

Outcome 1

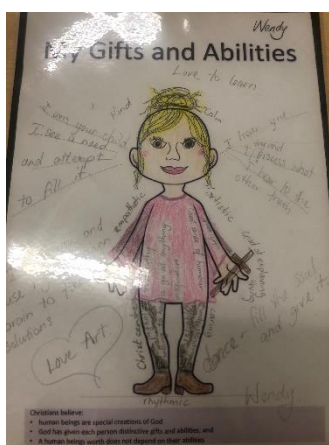
Grace

I had been a dancer from the age of 5 – 15 and heard the adjective graceful more times than I could count. I'd always associated it with a movement that was fluid, a posture that was strong and an appearance that caught the attention for all the right reasons. I had previously thought the word grace was a way people treated others. I previously thought this meant being kind and doing the right thing.

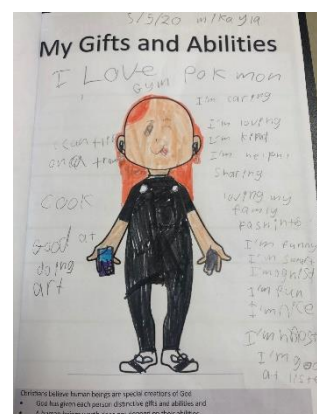
Through my Session One and professional development working at Calvary Lutheran Primary I have begun exploring a very different understanding of the word. The central recurrent theme of Lutheranism is: *'Lutherans are justified by grace through faith'* (Christenson, p45). Christianity.com states, *'Grace is the love of God shown to the unlovely; the peace of God given to the restless; the unmerited favor of God.'* (Christianity.com). The Skit guys refer to grace as *'God's crazy love'* which really resonates with me as it doesn't make sense and it is where God loves us so much even though we don't deserve it.

Grace means that God loves all people no matter who they are or what they have done. *"Grace means there is nothing we can do to make God love us more . . . and there is nothing we can do to make God love us less."* (Philip Yancey). I think this is really an important concept for students. I remind my students regularly that they are unique creations of God and loved by God. They are created just the way they are meant to be with a special mix of gifts and abilities.

Following my exploration of the grace resources I developed a deeper understanding of grace. I created a devotion where students explored their



Staff devotion example showing their unique gifts and abilities



Student example showing their unique gifts and abilities

own gifts and abilities and how these made them unique and special. I was able to support children who compared themselves to others and thought they had no gifts or talents. I was able to remind them that Christians believe that God loves each of us and has blessed us with different abilities and all of these abilities are needed and used by God to help us care and serve each other. Gifts of caring for others are just as important as being able to paint creatively, play the piano beautifully or play sport well. God loves all people, and no one is more special than another. *You are special* by Max Lucado on the Session 1 padlet was a great resource.

I also duplicated this devotion for staff where I initially had staff reflect on their unique gifts and abilities then had other staff members add their observations of that person's unique gifts and abilities. It was the most comfortable I felt doing a staff devotion and by far the most rewarding one I have done.

Within a school setting we practice restorative practices where we reflect the love of God, God's grace, in our relationships with others. We do this when we listen to one another, care for one another and allowing a space for forgiveness during times of conflict. Grace is both a valuable and challenging concept for Lutheran schools. It is helpful as we look to help each student feel loved and special. It is also challenging as even though we are loved we will make mistakes and hurt others, and this can have consequences. This is when God's grace inspires us to forgive ourselves and each other.