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# UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL STORY: DEVELOPMENT OF THE GOSPEL

LEARNING STRAND: SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION



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## RELIGIOUS EDUCATION PROGRAMME

FOR CATHOLIC SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN  
AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND

### Teacher Guide



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# TOPIC 11C: UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL STORY

## LEARNING STRAND: SCRIPTURE AND TRADITION

### Introduction to the Topic

This book contains teacher material and resources for classroom use –including OHT originals, (these can be found together at the back of this book in the Appendix), supplementary articles, activities and tasks that can be photocopied – for Topic 11C “Understanding the Gospel Story”. This topic forms the Scripture and Tradition Strand of the *Understanding Faith* programme at year eleven. Additional resources are available on the website [www.faithcentral.net.nz](http://www.faithcentral.net.nz). These are indicated in the appropriate place.

The study of topics in the Scripture and Tradition Strand is intended to enhance students’ understanding of the nature and significance of sacred Scripture and the living Tradition of the Church in passing on God’s self-revelation in *Hehu Karaiti* (Jesus Christ).

The material in this guide should be read alongside the following:

- The Religious Education Curriculum Statement for Catholic Secondary Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand
- The supplementary material and activities on the website.

This topic introduces students to the four Gospel accounts – Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – contained within the canon of the New Testament.

However, while there are four gospel accounts, it is important to understand that there is only **one** Gospel – the Good News of what God has done for us through Jesus Christ. In each of the evangelists’ distinct accounts there is one central theme, Jesus Christ, the Saviour, whose coming brought God’s reign of *aroha* (love), *tika* (justice) and *rangimārie* (peace) among us. The gospels show us how Jesus brings this about through his life and teachings, but especially by his death and *Te Aranga* (Resurrection).

Jesus is “Good News” because what God brought about in him is what *Te Atua* (God) intends for us – glorification, divinisation, immortality – by our participation in God’s life through the life of the Church. Thus, *Te Rongopai* (the Good News) is the basis of the Church’s liturgy, *hākarameta* (sacraments), *karakia* (prayer), teaching, mission and service.

In order to help students appreciate the story of the Gospel and recognise the privileged position given to the four gospels within the Christian tradition, this topic begins by looking at the role of stories in human experience before exploring the different types of truth – including religious truth – that are expressed through the various literary genre and forms of Scripture.

After identifying and dating the twenty-six books included in the New Testament canon, students will study the process by which the gospels arrived at their final written form. They will examine the historical basis of the gospels and recognise that they are theological documents that express the evangelists' faith in the Risen Lord. Students will then look at the distinctive features of each of the gospel accounts and reflect on the reasons for the differing emphases in these four portraits of Jesus.

Students will examine the significance of the miracle stories in the four gospels and will be encouraged to see them as signs of God's saving power at work in and through Jesus – signs that call for a response in faith. The Resurrection of Jesus Christ is presented as the greatest sign of God's *Mana* (power), the central event of the New Testament, and the basis of Christian *whakapono* (faith).

### **ACHIEVEMENT AIMS**

In this topic students will gain and apply knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to understand:

1. That Scripture is God's revelation.
2. How various books of the New Testament came to be written.
3. The significant features of the four gospel accounts.
4. The importance of *Te Rongopai* to Christians.

### **ACHIEVEMENT OBJECTIVES**

Students will be able to:

1. Understand that the Scriptures present different types of truth that are expressed in various literary forms.
2. Investigate the composition of the New Testament, especially of the gospels.
3. Identify distinctive features of each of the four gospel portraits and understand reasons for their differing emphases.
4. Develop an understanding of the significance of the miracle stories.
5. Recognise that *Te Aranga* of Jesus Christ from the dead is the central event of the New Testament.

### **CHURCH TEACHINGS AND LINKS WITH CHURCH DOCUMENTS**

Underpinning the five achievement objectives for the topic are important teachings of the Church. Where possible, direct links with the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*

have been established and quotations used to highlight the relationship between the various achievement objectives and the Church teachings that they embody. On occasions, other Church documents are referred to and quoted.

In all cases the official translations of Church documents have been used, but where necessary changes have been made so that the language is gender inclusive.

### **Achievement Objective 1**

Students will be able to understand that the Scriptures present different types of truth that are expressed in various literary forms.

### **Church Teachings**

- *Hehu Karaiti* is the fullness of God's revelation and the source of truth.
- *Te Atua* communicates to us through Scripture which is inspired by *Te Wairua Tapu* (the Holy Spirit).
- The Scriptures, which were written in human language by human authors, are inspired to express the truth about God.
- Christ lives in Scripture and opens our minds to its meaning.
- To interpret Scripture correctly readers must be open to what the human authors intend to say and to what *Te Atua* wants.
- An appreciation of the historical, cultural, social and literary contexts of the scriptural authors is necessary in order to understand their intentions.
- Attention must be given to the literary genres / forms found in Scripture if it is to be interpreted appropriately.
- Scripture is to be interpreted in the light of the canon as a whole, as part of the living tradition of the Church, and with faith in God's plan of revelation.

### **Catechism and Church Document Links**

*Christ the Lord, in whom the entire Revelation of the most high God is summed up, commanded the apostles to preach the Gospel, which had been promised beforehand by the prophets, and which he fulfilled in his own person and promulgated with his own lips. In preaching the Gospel, they were to communicate the gifts of God to all people. This Gospel was to be the source of all saving truth and moral discipline. (CCC 75)*

*Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. (CCC 81)*

God is the author of Sacred Scripture. *"The divinely revealed realities, which are contained and presented in the text of Sacred Scripture, have been written down under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit."* See Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 11. (CCC 105)

*God inspired the human authors of the sacred books. "To compose the sacred books, God chose certain people who, all the while they were employed in this task, made full*

*use of their own faculties and powers so that, though God acted in them and by them, it was as true authors that they consigned to writing whatever God wanted written, and no more.” See Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 11. (CCC 106)*

*The inspired books teach the truth. “Since therefore all that the inspired authors or sacred writers affirm should be regarded as affirmed by the Holy Spirit, we must acknowledge that the books of Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, for the sake of our salvation, wished to see confided to the Sacred Scriptures.” See Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 11. (CCC 107)*

*Still, the Christian faith is not a “religion of the book”. Christianity is the religion of the “Word” of God, a word which is “not a written and mute word, but the Word is incarnate and living”. If the Scriptures are not to remain a dead letter, Christ, the eternal Word of the living God, must, through the Holy Spirit, “open [our] minds to understand the Scriptures”. (CCC 108)*

*In Sacred Scripture, God speaks to us in a human way. To interpret Scripture correctly, the reader must be attentive to what the human authors truly wanted to affirm, and to what God wanted to reveal to us by their words. See Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 12. (CCC 109)*

*In order to discover the sacred authors' intention, the reader must take into account the conditions of their time and culture, the literary genres in use at that time, and the modes of feeling, speaking and narrating then current. “For the fact is that truth is differently presented and expressed in the various types of historical writing, in prophetic and poetical texts, and in other forms of literary expression.” See Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 12. (CCC 110)*

*Seeing that, in Sacred Scripture, God speaks through human beings in human fashion, it follows that the interpreters of Sacred Scripture, if they are to ascertain what God has wished to communicate to us, should carefully search out the meaning which the sacred writers really had in mind, that meaning which God had thought well to manifest through the meaning of their words.*

*In determining the intention of the sacred writers, attention must be paid, among other things, to “literary genres”.*

*The fact is that truth is differently presented and expressed in the various types of historical writing, in prophetic and poetical texts, and in other forms of literary expression. The interpreter must look for that meaning which the sacred writers, in given situations and granted the circumstances of their time and culture, intended to express and did in fact express, through the medium of a contemporary literary form. Rightly to understand what the sacred authors wanted to affirm in their work, due attention must be paid both to the customary and characteristic patterns of perception, speech and narrative which prevailed in their time, and to the conventions which people then observed in their dealings with one another. (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 12)*

*The Second Vatican Council indicates three criteria for interpreting Scripture in accordance with the Spirit who inspired it. (CCC 111)*

1. Be especially attentive "to the content and unity of the whole Scripture". *Different as the books which compose it may be, Scripture is a unity by reason of the unity of God's plan, of which Christ Jesus is the centre and heart, open since his Passover. (CCC 112)*
2. Read the Scripture within "the living Tradition of the whole Church". *According to a saying of the Fathers, Sacred Scripture is written principally in the Church's heart rather than in documents and records, for the Church carries in her Tradition the living memorial of God's Word, and it is the Holy Spirit who gives her the spiritual interpretation of the Scripture (" . . . according to the spiritual meaning which the Spirit grants to the Church"). (CCC 113)*
3. Be attentive to the analogy of faith. *By "analogy of faith" we mean the coherence of the truths of faith among themselves and within the whole plan of Revelation. (CCC 114)*

## **Achievement Objective 2**

Students will be able to investigate the composition of the New Testament, especially of the gospels.

## **Church Teachings**

- The New Testament Canon, which was determined by the Church, consists of twenty-seven books.
- The central concern of the New Testament are the actions, teachings, Passion and glorification of *Hehu Karaiti*, and the beginnings of the Church, through the power of *Te Wairua Tapu*.
- In the gospels, which are at the heart of the Scriptures, we discover most of what we know about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.
- The gospels were formed in three distinct stages – the life and teachings of Jesus, the oral tradition, and the written gospels.

## **Catechism and Church Document Links**

*It was by the apostolic Tradition that the Church discerned which writings are to be included in the list of the sacred books. This complete list is called the canon of Scripture. It includes 46 books for the Old Testament (45 if we count Jeremiah and Lamentations as one) and 27 for the New:*

The New Testament: the Gospels according to *Matthew, Mark, Luke* and *John*, the *Acts of the Apostles*, the *Letters of St. Paul to the Romans, 1 and 2*



*Corinthians, Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 1 and 2 Timothy, Titus, Philemon, the Letter to the Hebrews, the Letters of James, 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John, and Jude, and Revelation (the Apocalypse). (CCC 120)*

*"The Word of God, which is the power of God for salvation to everyone who has faith, is set forth and displays its power in a most wonderful way in the writings of the New Testament" which hand on the ultimate truth of God's Revelation. Their central object is Jesus Christ, God's incarnate Son: his acts, teachings, Passion and glorification, and his Church's beginnings under the Spirit's guidance. (CCC 124)*

*The Gospels are the heart of all the Scriptures "because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Saviour". (CCC 125)*

*The four Gospels occupy a central place because Christ Jesus is their centre. (CCC 139)*

*We can distinguish three stages in the formation of the Gospels:*

- 1. The life and teaching of Jesus. The Church holds firmly that the four Gospels, "whose historicity she unhesitatingly affirms, faithfully hand on what Jesus, the Son of God, while he lived among men, really did and taught for their eternal salvation, until the day when he was taken up".*
- 2. The oral tradition. "For, after the ascension of the Lord, the apostles handed on to their hearers what he had said and done, but with that fuller understanding which they, instructed by the glorious events of Christ and enlightened by the Spirit of truth, now enjoyed."*
- 3. The written Gospels. "The sacred authors, in writing the four Gospels, selected certain of the many elements which had been handed on, either orally or already in written form; others they synthesised or explained with an eye to the situation of the churches, the while sustaining the form of preaching, but always in such a fashion that they have told us the honest truth about Jesus." (CCC 126)*

### **Achievement Objective 3**

Students will be able to identify distinctive features of each of the four gospel portraits and understand reasons for their differing emphases.

### **Church Teachings**

- The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John hold a unique position in the Church as a testimony to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.

- The authors of the four gospels proclaim the truth about *Hehu Karaiti* in their own distinctive ways, depending on the sources they were drawing on and the situations in the communities they were writing for.

### **Catechism and Church Document Links**

*The fourfold Gospel holds a unique place in the Church, as is evident both in the veneration which the liturgy accords it and in the surpassing attraction it has exercised on the saints at all times. (CCC 127)*

*It is common knowledge that among all the inspired writings, including those of the New Testament, the Gospels have a special place, and rightly so, because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the incarnate Word, our Saviour.*

*The Church has always and everywhere maintained, and continues to maintain, the apostolic origin of the four Gospels. The Apostles preached, as Christ had charged them to do, and then, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they and others of the apostolic age handed on to us in writing the same message they had preached, the foundation of our faith: the fourfold Gospel, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 18)*

*The sacred authors wrote the four Gospels, selecting some things from the many which had been handed on by word of mouth or in writing, reducing some of them to a synthesis, explaining some things in view of the situation of their churches and preserving the form of proclamation but always in such fashion that they told us the honest truth about Jesus. For their intention in writing was that either from their own memory and recollections, or from the witness of those who "themselves from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the Word" we might know "the truth" concerning those matters about which we have been instructed (see Luke 1:2-4). (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 19)*

### **Achievement Objective 4**

Students will be able to develop an understanding of the significance of the miracle stories.

### **Church Teachings**

- Jesus' miracles were a sign that he was the promised Messiah who was bringing about *Te Rangatiratanga* (God's reign).
- Some people responded in faith to Jesus' miracles, others rejected him.
- By freeing people from physical evils Jesus was showing his *mana* to release people from sin.

## **Catechism and Church Document Links**

*Jesus accompanies his words with many "mighty works and wonders and signs", which manifest that the kingdom is present in him and attest that he was the promised Messiah. (CCC 547)*

*The signs worked by Jesus attest that the Father has sent him. They invite belief in him. To those who turn to him in faith, he grants what they ask. So miracles strengthen faith in the One who does his Father's works; they bear witness that he is the Son of God. But his miracles can also be occasions for "offence"; they are not intended to satisfy people's curiosity or desire for magic. Despite his evident miracles some people reject Jesus; he is even accused of acting by the power of demons. (CCC 548)*

*By freeing some individuals from the earthly evils of hunger, injustice, illness and death, Jesus performed messianic signs. Nevertheless he did not come to abolish all evils here below, but to free people from the gravest slavery, sin, which thwarts them in their vocation as God's sons and daughters and causes all forms of human bondage. (CCC 549)*

*The coming of God's kingdom means the defeat of Satan's: "If it is by the Spirit of God that I cast out demons, then the kingdom of God has come upon you". Jesus' exorcisms free some individuals from the domination of demons. They anticipate Jesus' great victory over "the ruler of this world". The kingdom of God will be definitively established through Christ's cross: "God reigned from the wood". (CCC 550)*

## **Achievement Objective 5**

Students will be able to recognise that the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead is the central event of the New Testament.

### **Church Teachings**

- The New Testament establishes the Resurrection as a real event and the central truth of the Christian faith.
- The New Testament accounts point to the empty tomb and the various appearances of the risen Lord – to Mary Magdalene and the other women, to Peter and the Twelve, and to many others – as signs of *Te Aranga*.
- The New Testament records that the faith of the original community of believers was based on the testimony of those first witnesses to the Resurrection.

## **Catechism and Church Document Links**

*"We bring you the good news that what God promised to the fathers, this day he has fulfilled to us their children by raising Jesus." The Resurrection of Jesus is the crowning truth of our faith in Christ, a faith believed and lived as the central truth by the first Christian community; handed on as fundamental by Tradition; established by the*

*documents of the New Testament; and preached as an essential part of the Paschal mystery along with the cross. (CCC 638)*

*The mystery of Christ's resurrection is a real event, with manifestations that were historically verified, as the New Testament bears witness. In about A.D. 56 St. Paul could already write to the Corinthians: "I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received, that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the scriptures, and that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the Twelve . . ." The Apostle speaks here of the living tradition of the Resurrection which he had learned after his conversion at the gates of Damascus. (CCC 639)*

*"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen." The first element we encounter in the framework of the Easter events is the empty tomb. In itself it is not a direct proof of Resurrection; the absence of Christ's body from the tomb could be explained otherwise. Nonetheless the empty tomb was still an essential sign for all. Its discovery by the disciples was the first step toward recognising the very fact of the Resurrection. This was the case, first with the holy women, and then with Peter. The disciple "whom Jesus loved" affirmed that when he entered the empty tomb and discovered "the linen cloths lying there", "he saw and believed". This suggests that he realised from the empty tomb's condition that the absence of Jesus' body could not have been of human doing and that Jesus had not simply returned to earthly life as had been the case with Lazarus. (CCC 640)*

*Mary Magdalene and the holy women who came to finish anointing the body of Jesus, which had been buried in haste because the Sabbath began on the evening of Good Friday, were the first to encounter the Risen One. Thus the women were the first messengers of Christ's Resurrection for the apostles themselves. They were the next to whom Jesus appears: first Peter, then the Twelve. Peter had been called to strengthen the faith of his brothers, and so sees the Risen One before them; it is on the basis of his testimony that the community exclaims: "The Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!" (CCC 641)*

*Everything that happened during those Paschal days involves each of the apostles – and Peter in particular – in the building of the new era begun on Easter morning. As witnesses of the Risen One, they remain the foundation stones of his Church. The faith of the first community of believers is based on the witness of actual people known to the Christians and for the most part still living among them. Peter and the Twelve are the primary "witnesses to his Resurrection", but they are not the only ones – Paul speaks clearly of more than five hundred persons to whom Jesus appeared on a single occasion and also of James and of all the apostles. (CCC 642)*

## **Part One: The Truth of Scripture**

**See Student Text pages 4 to 9**

### **Achievement Objective 1**

Students will be able to understand that the Scriptures present different types of truth that are expressed in various literary forms.

### **Church Teachings**

- Jesus Christ is the fullness of God's revelation and the source of truth.
- God communicates to us through Scripture which is inspired by the Holy Spirit.
- The Scriptures, which were written in human language by human authors, are inspired to express the truth about *Te Atua*.
- Christ lives in Scripture and opens our minds to its meaning.
- To interpret Scripture correctly readers must be open to what the human authors intend to say and to what God wants.
- Scripture is to be interpreted in the light of the canon as a whole, as part of the living tradition of the Church, and with faith in God's plan of revelation.

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this topic students will:

- Recognise the importance of stories in human experience.
- Identify different kinds of truth found in Scripture.

### **Teacher Background**

#### **The Authority and Truth of Scripture**

The Church has always venerated the divine scriptures as it has venerated the body of the Lord, in that it never ceases, above all in the sacred liturgy, to partake of the bread of life and to offer it to the faithful from one table of the word of God and the Body of Christ. (Constitution on Divine Revelation 21)

Christians affirm that God is the author of our Scriptures while at the same time recognising the role of human writers in the production of the Bible. As stated by the bishops at the Second Vatican Council:

Those divinely revealed realities which are contained and presented in Sacred Scripture have been committed to writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. For holy mother Church, relying on the belief of the Apostles (see John 20:31; 2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Peter 1:19-20, 3:15-16), holds that the books of both the Old and New Testaments in their entirety, with all their parts, are sacred and canonical because written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, they have God as their author and have been handed on as such to the Church herself. In composing the sacred books, God chose certain people and while employed by God they made use of their powers and abilities, so that with God acting in them and through them, they, as true authors, consigned to writing everything and only those things which God wanted.

Therefore, since everything asserted by the inspired authors or sacred writers must be held to be asserted by the Holy Spirit, it follows that the books of Scripture must be acknowledged as teaching solidly, faithfully and without error that truth which God wanted put into sacred writings for the sake of salvation. Therefore "all Scripture is divinely inspired and has its use for teaching the truth and refuting error, for reformation of manners and discipline in right living, so that the man who belongs to God may be efficient and equipped for good work of every kind" (2 Tim. 3:16-17, Greek text). (Constitution on Divine Revelation 11)

But how do the divine and human aspects of these writings come together?

Other religions whose beliefs are enshrined in sacred texts claim that their scriptures were directly communicated to their founders by God – an ancient example would be the Koran, a more recent one the Book of Mormon. The formation of the Jewish and Christian Scripture is very different from these.

The Bible is the product of many centuries, written by many hands in many different communities. While in some instances what we read is presented in terms of a vision or divine command – such as the Book of Revelation in the New Testament or the pronouncements of Old Testament prophets – there is much “ordinary” writing as well. St Paul did not write letters to the community in Corinth in some kind of ecstatic frenzy, taking dictation from a divine "voice". He was moved by very human emotions, and wrote in response to very concrete problems in the community. Later, the Church came to realise that Paul's word to his community is also God's word to the Church.

A more complex example of this process may be seen in the gospels where the four portraits of Jesus – the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – were produced by combining three layers of tradition:

1. Jesus' own teaching and preaching.
2. The preaching and teaching of the apostles after Jesus rose from the dead.
3. The unique perspective of the faith community within which a particular gospel emerged and was written down.

What is true of the gospels is true for the entire Bible – it is a product of the community of faith where God is encountered in human terms. The Bible expresses that encounter in human terms and reveals a God who chooses to speak to people in the words of our everyday life.

The Bible is true in that it teaches us the truth about God's plan for our lives. However, it is not to be read as a textbook of natural science or history. Although there is history in the Bible, that is not the purpose of the writing. The Bible is written to tell us who God was in the past, who God is for us in the present, and who God continues to be for people in every age.

### **Scriptural Truth and Fundamentalism**

Today, for many people truth is something relative and shifting – there is no certitude about absolute values. In such a climate, some Christians look to religion, especially the authority of Scripture, to provide certainty in their lives. Surrounded by a complex and often confusing world, people want simple, clear answers even if their problems and questions are difficult. Many adopt a fundamentalist approach to Scripture in their search to find security. But history and personal experience teach us that there are no simple answers to complex problems.

Fundamentalism is a response to those complex changes in society and the Church that seem to challenge the truth of Scripture. At the very core of Fundamentalism lies the doctrine of strict and literal interpretation of Scripture which holds that the Bible is correct in every detail. By setting forth and emphasising the absolute basics of Christianity as they see them, Fundamentalists seek to find simple solutions to the increasingly complex problems of life.

A number of tenets of Fundamentalism are contrary to the Catholic perspective on Scripture:

- The Fundamentalist stance of literal interpretation of Scripture by each individual believer violates the history and tradition of Scripture itself.
- The claim to certainty about the meaning of Scripture texts regardless of their context.

For Catholics, Scripture cannot stand apart from the community. God in Old and New Testament times called people and was revealed to every generation:

In times past, God spoke in fragmentary and varied ways to our ancestors through the prophets; in this, the final age, he has spoken to us through the son, whom he has made heir of all things and through whom he first created the universe. (Hebrews 1:1-2)

It was the task of the community to hand on this sacred revelation from God to each succeeding age. This occurred through human language, ideas, manners, and

customs. Sometimes the community spoke, at other times it wrote – but always the community had a care to pass on the Word it had received.

This community, the Church, has always recognised the divine authorship of the Bible and its central role in its life. However, it is important to remember that the Church existed before the New Testament was composed and assembled.

God inspired members of the early Christian Church to produce the New Testament, to preserve, copy and then hand on the sacred texts to successive generations of Christians. Under the guidance of the Holy Spirit the leadership of the Church decided upon the twenty-seven books of the New Testament. It was the Church, which determined, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, which books were inspired and which were not to be considered part of the Bible. This same teaching continued to be taught at the Second Vatican Council:

Sacred Scripture is the speech of God as it is put down in writing under the breath of the Holy Spirit. And Tradition transmits in its entirety the Word of God which has been entrusted to the apostles by Christ the Lord and the Holy Spirit. It transmits it to the Successors of the Apostles so that, enlightened by the Spirit of truth, they may preserve, expound and spread it abroad by their preaching. (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 9)

Thus it comes about that the Church does not draw her certainty about all revealed truths from the holy Scriptures alone. Hence, both Scripture and Tradition must be accepted and honoured with equal feelings of devotion and reverence. Sacred Tradition and sacred Scripture make up a single, sacred deposit of the Word of God, which is entrusted to the Church. (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 9 and 10)

God's self-revelation was in human language and God entrusted the Scriptures to the living context of a believing community. Thus, the Church has always taken seriously its responsibility to proclaim with confidence the true meaning of Sacred Scripture. In this the Church is led by the Holy Spirit.

The Bible is not just "mine" – it belongs to the whole Church. The inerrancy of the Bible comes from the fact that the Holy Spirit guided the Church in producing Scripture to begin with, and continues to guide each new generation of Christians to understand its meaning by guiding the leadership of that community in interpreting it.

Fundamentalism, because of its literalist approach, encourages people to use brief Scripture quotations taken out of context, and to hold worldviews and judgments opposed to the Catholic understanding. Fundamentalism sets up an exaggerated contrast between the world (evil) and the reign of God (good). For Catholics, Biblical teaching has always maintained that creation is essentially good and has been entrusted to our care by God. The world is not something evil to escape, rather something to embrace while recognising the sin within it.



Catholics understand that the Bible does not provide an answer for every problem. It is rather the record of God's loving and saving presence among his people. It is God's call to us to become a loving saving presence to one another in the community that is the Church. We are called by the Church and God's Word to a fullness of life that develops the community and its members as people of God.

### **Links with the Student Text**

#### **Student Text pages 4 and 5**

The material on these pages deals with storytelling. Its purpose is to help students understand the importance of stories in the human experience.

*Storytelling – Imagination and Faith* by William J Bausch (Twenty-Third Publications 1984, 1983) is a useful resource.

#### **Task 1**

##### **Stories I Know (page 4 Student Text)**

Here students are asked to discuss aspects of stories that they remember from their childhood. This could be done as a written or homework task, group exercise or full class discussion.

#### **Task 2**

##### **Story Telling (page 4 Student Text)**

The story telling activity cards found in the Appendix and on Faith Central can be used to create cards to complete this activity. Check with the resource box for this unit as someone may have already prepared them.

#### *Instructions*

The cards are shuffled and placed face down in the centre of the group. Each group member takes it in turn to pick up a card and tell a story based on the direction provided on the card.

Time will dictate how many stories each participant tells.

#### **Follow – up Discussion**

Following Task 2 the following questions may be used as discussion starters;

- Have you ever told that story before?
- To whom?
- What was the occasion?
- What was the reaction of your listeners?

The discussion could involve the whole class or take place in the small groups.

Following Task 2 the teacher should introduce the idea of the oral tradition to the class.

Comments that could be made include:

- The role stories play within cultures (myths and legends).
- The fact that oral storytelling was universal thousands of years before stories were ever written down.
- The importance of oral storytelling in the time before the invention of the printing press and the spread of reading.
- The importance of stories that underlie our national identity – The Treaty of Waitangi, Gallipoli, the 1905 All Blacks, Kate Shepherd and women's suffrage.
- The decline of oral storytelling in more recent times with influence of film, television, computers, etc.
- The advertising stories to which we are constantly subjected – the woman who knows the best cleaner to use in the bathroom, the young man with the freshest deodorant.
- The tradition of oral storytelling in Maori culture, on *marae* (traditional places of meeting) and through *whakapapa* (genealogies).

### **Task 3**

#### **My personal story, my family story (page 5 Student Text)**

This task asks students to consider other stories that affect their story.

They are required to build up a network of these stories with the teacher, for example, their personal story or their family story. This information should be presented in the form of a diagram as presented on page 5 of the student text.

Students should copy down the finished diagram or create one of their own.

As a summary of these introductory tasks student could copy the following statements:

***Stories are very much part of us.***

***They are part of our tradition whatever that may be.***

***Our personal stories are influenced by many other stories around us.***

Emphasise with students that their personal stories are part of a much larger story which includes the human experience of all other people. This larger story has a religious dimension which gives meaning and shape to all our stories.

### **Student Text pages 6-9**

The material on these pages begins to look at what a gospel is – and is not – by examining what we mean when we say the Bible is *true*. The material encourages students to recognise that there are different types and levels of truth in Scripture.

### **Task 4**

#### **Role Play: The Truth of the Matter (page 4 Student Text)**

1. The teacher directs students to Task 4. The situation is as follows:

*There has been a minor accident. A blue car and a red car have collided at an uncontrolled intersection. The blue car failed to give way but the red car was travelling too fast. Both cars have been slightly damaged but no one was injured.*

2. The teacher chooses the six students for the role-play and allocates the roles.
3. The first four have a few minutes to prepare their accounts.
  - The driver of the red car
  - The driver of the blue car
  - The passenger in the red car
  - A woman pedestrian on the footpath
  - A traffic officer who arrived on the scene after the accident
  - A reporter who interviews the traffic officer and writes a report for his / her editor. (The reporter does not hear the accounts of the four people involved in the accident).
4. The teacher sends the reporter out of the room.
5. The teacher asks the traffic officer to take notes as he or she listens to the brief verbal reports of the four involved.
6. The teacher sends the traffic officer out to be questioned by the reporter.
7. The reporter writes notes for the editor of the newspaper.
8. The reporter returns to the classroom and reads the report to the class.
9. Class Discussion.

The questions for discussion at the end of Task 4 lead students to understand some of the issues involved in determining what is true.

It is not necessary to bring the New Testament into the discussion, but rather the teacher should concentrate on establishing the similarities and differences between the various accounts of the accident. The point to stress is that while there are some differences in the various accounts, there is no dispute that the accident actually occurred. It is not necessary to assume that people are lying to explain why there are differences in their accounts. The fact that there was an accident is one answer to the question: What is true?

It may not be possible to disentangle from the conflicting accounts the truth of who was responsible for the accident. In fact, according to the information given at the beginning, both drivers were partly responsible, whatever legal decision may eventually be arrived at.

Some conclusions are:

- The truth is not always readily arrived at.
- There are different aspects to the truth.
- There may even be different kinds of truth.

10. The teacher lists on board or OHT/PowerPoint some different types of truth:

SCIENTIFIC TRUTH	GEOGRAPHICAL TRUTH
HISTORICAL TRUTH	MATHEMATICAL TRUTH
RELATIONS TRUTH	PERSONALITIES TRUTH
RELIGIOUS TRUTH	MORAL TRUTH
PROVERBIAL TRUTH	SYMBOLIC TRUTH

The class are asked to give examples of each type of truth from their own experience.

11. The teacher then asks the class to suggest some of the kinds of truth that can be found in the New Testament.

## **Task 5**

### **Truth in the Bible (page 7 Student Text)**

The teacher asks the class to read page seven of the student text headed "Truth in the Bible".

After the class has read the material the teacher should discuss any questions that arise from it with the class.

**Extra Activity: Match This (page 8 Student Text)**

To confirm their learning students could then complete the extra activity “Match This” found on page 8 of the student text.

These are the answers to the Extra Activity

The first part of each statement from Column A is followed by its correct ending from Column B.

1. The Bible contains the history of the Hebrew people, much of which <b>c)</b> was passed on orally for generations before it was written down.
2. Although the scientific understanding reflected in the Bible is very primitive <b>f)</b> we are still able to find the religious truth that the writer is trying to get across.
3. Much of the Bible, especially the Wisdom books, <b>h)</b> contains proverbs.
4. The story of the tree of good and evil in the garden of Eden <b>e)</b> is an example of Scripture communicating truth through symbols and myths.
5. Much of the moral truth contained in the Bible reflects the standards of the Hebrew people <b>b)</b> whose ideas about right and wrong were sometimes very different from our own.
6. The Bible, which is the record of the relationship between God and the chosen people, <b>d)</b> is mainly religious truth.
7. We need to read between the lines of Scripture <b>a)</b> to discover the truth being presented.
8. The Bible gives a true account of how people experienced God <b>g)</b> and how they responded or failed to respond to God.

**Optional Task Certificate of Execution (in Appendix and on Faith Central)**

The teacher decides with the students whether the work should be done individually or in pairs using the Certificate of Execution Worksheet

1. Ask students to imagine that they are the Roman centurion in Jerusalem in charge of paper work after crucifixions. A Galilean, Jesus of Nazareth, has been crucified today and they must fill out the Certificate of Execution.
2. Students are asked to complete the certificate form and use a Bible to help them check up on details.
3. The following conclusion or similar can be made from a review of this activity

*The Gospels cannot be understood as biographies or historical accounts of the life of Christ. But the lack of personal detail does not weaken the argument that there was an historical person called Jesus. Writings of the time other than the New Testament prove that there was.*

The following background information presents material that helps to explain the answers for the task.

### **Certificate of Execution Non-Citizen Judean Province**

**Nature of capital offence:** Inciting revolt – claimed to be King of the Jews (see Luke 23:2). The precise nature of the charge on which Jesus was condemned to death is not known. It seems likely that the Jewish leaders convinced Pilate that Jesus was a threat to Roman authority.

**Date of execution:** The 19<sup>th</sup> year of the Emperor Tiberius on the eve of Passover local time. Scholars differ on the date of the crucifixion. Luke 3:1 and 3:23 places Jesus' Baptism in the 15<sup>th</sup> year of the Emperor Tiberius (27 AD) when Jesus was aged about thirty. Following John's chronology of the Passion, some put Jesus' death at 7 April 30 AD – that is on the Friday of the Jewish Passover week in the month of Nisan. But others would dispute this.

**Method of execution:** Crucifixion.

**Place of execution:** Golgotha / Calvary (see John 19:17).

**Place of interment (burial):** The garden tomb of Joseph of Arimathea (see Matthew 27:57-61).

### **Details of the Person Executed**

**Full name:** Yeshua ben Yosef – Jesus son of Joseph (see Matthew 1:25).

**Aliases:** The Nazarene (see Matthew 2:22-23); the Christ / Messiah (see Matthew 16:16).

**Tribe, family or house:** of David (see Matthew 1:1-17).

**Place of birth:** Bethlehem.

**Date of birth:** 20<sup>th</sup> year of the Emperor Augustus, circa. No-one knows with certainty. Scholars usually date Jesus' birth around 6 BC working from the known date of the death of Herod the Great in 4 BC. The BC / AD calendar was designed by a Roman,

Dionysius Exiguus in the 6<sup>th</sup> century. He made a mistake of about five years in his calculations, but this was not discovered until much later.

**Residence:** Capernaum (see Matthew 4:13).

**Occupation:** Carpenter (see Mark 6:2-3).

**Next of kin:** Miriam (Mary) mother.

**Immediate family:** Not known. There are references in the gospels to the “brothers and sisters” of Jesus (see Mark 6:3 and Matthew 13:55-57). Catholic tradition maintains that Mary is “ever virgin”, and that the words translated from the Greek as “brothers and sisters” are derived from Hebrew words which might equally as accurately be translated as “cousins” or other terms indicating an extended family relationship rather than “blood” brothers and sisters.

**Political Affiliation:** Jesus was “Other”. There is no convincing evidence that Jesus was an Essene, Herodian, Pharisee, Sadducee, or Zealot. Although some say he had a Zealot among his disciples, Jesus discouraged violence at the time of his arrest. Jesus’ purpose transcended politics. His kingdom was “not of this world” (see John 18:36).

**Religion:** Jewish (although some Jewish leaders accused him of blasphemy).

**Physical Description:** There is no information about Jesus’ physical appearance – his height, his eye or hair colour, or other distinguishing physical features – in the gospels.

In order to understand the Gospels it is necessary to have some familiarity with their social and historical background. However, it is important for students to recognise that for many questions about the person and life of Jesus there are no certain answers. Which is not to say that we know nothing, or have no historical foundations for our faith. The evidence from non-Christian sources for the existence of Jesus is superior to evidence that we have for many figures of the ancient world whose existence no-one questions. *“Since that time (the early twentieth century) the historical existence of Jesus has not been disputed by any serious scholar.”* (Hans Kung, *On Being a Christian*, p.146.)

For a long time it was thought possible to write a biography of Jesus based on the Synoptic Gospels. When Mark was recognised as the earliest Gospel, between 1800 and 1850, over 30,000 lives of Jesus were written in Europe. What became obvious was that there were significant aspects of his life that were missing.

### **Extension Questions**

These questions would be useful discussion starters before students attempt Task 6 on page 9 of the student text

1. Name at least one problem facing the early Church as those who had known Christ personally got older and eventually died.

As people who knew the historical Jesus got older and died there was an increasing risk that the knowledge about Jesus that was handed down orally would become distorted once the original apostles and disciples who could verify its accuracy were gone.

2. Why were the stories of Christ's actions and sayings written down?

This was done to protect and preserve the stories so that they no longer depended for their survival on the oral tradition of a particular Christian community. This became more and more important with the rapid spread of Christianity throughout the eastern Mediterranean area and the threat posed to Christian communities by Roman persecution.

3. Why do we keep four separate accounts of Jesus life?

Each of the four gospels is the product of the oral traditions of a particular early Christian community. Each gospel presents its own distinctive portrait of Jesus that is the product of that community's particular history, circumstances and needs.

## **Task 6**

### **Who is Jesus? (page 9 Student Text)**

The placemat template for this activity can be found on the Faith Central website [www.faithcentral.net.nz](http://www.faithcentral.net.nz) and in the Appendix of this book.

Students are asked to work in groups of four to collect material that they know about the life and ministry of Jesus.

Class discussion will then enable the groups to add to their presentation and they are encouraged to continually return to their placemat throughout the topic so that they can build up a full presentation.



## **Part Two: Literary Forms in the New Testament**

**See Student Text pages 10 - 12**

### **Achievement Objective 1**

Students will be able to understand that the Scriptures present different types of truth that are expressed in various literary forms.

### **Church Teachings**

- An appreciation of the historical, cultural, social and literary contexts of the scriptural authors is necessary in order to understand their intentions.
- Attention must be given to the literary genres / forms found in Scripture if it is to be interpreted appropriately.

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this topic students will:

- Describe and find examples of different literary forms in the New Testament.

### **Teacher Background**

#### **Literary Forms**

Every written text is captured within a literary form. Not knowing the intended form of a message can lead the reader to misunderstand the meaning and significance of any given text. For example, when a person reads a newspaper, they need to know whether they are reading an editorial, a news story, an advertisement, a letter to the editor, an obituary, etc. if they are to make sense of the material in front of them. It is only when a reader recognises the literary forms they are dealing with that they are able to attribute value to them.

The collection of more than seventy books that together make up the Old and New Testaments of the Bible present their own interpretative challenges. Although written by human authors, these sacred writings are believed by Christians to be inspired by God. Through them God's plan of salvation for the human race is revealed. The difficulties in interpreting their meaning arise, in part from their status as sacred Scripture, but also because of the great variety of literary forms that they contain. Thus, it is just as important to recognise the different literary forms when reading the Bible as it is when reading the newspaper.

Clearly, there is more of a risk of misinterpretation when readers are unfamiliar with ancient literary forms or genre. It is also more difficult to discover the intended meaning of the given text. During the twentieth century the Church became increasingly aware of the need to use the tools of history, archaeology, ethnology and the other sciences to establish the literary forms that were used in the production of the various scriptural texts.

Frequently the literal sense<sup>1</sup> is not so obvious in the words and writings of ancient oriental authors as it is with the writers of today. For what they intended to signify by their writings is not determined only by the laws of grammar and philology nor merely by the context. It is absolutely necessary for the interpreter to go back in spirit to those remote centuries of the East and make proper use of the aids afforded by history, archaeology, ethnology and other sciences, in order to discover what *literary forms* the writers intended to use and did, de facto, employ. (Pius XII, *Divino Afflante, Spiritu – On Promoting Biblical Studies* 35)

Those who search out the intention of the sacred writers must, among other things, have regard for “literary forms”. For truth is proposed and expressed in a variety of ways, depending on whether a text is history of one kind or another, or whether its form is that of prophecy, poetry or some other type of speech. The interpreter must investigate what meaning the sacred writer intended to express and actually expressed in particular circumstances, as he used *contemporary literary forms* in accordance with the situation of his own time and culture. (*Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation* 12)

## What are “Literary Forms”?

Literary forms are the categories in which we speak or write. While a dictionary or an encyclopaedia will establish the meaning of particular words or items of vocabulary, we cannot evaluate the true meaning of any statement unless we know in which category of writing or speaking – in which ‘literary form’ – it occurs. Literary forms are generally classified according to three characteristics:

**a. According to their contents**

A handbook on cooking, a railway guide and a book of poetry do not leave us long in doubt as to what category they belong to! One glance at the contents and we know!

**b. According to their style**

Comparing a prayer book and a detective story, there is – apart from the contents – a marked difference in the style of the book. We instinctively

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<sup>1</sup> In this context ‘Literal sense’ is not to be understood in a fundamentalistic way. As Raymond Brown states it means “what the biblical authors intended and conveyed to their audiences by what they wrote”. [Introduction to the New Testament](#), Doubleday, 1997, p.35.

recognise what kind of writing we are dealing with by the words used and by the style.

**c. According to their context**

Each literary form arose in a particular situation in life. Since we know our school system, the typical school report immediately strikes us as something familiar. Since we sing in church, a hymnbook makes sense to us.

In short, a literary form as a category of speaking or writing that arose in a particular situation in life, that has its own peculiar contents, and that employs a distinctive vocabulary and style.

**Literary Forms in Scripture**

When we approach Scripture we are entering a world far removed from our own. To us, for example, the psalms appear to belong to one category. However, Jews recognise that they include a dozen or more different literary forms – hymns of praise, pilgrim songs, supplications of individuals or of the whole people, ballads for instruction, prayers of thanksgiving, etc. Lacking direct experience of traditional Jewish life and ways of thinking, the contemporary reader has to gradually learn these various types of psalm.

The prophetic books also contain many examples of different literary forms. The paranetic sermon aims at driving home certain central truths about loyalty to God. Covenantal threats, prophetic promises, satirical songs of mourning are other categories that are phrased in highly technical language. An understanding of the prophetic oracles require much knowledge about daily life in Israel – the legal system, ceremonies at court, market scenes, feasts, parties, covenantal renewals, rituals at burial and business contracts. Only with such knowledge are readers able to understand the literary forms and with them, the true message of the prophets.

Historical narration in the Old Testament is presented in many different literary forms. Readers' difficulties regarding historicity are due to a failure to recognise these forms. For example, we tend to organise biblical narratives into categories that are known to us – eyewitness reports, historical treatises, biographies and so on. This is a mistake that leads to misunderstandings.

Jewish narrators for example often explain how a place or a person received its name. In such accounts it is not the accuracy of the facts but the explanation of the name that matters. Similarly, prophetic legends of the type that grew up round Moses, Elijah and Elisha, exaggerate miracles to emphasise forcefully God's direct action through these persons.

## **Literary Forms in the New Testament**

The New Testament books were written in Greek between 50 AD and 140 AD. They include the Gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, the Epistles or Letters and the Book of Revelation. The central theme of the New Testament is Jesus Christ – his person, his message, his passion, death and resurrection, his identity as the promised Messiah and his relationship to the followers he left behind, the Church.

Each book of the New Testament needs to be approached on its own terms. In a sense The New Testament is like an anthology containing a number of different kinds of literature, each of which must be read and studied in the light of the characteristics of its particular form. Ignoring the literary differences between Revelation, Philippians, Acts, Matthew or Hebrews leads to a misreading of them. The various writers chose a particular literary form or forms from what was available to them within their cultural context, according to their purpose.

### **The Letters or Epistles**

The author of many of the letters in the New Testament was Paul of Tarsus, a Pharisee who was converted to Jesus through a vision on the road to Damascus. Paul was highly educated, wrote Greek fluently and was deeply versed in the traditions of the Hebrew Scriptures (Old Testament).

These factors influenced his style of writing – so did his purpose in writing his letters, which was to keep in touch with the small Christian communities that he had founded during his travels. Paul used the epistle, an existing literary form; because he could not be physically present to his communities, he wrote to them. Probably at times he also used to dictate his letters to scribes or to his disciples, who would write the letters for him.

Other New Testament letter writers were Peter, Jude, John and James. They had the same purpose as Paul and used similar literary forms.

Within the letters of the New Testament are various sub-forms, including exhortation and confrontation.

### **Characteristics of the Epistolary Form**

Paul's letters are known by the names of the communities or persons to which they were written; the others bear the names of their authors. They begin and end with formal greetings and prayers. Written in the present tense, they deal with real current situations in the early Church. They were not intended for general circulation but were regarded as being so valuable and spiritually helpful, that they were in fact handed around the different communities.

Their style is at times easy and familiar, at other times stern: they teach, advise, warn or praise. They contain personal details and information about the writers, but all have the purpose of keeping the message of Christ before the readers.

The images used in the letters, for example, 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 where Paul speaks of the body of Christ, his Church, are based partly on cultural background but more on the spiritual truths the writer wishes to emphasise.

### **Apocalyptic Literature**

An unusual literary form found in parts of the Gospel of Matthew and in the Book of Revelation is apocalyptic literature, an extended story form that has some of the characteristics of a secret code. Much use is made of visions, angels, fire, colour and demonic presence in quite extravagant imagery. The Book of Revelation may be regarded as protest literature, written in time of persecution, to maintain the hope of a people oppressed by evil governments, suffering for their faith but looking forward to divine vindication and redemption.

### **The Acts of Apostles**

These involve yet another literary form, the travel diary. The author, Luke, records the missionary journeys of Paul, their adventures and trials. The Acts show the development of the Church through the missionary communities. Again the story is based on a spiritual interpretation of actual events, places and people.

In all, the New Testament is a literary record of people who experienced Jesus in some way – by personal acquaintance or by someone else's experience conveyed through teaching. It is also a record of prayer and reflection on the life and works of Jesus. It is a source of life and grace to those who read or hear it; because of the literary efforts of those who wrote it, it is an integral part of the Christian heritage.

### **The Gospels**

Many of the literary characteristics of the letters are also found in the gospels. These are not four biographies of Christ. Like the letters they are unique in Christian literature.

The gospels view Jesus Christ from an Easter perspective. Although they bear the names of four men who traditionally were regarded as their authors, they were more likely a compilation by several writers from the community where they originated after Jesus' Resurrection. In the gospels, from beginning to end, Jesus is presented as the Risen Lord.

From the time of Mark's Gospel (about 67-70 AD) to that of John written (about 95-100 AD) a great deal happened to the Christian communities. This is one reason why the gospels are an extremely complex literary form – they have their basis in history, but history written from a spiritual view point, remembered and reflected on over the passage of years. They have little concern with chronology and portray four different perspectives of Jesus. In the gospels the meaning of Jesus' words and actions are much more important than the order of events. The Holy Spirit gives a deeper understanding to the words and works of Jesus as the community studies them and prays with them.

## **Literary Forms within the Gospels**

The gospel writers also employ a diverse range of literary forms. Many of them would have been familiar to the early Christian community because as Jews they would have experienced them in Jewish Scripture. Some of them are:

### **a) Midrash Haggadah**

The Gospels of Luke and Matthew begin with what can be called midrash haggadah, found frequently in the Hebrew Scriptures. These are stories told to instruct and edify, and in these two Gospels, emphasise the divine origin of Jesus and the events of his birth and childhood. These stories interpret as they narrate: and in the New Testament they always start with Jesus Christ, not from Scripture, as is the case in the Old Testament. In this way a Jewish cultural form was used to establish the miraculous birth of Jesus and the part played by his mother in the divine plan.

### **b) The Genealogy**

Both Matthew and Luke include genealogies of Jesus in their gospels (Matthew 1:1-17; Luke 3:23-38). These records of relationships of descent establish a person's membership of a particular group of kin. They are not marked by strict biological accuracy but structure history in such a way that the status and power of an individual is determined by their relationship to their ancestors.

The genealogy which opens Matthew's gospel, structures the history of Israel into sets of fourteen and draws special attention to Jesus' descent from the royal line of David. Five women are listed in the genealogy – a practice that is unusual – especially as some are significant for their promiscuity and others because they are non-Israelites. Their names are included not to enhance Jesus' stature but to communicate something about the nature of the good news of Jesus' coming.

Genealogies often move from the most distant in time to the most recent. Luke's genealogy, however, begins with Jesus and works backwards to "Adam, son of God". By doing so he is emphasising Jesus' own identity as Son of God.

Elsewhere in the gospels concern with ancestral heritage is an indication of status and kinship (e.g. Luke 1:5).

### **c) The Symposium**

At the time of Jesus, the symposium was the second course of a Greek or Roman banquet, a drinking-and-talking party. Typically, symposia were characterised by a common cast of characters – the host (usually noted for his wealth and / or wisdom), the chief guest (noted for his wit and wisdom), and other guests who to varying degrees would join in the discussion. Symposia also had a certain structure:

- The identification of the guests.
- An action or event that determined or introduced the discussion topic.
- The discussion itself.

Guests on the invitation list (usually men) were chosen to preserve and enhance the status of the host. They were arranged around a U-shaped table, reclining in positions that indicated their relative status.

In Luke's Gospel Jesus is seen to take part in occasions of this type. However, his own practices at the table indicated his willingness to associate with persons of low status, even women (see Luke 5:27-32; 7:36-50). Jesus' unconventional conversation, urging his table companions not to worry about status-seeking and positions of honour (Luke 14:1-24) and the bad behaviour of his followers who argue over greatness at the table (Luke 22:24-27) undermine the conventions of this genre.

**d) The Type-Scene**

These are episodes that occur at moments of crisis in a character's life. They follow certain established patterns and often repeat material from the Old Testament:

Aspects of the birth narratives in the gospels of Matthew (1:20-21) and Luke (1:11-20, 26-37, 2:9-12) – the announcement of the birth, the name of the child, the future of the child – are based on Old Testament models (Genesis 16:7-13; 17:1-21; 18:1-15; Judges 13:3-20).

The scenes of commission in the gospels also repeat Old Testament patterns (Judges 6:14; Jeremiah 1:7-10), as does the scene of Jesus meeting the Samaritan woman at the well (see John 4:1-42).

Type-scenes establish expectations on the part of the readers, helping them to anticipate what might come next. Sometimes the message of the passage is emphasised by these expectations themselves being undermined.

**e) The Farewell Discourse**

This literary form occurs in the Old Testament – characters including Jacob (Genesis 48-49), Moses (Deuteronomy 31-34) and Joshua (Joshua 23-24) all deliver farewell discourses.

Generally the farewell discourse includes a reference to approaching death, gathering one's relations or followers, review of one's life, exhortations, predictions, warnings, blessings and a final prayer. Farewell discourses report the honoured person's last words and allow that person's message to be summed up in one solemn teaching moment.

Jesus' farewell discourses are found in the gospels (see Luke 22 and John 13-17) where their purpose is to instruct those who are left behind. In them Jesus defends his course of action and emphasises the fundamental values and practices that he wants the community he is leaving behind to embrace.

**f) The Passion Narrative**

A significant section of each of the gospels is an account of Jesus' suffering and death (Matthew 26-27, Mark 14-15, Luke 22-23, John 12-19). These narratives stress the centrality of Jesus' death in God's plan to bring the Good News into human history.

The story of the vindication of the innocent sufferer is found in the Old Testament. Set against a legal or royal setting, the chief characters in these accounts are recognised for their outstanding qualities. Their lives are endangered, often through malicious scheming. Though innocent, they suffer persecution. Finally they are vindicated. In early representations of this form (see Joseph in Genesis 37-42), rescue and vindication came before death. However, later rescue and vindication came after, and through death (see 2 Maccabees 7 and Wisdom 1-2, 4).

The passion narratives of the gospels look back to these and other Scriptures including Psalm 22 and the song of the Servant of Yahweh (Isaiah 52:13–53:12). Jesus' horrific and shameful death on the Cross is presented with a depth of significance against the background of these Old Testament models.

**g) The Summary**

Summary is one of the many ways of marking time in a narrative. The evangelists use summaries to provide transitions from one scene to the next and to provide important background information (see Mark 1:45). Summaries tend to emphasise what is typical in the narrative (see Luke 8:1-3).

**h) Stories**

The most striking literary form in the gospel is the story. Jesus' message and teachings are recorded in many different types of story – parables, nature miracles, miracles of healing, discourses, sermons, sayings, riddles, maxims and speeches. The imagery contained in these stories is cultural, (eg the story of the Good Shepherd or the Woman at the Well) but the narrative is always directed towards spiritual instruction. Occasionally, Jesus explains the interpretation to his disciples, eg the parable of the Sower and the Seed. The gospels are the Good News of Jesus and this is their unifying literary feature.

There are distinctive types of stories within this literary form which have a particular form and purpose.

**i. The Parable**

The term parable refers to short stories within the gospels but also includes axioms, brief comparisons, similes, lessons drawn from everyday life, as well as metaphorical language in general. Key to an understanding of parable is the notion of using what is known in order to provide insight into what is not known.

As a literary form a parable is an imaginative story – possessing a beginning, middle, and an end – developed from ordinary life situations and told to make a



certain point. Parables may point beyond themselves to the larger story of God-human relationships, or they may depend for their message on people applying the lessons of everyday life to the life of discipleship. Sometimes the parable introduces a surprising twist into its storyline. This unexpected aspect challenges the reader to reflect more deeply on the story's meaning and on the nature of all reality. Such parables suggest an alternative vision of the world and of life as God sees it. Often parables are more concerned with bringing about change than with bringing comfort.

When Jesus employs parables and comparisons, we should distinguish *the story itself*, with its images and illustrations, from *the point* of the story, that is, what Jesus wants to teach.

**ii. *Miracle Stories***

The miracle stories are usually organised into five sections:

1. An introduction which presents the situation / person that needs healing.
2. A request for help that shows the faith of the person in need or of those around them.
3. The intervention of the person from whom the miracle is sought.
4. The result of the intervention.
5. The reaction of those who witnessed the event – fear or admiration.

**iii. *Pronouncement Stories***

In pronouncement stories a very simple story functions as a "context" for a decisive pronouncement by Jesus. The story often serves to illustrate a teaching of Jesus. In Mark 3:1-6, for example, the miracle story about the healing of the man with a withered hand serves to illustrate the decisive pronouncement that precedes it in Mark 2: 27-28: "The Sabbath was made for human beings, not human beings for the Sabbath."

Characteristic of such stories is their simplicity and ability to stand alone. Precise times and places, even the names of persons involved, are usually unimportant and often absent. In this story, for example, we are not told in which synagogue the healing takes place, nor the man's name, nor how he was healed. The focus here is not on the miracle of healing, but on the authority of Jesus and his decisive pronouncement concerning the Sabbath.

Such stories are creations of the Christian community, as elaborations of originally independent pronouncements.

**iv. *Call Narratives***

The stories of the calling of the disciples by Jesus are usually brief. They consist of a call followed by a response. These stories are modelled on the pattern established in the Old Testament of God calling leaders and prophets. Jesus is shown to be calling with the same authority as God.

**i) Controversies**

The controversy or discussion between scholars was a genre in which the rabbis were trained. The gospels often reveal a situation where an action or saying of Jesus causes amazement on the part of his audience. This then leads to a debate over what Jesus has said or done and its basis in Scripture. The discussion ends with Jesus pointing to the real meaning of his words or action. The listeners are thus challenged to make a decision – to accept or reject Jesus on the basis of what he has said or done.

**j) Maxims**

Encapsulated maxims occur when a saying thought to be important is inserted into a story that then serves as a framework for it. This story, whether it be a miracle, controversy or anecdote, is there only to set off the saying.

Other maxims are “floating”. These are sayings of Jesus which people have remembered, although they have forgotten the context in which these sayings were first pronounced. They are given a new context in another discourse or story.

**k) Hymns and Prayers**

These well-known literary forms also feature in the gospels. For example, the Magnificat (Luke 1:46-55) is a canticle or type of hymn.

## Links with the Student Text

**Student Text pages 10 and 11**

The material on these pages introduces students to the literary forms that are found in the New Testament, especially the gospels. The exercises encourage students to reflect on why an understanding of literary forms is important and direct students to distinguish between them.

**Task 7**

**Literary Form (page 10 Student Text)**

Here students are asked to link examples of particular literary forms with the terms – provided on a word list – that are used to describe them.

The answers are as follows:

- |                   |                 |                |
|-------------------|-----------------|----------------|
| a) Letter         | b) History Book | c) Joke        |
| d) Court Evidence | e) Novel        | f) Love Letter |
| g) Fairy Story    | h) Lyric        | i) Poem        |
| j) Prayer         |                 |                |

## **Task 8**

### **Literary Forms in the Newspaper (page 11 Student Text)**

Here students are asked to use their local newspapers to find examples of the various forms found in newspapers.

Here are some brief explanations of each of these forms:

- a) **Cartoon** – a caricature which gets a message across.
- b) **Editorial** – an article expressing the editor's opinion about a current issue.
- c) **News report** – as far as possible, an unbiased presentation of an event that has happened.
- d) **Advertisement** – information about products using persuasion and emotive appeals.
- e) **Classified advertisement** – objective information about goods or services which are categorised for easy access.
- f) **Letter to the editor** – readers express their opinion on a public issue in the form of a letter to the editor.

### **Thinking about: Literary Forms (page 11 Student Text)**

Students are then invited to consider the following

1. Name two things that are particular to each literary form.
1. What is the difference between each example
2. In what way does an editorial differ from a new report
3. Do you think that the literary form used conveys adequately, the purpose of the writer?

## **Task 9**

### **Literary Form in the New Testament (page 12 Student Text)**

In this task students are asked to match each literary form with its correct description and biblical example. They will need Bible to complete this task.

The answers given below name the literary form gives its description and the correct biblical reference

Literary form	Description	Biblical example
a. Nature miracle	6. A sign that shows Jesus' power over the forces of nature	ix. Storm at sea Mark 4: 35-41
b. Prayer	4. Calling on God's gifts for people and/or thanking God for gifts that have been given	vi. Ephesians 6:23-24

c. Diary	2. Personal account of events recorded in writing	ii. Acts 16:11-15
d. Apocalyptic	1. A story that has some of the features of a secret code. Use is made of visions, angles, fire etc.	iii. Revelation 12:1
e. Blessing	9. A specially worded form used in the early Church liturgies to illustrate a point about Jesus e.g. <i>Hail Mary</i>	xi. Mary's Canticle Luke 1:46-55
f. Controversy Story	8. A passage in which everything centres around Jesus and his opponents.	i. Tribute to Caesar Mark 12: 13-17
g. Parable	7. A short story drawn from everyday life, with a religious message	v. Prodigal son Luke 15:11-32
h. Letters	5. Written communication between people	viii. 1 Thessalonians 1:1
i. Healing Account	10. An account of Jesus bringing wholeness to a sick person	vii. Cure of the deaf mute Matthew 9: 32-34
j. Riddle	11. A question or statement that requires thought to understand	x. Matthew 11:11
k. Sermon/teaching	3. A teaching from a learned person, usually based on the Word of God	iv. Matthew 5: 7-28

## **Part Three: The Composition of the New Testament**

**See Student Text pages 13 to 22**

### **Achievement Objective 2**

Students will be able to investigate the composition of the New Testament, especially of the gospels.

### **Church Teachings**

- The New Testament Canon, which was determined by the Church, consists of twenty-seven books.
- The central concern of the New Testament are the actions, teachings, Passion and glorification of *Hehu Karaiti*, and the beginnings of the Church, through the power of *Te Wairua Tapu*.
- In the gospels, which are at the heart of the Scriptures, we discover most of what we know about the life and teachings of Jesus Christ.
- The gospels were formed in three distinct stages – the life and teachings of Jesus, the oral tradition, and the written gospels.

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this topic students will:

- Identify key features of the composition of the New Testament.
- Outline the three stages of gospel formation.

### **Teacher Background**

#### **The New Testament**

For many centuries the Christian Church has cherished and read the twenty-seven different documents that make up the New Testament. Written over a period of about fifty years, these were originally separate works and not part of a collection. The term New Testament was not used to describe them as an entity until the second century AD.

In terms of their arrangement in the Bible, the first four books of the New Testament collection are the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – the focus of the present topic. These are followed by the Acts of the Apostles, the second part of Luke's story, which tells how Jesus' first followers spread the Good News from Jerusalem to the

Greek East and the Roman Empire. After Acts come the letters or epistles. Thirteen of these have Paul's name attached to them. The rest are by other close followers of Jesus. Most are written to the new groups of Christians in different places, answering questions, explaining more about what Jesus did, and showing them how to live out their new faith in practical ways. The last book in the New Testament is Revelation. It looks forward to the final triumph of God as an encouragement to believers when times are especially hard.

### **What is a Gospel?**

Although it is important to understand the historical origins of the Christian message and the literary forms in which it was first expressed, the significance of the four gospels, for the Christian, is primarily theological.

The gospels are not biographies. A careful reading of the gospels shows that it is impossible to construct a simple historical account of the life of Jesus or to trace his movements with any certainty. At first sight, while the four gospels seem to share a great amount of similar and – in the case of the synoptic gospels – even identical material, a closer examination reveals confusing inconsistencies.

The first line of the first gospel suggests what we should expect when we read a gospel – not a life story but an *evangelion*, a kind of religious advertisement that proclaims its author's faith in Jesus of Nazareth and the Christian message.

“The beginning of the gospel about Jesus Christ, the Son of God.”  
(Mark 1:1)

The term *evangelion* (meaning “gospel”) has a long history in the Greek language where it is associated with the joyful proclamation of good news – victory in battle, the arrival of a great king, or other similar celebratory events in the life of the people.

The four gospel writers or evangelists did not set out to write a “Life of Jesus” but had other intentions – to announce the Good News (the translation of the Old English word “gospel”) that Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, the Son of God, and to tell the further Good News of the salvation he had brought about by his death and Resurrection.

In compiling their various versions of the Good News of Jesus Christ, the evangelists went back to words and events from Jesus' own life – words and deeds which had been passed on by word of mouth and perhaps, in some cases, in written form – and which were recalled in the community's liturgical celebrations. These traditions stand behind each of the gospels. And while each evangelist used these traditions in his own unique way, the traditions themselves have their origins in the memory of the life and teaching of Jesus, a memory that was kept alive in the earliest Christian communities among whom the evangelists lived and for whom they wrote. Certainly the gospels do tell us about the life, person, and activity of Jesus of Nazareth, but they were never intended to be biographies of Jesus.

The form of literature called “gospel” was a relatively late literary activity of the early Church. Before the first gospel was ever written (about 70 AD), Saint Paul, from the late 40s until the early 60s, had been writing letters to various Christian communities and individuals around the eastern Mediterranean, expressing his understanding of what Christian faith and life was about. Yet at no stage did Paul show any interest in telling the story of Jesus of Nazareth.

The earliest form of literature produced in the Christian Church was the epistle or letter. Although this form did not set out to “tell a story” it is possible to learn from Paul’s letters a little about the story of Jesus:

- Jesus was born of a Jewish woman (see Galatians 4:4).
- Jesus instituted a new sort of Passover meal which was intimately connected with his death (see 1 Corinthians 11:23-26).
- Jesus died, was buried, rose from the dead and appeared to his followers (see 1 Corinthians 15:3-5).

Paul also indicates that what he writes about the life, person and teaching of Jesus is something that he has received – a tradition or handing down. These traditions that are significant for Paul also form the basis of the gospels. Each gospel writer builds his stories of Jesus upon his particular community’s set of traditions.

Although the evangelists did not write twenty-first-century-style biographies, the gospel form is closely linked with the life, the preaching, and especially, the cross and Resurrection of Jesus. The gospels are a testimony of faith in the person and teaching of Jesus – their emphasis is always on the Good News proclaimed in and for the Church.

Each of the four gospels presents a different portrait of Jesus and it is inappropriate to try to harmonise them, to say that all four evangelists are saying the same thing. Rather, the fourfold gospel tradition leads the Christian into a mystery whose depths continue to question our absolutes and challenge our comfortable ways.

A correct reading of the gospels needs to take into account the circumstances of the community for which each particular gospel was written. At the same time the Christian recognises that the gospels are living texts that have a privileged place in the liturgy and life of the Church. The Second Vatican Council spoke powerfully about the place of Scripture – especially the Gospels – in the Christian tradition:

Among all the inspired writings, even among those of the New Testament, the Gospels have a special place, and rightly so, because they are our principal source of the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word, our Saviour. (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 18)

The Church has always venerated the divine Scriptures as she venerated the Body of the Lord, in so far as she never ceases, particularly in the sacred liturgy, to

partake of the bread of life and to offer it to the faithful from the one table of the Word of God and the Body of Christ. (Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation 21)

It is always from a position of faith that Christians read the sacred Scriptures as the inspired Word of God. Together with sacred tradition, they form the supreme rule of the Church's faith:

For, since they are inspired by God and committed to writing once and for all time, they present God's own words in an unalterable form, and they make the voice of the Holy Spirit sound again and again in the words of the prophets and the apostles. (Dei Verbum 21)

### **The Development of the Jesus Traditions in the Early Church**

The early Church and its traditions formed the gospels, which looked *backwards* to the Jesus traditions and *forwards* to the present and future needs of their writers' own communities.

The following are important steps in the sequence that lead to the composition of the gospels, as we know them:

- In the beginning was the person of Jesus Christ.
- After the impact of the Resurrection, a belief in the risen Christ was born – “the story of Jesus” became the precious heritage of the “oral tradition” of the Church.
- Paul's letters focused on Jesus' death and Resurrection and their significance for us all.
- The “traditional” stories were preached during Christian liturgical celebrations, retold in all sorts of settings, and some were eventually written down in documents that we no longer possess.
- As time went by, and there were fewer people alive who had living contact with the man Jesus, the Church saw the need to preserve Jesus' memory in the written forms that we call gospels.

The appearance of the first gospel, Mark, was an important literary event. The writer of Mark created a new form of literature, a gospel, which uses the story of the life, teaching, death and Resurrection of Jesus to communicate the *evangelion* – the Good News that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that God has saved us in and through his Son.

### **The Formation of the Gospels**

A document from the Pontifical Biblical Commission, *Instruction on the Historical Truth of the Gospels* (1964), makes reference to three stages in the process that formed the four gospels:

**Stage One** corresponds to the public ministry of Jesus, which can be dated approximately to 30-33 AD. Jesus himself did not leave anything in writing. Nothing was written about Jesus in the course of his public ministry, except, perhaps, the sign



over the cross that Pilate ordered, 'Jesus of Nazareth, King of the Jews'. The evidence of the gospels suggests that Jesus did not instruct his followers to write anything about him. Rather, he commanded them to preach and to teach.

**Stage Two** in the formation of the gospels, was the preaching and teaching of the apostles, which can be dated approximately from 33 to 70 AD. After the first Easter, the apostles and eyewitnesses proclaimed the death and resurrection of Jesus as the revelation of God's love for the world. They began their proclamation where our written gospels finish, with the death and resurrection of Jesus. They soon went on to speak about the life of Jesus, his words and his deeds, perhaps in response to the question, 'Why was Jesus crucified?' A good example of such preaching is to be found in Peter's words to the pagan Cornelius in Acts 10:36-43. In the light of Easter these first preachers understood the significance of Jesus' identity and mission in a way that was not possible during his public ministry. They preached and taught in the light of their Easter faith.

The first preachers were Aramaic-speaking, but soon the tradition about Jesus had to be translated from Aramaic into Greek as the preaching of the gospel spread beyond Palestine. These first preachers and teachers were not interested in conveying information about Jesus for its own sake. They sought to arouse faith in others, faith in Jesus as the Christ, as Lord and Saviour. They selected from the tradition of Jesus' words and deeds what was most helpful in preaching the gospel to unbelievers, in teaching the gospel to those who had come to believe, in disputing with Jewish opponents and so on. In time, they may have gathered together the teaching of Jesus according to particular topics, e.g. a collection of his parables on the kingdom; and the deeds of Jesus according to some common element, e.g. a collection of healing stories. The handling of the tradition about Jesus in the early church involved a certain revision of that material, in order to apply it to the living issues of the church. The forty years of this second period was predominantly a time of **oral tradition**. The tradition concerning Jesus' public ministry, death and resurrection circulated in oral form. However, in the course of this period, some of that tradition began to be expressed in written form. It is likely that the events of the last few days of Jesus' life found written expression relatively quickly. There may well have been an early version of what we call the passion narrative in this second stage. There is also evidence to suggest that a written collection of the sayings of Jesus began to take shape. In other words, some of the Jesus tradition had already begun to be put into writing before the first gospel was written.

**Stage Three** – the third and final step in the formation of the gospels – covers the period from 70 to 100 AD when the evangelists recorded the gospels in their written form. The evangelists, although they were the next generation to the original eyewitnesses, inherited the tradition about Jesus that came from them. This fact is explicitly recognised at the very beginning of Luke's Gospel:

"Since many have undertaken to set down an orderly account of the events that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed on to us by those who

from the beginning were eyewitnesses and servants of the word, I too decided, after investigating everything carefully from the first, to write an orderly account for you..." (Luke 1:1-3)

Luke acknowledges that his work is based on the tradition that was handed on by the original eyewitnesses who subsequently became "servants of the word", i.e. preachers and teachers. What is true of Luke's Gospel is also true of the others.

The four gospels were written anonymously. Their authors did not sign their names to them. The titles 'according to Mark', etc. were added to the gospels in the second half of the second century. Such titles are clearly based on earlier tradition, and represent the best judgement of the Church at the time as to the identity of the evangelists. In the early church, authorship referred to the authority behind a particular scriptural work not just to the person who wrote it down. Thus, the gospel 'according to Matthew' is the gospel that has Matthew for its authority. It does not necessarily mean that Matthew the apostle wrote that gospel, but, rather, that he had some responsibility for the tradition behind the gospel – the oral tradition out of which the written gospel developed.

It is now recognised that none of the evangelists were eyewitnesses to the events of Jesus' public ministry, but belonged to the next generation of Christians. The Instruction of the Biblical Commission, accordingly, distinguishes the 'apostles' of Stage Two from the 'sacred authors / writers' of Stage Three.

### **Sources**

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke are referred to as synoptic (from the Greek word meaning "general/common view") because they frequently parallel each other closely in content and expression.

When these three gospels are placed together side-by-side, apart from the similarities across all three, it becomes obvious that there exists material common to Matthew and Luke which has no parallel in Mark. This material, common to Matthew and Luke but absent from Mark, consists for the most part of sayings or teachings of Jesus, e.g. the Lord's Prayer (Matthew 6:9-13; Luke 11:2-4). The material common to Matthew and Luke often agrees in detail. To explain this material, scholars suggest that Matthew and Luke drew on another written source when writing their gospels, a source not known to Mark, viz. a collection of the sayings of Jesus, referred to as 'Q' for short, after the German word 'Quelle' (Source). In other words, when Matthew and Luke came to write their gospels they drew upon two major written sources, Mark's Gospel and a written collection of the sayings of Jesus. This latter source is no longer in existence. It remains a hypothesis, but a valid one.

The oral tradition about Jesus continued on into the period of the evangelists. The evangelists Matthew and Luke had their own independent access to this oral tradition. This helps to explain material in Matthew that is not in Luke (or Mark) and material in Luke that is not in Matthew (or Mark). Material that is unique to Matthew or Luke is designated 'M' or 'L' respectively, e.g. the parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard in

Matthew (20:1-15), and the parable of the Pharisee and the Tax Collector in Luke (18: 9-14). However, only some of what is designated 'M' or 'L' will have come from a source known only to Matthew or Luke respectively. We also have to reckon with the probability that some of what is designated 'M' or 'L' has been composed by the evangelist in question.

### **The Fourth Gospel**

John's Gospel seems to have been composed independently of the other three. One of the most significant characters in this gospel is referred to as "the disciple whom Jesus loved" (13:23; 19:26-27, 35; 20:2-10; 21:7, 20-24; cf. 18:15-16). He is presented as a very close associate of Jesus, an eyewitness to his ministry, in particular, to the passion and death of Jesus, the discovery of the empty tomb and the appearances of Jesus following the Resurrection. The gospel claims that he is an authoritative and reliable eyewitness (19:35; 21:24), whose testimony is the foundation of the gospel itself. He is understood within this gospel as the authority behind the gospel, the one who was ultimately responsible for the writing of the gospel (21:24). He was probably the primary influence on the oral tradition behind this particular gospel. At no stage in the fourth gospel is this significant eyewitness given a name, although the second century Church understood this disciple to be John, the son of Zebedee. On the basis solely of the internal evidence of John's Gospel, his identity remains a puzzle. Some contemporary scholars suggest that when we read the "beloved disciple" it is the ideal disciple, a literary devise of the author to indicate what all disciples need to do and how they are to be to bring about the message of the Reign of God. It is probable that, following the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus, he was a significant preacher and teacher within the faith community out of which the fourth gospel emerged. This community, which is referred to as the 'Johannine community', looked up to him as the reliable eyewitness whose interpretation of all that Jesus said and did was authoritative. After the death of the beloved disciple, the fourth evangelist, who would have been a close associate of this disciple, gathered and shaped the traditions from the beloved disciple into a gospel. He developed some of the stories of Jesus' miracles into superb dramas; the sayings of Jesus were woven into lengthy discourses of a solemn and poetic character. Shortly after the evangelist had completed his work, there is evidence to suggest that another writer from within the Johannine community, often referred to as the 'redactor', added some material to the gospel. Scholars generally attribute Chapter 21 to this redactor.

### **Stages of NT Formation and Transmission** (*with considerable chronological overlap, continuing down to today*):

1. **The Historical Jesus** – words are spoken and deeds are performed by Jesus himself during his lifetime on earth.
2. **Oral Tradition** – traditions and beliefs about Jesus are developed and passed on by early Christian communities.
3. **Written Sources** – some of the miracles and/or sayings of Jesus are compiled and recorded in early written documents.
4. **Written Texts** – individual letters, full Gospels, etc., are written with particular messages for particular situations.



5. **Distribution** – some writings are copied and shared with other Christian communities throughout the Mediterranean.
6. **Collection** – certain Christians begin collecting the letters of Paul and gathering together several different Gospels.
7. **Canonisation** – four Gospels, several collections of letters, and a few other texts are accepted as authoritative scriptures.
8. **Translation** – biblical texts are translated into other ancient and modern languages: Latin, Syriac, Coptic, Armenian, etc.
9. **Interpretation** – the meaning of the scriptures is investigated on various levels: literal, spiritual, historical, social, etc.
10. **Application** – communities and individuals use the NT for practical purposes: liturgical, moral, sacramental, theological, etc.

All the New Testament writings passed through several stages of editing or redaction before final versions were reached, by about 200 AD. But it was not until the Council of Trent in 1546 that the final canon, a list of books accepted by the Church as inspired, was defined:

It has thought it proper, moreover, to insert in this decree a list of the sacred books, so that no doubt may remain which books are recognised by this Council . . . New Testament: the four Gospels, according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John; the Acts of the Apostles written by Luke the Evangelist; fourteen epistles of the Apostle Paul – to the Romans, two to the Corinthians, to the Galatians, Ephesians, Philippians, Colossians, two to Timothy, to Titus, Philemon, and the Hebrews; two epistles of the Apostle Peter, three of the Apostle John, one of the Apostle James, one of the Apostle Jude, and the Apocalypse of the Apostle John. (Council of Trent, 1546)

The acceptance of a book into the canon depended on its:

- Apostolicity – it needed to be written by an apostle or someone closely associated.
- Catholicity – it had to be relevant to the whole Church.
- Tradition – there needed to be evidence that the book had always been used in the Church.
- Orthodoxy – the book contained no errors or heresy.

No other works have since been added to the New Testament.

### **Links with the Student Text**

#### **Student Text pages 13 to 22**

The material on these pages introduces students to the physical arrangement of the New Testament within the Bible. It also gets them to start thinking about when and where it was written.

## **Task 10**

### **Hand on Bible Investigation (page 13 Student text)**

This exercise is a hands-on investigation of the New Testament. It will take students about 30 minutes to complete. They will need access to Bibles

The answers are as follows. The quotes from Scripture come from the Good NRSV Bible

1. What is the first book in The New Testament? *The Gospel of Matthew*  
Write out the first verse. *An account of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah, the son of David, the son of Abraham.*
2. What is the last book in The New Testament? *The Book of Revelation* Write out the last two verses. *Amen. Come Lord Jesus! The grace of the Lord Jesus be with all the saints. Amen.*
3. Compare the length of the Old Testament with the New Testament.  
*According to a rough count, there are about 330 pages of New Testament in the Catholic Youth Bible edition of the NRSV. There are 1200 pages of the Old Testament.*
4. Which one is bigger and by about how much *The Old Testament is bigger. It is 4 times bigger.*
5. What is the significance in the difference in length between the Old and New Testaments?
  - *The Old Testament covers a much longer period of time than the New Testament.*
  - *The Old Testament being so much longer, has space for a greater variety of literary styles, e.g. family histories (Genesis and Kings), legal statements (Leviticus), novels (Ruth), prophecies (Isaiah), songs (Psalms), etc.*
  - *Because the New Testament is shorter it is more compact. Where the Old Testament has many main figures, the New Testament has only one, Jesus Christ.*
6. Estimate the number of words in the New Testament. – *it contains roughly 150,000 words.*
7. Compare that answer with the number of words in one of the full-length books you have studied in English. *Answers will vary.*  
What conclusion do you come to concerning the length of the New Testament?  
*The New Testament is not a long book it does not take long to read right through.*
8. How many books are there in the New Testament? *27.*

9. Which book is the shortest? *The Second Letter of John (slightly shorter than the Third Letter of John).*
10. Which book is the longest? *Matthew's Gospel is the longest work in the New Testament. Luke's Gospel appears to be the longest in the Good News Edition. The Acts of the Apostles is also very long. Advanced students will recognise that these are two parts of one work which is clearly the longest! In the case of the Letters, editors place the longest one first, ie the Letter to the Romans. This means that their position in the New Testament disregards chronology.*
11. What types of writing or literary forms are the books in the New Testament? *Students can discover the types of writing that are found in the New Testament by reading the titles: Letters and Gospel and 'Acts of...' By looking closer at the text, examples can be found of songs, prayers, blessings, journey stories, history of a sort and others.*
12. Turn to your contents page in the New Testament and note which books have place names in their titles. *There are seven books in the New Testament whose titles refer to places. These are: Rome, Thessalonica, Galatia, Corinth, Ephesus, Philippi, Colossae.*
  - i. Students are then asked to look at the map on page 14 of their text to find these places.
13. What do your answers to Question 12 tell you about the writing of the New Testament? *Although Jesus lived and died in one province of the Roman Empire, the New Testament works were written from and to places throughout the Mediterranean region, including Rome, the capital of the Empire. Jesus spoke mainly in Aramaic but the New Testament was written in Greek. Between the time of Jesus and the writing of the New Testament his message spread out into a different culture and was translated into a different language.*
14. What was written as the sentence about the cross in each of the four Gospels?
  - i. *(Matthew 27:37) This is Jesus, the King of the Jews.*
  - ii. *(Mark 15:26) The King of the Jews.*
  - iii. *(Luke 23: 38) This is the King of the Jews.*
  - iv. *(John 19:19) Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews.*
15. What were the last words of Jesus before He dies in each of the Gospels?
  - i. *(Matthew 27:37) Eli, eli, lema sabachthani.*
  - ii. *(Mark 15:26) My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?*
  - iii. *(Luke 23:46) For into your hands I commend my spirit.*
  - iv. *(John 19:30) It is finished.*
16. Which Gospels have the Infancy Narratives (the Christmas account)? *Matthew 1:18 – 2:12 and Luke 2:1-20.*

17. Read again the first and last verses in the New Testament.  
Can you make a connection between them? *The first and last statements ie from the Gospel of Matthew and the Book of Revelation, are about Jesus Christ: he is the focus of the New Testament – the Good News of the Gospel.*
18. What are the first verses about? *Jesus' genealogy how he fulfils. salvation history.*
19. What are the last two verses about? *The important purpose of the Scriptures is to impress the truth about Christ on all who read it.*

### **Task 11**

#### **Dating the New Testament (page 16 Student Text)**

Students use the information on pages 15 and 16 of their text to order the book of the New Testament according to when they were written.

A template of the task can be found at [www.faithcentral.net.nz](http://www.faithcentral.net.nz) . The order of the books according to date from the earliest is: (downwards)

1 Thessalonians	Titus
2 Thessalonians	1 Timothy
Galatians	1 Peter
1 Corinthians	Luke-Acts
2 Corinthians	Matthew
Romans	Hebrews
Mark	John
James	1 John
Colossians	2 John
Philippians	3 John
Ephesians	Jude
Philemon	Revelation
2 Timothy	2 Peter

#### **Student Text pages 17 to 22**

The material on these pages introduces students to the idea that the gospels were formed in three stages. It also helps them to recognise that the essential historical truth about Jesus is communicated through this process.

## Task 12

### Sources of the Four Gospel Accounts (page 12 Student Text)

This exercise asks students to study the diagram and notes on page 17 which illustrate the sources of the four gospel accounts and answer the following questions:

1. Why do you think all four gospels draw from a common oral tradition?  
The Gospel was preached first before it was written.
2. What reason can you give for the first Gospel not being written until approximately 35 years after the Jesus' death?

No one thought it was necessary. Jesus was expected to return, and most of the first generation Christians had actually seen Jesus or one of the apostles. They had a firsthand knowledge of Jesus.

It became necessary to write the Gospels when those who knew Jesus died, and also when the Church began to spread widely among the Gentiles who had no knowledge either of Christ or the Old Testament.

Aramaic was spoken only by a small group of people so that when the Gospels were written, they were written in the common language of the Mediterranean which was Greek. (Koine = Common)

3. Look at the the sayings of Jesus found in Matthew 8:18-22 and Luke 9:57-60. These are sayings that are not found in Mark's Gospel.

The sayings that appear in both Matthew and Luke (NRSV translation) that are not found in Mark are printed in bold below:

Now when Jesus saw great crowds around him, he gave orders to go over to the other side. A scribe then approached and said, 'Teacher, I will follow you wherever you go'. And Jesus said to him, '**Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head**'. Another of his disciples said to him, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father'. But Jesus said to him, '**Follow me, and let the dead bury their own dead**'. (Matthew 8:18-22)

As they were going along the road, someone said to him, 'I will follow you wherever you go'. And Jesus said to him, '**Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head**'. To another he said, 'Follow me'. But he said, 'Lord, first let me go and bury my father'. But Jesus said to him, '**Let the dead bury their own dead; but as for you, go and proclaim the kingdom of God**'. Another said, 'I will follow you, Lord; but let me first say farewell to those at my home'.



Jesus said to him, 'No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God'. (Luke 9:57-60)

Many scholars suggest that there is an extra source that both Matthew's and Luke's Gospels draw from that Mark's does not. Scholars refer to this hypothetical document of 'sayings' as Document Q. **NB:** Q = Quelle which is German for "source" or "origin".

On the website there is a **Simulation of Gospel Formation** based around elephant jokes that might be useful to use at this time. It takes about 30 minutes to complete.

### **Task 13**

#### **Time Line (pages 18 and 19 Student Text)**

Here students are asked to study the timeline and information on page 19 before answering the questions on page 18.

1. Could Jesus have known Paul?

This question may mislead some students. Yes, Jesus could have known Paul, since the latter was clearly an adult when he was converted (Acts 9:1-19). However, it is likely that Paul would have stated in his letters if he had met Jesus during his life on earth.

2. How old was Jesus approximately when he was crucified and rose from the dead?

Jesus was born in the reign of Herod the Great who died in 4 BC. He was approximately 33-37 years old at the time of his death and Resurrection.

3. Why was oral tradition the first method of passing on the gospel?

The Gospel was preached by the apostles immediately after Jesus' resurrection. They continued to preach not only to people in Palestine but to all those they went to as missionaries, eg: Acts 10:34-43; 13:17-41; 13:44-49; 14:7-12.

4. Why do you think a generation passed before the writing of the first gospel?

This was the period of oral tradition, and the Christians did not yet think it was necessary to write the Gospel.

5. What caused the members of the Church to disperse?

They were dispersed by persecution and missionary activity. People moved away to escape persecution. See Acts 8:1-8

6. Who was the first to write letters between the dispersed communities?

Paul.

7. In what period of time were the gospels written? (Approximately)

Between 65 and 100 approximately. (NB: Scholars differ about exact times. Compare for example Davies' dating (Student Text p12) and dates in Student Text p14.)

8. Can you give reasons why it took a long time for the different writings to be accepted throughout the Christian world?

It would take years for these writings to be made known to the different communities. Travelling was difficult and dangerous. There were no 'printed' versions – the writings would be on fairly delicate papyrus rolls. Not everyone could read. They had to have some 'official' acceptance first, and the Church was not organised until much later.

9. What is a gospel? What does the word mean?

A Gospel is an account of Jesus' life and message. The word means Good News. Jesus is the Saviour.

Photocopy the board game Writing the Gospels for students to play as a revision activity for the material in this section of the topic.

### **Thinking about The Gospels (page 21 Student Text)**

These questions could be considered in order for the students to integrate in the information on pages 21-22 of the Text Book.

In the Gospels we have:

1. The story of Jesus.
  2. The story of the community.
- These come together as the Gospel.

- Which of these do you find to be the most interesting?
- Why?
- Discuss this with a neighbour.

## **Part Four: The Four Gospels**

**See Student Text pages 23 to 27**

### **Achievement Objective 3**

Students will be able to identify distinctive features of each of the four gospel portraits and understand reasons for their differing emphases.

### **Church Teachings**

- The Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John hold a unique position in the Church as a testimony to the life and teaching of Jesus Christ.
- The authors of the four gospels proclaim the truth about *Hehu Karaiti* in their own distinctive ways, depending on the sources they were drawing on and the situations in the communities they were writing for.

### **Learning Outcomes**

At the end of this topic students will:

- Compare and contrast the four gospel portraits – their origins, time and place of writing, intended audience, and presentation of Jesus.

## **Teacher Background**

### **Introduction**

The early Christians were storytellers. Within the first hundred years of the emergence of the early Christian communities, a number of stories were recorded that revealed the worldview of those who told, retold, transmitted and eventually put into written form the story of Jesus Christ.

But the Gospels are not biographies or historical accounts of Jesus' life. A comparison of the gospels with standard biographies will reveal a lack of personal details about Christ and his family. The dates of important incidents and events in Jesus' life are not exact – often they are not mentioned. There are no photographs. No information is provided about Jesus' life from the time he was twelve until his emergence as an adult. Momentous historical events are ignored. His friends appear 'ready-made'. There was little intention on the part of the gospel writers to give specific and authenticated biographical material about Jesus.

How then can the historical truth about Jesus be conveyed in these gospels? Isn't the problem complicated by the existence of **four** accounts, which give different stories about Jesus' life and which usually do not agree as to details, or even omit some information? John's Gospel moreover is radically different from the other three in style and content. For instance, only Luke tells the story of the Prodigal Son; only Luke and Matthew refer to Jesus' infancy; John doesn't mention the institution of the Eucharist.

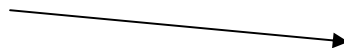
The truth about Jesus is conveyed in the gospels through the faith of the writers. Each gospel was written for a particular community which was quite different from the others in the Christian church. The audience for the gospels changed over the years as the Church moved away from its Jewish origins and spread among Gentiles. Over time, the communities faced various problems – e.g. the rise of heresies and the onset of persecutions. The younger generations followed the teachings and beliefs of their parents but needed permanent written accounts of the Good News. These written accounts developed within the distinct communities and were shaped by their dynamics and needs.

The gospels are written from a post-Resurrection viewpoint. Jesus is the **Risen Lord**, his spiritual influence **has already been felt** in people's lives, so that deep and lasting faith in him is already possible. At the same time, because the gospels present his humanity so vividly and honestly, all can identify with him. Students must be brought to see that Christ is not superman or a ghost! He lived as humans do, he suffered and died as humans do. He **didn't** come down from the cross until after he had died!

“For the truth of the story is not affected by the fact that the four evangelists relate the words and deeds of the Lord in a different order, and express his sayings not literally but differently, while preserving their sense.” (On the Historical Truth of the Gospels 9. Pontifical Biblical Commission, 1964)

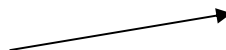
In the Gospels we have:

1. The story of Jesus



These come together as the Gospel

2. The story of the community



The information which follows on the four gospel portraits is taken from *Studying the Gospels: An Introduction* by Gideon Goosen and Margaret Tomlinson (Alexandria, NSW: E.J. Dwyer, 1994). Used with permission.

## **Mark – A Gospel in a Hurry**

### **Author**

We do not know who wrote the Gospel which bears the name of Mark. Early Church tradition, based on the somewhat unreliable historian Papias, thought it was the John Mark of Acts, the disciple of Peter (1 Peter 5:13), but internal evidence does not support this view. In fact, the differences in the background and situation of John Mark, when compared with the impressions the Gospel gives us of its author, are too marked for an identification of Mark the evangelist with John Mark of Acts (cf. Brown & Meier, 1982: 191-197, and Doohan, 1986: 10-11). The most we can say is that Mark was writing for a community that may have known the influence of Peter until his martyrdom sometime between 64 and 67 AD.

### **Date**

Internal evidence suggests that the Gospel was probably written between 65-70, after the death of Peter and towards or at the end of the four-year war between Israel and Rome which resulted in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70. Mark 13 has echoes of this struggle and of the destruction of Jerusalem, as well as mentioning earthquakes (there were three in Nero's reign, which came to an end in 68) and famine (the collapse of Jerusalem was accompanied by famine).

### **Place**

According to tradition, the Gospel was written in Rome. Some scholars have been puzzled by the lack of urban imagery in the Gospel (compared with the Gospel of Matthew, for example) and have suggested a more rural location to the north of Palestine. However, given the internal evidence of the Gospel, Rome is still the most favoured location.

### **Intended Community**

On internal evidence, it is clear that Mark was writing for a predominantly Gentile community (i.e. Christians of non-Jewish origins). There is little concern to show connections with the Old Testament. Mark explains Jewish customs (cf. 7: 3-4; 14: 12; 15: 42), and translates Aramaic words (cf. 3:17; 5:41; 7:11; 10:46). There are more Latinisms in Mark's Gospel than in any other, and it would seem that he is writing for people who knew and used Latin.

### **Background of the Community**

The atmosphere was one of conflict for a community constantly under threat of persecution by the erratic Roman emperors, especially Nero, who had already killed two of their leaders in Rome by 67. The community would have been distressed by the news of the impending destruction, or final destruction in 70, of Jerusalem and its Temple – the place where Christianity had its roots. No doubt some people were asking: is this the end of time? the final event leading to the Parousia? (In Mark 13:5-6 and 21-22, there are indications that Mark was reacting against "parousia pretenders" – men actually claiming to be the risen Christ returning at the end of time.)

## Sources

Before Mark wrote his Gospel, the words and actions of Jesus had been reflected on, in some instances grouped together, and used as the basis of preaching or teaching for over thirty years. Mark seems to have chosen from among the traditions circulating in his community:

1. Probably an early *passion narrative* (arrest, trial, death of Jesus). This narrative was filled with Old Testament references (as is Mark 15) to help believers understand that Jesus went to his cross “in accordance with the Scripture”, and to help Jewish converts (grounded in the Jewish Scriptures) to believe in a crucified Messiah.
2. An *account of the Lord’s Supper* (Paul also used a similar account when writing earlier to the Corinthians: 1 Cor. 11: 23-26).
3. A cycle of *miracle stories* (Chapters 5 and 7).
4. *Controversy stories*. Mark carefully frames these between miracle stories of cures of paralysis.
5. A collection of *parables* (Mark 4).
6. *Apocalyptic writing* (Mark 13) – a style of writing that belonged to the late Old Testament period (e.g. Daniel) and to earliest Christianity.

The author of the Gospel of Mark brought these materials together, imposing a geographical and chronological framework on the “Good News about Jesus Christ” – a framework followed by both Matthew and Luke (but not by John). This framework is more theological than historical, presenting a view of the ministry of Jesus from a particular post-resurrection perspective influenced by his (Mark’s) own and his community’s faith experience.

## Structure

Preparation for Public Ministry	1:1-13
The Galilean Ministry	1:14-7:23
Journeys outside Galilee	7:24-10:52
The Jerusalem Ministry	11:1-13:37
The Passion Narrative	14:1-15:47
The Resurrection Narrative	16:1-8 (16:9-20 later addition).

The structure of the Gospel is inverted parallelism or chiasm in which the first section of the Gospel parallels with the last, and the second with the fourth, with the journey to Jerusalem as the centre or hinge of the chiasm:

- a. Preparatory events
- b. Ministry: Galilee
- c. Journey to Jerusalem
- b. Ministry: Jerusalem
- a. Concluding events: burial.

## Style

Mark's Gospel has been called "a Gospel in a hurry". It is sprinkled with expressions such as "straightaway" Jesus did this and "at once" he did that (there are forty such expressions). Mark is an accomplished storyteller, with an eye to detail and a directness which has emotional impact and draws the reader into the experience. Mark's Jesus is a vivid, human Jesus.

Mark does not use the polished Greek of Luke, but rather everyday, colloquial Greek. As has been said, he translates Aramaic words and uses more Latinisms than any other Gospel. His Gospel has only two speeches or discourses (4:2-34; 13:5-36). He repeats particular words or phrases within an episode to emphasise the point (e.g. forgiveness of sin 2:5, 7, 9, 10).

Mark also uses a repetition pattern of three: three commissioning stories (1:16-20; 3:13-19; 6:7-13), three passion-resurrection predictions (8:31; 9:31; 10:33-34), three episodes of Jesus at prayer (1:35; 6:46; 14:32-42), three episodes on the mountain (3:13; 6:46; 9:2). He uses parallelism, too, including inverted parallelism or chiasm (e.g. the arrangement of the five controversy stories 2:1 to 3:6).

## Theological Slant and Concerns

*Past, present and future* all flow together in the Gospel of Mark: the past of the ministry of Jesus in Galilee, outside Galilee, and going to Jerusalem; the present of the ministry of Jesus in and through his Church; the future of the ministry Jesus will exercise when he comes soon as Son of Man. The writer thinks in terms of a drama that began in the past, continues in the present which the community is experiencing, and will reach a climax in the near future with the imminent coming of the end. Thus past, present and future tend to merge in his story.

Mark is concerned for *Gentiles*, e.g. 13:10; 13:27; 14:9. There are references to Gentiles in the miracle stories in Mark 5 and 7 (the Gerasenes are Gentiles). The centurion in 15:39 is a Gentile; he confesses Jesus as Son of God.

Mark uses *geography* for theological purposes. Galilee is a key place for Jesus' preaching and becomes a point of departure for going to Tyre and Sidon to meet the Gentiles. Ultimately, after the Resurrection (16:7) Galilee becomes the gateway for spreading the Good News. Conversely, Jerusalem is a city shut in on itself that rejects Jesus and puts him to death. In Mark's story, the lake, mountains and wilderness take on rich theological symbolism that goes beyond traditional Jewish understandings of the significance of these places.

The overall image of Jesus is that of the Anointed One, the *Messiah* – a suffering Messiah. The Gospel is of sufficiently early date to reflect the difficulty the Church encountered in its preaching of a suffering rather than a triumphant Messiah. Mark is reminding his readers, constantly faced with the possibility of persecution, that to be a disciple of Jesus means sharing in suffering and rejection before sharing in glory. It is

only after the Resurrection that the disciples know who Jesus really is and what discipleship means.

From its very beginning the Gospel moves towards the culminating point of the *Passion*. Mark immediately introduces John the Baptist (1:4), then records his arrest (1:14) and later links Jesus with John the Baptist (6:14ff.), subtly indicating that what happened to John will happen to Jesus. Mark includes a number of controversy stories of conflicts that centre around Jewish structures and practices: the Sabbath, cleaning, fasting, almsgiving – the boundaries by which the Jews identified themselves. From Mark 8 onwards, there are indications that Jesus was convinced that his ministry would end in his death (8:32-33; 9:30-32; 10:35-45; 14:34)

Mark presents the Passion as the culminating point in Jesus' experience of rejection and abandonment. It is also the point where, in response to the High Priest's question, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?", Jesus answers "I am" (14:16-62) – thus turning the trial, says Doohan (1986: 87) into "an epiphany of the Lord to the worshipping community".

At the beginning of the Gospel, Mark introduces Jesus as the *man from Nazareth* (1:9). Jesus of Nazareth is the man who goes to the cross. From beginning to end, Mark's story is of a very human Jesus with strong emotions.

Mark is quite explicit about the meaning of *discipleship* (8:34-35). Some have suggested that one of the primary purposes behind the writing of this Gospel was a clarification of discipleship (cf Doohan, 1986:93), no doubt prompted by the situation of the Christians in Rome, whose world was collapsing around them. Mark often focuses on the uncertainty and fear that Jesus' disciples experienced, at the same time addressing the need of his community to understand the nature and the challenge of discipleship. It is significant that Mark has Jesus present his main teaching on discipleship on the way to Jerusalem (to his death) and that this teaching is framed between two stories of Jesus curing the blind (8:22-26; 10:46-52). He is gradually opening their eyes to see who he is and to understand the true nature of his Messiahship.

The *community of disciples* gathered around Jesus constitutes the Church for Mark. He does not use the word "Church" and is not preoccupied with its organisation and structure. He uses simple images to express his understanding of the Christian community, such as boat (3:9; 4:1), flock (6:34, 14:27) temple – the new temple of God which replaces the old (14:58; 15:29).

Mark has Jesus begin his ministry with the words "The kingdom of God is close at hand" (1:15). His Gospel has been called a history of the *Kingdom*: he speaks of the requirements for entry (10:13-31) and membership (4:1-34).

The nature of the reign of God and human responses to it are presented in the parable of the sower and instruction on its meaning (4:1-34).



## **Matthew – Jesus As the New Moses**

### **Author**

It is generally accepted that the author is not the Apostle Matthew. The reasons for this are that an eyewitness would not have relied so heavily on Mark, and secondly, by 85 to 90 AD, the apostle Matthew would probably have been dead. A third reason for rejecting the Apostle Matthew, as author, is that the concerns of this Gospel are of second generation Christians. It could be of course, that the Apostle Matthew was associated with the community in which the Gospel arose. This would explain why the tax collector Levi in Mark 2:14 becomes the tax collector Matthew in Matthew 9:9 and 10:3.

The author was probably a Jewish convert who was familiar with the Law, prophets, Jewish traditions and messianic expectations.

### **Date**

It seems clear from internal evidence that this Gospel was written after the destruction of Jerusalem, which is seen as an event in the past (22:7 & 21:41). There is also an allusion to the destruction of Jerusalem in the parable of the Great Supper. Ignatius of Antioch (died 110) in his letters, seemingly refers to the Gospel of Matthew a number of times. Within this framework a date of 85 to 90 is likely.

### **Place**

One cannot be certain but Antioch in Syria is suggested by a number of scholars.

### **Intended Community**

His frequent reference to the Jewish Scriptures and traditions suggests that his readers were predominately converts from Judaism. However he also has a missionary outlook and openness towards Gentiles which argues for a Gentile audience as well. This audience is quite likely an urban community. Matthew uses the word for “city” (Greek *polis*) twenty-six times and the word for “village” only three times. Mark by comparison uses these words eight and seven times respectively.

There is some internal evidence to suggest that the Matthean community was relatively wealthy. Whereas Mark and Luke tend to refer to small change or lesser denominations (“copper coins”, Mark 6:8 or “minas/pounds”, Luke 19:11-27), Matthew frequently uses terms such as gold, silver and talents in his Gospel. A talent, for example, was worth about fifty times the value of a “minas/pound”.

### **Background of the Community**

Matthew reflects a period of consolidation for the early Christian communities. The Parousia, seen as imminent in Mark, is not so pressing in Matthew. The threat of immediate and total persecution has passed, although tensions between Christians and their Jewish and Gentile neighbours are real. Matthew speaks of disciples being “handed over to tribulation” hated by all, and even put to death (10:18, 22; 13:21; 24:9). Jewish Christians were clearly separate from other Jews, however, as can be seen by

Matthew's reference to "their" synagogues and his refusal to say anything good about the Scribes and Pharisees.

The time at which Matthew wrote was one of settling down for the Church while attempting to articulate its life and mission. Questions of order, discipline and authority arise. There are also echoes of the Church's liturgy; for example, "Go, therefore make disciples of all the nations; baptise them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit..." (28:19) gives us the first trinitarian formula in the New Testament which was most likely used in baptism in Matthew's community.

### Sources

- (1) Mark: Of Mark's 661 verses, Matthew reproduces some 606 verses.
- (2) Q: Matthew and Luke have 200 common verses not found in Mark.
- (3) M: This source provides material not found in Mark or Q.

This source could have been oral or written. The Infancy Narrative comes from this source.

### Structure

The Infancy Narrative	1:1-2:23
Preparation for Public Ministry	3:1-4:11
The Galilean Ministry	4:12-13:58
Retirement from Galilee	14:1-18:35
The Journey to Jerusalem	19:1-20:34
The Jerusalem Ministry	21:11-25:46
The Passion Narrative	26:1-27:66
The Resurrection Narrative	28:1-20.

Matthew can also be arranged into five books, possibly to parallel the five books of the Torah. In each book the discourse is introduced by a narrative section:

Prologue:	1:1-2:23
Book One: The Proclamation of the Reign	3:1-7:29
Book Two: Ministry in Galilee	8:1-11:1
Book Three: Controversy and Parables	11:2-13:52
Book Four: The Formation of the Disciples	13:53-18:35
Book Five: Judea and Jerusalem	19:1-25:46
The Passion Narrative:	26:1-27:66
The Resurrection Narrative:	28:1-20.

### Style

Matthew uses better Greek and a richer vocabulary than Mark, whom he often abbreviates. He improves upon Mark whenever he can. In keeping with his Jewish background, he uses rabbinical styles of composition known as Midrash, Halakah (e.g. 17:24-27) and Haggadah (cf. Infancy Narrative).

Whereas Mark's is a Gospel in a hurry, Matthew's is slower in pace, more reflective, and concerned with the teachings of Jesus rather than his actions. He is a highly skilled writer with an eye to symmetry. There are three divisions in his genealogy, three temptations, three duties (6:1-18), three sets of three miracles (8-9), three signs, three parables of judgement and three challenges to the Scribes (22). There are seven parables of the Kingdom (13), seven woes, and seven parables of warning (23:13-33; 24:32-25:46). He plans the whole Gospel around five discourses arranged in inverted parallelism (chiasm) with the first and fifth dealing with blessings or woes, the second and fourth with aspects of the life of the new community, and the central third speech dealing with the Kingdom.

### **Theological Slant and Concerns**

Matthew is a very *Jewish Gospel*. This is firstly shown by the vocabulary used. Matthew refers to the Kingdom of *Heaven*, rather than the Kingdom of God. Other typically Jewish words such as "righteousness", "almsgiving", "prayer", "fasting", "sons of God", "the consummation of the age", and "the day of judgment" are frequently used. Matthew constantly cites scripture – over 130 times. He often uses the rabbinical style of question (17:24, 25; 18:12; 22:17, 42; 26:66) and counter question (12:5; 21:16; 22:31). Jesus, in Matthew's Gospel, is initially and primarily concerned with the salvation of Israel (15:21-28). Matthew is also concerned with the *Law* and how Jesus fulfils it.

Although Matthew's is a Jewish Gospel, he can be anti-Jewish on occasions (12:6; 21:28-32; 27:25). At other times he expresses both pro-Gentile bias (2:1-12; 4:14-16; 12:21; 28:19) and anti-Gentile prejudice (10:5). Matthew is very harsh on the *Scribes and Pharisees*, referring to them as a brood of vipers (3:7-12), as people who cannot read the signs of the times (16:3), and as murderers of prophets (21:31). Chapter 23 is likewise very strident in its condemnation of them. This attitude is seen to reflect the strong feelings and tensions between the Jewish Christians and the Orthodox Scribes and Pharisees in the local community in which the Gospel arose.

Another concern of Matthew's is that of the *Church*. He is the only evangelist to use the word *ekklesia* which appears three times (16:18; 18:17). It translates the Hebrew "qahal", meaning "gathering of the brethren", which is also Matthew's understanding of the local Church. The Church is a community of the people of God and the disciples of Jesus. Within this community there are "prophets" (some false prophets) and "teachers".

This community had by 85 developed an organisational structure for governing its life. Peter, for example, receives "the keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" (16:19) as first among the disciples. The power of "binding and loosing" (18:18) is given to all the disciples and enables them collectively to regulate the difference of doctrine or discipline that may occur in the community. Yet within the group Peter clearly holds a position of special prominence as leader: "Thou art Peter and upon this rock I will build my Church" (16:18).

Matthew's *theology of salvation* is that the Good News, which was initially directed at the Jews, has been rejected by them and is now offered to the Gentiles. Matthew indicates that salvation is initially for the Jews by using geographical boundaries. Jesus' ministry is confined within the borders of Israel (15:24; 10:5-6). Matthew has the Canaanite woman "coming out" of the region of Tyre and Sidon so that it is in Israel that Jesus grants his favour (15:21-28). (Mark has no such qualms about Jesus performing miracles in pagan territory.) Jesus, in Matthew's Gospel, starts his ministry in Galilee, and after his Resurrection he meets his disciples again in Galilee, from whence he sends them out to the whole world (28:19). The movement is clearly from Jewish territory out to the pagan world.

Jesus is seen as the new *Moses*, the *Teacher* and *Law-Giver*, in Matthew's Gospel. Not surprisingly, therefore, much of the Gospel focuses on the teachings of Jesus (as opposed to the actions of Jesus in Mark).

Like Moses on Sinai, Jesus preaches the Beatitudes (the new Law) from the Mount. He is transfigured on a mountain and he meets the eleven disciples, after the Resurrection, on a mountain in Galilee (28:16). The physical setting of a mountain is thus used to emphasize the image of Jesus as the new Moses, the new Law-Giver on Mount Sinai.

In a way, the end of Matthew's Gospel sums up the author's and his community's understanding of their *mission*. Chapter 28:16-20 relates how Jesus, after his Resurrection, met with his disciples in Galilee and commissioned them to go out into the world to preach the Good News. In this account a number of significant points indicate how the new religion (to be known later as Christianity) has made a break with the religion from which it sprang (Judaism): Jesus meets with them on a mountain (like Moses on Sinai) and gives them a new Law; he claims "all authority on heaven and earth" (allowed only to Yahweh by traditional Jews); he commands them to go and make disciples of all nations (a new missionary perspective for Jews); they are to baptise followers into the new faith, which rite replaces that of circumcision; Jesus replaces the Torah as teacher, as the one who is to be obeyed; and finally the promise he makes is to be with them always, until the end of time (cf. Moloney, 1986: 118-122).

## **Luke – The Compassionate Saviour**

### **Author**

According to Fitzmyer and other scholars, the author of this Gospel is quite likely a Syrian of Antioch, a physician (Col 4:14) and collaborator of Paul, named Luke. He travelled with Paul from Troas to Philippi in Greece. He was also in Caesarea and later in Rome. According to one tradition he subsequently worked in Achaia (Greece). Early Christian writers such as Irenaeus (178 AD), Eusebius and Jerome, all refer to the Evangelist Luke and suggest he lived in Antioch in Syria. Another tradition according to which Luke was a painter originates from the fourteenth century and is thus less reliable.

## **Date**

It is dated later than 70 because it separates the destruction of Jerusalem from the end of the world. Furthermore it no longer sees the Kingdom as imminent as Mark does. Scholars suggest a date around 80-90.

## **Place**

Possibly Greece or Asia Minor.

## **Intended Community**

The author is clearly writing for Gentile Christians. The internal evidence for this is convincing. Luke dedicates Luke-Acts to a person bearing a Greek name, Theophilus (Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1). He relates the promised salvation to Gentiles or non-Jews. He seldom quotes the Old Testament and eliminates predominantly Jewish preoccupations from Mark or Q sources, e.g. the Sermon on the Plain omits the discussion on the fulfilment of the Law that Matthew has (Matthew 5:17-48); Luke also leaves out the section from Mark (7:1-23) which deals with the details of the clean / unclean controversy of the Jewish ritual for purity.

## **Background of the Community**

Luke is writing in a period of expansion for Christians. The Parousia is no longer seen as imminent and hence Luke prays for bread "each day" and exhorts followers to take up their crosses "daily". The disciples are settling down to a lifetime of work and prayer. In the meantime the Church will expand and grow under the guidance of the Spirit.

## **Sources**

- 1) Mark: Luke has 350 verses of Mark's 661 (55%). By and large he follows Mark's sequence.
- 2) Q: He has 230 verses from this source also found in Matthew.
- 3) Luke: This is Luke's own source, which could come from Johannine circles as he shares some motifs with John such as the Temple and Jerusalem. Most of the Infancy Narrative also comes from this "L" source.

## **Structure**

Prologue	1:1-4
The Infancy Narrative	1:5-2:52
Preparation for Public Ministry	3:1-3:13
The Galilean Ministry	3:14-9:50
The Journey to Jerusalem	9:51-19:27
The Jerusalem Ministry	19:28-21:38
The Passion Narrative	22:1-23:56
The Resurrection Narrative	24:1-53.

## **Style**

The author has a varied style. He writes in good, polished Greek. He is very observant of human behaviour, recording the mannerisms of people in his stories as well as giving psychological insight. In 9:43 Luke comments that Jesus gave the cured epileptic boy

“back to his father” (cf. Mark 9:27); in 18:1 he speaks about the “need to pray continually and never lose heart”; at other times he is able to give insight into the feelings of the crowd – “a feeling of expectancy had grown among the people” (3:15) and later “they imagined that the Kingdom of God was going to show itself then and there” (19:11). (cf. also 4:14f; 11:1, 29; 13:1; 17:20.)

### **Theological Slant and Concerns**

Luke is concerned with projecting Jesus as a *prophet*. Luke uses this title more than Mark (cf. 4:24; 7:16; 9:19).

Luke is concerned for the *Gentiles*. He omits Semitic words like Boanerges, abba, Iscariot, hosanna, Gethsemane, ephphatha, which his audience would not understand. Instead of “rabbi” he uses “didaskale” (teacher); instead of “golgotha” he uses “kranion” (skull), and instead of “amen” he uses “truly”. He writes for people who do not know Palestine. Hence he explains, “a city called Bethsaida” or “the feast of unleavened Bread which is called the Passover”.

Luke cares for the *poor*. In the Infancy Narrative, the poor and lowly are chosen for the greatest privileges. In the Beatitudes it is “happy are you poor” (not “the poor in spirit”, as in Matthew). Luke alone has the Isaiahan text about the poor when Jesus appears in the synagogue in Nazareth (4:18) and refers to it again later (7:22). The Story of the Rich Man and Lazarus is exclusive to Luke (16:19-31), as well as the material in Luke 12:13-21 relating to the poor. With the poor go the marginalised in society such as the *Samaritans* to whom Luke also gives particular attention (cf. 9:51-56; 10:29-37).

The *Holy Spirit* and *Prayer* are also emphasised in Luke. He first mentions the Holy Spirit in 1:15. John the Baptist from his mother’s womb, is “filled with the Holy Spirit”. Thereafter Luke frequently mentions the Holy Spirit (cf. 1:35, 41, 67, 80; 2:25, 26, 27; 4:1, 14, 18; 10:21). The Acts of the Apostles, also written by Luke, continues this emphasis on the Holy Spirit. *Prayer* is likewise highlighted with mention made of it before all the important steps in the ministry of Jesus; i.e. at his baptism (3:21), before the choice of the Twelve, (6:12), before Peter’s confession of faith (9:18), at the transfiguration (9:28), before teaching the “Our Father” (11:1), and in the Garden of Gethsemane (22:41). Jesus insists that his disciples be people of prayer too (cf. 6:28; 10:2; 11:1-13; 18:1-8; 21:36).

We can also say that Luke’s Gospel is one of *messianic joy*. The words used by Luke abound in joyous response to the wonder of what has taken place (our salvation). His disciples are to consider themselves fortunate and blessed.

Luke’s Gospel has been called the Gospel of *Mercy* or *Great Pardons*. The theme of compassion and forgiveness pervades the whole Gospel. One thinks of the stories of the lost sheep, lost coin and lost son (Chapter 15), the sinful woman (7:36-58), the story of Zacchaeus (19:1-10). Jesus also forgives his executioners (23:34). Luke has the injunction “Be compassionate (not “perfect” as in Matthew) as your heavenly Father” (6:36). This compassion and pardon is *universal* in Luke. His genealogical table (3:23-

38) goes back to Adam showing thus how we are all one human family with one Saviour.

*Stewardship of wealth* is another Lucan theme. Parables such as the Rich Fool, the Dishonest Steward and the Rich Man and Lazarus illustrate the point that the goods of this life are ours to look after and share.

Luke gives greater prominence to *women* than do the other evangelists. In addition to incidents where women play a prominent role which Matthew or Luke have taken from Mark, Luke has his own stories of women and gives them an importance peculiar to his Gospel. It is obvious that Mary plays a central role in Luke's Infancy Narrative (as opposed to Matthew's). In Jesus' public ministry a group of women (Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Susanna and several others, 8:2) journey with him in his travels and are also present at his Crucifixion (while the disciples flee), at his burial and at the tomb on Easter Day. They become the first preachers of the Easter message (24:9). Luke seems to make the point that women are the first to come to Easter faith and the first to proclaim it (Moloney, 1984:61).

In addition Luke has the story of Martha and Mary (10:38-42), the Widow of Nain (7:11-17), the sinful woman who washed Jesus' feet (7:36-50), the cure of the crippled woman (13:10-17), the lost coin (15:8-10) and the importunate widow (18:1-8). From Luke's projection of women in his Gospel, scholars have concluded that women played a significant role in Lucan communities.

We also note in Luke that the *ministry of Jesus parallels the mission of the Church in Acts*. Jesus is baptised by the Spirit in Luke 3:21f. Likewise the Church (Acts 2:1ff.) is "baptised" by the Spirit at Pentecost. Other parallels concern the preaching about the Spirit (Luke 4:16-19; Acts 2:17); theme of rejection (Luke 4:19; Acts 7:58; 13:50); cure of the multitudes (Luke 4:40f.; Acts 2:43; 5:16) and glorification (Luke 9:28-36; Acts 1:9-11).

## **John – On Eagle's Wings**

### **Author**

The identity of the author remains a mystery. Irenaeus, writing at the end of the second century, identified the apostle John with the evangelist John, and others have speculated that the Gospel was written by disciples of John the Apostle who was the Beloved Disciple.

Today the identification of John the Apostle with the Beloved Disciple is seriously questioned (cf. Brown, 1978: 33-34; Ellis, 1984: 3; Kysar, 1976: 20). Many think that somewhere behind the Gospel is the unnamed "other disciple" or "beloved disciple" referred to in the Gospel; a disciple of Jesus but not one of the Twelve, and the leader in the community that gathered around him. It is thought that a Johannine school or group of scholars developed in this community, who interpreted and expanded the Beloved Disciple's teaching as the years went by until someone wrote the Gospel in the

form in which we now have it. The same group is also thought to be responsible for the Epistles of John.

The Gospel shows an insider's familiarity with the Old Testament and with Jewish cultic life, so that we may conclude that whoever was behind the Gospel was of Jewish background. However, there are also indications that he may not have been from mainstream Judaism.

### **Date**

Internal evidence indicates that the Gospel was written after 85, and probably around 90 AD.

In the 80s, Jewish leaders met at Jamnia to re-establish Jewish identity after the devastating fall of Jerusalem and the confusion caused by the strange doctrines of the followers of Jesus of Nazareth. Probably after 85, another benediction was added to the eighteen benedictions which had to be recited publicly at the daily synagogue morning prayer. This benediction asked that the Nazarenes (Christians) and heretics might suddenly perish (cf. Perrin, 1974: 230; Moloney, 1986: 163), thus placing the Jewish Christians in a dilemma, since they were banned from the Synagogue if they did not recite the benediction. There is clear evidence in the Gospel of the Johannine community's conflict with the synagogue leaders (e.g. in John 9). Moreover, the Gospel of John is the only book in the New Testament that uses the technical Greek term for excommunication from the Synagogue: *aposunagogos* (9: 22; 12:42; 16:2).

Given this evidence, it seems reasonable to date the final writing of the Gospel around 90 when the results of the expulsion order would have been most felt in the Mediterranean area.

### **Place**

There is an ancient tradition which says that the Gospel in its final form was written at Ephesus. There does not appear to be any internal evidence either to support or deny this tradition.

### **Intended Community**

John's primary audience seems to have been a group of Jewish Christians who were in a situation of increasing tension with the Jewish Synagogue (cf., for example, John 9 and the aftermath of the healing of the blind man). They were torn between their allegiance to the Jewish Synagogue and their Jewish roots on the one hand and the Christian community on the other, and their faith in Jesus may have been wavering as a result of conflict and persecution (cf. 20:31).

### **Background to the Community**

Brown's study of the Johannine community (cf. 1979:25-58; 166-7) suggests that it was made up of several layers or groups, each of which, over the years, exercised its influence, which was carried through into the Gospel's final written form:



1. The originating group of Jews in or near Palestine, which included followers of John the Baptist. The group also included the Beloved Disciple, who had known Jesus during his ministry.
2. Jews who may not have belonged to mainstream Judaism:— they were hostile towards official Judaism, had an anti-Temple bias, and understood Jesus against a Mosaic background rather than the more usual Davidic background (as in the Synoptic Gospels). They made converts in Samaria. (It has been suggested that this group was associated with Stephen in Jerusalem and fled after his martyrdom into Samaria and thence further north (cf. Schillebeeckx, 1980: 315). Under the influence of this group, a “high”, pre-existence Christology developed. This was particularly upsetting to the Jews because it seemed to establish Jesus as a second God. (There are indications that it may also have upset some Jewish Christians in the community.) The Jews would eventually have the Johannine Christians expelled from the synagogues. These Christians would have understood very well a Jesus who is portrayed as rejected by his fellow Jews.
3. Gentiles – Greek converts who came into the community after it moved from the Palestine area, and who were seen as fulfilling God’s plan in place of “the Jews”, who were blind.

Given the Greek background of some of the community, John cannot assume that all his readers will understand Hebrew, so he sometimes translates Hebrew words (1:38 and 1:42), and uses universal symbols, such as the vine and bread.

### **Sources**

The question of whether John knew the Synoptic Gospels, or any one of them, has long been discussed, and to date there is no conclusive answer. While some of the events in John have parallels in the Synoptics (most notably Mark) and the Passion Narratives have much in common, there are obvious differences in style, presentation and order of events as well as in the chronological framework of the Gospel.

The Gospel consists of narrative material (some of it in common with the Synoptics) combined with long discourses which have no parallel in the other Gospels. There are no parables in John, and his use of miracles (“signs”) is different from the Synoptics. Some suggest that John may have used a “signs source” that contained some but not all of the Synoptic miracles and sayings, and that the discourses were developed out of these, or perhaps were based on fragments of homilies by the Beloved Disciple (cf. Ellis, 1984: 3-4).

If John were indeed using some early oral or written source(s) in common with the Synoptics, he has so made it his own that it is impossible to identify distinct sources.

Though John draws primarily on Jewish thought and Old Testament themes, it seems that his background may not have been mainstream Judaism but a branch of Judaism that had been influenced by non-Jewish religious and philosophical thought, especially Hellenism. Note must also be made of the similarities between the themes and

language of John and of the Scrolls of the non-mainstream Essene sect at Qumran. Brown (1979: 30-31) believes that the connection is explained by the presence in John's community in its early stages of some Jews, perhaps followers of John the Baptist, who held the kind of ideas expressed in the Qumran Scrolls, rather than by the Johannine writer's use of the Scrolls themselves. Others suggest that John was influenced by "a broad type of Judaism which embraced a great variety of forms and expressions" (Kysar, 1976: 19).

### Structure

1:1-1:18	Prologue
1:19-12:50	The Book of Signs (Public Ministry)
13:1-20:31	The Book of Glory (Last Supper, Passion, Resurrection)
21:1-25.	Epilogue (regarded by most scholars as a last minute addition)

Sometimes the structure of John's Gospel's is seen in terms of the Jewish feasts:

Prologue:	1:1-19
The First Passover:	1:19-3:21
Journeys in Samaria and Galilee:	3:22-4:54
The Second Feast at Jerusalem:	5:1-5:47
Another Passover:	6:1-6:71
The Feast of Tabernacles:	7:1-10:21
The Feast of Dedication:	10:22-11:54
The Last Passover:	11:55-17:26
The Passion Narrative:	18:1-19:42
The Resurrection Narrative:	20:1-24:25.

### Style

The Gospel uses simple, everyday Greek terms whose meaning is never exhausted. In Moloney's words: "It is written in one of the simplest forms of Greek in the New Testament, and yet it carries one of its profoundest theologies" (1986:168). The writer uses words, images and concepts that a non-Jewish Hellenist would understand ("the way", "living water", "new life"); at the same time, he writes with an insider's knowledge of the Hebrew Scriptures. He typically begins with everyday realities – water, bread, light – and then leads the reader in a reflective way into their symbolism on many levels.

By comparison with the Synoptics, the Gospel has only a small amount of narrative material combined with large blocks of discourse material. The Book of Signs consists of short stories and seven signs, out of which a long discourse or dialogue grows, leading the listener deeper into the meaning of the event and ultimately of his/her relationship with God (e.g., John 3: Nicodemus and the discussion about being born again; John 6 feeding the multitude and the discourse on the bread of life).

From the very beginning of the Gospel we are struck by John's constant use of dualistic symbols or pairs of opposites (e.g. light/darkness, above/below) which seem basic to the expression of his thought. Other characteristics of John's style are: his use of

double-meaning words (words that have one meaning for Jesus and another for Jesus' audience, e.g. 2:19-22, 3:3-4, 4:10-12); explanatory comments (which correct misunderstandings or explain symbolism – e.g. 2:21, 18:9, or remind the reader of something that has already happened – e.g. 11:2); inclusions (what is said at the beginning is repeated at the end, thus serving as a frame for the whole, e.g. 2:1-12, 20:1-18; note the repetition of key words such as names of people and/or places). Inclusions indicate the natural divisions of the Gospel; the present divisions of the Gospel into twenty-one chapters dates only from the thirteenth century and does not always respect John's inclusions (cf. Ellis 1984:8-10). John (like other Old and New Testament writers) also uses chiasm (e.g. 2:1-12).

### **Theological Slant and Concerns**

John leaves us in no doubt as to his purpose in writing his Gospel: "These things are recorded so that you may believe that *Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God*, and that *believing this you may have life through his name*" (20:31). While he may well have been writing for those who had not yet come to believe in Jesus, he was addressing more explicitly his community which, as has already been noted, was engaged in a traumatic debate with the local Jewish Synagogue.

John's primary intention was to strengthen the community as synagogue opposition grew and they were being cut off from their Jewish roots. Through narrative and theological discourse, John develops his theme of faith. Behind the Gospel is the central question: "What kind of faith is needed to commit oneself totally to all that Jesus has come to reveal?" (Moloney, 1986:176). The reactions/responses of people in the Gospel to Jesus embody various levels of faith, from rejection of Jesus (the "Jews", that is, the Jewish synagogue leaders who opposed the Johannine community, e.g. 5:15-16; 6:41; 8:59; 10:31ff.), to complete acceptance of him (e.g. Mary, 2:1-11, or the royal official, 4:46-54). Moloney speaks of a journey from no faith to partial faith to true faith (cf. 1986:175-7).

The signs evoke various responses and decisions – for Jesus or against him. The Book of Glory was written specifically for those who have accepted Jesus as one sent from God and who can therefore be led further into his revelation of God in his "hour".

Not only does John show Jesus leading Nicodemus or the Samaritan woman or the royal official on this journey of faith. At the same time, the reader, whether in the Johannine community then or the Christian community today, is being nurtured and challenged on the same journey: "These things are recorded so that *you* may believe..."

More urgently than any other Gospel, that of John asks the question: "Who is Jesus?" John's attempt to explore the question of *Jesus' identity* is expressed in terms, concepts and symbols that are often quite different from the Synoptics – his thought shaped both by the living faith experience of Jesus in his community and by the opposition encountered in the local Synagogue with its accusation that Christians worshipped two Gods. John's response is to state that Jesus Christ is the Messiah, is divine, but is not

a second God. The attempt to hold these two truths in tension accounts for the paradox in some of his writing.

Writing for a community that was being cut off from its Jewish roots, John takes four major Jewish feasts, situates Jesus' ministry within the framework of these feasts (cf. 5:9ff., 6:4ff., 7:2ff., 10:32ff.), and "develops a Christology that indicates that *the presence of the living God once celebrated in the feasts has now been incarnated in the person of Jesus*" (Moloney 1986:178). Likewise, John shows that the presence of God in the Temple is being replaced by God's presence in Jesus.

John's view of Jesus has been called "high" Christology. Emphasis is placed on the person of Jesus who comes "from above", is the pre-existent Logos, the unique human presence and revelation of God, one with the Father in being (e.g. 3:35; 4:34; 14:28).

The Prologue to the Gospel, uses the term *Logos*, translated as "Word", to express something of John's understanding of the identity of Jesus Christ – a term used nowhere else in the New Testament. Logos had its roots in a number of religious and philosophical systems, and John may well have been influenced by the Stoic and/or Gnostic concepts of his time. But the Prologue is also written out of the ancient Hebrew tradition of the Word of God which brought all things into being, and of the tradition of Wisdom literature. However, for John the Logos is not a merely abstract philosophical or religious concept – it is a living, historical person who is both (paradoxically) identical with God and yet distinct from God.

John returns to this paradox of identity and individuality again and again through his exploration of the *Father/Son* analogy. Whoever believes in and responds to Jesus (the Son) believes in and responds to God (the Father) (cf. 5:23, also 12:44-50 which is central to Johannine theology). For John the answer to the question "Who is Jesus?" is not a purely speculative one, but a practical one. Beyond the paradox and the struggle to express the Son/Father Jesus/God relationship is the simple reality lived out in the community's experience: to respond to Jesus is to respond to the Father.

John's view of the *Church* is different from that of the Synoptic Gospels. He does not use the word "church", nor is he interested in its institutional structure or authority, as was Matthew. But he does emphasize the community aspect of Church e.g. in the allegory of the Good Shepherd and the Door (10:1-18) and the True Vine (15:1-10). And in Chapters 15-17 he stresses the oneness of Christians – for whom the relationship between Father and Son and between Jesus and the believer is the model. The community is the "locus of the manifestation of God" *now* (Kysar, 1976: 100).

There is no mention of "apostle" or "the twelve" in John's Gospel. The writer uses the word "disciple" – and seems to include in this any believer. We note the prominence given to "the Beloved Disciple", a prominence based on the fact that he loved Jesus and was loved by him (13:23; 20:2; 21:7, 20). John is presenting in the Beloved Disciple a model of the true believer and is suggesting that any disciple can be the "Beloved disciple".

John's interest in the *Spirit* is different from Luke's. He emphasises the presence of the Spirit-Paraclete in the experience of the Christian community and is the only New Testament writer to use the word "Paraclete" for the Spirit (cf. John 14-16, where he talks of the role of the Spirit). Why the use of this unusual and multifaceted term? Kysar (1976: 93-98) suggests that, locked as they were in a tense situation with the leaders of the local Synagogue, the Johannine community needed to speak of the presence of God among them in a distinctive way. Again, there was the problem posed by the delay of the Parousia. Christ had not returned in the way they had expected he would, but is present in the community in the form of the Paraclete. The return of Christ is not an event in the future, but is the experience of the Paraclete in the community NOW.

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## Links with the Student Text

### Student Text pages 23 to 27

The material on these pages introduces students to the four gospels – their writers, the time and place of their composition, their audience, and their "view" of Jesus.

### Introduction

The teacher could introduce the students to the material on the Four Portraits of Jesus (pages 23 of student text) with the following or similar words:

It was decided that because ..... (some suitable person in the class) was such a significant character, a biography should be written.

So four people write an essay about this person. One essay writer is the person's mother, another their best friend at school, another a teacher, the last their sports coach.

The portrait of the person given in each essay will be different – even though they are all writing about the same person.

So when looking at a story it is important to know the relationship of the storyteller to their subject, and for whom the story is being told.

In the Student Text, there is some information about the type of story that each of the Gospel writers wrote and for whom the story is being told.

### Task 14

#### **The Four Gospel Card Activity (page 23 Student Text)**

The template for this sorting activity can be found on the website. Check in the resource box for this topic as someone may have already made the cards up.

- Students are asked to get into groups of four.
- One set of cards for each group of students.
- Students Shuffle the cards and place face down in the centre of the group.
- Each member takes a turn to pick up a card.

- After picking up the card, the student whose turn it is, reads out what is on the card and then states which of the four Gospels – Matthew, Mark, Luke or John – the information on the card refers to.
- If the student does not know the answer, he/she can “pass” and another student can provide the answer.

The web resource includes an answer list.

### **Task 15**

#### **One Jesus, Four Gospels (page 23 Student Text)**

Using the information on pages 24-27 the students are asked to complete the task sheet that can be downloaded from the website. It is a comparative exercise across the four Gospels.

This could be done either in four groups with each group sharing its information with the rest of the class or as an expert Jigsaw.

A copy of the completed grid can also be found on the FaithCentral website.

#### **Answers:**

#### **Gospel Symbols**

Christian tradition links the authors of the four gospels with the four "living creatures" that surround God's throne in the Book of Revelation (see 4:5-11).

"Coming from the throne are flashes of lightning, and rumblings and peals of thunder, and in front of the throne burn seven flaming torches, which are the seven spirits of God; and in front of the throne there is something like a sea of glass, like crystal. Around the throne, and on each side of the throne, are *four living creatures*, full of eyes in front and behind: the first living creature like a **lion**, the second living creature like an **ox**, the third living creature with a face like a **human** face, and the fourth living creature like a flying **eagle**. And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and inside. Day and night without ceasing they sing, "Holy, holy, holy, the Lord God the Almighty, who was and is and is to come." And whenever the living creatures give glory and honour and thanks to the one who is seated on the throne, who lives forever and ever, the twenty-four elders fall before the one who is seated on the throne and worship the one who lives forever and ever; they cast their crowns before the throne, singing, "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created."

One way of linking these "living creatures" with the four gospels is to say that the man stands for Matthew, whose narrative begins with the human genealogy of Jesus; that the lion stands for Mark, whose narrative begins with John the Baptist crying out in the desert (a lion roars in the desert); that the ox, a sacrificial animal, stands for Luke,

whose narrative begins in the Temple, and that the eagle stands for John, whose narrative begins in Heaven, with the eternal Word.

Various traditions about four heavenly creatures are also found in several older biblical texts:

- Ezekiel 1:1-14 – vision of four heavenly creatures with four faces each: human being, lion, ox, eagle.
- Ezekiel 10:1-22 – throne vision of cherubim with four faces each: cherub, human being, lion, eagle.
- Daniel 7:1-8 – vision of four beasts representing four empires: lion, bear, leopard, terrible fourth beast with iron teeth and ten horns.

The four "living creatures" have captured the imaginations of Christian artists throughout the centuries.

### **Suggested Extension Activity**

Students could be invited to design their own symbols for each of the four gospels and write a brief explanation of what their symbols mean and why they have chosen them.



## Part Five: The Miracle Stories

See Student Text pages 28 to 33

### Achievement Objective 4

Students will be able to develop an understanding of the meaning of the miracle stories.

### Church Teachings

- Jesus' miracles were a sign that he was the promised Messiah who was bringing about *Te Rangatiratanga*.
- Some people responded in faith to Jesus' miracles, others rejected him.
- By freeing people from physical evils Jesus was showing his power to release people from sin.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this topic students will:

- Explain the meaning of miracles stories in the gospels.
- Recognise ways in which miracles happen in people's lives today.

### Teacher Background

#### The Miracle Stories

Jesus' contemporaries, both those who became his followers and those who opposed him, recognised that he possessed remarkable powers (see Matthew 12:24-32; Mark 3:20-30; and Luke 11:14-23). They accepted that he performed cures and did other startling things for which there was no obvious natural explanation.

But the word *miracle* does not belong to the world of Galilean villagers in the first century. The evangelists used words like *paradox* (things one would not normally expect); *dunameis* (displays of power or authority); *terata* or *semeia* (signs or portents); or in a single case, in Matthew 21:15, *thaumasia* (marvels).

These words carry the sense that something has happened *within* what we call the natural world that is not anticipated – something that provides evidence for the active presence of an authority, a power, at work that enables the natural world to be more truly itself. They do not suggest an invasion of the *natural* world by an alien *supernatural* force.

Jesus' "mighty works" fit remarkably well into the context of his overall ministry. There is no dividing line separating them from the rest of his life and teachings. A first century follower of Jesus would have understood his mighty works within the context of his total proclamation – signs that the reign or kingdom of Israel's God was indeed coming into being. To those who opposed Jesus they would have been seen as "magic" – evidence that he was dangerous and subversive.

For Jews of the time, most of Jesus' healing – the bulk of his "mighty works" – involved a restoration back into the community of those who had been excluded from it because they were ritually unclean as a result of sickness, physical disability, demonic possession, etc. The healings parallel Jesus' welcome of sinners – another group who were excluded from the life of the community.

Jesus never performed mighty works simply to impress but saw them as part of the reign of God which he was bringing about.

A maimed Jew – one who was blind, lame, deaf or dumb – could not participate fully in the life of the community. Jesus' healing miracles bestowed the gift of *shalom* on those who lacked it, bringing not only physical health but renewed membership of the people of God. Many of the people Jesus healed came into one of the banned categories – blind people, deaf and dumb, the crippled, lepers, those with discharges of bodily fluids, especially blood. Jesus' touching of these people should have made him ritually unclean also but in fact had the effect of restoring them. His miracles performed for Gentiles and a Samaritan emphasise that he is bringing these outsiders into the people of God.

The effect of Jesus' cures was not merely to bring physical healing to people but to give them a renewed sense of community membership as healed members of the people of Israel's God. They were being reintegrated into the worshipping community, the renewed covenant.

Other signs of covenant renewal include the multiplication of the loaves and the fishes, the calming of storms, the extraordinary catch of fish, and most striking of all, the raising of the dead. Jesus exercises power over the natural order, bringing it into a new harmony with itself and with God. In all these actions is seen the restoration of creation.

The exorcisms are not simply the release of individuals from bondage to some strange state but Jesus' confrontation with the power of Satan. (See Matthew 12:28; Luke 11:20)

In Jesus' healing of the man who had the legion of demons (Mark 5:1-20 and parallels) the various features indicate that Jesus is surrounded by places, people and influences that belong to the enemies of God and his people. The ultimate enemy is Satan.

Within Jesus' public career, the mighty works are neither showy magic displays, nor attempts to win support from crowds, nor Jesus setting out to prove he is divine. They

were signs of the coming of the reign of God and an indication of who would be welcomed into it. The mighty works were an integral part of Jesus' entire ministry, just as his parables and other characteristic actions were. They were indications that his ministry was prophetic and the fulfilment of that of the great prophets Elijah and Elisha.

### **The Structure of the Miracle Stories in the Gospels**

The miracle stories are usually organised into five sections:

1. An introduction which presents the situation / person that needs healing.
2. A request for help that shows the faith of the person in need or of those around them.
3. The intervention of the person from whom the miracle is sought.
4. The result of the intervention.
5. The reaction of those who witnessed the event – fear or admiration.

### **Miracles Today**

*Few theological questions are so unsatisfactorily treated as the question of miracles.* (Richard P. McBrien in *Catholicism* p.325)

People tend to adopt different positions on the question of miracles based on their own philosophical standpoint or world view. Not all of these positions are at once intellectually satisfying, consistent with Catholic teachings and compatible with Christian faith.

A fundamentalist approach to miracles maintains that these biblical (and other) events happened literally as recounted. This position poses difficulties for many people and also fails to take into account the insights of modern Catholic biblical scholarship.

Others, from a perspective based on a rigid deterministic belief in inflexible laws of nature (rationalism or scientism) reject out of hand the very possibility of miracles. This mind-set had its origins in the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries. More recently, on the basis of advances in scientific knowledge, it has been called into question – for example, quantum physics suggests that there is more randomness in the workings of the universe than was formerly perceived. This position still remains an influential viewpoint at the popular level and forms a barrier to the understanding of miracles in the minds of many people.

Others, by focusing on the *meaning* rather than the *fact* of miracles are in danger of explaining them by explaining them away.

There are no easy explanations for miracles. However part of the challenge for teachers of this topic is to clarify their own position on or understanding of miracles.

Some students will be sceptical about the miracles that are presented in the gospels because they reject as impossible anything that seems to be unexplainable in terms of, or to be contradictory to, the laws of nature. It may be useful for teachers to refer back to the concept of scriptural truth that was introduced earlier in this topic.

Because the Bible is concerned with religious rather than scientific truth, readers need to be careful that they don't take the words of Scripture too literally when faced with matters relating to the curing of disease and disability. Teachers should encourage students to steer a middle course between literalism and scepticism by concentrating on the religious truth of the miracles – their meaning for us in faith. Central to this approach is the recognition of the importance of asking the right questions: What does this account of a miracle mean – for life in general, and for me in particular?

Miracles should be kept in perspective. Vatican II says that the miracles of Christ “*demonstrate that the Kingdom has already come on earth*” (Dogmatic Constitution on the Church 5). But it also makes it clear that the words, works and presence of Christ – especially his death and Resurrection and his sending of the Holy Spirit – also do this.

It is still valid to remind pupils of the significance of ‘everyday miracles’. This is not intended to downplay the significance of amazing events by implying that everything is miraculous.

As Christians, our basic attitude towards life is one of gratitude. Because all that we are and have – life, faith, salvation – is gifted from God, our central act of worship as Catholics is Eucharist, that is, thanksgiving. It is important that students be helped to appreciate the ‘ordinary’ miracles without in any way detracting from the significance of the special actions of Jesus recounted in the gospels – the feeding of the five thousand or the raising of Lazarus from the dead.

*Everyone wonders to see water turned into wine. Yet every day the moisture of the earth is drawn into the root of the vine and turned by the grape into wine, and no-one wonders.* (Pope St Gregory the Great)

Recognising the miracles of Jesus, we are challenged also to appreciate the miracle of the ordinary. We tend to see events as either natural or supernatural, categorising the latter as either nature miracles, healing miracles, or exorcisms. To the Hebrews no such categories existed. When we recognise in faith the hand of a caring God, that is a miracle. The whole Bible recognises the Exodus event and the Christ event as the two great miracles – everything else points to the meaning of these two great acts of God.

In recent times the triumph of love over neglect and indifference in the work of Mother Teresa, or the breaking down of totalitarian boundaries in Eastern Europe and elsewhere can be regarded as miracles.

## Links with the Student Text

### **Student Text pages 28 to 33**

The material on these pages encourages students to develop a deeper understanding of the meaning of the miracle stories in the gospels.

### **Task 16**

#### **What is a Miracle? (page 28 Student Text)**

This asks students to write down what they understand by the word “miracle” and to give an example of a miracle that they have heard about or experienced.

Answers will vary from student to student.

### **Task 17**

#### **Signs of God’s Love (pages 28 and 29 Student Text)**

Here students are asked to read the information “Signs of God’s love” on pages 28-29 of the text and answer the questions that follow on page 29.

1. From the information above what new understanding do you have of the word “miracle”?

The gospels present Jesus’ miracles not as wonders but as acts of God’s power, God’s works, or as signs from God.

2. Which is the more important aspect of a miracle; what actually took place, or its effects on people, including ourselves?

Jesus performed miracles to act as signs – signs of God’s power at work. What is important about miracles is their effects on us.

3. What do the miracles of Jesus signify?

Jesus’ miracles are signs of the reign of God – they show God’s power over illness, disability and nature and reveal God’s love for people, especially the poor and the outcast.

4. A sign is not a sign until it is read. What does this say about faith, in regard to miracles?

Jesus’ miracles – his “mighty works” call for a response from those who experience them. Those with faith recognise the power of God at work in the

miracles. Those who do not have faith doubt them or see them as works of magic. Those who believe are the ones who are open enough to see the miracles that are happening around them all the time.

**Task 18**

**Types of Miracles (page 32 Student Text)**

Here students are asked to use their textbooks and a Bible to complete the retrieval chart of page 32.

A completed copy of the chart can be found below:

Scripture Reference	Type of Miracle e.g healing or nature	Words of Jesus	People's reaction	Image or symbol
Matthew 9:1-8	Healing	"Courage my child your sins are forgiven"	Scribes accuse Jesus of blaspheming because he forgives sins which only God can do. Crows filled with awe and glorify God	Students to draw own
Mark 4:35-41	Nature	"Quiet now! Be calm"	Disciple are filled with great awe	Students to draw own
Luke 9:37-43	Exorcism	'Bring your son here"	All are astounded at the greatness of God	Students to draw own
John 2:1-12	Nature	"Fill the jars with water, ..draw some out now...and take it to the steward."	Jesus let his glory be seen	Students to draw own

**Student Text pages 30 to 33**

The material on these pages encourages students to recognise what is really important in a miracle story.

**Task 19**

**What's Really Important? (page 32 Student Text)**

After reading the material on external and Internal change on page 30 of their text book students are asked to discuss the following in view of all that they have learnt so far.

1. Discuss which would be a greater miracle, an external or an internal change? Which would you rather have happen to you?

Or External change can lead to internal change – discuss.

2. Discuss examples of modern miracles which show the power of love over hate, victory over evil, healing/reconciliation, and ask students to recall examples from their own experience.

Responses will vary.

### **Extra Activity Through the Roof (Supplementary to Part Five)**

Both the Appendix and Faith Central website have a drama script *Through the Roof*. Based on Matthew 9:1-8, Luke 5:17-26 and Mark 2:1-12 it presents the story of the Cure of the Paralytic. It could be used as a lesson starter or a model for students to create and perform their own version of a miracle story

### **Supplementary Task In depth study of Miracle Story Structure (Supplementary to Part Five)**

This supplementary activity that is on both the website and in the Appendix scaffolds an in depth study of the Healing of a Deaf Man (Mark 7:31-37) and the Blind Man of Jericho (Luke 18:35-43)

### **Quick Quiz Miracle Summary (Supplementary to Part Five)**

The website and the Appendix contain a Miracle Summary quick quiz that can be used with students orally or in written form as needed.

Also on the FaithCentral website is [A Reflection on Mark 4:35-41 – The Calming of the Storm](#)

## Part Six: The Resurrection Story

See Student Text pages 34 to 36

### Achievement Objective 5

Students will be able to recognise that Jesus' resurrection from the dead is the central event of the New Testament.

### Church Teachings

- The New Testament establishes *Te Aranga* as a real event and the central truth of the Christian faith.
- The New Testament accounts point to the empty tomb and the various appearances of the risen Lord – to Mary Magdalene and the other women, to Peter and the Twelve, and to many others – as signs of the Resurrection.
- The New Testament records that the *whakapono* of the original community of believers was based on the testimony of those first witnesses to the Resurrection.

### Learning Outcomes

At the end of this topic students will:

- Identify why *Te Aranga* is the central event of the New Testament and the basis of Christian faith.
- Compare and contrast the accounts of the Resurrection in the three synoptic gospels.

### Teacher Background

#### The Resurrection Narratives

The Resurrection of Christ is the basis of Christian faith and the core of Christian proclamation. The meaning of Jesus' teaching and preaching about the reign of God, his healing and forgiveness of sins, his suffering and his death is revealed in his Resurrection.

Each of the four Resurrection narratives, written 30 to 70 years after the event, gives its own perspective on what happened and contributes its own wealth to what we know and believe about the risen Christ. By preserving the different Gospel accounts of the Resurrection, the Church proclaims that Jesus Christ lives in our own and in all times.



The Resurrection narratives make two very clear points – that Jesus really was dead and that his disciples were absolutely convinced that they saw him again afterwards. The gospels are equally clear that what the disciples saw was not a ghost. Even though the raised Jesus seems to pass through locked doors (John 20:19), and suddenly materialises in the middle of his gathered disciples (Luke 24:36 and John 20:19-20), he assures them, “Touch me and see for yourselves; a ghost has no flesh and bones as you can see I have” (Luke 24:39). He later eats a piece of fish with them (Luke 24:42-43). Ghosts can't eat fish. What these traditions are emphasising again and again is that it wasn't a vision that Jesus' followers saw. It wasn't a waking dream. It was Jesus raised to new life from the dead.

### **Mark's Narrative**

It is likely that the last chapter of Mark's gospel, Mark 16, originally ended at verse 8. It tells the story of Easter Sunday morning when the women come to the tomb which they find open and empty. A mysterious young man in the tomb tells them: "...You are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified: he has risen, he is not here" (16:6). He then instructs the women to go and tell the disciples and Peter that Jesus is going ahead of them into Galilee where they will see him. At this the women flee but tell nobody what happened because of their fear.

This original ending is extraordinary, not because of the empty tomb, but because the women tell nobody. Mark is writing his Gospel in the 70's for a persecuted church. Throughout the Gospel Mark emphasises how difficult it was for those who followed Jesus to believe in him fully because they did not understand that suffering and rejection were an essential part of the identity of God's Son. Perhaps he ends almost with an absent Jesus, because that's what his community has experienced in persecution, an absent Jesus.

But pain leads to light. The added ending (Mark 16:9-20) recognises how an encounter with the risen Jesus brought about faith. We also hear how those whom Jesus upbraids for lack of faith and hardness of heart are entrusted with preaching the gospel to the whole world.

These are messages pertinent to our own lives. Mark's Gospel reminds us that Jesus' first disciples were struggling human beings like ourselves.

### **Matthew's Narrative**

Matthew's Resurrection Narrative draws on Mark. But instead of ending with the women fleeing and telling nobody, as Mark does, Matthew has Jesus meet the women, who go and tell the disciples what has happened, as instructed.

In the last scene in Matthew (28:16-20) Jesus meets the disciples on a mountain in Galilee where the story began – with the Sermon on the Mount – and commands them to go out and preach to the world.

Matthew, although he draws on Mark, describes what Mark only promised – the appearance of Jesus to the disciples. One of Matthew's concerns is the hostile relationship between synagogue authorities and Christian believers. Matthew reminds readers that the Christian proclamation of the gospel will not be without struggle. Matthew is careful to show that God's plan for Jesus was consistent from beginning to end. The revelation given about Jesus before he was born (1:23) proclaimed that he would be Emmanuel ("God with us"); Jesus' last words are "And look, I am with you always; yes, to the end of time" (28:20).

### **Luke's Narrative**

Like Matthew, Luke follows Mark in the basic story of the empty tomb, but then goes his own way in the appearances he reports.

Luke sees the Resurrection as fulfilling the Scriptures. The risen Jesus teaches the Eleven about his death and Resurrection by explaining the Scriptures: "This is what I meant when I said, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses, in the Prophets and in the Psalms, was destined to be fulfilled" (24:44).

In Luke, there are elaborate post-resurrection appearances. Jesus appears to two disciples on the road to Emmaus and to his followers in Jerusalem. He gives instructions about what the disciples are to do next – "Stay in the city..." (24:49).

Luke emphasises Jerusalem as the setting for Jesus' final appearances and his Ascension. For him the Gospel began with the appearance of Gabriel to Zechariah in the Temple – it ends with Jesus' disciples in the Temple blessing God.

Jesus' return to God begins the life of the Church that starts in Jerusalem (Judaism) and extends to Rome (the Gentile world).

### **John's Narrative**

John's Gospel narrates a series of encounters as character after character comes to meet Jesus and reacts to him. Peter and the Beloved Disciple (20:3-10), Mary Magdalene (20:11-18), the disciples (20:19-23), and finally Thomas (20:24-29), encounter the mystery of Jesus' Resurrection.

The last words of Jesus – which appear in an Epilogue to the Gospel – are about the Beloved Disciple (21:22-23). He is given no role of authority, but he retains a primacy in being loved, which is more important in this Gospel. To this disciple is held open the possibility of being there when Jesus returns. Symbolically that would be the final fruit of the Resurrection – a believing community of Christian disciples that would remain until Jesus comes again.

### **Links with the Student Text**

#### **Student Text pages 34 to 36**

The material on these pages encourages students to recognise that the Resurrection of Jesus is the central event of the New Testament and that the Gospel accounts came about as a result of the Easter experience of the first believers. Students will also look closely at the accounts of the Resurrection in the three synoptic gospels.

## **Task 20**

### **The Resurrection Accounts in the Synoptic Gospels (page 35 Student Text)**

Students are required to read the accounts of the Resurrection from Matthew, Mark and Luke that are found on pages 35 and 36 of the student text before completing a chart comparing the accounts. The chart is on FaithCentral as is a comprehensive answer sheet.

When going over the completed chart it is necessary to emphasise that difference in detail does not negate the reality of the event.

#### **Summary Discussion**

The object of the Christian faith is not a hole in the ground but a risen person. In order to conclude the section on the resurrection students might be led in a discussion, small group or full class where they look at the implications of the resurrection are for the followers of Christ.

The information throughout part five pages 34-36 of their texts should help students with their discussion. Some relevant points are:

- The meeting of the disciples with the Risen Christ changed them from being afraid to being courageous people.
- Jesus' Resurrection showed that everything he said and did was true.
- Jesus' Resurrection is the greatest sign of the reign of God.
- The disciples realised that the Resurrection was significant not only for them but for people in all places and in all times.
- The true meaning of human life is shown in the life, death and Resurrection of Jesus – we will be raised from the dead to the fullness of life just as Jesus was.

#### **Supplementary Task – Resurrection Crossword Puzzle (pages 35 and 36 Student Text)**

**The crossword which is on FaithCentral and in the Appendix of this book is based on material from pages 35 and 36 in the student text. The answers to all clues can be found in the three synoptic accounts of the Resurrection that appear there.**

#### **Across**

1. spices
3. Joanna
6. apostles
7. sepulchre
8. Luke
11. Mary Magdalene
14. Matthew
15. dawn
16. stone

#### **Down**

##### **Down**

1. Sabbath
2. Galilee
4. feet
5. Resurrection
6. angel
9. tomb
10. earthquake
12. Mark
13. Peter

## Glossary of General Terms

The entries in this glossary are for key words or terms contained in the text, and other useful definitions that provide additional background to the topic.

The references after each term, e.g. N.2766 are to paragraphs in the *Catechism of the Catholic Church*.

There is a separate glossary of Māori terms.

### **Acts of the Apostles**

This book is found in the New Testament immediately following the four Gospels. It is a sequel to the Gospel of Luke, written by the same author. It was written to show how, under the influence of the Holy Spirit, Jesus' first followers spread his Gospel "not only in Jerusalem but throughout Judea and Samaria and indeed to the ends of the earth". It is mainly concerned with the activities of St Paul and St Peter.

### **Apocalypse**

In Greek the word means a revelation or disclosure. Written with an initial capital this usually refers to the last book of the New Testament or the events described in that book. More generally an apocalypse is any disastrous occurrence.

### **Apostles (N.857-65)**

The word apostle comes from the Greek word meaning "one who is sent". In the New Testament it is used in a broad sense to refer to many followers of Jesus who spread his message. St Paul refers to himself and his co-workers as apostles. More precisely however the term is used to refer to the Twelve called by Jesus (Mark 3:13-19). The Catholic Church regards the Pope and the Bishops as successors of the original Twelve apostles with Peter at the head. The Pope and the Bishops, through this apostolic succession, inherit Christ's mandate to the original apostles, to be shepherds of his flock.

### **Aramaic**

A Semitic Language relating to Hebrew. It began to replace Hebrew as the spoken language of the Jewish people from the time of the Exile (6th Century B.C.). It was probably the language spoken by Jesus. Some passages of the Old Testament were written in Aramaic especially in the Books of Daniel and Ezra. Some words are also found in the New Testament – 'Abba' being the best known.

### **Christian Scripture**

A term used to describe the New Testament. The collection of the sacred writings of Christians, including the four gospels, the Acts of the Apostles, various epistles or letters, and the Book of Revelation.

**Disciples**

From the Latin meaning pupil or follower. In the ancient world a common way for people to learn something was to attach themselves to a master to follow him around, to listen to his teaching and to imitate his way of life. Many Rabbis (teachers) in Israel had disciples. In the New Testament the term disciple is applied both to the wider circle of Jesus' followers and to the inner circle including 'the Twelve' who are also called apostles.

**Epistle**

A letter. Used to refer particularly to the letters sent by St Paul and others to the early Christian communities.

**Evangelism**

The act of proclaiming the Good News.

**Evangelist**

A term from the Greek meaning "proclaimer of the Good News". It applies to anyone engaged in spreading the Gospel, but refers particularly to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John – those who, according to tradition, wrote the four gospels.

**Gentiles**

A biblical term, from the Latin word for foreigners, meaning people who were not Jews.

**Gospel**

From the Old English godspel meaning "good news" this word has two related meanings: the good news of God's saving action in Jesus Christ and the accounts of Jesus' life and works produced by the early Church – i.e. the four Gospels according to Matthew, Mark, Luke and John. There were also in circulation other accounts of Jesus' words and deeds which the Church did not recognise because they do not give an accurate picture of Jesus, and are not inspired. These books the Church rejected. She gave them no place in her canon of sacred books. They are referred to as the apocryphal Gospels.

**Inspired**

Those works recognised by the Church to have been guided by the Spirit of God, and to be spirit-filled.

**Kingdom or Reign of God (N.541ff, 671)**

The Kingdom or Reign of God is a term used in both the Old and New Testaments to describe the saving and life-giving rule of God over creation and human history. The preface for the liturgy of the Feast of Christ the King describes it as "an eternal and universal Kingdom: a Kingdom of truth and life, a Kingdom of holiness and grace, a Kingdom of justice, love and peace". In the Lord's Prayer Christians pray that this Kingdom may come "on earth as it is in Heaven". On the one hand Jesus ushered in the Kingdom with his presence on earth (Mark 4:30-32) while on the other hand the

Reign of God will not be experienced in all its fullness until Christ comes “again in glory to judge the living and the dead” (Mark 13:26-27). Christians are called on to take responsibility, both in the personal and the public spheres, for trying to foster the reign of justice and peace in their own times and situations.

### **Letters**

There are 21 Letters or Epistles among the 27 books of the New Testament. Thirteen of these are ascribed to St Paul, though modern scholars doubt his authorship of at least six of these. The non-Pauline letters are Hebrews and the Catholic letters. The word Catholic here means “general” and these letters, except for 3 John, are addressed to the Church in general, not to a particular Church or individual. They are 1 and 2 Peter, 1, 2 and 3 John and Jude.

### **Literary Form**

Types of literature distinguished by form and structure. For example, poetry, narrative, history, letter, etc.

### **Miracle (N.547)**

From a Catholic perspective a miracle is an unusual or unexpected manifestation of the presence and power of God in human history. There is no Hebrew word for miracle and the Greek word for miracle does not appear in the New Testament. Instead the Scriptures speak of “wonders”, “acts of power”, “works” and “signs”.

So the miracles of Jesus are signs of the power of God at work. The reign of God was shown by Jesus’ power over evil, illness, disability and nature. Jesus did not want to be a miracle man in the sense of a ‘wonder-worker’ or magician. He refused to work miracles to convince doubters such as Herod. The greatest miracle for Christians is the Resurrection, which actually happened, and which proclaims the power of God among us and his victory over sin and death.

### **Nero**

Emperor of Rome 54 – 68 A.D. He persecuted Christians.

### **New Testament (N.124-141)**

The New Testament is the second of the two sections of the Christian Bible or Sacred Scriptures, the first being the Old Testament. It is a collection of 27 books written between about 50 A.D. and the early part of the second century A.D. These writings passed through several stages of editing before reaching their final form around 200 A.D. While the 27 books of the New Testament have been generally accepted by the church since the end of the fourth century, the canon of scripture was declared definitively by the Council of Trent in 1546. The four gospels are the heart of the New Testament, “because they are our principal source for the life and teaching of the Incarnate Word our Saviour” (The Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation N.18).

**Old Testament (N.121-123, 128-133)**

The Old Testament is the first of two sections of the Christian Bible or Sacred Scriptures, the second being the New Testament. The Old Testament is a collection of 46 books of Jewish origin gathered together and edited over hundreds of years. Its final form (or canon) was not settled till early in the Christian era. The Old Testament has four main divisions. The Pentateuch (five scrolls) is the first five books, known by Jews as 'The Law'. The second division is The Historical Books, followed by The Wisdom Books and The Prophets. The Church regards the Old Testament, along with the New Testament, as the inspired Word of God. The Old Testament is an integral component of worship in the Church which also recommends it to the faithful as a source of "strength for their faith, food for the soul, and a pure and lasting font of the spiritual life". The Old Testament is sometimes referred to as the Jewish Scriptures or the First Testament.

**Oral Traditions**

The stories, experiences, sayings and history of a people preserved through telling, speaking, preaching, or liturgical ceremonies rather than in a written form.

**Passion Narrative**

The passages in the Gospels which recount the story of Christ's suffering and death (Matt 26-27; Mark 14-15; Luke 22-23; John 18-19).

**Redactor**

From the German word for editor, this term is often used to refer to the final editor or writer of the Biblical texts.

**Resurrection (N.988-1004)**

The term Resurrection refers, in the first instance, to the central Christian belief that God raised Jesus to new life after his death on the cross and burial in the tomb. The New Testament describes a number of appearances of the Risen Christ to his disciples. Following St. Paul the Church teaches that Christ's Resurrection is the 'first fruits' of many (see 1 Corinthians 15:20). All who die 'in Christ' will be raised to life with him and the Father through the power of the Holy Spirit. The Risen Lord appeared to the disciples as a glorified body. Those raised to life will also experience the resurrection of the body and not simply some spiritual or immaterial existence.

**Revelation (N.50-100)**

From a Latin word meaning 'to remove the veil', the term revelation refers to the Self-disclosure of God. Catholic teaching is that people can reason their way to a sure knowledge of God's existence. They can however only appreciate the full extent of the mystery of the nature of God (the Trinity), and of God's plans for humanity, because God has freely chosen to reveal these things. God has most fully revealed this mystery by sending Jesus Christ, his Son, and the Holy Spirit. Divine Revelation is transmitted through Scripture, Tradition and the Teaching Authority of the Church. Through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the faithful are able to grow in understanding of revelation.

## **Rome / Roman Empire**

The city-state of Rome on the Italian peninsula emerged as the dominant power in the Mediterranean area after defeating its rival Carthage in 146 B.C. At first governed as a Republic, Rome became an Empire in 27 B.C. It was during the reign of the first Emperor, Augustus Caesar, that Jesus was born. Palestine had become part of the Roman Empire in 63 B.C. Most Jews regarded the Romans as oppressive rulers and there was much unrest. In 70 A.D. a Roman army destroyed Jerusalem, killing many Jews and driving many into exile.

## **Scrolls**

In the ancient world books were written in a rolled-up form rather than with pages. These scrolls consisted of pieces of papyrus, leather or parchment sewn together and rolled smoothly round a stick. A reader would unroll the manuscript off the stick onto another. Much of the Old and New Testaments were written on Scrolls (See Luke 4:16-19).

## **Scripture**

The sacred writings of any people.

## **Synoptic Gospels**

The Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. They are called 'synoptic' because they can be 'viewed together' or compared in a parallel fashion. Scholars believe that Matthew and Luke are based on Mark and on another source called "Q" – from the German Quelle "source". This common basis would account for their similarity.

## **Theophilus**

The name of the otherwise unknown person to whom St Luke dedicated his Gospel and the Acts of the Apostles. The name, in Greek, means 'beloved of God'.

## **Tradition**

The word comes from the Latin and means to pass on from generation to generation. It can apply either to the content of what is handed on, or to the process of handing on. In the Church, Tradition (with a capital T) refers to the living transmission of the Gospel from the Apostles through their successors to each generation. Tradition is closely bound to Sacred Scripture as they flow from the same divine source. The writing of the New Testament in the early years of the Church demonstrates the process of living tradition. Within the great Tradition are numerous traditions (with a small t). These are the ways of expressing the faith (e.g. styles of worship) which, while they may be important in various times and places, are not essential, and should not be confused with Tradition.

## **Witness (N.2044)**

Give evidence of or testify to the truth of one's claims or beliefs. A person may give witness by what they say or teach, or they may show the truth of what they say by the way they act and how they live their lives.



## Glossary of Māori Terms

This glossary gives explanation of Māori terms which are italicised in the text.

Pronunciation – correct pronunciation of Māori comes only with practice in listening to and speaking the language. The English phonetic equivalents provided under each Māori word are intended to give help, for teachers who need it, in providing reasonably accurate examples for students. If in doubt please seek assistance from someone practised in correct pronunciation of Te Reo Māori.

´ indicates stressed syllable

### **Aroha** (úh-raw-huh)

In general, means love and/or compassion. Note that the word is used in two senses:

1. A joyful relationship involving the expression of goodwill and the doing of good, empathy.
2. Sympathy, compassion towards those who are unhappy or suffering.

### **Atua** (úh-too-uh)

The Māori word Atua has been used to describe God in the Christian sense since missionary times. Before the coming of Christianity, Māori used the word atua to describe many kinds of spiritual beings (in the way we now use the word “spirit”) and also unusual events. Only the priestly and aristocratic classes of Māori society (ariki, rangatira and tohunga) had access to knowledge of the Supreme Being, Io, also known as Io-matua, Io-matua-i-te-kore, Io-te-wananga, etc. It seems that many, but not all, tribes had this belief in Io before missionary times. Māori use several words to refer to God in the Christian sense:

Te Atua – God, the Supreme Being

Ihowa – Jehovah

Te Ariki – Lord, more correctly used of Jesus

Te Matua – the father (literally, parent)

Io – a term used for God in some, but not all Māori circles.  
(Te Atua is acceptable in all circles).

### **Hākarameta** (háh-kuh-ruh-meh-tuh)

Sacrament.

### **Hehu Karaiti** (héh-hoo kuh-rúh-ee-tee)

Jesus Christ.

**Karakia** (kúh-ruh-kee-uh)  
Prayer, ritual.

**Mana** (múh-nuh)  
Spiritual power and authority. Its sources are both divine and human, namely, God, one's ancestors and one's achievements in life. Mana comes to people in three ways: **mana tangata**, from people, **mana whenua**, from the land, and **mana atua**, from the spiritual powers.

Please note: when mana refers to Mana of God it is written as Mana.

**Marae** (múh-ruh-eh)  
The traditional meeting place of the Māori people.

**Rongopai** (ráw-ngaw-puh-ee)  
Gospel or Good News. Nga Rongopai (plural). Te Rongopai (singular).

**Te Aranga** (teh úh-ruh-nguh)  
The Resurrection.

**Te Rangatiratanga** (teh ruh-nguh-tée-ruh-tuh-nguh)  
The Kingdom or Reign of God.

**Te Wairua Tapu** (teh wúh-ee-roo-uh túh-poo)  
The Holy Spirit.

**Tika** (tée-kuh)  
Justice.

**Whakapapa** (fúh-kuh-puh-puh)  
Genealogy or family tree.

**Whakapono** (fúh-kuh-paw-naw)  
Faith.

## Appendix

<i>Task</i>	<i>Page</i>	<i>Teacher link</i>	<i>Student Text link</i>
<b>PART ONE: THE TRUTH OF SCRIPTURE</b>			
Story Telling Activity Cards	90	15	Task 2 pg 4
Who is Jesus – Placemat activity	91 & 92	22	Task 6 pg 9
<b>PART THREE: THE COMPOSITION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT</b>			
Dating the New Testament	93	45	Task 11 pg 16
<b>PART FIVE: MIRACLE STORIES</b>			
Through the Roof - Drama	94 & 95	77	Supplementary
Two Miracle Stories in depth	96 & 97	77	Supplementary
Miracle Summary – A Quiz	98 & 99	77	Supplementary
<b>PART SIX: THE RESURRECTION <i>TE ARANGA</i> ACCOUNTS</b>			
Resurrection – Crossword	100	81	Supplementary

**Task 2 Story Telling (page 4 Student Text)**

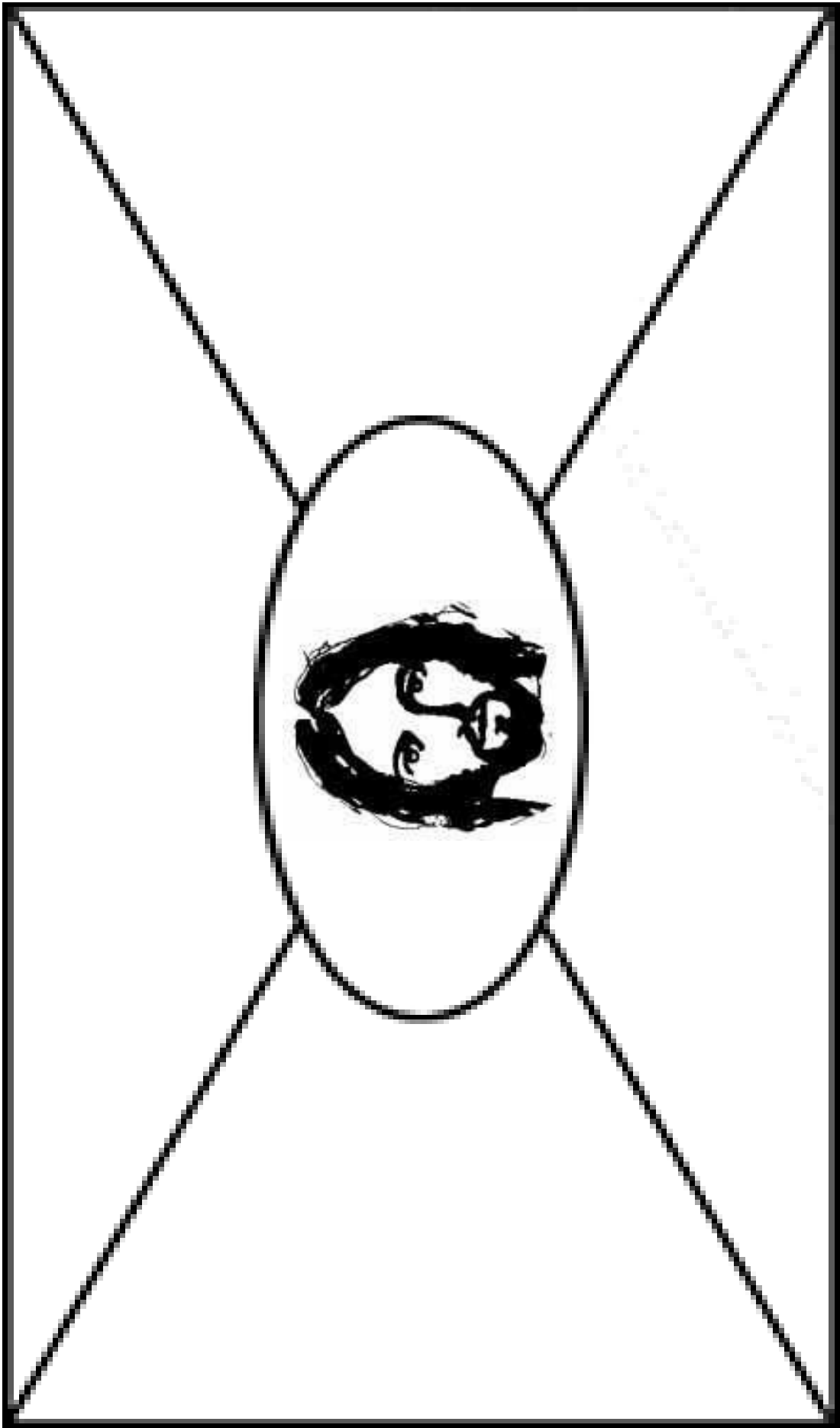
<b>My most embarrassing experience</b>	<b>My most exciting experience</b>	<b>My most frightening experience</b>
<b>My most satisfying experience</b>	<b>My most peaceful experience</b>	<b>My most disappointing experience</b>
<b>My most surprising experience</b>	<b>My happiest experience</b>	<b>My saddest experience</b>
<b>The experience that changed my life</b>	<b>My funniest experience</b>	<b>My most dangerous experience</b>
<b>My most negative experience</b>	<b>My most positive experience</b>	<b>My strangest experience</b>
<b>My most challenging experience</b>	<b>An experience I would never want to repeat</b>	<b>My most successful moment</b>

## Task 6: Who is Jesus?

## Placemat Activity (Page 9 Student Text)

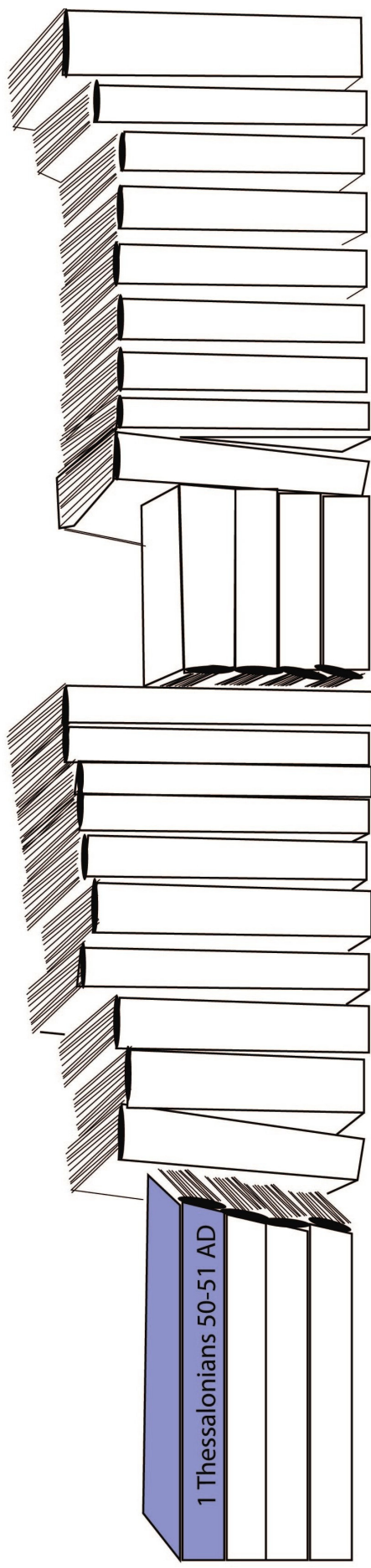
### Instructions

- ❖ In a group of 4 take one section each and write what you know about the life and ministry of Jesus.
- ❖ You cannot repeat information.
- ❖ When the groups have finished, build up a class information sheet on the life and ministry of Jesus.
- ❖ Then do a gap analysis to identify any important events that were missed by the groups. Your teacher will assist you to do this.



Task 11: Dating the New Testament (page 16 Student Text)

Use the information from the chart on page 15 of your text book to reorder the books of the New Testament in the order in which they were written.



**Drama Script:** Could be used in Part Five Miracle Stories pages 28-33 of Student Text

## Through the Roof

The following script based on Matthew 9:1-8, Luke 5:17-26 and Mark 2:1-12 (The Cure of the Paralytic) could be used as a model by students who wish to script and perform their own version of a miracle story.

### **CHARACTERS:**

Aaron and Ruth, friends of the paralysed man, Jacob.

The introduction and conclusion could be read by a narrator.

### **SETTING:**

The action takes place on the roof. The actors create the impression that they are lowering a heavy object down through the roof and into the house with ropes.

### **INTRODUCTION:**

We all face times when we need assistance to get our needs met. Sometimes other people help us in unexpected ways.

**RUTH:** *(straining and lowering the rope)* Almost! *(pause)* Just *(pause)* a little *(pause)* more!

**AARON:** *(also straining)* This *(pause)* better work *(pause)* Ruth.

*Together, they stop straining as the burden they are lowering comes to rest.*

**RUTH:** There! *(wiping her brow)* Whew! We did it! He's right at Jesus' feet. I suppose we can drop these ropes, huh?

**AARON:** No way! Those ropes cost me a fortune! I need them!

**RUTH:** C'mon, Aaron. I think Jacob needs to be healed more than you need your ropes.

**AARON:** I don't know. If this doesn't work, we may have to hoist him back up!

**RUTH:** Aaron! Where's your faith? Of course it'll work. If Jesus can't make him walk again, no one can!

**AARON:** I sure hope you're right, because if he doesn't, we've lost some really good rope!

**RUTH:** Forget about your precious rope, will you? Isn't Jacob more important to you than that?



**AARON:** Of course he is!

*They both let go of the ropes, and watch them fall through the hole.*

**AARON:** I can't believe I let you talk me into this!

**RUTH:** Well, how else were we supposed to get him near Jesus? The house is packed, and people are crowding around outside just to get a look in the windows.

*Ruth kneels down for a better look. Aaron remains standing, surveying the damage to the roof.*

**AARON:** Look at the size of that hole! Hey, did you see the look on Jesus' face when pieces of the roof started falling on his head!

**RUTH:** Shh! I want to hear what's going on!

**AARON:** Peter's gonna be furious when he sees this! So, did your brilliant plan cover how we're going to pay for the damage?

**RUTH:** Aaron, please! Jesus is talking to Jacob right now!

*Aaron kneels down, too. They both pause, straining to hear.*

**RUTH:** Huh? Did you hear that?

**AARON:** *(confused)* Yeah. Jesus just told Jacob that his sins are forgiven. Can't He see that what Jacob really needs is to be healed?

**RUTH:** Besides, isn't that blasphemy? I mean, I thought only God could forgive sins!

**AARON:** Shh! Jesus is speaking again!

**RUTH:** What! What did He say?

**AARON:** I think He must have heard you. He said, "Which is easier, to say to this paralysed person, 'Your sins are forgiven' or to say, 'Get up, take up your mat and walk'?"

**RUTH:** Hmm. I guess telling Jacob to get up and walk would be harder.

**AARON:** Huh? I don't get it.

**RUTH:** Well, if I tell you that your sins are forgiven, how will anyone know what I say is true? I mean, only God can see into your heart, right?

## Two Miracles to study in depth

Read about the healing of a deaf man (Mark 7:31-37) and the blind man of Jericho (Luke 18:35-43) in your Bible. Then sort the following aspects of the stories into the correct places on the table below:

The Structure of the Miracle Stories	Mark 7:31-37	Luke 18:35-43
1. The person or situation that needs healing is introduced:	a) Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God;	b) And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one.
2. A request for help is made:	c) Jesus took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.'	d) They brought to Jesus a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech.
3. Jesus intervenes in the situation:	e) When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, 'Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.' Then he shouted, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'	f) They begged Jesus to lay his hand on him.
4. The result of Jesus' intervention is described:	g) ... and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.	h) They were astounded beyond measure, saying, 'He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'
5. The reactions of the witnesses are described:	i) Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' He said, 'Lord, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has saved you.'	j) As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.

Answers:

The information arranged in the correct place on the table below:

	<b>Mark 7:31-37</b>	<b>Luke 18:35-43</b>
<b>The person or situation that needs healing is introduced:</b>	<b>d)</b> They brought to Jesus a deaf man who had an impediment in his speech.	<b>j)</b> As he approached Jericho, a blind man was sitting by the roadside begging.
<b>A request for help is made:</b>	<b>f)</b> They begged Jesus to lay his hand on him.	<b>e)</b> When he heard a crowd going by, he asked what was happening. They told him, 'Jesus of Nazareth is passing by.' Then he shouted, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Those who were in front sternly ordered him to be quiet; but he shouted even more loudly, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'
<b>Jesus intervenes in the situation:</b>	<b>c)</b> Jesus took him aside in private, away from the crowd, and put his fingers into his ears, and he spat and touched his tongue. Then looking up to heaven, he sighed and said to him, 'Ephphatha,' that is, 'Be opened.'	<b>i)</b> Jesus stood still and ordered the man to be brought to him; and when he came near, he asked him, 'What do you want me to do for you?' He said, 'Lord, let me see again.' Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has saved you.'
<b>The result of Jesus' intervention is described:</b>	<b>b)</b> And immediately his ears were opened, his tongue was released, and he spoke plainly. Then Jesus ordered them to tell no one.	<b>a)</b> Immediately he regained his sight and followed him, glorifying God;
<b>The reactions of the witnesses are described:</b>	<b>h)</b> They were astounded beyond measure, saying, 'He has done everything well; he even makes the deaf to hear and the mute to speak.'	<b>g)</b> ... and all the people, when they saw it, praised God.

## Miracle Summary

## A Quiz

Answer true or false to the following statements about miracles:

1. At the time of Jesus people believed that God was responsible for everything in creation.
2. The people of Jesus' time turned to science for explanations about how the world worked.
3. In the Gospels miracles are presented as signs or works of God.
4. The miracles of Jesus show the power of God at work.
5. Jesus revealed God's reign through his power over illness, disability and nature.
6. Jesus was a wonder worker and a magician.
7. Jesus worked miracles to convince those who doubted him such as the Pharisees.
8. In the miracle stories external healing is a sign of an inner change brought about by faith.
9. In a miracle story what actually happened is more important than the meaning of the miracle.
10. Jesus' miracles challenge believers to ask: "What is God saying to me through this?"

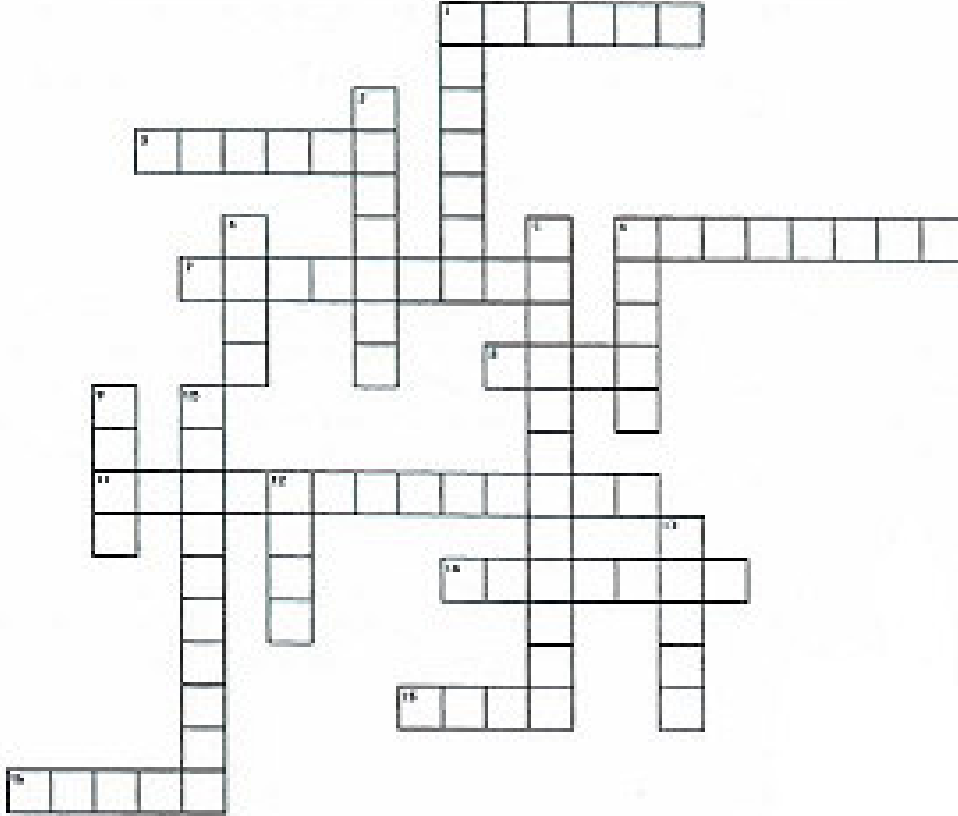
## Answers to Miracle Summary A Quiz

The correct answer is written in bold after each statement:

1. At the time of Jesus people believed that God was responsible for everything in creation. **True**
2. The people of Jesus' time turned to science for explanations about how the world worked. **False**
3. In the Gospels miracles are presented as signs or works of God. **True**
4. The miracles of Jesus show the power of God at work. **True**
5. Jesus revealed God's reign through his power over illness, disability and nature. **True**
6. Jesus was a wonder worker and a magician. **False**
7. Jesus worked miracles to convince those who doubted him such as the Pharisees. **False**
8. In the miracle stories external healing is a sign of an inner change brought about by faith. **True**
9. In a miracle story what actually happened is more important than the meaning of the miracle. **False**
10. Jesus' miracles challenge believers to ask: "What is God saying to me through this?" **True**

# The Resurrection

Use the information on pages 35 and 36 of your text book to complete the crossword



## Clues Across

1. In Mark's Gospel the women take these to the tomb to anoint Jesus with
3. One of the women who visited Jesus' tomb.
6. They did not believe what the women told them.
7. The name for a tomb or burial vault
8. In this gospel two men in dazzling clothes appear at Jesus tomb.
11. She is present in all three accounts of the Resurrection (two words).
14. In this gospel those guarding the tomb were terrified
15. The events described in the Resurrection accounts take place around this time of day.
16. This was rolled away for the tomb's entrance.

## Clues Down:

1. The Resurrection takes place on the day following the \_\_\_\_\_.
2. The women are told that they will see the risen Lord in this place.
4. In Matthew's Gospel the women take hold of Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_.
5. In all the gospels the women are told to spread the news of Jesus' \_\_\_\_\_.
6. The one who rolled back the stone in Matthew's Gospel.
9. In Mark's Gospel the young man is sitting on the right side of this.
10. In Matthew's Gospel this natural event took place at the time the stone was rolled back.
12. In this gospel the women were afraid and told no one about their experience.
13. The women are asked to tell this apostle about what happened.

# TITLES OF THE TOPICS IN YEAR 11

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## THE TRINITY



## CONSCIENCE, MORALITY, VALUES



## UNDERSTANDING THE GOSPEL STORY: DEVELOPMENT OF THE GOSPEL



## THE CHURCH'S STORY: REFORMATION AND BEYOND c.1500–1750



## ECUMENISM AND CATHOLIC IDENTITY

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