

Religion Curriculum Inquiry Unit



School:

YEAR LEVEL: Ten		Term:	Year:
Inquiry Question: What is God?			
Strands:			
Beliefs Sacraments Morality Prayer			
Class context/Learners: To be added by class teacher			
Key Inquiry Questions: What do I understand about God? How do we use images to understand and represent God? How is God present in my everyday experiences? What do I know about the resurrected Jesus? How can the trinity be represented in image?		I Wonder: I wonder about the nature of Jesus. I wonder how God is revealed to me through my everyday experiences. I wonder about the images of God I see in visual texts. I wonder how others represent God through the arts. I wonder how we can represent the Triune God in images.	
Knowledge & Understanding... Humans respond to the revelation of God's love and truth in Jesus Christ, in Scripture and Tradition, in creation and in human experiences. The primary way to approach the revelation of God is to receive it with awe. Art expresses theology, which has been shaped by an understanding of God and contemporary influences. Art evokes a sense of the sacred.		Skills Discern how societal and historical concerns influence religious understanding and expression. Outline ways in which religion and religious ideas are presented in various art forms, observing the historical and social concerns of the time. Engaging in, and reflecting on, the arts and justify its' use for personal religious experiences. Use scripture and various forms of multimodal texts with attention to the etymology of	

<p>Art and music create a bridge to religious experience Images of God can express differing theologies. Some religious traditions have rules about depicting God and people e.g. Islam and Judaism.</p> <p>Jesus Christ is truly human, truly divine: the “<i>Word made flesh</i>”. The divinity of Jesus radically challenges and transforms all human concepts of God.. Through the Spirit, Jesus enables us to become what he is.</p> <p>The mystery of the Trinity is a fundamental belief of Christianity. The Trinity is One – one God in three interrelated persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.</p>	<p>significant terms, along with the author’s purpose and audience, to assist with seeking and making theological and philosophical meaning.</p> <p>Explore their own considered and critical questions about the person of Jesus Christ. Discuss major developments in the formation of the Church’s understanding of Jesus. Construct meaning from the Church’s teaching on life and dignity of the human person. Reflect deeply on personal responses to the message of Christ.</p> <p>Analyze ideas and images of the Trinity that communicate the fundamental Christian belief of Trinity as expressed in Church teachings (e.g. Scripture, creeds) Assess images of the Trinity and explain how these images express the interrelatedness of Father, Son and Holy Spirit.</p>
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Assessment Plan

Year Level Achievement Standards:

By the end of Year Ten students communicate that God reaches out to us through experiences of our lives and invites us into a personal relationship through Jesus as revealed in scripture and tradition. Students identify a range of visual texts in different mediums to explain how they are used to reveal an understanding of God as Trinity. Students ask the question ‘who is Jesus’ in light of the Paschal Mystery, scripture, the Incarnation and the resurrection of Christ.

By the end of Year Ten students ask and respond to relevant questions about how the sacraments are an invitation to engage in the Christian quest for meaning and purpose. They particularly focus on the vocational options including matrimony and holy orders. They select a range of tools and techniques to communicate the complexity of sacraments, exploring the notions of service and leadership.

By the end of Year Ten students identify, analyse and communicate a clear understanding of the principles of Catholic Social Teaching. Students demonstrate as awareness of our responsibility to protect the dignity of the human person.

By the end of Year Ten students actively participate and lead Christian meditation and other styles of prayer. Students investigate the Eucharist as source and summit of Christian Life for the individual and the community. Students investigate a particular spiritual tradition.

Type of Assessment	Description	Possible Sources of Evidence	When assessment takes place
Formative Assessment <i>for</i> Learning	<p>Students to supply attributes that they find relevant when talking or thinking about God?</p> <p>Personally compare three images presented in three different passages listed above from the Bible. Have students respond to the symbolic images that they get from the text. This could be in the form of journaling or a creative response – art, poetry, music.</p>	<p>Verbal response – survey</p> <p>Creative response</p>	<p>Beginning of the Unit</p> <p>During the Unit</p>
Summative Assessment <i>of</i> Learning	<p>Use the Critical Literacy Tool to explore the segments of the selected DVDs – Chasing God or Oh My God</p> <p>Response to DVD</p> <p>If possible have students create their own video on IPad reflecting where they find God. a 5min video reflecting their personal space where they find God.</p> <p>Prepare a report on images of God in the Old Testament. In your report include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A brief description of monotheism • A brief description of a least five images of God used in the Old Testament and what these tell us about God. • A poster illustrating how God is presented in the Old Testament • A summary of your own image of God. <p>Students create a description or visual representation of an image or metaphor of God that they believe would resonate with contemporary Australian culture and justify their choice based upon previous learning in this Unit.</p> <p>Students read the following statements and record their opinion on one of the statements and the capacity of the ideas expressed in the statements to limit or enhance our understanding of God:</p>	<p>Critical literacy tool – written response</p> <p>Journaling</p> <p>Video</p> <p>Report</p> <p>Creative response – visual media</p> <p>Written response</p>	<p>During the Unit</p> <p>During the Unit</p> <p>During the Unit</p> <p>During the Unit</p> <p>At the end of the Unit</p> <p>A the end of the Unit</p>

		<p>images of God. We may call God: Father or Mother, or friend, but only if we keep in mind the limits of such names. They never capture the fullness of God's reality. God remains richer, fuller, better. There are many images of God but only one God.</p> <p>Rocks Activity. Place 5 rocks in different positions so that each angle you view the rock displays a different image. This can be varied several times to develop discussion about images continually changing but each image is just as important as the first.</p> <p>*Using one of the following DVDs to explore other people's ideas about God. Please select clips from the Oh My God DVD carefully</p> <p>Chasing God http://www.chasinggod.net/index.php Oh My God - a film by Peter Rodger www.OMGmovie.com</p> <p><i>Oh My God</i> please be selective as to the parts that you wish to show. There is some bad language, racist and extremist comments in some sections Sections that are worthwhile include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • at 21:00 minutes segment from Indian students • at 29minutes:24 seconds – Indigenous Australians and Hugh Jackman • 38 minutes Buddhists in Tibet <p><i>Use the Critical Literacy Tool to explore the films</i> What is the film about? What does the composer of this film want me to know? How is your understanding of the film influenced by your background? How is the film influencing you, e.g., does the film technique, sound, colour influence how you construct meaning? How does the language or lack of language in the film position you as viewer, e.g., does the use of passive or active voice position you in a particular way?</p>	<p>Five rocks of various sizes and colours.</p> <p>DVDs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chasing God DVD http://www.chasinggod.net/index.php <p>Oh My God - a film by Peter Rodger www.OMGmovie.com</p> <p>Critical Literacy tool</p>	<p>Assessment of and for learning</p>
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		<p>What meanings are dominant? Image, text or a balance? What view of the world and what values does the film present? What assumptions about your values and beliefs does the film make? What/whose perspectives are omitted? Whose interests are served by the text? What action might I take after viewing this film?</p> <p>After watching one of the DVDs have students watch the <i>Interview with God</i> YouTube Clip. In light of previous discussions this clip could provide another stimulus for talking about God with your class. Have students record their thoughts for assessment purposes. Possibly in the form of journal writing. Be critical when viewing it. What is it saying about who God is? Is it helpful in its imagining of God? What attributes of the divine are emphasised? What are missing? What stereotypes is it reinforcing? What attitudes is it critiquing?</p>	<p>Interview with God https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=moBvLFbFdJ4 journaling response</p>	<p>Assessment of Learning</p>
	<p>Finding Out</p>	<p><i>For Teachers:</i> <i>Catholics have many ways of learning about God. One of the most important ways is in the Scriptures. In the Old Testament, God is revealed gradually through the experience of people. The Israelites come to know that God is interested in them, loves them and calls them into a relationship. The writers of the Old Testament use many images to describe God. These images have influenced the ways in which many people think about God.</i></p> <p><i>God 'dwells in unapproachable light, whom no one has ever seen or can see' (1 Tim 6:16). Speaking about God is therefore problematic. We are speaking about matters of faith, not of observation. And we are attempting with limited concepts to plumb the infinite. St Augustine said that it is easier to describe what God is not, than to describe God. In our speaking about God, then, we have constantly to be aware of the limitations of our language. Whatever we say is but an image of God, a shadowy reflection that</i></p>		

		<p><i>bears some trace of the reality.</i></p> <p>In the Old Testament a multitude of images is used to portray God and God's relationship with human beings. God is firstly creator -- the creative breath that draws life out of the primeval waters, the creative word that orders the universe - Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 God is lawgiver, instructing humans in the ways that lead to life (Exodus 20). Ultimately God will judge all according to their deeds (1 Samuel 2: 1-11). As we make life's journey, God is there as a shepherd to guide us in safe ways (Psalm 23), and as our avenger of those who do us wrong (Psalm 99). as a protector from harm (Sirach 51), <i>There are tender images.</i> God is the potter who lovingly fashions us as the clay (Sirach 33: 13-14); The mother who cannot forget the child of her womb (Isaiah 49: 15-18); the lover who comes in search of the beloved (Song of Songs 2). <i>There are also other images such as</i> the light and cloud that lead Israel on its exodus (Exodus 13: 17-22), fire that consumes the pleasing sacrifice (1 Kings 18: 36-40) yet does not burn the bush in Moses' presence (Exodus 3: 1-6). <i>Other references that can be used include:</i> Judges 5:4-5 1 Kings 19:11-14 Exodus 19:18-21, Ecclesiastes 11:5 Deuteronomy 28:1-15 Isaiah 0:11,21-22 Isaiah 49:15-16 Jeremiah 18:5-6, 30:17-22; 31:31-37 Amos 7:7-9</p>	<p>Bibles to look up references</p> <p>Genesis 1 and 2 Exodus 20 1 Samuel 2:1-11 Psalm 23 Psalm 99 Sirach 51 Sirach 33:13-14 Isaiah 49:15-18 Song of Songs 2 Exodus 13:17-22 1 Kings 18:36-40 Exodus 3:1-6</p> <p>Judges 5:4-5 1 Kings 19:11-14 Exodus 19:18-21, Ecclesiastes 11:5 Deuteronomy 28:1-15 Isaiah 0:11,21-22 Isaiah 49:15-16 Jeremiah 18:5-6, 30:17-22; 31:31-37 Amos 7:7-9</p>	
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		<p>Personally compare three images presented in three different passages listed above from the Bible. Have students respond to the symbolic images that they get from the text. This could be in the form of journaling or a creative response – art, poetry, music.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the image of God represented in the three texts? • How they are different, how are they similar? <p>Divide the students into small groups and have them select a scripture passage from above and complete a “<i>What’s the Message?</i>” activity to develop a visual and text response to the scriptural passage that illustrates their understanding of the scripture. During the whole class discussions, comparisons are drawn across the passages.</p> <p>Ask students to collect pictures/paintings of images of God from a variety of contexts e.g. Selected contexts to include: Michelangelo’s Vatican Pictures, middle ages, aboriginal, contemporary. Use books with a variety of images from the Joe McCorley Resource centre listed at the end of this unit and in the resoruces column. You can also access art from www.Textweek.com under the Art Index on the home age. Images are also available on the <i>Sieger Koder – art and Inspiration</i> CD that has 36 full colour images for use in schools. Some these images are also available as posters in the Joe McCorley Resource Centre. Other images which can be used: The Creation of the World God the Creator Creation in and through Christ God the Architect Hand of God</p>	<p>Personal creative response.</p> <p>“What’s the Message” activity.</p> <p>www.textweek.com</p> <p>Resources: These resources can be found in the Joe McCorley Resource Centre at DCEO</p> <p>Farrell rsm , M.T (2011) <i>God Among Us Australian Images of Jesus</i> St Paul’s Publications. Strathfield:NSW</p> <p>Mohi. M ed <i>The Many Faces of Christ</i> Addwall Pty ltd Randwick:NSW</p>	<p>Assessment of/for/as learning</p> <p>Assessment of learning</p> <p>Assessment of learning</p>
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		<p><u>Creation</u> <u>Genesis</u> <u>In the beginning</u> Allow students to respond to the following questions by giving their individual interpretation of two of the paintings or artistic interpretations that they chose. Artist: Title: Date: What do you see? What does it look like? What symbols do you see? What colours are there? Why do think it was painted or created?</p> <p>Respond to the following questions: Can you find any clues of the culture, geographical or historical aspect that influenced this painting/image? Compare and contrast the two pieces. Identify the possibilities and limits of the image. What are the benefits and difficulties of this image for an Australian contemporary context?</p> <p>They share their chosen artwork with a larger group and explain how the piece reflects the mystery of God.</p> <p>Watch one of the YouTube clips below:</p> <p>Creation Calls YouTube clip https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwGvfdtI2c0</p> <p>BBC advertisement: https://www.youtube.com/embed/auSo1MyWf8g?rel=0</p>	<p>Delal M.H (2010) <i>Images of God for Young Children</i> Eerdmans Books for Young Readers Grand Rapids: Michigan</p> <p>Girzone J.F (1996) <i>What is God?</i> Harper Collins Religious. Blackburn, Vic.</p> <p>Koder.S <i>Art and Inspiration</i> Pauline Books and Media Middle Green, Slough: England.DVD</p> <p>Personal responses</p> <p>“Creation calls” YouTube clip https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LwGvfdtI2c0</p> <p>BBC advertisement: https://www.youtube.com/embed/auSo1MyWf8g?rel=0</p>	<p>Assessment of learning</p>
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		<p>Use a Think pair share strategy to reflect on a time that they felt connected with the environment around them or a time when they were overwhelmed with the beauty or mystery of an experience. What do you see? What do you think? What do you wonder? What does this say about the mystery of God?</p> <p>Watch 'Where's God" Busted halo You Tube clips No 1 and No 2 clip and use the Think Share and pair strategy to reflect on where they find God in their lives.</p> <p>If possible have students create their own video on IPad reflecting where they find God. a 5min video reflecting their personal space where they find God. Use the <i>Where's God</i> YouTube clips as a model.</p>	<p>Think Pair Share strategy</p> <p>Where's God No 1 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b5-RBIZBtLU</p> <p>Where's God No 2 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QgElwZ60AeI</p> <p>IPad- video or movie maker.</p>	<p>Assessment as Learning</p> <p>Assessment of learning</p>
	<p>Sorting Out</p>	<p><i>Teacher Background-Trinity: see end of Unit</i></p> <p>Students identify the multi-faceted nature of their lives as Daughter/Son, Sibling, Friend Student Aunty/Uncle Niece/Nephew Team member etc.</p> <p>Using analogies such as the 3 states of water – gas, liquid, solid- You can bring in ice and melt it then boil the water to make the steam. Bring in an egg as a symbol of the Trinity- Egg as shell, white and yolk to bring students to an awareness of the Trinitarian relationship of God.</p>	<p>Teacher background.</p> <p>Ice, egg</p>	

Use children's literature to examine an explanation of the Trinity –
3 in 1 A Picture of God

Guided reflection, class discuss the link between ways that we identify ourselves and the ways that we identify

God = Trinity

- Father (creator,)
- Son (word, humanness)
- Spirit (love, guide).

Use the headings,
God and Self.

Under each heading list these subheadings:

Have students individually complete the table to help understanding the multiple attributes of God as Trinity.

Self		God	
Image		Image	
Attributes		Attributes	
Character		Character	
Names		Names	
Personality		Personality	

The following YouTube clips will help with information on Trinitarian theology.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMI4rA4cuiM> – Robert Barron on the Trinity

–St Patrick explains the Trinity and how difficult the theology is for people to understand.

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

Discuss the complexity of the terms and the theology.

How can we simplify our understanding of the Trinity?

Is there an image that will help to show our understandings

Marxhausen,J (1973) *3 in 1 (A picture of God)*. Concordia Publishing House. St Louis:Missouri

Assessment for Learning

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hMI4rA4cuiM> –

Robert Barron on the Trinity Animation on St Patrick's bad analogies of the trinity

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

		<p>Locate some depictions of the Trinity in art books e.g. El Greco's 16th century painting 'The Holy Trinity. http://www.elgreco.net/holy-trinity.jsp#</p> <p>Daniel Bonnell's painting of the Moon, the Dove and the Foot Washer http://iocproject.ning.com/photo/the-moon-the-dove-footwasher?context=latest</p> <p>Rublev's Trinity – use Google images to find a picture of the icon. http://www.soulshpherd.org/2012/08/enjoy-the-hospitality-of-the-trinity-with-rublevs-icon/ This website explains the symbolism of the painting and also includes a meditation on the Icon from Henri Nouwen. A very useful webpage.</p> <p>Students think, compare and reflect on the image(s) portrayed through modern art pieces of the Trinity.</p> <p><i>Optional activity:</i> Songs can also be useful in trying to understand the concept of God and Trinity. <i>Never Too Young</i> have quite a few songs that can be examined and discussed how the composer has portrayed an understanding of God – A list of possible songs and is at the end of this unit. The <i>Never Too Young</i> box set of CDs are available in the Joe McCorley resource Centre. Or online at www.spiritandsong.com</p> <p><i>Understanding the post-resurrection Jesus and Holy Spirit</i> Study synoptic Gospel accounts of the Resurrection (Mk 16:1-8, Mt 28:1-10, Lk 24:1-12).</p>	<p>El Greco's 16th century painting 'The Holy Trinity. http://www.elgreco.net/holy-trinity.jsp#</p> <p>Daniel Bonnell's painting of the Moon, the Dove and the Foot Washer http://iocproject.ning.com/photo/the-moon-the-dove-footwasher?context=latest</p> <p>Rublev's Trinity – use Google images to find a picture of the icon. http://www.soulshpherd.org/2012/08/enjoy-the-hospitality-of-the-trinity-with-rublevs-icon/</p> <p>Think compare and reflect strategy .</p> <p>Songs from <i>Never Too Young</i> CD set.</p> <p>www.spiritandsong.com</p> <p>Bibles (Mk 16:1-8, Mt 28:1-10, Lk 24:1-12).</p>	<p>Assessment for /as learning</p>
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		<p>Using the KITE (Stead, 2000) see detailed explanation at the end of this unit.</p> <p>K – know the text I – Inspire the imagination T – translate to Life E - express the heart.</p> <p>List five common factors found in all three Gospel accounts. List at least five differences in the accounts. List at least three main points that were important to the evangelists and that they all agree on, despite the differences in detail. Students are asked to suggest explanations for similarities and differences. Summarise the responses of disciples to the Resurrection. What was the significance of this event? What is its significance today?</p> <p>Refer to Jn 14:8-17 Philip said to him, 'Lord, show us the Father. Explore ways in which God is revealed through people. For example, when we show care to another we reflect something of the care of God. List what is revealed to us about God through other people.</p> <p>Students design and make a bumper sticker or badge, which reflects what the revelation of God through people means to them.</p>	<p>KITEmethod</p> <p>Bible: Jn 14:8-17</p>	<p>Assessment of learning</p> <p>Assessment of learning</p>
	<p>Communicating</p>	<p>Students create a description or visual representation of an image or metaphor of God that they believe would resonate with contemporary Australian culture and justify their choice based upon previous learning in this Unit.</p> <p>Students read the following statements and record their opinion on one of the statements and the capacity of the ideas expressed in the statements to limit or enhance our understanding of God:</p>	<p>A selection of Images used previously in this unit.</p>	<p>Assessment of learning</p>

		<p><i>Statement No 1</i> <i>"How people image God seems to be central to how they view the world and their level of involvement in social concerns and in society generally. Theologians and sociologists of religion have discovered that those who believe in a God who is immanent, involved in the world and acting through people support action for social justice somewhat more easily than those who experience God as remote, outside the world and lording it over people".</i> http://lb10themysteryofgod.weebly.com/teacher-background.html</p> <p><i>Statement No 2</i> <i>Scripture is full of images of a God who lives in relationship. Our creation as children of God makes us brothers and sisters - this begs the question: is there any such person as a stranger in the Judeo-Christian context? The Israelites, in the Old Testament, understood God's call in a community context as this community understanding was central to their survival. God called people through the political and economic contexts of their day. So it is reasonable to think that they might work this way in our time also. God's intervention is always on behalf of those who are denied justice (the widow, the orphan, the stranger) seeking to bring us back into right relations."</i> http://lb10themysteryofgod.weebly.com/teacher-background.html</p> <p><i>Statement No 3"</i> <i>"As Christians, we believe that we bear the image and likeness of God inside of us and that this is our deepest reality. We are made in God's image. However we tend to picture this in a naive, romantic, and pious way. We imagine that somewhere inside us there is a beautiful icon of God stamped into our souls. That may well be, but God, as scripture assures us, is more than an icon. God is fire - wild, infinite, ineffable, non-containable".</i> <i>Ron Rolheiser</i></p>	<p>Statements on God</p>	<p>Assessment of learning</p>
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	Evaluating and Reflecting	<p>What was your favourite learning experience in this unit and why? Do you usually enjoy this type of learning experience?</p> <p>What was your least favourite learning experience and why? So you usually find this type of learning experience challenging?</p> <p>How did your understanding of the unit's subject matter change throughout the unit?</p> <p>Was anything you learned particularly interesting? Why?</p> <p>Write any other observations you have.</p>	Assessment as learning
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Catechism of the Catholic Church

40 Since our knowledge of God is limited, our language about him is equally so. We can name God only by taking creatures as our starting point, and in accordance with our limited human ways of knowing and thinking.

41 All creatures bear a certain resemblance to God, most especially man, created in the image and likeness of God. The manifold perfections of creatures - their truth, their goodness, their beauty all reflect the infinite perfection of God. Consequently we can name God by taking his creatures' perfections as our starting point, "for from the greatness and beauty of created things comes a corresponding perception of their Creator".¹⁵

42 God transcends all creatures. We must therefore continually purify our language of everything in it that is limited, image-bound or imperfect, if we are not to confuse our image of God--"the inexpressible, the incomprehensible, the invisible, the ungraspable"--with our human representations.¹⁶ Our human words always fall short of the mystery of God.

43 Admittedly, in speaking about God like this, our language is using human modes of expression; nevertheless it really does attain to God himself, though unable to express him in his infinite simplicity. Likewise, we must recall that "between Creator and creature no similitude can be expressed without implying an even greater dissimilitude";¹⁷ and that "concerning God, we cannot grasp what he is, but only what he is not, and how other beings stand in relation to him."¹⁸

1147: God speaks to humankind through the visible creation. The material cosmos is so presented to human intelligence that a person can read there traces of its Creator. Light and darkness, wind and fire, water and earth, the tree and its fruit speak of God and symbolize both God's greatness and God's nearness.

1878: All people are called to the same end: to God. There is certain resemblance between the unity of the divine persons and the brother and sisterhood that people are to establish among themselves in truth and love. Love of neighbour is inseparable from love for God.

Resources

Songs:

- Matt Maher- Resurrection Day
<http://www.spiritandsong.com/articles/series/14086/current>
- Bernadette Farrell - God of Abraham
<http://www.ocp.org/compositions/7775>
- Chris Tomlin, Jesse Reeves, Ed Cash – How Great is our God
<http://www.spiritandsong.com/compositions/77994>
- Trevor Thomson - Send Your Glory Down
<http://www.spiritandsong.com/compositions/83114>
- Tom Booth – Awesome God
<http://www.ocp.org/compositions/30926>
- Matt Redmand & Beth Redman – Blessed be your Name
<http://www.ocp.org/compositions/66850>
- Never Too Young: Spirit & Song for Young People – list of songs available on the Never Too Young CD collection. This resource is in the Joe McCorley resource Centre at DCEO.
<http://www.ocp.org/products/20344#tab:contents>

Books: These books can be found in the Joe McCorley Resource Centre at DCEO

- Farrell rsm , M.T (2011) *God Among Us Australian Images of Jesus* St Paul's Publications. Strathfield:NSW
- Mohi. M ed *The Many Faces of Christ* Addwall Pty Ltd Randwick:NSW
- Delal M.H (2010) *Images of God for Young Children* Eerdmans Books for Young Readers Grand Rapids: Michigan
- Girzone J.F (1996) *What is God?* Harper Collins Religious. Blackburn, Vic.
- Koder.S *Art and Inspiration* Pauline Books and Media Middle Green, Slough: England.DVD

DVD's

- Chasing God DVD <http://www.chasinggod.net/index.php>
- Oh My God - a film by Peter Rodger www.OMGmovie.com
- Sieger Koder – art and inspiration
 - 36 full colour images

Teacher Background Information

Twelve ways of Knowing God <http://www.peterkreeft.com/topics/12-ways.htm>

Jesus defines eternal life as knowing God (Jn 17:3).

What are the ways?

In how many different ways can we know God, and thus know eternal life?

When I take an inventory, I find twelve.

1. The final, complete, definitive way, of course, is **Christ**, God himself in human flesh.
2. His **church** is his body, so we know God also through the church.
3. The **Scriptures** are the church's book. This book, like Christ himself, is called "The Word of God."
4. Scripture also says we can know God in **nature** see Romans 1. This is an innate, spontaneous, natural knowledge. I think no one who lives by the sea, or by a little river, can be an atheist.
5. **Art** also reveals God. I know three ex-atheists who say, "There is the music of Bach, therefore there must be a God." This too is immediate.
6. **Conscience** is the voice of God. It speaks absolutely, with no ifs, ands, or buts. This too is immediate. [The last three ways of knowing God (4-6) are natural, while the first three are supernatural. The last three reveal three attributes of God, the three things the human spirit wants most: truth, beauty, and goodness. God has filled his creation with these three things. Here are six more ways in which we can and do know God.]
7. **Reason**, reflecting on nature, art, or conscience, can know God by good philosophical arguments.
8. **Experience**, life, your story, can also reveal God. You can see the hand of Providence there.
9. The **collective experience** of the race, embodied in history and tradition, expressed in literature, also reveals God. You can know God through others' stories, through great literature.
10. The **saints** reveal God. They are advertisements, mirrors, little Christs. They are perhaps the most effective of all means of convincing and converting people.
11. Our ordinary daily experience of **doing God's will** will reveal God. God becomes clearer to see when the eye of the heart is purified: "Blessed are the pure of heart, for they shall see God."
12. **Prayer** meets God—ordinary prayer. You learn more of God from a few minutes of prayerful repentance than through a lifetime in a library.

Teacher Background on the Trinity

I once heard a well-known theologian wryly observe that grasping Trinitarian language is not too difficult... once you realize that 'one' and 'three' aren't numbers in a sequence (but rather ways of speaking of a singularity embracing beyond the merely numerical); that 'persons' in the Trinity are not human persons (the Greek means something like dramaturgical 'masks' or 'appearances', and was deliberately chosen to *avoid* what we now denote by 'personalness'); and that 'substance' applied to God doesn't mean 'stuff' (but true essence beyond our knowledge of 'thingness')!

In other words, Trinitarian doctrine is not trying to *describe* God as you would a person or an object. But nor is it simply a mirror held up to our nice ideas about God. Instead it refers to what we can know *by participation*, rather than 'forensic examination' or speculation, about the life and affection of God encountered through the excess of the world, the unrestrained humanity of Jesus, the limitless donation of the Spirit, and the outstretched community of the church. It is therefore about image and relation, not some silly empirical claim to see into the very core of God when, frankly, most of us couldn't claim to have much of a clue about what makes our spouse or neighbour's cat tick – let alone the giver of the universe!

All of which brings us to that remarkable and famous icon about the Trinity painted around 1410 by Andrei Rublev. If we are swimming intellectually, this image will, I hope, begin to make what is being said more approachable. First, let's be clear, this *isn't* (as the untrained modern eye might assume), a representation of 'God in three figures' - a sort of celestial tea-party. Absolutely *not*. An icon is something to look *through*, not *at*. You need to go beyond the immediate appearance to 'see' what is 'hidden within and beyond it', so to speak. In this case, the three gold-winged figures are the visitors encountered by Abraham as he camps by the oak of Mamre. As he talks with them he finds himself mysteriously in conversation with God through being drawn into their curious communion, symbolized by the chalice. This only works if the picture, like the doctrine, is *figurative* – the opposite of what our modern minds fear, thank God, which is naive 'literalness'.

The life of God is seen by looking at what is happening *between* these figures, not by objectifying them or substituting one or more of them for God. In particular, as Rowan Williams has pointed out, God's life is envisioned (rather than pinned-down) in the mutual, non-competitive and continual loving gaze of each toward the face of the other, creating a perfectly free unity of *relations* – rather than a homogeneity of 'things' or 'stuff'. To appreciate this is to receive divinity as beauty in prayer, and to find in that beauty a loving dependence on the indwelling, expanding love of God. Such a tiny glimpse of divine possibility is then strengthened by living, serving and praying together – seeking to see and respond to more of what God goes on giving as we enter *a shared life-journey of transformation*.

This, then, is the 'Trinitarian' task of the church, according to St Paul in Romans. Not to create abstract formulas about God, but to allow the language that flows from Christian encounter with God to remind and teach us so to live, labour and long that the Creator who brings life to the world, the Christ who brings peace and the Spirit who brings love may be understood more and more as the true source and goal of our

flourishing. As Jesus declares in John 15. 26-27: "The Advocate..., the Spirit of truth who comes from the Father, will testify on my behalf. You also are to testify because you have been with me from the beginning" (John 16. 12-15).

This leads to two final remarks. Jesus calls God Father. And in Matthew's Gospel (23.9) he tells us to call no-one else on earth 'father', not *even* our biological fathers. In Jesus' day, we need to understand, fatherhood alone was seen as being able to donate the seed of life. These days that biological assumption is not sustainable, but that's what it means in the symbolic, participative language of the New Testament. As several women scholars point out, by removing 'fatherhood' (loving generativity) from the exclusive preserve and control of men, and preserving it in God alone, it is transformed, and so invites us to transformation beyond the limits of biology and culture - including an adoption of the variety of gendered and non-gendered images of God made available to us in the Bible and after.

A similar transfiguration takes place with the Spirit's falling upon all kinds of foreigners and weirdos at Pentecost and elsewhere - from which we deduce that the God who is spoken of as Trinity is not restricted to Christian propriety, just as Jesus did not build a church but a Beatitude community, and the Fatherliness of God is universal before it is particular (as the prologue to St John makes plain).

In Trinitarian Christianity, then, we have a unique language which holds plurality to be integral to God's universal purpose, expressed in the particularity of Jesus and multiplied as life in the Spirit. The Christian hope in seeking God's realm and will is that those who taste this abundant, divine life will be strengthened to develop and share it as widely as possible. For *"We have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ... We rejoice in the hope of the glory of God... And hope does not disappoint us, because God's love is poured out into our hearts by the Holy Spirit."* (Romans 5. 1a, 2b and 5a)

NOTES

[1] Adapted from a sermon preached at St Mary Arches, [Central Parish of Exeter](#), on 3 June 2007. Texts: Proverbs 8:1-4, 22-31; Psalm 8; Romans 5:1-5; John 16:12-15.

[2] A correspondent, David Ardagh-Walter, asked me for a *really* simple summary. I think I'd say "God ahead of us, God for us, and God between us", developing a catechetical phrase attributed to St Basil the Great... but trying not to get caught in what is now the metaphysical trap of 'before', 'beyond' and 'within'.

If God is One, who is Jesus?

Faith in the Trinity: God, Father, Son and Spirit emerged from the struggle to understand who Jesus really was and the nature of his relationship to the God of Israel. Christians inherited the Jewish conviction that God is one, holy and transcendent and yet they experienced Jesus doing for them what only God could do:

- forgiving sin,
- casting out evil,
- healing the sick,
- bringing the dead to life
- speaking with authority
- conquering death

The gospels and the letters of the New Testament speak of the 'Father', the 'Son' and the 'Spirit' yet we cannot separate the persons of the Trinity as if they were individuals. Words are inadequate to explain the mystery of the One God who is Three but what the mystery of the Trinity is trying to express is the truth that God's very life is a **relationship** of self-giving love and joy. In the Spirit the Father gives all to the Son who in turn returns all to the Father. This Spirit is breathed into his followers by Jesus and poured out on the Church at Pentecost. It is the Spirit which enables us to recognise Jesus and to call God Father and be drawn into relationship with them. If it were not for the Trinity, humanity would be forever excluded from the life of God.

Simon Barrow, an English theologian, expresses it like this (quoted from *Three Ways to make sense of One God*):

"The life of God is the origin and destiny of the whole universe. But that alone is not enough. (God is too remote and untouchable.)

So God is also the transforming life we see in Jesus. But that is not enough. (Jesus' life and death can only touch those who know of him.)

So God is also given as the Holy Spirit, as the transformative possibility of God between human beings, between us and creation, and between us and the God who comes to us in Jesus."

<http://www.eklesia.co.uk/node/5312>

What's the Message strategy?

What 's the message provides students with a guided process to unravel and critically reflect on the deeper meaning behind a particular scripture passage.

Questions that can be used

1. Who are the main characters in the story?
2. What is the story's setting?
 - a. Time of day?
 - b. Day of week?
 - c. What time was it happening?
3. Are there any particular cultural issues relevant to this story?
4. Were there any related stories that happened just before or after this story? If so, what were they?
5. Are there any repeated words or phrases that give extra emphasis or meaning to the story? If so, what are they?
6. Were there any symbols or images in the=is passage that occurred elsewhere in this Scriptures?
7. Considering the people and culture of this time, what would be the significance /impact of this story?
8. Does scripture writer have a particular message or theme with this story form the bible?
9. What are your thoughts and feelings about what happens in this story?
- 10.If you heard this story again in the future what image of thought would come back to you

Kite Method of understanding scripture

Know the text:		
The Setting: Where does it take place? When does it take place? What is the significance of time and place to the story?	The Characters: Who is in the story? How are they described? What emotions do they reveal? Who is the main character? Who initiates the action? Which characters interact with one another?	The Context: Where is this story? How does this passage answer questions previously raised in the Gospel? What new questions does it raise? What is its relationship to the passages immediately before and after it? How is it related to the Hebrew Scriptures?
The Structure: Are there any patterns or parallels in the story? Is there any repetition of words, phrases or questions? What is their significance Is there a parallel in another Gospel?	The Speech: Who speaks in the story? What is said? Why is it said? Who initiates the speech? What is the form of the speech (e.g. prayer, question, statement, petition)? What titles are used?	The Customs: What social groups are represented in the story? What is said about women?
Inspire the imagination: I wonder ... , Imagine ... , Pretend ... , Create..., Dramatise...		
Translate to life: Make connections between the Scripture story and child's own life story.		
Express the heart: Pray the Scriptures and discover the Scriptures as a source of prayer.		

Statements on God

Statement No 1

"How people image God seems to be central to how they view the world and their level of involvement in social concerns and in society generally. Theologians and sociologists of religion have discovered that those who believe in a God who is immanent, involved in the world and acting through people support action for social justice somewhat more easily than those who experience God as remote, outside the world and lording it over people..."

<http://lb10themysteryofgod.weebly.com/teacher-background.html>

Statement No 2

Scripture is full of images of a God who lives in relationship. Our creation as children of God makes us brothers and sisters - this begs the question: is there any such person as a stranger in the Judeo-Christian context? The Israelites, in the Old Testament, understood God's call in a community context as this community understanding was central to their survival. God called people through the political and economic contexts of their day. So it is reasonable to think that they might work this way in our time also. God's intervention is always on behalf of those who are denied justice (the widow, the orphan, the stranger) seeking to bring us back into right relations."

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Statement No 3

"As Christians, we believe that we bear the image and likeness of God inside of us and that this is our deepest reality. We are made in God's image. However we tend to picture this in a naive, romantic, and pious way. We imagine that somewhere inside us there is a beautiful icon of God stamped into our souls. That may well be, but God, as scripture assures us, is more than an icon. God is fire - wild, infinite, ineffable, non-containable".

Ron Rolheiser