Level: 4
Title: SACRED STORIES

SCRIPTURE:
Word of God, alive and active, foundational story of Christianity.

Suggested Duration: 6 weeks

Unit Focus
The idea of the Bible as a collection of books, containing different literary forms (i.e. poetry and song, myth, history and wisdom) will be explored in a preliminary way. Students will investigate the development of the Bible over time and examine the ways that Scripture is incorporated into personal and communal prayer. They will make simple connections between Scripture passages and their lives.

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

Distinguish different styles of writing in the Scriptures and connect the scriptural message with everyday life.

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

1. Identify the Bible as a collection of many books grouped together as Old and New Testaments.
2. Locate, classify and recall sample literary forms in the Bible.
3. Encounter Scripture in prayer and liturgy.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRAND</th>
<th>DOCTRINAL CONCEPTS</th>
<th>CATECHISM REFERENCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scripture</td>
<td>1. The Hebrew and Christian Scriptures contain different types of writing.</td>
<td>110</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. The Hebrew Scriptures tell the story of the people of Israel’s covenant relationship with God.</td>
<td>122</td>
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<tr>
<td>Christian Life</td>
<td>3. We respond to God’s commandments by treating each other with respect, love and compassion.</td>
<td>1878</td>
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<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>1. In our church communities we experience various kinds of prayer – thanksgiving, petition, praise, sorrow and adoration.</td>
<td>2626-2643</td>
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<td>2. Prayer is expressed in different ways through music, movement and meditation.</td>
<td>2660 - 2663</td>
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Key Understandings for Students
- The Bible is a library of books which contain different literary forms.
- For Christians the Gospels are at the heart of all Scriptures. Each Gospel provides a unique insight into the person and life of Jesus.
- Passages of Scripture are located by book, chapter and verse.
- Some of the different literary styles used in the Bible are poetry, myth, wise sayings, history.
- The proclamation of the Scriptures is an essential aspect of the Church's liturgy.
- Scripture texts inspire various forms of prayer, including songs and hymns.

Curriculum Links - VELS
Victorian Essential Learning Standards
The Sacred Stories unit can be used to assess a range of VELS. The table below gives examples of how Level 4 standards could be assessed.
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<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Key elements of Standards</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical, Personal and Social</td>
<td>Interpersonal Development</td>
<td>Building Social Relationships</td>
<td>“accept and display empathy for the points of view and feelings of their peers and others.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
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<td>“work effectively in different teams and take on a variety of roles to complete tasks of varying length and complexity. They work cooperatively to allocate tasks and develop timelines. Students accept responsibility for their role and tasks.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Civics and Citizenship</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
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<td>“demonstrate understanding that there are different viewpoints on an issue, and contribute to group and class decision making.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Learning</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Listening, Viewing and Responding</td>
<td>“summarise ideas and organise ideas and information logically and clearly in a range of presentations”</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“identify features of an effective presentation and adapt elements of their own presentation to reflect them.”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Presenting</td>
<td>“summarise and organise ideas and information, logically and clearly in a range of presentations.”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>Reasoning, processing and</td>
<td></td>
<td>“develop their own questions for investigation. They collect relevant information from a range of sources and make judgements about its worth”</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>inquiry</td>
<td></td>
<td>“generate imaginative solutions when solving problems”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Reflection, evaluation and</td>
<td></td>
<td>“use a broad range of thinking processes and tools and reflect on and evaluate their effectiveness.”</td>
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<td></td>
<td>meta-cognition</td>
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<tr>
<th>Curriculum Framework Context</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
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<tr>
<td>God’s Holy Word</td>
<td>Sacred Stories</td>
<td>The Covenant Unfolds</td>
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**Student Context**

Students at this level are becoming capable of abstract thinking, critical analysis and operational thought. They have some sense of history and enjoy stories of past events. Students have an increasing notion of other times, other places and other types of societies.

Students in upper primary are beginning their journey of understanding the ways the Bible conveys truth. They are at an age when they want to know about the people, beliefs and rulers of their religious community. Story is a major way of identification and appropriation through which children in this age group can enter into the perspective of others to gain meaning for life (Liddy & Welbourne, 1999). Their first understanding of Scripture will be literal, and this literal understanding is an essential stage of faith development. Students will need assistance recognising that the Scriptures continue to be relevant and meaningful today.

The students will be well equipped to understand the importance of literary form in interpreting texts as a result of their studies in English. This will support the practice of taking into account the context of a writer, the literary genre in use at that time, and the modes of expression that are used.

**Theological Background for**

- There are a variety of literary forms or genre in the Bible. Among the more common literary forms are pre-history, history, story, fable, legend, parable, poetry, song, legal code,
prophecy, wisdom sayings, apocalyptic, gospels, letters and many others. (It is important to note that the naming of literary forms varies and there is not a definitive list of literary forms found in Scripture). In interpreting texts from the Bible it is important to keep the literary forms in mind.

- The Bible comprises the Old Testament and the New Testament. The Old Testament consists of forty-six books written down between 900 BCE and 50 BCE. This includes seven books, written in Greek and acknowledged by Catholics as part of the canon. The New Testament consists of twenty-seven books written down between 50 CE and around 100 CE.

- In the ancient world, story or narrative, was the major means of sharing and passing on from one generation to the next significant events and the communal meaning derived from such events. From around 900 BCE these stories were committed to writing and underwent editing and re-editing over time.

- The style and content of the various texts developed over a long historical period and for many different audiences and purposes. At the time of the Exile of the People of Judah in Babylon, 587 BCE – 538 BCE there was a need to bring these collections of texts together. During this time a major writing and editing process took place in the light of the exile experience. The texts of many of the books of the Old Testament, as we have them in the Bible today, were set down in a fixed form.

- In the case of the New Testament, particularly the Gospels, a three-stage process over a period of some 70 years can be discerned. The first stage was the life of Jesus, his person, teaching and actions. The second stage consisted of the oral stories, anecdotes, and recollections of Jesus and his teachings. These circulated in the early Christian communities and formed part of their prayer and worship. The third stage consisted of the written texts that make up the New Testament.

- The Old Testament is generally arranged into the Torah (or Pentateuch), the Historical books, the Prophetic books and the Wisdom books. Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, introduced chapters in 1226. Printer, Robert Estienne introduced the numbering of verses in 1551. The word Bible comes from the Greek plural ‘ta biblia’, which means ‘the books’. In Latin it becomes the singular, Biblia or in English, the Bible.

- The Bible is a compilation of books that have been assembled over one thousand years. The first part, the Old Testament is common to Jews and Christians. The Jews and Protestants only recognise the books written in Hebrew, whereas Catholics recognise an extra seven books written in Greek. This is a total of forty-six books. Catholics refer to these seven books as deuterocanonical; Protestants refer to them as apocryphal.

- The Scriptures are those writings recognised by the Church as inspired by God and containing the truth necessary for our salvation.

- The significant event in the Old Testament is the Exodus, which probably took place about 1250 BCE. Most of the Old Testament literature is centred around this event. The New Testament, consists of twenty-seven books. The significant event in the New Testament is the crucifixion, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ.

- Catholic biblical interpretation takes into account the literary form or genre of the text being interpreted. Catholic biblical interpretation pays attention to the human ways of thought, language and figurative expression found in biblical texts. Catholic biblical interpretation recognises that biblical texts are often the product of long and complex processes. Diverse historical and cultural situations influenced the texts of the Bible. For Catholics, interpretation of the Bible involves taking the literary, historical, cultural and religious background into account. Biblical fundamentalism, however, insists on the verbal inerrancy of the Scriptures. Fundamentalist interpreters of Scripture insist that the scriptural text should be read and interpreted literally in all its details. Fundamentalist interpretation of the Scriptures is contrary to Catholic approaches to biblical interpretation.

(Adapted from the Guidelines for Religious Education, Brisbane Catholic Education, Using the Bible.)
Teacher and Student References NRSV
(Before teaching any of the following passages it is advisable to refer to a suitable Biblical Commentary or study tool e.g. Collegeville Commentary)

Deut 30:14
No, the word is very near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart for you to observe.

Isa 55:11  An Invitation to Abundant Life
So shall my word be that goes forth from my mouth; it shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and succeed in the thing for which I sent.

Myth (This book of Jonah is very short and reading the whole story can be beneficial. Suggested is http://www.devotions.net/bible00bible.htm)

Jon 1:17b - 2:10
…and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the belly of the fish, saying, "I called to the LORD out of my distress, and he answered me; out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and you heard my voice. 2 You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the flood surrounded me; all your waves and your billows passed over me. 3 Then I said, 'I am driven away from your sight; how shall I look again upon your holy temple? 4 The waters closed in over me; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped around my head 5 at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the Pit, O LORD my God. 6 As my life was ebbing away, I remembered the LORD; and my prayer came to you, into your holy temple. 7 The waters closed in over me; the deep surrounded me; weeds were wrapped around my head 8 at the roots of the mountains. I went down to the land whose bars closed upon me forever; yet you brought up my life from the Pit, O LORD my God. 9 Those who worship vain idols forsake their true loyalty. 10 But I with the voice of thanksgiving will sacrifice to you; what I have vowed I will pay. Deliverance belongs to the LORD!"

Historical Writing
1 Chr 22:1-5  David Prepares to Build the Temple
Then David said, “Here shall be the house of the LORD God and here the altar of burnt offering for Israel.”

David gave orders to gather together the aliens who were residing in the land of Israel and he sent stonemasons to prepare dressed stones for building the house of God. David also provided great stores of iron for nails for the doors of the gates and for clamps, as well as bronze in quantities beyond weighing, and cedar logs without number - for the Sidonians and Tyrians brought great quantities of cedar to David. For David said, “My son Solomon is young and inexperienced, and the house that is to be built for the LORD must be exceedingly magnificent, famous and glorified throughout all lands: I will therefore make preparation for it.” So David provided materials in great quantity before his death.

Psalm
Ps 139:1-12  The Inescapable God
O LORD, you have searched me and known me. You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you discern my thoughts from far away. You search out my path and my lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, O LORD, you know it completely. You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me. Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it. Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence? If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea, even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast. If I say, "Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night," even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.
Wisdom Writings
Sir 6:5-17
The root of wisdom--to whom has it been revealed? Her subtleties--who knows them? There is but one who is wise, greatly to be feared, seated upon his throne--the Lord. It is he who created her; he saw her and took her measure; he poured her out upon all his works, upon all the living according to his gift; he lavished her upon those who love him.
The fear of the Lord is glory and exultation, and gladness and a crown of rejoicing. The fear of the Lord delights the heart, and gives gladness and joy and long life. Those who fear the Lord will have a happy end; on the day of their death they will be blessed.
To fear the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; she is created with the faithful in the womb. She made among human beings an eternal foundation, and among their descendants she will abide faithfully. To fear the Lord is fullness of wisdom; she inebriates mortals with her fruits; she fills their whole house with desirable goods, and their storehouses with her produce.

Letters
2 Cor 1:1-2  Salutation
Paul, an apostle of Christ Jesus by the will of God, and Timothy our brother, To the church of God that is in Corinth, including all the saints throughout Achaia: 1Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

2 Cor 13:11-13  Final Greetings and Benediction
11 Finally, brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace; and the God of love and peace will be with you. 12Greet one another with a holy kiss. All the saints greet you. 13The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.

Narrative
Mk 5:1-20  Jesus Heals the Gerasene Demoniac
They came to the other side of the sea, to the country of the Gerasenes. 2And when he had stepped out of the boat, immediately a man out of the tombs with an unclean spirit met him. 3He lived among the tombs; and no one could restrain him any more, even with a chain; 4for he had often been restrained with shackles and chains, but the chains he wrenched apart, and the shackles he broke in pieces; and no one had the strength to subdue him. 5Night and day among the tombs and on the mountains he was always howling and bruising himself with stones. 6When he saw Jesus from a distance, he ran and bowed down before him; 7and he shouted at the top of his voice, ‘What have you to do with me, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I adjure you by God, do not torment me.’ 8For he had said to him, ‘Come out of the man, you unclean spirit!’ 9Then Jesus asked him, ‘What is your name?’ He replied, ‘My name is Legion; for we are many.’ 10He begged him earnestly not to send them out of the country. 11Now there on the hillside a great herd of swine was feeding; 12and the unclean spirits begged him, ‘Send us into the swine; let us enter them.’ 13So he gave them permission. And the unclean spirits came out and entered the swine; and the herd, numbering about two thousand, rushed down the steep bank into the sea, and were drowned in the sea.
14The swineherds ran off and told it in the city and in the country. Then people came to see what it was that had happened. 15They came to Jesus and saw the demoniac sitting there, clothed and in his right mind, the very man who had had the legion; and they were afraid. 16Those who had seen what had happened to the demoniac and to the swine reported it. 17Then they began to beg Jesus to leave their neighbourhood. 18As he was getting into the boat, the man who had been possessed by demons begged him that he might be with him. 19But Jesus refused, and said to him, ‘Go home to your friends, and tell them how much the Lord has done for you, and what mercy he has shown you.’ 20And he went away and began to proclaim in the Decapolis how much Jesus had done for him; and everyone was amazed.

Suggested Assessment Tasks

Assessment tasks for this unit may include:

Outcome 1  Identify the Bible as a collection of many books grouped together as Old and New Testaments.
• Biblical Library. Using empty matchboxes create a Biblical Library with one matchbox for each book of the Bible.
  Paste the title of the book, eg ‘Book of Genesis” along the striking edge as a spine. Inside the matchbox place a word, or a sentence, or two characters from the book, on a strip of paper.

Outcome 2  Locate, classify and recall sample literary forms in the Bible.
• Match a scriptural text to its literary form.
Outcome 3  Encounter Scripture in prayer and liturgy.

- Journal your response to an experience of prayer that uses a Scripture text, for example: Relax and read the passage, select a character, read the passage again and imagine you are the character, imagine this character’s thoughts, feelings, actions. Think about how this character’s thoughts, feelings and actions relate to your life. Record your own thoughts and feelings.
- Incorporate one of the Scripture passages studied in depth, eg Jonah 1:17b - 2:10 in to a Word Service that unpacks the story and offers all students an invitation to participate in a way they feel comfortable.

N.B Outcomes 1 and 2 lend themselves to reporting in the dimension of Knowledge and Understanding

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

Gather a variety of texts (fax, letter, magazine, advertisement, notice, email) and ask students to identify similarities, differences, and the purposes of each.

- Using the table of contents in the Bible find out how many books there are, how many are in each Testament. Bring out an awareness of the length and groupings of the different books. eg What percentage of the Bible is the New Testament?
- Give students a list of the books of the Bible (Appendix 1). Discuss how many books there are and their different classifications. Brainstorm comparable examples in the school library of these classifications.
- Markers: Students make Bible markers/tabs for easy reference, separation of testaments, key books and gospels.
- Students create a flow chart of the formation of the Bible.
- Maps: Refer students to maps located in the Bible. (Some Bibles do not have maps.) Investigate the purpose in using the maps and how they are related to Scripture. Students find out if their Bible has a Map Index and practise locating places using this if possible.
- Introduce students to sources such as Bible Atlas, Bible Dictionary, Biblical Commentaries, Concordance, Biblical Encyclopedia and to websites which make similar material available.
- Prepare text from 1 Chronicles 22:1-5 on card. Cut this into sections. Hide these parts in a sandpit or the schoolyard. Another group searches for the texts, finds the text or part thereof, then tries to place them together like the archaeologists and biblical scholars. Discuss the fact that not all sections of a text may have been found. Biblical scholars need to decipher and interpret what was found. Discuss with the students how documents like the Dead Sea Scrolls have helped biblical scholars understand Bible times.
- Establish a special place in the classroom where the class Bible may be displayed. Focus on the special nature of this book. Use song or chosen passage/prayer to focus the ritual.
- Create a mind map of some of the different types of literary forms found in the Bible.
- Introduce the features of selected literary forms (drawing on the techniques used in English) and have students locate and read references and classify according to the literary form. This could be done individually, in pairs or as a group.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Bible reference</th>
<th>What happens in this text?</th>
<th>Literary form</th>
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- Students choose a biblical character from the provided list – Abraham, Sarah, Joseph, Moses, Adam, Eve, Cain, Ruth, Esther, Abel, Noah, Miriam, Jonah, Jesus, Saul, Joseph and Mary. Using the index, students locate the characters in the Bible. (The reference can then be recorded and swapped with other students who can then seek the name of the character.)
- Read students one of Aesop’s Fables. Discuss how Fables are a significant form of writing that in ancient times explained a natural phenomenon or conveyed a particular message. Read the Book of Jonah. Students discuss why the Book of Jonah is considered a Fable. Look at what is
happening in the story. In small groups children respond to the question “What is the message of this story for us today?”

- Students create a cartoon strip of the story of Jonah

- Use the reading from Sirach 6:5-17, for a prayer circle. Encourage the students to pray by asking them to share one word that is in their mind after the reading. Have cards and felt pens for them to write the word. Display the words in class.


- Discuss the various purposes of letter writing. Paul was a great letter writer, look at the letters in the New Testament who were they to/from? Students look at the purpose of the letters that we find in the New Testament. Locate the communities to whom Paul wrote in a Biblical atlas.

- Look at 2 Cor: 1-2 and 2 Cor 13:11-13. Students write their own letter to a community using the style of Paul to compose the letter.

- Using team milling (refer to icon in Planning Tool) students present their learning from the unit on biblical writing. Each group could work on a particular genre.

- Develop a board game that requires players to progress by locating passages in the Scriptures and answering questions based on knowledge of the Bible.

- Ancient people read the Wisdom writings to inform them on how they were to live a good life. Refer to the Wisdom books: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Songs, Wisdom and Sirach. Students read the picture story book; ‘To everything’ by Bob Barner (2004) and discuss the wise messages within the story.

- Jon 1:17b - 2:10 To PREPARE TO HEAR the Word - Jonah was a prophet. This story is a myth to emphasise God's unlimited compassion. Jonah was commissioned by God to go to warn the people of Nineveh to change their wicked ways.


- Jon 1:17b - 2:10 To RESPOND to the Word – How do we get out of doing something that we do not want to do as Jonah did?

Prayer and Ritual
- Using the reading from Sirach 6:5-17, form a prayer circle. Around a central prayer focus place pictures/photos of friends. Encourage the students to pray by asking them to share one word that is in their mind after the reading. Have cards and felt pens for them to write the word. Display the words around the prayer focus.

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.
Appendix 1

Types of Story/Genres in the Bible

Myth

*Gen 1:1-24*  
Six days of Creation and the Sabbath

*Gen 2:5-3:24*  
Another Account of the Creation

*Gen 7-9:17*  
The Great Flood, The Flood Subsides, God’s Promise to Noah, The Covenant with Noah

Humour/Irony

*Jon 1-4*  
Jonah Tries to Run Away from God

Proverbs

*Prov Ch.10-22*

History

1 Sam

2 Sam

Parables

*Mt 5:13-17*  
Salt and Light

*Mt 13:1-9*  
The Sower

*Mt 13:10-17*  
The Purpose of the parables

*Mt 13:24-30*  
The Parable of the Mustard Seed

*Mt 13:44-50*  
Three Parables

Legend

1 Kings 3:16-28  
Solomon’s Wisdom in Judgment

Dreams

*Gen 28:10-12*  
Jacob’s Dream at Bethel

*Gen 37:5*  
Joseph Dreams of Greatness

*Gen 41:1-32*  
Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s Dream

*Job 7:14*

Poetry

*Song 1:5-8:7*  
Six love poems

*Ps 8*  
Praise;

*Ps 23*  
The Good Shepherd

*Ps 28*  
Petition;

*Ps 38*  
Distress

*Ps 44*  
Lament

*Ps 55*  
Persecution

Law

*Deut 5:6-21*

Prophecy

*Am 2:6-8*

Proclamation

*Mk 1:1*

Letters

*1 Cor 1:1-9*