

Living the Law of Love

In this unit students explore the qualities and responsibilities of friendship. They reflect on the sacrament of Penance and connect healing and reconciliation to their experiences of friendship. At the conclusion of the unit students contribute to prayer, and plan and participate in a friendship expo.

DOCTRINAL FOCUS

In planning to teach this unit the following references from the Catechism of the Catholic Church and the Compendium of the Catechism of the Catholic Church are recommended:

#1823 Jesus makes charity the *new commandment*. By loving his own ‘to the end,’ he makes manifest the Father’s love which he receives. By loving one another the disciples imitate the love of Jesus which they themselves receive. Whence Jesus says: ‘As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you; abide in my love’. And again: ‘This is my commandment, that you love one another as I have loved you’.
(See *Compendium* #388 *What is charity?*)

#1825 Christ died out of love for us, while we were still ‘enemies’. The Lord asks us to love as he does, even our *enemies*, to make ourselves the neighbour of those furthest away, and to love children and the poor as Christ himself.
(See *Compendium* #595 *How is forgiveness possible?*)

#1829 The *fruits* of charity are joy, peace and mercy; charity demands beneficence and fraternal correction; it is benevolence; it fosters reciprocity and remains disinterested and generous; it is friendship and communion: Love is itself the fulfilment of all our works. There is the goal; that is why we run: we run towards it, and once we reach it, in it we shall find rest.
(See *Compendium* #401 *In what does the social dimension of man consist?*)

#2844 Forgiveness is a high-point of Christian prayer; only hearts attuned to God’s compassion can receive the gift of prayer. Forgiveness also bears witness that, in our world, love is stronger than sin. Forgiveness is the fundamental condition of the reconciliation of the children of God with their Father, and of men with one another.

SPIRITUAL REFLECTION FOR TEACHERS

What is a friend? Is friendship about being social or is there more to it? Is mateship the same as friendship? Can friendship have a spiritual dimension? What does God have to do with friendship?

There are many ways to experience friendship – good friends, close friends, casual friends, friends over a lifetime, friends that belong to an experience or period of time. In friendship we find not only companionship but also self expression. We find not only attraction but also trust and reverence.

Albert Schweitzer says of friendship, ‘Sometimes our light goes out, but it is blown again into flame by an encounter with another human being. Each of us owes the deepest thanks to those who have rekindled the light’.

What friendships are or have been significant for you? What is it about them that has had an impact on you? What is friendship about for you?

LINKS WITH STUDENTS' EXPERIENCES

Students have many and diverse understandings and experiences of friendship. They know its joys and delights, and many have experienced its pain and fragility. *What do students associate with friendship? What does it look like, feel like, sound like for them? How do they describe a good friend? When have they experienced the difficulty of friendship?*

Bullying, dealing with difference and handling conflict are issues for some students. Some relate easily to their peers, while others may need support to develop appropriate skills and ways of thinking. *How is the command 'love one another' put into action in the life of this classroom?*

Each student has the capacity to hurt and to heal. *How does the figure of Jesus Christ guide students in the ways of forgiving?*

EXPLANATION OF SCRIPTURE

Jn 13: 34–35 I Give You A New Commandment

In this passage John establishes the approaching death of Jesus Christ as the ultimate example of love. The command to love one another reflects the self-offering of Jesus, the supreme example of love. The disciples and the Christian community for whom John wrote were called to love and to be of service to one another, following the example of Jesus Christ, who is the model of true love. The formulation of this new commandment became the distinctive mark of the Christian community.

POSSIBILITIES FOR PRAYER AND WORSHIP

- Silent reflection/journaling: Read Jer 31: 33–34. Play some quiet music as students respond to the following: 'Think of a time today, or this week, when you had to make a choice to do, or not do, something you knew was right and good. What did you eventually choose to do? How did you feel?' Allow students to share responses if they wish. Conclude with a song reflecting the message of the scripture passage.
- *Lectio Divina*: Slowly read Jn 13: 34–35. Invite students to choose a word or short phrase from the reading. Invite them to close their eyes and be still, aware of their breathing, and introduce the word or short phrase silently into their meditation. Allow a few minutes of silence for this. Conclude by rereading the text from John's Gospel.
- During class prayer share the preface 'In you we live and move and have our being ...' from the 'In Tradition' section of *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 15, p. 122. Reflect on what this might mean in our lives.
- The Jesus Prayer: Use the text from the 'In Tradition' section of *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 12, p. 96, as a mantra. It could also be used as a sung mantra. A group of students might compose a sung version of the text.
- Participate in a celebration of the First or Second Rite of Reconciliation.

- At the end of each day, bless the students with a Cross on the forehead and the words of blessing found in 'Our Prayer', *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 3, p. 24. There is a sung version of this prayer, 'May God Bless and Keep Us' (Christopher Walker, *Out of Darkness*, OCP Publications) that the class may use for this unit.

Related Chapters – *KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 4: Chapter 3, We Are God's Work Of Art; Chapter 12, Experiencing God's Forgiveness and Healing; Chapter 15, Love One Another.

Faith concepts: love, respect, relationship, friendship, forgiveness, healing, reconciliation.

Seeking understanding:

How can I be a good friend?

What are the qualities of a good friend?

How does Jesus Christ invite Christians to be good friends?

Understandings:

Jesus Christ is the model of Christian love and respect.

Through friendship people learn about themselves, about others and about God.

Sometimes friends need forgiveness and healing.

People experience God’s love and forgiveness through their friends.

The sacrament of Penance is a celebration and sign of God’s love and forgiveness.

Scripture Text: Jn 13: 34–35.

Unit specific learning:

Students will learn about	Students will learn to	Students will undertake to
<i>Knowledge and Understanding</i>	<i>Reasoning & Responding</i>	<i>Personal & Communal Engagement</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The words and actions of the Second Rite of the sacrament of Penance. • The sacrament of Penance as a celebration and sign of God’s love and forgiveness. • Formal prayers of forgiveness, i.e. Act of Contrition, Penitential Rite, The Lord’s Prayer, Lamb of God, and Confession of Sin. • The qualities and responsibilities of being a good friend. • Their own experiences of forgiveness and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reflect on their experiences and perceptions of friendship. • Express their feelings, perceptions, beliefs and ideas about forgiveness in light of new learning. • Make connections between their experiences of friendship and the Church’s teaching about forgiveness and reconciliation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in the sacrament of Penance.

healing.

PHASES OF STUDENT INQUIRY

Additional Reading for Teachers	Orientation to Inquiry <i>What do students already know, think or feel in relation to the topic? What are students' questions about the topic? What experiences and reflections can we offer students to become engaged with the topic?</i>	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning
<p>Lectio Divina is an ancient but very rich way of praying with a passage of Scripture. A passage is read slowly, perhaps several times. Time is allowed for a word or phrase to rise from the Scripture. This word or phrase becomes the focus of the prayer time. It continues with a further period of silent 'rest' in God's presence, and concludes with a final reading of the passage.</p> <p>Forgiveness is one of the great characteristics of the Christian faith. God forgives people their sins and faults, but each person too is required to be a forgiving person. In fact the words of the Lord's Prayer, which Jesus Christ himself taught his disciples, asks God to 'forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us'. Sometimes friends and family let us down as we sometimes let them down. Forgiveness of each other, as God forgives us, restores the bonds of love and friendship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Setting the Scene: John 13: 34–35 <i>Lectio Divina:</i> Read Jn 13: 34–35. Invite students to choose a word or short phrase from the reading. Invite them to close their eyes and be still, aware of their breathing, and introduce the word or short phrase silently into their meditation. Allow a few minutes of silence for this. Conclude by rereading the text from John's Gospel. In their journals students record their reflections in response to the prayer and Scripture. 	<p>Assessment as Learning Throughout the unit students are invited to use a journal to reflect on and monitor their learning.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graffiti Board Display large sheets of paper around the room. In the middle of each sheet write key words from the scriptural text on paper, e.g. friendship, Jesus Christ, love, reconciliation and forgiveness. Students write or draw any ideas that are sparked by the words. Leave these sheets up for the duration of the unit and add changes as students' ideas grow and develop (see 	<p>Assessment for Learning These tasks will indicate students' understanding, perceptions and experiences of friendship and reconciliation.</p>

	Murdoch, K, <i>Classroom Connections</i> , pp. 19–20).	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finish the Sentences Students are given the opportunity to consider the qualities of a friend by completing the following sentence starters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – A good friend is someone who ... – The thing I look for in a friend is ... – I am a good friend when I ... – Jesus was a good friend when ... <p>Students can dramatise, illustrate, write about, concept map or chat to a classmate about their responses.</p> <p>Compare and contrast students' responses in the whole grade.</p>	
Additional Reading for Teachers	Development <i>What experiences and religious texts will provide new learning for students? What skills will students need in order to work with these resources? What strategies and tools will enable students to think and reflect on these experiences and texts? How will students process their thinking and learning?</i>	Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Story Read a story or view a film about friendship such as <i>Shrek</i> by Dreamworks, <i>Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten</i> by Bob Graham, <i>The Tunnel</i> by Anthony Browne or <i>The Hurt</i> by Teddi Doleski. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Discuss the qualities of friendship reflected in the stories. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Discuss how the characters are good friends to each other. - Discuss when the characters are not such good friends, and how these times are resolved for each character. <p>Students create people paper chains, cutting out linked people. On each person write a quality that they look for in a good friend (see Elliot, M, <i>A-Z Learning Strategies</i>, p. 92).</p>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Journal Writing Write up the following statement for students to reflect on: 'One of the qualities of a good friend is to forgive, say sorry, make peace'. - Where in your life do you experience love and forgiveness? - When have you had to say sorry to someone? How did you feel? How might the other person have felt? - How did you make things right? <p>Students record their reflections through words and pictures in their journals.</p>	<p>Assessment as Learning Students use a journal to reflect on their experiences and perceptions of forgiveness.</p>

The Hebrew words for **sin** mean to shoot an arrow and ‘miss the mark’. The Christian understanding of sin is that it is a deliberate choice to do wrong or to be unfaithful to God’s law of love. There are, of course, degrees of sinfulness. All sin impedes our relationship with God.

Venial sin is less serious and usually involves self-interest and self-centredness. **Mortal sin** kills the life of God in us (mortal comes from the Latin word for death) and is a fully conscious and deliberate decision to think, say or do something that we know seriously contravenes the law of God. Mortal sins must be confessed to be forgiven.

- **Prayer Think Pad**

To make connections with the prayers of forgiveness of the Church provide each group of students with a copy of one of the following prayers: The Act of Contrition, Penitential Rite, Confession of Sin (Confiteor), Lord have Mercy, the Lord’s Prayer, the Lamb of God (*KWL*, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 18, pp. 150–151).

Each group records in one or two sentences (**WORDS**) what the prayer is about; they create a couple of **SYMBOLS** which represent the meaning of the prayer; they draw **PICTURES** that indicate when these prayers are prayed in the Church; they write or draw the kinds of experiences (**CONNECTIONS**) or times that these experiences relate to (see ‘Scriptural Think Pad’, White, D, *Into the Deep*, pp. 82–84).

Words	Symbols
Pictures	Connection to Life

<p>The sacrament of Penance and Reconciliation is one way in which we can seek forgiveness for our sins. In this sacrament we celebrate God's mercy and our own change of heart. We admit our wrongdoing to God through the priest, express our sorrow, and receive forgiveness – this is called absolution. We are given a prayer or an act of self-denial to carry out in sorrow for our sinfulness and as an expression of our resolve to turn towards God and away from sin.</p> <p>Another way in which we seek forgiveness is at the Mass. St Ambrose, a great and important teacher in the fourth century, said, <i>'If we proclaim the Lord's death, we proclaim the forgiveness of sins. If, as often as his blood is poured out, it is poured for the forgiveness of sins, I should always receive it so that it may always forgive my sins'</i>.</p> <p>Many prayers of the Mass ask for God's mercy and forgiveness. The Penitential Rite does so explicitly. The Communion Rite in several places asks that we might be freed from sin and that God will have mercy on us. The Sign of Peace provides the opportunity to share the peace of Christ with others before Holy Communion.</p>		
<p>The Structure of the Second Rite of Reconciliation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductory rites (song, greeting and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read and Discuss Students read <i>KWL</i>, 2nd edn, Year 4, Chapter 12, pp. 94–95, 98–99. Pose 	<p>Assessment for Learning Students' responses to the posed questions may indicate students' attitudes to and valuing</p>

<p>opening prayer)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liturgy of the Word – we listen to the Word of God • Readings, responses and homily • Examination of conscience – we reflect on our lives • Rite of Reconciliation – we say we are sorry for our sins • General confession of sin • Individual confession and absolution – we tell our sins to a priest who gives us a penance and absolution • Proclamation of praise – we come together again to thank God and rejoice in being forgiven • Prayer of thanksgiving • Concluding rite • Blessing and dismissal 	<p>the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What are the parts of the Second Rite of Reconciliation? – What are the similarities and differences between the Second Rite of Reconciliation and the rite that is celebrated in the parish? Or at your celebration of First Reconciliation? – How do you/others feel before and after the Rite of Reconciliation? – Does Reconciliation affect how you treat your friends? – What is the most important reason for you to celebrate Reconciliation? <p>Make a class display or class documentary about the Rite of Reconciliation that features students' responses to the above questions.</p>	<p>of the sacrament of Reconciliation.</p>
<p>Additional Reading for Teachers</p>	<p>SYNTHESIS</p> <p><i>How will students demonstrate their understandings, beliefs, values, skills and feelings in relation to the topic? How will students take action based on their learning? What strategies and tools will enable students to discern their action, to plan and implement action and to evaluate their action?</i></p>	<p>Assessment: for learning, as learning, of learning</p>
<p>There are many reasons to regret something we have done wrong: we may simply fear punishment; we may feel embarrassed or uncomfortable; or we might be deeply sorry because we know that what we have done has hurt another person, or is against the fundamental Law of Love for God and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-Reflection Students reflect on a time that they needed to seek forgiveness: what they did, why they are sorry and what they did to restore peace. <p>After reflecting on this time students</p>	

<p>neighbour.</p> <p>There is a progression in the moral awareness of human beings, but at whatever stage we are, the important thing is recognising that we have done wrong and being sorry. This is called contrition. Then it is possible to make a fresh beginning by naming the sin: confession; receiving the forgiveness of God: absolution; and making up for the wrong we have done or the pain we have caused: satisfaction.</p>	<p>write their own prayer of sorrow and develop their own 2D or 3D symbol to represent what forgiveness means to them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prayers of Sorrow <i>1st line</i> WHO is the prayer to? e.g. Loving God... <i>2nd line</i> WHY are you praying? <i>3rd line</i> WHAT you did and WHEN? <i>4th line</i> A promise <i>5th line</i> END with AMEN (Ryan, M, <i>Expressions Book 1</i>, p. 36) 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Friendship and Forgiveness Expo Students demonstrate how they understand friendship and forgiveness through comic strip, digital images with captions, drawings, paintings, sculptures, songs, or poems. Alternatively, students may exhibit the 2D/3D symbols they created in the previous task. 	<p>Assessment of Learning Students' responses will demonstrate how they understand the place of forgiveness in friendships.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sacrament Students participate in the sacrament of Penance. 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of Prior Thinking Students use the 2D/3D symbol of forgiveness and the images from the exhibition to compare what they now understand about friendship and forgiveness with their responses in the orientation phase. 	<p>Assessment as/of Learning This activity will indicate development in the students' understanding of forgiveness in the light of new learning.</p>

RESOURCES

To Know, Worship and Love, 2nd Edition

Year 4: Chapter 3, We Are God's Work Of Art; Chapter 12, Experiencing God's Forgiveness and Healing; Chapter 15, Love One Another.

Teacher Resources

Elliot, M 2005, *A-Z Learning Strategies*, Brisbane Catholic Education Office, Brisbane.

White, D 2003, *Into the Deep*, KD Publications, Marayong.

Ryan, M 2003, *Expressions Book 1*, Social Science Press, Riverwood.

Student Resources

Blabely, A 2007, *Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley*, Penguin.

Browne, A 1989, *The Tunnel*, Julia McRae.

Fox, M 1984, *Wilfred Gordon Macdonald Partridge*, Puffin Books.

Graham, B 1992, *Rose Meets Mr Wintergarten*, Penguin Books.

Paterson, D 2003, *Bridge to Terabithia*, Harper Collins.

Film

Bridge to Terabithia 2006, fantasy adventure, Disney and Walden Media.

Charlotte's Web 2006, adaptation, Paramount.

Shrek 2007, animation, Dreamworks.

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION STANDARDS

This unit may be used to assess some of the Level 3 standards.

Students interpret key actions, signs and symbols of liturgy and sacrament by providing a meaningful explanation of their significance.