

## Circle of Life – Our blessed journey

### Companions on a journey

The following is an overview of the content and learning activities of the 'Circle of Life' relationships and sexuality education program that is endorsed for use in Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Hobart.

#### Family Life (Early Years)

##### Focus

The Early Years program consists of age-appropriate content, facilitating a gentle unfolding of the child's discovery of 'who they are' in relation to God, their family, others and creation. Through the program

- The child is led into dialogue about the beauty of family life where they are loved, cared for, helped, and learn to share and develop a sense of belonging.
- The child grows in appreciation of the special and unique gift of life that they are to their families.
- Their mother's womb is presented as the first room where they are cared for and kept safe.
- Their family teaches them to love and stay safe in community.
- Gentle gesture of caring for a baby is enacted with the child.
- The beauty of birth as a *new beginning* is explored by drawing upon the animal world.

Programs can also be tailored to assist students in particular areas if a need arises.

#### Kinder/Prep Learning Activities

- Deepens their understanding that God's plan is for our full flourishing as human persons.
- Explores the nurturing place of the womb, the parental role and the responsibility of self-nurture as we grow and change.
- Identifies how the gift of their body is changing and deepens their understanding that their body is good and precious, to be respected, cared for (inclusive of hygiene requirements) and kept safe.
- Learns about friendships and the elements of safe and healthy relationships.
- Is guided to recognise safe and unsafe situations and identify actions to ensure their safety and wellbeing.
- Introduce the gift box with the gift of a baby inside and a mirror (showing the reflection of the gift of the child). This gift belongs to God and is given by God to a family.
- Importance of families - every family is unique and special. This is brought to students in the following way - A family or growing up in a family is imagined like the making of a fabulous cake – needing a special combination of ingredients that are mixed in just the right way. A family like a cake may not turn out exactly how one expects, perhaps we need to try checking the ingredients are all there and mixed in just the right way with the help of others in our world/community (a brief discussion in this way assists students that may be experiencing turmoil in their family life). It is important that in every family there is; loving, caring, helping and sharing. A family is a special place where we experience a sense of belonging. These elements/ingredients are what every family shares in common so that a family is a place where

we grow spiritually, physically, socially/emotionally, intellectually, etc in a happy, healthy and safe way.

- Ways to show love, care, share, help in a family.
- Story *Before I Was Born* or *Just In Case You Ever Wonder* (Ruah Woods – Theology of the Body)
- Our unique self, a gift to our family and a VIP.
- Activity – to colour VIP circle, globe game – there is no one exactly like me (in my family, in fact in the whole of the world), I am unique and special.
- Baby animals, human persons and welcoming new life – felt farm.
- Growth journey from a tiny embryo to an adult (stages of life simplified).
- The womb where human babies grow and an exploration of what the womb is like for a growing baby – I Wonder Questions and natural materials as stimulus.
- Baby needs (emotional and physical) of greatest importance the baby experiences love through gentle gesture.
- *God made all of me* (options for teacher to read to individual class) – our whole body is special from head to toes, some parts of our body are so special we keep them covered.
- Identifying natal sex of babies using life dolls (anatomy of the private parts of our body in brief, very simplified).
- Keeping safe – body safety education which follows any introduction to *Braveheart's*.
- Demonstration of gentle gesture - how to hold a baby, the experience of gentle gesture throughout our whole life.
- Hands on with *real to life* babies - gentle gesture experience by students.

Note: in utero models are not set out during this session

## **Growing & Changing (Primary Years)**

### **Focus**

Building upon the Early Years, the Primary program focuses on our sacred life journey from the moment of conception through to adulthood. The program explores how we express love for ourselves and others through our body and how the complementary design of our bodies facilitates new life. Puberty is sensitively explored as a stage in our life journey of spiritual, physical, intellectual, emotional and social development that is part of our flourishing as human persons. Through the program the child

### **Years 1 and 2 Learning Activities**

- Introduction of the gift of new life and the presenting of babies (5 months in utero) in sleeping bags – this gift belongs to God and is given by God to a family, also the gift in the mirror of the individual child.
- Importance of families - every family is unique and special and we share these common threads; loving, caring, helping and sharing. A family is a special place where we experience a sense of belonging. In our family there is no one exactly like us, in fact in the whole world there is no one exactly like us. We are a God given gift to our family and to this world.
- Activity – placing the individual fingerprint of students on the globe, highlighting that we are indeed an unrepeatable design.
- Ways to show love, care, share, help in a family.
- Story – *What Love Looks Like* as an extension of this understanding.

- Observation of baby animals and their mothers and the welcoming of new life animal babies and human persons. Students are led to see the relationship between mother and baby and how we are connected in the way we are nurtured on our journey.
- From the start our families might look different to each other's (not explained) but every human baby begins the same way with two very special cells; a tiny egg (ovum) from the mother/woman and a small seed (sperm) from the father/man. Note Sperm may not be mentioned and may be addressed by saying the father fertilises the egg.
- NOTE Intercourse is not explained at this level.
- *The womb our very first room* and where human babies grow.
- Exploration of the womb space (umbilical cord/placenta (for the growth journey) and the amniotic sac (for protection) referred to again during body safety education component).
- Activity - Making an umbilical cord, the first physical sign of moving away from mother but always being connected at the heart.
- Twins – only referring to how they grow side by side in the womb.
- Brief discussion about modes of birth – vaginal/caesarean.
- Story “Happy birthday”, Short DVD “A Family Life – family life Tasmania”.
- Baby needs (emotional, physical) of greatest importance the baby experiences love through gentle gesture.
- The natal sex of babies and use of anatomical names for private parts of the body.
- Demonstration of gentle gesture.
- Body safety education – personal space (our protective bubble like being protected in the womb), the swimsuit rule, early warning signs.
- Trusted adults in our world.
- Activity – tracing around the hand and listing the five trusted adults in students' individual life
- Types of touch - safe, unsafe and unsafe/unwanted.
- Prayer reflection – *God made me as I am part of creations plan.*

### Years 3 and 4 Learning Activities

- Introduction of the gift of new life and the presenting of babies (5 months in utero) in sleeping bags – this gift belongs to God and is given by God to a family.
- Importance of families - every family is unique and special and we share common threads; loving, caring, helping and sharing. A family is a special place where we experience a sense of belonging. In our family there is no one exactly like us, in fact in the whole world there is no one exactly like us. We are an unrepeatable design created in the image and likeness of God – meaning that there is part of God inside each one of us and that part of God is the way we love and care for each other and ourselves.
- Year 3 only – Has anyone ever witnessed a birth?
- Observation of baby animals and their mothers and the welcoming of new life animal babies and human persons
- Year 3/4
- Gentle gesture explanation – images
- I Wonder Question – if life began as an egg and observation of a nest
- Story *An Egg is Quiet* (Ruah Woods – Theology of the Body)

- From the start our families might look different to each other's (not explained) but every human baby begins life in the same way with two very special cells; a tiny egg (ovum) from the mother/woman and a small seed (sperm) from the father/man.
- Activity – egg/ovum relay to demonstrate the size of the egg and our miraculous journey from something so tiny to who we are now. Very brief explanation of where these special cells are housed in the human body.
- NOTE Intercourse is not explained at this level – when the egg and sperm come together this is the beginning of new life (conception/fertilisation)
- The egg and sperm melt together like a comet colliding with a planet and changes as demonstrated by in utero slides the growth of a baby in *the womb our very first room*
- The womb/uterus and where human babies grow
- Exploration of the womb space - umbilical cord, placenta (nurturing the baby in the womb) and the amniotic sac (protecting the baby in the womb)
- Activity – *My first room was the womb* pencil shading
- Birth – modes of birth vaginal/caesarean
- Twins and their unique beginning of life
- Discussion – the human person is nurtured in the womb (umbilical cord), outside the womb (breast or bottle feeding), the child at an appropriate age developmentally will begin to self-nurture (particularly in regards to looking after personal health and hygiene)
- DVD “A selection of in utero short films”
- Story *Love Your Body or Angels in the water*
- Relationships and the gesture we express in meeting the person
- The natal sex of babies and use of anatomical names for private parts of the body
- Body safety education – personal space (our protective bubble), the swimsuit rule, early warning signs
- Activity – guiding buddies to demonstrate the feeling of trust
- Trusted adults in our world
- Activity – tracing around the hand and listing the five trusted adults in students' individual life
- Types of touch-safe, unsafe and unsafe/unwanted
- To tell or not to tell
- The CANDO Plan (brief online safety)
- Baby needs (emotional, physical)
- Stages of life
- Simplified puberty session which briefly covers; pimples, hair growth, mood swings, breast development, muscle development, menstruation, nocturnal emissions, body odours. These topics will be covered with sensitivity and a mindfulness of students age and stage. Followed by a brief session about personal care and hygiene – gift of self-box
- Response to prayer space – my gift to the world

## **Years 5 and 6 Learning Activities**

- Introduction of the gift of new life and the presenting of babies (5 months in utero) in sleeping bags – this gift belongs to God and is given by God to a family
- Importance of families - every family is unique and special and we share common threads; loving, caring, helping and sharing. A family is a special place where we experience a sense of belonging. In our family there is no one exactly like us, in fact in the whole world there is no one

exactly like us. We are an unrepeatable design created in the image and likeness of God – meaning that there is part of God inside each one of us and that part of God is the way we love and care for each other and ourselves.

- Guess the size of the world's largest family
- We are made in the image and likeness of God, we are sacred and have a purpose
- Gentle gesture explanation – human persons show their love through their bodies (a language of love expressed by our bodies e.g., hugs)
- From the start our families might look different to each other's (not explained) but every human baby begins life in the same way with two very special cells; a tiny egg (ovum) from the mother/woman and a small seed (sperm) from the father/man. An egg and sperm are known as gametes (a Greek word meaning marriage partners)
- Who teaches us how to love? Unconditional love is demonstrated – Theology of the Body exercise for children as a total gift of self in love to be given and received
- Explanation of Intercourse – a sacred and reverent explanation of intercourse as a gift that adults give one another through a special expression of love known as sexual intercourse/IVF
- This is one-way adults show their love for each other by wanting to welcome a baby into their family through the one flesh union- leading to conception – every act of love may potentially welcome life
- Sometimes when we reflect on our life, we may start to see ourselves as ordinary but we are indeed extraordinary – when two ordinary things come together something extraordinary can happen – we were never ordinary.
- Where these special cells are housed in the body
- Exploration of the womb space - umbilical cord, placenta (nurturing the baby in the womb) and the amniotic sac (protecting the baby in the womb)
- The babies growth journey using visuals, tiny feet etc.
- Birth – modes of birth vaginal/caesarean
- Twins – fraternal and identical
- Discussion – the human person is nurtured in the womb (umbilical cord), outside the womb (breast or bottle feeding), the child at an appropriate age developmentally will begin to self-nurture (particularly in regards to looking after personal health and hygiene)
- DVD "A selection of in utero short films"
- Story – *The Quilt Maker* or *Are Mine* (Ruah Woods – Theology of the Body)
- Activity – the amazing story of conception
- Relationships and the gesture we express in these relationships
- Aristotle's types of friendship
- Relationship in terms of respect (model good gesture/connection), balance, rhythm, trust, nurture, understanding, feeling felt and how to listen without speaking (a large component of understanding our bodies and relationship)
- Activity – standing with a partner from the feet and staves
- The natal sex of babies and use of anatomical names for private parts of the body (what is it to be a woman, to be a man and the reproductive system)
- Body safety education – personal space (our protective bubble), the swimsuit rule, early warning signs
- Trusted adults in our world
- Types of touch-safe, unsafe and unsafe/unwanted

- The CANDO Plan (brief online safety)
- Baby needs (emotional, physical)
- Importance of making correct decisions – growing up in the heart
- Stages of life
- Puberty session – What it means?
  - Biological changes for boys; mood swings, pimples, hair growth, muscle development, facial changes, growth spurts, voice changes, nocturnal emissions, body odours
  - Taking responsibility for personal care and hygiene
  - Biological changes for girls; mood swings, pimples, hair growth, breast development, figure changes, growth spurts, body odours, menstruation, mucus discharge
  - Taking responsibility for personal care and hygiene
- Anatomy pictures to enhance explanation
- The gift of you box for sharing hygiene products
- Activity – Step by step stories, ship wrecked, friendship web
- Prayer reflection *I am Me*

Note: session 3-6 may address miscarriage when understanding the life journey – beginnings, endings and living in between

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Yours sincerely,



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