



Creation and
Covenant

Branch 1

Y1 Teachers' Guide

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This booklet is offered as a theological guide for teachers. Although the information provides some context for the whole branch, it will be most useful for teachers as they deliver the first few sessions and lessons within the branch.

Teachers' Guide: Y1 Creation and Covenant

Session 1	
Learning Focus	Retell the story of the creation in any form. <u>Genesis 1:1-4 24- 26</u>
Recall and Retrieval	EYFS God made our beautiful world and everything in it (use the pictures the children have brought in) God made me. God loves us.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Experience the verse of the scripture with the use of images. Know that the world was a dark place with the spirit flowing over the waters. Know that God created light. Know that God created the creatures and living things. Know that God created humans. Know that God saw it was good. Know that everything we see in the world is a gift from God.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U1.1.1. Recognise that the story of Creation in <u>Genesis 1:1-4 24- 26</u> , is an ancient, prayerful poetic reflection on God's world and retell in any form. U1.1.2. Recognise in an age-appropriate way that the church teaches that all that is, comes from God, Our Father who made heaven and earth.

Explain how the story of Creation in Genesis 1:1-4 24- 26, is an ancient, prayerful poetic reflection on God's world

The **Creation story** in **Genesis 1:1-4, 24-26** is often seen as an ancient, **prayerful poetic reflection** on the world God created. This passage is more than just a description of how the world came to be; it expresses deep theological meaning through poetic language and structure, inviting readers to contemplate the beauty, order, and goodness of creation.

1. Poetic Structure of Genesis 1

The story is organized into a **seven-day framework**, which gives the account a rhythmic, almost liturgical feel. Each day follows a similar pattern:

- **God speaks:** "and God said..."
- **Creation happens:** "and it was so."
- **God sees:** "and God saw that it was good."
- **Naming and setting:** God names the elements of creation, placing everything in order.

This repetition and rhythm reflect the style of **ancient Hebrew poetry**, where structure and repeated phrases are used to emphasize key points and make the text easier to remember and recite in a communal or prayerful setting.

2. A Prayerful Reflection

The passage encourages a **meditative attitude**, focusing on God's power and the goodness of His creation:

God's authority through speech: Each time God speaks, something new and wonderful comes into existence. This highlights God's divine power and the ease with which He creates. Reflecting on this can inspire awe and reverence for God's creative might.

Creation's inherent goodness: After each stage of creation, the text emphasizes that **God saw it was good**. This repeated affirmation of the goodness of creation encourages a sense of gratitude and worship for the beauty and order of the natural world. It invites people to see the world through God's eyes, recognising it as a gift that reflects His glory.

3. Theological Depth

God's intentionality: Genesis 1 presents the world as created with purpose and order. Nothing happens by accident; everything is part of God's divine plan. This invites believers to trust in God's control over the universe and to see the world as a carefully crafted masterpiece.

Human beings in God's image: Verses 24-26 describe the creation of animals and humans, with a special focus on the creation of human beings in God's image ("Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness..."). This emphasizes the dignity and responsibility of humans as stewards of creation, linking human identity directly to God's creative power.

4. Creation as a Call to Worship

- The poetic and reflective nature of Genesis 1 serves as a **call to worship**. The orderly progression of creation, from light to land, sea, and living beings, shows a harmonious design that points to the majesty of the Creator. Just as a poem or song leads us into reflection, this passage calls believers to **praise God** for the wonders of the world He made.
- The creation of **light** at the very beginning ("Let there be light" - Genesis 1:3) symbolizes the presence of God's goodness and truth shining over the darkness. It is a symbol often used in prayer and worship to signify God's power over chaos and His ability to bring clarity and order to the world.

5. Human Responsibility (Genesis 1:26)

In **Genesis 1:26**, God gives humans dominion over the earth and its creatures:

- This reflects the belief that humans have a special role in God's creation. The passage calls humans to act as **stewards**, caretakers of the earth, responsible for maintaining the goodness and order of creation. This is a prayerful reminder that humans must honour God by respecting and caring for the world He has entrusted to them.

Conclusion:

The story of creation in **Genesis 1** is not just a historical or scientific account of how the world was made; it is an **ancient, prayerful, and poetic reflection** that **emphasizes the power, order, and goodness of God's creation**. Through its rhythmic structure, repeated affirmations of the goodness of creation, and its theological insights, this passage invites believers to **contemplate, worship, and care for the world** as a reflection of God's glory and creative love.

Session 2	
Learning Focus	Know that creation is a gift from God and talk about how it's expressed in different artistic ways.
Recall and Retrieval	Using the pictures from the previous lesson remember what God created
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Know that God created everything in our world. Know that the creation story is expressed in different artistic ways. Talk about what they like about the different ways.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	D1.1.1. Talking about how God's gift of creation is expressed through the scriptures and diverse creative and artistic expressions, art music

How is God's gift of creation is expressed through the scriptures and diverse creative and artistic expressions, art music

God's gift of creation is celebrated and expressed in various ways through scriptures, art, music, and other creative forms. Each medium offers a unique perspective on the beauty, wonder, and significance of creation. Here's how this gift is reflected:

1. Scriptures

- **Genesis Creation Narrative:** The account of creation in Genesis 1 and 2 expresses God's intentionality and goodness in creating the world. Phrases like "And God saw that it was good" highlight the beauty and perfection of creation, affirming it as a divine gift.
- **Psalms:** Many Psalms celebrate God's creation, such as Psalm 19:1-4, which proclaims, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." This expresses how nature itself serves as a testimony to God's greatness.
- **Ecclesiastes 3:** This passage reflects on the seasons and cycles of life, recognising that there is a time for everything under heaven. It emphasizes the order and beauty inherent in God's creation.
- **New Testament Teachings:** Jesus often used nature in His parables, teaching profound truths about God and His kingdom through the lens of creation (e.g., the parable of the Sower in Matthew 13).

2. Art

- **Visual Arts:** Artists throughout history have drawn inspiration from creation to depict the beauty of landscapes, animals, and human life. Paintings like Claude Monet's "Water Lilies" or Vincent van Gogh's "Starry Night" evoke the splendour of nature and illustrate the harmony of God's creation.
- **Religious Iconography:** In Christian art, depictions of the Creation, the Garden of Eden, and the life of Jesus often reflect themes of harmony, balance, and divine presence in the natural world.
- **Sculpture:** Sculptors may create works that represent aspects of creation, such as animals, plants, and human figures, emphasizing the interconnectedness of all living things.

3. Music

- **Hymns and Spiritual Songs:** Many hymns celebrate creation and its Creator. For example, "How Great Thou Art" expresses awe at the beauty of the natural world and God's greatness.
- **Classical Music:** Composers like **Beethoven** (e.g., "Pastoral Symphony") and **Vivaldi** (e.g., "The Four Seasons") have created music that reflects the beauty of nature and the cycles of life. Their works often evoke feelings of peace and reverence for God's creation.

- **Contemporary Worship Music:** Many contemporary Christian songs focus on creation themes, praising God for His works and celebrating the beauty of the earth. Songs like "Indescribable" by Chris Tomlin express wonder at God's creativity.

4. Literature

- **Poetry and Prose:** Writers and poets often draw from nature to express themes of beauty, spirituality, and the human experience. Works by poets like **Mary Oliver** and **John Keats** reflect a deep appreciation for the natural world.
- **Theological Reflections:** Books exploring theology and creation (e.g., "A Hidden Wholeness" by Parker Palmer) discuss the sacredness of creation and humanity's role within it.

5. Dance and Performance

- **Choreography:** Dance can express the rhythms of nature and creation, portraying the joy and movement found in the natural world. Performances may depict the changing seasons or the beauty of life.
- **Theatrical Productions:** Plays and performances often explore themes of creation, humanity's relationship with nature, and stewardship of the earth.

Conclusion

God's gift of creation is expressed **through scriptures** that reveal His intentionality and goodness, as well as through **diverse creative forms** such as art, music, literature, and performance. Each expression offers unique insights into the beauty, complexity, and interconnectedness of creation, encouraging reflection, worship, and a sense of responsibility toward the world. Together, these expressions celebrate the divine creativity that permeates all aspects of life and inspire a deeper appreciation for the world we inhabit.

Session 3	
Learning Focus	Know that God is in there and wonder of creation and recognise that prayer can bring us closer to him.
Recall and Retrieval	Retell the verses of the Creation story they have studied.
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Know that everything we see is created by God because he loves us. Express the awe and wonder on the school's grounds by creating artistic interpretations of them. Respond writing a simple prayer to praise God for what they have drawn.
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	U1.1.3. Recognise that though people cannot see God, they can sense his presence through the awe and wonder experienced in the beauty and order of creation. U1.1.6. Recognise that prayer is a way of drawing closer to God U1.1.2. Recognise in an age-appropriate way that the church teaches that all that is, comes from God, Our Father who made heaven and earth

Explain how though people cannot see God, they can sense his presence through the awe and wonder experienced in the beauty and order of creation.

The belief that people can sense God's presence through the beauty and order of creation is deeply rooted in various spiritual and theological traditions. Here's an exploration of how this understanding unfolds:

1. The Beauty of Creation as a Reflection of God

- **Nature's Splendour:** The intricacies of nature—from majestic mountains to delicate flowers—evoke a sense of awe. Many people find that these experiences of beauty prompt reflections on a greater power or creator. This sense of beauty is often interpreted as a glimpse into God's character, showcasing His creativity, majesty, and love for diversity.
- **Artistry in Design:** The complexity and precision of the natural world, such as the balance of ecosystems, the intricacies of biological life, and the vastness of the universe, can inspire feelings of wonder. The order found in creation—from the cycles of the seasons to the laws of physics—can lead individuals to contemplate the intelligence and purpose behind such design.

2. Awe and Wonder as Spiritual Experiences

- **Emotional Responses:** Moments of awe, such as witnessing a breathtaking sunset, the starry night sky, or the birth of a child, often provoke profound emotional responses. These feelings can lead individuals to a sense of connection with something greater than themselves. In these moments, many feel a transcendent presence that they associate with God.
- **Mystical Experiences:** Throughout history, individuals have reported mystical experiences during encounters with nature. These experiences often involve feelings of unity with the universe or a sense of being part of a larger divine plan, reinforcing the belief that God's presence can be felt even if He cannot be seen.

3. Philosophical and Theological Perspectives

- **Natural Theology:** Many philosophical traditions emphasize that the existence of God can be inferred through the observation of nature. This concept, known as **natural theology**, posits that creation reveals God's attributes - such as His power, wisdom, and goodness - through the natural order and beauty.

- **Scriptural Affirmation:** Religious texts, including the Bible, often affirm that creation itself testifies to God's presence. For example, Psalm 19:1 states, "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands." Such passages suggest that creation serves as a witness to God's existence and character.

4. Interconnectedness of Creation and Humanity

- **Human Experience:** Humans are part of the created order, and this interconnectedness fosters a sense of belonging and relationship with the Creator. As individuals engage with the natural world, they often feel a deep sense of purpose and responsibility, leading to a heightened awareness of God's presence.
- **Spiritual Practices:** Many spiritual practices, such as meditation, prayer, and nature walks, encourage people to be mindful of their surroundings. By cultivating awareness of creation's beauty and order, individuals can enhance their sensitivity to God's presence and listen for His voice in the world around them.

5. Creation as a Means of Encounter

- **Symbol of Divine Relationship:** Creation can serve as a symbol of God's relationship with humanity. Just as humans care for and nurture the earth, they can also sense God's nurturing presence in their lives. The natural world becomes a space where people can encounter God's love, creativity, and sustaining power.
- **Sacred Space:** Many traditions view nature as a sacred space where God's presence is felt. Natural landscapes, such as mountains, forests, and rivers, often serve as settings for spiritual reflection, prompting individuals to seek a deeper connection with the Creator.

Conclusion

Although people cannot see God in a physical sense, they can sense His presence through the awe and wonder experienced in the beauty and order of creation. This recognition fosters a profound connection to the divine, inviting reflection, worship, and a sense of stewardship for the world. The beauty of nature serves as a reminder of God's attributes and encourages individuals to seek a deeper relationship with Him through their experiences in the natural world.

Explain the Catholic belief that prayer is a way of drawing closer to God

The Catholic belief that prayer is a way of drawing closer to God is foundational to the faith and encompasses several key aspects:

1. Communication with God

- **Two-Way Relationship:** Prayer is seen as a means of communication between God and the individual. It is not just about presenting requests to God but also involves listening to His voice and guidance. This dialogue helps deepen one's relationship with God, fostering a sense of intimacy and connection.
- **Expressing Thoughts and Feelings:** Through prayer, individuals express their thoughts, emotions, joys, and struggles. This openness helps believers feel more connected to God, as they share their lives with Him.

2. Different Forms of Prayer

- **Types of Prayer:** Catholicism recognises various forms of prayer, including **adoration, thanksgiving, confession, supplication, and intercession**. Each type serves a purpose in enhancing the relationship with God.
- **Adoration:** Recognising God's greatness and holiness draws the individual into a deeper reverence and appreciation of His nature.
- **Thanksgiving:** Acknowledging God's blessings fosters gratitude and humility, which strengthens the bond with Him.
- **Confession:** Seeking forgiveness helps cleanse the soul and renews the relationship with God, emphasizing His mercy and love.
- **Supplication and Intercession:** Presenting personal needs or praying for others highlights reliance on God and community connection, reinforcing the belief in His providence.

3. Spiritual Growth and Transformation

- **Becoming More Christlike:** Prayer encourages spiritual growth, helping individuals become more like Christ. Through prayer, Catholics seek to align their will with God's, fostering a deeper understanding of His purpose for their lives.
- **Inner Peace and Strength:** Engaging in prayer provides comfort, guidance, and strength, especially during challenging times. This support can deepen faith and reliance on God, furthering the relationship.

4. Sacramental Life

- **Integration with Sacraments:** Prayer is integral to the sacramental life in Catholicism. The sacraments, such as the Eucharist, are seen as encounters with Christ, and prayer enhances these experiences. Participating in the Mass includes communal prayer, reinforcing the belief in God's presence and love.
- **Personal Devotions:** Many Catholics engage in personal devotions, such as the Rosary or novenas, which involve structured prayers that draw the individual closer to God through meditation on His life and mysteries.

5. Community and Tradition

- **Communal Prayer:** The Catholic faith emphasizes the importance of community in prayer. Participating in group prayers, such as Mass or prayer services, fosters a sense of belonging and shared faith, reminding individuals that they are part of a larger body of Christ.
- **Rich Tradition:** The Catholic Church has a long history of prayer traditions, including the prayers of the saints, the Liturgy of the Hours, and various forms of contemplative prayer. Engaging with these traditions helps individuals connect with the broader faith community and the Church's heritage.

6. Encountering God's Presence

- **Mystical Experiences:** Many Catholics believe that through prayer, they can have profound experiences of God's presence. This can manifest as a sense of peace, inspiration, or clarity, affirming that prayer is a means of encountering the divine.
- **Guidance of the Holy Spirit:** Catholics believe that the Holy Spirit assists in prayer, guiding believers in their intentions and helping them to pray according to God's will. This assistance creates a deeper connection and understanding of God's desires.

Conclusion

In summary, the Catholic belief that prayer is a way of drawing closer to God emphasizes the importance of communication, spiritual growth, and community. Through various forms of prayer, individuals cultivate a relationship with God, experience His presence, and seek to align their lives with His will. Prayer is not only an act of devotion but a transformative experience that deepens faith and nurtures a profound connection with the divine.

Session 4	
Learning Focus	Reflect upon the opening words of the Creed and reflect on what they and the words of the Our father means to them.
Recall and Retrieval	Say the Our Father together
Sequence of knowledge throughout the lesson	Know that as a community, the church prays the Creed and the Our father to pray to God and worship him. Know that the Our father praises God (Our father who art in Heaven, hallowed be thy name) and that God's kingdom is a place where God rules and people behave in the way that Jesus teaches them to. Christians believe that in God's kingdom, people love and respect God as he deserves and people treat each other fairly and kindly. This is also God's will. He wants the world to be the best place for us to live. When Christians pray this, they are praying that the Earth will be a place of peace and justice. (On earth as it is in Heaven Respond the opening line of the Creed
Key skills/disciplinary knowledge	R1.1.1. Reflecting on the words of the Our Father and the opening of the creed say to them U1.1.2. Recognise in an age-appropriate way that the church teaches that all that is, comes from God, Our Father who made heaven and earth

Explain what the opening words of the Creed mean to Catholics and what the words of the Our father mean to Catholics

The opening words of the **Creed** and the **Our Father** are central to Catholic faith and practice, each carrying profound meaning and significance. Here's an explanation of what these words mean to Catholics:

1. The Opening Words of the Creed

The **Nicene Creed** is typically recited during Mass and begins with the phrase, "**We believe in one God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.**"

Meaning to Catholics:

- **Affirmation of Faith:** The opening words of the Creed serve as a declaration of faith. By stating "We believe," Catholics affirm their commitment to the fundamental truths of the faith and their membership in the Church. It emphasizes the communal aspect of faith, as it is recited together during Mass, reinforcing the unity of believers.

Understanding of God:

- **"One God":** This emphasizes the monotheistic belief central to Christianity. It signifies that Catholics worship a single, all-powerful God, which is foundational to their understanding of existence and the universe.
- **"Father Almighty":** Referring to God as "Father" indicates a personal and relational understanding of God. It reflects the belief that God is a loving parent who cares for His creation and desires a relationship with humanity. The term "Almighty" acknowledges His supreme power over all things.
- **Creator of All:** The phrase **"Maker of heaven and earth"** underscores God's role as the creator of the universe. It establishes the belief in God's active role in the world and His authority over creation. This leads to an understanding of humanity's responsibility as stewards of the earth.

- **Visible and invisible:** includes both the physical world and the spiritual realm, indicating that God is the source of everything, both seen and unseen, and recognises the existence of spiritual realities, such as angels and the divine.

2. The Our Father

The **Our Father**, also known as the **Lord's Prayer**, begins with the words, "**Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.**"

Meaning to Catholics:

- **Addressing God:** The prayer begins with "Our Father," which reflects a deep relational aspect of faith. It signifies that God is not a distant deity but a loving parent. The use of "Our" emphasizes community and inclusion, indicating that all believers are part of God's family.

Recognition of God's Holiness:

- **"Who art in heaven"** acknowledges God's transcendence, emphasizing that He is above all creation. It affirms that while God is personal, He also exists in a realm beyond human understanding and experience.
- **"Hallowed be thy name"** expresses reverence and respect for God. It acknowledges His holiness and encourages believers to honour and glorify Him in their lives.

Community and Intercession:

The prayer is communal, addressing God as "Our" Father, which reflects a collective identity among believers. It reinforces the idea that prayer is not just an individual act but a communal one, fostering a sense of belonging to the Church and the larger Christian community.

- **Expressions of Faith:** The subsequent petitions in the Our Father (e.g., "Thy kingdom come," "Thy will be done," "Give us this day our daily bread") reflect the core beliefs and aspirations of Catholics:
- **Desire for God's Kingdom:** The phrase "Thy kingdom come" expresses a longing for God's reign of love, justice, and peace to be fully realized on earth.
- **Submission to God's Will:** "Thy will be done" signifies a willingness to accept God's plan and purpose, demonstrating trust in His wisdom.
- **Daily Sustenance:** "Give us this day our daily bread" acknowledges reliance on God for both physical and spiritual nourishment, highlighting the belief in God's provision and care for His people.

Conclusion

The opening words of the Creed and the Our Father encapsulate essential beliefs and attitudes in Catholicism. They affirm a relationship with God as a loving Father, acknowledge His holiness and authority, and express communal faith and reliance on Him. Together, these prayers serve as foundational elements of Catholic worship and identity, guiding believers in their spiritual journey and connection to the divine.

Explain what the words of the Creed and Our Father might mean to a 6-year-old

Explaining the words of the Creed and the Our Father to a 6-year-old involves simplifying the language and concepts while still conveying the core meanings. Here's how you might explain each:

1. The Creed

What it Means:

- "We believe in one God": This means that we believe there is only one God, like how we have one mum or one dad who loves us.
- "The Father Almighty": We call God "Father" because He loves us like a parent does. "Almighty" means He is very, very powerful, much stronger than anyone else.
- "Maker of heaven and earth": This tells us that God made everything around us—the sky, the trees, animals, and even us! He created the whole world.
- "And of all things visible and invisible": This means God made things we can see, like our friends and the sun, and things we can't see, like love or angels.

Why It's Important: The Creed is like a special song we sing together that reminds us about God and how amazing He is. It helps us remember who God is and what we believe as a family in church.

2. The Our Father

What it Means:

- "Our Father": When we say this, we're talking to God as our special Father who loves and takes care of us, just like our parents do.
- "Who art in heaven": This means that God is in a wonderful place called heaven, which is very special and where God is always happy.
- "Hallowed be thy name": This is a way of saying that we think God's name is very special and we should treat it with respect.
- "Thy kingdom come": We are asking for God to make the world a better place, filled with love and kindness.
- "Thy will be done": This means we trust God to help us do what is right, even if we don't always understand it.
- "Give us this day our daily bread": We are asking God to give us what we need to be happy and healthy, like food and love.

Why It's Important: The Our Father is like a big hug for our hearts. It helps us talk to God about what we need and shows us how to be kind and loving, just like He is. It reminds us that we are all part of God's family.

Conclusion

Both the Creed and the Our Father are special prayers that help us feel close to God and remind us of how much He loves us. They are important parts of our time in church and help us learn how to be good people and friends.