

Staff Meeting:

Communion of Saints Strand

Preparation:

- The DRS should organize a way to record what the teachers still need to know (Inquiry style) - large paper/IWB/etc.
- Photocopy :
 - the Opening Prayer and Closing Prayer, 1 per person
 - the 4 topic pages (Communion of Saints, Canonisation, Mary, and Belief about Last Things) so that each person has only one topic sheet, and all four topics are read and discussed. (4 groups)
 - an A4 size of the Theological Focus (pp 4-5) for each teacher
- Planning sheets and Digital Resource available for start of planning

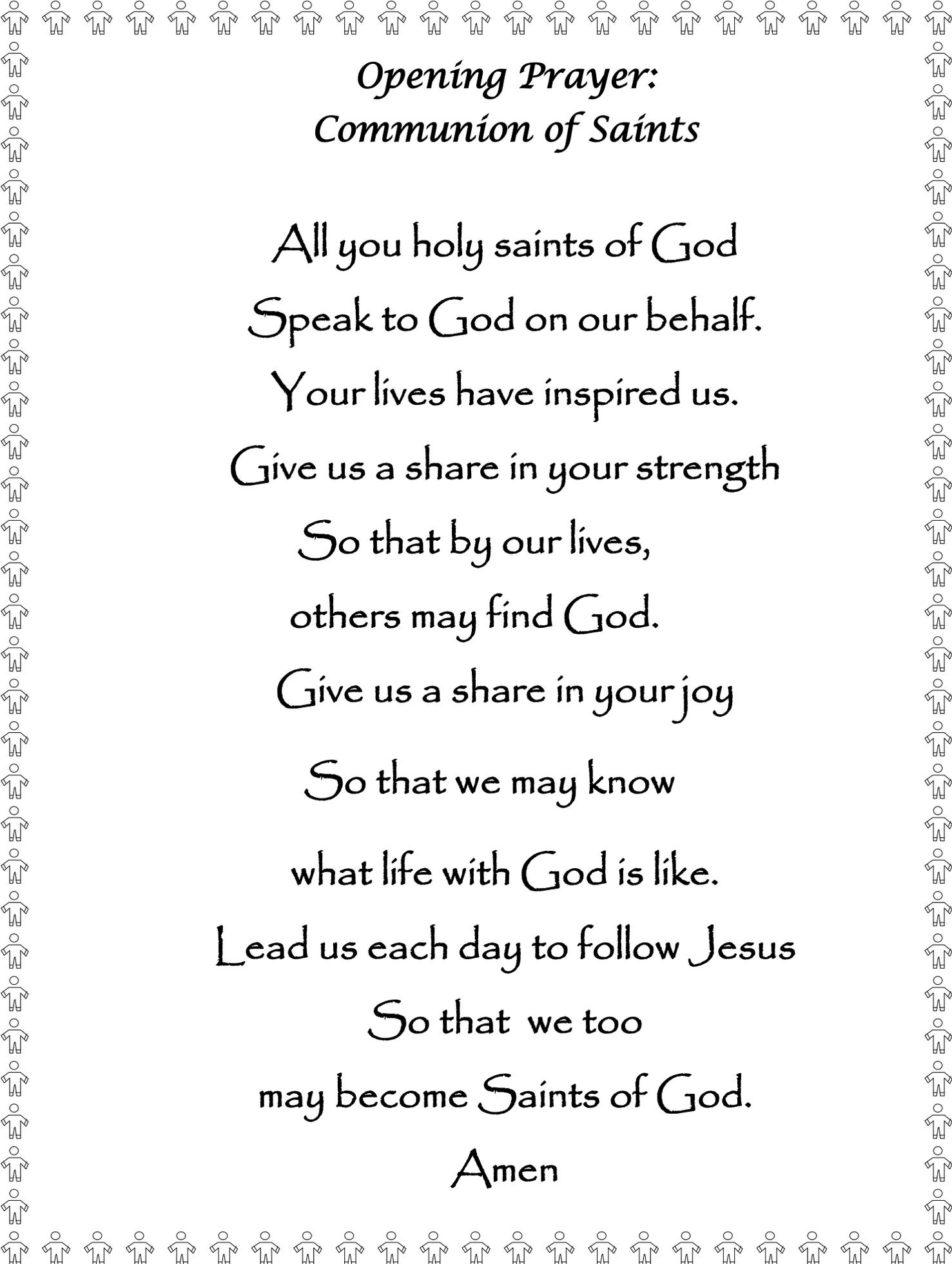
Teachers to bring with them:

- A selection of RE Journals (workbooks) from their class
- The teacher's strand book for their year level

Begin with exit meeting from previous strand:

These questions to be shared/discussed by all-

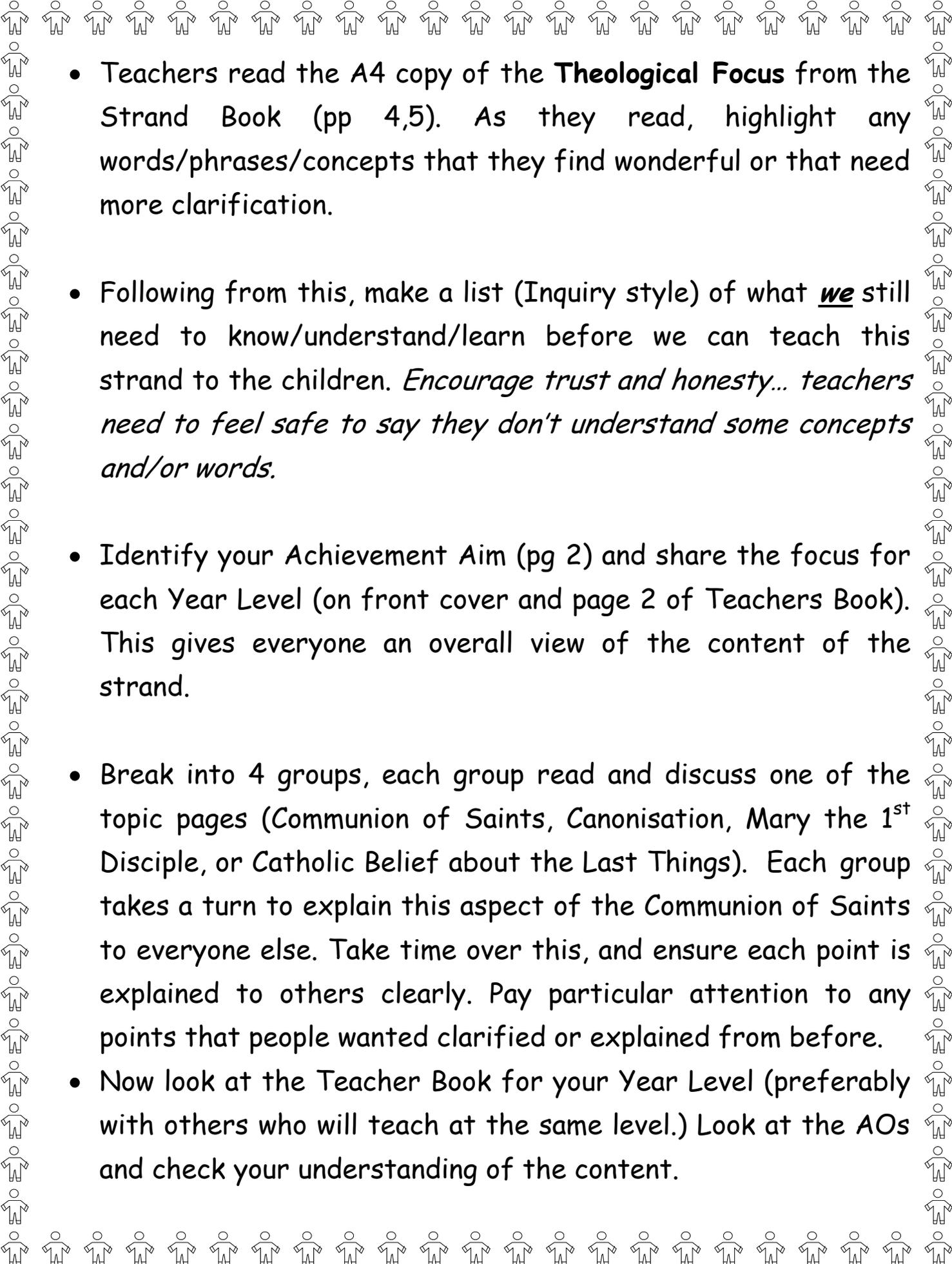
- Pair/share the Evaluation and Affective Domain from previous strand.
- Reflect on 1) your background knowledge; 2) your students' background knowledge.
- Share what was on your wall display towards the end of the strand - what work was child generated?
- In groups, discuss what was best about your teaching of the strand.
- What was challenging for you?
- How did you use the digital resource and what great lessons came from it?
- What didn't work well?
- What will you do to improve the learning of the next strand?
- Share children's RE journals.

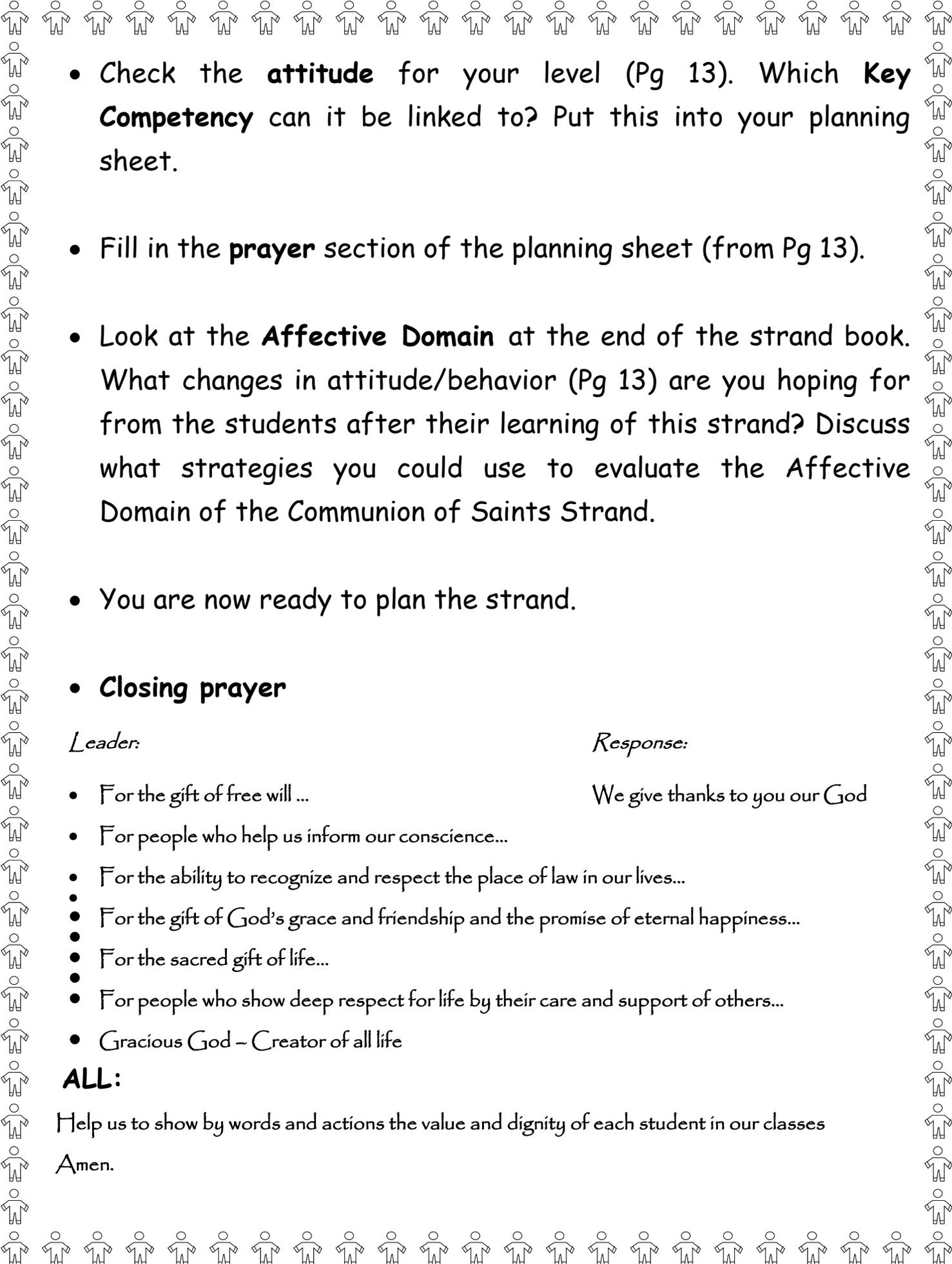


*Opening Prayer:
Communion of Saints*

All you holy saints of God
Speak to God on our behalf.
Your lives have inspired us.
Give us a share in your strength
So that by our lives,
others may find God.
Give us a share in your joy
So that we may know
what life with God is like.
Lead us each day to follow Jesus
So that we too
may become Saints of God.

Amen

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- A decorative border of small stick figures surrounds the text. There are 20 figures in each of the four corners, and a horizontal row of 20 figures at the top and bottom.
- Teachers read the A4 copy of the **Theological Focus** from the Strand Book (pp 4,5). As they read, highlight any words/phrases/concepts that they find wonderful or that need more clarification.
 - Following from this, make a list (Inquiry style) of what we still need to know/understand/learn before we can teach this strand to the children. *Encourage trust and honesty... teachers need to feel safe to say they don't understand some concepts and/or words.*
 - Identify your Achievement Aim (pg 2) and share the focus for each Year Level (on front cover and page 2 of Teachers Book). This gives everyone an overall view of the content of the strand.
 - Break into 4 groups, each group read and discuss one of the topic pages (Communion of Saints, Canonisation, Mary the 1st Disciple, or Catholic Belief about the Last Things). Each group takes a turn to explain this aspect of the Communion of Saints to everyone else. Take time over this, and ensure each point is explained to others clearly. Pay particular attention to any points that people wanted clarified or explained from before.
 - Now look at the Teacher Book for your Year Level (preferably with others who will teach at the same level.) Look at the AOs and check your understanding of the content.

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- Check the **attitude** for your level (Pg 13). Which **Key Competency** can it be linked to? Put this into your planning sheet.
 - Fill in the **prayer** section of the planning sheet (from Pg 13).
 - Look at the **Affective Domain** at the end of the strand book. What changes in attitude/behavior (Pg 13) are you hoping for from the students after their learning of this strand? Discuss what strategies you could use to evaluate the Affective Domain of the Communion of Saints Strand.
 - You are now ready to plan the strand.

- **Closing prayer**

Leader:

- For the gift of free will ...
- For people who help us inform our conscience...
- For the ability to recognize and respect the place of law in our lives...
- For the gift of God's grace and friendship and the promise of eternal happiness...
- For the sacred gift of life...
- For people who show deep respect for life by their care and support of others...
- Gracious God – Creator of all life

Response:

We give thanks to you our God

ALL:

Help us to show by words and actions the value and dignity of each student in our classes

Amen.

Topic Page Group 1

Communion of Saints

The thinking behind the theology of the Communion of Saints is of one big family, bigger than the human family on earth in that we also belong with those who have gone before. Our bond with Jesus Christ through Baptism, and the power of love is so strong, that neither can be shattered by death. You do not leave the Church by dying.

We think of the Communion of Saints as in three "states":-

- The Church in pilgrimage : the Church on earth
- The Church in purification: the Church undergoing purgatory
- The Church in perfection: the Church experiencing heaven



The Communion of Saints is like a great prayer network:



And the saints in heaven pray for the living.

Saints do not have the power to give grace themselves- this only comes from God. The saints speak to God for us. The saint who stands out above all other saints is Mary the Mother of Jesus, who, as the first disciple, is a model for all Christians.

Why Go To Purgatory?

Why would anyone go to purgatory? To be cleansed, for "nothing unclean shall enter [heaven]" (Rev. 21:27). Anyone who has not been completely freed of sin and its effects is, to some extent, "unclean." Through repentance people may have gained the grace needed to be worthy of heaven, which is to say, they have been forgiven and their souls are spiritually alive. But that's not sufficient for gaining entrance into heaven. They need to be cleansed completely.

Fundamentalists claim, as an article in Jimmy Swaggart's magazine, *The Evangelist*, put it, that "Scripture clearly reveals that all the demands of divine justice on the sinner have been completely fulfilled in Jesus Christ. It also reveals that Christ has totally redeemed, or purchased back, that which was lost. The advocates of a purgatory (and the necessity of prayer for the dead) say, in effect, that the redemption of Christ was incomplete. . . . It has all been done for us by Jesus Christ, there is nothing to be added or done by man."

It is entirely correct to say that Christ accomplished all of our salvation for us on the cross. But that does not settle the question of how this redemption is applied to us. Scripture reveals that it is applied to us over the course of time through, among other things, the process of sanctification through which the Christian is made holy. Sanctification involves suffering (Rom. 5:3-5), and purgatory is the final stage of sanctification that some of us need to undergo before we enter heaven. Purgatory is the final phase of Christ's applying to us the purifying redemption that he accomplished for us by his death on the cross.

Topic Page Group 2

CANONISATION

The Communion of Saints is the assembly of all the saints who belong to the Church :

- The canonized saints
 - Those not canonized:
 - Those who have died and dwell in God
 - Those undergoing purgatory
 - We who are still on earth
- joined to Christ,
the source and fountain
of all grace.

What is the process for canonization?

In order that a saint may be publicly honoured, the approval of the Church is necessary. The stages in the process are:

"Servant of God" The process leading towards canonization begins at the diocesan level. A bishop gives permission to open an investigation into the virtues of the individual, responding to a petition by members of the faithful. This investigation may open no sooner than five years after the death of the person being investigated. However, the pope has the authority to waive this five year waiting period, as was done for Mother Teresa by Pope John Paul II, and for John Paul II himself by Pope Benedict XVI.

"Venerable" When enough information has been gathered, the congregation will recommend to the pope that he make a proclamation of the Servant of God's heroic virtue (that is, that the servant exhibited the theological virtues of faith, hope and charity, and the cardinal virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude and temperance, to a heroic degree). From this point the one said to be "heroic in virtue" is referred to by the title "Venerable". A Venerable has as of yet no feast day, no churches may be built in his or her honor, and the church has made no statement on the person's probable or certain presence in heaven, but prayer cards and other materials may be printed to encourage the faithful to pray for a miracle wrought by his or her intercession as a sign of God's will that the person be canonized.

"Blessed" Beatification is a statement by the church that it is "worthy of belief" that the person is in heaven, having come to salvation. This step depends on whether the Venerable is a martyr or a "confessor".

- For a martyr, the Pope has only to make a declaration of martyrdom, a certification that the venerable gave his or her life voluntarily as a witness for the faith and/or in an act of heroic charity for others.
- If the Venerable was not a martyr – all non-martyrs are "confessors" as they "confessed" or bore witness to their faith by how they lived their lives – it must be proven that a miracle has taken place by his or her intercession: that is, that God has shown a sign that the person is enjoying the Beatific Vision by God performing a miracle in response to the Blessed's prayers. Today, these miracles are almost always miraculous cures, as these are the easiest to establish based on the Catholic Church's requirements for a "miracle."

This allows **beatification**, giving the venerable the new title "Blessed" (abbreviated "Bl.") or, in Latin, Beatus or Beata. A feast day will be designated, but its observance is normally restricted to the Blessed's home diocese, to certain locations associated with him or her, and/or to the churches or houses of the blessed's religious order, if they belonged to one. Parishes may not normally be named in honor of a Blessed.

"Saint" (contracted "St" or "S.") To be canonized a saint, at least two miracles must have been performed after death. **Canonization** is a statement by the church that the person certainly enjoys the Beatific Vision. The saint is assigned a feast day which *may* be celebrated anywhere within the Catholic Church, although it may or may not appear on the general calendar or local calendars as an *obligatory* feast, parish churches may be built in his or her honor, and the faithful may freely and without restriction celebrate and honor the saint.

Topic Page Group 3

Mary : the First Disciple ... and the best model of sainthood.

My soul proclaims the greatness of the Lord

My spirit rejoices in God my Saviour

For you, Lord, have looked with favour

On your lowly servant

And from this day

All generations will call me blessed.

For you who are mighty

Have done great things for me

And holy is your name.

You have mercy on those who fear you

From generation to generation.

You have shown strength with your arm

You have scattered the proud in their conceit.

You have out down the mighty from their seat

And have lifted up the powerless.

You have filled the hungry with good things

And have sent the rich away empty.

You have come to the help of your people

For you have remembered your promise of mercy

The promise you made to the people of Israel,

To Abraham and Sarah,

And their descendents forever.

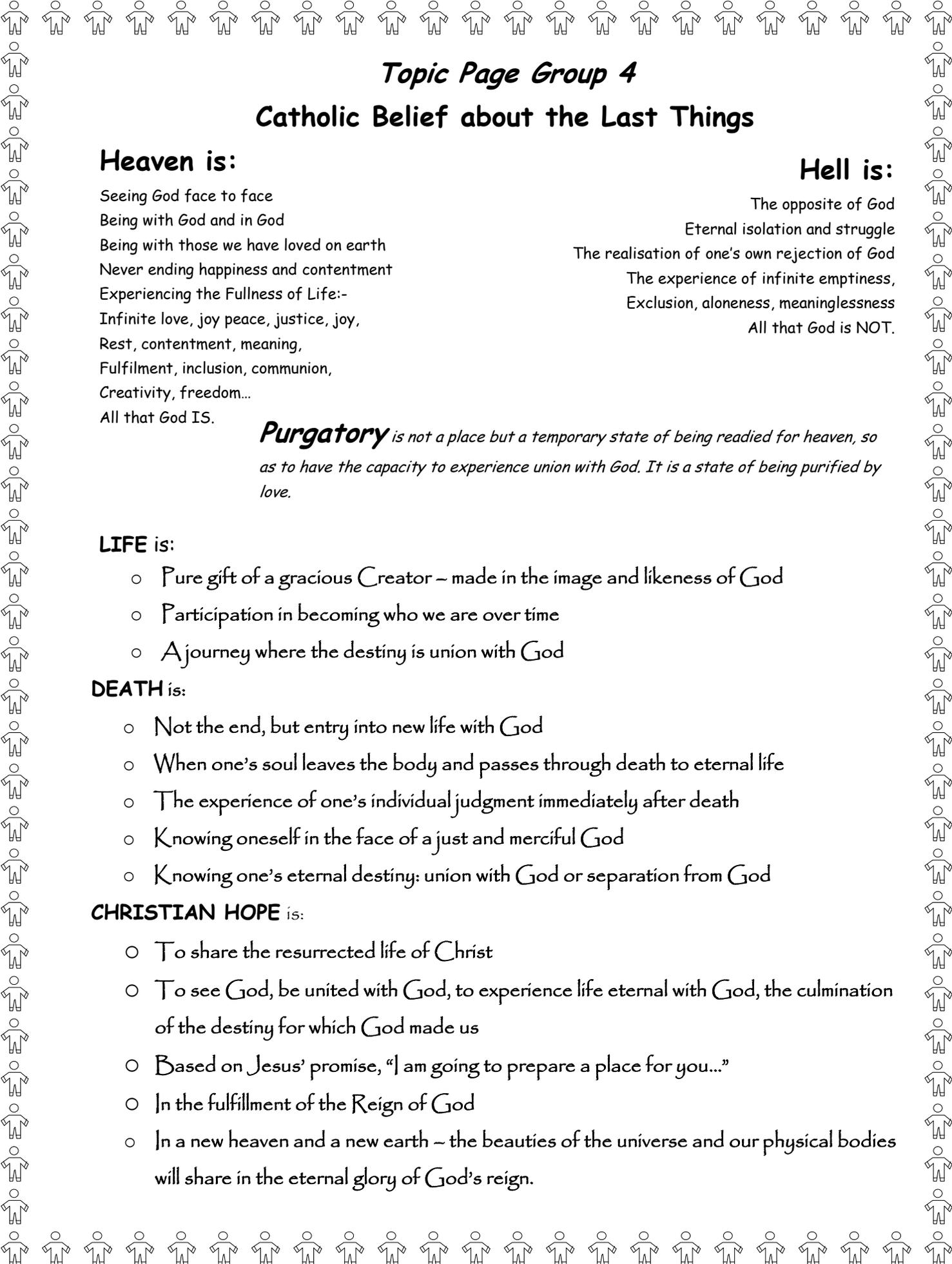
Luke 1:46-56

The Magnificat reveals more about Mary than her identification with the poor and lowly; it reveals Mary's solidarity with the oppressed of the earth, calling to God for justice and the condemnation of those who abuse their power and positions. It is a hymn praising God for intervening on behalf of the hungry and powerless and for lifting up the poor in dignity.

Mary as the First Disciple challenges all disciples of Christ to live the Gospel message in their personal lives and to challenge institutions and power structures that oppress people. Mary's example can empower Christians to ensure that all people can obtain adequate food, shelter and health care; that they have opportunities for education and meaningful employment; that they have equal rights and a share in the decision-making process.

Mary's openness to God, her fidelity in walking the journey of faith, and her concern that the justice of God will bring a restoration of dignity for the downtrodden, are as influential to the Church community as they were the saviour of the world whom she nurtured.





Topic Page Group 4

Catholic Belief about the Last Things

Heaven is:

Seeing God face to face
Being with God and in God
Being with those we have loved on earth
Never ending happiness and contentment
Experiencing the Fullness of Life:-
Infinite love, joy peace, justice, joy,
Rest, contentment, meaning,
Fulfillment, inclusion, communion,
Creativity, freedom...
All that God IS.

Hell is:

The opposite of God
Eternal isolation and struggle
The realisation of one's own rejection of God
The experience of infinite emptiness,
Exclusion, aloneness, meaninglessness
All that God is NOT.

***Purgatory** is not a place but a temporary state of being readied for heaven, so as to have the capacity to experience union with God. It is a state of being purified by love.*

LIFE is:

- Pure gift of a gracious Creator – made in the image and likeness of God
- Participation in becoming who we are over time
- A journey where the destiny is union with God

DEATH is:

- Not the end, but entry into new life with God
- When one's soul leaves the body and passes through death to eternal life
- The experience of one's individual judgment immediately after death
- Knowing oneself in the face of a just and merciful God
- Knowing one's eternal destiny: union with God or separation from God

CHRISTIAN HOPE is:

- To share the resurrected life of Christ
- To see God, be united with God, to experience life eternal with God, the culmination of the destiny for which God made us
- Based on Jesus' promise, "I am going to prepare a place for you..."
- In the fulfillment of the Reign of God
- In a new heaven and a new earth – the beauties of the universe and our physical bodies will share in the eternal glory of God's reign.