

# *Teaching for Transformation*

## See the Story... Live the Story

*“Every unit and lesson must be seen as being sacred – a divine opportunity for the student to enter into a deeper relationship with their God.”* Teaching for Transformation Guidebook

### Teaching for Transformation

The biblical truth that resounds in our Christian school’s curriculum is that all things in the world belong to God. It is important that we not presume that this truth is obvious or apparent to all. The task of a Christian school teacher is to help reveal God’s grand story in all things.

Thus, a teacher’s task is one of Christian-story telling, of seeking out and helping students to “See the Story” in all areas of study. We do this by teaching under the principle of all things. God created all things. Even after the fall, which indeed affects and infects all things, creation remains good. Redemption impacts all things, redirecting them to their God-designated purposes. Someday, all things will be fully restored but the work of renewal begins now and we are privileged to be co-workers with God in this process. It is into this story that teacher are called to invite each student. When teachers reflect on learning through this perspective, we reveal/unwrap God in all things and help our students to develop the understanding that there is not an area where God’s dominion does not reach. The purpose of a Christian education must always be the training and developing of every potential God has given us for Him. The Christian school’s role, therefore, is to make every possible attempt to cultivate each student’s abilities “for service and worship and glorification of God,” so that he or she can be God’s partner, a member of God’s team to “fix up” or to “transform” God’s world and to reveal God in all things.

Our call as Christian teachers is to unwrap the idea that our mandate as Christians to be transformers of everything that is broken in this world. This perspective is often referred to as a “transformational worldview”. The word “worldview” refers to the idea that we all experience the world through different lenses. These lenses affect how we interpret and interact with the world around us. Thus, to have a transformational worldview would imply that the way we interpret and interact with the world is transformational both for self and society. Developing a “transformational worldview” context for learning is a crucial component of Christian education.

The Teaching for Transformation Throughlines as developed by the Prairie Centre for Christian Education (PCCE) region provides a framework for the development of authentic and integral Christian learning experiences that are grounded in a transformational worldview with a focus on the Biblical story.

Throughlines are *Big Picture* ideas around which we can organize curriculum. Throughlines are qualities/characteristics that we desire students to develop as God is revealed to them in *all things*. They are discipleship concepts that guide our living. These characteristics describe how we can become part of the restoration of creation. They answer “How NOW shall I live?” Throughlines weave the big ideas into a transformational worldview.

Teachers carefully and prayerfully choose 1 or 2 Throughlines for each unit that they teach and then intentionally link all of the unit’s learning outcomes to the chosen Throughlines. These Throughlines become the “thematic Velcro” that connects and organizes the many facts, skills, and experiences together.

*“It is nothing but a pious wish and a grossly unwarranted hope that students trained to be passive and non-creative in school will suddenly, upon graduation, actively contribute to the formation of Christian culture.” Nicholas Woltersdorff*

A key component of the Tft program is that teachers are challenged not simply to tell the students about the Throughlines but to provide actual opportunities for the students to “live” the chosen Throughlines in each unit. For example, a unit on “Waste in God’s World” could be organized around “Earth-Keeping” and would provide authentic opportunities for the students to be “Earth-keepers” during the unit.

In this way the learning becomes truly transformational, encouraging students to influence our culture for Christ. Teaching for Transformation – See the Story – Live the Story!

Please see the following page for some Tft Testimonials. If you would like further information about the Tft program please contact Doug Monsma at [dmonsma@pcce.ca](mailto:dmonsma@pcce.ca).

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### **God-worshipper**

Students will understand that worshipping God is about celebrating who God is, what God has done and is doing, and what God has created. It is literally about standing in awe and wonder of God and His promises. Students will see this worship as a way of life.

### **Idolatry-discerner/Prophetic-speaker**

Students need to learn to “read” a worldview by asking questions about what is being portrayed in regard to culture, values, and belief systems. Through the curriculum, students will be challenged to identify, understand, and lay bare the idols of our time (and times past). But this is not the end. Students need to test these ideas against the Transformational worldview and be modern day prophets.

### **Earth-keeper**

Students will respond to God’s call to be stewards of all of creation. Caretaking can so easily succumb to exploiting. We need to reclaim and relearn how to respectfully treat the world/universe and all things contained in it. This is a matter of respecting God and it is our responsibility to be earth-keepers.

### **Beauty-creator**

Students will create beauty that praises God and enriches our world. Creation shouts that our God is a God who loves diversity, complexity, and creativity. As image bearers of a creative God, students will glorify and praise God by creating that which is beautiful and pleasing to Him. This offering of creativity isn’t optional – it’s a joyful duty that students offer as a sacrifice of praise.

### **Justice-seeker**

Students will act as agents of restoration. The world is not as God intended it to be. We lead our students to see the injustices in this world - but seeing these things can’t be where we stop. We need to enable students to act as agents of restoration by BOTH identifying and responding

### **Creation-enjoyer**

Students will celebrate God’s beautiful creation and give testimony to the presence of God in creation. Creation enjoying is looking at, talking about, studying creation. Ordinary things become extraordinary when seen in a new way. Creation enjoying is helping to coax the “songs of joy” (Ps. 65:8) from ourselves and from our students.

### **Servant-worker**

Students will work actively to heal brokenness and bring joy to individuals and to culture. Being an image bearer means having the ability and responsibility to discover, respond to, develop, use, and improve the world God has placed us in. We need to cultivate the desire and ability to offer hope, healing, and restoration to this world and its people.

### **Community-builder**

Students will be active pursuers and builders of community, in their classrooms, their neighborhoods, and in the global village they are part of. Students need to learn to pursue shalom - to be active and eager examples of peaceful and shalom-filled communities. Our classrooms will be communities of grace where students will learn to walk and work together in peace.

### **Image-reflector**

Students bear the image of God in their daily lives. Being an image bearer isn’t something we DO. It is deeper than that. Image bearer is what we ARE. We reflect God’s image! And we learn to see God’s image in others. The more Christ-like our actions are the more clearly Christ’s light shines in a dark world.

### **Order-discoverer**

Students see God’s fingerprints all over creation. When we read the creation account we read a story of God creating order out of chaos. There is purpose in God’s creation and we are able to discover this amazing order within creation. One of the inescapable conclusions for our students must be, “God really had an amazing plan for all of this, didn’t He!”

# TFT Testimonials

- *In my 25+ years of Christian schooling, I have not seen a program/methodology/textbook that does this (designing Christian Curriculum and Learning Experiences) as well as TfT does.*
- *If I was a parent, and I saw my child doing TfT, I would be super excited and think 'Wow, that Christian education they are experiencing is really making a difference in my kid's life!'*
- *The Biblical Throughline approach has allowed teachers and students to authentically and meaningfully recognize the fingerprints of God in all learning.*
- *Since implementing TfT, our students have become more actively engaged in their learning, and have responded to challenges to not only think about issues related to faith development, but also to be active participants.*

Gayle Monsma, Principal  
Covenant Christian School, Leduc, AB

- *Working with the TfT model of unit design has empowered our teachers to be more thoughtful and intentional in their unit planning.*

Jay Visser, Principal, Immanuel Christian  
Elementary School, Lethbridge, AB

- *It (TfT) puts our focus exactly where it needs to be and challenges us to not just teach content and add-on Christ (like book ends).*
- *I love that service learning is an essential component.*
- *I also love how articulately faculty spoke to how they valued TFT and really used it.*
- *TFT is a deep and rich model to enrich a child's faith journey.*
- *I deeply respect and value the TFT Model....*

Principals/Leaders from Grand Rapids Christian  
School and Holland Christian School, Michigan

- *Teachers appreciate the process and are able to use that process to make big ideas accessible to their students.*
- *..., the TfT model of unit design has given our K-12 teachers a common language around planning and preparation which has better facilitated collaborative work both at grade and subject levels but also at an intergrade and interdisciplinary level.*

David Loewen, Superintendent of Schools  
Surrey Christian School, BC

- *Teaching for Transformation has led to transformation in our school. It has allowed teachers to more fully understand what it means to integrate the Biblical Story into their planning and pedagogy. Teaching for Transformation has been instrumental in helping teachers and students see that the entire curriculum is linked through some common core values.*

Matthew Beimers, Principal  
Surrey Christian School. Surrey, BC

- *TFT has had a significant impact on me as a teacher and individual. While viewing my teaching through the TFT lenses, I have found myself transforming as a teacher and student. The ten through lines are the filters not only for how I teach the curriculum, but also for how I view life. In the midst of it all, I ask, "How is God wanting to transform me through this?"*

Barbi Wall, Grade Four Teacher, Immanuel Christian  
Elementary School, Lethbridge, AB

- *In classrooms, teachers are working on uncovering God's Truth by aligning lessons or units with the Biblical Story and utilizing the Tft format. Having Tft as part of our school culture, climate, and vision has been a big plus for us.*

Shade Holmes, Principal, Medicine Hat  
Christian School, Medicine Hat, AB

- *Tft has transformed how Trinity 'does' teaching. We are now using common language from kindergarten to grade 9 and students and teachers alike are being better equipped to be kingdom builders.*
- *There are many things that I find fantastic about Tft but one of the biggest is that the Biblical through-lines are verbs – action words.*
- *Our students are encouraged and challenged daily to actively pursue the heart of God – to care for and about the things that He cares about.*
- *As a Christian educator, this has probably been the best Pro-D effort I have ever been involved in.*
- *It's why I teach at a Christian school, and now I know how to do it well and practically where each unit has the potential to transform kids into Kingdom Builders with a solid and full Christian worldview.*

Teaching Staff from Trinity Christian  
School, Calgary, AB

- *What I have learned has helped me as a teacher, in my classroom, and even in my family. We are better at seeing God and appreciating Him in everything we do. My pupils pray before and after every lesson knowing that God is in everything.*
- *Tft has impacted the way I teach. Especially how I now see my pupils. They are made in the image of God and reflect His characteristics so that they can be Justice-seekers and Order-discoverers.*
- *Since I accepted the program last year, my teaching has been a blessing. This has been noticed by pupil/teacher behaviour changes and in the way school programs are run ...My life has also changed spiritually because I stick to the Throughlines even at home. My family and pupils see me as a transformed person. I support this program and LIKE it!*
- *Teaching for Transformation will greatly change the way I teach because now I am able to use the ten Throughlines, linking them to different subjects and topics. Applying CFRR helps me to realize the greatness and presence of God in this world.*
- *Teaching for Transformation has helped me to even bring up my own children on how to serve God. I thank the people who thought of this program, because it will change all of Zambia into a God-fearing nation.*

Teaching Staff, CCAP, Lundazi, Zambia



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