

The Church Lives the Word of the Lord

In this unit students explore the Old and New Testaments and learn how story is used in the Bible to teach God's message. They will examine part of the Exodus story from the Old Testament and the Parable of the Sower from Matthew's Gospel, and reflect on the meanings of these for their own lives. Students interpret a parable and present their understanding to the school community. At the end of the unit a group of students prepare a Liturgy of the Word to be celebrated by the class.

DOCTRINAL FOCUS

In planning to teach this unit the following references from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church are recommended:

#121 The Old Testament is an indispensable part of Sacred Scripture. Its books are divinely inspired and retain a permanent value, for the Old Covenant has never been revoked.

(See *Compendium #21 What is the importance of the Old Testament for Christians?*)

#125 The gospels are the heart of all the Scriptures 'because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Saviour'.

(See *Compendium #22 What importance does the New Testament have for Christians?*)

#112 Be especially attentive 'to the content and unity of the whole Scripture'. Different as the books which compose it may be, Scripture is a unity by reason of the unity of God's plan, of which Christ Jesus is the centre and heart.

(See *Compendium #23 What is the unity that exists between the Old and the New Testaments?*)

#133 The Church forcefully and specifically exhorts all the Christian faithful ... to learn the surpassing knowledge of Jesus Christ by frequent reading of the divine Scriptures. Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.

(See *Compendium #24 What role does Scripture play in the life of the Church?*)

#131 'And such is the force and power of the Word of God that it can serve the Church as her support and vigour, and the children of the Church as strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting fount of spiritual life'. Hence 'access to Sacred Scripture ought to be open wide to the Christian faithful'.

(See *Compendium #558 What are the sources of Christian prayer?*)

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

The Old Testament has many images of God that reflect how Israel related to God. What images of God are a source of inspiration or comfort to you? Are there images of God in the Old Testament that you cannot relate to? Why? What might these images tell us about the relationship between God and Israel at the time of their writing?

Each of the four gospels presents a unique portrait of Jesus Christ. Which gospel do you especially resonate with? What portrayals or stories of Jesus Christ inspire or comfort you?

Your word is a light to my eyes and a lamp to my feet (Ps 119: 105; cf. Is 50: 4). What place does prayer and reflection with Scripture have in your own life and in the life of the school? Are there ways that pondering Scripture can influence the decisions that a school makes and the directions it takes?

LINKS WITH STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

Remembering, celebrating, listening and learning are important aspects of one's personal story, and also of those we find in the Bible. Students love to share stories of their experiences. They need time to reflect in order to make links between their own stories and those of the Church.

Students are beginning to understand that God is revealed through their own life experience and through stories in the Bible. *How can students make links between the stories of their own lives and those found in the Bible?*

Students appreciate the positive relationships in their lives which give them a sense of love, companionship and security. *How can students best explore Scripture stories that reflect God's loving relationship with his people?*

EXPLANATION OF SCRIPTURE

Ex 16: 1–17

This is a story of God testing the people in the wilderness. God put the people in a position where they would need to show their allegiance to him. All the tests in the wilderness concern either food or drink for the people under Moses' authority. God would not abandon his chosen people – he loved them.

Manna is the name for the bread from heaven. Manna is honey-like droppings from the tamarisk tree of Palestine and Sinai, which the Bedouin people of the Sinai desert call *mann*. The droppings from the tamarisk tree are secretions from two kinds of scale lice, which suck large quantities of liquid from the twigs in spring in order to collect nitrogen for their grubs. It contains glucose and fructose but no protein, and cannot be harvested in quantity. The Bible portrays manna as miraculous – it does not happen every day.

The quail is a small migratory bird, brown or sandy in colour. It comes to Palestine and Sinai in March or April in great flocks, following the wind. If the wind shifts, the entire flock may be forced to land, and because they are exhausted they are easily caught.

Mt 13: 4–9 The Parable of the Sower

As is typical with the parables told by Jesus, the sower parable is taken from the everyday life that the audience would have understood. In Palestine at the time of Jesus the sower would have sowed the seed in quite a casual fashion. It would not all land in good soil. Some might land in good soil, some on the path and some amongst the thorns. Jesus Christ sows the Word of the Kingdom in a way that also seems quite casual. When the seed finds a receptive heart, the way is set for the arrival of the kingdom in the fullness described. This is how the Church would grow with the

readiness of people to receive the word, presupposing the repentance called for as part of the proclamation of that word (Mt 4: 17).

POSSIBILITIES FOR PRAYER AND WORSHIP

- Highlight the place of the word throughout this unit. Set the Bible on a bookstand with a candle on either side and mark the pages with a wide, colourful ribbon. Invite the class to choose phrases from Psalm 119 that describe God's word. Decorate the space with these phrases. At intervals, take one of the phrases and use it as a response for prayer, a mantra for meditation or as an antiphon for a gospel acclamation.
- Give students the opportunity to plan and lead a class prayer around the theme of the Church living the word of God. Identify people who have put God's word into action. Choose scripture passages which express God's call to action. Students may wish to use images, song, mime or guided meditation to accompany their reflection.
- Choose a scripture reading suitable for this unit, e.g. The Parable of the Sower (Mt 13: 4–9). Use a gospel acclamation as a response to the reading and song. Hymns suitable for this unit include: 'Bring Forth the Kingdom' (Marty Haugen, *Song of God Among Us*, GIA Publications); 'Feed Us With Your Word' and 'Alleluia, We Will Listen' (Paul Inwood, *Children At Heart*, OCP Publications); 'Listen To Jesus' (Bernadette Farrell, *Share the Light*, OCP Publications); 'Hearts On Fire' (Michael Mangan, *Setting Hearts On Fire*, Litmus Productions).

Related Chapters – *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 3: Chapter 6, The Church Lives the Word of God.

Faith concepts: church, story, revelation, relationship.

Seeking understanding:

What do we learn about God and God’s people in the Bible?

What do we learn about Jesus Christ and the early Christian community in the Bible?

Why is it important to read the Scriptures?

How do people live the word of God today?

Understandings:

Scripture is one important way that we can come to know God, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit and the story of God’s people.

The Old Testament tells us about God’s love for the Chosen People.

The New Testament tells us about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ and the growth of the early Church.

People can be inspired to live the Word of God when they read, think about and pray the Scriptures.

People can live the Word of God through the things they think, say and do.

Scripture Text: Mt 13: 4–9 The Parable of the Sower; Ex 16: 1–17.

Unit specific learning:

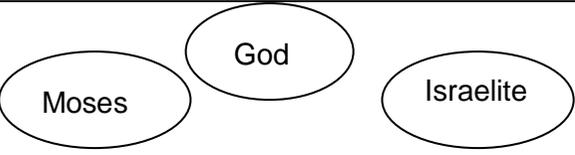
Students will learn about	Students will learn to	Students will undertake to
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Reasoning & Responding</i>	<i>Personal & Communal Engagement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The purpose of the Bible.• The differences between the Old Testament and the New Testament.• Significant people, places, events and stories in the Bible.• Ways to interpret the teaching in a parable.• Ways to live the Word of God today	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Make connections between their own lives and the teachings in Scripture.• Represent their ideas and thinking about characters and teachings in Scripture.• Identify people from the Bible and from their own lives who live the Word of God.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plan, lead and celebrate a Liturgy of the Word.

PHASES OF STUDENT INQUIRY

Additional Reading for Teachers	Orientation to Inquiry	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning
<p>A person's story is a significant way of defining identity. Telling our story, or the story of our family, is a way of discovering who we are. Stories are a way of initiating us into our community.</p> <p>The God of Israel is revealed in Israel's history and story, just as God is revealed to Christians in the person and story of Jesus Christ. For Catholic Christians this means knowing the story of our traditions, and experiencing God's continuing presence among us through the Scriptures.</p> <p>The Old Testament is sometimes called the Hebrew Scriptures. All the books of the Old Testament were written in Hebrew <i>before</i> the time of Jesus Christ. In these writings we find the revelation of God to the people of</p>	<p><i>What do students already know, think or feel in relation to the topic? What are students' questions about the topic? What experiences and reflections can we offer students to become engaged with the topic?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story Time! Begin by reading a storybook to tune the students in to the concept of stories and the messages contained in them. After reading, discuss the story, highlighting what they learned from this story and why they enjoyed it. Questions could be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What was a part of this story you enjoyed? – Why did you enjoy this? – Was there a part of this story that you felt was telling you a message? – Who was a character in this story you liked? – Why did you like this character? <p>Students bring in their favourite storybook and make a display. Students may be timetabled to read their book to the class during the course of this unit. As books are read, a poster with the name of the book and major themes/ideas is made and displayed.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible Stories! Students are asked to make a written or pictorial list of their favourite Bible stories. Collate class list placing Old Testament stories on one poster and New Testament stories on 	

<p>Israel.</p> <p>The books and letters of the New Testament were written in Greek by the early Christians <i>after</i> the time of Jesus Christ. In these writings we find the revelation of God to <i>all</i> people, in Jesus Christ.</p>	<p>another poster. At the end students come up with reasons the stories have been separated.</p> <p>At this stage the Bible becomes a central focus for the class prayer table.</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • KWL Chart Use a KWL chart to find out: What they Know about the Bible. What they want to find out about the Bible. As the unit progresses students fill in the L column as they make new Learnings. Questions from the W are displayed. The teacher may include some of these questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What’s in the Bible? (Parables/Scripture) – Who wrote the Bible? – Why is there an Old and New Testament? 	<p>Assessment for Learning This KWL Chart will indicate students’ prior knowledge and experience of the Bible.</p>
<p>Additional Reading for Teachers</p>	<p>Development <i>What experiences and religious texts will provide new learning for students? What skills will students need in order to work with these resources? What strategies and tools will enable students to think and reflect on these experiences and texts? How will students process their thinking and learning?</i></p>	<p>Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who Am I?/What Am I? Students write clues for people and events from the Bible as they learn about them. These are placed into a special box and students share them at appropriate times. <p>This activity is commenced and carried on throughout the unit as the children increase</p>	

	<p>their knowledge of Bible characters and places. It will be revisited in the synthesis phase of the unit.</p>							
<p>The Exodus story is central to the Old Testament. The word <i>exodus</i> means departure or exit. It refers to the escape of the Hebrew people, under the leadership of Moses, from slavery in Egypt. It is a story about God's protection and love. The Exodus story marks the beginning of the people of Israel.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring the Old Testament: The Exodus Story Immerse students in the Exodus story (from Ex 13 to Ex 20: 22) using a variety of media. These can include video/DVD, cartoon Old Testament stories, serial reading, <i>Children's Illustrated Bible</i>. 							
<p>The word covenant is a key word in the Old Testament. It means a solemn and binding agreement between two parties. God made a covenant with the people of Israel. God promised to be faithful and to protect the Chosen People and, in turn, they promised to be faithful to God by living with pure hearts and keeping God's laws.</p> <p>The Old Testament teaches that the Israelites are the chosen people of God. At the heart of their faith was the understanding that they had been chosen by God, out of all the people on the earth, to have a special relationship with God.</p> <p>The teaching of Jesus Christ, and that of the early Christians, emphasised that God does not have favourites, that God's saving love is offered to <i>all</i> people.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sorting Activity Teacher prepares cards with statements about the part of the Exodus story studied, e.g. escaped from Egypt; crossed the Red Sea; led the Exodus; complained about food; talked to Moses; provided for their needs. Students are put into groups and they sort cards under the following headings: <table border="1" data-bbox="819 954 1527 1093"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="819 954 1055 991">God</th> <th data-bbox="1055 954 1290 991">Moses</th> <th data-bbox="1290 954 1527 991">Israelites</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="819 991 1055 1093"></td> <td data-bbox="1055 991 1290 1093"></td> <td data-bbox="1290 991 1527 1093"></td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>At the end of the activity each group presents their findings and justifies their placement of statements.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concept Map Using a concept map students explore the relationships between God, the Israelites and Moses. Students write comments along the lines to define relationships. 	God	Moses	Israelites				<p>Assessment as Learning This sorting activity will indicate students' knowledge and understanding of the characters and the events of the Exodus story.</p> <p>Assessment as Learning The concept map will indicate the students' understanding of the relationship between the characters in the Exodus story.</p>
God	Moses	Israelites						

		
<p>The word parable comes from the Greek <i>parabole</i> meaning a comparison or wise saying. In the gospels a parable is a saying or story of Jesus Christ that illustrates a</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walk in Moses' Shoes Students reflect on the significance of the Exodus experience by considering it from Moses' perspective. They retell the whole experience or an episode in the first person, as if they were Moses. Students choose the mode of presentation either individually or in small groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Rap chant – Letter/email written to Moses' parents, to the Israelites or to God – Dramatisation – Set of digital photos as if taken by Moses about times during the Exodus that were important to him. • From Old to New <i>KWL</i>, 2nd edn, Year 3, Chapter 6, pp. 46–47. Read through the material with students, discussing words in bold. Students compare material in the text with the questions on the KWL chart. Add to the chart where appropriate. • Exploring the New Testament: Understanding Parables Read parables to the class through a variety of media, e.g. <i>KWL Big books</i>, <i>Children's Bible</i>. 	<p>Assessment of Learning This task will demonstrate how students identify with a biblical character and how they relate it to their own ideas, beliefs and perceptions.</p>

teaching. More than half of Jesus' teaching was done through parables. He used the ordinary things of people's everyday lives, e.g. seeds, salt, wheat, to portray the Kingdom of God.

Because a parable is a literary form we can usually find certain characteristics. In parables there are four such characteristics. These are:

Repetition: This helps to imprint the story on the minds of the audience (we keep hearing where the seeds fell);

Contrast: When opposites and contrasts are used they help to throw elements of a story into sharp relief (the seeds fell in different areas);

Folkloric Threesome: Storytellers throughout the ages have discovered and preserved the importance of three in a tale, be it three incidents, three characters or three events. In many nursery rhymes and fairy tales we have three characters. Think of the parable of The Good Samaritan that features 1) a priest, 2) a Levite and 3) a Samaritan. Usually, the third character is either a contrast to or a strong affirmation of the other two;

Rule of End Stress: There is often an emphasis, climax or concentration of attention directed to the last character in the story ('let anyone with ears, listen').

For an explanation of the Parable of the Sower see Mt 13: 4–9.

Use 'The Parable of the Sower' (Mt 13: 4–9) as a model for unpacking the message in a parable. Ask students to identify the characteristics of a parable (see the information in the adjoining column).

Students create a pictorial story map of the parable. They put post-it notes on the map to highlight where/if there is repetition in the parable; where/if there are opposites; and where/if there is a folkloric threesome.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fold-Out Book Strategy: Retell The Parable of the Sower Students make a fold-out book with different sections for the parable. On each fold students write an episode in the parable that is significant. Draw a picture in the next fold and give the meaning of God's word in the next fold. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Message of a Parable Students select from a list of parables and work in groups to prepare a 'Liquid Picture', 'Echo mime', or 'Reader's Theatre' of the story. Students present to the class the chosen drama and include the message of the parable. Teachers may need to work with students to clarify the message in the parables. 	<p>Assessment of Learning This task will indicate students' ability to interpret meanings in a parable.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Cube Strategy Students choose a person who has lived or does live the Word of God. They make a 3D cube, and on each face of the cube they: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – write the person's name – draw a picture of this person – list the qualities of this person – write down something this person has done – write/draw someone this person has helped – write/draw a way the student can be like this person. 	
Additional Reading for Teachers	SYNTHESIS <i>How will students demonstrate their understandings, beliefs, values, skills and feelings in relation to the topic? How will students take action based on their learning? What strategies and tools will</i>	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning

<i>enable students to discern their action, to plan and implement action and to evaluate their action?</i>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate Their Learnings Students choose a parable to demonstrate how it applies to their lives. Students can complete a multi-media presentation, visual artwork, talk or posters to be shared at Assembly, etc. 	<p>Assessment of Learning This task will demonstrate how students relate the teachings of parables to their own lives.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who Am I?/What Am I? Students write clues for people and events from the Bible as they learn about them. These are placed into a special box and students share them at appropriate times. They can be added to during the course of this unit. Students are also encouraged to include known people who they feel live the Word of God today. Students read and try to solve these at this stage. • The Great Bible Trivia Quest Using all the information gained during this unit, run a trivia quest at the end. • Liturgy of the Word Invite a group of students to plan a Liturgy of the Word that will be celebrated with classmates. Highlight how the Old and New Testaments are used in the 1st and 2nd readings, the psalm and the gospel. Invite the group to lead the class in this celebration of the Word of God. 	

RESOURCES

To Know, Worship and Love, 2nd Edition

Year 3: Chapter 6, The Church Lives the Word of God.

Teacher Resources

Ryan, M 2001, *Teaching the Bible*, Social Science Press, Katoomba, NSW.

O'Brien, K & White, D 2001, *The Thinking Platform*, KD Publications, NSW.

Elliot, M, *A to Z Learning Strategies*, Catholic Education Centre, Brisbane.

Blythe, C, Moffat, S & Murray, T 2005, *Parables of the Kingdom*, Catholic Archdiocese of Melbourne, Victoria.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS

This unit may be used to assess some of the Level 3 standards.

Students identify with biblical characters and people in the past and present Church by making inferences about their actions, feelings and motives. Students collaboratively plan liturgy using appropriate symbols, words and actions, following a given liturgical form.