



YEAR LEVEL	5 & 6
TITLE	Living as Disciples
STRAND	CHRISTIAN MORALITY AND SOCIAL JUSTICE
SUGGESTED DURATION	6 weeks
ENDURING QUESTIONS	What does it mean to be Christian? How do I choose to share God's love with all?

Unit Focus

In this unit students will focus on our mission to respond to God's love for us and all creation with the love and compassion of Jesus who said, "Learn from me for I am gentle and humble of heart."

Achievement Standards

By the end of Year 6:

Students identify Jesus' words and actions as a model for living a life of authentic service to others. They explain how Jesus taught us how to respond to God's commandment to love others.

Unit Outcomes

By the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. **Explore issues of social justice and the implications for our world.**
2. **Analyse the message and meaning of the Beatitudes.**
3. **Identify stories and people today who witness and proclaim the Good News of Jesus both locally and globally.**
4. **Determine ways in which they can make a personal response to the Beatitudes now and in the future.**

Key Understandings for Students

- It is our mission to respond to the message of the Beatitudes and to live with love and compassion.
- In keeping the message of Jesus alive, we draw on the fruits of the sacraments to help us to serve others.
- Christians are continually called to grow in love and justice and relationship with others.

Student Context

Students in Years 5 and 6 see themselves as members of a community that extends beyond their family and immediate surroundings therefore, they are ready to explore further God's love for us and respond generously as Christians to all creation. They are increasingly influenced by adults, other than their parents and their peers.

Theological Background for Teachers

- Jesus used the Beatitudes as a trumpet call to gather his listeners: the poor, the mourners, the meek, the justice seekers, the merciful, the pure in heart, and the peacemakers. By including the Beatitudes early in his Gospel, Matthew identified his audience. The early Church to which Matthew was writing was made up of people outside the circles of influence. They were good people, or people who wanted to be good, who were oppressed and powerless in the eyes of their society, they were nobodies.
- Beatitudes comes from the Latin *beatus*, meaning 'blessed.' For the ancient Jews, a blessing was a power-laden word or statement. A blessing safeguarded the community or recipient from evil forces. It transmitted peace, prosperity, and health. Once given, the effect of a blessing could not be revoked. This belief is central to the story of Jacob tricking his father Isaac into giving the blessing intended for Esau.
- When Jesus pronounced his blessing in the Sermon on the Mount, two unusual things took place. First, the targets of his blessings were not the normal groups of blessing recipients. To state, "Blessed are," past and present tense, to a group of people whose lives were far from the ideal of peace, prosperity, and health went against common wisdom. The poor, the grieving, and the outcast would not have been thought of as greatly blessed. The second unusual aspect of the beatitudes is that Jesus did not attach the source of power for the blessings to the name of God. It was understood that God was the source of all blessings. So, when Jesus declared his blessings as statements of fact without attaching them to God as the source, he crossed the line from simple rabbi or prophet and declared himself Messiah. It was not a verbatim declaration, but those listening would have understood clearly what Jesus intended.
- The Beatitudes of Jesus moved blessing away from material and social understandings to a new realm, he laid the foundation of authority upon which the rest of his teachings would build. The Beatitudes were a rejection of old attitudes and a call for new attitudes.

Scripture

Mt 5:1-10 The Beatitudes

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

"Blessed are the meek for they will inherit the earth.

"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

"Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

"Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

"Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

"Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Mk 6:6b-13

Then he went about among the villages teaching. He called the twelve and began to send them out two by two, and gave them authority over the unclean spirits. He ordered them to take nothing for their journey except a staff; no bread, no bag, no money in their belts; but to wear sandals and not to put on two tunics. He said to them, "Wherever you enter a house, stay there until you leave the place. If any place will not welcome you and they refuse to hear you, as you leave, shake off the dust that is on your feet as a testimony against them." So they went out and proclaimed that all should repent. They cast out many demons, and anointed with oil many who were sick and cured them.

Major Assessment Task

Students rewrite the Beatitudes in contemporary language. They may present the work in any way they wish, video, digital presentation, poster, etc. Students should ensure that their final work has images to support their contemporary language.

Suggested Learning Experiences

Focusing Activity:

Students brainstorm their idea of a perfect world. Create a class list or a concept map of the criteria for a perfect world. Add to this as the unit progresses.

- Read [Shaun Tan, The Rabbits](#). Students respond to the text by sharing their questions and wonderings about the images and issues that the text references.
- Students define: discrimination, prejudice, barrier, rejection, acceptance, exclusion, inclusion, stereotyping. Use Think Pair Share to explore ways we discriminate and types of discrimination.
- Look at Catholic Teaching on Justice ([Maurice Ryan .Expressions: Book 7, Topic 5](#))
- Organise students into groups, each group is given a Catholic Social Teaching Principle, posters to support this experience are available [Catholic Education Sandhurst Website.](#) Each group is required to present and explain their principle to the class, using words and images.
- Media Watch: Individually, students collect and collage media clippings about social justice issues in the world. The student writes a summary passage to identify and categorise the issues (e.g. human rights abuse, poverty, etc). In small groups students could pick one issue and critically explore this issue. Students create a collage of images and words that reflects their understanding of this issue and whether it is global, local or national.
- Read Matthew 5:1-12 The Beatitudes. Set the scene of Jesus preaching on a hillside in Palestine. Read the passage again. Put quiet music on and ask the students to imagine that they are on the hill and Jesus is talking to them. Re-read the text using the word 'you' instead of 'they'. Using a Scripture think pad (Maurice Ryan pg 86) students respond to the text. Ask students to respond with any questions or wonderings they have about this scripture.
- In groups the students each take one of the Beatitudes and create a frozen statue of their understanding of what it means to be, e.g., poor in spirit

- **Guest Speakers:** Invite guest speakers to speak to the students about their Christian mission. (There are many digital resources that are also available if you can't get a guest speaker, the [Caritas Website](#) has many useful videos and clips.
- Choose an active group from your parish, or local community, for example, St Vincent de Paul. Investigate this group. After listening and talking to a member of one of these groups identify: the role of the group in the parish, who do they serve?, brainstorm for ways in which students can support these groups
- **Mk 6:6b-13**, Read this scripture. This link will support teacher engagement with the content. [Commentary Link NCEC](#). Students list wonderings and questions they have about the text? Create a question wall. Students reflect on all the questions and then respond by creating a graffiti Wall. (Into the Deep Dan White)
- Individually students select a beatitude. They respond reflectively as to how they can live out this Beatitude.

Prayer Ritual

Set up a prayer place using the collage as the central focus.

Read the Beatitudes together as a class. After each verse students could share their contemporary version of the verse.

Conclude with spontaneous prayer from students and educators.