Level: 1

Title: I CAN TALK TO GOD

CHRISTIAN PRAYER: Relationship with God - personal and communal, listening and responding to God’s Spirit.

Suggested Duration: 3 weeks

Unit Focus
In this unit the children will begin to understand different ways of praying. They will experience prayer as a way of talking and listening to God. They will discover that prayer can take many forms, something that they can be involved in at any time and in any place.

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

Understand that prayer is an expression of God’s relationship with each of us and a way of responding to this relationship.

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

1. Make the Sign of the Cross and join in with class formal and informal prayers.
2. Articulate a short prayer to God using their own words.
3. Understand that they can talk to God at any time and in any place.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRAND</th>
<th>DOCTRINAL CONCEPTS</th>
<th>CATECHISM REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scripture</td>
<td>2. The scriptures tell us about God’s love for us and we learn from and pray with them.</td>
<td>125, 126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Prayer</td>
<td>2. I can talk with and listen to God at any time and in any place, in many different ways.</td>
<td>2660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Prayer involves rituals, symbols, celebrations and silence.</td>
<td>2663</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Prayer is a way of thanking and praising God for life and creation.</td>
<td>2637, 2638</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Understandings for Students
- We can pray in many ways and in different places.
- A way to be friends with God is to talk and listen to God.
- When we talk and listen to God we pray.
- All people can pray.

Curriculum Links - VELS

Victorian Essential Learning Standards
The unit I Can Talk To God can be used to assess aspects of VELS. The table below gives an example of how Level 1 standards could be assessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Key elements of Standards Students...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Physical, Personal and Social Learning  
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>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Framework Context</th>
<th>Level 1</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can Talk to God</td>
<td>We Can Pray in Different Ways</td>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Student Context

Children come to school with a wide range of cultural, religious and social backgrounds. Some will have little or no understanding of prayer, others will come from different faith traditions. Most children will have developed a love of story and their lives will have been given structure by routines, which on many occasions have taken on elements of ritual. They will enjoy the elements of ritual associated with prayer such as the Sign of the Cross. They are beginning to learn to separate fantasy from reality and to understand the meaning behind symbols. When a candle is lit to signify God’s presence during prayer time, this should be explained to the children. This will lead to an understanding of symbol and ritual in prayer.

While many children are very self-oriented at this level they begin to have an awareness of the needs of others. Their spontaneous prayer will not only relate to their pets and other personal needs but also to family members who need God’s help in some way. It is important to recognise the children’s tendency to imitate the expressions and behaviour of significant people, especially teachers. This is the time, too, for a strong response to the children’s natural appreciation of rituals and symbols, and their liking for repetitive stories, poems, rhythmic sounds and movements.

Theological Background for Teachers

- “Prayer can be described or approached in innumerable ways. Libraries have been written about the ways of prayer. But one thing is common to most forms of prayer; it is, explicitly or incidentally, a striving for a deeper level of awareness - awareness of myself and of the mystery in which I live. The gospel assures us that the mystery of our life is in the hands of a faithful and loving Father. It may take time and a little practice, but every person has an inbuilt ability to come to this realisation—that is, to pray” (Doherty, 1989.)

- “Prayer is the experience of our relationship with God. It is a mysterious, personal, and sacred experience, never the same. We are all different and God’s relationship with each one is different; God is at the heart of everything. We can be alone and pray or we can be alone and not pray. Prayer is an action of being in touch with God at the heart of our silence or at the heart of our words; at the heart of our solitude or at the heart of our activity. Prayer is a level of awareness.” (Devine, 1988)

- “Prayer is a conversation between hearts. It includes the traditional praise and gratitude, an occasional scream for help, a fervent petition now and then, and some hard-nosed bargaining for a better deal. But it does not stop there. It encompasses the confiding of secrets, the admission of fears, and ecstatic dance. When you start a conversation with ‘Abba’ anything is liable to happen.” (Doherty, 1989.)

- “Through his life, Jesus illustrated his teaching about prayer. He prayed in times of joy and sorrow; before important events and in thanksgiving. He prayed in public and in private, using both vocal prayer and mental prayer. He was drawn to prayer because of his relationship with God.” (Sharing Our Story K-12, CEO Parramatta. 1991. p 250)

Scripture

Teacher Reference (NRSV)

Rom 8: 26-27

Likewise the Spirit helps us in our weakness; for we do not know how to pray as we ought, but that very Spirit intercedes with sighs too deep for words. And God, who searches the heart, knows what is the mind of the Spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of
God.

**Student Reference (CEV)**

**Ps 28:6-7**
I praise you, LORD, for answering my prayers.  
You are my strong shield, and I trust you completely.  
You have helped me, and I will celebrate and thank you in song.

**Mt 6:9-13 Jesus’ Teaching on Prayer**
You should pray like this:  
Our Father in heaven, help us to honour your name.  
Come and set up your kingdom,  
so that everyone on earth will obey you,  
as you are obeyed in heaven.  
Give us our food for today. Forgive us for doing wrong,  
as we forgive others.  
Keep us from being tempted and protect us from evil.

**Lk 1:28 The Annunciation**
The angel greeted Mary and said, “You are truly blessed! The Lord is with you.”

**Lk 1:46-55 Mary’s Song of Praise**
Mary said:  
With all my heart I praise the Lord,  
and I am glad because of God my Saviour.  
He cares for me, his humble servant.  
From now on, all people will say  
God has blessed me.  
God All-Powerful has done great things for me, and his name is holy.  
He always shows mercy to everyone who worshipes him.  
The Lord has used his powerful arm to scatter those who are proud.  
He drags strong rulers from their thrones and puts humble people in places of power.  
God gives the hungry good things to eat, and sends the rich away with nothing.  
He helps his servant Israel and is always merciful to his people.  
The Lord made this promise to our ancestors, to Abraham and his family forever!

---

**Suggested Assessment Tasks**

Assessment tasks for this unit may include:

**Outcome 1** Make the Sign of the Cross and join in with class formal and informal prayers
* Observe whether the child is able to make the Sign of the Cross and whether he/she joins in class prayers.

**Outcome 2** Articulate a short prayer to God using their own words.
* As a response to Psalm 28 ask children to write/speak/draw their own prayer of praise to God.

**Outcome 3** Understand that they can talk to God at any time and in any place
* Ask the children to complete the following statement “I Can talk to God...” Paint or draw 4 or 5 places where they like to talk to or listen to God.

**N.B** All of the above Outcomes lend themselves to reporting in the dimension of Knowledge and Understanding.
Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

Focusing Activity

Refer to a prepared prayer space in the classroom, open the conversation and discuss, what is in this space and why? (eg. Coloured cloth, candle, Bible etc) Why is there a need for a prayer space in the classroom. How and what can we add to this space to make it relevant for our class.

- Break open scripture using the 5Ws what, where, when, who and why
- Lead the children through a guided meditation from one of the suggested resources
- Discuss: Can we talk to God at any time? Can we tell God about anything? List children’s responses on a large sheet of paper.
- Brainstorm places where we can pray to God.
- Ask the children what a prayer is? What are we doing when we pray?
- Make a ‘Y’ chart. What does praying look/sound/feel like? (refer to icon in Planning Tool)
- From magazines children cut out pictures of nature. Paste pictures onto a large sheet of paper to make a poster and write a class Prayer of Praise underneath it.
- Invite buddies to share prayer experiences.
- Make a class prayer book. Children can take it home and write/illustrate a prayer. They are then invited to read it during class prayer the next morning/week.
- Create a prayer space/focus in your classroom. Set up a ritual for daily prayer.
- Allow children to have the opportunity to offer spontaneous prayer.
- Introduce simple formal prayers such as the Sign of the Cross, a Morning Offering, Grace before Meals and Hail Mary
- Introduce singing and movement as forms of prayer as well as the concept of silent prayer. (Refer Music Resources). N.B. Refer to Expression Book 1 p.41-42
- Make a KW L chart – relating to prayer. (Teaching Resources Book, p.21)
- Learn to finger spell AMEN using Auslan signs (Expressions 1)
- Cut out pictures activity (Expressions 1, p.33)
- Explore prayer through art, music, drama and meditation
- Invite parents, families etc to a Prayer service which includes some of the different forms of prayer studied during this unit. Children could organise the setting, readings, prayers, music etc
- Mt 6:9-13 To PREPARE To HEAR the Word – prayer is talking to God, (always to God) it is a relationship between ourselves and God. Jesus prayed alone and with others; in the desert, in the garden, on the cross for the sick and for those who were outcasts. Explain that this prayer is found in the bible and was given to us by Jesus.
- Mt 6:9-13 To ENCOUNTER the Word after reading the text, students pray the prayer using hand movements (Bretheron, B, Praying with children).
- Mt 6:9-13 To ENCOUNTER the Word after reading the text students sing the Our Father.
Mt 6:9-13 To RESPOND to the Word list some of the way that I forgive 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.