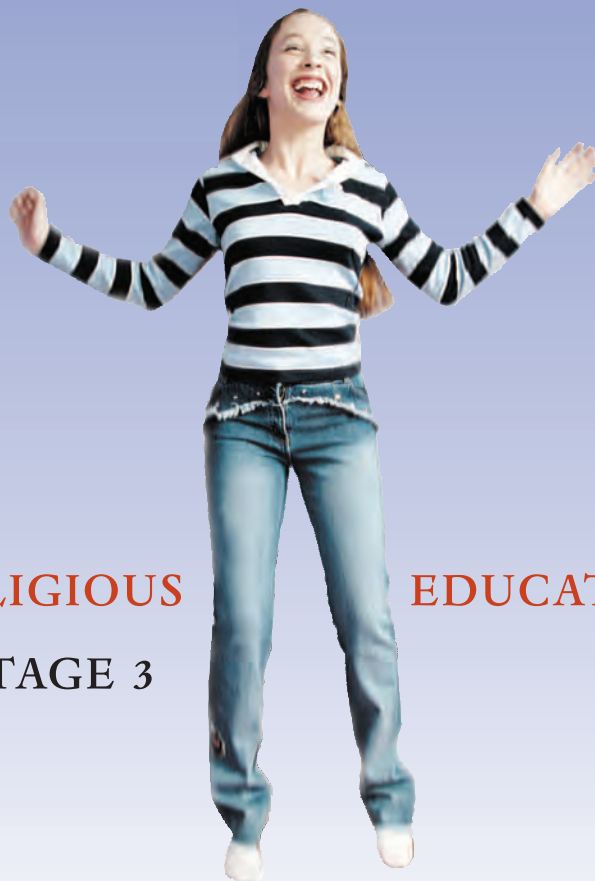


*Susan Morgan &
Peter O'Reilly*



fully alive 3



**CATHOLIC RELIGIOUS
YEAR 10 KEY STAGE 3**

EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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KEY STAGE 3

YEAR
10

Susan Morgan & Peter O'Reilly

VERITAS

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Welcome Back!

Term 1, Lesson 1

A new year! A new book! New things to explore and discover! This book comes with best wishes for you and for your future.

Dear Year Tens,

Welcome to your new school year. It will be an important one for you. There's new territory ahead. You are beginning to experience some great changes in your life: changes in the way you look (height, weight, shape, facial appearance, voice and so on); changes in the way you feel; and the changes of puberty, as your sexual development occurs. Your relationships are changing too; they're not as simple as they once were. Over the past while, your social world has become more important, and that can be a lot of fun. But it can mean a lot of pressure too. Change can bring new concerns and worries.

In all this, remember that you're not the only one dealing with changes in life. Apart from you and everyone else in your year group, the same thing is happening to students like you all over the world! And you're not helpless! You can manage your situation.

As part of your development, you face two key questions:

Who am I? Who do I want to be?

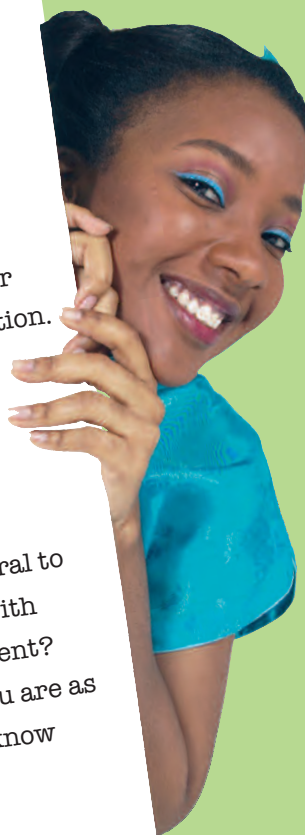
When people change, it's natural for them to reassess their identity and to seek new answers to old questions. It's natural to ask questions such as: Who am I? How am I getting along with other people? What's really going on in my life at the moment? Asking questions is a way of keeping in touch with who you are as you change. The journey of life is easier tomorrow if you know where you are today.

Why Don't You?

As a class, share how you feel about being in Year Ten? What's good about it/not so good about it? How did you feel at the start of last year? Do you feel the same this time around? Are you more excited? Are you calmer? In what ways is this year an important year for you? Record your feelings/comments on the board/flipchart.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.



Then, there's that other question: What do I want to be? Ask that question today and some people will answer: 'I want to be famous' or 'I want to be a celebrity'. Is this your ideal? What do you want your future to be like? In school this year, you will be asked to make choices about your future and about subjects for examinations. Will you do languages? Will you do Science? Will you do Art? You will be asked to consider careers and vocations.

Questions like these – **Who am I? Who do I want to be?** – can't be answered in just a few words or in just a few moments. Don't be too concerned if you can't answer them straightaway. Life is a journey, and every place and every person you meet along the way will help you to make that journey and to discover new things about yourself as you go. You never know the day when a chance remark – e.g. 'You're very good at that!' – could change your life. Don't worry unduly about making mistakes in your choices for the future. People can learn from mistakes and you can always change direction. But above all, don't be afraid to be true to yourself. If you're true to yourself, you'll never be false to anyone. As Pope Benedict XVI said on World Youth Day 2005 in Cologne: '**[Live] by the measure of truth and goodness, so that [you yourself] can become true and good.**'

You have changed. You are no longer the child you once were. Over the next few lessons, you will have the opportunity to renew your sense of who you are. In last year's book, you heard how the Bible says that people are made in the image and likeness of God. That includes you. So it's important for you to be your true self: you don't have to be the best or the most popular; you are wonderful in yourself just as you are; you are valuable not for what you do, but rather for who you are: a unique individual created by God. Strive to be yourself, and strive to allow others to do the same. Do this and it will be a great year! Wishing you an exciting and happy Year Ten,

Susan and Peter

Talking Points

1. The letter says: 'Change can bring new concerns and worries.' Would you agree that this might be true for Year Ten students? Why?/Why not? Support your answer with some examples of what those concerns and worries might be.
2. 'A person should strive to be themselves.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not? Suggest some examples of what might make it difficult for a person to be themselves.



A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

In the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus challenges us to be who we are, to be ourselves. Listen to what Jesus says:

Reader (*Matthew 5:14-16*)

You are like light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden, and no one would light a lamp and put it under a clay pot. A lamp is placed on a lampstand, where it can give light to everyone in the house. Make your light shine, so that others will see the good that you do and will praise your Father in heaven.

Teacher

For a few moments, quietly focus on those words of Jesus: 'Make your light shine.' Repeat them to yourself. Ask Jesus to help you to be yourself. Ask Jesus to help you to make your light shine. Make your light shine. (*Pause*)

Sign of the Cross

Why Don't You?

Make a display under the title 'My Concerns and Worries'. In the centre, place an image of a young person. On one side, include images and words to represent the major worries or concerns that a person your age has. On the other, place images and words to represent the people and things that can give a young person strength to cope with such concerns or worries.

Alternatively, make a display under the title 'My Hopes and Dreams'. In the centre, place an image of a young person. On one side, include images and words to represent the major hopes and dreams that a person your age has. On the other, place images and words to represent the people and things that can give a young person strength to achieve these hopes and dreams.

In Your Religion Journal

Make an entry in your journal about the holidays just past. How did the holiday go? What were the highlights of the summer for you? Do you think you've changed over the summer? In what ways have you changed?

One-Minute Soapbox

You have one minute to tell the class about what it's like for you to be starting Year Ten. (Even though this is called 'one-minute soapbox', you may take two minutes if you need to, but no more.) Agree on a special place in the classroom or perhaps use a sturdy support as a platform. (We will refer to this as the 'soapbox'.) Don't 'over-prepare' what you say. It's just a quick way of getting in touch with your own feelings or thoughts or reactions.

I Am Valuable!

How do you feel when someone remembers your birthday, or another special occasion in your life? How do you feel when someone praises you or notices something good about you? How do you feel when a friend confides in you and seeks your opinion about something? All these people are telling you something about yourself and who you are: what might that something be? How do you feel when people ignore or mistreat you? How much of an effect does this have on you? Should you allow the negative things that others do or say to affect you? This lesson will help you to focus on yourself and to recall (or even discover for the first time) what is valuable, good and precious about you.



The £100 Note

A well-known speaker started off his speech by holding up a £100 note. Addressing two hundred people, he asked, 'Who would like this £100 note?' Hands started going up. He said, 'I shall give this £100 to one of you, but first let me do this to it.' He proceeded to crumple up the £100 note. He then asked, 'Who still wants it?' Once again the hands were up in the air. 'Well,' he replied, 'what if I do this?' And he dropped it on the ground and spat on it and started to grind it into the floor with his shoe.

People still wanted it. And so it was, no matter what he did to it. Finally, he said, 'Friends, no matter what I do to this money, you still want it because it has not decreased in value: it is still worth £100. Many times in our lives, we are dropped, crumpled and ground into the dirt by the decisions we make and the things that come our way. We feel as though we are worthless. But no matter what has happened or what will happen, you will never lose your value.'

DID YOU KNOW?

No two people in the world have:

- exactly the same DNA – except genetically identical twins.
- the same fingerprints – even identical twins!
- the same pattern in the iris of their eye.



Why Value Yourself?

Your true friends and those who really care about you see the value in you. But sometimes, when there are a lot of things going on in life, it's possible that you might forget to put a proper value on yourself. It's possible to be distracted into not liking yourself. Still, how you feel about yourself at a particular time doesn't change this fact: you are valuable. There are several very good reasons why you are valuable.

Firstly, you cannot be replaced; there's only one of you. You are unique: with your own sense of humour, your own way of looking at life, your own way of talking and so on. You have your own gifts and talents too. Still, important as those talents are, they're not the core of you. True friends don't just like each other for their gifts and abilities. There's a core – a centre – to you that makes you unique and precious, even if other people might not notice it. Reflect for a moment on the unique characteristics that make up that core in you.

There's another reason why you are valuable and it has to do with God. Last year, you spent time reflecting on the fact that you are made in God's image and likeness. Your mind and your body are God's gift to you. Nothing else in the world – the best machines, the most powerful computers, the most expensive materials – is as good or as precious as what God has given you. God has given you the miracle of life, and God invites you to respect yourself and to look after yourself.

Talking Points

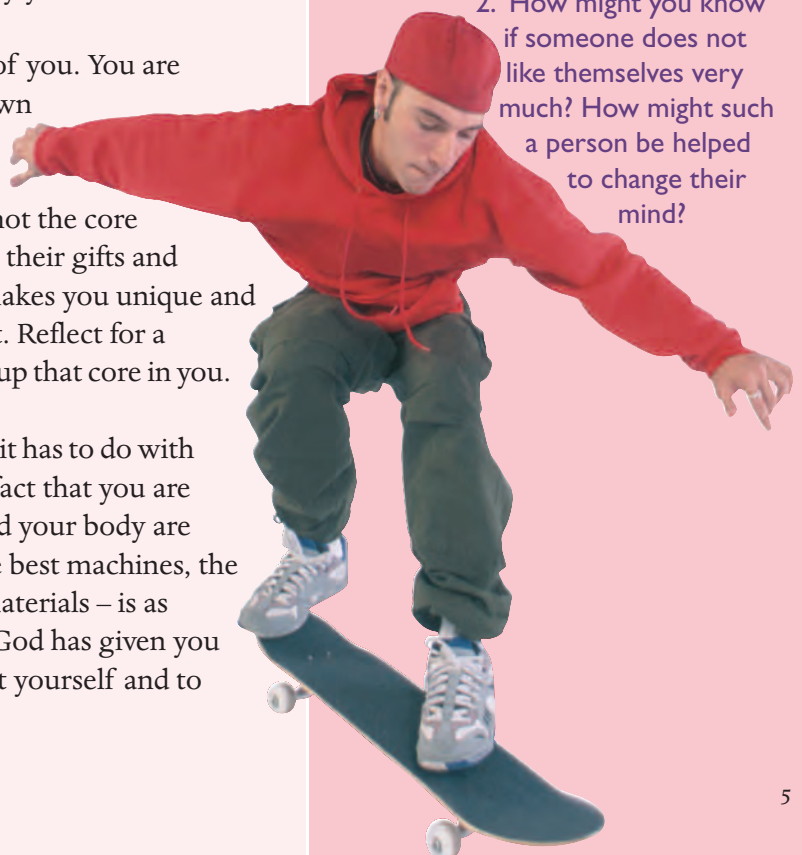
1. Would you agree with the basic message of the speaker? Why?/Why not?
2. Would you say that people always find it easy to like themselves? Explain your answer.
3. The speaker talked about being 'dropped, crumpled and ground into the dirt'. What do you think he meant by that? Give some examples.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Talking Points

1. If people don't like themselves, do you think this might affect the way they get on with other people and make friends? Explain your answer.
2. How might you know if someone does not like themselves very much? How might such a person be helped to change their mind?



Why Don't You?

For this activity, you will need a box of stones/pebbles (one for each student) and a corresponding number of labels with the name of a 'feeling' written on each one. Each student chooses a stone/pebble and a label and spends some quiet time examining the stone.

Notice what it is that makes this stone different from any other stone. What marks and lines are on it? What colours, texture and shape does it have? Give your stone an identity: a name, gender, age. Develop a story about your stone using the feeling named on the label you chose. Share your story in your group. Then put your stone back in the box.

The teacher then shakes the box and invites students, one by one, to find their particular stone again. Students then share with the whole class the unique characteristics of their stone that enabled them to find it.

Using your imagination to enter into 'Stone World' for a moment:

- Do you think the stones might 'recognise' one another? Why might that be?
- What might your 'stone' say to people who felt they had nothing different or special about them?

In Your Religion Journal

Quickly draw a cartoon-type picture of yourself. Beside or around the picture, write three genuinely good things about yourself. (If you have difficulty finding things you value about yourself, think about the things you value and love in your friends, then consider whether those things exist inside you, too. They often do.)

A time to pray

Read the following reflection slowly, pausing after each line.

Celebrate You!

You are worth celebrating.

You are worth everything.

You are unique.

In the whole world, there is only one you.

There is only one person with your personality,
your experience, your gifts.

No one can take your place.

God created only one you.

Believe in yourself and you will have even more strength
to love, to care, to create, to grow,
and, when necessary, to sacrifice.

It doesn't matter your age, gender or background
or whether or not you always feel loved.

Live for now; do not let the hurts of the past dictate how you feel!

God has accepted you.

God has forgiven you.

You are okay.

Know that you are loved in spite of everything.

So learn to love yourself and to nourish the life
that God has planted within you.

Celebrate you.

Begin now. Start anew.

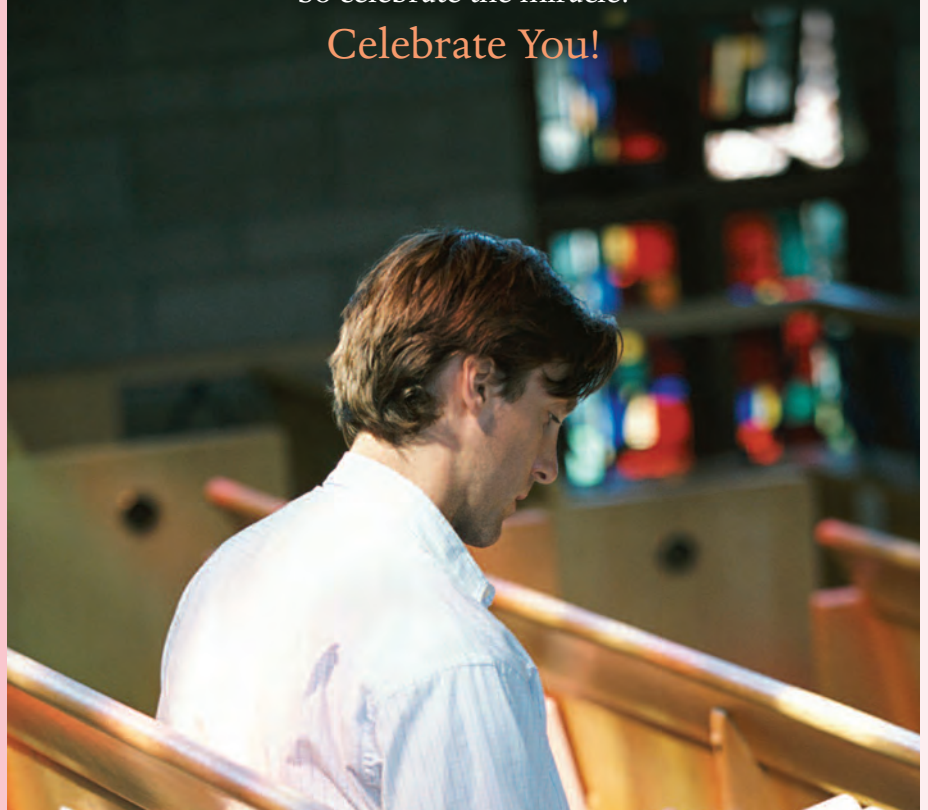
Give yourself a new birth. Today.

You are you and that is all you need to be.

Live freely the miracle God has given you.

So celebrate the miracle.

Celebrate You!



Getting To Know Me – My Outer Self

Term 1, Lesson 3

The outside is usually what you see first; whether it's the outside of the house, the outside of the car or the outside of the apple. The same applies to people. You get to see the outer person first: their appearance or image. We use the word 'image' to speak about the way a person looks. Of course, there is more to you than your 'image'. Anyone describing you would also mention your preferences, your qualities, your achievements and your approach to life. These are also things that make up the 'outer' you. This lesson will offer you an opportunity to get to know and appreciate your 'outer' self. To begin, take some time with the notion of 'image'.

Image

Image is important, but it is not everything. If you put on an 'image' (like a mask), people don't get the chance to come to know the real you. Of course, it's important to present yourself properly and to attend to your personal hygiene. (That might be why 'makeovers' are so popular.) Presenting yourself to the best of your ability is a mark of respect for yourself and for others. Trying to present yourself as someone other than who you are is to disrespect both others and yourself. Sometimes people are too critical of their image; they become preoccupied with how they appear. This is unwise because there is much more to a person than their appearance. Image is only a fraction of who you are as a person.

Talking Points

1. Which of the following do you consider most important in a person? Prioritise your list:
Complexion, hairstyle, hands and fingernails, shoes, clothes, personal hygiene, way of talking, consideration for others, sense of humour, physical strength, ability to drive.
2. Redo the list in the order that a seriously image-conscious person might choose.
3. In what way is your 'image' important? In what way is it unimportant?
4. 'Image is everything.' Discuss.

Why Don't You?

Cut out pictures/headings from a variety of magazines to illustrate the message about image that today's culture gives young people. Make a collage of these for display in your classroom. Around the display, post some comments on the effect you think these messages about image have on people in your age-group. You might use a coloured thread or string to connect each comment to the particular part of the display to which it refers.



Why Don't You?

Get into groups and use the information from Julie's diary to prepare a short description of Julie. Then share your descriptions with the other groups.

Talking Points

1. If you had a photograph of Julie, what might you learn about her? How might what you learn from a photograph compare with what you learn from her timetable for the week?
2. After doing the exercise in the 'Why Don't You?' above, how well would you say you know Julie as a person? Explain your answer.

Julie's Diary

There is more to a person than their image. There's a lot more that you can learn about a person apart from their appearance. You might begin by asking how that person spends their week. Here is an example of a week in the life of a Year Ten student called Julie, as seen through her diary.

SEPTEMBER		
16 Monday	17 Tuesday	18 Wednesday
8 6.30am Swimming Practice	8	8 6.30am Swimming Practice
9 9.00am-3.30pm School	9 9.00am-3.30pm School	9 9.00am-3.30pm School
10	10	10
11	11	11
12	12	12
14	14	14
15	15	15
16 4.00pm Netball	16 4.00pm Piano Lesson	16 4.00pm Help out at the Homework Club
17	17	17
18	18	18

SEPTEMBER		
19 Thursday	20 Friday	21 Saturday
8	8	6.30am Swimming Practice
9 9.00am-3.30pm School	9 9.00am-3.30pm School	10.00am-12.00pm Car Wash for local hospice
10	10	8.00pm Cinema with friends
11	11	
12	12	
14	14	
15 3.30-4.30pm Choir	15	
16	16	
17	17	
18	18	

SEPTEMBER		
22 Sunday		
10.30am Mass		
12.30pm Family Lunch		
3- 5.30pm Football Match		

SEPTEMBER		
23 Monday	24 Tuesday	25 Wednesday
8	8	8 6.30am Swimming Practice
9 9.00am-3.30pm School	9 9.00am-3.30pm School	9 9.00am-3.30pm School
10	10	10
11	11	11
12	12	12
14	14	14
15	15	15
16 4.00pm Netball	16 4.00pm Piano Lesson	16 4.00pm Help out at the Homework Club
17	17	17
18	18	18

SEPTEMBER		
26 Thursday	27 Friday	28 Saturday
8	8	6.30am Swimming Practice
9 9.00am-3.30pm School	9 9.00am-3.30pm School	10.00am-12.00pm Car Wash for local hospice
10	10	8.00pm Cinema with friends
11	11	
12	12	
14	14	
15 3.30-4.30pm Choir	15	
16	16	
17	17	
18	18	

SEPTEMBER		
29 Sunday		
10.30am Mass		
12.30pm Family Lunch		
3- 5.30pm Football Match		

SEPTEMBER		
30 Monday	1 October	2 October
8	8	8 6.30am Swimming Practice
9 9.00am-3.30pm School	9 9.00am-3.30pm School	9 9.00am-3.30pm School
10	10	10
11	11	11
12	12	12
14	14	14
15	15	15
16 4.00pm Netball	16 4.00pm Piano Lesson	16 4.00pm Help out at the Homework Club
17	17	17
18	18	18

SEPTEMBER		
31 Tuesday	1 October	2 October
8	8	8 6.30am Swimming Practice
9 9.00am-3.30pm School	9 9.00am-3.30pm School	9 9.00am-3.30pm School
10	10	10
11	11	11
12	12	12
14	14	14
15	15	15
16 4.00pm Netball	16 4.00pm Piano Lesson	16 4.00pm Help out at the Homework Club
17	17	17
18	18	18

Why Don't You?

Write your own timetable for the week. What would someone learn about you from looking at it? If someone were to compare your timetable for the week with Julie's, what might they notice?

Your Public Self

When someone is starting to get to know you, they learn from what they see of you: how you appear; the activities you take part in; the way you behave, etc. They might learn about you through being aware of your talents and abilities. They might get to know you through the things you like and the things you do. In other words, people start getting to know the 'outer' you. The 'outer self' is the part of you that is easily seen by others. It is the part of you that everyone can know about: it is your public self.



You might think that you know all there is to know about your 'outer self'. Every so often in life, it's a good idea to take a fresh look at your 'outer self' to check if you are actually the way you think you are. You might learn something new or unexpected about yourself or you might discover something that you had forgotten about yourself. One of the ways that God communicates with you is through what you learn about yourself. So it's worth spending a while getting to know your 'outer self'. The more completely you know yourself, the more you will be able to see yourself as God sees you. You may learn to appreciate new things about yourself.

Why Don't You?

Divide into four or five groups. Each person in the group gets an A4 page and prints their name across the top. Pass the pages around. When you receive a page, look at the name on the top and write something positive about that person at the end of the page. (It must be something that you have learned from observing them, e.g. Julie is very kind; Trevor is a good footballer.) When you have finished, fold the page up from the bottom to cover what you have written. Then pass it on to the person beside you, who will repeat the exercise. When everyone is finished, the teacher will collect the pages and distribute them at the end of the lesson.

'ME' Folder

Get started on making a 'ME' folder. Each student will need to bring in a cardboard folder, some paper to cover the folder, and perhaps a photograph of themselves or a (picture of a) small object that represents their 'outer self'. This is the start of a project that will be developed over the next few lessons and may be continued throughout the whole of Year Ten.

Cover the outside of the folder with paper and then decorate the exterior with images/words/objects representing your 'outer self'.

Talking Points

1. Give an example of something positive that you might know about someone, of which they might be completely unaware.
2. 'I don't need anyone to help me to get to know myself. How could anyone tell me anything about myself? They're not me!' Would you agree with this approach? Why?/Why not?
3. 'There are benefits to getting to know yourself as others know you.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not? You might use an example to explain your answer.

Why Don't You?

Get together in groups and construct a profile of an imaginary person, with some examples of their talents, abilities, behaviour, habits and routines. (N.B. You're only allowed to include aspects that are 'visible' to others.)

In Your Religion Journal

Create a profile of yourself as you think you appear to others and to the world at large. Ask your friends for ideas, as they will be able to help you with this.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Let's Talk

about the worksheet questionnaire...

1. 'The answers to this questionnaire are obvious.' To what extent would you agree? Explain.
2. If someone you had never met before spent a day in your company, how many of these questions would they be able to answer?
3. Would you say that you know a lot about a person when you know the answers to these questions?
4. How important would you say such information is in helping others to know you as a person?

A time to pray

Note: You might like to continue the practice (suggested in the earlier Fully Alive books) of lighting a candle at the start of prayertime and playing some quiet background music.

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Jesus wants us to see ourselves as God sees us: as precious and valuable, as someone God appreciates. We know this from his words in the Gospel according to Matthew.

Reader (Matthew 6:25, 28-30)

Jesus says: 'I tell you not to worry about your life. Don't worry about having something to eat, drink, or wear. Isn't life more than food or clothing? Why worry about clothes? Look how the wild flowers grow. They don't work hard to make their clothes.

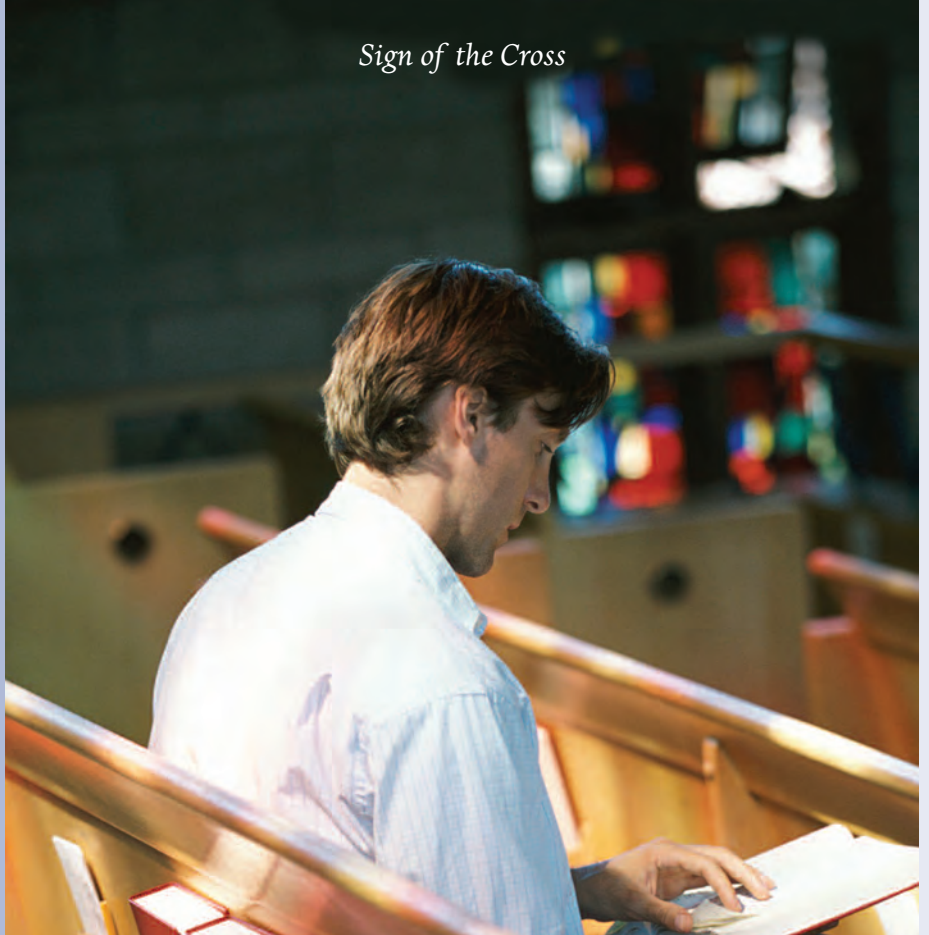
But I tell you that Solomon with all his wealth wasn't as well clothed as one of them. God gives such beauty to everything that grows in the fields, even though it is here today and thrown into a fire tomorrow. He will surely do even more for you!'

(If time permits, allow a short pause before finishing the prayertime.)

Sign of the Cross

Why Don't You?

Take some quiet time to yourself and slowly read through the Gospel text in the prayertime. You might like to play some quiet background music as you do. If you find a phrase that you like, repeat it several times. Don't rush. If you have a tendency to focus on negative ideas about yourself, imagine what Jesus would say to that in the light of what you have read.



Getting to Know Me – My Inner Self

In the last lesson, you focused on your ‘outer self’, the part of you that other people can see if they pay attention. But there’s more to you than this. No more than the outside of an apple is the whole apple, no more than the outside of a book is the whole book, so the way you appear to others on the surface is not the whole you. Indeed, there is a whole world within you – your ‘inner self’ – and this lesson (and the two that follow) offers an opportunity to explore that inner world further. Before beginning this lesson, spend some time deciding on some rules for working and sharing together in groups.

A Bad Day...

‘Dinner will be ready in thirty minutes,’ Matthew’s mother said when Matthew returned home after the game. Matthew didn’t respond. He hardly had the energy to drag himself up the stairs. Once in his room, he slumped onto the bed. But he wasn’t just physically tired. If there were words for what was going on inside him, they might have been: ‘I feel really twisted and horrible!’ But he could barely think, let alone speak!

The day had started badly and proceeded to get worse. Matthew didn’t waken on time that morning and he was late for school. That resulted in a telling-off from his form teacher and his first detention of the year. He felt awkward and embarrassed. In the rush to school, he forgot his English assignment. The teacher would take no excuses; he lost ten per

Group Work Rules

In your group work in this lesson (and throughout the year), you should agree the following rules:

1. I promise to respect any information that is shared in my group/classroom.
2. I promise not to repeat such information outside my group and outside this classroom.
3. I am free to opt out of sharing personal information if I do not feel comfortable doing so.

(You can also add further rules to this list as required. It should be understood that working as part of a group means that you promise to keep the rules. These rules should be displayed on the wall throughout the year and referred to as necessary.)

Talking Points

1. What was happening to Matthew as the day went on?
2. Why did Matthew find it hard to play well during the match?
3. If you had met Matthew before the match began, what might you have done? Give reasons for your answer.
4. Would you have needed anything from Matthew in order to be of any help to him? Explain your answer.
5. What aspect of Matthew did you learn most about in this story?
6. Did Matthew pay attention to his inner self? To what extent did this contribute to the way his day turned out?
7. Could Matthew have counteracted the difficulties of his day? In what way? Who or what could have helped him?
8. If Matthew continues to live in the same way, what will his future be like?

Why Don't You?

Do a 'brainstorm' and name as many human feelings/emotions as you can. (You might find the story in this lesson to be a useful springboard to get you started.)

Then choose *one* of the following projects:

- Make a wall display called 'The Rainbow of Feelings'. You might do it as follows: first, put up a series of strips of coloured paper to represent the colours of the rainbow; second, make a number of labels with individual feelings/emotions; third, decide (as a group) where the labels should go (i.e. which colour best suits which feeling/emotion).

continued ➞



cent of the marks and it would be noted on his report. He was afraid of what his mother would say. During lunchtime, the caretaker accused Matthew and his friends of leaving litter in the lunch room. Matthew felt a knot of resentment in the pit of his stomach. After school, he never spoke to his friends. Instead, he went straightaway to do his detention. From there he went to do his hour in the Garage Stores. The previous Saturday, he had tidied the whole place and reorganised everything when Mr Collins, the boss, was away. But there wasn't a word about it – no comment, no appreciation. By the time Matthew fielded for the match, his form was abysmal and his focus was off. The opposition ran rings around him; in fact, Matthew was taken off at half-time. 'You're just not trying,' said the coach. Little did the coach know what an effort everything was for Matthew that evening. Now Matthew was sitting silent on the end of his bed with his head in his hands, while downstairs his mother wondered what was wrong.

Taking Care of Your Inner Self

As you have seen, there are two aspects to a person: the outer and the inner. A person's outer self presents you with that person's 'facts' (e.g. appearance, interests, etc). A person's inner self deals with feelings (past and present), dreams, hopes and ideals (values).

If you listen to what is going on in your inner self, you will cope better with life. There are various ways of getting to know what is going on in your inner self. If you have someone in your life who deserves your trust, you might talk to that person about your feelings. If you prefer, you could keep a diary or a journal. By doing this regularly, you will begin to notice the trends in your life. You will especially notice how you talk about yourself: in a negative or a positive way. There are many ways to express who you are: you might do so through music, through song, through art, or perhaps even through sport. The better you express yourself, the more you'll get to know yourself. The more you know yourself, the more you'll get to know God who made you.

It's important to know how to deal with negative feelings. No one can hide from such feelings for very long. Putting off dealing with your negative feelings just adds to the stress and can begin to affect other parts of your life also. Matthew discovered this in the story.

Talking to God – The Healthy Option

One of the most positive ways of looking after your inner self is to pray. Prayer promotes inner health. God invites you to talk about your inner world in the most positive context imaginable. For as much as others may love and respect you, God loves you even more. God created you and made you. God has all the time in the world to listen to you, and God has things to say to help you too. There is nothing about you that God will turn away from. Even when you do not look on yourself with love, God still accepts you and encourages you to see yourself more positively. And when you do look on yourself positively, God is with you, encouraging you to be your full self, bringing your own brand of 'sunshine' to the world.



A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

God is always with us, to listen to us, to guide us and to encourage us. Confidently we pray: 'I turn to you, God; I give you my trust.'

All

I turn to you, God; I give you my trust.

Teacher

As we begin, we take a moment to become quiet and still. (*Pause*) We remember that God is with us. (*Pause*) We allow our eyes to close. Together, we breathe in (*Pause*) and we breathe out. (*Pause*) On the in-breath, we think of the words: 'I turn to you, God.' On the out-breath, we recall the words: 'I give you my trust.'

Silent prayer continues for a short while. The teacher may repeat the phrases a few times to enable the students to remember them.

Sign of the Cross

...continued

- Draw an outline of a person to represent you. Take some different coloured markers. Associate each colour with a feeling/emotion (e.g. red = anger; blue = sorrow; yellow = happiness; orange = energy, etc.) Colour within the outline to illustrate your own feelings as you are today (happy, sad, angry, proud, shy, etc). Put the date and time on the page. You might include this in your 'ME' folder and, at a later date, you might look at the outline again and ask yourself: Which feelings were most prominent? Which feelings were absent?
- Choose a song or piece of music to express how you are feeling. Bring this into class and play it. You might like to give a short explanation of why you chose this particular piece of music.

In Your Religion Journal

Make a list of the strongest feelings you have ever experienced. Choose one and use images or words to describe it. When you've finished, take a moment to pray about what you've done.

'ME' Folder

Continue your art project which you began in Lesson 3. This time, concentrate on your 'inner self' and begin to decorate the inside of your folder with things that reflect the inner you. It is not intended that you complete the folder during this lesson. Perhaps some time could be allocated during subsequent lessons to continue this project.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

My Inner Self In Past Times

Talking Points

1. Having read through 'Matthew's Timeline' below, which event of his life would you say had the biggest impact on Matthew? Offer a reason for your answer.
2. As a group, list some events that might have a big impact on the 'inner self' of the average young person growing up. What do you notice about your list?
3. Pick one memory or feeling from Matthew's past and suggest how it might influence his life today.
4. 'Past events and feelings have no effect on you once you grow up.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not?

The part of you that you might call your 'inner self' includes your personal inner world of feelings, hopes, dreams and ideals. Learning more about your inner self helps you to know yourself better. It can help you to be more aware of yourself, more fully alive. This is what God and others want for you. That's why this lesson continues the exploration begun in the last lesson. The emphasis here, though, is on your past and your memories. Begin with Matthew's timeline below. (Remember you met him in the previous lesson.)

Matthew's Timeline

Events	Age	Feelings/Reactions/Inner Thoughts
Birth. First child in the family.	0–1 yrs	Mum says I was a very happy baby.
No one to play with at home.	2–3yrs	Mum says I demanded a lot of attention.
Started primary school. Met Pat. Became best friends.	4 yrs	Mum says I had loads of fun with new friend Pat. Very happy at school.
Joined Junior Football team.	6 yrs	Mum says I was delighted to be on a team. Gave me a real sense of belonging.
Went to Disneyland.	8 yrs	I remember feeling so happy: would like life to be like this always.
More homework. Less football. Dropped from team for Junior Championship. Confirmation.	10 yrs	Finding schoolwork difficult. Frustrated when dropped from team. Feeling left out and ignored. Felt really special at Confirmation.
Moved house. Started new school.	11 yrs	Hate new school. Missing Pat and other friends. Feeling lonely.
Appendix removed. Lots of visitors.	12 yrs	Really pleased to have so many visitors in hospital. Feeling more secure and cared for.
Bad day at school and work (see story pages 11–12).	Today	Angry at being ignored and feeling unjustly treated.

Recognising Feelings and Dealing with Them

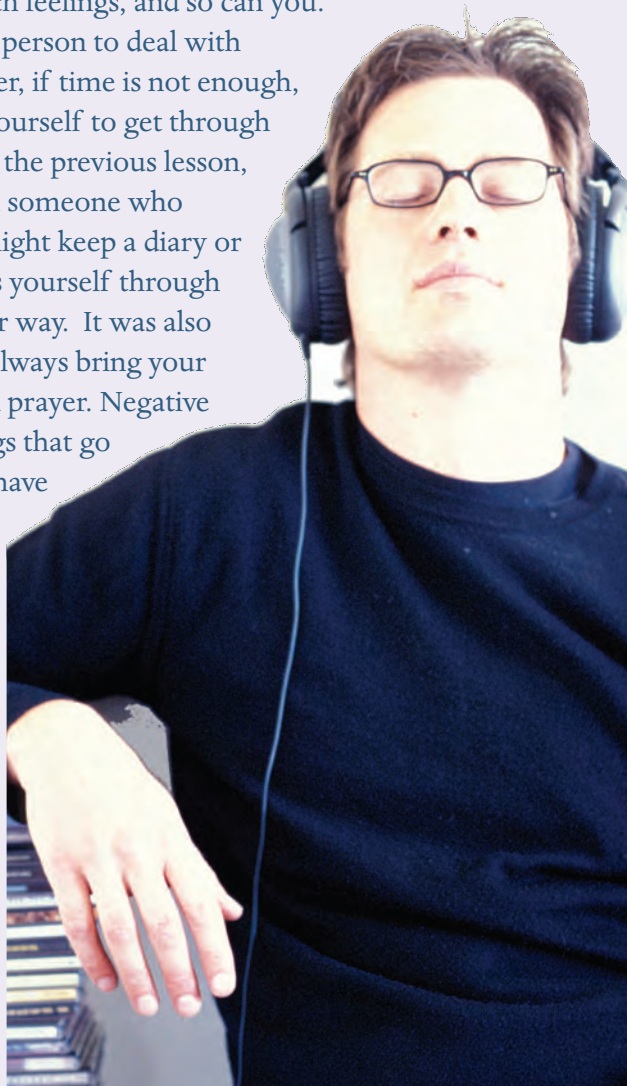
If, like Matthew, you are passed over for something (e.g. not chosen for a team), it might leave you feeling dejected. People sometimes describe such a feeling as 'negative' because it can be painful, unsettling, disturbing or difficult. A list of other so-called 'negative' feelings might include anger, envy, selfish pride, etc. Don't think that every 'negative' feeling is automatically bad; it may not be. For example, anger (expressed with self-control) would be the proper response if someone was being unfair to you. 'Negative' feelings are neither right nor wrong. But you need to be careful about them; you might allow them to lead you to make choices, and those choices may be either right or wrong. The more you are aware of your feelings, the more likely you are to notice how they are influencing your choices.

The same is true of 'positive' feelings. A list of 'positive' feelings might include being content, being amused, being right, being of service, achieving something, being strong. Not all 'positive' feelings are good. For instance, a feeling of 'being content' might lead a person to forget about others who are unhappy.

Your feelings are a natural part of your life. They are your reaction to the things that happen to you. Feelings are neither good nor bad; they're just feelings. Feelings can change. Sometimes, 'negative' feelings can make a big impact in your life, and it can seem as if they have taken over your whole life. At times like that, it's important that you remember that you are more than what you feel. Matthew, as you can see in his timeline, developed some negative feelings. He eventually got through such feelings, and so can you.

Generally, time will help a person to deal with 'negative' feelings. However, if time is not enough, you can do more to help yourself to get through them. As was suggested in the previous lesson, you might like to talk with someone who deserves your trust. You might keep a diary or journal. You might express yourself through music, art or in some other way. It was also suggested that you could always bring your negative feelings to God in prayer. Negative experiences and the feelings that go with them do not have to have a negative impact on your future.

Sometimes people find it difficult to express their feelings. This does not mean that they cannot do so or that they are bad at doing so. With practice, everyone can improve the way they express their feelings.



Talking Points

1. 'Negative feelings are never good for a person.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not?
2. 'Remember that you are more than your feelings.' What do you think this might mean?
3. What practical advice would you give to someone who is struggling with a lot of 'negative' feelings?
4. Do some people find it easier than others to express their feelings? Why do you think this might be?
5. 'Girls are better at expressing their feelings than boys.' Discuss.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Why Don't You?

Take an unlined A4 page and draw an outline of a travel bag or suitcase. Label it 'Matthew's Suitcase'. Within the outline of the 'suitcase', make a list of the feelings that Matthew carries with him from his past. Then recheck the story of Matthew from the previous lesson. Do you notice any connection between any of those feelings and the feelings Matthew had when he got back home after football?

In Your Religion Journal

On a page of your journal, draw the outline of a travel bag or suitcase. Repeat the 'Why Don't You?' activity above, but this time focus on yourself during the past week. What have you focused on? Overall, how would you describe your week? If someone other than you were to look at your 'suitcase', what might they notice?

Why Don't You?

Refer back to the story in the previous lesson where Matthew arrives home to his mother. Do a role-play of what happens when Matthew arrives home. Then change the story by substituting the character 'Matthew' with 'Amy'. Imagine that the same things have happened to 'Amy' as happened to 'Matthew'. Do the role-play of 'Amy' arriving home. When you have done both role-plays, compare them and notice any differences. Do you notice any difference in the ease with which feelings might be shared or otherwise? (Note: Refer back to the final paragraph of the section 'Recognising feelings and dealing with them' on page 15.)

'ME' Folder

You might like to take some time to add to your 'ME' folder after completing this lesson. Concentrate on including material about your 'inner self'. You might, for example, include a copy of the worksheet from this lesson. Alternatively, you might include any images, colours or forms that reflect where you are at in your life at this particular time. If you wish, you might write about this time in your life. In particular, express your feelings about your life at the moment.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Life is a mixture. There are many happy moments and sources of joy, but there are also painful and difficult things. We have to face the difficulties – there is no avoiding them. The writer of the book of Ecclesiastes in the Bible reminds us of this.

Reader (Ecclesiastes 3:1-8)

Everything on earth has its own time and its own season. There is a time for birth and death, planting and reaping, for killing and healing, destroying and building, for crying and laughing, weeping and dancing, for throwing stones and gathering stones, embracing and parting. There is a time for finding and losing, keeping and giving, for tearing and sewing, listening and speaking. There is also a time for love and hate, for war and peace.

All

God, grant me the serenity to accept the things I
cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and the wisdom to know the difference.

Sign of the Cross

With God In My Inner Self

Term 1, Lesson 6

Over the past few lessons, you have concentrated on getting to know yourself a bit better. When you are closer to yourself, you are also moving closer to God, who knows you and loves you. You can be more yourself in the time that you spend praying. During prayer, you are better able to be with God and to share the most personal things of your life. Such sharing helps you to grow in your awareness of yourself and in your awareness of God. This lesson offers you an opportunity to do just that: to pray. But first you need to complete some of the following exercises.

Why Don't You?

- Take some quiet time to do the 'ME' folder activity. You might like to play some quiet background music as you do the exercise.
- Get into groups organised by the teacher (preferably not with your friends) and share some of your answers to the 'ME' folder exercise. (Remember your Group Work Rules on page 11.)

'ME' Folder

Complete the following sentences under the title 'The Things That Matter To Me'. Then, write a short paragraph on what you have learned about yourself from doing this exercise.

The qualities I look for in a friend are...
The qualities I like most in myself are...
I feel comfortable with people who are...
I feel annoyed by people who...
I am hurt when someone...
I trust people who...
People make me happy when they...
I feel closest to a person when...
People like me most when I...
The thing I enjoy doing most is...

Why Don't You?

Choose an object from your personal belongings that symbolises something important in your life. Bring this item in to the next lesson and, in your group, tell the story of what that object represents for you.

A time to pray

WITH GOD IN MY INNER SELF

Preparing for Prayertime

Before this prayertime, you might like to:

- prepare a prayer space away from the classroom, if one is available, e.g. the school oratory or prayer room;
- prepare a 'sacred space' in the middle of the place where the prayer will occur. This 'sacred space' can be made up of a variety of coloured cloths and/or sacking covering an arrangement of small blocks or boxes placed so as to create a space of varied height. With due care, the prayer candle, the Bible and a holy image/icon may be placed in the middle of this space before the prayertime begins;
- continue the 'ME' folder project of earlier lessons;
- make the graphics for the symbols suggested for use in the prayertime;
- assign readers;
- find and set up some appropriate quiet background music;
- obtain an appropriate candle, lighter and long taper for lighting it.

Sign of the Cross

Some quiet background music may be played, as everyone settles to become quiet and still. If you have your 'ME' folder with you, it can be part of this prayertime, as indicated in the notes below.

Reader 1

God said: Let there be light.

Reader 2

And so life began. *(The candle is lit.)*

Reader 1

God said: Let us make human beings. Let us make them in our own image and likeness. In the image of God, let us make them.

Reader 2

And so, we are like God. We are like God in our power to choose what is good. We are like God in our ability to love, to be joyful and to be content.

Reader 1

After millions and millions of years, God's Word became flesh. Jesus was born.

Reader 2

Then we really knew how like God we could be. Jesus showed us the way to develop to be more like God.

Reader 1

But Jesus was rejected and crucified.

Reader 2

Then we knew that we were like God in suffering too. Our desire to love can sometimes bring us pain.

Reader 1

Jesus was raised from death by God the Father.

Reader 2

So too, our suffering will one day be ended. God will purify us of every wrong thing and make us truly good.

Teacher

During our recent lessons, we have spent time getting to know our inner self. St Augustine, a famous saint, once said, 'God is closer to me than I am to myself.' There is nothing of our inner self that God does not know. There is nothing about our inner life from which God withdraws. God came close to us in Jesus so that we would feel able to come close to God just as we are.

Reader 3

We bring ourselves to God just as we are. Today, especially, we bring our inner selves.

If the 'ME' folder is not being used as part of this prayertime, skip now directly to the next 'Reader 4' piece.

If the 'ME' folder is being used, the following may be added:

We take our 'ME' folders and place them in our sacred space.

At this point, students rise reverently and carefully place their 'ME' folders in the 'sacred space' area.

We pause for a moment to think of the aspect of our 'ME' folder that means most to us. *(Pause)*

Reader 4

With God, we reflect on some of the things that are within us. I invite those who are carrying the symbols of our inner life to come forward.

Those students who have been assigned to carry the symbols come forward.

Reader 3

We become aware of the love that is within us. (*Student holds up the 'heart' symbol.*) We think of those we love now, today. (*Pause*)

Reader 4

God, our ability to love makes us like you. It brings so much to our lives. Purify our love. Make us unselfish. Heal our hearts of any hurt.

Reader 3

We become aware of the joy we can have. (*Student holds up the 'fireworks' symbol.*) We recall something in life that delights us. (*Pause*)

Reader 4

God, when we are lifted up by joy, we share in your delight. Help us to enjoy the life you give us.

Reader 3

We become aware of the peace that is in us. (*Student holds up the 'dove' symbol.*) We enjoy a moment of peace together now. (*Pause*)

Reader 4

God, bless us with peace and help us to bring it to others.

Reader 5

We bring before God the things of our inner self that can cause tension. We bring God our anger. (*Student holds up the 'anger' symbol, e.g. thunderbolt.*) We become aware of any anger we feel now. (*Pause*)

Reader 6

God, anger can give us energy. It can help us to change things to be as you would want. Help us to express our anger with control and to cause no hurt.

Reader 5

We become aware before God of our jealousy and envy. (*Student holds up the 'jealousy/envy' symbol,*

e.g. a graphic of an eye.) We remember how we are sometimes jealous or envious. (*Pause*)

Reader 6

God, you know us as we are. We are sorry for not being content with ourselves and for wanting more than we have.

Reader 5

We become aware of our fear and insecurity. (*Student holds up the 'fear/insecurity' symbol, e.g. a black card.*) We remember one of our particular fears. (*Pause*)

Reader 6

God, you are with us always. Help us to trust in you.

Reader 5

We bring an empty box. (*Student holds up the 'empty box'. The box should be plain, with no visible words/markings.*) Perhaps there is a feeling in your life today that has not been mentioned here. If there is, recall it now and, in your imagination, place it in this box and bring it to God. (*Pause*)

Reader 6

God, you know us and you love us. We thank you for our feelings, which bring us such richness. Guide and direct us whenever our feelings are very strong.

Teacher

When St Paul spoke to his friends, the Ephesians, he told them how he prayed that God would strengthen their inner selves.

Reader (based on Ephesians 3:14-21)

For this reason I pray before the Father, from whom every family in heaven and on earth takes its name. I pray that, according to the riches of his glory, he may strengthen your inner self with power through his Spirit, and that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith, and keep you rooted and grounded in love. I pray that

you may have the power to know the love of Christ: a love that is beyond measure. Now to him who works within us to do more than we could ever ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.

Teacher

Now that we are getting to know ourselves a bit better, we once more remember that Christ is with us as we grow and develop. So, we pray:

All

Prayer to Jesus

Christ be with me.

Christ be beside me.

Christ be before me.

Christ be behind me.

Christ at my right hand.

Christ at my left hand.

Christ be with me everywhere I go.

Christ be my friend, for ever and ever. Amen.

Sign of the Cross

What Do I Want To Become?

Some people seem very focused in life; from early on, they just know what they want to do with their life. Something in life fires their imagination and they 'go for it'; they set about fulfilling their wish for the future. Like the switching on of a light in a dark place, their whole life lights up and they see the direction in which they wish to go; nothing seems to hold them back. There is a part of everyone that looks to the future (although not always with such energy). You will already have begun to think about your own future. This lesson will give you an opportunity to reflect on your own dreams and hopes for the future. You might like to begin with the first 'Why Don't You?' activity and then continue with Rudy's story.

Why Don't You?

Instead of reading 'Rudy's Story', which describes the life and career of disabled athlete Rudy Garcia-Tolson, you might prefer to present your own version after you look up the following (or other relevant) websites:

- http://www.usatoday.com/sports/2005-12-19-athletes-special-bonds_x.htm
- www.castaldibootcamp.com/bootcamp/inspire/rudy.html
- www.ussa.edu/news/2004/12/16/01tolson.asp
- http://caf.temp.powweb.com/athletes_stories/Rudy_Garcia.htm

Rudy's Story

Rudy Garcia-Tolson had both of his legs amputated just above the knees when he was five. When his parents and doctors talked with him about what was going to happen, he just replied, 'Take 'em off! I want to play sports like other kids.' Rudy had been born with a webbing at the back of both legs which stopped them from straightening. After fifteen operations, he was still in a wheelchair, watching other children running around and playing, and he was burning with desire to join in. Fortunately for Rudy, new technology had developed new kinds of artificial legs. Even though he was only five years old, he had artificial legs specially made for him. He got a pair of legs for running, a pair for cycling and a pair for walking.

Rudy's desire didn't just stop at playing games. By the time he was eight years old, he had set himself a new target. He was going to compete in the 2004 Paralympic Games. To anyone who doubted him – and there were many – Rudy would say, 'A brave heart is a powerful weapon.' He trained tirelessly to reach his goal: swimming two hours a day, six days a week, for six years, under the direction of his coach, Terry Martin. Rudy began to do triathlons: running, biking and swimming. Within a few years, he had won a string of medals, finally making it to the 2004 Paralympic Games in Greece, where he set the world record of his athletic class in the 200-metre individual swimming medley and got a gold medal. All this is only a fraction of what Rudy has done against the odds. (You can find a lot more about him on the Internet.) In recognition of his achievements as a Paralympic swimmer, and as a track and field athlete, he was awarded the International Olympic Committee President's Disabled Athlete Award for his outstanding achievements during the games and throughout his career. He had just turned sixteen.



Talking Points

1. Do you think ambitions, goals, dreams and targets in life are good things? Why?/Why not?
2. If you had met Rudy as an eight-year-old boy, how realistic would you have considered his goal to reach the Paralympics? Would you have supported him at that time? Why?/Why not?
3. What difference do you think having a goal in his life might have made for Rudy?
4. Can you think of people you know who have particular ambitions, goals or targets in their lives? Describe them.
5. Do you have ambitions, goals or targets? If you wish, you might share with the class some of the sorts of things they include. How important are they to you? What would your life be like without them?

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Talking Points

1. Name some of the 'ordinary' things that you have already achieved as a class, or as individuals. Make a list of 'ordinary' things that you might pick as goals for your future.
2. 'If only the best birds sang, the forest would be a very quiet place.' What do you think this means? How might you apply this saying to you and to your life?

Why Don't You?

In groups or as a class, make two lists:

LIST A: Things that have a positive impact on your motivation, e.g. making others happy, fame, the achievements of others, money, recognition, etc. On this list, include things that give you inspiration for the future, e.g. careers. You might also include the 'negative' things that can motivate you, e.g. being denied an opportunity, anger (protesting and standing up for yourself or others), etc.

LIST B: Make a list of things that have a negative impact on your motivation. What are the goals, aims or achievements in life in which you have little or no interest?

Then you might consider the following questions:

1. Have you any comments on either of these lists? For example, do you find that some things occur in both lists?
2. How easy or otherwise might it be for people to talk about what motivates them in life? Explain your answer.
3. Has doing this activity made you any more aware of your own motivation in life? If so, in what way? Are you more aware of the particular things that trigger a response in you?

'ME' Folder

Put an image of yourself at the centre of the page. Around this image, include one or more images of fireworks going off. In the centre of each one, write the name of something that inspires or motivates you for the future.
Or

Write about a time when you succeeded at something because you made it a goal and committed to it. Describe what happened. How did that make you feel? What did you learn from that experience?

Honour your Goals

Not every goal has to be as extraordinary as the desire to compete and win gold in the Olympics. Most people's goals are not like this. Do not compare yourself and your goals with others. Do not consider your goals as just 'ordinary'. Your goals may indeed be connected with everyday things. However, this does not make your goals any less important. In fact, your goals may be no less difficult for you than an Olympic sport is for a professional athlete. For example, you might aim to get a pass grade in a subject that you dislike; you might aim to be polite to someone who has treated you badly in the past; you might fast from sweets for a whole day; you might set a goal to complete an assignment and hand it in on time. Such goals might be very difficult for you to achieve. Even so, once they are done, they are real achievements. An achievement doesn't have to be out-of-the-ordinary to be a real achievement. Recognise your efforts! Recognise your everyday successes! That's the key to becoming able to achieve your greater goals in life.

A time to pray

Note: It might be helpful to have completed the worksheet associated with this lesson before this prayertime.

Teacher

Take a moment to ensure that you are sitting comfortably. (Pause) Become aware of your breathing and allow yourself to become quiet and still. (Pause)

God is always with you. You have the spirit of God within you, to guide you and direct you. Welcome God's presence with you and within you. (Pause)

God has given you your interests. God has given you your enthusiasm for the future. You have the ability to plan, to dream, to hope. God has made you someone who has a future, not just in heaven, but in your days and years here on earth. Be aware of God blessing you and blessing the time that is yet to be in your life. (Pause)

Turn your mind now to one of your hopes for your future. Name for yourself one really important part of your dream for your future. (Pause)

See yourself with your dream, your hope, realised. Picture yourself with your target achieved. Feel the joy, the contentment, the satisfaction that is yours in that future moment. (Pause)

Imagine yourself in that future moment of your life. Picture yourself as you live your dream, as your hope becomes real, as your target is achieved. In your mind's eye, see it taking place in your life. (Pause)

Give some time to God now. In your inner self, allow God to communicate with you about your hope – your goal – for your future. (Pause)

Ten years from now, your life will be different. You will have reached a goal, even if you do not yet know all of what that goal may be. Ask God's Holy Spirit to help you to reach your true goal in life safely. (Pause)

Our prayertime is drawing to a close. Before it does, remember once more that God is always with you. God loves you. God will help you and God will console you on your journey through life. God blesses you now and invites you to be joyful about the days and years ahead. (Pause)

When you are ready, open your eyes once more and stretch.

NB: You will need some magazines and/or catalogues for the 'Why Don't You?' activity in the following lesson, Lesson 8.

Finding My Way

Note: You will need to have gathered a number of magazines or catalogues before starting this lesson.

This lesson offers you a further opportunity to look forward into your future. Some people – perhaps you are among them – do not find it easy to be clear about exactly what they want to be in life. You might begin this lesson with the ‘Why Don’t You?’ activity before you read the story.

I Didn’t Know Where My Life Was Going...

I did all right at school, though not as well as some in the class. But then, no one thought of me as a ‘high-flyer’. At home, my results didn’t matter to them very much. I’ll always be thankful that they loved me for who I am and not just for what I could do in life. But there was still that question: what did I want to be? I hadn’t a clue. I began a course in metalwork, but I left after a month. I liked making things, but this was way too technical. So I took a job in the supermarket. I had to work weekends and I didn’t get to go out with my friends. I thought of going

Why Don’t You?

Do a wall display under the title ‘Our goals in the past...’.

- Using cut-outs from catalogues/magazines and/or using your own cartoon drawings, illustrate some of the stages of your life so far, e.g. at ages five, eight, eleven and fourteen. Put these across the top of the wall display.
- Use your memory or your imagination and make a list of what you (or people in general) wanted to be at those various ages. Then illustrate the different items (again either from catalogues or magazines or your own cartoon-type drawings) and put them on the wall display underneath the stage of life to which they correspond.

Then you might like to offer some answers to the following questions:

1. What changes do you notice over the years in what you (or people in general) want to become?
2. Might you (or others like you) find it difficult to choose what you want to do with your future at this point of your life? Why?/Why not?



Talking Points

1. At the start, the person in this story seemed to have no clear goal or ambition. What do you think that might have been like? What effect do you think it might have had?
2. At the end, the person in this story seems to have found their goal in life? Would you agree? Why?/Why not? What would you say about the way in which the person in this story found their goal in life?
3. With regard to the experience of making a choice for your future life, what's it like for you? Are you clear about it yet? What's it like to have others asking you about it?
4. What would you say to a young person who isn't clear about their future?

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

One-Minute Soapbox

Name a goal that you have achieved in your life.

Describe this goal and why you committed yourself to it. How did it feel to achieve it and what did you learn from this whole experience?

abroad, but I hadn't enough money and I had no skills. So I just had to adapt to a life that seemed to be going nowhere. Then my mum took sick. There was no one to mind her, so I did it. I wanted to do it, though it was harder than I expected. Those days I only got out if I could get someone to cover for me. My mum would get confused if someone else came along and she'd be worried; so I stopped going out. I loved my mum to bits, but sometimes she was difficult. She began to forget things and sometimes she wasn't sure who I was. For the first time in my life, I began to feel lonely. Towards the end, the nurse used to call regularly. And then my mum died. She had become the focus of my life and now I had nothing to focus on. I sat at home for days. I remember the morning that the letter arrived to say that the benefits would be stopped. I had no money, no job, no future; even the past was gone. Then one day the nurse dropped by, just come back to collect a few things we had got from the health service during my mother's sickness. She said she had a friend who was organising a fair that weekend and asked if I would be available to help. That's when I met Jan. Jan was from Holland. I hadn't seen anyone make jewellery before. I asked if I could have a go at making something. It's a long story but that's my work now: making jewellery. And Jan? Well, I didn't know it straightaway, but I had found the love of my life that day. It was a long road, but it was worth it after all.

God Is With You As You Seek Your Goal In Life

The story of Rudy Garcia-Tolson (in the previous lesson) is very different from the story above. Early on, Rudy made a clear decision about his future, and this goal remained constant in the years that followed. That is not to say it was easy for him; he had many difficulties to overcome, and, although he trained very hard, he would not always have been in good form. But despite these things, Rudy was able to see clearly what he wanted in life and he had a plan for achieving it. He stuck to this plan and he achieved his goal. In contrast, discovering a goal in life did not come easily to the person in the story above. There were many setbacks and not many successes. Despite all that, an opportunity did eventually arise. The person in the story had a chance to recognise a goal in life, and true happiness resulted, both in work and in a relationship.

It might be that, like Rudy, you are clear about what you want to do in life. If so, well and good. Alternatively, you might be much less clear and it could take you a long time to find your direction in life. If so, persevere! Different people grow and develop differently, at different rates, with different goals and interests. Remember that God is with you. God has made you with your own unique way of growing and developing. God has given you the ability to choose, and God is with you as you use that ability. As with so many other big decisions in life, talking and sharing your feelings can help. As you try to decide how to go forward in life, your conversations with God – your prayer – can help you too.

'ME' Folder

Draw a timeline to represent the years of your life. Mark in your birthday and important days in your life. Be sure to include at least one important moment that has influenced what you might like to be in life. Include the names of anyone who influenced you at that time. Underneath, write a prayer beginning: 'Thank you God for the important moments that influence my life...'

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

There are times in everyone's life when things seem unclear and we are not sure of where we are going. But no matter how uncertain we may be, God is always with us, guiding us. The twenty-third psalm is one of the oldest prayers to remind us of this. It encourages us not to be afraid, even if things seem very dark and unclear. Together, we pray:

All (from Psalm 23)

You, LORD, are my shepherd.

I will never be in need.

You let me rest in fields of green grass.

You lead me to streams of peaceful water,
and you refresh my life.

You are true to your name,
and you lead me along the right paths.
I may walk through valleys as dark as death,
but I won't be afraid.

Your kindness and love
will always be with me
each day of my life,
and I will live forever in your house, LORD.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

Prayer to the Holy Spirit

Holy Spirit, I want to do what is right.

Help me.

Holy Spirit, I want to live like Jesus.

Guide me.

Holy Spirit, I want to pray like Jesus.

Teach me. Amen.

Sign of the Cross

Why Don't You?

Make a list of three things that you think you do really well. It could be that you are good at listening, good at baking cakes, or perhaps you are good at reading or playing sports. Share these with your neighbour. Is there anything more that they would add to your list? What might you add to their list? What have you learned by doing this exercise?

Talking Points

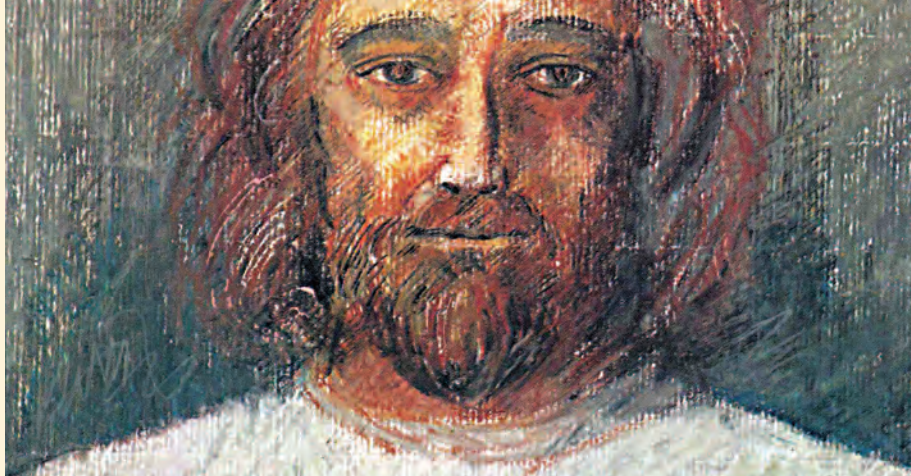
1. In a few words, describe each character's attitude (or approach) to their future.
2. Starting with the most positive character, list the characters according to their attitude. In your opinion, which character is doing their best with regard to their future? Give a reason for your answer.
3. Take each character in turn and answer the following questions: What would you say to her or to him about the future? What do you think God might want to say to her or to him about the future?

Who Does God Want Me To Become?

You know that there's a part of you that looks forward to the future. There's a part of you that hopes and dreams and focuses on what you might yet become. Jesus said that how you approach your future matters to God. He told a story about it, which is found in the Gospel according to Matthew and which you will have an opportunity to consider in this lesson. You will also have an opportunity to reflect on your approach to what you might become.

Looking to the Future

- Quite a few in Sheila's class are good at sport or music or school subjects. However, Sheila doesn't see herself having any such obvious talents. This has begun to affect both her view of herself and her ability to work at school. She no longer has much hope of any success in her life.
- Despite his best efforts, Barry has failed an exam and doesn't have the results he needs to get into the course that he wants. He would like to do nursing but will have to repeat the year if he wants to stick to his choice. He considers this to be a big setback, yet he is determined to stick to his plan and to fulfil his dream of being a nurse.
- The longer Brian stays at school, the more convinced he is that he is in the wrong place. He has never liked studying or sitting exams and is doing his best to cope. He has talked about this to his mother and he plans to leave school as soon as he can get an apprenticeship. He's looking forward to doing something that suits him better.
- School suits Julie: she meets her friends often; she gets a chance to play lots of sport; she does the minimum amount of school work and gets by with little effort. She doesn't bother doing more when she can get by as it is. She doesn't see the need to think about the future or make plans.



The Parable of the Talents

Note: The word 'talent' originally meant 'a very large unit of money'.

Jesus told the following story about three characters who made a choice about their future. Each one was given a different gift by his employer. The three employees used those gifts differently. The employer returned and had something to say about his three employees.

A man on his way abroad summoned his servants and entrusted his property to them. To one he gave five talents, to another two, to a third one; each in proportion to his ability; then he set out. The man who had received the five talents promptly went and traded with them and made five more. The man who had received two made two more the same way. But the man who had received one went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master's money.

Now a long time after, the master of those servants came back and went through his accounts with them. The man who had received the five talents came forward bringing five more. 'Sir,' he said, 'you entrusted me with five talents; here are five more that I have made.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, so I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness.'

Next the man with the two talents came forward. 'Sir,' he said, 'you entrusted me with two talents; here are two more that I have made.' His master said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have shown you can be faithful in small things, so I will trust you with greater; come and join in your master's happiness.'

Finally, the man who had the one talent came forward. 'Sir,' said he, 'I had heard you were a hard man, reaping where you have not sown and gathering where you have not scattered; so I was afraid, and I went off and hid your talent in the ground. Here it is; it was yours, you have it back.'

But his master answered him, 'You wicked and lazy servant! So you knew that I reap where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered? Well then, you should have deposited my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have recovered my capital with interest. So now, your money will be taken from you and given to the man who has the five talents. For to everyone who has will be given more, and he will have more than enough; but from the man who has not, even what he has will be taken away. You are a good-for-nothing servant, and you will be thrown into the dark, where there will be weeping and grinding of teeth.' (Adapted from Matthew 25:14-30)

Talking Points

1. Compare the way in which the employees develop the potential of the gifts they receive.
2. Which of the three is different from the other two and why?
3. Based on this story of Jesus, what do you reckon God wants people to do?
4. What do you think Jesus is saying to you in this story?

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

One-Minute Soapbox

Take an uninterrupted minute or two to talk about someone you admire who has developed her/his abilities.

'ME' Folder

Write a note or use images (either your own or from magazines, etc) to illustrate the following: 'What I imagine God wants me to become.'

Talking Points

1. 'It's not how much you have by way of ability or gifts that matters. It's how you try to develop them.' Do you agree? Why?/Why not?
2. Does this point of view differ from what you see in the world around you? If so, in what way?
3. Do you find that believing in God (as presented by Jesus) can make any difference to the way that you look at yourself and your abilities?

Why Don't You?

Everyone writes their name on half a page of paper. The names are put into a box (or bag). Without looking, everyone takes a turn to pick a name from the box. (If you pick your own name, put it back and choose again!) With great respect, write the name of something worthwhile that you think could be a suitable focus for that person's life. The pieces of paper are collected again and the teacher returns them to their owners. When you get back your own piece of paper, take some time to reflect on the suggestion someone has made for you. You might like to record your reaction to it in your Religion journal.

In Your Religion Journal

On a separate page, use some words and/or images to express what you think might be the main talents and abilities that God has given to you. Compare this with what someone suggested for you in the previous 'Why Don't You?' exercise.

God Invites You to Develop Your Full Potential

In giving you life, God has given you an invitation: you are invited to make the most of your future. God has given you something that has not been given to anyone else. You have your own unique identity, with your own particular mixture of abilities and talents. As you grow, you have been discovering more about your talents and abilities; you will discover even more about them in the future. However, God wants you to do more than just recognise your abilities and talents; God is also inviting you to develop them. For God, it's not a question of how much ability or how many gifts you have. Remember, the third character in the Parable of the Talents was not criticised for having less than the others; he was judged for making no effort to do anything with what he had. The real issue as far as God is concerned is this: are you doing your best with what you have been given? The Holy Spirit of God is with you, inspiring you, encouraging you and calling you to make the most of yourself and your future. If you respond to this personal invitation to do your best with what you have received from God, you will develop yourself to your full potential. You will become not only what God wants you to be; you will also find that you have become what you want to be.

A time to pray

Teacher

God has made us individual and unique. In the way God made each one, there is something that will never be repeated. So, we take some time to be more aware of God with us and we ask God to help us to be all that we can be.

To help us, we will use the phrase: '**God, you call me and you want me to be fully alive.**'

Before we begin, we become quiet and still. We sit up straight with our feet on the floor and with our hands resting gently before us. We close our eyes. To help us create a space for quiet and peace, we set aside any troubles or worries we may have and we place them in God's keeping. (Pause)

Now, we focus on our breathing. Keeping our eyes closed, and breathing gently in, we focus on the words: '**God, you call me and you want me...**' (Pause) On the out-breath, we focus on the words: '**...to be fully alive.**' (Pause)

The teacher may repeat the phrase several times, in rhythm with your breathing, to help you to focus on the prayer. When the time for praying is coming to an end, the teacher may conclude:

Before we finish, take a moment of complete silence in yourself to allow God to communicate with you and to remind you that you are special. (Pause) Take a final moment to give thanks to God. (Pause) When you are ready, open your eyes once again and stretch...

The Beatitudes

Term 1, Lesson 10

In the last lesson, you saw how God invites each person to fulfil their potential and to become fully alive. This lesson continues this theme and, through Jesus' teaching on the Beatitudes, further explores what God considers important for a person to be and to become.

What Does God Want Us to Be?

People haven't always agreed about the best way to live. Some people have suited themselves and based their lives on selfish attitudes, while others have suggested a different way. In particular, Jesus taught a set of attitudes and he told people that these are the attitudes that God invites everyone to adopt. You will find these attitudes in the Sermon on the Mount (see Matthew 5-7). Jesus began the 'Sermon' by listing out a particular set of attitudes that have since come to be known as the Beatitudes. Jesus said that these attitudes are specially blessed by God; God promises a special blessing to anyone who lives by these attitudes and the values that go with them. The contents of the list may surprise you. Here's what Jesus said:

God blesses those people who depend only on God.

They belong to the kingdom of heaven!

God blesses those people who are gentle.

The earth will belong to them!

God blesses those people who grieve.

They will find comfort!

God blesses those people who hunger and thirst
for what is right.

They will be given what they want!

God blesses those people who are merciful.

They will be treated with mercy!

God blesses those people whose hearts are pure.

They will see God!

God blesses those people who make peace.

They will be called God's children!

God blesses those people who are treated badly
for doing right.

They belong to the kingdom of heaven.

God will bless you when people insult you,
mistreat you and tell all kinds of evil lies about
you because of me. Be happy and excited! You will
have a great reward in heaven. People did these
same things to the prophets who lived long ago.

(Adapted from Matthew 5:1-12)



Why Don't You?

Get into groups of four or five and discuss the following attitudes to life:

1. 'Money, success and power are the only things that matter.'
2. 'Always cast the first stone.'
3. 'An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.'
4. 'I'm alright Jack!'
5. 'I'm always right.'
6. 'Big boys/girls don't cry.'
7. 'Look after number one.'

Write a short paragraph describing the kind of person you would be if you were to live by the above set of attitudes.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

In Your Religion Journal

Choose *one* of the following:

- Find the text of the Beatitudes in your Bible (Matthew 5:1-12). Copy it into your journal and decorate it.
- Which of the Beatitudes do you connect with most? Illustrate it in your own way. (You might like to include images from magazines or other places.)

Are these the people that you would consider blessed? Perhaps yes, perhaps no. However, Jesus makes one thing clear: God's values and standards can be radically different from the values and standards we sometimes choose. God is a friend in a way that is different from the way we might be a friend.

In the table below, you will find a more detailed explanation of the Beatitudes and what they mean, and what they say about the things that God values, i.e. what God holds dear and considers important.

LOOKING AT THE BEATITUDES MORE CLOSELY

JESUS SAYS THAT GOD BLESSES...	IN OTHER WORDS GOD BLESSES...	THIS SUGGESTS THAT GOD VALUES...
People who depend on God	People who know they don't have all the answers; people who are aware of God in their lives	Us and the connection we have with God
People who are gentle	People who treat others with kindness; people who treat the earth with respect	Gentleness Being kind-hearted Compassion
People who grieve	People who are mourning the loss of someone they love	Friendships and relationships – and will restore them in heaven
People who hunger and thirst for what is right	People who strive to make life fair; people who won't settle for inequality	Justice Equality
People who are merciful	People who don't take revenge; people who forgive and give others a fair chance to change	Mercy Forgiveness
People whose hearts are pure	People who are honourable; people who don't take advantage of others	Right living Thinking properly about others
People who make peace	People who work to end war, conflict and division; people who aim to unite others	Unity Peace Peacemaking
People who are treated badly for doing right	People for whom others make trouble because they do the right thing	Truth Honesty Fair play
People who are abused for following Jesus	People who live like Jesus, who see life as Jesus did and who trust God's promises	What Jesus taught Our love for Jesus Our respect for Jesus

A time to pray: Reflecting on the Beatitudes

Sign of the Cross

- Teacher** What Jesus says is not always what we say. Nor is it always what we want. Sometimes there's a gap between what God wants and what we want. We remember that in our reflection now.
- Reader 1** Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who depend only on God. They belong to the kingdom of heaven.'
- Reader 2** Yet sometimes people think, 'Money, success and power: these are what matter in life.' *(Pause)*
- Reader 3** God, you invite us to be our true selves and not to depend on anything to give us false confidence.
- All** God, help us to trust in you.
- Reader 1** Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who are gentle; the earth belongs to them.'
- Reader 2** Yet sometimes people say, 'Take advantage of every situation, even if others lose out.' *(Pause)*
- Reader 3** God, you invite us to be gentle with others and to respect the earth.
- All** God, help us to be caring and kind.
- Reader 1** Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who grieve. They will find comfort.'
- Reader 2** Yet sometimes people say, 'Be tough! Hide your tears.' *(Pause)*
- Reader 3** God, you invite us to enter into life, even when it is painful.
- All** God, send us the help and comfort we need.
- Reader 1** Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for what is right. They will be given what they want.'
- Reader 2** Yet sometimes people say, 'Why should I care about anyone else but me?' *(Pause)*
- Reader 3** God, you invite us to be concerned about justice and fair play.
- All** God, keep us true to what is just and right.
- Reader 1** Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who are merciful. They will be treated with mercy.'
- Reader 2** Yet sometimes people say, 'Be tough with others, especially when they go wrong or make a mistake.' *(Pause)*
- Reader 3** God, you invite us to make allowances and to give others a chance.
- All** God, make us more tolerant and understanding.
- Reader 1** Jesus says, 'Blessed are those whose hearts are pure. They will see God.'
- Reader 2** Yet sometimes people say, 'Be casual. It's okay to use others to get what we want.' *(Pause)*
- Reader 3** God, you invite us to be noble and to appreciate the people in our lives.
- All** God, help us to do what is decent and right.
- Reader 1** Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who make peace. They will be called God's children.'
- Reader 2** Yet sometimes people say, 'Revenge is sweet. I'll get my own back.' *(Pause)*
- Reader 3** God, you invite us to let go of our resentment, our grudges and our fear.
- All** God, help us to make friends and to make peace.
- Reader 1** Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who are treated badly for doing right. They belong to the kingdom of heaven.'
- Reader 2** Yet sometimes people say, 'Don't stand up for others. It's only trouble.' *(Pause)*
- Reader 3** God, you invite us to be true to what we know to be right, even if it makes us unpopular or makes us suffer.
- All** God, keep us loyal to what is true and right.
- Reader 1** Jesus says, 'Blessed are those who are insulted and mistreated because of me. They will have great reward in heaven.'
- Reader 2** Yet sometimes people say, 'I'll keep my religion private. I'll avoid any hassle.' *(Pause)*
- Reader 3** God, you invite us to follow Jesus even when others ignore him and what he says.
- All** God, help us to believe in Jesus and to honour him.

Sign of the Cross

Talking Points

1. Instead of God, who or what might people choose to rely on? What effect might this have on their future?
2. Why do you think Jesus might say that God blesses those who grieve?
3. Give some examples from everyday life of each of the following: being gentle, being merciful, being pure in heart, being a peacemaker. How easy or otherwise is it to live like this? What sort of person might you become if you lived in these ways?
4. Can you remember a time when someone you know of was treated badly for doing what was right? What does Jesus have to say about them?
5. Can you think of examples of times when what Jesus said in the Beatitudes applied to himself?

Why Don't You?

- In groups, prepare a Power Point presentation on one or more of the Beatitudes. Each group might focus on one single 'Beatitude' and find images to go with it. Once it's finished, you might like to run it with quiet music.
- As well as reading the version of the Beatitudes (Matthew 5:1-12) given here, read the versions given in other Bibles. What differences do you notice? Do you like one version more than any other? If so, why?

Why Don't You?

Get into groups of four or five and prepare a role-play about a situation where a person is faced with the choice to live one of the Beatitudes.

Talking Points

1. What would you say are your top three values? See if you can suggest where you might have got these values and why you might believe in them now.
2. If someone asked you to list what God values, what answer would you give? (Hint: Look back at the previous lesson on the Beatitudes.)
3. What difference (if any) might knowing your own values make to you?
4. Jesus had particular values. Can you think of any times when people saw his values at work in the choices he made? (Hint: Recall from last year the story of the man whose hand was paralysed; see *Fully Alive 2*, pages 68-72.)

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

'ME' Folder

Based on the answers you gave to the bullet-point questions opposite, make a note of the values that matter to you and why.

Knowing My Values

You are free to choose your future. Many things will influence the choices you make about your future. As you saw in the last lesson, we have another name for one of these influences: we call them 'values'. Values are ideals that you believe in and hold dear. You might like to begin by checking out your values in the table below.

What I Value Most in My Life?

Look at the table below and think about the ten values that are most important to you. List these in your Religion journal. If you wish, you may include other values that are not listed. However, you may only consider something a true value of yours if you can answer 'yes' to ALL the following questions in relation to that value:

- Is this something that's important to you?
- Do you feel good about this being important to you?
- Would you feel good if people you respect knew that this was important to you?
- Have you ever done anything that indicates that this is important to you?
- Is this something you would stand by even if others made fun of you for it?
- Does this fit in with your vision of who you are?

Adventure	Freedom	Friendship with God	Independence
Ambition	Friendship	Integrity	People
Creativity	Honesty	Love	Recognition
Challenge	Health	Learning	Power
Family	Humour	Money	Respect
Fun	Success	Security	Travel
Trust	Equality	Environment	Life

A time to pray

Note: St Paul used the phrase 'truly worthwhile'. Before the prayertime, it might be good to take a moment as a group to name just a few things that fit into this category.

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Today we listen to the values that St Paul recommended to his friends in his final years.

Reader

A reading from the letter of St Paul to the Philippians (*Philippians 4:4-9*). Always be glad because of the Lord! I will say it again: be glad. Always be gentle with others. The Lord will soon be here. Don't worry about anything, but pray about everything. With thankful hearts, offer up your prayers and requests to God. Then, because you belong to Christ Jesus, God will bless you with peace. Finally my friends, keep your minds on whatever is true, pure, right, holy, friendly and proper. Don't ever stop thinking about what is truly worthwhile and worthy of praise. You know the teachings I gave you, and you know what you heard me say and saw me do. So follow my example. And God, who gives peace, will be with you.

Teacher

Take a quiet moment to recall something truly worthwhile and worthy of praise. Quietly give praise to God for it.

Sign of the Cross

Jesus and his Values

Jesus never forgot that he had been sent by his Father to show God's love to the world. As a result, Jesus was very clear about his values. He loved and respected people, especially those who were in special need and those who were rejected by others. However, this does not mean that living his values (i.e. making choices in line with his values) was always easy for Jesus. Standing up for others meant criticising and facing up to the authorities of those times, especially the Pharisees, the scribes and the Sadducees. On Good Friday, Jesus was put to a cruel death because he would not back down from living his values. However, on Easter Sunday, God raised Jesus to new life and, in so doing, God backed the values that Jesus lived.



So, now you know more about

GUIDELINES FOR MAKING GOOD CHOICES

Love God.

Respect God's name.

Pray.

Respect myself.

Respect others.

Be truthful.

Be honest.

Share with others.

Wish everybody well.

In Your Religion Journal

Do **ONE** (only) of the following options:

- Write a classified ad (or do a poster) for the school newspaper, looking for a companion to join you at weekends to do some activity you really like. Describe yourself well enough so that people will know whether or not they would want to spend time with you. What does your ad tell you about how you see yourself and your values?
- Write (or do an illustration) about a time when either you or somebody else did something that conflicted with your values. How did it happen? How did it make you feel? Did you make any changes or decisions based on that experience? What did you learn from it?
- Imagine that two hundred years from now your great grandchildren find an article about you in an encyclopaedia. (Reflect on the following questions: What do you think the article might say about you? What kind of person were you? What did you do with your life? Why are you interesting enough to be in the encyclopaedia?) Either write the article (in no more than 300 words) or draw a picture to go with such an article. In each case, at the end list the values by which you lived.

Talking Points

1. Examine the list of guidelines for right choices (opposite). Are there any others you think should be added to the list?
2. For each guideline mentioned (or, alternatively, for each of the Ten Commandments), identify a value it represents, give an example of how to live it and give an example of something that would tempt a person away from living it.

Why Don't You?

In groups, review the following imaginary situations. In each situation, values are in conflict. Name those values and report back your answers to the whole class.

- You are doing poorly in Maths and your parents/guardians are putting pressure on you to get a higher grade. The day before the final exam, somebody steals a copy of the exam paper and offers to let you see it. You've never been a cheater.
- You love being on the team. After practice one evening, you see a team-mate deliberately damage a teacher's car. The coach knows you saw it happen and threatens to kick you off the team unless you name the guilty person. You've never told on anybody before.
- A friend swears you to secrecy and then tells you she's going to run away from home. You've always believed in keeping a secret.

After the reporting back, take some time to reflect on what you have said and heard or, alternatively, answer the following questions in the light of what has been discussed:

1. Do people find it difficult to live by their values all the time? Can you offer any suggestions as to why this might be?
2. In each case above, suggest some things that you might be afraid of if you were in that situation. How might they influence your final choice?

Staying True To My Values

what your values are. You have recalled what God values too. Staying true to these values is not always easy.

Sometimes, as you will see in this lesson, it's easier to make choices based on different values. You might begin with the 'Why Don't You?'. (Alternatively, you might begin with the 'Tricky Situations' activity on page 37.)

Who Needs Whom?

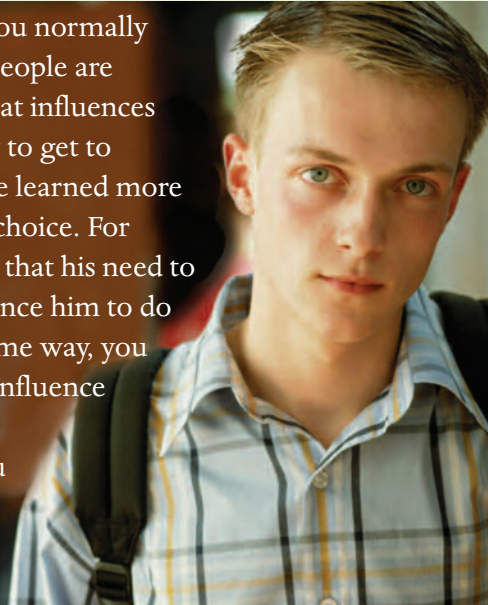
'What were you thinking of?' said Mr Kilbride to Brian as he waited in the office for his mother to collect him to take him to the hospital. Brian knew she would be furious. 'But they needed another player,' he said. 'The specialist at the hospital told you not to play again for at least three months,' Mr Kilbride reminded him. 'I know,' said Brian, feeling embarrassed. 'And yet you still went out and played anyway after just two!' Brian had no answer. It seemed so stupid, now that he'd damaged the same ankle again. From the pain, he reckoned it was another case of torn ligaments. Even though he was told not to, he had strapped up his ankle and tried to play a game. 'What's going on here, Brian?' asked the teacher. 'You get a serious injury. You're told to rest it. Yet you have to go and do something stupid! What was so important about the game that you had to risk your ankle? Do you not care that you could be left with permanent damage?' Brian had no explanation. At least there was no explanation that he could put into words. 'But Sir, they said I could lose my place if I didn't get back soon.' 'Listen to yourself Brian! Perhaps you need them more than they need you!' replied Mr Kilbride.



Living Your Values When You Know You're Under Pressure

At home, Brian probably looked after himself as his family might wish. Yet, when Brian was with his friends, other values seemed to take over. His need to belong to the team seemed to take over from everything else. Sometimes, it may be like that for you. You might live by certain values when you're with your family, but in other circumstances you

may find yourself doing what you normally would not choose to do. Most people are not fully aware of everything that influences them. That's why it's important to get to know yourself. Brian might have learned more about himself as a result of his choice. For instance, he might have learned that his need to belong to the team might influence him to do something dangerous. In the same way, you can learn about the things that influence you when you reflect on your choices. Doing this can help you to become more free to choose in line with the values that matter to you: values such as



honesty, fairness, effort, standing up for others, respecting a person's good name, equality, caring for the environment and so on. God has given you the freedom. Sometimes, you will make wrong choices. But God wants you to grow in freedom to make right choices.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

As we come to our time of prayer, we settle ourselves. We sit comfortably in an upright position. We take a moment to become quiet and still. (Pause)

Now, pick out a value that is important to you today. (Pause)

Recall a time when you were tempted not to live this value. (Pause)

Take a moment to ask God to help you to live it, despite any pressure to do otherwise. (Pause)

Together we pray:

All

Holy Spirit, I want to do what is right.

Help me.

Holy Spirit, I want to live like Jesus.

Guide me.

Holy Spirit, I want to pray like Jesus.

Teach me. Amen.

Sign of the Cross

Talking Points

1. Why do you think Brian might have let himself be pressured into playing that game? (Remember: Brian had heard the specialist explicitly tell him not to play a game for three months.)
2. List some of the values at stake in this scenario.
3. Which of these values would Brian have followed at home? Which of these values did Brian go with when he was with his friends?
4. What do you think the teacher meant by saying: 'Perhaps you need them more than they need you!'
5. To what extent would you say that Brian was conscious (aware) of his motivation?

Talking Points

1. 'Within the school I behave one way; at home I behave another way; with my friends I'm different.' How realistic is this quotation? Do you think it is possible for someone to behave differently in different situations? Suggest some examples. Do you think a person could be like this without being fully aware of it?
2. How might that affect such a person's ability to live by their values? Give an example to support your answer.

'ME' Folder

Add a piece to your folder, beginning with: 'I find it hard to live by my values when...'

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Talking Points

1. There are times when you might wrongly put friendship before honesty, or greed before fairness, or when you might seek revenge instead of making peace. Can you think of any more examples?
2. There have been many people who stood for particular values at great personal cost, e.g. Oscar Romero, Martin Luther King. Can you think of any others?
3. Give an example of how your faith might reinforce a particular value that you hold dear?

Why Don't You?

- As a class, list the most serious pressures you are feeling at this time. Discuss how these pressures affect your ability to stay true to your values.
- Together, create a collage illustrating the main pressures that face teenagers today.

In your Religion Journal

You might like to do *one* of the following:

- Write about a time when you were having a problem. Describe the problem and the pressure you felt you were under. What did you do/not do to resolve the situation? Did you try to work it out on your own or did you reach out for help? Did you compromise your values or were you able to stay true to them? Did you become aware of something that motivated you?
- Write a letter for your future son or daughter to read when they reach the age you are now. Tell them about any pressure(s) that you experience. Also, tell them about the two or three most important values you hold.

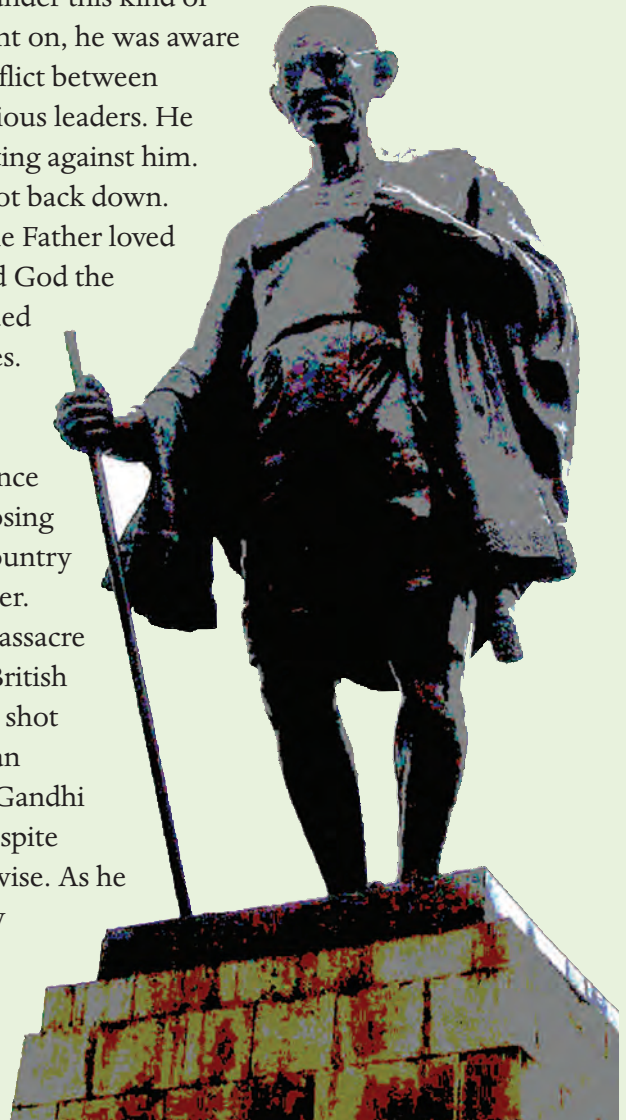
People Who Lived by Good Values

Even if you could be fully aware of all the influences in your life, even if you could know everything that pulled you away from your values, that wouldn't mean that you would find life easy or that you would have no problems living your values. Indeed, you could find yourself under a lot of pressure to let go of your values.

Jesus found himself under this kind of pressure. As time went on, he was aware of the increasing conflict between himself and the religious leaders. He knew they were plotting against him. However, Jesus did not back down. He knew that God the Father loved him and that he loved God the Father. So he continued to live by God's values.

Mahatma Gandhi believed in non-violence as the means of opposing the presence in his country of an occupying power. After the Amritsar Massacre in April 1919, when British Indian Army soldiers shot dead 379 civilians at an unarmed gathering, Gandhi stuck to his beliefs despite pressure to do otherwise. As he said, 'There are many causes that I am prepared to die for, but no causes that I am prepared to kill for.' He also said, 'When I despair, I remember that all through history the way of truth and love has always won. There have been tyrants and murderers and for a time they seem invincible, but, in the end, they always fall – think of it, always.'

Sr Dorothy Stang continued to support the work of the small farmers who protected the rainforests in Brazil, despite the threats to her life. In February 2005,



she was shot dead at point-blank range by hitmen hired by loggers who were trying to evict the farmers and cut the trees.

Your religious faith can support you in choosing to live by your beliefs. If you, for example, believe that God gave you life and loves you, then you will have greater strength in making difficult choices.

Tricky Situations...

Get into groups and role-play each of the scenarios listed below. In each scenario, there are three roles:

- the friend with a plan or a proposal;
- the other friend who objects;
- others in the group (this role is played by the rest of the group).

The person who objects has two purposes:

- to refuse to do what is suggested;
- to persuade the others in the group against it too (perhaps by helping them to become more aware of their motivation).

So here are the four 'tricky' situations:

1. One good friend wants to persuade another to join him/her in experimenting with a drug (alcohol or otherwise).
2. One friend is planning a cruel practical joke on someone in the class and another friend in the group is opposed to this prank.
3. One of the group has organised a party where there will be no adult supervision. Another friend objects because their parents/guardians don't allow them to go to unsupervised events.
4. Several classmates are in a supermarket. One of them puts alcohol in the basket and starts to take it to the checkout where another friend is working. However, the friend working at the checkout sees what is about to happen and takes a break to make clear their objections.

Each group takes a minute to get ready. Then for two or three minutes (but no more), act out the role-play for the rest of the class. At that point, freeze the role-play. The class can pick out some of the 'characters' to address them, starting as follows: 'Well, I'll tell you what's going through my head right now...' (Make sure that you stay 'in character' while you speak.)

Talking Points

1. List some of the values at stake on each side in each role-play. In each case, list the values that conflict with each other. Name any values that surface in all the role-plays.
2. 'It's easy to talk about values; it's harder to live by them.' Discuss this topic, with reference to the role-plays.
3. Do you think there might be times when the experience of conflicting values might be too much for a young person to handle alone? If so, give some examples and suggest a person or agency that might offer appropriate help in such circumstances.
4. What might help you to live your values at times when you are under pressure to do otherwise? List some suggestions.

Why Don't You?

Do one (or more) of the following:

- (a) Research one of the following: Jesus, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Oscar Romero, Rosa Parks, Nelson Mandela, Bono (Paul Hewson), Kieran Creagh, Michael Courtney, Joan Sawyer, Jean Donovan, Dorothy Stang. In their lives, what central values did/does this person hold dear? Perhaps you could put together a short presentation on this person's life and values and share it with the class.
- (b) Make a poster about living your values. You might use one of the following slogans or you might like to invent your own:
 - Know your values and stay true to them.
 - Make your own choices; don't just go along with the crowd.
 - Respect yourself.
 - Remember your goals and live them.
- (c) Debate the following statement: 'When you believe strongly in something, you can't just be pushed whichever way the wind blows.'

My Choices Affect My Future

In the previous two lessons, you have been reflecting on what happens before you make a choice. You have become more aware of the values that you have and of how they influence your choices. You are aware too that your religious faith can support you in living out your values: God is inviting you to make good choices. This lesson moves on to reflect on what happens after you carry out your choice. The choices you make can have ‘consequences’: they can affect your future and the future of others. You will see this in the story below, but you might like to begin with the ‘Why Don’t You?’.

Why Don’t You?

Get into groups of four or five and list some of the choices you (or a student like you) might have made so far today: walking to school instead of taking the bus; skipping breakfast for some extra time in bed; copying homework; cheating on a test, etc. As a group, consider the following questions in relation to your choices:

1. What influenced your choice?
2. Are any of the choices made by the people in your group ‘moral’ choices? If so, identify these. (Hint: A choice is MORAL when it is a choice between good and bad, between right and wrong.)
3. Later on in the day, how might you feel about such choices?

Nick Leeson Made Choices...

Within a year of going to the Singapore branch of Barings Bank, young Nick Leeson sorted out a one-hundred-million-pound problem. Not only that, he also made another ten million pounds – ten per cent of the bank’s entire profit that year. No wonder he became their superstar! Bank officials and bosses gave him complete freedom in his work. Nick and his wife Lisa had everything: £50,000 basic salary plus bonuses up to £150,000, weekends in exotic places, a smart apartment and frequent parties. Nick and Lisa were very much in love.



At work, Nick was never one for caution: he went with his gut feeling rather than taking carefully worked-out choices. In 1994, his luck began to run out and the market finances did not go the way he expected. He began to lose the bank’s money: hundreds of millions of pounds. Nick used a secret internal bank account to hide the losses and he continued to trade with money borrowed elsewhere. He kept trying for a miracle deal.

But he had not counted on what happened next. On 17 January 1995, a huge earthquake devastated the Japanese city of Kobe. The stock market index plummeted. Nick used even more borrowed money to make deals for the bank, hoping to make profits. Finally, the losses were too huge to hide any more. Nick Leeson and his wife went on the run. They were arrested in Germany. The final extent of the money he had squandered was revealed: £830 million. (To get an idea of how much that is in today's money, double the amount for every seven years since 1995.) Nick was jailed and Barings Bank, originally founded in 1762, closed. He was released from prison in December 1999, homeless and penniless. He had serious health problems and he had separated from his wife. (Probably, further results of stress brought on by his choices!)

Terms you met previously...

VALUES:

The ideals that you believe in and hold dear.

MORALITY:

Your morality is the basis on which you make moral choices.

MORAL VISION:

Your sense of right and wrong; the overall expression of your values.

Choices, Consequences and Morality

Bad moral choices can lead to bad consequences. In Nick Leeson's case, the consequences are obvious: loss of employment, loss of earnings, loss of his home, loss of love in his life. Nick Leeson suffered. So also did those people connected with Barings Bank, e.g. the employees and their families (who lost jobs and incomes), the account holders, the businesses connected with the bank, and those who invested money in the bank. In this case, many people suffered as a result of one person's bad moral choices. Some of those people will suffer the consequences of Nick Leeson's choices for the rest of their lives.

Suppose, by some miracle, Nick Leeson had been able to fix his problems without being caught. Would that mean that he had done nothing wrong? Would that make what he did all right? The answer is 'no'. Even if he had never been caught, Nick Leeson was most dishonest: he took enormous risks without telling his employers. He went to great lengths to conceal his dishonesty. Bad consequences might alert us that something is wrong, but consequences alone are not the measure of how wrong a choice might be. Last year, you learned that the rightness or wrongness of a choice is measured by three things: (1) the action taken; (2) the intention of the person(s) taking that action; (3) the circumstances in which that action was taken. (For more on this: see *Fully Alive* 2, page 66.)

Nick Leeson's morality focused only on consequences: if he could get away with it, then it was all right as far as he was concerned. Nick Leeson put wealth, earnings and profit before other values, such as marriage, friendship, truth and his good name. In the same situation, some people would have done the same, but many others would not. You become a

Talking Points

1. List the values held by Nick Leeson that are apparent in the story and say how these values influenced the choices he made?
2. Using this story (or examples from life), illustrate when a choice is a moral choice.
3. How would you describe Nick Leeson's morality at the time of the story? (Hint: Check the box opposite for a definition of 'morality'.)

Talking Points

1. 'Choices lead to consequences (results).' Do you think that the Nick Leeson story supports this statement? If so, in what way? Give some examples from life of the truth or otherwise of this statement.
2. Nick Leeson failed to escape the consequences (results) of his choices. Give some examples from life of other people who have failed to escape the consequences of their choices.
3. Nick Leeson tried to hide and run away from the consequences of his choices. List some consequences from which someone of your age might try to escape? In each instance, see if you can suggest another course of action.
4. Is it right to say: 'No consequences, no morality'?
5. Bad consequences let us know that something is wrong. Is the opposite true? Do good consequences necessarily mean that something is right? Can you think of the saying that sums up this approach? (Hint: It begins, 'The end...')

Why Don't You?

Design a poster or wall chart under the title 'Choices Lead to Consequences'. Focus on the choices (both good and bad) that face someone of your age and the consequences that can result from those choices. You might like to display your work somewhere in the school, e.g. the canteen or diningroom.

Talking Point

How would you go about finding out the kind of person God wants you to become? Would you expect to find an instant answer to this matter? Why?/Why not?

In Your Religion Journal

Consider the following theme: 'What God wants for me at this time.' Take some time to reflect on what God might be inviting you to become. It might be about a career or life-choice; it might be something to do with the way you treat someone else. Through words or images, illustrate what you become aware of.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

'ME' Folder

Add a piece to your folder on the following theme: 'Choices I am making now that affect my future.'

particular sort of person when you focus only on consequences: not the kind of person that God (or anyone who truly loved you) would want you to be.

The Future that God has in Mind for Us

Jesus was quite clear that God has a future in mind for people. The friends of Jesus were so delighted on Easter Sunday because they saw the first glimpse of that future in the risen Jesus. However, while God guarantees a future to everyone, there is something about that future that people have to work at for themselves. God has given you the gift of freedom, but how will you use it? How will you respond to God's invitation? What sort of person will you become? That depends on how you use your freedom to choose.

If you sin, if you make selfish or hurtful choices that go against God, then you move away from being the person God would want you to be. If you make an effort to listen to God through quiet time and prayer, if you listen to your conscience, if you listen to the wisdom of the Christian community, then you are much more likely to be aware of the direction in which God invites you to go, and your life will develop in that direction. Earlier, you saw how, in the Beatitudes, Jesus outlined the things God values. God will lead you gradually, and will give you the strength, to take up the challenge to become a person who is fully alive.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Listen to St Paul's advice about good choices in his letter to the Colossians.

Reader (Colossians 3:12-17)

God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek and patient. Put up with each other and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you. Love is more important than anything else. It is what ties everything completely together. Each one of you is part of the body of Christ, and you were chosen to live together in peace. So let the peace that comes from Christ control your thoughts. And be grateful. Let the message about Christ completely fill your lives, while you use all your wisdom to teach and instruct each other. With thankful hearts, sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs to God. Whatever you say or do should be done in the name of the Lord Jesus, as you give thanks to God the Father because of him.

All

Holy Spirit, I want to do what is right. Help me.

Holy Spirit, I want to live like Jesus. Guide me.

Holy Spirit, I want to pray like Jesus. Teach me. Amen.

Sign of the Cross

What Worth Do Others Have?

Term 1, Lesson 14

In recent lessons, you have had an opportunity to think about yourself: who you are, who you want to become and the values that you hold dear. You've also taken some time to look at yourself from God's point of view: you are valuable to God, both for who you are now and for who you wish to become in the future. Your hoping, searching, growing and planning matter not only to you; they matter to God too. Now that you have considered your own value and worth, this lesson invites you to move on to consider the value and worth of others. You might like to begin with the 'Why Don't You?'.

Lee's Story

My name is Lee and I am Chinese. My mum and dad run their own Chinese restaurant in Northern Ireland. We moved here from Beijing last summer. We were all really excited to come to a new country to make a fresh start. I began in a new school in September and I am in Year Ten. So far, school has been mostly good and I have made some friends. But from the day I started school here, there were people who

sniggered at me. Anyone can understand insults; they're clear enough without any words. You know when you're being jeered at, even if you don't understand a word. You know when you're being left out. I knew they were calling me names and treating me like a fool when I didn't understand their jokes. Then there were others in the class who just ignored me and pretended I didn't exist.

It didn't end there. I thought I could leave it behind when I got home, but I couldn't. At the end of November, our home was petrol-bombed. My mum was terrified – she cried for a week. There were crude



Why Don't You?

Suppose by some misfortune you end up trapped on an island. In groups, agree on which five of the following you would choose to have with you on the island:

- a top fashion-model;
- a hunter who speaks no English;
- the top goal-scorer in the Football League;
- a rabbi;
- an elderly person;
- a famous writer;
- a farmer;
- the farmer's husband;
- their ten-year-old son;
- your best friend;
- a fire-fighter;
- a government agent who is trained and armed.

Then do the following:

1. State whether or not you liked doing this exercise and explain why.
2. Explain the basis for any choices you may have made on the above.
3. Name some things that determine the way you react to others in ordinary, everyday life (i.e. not in such an extreme situation). List these things. When you've finished your list, evaluate it.

Talking Points

1. What do you think of the way that Lee and his family were treated? Explain your answer.
2. As best you can, describe the way of thinking that might lead people to mistreat someone like Lee. Can you see their reasons for behaving like this? Would you agree with them? Why?/Why not? Can you offer any suggestions for arguments against this way of thinking?
3. Most people were sympathetic to Lee and his parents. What does this mean? Suppose you asked one of the people who were sympathetic to explain why they felt this way, what do you imagine they might say?
4. What do you think motivates someone to abuse or mistreat another person?
5. Some people might resent a family like Lee's moving into their area, and feel such mistreatment is justified. What might you say to such people?

Why Don't You?

Suppose you were in the same class as Lee and overheard someone verbally abusing him, what might you say to such a person? Act out how the conversation might proceed between you and the other person.

Talking Points

1. If you did the 'Why Don't You?' at the start of this lesson, look back now at what you said about the people you rejected. How does that compare with the statement: 'No person can be considered unimportant'?
2. How might a person feel when others do or say things to make them feel unimportant?
3. Without referring to God or religion, can you suggest some ways of completing the following sentence: 'All people are valuable because...'

In Your Religion Journal

Using words or images, illustrate the following sentence: 'All people are valuable.' You might like to write a few words underneath to sum up what you believe about this.

messages of racial abuse smeared on the windows of the restaurant. I just don't understand why people do this sort of thing. We're just an ordinary, hard-working family, trying to get on in life. Most people in the area were also shocked by the attack and were very sympathetic to my parents. Why is it that some people think they can mistreat others just because they're different in some way: different colour, race, nationality, religion or whatever? Why can't they just leave us to live in peace? Deep down, are we not all the same?

Human Beings Are Valuable

Over the past number of lessons, you have had an opportunity to re-explore your sense of identity (i.e. who you are) and your hopes and the direction of your life (i.e. who you want to become). Hopefully, you have a stronger sense of self-respect and a stronger sense of being alive.

You matter: you have an identity, a history; you have a place in your home, in your school and in your community. You have a future: you have hopes, dreams and plans. No matter what might happen to you in life, or no matter how others may try to offend you, you will always be valuable. Even if others don't appreciate you, you will always have something to give to life, to the earth and to those around you.

One of the most painful things that a person can experience is not to matter, to be considered unimportant, to be ignored, to be neglected. People can feel deep hurt when others disregard their hopes and dreams, as happened to Lee (in the story above). Through such experiences, a person can realise what a terrible thing it is to be devalued by others. If you don't deserve to be treated in this way, then neither do other people. There is a sense in which everyone matters. If one matters, then everyone matters. No person on the face of the earth can be considered unimportant. And this is true regardless of gifts, abilities, age, nationality or race, possessions, money, job, position in society or family connections.



Human Dignity: Gift of God

The story of Creation in the book of Genesis describes how God values human beings. The first chapter of Genesis tells how only human beings are made in the image and likeness of God: “Then God said, “And now we will make humans and they will be like us and resemble us...”’ (Genesis 1:26).

Last year, you reflected on what it means to say that people are made in the image and likeness of God. You learned that being made in God’s image and likeness is an invitation to three things: (1) to respect the world; (2) to share in the work of creation and of making the world a good place; (3) to respect yourself and to respect every other person.

There is a special phrase that is used to sum up the value and worth of each person: human dignity. The phrase ‘human dignity’ also sums up the basis of the way God sees us and the way God calls us to treat others and to treat ourselves. The birth of Jesus, who is God’s Word made human, further emphasises the dignity of being human. Because people have ‘human dignity’, they may not be disrespected, they must be treated fairly, and there is no basis for saying that one person is more valuable than another. For Christians in particular, the phrase ‘human dignity’ means that each person, even before being born, has a God-given value that is above every other thing.

A time to pray

Note: Some quiet background music might be played while one person reads this prayer aloud slowly. Allow some silent times at the suggested pauses.

Prayer of Thanks

God, you have given life to the world.

You have given life to me.

I thank you. (Pause)

Despite all the things that annoy me,
there are many times when I can feel the wonder of being alive.

Despite bad days when I am unhappy,
despite days when I am unsure of myself,
you invite me to be open to the great adventure that is life. (Pause)

You have given me great worth:
for you, I have a value that no one can take away. (Pause)

Because you love me, you see beyond my failings;
yet you call me to be my best self.

Help me to go forward with confidence in my dignity and worth. (Pause)

And I know that when this phase of my life is ended,
you will welcome me into a new world where life goes on for ever.

Amen.

Talking Point

What do you think your religion might have to offer in a discussion of human dignity today?

Why Don't You?

Using images from magazines, newspapers and the Internet, create a collage of pictures of people. Try to include images of as many different types of people as you can. Do a banner title: ‘Human Dignity: We are made in the Image and Likeness of God.’ Underneath it you might include the phrases: ‘All Different. All Equal. All Valuable.’

One-Minute Soapbox

Take an uninterrupted minute or two to talk about a story (in the News) of human dignity being disrespected.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

‘ME’ Folder

Add a piece to your folder on the following theme: ‘Ways in which I respect my human dignity.’

God Has Blessed My Growing

In the previous lesson, you had an opportunity to reflect on human dignity and to explore your sense of the worth that each person has. You saw how that dignity arises because each person is a human being and because each person is made in the image and likeness of God. Now you will have a chance to dwell on your own dignity. God's image and likeness is embodied (made present) in you as a physical, bodily person. So this lesson invites you to reflect on the dignity of your physical, bodily self. It does so in the form of a prayertime, which focuses on the story of your physical, personal development. It recalls the processes through which you have grown, particularly now that you are entering a new stage of personal, physical development.

In Your Religion Journal

After the prayertime, you might like to take a page of your Religion journal and, under the title 'God has blessed my growing', you might like to write all or part of Psalm 139 (from the end of the prayertime).



Before you Begin

You may like to prepare the space in which you pray this prayertime. You might find it helpful to display a series of appropriate images showing the various stages of a child's development from the time it is in the womb.

You might also like to consider the use of:

- a prayer-space other than the usual classroom;
- background music;
- partially dimmed lighting;
- a lighted candle;
- anything else conducive to creating a prayerful atmosphere.



Finally, you might wish to use suitable oil (with added fragrance, if desired), as suggested during the final prayer below. If you do use such oil, the teacher may make the sign of the cross with it on your hand or forehead.

Alternatively, the oil might be passed among the group and all take a turn in honouring their physical, bodily self in this way. While this takes place, background music may be played, or the group may recite the verses taken from Psalm 139 during this activity. (Note: oil for such a use is commonly available, especially in pharmacies.)

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Our prayertime today recalls how your life began. It picks up your development from a moment some weeks after your conception: the moment when your body began to form after the meeting of sperm and ovum (egg).

Take a short while to sit comfortably upright and to settle yourself in your place. *(Pause)* Allow yourself to become quiet and still. *(Pause)* Close your eyes. *(Pause)*

Take a moment now to become more relaxed and at ease. *(Pause)* Imagine that all your problems and concerns are floating away and leaving you for the time being. *(Pause)* Now your inner space is just for you and for God, who is with you. *(Pause)* For a moment, allow God to bless you. *(Pause)*

In your imagination, let yourself be taken back in time, back past the time of your First Communion, back past the time of your first birthday, back to the time before you were born, when you were a baby in the womb. *(Pause)*

In your imagination, you find yourself in a place that is warm and comfortable, a place that is dimly lit, a place where you are completely surrounded by warm softness. You are safe and protected. You feel like you are floating: warm and secure. *(Pause)*

God blessed you then. God saw you then as you were growing in that hidden, sheltered place. *(Pause)*

Picture yourself inside that hidden, secure place. Your feet and your hands are tiny. See the folds and wrinkles on your skin. Picture yourself being able to move in that sheltered place. You can move and push. You can go head-over-heels. You can tumble and turn. Imagine it. *(Pause)*

God blessed you then. God delighted in you as you lived and moved and were alive in that hidden, sheltered place. *(Pause)*

Already, you were sensing the world outside. You were dimly aware of day and night. Vaguely, you were aware of people and their voices, singing; machines, noises and vibrations of street life; nature and the life of the countryside. Your physical features were beginning to form. Already you had your own fingernails and toenails, your own eyelashes and eyebrows, your own features, your own face. Already you were unique, different from every other baby that will ever be born. In your mind's eye, imagine what you see as you look closely at your tiny developing self. *(Pause)*

God blessed you then. God delighted in your body, so delicate yet so defined, as it grew together in the twilight of the womb. *(Pause)*

In the time that followed, the inner parts of your body developed and grew. Your lungs got ready to play their part. Then came the day of your birth. The womb that held you delivered you out into the world. Instinctively, you cried as you took your first breath. *(Pause)*

Now, everyone could see you and bless you. People wondered at you, at your face, your eyes, your nose,

your mouth, your hair, your tiny limbs. In you and in your body, God gave the world another miracle of life. *(Pause)*

From that day till now, your body works its best for you. Even now, it takes in breath; it digests your food; it produces your energy; it enables your actions. Within limits, your body can repair and renew itself in many ways: cuts, bruises, breaks, sprains and fractures can be set to rights. Focus, for a moment, on your living body, working for you here and now. *(Pause)*

God continues to bless you today. God continues to find joy in the gift of your living body. *(Pause)*

In your body and through your body, you are connected with the wonders of the world. The unique combination of the senses you have (whether for seeing or for hearing, for being aware of taste, touch or scent): through these you are aware of everything and everyone around you. In your body and through your body, you think, imagine, remember and feel. Right now in your body, you are connecting with life around you. *(Pause)*

God blesses your body today, here and now. God delights to be with you in your body as the centre of your life and awareness. *(Pause)*

A new stage has begun to unfold in the story of your growing. At a time of its own choosing, your body starts to produce hormones to trigger your new growth towards being an adult. Give thanks for the energy at work in your body, preparing you to pass on the gift of life. *(Pause)*

God has also planned this phase of your growing. One day in the future, you will be ready to pass on the gift of life that you received years ago. God is pleased to see the changes in you and in your body. *(Pause)*

Once again, as at the beginning, you are growing physically in ways that are delicate and intricate. New facets and aspects of your personality are emerging. You are reaching a new stage in your development. *(Pause)*

God has made you a physical being, reflecting God's image and likeness.

God asks you to take care of your bodily, physical self. *(Pause)*

God asks you to keep your body clean and safe and rested so as to allow your growth to continue and to progress. *(Pause)*

God asks you to protect your bodily self with due care until the time when you will be ready to work with God in the task of preparing and caring for new life. *(Pause)*

When you are ready, become aware of the room around you. Open your eyes. *(Pause)*

If oil is to be used, then, when all are ready, the teacher says the following:
Blessed are you, Lord God of all creation.

You are good to us. You have blessed us. You have made us like you.

In our human, physical selves, we bear your own image and likeness. With this oil, we reverence what you have brought to be.

With this oil, we honour our physical, bodily selves, which you have given us.

After the use of the oil, the teacher continues:

Now, together, we will pray some verses from Psalm 139:

All

You have looked deep into my heart, Lord,
and you know all about me.
You notice everything I do
and everywhere I go.

You are the one who put me
together inside my mother's body,
and I praise you
because of the wonderful way you
created me.
Everything you do is marvellous!
Of this I have no doubt.

Nothing about me is hidden from
you!

I was secretly woven together
deep in the earth below,
but with your own eyes
you saw my body being formed.

Glory be to the Father, and to the
Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now,
and ever shall be, world without
end. Amen.

Sign of the Cross

Why Don't You?

Take a moment to consider your reaction to having been part of this prayertime and share it with the group. You might like to include something on this in your 'ME' folder.

A Special Development

At some point during these years of your life, you reach puberty. This is the time when your body begins to change significantly. It develops new functions and abilities. Some of these are visible; some remain unseen. These changes lead to your development as a woman or a man. In this lesson, you will have an opportunity to reflect on this aspect of yourself and to appreciate your development as a wonderful gift from God.

Puberty Brings Changes in Your Body

No one can predict when puberty will begin, but there is no avoiding it. As sure as day follows night, your body begins to change, and these changes are real, not imaginary. Following puberty, boys start to become men: they become stronger and they also start to grow facial hair. From that point, girls also start to develop physically: for instance, their pelvis begins to broaden. Such outer changes are signs of a special development inside the body. What is this change? Special glands have begun to produce hormones. Your body works properly because of different 'glands': one type of gland produces tears to keep the surface of your eye free from dust; another type of gland produces saliva so that you can swallow. Puberty starts because certain glands begin to work for the first time in your body. These glands start to produce chemicals called 'hormones', which enter your bloodstream and flow all through your body.

Talking Points

1. How might you express the connection between God and the changes in your body as described here?
2. List some attitudes that people might have in relation to the onset of puberty. Which ones are most helpful?



In the female body, these glands are called 'ovaries'. They are situated inside the body, near the womb. They produce the hormone 'oestrogen', which gives a female body its distinctive characteristics, making it different from the body of a man. The ovaries also produce 'progesterone', which helps to prepare the womb in the work of helping a baby to grow. In the male body, the glands that produce hormones are called 'testes' or testicles. There are two of these and they are contained in a pouch of skin called the scrotum, which is between the legs. They produce 'testosterone', which gives the male body its special characteristics. These glands also produce the makings of human life. The ovaries in a woman produce 'life cells', called 'ova' or 'eggs'. The male testicles produce 'sperm' or 'semen'. When a single sperm from the man joins together with a single 'life cell' or 'egg' from the woman, a new human life begins.



A time to pray

Note: You might like to take a moment to read this prayer quietly before praying it together as a group.

You created me, God.
You have formed my body and all its hidden workings.
You watched over me as I grew in my mother's womb.
You watch over me as I grow today.

I praise you because I am wonderfully made.
The processes that bring changes to my body are amazing;
they prepare the way for new life.
Your works are wonderful indeed.

Your Developing Outlook

Connected with these physical changes, there are also changes in your way of thinking, in your way of feeling, in your way of relating and reacting to others. In these ways, a new side to you emerges: your sexuality, i.e. your sense (awareness) of what it is to be a woman or a man. The changes, which lead to the development of your sexuality, prepare you for a new and very wonderful type of friendship with a special person later in your life.

During this time, you are also picking up from the world around you a sense of what it means to be a man or a woman. In his first major document called *God Is Love*, Pope Benedict XVI reflected on many of the values that are prevalent in the world today. Some of his conclusions might be expressed as follows:

- Human beings are at the same time both physical and personal; they are body-with-soul. True love is never only physical. You lower both yourself and others when you relate on a purely physical level.
- Today, the human body is viewed as something to be exploited, something used in the business of selling. This is hardly the whole truth of what being human is about. Such emphasis on the body can undermine respect for the body.
- Those who truly love can be more easily aware of life as God's gift, a gift that goes on forever. Loving and being loved gives us a sense of life beyond everyday humdrum existence.

Differing Reactions

When young people begin to develop sexually as men or women, they may differ in the way they react:

- When Anna's sexual development began, her mother bought her a book about it. Anna read the book from time to time to check out what she wanted to know.
- Aaron had some questions about sexuality but he wasn't sure who he should talk to about them. He felt embarrassed.
- Aunt Zoe arrived from the airport for a visit at Maria's house. When Maria came downstairs to greet her, Aunt Zoe said, 'Wow, look at you! All changing and developing! Isn't it great!' Maria was mortified.
- Fred loved being able to show off his strength in PE class. He was really proud of his developing muscles.

God's Vision for Human Sexuality

The Bible clearly states that sexuality comes from God and is part of God's gift of life to human beings. In the book of Genesis, there is a reflection on why God made women and men: 'The Lord God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone"' (Genesis 2:18). When the man sees the woman, the man says, 'This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh' (Genesis 2:21). In these and in other places, the Bible describes how female sexuality and male sexuality complement and complete each other. In God's design, human sexuality brings a deep sense of

Talking Points

1. What do you think Pope Benedict was saying about some images of men and women that are used in advertising and selling today?
2. What is your evaluation of such images?
3. How do you think today's notions of what it is to be a man or a woman might differ from those with which your parents/guardians were familiar growing up?

Talking Points

1. What would you say to each of the characters described opposite? Why would you say this?
2. In what possible ways might a person react to the onset of sexual development? List some positive and some negative ways in which someone might react.
3. Suggest some helpful advice for someone going through sexual development.

Talking Points

1. The Bible says that sexuality is a gift from God. What do you think this implies for you and your attitude to your sexuality?
2. The Bible strongly connects sexuality with having children. How strongly or otherwise would you say that today's world makes this connection? Suggest a reason for your answer.

'ME' Folder

Under the heading 'Developing as God wants', put a photograph or an image of yourself in the centre of the page. Around the picture (or image), write in words to highlight the positive ways in which you are growing and developing, both in your body and as a person who is aware of others.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

companionship and friendship when it is part of an exclusive and permanently committed relationship.

The book of Genesis tells how sexuality is part of God's blessing on human beings: "Then God said, "And now we will make human beings; they will be like us and resemble us..." So God created human beings, making them to be like himself. God created them male and female, blessed them, and said, "Have many children, so that you and your descendants will live all over the earth..." (Genesis 1:26-28).

From this biblical passage, it can also be seen that the ability to have children is one of the first things to derive from the differing sexuality of male and female. In these words of the Bible, God tells the man and woman to have children.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

We praise God for the wonderful making and growing of the human body, as we say:

All

I thank you, God, for the wonder of my growing.

Reader 1

For the colour of my skin...

For the shape of my face...

For the brightness of my eyes...

For the warmth of my smile...

For the sound of my voice...

All

I thank you, God, for the wonder of my growing.

Reader 2

For my limbs and my joints...

For my shape and my form...

For all the ways my body is growing...

For all the ways my body moves...

For the strength of my bones...

All

I thank you, God, for the wonder of my growing.

Reader 3

For the energy in my body...

For the goodness of my body...

For the life-giving possibilities of my body...

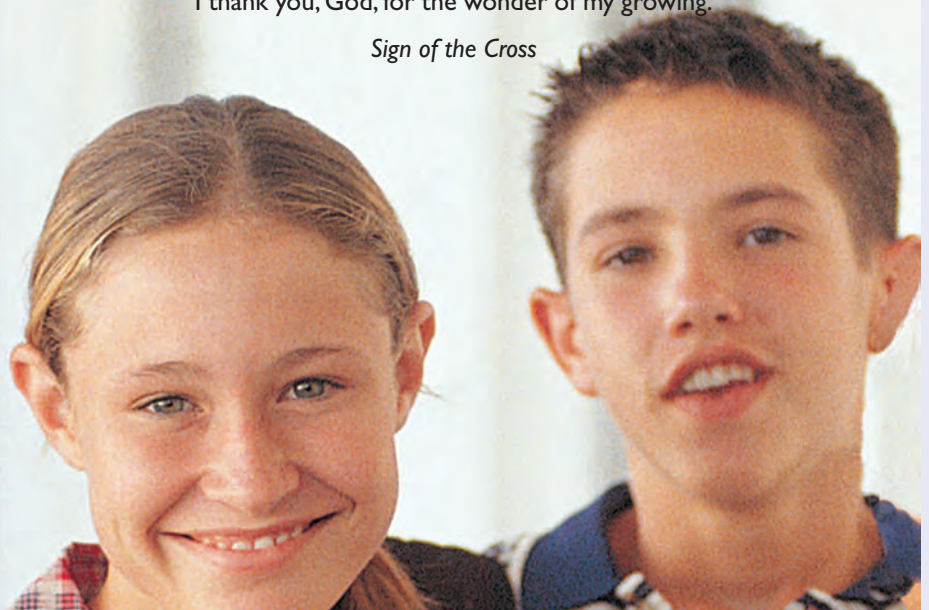
For everything that makes me grow to completion...

For the wonder of my own body and every body...

All

I thank you, God, for the wonder of my growing.

Sign of the Cross



Death and Eternal Life

For Christians, the occasion of death is a time for showing respect for life.

Through what it does at that time, the Christian community respectfully remembers the person who has died; it also remembers and proclaims God's respect for life and God's promise of life after death. Traditionally, the month of November is a time for remembering those who have died and praying for them. This lesson will give you an opportunity to reflect on and to become more familiar with beliefs and customs concerning death.

Funeral Facts from World Religions

- Where possible, Muslims are buried within a day of their death.
- Muslims are buried with the body turned right, towards Mecca.
- Any faithful member of the Muslim community may lead the prayers at a Muslim funeral.
- A Jewish body is not left alone before burial. Those who sit with it usually recite Psalms.
- In a Jewish house of mourning all mirrors are covered.
- In the Jewish faith, close relatives of the deceased (children, siblings, parents) tear a piece of clothing and wear this garment for the first seven days.
- After the funeral, Jews keep a candle lighting in the house of mourning for the first seven days for a close relative.



Talking Points

1. Are you surprised by any of the facts concerning funerals? Explain your answer.
2. If someone asked you why funerals are important, what answer would you give?

Talking Points

1. How would you sum up the difference between a Christian funeral and other types of funeral?
2. 'The Christian funeral offers help and consolation to those who mourn.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not?



- Generally in the Hindu religion, the body of the dead person is cremated.
- At a Hindu funeral, the surviving eldest son lights the fire that burns the body.
- Sometimes, the ashes of deceased Hindus are poured on to the water of the river Ganges.
- After a death in a Buddhist family, relatives and friends pour water over one hand of the body of the dead person.
- Buddhist monks come to the house of a Buddhist person who has died to chant prayers and preach sermons during as much of the time as possible before the burial of the body.
- Members of the Christian community gather to sympathise with those who have experienced a death in the family.
- At Catholic funerals, the Paschal Candle is lit and placed beside the coffin.
- Holy water is used at Catholic funerals.
- In the Catholic tradition, the funeral day celebration always includes a Mass, except during the Easter Triduum (when the Mass is postponed until Easter week).

Funerals Are Important

People everywhere have special ways of marking a death. In particular, the funeral is an occasion for marking the importance of a person and remembering what was special about them. A funeral gives people a time to reverently bury the body of the person who has died; it gives them a time to mourn their loss. It gives the wider community a chance to sympathise at a time of bereavement.

For Catholics and other Christians, a funeral is all these things; but it is also more. A Christian funeral says that God has brought the person who has died to new life. It proclaims Jesus as the first to have risen from death and reminds us of the promise of God's gift of new life to all who have died.

A religious funeral is also a way of honouring God and celebrating how God is always with people. It honours God as the one who gives life, who brings people through death to new life, who calls people to live a good life as a way of preparing for death and eternal life, who is our final judge, cleansing those who love God of their sin and failings, so that they may be ready for the new life God gives.

Eoin's Story

Hi, my name is Eoin and I am fourteen years old. Two years ago my dad died. After he died, many people wanted to help me and my family. I found out that some friends knew more than others about how to help me. Let me tell you what I mean so you can be better friends to anyone who has lost a loved one.

Helpful things...

- Treating me like before the death so I didn't feel different.
- Asking me how I felt and then listening.
- Inviting me to do things with their family.
- Talking about my dad and letting me talk about him.
- Asking their parents to help with things that my dad used to do, like fixing the chain on my bike.
- Standing by me until I started to feel better, even though sometimes I wasn't much fun to be around.

Unhelpful things...

- Ignoring me.
- Acting as though my dad didn't die.
- Never talking about my dad or never letting me talk about him.
- Teasing me about not having a dad.
- Never asking me how I felt.
- Saying things like 'Why aren't you fun anymore?'

The Wake

When a Catholic person dies at home, the body is washed and dressed and 'laid out' in a coffin or on a bed, with hands joined and holding a set of rosary beads. The bed would normally have a white sheet on it and a white bedcover drawn halfway up, covering the lower part of the body. Traditionally, mirrors are covered and the curtains are closed. On a small table beside the bed, two candles are lit, with a crucifix standing between them, and there is some holy water with a sprig of greenery. Mourners and visitors dip the sprig in the holy water and sprinkle the body. Visitors come to the house to sympathise with the bereaved family members, and some will stay through the night with the body. If a person dies in hospital, the body may be prepared and laid out in the hospital mortuary chapel. As another possibility, a funeral home might be used as a place where the body is laid out.

At a suitable time, people gather formally around the body, and prayers are said. These may be led by the priest; if there is no priest, a lay person may lead them.

The prayers include readings from the Bible, a psalm, some general intercessions and some prayers for the person who has died.

Traditionally, the Rosary is also said, with mourners taking turns to lead the decades.



Talking Point

Did you discover anything that you hadn't realised before in these two lists of helpful and unhelpful things? Explain your answer.

Talking Points

1. Have you ever been at a wake in a house (i.e. in the time between the death and the funeral)? Have you ever been at a funeral? Does anything in particular stand out in your memory? (As a group, you might like to share briefly a few such memories.)
2. Recall what is placed on the table beside the body at the wake. Can you suggest why those things are there?
3. Why do you think people might stay around and chat at a wake?
4. Would you say that there are differences between the way wakes are held in the city and in the countryside? Give reasons for your answer.

Why Don't You?

Do a Bible search for some readings that may be used at funerals:

- Psalm 23 (God is the shepherd who looks after us for ever and ever.)
- Wisdom 4:7-15 (Even in the event of sudden death, God protects those who die.)
- Isaiah 25:6-9 (God will destroy death for ever.)
- Revelation 21:1-7 (There will be no more death. God will be with people in a new heaven and a new earth.)
- Romans 5:5-11; 8:31-39 (We need fear no more because we are reconciled with God through Jesus.)
- Romans 14:7-12 (Even after death, we belong to God and will be with God. God is our judge and our life-giver.)
- I Corinthians 15:51-57 (Victory over death.)
- Philippians 3:20-21 (The risen Jesus will transform us after death.)
- John 14:1-6 (Jesus says that we shall be with him.)

What Happens at a Funeral?

When it is time for the body to be taken to the church, it is placed in a coffin, if this has not already happened. It may be carried by the bereaved family members. At the door of the church, the coffin is sprinkled with holy water. This is in memory of the person's Baptism, which celebrated the start of God's gift of life, and as a reminder that life now continues elsewhere with God. When the coffin is brought into the church, the large Easter candle, which was also lit at Baptism, is placed beside it. Incense may be used as a sign of special reverence for the body of the person who has died.

The funeral Mass includes special scripture readings and prayers. At Mass, people remember the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, through which God's promise of eternal life was made known. This is the setting within which Christians remember their loved ones who have died. The prayers give thanks for God's gifts and entrust the person who has died back to God, who brings those who have died to new life. When people gather for the beginning of the Mass, special things that recall the life of the person who has died may be brought forward and presented. Since these special things are not gifts, this is best done separately from the presentation of the bread and wine.

After Mass, the body is brought to the grave, which is blessed using holy water. Prayers are said once again, handing over to God the care of the person who has died. There are prayers asking God to comfort those who mourn. There is a special prayer to Mary, recalling how she mourned the death of Jesus on the cross. It is traditional for a part of the Rosary to be said before the final prayer over the people.



Heaven, Hell and Purgatory

HEAVEN is a fuller life than we can imagine. It is where we finally become fully alive. As St Paul says, 'No eye has seen nor ear heard, nor the human heart conceived, what God has prepared for those who love him' (1 Corinthians 2:9). 'Heaven is the ultimate end and fulfilment of the deepest human longings, the state of supreme, definitive happiness' (*Catechism of the Catholic Church (CCC)*, 1024). It is where we find and live our true identity (*CCC*, 1025). It is a state of happiness, where we live with God and others forever in a relationship of knowledge and love.

Because God made people free to choose, we have to imagine the possibility that people can reject the love of God and of others. As St John says, 'There is sin that is mortal' (1 John 5:16): this includes the attitudes and actions through which people cut themselves off from God. This has often been called **HELL**. It recognises the power we have to turn away from God, to ignore our conscience and to ignore what God and others tell us. God never fails to love us, no matter what we do; even if we do turn away, God is always waiting to welcome us back.

At the moment of death, few people are fully perfect. They have not reached their full potential to be what God made them to be. There is a gap to be crossed. **PURGATORY** is the name we give to the transitional phase – the stage between death and heaven – in which God makes people ready to enter the joy the heaven (*CCC*, 1030). Catholics believe that we can unite ourselves with God and with those who have died through prayer – especially at Mass – and through good deeds. In this way, we can continue to help those who have died (*CCC*, 1032).

In Your Religion Journal

Make a list of those that you know who have died. Decorate it and underneath write a prayer asking God to take care of them.

Why Don't You?

Recall what you know about the Rosary, as this is a prayer that may be used during wakes and at funeral celebrations. (You will find the accompanying worksheet particularly helpful in this regard.)

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

A time to pray

Note: You might like to include one of the readings listed earlier in the 'Why Don't You?' (on page 54) at the start of this prayertime. You might also like to prepare a list of names of those to be remembered beforehand, and have them read out at the point below where the dead are remembered.

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

We take a moment to remember those who have died. (Pause)

Together we pray:

All

Into your hands, God, we entrust those who have died.

In this life, you embraced them with tender love;

deliver them now from every evil

and bid them enter eternal rest.

The old ways have passed away:

so welcome them into heaven

where there will be no sorrow, no weeping nor pain,

but the fullness of peace and joy

with your Son and the Holy Spirit

for ever and ever. Amen.

Sign of the Cross



Why Don't You?

Work in small groups. Half the groups answer the first question. The other half work on the second. Compare the answers. Notice any differences.

Question 1: What do you expect from a good friend?

Question 2: If you are a good friend to someone, how do you behave?

Talking Points

1. Which of the descriptions given opposite appeal to you? Why?
2. Name any qualities not mentioned here that you might wish to add.
3. As a class group, try to agree on a brief description of what a good friend is.
4. What qualities do you think people might look for in a friend?
5. In your opinion, what makes a bad friend?

Friendship

True friendship is one of life's best experiences. It makes it good to be alive and it reminds you of your worth. Friends make you feel valuable for who you are (not for what you possess or for what you can do or for how you appear). Friendship is one of life's great reminders of your human dignity. So, what is a good friend? What does it mean to be a good friend to someone else? What is true friendship about? Could friendship make you think differently about life? If so, how? This lesson is a chance for you to explore experiences of having friends and of being friends.

What some young people said about the qualities of a good friend:

- 'Caring, reliable, they don't talk about you behind your back and they know your faults and still like you.' (Jessica, 13)
- 'Tells the truth and has a sense of humour and does not pressure you into anything that you don't want to do.' (Daniel, 14)
- 'Honesty, humour, reliability and understanding.' (Michelle, 14)
- 'Honest, trustworthy, likes to have a good time and isn't snobby or "high-and-mighty", doesn't whine and doesn't feel stupid doing just ordinary stuff.' (Janet, 14)
- 'They are real – not pretending to be something they're not, someone you can talk to and who is able to listen and show they understand.' (Dave, 13)
- 'Someone who accepts you as you are and someone you can share your hopes, dreams, ideas, fears and good/bad times with.' (Shane, 14)

Different Types of Friendship

No two people are exactly the same, and so no two friendships are exactly the same. There are different ways of being friends.

- Some friendships focus mainly on activities. They are about going to the cinema, youth club, pizzeria or to the shops together. Such friends meet once in a while.

- Some friendships focus mainly on common interests or views (e.g. music, football, computers, etc). These friends share a similar way of thinking. They respect one another's opinions or ideas. They chat together from time to time in person, on the phone or over the Internet.
- Some friendships are more personal and grow stronger over time. Such friends grow to accept each other for who they are. They are happy to learn more about each other and to grow in understanding of each other. They enjoy time together just for the company, even without necessarily having anything planned.
- Sometimes, friendship is mostly about help. For example, a young nurse may be a friend to an elderly patient in the way they help; equally, that elderly person may be a friend to such a nurse through chatting and listening.

No one single friend will give you all the friendship you need. Different friendships will give you various levels of support, enjoyment, confidence, understanding, acceptance, opinions, advice, etc. People need various types of friendship at various times throughout life. Some friendships last for a long time, while others are brief. Friendships can break down, but if the people concerned are prepared to work at their relationship, it may be possible to stay friends and maybe even to deepen the friendship.

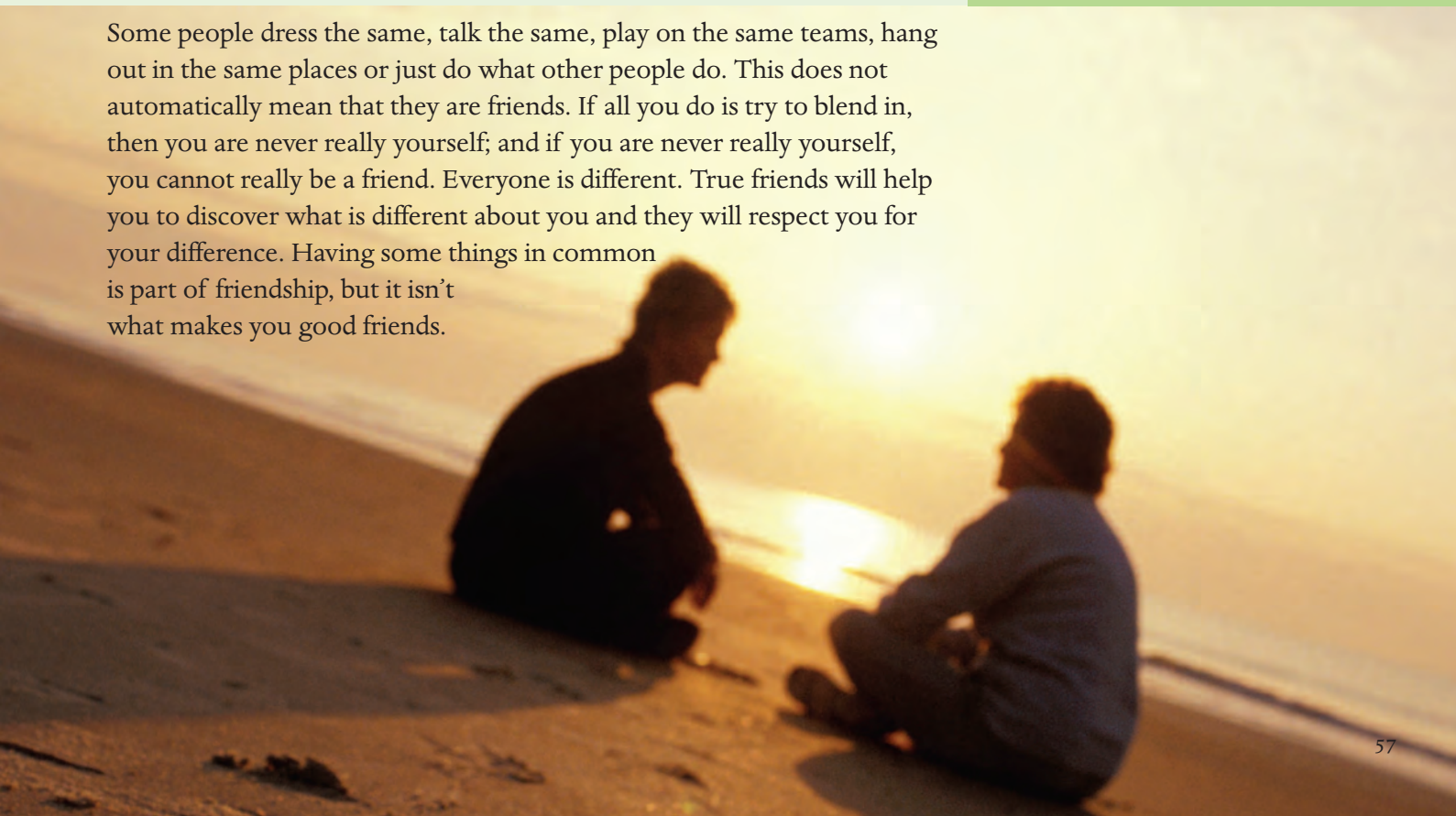
False Friendship

It is very possible to have lots of acquaintances, but no real friends. Real friendship means taking time to get to know another person and allowing them to get to know you. Some people keep their relationships superficial: others never get to know them and they never get to know others. While they may mix with many people, they may feel quite alone.

Some people dress the same, talk the same, play on the same teams, hang out in the same places or just do what other people do. This does not automatically mean that they are friends. If all you do is try to blend in, then you are never really yourself; and if you are never really yourself, you cannot really be a friend. Everyone is different. True friends will help you to discover what is different about you and they will respect you for your difference. Having some things in common is part of friendship, but it isn't what makes you good friends.

Talking Points

1. Would you agree that friends are a reminder to people of their human dignity? Explain your answer. (Remember: Human dignity is about your worth and value as a person.)
2. What are the benefits of having a 'best friend'? Do you think it is reasonable for someone to focus all their time and energy on their 'best friend'?



Talking Points

1. Do you agree with the description of 'bad friendships' given here? Why?/Why not? What advice would you give to someone in such a 'bad friendship'?
2. 'People need different types of friendship.' Suggest some examples of different kinds of friendship that you need at present.
3. 'Too much alike is boring, too different makes it hard to relate!' Discuss this statement on friendship.

One-Minute Soapbox

Talk for an uninterrupted minute or two, beginning with: 'For me, the most important quality in a friend is...' (Be sure to give reasons for what you say.)

At times, people hold on to so-called friends even though those 'friends' may be unkind to them, make fun of them, use them or dominate them. Such friendships may be called 'bad friendships'. They are based on things such as the fear of being isolated or left out; the desire to belong to a group; unquestioning admiration of someone who is forceful or strong. These friendships are never happy and it's best to move on from them.

God's Friendship for You

When you learn about friendship, you also learn about God. After all, friendship is part of the life God created. Every good friend you have gives you some hint of the friendship God has for you. God's friendship for you comes to you through the friendship of others. Every aspect of good friendships is a reflection of God. The fun, the kindness, the listening, the joy and the support of friendship: they are all created by God and give you hints of who God is and what God is like.

The clearest expression of God's friendship for you was shown in Jesus. Think of the things Jesus said: he told people not to worry because God would always take care of them. Think of the things Jesus did: he cared for the most vulnerable and rejected people as a sign that no one is beyond God's care and concern. Think of what Jesus was: he stood up against the Pharisees when they suggested that God loved only those who were acceptable and respectable people. Think of what Jesus suffered: rather than deny God's love for all, Jesus faced a cruel death. Think of the destiny of Jesus: God raised Jesus up and revealed the new life God planned beyond death. Everything in the life of Jesus pointed to God's immense love and friendship for you and for everyone. The risen Jesus brings you that same love today at Mass (especially in Holy Communion).



Your friendships with others and your friendship with God are connected. Jesus underlined this connection. When he was asked to describe the greatest rule for living, Jesus said: 'Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind. This is the first and most important commandment. The second most important commandment is like this one. And it is, Love others as much as you love yourself.' (Matthew 22:37-39)

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

St Paul tells us that God wants us to be friends with one another and to forgive one another. This is what he says:

Reader 1 (*Colossians 3:12-14*)

God loves you and has chosen you as his own special people. So be gentle, kind, humble, meek and patient. Put up with each other and forgive anyone who does you wrong, just as Christ has forgiven you. Love is more important than anything else. It is what ties everything completely together.

Teacher

Here is a reflection called 'HOW TO BE A GOOD FRIEND'. To have good friends, you must be a good friend. Here are some of the ways good friends treat each other:

Reader 2 (*or several individual readers*)

- Good friends listen to each other.
- Good friends don't put each other down or hurt each other's feelings.
- Good friends try to understand each other's feelings and moods.
- Good friends help each other to solve problems.
- Good friends give each other true compliments.
- Good friends can disagree without hurting each other.
- Good friends are dependable.
- Good friends respect each other.
- Good friends are trustworthy.
- Good friends give each other room to change.
- Good friends care about each other.

Teacher

We pause for a moment to pray for our friends. (*Pause*)
Together we pray:

All

God our friend, help us to be good friends to one another. Amen.

Sign of the Cross

Talking Points

1. Would you include God in your list of friends? Why?/Why not? (Look at the exercise given on the accompanying worksheet. If you were to include God, where would the dot representing God be on your worksheet?)
2. If you were making a list of signs of God's friendship in everyday life, what might you include? Draw up a list.

'ME' Folder

Based on the happenings of your own life, choose words and/or pictures to illustrate the theme 'God's Friendship for Me' on one or more pages of your folder.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Friendship and Communication

Friends remind you of your human dignity, so friendship is important. As you saw in the last lesson, you will have different experiences of friendship as you go through life. Each friendship is unique and special, but there is one thing that helps all friendships to grow. What is it? Communication. In this lesson, you will have an opportunity to reflect on how communication can help true friendship to grow and develop. In a previous lesson, you read a story involving Matthew (see pages 11 and 12). You may recall what a bad day he had. Pick up the story below...

Why Don't You?

After reading 'A Bad Day...', you might like to act it out.

Talking Points

1. Do you think Matthew's conversation with Clare might have helped Matthew change the direction of his day? Why? Why not?
2. If you were Clare, what would you have said to Matthew when he talked to you about his difficult day?
3. 'We can all hear, but we don't always listen.' What do you think this might mean?
4. Give an example of a way in which a conversation can help a friendship. Give an example of a way in which a conversation can harm a friendship.
5. Have your ideas about friendship changed since you were in primary school? If so, how would you describe the difference?

A Bad Day...

Clare: Hi there, Matthew! What sort of a day did you have yesterday?

Matthew: Okay...

Clare: Is that okay brilliant or okay awful?

Matthew: Well, let's see. I slept in and was late for school, which earned me a detention. I lost ten per cent of my marks on my English assignment for late submission. I got blamed for leaving litter in the lunch room though I had nothing to do with it. And to top it all, I played abysmally in the football match in the afternoon, let all my team-mates down and we lost the game.

Clare: So, you didn't have a great day, did you?

Matthew: Aaaargh! I'm just so fed up, Clare. Life is so unfair!

Clare: Matthew, I'm sorry you had such a horrible day, but look on the bright side – no one you know has died, so things can't be that bad.

Matthew: Yeah, I suppose, but I just don't understand why...

Clare: Why what?

Matthew: Ah, nothing!

Clare: Matthew, if there's something bothering you, you might as well get it off your chest. It's not good to bottle things up.

Matthew: Ah, I know, Clare, but this is silly really. I don't know why I've let this get to me.

Clare: Matthew, tell me! Maybe I can help.



Why Don't You?

Do a wall chart entitled 'Friendship Can Help You Deal with Pressure'. Draw an outline of a bottle of fizzy juice and imagine that the bottle is being shaken to the point where it might explode. Now imagine that the fizzy drink is you or a person you know. Inside the bottle outline, name some of the feelings and experiences that you think might cause a person to want to explode. Then outside the 'bottle', list some of the things that would cause a person to settle down again.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Talking Points

1. Review the encounter between Clare and Matthew. From the story, pick out (a) some different types of communication and (b) some examples of good communication. Explain your examples.
2. Choose an example of friendship (e.g. family, personal, neighbour or even international). Suggest examples of how communication can help that friendship to grow.
3. What do you think it might be like to be with someone when they deliberately allow their attention to be more on their mobile phone than it is on you?
4. Picture two friends together, but each having separate conversations on their mobile phones. What might you say about this situation?

Matthew: Okay. Last Saturday, things were slack at work, so I decided to tidy out the stockroom. Mr Collins, my boss, was away, so he didn't see what I'd done until Monday. Thing is, I called into work yesterday evening, just before going to the match, and he was in the office. I sort of expected him to say something, like I had done a good job on the stockroom. Everyone else seemed to think it was a great job.

Clare: But Mr Collins never said anything?

Matthew: Right, Clare. It was as if I wasn't there. And as he was leaving the office, he called me John.

Clare: Well, I'm not surprised you're annoyed.

Matthew: Really, so I'm not going crazy then.

Clare: No, Matthew, you are right to feel annoyed. But you can't let Mr Collins get to you. It's starting to get in on you too much.

Matthew: Yeah, you're right. Thanks for listening. It helps.

Clare: No problem, Matthew. I know you'd do the same for me if I needed to talk.

Matthew: Sure thing, Clare. Here, I'd better get moving. Physics with Mr Burns next. Oh happy day... I'll text you later.

Communication

Communication is an important part of friendship. It's hard to be friends without it. Communication can include a lot of different things: words, tone of voice, gestures, written messages, gifts. One important thing is missing from that list: 'listening'. You can show that you are listening when you use your own words to repeat back what your friend says to you. This helps friends to check over what they have said and helps them to know that someone is really listening. It helps them to feel understood and appreciated. Good communication between friends means listening and talking; it's a two-way process.

Nowadays, the mobile phone gives people the opportunity to be in constant communication. It's a great way of staying in contact. However, it's important to remember that it might not always lead to good communication. For example, suppose two friends allow their conversation to be interrupted all the time with text messages or phone calls from other people: what kind of communication is that?

The worst type of communication is judging others, when, for example, you might say something like: 'You are stupid, mean, lazy, etc' or 'I think

EXAMPLES OF BAD COMMUNICATION

- Always talking about yourself and expecting others to do all the listening while you offload your bad feelings.
- Coming across as really friendly so as to trick someone.
- Pretending to be what someone else wants you to be.
- Allowing yourself to be distracted so that you are not listening to what a person is saying to you.

Why Don't You?

Look up the following Gospel references: Mark 2:13-17, Mark 7:24-30, Matthew 9:9-13, Matthew 9:18-26, Luke 7:1-10, Luke 7:36-50, Luke 10:38-42. What do these suggest to you about Jesus and friendship?

In Your Religion journal

Complete the sentences:

- 'A good friend is...'
- 'Being a true friend means...'
- 'Jesus gave a good example of friendship when...'

Write about a time when you talked over something that was annoying you with a friend. How well did your friend listen? Did you feel judged or not? How did you feel before you talked and afterwards?

Why Don't You?

Make a poster called 'Guidelines to Good Communications'. Write your own rules or guidelines and include some illustrations. You might like to display your work in one of the public spaces in the school.



you are immature, etc'. This type of communication can really damage a friendship. By all means, tell others how they make you feel – angry, happy, sad, etc – but avoid phrases that begin, 'You are...' or, 'I think you are...'

The best gift that friends give to one another is the gift of listening without judgement. However, if someone who cares about you sometimes does make you feel judged, remember that they may do so with the best of intentions and that they may mean you no harm. It is important to try to put yourself in the other person's shoes and always to be kind in your comments, even if you disagree with their views.

Jesus and Friendship

Jesus was a good communicator and a good friend. He talked to people and paid attention to them. Jesus accepted people unconditionally, regardless of their race, colour, gender, religion or politics. Jesus gave his time and energy to anyone who approached him. He offered true friendship to his disciples and followers. The religious authorities at the time (the Pharisees, the Sadducees and the scribes) tried to exploit Jesus' goodness so as to accuse him of all sorts of offences: 'He mixes with tax collectors and sinners,' they said.

In your life, you may also encounter people who will try to exploit a giving nature. Some people use friendship as a mask to exploit other people. You may need to avoid such people, as they can be very hurtful. Friendship is a wonderful gift when it is true, balanced and healthy. The best friendships build you up and enhance you as a person; that is the mark of a true friendship. You are better staying clear of any person or group that hurts you or exploits you.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Years ago at primary school, your class began each day with a morning prayer. Together we will pray that prayer again now:

All

Father in heaven, you love me,
You're with me night and day.

I want to love you always in all I do and say.

I'll try to please you, Father.

Bless me through the day. Amen.

Teacher

For a moment, remember that God is with you now during this day. *(Pause)*

Share with God your particular cares and concerns for this day. *(Pause)*

Allow yourself to be silent so that God may communicate with you. *(Pause)*

May God bless you through this day and always.

Sign of the Cross

Jesus Leads People To Friendship With God

In the previous lessons, you focused on your own experience of friendship. In this lesson, the focus moves towards the friendship Jesus enjoyed with the One he called Father. Begin with the 'Why Don't You?'. Reflecting on your own experience of friendship will remind you of the importance of regular communication and will help you towards a deeper understanding of the friendship Jesus enjoyed with his Father.

Jesus' Friendship with his Father

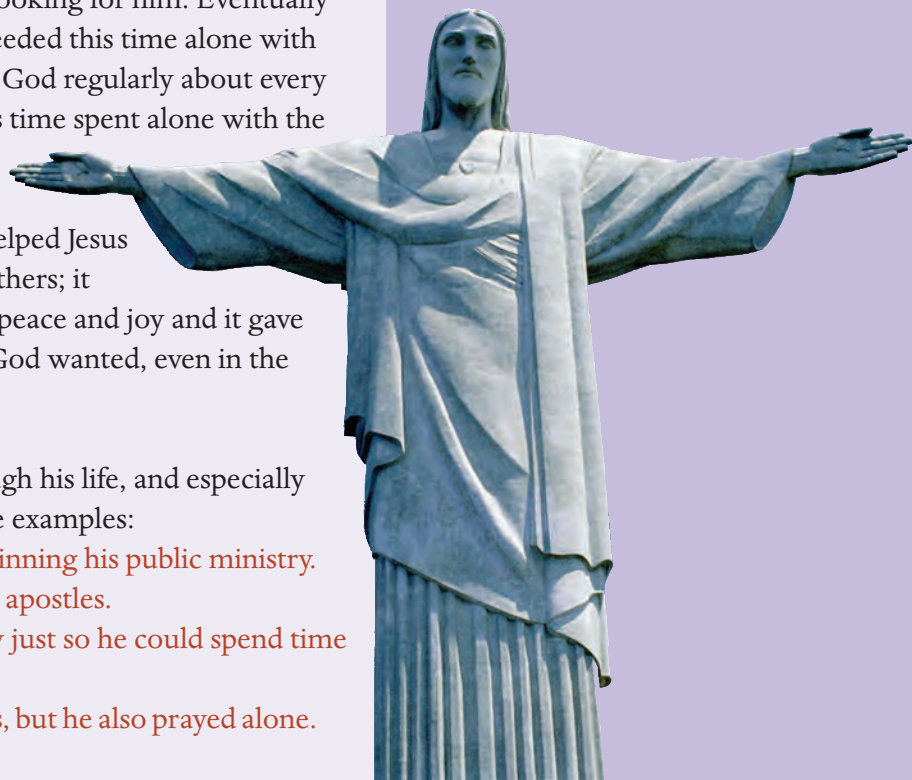
The friends of Jesus spent a lot of time in his company. They listened to him as he taught about God. They watched him as he went to people who were sick or troubled. They also noticed that he did not spend all his time with them or with other people he met. There were times when Jesus went off alone. On one of those occasions, his friend Peter went to find him. Peter did not seem to understand why Jesus went off on his own rather than help the people who came looking for him. Eventually the friends of Jesus came to accept that he needed this time alone with God the Father and that he needed to talk to God regularly about every aspect of his life. His friends realised that this time spent alone with the Father gave Jesus great energy and power. It strengthened him in his work for others and in the friendship he had for them. Praying helped Jesus to know what God wanted for him and for others; it helped him to choose his future; it gave him peace and joy and it gave him the strength to remain faithful to what God wanted, even in the face of opposition and death.

The Gospels show that Jesus prayed all through his life, and especially before major events in his life. Here are some examples:

- He spent a long time in prayer before beginning his public ministry.
- He prayed before he appointed his twelve apostles.
- He often took time out of a very busy day just so he could spend time talking and listening to God the Father.
- He prayed for others and in front of others, but he also prayed alone.
- He taught his friends to pray.

Why Don't You?

Make a list of the names of your close friends. Choose just one of these people and beside their name write down how much time (approximately) you spent in each other's company over the last seven days. Write down also the various ways in which you communicated with each other during that time: face to face, text, Internet, phone, email, card, letter, etc. Then ask yourself two questions: Are you surprised by the amount of time you spend communicating with your friend or is it close to what you expected? Have you learned anything about your friendship from doing this exercise?



Jesus invited his friends to grow in friendship with God. Those friends have passed on this invitation to you. Jesus wants you to be aware of God as your friend, who cares for you really deeply. That is why Jesus taught his followers to call God 'Our Father'.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Jesus taught his friends to call God 'Our Father' and to pray the prayer we call the 'Our Father'. We take some time to reflect on this prayer. We become quiet and still. We remember that God is with us now as we pray. (Pause)

Reader 1

When we say 'Our Father', we remember that God is always with us and that God loves us with all the care of a truly loving parent. We take a moment to be aware that God's loving care surrounds us. (Pause)

Reader 2

When we say 'who art in heaven', we remember that heaven is the place where life continues forever and that heaven is near to us even now in the great moments of life. We pick out and remember one of those great moments in life when heaven was near to us. (Pause)

Reader 3

When we say 'Hallowed be thy name', we bless God and we bless God's name. God has given us all that we have and all that we are. Blessed be God! (Pause)

Reader 4

'Thy Kingdom come; thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.' In these words, Jesus teaches us to pray that we will be fully alive, that we will live the life that God wishes for us. We ask God to make us fully alive. (Pause)

Reader 5

'Give us this day our daily bread.' We ask God for what we need today, not just for food, but also for the love and friendship that we need. (Pause) We remember people in various situations of need. (Pause)

Reader 6

'Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us.' We remember that we have hurt others. (Pause) We remember that we have damaged the environment. (Pause) We ask God to help us to forgive those who have hurt us. (Pause)

Reader 7

'And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.' We ask God to strengthen us against making the wrong choices. (Pause) We recall our worries and share them with God. (Pause)

Teacher

Together we pray in the words that Jesus taught us, saying:

All

Our Father... (or *Ár nAthair...*)

Sign of the Cross

In Your Religion Journal

Look up the following Gospel references and copy the verses into your Religion journal: Mark 1:35-39, Luke 4:42-44; Luke 5:15-16; and Luke 6:12.

Talking Points

1. 'A friendship is not real if people never communicate or keep in touch.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not?
2. Why do you think praying was so important to Jesus?
3. How do you think praying might benefit you at this time in your life, when you are changing as well as choosing your future?
4. How would you describe what prayer meant to Jesus? Give reasons for your answer.

In Your Religion Journal

If you could send a text message to God today, what would it say?

'ME' Folder

Add a piece to your folder on the following theme: 'What I would ask God for today.'

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Your Friendship With God

Term 1, Lesson 21

Even if you are not much aware of it, God's love is there for you. God is delighted when you take time for prayer. That time creates an opportunity for you to become aware of God and of what God's love wants for you. God's ultimate wish for you is that you become someone fully alive. This lesson will offer you an opportunity to focus on prayer, because prayer gives you a fresh awareness of God's friendship with you.

God's Friendship with You

Once you share a deep love with someone, you take every opportunity to be with that person, whether you have plenty to say or whether there is nothing to be said. No wonder that Jesus took many opportunities for prayer. In that quiet time, he gave full attention to being in the presence of his Father. You couldn't imagine a stronger bond of love than the bond between God the Father and Jesus. God the Father sent Jesus to tell us that God has the same deep love for us.

Jesus invited his friends to enter into friendship with God. Those friends passed on that invitation to others down the years, and eventually that invitation came to you. Your Baptism was, among other things, a celebration of God's friendship with you and God's welcome for you. God trusts you. God has trusted you with life and with the power to change life, especially through friendship, which some describe as one of the greatest powers on earth. God is always delighted to be with you and God welcomes you into friendship. You can live your friendship with God when you pray. The time you make available for communicating with God – even time when you don't have anything particular to say – is time that God welcomes. You can also live your friendship with God in the way you respect your own dignity and in your friendship towards others. Your friendship with God will help you to grow and develop as a person, especially at times of change in your life. God is never too busy to listen to your prayer. God wants you to know that you are never alone in life's difficulties. God wants to help you to discern what it is that you are meant to be. Whether in private or with others, praying makes it more possible for God's love to transform you and to encourage you to be more fully alive.

Talking Points

1. When someone says the word 'prayer', what comes into your mind? As a class or group, make a list of those things. See if you can agree a 'Top Three' from the list you make.
2. By now, you have experienced different kinds of prayer in your life. Is there one type that you prefer? Which? Has there been a class prayertime that stands out in your memory? Why?
3. As a class or group, name some things that might help a person to pray.



Talking Points

1. What are the ways in which you live in friendship with God and with others?
2. What would you say to someone who thinks that God has no time for them? Do you think it is possible always to answer this question? Why?/Why not?

Why Don't You?

A 'mantra' is a set of words that you repeat silently, over and over, within yourself. One of the most famous such prayers is the 'Jesus Prayer', which goes as follows: 'Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.' Try using it on your own sometime, after you allow yourself to settle and to become quiet and still.

In Your Religion Journal

Make up a 'mantra' prayer of your own: a short (easy-to-remember) phrase or set of words that you could repeat over and over within yourself. Write it into your journal and decorate it (or do it on a computer and print it out).

Different Types of Prayer

VOCAL PRAYER: Praying out loud with others (i.e. communal) or alone (i.e. individual), using your own words or traditional prayers. Includes prayer of 'petition' (asking for things), 'thanksgiving' (giving thanks for specific things), 'sorrow' (saying sorry for things, e.g. 'I confess...').

MEDITATION: Focusing on a Gospel story and its details; concentrating on the meaning of a particular phrase or prayer; using your mind to relate to God. A 'mantra' prayer is a phrase that you can repeat silently, over and over, as you pray.

CONTEMPLATION: Simply being aware of God's loving presence; being content to be with God without having to use words or gestures or images. Includes 'adoration' (deep feeling of love and admiration).

Your Body Helps You to Pray

People choose a posture or gesture that helps them to be more aware of God and to express themselves better to God. Some people sit upright during their prayer, while other people kneel. Sometimes people stand to pray. People use gestures to help them to pray: bowing (e.g. during the Creed at Mass); holding their hands outwards (e.g. as the priest does at Mass); the sign of the cross (as a sign of blessing or being blessed). These are basic examples of 'liturgical movement', i.e. praying with the help of movement during the liturgy. Other examples would include processions, e.g. at Communion during Mass or during funerals. Sometimes, too, movement to music is used to express the joy of a special liturgical occasion. People use gesture or posture to express their relationship with God, either as an individual (in private) or with others (as a member of the Church).



A time to pray

Teacher

Allow yourself to sit comfortably upright. Let yourself become quiet and still. Focus on your breathing. Let it become slower and steadier. (Pause)

Close your eyes and imagine yourself in a beautiful place. Imagine the time of day (Pause) and the season of the year. (Pause) Picture that place in your mind. (Pause) The risen Jesus is always with you. He is with you now in the place of your imagining. Take a moment to welcome the presence of the risen Jesus. (Pause)

Jesus asks you now about your concerns and the things that are uppermost in your mind today. Using your inner voice, speak to Jesus about them. (Pause)

Jesus asks you now about the other people you know who need special help at this time. Again, let Jesus know using your inner silent voice. (Pause)

Jesus asks you now to hand over the things you have mentioned. Allow Jesus to take them from you for now, for the present. (Pause)

Take some time to say sorry to Jesus for where you think you have gone wrong. God wants to forgive you. Allow Jesus to do so for each thing you mention. (Pause)

Slowly, in your mind, give thanks for several things: things as simple as being able to breathe, things in the world around you or things that others have done for you. Give thanks now to God. (Pause)

Keeping quiet, still and relaxed, listen to some words of Jesus from the Gospel according to John (15:4-5): Jesus says, 'Stay joined to me (Pause) and I will stay joined to you. (Pause) Just as a branch cannot produce fruit unless it stays joined to the vine, you cannot produce fruit unless you stay joined to me. (Pause) I am the vine and you are the branches.' (Pause)

Be conscious that Jesus is with you as your friend, not saying anything in particular, just with you as your friend. He blesses you. (Pause)

Our prayertime is nearly at an end. But before it finishes, Jesus has something to ask of you. (Pause) Jesus asks you to bless the first ten people you meet as you leave here, no matter who they are – to do so silently, in your mind. They too are his friends. (Pause)

When you are ready, thank Jesus for his presence with you. In your own time, you may open your eyes and stretch.

One-Minute Soapbox

Talk for an uninterrupted minute or two, beginning with: 'To me, friendship with God means...'

Why Don't You?

Do a project on one or more of these famous places of prayer and pilgrimage:

- Lough Derg (www.loughderg.org)
- Knock (www.knock-shrine.ie)
- Taizé (www.taize.fr and then select the English-language version)
- Lourdes (www.lourdes-france.com and then select the English-language version)
- Rome
- The Holy Land

Consider including the following: history, location, description of the place, the traditional prayers and activities, the pilgrims who go there, the reasons for going there.

You might find it helpful to check if local or diocesan groups have been to these places.

Talking Point

Check your understanding of the 'thoughts' outlined in the bullet points (opposite).

Some Thoughts about Prayers and Blessings

- In your time with God, you can become more aware of what is going on within you. Prayer can be a process that refines you and that helps you to discover who you are, what you could be and how to transform yourself.
- Prayer makes you more aware of God with you.
- When you pray, God can let you know how to make the conditions for God to bless others and to bless the environment.
- Prayer is not only about letting God know of your wants and weaknesses. Prayer can raise you up as a person by helping you to see more to your life so that you can develop God's blessings in yourself.

Talking Points

1. Can you think of any other challenges to praying?
2. What would you say to someone who said: 'I did no work for my exam. I prayed but I failed. So God did not answer my prayer'?
3. How would you talk to someone who said: 'I prayed for my team to win, but they lost. So I won't pray any more'?
4. What might you say to someone who said: 'I prayed to God to make Alice interested in me, but she talks more to other people. God doesn't love me'?

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

'ME' Folder

Add a piece to your folder on the following theme: 'A time when I prayed recently.'

Why Do We Not Always Get What We Ask For When We Pray?

When we don't get what we ask God for, we might become frustrated and decide that God does not care or that God is not there. Before jumping to such conclusions, it's helpful to remember:

- Not all the things you want are right. You can't expect God to do wrong.
- Not all the things you want are good for you. God won't give you something bad.
- God gives you freedom. You can't expect God to undo the damage you do to yourself by abusing your freedom.
- Not everything that happens to you is God's doing; others may use their God-given freedom to hurt you and make you unhappy.
- Even though what God made is good, there is still evil in the world. Bad things happen even though they are not our fault. Bad things happened to Jesus too. Jesus prayed not to have to go through his passion and death. Through the resurrection of Jesus, God showed us that evil will not triumph, that good will win over evil in the long run.

The Lord's Prayer (with gestures suggested)

Here is an example of prayer through movement. Practise it several times so that you can really pray it. Sit comfortably, your hands placed at rest in your lap, before you begin.



Our Father who art in heaven: Lift your open hands up to chest level.

Hallowed be thy name: Keep your arms up and just lower your head.

Thy kingdom come: Raise your head and open your arms wide, with palms turned upwards.

Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven: Turn your palms to face downwards and move them first outwards and then together in a gesture of praying over the earth.

Give us this day our daily bread: Extend your arm, with palms upturned.

And forgive us our trespasses: Place your palms crossed against your chest.

As we forgive those who trespass against us: Open arms, with palms upturned.

And lead us not into temptation: Push your hands to one side, with palms vertical, and turn your head to face the other direction.

But deliver us from evil: Join both hands together in a gesture of prayer.

Amen: Raise your hands and arms in affirmation.

Awareness Of God; Image Of God

Term 1, Lesson 22

People wouldn't buy you the same birthday present as they did five years ago. The same present wouldn't do. You've changed. You see things differently now: clothes, food, games and entertainment. Your relationships have changed too: your friendships are different from what they were when you began primary school. You see others differently; you see yourself differently. So it's probable that you see God differently too. In this lesson, you will have a chance to reflect on your relationship with God.

Why Don't You?

Spend a while imagining the God you would want to believe in. Get into groups and put your description together. How do your descriptions compare with one another and with the image of God you have picked up from your own religious tradition?

A Natural Sense of God

Neil didn't find out about what had happened until he went back to school. He had been away on an exchange programme when the tragedy occurred. He didn't know Robbie all that well: they had been in the same class for four years, but Neil didn't play football. It came as a shock to Neil to hear that Robbie had collapsed on the football field. Robbie had been so fit. There was every chance that he would have been captain of the school team. The news of Robbie's sudden death hit Neil hard. That evening he let his friends head off to the bus without him. He started walking the long way to the bus depot; he wanted to be alone. It was a lovely evening, but Neil wasn't paying particular attention to the weather. To say he was in a mood wouldn't be accurate. Yes, mood was part of it: he felt at a loss, unsettled and disconnected. But there was more to it. Hearing the news had brought Neil face to face with some sort of issue. He was like someone who had just wakened up to find himself in a place he only half knew, in unfamiliar territory. He needed time to absorb the news of Robbie's death, to come to terms with it. Sure, people die all the time: one every second, if the statistics are to be believed. Yes, but this was Robbie who had died: someone the same age as Neil, someone fit and well, someone with talent and ability. Neil came to a low stone wall. There was a spider's web between the wall and the hedge. He hadn't looked at a web for years. But today, he just looked and looked. He was struck by the web's fineness and delicacy. Yet, one swipe and it

Talking Points

1. After hearing the news of Robbie's death, Neil wanted to spend time alone. Can you understand this? Why?/Why not?
2. Would you have advised Neil to spend that time alone? Why?/Why not? Do you think Neil might have been better advised to try to forget about this news, e.g. by chatting with his friends or going to the cinema?
3. Do you know anyone who had to stop and think over their life because of something that happened? Do you know what they did to help them cope?
4. Such moments in life happen to everyone. Can you think of anything you might do in the present that could make you better able to cope with such moments when they arise?
5. Do you think there are times in life when people feel closer to God? Offer an example to support your answer.
6. Do you think there are times in life when people feel that God is more remote or unreal? Support your answer with an example.

One-Minute Soapbox

Talk for an uninterrupted minute or two, beginning with: 'I felt close to God when...' or 'I felt God was far away when...'

In Your Religion Journal

Describe in words or in images the relationship between God and yourself at present. If you can, include something about why the relationship might be so.

would be gone for ever. Neil stood for a minute without moving. He prayed, though not in any usual words. He needed to reach out to God, to be with God. In that moment, it was all that could help or reassure him.

Things that Block your Sense of God

Despite events, the young man in the story above seemed able to find some sense of God. You may find this more difficult. You may find yourself feeling that God seems remote or unreal. Don't be too surprised if this happens. As you go through life, things may occur that need you to update your notion and your image of God. For instance, you may suffer a serious illness or setback, or you may become more aware of the evil in the world today. (Refer back to the section in the previous lesson on why prayer sometimes seems to go unanswered.) If you give it time and space, your awareness of God can grow, as it seems to have grown for the young man in the story.

However, finding such time and space can be difficult. Things can prevent you from doing so. If you are feeling tired or disillusioned, you will not much feel like facing the deeper questions of life. Equally, if you turn your energies into shopping, gadgets, celebrities or work, you may not have much time or space left for facing your own life as it is. It's important that you make time for your real life so that you can be fully alive. The more genuinely and fully alive you are as a person, the more you will be able to face life and the more you will be able to let your image of God grow.

Images of God: Hinting at What God is Like

Everything that exists reflects God in some way, even a spider's web. This is especially true of women and men, who are made in God's image and likeness. The power of nature, the vastness of space, the fragility of a snowdrop, a baby's smile: all these can suggest the wonder and beauty of God. However, they never express the full reality of God. Still, such images and experiences from everyday life are valuable because they hint at what God is truly like.



The Bible points to various images and experiences that hint at what God is like. Here are some quotations from the Old Testament (or the Hebrew Scriptures):

- 'In the beginning, when God created the heavens and the earth...' (Genesis 1:1)
- 'When Israel was a child, I loved him and called him out of Egypt as my son.' (Hosea 11:1)
- 'They shall go after the Lord, who roars like a lion; when he roars, his children will come trembling from the west.' (Hosea 11:10)
- 'Like an eagle teaching its young to fly, catching them safely on its spreading wings, the Lord kept Israel from falling.' (Deuteronomy 32:11)
- 'The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need. He lets me rest in fields of green grass and leads me to quiet pools of fresh water.' (Psalm 23:1-2)

- ‘Can a woman forget her own baby and not love the child she bore? Even if a mother should forget her child, I will never forget you.’ (Isaiah 49:15)

Besides everyday life and the Bible, you can also find images for God in art. You are familiar with icons, an art form particularly loved by our brothers and sisters in the Greek Orthodox tradition. You may be familiar with the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome, where Michelangelo painted a famous image of God reaching out to Adam. From an early age, you have been seeing images of God in various places, e.g. at home, in school or in your parish.

Limits on Our Images of God

There are limits to the human ability to understand God or to describe God. A young child can't understand the world of a teenager. In the same kind of way, people's efforts to know, describe and understand God will always fall short.

For example, God has always been referred to as 'He' in our tradition. This seems to suggest that God is masculine. However, God is a spiritual being and so is neither masculine nor feminine. The Bible recognises this and uses feminine as well as masculine images to describe God.

Artistic images also show the limits of the human ability to describe God. Despite best efforts, in actual fact God looks nothing like any image that anyone could produce. For example, Michelangelo painted God with the appearance of a European. This doesn't mean that people should stop producing images of God; it just means that any artistic image of God should be understood merely as a means of helping us to focus on one or more aspects of God, within the limits of human ability.

Jesus Christ: True Image of the Unseen God

While no single thing can ever describe God fully, there is one person who did: Jesus Christ. No truer image of God is possible for people. Jesus gave human beings the fullest description of God that they could ever want or manage. Even from the moment of his birth, Jesus was a full and true image of God, just by being himself. Jesus showed God to people, not only in what he said but also in what he did. That is why the Gospels are so valuable. In other words, Christians believe that the best place to look for an image of God is to look at Jesus. Reflect on what Jesus said and did, because that is the best available description of God that you will ever find.

Talking Points

1. Name some experiences that you have had in life that give you a hint of what God is like. Then go on to suggest a single word to sum up the sense of God that these experiences give you.
2. Suggest a word to describe God to go with each image that is presented in the quotations listed opposite (e.g. 'Creator' for Genesis 1:1).
3. From the answers that you have given to the first two questions, which of those images of God appeals to you most? Why?
4. Can you describe and/or name any famous works of art that show images of God?
5. What images of God have appealed to you most over the years? Are there any that you remember from the different Religion books you have had?

Why Don't You?

Choose a line or more from one (only) of the following psalms and provide a simple image to go with it: Psalm 8, Psalm 19, Psalm 23 or Psalm 148. In one or two sentences, explain why you chose that particular image. As a class, you might like to make a display of your illustrated quotations.

Why Don't You?

- Take a look at some fine examples of religious art of European and Russian culture at:
www.christusrex.org/www2/art/gallery.htm
- Search the Internet for some images of Jesus produced by different cultures and peoples. For example, you might visit:
www.rejesus.co.uk/expressions/faces_jesus/
- Do a Bible search for the following passages, which describe God in feminine terms: Isaiah 49:14-15; Isaiah 66:13; Psalm 131:2-3.

Why Don't You?

- Do a Bible search for what the New Testament says about Jesus being an image of God: John 1:14; John 14:9; John 10:11-18; Colossians 1:15.
- Reflect on some of the words of Jesus that give us an image of God: Luke 15; Matthew 5:43-48. Can you suggest any other stories from memory?

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

'ME' Folder

Include a piece on the theme: 'A person, an event, a happening, or a thing that helps me to feel God is with me.'



Jesus comes to you in Holy Communion to help you to become his image – his body – in the world today. St Paul, about whom you will learn more in Term 3, is a good example of someone whose image of God changed hugely during his lifetime and who himself was a good example of someone who saw himself as part of the body of Christ.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Jesus said to his friends: 'Love one another as I have loved you.' He asked us to become images of his love. He comes to us in Holy Communion to change and transform us so that we may indeed be his body in the world. Let us pray:

All

Jesus, you have no body but ours,
no hands, no feet on earth but ours.
Ours are the eyes through which your kindness shines.
Ours are the feet with which you walk to do good.
Ours are the hands with which you bless the world.
Jesus, you have no body now on earth but ours.*

Sign of the Cross

**based on the prayer of St Teresa of Avila*

You were baptised ‘in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit’. You bless yourself in the same way before most Church celebrations and before you pray. Yet, how much do you know of the Blessed Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit represented by that phrase? This lesson offers you an opportunity to become more aware of the connection – the relationship – at the heart of the Blessed Trinity, in whose life you are invited to share. But before that, take some time to recall how vital that relationship is to life on earth.

Invited to Be in Relationship

Relationship is at the core of everything that exists in our universe, says Nellie McLaughlin in her book, *Out of Wonder*. She writes:

Who am I without the Sun, the elements and stars from which I was born? Where would the primrose be without the seed, soil, water and flower community that nurtured [looked after] it?... No being exists in the universe except in the community of the whole [universe]... To be is to be in relationship... Everything that exists is kin [family], is bound in essence to everything else, is one. John Muir, Scottish-American naturalist, captured this reality when he wrote: ‘When you try to take out anything by itself, you find it hitched to everything else in the universe.’

In the recent past, people have ignored their relationship with the earth. As a result, the earth has been put at serious risk of terrible damage. You explored this in *Fully Alive 2* (pages 30–41). Human beings have been producing ever-greater amounts of carbon dioxide. High levels of this gas have been turning the earth’s atmosphere into a heat trap. Scientists reckon the climate is becoming warmer as a result and that this in turn is causing Climate Change. In particular, weather has been becoming more extreme. Forests that could have helped to soak up carbon dioxide from the atmosphere have been cut down for quick profits.



Talking Points

1. On a scale of one to ten (where one means 'completely unconnected' and where ten represents 'very connected'), how connected do you feel to (a) the earth; (b) your class; (c) your local community at home? What do your answers say about you? Suggest reasons for your answers.
2. List some of the activities that you do that help keep you aware of your connection to other people and to the wider world around you. Comment on the list that emerges.
3. How well or otherwise are your choices in answer to question 2 reflected in your answers to question 1?

Talking Points

1. The way in which 'yawning' spreads through a group is an example of the influence people can have on one another. Can you suggest other examples of ways in which you influence others and vice versa?
2. 'If you keep yourself connected to the world, you will find it easier to keep yourself connected to God.' Do you agree? Why?/Why not?
3. 'If you respect your relationship with God, you will respect your relationship with the world.' Evaluate this statement.

If this trend continues, sea-levels will rise as the polar ice-caps melt. Low-lying coastal regions and islands will disappear and homes will be lost. More frequent heat waves and failing air quality will affect the old, the sick and all who have breathing difficulties. Farming communities will be abandoned, as long dry periods and destructive bursts of heavy rain turn land into desert. In other words, if people don't change their ways, there will be serious consequences. Human beings are invited to live in right relationship with the earth. They refuse that invitation at their peril.



In Relation to Each Other and to God

You probably think of yourself as an independent, individual person: someone distinct and separate, someone with your own mind, someone who can make your own choices. But, as you saw above, this is only partly true. The greater fact is that you are connected to all that is around you. You exist only in relation to other people and other things. You don't exist on your own.

If you are connected to the universe, then you are also connected to the God who made it. In creating the world, God also created you. In keeping the world in existence, God also keeps you in existence as part of that world. Just as you are invited to take seriously your relationship with the world, so you are also invited to take seriously your relationship with God. God's love and friendship for you will give you energy to relate well to the world God loves.

The Rublev Icon: An image of the Trinity

The icon on page 75, made by Andrei Rublev in AD 1425, recalls a story about Abraham in the Old Testament: three figures are sitting together to share a meal prepared for them by Abraham and Sarah. The Bible story (see Genesis 18) tells how they are the presence of God to Abraham and Sarah. As Rublev has made it, the icon goes further and represents the Blessed Trinity: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit. The figure on the left wears a gold robe,

a sign of special dignity in the Russian Orthodox tradition: this is God the Father. The figure in the middle wears red, a sign of blood shed on the cross: this figure is Jesus, God the Son. The figure on the right wears green, the colour of life and new growth: this is God the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of life. If you look closely, you will notice that the features of all three figures are identical. This was Rublev's way of representing the unity of God.



Notice how the colour blue is used in this icon. All three figures wear it, though very little of it is seen on the figure of God the Father. This is because blue is used here to represent what we know of God, and we know very little about God the Father. On the other hand, we know a lot about God and God's nature in Jesus. The same is true of the Holy Spirit, whose gifts and fruits may be seen at work in many places.

Through this icon, Rublev presented the core Christian beliefs about God:

- There is one God who is Father, Son and Holy Spirit. For this reason, God is called the Blessed Trinity.
- The Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are distinct, though not separate. This is summed up by describing God as 'triune', meaning 'three-in-one'.
- The Father is the one who creates everything, who is the origin of all that exists. The Son is the one who was sent by the Father to speak God's word to us and to save us from sin and selfishness. The Holy Spirit, who was sent at Pentecost, stays with us and continues to inspire people to become good and to be holy.
- Although the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit are each identified with these particular roles, they all act together as one; they do not act independently of one another. God is not a solitary being. At the heart of the reality of God, there is the relationship between Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

No language can fully describe God. In expressing their beliefs about the Blessed Trinity, Christians hold on to two facts at the same time, namely: (1) God is one – there is only one God; (2) Yet we have three distinctive experiences of God as Father, as Son and as Holy Spirit.

Talking Points

1. You already know various things about each member of the Blessed Trinity. Make a list of what you know about each. (Note: You may find it helpful to recall the Creed if you are stuck for ideas.)
2. Recall some of the prayers that you know involving the Trinity: the Sign of the Cross, the Glory Be to the Father, the Creed, the Glory to God (from the Sunday Mass).

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Why Don't You?

Do a Bible search for important moments when different members of the Blessed Trinity are mentioned in the story of Jesus. You might begin with the following from the Gospel according to Matthew:

Matthew 1:13-17 (The Baptism of Jesus)

Matthew 6:5-15 (Jesus teaches his disciples to pray the 'Our Father')

Matthew 11:25-27 (The relationship between Jesus and his Father)

Matthew 16:13-20 (Peter declares who Jesus is)

Matthew 17:1-8 (God describes Jesus as the Son of God)

Matthew 28:16-20 (Baptism in the name of the Trinity)



This is a modern-day version of Andrei Rublev's icon of the Most Holy Trinity. It was 'written' or painted by Sr Paula, a member of the Cistercian community at St Mary's Abbey, Glencairn, County Waterford. To emphasise the circle of love into which God invites us, Sr Paula's version of the icon is circular rather than rectangular in shape.

Note: In this version of the icon, God the Father is shown wearing a cerise robe. This reflects the Greek Orthodox tradition.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Andrei Rublev made the Trinity icon to remind us of an important connection in our life: the connection between God and us. The three figures represent the Blessed Trinity: God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. Around the table where they sit, there is an empty space. The picture is a way of saying that God has left a special space for you. God is always with you.

Take a moment to become quiet and still. Do your best to set aside any worries or concerns. Fix your gaze on the icon image. Focus on the space at the front of the table. This space is for you. God is inviting you to recognise your place in the circle of life. God is inviting you to take your place in life. God is inviting you:

- to be yourself
- to be as God made you and wants you to be
- to be fully alive
- to listen to your conscience
- to help others to be fully alive
- to love God as much as you are able
- to be like Jesus
- to respond to the Holy Spirit
- to share in the Eucharist.*

Take a moment to focus quietly on the space that is there for you. As you do, listen inside yourself to hear how God is inviting you to take your place in life today. *(Pause)* For a few moments now, ask God to help you to take your place in life.

Sign of the Cross

**Note: The cup at the centre of the table is like a chalice that is used at the Eucharist. It contains the head of a lamb: this is a symbol of Jesus, who is called the Lamb of God, and a reminder of Holy Communion.*

In Your Religion Journal

Across the top of the page, write a title: 'The Blessed Trinity'. Underneath, include some pictures to represent the work of the Blessed Trinity: e.g. a picture from nature or outer space, to represent God the Father's role as creator; a picture of people helping one another, to represent God the Son's role as the one who saves us and shows us how to live; and a picture of a person praying, to represent the role of God the Holy Spirit, who inspires us to be good and to be holy.

You might like to copy out one of the prayers that include the Blessed Trinity or you might like to (let the Holy Spirit help you to) compose one of your own.

Why Don't You?

- As a further example of how the world is connected, you might look up the 'Butterfly Effect' at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Butterfly_effect
- Take two acoustic guitars and tune them to the same pitch (or level). Stand them facing each other. Then firmly pluck one of the bass strings of the first. After a second or two, put your hand on that string of the first guitar to silence it. Then listen to the other guitar: you should hear a faint sound of the same guitar string on the other guitar sounding the same note. This is called 'resonance'. The two strings do not touch. What does the fact of 'resonance' suggest about any connection between the two strings? Do you think other things might be connected in a similar way?

Prayer Service For Advent

Preparatory Notes:

- The Church season of Advent usually begins in the last week of November. This would be the best time for this prayer service, even if it interrupts the given sequence of lessons.
- Consider in advance if and how the general space might be darkened for this prayer service. However, remember to allow sufficient light for readers.
- Prepare in advance the index-sized cards (or pieces of paper) suggested for the final part of this service. Label them on one side with the words 'Dream' and 'Hope'.
- Distribute these immediately before the prayer service begins and invite all to set them carefully to one side until the point when they are needed.
- You might like to demonstrate briefly how the card is to be held later in the service, as follows: resting on open upturned palms, with hands held side by side.
- Assign the Reader parts in advance. You may need to have readers take more than one part according to the number in the group. It might be helpful to readers to remind them to read at a reverent pace.
- You might practise reading together the psalm 'The Lord is my shepherd', so as to set a prayerful pace.
- You might use a Bible for the scripture reading in Part Two, as a means of having it proclaimed more formally and reverently.
- Consider having some reflective, unobtrusive background music throughout.
- You might consider using an oratory (or other suitable space) for this prayer service.
- As an alternative (or an addition to) an Advent Wreath, you might prepare a prayer space display. This may be simply made using some violet material and some sacking (with the candle, in the absence of the wreath) and a Bible.
- An Advent Wreath may be made from a circle of greenery together with three violet candles and one rose candle (for the third week of Advent).
- You might consider inviting the school chaplain to take the part of the Leader. Alternatively, this part may be taken by the teacher.
- You could use a hymn or sacred song to begin and to conclude.
- Consider using Psalm 139 in place of the psalm provided in Part Two.

Leader

Before we begin, we take a moment to focus and be still. *(Pause)*
We are here today to reflect and to pray and to remember certain things in this time leading up to Christmas. May God be in our minds and hearts as, together, we begin...

Sign of the Cross

PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

Reader 1

For us, these are the shortest days of the year. The contrast between darkness and light is at its most extreme. It's dark when we rise in the morning; by the time we get home, little daylight remains.

Reader 2

The days have become colder too. It can be a time of frost and freezing temperatures. The leaves are long gone off the trees. Animals hibernate. Food is scarce. Nature is at its lowest point.

Reader 3

During these days, the sun doesn't rise very high in the sky. It traces a low arc across the sky. On days when the sun breaks through, it casts long shadows across the ground.

Reader 1

For nature, this is the season of winter. For Christians, however, this is also another season. This season of the extremes of darkness and light is the Church season of Advent.

Reader 2

It is a time when we remember other senses in which darkness and light are part of the world outside us; it is a time when we remember other ways in which darkness and light are part of the world within us.

Reader 3

Advent is a time when the longer hours of darkness can echo the darkness that is sometimes in our life. We might feel a sort of darkness in life when we are not sure what to choose for the future. We might feel something like darkness around us when we are going through loss and mourning.

Reader 1

Advent is a time when the longer shadows of nature may remind us of shadows of another sort in our life: shadows such as being in bad form or lacking in self-confidence. Other things too can cast a

shadow over life: war and violence, natural disasters and political oppression, world poverty and hunger.

Reader 2

Advent is a time when the way winter curbs nature calls to mind some of the ways we get held back in life. Time and again, we cannot do as we want. There are times too when we fail, and some other way forward has to be found.

Reader 3

For a moment we remember other ways in which darkness is part of us. We take an honest look at ourselves and own up to the darkness we have within us.

Reader 1

Has your life been dark with selfish pride when you looked down on someone else? Have you been happy to see other people fail or get hurt? *(Pause)*

Reader 2

Has your life been dark with jealousy, with envy and with greed? Have you been hurtful or mean to anyone because of what they are or what they have? Have you taken more than you need? *(Pause)*

Reader 3

Has your life been dark with uncontrolled anger? Have you spoken without thinking? *(Pause)*

Reader 1

During these days, we decorate our homes and streets with artificial lights. Sometimes we also fill ourselves with artificial life and light. Do we let images of wealth make us forget the happiness of ordinary, everyday life? *(Pause)*

Reader 2

Do we let images of success make us forget the value of small achievements? *(Pause)*

Reader 3

Do we look at the images of beauty and become blind to the beauty with which God made us? *(Pause)*

Leader

It is against this sense of darkness and light that we will light this candle (on our Advent Wreath). It reminds us of Christ, who overcame the darkness of life and brought us into true light.

The candle is lit, slowly and reverently. Then the following is said:

Reader 1

Christ our light!

All

Thanks be to God.

Reader 2

Christ our light!

All

Thanks be to God.

Reader 3

Christ our light!

All

Thanks be to God.

PART TWO: THE WORD OF GOD

Leader

Jesus called himself 'the light of the world'. He is the one sent by God our Father to overcome the darkness and difficulty of life. The evangelist Luke told how Jesus described this mission. Let us listen to the story from the Gospel according to Luke:

Reader 4 (Luke 4:16-19)

Jesus went back to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and as usual he went to the meeting place on the Sabbath. When he stood up to read from the Scriptures, he was given the book of Isaiah the prophet. He opened it and read, 'The Lord's Spirit has come to me, because he has chosen me to tell the good news to the poor. The Lord has sent me to announce freedom for prisoners, to give sight to the blind, to free everyone who suffers, and to say, "This is the year the Lord has chosen."'

Leader

So Jesus saw himself as someone who helps people who suffer in life and who find life difficult and harsh. He is the one who knows what difficulty is and who is with us when we cannot find our way. We remember that he is with us as we pray the words of the psalm together:

All (Psalm 23)

The Lord is my shepherd;
there is nothing I shall want.
Fresh and green are the pastures
where he gives me repose.
Near restful waters he leads me
to revive my drooping spirit.
He guides me along the right path;
he is true to his name.
If I should walk in the valley of darkness
no evil would I fear.

You are there with your crook and your staff;
with these you give me comfort.
Surely goodness and kindness shall follow
me all the days of my life.
In the Lord's own house shall I dwell
for ever and ever.

Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son,
and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
is now and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen.

Leader

Jesus has overcome the darkness of this world and will return again in glory. We praise him as we say:

All

Dying you destroyed our death.
Rising you restored our life.
Lord Jesus, come in glory.

Note: The above acclamation may be used as a response to the following prayers.

Reader 5

That the evil of war may be banished from the earth: that we may give up destructive and hurtful ways.

Reader 6

That refugees may once again return to their homes and find your peace: may we not fail in our support for the agencies that work on their behalf.

Reader 7

That the earth may be protected from harm and damage: may we do our part to preserve the world's balance and beauty.

Reader 8

For those whose lives are darkened as a result of rumour, gossip and false judgement: that they may find hope in your victory over what is false and that we may be careful in the things we say.

Reader 9

For any who are caught up in addiction, in debt, in worry or in despair: that we may help each other to bear life's burdens as we await your return.

Reader 10

For those taken from us in death: that they may share for ever in the peace and rest God has promised.

Leader

As children of God, let us pray as Jesus taught us, saying:

All

Our Father... (or *Ár nAthair...*)

PART THREE: GUIDED REFLECTION

Leader

During Advent, we remember how Christ came among us at the first Christmas. During Advent also, we remember the time of the return in glory of the risen Jesus. At that time, God's best gifts to us will be fulfilled. So we focus now for a while on our hopes and dreams. I invite you to take up the card you were given earlier.

Take up the piece of card (paper) you received earlier. (Pause)

Look once again at what is written on it. See the word 'Dream' and the word 'Hope'. (Pause)

Take the card now and let it rest on the palms of your open hands.

Allow your hands to rest in front of you. (Pause)

Allow your eyes to close. Take a moment to become quiet and still. (Pause)

Sense how light the piece of card (paper) is. (Pause)

Take a moment to be aware that Jesus is with you. (Pause)

Greet Jesus and welcome him. (Pause)

Jesus asks you now about your dream, about your hope. Take a moment to share with him about that dream, that hope. (Pause)

In the quiet of your inner self, listen to Jesus now as he shares with you about God's dreams and hopes for you. (Pause)

Thank Jesus for anything he may have shared with you. (Pause)

Jesus promises you that God's deepest dreams and hopes will be fulfilled. He blesses you now. (Pause)

Take a further moment of quiet and stillness, and when you are ready you may open your eyes. (Pause)

Keep your piece of card (paper). Later on this evening, you might take some time to write or draw something on it to remind you of your hopes and dreams for your life and of God's hopes and dreams for your life. Let it be a reminder of your Advent prayertime today.

Sign of the Cross

Christmas

For some, Christmas and the time leading up to it can be the most wonderful time. It brings them closer to family and friends. It's a time for presents and the good things of life. For others, it can be a difficult time, when they feel more isolated and lonely. So what is it about this time of year that brings so much happiness to some and so much sadness to others? This lesson gives you an opportunity to reflect again on what Christmas is about and what you make of it.

Talking Points

1. How do you think Christmas might be for someone in prison? in hospital? from a family that is separated? in a house where there has been a recent death? Should they celebrate Christmas? Why?/Why not?
2. Do you think you would be able to celebrate Christmas in such circumstances? Why?/Why not?

The Days Before Christmas

Joanne was in her final year at school. She had her heart set on becoming a social worker. By way of work experience, she had joined a local voluntary group that visited people who were elderly. It was one of those dark evenings just before Christmas when the town was lit up with Christmas lights and people were busy shopping. Joanne and Linda, one of the group members, were going to visit a woman called Mrs Martin. 'A bit of company can stop someone feeling lonely when they're not able to go out,' Linda said. 'Sometimes people forget that amidst the fuss of getting ready for Christmas.' Mrs Martin still lived in her own home. Every day the 'home help' woman came in to help her to start the day. She had also helped put up some lights and decorations. The place looked lovely and Christmassy.

Mrs Martin was really interested to hear about Joanne's choice of career. When Linda and Joanne were about to go, Mrs Martin said that she was worried about Mr Jones next door. 'I'd swear I heard a strange noise this afternoon,' she said, 'like a great big thump on the floor. I do hope nothing has happened.' Linda and Joanne went next door and knocked gently. There was no reply and the lights were off. They went back to Mrs Martin. 'Hold on,' she said, 'he gave me a key to the house for safe-keeping a while back. Here it is.' Linda and Joanne let themselves in and called out for Mr Jones. They found a light-switch and turned it on. What a sight they saw: wallpaper coming off the wall; bills and junk-mail unopened on the hall floor; the air was stale and the place was freezing. 'Look,' said Linda, pointing to the half-



conscious figure lying on the floor. 'If you get something to warm him, I'll phone the emergency services,' she said. Joanne got on her knees beside him on the floor. 'Hello, Mr Jones,' she began, not really knowing what to say. 'My name is Joanne. You must have fallen.' She pulled the rug off the sofa and put it over him. It was covered with coffee stains and biscuit crumbs, but it would do for now. It was four days away from Christmas. As she looked around, she could not see a card, a tree or even a decoration, and there wasn't a single photograph in the place. How did Mr Jones get to the point of such isolation and self-neglect? How could someone not know about him?

Poverty at Christmas and Throughout the Year

For many in this country, Christmas is a time of eating, drinking, celebrating and spending. At the same time, often unseen and unnoticed, there are people here who are unable to join with the celebrating because they are poor. Few people in this country have absolutely no money, but quite a few may have so little money that they are unable to join in the Christmas celebrations or any other celebrations at any other time of the year. They have no choice.

How do you define 'poor' in this country? Nowadays, you could say a person is 'poor' when their income or welfare payment is around half of the average take-home pay. That's the point at which the lack of money gets so severe that a person has few choices, if any. For example, they may no longer be able to:

- keep up with paying the bills (rent or mortgage, electricity, etc)
- buy essentials such as food and clothing
- afford proper heating
- replace broken equipment at home
- afford the extra costs that go with further education.

Talking Points

1. 'People love a bit of company; it helps them when they're not able to go out.' Do you think this is true? Why?/Why not?
2. Joanne asked herself how Mr Jones got to the point of such isolation and self-neglect. What do you think she meant? Could such a thing only be true for elderly people? Explain your answers.
3. Why do you think Mr Jones had made no preparations for Christmas? Why do you think Mrs Martin had made such preparations?

One-Minute Soapbox

Talk for an uninterrupted minute or two, beginning with: 'If I could change one thing about Christmas, I...'

Why Don't You?

As a class, describe this year's ideal Christmas. What would you consider to be the best way to approach this Christmas? Give reasons for your answers.

Talking Points

1. 'Christmas is for people who are rich.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not?
2. What does the word 'poverty' mean to you? Complete the phrase: 'Poverty means...' (Note: The bullet points on page 81 give some examples).
3. For Mr Jones, poverty meant being an elderly person with a low income and with few friends. List some other groups of people who might be badly affected by poverty.
4. In your opinion, what are the possible causes of poverty? Is it always a person's own fault if they are poor?
5. Do you know of any organisations that can help others who are affected by poverty?

Why Don't You?

Prearrange a visit from a representative of a local voluntary group that makes a special effort at Christmas. Invite them to tell you about their work as a volunteer. (You might like to include a short prayertime in such a visit and organise a class member to say a word of thanks afterwards.)



While the word 'poor' in this country normally means a shortage of money, a person can also be 'poor' in the sense that they lack friends and family, health, or even a home and security. For some people, no matter how much money they have or spend, regardless of having many choices available to them, Christmas is the most difficult time of year. It can be a time when people feel most lonely and vulnerable. Christmas is also different for the world's poorest people and for those millions forced to flee their own homes. Their Christmas celebrations will not be in the least like Christmas as it appears in the magazines and advertisements here.

Christmas in the Gospels

Jesus was born in poverty. As you will see below, his birth showed that God is close to people in life's pain and difficulty. Later on, Jesus faced suffering and death, the most serious issue of all for human beings. Through the resurrection of Jesus, God the Father showed that death is not the end and that God has planned a new life for everyone. This Good News began with the birth of Jesus, which Christmas celebrates. So there is very good reason to celebrate at Christmas, even (and perhaps especially) if life is difficult.

The **GOSPEL ACCORDING TO LUKE** describes how the angel Gabriel appeared to Mary and told her that her baby would be called Jesus and he would be the Son of God. When Jesus was born, Mary and Joseph were unable to find any room. After his birth, Jesus was wrapped in cloths and placed in a manger (an animal's feed-holder). His first visitors were shepherds. In Jewish society of that time, shepherds belonged to the lowest class of people; they were not considered 'decent'. From the start, the story of Jesus included everyone, especially those who were excluded by others.

At the start of the **GOSPEL ACCORDING TO MATTHEW**, the angel that appeared to Joseph told him that Jesus was God's Son and he invited Joseph to adopt the child. Later on, Joseph did this and gave the

child the name Jesus. According to this Gospel, Jesus was under threat from the start. The story tells how Herod killed innocent children while trying to kill the infant Jesus. Yet, the influence of Jesus was to spread far. The Magi – the visitors who came bringing gifts – represent all who come to Jesus.

In the **GOSPEL ACCORDING TO JOHN**, there is no story about a birth at Bethlehem. Instead, at the start it describes Jesus as the Word of God and proclaims that (as it says in the Angelus) 'The Word was made flesh and dwelt among us'. The word 'Incarnation' means literally 'becoming flesh' or becoming human. It is the term that is used to say that Jesus, the Son of God, became human. Jesus is both God and man.

A time to pray

Note: Before the prayertime, you might give some consideration to the atmosphere and focus of the room. If possible, make a prayer space using a piece of cloth or sacking. If you can, include a crib (or at least a manger) and a candle. To emphasise the Gospel as God's Word, the candle might be taken and held aloft beside the reader. Consider also the possibility of having some music or singing. There are many CDs of Christmas hymns and songs whose words are available on the Internet.

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

As Christmas gets nearer, we remember how Jesus was born years ago.

Reader

This reading is from the Gospel according to Luke (2:6-12; 16-20).

While Mary and Joseph were in Bethlehem, the time came for the baby to be born and Mary gave birth to her firstborn, a son. She wrapped him in cloths and placed him in a manger, because there was no room for them in the inn.

And there were shepherds living out in the fields nearby, keeping watch over their flocks at night. An angel of the Lord appeared to them and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.'

So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph, and the baby, who was lying in the manger. When they had seen him, they spread the word concerning what had been told them about this child, and all who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said to them. Mary treasured up all these things and pondered them in her heart. The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all the things they had heard and seen, which were just as they had been told.

(All may join together in singing an appropriate Christmas song at this point.)

Teacher

Jesus was born in poverty. We remember those who find Christmas difficult because they lack money or friends or family. *(Pause)* We ask God to help us to do what we can for those around us who are in need.

(Pause)

The birth of Jesus brought joy to Mary and Joseph. We look forward to the good things that may come with Christmas for us and we give thanks to God. *(Pause)* We give thanks particularly for the people who help make Christmas a good time for us: for friends, family and entertainers. *(Pause)*

Sign of the Cross

Why Don't You?

- Check out the following website for more information on organisations that help people living alone: www.alone.ie. (This website contains some stories of the difficulties and dangers of living alone, particularly in the later years of life.)
- You might also like to search the Internet for more information on the St Vincent de Paul society.
- Consider using gift aid certificates as a way of giving this Christmas.

Talking Points

1. 'Even if you are sad or lonely, even if you are sick, there is good reason for you to celebrate at Christmas.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not?
2. What kind of things might make a person not want to bother with Christmas? Give reasons why you think this might be so.

In Your Religion Journal

Divide a page into two sections:

(1) My approach to Christmas five years ago; (2) My approach to Christmas today. Then ask yourself: Has my approach to Christmas changed in recent years? If so, how does my approach differ now?

Respond to these questions either in writing or by providing images in the sections on your page.

Talking Points

1. Why do you think Rachel didn't know the cleaner's name?
2. Based on the story, how would Rachel describe the way she related to the cleaner? Would she feel that she had a good enough attitude to the cleaner? Would you agree with her?
3. Why do you think the professor put in the question about the cleaner's name?
4. Name some of the different people with different jobs in your school community. Does your attitude to them or your outlook on them make a difference to your school community? In what way?
5. What sort of attitude or outlook (or way of relating to others) helps to make a good school community?

In Your Religion Journal

Did you ever feel that you didn't really count as far as someone else was concerned? Draw a picture or write a few words to express what that was like for you.

Or

Name one person to whom you will show more respect in future and write a note about how you might do it.

One-Minute Soapbox

You have one or two minutes to tell the class about a time when you were aware of a good attitude in yourself or others.

Check Your Attitude! Check Your Outlook!

Life isn't only about what happens to you. The way you react to others, the way you think about others and the way you relate to others is important too, as the girl in the following story found out...



A Valuable Lesson

Rachel was half-way through her first year at nursing school. She was a hard-working student, and so, when the professor surprised the class with an unexpected test one day, it didn't worry Rachel greatly. She breezed her way through the questions, until she came to the last one; it threw her completely. The question read: 'Name the woman who cleans the college.' Surely it was some kind of a joke. Yes, she had seen the cleaning woman several times. She was tall, dark-haired and in her fifties. But how would she know her name? So Rachel handed in her answers, leaving the last one blank. Before the class ended, one student asked if the last question would count. 'Indeed it will!' said the professor. 'Throughout your working life, you will meet many people. They all count. They deserve your attention and care, even if all you do is smile and say Hello!' It was a lesson that Rachel never forgot. She also learned that the cleaner's name was Dorothy.

Your Attitude Matters!

You have your own way of relating to others. You have your own way of reacting to others. You have your own way of treating yourself. Everyone has their own way of behaving. These things point to an attitude in each person. For instance, a person with a kind or caring attitude will notice if someone is missing or is having a bad day. A person with a lazy attitude won't help if someone drops something or needs assistance. A person with a selfish attitude will take more than their share, even if it means that others don't get any. A person with a negative attitude will always behave negatively: they will criticise; they will complain; they will give up even before they start; they won't bother to try.

Your attitude is vital because it shapes the way that you treat others and yourself. There are different types of attitude, and not all of them are positive. Checking and challenging your attitude is a good thing because it can challenge you to change the way you treat others.

Our Attitude to Ourselves: Self-Worth

One of the most important attitudes that you have is your attitude to yourself. How you value yourself can affect everything that you do and say. There is a name for your attitude towards yourself: it's called 'self-worth'. When your sense of self-worth is positive, you accept yourself for who you are; you are willing to believe in yourself and to work at developing yourself and your abilities, and you expect others to have a proper sense of appreciation for you. When your sense of self-worth is negative, you are down on yourself; you lose faith in your abilities and you put less energy into developing yourself. If you believe yourself to be 'worthless' and of 'no value', then these negative beliefs will be apparent in all your behaviours and interactions with others.

Your Self-Worth Can Grow

Your attitude towards yourself can change. It depends on how you see yourself and on how others treat you. This includes your relationship with God. Being aware of God's love for you will have a positive effect on your sense of self-worth. When you allow yourself to realise that God made you the unique person you are, with your own special personality and gifts and abilities, you will see yourself more positively, and this will have a positive effect on the way you treat yourself and others. The prayertime that follows will help you to reflect some more on this.

Why Don't You?

Imagine that a job has been advertised in your local shop. Get into groups of four and make up three questions to ask those who apply for the job, e.g. Do you feel that you are suited to this job?

How would you go about doing this job? What do you hope to get from doing this job?

Then one student takes on the role of job applicant and is 'interviewed' by the other three students. Before the 'interview', the student who plays the part of the job applicant secretly chooses a particular attitude, e.g. lazy, positive, selfish, proud, considerate or kind. The other three have to guess what the attitude is from the answers they receive to the questions they ask.

In Your Religion Journal

Name one person who changed your attitude towards someone or something. Describe how your behaviour changed as a result.



In small groups, discuss the following: 'One person's dream will be another person's nightmare – it all depends on attitude.' You might explore this statement by looking at various experiences, e.g. moving house, being asked to speak in public (at assembly) or taking your turn to read at Mass. Nominate one person from each group to report to the class on your discussion.

Or

Pick five people to have a discussion for the whole class on the same theme. They may support or contradict one another respectfully, or they may introduce new ideas to the conversation as it proceeds. Decide on a time-limit for the conversation, and stop it when it reaches this limit. If no one speaks, then allow the silence.

'ME' Folder

How would you sum up your attitude to yourself? Write the title 'My Attitude to Myself' across a page and underneath include words and/or pictures to express your answer.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Why Don't You?

Take one of the Bible-based phrases used in the prayertime. Talk about how it might help you to take a more positive view of yourself. What effect might that have on your attitude and the way you treat others?

In Your Religion Journal

Write your own name and follow it with your favourite Bible phrase from those given in the prayertime. Decorate the page.

Before the Next Lesson...

Go for a short walk (ten or fifteen minutes). As you do, allow yourself to be aware of the experience of being outside and of being in touch with the world of nature.



A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

The characters and stories of the Bible let us know that God is with us. Their words tell of God's care for us and of how God sees us. Together we will read some of those words now:

All (*slowly and reverently*)

'You are made not much lower than the angels.'

(*Hebrews 2:7-9; Psalm 8:4-6*)

'You are made in the image of God.'

(*Colossians 3:10; Genesis 1:26-27*)

'Your name is written in the Book of Life.'

(*Philippians 4:3*)

'You are one of the anointed and sealed.'

(*2 Corinthians 1:21-22; Ephesians 1:3-14*)

'You have a seat in the heavenly places.'

(*Ephesians 2:6-10*)

'You are an heir of God with an inheritance in heaven.'

(*1 Peter 1:4; Romans 8:17*)

'God...has placed you in the body and given you a function...both necessary and pleasing to [God].'

(*1 Corinthians 12:18, 22*)

Teacher

Take a quiet moment to yourself now. Pick your favourite phrase out of what we have just read. Repeat it several times silently within yourself. (*Pause*)

Sign of the Cross

Jesus' Attitude To The World

Term 2, Lesson 2

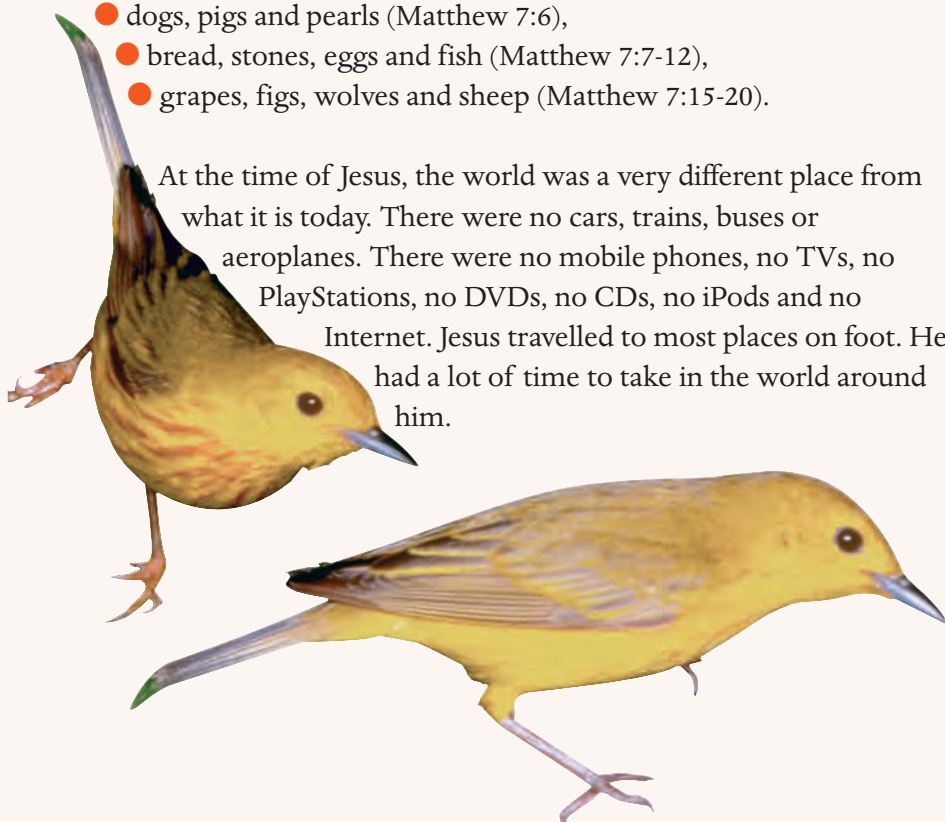
The last lesson gave you an opportunity to reflect on your attitude and outlook. This lesson will give you a chance to be more aware of your own attitude and the attitude of Jesus to the world of nature.

Jesus Connected with the World Around Him

It's not hard to believe that Jesus was connected with the world around him. Read his words in the Gospels and you will see: he often refers to nature. For example, in the famous passage known as the Sermon on the Mount (Matthew 5:1–7:29), Jesus mentions:

- salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16),
- the sun and the rain (Matthew 5:43-48),
- moths and rust (Matthew 6:19-21),
- birds and flowers (Matthew 6:25-30),
- dogs, pigs and pearls (Matthew 7:6),
- bread, stones, eggs and fish (Matthew 7:7-12),
- grapes, figs, wolves and sheep (Matthew 7:15-20).

At the time of Jesus, the world was a very different place from what it is today. There were no cars, trains, buses or aeroplanes. There were no mobile phones, no TVs, no PlayStations, no DVDs, no CDs, no iPods and no Internet. Jesus travelled to most places on foot. He had a lot of time to take in the world around him.



In Touch with Nature

Thousands were killed by the tsunami that occurred on 26 December 2004. Helicopters were dispatched to the smaller islands to see what help the local tribes needed after the disaster. However, aid workers and government officials found that tribes on the Nicobar and Andaman islands survived. They believe that it was their knowledge of the movement of wind, sea and birds that saved them. 'They can smell the wind. They can gauge the depth of the sea with the sound of their oars. They have a sixth sense which we don't possess,' said Ashish Roy, a local

Talking Points

1. Jesus noticed the world of nature. He spoke about it. How would you describe his attitude towards it?
2. Would you say that you pay as much attention to the world of nature as Jesus did? Why?/Why not?
3. How would you account for any similarities or differences in your relationship with and your attitude towards the world of nature and Jesus' relationship with the world of nature?

Why Don't You?

Either in groups or as a whole class, share some answers to the following questions: Is there a favourite place that you go to when you have something that you want to think about or a decision to make? What does the place offer you? Before you do this, you might enjoy listening to Margaret Woodward's two-minute broadcast of 4 January 2005 in the BBC Radio Ulster series 'This Place' at: www.bbc.co.uk/northernireland/community/thisplace/index.shtml Click on 'regions' to find broadcasts about places near your home place.

Talking Points

1. The native people benefited from their awareness of the wind, the sea and the birds. Suggest some benefits that being in touch with nature might bring you in your life.
2. If you went on the walk suggested at the end of the previous lesson, did you feel that you gained something from doing so? Explain your answer.
3. Do you think it is harder to connect with the world of nature when you live in a city rather than in the country? Why?/Why not? What might you miss when you don't 'tune in' to the world around you?
4. Suggest some reasons why cities and towns have parks.
5. People often go on holiday to places of natural beauty. Why do you think this might be?

In Your Religion Journal

List some way(s) in which you might improve your relationship with the world around you.

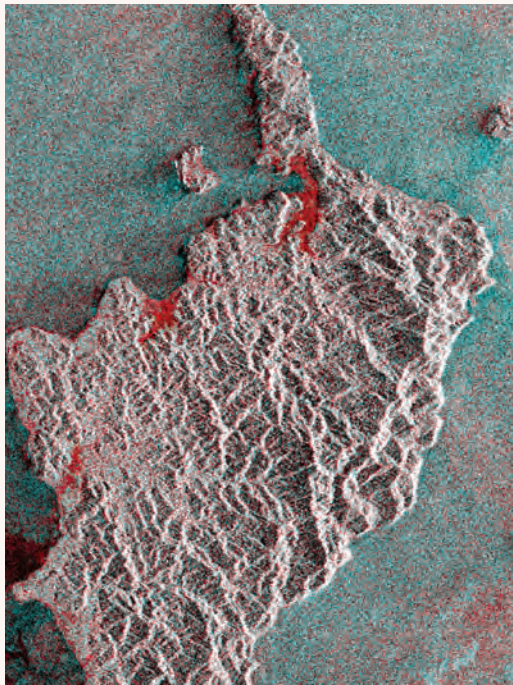
Why Don't You?

Do a search on the Internet for images of nature. Print out your favourite and put it in a place where you can see it. Look at it from time to time.

Talking Points

1. Can you give an example of anything in the world around him that helped Jesus to be more aware of his relationship with God the Father?
2. Can you think of things or events in the natural world around you that would help you to be more aware of God? Make a list.

environmentalist and lawyer who has called on the courts to protect the tribes by preventing their contact with the outside world. It appears that many tribesmen fled the shores well before the waves hit the coast, where they would typically be fishing at this time of year. (*Seattle Intelligencer*, 6 January 2005)



Radar image showing the extent of the damage (seen here in red) done to the west coast of the Nicobar Islands during the December 2004 tsunami disaster

The World of Nature Helped Jesus to Connect with God

From what he said, it seems that Jesus noticed nature for its beauty, its power, its energy and its danger. He also noticed it for another reason, as the following parable of Jesus shows.

The Parable of the Mustard Seed (Matthew 13:31-32)

The kingdom of heaven is like a mustard seed that someone took and sowed in his field; it is the smallest of all seeds, but when it has grown it is the greatest of shrubs and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and make nests in its branches.

Jesus was strongly aware of the world around him. He had a positive attitude towards it. It seemed to help him to become more aware of his relationship with God the Father. It helped him to offer people a deeper awareness of their relationship with God. Jesus suggested that tuning in to nature could deepen your awareness of the way in which God is with you. For example, when Jesus looked at the growing mustard seed, he immediately sensed God's presence in small ways and in small things. Jesus encouraged everyone to believe that, with God's help, small things can make a big difference.



A time to pray

Note: For this prayertime, the class might divide into two or three groups which take turns at reading the verses of the psalm-prayer below.

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

The great and fearful things of nature helped the Jewish people to become more aware of God. They were filled with wonder and awe.
Together let us pray a prayer that Jesus prayed.

All (Psalm 95: 1-7)

Sing joyful songs to the Lord!
Praise the mighty rock where we are safe.
Come to worship him with thankful hearts and songs of praise.

The Lord is the greatest God, king over all other gods.
He holds the deepest part of the earth in his hands,
and the mountain peaks belong to him.
The ocean is the Lord's because he made it,
and with his own hands he formed the dry land.

Bow down and worship the Lord our Creator!
The Lord is our God, and we are his people,
the sheep he takes care of in his own pasture.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.
Amen.

Sign of the Cross

'ME' Folder

Is there something in the world that you particularly appreciate? Does it help you to connect with God? Does it remind you of God in any way? Write a short reflection on it.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

One-Minute Soapbox

Name an outdoor place that you would like to visit and say what you imagine being there would be like. Would being there make you praise God? Why?/Why not?

Or

Name a TV or multimedia nature programme that you enjoyed and say why. What does it suggest to you now about God?

Jesus And His Relationship With Others

In the last lesson, we looked at how Jesus always seemed to be aware of the hidden depths in the world. He could see beyond appearances. This was true of his attitude to people as much as to the world of nature and of everything around him. He looked beyond the surface. He valued people for who they were. After all, were they not made by God? Jesus did not dismiss people. Rather, he ‘discovered’ them and helped them to ‘discover’ themselves. You will see this in the story of Zacchaeus, which you will have an opportunity to explore later in the lesson. First, though, it’s time to do a bit of work on yourself.

Before the Guided Meditation

As a class group, suggest some answers to the following questions:

- Who are the people that are closest to you?
- In what ways might such people let you know that you are valued and loved?
- Name examples of times when you feel noticed and valued and loved. Then, as an individual, quietly choose a (recent) moment in your life when you felt valued and loved, e.g. at a birthday party or through a kind word.

Guided Meditation

Note: You might find it helpful to do this meditation in the school prayer room. You might also like to use some quiet, reflective music.

Teacher

As we prepare to enter this time of reflection, we start to become quiet and still. Begin by settling your feet on the ground. *(Pause)* Allow yourself to sit upright and slowly close your eyes. *(Pause)* Become aware of your breathing. *(Pause)* Notice your breath as you take it in. Notice your breath as you let it leave you. *(Pause)*

Now, imagine yourself going along in a quiet place. You come to an entrance and you decide to go in. But before you enter, you take your cares and worries and you leave them to one side for now. *(Pause)*

Now, you go in to the quiet place where you are at peace. *(Pause)*
Allow yourself to go back in time to a special moment when you felt valued and loved. *(Pause)*

In your mind's eye, remember what time of day it was; picture where you were; recall who was with you. Imagine yourself back in that moment. *(Pause)*

Quietly, inside yourself, go back over what was said and done in that moment. *(Pause)*

Relive the experience of that moment. Become aware once more of what it was like; become aware of how that moment makes you feel as you remember it now. *(Pause)*

Take a moment to be thankful. Give thanks for the experience of being valued and loved for who you are. *(Pause)*

Allow yourself to become aware of God with you in a loving way. God wants to speak your name; God wants to speak a word of love to you.

Listen for a moment within yourself as God speaks. *(Pause)*

Now you are about to go from the quiet place. Take a final moment and then, when you are ready, open your eyes once more and take a stretch.

In Your Religion Journal

(Note: If you did the prayertime in the school prayer room, you may like to remain there while doing this journal entry.)

Choose someone you know and appreciate in your home or school life. Describe the good that you see in them in picture or in words (or in a combination of both).

Picking the Team

It was the last fifteen minutes of PE class and Mr McQuaid allowed the boys a short game of five-a-side football. 'Right!' he said. 'John and Eamonn, pick a team each! And remember, it's a game and not a competition!' The class lined up in front of them. Phil, Steve, Mike and Marty were first to be picked: obvious choices because they were on the school football team. Liam and Connor were next: even though they didn't play on the school team, they could kick a ball. Gary and Fintan were last. Then Eamonn said, 'Well, I don't want Fintan. He's no good.' Mr McQuaid overheard him and...



Talking Points

1. Do you think Eamonn was justified in what he said? Why?/Why not?
2. What do you think might have happened next? Discuss the answers that arise.
3. What do you think it was like for Fintan to hear what Eamonn said?
4. Is there ever a time when you might be justified in avoiding or ignoring someone? Explain your answer.
5. List some times when a person might feel passed over, dismissed or snubbed.

The Story of Zacchaeus

Can you remember this story? Here's something to jog your memory:

ZACCHAEUS

Short. Tax collector for the Romans. Seen as a traitor because he gathers money to give to the 'occupiers'. Curious about Jesus. Climbs a tree. Gets invited to spend the day with Jesus. Brings Jesus home for a meal and a chat. Decides to change.

THE CROWD

Don't like Zacchaeus. He's not one of 'them'. Won't let Zacchaeus through. Show that they are not pleased that Jesus wants to spend time with Zacchaeus. Amazed that Jesus accepts him. Even more amazed that Jesus will eat with him.

JESUS

On his way through Jericho. Talking to his friends. Happy to meet the crowd. Talks to them about God's love. Notices Zacchaeus up a tree and stops to talk to him. Notices the reaction of the crowd. Goes home with Zacchaeus for a meal and a chat.

THE TREE

Sycamore. Climbed by Zacchaeus. Witnesses what happens.

In Your Religion Journal

Use your Religion journal to express a few of your reactions, feelings or thoughts on what happened in the story of Zacchaeus. You might use some of the following pointers to get you started:

- What do you imagine it was like to be Zacchaeus/Jesus/the crowd/the tree in the story?
- Think about the different attitudes that you find in the story.
- Who affects whom in the story and in what way?
- Consider the way Jesus comes across to you now that you are looking at this story again.
- What does this story say to you right now about the way you live your life and your attitude towards others?

Okay, so now you recall the story. But before you start to explore it again, decide on your answers (either as a group or as individuals) to the following questions:

- Will the crowd change their attitude to Zacchaeus because of Jesus?
- Is Zacchaeus still a tax collector afterwards?

Now choose *one* of the suggestions below to help you explore and discover the story of Zacchaeus for yourselves.

Exploring the story

ROLE-PLAY

Either as a class or in groups, quickly (in no more than five minutes) decide the outline of a role-play based around the Zacchaeus story, and then improvise (act) it. Get people to do the various 'characters' mentioned in the introduction above (including the tree!). What's important here is that people have a chance really to get into the story. It doesn't matter if the words or the acting aren't 'perfect'.

DRAMATIC SPEECH

Imagine that you are one of the 'characters' in the story. Compose a poem/monologue/rap expressing their point of view and perform it for the class.

ART

Retell the story through art. You might do this through pictures. Alternatively, you could do it in an abstract way, using a variety of materials and/or colours to represent the 'characters'. Share your work with the class.

MIME, DANCE, MUSIC

Use mime or body-movement to represent the events in the story (e.g. Zacchaeus trying to get to see Jesus, Jesus noticing Zacchaeus, the reaction of the crowd, etc). You might like to use a narrator, but you don't have to do so. The movement alone could communicate the story.

INTERVIEW

Make up some questions for one of the 'characters' in the story. Take turns in your group (or class) at being the person asking the questions and the 'character' giving the answers. Decide each time whether the interview is for TV, radio, Internet, iPod or newspaper.

The Attitude of Jesus

Jesus could see beyond what others saw. The story of his meeting with Zacchaeus is an example of this. When the crowd wanted to reject Zacchaeus, Jesus turned the tables on them. He let them know that there was more to Zacchaeus than they were prepared to let themselves see. Jesus challenged them. He reminded them that even though they didn't like Zacchaeus, Zacchaeus was still a 'child of God'. If God could accept Zacchaeus, then the crowd had to ask themselves why they did not.

Sometimes people today reject others. There are lots of excuses for doing this. Perhaps people reject others because they come from a different place, they have a different accent, they look different or they follow different customs. Jesus challenges you to look at the way you treat other people. He challenges you to reflect on the way that you think about other people. He challenges you not to exclude other people but rather to include them in your chat, in your games, in your projects and in your life.



In small groups, discuss the following: 'Seeing the good in others'. Nominate one person from each group to report to the class on your discussion.

Or

Pick five people to have a discussion for the whole class on the same theme. They may support or contradict one another respectfully, or they may introduce new ideas to the conversation as it proceeds. Decide on a time-limit for the conversation, and stop it when it reaches this limit. If no one speaks, then allow the silence.

Talking Points

1. Compose a list of words to describe the attitude of Jesus as you have discovered it now in the story of Zacchaeus.
2. What challenges does the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus offer to the world, to your school and to your local community today?
3. Has doing this lesson made you think differently in any way? Explain your answer.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

One-Minute Soapbox

Take a minute to pick out what matters to you in the story. Then go to the 'soapbox' and, for one or two minutes, share it with the class. You can do this either as yourself or as one of the 'characters' in the story.

Talking Points

1. Do you have any initial reactions to the story of Sojourner Truth? Share them. Are you aware of any examples of slavery in the world today?
2. Describe some of the attitudes that people took to Sojourner Truth.
3. What do you think of those attitudes? Do you ever see or hear of attitudes like that today? Explain your answer.
4. Give some examples of a respectful attitude that you might witness in others or have yourself at school.

Why Don't You?

- Read the rest of Sojourner's famous speech 'Ar'n't I a Woman?' at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ar'n't_I_a_Woman%3F
- Find out more about Sojourner Truth on the Internet. Here are a few websites with which to start: www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAStruth.htm www.geocities.com/Athens/Oracle/9840/sojourn.html
- Find out about slavery today and especially about the experience of a woman named Boulboulou by using an Internet search-engine or by visiting: www.antislavery.org/homepage/antislavery/award/weilaspeech2004.htm

The Woman Given Peace By Jesus

Attitude (or the way you think) may not seem like something that can hurt another person, but it can. The way you treat someone is directly related to what you think of that person. In this lesson, you will see an example of the attitude of Jesus in action. You will also have a chance to reflect on the way that you think about other people.

Sojourner Truth



Isabella Baumfree was born a slave in New York State in about 1797. She was auctioned off at the age of nine and was sold three more times before she got her freedom in 1828. During this time, she married a fellow slave, Thomas. They had five children. New York State got rid of slavery in 1827. Despite that, her son Peter was illegally sold as a slave to a plantation owner in Alabama. Even though she was unable to read or write,

Isabella used the New York law courts to get her son back. A small victory turned into a crusade. She changed her name to Sojourner Truth. 'Sojourner' means 'traveller' and the 'truth' she proclaimed was freedom: freedom from slavery and freedom to take part in society. She spoke at public meetings all over America. On one occasion, a white man heckled her; her speeches were no more important than a flea bite, he said. 'Maybe not,' she replied, 'but the Lord willing, I'll keep you scratching.' On another occasion, a man heckled her saying that she was just a woman and that women had no rights. Here's her reply, just as she spoke it:

That little man in black there say a woman can't have as much rights as a man 'cos Christ wasn't a woman. Where did your Christ come from? From God and a woman – man had nothing to do with it.

In 1997, the American space agency NASA named a Mars robotic explorer 'Sojourner' after her.

At the House of Simon the Pharisee

Jesus was invited to Simon the Pharisee's house for dinner. But when he got there, there wasn't a great welcome for him: no greeting at the door, no freshening up for tired feet as was the custom at the time, no oil or scent. In other words, Jesus received none of the traditional signs that honour a guest. Still, Jesus said nothing.

Jesus and Simon were both Jews. However, Simon was a particular kind of Jew: he was a Pharisee, the kind of Jew who believes in strictly following every rule and law of the Jewish religion. The Pharisees were not always pleased with what Jesus said or with the kind of people he talked to.

Back then, it was a man's world. Women had no role in business or social life. So, Simon's eyes must have rolled in his head when a woman – especially a woman he thought of as a sinner – insisted on getting in to see Jesus. When this woman got inside the room, she began crying. She knelt down and wiped the feet of Jesus and poured a precious scent on him.

Jesus could see that this was getting too much for Simon, so he spoke to him. He told him a story, and after telling it he asked: 'When people show true kindness (the sort of kindness that Simon had failed to show to Jesus), would you not agree that those people must be close to God?' The story in the Gospel according to Luke doesn't say whether Simon agreed that God was close to this woman. But we do know that Jesus told her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' All the pent-up unhappiness of the past flowed out with her tears. She was at peace, because Jesus helped her to believe that God was close to her.



In Your Religion Journal

Write about a moment during which you felt that someone was showing you respect. Use words or drawing (or a combination of both). You might like to add a few words describing how you felt in that moment.

Why Don't You?

Read Luke 7: 36-50 for the original version of the Gospel story of what happened at the house of Simon the Pharisee.

Talking Points

1. Describe Simon's attitude to the woman in the story.
2. Suggest an explanation for Simon's attitude to this particular woman. Would you say he was justified in his way of thinking? Why?/Why not?
- 3 'Simon didn't actually do anything to the woman; so he was doing nothing wrong.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not?
4. When it comes to other people, does it really matter what you think of them or how you talk about them or how you look at them as long as you do them no actual harm? Explain your answer.
5. Given the way that Jesus treated the woman in the story, what do you imagine he might have seen in her that Simon did not see in her?
6. Do you think it's possible for you to miss something in another person because of the way that you think about them? Explain your answer.

One-Minute Soapbox

Starting with the words 'People should be respected regardless of...', speak for one or two minutes, but no more.

Why Don't You?

Read the poem 'No Going Back' in a rap style.

No Going Back

Other people frowned,
always putting her down,
but a good conversation
with a man of reputation
from Nazareth town
made her confidence rebound*.

She was so amazed
at what he had said
of how she belonged
far as God was concerned
that before he was gone
she forgot to say thanks.

Now he had gone on
to a party in town
where he wasn't much welcome
what with his reputation.
It was straight to table:
'Eat as quick as we're able.'

Then she was gate-crashing**
bangles jingle-jangling
the men's world disturbed:
a new sound declared,
through perfume and tears,
her past was now cleared.

It was a party then all right
but not to Simon's delight.
He began to complain
wanting her to refrain
and go home again
back from where she came.

But there's no going back
to grey and to black.
Enjoy the new dawn,
rainbow-colours and sun,
unless you like misery
with Simon the Pharisee.

* bounce back

** arriving uninvited

A time to pray

Note: You might spend a quiet moment reading the following prayer for yourself before reading it together.



All

O my God,
help me to love you and to love all
that you have made.
Help me to respect others as you
respect them.
Help me to realise that everyone is
important to you,
for you have made us all to be with
you now and forever. Amen.

'ME' Folder

Write a piece recalling a time when you had to change your attitude towards someone. Did the relationship change? How?

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

The Woman Crippled For Eighteen Years

Term 2, Lesson 5

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

In today's lesson, we're going to begin with a Gospel story: the story of a woman who was crippled for eighteen years. Jesus met her one Sabbath day in a Jewish synagogue. He cured her and she gave thanks, but the synagogue officials were not pleased. Yet again, we see the different attitudes that Jesus provoked.

Later on, we will reflect on our own attitudes. But first we will look at the attitudes of the people in the story as it is read for us now.

Reader

A reading from the Gospel according to Luke (13:10-17).

One Sabbath, Jesus was teaching in a Jewish meeting place, and a woman was there who had been crippled by an evil spirit for eighteen years. She was completely bent over and could not straighten up. When Jesus saw the woman, he called her over and said, 'You are now well.' He placed his hands on her, and right away she stood up straight and praised God.

The man in charge of the meeting place was angry because Jesus had healed someone on the Sabbath. So he said to the people, 'Each week has six days when we can work. Come and be healed on one of those days, but not on the Sabbath.'

The Lord replied, 'Are you trying to fool someone? Won't any one of you untie your ox or donkey and lead it out to drink on a Sabbath? This woman belongs to the family of Abraham, but Satan has kept her bound for eighteen years. Isn't it right to set her free on the Sabbath?'

Jesus' words made his enemies ashamed. But everyone else in the crowd was happy about the wonderful things he was doing.

The Gospel of the Lord.

All

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Teacher

Allow yourself to become quiet and still. Sit comfortably upright, with your feet on the floor.

Close your eyes and imagine an open box on the floor in front of you.

Take any worries or problems that you have and imagine yourself putting them in this box and closing it.

For the next while, you will focus on being here. (Pause)

Be conscious of any tension in your neck or shoulders. Take a moment to let it go. (Pause)

Take another moment to focus on someone who needs your prayers.

Ask God to be with them and to send them comfort. (Pause)

God is with you always.

God is with you in a special way now as you reflect.

Take a moment to ask that you may be ready to receive what God inspires in you. (Pause)

Now, we are ready to go into the story we have just heard.

Focus first on the woman.

- See her bowed down, her back curved, not able to straighten herself. She has been like this for eighteen years.
- Imagine her waking up that Sabbath morning. What sort of humour is she in as she faces another day? (Pause)
- Picture her starting the day, gathering the firewood, going to the well, not able to carry much water because she can't put the jar on her head. (Pause)
- People look at her. Imagine their different reactions to her. (Pause)
- See her walking to the synagogue, slowly, with her neck straining up to see her way. (Pause)
- Children look at her. Imagine what they say. (Pause)
- Imagine how sore her neck is by the time she gets there. (Pause)
- See her doubled over in the synagogue. She has to strain to see the rabbi and to hear what he is saying. (Pause)

Focus now on Jesus.

- It is the Sabbath day. Imagine Jesus on the short walk past the flat-roofed

houses on his way to the synagogue: it is dry and sunny. (Pause)

- Imagine his humour on his way to the synagogue to listen and to pray. (Pause)
- He enters the synagogue. The singing has started. In your mind's eye, see the space dimly lit with oil lamps. (Pause)
- Picture the moment when Jesus first notices the woman, doubled-over, not able to stand up straight. (Pause)
- Jesus leaves the men's section and goes over to the women's section. Some people notice this and get distracted. The synagogue leader begins to frown. (Pause)
- Jesus talks to the woman and asks her how long she has been like this. Picture the scene as more people quietly nudge each other and start to watch what is going on. (Pause)
- You see Jesus react as he hears that this woman has been unwell for eighteen years. Watch him as he gently places his hands on her. (Pause)
- The woman cries out as she stands up straight for the first time in eighteen years. Now everyone notices. (Pause)

Focus now on the synagogue leader.

- He's very aware of his role as leader. He's doing his best to lead the praying, but Jesus has distracted everyone. The synagogue leader is annoyed. Imagine what's going on in his mind. (Pause)
- After the service, he goes up to Jesus and tells him he's annoyed. The Sabbath is a day of rest, not a day for curing people, he says. He tells Jesus he's got a bad attitude. (Pause)
- Meanwhile, around the woman, people are expressing their delight. Imagine that you are one of those people sharing the woman's joy. (Pause)
- You see the synagogue official getting angrier and giving out more. Tell him to calm down and

to be glad of the good thing that has happened. (Pause)

- Imagine how he responds to you. (Pause)

Shortly now, it will be time for us to come away from the scene. In your mind's eye, look one more time at the woman standing up straight in the middle of her friends. (Pause) Imagine the reaction of Jesus as he looks at them and sees that the woman is fully well and fully alive again. (Pause)

For a moment now, let your mind be open to God for whatever God may inspire in you. (Pause) Take a final moment to see if there is anything that God is asking of you. (Pause) When you are ready, slowly and quietly, open your eyes again and stretch. *Note: Directly after the prayertime, you may find it helpful to take a thirty-second 'stretch' break (i.e. time to stand up and move a little).*

Talking Points

1. List some words or phrases to describe different attitudes that you imagine the villagers might have had to the woman before she was cured.
2. When and where might you see such attitudes today?
3. Repeat 1 and 2 above for Jesus and for the synagogue leader.

Why Don't You?

Put an illustration of the woman from this Gospel story in the centre of a large sheet or on a noticeboard. Divide the space around her into three. Use one space for each of the following: the synagogue leader, Jesus, the villagers who knew the woman. Then, in each particular space, put words, phrases or illustrations to show the attitude of each of the three. You may do this as a class activity.

In Your Religion Journal

When you have done the 'Why Don't You?' above, choose one of those words or phrases from the class list and describe (in words and/or illustration) a time when you showed that kind of attitude.

When Someone in the Class Wasn't Well

Mr Alter's fifth-grade class at Lake Elementary School in Oceanside, California, included fourteen boys who had no hair. Only one, however, had no choice in the matter. Ian O'Gorman, undergoing chemotherapy for lymphoma, faced the prospect of having his hair fall out in clumps. So he had his head shaved. But then thirteen of his classmates shaved their heads, so Ian wouldn't feel out of place.

'If everybody has his head shaved, sometimes people don't know who's who,' said eleven-year-old Scott Sebelius in an Associated Press story (March 1994). 'They don't know who has cancer, and who just shaved their head.' Ten-year-old Kyle Hanslik started it all. He talked to some other boys, and before long they all trekked to the barber shop.

'The last thing he would want is to not fit in,' said Kyle. 'We just wanted to make him feel better.' (www.witandwisdom.org/archive/20040429.htm)



Let's Talk

1. Have you ever noticed people being stared at, pointed at or talked about? Describe the situation.
2. Why do you think those people might do the talking, the pointing and the staring? What do you think might be going on in their minds while they're doing these things?
3. What do you think it's like for those who are talked about, pointed at, stared at? Has that ever happened to you or someone you know? If you wish, you might share the story of what happened with the class.
4. Have you ever visited someone in a hospital? Did you do much looking around you while you were there? while you were going in and leaving? Why?/Why not?
5. Have you ever been in hospital? Tell the story of why you were there. How did people treat you while you were there?

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

The Centurion's Servant

Term 2, Lesson 6

In Term 2, Lesson 3, you explored the story of Jesus and Zacchaeus. Zacchaeus was a tax collector for the Romans. The Romans were not welcome because they demanded money from the people and their soldiers enforced Roman rule. The people were not free and the Roman soldiers reminded them that they were not. In this lesson, you will have an opportunity to explore a story about how Jesus responded when one of those soldiers asked him for some help.

Talking Point

Suppose you needed someone with whom you could discuss a difficult situation. What sort of person would you look for? Make a short list of words to describe them.

Talking Points

1. How would you describe the action of the Jesner family in this story?
2. At the time of the events in the story, there was a conflict between the Israeli and the Palestinian people. Name some of the different ways in which you think some of those people might have reacted when they heard this story. Explain your various answers.
3. People are usually willing to help their friends. Should we ever help anyone else apart from our friends? Why?/Why not?

In Your Religion Journal

Has there been a time recently when someone helped you who was not from your circle of friends? If so, name the person and describe what help they gave you. Use words and drawings (or a combination of both).

Willing to Help

A seven-year-old girl had been waiting two years for a kidney transplant. And all of a sudden, in September 2002, she got one. It came from Jonathan Jesner, a nineteen-year-old Glasgow student, who was killed while on holiday. But this story is not just a good story; it is a great story. For, the girl was a Palestinian and the student was Jewish. He was fatally injured in a Palestinian suicide bomb attack in Tel Aviv. The Jesner family gave their son's kidney to whoever would benefit. It didn't matter to them that the little girl was a Palestinian. Donating his kidney was, as his brother said, 'what Joni [Jonathan] would have wanted.' The director of Israel's transplant organisation said, 'People have the right to restrict where the organs go, especially after a terrorist attack, but it did not come up. They just thought about saving life.'

(Reuters, 22 September 2002)

The Story of Jesus and the Centurion's Servant

Do a Bible search for Matthew 8:5-13 and read the story there. Three characters are mentioned in it:

THE CENTURION

Not easily put off. Brave. Willing to ask. Willing to trust. Appreciates those who work for him. Well aware of the tensions between Jews and Romans. Used to using power. Able to imagine the power of Jesus from his own use of power.

JESUS

Responds straightaway when asked. Powerful: able to cure the servant without being physically present. Amazed at the centurion's faith and trust. Well aware of the tensions between Jews and Romans. Willing to visit the house of a Roman soldier and do him a favour. Aware of the comment that the visit may provoke from 'his own side of the house'.

THE SERVANT

Very dangerously ill one day; cured the next. Knows he's appreciated by his employer. Well aware of the tensions between Jews and Romans.

You may not know this story as well as you know the story of Zacchaeus. Answering the following questions may help you to become more familiar with it.

ABOUT THE CENTURION

1. The story does not tell of how the centurion found out about Jesus. How do you imagine that he found out?
2. The Romans were an occupying force and the centurion was a soldier. What do you imagine relations were like between Jews and Romans? How do you think locals might have reacted to a soldier asking favours of them?



3. The centurion seems to have approached Jesus with confidence. Do you imagine that others would have shared his confidence as a Roman going to ask a favour of a Jew? Why? / Why not?

ABOUT THE SERVANT

1. Do you suppose the servant might have known beforehand that the centurion, his boss, was going to see Jesus? If so, what do you imagine the servant expected to happen between the centurion and Jesus?

2. Jesus never actually went to see the servant. How do you imagine the moment when the servant got better? How long do you imagine it took for the servant to realise that it was Jesus who healed him?
3. Do you expect the servant had as much faith in Jesus as the centurion, his boss? Why? / Why not?

ABOUT JESUS

1. What do you imagine it was like for Jesus when he discovered that he was able to heal people?
2. What do you think Jesus wanted people to make of his ability to heal others?
3. Why did Jesus respond so positively to the centurion's request?
4. The centurion expected Jesus to be able to heal the servant without going to his bedside. What was Jesus' reaction?

Exploring the Story

Now choose *one* of the suggestions that follow to help you to explore and better understand the story of the centurion's servant.

ROLE-PLAY

Get into groups. Prepare a conversation between the centurion and the servant:

- either on the day before the servant got better,
- or on the day afterwards.

Decide which one you're doing. Take three minutes to list three things they might talk about on that occasion, and then two people role-play the conversation for the group. Concentrate on getting into the role. It doesn't matter if the words or the acting aren't 'perfect'.

DRAMATIC SPEECH

Suppose that afterwards the centurion wrote a letter to his friend in Rome. Write the letter. (The following questions may help you: What do you think he tells his friend about his servant? About Jesus? About himself?) Read out some (or all) of the letter for the class.

INTERVIEW

Get into groups. Quickly decide which one of the following characters you are going to 'interview': the centurion, the healed servant, or one of the other servants in the centurion's house. Decide which medium the 'interview' is for: radio, TV, Internet, newspaper or iPod. Prepare some questions. One of the group acts as 'interviewer'. Two other members of the group take turns at doing the role and answering the questions in their own words.

In Your Religion Journal

Jesus prayed to his Father. What do you suppose Jesus prayed about on the day that he healed the centurion's servant? What might Jesus have said to his Father during his prayer? You can do it as part of a drawing, if you wish.

One-Minute Soapbox

Decide which of the following you are to be: the centurion, the servant, one of the apostles. Presume that your listeners already know what happened. Concentrate instead on telling them about your reaction to what took place. You may talk for one or two minutes but no more. (Stay in character!)

Talking Points

1. List some words and phrases to describe the attitude of Jesus as you have discovered it in the story of the centurion's servant.
2. Give some examples of barriers that exist between groups of people.
3. What challenges does the story of Jesus and the centurion offer to the world, to your school and to your local community today?
4. Has doing this lesson made you think differently in any way? Explain your answer.
5. Has doing this lesson reinforced the way you see Jesus? Why?/Why not?



In small groups, discuss the following: 'The barriers that exist between people.' Nominate one person from each group to report to the class on your discussion.

Or

Pick five people to have a discussion for the whole class on the same theme. They may support or contradict one another respectfully, or they may introduce new ideas to the conversation as it proceeds. Decide on a time-limit for the conversation, and stop it when it reaches this limit. If no one speaks, then allow the silence.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

The Attitude of Jesus

It's possible to read the Bible story without being aware of the tensions between Jews and Romans. But those tensions were there and they were very real. When Jesus was growing up, he would have heard plenty of bad things about the Romans, and particularly about Roman soldiers. He may even have seen some of the bad things they did as an occupying army. Yet, Jesus did not seem to be influenced by such things. Instead, he treated the centurion as a human being first. Jesus was willing to help when he was asked. He was willing to cross the barriers that divide people.

Jesus did not cure every person who was sick in his day. Eventually, Jesus had to die himself, executed by the Romans. But through what Jesus did, he showed that God is with us. The way that Jesus restored life to the servant is a sign that God wants us to be fully alive, both now and for ever.

A time to pray

Note: As a group before the prayertime, you might take a moment to name a number of places in the world today where there are barriers that have brought conflict and division. Quietly, choose one of these places as your focus in what follows.

Sign of the Cross

Teacher (pausing where appropriate)

Today we remember people in places affected by divisions past and present, as we pray:

- for families broken apart,
- for friendships lost,
- for lives lost,
- for those in prison,
- for local communities affected by resentment,
- for those whose lives remain badly affected by unfair treatment,
- for the work of the Red Cross or Red Crescent organisation, helping those who suffer.

Today also we remember people who work to overcome those divisions and to bring people to unity and peace, as we pray:

- for those who bring people together again in friendship,
- for politicians and public representatives who represent and negotiate to bring about positive change,
- for the work of the United Nations organisation, supporting peace and reconciliation.

We pray now as children of God in the words Jesus taught us, saying:

All

Our Father... (or Ár nAthair)

Sign of the Cross

Focusing On Unfair Feelings

Term 2, Lesson 7

There were plenty of reasons why Jesus might have chosen to hate the Romans. From his earliest days, he would have known of many examples of bad behaviour by the Roman army. Yet Jesus did not hate the Romans. You saw in the last lesson how Jesus met the centurion and helped him. Jesus even praised this Roman soldier as a model of belief and trust in God. So you've heard about Jesus and his attitude. Now, what about your attitude? Are you as open as Jesus was? Time to start finding out!



Why Don't You?

Here are four photographs, numbered 1, 2, 3 and 4. Each one shows an individual. Look briefly at each one in turn and then do the following:

- List them in order of your preference, starting with your favourite.
- Describe the one you like most and the one you like least.
- Choose one of the other pictures. If you were actually to meet these people, what would you expect them and their life to be like? Be as descriptive as you can.

THEN

Use your answers to make a **DISPLAY** under the title 'The Way We See People'.

Note: You might like to add to this display in the course of both this lesson and the ones that follow.

Why Don't You?

In groups of three or four, role-play the situation outlined in 'The Party'. Quickly decide who will do which part: 'Marie', 'Donal', 'Tricia' and other friends. (Change the names if desired.) Start at the beginning and continue the conversation beyond the end of the story here, as follows: Marie gives 'reasons' why she doesn't like Natasha – someone whom she doesn't know or hasn't got to know. The other characters do their best to get her to change her mind, but find Marie impossible to persuade. Each time they manage to explain to Marie that her 'reason' is unfair, Marie comes up with another. Use your imagination. After two minutes, swap parts and repeat the role-play for another two minutes without repeating the previous 'reasons'.

Talking Points

NB: Answer these questions only after doing the role-play above.

1. List some 'reasons' Marie might give for not liking someone she doesn't know or hasn't yet got to know.
2. As a group, which of Marie's 'reasons' (from your answer to the first question) might you accept? Which ones would you reject?
3. It is impossible (or very difficult) to persuade Marie to change her attitude to Natasha. Suggest some reasons why Marie might be that way.
4. What do you suppose it might be like for Natasha when she learns of Marie's feelings?
5. Suppose Natasha notices that Marie ignores her. What might she do? Suppose Natasha only finds out about the party afterwards. What might she do?
6. Suggest some different ways in which the relationship between Marie and Natasha might develop.
7. Why might someone take an instant dislike to someone else? Have you ever seen it happen? Has it ever happened to you?

In Your Religion Journal

Write a few words of advice to Marie and Natasha.

The Party

Someone said it was official: scientists reckon the third week of January to be the most depressing time of year. 'Well, not this year!' said Marie. 'Let's have a get-together – a party – this weekend.' She didn't have to say it twice. The group of friends were soon busy dividing out the tasks: who'd get the DVD, who'd get the pizza, who'd organise the place and so on. It was going to be great...but then Donal mentioned inviting Natasha along. Suddenly, Marie went silent. Her expression changed; her smile evaporated; her eyes narrowed. It was as if Donal had insulted Marie, as if he had deliberately meant to offend her. 'Well,' began Marie, 'if you think she's going to come to this party, you can think again!' 'Sure why not?' said Donal. 'What's the harm?' said Tricia. 'She's not from round here. She's new to the school and she doesn't know anyone.' 'Okay, I know I've never met her and I'll admit I don't know her, but I just don't like her,' said Marie. 'She's...'



The Way We See Others

From the moment you first see another person, you begin to make assumptions about them. Even before you know it, you start deciding whether or not you trust them or fear them, whether you want to meet them or ignore them. You start to make judgements about others even though you don't know them. You are seldom neutral towards others. More often than not, you will have some bias (or feeling) in favour of another person or against them. You won't always notice that bias (or feeling). But it can be seen in the way you talk about someone and especially in the way you treat someone.

You have to be careful about your reactions towards others. Sometimes, what you suppose to be true about a person is not true at all. Some of what you suppose may be unfair and indefensible. If you're not aware of your reactions or if you don't check them, your bias may grow and start to affect your behaviour. You might start to allow yourself to think negatively of one or more people for no good reason and to treat them badly as a result. Indeed, you could continue with that bias and treat others with no respect, even when others tell you that you're wrong to do so. At that point, you have become prejudiced and have begun to behave in a prejudiced way.

Do not be surprised to find some prejudice in yourself. Almost everyone is prejudiced in some ways. However, good people make the effort to identify their prejudices. They do not act in line with their prejudices. Identifying prejudice and overcoming it is a lifelong task for everyone.

A time to pray

Note: You might find it helpful to light a candle at the beginning and to play quiet background music during what follows.

Teacher

As we begin our prayertime, we take a moment to become quiet and settled inside ourselves. *(Pause)*

Close your eyes...and imagine yourself in a place where it is warm and sunny and quiet. *(Pause)*

Picture yourself sitting there quietly and comfortably. In your mind's eye, look around you and see that place. *(Pause)*

Become aware now of the presence of Jesus with you. He is with you in your quiet place. He enjoys your company and is glad to be with you. Allow him to tell you so now. *(Pause)*

Together with Jesus now, remember the story of his meeting with the Roman military officer, the centurion. Picture Jesus listening to the centurion's worries and concerns. *(Pause)*

Allow Jesus to remind you that he is always with you and that he always welcomes you, just as he welcomed the centurion. *(Pause)*

Now, Jesus asks something from you. He asks you even though it may be a bit difficult for you. He asks you to pick out a particular person, a person to whom you have taken a dislike, a dislike that they did not deserve. With Jesus, focus on that person now. *(Pause)*

Jesus reminds you again that he is glad of your company. He asks you to tell him of the first moment you became aware of disliking that person. Picture that occasion: the place, the time of day, their appearance, their manner, the company you may have been with. Tell Jesus now about that moment of dislike for that person. *(Pause)*

Jesus tells you not to be surprised to find some prejudice in yourself. Allow Jesus to bless you now and hear him encourage you not to live out of any unfair feeling you have. *(Pause)*

Jesus invites you to join him in blessing the person you have remembered today. Together you offer that blessing now. *(Pause)*

For another moment, sit quietly with Jesus and listen within yourself to anything else he may have to say to you. *(Pause)*

Now it is time for you to return to the doings of this day. Jesus reminds you that he loves you and will be with you. *(Pause)*

When you are ready, open your eyes once more and stretch.

Talking Points

1. If you dislike someone, does that have to mean that you are prejudiced against them? Why?/Why not?
2. How do prejudiced people treat others?
3. Have you ever seen or heard of people being treated in a prejudiced way?
4. What might you do if your friend behaved in a prejudiced way towards someone else?
5. How would you know if someone was prejudiced towards you? What might you do in such a case?

'ME' Folder

Include a piece on the following:
'A time when I was like Marie (or Donal) in the story.'

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

In Your Religion Journal

Recall a time when you allowed yourself to think negatively of someone for no good reason and perhaps treated them badly. On a page of your journal, recall what happened and express your feelings about it now. Use drawing or words or both.

Prejudice And Stereotyping

The previous lesson gave you an opportunity to reflect on how you can make assumptions and judgements about others, even though you don't know them. When you relate to people only on the basis of your negative assumptions and judgements about them, without getting to know those people, you are being prejudiced. Everyone has to struggle to some extent against being prejudiced. Identifying the prejudice in us is a key step in overcoming it. This lesson will help you to identify and explore a particular way in which prejudice is often present: stereotyping.

Talking Points

1. What did you think of the label that was put on you in the game? On a scale of one to ten, how satisfied or dissatisfied were you with it?
2. Think back to the start of the 'game'. How did you feel at the prospect of being labelled by someone else? Give a reason for your answer.
3. Supposing you knew that the label was not going to be a positive one, how might you have felt about being labelled then?
4. If someone said to you that it was possible to 'label' someone else without using a sticker, would you agree? Why?/Why not?

Game: 'The Labelling Game'

Note: For this game, you will need a box of self-adhesive labels.

- Everyone gets a label and takes out their pen, pencil or marker.
- The group divides into pairs. (If there's an odd number in the group, form one group of three.)
- Choose a word or phrase that describes a positive quality in the person with whom you are paired, e.g. cool, brainy, cheerful, artistic, thoughtful, sincere, friendly, good fun, strong, kind, truthful, etc.
- Write the word/phrase on the label. Don't let the other person see it. (If there's a group with three in it, A describes B, B describes C, and C describes A.)
- Attach the label to the other person's back.
- Now try to work out what's on your label by asking the others in the class questions that require only a 'yes' or 'no' answer. You may not look at your label.

Meeting the Professor

It was Sheila's first time in the United States and she was enjoying the warm sunny morning in late August. She admired the impressive buildings on the huge campus as she made her way to the 'reception' for new students. This morning she would meet the professor who would supervise her study during her year at Boston College. The invitation she had received said:

RECEPTION FOR NEW STUDENTS

Meet Professor McDowell,
your tutor for the year.
Tuesday, 9.30am,
North Campus,
Marino Building, Room 202

'McDowell,' Sheila thought. 'Perhaps he has some Scottish connections!' She was both excited and anxious as she walked down the long hallway that led to the conference room. Back in the seventies, it was not that common for someone to study abroad. She could barely believe her luck at being selected to study here.

When she arrived, the room was full of chatter. As she entered, she could see that around thirty people were gathered there. She heard a familiar voice: 'Good Morning,' said Kelly, the American student who had met her at the airport. 'Did you sleep?' 'Yes, eventually,' Sheila replied. 'Ah, you'll have jetlag for a few days yet,' said Kelly. 'Come on!' she continued, 'Professor McDowell wants to meet you.'

Kelly brought Sheila over to a large group. As the group of people opened up to include them, Sheila caught sight of a tall woman whose skin was as dark as her own was light. The woman was dressed in a smart white suit. The bright white of the suit seemed only to heighten Sheila's focus on the depth of the woman's skin colour and tone. To Sheila, her whole face seemed to shine like gloss. Sheila was suddenly aware that she was staring at Professor McDowell. After a few moments of awkward silence, Sheila soon got the conversation going again, talking about the huge difference in the weather between Boston and home. When the reception was over and Sheila was on her way out of the conference room, Professor McDowell called her over. 'Nice to meet you, Sheila!' she said. 'I hope we will really enjoy working together in the year ahead!'

Talking Points

1. If you had asked Sheila to prepare a label to describe the professor before they met, what do you think might have been written on it?
2. Sheila presumed certain things about the professor beforehand. What did she presume? What effect did that have on their meeting?
3. Do you think Professor McDowell knew what was going on in Sheila's mind at the moment they met? If so, do you think the professor might have felt 'labelled' by Sheila, and how might that have affected the way they got on?
4. Have you ever been aware of someone 'labelling' (or wrongly assuming something about) someone else? Give an example and say what effect, if any, you think it may have had.

One-Minute Soapbox

Talk for an interrupted minute or two, beginning with: 'You shouldn't assume you know someone just because...'

Talking Points

1. What is so unfair about prejudice? Do you think it is wrong simply to have unfair feelings towards another person? Why?/Why not?
2. Give an example from history of a time when people tried to justify prejudice.
3. Name an example of prejudice in recent news reports or in your country today.
4. There are various unfair ways of stereotyping (labelling) people, e.g. appearance. Give a few more examples and suggest some reasons why you think each one is unfair.
5. Suppose that there was a lot of stereotyping going on in a particular group or class, what suggestions might you make to such a group or class to help them overcome stereotyping? Pick one of these suggestions and consider whether it might be helpful in your own class. Perhaps you might decide to follow it in your class.

Why Don't You?

If you did the display 'The Way We See People' in the last lesson, you might like to add some 'stereotype' labels to it now.

Prejudice

Two words are used to make the word 'prejudice': 'pre' and 'judge'. Prejudice means that you 'pre-judge' someone: you judge them before you get to know them. You allow yourself to feel a certain way about a person. Your feelings are based on negative judgements and assumptions that you have about that person. This is unfair. It is unfair to let such feelings, judgements and assumptions drive your attitude towards a person because you do so before you get to know that person. Indeed, if you don't stop and think about what you're doing, prejudice will prevent you from even making an effort to get to know that person.



Stereotyping

Sometimes you can see your negative feelings, judgements and assumptions in the way that you label people. You might judge them on the way they speak. You might judge them on the way they look. You might judge them on the place they come from. There are many unfair ways of labelling people or thinking about people before getting to know them. This behaviour is called stereotyping and it is part of prejudice.

You stereotype a person or a group of people by putting them into a category (i.e. by grouping them together) without any evidence for doing so. In doing this, you overlook whatever skills, abilities or interests a person or a group of persons may have. You disregard anything that makes them individual and you refuse to recognise what makes them unique. Instead, you lump them together with others of a particular group that you think little of, and you do so unfairly.

You are already aware of the story in the book of Genesis of how God created people and of how God values them. You are already aware of the example of Jesus, who refused to stereotype people. Instead, he treated each person as an individual and with respect. Even if others rejected people because they were 'sinners' or 'tax collectors' or 'Romans' (i.e. because they belonged to a particular group whom they didn't like), Jesus did not do this.



A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Today we will pray in rhythm with our breathing.

So to get ourselves ready, we begin to become quiet and still.
We settle our feet. We sit up comfortably and straight. We close
our eyes. *(Pause)*

The prayer we pray today is: 'Remind me God *(Pause)*...of your
love for me.' *(Pause)*

We become aware of our breathing in *(Pause)*...and our
breathing out. *(Pause)* Be aware of your breath as you take it in
(Pause)...and let it go. *(Pause)*

On the in-breath, we silently pray: 'Remind me God...'

On the out-breath, we silently pray: 'of your love for me.'

'Remind me God *(Pause)*...of your love for me.' *(Pause)*

'Remind me God *(Pause)*...of your love for me.' *(Pause)*

And now together we pray our prayer for a short time in silence.

(Time for quiet repetition of prayer)

Before we finish our praying, take a further moment of quiet
and allow God to communicate with you.

Now it is time to finish. When you are ready, open your eyes
and take a stretch.

Sign of the Cross

In Your Religion Journal

Think back to the stories of Jesus in recent lessons. Pick one in which Jesus refuses to stereotype another person. Using drawing and/or speech bubbles, illustrate the person(s) doing the stereotyping and Jesus refusing to take part in it.

or

Complete *one* only of the following stories in two opposite ways, one that includes stereotyping and one that does not:

Story 1: Olive and Claudine joined an evening class to learn French for their holidays. On the first night there, they overheard Ann saying that she was over seventy years of age. Olive looked at Claudine and said...

Story 2: John helped Michael manoeuvre his wheelchair into the meeting. Caterers were supplying cups of tea. When it was Michael's turn to be offered a cup of tea, the caterer...

Workbook Follow-Up

When you have completed the worksheet that goes with this lesson, ask yourself the following questions:

1. Based on what you have written, how well would you say you know the other students in your class?
2. To what extent would you say your relationship with others in the class is still based on your first impressions?
3. Have you made much of an effort to get to know the others in your class or have you stuck with fixed ideas about them?
4. Name one practical thing you might do to get to know people better in your class?

Acting Unfairly

These lessons on prejudice began by seeking to make you more aware of the unfair feelings that can arise in your heart. They then moved on to the unfair thinking that happens when we stereotype another person or group. But what happens when people let their unfair feelings and unfair thinking guide what they do? Discrimination happens. This lesson in general, and the 'Exclusion Game' in particular, will offer you an opportunity to reflect on that.

Talking Points

NB: Work with these questions only after doing 'The Exclusion Game'.

1. Would you like to have played another round of this 'game'? Why? Who would not? Why not?
2. Which role do you consider the 'best' role? Why? What feelings/thoughts/reactions did you have while you were in that role? Describe them. Do you think this sort of role would be good for you in real life? Why?/Why not?
3. What feelings/thoughts/reactions did you have while you were in the other roles? Describe these. Do you think this sort of role would be good for you in real life? Why?/Why not?
4. Find some words or phrases to describe the activity of the Greens towards the Reds in Round One. Repeat this in regard to the activity of the Blues towards the Reds in Round Two.

Game: The Exclusion Game

NB: This is a simulation game. Do not use this game unless you have time to follow it up with the questions in the 'Talking Points' on this page. This game gives you an experience of power, of being controlled, and of being excluded. This part can give rise to strong feelings. Essential to the learning is the 'debriefing' afterwards, where each person has the opportunity to speak about their feelings during the game. The questions that follow the game are a guide to how you might facilitate the debriefing.

Divide into three groups: the reds, the blues and the greens. You might use coloured stickers to identify the groups. One person is chosen to act as time-keeper; they take no other part in the game. There are two 'rounds' to the game. Each 'round' lasts two minutes (and no more). Do Round One as follows:

1. The Greens are allowed to sit down comfortably and are given a small treat (e.g. fruit/yoghurt).
2. One of the Greens orders the Reds to stand facing the wall. From this point, the Reds may not talk or look around. They must close their eyes and be totally silent. They are not allowed to do anything other than stand in their place.
3. Individual Greens then take turns at giving orders (from the bullet-point list that follows) to individual Blues, who must do as they are told or get someone from their group to do the activity in their place. The following orders may be used:

- Stand on tip-toe
- Hop on one leg

- Make animal noises
- Count backwards from 100
- Say the alphabet
- Recite an addition table
- Imitate a bird trying to fly
- Do a mime of washing the dishes
- Touch your nose with one finger

Note: Other orders might possibly be used, but only with the clearly expressed prior permission of the class teacher.

For Round Two, roles are changed as follows: Blues give the orders; Greens face the wall; Reds are told what to do.

Discriminating Against People because of Who or What they Are

Discrimination is prejudice in action. You discriminate against someone when you allow your prejudice to get expressed in unfair words or in unfair actions towards them. Discrimination usually takes two forms:

- one person (or group) ignores another person (or group) because of who or what they are;
- one person (or group) exploits or dominates another person (or group) because of who or what they are.

Sometimes one group in society keep their privileges and power by discriminating against others who might want to share those privileges and power.

Discrimination focuses on the same things as prejudice and stereotyping, for example skin colour, culture, age, gender, disability, religion and so on.

Discrimination can happen almost anywhere: at work, in shops, on the street, at school, at home, in places of entertainment. Many laws have been passed to prevent the most obvious forms of discrimination in society. However, discrimination in more discreet forms still remains.

It is easier to recognise discrimination in far away places than it is to be aware of the prejudice that leads you to discriminate against others. It's possible for you to be unaware of the extent of your own prejudice and of your tendency to discriminate.

When you discriminate against others, you disregard how God sees those people. You forget that they are made in the image and likeness of God. God knows you by name. God sees and loves you as a unique, irreplaceable person. It is the same with those against whom you discriminate. God knows and loves them too.



Talking Points

- Reread the story 'The Party' in Lesson 7 (page 104). Do you think Marie attempted to discriminate against Natasha? If so, in what way?
- If you wanted to discriminate against someone, what might you do? In each instance, say what you think of that kind of behaviour and why.
- Some people discriminate against others on the basis of skin colour. List some other sorts of discrimination and say why each one is wrong.
- Do you think there are any kinds of discrimination in your local area? If so, name some examples. Do you ever see yourself as capable of that kind of discrimination against another person or group? Why?/Why not?
- If you knew someone who was actively discriminating against another person or group, what advice would you give to that person? Do you think you would get much of a hearing? Why?/Why not?

Why Don't You?

Get into groups of four. Each group picks a particular kind of discrimination. Have a three-minute conversation where one pair argues in favour of the particular discrimination and the other pair argues against it. NB: Afterwards, talk together about what doing this activity was like for you.

In Your Religion Journal

Draw an image or write about a time when someone discriminated against you or someone you know. Include some words or phrases that describe how you felt about it.

Why Don't You?

Make a list of different types of discrimination. For each particular example, look for a story of someone to whom it happened. Put the results of your research into a scrapbook or make a display under the title 'Discrimination – Prejudice in Action'. Underneath put a subtitle: 'God Loves Every Person.'

'ME' Folder

Write a piece on the following theme: 'A time when someone treated me unfairly for no good reason.' Recall how you felt and how you dealt with it.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Each one of us is precious to God. God wants everyone to live together in fairness because God loves each one of us. St Paul reminds us of this.

Reader 1

St Paul wrote this letter to the people of Ephesus (*Ephesians 4:1-3*):
I beg you to live in a way that is worthy of the people God has chosen to be his own. Always be humble and gentle. Patiently put up with each other and love each other. Try your best to let God's Spirit keep your hearts united. Do this by living at peace.

The word of the Lord.

All

Thanks be to God.

Teacher

If we are to live in God's way, we must root out discrimination. This sounds easy. In fact, it's not easy at all. Some discrimination is very obvious, but most of the time discrimination is harder to see.

Reader 2

Sometimes people have to pretend to fit in. They must act the same, dress the same, talk the same in order to be accepted by the group. People who are different are often ignored or made to feel uncomfortable. Yet everyone reflects God in some way. God, forgive us.

All

God, forgive us our sins.

Reader 3

Some people can make no progress because their way is blocked. They have to do more than everyone else in order to be accepted. Extra things are demanded of them. For example, they must have a fixed address, do an extra test or sign an extra form. Buildings are not designed with everybody's needs in mind. Workplaces and

businesses often make no effort to take account of people's different customs and traditions. God, forgive us.

All

God, forgive us our sins.

Reader 4

We may discriminate at home. We may use crude names when speaking to or about other people. We may see no harm in making hurtful jokes about another person or group of people. If one of our family is friendly with such a person or group, we may object and make things awkward for them. We may be inclined to blame certain groups for crime or trouble in our area simply on the basis of our prejudice against them. God, forgive us.

All

God, forgive us our sins.

Reader 5

We may be slow to campaign to ensure that there are laws to protect the rights of some people. We may neglect or not show any interest in the issues that concern some people. We may fail to make our schools or workplaces welcoming places for certain people. We may make no effort to understand some people's accents, or fail to spell or say their names correctly. God, forgive us.

All

God, forgive us our sins.

Teacher

We pray the prayer that reminds us that we are one family under God:

All

Our Father... (*or Ár nAthair*)

Sign of the Cross

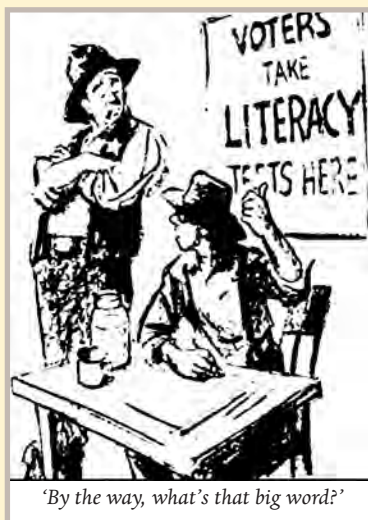
Prejudice: Unfair Systems

You have seen how prejudice exists in individual people. In this lesson, you will have the opportunity to consider some examples of how prejudice can also exist in the whole way of life of a community, even of a country. When that happens, everyone in that community or country is involved, whether they like it or not, whether they know it or not.

Overcoming such prejudice will require understanding, courage and action on the part of everyone.

More than they bargained for...

In theory, back in the 1960s, all citizens of the United States of America had the right to vote. But in practice that right was regularly denied to many citizens in the southern states. The official reason given for rejecting their right to vote was mostly that those applying to vote were judged to be illiterate (not able to read or write). Some of those who were judged illiterate had university degrees and were well able to read and write. Many people in the US didn't believe the official reason given because they noticed that all those who were refused the right to vote had another thing in common: the colour of their skin.



In 1964, six hundred and fifty young students travelled to the state of Mississippi to put things right. They did not accept that colour of skin was any excuse for preventing someone from voting. They wanted to help the people to register for their vote. Despite the good intentions of all those students, things did not go well. They were up against more than they bargained for. Afterwards, one of those students wrote home to tell what happened:

'We got about fourteen [of those people] to go to the court-house with the intention of registering to vote. Sheriff Smith greeted the party with a six-shooter [gun] drawn from his pocket, and said "Okay, who's first?"

Why Don't You?

Imagine you have a disability that means you must use a wheelchair. Describe a trip (real or imaginary) to your local town. Make a list of ways in which you might find your needs ignored or ways in which you might find yourself excluded. Put a 'star' beside those forms of discrimination that are caused not so much by individuals but more by the way things are organised or done locally – in other words, the structures and systems that are in place. Would it be easy to remedy such problems of discrimination? Why?/Why not?

One-Minute Soapbox

Talk for an interrupted minute or two, beginning with: 'I see prejudice in our country (or community) when...'

Talking Points

1. What is your reaction to this story? Take a moment to share it.
2. Do you consider being unable to read or write a fair reason why someone should be prevented from voting? Why?/Why not?
3. Do you notice any signs of prejudice, including stereotyping and discrimination, in the events of the story? Explain your answers.
4. Does it seem likely to you that Hartman Turnbow bombed his own house? What explanation might others have offered for that event at the time?
5. How was it that the good intentions of so many students were not enough to help the people who wanted to register to vote? What does the story suggest they were up against?

Most of [the fourteen people] remained cautiously quiet. After several seconds a man who had never before been a leader stepped up to the sheriff, smiled and said, "I'm first, Hartman Turnbow." All registration applications were permitted to be filled out and all were judged illiterate. The next week, Turnbow's house was bombed with Molotov cocktails [hand-thrown explosives]. When the Turnbows left the burning house, they were shot at. A couple of days later, Turnbow was accused of having bombed his own house, which wasn't insured. Sheriff Smith was the one witness against them. Mr Turnbow was convicted.'
(www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/USAvoting65.htm)

A System of Prejudice

In 1965, the US President, Lyndon B. Johnson, proposed a new law. In his speech (given below) to introduce that law, he described the prejudice and discrimination that refused certain people the right to vote. It was more than the prejudice of a number of individuals; this prejudice had become part of the whole way of life in certain parts of the US.

Every American citizen must have an equal right to vote. Yet the harsh fact is that in many places in this country, men and women are kept from voting simply because [of the colour of their skin]. Every device of which human ingenuity [cleverness] is capable has been used to deny this right. [Such a] citizen may go to register only to be told that the day is wrong, or the hour is late, or the official in charge is late, or the official in charge is absent. And if he persists and he manages to present himself to



A civil rights march in 1963, the year prior to the enactment of the Civil Rights Act

register, he may be disqualified because he did not spell out his middle name or because he abbreviated a word on his application. And if he manages to fill out an application, he is given a test. The registrar [person who decides who is on the register] is the sole judge of whether he passes his test. He may be asked to recite the entire Constitution

[document outlining the laws of the State], or explain the most complex provisions of State laws. And even a college degree cannot be used to prove that he can read and write. For the fact is that the only way to pass these barriers is to show a white skin. This bill will strike down restrictions to voting in all elections – federal, State, and local – which have been used to deny Negroes [black people] the right to vote.

(Lyndon Baines Johnson, speech on the Voting Rights Act, March 1965)

Examples from History

The story of how a particular group of people in the United States were once denied the right to vote is an example of a particular way in which prejudice can be present. That prejudice was kept going by more than just a few individuals. It took very little to maintain it. It was present everywhere and was considered ‘normal’. This story of prejudice shows how prejudice can be present throughout a whole system or society or community. We can say that prejudice may be ‘institutional’ or ‘structural’.

The laws and systems of Nazi Germany were another example of structural prejudice. They favoured a particular type of physical appearance. This became the excuse for discriminating against those who were physically or mentally different. The first to be killed were Germans who were physically disabled. But soon many others were also selected to be killed, according to their race, nationality, beliefs, condition or orientation. In particular, they singled out Jewish people. Millions were killed, despite the fact that many Germans did not want this to happen.



Apartheid in South Africa is another example of structural or institutional prejudice. Just like the system of prejudice that prevented certain US citizens from voting, this system of prejudice was based on the colour of a person's skin. People of different skin colours were not allowed to mix or meet together socially. Different laws and regulations applied to each group. They had different cinemas, hospitals, schools, housing areas and transport systems.

Racism Today

You are aware that prejudice led to

- the denial of the right to vote in some southern states in the United States;
- the complete dividing of the people of South Africa;
- the systematic killing of millions of people by the Nazis during the Second World War.

These events are in the past now and may seem remote to you. You may believe that such prejudice could never happen again because people have seen its results. Surely, history has shown how wrong this kind of prejudice is. Well, don't be too sure about that! Such prejudice

Talking Points

1. 'If it weren't for those individual registrars who refused certain people the right to vote, there would have been no problem.' Do you agree? Why?/Why not?
2. Would it be right to claim that the legal system (judges and law-enforcement officers) of those places was also involved? Why?/Why not?
3. Would it be right to claim that ordinary residents of those places where discrimination took place were also involved? Explain your answer.
4. The 'Why Don't You?' activity on page 113 offered you an opportunity to explore how discrimination might be present in your locality, even though most individuals may not wish to discriminate. If you did this activity, was your list very long? Would you consider it fair to say that these difficulties are caused more by the system than by individuals? Why?/Why not? To what extent might lack of awareness of such difficulties contribute to leaving such problems unsolved?
5. If you didn't do the 'Why Don't You?' activity, why did you not do it? Might that decision reflect anything of the local attitude towards issues of access for wheelchair-users?

In Your Religion Journal

Under the title 'Prejudice: Unfair Systems', make an image or write some words or phrases about either prejudice in Nazi Germany (you can find information at www.bbc.co.uk/dna/ww2/1A1289937 and elsewhere) or apartheid in South Africa (you can find information at www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/africa/features/storyofafrica/12chapter6.shtml and elsewhere).

Talking Points

1. If you were looking for signs of prejudice focused on the race or ethnic origins of others in your locality, would you find any? If so, what would it be?
2. How would you explain such racism to, say, a being from another planet?

Why Don't You?

Search the BBC website/ newspapers for recent local news stories on racism. Here are some examples:

news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/3390249.stm
news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/3595439.stm
news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/northern_ireland/3996675.stm

Further Resources

FILMS/MOVIES

Rabbit Proof Fence (2002)
Mississippi Burning (1989)
Cry Freedom (1987)
The Killing Fields (1984)

TRÓCAIRE'S ACTION AND EDUCATION PACK – LENT 2004

Rwanda: The Generation after Genocide

WEBSITES

www.disabilityaction.org
learningdisabilities.org.uk
free2pee.org.uk
timetogetequal.org.uk

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

reoccurred in the 1980s during the break-up of the country formerly known as Yugoslavia. It occurred once more in 1994 in Rwanda, again with dreadful results. In 2004, events in Sudan showed the signs of similar prejudice. All these events occurred as a result of prejudice which focused on the ethnic origin of those who were attacked. This type of prejudice is often called 'racism'. It may well be that, somewhere in the world, the same kind of prejudice is happening even as you read this page.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Jesus assures us that God knows the pain of those who suffer prejudice and the injustice that goes with it. Jesus also assures us that one day God will change the present way of the world. God will undo the hurt that these people have suffered.

Reader

This is what Jesus says at the beginning of the Sermon on the Mount in the Gospel according to Matthew (5:1-10):

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.

Teacher

Let us pray:

All

God, defend the poor of the earth and those who suffer injustice.

Bring us to our right mind so that we may remember that all people are your children, created and loved by you.

Amen.

Sign of the Cross

A Very Particular Sort Of Prejudice

You know the elements of prejudice: unfair feeling, unfair thinking, unfair acting and unfair systems and structures. This lesson is about a very particular combination of these elements.

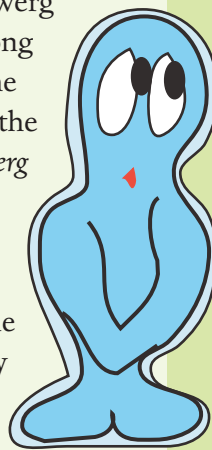
Gronks and Twergs

It was time for Susan to go to sleep. 'Mummy, tell me the story of the Gronks and the Twergs,' she said. So, the story was begun once more:

Once upon a time there were the Gronks and the Twergs. Long ago, there had been a big fight between the Gronks and the Twergs that never ended properly. Every so often, it would break out again. The Gronks and the Twergs had long memories. Each had their own stories and songs about what had happened, and these stories and songs were often quite different. Each celebrated different holidays. On Gronk Day, the Twergs did not join in. And it was the same at Twerg Time, when many Gronks went on working as usual.

One day, a girl Gronk called Allison fell in love with a boy Twerg called Tom. They liked spending time together: they took long walks or went to the cinema or had some pizza together. The first day Allison went to Tom's house, she was reminded of the differences between them. In Tom's house, they had the *Twerg Times*; this was very different from the *Gronk Gazette*. Tom had a poster of the Twerg Tiddlywinks team; Allison's brothers and sisters had never put up posters of that team. Ludo was the Gronk sport. Allison noticed that Tom's people always watched TV Twerg and not the Gronk channel. They talked about people that Allison had never met. This was natural enough because Tom and his family had been to Twergville High School and Allison and her family had been at school in Gronktown Grammar. Tom's mother and father were very quiet the first day that Allison came to their house. Tom seemed a bit flustered too. He didn't seem too sure about where things were when it came to making a mug of tea. However, they were soon playing a video game and Tom's brothers and sisters joined in. After a while, they said that she was an okay Gronk after all. Allison wondered what they meant by that. Weren't Gronks okay anyway?

Just then, Susan's dad came in and interrupted the bedtime story. 'You're not listening again to that silly story about the French and the English!' 'How do you mean?' asked Susan. 'Well,' said her father, 'let me explain: the Gronks are French and the Twergs are English.' 'Oh!' said Susan, surprised. 'I thought it was a story about the...'



Term 2, Lesson 11

Talking Points

1. How do you suppose Susan might have finished the final sentence of the story if she were a little girl growing up (a) in a southern state in the US during the 1960s, (b) in South Africa in the 1970s, (c) in Bosnia-Herzegovina in the 1980s, (d) in Rwanda in 1994?
2. In the story, did you notice any hints of prejudice (especially any signs of stereotyping or discrimination)? Explain your answer.
3. List the areas of difference between the two groups in the story. What other areas of difference might you expect to find between them?
4. Is the prejudice that is described in the story confined to individuals, or is it likely that such prejudice occurs throughout their system and community? Do you think it would be easy to get rid of any such prejudice? Why?/Why not?
5. Suppose Susan was a little girl growing up in the same land as you, what might she have assumed the story to be about?
6. Supposing again that the story was set in the place where you live, what single issue or factor might be connected to all the differences between the two sides?
7. Give some examples of these kinds of difference from your experience. Would you say that such differences affect you and those who look after you differently or to the same extent?

Talking Points

1. Give some everyday examples of ways in which people on both sides of a situation where sectarianism exists might live out the first three factors listed opposite. Which ones apply particularly to you?
2. In the Gronks and Twergrs story, do you think that it would be easy for Allison and Tom to remain close friends? Explain your answer. How might their relationship influence (a) Allison's standing or popularity with other Gronks and (b) Tom's standing or popularity with other Twergrs? In your view, which one of the four factors listed opposite is most likely to cause such influence? Suggest other practical examples of that influence from your experience.
3. Suppose the two 'sides' in the Gronks and Twergrs story simply stopped showing their prejudice, would that be enough to get rid of it? Why?/Why not? What might your answer say about sectarianism? Which of the four factors would you say is the most powerful? Why?
4. In a community where sectarianism exists, do you consider that finding one person or group to blame for it will help to get rid of it? How does your answer fit in with the fourth factor above?
5. In the Gronks and Twergrs story, the young girl heard her story of prejudice at bedtime. Where and when did you first become aware of the story of prejudice strongly connected with one religion, i.e. sectarianism?

The 'S' Word: A Very Particular Form of Prejudice

Prejudice may begin with unfair feelings towards another person or group. Generally, those unfair feelings arise in you before you know it and they may be encouraged by the community or system in which you live. Prejudiced feelings may lead you to 'stereotype' or label that person or group in a negative and unfair way: you forget what's unique and special about them. If you don't curb those ways of feeling and thinking, you may begin actually to treat those people badly in what you say and in what you do: you may discriminate against them.

When prejudice is strongly connected with the religion of the other person, it is called sectarianism. Sectarianism is a particular type of prejudice. It has the same four features:

- (1) Unfair feeling: you dislike or mistrust a person because they belong to a particular religious group.
- (2) Unfair thinking (stereotyping): you start to assume that all people of the same religion are the same and deserve the same reaction from you.
- (3) Unfair action (discrimination): to a greater or lesser extent, you speak badly of people of this particular faith; you call them particular names; you might prefer not to work or socialise with them; you might feel justified in attempting to bully or dominate them.
- (4) Part of the 'system', i.e. part of every aspect of life: such feeling, thinking and behaving can become a factor of every aspect of your community (e.g. in sport, business, politics, housing, education, celebration days, laws, etc), both in ways that you realise and in ways that you don't realise. It's more than just an 'individual' thing.

A time to pray

Note: You might like to use the indications for mime that are included in this prayertime. If you do so, you will need two spools of wool or string.

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Sometimes a country or land is split into two groups that are prejudiced against each other. The students split into two separate circles some distance apart, with one person standing in the middle of each circle. Each group has a ball of wool or string.

But eventually some people want to move beyond prejudice and get to know one another.

The two 'individuals' leave their 'circles' and stand together in the middle.

When that happens, the prejudice that runs throughout the community may start to work on them. The two circles open into semi-circles and stand at opposite sides of the two individuals in the middle.

Then the web of prejudice in which they are caught starts to become visible. People say things.

Reader 1

I prefer to stick to friends of my own kind.

The people who have the wool or string take a firm hold of one end of it and throw the remainder at the other 'group' (over or around the two individuals in the centre). This action is repeated each time the different readers speak. The aim is to show the web of prejudice that limits the freedom of the two individuals in the centre and holds everyone in their place. Keep the threads taut.

Reader 2

People of the other kind don't understand my traditions.

Reader 3

I don't agree with what the other side believes in.

Reader 4

I don't like their flags and traditions.

Reader 5

I wouldn't feel comfortable with one of them around.

Reader 6

Their celebration days aren't for me.

Reader 7

I don't like their newspapers and the way they see things.

Reader 8

Their leaders make my blood boil.

Reader 9

If I had my way, there'd be none of that kind around here.

Reader 10

How can you be friends with that sort when they hurt my people so much?

Reader 11

I believe they should be made to live in their own areas.

Reader 12

I've nothing against the good ones of their kind, but I'd rather not have them mixing with my family.

Note: If you wish to make the 'web' more visible, the reader parts might be repeated.

Teacher

And so the web of prejudice becomes visible. It holds us in place and it limits our freedom to move. It holds us back from moving beyond our prejudices. We take a moment to recall our own feelings and experiences of prejudice. *(Pause)*

God of mercy and kindness, heal our hurts and show us helpful ways of dealing with our anger. You love us. Jesus taught us to call you our Father. Help us to realise that, despite our differences, you see us all as your children. Even though we may not be able to get rid of our prejudices completely, help us to set them down and to live above them. *(Pause)*

The group set the 'web' on the floor.

Help us to imagine a world beyond prejudice and to offer one another the signs of peace. *(Pause)*

All meet in the centre, walking over the web, and shake hands.

Sign of the Cross



In small groups, discuss the following: 'It's not possible to avoid being sectarian where we live'. Nominate one person from each group to report to the class on your discussion.

Or

Pick five people to have a discussion for the whole class on the same theme. They may support or contradict one another respectfully, or they may introduce new ideas to the conversation as it proceeds. Decide on a time-limit for the conversation, and stop it when it reaches this limit. If no one speaks, then allow the silence.

In Your Religion Journal

Using words and/or image(s), describe the experience or effect of sectarianism in your life or in the life of someone you know. Underneath, write a short prayer to God about that experience or effect.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Moving Beyond Sectarianism

Prejudice that focuses on religion may be called sectarianism. As you saw in the last lesson, it can affect every aspect of community life. In this lesson, you will have an opportunity to reflect on how others deal with such prejudice and on how you might deal with it yourself.

A time to pray

Note: You may wish to use the prayer room for this reflection. You might also consider using some reflective background music throughout.

Voices One, Three and Five belong to one 'side' of a community divided by sectarian prejudice, while Voices Two, Four and Six belong to the other 'side'; they stand on either side of the area that is used for this reflection. A suitable number of people may act as the 'Voices of the Future'; they stand in the middle of the space, slightly to the back.

Teacher

Today we reflect on the different ways in which people might deal with sectarian prejudice. Such prejudice focuses on the religion of others and destroys trust. Relationships are affected, as we shall now hear.

Voice One

We have been hurt by them. Our hurt goes back a long way. They show us no respect.

Voice Two

We have been hurt by them. They don't care for our culture. They don't understand us. The things

that happen only remind us of our hurt.

Voice One

We feel trapped and fearful of reaching out.

Voice Two

We are afraid because of what people might say...

Voices One and Two

...and especially of what people from our own 'side' might say.

Teacher

We pause to pray for all whose lives are affected by prejudice. (Pause)

Voices of the Future

(several readers)

Listen! Listen to us!

We are the voices of the future! When the hurt of the past takes over, the voices of the future are being silenced. Will nobody speak for us?

Voice Three

We will speak for you.

Voice Four

What do you want us to do?

Voices of the Future

Find a different way.

Follow a different path.

Open the way to a new tomorrow!

Voice Three

Very well! We will leave the past behind.

Voice Four

We will pretend that it no longer exists.

Voices Three and Four

And if anyone brings up the past again...

Voice Three

...we will condemn them.

Voice Four

...we will split with them.

Voice Three

We must deny the past for the sake of the future.

Voice Four

We must be careful to hide away our prejudice...

Voices Three and Four

...for we do not want to be condemned ourselves.

Teacher

We pause to recall someone whom we judged badly because of our prejudice. *(Pause)*

Voices of the Future

Once again, we speak.
Hiding the past will not help.
It is not enough to avoid prejudice.
It is not enough to be against prejudice.

Voices Five and Six

Well then, what must we be?
How must we go forward?

Voices of the Future

You cannot deny the past. It lives in you.
Condemn no one for any prejudice they feel!
But let no one live out of prejudice either!

Remember, people are more than what they feel.

Have respect for each other, even when you disagree strongly.
Be prepared to hear their story and to tell your own.

You are starting a long journey, a journey that will take time and effort, a journey towards a new future together.

Voices One, Three and Five

So we begin to turn towards each other in order that we may see with our own eyes and not with the eyes of the past.

We begin to listen to each other so that we may hear with our own ears and not with the ears of the past.

Voices Two, Four and Six

We set ourselves to grow in friendship, despite the past that has divided us and despite the hurtful things that may yet appear.

(Everyone steps into the centre of the space and all join hands.)

We join our hands in prayer so that we may listen to God and allow God to make us more aware of ourselves.

Teacher

We pause to ask for healing of past hurts that are still with us, not only in ways that we see but also in ways that we do not see.
(Pause)

All

Help us, God,
to know our past
but not to be trapped in it.
Help us, God,
to move beyond prejudice
into the future you want us all
to share.
Amen.

Talking Points

1. Look back at Voices One and Two of the prayertime for an example of the way in which sectarian prejudice can keep itself going. Can you recall an example of this from your own experience? To what extent do you think that you experience these pressures today?
2. If someone suggested tackling sectarianism by avoiding it or by condemning it where it occurred, what would you say? To what extent would you agree with this proposal? (Hint: Look at what Voices Three and Four have to say in the prayertime.)
3. 'Because sectarianism is so deeply rooted in a sectarian society, there is nothing we can do to escape it.' Do you agree? Why?/Why not?

Moving Beyond Sectarian Prejudice

When you are prejudiced against someone because of the religious group to which they belong, your prejudice may be called sectarian. If sectarian prejudice becomes widespread in your community, your community will become divided. What is more, it is very easy for your community to stay divided. Once it takes root, sectarian prejudice can keep itself going: people continue to divide themselves into two opposing 'sides'. The prejudice can become so strong that you may feel you are being disloyal to your 'own side' if you try to reach out to people on the 'other side'.



As you saw in the previous lesson, sectarian prejudice need not be confined to just a few individuals; it can become part of the structures and traditions of the community it divides. For that reason, avoiding prejudice may avoid conflict in the short term, but it makes little difference in the long term.

Nor is there a long-term benefit in concentrating exclusively on being anti-sectarian, i.e. against sectarianism. This approach may lead to more condemnation and division.

When your community has been divided and controlled for a long time by sectarianism, something new is called for. Firstly, remind yourself that you are not likely to have escaped the effects of sectarianism. You will probably have feelings of prejudice towards people of the 'other side'. Be aware of those feelings in yourself and acknowledge them.

No one can avoid the feelings that arise in them. You can move beyond sectarianism by being aware of your sectarian feelings, by refusing to live or act according to them, and by taking every opportunity to meet and dialogue with others, especially those whom you may think of as being of the 'other side'. By making such choices, your feelings can change and be changed.

Three Northern Ireland Communities Moving beyond Sectarianism

THE CURRAGH COMMUNITY

This community began in 1992 with six people from a variety of different backgrounds. They live on the Springfield Road in Belfast, in two houses that used to be derelict. These houses are on what is called the 'peace line' between the Catholic and Protestant areas. Members of the Curragh community share a simple lifestyle and pray together as part of their 'healing and reconciliation ministry'. They reach out to the local community through a variety of projects aimed at promoting peace and reconciliation, including group work with local people, youth work, developing community awareness, and justice work.

THE CORRYMEELA COMMUNITY

The Corrymeela community was founded in the early 1960s by Reverend Ray Davey. Today there are 230 formal members, both Catholic and Protestant, though many more are involved with the community's work in their own locality. They have centres at Ballycastle, Glenshesk and Belfast. They believe they are called together as 'Instruments of God's peace'. They provide opportunities for Protestants and Catholics to meet and talk together, and so to build mutual respect, trust and co-operation. They support those affected by violence and injustice and they work to promote peace.



THE CORNERSTONE COMMUNITY

This community of nineteen men and women is based in West Belfast. They all come from different backgrounds. Two of the members live on the 'peace line' between the Falls and the Shankill areas. They believe they belong to one another in the family of God. Through them, they hope that the people of the Shankill and the Falls will become more aware of what unites them. The community aims to be a living example of how people from different local traditions and backgrounds can live in peace.

Why Don't You?

Find out more about these communities at their websites or elsewhere.

Curragh Community:

www.ccommunity.fsnet.co.uk

Corrymeela Community:

corrymeela.org/index.html

Cornerstone Community:

www.cornerstonecom.fsnet.co.uk

You might like to use your findings to do a wall display under the title 'Moving Beyond Prejudice'.

In Your Religion Journal

On a page of your journal, illustrate the theme 'Moving Beyond Prejudice' through images that you have gathered or through your own words/images. Be sure to include yourself and what you can do.

'ME' Folder

Write a piece beginning: 'I notice the sectarianism in myself when...'

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Lent: Keeping Focused

Before you begin this lesson, ask yourself this question: 'What goals do I have in life?' Write down three words or phrases naming your goals in life. This lesson focuses on ways in which we achieve such goals. It also focuses on Lent because Lent provides us with a great opportunity to reflect on our goals in life and to do some work towards achieving them.

Talking Points

1. If Amir had not taken up boxing, do you think he might have turned out to be a different kind of person? Give a reason for your answer.
2. How might boxing have helped Amir to grow as a person?
3. List some things that people can work at which might help them to feel positive about themselves and about life. Describe the sort of effort, focus or discipline that one of these things might involve.

'It has Changed my Life and Kept me Focused': Amir Khan on Boxing

Amir Khan was still only seventeen years of age when he won a silver medal for boxing at the Athens Olympic Games. Amir's father had



moved from Pakistan to the UK in 1970. Amir was born in Bolton on 8 December 1986.

Who'd have thought what would be happening seventeen years later? Here's what Amir said about himself:

'I was about eight years old when I first got into boxing. I was a really hyperactive kid and my dad says I was a born fighter. I

got bored easily and was always fighting with other kids at school. So my dad took me to Haliwell Boxing Club, which was just round the corner from where we lived in Bolton. From there I moved on to Bury Amateur Boxing Club. I was all right at most sports at school – especially football, cricket, rugby and athletics – though I didn't really focus on any of them. Boxing came fairly naturally to me but I have had great coaching from Mick Jelley at Bury. By the age of eleven, I was boxing competitively. It has changed my life and kept me focused. All my energies are used up at the gym.'

Today, people describe Amir as 'a really nice guy'.

(http://news.bbc.co.uk/sportacademy/hi/sa/special_events/boxing/newsid_3891000/3891089.stm)

Lent Can Help us to Grow

People often find that taking part in sport helps them to become better people because it encourages them to develop good habits. For example, participating in a sport can help you to grow in respect, patience, concentration, willpower, persistence, and in co-operation with others. It

can increase your sense of satisfaction and fun in life. The same applies to other forms of discipline, such as practising the guitar, learning a song, learning to dance.

Any good discipline (training) will increase your ability to focus and to stay focused. This can help you to become a better person. When you have more staying-power, you're better able to stay with what needs to be done. So, when people really need your help and attention, you can actually give it.

There are three particular disciplines that people traditionally do during Lent. You already know them. **ALMSGIVING** (giving alms) means doing something about the needs of others. It means doing more than just looking out for ourselves. It involves giving of our time, attention and talents to help others, and perhaps giving some of what we own. **PRAYING** means being aware of God's love and focusing on God. **FASTING** makes us more aware of God and more aware of the good things around us. We fast when we eat less food or when we give up something we enjoy. These three ways of training ourselves allow us to focus on God and on what God wants. They help us to become what God wants and to be human in the same way as Jesus was human.

Key Facts: The Church Season of Lent

- Begins Ash Wednesday; ends Holy Thursday morning.
- It is a time of preparation for Easter.
- It recalls the forty days that Jesus spent praying and fasting in the wilderness.
- A time to be more aware of God and to listen to God.
- A time to focus on what is really going on in your life.
- A time to focus on others.
- The word 'Lent' comes from the old Anglo-Saxon word for 'Spring'.

Key Facts: Ash Wednesday

- First day of Lent.
- Our foreheads are marked with ashes in the sign of the cross.
- Ashes are made by burning last year's palms from Palm Sunday.
- Day of fast (eating less) and abstinence (no meat).
- Ashes show that we admit our wrongdoing and that we say sorry to God and others; we make a new start.

Talking Points

1. Did you write down three words or phrases as suggested at the start of the lesson? Did any of those words describe the kind of person you would like to become? If so, why is the kind of person you become important to you?
2. If your list of three words or phrases did not include any word to describe the kind of person you would like to become, why do you think that might be?
3. Do you think it's important to try to be a better person? What difference might it make and to whom?
4. List some ways in which Jesus showed us how to be human in the way that God wants.
5. What sort of goals do others seem to expect you to have in your life at present? List a few of these goals and say what you think of them. How do you propose to achieve these goals?
6. Praying, fasting and giving alms are the traditional disciplines of Lent. How might these train you to become a better person?

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.



Why Don't You?

In groups or as a whole class, read the following list before answering the questions:

- Sharon claimed for her camera against her travel insurance, even though she broke it the day after her holiday.
- The company wouldn't give Jasmine a pay rise. They claimed it was because of cutbacks, but they knew she would not be able to get a job anywhere else.
- The whole class got punished with extra homework all because James wouldn't own up to making noise during class.
- Freda teased Tariq and Ali because they wouldn't eat or drink anything at school during the month of Ramadan.
- Sally put a price tag from a cheaper T-shirt on to the one she was buying and got away with it.
- At break-time, the older boys lifted the ball and pushed the younger lads off the soccer pitch.
- John went off home from work saying he was sick, but he wasn't sick at all.
- Fiona downloaded so much on to the computer that it has slowed it down for everyone else at home.
- Peter knew the factory was polluting the river, but he didn't say anything.
- Breda repeated a rumour she heard about Elaine being accused of dishonesty when she worked in the supermarket.

continued 

What Makes Something Fair?

Suppose I disrespect and insult you because of your religion or where you come from or your ethnic roots. Suppose I take your stuff and ruin it deliberately. Suppose I abuse the earth and its resources, spoiling them for future generations. You might say that it's not fair to do these things. I might argue that my sense of what's fair is different from your sense of what's fair. Am I entitled to do whatever I want just because I think it's fair, regardless of what you think? Do you just tell me I'm wrong when you disagree? This lesson explores the basis of what makes things fair or unfair. You might like to begin with the 'Why Don't You?' exercise.

Justice, Fair Play and Right Relationships

There is a particular word that covers the whole area of fairness. This word can also include respecting people, no matter what their belief, their ethnic origin, their religion or their situation in life. It's a word that can mean giving people what is rightfully theirs. It's a word that can also describe proper treatment of the earth and its resources. This word is 'justice'. **JUSTICE** begins with us and our dealings with others and the environment. Most often, people connect justice with the law, the courts and prisons. Rightly so! But justice is about more than keeping the law. A thing can be legal and still be unfair or unjust, e.g. a very rich business might pay you the legal minimum wage, but it may not be just if they refuse to share more of the huge profits you are helping them to make.

You can describe justice as giving **FAIR PLAY** to other people. Fair play means respecting what belongs to other people and giving people what is properly owed or promised to them. But, as was said in the introduction to this lesson, fair play is not always a good guide. For example, a driver may feel it's fair to take risks on the road and to show off. That same driver may feel it is fair for others to do the same and

may think them cowardly for not doing so. Would you trust this driver's sense of fair play?



A good way to describe justice is to say that it is about **RIGHT RELATIONSHIPS** with other people, no matter who they are. That includes both close friends and people you don't know, even people you don't particularly like or get along with. Building up right relationships means creating conditions between you and others in such a way that everyone can get along together. When relationships are right, justice is the result. You destroy justice when you destroy right relationships between yourself and other people. You destroy justice when you abuse the environment and destroy right relationships between yourself and it.

Do a Bible search for Matthew 18:23-34, which contains a parable that Jesus told about an unforgiving servant. Before acting out the parable, here are some notes about the main characters to help bring it into focus:

KING: Hugely generous with mercy and forgiveness; expects these to be shared.

FIRST OFFICIAL: Owes many millions to the king, who lets him off when he begs for mercy. Meets fellow official who owes him a small amount but refuses to let him off with it. Gets second official put in jail.

SECOND OFFICIAL: Owes small amount to first official but cannot pay it back at this time. Begs for time to pay back what is owing.

OTHER OFFICIALS: Annoyed with first official; report this to the king.

Before (or after) you act out this parable, decide about the following questions:

1. Do the other officials confront the first official before they go to the king? If so, how do you think that meeting might go?
2. How do you think the first official ran up such huge bills in the first place? Do you think he spent much of it on other people?
3. Overall, how do you think the first official might have related to other people in general? Would you say he believed in building up right relationships with others? Why?/Why not? What would you say about his sense of fair play?

...continued

- Brian decided to make life difficult for David because he thought David was too confident in himself.
- Jo was collecting for the St Vincent de Paul society at Christmas. She kept some of it for herself. The total she collected was high, so no one noticed.

After you have read the examples above, answer the following questions:

1. Do you think these stories have anything in common? Explain your answer.
2. Do you think all the examples above belong in this list? Why?/Why not?
3. Which examples – if any – would you exclude from this list? Explain your answer.
4. If you could add another example to this list, what would you add? Why?

Talking Points

1. Look back at the list of examples from the start of the lesson. Choose one as an example of injustice where fair play is missing.
2. Choose another as an example of someone being unjust because they damaged right relationships.
3. Describe an incident where you (or someone you know) acted justly.

Talking Points

1. Recall the 'Our Father' prayer. In your opinion, does it contain any words that refer to the importance of right relationships?
2. Do a Bible search for Matthew 5:23-24. What does this suggest about right relationships?



In small groups, discuss the following: 'Injustice at home'. Nominate one person from each group to report to the class on your discussion.

Or

Pick five people to have a discussion for the whole class on the same theme. They may support or contradict one another respectfully, or they may introduce new ideas to the conversation as it proceeds. Decide on a time-limit for the conversation, and stop it when it reaches this limit. If no one speaks, then allow the silence.

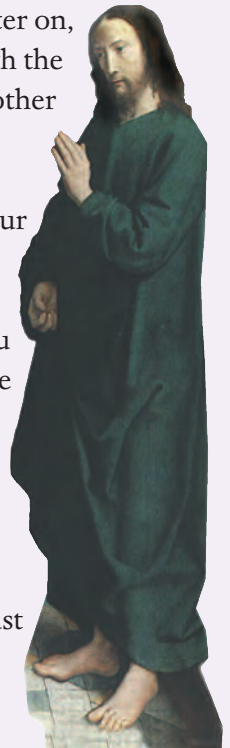
Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Jesus Teaches Us about Right Relationships

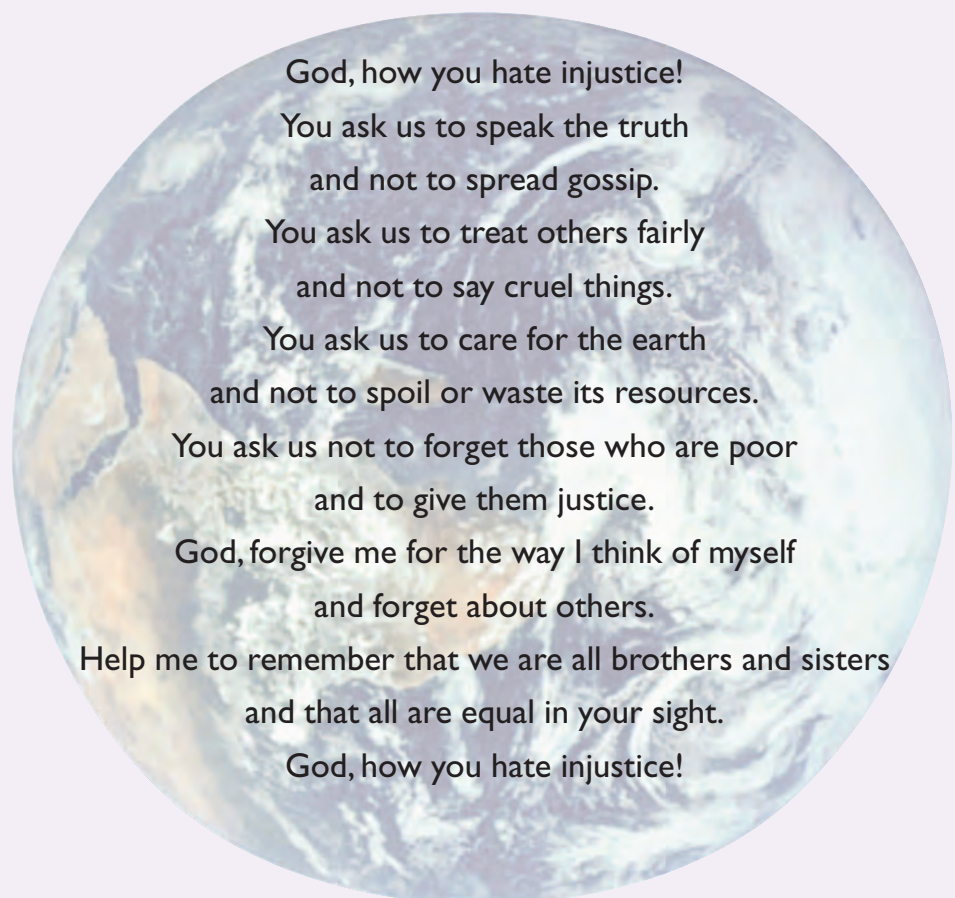
In his 'Parable of the Unforgiving Servant', Jesus told a story about a king and his court. The first official in the story ran up a debt so huge that it could not be repaid in several lifetimes. But the king put the man and his future before the debt and he let him go free. Later on, the official did something to damage his relationship with the king and everyone else: he did this when he treated the other official really badly.

Jesus told this story to let you know something about your life and your relationships. You have a relationship with God who is always with you, so there is no need to worry. You can presume that God will always forgive you and free you from the past when you ask. However, there is one catch: you must be prepared to do the same for others. Your hurtfulness, your meanness, and any other negative stuff that you do to others, affect your relationship with God. Hurting others ultimately hurts you. As far as God is concerned, justice matters. Having and looking after right relationships with others is not just an option: it's essential.



A time to pray

Note: You might like to read this prayer quietly before reading it together as a group. The group might divide into two groups and alternate the lines as the prayer is read.



God, how you hate injustice!

You ask us to speak the truth
and not to spread gossip.

You ask us to treat others fairly
and not to say cruel things.

You ask us to care for the earth
and not to spoil or waste its resources.

You ask us not to forget those who are poor
and to give them justice.

God, forgive me for the way I think of myself
and forget about others.

Help me to remember that we are all brothers and sisters
and that all are equal in your sight.

God, how you hate injustice!

Justice And Human Rights

Simply because you are a human being, you have worth and value. In other words, you have human dignity, no matter who you are, no matter what you are, no matter what your religion, no matter what your gender, no matter what your mix of abilities and disabilities, etc. No matter what, you have human rights. Every person has human rights: things to which they are entitled because they are human beings. If someone is denied their human rights, they are denied justice. What would be on a list of those human rights? Close this book and (as groups or individuals) see if you can draw up such a list on your own.

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

After the Second World War (1939-45), the United Nations produced a document called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, on 10 December 1948. This is one of the most important statements of human rights anywhere. It was signed by representatives of people from all over the world. It listed some thirty human rights, including the following:

- the right to life
- the right to liberty and to personal safety
- the right not to be a slave
- the right to protection of the law
- the right to a fair and public hearing in the courts
- the right to be presumed innocent until proven guilty
- the right to freedom of movement and residence
- the right to a nationality
- the right to marry and have a family
- the right to own property
- the right to freedom of thought, conscience and religion
- the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association
- the right to freedom of opinion and expression
- the right to seek and receive information and ideas
- the right to take part in politics
- the right to social security
- the right to work
- the right to fair wages and equal pay for equal work
- the right to join a trade union

Talking Points

1. If you composed a list of human rights as suggested in the introduction to this lesson, compare your list(s) with the United Nations list of human rights. Comment on any similarities and differences.
2. Recall the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20; Deuteronomy 5). See how many of these you can connect with the human rights mentioned from the United Nations document. (Note: Commandments may link with more than one human right.)
3. Read again the list of scenarios given at the start of the previous lesson (pages 126-7). Which human rights are involved?
4. The United Nations list of human rights does not include things like having the latest fashion or the newest gadget. Can you suggest a reason for this?
5. Do you think that human rights can be disrespected at home? Give some examples.

Why Don't You?

Visit the United Nations website and look at the text of the Declaration on Human Rights: www.un.org/Overview/rights.html

- the right to rest and leisure
- the right to adequate health care
- the right to education.

If you want to be a just person, then you must respect people and their human rights. That means that you must respect their life, their property, their reputation, etc. Look at the Ten Commandments and you will find that through them God calls you to respect human rights. For example, the Fifth Commandment calls people to respect the right to life. Remember that human rights are different from 'privileges'. For example, you might want to have a driving licence, but that doesn't mean that you have a human right to it. A driving licence is something you have to earn by passing the driving-test exams. Remember too that a human right is not the same as an 'interest' or 'preference'. If you are forbidden to play football beside a glasshouse, that is not a denial of your human rights. Human rights are things that are owed to you (or due to you) simply because you are a human being with a special dignity. Human rights are essential to your life as a human being. Simply because you are human, you have human rights. If someone denies you your human rights, they attack your dignity as a human being. Based on your religious tradition, you can go further and say that people have those human rights precisely because they are created in the image and likeness of God.

Amos the Prophet

Many years ago, back in the eighth century BC, a man named Amos was called by God to stand up for human rights. He was a prophet, someone chosen by God to speak out. His story and his words are told in the book of Amos in the Bible. He is a good example of a prophet. Being a



United Nations headquarters in New York

prophet made life very difficult for him. Those in authority turned against him because he spoke out and criticised the lack of human rights. If radio had been invented at that time, an interview with him might have sounded something like this:

INTERVIEWER: Amos, you're in big trouble. You've been reported to the king. Amaziah, the priest in charge of the sanctuary at Bethel, says you're trying to overthrow the country.

AMOS: Well he would say that, wouldn't he! It's the oldest trick: get the messenger, not the message.

INTERVIEWER: But didn't you say that the king and his family would be destroyed?

AMOS: Yes, I did, but I didn't say that I wanted that to happen.

INTERVIEWER: Well then, why do you go on talking like this? Do you want people to call you a traitor?

AMOS: Not in the least. I much prefer a quiet life. I'm a farmer at heart. But our country is going rotten. The courts give no protection to the poor! Shopkeepers using false weighing scales! Poor people being exploited! There's a whole set of people who care nothing for the poor and needy. All they want is the latest fashion and stuff while the country is falling apart.

INTERVIEWER: And you blame the king for this?

AMOS: Well, he's part of the problem, but he's not all of it. There's a lot of false religion about: the kind of religion that makes you feel good and that does nothing for people in need.

INTERVIEWER: And what gives you the right to say that? Do you know more about religion than the high priest does?

AMOS: Well, any religion that ignores human dignity is no religion as far as I'm concerned. What happened to our good religion? What happened to caring for the poor, being a good neighbour, giving fair play? Have we forgotten that God brought ALL our people out of Egypt? Didn't God give the Ten Commandments to ALL the people and not just to a select few? Why doesn't the high priest talk about that? We're falling apart as a nation. We don't care for one another any more. It's a disaster, with more disaster to follow.

INTERVIEWER: You might well be correct, Amos, but what right have you to say all of this? What makes you so special?

AMOS: I can't stay quiet and look at what's going on. I have to speak out for God against the injustices in our society. Believe me, I never wanted to be a prophet. I didn't go looking to be chosen by God. But I'd have no peace in myself if I didn't speak out.

INTERVIEWER: Well, Amos, I know you can't stick around for long. If you had one message to give today, what would it be?

AMOS: If Amaziah could hear me, I'd tell him this: God hates your religious practices! God does not accept your temple worship. God doesn't want your hymns and music, or loads of prayers. God wants justice. Let it roll like a river. There's no true religion without right relationships!



Talking Points

1. Check the interview for evidence that Amos sees justice as each of the following:
 - (a) fair play;
 - (b) human rights;
 - (c) right relationships.
2. 'Right relationship with God is about more than praying.' Do you think Amos would agree? Why?/Why not?
3. 'Amos seems to undermine religion.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not?

Why Don't You?

- Do a Bible search for Amos 8:4-13 as an example of what Amos said.
- Do a collage or a poster on the theme of 'People Working For Justice'. You might include some images of characters from the past and present, such as Mahatma Gandhi, Oscar Romero, Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, Mother Teresa, Martin Luther King, Dorothy Stang, etc. You might add a biographical note about those you include.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

One-Minute Soapbox

For one or two minutes, share a story of people being denied their human rights today. You can do this either as yourself or you can do it as one of the 'characters' in the story.

'ME' Folder

Explore the following question: 'To what extent might I take my family and family life for granted?'

In Your Religion Journal

Check recent newspapers and magazines for stories of people denied their human rights today. Cut them out and paste some of them into your Religion journal. You might include a comment or reflection of your own on these stories.

Called to Respect our Common Humanity



Recalling the end of the Second World War, Pope John Paul II said that most of the victims were young, like you. He then went on to add: 'The Second World War made all people aware of the [scale]... which contempt for [people] and the violation of human rights could reach... For this reason I ask you, the young people of the twenty-first century, to be particularly alert to the signs that the culture of hatred and death is growing...

Renounce every form of extreme nationalism and intolerance.

A civilisation of love and truth can only be built if openness to others extends to the relations between peoples, nations and cultures. May this appeal resound in the heart of everyone: Love other peoples as you love your own! The path of humanity's future is that of unity; and authentic unity – so the Gospel proclaims – is found through Jesus Christ, our reconciliation and our peace' (see Ephesians 2:14-18).

(www.ewtn.com/library/papaldoc/jp2wwii.htm)

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Over the years, and still today, people have been put in jail for what they believe rather than for doing any wrong actions. These people are in jail because governments or those in authority don't like what they say or think, and they want to keep them out of the way. We call such prisoners 'prisoners of conscience'. We take a moment to imagine what life without human rights is like for them.

- Imagine that you are a prisoner.
- Imagine that you have been beaten by your guards.
- Imagine that you are made to stay in a small cell which was originally meant to keep dogs.
- Imagine that you have no bed, no bedding, just the floor to sleep on.
- Imagine that you are denied food and water for days at a time.
- Imagine that you have been there for more than fifteen years.
- You were put there because you were caught passing on information to the United Nations organisation about the use of torture in your country.
- You are sick, but you are allowed no doctor.
- You are in jail, but you can get no lawyer.
- You know the truth, but you may not tell it.
- Imagine that the rulers of your country keep you in jail as an example to others of what happens when you speak out.*

We pause to remember prisoners of conscience all over the world, people kept in prison because of what they believe. (Pause)

Sign of the Cross

**Note: This reflection is based on the story of a Burmese man named U Win Tin who was imprisoned because of his senior position in the National League for Democracy in that country.*

The Needs Of The Wider World

As a group, take a few minutes to make a 'wish list' of gifts (say, for your birthday). Include only gifts that you would really, really like to receive. Beside each gift, put the reason why you would like to receive that gift. Just below here, you'll find a list of rather different gifts. Nowadays, there are many organisations that encourage and enable people to send 'global gifts' to the world's poor. Why do you think such organisations do this? This lesson will help you to find out.

Talking Points

1. Did you (or anyone you know) arrange to send a 'global gift', e.g. at Christmas? What was the gift?
2. Why might someone need any of the 'gifts with a difference' listed below? Why might people send them such gifts?
3. If you did your own 'wish list' as suggested in the introduction to this lesson, compare it with the list of 'gifts with a difference'. In your opinion, which list is more connected to basic human needs such as food, shelter or safety? Explain your answer.
4. Would you imagine that there is any difference between your situation and the situation of people who would wish for the 'global gifts' listed here? If so, what would you guess might be the main differences?

Why Don't You?

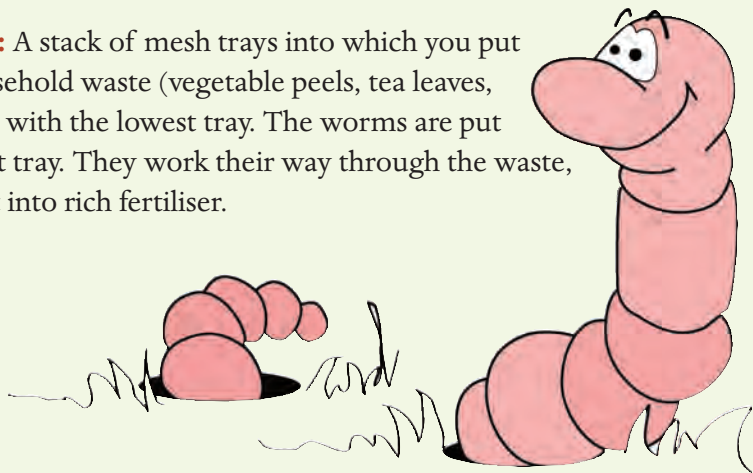
Find out more about these and other such global gifts on the Internet, e.g.:

- www.trocaire.org (click on 'Global Gift Plan')
- worldgifts.cafod.org.uk
- www.bothar.ie (click on 'Learn about our animals')
- www.oxfamunwrapped.com

What other gifts are mentioned there? Why do you think people might appreciate receiving those gifts?

Gifts with a Difference

WORMERY: A stack of mesh trays into which you put organic household waste (vegetable peels, tea leaves, etc), starting with the lowest tray. The worms are put in this lowest tray. They work their way through the waste, converting it into rich fertiliser.



MOSQUITO NETS: Hung from the ceiling over a bed at night to prevent mosquito bites.

PIGS: They need little land and they eat vegetable and garden waste. They produce rich fertiliser. An average sow will produce over sixteen piglets a year, which can be sold at market for income.

BUFFALO AND PLOUGH: Ploughing the land improves the harvest. The buffalo can pull the plough where there isn't a tractor. It can also carry goods to and from market at other times of the year.

HOUSING KIT: Consists of timber frame and corrugated metal sheets for roof and other materials to make a home in a hurry.

Why Don't You?

Using an atlas or world map, locate the countries (and continent) to which the gifts are being sent. In groups, take a different country and research topics such as its people, customs, language, music, traditions, etc.

Talking Points

1. Did these 'gifts with a difference' seem strange to you when you first learnt about them? Have you changed your mind? Why?/Why not?
2. List some of the differences between the countries you have just read about here and your own country.
3. Name some of the problems that you've read about here that can prevent countries from developing. Suggest some reasons why these problems (e.g. conflict) would stop development.
4. Remember back to what you read about the prophet Amos in the previous lesson. If he was alive today, what do you think he might say about some of these situations?

Some Background Stories

Nowadays in Central America (Guatemala, Nicaragua, El Salvador and Honduras), thirty million people (three quarters of the population) have little money to buy food. They must either grow their own food or starve. They can't afford to buy anything to help improve their land. However, receiving a **WORMERY** as a gift makes a real difference because it can be used to produce organic fertiliser to help their crops to grow.

In Angola (southwest Africa), thirty years of civil war has resulted in massive loss of life. The war ended in 2002, leaving the country devastated, with many people homeless, orphaned and sick, not to mention the landmines scattered throughout the countryside. Life expectancy is very low: one in five children will not reach their fifth birthday, chiefly due to malaria. There are an estimated three million cases of malaria in the country each year, with children and pregnant women being affected the most. The gift of **MOSQUITO NETS** helps to protect them and to save lives. When these nets are hung around the bed, they prevent the mosquitoes from infecting people while they sleep.



One of the largest armed conflicts since the Second World War has been fought in the Democratic Republic of Congo (in central Africa). Farming was stopped in many places and food was no longer produced. One in every three children under the age of five years ended up starving and underweight. However, the gift of a **PIG** means that a family can sell some of the piglets that are produced. The income generated from this helps to pay for food, for healthcare and for schooling.

In the State of Orissa in eastern India, half of the population are very poor and depend on farming for food and for a living. The gift of a **BUFFALO AND PLOUGH** helps such people to get a better harvest. At other times of the year, the buffalo can be used to transport food, thus earning money for the owner.

Every day in Colombia (in South America), many people are forced to flee their homes because of an armed struggle that has gone on for over fifty years. Some three million people have become displaced (forced to leave their homes) in their own country. They have moved to the cities, where they set up in rough-and-ready shelters that are neither secure nor safe. A **HOUSING KIT** gives such families the basic raw materials for proper shelter.



(Based on information from the Trócaire website: www.trocaire.org)

What's It Like to Be Poor in Today's World?

It's very hard to imagine what life is like for the poorest peoples of the earth. For many, like Badadha Kule, each day is a struggle just for survival. She comes from Ethiopia – one of the countries of the world that is poor in money but rich in many other ways. Read her story below.

'My Name is Badadha Kule. I am sixteen years old and belong to the Borana tribe of Ethiopia. My family has lived here for all of my life and we live from our cattle and goats. There are no walls or fences but vast open spaces, which are often dry for long spells.



Every day there are a number of jobs that I have to do to help my family. Most mornings I get up at 5 a.m. to milk the cows. I will then collect firewood, which takes two or three hours as I have to walk far to fetch it, or I bring our cattle to the deep-water wells. This takes most of the morning but it's my favourite job because of the importance of cattle to the Borana tribe. It's very hard work but fun because we sing as we walk and I get to meet my friends. In the afternoons I will walk ten miles to the local market to sell milk and eggs. Because my work during the day is essential to my family's survival, I didn't go to school when I was younger. Now I have just started going to school each evening from 6 p.m to 10 p.m. This is very tiring but education is very important to me and I enjoy learning new things. I'm not married yet but hope to be some day.'

Life can be very hard for those who look after the animals. They often have no choice but to leave their families and communities behind to go with their cattle in search of new pasture and water supplies.



Why Don't You?

Check out www.ethiopianlives.net to learn more about Badadha's life.

Talking Points

1. Try to imagine living Badadha's life. Which aspects would you find most difficult? Why?
2. Can you identify any positive aspects to her life?
3. What do you think would be a better future for Badadha and her family? What help do you think they would need to achieve it?



In small groups, discuss the following: 'You can't help everyone in trouble. People really have to sort out their own problems.' Nominate one person from each group to report to the class on your discussion.

Or

Pick five people to have a discussion for the whole class on the same theme. They may support or contradict one another respectfully, or they may introduce new ideas to the conversation as it proceeds. Decide on a time-limit for the conversation, and stop it when it reaches this limit. If no one speaks, then allow the silence.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Jesus believed in helping others. He saw a lot of poverty in his home country. He knew what it was to see people hungry or thirsty. He saw people who were too poor to look after themselves. Perhaps this was the experience that made him describe his return to judge the world in the following words from the Gospel according to Matthew:

Reader 1 (Matthew 25:31-40)

When the Son of Man comes in his glory with all his angels, he will sit on his royal throne. The people of all nations will be brought before him, and he will separate them, as shepherds separate their sheep from their goats. He will place the sheep on his right and the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, 'My father has blessed you! Come and receive the kingdom that was prepared for you before the world was created. When I was hungry, you gave me something to eat, and when I was thirsty, you gave me something to drink. When I was a stranger, you welcomed me, and when I was naked, you gave me clothes to wear. When I was sick, you took care of me, and when I was in jail, you visited me.' Then the ones who pleased the Lord will ask, 'When did we give you something to eat or drink? When did we welcome you as a stranger or give you clothes to wear or visit you while you were sick or in jail?' The king will answer, 'Whenever you did it for any of my people, no matter how unimportant they seemed, you did it for me.'

Reader 2

We remember that people in the world today are hungry. (Pause)

People today are thirsty. (Pause)

People today are separated from friends and from home. (Pause)

People today are too poor to provide for themselves. (Pause)

People today are sick and need special health care. (Pause)

People today are in jail, sometimes because they deserve to be and sometimes because they are denied their rights. (Pause)

We pray for these people and for the organisations that help those in need. (Pause)*

Sign of the Cross

**Note: At this point, you might like to light a candle and leave it lit until the end of the lesson time.*



Trócaire: Mercy, Care and Compassion

In 1973, the Irish Catholic Bishops formed an organisation called Trócaire, in response to the suffering of the world's poorest and most oppressed people. It has two tasks:

- 1) To offer support both in long-term projects that help such people to develop and in short-term emergency relief.
- 2) To keep people in Ireland informed and motivated about the existence and root causes of poverty and injustice in the world today.

Trócaire's first task focuses on the world. The organisation finds out what's going on in the world and works together with those who seek to bring about justice and change.

Trócaire's second task focuses on you. It wants you to know about the millions of people living in poor and developing countries whose human rights are denied each day. It wants you to understand the causes of such injustice and poverty. It wants you to know that you can make a difference. You can bring about change in the world: buying a global gift can change the life of an individual or a family.

Sometimes, especially each year during Lent, Trócaire will focus on particular issues (e.g. the use of children as soldiers in armed conflicts). It will invite you to think about how you can remember and be more caring towards people affected by such issues. Trócaire will offer you suggestions as to what you might do about these things. Trócaire will also speak to your political representatives to influence them to make a difference.

Trócaire has a vision of a world where there is justice for everyone. If the world were like this, people's human dignity would be ensured, human rights would be respected, and basic human needs would be met. In a just world, resources would be shared fairly and people would have control over decisions that affect their lives and their future.

Trócaire makes a particular point of working with local people in the areas where help is offered. Representatives of Trócaire approach local organisations and groups to find out about local needs. Together they seek to find the people most in need and together they see to the distribution and follow-up support.

Talking Points

1. Trócaire's partners overseas identify what global gifts (like those mentioned earlier) they want each year. Why do you think Trócaire asks the people and groups with whom it works to choose the gifts?
2. Trócaire purchases each gift in the country that benefits from the gift (e.g. buffaloes given to poor families in India are bought from local traders). Why do you think this might be important?

Why Don't You?

Visit the Trócaire website (www.trocaire.org). Find the links to the post-primary resources for this year's Lenten campaign. Do the activities and learn what action you can take.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

In Your Religion Journal

Use the Internet to find a news story that provides an example of some of the difficulties explored in this lesson. In your journal, either write about this story or paste in a copy of it. You might like to include your own reactions and comments to this story. (If you can't find such a story in the news, what might that suggest to you about the way news is presented?)

One-Minute Soapbox

Take an uninterrupted minute or two to share with the group any particular reaction you have to what is in this lesson.

Islam – Beginnings And Developments

Where did your religion come from? How did it start? Could you sum up your religious beliefs in a few words? Do you pray every day? How many times? In what way do you pray? Do you give to charity? How much do you give? In what other ways do you put your faith into practice? Do you know what 'fasting' is and do you ever fast? How easy or difficult to answer do you find these questions? If you were a Muslim, you would not find them difficult. The faith of Muslims is called Islam and it offers clear answers to such questions. In the lessons that follow, you will learn more about Islam.

Introducing Islam

Islam is one of the major world faiths today. Believers in the Islamic faith are known as Muslims. There is said to be over a thousand million Muslims in the world at present. Islam, like Judaism and Christianity, is a monotheistic faith. In other words, Muslims believe in ONE God, whom they call 'Allah'. The name Islam comes from an Arabic word meaning to surrender or to submit. Muslims have great love and respect for God, and surrendering to what God wants is central to their faith. Islam is a way of life, and Muslims seek to live their whole lives in a way that is pleasing to God.

Islam began some 1500 years ago with the prophet Muhammad. Although Islam is different from both Judaism and Christianity, it shares the same roots. For example, Muslims believe that Abraham, Moses and Jesus were all great prophets. They hold Muhammad to be the last prophet of Allah (God) and that God's word was fully revealed to him. Muslims have great respect for the prophet Muhammad, and after they say his name they will add the phrase 'Peace be upon him' or 'Peace and blessings be upon him'.

'ME' Folder

Record your feelings as you begin these lessons on Islam.

Talking Point

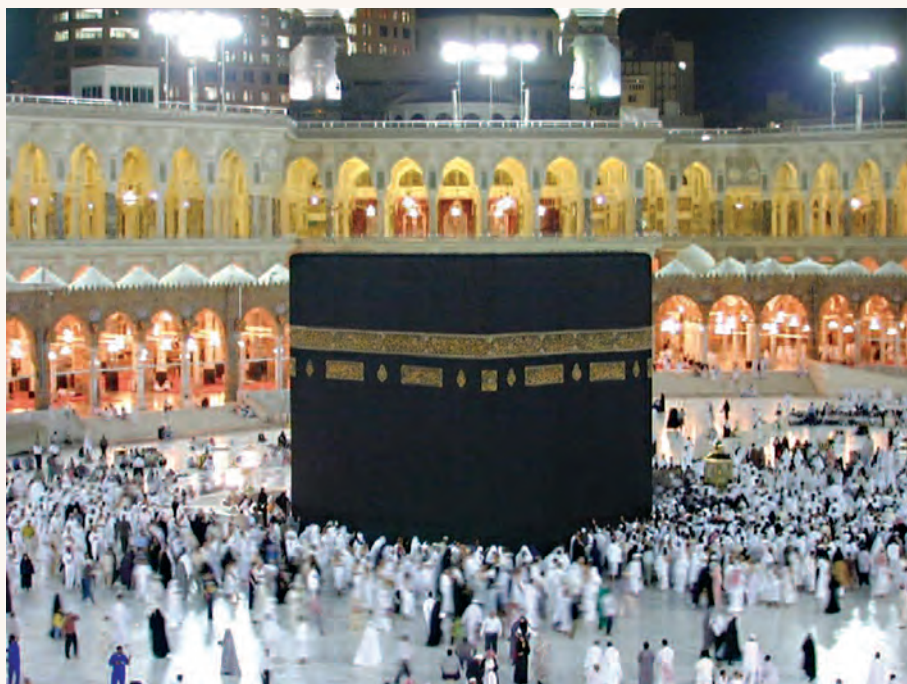
From what you have read so far, how would you say Islam is similar to your own religion and how is it different?

Islam at a Glance...

- Began over 1500 years ago with the prophet Muhammad.
- Believers in the Islamic faith are called Muslims.
- There are said to be over a thousand million Muslims in the world at present.
- Muslims believe that there is only ONE God, whom they call Allah.
- Muslims believe Muhammad was the last prophet of God.
- The Arabic word 'Islam' means to surrender or submit to God.

Muhammad: The Early Years

Muhammad was born in Mecca, in the area we know today as Saudi Arabia, around AD 570. Muhammad's parents died when he was very young and his uncle brought him up. Muhammad grew up to be a merchant. When he was twenty-five, he went to work for a widow named Khadija. They married and had six children. He was concerned about the bad behaviour of the business people in Mecca. He saw the bad things they did: lying, cheating, gambling, fighting, and drinking too much alcohol. Muhammad was a good man and he often went up into the hills to pray and think. One day in AD 610, when he was alone in a cave on Mount Hira, Muhammad had a vision or dream. He believed that the angel Gabriel appeared to him and told him that there is one God, whose name is Allah, and that Muhammad was to be God's messenger.



Pilgrims circle the Ka'ba, the 'House of God', in Mecca

Muhammad: Action and Opposition

Muhammad began to speak to the people on the streets of Mecca. He encouraged them to surrender their lives to the will of God and to take care of their fellow citizens. The people did not welcome him. They believed in many gods and were not prepared to believe in only one God, as Muhammad suggested. Local business people did not want to change either. Many of them made their money from providing for the different religions. Eventually, in AD 622, the people and the traders forced Muhammad and his small group of followers to flee the city. They went

In Your Religion Journal

Write the name of Muhammad and decorate it. Around it, write words to describe him based on what you've read here.

Talking Points

1. 'The prophet Muhammad's actions were connected with what he believed.' Would you agree? Explain your answer.
2. Give some examples of things that people might or might not do because of their faith (what they believe)? Comment on these examples.
3. Do you always see a connection between what a person believes and what they choose? Explain your answer.

Why Don't You?

Do a Bible search for James 2:14-17 and see what it has to say about the connection between faith (what a person believes) and deed (what a person does).

to a city then known as Yathrib. This leaving of Mecca is called the Hijra (which means departure or exodus). It is a very significant date in the Islamic year.

Muhammad was welcomed into Yathrib. The people liked the message that he preached and soon he became their leader. The city became known as Medina, meaning City of the Prophet. It was in Medina that the Muslim community really began. They built their own place for prayer and worship: the first mosque. Eight years later, Muhammad and his followers returned to Mecca with a large army and soon conquered it. By the time he died, just two years later, most of Arabia had converted to Islam.

Factfile on the Prophet Muhammad

Name:	Muhammad.
Born:	In Mecca, Saudi Arabia, around AD 570.
Family:	Parents died when he was a baby. Brought up by his uncle. Married a widow named Khadija, with whom he had six children.
Called by God:	Around the age of forty, Muhammad had a vision, or dream, that the angel Gabriel appeared to him. The angel told him that there is one God, whose name is Allah, and that Muhammad was to be God's messenger.
Response:	Muhammad preached the message in Mecca. The rich merchants forced Muhammad and his followers to flee to Yathrib in 622.
Famous for:	Leaving Mecca in 622 (Hijra). Founding the first Muslim community in Yathrib (Medina). Returning to Mecca in 630 with a large army and conquering it. Converting most of Arabia to Islam before his death in 632.



One-Minute Soapbox

Talk for an interrupted minute or two on the topic: 'Why study Islam?' (Focus on the benefits of understanding a major world religion.)

Islam Since the Death of Muhammad

After his death, Muhammad was succeeded by Abu-Bakr, who became the first Caliph (or successor). After Abu-Bakr came Umar (the second Caliph) and then Uthman (the third Caliph). The fourth Caliph was Ali, Muhammad's adopted son. However, a dispute arose about his right to be Caliph (successor), and before it could be settled Ali had been killed. As a result, the Muslim community separated into two distinct groups. These two groups still exist today and, while both are Muslim, they have developed somewhat different traditions over the years. The largest group are the Sunni Muslims, who make up ninety per cent of the world's Muslims. They tend to be a united group, with a strong sense of their traditions. The smaller group are the Shia (Shiite) Muslims, who are particularly strong in Iran. This is a much more varied group, which gives a stronger role to individual charismatic leaders and reformers.

There is no single overall religious leader in Islam. For Muslims, the only true authority is to be found in the words of God given through the prophet Muhammad and in the meaning of those words.

The majority of Muslims today live in countries of North Africa (e.g. Algeria, Libya and Egypt) and in the Middle East (e.g. in Saudi Arabia, Iran and Iraq). Over forty other countries have Islam as the main religion. Muslims are also present in significant numbers in countries as varied as Russia, China, India, England and the United States of America.

A time to pray

Note: You might like to take some time to read this prayer quietly before it is read aloud.

Holy, holy, holy Lord,
God of power and might,
Heaven and earth are full of your glory!
I think of the heavens that you have made,
the planets, stars and galaxies you have brought to life;
and I say 'How wonderful you are!'
You do things that are far beyond anything I can do.
You have a power that I cannot even imagine.
And yet, you care for me.
You have given me my abilities and my gifts.
My life is a wonder.
Every day science uncovers the wonder of life.
Glory and praise to you! Amen.

Why Don't You?

- Find out more about Islam at the BBC website:
www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/index.shtml
- Prepare a wall chart or display or project about Islam. Based on what you have learned in this lesson, you might start with a section on 'The Beginnings of Islam'. This could include a file on the prophet Muhammad, and a map showing countries where Islam is the main religion today.
- Draw a timeline tracing the origins and development of Islam. Begin with the birth of Muhammad and continue to the present day. Include the number of Muslims in the world today.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

The Sacred Text And The Tradition Of Islam

Have you a collection of CDs, DVDs, videos or books? Do you have your own selection on your iPod? If someone asked you to say why you had such a collection, what would you say? What are your favourites from them? Why? Does your selection of 'favourites' change over time? Why? / Why not?

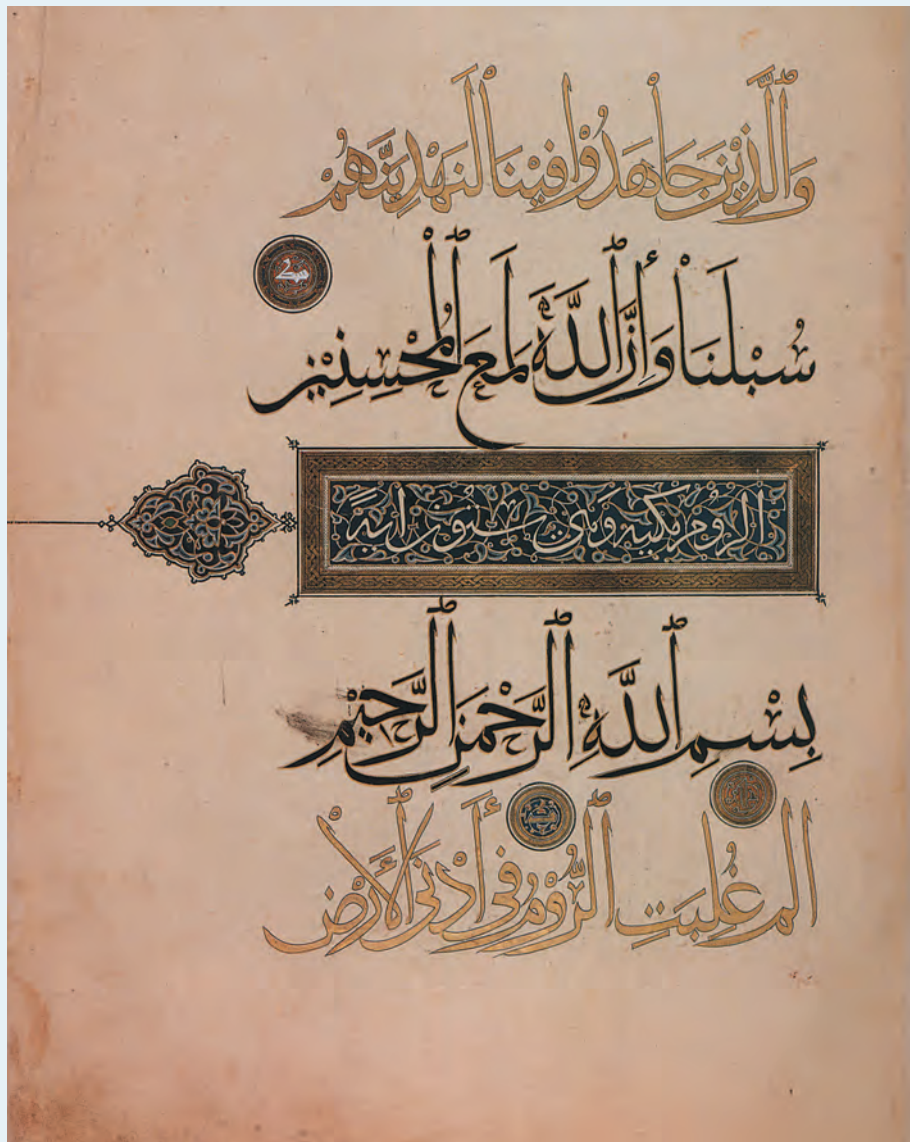
Muslims have their own collection of important writings, which is called the Qur'an (pronounced Kur-Ann). They treasure it and respect it. They like to read it, to listen to it and to recite it out loud. So what is the Qur'an? Where did it come from? What are the main beliefs that it contains? These are some of the issues that this lesson will help you to explore.

The Qur'an – Sacred Text of Islam

Muhammad often took time alone to pray in a cave on Mount Hira. During many such times, he believed that the angel Gabriel appeared to him and spoke the word of Allah (God). Not being able to read or write, Muhammad had to learn by heart everything that the angel said to him. During the lifetime of Muhammad, his followers began to write down those messages. In the twenty or so years after Muhammad's death, his followers gathered all these messages together into a single collection, which became known as the *Qur'an*. It has remained the same to the present day. The Qur'an is about the size of the Christian New Testament and is divided into 114 chapters, called *suras*.

The Qur'an is the sacred book of all Muslims. The word Qur'an means 'that which is to be proclaimed'. (It comes from the Arabic word *iqra*, which means 'to recite'.) It is written in Arabic and Muslims consider every word to be sacred. Muslims are encouraged to read and recite the Qur'an in the original Arabic. Young Muslims attend lessons to help

them to learn Arabic if it is not their native language. Some Muslims can recite the entire text in Arabic; these people are highly respected in the Muslim community and have the title *hafiz*. When Muslim infants are born, the first thing they hear are words from the Qur'an. Faithful Muslims read the Qur'an every day. It offers them guidance on how to live a good life and explains how to serve Allah.



Talking Points

1. Do you find it surprising that Muhammad could not read and write? Explain your answer.
2. What is the Qur'an? Where did it come from? Why do you think the early community of Muslims might have put it together?
3. Why do you think that Muslims have always had a great respect for the Qur'an?
4. What is the name of the sacred text of your religion? Do you think that you have as much respect for it as Muslims have for the Qur'an? Comment on your answer.

The 'Way' of the Prophet: A Further Source of Inspiration

Naturally, Muhammad's followers were interested in what he said and did and approved of, and this was the basis of a set of writings that became known as the *Sunna* or 'way'. This set of writings summed up the way that Muhammad lived his life. His followers also kept a record of what Muhammad said and taught, and this collection of the direct sayings of Muhammad is known as the *Hadith*. It covers almost every aspect of life: from table manners to the nature of the world about us. Muslims today continue to use the *Sunna* (and the *Hadith*) to help them to gain a better understanding of life and of the Qur'an. However, Muslims give clear priority to the Qur'an, for they believe the Qur'an to be the word of God, while they hold that the *Sunna* and the *Hadith* come from Muhammad.

Talking Points

1. 'We can work out what's right on our own; we don't need a holy book (or sacred text) to tell us what to do.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not?
2. Do you think a good Muslim would agree with that statement? Why?/Why not?

Why Don't You?

Continue with a wall chart or display or project about Islam. Based on what you learn in this lesson, you might include a section on the Qur'an. You might like to do an Internet search for images of pages of the Qur'an and print out some of the images you find.

Talking Points

1. Which would you say is more important for day-to-day good behaviour in your school: the set of school rules or the school principal? Try to find arguments for both answers.
2. What or who is the ultimate authority in your religious tradition? Does your religious tradition have a different kind of ultimate authority than Islam? If so, in what way?

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Sharia Law: The Way of Allah Expressed in Rules for Living

Muhammad always wanted to make good choices. His followers seek to do the same. They look for guidance first to the Qur'an and then to the life and sayings of Muhammad. Through a process of argument and agreement, a huge range of laws and recommendations has emerged. This body of laws is called Sharia or 'Allah's Law'. It includes rules for every area of life, including, for example, how to dress, how to pray, how a country should be governed, etc. Sharia is the ultimate authority in Islam. Teachers (or scholars) continue to play a most important role in Islam today because they work out how to apply Sharia Law in new situations. But these teachers are not as important as the Sharia itself. Sincere Muslims strive (or go all-out) to follow Allah's Law in absolutely every area of their lives. The word for this all-out 'striving' in Islam is *Jihad* .

KEY POINTS

- The Qur'an is the sacred text of Islam.
- The Qur'an is about the size of the Christian New Testament and is divided into 114 chapters called suras.
- The Qur'an is written in Arabic, and Muslims are encouraged to read and recite the Qur'an in the original Arabic.
- Faithful Muslims read the Qur'an every day.
- Muslims also use the Sunna and the Hadith to help them achieve a better understanding of life and of the Qur'an.
- Muslims keep Sharia Law or 'Allah's Law'.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

God has given us the power to do what is right. God is with us and within us as we decide on what choices to make. So, we turn to God and we pray the words: 'Wherever life takes me, God guide and direct me.'

We repeat the phrase together to help us remember it.

All

Wherever life takes me, God guide and direct me.

Teacher

So, as we begin, we take a moment to become quiet and still. *(Pause)*

We remember that God is with us in our hearts and minds. *(Pause)*

We allow our eyes to close. Together, we breathe in, *(Pause)*
and together we breathe out. *(Pause)*

On the in-breath, we think of the words: 'Wherever life takes me...'

On the out-breath, we recall the words: 'God guide and direct me.'

Silent prayer continues for a short while. Teacher may repeat the phrases a few times to enable the students to remember them.

Sign of the Cross

Islam – Core Beliefs And Right Living

When you see someone giving to a charity or protesting in the street, it is because they believe in something. Perhaps they give to charity because they believe everyone is valuable and should have a fair chance in life. Perhaps they protest because they believe in looking after the environment or because they believe that war is wrong. What would you stand up for? Give some examples. What sort of things would you object to and why?

People also have beliefs about other things, such as why people exist or where everything came from. People of every age have asked questions such as: Why do we exist? Why is there anything at all and not nothing? What is the right way to behave in life? What is the right attitude to take in life? The answers they give to such questions will reveal what they believe in. Muslims have their own special beliefs. Their religious tradition offers particular answers to the basic questions about life and right living. That's what this lesson will help you to explore.

Core Beliefs

The word Islam comes from an Arabic word that means 'to submit or surrender oneself'. So Islam is about giving oneself fully to Allah (God). This is Islam's first and foremost belief: submission to Allah. Muslims believe that the word of Allah was given to Muhammad and is contained in the Qur'an. Some of the central beliefs of the Qur'an are:

ALLAH (GOD): The central teaching of Islam is that God is one: 'There is no God but Allah!' For Muslims, God is real, all-knowing, all-powerful and absolute; nothing is greater than God. Muslims believe that God is involved in the world. At the same time, they also believe that God is utterly different from the world and cannot be pictured or imagined in terms of anything physical. God has no equal. (For these reasons,

Talking Points

1. What answers would you give to the questions in the introduction to this lesson? What do you believe in?
2. If you wanted to know what someone believed in, what would you ask them?

'ME' Folder

Record your answer to Question 1 of the Talking Points above.

Talking Points

1. For Muslims, giving themselves to God is the most important thing they can do. How does this compare with what you feel is most important in your own life?
2. Recall what you have read regarding Islamic beliefs about God and about human beings. How are your views similar? How do they differ?

Why Don't You?

Do an Internet search for 'Christian art', where you will find some images of the face of God and saints. Then do an Internet search for Islamic religious art (using such search words as 'Islamic', 'art', 'God', 'Allah', etc). You will find no picture of the face of God. Why do you think that might be? (Hint: Reread the section on Islamic belief about God.)

Persian miniature painting: the angel Gabriel carries Muhammad over the mountains

although they respect him, Muslims cannot accept that Jesus Christ is God.) Allah is the name that Muslims give to God. By tradition, they have ninety-nine 'beautiful names' for God to describe God's qualities. Some of these names are in the Qur'an; some are traditional. The most important of these names are 'the Compassionate' and 'the Merciful'. Other names include: the Forgiver, the Forgiving, the Generous, the Affectionate, the Kind, etc.

NO HUMAN BEING HAS A FUTURE WITHOUT ALLAH: Muslims believe that Allah has created each person and that people only find true peace by surrendering to the will of Allah. No person would have any future without Allah, on whom they depend completely. Before Allah, all men and women are equal. Allah gives people freedom to choose whether or not they will serve and obey God. At the same time, Allah decides their future. It is not enough just to believe in Allah. That belief must be put into practice, particularly through living out the 'Five Pillars of Islam' (see page 147).

ANGELS: The Qur'an often mentions angels. The Qur'an itself is said to have been spoken to Muhammad by an angel. Angels are 'messengers of Allah': made of light and completely obedient to God. They worship God and do as God commands, e.g. some angels guard people against harm. Every person is said to have two 'recording' angels: one to record the good words and deeds, the other to record the bad words and deeds.



SACRED BOOKS: Muslims believe that God has communicated with people in past times, especially through sacred books. For example, Muslims believe that God gave special books to certain people: Moses received the Taurah (spelt differently from Torah); David received the Zabur (Psalms); Jesus received the Injil (Gospel); and, finally, Muhammad received the Qur'an, which is God's final revelation.

THE PROPHETS: According to Islam, Allah has chosen spokesmen and sent them to people everywhere. Their message is that Allah is one and should be obeyed. They are sent to speak for Allah and to guide people in how to obey and worship God. The Qur'an gives special mention to twenty-five of these prophets, including many from Jewish and Christian scripture, e.g. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, David, Solomon. The list concludes with Jesus and then Muhammad.

FINAL JUDGEMENT AND LIFE AFTER DEATH: Muslims believe in a Day of Judgement, when people will be either rewarded or punished by Allah depending on whether or not their good deeds outweigh their bad deeds. The good go to Paradise; the evil are excluded from God's presence.

The Five Pillars of Islam: Five Ways of Actively Submitting to Allah

THE DECLARATION OF FAITH (SHAHADA): 'There is no God but Allah, and Muhammad is the Prophet of God.' Good Muslims see it as their first duty to say this Creed five times every day as part of their daily prayers.

PRAYER (SALAT): Muslims pray five times each day: dawn, noon, mid afternoon, sunset and late evening. This is compulsory for good Muslims. Before prayer, Muslims remove their shoes and do a ritual washing (*wudu*). The prayers include verses from the Qur'an praising Allah and asking for his guidance. They are said in Arabic and follow a set form, which includes movements and gestures. (Each set is called a *rakat*.)

Core Beliefs of the Islamic Faith

- There is no God but Allah.
- No one has a future without Allah.
- Angels are messengers of Allah.
- God has communicated with people through sacred books.
- The prophets are sent to speak for Allah.
- There will be a final judgement and a life after death.

THE PRACTICE OF GIVING (ZAKAT): Every year, Muslims are expected to make a donation of two-and-a-half per cent of their disposable income for the relief of the poor. (Farmers and owners of livestock have a different rate.)

FASTING (SAWM): During the month of Ramadan, all adult Muslims go completely without food or drink during the hours of daylight. Exceptions are made for those who are sick or travelling, and for those who are elderly or pregnant.

PILGRIMAGE (HAJJ): Mecca is the chief holy city of Islam. (Provided have enough money and health) Muslims are expected to go there as pilgrims at least once in their lifetime and to join in the special prayers. This includes a visit to the Ka'ba, the place where Muslims believe that Abraham showed his willingness to offer his son, Ishmael, as a sacrifice. The Hajj lasts for four days every year, with around one million Muslims taking part. It occurs during the twelfth month of the Muslim calendar.

Why Don't You?

Find out more about the beliefs and practices of Islam at the BBC website: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/index.shtml
This includes a very clear illustration of how Muslims pray.

Talking Points

1. How do you think you would find living the Five Pillars of Islam? Explain your answer.
2. What are the chief religious practices of your religion? Does your religious tradition share any part of the practices described in the Five Pillars of Islam? If so, in what way?
3. Sometimes the month of Ramadan occurs in summer. How might this make fasting more demanding in Islamic countries?

Why Don't You?

Continue with a wall chart or display or project about Islam. Based on what you learn in this lesson, you might include a section on the Five Pillars of Islam.

Five Pillars of Islam:

THE DECLARATION OF FAITH (**SHAHADA**)

PRAYER (**SALAT**)

THE PRACTICE OF GIVING (**ZAKAT**)

FASTING (**SAWM**)

PILGRIMAGE (**HAJJ**)

A time to pray

(Psalm 148: 1-3, 11-13)

Note: You might like to take some time to read this prayer quietly before reading it together as a group.

All of you angels, come and offer praise.

**Sun and moon, and all bright stars,
come and offer praise.**

**Let all things praise the name of the LORD,
because they were created at his command.**

**Every king and every ruler, all nations on earth,
every man and every woman, young people and old,
come praise the LORD!**

All creation, come praise the name of the LORD.

Praise his name alone.

The glory of God is greater than heaven and earth.

**Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to
the Holy Spirit.**

**As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end.**

Amen.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Islam – Festivals And Worship

In your life, you have several kinds of calendar. In other words, you have different ways of dividing up the year. For instance, your school year starts in September and ends in June. The civil year starts on 1 January and ends on 31 December. Then there are calendars for football competitions, for other sports, and even for fashion. Christians have another kind of calendar in their lives. The Church year begins on the First Sunday of Advent and ends on the Saturday afternoon after the Feast of Christ the King. So, you won't be surprised to hear that Muslims have their own religious calendar. It starts on a particular day; it ends on a particular day; and it has its own feasts and festivals, as you will discover in this lesson. However, before you start, you need to know what a 'lunar' calendar is.

Talking Points

Which kind of calendar do people follow in Europe and in America: a lunar calendar or a solar calendar? Explain your answer.

What is a 'Lunar' Calendar?

A 'Lunar' calendar is based on the phases of the moon. Days start at moonrise, i.e. in the evening. Months last from one full moon to the next: just over twenty-nine-and-a-half days. Put twelve 'lunar' months together and you get a year with 354 or 355 days. Lunar calendars are not in step with the seasons. In contrast, the 'solar' year is the time taken for the earth to make a full round of the sun. It lasts 365 or 366 days and keeps in step with the seasons. The days of a solar calendar begin at sunrise.



Talking Points

1. In what way are the calendars of Islam and Judaism the same?
How are they different?
2. Compare and contrast the ways of measuring the year used by Islam and Christianity.



The Calendar of Islam

Jews and Muslims use lunar calendars, i.e. calendars based on the cycles of the moon. Jews add an entire month to their calendar every so often to keep their calendar connected to the seasons. Muslims do not do this, and so their calendar does not connect with the seasons. For example, if a particular date in the Islamic calendar marks the start of spring one year, it will be about thirty of our Western years before that same date marks the start of spring again. Islamic festivals happen at various times during the Western year and are not linked to the seasons like the festivals in the Christian and Jewish religious calendar.

The Islamic year begins with the month named **Muharram**. Each of the months has its own name, as follows: **Muharram**; **Safar**; **Rabi' al-awwal**; **Rabi' al-thani**; **Jumada al-awwal**; **Jumada al-thani**; **Rajab**; **Sha'ban**; **Ramadan**; **Shawwal**; **Dhu al-Qi'dah**; **Dhu al-Hijjah**. The holiest month is Ramadan: the month of fasting (see below). The other important month is Dhu al-Hijjah, during which the *Hajj* (or pilgrimage to Mecca) occurs.

Ramadan – The Holiest Month of the Islamic Year

From sunrise to sunset during the month of Ramadan, good Muslims are forbidden to eat, to drink, to smoke or to have sexual relationships. They are also expected to make an extra effort to be good, to be respectful and to be friendly. This means no anger, no violence, no envy, no greed, no backbiting. Certain people are excused from fasting: young children; soldiers in battle; those who travel; people who are weak, sick or elderly; women who are breastfeeding or expecting a baby. As well as honouring Allah, fasting during the month of Ramadan offers Muslims:

- a chance to strengthen their faith by creating more time for Allah during the day (especially through reading the Qur'an);
- a reminder of what it is to be poor and to be without food and water, which is all the harder when Ramadan occurs during high summer;
- a way of making up for past faults and failings;
- a sense of community with Muslims worldwide, all of whom are fasting.

The Two Major Festivals of Islam

EID UL-FITR (1 SHAWWAL): The first day of Shawwal (the month after Ramadan) is called Eid ul-Fitr. Coming directly after the hard fast of Ramadan, the sight of the new moon naturally brings great celebration. Prayers are said in the morning in the mosque and there is an address given by the *imam* (leader). People gather together for a communal meal. The traditional greeting among Muslims on that day is 'Eid Mubarak', which means 'blessing and joys of Eid'. During the first three days of the new month (Shawwal), there is a lot of visiting between families and friends, with the giving and receiving of presents. It is also the custom to visit the graves of the deceased members of the family to remember them.

EID UL-ADHA (10 DHU AL-HIJJAH): This is the chief worldwide festival of the Muslim year and it occurs during the time of the Hajj (see fifth 'Pillar of Islam' in previous lesson). It recalls how Ibrahim (Abraham) submitted to the will of Allah. Ibrahim had a vivid dream in which he was asked to offer his son, Ishmael, in sacrifice. The festival recalls the story of how Ibrahim resisted all temptations not to do Allah's will and how Allah intervened and provided an animal as a substitute. The events of this story are particularly connected with a shrine in Mecca, known as the *Ka'ba* (meaning 'cube'). The *Ka'ba* is said to have been built by Ibrahim and Ishmael. Pilgrims to Mecca begin and end their Hajj at the *Ka'ba*, going round it seven times, anti-clockwise each time. Muslims who are not in Mecca for this festival offer prayers in their mosque and arrange for the sacrifice of an animal in memory of Ibrahim, who sacrificed a sheep provided by God to take the place of his son. The meat is usually given to the poor.

Other Days Celebrating Events in the Life of the Prophet Muhammad

AL-HIJRA (1 Muharram): The first day of the Islamic Year, the first day of the month of Muharram. It marks the Hijra in AD 622, when the prophet Muhammad moved from Mecca to Medina, and set up the first Islamic State. The Muslim calendar counts dates from the Hijra, which is why Muslim dates have the suffix AH (After Hijra).

ASHURA (10 Muharram): A day of fasting for Muslims to mark two events: the day Nuh (Noah) left the Ark, and the day that Musa (Moses) was saved from the Egyptians by Allah. Shia Muslims in particular use the day to commemorate the martyrdom of Hussein, a grandson of Muhammad, in AD 680.

MILAD UN NABI (12 Rabi'al-awwal): Birthday of Muhammad. Muslim parents will tell stories of his life to their children. Not all Muslims approve of this feast because it is a later addition to the customs of Islam.

Talking Points

1. If you were a Muslim, how well do you think you would cope with the month of Ramadan?
2. How do you think the Ramadan fasting might strengthen a sense of community among Muslims?
3. Are you aware of any tradition of fasting in your own religion? If so, describe it.

Why Don't You?

- Find out the date for the start of Ramadan. You might, for example, do an Internet search for 'Islamic Holidays'.
- Find out more about Ramadan on the Internet at:
en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ramadan

In Your Religion Journal

Imagine that you are a good Muslim doing the fast of Ramadan. Write down what you imagine you might feel about the fast and about Allah.

Talking Point

The celebrations of the Islamic year focus on the prophet Muhammad. On whom do the celebrations of your religious tradition focus? Give some examples.

Why Don't You?

Do an Internet search for images of the Dome of the Rock, or click on: www.math.toronto.edu/~drorbn/Gallery/Jerusalem/NighttimeDomeOfTheRock.html



In small groups, discuss the following: 'Respecting other religions.' Nominate one person from each group to report to the class on your discussion.

Or

Pick five people to have a discussion for the whole class on the same theme. They may support or contradict one another respectfully, or they may introduce new ideas to the conversation as it proceeds. Decide on a time-limit for the conversation, and stop it when it reaches this limit. If no one speaks, then allow the silence.

LAILAT AL MIRAJ (27 Rajab): This festival is particularly associated with the Dome of the Rock, a special shrine in Jerusalem. It honours the night that Muhammad is said to have spent in heaven, where he learned the Muslim prayer custom.

LAILAT AL QADR (27 Ramadan): The festival, the Night of Power, marks the night in which the Qur'an was first revealed to the prophet Muhammad by Allah. Some will spend the whole night in prayer or reciting the Qur'an.

Mosque: Place of Muslim Worship and Prayer

Many mosques have dome-shaped roofs and a crescent-moon symbol on the top. Most mosques have a tower called a *minaret*, where the call to pray is made, often through a loudspeaker, by a person called a *muezzin*. Muslims pray five times a day, usually at a mosque, but when it is not possible to attend a mosque, they simply use a prayer mat laid out on a clean piece of ground, facing in the direction of Mecca. Muslims always pray facing Mecca. Some modern mats have built-in compasses to help find the direction of Mecca. Each mosque has a *mihrab*, an arched alcove that shows the direction of Mecca.



All male Muslims are expected to attend the mosque at midday on Friday for prayers. The congregation stand in rows, shoulder to shoulder. They turn towards the mihrab and pray in the direction of Mecca. A leader, called the *imam*, who is appointed by the mosque, leads the prayers and movements. He is expected to be a very religious and faithful Muslim, who is well respected within the community.

Women may also attend the services but they go to a different part of the mosque. Men and women pray separately; in some mosques, this is done with the men at the front and the women behind, while in other mosques there are separate rooms for men and women.



Every mosque must provide a place where Muslims can wash before going inside to pray. A cloakroom is also provided, where shoes must be left before entering the mosque; this is to prevent dust from entering the holy building. The floor is covered with prayer mats. Inside, the mosque is very bare, as there are no seats, altars, candles, flowers, statues or paintings. The walls may be decorated with brightly coloured tiles or mosaics and, in some cases, words or sentences from the Qur'an may be written on them.

In general, Muslim prayer is not about a personal relationship with Allah. People pray in order to honour Allah and to bring themselves into line with what Allah wants. Prayer of petition does not have a major place in Muslim prayer.

Muslims have a rosary with ninety-nine beads, which helps them to recall the names for God.

A time to pray

Teacher

Take a moment to become quiet and still. Let yourself become aware of being alive. *(Pause)* Notice your breathing. *(Pause)* Let your mind become aware of this room. *(Pause)* Now let your awareness expand to take in the school and the wider world. *(Pause)* We are surrounded with life. We live within a vast world that God has made. It is right to give God thanks and praise. We take a moment in silent praise of God for our wonderful world.

LITANY OF PRAISE

Teacher

Together, we praise God and we say: 'We bless you; we praise you.'

All *(This response is used after each phrase of the litany that follows)*

We bless you; we praise you.

Teacher

God, you are powerful.

God, you are forgiving.

God, you are faithful.

God, you are just and fair.

God, you give us life.

God, you give us hope.

God, you give us guidance.

God, you give us the world of nature.

God, you call us to be your people.

God, you call us to treat others fairly.

God, you call us to care for the poor.

God, you call us to respect the earth.

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit.

As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end.

Amen.

Talking Points

1. Name some similarities between a mosque and your place of worship. List some differences.
2. Do you notice anything in the Muslim tradition of prayer and worship that is similar to your own religious tradition? Do you notice things that are different? Explain your answers.
3. How does Muslim prayer differ from the prayer of your own tradition? Can you suggest any reasons for these differences?

Why Don't You?

Prepare some questions as the basis of an interview with a Muslim, focusing on their faith and worship. If there is a Muslim living in your area who is willing to be interviewed about their faith, one or more members of the class might carry out such an interview and then share the answers with the whole class.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Islam – Rituals, Customs And Symbols

When you go to a baptism, a wedding or a funeral, you know what to expect. You are used to things being done in a particular way. When it comes to food, you expect that you can eat what you like; and you're used to seeing alcohol advertised and consumed. You might think that such things are the same the world over; they are not. For example, Muslims have their own ways of celebrating great events. They also have their own approach to food. This lesson offers you a chance to begin to become familiar with Islamic ways and traditions.

Talking Points

1. With regard to the way that birth, death and marriage are celebrated in your own tradition and in the Islamic tradition, what do you notice as (a) the major similarities and (b) the major differences?
2. If you were able to add one Muslim custom to your own tradition of celebrating birth, death or marriage, what would it be and why?

Why Don't You?

- Find out more about Islamic customs concerning death and burial at: islam.about.com/cs/elderly/a/funerals.htm
- Find out more about Islamic marriage celebrations at: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/features/rites/weddings.shtml
- Find out more about Islamic customs connected with birth at: www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/features/rites/birth

Islamic Traditions Concerning Major Life Events

THE BIRTH OF A BABY: Shortly after the birth, the midwife brings the baby to the gathering of male relatives and friends. The head of the family then whispers the traditional call to prayer into the baby's right ear and the traditional call to rise and worship into the left ear. Something sweet is rubbed on the baby's lips to express the hope that the baby will become 'sweet', obedient and kind. They pray that the baby will be healthy and prosperous. Babies are named seven days after birth, and baby boys are circumcised. The baby's head is shaved to show that the child is a servant of Allah. The hair is weighed and, in accordance with tradition, the worth of the same weight of silver is given to charity. Nowadays, other forms of donation may be made. Traditionally, sheep are sacrificed in thanksgiving – two for a boy, one for a girl – and the meat shared out among relatives, neighbours and the poor. When children reach four years of age, they are taught to recite and learn a short passage from the Qur'an. In Islamic countries, religious education is continued at school. In other countries, Muslim children learn about Islam after school hours, in the special school at the mosque.

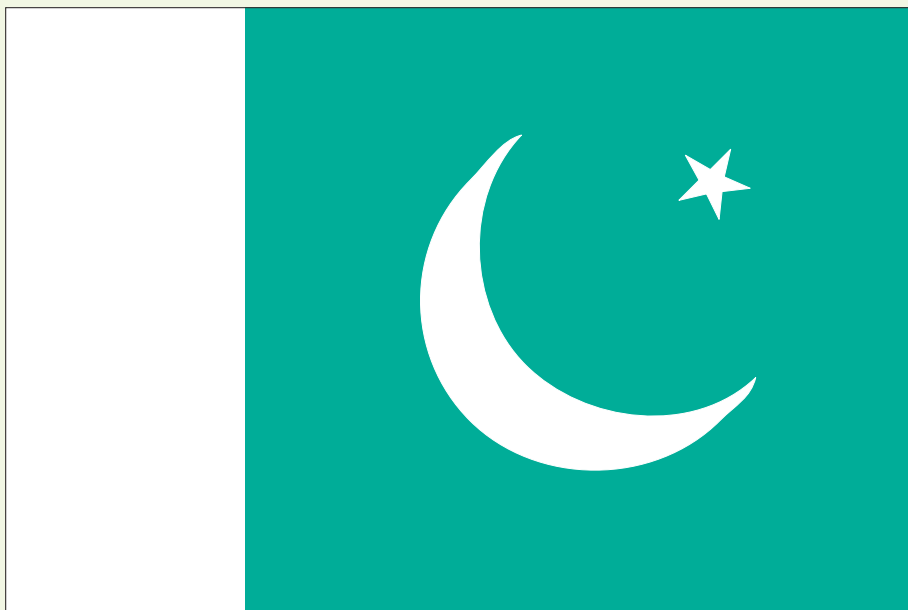
GETTING MARRIED: Muslim weddings are short and simple, consisting of some readings from the Qur'an, followed by an exchange of vows and some prayers. The bride need not attend, but may send witnesses in her place. Usually, the imam officiates, but any faithful Muslim may do this. There is no such thing as a Muslim 'priest'. When a

Muslim woman marries, her groom gives her a dowry for her own use, and she keeps her own family name. Divorce is allowed, even though it is not the ideal.

DEATH AND BURIAL: Where civil law permits, Muslims are buried within a day of their death. The body is washed and prayers are said in a public space, not in the mosque. The body is laid to rest on the right side, facing Mecca. The relatives mourn intensively for three days. Widows mourn for four months and ten days, in accordance with the Qur'an.

Symbols

Nowadays, the crescent moon and star are often assumed to be the symbol of Islam. The moon is the basis of the Muslim calendar and the five points of the star motif are said to remind Muslims of the Five Pillars of Islam. However, these symbols are not universally accepted. The earliest Muslims did not have a symbol, and Islam is not a faith that relies on symbols.



The flag of Pakistan

On the other hand, the colour green is commonly used when representing Islam. It is often used in decorating mosques, tombs and various religious objects. Some say this is because green was the favourite colour of Muhammad and that he wore a green cloak and turban, while others say that it symbolises vegetation. In the Qur'an, it is said that the people in heaven will wear green clothes.

Islamic Rules Concerning Food and Drink

- Except in extreme circumstances, all meat must be *halal*, or 'permitted'. This means that the animal from which the meat comes is slaughtered according to the rules of Islam. These rules require prayers to be said during the slaughter and the blood to be drained away.
- There is one meat that Muslims may not eat: pork. This includes sausages, bacon and ham. It also includes many other foods that contain traces of fat from pigs.
- Muslims are not permitted to take alcohol or any other intoxicant.

Why Don't You?

Check the Internet for more information about the role of symbols in Islam, e.g. islam.about.com/library/weekly/aa060401a.htm

Talking Point

Do you think it would be easy for Muslims to eat out in Western restaurants? Explain your answer. You can find out more about this subject on the Internet at: en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Halal

Talking Point

'We could all learn something from the Muslim dress code.'
Discuss.

Dress Code

Muslims believe in dressing modestly in public, so as not to draw attention to their bodies. Muslim men must cover themselves from the waist to the knee. Muslim women are encouraged not to show bare skin in public; for this reason, they will wear a scarf (often called a *hijab*) and cover their arms and their legs when they go out. Although it is not strictly required by Islamic law, some Muslim women choose to wear the *burka*, which is a long loose-flowing garment that covers their body from head to toe, with only a small opening for the eyes.



Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

A time to pray

God to be with me in the events of my life!

God to guard me in life's changes!

God to direct me in the choices I make!

God to protect me in the problems I face!

God to enlighten me in the path that I choose!

God to inspire me with goodness!

God to turn me from danger and harm!

God to be praised in the way that I live! Amen.

Living As A Muslim

Now that you've worked through the previous lessons, you know lots of details about Islam. But what is it actually like to be a Muslim? This lesson offers you an overview of Muslim life through the eyes of Sayyed, a fifteen-year-old boy. His father, who is Egyptian, met Sayyed's mother when he was studying to become a doctor at a large hospital here. Sayyed answers some questions about his Islamic faith.

How did you become a Muslim?



Well, both my parents are Muslims. So naturally enough, I was born a Muslim. Faith is an important part of our life together. We believe that we are all born Muslim because as babies we naturally submit to God's will. There is a ceremony for newborn babies. When I was born, my father whispered special words into my ear: it was a call to prayer. I was given a name. Later, like all Muslim boys, I was circumcised. When I was seven days old, my hair was shaved off and weighed. In the past, the weight of a baby's hair was given in gold

or silver to the poor. Parents are still expected to give a donation to charity.

Do Muslims go to church on Sundays?

No, we don't go to church on Sundays. We worship in a building called a mosque, and our special day for worship is Friday, not Sunday. Prayer is a very important part of my life. Like all good Muslims, I pray five times a day.

Do Muslims have a Bible or Holy Book?

Yes, it is known as the Qur'an and it contains the word of Allah, which was given to the prophet Muhammad – peace be upon him! We believe that every word of the Qur'an is sacred and we only speak it in the original Arabic. I go to the mosque each day after school to learn Arabic and to learn more about the Qur'an.

I noticed some unusual food in your lunch-box. Do Muslims have special customs when it comes to food?

Yes. You should try some of my food – it's really tasty! We eat food that is *halal*, meaning food that is allowed. When an animal is killed for meat, special prayers are said and all the blood is then drained away. We are forbidden to eat the meat of a pig. My mum is a great cook and she makes lovely Egyptian dishes for us at home.

Talking Points

1. Supposing someone said to you: 'The only point of your life is to do what God wants.' How would you react? Would you agree? Why?/Why not? What does your religious tradition say about this?
2. 'Western culture puts a lot of emphasis on the individual.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not? How would you answer Sayyed's question: 'Does [such emphasis] always bring happiness or contentment?' Give reasons for your answer.
3. Sayyed said: 'When my sister started wearing the hijab, some people did not understand.' What did those people not understand? Would you understand? Explain your answer.
4. 'Because of recent events, some people have taken a different attitude to Muslims.' What might Sayyed be referring to here? What is your attitude to such things?
5. What are the past differences between Christians and Muslims to which Sayyed refers?
6. Why would good Christians want to treat others with respect? Do you think that this respect should include people of different faiths? Explain your answer.
7. Did you notice the phrase that Sayyed added after he spoke the name of the prophet of Islam? What was that phrase and why do you think that Muslims use it in this way?

What is it like growing up as a young Muslim here?

Overall it's cool. I have lots of friends and we have great fun together. I also meet my Muslim friends at the mosque. Muslim families like to keep in touch. Because of recent events, some people have taken a different attitude to Muslims. They seem suspicious of us and think that all Muslims are from another country. But listen to my voice and you will know that this is where I come from. I was born here and this country is my home. When my sister started wearing the *hijab* (scarf), some people did not understand at first, but now they know that it's part of our tradition. I think people really respect someone who stands up for what they believe. I know that there have been differences between Christians and Muslims in the past, but that is history now. And I understand that good Christians want to treat others with respect.



If I wanted to become a Muslim, how would I do it?

You have to believe that there is only one God, Allah, who created the entire universe; and you have to believe that Muhammad – peace be upon him! – is God's final messenger on earth. If you do, then you are ready. You become a Muslim simply by reciting the Shahada prayer of the First Pillar of Islam before two witnesses. This makes you part of the family of Muslims, or the *umma* as we like to call it. We think of ourselves as one family or community. This family or *umma* includes all the Muslims of the world and all the Muslims that have ever existed.

What difference would it make to my life if I became a Muslim?

Once you become a Muslim, your whole life has only one point: to live in the way that Allah wants. Once you accept Allah as the one and only God, you have to keep a constant link with God in your life. You do that through prayer, which is the Second Pillar of Islam. When it's possible, you pray five times a day, at set times, facing Mecca. You may pray almost anywhere. As a good Muslim, you would never take alcohol or drugs. You'd have a lot to learn about the Qur'an; but I'm told it's about the same size as what Christians call the New Testament.

Would I feel that I had lost my freedom if I became a Muslim?

Not at all! In fact, you should feel even freer. Islam takes away all your responsibilities and replaces them with just one: living your whole life as Allah would want. Every moment of your life has to follow Allah's will. Every choice you make must be the choice that would please Allah. Western culture puts a lot of emphasis on the individual and what they want. But does that always bring happiness or contentment?

Christianity and Islam: Similarities and Differences

Now that you've done these lessons on Islam, here is a very brief summary of the main similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity:

Why Don't You?

Visit the following websites to find out more about Islam:
www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/index.shtml
www.belfastislamiccentre.org.uk

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS BELIEVE IN

- One God
- Life after death
- God's final judgement of us
- Prayer, fasting and almsgiving
- Mary, the mother of Jesus
- Angels
- The existence of evil

CHRISTIANS AND MUSLIMS DISAGREE ON

- God as Father, Son and Holy Spirit
- Jesus as the Son of God
- Jesus' death and resurrection
- Jesus as saviour
- The Bible as God's final word

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Like Muslims, Christians believe in living as God would want.
We remember this now as we pray together:

All

Father in heaven, you love me.

You're with me night and day.

I want to love you always

In all I do and say.

I'll try to please you, Father.

Bless me through the day. Amen.

Teacher

Take a quiet moment to think of some little thing that God would want you to do, some act of kindness that God would like you to perform. (Pause)

Sign of the Cross

Why Don't You?

If you haven't already done so, compose some questions that you might ask a Muslim. Then you might invite a Muslim to meet your group or your representative for a conversation based on those questions. In the case where you use a representative, the class receives feedback on the answers later on.

'ME' Folder

Based on your work in this and previous lessons, write a piece on what has struck you about Islam.

Palm Sunday

Holy Week is the high point of the Church Year. It begins on Palm Sunday and ends a week later on Easter Sunday. As you already know, the Easter Triduum includes Holy Thursday evening, Good Friday, Holy Saturday and Easter Sunday. During this time, we remember in particular the events of the last week in the life of Jesus. Palm Sunday, also known as Passion Sunday, is the day for remembering the story of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem. It recalls how the ordinary people waved palms and welcomed Jesus into their city. But before you go into the story of Jesus, read the following story of a young woman being welcomed and honoured on account of her hard work and extraordinary courage.

Talking Points

1. How do you think Ellen MacArthur felt when she saw the cheering crowds?
2. Have you ever been in a cheering crowd? What was the occasion? Did you join in the cheering? Why?
3. Name some other events that you know of where large crowds of people gathered to cheer. What were they cheering about?

The Sailor



Between 28 November 2004 and 7 February 2005, Ellen MacArthur sailed around the world in the fastest time ever: just under seventy-one days and fifteen hours. She was alone during all that time. She got very little sleep: on some days, as little as ten minutes. In the Southern Ocean, huge waves crashed into the boat and made it impossible to stand up. At other times, rough seas had the whole boat groaning and everything in it shaking. At one point, she was very badly bruised when she had to climb the mast of the boat in driving winds to reconnect the main sail to the mast. Two weeks later, Ellen sailed into London, her capital city, where she was welcomed by cheering crowds. They had all heard her story, and now they came to show their admiration for her. When Ellen was still at school, she had saved her dinner money to buy her first boat. Now she was being cheered as the holder of one of the most important sailing records.

(news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/other_sports/sailing/4271507.stm
news.bbc.co.uk/sport1/hi/other_sports/sailing/4192517.stm)

Praising the Goodness in Others

The people who gathered to cheer for Ellen wanted to honour her for all her hard work and her great courage. People honour the goodness in you too. On your birthdays, you may get cards and presents. At Christmas too, people send you greetings and give you gifts because you matter to them. They want to share a sense of belonging with you. At other times, people show you that you matter in the way they might say 'hello', or send you messages, or in the way they may take time to talk to you.

People soon learned about the goodness in Jesus. They got to know it through what he did and said. As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowds gathered to cheer him and to honour him. You can read the story of what happened in the Gospel according to Matthew:

When Jesus and his disciples came near Jerusalem, he went to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives and sent two of them on ahead... The disciples left and did what Jesus had told them to do. They brought the donkey and its colt and laid some clothes on their backs. Then Jesus got on. Many people spread clothes in the road, while others put down branches which they had cut from trees. Some people walked ahead of Jesus and others followed behind. They were all shouting, 'Hosanna for the Son of David! God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna for God in heaven above!' When Jesus came to Jerusalem, everyone in the city was excited and asked, 'Who can this be?' The crowd answered, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.'
(Matthew 21:1-12)



This story shows clearly that many people supported Jesus and welcomed his words and actions. However, his entry into Jerusalem on a donkey also raised many questions about his identity, and was to spark off a chain of events that would culminate in his death on a cross. Read the following newspaper report describing events in Jerusalem.

Why Don't You?

Write a short summary of a recent event where large crowds of people gathered to cheer.



CROWDS WELCOME GALILEE PROPHET

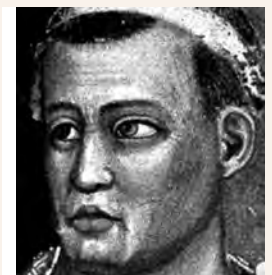
Extraordinary scenes took place yesterday in Jerusalem as Jesus, a prophet from Nazareth, entered the Holy City. There have been rumours for weeks that he was making his way to Jerusalem, and large crowds lined the streets in the hope of catching a glimpse of him. Interest in what some people claim is his outrageous teaching and apparent miracles has been high. Although Jesus had walked all the way from Galilee, he chose to travel the last few kilometres on the back of a donkey, an act that many people believe was a special sign. According to the prophet Zechariah,



the Messiah will enter Jerusalem 'humble and riding on a donkey'. Because of this, some people believe that Jesus is, in fact, the long-awaited Messiah. Others argue that by entering Jerusalem on a donkey, Jesus was once again showing his solidarity with the poor and that he is a man of peace. Whatever the case, the people of Jerusalem went wild with excitement as he passed. They carpeted the road with palm leaves and their cloaks and acted as if he were some kind of a king. Many were heard to shout 'Hosanna to the son of David'. The Jewish religious authorities, who have been critical of Jesus' actions in the past, declined to comment on the incident, and although a minor disturbance was caused by Jesus and his supporters, the Romans made no arrests.

Roman Governor to spend Passover in Holy City

Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, has left his headquarters in Caesarea and is expected to arrive in Jerusalem later today. He will be accompanied by his wife Claudia. Last year there were a number of violent clashes between rebels and Roman soldiers during the festival period. The person widely believed to have been responsible for the disturbances last year, a rebel by the name of Barabbas, was arrested last week and is being held on charges of rebellion and murder. Nevertheless, sources close to the governor say he is not taking any chances, and extra battalions of Roman soldiers have been drafted in to ensure a troublefree festival.



*** Big Prize Lotto Draw – page 5**

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

As Jesus entered Jerusalem, the crowds gathered to cheer him and to honour him. Listen now to the story of what happened as told in the Gospel according to Matthew (21:1-11):

When Jesus and his disciples came near Jerusalem, he went to Bethphage on the Mount of Olives and sent two of them on ahead... The disciples left and did what Jesus had told them to do. They brought the donkey and its colt and laid some clothes on their backs. Then Jesus got on. Many people spread clothes in the road, while others put down branches which they had cut from trees. Some people walked ahead of Jesus and others followed behind. They were all shouting, 'Hosanna for the Son of David! God bless the one who comes in the name of the Lord. Hosanna for God in heaven above!' When Jesus came to Jerusalem, everyone in the city was excited and asked, 'Who can this be?' The crowd answered, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth in Galilee.'

Teacher

People saw the goodness in Jesus and praised him. We remember their praise now as we say: Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David!

All

Hosanna! Hosanna! Hosanna to the Son of David!

Note: This response may be repeated after each of the following bullet points. At this point, if possible, the group may form a procession and move in an orderly fashion around the area that is being used during the following short litany.

Readers 4 & 5 (alternating)

- The people who listened to the stories of Jesus praised him.
- The apostles and friends of Jesus praised him for his friendship.
- The apostles and friends of Jesus praised him for the way he prayed.
 - The two blind men outside Jericho praised Jesus.
 - The little children praised Jesus.
- The father whose son had a bad case of epilepsy praised Jesus.
 - The Canaanite woman who shouted after Jesus to heal her daughter praised Jesus.
- The thousands that he fed with five loaves and two fish praised Jesus.
 - The apostles and friends of Jesus praised him for the way he calmed the storm.

Teacher

Together, we join with the crowds who praised Jesus as we say:

All

Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

Sign of the Cross

Talking Points

1. In the time of Jesus, what expectations were there of a Jewish Messiah?
2. Why would the Romans have arrested anyone claiming to be the Messiah?
3. Suggest some words to describe how the Jewish authorities might have reacted to Jesus' entry into Jerusalem?
4. What is the name given to the special day on which Christians today celebrate this event?

In Your Religion Journal

Under the title 'Jesus Enters Jerusalem in Triumph', use words and/or images to describe your impressions of what it would have been like to be there with Jesus that day.

Why Don't You?

Do a display entitled 'Jesus Enters Jerusalem in Triumph'. Go through the Gospel according to Matthew and include in the crowd all the people that Jesus helped/healed during his ministry.

Or

Write your own newspaper article describing Jesus' entry into Jerusalem. Perhaps you could write it from the point of view of one of the people whom Jesus helped.

A Reflection For Holy Thursday

Preparing for the Reflection

You might like to do this reflection in the school oratory or some other suitable space other than the classroom. It would be helpful to prepare a 'Sacred Space' around which the gathering could focus. This could be done by using some sacking or some brightly coloured cloth as a base on which to display a lighted candle (with appropriate care), a white towel, a basin and a jug of water. Some quiet background sound to encourage a reflective atmosphere would also be helpful.

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

During Holy Week, we remember the most important things of life and living, for example, friendship. Friendship matters to us. It helps us to belong. Jean Vanier founded the L'Arche movement. He discovered a new sense of belonging when he offered friendship and care to others. Here is part of his story.

Reader 1

Jean Vanier left the Canadian Navy in 1950. It took him fourteen years to settle on what to do next. He knew that he wanted to live a good life – a life like Jesus. Obviously, he couldn't go back two thousand years and live in Palestine. So, how was he, Jean Vanier, going to live like Jesus in the twentieth century? In 1964, he bought a house and invited two people to live with him: Raphaël and Philippe. Both these men were from the local psychiatric hospital: Raphaël was unable to talk and Philippe was barely able to walk. Together, they would try to be a family and see what they might learn from it.

Reader 2

The situation was sometimes difficult. It was hard for Raphaël and Philippe to cope with the change from living in an institution. Jean Vanier himself was glad of the discipline that he got in the Navy, which taught him how to work as part of a team. He also appreciated the help he got from dedicated psychiatrists. Nowadays, though, he remembers more of the fun: 'There was a degree of fooling around – every meal was a place of laughter.' This was how the L'Arche project began. Around the world today, people copy this example and form new homes and new families. It's never a question of one person being superior to another because of abilities or disabilities. Everyone lives together as equals, helping one another.

Teacher

Jean Vanier and others in the L'Arche movement offer friendship and a home to one another. We pause for a moment to remember the ways in which others have offered us friendship and care and belonging.

Reader 3

Note: After each prayer, the reader may add 'Lord hear us', and all may reply 'Lord, graciously hear us'.

- Here and now, we think of one person in particular who talks to us. *(Pause)* We give thanks for that person and for all who talk to us.
- Here and now, we think of one particular person who brings laughter to our life. *(Pause)* We give thanks for that person and for all who help us to laugh.
- Here and now, we think of one particular person with whom we share fun and enjoyment. *(Pause)* We give thanks for that person and for all with whom we enjoy life.
- Here and now, we think of one particular person who has given us a home. *(Pause)* We give thanks for that person and for all who have given us a place to live.

Teacher

Jesus offered friendship and care to his friends. When it came to their final meal together, he did something unusual. John the Apostle often spoke about it later and the story is in the Gospel that bears his name. Here is part of it now:

Reader 4 (*John 13:1-5*)

It was just before the Passover feast. Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he now showed them the full extent of his love. The evening meal was being served, and the devil had already prompted Judas Iscariot, son of Simon, to betray Jesus. Jesus knew that the Father had put all things under his power, and that he had come from God and was returning to God; so he got up from the meal, took off his outer clothing, and wrapped a towel around his



waist. After that, he poured water into a basin and began to wash his disciples' feet, drying them with the towel that was wrapped around him.

Reader 5 (*John 13:12-15*)

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. 'Do you understand what I have done for you?' he asked them. 'You call me "Teacher" and "Lord", and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your

lord and teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do, as I have done for you.'

Teacher

Jesus cared for his friends. He also cares for us. We will take some time together now to focus on Jesus' love and care for us. We will listen to the water in the jug being poured into the basin as a way of linking back with the moment when Jesus poured water over the feet of his friends. I invite you now to begin by sitting comfortably...closing your eyes...and becoming quiet and still inside yourself. *(Short pause)* Imagine yourself watching what happened in the room at the Last Supper. In your mind's eye, see Jesus getting up from the table, tucking the towel around his waist, and then pouring water into a basin. We listen to the sound of water as it is poured. *(The teacher, or one of those present, pours the water very slowly into the basin, allowing the sound to be heard throughout the room.)* Imagine Jesus seeing you there and coming over to you. He comes over to you because he is your friend. He places the basin of water on the floor beside you. He begins to wash your feet. Feel the water as he pours it over your feet. *(Pause)* He then dries your feet carefully and gently. *(Pause)* He says to you, 'Be like me. Be kind to other people. Help other people. Do what you can for others.' He speaks his words again: 'Be like me. Be kind to other people. Help other people. Do what you can for others.' Take a minute to respond to him now and to listen to any more that he may say to you now. *(Pause)*

Teacher

We take a final moment to thank Jesus for his love. *(Pause)* Once again, we open our eyes and listen to a final few words from Jean Vanier, from his book called *Encountering 'the Other'*.

Reader 6

'There is a story in the Gospel that I consider extremely moving. During his last meal with the disciples, Jesus got up and took off his outer garments, and went to fetch a basin. He put water in the basin, knelt down in front of the disciples and washed their feet. Jesus was revealing that God comes and kneels before us. What does this mean?'

Reader 7

Maybe we cannot all do big things, but all of us can kneel at one another's feet and say, 'I trust you and I believe you.' All of us can ask the spirit of God to come within us, to give us the strength, the wisdom and the humility to help people to rise up and to believe in themselves. The danger for all of us is that we are living in a culture of competition and rivalry, so we are often on the defensive and trying to prove that we are better than others. Have we forgotten that Jesus is kneeling at our feet asking us to serve one another just where we are?

Teacher

Together, we pray the prayer to the Holy Spirit:

All

Holy Spirit, I want to live like Jesus. Guide me.

Holy Spirit, I want to pray like Jesus. Teach me.

Holy Spirit, I want to love like Jesus. Help me.

Sign of the Cross

The Passion, Death And Resurrection Of Jesus

- You may find it preferable to conduct these stations in the school oratory or in the local church building.
- The part of the Leader may be taken by the teacher or school chaplain or local priest.
- The song 'Stabat Mater' (or some other suitable song) may be used as desired in this prayertime.
- After the title of each station is announced, the Leader says: *'We adore you, O Christ, and we praise you!'* All genuflect and reply: *'Because, by your holy cross, you have redeemed (saved) the world'*.
- At the end of each station, all kneel and pray the 'Act of Sorrow' or another traditional prayer.

Sign of the Cross

Leader

The three special days of the Church Year – the Easter Triduum – are drawing near. This is the time when we remember the final events in the life of Jesus. Today we focus on the events leading up to his death. Even before we reach the point where the Stations of the Cross normally begin, Jesus has already suffered much. In the Garden of Gethsemane, he felt very afraid. We listen now to the story as told in the Gospel according to Matthew.

Reader 1 (reads Matthew 26:36-39)

Leader

Then there was the shock of being arrested under cover of dark. Jesus was threatened and handled roughly.

Reader 2 (reads Matthew 26:47-49)

Leader

Jesus was led off to the house of Caiaphas, the high priest. Peter the apostle followed at a distance. The religious leaders were there waiting for Jesus. Some of them had been plotting to get Jesus killed. Now they had their chance. They questioned Jesus. They asked him if he was the Messiah. Listen now to what was said.

Reader 3 (reads Matthew 26:62-66)

Leader

Peter, who had followed Jesus at a distance, had to face some questions that night too. Listen now to what Peter said.

Reader 4 (reads Matthew 26:73-75)

Leader

The two apostles, Peter and Judas, betrayed Jesus in different ways. Peter denied that he knew Jesus. Judas helped the religious authorities to arrest Jesus. The Gospel according to Matthew tells us how Peter and Judas reacted to their mistakes. Peter cried hard. Judas took his own life. Judas didn't realise that Jesus would never stop loving him. (Pause) Jesus had been up all night by the time he was sent over to Pilate, the Roman governor.

Reader 5 (reads Matthew 27:11-13)

Leader

The First Station: Jesus is condemned to death

At first, Pilate seemed to believe that Jesus was innocent. Jesus was no threat to Roman power. Even Pilate's wife believed that Jesus was innocent. But the religious authorities and the crowds got worked up, and that was a threat to the peace, so Pilate gave in.

Reader 6

Pilate showed himself to be a weak man. He did what was wrong because he was afraid. Give us your courage, Lord, to be truthful and honest. Help us in the decisions we find difficult.

Leader

The Second Station: Jesus receives the cross

Jesus sees the cross for the first time. There is no going back now – this is it. This is what it has cost him to be a loving person. This is the cost of his conflict with the religious authorities. This is the cost of curing people on the

Why Don't You?

Look at a different type of 'Stations of the Cross' at: www.dioceseofmeath.ie/Links/Via_Crucis_et_Lucis.html

1



2





3

Sabbath, of being friendly with sinners. This is the cost of talking about God's love.

Reader 7

Jesus chose to do what God wanted: he showed God's love to the world. Now he must face the consequences. He must suffer, because of his conflict with the religious authorities.



4

Leader

The Third Station: Jesus falls the first time

The Roman soldiers had scourged Jesus. He was weak and in great pain. He had been up all night and he was tired. No wonder he fell under the heavy load.



5

Reader 8

Jesus collapsed under the weight of the cross. We remember people who collapse under the weight of their troubles: people who worry about their family, their health, money problems and other concerns. We are sorry for the times we have added to the worries that others have.

Leader

The Fourth Station: Jesus meets his mother

Mary braved her fears and the crowds to go out to meet her son. What a shock it must have been for her to see what had happened to Jesus!

Reader 9

Mary decided to go to Jesus and to be seen with him, even though others had condemned him. Mary was a reliable friend and mother to her son. We ask forgiveness for times when we have failed others and let them down.



6

Leader

The Fifth Station: Simon of Cyrene helps Jesus to carry the cross

The soldiers led Jesus off. 'On the way they met a man from Cyrene named Simon, and they forced him to carry Jesus' cross' (Matthew 27:32). Little did Simon know that he would be remembered for what he did that day.



7

Reader 10

Any moment in life is a moment where others may need our help. We pray that we may actually offer that help, even despite our bad humour, our laziness and our annoyance at being disturbed.



8

Leader

The Sixth Station: Veronica wipes the face of Jesus

Veronica is not actually mentioned in the Gospel. Yet the tradition lives on of a woman who stepped forward and wiped the face of Jesus. On that day, many people joined in to jeer at Jesus, but Veronica respected the human being and his terrible suffering.

Reader 11

God, when others jeer and make little of someone else, help us to remember that each person is made in your image and likeness.

Leader

The Seventh Station: Jesus falls the second time

Jesus collapsed. This time it was not from the weight of the cross: he was in a fearful state, not able to go on.

Reader 12

God, when we are gripped by fear, help us to believe that you are with us. Help us to believe that no matter what happens to us, you will help us to get through.

Leader

The Eighth Station: Jesus speaks to the women of Jerusalem

Even though he was distraught and very stressed, Jesus could still see the trouble of others. He could still say a word to the women who were distressed at seeing his suffering.

Reader 13

God, when we are in difficulties, when we are having a bad day, save us from becoming absorbed in ourselves. Save us from self-pity. Help us to remember that other people suffer too.

Leader

The Ninth Station: Jesus falls the third time

By now, Jesus is completely exhausted. Gone is the energy that cured others! Gone is the energy that calmed the Sea of Galilee! Gone is the energy that thought up parables and stories! Jesus has given his all for his Father and for us.

Reader 14

Often, we are careful about ourselves. We do what suits us. We offer what we can do without. We give the minimum. God, make us more like Jesus, who was so generous.

Leader

The Tenth Station: Jesus is stripped of his clothes

The executioners were less interested in Jesus than they were in his clothes. They gambled to see who would get them. For them, this was just another day's work. They were just carrying out orders. Yet, what cruel orders they were!

Reader 15

God, make us careful about how we live. Don't let us become like the soldiers, blind to the other people in our lives. We ask forgiveness for the way the resources of the earth are stripped away from the poor and powerless peoples of the earth.

Leader

The Eleventh Station: Jesus is nailed to the cross

The Gospel according to Matthew tells us: 'They came to a place named Golgotha, which means "Place of a Skull"' (27-33). There they gave Jesus some wine mixed with a drug to ease the pain. But when Jesus tasted what it was, he refused to drink it. The soldiers also nailed two criminals on to crosses, one to the right of Jesus and the other to his left. Some of the people who passed by said terrible things about Jesus.

Reader 16

Jesus united himself with us. He suffered the pain of human suffering. God, help us to realise the strength of your love for us.

Leader

The Twelfth Station: Jesus dies on the cross

At this point, Jesus had been abandoned by his disciples, betrayed by Judas, denied by Peter, accused by the Temple priests, rejected by the crowd, mocked by those who were at the cross, and surrounded by the darkness of nature. It even seemed as if God had forsaken him too. It was a scene of utter agony. Jesus had suffered a terrifying fate, and all for us. Let us kneel. *(It is traditional to kneel and pause at this point. After the pause, the Leader may say: 'Let us arise.')*

Reader 17

God, there is still great suffering in the world today. Many people suffer for want of food and clean water. Many people suffer for want of freedom. We

bow our heads in silence as we remember the death of Jesus and the suffering of the world. *(Pause)*

Leader

The Thirteenth Station: The body of Jesus is taken down from the cross

The evening had come. Jesus had completed all that his Father wanted him to do. He had lived his Father's love to the end. But at that moment it seemed as if there was no hope. For the mother of Jesus and his friends, this was the end of hope. The Resurrection was yet to come.

Reader 18

We pause to pray for people who have no hope and for those who have been separated from people they love through death. *(Pause)*

Leader

The Fourteenth Station: The body of Jesus is laid in the tomb

After the usual response, the leader reads Matthew 27: 57-61.

Reader 19

Jesus went through death and joined himself with all those who died. God, we remember those who have died. Give us faith that you have brought them to heaven. Help us to live a good life, as Jesus did.

Leader

The traditional Stations of the Cross end here. However, the story goes on in the Gospel according to Matthew.

Reader 20 *(reads Matthew 28: 1-7)*

Leader

At the very end of the Gospel according to Matthew, Jesus meets his friends. Now Jesus is different. He is risen, living life in a new way. He will never die again.

Reader 21 *(reads Matthew 28: 16-20)*

All

Glory be to the Father,
And to the Son,
And to the Holy Spirit.
As it was in the beginning,
Is now, and ever shall be,
World without end. Amen.

Sign of the Cross

9



10



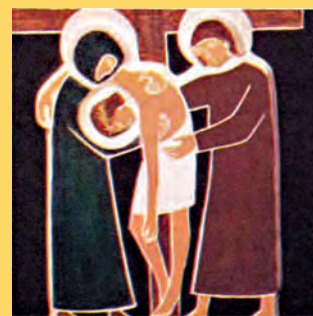
11



12



13



14



The Empty Tomb

You change as you go through life. Sure, you grow physically. But you change in other ways too: in your attitudes, in your mind, in your approach to life and living. Such changes can happen for a variety of reasons: for example, you might meet new people; you might witness something startling, or you might learn of some particular event. As a result of experiences like these, you could change.

For the friends of Jesus, discovering the empty tomb on Easter Sunday morning was a life-changing event. It took them a while to work out what it meant; it didn't change them all at once. In this lesson, you will have an opportunity to reflect on their new attitude and how it emerged. To begin with, here's a story of someone who went through a change of attitude.

A New Attitude

Jonathan and Elaine were on their honeymoon in Europe. They had enjoyed the scenery of Switzerland before heading down to Italy, to the little coastal town of Paestum, south-east of Naples. After exploring the town's many Roman ruins, the couple headed for the beach. As Jonathan looked out at the great expanse of blue sea, he wished he had learned to swim. However, when he noticed people paddling a fair distance out into the sea, he realised that the water wasn't very deep. So he left Elaine sunning herself on the beach and headed off into the water. When the water reached his knees, he decided to turn back. That was when he got into serious trouble. The sand underneath wasn't as even as it had seemed; in a single step, he was out of his depth. He tried to swim, but couldn't. No matter what he did, he went under several times. He tried to call out, but people were too far away. At the same time, he was panicking. He was sure he would drown.



Talking Points

1. What happened to Jonathan changed him as a person. Has an event or a person ever changed you or someone you know in the same sort of way? Explain your answer.
2. How would you describe the new attitude that emerged in Jonathan in the months and years after this incident? List some words to name it.
3. What effect do you think having such an attitude had on Jonathan? What effect do you think such an attitude might have on you? Explain your answer.
4. Have you ever seen that kind of attitude in yourself or in someone else you know? If so, can you trace it back to any particular event or person?

In your Religion Journal

Pick a moment when an event or person changed you or someone you know. Describe it using words and/or illustrations.

Talking Points

1. The Gospel story (opposite) tells how the disciples raced to the tomb. However, it seems that afterwards they went back to join the others at a much slower pace. How might you account for this?
2. What are the main facts of this story? As you read it today, what does the story suggest to you?
3. The story says that the 'favourite disciple' believed. What do you think he believed?

But it was not to be. Someone – he never found out who it was – pulled him out of the water. The next thing he knew, he was sprawled out on the sand beside his wife. He was shocked and confused. For the next few days he was very quiet. Then, gradually, the thought came to him, 'I would never have seen this day if someone hadn't saved me. I might not have been here today!' But months and years later, he began to have another thought: 'Isn't it a wonder that I'm here in the first place? Isn't it a marvel that I was ever born, that I have a life, that I'm alive, that I can sense the world around me, that I can love and be loved, that I can make a difference.' Jonathan's experience of nearly drowning made him look differently at being alive. He would never again see life and living in the same way. Never again would he take anything for granted.

Peter and 'the Favourite Disciple' go to the Tomb of Jesus (John 20:1-10)

On Sunday morning while it was still dark, Mary Magdalene went to the tomb and saw that the stone had been rolled away from the entrance. She ran to Simon Peter and to Jesus' favourite disciple [John] and said, 'They have taken the Lord from the tomb! We don't know where they have put him.'

Peter and the other disciple set off for the tomb. They ran side by side, until the other disciple ran faster than Peter and got there first. He bent over and saw the strips of linen cloth lying inside the tomb, but he did not go in.

When Simon Peter got there, he went into the tomb and saw the strips of cloth. He also saw the piece of cloth that had been used to cover Jesus' face. It was rolled up and in a place by itself. The disciple who got there first then went into the tomb, and when he saw it, he believed. At that time Peter and the other disciple did not know that the Scriptures said Jesus would rise to life. So the two of them went back to the other disciples.

Talking Points

1. While they were at the empty tomb, it seems that John was more convinced than Peter about the resurrection of Jesus. Would you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. List some words to describe Peter as he leaves the empty tomb. Do the same for John.
2. How would you say the event of that morning changed Peter and John for the rest of their lives? How did it affect their attitudes and their beliefs?
3. Even though he couldn't explain how it happened, John believed that Jesus had risen. Would you say that it is possible to believe something without being able to give others a convincing explanation? Explain your answer.

Why Don't You?

Imagine that you are Peter and John returning from your discovery of the empty tomb. Act out their discussion on their way to the other disciples. (Note: You may find it helpful to refer to Question 1 of the Talking Points above.) You might like to begin as follows:

John: This has to be the greatest news ever.

Peter: Well, I wouldn't be so sure...

'ME' Folder

Write about an event that changed you. Take a moment to remember it with God. If you wish, include a note about your prayer.

Believing in the Risen Jesus

On Easter Sunday morning, Peter and John (who is called the 'favourite disciple' in the Gospel according to John) ran to the tomb. The Gospel story records what they saw: the stone rolled back, the body no longer there, and the burial cloths set to one side. This scene must have been a huge surprise to them. Many questions must have run through their minds: Had they come to the right place? Was this the right tomb? Had someone stolen the body? Initially, there was no satisfactory explanation of the facts – they made no sense at first.

But then, a possible explanation emerged. John saw that possibility first: the Gospel says that he believed. He believed that Jesus was alive in a new way. Though Jesus had died on the cross, the apostle John saw the possibility that somehow the life of Jesus had been both preserved and changed. He could not explain how this had happened, but he was ready to believe that it had happened. He believed that God's power was at work, although he could not fully explain how.

In the weeks that followed, the friends of Jesus developed a new attitude. The risen Jesus appeared to them, and they came to see and believe that he was alive. With the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, they became more confident and joyful. Their attitude to life was changed for ever.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

We recall some of the positive ways in which people have given us a good attitude to life:

- with a present on our birthday or at Christmas (*Pause*)
- by showing us how to do new things (*Pause*)
- by taking us places we'd never been before (*Pause*)
- with a word of forgiveness (*Pause*)
- with a friendly gesture (*Pause*)
- by praising something that we did (*Pause*)
- by including us and counting us in when we were strangers. (*Pause*)

All

I thank you, God,
for the people and events
that make my life good.

I thank you, God,
for Jesus fully alive
after his passion and death.

I thank you, God,
for making my life
a life that will last for ever.

I thank you, God,
for this bright hope
even on my darkest days.

Amen.

Sign of the Cross

Sent To Serve

As you saw in the previous lesson, the empty tomb pointed to a new possibility. When the risen Jesus appeared to his friends on Easter Sunday, they realised that he was alive again in a new way, that he would live for ever and that he would never die again. The Gospel according to Matthew reports the final words of the risen Jesus to his friends. But before you go on to look at those words, here are some other examples of final words.

Last Words

Back in 1948, a Canadian wheat farmer got trapped beneath his overturned tractor. He used his penknife to scratch a will on the mudguard: 'In case I die in this mess, I leave all to the wife. Cecil Geo Harris.' Mr Harris was eventually found, but he died two days later in hospital. The will was contested and, despite its unusual nature, it was accepted by the Canadian courts. Eventually, the mudguard was transferred from the court archives and it now forms part of a Canadian law library in Ottawa.

In his will, Pope Paul VI (1963-78) expressed his attitude to life. Here are some of the words from his final document:

'Lord, I thank you for having called me into life and... for having... destined me to the fullness of life... As regards my funeral: let it be simple... As regards my tomb: I would like to be buried in the earth with a simple stone to indicate the place and invite a prayer. No monument for me... I close my eyes on this sorrowful, dramatic and magnificent world... Again I bless everyone, especially Rome, Milan and Brescia. For the Holy Land, the land of Jesus, where I went as a pilgrim of faith and peace, a special greeting and blessing.'*

**Paul VI was born near this Italian city.*



Talking Points

1. What was important in life according to Cecil Harris? Pope Paul VI? Explain your answers.
2. If you had to sum up what you have learned so far about life, what would you say?
3. Based on what you have learned about life, what one practical change would you make to the world today?

One-Minute Soapbox

Look again at what Cecil Harris and Pope Paul VI said in their wills. Imagine that you want to leave a message for the world about what you see as important and what you think needs to change. Talk for an uninterrupted minute or two, beginning with: 'In my will, I would like to tell people to...'

The Final Words of Jesus in the Gospel According to Matthew

Jesus didn't write a will, but he did make it clear how he wanted his disciples to continue his work. He asked his disciples to remain faithful to who he was and to what he had said and done. He asked them to hand

Talking Points

1. Jesus 'commissioned' his followers: he gave them a special role when he asked them to help people to become his disciples. Have you ever been 'commissioned' or given a special role at home? at school? by a local group? by a friend? Explain your answer.
2. The people Jesus spoke to in the Gospel story are no longer among us. Does that mean that the call of Jesus to help people become his disciples is now out of date? Explain your answer.

In Your Religion Journal

Do a Bible search for Matthew 25:21-46. Then take a page in your Religion journal to illustrate the theme: 'Caring for People Today.' Use words and/or images.

on what he had given them. Indeed, he wanted his teaching to be passed on to people everywhere, 'to the ends of the earth'. Here is how the story is told in the Gospel according to Matthew:

Jesus' eleven disciples went to a mountain in Galilee, where Jesus had told them to meet him. They saw him and worshipped him, but some of them doubted. Jesus came to them and said: 'I have been given all authority in heaven and on earth! Go to the people of all nations and make them my disciples. Baptise them in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, and teach them to do everything I have told you. I will be with you always, even until the end of the world.'

(Matthew 28:16-20)

Jesus tells the Eleven to go out to the whole world and make people his disciples. He asks the Eleven to help people everywhere to get to know him, to learn from him, and to copy his attitude and live it. Jesus asks the Eleven to teach others to do everything that he has told them. This includes loving God and loving one's neighbour (Matthew 22:34-40) and particularly looking after those who are hungry or thirsty, without proper clothes or shelter, those who are in prison, those who are from other places, and those who are sick (Matthew 25:21-46).

Jesus is With Us Always

Jesus is with you on your journey of life; he is not someone distant or far away. He invites you to be his disciple. This is what was celebrated when you were baptised. Through Baptism, you began to be a disciple (follower) of Jesus and a member of his Church.

In the early years of the Church, the disciples of Jesus showed what it meant to be his followers:



Detail from 'The Last Supper' by
Giovanni Lanfranco

They spent their time learning from the apostles, and they were like family to each other. They also broke bread and prayed together... All the Lord's followers often met together, and they shared everything

they had. They would sell their property and possessions and give the money to whoever needed it. Day after day they met together in the Temple. They broke bread together in different homes and shared their food happily and freely, while praising God. (Acts 2:42, 44-47)

Pope John Paul II (1978-2005) expressed how people today can be followers of Jesus when he said:

Solidarity [being united with others and concerned for others]...is not a feeling of vague compassion or shallow distress at the misfortunes of so many people, both near and far. On the contrary, it is a firm and persevering determination to commit oneself to the common good; that is to say, to the good of all and of each individual, because we are all really responsible for all. (*Sollicitudo Rei Socialis*, 1987, para. 38)

Why Don't You?

Do a wall display under the heading 'We Are Followers of Jesus Today'. Discuss what you might include in it. You might like to use images and headlines from magazines and newspapers.

A time to pray

Note: You might like to read this prayer quietly before reading it together as a group.

I thank you, God, for life,
for the life that surrounds me
in all living things, in nature's changing seasons.

I thank you for the life that I find
in art, in storytellers and in games.

I thank you, God, for life,
for the life within me
in my feelings and reactions and thoughts,
for the life you gave me,
for the good you see in me,
for the way you love me.

Help me, God, to enjoy being alive,
to notice what I am and what I have,
to be aware that I am unique and never to be repeated.

Despite the things that make life difficult,
help me, God, to focus my energy
and to become more fully alive.

Help me to be able to give more to others.

Help me to be a better disciple of Jesus.



In small groups, discuss the following: 'Solidarity with others.' Nominate one person from each group to report to the class on your discussion.

Or

Pick five people to have a discussion for the whole class on the same theme. They may support or contradict one another respectfully, or they may introduce new ideas to the conversation as it proceeds. Decide on a time-limit for the conversation, and stop it when it reaches this limit. If no one speaks, then allow the silence.

Difficult Times

Talking Points

1. Would you be happy to play another round of this 'game'? Why? Who would not? Why not?
2. Which role – green or red – do you consider the 'best' role? Why?
3. What feelings/thoughts/reactions did you have if you were one of the (a) Greens or (b) Reds during the game.
4. If you were one of the Reds, what did it feel like to find yourself excluded from the group?
5. Suggest some words or phrases to describe the activity of the Greens towards the Reds during the game. Do you think that this sort of role would be good for you in real life? Why?/Why not?
6. Describe an occasion when you or someone you know experienced being deliberately excluded by someone or something.

Remember back to the lessons on prejudice and discrimination. One of those lessons included the Exclusion Game (see page 110). Here is another version for you to try. (Note: Do not use the following 'game' unless you have time to follow it up with the questions in the 'Talking Points' opposite. It may evoke strong feelings. Make sure you take time afterwards to talk about your feelings during the game. The Talking Points are offered to you as a guide in this.)

Divide into two groups: the **Reds** (those whose birthday date is even, e.g. 2nd, 14th, 26th, etc) and the **Greens** (those whose birthday date is uneven, e.g. 7th, 15th, 29th, etc).^{*} You might use coloured stickers to identify the groups. One person is chosen to act as time-keeper. S/he takes no other part in the game. The game should last three minutes. The **Greens** are allowed to sit down comfortably and are given a small treat to eat.

One of the **Greens** orders the **Reds** to stand facing the wall. From this point, the **Reds** may not talk or look around. They must close their eyes and be totally silent. They are not allowed to do anything other than stand in their place.

**Note: Some other chance way of dividing the group may be chosen, e.g. based on first-name initials.*

Difficult and Dangerous Times; Saul of Tarsus

After receiving the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, things were going really well



The stoning of Stephen

for the first followers of Jesus. The apostles began to do as Jesus asked by going out to share the Good News with others. As a result, many were baptised and became followers of Jesus. At first, these followers were seen as being just another sort of Jew. As their numbers increased within the Jewish community, other members began to see them as a threat. When the followers of Jesus began to accept Gentiles (non-Jews) into their group, this deepened the divisions between them and their Jewish brothers and sisters. The Jewish religious authorities would not accept that Jesus was the Messiah. They began to attack the followers of Jesus and put them in prison.

One of the leading persecutors was a Jewish man named Saul. He was born in Tarsus, a city located in today's southern Turkey. He was a devout Jew, and in his youth he had spent some time studying the Jewish law in Jerusalem. Saul became a Pharisee and took his faith very seriously. He was disturbed by the increase in the numbers of those who

followed Jesus. He opposed the way they did not keep all the parts of the Jewish law. They were a threat to all he believed in, a threat that needed to be eliminated. Saul is first mentioned in Acts 7:58, which tells of how he approved of the killing of Stephen, the first person to be killed for being a follower of Jesus. After this, Saul began his full-scale persecution of the followers of Jesus. The followers of Jesus now found themselves excluded from the synagogue by their fellow Jews. It was after this time that the followers of Jesus began to be called Christians (see Acts 11:26).

Over time, the Roman authorities also came to despise the followers of Jesus. This new version of religion was considered to be a security risk by the Roman authorities. As time went on, the situation worsened and opposition to Christianity became increasingly violent. Christianity was outlawed and the Christian community became almost a secret organisation.

A time to pray

Note: If you visited the website suggested in the 'Why Don't You?' opposite, you might use a story from it as an introduction to the following prayertime.

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

The first named persecutor of Christians was Saul. We first hear of him in the Acts of the Apostles, which mentions that he was present when the first follower of Jesus was killed. Saul entirely approved of what happened.

Reader (Acts 7:58–8:1-3)

Then they dragged Stephen out of the city and began to stone him; and the witnesses laid their coats at the feet of a young man named Saul. While they were stoning Stephen, he prayed, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.' Then he knelt down and cried out in a loud voice, 'Lord, do not hold this sin against them.' When he had said this, he died. And Saul approved of their killing him. That day a severe persecution began against the church in Jerusalem, and all except the apostles were scattered throughout the countryside of Judaea and Samaria. Devout men buried Stephen and made loud lamentation over him. But Saul was ravaging the church by entering house after house; dragging off both men and women, he committed them to prison.

Teacher

Followers of Jesus are still persecuted in the world today. We pray for them.

Reader

For those whom people want to kill because they have become Christians.

(Pause)

For those who are not free to live as Christians because of State laws and discrimination. *(Pause)*

For those who are excluded from government and from jobs because they are Christians. *(Pause)*

Sign of the Cross

Talking Points

1. Why did the Jews exclude the followers of Jesus from the synagogues?
2. Saul was a Pharisee. What does that tell you about his approach to his faith and his possible reasons for persecuting the followers of Jesus?
3. Do you think it would have been difficult for the first followers of Jesus to remain faithful to their belief in Jesus? Explain your answer.

In Your Religion Journal

Look up Acts 7:54-60 and read the story of the stoning of Stephen, the first Christian martyr. Imagine you are a Christian living in Jerusalem at that time. Write a letter to a friend describing these events and your fears about what might happen to you now that Saul has begun his persecution of the Christian community.

Why Don't You?

Visit www.opendoors.org.au for information on persecuted Christians in the world today.

From Saul To Paul – A Man With A Mission

Sometimes you have a moment in life when you change. It might be a moment when you change your mind about someone. It might be a moment when you learn something about yourself that helps you to relate to others or that makes you feel different from others. It might be a moment of joy or sorrow, where you experience something that you never forget. One way or another, in your lifetime something will probably happen to you that will change you, just like what happened to Craig Kielburger in the following story.

Craig's Life Changes

One April morning in 1995 in Toronto, Craig Kielburger was ready too early for school. With time to spare, he reached for the cartoon section of the *Toronto Star* newspaper. But his eye fell on the main headline:

'Battled Child Labour, Boy, 12, Murdered.' It told the following story:

Iqbal Masih from Pakistan was four years old when his father had to sell him to pay family debts. Iqbal was bought by a carpet maker and chained to a carpet loom making the carpets and rugs with the tiny stitches only a child's hands could manage. He was forced to work sixteen hours a day without proper food, and with no chance for play. Carpet factory owners in Pakistan could get away with such treatment of children because they were rich and powerful. Six years later, Iqbal escaped. Later at a public meeting, he told what his life had been like. Iqbal was invited to speak in many places; he also helped to restore the rights of millions of other children like himself. He brought his story to the local papers. On 16 April 1995, he was shot dead. For the rich and powerful factory owners that used (and continue to use) child slave labour, the death of Iqbal Masih was good news. At twelve years of age, his body was the size of a six-year old.



Craig was shocked. He had never heard of child slave labour. He soon found out that there were 250 million child labourers in the world, half of them working full-time, often in hazardous conditions. At school, Craig gathered a group of six school friends together, all twelve years old like him, and they started an organisation which they called *Free The*

Children. Together they learned more about the condition of child labourers. Craig spoke in public to inform others. Eventually, he travelled to places to see the situation for himself. Today, Craig leads an organisation of more than a million supporters in forty-five different countries. It still has the same goal: to free children from abuse, exploitation and the idea that they are not old enough or smart enough or capable enough to change the world.

ROLE-PLAY

Note: Before you do this role-play, do a Bible search for Acts 9:1-30 and read the story.

Characters: Narrator, Saul, two companions, voice of Jesus, Ananias, Judas.

Narrator: Saul was travelling with some companions to the city of Damascus to look for any disciples of Jesus who might be hiding there. He planned to arrest them and bring them back for trial in Jerusalem. He had just reached the outskirts of the city when suddenly he was dazzled by a strong light that seemed to surround him. He fell to the ground. It was then that he heard a voice calling to him.



Voice of Jesus: Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting me?

Saul: (Frightened) Who are you?

Voice of Jesus: I am Jesus, and you are persecuting me.

Companion 1: (Looking around anxiously) Did you hear that? I could swear I heard a voice.

Companion 2: (Arm up covering eyes) And that bright light? I've never seen anything like it before.

Narrator: The voice instructed Saul to go to Damascus and wait there to be told what to do next.

Why Don't You?

Find out more about *Free the Children* at:

www.freethechildren.org/index.html

Find out more about Iqbal Masih at:

www.mirrorimage.com/iqbal/who/who.html

en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Iqbal_Masih

Talking Points

1. Would you agree that Craig Kielburger's experience in reading Iqbal's story marked a turning point in his life? Why?/Why not?
2. In what way do you think Craig's attitude and outlook on life changed?
3. Sometimes events can change the way people in general think and live. Suggest a list of such events, saying why each should be included.
4. Craig changed his life and made a significant contribution to changing the world. What change could you make as a contribution to changing the world?

Why Don't You?

Find out more about child labour in the world today. You might contact organisations such as Trócaire (www.trocaire.org) or Cafod (www.cafod.co.uk) for more information.

Companion 1: (*Concerned*) Are you all right there, Saul?

Saul: (*Uncertainly*) My eyes! That light has blinded me. I can't see.

Companion 2: Here, take my hand. Let me help you up. That light was like nothing I've ever seen. You'll be fine in a minute when your eyes have time to adjust.

Companion 1: (*Nervously*) I think we should continue on to Damascus. We're not far from the city and Saul can rest there until his sight returns.

Narrator: But Saul's sight did not return. For three days and three nights he remained blind. He refused to eat or drink. His companions began to be concerned about his weak state. (*Pause*) Meanwhile in Damascus, a Christian named Ananias had a vision, in which he heard the risen Jesus call his name.

Ananias: Here I am, Lord.

Narrator: Ananias was told to go to the house of Judas – no, not that Judas! Many others had that name! Ananias was to go to the house of Judas on Straight Street and to ask for someone called Saul who came from Tarsus.

Ananias: (*Anxiously*) Do I really have to go, Lord? I have heard of this Saul and he has a reputation for being a fierce opponent of the followers of Jesus. He has come here to Damascus to arrest them and I'm afraid he might try to arrest me.

Narrator: The Lord told Ananias not to be afraid, that at that very moment Saul was having a vision telling him about Ananias. He also told him that he had chosen Saul to be the one who would bring the Good News to the Gentiles.

Ananias: (*Surprised*) Saul, bringing the Good News to the world! I can't believe it!

Narrator: Despite his misgivings, Ananias was a faithful man and he obeyed God. He immediately went to Judas' house.

Judas: (*Loudly*) What business do you have here?

Ananias: (*Softly*) Is Saul from Tarsus here?

Judas: (*Dismissively*) Yes he is, but he is very weak.

Ananias: (*Confidently*) You must allow me to see him. I have urgent business with him.

Narrator: Judas brought Ananias into the room where Saul was resting. Ananias immediately placed his hands on Saul's head and shoulders.

Ananias: Brother Saul, I have been sent by the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on your way here. Receive your sight again and be filled with the Holy Spirit.

Saul: (*Looking up*) You are Ananias. I was told in a dream that you were coming to heal me. Thank you, Lord Jesus, for healing me through your servant Ananias and for helping me to see everything so clearly now. Now I wish to be baptised in the name of Jesus.

Narrator: And so Ananias baptised Saul, and the former persecutor of the friends of Jesus became a follower of Jesus and a member of their community. Saul changed his name from the Jewish name Saul to the Greek name Paul, as a

sign of his change in direction. Paul became an active member of the Church and immediately began to proclaim in the synagogues that Jesus was the Messiah and Son of God. The Jews who heard his words could not believe the change in Paul and were puzzled at how this transformation had come about.

Factfile on Paul

Name:	Paul (changed from Saul after his conversion)
Birthplace:	Tarsus (in modern-day Turkey)
Religion:	Jew – a strict Pharisee, but became a follower of Jesus
Education:	Well educated – studied Jewish law in Jerusalem; spoke Aramaic and Latin and, like other Jews, used Hebrew as language of prayer.
Occupation:	Tentmaker
Famous for:	(1) His conversion from persecutor to promoter of the way of Jesus. (2) His three missionary journeys bringing the Good News to the Gentiles throughout the Roman Empire. He was arrested in Jerusalem on his fourth journey and brought to Rome, where he was executed.
Death:	AD 64 – supposedly had his head cut off with a sword on the orders of Emperor Nero.
Feast Days:	25 January – Feast of the Conversion of St Paul 29 June – Feast of St Peter and St Paul

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

Today we will use a special phrase to help us pray: 'You are with me, God, through all of life's changes.' We will pray the phrase quietly, inside ourselves, without saying it aloud. We will also use our breathing. Use your in-breath to recall the words 'You are with me, God'. Think of God being with you and within you as you breathe in. Use your out-breath to recall the words '...through all of life's changes'. Think of breathing out as a form of letting go. Think of it as part of life's changes.

Before starting, get into a comfortable upright position in your seat. (Pause) Place both feet on the ground. (Pause) Allow your hands to rest gently on your lap. (Pause) Now we allow our eyes to close (Pause) and we are ready to pray. (Pause) Become aware of your breathing, coming in (Pause) and going out. (Pause)

We begin our prayer. Listen again to the phrase: 'You are with me, God, through all of life's changes.'

The teacher repeats the phrase aloud a few more times and then the prayer proceeds in silence. The teacher concludes by saying:

As our prayertime draws to a close, take a moment of quiet and stillness inside yourself. Allow God to speak to you about the changes in your life. (Pause) And now we finish. When you are ready, open your eyes once more and stretch.

Sign of the Cross

Talking Points

1. Why was Ananias so surprised to hear that Saul was going to become a follower of Jesus?
2. What do the stories of St Paul and Craig Kielburger have in common?
3. Why do you think Saul changed his name to Paul? How would you describe the differences between Saul and Paul?
4. Has anything ever happened in your life that changed you?

Why Don't You?

Check the information on St Paul at the following website:

www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/features/stpaul/st_paul.shtml

In your Religion Journal

1. Using images and/or words, illustrate how you think people would describe you or sum up your life.
Or
Describe an experience that has happened to you or to someone you know that has caused you to look at life differently.
2. Use a page of your Religion journal to illustrate the change from Saul to Paul. Use words and/or images.

Paul – Man Of Journeys And Man Of Letters

Bands go on tour. Astronauts have gone to the moon. Divers explore the ocean floor. Climbers go on expeditions. Politicians go canvassing. Holiday brochures are full of possible journeys. Would you like to make a journey? Where would you like to go? Why would you go there? How long would you spend? And when you got there, what might you send back? A postcard? An email? A text? Would you keep a diary of your travels? After his dramatic roadside conversion, Paul believed firmly in Jesus and he wanted to tell others about him. That's what started him going on journeys. It's also what made him write letters to the people he visited. This lesson will help you to get to know more about the journeys that Paul made and the letters that Paul wrote.

The Journeys of Paul

Paul made four journeys: his three major missionary journeys and his final journey to Rome.

First Journey (told in Acts 13:1–14:28): Paul travelled with Barnabas, first to Cyprus and then into the area known today as southern Turkey.

Second Journey (told in Acts 15:36–18:22): Paul returned to many of the communities that he had set up, to encourage and help them. Then he travelled on to take the Gospel into Macedonia and Greece.

Third Journey (told in Acts 18:23–21:8): Paul spent a long time at Ephesus, as well as returning to cities in Macedonia and Greece. When he got back to Jerusalem, he was arrested and spent over two years in jail at Caesarea.

Last journey to Rome (Acts 27:1–28:16): Because he was a Roman citizen, Paul was taken to Rome for trial. Tradition tells that Paul was executed there on the orders of Emperor Nero.

Talking Points

1. Why do you think Paul spent his life travelling to various countries?
2. Would you have liked to travel with Paul on his journeys? Why?/Why not?



Note: You can download different maps of the journeys of St Paul from:

- gbgm-umc.org/umw/corinthians/maps/pjbig.gif (High resolution black-and-white)
- www.bible.ca/maps

Paul's Letters

Paul wrote letters to the various Christian communities that he had founded or visited. The text of some of these letters survives to this day and may be found in the New Testament section of the Bible, after the Acts of the Apostles. There are thirteen letters in all, seven of which were definitely written by Paul, while the rest were probably written by those who continued his work after he died. Like every letter, Paul's letters contained greetings, thanks, news and farewells. Paul's letters also contained advice on a variety of topics, some of which are mentioned below. (If you look up each of the following Bible references, you will get a glimpse of what Paul had to say about them.)

- Love (1 Corinthians 13:4-8; Romans 12:9-21)
- Peace (1 Corinthians 1:10)
- Unity (Ephesians 4:1-6)
- Marriage and family life (Ephesians 5:22-6:4)
- Respect for the human body (1 Corinthians 12:18, 22-25; 1 Thessalonians 4:3-5)
- Love of neighbour (Galatians 5:14; Romans 10:12)

Why Don't You?

Find out more about the places Paul visited on his journeys at: www.luthersem.edu/ckoester/Paul/Main.htm

Talking Points

Do a Bible search for the quotations given opposite. Then answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think Paul wrote letters to the various Christian communities?
2. Looking at what Paul wrote, can you suggest what was going on in the community to which he was writing?
3. How might the members of the Christian community have benefited from hearing what Paul had to say?

In your Religion Journal

Do a Bible search for the following quotations from the letters of St Paul:

- 1 Corinthians 3:16-17
- 1 Corinthians 13:1-8
- Romans 12:9-21
- Ephesians 4:1-6
- Ephesians 4:26-28
- Colossians 4:6

Choose your favourite quotation and copy it on to a page of your journal. You might also like to decorate the pages.

You can find these quotations on the Internet using:
www.biblegateway.com

Why Don't You?

Check www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/features/stpaul/index.shtml on the Internet for more about St Paul.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

The followers of Jesus at Corinth became jealous and began to quarrel. Paul heard about it and wrote to them. He told them to put an end to their divisions and to live a life of love instead. First we will listen to how Paul described what he meant by love and then we will pray a prayer for peace.

Reader (1 Corinthians 13:4-8)

Love is kind and patient, never jealous, boastful, proud, or rude. Love isn't selfish or quick-tempered. It doesn't keep a record of wrongs that others do. Love rejoices in the truth, but not in evil. Love is always supportive, loyal, hopeful, and trusting. Love never fails!

All

Make me a channel of your peace;
Where there is hatred, let me bring your love,
Where there is injury, your pardon Lord,
And where there's doubt, true faith in you.
Make me a channel of your peace;
Where there's despair in life let me bring hope,
Where there is darkness – only light,
And where there's sadness, ever joy.
Oh Master, grant that I may never seek,
So much to be consoled as to console,
To be understood, as to understand,
To be loved, as to love with all my soul.
Make me a channel of your peace,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
In giving to all people that we receive,
And in dying that we're born to eternal life.

Sign of the Cross

An 'Interview' with Paul

Interview with Paul of Tarsus for *The Roman Herald*

by Marcus Verellius

Note: Throughout this 'interview', you will find numbers in brackets. These numbers refer to particular quotations from the letters of St Paul. You will find the list of these references at the top left-hand corner of the next page. You might like to check them out.

Paul of Tarsus, famous for his travels from Jerusalem to Athens to Rome and throughout the Mediterranean in the name of Christianity, has been under house arrest here in Rome for the past two years. Last Thursday, in an exclusive interview, journalist Marcus Verellius was able to ask him about the places he'd visited and how he has managed to keep contact with them.

Marcus Verellius: Paul, thanks for the interview today.

Paul: No problem. I'm always happy to talk about Jesus. He's far more important than I'll ever be.

MV: And yet, you've made a big difference, haven't you?

Paul: Well, I suppose you could say that. But I didn't do it just because I wanted to do it: I still remember the day I fell off that horse. (1)

MV: The day you heard Jesus call you?

Paul: Yes, Jesus called me in person. I know it was long after Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead, but he still appeared to me and called me. I have always called myself an apostle, someone who was 'sent'. (2)

MV: Well, you've certainly earned the title. I can think of few people of these times who have been 'sent' to so many places: Corinth, Philippi, Ephesus...

Paul: Galatia, Thessalonica, Antioch...

MV: ... and now Rome. I believe that you have plans to go on to Spain. (3)

Paul: Yes. If I get the chance, I'll go all over the empire. After all, I'm a citizen of

Rome. Whatever you might say about the Romans, they have made it easier to travel than it has ever been.

MV: How did you get into the whole 'journey' thing?

Paul: A while after I became a follower of Jesus, a man called Barnabas came looking for me and brought me to Antioch. (4) We spent a year there, and next thing the two of us were sent off on our first journey. We sailed to Cyprus. What a time that was! (5)

MV: Why? What happened?

Paul: The local leader wanted to hear us out and there was this fellow who kept opposing us. I told this fellow that he was blinding people to the truth about Jesus. The next thing was that he actually went blind, lost his eyesight there and then! (6)

MV: That created a stir!

Paul: You bet! After that, people began to pay real attention to us.

MV: What drives you on? What makes you so keen?

Paul: The Good News! You see, I believe that the Good News of God's love is for everyone. Nothing can separate us from God's love. (7) I remember after I left the people in Galatia...

MV: That's in Asia, isn't it?

Paul: Indeed. After I left them, some people came along and told them that God's love was really only for people who lived by Jewish traditions as well as being followers of Jesus. (8)

MV: You mean: they tried to get them to become Jewish as well as Christian?

Paul: Yes, and I think that's crazy. God's love doesn't depend on us following the rules of the Jewish religion. Even Peter the apostle thought he could let people away with those Jewish beliefs and customs. But I challenged him to his face. (9)

MV: Indeed, word of that argument spread everywhere. So what did you do about the Galatians?

Paul: I wrote to them. I couldn't go myself to deal with it straightaway, so I



Right: Mosaic fragment with image of St Paul. This fragment originally decorated the state banquet hall of the papal Lateran Palace of the Middle Ages. Paul is characterised by his long pointed beard.

References from 'Interview' with Paul

- (1) Acts 9:3
- (2) Galatians 1:1-2
- (3) Romans 15:28
- (4) Acts 11:25
- (5) Acts 13:4
- (6) Acts 13:9-12
- (7) Romans 8:38
- (8) Galatians 1:7
- (9) Galatians 2:11
- (10) Galatians 5:14
- (11) Acts 18:17
- (12) Acts 23:12-13
- (13) 1 Corinthians 10:23
- (14) 1 Corinthians 13:4 ff
- (15) Philippians 2:1-11
- (16) Philippians 1:12-14
- (17) Acts 27:39 ff
- (18) Romans 8:38
- (19) 1 Thessalonians 1:2 ff

Why Don't You?

Do a Bible search for the footnote references given above.

Talking Points

1. A number of places are mentioned in this 'interview'. Check the map on page 183 to see if you can find them.
2. From what you have read, list some of Paul's main concerns.
3. People who have studied Paul and his writings have said that he was energetic, brave, warm, concerned and critical. Take each of these descriptions in turn and see if you can find evidence of it in what you have read in this lesson.
4. It is believed that Paul was beheaded in a persecution by Emperor Nero some time in the early AD 60s. From what you have read here, how do you think he might have faced his death? Explain your answer.

found someone who was going that way who would be willing to carry a letter to them. In that letter I gave out, telling them to leave all that extra stuff aside and to concentrate on the only law that truly comes from God: the law of love (10) and living like Jesus.

MV: And how did your former Jewish colleagues take that?

Paul: To them, I was a traitor for setting aside the Jewish laws and traditions. But then I shouldn't be surprised: I was a Pharisee once! I know how seriously Pharisees take the Jewish religious laws. The closest friends can become the bitterest enemies.

MV: Bitter?

Paul: Yes, indeed. I remember in Corinth they tried to bring a law case against me. When it didn't work out, they were so frustrated that they beat up their own synagogue leader right outside the court! (11) But I was going against something deeply sacred to them. Some of them vowed to kill me. (12)

MV: But, I've listened to you talking a lot of times. For you, following Jesus is about more than giving up Jewish religious rules and regulations?

Paul: Exactly! Take the Corinthians for instance. They thought that being free from the old Jewish laws and customs meant they were free to behave any way they pleased. (13) I told them that when you take on to live like Jesus Christ, you take on a right way of living: the way of love. (14)

MV: Yes, I heard about that. Love is patient, love is kind, love is...

Paul: ...never boastful or jealous...

MV: If I ever get married, I'm going to get someone to read that out.

Paul: Well, following Jesus isn't just a soft sort of love. It's about being a servant to others. It's about emptying yourself: I mean, it's about putting others first, forgetting about what you can get from others and thinking instead of what you can give to them. (15)

MV: Yes, you wrote that to the people of Philippi, didn't you?

Paul: Well, they had done a great service to me. They've contributed a lot to the

success of my time in Rome. I wanted to thank and encourage them.

MV: Doesn't it seem odd: you come here to Rome as a prisoner of sorts, and yet you're having such an effect on the city? More and more people are becoming Christians, even the soldiers. (16) They say the official religion of Rome will collapse altogether if things continue to change at this rate.

Paul: And to think we nearly never made it here!

MV: Yes, I heard about that. Blown off course on the way to Rome and shipwrecked in Malta! It must be terrifying to hear the ship breaking up on the rocks underneath you and having to make it to the shore.

Paul: Yes, but there's more to it! The soldiers guarding us wanted to kill all the prisoners rather than risk letting us escape into the waters off the sinking ship. Only for Captain Julius, we'd have been goners. (17)

MV: But then, you don't really worry about death, do you?

Paul: I think people shouldn't worry about dying. Not even death can separate us from God's love. (18) Jesus Christ has set us free from that. His resurrection means that we too will live for ever.

MV: You've come a long way from Tarsus! And you've made a lot of journeys to talk about Jesus.

Paul: Yes, I've come a long way from the first time I went to Thessalonica to talk about Jesus.

MV: Have you been able to keep in touch with them?

Paul: From time to time. I wrote to them. I wanted to let them know how much my time there had meant to me. (19) Indeed, that's really why I wrote any of my letters. I wanted to stay in touch and to encourage them.

MV: Yes, it's great to receive a letter. If someone takes the time to write to you, it means that they really care about you. You know, some day someone might gather up your letters... and even publish them.

Paul: I suppose stranger things have happened.

Christianity Comes To Ireland

Christianity began to filter into Ireland through contacts with Britain or Gaul (nowadays called France). In AD 431, the Christian community was already strong enough for Pope Celestine I to send a bishop called Palladius. Patrick came to Ireland some time after this. But what sort of Ireland did he find? This lesson will help you to find out.

Pre-Christian Ireland

Before Christianity arrived in Ireland, the people who lived here were Celts. They were pagans and so they had a particularly strong attachment to the moon and the sun, which they worshipped. The druids were a group of men who led them in their worship. The Celts celebrated four festivals. Naturally, these festivals were all connected with the seasons and with crops. Unlike you, people then depended directly on the earth for food, so nature was vital to them. If the harvest failed, people starved.

The four major festivals of the Celtic year were:

- **SAMHAIN** (1 November): This marked the end of the agricultural year and the time when the dead returned to visit the land. The Celts made food offerings to bring about a good harvest in the year ahead. Trees were sacred to the Celts; they made bonfires of any that had fallen or died during the year. Rituals were performed beside rivers and at wells, which were thought to be the entrance to the 'Other' world.
- **IMBOLC** (1 February): The beginning of spring; the lambing season began and the ground was tilled for sowing.
- **BEALTAINE** (1 May): Cattle returned to pasture. Crops were beginning to grow. People turned to their gods for protection against danger.
- **LUGHNASA** (1 August): Celebrating food and life.



St Patrick

Talking Points

1. Compare your outlook with the outlook of the Celts. How is it the same and how is it different?
2. Do you think you might have anything to learn from the Celtic way of looking at the world? Explain.
3. If people had the Celtic way of looking at the earth today, what difference do you suppose it might make?

So this was the Ireland that Patrick came back to in later life – an Ireland of pagan worship and traditions. What approach do you think Patrick took when talking about a new religion to the Celtic people of those times? It seems that, for the most part, Patrick took the practices and beliefs of the old Celtic religion and changed them into ways of celebrating Christianity.

Thus, **SAMHAIN** became the time for celebrating All Saints and All Souls. **IMBOLC** became the feast of St Brigid. The custom of pleading for the spirit of Spring to return became a time for asking for the protection of the saint. Where once farmers turned to their gods for protection at **BEALTAINE**, there grew up the practice of sprinkling the land with holy water, blessed at Easter. In the west of Ireland, **LUGHNASA** became the time for the pilgrimage to Croagh Patrick.

Celtic Spirituality

When Celts started to become Christians, they developed a special way of expressing their Christian beliefs. For instance, they had a strong sense that God was with them and that God was within the world of nature. As far as they were concerned, following Jesus was not some vague thing. They were very disciplined and believed that their love for God had to be expressed in practical, down-to-earth ways, especially in their hospitality for others. Also, in their prayers they often mentioned the Blessed Trinity – God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Spirit. They found echoes of the Blessed Trinity in the world around them, for example in the shamrock.

'ME' Folder

Is there anything in the natural world around you that calls up a special reaction in you? If so, write about your reaction. Make up a prayer based on your reaction and include it in your folder.

Workbook

Check your workbook for more to do with this lesson.

Why Don't You?

Reread the prayertime and see if you can find in it any aspects of Celtic spirituality mentioned above.

A time to pray

Note: Before you pray this prayer, read it through quietly and consider what physical gestures you might use to help you as you pray it.

May the eye of God watch over me.
May the footstep of Christ be beside me.
May the Spirit of God be within me.

That with my own eye, I may notice who is my neighbour.
That with my own hand, I may help where help is needed.
That with my own ear, I may listen if someone needs to talk.
That with my own mouth, I may give thanks to those who help me.

May the eye of God watch over me.
May the footstep of Christ be beside me.
May the Spirit of God be within me.

That with my own eye, I may notice what beauty surrounds me.
That with my own hand, I may respect the nature about me.
That with my own ear, I may hear the sounds of creation.
That with my own mouth, I may speak for the world of which I am part.

I bow before the Father who made me,
I bow before the Son who saved me,
I bow before the Spirit who guides me.
In love and adoration, I praise the Blessed Trinity. Amen.

Factfile on St Patrick

Check to see how much of the story of Patrick you can remember before you read the summary below.

- Born a Christian.
- Son of a deacon/local official.
- Didn't pay much attention to his religion when young.
- Sixteen years old when kidnapped and taken to Ireland.
- Sold to a slave-master named Milchu.
- Six years of forced labour tending animals on an Irish hillside.
- Suffered cold, hunger and great loneliness. Began to become more aware of God and to pray. Sometimes prayed through the entire night, and so grew in love and reverence for God.
- Had two dreams: first, telling him that he would soon go home to his own country; and second, telling him his ship was ready.
- Believed these were signs from God and so ran away from his master.
- Finally reunited with his relations.
- Years later, became a priest.
- In a dream, he heard the voice of young Irish people calling him back to walk among them once more.
- Made a bishop and sent to Ireland no earlier than AD 432 and perhaps as late as AD 460.
- Spent over thirty years as a missionary in Ireland.
- Despite serious difficulties, he achieved much success.
- Christianity had arrived in Ireland before Patrick's return. However, Patrick did much to make Ireland a Christian island by the end of the fifth century.
- Wrote his 'Confessio' and a letter to the soldier Coroticus.
- Died at Saul in County Down.
- Buried somewhere in Downpatrick, possibly within the grounds of Downpatrick Cathedral.
- Feast Day: 17 March.

Early Irish Monasticism

Because Ireland had not been invaded and taken over by the Romans, it did not have towns and cities. As a result of this, Christianity in Ireland developed differently from elsewhere in Europe. In the early sixth century, some individuals began to live alone in quiet places in order to be more aware of God and in order to concentrate

Talking Points

1. Patrick talked to God many times during the day and night. How often might a young person today talk to God and what sort of things might they talk to God about?
2. How might talking to God more often help you in your life?
3. Think back to the earlier lessons on St Paul. Do you see any parallels between the experiences of St Paul and those of St Patrick?

Why Don't You?

- Do an Internet search for the text of the prayer known as the 'Breastplate of Saint Patrick' and decide to what extent it represents Celtic Christian spirituality. You will find it at: elvis.rowan.edu/~kilroy/jek/03/17.html. See if you can find in it any aspects of Celtic spirituality mentioned in this lesson.
- Visit www.saintpatrickcentre.com and find out more about St Patrick and other Irish saints.



Timeline of the Church through the Ages (Part 1)

AD 28*: Pentecost Day. The Church emerges.

AD 35-61*: St Paul's missionary journeys. St Peter also travels to Rome.

AD 64: Nero's persecution of Christians. St Peter and St Paul executed in Rome.

AD 65*: The Gospel according to Mark is written.

AD 75-100*: Other Gospels written. Persecution continues, yet Christianity flourishes.

AD 313: Constantine gives religious freedom to all (Edict of Milan). Persecution ends.

AD 325: Council at Nicaea.

AD 381: Council at Constantinople.

AD 431: Council at Ephesus. Palladius comes to Ireland.

AD 432*: Patrick comes to Ireland.

AD 500: Monasteries in Ireland.

AD 546: Columcille founds his first monastery at Derry.

AD 563: Columcille goes to Iona (Scotland): Irish missionary work starts.

AD 591: Columbanus leaves Ireland. (Founds monasteries first in France and then in Italy.) Dies
AD 615.

**These dates are approximate.*

Talking Points

1. How do you think you would cope if you were Brother Mark?
2. What kind of person did you have to be if you were a monk in those times?

on becoming better followers of Christ. Soon, others joined them. One such man was named Enda and he chose to move to Inishmore, the largest of the three Aran Islands, to devote himself to Christ. Over time, so many joined him that Inishmore became like a town. The same thing happened elsewhere in Ireland. There was Ciaran in Clonmacnois, Brendan in Clonfert, Comgall in Bangor, Kevin in Glendalough and many more. Such groupings became known as monasteries, and the men who went to live a holy life there were called monks. In time, these monasteries became the main centres of civilisation in Ireland and were known as great centres of learning and art. Entire families went to live at the monasteries, although not every family member joined the monastic community. In this way, monasticism – the monk's way of life – became hugely popular and developed at a startling rate. Some monks went across the Irish Sea to monasteries in Wales and brought new learning back to Ireland. Read the following story to find out more about a typical day in the life of a monk in an early Irish monastery.

Brother Mark's Day

Hello! I'm Brother Mark and I am a novice monk here at Inishmore on the largest of the three Aran Islands. This is a very remote spot, rocky and rough and completely cut off from civilisation. Why am I here? I'm here because I want to give my life to God. The monastery is run by a former soldier, Brother Enda. So, you'll not be surprised to hear that we live a strict life here. Our monastery has a little church, with some huts around it. Some of the huts are large: our kitchen and dining area, our wash-house and our guest-house. There's also our library and writing place, where some of the senior monks copy the Gospels by hand on to manuscripts. There are also some smaller huts: we call them 'cells'. I share a 'cell' with three other members of the monastery. We call one another 'brothers' to remind us of how we should treat one another.

We get up very early: 5.30am for morning prayer. Breakfast is at 6.00, and we eat in silence. We speak only when necessary or useful; I find this difficult, because I love to chat. After breakfast we are given our chores; that might mean cleaning, washing, cooking, taking care of guests or going out to the fields to look after our crops or our animals. We grow all our own food. As a new member of the monastery, I have to study. I'm learning Latin and I'm studying some of the books of the Old Testament at the minute. It's not easy, as you can imagine, for a fellow like me who never studied much before. Brother Enda says I must do it 'for the sake of my soul' – or my inner self. We stop our work and gather for prayer regularly throughout the day: at 9.00, 12.00, 3.00 and 6.00. Our final prayer of the day is at midnight. After this we go to bed. We only eat twice a day; dinner is at 6.30pm. I found it difficult to get used to fasting, but it is very much part of a monk's life. We fast every Wednesday and Friday and throughout Lent. So, as you see, I don't have much time to spare. Right now, I've got to run! Prayer starts in five minutes and I might get a penance to do if I'm late.

Christianity Develops In Ireland

Christianity in Ireland began well. Many Christians joined communities known as monasteries, and these monasteries became the main centres of Christianity in Ireland. This lesson will help you to fill out the picture of what happened from those times up to the present.

From Monastery to Diocese

Irish monasteries continued to grow in size and importance, even spreading into Europe. But when the monasteries became wealthy, problems arose. Some people joined monasteries for the wrong reasons; they were more focused on what they could get for themselves rather than on how they could live like Jesus. Some abbots or leaders of the monasteries were not even monks, but remained as 'laymen'. Around AD 750, a group formed which was called the Céili Dé (literally 'servants of God'). This group, under the leadership of a monk named Mael Ruain, began to reform the monastic tradition.

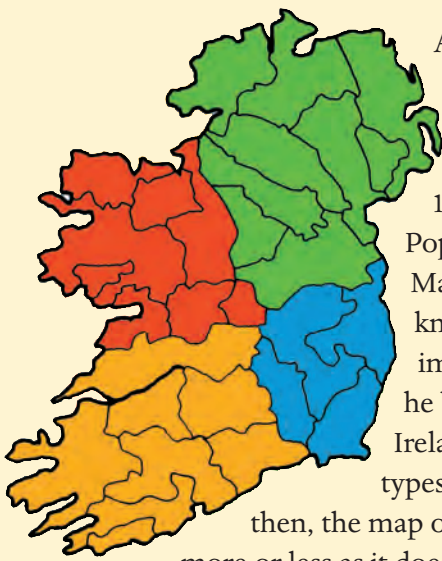
Around this time, the Viking raids also began and did great damage. As a result, things got worse for Irish Christianity in general and for monasteries in particular. Many people did not bother with the sacraments; marriage promises were not properly respected; people were no longer getting proper spiritual care. Irish Christianity was in dire need of reform.

Fortunately, reform happened. In the eleventh century, Pope Gregory VII began to reorganise the whole Church. A special meeting or 'synod' was held in Cashel in 1101 to bring those reforms into Ireland. Another synod was held ten years later, the Synod of Ráth Breasail. It was during this time that the boundaries of Irish dioceses first began to be fixed. Many parish boundaries also date from this period.

Why Don't You?

Find out more about the history of your diocese and your parish. You might find it helpful to look up your diocesan website. Include any information from your local area about the sites of the first monasteries, Viking raids, and important characters or events in the setting up of your diocese and parish.





A man named Malachy played a vital part in carrying out these reforms. He became leader and bishop of the diocesan Church at Armagh in AD 1134. On his way to Rome to meet Pope Innocent III about these reforms, Malachy stayed with a group of monks known as Cistercians. He was so impressed with this order of monks that he brought a number of them back to Ireland. In the years that followed, other types of monk came to Ireland too. By then, the map of Irish diocesan boundaries looked more or less as it does today (shown here).

Why Don't You?

Identify your own diocese on the map of diocesan boundaries shown opposite.

Talking Point

Before you read the section opposite, recall what you remember about the way in which the Reformation started.

The Reformation and Its Aftermath

In 1517, Martin Luther criticised the leadership of the Church in the '95 Theses' (arguments) that he pinned to a church door in Wittenburg, Germany. He said that the Church was misleading people by claiming to be able to sell indulgences (benefits that normally came from prayers or good deeds and that erased the effects of sin). Those Christians who accepted Luther's view eventually came to be separate from the group of Christians that remained linked with the authority of the Pope. The Church of the West had split.

Around the same time, King Henry VIII appointed himself Supreme Head of Christianity in England (in this way, getting his divorce from Catherine of Aragon so as to marry Anne Boleyn). With his actions began the separation of many of England's Christians from Rome.



Anne Boleyn



Catherine of Aragon

The Reformation did not take such a strong root in Ireland because the Plantation undermined the authority of the English government among Irish Catholics. Through plantation, the English authorities took land from many Catholics and gave it to loyal Protestants from mainland

One-Minute Soapbox

Take an uninterrupted minute or two to talk to the class, beginning with: 'For me, getting to know more about our history is...'

Why Don't You?

Find out if you have a Mass rock in your parish. If one exists, find out something about its use during Penal Times. You might consider visiting such a Mass rock if there is one in your area, and using the prayertime of this lesson while you are there. Is there still a tradition of celebrating a Mass at this rock? Why?/Why not?

In Your Religion Journal

From your own experience or from your imagination, describe in words and/or pictures an experience that you and your parish today might have celebrating the Eucharist at a Mass rock.

Why Don't You?

In groups, if you wish, share with others something of what this prayertime meant for you.

Britain. In this way, they aimed to increase their power in Ireland. However, some Catholics took up arms against the English authorities. Those authorities never again trusted Catholics to be loyal to English rule. Over time, the English parliament passed more laws against Irish Catholics so as to strengthen its grip on Ireland even further. These laws were called 'Penal Laws'. They removed most rights from Catholics, e.g. the right to education and the right to practise their religion. At times, priests were liable to be executed if they were found.

In the meantime, the influence of Catholicism in Ireland was strengthened by the Council of Trent. This special meeting began in 1545. It set about renewing the Church; it introduced its own reforms and reinforced the enthusiasm of Catholics, i.e. those who remained faithful to the Pope.

During the eighteenth century, a new way of thinking (called The Enlightenment) spread through Europe. People began to put less trust in civil and religious leadership and to put more trust in their own reason. They began to see for themselves the inhumanity of what was being done to Catholics in Ireland. A Presbyterian man named Theobald Wolfe Tone (1763-98) set up the Society of United Irishmen in Belfast in 1791 with the aim of uniting Irish Catholics and Protestants in the quest for self-rule. Ultimately, Catholics had many rights restored following Catholic Emancipation in 1829.

A time to pray

Note: You might like to go to a local Mass rock and use the following prayertime there. If you do, begin with the introduction at a point some distance from the Mass rock and then walk in silence to it. If you choose this option, you might bring a candle and lighter with you and make practical arrangements to keep the candle alight while there. You might also choose a song or hymn to sing during the prayertime.

Teacher

Before we begin our prayer today, we set the scene. Imagine that we can go back in history to Ireland of the years following 1652. It was a time when the English authorities went hard on Catholics. Catholics were not allowed to have churches. They had to celebrate Mass in hidden places in the countryside. It was a dangerous time for priests. Being found meant they could be exiled or, worse, executed on the spot.

Against this background, imagine that it is a Sunday morning back in those years following 1652. You are heading far out into the countryside. A priest has come to celebrate Eucharist with you. You have to lead him safely along the way. There is a rumour that soldiers are in hiding somewhere near at hand. Spend a while imagining what it is like to walk along with him. (Pause)

Imagine what it is like to be gathered at the Mass rock waiting for the priest, not sure if he will get safely through. Imagine that you are there waiting with your family. Your parents are with you. You don't know what will happen to you if the soldiers find you. (Pause)

Now, imagine yourselves gathered around the rock together at the Eucharist. With your inner voice, go over the words of the 'Our Father' in your mind. Take your time and linger over any of the words that stand out for you. (Pause)



The Famine in Ireland – peasants at the gate of a workhouse

Catholicism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries

FAMINE AND SUBSEQUENT REFORMS: In 1846, the failure of the potato crop brought famine to Ireland. In the space of five years, the population fell from 8.5 million to 6.5 million. Many of the links with pre-Christian practices connected with the earth were finally broken at this time. Cardinal Paul Cullen reinforced this break with the past through the new religious practices that he introduced from Europe: benediction, Stations of the Cross, novenas and retreats. Wakes at home were to be replaced with Requiem Mass in the church building. New feast days (e.g. the Assumption of Our Lady) overshadowed any remaining pre-Christian practices. Before Cullen, Catholic practices had centred more on the home, with lay people to lead them; after Cullen's time, Catholic practice became almost exclusively church-building centred and clergy-led. Catholicism in Ireland became more fully Roman Catholic. Yet, the changes became less effective the further west you went in Ireland, and echoes of past spirituality remained.

REFORMS OF VATICAN II: Between 1962 and 1965, a special gathering of Catholic Church leaders took place in Rome. The Second Vatican Council – or Vatican II – was called by Pope John XXIII and continued by Pope Paul VI to renew the Catholic Church and help it to take account of the changing modern times. In particular, there was a need to renew dialogue with the world, with other Christians and with people of different religions. Other significant changes happened:

- Latin was no longer the only language in which Mass could be celebrated.
- Everyone was invited to take part in the liturgy, and the priest faced the people for Mass instead of standing with his back to them.
- Catholics were urged to stand up for human rights, for social justice and to oppose prejudice in any form.
- Before the Council, the Church was most often thought of as an institution; after the Council, the emphasis was on the Church as a living reality called 'the People of God'.

Timeline of the Church through the Ages (Part 2)

AD 750: Reform of Irish monasticism begins.

AD 795-1014: Vikings raids.

AD 1054: Schism: Church splits into East (Orthodox) and West (Catholic).

AD 1101: Synod of Cashel begins a reform of the Irish Church.

AD 1111: Synod of Ráth Breasail: boundaries of dioceses of Ireland begin to be fixed.

AD 1134: Bishop Malachy of Armagh continues reform of the Irish Church.

AD 1517: Reformation begins in Germany, led by Martin Luther. Spreads throughout Europe.

AD 1536: King Henry VIII appoints himself supreme head of Christianity in England.

AD 1545: Council of Trent condemns bad practices and renews the Catholic Church.

AD 1558: The Oath of Supremacy: those who refuse to swear it are persecuted. Plantation: many Irish Catholics lose their lands.

AD 1695: Penal Laws introduced. Rights of Catholics to own land and practise their faith restricted. Priests and bishops outlawed. Mass rocks used widely.

AD 1700-1800: The Enlightenment.

AD 1829: Catholic Emancipation in Ireland.

AD 1846: Failure of the potato crop brings famine.

AD 1850: Reforms introduced by Cardinal Paul Cullen.

AD 1870: First Vatican Council.

AD 1962-65: Second Vatican Council.

Why Don't You?

Ask an older member of your family or community what they remember of the changes that came with Vatican II.

Why Don't You?

Make a short list of people or organisations that influence the way the world has become today. For each one on the list, consider the following:

1. Describe in a few words the sort of influence you think they have.
2. Would you like to have the same influence? Why?/Why not?

In Your Religion Journal

Take a double page and put your name or an image of yourself at the centre. Around yourself, put the names or images of the people who influence you. Beside each one, write a word or draw an image to help you remember a way or a time when they influenced you. As you do this, share with God about what you remember. When you're finished, pause for a moment to allow for any reaction God may inspire in you.

One-Minute Soapbox

Take an uninterrupted minute or two to speak to the class group, beginning with the words: 'If I ruled the world...'

The Mark You Will Make

During the past year, you have begun to think more seriously about the future. Now that the year is about to end, it's a good time to do so again. This year, people might have asked you about the kind of career you will choose. This lesson offers you a different sort of question to ask yourself about your future: what kind of effect are you going to have? What sort of mark are you going to make on life? You might like to begin this lesson by considering what sort of effect other people have in the world today; this topic is dealt with in the first 'Why Don't You?'.

Making a Mark

People have an effect on the world and on the planet. They make a difference, for example:

- in the way they choose to relate to other people, such as family members, friends, neighbours, fellow pupils, even strangers (You explored this in the earlier part of Term 2);
- in the work they do: whether that be paid employment, or the work of home and family life, or voluntary and unpaid;
- in the way they treat the planet, e.g. a person's choice to walk rather than drive whenever possible has beneficial effects for themselves, for others and for the environment, in terms of reducing stress and improving health, reducing congestion on the roads, reducing fuel consumption, reducing pollution, reducing financial costs, etc. (You explored this last year in *Fully Alive 2*.)

People don't always make a good mark on life. Already, you are aware of:

- damage to the environment resulting from people's choices, e.g. the increasing rate at which animal and insect species are disappearing for ever;

- the visible effects of prejudice and sectarianism, both at a personal and structural level;
- the denial of human rights;
- decisions to go to war, which result in injury, death, displacement, etc;
- everyday acts of hurtfulness, which can have a bad effect on people's lives.

What Mark are You Going to Make?

It's not only presidents and prime ministers that make a difference. Simply by being here in this world, you are already making a difference too. You do that, for example, by the way you are friendly with others or not, by the way you stand up for what is right or not, by your efforts to recycle, to save energy, to save water or not. Just as you cannot walk barefoot on a beach without leaving a footprint, neither can you go through life without leaving a trace. You might complain that you won't make much of a mark in life because you don't have the talents or ability or appearance or money or strength and so on. You may consider yourself too weak or too powerless to make any significant difference. You might say, 'Why should I bother?' One thing is certain: if you never try, you'll never know! Besides, you make a mark on life even as you are right now, regardless of your pluses and your minuses.

However, beware of being unrealistic. You are probably not the person who will single-handedly bring about world peace, solve the energy crisis, halt climate change, travel across the galaxies, break a world record at the Olympics or win a Nobel Prize. Still, within the limits of reality, there is plenty of room for idealism.

The following is a realistic example of that idealism: of someone deciding how they wish to make their mark in life.

I'll make my mark by...

- doing my part to care for the earth;
- treating others as I'd like to be treated – kindly and with respect;
- being myself as much as I can, rather than trying to fit into anyone else's idea of what or who I should be;
- helping others in need as much as I can, any way I can;
- being a good friend;
- spreading good humour whenever I can.

Making your mark isn't just as easy as deciding it and then it happens, with no effort on your part. No, you have to make it happen by the choices that you make. Talk about helping others is only talk until you actually do it; talk about the environment is only talk until you actually do the recycling, the energy-saving, etc.

Why Don't You?

In groups, take one or more of the following examples and make a list of the effects that stem from these actions:

1. Maria did volunteer work at the local home for three weeks during the summer holidays.
2. James waits until Sarah is at work on the hospital switchboard to text her to say that he is breaking up with her. He knows that she'll be too busy to phone him back.
3. After Mass on Sunday, people stay about to chat for a while.
4. When his father came in, Mel made time to talk to him.
5. Peter made a smart remark about Chan's name.



In small groups, discuss the following: 'The mark a person can make.' Nominate one person from each group to report to the class on your discussion.

Or

Pick five people to have a discussion for the whole class on the same theme. They may support or contradict one another respectfully, or they may introduce new ideas to the conversation as it proceeds. Decide on a time-limit for the conversation, and stop it when it reaches this limit. If no one speaks, then allow the silence.

Talking Points

1. 'You have to be famous or wealthy to make a mark in life.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not?
2. Does everyone think about the sort of mark they would like to make in life? Why?/Why not? What do you think would happen if nobody ever thought of the effect they have on others?
3. Debate the following quotation: 'Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed individuals can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.' (Margaret Mead)

Why Don't You?

As a group, draw up a list of a few ways in which you will make your mark on the world.

Why Don't You?

Make a list of people who, in your opinion, make a good mark on the world today through their career or (voluntary) work. Choose one of the people on your list and describe how you think that person is living their calling to affect the world in ways that are good. (If you're not sure where to start, you might begin your list with one of the following: someone at home or in your local community, Paul Hewson 'Bono', Bob Geldof, Fr Kieran Creagh, Mary McAleese.)

How Does God Want You to Make Your Mark in Life?

You are made in the image and likeness of God (see Genesis 1:26). Last year and earlier this year (Term 1, Lesson 14), you reflected on what this means. You learned that being made in God's image and likeness is an invitation to three things: (1) to respect the world; (2) to share in the work of creation and of making the world a good place; (3) to respect yourself and every other person. If you respond to this invitation, you will make a mark on the world in the way that God wants. This invitation is part of who you are; it is part of the way you are made. There is another word for this special 'invitation' from God: it is the word 'vocation', which means 'call' or 'calling'. Everyone is invited by God to make a good mark on the world. This means that everyone has a 'vocation' or 'calling' in life.

It is possible for you to ignore this call. You see people ignoring this call when they are selfish and when they abuse the earth and its resources. People ignore God's invitation when they disrespect themselves and others, for example through letting their abilities and talents go to waste, through bad friendships or through expressing their prejudice. However, if you pray, if you make time to communicate with God, then you will more easily get in touch with God's call to you.

Everyone is called to have a good effect on themselves, on others and on the earth. But this doesn't mean that everyone is called to do this in exactly the same way. Each person is made differently and so each person will have their own special way and their own special abilities to do good. That includes you, as the 'time to pray' below suggests.

A time to pray

Note: You might like to read this prayer as a group and then allow some quiet time for everyone to read it, quietly and reflectively, in silence.

God gave me life.

God's love created me.

God calls me to service:

to do good for others,
to treat the earth with respect,
to make a good mark on the world.

God has made me.

I am unique, never to be repeated.
There is something that only I can do,
some good influence that only I can have,
some positive effect that only I can
bring about.

God, you have trusted me with something
that you have given to no one else.
I am delighted to find myself so loved, so
valued and so treasured by you.

Amen.



Marriage And Priesthood

In this lesson, you will have a chance to reflect further on God's call. It focuses on two particular ways in which people are called by God – two special vocations: marriage and priesthood.

A Special Calling: 'All the Days of Our Lives'

Your Baptism was the first celebration of God's presence and God's call in your life. Later in your life, God's presence and God's call may focus in a new way for you. You may find a person whom you love in a unique way and who loves you in equal measure. After a time of careful consideration, you may decide to be committed to each other for life, as if to say to each other: 'I love you alone. I love you always.' This love is not just a feeling; it is a deliberate choice. Feelings may suggest that love is present, but real love is not based only on feelings; real love is based on choice. This is the love that leads to marriage.



The Catholic Church understands marriage in a particular way: it involves a promise to be faithful between a woman and a man who are open to new life in the birth of children. In the view of the Church, marriage is **permanent**: a choice that is not taken back, a choice that will be lived all the days of your life. Christian marriage is also **exclusive**, i.e. it excludes any other such committed relationship with another person. For Catholics, marriage is a **sacrament**. It is a visible sign of an invisible gift from God. Your marriage partner becomes a special part of God's loving presence and God's call in your life.

Alison's Story

We had been married for just two years when John was involved in a terrible car crash. You would hardly believe it to look at him now but he was once tall, strong and so very handsome. He suffered a brain injury and is completely paralysed from the neck down. He requires twenty-four-hour care, as he can't do anything for himself. I have to

Term 3, Lesson 9

In Your Religion Journal

Under the heading 'My Baptism, My Calling', draw a picture (or put a photograph) of your Baptism. Then, underneath, write and complete the following: 'My Baptism celebrated God present with me and God calling me. Today I know God is with me because... Today I answer God's call when I ...'

Talking Points

1. 'When two people decide to get married, it's something between their two selves: God has nothing to do with it.' Would you agree? Why?/Why not?
2. Is it possible that feelings might not be a fully reliable basis when deciding to marry? Explain your answer.
3. Why do you think that a time of careful consideration is necessary before two people decide to commit to each other in marriage?

Why Don't You?

Check out the following websites for more information on preparing for marriage and for the kind of support that is on offer to married couples:

- www.accord.ie
- www.gettingmarried.ie
- www.marriageencounterireland.com

Talking Points

1. What do you notice about Alison's attitude to marriage? What is your reaction to it? How does her attitude in this situation compare with your own?
2. What does her story tell you about the promises of marriage?

Why Don't You?

Divide into groups. Each half of the group prepares a 'priority list' for a wedding day celebration. Then share your list and evaluate it using the following questions:

- Did you find it easy to agree the priorities? Why?/Why not? Is there anything you might learn from that?
- What does each item on your list add to the spirit of the wedding day?

Talking Point

What practical advice would you give a couple who were about to get married a) regarding their wedding day and b) regarding their married life together?

spoonfeed him all his meals and wipe away the saliva from his mouth. Sometimes I feel like I'm looking after a baby, only John will never progress to being independent. Some days I think: this isn't what I signed up for on our wedding day. I cry about what our future together might have been. Then I remember the promises I made: for better, for worse; for richer, for poorer; in sickness and in health; all the days of our life. Other days I sit with John and sense him looking at me with his intense brown eyes and I see that the man I married is still there, although trapped in an uncooperative body. I realise how much I love him and I can feel how much he loves and needs me. I suppose that's what keeps me going on the bad days.

Celebrating Your Wedding: Living Your Marriage

You have probably been to a marriage celebration. If so, you may recall what happens. After the homily, the priest invites the couple to express their understanding of marriage as a permanent, exclusive relationship that welcomes children. The couple then express publicly their consent to be married. They do this before the priest and the formally chosen witnesses (the bridesmaid and best man), who represent the community. Finally, the couple may exchange blessed rings, as symbols of faithfulness and unbroken love. The priest also blesses them with a special Nuptial Blessing.

The celebration takes place on a single day, but the marriage itself is for life. Your union will be made stronger if:

- you live your choice to be married every day in every way, especially through open and honest communication with each other;
 - you celebrate the sacrament of marriage and recognise what God gives you;
 - you pray and remember what God asks of you in your marriage.
- Your marriage will be weakened if you are selfish with each other.

A time to pray

Sign of the Cross

Teacher

We join with the couples all over the world who are celebrating their marriage this day, as we read the following Prayer of the Newly Married Couple.

All

**We thank you, Lord,
and we praise you
for bringing us
to this happy day.
You have given us to each other.
Now, together, we give
ourselves to you.
We ask you, Lord:**

**make us one in our love;
keep us one in your peace.**

Protect our marriage.

Bless our home.

Make us gentle.

Keep us faithful.

**And when life is over
unite us again**

**where parting is no more
in the kingdom of your love.**

**There we will praise you
in the happiness and peace
of our eternal home.**

Amen.

Sign of the Cross

Called to Serve the Community as a Priest

Jesus called the Twelve from among his disciples and friends to help him with his work. He sent them out during his life on earth (Matthew 10:1-5). He sent them out again after his death and resurrection (Matthew 28:16-20). Early on, the apostles took responsibility for looking after the needs of the people, but as these needs increased they got others to help them (Acts 13:1-4). Timothy was chosen by St Paul to continue his work (1 & 2 Timothy). When the apostles appointed helpers, they laid hands on them (Acts 6:6; 1 Timothy 3:1). To this day, this gesture is still the central act in the celebration of the sacrament of Holy Orders.

An interview with a priest

Q: Why does anyone become a priest?

A: Something about it seems right for you. You start out to become a priest because you want to. Inside yourself you feel called by God, but not in a 'thunderbolts and voices' kind of way. When you start the training, the teachers and trainers help you to get to know yourself, your talents and your abilities. You also take time to pray. Eventually, you get to know if being a priest is right for you. Of course, you can't finally become a priest until you're chosen. That's the job of the bishop or the leader of the religious order (group) you join.

Q: What's it like being a priest?

A: For most priests, being a priest means being in a parish. That means sharing life with a community of people who 'love and serve the Lord'. You celebrate the happy times: new babies, wedding days, First Communion days, and so on. You're also there on the difficult days, for example, when people are sick or in hospital, or when there is a funeral. You get to be with people and to see the faithful love of God in their life stories. Sometimes people know God's love is in their lives already and they want to celebrate it; sometimes they're not so sure. So you can help them to become open to God's faithful love in the story of their lives.

Why Don't You?

Discuss briefly what you think being a priest is about. Then compare your ideas with what you discover in the 'interview' provided below.



Talking Point

In recent years worldwide, the number of priests has increased. Has this been the case in your area? Why?/Why not?

Why Don't You?

Talk to a local priest (or a priest you know) and ask him to tell you the story of his vocation.



In small groups, discuss the following: 'The experience of Religion class this year.' Nominate one person from each group to report to the class on your discussion.

Or

Pick five people to have a discussion for the whole class on the same theme. They may support or contradict one another respectfully, or they may introduce new ideas to the conversation as it proceeds. Decide on a time-limit for the conversation, and stop it when it reaches this limit. If no one speaks, then allow the silence.

Q: What does a priest do?

A: Like everyone else in the Church community, a priest is supposed to be like Jesus. What's different is that he's called to do this in a way that serves that whole community. A priest is supposed to lead people to God: Jesus often prayed and taught people to pray. Most often, the priest does this at Mass. He also prays with people who are sick at home or in hospital. A priest is supposed to be a teacher: Jesus often used parables as a way of drawing people's attention to God and God's ways. The priest's Sunday homily is a part of this. Finally, a priest is supposed to be one who looks after others: Jesus described himself as the Good Shepherd. The priest will oversee the needs of the parish, working in partnership with a parish finance committee (which helps and advises with money matters) and a parish pastoral committee (which helps with decisions about how best the parish can look after people).

Q: Why can't priests get married?

A: A priest has to have room in his life for many people and not just one person. That is why a priest takes on to be celibate and not marry. It is a sign of his complete dedication to God and the service that God wants him to give to the whole Church community. Celibacy is not just a part of the Catholic tradition of priesthood. You will find a long tradition of celibacy in other spiritual traditions, e.g. Buddhism.

Q: Are there other kinds of priest besides those in parishes?

A: Yes. Basically there are two types of priest: priests who belong to their diocese, and priests who belong to religious orders or communities. Like diocesan priests, priests who belong to religious orders are not married. They join a community that lives life around a set of shared ideals. This may include a specialised form of service (e.g. education, giving retreats, etc).

Q: Is it difficult being a priest?

A: Life can be difficult for everyone. Everyone has their share of burdens in life, such as illness or loneliness. Like everyone else, priests will have a network of friends to help them. Just because a priest lives alone doesn't mean that he has to be lonely. The life of a priest is no more difficult than any other life.

A time to pray

Note: This prayer is adapted from the Rite of Ordination of a Priest. As you quietly read this prayer, you might like to remember the priests of your diocese and of the monasteries and communities in your area.

God, fill with the gift of the Holy Spirit
those you have made priests.

May they be worthy to stand before those you gather around the table of your Son!

May they proclaim the Gospel of your kingdom!

May they serve your word of truth!

When Jesus our Saviour returns again, may they go out to meet him and receive from your goodness the reward of their work. Amen.

A Prayer Before Moving On

Term 3, Lesson 10

Notes:

- This prayertime is intended to be used on a suitable day near the end of the school year.
- If the school has an oratory or prayer space apart from the normal classroom, you might consider using it.
- For this prayertime, you will need one schoolbag containing a set of the year's school books, including the 'ME' folder and the Religion journal for the year.
- You will also need a table on which to place the contents of the bag.
- It is intended that one person take a place that is visible to the whole group and there perform the actions with the schoolbag and contents on behalf of the group.
- Alternatively, if it be desired that each student uses their own school bag and contents, again including their own 'Me' folder and Religion journal, the prayertime may be adjusted accordingly.
- Some consideration might be given to finding and preparing some suitable songs with which to begin and end the prayertime.
- Throughout the prayertime, some suitable background music may add significantly to the atmosphere of reflection and prayer.
- You might like to consider inviting the school chaplain to take the role of the Teacher.
- If appropriate, a candle may be lit throughout and may be used as part of a Gospel Procession before the Reader proclaims the reading. Alternatively, if appropriate, the candle may simply be held up as the scripture is proclaimed.

Why Don't You?

Make your own end-of-year prayer service. For example, you might use some or all of parts 3, 4 and 5 of this prayertime. But you might, for example, change part 2 as follows: fill the bag with objects that represent aspects of the past year, e.g. objects to represent friendship, learning, events, happenings, personal development, goals, aims, choices, etc. Prepare your own comment on each one as it is included in the bag. Perhaps each student might have the option, if they so wished, to bring along an object of their own that expresses something of what the year meant for them. Each one could be used in the prayertime along with their own comment about it.



PART 1: INTRODUCTION

Sign of the Cross

If you are going to use the 'ME' folder and Religion journal during the prayer service, place them on the table before you begin. If the students are using their own schoolbags, folders and journals, place them within easy reach of each person before the beginning. After the prayertime begins, everyone takes a moment to become quiet and still. The schoolbag, full with its contents, is held aloft in silence. Then the teacher speaks.

Teacher

The schoolbag represents the year. Like the school year, it is full now: full of days and memories, full of events and happenings, full of things that have occurred. Today, we take some time to unpack the year, so to speak. We go back over it again in our hearts and minds. We remember it.

During each pause in what follows, one or more items are removed deliberately and slowly from the schoolbag. These are laid out on a table, placed there for the purpose.

Reader 1

We go back in time, past the last term, past Easter. (Pause)

We go back before the Spring and before Lent. (Pause)

We go back beyond the light and dark of Christmas days. (Pause)

We go back through Hallowe'en and through November. (Pause)

We go back past harvest and past October. (Pause)

And so we arrive finally at the start of the new school year and the early days of September. (Pause)

If the bag is not empty at this point, the last of the contents are now carefully removed.

PART 2: REMEMBERING BACK OVER THE YEAR

Teacher

Can you remember how the year began for you? If you can, remember back to what was important for you at that time. What was your greatest concern as you faced the year? (Pause) If that concern has been resolved and sorted out for you, thank God now. If not, ask God now to help you. (Pause)

Reader 2

The past year has been filled with friendship. Friendships – some new, some old – have supported us on our way. We take a moment to remember the friendships that have been part of this year. (Pause)

We put something into the bag, remembering friendships that have helped to fill the year. We remember them before God and we give thanks. (Pause)

Reader 3

This past year has been filled with learning. Some of this has been from books. We may also have learned new skills and abilities. We may have been learning about ourselves. We take a moment to recall something we learned that has been part of this year. (Pause)

We put something into the bag, in honour of new learning that has helped to fill the year. We remember it before God and we give thanks. (Pause)

Reader 4

This past year has been filled with events and happenings. Things have happened that we will remember: in school, at home, on the News and in the world of sport. We take a moment to recall events and happenings that have been part of this year. (Pause)

We put something into the bag, in honour of the events and happenings that have helped to fill the year. We

remember them before God in a moment of quietness. (Pause)

Reader 5

This past year has been filled with growing and developing. We have developed in body, in mind and in spirit. We take a moment to recall the growing that has been part of this year. (Pause)

We put something into the bag, in honour of the personal development that has taken place this year. We take a moment to remember that God blesses our growing. (Pause)

Reader 6

This past year has been filled with hopes and dreams. We spent some time exploring who we want to become, and we spent some time exploring who God wants us to become. New goals and plans are starting to focus in our lives. We take a moment to recall the hopes and plans that have come into focus as part of this year. (Pause)

We put something into the bag, in honour of the goals and aims that have helped to fill the year. We remember them before God. (Pause)

Reader 7

This past year has been filled with choices. Some choices were good; some were bad. Some were important; some were not. We take a moment to recall the choices of the past year. (Pause) We put something into the bag, remembering the choices that have helped to fill the year. We ask God to guide us in making choices that will help us in our lives. (Pause)

Reader 8

Perhaps something may have gone into this year for you that has not been mentioned so far. If so, remember it now. (Pause) Put something into the bag, in honour of that thing, and remember it before God. (Pause) *The last of the contents are put back into the bag. The bag is left open.*

PART 3: REVIEWING THE 'ME' FOLDER AND THE RELIGION JOURNAL

If the 'ME' folder and Religion journal are NOT being used, continue on to Part 4.

If the 'ME' folder and Religion journal are being used, the following is said:

Teacher

We pick up our 'ME' folder and take some quiet time to look back over the year. Rather than looking at everything it contains, look through one or two items slowly and reverently. Stay with any memories they bring up. (Pause) Now we close our 'ME' folder and pick up our Religion journal. (Pause) Once again, rather than looking at everything, we dwell on one or two pages. Remember that God is with you as you do this. (Pause)

PART 4: A TIME TO SHARE

Teacher

With the person beside you, take a moment to remember back over the Religion class of this year. Share a particular memory you have of the Religion classes of the year. (Pause) *The group takes a short time for conversation and remembering.*

Teacher

If you would like to share with the whole group a particular memory you have from Religion class this year, you are welcome to do so now. *If any present wish to share their memories of the year, they do so at this point. After each sharing, if it seems appropriate, all present may say: 'Thanks be to God' or 'Blessed be God'.*

PART 5: THE WORD OF GOD AND PRAYING TOGETHER

Teacher

We listen once more to the words of Jesus from the Gospel according to Matthew.

Reader 9 (Matthew 5:14-16)

Jesus said to his followers: 'You are like light for the whole world. A city built on top of a hill cannot be hidden, and no one would light a lamp and put it under a clay pot. A lamp is placed on a lampstand, where it can give light to everyone in the house. Make your light shine, so that others will see the good that you do and will praise your Father in heaven.'

The Gospel of the Lord.

All

Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.

Teacher

The end of the year is approaching. We remember that as we close the bag. We mark the end of our time together for this year.

In silence, the bag is slowly and deliberately closed. Then it is lifted and held up.

Teacher

As we go forward, we carry the year with us. It will be forever a part of our lives. It is time to pick up the past and head off into the future. New times and places lie ahead of us. Together now, as we face the future, we pray St Patrick's Prayer:

All

I arise today
Through the strength of heaven;
Light of sun,
Radiance of moon,
Splendour of fire,
Speed of lightning,
Swiftness of wind,
Depth of sea,
Stability of earth,
Firmness of rock.

I surround myself today with the power of God:
God's strength to comfort me,
God's might to uphold me,
God's good sense to guide me,
God's eye to look before me,
God's word to speak for me,
God's hand to lead me,
God's way to lie before me,
God's angels to save me.

Christ be with me.
Christ be beside me.
Christ be before me.
Christ be behind me.
Christ at my right hand.
Christ at my left hand.
Christ be with me everywhere I go.
Christ be my friend, for ever and ever.

Amen.

Teacher

May you be fully alive!
May you have the love and energy of life in you!
May your light shine!
May you make a good mark on the world!
To God be praise for ever and ever!

All

Amen.

Sign of the Cross