

YEAR LEVEL	5 & 6
TITLE	Sacred Stories
STRAND	SCRIPTURE
SUGGESTED DURATION	5 - 7 weeks
ENDURING QUESTIONS	<p>What is Scripture?</p> <p>How does God's word affect my life?</p>



Unit Focus

Within this unit, the idea of the Bible as a collection of books, containing different literary forms (i.e. poetry and song, myth, history and wisdom) will be explored in a preliminary way. Students will investigate the development of the Bible over time and examine the ways that Scripture is incorporated into personal and communal prayer. They will make simple connections between Scripture passages and their lives.

Achievement Standards

By the end of Year Six:

Students identify the Bible as a collection of books containing different literary forms. They identify examples of various genres contained in the scriptures.

Students explain how to navigate the Bible and its contents.

Unit Outcomes

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

1. Articulate their understanding of the historical and literary contexts of the writings in the Bible.
2. Locate and analyse a variety of texts in the Bible.

Key Understandings for Students

- The Bible is a library of books which contain different literary forms.
- For Christians the Gospels are at the heart of all Scriptures. Each Gospel provides a unique insight into the person and life of Jesus.
- Passages of Scripture are located by book, chapter and verse.
- Some of the different literary styles used in the Bible are poetry, myth, wise sayings and history.
- The proclamation of the Scriptures is an essential aspect of the Church's liturgy.
- Scripture texts inspire various forms of prayer, including songs and hymns.

Student Context

Students at this level are becoming capable of abstract thinking, critical analysis and operational thought. They have some sense of history and enjoy stories of past events. Students have an increasing notion of other times, other places and other types of societies.

Students in upper primary are beginning their journey of understanding the ways the Bible conveys truth. They are at an age when they want to know about the people, beliefs and rulers of their religious community. Story is a major way of identification and appropriation through which children in this age group can enter into the perspective of others to gain meaning for life. Their first understanding of Scripture will be literal, and this literal understanding is an essential stage of faith development. Students will need assistance recognising that the Scriptures continue to be relevant and meaningful today.

The students will be well equipped to understand the importance of literary form in interpreting texts as a result of their studies in English. This will support the practice of taking into account the context of a writer, the literary genre in use at that time, and the modes of expression that are used.

Theological Background for Teachers

- There are a variety of literary forms or genres in the Bible. Among the more common literary forms are pre-history, history, story, fable, legend, parable, poetry, song, legal code, prophecy, wisdom sayings, apocalyptic, gospels, letters and many others. (It is important to note that the naming of literary forms varies and there is not a definitive list of literary forms found in Scripture). In interpreting texts from the Bible it is important to keep the literary forms in mind.
- The Bible comprises the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament consists of forty-six books written down between 900 BCE and 50 BCE. This includes seven books, written in Greek and acknowledged by Catholics as part of the canon. The New Testament consists of twenty-seven books written down between 50 CE and around 100 CE.
- In the ancient world, story or narrative was the major means of sharing and passing on from one generation to the next significant events and the communal meaning derived from such events. From around 900 BCE these stories were committed to writing and underwent editing and re-editing over time.
- The style and content of the various texts developed over a long historical period and for many different audiences and purposes. At the time of the Exile of the People of Judah in Babylon, 587 BCE – 538 BCE, there was a need to bring these collections of texts together. During this time a major writing and editing process took place in the light of the exile experience. The texts of many of the Hebrew Scriptures, as we have them in the Bible today, were set down in a fixed form.
- In the case of the New Testament, particularly the Gospels, a three-stage process over a period of some 70 years can be discerned. The first stage was the life of Jesus, his person, teaching and actions. The second stage consisted of the oral stories, anecdotes, and recollections of Jesus and his teachings. These circulated in the early Christian communities and formed part of their prayer and worship. The third stage consisted of the written texts that make up the New Testament.
- The Old Testament is generally arranged into the Torah (or Pentateuch), the Historical books, the Prophetic books and the Wisdom books. Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, introduced chapters in 1226. Printer, Robert, Estienne introduced the numbering of verses in 1551. The word 'Bible' comes from the Greek plural 'ta biblia', which means 'the books'. In Latin it becomes the singular, Bible.

- The Bible is a compilation of books that have been assembled over one thousand years. The first part, the Old Testament, is common to Jews and Christians. The Jews and Protestants only recognise the books written in Hebrew, whereas Catholics recognise an extra seven books written in Greek. This is a total of forty-six books. Catholics refer to these seven books as deuterocanonical; Protestants refer to them as apocryphal.
- The Scriptures are those writings recognised by the Church as inspired by God and containing the truth necessary for our salvation.
- The significant event in the Old Testament is the Exodus, which probably took place about 1250 BCE. Most of the Old Testament literature is centred around this event. The New Testament consists of twenty-seven books. The significant event in the New Testament is the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.
- Catholic biblical interpretation takes into account the literary form or genre of the text being interpreted. Catholic biblical interpretation pays attention to the human ways of thought, language and figurative expression found in biblical texts. Catholic biblical interpretation recognises that biblical texts are often the product of long and complex processes. Diverse historical and cultural situations influenced the texts of the Bible. For Catholics, interpretation of the Bible involves taking the literary, historical, cultural and religious background into account. Biblical fundamentalism, however, insists on the verbal inerrancy of the Scriptures. Fundamentalist interpreters of Scripture insist that the scriptural text should be read and interpreted literally in all its details. Fundamentalist interpretation of the Scriptures is contrary to Catholic approaches to biblical interpretation.

Scripture

Historical Writing

1 Chr 22:1-5 David Prepares to Build the Temple

Then David said, "Here shall be the house of the LORD God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel."

David gave orders to gather together the aliens who were residing in the land of Israel and he sent stonecutters to prepare dressed stones for building the house of God. David also provided great stores of iron for nails for the doors of the gates and for clamps, as well as bronze in quantities beyond weighing, and cedar logs without number- for the Sidonians and Tyrians brought great quantities of cedar to David. For David said, "My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorified throughout all lands: I will therefore make preparation for it." So David provided materials in great quantity before his death.

Psalms

Ps 104 God the Creator and Provider (Appendix 3)

Wisdom Writings

Sir 6:5-17 Friendship, False and True

Pleasant speech multiplies friends,
and a gracious tongue multiplies courtesies.
Let those who are friendly with you be many,
but let your advisers be one in a thousand.
When you gain friends, gain them through testing,
and do not trust them hastily.
For there are friends who are such when it suits them,

but they will not stand by you in time of trouble.
And there are friends who change into enemies,
and tell of the quarrel to your disgrace.
And there are friends who sit at your table,
but they will not stand by you in times of trouble.
When you are prosperous, they become your second self,
and lord it over your servants;
but if you are brought low, they turn against you,
and hide themselves from you.
Keep away from your enemies,
and be on guard with your friends.
Faithful friends are a sturdy shelter:
whoever finds one has found a treasure.

Faithful friends are beyond price;
no amount can balance their worth.
Faithful friends are life-saving medicine;
and those who fear the Lord will find them.
Those who fear the Lord direct their friendship aright,
for as they are, so are their neighbours also.

Letters

2 Cor 1:1-2 Salutation

Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, to the church of God that is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout Achaia: ²Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.'

2 Cor 13:11-13 Final Greetings and Benediction

¹¹ Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. ¹² Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. ¹³ The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Major Assessment Task & Rubric – Years 5 & 6

Unit: Sacred Stories

Major Assessment Task

Students present a 'What I have learned in this unit' Folio for assessment at the completion of the unit. The folio should contain their pieces of work or photo/s of work if part of a larger display as in a mural; as well as the completed template in **Appendix 5. (N.B. This template has a 'before' and 'after' component.)**

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

Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

Focusing Activity:

Explore the purpose of story with students. Why do we tell stories? Are they always true? What can we learn from stories? What kinds of stories are there? (Discuss genre) Students begin to create a Story Wall (A long strip of brown paper could be used to make the wall). On a book shape, students write their favourite book title, the characters, the plot, etc. and paste onto the Story Wall.

- For us as Christians, the Bible is not just a story; it is actually a library of sacred stories of our relationship with God. We reverence the Bible and treat it with respect. Create a special place where the Bible is displayed in the classroom aside from the Prayer Space.
- Ask the question: What do I know about the Bible? Record students' responses.
- Using the table of contents in the Bible, find out how many books there are; how many are in each Testament. Bring out an awareness of the length and groupings of the different books. eg What percentage of the Bible is the New Testament?
- Markers: Students make Bible markers/tabs for easy reference, separation of testaments, key books and gospels. (Pentateuch, History, Prophets, Wisdom in the Old Testament – Gospels, Acts, Letters, Revelation in the New Testament)
- Maps: Refer students to maps located in the Bible. (Some Bibles do not have maps.) Investigate the purpose of using the maps and how they are related to Scripture. Students find out if their Bible has a Map Index and practise locating places using this if possible.
- Introduce students to sources such as Bible Atlas, Bible Dictionary, Biblical Commentaries, Concordance, Biblical Encyclopaedia and to websites which make similar material available.
- How was the Bible formed? **(Appendix 1)**

History Books of the Bible

There are 12 books in the Bible which we refer to as history books. They are found in the Old Testament.

The first and second books of the Chronicles are another interpretation of the history of the people of Israel. The first interpretation is present in the books of Kings.

The Chronicles highlight the importance of the rituals of the time and worship of God.

"The goal of 1 and 2 Chronicles was to give the Israelites hope for the future after returning from Exile. The Chronicles reminded them that if they maintained their religious practices and worship of God, they would continue to be God's people" (Catholic Youth Bible NRSV)

- Prepare a text from 1 Chronicles 22:1-5 on card. Cut this into sections. Hide these parts in a sandpit or the schoolyard. Another group searches for the texts, finds the text or part thereof, then tries to place them together like the archaeologists and biblical scholars. Discuss the fact that not all sections of a text may have been found. Biblical scholars need to decipher and interpret what was found. Discuss with the students how documents like the Dead Sea Scrolls have helped biblical scholars understand Bible times.

- Students read the text from 1 Chronicles 22:1-5.

What words need to be explained to you? Who are the people mentioned? What information can we gather from the text about the temple to be built. **(Appendix 2)**

The Book of Psalms

The Book of Psalms is part of this collection of Books. As too is Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, The Song of Solomon and, in some Bibles, the Book of Sirach. The Book of Psalms was the Israelites' hymnbook. The prayers, songs and poems are still used by Jews and Christians when they gather for worship. The Psalms are said to tell about the ups and downs of the Israelites' relationship with God. The Psalms are referenced more in the New Testament than any other Old Testament text and are often used in our liturgies today. (NRSV student Bible)

- Read the Psalm, '*God the Creator and Provider*' (Psalm 140) **(Appendix 3)**
- What does the title mean? How does this Psalm make you feel? What does it tell you about God? Students choose images within the Psalm that relate to the title.
- Create a mural to illustrate these images. Record the matching verses on the mural. Place the mural on the Story Wall.

Wisdom Literature

The Wisdom Literature of the Old Testament consists of common sense sayings about life, people and their behaviour, and thoughts about God and the world. These books provide collections of short sayings that help people to think about God and the world. These books provide collections of short sayings that help to think about the ways they live. The whole Book of Proverbs is filled with such sayings: these are also found in the Book of Ecclesiastes. The emphasis was what could be learned by experience and applied in daily life. The writing was often somewhat poetic: an idea was stated and then repeated in a slightly different way in the next line.

- Students select verses from Sirach 6:5-17 about friends. Discuss the attributes of friends that are listed in the text and categorise these as true or false attributes. Record key phrases on dark and light Greek tragedy masks. **(Appendix 4)** Display the masks on a 'Wall of Wisdom'. Students connect these attributes from Sirach to modern wisdom sayings and examples from the media about true and false friends. Record these on the 'Wall of Wisdom'.

New Testament Letters

The letters in the New Testament were also known as Epistles. There are 21 letters in the New Testament, most of which were written by St. Paul. The structure of first-century letters usually followed an established format: a greeting to the intended recipient, a blessing, the main content, and a closing with final greeting and blessings. (Essential Bible Dictionary, St. Mary's Press)

- Discuss the various purposes of letter writing. Paul was a great letter writer. Look at the letters in the New Testament. Who were they to/from? Students look at the purpose of the letters that we find in the New Testament. Locate the communities to whom Paul wrote in a Biblical atlas.

- Look at 2 Cor: 1-2 and 2 Cor 13:11-13. Students write their own letter to their school community using the style of St. Paul to compose the letter.

Prayer and Ritual

Using the reading from Sirach 6:5-17, form a prayer circle. Around a central prayer focus, place pictures/photos of friends. Encourage the students to pray by asking them to share one word that is in their mind after the reading. Have cards and felt pens for them to write the word. Display the words around the prayer focus.