

Deep connection, deep belonging

Year 6

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Duration of unit: 1 term

This unit is written as a sequence of learning and needs to be tailored to the needs of the students and time available. Many of the activities in this unit can be further developed if time permits and if student need/interest is there.

Unit overview:

In this unit, students explore **connectedness** and **belonging** as key concepts of spirituality. They investigate personal and community connections (and identifying ways in which these provide (or do not provide) contexts for and expressions of spirituality. They also consider themes of belonging and connection central to traditional Aboriginal spiritual beliefs.

Students also examine some Christian expressions of spiritual connection (eg. prayer, worship, fellowship, devotional practices) and consider their value in deepening a Christian's spirituality.

CSCF Focus:

<p>CW Key idea 2: People express their spirituality in various contexts within and beyond Christianity</p> <p>(minor focus)</p> <p>CC Key idea 3: Christians pray, worship and celebrate the sacraments</p>	<p>CW4.2 Students examine people's need for spirituality and identify how Australians seek to fulfill it</p> <p>CC4.3 Students compare and contrast the origins, intention and diversity of Christian worship practices</p>	<p>Students know: Australian expressions of spirituality</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Indigenous spirituality (eg. The Dreaming, relationship to land) • Cultural rituals and artefacts • Christian spirituality (eg. In daily life, in relationships, in worship) <p>People of all ages and places search for meaning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People make meaning through their relationships with others and belonging (eg. Where do I fit with my family, friends?) • People express their spirituality and search for meaning in different ways <p>Ritual in worship In worship, God acts in word and sacraments and people respond in a variety of ways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God speaks through the word • In holy communion, confession, forgiveness, renewed life is experienced • Sacraments help build community • Prayer • Expressive worship
<p>Central idea: All people have a</p>	<p>Inquiry questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To what are people connected? 	<p>Major assessment task:</p>

<p>deep need to be connected, and express this in various ways.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How are people connected? • What needs do connections meet? • To what extent do connections add value and meaning to people's lives? • How does connection/belonging make people feel? • How do people express their connections to things/people/organisations/ ideas? • How do Christians develop and express their spiritual connections? 	
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Learning overview

<p>Tuning In:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Life is full of connections – have students stand in circle. Hold on to one end of a ball of wool and throw ball to someone else you have a connection with (and name the connection – eg. Sally and I are netball teammates). Continue until all students hold part of the wool and lots of different connections have been made. Afterwards, discuss the question ‘what does it mean to be connected?’ (note responses) and possibly draw out that some connections are superficial, tenuous, others are deeper and concerned with a sense of belonging and shared values or experiences 2. <i>(If possible & appropriate, have access to computers so students can log in to their social networking sites)</i> Discuss online social networking sites students are a part of - what students like about them, what benefits there are, what they add to their daily lives; have students share with a partner the people they are connected to on these sites – who are they? Why are you connected to them? What interactions do you have with them (both online and personally)? Individually, have students attempt to classify the people on their list of ‘online friends’ using groupings they develop (eg. relatives, friends from sport, school friends; or categories like people I’ve only met once, people I’d trust with a secret, people who I enjoy a laugh with, people who make me feel good about myself..) 	<p>Assessment and monitoring:</p> <p>During tuning in activities, take note of any questions that arise on the topic of belonging and connectedness – particularly questions and comments about the significance of connections for people</p> <div data-bbox="1133 957 1657 1292" style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; margin-top: 10px;"> <p><i>This requires teacher sensitivity about the maturity with which students engage in this task – where you think students may make unkind categories you may need to suggest categories! Also consider whether all/most students in the class have social networking pages – if not, they could just think generally about the people they know</i></p> </div>	<p>Resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ball of wool - Computers with access to social networking sites (eg. Facebook)
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<p>3. Model and have students individually create a ‘belonging web’ or matrix on large chart paper (or electronically) where they identify groups that they belong to and note answers to questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - How did I come to belong in this group? - What do we have in common/what unites us? - What do we do in common? - What outward signs or things show we belong? - What’s in it for me? (How does belonging make my life better? Why do I like belonging to this group?) <p>If time, do a Gallery Walk to view each others’ charts and gather further ideas on belonging</p> <p>4. Review connections/belongings explored to this point – discuss the kinds of connections that have been identified – what are they based around (eg. location, common needs, common experiences, genetic bonds, cultural connections, etc). Discuss which connections are most important – why? Which connections meet deeper needs? Which are closely connected with your identity? Which would you struggle to live without?</p> <p>5. Have students review their connections (with individuals and groups) and rank them in importance. Give justifications for these rankings. Invite students to share their reasoning.</p> <p>Finding out and sorting out:</p> <p>6. Ask students about what they understand about the word ‘spirituality’. What does it mean to be ‘spiritual’? Are all people spiritual? How would you know if a person is very spiritual? Share with students (building on prior discussion) that feeling connected and belonging is an important element of spirituality. Belonging to something bigger and important gives meaning, direction and identity. Share the unit’s central idea. Have students complete reflection sheet attached (collect to gauge students’ current understanding and identify questions)</p> <p>7. Group task: To investigate 1 community group/organisation, specifically in terms of how it might fulfil people’s spiritual needs for</p>	<p>Formative assessment: Can students identify and discuss examples of belonging and the importance of belonging? Identify whether or not students are able to recognise deeper connections that give meaning to life. Do they identify spiritual aspects and needs? How will this initial understanding shape the rest of the unit (ie. Am I building on a solid foundation where students recognise spirituality and spiritual needs or not?)</p> <p>Formative assessment: Gauge students’ understanding of the concept of spirituality –may need to spend further time on this if needed – perhaps have them ask/survey others about how they define ‘spirituality’ or in what ways they are spiritual, or find a youtube clip on spirituality</p>	<p>Chart paper & markers</p>
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connection and belonging. Class discussion and brainstorming around:

- a. Groups that could be investigated (eg. cultural groups and associations, hobby groups, families, team sports, clubs, schools, political or social causes, churches and other religious groups) – be specific
 - b. Questions that are worthwhile (eg. How do people become involved and what are their reasons for wanting to be involved? What do people have in common? What builds a sense of belonging to the group? What do people do that shows they belong to this group (including contributions to the group/serving, rituals and customs, etc)? What special items, customs, traditions are there (and how are they meaningful)? How does belonging make people feel? What does the group (and belonging to it) mean to people/members?
 - c. How to find out about the group – phone, email, internet, visit
8. Presentation of group findings: Groups develop a poster or slide show with answers to the key questions about their group, which is then presented to the class
9. **Case study** – belonging and connection in Aboriginal spirituality
Options for developing understanding/finding out include organising a visit to the museum (eg. Queensland Museum’s Dandiiri Maiwar) or Aboriginal cultural centre –viewing exhibits and hearing a talk on Aboriginal spirituality; exploring published information on Aboriginal spirituality (LEQ’s *Faith, Courage & Hope* DVD includes a section on Aboriginal spirituality); inviting a local Aboriginal elder to talk about spirituality, connection and belonging (being aware that this may be a sensitive topic)
Focus is on gathering information about Aboriginal people’s traditional connections to land/sea; stories and customs that expressed the people’s connectedness to land, sea, wildlife and other people; ways in which individuals were connected to others (especially family members); the significance of spiritual ideas and the

Depending on the independence & cooperative skills of the class this may need to be more or less teacher scaffolded and directed. It’s important students identify groups they are interested or involved in. The questions need to highlight aspects of meaning and belonging rather than just ‘what does the group do?’ If students have difficulty with this, there may need to be a combination of teacher questions and student questions. Need also to consider the logistical aspects of data gathering (ie will it be done in own time?) – for this reason it’s easier if students have personal connections with the group

Need access to chosen groups/organisations (contact information, websites)

This case study will be more authentic and meaningful if there is opportunity to have direct input from local Aboriginal people. There are also various perspectives on the nature and role of Aboriginal spirituality, so care needs to be taken so students understand that information and perspectives shared may not be true for all Aboriginal people (as is the case with any group), and that there is both change and continuity in Aboriginal spirituality from ‘traditional’ to ‘modern’ times.

Appropriate resources depending on option chosen

Dreaming for the way Aboriginal people led (or lead) their lives; connections to spiritual beings; artefacts, traditions, ceremonies and rituals that enabled Aboriginal people to express their spirituality
Information gathered can be recorded at a whole class level for future reference

If time, students can work individually or in pairs to choose the idea that they think is the most important out of what was learned and prepare a freeze frame, or visual symbol to represent that.
Students may respond to their learning through reflection on key questions such as What has been new or surprising to you? How does this connect to our previous thinking/work on belonging (how is it similar, how does it build upon it)? What does it make you wonder (about Aboriginal spirituality or about the unit's central idea)?

10. Exploring Christian spirituality and ways Christians express connection and belonging to God and to the Christian community

Ask students to brainstorm ways in which Christians show they are connected to God and to other Christians (eg. attending worship, prayer, Bible study/devotions, fellowship with other Christians, Holy Communion, etc). Very briefly have students share how these practices express/develop connection

Students choose 1 aspect to find out more about (working then in expert groups)

Focus questions: How does this practice build a sense of belonging/connection (to God and to others)? How does this practice make Christians feel? What does it contribute to a person's identity/life as a Christian? What special rituals or artefacts assist in building this connection?

Students find out though either listening to a guest speaker (chaplain, local congregation member) and/or accessing printed information. Record information and present in a selected form (chart/poster/slide show/question and answer)

Sharing information – Use a '1 stay, others stray' strategy (1 group member stays and shares the information they discovered, while

Consider students' growing understanding of spirituality as it relates to the idea of belonging/connection – can students relate Aboriginal spirituality to the central idea of the unit?

Need to know whether students have previously studied the sacrament of Holy Communion (CC4.3), students may have a limited understanding of this

Various art materials, access to computers, depending on mode chosen by students.

This activity could be developed as a formal assessment task

Information in LIFE folders (Bands B-D) is a good place to start – Bible, Holy Spirit, Worship, Prayer concepts

other group members circulate and find out about the other groups' research through talking with their 'stayers'.

Making conclusions:

11. Students individually create a representation of deep belonging and connectedness from their life – a piece of art or a symbol, a word web or poem or letter of gratitude. Students write (or voice record) a reflection which explains how this representation expresses their spirituality
12. Students can use their representation (above) as a starting point for reflecting on the unit as a whole by responding to a number of questions from 'Ways of seeing' (attached)

References and Resource list:

- LIFE folders – for resources/information on Christian practices such as prayer, worship, Holy Communion, etc
- *Faith Courage and Hope: Stories of the Lutheran mission and Aboriginal community of Hope Vale, Cape York Peninsula* DVD – LEQ (2009)
- The Rainbow Spirit Elders (2007) *Rainbow Spirit theology: Towards an Australian Aboriginal theology, 2nd ed.* ATF Press: Hindmarsh, S.A.
- Thompson, D (Ed) (2004) *Milbi Dabaar: A resource book.* Wontulp-Bi-Buya College: Cairns.
- Aboriginal Australia Art and Culture Centre, <http://aboriginalart.com.au/culture/dreamtime.html>
- Australian Museum Online – Indigenous Australia, <http://www.dreamtime.net.au/>
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What do you know/believe or have experienced that supports this statement?

What parts of this statement would you challenge or do you struggle with?

All people have a deep need to be connected, and express this in various ways.

What does this statement make you wonder?

How does this statement make you feel?

Ways of seeing...



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Be open minded...

Look around

- What has surprised you?
- What didn't you expect?

- Do you understand anything differently?

I didn't expect...

Be reflective...

Look within

- How do you feel about this?
- What are the best things? Why?
- What are the challenges? Why?
- How are you changing?

I feel...

Be curious...

Look up

- What are you wondering?
- What would you like to find out more about?
- What questions do you have?

- What has it made you wonder?

I wonder....

Be precise...

Look at

- What are you sure about. What can you now explain to others?
- What examples can you give to support these ideas

I know....

Be strategic...

Look ahead

- What do you need to do now?

What could you do to find out more or improve your work?

Now I need to...

Be empathic

Look beside

How might others see or feel about this?

What are other points of view?

A different way of seeing this is....
.....would say/feel....

Be metacognitive...

Look over

- What do you know now that you didn't know before?
- What do you notice about your thinking?

When I think about all this, I notice I....