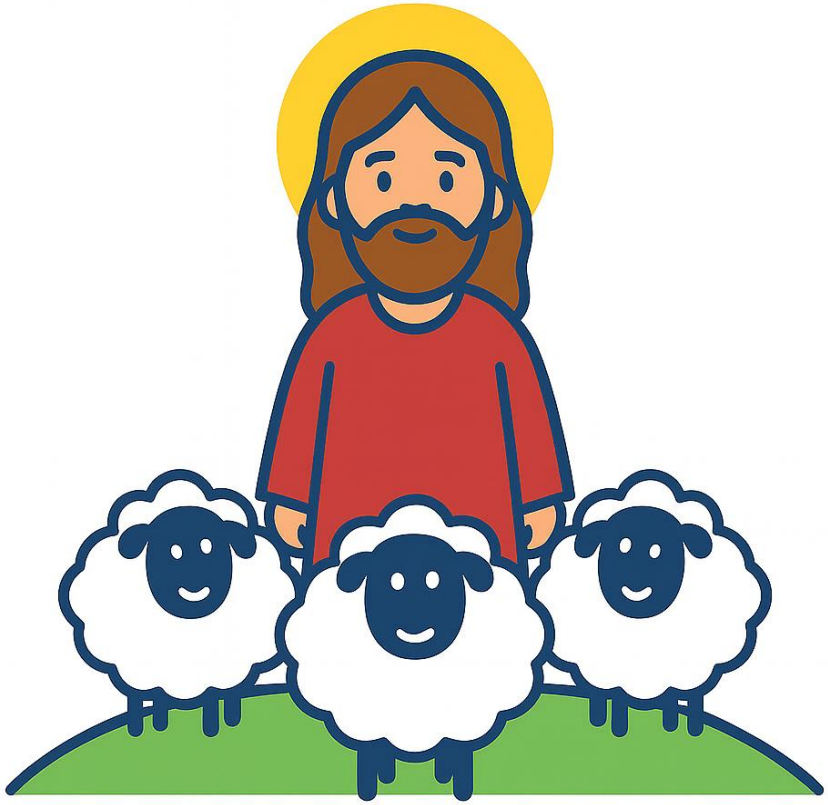


DISCERNING DISCIPLES

A religious education programme
for Catholic primary schools in
the Archdiocese of Birmingham

The words and actions of the Sign of the Cross: 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen'.

Know

We talk to God through prayer, starting and ending with the Sign of the Cross.

The words of the Sign of the Cross are, 'In the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit Amen'.

When we make the Sign of the Cross, we start with our right hand on our forehead.

Discern

The Sign of the Cross is a good, formal way of starting and ending a conversation with God.

Suggested discovery questions

1. When we make the Sign of the Cross, who are we showing we are ready to talk to?
2. How does making the Sign of the Cross help us remember this is a special time?
3. Why do you think we make the Sign of the Cross again after talking to God?

Respond

Role play different greetings and decide which are formal and informal.

Invite children to make the Sign of the Cross using actions and words.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Father	a name for God who loves and cares for us
Son	Jesus, God's son who shows us God's love
Holy Spirit	God's loving help within us
prayer	talking and listening to God

Teacher Notes

A polite conversation always starts and ends with a greeting for example, 'Hello'.... (How do children greet others in their own personal context?)

What body language do we use when greeting someone?
- Formal: Handshake
- Informal: Kiss, hug, high five.

Formal greetings: The King, The Archbishop etc

In Catholic tradition, the Sign of the Cross is both a prayer in itself and a ritual action that prepares us to enter into conversation with God. Reception pupils can begin to understand that it is a formal sign: something special that we do only in prayer or worship. The formality comes from two elements. First, the words name the three Persons of the Trinity, acknowledging God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Second, the gesture marks the body with Christ's Cross, expressing belonging to God and reminding the believer of God's love.

For pupils with no prior learning, this week serves as an introduction to prayer as something different from ordinary talking. For pupils with Nursery experience, this week clarifies why we use this sign and deepens their awareness of its meaning. The gesture is not magical; it is a deliberate way of "getting ready" to pray and "closing" prayer with reverence.

Teachers can also highlight that formal actions help us show respect, just as we use polite greetings with important people. In the same way, the Sign of the Cross shows that we recognise God's presence and are entering a sacred moment..

God created the world and said, 'Indeed it is very good' (Genesis 1:31).

Know

The Creation Story is in the Bible. It is in the book of Genesis

God created the world in six days. After each day, He said, 'Indeed it is very good'

Discern

God created the world. It is good.

Suggested discovery questions

1. Who made the mountains, seas, and all the animals we see?
2. When God created the world, do you think He made it to be bad or to be good?
3. How can we show God we are glad He made a good world?

Respond

Always ensure that the Bible on display in the classroom is treated and displayed respectfully.

Go outside and take care of God's good world.

Textual references

An age-appropriate retelling of the Creation account in Genesis 1 (aka 'The Six Days of Creation')

Key vocabulary

Bible	the holy book that tells us about God
Genesis	the first book of the Bible, where the Creation Story is found
good	exactly as God wants it to be

Teacher Notes

Reiterate that the Bible is a good book, using the words and phrases ‘sacred’, ‘holy’, and ‘from God’.

Reiterate understanding that the Bible is the story of God and His people.

This week's learning links well to Forest School.

This week introduces pupils to the Creation Story as a biblical text and deepens their understanding that creation is intentionally made by God and declared ‘very good’. At this age, pupils do not need to interpret the story scientifically; instead, they should learn that the Bible uses story to teach truth about God’s relationship with the world. The key theological idea is that creation is willed, ordered, and good. Nothing in creation is accidental or unimportant.

Introducing the book of Genesis situates the story within the Bible as a sacred book, helping pupils recognise that Christians look to Scripture to understand God. For children with no prior learning, this is their first structured encounter with the Bible. For those who learned about creation in Nursery, this week expands understanding by emphasising that the goodness of creation comes from God’s intention, not simply from its beauty.

The repeating refrain ‘Indeed it is very good’ can be used to show that God delights in what He has made. This provides a theological foundation for ecological responsibility: if God sees the world as good, then we should treat it with care, gratitude, and respect.

	The whole of Creation shows God's love for us (Laudato Si' 84–88).
Know	**The whole of Creation shows God's love for us.**

Discern	God gave us this world because He loves us.	Suggested discovery questions 1. When someone gives you a gift, how do it make you feel? 2. If the world is God's gift to us, what does that tell us about how He feels about us? 3. What could we say to God to thank Him for giving us this world?

Respond	Go on a Creation Walk and identify your favourite part of Creation. Show appreciation for what God has created. Link this to His love for us. Learn and sing an appropriate creation song.

Textual references

Laudato Si' 84–88

Key vocabulary

Teacher Notes

This week's learning helps pupils understand that creation does not simply exist because God made it, but because God wanted to show His love through it. Catholic theology teaches that the whole created world expresses God's generosity: its beauty, variety, and life point towards a God who delights in giving good things. Pope Francis, in *Laudato Si'*, taught that creation is a gift that reveals the loving intention of the Creator. For Reception pupils, this can be introduced simply as: God gave us the world because He loves us.

For pupils entering Reception without Nursery experience, this introduces the idea that God's love can be seen in the world around them. For those with prior learning, it deepens the concept by focusing on why creation is given: not only because it is good, but because it reflects God's care for every person.

Linking this to the experience of receiving a gift helps children make a clear emotional connection. When a gift brings joy, we understand that the giver cares for us. In the same way, noticing the goodness of creation helps pupils recognise God's kindness and respond with gratitude.

A Creation Walk strengthens this understanding by encouraging attentive, appreciative observation.

	God is love. God made each one of us. God loves each one of us as a unique person. God made a wonderful world and what God creates is good. God loves us and we are part of a family.
Know	God made me and loves me just the way I am. God made a wonderful world, and everything God makes is good. **God gives me people to love and care for in my home family and school family.**

Discern	We have a classroom family; we have a school family. God is at the heart of families.	Suggested discovery questions 1. How do the people who love us show us their love? 2. What can we do each day to make our classroom feel like a happy family? 3. How do you think God wants us to treat the people in all our families?

Respond	How can we look after God's Creation? Discuss classroom and playground rules, emphasising how they require us to look after each other. Identify times when we have seen others looking after the school and everyone in it. God gave us this world because He loves us.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

care	helping someone or treating them well
love	showing kindness and goodness to others

Teacher Notes

This week's learning centres on the Catholic understanding that God creates human beings not only as individuals but also for relationships. In Scripture, God is revealed as love, and love is expressed through community. Families, whether at home or in school, are places where love is learned, practised, and shared. For Reception pupils, it is helpful to frame this simply: God gives us people to belong to, and He wants us to treat one another with kindness because each person is made and loved by Him.

Catholic theology holds that every person has a unique dignity, but this dignity is always lived out in connection with others. Children can begin to explore this by thinking about how their actions affect the people around them. Classroom routines, playground rules, and shared tasks become opportunities to teach that caring for others is part of responding to God's love.

For pupils without Nursery experience, this introduces the foundational idea that God makes and loves each person. For those with prior learning, this week extends that understanding by highlighting God's desire for us to live in loving families and communities, reflecting His love in how we treat one another.

	Care and love for self, family, others, and God's world. God made each of us, so each one of us is very special. We must treat others in a caring way because God made them too. (CST link: The dignity of the human person).
Know	God made each one of us. Each of us is very special. **We must treat others in a caring way because God made them.**

Discern	We are kind of the same and we are all kinds of different and that is good. We are unique.	Suggested discovery questions 1. What are some ways we are the same as our friends? 2. What are some ways God made each of us different? 3. Why do you think God is happy that we are not all exactly the same?

Respond	Revisit classroom and playground rules, focusing on how they promote care and fair treatment of each other. How do we look after and help others in: our families? our class? our school? our parish?

Textual references

Key vocabulary

dignity	the special worth every person has because God made them
unique	only one of its kind; no one else is the same as you

Teacher Notes

This week's learning develops the Catholic principle that every human person has a God-given dignity. Catholic theology teaches that each person is created intentionally by God, possesses unique gifts, and reflects something of God's goodness. Reception pupils can understand this through the idea that we are 'kind of the same and kind of different', and that both similarity and difference are part of God's plan.

Being 'the same' points to our shared humanity: all people are made by God, loved by God, and called to treat one another with care. Being 'different' expresses individuality: God gives each person distinct traits, abilities and ways of being. These differences are not mistakes but signs of God's creativity and generosity. For pupils without Nursery experience, this introduces the foundational idea that God made them special. For pupils with prior learning, this week deepens their understanding by showing that God also gives us others who are special in different ways.

The link to Catholic social teaching (the dignity of the human person) is particularly strong here. Because every person is made by God and is precious, we must act with fairness, gentleness and respect. Classroom and playground rules can be interpreted through this theological lens.

Celebrate God's beautiful world. God made the earth and sky. God made all the people all over the world. God made all the animals. God made all the plants. God made the air, the ground, and the water. And God tells us we must take good care of them. It is an important job! (CST link: Stewardship)

Know

God made the world and everything in it.

God tells us we must take good care of the world and everything in it. It is precious.

Stewardship means to look after the world; everything and everyone in it.

Discern

God loves us so he made the world and everything in it. It is good.

Suggested discovery questions

1. If God made the sun, the moon, and the stars, what do you think He wants us to do when we see them?
2. How does it feel to know God made the world just for you?
3. If you could tell a friend about how wonderful God's world is, what would you say?

Respond

Retell and explore the Creation story in a variety of ways.

Share something that is very precious to you and say how you look after it (e.g. show and tell format)

Textual references

An age-appropriate retelling of the Creation account in Genesis 1 (aka 'The Six Days of Creation')

Key vocabulary

stewardship	looking after the world because it belongs to God

Teacher Notes

This week strengthens pupils' understanding of stewardship, a key theme in Catholic teaching. Stewardship means recognising that the world belongs to God, not to us, and that God entrusts it to human beings to care for with love. Reception pupils can understand this through the idea that the world is precious because God made it, and therefore we must look after it.

Catholic theology teaches that creation is a gift flowing from God's love. Because everything God makes is good, everything in creation has value: land, water, plants, animals, and people. Stewardship involves gratitude, respect, and responsibility. At this age, pupils can begin to learn that caring actions (such as protecting living things, tidying shared spaces, and using resources carefully) are ways of responding to God's love and honouring the goodness of His world.

For pupils new to Catholic RE, this week introduces the idea that God gives us an important job: looking after the world. For pupils who learned about creation in Nursery, this develops their understanding further by linking God's love to a moral responsibility. Stewardship becomes not just appreciation but action, rooted in the belief that everything God creates matters.



We enter God's family, the Church, through Baptism

Know

God's family is called the Church.

Catholics enter God's family through Baptism.



Discern

When someone new joins our family or class, we are happy and celebrate. In the Church, this is called Baptism, and is when a person becomes part of God's family.

Suggested discovery questions

1. How do you feel when someone new joins your home family or class family?
2. What are some of the ways we can say 'welcome' to a new baby or new friend?
3. Why do you think Baptism is a special way to welcome someone into God's family?



Respond

Reflect on how welcoming our classroom family is to new people joining our school or parish.

Set up an area within continuous provision, where pupils can recreate what happens during a Baptism.

Textual references

Key vocabulary

Baptism	a special celebration where someone joins God's family
Church	God's family of people who follow Him

Teacher Notes

This week's learning introduces pupils to the Catholic understanding of Baptism as the moment when a person becomes part of God's family, the Church. In Catholic theology, Baptism is the first of the Sacraments of Initiation and marks a new beginning: through water and the Holy Spirit, a person is welcomed into the life of the Church. For Reception pupils, the focus is not on sacramental theology itself, but on the idea of joining a loving family where they are known, valued and celebrated.

The concept of 'family' is central. Human families welcome new members with joy, and the Church mirrors this by welcoming people through Baptism. This helps children understand that they belong not only to their home family and class family, but also to a wider family of believers. For children without Nursery experience, this is a first introduction to Baptism. For those with prior experience, this week deepens understanding by linking Baptism to the wider idea of belonging and community.

At this age, the symbols used in Baptism (e.g water, a candle, white clothing, a blessing) can be explained simply as symbols that show God's love and welcome. The emphasis is on joy, celebration, and the belief that God wants everyone to be part of His family.