

Beacon Media teacher training handbook 1

A Thematic Approach to producing a God- centred Curriculum

for the Primary School

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Beacon Media...our vision

Our vision is to support Christian educators who are open to a God-centred approach to education.

Our resources:

- are based upon God's word, and the character and nature of God. Children grow in their faith as they are introduced to the character and nature of God *through* their studies. Devotions and Bible studies are not treated as a separate discipline, but integrated with subject areas.
- help teachers to be more creative, while at the same time bringing spiritual depth, and an understanding of the surrounding world from God's perspective.
- help teachers integrate the character and nature of God with the various areas of the school curriculum: science, social sciences, history, geography, health, art, music, maths and literacy.

Beliefs about learning in the Christian School

1. Learning must be *relevant* to the lives and needs of the students, and must build upon prior knowledge.
2. Learning experiences must include *active learning*. This means that students will undertake a variety of *multi-sensory* learning opportunities and not be subjected to long teacher sermonettes. Examples of active learning experiences include research, projects, games, discussions, student presentations, group work, creative arts and technology.
3. The world is constantly changing. *Therefore* we will provide opportunities to help students understand that the present is affected by the past and both affect the future.
4. We live in a world of diverse cultures. *Therefore* we will develop student understanding of diverse cultures and languages showing that God is not ethnocentric and has no favourites.
5. Assessment should be ongoing and diagnostic. *Therefore* we will provide a variety of different assessment tools and not rely solely on written tests and exams.
6. The use of community resources is essential for effective instruction. *Therefore* we will use the rich history and ethnic diversity of our community, including our churches, so that no classroom is an island.
7. Students will engage in missions outreach and service within the local community as well as on campus.

8. All the staff will keep current with contemporary research and implement the initiatives that are consistent with our Christian worldview.
9. Where students sense that they are liked by the teacher their motivation to learn is significantly higher. *Therefore* our teachers will make extra ordinary efforts to be a friend to their students, praying for them and ministering the love of Jesus without favouritism.
10. Students are best nourished when drinking from a running stream rather than from a stagnant pool. *Therefore* as all learning has a spiritual component, teachers will keep a fresh vibrant and intimate relationship with God so that spirit-to-spirit education is a part of every lesson.

Exercise 1

Questions for discussion and journal entry:

- a) Which of these beliefs about learning do you think are the most important?
- b) Which ones, if any, would be revolutionary to the style of teaching in your country or school?
- c) What are some of the difficulties that may be encountered with the practical outworking of some of these?
- d) Give some possible ways to overcome these difficulties.

Understanding the character and nature of God

Students come to KNOW God through study of His character and nature. There are over 80 Biblical references to 'who God is' in the Bible. Some of these refer to His nature, such as 'Creator of the universe', 'All-knowing', 'the only true God'. These are aspects of God that humans could never be. Other attributes refer to His character, such as 'loving, kind, patient, a servant'. These are aspects that we can reflect in our lives as we come to know Him. Unless God is the source of our good character traits, 'being good' without God is self-centred and leads to pride. In teaching the attributes of God, the focus is to KNOW God Himself rather than just know ABOUT Him through Bible knowledge alone.

By truly understanding God's character and nature students can:

- grow in their personal relationship with God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
- grow in faith as they learn that God's character and nature can be trusted.

- gain a balanced view of God, as all His attributes are presented...not just His love and care for us, but His purity and holiness as well.
- understand that the Bible is relevant, because every Bible story or passage points them to God.
- develop Godly character.

Example:

Attribute of God: God is Love

Bible passage showing us that God is love: the story of Zacchaeus

Character development resulting from an understanding of God's love: showing love towards others

Related class topic for study: God's hand upon our nation in bringing the Good News; changes to our nation because of God's hand upon us.

An understanding of God's character and nature changes our lives. (For every attribute we fully understand, there is a response required on the part of the student and teacher.)

As we come to understand each attribute of God, a personal response is required of us.

God is Creator

Related attributes: God is Powerful; God is Provider

Response: Standing in awe of the creator; praising Him for His great works; understanding that God created the world in 6 days and not millions of years.

God is Love

Related attributes: God is Shepherd; God is Patient and kind; God is Faithful

Response: Loving God as He first loved us; feeling loved and accepted by God and others; loving others. Christians should be known by their love. Are we teaching our children to reach out to a world desperately in need of love? Are we as teachers teaching the students attitudes of love and care by example?

God is Wise/Wisdom

Related attributes: God is Truth

Response: Acknowledging that God knows more than we do; allowing Him to be in charge of our life.

God is Protector

Related attributes: God is Peace; God is Provider

Response: Trusting in God as Father; feeling safe and secure in His care.

God is Powerful

Related attributes: God is Creator; God is Healer; God is Protector

Response: Expecting to witness His supernatural power in our lives; allowing the Holy Spirit to work powerfully through us; relying on God's power and not our own strength.

God is Truth

Related attributes: God is Wisdom; God is Creator

Response: Believing God's word; obeying God's word; discerning truth in the world about us. There can be no neutral ground. God either holds the universe together or He doesn't. Either Genesis is true or it's a fairy story.

God is Pure

Related attributes: God is Holy; God is Saviour; God is Judge

Response: Understanding that we are fallen; asking God to forgive us; living in right relationship with God and others.

God is Patient

Related attributes: God is a Servant; God is Love

Response: Being patient with others; having self-control; waiting for God to answer prayer.

God is a Servant

Related attributes: God is Humble; God is Love; God is a Redeemer

Response: Serving God and others with humility. Are we leading our students into areas of service? Are we teaching the creative skills necessary for service?

God is Life

Related attributes: God is Saviour; God is Joy; God is Creator

Response: Receiving God's gift of eternal life; accepting Jesus as Lord and Saviour; knowing the joy that Jesus gives.

God is Provider

Related attributes: God is Love; God is Creator; God is Faithful; God is Powerful

Response: Trusting God as father; thanking God for His provision.

God is Peace

Related attributes: God is Saviour; God is Redeemer; God is Protector; God is Life

Response: Experiencing inner peace; feeling safe and secure in God's care; joy in being His child.

What does it mean to know God?

- to be in relationship with Him.
- to develop a friendship with Him.
- to know how He feels about the things we do.
- to want to please and obey Him.
- to know how much He loves us.
- to know that He is a Father.
- to have a desire to communicate with Him and read His word

What are the results of knowing Him?

- Eternal life (John 17:1-3)
- Grace and peace (2 Peter 1:2)
- We become more like Him (2 Cor. 3:18)
- We love Him more (John 17:14 -16)
- He reveals Himself to us (John 17:24)
- We are His witnesses (Mark 3:13 - 15)

Why is a curriculum founded on the character and nature of God so important?

As we come to understand who God is, we can grow to know Him personally, and become more like Him. Too often spiritual teaching focuses on Bible stories, with a spiritual point tacked on the end. What do the children remember? Usually they will remember the story very well, but have little idea what the story teaches.

If we START with the character and nature of God approach, we actually START with the point. This means that children will *remember* it. We are not down-grading the role of the Bible, but in fact, enhancing it. Every attribute of God's character or nature links up with numerable Bible stories.

Example: Children will remember that God is provider, from the story of the loaves and the fishes, because you have actually presented the idea that God *is* provider *first*. Instead of saying, "*Today, children, we are going to listen to the story of the loaves and the fishes*", we might say, "*Today, children, we are learning that God is provider*", and then proceed to tell the story of the loaves and the fishes. We can then link it up with our classroom topic of study, such as "God provides our food".

Exercise 2

Questions for discussion and journal entry:

- a) Choose two character attributes of God. Think of two Bible stories or passages that reflect these attributes. (2 passages for each attribute).
- b) What advantages are there in having children grounded in an understanding of the attributes of God, rather than in Bible knowledge alone?

Suggestions for relating topics to the character/nature of God

God is Creator

- animal life; plant life; ecosystems
- human biology
- solar system
- air
- water
- fossil records; creation science
- technology; inventions

God is Love

- myself; my family
- understanding different cultural groups
- understanding the aged and disabled
- the third world: giving and sharing
- friendship, fruits of the spirit
- biographies of those who have shown kindness and compassion
- technology; inventions (God's wisdom given to man)
- the balance of nature
- the age of discovery and exploration (God's guidance)

God is Wise

- civil laws
- environmental responsibility
- safety
- money
- planning for the future; careers
- biographies of those who relied on God for guidance and wisdom

God is Protector

- family
- shelter
- protection services
- the middle ages, (castles and fortresses)
- human biology
- sea voyages, ships and lighthouses
- environmental protection
- animal protection; camouflage

God is Powerful

- force and motion
- electricity
- magnetism
- solar system
- landforms

- change: chemical reactions
- weather
- transport; flight

God is Truth

- friendship, (faithfulness and truthfulness)
- scientific method
- discovering real or substitute; fact or fantasy
- scientists who discovered the truth
- discovering the truth through archaeology
- creation science
- the media and advertising; consumer education

God is Pure

- water, (symbol of purity)
- light, (symbol of purity)
- purity in relationships: loving and forgiving
- the fall of the perfect creation; environmental pollution
- heaven- study of precious metals, crystals and gems in the Holy City

God is Patient

- Growing things (patience in watching them grow)
- listening to others patiently
- listening, sound and the ear
- patience with people
- understanding and making allowances for differences
- patience in hobbies and occupations
- people who have shown patience: pioneers
- gold- patience and perseverance
- development of technology

God is Life

- cycle of life from birth to death
- animal life; plant life; ecosystems
- plant life
- requirements for life: air, water
- desert survival
- joy in life: celebrations and cultural festivals

God is Provider

- food
- plants
- forestry
- fibres and fabrics
- animal husbandry
- fishing industry
- world food supply

- technology
- rainforests; ecosystems

God is Peace

- home and family
- peaceful play
- trust, (inner peace)
- dealing with fears, (obstacles to peace)
- barriers to peace, (racial, national, cultural prejudices)
- national and international peace
- biographies of peacemakers and those who have struggled for peace

Things to include in Biblical subject integration

- a balanced overview of the Bible.
- real life experiences, modern day miracles and personal testimonies, to back up bible stories. These show us that God works today, and not just in biblical times. Every lesson should be related to LIFE.
- the character or nature of God.
- creativity and active learning activities
- awareness of age-appropriate teaching materials and activities.
- acknowledgment that God is the Creator of the universe, and powerful enough to miraculously create the universe in six 24-hour days.

Exercise 3

For discussion and journal entry:

- a) Choose two attributes of God.
For each attribute, choose a related classroom topic. (It may be one in the list or one of your own choice.) Write a sentence explaining how the topic connects to the attribute. Decide on the age-group undertaking the topics.

e.g. **God is Wise**

Topic: Road safety, age 7 years

Connection: To be wise is to know the right thing to do, and to do it. God wants us to be wise in all we do. This means we should be wise when we cross the road or walk along the road.

- b) Now for each attribute think of a Bible story or references that relate to that aspect of God.
e.g. God is Wise – Verses about wisdom from Proverbs; a Bible story about a character who showed wisdom.

What is God-centred curriculum?

Origins

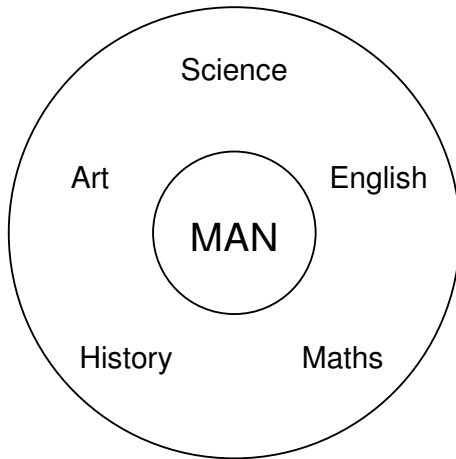
The key difference between a Christian school and a church school is the focus on Biblical integration.

This means integrating Biblical teaching through subject areas and not confining it to devotional periods or 'chapel'.

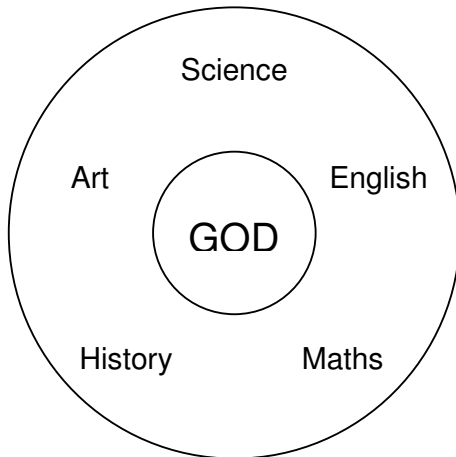
This concept originally came from the Hebrews whose education system was founded on the Scriptures.

Secular education is based on Greek thought, where all subjects are placed in separate boxes, with no spiritual integration.

The Greek model



The Hebrew model



Exercise 4:

For your journal:

- a) **What is the difference between the Hebrew and Greek approach to education?**
- b) **Would the following example be a Hebrew or Greek approach:**
a school that takes a devotion or Bible study once a day, then secular teaching the rest of the day.
- c) **Explain how a school could integrate God and the Bible with their curriculum?**

The Hebrew education system and the modern Christian school

A successful way of taking on the Hebrew approach to education was revealed by the Holy Spirit to a group of teachers at a Youth With A Mission Christian education conference in the 70s.

God-centred curriculum in the 70's

1973 saw the beginnings of a gold mine in Christian education. God revealed to certain individuals a particular approach to Christian education, placing God at the centre of learning. This approach was founded on the character and nature of God.

Prophetic insight...

The initial prophetic insight was given in 1973 to a pastor in a church in Alaska. He was seeking God for understanding regarding the curriculum for the Christian school that was being set up in his church. God began to give him prophetic revelation, so he wrote it down as God gave it to him. Later he shared it with his staff. Two of these teachers shared it with other teachers when they attended a course run by Youth With A Mission in Hawaii, 1978. The course was 'Crossroads Discipleship Training School'.

"I, the Lord God, am calling my people out from the world, calling my people to separate themselves and sanctify themselves that they might do the work of the ministry...In regard to education, I would have my people to put away old forms; I would have them seek Me concerning not what is good, but that which is perfect in my sight, and that which proclaims My Son, Jesus Christ as Lord. I would have as the basis, at the foundation of any educational endeavour, that rock, the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Therefore, let my people know that it is no longer acceptable in the Lord's sight to bring My truth into the curriculum, but the Lord is now calling for My truth to BE the curriculum."

"Just as every name of Christ reveals a portion of truth: Comforter, Saviour, Healer...so I would have Science reveal Jesus as Creator and sustainer of Life; History, a revelation of God working through men to achieve His divine purpose...Each subject should reveal the Holy Spirit as teacher..."

"Those with this vision must end their perception that academic disciplines are secular and Bible disciplines are spiritual. Both, when functioning properly involve the whole person, body, soul and spirit."

"The school, through its administration and teacher, and through its curriculum, is to be a haven for My children. The presence of the Lord should be so strong as to be a shield. The healing and comforting presence of the Lord should work through the anointing of the materials. Many blocks to spiritual growth, to academic growth, to physical growth, to social growth, will quickly dissolve. My word goes forth to heal and preserve. "

"The Lord is therefore requiring the Christian school in these days to be a centre of Christian ministry, and a nurturing place for children. This can only be done when teachers are Holy Spirit-led, dependent on God's direction in everything they teach. The curriculum must be living and exciting, not static or steeped in humanistic methods emerging from universities and colleges."

At the conclusion of the Crossroads DTS, four of these teachers met to pray about the form the Christian School curriculum should take. Previously God had shown 27 pegs reflected in a mirror. Through prayer, this group gained understanding that there were to be 27 attributes of God used in developing the curriculum and the reflection in the mirror indicated that there would be a response in and from the teachers and children as they came to understand each attribute of God.

In the 70's, Margaret McIntyre pioneered Christian primary school curriculum thematically based on the character and nature of God

Margaret, an Australian primary school teacher, was one of the teachers who attended the Crossroads DTS in Hawaii, 1978. She returned to Australia and developed a curriculum based on the 27 character qualities of God that had been given to the group in Hawaii.

GOD IS: Omnipotent, Omniscient, Omnipresent. *(Only God can express these attributes)*

GOD IS: Creator, Shepherd, Protector, Preserver, Provider, Father, Healer, Light, Servant *(God has these attributes in full measure. God can also express these qualities through the lives of people who allow God to work fully in their lives)*

GOD IS: Love, Joy, Peace, Good/righteous/Holy, Self Control, Grace, Justice, Patience, Mercy, Forgiveness, Resourcefulness, Kindness, Humility, Truth, Wisdom *(These are fruits of the Holy Spirit in the lives of God's children. As we come to know Him and allow His character to be expressed in our daily life experiences we grow these qualities to greater maturity).*

This way of building curriculum is founded on the character and nature of God.

How to integrate our teaching using the character and nature of God

Attributes List
God is...

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

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

Pure	Patient	Servant
Holy	Loving	Faithful
Righteous	Kind	Healer
Good	Forgiving	Humble
Light	Persevering	Sacrificial

Life	Provider	Peace
Sustainer	Father	Reconciler
Joy	Faithful	Forgiving
Saviour	Generous	Protector
Redeemer	Resourceful	Comforter

The attributes of God are linked and shown here in clusters.

Each attribute links to Bible passages / Bible stories / Bible verses.

As we understand each attribute of God, we are challenged in our own personal life (Christian character development)

For every subject or topic we encounter in the curriculum, the Bible has something to say. There is an attribute of God that is relevant.

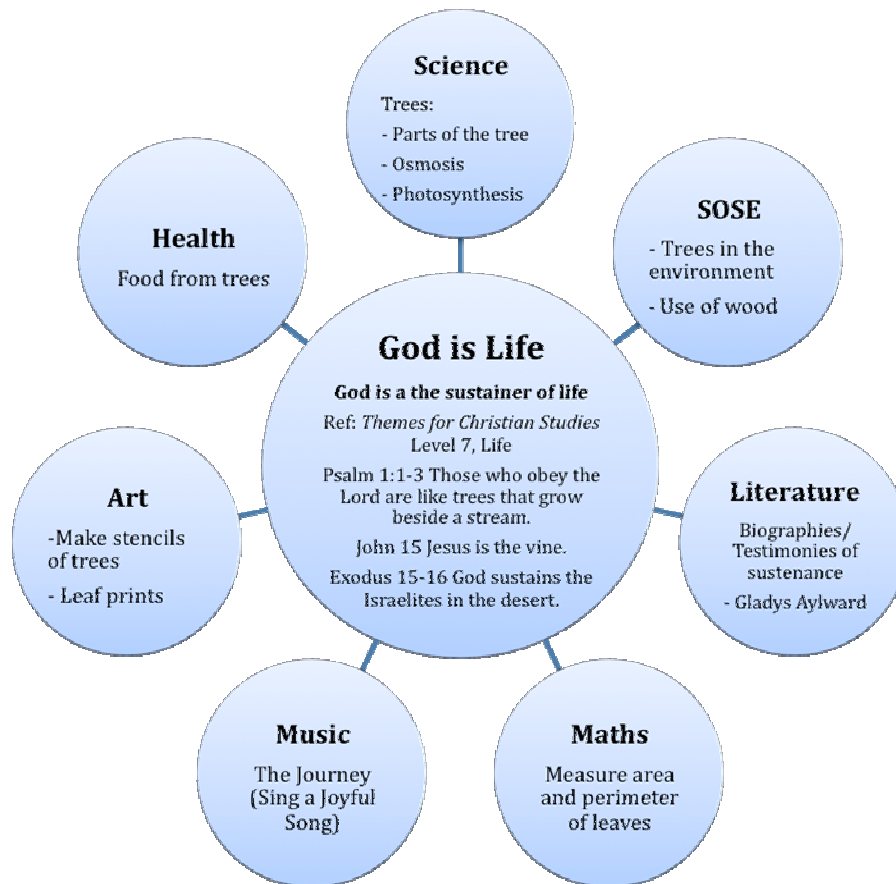
EXAMPLE:

Theme: God is Life

Focus: God is the sustainer of life

Topic: trees

God should be central to the unit and not an afterthought.



Examples of Integrating topics with Biblical worldview

WHICH TOPIC?	WHAT IS MY SPIRITUAL FOCUS?
Advertising/ media	God is Truth: honesty/dishonesty in advertising & packaging God is Pure: discerning the truth and purity in the world around us.
Agriculture	God is Love: God shows His love by providing through the land.
Air	God is Life: God has provided Earth with the elements for life support.
Animals	God is Life: animal life cycles God is Creator: Our responsibility towards animals. God is Provider: God provides for us through animals. God is Protector: camouflage and defence mechanisms. God is Powerful: animal kingdoms; balance of nature
Ants	God is Wise: ants are wise creatures. They prepare for the future. Prov. 6:6
Archaeology	God is Creator/Truth: Discovering the truth through archaeology.
Architecture	God is Patient: certain occupations require patience and precision. Look at historical buildings.
Astronomy	See Solar System
Banking	God is Wise: wise use of money
Camouflage	See Animals
Careers	God is Wise: making wise choices and decisions in the choice of a career.
Castles	See Shelter
Chemistry	God is Powerful: powerful chemical reactions bring change. Heat; states of matter. God can change us!
Choices & decisions	God is Wise: choices in shopping, eating and choosing a pet. God is Wise: choices in choosing friends; right and wrong; drugs and alcohol.
Civil laws	God is Wise: wise and responsible behaviour; traffic laws; environmental responsibility
Clocks	See pendulums
Clothes	God is Provider: God provides materials for clothes.
Communication	God is a Servant: technology serves us in spreading the word. T.V. radio, telephone, computer. Missionaries and Bible translators.
Community services	God is a Servant: People who serve in our community: medical services, fire fighters, police. God is Protector: People who protect us: police, fire fighters, life-savers.
Consumer education	God is Wise: Wise choices in shopping. God is Truth: honesty in advertising/packaging. Customer surveys; testing performance of products.
Crafts/hobbies	God is Patient: hobbies that require patience.
Creation/ evolution	God is Creator: the flood; dinosaurs; arguing the case against evolution
Crystals	God is Patient: patience in waiting for crystals to grow; limestone caves.
Cultural groups	God is Love: God loves all people unconditionally. God's love for different cultural groups. Our love and acceptance of different people. God is Patient: God's patience with us. Patience required when two different cultures meet.

	God is Peace: racial and international peace
Dinosaurs	See Creation/evolution
Disabled	God is Love: God wants us to show particular kindness to those with special needs. God is Patient: showing patience towards the elderly and the disabled.
Disasters	God is Wise: safety precautions to avoid disasters; preparation for natural disasters such as bush fires and snow storms. God is Pure: natural disasters are a result of the fall and were not part of God's original perfect creation.
Drugs	See Choices and decisions
Ecosystems	God is Creator: nature's perfect balance and the effects of the Fall.
Electricity	God is Powerful: God has placed within the creation powerful sources of energy for our use.
Environment	God is Peace: appreciation of God's creation; harmony, beauty and design.
Environmental responsibility	God is Wise: wisdom in caring for the environment; pollution
Explorers	God is Wise: wisdom in allowing God to guide us. God guided many of the early explorers.
Fact and fantasy	God is Truth: discerning between truth and fiction
Family	God is Protector: protection through the family. God is a Servant: serving in the home. God is Peace: feeling secure with family; playing peacefully with siblings. God is Truth: honesty in the home.
Fibres and fabrics	See Clothes
Food	God is Provider: buying food; preparing food. God is Provider: plant foods God is Provider: fruits and seeds God is Provider: food from animals God is Provider: food from the sea God is Provider: world food supply; supply and demand; imports and exports; assistance to developing nations
Force and motion	God is powerful: powerful forces in the creation: tools, toys, machines, transport.
Fossils	God is Creator: the flood; dinosaurs; age of fossils
Friends	God is Pure: purity in relationships; forgiveness and honesty
	God is Peace: peace and harmony in relationships
Geography	God is Wise: maps to guide us. The Bible is God's map for our lives. God is Powerful: powerful forces creating landforms: mountains, rivers, glaciers, volcanoes God is Life: desert survival God is Love: people of the world. (See Cultural groups); poverty in developing nations
Geology	God is Truth: rocks and soil. God's word is a rock. God is Pure: purity of metals and minerals God is Pure: salt. Salt is a cleansing agent.

	God is Creator: the Great Flood
Growth	God is Life: the cycle of life from birth to old age. God is Life: plant life. God is Provider: plants
Government	God is Peace: current affairs relating to peace God is Wise: governments are elected to make wise choices and decisions
Health	See Safety; human body; food
History of Civilisation	God is Love: the nation of Israel; Jews and gentiles; (John 3:16)
Hobbies	God is Patient: hobbies that require patience.
Home	See Family
Houses	See Shelter
Human biology	God is Creator: We are created in God's image. God is Love: myself; my body God is Protector: The blood and immune system
Israel	God is Love: God's purpose for Israel and His love for the gentiles.
International peace	God is Peace: peacemakers; reconciliation between people groups
Kings and kingdoms	God is Powerful: royalty; fact and fantasy; good and evil; Jesus is our King.
Law and order	God is Wise: It is wise to obey God.
Light	God is Creator: God created light. Sun, moon, stars, reflections, shadows, spectrum. God is Pure: light, shadow, reflections: Light is a symbol of purity. Walk in the light.
Lighthouses	God is Protector: Lighthouses protect ships. Jesus is the light.
Machines	see Force and motion
Magnetism	God is Powerful: magnetism is a powerful force within the creation.
Mapping	See Geography
Medical Profession	See Human Body and community services
Metals and minerals	God is Pure: metals are refined to remove impurities. Gems and crystals reflect light. The purity of Heaven.
Middle Ages	God is Protector: Castles of the middle ages provided protection. God is our fortress. The armour of God.
Missionaries	God is a Servant: missionaries serving God God is a Servant: serving with humility God is a servant: spreading the Good News God is Peace: the Peace Child Story, West Papua God is Love: missionaries; helping nations in poverty
Money	See banking
Multi-cultural	See Cultural groups
Nutrition	See Food
Occupations	God is Patient: jobs that require patience, precision and accuracy.
Pendulums	God is Truth: Galileo's discovery of the truth about the solar system and pendulums
Pets	God is Wise: wise choice of a pet; caring for pets.
Pioneers	God is Patient: patience and perseverance; tools, equipment, olden-day technology. God is a Servant: people who made sacrifices to 'pave the way' for others.
Plants	God is Provider: plant foods

	<p>God is Provider: fruits and seeds God is Life: Plant growth God is Creator: God provides for His creation God is Patient: waiting for seeds to sprout</p>
Pollution	<p>God is Pure: What happened to the perfect creation? God is Wise: environmental responsibly</p>
Protection services	Police, fire brigade, life savers (See Community Services)
Racial peace	See Cultural groups
Relationships	See Friends, Family
Road safety	See Safety
Rocks	See Geology
Safety	<p>God is Wise: Be wise and take precautions. God is Peace: stranger danger. Recognise feelings opposed to peace.</p>
Scientific method	God is Truth: discovering truth through the scientific method
Scientists	God is Truth: scientists who seek the truth
Seeds	See plants
Senses	See the human body
Shelter	God is protector: History of shelter. Houses and castles protect.
Ships	God is Protector: protection on sea voyages
Solar system/space	<p>God is Powerful: powerful forces: sun and planets, the earth in space, weather, time and seasons. God is Truth: Galileo discovers the truth about the solar system</p>
Spiders	<p>God is Patient: patience and perseverance shown by spiders in web building. God is Creator: tiny creatures teach us lessons for life.</p>
Time	God is Wise: using time wisely
Tools, toys	See Force and motion
Transport	See Force and motion; ships; air
Travel	God is Wise: planning for journeys
Water	<p>God is Life: Jesus the Living Water God is Pure: water purification – solutions, suspensions, evaporation</p>
Water cycle	God is Powerful: steam power; hydro power
Weather/ seasons	God is Powerful: power in the creation
Weights and measures	God is Truth: a false balance is an abomination to God (Prov. 11:1)

Scripture Bank – one example

God is Protector
<p><i>God is a Father who protects His children</i> Protection of baby Jesus (Matt. 2) Protection of baby Moses (Ex. 1-2) Protection of David against Goliath (1 Sam. 17)</p>
<p><i>God protects His people when they are in danger</i> God protected Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego (Dan. 3) God protected Daniel in the lion's den (Dan. 6) Jesus protected the disciples during the storm (Luke 8:22-25)</p>
<p><i>God protects His people when they fight for Him</i> The armour of God (Eph. 6:10-18) God protected David against Saul (1 Sam. 18-19) God is a strong tower, a fortress and a shield (Ps.18:2; Prov. 18:10; Prov. 30:5)</p>
<p><i>God rescues His people and protects them from sickness</i> God must rescue and protect because of the fall (Gen. 3) God's strategy for bringing the Israelites out of Egypt (Ex. 7-11) The escape (Ex. 12) Opening of the Red Sea (Ex. 14) God protects and heals (Deut. 7:12 & 15; Ex. 15:2; Ps. 91) God's rescue plan for us (John 3:16)</p>
<p><i>God protects us from harm and evil</i> Angels protect us (Ps. 91) The Lord is my Shepherd (Ps. 23) The armour of God (Eph. 6:10-18) Elisha and God's army of angels (2 Kings 6) Fear not (Is. 41:10 & 43:1-2) Three men in the fiery furnace (Daniel 3) An angel saves Peter (Acts 12:1-9)</p>
<p><i>God protects his people in times of trouble</i> God protected Paul during the shipwreck (Acts 27 & 28) Protection from effects of snake bite on Malta (Acts 27 & 28) Paul and Silas in jail (Acts 16:16)</p>
<p><i>God is our shelter</i> God is a shelter for us (Ps. 17:8; 27:5; 32:7) God's protection of the Israelites entering the promised land (Jos. 2-6) Protection of the Jews through Esther (Esther 1-10)</p>

A God-centred lesson – a three-pronged fork

The Christian school teacher

Exercise 5

For thinking and discussion only:

How are my lessons different from those in a secular school?

How do I apply a Biblical worldview to my teaching?

What does Biblical worldview really mean?

How do I nurture character growth patterned on the life of Jesus?

How do I integrate God with my subject area?

How do I make my lessons look like a well-blended chocolate milk shake and not a pizza where the ingredients are separate?

All Christian teachers aim to put God first, but there is often a mystery as to how this is done.

The following simple steps can have a dynamic effect on the way we teach:

The way we present a lesson can be thought of as a three-pronged fork:

1. Who is God? ...relate an aspect of God's character / nature to your lesson. e.g. a science lesson on light and reflection can be related to God is Light.
2. Select Bible passages, verses or stories *relevant* to that particular attribute of God.
3. Ask, "How does an understanding on God in this way impact the way we should live?"

So here we have the three prongs:

- an understanding of God Himself (*Attribute of God*)
- an explanation of this from the Bible (*Bible*)
- a personal challenge to reflect His character (*Character development*)



So an easy way to remember this is **A B C**.

Example of ABC :

Topic: My country, my home

Attribute of God: God is my Protector (**A**)

Bible verse: He hides me in the shadow of His wings (**B**)

Christian response: I will trust and not be afraid because God is my protector.
(**C**)

But this alone is not enough! We need to make the connections plain to the students.

We need to assist the students in making the connections between **A-B-C**. Besides the three prongs, there is another element in the three pronged fork. Without it the three prongs will not stay together. What is it?

The handle!

Who is the handle?

The teacher is the one that links the three elements and helps the student understand the connections between them.

Examples of making connections:

EXAMPLE 1

Science topic: reflection, light, heat

- 1. Aspect of God: God is Light**
- 2. Bible passages: Psalm 119:105 (NIV) - 'Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.' Acts 9 – Paul's conversion came through a bright light from God.**
- 3. Character development: I will choose righteousness; to walk in the light.**

The handle:

The teacher sets the following task for the students:

Write down what your understanding of this phrase is and how it can be applied in your lives. Make reference to scientific phrases, e.g. radiation, reflection, energy etc.

Student responses:

Student 1:

The Bible is God's lamp to my feet - God's lamp (the Bible) also uses reflection because his lamp also reflects into our lives. The lamp is also a light

for our paths we to take in life; hopefully it is a big light (one with a concave mirror) so that we can ALWAYS see our way in the dark or whenever we are lost or gone astray - that light will always be there to stay.

Student 2:

God's word is radiated at us leading us to a life full of righteousness and blessing that is fully devoted to Him. It is our choice if we choose to absorb it or follow the world's ways, and once we have accepted him we should reflect it to others.

EXAMPLE 2

Topic: Plants

- 1. Aspect of God: God is life**
- 2. Bible passages: John 4:7-29 – The woman at the well, (Jesus gave her new life / living water)**
- 3. Character development: The Holy Spirit can help me to live as Jesus wants me to live.**

The handle:

Teacher explains:

Plants need water to stay alive. Just as plants need water to stay alive, we need the Holy Spirit to have spiritual life. Jesus gives us the Holy Spirit, the Living Water. He helps us do what Jesus would do.

Exercise 6:

For your journal:

Using the A,B,C principle, choose an aspect of God, a Bible passage, and a character development statement.

Now explain how you, (the teacher – the handle), can help the students see the link between the attribute of God and their topic of study. Write down what you might say to them.

Writing a God-centred curriculum

Steps to Intercession

Waiting on God for revelation on how we should teach

1. Have a clean heart before God. Confess sins that the Holy Spirit convicts you of. This can be either privately or aloud, depending on the nature of the sin. Psalm 51; Psalm 66:18.
2. Lay down all your own will, abilities, ideas, plans, qualifications, teaching and other experience. Offer it all, in total to God. John 12:21-24.

3. Invite the Holy Spirit to work in our minds and hearts to teach and guide us in what He wants to write and teach. John 16:12-14.
4. Allow the Holy Spirit to resurrect anything of ourselves that He wants resurrected...Only those elements from ourselves that He has transformed by the renewing of the mind. Romans 12:1-2.
5. LISTEN to God, NOT "Bless my good ideas God," but "Lord speak to me, I am listening." Psalm 119:26-27.

In the Living Bible this passage reads: *I told you my plans and you replied. Now give me your instructions. Make me understand what you want, for then I shall see your miracles.*

6. Write down what God tells you.
Habakkuk 2:2-3, Living Bible: *Write my answer on a billboard, large and clear, so that anyone can read it at a glance and rush to tell others. But these things I plan won't happen right away. Slowly, steadily, surely the time approaches when the vision will be fulfilled. If it seems slow, don't despair for these things will surely come to pass. Just be patient. They will not be overdue a single day.*

Adapted from the Y.W.A.M. principles of intercession, by Margaret McIntyre

Ask God for a curriculum specific to your school

Although there are many resources on the *Beacon Media* website, including a sample curriculum for integrated studies, it is important to tailor-make your curriculum for your particular situation.

Before you start, decide to work as a team and pray about what God wants for you.

Then use the resources to place the pieces together, based on what God is saying.

Hearing God's voice

This is an important practice for both teachers and students.

Use the steps of intercession above.

You may feel unsure about how to hear God's voice at first.

When praying in a group, other members can have confirmation of what God is saying. Praying as a group provides safety against thoughts and ideas that are not from God.

The Bible can be a tool through which God speaks. He may bring to your mind a Bible passage or story that you know.

When God speaks, His words will be encouraging, not discouraging.

God can speak through a still small voice (in our thoughts), His word, visions (or pictures in your mind), dreams, and when right circumstances fall into place.

The Holy Spirit is our guide and teacher.

Prayer should be a dialogue. This means that it is not one way. It's not just us presenting our "shopping list". We must include times of silence when we listen for God to speak back to us.

What if we don't hear anything from God?

It may be that God doesn't have anything to say to us right now.

It may be that we need more practice in listening.

John 10 says, "The sheep know my voice." As we practice listening to the voice of the shepherd, we will learn to recognize His voice.

Exercise 7:

(Practical exercise only)

Form small groups and ask God to show you what He wants you to pray for.

Wait on God and see if He has anything to say about this situation.

Do any scriptures come to mind?

Planning an integrated studies curriculum for the Primary School

Exercise 8

For your journal:

Browse through the “Building Blocks Teacher’s Notes” and choose an aspect of God that you would like to focus on. Write down the main Scriptures that impacted you, and explain how these scriptures have deepened your understanding of this aspect of God.

Exercise 9

For your journal:

- Scan through “Building Blocks”. Be aware that you can modify this by adding new topics or swapping the order of topics and spiritual themes.
- Note that there are 8 spiritual themes per year, (2 per term).
- Note that there are related attributes for each main spiritual theme.
- Note that there is a Bible story and memory verse for each week of the year, relating to the attributes of God.

Answer in your journal:

- a) What advantages do you see in a thematic approach such as this, over working through a text book from cover to cover?
- b) What are the advantages of the whole school working on the same spiritual theme at the one time? (See the *whole school focus table*)

Example of development of a spiritual theme:

Term 1 age 7

God is a Powerful Creator

Related attributes: Lord and King

Topic: The Water Cycle

Spiritual awareness: God has power over creation. God's power is expressed in the greatness of the creation. We see this in the oceans, and powerful weather forces. This powerful God cares about me individually. He is able to perform miracles on my behalf.

Duration: 4 weeks

Bible stories:

Genesis 1 -The creation

Mark 4:35-41 - Jesus calms the storm.

Matthew 14:22-32 Jesus walks on water. (Jesus' power over creation)

Exodus – God opened the Red Sea

Bible verses:

Psalms 93:4 - The Lord rules... greater than the roar of the oceans, more powerful than the waves of the sea.

Job 36:22 - God does great things by His power.

Psalms 104:10-18 God provides for all of His creation.

Our response / character development: thankfulness for God's provision of water; wise use of water

Key Questions

Why did God create water?

How do we get water?

How do we see God's power in creation?

How can I thank God for all that He has made?

Objectives:

- To explain the importance of water to life.
- To explain the water cycle.

Examples of activities:

(At the beginning of each lesson, remind the students that God is a Powerful Creator, who supplies us with the things we need, including water. Ask some key questions to test that they are making the link between the study of water and the attribute of God.)

SOSE

- Make a chart showing our dependence on water, e.g. for drinking; for plant survival; for washing.
- Find out where your local drinking water comes from and how it gets to your house.
- Plot the major rivers of your country on a map.

GEOGRAPHY

- Draw maps to show rainfall distribution over your country.
- Compare the rainfall of your country with that of another country.
- Look at pictures of powerful bodies of water around the planet, e.g. waterfalls, oceans, ice deserts.

SCIENCE

- Conduct experiments with plants to show their dependence on water.
- Measure rainfall.
- Conduct evaporation / condensation experiments.
- Study and chart cloud cover and rainfall.
- Classify cloud types.

- Draw a diagram to explain the water cycle.
- Look at water in its three states of matter.

LITERACY

- Retell the selected Bible stories and make them into class books.
- Retell the story of 'little raindrop' from *Themes for Christian Studies 2*, Creator
- Make word lists about rain, clouds, water etc. and display them.
- Write your own story about a little raindrop going through the phases of the Water Cycle.

HEALTH

- Make a poster on the importance of water for cleanliness / and the importance of conserving water.

MUSIC

- Make or select instruments that sound like rain and thunder e.g. make rice shakers for rain; wobble boards for thunder. Use the instruments to accompany songs about rain, rivers, seas or water e.g. "God is Wonderful" from *Couldn't be Finer*.

MATHS

- Conduct measuring activities with water

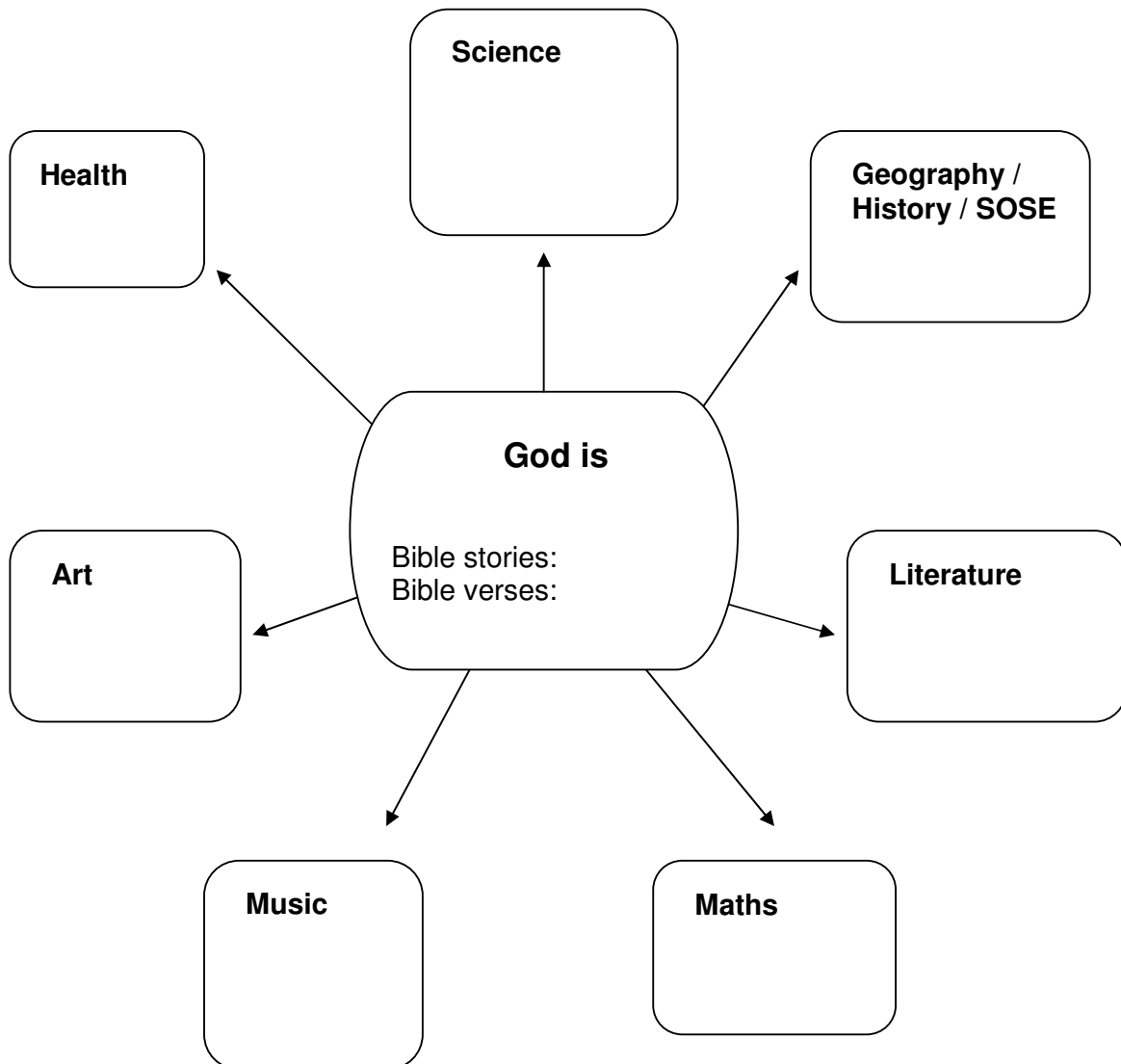
Exercise 10:

For your journal:

Draw a diagram. Make a large circle in the centre of the page. Write inside the circle: "**God is a Powerful Creator**", and Bible passages underneath. Now draw links to subject areas around the outside.

(You can use the following template if you like, or draw a bigger one)

Enter some activities and learning material for each subject: Literacy, SOSE/history/geography, Science, Health, Art, Music, Maths.



Exercise 11:

For your journal:

Expand a Theme of your choice, in a similar way to the previous example.

("God is a Powerful Creator" – the Water Cycle)

Use "*Building Blocks*" as a reference.

Exercise 12

For your journal:

- Scan through the document, "*Themes for Christian Studies*".
- Note that this document has two purposes: it may be followed from cover to cover, taking the spiritual themes in the order that they appear, (a Sunday School would do this); or in a Christian School it may be used in a flexible way, selecting sections to slot into your curriculum where appropriate.
- Note that each main spiritual theme has a "subtheme", which brings out a specific way of looking at the attribute of God.

For your journal:

- a) Why is it important to have subthemes?
- b) How could a Christian school make best use of this document?

Student Evaluation

To ensure that the students are making the link between their academic studies and the spiritual theme, three key questions need to be asked regularly:

Ask the students:

1. What are we learning about God this week? (e.g. God is Provider)
2. What are we learning about the world around us, that shows us that God is...? (e.g. *rainforests*)
3. Can you think of any stories or verses from the Bible that show us that *God is....?*

Exercise 13

For your journal:

Take the topic that you expanded in Exercise 10 and write three evaluation questions to ask the class, in order to find out whether the students have made a spiritual connection between the topic and the attribute of God you are studying.

The power of the story

The approach to God-centred curriculum outlined in this document includes a different Bible story for each class each week. The following ideas can help reinforce the Bible story on a daily basis.

Day 1: T teacher reads the story from either a Good News Bible or an illustrated children's Bible for younger children. At the end of the story the teacher can ask a series of questions to test the children's listening and concentration.

Day 2: Teacher asks the class to retell the story, while teacher writes it on the white board. Ask: What happened first in the story? What happened next? etc.

Day 3: Make a whole-class illustrated book of the Bible story. Teacher writes one sentence per page and each child illustrates a page. Then pages can be collated and stapled it together as a book.

Day 4: Dramatize the story.

Day 5: Children write the story individually in their own words as a writing exercise.

Recap

Exercise 14

For your journal:

Write a few sentences on each of the following, as if you were explaining to the students the link between the spiritual theme and the classroom topic. Give at least one Bible story and one memory verse to support each.

What is the connection between:

- a) God is Protector and a study of "Shelter"
- b) God is Truth and a study of "Fossils"
- c) God is a Loving Provider and a study of "My Country"
- d) God is Pure and Holy and a study of "Pollution"
- e) God is a Servant and the study of "The Medical Profession"