

First Australians: Outcomes and Activities

God is Love Year 6

Spiritual Awareness: God is forgiving, patient and kind

Racial tolerance is all about patience and kindness. Each respective culture needs patience in understanding the other. Each culture needs to view cultural differences through the eyes of Christ. How did Jesus relate to those who were different? Culture contact in the history of Australia has caused conflict between European and Aboriginal Australians. Part of this conflict has occurred because of wrong attitudes on the part of the Europeans. In the early 1900's, due to the acceptance of Darwin's theory of evolution, Europeans regarded Aboriginal people as 'the missing link' between apes and humans. Aboriginal people were shot like animals, their children taken from them and their culture devalued. As a result of this treatment, many Aboriginal people have suffered from problems of low self-esteem.

The mistakes of the past have had a severe impact on the Aboriginal people of today. The blame for these mistakes has been placed upon missionaries of the day, when in fact government institutions were largely responsible. Col Stringer writes, in *Discovering Australia's Christian Heritage*:

"People are quick to write and voice their horror about how the early church and professing Christians...mistreated Aborigines....However, one must remember the days in which these people lived were far different from those of today's 'enlightened' society. A sadly neglected fact is that it was most often these very men and women of God that helped those who were being oppressed, often standing between them and a violent death at the hand of some bloodthirsty mob."

There is now a desperate need for white Australians to show Aboriginal people that they are truly sorry for what has happened in the past, and for God's love to be shared. Aboriginal people need to feel that they are valued people and recognized for all they have to contribute to our society.

Biblical references

Matthew 18:21-22; Colossians 3:12-13; Ephesians 4:32 - We should forgive one another.

John 3:16 - God's love for the whole world.

Acts 10 - Peter called to the Gentiles.

1 John 3:11-18 - Love one another in word and deed.

Luke 10:25-38- The Good Samaritan

Luke 10:27; Matthew 22:39 - Love the Lord with all your heart...and your neighbour as yourself.

1 Corinthians 13:14 - Love is patient and kind.

Acts 10:34 - God treats everyone on the same basis.

James 2:1-9 - Warning against prejudice.

John 13:34 - A new commandment...love one another.

Key Questions

Who were the first Australians?

Where did Aboriginal people come from and how did they get to Australia?

Why were Aboriginal people killed, or pushed into the desert regions by some of the Early White settlers?

What does God think about Aboriginal people?

What do Aboriginal people think about white people?

What can we learn from Aboriginal people?

How can Christians show God's love towards Aboriginal people?

Outcomes

Knowledge

- Develop an awareness and an understanding of the elements of traditional Australian Aboriginal Culture.
- Understand the unique relationship of Aboriginal people with the land.
- Understand some of the impact that Early European settlement had upon Aboriginal people.
- Recognize why conflict arose between Aboriginal people and Early European settlers and how this has affected contemporary Australian society.
- Understand that Aboriginal people came to Australia post Flood, an event which happened approx 4,000 years ago
- Understand the diversity of Australia's first peoples and the ways Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander peoples are connected to Country and Place (land, sea, waterways and skies) and the implications for their daily lives
- Recognize why conflict arose between Aboriginal people and Early European settlers and how this has affected contemporary Australian society

Skills

- Compare and contrast cultures through discussion and debate.
- Identify different points of view.
- Research/investigate traditional Aboriginal/Torres Strait Island traditional through interview, internet, non-fiction resources.
- Communicate findings through a written assignment or oral presentation.
- Develop conflict resolution strategies.
- Sequence event chronologically.

Values

- Appreciation of Aboriginal/Torres Strait Island culture
- Fair treatment
- Respect
- Recognition that Australian are made up of different people groups from different backgrounds, but all equal in the sight of God
- Desire to show Christ's love, kindness and compassion to those in need

Activities

- Research traditional Aboriginal culture: beliefs, customs, homes, food, survival skills, tools and weapons, art, music, roles.
- Build or make a model of traditional shelters.
- Study Aboriginal devices such as the firestick, boomerang and woomera. Make a model. Explain how they were constructed and operated.

- Compare lifestyles of Aboriginal people living in different parts of Australia today e.g. urban / rural / Arnhem Land
- Locate information on Aboriginal contributions to Australian society.
- Paint in the traditional Aboriginal style using patterns, simplified animal shapes and typical colours.
- Draw the Aboriginal flag and discuss the significance of the colours.
- Make a list of Aboriginal place names and their meanings.
- Research the history of Australian settlement and discuss the way in which Aboriginal people were treated.
- Discuss reasons for Aboriginal children of last century being taken from parents and given English names.
- Discuss and debate issues such as land rights.
- Discuss connection with the land and their respect for the creation.
- Discuss the Dream Time and compare it to the Creation.
- Read some Aboriginal legends, and Aboriginal flood stories.
- Read the story of *Nabor the Aboriginal*. Discuss the actions of Nabor and the way in which he put into practice the words of Jesus.
- Study the biographies of European missionaries who had a positive effect in bringing the gospel without destroying culture.
- Discuss the role of patience in culture contact: Have Australian Aboriginal people shown patience towards white Australia? Have white Australians shown patience towards Aboriginal people?
- Discuss the importance of saying sorry on the one hand, and forgiveness on the other hand. How do these attitudes contribute to the reconciliation process?

Project: Write a report on life of Aboriginal people before the arrival of Europeans (*First study the following information.*)

What was life like for Aboriginal people before the arrival of the Europeans?

How did Aboriginal people come to Australia?

Where did Aboriginal people come from to Australia?

How long have Aboriginal and Torres Strait islander people been here?

What was life like for Aborigines before Europeans arrived?

How did Aboriginal people use native plants?

What type of shelters did Aboriginal people build?

How did Aborigines make tools?

Did Aborigines speak different languages?

How did the Aboriginal people get to Australia?

All people of the world had their origins in the Middle East, where God separated people into language groups at the Tower of Babel. From there, groups set out to places all over the world.

Studies on how the Aboriginal people got to Australia have suggested that they traveled from Africa to “the land Down Under”. They gradually made their way to islands of Southeast Asia through a series of dangerous sea journeys.

There are indications of the last voyage, probability being between the northern Kimberley coast and Timor, involving a hundred to four hundred people. This involved four days to a week of rowing on a raft or hand-made boat, and the most advanced planning skills and strategies.

These people would have brought with them the Dingo. If we look at the Dingo of the New Guinea highlands, and the Bali Street Dog we can see some similarities. The New Guinea singing dog is genetically closer to those dingoes that live in southeastern Australia than to those that live in the northwest.

There are physical similarities between the Bali Street Dog and the Australian Dingo. Contrary to often held belief the Australian Dingo does not only have a red/brown coat. Dingoes also come in solid black and solid white. Both the Australian Dingo and Bali Street Dog bitches will dig holes in which to birth and raise their young. Bali Street Dogs most definitely bark whilst the Australian Dingo mostly whispers and howls. The Bali Dog that lives in the Indonesian jungles has a song almost identical to the nocturnal desert howling of the Dingo.



Australian Dingo



New Guinea Singing Dingo



Rescued Bali street dog

Aboriginal way of life before the arrival of Europeans

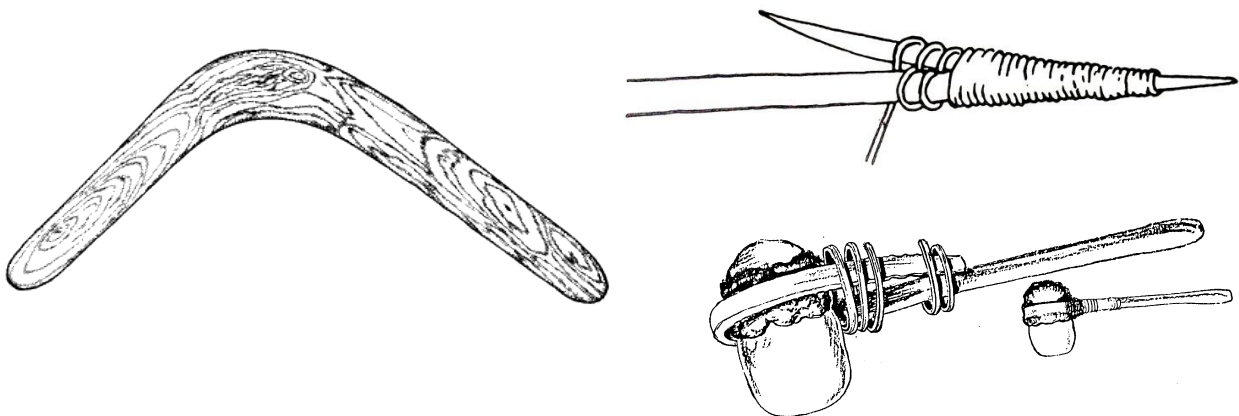
Hunting

Aboriginal men were skilled hunters. They were trained from a very young age to know the tracks of every animal. The kangaroo was a favourite target because it gave a large quantity of meat. On a moonlight night, possums were hunted. A throwing club was used to stun them. Fires were lit inside a tree to smoke out the possums. Snakes and goannas were held by the tail and dashed against rocks or trees. Wombats and marsupial rats were tracked to their burrows and dug out. Parrots were trapped in nets. Emu eggs were gathered and fish were speared.

Weapons

The boomerang was a hunting or fighting weapon, but was also used to stoke the coals on a fire. Two boomerangs were sometimes clapped together as a percussion instrument in songs. The deeply curved returning boomerang was believed to be an Australian invention. It spun as it was thrown, following a wide arc and returning to its thrower.

Spears were used for fishing and hunting, and were an essential weapon for self-defense during fights between tribal groups. Many Aboriginal groups used shields, which were effective against clubs and boomerangs that were thrown at them. They were decorated with paint or engraving. Clubs were carefully balanced for easy use in battle.



The women's role

Usually, small groups of families lived in a certain area. The women searched for food by climbing trees, digging under roots and looking for honey ants, white ants, grasshoppers, beetles and moths. In Central Australia, witchety grubs were found under tree roots. The women also collected seeds, nuts, berries, fruits, stems of plants, water lilies, leaves of bushes and roots. Nuts were beaten into a powder, sprinkled with water and then baked. The oven was made of small stones and clay. When animals were cooked, the fur or feathers were burnt off first. Sometimes hot stones were placed inside the animal they were cooking, so that it cooked from the inside as well as the outside. The main meal for the day was the evening meal.



Aboriginal art

Aboriginal people worked with bark brushes and stone tools to create rock paintings. Their paintings usually told a story about animals or water sources like creeks and rivers. The animal drawings were filled with geometric patterns. Sometimes the animals were drawn showing their internal organs and bones. The colours were earthy colours, like browns, reds and greys from the earth and ground rocks around them.



Making fire

This was done by twisting and turning one piece of wood in another, or by hitting two pieces of stone together to make sparks.



Message sticks

Message Sticks are a form of communication traditionally used by Indigenous Australians. It is usually a solid piece of wood, of varying length, etched with angular lines and dots. The patterns were used as a general reminder of the message. They were often used to invite neighboring groups to corroborees, set-fights, and games.



Homes

Homes were never very big, as the tribes had to move around frequently according to the seasons and availability of food or water. Homes were made of bark and natural materials.



Music

Singing was the most popular form of music. Children learned songs from early childhood. Songs were usually accompanied by the beating of sticks or the didgeridoo. Men and women had separate dances and the women were usually not allowed to see the special ceremonies performed by the men. Body decoration had a special meaning according to the dance being performed.



Didgeridoo

Aboriginal Bush Tucker

<https://www.tourhero.com/en/magazine/gastronomy/guide-to-australian-bush-tucker-10-ingredients-used-in-traditional-aboriginal-food/>

The Aboriginal Australians were the ultimate foragers. From rainforest to desert, they made use of the land and harvested much of their food from their surroundings.

Indigenous tribes would live off the land, foraging for nutrient-rich and high-fiber ingredients such as native herbs, spices, fruit, seeds, and nuts. Animal sources of Australian bush tucker, such as kangaroo, emu, crocodile, and witchetty grubs, provided good protein. By necessity, the Indigenous Australians had extensive knowledge about the flora and fauna that surrounded them, and it was this knowledge that sustained them for thousands of years.

As hunter-gatherers, they would look for energy-dense foods — foods that would provide necessary protein, fat, and sugar for survival in the harsh conditions of the bush. Often, these would include animal meat and offal, insects and grubs, and honey and fruit.

Most plant foods were eaten raw and meats were often cooked over hot campfire coals or wrapped in paperbark and baked in ground ovens. Overall, the bush tucker diet was one that provided high nutrition, offering good levels of nutrients – vitamins, minerals, protein, fat and fiber. Certain animal foods like witchetty grubs provided high-fat sources, but the majority of native land animals, including the kangaroo, provided very lean meat compared to many domesticated animals eaten today.

The colonization of Australia in 1788 greatly affected the traditional use of bush foods as native ingredients were thought to be “less superior”. The introduction of non-native foods, coupled with the loss of traditional lands and destruction of native habitats, resulted in limited access to native foods and resources.

However, today the value of bush tucker food is being recognized. These foods are now being celebrated for their nutritional benefits and gourmet value across the country in award-winning restaurants and home kitchens.

Find information on some of the following bush tucker foods and draw pictures.

Examples of Australian bush tucker foods

Nuts and seeds, e.g. Macadamia nut, Bunya nut, Moreton Bay chestnut, Bush coconut

Fruits, e.g. Kakadu plum, Desert quandong, Desert lime, Finger lime

Spices and flavours, e.g. Lemon myrtle, Tasmanian pepperberry

Insects and grubs, e.g. Witchetty grub

Animal foods, e.g. kangaroo, goanna, snake, crocodile, birds

The effect of white settlement on the Aboriginal people

The coming of the white man to Australia seriously affected the Aboriginal people's former way of life. Thousands were killed, and others lived in constant fear of death. The white man took over their former hunting grounds, their water holes and ceremonial sites. They brought disease, and later, terrible effects of alcohol. All this led to a break down in their social system. In Tasmania, between 1800 and 1830, the Aboriginal population fell from about 4,000 to less than 500 and was later destroyed altogether. In Victoria, a population of 10,000 was reduced to 2,000 in 30 years. The white settlers' demand for land meant that most of the remaining Aboriginals were driven into the tropical north and the desert areas of Central Australia.

Early Policies of the British government

The English government at the time, ruling in Australia, believed that the Aboriginal people should be trained in the ways of white people. They set up institutions for this, and children were taken from their families in order to be educated in white institutions. Christian missionaries are often blamed for this, but in fact it was a government policy. True Christian missionaries at the time treated the Aboriginal people fairly and with compassion.

The State Governments believed that it was necessary to make "Protection Laws", to restrict movement of Aboriginal people and to regulate their life. In those days alcohol was prohibited and marriage between Aboriginals and White was controlled. Between 1911 and 1940 Aboriginal settlements, (called reserves), were created by the government, and clothing, blankets and food was given out. By 1920, some Aboriginals were living and working on farms and cattle stations, but most Aboriginals lived in a state of poverty. Part-Aboriginal children were removed from the reserves and placed in institutions.

When World War II broke out, there was a shortage of labour, so some Aboriginals were given employment. Some were employed in the Defense Force, and many went to war to fight for Australia. Of the 1 million Australians who served in Australia and overseas during World War II, it is estimated that up to 3000, perhaps more, were Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Stories about Aboriginal people

Nabor the Aboriginal

In 1770, Captain James Cook and his crew, in the ship called *the Endeavour*, became the first white people to land on the East coast of Australia. Eighteen years later, a fleet of ships was sent from England to Sydney, with the purpose of setting up a new home for the convicts in the overcrowded British jails. This is how the first white people came to Australia. Before then, only the Aboriginal people lived in Australia.

Many true stories are told about the help that Australian Aboriginal people have given to white people. The story of Nabor is one of these.

The Australian Aboriginal people did not understand the ways of the first white people. Aboriginal people had their own laws which they kept with great care; but the white man's laws were new and strange to them.

When the white people took over the land, many of the past hunting-grounds of the Aboriginal people were lost to them. Since they could no longer hunt for kangaroos and other animals, they, being hungry, took the white man's animals instead.

Sometimes too, they would raid an outback hut, and steal the food. The white people, who needed the food themselves, tried to put a stop to this.

Once, a policeman and his party of 'black trackers' set out to catch four Aboriginal people who had broken the law and raided such a hut. They caught them and fastened them one to the other with chains about their necks. Then the policeman and the trackers, with their captives, set out for home. The captives walked by the police horses.

Now, heavy rains had fallen since the police party had set out, and they found that a small river, which they had crossed before was already in full flood.

On the return, the party had to cross this river. The policeman had told the captives to swim while he and the black trackers went across on their horses. He then undid the chains, and these hung down loosely from their necks. Each of the captives then wound the loose chain about his neck and under his arms.

Then they dived into the water. The captives were all strong swimmers, and all swam the flooded river quite safely. So also did the black trackers. The policeman, however, seemed to have disappeared.

Then they saw that he had been thrown from his horse. He and the horse had both been caught in the strong current. They watched the policeman struggle back to his horse, but the terrified animal kicked him. The policeman fell back into the water unconscious. Already the current was carrying him away. It seemed almost certain that the flood would cost him his life.

Suddenly, Nabor, one of the captives, wound his loose chain about himself and ran along the river bank in the same direction as the current was going. He noted the spot where the policeman was, and running past it, dived into the flooded river. He swam and struggled against the current, until he managed to draw nearer to the policeman.

Even when he reached him the struggle wasn't over. Nabor was tiring, and the chains about him felt heavy. It was hard, in the strong current, to keep the policeman afloat and struggle toward the bank.

The other Aboriginal men had run to the nearest spot, and, as Nabor struggled toward the bank, they took the policeman from his arms and put him carefully on the ground. He lay quite still.

The rest of the party stood and looked down at the one white man among them. He was so pale and still that even then they thought he might die. Then suddenly Nabor wound his loose chain around his arm and disappeared.

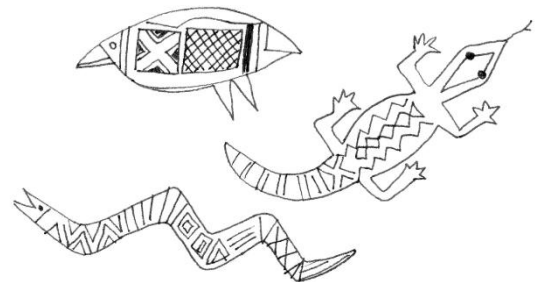
He ran straight into the bush; not to escape, but to get help for the white man. For three miles he ran, until he found some white men. With them he hurried back again. These men were able to help the policeman, and soon he looked less pale and began to speak to them. Later he was able to go on his way. When the party reached the police station, the policeman told the story of Nabor's bravery.

This true story was told in the newspapers. When the story reached England, the King decided that Nabor deserved a medal, and ordered that one should be sent to him.

Even though Nabor had probably never read the words of Jesus, he was actually doing as Jesus commands us. You can read this in Luke 6:27-28. Nabor also gave us a true example of what it means to love your neighbour. Perhaps Nabor was given his name because of the kindness he showed to all people...even his enemies. He gave us a true example of loving our neighbour.

Activities – Nabor the Aboriginal

1. Why did Australian Aboriginal people steal the food of the white people?
2. What did the white people do about this?
3. Who were the captives?
4. How do we know that the captives were good swimmers?
5. Do you think that the policeman deserved to be rescued by Nabor? Explain why or why not.
6. Write this verse from the Bible: Luke 6:27, starting from the word 'Love'.
7. Read Mark 12:30-31. Explain why Nabor was being a good neighbour



The Secret

Yami was an Australian Aboriginal boy who lived with his family at Wallatina, about 1000 miles north of Adelaide. In Yami's culture nothing was written down. Everything to do with the land and the history of his people was told to the children by the older Aboriginal people. Through the wealth of stories told by the older people, Yami started learning about the land at an early age. The older people knew where the rock holes and water holes were, and they knew all about finding food. This information remained a secret within the tribe.

Sometimes Yami would travel with his family over the land. It was on these journeys that the secret information was most important. At first, they would follow the creek up to the hills. There was always plenty of water in the creek. Then they left the creek and travelled across the bush. They followed a special track well known to the people of Yami's tribe. Along this track there were little rock-holes in which water could be found. Yami's father knew exactly where to find these holes. Yami knew that he too must learn where to find them because one day he would be responsible for finding the holes by himself.

They stopped at a small rock-hole and Yami's father lifted the flat stone lid, which had been placed there to stop the water from evaporating. The rock-hole had filled with water during a rainy period. Even though there had not been rain for some time, the water remained in the rock-hole because of its secure lid. Yami's father carefully placed the lid after each person had drunk some water.

Sometimes Yami's family would travel with other families into the drier parts, but before attempting such a journey they would wait for the rain to fill the rock-holes and clay pans.

Knowing where to find water was a special secret passed on from person to person in Yami's tribe. Through this secret information life was sustained in the dry times.

Every living thing needs water. We could say that water is the next most important thing to air in sustaining life. Without water we would have no life. Jesus said that there is something else that is absolutely important to life. Jesus was talking about our spiritual life. Our spirit is the part of us that lives forever. We need water for our body to have life, but for our spirit to have life we need Jesus.

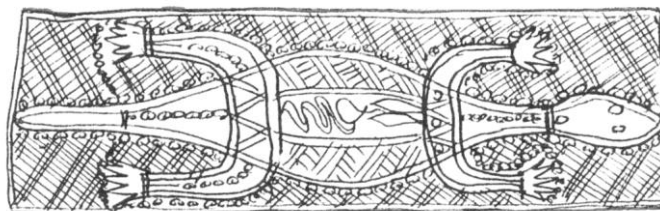
We Are Sorry

On June 10, 1838, a group of Australian Aboriginal people were murdered by some white settlers. While the men of the Aboriginal tribe were away working, a group of white settlers attacked the Werei tribe's camp. Women, children and old people were taken to a nearby cattle yard and killed. The event became known as the 'Myall Creek Massacre'. Later, seven of the nine men responsible were caught and hung. (Two had escaped). However, the memory of what the Whites had done would always remain with the Aboriginal people.

In May 1988, Australia's new parliament house was opened in Canberra. Christians from all over Australia decided to get together to pray for Australia outside parliament house. They encircled the building and prayed all day and all night. They prayed that Australia would continue to be a free country. Some of the white Christians decided that they wanted to say 'sorry' to the Aboriginal people for the great injustices committed by white people against them.

A rough wooden cross was carried by a group of white Church leaders. The cross was made from timber taken from the cattle-yard where the Aboriginals had been killed 150 years before. It was placed in the ground in front of the crowd who had gathered to hear speeches of reconciliation. One of the white church leaders addressed the group of Aboriginal People.

The Aboriginal people then performed a ceremony, which showed their forgiveness towards the whites. They placed leaves on a fire. The smoke represented purification. They also poured water from plastic buckets into small paper cups held by the white church leaders. This was another sign forgiveness and acceptance.



Stories told by Aboriginal people

The winking owl

As told by Jimmy Bird

Long long ago there was a great flood. This is how it started. Some children found the winking owl in a tree and plucked out all its feathers. They forced a grass reed through its nose and treated it shamefully. The bird flew without wings, into the heavens and showed himself to Ngowunga, the Great Father. Ngowunga became very angry and decided to drown the people.

Later the people saw a small cloud rising, which grew bigger and bigger, until it spread over the whole sky. The thunder began to roll and crash and the people were greatly afraid. With the rain and thunder was a terrible wind which broke great limbs off some trees and rooted up others.

During this terrible storm there was a noise above the awful crashes of thunder. This noise was coming from the north. The salt water, the sea, came pouring over the ranges from the north. The flood rose higher and higher until all the land was covered except the tops of two or three mountains. One of them was Mt. Broome.

From the west, a man called Diabalgari, with his wives and a dog, were battling their way in a canoe, when a bird with a leaf in its mouth flew in front of them showing them the way to Mt Broome. They eventually reached Mt. Broome and landed there, where there were a few other survivors.

Then Djabalgari, the great left-handed man, cut his little finger and let the blood trickle down into the flood waters. The waters began to go down and eventually disappeared off the country. All other people were drowned.

Similarities with Genesis:

The flood was sent to judge wickedness.

God sent the flood to drown all the people.

All the land was covered.

There was a man in his boat with his wife with an animal.

A bird with a leaf in its mouth was the sign of dry land.

They landed on a mountain.

All other people drowned.

There was a sacrifice of blood at the end of the flood.



The red-legged birds

(a story from Western Australia)

Long ago, in the Creation country across the sea to the west, some people saw some red-legged birds strutting along with their heads moving up and down. Whenever the people approached them, the birds moved forward, always keeping the same distance between themselves and their followers.

There were millions of these birds, and they were much taller than they are today. The men followed them to discover where they were all going. The birds walked east and eventually led the men to the coast of Australia. They stepped out of the sea, where Fremantle is today, then turned north and walked up the coast. The men continued to follow them. When they reached the point just south of where Port Hedland is now situated, the great flood came.

The sky opened and the water poured down in a great deluge. Many people were drowned, but some were saved on mangrove boats. They paddled towards the ranges in Central Australia, the Mardudjara people (now camped at Jigalong), leading the way. They were the first people to take dogs to the centre of the continent.

When Wonjuna Made the Great Flood

There was once a medicine man called Tanjilli. There was also a man called Umbirri who did not like Tanjilli. He was jealous because Tanjilli was such a famous medicine man. Umbirri was a bad man. He did not belong to Tanjilli's tribe in the first place. He had come to live with them after being chased out of his own tribe for stealing.

Well, Umbirri was a real trouble maker. He decided that he would make Tanjilli look really foolish. There had not been any rain for a long time, so Umbirri suggested to the tribe that Tanjilli should try to make it rain. Umbirri didn't think for a minute that Tanjilli could do this. He only made the suggestion so that Tanjilli would look like a big failure.

Well, Tanjilli went to a secret place and tried to make rain. Soon drops of rain began to fall until everything was soaked. Tanjilli was very proud of himself. He walked around boasting about what he had done.

It rained and it rained. It did not stop raining and the great flood began to flow over the land. The tribe were very frightened for soon they would all be drowned. Tanjilli tried to stop the rain, but he could not. It kept raining for forty days and forty nights. One evening Tanjilli and Umbirri were both washed away. The people were frightened. Then an old man in the tribe called Oolpa called out, "Oh, Great Spirit, tell the rain to come no more." Almost at once the rain stopped falling, and soon after the blue sky showed through.

The tribe was puzzled.

"We know that it was not the medicine man who made the flood," they said, "or he would have not been washed away. Who did send the flood?" they asked.

"Perhaps Wonjuna did," answered one of the members of the tribe. (Wonjuna was the name they gave to the great spirit who made everything.)

They were not really sure, but they all agreed that the loss of Tanjilli and Umbirri was a good thing. Tanjilli, after all, was very proud, and Umbirri was really wicked.

from 'The Prince of the Totem' T. Rayment 1935

Discussion

1. What similarities can you see between this story and the Biblical account?
 - a) the extent of the flood. (...over the whole land)
 - b) the duration of the flood. (...forty days and nights)
 - c) sinful people were drowned.
2. If people all around the world have stories of the great flood in their historical records, what does this show us?
3. If the story of the great flood is true, then what should we believe about the rest of Genesis?

Man-eating kangaroos

For many years, Aboriginal stories of 'savage giant kangaroos that preyed on men', were dismissed by early Europeans as nonsense. No one believed that there could be such a thing as a flesh-eating kangaroo.

However, there does exist today a carnivorous kangaroo! The Rufous Bettong, also called the Rufous kangaroo-rat, is one of the smallest species of kangaroo. It is mainly a root and fungus eater, but it is often seen to be chewing on animal bones. It is also known on occasions to steal eggs from chicken yards. A related species, the Burrowing Bettong, will scavenge sheep carcasses.

These rabbit-sized creatures are too small to prey upon large animals. In the past however, there were giant bettongs which weighed an estimated 70 kg and stood about 2 metres high.

From the *Propleopus* species, their teeth looked more like teeth of a carnivorous animal than of a grazing animal. Their strong lower incisors were sharp and horizontally aligned, forming ideal stabbing weapons. The premolar teeth were like blades, serrated for sawing through tough foodstuffs. They were called the wolves of the kangaroo family.

*Wikipedia: **Propleopus** is an extinct genus of marsupials. In contrast to most other kangaroos, and similar to their small extant relative, the musky rat-kangaroo, **they were probably omnivorous.***

