



Level: **2**

Title: **GRIEF AND LOSS**

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

Suggested Duration: **2-3 weeks**

Unit Focus In this unit students will be given the opportunity to explore the nature of change and loss in relation to changes in creation, the seasons and in the life cycle of people and animals.

They will explore feelings related to the experience of loss and death, and gain insights into the variety of ways that families, cultural groups and the Church celebrate the life of the departed.

Students will gain some understanding of the Christian concept of eternal life.

Level Outcome By the end of Level 2 students should be able to:

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

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

1. ***Explain changes that take place in life cycles and seasons.***
2. ***Thank God for the gift of life.***
3. ***Identify some rituals used to say goodbye to loved ones.***
4. ***Name and express some feelings associated with loss and some ways we can support others who grieve.***

STRAND	DOCTRINAL CONCEPTS	CATECHISM REFERENCE
God	1. God is loving creator and continues to give us life 2. God loves each of us 3. God is always with us	239, 337, 338, 946 – 48, 1020, 1023, 1007 219, 733 301, 205
Sacraments	2. Sacraments are special celebrations in the life of the Church	1124
Christian Life	1. I am precious, unique and loved by God 2. God invites me to love and care for myself and others	27 27, 2822
Christian Prayer	4. Prayer is a way of thanking God for life and creation	2637, 2638

Key Understandings for Students

- There are many losses that cause people to grieve e.g. sickness, migration, disability, relocation, separation, death of pets, theft, broken toys, being adopted.
- We remember that God loves each of us and gives us life.
- When someone we love dies we remember and celebrate their life.
- Some understanding of rituals associated with loss is important.
- Sometimes we feel sad when things change.
- Birth, life and death is the cycle of life
- God is present and active in all cycles of life

- Christians believe in eternal life and we talk about heaven
- We are sad when someone we love dies.
- We can feel sad when people we love move away and leave us.
- Feelings are important in our lives.
- It is helpful to express our feelings of loss. These feelings are part of grief. To grieve is part of loving and saying goodbye.
- There are ways each of us can support those who grieve.
- Death does not hurt; a dead person does not feel; the correct word to use is dead/death; when sad people cry it is healthy and good; death is not catchy; death is final; when we grieve it is good to discuss our feelings and concerns with adults who love us; when we grieve we will not always feel sad; when we grieve it is good to hold a ritual so we can say goodbye and share our grief.

**Curriculum Links
- VELS**

Victorian Essential Learning Standards

The unit *Grief and Loss* can be used to assess a range of VELS. The table below gives examples of how Level 2 standards could be assessed.

Strand	Domain	Dimension	Key elements of Standards Students...
Physical, Personal and Social Learning	Interpersonal Development	Building Social Relationships	-“identify the feelings and needs of other people. Students identify and accept that there are consequences for their actions. They take appropriate steps to resolve simple conflicts.”
		Working in Teams	-“work in teams in assigned roles, stay on task and complete structured activities within set timeframes. They share resources fairly. With teacher support, they describe their contribution to the activities of the team.”
Inter disciplinary Learning	Information and Communications Technology	ICT for Visualising Thinking/ ICT for Creating	-“students manipulate text, images and numeric data to create simple information products for specific audiences. They make simple changes to improve the appearance of their information products. With some assistance, students use ICT to locate and retrieve relevant information from a variety of sources.”

Curriculum Framework Context	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
			Grief and Loss

Student Context

Students at this level may have limited understanding of time, growth, change and cycles of life. Our lives and the world around us are constantly changing. In the change process, loss is common to all. Pets die and leave children grieving. Some children experience the death of loved grandparents and they are growing in awareness that people are sad when their loved ones die. For some the understanding of the finality of death is not understood. For many students family experience of separation and divorce is a painful reality. Students at this level are beginning to be able to understand and describe their feelings in a more reflective and insightful way. They are also growing in the awareness of the grief of others and how they can be supportive. Students at this level are able to share their experiences openly and willingly. Students may need to be helped to appreciate that all feelings are healthy and OK. How we handle them is important.

Grief is not a bad thing and it won't cause children or adults to go mad or to die as long as there is

enough love, understanding and support available. *The Grief of Our Children - Dianne McKissock (1998)*

Theological Background for Teachers

- It is through the rhythm of the cycles of life that the believer comes to experience and understand God as ever present, loving, sustaining, forgiving and caring.
- Through the cycles of life we see God's creative action made visible.
- In creation we see the constant pattern of birth/beginnings, life, death and rebirth.
- Death is not the end of human existence but the beginning of new life. (Guidelines for Religious Education of Students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne 1995)
- Our hope as Christians is that as Jesus was raised from the dead, so we too will be raised from the dead and enjoy eternal life with God.
- It is in the face of death that the riddle of human existence becomes most acute.
- Although the mystery of death utterly beggars the imagination, the church has been taught by divine revelation, and herself firmly teaches, that human beings have been created by God for a blissful purpose beyond the reach of earthly misery.

Gaudium et Spes 1965 (GS)

- For God has called man and still calls him so that with his entire being he might be joined to him in an endless sharing of a divine life beyond all corruption. Christ won this victory when He rose to life, since by his death he freed man from death. 1 Cor, 15:56-57 GS
- Through Christ and in Christ the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. GS
- Life is changed, not ended. *The Funeral Liturgy*.
- At the Second Coming of Christ, all things will be renewed and the reign of God will appear in its fullness.

The communion of all members of the Church, both those now living and the saints in Heaven, is one of the distinguishing beliefs of the Catholic Church. This belief is generally referred to as 'the communion of saints.' GS

Scripture

Teacher Reference NRSV

1 Thess 4:13, 14, 18

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

Rom 6:8-9

But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

Jn: 11:25-26

Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

Student Reference CEV

Jn 14:1-4 *Jesus Is the Way to the Father*

Jesus said to his disciples, "Don't be worried! Have faith in God and have faith in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house. I wouldn't tell you this, unless it was true. I am going there to prepare a place for each of you. After I have done this, I will come back and take you with me. Then we will be together. You know the way to where I am going."

Mt 5:4 *Blessings*

God blesses those people who grieve. They will find comfort!

1 Cor 2:9

But it is just as the Scriptures say, "What God has planned for people who love him is more than eyes have seen or ears have heard. It has never even entered our minds!"

Suggested Assessment Tasks

Assessment tasks for this unit may include:

Outcome 1 Explain changes that take place in life cycles and seasons.

- Order the life cycle of a frog or butterfly, or the seasons, and name some of the changes that take place.

Outcome 2 Thank God for the gift of life

- Children contribute a prayer to a class book titled "In my life I thank you for....."

Outcome 3 Identify some rituals used to say goodbye to loved ones.

- After reading one of the stories from the resource list eg. the story or video "*The tenth good thing about Barney*" (Viorst, Judith) children draw some of the aspects of loss.

Outcome 4 Name and express some feelings associated with loss and some ways we can support others who grieve.

- Children complete the statement "We can help people when they are sad by....."

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

Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

Focusing Activity

Read a story such as "*Toby*" (Wild, Margaret) about sad times. Explore with the children issues they raise.

- Read about life cycles. Discuss that all living things have stages of development. Collect pictures of babies, toddlers, children etc.
- Make a poster about a life cycle of a creature and label it.
- Ask the children to interview their parents to talk about their parents and other ancestors.
- With the help of the children's families have each child make a poster with photos to show his/her development to date.
- Have a Think/Pair/Share (*refer to icon in Planning Tool*) of the different responsibilities they have had and expect to have at each stage of their lives.
- Plant some fast growing seeds and chart their development.
- Make a "Memory Book or Box: after reading "*Wilfred Gordon Mc Donald Partridge*" (Fox, Mem) about things they did or can remember about some of the things that happened to them when they were younger.
- Use a feelings poster and share experiences when these feelings have been felt. Extend the children's feelings vocabulary.
- Use "*Stones have feelings too*" (Deal, Russell) (card set from St. Luke's Innovative Resources) to explore various feelings that we experience.
- Make a 'Feelings Book' in which the children can name and illustrate as many feelings as they can think of. Have a class activity that divides the feelings into two divisions eg those we like to have and those we don't like to have. Explore ways we can lessen the intensity of those we do not like.
- Read "*Beginnings and Endings with Lifetimes in between*" (Mellonie, Bryan)
- Discuss the changes in the seasons. Draw a symbol for each season.
- Read "*If Nathan Were Here*" (Bahr, Mary) discuss the feelings that Nathan's friend was feeling

- Discuss with the children if they know of anyone who has died. Discuss how people reacted, was there a funeral, what happened at the funeral, what did people do afterwards?
- Discuss how it is important to share memories about a person after they have died.
- When appropriate the children can make cards for a grieving person.
- Consider making or contributing to a memorial garden in your school/parish
- Students journal their Personal reflections on their own experience of loss
- Mt 5:4 To PREPARE TO HEAR the Word - feeling sad is a part of our life
- Mt 5:4 To ENCOUNTER the Word read the text from the Bible
- Mt 5:4 To RESPOND to the Word – students contribute to a class book of times when they have felt sad

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.