

**DRAMA AND
RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:
A MATCH MADE IN HEAVEN**

ANNE FRAWLEY-MANGAN

B.Ed., Dip. T., A.T.C.L.

A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements of the degree of

MASTER OF EDUCATION (RESEARCH)

Faculty of Education

School of Religious Education

Australian Catholic University

Research Services

Locked Bag 4115

Fitzroy, Victoria 3065

Australia

March 2006

Statement of Sources

This thesis contains no material published elsewhere or extracted in whole or in part from a thesis by which I have qualified for or been awarded another degree or diploma.

No other person's work has been used without due acknowledgement in the main text of the thesis.

This thesis has not been submitted for the award of any degree or diploma in any other tertiary institution.

All research procedures reported in the thesis received the approval of the relevant Ethics/Safety Committees (where required).

(Signed)_____

Date: / /

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My heartfelt thanks to:

Dr Peta Goldberg for principal supervision, your faith and calmness in the storm.

Dr Tracey Sanders for co-supervision and your gift of storytelling.

Dr Peter Wright for starting me on the journey.

Michael Mangan for layout design, attention to detail
and for not letting me give up.

Susannah, Sophie, Liam and Rory Mangan
who share with me the drama of life.

Pat and Dell Frawley for beginning my religious education
and allowing me the freedom to choose

and

Alice, Cari and the children - what a blessing you have been.

For Michael
with love.

You are sacrament,
God present in my life.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Statement of Sources	ii
Acknowledgements	iii
Table of Contents	iv
Abstract	vii
Chapter 1 Introduction:	1
<i>In the beginning</i>	
Introduction	1
Religious Education	1
Aesthetic Education	3
Integration of Arts and Religious Education	5
Summary	6
Chapter 2 Literature Review:	8
<i>Let there be light</i>	
Introduction	8
Religious Education	8
Early Church	9
Middle Ages	12
Reformation	13
Twentieth Century	15
Church Documents	24
Arts-based Approach	27
Ways of Knowing	31
Aesthetic Knowing	35
Spiritual Knowing	38
Religious Knowing	41
Educational Drama	45
A Door to the Aesthetic	45
Process Drama	49

	Back to the Future	53
	Integration of the Arts and Religious Education	53
	Religious Imagination	56
	Sacramental Imagination	57
	Metaphor and Parable	58
	Summary	60
Chapter 3	Research Design & Process:	61
	<i>They will shine in the sky to give light</i>	
	Identifying an Epistemology	61
	Choosing a Paradigm	63
	Case Study	63
	Ethnography	65
	Arts-based Research	68
	The Context	70
	Methodology	72
	Participant Observation	72
	Interviews	75
	Log Book	78
	Analytic Memos	81
	Transcripts	81
	Data Analysis	83
	Data Reporting	84
	Data Trustworthiness	85
	Constraints of the Research	88
	Researcher Bias	89
	Timeline	91
	Summary	91
Chapter 4	Analysis:	92
	<i>Separate light from darkness</i>	
	Starting	92
	Before the Drama	94
	The Teachers' Voices	94
	Out of the Mouths of Babes	99
	The Concepts	99
	Confirmation and First Communion	102
	The Process Drama	104
	Planning	104
	Drama Process	106
	Quincy Day	106
	Group Work	106
	Opening a Door to the Aesthetic	109

Knowledge and Understanding	112
Belonging	113
Remembering	114
Spirit	115
Promises	117
Building Bridges	118
Attitude	121
Fun	121
Self-esteem	122
Alice's Analysis	122
Summary	125
Chapter 5	Discussion and Conclusion:
	126
	<i>All that was created was good</i>
Introduction	126
Emergent Finding 1	128
Past Experience	129
Constructed Meanings	134
Recommendation	140
Emergent Finding 2	141
Group Work	142
Self-confidence	144
Recommendation	145
Emergent Finding 3	146
Recommendation	150
Emergent Finding 4	152
Motivation	153
Aesthetic Experience	154
Process Drama	157
Aesthetic Knowing	160
Religious Knowing	162
Recommendations	167
Conclusion	170
Background	170
Summary	173
Future Directions	175
Bibliography	176
Appendices	185

ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates the use of drama as a teaching tool in religious education within the context of sacramental preparation. The research is informed by educational theories which suggest that arts education and religious education both rely on aesthetic knowing to construct meaning. The theories which underpin this research claim that this form of knowing honours the students' freedom to form their own understandings and will be achieved through critical reflection and experiential methods which engage heart, spirit and mind. Drama is one such method and therefore this thesis contends that drama and religious education are indeed 'a match made in heaven'.