

Teachers' Resources

Social Justice Sunday Statement 2006

The Heart of Our Country: Dignity and justice for our Indigenous sisters and brothers

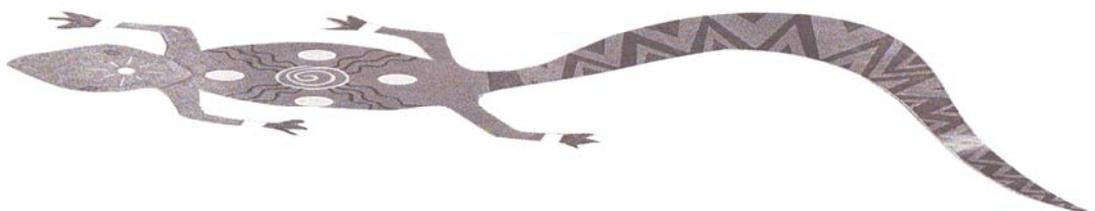
The following unit of work for use in schools has been written to support the 2006 Social Justice Sunday Statement of the Australian Catholic Bishops Conference, "The Heart of Our Country: Dignity and justice for our Indigenous sisters and brothers".

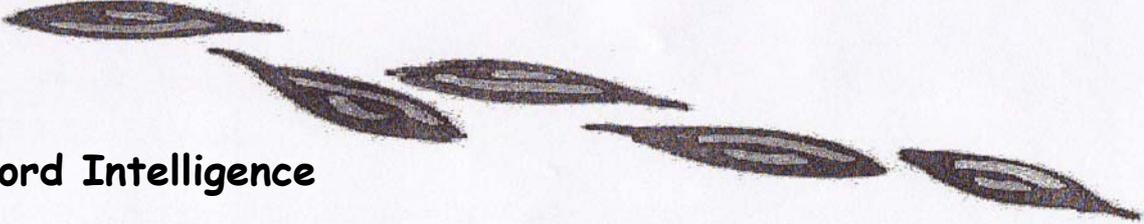
The writers of the unit, Di Brown, Catholic Schools Office, Armidale and Beverley O'Keefe, St Michael's School, Mittagong, have combined Gardner's Multiple Intelligences and Bloom's Revised Taxonomy of cognitive processes to enable teachers to use a tool for differentiating curriculum tasks to address individual differences in students.

The unit does not focus on specific year levels, but has a wide range of strategies suitable for students from Year 3 to Year 12. The activities can be adapted to address the learning outcomes for the various Stage or Year levels including K - 2.

Note:

The term Indigenous means both Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.





Word Intelligence

Make a facts chart about Pope John Paul II's visit to Alice Springs in 1986.

Understand

Read the Scripture passage from Isaiah 61:1-7 *Good news to the oppressed*
Choose a well known person whose life's work has made a significant contribution to the improvement in conditions for Australia's Indigenous peoples. Write your own quiz questions about the person. Use the quiz with other members of your class.

Apply

Watch the DVD / video of *Rabbit Proof Fence* [PG]. What questions would you ask of Molly, Daisy and Gracie if you had the opportunity to speak with them?

Analyse

Aboriginal people are often portrayed negatively by mainstream Australians as alcoholics / drunks, welfare dependent / dole bludgers / lazy, dishonest and destructive etc. Imagine how it would feel to live your life hearing these negative terms and experiencing the attitudes that come with them. Conduct an investigation and produce information to support the view that positive attitudes and a sense of connectedness / belonging can help to change the lives of disadvantaged people.

Evaluate

In Aboriginal culture, *Message Sticks* were carried by those bearing important news, particularly news of gatherings. The *Message Sticks* currently circulating throughout Australia also carry with them the call to reflect on the message delivered by Pope John Paul II in 1986. Evaluate the extent to which we have responded to that message over the past 20 years.

Create

Devise a way of getting the message across to Governments and other decision makers, that education across a broad range of areas, including health, is imperative, if we are to improve the outcomes for many Indigenous Australians.





Interpersonal Intelligence

Remember

Most Indigenous people in Australia can be linked to a particular land, sea area, or kinship group. In pairs write an acrostic poem about the Aboriginal name of the Indigenous people in your local area.

Understand

Many Indigenous Australians are still experiencing an ongoing cycle of poverty. Form groups and prepare a flow chart using the following headings.

Disadvantaged lifestyle → Birth → Early Childhood → Schooling → Early Schooling Dropout → Employment →.

Under each heading list the factors that contribute to the cycle of poverty.

Apply

Reflect on the statement: "To Understand the Present - We Must Understand the Past." Using any medium, show how the many atrocities and injustices including physical and emotional abuse, massacres, forced removal from family and land, lack of acknowledgement of cultural and spiritual connections to the land, the breakdown of language systems and education, spiritual self, and traditional lore and punishment have contributed to the psychological scarring and sociological impact that is evident in many Indigenous communities today. Present your findings to your class.

Analyse

What is meant by Reconciliation and why is it important to all Australians? Investigate areas throughout Australia where Reconciliation is considered to be successful. Explain why this is so, and then identify contributing factors that are inhibiting its success in other areas.

Evaluate

Form a panel to discuss the statement made by the Prime Minister: "Without any doubt, the greatest blemish and stain on the Australian national story is our treatment of the Indigenous people."

Create

His Holiness, Pope John Paul II provided strong support for Indigenous people to contribute their cultural richness and diversity to the life of the Catholic Church. Devise ways in which Parish communities can work with local Indigenous groups, and then make this a reality in your community.





Musical Intelligence

Remember

Locate on the internet and learn the song "From Little Things, Big Things Grow".

Understand

Explain the incident that prompted Paul Kelly and Kev Carmody to write the above song.

Apply

Form groups to find songs which tell about The Dreaming. Select appropriate background music and retell the stories to your class.

Analyse

Compare the different sounds that you might have heard around the traditional campsites of Indigenous people. Investigate ways you can reproduce those sounds. Graphically notate the sounds and perform for your class.

Evaluate

Prepare a list of criteria for judging a competition in which songs have been written and / or performed by Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people where they tell stories about their people or their own lives.

Create

Devise a chant or compose a song that epitomizes the lifetime work of Mum Shirl, [Shirley Perry Smith 1921 - 1998] particularly in caring for children, and the homeless and unemployed Aboriginal people of Sydney. If writing a song, put your words to a known melody, or write a melody of your own.





Naturalist Intelligence

Remember

In his address to the Indigenous people of Australia Pope John Paul II said "You did not spoil the land, use it up, exhaust it and then walk away from it. You realised that your land was related to the source of life". List the ways the Aboriginal people care for the land.

Understand

Take a Spring nature walk and then write a Poem or Diary entry summarising your thoughts and expressing your feelings in thanksgiving for God's gift of Creation.

Apply

Plant a tree or small garden at your school, to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of Pope John Paul II's visit to Alice Springs. Place a plaque near your tree or garden to remind your school community that Pope John Paul II called upon every person to work for Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians.

Analyse

Compare and contrast how the traditional custodians of the land and other Australians of today, care for the land.

Evaluate

Aboriginal people live in harmony with the natural environment in Australia and have done for over forty thousand years. Non-indigenous Australians have created many environmental problems in just two hundred and eighteen years.

Evaluate the environmental problems which exist today, give a short explanation of each problem, state the cause of the problem, and say whether the solutions employed to rectify these problems are working.

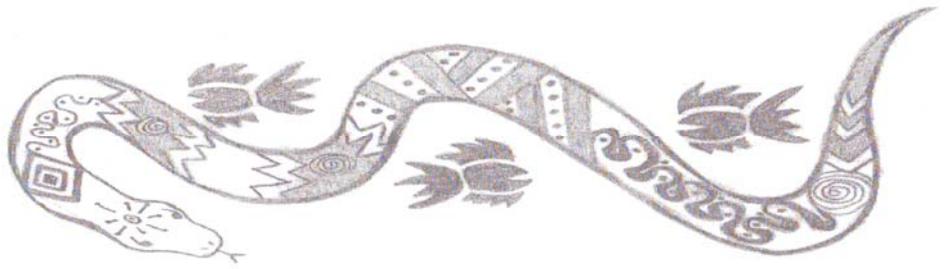
Create

Read Gospel references where Jesus used images of nature in his teaching.

Reflect on one or more of these passages and then express the message you believe Jesus was making in a creative way, through, writing, art, dance or movement.



Self Intelligence



Remember

Define the term **Social Justice** and list the issues which relate to this topic with regard to Indigenous Australians.

Understand

'The Rainbow Serpent' is a very significant Dreaming story for the Indigenous people. Read the story and then retell the story to your class in your own words.

Apply

Pope John Paul II when speaking to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples about the struggles and difficulties they have faced, said "**Endurance brings with it patience; patience helps you to find the way ahead, and gives you courage for your journey**". Reflect on the Pope's words and write about how these words can be applied to your own times of difficulty and struggle.

Analyse

For over thirty years Father Ted Kennedy worked with the Aboriginal people of Redfern. Research the work of Father Ted Kennedy and write a report showing how one person can make a difference, when they live their life in the spirit of the Beatitudes Matthew 5:3-12.

Evaluate

Present your view on how the Catholic Church can work towards achieving the hope of Pope John Paul II when he addressed the Catholic Church in Oceania in 2001, "**it is the Church's task to help Indigenous cultures preserve their identity and maintain their traditions**".

Create

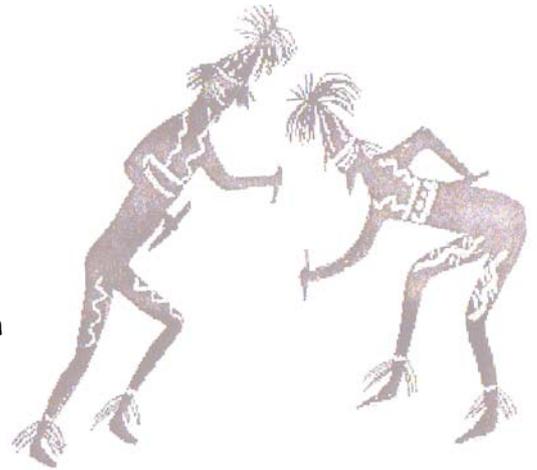
Aboriginal artist and teacher Miriam-Rose Ungunmerr, from the Daly River in the Northern Territory says her people have a special quality and gift to share with non-Indigenous Australians; "*it is perhaps the greatest gift we can give to our fellow Australians...Dadirri...inner, deep listening and quiet, still awareness*". Prepare an outdoor meditation on the theme '**Appreciating the Gifts of our Indigenous Brothers and Sisters**'. Incorporate into your meditation moments of *deep listening and quiet, still awareness*.



Space & Vision Intelligence

Remember

Find the logos of organisations within the church and in society which have been established to protect the rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.



Understand

Make a Collage which uses illustrations and symbols of Pope John Paul II's message to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people in Alice Springs in 1986.

Apply

Shirley Perry Smith (Mum Shirl) was a wonderful guide, support and advocate for Aboriginal people. Read about the work of Mum Shirl and then create a Board Game about her life and work.

Analyse

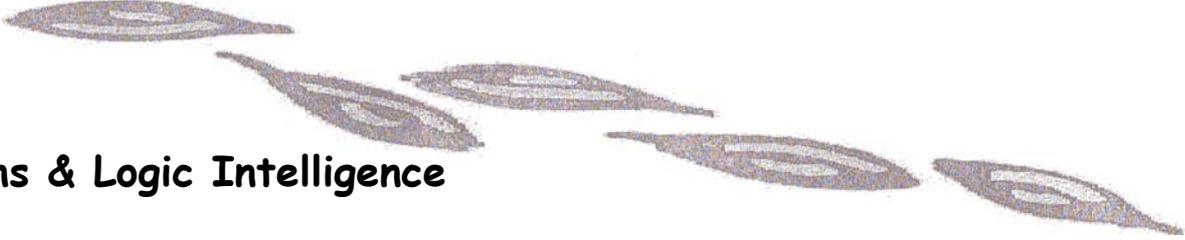
Compare the way of life of the Indigenous Australians before 1788 (colonisation) with their life today. Make a model (using clay, papier mâché, and other craft materials) to show the differences.

Evaluate

"The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ speaks all languages. It esteems and embraces all cultures". These words were spoken by Pope John Paul II to Australia's Indigenous people in Alice Springs in 1986. Prepare a Power Point Presentation for your School Assembly using this statement of Pope John Paul II.

Create

Pope John Paul II used a familiar Australian image when he spoke to the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples in 1986, **"The leaves are scorched and the tough bark is scarred and burned, but inside the tree the sap is still flowing, and under the ground the roots are still strong. Like that tree you have endured the flames and you still have the power to be reborn"**. Design and paint a mural to illustrate these words of Pope John Paul II.



Maths & Logic Intelligence

Remember

"For many of Australia's Indigenous people, painful memories remain of separation from family, country and culture that led them to be placed in the care of Church run institutions"(2006 Social Justice Sunday Statement). On a map of Australia locate where many of these Church run Institutions or Missions were established.

Understand

Make a Story Map of one of Jesus' parables/teachings related to Social Justice.

Apply

"Many efforts have been made to bridge the gap between the largely Western European culture of the Catholic Church in Australia and the cultures of the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people" (2006 Social Justice Sunday Statement). Conduct a survey among the teachers of your school to find out what they know about the efforts that have been made to bridge this gap.

Analyse

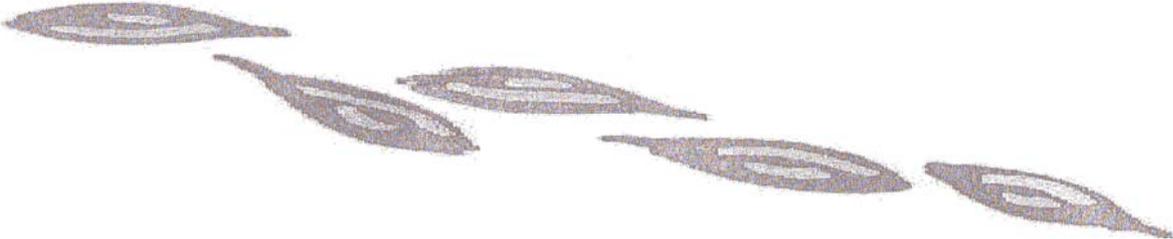
Research the statistics for the number of Indigenous children involved in the Stolen Generation for each State and Territory of Australia. Use the results to make a graph. Be creative.

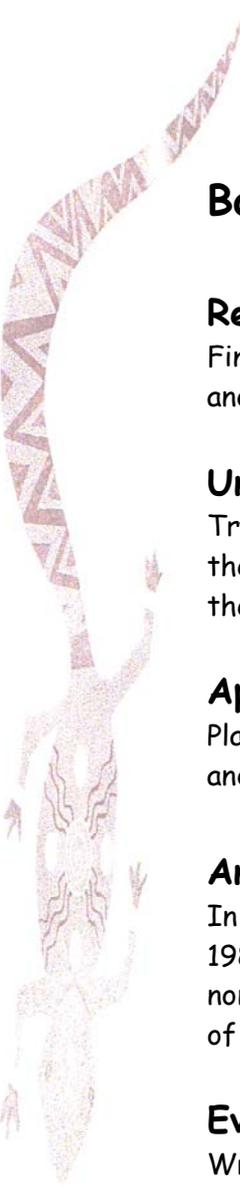
Evaluate

Great things have been achieved by Indigenous and non-Indigenous people in addressing the social injustices towards Indigenous people in the past. After listing, rank in order of importance the achievements which have been made and justify why you have given each a specific ranking.

Create

Invent a code and send messages to your classmates telling them how discrimination towards our Indigenous brothers and sisters can be overcome.





Body Intelligence

Remember

Find a song written and performed by the Aboriginal singer Warren H Williams (or another Aboriginal performer) and use body percussion to accompany his/her song.

Understand

Try to imagine what it would have been like for Indigenous children to be taken from their families and sent to a Mission where they lived for many years. Act out some of the emotions they may have felt, being separated from their families and homes.

Apply

Plan a healthy diet for Indigenous children using both traditional Indigenous foods and foods from other cultures.

Analyse

In addressing the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people at Alice Springs in 1986 Pope John Paul II spoke of the need for Reconciliation between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities. In small groups sculpture your bodies to form symbols of Reconciliation.

Evaluate

Write and perform a play about an Indigenous child's first experience of going to a non-Indigenous school. Think of the discrimination issues which would have been part of his/her experience.

Create

Using coordinates (grid), design a Floor Game about significant Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander men and women who have worked to improve the life of their people.

