Level: 3
Title: COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS
Strand: CHURCH:
Body of Christ, Community of Disciples, Witness to Unity and Justice.

Suggested Duration: 6 weeks

Unit Focus
In this unit students will be invited to discover ways in which they can contribute to the Church - through actions of unity and justice. They will be encouraged to recognise ways in which the Holy Spirit empowers them to live, work and love like Jesus. They will be given opportunities to identify the different ways in which the Church community proclaims the Good News.

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

*Identify the Church as a community that celebrates the life and work of Jesus.*

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

1. Express an understanding of the way in which the early Christian Church was shaped.
2. Name some of the ministries that exist within their local church community.
3. Identify the ways in which Jesus encouraged his followers to live.
4. Describe ways in which the Holy Spirit is active in the community of believers.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRAND</th>
<th>DOCTRINAL CONCEPTS</th>
<th>CATECHISM REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jesus Christ</td>
<td>1. After Jesus’ death and resurrection people gathered in communities to remember him and tell the story of his compassion and love.</td>
<td>767</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. Jesus is the Son of God and shows us the way God wants us to live.</td>
<td>561</td>
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<tr>
<td>Church</td>
<td>1. The Church is a community of believers called to celebrate and make present the ministry of Jesus.</td>
<td>783</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3. The Church is empowered by the Holy Spirit to witness to unity and justice.</td>
<td>791</td>
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<tr>
<td>Scripture</td>
<td>2. The Gospels teach us about the life and love of Jesus.</td>
<td>515, 125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Life</td>
<td>1. Jesus challenges us to follow his teachings and example.</td>
<td>519</td>
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Key Understandings for Students
- The Church is a community of people who gather together with a common belief in Jesus Christ.
- When people are united with a common purpose or belief this is called community.
- The Holy Spirit is active in our Church community and evident in the qualities and actions of people in our families and faith community. The Holy Spirit is active in the lives of God’s people.
- We need to be open to the active presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- When we share the gifts of the Spirit we are building a community of believers.
- Jesus taught his disciples and friends to follow his actions.
- Jesus’ most important message to his people was “Love one another as I have loved you.” (Jn 13:34).
- Jesus wanted his people to be the Good News to others after his death, and asked Peter to establish the Church.
- Through the various ministries of the Church we are invited to live out our calling to be people
Curriculum Links - VELS

Victorian Essential Learning Standards
The unit *Community of Believers* can be used to assess a range of VELS. The table below gives examples of how Level 3 standards could be assessed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Key elements of Standards Students…</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical, Personal and Social Learning</td>
<td>Interpersonal Development</td>
<td>Building Social Relationships</td>
<td>“demonstrate respect for others and exhibit appropriate behaviour for maintaining friendships with other people. They support each other by sharing ideas and materials, offering assistance, giving appropriate feedback and acknowledging individual differences. They work with others to reduce, avoid and resolve conflict.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>CIVICS and CITIZENSHIP</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td>“contribute to the development and support of class rules and participate in school celebrations and commemorations of important events. They describe some of the roles and purposes of groups in the community. They work with other students to identify a local issue and plan possible actions to achieve a desired outcome.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Learning</td>
<td>Information and Communications Technology</td>
<td>ICT for Visual Thinking</td>
<td>“use ICT tools to list ideas, order them into logical sequences, and identify relationships between them. Students retrieve their saved visualising thinking strategies and edit them for use in new, but similar situations. They explain how these strategies can be used for different problems or situations.”</td>
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<td>ICT For Creating</td>
<td>“create information products to assist in problem solving in all areas of the curriculum. With minimal assistance, students use ICT tools to capture and save images. They use simple editing functions to manipulate the images for use in their products.”</td>
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<td>Thinking</td>
<td>“collect information from a range of sources to answer their own and others’ questions. They question the validity of sources when appropriate. They apply thinking strategies to organise information and concepts in a variety of contexts, including problem solving activities. They provide reasons for their conclusions.”</td>
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Creativity -“apply creative ideas in practical ways and test the possibilities of ideas they generate. They use open-ended questioning and integrate available information to explore ideas.”

Reflection, evaluation and meta-cognition -“identify strategies they use to organise their ideas, and use appropriate language to explain their thinking. They identify and provide reasons for their point of view, and justify changes in their thinking.”

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Curriculum Framework Context</th>
<th>Level 2</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
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<tr>
<td>We are Part of God’s Church</td>
<td>Community of Believers</td>
<td>The Church in Australia</td>
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**Student Context**

At this level students have a new understanding of rules and are developing a moral framework that stresses fairness and equal treatment. They are beginning to understand individual stories can be part of a larger story that can help them make sense of their life and the world.

Students are beginning to make sense of themselves in the context of their community, so they need to be provided with opportunities to explore, analyse and discover how the believing community lives and proclaims the Good News. Level Three students need to be able to see how they can be actively and meaningfully involved in the community.

**Theological Background for Teachers**

- “Christian faith is also a communal faith. When a believer responds to God, he or she becomes more united with others striving to do the same. Christians cannot become more united with Christ without becoming more united with each other. As they open themselves to Christ, they are bonded together by the Holy Spirit.” (The Word Dwells Among Us, 1990, p. 55)

- “Jesus called them together to follow him and be his disciples. He spoke of his ‘flock’ [Lk 12:32], his ‘companions’ [Mk 3:14] and ‘branches’ of his vine [Jn 15:5]. He promised that, ‘wherever two or three meet in my name, I shall be there with them’ [Mt 18:20]. Christian faith can never be a purely private and personal affair. Christ cannot be followed alone. As the twelve, the seventy-two, and the others who sought Christ discovered, a person can only walk with Christ if he or she is willing to walk also with others.” (The Word Dwells Among Us, 1990, pp. 72 - 73)

- Each one of us is a living temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Cor 6:19) and we become bound together more closely as each responds to the Holy Spirit within.

- Commonly, the building where Christ’s followers gather is referred to as ‘the church.’ Too often, in fact, people associate the word ‘church’ only with a building and forget that the word is attached to the building only by association.

- It is important to understand that although Jesus began his life and mission in 1st century Palestine, the salvation his father sent him to proclaim was intended for the whole of humanity in all ages.

- To offer his salvation to all, Jesus needed to be present in a visible way among peoples throughout the world. He revealed his way when he promised “Where two or three are gathered in my name, I shall be there with them.”(Mt 18:20) Jesus would be present to all humanity henceforth through his followers – his Church.

- Jesus’ followers show their convictions that he is present in them today as they continue his mission, showing that his salvation is for all, regardless of colour, race, gender, political belief or socio-economic status. (The Word Dwells Among Us, 1990, p. 73)

- On the first Pentecost there were only a few disciples in Jerusalem. By the end of the first century, their message had reached many parts of the Roman Empire.
Like the Gospel, (Lk 1:1-4) the Book of Acts begins with a prologue. As in the Gospel, Luke addressed Theophilus, a name meaning ‘friend of God’. Theophilus represents everyone who will read the text – including us!

After Pentecost the men and women who wanted to follow Jesus began to meet together. They would meet for the meal, the breaking of bread and to praise God.

The followers of Jesus gave this coming together a new meaning; sharing in the Eucharist, they were people united by faith and friendship. Their numbers increased steadily. Soon, small communities sprang up all over the country and across the empire.

Scripture

Teacher Reference (NRSV)
Mt 3:13-17  The Baptism of Jesus
Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan, to be baptised by him. John would have prevented him, saying, “I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?” But Jesus answered him, “Let it be so now; for it is proper for us in this way to fulfil all righteousness.” Then he consented. And when Jesus had been baptised, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him. And a voice from heaven said, “This is my son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.”

Student References (CEV)
Jn 13:34-35  The New Commandment
I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another.

Mt 16:17-19  On this rock I will build my church
And Jesus answered him, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father in heaven. And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not prevail against it. I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Acts 2:41-47a  Life Among the Believers
So those who welcomed his message were baptised, and that day about three thousand persons were added. They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles. All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need. Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread at home and ate their food with glad and generous hearts, praising God and having the goodwill of all the people.

Suggested Assessment Tasks

Assessment tasks for this unit may include:

Outcome 1  Students express an understanding of the way in which the early Christian Church was shaped.
- Read Acts 2:41-47a and identify the characteristics that show how the people of the early Christian Church community lived.

Outcome 2  Students name some of the ministries that exist within their local church community
- Students prepare and present an oral report about one of the ministries of their local church community.

Outcome 3  Students identify the ways in which Jesus encouraged his followers to live.
- Students write a personal creed or code to live by which expresses how they might live their lives according to Jesus’ example. Links to Scripture should be strongly encouraged.
- Students write what their hopes for their classroom for the year according to Jesus’ example. Links to Scripture should be strongly encouraged.

Outcome 4  Students describe ways in which the Holy Spirit is active in the community of believers.
- Students write a newspaper article entitled “Holy Spirit in the 21st Century” and detail how the Holy Spirit continues to
work in our community today.

- Students compose letter to themselves from the Holy Spirit, helping them to be open to and recognise the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives /world.
- Students complete a comparison between ‘team spirit’ and the Holy Spirit in our lives

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

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggested Teaching &amp; Learning Experiences</th>
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**Focusing Activity**

Students design, make and share a story map of their life so far, including: people, events and their gifts and talents.

- As a whole class, story Map of the major events and people in Jesus’ life that identify the ways in which Jesus encouraged his followers to live – either in words or pictures. Students can then use the Sequencing strategy to order another person’s story map. Students make a booklet about five characteristics of Jesus that they see as being the most important in the forming of them as a person.
- Create a class Y chart for Justice (refer to icon in Planning Tool)
- Complete KWL chart about how Jesus encourages the community of believers to live. (refer to icon in Planning Tool)
- Dictagloss on the passage from Mt 16:17-19, Peter’s Declaration about Jesus. Students prepare a role-play to show their understanding of Peter having the responsibility of spreading the Good News. Each role-play can be developed further by incorporating aspects of our responsibility of continuing Peter’s work. (refer to icon in Planning Tool)
- Students role-play the interaction between Jesus and Peter, expressing the intent of Jesus to have Peter continue spreading the Good News. Emphasis will be placed on why Jesus chose Peter and the ultimate purpose of the church as a community of believers.
- To show their interpretation of the scripture passage Acts 2:41-47, students complete “Potter and Clay activity” (Refer Dan White Into the Deep pg 40) the final sculpture should show the emotional feelings of the character not simply recreate the action of the character.
- Use teacher prepared Thought Sheets (refer to icon in Planning Tool) to lead the students to appreciate the influence the Holy Spirit has on us as a community of believers.
- Students identify ways in which the Holy Spirit is clearly evident in the lives of people in school, local, national community today through brainstorming and researching.
- Develop a newspaper article/ media interview to expose fully the work of the Holy Spirit.
- Research the key events that shaped the early Church, using texts provided by teacher taken from the resource list.
- Visit the foyer of the Church, collect pamphlets, information about the various ministries of the church, choose one to investigate more deeply, and then share this information with the class.
- Access a copy of church bulletin, look at rosters etc, to come to a deeper understanding of what happens in their local church.
- Invite people from the various ministries to talk with the students about the role they play in the parish.
- Research the history of various aspects of the local church.
- Create a postcard with pictures and information about your church, choose an appropriate way to distribute or share this information
- Students design and produce welcome banners for the Church.
- Advertising banners asking if parishioners have thought about joining a particular service group within the Church.
- Create an ongoing class graffiti board (Dan White, Into the Deep) that shows actions of the community of believers
that are based on the actions and teachings of Jesus.

- Make a photo-board depicting actions and character traits that would be evident in a community of believers that is guided by Jesus “law of love.” (Jn 13:34-35)

- Complete a PMI chart for living justly. (refer to icon in Planning Tool)

- Think, Pair, Share contemporary television shows, movies, books and/or songs that support Jesus way of life. (refer to icon in Planning Tool)

- Different but alike Venn Diagram, Early Church, Contemporary Church (Refer Dan White Into the Deep pg 53-56)

- Visit e.g. an old people’s home, talk to them, sing to them, and make cards etc for them.

- Children identify practical ways they can be Church today.

- Forming a mini Vinnies group to discover how we can be active members of our church community.

- Acts 2:41-47 To PREPARE TO HEAR the Word – Choose some of the main words within the text and explore their meanings

- Acts 2:41-47 To ENCOUNTER the Word after reading the text, students create a liquid picture or echo mime to reinforce their understanding of the text

- Acts 2:41-47 To RESPOND to the Word – Complete a comic strip, then taking one aspect of the text, reflect and write how you see this happening in your community.

- Acts 2:41-47 To RESPOND to the Word – Using information gathered from the scripture passage, students compose a letter from one of the apostles or one of the new believers telling of their feelings

**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](http://www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au) and follow links to Resource Centre.