

DRAFT

YEAR LEVEL	5 & 6
TITLE	Creation and Our Responsibility
STRAND	TRINITY
SUGGESTED DURATION	4 - 6 weeks
ENDURING QUESTIONS	Who is God? Is God Alive in Me?



## Unit Focus

This unit will focus on the revelation of God through all of creation. In it students will explore how God's creative act invites us to shape our lives, relationships and world by reaching out and actively responding to the call to be co-creators.

## Achievement Standards

By the end of Year Six:

**Students identify God's creative act of our universe through scripture. Students identify how they can actively respond to the call to care for and continue to work as co-creators in the world.**

## Unit Outcomes

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

1. Explore and reflect upon what Scripture says about creation.
2. Identify ways in which we can work towards living in harmony on this planet.
3. Understand how we are called to be co-creators of creation with God.

## Key Understandings for Students

- God is present in all of creation.
- God's creation is given to all beings for the benefit of all.
- God's creation is good, we are called to live in ways that ensure ongoing life.
- The respect we have for the world, for nature and for all people is an expression of our relationship with God. What God has created is sacred and we are to treat it as such.
- We co-operate in God's creative plan by responsible use of science, technology and the resources entrusted to us.
- The natural world is the source of our imagination.
- We are part of the creative process; our lives are a celebration.
- Integral to Indigenous Australian spirituality is an understanding of the interconnectedness of all creation.
- The Dreaming allows Indigenous Australians to develop these understandings.

## Student Context

Students at this level are ready to explore the ways that the Bible conveys the truth. They can be introduced to the literary forms of myth, legend, poetry, history and narrative in the Bible. This unit provides examples of some of these forms for study.

Level Four students question the validity of opinions offered by adults whilst at the same time are developing a profound empathy with others. They seek to define and own their own codes of behaviour. They question inconsistencies in the beliefs and behaviour of adults, governments, and other decision-making bodies. They have a strong sense of fairness, hence this unit will help them develop their own social conscience and look for ways in which they can act as a response to their faith.

Level Four students see themselves as members of a community that extends beyond their family and immediate surroundings. Therefore, they are ready to explore their role as co-creators. They are capable of logical and abstract thinking which will enable them to study extracts from Genesis, for example, the creation account, the Covenant, and so forth, and put into action the call to care for the world in which they live.

## Theological Background for Teachers

- The Judeo Christian Creation Story is not a recount or an informational text. Its genre is that of open-ended questioning and reflection about faith. Where do we come from? Where are we going? What is the reason for life, death and suffering? What is our relationship with our God, one another and our world?
- The Biblical creation stories affirm that God loves the world and that human beings are intended to live in harmony with the environment.
- Human life certainly started one day, with whom, where and how? It is for science to answer these questions, not the Bible. Scientists and theologians should be companions in their respective fields of inquiry. Both search for an explanation of the place of humanity in the world. Science and theology ponder the mysteries of our place in the universe.
- Creation is assigned to six days culminating on the Sabbath. This is a liturgical arrangement not a scientific one. It is used to establish the importance of the Sabbath and reflection. It has a pastoral implication and in today's world asks us to reflect on the desire to produce, to work and to make time for loving stillness and wonder. Sabbath enables us to rekindle the fires of creativity.
- The creation texts were produced during the Exile, this adds extra significance to it as an act of faith.
- The Old Testament represents life as a blessing. Genesis calls us to be stewards of all creation. Because we are stewards of creation and are made in the image and likeness of God, we all possess inalienable dignity. The spiritual dimension of human life shows that we are so interrelated, that if anything diminishes the well-being of one person it diminishes the well-being of humanity at large. Because God is the provident and faithful one we, too, must provide for and be faithful to those with whom we share the earth.
- Creation gives us an insight into the nature of God and deepens our understanding and appreciation of our significance and responsibility to nurture God's creation. We have been made stewards of creation not only for ourselves but for those generations that follow.

- The creative act is revelation. Revelation is God's self-disclosure to humankind. Through creation we can come to know God and know who we are. God is revealed in and through the world because, as creation unfolds in history, it reflects the life-giving, self-giving author of all.
- The Psalms constantly draw our attention to the beauty and potency of the natural world. The world is the place where we recognise God. If we destroy the beauty of creation, we impoverish our sense of God.
- A basic respect for life and the rights of others is consistent with Hebrew Law. Jesus was faithful to Hebrew biblical tradition. For Jesus, the Law was a gift and was meant to serve humanity.
- The Aboriginal people have a unique culture and have a special place in Australia. Their stories of Dreaming give them insight into their beginnings and provide them with an understanding of life. The Dreaming carries special obligations for Aboriginal people and these stories and this heritage can inform our understanding of the Genesis stories.

## Scripture

### Gen 1:1-26

#### Six Days of Creation and the Sabbath

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, <sup>2</sup>the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters.

<sup>3</sup> Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. <sup>4</sup>And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup>God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

<sup>6</sup> And God said, 'Let there be a dome in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters.' <sup>7</sup>So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. <sup>8</sup>God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

<sup>9</sup> And God said, 'Let the waters under the sky be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear.' And it was so. <sup>10</sup>God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup>Then God said, 'Let the earth put forth vegetation: plants yielding seed, and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it.' And it was so. <sup>12</sup>The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

<sup>14</sup> And God said, 'Let there be lights in the dome of the sky to separate the day from the night; and let them be for signs and for seasons and for days and years, <sup>15</sup>and let them be lights in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth.' And it was so. <sup>16</sup>God made the two great lights—the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—and the stars. <sup>17</sup>God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth, <sup>18</sup>to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

<sup>20</sup> And God said, 'Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the dome of the sky.' <sup>21</sup>So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup>God blessed them, saying, 'Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, and let birds multiply on the earth.' <sup>23</sup>And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

24 And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures of every kind: cattle and creeping things and wild animals of the earth of every kind.' And it was so. <sup>25</sup>God made the wild animals of the earth of every kind, and the cattle of every kind, and everything that creeps upon the ground of every kind. And God saw that it was good.

26 Then God said, 'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'

## Major Assessment Task & Rubric – Years 5 & 6

Students choose Genesis 1:1-26 and present their chosen scripture piece using a collage. Each part of the creation story should be labelled with a researched action statement that can be followed to promote preservation and harmony on our planet

## Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

### Focusing Activity:

Students watch one or both of the video clips about how creation evolved from a scientific perspective.

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

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=E0ncK6yDy9Q>

- Look at the series of books by Jennifer Morgan - *Born with a Bang, From Lava to Life, Mammals who Morph*.  
Discuss the timeline of evolution and any wonderings the students may have.
- Explain that there are many stories from ancient times about how creation began and they are often called myths. Explain the correct meaning of a myth.

**Myth:** Stories passed down across generations to teach lessons and offer insights into the mysteries of life. They are often used to shape a culture or religion's fundamental belief. Many myths use symbol, allegory, rhyme and sometimes they are put to music. They may sound like real events but they are not meant to convey history or science. They teach spiritual, moral and religious truth

- Read the Creation story in Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a  
Look at the context of the story and the structure of the story. **(Appendix 1)**
- Study a representation of the Hebrew worldview in relation to the first creation story in Genesis 1:1-2:4a.  
[Label the diagram with the Biblical reference to that aspect.](#)
- Look at pages 2-21 in *The Two Hands of God* by Dr Mary Coloe. Allow students to read the contents and respond.

- Refer back to the scientific timeline of Creation. Students can create a linear depiction of the unfolding of creation in the Genesis story and compare the order of evolution. What do you notice? Are there similarities to the scientific explanation?
- Look at the first 2 minutes of the following clip from the series *The First Australians* on SBS. <http://www.sbs.com.au/firstaustralians/> What are you wondering about?
- Explore a local Dreamtime story. Reflect on the message within this story about creation. Students draw one scene from the story and share with a small group why they have chosen to draw this scene.

Then God said, ***'Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the wild animals of the earth, and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth.'*** (Genesis 1:26)

We are created in the image of God and as such, we become co-creators with God. Humans were not given their own day of creation; they have the sixth day with many creatures because we are intimately connected with all else in creation, interdependent and interrelated.

The word 'dominion' is translated from the Hebrew word '*radah*', which means to be responsible for or to look after.

We are not to rule over or exploit creation for our own purpose but are to care for creation. We protect and guard it.

- Look at the story 'Old Turtle' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0itq-Uk43mE> Ask students to reflect individually about what they saw and heard in the story. What messages will they take from the wisdom of the old turtle? Students create a piece of art that illustrates one of old turtle's messages about how our world should and could be.
- Pope Francis asked us this question, **"What need does the earth have of us?"** What do you think he means?
- Brainstorm with the students, what they think the earth needs to regain its health. Record their responses on cards and display.
- In groups of 3, students take one of the themes from the cards and make an action plan of how they and their communities can take steps to help make our earth healthier and more harmonious.

## Prayer and Ritual

Students gather in a circle. In the centre, place images of creation – photos, leaves, rocks, shells, a bowl of water and/or earth, etc.

Read Psalm 65:9-13. - Allow a time of silence as they think about what they have just heard.

Students draw or colour a mandala. (**Appendix 2**) whilst listening to quiet music, such as Dawn Mantra by Ross Edwards

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ECP5AydSmnc>

When complete, students place their mandala in front of them and turn towards the inside of the circle.

Together they pray the Thanksgiving Prayer.

Lord God, Creator of the universe,  
You have given us this world to enjoy and to cherish.  
Help us to appreciate its beauty and to take good care of it.  
Teach us to be aware of our environment  
to save what is re-usable  
to keep our waterways clean  
to renew our forests  
to protect our native flora  
to safeguard our wildlife and  
to care for our pets at home.  
We make this prayer through Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

## Appendices

Appendix 1: Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a - Teacher Notes

Appendix 2: Christian Mandala