prayer, not held on one bead per Hail Mary as is the custom when praying the Rosary.

Students use a finger labyrinth during prayer and quiet reflective times.

Students use sand play as a means of focusing during prayer.

Provide a bucket of sand and a cup. Provide each student with a paper plate. Pass the bucket of sand around the class for each child to scoop some sand onto their plate. Fingers, paddle-pop sticks and the like are used to draw in the sand during prayer time.
Students are shown how to close their eyes and be still.

*Establish a short rest time each day when students are invited to stay still and close their eyes. Students listen to quiet music. Students lie with hands by their sides or folded on their stomachs for the duration of the music.*

Student engage with meditative prayer practice as it has been taught through the centuries in the Church.

*Students may experience simple ways to meditate from the Catholic tradition that are suitable for their age e.g. the Examen Prayer from the Ignatian tradition. Christian meditation is prayer that aims to develop a contemplative nature.* (Christie, E. Coming Home – A Guide to Teaching Christian Meditation to Children John Garratt Pub. 2008)

**Simple Meditative Techniques:**

Introduce students to some simple meditation techniques to help them respond to God’s presence. Meditation can take place in the classroom, chapel or church. As a general rule, time spent meditating is best related to the student’s age, five minutes for the five year old, six minutes for the six year old and so on. It is most important that participants are comfortable during meditation but that the spine is straight.

**Sitting Meditation 1**

Sitting cross-legged, back held straight and face forward. Clasp your hands and let them rest in your lap. Close your eyes.

Breathe easily and evenly, in and out. Silently count each breath in as one count, and each breath out as one count, till 50 counts, or another even number.

*Example:*

Count 1: breathe in
Count 2: breathe out
Count 3: breathe in. *Continue breathing this way…*

Now, while continuing to breathe evenly, pray about ways that you can show peace to the people in your life, at school and at home.

To finish the meditation, take a final deep breath in, slowly let it out, open your eyes, stand up and stretch.

**Sitting Meditation 2**

Students, with teachers assistance, choose a mantra. Students repeat the mantra as they breathe peacefully.

*The mantra is used to stop other images filling the mind while we become still and silent. Sitting still is difficult and inevitably our minds will wander. The mantra is used to draw us back. Many practitioners recommend adopting Maranatha (Come, Lord Jesus) as a prayer word for children to use in Christian meditation. The regular rhythm of this mantra lends itself to our breathing rhythm, while its strangeness concentrates our mind. Maranatha is prayed, broken into syllables in the following way, Ma-ra-na-tha.*

**Step 1**

Invite the class with a ‘call to prayer’ signal (see reference above) to let everyone know that prayer time is about to start.

**Step 2**

Invite students to sit cross-legged, back held straight and face forward. Place one hand on each knee with palms facing upwards or in a traditional prayer posture.
Step 3
Invite students to breathe easily and evenly, in and out, repeating the mantra Ma-ra-na-tha. As each syllable is said the thumb is touched to each finger of the hand in turn. This is done with both hands simultaneously. This process is repeated constantly throughout the meditation.

Breathe in - Ma-ra-na-tha
Breathe out - Ma-ra-na-tha
Breathe in - Ma-ra-na-tha
Breathe out - Ma-ra-na-tha

Step 4
To draw your meditation to a close repeat your ‘call to prayer’ signal and allow the students to leave the prayer space quietly when they are ready.

Students begin by keeping their meditation short, slowly building to a time suitable to the student’s stage of development. Once the students are familiar with using a mantra they should be slowly encouraged to pray in silence.

Meditation Through Scripture
Step 1
Teachers may at times choose a focus Gospel story for meditation e.g. Jesus calms the storm. Students should be familiar with the story and have the opportunity to brainstorm and discuss the things and places mentioned in the bible story – Sea of Galilee, boat, disciples, ropes, sails, storm, waves, lightning, wind, water spray etc.

Step 2
Students are invited to lie down on a piece of carpet or other comfortable surface to stretch out, close their eyes and let their body relax. Invite students to breathe evenly in and out.

Example:
Count 1: breathe in
Count 2: breathe out
Count 3: breathe in

Continue breathing this way…

When students are still and at peace invite the students to imagine being on the boat with Jesus and the disciples.

Step 3
Read the Calming of the Storm for the first time at the usual pace.

Read the Calming of the Storm for the second time slowly encouraging the students to imagine being a part of the scene and being like Jesus staying calm in the storm as it rages all around and calming the disciples who are full of fear.

Step 4
After some time, invite the students to begin to come back to their everyday active self by taking a deep breath, opening their eyes, stretching out their arms and legs and sitting up.

Step 5
Invite the students to share their experience and any new ways of being calm that they have discovered from meditating on this powerful bible story and message.
Guided Meditation

In Guided Meditation, students are led in a meditation in which they experience meeting with God. After concluding the meditation, students draw an image of God as they imagine God to be. Students form a circle and use the Talking Circle Strategy to explain their image to the class. Below is an example of a guided meditation.

*Close your eyes and become aware of the gentle sound of your breathing. Breathe in slowly... and slowly breathe out... Begin to focus on the sounds outside and inside the classroom... leave them behind as you imagine yourself standing in front of a door... Think of your favourite place... When you are ready, open the door and enter into your favourite place... Focus on what you can hear and see... Notice all the little sounds and the louder sounds... Notice all the colours you are aware of... Soon you see someone coming to meet you... A friend or family member... Coming to you, the person speaks and says that you have been chosen to see God... And all you need to do is ask... When you are ready and in your own way, come into God's presence... Reflect on what you see and feel about God. For a moment, all time stands still. What do you see?... What do you feel?... There is something that you wish to ask God before you go. Ask God one thing you wish you had an answer to... Listen to God's reply. When you are ready, become aware of returning to the door of the room... Open it and you are aware once more of the sounds of this room. Breathe in slowly... Slowly breathe out... As soon as you feel the time is right, open your eyes and begin to draw. Then write your vision of God also in silence.*

The following images of God were drawn following this meditation.
The Prep class at Yeronga made an Images of God quilt in response to the meditation. A sample panel may be seen here on the left.

Following their meditation Year 1 students at Yeronga created and discussed self portraits showing how they thought about themselves. These images were done in charcoal.

**Ritual**

A ritual is a practice, undertaken repeatedly, using the same or similar format each time it is performed. Early years students respond positively to ritual because of the predictability and familiarity of its patterns. Students have the confidence to participate actively in a process that has become routine for them. Regular rituals, therefore, play an important part in the life of any Early Years’ class. Prayer rituals are no exception. They allow us to draw on the wealth of our Catholic Christian heritage to enhance students’ knowledge, understanding and practice of their faith. They come in as many forms as prayer itself, becoming ritualised within individual classrooms because of their particular application to or adoption by that class.

Examples of prayer rituals include signs, symbols, prayers and routines used during each class prayer session. These may include a:

- call to prayer signal;
- prayer mat;
- class candle;
- Bible or focus object;
- School icon;
- Sign of the Cross;
- Greetings at the beginning and end of the day;
- Greetings at the beginning and end of each prayer session e.g.
  
  Teacher: *Peace be with you.*
  
  Students: *And also with you.*

Forms of prayer are often ritualised within classrooms e.g. daily meditation, an end of day ritual during which students reflect on

- three things for which they are thankful
- something for which they are sorry
- something they intend for tomorrow.
Symbols

Investigate the signs and symbols of religion particular to your school e.g. Our Lady of the Rosary Schools would have some form of expressing their association with the Rosary. One way in which they have done this is to assign each class one of the mysteries of the Rosary or one of the heading squares to illustrate, to form the wall hanging opposite. Understanding is enhanced when background research is undertaken in order for each class to design its panel. The hanging, in which students and staff feel ownership, can then be used in liturgies and displayed prominently in the school foyer.

Some Useful Resources

Calming the Storm

- The Miracles of Jesus DVD available from ResourceLink
- Animated Bible Stories: the Life of Jesus DVD available from ResourceLink
- Animated Bible Stories for Ages 4-6: Jesus for Kids DVD available from ResourceLink
- The Story of Jesus for Children DVD available from ResourceLink
- Awesome Mysteries of the Bible DVD available from ResourceLink
- Leading Meditative Prayer With Students: Silence Stillness and Simplicity DVD available from ResourceLink
- Christie, E. Coming Home – A Guide to Teaching Christian Meditation to Children
- Macdonald, Sr. A. To God on a Magic Carpet - Meditating with Children
- Grajczonek, J.ed. Religious Education in Early Childhood
- http://www.spiritualityandpractice.com This is an excellent site for developing your personal spirituality
- www.charlesgilchrist.com Information on Mandalas
- http://www.quietmeadows.org/labrynth.html
- http://www.catholic-kids.com/prayers.htm
- From Aardvark to Zucchini – My Very Own Alphabet of Prayers Season 1 DVD available from ResourceLink
- From Aardvark to Zucchini – My Very Own Alphabet of Prayers Season 2 DVD available from ResourceLink.
Religious Education Support Resource for the Early Years

Religious Education and Health and Physical Learning