

Year 6

Religion: CHRISTIANITY

Area of Study: BELIEFS AND QUESTIONS

Theme: TRINITY / IMAGE OF GOD



Celtic pattern embroidery

Photo by Beth Boast

First Steps

The main focus of this unit comes from the themes of **trinity and the image of God**; God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. It is one way in which to explore the Area of Study **Beliefs and Questions** from a Christian viewpoint. It concentrates on the main question “**what key beliefs do people hold about God, the world and humans?**” The unit starts with the children’s own experiences of mystery through Mobius strips. They explore Celtic and other Christian symbols of trinity and try to make their own complicated pattern that represents oneness. They investigate how the Holy Spirit is seen in the Bible and how the trinity is expressed in Christian art and music in different ways. They create their own image or song to try to explain the ideas. They talk to a member of a local church to find out about their views on the image of God / Trinity and use them to design an altar cloth which could then be selected by the church and made by the class. Children work together to prepare a talk like an expert or teacher to explain symbolism in a selected image of God / trinity.

Consider the best place to teach this unit in the year. It is meant to be taught with the other two units about Human Responsibility for the Environment and Suffering and Happiness, but does not necessarily have to be taught first. Does it have any cross curricular links that you can tie in e.g. art / DT? Are there any visits planned that might have links to this unit? When are they taking place? Do you want to book a visit or visitor to coincide with this unit? How much advance planning will that need? Would it be better at the start or the end of the unit? Will there be a cost implication? What resources do you already have in school that could be used? Do you have text books in school that could be used to give information to the children or teachers? If the text is not useful, are there pictures in the books that children might find useful? Do you have any artefacts that will be useful in this unit? Can software like Espresso help you?

Finally, how will you assess what the children have achieved? How will you keep a record their work when it is not a written piece? Encourage the children to write on photos you take of their activities expressing what they felt and thought when they were working and to reflect on what they have learned by doing the activity.

Starting the Unit

- Create Mobius strips. (maths links possible here) A mobius strip is a long strip of paper made into a loop with a half twist put in) Try

http://mathssquad.questacon.edu.au/mobius_strip.html for easy ideas and instructions or www.dadcando.com. There is a picture by Escher which shows this – Mobius Strip II (Red Ants). How many sides does it have (inside and outside). Colour the strip by starting at the join on the outside and work your way around. What happens? (you keep colouring until you come back to where you started) So how many sides does it have? How is this possible? Cut the loop in half along the strip. What happens? Do you get 2 new loops? (one large loop). Try cutting the loop starting about one third of the way down and keeping that distance all the way down (like peeling an apple in one strip). What happens? (you get a big loop with a little one connected to it). Try putting two twists in the circle and cut it. Try different things with the strips. How do they work? Can it be easily explained? It is like a mystery. Christians often speak of Jesus as a mystery.

- Look at the idea of mystery and what it means to not know everything about something. A mystery is something beyond ideas and there are different ways of explaining it. Tell the children that in this unit they may think of their own way to explain it.

Developing the Theme

- Look at Celtic trinity symbols (e.g. Book of Kells – try <http://historymedren.about.com> for lots of free images or www.celticnetwork.com for general information) and Celtic crosses and designs– try www.celticcolours.com for information and images. Discuss what the circle might mean around the cross. Look at the patterns that are one big loop – symbolic of God as eternal and never ending. Use St Patrick’s image of the shamrock – three leaves but one plant.
- Ask the children to make a tied loop with wool or string. Cross it over itself to make patterns and swirls – it is more complicated but still one circle. Make a three pointed shape with it – it is still one piece although it has 3 corners.
- Children can make their own Celtic type pattern to show oneness of God. Art.
- Early Christians came from a tradition where God was unseeable; Jesus, however was clearly visible to them and the disciples, so how could they reconcile the two ideas? “He is the image of the invisible God.” They decided to explain that God was above them, Jesus was God along side them, and the Holy Spirit was God inside them.

- Look at mentions of the Holy Spirit appearing in the Bible; Matt 3:13 but same passage appears in other gospels; look also the Pentecost story Acts 2: 1 - 5
- Explore the Three in One / trinity and images of God. There are many images of the Trinity on the internet. Try to find ones that show the Trinity in different ways e.g. as a native American. Discuss the images with the children. They could create their own visual representation of the Trinity. Try www.faithclipart.com or www.textweek.com has a lot of images that might be useful.
- Look at Christian songs and prayers that mention the image of God or the Trinity. Children could make up their own prayer or song verse – possible music link. E.g. www.truevinemusic.com has a good song called Glory Be which explores the trinity.

Possible assessment opportunity

AT1 L4 use a developing religious vocabulary to describe and show understanding of sources, practices, beliefs, ideas, feelings and experiences.

AT1 L5 explain how religious sources are used to provide answers to ultimate questions...

- Design an altar front for a local church. What images of God / trinity would be suitable? Ask a member of the church in to discuss with the children what the church would like / is appropriate. Children should then design an altar front. The Church could then pick their favourite design which the children could make. DT textiles link.
- Try to find an image of Rublev's Icon. Look at Rublev's Icon: contemplating the Trinity, Inwardly and Outwardly by Paul Fromont – can be found through the prodigal kiwi site. This explains different images in the icon.
- Ask the children to work in pairs to give a talk on the symbols in this image or in others of your choice.

Reviewing

- What is a good mother? Write down qualities as children think of them. What are the qualities that a good king should have? A good shield? A good father? Creator? Judge? Look at these in groups. Share what they groups have produced for their own word as you write them up. Discuss who might have all of these qualities? These are all ways that God is viewed by Christians. Which of these qualities would you like to have / be? Would you like to talk to someone who had all these qualities?

- <http://www.ceosyd.catholic.edu.au> has teacher notes and ideas about views of God found in the Bible.