Level: 1
Title: HOW DO I KNOW GOD LOVES ME?
Strand: GOD: Trinity of Persons, Creator, Communion of Love
Suggested Duration: 4-5 weeks

Unit Focus
In this unit students will explore a range of understandings about God. They will be given opportunities to explore images of God. They will come to understand that God’s love for them is revealed through their families, friends and creation and they will be given opportunities to give thanks for all these gifts.

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

Recognise that God is Love and this Love can be experienced in people and the world around us.

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

1. Explore their own and others’ images of God.
2. Identify the special qualities that make them unique.
3. Understand and appreciate their world as a gift from God.
4. Recognise and appreciate that God always loves them.

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<th>STRAND</th>
<th>DOCTRINAL CONCEPTS</th>
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<td>God</td>
<td>1. God is known as Father, Son and Holy Spirit</td>
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<td>3. We experience God in other people’s love for us.</td>
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<td>4. God invites us to respond in love.</td>
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<td>Christian Life</td>
<td>1. I am precious, unique and loved by God.</td>
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<td>1. God is with me in a special way in prayer.</td>
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Key Understandings for Students
- Creation is a gift of God.
- We are made in God’s image.
- God loves us as we are.
- God is present in people and the world around us.
- There are different names for and images of God.

Curriculum Links - VELS
Victorian Essential Learning Standards
The unit How Do I Know God Loves Me can be used to assess aspects of VELS. The table below gives an example of how Level 1 standards could be assessed.

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**Student Context**

When Level 1 students come to school their knowledge of God and of creation will vary from student to student, but their natural curiosity will make them willing to explore new concepts and environments.

At this level they become more able to understand concepts such as cause and effect and symbolism, therefore there is a window of opportunity to develop in all students a heightened awareness of their world and of God who created it.

**Theological Background for Teachers**

- **Who is God?** Theological giants caution us not to rely on strict definitions about the nature of God. “If we have understood, then what we have understood is not God,” wrote Augustine in the fifth century. “We can know that God is, but not what God is,” Thomas Aquinas said some eight centuries later. They are saying that God who is mystery cannot be imprisoned by limited human vocabulary. We cannot say what God is, said Aquinas, but we can say what God is like. We can talk about God by way of analogy and image. (Inform No. 63, March, 1999)

- Each of us is unique and has received the Spirit of God. This gift of the Spirit calls each one of us to become authentically human and to live in relationship with God and with others.

- As people created in the image and likeness of God, we are creative, gifted and talented. We have been endowed with intellect and with the freedom to use and express these gifts and talents. We are called in different ways to contribute to the life and mission of the Church and the common good of society by using our gifts and talents in the service of others. In service to others our gifts are developed as we grow as persons.

- Everything in our world is an example of God’s creative love. All things created by God are good because they come from the creative hand of God.

- God loves each individual in a unique and personal way. God loves us as a mother and father would. God’s love is constant. We are created to know and love God. God has given us the freedom to accept or reject this love. (Education Committee of Australian Bishops’ Conference, 1990, # 2.60)

- Young children form their concept of God from the people and world around them. Even though they may not be able to articulate their understanding of God, the experiences that each child has had provide the foundation for their concept of God.

- Teachers need to be aware that the student’s acceptance of teachings about God will be influenced heavily by his or her ‘self-image.’ If a student feels unloved or worthless, he or she will not easily believe in the unconditional love of God, nor in any of God’s other attributes. (Education Committee of Australian Bishops’ Conference, 1990, # 2.85 and Catholic Education Office, Parramatta, 1999, p.60)

**Scripture**

**Teacher Reference (NRSV)**

Eph 1:17-19

I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of glory, may give you a spirit of wisdom and revelation as you come to know him, so that, with the eyes of your heart enlightened, you may know what is the hope to which he has called you, what are the riches of his glorious inheritance among the saints, and what is the immeasurable greatness of his power for us who believe, according to the working of his great power.
Acts 17:28a
For "In him we live and move and have our being."

Student Reference (CEV)

Lk 18:15-17
Some people brought their little children for Jesus to bless. But when his disciples saw them doing this, they told the people to stop bothering him. So Jesus called the children over to him and said, "Let the children come to me! Don't try to stop them. People who are like these children belong to God's kingdom. You will never get into God's kingdom unless you enter it like a child!"

Mk 4:2-9 The Parable of the Sower
He used stories to teach them many things, and this is part of what he taught: Now listen! A farmer went out to scatter seed in a field. While the farmer was scattering the seed, some of it fell along the road and was eaten by birds. Other seeds fell on thin, rocky ground and quickly started growing because the soil wasn't very deep. But when the sun came up, the plants were scorched and dried up, because they did not have enough roots. Some other seeds fell where thornbushes grew up and choked out the plants. So they did not produce any grain. But a few seeds did fall on good ground where the plants grew and produced thirty or sixty or even a hundred times as much as was scattered. Then Jesus said, "If you have ears, pay attention."

Gen 1:27-28 God Created Humans
So God created humans to be like himself; he made men and women. God gave them his blessing and said:
Have a lot of children! Fill the earth with people and bring it under your control. Rule over the fish in the ocean, the birds in the sky, and every animal on the earth.

**Suggested Assessment Tasks**

**Outcome 1** Explore their own and others' images of God.
- List words you would use to describe God. Discuss - What is God like? Write a sentence - God is like a _______ because _______________. Paint your image of God.

**Outcome 2** Identify the special qualities that make them unique.
- Students identify the special qualities that make them unique.

**Outcome 3** Understand and appreciate their world as a gift from God.
- Draw a picture of something for which they want to thank God.
- Bring in a natural object for display and express a prayer of thanks for this gift.

**Outcome 4** Recognise and appreciate that God always loves them.
- Complete the sentence with words or a drawing “I know God loves me when my family…" my friends…I see…

N.B All of the above Outcomes lend themselves to reporting in the dimension of Knowledge and Understanding.

**Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences**

**Focusing Activity:**
Mirror in a box activity. Prepare a gift box with a mirror attached to base, invite the children to open the box, look in and discover what they see. Highlight that we are all God’s greatest gift. (Reference Great Gifts book)
- Gen 1:27-28a To PREPARE TO HEAR the Word discuss the fact that God created humans in God's own image and likeness, the most important of all creations. Look at the meaning of blessing - God's love
- Gen 1:27-28a To ENCOUNTER the Word after reading the texts students brainstorm. List the people who love...
me, and the different ways that they show God’s love for me.

- Gen 1:27-28a To RESPOND to the Word Make a class list of possible gifts that God has given them. Children put their names to the gifts.

- Personality bags: the teacher brings a bag containing 4-5 personal items that tell about their favorite things. The children are then invited to create and share a “personality bag” of their own. It is a good idea to limit the number of items and allocate 4-5 children to take a turn to share their items over a number of days.

- Think, Pair, Share. Name and list;
  - qualities that make you unique,
  - your likes and dislikes. (refer to icon in Planning Tool)

- Lk 18:15-17 To PREPARE TO HEAR the Word students investigate the vocabulary of the text eg. kingdom, blessing and disciples. Share times when you have felt welcomed. Read the picture book eg. ‘The stew that grew’. (Gray, Michael)

- Lk 18:15-17 To ENCOUNTER the Word after reading the text students tell the story using Godly Play materials.

- Lk 18:15-17 To ENCOUNTER the Word after reading the text students propose a new ending for this text, imagining that the disciples welcomed the children.

- Lk 18:15-17 To RESPOND to the Word make a class list of ways that we welcome new students into our school

- Lk 18:15-17 To RESPOND to the Word students make a front entrance/classroom door welcoming all who enter

- Lk 18:15-17 To RESPOND to the Word wrap up a large box as a parcel label it ‘God gives us the gift of welcome - we accept it with love’

- Dramatise various ways of showing love to family and friends.

- Art: paint or make self-portraits and list their special qualities.

- Draw themselves and their family in a circle with the words ‘God loves me all the time’ around the outside of the circle.

- Students make a puppet of someone who loves them and introduces their person to the class

- Read the story “in God’s Name” (Sasso, Sandy Eisenberg) or “Old Turtle” and discuss the images of God portrayed in this story

- Students make a place card for each member of their family to be used at an evening meal. Make cards in the shape of a heart and write the words Thank you God for…….. (enter family member’s name on each card)

- Students pick a name out of a bag for someone in the classroom. Make cards in the shape of hearts and write the words, ‘thank you God for…… because...’

- Learn John Burland song "God Loves Me”.

- Read the book "Families are fun" by Nan Hunt & Deborah Niland and discuss what things the family members do and how it relates to themselves.

- After reading a selection of PSB’s depicting loving families, name the ways in which family members show love and kindness to one another.

- Create a “family” profile eg. people in my family; things my family do together; favourite family things; ways my family show love for one another etc.

- Complete a matrix about friendship: eg. My friends and I like to…….. I am a good friend when I......... I like it when my friends........Friends are important because........

- Provide a variety of pictures of the natural world eg tree, river, sun, flower, etc. Discuss how these things make my life better.
Contribute to a class poster, words and pictures around the following statement "I KNOW THAT GOD LOVES ME WHEN"...........eg I feel the warmth of the sun; see a beautiful flower; sit in the shade of a tree etc

Resources

For resources to support this unit refer to the Online Planning Tool. For additional suggested resources for this unit, refer to the Resource Centre Catalogue: [http://www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au](http://www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au) and follow links to Resource Centre.