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Uniting Church in Australia
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

As We Walk Along

**Religious and Values Education
Middle Years (7&8)**

Acknowledgements

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Mr Alan Ross principal Billanook College and Ms Ann Thomson later invited a group of teachers to begin a conversation about what we would like to see in a secondary curriculum. This is the outcome.

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A Message from the Moderator



Uniting Church Schools are an important part of the mission and ministry of the church.

It is within the school now more than ever that our young and their families are likely to hear and experience the Christian message in all its richness.

The production of.... *As We Walk Along*.....is an exciting development which builds on the popular primary series *Come & See..* for Religious and Values Education in Uniting Church Schools. The curriculum is also being used by independent schools of other Christian denominations as well as by some congregations

Once again it has been written to be used by lay teachers and it is encouraging that this subject, taught well and supported by sound and interesting curriculum materials, is truly worthy of a place on the timetable at every level.

One strength among many of this document is the acknowledgement that it speaks from a Christian perspective, but constantly reminds us that this is one pathway among many to God in our multi faith society. There is opportunity to explore some of these pathways. Opportunity is also offered to explore indigenous Australian issues.

I wholeheartedly support and endorse this curriculum for use in schools and offer encouragement to all involved in Religious and Values Education, teachers, chaplains and leaders in schools. You all participate in a ministry of privilege and responsibility as you guide young people towards wholeness, challenged to turn to others and to contribute to a more just and equitable society.

Rev Jason Kioa

Moderator

Synod of Victoria and Tasmania

Uniting Church in Australia

Introduction

To ensure Religious and Values Education is relevant for students today, teachers are challenged to bring the gospel into dialogue with the concerns of our world and with the issues which students experience in their lives. It takes into account research, theory and best practice in education, to lead students to reflect and to appreciation of how to live a life which contributes to building a better world.

Living in a pluralist and secularized society calls for Religious and Values Education to have a broader approach than in the past. This raises questions at both theoretical and practical levels. The challenge of pluralism is to go beyond the horizons of our own faith and to be open to learn from the other. What assumptions should be made about the truth status of world religions taught in a multi-faith society? Religious educators face the challenge of respecting truth for students of other faiths while being true to the tradition from whence they spring.

While this curriculum attempts to meet these criteria, it presents ways in which beliefs and practices of the Uniting Church may give direction for students and enliven them with a desire to engage positively with life and to contribute building a better world.

The intention is that students will be drawn to new and deeper understandings about human life, (as modelled by Jesus). The curriculum offers learning experiences and activities directed at self discovery (knowing and valuing self) leading to a deepening understanding of their capacity for relationship with others, and they will become ever more aware of the many ways they can contribute to care of the world. At every level P-12 one of the primary purposes is to call for a lived response from each student.

The document offers students access to the language, symbols and rituals of Christianity, but continually reminds teachers of the different pathways to God – other faiths, which all enshrine language, rituals and symbols in an authentic way. The richness of these different pathways is experienced as the classroom teacher continually revisits them and provides students with a variety of opportunities to learn about other religions.

As principals, school leaders, religious education teachers, chaplains and classroom teachers in Uniting Church schools, you exercise a very significant ministry. You will be supported in this process through the ongoing provision of professional development and enrichment programs and faith formation experiences, made available to schools by a number of providers:

eg: Education in Schools Unit, CFM, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania
Dialogue Australasia National – DAN which offer excellent resources for RE teachers www.dialougeaustralasia.org – for membership
Uniting Church Centre for Theology and Ministry, Melbourne
Australian Catholic University – National
Australian Association of Religious Educators (VARE in Victoria)
Melbourne College of Divinity (and providers in other states)

As religious educators you are one group among many who are forming young people through your teaching and by your genuine concern for the students in your care. Everyone involved in Religious and Values Education needs to be supported and encouraged. Together we participate in a ministry of privilege and responsibility. You are part of a life-giving tradition.

Rationale

As We Walk Along...

the Road to Emmaus. Luke 24:13-35

The focus of the Primary level Units of work employed the theme *Come & See* -Jesus' invitation to Andrew at the outset of John's gospel. For students, an invitation to an exciting journey of discovery about Myself, Others, The World, and God.

The theme for the Secondary Units of work is taken from the account of the disciples with the risen Jesus on the road to Emmaus. Luke 24:13-35. The selection of this seminal passage in the early Christian story parallels to some extent the questions and concerns of adolescent students:

Who am I?

What can I believe?

How must I live?

In these units of work, secondary students are invited to engage in four activities that emerge from the Emmaus encounter:

1. Student are offered an opportunity to tell their own story, listen to interpretations of the narrative and share with their community in an exploration of Jesus' message. Luke shows how the process of telling and interpreting diverse experiences not only builds a community narrative but creates the community itself.

In these Secondary units the activities intend to locate the students within the story and promote classes which encourage some reflection upon the message and to see parallels in their own lives.

2. We observe in the Emmaus encounter that the disciples' eyes were opened. They saw the key texts of the Hebrew Scriptures in a new light and perceived Jesus in a different mode. The young church gained new insights into the ancient texts and into their own lives by sharing their deepest concerns.

The intention of these units is to offer secondary students an opportunity to explore their own life experiences to gain a deeper understanding of their lives. Students will be enabled to see the texts in a fresh light and revitalise their concept of the person of Jesus, thus discovering deeper meaning for each person within the message.

3. Luke's narrative notes the return of the disciples to the community. Though somewhat disheartened at the outset they are reunited with their group and a renewed solidarity is forged.

The opportunity for secondary students to dialogue with classmates and teachers about their life, in the light of the gospel will enable a certain anchoring of each student to a supportive communal setting.

4. These elements of story telling, enlightenment and communal sharing will offer encouragement and hope to students. Luke concludes his gospel on a note of optimism and looks toward the gift of the spirit that is promised to the young church. The units of work have as a specific goal:

- **the encouragement of the student,**
- **the engendering of a certain trust in God**
- **offering a word of hope for students own lives.**

The units also offer an opportunity for prayer and reflection during the year. These activities emerge from the topic studied and serve to enhance the participation of the student in a spiritual life.

‘May their hearts burn within them as the scriptures are explained and may the person of Christ be encountered in the mystery of their lives.’

We are mindful that not all students in these classes are from the Christian tradition. Nonetheless taught well, we are confident that these units will address key issues in all students’ lives. The units offer opportunity for a shared understanding of a message and a new point of departure for the discussion on some key questions of adolescent life which will benefit all students

The units are specifically oriented toward eliciting a life response from the students. They are encouraged to listen, respond, learn, pray and share life with each other

Victorian Essential Learning Standards The three interwoven purposes of the Victorian Essential Learning Standards (VELS) are *‘to equip students with capacities to manage themselves and their relations with others, understand the world and act effectively in that world.’* (Victorian Essential Learning Standards: Overview, page 6, Victorian Curriculum Assessment Authority, March 2005)

The Units of work in.. *As We Walk Along* ...are an extension of the four concepts used in the Primary curriculum and have been further developed broadly around these concepts:

- Understanding Myself
- Understanding Others
- Understanding the World
- Understanding the Faith Community

to enable students to develop understandings about and relationships with themselves (knowing & valuing self), other people, the world, God, and their own community.

The interwoven purposes of Victorian Essential Learning Standards are deeply embedded in the fabric of this curriculum.

The Richness of Our Multi-Faith Classroom and of our Society

One of the many tasks of Religious and Values Education is to develop a relationship with God. It is within that relationship we learn a language with which to communicate.

Just as we are born into the language of our family, our culture, so we learn the language of our tradition – for Christian schools, Christianity. A Muslim student will learn the language of Islam, a Jewish student, the language of Judaism. Each tradition and language offers a way to God.

While this curriculum acknowledges these issues, it does not claim to offer ‘all the answers’. This will only be developed over time and with wisdom, experience and ongoing wide consultation.

The curriculum speaks from a Christian standpoint, yet alerts students and their families to the richness of our multi-faith society and encourages teachers to offer many opportunities for students to engage in learning about other faiths. Personal faith experience is at the core of all religions. The more we understand the experience of another the less misunderstanding is likely to occur.

A dimension which also requires consideration is the position of the student who claims no faith. Parents have sought entrance to a Christian school. Is it reasonable to expect that the student will engage in the curriculum of the school? Class teachers ought to always respect the faith position (or lack of)of all students. Does the school have a policy here?

This curriculum is to be seen as a living document – growing and changing as units of work are added, replaced or further developed. It will have application in a variety of settings, as a stand-alone program or within fields of enquiry. Schools which have introduced International Baccalaureate will find the document offers many points of entry.

Ongoing consultation will further develop this as units of work are rewritten.

Resources

An extensive list of resources is presented within each Unit of work at this level.

Here are some further suggestions for enrichment/support of Religious and Values Education.

Dialogue Australasia Network An excellent resource service for all area of Religious and Values Education. For membership enquiries:
www.dialogueaustralasia.org

World Religions

Teacher Reference:

Interdisciplinary Units, World Religions
ISBN 1-86401-758-9
Hawker Brownlow Education

A Lion Handbook, The World's Religions
ISBN 10 9 8 7 65
Lion Publishing

Spectators Guide to World Religions – an introduction to the big five.
John Dickson, Blue Bottle Books
ISBN 1-920935-42-8

Life Times – 4 book series
Rites of passage of 6 major World Religions
Publisher Evans Bros. London
www.evansbooks.co.uk

The Usborne Internet Linked Encyclopaedia of World Religions
www.usborne-quicklinks.com
ISBN 07460-4714-2

Imaging the Sacred, Soundings in World Religions
Vernon Ruland
ISBN 1-57075-209-5
Orbis Books

Website: www.education.openbook.com.au

Student Reference:

Website: www.reonline.org.uk
An excellent resource – some interactive sites.
Primary, Middle and Senior sections with links to other worthwhile sites

Living Religions:

Christianity	ISBN	0-431-49860-0
Islam	ISBN	0-431-14987-9
Judaism	ISBN	0-431-14988-7
Hinduism	ISBN	0-431-14989-5.
Sikhism	ISBN	0-431-14990-9
Buddhism	ISBN	0-431-14999

Celebrations

Divali ISBN 1-884-21521-0
Hanukkah
Publisher Raintree www.raintreepublishers.com.uk

Start Up Religion Series, Ruth Nolan
Publisher Evans Brothers, London www.evansbooks.co.uk

Your school librarian will be your greatest resource. There are many other World Religions books available. It is recommended that you visit some of the listed websites.

Christian Resources

The new Revised Standard Version of the bible is available for students online.
Google: RSV Bible

The Uniting Church in Australia
UCA Justice Website <http://nsw.uca.org.au/schoolprojects.index.htm>

Seasonal resources, music resources and list of storybooks

Pancake Day Website www.pancakeday.com.au

Unichurch Books <http://unichurch.victas.org.au>
Story books & music especially for Christmas, Lent, Easter, Advent & other Christian celebrations

OZspirit An electronic gateway to the promotion of justice, spirituality and global education presenting a fortnightly e-magazine.
An excellent resource for teachers
Produced by Caritas Australia – a Catholic Church social justice agency
www.ozspirit.com.au

www.uq.net.au/cjpc/church/htm a social justice website

Story keepers Entertaining, animated series of Bible stories to help student's understandings.
DVD, 13 half hour sessions
Information and orders www.storykeepers.com

Enhance Multi media Bible resources www.digistry.org

Seasons of the Spirit www.seasonsofthespirit A lectionary based resource for Sunday schools, worship leaders, Christian educators

"Dear Kim, this is what I believe" Rev. Prof. Bill Loader
<http://tcpc.org/resources/articles/whatabout>

Environmental Issues

www.kidsgreen.org

<http://www.greenhouse.gov.au>

<http://www.cafonline.org.au>

<http://www.kidsforsavingearth.org>

<http://nat.uca.org.au/home/> type in "environment" in search –go to- Energy and the Environment Kid's call to Action Booklet Cherishing Creation

Centre for Ecology and Spirituality

183 Burns Rd, Glenburn Vic 3717
Telephone: (03) 5780 5600. For school groups

Indigenous Education

- Narana Creations An Australian Aboriginal Cultural and Educations enterprise of the Uniting Church
410 Torquay Road, Grovedale Vic 3216 www.narana.com.au
www.dreamtime.net.au
- Kanyini www.Kanyini.com.au an excellent DVD which presents the story of Indigenous Australians in a warm non confronting way as told by “Uncle Bob Randall “ Australian Indigenous of the year 19 99?
- National Uniting Aboriginal and Islander Christian Congress
<http://nat.uca.org.au/uaicc/resources/index.htm>
- National Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Ecumenical Commission (NATSIEC)
Part of the National council of Churches in Australia (NCCA)
www.ncca.org.au/natsiec
- Ozspirit Excellent teachers resources & lesson ideas
www.ozspirit.com.au
- Yarra Healing Gives voice to local Indigenous people and to the growth of the reconciliation movement across the nation
www.yarrahealingmelb.catholic.edu.au
- Reconciliation Australia www.reconciliation.org.au
- Lore of the Land www.loreoftheland.com.au
- Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission www.heroc.gov.au
- The Age (on Reconciliation) Compilation of all articles in 2000
www.theage.com.au/issues/reconciliation
- www.koorimail.com links to many other websites
- The Aboriginal and Torres Strait Island Commission (ATSIC) www.atsic.gov.au
- Canadian website –Indigenous of the World –extensive links to Aboriginal Australia
www.bloorstreet.com

Resources available

Unichurch Books and Resources,
130 Little Collins St Melbourne 03 9 251 5291

Pauline Books and Media ,
7 Denmark Hill Rd, East Hawthorn VIC 03 9882 3424
www.paulinebooks.com.au

Rainbow Books
303 Arthur St Fairfield VIC 03 9481 6611
www.rainbowbooks.com.au

Scripture Union
828 Sydney Rd Coburg North VIC 3058 03 9 319 9100
www.suvic.org.au

Open Book 703 Station St Box Hill VIC

Also mainstream providers of Picture story books & novels

Movies/DVD's with themes applicable for Religious Education classrooms

Publication: Finding God in the Movies -33 films of reel faith -Katherine Barsotti and Robert Johnson
Google -Finding God in the Movies .

www.Amazon.com

Les Miserables: Teaching Resource for secondary schools. available -
Education in Schools Unit Synod of Vic Tas 039 251 5492

There are many films with themes about life which can be used in RE lessons. It is important to view the film before use in the classroom to ascertain its suitability for your purposes.

Some suggestions include:

Cider House Rules -Ethics
Bruce Almighty -Free will (comedy)
Romero
Matrix
Chocolat
Malachai
Indiana Jones - (faith)
Star Trek (social Justice)
Bend it like Beckham (Racism)
Patch Adams

References:

McBrien, Richard P. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Catholicism*. San Francisco: Harper, 1989. (ISBN 0 06 065338 8)

Dutney, A. *Where Did the Joy Come From: Revisiting the Basis of Union* Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 2001. (ISBN 1 86407 221 0)

Merritt, D.R. *Understanding the Uniting Church In Australia*. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1996. (ISBN 1 86407 143 5)

Basis of Union (1992)- available online (<http://nat.uca.org.au/basisofunion/Basis1992.htm>)

MULTI FAITH CALENDAR 2007

Yearly variation of dates and greater detail available online. eg REonline.org.uk

January

1st Shinto: Shagatsu.
Guatan-sai
New Year

5th Sikhism: Birthday of Gobind Singh.
The tenth Sikh Guru who formed the Khalsa on Vaisakhi (Baisakhi).

6th Christian: Epiphany
The visit of the wise men

6th-7th Christian: Eastern Orthodox Christmas Eve and Day

20th Muslim: Al-Hijra – New Year's Day
Commemorates the Hijra or migration of the prophet Muhammad

29th Muslim: Ashura
Day of mourning for Husain.

February

3rd Shinto: Setsebun
The beginning of Spring

9th Buddhism: Nirvana Day
A regional observance of the death of Buddha

16th Hindu: Maha Shivaratri
Festival in honour of Lord Shiva

20th Christian: Shrove Tuesday
Shrove means 'forgiveness' Pancake Day is held on this day

21st Christian: Ash Wednesday
Marks the first day of Lent and the forty days that lead up to Easter.

21st -8th April Christian: Lent
Time of fasting and discipline in preparation for Easter.

March

2nd Christian: World Day of Prayer
Interdenominational Prayer Day

3rd Buddhism: Hanamatsuri
Celebrates the Buddha Shakyamuni's Birthday with a flower festival.

4th Jewish: Purim
Commemorates the preservation of the community and Jewish history.

14th Hinduism: Holi/Spring Festival
Hindus celebrate the arrival of spring

25th Christian: Passion Sunday
5th Sunday in Lent when Christians concentrate on the suffering or passion of Jesus

26th Hindu: Rama Navami
The Birthday of Rama the seventh avatar of Vishnu.

MULTI FAITH CALENDAR 2007

Yearly variation of dates and greater detail available online. eg REonline.org.uk

April

1st Christian: Palm Sunday

First day of Holy Week when Christians remember Jesus' entry into Jerusalem followed by his arrest and Crucifixion.

3rd Jewish: Passover/Pesach

Commemorates the exodus from slavery in Egypt. Lasts 8 days.

6th Christian: Good Friday

Commemorates the crucifixion of Christ

14th Sikh: Vaisakhi (Baisakhi)

Celebrates the founding of the Order of the Khalsa by the Guru Gobind Singh.

15th Yom Ha-Shoah

Remembers the six million Jews who were victims of the Nazi holocaust.

23rd Christian: St George's Day

Celebrates the martyrdom of the patron Saint of England.

May

1st May Buddhism: Saga Dawa

Tibetan and Nepalese festival that celebrates the birth, death and enlightenment of the Buddha.

6th Jewish: Lag B'Omer

Jews observe the link between Pesach and Shavout.

17th Christian: Ascension Day

The 40th day after Easter when the disciples remember the last earthly appearance of Jesus.

23rd May Jewish: Shavout/Pentecost

Celebrates the revelation of the Torah to Moses on Mount Sinai.

27th Christian: Pentecost

Also known as Whitsuntide is often thought of as the 'birthday' of the church. Christians remember the first proclaiming of the Gospel.

June

7th Christian: Corpus Christi (Catholic) and Day of Thanksgiving (Anglican)

Celebrates the Eucharist and occurs 60 days after Easter.

16th Sikhism: Martyrdom of Guru Arjan

Celebrates the fifth Guru who made the first compilation of the Sikh Scriptures.

30th Buddhism: Asalha Puja

Celebrates the First Proclamation by Gautama.

MULTI FAITH CALENDAR 2007

Yearly variation of dates and greater detail available online. eg REonline.org.uk

July

**16th Hindu: Ratha Yatra
'Chariot Journey'**

Symbolised by the pushing of huge wagons with images of Krishna on them.

**18th Buddhism: Chokhor
(Chokor Duchon)**

A Tibetan and Nepalese Festival that commemorates the Buddah's first turning of the wheel, the first teaching concerning the Four Truths.

24th Jewish: Tisha B'Av

A day of mourning and reflection focusing on the destruction of the first and second temples in Jerusalem.

August

**6th Christian: The
Transfiguration**

Commemorates Jesus being transformed in the presence of three of his disciples.

**11th Islam: The Prophet's
Night Journey and
Ascension**

Recognises the journey Muhammed made from Makkah to Jerusalem and through the heavens to the presence of God, all in one night.

**28th Hinduism: Raksha
Bandhan**

Festival about brotherly protection where sisters tie amulets of coloured thread around the wrists of their brothers to protect them from evil.

September

**4th Hinduism: Krishna
Jayanti**

Celebrates the birthday of Krishna.

**13th to 12th October
Muslim: Ramadan**

A time where Muslims fast from dawn to Sunset.

**15th Hinduism: Ganesh
Chaturthi**

The birthday of ganeshha the elephant-headed deity seen as the remover of obstacles.

**22nd Jewish: Yom Kippur
(Day of Atonement)**

The final day of the 10 days of repentance.

27th Jewish: Sokkot

Festival commemorating the 40 years the Jews spent in the wilderness on the way to the Promised Land after escaping slavery in Egypt.

MULTI FAITH CALENDAR 2007

Yearly variation of dates and greater detail available online. eg REonline.org.uk

October

5th Jewish: Simchat Torah

Celebrates the annual cycle of the reading of the Torah.

9th Islam: Lailat-ul-Qadr

The 'Night of Power' when Muslims commemorate the Prophet Mohammad receiving the first revelation of the Qur'an.

13th Islam: Eid-ul-Fitr

This is the breaking of the fast for Muslims. It lasts 3 days.

November

1st All Saints' Day

Honouring all saints known and unknown.

9th Hinduism: Divli- The festival of lights

Celebrating the good can overcome evil with fireworks and candles.

11th November Christian: Armistice Day

Remembering those who died in the Two World Wars and subsequent Wars

24th Sikhism: Birthday of Guru Nanak, the first Sikh Guru.

30th Christian: St Andrew's Day

Celebrates the first disciple to follow Jesus.

December

2nd Christian: Advent Sunday

When Christians prepare for celebrating the birth of Jesus at Christmas.

5th-12th Jewish: Hanukah

Celebration of the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem after it was recaptured.

8th Buddhism: Bodhi Day

Celebration of Gautama's attainment of Enlightenment under the Bodhi tree.

20-22nd Islam: Eid-ul-Adh – The Festival of Sacrifice

Marks the end of the Hajj (the pilgrimage to Makkah). It recalls Abraham's willingness to sacrifice his son in obedience to Allah.

25th Christmas Day:

Celebrates the birth of Jesus. The Christmas candle is lit symbolising the light of Christ coming into the world. The culmination of Advent.

A Framework

for

Religious & Values Education

in Schools

A Framework for Religious & Values Education.

Purpose

This document is intended to assist in the planning, implementation and co-ordination of Religious Education across the school. It attempts to address the complexities which constitute sound practice at the beginning of the third millennium. The introduction into some schools of the International Baccalaureate requires that curriculum is designed to accommodate the enquiry method of learning.

Religious education is interdisciplinary and includes areas such as the study of ethics, environment, peace, justice, sexuality, drug education, relationship education, religion and science, philosophy. Contemporary theorists in religious education make a critical distinction that provides a basis for contemporary approaches. One strand of religious education, which tends to dominate, can be described as education about religions. This is an academic study of religions which employs standard educational language about the goals, process and evaluation of classroom teaching and practice in the discipline. Another strand is education to be religious. This encompasses education in faith, education in spiritual development, education in personal development and is invitational as it depends on a life/faith synthesis that is an integral part of the overall program. In both senses of Religious Education, however, values permeate all teaching and learning.

The society in which the document is to be used is deeply multi-faith and multicultural. Teaching and learning strategies need to factor in the religious and social background, and the unchurched nature of society in which our young people are being formed. The influence of the student's peer group and the involvement of teachers and other members of the adult community in the total development of each young person is also to be considered.

Theological Rationale

The complex nature of relationships that exists between people, the world, church and God, provides religious education with its content. To understand something of this content and direction, an understanding of the Christian concepts of people, life, church and God, as developed in the Uniting Church, is desirable.

- *The Basis of Union 1992 Ed. Publisher Media Com;*
- *Understanding the Uniting Church David Merritt 1992;*
- *Where Did the Joy Come From? revisiting the Basis of Union. Andrew Dutney Uniting Church Press Melb. 2001*

God

Belief in and worship of God, are the common factors in many religions. All religions are identified by their different beliefs and practices. A belief about the Christian concept of God, is that God shares life with us. Christians know something of the mystery of God who, through Jesus and the Holy Spirit shares life with people in the midst of their own lives. We come to know a God of love and relationship.

The Christian teaching of Trinity proclaims that it is of God's nature to live in relationship. The one God is Father, Son (Jesus) and Spirit.

The Christian teaching of Incarnation, proclaims that God became human (in Jesus) and lives in close relationship with everything that constitutes human life.

This document helps us to discover the many ways we can encounter God, and teaches us to recognise the presence and action of God in the ordinariness of our everyday routine, as well as in the great moments of life

Revelation -Revealing/Encountering God in the world.

Revelation is the act of God communicating to us through all moments of our life – in our relationships with others, in the natural world, in life's experience. We live out our life as best we are able in our human condition.

Scriptures echo the activity of God, who cannot be totally contained in any language, culture or concept. It is only in our lives, with their cultures and histories and through their languages and concepts that we can come to experience God's way of working.

Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ unites himself to all human life by becoming human (the Incarnation). God continues to be revealed through the human life of Jesus with its implicit message of 'love one another'.

Church

The Uniting Church through *'The Basis of Union'* endeavours to shed light on the experience of human life, interpret it in the light of faith and call for a radical way of living which testifies to the gospel and its values. The Uniting Church is a pilgrim people, discerning and responding to the living revelation of God in the midst of the ambiguity of history and life experience.

Holy Spirit

Through the Holy Spirit, God is present in our daily lives - in the people with whom we interact, in daily events, in nature. A part of the educational enterprise is to lead students to recognise these encounters and enable them to respond each in her/his own way.

Faith

God respects the freedom, which has been made integral to human life. We are able to contribute to building a better world by our lives of witness, and our openness to listening to the word of God.

God loves and works for each one of us – whatever our situation or our capabilities. It is in those different personal ways that our lives develop.

Life

We can only encounter God in the world within the realities of each person's individual journey of life. All human development is unique and personal.

It follows that the only forum for the interaction of these aspects of God's work – is people's lives. There is no other way in which God is revealed to us and our responses invited, except in our lives; in the events and activities and the people who form part of each person's individual life. The Christian concept of God tells us that God works with each person through all moments and situations of life.

For our purposes we can schematise life into four broad areas:

- (a) Each person's life
- (b) is lived in relationship with other people,
- (c) in the midst of the world,
- (d) knowing that God is also present in a particular way in our community of faith (the school community, or a church community).

There is no other forum for God's activity, but life. This then is our starting point - the life of each one of our students.

We now have a framework – for the development of a curriculum

The following areas of human life provide the structure for the content of a program :

1. Dimension of - **understanding myself**
2. Dimension of - **understanding other people**
3. Dimension of - **understanding the world**
4. Dimension of - **understanding faith communities**

The Units for Yr 7-8 *As We walk Along* offer elements from each of these areas

- As students grow in **understanding of myself**, they come to recognise themselves as special, gifted in some way and loved by God. In response to this they come to value themselves more. (*development of self esteem, self worth, resilience*)
- As students grow in their **understanding of other people** they are more able to relate with others. Through these relationships they experience God's presence and action in their lives. (*they are led to see that God's love is experienced through those people who love and care for them, and develop capacity to be in relationship with a wide range of people in various situations, some life giving others, challenging.*)

- As students grow in *understanding of the world*, they become more aware of the major issues facing society today, and are encouraged to reflect on ways they might engage in transforming the world. They are encouraged to explore questions of meaning and purpose, beliefs and world views.
- As students grow in *understanding of the school as faith community*, they are invited to participate in its life of worship, service, scripture, prayer. For the vast majority this school experience will be the only experience of belonging/participation. *(It is therefore important to offer students developing their sense of self worth and belonging, regular positive, engaging experiences, while preparing for the sometimes difficult realities of life.)*
- *It is important to recognise and affirm the faith community experiences of students of other faiths both in the classroom and through whole school initiatives, using a variety of strategies which honour that faith tradition. (Suggested resources will assist the teacher to be effective here)*

Broad Goals of Religious and Values Education

The broad goals of Religious Education are concerned with:

- (a) encouraging students to question, think, explore, share, contribute to enquiry and to make connections to their own life.
- (b) the development of life and faith through a variety of learning experiences both cognitive and affective.
- (c) development in students of:
 - an appreciation of the world; (*environment*)
 - an understanding of and respect for other faiths, exposure to the beliefs and practices of other world religions;
 - an understanding and appreciation of and sensitivity to others including the marginalised in our world;
 - an ever deepening understanding of and appreciation for values, ethics, peace, justice, human rights, environment, and health, leading to a lived response;
 - an openness to enquiry, in their search for truth; (*philosophy, science & religion*)
 - a love of learning;
 - a response of service and love in helping to build up and renew this world;

Sound teaching and learning adopts a process, which respects the individual person and the appropriate readiness .

Religious and Values Education is seen as an area in curriculum which brings together many other disciplines and aspects of life, and calls for a lived response.

A Teaching Process

A teaching process which respects and attends to individual differences attempts to facilitate the integration of these broad goals. Students will learn, respond, grow and believe in varying capacities and in different ways one from another and in doing so will confidently respond to the challenges of life.

In order to maximise the teaching process, the following areas are recommended: (see over -diagram A)

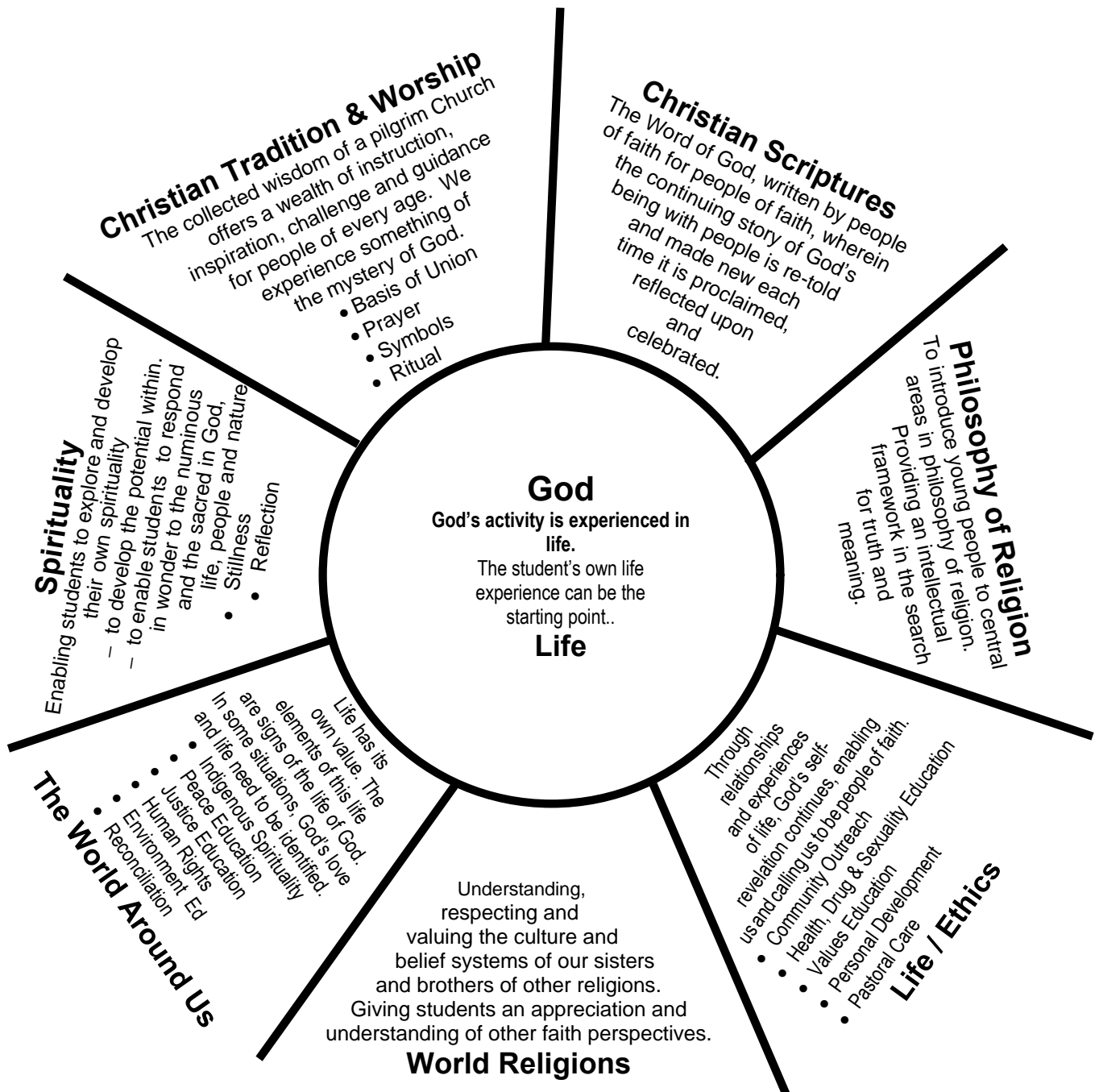
With a skilled, sensitive teacher using these areas and the visible support of Principal, school leaders and other staff, who also value this area of the curriculum, learning and personal growth will occur.

It is the lived experience of each student, which provides the basic matter to be drawn on in the teaching and learning process. This process will also be enriched through the use of various mediums, literature, music, drama, art, technology and other creative arts. A necessary dimension to this will be ongoing professional development/enrichment for all teachers of religious education.

Religious and Values Education

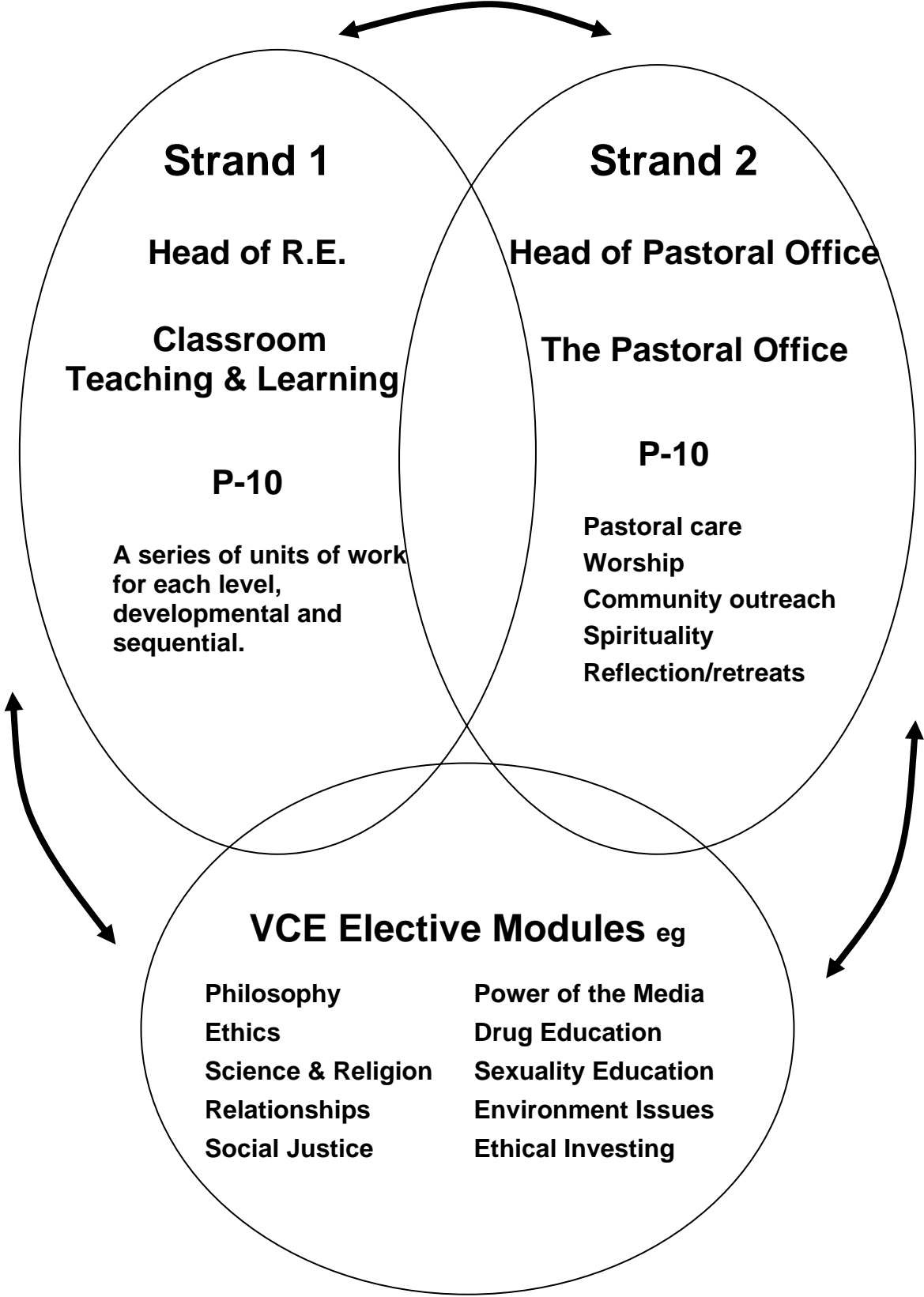
Dimensions.

diagram A



The interaction of these dimensions in the teaching and learning process and the provision of a variety of opportunities to engage students spiritually, emotionally, socially and intellectually will support their growth towards wholeness, to enable them to participate fully in life and generously contribute to building a more just and equitable society.

A model for Religious and Values Education



Policy and Curriculum Development

In developing its religious and values education policy and curriculum, which will incorporate formal teaching and learning, faith development, spirituality, community outreach, social justice programs, pastoral care, formal and informal worship times, the school will take into account the school profile, vision and mission statements and beliefs about how the school supports student learning.

A Guide to the Development of the School's Religious and Values Education Policy and Program.

The Religious and Values Education of students takes place within the specific nature of the individual school. Inspiration is drawn from the bible, the mission statement of the school and the direction of the Uniting Church. Therefore, policy and programs should reflect the vision and mission statements of the school underpinned by *The Basis of Union*- the faith statement of the Uniting Church. This is a way the links with the Uniting Church will be manifest and enduring; school being supported by church (through Education in Schools Unit) to develop school-based documentation of policy and programs.

When developing a policy and program, the following tenets are worthy of note:

A Religious and Values Education policy will:

- respect students' freedom to explore or reject faith
- be relevant to and respectful of the students' stages of development, socio-economic backgrounds, cultural heritage and religious background and experiences (or lack of);
- be based on respect for all people.
- take into account the multi-cultural, multi-faith nature of the Australian population and of the particular school population, ever respectful of the reality that Christianity is one pathway among many to God

The Purposes of Religious and Values Education within the School, are to:

- teach the content of the Christian faith in a way which contributes to understanding;
- provide opportunities for students to respond in life.
- lead students to know, appreciate and respect the beliefs of classmates & those of other faiths by inviting those students to share experiences of their beliefs and celebrations.
- immerse students in the life of the school in such a way that they can experience the values of a Christian community, together with opportunities for participation in prayer and more formal worship;
- form resilient young people with a strong sense of their own worth;
- form young people with a growing capacity to know and understand themselves and those with whom they will form relationships as they mature, through programs specifically targeted at health, sexuality and drug education as well as seminars on mental /emotional health and wellbeing.
- skill students to critique the world not merely function in it
- provide regular opportunities for stillness, reflection using a variety of strategies
- Develop an openness to enquiry
- Provide a language with which to explore beliefs, values, alternate world views and the world view they are forming.

Methodology of Religious and Values Education:

- is based in life; it begins with the experience of students and leads towards deeper insights and understandings of life.
- is concerned with the integration of faith and life, in order that the Christian message relates to the life situations of students
- is based on an enquiry approach to learning which invites students to discover meaning in their lives and encourages a lived response
- is concerned with understandings about how students learn. These understandings are integral to decisions made concerning classroom strategies and teaching methods
- is concerned with attainable objectives, learning strategies and assessment and evaluation procedures, all of which are integral to the learning process.

The Delivery of Religious and Values Education

It would be important to consider the number of ways Religious and Values Education might be delivered in your school.

In formulating a model the following could be considered:

two distinct but interrelated areas working side by side and supporting each other

- The classroom curriculum - overseen by the Head of RE Curriculum who would have responsibility for the oversight and teaching of the curriculum
- The pastoral dimension -overseen by Head of Pastoral Office who would have responsibility for such areas as pastoral care of individuals within the whole school community, community outreach programs and the follow up reflection on action program, retreats, worship, prayer/spiritual/reflection experiences, social justice programs, whole school activities like Pancake Day, a national fund raising effort by the Uniting Church for the underprivileged.

*It should be noted that many schools employ professional counsellors. This is a separate and distinct professional service area, not to be confused with Pastoral Care of the whole school community , which has a sacramental and spiritual context. One of the most significant roles of the school chaplain is to offer pastoral care to the whole school community . This cannot be contained in any timetable.

A school community is diminished when the centrality of this is minimised. The chaplain will work in cooperation with classroom teachers who all practice pastoral care by their daily interaction with students in their care.

Religious Education as Part of the Whole School Curriculum

Effective Religious and Values Education programs are designed to educate the whole person. Therefore, many experiences within the school contribute to students' personal/spiritual development.

Curriculum provision in a Uniting Church school is concerned with education across all learning areas. Therefore the school will give some priority to Religious Education both at the formal level seen in the commitment to teaching and learning within the time-table and the informal level by the infusion of the curriculum and wider school community activities with Gospel values. Without some commitment to Religious Education in the curriculum informal infusion is less likely to be educationally effective.

The school will provide opportunity for exploration of alternative world views- in the search for truth.

The whole school curriculum integrates religious, pastoral, and co-curricular dimensions. It is important to pay ongoing attention to these aspects and ensure that they are appropriately integrated into the life of the school. In making these explicit, the school is providing an inclusive curriculum, which responds to the needs of all students. Religious Education in this context permeates all areas of the curriculum, and is enriched by the cultural and social diversity of the school community.

The school assists its students in the development of knowledge, skills, values and attitudes that will enable them to affect their responsibility of living justly.

It is through the provision of these opportunities that students will grow to full freedom as strong, resilient young adults, imbued with a sense of altruism able:

- to engage positively in life;
- to achieve their personal best;
- to turn to others in love;
- to contribute to building a more just and equitable society.

Victorian Essential Learning Standards (Level 5) and *As We Walk Along* (Middle Years: 7&8) Religious and Values Education for the Secondary Classroom

Curriculum Overview

As We Walk Along is a religious and values education program undertaken primarily from a Christian perspective, in which students are invited to explore, engage with and reflect upon the religious dimension of their own selves, their community and the world in which they live. In light of such an objective, *As We Walk Along* openly and explicitly engages with the three interwoven purposes of VELS in an effort to equip students with the capacity to:

- Manage themselves and their relations with others
- Understand the world and
- Act effectively in that world

Throughout its Level 5 component, *As We Walk Along* draws upon areas of learning pertinent to all three of the *Physical, Personal and Social Learning, Discipline-based Learning* and the *Interdisciplinary Learning* strands. The program's curriculum has been specifically designed to foster students' growth and maturation in the domains of *Interpersonal Development, English, Humanities (History), Communication* and *Thinking Processes*.

The domain of *Interpersonal Development* is addressed within all *As We Walk Along* (Level 5) units of work with students regularly invited to build, manage and maintain positive social relationships through co-operative learning opportunities. Each unit contains activities and associated assessment tasks that are collaborative in nature, fostering individual student's abilities to work in conjunction with peers in the context of a team environment.

The domain of *Civics and Citizenship* is evident in the program's focus on issues of justice and outreach. Here, students are encouraged to examine contemporary issues pertinent to their local and global communities, identifying different perspectives and potential solutions to these challenges. In addition, students are actively invited to engage with these issues as agents of change through participation in a variety of school and community-based ventures.

The domain of *English* is addressed throughout this curriculum program with each unit actively integrating a variety of texts, both biblical and non-biblical, in a source-orientated study of religion in our world. Accordingly, texts and language are central and essential components which form the basis of teaching and learning activities, weaving reading, writing, speaking and listening opportunities throughout.

The domain of *Humanities (History)* is actively engaged with throughout this religious education curriculum, with students encouraged to develop their historical knowledge and understanding of Christianity from its earliest centuries through to the current day. Skills of historical reasoning and interpretation are also fostered with students' capacity for historical thinking nurtured in a range of learning activities and assessment tasks.

The domain of *Communication* is also addressed in each unit through learning activities and assessment tasks specifically designed to develop students' listening skills, with opportunities for all students to present, analyse and respond to their own and others' ideas.

The domain of *Information and Communications Technology* is engaged in a number of the teaching and learning activities contained herein. Students are regularly invited to undertake technology-based research and encouraged to use such means to process data, present ideas, communicate with others and support knowledge-building for the benefit of themselves and within collaborative contexts.

Finally, the domain of *Thinking Processes* is addressed throughout *As We Walk Along* (Level 5) with students consistently invited to undertake enquiry-based learning opportunities. Here, students are encouraged to develop their individual capacity for reasoning varied viewpoints, investigate novel ideas and critically reflect upon these with subsequently reasoned evaluation. Students are deliberately encouraged to think creatively, moving them from their existing viewpoint to understand and appreciate that of others.

Victorian Essential Learning Standards and As We Walk Along (Middle Years: 7&8)

Religious and Values Education for the Secondary Classroom

Level 5 Compliancy Sample

Unit One: What Is Christianity?

Strand	Domain	Dimension	Level 5 Standards	Lesson: Activity
Physical, Personal and Social Learning	Interpersonal Development	Building social relationships	Demonstrate respect for the individuality of others Empathise with others in local, national and global contexts Acknowledge the diversity of individuals	1:1; 1:2; 5:1; 5:2; 6:2; 7:1; 7:3; 8:2 1:1; 1:2; 5:2; 6:1; 6:2; 7:1; 7:2; 7:3; 8:2 1:1; 1:2; 5:2; 6:1; 6:3; 7:2; 7:3
		Working in teams	Accept responsibility as a team member Support other team members to share and explore the ideas of others Work cooperatively to achieve a shared purpose Reflect on individual and team outcomes Act to improve their own and the team's performance	4:2; 5:2; 6:2; 7:3; 8:2 5:1; 5:2; 6:2; 7:3; 8:2 4:2; 5:1; 5:2; 6:2; 7:3; 8:2 5:2; 6:2; 8:2 5:2; 6:2; 8:2
Discipline-based Learning	English	Reading	Read and view imaginative and informative texts that explore ideas and information related to challenging topics and themes Identify the ideas, themes and issues explored in texts	1:1; 2:2; 2:3; 3:1; 3:2; 4:1; 4:2; 5:2; 6:1; 6:2; 8:2 1:1; 2:2; 2:3; 3:1; 4:1; 5:2; 6:1; 6:2
			Produce personal responses to texts Infer meanings and messages in texts	1:1; 3:1; 5:2 1:1; 2:2; 2:3; 3:1; 4:1; 5:2; 6:2; 8:2
		Writing	Analyse how social values or attitudes are conveyed within texts Compare the presentation of information and ideas in different texts	2:2; 3:1; 3:2; 8:2 1:1; 3:1; 8:2
		Speaking & Listening	Produce texts for a variety of purposes Write extended narratives with attention to characterization, consistency of viewpoint and development of resolution Write reports incorporating challenging themes and issues Write personal reflections on or evaluations of texts presenting challenging themes and issues	3:3; 4:4; 5:2; 6:2; 8:2 4:4 3:3; 4:4; 5:2; 6:2; 8:2 3:3; 7:1
			Express creative and analytical responses to texts, themes and issues Identify main issues in a topic Provide supporting detail and evidence for opinions Prepare and present spoken texts for specific audiences and purposes	1:1; 1:2; 3:1; 4:3; 5:2; 7:3; 8:2 1:1; 3:1; 4:3; 5:2; 6:1; 7:1; 7:3; 8:2 3:1; 5:2; 7:1; 7:3; 8:2 4:2; 5:2; 8:2
Strand	Domain	Dimension	Level 5 Standards	Lesson: Activity

Discipline-based Learning (cont.)	The Humanities (History)	<p>Historical knowledge & understanding</p> <p>Historical reasoning & interpretation</p>	<p>Analyze and describe key events in ancient and medieval societies Use a variety of sources to describe key aspects of these societies Describe aspects of daily life in ancient and medieval societies Explain key features of community life in these societies Analyse the ways that ancient and medieval societies were governed Describe the roles of key individuals Evaluate the contributions of and legacies lefts by key individuals Analyze change and continuity over time Compare key aspects of past and present societies Demonstrate understanding of key concepts</p> <p>Frame key research questions, plan investigations and report on findings Use a range of primary and secondary sources</p> <p>Identify the content, origin, purpose and context of historical sources Evaluate historical sources for meaning, point of view, values and attitudes Identify strengths and limitations of historical documents Use a variety of forms to present their understanding</p>	<p>3:1; 4:4; 5:2; 6:1; 6:2 3:1; 3:2; 3:3; 4:4; 5:2; 6:2 3:2; 3:3; 4:4; 3:2; 3:3; 4:4 3:2; 4:4 3:3; 4:4; 5:2; 6:2; 8:2 5:2; 6:2; 8:2 6:1 3:2; 6:1 3:2; 3:3; 4:3; 4:4; 6:1; 6:2</p> <p>4:4; 6:2 2:2; 2:3; 3:1; 3:2; 3:3; 4:1; 4:2; 5:2 2:2; 2:3; 3:1; 4:3; 5:2 2:2; 2:3; 3:1; 4:1; 4:3 2:2; 3:1 4:4; 6:2</p>
Interdisciplinary Learning	Communication	<p>Listening, viewing & responding</p> <p>Presenting</p>	<p>Modify verbal and non-verbal responses to suit particular audiences Interpret complex information</p> <p>Offer responses involving specialized language and symbols as appropriate to the contexts in which they are working Consider their own and others' points of view</p> <p>Apply prior knowledge to new situations</p> <p>Challenge both their own and others' assumptions</p> <p>Justify their own interpretations</p> <p>Use communication conventions, forms and language appropriate to the subject to convey a clear message across a range of forms to meet the needs of the context, purpose and audience Provide constructive feedback and reflection to develop effective communication skills Use constructive feedback and reflection to develop effective communication skills</p>	<p>4:4; 6:2; 8:2 3:1; 3:2; 3:3; 4:1; 4:3; 4:4; 6:1; 6:2; 7:1; 8:2 4:1; 4:3; 4:4; 6:2</p> <p>1:2; 2:1; 6:1; 6:2; 7:1; 7:2; 7:3; 8:2</p> <p>1:3; 1:4; 2:1; 4:1; 4:3; 4:4; 5:1; 6:1; 8:2</p> <p>1:2; 2:1; 3:1; 4:3; 6:1; 6:2; 7:1; 7:3; 8:2</p> <p>1:4; 2:1; 3:1; 4:3; 6:2; 7:3; 8:2</p> <p>4:4; 5:2; 6:2; 7:3; 8:2</p> <p>5:2; 6:2; 7:3; 8:2</p> <p>5:2; 6:2; 7:3; 8:2</p>

Strand	Domain	Dimension	Level 5 Standards	Lesson: Activity
Interdisciplinary Learning (cont.)	Information and Communications Technology	ICT for creating	Create products which contain minimal functional, formatting and readability errors	5:2; 8:2
		ICT for communicating	Select appropriate search engines to locate information Use complex search strategies to refine their searches Judge the integrity of located material – credibility, accuracy, reliability and comprehensiveness	5:2; 6:2; 8:2 5:2; 6:2; 8:2 5:2; 6:2; 8:2
	Thinking Processes	Reasoning, processing and inquiry	Use a range of question types	4:4; 7:1
			Locate and select relevant information from varied sources when undertaking investigation	3:2; 3:3; 4:1; 5:2; 6:2; 8:2
			Use a range of appropriate strategies of reasoning and analysis to evaluate evidence	3:3; 4:1; 4:4; 5:2; 6:2; 8:2
			Consider their own and others' points of view	4:3; 5:2; 6:2; 7:1; 7:2; 7:3; 8:2
	Creativity	Use a range of discipline-based methodologies	5:2; 6:2; 8:2	
		Complete activities focusing on problem solving and decision making which involve an increasing number of variables and solutions	3:3; 5:2; 6:2; 8:2	
	Reflection, evaluation & metacognition	Apply creative thinking strategies to explore possibilities	3:3; 4:3; 4:4; 5:2; 6:1; 6:2; 8:2	
		Generate multiple options, problem definitions and solutions Demonstrate creativity in the ways they engage with and explore ideas in a range of contexts	4:3; 5:1; 5:2; 8:2 4:4; 5:2; 6:2; 8:2	
Reflection, evaluation & metacognition	Use a range of thinking tools in appropriate contexts	4:4; 5:2; 6:2; 7:1; 7:3; 8:1; 8:2		
	Use specific language to describe their thinking	1:1; 1:2; 1:4; 2:1; 3:3; 4:3; 6:2; 7:2; 7:3; 8:2		

The *National Values Education Framework* and *As We Walk Along* (Middle Years: 7&8) Religious and Values Education for the Secondary Classroom

Curriculum Compliance Overview

As We Walk Along (Middle Years: 7&8) actively engages with the *National Values Education Framework* for Australian Schools, fostering the framework's nine fundamental values:

- Care and Compassion (CC)
- Integrity (I)
- Respect (R)
- Responsibility (RR)
- Understanding, Tolerance and Inclusion (UTI)
- Freedom (F)
- Honesty and Trustworthiness (HT)
- Doing Your Best (DYB)
- Fair Go (FG)

Unit Title	Lesson Title	Exhibited Value
1. What Is Christianity?	What is religion?	UTI
	So, what do you know about Christianity?	UTI, R
	Exploring the Jesus of history	UIT
	Exploring the Christ of faith	UTI, R, DYB
	The early Church	DYB
	From early times to today	R, DYB
	Christian life in our world	UTI, R
	Famous Christians today	R, DYB
2. Focusing on the Stories of Jesus	Who was Jesus of Nazareth?	UIT, R
	The religious context of first century Judea	UIT
	Jesus: Rebel with a cause	UIT, CC, FG, F, I, RR
	Jesus' Miracles & the Kingdom of God	R, DYB, CC, RR
	Jesus in the 21 st century	UIT, R, DYB
3. The Spiritual Self	There's more to me than meets the eye	UIT, R, DYB
	Moving into stillness and silence: Listening to God	R, CC
	Finding the words: Guided prayer	R, DYB, CC
	Reflection and contemplation: Praying the Bible	R, CC
	Praying with imagination	R, DYB, CC
4. Reading the Bible	The Bible as a resource library	UTI
	Literary genres in the bible	UTI, DYB
	'How to' guide for examining Biblical texts	UTI
	Old Testament characters & their stories	UTI, DYB
	New Testament characters and their stories	UTI, DYB
	Images of God in the Bible	UTI, R
5. Talking About What's Important: Ethical Thinking	What is 'ethics'?	UTI, R, RR, FG
	Identifying ethical issues	UTI, R, DYB
	Making ethical decisions	R, DYB, CC, HT, RR
	Turning to the authorities: Getting the opinions of others	UTI, R
	Jesus: The role model for Christian Life	UTI, R, CC, RR
	Getting it all together: Exemplars of living by one's conscience	UTI, R, CC, I, RR
6. Caring For Others: Social Justice	Justice is a matter of balance	FG, F, RR
	Why value justice?	R, CC, FG, RR
	The Christian call to be seekers of justice	R, CC, RR
	Seekers of justice in our world	UTI, R, CC, I, RR
	How can I be a seeker of justice?	UTI, R, CC, I, RR
7. This Is The Uniting Church	Who are the Uniting Church?	UTI, R
	What do members of the Uniting Church believe?	UTI, R
	How is the Uniting Church present in our world?	UTI, R, RR



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Student Objectives

That students will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of Christianity's roots in the person of Jesus Christ
- Develop an appreciation of the heritage of Christianity
- Gain a deeper understanding of the connection between denominations within the Christian religious tradition
- Gain an appreciation of the impact of Christian faith upon the lives of believers

Notes for the teacher:

This unit focuses on the broader identity of 'Christianity', tracing the tradition from its roots in the person of Jesus Christ, to the varied and multifaceted phenomenon we have today. Jesus, through his life, death and resurrection, gave the world a most intimate experience of God. It is belief in this manifestation of God that sets Christians aside from Jews and Muslims, both of whom recognise Jesus as a prophet, but not the Messiah: anointed one of God.

Teachers are encouraged to reflect upon and make clear for their students throughout this unit that Jesus was a loyal and faith-filled Jew who in no way sought to establish an alternate religious tradition. Accordingly, through his ministry, Jesus critiqued his Jewish faith as one very much operative within its bounds. His criticism of contemporary leadership and practice was done from the standpoint of a dedicated adherent who only sought change in order to better align the tradition with the will of God.

Christianity, as a religious movement, was only to emerge as a distinct tradition aside from Judaism some time beyond the death and resurrection of Jesus. Some within scholarship argue that such development was not evident until the time of Paul (late 40ce). Others suggest a timeframe much later in the first century, around the time of the fall of the Second Temple (70ce). Others still argue for a dating either in the second century, or even up to the fourth century, although such late dating as this is difficult to justify.

What will need repeated clarification for students throughout this unit is that Christianity is a religious phenomenon that evolved post-Jesus. Although it is based on his ministry in terms of both his teachings and actions, its formation was not the intention of Jesus himself.

Teachers may well wish to reflect upon such details with students at the outset of each lesson in this unit in order to clarify and solidify in the students' minds the process of evolution undertaken by the tradition to reach the diversified Christian reality we have today. Such a discussion is outlined for teachers' use at the opening of Lesson 5 'The Early Church'. Alternatively, teachers may prefer to undertake such a discussion at the outset of the unit, with brief regular reminders at the opening of each individual lesson to ensure students contextualise the content covered in an accurate and meaningful fashion.

Suggested Lesson Time frame:

To complete this unit as it is presented here, a total of 19 x45minute periods will be required, with additional time needed for the forum morning/day. Such a time frame allows for both research and presentation of all tasks outlined. As such an amount of time may not be viable within each educational setting, teachers are invited to manipulate the Unit's contents to suit their individual school's needs. In this light, teachers may wish to select individual Lessons for implementation or, conversely, limit the number of activities undertaken within each Lesson.



**Uniting Church in Australia
Religious and Values Education
Middle Years (7&8)**

Unit 1 What is Christianity?



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Lesson 1	What is Religion?
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>The teacher will need Worksheet One: <i>Quotes on the Meaning of Life.</i></p>	<p>Opening Statement for the Unit: In this unit we are going to learn about the Christian religious tradition from its origins in the person of Jesus Christ to the diversified faith community present in our world today. We are going to examine some of its beliefs and practices, with particular focus placed on the identification of how some Christians choose to live out their Christian faith in contemporary society.</p> <p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is religion? • Why do people choose to believe? <p>Discuss: All people have their own ideas about the meaning of life. Many express this in terms of a guiding philosophy.</p> <p>Activity One Using Worksheet One: <i>Quotes on the Meaning of Life</i>, select a range of quotes to read to the class. You may wish to write them on the board or display them on an overhead. Discuss as a class what these might mean, which appeals to them and which do not.</p> <p>Discuss: There have always been some really big questions in life that people have searched for answers to. One is ‘Where did the universe come from?’ What are some similarly big questions in life?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why am I here? • How was the universe created? • Why do people hurt each other? • What happens when we die? • Why do bad things happen to good people? • Is my life planned out already? <p>As humans, we all have a desire to make sense of the world around us. We also possess a spiritual, reflective nature that drives us to look inward at ourselves in a search to find out about who we really are as individuals. Such a search for meaning in life confronts all people, and always has, right from the earliest of human civilization.</p> <p>One means by which many people find answers to some of these questions is in religion. Religion offers people a perspective on why things are as they are: why there is suffering in the world, why humanity exists etc.</p>



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Religion also offers people a way of looking at the world, a sense of meaning, a sense of purpose and a sense of comfort in difficult times. There are countless reasons for why people choose to be part of a religious tradition. If we asked 100 believers why they choose to believe in their chosen religion, we may well get 100 different answers.

Activity Two:

Briefly brainstorm reasons that these 100 people may offer you if, as a TV reporter for Channel 9's *The Shak* kids show, you were to interview people and ask them: if they follow a religion, why do they believe?

- I was born into a family who belonged to this tradition
- I wanted 'more' from life so I decided to join a Church
- I wanted to feel like I belonged somewhere that people cared
- I want to be part of a community that sees the world in the same way I do
- I find my faith offers me comfort when I'm distressed
- It helps me understanding why bad things happen in the world
- It helps me know right from wrong

Discuss:

So there are a whole range of reasons why people may choose to belong to a religious tradition. If you and/or your family belong to a religious tradition, which one is it? If not, do you have any friends that belong to a particular faith?

Activity Three:

As a class, construct a list of religious traditions and/or Churches. Try to fill the board with as many suggestions as possible. This may include the major world religions such as:

- Hinduism
- Buddhism
- Judaism
- Islam
- Christianity

As well as Churches or denominations within these such as:

- Uniting Church
- Catholic
- Chassidic Judaism
- Greek Orthodox
- Baptists

NB. Do not worry about grouping or ordering these as the focus here is the multitude rather than their specifics of relationships.



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Discuss:

While all of these faiths have many varied beliefs and practices, they also share a fundamental core. Each one:

- Recognises a higher being(s) – Buddha, Allah, Yahweh, God etc
- Places greater worth in life than the material world itself
- Calls each individual to live as virtuous, spiritual beings
- Calls humanity, as a collective, to live in harmony
- Seeks to offer some form of response to the ‘big questions’ in life (such as those listed earlier)

Out of this spectrum of world faiths, we are going to select Christianity as our starting point and spend the following lessons examining what it means to be Christian – i.e. Believers in Christ (thus the name).

Activity Four:

Returning to the brainstormed listing of world faiths, ask student to nominate which of these they think are ‘believers in Christ’ – Christians. Circle these as students nominate correct responses. When all suggestions have been offered, circle those that have yet been overlooked.

NB. Lesson Two will pick up from this point and explore, in a more specific fashion, beliefs and practices of Christianity.



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Unit 1 What is Christianity?



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Lesson 2	So, what do you know about Christianity?
Resources	Lesson Format
	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What does the term ‘Christianity’ mean?• What are some basic Christian beliefs? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>‘Christianity’ is a term that denotes a religious tradition which upholds belief in Christ. By this, we mean belief that Jesus, a man who walked the Earth two thousand years ago, was ‘anointed’ or specially blessed by God.</p> <p>Activity One:</p> <p>Pose the following questions and ask for student responses. This will let you gauge the level of understanding currently operative within your class and allow subsequent lessons within this topic to be set at a standard suitable for your group. Answers offered may include both accurate and inaccurate statements so be careful to qualify these as they are offered. If noting them on the board, only record those which accurately reflect Christian teaching and practice. Listed below are some possible responses you may receive.</p> <p>What do you know about the beliefs of Christians? They believe in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God - a singular, all-powerful being• Jesus rising from the dead• Jesus as teacher and miracle worker• Trying to live a good life by helping others in need <p>What do you know about their practices?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• They go to chapel on Sundays• They pray• They eat bread and drink fruit juice/wine which represents Jesus’ body and blood• Some Churches have rock bands <p>Who are some famous Christian you know of?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Simpsons• Ned Flanders• Pope• Peter Garret• Bono• Mother Teresa• Mel Gibson• Jessica Simpson• Tim Costello• Peter Costello• A person you know of locally or globally



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

<p>Students will need Worksheet Two: <i>So, What do Christians believe?</i></p>	<p>Discuss: Christianity is a religious tradition that encompasses a huge number of Churches and totals a membership of around a third of the globe's population. While we will examine the variety within this tradition later, let's look at some basics of what all contemporary Christians believe. These are called 'core' beliefs because, without them, the Christian religious tradition would fall apart like an apple without its core.</p> <p>Activity Two: Using Worksheet Two: <i>So, What Do Christians Believe?</i> ask students to quietly read through the Apostle's Creed (ca. 215ce), outlined on worksheet two. You may wish to explain that a creed is a statement of faith and accordingly outlines the foundational beliefs for the given religious tradition. For Christians, this Creed is the earliest statement of faith developed and is still recited by Christians today.</p> <p>As some of the language of this creed is difficult, it may benefit the class to go through it together once all have done their own first reading of its contents.</p> <p>Discuss: Some key concepts for discussion that are evident in this Creed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God as creator• Jesus as the Son of God• The Holy Spirit• Trinity• Resurrection• The Church• Everlasting Life• Eschatology <p>While many of these concepts are difficult in terms of their theology and language, their brief and basic discussion here will act as an introductory exercise which will be elaborated upon in the Years 9 and 10 program.</p> <p>For some of your students, many of these concepts may be familiar, although the language may be new. For others, all may be unfamiliar. Teachers are encouraged to engage students in discussion of these ideas nonetheless as these beliefs are some of the cornerstones of Christian faith.</p> <p>NB. Definitions of the above terms are provided for your convenience in the introductory notes of this unit.</p> <p>Activity Three: Students are then to examine this as a source document of the Christian faith and answer the questions outlined on page one.</p>
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Unit 1 What is Christianity?

<p>Students will need Worksheet Two: <i>So, What do Christians believe?</i></p> <p>Worksheet Two</p>	<p>Discuss: The beliefs outlined here in this creed are foundational for all Christians. Many of these beliefs, essentially all those regarding Jesus as the Son of God, are what set Christianity aside for their closely associated traditions of Judaism and Islam.</p> <p>While this Creed is almost 1800 years old, it is often still recited today in Chapel and Church services of the various Christian denominations. Over time, some churches have developed additional Creeds that reflect more contemporary times. The Uniting Church in Australia has developed '<i>We Are A Pilgrim People</i>'.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: As an extension activity, teachers may wish to provide students with a copy of '<i>We Are A Pilgrim People</i>' and analyse it against the Apostles' Creed. This could be a valuable exercise, highlighting for students that while core, fundamental beliefs don't change, our understanding and subsequent expression of them does. While such change is attributable to God's revelatory work, growing our understanding over time, it is also due to our need, as human beings, to make our faith both tangible (ie. accessible and meaningful) and relevant (eg. in terms of expression) to our contemporary times.</p>
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**Uniting Church in Australia
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Middle Years (7&8)**

Unit 1 What is Christianity?



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Lesson 3	Exploring the Jesus of History
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need their Bibles and Worksheet Three (page one): <i>Who was... Jesus of History?</i></p> <p><i>New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)</i> is available online if that is a preferred method. However it is advantageous for students to be able to 'find their way' around the bible in preparation for the unit -Reading the Bible</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who was Jesus, the man? • What do we know about the life he lived? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>Jesus was a man who existed in history. What does this mean?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • He really existed • We can prove he lived – there is evidence • He had a family and friends that were real • He was born at a particular time • He died at a particular time • He lived during a particular period of history which was shaped by its contemporary social, political and religious happenings • Jesus the man is a tangible person, who ate, slept and worked like all normal human beings <p>The gospels of Matthew and Luke give us quite a bit of information in regard to the birth of Jesus and his family. While you need to sort out the historical truth from the faith embellishments, we can still collect quite a bit of information about him here. Let's have a look.</p> <p>It is also really important to remember that this man, who lived around two thousand years ago, was Jewish. He was not Christian. He was not looking to start his own religious tradition. Indeed, Christianity did not exist during the lifetime of Jesus. It was only to develop later when people reflected upon the works and teaching of Jesus and started to live in a way that was no longer 'Jewish'. This will be discussed further in Lesson Five.</p> <p>Activity One</p> <p>Using Worksheet Three: <i>Who was...Jesus of History?</i> divide the class in half. One half will individually answer the questions given in regard to Matthew 1:1; 1:17-2:18 and the other half will use Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20. Come back as a class and compare responses between the two texts. The answers should be as follows:</p> <p>Matthew 1:1; 1:17-2:18</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Joseph was from the same family line as Abraham and David (1:1) 2. Mary (1:18) 3. Joseph (1:18&19) 4. Not stated 5. Bethlehem in Judea (2:1) 6. Not stated 7. A house (2:11) 8. Wise men (2:7) 9. A star shone over the house (2:2&9) 10. King Herod (2:1)



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20

1. Joseph was from the house of David (1:27)
2. Mary (1:27)
3. Joseph (1:27)
4. Mary lived in Nazareth in Galilee; Joseph lived in Nazareth but his family was originally from Bethlehem in Judea (2:4)
5. Bethlehem in Judea (2:6)
6. Because the ruler of the time wanted all the people to be registered – like a census (1:1-3)
7. In a manger (2:7)
8. Shepherds (2:15-16)
9. An angel told them where he was (2:9-12)
10. Emperor Augustus and Quirinius was the governor of Syria

Discuss:

While some of these questions will render the same or similar answers between the two texts, some will not. Of note in this regard are questions 7, 8, 9 and 10.

Regarding question 7, Luke places the family in a barn or the like (as he may have been writing for a rural audience) with the baby Jesus being laid in a ‘manger’ (an open food trough for animals). Matthew places the birth in a house.

Regarding Question 8, Luke writes of shepherds (again a sign he may have been writing for a rural audience) as opposed to the (unnumbered) wise men (not kings!) of Matthew’s narrative.

Question 10’s answers will also be different but in fact confer the same approximate timing of the birth regarding political leadership. The only difference is the level of leadership referred to: a king in Matthew vs. the emperor and governor in Luke.

In terms of questions 7-9, this variance is an example of authors not writing historical accounts, but narratives or stories that may contain history but whose main purpose is not such details. The answers that correlate are assumed by scholarship to be probably historical fact while the diverse details here are literary embellishments which allow the author to tell their story of ‘Christology’ i.e. Statements of their faith regarding who Christ is. This is their own particular message, which seeks to meet the needs of their particular faith community while also being individual theological prologues for the subsequent Gospel texts.

So now we know a few facts about Jesus, the man who lived in history:

- His ‘parents’ were Mary and Joseph
- He was somehow blessed and set aside by God
- He lived during the political reigns of King Herod, Emperor Augustus and the governor Quirinius (ca. 4bce)
- He was born in Bethlehem in Judea but probably lived in Nazareth in Galilee where his parents resided
- Joseph came from the house of David

What else do we know about this man who lived two thousand years ago?



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<p>Teachers may wish students to use Worksheet Three: (page two): <i>Life in the 1st Century</i>) or one specific to their nominated DVD.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• He was Jewish• He lived as a loyal Jew, practicing his faith like other men during the first century• He was a carpenter for the majority of his adult life• He stopped being a carpenter to become an itinerant teacher, healer and miracle worker• He only live until he was about <p>Activity Two: Watch a nominated DVD which focuses on the historical context of Jesus' life. Your library may well have a proven video or DVD that they recommend for such an activity. If not, the following is a suggested source listing which you may wish to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Son of God</i> (ABC Compass)• <i>Jesus and His Times</i> (Reader's Digest Classic Collection)• <i>So Who Is This Jesus?</i> (Presented by Russell Boulter)• <i>Yeshus: Exploring the Jewish Roots of Jesus</i> (Peter Darg and Marc Villiger, 2005)• <i>ABC News Presents The Search For Jesus</i> (Peter Jennings, 2000) <p>Teachers may wish students to use Worksheet Three: <i>Jesus of History</i> (Side two: <i>Life in the 1st Century</i>) while watching their DVD. This is a general, non-source specific worksheet designed to prompt students to gather relevant information while watching the nominated DVD.</p> <p>Alternatively, teachers may prefer to write up a worksheet with questions and activities specifically relevant to their selected DVD.</p> <p>Discuss: As a class, go through answers gained for the questions on Worksheet Three: <i>Jesus of History</i> (Side two: <i>Life in the 1st Century</i>) or alternative.</p> <p>Extend the students' findings by discussing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What do we now know of life in the first century?• What sort of place was Galilee and its surrounding districts?• What was the landscape like?• What was society like?• What would Jesus have looked like?• What language did he speak?• What sort of things did he do during his ministry?• Why did he upset people?• Why did he attract so many followers?
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Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Activity Three:

In concluding these discussions, and in light of both activity two and three, students are to write a brief reflective piece or report on Jesus, the man of history outlining who they understand him to have been.

These details may include:

- He was a carpenter
- He inherited this trade from his 'father' Joseph
- He grew up in Nazareth which is a town in Galilee
- He was a middle-eastern man and would have looked like someone from, for example, today's Iraq or Iran
- He was a loyal Jew who participated in Jewish rituals such as going to synagogue and, most likely, an annual pilgrimage to Jerusalem to offer sacrifice at its temple
- He stopped his carpentry work when he was about 30 years old and began to be an itinerant (roaming) preacher, teacher and healer
- He attracted a group of followers who were interested in his ideas and actions. These people followed him around the Judean countryside from town to town as 'disciple' – student of this 'master', Jesus
- Jesus eventually came to the attention of Jewish and Roman leaders after about a year of his 'ministry' as he now was quite famous and had the support of many people interested in his views
- Like anyone in the spotlight, Jesus was now seen as powerful because of his popularity.
- This concerned some of the Jewish religious leadership as well as Roman political leadership of the time.

Discuss:

Highlight for students that this is the man we know as Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus the Christ (a declaration of faith) is the same person but looked at through the eyes of one who believes in the resurrection. We will look at this understanding of Jesus on our next lesson.

Notes for Teachers:

This lesson, **excluding** the viewing of a selected DVD, will take approximately two periods to complete.



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Lesson 4	Exploring the Christ of Faith
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need their Bibles and Worksheet Four: <i>Who is the Christ of Faith?</i></p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who is the Christ of faith? • How does this relate to the Jesus of History? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>We now know a bit about Jesus of Nazareth, the man who lived two thousand years ago: the historical figure that left behind traces of his life that allow us to discover some of the historical facts about his life. But what about the characteristics and parts of his life that made him stand out so much that he gathered a whole range of followers around him, followers that exist in their millions today?</p> <p>To discover more about these details, we need to examine what is known as the ‘Christ of faith’. This Christ (meaning ‘anointed one’ or one specially blessed by God), or Jesus Christ, is still the Jesus of history that we have been learning about, but he gets this title from people who believe him to have been more than just a normal, everyday man. These people, Christians, believe him to have risen from the dead! Accordingly, while he may have been a man in history, he did amazing things that were, perhaps, superhuman. He was able to do these things because he was ‘anointed’ or specially blessed by God. To identify Jesus as this ‘anointed one’, obviously you need to believe in him and God, so that’s why this understanding of Jesus is known as ‘Christ of faith’. Without this faith, he’s just ‘Jesus of history’.</p> <p>Details of these ‘amazing’ things can be found in the same place we found some historical details: the gospels. In fact, as the authors of these books were believers, most of the information they give is influenced by these ‘amazing’ details because they wrote their texts to spread Jesus’ amazing story, not just to tell people about his life as an average, everyday carpenter.</p> <p>Activity One</p> <p>Using Worksheet Four: <i>Who is the Christ of Faith?</i> students are to examine a range of selected biblical excerpts to find out what amazing qualities Jesus, the Christ of Faith, had and accordingly complete the word find. (Answer sheet provided)</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <p>One of the most amazing things Christians believe about Jesus, the Christ of faith, that clearly sets him aside from all other humans from their perspective, is that he rose from the dead.</p>



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<p>Students will need their Bibles</p> <p>Option of working online bible may be helpful: (NRSV) (New Revised Standard Version)</p>	<p>Activity Two: As a class, read through the passion narrative as it is found in the gospel of Mark (15:1-16:8). Assign students to the following roles within the narrative so as to bring the story alive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Narrator• Pilate• Jesus• Chief priests (2-4)• Crowd members / passers by (3-5)• Soldiers (2-5)• Scribes (2-4)• Centurion• Mary Magdeline• Mary the mother of James• Salome• Angel <p>Each student is, in turn, to read their part with the narrator carrying the story onward. Students can either use their own Bibles (if all readers have the same editions) or the teacher can nominate an edition and copy it for use in this activity. Copying the excerpt allows students to highlight their parts for smoother reading. Otherwise, if using their own Bible, they may wish to underline their part. Either way, allow students preparation time for quiet reading over their parts prior to performing it as a group.</p> <p>Activity Three: Allow time for prayerful reflection at the conclusion of Activity Two. Introduce such reflection by having a brief discussion with students highlighting for them that this event, the resurrection of Jesus, is the most important event upon which the Christian faith is built. Ask students why they think this is so. Responses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This was a super-human act• This was evidence that Jesus was more than just a normal human being• This was evidence that Jesus was specially blessed and set aside from everyone else by God <p>Outline for students that Christians believe that this event brought new meaning to life, death and our understanding of God. It is from the standpoint of the resurrection that Christians believe they too can live on beyond death, should they choose to live in relationship with Jesus and God during their life. Accordingly, belief in the resurrection of Jesus, the Christ of faith, shapes not only what Christians believe but the way they live.</p> <p>Silent reflection for 5-10 minutes upon the narrative read and subsequent discussion.</p>
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Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Discuss:

From this narrative some of the most important details about the ‘Christ of faith’ emerge:

- Jesus, while fully human, was also divine
- He defeated death by rising to new life
- He rose after three days
- Once risen, he appeared to some of his closest followers
- From the standpoint of the resurrection, Christians declare Jesus the Son of God.

Of course, you have to have faith in God and Jesus Christ in order to believe these things, that’s why they are attributed to the ‘Christ of faith’ not just ‘Jesus of history’.

Notes for Teachers:

Teachers may need to highlight for students that the Jesus of history and Christ of faith are not two separate people. Both titles refer to the single person: Jesus of Nazareth, but just highlight different characteristics. While such an approach can create an artificial divide, this is not the intent. Instead, it is hoped that such an approach will help students understand the full humanity yet full divinity of Christ – a notion to be more fully explored in the Year 9 and 10 program.

Activity Four:

In light of both this lesson’s content (*Christ of Faith*) and Lesson Three (*Jesus of History*), students are to individually complete a creative writing task in which they are reporters for the *Jerusalem Times*, interviewing this rising celebrity: Jesus of Nazareth.

Students are to undertake an initial planing stage for this task, where they compose a series of questions to ask Jesus. These questions are to delve into both details regarding Jesus the man (history) and his amazing transformation from carpenter to healer, miracle worker, prophet and resurrected Son of God. This interview is to take place during one of his post-resurrection appearances.

They can then begin to write up the answers to these questions which, together with the questions themselves, will be tomorrow’s headline article in the local news scroll, *Jerusalem Times*.

Notes for Teachers:

This lesson, including preparation time for Activity Four will take approximately four periods to complete.

Students will need Worksheets Three and Four for reference and their Bibles.



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Lesson 5	The Early Church
Resources	Lesson Format
	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the early Christian community like?• Who were key characters in this early Christian community? <p>Notes For Teachers:</p> <p>This lesson is an alternate version of Lesson 5 in Unit 4 where it is titled <i>New Testament Characters & Their Stories</i>. If Unit 4 has already been completed, teachers could refer students back to this class as a means by which to open this lesson. If the <i>Resume of New Testament Characters</i> task was completed in Unit 4, teachers may wish to either revisit these rather than completing Activity Three here, assign different characters to each student, or ask students to go beyond what they completed in this initial class.</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <p>After Jesus died and rose from the dead, he appeared to his mother and some of his earliest followers. After this, not much is known about what his followers did. At some point, however, not too long after this, these disciples (followers) started gathering together on a weekly basis. This was the earliest beginnings of what was to become known as the Christian Church.</p> <p>The New Testament contains the stories of many people who played significant roles within these relatively small religious communities of their time. These people were key players in the establishment of the Christian religious tradition of today. They lay the ground work for today's world-wide Church in all its diversity.</p> <p>While many of these people were original followers of Jesus, others did not know him directly, and others still played their part by being in opposition to early believers!</p> <p>Activity One:</p> <p>As a class, brainstorm for names of people associated with the early Church. These may well include Jesus' family members, disciples, appointed apostles, or even New Testament authors. Make a listing of these names on the board and allow students to offer what information they have on their named character. Such a list may include: Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Peter, Mary Magdeline, James, Phillip, Simon, Andrew, Judas, Herod, Paul/Saul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John etc.</p>



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<p>Students will need their Bibles and Worksheet Five: <i>Founding Members of the Earliest Christian Communities</i></p>	<p>Activity Two: In pairs, students are to research one of these biblical characters: their role in the early Christian community and its literature. This research is to utilise both books and the internet and will be presented in the form of a poster and three minute oral presentation. Students are to utilise Worksheet Five: <i>Founding Members of the Earliest Christian Communities</i> to guide their research. Discuss these characters and individual presentations as a class group.</p> <p>Suggested Internet Sources: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:New_Testament_people http://www.mustardseed.net/html/people.html http://www.wsu.edu/~dee/CHRIST/CHRIST.HTM Using Google to search for individual character names is also effective.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: The teacher may wish to assign characters or they can be nominated by students, although only one pair should be assigned per character to maximise content coverage. This lesson, including preparation time for Activity Three will take approximately four periods to complete.</p>
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Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Lesson 6	From Early Times to Today
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need Worksheet Six (page one): <i>Timeline of Christianity</i></p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did Christianity develop from the earliest communities to the vast religious tradition we have today? • Where does the Uniting Church fit into this picture? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>Christianity as a religious tradition has undergone many changes since its first century beginnings. What started off as small communities, with a small population per town, meeting in someone’s home each week, somehow grew to involve around 30% of today’s world-wide population.</p> <p>What is also interesting is that ‘Christianity’ has never really been a single identity as there have always been slightly different beliefs and practices upheld between the various churches, although some beliefs remain uniform. Shared beliefs include those examined in our last lesson, outlined in the Apostles’ Creed.</p> <p>In a sense, it’s a bit like being a follower of Aussie rules football. While all who follow it uphold the same passion, interest and rules, they do it by being a member of different clubs. For Christianity, this rich variety has lead, over time, to the development of a whole range of Christian ‘denominations’ or different Church communities. Let’s have a look at a timeline to see how this rich tapestry of Christian heritage developed.</p> <p>Activity One:</p> <p>Using Worksheet Six: <i>Timeline of Christianity</i> go through with the class some details about how Christianity has developed over time. As you discuss the major points of change (Chalcedon, Great Western Schism, and Reformation), students are to fill in ‘What’s the problem?’ with naming the issue that saw the various partings take place.</p> <p>Details of these three events can be found at the beginning of this unit in the <i>Extension Notes for Teachers</i> as background reading, and could be explained to students in the following language:</p> <p>1. Council of Chalcedon (451):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Within the mix that was Christianity of the fifth century, most people said that Jesus was both human and divine (God) • The problem was, did this mean he had two different ‘natures’ (parts within himself) or one? • This was why a council (meeting) had to be called to discuss this very matter. • It was decided that the Church was going to stick with its two-part theory. • Those who wished to uphold a one-part theory thus separated to



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form Oriental Orthodox Christianity.

- *What's the problem?* Answer : Discussions about how we are to understand Jesus

2. Great Western Schism (1054):

- This parting took hundreds of years to come to a head.
- For many years, there were differences of opinion about who was the leader of the Church here on earth.
- Some people believed leadership was equally held by the five Bishops (head priests) who each lived in Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople and Jerusalem.
- Some thought the Bishop of Rome was the most important (Pope) and the others were secondary to him.
- While this argument went on over hundreds of years, it then got caught up in politics when the Roman Empire in which the Church lived, got split in half: East and West.
- Now, added to these problems was the fact that half spoke Latin and half spoke Greek.
- As a result of these three issues: religious leadership, political and language, Eastern and Western Christianity officially decided to go their separate ways in 1054.
- *What's the problem?* Answer : Arguments about religious leadership, politics and language

3. Reformation (16th century):

- The 15th century Western Christian Church was experiencing many difficulties including poor leadership and a lack of focus on doing the work of God and Jesus here on earth.
- Many people within the Church were far from happy with how it was operating.
- Many questioned its leadership, its theology (teaching about God) and its practices.
- This process of questioning led many to protesting against what they saw as downfalls within the Church.
- This protesting, which involved many discussions, enquiries and the like, led to some leaders within these discussions to leave the Church, with many founding their own Christian Churches.
- These brave protestors and the Churches they founded became known collectively as Protestant Christianity.
- Other chose to stay in the Church and fight for reform from within.
- *What's the problem?* Answer : Poor leadership, questionable theology, questionable practice and a lack of focus on doing the work of God and Jesus here on earth. These issues saw some people leave the Church to establish their own.



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Discuss:

So all three of these major points of parting resulted from disagreements. Some were theological, some political and some about language! Out of what could have been quite a mess emerged a rich variety of religious belief and practice that give us our rich Christian tapestry of Churches we have today.

Really, it's through disagreement, discussion and re-formulation that each denomination (individual Church identity within the broader tradition) came into being. Each of these 'versions' of Christianity offers its members rich understanding and experience of God and Jesus, while collectively sharing some common, foundational beliefs called 'core beliefs'. At the same time, each has its own identity based in its individualised subsequent or secondary beliefs and practices – i.e. the means by which they live out their faith.

The formation of the Uniting Church in Australia is a little different. Rather than 'parting' from other forms of Christianity, it saw the 'uniting' of three Churches to become one. These three were the Methodist Church of Australia, the Presbyterian Church of Australia and Congregational Union of Australia. After years of discussion and planning this union happened relatively recently, 1977 and is a living expression of the underlying unity amongst all the followers of Christ.

Activity Two:

Using Worksheet Seven: *Researching the Family Tree of Christianity* and working in pairs, students are to select a Christian Church from those listed on Worksheet Six's timeline and complete the guided research as outlined. This can be done either independently or in pairs. Their findings are to be recorded on an A3 leaf poster (see suggested template) which, when joined with those of the rest of the class, shall make up a *Christian Religious Tradition Family Tree* display for the classroom wall.

Notes for Teachers:

Be sure to have a spread of Churches researched with preferably no doubling up so as to achieve a fuller family tree. Students may wish to research their own family's tradition, or one they are particularly interested in. Otherwise, the teacher may need to assign Churches to maximise variety.

Teachers can create the trunk and branches of the tree using names prominent within the early Church, such as apostles, leading disciples etc. on brown card.

It is also suggested that the Church leaves be arranged in chronological order of emergence to create not only a 'Family Tree' but a functional timeline.

This lesson, including research time for Activity Two, will take approximately four lessons to complete.

Students will need Worksheet Six (page two): *Researching the Family Tree of Christianity* and an A3 copy of *Family Tree Leaf Template*.



**Uniting Church in Australia
Religious and Values Education
Middle Years (7&8)**

Unit 1 What is Christianity?



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Lesson 7	Christian Life in Our World
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Selected Christian youth from the school's Past Student Association and youth ministries.</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What does a Christian look like today? • How do they live their life in our contemporary world? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>In the lessons so far, we have looked at what it means to call yourself 'Christian'. But what does a Christian look like and live like in today's world? We now have the opportunity to meet some such people whose faith are an integral part of their identity and plays a major role in the way they live.</p> <p>Activity One:</p> <p>Using the <i>Past Student Association</i> of the school, as well as denominational youth networks, organise a variety of Christian youth to come and speak in a forum to the year level. Select those with interesting stories to tell about their faith and how they live it out in today's culture. Eg. Social Justice workers, activists etc.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers:</p> <p>Such a forum can take many formats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual speakers address the whole student body with question time offered immediately after and directed to each speaker • Panel of presenters each speaking to focus questions composed by students, in front of whole student body • Student body sign up to individual speakers (eg. Can attend any of three presentations) with speakers addressing smaller groups of students and presenting their material multiple times having had the student body rotate through presenters. This can then be tied together with a panel-style question time. <p>It is suggested that such a forum be allotted an entire morning, or even within the context of a day-long seminar.</p> <p>Such a forum's success relies on the quality of organisation put into its preparation and, while this can require a significant time commitment on behalf of teaching staff and/or year level co-ordinators, it can be a memorable learning experience within the school life of students involved. Having made the required contacts once, such a forum activity is all the easier to run again in subsequent years.</p> <p>In addition, be sure to thoroughly screen selected presenters prior to the forum to ensure the quality of material to be discussed. While personal testimonials can be fascinating, engaging and a rich source of learning, clear rationale and objectives need to be established. The primary objective in this setting is to exemplify 'Christian living' in our contemporary world, in all its diversity. Speakers need to be informed of</p>



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

<p>Presenter should be given a copy of Worksheet Seven: <i>Living a Christian Life</i></p> <p>Students will need Worksheet Seven: <i>Living a Christian Life</i></p>	<p>this objective and encouraged to maintain a focus on this aim. In light of Activity Two, and with the intent of offering the speakers a starting point from which they can prepare their presentations, be sure to give a copy of Worksheet Eight: <i>Living a Christian Life</i> to each speaker well prior to the day. While their presentations will go well beyond the basic scope of this task, it will allow them to see your fundamental objectives for student learning.</p> <p>Activity Two: To affirm the content explored within the student forum, students are to complete Worksheet Eight: <i>Living a Christian Life</i> during the course of the day/morning. This task is to be done individually, and calls for students to not only recount details of a nominated presentation but also provide personal reflections up this individual's story. Students can choose which speaker they wish to complete this task on. It is recommended that this task be complete on the day of the forum while the material is at the forefront of students minds.</p> <p>Activity Three: At the conclusion of the forum, students are to gather in groups according to their nominated presenter upon which they focused their responses in Worksheet Eight: <i>Living as Christian Life</i>. Here students are to discuss their reflections as recorded in the worksheet activity. The teacher should move between groups to support and enhance student responses, calling them to reflect more deeply on the nominated presenter's story.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: Activities Two and Three can alternatively be used as a consolidating tasks in subsequent class time and thus removed from the forum morning/day itself. Either way, such reflection upon the forum experience is essential for both cognitive and affective purposes.</p> <p>The teacher is also encouraged to make clear connections between the information discussed throughout the unit to prepare students well for this forum activity. Given the nature of Lesson Seven's format (whole year level, guest speakers etc) it is suggested that teachers engage in prior discussion about this activity with students so as to properly prepare them, bridging the gap between the theory of the earlier lessons, and the real-life applications demonstrated by presenters in the forum.</p>
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Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Lesson 8	Famous Christians Today
Resources	Lesson Format
	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who are some famous people who are Christians?• How does their faith influence their life? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>As previously mentioned, about a third of the world's population today are Christians. With such a significant portion of people belonging to this faith tradition, it is likely that some are famous, but not necessarily for their religious beliefs. In our very first class of this unit we brainstormed some of these people's names. Lets see if you remember them or, indeed, can add to the list now we know a bit more about the Christian religious tradition.</p> <p>Activity One:</p> <p>Brainstorm a list of famous Christians. This may include those outlined in the second lesson including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Simpsons• Ned Flanders• Pope• Peter Garret• Bono• Mother Teresa• Mel Gibson• Jessica Simpson• Tim Costello• Peter Costello• A person of your choice <p>Some other Christians include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Martin Luther King (Rights Activist)• Matthew Hayden (Australian cricketer)• Ross Allen (AFL Umpire)• Guy Sebastian (Singer, <i>Australian Idol</i> winner)• Marina Prior (Singer, Melbourne stage identity)• C.S.Lewis (Author of <i>Narnia</i> series)• J.R.Tolkein (Author of <i>Lord of the Rings</i> trilogy) <p>Discuss:</p> <p>These people's faith, in some way, has influenced the way they live their lives. For some, this is very obvious in the things they do – eg. Guy Sebastian was a member of a Christian rock band; Martin Luther King stood up for the rights of African-Americans based on his belief that all people are made equal in the eyes of God. For others, their faith may not</p>



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

<p>Students will need Worksheet Eight: <i>Famous Christians Today</i></p>	<p>be so obvious, but it is still very much part of their personal identity.</p> <p>Activity Two: Using Worksheet Nine: <i>Famous Christians Today</i> students are to select and research a famous Christian either alive today or who has lived in recent history (last 100 years). They may choose a person from the brainstormed list or find an alternative individual in the course of their research. The worksheet shall act as a guide for student research although they may wish to include additional information as is suitable to their nominated individual.</p> <p>Students will require access to the internet and library for such research. While Google searches are perhaps that most effective means for students to research their nominated individual, the following sites may provide some assistance as they are general listings of ‘famous Christians’:</p> <p>http://www.adherents.com/largecom/fam_christian.html http://www.christianadvice.net/famous_christians.htm http://www.ers.north-ayrshire.gov.uk/christianity.htm http://www.christianitytoday.com/history/features/heroes.html http://www.adherents.com/adh_fam.html</p> <p>Students can choose to undertake this task either individually, or in small groups of no more than three. Their findings may be presented to the class in any of the following ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Three minute oral• Poster• Written report• Advertising flyer promoting their character as being the guest speaker at a local Church• Power point <p>Students may nominate their mode of presentation, or the teacher may wish to guarantee variety by writing a selection of modes on paper and allowing the students to blindly select – in the style of a lucky dip. This can add interest and challenge students to present in ways they would not necessarily choose for themselves.</p> <p>Notes for Teacher: As the questions outlined on Worksheet Nine: <i>Famous Christians Today</i> are just a guide, students may like to include additional or different information. Be sure to remind students, however, that the objective of this task is to learn about the role of Christian faith in these peoples’ lives and thus the focus need to be placed here rather than on general biography.</p>
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Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Discuss:

As a class, discuss the content of these presentations.

At the conclusion of these presentations, close the Unit by posing the following questions to students, calling for reflection upon their own learning:

- How has your understanding of what it means for an individual to call themselves 'Christian' changed over the course of this Unit?
- What new information do you now have about what it means to be 'Christian'?
- Are you more aware of this religious tradition with both our local, national and global community?

Note for Teachers:

This lesson, including time for the research and presentation of Activity Two, would require approximately four classes.

Additional References:

Dutney, A. *Where Did the Joy Come From: Revisiting the Basis of Union* Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 2001. (ISBN 1 86407 221 0)

Merritt, D.R. *Understanding the Uniting Church In Australia*. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1996. (ISBN 1 86407 143 5)

Basis of Union (1992)- available online (<http://nat.uca.org.au/basisofunion/Basis1992.htm>)

McBrien, Richard P. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Catholicism*. San Francisco: Harper, 1989. (ISBN 0 06 0653388)



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Assessment Ideas

How well did the students:

- demonstrate their understanding of Christianity's roots in the person of Jesus Christ through the exegesis of selected biblical texts (Worksheet Three: *Jesus of History* and Worksheet Four: *Who is the Christ of Faith?*) and composition of an interview with Jesus for a first century news scroll?
- demonstrate their understanding of the heritage of Christianity through their research and presentation of details regarding *Founding Members of the Earliest Christian Communities*
- demonstrate an understanding of the connectedness between denominations within the Christian religious tradition through completion of Worksheet Six: *Timeline of Christianity*, their research of a nominated Christian Church (Worksheet Seven: *Researching the Family Tree of Christianity*) and their contribution to the construction of a *Christian Religious Tradition Family Tree?*
- demonstrate an appreciation of the impact of Christian faith on the lives of believers through their written reflection on guest speakers (Worksheet Eight: *Living a Christian Life*) and their report on famous contemporary Christians (Worksheet Nine: *Famous Christians Today*)?

Evaluation

How well did the unit:

- deepen the student's knowledge of the connection between Jesus as a man of history and Jesus as a figure of faith within the Christian religious tradition?
- deepen the student's knowledge and appreciation of the lives of members within the early Church?
- lead students to a deeper understanding of the connectedness of Christian denominations?
- enable the students to articulate their insights and responses to Christian faith and its impact on the lives of believers?
- deepen student's awareness of Christianity's presence in our contemporary world?
- invite students to reflect upon their own faith tradition and its role in their lives?
- encourage students to think, explore, share and contribute to inquiry into the role of religion in the lives of others and themselves?



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Extension notes for the teacher:

- *Christians believe that Jesus was an individual specially blessed and accordingly set aside by God as the 'Christ' (Christos - Gk) or 'Messiah' (Hb): anointed one.*
- *It is from such an understanding that Christians declare Jesus as the 'Son of God'.*
- *Jesus was an observant Jew who did not seek to form a new religious movement but did critique many contemporary Jewish practices and interpretations of God's law, Torah.*
- *It was such questioning that was to lead to his crucifixion, having been identified by both religious and political leadership as a potential rabble-rouser.*
- *It was only post the death and resurrection of Jesus that his followers began to push the bounds of normative Judaic belief and practice.*
- *Christianity began within Judaism and operated very much within a multifaceted religious environment that was first century Israel.*
- *Biblical scholarship had long debated the point (s) at which Christianity was no longer able to be considered a sect of Judaism and thus a 'Church' unto itself. Three main dates are supported in this regard. The earliest is during the 50s and 60s ce. with the flourishing of a gentile (non-Jewish) missionary endeavour and the expulsion of some Jewish-Christians from traditional Judaic worship in the synagogues. The second is in the early second century, after the fall of the second Temple and the establishment of rabbinic Judaism. This saw a definitive move by 'normative' Judaism to clarify who was, and was not, part of Israel. Finally, other scholars place the parting at a much later stage such as the fourth century ce.*
- *Christianity is a religious tradition with many diversified Churches within it. Essentially, there have been three main stages at which separation between these Churches has occurred, allowing each to go its own way regarding issues of theology and/or practice.*
- *The first prominent parting in Christianity beyond the first century emerged during the Council of Chalcedon in 451ce.*
- *Here, some groups questioned the dual personages of Christ: human and divine. Some groups saw these two natures as so unified that they became one. In doing so, they were considered to be teaching outside orthodox Christian thought and thus broke from what can be considered normative Christianity. Such groups formed what today is known as Oriental Orthodox.*
- *Churches such as Coptic Orthodox, Armenian Orthodox and Syrian Orthodox belong to this form of Christianity.*
- *The second prominent parting occurred over the course of hundreds of years due to a number of theological, political, linguistic and cultural issues.*
- *Over time, there emerged a dispute over Church leadership. Essentially, this dispute focused on what were called Patriarchs: leading Bishops located in Rome, Alexandria, Antioch, Constantinople and Jerusalem. Some Churches recognised the patriarch of Rome (also known as the Pope) as the most important of these positions. Others saw this as equal to the other four.*
- *This ideological division was accompanied by political division when, in the early fifth century, the previously unified Roman Empire was split into Eastern and Western regions.*
- *Further division was evident in terms of linguistics. In the West, Latin had become the dominant language, while in the East, it was Greek.*
- *As a result of these theological, political, linguistic and cultural partings, the two religious traditions of Eastern and Western Christianity inevitably parted formally in 1054.*
- *Traditions pertaining to Eastern rites include Serbian Orthodox, Russian Orthodox and Greek Orthodox.*



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- *Traditions pertaining to the Western Church include the Protestant Churches and Roman Catholicism.*
- *The third prominent parting occurred during the 16th century and was a foundational event for contemporary Western Christianity: the Reformation.*
- *The Reformation saw the break-up of Western Christianity into Protestant Churches and Roman Catholicism. From this point, the vast landscape of Protestant Christianity flourished to encompass a multitude of new Churches over the past four hundred years.*
- *The Reformation, while complex in nature, was essentially a questioning of theology and practices upheld by the Roman Catholic tradition. It was in this process of ‘protesting’ (questioning and redefining) that individual theologians sought to break with Rome, whereby forming new Churches.*
- *Some of the prominent Protestant theologians to emerge from this period were Martin Luther, John Calvin and Ulrich Zwingli.*
- *Some of the prominent theological debates to emerge during the Reformation centred on the topics of salvation, grace, scripture and Christ’s presence in the Eucharist.*
- *Some of the practices debated involved the number and nature of the sacraments, the language of scripture and liturgical celebrations and the role of papal leadership within the Church.*
- *All these different Christian denominations, whether Oriental, Eastern Orthodox, Roman Catholic or Protestant have many common elements.*
- *The most important of these shared characteristics are the foundational core beliefs of a monotheistic God and his son, the risen Christ.*
- *The common creeds of all Christian Churches are the Apostles’ (215ce) and Nicene (325ce) Creeds. These are statements of core beliefs upheld by all Christians identifying the nature of God, his relationship to the Son, the work of the Holy Spirit and their presence in the world through the Church.*
- *While the Creeds contain the commonly upheld core beliefs of all Christians, ancillary beliefs, which are based on such core notions, are generally more individually specific to each denomination., It is predominantly these secondary beliefs along with expressive means (practices) that form the individual identity of each Church.*
- *Where does the Uniting Church in Australia fit within this picture? The Uniting Church is a Protestant denomination, thus making it part of Western Christianity.*
- *The Uniting Church in Australia was formed in 1977 through the union of The Congregational Union of Australia, the Methodist Church of Australia and the Presbyterian Church of Australia.*
- *The Uniting Church is a living expression of the unity present between all Christian faiths, based upon their faith in the risen Christ. The Uniting Church seeks to pursue unifying dialogue with other Christian Churches in its belief that Christ ultimately seeks unity amongst all parts of his body, the Church.*

Key Terms Used Within This Unit:

Apostle:

This term comes from the Greek of ‘apostolos’ meaning ‘one who is sent out’ or ‘messenger’. In the New Testament, this term denoted an office within the early community of those who were commissioned by Christ to carry his message of good news to the world.

Christology:



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In its literal sense, this is the study of Christ, the Jesus of faith. The term 'Christ' comes from the Greek of 'christos' which means anointed one, thus referring to Jesus as being the 'anointed one' of God, set aside by God from all others. Clarification needs to be offered here regarding the two phrases of note here: 'Jesus of history' and 'Christ of faith'. Theologians use these two phrases to distinguish between the historical Jesus and the messiah, Jesus Christ who is only able to be declared such through faith. Many details of the Jewish man who lived in the historical setting of the first century are indisputable historical facts that can be researched and identified through archaeological findings, textual records and the like. The 'Christ of faith' relied upon not historical 'fact' but the declaration of faith. While such titles clearly refer to the one, singular individual, the two bodies of knowledge can be seen as quite distinct in their foci. What is important to note, however, is that each is integral for the other and should be kept in healthy tension. To deny the Jesus of history would distort the Christ of faith, just as to deny the Christ of faith redefines the Jesus of history in a significantly reductional sense. The two are studied separately here in order to allow students to see the two areas of knowledge for what they are: distinct understandings which in fact need each other for their fullest definition.

The Church:

Deriving from the Greek term 'ekklesia' meaning 'assembly', this term refers to the Christian community, the Body of Christ, the People of God.

Denomination:

This term refers to a Church or religious sect within a broader religious tradition. For example, within the religious tradition of Christianity, there exists a multitude of denominations which themselves constitute Churches such as the Uniting Church in Australia, the Baptist Church, the Greek Orthodox Church or the Roman Catholic Church. All pertain to the same fundamental tradition of Christianity with its belief in the risen Christ and other associated core beliefs, but each simultaneously upholds its own defining corpus of subsidiary beliefs and practices.

Disciple:

This term comes from the Latin term meaning 'one who learns'. A disciple is an individual who follows in the way of their master, seeking to learn from and thus imitate this leading figure. In New Testament times, the means by which one studied, for example, philosophy, was to become the disciple of an authoritative master. In such a way, Jesus, John the Baptist, Pharisees and other such religious authorities had disciples who sought to follow in their leadership and learn from their teachings. The term 'disciple' has thus been applied to any and all of the followers of Jesus, not just the twelve 'apostles', although these clearly held a special place among this group. It is important to note, then, that while apostles are also disciples, disciples are not necessarily commissioned as representatives of Christ, as apostles are. It is also important to note that all Christians are called to a life of discipleship, learning from Christ and following in his way. Thus, for Christians today as for Christians since the death and resurrection of Christ, discipleship involves living in such a way that exemplifies the teachings of Christ, being prepared to take up his cross and, essentially, following in his way.

Everlasting Life:

Christians believe, as do many other faith traditions, that life does not end in bodily death. Christians believe that, in Christ's death and resurrection, evil was defeated, with death opening the path to eternal life with God.



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Eschatology:

Taken from the Greek term 'eschatos' meaning 'last', eschatology is the study of end times: the point of cessation for the universe as we know it. Here, Christians believe that Christ and God will be present in a new, most intimate way, with their reign coming to its fullest reality. Our current world will be transformed and, as suggested in Revelations 21:1, a 'new heaven' and 'new earth' will come into being. In this new state of existence, the dead shall be raised and all shall enter eternal life.

God as creator:

As reflected in the two creation stories of Genesis 1:1-2:4 and 2:5-25, one means by which we can come to an understanding of God is in the role of creator. While there is significant breadth of interpretation within this belief between the various Christian denominations, it is generally upheld that God is the source and summit of all life, having played an integral role in the formation of all living things. God's creating work did not and does not end with the founding of life, but continues to be present in an ongoing fashion as sustainer of all humanity and created order. Christian belief in this Creator God who so intimately associates with the origin of all life has its foundational roots in the faith of Israel.

Incarnation:

This term comes from the Latin 'caro' meaning 'flesh', thus it is used to describe the 'enfleshing' of God in the person of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that God assumed human form and, in doing so, Jesus Christ is believed to have existed in two natures: both divine and human, within the one form (hypostasis).

Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is understood by Christians to be the third person of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The Spirit, while difficult to define, can be understood as that which enables humanity to relate to God. Here, the Holy Spirit is understood by Christians to be gifted to each of us in the form of Grace. It is Grace that allows us to grow in knowledge and understanding of both God's identity and presence in our lives. Accordingly, while Jesus Christ vividly showed us something of the nature of God, it is the Spirit which actively facilitates our relationship with this God. (Also see 'Trinity' outlined below.)

Jesus as Son of God:

Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth was born of Mary and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, Jesus can be declared the Son of God. While also understood to be the second person of the Trinity (see below), Jesus' sonship allows him to show us something of the identity of God. The phrase 'Son of God' evolved significantly over the period of Old and New Testament writings. Early Judaic texts use the phrase to denote heavenly beings (Genesis and Job) but this was later applied in the context of righteous individuals (Wisdom) and messianic figures (Enoch and Ezra). New Testament texts also display an evolving interpretation of 'Sonship'. The Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke appear to use the phrase to reference Jesus' intimate relationship with God, often presenting Jesus himself as one who denoted himself as God's Son (see especially Matthew). It is in the fourth and final Gospel (John) that one can see significant theological development emerge, with Jesus being intimately united with God. Here John presents a pre-existent Sonship, with Jesus being one with the Father prior to, during and after his time here on earth. It is from this latter Christological evolution that the early creeds and our contemporary general understanding of Jesus as Son of God emerged.



Unit 1 What is Christianity?

Reformation:

This was a religious and political event that occurred during the 16th century that was to see the division of Western Christianity into Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. While a number of factors came into play that was to result in such division, the essence of the dispute had its founding in two key areas: papal authority and salvation theology. Due to the expansive nature of such a topic, teachers are recommended to the following internet sources for further reading:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12700b.htm>

<http://www.newgenevacenter.org/west/reformation.htm>

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook02.html>

Resurrection:

Christians believe that Jesus died on the cross at Golgotha, but defeated death to rise to new life, three days after his crucifixion (Easter). This new life, divine life, saw Jesus declared Lord and was to become the corner stone of Christian faith.

Salvation:

This term is used to denote the ultimate restoration of relationship between humanity and God. Protestant Christians believe that salvation will be gained by all who have faith in God and the risen Christ. The human capacity for such faith is facilitated through God's blessing of Grace. Salvation will offer all individuals both ultimate fulfilment and total happiness as eternal union with God is achieved.

Sect:

This term refers to a group operative within the context of a larger entity, with which it has affiliation regarding both belief and practice. A sect has, however, its own identity which, to some degree, allows it to stand aside from the larger entity. Such individual consciousness will spring from divergent beliefs and practices which are not considered consistent with the parent identity.

Trinity:

Christians speak of God as consisting of three natures: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father offers each individual salvation through the Son by the power of the Spirit. While each are separate persons, they form a unity of substance which is the foundation stone of all Christian belief. Such doctrine does not, however, work in opposition to the notion of God as a monotheistic (single) being. Instead, it is understood that each is wholly part of the other, thus collectively forming a singular unit: God.

Quotes on the Meaning of Life

Only a life lived for others is a life worthwhile. (Albert Einstein)

Life is about getting what you want from it because you aren't here for long enough to worry about anything else in the end. (Samuel, Age 14)

And in the end, it's not the years in your life that count. It's the life in your years. (Abraham Lincoln - American President)

Life is rather like a tin of sardines - we're all of us looking for the key. (Alan Bennett - Actor)

If we could see the miracle of a single flower clearly, our whole life would change. (Buddha)

Time is a companion that goes with us on a journey. It reminds us to cherish each moment, because it will never come again. What we leave behind is not as important as how we have lived. (Captain Jean-Luc Picard - Star Trek: Generations)

Life is what happens to you while you're busy making other plans. (John Lennon - The Beatles)

We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give. (Winston Churchill - English Prime Minister)

This above all: to thine own self be true. (William Shakespeare)

The point of life is that we all die. So really, what's the point? (Unknown)

We are a Pilgrim People

We believe in one God,
The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
We proclaim Jesus Christ, the crucified and risen one
confessing him as Lord
to the Glory of god the Father.

In the fellowship of the Holy Spirit
we acclaim Jesus as the Lord of the church,
the head over all things'
the beginning of a new creation.

We acknowledge that we live and work
between the time of Christ's death and resurrection
and the final consummation of all things
which he will bring.

We are a pilgrim people,
always on the way towards a promised goal;
on the way Christ feeds us with word and sacraments,
and we have the gift of the Spirit
in order that we may not lose the way.

We will live and work within faith and unity
of the one holy catholic and apostolic Church
bearing witness to that unity
which is both Christ's gift and his will.

We affirm every member of the church
is engaged to confess the faith of Christ crucified.
Together with all the people of God,
we will serve the world for which Christ died.
And we await with hope the day of the Lord Jesus.

*Adapted from the Basis of Union
of the Uniting Church in Australia*

So, What Do Christians Believe?

The Apostles' Creed, which is thought to have been written as early as 215ce, is still recited today by many Christians as a declaration of their faith. Using this as your source document, answer the following questions and discover some of the most fundamental beliefs of Christianity.

1. Who do Christians understand God to be?
2. Who is Jesus?
3. What statements here tell us that Christians believe Jesus was human?
4. What statements here tell us that Christians believe Jesus was much more than human?
5. Other than belief in God and Jesus, what other beliefs are outlined here?
6. What do Christians believe about death?

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,
the Father almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven
and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen.

Who Was...

Jesus of History?

There are a few ways we can find out about Jesus, the man who lived in the historical setting of the first century. One way is through examining books written about him: comparing them and drawing out information that tells us about his life and work. Four books that offer us some of this information are found in the New Testament. These are called the 'gospels', which means 'good news'. What makes this a bit tricky is that, as their name implies, these books were written to tell the 'good news' about Jesus being the savior, the Son of God, not about historical facts of the times. The authors were faith-filled storytellers, not historians.

Answer the following questions using either Matthew 1:1 & 1:18-2:23 or Luke 1:26-38 & 2:1-20 to uncover some historical facts about Jesus, the man of history.

1. Into what important 'house' (family line) was Jesus born?
2. Who was his mother?
3. Who was Mary betrothed to and the father figure for Jesus?
4. What towns were his parents from?
5. In what town was he born?
6. Why was he not born in the town where his parents now lived?
7. In what sort of building was he born?
8. Who visited him there?
9. How did these visitors get directed there?
10. Who was the political ruler of the time?

Life in the 1st Century

Life in the first century was very different to today. Houses and cities looked different, people's lifestyles were different and, in the region we now know as the Middle East, cultures, religions and languages were different. In order to better understand who Jesus was, it is really important to explore all these details and place him in his historical context. While watching the following DVD, gather answers to these questions and create a picture for yourself of Jesus' world.

1. What is the countryside in which Jesus lived and worked like?
2. Describe what the towns look like. Comment on housing, trade centers etc.
3. List and describe some of the different groups who were active in this first century Middle-Eastern society?
4. What sort of clothing was worn in this period?
5. What languages were spoken in this society? By whom? What factors influenced this?
6. List other features evident within this film that contribute to our understanding of Jesus: the man in history.

Who is ... the Christ of Faith?

To gain an understanding of whom Jesus, the Christ of faith is, you have to go beyond the facts of history. This conception of Jesus calls believers to take a leap of faith and recognize that he was not just an ordinary man in history but 'the anointed one' (*Christos*), blessed by God in a most special way. It is because of this blessing that believers identify Jesus as an individual who offered us a most amazing experience of God here on earth.

Read the following biblical excerpts and identify what characteristic of Jesus, the Christ of faith, is featured in each. Each dash represents a single letter in the answer.

Hint: As a clue, each of the eight stories' characteristics can be located in the word-find over the page.

John 2:1-11 _____

Matthew 5:43-48 _____

Luke 5:12-13 _____

Matthew 5:1-12 _____

John 20:1-18 _____

Mark 1:9-11 _____

John 14:1-7 _____

Mark 14:39 _____

Matthew 24:1-2 _____

Jesus, the Christ of Faith Word Search

E	B	I	W	S	Q	H	B	A	X	B	P	F	G	M	Z	M	N	Q	A
E	J	R	F	O	L	C	I	G	L	Z	E	R	T	R	Q	V	W	T	E
H	T	E	A	C	H	E	R	S	B	F	M	L	F	C	F	F	B	C	L
T	W	V	I	H	C	S	H	W	C	V	W	Q	M	O	C	E	T	O	M
B	C	O	Q	L	S	W	S	P	C	F	M	F	I	Y	T	N	D	F	E
A	V	C	S	Z	J	T	S	G	K	F	R	N	R	R	L	Z	U	B	Q
N	E	N	A	S	B	G	G	Z	K	E	X	B	A	B	Q	J	I	O	L
J	I	V	V	A	R	O	A	I	L	K	H	B	C	R	Q	F	Z	E	P
B	O	P	I	G	N	W	R	D	U	U	Z	K	L	R	H	O	S	Y	D
D	R	G	O	W	K	B	Y	R	P	X	H	B	E	I	G	Y	J	R	Q
S	Q	M	U	I	H	W	Z	O	U	G	O	X	W	W	Y	W	D	S	V
F	J	U	R	V	Z	A	C	D	P	R	R	Y	O	H	E	A	L	E	R
Q	O	I	H	Z	T	M	F	O	H	J	E	B	R	W	P	Q	C	M	W
B	N	J	T	W	Z	N	A	B	S	Z	D	P	K	Q	Q	V	N	U	J
F	B	A	U	E	T	U	Q	T	A	O	Y	E	E	C	I	A	D	T	C
U	Y	N	N	O	G	D	F	P	V	J	Q	F	R	Q	G	L	R	X	S
L	W	O	B	M	Z	Z	N	V	U	J	J	R	R	S	N	T	Y	P	L
X	F	I	P	R	O	P	H	E	T	V	G	K	H	C	C	D	L	E	B
K	B	N	L	T	G	X	D	M	E	B	X	J	A	D	Z	L	C	A	I
O	T	T	M	I	F	X	U	M	Y	R	Z	X	Y	Z	M	J	Y	C	E
Q	V	E	T	J	K	S	Z	G	A	C	E	Z	L	K	V	J	M	E	F
E	I	D	N	F	V	S	P	R	U	C	E	A	R	A	X	N	I	M	O
Z	P	O	P	V	F	V	E	E	C	X	D	C	E	D	D	A	T	A	T
N	R	N	T	B	Z	R	E	S	U	R	R	E	C	T	E	D	I	K	V
D	E	E	U	T	Q	Y	Y	E	W	F	N	I	A	C	X	H	Y	E	Z
L	J	V	S	O	N	O	F	G	O	D	D	W	T	H	N	Y	G	R	S

Who is ... the Christ of Faith?

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Read the following biblical excerpts and identify what characteristic of Jesus, the Christ of faith, is featured in each. Each dash represents a single letter in the answer.

Hint: As a clue, each of the ten words can be located in the word-find over the page.

John 2:1-11

M I R A C L E W O R K E R

Matthew 5:43-48

P E A C E M A K E R

Luke 5:12-13

H E A L E R

Matthew 5:1-12

T E A C H E R

John 20:1-18

R E S U R R E C T E D

Mark 1:9-11

S O N O F G O D

John 14:1-7

S A V I O U R

Mark 14:39

A N O I N T E D O N E

Matthew 24:1-2

P R O P H E T

Jesus, the Christ of Faith Word Search

E	B	I	W	S	Q	H	B	A	X	B	P	F	G	M	Z	M	N	Q	A
E	J	R	F	O	L	C	I	G	L	Z	E	R	T	R	Q	V	W	T	E
H	T	E	A	C	H	E	R	S	B	F	M	L	F	C	F	F	B	C	L
T	W	V	I	H	C	S	H	W	C	V	W	Q	M	O	C	E	T	O	M
B	C	O	Q	L	S	W	S	P	C	F	M	F	I	Y	T	N	D	F	E
A	V	C	S	Z	J	T	S	G	K	F	R	N	R	R	L	Z	U	B	Q
N	E	N	A	S	B	G	G	Z	K	E	X	B	A	B	Q	J	I	O	L
J	I	V	V	A	R	O	A	I	L	K	H	B	C	R	Q	F	Z	E	P
B	O	P	I	G	N	W	R	D	U	U	Z	K	L	R	H	O	S	Y	D
D	R	G	O	W	K	B	Y	R	P	X	H	B	E	I	G	Y	J	R	Q
S	Q	M	U	I	H	W	Z	O	U	G	O	X	W	W	Y	W	D	S	V
F	J	U	R	V	Z	A	C	D	P	R	R	Y	O	H	E	A	L	E	R
Q	O	I	H	Z	T	M	F	O	H	J	E	B	R	W	P	Q	C	M	W
B	N	J	T	W	Z	N	A	B	S	Z	D	P	K	Q	Q	V	N	U	J
F	B	A	U	E	T	U	Q	T	A	O	Y	E	E	C	I	A	D	T	C
U	Y	N	N	O	G	D	F	P	V	J	Q	F	R	Q	G	L	R	X	S
L	W	O	B	M	Z	Z	N	V	U	J	J	R	R	S	N	T	Y	P	L
X	F	I	P	R	O	P	H	E	T	V	G	K	H	C	C	D	L	E	B
K	B	N	L	T	G	X	D	M	E	B	X	J	A	D	Z	L	C	A	I
O	T	T	M	I	F	X	U	M	Y	R	Z	X	Y	Z	M	J	Y	C	E
Q	V	E	T	J	K	S	Z	G	A	C	E	Z	L	K	V	J	M	E	F
E	I	D	N	F	V	S	P	R	U	C	E	A	R	A	X	N	I	M	O
Z	P	O	P	V	F	V	E	E	C	X	D	C	E	D	D	A	T	A	T
N	R	N	T	B	Z	R	E	S	U	R	R	E	C	T	E	D	I	K	V
D	E	E	U	T	Q	Y	Y	E	W	F	N	I	A	C	X	H	Y	E	Z
L	J	V	S	O	N	O	F	G	O	D	D	W	T	H	N	Y	G	R	S

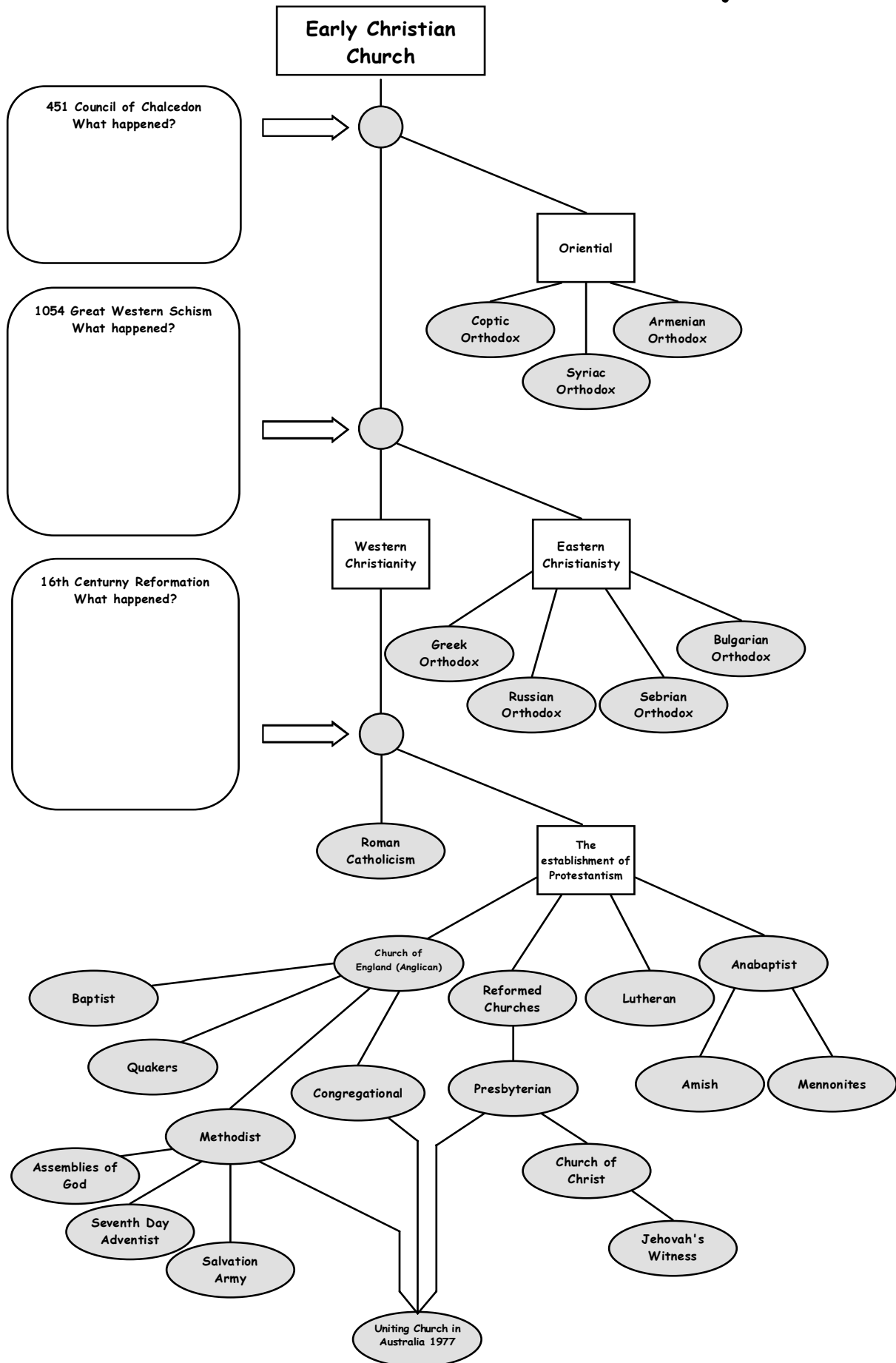
Founding Members of the Earliest Christian Communities

Your task is to choose a character from the early Christian Church and research their role in the developing community. Using the pointers outlined below, create a poster outlining for the class who your person was, what they were like and why they were considered such important figures both in the early Church and today.

My character is: _____

1. What literature of the New Testament do they appear in?
2. What was their role in the story of Jesus and/or the early church?
3. Do we know anything about their background? If so, what?
4. Retell one interesting story in which they were involved.
5. What do you think they would have been like as a person?
6. What were some of their strong character traits?
7. Would you say they had strong faith in Jesus Christ? Why/Why not?
8. How were they important to the early Christian church and its story?
9. If you met this person today, what would be three questions you would ask them about their life in the early church?
10. What things can we learn from this person today?

Timeline of Christianity



Researching the Family Tree of Christianity

The Christian Church I'm researching is: _____

1. When was this Church founded?
2. What were the circumstances that saw the Church formed?
3. Who were the important people active in the founding of this Church?
4. Outline three of its beliefs that make this Church a bit different from some other Christian Churches.
5. Pick two of its practices and give details about how they are performed and what meaning they have.
6. Give some details about two important people to have emerged from this Church.

Now you have completed all your research on this Church, copy the details onto a leaf of the *Christian Religious Tradition's Family Tree* for display in the classroom.

Living A Christian Life

Name of Speaker: _____

1. How did they come to be a Christian?

2. What Church or denomination of Christianity do they belong to?

3. List some of their religious beliefs that come across as being most important to them.

4. How do these and other beliefs they hold influence their lives?

5. What effect do their religious beliefs have on decisions they have made in life? Outline one example.

Famous Christians Today

My nominated Christian is: _____

1. What do they do they currently makes them famous?
2. Outline some background biographical information on this person:
 - Where were they born?
 - Where did they grow up?
 - What was their family like?
3. What Christian church do they belong to today? (eg. Uniting, Baptist, Catholic, Greek Orthodox etc)
4. Were they born into this church, or did they join later in life?
5. If they were born into this church, how did it influence their family life growing up?
6. If they joined the church themselves, why did they do so and when?
7. How has their Christian faith influenced their life so far?

You might not be able to find the answers to all these questions, or you may find some different information that is really relevant and interesting, so only use these questions to guide you in your research.

Family Tree of Christianity
Leaf Template





Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Student Objectives

That students will:

- Gain a deeper understanding of the context of Jesus' ministry
- Gain a deeper understanding of Jesus' teachings and miracles
- Develop an understanding of Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God
- Gain an appreciation of the meaning of the stories of Jesus for Christians today

Notes for the teacher:

This unit focuses on the life and work of Jesus as presented to us in the gospel texts. Here, students will examine the teachings, healings and the varied depictions of key events within the life of Jesus as these details are given to us by the early evangelists. Many of these stories see Jesus calling for social reform and for a refocusing of late Second Temple (first century) Judaism onto initiation of the Kingdom of God which was understood by his contemporaries as being brought about through effective living out of the covenant relationship. Many of the stories of Jesus outline this vision of 'righteousness' where justice, equality and love are to form the basis of religious and social order. In addition and of vital importance to Christians over the previous two millennia, these stories give readers insight into God's activity in our world, in the person of Jesus Christ.

While the title of this Unit implies a specific focus upon the stories told by Jesus himself, the following lessons have been designed to encompass the broader depiction of Jesus and his ministry as presented within 'the stories of Jesus': the four Gospel texts of Mark, Matthew, Luke and John. Accordingly, this Unit looks to focus upon the person of Jesus and the significance of his ministry as formulated and subsequently passed down to us in these mid to late first century texts.

Here, as in all Units, teachers are encouraged to engage students in a Historical-Critical analysis of biblical texts. Such a methodology requires readers to place ancient texts within their historical setting, while being critical in analysing its literary content. While this can be an extensive and complex process when done thoroughly, an easy and accessible start to such an approach is outlined for use in Unit Four: How To Read the Bible – Lesson 3. Here, the 'Context Method' of textual analysis gives students a clear, six-step process through which they can credibly gain access to these ancient and sometimes distant texts. This approach, when used faithfully within the context of scripture being revelatory, will offer students a balanced view of this sacred literature being equally historical, literary and revelatory in nature.

Teachers would be encouraged to familiarise themselves with the biblical excerpts outlined for use in each lesson prior to implementing the given activities in order to place themselves in a position of 'guide' for students who may well be limited in their abilities to open up and gain accurate meaning from the scriptural texts. This can be aided by some preliminary groundwork such as pre-reading outlined excerpts and analysis of each through the use of either a biblical commentary or concordance. Such biblical aides will be available for teachers in most school libraries.

Total time required:

To complete this unit as it is presented here, it is recommended that a total of 20x45minute periods be allocated. Such a time frame allows for both research and presentation of all tasks outlined. As such an amount of time may not be viable within each educational setting, teachers are invited to manipulate the Unit's contents to suit their individual school's needs. In this light, teachers may wish to select individual Lessons for implementation or, conversely, limit the number of activities undertaken within each Lesson.



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

For further assistance in teaching this unit of work refer to the Extension Notes for Teachers to be found after Assessment and Evaluation for explanation and clarification of terms used in the unit.

Unit Two Lesson Outline:

Lesson One: *Who Was Jesus of Nazareth?*

Lesson Two: *The Religious Context of First Century Judea*

Lesson Three: *Jesus: Rebel With A Cause (Initiation of the Kingdom of God)*

Lesson Four: *Jesus' Miracles and the Kingdom of God*

Lesson Five: *Jesus In The 21st Century*

Additional references:

Dutney, A. Where Did the Joy Come From: Revisiting the Basis of Union Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 2001. (ISBN 1 86407 221 0)

Merritt, D.R. Understanding the Uniting Church In Australia. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1996. (ISBN 1 86407 143 5)

Basis of Union (1992)- available online (<http://nat.uca.org.au/basisofunion/Basis1992.htm>)

McBrien, Richard P. (ed.) Encyclopedia of Catholicism. San Francisco: Harper, 1989. (ISBN 0 06 0653388)



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Lesson 1	Who Was Jesus of Nazareth?
<p>Resources</p> <p>Students will need their Bibles and a sheet of paper per group on which to collate their findings.</p> <p>While it is important for students to develop some familiarity with the bible, using the bible online offers variation</p> <p>(NSRV - New Standard Revised Version)</p>	<p>Lesson Format</p> <p>Opening Statement for the Unit: In this unit we are going to learn more about the ministry of Jesus: his healings, teachings and vision of the Kingdom of God. In order to more fully understand these details, we will also briefly examine the religious landscape of first century Judaic society as well as our own conceptions of Jesus, the man.</p> <p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was Jesus like as a man?• How are we to picture him? <p>Activity One: Break the class into six groups and assign each one of the following readings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Matthew 20:29-34 Healing of Two Blind Men• Mark 2:1-12 Healing the Paralytic• Mark 14:32-41 Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane• John 2:13-17 Turning the Tables in the Temple• Luke 2:41-52 The Boy Jesus Teaches in the Temple• Luke 15:11-32 Parable of the Lost Son <p>In their groups, students are to read their assigned New Testament excerpt. Having allocated a scribe, students are then to discuss and record what the group concludes regarding the figure of Jesus as evidenced in their assigned story. This may include details such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• His personality• His beliefs• His values• His interests <p>Encourage students to reflect on their assigned excerpt, dig for clues about this man and imagine/hypothesise, in light of the details given in the excerpt, what such an individual might have been like. Students should ask themselves questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What sort of man does this?• What sort of man says this?• What sort of man believes in this?• Does this fit with my image of Jesus? <p>Once students have completed this task, each group feeds responses back to the class, creating a character map on the board: the face or name of Jesus in the centre, with a series of circles around this in which students volunteer to record their conclusions regarding his characteristics. Suggestions may include:</p>



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

<p>Students will need Worksheet One: <i>Who Is the Jesus I Know?</i> and materials to draw with.</p> <p>Suggested Art books include: Crumlin, R. <i>Images of Religion In Australian Art</i>. Kensington, NSW: Bay Books (1988).</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Passionate• Committed• Caring• Rebellious• Wise• Opinionated• Interesting teacher• Intriguing storyteller• Compassionate healer <p>So, we now know a little about what his character might have been like, but what would he have looked like?</p> <p>Activity Two: Using Worksheet One: <i>Who Is the Jesus I Know?</i> students are to spend the 10-15minutes drawing a portrait of what they think Jesus looks like. Reassure students that this is not a test of their artistic skills and that there is no right or wrong. At the conclusion of this time, ask students to volunteer to show their drawings and/or discuss the image of Jesus they have in their minds. Some suggestions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A man with a beard and long hair• A young man with a kind face• Someone with long brown hair and pale skin• Wise looking• Skinny <p>Over the past two thousand years, artists have depicted Jesus in many different ways.</p> <p>Show students a range of images that depict Jesus. These can either be sourced from art books in you school library or from the internet. You may wish to give the following list of sites for students to look up, having scheduled this lesson in an IT lab:</p> <p>Anglicised Jesus as shepherd: http://www.christian.ac.th/english/jesus.jpg</p> <p>Young Jesus: http://www.antinopolis.org/jesus.jpg</p> <p>Jesus Christ Superstar: http://www.theaterverkoopzeeland.nl/fotos/jesus%20foto.JPG</p> <p>Arabian Jesus: http://www.logiablavatsky.com/jesus.jpg</p> <p>Jesus as royal prince: http://images.art.com/images/-/S-Schweitzer/Blessed-Mother-with-Child-Jesus--C10140792.jpeg</p> <p>Sacred Heart of Jesus image: http://www paranormal.de/para/ballabene/meditation/lichtmeditation/jesus.jpg</p> <p>African Jesus:</p>
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Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

<p>Crumlin, R. <i>Beyond Belief: Modern Art and the Religious Imagination</i>. Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria. (1988).</p>	<p>http://www.jesusmafa.com/images/gimages/403.jpg God as Asian Jesus http://davenation.com/madonnas/ki-chang.jpg</p> <p>Other effective images for this task can be found on: rejesus.co.uk</p> <p>Discuss: As a class, discuss student reaction to these images:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which pictures reflect similar depictions to their own illustrations?• Which are strikingly different?• Which are attractive to them? Why?• Which do not reflect their understanding of Jesus? Why?• Why is there such variation in conceptions of this man?• Are some perhaps more historically and culturally accurate than others?• How do these images reflect differing beliefs about this man? <p>Highlight for students that the historical reality of what Jesus would have looked like may not allow all individuals to connect / relate to this figure in the way that a less historically-accurate image might. Why? Because often humans relate best to familiar things and people, so making Jesus like themselves (eg. physical characteristics of their own nationality) allows them to better understand him and feel closer to him.</p> <p>In terms of determining what a more historically accurate depiction of Jesus would look like, there are many factors to consider. We obviously don't have any pictures that come from the time of Jesus to confirm exactly what he looked like. What we can conclude, however, is that he would have been a man very much stamped by his geography and social context.</p> <p>This would probably mean that he:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Was 'middle aged' for his time, being around 30 years old during the time of his ministry. Most people would not live that long beyond their 40s due to the harsh living conditions and poor medical knowledge• Would have probably been relatively slim as he was not from the wealthy classes.• Would have been quite strong from his work as a carpenter.• Would have had dark hair and tanned skin not unlike men of the Middle East today.• He would have been circumcised as is the Jewish custom for all new born males.
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Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Activity Three:

At the bottom of Worksheet One: *Who Is the Jesus I Know?* students are to write a brief reflection outlining what sort of person they think Jesus was. Students may wish to draw on terms listed from Activity One and/or reflect on a more personal understanding of Christ. The teacher may prefer students to work either in pairs or small groups for this task.

Notes for Teachers:

This lesson will take approximately two periods to complete.



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Lesson 2	The Religious Context of First Century Judea
Resources	Lesson Format
	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was Judaism like in the time of Jesus?• Was there a single Jewish identity into which Jesus had to fit? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>In Lesson One we looked at what Jesus was may have been like as a man given the information we have within the Gospels. We also examined a range of images used to portray him, including our own conceptions of what he may have looked like. Now we need to try and discover what the world in which he lived, was like.</p> <p>Activity One:</p> <p>Ask students to close their eyes and picture themselves in first century Judea. Get them to mentally recall the scenes they saw in the DVD on the life and times of Jesus: what was worn, what the towns were like etc., and to contemplate the images of Jesus studied in the previous class. (Revise details of Unit 1, Lesson 3: <i>Exploring the Jesus of History</i> as required)</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <p>Outline for students details of Judaic religious life for them to add to their mental image of the first century Middle East. These details may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you were a Jewish person living in the Middle East during the first century, your everyday life would have been very much based upon you religious faith.• You would have kept Sabbath by being sure not to work from sundown on Fridays to sundown on Saturdays and going to the synagogue to pray with the rest of the community on Saturdays• You would have celebrated all of the great religious festivals with your family• At least once a year, you would have gone to the beautiful Temple in Jerusalem to offer birds or a lamb as sacrifice for the atonement (forgiveness) for your wrong-doings and in praise of your God, Yahweh.• Your faith and its practice was the very foundation of your life's purpose: to live in friendship with God. It influenced everything you did in day to day life as this friendship with God was most important. <p>Activity Two:</p> <p>One of the main questions people faced in this period, and one we still face today, is how to maintain this friendship with God. Pose this question to students and brainstorm for responses:</p> <p>What actions and attitudes help you maintain a friendship with your best friend here at school? Answers may include:</p>



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

- Be good to them
- Keep in contact with them
- Look after them when they need you to
- Share you things with them
- Don't do things that upset them
- Respect them
- Communicate often in a variety of ways

Discuss:

Maintaining a friendship with God is no different. God wants you to keep in contact, be good to God and look after God. But how do we do this?

- How do we keep up our end of the friendship?
- How do we please God?
- How do we show God we value his friendship?
- How do we maintain this friendship?
- What happens when I do something to damage this friendship?

These questions were exactly those debated in first century Judaism.

The answers first century Jews came up with to these questions regarding the maintenance of their friendship with God were many and varied. This variety of responses reflected the diversity within Judaism of the time with many different groups existing within the broader identity of Judaism.

Activity Three:

NB. Teachers may wish to use this task as an optional extension activity. Using Worksheet Two: *Judaism in the First Century*, students are to fill in some basic details about the nominated groups within late Second Temple Judaism (excluding the section on Jesus). Such details may either be gained from texts within the school library, or on the internet at site such as:

<http://gbgm-umc.org/umw/bible/factions.html>

http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Jewish_Groups.htm

Concluded differences between these groups should include:

- Pharisees believed that you had to very strictly abide by holy Laws to make sure you were 'pure' enough to maintain this friendship.
- Sadducees also supported many of the holy Laws but interpreted them in a very different way to the Pharisees.
- Essene believed that to maintain a true relationship with God, you had to watch very carefully who you chose to associate with, and even try to remove yourself from general society and just mix with other equally 'pure' people.

Discuss:

Having complete this initial research, gather as a group and discuss students' findings. Essentially, students need to be able to identify the

Students will need access to either the library or internet and Worksheet Two: *Judaism in the First Century*

Suggested reading for Teachers on the groups within late Second Temple Judaism:
E.P.Sanders, *Judaism: Practice and Belief 63bce-66ce*. London: SCM Press, 1992.



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

diversity that was present within Judaism of Jesus' time: diversity that was not only accepted but a key feature of the faith. They should also be able to note that commonalities also existed. While all these different groups had their own opinions about how to maintain this friendship with God, what was common to all was that they all believed:

- In the same, single God (monotheistic)
- In the fact that God had specially chosen all of them to be in friendship with Him
- That the Law (Torah) had a special role in maintaining this friendship

How you interpreted this Law and how you chose to live it out was a point of great debate and it was into this debate that Jesus came to voice his opinion.

Activity Four:

Pose the following question to the class:

How do you think Jesus might have believed friendship with God was to be lived out?

Ask students to reflect upon the New Testament stories they examined in Lesson One when looking to establish what sort of person Jesus was.

Discuss student suggestions and add depth to these by questioning how they came to their conclusions. All should be able to draw upon stories thus far examined. Many may reveal knowledge of selected scenes from the gospels, or an understanding of some parables and associated teachings, beyond those looked at in class.

Answers may include:

- By treating other people like we want to be treated (because he told people to love their neighbour like they love themselves)
- By helping people who need our help (because I remember a story he told about a good Samaritan)
- By following basic rules in life (because I know he believed in the 10 commandments and taught his followers the beatitudes)

Note on the board responses that reflect an accurate understanding of Jesus' teaching. Students can copy these ideas onto Worksheet Two: *Judaism in the First Century* in the space provided. This can be referred back to throughout the coming lessons and added to as the class learns more about what Jesus taught about living in friendship with God.

Notes for Teachers:

Activity Four is only to be used if you think your class has some level of prior knowledge about Jesus and his story. If not, this will not be a productive task. If so, it will allow you to gauge this level of prior learning so as to adjust the subsequent content accordingly.

Worksheet Two:
*Judaism in the First
Century*



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Discuss:

Jesus wasn't rejecting his Jewish faith in these teachings. In fact, many of these ideas can be said to have been the sentiment behind many of the Laws about which everybody debated. Remember, he still believed:

- There was only one God
- That he was part of a group of people specially chosen by God to be in friendship with Him
- That this friendship was sustained by Laws (although their interpretation and role was debatable)

Jesus simply had a different point of view on some things, especially the interpretation and application of the Law. Here he tended to focus on the meaning behind the Law rather than how to strictly live out the practices associated with it.

He had this different point of view in an environment where there were lots of different views about how one was to maintain their friendship with God. Variety of opinion in this regard was not a problem within itself. In fact, the debating of such opinions was encouraged and an integral part of the tradition.

The following lessons shall look further into what Jesus had to say, what he did in an effort to teach about God and our friendship with him, and what he himself revealed of God.

Notes for Teachers:

This Lesson will require approximately two periods.



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Lessons 3	Jesus: Rebel With A Cause (Initiation of the Kingdom of God)
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Select one or more scenes from <i>The Simpsons</i> – Season 9 Episode 14 <i>Das Bus</i> or alternate source materials that depict ‘unhealthy’ social order: be these other visual mediums or news articles.</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was Jesus’ vision of the Kingdom of God? • How can this Kingdom be brought about? <p>Activity One: (Optional) As a class, watch an excerpt from <i>The Simpsons</i> – Season 9 Episode 14 <i>Das Bus</i>. Here, Bart and the children of Springfield are stranded on an island and turn on themselves in the style of <i>Lord of the Flies</i>. Select and use a couple of scenes which demonstrate the lack of a healthy social order being depicted (eg. where Milhouse is ‘put on trial’ for stealing the rations). The intention here is to highlight the need for justice in order to have effective and righteous communities.</p> <p>Discuss: Pose the following questions to the class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you call the children’s island community healthy and happy one? Why / why not? • What was wrong with this community? • What effect did these flaws have on its function and quality? • How could these problems have been righted? • Would you say justice exist within this community? • If not, why not? <p>In Lesson Two we looked at what Jesus thought it meant to maintain a friendship with God. This was a topic hotly debated in the first century, as it still is today. One of the main features of Jesus’ teachings about this was the creation of a community based on justice, equality and love, were inequality, injustice and hatred no longer exists.</p> <p>Offer students the following definition of ‘justice’ by writing it on the board.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ‘Justice’ means living in right relationship with myself, others, the world and God. <p>Allow students time to read and contemplate this definition, then, as a class, analyse it through group discussion using questions such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What do you think it means to ‘live in right relationship with myself’? • What do you think it means to ‘live I right relationship with others’? • What do you think it means to ‘live in right relationship with the world’? • What do you think it means to ‘live in right relationship with God’?



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

<p>Students will need Worksheet Three: <i>Isle of Righteousness: My Ideal Community</i></p>	<p>Once these notions have been fleshed out, ask students to apply this knowledge to the <i>Simpsons</i> episode viewed. This can be achieved by posing the following questions for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you think ‘justice’ by this definition, was present on Bart’s island? Why / why not?• What could they have done to achieve these ‘right relationships’ and accordingly have a more ‘just’ island community?• Would you call Bart’s island your ‘ideal’ community? Why/Why not? <p>Activity Two: In light of previous discussions, students are invited to contemplate their own vision for an ‘ideal’ community. Using Worksheet Three: <i>Isle of Righteousness: My Ideal Community</i> (page one) students are to work in pairs and outline characteristics of their ideal community. They are to name their capital city on the fictitious <i>Isle of Righteousness</i> and draw up a set of rules by which the community is to live.</p> <p>Values (ie. moral characteristic to which worth is attributed) upon which the Isle of Righteousness operates could include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• justice• equality of all people• respect <p>Means by which these values are to be achieved may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 100% employment• No homelessness• Everyone has enough money to live comfortably• Social networks that mean nobody feels alone• Peaceful conflict resolution strategies that guarantee no wars <p>Upon completion, ask students to volunteer to present their community’s details to the class and walk everyone through the values and characteristics of an ideal community.</p> <p>Discuss: While our world is a wonderful place, many things are still not ‘ideal’. Does such a community currently exist? As a class, discuss what they think some of the reasons are behind such a community not existing in our current times. Start local level and work to a global level. Responses may include:</p> <p>Why does it not exist at home in our families?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Lack of respect for siblings• Lack of respect for parents• Parents stressed out about money• Parents separated• Too busy• Illness
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Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Why does it not exist here at school?

- Some kids are bullies
- Lack of respect for some people's rights
- Click groups that isolate individuals
- People's personalities clash and it's hard to look beyond that

Why does it not exist here in Melbourne?

- Homelessness
- Unemployment and poverty
- Illness
- Loneliness

Why does it not exist here in Australia?

- Unemployment
- Lack of respect eg. for indigenous Australians
- Some people are very rich while some are very poor
- Too great a focus on material wealth

Why does it not exist world-wide?

- War
- Poverty in some countries
- Gross wealth in other countries
- Poor countries with debt to wealthy ones (make ref to the 'Make poverty history campaign which students will be familiar with)
- Lack of human rights

Discuss:

Building a better community / world is not impossible. The first step is to look at things a different way: God's way. One of the main things Jesus did during his ministry was to talk about his vision of an ideal community. This community, if it was to reach its fulfilment, with all people acting in ways that were pleasing to God, would bring about a whole new form of society, where God's kingdom would actually be present here on earth. What do we mean by God's kingdom?

In the New Testament, the Greek term '*basileia*' is used when Jesus speaks about a time and place where God's presence dwells in a most vivid way. Here. God's presence is overwhelming. This term is generally translated as 'kingdom', 'reign', 'rule' or 'domain'. What images do such terms create for you?

What is really interesting and challenging about this notion is that we often think God's kingdom is in Heaven, in some far off location in the clouds. According to Jesus, however, this time and place is only as far away as we cause it to be! In fact, God (and Jesus) wants this kingdom to exist here on Earth, but it is us and our attitudes to each other that often get in its way.



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Students will need their Bibles and page two of Worksheet Three:
Jesus' Teaching on the Kingdom of God

Activity Three:

Using page two of Worksheet Three: *Jesus' Teaching on the Kingdom of God*, students are to examine a range of New Testament excerpts to discover what Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God. Excerpts to be studied here include:

- Justice: Mt 25:31-40
- Pearl of Great Price: Mt 13:45-46
- Beatitudes: Mt 5:3-12
- Zacchaeus Meets Jesus: Luke 19:1-10
- Nature of Discipleship: Lk 9:23-27
- Rich Young Man : Mk 10:17-31
- Greatest Commandment : Mk 12:28-34
- Teaching on Love: Lk 6:27-36
- Parable of the Good Samaritan: Lk 10:25-37

Teachers may wish students to complete this task individually or in groups. If the latter is preferred, groups of three could well be formed with one question and associated readings assigned per student. Each student is then to report back to the others in their group with their concluded findings.

NB. An 'Answer Sheet' is provided for teachers to give support in facilitating students' study of these texts. While some of these nominated excerpts are complicated in nature and meaning, students require only relatively basic details in order to achieve understanding within this task.

Discuss:

Jesus did not create an ideal community during his lifetime, but he was able to show us what sort of values such a community would be based on, giving us a blueprint to work towards. Many things look like they get in the way of our 'ideal' community, but are any of these issues impossible to fix? While many might be difficult, none are impossible. Let's look at one way a young boy sought to fix one of these problems and give us a glimpse of how we can work towards establishing the kingdom of God.

Activity Four:

One young Canadian boy who had a vision of a better community, and took action to achieve it, was Ryan Hreljac. Watch the video *Ryan's Well* (25 and 50 minute options available) which outlines the work Ryan has undertaken in order to provide wells for fresh water to isolated communities across the world.

Discuss:

- Why do you think Ryan did this?
- What do you think was Ryan's vision of a better world?
- Can all individuals make a difference in this world?
- How can you try to bring about a better world?

Video: *Ryan's Well*
available from:
<http://www.abc.net.au/programsales/s1123021.htm> (\$88 for schools)
Information about this project available from:
<http://www.ryanswell.ca/index.php>
or
<http://www.readersdigest.ca/mag/2001/01/ryan.html>



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Highlight for students that while Ryan's actions are amazing, they are not impossible for all of us to undertake. It simply requires commitment to a vision of a better world and the courage to undertake actions in an effort to achieve it.

Activity Five:

As a class, create a mind map outlining ways in which we can start to build a better community.

- Start this map by placing in the centre the name of the class (eg 7Red).
- Around this, students are to suggest qualities they want to see in our community. (eg. justice, equality, no poverty, no starvation, clean water, fair wages etc).
- Complete the map with an outer circle listing the ways each of these qualities can be pursued and/or achieved. Some of these suggestions may be at a local level of family or school, others may be global projects (eg. buddy up with the grade sixes to aid in their transition to Year 7 during term 4; do fund raising towards desks and chairs for a nominated brother/sister school overseas; collect unwanted books from home for use in overseas missions etc).

Option 1:

Once this mind map has been completed, organise a class vote, nominating four projects to be undertaken by the class: one per term (depending on what stage of the year this Unit is completed). Decide as a group which shall be assigned to which term, and write the basic details of each on large, coloured poster paper for display within the class. As each term begins, flesh out the specifics of each project in terms of activities to be undertaken etc.

Option 2:

As a year level, come together to nominate four projects, allocating one to each term.

Option 3:

As a class or year level, nominate one project to be undertaken throughout the course of the school year.

Notes for Teachers:

When implementing such a project, be sure to utilise the many support systems available to you such as the Year Level Coordinators, Homeroom Teachers, Social Justice Coordinators, Student Social Justice Leaders etc. Such a project may well be incorporated across the curriculum areas.

It should also be noted that support of one particular project by the year level can be sustained out throughout their six years of secondary school. Such a project can accordingly become part of the cohort's identity, with many beneficial side-effects in terms of life-long learning.

This lesson, including the watching of video: *Ryan's Well*, will require approximately five periods.



Uniting Church in Australia
Religious Education Lesson Plan
Middle Years (7&8)

Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Lesson 4	Jesus' Miracles & The Kingdom of God
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Notes for Teachers: For further reading on Sophie Delezio's story go to: http://sixtyminutes.nine.msn.com.au/sixtyminutes/stories/2004_10_31/story_1262.asp or http://news.google.com.au/news?q=Sophie+Delezio&hl=en&lr=&cr=countryAU&sa=X&oi=news&ct=title</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are 'miracles'? • What miracles did Jesus perform? • What do Jesus' miracles tell us about the Kingdom of God? <p>Discuss: It is suggested that the teacher open this lesson by engaging the students in discussion of a recent, local or at least familiar 'miracle' story such as the survival of Sophie Delezio from two horrific car accidents.</p> <p>When Sophie was just three years old, in December 2003, she was severely burnt when a car crashed into her kindergarten. This saw her lose an ear, both feet, a number of her fingers and suffer third degree burns to 85% of her body. It was not only amazing that she survived, but she was eventually able to walk again and live an almost 'normal' life, starting school, like other 5 year olds, in January of 2006.</p> <p>This was not the end of Sophie's suffering, however, as she was to again be struck by a car at a pedestrian crossing in May of 2006. Again, she survived horrific injuries, managing to leave hospital and return to school in July of the same year.</p> <p>Pose the following questions to students for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would you call these healings miracles? • Was her survival what you would call 'miraculous'? • Why / Why not? • What do you think a miracle is? <p>Responses to this final question may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Something that's amazing • When something that seems impossible happens • An incredible event that's hard to understand <p>Offer students the following definition for consideration by writing it on the board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Miracles are events that happen that cause people to be amazed. They go against our logical expectations. The famous writer C.S.Lewis (who wrote the <i>Narnia</i> chronicles) suggested that a miracle does not go against nature but against our human expectation of nature. <p>In our modern world, the media often use the term 'miracle' for things that fall short of this definition. 'Miracles', according to this definition, have something so amazing about them that they are far from common occurrences. Sometimes, however, we do witness events that fit such a</p>



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

<p>Students will need Worksheet Four (page one): <i>A Modern Day Miracle</i></p>	<p>definition. Can anyone name such a ‘miracle’ that they are aware of? Suggestions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The survival of Sophie Delezio from two separate horrific car accidents• The survival of Stuart Diver from the Thredbo landslide• The survival of Brant Webb and Todd Russell in the Beaconsfield mine disaster <p>Activity One: As a class, study a contemporary miracle, such as those listed above. Using Worksheet Four (page one): <i>A Modern Day Miracle</i>, and a selected newspaper article or web report, students are to outline:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details of the event• The logical conclusion that most people expected to eventuate• Details of the actual turn of events• An outline of what makes this able to be called a ‘miracle’ <p>Discuss: Miracles clearly take us by surprise as they see something amazing happen that we just don’t expect. They go beyond our expectations. They give hope where hope seems futile. They transform lives through this gift of hope. Reasoning as to how or why miracles come about is often impossible to conclude, especially if one was to search for a purely logical answer.</p> <p>For many religious traditions such as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Christianity, miracles are understood to be the work of an all-powerful God (or gods, as is the case in Hinduism). These religious traditions believe that miracles are signs of God’s presence in our world. They are not just random acts of fate but evidence of a God who is active in human history, a being who is able to make the impossible possible.</p> <p>For Christians, such an understanding of God being present and active in the world is evident throughout the ministry of Jesus. The New Testament tells us that Jesus performed many miracles that were amazing to all who saw them and heard about them.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some of these miracles saw people healed of terrible diseases• Others saw seemingly impossible situations change, such as storms suddenly subside <p>Jesus’ miracles, be them over elements of nature or of healing, fit our original definition well: they are beyond human understanding. To this original definition Christianity adds:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Miracles are a sign of the divine active in our world• Miracles can only be recognised and fully understood when viewed from a position of faith in God.
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Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

<p>Students will need their Bibles, video cameras, props and Worksheet Four (page two): <i>Breaking News: Jesus Performs Miracle</i></p>	<p>These miracles also give Christians a glimpse of what God's kingdom will be like with suffering of all kinds relieved, society healed and blindness to God's presence changed into new understanding.</p> <p>Accordingly, not only did Jesus teach about the kingdom of God during his ministry, as studied in Lesson Three, but he also gave us glimpses of what this new 'ideal community' will be like: no physical, emotional or psychological suffering will exist. These visions of the kingdom are perhaps most evident in the miracles which Jesus performed throughout his ministry as well as the greatest miracle of all: his resurrection from the dead.</p> <p>Activity Two: Working in a group of four – five and using Worksheet Four: <i>Breaking News: Jesus Performs Miracle</i> each group is to select one of the following miracles over nature or healing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Water into Wine at Cana (Jn 2:1-11)• Jesus Walks on Water (Mt 14:22-33)• Feeding of the 5000 (Mt 14:13-21)• Stilling the Storm (Mk 4:35-41)• Bumper Catch of Fish (Lk 5:1-11)• Restoring Lazarus to Life (Jn 11:1-44)• Curing the Blind Man at Bethsaida (Mk 8:22-26)• Healing a Deaf and Mute Man (Mk 7:31-37)• Healing the Haemorrhaging Woman (Mk 5:25-34)• Restoring the Daughter of Jairus to Life (LK 8:40-42; 49-56) <p>Students are to read their chosen excerpt and complete the outlined tasks, examining the miracle's context, contents, meaning and implications for our understanding of the Kingdom of God.</p> <p>Students are to present their nominated miracle over nature and their associated findings to the outlined questions in the form of a T.V. news report. This can be either set in its first century setting or transposed into the modern day.</p> <p>This report is to be video taped by students and played back to the class, just as a news report appears on the nightly news.</p> <p>Key features of this report should include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Details of the miracle's circumstances• Details of what the miracle involved• Interviews with individuals involved and/or eye witnesses• A conclusion about the possible meaning of such a miracle• A reflection upon what this tells us about the kingdom of God <p>As a class, watch these recorded 'news reports' and discuss the miracles</p>
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Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

<p>Students will need Worksheet Five: <i>Jesus: Rebel With A Cause</i></p>	<p>they depict.</p> <p>Discuss: These ‘breaking news stories’ have shown us a whole range of miracles that Jesus worked. Often these miracles are grouped together according to what the nature of the amazing change that Jesus brought about. Three such ‘categories’ we have seen here are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Miracles of healing• Miracles over nature• Miracles of renew life <p>As a class, discuss which ‘type’ of miracle was which, as depicted in the news stories. Teachers may ask each group to work out which type was their depicted miracle.</p> <p>As demonstrated in all of these miracles performed by Jesus, be them over nature, personal healing, or the gift of renewed life, miracles are amazing events that are difficult to logically understand. They call people to look at the world in a different way. It is through eyes of faith that we are able to interpret them as God’s work, revealing something of what the Kingdom of God will be like. They can also affirm belief in a God who is active in our world and who chooses to intervene in human history and to relieve human suffering at certain times for reasons only God can know.</p> <p>In fact, faith plays a huge role in miracles in two different ways. Firstly, as we have seen, the gospels usually depict miracles as happening as a response by Jesus to people’s faith in him. Secondly, we have also seen that it takes faith to understand them for what they are: signs of God active in our world. Accordingly miracles can be said to require a ‘double dose’ of faith: you need faith for a miracle to happen and faith in order to understand it.</p> <p>Activity Three: Using Worksheet Five: <i>Jesus: Rebel With A Cause</i>, students are to individually reflect on and make connections between the content covered in Lessons Three and Four where the topics of ideal community, Jesus’ miracles and the kingdom of God were examined.</p> <p>Discuss: Having completed Worksheet Five (page two): <i>Jesus: Rebel With A Cause</i>, come together as a class to discuss responses given. Highlight for students that, while Jesus’ teachings and miraculous works can be interpreted in a variety of ways, all that was done in his public life was essentially carried out in order to point people towards God and the Kingdom.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: This Lesson, including preparation time for Activity Two, will require approximately five periods.</p>
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Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Lesson 5	Jesus in the 21 st Century
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need Worksheet Six: <i>Who Would Jesus Be Today?</i></p> <p>DVD: <i>Joshua</i> (90 minutes) available from most DVD sellers or online at http://www.word.com.au/</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What sort of person would Jesus be today?• What would Jesus have to say about our contemporary world? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>If Jesus was walking down Bourke Street Mall today, what would he look like? Remember that he was a rebel, healer, teacher and man of God all rolled into one, so what would such a person present like today? Keep in mind also that, in the first century, all leaders were male. Today, that is not the case, so do you think the 21st century Jesus would be male or female?</p> <p>Activity One:</p> <p>Using Worksheet Six: <i>Who Would Jesus Be Today?</i> Students are to reflect upon what sort of person Jesus might present as in our contemporary world. After completing this task, students are to gather in groups of five to six and discuss their visions of Jesus today as outlined in Worksheet Six: <i>Who Would Jesus Be Today?</i></p> <p>Discuss:</p> <p>Come back together as a class and discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Were there any similarities within the group?• If so, on what points?• How did these figures resemble Jesus of the first century?• How were they different?• What do you think Jesus would say about our contemporary world? <p>Activity Two:</p> <p>As a class, watch the DVD <i>Joshua</i> (90 minutes) and ask students to focus on the image of Jesus being presented here. NB. If teachers are familiar with the novel behind this movie, by Joseph F. Grizone, be aware that the movie differs significantly from the original text.</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <p><i>Joshua</i> is a contemporary movie which presents to us an image of who Jesus might be if he lived in our modern world. Discuss and reflect as a class upon the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What sort of person is Jesus depicted as in <i>Joshua</i>?• What qualities does he value?• What issues in our modern world concern him?• How does he try to tackle these issues?• What about this image of a modern day Jesus is attractive to you?• What aspects are not attractive to you? <p>While there are many great things happening in our world today, there are</p>



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

<p>Students will need their Bibles and Worksheet Seven: <i>Jesus, This Is Your Life</i></p>	<p>still some major issues, just like there were in the first century. At their basis, many of these issues are the same, although they present in different forms in different eras:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Injustice• Inequity• Human suffering• Lack of respect• Lack of love <p>The challenge for us today, as it was for those who heard Jesus' message for the first time over 1900 years ago, is to respond to these challenges head on. We need to change ourselves, in order to change what's happening around us at school, in order to change Australian society, in order to change the world. Only by making these changes will we bring about a better community, an ideal community, in which God's kingdom will reign.</p> <p>Activity Three: In light of the content of Unit Two: <i>Focusing on the Stories of Jesus</i>, (especially Lessons One to Five) students are to present <i>Jesus, This Is Your Life</i> to a first century outdoor theatre pack with the friends, family and colleagues of Jesus.</p> <p>Using Worksheet Seven: <i>Jesus, This is Your Life</i> students are to adopt and research a character from within the life and ministry of Jesus and recount their experiences with this mid-first century celebrity. In completing this task, students are to draw on Biblical stories which involved both Jesus and their characters, recounting these and drawing meaning from them in the context of this dramatic presentation.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: In regard to Activity Three, students will require time to both research and create their character, as well as time to present the show as a whole. Accordingly, at least three periods may be required for this task, depending on the level of detail and dramatic creativity required by the teacher. This may also be most effectively performed in front of another class or filmed. In total, this lesson will require approximately 6 periods.</p>
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Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Assessment Ideas

How well did the students:

- demonstrate their understanding of the context of Jesus' ministry in their examination of selected first century Judaic groups outlined in *Judaism in the First Century* and through the research task *Jesus, This Is Your Life?*
- demonstrate an understanding of Jesus' vision of the kingdom of God through examination of his teaching on this notion in both *Jesus' Teaching on the Kingdom of God* and *Jesus: Rebel With A Cause?*
- demonstrate their understanding of Jesus' teachings and miracles through their completion of *Breaking News: Jesus Performs Miracle*
- demonstrate an appreciation of the meaning of the stories of Jesus for Christians today through completion of the reflective task *Who Would Jesus Be Today?*

Evaluation

How well did the unit:

- deepen the student's knowledge of the context in which Jesus lived out his ministry?
- deepen student's understanding of the gospel stories about Jesus?
- deepen the student's knowledge and appreciation of Jesus' teachings?
- invite students to reflect upon the meaning of Jesus' miraculous acts?
- lead students to a deeper understanding of Jesus' vision of the Kingdom of God?
- encourage students to think, explore, share and contribute to inquiry into the meaning of Jesus' miracles and teachings for Christians today?



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Extension notes for the teacher: *bce = before the common era ce = common era*

- *Jesus was born in time known as the Second Temple period which constitutes the period from the fall of the First temple in 587bce through to the fall of the Second Temple in 70ce.*
- *This period is one marked by religious diversity in terms of Judaic belief and practice.*
- *Prior to this period, Jewish belief and practice was relatively unified and being a member of the House of Israel had both religious and nationalistic underpinnings. In this earlier time, Israel had its own land, temple and political leadership.*
- *In 587 bce, this kingdom of Judah was invaded by the Babylonians who sent its inhabitants into exile in Babylonia (modern day Iraq) for fifty years. Here, the people no longer had their land, their temple or their own political leadership. All three of these elements that had been fundamental to the peoples' identity were now gone.*
- *It is from this point on that the term 'Judaism' appears to have emerged which now predominantly denoted a religious tradition rather than a national, territory or land based identity.*
- *In response to the loss of these things (Temple, Land and Leadership), a new focus for the people of Israel was needed. A new way of living out their religious identity. This was found in the Torah ('Law') previously given to Moses at Sinai, as was recorded in the Pentateuch (Hebrew scriptures of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Numbers). This focus on the Law meant that the people of Israel could choose to live their lives in such a way that pleased their God, without the need for land, leadership or, worst case scenario, the Temple.*
- *This way of living, known as Torah-observance, meant that the people could sustain their religious identity wherever they might find themselves and in whatever situation.*
- *The question now arose, however, how do we correctly interpret the Law to make sure we are living according to God's requirements? Such a question was answered in a number of different ways by a number of different groups within Judaism who eventually emerged as sects, all upholding the common core beliefs of Judaism but who interpreted these beliefs and associated practices in different ways.*
- *In 537bce, at the end of the Babylonian conflict, many chose to return to Judea while others remained where they were. Those who returned, with the help of some within Roman political leadership, rebuilt the Temple. This new construction was what is called the Second Temple.*
- *Even with their temple returned to its former glory, and a certain degree of autonomy in their own leadership, Torah and its lifestyle requirements remained the primary source of identity for Jewish people.*
- *By the early to mid first century ce, Judaism was a diverse religious entity made up of many sects. Some of these included Pharisees, Sadducees and Essenes.*
- *Pharisaim was a sect within Judaism that consisted of both priests and lay people. They prided themselves on their interpretation of the Law and were very strict in their beliefs about how this Law should be kept. They were seen as the people to go to if you had a question about the Law such as its purity requirements and the like.*
- *The Sadducees were part of the aristocratic elite within Jewish society, some of whom were priests. While they followed the Law, they did not do it in the rigorous sense Pharisees did.*
- *The Essenes also consisted of priests and lay people and within themselves had a variety of sub-groups who sustained their own understanding of the Law and its implementation. This group was particularly interested the Temple and associated ritual purity. As a result of the latter, Essenes generally removed themselves from broader society so as to maintain their extreme purity requirements.*



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

- *Among all such groups, some core beliefs remained the same. These are commonly known as the four 'pillars' of Second Temple Judaism: the belief that there was only one God (monotheism); the belief that Israel was specially selected by God to live in relationship with Him (Election); the belief that the Temple was an important part of ritualistic life; and the belief that Torah was the fundamental means by which this relationship with God was to be lived out in daily life.*
- *One of the main means by which such varied opinion was clarified was through open debate. Such debate was used as a fundamental tool for learning both within these groups and between them. It created constructive intra-Jewish dialogue rather than conflict, as is often inaccurately perceived by modern Christian audiences.*
- *It was in amongst this dialogue of religious diversity of belief and practice that Jesus presented.*
- *Jesus' public ministry, his time of teaching, healing and calling for religious reform, was only between one and three years in length, depending on which Gospel text is given preference. During this ministry, Jesus did not seek to alter the belief of his faith, but sought considerable reform of practice and social order.*
- *The gospel writers frequently present Jesus as being in opposition to Judaic leadership, manifested amongst the Sadducees and Pharisees. This should be read for what it is: Jesus, a Jew, debating and dialoguing with fellow Jews about how one should live to be in right relationship with God.*
- *Jesus clearly sought reform to the contemporary social order of his time: an order that actively outcast the needy, the ill, the poor and all who were considered 'unclean'.*
- *As ritual purity was a very important part of Judaic life for Pharisees, Sadducees, Essenes and anyone who wishes to participate in the Temple cult, maintenance of such 'cleanliness' was foundational to religious life. It was this seeking of purity that was at the base of most of the acts of exclusion upheld in the religious world of this time.*
- *Many things brought one's level of purity into question such as interaction with bodily fluids (eg. blood or weeping sores), any contact with a menstruating woman, or contact with the dead), just to name a few. All such items meant that one's level of participation in Judaic faith practice were limited until such a time at which you were again declared 'clean' by a priest. This was generally after a stipulated period of time had passed and the individual had undertaken specified 'cleansing' rituals such as submersion in a ritual bath (mitzvah).*
- *Jesus questioned many such practices due to their destructive ramifications for the weak and the needy within society who were largely those being identified as the 'unclean' and those who would cause others to be 'unclean'. Jesus often argued that it was these people who were foundational to the kingdom of God, and most in need of our care, not rejection.*
- *It was in this environment of religious diversity and tension that Jesus emerged as a teacher and healer, working to change his religious tradition to one actively focused on bringing about the kingdom of God.*
- *It should be noted that, during the first century, many itinerant healers and teachers operated in and around the Middle East. In the Gospels, we are told of such a teacher in John the Baptist who, like Jesus, had a group of dedicated followers who sought to learn about the Kingdom of God through their master's teaching. Christians believe, however, that Jesus differed from such individuals in his authority as he was, in fact, God incarnate.
(Incarnation – God became man – in Jesus)*



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Key Terms Used Within This Unit:

Kingdom of God:

The New Testament writings utilise the Greek term 'basileia' which can be translated as 'kingdom', 'reign', 'rule' or 'domain' as a scriptural metaphor which seeks to describe God's love-centred rule over all created order. Such references are based upon the notion of God as King who rules over all creation: an understanding frequently affirmed throughout Hebrew Scripture (eg. Deut. 33:5; Ps 22:28 and Ps 103:19) and at the forefront of Israel's conception of both their history and very presence as a people.

There was significantly varied opinion within the late Second Temple period about the nature of this 'rule' as well as what was required of humanity in order to bring about its presence here on earth. Jesus' teaching frequently focused upon both of these issues and, within the broader Judaic discourse of the first century, his vision was both unique and challenging in many ways. Integral to the notion of God's reign existing here on earth was the Judaic notion of messianic redemption. It was thought by many groups within Second Temple Judaism that the realm of God would only come into earthly existence when brought about by the power of a mighty figure(s) sent by God as some form of advocate.

For Christians, Jesus was identified as this messianic figure, although his power was exercised in lowliness, suffering and the ultimate experience of rejection by humanity rather than physical might, political dominance and brutal, war-like victory. In fact, the Kingdom itself was and is embodied within Jesus, through both his proclaimed word and ministry. In terms of the latter, Christians generally believe that Jesus' suffering, death and resurrection brought the kingdom to birth.

While Jesus' ministry and very person embodied the future Kingdom of God which can be expected at the parousia (end-time), Christians uphold the belief that such a reign can also be present in our current reality, not only as a future expectation and hope. It was in Jesus' death that he was able to conquer, opening up the possibility for God's reign to co-exist with humanity in the present. In light of Christ's resurrection, such an opportunity was laid bare for humanity to bring about the fullness of this Kingdom through creation of a Christ-centred social order based on justice, equality, love, healing, wholeness and goodness. In this way, the realm of God will be brought into existence here on earth in our present times.

Miracle:

The term 'miracle' is derived from the Latin of 'mirare' meaning 'to wonder at something'. A 'miracle' is an event or occurrence that goes against our logical expectations. C.S.Lewis suggested that a miracle does not go against nature but against our human expectation of nature. The miracles of Jesus outlined in the gospel texts are just this: beyond human understanding. As such, they are signs of the divine active in our world and can only be recognised and understood from a position of faith. The miracles recounted in the gospel texts are generally to be understood as interventions of the divine, whose power allowed the improbable to be made possible. Indeed, the greatest of all these miracles is the presence of Jesus himself, as God incarnate – God dwelling among us in human form. This miracle is perhaps most vividly seen in Jesus' resurrection from the dead. While the 'miracles' are passed on to us today in the literary form of 'story', remembering that the gospels are testimonies of faith, not simply historical accounts, the actions or events themselves are not to be understood as literary tools or constructions. Instead, these were acts performed by Jesus which were subsequently passed down in oral tradition and recounted by the gospel writers within their texts as signs of the divine.



Unit 2 Focussing on the Stories of Jesus

Parable:

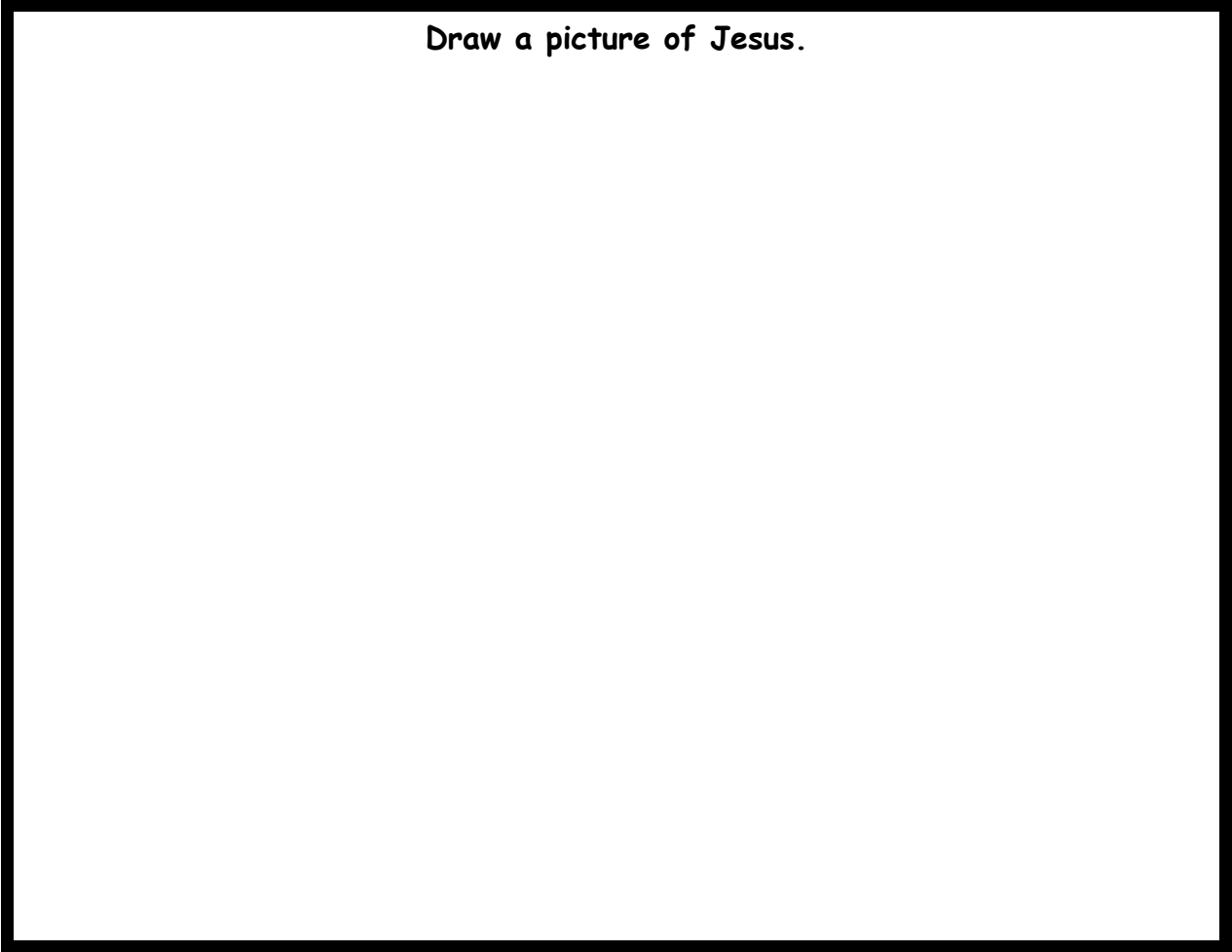
Parables are short stories that are metaphoric in nature. Accordingly, while such stories may themselves seem simplistic in their literal reading, their intended meaning is more subtle and complex. Jesus utilised parables as a key teaching means within his ministry. These stories often engaged images drawn from nature and everyday life in order to comment upon complex notions such as the presence and nature of the kingdom of God.

Second Temple Period:

This time period denotes the centuries between the Temple of Solomon being destroyed by Babylonian forces in the mid 6th century bce and the subsequent restoration of the Jerusalem Temple and its destruction in the 66-70ce Jewish-Roman War. The first century, prior to this latter catastrophe, is generally labelled by scholarship as the 'late Second Temple Period' and, in light of this phrases' frequent use in secondary literature, it has been engaged here in this curriculum document. In terms of its usage with students, its meaning requires clarification which may or may not be appropriate within the context of your given class, or with this unit. Accordingly, where such a phrase appears in this teaching document, it may well be replaced with the more common 'first century' label as this may well be more accessible to students of Years 7 and 8.

Who Is The Jesus I Know?

Draw a picture of Jesus.



What do you think Jesus was like as a man?

Judaism in the First Century

	Pharisees	Sadducees	Essenes	Jesus
In what ways was this group different from other Jewish groups of the first century?				
In what ways was this group similar to other Jewish groups of the first century?				
Describe the sort of lifestyle and/or religious practice this group believed best maintained one's friendship with God.				

The Isle of Righteousness: My Ideal Community

Congratulations! You have just been elected joint Prime Ministers of the newly founded nation, *Isle of Righteousness*.

Your first assignment as the nation's leaders is to complete the following planning task, outlining your vision of what is to be an ideal society and role model of goodness to the rest of the world.

Name and briefly describe the capital city of the <i>Isle of Righteousness</i> .	Make a list of the values you want this community to be based upon in order to become the world leaders in 'goodness'.	Outline the means by which these values will be lived out by the community and exhibited to the world.	List the top five laws you will implement encourage the values aimed for in this ideal community.

Jesus' Teaching on the Kingdom of God

The New Testament writers often depict Jesus as teaching about the kingdom of God, but what does this term mean?

Christians believe that, in the person of Jesus, God entered the world in a new and most amazing way.

It is this presence of God that Christians look forward to experiencing in the establishment of God's kingdom here on earth.

Read the following biblical excerpts to find out what Jesus taught about this new way of living.

What's it going to be like?	Justice Matthew 25:31-40	The Pearl of Great Price Matthew 13:45-46	The Beatitudes Matthew 5:3-12
What does the kingdom value?	Zacchaeus Meets Jesus Luke 19:1-10	Nature of Discipleship Luke 9:23-26	Rich Young Man Mk 10:17-31
How can we bring it into existence here on earth?	The Greatest Commandment Mark 12:28-34	Teaching on Love Luke 6:27-38	Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37

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<p>What's it going to be like?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Justice Matthew 25:31-40</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God's kingdom will break into the world • God will gather all peoples like a shepherd gathers his sheep • The faith-filled will inherit eternal life 	<p style="text-align: center;">The Pearl of Great Price Matthew 13:45-46</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • More precious than the finest of jewels • So wonderful, you will abandon all else to gain it • All else pales into insignificance 	<p style="text-align: center;">The Beatitudes Matthew 5:3-12</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The powerless will be empowered • The weak will be made strong • The marginalized will be embraced • Doers of good will be welcomed as God's children
<p>What does the kingdom value?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Zacchaeus Meets Jesus Luke 19:1-10</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Equality of all people • Repentance • A willingness to be saved • Openness to God 	<p style="text-align: center;">Nature of Discipleship Luke 9:23-26</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Denial of self • Willingness to take up the sufferings of Christ • Eagerness to following the way of Christ 	<p style="text-align: center;">Rich Young Man Mk 10:17-31</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generosity to those in need • Commitment to equity & social justice • Total abandonment of material goods • A focus on God rather than oneself
<p>How can we bring it into existence here on earth?</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">The Greatest Commandment Mark 12:28-34</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love God • Love our neighbour - all people, especially the weak and the vulnerable 	<p style="text-align: center;">Teaching on Love Luke 6:27-38</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love our enemies • Do good to those we don't like • Bless and pray for those who we don't get along with • Turn the other cheek • Be unconditionally generous 	<p style="text-align: center;">Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love those who you may not like • Care for all people • Do not discriminate in your love • Offer help unconditionally • Be open to all people • Practice of religion must firstly require love of others before all else

Breaking News: Jesus Performs Miracle

For many religious traditions such as Judaism, Islam, Hinduism and Christianity, miracles are understood to be the work of an all-powerful God (or gods, as is the case in Hinduism). These religious traditions believe that miracles are signs of God's presence in our world. They are not just random acts of fate but evidence of a God who is active in human history, a being who is able to make the impossible possible. For Christians this activity of God is seen throughout the ministry of Jesus and is perhaps most evident in his miraculous deeds.

Task One

Working in small groups, select one of Jesus' miracles from the following list:

- Water into Wine at Cana (John 2:1-11)
- Jesus Walks on Water (Matthew 14:22-33)
- Feeding of the 5000 (Matthew 14:13-21)
- Stilling the Storm (Mark 4:35-41)
- Bumper Catch of Fish (Luke 5:1-11)
- Restoring Lazarus to Life (John 11:1-44)
- Curing the Blind Man at Bethsaida (Mark 8:22-26)
- Healing a Deaf and Mute Man (Mark 7:31-37)
- Healing the Hemorrhaging Woman (Mark 5:25-34)
- Restoring the Daughter of Jairus to Life (Luke 8:40-42; 49-56)

Read your chosen miracle story and answer the following questions:

1. Where does this miracle take place?
2. Who was involved and/or witnessed it?
3. What problem presented itself to Jesus?
4. How did Jesus respond?
5. What was the result of Jesus' actions?
6. What effect did this miracle have on those directly involved?
7. What effect might it have had on those who witnessed it?
8. What effect might it have had on those who hear about it?
9. What does it tell us about Jesus & God?
10. What does it tell us about God's kingdom?

Task Two

Using your answers to the questions outlined above, present your selected miracle to the class. This is to be in the form of a T.V. news report either set in its first century context or transposed into a modern day setting.

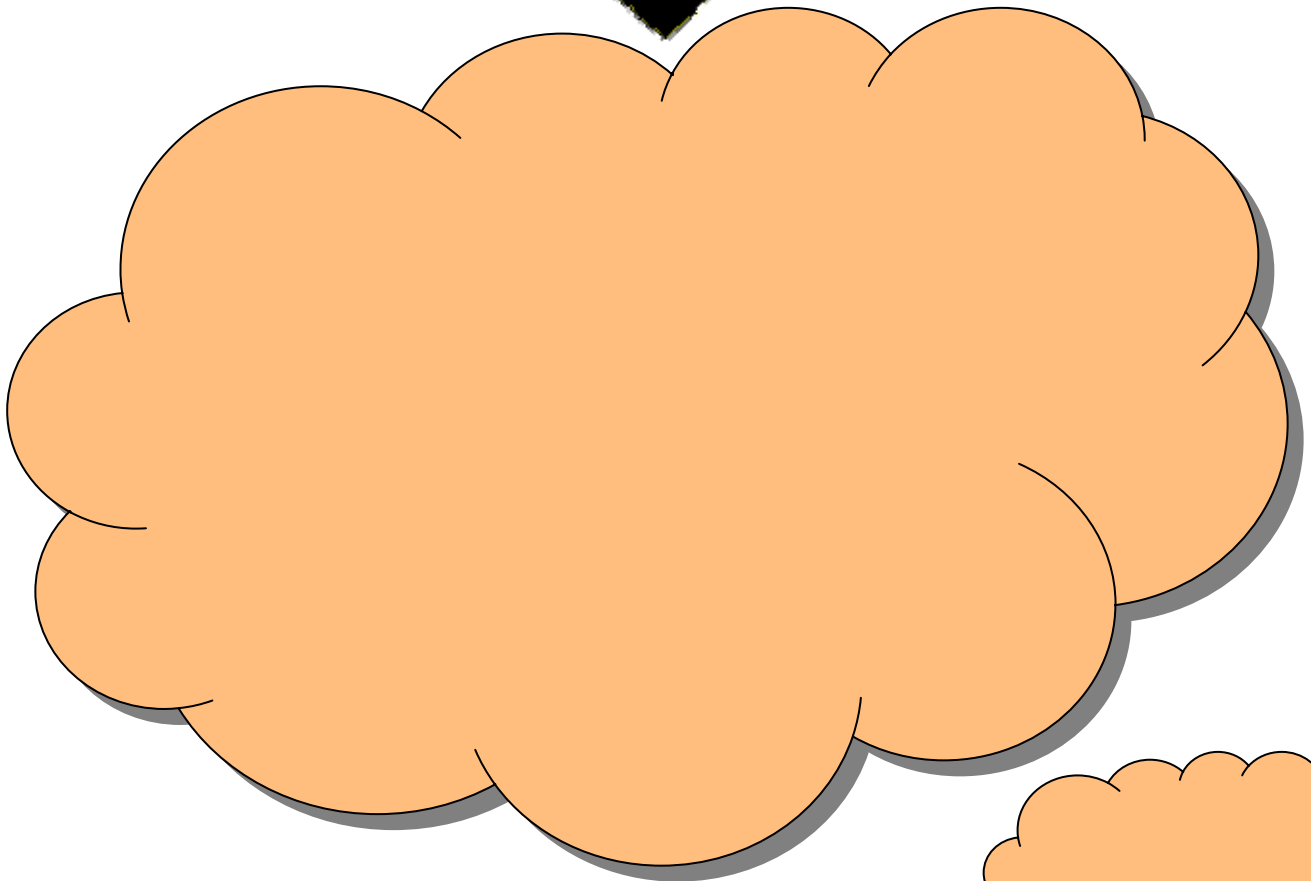
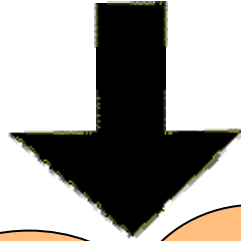
Key features of this report should include:

- Details of the miracle's circumstances
- Details of what the miracle involved
- Interviews with individuals involved as well as eye witnesses
- A conclusion about the possible meaning of such a miracle
- A reflection upon what this tells us about Jesus, God and the Kingdom

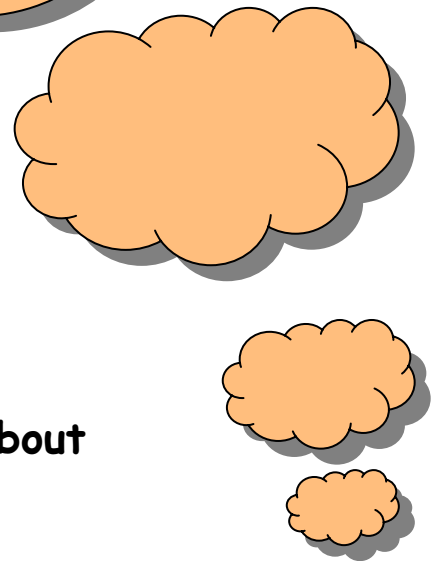
This report is to be video taped and played back to the class, just as a breaking news report appears on the nightly news.

Jesus: Rebel With A Cause

What do Jesus' parables & teachings tell us about the Kingdom of God?



What do Jesus' miracles tell us about the Kingdom of God?



Who Would Jesus Be Today?

Jesus was a man very much committed to his values and ideals. He stood up for what he believed in and did not back down from what he thought was right. He was a rebel, a teacher, a healer and a man of God all rolled into one. While we know quite a bit about Jesus and his first century ministry, it is interesting to think about what Jesus might be like if he lived in our modern, contemporary world. Who might Jesus be if he walked the earth today?

1. Would Jesus be male or female?
2. Would Jesus have tattoos or piercings? If so, what sort?
3. How old would Jesus be?
4. Would Jesus drive a car? If so, what sort?
5. What sort of clothes would Jesus wear?
6. What music would Jesus listen to?
7. What TV shows would Jesus watch?

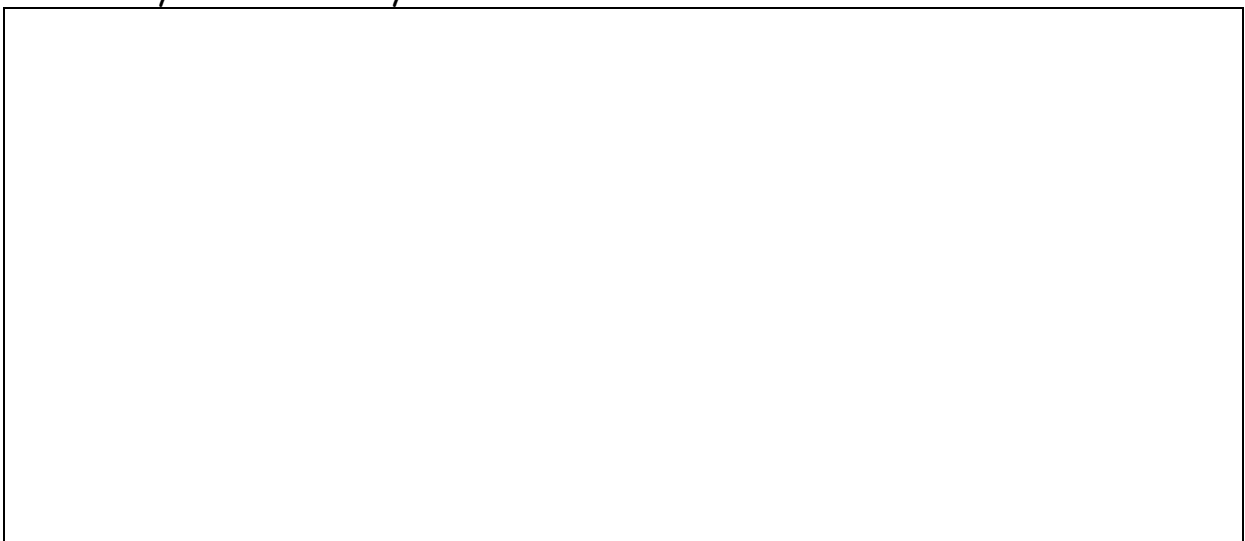
8. In what sort of area & house would Jesus live?

9. What sort of friends would Jesus have?

10. What sort of issues/causes would Jesus fight for?

11. How would Jesus fight for these causes?

12. Draw your modern-day Jesus.



Jesus, This Is Your Life

As a class, we are collectively writing the script and performing the show *Jesus, This Is Your Life*, which is to be presented to a first century outdoor theatre packed with family, friends and colleagues of this great man. The show will cover all of the important events in Jesus' life: his birth, childhood, ministry of teaching and healing, his challenge to local authorities, his death and, of course, what sort of show would it be if we didn't feature his ground-breaking resurrection?

Premiere Details

Date of Performance:
Time:
Location:	Galilee Outdoor Entertainment Centre,
Dress:	Formal First Century Attire

Each character must have the following details recorded in their note books:

- Who you are
- Where you live
- Background details of what it was like for you to live in the first century Middle East
- How you came into contact with Jesus: Reflect back on your first meeting. What happened? What was Jesus like?
- Reflect on how Jesus has affected your life, values, way of thinking, actions etc.

In addition to these details, each individual character will need to provide specific information as directed in the following pages. Suggested reading in regard to this information is list for you.

Please Note:

You must write at least one page of notes from which you will then draw out the main details for presentation within the show.

Characters

1. Presenter

- Give yourself a name
- Work with each character to be able to briefly introduce each one
- Give an overall view by placing Jesus' life in perspective for your audience
- Outline key aspects of Jesus' life and teaching
- Underline his significance

2. Jesus

- Give a reflection on your own life and works
- Work with each of the characters so as to know who they are
- Be able to respond to each of these characters

3. Mary (Jesus' Mother)

- Work with your husband, Joseph
- Outline details of Jesus' birth from your perspective (Luke 1:26-38; 2:1-20)
- Talk about his childhood (Luke 2:21-52))

4. Joseph (Jesus' Father)

- Work with your wife, Mary
- Outline details of Jesus' birth from your perspective (Mt 1:18-2:15)
- Talk about his childhood (Matthew 2:19-23)

5. Elizabeth (Jesus' mother's cousin)

- Work with your son, John
- Tell us about your family (Luke 1:5-25; 57-80)
- Outline the events of your meeting with Jesus' pregnant mother (Lk 1:39-56)

6. John the Baptist (Jesus' second cousin, son of Elizabeth & Zechariah)

- Work with your mother, Elizabeth
- Tell us about your ministry (Lk 3:1-20; Mark 1:1-8))
- Tell us about the baptizing of Jesus (Mark 1:9-11)
- Outline why and how you died (Mark 6:14-29)

7. Simon Peter (Disciple)

- Work with your fellow disciples
- Tell us about your first meeting with Jesus (Mk 1:14-20)
- Outline two of your fondest memories from your time with (eg. the Transfiguration - Mk 9:2-13; the final Passover celebration - Mk 14:12-26 or Jesus' walking on water - Mk 6:45-56)
- Comment upon why these events were special to you
- Comment upon your disowning of Jesus (Mt 26:31-35; 69-75)

8. Andrew, brother of Simon Peter (Disciple)

- Work with your fellow disciples
- Tell us about your first meeting with Jesus (Mk 1:14-20)
- Tell us about Jesus' arrest (Mt 26:47-56)
- Reflect upon how his arrest affected both yourself and the other loyal disciples

9. James, son of Zebadee (Disciple)

- Work with your fellow disciples
- Tell us about your first meeting with Jesus (Mk 1:14-20)
- Tell us about your time in the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus (Mt 26:36-46)
- Outline what your time with Jesus taught you about God's kingdom

10. John, son of Zebadee (Disciple)

- Work with your fellow disciples
- Tell us about your first meeting with Jesus (Mk 1:14-20)
- Tell us about your time in the Garden of Gethsemane with Jesus (Mt 26:36-46)
- Outline what your time with Jesus taught you about God

11. Judas (Disciple)

- Work with your fellow disciples
- Discuss your decision to betray Jesus (Mt 26: 14-16)
- Outline the circumstances of this betrayal (Mt 26:47-56)
- Reflect upon your role in Jesus' death
- Comment upon your own death (Mt 27:1-10)

12. Jairus (Leader of the synagogue)

- Work with your wife, daughter and the hemorrhaging woman
- Read Mark 5:21-43
- Outline your personal experience of Jesus' healing power
- What brought you to approach Jesus at this time?
- What had you heard about him? Give specific examples
- Comment on your faith in him

13. Jairus' Wife

- Work with your husband, daughter and the hemorrhaging woman
- Read Mark 5:21-43
- Give yourself a name
- Outline your personal experience of Jesus' healing power
- Comment upon other circumstances that you had heard in which Jesus had healed people in need (eg. Healing of a man with leprosy - Mk 1:40-45; healing of a paralytic - Mk 2:1-5; raising of a widow's son - Lk 7:11-17)
- Comment on your faith in him

14. Jairus' Daughter

- Work with your mother, father and the hemorrhaging woman
- Read Mark 5:21-43
- Give yourself a name
- Outline your personal experience of Jesus' healing power
- Why do you think your father sought Jesus out as he did?
- How did this miracle affect your family?

15. Hemorrhaging Woman

- Work with Jairus and his family
- Read Mark 5:21-43
- Give yourself a name
- Outline your personal experience of Jesus' healing power
- What brought you to Jesus?
- How did this meeting with Jesus change your life?
- You have been described as a model of faith. Comment on this

16. Sinful Woman

- Work with Zacchaeus
- Read Luke 7:36-50
- Give yourself a name
- Tell us about your experience with Jesus

- What brought you to him?
- How did he heal you?
- You, like the hemorrhaging woman, have been described as a model of faith. Comment on this
- How was your life changed from this meeting onward?

17. Zacchaeus (Tax Collector)

- Work with the Sinful Woman
- Read Luke 19:1-27
- Tell us about your experience with Jesus
- What brought you to him? Outline some of the stories you had heard.
- How did this meeting with Jesus change your life?

18. Caiaphas (High Priest, Jewish religious leader)

- Work with your fellow religious leader, the member of the Sanhedrin
- Read Matthew 26:57-68; 27: 11-26; 27:32-44
- Tell us a little about yourself and your position as a religious leader
- What you had heard about Jesus?
- What about Jesus and his ministry concerned you and your fellow community leaders? Give some examples
- What action did you take against Jesus?

19. Member of the Sanhedrin

- Work with Caiaphas, the High Priest
- Read Matthew 26:57-68; 27: 11-26; 27: 32-44
- Tell us a little about yourself, the Sanhedrin and you position on this council
- What about Jesus and his ministry concerned you and your fellow community leaders? Give some examples
- What action did you take against Jesus?

20. Pilate

- Work with Barabbas
- Read Matthew 27:11-26
- Tell us a little about yourself and your position as the Roman governor of this region
- How did Jesus come to your attention?
- What was your role in Jesus' death?
- Why were you reluctant to sentence Jesus to death?

- Outline what then happened to Jesus leading up to his death

21. Barabbas

- Work with Pilate
- Read Matthew 27:11-26
- Tell us a little about yourself
- How did you come to be facing death?
- Describe the political system that allowed you to walk free
- How did you feel being released when this meant that Jesus was to die?

22. Simon of Cyrene

- Work with the other crowd member present at Golgotha that day and the Centurion
- Read Luke 23:26-49
- Tell us a little
- What did you know about Jesus?
- Outline events of this day as you saw them
- What were you doing there in the crowd?
- How did you feel when asked to help Jesus carry his cross?

23. Person in the crowd at Golgotha

- Work with Simon of Cyrene and the Centurion
- Read Matthew 27:32-56
- Given yourself a name
- What did you know about Jesus?
- Outline events of this day as you saw them
- What brought you to Golgotha that day?
- How did what you saw make you feel?

24. Crucified Criminal (No.1)

- Work with your fellow criminal
- Read Luke 23:26-49
- Give yourself a name
- Tell us a little about yourself
- What crime(s) did you commit that saw you crucified?
- Outline Jesus' death as you saw it
- Explain your tormenting of Jesus

25. Crucified Criminal (No.2)

- Work with your fellow criminal
- Read Luke 23:26-49
- Give yourself a name
- Tell us a little about yourself
- What crime(s) did you commit that saw you crucified?
- Outline Jesus' death as you saw it
- Explain your defense of Jesus

26. Centurion

- Work with the crowd member present at Golgotha that day and Simon of Cyrene
- Read Mark 15:21-39
- Give yourself a name
- Tell us about your job as a Roman Centurion
- What had you heard about Jesus prior to this day?
- What caused you to declare him the Son of God?

27. Joseph of Arimathea

- Read Mark 15:42-47
- Tell us a little bit about yourself
- Outline what happened as you saw it on the day of Jesus' death
- What were 'Preparation Day' and 'Sabbath'?
- Why did you request his body?
- What did you do with it? Why?
- How did you feel at this time?

28. Mary Magdalene

- Work with Mary, the mother of James
- Read Luke 23:44-24:12 & Matthew 27:45-56
- Tell us a little about your time as a follower of Jesus (Luke 8:1-3)
- Why did you attend his crucifixion?
- Who else was there?
- How did it make you feel?
- What brought you to the tomb the next day?
- What did you see there?
- How did this make you feel?

29. Mary (Mother of James)

- Work with Mary Magdalene
- Read Luke 23:44-24:12 & Matthew 27:45-56
- Why had you given up everything to follow this man?
- What sort of support did you and the other women offer Jesus and his disciples during the ministry?
- What brought you to the tomb that day?
- What did you see there?
- How did this make you feel?
- What were your immediate thoughts?
- What did you do once you found the tomb empty?

30. Cleophas

- Read Luke 24:13-52
- What was the countryside like along the road to Emmaus?
- Describe what happened to you on this journey
- Why did you not recognise Jesus?
- What eventually made you recognise him?
- How did you and others that met the risen Jesus feel?



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Student Objectives

That students will:

- Gain an appreciation of the spiritual dimension of one's self
- Gain a deeper understanding of what prayer is and its role in one's spiritual life
- Develop an appreciation of both stillness and silence
- Gain a deeper understanding of a variety of contemplative means

Notes for the teacher:

This unit focuses on the spiritual dimension present in all humans. It invites students to contemplate their own spiritual selves and examine means by which to foster and express this dimension of self. Teachers are encouraged to create an environment where all faith traditions represented within the class group are included and valued for their rich spiritual heritage. Such diversity will give breadth and depth to this unit and each lesson should be undertaken in a way that best suits and utilises this individual diversity.

*The spiritual dimension of each individual is an integral part of what makes us human. The development of a capacity to acknowledge this dimension through the ability to be still and silent is a fundamental aim within this unit. While the spiritual selves of many are nurtured within the context of a religious tradition, this dimension of self can be fed by any number of other sources. In this light, this unit does not only focus on the welcoming of God into the stillness we create, although this is most valuable within itself and frequently encouraged, it also looks to foster the fundamental skills associated with entering into such stillness and silence for their own sake. Here, at the level of Years 7 and 8, focus has been placed upon student identification of their spiritual selves, the fostering of each one's ability to encounter stillness and silence and their ability to explore and express this most intimate dimension. In such a way, **the fundamental objectives of this unit are affective rather than cognitive in nature.***

Due to the nature and substance of this unit, it is suggested that the lesson content presented here be divided in half, with the six lessons implemented at Year 7 and again at Year 8 with the teacher selecting from the activities provided, implementing some within the first year and those left in the second. This will allow for each lesson's topic to be introduced and briefly explored in the first year, then revisited and extended upon in the subsequent year. It is also recommended that prayer, contemplation and meditation be built into the regular lesson structure and used throughout the year so as to allow students to experience these fundamental elements of human expression on a regular and ongoing basis. This will not only aid the development of the affective self, but allow for gradual skill development in this important area, over time.

It should be noted that the classroom where the teacher intends prayer to be undertaken must be congenial to such intent. Accordingly, teachers are advised to seriously consider the environment in which they implement both these lessons and any subsequent classes where prayer is to be undertaken. Teachers, in collaboration with their class, may wish to establish a 'Prayer Table' in the classroom, where a Bible and other prayer books are kept, along with a candle and/or sacred objects for contemplation (see Lesson One). You may prefer to take your students outside, to a chapel or alternate prayerful space in order to create a setting more suited to reflection than the traditional classroom.



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Total time required:

To complete this unit as it is presented here, it is recommended that a total of 17 x 45 minute periods be allocated. This would most effectively be done in two stages: 9 x 45minute periods during Year 7 and 8 x 45minute periods during Year 8. If such a format is selected, teachers will need to discern which activities shall be assigned to each year level so as to avoid repetition of teaching and learning tasks while ensuring students have opportunities at both levels to explore outlined concepts and experience prayer opportunities.

For further assistance in teaching this unit of work refer to the Extension Notes for Teachers to be found after Assessment and Evaluation, for explanation and clarification of terms used in this unit.

Unit Three Lesson Outline:

Lesson One: *There's More To Me Than Meets The Eye*

Lesson Two: *Discovering My Spiritual Self*

Lesson Three: *Expressing My Spiritual Self*

Lesson Four: *Finding the Words To Say: Guided Prayer*

Lesson Five: *Finding the Words To Say: Scripture As Prayer*

Lesson Six: *Praying With Imagination: Using Music & Dance*

Additional references:

Dutney, A. Where Did the Joy Come From: Revisiting the Basis of Union Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 2001. (ISBN 1 86407 221 0)

Merritt, D.R. Understanding the Uniting Church In Australia. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1996. (ISBN 1 86407 143 5)

Basis of Union (1992)- available online (<http://nat.uca.org.au/basisofunion/Basis1992.htm>)

McBrien, Richard P. (ed.) Encyclopedia of Catholicism. San Francisco: Harper,1989.(ISBN 0 06 0653388)



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Lesson 1	There's More To Me Than Meets The Eye
Resources	Lesson Format
The teacher will need a loaf of bread	<p>Opening Statement for the Unit: In this unit we are going to explore the spiritual self and learn about how we can connect with this element of our nature as human beings. We shall examine a variety of approaches that seek to engage with and give expression to human spirituality. We will also examine in detail a range of means by which Christianity gives expression to this dimension through a variety of prayer types.</p> <p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is 'spirituality'?• What role does spirituality have in being human? <p>Activity One: Place a loaf of bread on a table in front of the students and ask them what they see. Students will generally respond making statements about the physical appearance of this object such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A loaf of bread• It's white bread• It's a square loaf• It's not sliced <p>Suggest to students that there is more to this loaf than what they physically see. Tell them that you also see:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A baker who rose to go to work very early this morning• The baker and his/her apprentice kneading the bread• The shop keeper who purchased the bread• A field of wheat that was to be harvested to produce the flour• Cows that provided the milk <p>Ask students to add to this list. Highlight for students that there is much more to all things than what meets the eye. This is perhaps a good definition of what a 'symbol' is – meaning to be gained beyond what is initially understood. Accordingly, all objects have the component of what is 'seen' and that which is 'unseen'. It is the same for human beings. There is much more to me than what physically meets the eye.</p> <p>Discuss: I have a lot of different dimensions that all together make me who I am: that together make me whole. This multitude of elements rolled up together mean that there is no one else like me on earth.</p> <p>List a variety of characteristics that you, the teacher, have that when combined, make you 'whole' and special, set aside from all other people. These items may include:</p>



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<p>Students will need a photo of themselves, and Worksheet One (blown up to A3 size): <i>What Makes Me, Me?</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical characteristics• Talents – good tennis player etc• Personality traits – positive, outgoing, shy etc• Character traits – tidy, punctual, conscientious, etc <p>Activity Two: Pose the following questions to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What makes you who you are? <p>Using Worksheet One (blown up to A3) <i>What Makes Me, Me?</i> students are to reflect upon their human characteristics which set them aside as an individual. They are to attach a photo of themselves to one of the cube's sides, then complete the following information either in text or illustrated form on another four of the cube's six sides, keeping one side empty for use in Lesson Two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Physical characteristics• Character traits• Personality traits• Talents <p>They may wish to discuss their responses with the person they are sitting next to. Upon completing this task, refocus as a group and ask students to share their responses.</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What sort of things did many of us have in common?• What sort of things set them apart? <p>We all have another dimension that is very important and not to be overlooked when considering who you are as a human being. This is our spiritual selves. Unlike all other animals or objects, humans have a capacity to reflect, draw meaning from and turn one's heart and minds toward a higher being.</p> <p>This, too, is something that will differ from person to person: both in its nature and the means by which the person may choose to explore and express it. It is this dimension that makes us fully human, allowing each one of us to draw meaning from our life experiences and seek, maintain and enrich a relationship with God.</p> <p>Activity Three: Ask students to leave their books, pens etc. in the classroom and come to a 'special place'. Teachers may nominate any number of suitable places within the school including any of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Oval – ask students to lie on the grass and gaze into the sky• Picturesque garden• Fountain
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This may need to be within the classroom and if this is the case, try to move chairs and tables out of the way.

NB. As the purpose of this activity is to lead students to a very general understanding of 'spirituality' aside from that traditionally based in formal religion, try to avoid places such as the school chapel, grottos or the like. Such formal settings can often carry with them preconceived ideas about 'religious experience' which can be too specific for our purposes here.

Invite students to settle themselves into their own nominated space, away from each other, so as not to be distracted by those around them. Once settled, invite students into silence, so as to most vividly heighten their senses to the nature that surrounds them.

Ask them to relax their bodies, from the core of their stomachs to the tips of their fingers and toes. Feel the tension and stresses melt away from their bodies. Allow for a moment (approximately 1 minute) of stillness and silence.

Slowly recall students from their place of stillness and silence, inviting students to join the class group in a circle for discussion.

Discuss:

As a class, discuss this experience of stillness and silence. This can be done by posing the following questions to the student group:

- When you first came to this 'special place', what were you thinking?
- What was your primary focus when you sat down?
- Was focusing on yourself, your body and the process of relaxing difficult? Why/Why not?
- Once relaxed, what did it feel like?
- What occupied your mind?
- What dimensions of self were you particularly aware of?

This can be called an opportunity to engage with your 'spiritual self'.

- What do you think the term 'spiritual self' or 'spirituality' means?

This can be a really difficult dimension of self to discuss. For many of us, language doesn't seem adequate for describing this inner-most self. Some people refer to it as the 'core self' and others talk more of its enabling capacity: that is, its ability to help us view, comprehend and experience 'sacred' elements within life. Let's have a look at how some Year 7 and 8 students describe this part of their beings.

NB. The teacher may wish to return students to the classroom at this point, especially if they wish responses gained in Activity Three to be written down.



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<p>Students will need Worksheet One (page two): <i>What Is Spirituality?</i></p>	<p>Activity Four: In groups of four, students are to read Worksheet One (page two): <i>What Is Spirituality?</i> by assigning one of the four interviewed students to each team member.</p> <p>Each interview has a Year 7 or Year 8 student discussing what they think spirituality is, along with their comments on God / divine being and their relationship with this higher source. Students interviewed come from a range of religious backgrounds. Such diversity may well be reflected within the class group and are designed to invite all students, regardless of faith background, or indeed lack thereof, to participate within this unit.</p> <p>Having read these interviews, students are to discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What definitions of the term ‘spirituality’ are offered here?• What threads are common through all four students’ comments?• What differences are evident between the students’ views?• Which student’s response do you best relate to? Why?• Which response do you least relate to? Why?• Why do you think there is such a variety of understanding and expression of the dimension of ‘spirituality’? <p>Discuss: Come back together as a class and discuss questions one and six. Highlight for students that spirituality is a fundamental characteristic of what it means to be human: what makes us whole. It is an ‘unseen’ component of our ‘seen’ physical selves. This ‘inner self’ or ‘core self’ is what makes all human beings sacred and what, at essence, sets us aside from all other animals. It is through this spiritual self that we can come to know a being much greater than ourselves.</p> <p>Many people over time have tried to understand this dimension of human existence. Some have approached the topic in what can be called a ‘secular’ (non-religious) fashion. Others have approached the topic from a religious perspective. Religious traditions are indeed based upon belief in and valuing of this human dimension. Accordingly, such traditions can be sources of insight into how we can develop and express this part of our being.</p> <p>Activity Five: Using the internet, invite students to research and discover what each of the five major world religions say about human spirituality. Assign each student one of the following religious traditions. If you have students from these or other traditions they may like to research their family tradition.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hinduism• Judaism• Christianity• Islam• Buddhism
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Students are to research the following three questions:

- What does this tradition say about 'spirituality'?
- What does this tradition say about 'prayer'?
- Find and copy out one prayer from this religious tradition (noting its source/web address)

Web sites that may be of use here include:

- <http://www.omsakthi.org/religions.html>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/>

Discuss:

Come back as a group and discuss students' findings.

- What does each religious tradition have to say about human 'spirituality'?
- What commonalities do these traditions share in their understanding of 'spirituality'?
- What differences are evident?
- What does each say about prayer?

Gather students' prayers from each of these traditions and collate them into a class 'World Religions Prayer Diary' which can be used in subsequent reflection times. This can easily be done using a display folder into which the prayer can be placed according to their tradition.

Notes for teachers:

Hindus generally believe that Brahman is a great, all-powerful, absolute, divine being, to whom all people are drawn. While different traditions may call this divine being by different names, all people search for that divine being. Hindus believe that it is the presence of the human 'soul' which sees them drawn to Braham. It is the soul that allows individuals to long for and accordingly search for relationship with this supreme being. It is this consciousness and expression of a divine presence that can be called 'spirituality'.

Judaism teaches that all people are made "in the image of God" (Gen 1:27). This 'image' of God is most evident in the human soul, the inner most goodness and capacity for knowing God. It is in our soul that humans are set aside from all other living creatures as it is through its presence that we have 'spirituality', a capacity for turning ourselves towards God.

While sharing this view held within Judaism, Christians add that this capacity for relationship with God is made possible through 'grace'. 'Grace' is a special blessing freely given to all people by God and is understood as God's divine in-dwelling within all people. This is a gift of love given through love. It is this love that calls each of us to seek and maintain friendship with God.



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Muslims also believe that humans have a unique capacity for being aware of and responding to a divine power greater than oneself. For Muslims, like Jews and Christians, God is understood and the source and object of such attraction. It is the capacity for this attraction and offering of response that can be called 'spirituality'. For Muslims, this is one of the four major components of human existence, the others being one's physical self, one's social self and one's subjective or psychological self.

Buddhists generally believe that 'spirituality' is not to be associated with the upholding of particular religious beliefs, but expressed in the way one chooses to live one's life. For Buddhists, belief in a God or Gods is not relevant to one's 'spirituality'; rather it is in the ending of suffering through a life lived in enlightened harmony and compassion that must be focus of the 'spiritual' self.

Common to all these tradition's views of 'spirituality' is:

- a sense of an 'inner self'
- a sense of 'sacred' or mystery in life
- a sense of yearning and a capacity for searching for something greater than oneself
- a great valuing of this inner being

It is this 'spiritual self' that we had the opportunity to engage with in Activity Two and explore some definitions of in Activity Three. Students are invited in the next lesson to reflect upon this element of themselves as they create a visual representation of this on their '*What Makes Me, Me*' cube.

It is recommended that teachers collect the A3 cube worksheets for preservation for use in Lesson 2.

This lesson, including preparation time for the 'Me' cubes and research time for Activity Five will take approximately three periods to complete.



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Lesson 2	Discovering My Spiritual Self
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Teachers will need to pre-prepare the class for Activity One by asking students to bring an item to school that is significant to them, holds deeper and more valued meaning beyond its literal self – ie. is sacred. Teachers will also need to bring such an item of their own – eg. a button off a war uniform that belonged to your grandfather; a signet ring of your mother’s; a shell from a beach holiday in your childhood etc.</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can I come to know my spiritual self? • How can I foster and express my personal spirituality? <p>Discuss: In our last class we spent some time exploring the notions of ‘spirituality’, trying to figure out what this somewhat intangible element of the human character is. We looked briefly at what some religious traditions say about this, and we had the opportunity to try and engage with this dimension of ourselves. In this lesson, we are going to explore a bit deeper and more personally this element of our inner-most selves.</p> <p>Activity One: Ask students to bring to this class an item of significance to them: something which holds deep meaning for them beyond its literal self. This item will be used as the focal point of the following reflection activity.</p> <p>Gather as a class, with each student holding their nominated item. Ask students to settle into stillness and silence, relaxing their bodies and emptying their minds. Ask them to release all stressful energy from within themselves, flowing through their bodies and out their fingertips.</p> <p>The teacher should be the first to present his or her item, setting the scene for students. Place this item in front of students or allow them to pass it around (if small and not too fragile). If it is not obvious, tell the student what the item is, in its literal sense. Then proceed to explain to students what it ‘really’ is – ie. what it means to you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did you first get this item & in what circumstances? • Do you associate this item with certain special people? If so, who? • What memories does it bring to mind? • How does it make you feel? • Why is this item special to you? <p>Highlight for students that, like the loaf of bread in the previous lesson, this item has more to it than meets the eye – and in this case, it holds much deeper meaning beyond the item we see.</p> <p>Invite students to look at and place all their focus upon their ‘special’ object. Allow them to pause for a moment in contemplation of their object. Then, ask students to silently consider the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When did you first get this item & in what circumstances? • Do you associate this item with certain special people? If so, who? • What memories does it bring to mind?



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- How does it make you feel?
- Why is this item special to you?

Allow for a moment of silence and then invite students to move out of this contemplative opportunity and refocus on the class.

Ask students to move into groups of five and invite students one by one to present their special item to the small group. Highlight for students that they only need reveal what they feel comfortable with.

Ask students to return to their seats and write a reflection on this activity. Here, they are to write about their own and one other person's item they had shared with them.

- Describe the item physically
- What deeper meaning did it hold for you/the student?
- What is it that makes the item truly valuable for its owner– its physical self or its deeper meaning?

Notes for Teachers:

Teachers would be encouraged to consider the storage of student's nominated items use in Activity One. Due to the 'sacred' and most valued nature of these items, teachers may wish to insist that students lock these away for safe keeping in their locker and take them home immediately after this lesson.

Discuss:

Come back together as a class and clearly connect Activity One to the notion of 'spirituality' for students by reflecting on their written responses to question three:

- What is it that makes the item truly valuable for its owner– its physical self or its deeper meaning?

It is the 'spiritual' dimension of one's self that allows us as human beings to pause, reflect on and gain meaning from such otherwise inanimate objects. Clearly, it is not the object itself that has meaning and value; these are what we bring to them.

By valuing things beyond what they initially appear to be we allow ourselves to attach great meaning and in doing so, these items can be understood as 'sacred'. It is this notion of the 'sacred' in life that our spiritual selves allow us to appreciate, unlike all other living creatures.

It is in this way that our 'spiritual' dimension, or 'inner self' is a most valuable component of our person. This, like our physical and other traits, makes us an individual and accordingly different from all other people. While it can't be physically seen, it cannot and should not be overlooked as it is perhaps the most defining feature of human beings, setting us aside from all other living creatures.



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<p>Students will need Worksheet One (page one); <i>What Makes Me, Me?</i></p> <p>Medium-weight cardboard, glue, markers, pencils, glitter etc.</p> <p>Small table, cloth, candle and any sacred items as nominated by the teacher and/or students (eg cross, class photos etc).</p>	<p>Activity Two: Returning to Worksheet One (page one), <i>What Makes Me, Me?</i> students are invited to fill in the final box with images or text representing their ‘Spiritual Self’. They may wish to write a reflection, draw a symbol or brainstorm words that describe their inner spiritual selves. Conversely, they may wish to choose from the following statements, writing one down that appeals to them:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God calls me into a close relationship• God is intimately present in my life• My spiritual self calls me to find deeper meaning in life <p>Once completed, students are to cut around the outside of their boxes, being careful to retain them in one piece. This is then to be stuck onto medium-weight cardboard, cut out again and folded to create a cube. The flaps provided will allow students to glue their cube into a relatively solid construction. Students may wish to decorate their ‘Me’ cube with glitter, markers etc.</p> <p>Discuss: Come together as a class and discuss the significance of these cubes. These cubes are very special. They remind us who we are, what our gifts are and how we are set aside as special in the eyes of God. As a class, we are going to keep these on a special table set aside in the classroom as our ‘<i>Prayer & Reflection Table</i>’. This will be set up to remind us of the need to take time to reflect within our busy day.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invite a student to dress the table with a cloth• Invite another student to place the candle on the table and light it• Invite each student to bring their boxes up and place these on the table <p>These cubes are going to be used throughout this Unit as a tool for focusing on different dimensions within ourselves, especially our spiritual dimension.</p> <p>These ‘<i>Me</i>’ cubes are going to be the basis of our settling routine prior to reflection time in each lesson. Here, each student will be invited to collect their cube from this, our ‘<i>Prayer & Reflection Table</i>’, returning to their seat and turning the ‘<i>Spiritual Self</i>’ side up as a conscious act of entering into this quiet time. At the end of such time, the cube can be returned to the ‘<i>Prayer & Reflection Table</i>’ ‘<i>Spiritual Self</i>’-side down to consciously indicate the end of their reflection time.</p> <p>Activity Three: Construct a <i>Reflection Diary</i> for use at the end of each lesson. This can be done in a number of ways including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Using the coloured A6 paper provided, students are to design a cover for their diaries. This can then be laminated and, having included 20+ pages of A4 white paper cut in half, bound using
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	<p>spiral binding.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students can be requested to purchase a small exercise book. Using scraps of fabric, students can cover these to personalise them, making them visually set aside from the rest of their school notebooks.• Students can use their current RE notebooks. In order to set their reflective work aside, this may best be turned over and used from the back forward. A cover for this section can be designed by the student to denote it as a set of pages set aside for special work. <p>Such personalised diaries can then be used throughout the year or, if enough internal pages are provided, be carried across into the subsequent years' program.</p> <p>Allow students to spend some time (approximately 5-10 minutes) completing the following phrases in this diary as a form of examination of their reflection experience from earlier in this lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In reflection today we...• In reflection today I felt...• In reflection today I learnt... <p>Discuss: In drawing this lesson to an end, highlight for students the role of these <i>Reflection Diaries</i> in subsequent classes.</p> <p>At the end of each lesson, students will be given time to quietly think and write about their reflection experiences gained in each lesson. Explain that these are personal yet purposeful diaries, with their contents being understood as private, between the student and teacher alone, and focused on the experiences offered in each lesson.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: The teacher may need to consider storage options for the <i>Reflection Diaries</i> due to their private and potentially sensitive contents. They may well be stored in students' lockers or teachers may wish for them to be collectively stored in a designated place within the homeroom. Conversely, they may be better collected and held by the teacher at the end of each class and subsequently distributed as required.</p> <p>This Lesson will require approximately two periods to complete.</p>
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Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Lesson 3	Expressing My Spiritual Self
Resources	Lesson Format
	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is prayer?• How does ‘prayer’ relate to ‘spirituality’? <p>Activity One: Students are to collect their ‘Me’ cubes from the <i>Prayer & Reflection Table</i>. These are to be placed on the desk in front of each student and, when they are ready to enter into the following experience of stillness and silence, students are invited to turn their cubes so that their ‘Spiritual Self’ side is facing up.</p> <p>Invite students to close their eyes and listen to the silence.</p> <p>Ask students to relax by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Position their feet flat on the floor• Place their hands in their laps• Sit very still• Breathe through their nose• Concentrate on their breathing• Listen to their heart beating• Clench their body – fists, toes stomach muscles etc• Slowly release all this tension until every muscle is relaxed• Empty their minds of all thoughts – focus on nothingness / empty blue sky etc <p>Allow for time to pass (1min) then ask students to silently contemplate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay attention to you breathing – in – out• Breathe so quietly that only you can hear your breath• Feel the air as it enters you nose, travels through your sinus and down to your lungs• Feel the air as you exhale• Take slow, deep breaths• Listen and feel the silence as you continue to breath• What sounds can you hear?• How do you feel?• It is in moments of stillness and silence that we can often best come to know our inner-most self.• This dimension of human existence is our ‘spiritual self’• It is in this time of stillness and silence that we can also meet God.• Contemplate this meeting with God



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<p>Students will need markers and Worksheet Two (page one): <i>What is Prayer?</i></p>	<p>Pause and invite students to consider the following statements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• God who has no voice talks to us• God who has no hand touches us• God is always present in our world• It is in times such as this that we can intimately meet God. <p>Pause and ask students to silently consider the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• If you were to speak out loud to God, what would you say today, right at this moment? <p>Move students back out of the stillness and silence by talking them back through their breathing and slowly opening their eyes and rejoining the class.</p> <p>Discuss: Refocus as a class group and discuss the experience of stillness and silence just undertaken. Pose the following questions to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How did this activity make students feel?• What did they like?• What did they dislike?• Do they often take time to sit in stillness and silence?• If so, when and in what circumstance do they do this? (eg. Chapel services?)• Would they call what they just did 'prayer'? Why/Why not? <p>Stillness and silence is a very important ingredient in creating a happy and healthy life. It enables us, as humans, to take time out from our hectic lifestyles and reflect on the most important elements of human existence: who we are, the people who are important to us and, perhaps, contemplate how a being greater than our own self is active within our life. It allows us time to explore and nurture our spiritual selves.</p> <p>As important as it is to give such time to this personal dimension, so too do we need to develop ways of expressing this dimension. One means for such expression is prayer.</p> <p>Activity Two: Working individually and Using Worksheet Two, <i>What Is Prayer?</i> students are to complete the following sentence prompts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prayer is...• People pray because...• People pray by... <p>Upon completion of these prompts, students are to move into groups of four-five and discuss their responses:</p>
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<p>Students will need Worksheet Two (page two): <i>Different Prayer Styles</i></p> <p>Students will need their <i>Reflection Diaries</i></p>	<p>The form of prayer can be identified by the means through which it is expressed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prayer can take in any number of forms including: Silent, Spoken, Sung, Read or Danced <p>The prayer's type can be identified through its content and/or intent:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relaxing prayer involves silently reflecting in an inward fashion in order to communicate with God. This type of prayer is often associated with either contemplation (thinking about a small, specific piece of scripture) and meditation (focusing on an image, music or a personal experience)• Prayers of thanks look to offer praise and thanks to God for something in the person's or group's life• Prayers of intercession ask God for some type of extra assistance in life: help, forgiveness etc• Scriptural prayer uses a passage from the Bible as its focus <p>Teachers may wish to discuss possible examples with students of each of these styles. Many examples are readily available within the chapel services regularly celebrated with and thus familiar to the students.</p> <p>Activity Three: Using Worksheet Two (page two): <i>Different Prayer Styles</i>, students are to work in pairs and come up with a range of different prayer settings which match the allocated nature, form and type, demonstrating their understanding of these characteristics.</p> <p>Discuss: Once students have completed Activity Three, come back as a class and discuss each scenario, gathering student responses and their reasoning for these. Offer correction and clarification where required.</p> <p>Activity Four: Allow students to spend some time (approximately 5-10 minutes) completing the following phrases in their <i>Reflection Diaries</i> as a form of examination of their reflection experience from earlier in this lesson:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In reflection today we...• In reflection today I felt...• In reflection today I learnt... <p>Note for Teachers: This lesson will require approximately two periods to complete.</p>
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Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Lesson 4	Finding The Words to Say: Guided Prayer
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Teachers will need a traditional copy of <i>The Lord's Prayer</i> – located on Worksheet Three (page one): <i>Finding the Words To Say: The Lord's Prayer</i></p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is guided prayer?• How can it help me to pray? <p>Activity One: Students are to collect their 'Me' Cubes from the 'Prayer & Reflection' table. These are to be placed in the desk in front of them and, when they are ready to enter into the following experience of stillness and silence, they are to turn their cubes so that their 'Spiritual Self' side is facing up.</p> <p>Invite students to close their eyes and listen to the silence.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Position their feet flat on the floor• Place their hands in their laps• Sit very still• Breathe through their nose• Concentrate on their breathing• Listen to their heart beating• Clench their body – fists, toes stomach muscles etc• Slowly release all this tension until every muscle is relaxed• Empty their minds of all thoughts – focus on nothingness / empty blue sky etc <p>Allow for time to pass (1min) then ask students to silently contemplate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay attention to you breathing – in – out• Breathe so quietly that only you can hear your breath• Feel the air as it enters you nose, travels through your sinus and down to your lungs• Feel the air as you exhale• Take slow, deep breaths• Listen and feel the silence as you continue to breath <p>Taking time and allowing for students to fully contemplate the words of this prayer, recite a traditional version of <i>The Lord's Prayer</i>. Upon completing this, allow a few moments for further contemplation.</p> <p>Move students back out of the stillness by talking them back through their breathing and slowly opening their eyes and rejoining the class.</p> <p>Discuss: Sometimes it can be really difficult to find the words for what you wish to express in prayer. In times such as these, it is often useful to use prayers that are already written for our use. This is often called 'Guided Prayer' as</p>



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

<p>Students will need Worksheet Three (page one): <i>Finding the Words To Say: The Lord's Prayer</i></p> <p>Students will need Worksheet Three (page two): <i>Composing My Own Prayer</i></p> <p>Students will need A4 or A5 colour paper, markers and possibly their Bibles.</p>	<p>the words guide us through the prayer experience. One of the earliest Christian prayers of this type come from the words of Jesus himself and we know it today as <i>The Lord's Prayer</i>. It is this prayer that we used in Activity One and that you hear often when we celebrate liturgy in the Chapel.</p> <p>Activity Two: Working as a class and using Worksheet Three (page one): <i>Finding the Words To Say: The Lord's Prayer</i>, examine this prayer as it is actually made up of a range of types.</p> <p>Firstly, it praises God: "Hallowed be thy name" Secondly, it asks God to intercede: "Give us this day our daily bread..." Thirdly, it asks for God's forgiveness: "Forgive us our trespasses..."</p> <p>Over time, people have re-written this famous prayer that first appeared in scripture, placed on the lips of Jesus when he prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane before his arrest, trial and execution. Read through these different versions.</p> <p>Using these prayers as models, invite students to compose their own prayer using the prompts outlined on Worksheet Three (page two): <i>Composing My Own Prayer</i>. Encourage students to consider addressing their prayers to different persons of Trinity, or using different names for these: God, Father (parent) Son, Jesus, Spirit etc.</p> <p>Activity Three: Create a <i>Class Prayer Booklet</i>. Students are to use the following prayer types (examined in Lesson Two) and compose two prayers for inclusion in this class compilation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thanksgiving• Intercession <p>This can be done on either A4 or A5 paper, and the teacher may wish to provide coloured paper denoting each type of prayer of ease of use once bound. Upon completion of these prayers, finish the collection using a transparency cove and spiral binding.</p> <p>Activity Four: Gather students in groups of four-five to share their composed prayers. Ask students to follow the process used for centring oneself for prayer, featured at the opening of each lesson within this Unit. Once settled, students can select one of their two composed prayers and share them with the group in a brief liturgy.</p>
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Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

<p>Students will need their <i>Reflection Diaries</i></p>	<p>Activity Five: In light of these guided prayer experiences, students are to spend some time (approximately 5-10 minutes) writing in their <i>Reflection Diaries</i>, completing the following phrases:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• In reflection today we...• In reflection today I felt...• In reflection today I learnt... <p>They may wish to write about both prayer experiences, or choose one which particularly touched them.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: This Lesson will require approximately two periods to complete.</p>
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Uniting Church in Australia
Religious Education Lesson Plan
Middle Years (7&8)

Unit 3 The Spiritual Self



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Lessons 5	Finding the Words to Say: Scripture as Prayer
Resources	Lesson Format
	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is contemplative prayer?• How can the Bible be used in prayer? <p>Activity One</p> <p>Students are to collect their 'Me' Cubes from the 'Prayer & Reflection' table. These are to be placed in the desk in front of them and, when they are ready to enter into the following experience of stillness and silence, they are to turn their cubes so that their 'Spiritual Self' side is facing up.</p> <p>Invite students to close their eyes and listen to the silence.</p> <p>Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Position their feet flat on the floor• Place their hands in their laps• Sit very still• Breathe through their nose• Concentrate on their breathing• Listen to their heart beating• Clench their body – fists, toes stomach muscles etc• Slowly release all this tension until every muscle is relaxed• Empty their minds of all thoughts – focus on nothingness / empty blue sky etc <p>Allow for time to pass (1min) then ask students to silently contemplate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay attention to you breathing – in – out• Breathe so quietly that only you can hear your breath• Feel the air as it enters you nose, travels through your sinus and down to your lungs• Feel the air as you exhale• Take slow, deep breaths• Listen and feel the silence as you continue to breath <p>Select a scriptural reading such as the Sermon on the Mount (Mt 5:1-16) and read it to the silent class as a focus for this prayer time. The teacher can choose to undertake this scriptural prayer in one of two ways:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Read the excerpt as it appears, slowly pacing your voice and the flow of the text to encourage students' prayerful reflection upon the text as it is written• Select the text in advance and re-write it either using more simplistic language or setting its story in a modern context. This would then be read to students, slowly pacing your voice and the flow of the text to encourage students prayerful reflection upon the re-written text



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Move students back out of the stillness by talking them back through their breathing and slowly opening their eyes and rejoining the class.

Discuss:

As we discussed in our last lesson, there are lots of different ways to pray. One way is by using the Bible as a starting point. Here, we may:

- read an excerpt of scripture and have these words as our prayer within themselves (as done in Activity One)
- take a small section of scripture and reflect up its significance
- read a selected excerpt of scripture and focus upon it as being God speaking directly to you, and its meaning in you life

Activity Two:

Working in groups of five to six, students are to select or be assigned one of the following scriptural passages:

- The Healing of Jairus' Daughter – Mark 5:21-43
- The Raising of the Paralytic – Mark 2:1-12
- The Prodigal Son – Luke 15:11-32
- The Good Samaritan – Luke 10:25-37
- The Healing at the Pool – John 5:1-15

Students are to read their nominated excerpt then plan a means by which this can be acted out for the rest of the class. This, along with other group's presentation will form a contemplative liturgy to be held in a subsequent class time.

Open this liturgical experience by highlighting that prayer, in this form, comes from one's individual reflection upon the story being told to them.

Here, students are to place themselves within the context of the story, reflecting upon:

- Who might they be in this story? (Adopt a character's perspective)
- What they would say if in this character's shoes?
- What would they do?
- What would they feel?

Such contemplative reflection is to be given time at the conclusion of each presentation. The teacher may wish to lead this reflection by posing the above questions to students or, conversely, students within the presenting group could lead this as a conclusion to their prayerful presentation.

NB. Such questions as those listed above are just a basic suggestion and could well be tailored to suit each individual scriptural presentation.



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

<p>Students will need their <i>Reflection Diaries</i></p>	<p>Notes for Teachers: The teacher may wish students to select from this listing or may prefer random selection achieved through writing the references on pieces of paper from which students' blindly select.</p> <p>Some rehearsal time will be needed for this task and this can be tailored to the teacher's own planning requirements. If possible, students may be asked to present their excerpt in the subsequent class time to allow for props or costumes to be arranged.</p> <p>The teacher will need to highlight for students that this task requires them to present the scripture-centred prayer experience for their fellow classmates and must be prepared with this contemplative aim in mind.</p> <p>The teacher should also pre-prepare a space for this experience either by clearing the tables and chairs aside within the classroom, or arranging an alternate open and private space.</p> <p>On the day of the liturgy, the teacher would be encouraged to invite students to sit in a circle or semi-circle, making themselves comfortable for this contemplative prayer experience. As the sharing of each story and its associated reflection time will require the better part of an entire period, student comfort and focus is essential.</p> <p>Discuss: Scripture can be a rich and emotive source for prayerful contemplation. Even if we don't have people to act it out for us, we can still read it and place ourselves within the scene. Scripture is intended to make reader think, to provoke reflection and to encourage us to look at the world in a different way: God's way.</p> <p>Activity Three: In light of the contemplative liturgy focusing on scripture, students are to spend some time (approximately 5-10 minutes) writing in their <i>Reflection Diaries</i>. Here, invite students to write a letter to Jesus reflecting on and responding to one of the scriptural presentations they experienced.</p> <p>This may take the form of a reflection from the point of view of one adopted character from a selected story, or may reflect upon the theme of the scriptural passage and its meaning within our contemporary world.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: This lesson, including preparation time for Activity Two and celebration of its associated liturgy will require approximately three periods.</p>
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Uniting Church in Australia
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Middle Years (7&8)

Unit 3 The Spiritual Self



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Lesson 6	Praying With Imagination: Using Music & Dance
Resources	Lesson Format
	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How can the creative arts be used for prayer?• How can my creative talents help me to pray? <p>Activity One: Students are to collect their 'Me' Cubes from the 'Prayer & Reflection' table. These are to be placed in the desk in front of them and, when they are ready to enter into the following experience of stillness and silence, they are to turn their cubes so that their 'Spiritual Self' side is facing up.</p> <p>Invite students to close their eyes and listen to the silence. Ask students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Position their feet flat on the floor• Place their hands in their laps• Sit very still• Breathe through their nose• Concentrate on their breathing• Listen to their heart beating• Clench their body – fists, toes stomach muscles etc• Slowly release all this tension until every muscle is relaxed• Empty their minds of all thoughts – focus on nothingness / empty blue sky etc <p>Allow for time to pass (1min) then ask students to silently contemplate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pay attention to you breathing – in – out• Breathe so quietly that only you can hear your breath• Feel the air as it enters you nose, travels through your sinus and down to your lungs• Feel the air as you exhale• Take slow, deep breaths <p>Select a piece of music that you feel the class may relate to or find effective in reflective contemplation. The following is a list of suggested pieces:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Forest Gump Suite by Alan Silvestri• Phil Collins, Another Day In Paradise• Chopin, Nocturne in E Flat Major, Op.9• See <i>Suggested Support Materials: Music</i> for further suggestions <p>Ask the students to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listen to the music• Feel yourself being drawn into the music



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

<p>Students will need Worksheet Four (page one): <i>Music For Death & Resurrection</i> Access to computers may be required by some students to complete their CD cover</p>	<p>Pose the following question to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What, in this relaxed place of stillness, would you like to say to God?• What troubles you?• What do you have to be thankful for?• Can you feel God's presence in this inner place of stillness? <p>Move students back out of the stillness by talking them back through their breathing and slowly opening their eyes and rejoining the class.</p> <p>Discuss: Music can be a very powerful tool when looking to focus your mind. Pose the following question to students and briefly discuss responses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does anyone play music while they do their homework?• If so, why?• Does it help you concentrate on your task at hand?• Do you have particular music you play when you're sad?• Do you have particular music you play when you're on holidays?• What sort of music do Mum and/or Dad play?• What does this music do for them?• What sort of music do your Grandparents play?• What does this music do for them? <p>Music has been a very important part of religious worship and prayer for thousands of years. All religious traditions recognise its power in enabling individuals to focus and turn themselves toward God/ a higher being. When well selected, music can help us focus, turn inward and place ourselves mentally in the presence of God.</p> <p>Activity Two: <i>Funk Music</i> have put a call out to music producers worldwide to collate a CD of awesome significance: <i>Music For Death & Resurrection</i>.</p> <p>Working in pairs and using Worksheet Four (page one): <i>Music For Death & Resurrection</i>, students are to design a CD cover, listing the tracks they would include on their CD. Nominate tracks should have the capacity to be used in prayer which reflects upon the sorrow and hardships in life (death) as well as the triumphs and joys (resurrection).</p> <p>The CD cover will also have to contain graphics designed to impress executives at <i>Funk</i> if students' entries are to stand out from the crowd and win production rights.</p>
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Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

<p>Students will need Worksheet Four (page two): <i>Praying With Imagination</i></p>	<p>Discuss:</p> <p>Music is by no means the only art form that helps people pray. Dance and art have also featured prominently in prayer and liturgy for hundreds of years. Art, in the form of paintings, sculpture, mosaic, architecture, leadlight and the like have always been a key part of religious contemplation. Dance, like the drama used in our last lesson, can also draw people in to reflect upon their relationship with God.</p> <p>Art and dance are not only vivid means by which to encourage prayerful contemplation by those who observe them, but are a powerful expressive vehicle for those who create or perform them.</p> <p>Activity Three:</p> <p>Using Worksheet Four (page two): <i>Praying With Imagination</i> as a source for inspiration, students are to select from the mediums of Art and Dance to examine and experience another form of prayer which utilises both the imagination and performing arts.</p> <p>Here, students are to create and present an artistic work or dance performance reflecting upon a nominated theme or scriptural excerpt which is to be presented within a class liturgy to be celebrated in a subsequent period.</p> <p>The suggested themes outlined are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Thanksgiving / Blessing• Forgiveness• Petition <p>The suggested scriptural excerpts outlined are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Empty Tomb (Mark 16:1-8)• The Crucifixion (Mark 15:33-39)• Psalm 61• Psalm 71• God Tests Abraham's Faith (Genesis 22:1-19)• God is Israel's Saviour (Isaiah 43:1-2) <p>The teacher may well wish to add to these listings or allow students to investigate their own source materials, although the latter will require some degree of teacher guidance to ensure suitability.</p> <p>Students may wish to undertake this task individually or in small groups.</p> <p>As this activity is designed to engage student's creative talents and their imagination, the task is quite open-ended. Accordingly, the teacher would be encouraged to work with each individual student and/or group to ensure their aim of creating a prayer-filled contemplative opportunity is suitable and achievable.</p>
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Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

	<p>Activity Four: In light of these prayer experiences utilising one's imagination, students are to spend some time (approximately 5-10 minutes) writing in their <i>Reflection Diaries</i>.</p> <p>Here, they may wish to write about one of their favourite pieces of music which moves them into deep contemplation. Conversely, they may wish to reflect upon the creative process that went into the creation of their dance or art work.</p> <p>Notes For Teachers: This lesson, including preparation time for Activities Two and Three and celebration of a class liturgy comprising of the art and dance created in Activity Three, will require approximately five periods.</p>
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Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Assessment Ideas

How well did the students:

- demonstrate an appreciation of the spiritual dimension of one's self through discussion of this dimension within in the *What Is Spirituality?* activity; research of major world religions' view on the spiritual dimension and construction of the *What Makes Me, Me?* cube?
- demonstrate an understanding of what prayer is and its roles in one's spiritual life through reflection upon and completion of the *What Is Prayer?* and *Different Styles of Praying* activities?
- demonstrate an appreciation of both stillness and silence through each of the centring activities which were used to open each lesson?
- demonstrate their understanding of a variety of contemplative means through participation in and completion of the following activities: composition of a *Class Prayer Booklet*; analysis of *The Lord's Prayer*; involvement in the dramatisation of scripture and participation in its associated liturgy; creation of a CD cover in the task entitled *Music For Death & Resurrection* and creation of a dance or art reflective piece in the activity *Praying With Our Imagination* and involvement its associated liturgy?

Evaluation

How well did the unit:

- encourage students to think, explore, share and contribute to discussion of human spirituality?
- deepen the student's knowledge and appreciation of the human capacity of spirituality?
- invite students to reflect upon and explore their own spiritual selves?
- deepen student's awareness of and appreciation for stillness and silence?
- lead students to a deeper understanding of prayer and its role in giving expression to human spirituality?
- deepen the student's knowledge of prayer forms and contemplative means?
- enable the students to articulate their insights and responses to a variety of prayer styles and contemplative means?



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Extension notes for the teacher:

- *All individuals have a spiritual domain, an 'interior dimension'. Whether this is aligned with a particular religious tradition or not, each person by their very nature as humans are drawn towards discerning a greater reality.*
- *This search for discernment can take many forms, only one of which is formal religion.*
- *It is vital to encourage students to be open to that which is sacred in all elements of their daily lives.*
- *For many, a most intimate and personal experience of the sacred can be gained through nature. Here, allowing oneself to be open to the spiritual experience of the sea, a river or other elements of nature can be a means by which to recognise and become attuned to this component of self, aside from the hectic and mundane nature of everyday life.*
- *It is important for the teacher to note that adult awareness of and language for expressing one's spiritual dimension is not necessarily that to which students may relate. Accordingly, it is fruitful to listen to the students themselves in order to discern their conceptions of this dimension and the means by which they seek to interact with it.*
- *Within the context of formal religion, one of the most fundamental components of all traditions is the valuing of, interaction with and expression of the spiritual dimension.*
- *For Christians, this greater reality is God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.*
- *Christians believe that this capacity for searching is given to us through God's gift of Grace. Through Grace, the Holy Spirit works within us, drawing us toward God.*
- *As Christians, we are invited to engage with God and the world through both action and reflection: doing and being (UCA Synod of Victoria and Tasmania Commission for Mission, Lacuna, 2003, 14).*
- *The action we undertake in our world is best underpinned by reflection. Just as Jesus took himself to a lonely place prior to embarking on his ministry (Mark 1:12-13), so we too should take time for prayer: time for drawing closer to God, prior to embarking on our activities.*
- *Prayer, in whatever form is meaningful to the individual, allows us to acknowledge our deeper selves, our spiritual selves, from which great depth and richness of experience can be gained.*
- *It is important to remember that one of the highest forms of aestheticism (ie. raising one's mind to God) is relaxation – time taken to relax in our busy world.*

Key Terms Used Within This Unit:

Spirituality:

Possessed by all humans, one's spiritual dimension can well be defined as "the person's way of being in the world before the divine" (Maurice Ryan (ed) Heartlines, Melbourne: Thomson, 2004, viii). Such a dimension of self is somewhat beyond human comprehension, although it becomes more tangible in and through its expressive means. All religious traditions have at their foundations a need and intent to seek engagement with the spiritual self. Within Christianity 'spirituality' is understood to be the component within all peoples' lives which is founded upon God's gift of grace. This grace, present in all individuals through the work of the Holy Spirit, fuels one's capacity to turn toward God in a search for meaning and fulfilment. Essentially, spirituality is this search for the Sacred. Within the course of this unit, however, a broader approach has been taken which seeks to enable students to recognise, engage with and express their spiritual selves on a most fundamental level prior to then examining its possible home within Christian tradition.



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Contemplation:

Contemplation calls individuals to deeply focus upon God's presence. J. Crittsier describes this skill as "the ability to see the world around us as God sees it". Some make a distinction between prayer and contemplation with the latter defined as a way of being, not merely a form or style of prayer. Contemplation is a silent form of worship where no spoken words or images are used. Traditionally, contemplation is distinguished from meditation through its focus on scripture. For Western traditions, such a distinction has arisen from monastic life where lectio divina (contemplation of and reflection upon scriptural passages) became a fundamental means of focusing upon the ever-present God.

Meditation:

Meditation, like contemplation, calls the individual to silently focus upon bringing one's self into union with God. Meditation, however, does not have the fundamental focus on scripture traditionally assigned to contemplation. Meditation can be undertaken in two basic forms: concentration and awareness. Concentration meditation focuses upon a visual image, object, sound, music, chant, a sacred word or icon. Awareness meditation does not use such elements within its practice, choosing instead to focus the individual on their own immediate experiences, bodily state and condition. This method calls the individual to empty their mind of all external concerns and accordingly open themselves to an experience of God.

Prayer:

Augustine defined prayer as the affectionate directing of one's mind to God. Others have suggested that it is a conversation with the divine, which is not unlike an intimate sharing between close friends. Prayer is the means by which an individual or group consciously places themselves in communion with God. It is traditionally understood to exist in a variety of forms including entreaty, supplication, petition, thanksgiving, adoration, intercession, repentance or praise. The capacity for prayer is understood by Christians to come from God through the gift of Grace. It is Grace which allows one's mind and heart to be directed toward the divine.

Grace:

Grace is a most intimate blessing freely given by God to all people which allows for one's capacity for a loving relationship with this God. It is this self-communication of God's saving love which is fundamental to God's gift of salvation to all who believe. The evangelist John describes 'grace' as a divine indwelling (Jn 14:18) conceived of at the point of creation by God's all-encompassing love for humanity. John Wesley, in his sermon on 'Free Grace' preached in Bristol in 1740, noted that Grace "is free in all to whom it is given. It does not depend on any power or merit in man...It does not in anywise depend either on the good works or righteousness of the receiver; not on anything he has done or anything he is...But it is free for all as well as in all". Within itself, Grace is the most intimate experience of God's all-redeeming favour: the divine indwelling, which heals and transforms every individual and whose source is Jesus Christ.

Further Reading:

David Tracey, *The Spirituality Revolution: the emergence of contemporary spirituality* (Sydney: Harper Collins Publishers, 2003)

David Tracey, *David Tracey on Spirituality* available at: www.unitinged.org.au/index.cgi?tid=42

Victor Pfitzner, *Spirituality for Christian Teachers* available at: www.unitinged.org.au/index.cgi?tid=37



Unit 3 The Spiritual Self

Suggested Support Materials:

Collected Prayers:

C'mon God! Prayers of petition by young Australians. (Sydney: Catholic Mission, 1997)

G'Day God! Daytime prayers by young Australians. (Sydney: Catholic Mission, 1997)

G'night God! Night time prayers by young Australians. (Sydney: Catholic Mission, 1997)

Good On Ya' God! Prayers of praise by young Australians. (Sydney: Catholic Mission, 1997)

A selection of these is published with permission in the primary curriculum 'Come & See' Year 3-4.

Maurice Ryan (ed) *Heartlines: Prayer resources for a contemporary spirituality.* (Melbourne: Thomson Social Science Press, 2004)

Uniting Church in Australia: Commission for Mission, *Lacuna: Space for God.* (Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, 2003)

Uniting Church in Australia: National Working Group on Worship, *Uniting in Worship 2.* (Sydney: Uniting Church Press, 2005)

Duane Arnold, *Beyond Belief: What the Martyrs Said to End.* (Zondervan Publishing House, 2002)

David Gatward, *Bunch of Green Bananas.* (Kevin Mayhew Publishers, 2002)

Nick Aiken, *Complete Prayers for Teenagers.* (Marshall Pickering, 1998)

Desmond Tutu, *African Prayer Book.* (Doubleday Publishing, 2006)

Chicken Soup for the Teenage Soul.

Music (Classical):

Brahms, *Symphony No 1, 3rd mvt.*

Chopin, *Nocturne in E Flat Major, Op.9*

Holst, *The Planets*

Liszt, *Liebestraum*

Vaughan Williams, *Fantasia on Greensleeves*

Vivaldi, *Four Seasons*

Music (Popular Contemporary):

Alan Silvestri, *Forest Gump Suite*

Eric Clapton, *Tears in Heaven*

Phil Collins, *Another Day In Paradise*

Alex Lloyd, *Amazing*

The Calling, Wherever You Will Go

REM, *Everybody Hurts*

Enya, *The Memory of Trees*

Students will be an endless source of popular contemporary inspirational/reflection music.

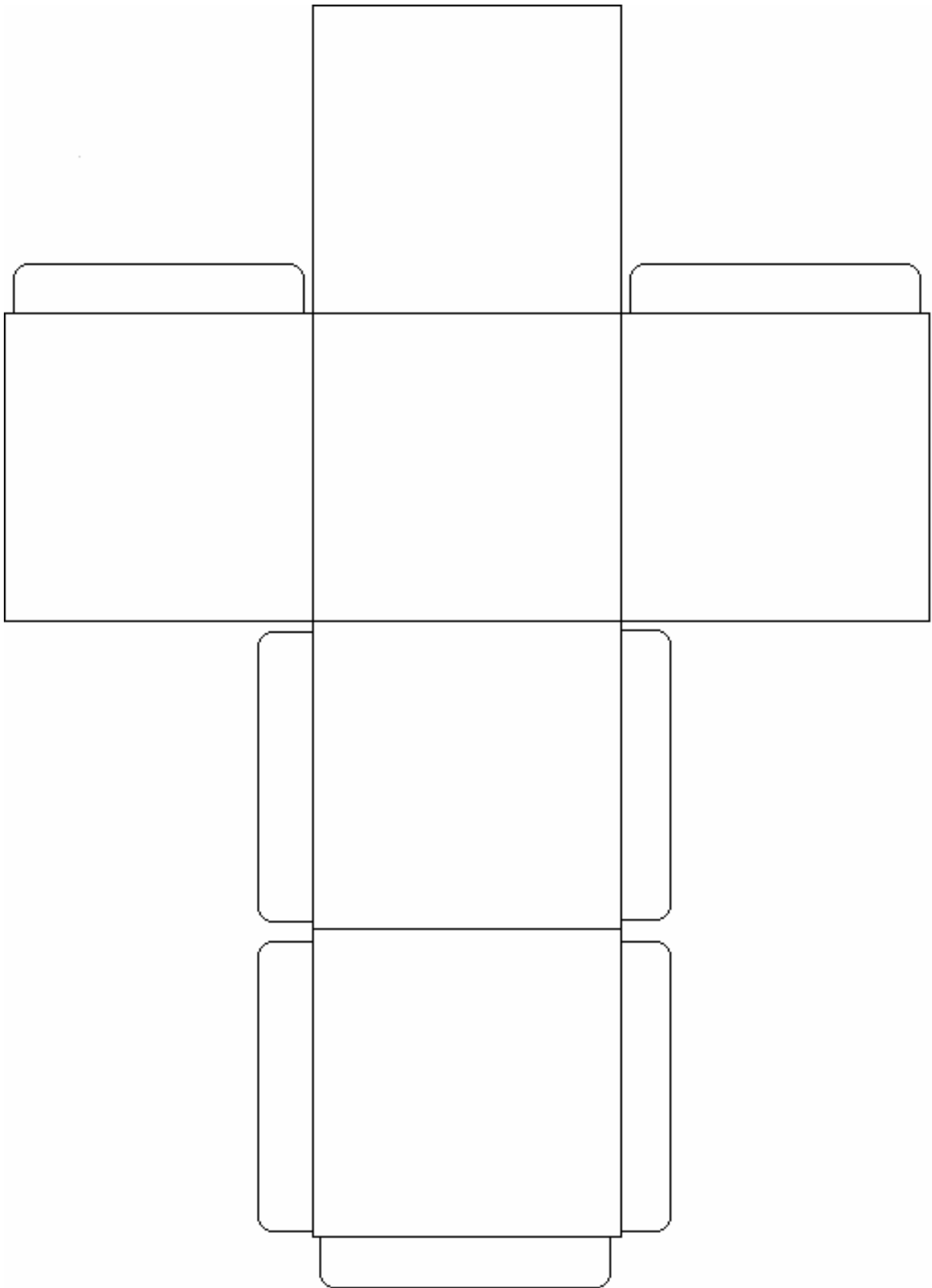
Music (Christian Contemporary):

Julie Perrin, *For You Deep Stillness*

Works by Phil Keaggy

Taize

What Makes Me, Me?



What Is Spirituality?

Amanda:

"I think 'spirituality' is that part of me that helps me get close to God. It's a bit hard to describe, isn't it? Well, it something inside me that lets me reflect on stuff, you know, think about God and other religious stuff. It's the part of me that I should tune into at Chapel, but sometimes I'm just not into it and I just sit there and not bother. Other times, I feel this part inside me really connect to God. I feel like I can say or think anything, pray, and He hears me. It's something really special when that happens, you know, when I just want to put myself in a place where God is. I suppose it's the 'spiritual' bit in me that helps me do that."

Scott:

"I reckon 'spiritually' is about feeling something that's bigger, much bigger than me. I'm thinking especially of when I go surfing down at Bells or Torque. When I'm out there in the waves, I feel like I can lose myself, the power of the sea is so huge. I feel like I'm just one tiny thing out there, and something else, something much more powerful than me, just takes over. The crashing waves can be deafening, but there's also an amazing silence when I've crashed out and I'm deep under the water. It's like time stops and something much greater than me is there looking out for me. It's weird but I feel this sort of 'presence', that makes sure I'm ok. It's awesome, you know. Well, I suppose that what I think is 'spiritual', so it must be something like that."

Pryanka:

"'Spirituality' is something to do with religion isn't it? My family is Hindu, so prayer and stuff like that are a big part of our lives. I think 'spirituality' is to do with my soul 'cause it's my soul that allows me to be close to Brahman (God), so I suppose that's where my 'spirituality' starts. We believe that Brahman is a mighty, powerful being and I have part of Brahman in me. We call this 'atman'. All people have atman. I suppose 'spirituality' is what helps me recognize and believe in this stuff. You know, what helps me to have faith and do all the religious stuff that we do. It helps me understand the meaning of what I do and why I do it, even though at times all that stuff can be a drag. We also do meditation sometimes as part of this religious stuff. I suppose it's my 'spirituality' that helps me do that. Some Hindu people get right into meditation and yoga. I think it's a way for them to express this 'spiritual' stuff."

David:

"Gee, that's a tough one. Well, I think it's that part of me that helps me relate to God. You know, it's what helps me pray and stuff. My family is Jewish, so our religion is part of everything we do. I suppose 'spirituality' is what helps me believe, helps me do all the religious stuff I have to do, and get something out of it, you know. It's what helps me see the deeper meaning in what we do: see the point in it and get something from it. I don't mean get rewarded for it, I mean doing the religious stuff like being part of my family's Passover meal helps me please God and I feel closer to God when I do that stuff. Yeah, so I suppose 'spirituality' is something in me that helps me love God."

As a group discuss the following questions:

1. What definitions of the term 'spirituality' are offered here?
2. What threads are common through all four students' comments?
3. What differences are evident between these students' views?
4. Which student's responses do you best relate to? Why?
5. Which responses do you not agree with? Why?
6. Why do you think there is such variety in understanding and expression of human spirituality?

What Is Prayer?

Prayer is...

People pray because...

People pray by...

Different Styles of Praying

Nature:

The nature of prayer can be identified through the context in which it is celebrated:

- Communal prayer is reflection time shared and celebrated in the company of others
- Individual prayer is reflection time undertaken by one's self

Form:

The form of prayer can be identified by the means in which it is expressed:

- Prayer can take in any number of forms including: Silent, Spoken, Sung, Read or Danced

Type:

The prayer's type can be identified through its content and/or intent:

- Relaxing prayer involves silently reflecting in an inward fashion in order to communicate with God. This type of prayer is often associated with either contemplation (thinking about a small, specific piece of scripture) and meditation (focusing on an image, music or a person experience)
- Prayers of thanks look to offer praise to God, thanking Him for something in the person's or group's life
- Prayers of intercession, or petition, ask God for some type of extra assistance in life
- Scriptural prayer uses a passage from the Bible as its focus

Nature	Form	Type	Describe a possible prayer setting
Communal	Dramatized	Scriptural	
Individual	Silent	Relaxing: Meditation	
Individual	Spoken	Petition	
Communal	Danced	Thanks	
Communal	Silent	Intercession	
Individual	Read	Relaxing: Contemplation	

Finding The Words To Say: *The Lord's Prayer*

Matthew 6:9-13

Our Father in heaven,
hallowed be your name.
Your kingdom come.
Your will be done,
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread.
And forgive us our debts,
as we also have forgiven our debtors.
And do not bring us to the time of trial,
but rescue us from the evil one.

Traditional Form

Our Father, in Heaven,
hallowed be your name;
your kingdom come,
your will be done
on earth as it is in Heaven.
Give us today our daily bread;
and forgive us our sins
as we forgive those
who sin against us;
and save us from the time of
trial,
and deliver us from evil.
For the kingdom, the power
and the glory are yours,
now and for ever. Amen.

Australian Indigenous Christian Form*

You are our Father, you live in heaven,
We talk to you, Father, we your children
Give us bread today.
Others have done wrong to us
And we are sorry for them, Father,
today.
We have done wrong, we are sorry,
Teach us Father not to sin again.
Stop us from doing wrong, Father,
Save us all from the evil one.
You are our Father, you live in heaven
We talk to you, Father, you are good.
Amen.

Alternative Form*

Loving Father and Friend,
Blessed are you and your ways.
Give me sight to see your will.
Give me trust to rely on you will.
Give me strength to do your will.
Sustain me throughout today's
journey
And forgive me when I stray from
your love,
As I try to forgive those who
offend my love.
Protect me from hardship
And be with me in times of trouble.

*Source: Maurice Ryan (ed) *Heartlines: Prayer resources for a contemporary spirituality*. (Melbourne: Thomson Social Science Press, 2004)

Composing My Own Prayer

Dear _____

Thank you for

Give _____

Forgive

Amen.

Music For Death & Resurrection

Funk Music has put a call out to music producers worldwide to collate a CD of awesome significance: *Music For Death & Resurrection*. You and your hot-shot production partner are to take up the challenge by designing a CD cover, listing the tracks you would include on such a CD. Nominated tracks should have the capacity to be used in prayer and liturgical services which reflect upon the sorrow and hardship of life (death) as well as the triumph and joy (resurrection).

The CD cover will also have to contain graphics designed to impress executives at *Funk* if your submission is to stand out from the crowd and win production rights. This could be your big break!

Specs. of Submissions

- All entries must have six 'Death' tracks and six 'Resurrection' tracks selected and listed
 - Track title and artist must be included on the CD cover
 - Music chosen for collation can be of any style
 - Graphics should reflect the nature of the CD's musical content
 - CD compilations themselves are not required
 - Entries close
-

Death Tracks

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Resurrection Tracks

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.

Praying With Imagination

Prayer and reflection celebrated through creative mediums such as dance and art can be both deeply moving and memorable. Reflective dance can take many forms and can use a wide variety of music including contemporary and classical non-religious tracks or more traditional religious pieces. So too, reflective art can take many forms such as sketches, paintings or sculpture. Really, the only limit is your imagination!

Using the creative mediums of either dance or art, create a prayer-filled reflection opportunity based upon either one of the following themes or scriptural excerpts:

A) Themes:

- Thanksgiving / Blessing
- Forgiveness
- Petition

B) Scriptural excerpts:

- The Empty Tomb (Mark 16:1-8)
- The Crucifixion (Mark 15:33-39)
- Psalm 61
- Psalm 71
- God Tests Abraham's Faith (Genesis 22:1-19)
- God is Israel's Savior (Isaiah 43:1-2)

You are free to choose either your dance style or art medium, but remember to consult with your teacher to ensure the materials you require are available.

You may wish to work independently or in small groups.

Your artistic reflection is to be shared in our class liturgy to be celebrated on:



Unit 4 Reading the Bible

Student Objectives

That students will:

- *Develop an appreciation of the Bible as a collection of literary texts.*
- *Develop basic skills in biblical exegesis.*
- *Gain a deeper understanding of how individual authors understood God to be working in their own lives and the lives of others.*
- *Develop an appreciation of the Bible as a vivid source for learning about God.*

Notes for the teacher:

This unit focuses on the Bible as literature from which one can gain a deeper understanding of God: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. While the Bible is a primary source from which readers can access a unique prophetic and apostolic testimony, these texts are to be understood as the work of human hands and thus individual interpretations of the Word of God. Students are to be encouraged to view the Bible as a collection of texts separated not only by their individual authors, audiences and contexts, but by significant passages of time. This concept may well be paralleled with a shelf in their school library which, while containing books on a common topic, are all individual works unto themselves and accordingly deal with their shared subject matter in different ways. This, along with the notion of canon formation, shall be dealt with in the first lesson, but should remain as a constant reminder throughout the course of this unit.

Total time required:

To complete this unit as it is presented here, it is recommended that a total of 16x45minute periods be allocated. Such a time frame allows for both research and presentation of all tasks outlined. As such an amount of time may not be viable within each educational setting, teachers are invited to manipulate the Unit's contents to suit their individual school's needs. In this light, teachers may wish to select individual Lessons for implementation or, conversely, limit the number of activities undertaken within each Lesson.

For further assistance in teaching this unit of work refer to the Extension Notes for Teachers to be found after Assessment and Evaluation, for explanation and clarification of terms used in the unit

Unit Four Lesson Outline:

Lesson One: *The Bible As A Resource Library*

Lesson Two: *Literary Genres In The Bible*

Lesson Three: *'How To' Guide For Examining Biblical Texts*

Lesson Four: *Characters Of The Hebrew Scriptures & Their Stories*

Lesson Five: *New Testament Characters & Their Stories*

Lesson Six: *Images of God In The Bible*



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Unit 4 Reading the Bible

Lesson 1	The Bible as a Resource Library
<p>Resources</p> <p>This first lesson may most effectively be run within the library to focus students on the expansive and varied nature of the Bible-as-library.</p> <p>Students will need Bibles and Worksheet One: <i>Navigating Your Way Around the Bible</i></p>	<p>Lesson Format</p> <p>Opening Statement for the Unit: In this unit we will learn about the Bible as a collection of text which demonstrates the work of God in peoples' lives. We are going to look at literature written over a 1100 year time span that shared a common quest: the search for God.</p> <p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the Bible?• How do we use it? <p>Discuss: What is a library?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Somewhere books are kept• A place I can go to research something• Somewhere I get answers from• A place where a huge number of books are kept in order according to their content and/or their author's name <p>Select a couple of students to go to any nominated shelf in the non-fiction section and identify the types of books stored there. For the benefit of the group, ask the selected students to respond to the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How many books are on the shelf?• Why are they grouped together?• What is their common subject matter?• Are they all written by the same author?• Were they all published at the same time?• Were they all published in the same city? <p>We are going to look at a much smaller library, called the Bible. In fact, the Bible is more like a single shelf in this library as it contains a large number of books by different authors, from different places and different times. What they all have in common, however, is their subject matter: God and his work in peoples' lives.</p> <p>Activity One: Using Bibles, students are to complete page one of Worksheet One: <i>Navigating Your Way Around the Bible</i>. Upon completion, students are to come back together as a class to discuss the answers, with the teacher elaborating on each response. Emphasis is to be placed on the notion that each book is an entity unto itself and, altogether, they form a library.</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Hebrew Scriptures (also known as the Old Testament) is the religious literature of the Jewish people and are thus the texts which Jesus would have been very familiar with



Unit 4 Reading the Bible

<p>Students will need Bibles and Worksheet One: <i>Navigating Your Way Around the Bible</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• New Testament literature is not upheld by Jewish people but is understood by Christians as continuing the traditions of the Hebrew Scriptures in telling us about God, now understood in the person of Jesus and the fledgling Church• Many different literary genres are included• This library has undergone a significant editing process over the past 2000 years• Each text was originally recorded on either papyrus or within Torah scrolls rather than the modern conception of a bound book*• The Hebrew scriptures) were originally written largely in Hebrew with some texts in Aramaic**• New Testament texts were originally written in Greek**• Choices were made over time about which texts would be included in this library (canon), and which would not <p>*Papyrus and Torah scrolls: The original texts did not appear in the bound style of books we have today. They were often written on either papyrus, a material made from water reeds, or in a scroll, which was unwound and read section by section. Torah scrolls are still used in Jewish synagogues today, often in their original languages.</p> <p>**Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek: The original languages of the Hebrew Scriptures were Hebrew and Aramaic. The New Testament was written in Koine (Common) Greek which was a form of Greek used between 200bce and 600ce. From these original languages, later translation were made into Latin and then into languages common to the local people (vernacular). Because of this extensive amount of reproduction and interpretation, many of our Bibles today use slightly different words to express the same stories. The most accurate translations have been produced using early manuscripts in the original languages.</p> <p>Activity Two: Using either an NRSV or King James Bibles, students are to complete page two of Worksheet One: <i>Navigating Your Way Around the Bible</i>. If your class set of Bibles are neither of these two versions, the references outlined may not reveal a meaningful sentence. The task, in itself, still has value and it is recommended that students still be given the opportunity to locate specific verses in order to become accustomed to biblical referencing style. If a mixed collection of Bibles is used, the teacher may wish to take this as an opportunity to discuss with students the variance in texts which emerges through the translation process.</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why do you think editors added in chapter and verse references?• Do other books have these reference tools?• How do you refer to sections of books that don't?• Why would using page numbers in referencing the Bible be difficult and less accurate? <p>Reaffirm for students that these tools will be utilised extensively in subsequent lessons.</p>
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Unit 4 Reading the Bible

Lesson 2	Literary Genres in the Bible
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need their Bible, one of Worksheet Two (Set of ten) 'Types of Writing in the Bible', and coloured poster paper.</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What different types of writing styles are contained in the Bible?• How do they help us learn about God? <p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Just like there are a wide variety of literary genres contained in a library, there are many different types of writing styles found in the Bible. <p>Activity One:</p> <p>Brainstorm a list of different literary genres found in the school library:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Non-fiction – History books, Geography books etc.• Fiction – Myths, Children's' books, Science fiction etc.• Poetry• Reference books <p>All these books are written in different styles and for different purposes. We don't look up a fiction novel when looking for historical information and we don't use an encyclopaedia to find poetry or songs. Each different type is very much worthwhile when used for its intended purpose. It's the same for different books in the Bible. This library also contains a wide variety of different types of writing including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Myth• Poetry• Proverb• Law• Prophecy• Letters• Narrative• Parable• History• Apocalyptic literature <p>Each, in its own way, conveys who its author understood God to be and reflects on how God was active in their life.</p> <p>Activity Two:</p> <p>Working in pairs, students are to investigate one of these literary genres as they appear in the Bible. This research is to be guided by the set of ten worksheets provided, <i>Types of Writing in the Bible</i>. Each offers a basic background to the literary style and poses as set of questions to be investigated and responded to. Students' findings are to be presented in the form of a poster and accompanied by a brief (1-2 minute) explanation to the class of their nominated genre. This research task may require approximately 3 periods to complete research and presentations.</p>



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Lesson 3	'How To' Guide For Examining Biblical Texts
Resources	Lesson Format
Students will need Worksheet Three: <i>Searching for Meaning in the Bible</i> , page one.	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is an effective way to approach biblical text?• How can we begin to engage with biblical excerpts in a meaningful way? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>Sometimes reading newspaper articles, books or magazine items can be difficult. The language they use is often unclear and hard to understand. They make reference to things that are not familiar for the audience and can generally make it tricky for readers to grasp accurate meaning from. What are some things that make newspaper articles hard to read?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complex language• Lack of pictures to aid interpretation• Excessive length• Lack of background information• Specialist knowledge required of topic <p>It's the same with some biblical texts. Often it's hard to gain effective meaning from biblical excerpts, especially if only reading a brief section without having read the rest of the text. Its language can be difficult, images foreign and there are rarely visual prompts to help young readers.</p> <p>Here is one means by which you can decode and decipher stories from the bible. It's called the Context Method. It can help you uncover what the author was trying to tell his original audience (over nineteen hundred years ago) as well as help you decide on the passage's meaning for readers today. It also offers you a step-by-step means by which to analyse texts as literature from within a broader literary context, just like biblical scholars do.</p> <p>Activity One:</p> <p>As a class, and utilising Worksheet Three: <i>Searching for Meaning in the Bible</i>, go through the six steps of the Context Method. Each step builds a stronger foundation of understanding and knowledge about the selected text.</p> <p>Step One: Identify the Text</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Give the reference and title (if known) <p>Step Two: Where does it come in the book?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Beginning, middle or end?• This information can often tell you if the passage is setting the scene, or tying up and reaffirming a prior theme etc <p>Step Three: Where does it come in the chapter?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What's happening before it?• What's happening after it?



Unit 4 Reading the Bible

<p>Students will need their Bibles and Worksheet Three: <i>Searching for Meaning in the Bible</i>, page one.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Often both these things can help you understanding the message of the excerpt itself better – gives you a context within the literary narrative in which to place its content <p>Step Four: What characters are involved and what’s going on?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is a brief summary of the excerpt itself to clarify its content details <p>Step Five: What meaning might this have had for its original audience?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Did it tell them something about who God is or how to follow him etc?• Did the language or images hold special meaning for the audience?• This will often require teacher guidance and input• Older students may well engage with concordances for this step <p>Step Six: What meaning can it have for readers today?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This is often related to step five• Again, teacher input and guidance may be needed here• Draw connections between the passage’s original message and its place in the life of the student <p>Activity Two: Now, as a class, apply these steps to the biblical excerpt Mark :16-20.</p> <p>Step One:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mark 1:16-20 Calling of the first disciples <p>Step Two:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Towards the beginning of the book which means its message will probably be setting the scene for things to come <p>Step Three:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Prior to this passage, John the Baptist has declared that one greater than he is to come. This person is clearly Jesus. Jesus has just been baptised in the river Jordan and the author has declared Jesus the Son of God. It is from this point of view that the rest of Mark’s gospel is to be understood.• After this passage, Jesus and his new followers travel to Capernaum where his teaching affirms his authority – an authority greater than the most learned of Jewish leaders within the synagogue. This authority is affirmed with healing. <p>Step Four:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• This passage is set on the shores of the Sea of Galilee. Here, Jesus calls his first disciples to “follow” him. These are Simon, Andrew, James and John. All men hear this call and respond immediately, leaving behind their livelihoods, possessions and families.• Interesting to note that James and John had ‘hired men’ indicating that they were more wealthy than Simon and Andrew who did not have such a sizable business. <p>Step Five:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To be a disciple of Jesus, readers had to be prepared to hear their call, respond immediately and “follow” just as these men did. They had to be prepared to give up worldly goods, family and
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<p>Students will need their Bibles and Worksheet Three: <i>Searching for Meaning in the Bible</i>, page two.</p>	<p>their everyday lives to go with Jesus on his journey.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Jesus' journey and that of a disciple's is outlined in the rest of this gospel. This passage sets the scene for the Jesus story and that of anyone who wishes to "follow". <p>Step Six:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being a disciple, requires the same things: hearing his call, immediate response and a willingness to "follow" Jesus' way. Just like in the first century, this is not easy. But Mark reassures his readers that Jesus is worth taking such risks for as he truly is the Son of God. Not only does he fulfil the promises of the Hebrew Scriptures and those of John, but he demonstrated his authority in both teaching and healing.• Discipleship involves sacrifice but Jesus is the genuine messiah. <p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does this method allow us to delve into the text?• Why do you think biblical scholars use this method and others like it? <p>Activity Three:</p> <p>Students are to attempt their own exegesis using the Bibles and Worksheet Three: <i>Searching for Meaning in the Bible</i>, page two. Students can choose any one of the following passages to complete their Context Method exegesis in reference to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mark 14:32-42 (Prayer in the garden of Gethsemane)• Mark 5:25-34 (Healing of the haemorrhaging woman)• Mark 4: 35-41 (Calming of the Sea of Galilee) <p>Upon completion, students can move into three groups, according to the passage chosen, and discuss their responses with fellow students. The teacher should move from group to group to offer depth and insight to the exegesis of each excerpt.</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <p>Reaffirm for students that they, as biblical scholars, now have the basic tools to examine, in a critical fashion, any biblical text. Students should be encouraged to utilise this method whenever engaging with biblical passages as it will allow them greater access to the text, both in terms of content depth and accuracy.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers:</p> <p>This method will be built upon in subsequent year levels to encompass an understanding of textual authors, audiences, and cultural context, aiming to encourage an historical-critical methodology for biblical exegesis. Such a method is widely upheld within biblical scholarship as being that which produces a well informed and well-rounded interpretation of scripture. Teachers would be encouraged to model the Context Method of exegesis whenever engaging in textual analysis with the students, making it an essential tool within the faith education classroom.</p>
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Lesson 4	Characters of the Hebrew Scriptures & Their Stories
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need their Bibles and Worksheet Four: <i>Biography of a Character from the Hebrew Scriptures.</i></p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are key characters in the Hebrew Scriptures? • What are their stories? • Why are they important for Christians today? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>Heroes are people who are admired for their outstanding qualities. They are often seen as superhuman, doing things and possessing characteristics beyond those of many ordinary individuals. Who are some heroes you admire? Brainstorm for names of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sporting Heroes – James Hird, Ian Thorpe, Don Bradman, etc. • Skilled charity workers – Mother Teresa, Fred Hollows, Prof. Ian Frazer, etc. • War heroines - Weary Dunlop, etc. <p>Often authors use characters that can be called heroes within texts to convey a story or message to readers. Sometimes these heroes are fictional characters like J.K.Rowling’s character of Harry Potter. His superhuman qualities fight forces of evil to triumph in the face of adversity. Sometimes authors use real life heroes to tell their stories.</p> <p>The authors of the Hebrew Scriptures are no different. Many characters found in this literature can be considered heroes due to their outstanding qualities that set them aside from all others. These characters were often either real people or characters based on the lives of real people. They feature in the Hebrew Scriptures because of what they teach us about God and our relationship with him.</p> <p>Activity One:</p> <p>As a class, brainstorm a list of known characters from the Hebrew Scriptures. The teacher may well need to supplement this listing for students.</p> <p>Such a list may include: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Sarah, Hannah, Ruth, King David, Noah, Joseph, Jeremiah, Isaiah etc</p> <p>Activity Two:</p> <p>Using Worksheet Four, <i>Biography of a Character from the Hebrew Scriptures</i>, students are to work in groups of three to research a nominated character. Students are to be guided in their research by the questions posed within the worksheet. It is recommended that students divide the workload according to that suggested on the worksheet.</p>



Unit 4 Reading the Bible

<p>This task is best undertaken either in the library or information technology centre.</p>	<p>Students' research is to be presented in a 5-6 minute oral presentation to the class. Each student may present their own findings individually within their group's presentation or the group may wish to pool their findings and present them as a single collective. Students may choose their format of presentation (eg. Role plays, class activities, etc). Both library texts and the internet are to as the basis of this research. This task will require 3-4 periods to complete research and presentations.</p> <p>Suggested Internet Sources: www.bible.org www.newadvent.org http://demo.lutherproductions.com/bibletutor/level1/program/start/people/menu.htm http://www.mustardseed.net/html/people.html www.sparknotes.com/lit/oldtestament/characters.html</p> <p>Using Google to search individual character names is also effective.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: It is recommended that a maximum of three groups present their findings per subsequent class to maximise student engagement. It is also recommended that characters are undertaken by a single group only to avoid the duplication to material and to maximise the breadth of material covered.</p>
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Unit 4 Reading the Bible

Lesson 5	New Testament Characters & Their Stories
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need their Bibles and Worksheet Five: <i>Resume of a New Testament Character</i></p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who are characters in the New Testament? • What are their stories? • Why are they important for Christians today? <p>Notes For Teachers: This lesson is an alternate version of Lesson 5 in Unit 1 where it is entitled <i>The Early Church</i>. If Unit 1 has already been completed, teachers could refer students back to this class as a means by which to open this lesson. If the <i>Founding Members of the Earliest Christian Communities</i> research task was completed in Unit 1, teachers may wish to either revisit these rather than completing Activity Two here, assign different characters to each student, or ask students to use material from this initial class in a different way.</p> <p>Discuss: Like in the Hebrew Scriptures, the New Testament contains the stories of many people who played significant roles within the contemporary religious community of their time. In the New Testament, these people were key players in the establishment of the Christian faith. They lay the ground work for the world-wide church we know today. Many of these people were original followers of Jesus, others did not know him directly, and others still played their part by being in opposition to early believers.</p> <p>Activity One: As a class, brainstorm for names of people associated with the early church. These may well include Jesus' family members, disciples, appointed apostles, political leaders or even New Testament authors. Make a listing of these names on the board and allow students to offer what information they have on their named character. Such a list may include: Jesus, Mary, Joseph, Peter, Mary Magdeline, James, Phillip, Simon, Andrew, Judas, Herod, Pontius Pilot, Paul/Saul, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John etc.</p> <p>Activity Two: Students are to research one of these biblical characters and present their findings in the form of a resume. Research is to utilise both books and the internet and will be guided by Worksheet Five: <i>Resume of a New Testament Character</i>. Prior to commencing research, discuss with the class what a resume is, what it is used for and what sort of information it contains. Discuss the information sought for this first century resume:</p>



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- the character's background
- work undertaken prior to Jesus' ministry, during and after it
- their personal strengths as a disciple and exemplar of faith

Basic biographical information and details regarding their role in the New Testament narrative are to be outlined here, so encourage the students to be creative in presenting their research in this resume form. This research task will take approximately two periods to complete.

Suggested Internet Sources:

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Category:New_Testament_people

<http://www.mustardseed.net/html/people.html>

Using Google to search individual character names is also effective.



Unit 4 Reading the Bible

Lesson 6	Images of God in the Bible
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>General background reading on God in <i>The Simpsons</i>: http://www.snpp.com/other/papers/gb.paper.html http://www.religion-online.org/showarticle.asp?title=2113 http://www.simpsoncrazy.com/information/articles/religion.shtml</p> <p>Regarding <i>Homer the Heretic</i> see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Homer_the_Heretic A still image of Homer's God is available to view at: http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/a/a2/Homer_the_Heretic.gif</p> <p>The teacher will need to have a variety of images available for students either in hard copy or in the form of a listing of the given web sites.</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who do you think God is? • What does God look like? • What characteristics does God have? <p>Discuss: Everyone has their own image of God. How do you imagine God to look?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Old man with grey hair • Young man with a dark beard • A ball of light • A grandma-style woman • Like Santa clause but no red suite • A formless being in a long black hooded cloak <p>Activity One: As a class, watch a selected scene of <i>Homer the Heretic</i> (<i>The Simpsons</i>, Episode 403) which depicts God: the final minute of this episode is a good example as it depicts Homer walking with God who is about to tell him the purpose of life.</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is God visually depicted here? • What parts of God are not shown? (His face is never shown) • Why do you think the animators depicted him this way? • What characteristics does God have? • What is the relationship like between Homer and God? • God is different to other characters in one main physical way – can you pick how God is set aside from all other <i>Simpsons</i> humanity? (God has five fingers, not four like all other characters) <p>Activity Two: More traditional artists have also tried to represent God in many different ways. Using a variety of images, explore as a class the different visions artists have had of God.</p> <p>Michelangelo's <i>The Creation of Adam</i> http://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/en/7/73/God2-Sistine_Chapel.png</p> <p>God as Sunlight http://www.fineartsemporium.com/scws/artist/2005%20images/God%20Is%20Talking%20To%20Me.jpg</p> <p>God as Angel http://soc.jpl.nasa.gov/images/roman-god-saturn.jpg</p> <p>God as clouds http://www.agapewebpromotion.com/media/desktop-wallpaper-for-computers/the-canvas-of-God-1_1280x10.jpg</p>



Unit 4 Reading the Bible

<p>Suggested texts: Crumlin, R. <i>Images of Religion In Australian Art</i>. Kensington, NSW: Bay Books (1988).</p> <p>Crumlin, R. <i>Beyond Belief: Modern Art and the Religious Imagination</i>. Melbourne: National Gallery of Victoria. (1988).</p> <p>Students will need their Bibles and Worksheet Six: <i>Images of God in the Bible</i>. It is recommended that this worksheet be blown up to A3 size for ease of completion.</p>	<p>God as Eye http://z.about.com/d/urbanlegends/1/0/-/7/eye_of_god.jpg</p> <p>God as Colour http://studio.neverside.com/download/69/eye_of_god.jpg</p> <p>God as Businessman http://www.cultv.com/images/art/god.gif</p> <p>God as Creator http://www.netsoc.tcd.ie/~nglynn/pics/god%20makes%20the%20snake.jpg</p> <p>God as Asian Jesus http://davenation.com/madonnas/ki-chang.jpg</p> <p>God as Juggler http://www.jeresmith.com/portfolio/images/artwork-god.jpg</p> <p>Chinese God http://academic.brooklyn.cuny.edu/core9/phalsall/images/wenchang.gif</p> <p>God as Snake http://www.english.ufl.edu/faculty/publications/2001summer/images/greger_god.jpg</p> <p>God from Taiwan http://www.burgessbroadcast.org/taiwan/Taipei200406/pics/God-Fu.jpg</p> <p>Horned God http://www.tradetalk.de/english/gallery/images_johnh/horned_god.jpg</p> <p>God on a Tornado http://www.andrew.cmu.edu/user/anegrey/final%20selections/4.%20god%20on%20tornado.jpg</p> <p>Working in small groups of four-five students, they are to select (or be assigned) three images. In relation to these they are to discuss the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What elements are common amongst these images?• What elements make each one distinct?• Are some more positive, affirming or attractive images than others?• Do you think this may reflect on the artist's own relationship with God? If so, how?• Is God depicted as male, female or genderless?• Which one of these images, if any, particularly appeals to you? Why? <p>Activity Three: With all such images in mind, let's look at what images of God are offered in the Bible. Using their Bibles and Worksheet Six: <i>Images of God in the Bible</i>, students are to examine a range of biblical images of God.</p> <p>NB. Teachers should clarify with students the genre of 'metaphor' prior to them completing this task to ensure they understand both its literary function and subsequent meaning. Teachers are encouraged to highlight for students that such a literary tool is not to be taken literally, but instead gleaned for its deeper meaning. Teachers would also be encouraged to ensure that students derive accurate meaning from these metaphors</p>
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through discussion of the comparative vehicle and placement of this within is historical context.

Discuss:

- All of these biblical images tell us something about who God is.
- Each tells us something about God's relationship with humanity.
- Is God presented as male, female or Genderless in each text?
- Which of these biblical images appeals to you? Why?
- Why do you think such a variety of images is offered in the Bible?

It is really important to remember that the being of God is not able to be easily put into words. That's why we have so many different depictions of God throughout the Bible. It's often easier to discuss what characteristics God has, what God values, and what our personal experience of God is.

No words will ever fully describe the well-beyond human being that God is. In fact, many ancient, learned philosophers and believers had often come to this conclusion when they said:

- God is "inexpressible, the invisible, the ungraspable" (St. John Chrysostom)
- "If you understood Him, it would not be God" (St. Augustine)

That's why it is really important to remember that while God is so transcendent, ie. beyond us as human beings, God is also constantly with us in a most intimate way. We can personally experience God and come to know what God is like, just like these biblical authors did, if we look at our life experiences through the eyes of faith.

Christianity, like Judaism and Islam, teaches that all people are "made in the image of God" (Genesis 1:27). This does not necessarily mean God has two eyes, a nose, a mouth and hair etc. In fact, Christians generally believe that it is our inner-most selves that reflect God's likeness: our inner-most goodness, not our outer, physical selves.

Accordingly, whatever picture of God we may have in our minds, we should remember that God is so much more than what our wildest dreams can imagine, more than what any one person can every hope for.

Note for Teachers:

Activities One and Two will need approximately one class each to complete, while Activity Three may require two.



Unit 4 Reading the Bible

Assessment Ideas

How well did the students:

- demonstrate their appreciation of the Bible as a collection of texts through their research and presentation of a biblical literary genre?
- demonstrate basic skills in biblical exegesis in the application the Context Method analysis to selected passages from Mark's gospel?
- demonstrate their understanding of biblical texts being an exploration of the author's understanding about God and his work in people lives through the research and presentation of a *Biography of a Character from the Hebrew Scriptures* and a *Resume of a New Testament Character*?
- demonstrate their appreciation of the Bible as a vivid source for learning about God through contemplation of selected biblical texts and completion of *Images of God in the Bible* matrix?

Evaluation

How well did the unit:

- lead the students to a deeper appreciation and knowledge of the Bible as a library of texts with the common subject matter of God and his work in people's lives?
- equip students with tools and processes for engaging with biblical text?
- engage students in active literary analysis?
- deepen student's knowledge and connection to the work of God in peoples' lives as evidenced in the Bible?
- enable the students to articulate their insights and responses to images of God presented in biblical texts?
- invite students to reflect upon the being of God and his role in their own lives?
- encourage students to question, think, explore, share and contribute to inquiry into the Bible as a key resource library and to make connections between its content and their own lives?

Additional References:

Dutney, A. *Where Did the Joy Come From: Revisiting the Basis of Union* Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 2001. (ISBN 1 86407 221 0)

Merritt, D.R. *Understanding the Uniting Church In Australia*. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1996. (ISBN 1 86407 143 5)

Basis of Union (1992)- available online (<http://nat.uca.org.au/basisofunion/Basis1992.htm>)

McBrien, Richard P. (ed.) *Encyclopedia of Catholicism*. San Francisco: Harper, 1989. (ISBN 0 06 0653388)



Unit 4 Reading the Bible

Extension notes for the teacher:

- *The Bible is a collection of individual texts that were composed over a 1100 year time period.*
- *The earliest of the Hebrew Scriptures come from around the time of Kings David and Solomon (ca. 1000bce).*
- *The latest New Testament texts were being completed around the end of the first or beginning of the second century ce.*
- *The process of collation into the canon we have today occurred during the first centuries of the early Church and was completed at least by the time of Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus of the 4th century, both of which generally outline the current collection of biblical texts.*
- *The earliest texts were written on scrolls, although the use of papyrus and/or vellum soon overtook this earlier form due to ease of usage, storage and durability.*
- *Papyrus is a paper-like material made from the stem of papyrus plant. Vellum was made from animal skins which were scraped and cleaned in order to create a smooth surface on which one could write. Either of these two materials could subsequently be sewn together to form a codex, the precursor to our modern book.*
- *The term 'Hebrew Scriptures' is often used amongst scholarship in order to recognise the Judaic heritage of Old Testament literature. This term shall be used to refer to Old Testament scripture throughout these units of work.*

- *The Protestant canon has a total of 66 texts, with 39 in the Hebrew Scriptures and 27 in the New Testament.*
- *This canon was arrived at after an extensive process of assessment which sought to establish the authority of textual authorship and worthiness of content.*
- *The Bible is the work of humans who sought to convey the Word of God as they understood and experienced it in their own lives.*
- *The Bible is a source of religious 'truths' focusing on who God is and how we are to live in order to be in right relation with him. It is not to be read as literal 'truth' itself, either in the sense of historical, scientific or quantifiable fact.*
- *The Bible has a central place in the life and witness of the Uniting Church and as such, the reading of scripture is considered vital to the religious life of all its members and Christian peoples throughout the world.*

Key Terms Used Within This Unit:

Apocalyptic literature

The term 'apocalypse' is a Greek term meaning 'unveiling' or 'revelation'. Apocalyptic literature is typically a genre of texts that 'reveal' to readers symbolic visions of future times. In terms of New Testament literature, the Book of Revelations is the only text considered to fall within this genre of writing. Thought to be written by John, the author of the fourth Gospel, most likely in the closing decade of the first century, this text outlines visions of the 'parousia' or 'end times' at which point the world as we know it will cease to exist. In this Christian text, the leading figure is Christ, while in Judaic literature the revealing agent usually appears as an angelic figure. This genre of writing is filled with symbolic references and vivid imagery as readers are taken on a journey around the cosmos at the end of time.



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b.c.e.:

An abbreviated form of 'before the common era'. This phrase denotes the period prior to 0, the turning of the 'common era' and was often previously referred to in Christian terms by the term 'before Christ' or b.c. As such a term has no credible relevance for non-Christians, biblical scholarship gives preference to the use of the more generic term b.c.e.

c.e.:

An abbreviated form of 'common era'. This phrase denotes the period of time from 0 onwards which was previously often referred to by the Christian term 'anno dominie' or a.d. As with b.c., such terminology has no meaning outside Christian belief and has accordingly been abandoned by biblical scholarship, who now gives preference to this generic demarcation.

ca.:

An abbreviated form of the Greek term 'circa' meaning around or approximately.

Canon:

This term comes from the Greek 'kanon' meaning 'norm' or 'standard'. It denotes the authoritative corpus of writings that together make up the biblical collection. The process of canon formation was determined over an extensive period of time during which texts were deemed normative for the faith. The canon of Hebrew Scriptures was compiled by the end of the first century ce., while the New Testament did not consolidate itself until the fourth century ce. Such selection was made on the basis of each book's teachings about God. It is important to realise that there were many books that did not make it into the canon we have today. Some Christians, such as Catholics, add extra books to today's standard Protestant collection which highlights that canon formation is a process based very much upon a tradition's individual discernment of worthiness. For the New Testament corpus, such worthiness was determined primarily by two elements: the validity of authorship and the usefulness of texts in the context of worship.

Exegesis:

This term comes from the Greek 'exegeisthai' meaning 'to draw out or explain'. It is the analytical study of biblical text. The aim of exegesis is to allow contemporary readers to gain meaning from ancient text. There are many different exegetical methods used within biblical scholarship including those that examine and assess the originality of manuscripts (textual criticism), those that examine literary forms within texts (form criticism) and those focused upon the editorial process which a text may have undergone (redaction criticism). Since the eighteenth century Enlightenment movement, there has been a dedicated move within biblical scholarship to 'read out of' rather than 'into' texts. This move has sought to place biblical texts within their original historical contexts rather than subsuming them into our modern world and distancing them from their intended audience and meaning.

Here, at this junior level, every effort should be made to lay the foundations of sound textual interpretation and thus a basic method of exegesis has been offered here. This, in later year levels, should be built upon to allow students access to more accurate textual interpretation and a more vivid understanding of the world from which these texts emerged.



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Hebrew Scriptures:

This term refers to the collection of texts known to Christians as the 'Old Testament'. In contemporary biblical scholarship, this term is given preference over 'Old Testament' due to the latter's presumption of a second collection. The terms 'old' and 'new' can also denote a value judgement being active, with the 'new' in some way surpassing the 'old'. Accordingly, while the term 'Old Testament' is of no relevance to Judaic scholars, Christian scholarship also notes the vital nature of this collection which, while Christians may believe that they find their fulfilment in the person of Christ, are by no means to be devalued by or replaced with the 'New Testament'. Often the terms 'First' and 'Second' Testaments are also used. Throughout these units of work, the term 'Hebrew Scriptures' shall be used.

Myth

This term comes from the Greek 'mythos' meaning 'story' or 'fiction'. 'Myth' as a literary genre requires particular care and attention when used with students in order to balance the notion of 'truth' in such a way that does not see all such texts neither taken at their literal word, nor abandoned totally as worthless fable. Myths are some of the most valued and loved texts within the Bible as they reveal to readers truths about God and created order's relationship with this divine being. Perhaps the most well known biblical myths are the two creation stories that appear in the opening chapters of Genesis (1:1-2:4; 2:5-25). Taken at face value, these two stories present many contradictory details about the process of creation that saw the world and its inhabitants come into being. Even when considering that these texts were written over four centuries apart by different Israelite traditions (Priestly – ca 500s bce and Yahwist – ca. 950s bce respectfully), the variation in their content is difficult to reconcile. It is through recognition of their mythological nature that readers can move beyond such differences and, in fact, gain a much richer understanding of the authors' intended messages. It is in this way that the literary genre of 'myth' conveys rich truth beyond superficial story details. It is at their very essence that the author conveys foundational understandings, religious 'truths', with the 'myth' or story itself being but the vehicle for such truths' communication. (Also refer to 'Truth' outlined above.)

Parable

Parables are short stories which involve a simile or metaphor which intends to describe or elaborate upon a given lesson. While the language and imagery engaged is quite simple and characteristically very familiar to the intended audience, the message contained often confronts people, conveying an unexpected challenge. Accordingly, the literary devices of contrast, reversal and repetition are characteristic of this genre, catching the audience unaware and challenging their current thoughts, beliefs and behaviours. Jesus used parables, in their oral form, as a primary means of teaching throughout his ministry. It was only later that the Gospel writers took these oral traditions and recorded them in literary form.

Prophecy

This genre of biblical literature records details of God's communication with human agents, who in turn convey such messages to selected individuals or their contemporary community at large. Prophets are often very average individuals who are called by God to do beyond average work. They often are people who see themselves as being far from appropriately equipped to be such messengers. Amos, for example, was an 8th century bce sheep herdsman and dresser of sycamore-trees who questioned his capabilities regarding public speaking and all that goes with such a role. The prophet's message is always a challenging one, far from welcomed by the receiving audience. This message is God's message, conveyed by the human prophet, calling for change in behaviour, attitude and/or values currently espoused by the community.



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Accordingly, prophets are largely the bearers of unwanted news, demanding change from the people and announcing the threat of things to come if the prophetic message is not heeded. Of note regarding this genre of literature is the fact that prophecy in its original form is oral by nature. Biblical prophets did not deliver God's message in written form, but spoke to its intended audience. It was only at a later time, sometimes a much later time, that these messages were recorded either by the prophet themselves or a subsequent individual. Thus, prophecy as a literary genre is secondary to prophecy's primary form: oral.

Proverb

Like secular proverbs such as 'A stitch in time saves nine', biblical proverbs are brief statements which seek to convey knowledge or advice to the reader. In the case of those recorded in the Bible, such advice generally pertains to an individual's behaviour or values, leading the reader towards a life that is both pleasing to God and harmonious with others. Accordingly, biblical proverbs contain some form of practical truth about how to live life in a way that is pleasing to God as observed or experienced by its author.

Truth:

The notion of 'truth' will emerge on a regular basis when dealing with biblical texts. This notion should be well considered prior to entering into discussion of biblical 'truth' with students. It is important to note that there are different types of 'truth'. Scientific truth is a factual, quantifiable and test-proven truth that allows us to know more about the reality of the world around us. Historical truth is able to be researched and placed within a given time, based upon evidence and artefacts from the period itself. Proverbial truth is the understanding gained from lessons in life or from stories about these lessons. It teaches a type of truth that is not quantifiable as such, but is information that resonates with an individual in terms of morals or values. Religious truths are very similar to this latter form. These, too, are often unable to be 'proven' with evidence, but are ratified by faith alone. An obvious example of this type of truth can be found in the creation myths of Genesis. The 'truth' in these tales is not how God made the world, be this in seven days or through the creation of Eden and its inhabitants, but that God did create the world and, indeed, continues to re-create. In addition, such myths tell us that God continues to be present, seeking relationship with all of humanity and created order.

While the Bible does not seek to offer scientific truth, it does contain historical, proverbial and religious truths. Some elements of biblical text are set within clearly researchable periods of history and thus offer some degree of information about the era. Many truths about righteous living can be gained within its texts. Finally, all biblical texts seek to offer an understanding of who God is and our relationship to him. These, be them presented within mythological tales of creation, songs of praise and thanksgiving or narratives outlining stories of the early church, all seek to convey religious 'truth' about this God as the authors understood it to be.



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Word of God:

Two definitions of this phrase require consideration here. Firstly, the Word of God is the living Christ, the eternal Son of God incarnate. Secondly, the Scriptures are also understood by Christians as the word of God in that they testify to this divine and human Word, Jesus Christ. Within themselves, the scriptures are not just human testimony, as the Spirit has spoken through them and continues to speak through them. In this sense, the Bible is the divine word of God in the words of human beings. Paradoxically, the Bible arises out of the community of faith (Israel-Church) while also standing over against it: nurturing its life, challenging it, encouraging it. In this way, the Bible is understood as a 'unique prophetic and apostolic testimony' (Basis of Union, paragraph 5) of this living Christ. The term 'unique' denotes for believers the place of the Bible amongst other sacred texts. The authors contained in this sacred collection were individuals who saw God (prophets) and who were sent out (apostles) to communicate this to the world. The term 'testimony' highlights that it is a form of human communication; it comes to us via the work of human hand, not divine. As such, while witnessing the message of God, the Bible is the work of humanity, guided and nurtured by the Holy Spirit, and it is this Spirit which enable the text to reveal to the Church the ongoing meaning of the Bible for believes throughout the ages.

Navigating Your Way Around the Bible

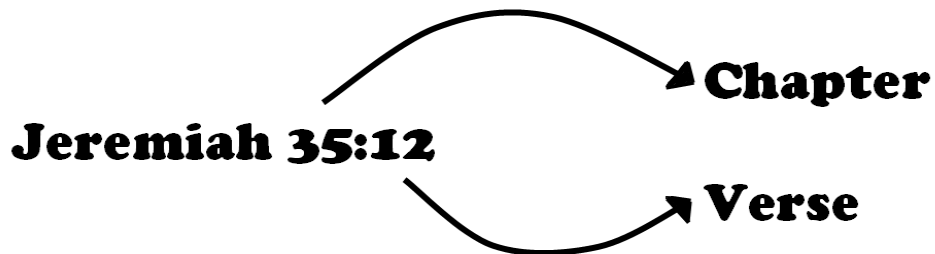
The Bible is just like a library, or at least a single shelf in the library. It contains a whole range of books by different authors, who wrote in different times and in different places. What all the books have in common, however, is their common subject matter: God and his work in peoples' lives.

Using the contents page of your Bible, see if you can answer the following questions:

1. What are the two main collections of texts called? _____
2. How many individual texts make up the first collection? _____
4. How many texts make up the second collection? _____
5. Look up the book of Psalms. How many psalms are there in total? _____
6. The first four books of the New Testament are called the Gospels. List them in the order that they appear. _____
7. List the names of letters found in the New Testament which were written to people in the following cities and towns: (Hint - look at the letter's titles!)

Corinth	_____	Philippi	_____
Ephesus	_____	Galatia	_____
Thessalonica	_____	Colossae	_____
8. Leviticus is a book where God outlines his Laws to the people of Israel. What important character does he communicate these to? _____
9. The Book of Acts is the second volume that accompanies one of the gospels. Both texts open by addressing a person called Theophilus. Which of the four gospels is volume one? _____
10. Do you think the Bible was always in this current form - bound as a single book with page numbers? Give a reason for your answer.

Rather than just using page numbers, editors have tried to make your job easier when looking passages up in the Bible by including 'chapter' and 'verse' reference numbers for you. Chapter references are the large, bold numbers while verse references are the smaller numbers usually found at the beginning of sentences. These are used in the following format:



Try out this navigating tool by looking up the following references and copying down the first word of each. Once finished, you should have a message revealed from your list of words!

1. Psalm 74:18 _____
2. Genesis 42:11 _____
3. 1Corinthians 12:29 _____
4. Exodus 27:17 _____
5. Numbers 7:37 _____
6. Colossians 3:20 _____
7. 1 Samuel 9:13 _____
8. Job 5:13 _____
9. Ephesians 1:3 _____
10. Jeremiah 10:14 _____
11. Joshua 13:8 _____
12. Romans 13:10 _____

See! Navigating you way around this extensive collection is easy once you know how. Remember, always go to the contents page first, and then use the chapter and verse reference numbers.

Navigating Your Way Around the Bible

The Bible is just like a library, or at least a single shelf in the library. It contains a whole range of books by different authors, who wrote in different times and in different places. What all the books have in common, however, is their common subject matter: God and his work in peoples' lives.

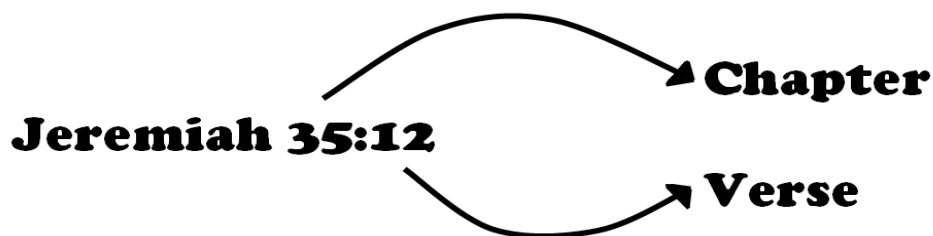
Using the contents page of your Bible, see if you can answer the following questions:

1. What are the two main collections of texts called? **Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament) & New Testament**
2. How many individual texts make up the first collection? **39 books**
4. How many texts make up the second collection? **27 books**
5. Look up the book of Psalms. How many psalms are there in total? **150**
6. The first four books of the New Testament are called the Gospels. List them in the order that they appear. **Matthew, Mark, Luke, John**
7. List the names of letters found in the New Testament which were written to people in the following cities and towns: (Hint - look at the letter's titles!)

Corinth	1&2 Corinthians	Philippi	Philippians
Ephesus	Ephesians	Galatia	Galatians
Thessalonica	Thessalonians	Colossae	Colossians

8. Leviticus is a book where God outlines his Laws to the people of Israel. What important character does he communicate these to? **Moses**
9. The Book of Acts is the second volume that accompanies one of the gospels. Both texts open by addressing a person called Theophilus. Which of the four gospels is volume one? **Luke**
10. Do you think the Bible was always in this current form - bound as a single book with page numbers? Give a reason for your answer.
No because each text was written at a different time, in a different place by different people and were only collated at a later time. Discuss reasoning further with students.

Rather than just using page numbers, editors have tried to make your job easier when looking passages up in the Bible by including 'chapter' and 'verse' reference numbers for you. Chapter references are the large, bold numbers while verse references are the smaller numbers usually found at the beginning of sentences. These are used in the following format:



Try out this navigating tool by looking up the following references and copying down the first word of each. Once finished, you will have a message revealed from your list of words!

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. Psalm 74:18 | Remember |
| 2. Genesis 42:11 | We |
| 3. 1Corinthians 12:29 | Are |
| 4. Exodus 27:17 | All |
| 5. Numbers 7:37 | His |
| 6. Colossians 3:20 | Children |
| 7. 1 Samuel 9:13 | As |
| 8. Job 5:13 | He |
| 9. Ephesians 1:3 | Blessed |
| 10. Jeremiah 10:14 | Everyone |
| 11. Joshua 13:8 | With |
| 12. Romans 13:10 | Love |

See! Navigating your way around this extensive collection is easy once you know how. Remember, always go to the contents page first, and then use the chapter and verse reference numbers.

TYPES OF WRITING IN THE BIBLE:

MYTHS

Myths are stories that, that contain a deeper message that reveals some kind of truth beyond its obvious, literal story. They are very similar to 'fables'. One fable you may know well is that of the *Tortoise and the Hare*. This fable has both a tortoise and a hare in a race together. Now, of course, the hare was a really fast runner and you would think that he would win the race over the slow tortoise. Instead, the hare took such an arrogant attitude during the race that he managed to waste lots of time just showing off, while the tortoise plodded away until he reached the finish line...first! Here, the truth does not lie in whether or not there was really a race between two such animals, but the lesson to be learnt: focus on your goal, work consistently, don't show off and just get the job done. This is how to be a winner in life. Biblical myths are the same in that you have to dig for the truth as its story is not literally true but its deeper message is.

TASK: Investigate a creation myth found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

READ: Genesis 1:1 – 2:4

PRESENT THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

1. Retell this myth in a series of pictures.
2. List five characteristics of God that are evident in this story.
3. Where men or women created first?
4. At what stage of creation were men and women made?
5. What is the purpose given by God to human kind here?
6. What does God create that is evil?
7. What does God create that is good?
8. With these answers in mind, outline what you think is the important truth to be gained from this story.

Hint: Look below the surface of the story to see what it tells us about God and our relationship with him.

TYPES OF WRITING IN THE BIBLE:

POETRY

Poetry is found in the Bible in the book of Psalms, which is part of the 'Wisdom Literature' collection. Psalms are either songs or poems that convey very passion-filled messages. Some sing the praises of God. Others cry about the stresses and misfortunes of life. Many celebrate the all-powerful and all-loving nature of God while others question where such a God is in their times of trouble. It is thought that many of the psalms were written by King David, during his reign from 1010 to 970 BC but we are not sure of this. Poetry such as that found in the Book of Psalms contain beautiful imagery of God and is seen to reflect, in an expressive way, upon our relationship with him. They are evidence of people with faith who place their trust in a God who cares for them: both in good times and bad.

TASK: Investigate a piece of poetry found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

READ: Psalm 23

PRESENT THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

1. Present the content of this psalm in a picture.
2. Outline, in your own words, the message its author is trying to convey.
3. List the emotions being written about in this poetry.
4. How is God described here?
5. What do you think this image of God is meant to mean for readers?
6. Why do you think the author chose to write poetry here rather than use another form of writing? Hint: What advantages does this creative style of writing have?
7. If King David was the author of this psalm, use your imagination and outline as to what may have been happening in his life three thousand years ago that caused him to write this praise-filled song.

TYPES OF WRITING IN THE BIBLE:

PROVERBS

The Bible contains a selection of books that are called 'Wisdom Literature'. These texts' main purpose is to teach readers practical lessons about how to live good, productive and happy lives as God wants us to. Books that fall into this category are: Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Wisdom of Solomon, Song of Songs and Sirach. While some of these texts use song (such as Song of Songs), others are written in very brief, direct language which is like 'words of wisdom' from friends when we are troubled. They teach from the point of view of the author's own life experiences and are often very practical bits of advice about how to live a good life. The book of Proverbs is a great example of this literature. It offers a collection of short pieces of advice about how to be the best person you can be both in terms of our relationships with other people and with God.

TASK: Investigate a selection of proverbs found in the Hebrew Scriptures

READ: Proverbs 10:12, 18:2, 29:23

PRESENT THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

1. Rewrite each of these proverbs in your own words, using a dictionary to check any words you are uncertain about.
2. Take special note of each proverb's structure. It has two halves doesn't it? What is the difference between the first half and the second half?
3. What characteristics do each of these proverbs criticise?
4. What characteristics do each of these proverbs encourage?
5. List four characteristics you value in a good friend. Why are these important to you?
6. Pick two of these characteristics you value in good friends and write your own proverbs teaching about why they are vital. Hint: remember that your proverb needs two halves.
7. Have a look through some of the other proverbs outlined in this book. Pick one that you really like and copy it onto your *Proverbs* poster.
8. Outline why this proverb is attractive to you.

TYPES OF WRITING IN THE BIBLE:

LAWS

Laws are a vital part of Hebrew Scriptures and are valued because of their understanding of what a healthy and happy society should be based on: a love of God and respect for our fellow human beings. Such laws are found in the books of Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy and Numbers. In all of these books, each book presents God as being the one who outlines the law to the people of Israel (another name for Jewish people) having just saved them from slavery in Egypt. They come at the point in the story where God has offered to be in a special relationship with these people, one that requires God to live in the presence of the people and the people to live in such a way that respects both this God and fellow human beings. All these laws are communicated to the people through a specially selected man: Moses. Perhaps the most famous section of these laws is what we call the Ten Commandments, or Decalogue. These ten laws form the basis of Jewish, Christian and Islamic understandings of how to live in friendship with both God and each other.

TASK: Investigate a set of laws found in the Hebrew Scriptures.

READ: Ten Commandments Exodus 20:1-17

PRESENT THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

1. Number each of these ten laws. Some are tricky so here's a hint: the first is 20:3; the second is 20:4-6; the third is about not using God's name in inappropriate ways; the fourth one has four verses in it.
2. Rewrite these ten laws in your own words.
3. Four of these laws are about our relationship with God. Which are they?
4. Six of these laws are about how we should live as a community. Which are they?
5. Who gave the people of Israel these laws and where?
6. How do you think these laws would have helped create a safe, happy and healthy society for the people of Israel?
7. If you were the leader of a new nation, in a newly discovered land and you had the opportunity to try and create your ideal community, what would be your Five Commandments?

TYPES OF WRITING IN THE BIBLE:

NARRATIVE

Narrative is a type of writing used when an author has a story to tell and a message to convey. Narratives, like many TV dramas, always have four common elements: a narrator, a setting, characters and a plot. The narrator is the person telling the story and is often not in the story itself. Sometimes they are the author of the text, but this is not always the case. The setting of a story is like the stage setting of a play as it acts like a backdrop to the drama. The characters are all those people involved in the action. The plot is the storyline itself being conveyed in the setting by the characters. By identifying these three things, you will get to the heart of what the author is trying to tell you. As investigators into the Bible, you need to keep in mind one additional factor. As the information is written from the perspective of the author, in the form of a story, you have to keep in mind that that it is the narrator's way of passing on a message to you – it is not necessarily a factual report of events. In fact, some stories are told by more than one author, in their own individual ways.

TASK: Investigate a section of narrative found in the New Testament.

READ: Mark 15:16-37

PRESENT THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

1. Under the headings of 'Narrator', 'Setting', 'Plot' and 'Characters', list these details as they are found within this narrative.
2. What events are told of in this narrative?
3. Often narratives such as these were used to spread the Christian story to people who had not heard of Jesus Christ. List three main points you think the author was trying to convey to such readers here.
4. Matthew, Luke and John each also chose to write about the details of this event in their own gospel narratives. Why do you think they all decided to write about it?
5. Mark's narrative is most likely the earliest version of the story, having probably been written about thirty years after the events told of. What advantages and disadvantages does being the earliest offer?
6. Why do you think this information was written in narrative style rather than another form of writing such as history or poetry?
7. Telling the story from the perspective of either Simon of Cyrene or one of the Roman soldiers, write your own narrative of these events. Hint: Remember the four vital ingredients: Narrator, Setting, Plot and Characters.

TYPES OF WRITING IN THE BIBLE:

PROPHECY

Prophets are fascinating people. They are considered to be revealers or interpreters of God's will. In biblical times, prophets often received visions in the form of dreams which they understood as being messages from God which they needed to pass onto either the leadership of the time or the people of Israel themselves. Often these messages were about the need for a change in behaviour by people who had turned themselves away from God. In this way, biblical prophets were often the bearers of bad news, or at least news that the people around them don't want to hear. No one really wants to be told off, or criticized, do they? Well, that's exactly what prophets did. If the result of the peoples' bad behaviour was not already evident, then it was not far away according to these messengers. They often foretold of events to come that were to be the direct result of this turning away from God. In warning of these bad things to come, prophets called for a change in heart and attitude from people, and for this they were often seen as insane, rejected and frequently killed.

TASK: Investigate a section from a prophetic text of the Hebrew Scriptures

READ: Isaiah 6:1-13

PRESENT THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

1. This tells us the beginning of Isaiah's story: his call to become a prophet. He received this calling in a dream. Draw the scene he describes in 6:1-3.
2. What was Isaiah's response when God is looking for someone to carry his message?
3. God asks Isaiah to tell the people to stop everything they are doing and wait for God's action. What is this action going to involve? Is it a reward or punishment?
4. Do you think being the bearer of such news would be an easy or difficult job? Why?
5. Prophets like Isaiah spoke their message directly to the people concerned so this text was only later written down by him or possibly his followers. Why do you think they bothered to write it down?
6. What worth does it still have for readers today?
7. Make a list of behaviours or events in our world today would probably upset a God who wants the absolute best for us in life.
8. Choose one of these and outline how the words of a prophet may help us think twice about our actions here.

TYPES OF WRITING IN THE BIBLE:

LETTERS

Email is a great way to communicate with our friends. It's fast, no postage stamps are required, and you can get a response from them almost straight away if they're online. Prior to email, people had to rely on either the telephone or postage mail services. Before this, letters carried by couriers, on foot, horseback or boat, were the only way to communicate with people who could not be directly spoken to. Imagine that! Such communication could take days, weeks or even months! Two thousand years ago, the early Christians faced this problem of communicating with their fellow believers. This was especially difficult for missionaries that traveled around the Middle Eastern world spreading the story of Jesus. As soon as they had established a community of believers in one area, known as a church, they would move on to the next. In order to keep in touch with these communities and keep them on track, they sent letters. Some of these letters have been preserved in the New Testament. They not only tell us something about God and our faith in him, but they offer us an understanding of what it means to be a good Christian.

TASK: Investigate one of the letters of Paul from the New Testament.

READ: 2Corinthians 1:1; 1:2-7; 9:10; 13:5; 13:11

PRESENT THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

1. Paul wrote all his letters in a similar format: an opening greeting, a brief prayer of blessing, a discussion of his main message and a final, concluding farewell. Identify which of the passages would fit into each such section.
2. Does this differ greatly from the format of a letter or email you may send? How?
3. Why do you think Paul wrote letters rather than stories or songs? Hint: What makes the genre of letter writing different from other writing forms?
4. Why do you think these communities held on to these letters and ensured they were preserved within the Bible for us to read today?
5. Paul's letters were always focused on topics he was very passionate about such as how to live as a good Christian and what it meant to be part of a Christian community. List five issues that are really important to you, that might inspire you to write a letter, or voice an opinion about. (eg. Junk food in you canteen; lack of recycling facilities in your local area etc.)
6. Choose one of these issues and write a letter to either your school, local community, or group either praising their good work in regard to this topic or pulling them back into line. Use Paul's letter format of Greeting, Prayer, Message and Farewell as the basis of your letter's structure.

TYPES OF WRITING IN THE BIBLE:

PARABLES

Parables are short stories that have an underlying message in them. They use everyday images and language that were familiar to their audience in order to communicate an important lesson to them. This way of teaching, through stories, was popular in the first century world. Parables can be found in an assortment of writings from this period, not just within the New Testament. They often used images of farms, plants, families and households to communicate their messages as these were very familiar items in the lives of men and women of the time. For Christians, this genre of writing became famous because Jesus used to teach by telling parables all the time. He, too, used local, familiar images to teach about the kingdom of God and what it means to be part of this kingdom. While a really complex subject, Jesus made it easier to understand through this story-telling. Later, when his story came to be written down by various authors such as Mark, Matthew, Luke and John, this style of teaching was captured in their texts for us to continue learning from today.

TASK: Investigate one of parables found in the New Testament.

READ: Luke 15:1-7

PRESENT THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

1. Draw the parable spoken by Jesus in Luke 15:3-7 in 5 cartoon frames.
2. Write a list of the images Jesus uses here that would have been very familiar to his first century audience.
3. Luke 15:1-2 sets the scene for this parable. List the people to which Jesus is addressing this lesson.
4. Tax collectors and 'sinners' were people considered to be on the fringe of first century Jewish society. They were the outcasts with whom most people, including the Pharisees (Jewish religious leaders), tried not to associate. Now, if Jesus is saying that the lost sheep are reprehensive of these outcasts and God is the Shepherd, who are the remaining sheep?
5. Who, out of the single, lost sheep and the other ninety nine, does the shepherd care for? Why?
6. Who does the shepherd pay extra special attention? Why?
7. What do you think is the lesson Jesus is trying to teach here?
8. Rewrite this parable in your own words, using a different story but teaching the same message. Be sure to use images that are familiar to 13 and 14 year olds today.

TYPES OF WRITING IN THE BIBLE: HISTORICAL LITERATURE

Historical writing tries to re-tell an event in history by writing about it in such a way that the author remains as accurate as possible to the original details. They often do this so as to communicate to people what can be called the 'facts' about an event or period in time. Literature about the history of Jews can be found in the Hebrew Scriptures of Joshua, Judges, Ruth, 1&2 Kings, 1&2 Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther. The history of the early Christian communities, during the first decades after the death and resurrection of Christ, is found in the New Testament book of Acts. This was written by Luke, who also wrote one of the gospels.

An important factor to consider when studying these 'historical' texts is that the authors do not necessarily present the facts in their truest form because they were biased in their view of events. They were biased because they were believers and thus members of the community whose story they were telling. This bias is like having a Collingwood supporter commentate a Collingwood and Essendon football match. Too much of the talk might be about Collingwood, and they might be presented as doing everything right and nothing wrong. On the other hand, you may also get some fantastic 'insider' comments that a non-supporter might not know.

Bias within these biblical texts is similar. Sometimes the author focuses on people and events in a way that blows them out of proportion. At the same time, the authors offer us a rich and valuable insight into the exciting goings on of their communities that only a believer could.

TASK: Investigate one historical account found in the New Testament.

READ: Acts 2:1-13

PRESENT THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

1. This is Luke's account of Pentecost, when the Holy Spirit came upon the earliest followers and allowed them to speak many different languages. Illustrate this passage.
2. Luke was not present at this event as he may not have even been born yet. How do you think he knew about it?
3. Why do you think he chose to write it down in his 'history of the early church'?
4. What difference do you think it makes that Luke was a Christian writing about this important Christian event?
5. How might a non-believer have viewed the scene? (Hint: see the last line of this passage)
6. Why do you think the early editors of the bible saw this history of the beginning of the Christian community as valuable, even if it is biased?
7. What value does this 'history', presented by Luke in the book of Acts, have for Christian believers today?

TYPES OF WRITING IN THE BIBLE:

APOCALYPTIC LITERATURE

Apocalyptic literature is a type of writing that was very common in the ancient world. This style of literature is always based on the same topic: the end of the world. It looks to explore ideas about what will happen at the end of time and the world as we know it and is usually presented in the form of a vision or dream. As you can imagine, this literature often contains amazingly vivid images and sounds like the basis of a Hollywood movie. Such literature contained in the New Testament is no different.

The Book of Revelation is found at the very end of the Bible and is believed to have been written by John, the author of the Gospel of John, around the end of the first century. With incredible images of dragons, angels, plagues and the like, this text offers an understanding of the kingdom of God breaking into our world at the end of time to share with, all who want it, the joys of heaven on earth. While none of us know what will happen in the future, this text reminds us of God's almighty presence in our world and beyond.

TASK: Investigate apocalyptic literature found in the New Testament.

READ: Revelations 22:1-5

PRESENT THE FOLLOWING DETAILS:

1. This is John's vision of what will exist at the end of time. Draw the vision presented in this passage.
2. In this vision, John says that 'nothing accursed' will exist. This means that nothing bad which can cause people misery or upset will remain. Make a list of what sort of things will no longer exist.
3. Quite a bit of this misery is caused by conflict, of different sorts, between nations. Name three such types of conflict.
4. The tree of life described here will have healing leaves to ease these conflicts. What sort of qualities might these leaves bring with them? (eg. love and peace)
5. God always wants what is best for us. How is that evident in this vision?
6. Often when we talk about the 'end of the world' or the 'end of time' it implies the world will no longer exist. This vision shows us that it will still exist, but just do so in a different way: God's way. How is this existence different to ours today?
7. Do you find this a pleasing image? Why?
8. Describe what your 'ideal' world would consist of if these ideas of love, justice and peace were at the centre of it.

Searching for the meaning in Bible Stories:

Context Method

Sometimes reading newspaper articles, books or magazine items can be difficult. The language they use is often unclear and hard to understand. They make reference to things that are not familiar for the audience and can generally make it tricky for readers to grasp accurate meaning from. It's the same with some biblical texts. Here is one means by which you can decode and decipher stories from the bible. It's called the Context Method. It will help you uncover what the author was trying to tell his original audience (over nineteen hundred years ago) as well as help you decide on the passage's meaning for readers today.

Step One:

Name the excerpt

Step Two:

Where does it come in the book?

Step Three:

Where does it come in the chapter?

Step Four:

What characters are involved & what's going on?

Step Five:

What meaning might this have had for the original audience?

Step Six:

What meaning can it have for readers today?

Doing your own detective work

Step One:

Name the excerpt

Step Two:

Where does it come in the book?

Step Three:

Where does it come in the chapter?

Step Four:

What characters are involved & what's going on?

Step Five:

What meaning might this have had for the original audience?

Step Six:

What meaning can it have for readers today?

Biography of a Character from the Hebrew Scriptures

Our Character: _____

Researcher One: _____

1. What book do they feature in within the Hebrew Scriptures?
2. What is this book about? From your research, give a general outline of this book's contents.
3. Why do you think this book is considered important enough to be included in the bible collection?

Researcher Two: _____

1. Who is this character? Research and outline their basic biographical details.
2. Why is this character considered to be an important person in the Hebrew Scriptures?
3. List three interesting and/or important details to emerge from their story regarding their relationship with God.

Researcher Three: _____

1. What role do they play in this book's story?
2. Select an important scene or event from their story. Retell this in your own words.
3. What does this character tell us about God and/or our relationship with God?

Resume of _____

Location of Birth:

Family Background:

Employment History:

Key Skills:

Personal Strengths:

Demonstration of Faith:

Images of God in the Bible

Read	Summarise this passage in your own words	Describe the image of God presented here	What does this tell us about God?
Exodus 3:1-12			
Genesis 2:5-25			
Psalms 23			
Psalms 27			
Jeremiah 18:1-6			
Luke 5:27-32			



Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

Student Objectives

That students will:

- *Be able to define the term 'ethics'.*
- *Gain a deeper understanding of 'ethical' issues and their associated characteristics.*
- *Gain an appreciation for and an ability to apply ethical decision making processes.*
- *Develop an understanding of the notion of 'authorities' and their role within the ethical decision making process.*
- *Develop an understanding of some of the ethical teachings evident within scripture.*
- *Develop an understanding of fundamental ethical teachings evident within the ministry of Jesus Christ.*
- *Develop an appreciation of individuals' responses to ethical dilemmas.*

Notes for the teacher:

This unit focuses on the notion of 'ethics' both in terms of an academic study and personal response to challenges faced within life. It seeks to offer students the opportunity to explore 'ethical' issues, form their own responses to these issues, and be introduced to the notion of 'authorities' and their role in the formulation of discerned responses. Here, at this junior level, particular attention shall be paid to biblical sources of authority, focusing primarily on the teachings of Jesus Christ while also exploring the rich ethical heritage outlined in the Hebrew Scriptures. Students are also invited to examine the responses of other contemporary individuals to selected ethical issues, investigating for themselves people around them who have been faced with ethical dilemmas and worked through them to produce well discerned responses.

Total time required:

To complete this unit as it is presented here, it is recommended that a total of 14 x45minute periods be allocated. Such a time frame allows for both research and presentation of all tasks outlined. As such an amount of time may not be viable within each educational setting, teachers are invited to manipulate the Unit's contents to suit their individual school's needs. In this light, teachers may wish to select individual lessons for implementation or, conversely, limit the number of activities undertaken within each lesson.

For further assistance in teaching this unit of work refer to the Extension Notes for Teachers to be found after Assessment and Evaluation, for explanation and clarification of terms used in the unit

Unit Five Lesson Outline:

Lesson One: *What Is 'Ethics'?*

Lesson Two: *Identifying Ethical Issues*

Lesson Three: *Making Ethical Decisions*

Lesson Four: *Turning to the Authorities: Getting the Opinions of Others*



Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

Lesson Five: *Jesus: The Role Model For Christian Life*

Lesson Six : *Getting It All Together: Exemplars of Living By One's Conscience*

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Unit 5 Talking About What’s Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

Lesson 1	What is ‘Ethics’?
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need the set of Worksheet 1, cardboard & pens.</p>	<p>Opening Statement for the Unit: In this unit we are going to examine the nature and substance of ‘ethics’, focusing upon the process of ethical decision making and associated sources of authority. Students will be invited to examine a range of ethical dilemmas and explore means by which these can be effectively dealt with.</p> <p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is ‘ethics’? • What makes an issue or dilemma an ‘ethical’ one? <p>Activity One: Open this unit with a directed ‘<i>Hypotheticals</i>’ activity. Using the set of Worksheet 1, students are to adopt a character within this debate which shall focus on the ethical issue of illegal downloading of music and movies from the internet. While numbers will vary according to the size of your class, it is suggested that the following characters be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representatives from <i>Funk Records</i> (x2) • Representatives from <i>Vibe Music</i> (x2) • Members of a contemporary rock band (x4) • Solo recording artists (x2) • Famous Hollywood actors (x4) • Hollywood movie financiers (x2) • Users of illegal downloads (x4) • IT gurus & creators of illegal download sites (x3) • Legal expert in artistic property (x1) • Legal expert in IT (x1) <p>Assign characters and distribute their associated character outline worksheet, allowing 10-15 minutes for students to read over their briefs and add in their own creative details where required. Students are also to create name plaques for their identification within the panel setting. Provide cardboard for this as required.</p> <p>Organise the room so that students can sit in either a semi-circle or near-complete circle. Gather students and seat them with their name plaques clearly visible. The teacher is then to act as the compare of this debate, introducing the hot topic of discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Illegal Downloading: Users’ Rights vs. Owner’s Rights. <p>The teacher is to set the scene with a brief outline of what internet downloading is and then individually invite characters/groups to introduce themselves and their opinions on the debate.</p>



Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

The teacher should pose questions to characters which bring out key components of this debate as one which is 'ethical' ie. dealing with 'right' and 'wrong'. Tease out student responses to highlight the vast array of issues involved here by using probing questions such as:

- What impact does illegal downloading have on you?
- Does it affect you financially? How?
- Do you think it is an internet users' right?
- Should downloader's be made to pay for the sharing of such material?
- Would you like to see illegal downloading stopped? Why?
- How would you go about monitoring such downloads?
- How would you go about charging for such material?

The teacher should keep the debate moving around the room, calling on a number of different characters/groups to comment and respond to those opinions being made around them. This should be a fast moving activity, highlighting for students the range of ethical issues involved and the number of parties with vested interests in this debate.

Draw the debate to a close once all students have been heard and sufficient discussion has been had to highlight the ethically dubious nature of illegal downloading – approximately 20-25 minutes.

Discuss:

Having opened the class and unit with this debate, draw students back to the classroom by asking them, in light of these discussions, what they think the term 'ethics' means. Brainstorm responses on the board.

Responses may include the following terms:

- Values
- Morals
- Right & Wrong
- Good & Bad
- Conscience

Offer students a concise definition to work with throughout this unit such as the following:

- Ethics is the student of decision making when the choice of action involves assessment of 'good' vs. 'bad' and/or 'right' vs. 'wrong'.

Teachers may wish to extend upon such a definition by incorporating the student-suggested terms in order to clarify their role in 'ethics'.

Accordingly, such a basic definition may be augmented with:

- 'Ethical' decision making requires individuals to consider what they value in life (values) and what they personally feel is 'right' or 'wrong' (morals).



Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

- This will require them to use their knowledge of 'good' & 'bad' / 'right' & 'wrong' which is called one's 'conscience'.
- 'Ethics' examines the process by which individuals and/or groups made such decisions which involve considerable weighing up of options and considering of opinions.

Activity Two:

Using the above definition, offer students the following list of dilemmas one at a time asking them whether or not it involves 'ethical' decision making. Ask them to justify their responses:

- Deciding which shoes to wear to the party Saturday night
- Deciding whether or not to drink at this 15 year old's party
- Deciding what to have for lunch today
- Deciding whether or not to validate you ticket on the tram ride home
- Deciding what to watch on TV tonight
- Deciding whether or not to study for the French test tomorrow
- Deciding whether or not to take your friend's copy of tomorrow's French test
- Emailing a really, really bad photo of your friend to your other friends
- Buying an expensive polo top which is made in foreign sweat shops
- Having a really long shower
- Leaving the lights on in the spare room overnight
- Littering

Discuss:

Highlight for students that not all decisions being made in our every day life are 'ethical' ones. Some don't involve the important notions of 'right' and 'wrong' or 'good' and bad'. Many, however, do involve some degree of value-based assessment and it is these that are going to be the focus of this unit. In fact, students may not realise it, but they are probably making many, many ethical decisions a day: some more important and taking more time to consider than others.

Notes for Teachers:

This lesson, including time for Activity One, will require approximately one period to complete.



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Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

Lesson 2	Identifying 'Ethical' Issues
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need Worksheet Two: <i>Identifying Ethical Issues</i>, three sheets of coloured card, scissors, glue and coloured pencils NB. Copy Worksheet Two on two single-sided sheets rather than double-sided.</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What different sorts of 'ethical issues' are there? • How can these be identified and categorised? <p>Discuss: In our last lesson we established a definition of what the term 'ethics' means:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethics is the study of decision making when the choice of action involves assessment of 'good' vs. 'bad' and/or 'right' vs. 'wrong'. <p>We also expanded upon this by saying that 'values', 'morals' and 'conscience' played roles in ethical decision making:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ethical decision making requires individuals to consider what they value in life (values) • Ethical decision making also takes into consideration what an individual personally feel is 'right' or 'wrong' (morals) • This will require individuals to use their knowledge of 'good' & 'bad' / 'right' & 'wrong' which is called one's 'conscience' <p>We also decided that not all decisions we make in life are 'ethical' ones as not all of them involve the notions of 'right' and wrong' or good' and 'bad'. Of those that do, however, require us to think about these dimensions and call us to make value-based judgements, some can be quite personal while others can involve many other people beyond just ourselves.</p> <p>Accordingly, we can generally categorise ethical issues into three groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal: those that involve only myself • Communal: those that involve a broader group of people, which may extend to my local, or nation-wide community • Global: those that involve everyone, worldwide <p>Activity One: Working in groups of three and using Worksheet Two: <i>Identifying Ethical Issues</i>, students are to sort through the range of issues listed and discern which can be categorised as personal, communal and/or global ethical issues, and those which are not ethical in nature at all.</p> <p>Once such categorising has been completed, each issue is to be cut out and glued to one of the three coloured cardboard sheets provided, with each entitled one of the three categories:</p>



Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

<p>Students will need copies of the week's newspapers, scissors and glue.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal Ethical Issues• Communal Ethical Issues• Global Ethical Issues <p>Students are then to note next to each situation who is involved and affected by the issue, thus justifying their placement of the account into its nominated category.</p> <p>Discuss: Come back together as a class and discuss the categories assigned by each group to the outlined issues.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do they all fit easily into their categories?• Do some overlap categories & if so, why?• Which were difficult to place? Why? <p>While many of these issues are not ones that affect us in our everyday lives, it is important to remember that such ethical issues and associated debates are being argued around us every day.</p> <p>Activity Two: Using newspapers gathered from over the recent days, students are to return to their groups of three and search for two-three examples of each category of ethical issue. Once located, these are to be cut out and glued to the back of the appropriate sheet.</p> <p>Upon completion of this activity, students are to present their located articles to the class and the poster can then be hung around the room to remind students of this base information during the remainder of the unit.</p> <p>Discuss: Many, many issues in our world require people like us, those around us or those on the world stage, to engage in ethical decision making on a day to day basis. These news articles are evidence of this. But what about us in our everyday lives? What are we faced with that requires us to consider 'right' and 'wrong', 'good' and 'bad' and what role does our conscience play in such decision making?</p> <p>Our conscience is not just a little voice in our head or heart that tells us what to do. Although <i>The Simpson's</i> often represent Homer's conscience as two distinct figures, one good angel and one evil devil looking over him, arguing about his different available courses of action, this is not really what a conscience is.</p> <p>The human conscience is a body of knowledge, in many ways like all other forms of knowledge. Rather than being knowledge of maths or geography</p>
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however, it is our knowledge of 'good' and 'bad' / 'right' and 'wrong'. Like all other forms of knowledge, we need to foster its growth by educating it (teaching it) and exercising it (using it). We do this in a number of ways such as:

- Listening to those around us
- Getting the advice of people we respect and trust
- Reading about the situations and decisions others have been faced with
- Reflecting upon my own morals and values
- Being placed in situations where we need to use it
- Thinking about what we would do in a given situation, had we been in another's place

All such activities allow individuals to inform themselves thus broadening their understanding of 'right' and 'wrong'.

While this all sounds very vague compared to the education in Maths we get at school, it's probably easiest to think about it over a lifetime of conscience formation. If you have a little brother or sister, do you remember when they were really young? I'm sure they did things that you would consider 'wrong' or 'bad', had they been done by an older person, but just part of the process of 'growing up' in their case.

- What were some of these incidents?
- What reactions did they get from those around them?
- In what ways could we consider their conscience 'uneducated' or 'undeveloped'?
- How did the responses of those around them contribute to this 'educating' process?

Now, as young people on the way to adulthood, you have had many opportunities to 'educate' and 'exercise' your conscience. In fact, you are doing this everyday, probably many times a day.

Activity Three:

Brainstorm a list of ethical issues students have faced in the past week.

Responses may include:

- I chose to validate my train ticket when those around me didn't
- I chose to step in and stop a friend who was bullying a junior student
- I saw a dilemma outlined on Neighbours and reflected upon what I might have done in that situation
- I was faced with a tough ethical decision and sought advice from people who I consider to be sound sources of advice in regard to that issue



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Of course, often major ethical issues come to our attention when they stand out from our everyday lives. This may be, for example, when we are on holidays in a foreign country and social customs and living practices are vastly different to our own here in Australia. Ask students if they have had any such experiences. These may include:

- The required dress of a particular culture
- The treatment of women in other cultures
- The vast poverty in which many live

Activity Four:

Turning their notebooks upside down so that the back becomes a new front cover, students are to keep an ongoing journal of ethical issues they come across in their daily lives. These may be personal, communal or global, and some may initially seem insignificant in nature, but such a record is intended to highlight for students the frequency with which they engage their conscience in making assessments of 'right' and wrong'.

Such a journal may best be set up with columns headed:

- Date
- Location
- Incident Outline/ Issue Overview
- Personal, Communal or Global?

Conversely, it may be kept in a diary format.

Allow students time to establish this journal with a front cover and an opportunity to write up their first entry.

Notes for Teachers:

This lesson will require approximately two periods to complete.



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Lesson 3	Making Ethical Decisions
Resources	Lesson Format
	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do we make ethical decisions? • What authorities exist that may aid us in such a decision making process? <p>Activity One: Pose the following ethical dilemma to the class group by either reading this passage directly aloud to them or retelling it in a story-like fashion:</p> <p>Kaitlyn’s best friend since prep was a girl named Chantelle. Ever since they were very young, they had spent their whole school day together and, since moving on to secondary school, even travelled to and from school together on the train.</p> <p>Kaitlyn and Chantelle shared very similar homes lives. They both had an older brother, both their parents had separated and both girls lived predominantly with their mothers.</p> <p>Where they differed, however, was that Kaitlyn had what she considered a relatively happy relationship with her mum. Sure, they had their disagreements and frequently argued over home duties and whether or not Kaitlyn was to be allowed to go to the shopping centre with her friends of a weekend, but that was not what Kaitlyn considered to be anything particularly out of the ordinary.</p> <p>Chantelle, on the other hand, seemed to have a very difficult relationship with her mum. In fact, Kaitlyn often worried about her friend, especially when they would go swimming together and Chantelle would have bad bruising that she would tell Kaitlyn was from school sports.</p> <p>One particular Sunday afternoon when they were at the shops, heading into the movies together, Kaitlyn noticed that Chantelle was avoiding picking things up or holding things with her left hand. In fact, for what was a really warm November day, Chantelle was wearing a long sleeved top which looked quite odd with her short skirt.</p> <p>No wanting to pry but deeply concerned for her friend, Kaitlyn asked what was wrong with her arm. With a quick and sharp reply, Chantelle denied anything was wrong and proceeded to grab her popcorn with this hand. Wincing with pain and dropping the popcorn, Chantelle exposed what to Kaitlyn looked like a protruding bone from her wrist.</p> <p>Shocked at this sight, Kaitlyn gasped and took hold of Chantelle’s left hand and said:</p>



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“That’s not nothing! You’ve broken your wrist. What happened?”

To this, she got no reply but her friend began to cry uncontrollably. Putting her popcorn aside and abandoning the thought of going into the movies, Kaitlyn insisted on calling her mum to pick them up and take Chantelle to the doctor.

While awaiting her mother’s arrival, Kaitlyn pressed her friend for details of what had caused such an injury. Having made Kaitlyn promise not to tell anyone, Chantelle confessed that she had forgotten to put the bins out last night and, after her mother had had a few drinks and discovered the over-flowing bins, she had lost her temper and pushed her down the back stairs.

Discuss:

Allow a moment for student reflection upon the details of this story then pose the following questions for consideration:

- If you were Kaitlyn, what would you do in this situation?
- Would you break the promise and tell someone?
- If so, who?
- Would you keep the promise?
- If so, what course of action would you take to help your friend?
- What parties are involved here?
- Who could be affected by your actions and how?
- Would you seek advice on what to do?
- If so, from whom?
- Is this an ethical dilemma?
- If so, why?

Often, in circumstances such as those faced by Kaitlyn, we feel a need to act, however difficult this may be and however confusing the path ahead may be.

- Why is this so?
- Could Kaitlyn have done nothing?
- What would be the possible consequences of doing nothing?
- What would be the possible consequences of acting?
- What other factors need considering here?

Activity Two:

Read students the story of the Good Samaritan (Lk 10:25-37). The teacher may choose to read this as it is found in the Gospel text, or retell it in her/his own words.



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<p>Students will need Worksheet Three (page one): <i>STOP!</i></p>	<p>Discuss</p> <p>Like Kaitlyn, the man from Samaria was put in a position where he was faced with a difficult choice: to act or not act. Unlike those who had walked by before him, the Samaritan could not leave this injured man on the side of the road to suffer, unaided. So, in light of some quick thinking, he made the decision to help.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What were the possible courses of action available here to the Priest and Levite?• What sort of things would have been considered by the previous two passing men? (ie. issues of ritual purity etc.)• What were the possible courses of action available here to the Samaritan?• What sort of things do you think the Samaritan may have considered prior to taking action? <p>When we are faced with ethical dilemmas, often many factors need to be taken into consideration prior to jumping in and making a final decision. We may well be faced with a whole range of options as well as a range of possible consequences for our actions. This can be very confusing.</p> <p>One means by which we can approach ethical dilemmas such as these is to use a process called the '<i>STOP</i>' method of decision making. This is a four stop method that allows us to carefully and clearly go through the options laid out before us, weighing them and, hopefully, producing a well formulated response.</p> <p>Using Worksheet Three (page one): <i>STOP!</i> Go through the <i>STOP</i> method of decision making with the class, discussing each of the four steps involved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• S: Search out the facts of the situations• T: Think about a) the options that lie before you and b) their possible consequences• O: Get the opinions and advice of others• P: Pause and reflect on your nominated action plan – how do you feel about this course of action? <p>Activity Three:</p> <p>As a class, apply <i>STOP</i> to Kaitlyn's situation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• S: List the facts of the situation on the board as they were presented within the account read earlier in class• T: a) list Kaitlyn's options regarding possible courses of actions b) next to each option, list the possible consequence(s)• O: List those whose opinions Kaitlyn should seek• P: After reflection upon all options, what way would you suggest that Kaitlyn goes?
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<p>Students will need Worksheet Three (page two): <i>STOP! Case Scenarios</i>.</p>	<p>Discuss: As a class group, discuss the advantages and limitations of such a method for ethical decision making. Highlight for students the need for careful consideration of each step and its most desired outcome: a well thought through response.</p> <p>Activity Four: Working in groups of three, students are to select from a range of ethical dilemmas outlined on page two of Worksheet Three: <i>STOP! Case Scenarios</i>. Here, they are to apply the STOP method of ethical decision making and, within their group, outline their thought processes and conclusion drawn.</p> <p>Upon completion, students are to come back to the class, act out their nominated scenario and report on their four STOP steps.</p> <p>Discuss each presentation with the class, broadening and deepening student responses to each of the four steps.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: This lesson will be further developed in Lesson Four through a more detailed study of the STOP method's step three: getting the advice of others. Here, relevant 'authorities' will be identified for student examination and consideration, which shall aim to extend them beyond their circle of friends and family to seek the advice of alternate credible sources.</p> <p>Lesson Three will require approximately two periods to complete.</p>
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Lesson 4	Turning to the Authorities: Getting the Opinions of Others
Resources	Lesson Format
	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is meant by the term 'authority'?• What 'authorities' do I have available to me?• How can an 'authority' aid in my decision making process? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>In Lesson Three we explored the STOP method of ethical decision making. This involved four steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• S: Searching out the facts of the situation• T: Thinking about the possible options available and their consequences• O: Getting the opinions of others• P: Pausing for reflection prior to acting <p>One of these steps needs further consideration: 'O'. Getting the opinions of other people is essential in making a well balanced and considered decision in the face of what can be many confusing options.</p> <p>Pose the following questions students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why do you think this important?• How can the opinions of others help?• Who might you turn to for advice? <p>Responses to the last questions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Friends• Family• Teachers <p>There are also many groups or institutions that can be excellent sources of information about difficult topics. These groups are often called 'authorities' as they are seen as holding what can be understood as specialist information or expertise in an area. Such parties may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doctors• Counsellors• Legal institutions• Government institutions• Religious groups <p>For example, in Kaitlyn and Channelle's story which we heard in our last lesson, some relevant authorities whom Kaitlyn may consider talking to and getting the advice of include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Child Welfare authorities• School counsellor• Kid's Help Line• The school chaplain or local minister



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<p>Students will need Worksheet Four (page one): <i>Getting the Opinions of Others</i>.</p>	<p>Activity One Using Worksheet Four (page one), <i>Getting the Opinions of Others</i>, students are to identify the sources of authority listed amongst a variety of people and groups from whom we can seek advice. Once completed, come back together as a class and discuss responses, highlighting for students the possible worth of all sources of opinion listed but identifying the specialist knowledge of the 'authorities' listed.</p> <p>Discuss: One of the sources of authority mentioned earlier was religious institutions. For many people who face making really important ethical decisions, getting the opinions and advice of those within their religious tradition can be both reassuring and a great source of comfort. But what would a church or church representative be able to offer?</p> <p>Throughout history, people have turned to religious traditions for answers to the really big questions in life such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why am I here?• What's the point of living?• Should I care about others?• If so, why?• Why should people care about me? <p>While trying to offer some form of advice and opinion about these really big issues, religious traditions have also, along the way, formulated ideas and teaching on a whole range of issues. Accordingly, the tradition's sacred literature and associated teaching can also be a great source of 'authority' for us in our day to day ethical decision makings.</p> <p>For Christians, one such rich and valuable source of 'authoritative' opinion can be found in the Bible. Here, not only do we find a treasure trove of teaching shared with Judaism in the Hebrew Scriptures, but we also have the advice and teachings of Jesus recorded in the New Testament writings.</p> <p>Pose the following question to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What passages come to mind as being possible sources of ethical advice? <p>Answers may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ten Commandments• Beatitudes• Jesus' parables <p>These are but a few sources of possible advice. Let's have a look at some such passages and figure out how they might aid us when facing difficult decisions.</p>
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Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

<p>Students will need Worksheet Four (page two): <i>Scripture as a Source of Authority</i> and their Bibles.</p>	<p>Activity Two: Working in pairs, students are to use Worksheet Four (page two): <i>Scripture as a Source of Authority</i> to examine some prominent biblical excerpts, identifying how they might be a source of advice for those facing difficult ethical dilemmas.</p> <p>In order to make this a guided learning activity, grounding each scriptural source within a given ethical situation, the student is provided with a prompt which suggests a relevant ethical issue in which the given scriptural excerpt could be looked to. Students are to suggest ways these excerpts may offer an opinion or advice on the given topic.</p> <p>Discuss: These three biblical excerpts, among many others, can well be thought of as the basis of Christian ethical teaching. Like a house requires strong, stable foundations upon which it can be effectively constructed, so to does a Christian's way of living have its foundational basis in such teachings. They provide us with an understanding of what God and Jesus valued and, in turn, what they expect of believers in terms of one's chosen way of living.</p> <p>Much of this advice was based upon common ideas or sentiments. Pose the following question to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What common themes appeared to emerge between these scriptural excerpts? <p>Responses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love of God• Love of each other• Respect for human life• Respect for justice <p>While these seem to be very general statements, they are in fact some of the most important values that underpin Christian faith. Accordingly, while it may seem odd to read biblical scripture for an opinion or advice on caring for the environment in our modern world (and issues of the like), this religious tradition is based upon valuing certain things, regardless of the time or place. But is such advice distinct to Christianity? The answer to this question is a tricky one: both yes and no.</p> <p>Christians share all of these fundamentals with followers of both Judaism and Islam:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Love of God• Love of each other• Respect for human life and created order• Desire for justice
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Hindus and Buddhists also uphold similar sentiments although they do not focus on a single god-like figure as these other religions do. Regardless of this, they share a focus on:

- Respect for fellow humanity
- Respect for created order
- Desire for and active seeking of justice

What, then, sets Christianity aside? It's the person of Jesus and his example of total, all-embracing love: love for humanity and all of God's created order. Christians uphold Jesus as their primary example of how to live an 'ethical' life – one based upon great love.

For Protestant Christians, such as members of the Uniting Church in Australia, the belief that Jesus Christ opened up for us a new way of living is essential and foundational. This new way of living does not require anything of us beyond our total faith in Christ, as it is this faith itself which will draw us toward Christ, calling us to inevitably act like him – out of total love.

For members of the Uniting Church in Australia, and indeed all Christians, 'ethical' behaviour is a response of love to love. Our behaviour and the choices we make in life will not alter God's love for us. What such choices can alter, however, is the nature of our community: making it either Christ-like with love as its core or lacking in love with injustice and inequity at its core.

Notes for Teachers:

This lesson will require approximately two periods to complete.



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Lesson 5	Jesus: The Role Model For Christian Life
Resources	Lesson Format
	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does faith in Jesus affect one’s ethical decision making? • How can Jesus be seen as a role model for Christian living? <p>Activity One: Working in groups of four to five, students are to go away and read the story of <i>The Prodigal Son</i> (Luke 15:11-31) then act it out, rehearsing it until they feel they have truly captured the essence of this parable (without any form of teacher input). At this point, they are to invite the teacher to view their dramatic interpretation of the story and receive a score out of 10 for its accuracy in conveying Jesus’ message.</p> <p>Inevitably, students will include some or all of the following inaccurate features:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depicting the father hesitating or arguing with the son when he seeks his share of the inheritance • Omit the father running to receive the returning son (which should be much to the shock and distain of those who witness the scene) • Depicting the father with at least some degree of distain for the younger son and/or his actions • Omit the father’s request for the servants to dress the returning son in the families finest clothes • Depicting the father rebuking the older son for his reaction to the events <p>When such inaccuracies (or others) appear, score the performance appropriately but only advise students that they do not appear to be telling the story as it appears in the biblical text. Send the group away to try again. Repeat this process until they present a truly accurate interpretation of the parable. This will score 10/10.</p> <p>Discuss: Come together as a class and discuss the meaning and significance of this parable, highlighting features such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Middle Eastern culture of the first century would have been totally aghast at the son’s behaviour. By asking for his inheritance, the boy was totally rejecting both his father and entire family. • Adults did not run in this culture as it was a sign of immodesty. Not only did the father run to his lost son but publicly embraced him, welcoming him back without any condition into the family the son had previously rejected.



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<p>Students will need Worksheet Five (page one): <i>Where Is the ‘Prodigal Son’ Today?</i> and some may need access to either the library or internet.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By the father dressing the son in a cloak, sandals and a ring upon his return, he was putting this son in charge of all he owned. In light of this son’s actions, this is absolutely contrary to all the listener would have expected. • The father went out to the older son to reason with him and the story ends with him staying outside with this son – he does not reject this son as is often thought, but highlights his love for him and recognition of his righteous behaviour which stands aside from the actions of his brother. • Jesus’ message here is one of total and utter love – whatever one’s actions or circumstances, however extreme the situations. This is the love Jesus showed for us, ultimately in his death and resurrection. This is the love all Christians are compelled to live out if they truly claim to have faith in Christ. • Christians are called by and through Christ to live in a new way – totally engulfed by and exemplars of Christ’s unending and unconditional love. <p>Activity Two: With this accurate understanding of Jesus’ <i>Prodigal Son</i> parable in mind, students are to individually find a setting of this story’s message in today’s world – be this in music, a movie, a TV program’s storyline or in their personal lives.</p> <p>Using Worksheet Five (page one): <i>Where Is the ‘Prodigal Son’ Today?</i> Students are to write a brief reflection on this source and its relevance to the original story, being guided by the questions outlined on this worksheet. This may well be completed in their ‘ethical decisions’ journal at the rear of their notebooks.</p> <p>Upon completion, students are to gather back in their groups of four to five and present the other students with their ‘modern day <i>Prodigal Son</i>’ story, explaining what their chosen depiction is and how it embodies Jesus’ message of unconditional love.</p> <p>Discuss: What does this parable mean for us today? Jesus was trying to teach his audience about the nature of love: that God’s love is all-embracing, all-merciful and never-ending – just like the father’s love in the story. It is this type of love exhibited by Jesus both in his life and in his death. It is this unconditional love we, as Christians, are offered by God and, in turn, are called to offer to those around us.</p> <p>But to whom are Christians called to show such love? Our neighbour. Who is our neighbour?</p>
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<p>Students will need their Bibles.</p>	<p>Activity Three: In Lesson Three, we briefly examined the parable of <i>The Good Samaritan</i> (Luke 10:25-37). Ask students to re-read this passage on their own in light of the question ‘Who is my neighbour?’</p> <p>Discuss: Prior to discussing this passage’s relevance for ethical decision making as a class, break this parable open by explaining each of the following elements to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• ‘Experts in the law’ (ie. Torah – scripture) would have known how one was to inherit eternal life. Either this individual was testing Jesus or he genuinely wanted to hear Jesus’ interpretation of such scripture.• Jesus answers the question of ‘who is my neighbour?’ with a parable. Parables are not straight forward. They require both the original listener and us today to reflect deeply on an issue as its content is usually very surprising and challenging to those who hear it. You can always expect the unexpected from Jesus’ parables – their message is never an easy one to live up to. This was definitely the case here with the parable of the Good Samaritan.• The man was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. This tells us he may well have been Jewish and been returning from a period of worship in the temple.• The Priest and the Levite, both of whom were workers in the Temple, were most likely travelling down the road in the opposite direction on their way to the Temple. These men’s jobs in the Temple saw them responsible for the sacrificial offerings that went on there. Due to the nature of these jobs, these men needed to maintain what was called their ‘ritual purity’ prior to being able to enter the Temple, let alone fulfil their roles there. One of the main ways to become ritually ‘unclean’ was to come into contact with bodily fluids, such as blood. Thus, both men chose to avoid the bashed man, who was most likely bleeding, so as to maintain their purity. In fact, to ensure avoiding this, they crossed to the other side of the road.• The Samaritan man (ie. a man who came from a place called Samaria, to the north of Jerusalem) was the one who stopped. Now people from Samaria were passionately disliked by people of the south. They, too, were largely Jewish in their populace but practiced their faith in slightly different ways. This, along with old political details between the two regions, saw Samaritans hated by southerners. Of all people, one would not have expected such a person to stop and show such mercy to the robbed man from the south. This would have really shocked Jesus’ listeners as it says to them, as well as us today, our neighbour is anyone who may need
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<p>Students will need Worksheet Five (page two): <i>Loving My Neighbour</i>.</p>	<p>us – even those who we find most foreign and difficult to get along with. In fact, perhaps these people are most especially those to whom Jesus wants us to show love and mercy.</p> <p>Discuss as a class what this means for us, today, in terms of viewing Jesus as a role model for ethical behaviour. Pose the following questions to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When making ethical decisions, why should you think of your neighbour?• How can you consider the needs of your neighbour?• Does such a requirement make decision making easier or harder? In what ways? <p>Jesus calls us to “Love our neighbour” which is, by no means, an easy feat at times. In the context of ethical decision making, such a call to ‘love’ indiscriminately means we need to look after not only our own selves but others when choosing courses of action. In this sense, we are not just responsible for ourselves, but those around us as well. Our actions can have far-reaching ramifications so consideration of such consequences must be undertaken. We cannot just act for the betterment of ourselves.</p> <p>It’s this new way of living, living out of an all-embracing love that Jesus modelled for us.</p> <p>Activity Four: Using Worksheet Five (page two): <i>Loving My Neighbour</i> students are to reflect upon the significance of Jesus’ ‘Good Samaritan’ parable for contemporary ethical decision making. Here, they are to read the case scenario given and outline how the content of this parable may impact upon one’s response to the given situation.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: This lesson will require approximately three periods to complete.</p>
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Lesson 6	Getting It All Together: Exemplars of Living By One’s Conscience
Resources	Lesson Format
	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do people with well-informed and well-developed consciences act? • How do they respond to difficult ethical situations? <p>Discuss: We have spent quite some time looking at what ‘ethics’ is and how one might go about making ‘ethical’ decisions. We have seen the need to get all the facts straight, vital role of careful consideration regarding the options available to us and the possible consequences of these options, the value of others’ opinions and advice and the need for personal reflection.</p> <p>There seems to be quite a lot involved in making sound ethical decisions! While these are often not easily made, we all know of people who have faced troubling ethical dilemmas and come through them in admirable ways.</p> <p>Activity One: Invite a guest speaker in to speak to the class about a difficult ethical dilemma they have faced and their response to it. You may wish to choose a past student, a willing staff member or someone from the wider school community with whom the students are familiar.</p> <p>Conversely, you may feel it more appropriate to invite a speaker from a formal organisation who is well experienced in giving testimonials to students and thus able to adapt their story for the age and stage of your class. This may also be done on a multi-class or year level basis.</p> <p>Allow students time to question the speaker and reflect on the presentation.</p> <p>Discuss: After hearing from your nominated presenter, be this in the second half of the period or in subsequent class time, depending on the length of the presentation, engage students in reflective discussion about what they heard.</p> <p>Acting according to one’s conscience is not always easy. In fact, it can, at times, be much more difficult than just going along with what everyone around you is doing.</p>



Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

<p>Students will need Worksheet Six (page one): <i>Interview With An Ethical Decision Maker</i></p>	<p>To illicit detailed class discussion, pose the following questions to the students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What choices did the speaker have in their situation?• What advice did they seek in making their decision?• What were the ramifications of their decision?• Who was affected by their decision?• What would have been the 'easy way out'?• Why do you think he/she didn't take the 'easy way'?• Did they feel this was the 'right' decision? Why/why not?• Did you feel this was the 'right' decision? <p>Activity Two: We all know someone who has faced such difficult ethical dilemmas and had to be led by their conscience.</p> <p>Pose the following question to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who do you know that has faced a difficult ethical dilemma?• How did they work through the problem?• How has it affected them later in their lives? <p>Students may volunteer to speak about a friend, a family member or even someone they saw in a TV show or movie. Encourage students to share these stories (if comfortable to do so) with the class.</p> <p>Using Worksheet Six: <i>Interview With An Ethical Decision Maker</i>, students are to begin work on a research task aimed at them identifying someone close to them who has been faced with making a difficult ethical decision.</p> <p>The first step which they are to work on here during class time is to construct a series of interview questions designed to gain basic information about the person themselves, as well as details of the dilemma and the process by which they worked through it, culminating in a reflection upon their final decisive action.</p> <p>Implementation of this interview is to be done in the student's own time over the coming days/week.</p> <p>The interview: its questions and responses are then to be written up in either a poster or report format and submitted during a designated lesson time.</p> <p>The teacher may wish for students to have the opportunity to share these interviews with their fellow students. This may best be done in small groups of 5-6. Such a task may also be displayed around the classroom.</p>
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Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

<p><i>Amazon DVD/video</i></p>	<p>Discuss: Clearly, from such a wonderful range of people interviewed, we all know some very interesting individuals who have been faced with difficult decisions to make. Often such people can be role models for us when we, ourselves, come to making such decisions.</p> <p>Often, the facing of serious ethical dilemmas and the dealing with them makes the person or people involved stronger. It can change who they are, make them re-asses their actions and attitudes in life. In short, such challenges can be life-transforming.</p> <p>Activity Three: Students are to watch a DVD/video based upon the making of an ethical decision(s) which has been life-changing. Teachers may well have a preferred source in their own school libraries or may wish to use one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Nelson Mandela: Journey to Freedom</i> (Amazon)• <i>Mandela: Son of Africa, Father of a Nation</i> (Amazon)• <i>Martin Luther King Jr: The Man and the Dream</i> (Amazon) <p>Notes for Teachers: Given the time constraints constantly faced by teachers, such viewing may best be restricted to brief, nominated scenes or appropriately selected 10-15min excerpts of a longer movie, TV show or documentary.</p> <p>Discuss: As demonstrated in the DVD/video, ethical decision making can result in life-changing experiences. The choices one makes can lead one down paths in life that would have been significantly different had alternate options been pursued.</p> <p>Pose the following questions to students in light of the material viewed:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What was the ethical dilemma faced by X in this DVD/video?• What were the facts of the situation?• What made this an 'ethical' dilemma?• What opinions did he/she have before them?• What were the possible consequences of these options?• Did they seek advice on the situation?• If so, from who?• Would you consider these sources of opinion 'authorities'?• What decision did they finally make?
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Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

<p>Students will need Worksheet Five (page two): <i>Calling All Advertising Gurus</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do you think it was the 'right' decision?• What would you have done if in their position? <p>Activity Four: Using Worksheet Five (page two): <i>Calling All Advertising Gurus</i>, students are to work in groups of four to six to produce an informative TV advertisement outlining the following details:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Definition of the term 'Ethics'• Examples of 'Ethical' dilemmas• An outline of the STOP method for ethical decision making• A brief description of someone facing and working through an ethical challenge. <p>The advertisement is aimed at informing a nominated audience about these details. Students may wish to make their target audience a younger year level, a teenage group of their own peer level, young adults or adults: the choice is theirs. The material presented must, however, be tailored to this audience group both in terms of language used and presentation mode selected.</p> <p>If facilities allow, these ads can be video taped/ digitally recorded and played back in presentation to the class. Otherwise, students can act out their ad to the class live.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: This lesson, assuming the run time for your Activity Three nominated DVD is 45 minutes or less, will take approximately four periods.</p>
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Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

Assessment Ideas

How well did the students:

- demonstrate their understanding of the term 'ethics' and what constitutes and 'ethical' issue through categorisation of ethical and non-ethical issues (Worksheet Two: *Identifying Ethical Issues*), their reflective writing in their *Ethical Issues Journal* and their construction of an informative TV advertisement (Worksheet Six (page two): *Calling All Advertising Gurus*)?
- demonstrate their understanding of ethical decision making processes through examination and presentation of a nominated ethical dilemma (Worksheet Three: *STOP!*) and their construction of an informative TV advertisement (Worksheet Six (page two): *Calling All Advertising Gurus*)?
- demonstrate their understanding of the notion of 'authorities' and their role in effective ethical decision making through identification of a range of sources of advice (Worksheet Four (page one): *Getting the Opinions of Others*) and their construction of an informative TV advertisement (Worksheet Six (page two): *Calling All Advertising Gurus*)?
- demonstrate their understanding and appreciation of scripture as a source of ethical authority through their examination and application of selected biblical excerpts (Worksheet Four (page two): *Scripture As A Source of Authority*)?
- demonstrate their understanding and appreciation of the relevance of Jesus Christ and his teaching for ethical decision making through examination of selected parables (Worksheet Five (page one): *Where Is The 'Prodigal Son' Today?* and Worksheet Five (page two): *Loving My Neighbour*)?
- demonstrate their appreciation of individuals' responses to ethical dilemmas through development, implementation and presentation of an interview with an ethical decision maker (Worksheet Six (page one): *Interview With An Ethical Decision Maker*) and their construction of an informative TV advertisement (Worksheet Six (page two): *Calling All Advertising Gurus*)?

Evaluation

How well did the unit:

- lead the students to a deeper appreciation and knowledge of 'ethics' and 'ethical' decision making?
- deepen students' knowledge and connection to their own and others' processes of ethical decision making?
- enable the students to articulate their insights and responses to a range of 'ethical' issues?
- invite students to reflect upon the teachings of Jesus Christ in light of nominated ethical dilemmas?
- invite students to reflect upon scripture in light of nominated ethical dilemmas?
- encourage students to question, think, explore, share and contribute to discussion of ethical issues?



Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

Extension notes for the teacher:

- *When discussing 'ethics' with students in light of the notions of 'right' and 'wrong', it is vital to highlight for them that, in their declaration of faith in Jesus Christ, God has already granted to them eternal love, forgiveness and blessing regardless of their subsequent actions.*
- *In this light, the study of ethics within a Uniting Church context focuses on the living of a life that is already within the loving embrace of God. One's actions can not alter this intimate presence, nor fracture one's hope for salvation – ultimate restoration of full relationship with God in the afterlife.*
- *It is also important to note that the Uniting Church does not uphold belief in the notion of 'predestination', that is, that one's life course and choices made along this journey, have already been predetermined by God prior to one's birth.*
- *Instead, the Uniting Church fully upholds that one of the fundamental blessings given to each individual is the gift of free will, through which each man and woman can come to shape their own life's path, exercising free choice at every juncture.*

Key Terms Used Within This Unit:

Ethics:

Ethics can be defined as the study of decision making, taking into consideration the process and associated contributing factors through which an individual or group draw conclusions in the face of dilemmas. Such dilemmas are those which are operative at a level involving the notions of right and wrong, good or bad. Accordingly, it is important to remember that not all situations requiring choices to be made involve ethics. It is only those which require consideration of 'moral rights and wrongs' which are to be understood in this way.

Morals:

Morals can be described as an individual's yard stick for assessing 'right' and 'wrong', 'good' and 'bad'. One's morals allow for the discernment of such judgement in order deal with the ethical decision making process.

Values:

Values are, as their name implies, ideas or sentiments that an individual places worth in – "I value honesty and integrity". Values can impact significantly upon ethical decision making as they underpin one's guiding principles in life and often allow for the discernment between options based upon more desirable or less desirable outcomes: "Because I value honesty and integrity, I am going to take this line of action in order to achieve an outcome consistent with these values".

Conscience:

One's conscience should not be thought of simply as a 'voice' within one's head or heart, advising an individual as to his or her potential courses of action in life. One's conscience is rather a body of knowledge, like my others, cognitively based with affective ramifications. In being cognitive, the human conscience can be nurtured, educated and formed like all other forms of knowledge. In having affective associations, it should be noted that this body of knowledge has intimate affiliation with the broader self, often directly affecting one's emotive state. One's conscience is essentially an individual's knowledge of what is 'right'. All human individuals have a conscience and this can well be noted as a fundamental characteristic setting humanity aside from all other animals.



Unit 5 Talking About What's Important: An Introduction to Ethical Thinking

This is not to say, however, that all human consciences are equal in terms of maturation, and such maturation is not solely dependant upon one's chronological age. While age does often play a part, the level of maturation of conscience largely depends on the formative education process, both in terms of quantity and quality, undertaken by the individual in terms of exposure to moral teachings and relevant life experiences: the informing process through which conscience development can occur.

Discernment:

Discernment is a key process within ethical decision making. This refers to the act of sorting options as they lay before an individual. To discern is to not only sort 'right' from 'wrong' but to identify a whole range of options within each of these categories. It involves the application of an ethical decision making process in order to achieve such sorting, from which point informed decisions can be more adequately made.

Ethical Dilemma:

Ethical dilemmas are problems that are faced involving choices based on the notions of 'right' and 'wrong' which have two or more possible courses of action available to the individual or group.

Authorities:

Authorities are sources of 'expert' opinion which can and should be referred to by an individual or group when looking to make an informed decision. By getting the advice of those deemed to be in authority on the matter at hand, one is able to inform oneself fully in order to consider all viable options and weigh them accordingly. Sources of authority may well include Churches – their representatives and writings; Government bodies; and other well recognised and respected groups or individuals.

Salvation:

This term is used to denote the ultimate restoration of relationship between humanity and God. Christians of Protestant traditions believe that salvation will be gained by all who have faith in God and the risen Christ. The human capacity for such faith is facilitated through God's blessing of grace. Salvation will offer all individuals both ultimate fulfilment and total happiness as eternal union with God is achieved. In this light, salvation is understood by Christians to be so precious a gift that one cannot help but value it like a most valued possession, and thus are driven to live their lives in such a way that reflects this source of love. This reaction to God's unmerited gift is perhaps most vividly illustrated by St. Paul's reaction to his experience of Jesus on the road to Damascus. Here, confronted with the presence of Christ, Paul immediately had a total change of heart, changing from one who was a relentless persecutor of Christians to being a follower of Christ himself. Having experienced God's grace here in a most amazing fashion, Paul had no choice but to change his life in a most radical way. So too, as recipients of this gift of grace, Christians are compelled to act, in all they do, in such a way that mirrors this unending love.

FUNK RECORDS

You are a high-powered executive from the world-wide recording studio of *FUNK RECORDS*. In this role, you have been invited to Channel 8 studios in Melbourne, Australia for the recording of an episode of *Hypotheticals: The Illegal Downloading Debate*. Here, as a representative for your industry, you are asked to present the views of *FUNK RECORDS* regarding the massive spread of illegal music downloading and its impact on your company.

Be prepared with the following details:

1. Your name:

2. A list of bands you and your company represent:

3. An outline of the impact of illegal downloading on your clients & company:

4. Two specific examples of how this issue has affected your clients & company:

5. Your opinion about illegal downloading:

6. Your opinion about possible penalties for those caught illegally downloading:

7. Any other comments in regard to this topic:

VIBE MUSIC

You are a high-powered executive from the world-wide recording studio of *VIBE MUSIC*. In this role, you have been invited to Channel 8 studios in Melbourne, Australia for the recording of an episode of *Hypotheticals: The Illegal Downloading Debate*. Here, as a representative for your industry, you are asked to present the views of *VIBE MUSIC* regarding the massive spread of illegal music downloading and its impact on your company.

Be prepared with the following details:

1. Your name:

2. A list of bands you and your company represent:

3. An outline of the impact of illegal downloading on your clients & company:

4. Two specific examples of how this issue has affected your clients & company:

5. Your opinion about illegal downloading:

6. Your opinion about possible penalties for those caught illegally downloading:

7. Any other comments in regard to this topic:

Band Member

You are a member of a world famous rock band. In this role, you and your fellow band members have been invited to Channel 8 studios in Melbourne, Australia for the recording of an episode of *Hypotheticals: The Illegal Downloading Debate*. Here, you are asked to present the views of your band regarding the massive spread of illegal music downloading and its impact on you as recording artists.

Be prepared with the following details:

1. Your name:

2. Your band's name:

3. A list of some of your biggest selling CDs:

4. An outline of the impact of illegal downloading on your band:

5. Two specific examples of how this issue has affected your band:

6. Your opinion about illegal downloading:

7. Your opinion about possible penalties for those caught illegally downloading:

8. Any other comments in regard to this topic:

Solo Recording Artist

You are a world famous solo recording artist. In this role, you have been invited to Channel 8 studios in Melbourne, Australia for the recording of an episode of *Hypotheticals: The Illegal Downloading Debate*. Here, you are asked to present your views regarding the massive spread of illegal music downloading and its impact on you as a solo recording artist.

Be prepared with the following details:

1. Your name:

2. A list of some of your biggest selling CDs:

3. An outline of the impact of illegal downloading on you as a solo artist:

4. Two specific examples of how this issue has affected you as an artist:

5. Your opinion about illegal downloading:

6. Your opinion about possible penalties for those caught illegally downloading:

7. Any other comments in regard to this topic:

Big Screen Actor

You are a Hollywood big screen actor. In this role, you have been invited to Channel 8 studios in Melbourne, Australia for the recording of an episode of *Hypotheticals: The Illegal Downloading Debate*. Here, you are asked to present your views regarding the massive spread of illegal movie downloading and its impact on you as actor.

Be prepared with the following details:

1. Your name:

2. A list of some of your biggest Hollywood movies:

3. An outline of the impact of illegal downloading on your career:

4. Two specific examples of how this issue has affected you as an actor:

5. Your opinion about illegal downloading:

6. Your opinion about possible penalties for those caught illegally downloading:

7. Any other comments in regard to this topic:

Big Screen Movie Financier

You are a multi-millionaire who finances many of Hollywood's big screen movies. In this role, you have been invited to Channel 8 studios in Melbourne, Australia for the recording of an episode of *Hypotheticals: The Illegal Downloading Debate*. Here, you are asked to present your views regarding the massive spread of illegal movie downloading and its impact on you as a financial backer within the film industry.

Be prepared with the following details:

1. Your name:

2. A list of some of the biggest Hollywood movies you have financed:

3. An outline of the impact of illegal downloading on your industry:

4. Two specific examples of how this issue has affected you as a financier:

5. Your opinion about illegal downloading:

6. Your opinion about possible penalties for those caught illegally downloading:

7. Any other comments in regard to this topic:

Illegal Downloader

You are a frequent illegal downloader of both music and movies. In this role, you have been invited to Channel 8 studios in Melbourne, Australia for the recording of an episode of *Hypotheticals: The Illegal Downloading Debate*. Here, you are asked to present your views regarding the availability of illegal music and movie downloading and its impact on you as consumer.

Be prepared with the following details:

1. Your name:

2. A list of some of your favourite downloading sites:

3. A list of some of your latest downloads:

4. An assessment of how frequently you would download music and movies:

5. Two specific examples of how this issue has affected you as a consumer:

6. Your opinion about illegal downloading:

7. Any other comments in regard to this topic:

IT Guru

You are an IT guru and creator of illegal downloading software. In this role, you have been invited to Channel 8 studios in Melbourne, Australia for the recording of an episode of *Hypotheticals: The Illegal Downloading Debate*. Here, you are asked to present your views regarding the illegal downloading industry and its impact on you as a technology genius and business person.

Be prepared with the following details:

1. Your name:

2. The name of your software company:

3. An outline of what your software does and how people access it:

4. An assessment of how many people use your software for illegal downloading:

5. Your opinion about illegal downloading:

6. Your opinion about possible penalties for those caught illegally downloading:

7. Any other comments in regard to this topic:

Legal Expert: Artistic Property

You are a legal expert in the area of artistic property. In this role, you have been invited to Channel 8 studios in Melbourne, Australia for the recording of an episode of *Hypotheticals: The Illegal Downloading Debate*. Here, you are asked to present your views regarding the massive spread of illegal music and movie downloading and its impact on the global legal community.

Be prepared with the following details:

1. Your name:

2. The Name of your legal firm:

3. An outline of the impact of illegal downloading on the legal community:

4. Two examples of cases you have handled regarding illegal downloading:

5. Your opinion about illegal downloading:

6. Your opinion about possible penalties for those caught illegally downloading:

7. Any other comments in regard to this topic:

Legal Expert: IT

You are a legal expert in the area of Information Technology. In this role, you have been invited to Channel 8 studios in Melbourne, Australia for the recording of an episode of *Hypotheticals: The Illegal Downloading Debate*. Here, you are asked to present your views regarding the development and availability of illegal music and movie downloading software.

Be prepared with the following details:

1. Your name:

2. The Name of your legal firm:

3. An outline of the impact of software development within this area:

4. Two examples of cases you have handled regarding such software:

5. Your opinion about illegal downloading:

6. Your opinion about possible penalties for those caught illegally downloading:

7. Any other comments in regard to this topic:

Identifying Ethical Issues

We are frequently faced with dilemmas in life that require us to make decisions. Ethical dilemmas involve judgments of 'right' and 'wrong' or 'good' and 'bad'. Other plain, everyday, basic dilemmas are not based upon such moral judgments.

Those that are 'ethical' in nature can be categorized into three groups:

- Personal: Effecting only yourself
- Communal: Effecting those around you and/or your local community
- Global: Effecting people all around the world

Your Task:

Sort through the following list of issues and figure out:

- Which may involve 'ethical' decisions vs. those that will not
- What category the ethical decisions may belong to out of personal, communal and global

Disposal of industrial waste

Cheating on your boyfriend

DECIDING WHAT TO HAVE FOR LUNCH

Taking notes into a closed-book test

Cutting down rainforests

Helping a very ill person die quickly

Organising your transport to school

Selecting an outfit for the school formal

littering

Disposing of paper from IT labs

Watering your garden

Harvesting coral from the Great Barrier Reef

Fishing

Deciding what colour to paint your room

Going to war

Selecting what to watch on TV tonight

Taking alcohol to an underage party

Hunting rabbits

Eating meat

Handing in a friend's assignment as your own

Wagging school

Never returning library books

Kissing you friend's girlfriend

'Borrowing' money from your father without him knowing



STOP

Search out the facts of the situation

Think about:

- a) the options that lie before you and
- b) their possible consequences

Get the opinions and advice of **others**

Pause and reflect on your
nominated action plan

STOP! Case Scenarios

Apply the STOP! method of decision making to one of the following scenarios. Present your findings to the class by acting out the given scene then discussing the facts, options and their possible consequences, the opinions of others and a final course of action, for the ethical dilemma(s) you face.

Scenario One:

Sally was a quiet girl who tended to keep to herself. Her friend Emma, on the other hand, was out-going and the life of the party. When the two girls were invited to Jason's 16th birthday party, Sally didn't think much of it, asking her parents, as per usual, if she could go. Having been asked the normal questions about location, time, parental supervision and whether or not it was going to be alcohol free, Sally was able to reassure her parents that all was fine and she was accordingly given permission to go. The day before the party, much to Sally's surprise, Emma asked what booze she planned on taking, remarking that it was "very cool" that Jason's parents were fine with alcohol and they trusted him so much that they weren't even going to hang around for the night.

Scenario Two:

James worked for a fast food chain that made in excess of \$250,000 per week. James was 16 years old and accordingly on youth wages of \$11.97 per hour. Even though he worked three five hour shifts a week, he could not earn enough to keep up with his mobile phone bill. He tried asking his rich step-father, David, to lend him some cash but was told that the phone was his responsibility. With the telephone company threaten to cancel his connection, James was desperate unsure where to turn to. He was seriously contemplating either stealing from his step-dad or his employer but had yet to make a decision.

Scenario Three:

In the grand scheme of things, everyone does it a few times in their life, don't they? Well, that's what Melissa was trying to convince herself of as she busily prepared her notes for the up-coming French test. If she wrote them small enough on her leg, then Mrs. White would never notice her cheating. Sam, Melissa's best friend, had been shocked at her willingness to cheat, but Melissa was hopeless at French and if she didn't get straight Bs (at least) her parents were not going to let her go to the Port Sea new year's eve party. French was all that stood in her way. With only two days to go until the exam, she was never going to learn enough to get her through. What other choice did she really have?

Scenario Four:

Mick really did quite like Eva, his current girlfriend of three weeks, but it was Eva's friend Sandy that really interested him. Eva was a nice girl and all that, but she just didn't have the same bright character and stunning looks of her friend. It was really convenient being with Eva though, as this meant Mick got to see Sandy all the time as the two girls were inseparable. Eva didn't even seem to notice that Mick's attention was focused on Sandy whenever she was about, so if she's that vague, isn't it her problem, not his? If Mick did have the guts to drop Eva, would Sandy really be interested in him?

Getting the Opinions of Others

It's really important to get the opinions and advice of others when we are faced with ethical dilemmas. Identifying all our possible options is hard enough, let alone figuring out which is the best one to go with!

It is times like these that we can turn to our family, friends and a whole range of 'people in the know' (authorities) for advice. A variety of such groups is listed below.

Your task:

Suggest how each of these people and/or groups may be of assistance to you when making tricky ethical decisions and

Note down which may be appropriately called an 'authority': a holder of specialist information, as opposed to a more general source of personal opinion.

Source of advice	How might they assist?	'Authority'?
Family doctor		
Friend from school		
School counsellor		
Kids Help Line		
Mum		
School Chaplain		
Local government representative		
Teacher		

Scripture as a Source of Authority

Examine the following biblical passages and identify the advice or perspective they offer on the issue listed. Record the passage's possible relevance to the given scenario in the space provided.

Biblical passage	What advice/opinion can this passage offer?
Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-20)	...on the issue of establishing happy and healthy communities?
The Greatest Commandment (Matthew 22:34-40)	...on the issue of discrimination?
The Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12)	...on the issue of bullying?

Where Is the Prodigal Son Today?

The parable of the *Prodigal Son* (Luke 15:11-31) is much more than simply a story of a boy finally getting his act together and a father offering forgiveness. To settle with this understanding is to sell Jesus' teaching here too short. What it does exemplify, however, is the unconditional love and immeasurable mercy God offers to us and, in turn, the type of love and mercy we are encouraged to give to those around us. Such all-abounding love should play a key role in all our ethical decision making.

Activity:

Find a modern day setting of Jesus' parable *The Prodigal Son* by identifying this story's message and finding a source that contains the same message today.

The contemporary sources you may wish to examine include:

- Music
- Movies
- TV programs
- Books
- Examples from your own life experience

Having located such a source and reflected upon how it retells this parable's message, answer the following questions and present your findings to fellow members of your class:

1. Outline details of your modern-day source: what is it, where did you find it, who wrote/sung/performs it?
2. Outline details of the storyline which is found here.
3. Describe how this conveys the message found in Jesus' parable, *The Prodigal Son*
4. How effective is this medium in conveying this message?
5. Do you think this message is still relevant today? Why/Why not?

Interview With An Ethical Decision Maker

We all know people who have been faced with difficult ethical dilemmas. Sometimes, the choices you make when faced with such hard decisions can be life-changing, with significant consequences.

Your task is to research one such individual and the ethical dilemma which they faced. This is to be done through interviewing your nominated individual and asking them a series of specially designed questions aimed at finding out about the situation with which they were faced, what they did and how they went about making their final decision.

Use the following notes as a guide for your research & its presentation.

Content

Be sure to cover the following details in your research and its presentation:

- Basic background biographical details of the individual*
- Details of the ethical dilemma faced*
- What options did the person feel they had in the given situation?*
- What were the possible consequences of these options?*
- Did the individual ask the opinions and advice of others? If so, who?*
- What sort of advice did these people give?*
- What was the final decision made?*
- Upon reflection, were they happy with this decision?*
- Give a detailed listing of the interview questions & the responses gained*

Presentation

You may choose to present your interview in any one of the following ways:

- Poster*
- Written report*
- Video recording & accompanying notes*
- Other means as decided in consultation with you teacher*

Due Date: _____

Calling All Advertising Gurus

You and your team are known in the advertising industry as experts in the areas of marketing and innovative ideas. That's why you've been chosen as the *Australian Ethics Council's* advertising consultants for their new advertising campaign: *Ethics: What's It Got To Do With You?*

Your assignment is to inform people in the wider community as to some of the most important details regarding 'ethics' and 'ethical decision making' through creation of a TV advertisement aimed at a nominated audience.

You may choose from any of the following target groups:

- Students of a younger year level - eg. Students from Grades 4-6
- Your peer level - Students from Years 7-9
- Young adults - Students from Year 10-12
- School Leavers - Aged 18-22 years
- Adults

Your advertisement should contain the following details:

- A definition of the term 'ethics'
- Some examples of 'ethical' dilemmas
- An outline of the *STOP!* method of ethical decision making
- A brief description of how an individual has effectively worked through a difficult ethical dilemma

The material presented must be tailored to your audience group both in terms of the language used and the examples chosen to illustrate your main points.

Remember: Grade 4s think differently from adults and relate to different things, as do Year 8s and 22 year olds. Make sure your sales pitch is tailored accordingly!



Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

Student Objectives

That students will:

- *Deepen their understanding and appreciation of what 'justice' is*
- *Develop an appreciation for what constitutes a 'just' society*
- *Gain an understanding and appreciation for the Christian view that the seeking of 'justice' is an integral part of living one's faith*
- *Gain an appreciation for the work carried out by others in an effort to seek 'justice' in our world*
- *Gain an understanding and appreciation for their own capacity to act for justice's sake*

Notes for the teacher:

This unit focuses on the notion of 'justice' in terms of both a theoretical notion and Christian call to action. It seeks to offer students the opportunity to explore the notion of 'justice' as a fundamental requirement of righteous social order and the ramifications that become evident when such a quality is not present and active within a community. Students are also invited to examine specific issues which can hinder the existence of 'justice' and responses that are currently offered to these situations by a variety of organisations. Here, special attention is paid to the social justice activities of the Uniting Church in Australia.

Total time required:

To complete this unit as it is presented here, it is recommended that a total of 20 x45minute periods be allocated. Such a time frame allows for both research and presentation of all tasks outlined, unless otherwise specified. As such an amount of time may not be viable within each educational setting, teachers are invited to manipulate the Unit's contents to suit their individual school's needs. In this light, teachers may wish to select individual lessons for implementation or, conversely, limit the number of activities undertaken within each lesson.

For further assistance in teaching this unit of work refer to the Extension Notes for Teachers to be found after Assessment and Evaluation, for explanation and clarification of terms used in the unit

Unit Six Lesson Outline:

Lesson One: *Justice Is A Matter Of Balance*

Lesson Two: *Why Value Justice?*

Lesson Three: *The Christian Call To Be Seekers of Justice*

Lesson Four: *Seekers of Justice In Our World*

Lesson Five: *How Can I Be A Seeker Of Justice?*



Uniting Church in Australia
Religious Education Lesson Plan
Middle Years (7&8)

Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).



Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

Lesson 1	Justice Is An Matter of Balance
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Jenga is a balance game.</p> <p>There will be other similar games within the mathematics faculty. It is distributed by Hasbro through any toy retailer.</p>	<p>Opening Statement for the Unit: In this unit we are going to examine the nature and substance of ‘justice’. ‘Justice’ is to be studied through the notion of ‘balance’, with ‘injustice’ understood as ‘imbalance’ either within ourselves, our communities or in our relationship with the natural world. Students are invited to explore the means by which a variety of agencies seek to right such imbalance with special attention paid to the justice mission activities of the Uniting Church in Australia.</p> <p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is ‘justice’? • How does the notion of ‘balance’ relate to ‘justice’? <p>Activity One: If the school yard has a see-saw in its junior play area, take the class out to this to begin this lesson. If not, using an old fashioned pair of scales or a balancing game such as ‘Jenga’ can achieve the same visual stimuli for discussion here.</p> <p>Using the see-saw or alternate apparatus, ask two students to come out and show the class what it means to be in ‘balance’.</p> <p>Discuss: In light of this visual stimulus, pose the following questions to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happens when the two see-sawing students are not of equal size and weight? • What does such imbalance result in? • How can such imbalance be righted? • Why would you bother righting it? <p>Balance is needed in all areas of life such as diet, play, study and relationships.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How is such balance achieved? • How is imbalance in these areas achieved? • Why do you think such balance important? <p>(Offer examples for students as required to direct discussion.)</p> <p>Activity Two: Using Worksheet One (page one): <i>Life Is A Balancing Act</i>, students are to reflect upon how balance and imbalance can be brought about in their own lives. In light of the previous discussion, they are to individually list ways in which life can be ‘balanced’ or ‘imbalanced’ on or around the associated picture.</p>



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<p>Students will need Worksheet One (page one): <i>Life Is A Balancing Act</i></p>	<p>Areas for students to focus their reflection upon include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Diet• Play• Study• Work• Exercise• Friendships• Family Relationships• God <p>Discuss: Coming back together as a class, ask students to share their responses. Draw this sharing to a close by asking students the following questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does one's own 'balance' only affect the individual themselves?• If not, how can 'imbalance' affect those around us? <p>Being in 'balance' is not just something we have to be concerned with in regard to our own lives. We also have to be in 'balance' with those around us and the world at large. Balance needs to exist in communities if they are to function properly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What would happen if only one person totally controlled how everyone else in Australia lived?• What would happen if only one group in Australia had all the money, and the rest of us had none?• What would happen if the only people offered health care were those who worked and payed taxes? <p>All these things would mean that the Australian community would be out of balance. Only some would benefit or profit from these things while many would be disadvantaged.</p> <p>So too, in our global community, there needs to be balance. Having really, really rich countries and really, really poor ones causes imbalance. Not allowing some countries to trade with others also causes imbalance. Pose the following question to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What else can cause imbalance between countries? <p>Suggestions may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Having one country more powerful than another in terms of military power• Having one rich country use another country's poorer population as cheap labour <p>The need for balance does not stop there. We also need to be balanced in our treatment of the environment. What does this mean?</p>
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Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

<p>Students will need Worksheet One (page two): <i>Everyone & Everything Need Balance</i></p>	<p>Responses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Monitored use of natural resources• Replanting of wooded forests• Responsible water usage <p>Activity Three: Using Worksheet One (page two): <i>Everyone & Everything Needs Balance</i> students are to work in pairs to come up with a listing of ways in which balance and imbalance can result between either local communities, global communities or humanity and the environment.</p> <p>Once completed, students are to break up into three groups: those who dealt with local communities, those who dealt with international communities and those who dealt with the environment. Students are to pool their responses, adding to their listing with those shared within the group. A presenter from each of the three groups is then to be nominated to share their findings with the class.</p> <p>Discuss: One of the main results of imbalance, whatever the setting, is ‘injustice’. Pose the following question to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is this evident in the examples we have looked at so far? <p>Responses may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• When the relationship between a brother and sister is imbalanced it can result in one always getting their way over the other which is unfair and unjust• When communities are imbalanced financially, this can result in poverty and the lack of life’s necessities for one group while the other has everything they need which is unjust• When a country strips down all the trees in a forest area without replanting, natural animal habitat is lost and a valuable resource is taken away which is unjust for both the animals, the local community and the health of the environment as a whole <p>‘Justice’ can often be a really difficult concept to understand by itself. Sometimes it’s easier to understand by thinking of it’s direct opposite: ‘injustice’.</p> <p>Activity Four: We have all suffered ‘injustice’ at some point in our lives, be this at home amongst family members, at school or elsewhere. Working in groups of five, students are to discuss experiences they have had that were ‘unjust’. Examples may include experiences such as the following:</p>
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- Mum blaming me for something my sister did
- A teacher disciplining me in class when it was really the student next to me that was talking
- Getting caught on the tram without a valid ticket when I dropped it between the seats

From this sharing of experiences, students are to nominate one which they feel best exhibits the notion of ‘injustice’ and act out or mime the scene. They are to then act out an alternate running of events that would have seen justice, rather than injustice, prevail. These two dramatic interpretations are then to be presented to the class.

Discuss:

Each of these scenes shows us what can happen when we are faced with unjust actions or circumstances. Often, as we saw, righting the situation and making the outcome ‘just’ results in a much healthier and happier outcome for all involved.

Some people suggest that peace is a direct result of justice. Without justice, peace cannot exist.

- Would you agree with this conclusion?
- When justice does not exist in a situation at home, is life peaceful? Why/why not?
- Was this association (no justice = no peace) evident in any of Activity Four’s scenarios? How?

So if ‘injustice’ involves a lack of balance, how can we define ‘justice’?

- ‘Justice’ involves balance: between myself, others and the world around me.
- ‘Justice’ involves caring for myself, others and the world around me

This equation (justice = peace) is not only evident in our family lives and here at school but can also be seen on the world stage.

- What examples of this exist in our world today?

Responses may include the following:

- When a country is not being ruled in a just way, it can result in civil war amongst its own people and the governing body – which is a total lack of peace. This is evident in some parts of Africa such as in the Sudan or Zimbabwe
- When some individuals or groups act in an unjust fashion, this can also lead to war with other countries reacting to the unjust activities. This is evident in the Middle Eastern conflicts involving Al Qaeda and the Allied Forces.



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	<p>These demonstrate that without justice, peace cannot exist. Without peace, individuals and communities as a whole cannot flourish and this is not good for anyone involved. Accordingly, justice is an essential part of any healthy community: be this within a family, at school, or on a much larger stage such as national and global politics.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: This lesson, including time for Activity One, will require approximately three periods to complete.</p>
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Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

Lesson 2	Why Value Justice?
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>The teacher will need to bring some blocks of chocolate to class as well as some diabetic/sugar free chocolate (if any of the students so require)</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why should we value ‘justice’? • How do we know God values ‘justice’? <p>Notes for Teachers:</p> <p>It is suggested that some background reading be undertaken by the teacher prior to implementing Activity One in order to accurately present the issue of child labour and unfair trade in the cocoa industry. The following web sites may aid in such preparation:</p> <p>Fair Trade Chocolate Makers: http://www.papapaa.org/ http://www.dubble.co.uk/story/chunk1.shtml</p> <p>Fair Trade Association: http://www.fta.org.au/</p> <p>Child labour in cocoa industry: http://www.american.edu/ted/chocolate-slave.htm http://www.laborrights.org/projects/childlab/cocoa.htm http://www.globalexchange.org/campaigns/fairtrade/cocoa/</p> <p>Cocoa farmers strike to gain rights: http://www.voanews.com/english/archive/2006-10/2006-10-16-voa38.cfm?CFID=31794235&CFTOKEN=73437917</p> <p>Stop the Traffik http://www.stophetraffik.org</p> <p>Activity One:</p> <p>Present the class with some blocks of chocolate – enticingly laid out on a desk at the front of the room. Pose the following questions to the class:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Who here likes chocolate? • What is your favourite sort? • What about it do you like? • Would it rate in your list of favourite foods? • How often do you purchase it? • How much would you spend a week on it? <p>Share the chocolate around for students to eat. (Check for food allergies and diabetics prior to giving out the chocolate.)</p> <p>Once consumed, pose the following question to students:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does anyone know how chocolate is made? <p>Explain to students that chocolate is made from cocoa beans, many of which come from West Africa. Here, because such poor money is paid by</p>



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large many chocolate-making companies for the beans, farmers struggle to survive. In fact, thousands upon thousands of those who work on these farms are children, many between the ages of 9 and 12. They work in really dangerous conditions, for very long hours and most are unable to attend school because of their working commitments.

Many have come to these farms as a result of child trafficking, which means they were either kidnapped from their homes and taken there, or sold by their families to these farms thinking they would be able to send money back home. The latter is generally not the case and the children are worked like slaves to lower labour costs for the farmers. They are paid outstandingly low wages and treated, often, in inhumane ways.

Discuss:

In light of the information discussed in Activity One, revise the notions of ‘balance’ and ‘justice’ introduced in Lesson One of this unit. Pose the following questions to students:

- What parts of this process of chocolate production are ‘unjust’?
- What is out of balance here?
- Why do you consider these things ‘unjust’ and ‘imbalanced’?

As discussed in Lesson One, ‘justice’ requires balance: it involves caring for ourselves, others and the world around us. But what does this mean in terms of real life situations? What do ‘justice’ and ‘injustice’ look like?

Activity Two:

Pose the following questions to students and record their responses on the board:

- What are the qualities you associate with ‘justice’ and ‘just’ societies?

Responses may include the following:

- Fairness – in all aspects of society
- Equal rights for all people
- Respect of all people
- Acceptance of differences

In light of these qualities:

- What qualities do you associate with ‘injustice’ and ‘unjust’ societies?

Responses may include the following:

- Unfair conditions – in all aspects of society
- Unequal rights between different groups of people
- A lack of respect for each other



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<p>Students will need Worksheet Two (page one): <i>The Global Community Values Justice</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A lack of acceptance of each other <p>Clearly, ‘justice’ seems more favourable than ‘injustice’, especially if you are part of the group suffering from ill-treatment.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why is this so?• Why should we value ‘justice’ over ‘injustice’• In what circumstances could it be tempting to value ‘injustice’? <p>If we are to say that justice is about balance, then sometimes imbalance can not only create a suffering group of people but, on the other end of the see-saw, it can produce a profiting group of people.</p> <p>In the case of our chocolate, while the children being used as slave labour are clearly suffering, the farmers are able to gain greater profit and the chocolate companies are able to purchase the much needed coca beans at a cheaper rate while selling it to us for a much greater price. Accordingly, while the children may be on the losing end of this deal, the farmers, traffickers and manufacturers, especially the latter, seem to be the winners.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is out of balance here?• What makes this situation ‘unjust’? <p>Responses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The children’s rights are not respected• Children are being exploited• They have unfair working conditions• There is a lack of respect for the children and their families• There is also a lack of respect for the farmers when the manufacturers pay so little for their crops <p>On the other end of this imbalance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• People are profiting from others’ suffering• Big manufacturing is not caring about where and how their products are resourced• Larger profits are made <p>Thus, imbalance and injustice always disadvantages some, and sometimes advantages others.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• So should we bother valuing ‘justice’?• Should we bother seeking it? <p>Activity Three: Using Worksheet Two (page one): <i>The Global Community Values Justice</i>, students are to examine a selection of excerpts from the <i>1948 Declaration of Human Rights</i>, some of which have been re-worded here for the Year 7-8 audience. With these in mind, students are to answer the associated</p>
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Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

<p>Students will need Worksheet Two (page two): <i>God Calls Us to Value Justice</i>, their Bibles and coloured pencils.</p>	<p>activity questions as outlined.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: A complete copy of the <i>1948 U.N. Declaration of Human Rights</i> is available from: http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html</p> <p>Discuss: Come back together as a class and discuss the formation of the U.N. and its 1948 Declaration. Within this discussion, pose questions such as the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How is this group (the U.N.) evidence of ‘justice’ being valued?• What does their Declaration tell us about their understanding of ‘justice’?• What qualities of justice are promoted in this declaration?• How can this understanding create ‘balance’ for individuals, local communities and international relations? <p>Discuss student responses to the activity questions outlined on this worksheet. Nominate students to present their own <i>Declaration of Human Rights</i> to the class.</p> <p>Discuss: Of course, ‘justice’ is not only sought by secular (non-religious) groups such as the United Nations. It is highly valued and actively sought by all religious traditions.</p> <p>Jews, Christians and Muslims alike believe in a God who is love and the eternal giver of love. Accordingly, this God is one who values justice very highly. Throughout the Hebrew scriptures, shared by all three of these religious traditions, God calls people to be seekers of justice. In fact, when God felt that injustice was dominant amongst people, God called specially chosen individuals to stand up and carry the message of love to those who most needed to hear it. These people came to be known as ‘prophets’ – messengers of God.</p> <p>Activity Four: Using Worksheet Two (page two): <i>God Calls Us to Value Justice</i> students are to examine a range of prophetic texts which both depict God’s valuing of justice and God’s call for people to be seekers of such righteous social order. Students are to choose from the listed biblical passages and create a logo which expresses the passage’s view of justice, explaining their logo in the space provided. Biblical excerpts outlined in this activity are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Micah 4:3-7• Isaiah 11:6-9• Amos 5:21-24
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	<p>Notes for Teachers: Due to the language used in the biblical excerpts of Activity Four, teachers may need to assist students in interpreting these passages.</p> <p>Discuss: Each of these passages depicts God’s ideal vision of a just world. In each, surprising associations are outlined, such as animals befriend each other in a way that we would not normally expect. Such seemingly impossible friendships and images highlight not only the dramatic change in reality needed for justice to most fully exist in our world, but also the need for us to look at our world in a new way: God’s way.</p> <p>It is obvious from the forming of the U.N., the writing of its subsequent declaration and religious visions such as those found in the Hebrew Scriptures that most people seem to value justice. Of course, at times, what constitutes ‘justice’ can be a matter of perspective and individual interpretation.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: This lesson will require approximately three periods to complete.</p>
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Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

Lesson 3	The Christian Call to Be Seekers of Justice
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need Worksheet Three (page one): <i>Jesus Was A Seeker of Justice</i> and their Bibles.</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What did Jesus teach us about ‘justice’? • Is there something specific to the Christian call to justice? <p>Discuss: In Lesson Two, we examined the United Nation’s Declaration on Human Rights which outlined for us one vision of a ‘just’ society. We also found that the Hebrew Scriptures depicted a God of love who was very much concerned with justice, and calls His people to be agents of such righteousness.</p> <p>For Christians, God’s call to be seekers of justice and voices for those who are powerless in our world is believed to have reached a whole new level in the person of Jesus. But what did Jesus, himself, do and say about justice?</p> <p>Activity One: In pairs, using Worksheet Three (page one): <i>Jesus Was A Seeker of Justice</i>, students are to investigate one of the outlined biblical excerpts in order to report back to the class the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Retell the excerpt in your own words • Who is in need of Jesus’ care and attention here? • Why might this person be considered an outcast or marginalised in first century society? • What does Jesus do to work towards righting this situation? <p>Discuss: Allow each pair to report back on their biblical passage. Each report should only be brief and require approximately 1 minute for presentation. While one of the students in each pair can be presenting their findings orally, the other can make very brief notes on the board under the headings research:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brief story title & biblical reference • Injustice evident • Jesus’ view <p>Draw these findings together for students by posing the following questions to the group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the content of these stories, what sort of injustices appear to have been evident in Jesus’ time? • What effects did these injustices have on the people involved?



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<p>Students will need Worksheet Three (page two): <i>The Beatitudes</i>.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• What sort of attitude did Jesus have to these unjust circumstances?• What sort of responses did he offer to them? <p>Highlight for students that while the specific issues of injustice may be different today they are still evident in many ways. While leprosy is not as rampant in modern society as it was in the first century, mental illness can well be likened to this in terms of its social effects for many sufferers. So too, poverty in Western cultures may not appear as prominently in the form of beggars, but manifests in what we now call the ‘working poor’ – people with jobs that just don’t pay adequate wages, and in those excluded from services which are available to the more affluent in our community.</p> <p>Note for Teachers: Of course both leprosy and poverty, evident in the form of begging, is still evident in many countries today. This is not to be belittled or denied. The above discussion is intended only to highlight issues more immediate to the lives of our students in the Australian context.</p> <p>Activity Two: Jesus makes very clear within the course of his ministry that God has special concern for those who are marginalised, suffering and on the fringes of society. God is love itself and thus demands love, in the form of justice for all people. Perhaps the best known scripture passage that outlines this is ‘<i>The Beatitudes</i>’.</p> <p>As a class, read through <i>The Beatitudes</i> (Matthew 5:1-12) as outlined on Worksheet Three (page two): <i>The Beatitudes</i> the discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What sorts of people are identified as blessed here?• Are they notably powerful and influential people?• Why do you think God specially blesses these people?• In light of what we discovered about first-century suffering and society in Activity One, why do you think Jesus felt compelled to present this teaching to the crowds? <p>Discuss: In fact, Matthew presents this as the first of Jesus’ public teachings. In this way, <i>The Beatitudes</i> really sets the scene for things to come in this gospel. Right from the outset, we are told by Jesus what his ministry is going to be focused on: the poor in spirit, those who mourn, the persecuted and the seeking of righteousness, mercy and peace. In this way, Jesus’ ministry is a living out of God’s very nature: love. But how relevant is this quest in today’s world?</p>
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Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

<p>Students will need coloured A4 paper, pencils, fabric or normal paint and either a length of calico or reinforced paper onto which the hands can be stuck.</p>	<p>worth for. This blessing is what is at the heart of humanity's relationship with God and, indeed, facilitates this relationship.</p> <p>St Paul writes in his letter to the church in Rome that "righteousness from God comes through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe" (Romans 3:22).</p> <p>Thus, as Christians, we don't have to fight for justice in order to gain God's love: we already have it. Instead, it is because we live within this circle of love that we are compelled to, ourselves, enact love and it is through this enacting of love that we will be seekers of justice for all.</p> <p>Activity Five: As a class, create a banner entitled <i>Love and Justice Go Hand in Hand</i>. Students are then to trace their own hands on coloured paper and write on this any one of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A definition of what they believe justice to be• A prayerful reflection on God's call to be seekers of justice• A recount of a New Testament story which depicts Jesus as a seeker of justice• A comment on the association of love and justice. <p>Collect all these hands together and create a collage around the central heading: <i>Love & Justice Go Hand In Hand</i>. The completed banner can then be displayed either in a college foyer or used within a liturgy on the theme of justice.</p> <p>Such a liturgical celebration may well feature as the concluding activity for this unit for each individual class or the year level as a whole. Conversely, it may be celebrated in order to mark the commencement of an intensive period of justice activities within the broader school community, or to conclude a <i>Social Justice Forum</i> such as that outlined in Lesson Five.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: Lesson Three will require approximately four periods to complete.</p>
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Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

Lesson 4	Seekers Of Justice In Our World
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need Worksheet Four (page one): <i>Justice Seekers In Our World</i>, poster paper and access to the internet.</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How do people fight for ‘justice’? • What does the Uniting Church do in an effort to promote ‘justice’? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>There are many different agencies in our world today that actively seek justice for those who suffer from injustice. Some groups deal with poverty in third world countries, some deal with homelessness on our city’s streets and others fight to for environmental justice. As a class, brainstorm a listing of such agencies. This list may include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uniting Care • Justice & International Mission Unit http://jim.victas.uca.org.au • UCA Share Appeal www.shareappeal.com.au • World Vision • Salvation Army • St. Vincent De Paul • Smith Family • Caritas www.ozspirit.com.au -with a regular e magazine • Wildlife Preservation Society • Hotham Mission • Kids Help Line • Just Act http://justact.org.au <p>Activity One</p> <p>From the brainstormed listing or their own wider reading/research, students are to investigate the work of a nominated group.</p> <p>Worksheet Four (page one): <i>Justice Seekers In Our World</i> offers a number of questions designed to guide students in their investigations. Access to the internet shall be required for this task.</p> <p>Students are to collate their findings in the form of a poster outlining pertinent details of their group’s work. This is to be presented to the class in a two minute oral, offering other students the opportunity to learn about the wide variety of justice-orientated groups active in the community.</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <p>The Uniting Church in Australia has a very strong commitment to Gods’ call for justice. As a Church, they are deeply committed to the belief that love and justice go hand in hand. Accordingly, the Uniting Church sees it as their special mission to seek justice wherever injustice exists.</p>



Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

<p>Students will need Worksheet Four (page two): <i>The Uniting Church's Call To Justice</i> and access to the internet.</p>	<p>From the Church's very founding in 1977, it has been a Christian community committed to seeking justice in our world. In their founding statement, the <i>Basis of Union</i>, this commitment is evident: Paragraph 3: In rising Christ from the dead, God initiated "a new order of righteousness and love" Paragraph 16: Expresses a commitment to pastoral cares and the role of the Christian disciple as servant.</p> <p>In an effort to live out this mission, the Church has formed a number of groups with the specific aim of seeking justice.</p> <p>Activity Two: Using the Uniting Church in Australia's official national web site, along with associated sites outlined below, students are to investigate the missionary activity of this community:</p> <p>UCA National Homepage: http://assembly.uca.org.au/home/ UnitingCare Australia: http://www.unitingcare.org.au/ Hotham Mission: http://asp.hothammission.org.au/ Disaster Relief Fund: http://nat.uca.org.au/agencies/disaster_relief/index.htm Frontier Services: http://www.frontierservices.org/ Uniting International Mission: http://www.uim.uca.org.au/home Uniting Justice Australia: http://nat.uca.org.au/unitingjustice/ http://jim.victas.uca.org.au -go to the JIM (Justice & International Mission) site for an extensive list of activities in the pursuit of justice</p> <p>Worksheet Four (page two): <i>The Uniting Church's Call To Justice</i> provides guidance for this task with a listing of questions to be answered from students' research.</p> <p>Students may either choose for themselves which of the above groups they shall answer the designated questions in regard to, or the teacher may wish to assign one social justice endeavour per student which will result in approximately 4-5 students within the class working on the same endeavour.</p> <p>Having allowed approximately one period for this research to be completed, gather students in small groups, consisting of one student and their findings for each of these UCA social justice groups. Here, students</p>
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Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

are to present their findings on their nominated group.

Note for Teachers:

Teachers should be aware that students also undertake a brief research task on a Uniting Church social justice group in Unit 7: *This Is The Uniting Church* (see Lesson Three, Activity Four). Accordingly, this task may require some additional supervision to ensure students examine either different groups, or have highlighted for them the need for significantly differing depths of research to be undertaken.

Discuss:

Clearly, the Uniting Church in Australia is a community very much concerned with justice in our world today.

- What sort of injustices does the Church attempt to face?
- Why do you think it is driven to carry out such work?
- How do these social justice endeavours carry on the work of Christ?

Notes for Teachers:

This lesson, including reach time for both activities one and two, will require approximately four periods to complete.



Uniting Church in Australia
Religious Education Lesson Plan
Middle Years (7&8)

Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).



Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

Lesson 5	How Can I Be A Seeker Of Justice?
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>“Pay it Forward” was released by Warner Home Video in 2001. Available through Amazon, (www.amazon.com) or retailers</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What can I do to be a seeker of justice in my everyday life?• How can we, as a class, contribute now? <p>Discuss:</p> <p>We have seen that there are many aid agencies run by both non-religious and religious groups which do great things in their fight for justice. But how can we, as individuals, live out God’s call to be seekers of justice?</p> <p>Students may suggest the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Join one of these aid agencies• Collect money for the poor at Easter• Donate spare clothes to the local needy• Buy a yellow ribbon on Daffodil day• Buy a Pancake on Pancake Day <p>All such actions will help in the fight for justice in our world. Some can be big-scale contributions, others small. What all such action starts with, however, is a commitment to genuinely valuing justice and committing to be an activist for this. Such an attitude is vital if each of us is going to make any form of difference in this world.</p> <p>Activity One:</p> <p>Students are to watch the DVD ‘Pay it Forward’. Teachers may wish to select just a few pertinent scenes or to show the entire movie depending on time restraints within their given context.</p> <p>Here, a young boy develops a concern for justice and formulates a theory he calls ‘paying it forward’. This theory is based on the notion of freely choosing to help three people in need without looking for payment or any other form of return other than the commitment from the individual given assistance to do the same. This ‘doing good’ then is intended to spread a desire for justice and an attitude of care amongst the community at a three-fold rate.</p> <p>Discuss:</p> <p>In light of watching this DVD, discuss the following question as a class group:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What did you think of the ‘pay it forward’ theory?• What made it work?• What would hinder it from being a world-wide success?



Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

Clearly, being a seeker of justice through the enacting of good is not, necessarily, an arduous task. Sometimes it may just mean standing up for someone who can't stand up for themselves. Other times it might just mean choosing one chocolate brand over another or one garment brand over another (in order not to support slave/child labour etc.).

Archbishop Desmond Tutu once made the following statement:

"If you are neutral in situations of injustice, you have chosen the side of the oppressor. If an elephant has his foot on the tail of a mouse and you say that you are neutral, the mouse will not appreciate your neutrality."

Accordingly, being a voice for justice by choosing to act rather than not act can be a most powerful way to fight for justice. Pose the following question to students:

- Have you ever been in a situation when you saw an injustice happening and you spoke out?
- Have you ever witnessed an injustice where someone else stepped in in an attempt to right the situation?

Examples offered may be as basic as speaking out in the schoolyard against a bullying act or something on a more international scale such as refusing to buy a particular brand of clothing due to its manufacturing practices exploiting workers.

One powerful way to be an advocate of justice is to write emails or letters to people in leadership, putting your point forward on an issue of injustice. This may be leadership here at school, in our local councils, state or federal governments or international organisations.

Pose the following question to students:

- What sort of justice issues may be tackled in this way?
- Who would be your chosen audience?

Responses may include:

- The preferential service given to Year 12s in the canteen lines – Principal, Vice Principal (Students) and/or Canteen Coordinator
- Unregulated use of 'private' bores – Premier and associated State Ministers
- Detention of Asylum Seekers – Prime Ministers and associated Federal Ministers
- Detention of David Hicks without charges and Australian Government's lack of definitive action – Prime Minister

Note both the justice issues suggested and the possible audiences to which associated letters of protest could be addressed on the board. Construct a sizable listing for students to consider.



Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

<p>Students will need access to the internet and email.</p>	<p>Activity Two: Students are to choose one such justice issue which they feel committed to and research this topic. This issue may be local, national or international in nature and is to be chosen in consultation with the supervising teacher.</p> <p>In response to their nominated justice topic, students are to either email or post a letter to an associated authority, presenting their argument against the situation. This correspondence is to contain the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An outline as to the current state of this situation• A clear outline of arguments outlining as to why this issue is one which impinges the rights of others - ie. is a 'justice' issue• A proposed a course of action to right the current situation• An outline of they feel it is necessary to bring this issue to the attention of the nominated authority. <p>The draft of this correspondence is then to be checked by the teacher for suitability etc. prior to a final draft being completed and sent to the nominated authority. Students are to request that all subsequent correspondence be sent to their home address.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: In many cases, students will receive a reply either from a designated individual or department within the given authority. Ask students to bring these responses to class to share with the group. In cases where no response is offered, encourage students to write follow-up correspondence so as to demonstrate their commitment to this cause to the agency or department they originally approached. Allow time in class for such additional correspondence as required.</p> <p>Discuss: Getting involved through forming or joining an action group is another way of living out God's call to be a seeker of justice. This may be as easy as joining a justice group operative in the school, or forming such a group yourself. It might also be lived out through actively seeking out information on justice issues and becoming informed about what is going on in you local and global community.</p> <p>Activity Three: (Option One) The Justice & International Mission Unit of the Victorian and Tasmanian Synod of the Uniting Church In Australia in conjunction with UCA schools run a '<i>Social Justice Forum</i>' each year which looks to engage students in open discussion and debate about contemporary justice issues prevalent in our world.</p>
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Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

Consisting of a day per term over terms one, two and three, this forum is focused upon a different justice issue each year. Encourage student involvement in this program and allow those who attend to report back on their experience to the class as a whole.

Activity Three: (Option Two)

In the case of being unable to involve your students in the *Social Justice Forum*, implement your own half-day retreat focused on justice. Here, implemented on a year level-wide basis, the following activities may be organised and implemented within a setting such as the school hall, allowing students to further explore the area of social and/or environmental justice:

- A guest speaker presenting to the whole cohort on the nominated topic
- A range of guest speakers all associated to the one topic presenting in a panel format
- A number of guest speakers presenting on a range of topics through which smaller groups of students rotate or nominate to hear a given number of presenters
- Simulation Dilemma Games: Contact Dr. Mark Zirnsak, Director of the Justice & International Mission Unit of the UCA: mark.zirnsak@victas.uca.org.au
- Have a BBQ or other form of subsidised lunch to raise funds for a nominated action group
- A liturgy focused on the theme of 'Justice'

Discuss:

Follow up either Activity Three or Four with extensive discussion in class about what students learnt from these forums. Questions such as the following may aid in stimulating discussion:

- What did you hear presented that affirmed what you already knew?
- What did you hear that was new to you?
- What of note jumped out at you about any of the presentations?
- Did any leave you with a lasting impression? How & why?

Activity Four:

Either on a class-by-class basis or as an entire year level, nominate and vote upon a focal justice initiative to be undertaken. This may include activities such as:

- ongoing sponsorship of a specific justice group (such as Hotham Mission)
- development of a specified fund which collects for a different aid agency each term



Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• sponsorship of a specifically identified community in need <p>Whatever the cause, students need to feel ownership of this activity and fully understand its details so as to make a strong and personal connection to it as their means for seeking justice. This may be achieved through class-based research of the project and frequent discussion of its activities and contribution to justice in our world throughout the year.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: This lesson, excluding time for either version of Activity Three, will require approximately six periods to complete.</p>
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Additional references:

Dutney, A. Where Did the Joy Come From: Revisiting the Basis of Union Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 2001. (ISBN 1 86407 221 0)

Merritt, D.R. Understanding the Uniting Church In Australia. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1996. (ISBN 1 86407 143 5)

Basis of Union (1992)- available online (<http://nat.uca.org.au/basisofunion/Basis1992.htm>)

McBrien, Richard P. (ed.) Encyclopedia of Catholicism. San Francisco: Harper, 1989. (ISBN 0 06 0653388)



Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

Assessment Ideas

How well did the students:

- demonstrate their understanding and appreciation of what ‘justice’ is through exploration of the notion of balance (Worksheet One (page one): *Life Is A Balancing Act* and Worksheet One (page two): *Everyone and Everything Needs Balance*), establishment of a definition of the term ‘justice’ and examination of the characteristics of ‘justice’ and ‘injustice’?
- demonstrate their appreciation of what constitutes a ‘just’ society through examination of secular (Worksheet Two (page one): *The Global Community Values Justice*) and sacred (Worksheet Two (page two): *God Calls Us to Value Justice*, Worksheet Three (page one): *Jesus Was a Seeker of Justice*, Worksheet Three (page two) : *The Beatitudes*) texts outlining key characteristics of righteous social order?
- demonstrate their understanding and appreciation of the Christian view that the seeking of ‘justice’ is an integral part of living one’s faith through examination of Christ’s teaching and actions regarding justice (Worksheet Three (page one): *Jesus Was A Seeker of Justice*); identification, exploration and reapplication of the Beatific call (Worksheet Three (page two): *The Beatitudes*) and participation in the construction of a justice banner (*‘Love & Justice Go Hand In Hand’*)?
- demonstrate their appreciation of the work carried out by others in search of justice through research and presentation of an individual activist or group (Worksheet 4 (page one): *Justice Seekers In our World*) and investigation into the missionary activities of the Uniting Church In Australia (Worksheet Four (page two): *The Uniting Church’s Call to Justice*)?
- demonstrate their understanding and appreciation for their own capacity to act for justice’s sake through participation in a *Social Justice Forum*, composition of emails or letters voicing an opinion on a selected justice issue and involvement in a class or year-based justice initiative?

Evaluation

How well did the unit:

- lead the students to a deeper appreciation and knowledge of what ‘justice’ is?
- enable the students to articulate their insights and responses to ‘just’ and ‘unjust’ circumstances?
- encourage students to question, think, explore, share and contribute to discussion of what constitutes a ‘just’ society?
- invite students to reflect upon God’s call to all people to be seekers of justice?
- deepen students’ knowledge and connection to the Christian understanding that justice is a direct result of love and an integral part of living one’s faith?
- Encourage students to explore the means by which others seek justice in our world?
- invite students to reflect upon their own capacity to be a seeker of justice?



Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

Extension notes for the teacher:

- *Justice is achieved when we care for ourselves, others and the world around us.*
- *Justice is primarily an issue of balance. When we are in balance with God, ourselves, those around us and the world at large, justice can be achieved.*
- *When we are out of balance with God, we are not going to have a healthy or happy relationship with God.*
- *When we are out of balance with ourselves, we are not going to be healthy or happy in mind or body and thus unable to function to our fullest capacity.*
- *When we are out of balance with others, we are not going to be able to maintain just relationships or just communities.*
- *When we are out of balance with the world, the health and well-being of our environment is compromised.*
- *A just society is one in which individual rights are balanced with communal rights.*
- *Throughout the Hebrew Scripture we are shown a God of love who wants justice to reign for all people. Maintaining a just social order is frequently the demand presented to the people of Israel through God's messengers, the prophets. This call to 'justice' is often particularly focused upon social and economic polarisation evident within the given society. God is depicted in these texts as one who seeks equality for all.*
- *As Christians, we understand that Christ called us to pay special heed to the needs of the weak, the disadvantaged and the marginalised. Within his ministry, Jesus frequently turned his attention to those within his own society who were in such need.*
- *The following unit of work is to be approached and implemented from the perspective of salvation: ultimate restoration of one's relationship with God.*
- *Justice is directly related to love and thus is an integral part of living out of one's faith in the risen Jesus Christ and God, who is love itself. This seeking of justice is not to be understood as a duty through which salvation can be earned, but a natural response of love to love.*

Key Terms Used Within This Unit:

Justice:

Justice is achieved when we care for ourselves, others and the world around us. Achieving 'justice' starts with recognition of each individual's rights as a human being: to not only subsist but flourish as both an individual and member of a community. It is recognised by signatories to the 1948 United Nations Declaration of Human Right that each person should have the right to access sufficient food, shelter, education and safe employment while also being able to freely choose and practice their religious beliefs. Only when these, among other basic requirements, are present shall a 'just' social order be achieved.

In religious terms, Jews, Christians and Muslims alike share the conviction that we are all created equally in the "image of God" (Genesis 1:27) and thus the sacredness of each human being must be recognised in order to establish a 'just' society.

As Christians, Christ calls us to be stewards of justice, standing up for the rights of the weak and marginalised in our communities. Within his ministry, Jesus paid special attention to those on the fringe of his contemporary society: the physically and psychologically ill, the poor and all those who struggled with social rejection.



Unit 6 Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, the World (Social Justice).

Today, while the ills may differ from those that present in first century society, such marginalisation is still very much a part of our world. Accordingly, justice must be sought in all avenues of life to ensure a balanced and righteous social order, especially when those who suffer from injustice are, themselves, powerless to participate in this fight.

The duty of being seekers of justice is understood by Protestant Christians to be an integral element of one's response to grace. Grace, the gift of love freely given by God to all individuals, is what allows for the human response of faith. With this response comes the desire to live out God's love by way of valuing justice and seeking this for all people. A desire for justice is as integral to Christian living as heat is to fire.

Equality:

Christians believe that all of humanity are created in the "image of God" (Genesis 1:27). While this does not denote a specifically physical likeness, it is in our souls or our inner-most capacity for goodness that we reflect the divine image. In this light, all are understood to be equal in terms of human dignity and associated rights. It is from this perspective that the Christian call to justice is to be understood.

Salvation:

This term is used to denote the ultimate restoration of relationship between humanity and God. Christians of Protestant traditions believe that salvation will be gained by all who have faith in God and the risen Christ. The human capacity for such faith is facilitated through God's blessing of Grace. Salvation will offer all individuals both ultimate fulfilment and total happiness as eternal union with God is achieved.

It is important to note in this context, however, that one's actions cannot impinge upon one's achieving of salvation. Thus, being actively engaged in the pursuit of social justice is a natural response of faith itself, not a requirement placed upon us by God. We do not and cannot earn salvation through our own actions, such as deeds performed in pursuit of righteous social order. Instead, it is through our faith in Christ we are granted eternal salvation in God and our actions are but a reflection of this all-embracing love.

Further Reading:

*Beth Gilligan, Searching For Justice (Melbourne: Harper Collins Religious, 2000).
Department of Education & Training, Ideas For Human Rights Education (Melbourne: Student Learning Division – Dept. of Education & Training, 2005).*

Suggested Support Materials:

United Nations Declaration of Human Right (1948) available from:

<http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html>

UCA National Homepage:

<http://assembly.uca.org.au/home/>

UnitingCare Australia:

<http://www.unitingcare.org.au/>

Hotham Mission:

<http://asp.hothammission.org.au/>



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Disaster Relief Fund:

http://nat.uca.org.au/agencies/disaster_relief/index.htm

Frontier Services:

<http://www.frontierservices.org/>

Uniting International Mission:

<http://www.uim.uca.org.au/home>

Uniting Justice Australia:

<http://nat.uca.org.au/unitingjustice/>

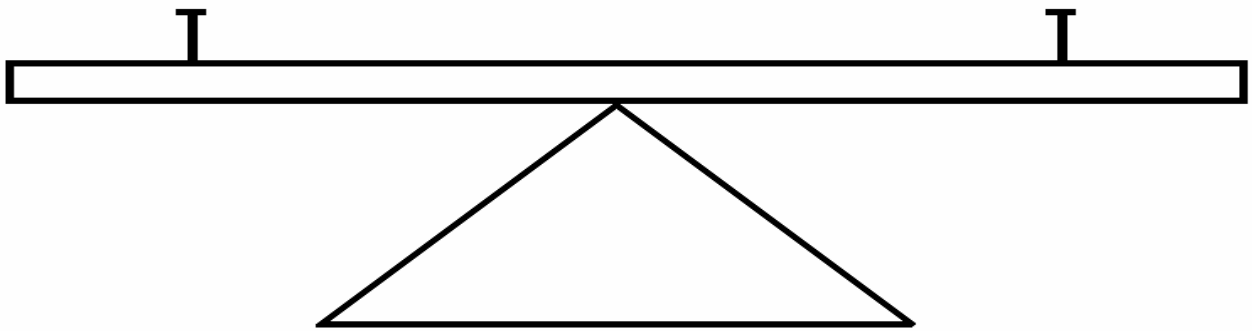
Life Is A Balancing Act

It's really important to get all the different areas of our lives well balanced. These areas include the following:

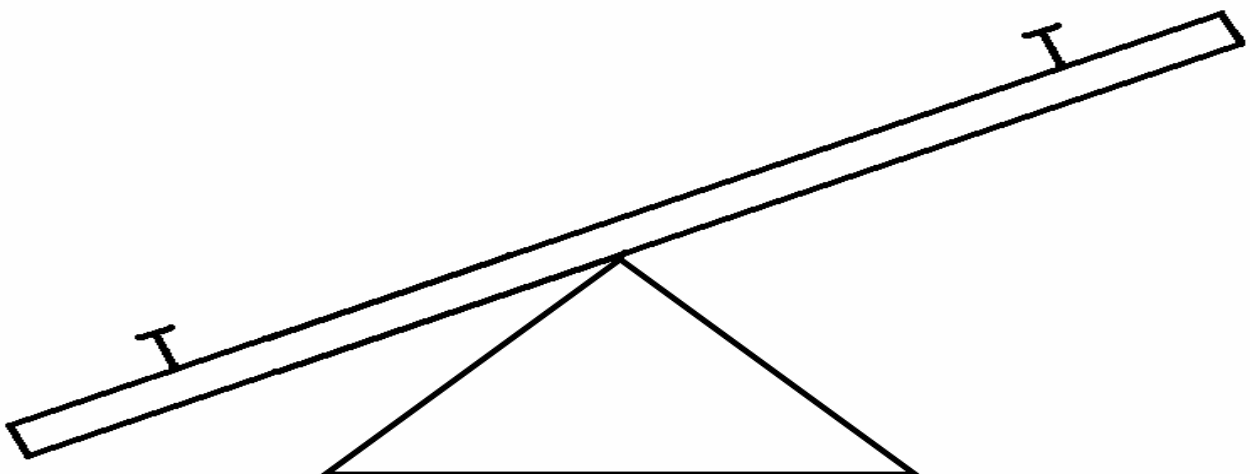
Diet	Play
Study	Exercise
Work	God
Friendships	Family Relationships

Balancing these can help us to be healthy and happy individuals, able to function to the best of our abilities.

I'm well balanced when....



I'm out of balance when...



Everyone & Everything Needs Balance

Local communities, global communities and humanity's relationship with the environment need balance too. When sections of a community or countries as a whole are out of balance with each other, lots of problems can emerge. The same can be said of an imbalanced relationship with the environment. Choose one of these three options and list ways in which balance can be achieved or lost.

Balance can be achieved when...

Imbalance can result when...

The Global Community Values Justice

What Is the United Nations?

The *United Nations* (or *U.N.* as it is commonly known) is a worldwide organisation made up today of over 190 countries. The *U.N.* seeks to uphold the rights of all peoples and ensure justice is exercised throughout the world. This sounds like a big task - and it is! One way in which they have sought to achieve this is through developing a common, world-wide understanding of human rights. This listing, signed by its member nations back in 1948, is evidence of a common belief in justice and the rights of all individuals. The following is a sample of some of the statements contained within this document.

United Nations 1948 Declaration of Human Rights

Article 1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

Article 3: Everyone has the right to life, freedom and personal security.

Article 4: No one should be held in slavery; slavery and the slave trade shall be banned in all their forms.

Article 5: No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 9: No one shall be subjected to unjustified arrest, detention or exile.

Article 11: Everyone charged with an offence has the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty according to law in a public trial at which he/she has had adequate defence.

Article 15: Everyone has the right to a nationality.

Article 18: Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion.

Article 19: Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression.

Article 23: Everyone has the right to work, just working conditions and to equal pay for equal work. Everyone who works has the right to just and adequate pay.

Article 25: Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of themselves and of their family, including an ability to provide food, clothing, housing and medical care.

Article 26: Everyone has the right to education.

Activity:

1. Choose three of the above statements and explain how they might contribute to a 'just' society.
2. Which of the above statements do you feel is the most important and why?
3. Write your own *Declaration of Human Rights*, outlining ten items which you feel are essential for creating a just community here at school.

God Calls Us to Value Justice

For Jews, Muslims and Christians alike, God is understood to be a lover of justice. God calls people to value 'justice' and wants all of us to live in communities which embrace such a characteristic. This call is echoed throughout the Hebrew Scriptures. Choose one such passage from the excerpts listed below and depict its sentiments in a logo entitled '*God's Call To Justice*'. Explain the excerpt and how it is represented in your logo in the space provided.

Isaiah 11:6-9

Amos 5:21-24

Micah 4:3-7

God's Call To Justice

Jesus Was A Seeker of Justice

Throughout his ministry, Jesus spent quite a bit of his time healing the ill and socializing with the outcast. This tells us something about Jesus and his attitude to these people: they are equals and need to be respected as such. In order to demonstrate this respect, often Jesus did things that those around him found either odd or really challenging: he loved the unlovable. This is one powerful way in which Jesus sought justice for those who could not fight for this themselves.

Working in pairs, choose one of the following biblical excerpts to investigate:

The Calling of Matthew (Matthew 9:9-13)

Healing a Man With Leprosy (Matthew 8:1-4)

The Calling of Levi (Mark 2:13-17)

Healing a Man on the Sabbath (Mark 3:1-6)

Healing of the Demon-Possessed Man (Mark 5:1-20)

Healing of a Deaf and Mute Man (Mark 7:31-37)

Healing of Bartimaeus (Mark 10:46-52)

Healing of a Paralytic (Luke 5:17-26)

Jesus Raises a Widow's Son (Luke 7:11-17)

Ten Healed of Leprosy (Luke 17:11-19)

Zacchaeus the Tax Collector (Luke 19:1-10)

The Healing at the Pool (John 5:1-15)

Read this passage and report back to the class the following:

1. Retell the excerpt in your own words.
2. Who is in need of Jesus' care and attention here?
3. Why might this person be considered an outcast or marginalized in first century society?
4. What injustice is at the core of this situation?
5. What does Jesus do to work towards righting this injustice?

The Beatitudes

(Matthew 5:1-12)

When Jesus saw the crowds, he went up the mountain; and after he sat down, his disciples came to him. Then he began to speak, and taught them, saying:

'Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted.

'Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.

'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

'Blessed are the merciful, for they will receive mercy.

'Blessed are the pure in heart, for they will see God.

'Blessed are the peacemakers, for they will be called children of God.

'Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

'Blessed are you when people revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for in the same way they persecuted the prophets who were before you.

Activity One:

Using a selection of recent newspapers, find articles that show evidence of the following groups in our contemporary world:

- Poor in spirit
- Those who mourn
- Those who are meek
- Those who fight for what is right
- Those who show mercy
- Those who are pure in heart
- Those who seek peace
- Those who are persecuted

Activity Two:

Using *The Beatitudes* as your model, compose a reflection for our contemporary world which highlights groups that are poor in spirit, the mournful, the meek, the merciful, the pure in heart, the seekers of righteousness and peace and those who are persecuted.

Once a draft of this reflection has been completed, copy your *Beatitudes For Today's World* onto a piece of poster paper for display in the classroom.

Justice Seekers In Our World

There are many groups working in our community today, either at a local or international level, that seek to promote justice where, sadly, injustice currently exists. Amongst these groups there are lots of different reasons for acting. Some are religious, others stem from a more general desire to 'put things right'. Whatever the motivation, many of these organizations do amazing things for those in our world who need help the most.

Select either an individual or group that has been outstanding in their support of those in need - whatever this need may be. Research this person or organisation then create an informative poster outlining the work that they do.

Possible groups include:

- Uniting Care
- Justice & International Mission
Unit Synod of Vic/Tas
- World Vision
- Salvation Army
- St. Vincent De Paul
- Share Appeal
www.shareappeal.org.au
- Smith Family
- Caritas Australia-
www.ozspirit.com.au
- Wildlife Preservation Society
- Hotham Mission
- Kids Help Line

Use the following details as a guide to what you should include:

1. Background information of the individual or group
2. The location of their work
3. An outline of the 'injustice' that causes them to act
4. An outline of their own personal motivation for taking action
5. Details of their work - what do they do to help?
6. An assessment of the impact their work has made upon those to whom they offer this aid

Also be prepared to share your findings with the class in a brief, two minute oral presentation.

The Uniting Church's Call To Justice

Use the following web pages to discover how the Uniting Church in Australia actively seeks justice in our world:

UnitingCare Australia:

<http://www.unitingcare.org.au/>

Hotham Mission:

<http://asp.hothammission.org.au/>

Frontier Services:

<http://www.frontierservices.org/>

Justice & International Mission Unit

<http://jim.victas.uca.org.au>

Disaster Relief Fund:

http://nat.uca.org.au/agencies/disaster_relief/index.htm

Share Appeal shareappeal.org.au

Uniting International Mission

<http://www.uim.uca.org.au/home>

Uniting Justice Australia

<http://nat.uca.org.au/unitingjustice/>

Just Act <http://justact.org.au>

Select one of the above UCA aid groups and answer the following:

1. What is the 'mission' or purpose of this group?

2. What 'injustice' does this group confront?

3. What activities does this group undertake in an effort to seek justice?

4. Who can get involved in this group and how?



Unit 7 This Is The Uniting Church

Student Objectives

That students will:

- *Gain a deeper understanding of the heritage of the Uniting Church in Australia.*
- *Develop an understanding of the Uniting Church's core beliefs and practices.*
- *Develop an appreciation of the social justice work of the Uniting Church within our Australian community and beyond.*

Notes for the teacher:

This unit focuses on the identity of the Uniting Church in Australia, exploring its history, core beliefs, practices and missionary endeavours within our local Australian community. While looking to locate the Uniting Church amongst fellow Christian Churches, this unit hopes to further student understanding of what it means to be 'Christian' in our contemporary world. Further to this, the following lessons identify some of the fundamental and individual characteristics of this Church that sees it stand aside, although in close solidarity with its fellow Christian denominations.

Total time required:

To complete this unit as it is presented here, it is recommended that a total of 9 x45minute periods be allocated. Such a time frame allows for both research and presentation of all tasks outlined. As such an amount of time may not be viable within each educational setting, teachers are invited to manipulate the Unit's contents to suit their individual school's needs. In this light, teachers may wish to select individual Lessons for implementation or, conversely, limit the number of activities undertaken within each Lesson.

For further assistance in teaching this unit of work refer to the Extension Notes for Teachers to be found after Assessment and Evaluation, for explanation and clarification of terms used in the unit

Unit Seven Lesson Outline:

Lesson One: *Who Is The Uniting Church?*

Lesson Two: *What Do Members Of The Uniting Church Believe?*

Lesson Three: *How Is The Uniting Church Present In Our World?*



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Unit 7 This Is The Uniting Church

Lesson 1	Who Is The Uniting Church?
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Teachers will need both an overhead projector and the <i>Christian Family Tree</i> overhead image.</p>	<p>Opening Statement for the Unit: In this unit we are going to examine the identity of the Uniting Church in Australia, exploring its history, core beliefs, practices and missionary endeavours within our local Australian community. We are going to identify some of the fundamental and individual characteristics of this Church that sees it stand aside, although in close solidarity with its fellow Christian denominations.</p> <p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Where does the Uniting Church in Australia ‘fit’ in the family tree of Christianity?• What is its history? <p>Discuss: In Unit One, we closely examined what ‘Christianity’ is, both in terms of its history as a religious tradition and its fundamental beliefs: what it means to call yourself ‘Christian’.</p> <p>Ask students to turn their minds back to this study, and pose the following questions for discussion:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is the main figure for Christians, generally referred to as the ‘Son of God’?• What religion did he belong to?• What century did he live in?• If he wasn’t Christian himself, how did ‘Christianity’ come about?• Who were some of the important founding members of this religious community?• We examined one of the tradition’s earliest statements of faith called the ‘Apostles’ Creed’. What beliefs do you recall this outlining? (ie. What are some core beliefs for Christians?) <p>Having refreshed our memories a little as to what ‘Christianity’ is, we are going to look much more closely at one denomination (or Church) within the extensive Christian family tree: the Uniting Church In Australia.</p> <p>Activity One: Using the <i>Christian Family Tree</i> overhead, highlight for students where the Uniting Church In Australia ‘fits’ within broader Christianity as well as within Western Protestant Christianity. Highlight for student the following points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Uniting Church In Australia has a relatively short history as a Christian denomination.• It was founded in 1977 when three previously independent denominations decided to come into Union– thus the name.• The three uniting denominations were the Methodists,



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Presbyterians and Congregationalists.

- While that may seem a long time ago to 13 and 14 year old students (over two lifetimes ago!) it happened during the teenage years of many of your parents. Considering some Christian denominations are over 1500 years old, this is a really new Church!
- This process of Union, as it came to be known, was a most interesting and exciting process as it involved the opinions of all adult members of the Churches. Congregation members were the ones who voted on whether or not they wanted their Church to be part of this new united identity.

NB. These points will be further developed by students in 'Part One' of their research task, featured in Activity Three. Here, they are just very basic notes to contextualise the Church in its broader Christian context.

Discuss:

As mentioned, Union was a most exciting and challenging process for the Church. Given that it saw three previously independent Churches come together to form one united entity, they would have faced many challenges. It would have been very much like trying to unite three different football teams.

- Each would have its own identity
- Each would have its own history
- Each would have its own way of doing things
- Each would have its own jersey, colours and symbols

Just like trying to unite three footy teams, these Churches would have faced many questions. Thinking along the lines of uniting footy teams, what might some of the challenges have been for the Churches coming into union?

Student responses may include:

- Differing opinions about who was going to be in charge
- Differing opinions about what to do with the many Church buildings
- There might have been some slightly different beliefs between them
- Each may have had its own way of running, leadership roles etc. so there would have been differing views on which would be adopted in the new Church
- Each would have had some people who wanted to unite, and some who did not
- Each probably had its own historic symbols so there might have been differing opinions about which would be kept and which wouldn't be



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Students will need
Worksheet One (page
one): *A New Emblem
For A New Way Of
Being Church*, colour
pencils and the internet

As you can see, this process of union would have taken a long time and a lot of discussion. One element that was decided upon was that this new Church needed a new symbol of its very own, not inherited from one of its particular contributing churches. Accordingly, the symbol we have today for the Uniting Church in Australia was born.

Activity Two:

Using Worksheet One (page one): *A New Emblem For A New Way Of Being Church*, students are to draw and research the meaning of the Uniting Church In Australia's emblem. The following web site gives students a slide show presentation on the meaning of this emblem and would be excellent foundational viewing:

- <http://www.uca.org.au/logoshow/logoshow.htm>

Discuss:

Come back together as a group and discuss their findings on the meaning of the emblem's individual parts as well as its overall significance for members of this Church.

Pose the following questions to students and discuss their responses:

- Why do you think the Uniting Church needed a new emblem?
- Do you think they could have chosen to use one of the uniting church's names and symbols? Why/Why not?
- Why are symbols such as these important?
- How does it contribute to the new identity of the Church and its members?

Activity Three:

One of the concrete signs of this union still evident today is to be found on the foundation stones of Uniting Churches across Australia.

Again, this can well be likened to merging football teams. If Essendon, Collingwood and Hawthorn were to merge prior to next season, they would only require one set of training facilities – one gym and one training ground. Now, they could either sell up all of the old three venues and build one new one, or they could decide to use one of the existing ones and sell the other two.

The issue of what to do with excess buildings is ongoing and continues to cause considerable stress as each building is considered a sacred site by the people who belong to each small congregation. Accordingly, if you take a walk around the Uniting Church, in your area you will find a foundation stone most likely laid well before 1977 – before union. Here, you can discover the individual history of this church, and possibly understand how the issue has been resolved by the local congregation.



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This is some of the concrete history of union right in our very midst. Either as a class (if possible in regard to staffing numbers) or as a research task for students on their way home, find a local Uniting Church, search out the foundation stone and investigate which denomination the church came from prior to union.

Activity Four:

Of course, this process of Union not only saw change for local congregations but also for schools associated with the uniting churches.

As a class, identify the denomination which established your school (if it was founded pre-1977). This may be obvious through the school name, or may require a trip similar to that carried out in Activity Three around the foundation stones of some of the older buildings within the school such as the chapel.

You may wish to take students to the school library to research this historical point in the school's history through old school magazines, photos or bulletins.

Notes for teachers:

Your school archivist and/or librarian will be a wonderful source of information on this localised history.

Discuss:

You may have noticed that in your area there are still some Presbyterian, Methodist or Congregational Churches. This is also an interesting part of the history of Union.

As mentioned earlier, the process of coming into union was an extensive one that involved the opinions of all adult members of the three Churches. One of the most important processes undertaken was a vote which determined whether individual congregations indeed wanted to be united or not.

While most voted for the union, some felt that their individual denominations would serve their communities better if they remained separate, retaining their individual histories and traditions.

While all Methodists and Congregationalists came into union, some congregations chose to remain Presbyterian, and have done right up to this day.



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<p>Students will need Worksheet One (page two) <i>Who Is the Uniting Church In Australia?</i> and access to the internet.</p>	<p>Activity Five: Using Worksheet One (page two): <i>Who Is the Uniting Church In Australia?</i> students are to work either individually or in pairs to research the history of the Uniting Church. This research will primarily be carried out using the internet and web sites listed on the given worksheet. Students are to present their findings in one of the following formats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Information pamphlet• Poster• Written report <p>Notes for Teachers: This research task will form the main assessment for this Unit and is to be worked on progressively throughout the coming lessons.</p> <p>Its content has three main areas: history, beliefs & practices and Church mission, each of which is the basis of the three lessons within this unit. Accordingly, Teachers would be encouraged to focus student research on ‘Part One’ of this assignment during Lesson One; ‘Part Two’ during Lesson Two; and ‘Part Three’ in Lesson Three. In this way, the content discussed within each lesson will contribute to the research work carried out.</p> <p>This lesson will take approximately three periods to complete, including a period of research time for Activity Five, Part One.</p>
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Lesson 2	What Do Members Of The Uniting Church Believe?
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need Worksheet Two: <i>What Does the Uniting Church in Australia Believe?</i>, some calico and a set of textas.</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are some core beliefs upheld by members of the Uniting Church? • How are these beliefs expressed? <p>Discuss: As discussed in Lesson One, the Uniting Church in Australia is a Christian church and they are part of the Protestant religious tradition. But what do they believe? And what sets them aside from other Protestant Christian denominations?</p> <p>Activity One: Using Worksheet Two (page one): <i>What Does the Uniting Church in Australia Believe?</i> Students are to work in groups of three-five to create a banner, listing some of the most important beliefs (core beliefs) of this Church as outlined in <i>The Apostles' Creed</i> and excerpts from the <i>Basis of Union</i>. Students can decorate their banner as they see fit and may choose to include the Uniting Church in Australia emblem, their school emblem or other symbolic images associated with the church (cross, dove, flame, candle, etc).</p> <p>Upon completion, teachers may choose to display these banners either within the classroom, year level foyer or school admin foyer. Such a display could later be added to through the inclusion of students' research projects focusing on the Uniting Church.</p> <p>Discuss: Some of these beliefs are vital, foundational beliefs for all Christians, not just members of the Uniting Church. Let's make a list of some of these 'core' beliefs on the board. This list, as nominated by students, may include the following beliefs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • God as Parent • God as creator • Jesus as Son of God • Jesus having risen from the dead <p>While Christians often name these beliefs as fundamental to their beliefs, and state them regularly in Chapel as well as in private prayer, sometimes it is important to stop and really consider what is meant by these statements. Let's take a closer look at a few of these now.</p>



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Teachers will need to establish five 'workstations' around the classroom using the 'Belief Cue Cards' provided, as well as items from the suggested 'expressing beliefs' listing outlined here in the 'Notes for Teachers'. Your School Chaplin will be an excellent source of such items. Students will also need Worksheet Two (page two): *Defining and Expressing Beliefs*.

Activity Two:

Using the cue cards provided, set up five work stations around the classroom for students to rotate through. Each card names a Christian core belief, offers a definition of this belief, asks students to reflect on how this belief is given expression in the item provided and then asks student to suggest how else this belief is given expression within Christian practice.

Student responses are to be recorded on Worksheet Two (page two): *Defining and Expressing Core Beliefs*.

Notes for Teachers:

Teachers may wish to laminate the cue cards for durability and presentation. Items which express these beliefs and thus can be used at the appropriate workstation may include:

God as Parent

- Copy of the Lord's Prayer

God as creator

- Image of one of the Genesis creation stories
- Children's illustrated book depicting one of the Genesis creation stories
- Picture of stain glass windows depicting these stories

Jesus as God Incarnate

- Copy of appropriate lines from Apostles' Creed

Jesus as Son of God

- Nativity scene/set

Jesus as risen from the dead

- Empty cross
- Image of the empty tomb
- Excerpt of scripture such as Mark 16:1-8

Discuss:

As can be seen from Activity Two, some Christian core beliefs are difficult to understand. It is because of this need to make tangible, to make clear their beliefs that Christian religious traditions have formulated ways to express complex ideas in relatively simple ways such as those you explored in this activity. This is not only something Christians do to make sense of their faith, or as a means to identify with it, but is a process carried out by all religious traditions.

In terms of the Uniting Church in Australia, the most important source for the expression of religious belief is found in scripture. The Bible is considered by this Church as "the source of nourishment to Christians, as the main source of the church's preaching, and as authority and guidance for living" (D. Merritt, *Understanding the Uniting Church in Australia*. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1992, 7).



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<p>Students will need from Lesson One Worksheet One (page two): <i>Who Is the Uniting Church In Australia?</i> and access to the internet.</p>	<p>Another key form of expression of belief within the Uniting Church is the celebration of sacraments. “Sacraments are symbolic actions which express deep truths about our relation to God.” (D. Merritt, <i>Understanding the Uniting Church in Australia</i>. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1992, 7.) In the Uniting Church, two sacraments are celebrated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Baptism – which sees the initiation of individuals (be these infants or adults) into the church and accordingly the people of God2. Lord’s Supper – which recalls the death and resurrection of Christ, allowing participants to share in this most sacred mystery <p>Activity Three: Using Worksheet One (page two): <i>Who Is the Uniting Church In Australia?</i> students are to continue working on their research projects. The focus of this lesson has prepared students for working on Part Two of this project which has them researching beliefs and practices of the Uniting Church. This research will primarily be carried out using the internet and web sites listed on the given worksheet.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: This lesson, including research time for Activity Three, will require approximately two periods.</p>
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Lesson 3	How Is the Uniting Church Present In Our World?
Resources	Lesson Format
<p>Students will need their Bibles.</p>	<p>Focus Questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What social justice work does the Uniting Church undertake? • Why does it undertake such activities? <p>Discuss: One of the most important beliefs upheld by the Uniting Church is in its call to carry on the work of Christ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “All who confess Jesus Christ and seek to be his followers are committed to continuing his work of service in the world.” (D. Merritt, <i>Understanding the Uniting Church in Australia</i>. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1992, 8.) <p>But what does this mean? What ‘work of service’ did Jesus do and why does the Church feel compelled to carry it on?</p> <p>Throughout the New Testament gospel texts we are told about Jesus’ ministry of teaching and healing. In fact, scripture suggests that it was these two things that drove Jesus’ ministry, seeing him reach out to those in need, be this physical, social or emotional.</p> <p>Jesus sought to break down his contemporary social barriers, and focussed on the worth of each individual as a living reflection of God’s love, whatever their status in life. In fact, Jesus taught that it was for these weak and marginalised individuals that he had come, and for whom the Kingdom of God truly awaits.</p> <p>Activity One: Working in groups of five, students are to choose (or be assigned) one of five scriptural readings from the following list. You may wish to do this by writing them on small pieces of paper and asking students to select one from a ‘lucky dip’. Here, they are to identify:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What ‘work of service’ Jesus is carrying out? • Why he did this: what was he trying to teach us about God’s Kingdom? <p>These questions may well be noted on the board for ease of reference for students.</p> <p>Students’ findings, plus a brief précis of the excerpt itself, are then to be reported back to the other members of their group.</p> <p>The readings which are the basis of this activity are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark 1:40-45 Healing of a man with leprosy • Mark 12:41-44 The Widow’s Offering • Mark 2:143-17 The Calling of Levi • Luke 15:1-7 The Parable of the Lost Sheep • Mark 5:21-43 Healing of Jairus’ Daughter & a Sick Woman



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<p>Students will need their Bibles, Worksheet Three (page one): <i>Wanted: A Disciple of Jesus</i>, poster paper/A4 paper and texters.</p>	<p>Discuss: Come back together as a class and discuss students' findings.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What sort of service did Jesus carry out during his ministry?• Why do you think he did this? <p>Responses may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• He healed sick people• He highlighted social injustices• He sought to demonstrate that all people are equal• He did this to show the love of God• He did this to show how society really should be• He did this to show what God's kingdom will be like• He did it to demonstrate righteousness – what is truly right <p>One of the main themes that run throughout the Gospels is that of 'discipleship'. To be a 'disciple' means that you are a follower or a student. To be a disciple of Jesus meant that you followed him, seeking to learn from him. Sometimes the Gospels depict Jesus as being very clear in his teaching about what such a role meant. Often his 'disciples' struggled to fully understand this, as it was really only made fully clear after his death and resurrection.</p> <p>Activity Two: Working in pairs and using Worksheet Three (page one): <i>Wanted: A Disciple of Jesus</i>, students are to read a selection of the suggested scriptural excerpts to determine what characteristics/skills/attitude are needed to be a disciple of Jesus. Using this information, students are to create a 'Wanted' poster, outlining a disciple's key characteristics.</p> <p>The readings which are the basis of this activity are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mark 1:14-20 Calling of the First Disciples• Mark 12:28-34 The Greatest Commandment• Mark 10:46-52 The Healing and Call of Bartimaeus• Mark 9:33-37 Teaching on Greatness• Mark 10:17-30 The Rich Young Man• Luke 6: 27-38 Love Your Enemies <p>Notes for Teachers: Students may require some assistance in drawing conclusions from some of the above listed readings, in light of the assigned task.</p> <p>Discuss: While Jesus clearly understood that following him and being a disciple was not an easy task during his lifetime, we can assume that he would still today see that this role has not really got any easier over time. While the challenges faced by disciples (ie. Christians) in our modern world may be</p>
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somewhat different from those faced by Jesus' immediate followers in the first century, being prepared to give up all we have, to suffer and to walk in Christ's footsteps, caring for those in need and on the fringes of society is still no easy task. But do all Christians really have to do this?

In baptism, Christians are made 'apostles'. This term comes from the Greek '*apostolos*' which literally means 'one who is sent out', or 'messenger'. But what are baptised Christians 'sent out' to do? They are 'sent out' to be 'messengers' of God, doing God's work in the world. This means walking with Christ, doing as he did, in order to bring about God's kingdom in our world.

The Uniting Church in Australia takes this mission very seriously. Its members believe that "...they are sent by Jesus, as his early apostles were, to be his servants to a world in need" (D. Merritt, *Understanding the Uniting Church in Australia*. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1992, 17). And this 'need' is very varied in our contemporary society. While Australia may not have many sufferers of leprosy to care for, it does have drug addicts, those suffering financial, social and psychological hardship and many individuals who find themselves on the fringes of our society.

While all people within the Uniting Church are called to carry out the work of God, each according to their own gifts and talents, special agencies and activities have been established by the Church to meet particular needs within the broader community. These agencies and activities are many and varied, some of which you may well be familiar with while others you may not be.

Visit the Uniting Church website and research some of these agencies eg Wesley Mission www.wesleymission.org.au/community_services

Students will need Worksheet Three (page two): *Doing the Work of God In Our World*, and access to the internet.

Activity Three:

Using Worksheet Three (page two): *Doing the Work of God In Our World*, students are to research a member of the Uniting Church from those listed. Use the internet to collect information about this nominated figure answer the outlined questions, focusing on how they sought to carry out God's work in our community.

Discuss:

Come back together as a class and discuss these Uniting Church figures. Group student together who did the same figure and ask them to present their findings. Pose the following questions to students for discussion:

- What drove them to do the work they did?
- Did they work alone, or inspire others to work with them?
- What needs were they trying to meet?
- How successful were they?
- How did their work reflect that of God?



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<p>Students will need from Lesson One Worksheet One (page two): <i>Who Is the Uniting Church In Australia?</i> and access to the internet.</p>	<p>Conclude by reflecting upon all figures examined:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Which one stood out as doing amazing work for individual students? <p>Activity Four: Using Worksheet One (page two): <i>Who Is the Uniting Church In Australia?</i> students are to continue working on their research projects.</p> <p>The focus of this lesson has prepared students for working on Part Three of this project which has them researching a nominated missionary outreach agency or activity undertaken by the Uniting Church. This research will primarily be carried out using the internet and web sites listed on the given worksheet.</p> <p>Notes for Teachers: Teachers should be aware that students also undertake an extensive research project on a Uniting Church Social justice work in Unit 6: <i>Caring For Others: Enlarging Our Hearts – Caring For Self, Others, The World (Social Justice)</i> (see Lesson Four, Activity Two). Accordingly, this task may require some additional supervision to ensure students examine either different groups, or have highlighted for them the need for significantly differing depths of research to be undertaken.</p> <p>This lesson, including research time for Activities Three and Four, will require approximately four periods. An additional research period and preparation time may be required in order for students to complete their major research task on the Uniting Church.</p>
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Unit 7 This Is The Uniting Church

Assessment Ideas

How well did the students:

- demonstrate their understanding of the heritage of the Uniting Church In Australia through completion of their research project *Who Is the Uniting Church In Australia?* and the research activity *A New Emblem For A New Way Of Being Church?*
- demonstrate their understanding of the Uniting Church's core beliefs and practices through completion of their research project *Who Is the Uniting Church In Australia?*, the creedal analysis activity *What Does the Uniting Church in Australia Believe?* and the core belief analysis activity *Defining and Expressing Core Beliefs?*
- demonstrate their understanding of the Christian call to discipleship in the scriptural analysis activity *Wanted: A Disciple of Jesus?*
- demonstrate their appreciation of the social justice work of the Uniting Church within our Australian community through contemplation of their research project *Who Is the Uniting Church In Australia?* and the research activity *Doing the Work of God In Our World?*

Evaluation

How well did the unit:

- lead the students to a deeper appreciation and knowledge of the heritage of the Uniting Church in Australia?
- deepen student's knowledge and connection to Uniting Church beliefs and practices?
- enable the students to articulate their insights and responses to the Christian call to discipleship?
- invite students to reflect upon the living out of Christ's call to discipleship?
- encourage students to question, think, explore, share and contribute to the heritage and faith life of the Uniting Church in Australia?



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Extension notes for the teacher:

- *The Uniting Church is a Protestant denomination, thus making it part of Western Christianity.*
- *The Uniting Church in Australia was formed in 1977 through the union of The Congregational Union of Australia, the Methodist Church of Australia and the Presbyterian Church of Australia.*
- *Although Union of these three Churches officially took place on 22 June, 1977, negotiations between these three parties had been underway for around two decades. These negotiations took their form in a Joint Commission on Church Union.*
- *The process of negotiations was extensive, involving much debate, discussion and decision-making. This process was not undertaken independently by the Joint Commission, but actively involved all eligible members of the three Churches. This collaborative approach is perhaps most evident in the voting that took place regarding the principle of Union and the vision of the unified Church. This determined each congregation's willingness to be a part of this unifying process, as well as the viability of the Union within itself.*
- *From this extensive process of consultation came the Basis of Union, a declaration of identity which focuses primarily on what the new Church hoped to be, rather than how it would be organised and operate. In a sense, this document is like an extensive vision statement which sought to outline the type of community which was sought through this unifying process.*
- *Details regarding organisational and operational proposals addressed separately in subsequent documents such as the Constitution and Regulations.*
- *The fundamental intent of Union as upheld by all three contributing Churches, was to pursue a missionary endeavour – “to hear anew the commission of the risen Lord to make disciples of all nations” (paragraph 1).*
- *“The church of God exists for participation in the mission of God.” (Andrew Dutney, Where Did the Joy Come From: Revisiting the Basis of Union. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 2001, p.18.)*
- *The process of Union is still an active part of Uniting Church identity today.*
- *The Uniting Church is a living expression of the unity present between all Christian faiths, based upon their faith in the risen Christ. The Uniting Church seeks to pursue unifying dialogue with other Christian Churches in its belief that Christ ultimately seeks unity amongst all parts of his body, the Church.*
- *The Uniting Church in Australia exists because God has called it into being through Christ and the work of the Holy Spirit (Basis of Union, paragraph 4).*
- *The Uniting Church in Australia considers itself to be a “pilgrim people, always on the way towards a promised goal” (Basis of Union, paragraph 3): this goal being the return of Christ and the inauguration of God's kingdom here on earth (paragraph 17).*
- *In light of this, one can conclude that the Uniting Church exists as both a sign and an instrument of things to come, “to be a fellowship of reconciliation, a body within which the diverse gifts of its members are used for the building up of the whole” in an effort to be “an instrument through which Christ may work and bear witness to himself” (paragraph 3).*

Source: Andrew Dutney, Where Did the Joy Come From: Revisiting the Basis of Union Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 2001.



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Key Terms Used Within This Unit:

God as creator:

As reflected in the two creation stories of Genesis 1:1-2:4 and 2:5-25, one means by which we can come to an understanding of God is in the role of creator. While there is significant breadth of interpretation within this belief between the various Christian denominations, it is generally upheld that God is the source and summit of all life, having played an integral role in the formation of all living things. God's creating work did not and does not end with the founding of life, but continues to be present in an ongoing fashion as sustainer of all humanity and created order. Christian belief in this Creator God who so intimately associates with the origin of all life has its foundational roots in the faith of Israel.

Incarnation:

This term comes from the Latin 'caro' meaning 'flesh', thus it is used to describe the 'enfleshing' of God in the person of Jesus Christ. Christians believe that God assumed human form and, in doing so, Jesus Christ is believed to have existed in two natures: both divine and human, within the one form (hypostasis).

Jesus as Son of God:

Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth was born of Mary and through the power of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, Jesus can be declared the Son of God. While also understood to be the second person of the Trinity (see below), Jesus' sonship allows him to show us something of the identity of God. The phrase 'Son of God' evolved significantly over the period of Old and New Testament writings. Early Judaic texts use the phrase to denote heavenly beings (Genesis and Job) but this was later applied in the context of righteous individuals (Wisdom) and messianic figures (Enoch and Ezra). New Testament texts also display an evolving interpretation of 'Sonship'. The Gospels of Mark, Matthew and Luke appear to use the phrase to reference Jesus' intimate relationship with God, often presenting Jesus himself as one who denoted himself as God's Son (see especially Matthew). It is in the fourth and final Gospel (John) that one can see significant theological development emerge, with Jesus being intimately united with God. Here John presents a pre-existent Sonship, with Jesus being one with the Father prior to, during and after his time here on earth. It is from this latter Christological evolution that the early creeds and our contemporary general understanding of Jesus as Son of God emerged.

Trinity:

Christians speak of God as consisting of three natures: Father, Son and Holy Spirit. The Father offers each individual salvation through the Son by the power of the Spirit. While each is a separate person, they form a unity of substance which is the foundation stone of all Christian belief. Such doctrine does not, however, work in opposition to the notion of God as a monotheistic (single) being. Instead, it is understood that each is wholly part of the other, thus collectively forming a singular unit: God.

Holy Spirit:

The Holy Spirit is understood by Christians to be the third person of the Trinity (Father, Son, and Holy Spirit). The Spirit, while difficult to define, can be understood as that which enables humanity to relate to God. Here, the Holy Spirit is understood by Christians to be gifted to each of us in the form of Grace. It is Grace that allows us to grow in knowledge and understanding of both God's identity and presence in our lives. Accordingly, while Jesus Christ vividly showed us something of the nature of God, it is the Spirit which actively facilitates our relationship with this God. (Also see 'Trinity' outlined below.)



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Resurrection:

Christians believe that Jesus died on the cross at Golgotha, but defeated death to rise to new life, three days after his crucifixion (Easter). This new life, divine life, saw Jesus declared Lord and was to become the corner stone of Christian faith.

Salvation:

This term is used to denote the ultimate restoration of relationship between humanity and God. Protestant Christians believe that salvation will be gained by all who have faith in God and the risen Christ. The human capacity for such faith is facilitated through God's blessing of Grace. Salvation will offer all individuals both ultimate fulfilment and total happiness as eternal union with God is achieved.

Everlasting Life:

Christians believe, as do many other faith traditions, that life does not end in bodily death. Christians believe that, in Christ's death and resurrection, evil was defeated, with death opening the path to eternal life with God.

Church:

Deriving from the Greek term 'ekklesia' meaning 'assembly', this term refers to the Christian community, the Body of Christ, the People of God.

Denomination:

This term refers to a Church or religious sect within a broader religious tradition. For example, within the religious tradition of Christianity, there exists a multitude denominations which themselves constitute Churches such as the Uniting Church in Australia, the Baptist Church, the Greek Orthodox Church or the Roman Catholic Church. All pertain to the same fundamental tradition of Christianity with its belief in the risen Christ and other associated core beliefs, but each simultaneously upholds its own defining corpus of subsidiary beliefs and practices. Each of these can be referred to as a Christian 'denomination'.

Reformation:

This was a religious and political event that occurred during the 16th century that was to see the division of Western Christianity into Protestantism and Roman Catholicism. While a number of factors came into play that was to result in such division, the essence of the dispute had its founding in two key areas: papal authority and salvation theology. Due to the expansive nature of such a topic, teachers are recommended to the following internet sources for further reading:

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/12700b.htm>

<http://www.newgenevacenter.org/west/reformation.htm>

<http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/mod/modsbook02.html>

A unit of work on the Reformation will be available at Year 9-10 level

Government in the Uniting Church in Australia:

The Uniting Church is organised fundamentally in three levels: local, regional and national and is governed by a number of related councils, each of which is responsible for its own tasks and areas. Ultimate leadership of the Church is held by Christ alone, who speaks through the ongoing work of these councils.



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Presbytery:

This is the regional or district council of the church, made up of ministers, elders, leaders and other members that exercises oversight of local congregations.

Synod:

This is the state-level council of the church which actively oversees the work of Presbyteries within its region in terms of administration and general direction. This is made up of ministers, elders, leaders and other appointed Church members.

Assembly:

This is the national council and is made up of ministers, elders, leaders and other appointed Church members. It has the role of determining doctrine, promotion of the Church's mission, dealing with issues associated with worship, setting of standards regarding the theological training of ministers, discipline and general government of the Church. It is the Assembly that sets the tasks and guidelines for all other councils within the Church. When determining issues of fundamental importance for the Church, this national council must seek the advice and support of both the lesser councils and the congregations themselves.

Roles within the Uniting Church in Australia:

Congregation:

Congregations consist of all members of the uniting Churches from the point of Union, gathered together on a local basis. Congregational membership is open to all baptised individuals.

Elders /Leaders:

These are individuals within congregations who, at the time of Union, held positions of Elder, Leader or Deacon within their respective faith community (Basis of Union, paragraph 14). These roles have subsequently been sustained within the Uniting Church and are recognised as holding responsibility in terms of spiritual oversight. This oversight is carried out both corporately in their membership on the Church Council as well as individually in the life and work of the congregation (10th Assembly Minutes, 2003, p.19). The model of incorporation of such leadership can vary from congregation to congregation as determined by the Presbytery.

Ministers:

Set aside by ordination, Ministers are those within a congregation who preach the Gospel, tend to the spiritual needs of the community and administer the sacraments.

Deacons/Deaconesses:

This is a specific ministry of service in the world beyond the congregation. Deacons are ordained individuals who, unlike ministers, see their role of service outside a local congregation, often tending to those who suffer or who are disadvantage in the wider community.

Lay Preachers:

These are accredited local preachers located within congregations.

Further Reading & Suggested Support Materials:

Internet:

The Uniting Church in Australia: <http://www.uca.org.au/>

National Council of the Uniting Church in Australia: <http://assembly.uca.org.au/home/>

The Uniting Church in Australia: Synod of Victoria and Tasmania: <http://victas.uca.org.au/>



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Publications:

Basis of Union (1992)- available online (<http://nat.uca.org.au/basisofunion/Basis1992.htm>) or from the Unichurch Bookshop

Dutney, A. Where Did the Joy Come From: Revisiting the Basis of Union Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 2001. (ISBN 1 86407 221 0)

Emilson, W.E. & Emilson, S. (eds.) The Uniting Church: Its First 25 Years. Melbourne: Melbourne Publishing Group, 2003. (ISBN 0 95809 382 2)

Merritt, D.R. Understanding the Uniting Church In Australia. Melbourne: Uniting Church Press, 1996. (ISBN 1 86407 143 5)

A New Emblem for a New Way of Being Church

Draw and colour the symbol of the Uniting Church in Australia

What is the meaning of the Uniting Church in Australia's national emblem?

1. The Cross represents:
2. The darkened background represents:
3. The dove represents:
4. The red wings of the dove represent:
5. The 'U' represents:
6. The symbol is to remind members of:

Who Is the Uniting Church In Australia?

Using the following web sites, research the history, beliefs & practices and social justice work of the Uniting Church In Australia:

- www.uca.org.au/
- <http://assembly.uca.org.au/home/>
- <http://victas.uca.org.au/>

The questions outlined below will act as the basis of your work but can be added to as you find further interesting information. You may choose to present your findings in any of the following formats:

- *Information pamphlet*
- *Poster*
- *Written report*

Part One: History & Background

1. List the three Churches that 'united' to create the Uniting Church in Australia
2. When did this happen?
3. Outline some of the details of how this process came about.
3. How is the Church organized?
4. Who is the current Moderator of the Victorian/Tasmanian Synod? Give some details about them.
5. Include a copy of the Uniting Church emblem & explain what its symbols represent.
6. How many Uniting Church congregations are there in Australia today?
7. How many members does the Uniting Church in Australia have today?
8. Research the history of one local congregation (other than that examined in class) by including a picture of its foundation stone. What denomination was this Church originally, prior to union?

Part Two: Belief & Practices

1. Search out & include a copy of either the Apostles' or Nicene Creeds.
2. List and define three beliefs that are evident in this creed.
3. Examine 'We Are A Pilgrim People'. Suggest how this Creed differs from the earlier Creed.
4. Why is Sunday worship so valued by the Uniting Church?
5. Define the term 'Sacrament'.
6. What Sacraments are celebrated within the Uniting Church? Explain the meaning of each.
7. What liturgical colours does the Uniting Church use & what do they symbolise?

Part Three: Mission

1. Select one of the social justice /outreach groups/agencies operated by the Uniting Church.
2. When was this group founded? Give details.
3. What does the group do?
4. Where is this work carried out?
5. How is this group doing the work of Christ?

What Does the Uniting Church In Australia Believe?

Use the following statements of belief to create a listing of some of the most important beliefs upheld by the Uniting Church in Australia.

The Apostles' Creed

I believe in God,
almighty,
creator of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, God's only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate
was crucified, died and was buried;
he descended to the dead.
On the third day he rose again;
he ascended into heaven
he is seated at the right hand of the Father.
and he will come again to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy catholic Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting.
Amen

Excerpts from the Basis of Union

"The Church preaches Christ the risen crucified One and the Father confesses him as Lord to the glory of God the Father."
(Paragraph 3)

"In love for the world, God gave the Son to take away the world's sin." (Paragraph 3)

"In raising him to live and reign, God confirmed and completed the witness which Jesus bore to God on earth..." (Paragraph 3)

"The Word of God on whom salvation depends is to be heard and known from scripture..." (Paragraph 5)

"Baptism into Christ's body initiates people into Christ's life and mission in the world..." (Paragraph 7)

"The Uniting Church acknowledges that the continuing presence of Christ with his people is signified and sealed by Christ in the Lord's Supper..." (Paragraph 8)

"The Uniting Church affirms that it belongs to the people of God on the way to the promised end." (Paragraph 18)

Defining and Expressing Core Beliefs

Belief	Definition	Expressed here by...	Expressed elsewhere in...



WANTED:

A DISCIPLE OF JESUS

Use a selection of the following scriptural readings to determine what characteristics, skills, values and signs of commitment Jesus required of a disciple:

- Mark 1:14-20 Calling of the First Disciples
- Mark 12:28-34 The Greatest Commandment
- Mark 10:46-52 The Healing and Call of Bartimaeus
- Mark 9:33-37 Teaching on Greatness
- Mark 10:17-30 The Rich Young Man
- Luke 6: 27-38 Love Your Enemies

Characteristics:

Skills:

Values:

Signs of Commitment:

Having constructed your listing of what Jesus looked for in a disciple, use a piece of poster paper to create a '*WANTED*' sign for posting around either first century Galilee or your modern, local city.



Doing the Work of God in Our World

Using the internet, research one of the following Uniting Church in Australia members and the work which they carry out:

- John Flynn
- Sir Edward 'Weary' Dunlop
- John and Charles Wesley
- Davis McCaughey
- Sir Ronald Wilson

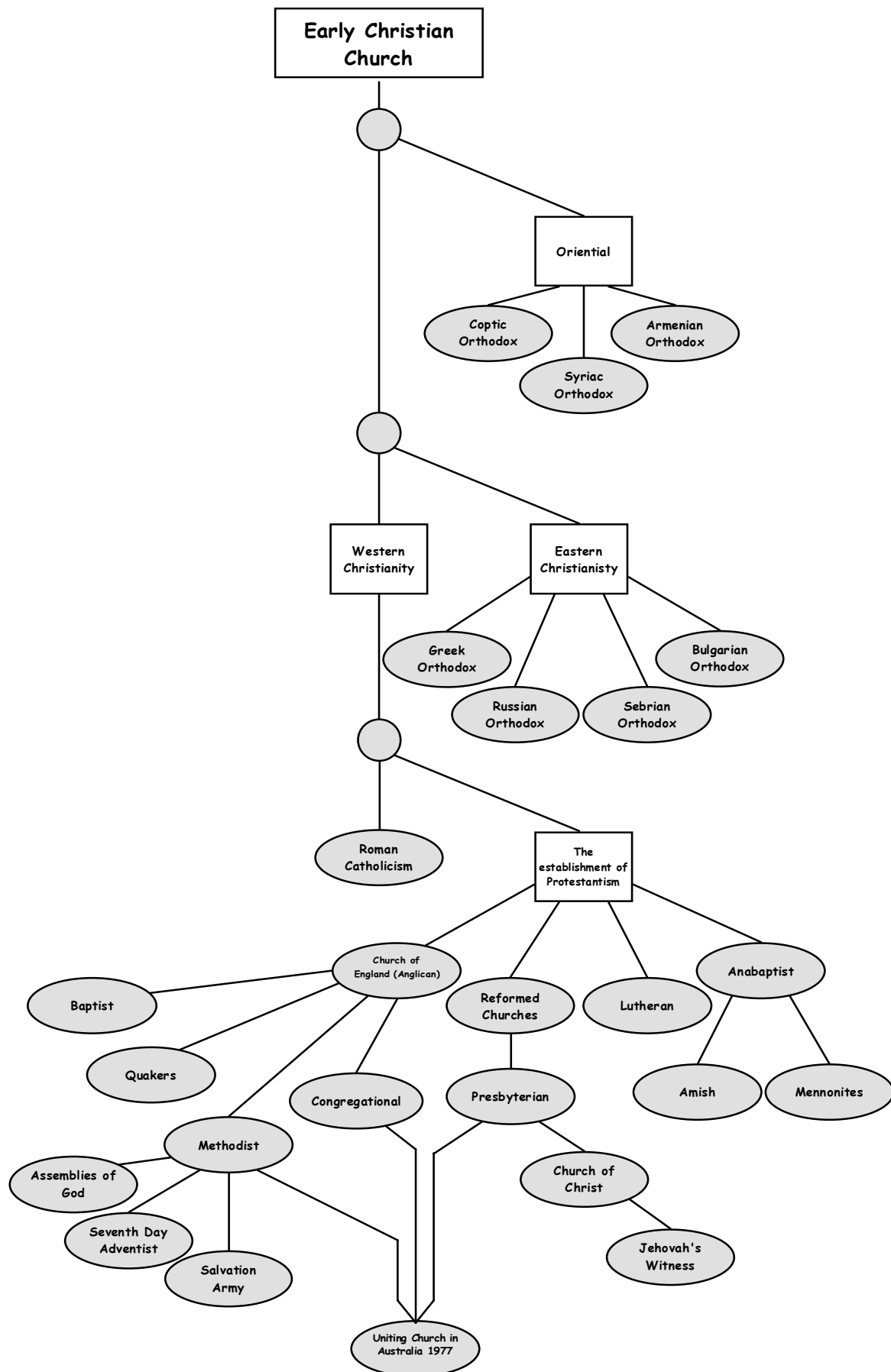
1. Outline some biographical details about this person.

2. What do they do that can be seen as the 'work of God'?

3. Who is aided by this work?

4. Why do they carry this work out?

The Christian Family Tree: Where Does The Uniting Church In Australia Fit?



God as Parent

Definition:

While some Christians call God 'Father' as a reflection of their belief that God shares a most special, close relationship with all humanity, the Uniting Church chooses to use inclusive language. For this exercise Parent is the preferred choice.

In the New Testament, Jesus is depicted by the Gospel writers as frequently referring to God as 'Father', both in prayer and times of teaching.

It is important to remember that the term 'Father' is intended to highlight the intimate relationship between God and humanity, similar to that of a loving parent for their child. It is not intended to imply that God is male. Accordingly, while less often used, we can equally reflect upon this close, nurturing and loving parent by calling God 'Mother' as God is beyond the human constraints of being either male or female.

God as Creator

Definition:

Christian tradition has taken on from its Jewish heritage the belief that God is a creating God.

While there is significant variance of interpretation of this belief between Christian traditions, it is generally upheld that God is the source and summit of all life, having played a most important role in the formation of all living things.

God's creating work did not and does not end with the creation of life, but continues to be present in an ongoing way as the sustainer and provider for all humanity and created order.

Christian belief in God as Creator is based upon the belief that God is a being who intimately associates with the origin of all life. This belief has its foundational roots in the faith of Israel.

Jesus as God Incarnate

Definition:

This term 'incarnate' comes from the Latin '*caro*' meaning 'flesh'. Accordingly, it is used to describe the presence of God in the human person of Jesus Christ.

Christians believe that God appeared among us in human form in the person of Jesus Christ. Jesus wasn't just human, or just God. For Christians, he was both at the same time.

Jesus is believed by Western Christians to have existed in two 'natures', but one 'person'. By this Christians mean that Jesus was both divine and human at the same time, while having only one form or body.

The technical term for this complex belief is 'hypostasis' which means 'substance'.

Jesus as Son of God

Definition:

Christians believe that Jesus of Nazareth was born of Mary through the power of the Holy Spirit. Accordingly, Jesus is called by Christians the 'Son of God'.

Just like we display characteristics of both our birth parents, so too did Jesus. In this way, Jesus is believed by Christians to have shown us something of the identity of God.

It was only after Jesus' death and resurrection, however, that followers came to more fully understand his close relationship with God. It was later, upon reflection on all that had happened, that Christians formulated belief in Jesus being Son of God.

Jesus as risen from the dead

Definition:

It is well documented that Jesus of Nazareth was executed by Roman authorities in the early first century. He was crucified at a place called *Golgotha* on the eve of *Passover*: a traditional Jewish festival.

Christians believe that after his death, Jesus' body was laid in a nearby tomb to await preparation as is traditional for Jewish funeral rites. Here, Christians believe that Jesus laid for three days prior to rising again to new life: divine life.

Belief in Jesus' resurrection has always been foundational to Christian faith. This resurrection is understood to have been the defeat of death and saw Jesus declared by believers as Lord and savior.