

YEAR LEVEL	5 & 6
TITLE	The First Australian Catholics
STRAND	CHURCH AND TRADITION
SUGGESTED DURATION	5 weeks
ENDURING QUESTIONS	What does the Church look like in our community? How can I be like Jesus in our community?



Unit Focus

In this unit students will explore the development of Catholicism in Early Australia and the lives of those men and women who were inspirational in carrying forward the mission of Jesus in the early Australian Church.

Achievement Standards

By the end of Year 6, students should be able to:

Describe the Church as being empowered by the Holy Spirit to be a sign of hope, reconciliation and service to the world.

Unit Outcomes

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

- 1. Identify the men and women who, with the help of the Holy Spirit, shaped and inspired the development of the Australian Catholic Church.***
- 2. Recount the story of one significant Australian Catholic, exploring how their faith enabled them to carry out their mission.***

Key Understandings for Students

- Christian Church communities provide a basis for interaction and service to the local, national and international communities.
- There was little unity in the early Australian Church. It was fiercely divided between Protestant and Catholic. Each separate group looked down on most of the other groups, sometimes refusing to acknowledge them as fellow Christians (*The Australian Church*, p. 18).
- Catholic convicts arrived in Australia during the earliest years of settlement. Most of them came from Ireland ... they eagerly sought to maintain their Catholic identity (*The Australian Church*, p. 28). Guided by the Holy Spirit, special men and women shaped and inspired the beginnings of the Catholic Church in Australia.

- Many of our early settlers were inspired to live a life of service to others. Their faith enabled them to overcome the many hardships and barriers experienced by life in those times.
- Issues of the twentieth century (new technology, wars, depression, communism, conscription) caused much political division within the Church (*The Australian Church*, p. 102).
- The first changes to Australia's solidly Anglo-Celtic culture came with the great surge of migrants after World War II. It was a time of imaginative new kinds of ministry and new translations of the Bible. It was a time when the different denominations became closer than before (*The Australian Church*, p. 138).
- The Church has played an important role in building our nation. It has shaped the ideals of ordinary citizens and it has steered the decisions of prominent leaders, both religious and secular. It has provided an image of Jesus in its care of the needy. The Australian Church depends upon all members of the church taking an active role in building the future (*The Australian Church*, p. 170).
- Pastoral care of the Parish is usually entrusted to a Priest, under the authority of an Archbishop/Bishop.

Student Context

Students in Years 5 and 6 see themselves as members of a community that extends beyond their family and immediate surroundings. They are moving towards a capacity for more abstract reasoning and analysis and a sense of history. Their grasp of an understanding of other people in time and place makes it possible for them to use information to contrast, predict and interpret information about the Church in Early Australia. A study of the development of the Church in Early Australia and the development of their own Parish can help students in Years 5 and 6 explore the communal and universal nature of the Catholic Church.

Theological Background for Teachers

- Christian ministry is the public activity of a baptised follower of Jesus Christ flowing from the Spirit's charism and an individual personality on behalf of the Christian community to witness to, serve and realise the Kingdom of God (O'Meara, 1983, p. 142).
- The forms through which the Church acts on behalf of the Kingdom come from the culture of a time and place. Ministry is a ... mine awaiting new excavations. (O'Meara, 1983, p. 21).
- The Catholic Church began in Australia with the arrival of the First Fleet in 1788. Of the 1044 convicts who arrived, 316 were Catholics. For some years there were no priests or religious in the settlement, so the laity assumed responsibility for keeping the faith alive.
- Fr Dixon, a convict, celebrated the first Mass in Australia on May 15, 1803 after being pardoned and permitted to say Mass and celebrate baptisms and marriages.
- In 1820 Father John Therry and Fr Philip Conolly arrived as the first official priests to minister to Catholics in the colony.
- Father Therry dedicated the first Catholic Church in the Colony to Our Lady Help of Christians.
- In 1835 John Bede Polding was appointed as Australia's first Catholic bishop. He set out to establish a Benedictine Monastery, to provide efficient administrators to set up dioceses and respond to the pastoral needs of the community.

- The Pope, in consultation, appoints bishops to lead Dioceses. Bishops succeed the Apostles through the Holy Spirit who is given to them. They are the constituted pastors in the Church and are to be teachers of doctrine and the priests of sacred worship (*Code of Canon Law*, # 372).
- The pastor leads the Parish community in the name of the Bishop by:
 - ensuring that the Word of God is proclaimed;
 - fostering works which promote the Spirit of the gospel;
 - caring for the Catholic education of children and young people;
 - bringing the Gospel message to those who have given up religious practice;
 - ensuring the Blessed Eucharist is the centre of the Parish assembly of the faithful;
 - encouraging all to pray and to take a lively and active part in sacred liturgy
(*Code of Canon Law*, # 528)
- In 1838 the Sisters of Charity were the first religious order from overseas to be invited to set up communities to work with the Catholic people. Caroline Chisholm also arrived this year. She is well known in our history for her work with the immigrant poor and wayward girls.
- Through the 1800s local Religious Orders were established in Australia to respond to the pastoral needs of the community. During this time, many religious congregations from overseas established foundations to help the Church's work.
- Catholic Schools in Australia were established and largely staffed by lay people until the Public Institution Act in 1880. With government assistance withdrawn the Church had to establish its own Catholic education system. Religious sisters and brothers were encouraged to come to Australia to help staff the schools and Australian Catholics had to support the schools financially.
- The Catholic Church community consists of people from many countries throughout the world.
(CEO Parramatta. (1991). *Sharing our story*. Parramatta: CEO; McClish, B. (1999). *The Australian Catholic story*. Melbourne: HarperCollins Religious)

Scripture

Eph 4:11-12 *Unity in the Body of Christ*

The gifts he gave them were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry for building up the body of Christ.

1 Cor 12:12–13, 27- 31 *One Body with Many Members*

12 For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves[a] or free—and all were made to drink of one Spirit.

27 Now you are the body of Christ and individually members of it. And God has appointed in the church first apostles, second prophets, third teachers, then miracles, then gifts of healing, helping, administrating, and various kinds of tongues. Are all apostles? Are all prophets? Are all teachers? Do all work miracles? Do all possess gifts of healing? Do all speak with tongues? Do all interpret? But earnestly desire the higher gifts.

And I will show you a more excellent way.

Major Assessment Task

Create an interview or facebook profile using research gathered about a prominent Australian Catholic.

The work should show knowledge of the person's life and contribution to the Australian Church.

Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

Focusing Activity

Students view the celebration video of 200 years of Catholic Education in Sandhurst

<https://resource-macs.com/2018/10/01/twenty-five-of-the-best/>

List questions and wonderings of the students. If possible visit your local parish church and notice the date that it was opened.

- For analytical and conceptual development students make a Word Web that records as many words as possible that can be associated with the phrase, Catholic Church in Early Australia. (**Appendix 1**)
- Using the provided timeline, as a class annotate some events within this document. (Educators may like to refine the timeline as they see as appropriate) Students in groups may select an event and then record 4-5 main ideas connecting the significance of the event with the development of the Church in Australia.
- List the men and women who shaped and inspired the development of the Australian Catholic Church. This list can be created using both **Appendix 2** and what students can connect from the video and their school history. This link <https://resource-macs.com/2018/10/01/twenty-five-of-the-best/> may provide some additional information. From the list students pick a name and in pairs or individually research the name, creating a list of facts which they compile to create who am I questions? This could be part of a class gallery walk quiz.
- Investigate the history of the Church and the Parish. If possible, invite a member of the Parish to support this.
- Read 1 Cor.12:12-31. Paul rejoices in the gifts of all in the community at Corinth. He tells the Corinthians that all giftedness is used to build community. Students name their gifts as individuals and brainstorm how their gifts may be used to build their classroom community. As a class, create a 'Community Wall' where students name the collective gifts and illustrate how they could be shared within the class community.
- Read Eph 4:11-12. Respond to this text using a Scriptural Thinkpad (Maurice Ryan Into the Deep) Who are these people in our Church today? What does it mean to build up the body of Christ?
- List the many services that different Catholic groups provide for not only the Catholic, but the wider community. How does this 'build the body of Christ?' Create digital presentations of each of these local groups, highlight how they service others and build the body of Christ?

- Identify and gather images and symbols related to Australia and specifically to your Diocese. These could be placed in the classroom prayer space as part of the morning prayer ritual. A simple prayer of thanks could be included with each new addition. For example “For the riches of our earth we give thanks and place this as a reminder of..... and of God’s abundant generosity.”

Prayer and Ritual

Prepare a Liturgy of the Word based on one of the Scripture texts. Incorporate a reflection on the life of one or more people who shaped and inspired the Catholic Church in Australia, or specifically in your Diocese. Students could write prayers of thanksgiving for those men and women led by the Spirit to do God’s work. Incorporate songs and symbols related to the Australian Church.

Resources

There is a particularly detailed unit on this topic in the following:

Ryan, M. Expressions Bk 5, The Catholic Church in Australia.

[Ryan, M. Learning Links to the Church in Australia.](#)

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Timeline
- Appendix 2 – Male religious and female religious