

***Beacon Media***  
**Professional development for  
teachers**

**Session 2**  
**The character of God  
and character**

**The Power Point presentation can be found at:  
[www.beaconmedia.com.au](http://www.beaconmedia.com.au) – Key topics for  
Christian teachers**

### **The *Beacon Media* vision**

The vision of the *Beacon Media* Christian education ministry is...

- to share spiritual food with the hungry
- to bring students into a heart knowledge of God
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*Is not this the kind of fasting I have chosen?...to share food with the hungry, (Isaiah 58:6-7).*

### **Beacon Media beginnings**

Margaret McIntyre, an Australian Primary teacher created a curriculum based on the character and nature of God while on the staff of Youth With a Mission during the 1970s and 1980s. Much of the Beacon Media curriculum material has been founded on the principles that she developed.

### **Youth With A Mission seminar, Hawaii 1973**

**It was during this seminar that a group of Christian teachers were challenged by a prophetic word:**

- Put away old forms
- Education must be founded on the rock, Jesus Christ
- God's truth should not be "brought into" the curriculum
- God should be the centre of the curriculum – GOD IS THE CURRICULUM
  
- Subjects should reveal the Holy Spirit as teacher
- The presence of the Lord should be strong – a shield, a healing and comforting presence
- The curriculum must be living and exciting – not static
- Teachers must be Holy Spirit led, dependent on God's direction in everything they teach.

### **Waiting on God...**

**The group of teachers waited on God and asked Him to show them how this word could be put into practice in the classroom.**

- One of the teachers received a picture of 27 pegs reflected in a mirror. It was a bit like the reflection of pegs on a Chinese checkers board.
- Each peg was to be a centre-piece from which a curriculum would grow.
- Each peg was a name of an attribute of God – His character, His nature.

### **The attributes of God**

#### ***Refer to poster: Attribute clusters***

There are many attributes of God mention in the Bible. To get a balanced understanding of God we can organize the attributes into groups or clusters. In each group there is a main attribute and related attributes. When teaching the attributes of God it is important to give equal emphasis to all the attribute groups. For example, if we teach 'God is Love', and leave out 'God is Pure and Holy' then we have given an unbalanced view of God.

## **God is...**

<b>Creator</b>	<b>Love</b>	<b>Wise</b>
Designer	Shepherd	Just
Powerful	Friend	Guide
Ordered	Father	All-knowing
Awesome	Faithful	Truth
Resourceful	Kind	Right

<b>Protector</b>	<b>Powerful</b>	<b>Truth</b>
Refuge	Creator	Faithful
Deliverer	Healer	Just
Defender	Lord and King	Teacher
Father	Great and mighty	The Way

<b>Pure</b>	<b>Patient</b>	<b>Servant</b>
Holy	Loving	Faithful
Righteous	Kind	Healer
Good	Forgiving	Humble
Light	Persevering	Sacrificial

<b>Life</b>	<b>Provider</b>	<b>Peace</b>
Sustainer	Father	Reconciler
Joy	Faithful	Forgiving
Saviour	Generous	Protector
Redeemer	Resourceful	Comforter

### **The character and nature of God**

#### ***Refer to poster: attribute symbols***

We can learn about the character and nature of God through His love letter to us, the Bible. Let's look at some Scripture verses that speak of God's character.

#### **God is Creator**

*You created the moon to mark the months; the sun knows the time to set*  
*Psalm 104:19*

#### **God is Love**

*Jesus the loving shepherd - John 10*

#### **God is Wisdom**

*Learn from the wisdom of the ant - Proverbs.6:6*

#### **God is a Protector**

*A mighty fortress – The name of the Lord is a strong tower – Proverbs 18:10*

#### **God is Powerful**

*God rules...more powerful than the waves of the ocean – Psalm 93:4*

**God is Truth**

*Weigh His truth against everything – Live a life that measures up to the standard God set - Ephesians 4:1*

**God is Pure and Holy**

*Wash me and I will be whiter than snow – Psalm 51:7*

**God is Patient**

*Learn from the spider, a patient builder – Be patient with everyone – 1 Thessalonians 5:14*

**God, (through Jesus), is a servant**

*Let love cause you to serve one another – Galatians 5:13.*

**God is Life**

*He gives us new life – No one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again – John 3:3.*

**God is Provider**

*I have provided all kinds of grains and all kinds of fruits for you to eat – Genesis 1:29*

**God is Peace**

*The Holy Spirit came as a dove bringing peace to mankind – We have peace through God through our Lord Jesus Christ – Romans 5:1*

**The attributes of God overlap**

To teach about every attribute of God within the school curriculum takes a lot of time, but combining attributes is a useful tool in curriculum planning.

**e.g. a classroom unit of study running for 4 to 6 weeks could focus on:**

- **Loving Provider**, *during which time we study both God's Love and God's provision.*
- **Powerful Creator**
- **Humble Servant**

**Refer to poster: The daisy chain.**

This poster shows the inter-relatedness of the attributes of God. Each flower has a key attribute in the centre surrounded by related attributes.

**Why teach about the character and nature of God, and not just the Bible?**

- Heart knowledge and not just head knowledge
- Relationship with God
- Faith in a supernatural God
- Development of character development – an understanding of who God is requires a response from us

## **God's attributes can be seen through the topics we teach**

God is Creator – we teach about the creation

*That's easy!*

BUT what about the other attributes?

*Some ideas –*

God is Protector – study of shelter

God is Provider – study of food

God is Love – study of people of the world

## **What is our response to an understanding God's character?**

As we come to understand each attribute of God's character and nature, a response is required of us.

*He has told you O man what is good; And what does the Lord require of you? To do justice, to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. (Micah 6:8)*

Character development should be taught as an outworking of knowing the character of God.

*But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory unto glory, just as from the Lord, the Spirit. (2 Corinthians 3:18)*

Looking closely at the Lord and learning about His character, causes us to *reflect* His character.

## **Our response...**

***Refer to poster again: Attribute symbols***

*Let's look at some of the responses we can make:*

### **God is Creator**

We stand in awe of God's power; believe God's plan for the world; believe that God created the universe in six 24-hour days.

### **God is Love**

We love others as Christ loves us. Forgive, be kind, be gentle.

### **God is Wisdom**

We seek God's opinion, not our own, and do what Jesus would do.  
We understand that wisdom comes from obeying God.

### **God is Protector**

When we understand that God is our protector we have trust and confidence in a great and powerful God, a loving father.

**God is Powerful**

This is to believe in God's supernatural ability; have faith.

**God is Truth**

This is to know that Jesus is the only way; demonstrate discernment; tell the truth and live the truth.

**God is Pure and Holy**

We ask for God's forgiveness and salvation.  
We are pure in words and deeds and obey God.

**God is Patient**

We are patient with ourselves and others; demonstrate self-control.

**God is a Servant**

We follow the example of Jesus, the greatest servant; serve one another with humility; put others first and self last.

**God is Life**

Jesus gives us new life when we accept Him as Saviour.  
We live the Christian life by demonstrating the fruit of the Spirit.

**God is a Provider**

We have trust and have confidence that He cares for us and will provide for us. Jesus says, "Do not worry!"

**God is Peace**

Be at peace, knowing that God is with us; we develop good relationships and resolve conflict peacefully.

**How do we teach values?**

- Focus FIRST on who God is, e.g. He wants us to be loving, because He is.
- THEN teach the value that comes out of knowing who God is.
- The attribute of God is the primary focus, (not the value).

**Serving not striving**

- A character development program that is separated from the character of God results in striving, e.g. A teacher could say to the class, "Kindness is the focus for this week. Let's TRY to be kind."
- A better way is to say: "God's love is the focus for this week. We know that God is loving and kind to us. He wants us to show His love to others."

**What Would Jesus Do? The answer to this question is our *response*.**

- We love because God loves us.
- We serve because Jesus served.
- We are patient because God is patient with us.
- We do what's right because God is pure and holy.
- We are thankful and generous because God is our provider.

***Refer to poster: 'serving not striving'***

On the left hand side of the poster we see that our actions can never create righteousness. By trying to be good in our own strength we can never be good enough to please God.

On right hand side we see that our righteousness comes from loving God and having a relationship with Him. We have accepted God's forgiveness and we *want* to please and obey Him because we love Him.

***Poster: "the attributes tree"***

Education founded in the character and nature of God is a foundation of good soil that helps students to grow in Him and make a right response to Him. This produces fruits in their lives – more than just the fruit of the Spirit – love, joy, peace, patience, goodness, faithfulness, kindness, gentleness, self-control – but other fruit as well such as honesty, faith, wisdom, humility, and servanthood.

**We need to teach students to know God...**

- Not just to know about Him.
- Not just to be good citizens.

Now let's look at some ways in which we can link the attributes of God to the topics we teach. These examples show us how classroom topics can be God-centred:

Topics based on **God's Creation** show us that God is Provider, God is Powerful, God is Truth, God is Life.

Studies of **human relationships** give opportunity to learn of God's love, purity, forgiveness, protection and provision.

Studies of **God's creatures** teach us lessons in God's wisdom, serving and patience.

A study of the **solar system** shows the love of God, who wanted to create a special place for us, with conditions unlike any other planet.

### **Your classroom can be a place of big and small miracles!**

- The miracles take place when the students come into an understanding of God's character as they see it throughout the curriculum.
- This understanding goes deep into the hearts of the students and reflects in their lives.

### **It's all about remembering**

- *You shall remember the Lord your God...but if you ever forget the Lord your God and go after other gods and worship them then you shall surely perish, (Deut 8:18-19).*
- *Remember your creator in the days of your youth, (Ecc 12:1).*

In Joshua 3:16-17 we read that God dried up the Jordan River so that the children of Israel could pass through on dry ground. Following this Joshua commanded that 12 large stones be taken up from the bed of the Jordan River and set up as a monument, so that the Israelites would never forget this event.

- *"When your children ask their father in time to come, 'What are these stones?' you shall tell them that Israel crossed the Jordan on dry ground." (Joshua 4:21-22)*

### **Refer to poster: 'Attribute symbols'**

These 12 symbols, like the 12 stones, are memory aids to helping us remember the attributes of God's character and nature.

### **Here are some keys to help the students remember God through their studies:**

- Study one or two selected attributes of God for the duration of your class theme, e.g. Loving Provider.
- Connect values education to the selected attributes of God.
- Create a visual display.
- Refer to the visual display - and reinforce the selected attributes of God across the subject areas.

The display includes the *name* of attribute of God... 'God is...' Children love to get involved with making the large colourful sign to display on the wall. You can cut out large letters and let the students decorate them. It will have more meaning to them if they make it.

***Here are some Ideas for topic displays:***

***Refer to posters: Topic displays***

### **God is a Healing Servant**

**Topic:** *the Medical Profession* – might be studied by 5-8 year olds. We can look at community servants who help us when we are sick.

The teacher can display sentences about the topic and ask children to provide illustrations. The class can read and illustrate Bible stories that show God as healer.

### **God is Pure and Holy**

**Topic:** *Light* (Light is used in the Bible as a symbol of purity.)

The class can construct some concise sentences for the display that give some key ideas:

*e.g. God created light. We need light to stay alive.*

*Light can be split into colours.*

Also display a Bible verse about light, e.g. 'God is light. In Him there is no darkness. Walk in the light as He is in the light.' 1 John 1:5-7

### **God is Truth**

**Topic:** Gravity and Pendulums – for children a little older, say 9-12

Some concise sentences could be written as part of the display: e.g.

*The universe is held together by the laws that God created. Gravity is one of these laws.*

Students can research the work of Galileo who discovered pendulums. They can display some key statements about his work and include a statement about his stand for God.

As part of the topic the class can study Bible characters such as Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego who stood up for God's truth.

### **The results of remembering**

- God teaches us lessons - students, teachers and parents. The whole school community can be impacted.
- Children will report testimonies of how God has worked.

### **Some *Beacon Media* resources to assist you in planning God-centred Primary curriculum: (See the website for free downloads)**

#### **1. *Building Blocks***

A planning tool to help teachers find God's perspective on science, social studies and health topics

- There are over 80 topic outlines built on a Biblical Christian world view
- Topics can be selected by the teacher to create a curriculum document.
- Topic outlines include spiritual overview, Bible references, learning outcomes, activities and assessment ideas.

## **2. Units of Study student work books**

There are student work books in Science and Social studies are also free downloads. These link to 'Building Blocks' teachers' notes.

## **3. A resource for Biblical teaching: *Themes for Christian Studies***

- Devotional studies for children on the character and nature of God
- These studies link with classroom topics.

## **4. A resource for character development: *Jesus First – a guide to character development***

This is a collection of lessons on the *responses* we make when we understanding God's character, e.g.

- God is Love – our response is to be loving and kind.
- God is a servant – our response is to serve others

This program puts the character of Jesus first rather than the human moral value first, e.g. understanding God's love is a prerequisite to showing kindness towards others.

When we do this we experience joy:

*J – Jesus first, O – others next, Y – yourself last*

## **5. Puppet plays for teaching values**

- Puppets are funny. We can use puppet skits to laugh at ourselves.
- *Beacon Media* puppet plays are designed for character development and teach the character attributes in the '*Jesus First*' teacher's guide.

## **6. God-centred literacy resources in graded levels of difficulty**

- Bible stories at various reading levels
- Stories of Faith
- Stories that teach on the fruit of the Spirit and using our gifts for God
- Phonics and spelling resources found in '*Teacher's Tool Box*'

## **Stay connected in all you teach**

### ***Refer to poster: The Vine***

*I am the Vine and you are the branches; he who abides in Me, and I in him, will bear much fruit; for apart from Me, you can do nothing. (John 15:5)*