

Pathways: theological focus

Learning and teaching encounter



Central understanding

- tension exists within the spiritual and secular sides of education; in curriculum and pedagogy we see the paradoxical relationship at work

Key question

- is learning and teaching different in Lutheran schools?

Biblical narrative

- Paul in Athens (Acts 17:16-32)

Theological perspective

- creation; continuing creation; wisdom

Response

- to issues specific to the encounter

Facilitator theological notes

Focus questions

- Is learning and teaching in Lutheran schools different to learning and teaching in other state or independent schools?
- Does a Lutheran understanding of creation and the nature of the individual impact on a view of the learner and learning in a Lutheran school?
- Can the biblical view of 'wisdom' inform the approach to learning and teaching in a Lutheran school?

A real life scenario

Scenario 1

Ben's mother had made an appointment to see his teacher. Ben's class had been working on a unit looking at animals and birds and the way in which they change and adapt to their environment. In doing their research, some of Ben's group began to include questions about dinosaurs and their disappearance in their inquiries. When Ben mentioned this at home, his parents became quite agitated and his mother rang the school to speak with his teacher. She was concerned that dinosaurs were being discussed in the class since the Bible made no mention of these in the story of creation.

Scenario 2

The teachers of senior English were meeting to select texts for study in the following year. A number of texts had been suggested from the recommended list. Shane objected to one of the texts. "This text is not at all suitable for our students since it deals with homosexuality. It even seems to take an open position in respect to it. Surely we can't use a text like this in a Lutheran school!"

Scenario 3

The school pastor called into the principal's office to raise an issue which had been brought to him by a small group of parents. One of the parents had been providing material about 'intelligent design' to a congregational study group in which he was involved. He had influenced some of the other parents to request that the school should substitute the teaching of 'intelligent design' in science classes in place of the teaching of 'evolution'. They felt that 'intelligent design' fitted much better with the Bible as a 'scientific explanation' of the origin of the world than the teaching of 'evolution' which was inconsistent with the Bible.

Scenario 4

The upper primary cohort of teachers was gearing up for a scheduled meeting time and the topic under discussion was to be *Approaches to mental math*. The pressure had been on for some time. Racing against the clock, speed and accuracy, mental math exercises (sets of ten questions) as the sole diet for mental math had come under fire from Erin and Jason who were pushing for approaches that promoted better understanding and allowed for greater entry/exit points for students. This, they said, was more aligned with the direction the school was taking with pedagogy anyway. Some of the group, however, were holding out saying that, from parent and secondary perspectives, it was an expectation that students learn their mental math facts this way as it prepared them better for their school years ahead. The others countered that it seemed to be at odds with what they were saying as a school about how learners learn, and the best ways for learning to occur.

Facilitator theological notes

Scenario 5

The staff meeting had been going very well until the issue of the admission of Sam as a student at the school came onto the agenda. He had been accepted as a student after he had been asked to leave his previous school because his disability had caused major problems there. 'Why should we bring another special needs student into the school?' was the question raised by a couple of teachers. They pointed out that there were already a number of students who were demanding an unfair share of the limited time of the special needs teacher and there wasn't any way the school would be able to provide extra assistance for her on the existing budget allocations. 'What about the needs of some of the other students who might benefit from additional resources? We need to be able to extend some of the students who have particular gifts, rather than put most of our resources into students with disabilities we can't really cope with.' The discussion about resources also sparked off again the unhelpful disagreement between the music teachers and the PE teachers about who most needed additional teaching staff to reduce their work loads.

Scenario 6

Caitlyn called together some of the year 11 and 12 teachers to discuss a problem she had encountered in preparing the timetable for the next year. With additional periods required to meet new requirements for some subjects, she was looking at possibilities for creating spaces in an already full timetable. Shaun pointed out that this discussion happened every year about this time and that the solution was really quite simple. 'Why don't we reduce or even cut out the Christian Studies periods? The students say that they find them boring and it's basically a waste of good teaching time.'

Facilitator theological notes

(...cont)

A biblical insight

Preamble

In considering learning and teaching, questions such as 'Who?', 'Why?', 'What?' and 'How?' come to mind. Who learns and why do they learn? What do they learn and how? How is teaching related to learning, and learning to teaching?

As was discussed in *God's living word encounter*, we cannot regard the Bible as a textbook of educational philosophy, psychology, theory or methodology. However, there are relevant biblical insights for our consideration of these issues.

Narrative: Paul in Athens [Acts 17:16-32]

St Paul was a highly educated man having completed one of the best educational programs of his time. He appreciated his Jewish background and heritage and also the value of the insights and culture of the Greek and Roman [Hellenistic] world in which he lived and worked. However, Paul was also very sure that all of this learning was not of any value when it came to understanding about God and his plan of salvation. This was accessible only through God's revelation of his will and purpose for humanity [1 Corinthians chapters 1 and 2].

In Athens, Paul found himself in discussion with the intellectual elite of his time. He joined in their debates as they questioned him about his 'new teaching'. Instead of raising concerns about the many gods worshipped in Athens, Paul commended the Athenians on their religious practices but also found an immediate point of entry into their thinking through the altar 'to an unknown god'. Building carefully on this, and even including quotations from the Greek poets, Paul was able to introduce a wide-ranging consideration of creation, humanity, the nature of God, justice and ultimately the life, death and resurrection of Jesus.

Although Paul was ready to use all of the insights of the Athenian philosophers, he was not ready to compromise in any way on what he saw as the crucial content of his message, particularly the teaching of resurrection from the dead which was unpopular amongst some of the Athenians.

In this biblical narrative we see Paul operating within his cultural context using various insights from that context in a situation of learning and teaching which also became an opportunity for witness. Paul began from an interest in religion and a consideration of creation as a common starting point because this was something in which all his hearers shared. The doctrine of creation is a very useful starting point too for considering learning and teaching in the Lutheran school as it gives insights for understanding the persons involved in learning and teaching as well as providing guidance in areas such as purpose, content, and methodology.

Facilitator theological notes

(...cont)

Aspects of theology of creation

Introduction

The theology of creation provides important insights for considering learning and teaching. However, in dealing with theology of creation in this context, only relevant aspects of this extensive area of theology will be considered.

'Original creation' [*creatio ex nihilo*] and 'continuing creation' [*creatio continua*]

Lutheran theology identifies two closely related but clearly distinguished areas of theology of creation. Both of these are significant in considering learning and teaching.

'Original creation' refers to the beginning of time when God created everything out of nothing [*'ex nihilo'*]. It emphasises that God is the creator of everything, separate from creation which was called into existence by the creative word of God. 'Continuing creation' emphasises that God has not withdrawn from creation but continues to work within it, caring for and protecting creation and creating new life so that creation continues. In this continuing creation, God operates through human beings as participants and agents in God's creative process [theology of vocation].

God is the creator

Many biblical passages speak of God as the creator [eg Genesis 1 and 2, Psalm 104, 19, 33, 95, 136, Isaiah 44:24-28; 45:9-13]. This understanding of a creator is not unique to the biblical material but is seen in different ways in many religions as Paul indicated in his speech in Athens. Some form of creator is also common to Australian Indigenous spirituality. However, the biblical material emphasises that God created out of nothing or brought order into chaos. God is the creator and is not to be confused with the creation since there is an absolute distinction between the creator and what was created. Creation is therefore totally dependent on the creator who called it into being through his creative word.

God's creation is 'good'

All that God created is 'very good' [Genesis 1:31]. It was 'good' because it was exactly as God had intended it to be. Even after sin marred what God originally created, it is still 'good'. Certainly God's good creation can be abused and perverted and we see the effects of sin also in the destructive fury of nature, but faith in God still allows believers to see the goodness of creation and the gifts God gives in creation. It is important not to develop dualistic thinking which sees creation as totally corrupt and no longer the means through which God continues to care for all which he created and through which people can enjoy the gifts of creation. God invites us to share in the joy and wonder of creation [Psalm 8, 104, 136:1-9].

Human beings are the high point of creation

Whatever understanding we may have of the process of creation [which is not the focus of the biblical material], the Bible emphasises that human beings are a special creation of God [Psalm 8:4-6]. In fact, they are seen as the climax or crown of God's creative work. Even though God cares for all of creation, including the sparrows [Matthew 10:29], human beings are unique and different from all other living things which God created. Genesis 2:7 speaks about the special creation of human beings: God formed the person from the dust of the ground and breathed God's breath [in Hebrew the word can be translated as 'breath', 'spirit' or 'wind'] into the person who became a living person. Therefore a human being is both dust [at one with the earth from which the person was taken and to which the person will one day return] and God's breath [spirit].

Facilitator theological notes

(...cont)

Human beings are created 'in the image of God'

Genesis 1:26-28 emphasises the uniqueness of human beings in another way. Human beings [male and female] were created 'in the image of God'. While there is considerable debate amongst biblical scholars about how to interpret these words, there is general agreement that it does not mean that humans look like God [who is spirit] nor that it is seen in capacities such as reason, speech, or intelligence which can be seen to distinguish humans from the animal world.

From a biblical perspective, 'image of God' indicates that human beings are created for fellowship with God. They are able to know God, believe in God, love and obey God. Even though Christians recognise that through the advent of sin the image of God is now deeply fractured, Christians also understand that the image of God is gradually being restored in them by the power of the Holy Spirit as they grow in holiness [Ephesians 4:22-24; Colossians 3:9-10].

The 'image of God' is also recognised in the responsibility which God has placed on human beings to be his representatives on earth to take care of creation [stewardship on behalf of God]. While human beings are given the responsibility to exercise control over the creation [Genesis 1:28] they are to take care of that creation [Genesis 2:15] and not exploit or misuse or abuse creation.

Human beings are created as unique individuals

Theology of creation teaches that each person is created as a unique individual with distinctive characteristics, gifts and abilities. Each person, therefore, has individual worth and value in the eyes of God. This value of the individual rests not only on God's creative work but also on the fact that Jesus has died for each person and that the Holy Spirit offers faith to each person and lives within each believer. This is the basis for realistic self-awareness, self-identity and self-acceptance.

While theology of creation emphasises the importance of each person, it also stresses that individuals are created for inter-dependence rather than independence. The importance of relationships will be considered in *Caring relationships encounter*.

God continues to create and care for creation

The Bible emphasises that God has not withdrawn from creation. He continues to work in it and preserve it [*'creatio continua'*] using human beings as his agents [the 'masks' of God]. The theology of creation does not see God like a clockmaker ['theism'] who set the world into motion and now allows it to run by itself. Theology of creation also recognises that God is present in disasters and tragedy [cf *Strength in weakness encounter*].

Lutheran theology sees that people operate in various areas of responsibility in the world such as the family, employment, society, government, the church, etc. [cf *Two ways God cares encounter*]. These areas are referred to as 'orders of creation' through which God continues his creative activity.

Creation and sin

As has already been indicated, all of creation has suffered through human sin. This has profoundly disrupted all relationships, those between the individual and God, the individual and other people, the individual and the rest of creation and also the individual within him/herself. The impact of this will be further explored in *Expression of freedom encounter* and *Caring relationships encounters*.

Facilitator theological notes

(...cont)

Creation and 'wisdom'

The so-called biblical 'wisdom literature' provides some of the most profound insights into learning and teaching in the Bible. This literature is found in various places, but most clearly in the so-called 'wisdom books' of Job, Psalms, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, and particularly in Proverbs. In these writings, 'wisdom' is closely related to theology of creation. In Proverbs 8:22-36, wisdom is personified and she is portrayed as being involved in creation. [This can be compared with the way in which John speaks about Jesus Christ, 'the Word', being the agent of creation in John 1:1-18.]

The book of Proverbs states clearly the starting point for an approach to 'wisdom' [9:10]: 'The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom'. The Bible recognises that since God is the creator of order out of chaos, becoming wise begins with the recognition of this fact. This leads to respect for God, confidence in God, worship of God and respectful submission to God. These attitudes enable a person to be in tune with God and they create a listening heart, open to God, through which God can provide insights that lead to wisdom. Being wise in biblical terms is to live in harmony with God and God's creation. It means respecting and using that creation as servants of the God of creation. It results in fitting into the cosmic order and also into the social orders such as family which God has created. Fearing God means to place oneself in reverent humility and trust under the instruction of God and so to live under God's will and purpose for creation.

The biblical concept of 'wisdom' recognises that wisdom grows out of the accumulated experience of people. It means valuing the past as well as being challenged by the future. It accepts that our understanding of creation will always remain partial. While we enjoy God's creation and can use all human ingenuity and expertise to investigate it and try to understand it, explain it and see God's plan in it, we can never do so fully. It also emphasises the importance of helping students to search for truth, recognising the interrelatedness of life and encouraging attitudes of wonder, mystery and celebration.

However, the Bible also emphasises that human wisdom apart from Jesus Christ is 'foolishness'. Sin has corrupted all of God's good creation, including the search for wisdom. Separated from 'fear of the Lord', wisdom becomes the opposite of what it should be and leads people away from God. Only God's revelation in Jesus Christ can bring all this back into true perspective. Paul outlines this clearly in the first two chapters of 1 Corinthians. There is a clear link here with 'theology of the cross' and the recognition that ultimately true wisdom is the work of the Holy Spirit in the life of people.

Jesus Christ and the 'new creation'

Because of the broken relationships brought about by sin [cf *Expression of freedom encounter* and *Caring relationships encounter*], Jesus Christ became part of his own creation and suffered with humanity and the whole of creation: 'the Word became a human being' [John 1:14]. Through his miracles, Jesus demonstrated his creative power over creation in stilling the storm, raising the dead, healing the sick, etc. Jesus provides redemption for all broken relationships and in him a new creation has become a reality [Colossians 1:15-20]. In Christ, as God's new creation [2 Corinthians 5:17], Christians are empowered by the Holy Spirit to live as God's people in the world [Ephesians 2:10]. Through his death and resurrection, Christ initiated a new kingdom which is a foretaste of the end of time when there will be a new heaven and new earth [Revelation 21:1-4]. Through faith in Christ, sins are forgiven and finally God will be reunited with God's people in heaven.

However, the Bible teaches that until the end of this age all creation will 'groan' under the weight of the problems caused by sin [Romans 8:19-25]. But in Christ, Christians look forward to the new creation.

Facilitator theological notes

(...cont)

Responding to issues relating to theology of creation and learning and teaching in Lutheran schools

1. Is there a 'distinctive Lutheran' approach to learning and teaching based on theology of creation?

In considering learning and teaching in Lutheran schools, the best insights from educational philosophy, theory, psychology, history, pedagogy, etc, must be brought together with relevant insights from theology. While it may be difficult to argue that this produces a 'distinctly Lutheran' approach which is different from schools from other theological traditions, it is important that Lutheran schools develop an 'authentic approach' which consistently incorporates a Lutheran theological basis. This also means that Lutheran educators need to evaluate continually how they approach learning and teaching to maintain this 'authentic approach'.

The LEA framework, *A vision for learners and learning in Lutheran schools* [2005] provides a clear presentation of 'Beliefs about learning'. It is not only crucial that all teachers in Lutheran schools are aware of these, but that there is an on-going re-evaluation of these both educationally and theologically if Lutheran schools are to be and to remain 'authentic'.

2. Theology of creation and the individual

The theology of creation reminds us that all people are made in the image of God and are unique and special creations. This influences the way we view others in the school community and value them as individuals irrespective of factors such as social status, culture, religious belief or situations in life. Creation theology reminds us that while all people are to be equally valued and appreciated each person is different not only in appearance but also in relation to personal attributes and abilities. For this reason, there will be a diversity of educational ability in every classroom and students will react in different ways to the learning situation.

Learning and teaching will have to be planned to enable all students to have the opportunity to develop as individuals and to explore their God-given talents. Learners with special needs are catered for within a setting of acceptance and recognition of their uniqueness. Again here the LEA framework, *A vision for learners and learning in Lutheran schools* [2005] provides 'Beliefs about learners' which are crucial for Lutheran educators.

3. The learning community

Creation theology stresses that people are created for relationships. In Genesis 2:18, God said, 'It is not good for the man to live alone. I will make a suitable companion to help him.' The nature of the learning community is important for the success of learning and teaching. The LEA framework, *A vision for learners and learning in Lutheran schools* [2005] outlines 'Beliefs about learning communities' which are important guidelines for Lutheran schools to use in evaluating their own communities.

4. The learning and teaching curriculum

Since creation theology teaches that everything has been created by God and that everything was 'good' [according to his plan], all of God's creation is open for exploration in the process of learning and teaching. This means, for example, that insights from the arts, from literature, from science, from philosophy and all other human investigations and researches are relevant to the Lutheran school curriculum. While from time to time there may be some areas where the relationship between reason and revelation seem to be in some sort of tension, this does not allow the Lutheran school to simply ignore those matters or rule them out of consideration.

Facilitator theological notes

(...cont)

In this regard it is important to recognise that different areas of human investigation operate with their own paradigms and students will need help in understanding these. However, as they explore creation and try to understand how God has ordered creation so that it operates as he had intended [apart from the impact of sin], students will develop critical awareness in respect to truth and the distinction between 'provisional truth' and 'absolute truth'. If Jesus' claim to 'be the truth' is accepted, then all truth must relate in some way to Jesus Christ and what he has revealed to us.

From this perspective, any exploration which looks for truth is relevant in Lutheran schools. The Lutheran school curriculum is free to explore areas such as the relationship between science and revelation also in respect to the origin of the universe. It means that careful and sensitive introduction of contentious social and moral issues are a vital part of such a curriculum. Here careful explanation will be necessary also to parents.

5. **Responsibility for creation**

Creation theology links human beings with the ground from which they were created as dust made alive by the breath of God [Genesis 2:7]. It also emphasises God's mandate that human beings are to be careful and responsible stewards of all that God has created. Lutheran schools should therefore be leaders in learning and teaching related to issues such as ecology, care for the environment, social justice, global perspectives, distribution of wealth, and similar concerns. As discussed in *Two ways God cares encounter*, this applies to both ways in which God cares for the world. It is therefore relevant to all members of the Lutheran school community whether or not they recognise God as creator. Learning and teaching in this area should go beyond an awareness of these matters to the promotion of lively participation in activities which promote responsible stewardship in the local and global community.

The theology of vocation is relevant here. Students need to become sensitised to the various areas of responsibility in which they can serve others. They can be helped to appreciate that they can use their gifts and abilities not only for their own benefit, but in serving others.

6. **Learning and teaching and the biblical concept of 'wisdom'**

The link with creation in the biblical concept of wisdom provides interesting and important insights for learning and teaching. In starting with the presupposition that the human grasp of truth can only remain partial, it recognises there is an aspect of mystery and wonder in creation which human beings can enjoy and celebrate but not fully understand. However, this is not an excuse for ignorance but a stimulation for further exploration and investigation while recognising that the starting point for all of this is 'the fear of the Lord'.

Biblical wisdom recognises as well the interrelatedness of life and the unity of knowledge. This emphasises the importance of helping students to grow in their understanding of integration and to develop patience in becoming more aware of reality. A question arises here about the appropriate time for students to specialise in their learning and so leave behind important areas for a rounded approach to life. Students also need to appreciate that wisdom is based on the accumulated experience of people. An appreciation of the past and input from other cultures is important here. Very often the emphasis can seem to be rather more heavily on the present and the fascination of the future.

This is a real challenge in an environment which often operates with instant access to disconnected data and individual fragments of information through the various means of rapid communication provided by ever developing technology. Learning in Lutheran schools can help students appreciate the benefits of technology while recognising their limitations in the accumulation of wisdom.

Facilitator theological notes

(...cont)

7. **Christian Studies a core area of learning and teaching in the Lutheran school**

Learning and teaching in Lutheran schools takes very seriously the spiritual and religious dimension of learning. Only such learning addresses the development of the whole person. While in Lutheran schools there is a concern for the Lutheran heritage of the schools, there is also an openness in the Christian Studies Curriculum Framework [CSCF] to the exploration of other faith experiences and their impact in the world. The pedagogy to enable this to happen in the school is clearly presented in the CSCF materials.

An important question here is whether Christian Studies can be more than a core area of learning and teaching. Following the biblical concept of wisdom, can Christian Studies provide the integrating framework for the whole school curriculum? Even for students who may not share a faith in Jesus Christ, involvement in a curriculum which takes seriously the spiritual dimension can provide a very helpful basis for a full and purposeful approach to life even if aspects of that world view are subsequently rejected. Such a curriculum recognises that there is truth which lies beyond our immediate comprehension but which is reflected in our best human endeavours.

Discussion questions

1. Is the approach to learning and teaching presented in the LEA *A framework for Lutheran schools* consistent with theology of creation?
2. Can we emphasise the uniqueness of each person in the school without fostering individualism?
3. How can we help students to see themselves as part of God's 'continuing creation'?
4. Is 'intelligent design' a helpful approach to creation and how does it relate to the biblical teaching of God as creator?
5. Can the doctrine of creation provide a framework for an approach to 'special needs' in education?
6. What important insights does the biblical understanding of 'wisdom' provide for exploring learning and teaching in the Lutheran school?
7. Can the CSCF be seen as providing the 'integrating framework' for the whole curriculum in Lutheran schools?
8. Do Lutheran schools foster a deep concern for the environment and stewardship of creation?
9. Is using a constructivist approach to learning and teaching consistent with the claim that Jesus is 'the truth' and with a biblical understanding of 'wisdom'?
10. Why is theology of vocation important in considering learning and teaching in the Lutheran school?

References and further reading

BLS (2001) Session 4 Two ways God cares, *Theological Orientation Program for Staff (TOPS)* 2nd edition (pp. 6-9) Adelaide: BLS.

CTICR statements on creation available online <http://www.lca.org.au/lutherans/doctrinal.cfm>

Christenson, T. (2004) *The gift and task of Lutheran higher education*, Minneapolis: Augsburg Fortress (pp 37-42).

LEA (2005) Key idea 1 Christians believe that God creates people to live in relationship with him and with each other, *Christian Studies Curriculum Framework Theological Notes* (pp. 38-41). Adelaide: LEA.

Luther's Small Catechism and Large Catechism: explanation to the First Article of the Creed.

McCutcheon, Felicity, 2009. 'Resilience – two approaches', *School Link*, July 2009, vol 15:2, (pp 1-2).

Purposes of the *Learning and teaching encounter*

The purposes of this encounter are for participants to:

- explore the question: is learning and teaching different in a Lutheran school?
- engage with a Lutheran understanding of creation, and the nature of the individual, and consider the implications this has for a view of both 'learner' and 'learning'
- consider how an approach to learning and teaching might be informed by a biblical view of 'wisdom'

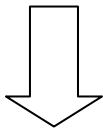
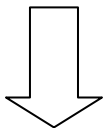
Plan for the *Learning and teaching encounter*

- welcome and introductions
- orientation to the encounter (setting out)
- exploring information, developing understandings (gathering pace)
- sharing perspectives, discussing questions, developing understandings (multiple views)
- reflecting on learning (in a quiet place)
- close

Facilitator encounter preparation checklist

- ☐ read *Facilitator theological notes*
- ☐ read *Workshop*, select and prepare handouts needed
- ☐ have copies of handouts and resources participants may need on tables ready for them
- ☐ prepare a pre-recorded interview or invite staff for interview if using that *Setting out* option
- ☐ make adjustments to Slides 4 and 5
- ☐ organise a place/places where participants can access internet
- ☐ have weblink live and ready, and be familiar with it
- ☐ find music to play during *In a quiet place* phase
- ☐ have available coloured highlighters, coloured textas, chart paper
- ☐ collect materials and items needed for Short Trails (Bibles will be needed for some, as will *Six Mysteries – Six Challenges* and copies of your school's special needs policy)

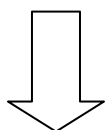
Workshop

<p>Welcome and introductions (5 minutes)</p>	<p>Welcome participants to the encounter: <i>Learning and teaching</i> Introduce yourself and if needed make time for participants to introduce themselves to each other. Ensure everyone has the material for the encounter.</p>
<p>Setting out (15 minutes)</p> 	<p>Show Slides 2 and 3 Share the purposes of the <i>Learning and teaching encounter</i> with participants and briefly outline how the workshop will run.</p> <p>Show Slide 4 Invite participants to choose from the following options:</p> <p>Option 1: Walk and talk Participants set off in pairs, taking turns to talk about one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • how their view of learners and learning has grown and changed from student days up until now • changes and adjustments they have made to their teaching approach since teaching in a Lutheran school • issues or concerns they have with teaching approaches in the school • differences they have found in curriculum content since teaching in a Lutheran school • issues or concerns they have with curriculum content in a Lutheran school • the nature of interactions between adults and children in the school and their response to these <p>(see <i>Walk and Talk in Handouts</i>)</p> <p>Option 2: Interviews Invite the principal and/or staff member to share thoughts on a recent event where issues relating to learning and teaching have been the subject of educational-theological dialogue. Alternatively, <i>A real life scenario</i> from <i>Participant Theological Notes</i>, or one of the discussion questions, at the end of <i>Participant Theological Notes</i>, could also provide the topic for this option.</p> <p>Option 3: Pair and share Participants read <i>A real life scenario</i> in <i>Participant Theological Notes</i>, then pair up and talk about similarities and differences with their own experiences for one of the scenario options.</p>
<p>Gathering pace (40 minutes)</p> 	<p>This phase has two parts. Show Slide 5</p> <p>Part 1: Reading and responding Refer participants to <i>Participant theological notes</i> and ask them to read <i>A biblical insight</i> and <i>Aspects of theology of creation</i>. To set the scene, some images of the Areopagus could be viewed at the following links:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.mccullagh.org/photo/1ds-12/areopagus-hill • http://www.stoa.org/athens/sites/acrogeneral/source/p20024.html • http://www.stoa.org/athens/sites/acrogeneral/source/p20025.html • http://www.padfield.com/2001/areopagus.html <p>(Note that these images are also included in the Arts Short Trail as part of one of the options for participants)</p> <p>By way of responding to the read theological material, invite each participant to create two mind maps, one for 'creator' and one for 'creation':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflecting the components of each • showing the interrelationships and connections between them <p>Each could then compare their individual effort with another participant, reviewing the way they have represented their understandings.</p>

Workshop

(...cont)

Gathering pace ...cont



Part 2: Short Trails

Show Slide 6 and distribute *Short Trails* (see *Handouts*)

Invite participants to further explore Learning and teaching individually through any one of the following *Short Trails* available online at

www.lutheran.edu.au login to the member area and select

Resources/publications then *Pathways* then *TRIAL MATERIAL ONLY Pathways: theological focus*. If the facility is available bring the screen up to show participants the options as a whole group, or select and provide some that can be explored in hard copy (see *Resources Short Trails*)



Arts Short Trail: This *Short Trail* allows for exploration from musical, visual art and historical/archaeological perspectives. Specific and general aspects of the theology of creation are the focus.



Pedagogy Short Trail: In this *Short Trail* participants are invited to think more deeply about the connections between the theology of creation and an approach to teaching. Beliefs about learners, learning and learning communities also come under the microscope.



Reading Short Trail: Additional readings, from a range of sources, can be used by participants to expand, extend and challenge their thinking about learning and teaching. They should record and highlight any significant statements that expand their thinking and add weight to the material already studied.



Curriculum Short Trail: Participants consider implications the theology of creation has for matters such as care of the environment and eco-justice, the prevalent 21st century paradigm for 'living life', and the themes around which education in a Lutheran context might take place.



Lutheran Education/School Policy Short Trail: Lutheran Education Australia publications and policy are explored in this *Short Trail* so that participants can make connections between the theology in which they have been immersed and its relationship to those LEA documents.

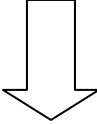


SMS Short Trail: Summarise, More views, Synthesise
Participants work with any of the three options:

- significant statements
- questions
- responses and quotes

Workshop

(...cont)

<p>Multiple views (40 minutes)</p> 	<p>Participants gather, bringing their recorded responses up to this point, and any other material they have recorded or developed from their personal engagement with the <i>Short Trails</i>. Work with the discussion questions in the <i>Participant Theological Notes</i> and refer to <i>Responding to issues relating to theology of creation and learning and teaching in Lutheran schools</i>.</p> <p>Option 1: Whole group approach Show Slide 7</p> <p>The group agrees by consensus on a list of questions they wish to discuss, including questions that have arisen as a result of their reading and engagement with <i>Short Trails</i>.</p> <p>Use a discussion strategy such as <i>Round</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• everyone sits or stands in a circle and responds to the same question• they think about their response, or write it out, for a minute and then have 30 seconds each to respond• this ensures all have a chance and opportunity to speak• follow with open discussion <p>Refer to <i>Responding to issues relating to theology of creation and learning and teaching in Lutheran schools</i> in <i>Participant theological notes</i> as necessary.</p> <p>Option 2: Small group approach Show Slide 8</p> <p>Ask participants to form groups of four. Each group agrees by consensus on a priority order for the questions they wish to discuss. Use a discussion strategy such as <i>Placemat</i> (see <i>Resources</i>). For one minute each person writes responses to the chosen question in their section of the placemat. Then in turn they have 30 seconds each to share their responses. This ensures that all participants have a voice. Follow with open discussion. Refer to <i>Responding to issues relating to theology of creation and learning and teaching in Lutheran schools</i> in <i>Participant theological notes</i> as necessary.</p> <p>Work through as many questions as possible in the time given. To bring this phase to a close, restate the purposes for the encounter and the means by which you have achieved that (refer to Slides 2 and 3 for purposes and plan).</p>
<p>In a quiet place (10 minutes)</p>	<p>Distribute copies of <i>POWW</i> (see <i>Handouts</i>) Show Slide 9</p> <p>Invite participants to find a quiet spot where they can be comfortable while using the prompts to reflect on their experience, their thinking and their learning.</p> <p>Play some restful, peaceful background music.</p>