

**YEAR LEVEL** 9 & 10

**TITLE** The Australian Church

**STRAND**

**CHURCH & TRADITION**

**SUGGESTED DURATION** 10 weeks (25 hours)

**ENDURING QUESTIONS** **How does the Church make a difference?**  
**How can I connect with community and Church?**



## Unit Focus

In this unit students will investigate some major events in Church history and in the history of Australia and consider how they have shaped the Church in our society today. They will explore the impact Australian society and history has had in forming the Australian Catholic Church as well as its unique identity and characteristics.

## Achievement Standards

By the end of **Year 10**:

**Students investigate major events in the history of Australia and in the Church and explore how they impact on each other.**

**Students identify issues and challenges facing the Catholic Church in Australia today.**

## Unit Outcomes

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

1. Outline the major events, personalities and groups contributing to the emergence and development of the Catholic Church in Australia.
2. Describe the experiences of ordinary Catholics and the contributions of ethnic groups, including indigenous Australians, as the Australian Catholic Church grew and developed.
3. Examine some of the effects of the Second Vatican Council on the Church in Australia.
4. Name some of the issues and challenges which confront the Catholic Church in Australia today.

## Key Understandings for Students

- The ideas of community reflect the characteristics, qualities and practices of the early Christian communities – communal prayer, sharing of resources, breaking open the word and table fellowship, working towards Jesus' dream of the Kingdom.
- World and political events impact on the development and nature of the Church, its structure and organization – the universal Church, the Australian Church and local Church communities.

- The Church Councils (e.g. the Council of Trent and the Second Vatican Council) are key events in defining and setting new directions for the Church.
- The Plenary Council (2021-2022) conducted by the Australian Catholic Church is another critical event in defining and setting new directions.
- A study of the Australian Church frees us from the tyranny of our own experience of Church, the naïve belief that the Church as we know it is simply how it always was and always must be.
- The Holy Spirit is active in the Church and directs her through a variety of gifts.
- In the 21st Century individuals and communities face challenges as they seek to be a community of the faithful.

## Student Context

Year 9 and 10 students are on the threshold of adulthood in many areas. They are planning their futures, and are learning to be comfortable with who they are - physically, emotionally and spiritually. Many are forming questions about their religious beliefs and use their various backgrounds or experiences to inform, challenge and validate their belief systems.

Year 9 and 10 students are interested in debating contentious issues including with regard to religion and Church and their position in this regard. They have the capacity to consider how historical events have impacted on other times, including our own. They have a natural concern for the future and an interest in shaping organisations, including the Church, in ways that respond to the concerns of contemporary society.

## Theological Background for Teachers

### The Early Church Community

Many of the challenges and questions that face the Church today are similar to those experienced by the Early Church.

The Early Christian community grew from a small Jewish sect known as 'The Way' who gathered together to share their belief in the Resurrection of Jesus. Eventually, this group spread from the Greco-Roman-Gentile world, and became separated from the Jewish faith at around 70 CE. Palestinian Jews expelled the followers of Jesus from worshipping in their Temples and Synagogues. Jesus' followers became isolated and formed their own communities of faith based on Apostolic preaching. These communities may be called 'Churches' as they were united in faith, worship and leadership. As Christianity expanded from Israel, the expression of their faith was adapted to meet the local needs. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the variations became the structures we have today and our worship reflects the foundations Jesus had laid in his lifetime on earth.

The Early Church was Spirit filled and its members were aware of the presence and power of the Spirit of Jesus Christ in their communities and in their various ministries. The life of the early Christian community consisted in sharing concerns and possessions, preaching, liturgical life and teaching the newly baptized.

The mission of the Church as a whole, and individuals within that Church, is to live out the Gospel values of Jesus Christ, proclaim the Kingdom in word, in worship, in witness and in service. Each individual has a mission and a ministry by virtue of their Baptism and each contributes to the life of their local faith community by exercising that mission and ministry. In addition, the Church identifies particular formal ministries through which individuals contribute to the life of the local and global faith community which is the Church.

As the Church embarks on this new Millennium it must remain faithful to the Vatican II imperatives of reading the signs of the time. The Church as a whole and we as individuals must respond to the challenge of making the person and message of Jesus relevant to this time.

### Ecumenism

Throughout history there has always been tension within the Church, as people try to interpret their experience in the light of the Gospel. In their search for truth about God, people sometimes took up different positions within the one community. The great Church Councils helped the community to clarify and define their understanding of who Jesus was, and the meaning and purpose of life with the Church community. Ecumenism is about seeking the unity that Christ wants – “That they may be one as you Father and I are one” (John’s Gospel).

Australia was the first truly secular country. It had no state religion, no hierarchical structure of Church until years after convict settlement. In the first instance the faith tradition of the majority of the soldiers and the settlers was Church of England, and the faith tradition of most of the convicts was Irish Catholic.

Although the various Christian traditions share a common root stock in Roman Catholicism, they have taken up various positions with regard to issues dealing with Church and Church life over time.

### **Church Councils – particularly Vatican II**

The Council of Trent was convened by Pope Paul III. This council met at various times between 1545 and 1563. Many reforms occurred as a consequence, including:

- reforms to the clergy
- reforms to the Sacraments
- reforms to the training of priests

The Council also reaffirmed Church doctrine, especially in relation to salvation. It restated that salvation comes from God, but needs human cooperation. Humans needed to participate in good works and have faith for salvation. And, in response to Martin Luther, it reaffirmed that Revelation has two main sources - Scripture and Tradition.

The First Vatican Council was held between 1869 and 1870, and dealt mainly with reviewing Catholic faith and the authority of the Pope.

The Second Vatican Council was held between 1962 and 1965, and was a turning point in modern Church history. The main goal of the council was to promote peace, unity and harmony in the world. The council particularly wanted to identify ways that the Church could be proclaimed and present itself in the world today. Pope John XXIII described the council as an opportunity to “open the windows of the Church” and allow the holy Spirit to permeate. The Second Vatican Council produced documents on the following:

- liturgy
- the Church
- how God is revealed to us
- the modern world (marriage and family; cultural, social, and economic life; the political community; war and peace etc)
- modern means of communication
- Eastern Catholic Churches
- other Christian Churches
- the role of the bishops
- the role of priests
- training priests
- lay people in the Church
- missionary action of the Church
- the life of religious men and women
- non-Christian religions
- Christian education

- religious freedom

## Indigenous Australians

Pope John Paul II said at Blatherskite Park, Alice Springs, 29 November 1986, in his Address to the Aboriginal People of Australia

*“The Church of Australia will not be fully the Church that Jesus wants her to be until you (the Indigenous peoples of Australia) have made your contribution to her life and until that contribution has been joyfully received by others”.*

A united Australia which represents this land of ours values the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander heritage and provides justice and equity for all. This reinforces the importance of the path towards Reconciliation for the Catholic Church in Australia.

## Scripture

### Acts 2:44-47 Life Among the Believers

All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute their proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the good will of all the people.

### 1 Cor 12:4-11 Spiritual Gifts

Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom, and to another the utterance of knowledge according to the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit, to another gifts of healing by the one Spirit, to another the working of miracles, to another prophecy, to another the discernment of spirits, to another various kinds of tongues, to another the interpretation of tongues. All these are activated by one and the same Spirit, who allots to each one individually just as the Spirit chooses.

## Major Assessment Task

### THE AUSTRALIAN CATHOLIC CHURCH

In pairs research **one** of the areas from the story of the Catholic Church in Australia listed below:

- The contribution of the Laity – from early priestless years to today.
- The development of a Catholic hierarchy with emphasis on the role of bishops – Polding, Vaughan, Moran, Goold, Quinn & Mannix.
- Religious Orders and their work.
- The development of Catholic Education including the work of Mary MacKillop.
- The involvement of Catholics in political debates in Australia – the Movement, conscription etc.
- The development of a multicultural church including the effects of migration

#### Research requirements:

- Written research of 500 words.

- Use of a minimum of 10 relevant images.
- Make use of an interview.
- Include a bibliography (at least 3 resources).
- Include a timeline.
- Make use of a piece of memorabilia that reflects Catholic life from the period (an image may suffice but special credit for an actual piece).
- Consider how the issues and challenges which confronted the Church in the past can give guidance for the challenges of today.

Communicate research to the class selecting an appropriate format.

*It is expected that students and teachers will co-construct an assessment rubric for this task beginning with the below. Teachers are encouraged to assess skills and knowledge from other learning areas that may be included in this task.*

|                                    | WELL ABOVE EXPECTED LEVEL   | ABOVE EXPECTED LEVEL   | AT EXPECTED LEVEL  | WORKING TOWARD EXPECTED LEVEL  |
|------------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Knowledge and Understanding</b> | Research is insightful and very detailed.   | Research is thorough and detailed.   | Research is accurate   | Work is under the set parameters with an ability to recount facts.                             |
|                                    | A very high level of understanding has been demonstrated throughout the record of research.                         | A very sound level of understanding has been demonstrated throughout the record of research.                       | An adequate level of understanding has been demonstrated throughout the record of research.  | Some understanding has been demonstrated throughout the record of research.                    |
|                                    | Shows a high ability to analyse nominated topic and explain context, setting & application for today                | Sound analyse of nominated topic and a good explanation of context, setting & application for today                | Evidence of ability to investigate topic and consider applications for today   | Has attempted to identify connections between the beginnings of the Australian Catholic church |
| <b>Reasoning</b>                   | Has considered insightfully, how the issues and challenges that confronted the Church in the past can give guidance | Has thoughtfully considered how the issues and challenges that confronted the Church in the past can give guidance | Has considered how the issues and challenges that confronted the Church in the past can give guidance for the challenges of today. | Has considered how the Catholic Church confronts challenges.                                   |

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|--|------------------------------|------------------------------|--|--|
|  | for the challenges of today. | for the challenges of today. |  |  |
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## Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

### Focusing activity:

Read *"The Rabbits"* by John Marsden and Shaun Tan. Ask students to make notes as the story is read. Discuss: what do you think the story is really about (lead to conclusion of European settlement in Australia)? In groups of 2/3 students are given a page to analyse using the following questions: what do you see in the picture? How does the illustration link to the text? Do any objects or characters have a symbolic meaning? What might it be? How does the picture make you feel?

### Outcome 1 Outline the major events, personalities and groups contributing to the emergence and development of the Catholic Church in Australia.

- Complete a scale timeline of the Catholic Church in Australia (adapted from *To Know, Worship and Love*, year 9, page 277).
- Present on a world map or present graphically the immigration of Catholics to Australia, including the period in which the migration took place, the major reasons, numbers and areas of settlement. Which religion/s were influenced by this phase of immigration?
- Research the beginnings of your town. Where did the first settlers come from? What religion/s did they follow? What places in your town still recall these times?
- Select a major event, personality or group and research their contribution to the Catholic Church in Australia.

### Outcome 2 Describe the experiences of Indigenous Australians, as the Australian Catholic Church grew and developed.

- Begin by showing a language map of Indigenous Australia before white settlement (e.g. *To Know Worship and Love* year 10, p140). Emphasise the great diversity of language, identity, story and cultural practices. Read pp140-153 of TKWL year 10 and complete selected activities along the way. Teachers should read "Discovering the Catholic Church in Australia" Maurice Ryan p.36-38
- Show the clip from "Rabbit Proof Fence" in which the children are taken away. Ask students what they know about the Stolen Generation. Record responses. Play "Took the Children Away" by Archie Roach (or read the book also illustrated by Ruby Hunter). What facts are presented? What feelings arise among the students? (*For further resources re the Stolen Generations see Resources below*)
- Introduce the topic of Church missions. Why were they established? What effects, positive or negative, may Christian missions have had on the lives of the people in those communities?
- Read Pope John Paul II's address to indigenous people at Alice Springs on November 29 1986. What did the Pope say? Why might the Pope have been moved to make these statements? To what extent has the Australian Catholic Church realised the Pope's hopes for indigenous Australians within it?
- Investigate the Uluru Statement From The Heart (2017). What are its key messages? What have the Australian Catholic Bishops said about it?
- The National Aboriginal Torres Strait Islander Catholic Commission (NATSICC [www.natsicc.org.au](http://www.natsicc.org.au)) and Aboriginal Catholic Ministry (ACM) have continued to provide a voice for Indigenous Australians in the Australian Catholic Church. Examine one of their websites. What evidence (images, prayers, symbols, information) can students find?

### Outcome 3 Describe the experiences of ordinary Catholics and the contributions of ethnic groups as the Australian Catholic Church grew and developed.

- Refer again to your scale timeline above (Outcome 1). Include dates for the successive waves of immigrants to Australia (e.g. European after WW2, Vietnamese, Middle Eastern, African)
- Consider the ethnic groups in your local community. Research their contributions to your town or region as well as to your local parish.

#### **Outcome 4 Examine some of the effects of the Second Vatican Council on the Church in Australia.**

- Using an episode from the video, *Brides of Christ*, present a brief report on how Vatican II affected the Australian Church.
- Interview a grandparent or older parishioner. Recount and report their story – rituals, events, practices (eg fasting), groups (eg, YCW). Can be done in pairs, or small groups. Prepare a written report focussing on key learnings and outlining changes experienced.
- Students work through the activities from REsource <https://resource-macs.com/2018/10/01/vatican-ii/>

#### **Outcome 5 Name some of the issues and challenges which confront the Catholic Church in Australia today.**

- Brainstorm social issues that are prevalent in Australian society today. Read the Working Document from the 2020 Plenary – what issues arise that the Australian Church sees as significant? Does the Catholic Church have any input into these? Should they?
- Formulate questions and conduct a survey/panel discussion (include eg, parish priest, teacher, young person involved in the church, indigenous worker, Saint Vincent De Paul worker) to ascertain the main issues and challenges confronting the Catholic Church in Australia. Compile a summary of responses from the survey/panel discussion outlining issues and challenges confronting the Catholic Church in Australia.
- Refer to key Scripture above (Composite and/or KITE method – Carswell) and write a personal response: How can the ideals found in the early Church become a reality in our world today?
- Write a prayer or a poem, or create a picture, expressing your hopes for the future of the Catholic community in your area.

#### **Liturgical Connections**

**Plan and participate in a class liturgy that acknowledges the people, events or groups that have shaped the Catholic Church and express hopes for the future.**

## **Resources**

#### **Recommended Resources**

Archdiocese of Sydney (2003) *To Know, Worship and Love*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Yr 9 chapter 7. Yr 10 chapter 4. Melbourne: James Goold House.

Dulles, A. (1988). *Models of the Church* (2<sup>nd</sup> ed.). Dublin: Gill & Macmillan.

## Stolen Generations

Healing Foundation <https://healingfoundation.org.au/schools/> (especially the Case Studies)

TEDx Talk “My stolen childhood and a life to rebuild.” Sheila Humphries (14:50mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5V3SX0H7pHc>

Archie Roach “Took the Children Away” (song) [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IL\\_DBNkkcSE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IL_DBNkkcSE)

Archie Roach & Ruby Hunter “Took The Children Away” (story book)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NVwGwaG9bWw>

## AV Resources

Brides of Christ – ABC TV

## Internet

Australian Catholic Bishops [www.catholic.org.au](http://www.catholic.org.au)

Aboriginal Catholic Ministry Victoria <https://www.cam1.org.au/acmv>

NATSICC [www.natsicc.org.au](http://www.natsicc.org.au)

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## Appendices