Teachers’ Guidance
Where is God Now?

We are looking for evidence of students grappling with content such as this in response to the idea of where God might be in today’s world. Pupils might reflect on questions about God’s whereabouts, OR the role God plays in today’s world, or both. The material below are examples only. We look forward to seeing art inspired by a wide variety of stimuli.

Ps 42 and 43
There are 150 Psalms in the book of the bible of this name. The Psalms are songs written to God, about God, raising all sorts of feelings and questions. They are emotional and poetical, the language is not always clear, but then sometimes our thoughts aren’t always clear.

Pupils might feel that songs and poetry are the best ways to ask confusing questions about God. Their art work might express confusing questions, and their thoughts and feelings, as in the Psalms.

Do these psalms feel out of date, or are the questions they ask still the sort of things we might ask today about the whereabouts of God?

You might use specific lines from Psalm 42 and 43, to bring out different ideas, such as:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>‘My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When can I go and meet with God?’ (Ps 42:2)</th>
<th>‘By day the LORD directs his love, at night his song is with me’ (Ps 42:8)</th>
<th>‘’let them bring me to your holy mountain, to the place where you dwell.’ (Ps 43:3)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The psalmist feels his soul’s need for God. God is described as ‘living’, as a being who can be found. Will the soul’s thirst be quenched once God is found?</td>
<td>God is somehow present in day and night, and seems to have different characteristics at different times. At night God is felt as song, and during the day as love.</td>
<td>In many traditions God resides in a particular place. Is God more concentrated in a particular place? Can God also be everywhere?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Finding God in Suffering
Do we only look for God when we need something?

Christians talk about seeing Jesus ‘in the eyes of the poor’. In Matthew 25: 31-46, Jesus tells his followers that ‘whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me’, meaning that whenever we help someone who is suffering, it is like we help Jesus. Is it in reaching out to help others that we find God? Does God suffer with us? Do we find God when we are feeling sad and scared, is God there with us? Does this mean God is present in war and disasters as well as rainbows and sunsets?

God in the natural world: animism
Learn about a worldview which sees God in nature and the world around us.

Some groups whose beliefs are older than the organised religions like Christianity and Islam see the world from an animist perspective. This means they see spirits or gods in the world around them; the trees, animals, plants and even rocks and rivers. They see the living world and believe that spirits animate it. Learn about Native Australian beliefs in the ancestors who are still present in nature. Watch a clip from Ferngully the Last rainforest to help pupils imagine what it would be like to see the natural world as special.

Learn about St Francis of Assisi who held all of creation to be sacred because God made it. Read lines from his prayer called ‘Canticle [song] to Brother Sun’. If God made the world, all life and the universe, can these things be sacred? Can God be found in the world around us, even in a building or a special room?