

YEAR LEVEL	3 & 4
TITLE	For Creation, Praise
STRAND	TRINITY
SUGGESTED DURATION	4 - 6 weeks
ENDURING QUESTIONS	Who is God? Is God alive in me?



Unit Focus

In this unit students will gain a deeper understanding of how we can come to know God through our appreciation of nature and recognise God's divine presence in the wonder and work of creation. The students will be given insight into their responsibility to care for and to conserve our world.

Achievement Standards

By the end of Year 4:

Students identify how they know God as Creator. They describe the need to care for the world.

Unit Outcomes

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

- 1. Recognise and appreciate the beauty and wonder of God's creation.***
- 2. Demonstrate an awareness of the need to care for and take responsibility for God's creation.***
- 3. Explore the first creation story in Genesis.***

Key Understandings for Students

- We have been created in God's image to love and be loved.
- God's love is revealed to us through the goodness and compassion of others and through the beauty of God's creative power.
- Creation reveals the power, beauty, wisdom and creativity of God.
- God's creation is good.
- God has given us the responsibility to be stewards of the earth. We must care for each other and the environment and use the earth's resources wisely. In this way we cooperate in God's creative plan.
- Indigenous people tell of creation through Dreaming stories.

Student Context

Students at this age have a sense of wonder of the world and will generally be very concerned about the state of the global environment. They will be aware of various conservation practices and be able to express their concerns for the preservation of our environment. Students have an awareness of various environmental groups and may express their desire for an ideal world, often without making a connection between their care of the local environment and the bigger picture. Students need to be given experiences to deepen their appreciation of their role in God's creation. Opportunities need to be made available for the students to reflect on God's love being revealed to us through all of creation.

In the selection of content and the design of the educational process it is important that students are able to relate selected global, national and local environmental problems to decisions made by themselves, their families and school community. In providing opportunities for students to be actively involved in the conservation and preservation of their immediate environment, we can inspire them with the realisation that individuals and small communities can make a difference.

Theological Background for Teachers

- 'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth' (*Genesis 1:1*). The *Catechism of the Catholic Church* says that Creation is the foundation of 'all God's saving plans,' the "beginning of the history of salvation' that culminates in Christ. (CCC, # 280).
- God's love is revealed to us through the mystery of creation. 'God progressively revealed to Israel this mystery. He who chose the patriarchs, who brought Israel out of Egypt, and who by choosing Israel created and formed it, this same God reveals himself as the One to whom all the peoples of the earth belong, and the whole earth itself; he is the One who made heaven and earth.' (CCC, # 287).
- The doctrine of creation is intimately connected with our belief in God. Creation has its origins in God's creative word, and constantly depends upon God for continual existence. Creation is an act of the outpouring of divine love and goodness that are expressed in the extraordinary diversity of the universe.
- The Bible begins with two accounts of creation. Such stories do not offer scientific explanations of the origin and the nature of the universe. Rather they deal with the religious questions of purpose and our relationship with the Creator. The two creation narratives, while different in detail, portray the same revelation: there is one God who is the origin of all being, who made man and woman equal in dignity and for the same destiny of living in God's presence.
- The greater our scientific knowledge, the more aware we become of the marvelous inter-relationship between every element of the created universe. Nothing exists of itself.
- "Creation exists only in dependence on each other, to complete each other, in the service of each other." (CCC, # 340)
- The Genesis creation stories reveal that humans are free beings who must accept responsibilities for their decisions. Human beings are an integral part of creation and have a role in preserving and furthering it.

Scripture

Ps 148:1-13

Praise the LORD!

Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights!

Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his host!

Praise him, sun and moon; praise him, all you shining stars!

Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!

Let them praise the name of the LORD, for he commanded and they were created.

He established them forever and ever; he fixed their bounds, which cannot be passed.

Praise the LORD from the earth, you sea monsters and all deeps,

fire and hail, snow and frost, stormy wind fulfilling his command!

Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars!

Wild animals and all cattle, creeping things and flying birds!

Kings of the earth and all peoples, princes and all rulers of the earth!

Young men and women alike, old and young together!

Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted;

His glory is above earth and heaven.

Major Assessment Task

Students Identify a local environmental issue that impacts the beauty and health of creation. They devise and implement a class action plan in response to this issue. Record action plan progress.

Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

Focusing Activity

Senses overload activity – Set up five station groups: Station 1 Sight (Magic eye picture), Station 2 Smell (Scented flowers, herbs, perfume) Station 3 Hear (Headphones playing different sounds, birds, music, voices) Station 4 Taste (Different pieces of fruit, sugar, salt) Station 5 Touch (sand, wood, water, bark, leaves, pebbles) Using EEKK strategy (Teaching Strategies Book p 23) children share their experiences of the senses. Create a class wall chart to be added to over the course of the unit.

And/or Read the story '[Where the Forest Meets the Sea](#)' by Jeannie Baker and share their experiences of being somewhere where they have been in awe of creation.

- In groups students make a collage of their favourite creation images and find music to match it, present to class. The book '[The Everything Seed, A Story of Beginnings](#)' by Carole Martignacco, may also be a useful resource here.
- Examine the Bangerang Dreaming story 'How the Murray River Was Made' (or another local story if possible). Utilise the 'User's Guide' to depth understanding and reflection on the story. Students explore their interpretation of the story through painting, or writing.
- Discuss the different ways in which we may encounter the presence of God in our lives. Compile a list of these and add to them during the course of the unit. Discuss how God is revealed to us through scripture, through the sacraments, through Jesus, through our everyday encounter with others and through the created universe and the ongoing creation of the universe. Make a class book or individual mini-books on how God is

revealed to us, (e.g. God is revealed to us through the...). Explain how the Church uses the language of “Revelation” to articulate the presence of God in our lives, particularly in the here and now.

- Read Psalm 148. Examine St Francis of Assisi’s *Canticle of Creation* <https://brigidine.org.au/st-francis-of-assis-prayer/> and note the influence of the psalm. Invite students to select a line or two from the Psalm and draw an image or create a collage to correlate with it. Students then write their own psalm of praise for the gift of God’s love in creation.
- How can we make a difference in caring for Creation? Students list all the elements of creation they are aware of. This could be done collaboratively in small groups. Ask students to attempt to categorise. Use [‘Belonging’ by Jeannie Baker](#) to explore how individuals can make a difference in caring for their part of Creation and how this can have a flow on effect in the community.
- After reading [‘Whadyamean’ by John Burningham](#). Brainstorm ways children can be active in effecting change in our world.
- Using “*Fifty Ways to care and praise creation.*” as prompter use the Hot Potato strategy to inspire ways children be active in caring for Creation. List these to use as a stimulus for the slide show.
- Have students, in pairs or groups, create a slideshow prayer with different images of creation.

Prayer Ritual

Have the students bring an item from creation that is special to them, a flower, rock, a photograph of a special place etc. Invite the students to bring their item and place it meaningfully in the prayer space.

Lead students in a guided meditation from Michael Mangan’s *Be Still: Creation Meditations*.

Have students present their creation prayers to the class. This can be repeated until all students have had the opportunity to lead the class prayer.