Level: 1
Title: I AM SPECIAL, SO ARE YOU

CHRISTIAN LIFE: The flourishing of human persons, the common good of societies, shared responsibility in relation to creation.

Suggested Duration: 6 weeks

Unit Focus
In this unit students will explore and express their unique identity. They will be asked to identify their talents and gifts, to rejoice in their individuality, and to thank God for the life given to each of them. Students will develop a sense of respect, wonder and an appreciation of diversity.

Level Outcome
By the end of Level Two the students should be able to:

Explore ways that Christians in their lives express love for God, self and others.

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

1. Identify the gifts and talents God has given them
2. Express thanks to God for their life and uniqueness
3. Recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others
4. Describe how their actions affect others

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRAND</th>
<th>DOCTRINAL CONCEPTS</th>
<th>CATECHISM REFERENCE</th>
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<td>God</td>
<td>1. God is loving creator and continues to give life.</td>
<td>239, 337, 338</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2. God loves each of us.</td>
<td>219, 733</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5. God invites us to respond in love.</td>
<td>2196, 2822</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Life</td>
<td>1. I am precious, unique and loved by God.</td>
<td>27</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. God invites me to love and care for myself and for others</td>
<td>27, 2822</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. My choices and actions affect myself and others.</td>
<td>1970</td>
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Key Understandings for Students

- I am special and unique.
- God loves me.
- I am part of God’s creation.
- We are created in God’s image.
- Each of us is uniquely gifted and talented.
- Jesus loves each of us in a special and unique way.
- God created us to grow in love of God, self and others.
- We can experience God’s love in the love we receive from our parents, families and others.
Curriculum Links - VELS

Victorian Essential Learning Standards

The unit *I am Special So Are You* can be used to assess aspects of VELS. The table below gives an example of how Level 1 standards could be assessed.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Key elements of Standards Students</th>
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| Physical, Personal and     | Interpersonal Development       | Building Social Relationships| "Students identify the qualities of a friend and demonstrate care for other students. They contribute to the development of positive social relationships in a range of contexts. They use appropriate language and actions when dealing with conflict. Students describe basic skills required to work cooperatively in groups."

<table>
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<th>Curriculum Framework Context</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
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<td>I am Special, so are you!</td>
<td>Jesus Helps me to choose.</td>
<td>Reaching Out</td>
<td>Serving Others</td>
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Student Context

Children come to school from a wide range of cultural, religious and social backgrounds. Differences in child-rearing practices, and the variety of child-care and pre-school provisions that families use provide different kinds of learning experiences.

In this period of early childhood, children are led by natural curiosity to engage in a direct hands-on exploration of their world, expressing themselves through talking, drawing, creating, moving and above all, playing. The content and experiences of this unit are closely linked to the development of students in this stage.

Theological Background for Teachers

- Each of us is unique and has received the gift of life from God. We have been created in the image and likeness of God, and are each creative, gifted and talented. We have been graced with intellect, with creativity and with the freedom to use and express these gifts and talents. By using our gifts, talents and creativity, we enhance our own growth and contribute to the community. It is also our responsibility to respect and encourage the giftedness of others.

- God did not create us in isolation. Called by God to become unique and gifted individuals, we are blessed with people who help us to discern our unique identities. We are oriented to relationships with other people, so that we can share our unique giftedness, thereby revealing God's love and goodness.

- God knows us fully and loves us unconditionally.

Scripture

Teacher Reference (NRSV)

**Isa 43:1**
But now thus says the Lord, He who created you O Jacob, he who formed you O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by your name, you are mine.

**Isa 49:15**
Can a woman forget her nursing child. Or show no compassion for the child of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you.

**Ps 139:2**
You know when I sit down and when I rise up: you discern my thoughts from far away.

**Jer 31:3**
The Lord appeared to him from far away I have loved you with an everlasting love. Therefore I have continued my faithfulness to you.
Student Reference (CEV)

**Isa 43:1**
I have called you by your name; now you belong to me.

**Isa 43:4**
To me, you are very dear and I love you. That's why I gave up nations and people to rescue you.

**Ps 139:14**
I praise you because of the wonderful way you created me. Everything you do is marvellous! Of this I have no doubt.

**Eph 2:10a**
God planned for us to do good things and to live as he has always wanted us to live. That's why he sent Christ to make us what we are.

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**Suggested Assessment Tasks**

Assessment tasks for this unit may include:

**Outcome 1** Students identify the gifts and talents God has given them.
- Write and paint an 'I am Special' story.
- Make a collage of a series of pictures that reflect their own gifts and talents.

**Outcome 2** Students express thanks to God for their life and uniqueness.
- After a meditation time students take turns in verbalising their gratitude to God.
- Write a thank you prayer - Thank you God for making me, because...

**Outcome 3** Students recognise similarities and differences between themselves and others
- Label life sized pictures of each student in the class with their own characteristics.
- Each students contributes to a class mural which identifies their gifts and talents and then discuss the similarities and differences of those within the class.

**Outcome 4** Students describe how their actions affect others
- Use role play to predict possible consequences for given actions. Children illustrate consequences if we use our gifts well.

N.B Outcomes 1, 3 and 4 lend themselves to reporting in the dimension of Knowledge and Understanding.

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**Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences**

**Focusing Activity**

Read story eg: “Koala Lou” (Mem Fox) to illustrate how we are special.

OR

Students sit in a circle and take turns to roll a ball to a classmate – saying something positive/giving a compliment about that student

- Isa 43:1 To PREPARE TO HEAR the Word students tell each other their name and make their name using collage materials. Play various name games. Inform students that Isaiah was an Old Testament Prophet

- Isa 43:1 To ENCOUNTER the Word after reading the text, share the story ‘All the places to love’ (MacLachlan, Patricia)

- Isa 43:1 To RESPOND to the Word students learn song ‘I have called you by name’ (Chinn, Andrew. These Hands. [CD])

- Read ‘Guess the baby’ (French, Simon.) and explore whoever you are, everyone is different, everyone is special.

- Make a name display. For example the children write their names on cut out flowers or hand shapes. Display name
shapes so that all names are joined together.

- Story map on story used eg: “Koala Lou” (Fox, Mem.) to show sequence of story and to clarify the special relationships. *(refer to icon in Planning Tool)* Teacher may need to model this.

- EEEKK Children discuss aspects of the story, relate to themselves. Questions like: “When did you feel special?” “What made you feel special?” “Who made you feel special?” “What makes you special?” *(refer to icon in Planning Tool)*

- List the characteristics the children have identified and add to this as the unit progresses.

- Introduce children to Bible and the verse within Ps 139:14. Allow them to dwell on the fact that God made them so wonderfully. Write this enlarged and display on wall, refer to it often and use in prayer.

- Teach a song such as “I am Wonderfully Made” (Miffleton, Jack. *Make a wonderful noise*.[CD]) or “I have called You by Name” (Chinn, Andrew. *These Hands*.[CD]). Make up actions to go with the song, use instruments to add impact.

- Meditation on how wonderfully we are made. Ideas for meditation available in: *You and me God: Prayer themes for guided meditations for children.* (Bretherton, Barbara). or *Prayer strategies: a teacher’s manual.* (Nolen, Beth). or *Moonbeam meditations for children.* (Garth, Maureen).

- Students respond to the meditation, giving them choices as to how they will respond i.e. written, illustration, collage etc.

- Prayer of thanks to God for making them so wonderfully, first class prayer and then children can compose their own. *(A)* Use Ps 139:14 to show how others have prayed their thanks to God over the years. Display prayers – send some home.

- Children bring photos and share something special about themselves at talk time. Continue to add to the list.

- Role play themselves doing something they do well; then extend this by role playing a class member doing something they do well. Read books such as “Max” (Graham, Bob), “Too Loud Lily” (Laguna, Sofie), or “Elmer” (McKee, David) to assist in this activity

- Make a “Book About Me”, include photos, hair/eye colour, height, etc. and some of their gifts and talents. Children share books at home and in class.

- Teach children mantra prayer, eg: “God made me special” “Thank you God for me” *(Ideas for mantras available in “Praying with Children” (Bretherton, Barbara) and “Prayer Strategies”* (Nolen, Beth)

- Make a mural of class members, add thing they do well.

- Teach song: “We are Delightful” (Brown, Monica. *God delights in you: celebrating children’s spirituality*.[CD]) with actions.

- Discuss how people use their special gifts to help others.

- EEEKK: How do other people in my life help me with their special talents? In my family, at school, with my friends? How do I use my special gifts? *(refer to icon in Planning Tool)*

- Present ‘news’ item detailing why they are special.

- Children trace two hands, in one they write/draw how others help them; in the other how they help others.

- Continue using stories to illustrate characters and how they share their special gifts.

- Create class rules which show they care and respect each other.

- Complete the following… ‘I am happy to be me because …’

- Mime a talent they possess, ask the rest of the class to identify the talent being portrayed.

- Form a prayer circle with prayer centre using some symbols from this unit of work. Sing “I am Wonderfully Made”*/We
are Delightful”. Pray Scripture and children’s own prayers. Children pass a symbol around the circle and in turn state: “I am special to God because ….. “. Next time they could say: “I like the way you …”

- Encourage children to acknowledge each others gifts. Make graffiti board with compliments on it that children can say to each other.

- Encourage children to use their gifts to help class mates, and encourage them to ask for help from those whom they know to have a specific gift/talent.

- Make class “yellow pages” e.g: I can draw well / I like to skip / I can write my name / I can do up shoe laces – with list of children’s names under it, use digital camera to take photos of students and list their gifts and talents.

- Introduce children to classroom meetings, where problems are raised and hopefully solved and children are praised by their peers. These can continue on a weekly/fortnightly basis. (McGrath, Helen. “Friendly Classrooms, Friendly Kids”.)

- Create “I’m a little star” with their buddies, write their gift and talent on one side and name on the other, wear these as a badge.

- Revisit the picture book: “I like myself” (Beaumont, Karen), how does the book reflect the scripture passage (Isaiah 43:1) that we have read and discussed, and how does it reflect their lives.

- Discuss how people use their special gifts to help others. Invite a community guest speaker to talk about they use their gifts and talents i.e. this could be someone from the Parish or someone from the wider community.

- Each student makes a star and writes their gift or talent onto it. Stars then are placed in a communal special box to be experienced by others

- At the end of unit, each student awards a gold star to another students in the class and name their gift or talent that they share with others

| Resources |

For resources to support this unit, refer to the online planning tool. For additional resources, refer to the Resource Centre Catalogue: http://www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au and follow links to Resource Centre.