

**STRAND** *CHRISTIAN LIFE: The flourishing of human persons, the common good of societies, shared responsibility in relation to creation.*

**VALUES AND PURPOSES** *Being a person of hope and resilience  
Making connections  
Growing to fullness of life  
Biblical and religious inquiry and literacy  
Participation in the prayerful, liturgical and sacramental life of the faith community*

**ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS** Students will be given the opportunity to explore the nature of change and loss in relation to changes in creation, the seasons and in the life cycle of people and animals.

They will explore feelings related to the experience of loss and death, and gain insights into the variety of ways that families, cultural groups and the Church celebrate the life of the departed.

Students will gain some understanding of the Christian concept of eternal life.

Strand	Doctrinal Concepts	Catechism Reference
God	2. God is always present. 3. God is experienced on other peoples love for us. 4. God invites us to respond in love.	220 308 357
Sacraments	2. The Church is a sacramental community.	1118
Christian Life	1. <b>I am precious, unique and loved by God</b> 2. <b>Jesus shows us how to live.</b> 4. <b>In times of happiness and in times of sadness and loss people can experience God's love in their care for each other.</b>	27 460 1829, 1942, 2300, 2301
Christian Prayer	4. Prayer involves rituals, symbols, celebrations and silence.	2663

LINKING WITH OTHER RESOURCE BANKS	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
	I Am Loved By God	<b>Grief and Loss</b> <b>Loving God and Others- Our call To Mission</b>	Circle of Life

**STUDENT CONTEXT** Students at this level may have limited understanding of time, growth, change and cycles of life. Our lives and the world around us are constantly changing. In the change process, loss is common to all. Pets die and leave children grieving. Some children experience the death of loved grandparents and they are growing in awareness that people are sad when their loved ones die. For some the understanding of the finality of death is not understood. For many students family experience of separation and divorce is a painful reality. Students at this level are beginning to be able to understand and describe their feelings in a more reflective and insightful way. They are also growing in the awareness of the grief of others and how they can be supportive.

Students at this level are able to share their experiences openly and willingly. Students may need to be helped to appreciate that all feelings are healthy and appropriate. How we handle them is important.

'Grief is not a bad thing and it won't cause children or adults to go mad or to die as long as there is enough love, understanding and support available.' *The Grief of Our*

**THEOLOGICAL  
BACKGROUND  
FOR TEACHERS**

- It is through the rhythm of the cycles of life that the believer comes to experience and understand God as ever present, loving, sustaining, forgiving and caring.
- Through the cycles of life we see God's creative action made visible.
- In creation we see the constant pattern of birth/beginnings, life, death and rebirth.
- Death is not the end of human existence but the beginning of new life. (Guidelines for religious education of students in the Archdiocese of Melbourne 1995)
- Our hope as Christians is that as Jesus was raised from the dead, so we too will be raised from the dead and enjoy eternal life with God.
- It is in the face of death that the riddle of human existence becomes most acute.
- Although the mystery of death utterly beggars the imagination, the church has been taught by divine revelation, and herself firmly teaches, that man has been created by God for a blissful purpose beyond the reach of earthly misery.

**Gaudium et Spes 1965 (GS)**

- For God has called man and still calls him so that with his entire being he might be joined to him in an endless sharing of a divine life beyond all corruption. Christ won this victory when He rose to life, since by his death he freed man from death. 1 Cor, 15:56-57 GS
- Through Christ and in Christ the riddles of sorrow and death grow meaningful. GS
- Life is changed not taken away. *The Funeral Liturgy*.
- At the Second Coming of Christ, all things will be renewed and the Kingdom or reign of God will appear in its fullness.

*The communion of all members of the church both those now living and the saints in Heaven is one of the distinguishing beliefs of the Catholic Church. This belief is generally referred to as "the communion of saints." GS*

**SCRIPTURE Teacher Reference NRSV**

**1 Thessalonians 4:13, 14, 18**

But we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers and sisters about those who have died, so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have died. Therefore encourage one another with these words.

**Romans 6:8-9**

But if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ, being raised from the dead, will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him.

**John: 11:25-26**

Jesus said to her, 'Your brother will rise again.' Martha said to him, 'I know that he will rise again in the resurrection on the last day.' Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. Those who believe in me, even though they die, will live, and everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?'

**Student Reference CEV**

**John 14:1-4**

*Jesus Is the Way to the Father*

Jesus said to his disciples, "Don't be worried! Have faith in God and have faith in me. There are many rooms in my Father's house. I wouldn't tell you this, unless it was true. I am going there to prepare a place for each of you. After I have done this, I will come back and take you with me. Then we will be together. You know the way to

where I am going."

**Matthew 5:4**

God blesses those people  
who grieve.  
They will find comfort!

**1 Corinthians 2:9**

But it is just as the Scriptures say,  
"What God has planned for people who love him  
is more than eyes have seen or ears have heard.  
It has never even entered our minds!"

## Planning a Learning Sequence

<b>LEVEL FOCUS</b>	God invites me to love and care for myself and others.
<b>OVERARCHING GOAL</b>	Example: God is always present in the cycles of life. Loss, dying and death are part of the natural cycle. Grief is associated with loss and it is the Christian challenge to care for self and others when they grieve, as St Paul says, ' <i>so that you may not grieve as others do who have no hope</i> '.
<b>GENERATIVE TOPIC</b>	Example: What do we know about beginnings and endings and lifetimes in between?
<b>UNDERSTANDING GOALS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are many losses that cause people to grieve eg sickness, migration, disability, relocation, separation, death of pets, theft, broken toys, being adopted.</li><li>• We remember that God loves each of us and gives us life.</li><li>• When someone we love dies we remember and celebrate their life.</li><li>• Some understanding of rituals associated with loss is important.</li><li>• Sometimes we feel sad when things change.</li><li>• Birth, life and death is the cycle of life</li><li>• God is present and active in all cycles of life</li><li>• Christians believe in eternal life and we talk about Heaven</li><li>• We are sad when someone we love dies.</li><li>• We can feel sad when people we love move away and leave us.</li><li>• Feelings are important in our lives.</li><li>• It is helpful to express our feelings of loss. These feelings are part of grief. To grieve is part of loving and saying goodbye.</li><li>• There are ways each of us can support those who grieve.</li><li>• Death does not hurt; a dead person does not feel; the correct word to use is dead/death; when sad people cry it is healthy and good; death is not catchy; death is final; when we grieve it is good to discuss our feelings and concerns with adults who love us; when we grieve we will not always feel sad; when we grieve it is good to hold a ritual so we can say goodbye and share our grief.</li></ul>
<b>INDICATORS OF LEARNING</b>	Students should be able to: <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Explain changes that take place in life cycles and seasons.</li><li>2. Thank God for the gift of life.</li><li>3. Identify some rituals used to say goodbye to loved ones.</li><li>4. Name and express some feelings associated with loss and some ways we can support others who grieve.</li></ol>

## Suggested Assessment Strategies

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- Order the life cycle of a frog or butterfly, or the seasons, and name some of the changes that take place.

- Children contribute a prayer to a class book titled “In my life I thank you for.....”
- After reading the story or watching the video “The tenth good thing about Barney” children draw some of the aspects of loss.
- EEKK (Teaching Strategies Resource Book p 23) after completing EEKK children complete the statement “We can help people when they are sad by.....”

## *Suggested Learning and Teaching Experiences*

- **Focusing Activity:** Do a KWL (Teaching Strategies Resource Book p 21) about death/funerals. Explore with the children issues they raise. Be sure to teach the essential vocabulary.
- Read about life cycles. Discuss that all living things have stages of development. Collect pictures of babies, toddlers, children etc.
- Make a poster about a life cycle of a creature and label it.
- Ask the children to interview their parents to talk about their parents and other ancestors.
- Invite a mother with a baby of a few months into the classroom and discuss the baby’s needs and growth. Ask the mother to bring in clothes that no longer fit the baby.
- With the help of the children’s families have each child make a poster with photos to show his/her development to date.
- Have a Think/Pair/Share (Teaching Strategies Resource Book p 49) of the different responsibilities they have had and expect to have at each stage of their lives.
- Discuss Jesus’ growth from a baby to a child to an adult. Make a Time-line of Jesus’ life.
- Plant some fast growing seeds and chart their development.
- Make a “Memory Book: after reading “Wilfred Gordon Mc Donald Partridge” about things they did or can remember about some of the things that happened to them when they were younger.
- Ask the children for an anniversary date of a relative/friend who has died and include all names and dates in an Anniversary calendar. Pray for the person on the anniversary. Start up a prayer book, children add to this book throughout the year.
- Use a feelings poster and share experiences when these feelings have been felt. Extend the children’s feelings vocabulary.
- List ways in which they can help someone who is grieving. Role play
- Make a ‘Feelings Book’ in which the children can name and illustrate as many feelings as they can think of. Have a class activity that divides the feelings into two divisions eg those we like to have and those we don’t like to have. Explore ways we can lessen the intensity of those we do not like.
- Compose and present a Liquid picture (Rina Wintour Just Imagine) based on John 14:1-4
- Read “*Beginnings and Endings with Lifetimes in between*”
- Watch the video “*Charles Caterpillar*” and discuss the changes from caterpillar to butterfly. Children complete Sequencing activity (Teaching Strategies Resource Book p32)
- Discuss the changes in the seasons. Draw a symbol for each season.
- Read “*If Nathan Were Here*” discuss the feelings that Nathan’s friend was feeling

- Discuss with the children if they know of anyone who has died. Discuss how people reacted, was there a funeral, what happened at the funeral, what did people do afterwards?
- Discuss how it is important to share memories about a person after they have died.
- Introduce children to the Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick. Show children the oil that is used. Invite the Parish Priest to talk about his ministry to the sick and the bereaved.
- When appropriate the children can make cards for a grieving person.
- Consider making or contributing to a memorial garden in your school/parish
- Devise a prayer service using Matthew 5:4 as the main response
- Using the scripture passage 1Corinthians 2:9 children participate in a guided meditation.

## Resources

### Highly Recommended Resources

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Fox, Mem (1984) Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge  
 McKissock Dianne (1998) *The Grief of our Children* ABC Books  
 The Dougy Center for Grieving Children (1999) *35 Ways to Help a Grieving Child* The Dougy Center  
 The Dougy Center When Death Impacts Your School (1999) The Dougy Center  
 Ryan, M. (2003) *Expressions* Book 5 The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick  
 Social Science Press Australia  
 Mellonie, B. & Ingpen, R. (1989) *Beginnings and Endings with Lifetimes in between* Penguin Books  
 Zagdanski, Doris (2001) *What's Dead Mean?* Hill of Content Melbourne

### Community Resources

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Parish Priest  
 Funeral Ministry Team

### Teacher Resources

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Wezeman Vo P, Fournier J.D, & Wezeman K.R (2002) *Guiding children through life's losses - Prayers, Rituals & Activities*. Twenty-third Publications  
 Ryan, M. (2003) *Expressions* Book 5 The Sacrament of Anointing of the Sick  
 Social Science Press Australia  
 Wintour, R. Just Imagine  
 Herbert Martin (1997) *Separation and divorce: Helping Children Cope* PACTS ACER  
 Nelson William D (1992) *Helping Children Understand Death* OP  
 AEC Resource Booklet  
 The Dougy Center for Grieving Children (1999) *35 Ways to Help a Grieving Child* The Dougy Center  
 The Dougy Center When Death Impacts Your School (1999) The Dougy Center  
 McKissock Mal and McKissock Dianne (1997) *Coping With Grief* (ABC Books  
 McKissock Dianne (1998) *The Grief of our Children* ABC Books  
 Parker, Judith (1995) *Understanding Grief and Loss* AECA Resource Book Series  
 Pearson, Mark and Nolan, Patricia (1995) *Emotional Release for Children* Australian Council

### Student Resources

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#### Literature

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Bahr M & Jerome K. A (2000) *If Nathan Were Here* Cambridge  
 Brown, Laurene Krasny and Marc, (1986) *Dinosaurs Divorce* Little, Brown and Company OP  
 Brown, Laurie Krasny and Marc, (1996) *When Dinosaurs Die* Little, Brown and Company  
 Carle, E. (1969) *The Very Hungry Caterpillar* The World Publishing Company

Croser, Josephine (1989) *Tiddycat* Collins OP  
Dumbleton, M & Denton, T. (2001) *Passing On* Random House Australia  
Fox, Mem (1989) *Sophie* Drakeford/Watts  
Fox, Mem (1984) Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge  
Kent, Lisa (1993) *Love is Always There* Paulist Press OP  
Mellonie, B. & Ingpen, R. (1989) *Beginnings and Endings with Lifetimes in between* Penguin Books  
Osman, Trudy and Carey, Joanna (1990) *Where has Daddy Gone?* Mammoth  
Perkins, Ginny, and Morris, Leon (1996) *Remembering Mum* A & C Black London  
Stickney, Doris (1982) *Water Bugs and Dragonflies* The Pilgrim Press  
Thomas, Pat (2001) *I Miss You* Hodder Wayland  
Wild, Margaret (1989) *The Very Best of Friends* Margaret Hamilton Sydney  
Wild, Margaret (1995) *Old Pig* Allen and Unwin  
Wild, Margaret (199?) *Toby*  
Winsch, Jane Loretta (1995) *After the Funeral* Paulist Press  
Wise, Margaret (1965) *The Dead Bird* A Young Scott Book OP  
Zagdanski, Doris (2001) *What's Dead Mean?* Hill of Content Melbourne

## Music

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Brown, M. (2001). There's a time. *God delights in you*. [CD]. Australia: Emmaus  
Mangan, Michael and Herir, Peter (1997) *We Rejoice!* Litmus Pubs  
Mangan, Michael and Herir, Peter (1997) *We Are All Saints* Litmus Pubs  
Mangan, Michael and Herir, Peter (1997) *Care For Life* Litmus Pubs  
Mangan, Michael and Herir, Peter (1997) *Till the End of Time* Litmus Pubs  
Mangan, Michael and Herir, Peter (1993) *Song For Change* Litmus Pubs  
Mangan, Michael and Herir, Peter (1993) *Look At The Cross* Litmus Pubs  
Mangan, Michael (1995) *O Queen of All* Litmus Pubs  
Mangan, Michael (1993) *The Day of the Lord* Litmus Pubs  
Mangan, Michael (1993) *We Believe* Litmus Pubs  
Vivaldi's Four Seasons

## Audio-video Resources

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(1986) *The tenth good thing about Barney* Educational Media Australia  
*Charles Caterpillar* Veritas Australia  
(2003) For the Juniors *Friendship – Losing Friends* ABC Education Schools  
Video Program Sales  
Teacher Resource *Inside your Feelings – Children dealing with Loss and Grief* Video Education Australasia  
(1999) Edna *The Eagle* 23<sup>rd</sup> Pub  
(1983) *Grandma's Bread* Franciscan Communications  
(1999) *The Fall of Freddie the Leaf* AIMS Media  
World Wide Web / Internet

<http://kidsaid.com> KIDSAID, a companion site of Griefnet, is described as a safe place for kids to share and to help each other deal with grief about any of their losses. Very "kid friendly" in its design and content, eg places for children's stories, artwork, questions.

<http://www.griefaustralia.org> This is the website for the National Association for Loss and Grief (Australia) Inc, or NALAG (Australia). This website aims to maintain, present and promote a national perspective and action on issues relating to loss and grief.

<http://reachout.com.au/index.asp?mci=3&mwi=2&rtii=18.html>

Reach Out: Factsheet. Suggestions for managing grief. Things that may be helpful while grieving. Managing grief can be really hard. This factsheet has some suggestions that may help you to get through this time

<http://www.aboutourkids.org/aboutour/articles/grief.html>

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