SCHOOL-DEVELOPED SAMPLE UNIT FOR LEVEL 2

PRAYER IN CHRISTIAN LIFE

LIFE CONCEPT: GOD HELPS PEOPLE PRAY

YEAR:..... **FAITH STATEMENTS:** ① **2** ③

DURATION OF UNIT:……**DATE OF USE:** .....

UNIT-SPECIFIC GOALS (highlighted)

1. GOD INVITES PEOPLE TO PRAY TO HIM IN JESUS' NAME

1a explore Christian prayer as a response of faith in God

1b examine what enables Christians to pray with confidence

1c investigate different forms of prayer and their purposes

2. GOD PROMISES TO HEAR AND ANSWER PRAYER

2a investigate the varied ways in which God answered people's prayer in the Old and New Testaments

2b investigate the Christian belief that prayer encompasses and acknowledges all aspects of life

3. JESUS TAUGHT PEOPLE TO PRAY

3a explore what Jesus' own prayers teach about prayer

3b examine the Lord's Prayer as a tool for daily living

STUDENT ASSESSMENT

ASSESSABLE STUDENT OUTCOMES		ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES
Examine the confidence Christians have in God in regard to their prayers and express this in a collage. (1b)	⇨	collage or picture or painting (done in pairs)
Examine and comment on different types of prayer. (1b,1c)	⇨	individual work samples (TRS D2/2)
Express struggles and conflicts faced in dealing with guilt, temptation and ethical questions. (3b)	⇨	observation of role-plays
Depict creatively a significant Christian belief about prayer. (1b,1c,3b)	⇨	banner

UNIT SUMMARY

Students briefly examine different types, forms and modes of prayer to appreciate the variety available. This also is to help them gain an awareness of the value of prayer. This is done in part by studying written prayers and also by experiencing the value of quiet time. The students also look at how people turn to prayer in time of need and the benefits received from this. They then look more closely at the Lord's Prayer, becoming aware of its richness as well as its relevance for life.

INTRODUCTION

AN OPTIONAL STARTING POINT

Christians understand prayer as an expression of the deepening relationship between a loving God and his people.

View a film which explores the development of personal relationships through life's events and experiences. For example, students plot the main events and experiences in Forrest Gump's life in *Forrest Gump*. They focus on his relationship with his mother and Jenny, identifying what keeps the relationships going through the many events of his life.

1. CALLING FOR HELP

Students think of three different situations in their lives when they have needed help. Students recall and record

- the problem they were experiencing and how that made them feel
- from whom they asked for help and why they went to that person
- how they asked for help
- what help they were given and how this made them feel.

These experiences may be shared with the class, but only if the student feels comfortable with this sharing.

Students discuss:

- Was it easier to ask for help when they were younger than it is now?
- What encourages them to ask for help? What discourages them from asking?
- How do they feel about helping out other people?
- How is prayer like calling for help?

2. AIDS TO PRAYER

Students brainstorm what helps people pray and/or reflect about God and their life, eg

- music
- focal points, eg a picture or sculpture
- lighting, eg a bright light or solitary candle
- use of space and place.

Students discuss the value of putting aside time and place for prayer and personal reflection.

(Students may set up, experience and reflect on their own suggestions for prayer.)

3. PRAYER ANTHOLOGIES

Students examine collections of the prayers written by individual people, eg

- *A Common Prayer* (M Leunig)
- *Australian Images* (A Podlich)
- *Brief Prayers for Australians* (B Prewer).

They identify the different styles of prayers, the content of the prayers, the structure of the prayers, the main concern of the writers, the writers' view of God and themselves.

Students select their favourite prayers from the collection, giving reasons for their choice.

TRS D2/1 can be used for this activity.

4. THE SOUND OF SILENCE

Most writers on prayer make a connection between prayer and silence. Being quiet encourages reflection, contemplation, listening. (You may find Mark Link and Henri Nouwen useful.)

Students share how they feel about silence or being quiet or being still — is it peaceful or threatening? They try to think of a time when they have experienced complete silence, eg no radios, CD player or television at home.

Students discuss: What can silence do for a person that sounds cannot do?

Throughout the unit give students an opportunity to experience silence during each lesson, eg they get comfortable, breathe slowly and deliberately, relax, close their eyes and listen to the sounds around them. Repeat this for several consecutive lessons. Begin with one or two minutes and gradually increase the time of silence. Students record in their journals what they hear, think and feel during the exercise.

Build on this activity by providing one of the following at each session:

- quiet music
- a picture or a collection of objects on a theme, eg beauty of nature
- a quotation from, the Bible, traditional prayers.

The books *You* and *Breakaway* by Mark Link provide some excellent resources.

DEVELOPMENT

5. EVER-PRESENT

Conduct a guided reflection in which students think of a time when they have been lost, hurt, confused, angry. Use symbols and pictures to help students focus their thoughts, eg barbed wire, a bird in sole flight in a vast sky. Students then think of who or what was able to restore their sense of peace and wellbeing.

Students work in pairs, examining one of the following texts which express people's confidence in God. Students create a picture, painting or collage to demonstrate the truth to which the Bible verse points.

Deuteronomy 30:19,20	Joshua 1:8
Psalm 121	Isaiah 40:28–31
Daniel 2:20–23	Daniel 3:17,18
Matthew 18:20	Matthew 28:20
Luke 12:22–31	Romans 5:2
John 14:1 16–18	Ephesians 2:18
Romans 8:38,39	Hebrews 4:16
Ephesians 3:12	Hebrews 10:22
Hebrews 9:24	

6. THE LORD'S PRAYER

A. In small groups students examine the meaning of key words of the Lord's Prayer, both as they are used in the prayer and as they are used in students' own daily life: *father, hallowed/holy, kingdom, will, daily bread, forgive, temptation, deliver, evil.*

B. Students then explore the meaning and focus of the Lord's Prayer.

Students examine the meaning of each petition in the Lord's prayer, referring to the meaning given in Luther's small and large catechisms. From this they put each petition of the prayer into a part of life as set out in TRS D2/2, assessing which aspects of life are addressed in the prayer.

Alternatively, students may list different parts of their lives and see if they can find a relevant section of the Lord's Prayer that would be appropriate.

C. In pairs students rewrite the Lord's Prayer, using more contemporary words and phrases to express the same meaning.

An optional exercise Students make a list of antonyms for each of the key words in the Lord's Prayer, examining the insight this gives to the focus of the Lord's Prayer eg how is the prayer changed by saying: 'Our Father on *earth'* or '*ordinary* is your name'?

7. LIFE'S A STRUGGLE

A. Students examine the last three petitions of the Lord's Prayer:

- *Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us.*
- *Lead us not into temptation,*
- *but deliver us from evil.*

In small groups students discuss the reality of guilt, the need for forgiveness, and the experience of temptation and evil in their own lives.

B. Each group role-plays the struggles, conflict and opposition associated with dealing with guilt, quarrels, temptation, and deciding between right and wrong.

C. Students consider how well some of the New Testament writers describe the reality expressed in the role-plays. In the same groups as above, students look at two of these passages:

Romans 7:15,18-25 James 4:1-6
1 John 2:15-17.

They report to the class on:

- In your own words what is the text saying?
- How is the message relevant to what we have been looking at?

D. You may have students interview an older Christian person to find out the importance of prayer for that person. Alternatively, you could invite some Christian people in to share their experiences and thoughts with the class.

RESPONSE

8. BANNERS

Groups of students create a banner for each section of the Lord's Prayer or one which depicts God's promise to those who come to him in faith.

Alternatively, students design and create a banner using colour, symbols, words to depict any one of the following Christian beliefs about prayer:

- Prayer requires a humble approach.
- Prayer expresses a relationship of faith and trust in God.
- Prayer is for everyone in every situation.
- Prayer is praise, confession, thanksgiving, intercession, asking for needs.
- Prayer is in Jesus' name.
- Prayer is waiting on God.
- Prayer is listening, thinking, acting, responding.

YOU WILL NEED

- ☐ Bibles
- ☐ Luther's small and large catechisms
- ☐ a selection of prayer anthologies
- ☐ materials for making banners
- ☐ optional: a video of *Forrest Gump* or another showing developing relationships
- ☐ TRS D2/1, 2

INTEGRATING INTO OTHER CURRICULUM AREAS

Find out what students are doing in other curriculum areas in relation to

Topics

- communication .....
- personal relationships .....

Skills

- journal-writing .....

UNIT EVALUATION

Which activities worked well in this unit?

Which resources were useful in the implementation of this unit?

How did I respond to the range of students' experiences with prayer and stillness?

How did I respond to the range of students' attitudes towards God and prayer?

What would I do differently if I was teaching this unit again?

How will I use and build on knowledge, understandings, skills, attitudes, and values students have developed in this unit?