

Beacon Media
**Professional development for
teachers**

Session 4
Planning a single unit

The Power Point presentation can be found at:
www.beaconmedia.com.au – Key topics for
Christian teachers

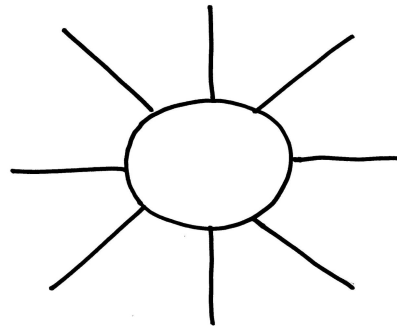
Planning topic-based units of study

- A topic, or unit of study, becomes a central focus in the classroom for a period of time, e.g. 4 weeks.
- During this time you can teach the students about an aspect of God that is related to the topic.
- The Beacon Media resource, “**Building Blocks**” will provide you with Bible references and ideas for expanding your topic.

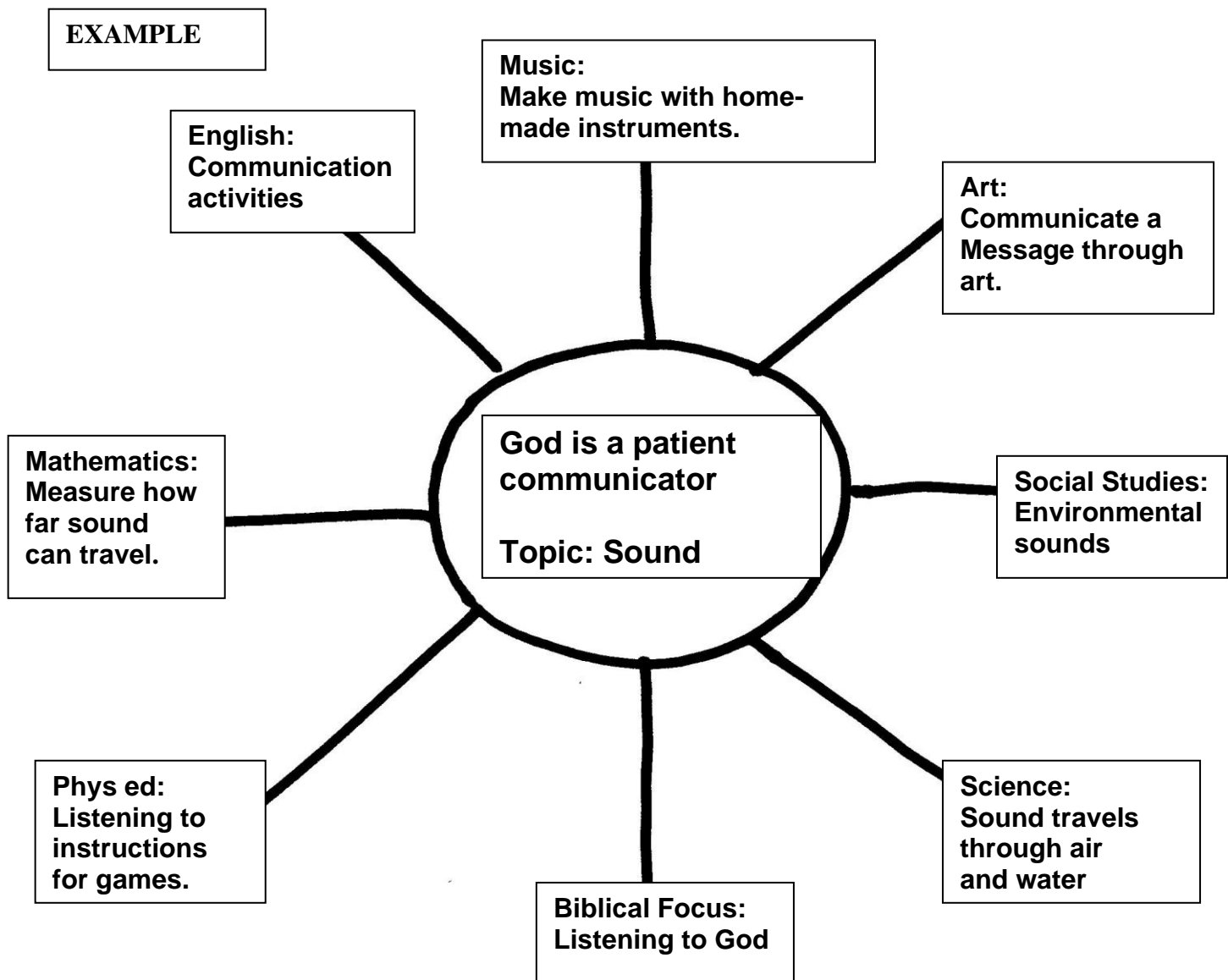
Planning a single topic

- Pray and ask God to guide you in your planning.
- Start with brainstorming.
- Write down as many ideas as you can in the form of a spider diagram.

Create a spider diagram for initial brainstorming.



- You will need a large sheet of paper.
- It helps to work with other teachers, to generate more ideas.
- Start by placing “God is” in the centre, e.g. God is Provider, then fill in ideas for the subject areas.



Fill in the ideas from your brainstorming. Don't go into too much detail.

Now write a planning document

- Use the spider diagram as a basis, expanding each idea.
- To help you write this document, you can use *Building Blocks* on the *Beacon Media* website. See *Science & Social Studies God-centred curriculum guides*
- There are over 80 topics here with planning notes for teachers.

Step 1

Expand the **Biblical focus** that you wrote in your spider diagram...

God is a patient communicator

Biblical Focus: LISTENING TO GOD

- God listens to our prayers.
- How do we listen to God?
- Right relationship with God and others; patience in listening to others

Add Bible stories and verses.

God is a patient communicator

Bible stories and verses: (include references)

- Samuel – listened and obeyed
- Jonah – didn't listen
- Mary and Martha – Mary listened
- Elijah listened and delivered God's word

Step 2

Write your OUTCOMES to show what the students will get out of the topic. Start with:

At the completion of this unit students will:

Then write what you want them to:

- **Know** (What knowledge about the topic do you want them to have by the end?)
- **Do** (What educational skills do you want them to practice, e.g. researching, measuring, presenting a talk.)
- **Show** (What positive character traits do you want them to demonstrate?)

Step 3

Write your ACTIVITIES

- Write a full list of activities for each subject.
- Begin each activity with a verb.

Let's look at the following examples:

Activities for: Christian Studies and values education

- Read, retell and act out selected Bible stories.
- Make illustrated wall stories of the selected Bible stories
- Play games that require patience, e.g. building a tall tower with blocks or cards.
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- Play games that require careful listening, e.g. whisper a message around the circle.
- Discuss the importance of listening to others.
- Discuss ways in which we can hear God's voice.

See beaconmedia.com.au for: Bible teaching resources – **“Themes for Christian Studies”** and Values Education– **“Jesus First, a guide to character development”**

Activities for: Science

- Devise experiments to show that sound travels through air and water.
- Make telephones using tin cans and string.
- Tap wooden blocks together under water.
- Make musical instruments – water in glasses, shakers, rubber bands, drums, bamboo

Activities for: Social Studies

- Listen to and record environmental sounds
- Compare sounds in the city and rural places
- Discuss the effects of noise pollution
- Research the history of communication
- Discuss the importance of communication

Activities for: Art

- Communicate a message through art.
- Listen to music and express the sounds you hear through art.

Activities for: Music

- Use the musical instruments made in the science lessons to keep a beat.
- Use music to communicate a message.
- Imitate these using voice and instruments to create a sound picture.

Activities for: English

- Communicate through class presentations – drama, giving a talk, writing
- Read, retell and act out Bible stories.
- Play listening games.
- Undertake some listening comprehension.
- Listen for phonetic sounds in spelling.
- Identify voice tones that express emotions.

Activities for: Mathematics

- Measure the distance a sound can travel
- Can you hear a sound 100 metres for the source?
- Use the telephones made in science and try out different lengths of string. Record the results with different measurements of string.

Activities for: Physical Education

- Listen to and obey instructions for games.
- New games that children haven't played before, so that they have to listen carefully to the instructions.

Step 4: Write your EVALUATION

- You need to plan two or three ways in which you will evaluate the students.
- e.g. a short answer test; a class presentation; a project or written report; a checklist of skills mastered.

- Also evaluate whether the students have understood the connection between the topic and the aspect of God being studied.

Step 5: Organize weekly content

- Use a table or work program to break up your activities into weekly content.
- The following table is an example of a layout for one week’s activities. Other subjects can be added. Set it out in landscape format.
- Use a separate table for each week.

God is:

Term:

Week:

Biblical Focus	Topic (Science/Social Studs/History/ Health)	English	Mathematics	Creative Arts (Visual art, Music, Drama)

Be Flexible

- The “God is” theme should flow naturally into subject areas and not be forced.
- The thematic (topic-based) approach works well with subjects like science, social-studies, and health.
- But what about subjects where it is necessary to follow a systematic skill building approach? e.g. Mathematics, English?

You can follow specific skill building curricula or workbooks in Literacy and Mathematics, where there are mastery skills that need to be developed from the simple to the complex, e.g., in phonics we start with single sounds (simple) and progressing to phonic blends.

- But sometimes you can bring in ideas that link with your topic.
- See the following examples:

- In Mathematics, the teacher can create student exercises in weighing, measuring, calculating and problem solving.
- e.g. How many animals aboard Noah's ark?
- In English, use the theme for writing activities and create word banks.
- A word bank is a list of words based on your topic. These words are made into a chart and displayed. The students use the word bank for literacy activities.

Examples of a Word Bank

Example 1: Words about the human body

Example 2: Weather words:

Cloud, blizzard, hurricane, lightning, rain, rainbow, snow, storm, temperature, tornado, weather, wind

Example 3: The fruit of the Spirit

Building Blocks resource

- The *Beacon Media* Building Blocks resource is full of topic ideas. It provides outcomes, Biblical overview, activities and ideas for evaluation.
- You don't have to come up with all the ideas yourself! There is a wealth of ideas in this resource.

See www.beaconmedia.com.au – Primary Science & Social Studies God-centred curriculum guides

Workshop activity

Work in a group to create a spider diagram. Choose a topic and an age-group that you will be working with. Brainstorm ideas and write them on the diagram. You can use the "*Building Blocks*" teachers' notes as a resource, or just use your own ideas.