3.1 Created by God: A Gift to Share

In this unit students will learn that they are created in the image and likeness of God and loved by God. The students will come to appreciate that they have been created by God to be free and creative and to engage with all of creation. The unit introduces the second story of creation in the Book of Genesis, which speaks of the creative free act of God, an outpouring of divine love and goodness, in which we are called to share.

The students will be encouraged to explore their own giftedness and identify how they can use their gifts for the good of all. They will explore God’s love, revealed in them, in others and in all creation. The students will also look at ways they can give glory and praise to God for the wonderful gifts they have been given.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Values & Attitudes**  *Students will demonstrate that they are:* | **Knowledge & Understandings**  *Students will demonstrate that they can:* | **Skills**  *Students will demonstrate that they can:* |
| S2.1 able to choose ways in which the gift of self can be strengthened | describe ways in which the gift of self can be developed | identify the need for each to develop and use their gifts |

Syllabus Outcomes  
Self – Stage 2

Classroom Outcomes

*Students will be able to:*

* recognise and appreciate that each person is created in the image and likeness of God
* identify how they and others are gifted by God
* respond in wonder and praise and give thanks to God for the gift of life

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Scripture | Doctrine |
| Genesis 2:5-7 *The Second Story of Creation*  Psalm 139:1-6,13-14 *God knows me*  Isaiah 43:1–4a *I will be with you*  Matthew 25:14-30 *Parable of the Talents*  Daniel 3:57-81 *A Hymn of Praise: All Creation praises God* | * God created me and I am good * I am known, loved and cared for by God * God created us out of love and calls us to love * We can be signs of God’s love for each other * The goodness and splendour of God is revealed in all creation |

Spiritual Reflection for Teachers

Every now and then we experience one of those special moments when we realise that someone in our life is a real gift of God to us. Their love, their help, their presence is freely given by them, and undeserved by us. It’s all gift. And occasionally, someone will tell us that we’ve been a gift to them. In that moment, we’re affirmed as someone worthwhile, someone who’s helped another.

With our own talents and personality, we’re each called to be a gift to others.

- Think about a person you know or a child in your class who causes you difficulty.

- How do you interact with this person?

- Who have been the people who have been gifts in your life?

- How have you been a gift in the life of another? (Be specific!)

Catechism of the Catholic Church

**Excerpts from the Catechism of the Catholic Church are included below as information for teachers. They present the Church’s teachings contained in this unit.**

**355** "God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them." Man occupies a unique place in creation: (I) he is "in the image of God"; (II) in his own nature he unites the spiritual and material worlds; (III) he is created "male and female"; (IV) God established him in his friendship.

**357** Being in the image of God the human individual possesses the dignity of a person, who is not just something, but someone. He is capable of self-knowledge, of self-possession and of freely giving himself and entering into communion with other persons. And he is called by grace to a covenant with his Creator, to offer him a response of faith and love that no other creature can give in his stead.

**362** The human person, created in the image of God, is a being at once corporeal and spiritual. The biblical account expresses this reality in symbolic language when it affirms that “then the Lord God formed man of dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.” Man, whole and entire, is therefore *willed* by God.

**363** In Sacred Scripture the term "soul" often refers to human *life* or the entire human *person*. But "soul" also refers to the innermost aspect of man, that which is of greatest value in him, that by which he is most especially in God's image: "soul" signifies the *spiritual principle* in man.

**364** The human body shares in the dignity of “the image of God”: it is a human body precisely because it is animated by a spiritual soul, and it is the whole human person that is intended to become, in the body of Christ, a temple of the Spirit:

*Man, though made of body and soul, is a Unity. Through his very bodily condition he sums up in himself the elements of the material world. Through him they are thus brought to their highest perfection and can raise their voice in praise freely given to the Creator. For this reason man may not despise his bodily life. Rather he is obliged to regard his body as good and to hold it in honour since God has created it and will raise it up on the last day.*

**365** The unity of soul and body is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the "form" of the body: ie it is because of its spiritual soul that the body made of matter becomes a living, human body; spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature.

Scripture: Background Information

## Genesis 2:5-7 The Second Story of Creation

In contrast to the first creation account in Genesis 1:3–31, in the second account of creation, Genesis 2:4b–25, the human person is the first of God’s creations rising out of a world that is waterless and lifeless. Formed from earth, the man is imbued with the very breath (ruah) of God. He is given the name ‘Adam’ from ‘Adamah’, meaning an earth creature of flesh and spirit. As this creation account unfolds, there is a strong sense of God’s generosity and providence, especially as the garden grows up to provide for the man’s needs. The man works in cooperation with God, naming the animals and therefore having both dominion over them and responsibility for them. With the creation of the woman, God provides the man with an equal “bone from my bones and flesh from my flesh” (verse 23). This is someone who will share his life and be a companion. Only when the two sexes exist is humanity complete.[[1]](#footnote-1)

## Psalm 139:1-6, 13-14 God knows me

## Psalm 139 puts before us an intimate conversation with God, the God who knows us completely just as we are and who is always with us. We really cannot get away from God even if we try very hard, so the Psalmist tells us. In many ways this is a psalm of innocence. Thus it is a good psalm for children. Verses 13-14 tell us that God created the very person that we are. God put us together in the womb. God is intimately involved with the making of each person and in the face of such an enormous mystery the psalmist exclaims with thanks and praise: “For the wonder of myself, for the wonder of your works” (v14). If we look at the Hebrew text for that last line it has “I am wonderful, your works are wonderful” (Ps 139:14).

## Matthew 25:14-30 Parable of the Talents

This parable,like all parables, has different layers of meaning and can beunderstood in several different ways. In the context in which it was written it urges a responsible use of the Master’s goods, keeping in mind the return of the Master to whom account will need to be given.

In those days a ‘talent’ was a measurement of weight used with the heaviest of metals – gold, silver etc. In Jesus day one talent was equivalent to around 6000 denarii (Roman coins), which would have taken a servant about fifteen years to earn. The master in the parable entrusts each of the slaves with an enormous amount and expects when he returns that they will have done something productive with what was given to them ‘…each according to his ability’ (vs15). In the early Church this parable addressed the need for the early Christians to be energetic and productive with the gift of faith and not to hide it away. The master’s return refers to the judgment when the Son of Man comes to settle accounts.

## For all of us and particularly for these Year 3 students the parable can challenge us to use the gifts and abilities the Lord has entrusted to us in a productive, rather than static way.

## Isaiah 43:1-5 I will be with you

This text is from the second part of the Book of Isaiah. It was written during or towards the end of the Exile in the sixth century BC, and for a people feeling despondent. Life was indeed difficult for them. They had lost their home, their Temple and their capital city. All had been destroyed in battle and they had been taken as prisoners to a foreign country. Still they are encouraged not to give up hope. “Do not be afraid for I am with you” (v5).

The writer certainly gives them encouragement by explaining that God is with them even through the most difficult times. The writer graphically describes those times as walking through rivers or through fires or even through the sea. Yet God is with them always. Why? Because “You are precious in my eyes, you are honoured and I love you” (v4).

The Hebrew words give some marvellous insights into just how close God is. In verse 2 it says “I have called you by your name, you are mine. Should you pass through the sea, I will be with you”. The words “you are mine” literally translated from the Hebrew mean “to me you are” giving the sense that we exist in God – “to me you are”. Further, the words “I will be with you” literally translated from the Hebrew mean “with you I am” giving the sense that God exists in us.

The Church’s Teaching and Lived Tradition

**In Tradition: *To Know, Worship and Love,* Year 3, p17 – Nicene Creed**

We express our faith in God the Creator in these opening lines of the creed we say at Mass. The scope of divine creation is wide. It is not only this visible material world and the universe, but the spiritual dimension of “things unseen”. This touches upon the mystery of creation in all its aspects, even beyond our present experience or awareness. [[2]](#footnote-2)

Celebration: Prayer and Liturgy

**Celebration is a key part of Religious Education. The following suggestions provide opportunities throughout the unit for celebration in prayer and liturgy. Most of these suggestions are included as ‘teaching/learning’ activities in Unit Content sections.**

* Tell the story ‘Our Prayer Place for Ordinary Time’ to introduce the Church’s season and year. See Resource Sheet 1 for suggested script and materials.
* Use ‘Breathing’ a suggested meditation prayer, from Prayer Box II p29, (now printed in unit) to enable students to make our breath a prayer
* Introduce students to meditation on the Scripture, using Genesis 2:5–7. Read the narrative slowly allowing the students to imagine that they are the human being in the story. Invite the students to reflect on how God loves them by thinking about all the good things in their lives.[[3]](#footnote-3)
* Students list some of the ways that God shows love for us. Create prayers of thanks for God’s love.
* Organise students into pairs for class prayer. Use reflective music to create a peaceful atmosphere and invite the students to express in movement Genesis 2:5-7. Allow each partner the opportunity to be both the creator and the created.
* Students write a class prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gift of life and all of creation.
* Create a prayerful environment for class prayer. (You may wish to share this prayer time with parents or other classes.)

- Begin with the words of Ps 139:13 ‘(O Lord) It was you who created my inmost self, and put me together in my mother’s womb.’

* + - Invite students to write thankyou cards to God for a gift / gifts they have been given. Place the cards into a gift box on the prayer space
    - Conclude the prayer by saying together the words of Psalm 139 … “For all these mysteries I thank you (vs14).”[[4]](#footnote-4)
* During class prayer, place in a circle various poems, drawings and images of creation. Invite students to sit around the circle. Choose a prayer from the chapter Praising God for Creation in *Bless This Day* by Patricia Mathson. Conclude with a hymn that praises God for all that has been given to us such as ‘Thank You for the Earth and its Beauty’ by Tony Barr.
* Students use Daniel 3:57-88a as a model to create their own Hymn of Praise. Invite students to share their ‘Hymn of Praise’ during prayer in the classroom.

Assessment

**Interim Assessment Statement 2014**

The identification of Teaching/Learning strategies as ‘suggested assessment’ has been removed from the 3-6 RE curriculum. The type of assessment activity and the way evidence of learning is gathered will vary, depending on such factors as; the outcomes being assessed, the evidence being gathered, the teaching and learning activity, context and students’ learning needs (NSW Board of Studies, <http://syllabus.bos.nsw.edu.au/support-materials/k-6-assessment-strategies/>).

Assessment in Religious Education is based on the same principles as in other key learning areas. Please refer to the CEO Sydney site supporting the implementation of the Australian Curriculum in the context of the NSW BOS Syllabus. At this site <https://sites.google.com/a/syd.catholic.edu.au/professional-learning-modules/home> professional learning modules are provided to support teachers as they engage with the NSW BOS Syllabuses for the Australian Curriculum.

**Module 4, Assessment and Planning** explores the principles of effective assessment ***for***, ***as*** and ***of*** learning and considers a range of strategies and methods for assessing student learning. Activities focus on moving beyond assessment as an index of learning, towards assessment that motivates, enhances learning and achieves deeper understanding to meet the diverse learning needs of all as students. Participants are encouraged to reflect on assessment as a driver for improvement in teaching and learning.

**Religious Education Curriculum and Assessment**

In Year 3-6 Religious Education Curriculum, both Syllabus Outcomes and Classroom Outcomes are key reference points for decisions about students’ progress and achievement. Classroom outcomes are more specific to the unit content. Unit Content statement and *Students will learn* statements in each unit should also be taken into account in planning and developing learning and assessment opportunities. Outcomes and Unit Content Statements are derived from Syllabus objectives.

Effective Religious Education involves teaching the Catholic faith (Scripture, doctrine, traditions, prayer and sacraments) and nurturing the faith of the child. There is no attempt to assess the child’s faith. Assessment is concerned with skills, knowledge and understanding of the Catholic faith taught in the curriculum and supported in the religious life of the school.

Resources

***To Know Worship and Love:* Year 3, Chapter 2, 2003, James Goold House Publications, Melbourne, Victoria**

Catholic Education Office, Bathurst NSW, (1988), *Breathing Life Into the RE Classroom*. *Creative Teaching Strategies for Religious Educators,* CEO, Bathurst NSW

CharpentierE,(1989), *How to Read the Old Testament*, SCM Press Ltd, London

Children’s Mission, *Prayer Box II,* Catholic Mission, Ashfield, NSW

Wintour R, (2000), *Just Imagine: Creative Ways of Presenting Scripture*, Mountjoy Enterprises, Brisbane

**Children’s Literature**

Hamilton H, (1982), *The Ugly Duckling,* Hans Christian Anderson, London

Lindbergh R*,* (2000), *In Every Tiny Grain of Sand, A Child’s Book of Prayer and Praise*, Walker Books Ltd, London

MathsonP, (2002), *Bless This Day,* Ave Maria Press, USA

**Music**

Barr T, (2002), ‘Thank You for the Earth and its Beauty’, *As One Voice For Kids,* Willow Connection, Manly Vale, NSW

Bates K, (2002),‘Alive and Aware’, *As One Voice For Kids*, Willow Connection, Manly Vale, NSW

Chan K, (2002),‘God Made Me To Love’, *As One Voice For Kids*, Willow Connection, Manly Vale, NSW

Farrell, Bernadette ‘O God, You Search Me’, *Christ be Our Light* (CD)

Haas D, (2002)*,* ‘You Are Mine’, *As One Voice For Kids*,Willow Connection, Manly Vale, NSW

Landry C and Kingham C J, ‘Wondrous Work of Art’, *Hi God 3*

Sherman csj K, (2002), ‘We Are Children Of The Living God*’, As One Voice For Kids,* Willow Connection*,* Manly Vale, NSW

Schutte, (1992), ‘You Are Near’, *As One Voice,* Willow Connection*,* Manly Vale, NSW

‘The Whole World Is In God’s Hands’, Traditional, *As One Voice For Kids,* (2002),Willow Connection,Manly Vale, NSW

**Audio-visual**

Anderson H C, (1975), *The Ugly Duckling*, Weston Woods, Conn

Key to Symbol

✪ denotes higher order activity

Unit Content 1

We are alive with the life of God.

*Students will learn:*

* about the creation of human beings in the second story of creation in Genesis
* about the relationship with human beings
* to write prayers of thanksgiving for God’s creation of human life

Unit Content: Background Information

The Bible tells us that God created man and woman in God’s own image and likeness. Because of this, all human beings have equal dignity and worth. In Genesis we have two accounts of creation. While each of them is different in detail, they both portray the same revelation: that there is one God who created the universe and everything in it.

Genesis 2:5-7 expresses specifically the beliefs of the Jewish and Christian people about God’s creation of human beings.

When sharing the Genesis account with students, it is important to mention that human beings were created both of the earth (soil) and of God’s own life (God’s breath). The terms ‘body’ and ‘soul’ (KWL Year 3, p14-15) are words used to show that humans, unlike other living things, are made both of the earth and of God’s own life. We are both material and spiritual beings and the student’s book will be useful for teachers when exploring this with their students.

In discussing ‘body’ and ‘soul’ with the students, the following implications are most important. Firstly, we are infused with God’s life and therefore we need to reflect God’s life. Secondly, because we are graced with God’s life, we yearn for God and will be complete only in union with God. St Augustine expresses this idea in his well-known words “You made us for yourselves, O Lord, and our hearts will always be restless until they rest in you”.

In trying to present the idea of body and soul, ensure that ‘body’ and ‘soul’ are presented as unified and not as two separate components. KWL wording (Year 3, p14) is particularly helpful for Year 3 students, “The soul is the special kind of human life we have in us.” Whilst the word ‘soul’ refers to the spiritual dimension it cannot be separated from who we are as bodily people. The Catechism of the Catholic Church is very clear on this;

*365* *The unity of body and soul is so profound that one has to consider the soul to be the “form” of the body .. ; spirit and matter in man are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature.*

In preparation for presenting this account of creation it is suggested that students are given the opportunity to create something themselves such as: sculpture or painting. Details are provided below, but if students have worked recently on a creative project in another Key Learning Area, this experience could be drawn upon. Provide students with sufficient time so that they are able to reflect on the experience of creating.

CRP - Cardiopulmonary resuscitation is also mentioned in a T/L strategy. This is a combination of mouth-to-mouth resuscitation and chest compressions that delivers oxygen and artificial blood circulation to a person who is in cardiac arrest. It can be life-saving first aid.  
In many cases without this treatment the person would die.

The Prayer Place script for Ordinary Time is provided in Resource Sheet 1. This could be used at the beginning of the unit and / or school year to continue the story of the Church’s year.

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Review with students the concepts of ‘living’ and ‘non-living’. Invite students to explore actions/ movements that demonstrate they are alive, eg different methods of moving (run, hop, skip), breathing, talking, the use of the senses.
* Students describe what it feels like to be alive, eg “I feel alive when … “
* Learn ‘We are Children of The Living God’ by Kathy Sherman csj or ‘Alive and Aware’ by Kevin Bates for use in prayer and reflection throughout the unit.
* Prepare the students for listening to the 2nd Creation account.
* Invite students to create an animal that has never been in existence. Use clay, play dough or even rocks (suggestion: a pet rock!). Give it a name and describe the creation. Students write words or phrases to describe the experience:
* What was it like to create something new?
* How do you feel about your creation? e.g. happy, proud, etc.
* How does your creation reflect you?
* Provide the students with balloons that have not been inflated. Discuss how the balloon is limp and lifeless. Instruct students to inflate their balloon. Ask them to describe the change to the balloon. What is it like now? Does it have form? What can happen to the balloons now that could not happen before?
* Read with students KWL Year 3, p16-17 Genesis 2:5-7, a section of the 2nd account of creation. Introduce the story by telling students that people long ago used stories to tell about their beliefs and to pass on truths about God. After reading the story, explore the passage with students:
  + what the world was like at the time of the story?
  + what happens in the story?
  + what is God like in the story?
  + have you ever experienced or heard about someone bringing things to life by helping them to breathe. Briefly explain the purpose of CPR.
  + what sentences tell us about the relationship between God and human beings?
  + how would you describe that relationship?[[5]](#footnote-5) Why?
* Read and discuss *‘Created by God, Called to Love’* (Year 3, p14-15). Assist students in understanding that we are created as more than just physical beings, and this is what makes us unique. Invite students to respond by identifying ways we are different from other living things, i.e. plants and animals. Create a wall display of student responses.
* Use ‘Breathing’, a suggested meditation prayer from *Prayer Box II* (p29) and printed below, with permission from Catholic Mission.

Breathing Prayer. We can make our breath a prayer. God is giving us life with every breath. We only need to stop breathing for a few minutes and we are without life.

Sit quietly and become aware of your breathing. Close your eyes to help you concentrate.

As you breathe in, receive this gift of life from God consciously, gratefully, lovingly.

As you breathe out, surrender your life to God, wholly, trustfully, happily.

Do this for a few minutes during the day and be aware how it influences your life. That’s prayer[[6]](#footnote-6).

* Sing ‘God Made Me To Love’ by Kathie Chan as a focus for reflection. Students in small groups work to identify how they believe God wants us to live our lives.
* Introduce students to meditation on Genesis 2:5–7. Read the narrative slowly allowing the students to imagine that they are the human being in the story. Invite the students to reflect on how God loves them by thinking about the good things in their lives.[[7]](#footnote-7)
* Students record responses to the following: “I am alive with the very life of God.” What does this statement tell us about God? What does this tell you about yourself?
* Students nominate to work in a group of their choice to develop a class prayer. Some areas the students may choose to work in could be:
* to use reflective music to create a peaceful atmosphere to invite all into the space for prayer, for seeking and finding God
* to express Genesis 2:5-7in movement allowing each partner the opportunity to be both the creator and the created. An example of this stragtegy refered to as ‘Potter and the Clay’ can be found in *Breathing Life Into the RE Classroom*, p22-24.
* to write a prayer of thanksgiving to God for the gift of life and all of creation.
* to choose a common traditional prayer to be shared aloud.

Unit Content 2

In knowing ourselves we discover we are a gift of God.

*Students will learn:*

* about God’s love and care for each person
* to identify the ways that they are gifted by God and how they can use their gifts wisely
* to identify some of the gifts of others

Unit Content: Background Information

Psalm 139 and Isaiah 43 speak of how much God loves each person. The amazing thing is that we have done nothing to earn this gift. Life is the gift of God freely given to us because God loves us.

Throughout our lives we grow in self-awareness, in relationship with others and relationship with God. It is God’s love in each of us that calls us to communion with God and with one another. The more we respond, the more we are able to grow as the person we are called to be. It is important to understand that realising how we are gifted and that others are also gifted has a transforming effect on our lives. It helps us to live the words of Jesus, “You shall love your neighbour as yourself” (Matthew 22:39). There are many examples in the New Testament of Jesus showing respect and love for all and recognising the gifts and talents of people. In Matthew 25:14-30 Jesus tells the story of the three servants and the talents given to them by their master. The parable leads us to understand that God gives us all gifts and it is our responsibility to recognise what we have been given and to use it well.

As people created in the image and likeness of God, we are each creative and gifted. Each person is an example of God’s creative love and is called to live life to the full and to celebrate his or her own gifts and those of others. The concept of ‘gift’ should be seen in broad terms to include, not simply what they excel in, but all that students recognise they can do and use for good.

Helping students to accept themselves as gifted influences the relationship they have with God. If a student feels unloved and worthless, he or she will not easily believe that they are loved unconditionally by God, nor will they be able to recognise the inherent goodness and dignity of others. Key factors in developing this are the positive relationships established in the school and the climate established in the classroom. The teacher has a central role in this and needs to ensure that interactions and learning experiences promote the self-esteem of students, affirming them and respecting their dignity and also challenging them to truthfulness.

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Read a piece of children’s literature with the class such as ‘The Ugly Duckling,’ that explores a character’s search to discover and accept who they are. Discuss the central character of the story. Identify and list the qualities and gifts of the character. See list of children’s literature for this unit in ‘Summary Curriculum Resource, Year 3’ on RE Online under Primary Curriculum (Word) and Resources.
* Reflect on what makes a person unique. How is one person similar to another? How are they different? If there are twins in the school, invite them to share with the class how they are similar yet different. Create a ‘Me Cube’. Students record by word or symbol, six qualities that make them unique. Share ‘Me Cube’ with a partner.
* Reflection on name – Point out to students that their name is important because it is theirs and was especially chosen for them at their birth. Students ask their parents the reasons they were given their name. Students to present their name in an artwork and illustrate or write words that describe their personalities, hopes, dreams, likes, dislikes, feelings, etc.
* Learn to sing ‘I Am Special’ from *Great Gifts* or another hymn/song suggested in ‘Summary Curriculum Resource Year 3’, which celebrates the uniqueness of each person and the gifts they have been given.
* Read Ps 139:1-6, 13-14 (*Our Prayer*, KWL Year 3, p18 for vs13-14). Discuss God’s presence and closeness with each person. To extend the student understandings, share *‘On Morning Wings, In Oceans Deep’* - a reflection on Psalm 139 (Lindbergh Reeve, *In Every Tiny Grain of Sand*, p56).
* Learn ‘*O God, You Search Me*’ by Bernadette Farrell which is based on the Psalm 139 on Christ Be Our Light CD
* Students to create a collage on the theme ‘God loves me’ linking their uniqueness with God’s unconditional and all-embracing love for them.
* Tell the story of *The Parable of the Talents* (Matthew 25:14-30)*.* See Resource Sheet 2 for suggested script and materials.
* Engage students in wondering. Some suggested wondering statements are:
* I wonder what it was like being given 5 talents (repeat for two and one).
* I wonder what it was like to be the master, giving the talents to the slaves to look after.
* I wonder why the master rewarded the slaves who made more money.
* I wonder why the slave who buried the money in the ground was not rewarded.
* I wonder what Jesus meant when he said, “Come share your master’s joy.”
* I wonder what this story is really about.
* Offer students the opportunity to explore the story in ‘work’ of their choice. This could include:
* Students form into small groups and become one of the characters, then re-read the parable. In each group the students retell the parable from their character’s perspective and the meaning they find in the parable. (Remember, that parables have many layers of meaning so there could be a number of different ideas expressed).
* Using a Journal, students reflect on their own talents and how they use them. The following could be asked to guide students if they require it:
  + I wonder what gifts I have been given.
  + I wonder how I can develop my gifts/talents.
  + I wonder how I can share my gifts/talents with others .
* Students represent the parable or an aspect of it in art or drama.
* Students re-tell the story using the story materials individually or in small groups.
* Invite students to make a card thanking God for creating them and for the special gifts God has given them. These cards can then be used during the suggested prayer celebration below.
* Create a prayerful environment for class prayer. This prayer time is an opportunity to share with parents or other classes.

- Begin with the words of Ps 139:13 ‘(O Lord) It was you who created my inmost self, and put me together in my mother’s womb.’

* + - Use the thank-you cards, made in strategy above. Place the cards into a gift box on the prayer space. Use one of the songs learned in unit.
    - Invite spontaneous prayers from students.
    - Conclude the prayer by saying together the words of Psalm 139 … “I praise you for I am wonderfully made, wonderful are your works. (vs14).”[[8]](#footnote-8)
* Invite each student to brainstorm and list the people who know and love them. Explore with students what helps us to know that these people love us.
* Share with students the background to Isaiah 43:1-4a. Explain how God, because of his love for the Israelites, continued to be present with them during difficult times. (Refer to ‘Scripture: Background Information’.)
* Read with students Is 43:1-4a. Students identify words and phrases that tell us about God’s love for the people. Read passage again.
* Engage students in wondering using the following or other wondering statements
* I wonder what God is saying to the Israelites in this passage.
* I wonder how they would feel hearing this message from God.
* I wonder how someone might feel knowing that God knows them and calls them by name.
* Focus on each line of Is 43:1–4a.
* Talk about the dangers that faced the people of Israel and how God was with them. Identify present day difficulties and dangers where we need God’s love and protection. Create a further list of those who show us love and protection at these times. Students could trace around their hand. On each finger they write the name of a person they could go to when in difficulty or in need of protection.
* Make Is 43:1–4a more accessible for the students by creating an adapted version of the passage. Include the names of the students, precious objects or items and their lived experiences eg “Now the Lord who created you (Year 3 or child’s name) says, ….” Draw on experiences identified by students listed above.
* Explain to the students that Isaiah 43:1-4a is like a letter of love from God to us. God says ‘“You are precious in my sight and honoured, and I love you” (Is 43:4). Invite students to write their own letter of love to God in reply.
* Sing ‘You are Mine’ by David Haas which reflects this passage of Scripture.
* Direct students to read over the list of people who love them. Students select someone on their list and create a response identifying all the special qualities of the person and how they are a gift to them and others.

Unit Content 3

We praise and thank God for the gift of love in all we see around us.

*Students will learn:*

* about creation reflecting the endless beauty and goodness of the Creator
* to express glory and praise to God who is the source of all that is

Unit Content: Background Information

St Bonaventure described the universe as being like a book that reflects, represents and describes God. Pope John Paul II borrowed the same description in 2002 when he commented that “creation… is almost like another sacred book whose letters are represented by the multitude of creatures present in the universe”. Revelation is the self-communication of God to humanity, witnessed initially in creation, and reaching its climax in Jesus Christ who is the “mediator and fullness of all revelation” (‘Dei Verbum’ n2). It is important therefore for us as human beings to be aware of creation as a source of revelation and to give thanks and praise to God for all that is created including the gift of ourselves.

God desires to share the gift of love and goodness revealed in the extraordinary beauty and diversity of creation. Throughout the Old Testament we read psalms and songs of praise that celebrate the wonder and beauty in all that God created. We recognise that all creation reveals the glory of God. Along with all creation we give praise and thanks to God. Daniel 3:57-87 is an invitation for all of creation, to give praise to God. This is a litany of praise. It provides a good model of how to express glory and praise to God.

Suggested Teaching/Learning Strategies

* Take students on a ‘mindful walk’. Find a quiet, peaceful place in the playground and allow students to sit and ‘watch’ creation. Alternatively, view a section of a DVD that captures the wonderful work of God in all that we see.
* Identify and list all the wonderful things God has created – oceans, beaches, mountains, rivers, trees, plants, animals, human beings.
* Gather photographs and images that convey the beauty of humankind in creation. Explore the mechanics of how the human body works and reflect on its amazing design.
* Gather enough flowers or leaves for the students to have one each that they can focus on and study. Allow students time to share / record observations. Refer to the intricacy and cleverness of God’s design.
* Students draw /paint, write prose or a poem about the things they see in the world that reveal or reflect God’s love to them.
* Share with the students a selection of verses from Daniel 3:57- 81 ‘All creation praises God’. Individually, in pairs or small groups, students illustrate or present the image depicted in a verse from Daniel 3. These illustrations could be used to accompany a Hymn of Praise at a school assembly.
* Examine the structure of Daniel 3:57-81. Look at the elements of creation selected, including human beings. Match these to the classroom list of all that God has created. Ask students to identify the words or phrases that are repeated in Daniel 3:57-81.
* Students create their own ‘Hymn of Praise’, modelled on the structure of Daniel 3:57-81 incorporating at least four aspects of creation that give praise to God. Invite students to share their ‘Hymn of Praise’ during prayer in the classroom.
* During class prayer, place in a circle various poems, drawings and images of creation. Invite students to sit around the circle. Choose a prayer from the chapter ‘Praising God for Creation’ in *Bless This Day* by Patricia Mathson. Conclude with a hymn that praises God for all that has been given to us, eg ‘Thank You for the Earth and its Beauty’ by Tony Barr.
* Sing ‘The Whole World Is In God’s Hands’ (Traditional) and invite the students to add their own names to the verses.

**Resource Sheet 1**

**3.1 Our Prayer Place for Ordinary Time**

**YOU WILL NEED:**

\* a small table

\* ***green*** fabric, Bible, bookstand, candle, cross and small gift box tied with ribbon, placed in a box or basket

*Invite children to sit reverently in a circle in the part of the classroom where you intend to set up a prayer place.   
This is a liturgical story, so students can be invited to participate by placing the symbols and objects on the prayer place.*

*Begin by saying* **We are going to make a special prayer place. It is a place where we can be quiet with God. We can listen to God and talk with God. We’ll use some special symbols and objects to help us be with God at this time in the Church’s year.**

*Place table in the prayer place. Hold the green fabric.***At this time of the Church’s year we place green fabric on the table. Green is seen everywhere. It is a rich colour of life, growth and hope and is used by the Church during the season of Ordinary Time.***Cover the table with a green fabric.*

*Hold the Bible up for all children to see. Be conscious of handling the Bible in a reverent manner.*

**This is our class Bible. At this time in the Church’s year we remember and tell the stories about what Jesus said and did during his life on earth. We’ll continue to do this until the beginning of the next season, Lent.**

*Place the Bible on the bookstand.*

*Take out the candle and show to children.*

**The candle reminds us that Jesus is always with us. We’ll light the candle each time we pray or when we’re listening to the stories from the Bible.**

*Place the candle on the prayer place.*

*Hold the cross.*

**This is our class cross. The cross is a symbol of Jesus, and of our Christian faith and hope.**

*Place the cross on the prayer place.*

*Hold the gift box.*

**During the next few weeks we’re going to explore together God’s great gift of love for us all.**

*Untie ribbon and take off the lid (you may rather do the following as part of Unit Content 2)*

**God created us out of love and calls us to share that love with others.***Place the gift box on the prayer place.*

**Other symbols appropriate to Unit 3.1 can also be added.**

**This is our prayer place for Ordinary Time.**

*Point to the symbols and objects as you name them again:*

**It has green fabric, a Bible, a candle, a cross and a gift box.**

*You could finish this story with an appropriate prayer or blessing.*

**Resource Sheet 2**

**3.1 PARABLE OF THE TALENTS**

**(Matthew 25: 14-30)**

**You will need:**

* Class bible
* Felt: beige underlay (90cm x 50cm); brown road (90cm x 16cm); brown piece to cover the 1 talent
* 2D Materials: Master, Master’s house, Slave 1, Slave 2, Slave 3, 5 talents (x2), 2 talents (x2), 1 talent. See RE Online for 2D masters (Note: Darker slave should be slave 1 or 2 , not slave 3)

*Students are seated in a semi-circle ready to listen to the story. When the children are settled, take the materials from the RE shelf and carry them respectfully to the storytelling place as you would the Bible. Place these beside you.*

*Hold class Bible, open at Matthew, and say:*

**This story comes from the Gospel according to Matthew. The Gospels are in the New Testament section of the Bible.**

*Place Bible beside you. Smooth out the underlay in the middle of the storytelling space. Place the road on top of the underlay. Place the house at the top of the road closest to you. Look at the students as you say:*

**Jesus taught the people, not with books or computers, but with special stories, known as parables. This is one of them.**

*Look now only at the story materials. Hold the 2D image of the Master as you say:*

**There was once a wealthy man who was about to go on a long journey.** *Place Master in front of the house*

*Place the three slaves around the Master*

**Before leaving, the Master called his slaves and gave them responsibility for his riches.**

*Move Slave 1 closer to the Master. Hold the 5 talent image for the students to see, as you say:*

**To one slave, the Master gave five talents. In those days just one talent was worth a great deal of money.**

*Place 5 talents in front of Slave 1.*

*Move Slave 2 a little closer to the Master. Hold the 2 talent image for the students to see, as you say:*

**To another slave he gave two talents.***Place 2 talents in front of Slave 2.*

*Hold the 1 talent image for the students to see, as you say:*

**And to the third slave he gave one talent.***Place 1 talent in front of Slave 3.*

*Move Master down the road and then right off to the side, as you say:*

**Then the Master went away.**

*Move Slave 1 and 5 talents half way down the road then off to your left, as you say:*

**The slave who had received five talents immediately traded with them and made 5 more talents.***Place second 5 talents with the first in front of Slave 1.*

*Move Slave 2 and 2 talents half way down the road then off to your right, as you say:*

**In the same way, the slave who had received two talents made two more talents.***Place second 2 talents with the first in front of Slave 2*

*Move Slave 3 and 1 talent to the left of the house, as you say:*

**But the slave who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.***Place black piece of felt over the 1 talent*

*Move Master up the road to his house, as you say:*

**After a long time the master returned. He wanted to hear what the slaves had done with his money while he was away.**

*Move Slave 1 and both sets of 5 talents to the Master:*

**The one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying,   
“Master you gave me five talents, see I have made five more.”**

*Point to the Master***His master was delighted, “Well done, good slave; you have been very responsible with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things.**

*Move Slave 1 and talents to the side of the house*

**Come share your master’s joy.”**

*Move Slave 2 and both sets of 2 talents to the Master:*

**The one with the two talents also came forward saying, “Master you gave me two talents, see I have made two more.”**

*Point to the Master***His master was delighted, “Well done, good slave; you have been very responsible with a few things, I will put you in charge of many things.**

*Move Slave 2 and talents to the side of the house*

**Come share your master’s joy.”**

*Move Slave 3 and one talent to the Master*

**Then the one who had received one talent also came forward saying, “Master I knew you were a strict man, so I was afraid. I looked after your talent by hiding it in the ground.**

*Slide the talent to the Master*

**Here it is.**

**But his master replied, “You lazy slave! You should have at least put my money in the bank!**

*Slide the talent to Slave 1*

**Take the talent away from him; give it to the one with ten talents!”**

*Sit back, pause for a moment, then wonder about the story together.*

**I wonder how the slaves felt when they were given 5 talents (repeat for two and one).**

**I wonder how the master felt, giving the talents to the slaves to look after.**

**I wonder why the master rewarded the slaves who made more from what they were given.**

**I wonder why the slave who buried the money in the ground was not rewarded.**

**I wonder what Jesus meant when he said, “Come share your master’s joy.”**

**I wonder what the master expected the slaves to do with the riches he gave them.**

**I wonder who the master might really be.**

**I wonder what this parable is really about.**

1. KWL, Teaching Companion, 3a, p55 [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. KWL, Teaching Companion*,* 3a, p56 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. KWL, Teaching Companion, 3a, p58 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. KWL, Teaching Companion, 3a, p59 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. KWL, Teaching Companion, 3a, p58 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Printed with permission of Catholic Mission [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. KWL, Teaching Companion, 3a, p59 [↑](#footnote-ref-8)