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Picture Books and Catholic Social Teaching

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Introduction

With the current focus on academic achievement and accountability, teachers are understandably focused on those aspects of the curriculum that are being assessed. This focus, in conjunction with the use of levelled instructional texts during the primary years, has resulted in a limited, narrow view and experience of reading that largely focuses on processing information in print (Unsworth & Chan, 2009).

In order to ensure that students – (a) “learn to listen to, read, view, speak write, create and reflect on increasingly complex sophisticated spoken, written and multimodal texts” (ACARA, 2015) and (b) are prepared to function in an information-rich multi-modal world – students need scaffolded opportunities to read, analyse and critique a much wider range of texts (Turner, 2014). Indeed, Luke, Woods and Dooley (2011) argue that in order to generate sustainable gains in students’ literacy engagement, participation and achievement, students need ‘sustained engagement with substantive knowledge’ (p. 8) and scaffolded opportunities to engage critically with literacies related to their lives and worlds both inside and outside of school.

Postmodern picture books, with their inherent devices – for example, multiplicity of meanings, layering of texts within one text, playful use use of symbols, and blurring of the boundaries among the author, narrator and reader (Sipe & McGuire, 2008) – are ideal for developing students’ critical literacy skills as well as their understanding of social mores, values and beliefs (Goldstone, 2009). Postmodern picture books also offer rich opportunities for students and teachers to reflect deeply on the principles of Catholic Social Teaching (CST).

Principles of Catholic Social Teaching

On the following pages, a selection of postmodern picture books, which provide opportunities for readers’ development of literacy skills and social understandings, are presented across the six principles of Catholic Social Teaching identified by Caritas (2016), namely:

1. Preferential Option for the Poor
2. Dignity of the Human Person
3. Stewardship of Creation
4. Subsidiarity and Participation
5. The Common Good
6. Solidarity

List of Selected of Postmodern Picture Books for Catholic Social Teaching

Preferential Option for the Poor	Dignity of the Human Person	Stewardship of Creation	Subsidiarity & Participation	The Common Good	Solidarity
Grodin, Elisa. <i>Oscar Wilde's The Happy Prince</i> . Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2006. Print.	Allen, Emma, Freya Blackwood, and Rebecca Macauley. <i>The Terrible Suitcase</i> . Print.	Balla, Trace. <i>Rivertime</i> . Print.	Browne, Anthony. <i>Piggybook</i> . London: Walker, 1996. Print.	Baker, Jeannie. <i>Mirror</i> . London: Walker, 2010. Print.	Blabey, Aaron. <i>Thelma the Unicorn</i> . Print.
Hathorn, Libby, and Gregory Rogers. <i>Way Home</i> . Random House, 1994. Print.	Allen, Pamela. <i>The Potato People</i> . Camberwell, Vic.: Viking, 2002. Print.	Baker, Jeannie. <i>Where the Forest Meets the Sea</i> . London: Walker, 1989. Print.	French, Jackie, and Bruce Whatley. <i>Flood</i> . Lindfield, N.S.W.: Scholastic Australia, 2011. Print.	Fox, Mem, and Julie Vivas. <i>Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge</i> . London: Puffin, 2005. Print.	Browne, Anthony. <i>Little Beauty</i> . London: Walker, 2008. Print.
Hest, Amy. <i>When Jessie Came Across the Sea</i> . London: Walker Books, 1997. Print.	Blabey, Aaron. <i>Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley</i> . Asheville, NC: Front Street, 2008. Print.	Foreman, Michael. <i>One World</i> . London: Andersen, 2011. Print.	James, Simon. <i>Dear Greenpeace</i> . London: Walker, 2008. Print.	Graham, Bob. <i>Silver Buttons</i> , 2013. Print.	Do, Anh, Suzanne Do, and Bruce Whatley. <i>The Little Refugee</i> . Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2011. Print.
Hill, Anthony. <i>The Burnt Stick</i> . Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995. Print.	Browne, Anthony. <i>Voices in the Park</i> . New York: DK Pub., 2001. Print.	French, Jackie. <i>The Tomorrow Book</i> . Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 2010. Print.	Plant, Andrew. <i>The Poppy</i> . Print.	Tan, Shaun. <i>The Lost Thing</i> . Sydney: Lothian / Hachette Australia, 2010. Print.	French, Jackie, and Mark L. Wilson. <i>A Day to Remember: The Story of Anzac Day</i> . Sydney: Harper Collins, 2012. Print.
Jolly, Jane. <i>Ali the Bold Heart</i> . Balmain, N.S.W.: Limelight Press, 2006. Print.	Fox, Mem, and Leslie Staub. <i>Whoever You Are</i> . Orlando, Flo.: Voyager, 2006. Print.	French, Jackie, and Bruce Whatley. <i>Fire</i> . Print.	Ward, Helen, and Marc Craste. <i>Varmints</i> . Cambridge, MA: Candlewick, 2008. Print.	Thompson, Colin. <i>The Violin Man</i> . Sydney: Hodder Headline, 2004. Print.	Greenwood, Mark, and Frané Lessac. <i>Simpson and His Donkey</i> . Newtown, N.S.W.: Walker, 2011. Print.
Marin, Gabiann. <i>A True Person</i> . Frenchs Forest, N.S.W.: new Frontier, 2007. Print.	Fox, Mem, and Julie Vivas. <i>Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge</i> . London: Puffin, 1987. Print.	Gleeson, Libby, and Armin Greder. <i>The Great Bear</i> . Sydney: Scholastic Australia, 1999. Print.	Wheatley, Nadia, and Donna Rawlins. <i>My Place: The Story of Australia from Now to Then</i> . Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1987. Print.	Thompson, Colin. <i>Dust</i> , 2007. Print.	Greder, Armin. <i>Australia to Z</i> . Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2016. Print.
Saxby, Claire. <i>My Name is Lizzie Flynn: A Story of the Rajah Quilt</i> . Newton, N.S.W.: Black Dog Books, 2015. Print.	Gleeson, Libby, and Armin Greder. <i>I Am Thomas</i> . Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2011. Print.	Graham, Bob. <i>How to Heal a Broken Wing</i> . London: Walker, 2010. Print.	Wild, Margaret, and Ron Brooks. <i>The Dream of the Thylacine</i> . East Melbourne, Vic.: Allen & Unwin, 2011. Print.	Wild, Margaret, and Vivienne Goodman. <i>Tanglewood</i> , 2012. Print.	Hathorn, Elizabeth, and Peter Gouldthorpe. <i>The Wonder Thing</i> . Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996. Print.
Wild, Margaret, and Ritva Voutila. <i>The Stone Lion</i> . Richmond, Victoria: Little Hare, 2014. Print.	Greder, Armin. <i>The Island</i> . Allen & Unwin, 2007. Print.	Hathorn, Libby. <i>The Wonder Thing</i> . Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin. Print.	Heffernan, John, and Freya Blackwood. <i>Two Summers</i> . Lindfield, N.S.W.: Scholastic, 2003. Print.	Wild, Margaret, and Julie Vivas. <i>Let the Celebrations Begin! A Story of Hope for the Liberation</i> . Norwood, S. Aust.: Omnibus, 2014. Print.	Innocenti, Roberto, and Christophe Gallaz. <i>Rose Blanche</i> . London: Jonathan Cape, 1985. Print.
Williams, Edna Tantjingu and Eileen Wani Wingfield. <i>Down the hole</i> . Alice Springs, N.T.: Jukurpa Books, 2000. Print.	Kobald, Irena, and Freya Blackwood. <i>My Two Blankets</i> . Print.	Heffernan, John, and Peter Sheehan. <i>The Island</i> . Linfield, N.S.W.: Scholastic, 2005. Print.	McRae, Rodney. <i>Cry Me a River</i> . North Ryde, N.S.W.: Angus & Robertson, 1991. Print.	Wood, Douglas, and Cheng-Khee Chee. <i>Old Turtle</i> . Duluth, MN: Pfeifer-Hamilton, 1992. Print.	Jorgensen, Norman. <i>In Flanders Field</i> . 2004. Freemantle, W.A.: Fremantle Press, 2004. Print.
	Marin, Gabiann, and Jacqui Grantford. <i>A True Person</i> . Frenchs Forest, N.S.W.: New Frontier, 2007. Print.	McRae, Rodney. <i>Cry Me a River</i> . North Ryde, N.S.W.: Angus & Robertson, 1991. Print.	Riddel, Tohby. <i>The Singing Hat</i> . New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2000. Print.		Marsden, John, and Shaun Tan. <i>The Rabbits</i> . Vancouver: Simply Read, 2003. Print.
	Marsden, John, and Matt Ottley. <i>Home and Away</i> . Melbourne: Hachette Livre, 2008. Print.	Thompson, Colin and Save the Children. <i>Dust</i> . Sydney: HarperCollins, 2007. Print.	Thompson, Colin. <i>Short and Incredibly Happy Life of Riley</i> . Gardners, 2006. Print.		Metzenthen, David, and Michael Camilleri. <i>One Minute's Silence</i> . Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2014. Print.
	Thompson, Colin. <i>The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness</i> . North Sydney, N.S.W.: Random House, 2008. Print.	Wheatley, Nadia, and Matthew Ottley. <i>Luke's Way of Looking</i> . Newtown, N.S.W.: Walker Australia, 2012. Print.			Plant, Andrew. <i>The Poppy</i> . Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2014. Print.
	Wild, Margaret, and Ron Brooks. <i>Fox</i> . St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2000. Print.				Starke, Ruth, and Greg Hotfeld. <i>An Anzac Tale</i> . Kingswood, S. Aust.: Working Title, 2013. Print.
					Wild, Margaret. <i>Let the celebrations begin</i> . Somerville, M.A.: Candlewick Press, 2014. Print.
					Wilson, Mark. <i>Vietnam Diary</i> . Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2013. Print.

Brief Descriptions of Selected of Postmodern Picture Books for Catholic Social Teaching

1. Preferential Option for the Poor

- Grodin, Elisa. *Oscar Wilde's The Happy Prince*. Chelsea, MI: Sleeping Bear Press, 2006. Print. A tale of a selfless 'prince' who gives away his wealth to the poor.
- Hathorn, Libby, and Gregory Rogers. *Way Home*. Random House, 1994. Print. A homeless boy provides shelter for a homeless cat.
- Hest, Amy. *When Jessie Came Across the Sea*. London: Walker Books, 1997. Print. A historical fiction account of a journey to the 'new land' to start a new life.
- Hill, Anthony. *The Burnt Stick*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1995. Print. An Aboriginal mother covers her child in soot to protect him from being taken away.
- Jolly, Jane. *Ali the Bold Heart*. Balmain, N.S.W.: Limelight Press, 2006. Print. The story of a refugee's plight seeking a new life.
- Marin, Gabiann. *A True Person*. Frenchs Forest, N.S.W.: new Frontier, 2007. Print. A mother and daughter are placed in a detention camp as they seek a new life.
- Saxby, Claire. *My Name is Lizzie Flynn: A Story of the Rajah Quilt*. Newton, N.S.W.: Black Dog Books, 2015. Print. The story of the voyage to Australia during the early settlement and the women's construction of a quilt.
- Wild, Margaret, and Ritva Voutilainen. *The Stone Lion*. Richmond, Victoria: Little Hare, 2014. Print. A 'lion' protects an abandoned baby and sacrifices his own dreams.
- Williams, Edna Tantjingu and Eileen Wani Wingfield. *Down the hole*. Alice Springs, N.T.: Jukurrpa Books, 2000. Print. A story of Aboriginal children being hidden to protect them from being taken from their families.

2. Dignity of the Human Person

- Allen, Emma, Freya Blackwood, and Rebecca Macauley. *The Terrible Suitcase*. Print. A child finds acceptance in her classroom.
- Allen, Pamela. *The Potato People*. Camberwell, Vic.: Viking, 2002. Print. The strong bond between a grandmother and her grandchild even when separated by distance.
- Blabey, Aaron. *Pearl Barley and Charlie Parsley*. Asheville, NC: Front Street, 2008. Print. Two very different friends respect and complement each other's gifts.
- Browne, Anthony. *Voices in the Park*. New York: DK Pub., 2001. Print. Different perspectives of human and animal interaction in our society and their different values.
- Fox, Mem, and Leslie Staub. *Whoever You Are*. Orlando, Fla.: Voyager, 2006. Print. A multicultural view of childhood.
- Fox, Mem, and Julie Vivas. *Wilfred Gordon McDonald Partridge*. London: Puffin, 1987. Print. The relationship between a young boy and the people in a nursing home.
- Gleeson, Libby, and Armin Greder. *I Am Thomas*. Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2011. Print. A young boy self-belief even though society sees him differently.
- Greder, Armin. *The Island*. Allen & Unwin, 2007. Print. A person is ostracised by the people on an island he visits. He is eventually driven from the island.
- Kobald, Irena, and Freya Blackwood. *My Two Blankets*. Print. A child moves to a new place and culture and feels displaced until a friendship and acceptance blossoms.
- Marin, Gabiann, and Jacqui Grantford. *A True Person*. Frenchs Forest, N.S.W.: New Frontier, 2007. Print. Zallah and her mother flee their war torn country looking for safety in Australia. They struggle living in a detention centre.
- Marsden, John, and Matt Ottley. *Home and Away*. Melbourne: Hachette Livre, 2008. Print. Australia is invaded and the citizens become 'boat people'.
- Thompson, Colin. *The Big Little Book of Happy Sadness*. North Sydney, N.S.W.: Random House, 2008. Print. A three legged dog is saved from 'death row' by a boy and his grandmother and their lives are changed.

Wheatley, Nadia, and Matthew Ottley. **Luke's Way of Looking**. Newtown, N.S.W.: Walker Australia, 2012. Print. **Luke is an artistic child who sees life differently to others. His life changes when he visits a modern art gallery and sees works by others who see the world as he does.**

Wild, Margaret, and Ron Brooks. **Fox**. St. Leonards, Australia: Allen & Unwin, 2000. Print. **A story of loyalty , trust and betrayal.**

3. Stewardship of Creation

Balla, Trace. **Rivertime**. Print. **A boy and his uncle travel up the Glenelg River, connecting with its creatures and land.**

Baker, Jeannie. **Window**. MacRae, 1991. Print. **A wordless book that documents the changing environment outside a boy's window and the impact of urban development.**

Baker, Jeannie. **Where the Forest Meets the Sea**. London: Walker, 1989. Print. **The changing environment and man's impact.**

Foreman, Michael. **One World**. London: Andersen, 2011. Print. **A brother and sister create a micro world at the beach , untouched by the pollution that looms over the world..**

French, Jackie. **The Tomorrow Book**. Sydney: Angus & Robertson, 2010. Print. **An environmental focus on how we can create a world for the future.**

French, Jackie, and Bruce Whatley. **Fire**. Print. **An account of the Victorian bushfires.**

Gleeson, Libby, and Armin Greder. **The Great Bear**. Sydney: Scholastic Australia, 1999. Print. **Cruelty towards animals is told focusing on a circus bear.**

Graham, Bob. **How to Heal a Broken Wing**. London: Walker, 2010. Print. **A child cares for an injured bird with the support of his parents.**

Hathorn, Libby. **The Wonder Thing**. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin. **Water is named as 'The Wonder Thing'.**

Heffernan, John, and Freya Blackwood. **Two Summers**. Lindfield, N.S.W.: Scholastic, 2003. Print. **The impact of drought on an Australian farm.**

Heffernan, John, and Peter Sheehan. **The Island**. Linfield, N.S.W.: Scholastic, 2005. Print. **A blind boy helps others to become aware of the beauty on their island.**

McRae, Rodney. **Cry Me a River**. North Ryde, N.S.W.: Angus & Robertson, 1991. Print. **A poem that documents a rivers journey from the mountain to the sea.**

Riddel, Tohby. **The Singing Hat**. New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2000. Print. **A man protects the ideals he believes in even at a personal cost.**

Thompson, Colin and Save the Children. **Dust**. Sydney: HarperCollins, 2007. Print. **A snapshot of places in our world devastated by natural and man- made crisis.**

Thompson, Colin. **Short and Incredibly Happy Life**. Gardners, 2006. Print. **A pink rat is a role model on how we could all live with a lot less.**

4. Subsidiarity and Participation

Browne, Anthony. **Piggybook**. London: Walker, 1996. Print. **Families working together so that everyone finds fulfilment.**

French, Jackie, and Bruce Whatley. **Flood**. Lindfield, N.S.W.: Scholastic Australia, 2011. Print. **The story of the 2011 Brisbane floods and the community supporting each other.**

James, Simon. **Dear Greenpeace**. London: Walker, 2008. Print. **A child learns about whales through correspondence with Greenpeace.**

Plant, Andrew. **The Poppy**. Print. **The story of the deep relationship between Australia and Villers-Bretonneux that still exists today after Australia's defence of the town in WW1**

Tan, Shaun. **The Red Tree**. Port Melbourne: Lothian, 2002. Print. **The metaphoric tale of hope when life seems sad.**

Ward, Helen, and Marc Craste. **Varmints**. Cambridge, MA: Candlewick, 2008. Print. **A focus on environmental issues.**

Wheatley, Nadia, and Donna Rawlins. **My Place: The Story of Australia from Now to Then**. Melbourne: Collins Dove, 1987. Print. **The history of Australia told through dialogue and maps that weaves back in time to the Dreaming.**

Wild, Margaret, and Ron Brooks. **The Dream of the Thylacine**. East Melbourne, Vic.: Allen & Unwin, 2011. Print. **The documentation of the extinction of the last of the Thylacines.**

5. The Common Good

Baker, Jeannie. **Mirror**. London: Walker, 2010. Print. **The comparison of the lives of two cultures, Australia and Morocco (wordless)**

Fox, Mem, and Julie Vivas. **Wilfrid Gordon McDonald Partridge**. London: Puffin, 2005. Print. **The special relationship between a small boy and the residents of the local nursing home.**

Graham, Bob. **Silver Buttons**, 2013. Print. **The delight of a small child when he tastes ice-cream for the first time, and the circumstances that led to that experience.**

Tan, Shaun. **The Lost Thing**. Sydney: Lothian / Hachette Australia, 2010. Print. **A tale of a 'lost thing' that society ignores until a boy guides it to the place where it belongs.**

Thompson, Colin. **The Violin Man**. Sydney: Hodder Headline, 2004. Print. **A lyrical tale of love, loss and music.**

Thompson, Colin. **Dust**, 2007. Print. **Highlights the plight of people in our world suffering from poverty and homelessness.**

Wild, Margaret, and Vivienne Goodman. **Tanglewood**, 2012. Print. **A tree welcomes migratory birds each year into its branches and offers a safe home.**

Wild, Margaret, and Julie Vivas. **Let the Celebrations Begin! A Story of Hope for the Liberation**. Norwood, S. Aust.: Omnibus, 2014. Print. **The story of the women of Belsen and their hope for liberation.**

Wood, Douglas, and Cheng-Khee Chee. **Old Turtle**. Duluth, MN: Pfeifer-Hamilton, 1992. Print. **People of the earth need to listen to the sounds of the world to discover their God.**

6. Solidarity

Blabey, Aaron. **Thelma the Unicorn**. Print. **A tale about being true to who you are.**

Browne, Anthony. **Little Beauty**. London: Walker, 2008. Print. **Friends always support each other.**

Do, Anh, Suzanne Do, and Bruce Whatley. **The Little Refugee**. Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2011. Print. **The story of a refugee's journey to Australia.**

French, Jackie, and Mark L. Wilson. **A Day to Remember: The Story of Anzac Day**. Sydney: Harper Collins, 2012. Print. **We remember the sacrifices of the ANZACs.**

Greenwood, Mark, and Frané Lessac. **Simpson and His Donkey**. Newtown, N.S.W.: Walker, 2011. Print. **The story about a hero of Gallipoli.**

Greder, Armin. **Australia to Z**. Crows Nest, N.S.W.: Allen & Unwin, 2016. Print. **A different look at the alphabet in relation to Australian culture for older readers.**

Hathorn, Elizabeth, and Peter Gouldthorpe. **The Wonder Thing**. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1996. Print. **The gift of water in our world.**

Innocenti, Roberto, and Christophe Gallaz. **Rose Blanche**. London: Jonathan Cape, 1985. Print. **The courage of a young girl in Nazi Germany.**

Jorgensen, Norman. **In Flanders Field**. 2004. Freemantle, W.A.: Fremantle Press, 2004. Print. **The selfless act of bravery and courage of the soldiers in WW1.**

Marsden, John, and Shaun Tan. **The Rabbits**. Vancouver: Simply Read, 2003. Print. **An allegorical tale about the colonisation of Australia.**

Metzenthén, David, and Michael Camilleri. **One Minute's Silence**. Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 2014. Print. **A tribute to soldiers on both sides of the conflict in Turkey in WW1.**

- Plant, Andrew. *The Poppy*. Melbourne: Hybrid Publishers, 2014. Print. **The story of the continuing deep relationship between Australia and Villers-Bretonneux that developed after Australia's defence of the town in WW1.**
- Starke, Ruth, and Greg Hotfeld. *An Anzac Tale*. Kingswood, S. Aust.: Working Title, 2013. Print. **The story of the ANZACs using anthropomorphism.**
- Wild, Margaret. *Let the celebrations begin*. Somerville, M.A.: Candlewick Press, 2014. Print. **The story of the women of Belsen and their hope for liberation.**
- Wilson, Mark. *Vietnam Diary*. Sydney: Hachette Australia, 2013. Print. **A young soldier writes in a diary about his experiences in Vietnam.**

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CARITAS - RESOURCES

Note: Caritas also provides links to teaching resources including an Educational Toolkit for Lower Primary (K-2), Middle Primary (3-4), Upper Primary (5-6) and Secondary (7-12) as follows:

Preferential Option for the Poor

<http://www.caritas.org.au/learn/catholic-social-teaching/preferential-option-for-the-poor>

Dignity of the Human Person

<http://www.caritas.org.au/learn/catholic-social-teaching/dignity-of-the-human-person>

Stewardship of Creation

<http://www.caritas.org.au/learn/catholic-social-teaching/stewardship-of-creation>

Subsidiarity and Participation

<http://www.caritas.org.au/learn/catholic-social-teaching/subsidiarity-and-participation>

The Common Good

<http://www.caritas.org.au/learn/catholic-social-teaching/the-common-good>

Solidarity

<http://www.caritas.org.au/learn/catholic-social-teaching/solidarity>