

# Year 8 Unit 1a:

## The Jewish context of the life and words of Jesus

### Standards

By the end of this unit it is intended that students:

- appreciate the regional diversity of Israel at the time of Jesus, and differences in customs and social groups
- identify the geography, customs and social groups at the time of Jesus
- analyse stories about Jesus in terms of the students' cultural and historical background.

### Indicators of Learning

|   | Values and Attitudes  | Knowledge  | Skills   |
|---|---|--|--|
|   | <i>It is intended that students will be able to:</i>  |  |  |
| 1 | consider how the context of the students' own world has shaped their lives and recognise the importance of Jesus' Jewish background, in appreciating the beginnings of Christianity | understand how knowledge of Jesus' Jewish background is essential to the way he lived his life               | analyse the Gospel story for references of Jesus' identification with his Jewish background                            |
| 2 | suggest ways in which the regional diversity of Israel provided a setting for the imagery of Jesus' teaching  | be familiar with key characteristics of the physical, climatic and natural environment of the land of Israel | locate on a map significant towns in Israel and indicate how they featured in Jesus' ministry                          |
| 3 | consider how the political context of Australia has shaped their lives in some form   | have some understanding of the political situation in Israel at the time of Jesus                            | use source material to identify political figures and conflicts which entered into Jesus' ministry                     |
| 4 | recognise the difficulties, the prejudices and stereotyping experienced by different groups in both Jesus' time and today   | identify and describe the religious/ social groupings which were active during Jesus' ministry               | describe some of the main groupings and locate Gospel passages which portray encounters between Jesus and these groups |
| 5 | recognise the influence of social, agricultural and economic customs in shaping Jesus' ministry and teaching  | characterise daily life in Israel of 30 AD   | identify Gospel stories, such as parables, which illustrate daily life and practices in Israel                         |

### Spiritual Reflection for Teachers

Our lives are filled with memories of the people, places and events that have shaped us – the cultural setting of our lives. What we believe, what we value, how we live our lives and how we tell our story is all influenced by this context.

For students to properly understand the message of the Gospel, they need to realise that Jesus was a Jewish person who lived in the first years of the first century AD. This unit helps them explore some of the formative influences that shaped Jesus' message. What are the similarities between his situation 2000 years ago and ours today that make his teaching relevant to us?

## Links with Students' Life Experience

### Social or Cultural Background

- Students will build on their knowledge of the Jewish social, political, geographic and historical background of first century Israel and hence gain a greater appreciation of the Gospel.
- As a unit taught at the beginning of the year it can be linked to the social/cultural background of the students in the classroom. It provides a timely opportunity to foster personal and cultural understanding of each student. This may help them understand that racial discrimination and stereotyping, such as Anti-Semitism and Anti-Islamism is prevalent in today's society.
- Many students are not aware of the Jewish/Christian connection. This unit could initiate an awareness of the Jewish/Christian dialogue and nurture a high regard for tolerance and understanding of all religions.

## The Church's Teaching and Lived Tradition

### Connections with Judaism

- Christianity is bound spiritually and historically to Judaism in a unique way. Vatican II in its Declaration on the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions (*Nostra Aetate*) emphasises that an understanding and appreciation of Judaism is essential to the Church's self-understanding and identity.
- This unit offers the opportunity to develop an awareness of the history and traditions of Judaism. In doing so, it is important to redress any negative or inaccurate interpretation of Jewish references in Scripture.
- In the New Testament some references may reflect the situation of tension that existed as the Early Church and Judaism grew apart in the first century. It is a Christian responsibility to become aware of the historical situation which accounted for the negative Gospel critique of the Pharisaic movement in particular.

## Catechism of the Catholic Church

### The Hidden Life of Jesus

In preparation for the teaching of this unit the following references are recommended:

#### Part One, Section Two: The Profession of the Christian Faith

#### 527-534 Hidden Life of Jesus

531 During the greater part of his life, Jesus shared the condition of the vast majority of human beings, a daily life spent without evident greatness, a life of manual labour. His religious life was that of a Jew obedient to the law of God, a life in the community.

534 The finding of Jesus in the Temple is the only event that breaks the silence of the Gospels about the hidden years of Jesus. Here Jesus lets us catch a glimpse of the mystery of his total consecration to a mission that flows from his divine sonship: 'Did you not know that I must be about my Father's work?' Mary and Joseph did not understand these words, but they accepted them in faith ...

#### 595-598 Divisions among the Jewish Authorities concerning Jesus

## Explanation of Scripture used in this unit

- It is essential that students have access to a Bible and that the Gospels are referred to in all parts of this unit. Respect for the Book of the Bible is paramount.
- This unit emphasises the Jewish origin of Christianity and therefore students should be encouraged to research the Jewish context of the Gospels. In particular they should look for examples of Jesus observing Jewish customs and traditions.

### **Luke 2:22–39** *The Presentation in the Temple* (Indicator 1)

Luke sets the scene in the first part of this story. Mary had finished the forty-day period of ritual uncleanness following the birth of Jesus. During this period she was unable to do work of any kind. Instead, she was free to rest and care for her baby.

Now, as a pious Jewess, she was careful to fulfil the requirements of the Law. An offering was made to God, to mark the end of the forty-day period and to thank God for a safe birth and a healthy child. She was required to offer a lamb and a pigeon, though as a poor woman she offered a second pigeon instead of a lamb. See Leviticus 12 for laws relating to childbirth. As well, since Jesus was a first-born son, a nominal sum of five Temple shekels was paid, to buy back the baby from God. See the explanation for this law in Numbers 18:15ff.

There was no requirement that this ceremony be performed in the Temple in Jerusalem. Such a law would have been impractical for many Jews. Nevertheless, Luke set the scene in the Temple. He appeared to have in mind the dedication of Samuel the prophet, (1 Samuel 1:11, 22–28). He implied that this would be no ordinary baby, but a great prophet of God.

We see Simeon, an elderly Jew, who waited patiently and faithfully for the fulfilment of God's promise, just as his people waited. He had the gift of prophecy, and recognised the anointed one of God in this tiny baby before him. His prayer, the *Nunc Dimittis*, has become one of the great canticles of the Church.

### **Luke 2:41–51** *The Boy Jesus in the Temple* (Indicator 1)

All Jewish men who reached the age of puberty were required to travel to the Temple for the feasts of Passover, Pentecost and Tabernacles. However, people who lived some distance from Jerusalem usually only made one annual journey. Women and children often accompanied the men but they travelled in separate groups. They were accompanied by donkeys loaded with food, clothes and bedding.

As a Jewish boy of twelve, Jesus as a young adult was able to take care of himself. His parents assumed he was with one of the scattered groups in the returning caravan. In fact, they eventually found him with a group of rabbis in the Temple. Already, Jesus was showing a depth of wisdom and intelligence that would mark him out from others.

Mary's reproach was a spontaneous expression of pain and anxiety. Jesus' reply was detached, even abrupt. In fact, Luke makes a point: for Jesus, the claims of God over-ride everything, even the ties of a loving family. Eventually, this idea would develop into the notion of the family of believers, rather than of blood-kin.

### **Matthew 15:1–14** *Challenging the Pharisees* (Indicator 4)

Passionate religious debate is a part of Judaism, and we often see examples of it in the Gospels. Jesus argued strongly with the Pharisees and Scribes, who sought to please God by keeping every detail of the Law of Moses. Jesus and the Scribes both venerate the Law, but Matthew showed them arguing about its interpretation. This short controversial story probably suggested tensions about observing dietary laws in the early Christian communities.

Having been accused of breaking with the tradition of the elders, Jesus gave a case in point where the Scribes were 'making void the word of God' as found in Exodus 20:12 and 21:17 (Matthew 15:3–6).

In verses 8 and 9, Jesus cited Isaiah (29:13) against them, arguing that we must distinguish between merely human commandments and what is truly the will of God.

## Year 8 Unit 1a: The Jewish context of the life and words of Jesus

### STANDARDS

By the end of this unit it is intended that students:

- appreciate the regional diversity of Israel at the time of Jesus, and differences in customs and social groups
- identify the geography, customs and social groups at the time of Jesus
- analyse stories about Jesus in terms of the students' cultural and historical background.

| Indicators of Learning (Incorporating Values, Knowledge and Skills)  | Essential Reading for Teachers   | Suggested Learning/Teaching Strategies   | Possible Assessment  |
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| <p><b>I.</b></p> <p><b>It is intended that students will be able to:</b></p> <p><b>V</b> consider how the context of the students' own world has shaped their lives and recognise the importance of Jesus' Jewish background, in appreciating the beginnings of Christianity</p> <p><b>K</b> understand how knowledge of Jesus' Jewish background is essential to the way he lived his life</p> <p><b>S</b> analyse the Gospel story for references of Jesus' identification with his Jewish background.</p> | <p>An understanding of Jesus' Jewishness helps Christians have a more adequate appreciation of his humanity and the richness of the Judaism within which he lived, Jesus was immersed in the Jewish religious culture of first century Israel. He followed the laws, traditions and customs of his people. The key concepts of Jesus' teaching must be understood within the context of his Jewish heritage.</p> | <p>At the beginning of the unit – read the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10:25–37) and write a reflection about it. At the end of the unit write a reflection of the same parable in light of what has been learnt.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the unique backgrounds of all members of the class. Encourage stories which highlight cultural background, customs surrounding special events and meals, position in the family, and so on. Students reflect on how they are shaped by this background.</li> <li>• Collate data in several ways – tallying on the board/ computer; countries of origin. Create pie/other graphs to display this information. This could be placed in a prominent place in the classroom.</li> <li>• Compile an oral family history of the class.</li> <li>• Show and tell: Family photos/cultural artefacts, etc.</li> <li>• Interesting stories told about family members.</li> <li>• Class devises a questionnaire to ask parents/grandparents things such as customs surrounding special events and meals, position in the family, and so on.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Peer Assessment</b></p> <p>Information from parents/grandparents presented to class in various forms (Multiple Intelligences).</p> <p>'This is your Life' with character of Jesus.</p> <p><b>Teacher Assessment</b></p> <p>Observation of discussion of culture and customs.</p> <p>Written response: Why is it important to understand Jesus' background?</p> <p>Presentation by groups on details extracted from Scripture references.</p> |

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| <p><b>2.</b></p> <p><b>It is intended that students will be able to:</b></p> <p><b>V</b> suggest ways in which the regional diversity of Israel provided a setting for the imagery of Jesus' teaching</p> <p><b>K</b> be familiar with the key characteristics of the physical, climatic and natural environment of the land of Israel</p> <p><b>S</b> locate on a map significant towns in Israel and indicate how they featured in Jesus' ministry.</p> | <p><b>Geography of Israel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategically located in the SW area of the Fertile Crescent. Israel is scarcely 240km long, stretching from Lake Huleh in the north to the Dead Sea in the south. At its broadest point the country is only 80–95km wide.</li> <li>The main physical divisions of the country feature the coastal plain; central hill area; rift valley and desert. The River Jordan follows the Rift valley for over 100km until it reaches the Dead Sea.</li> <li>There is a remarkable contrast between the regions of Galilee and Judea. Lower Galilee is one of the most fertile parts of Israel. The countryside of gently sloping hills allows rich vegetation and varied crops to grow on the land. Indeed the beauty of the environment more than likely influenced Jesus' teachings. By contrast Judea has rugged terrain, and the dry rocky soil proved difficult to cultivate.</li> </ul> | <p>This could be reported to the class, visually, (PowerPoint), artistically, poetically, in song or orally in a narrative form.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Group work: Read the following Scripture references: Luke 1:26–33; 2:1–7; 2:22–24; 2:41–52; 22:7–13 and Matthew 1:1–17; 2:1–6; 13–18; 17:24–27.</li> <li>Record two pieces of information about Jesus' life from each story. Prepare a short presentation to the class with points about Jesus' background. At the conclusion of presentations develop a summary of learnings from this exercise.</li> <li>Prepare a TV program 'This is your life' with the character of Jesus. This could also be done as a storyboard, a song, a rap, a crossword or a game of Snakes and Ladders.</li> </ul>  |   |
|   |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mapping Exercise, KWL p. 7</li> <li>Library research: Students develop a 'Fact File of Israel at the Time of Jesus', using the following headings: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Geography: land, sea, rivers, towns, mountains</li> <li>Water sources: Lake Galilee, River Jordan</li> <li>Crops: olives, figs, grapes, wheat, barley</li> <li>Animals: sheep, goats, donkey, mule, horse, cattle, deer, camel, fox</li> <li>Birds: eagles, vultures, pigeons, doves, owls, storks, partridges, quail.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Research and describe: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– the terrain of Palestine</li> <li>– housing in villages and cities in first century Palestine</li> <li>– the main industries, especially agriculture and fishing.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p><b>Teacher Assessment</b></p> <p>Making of the labelled map using the relevant Scripture passages.</p> <p><b>Peer Assessment</b></p> <p>Use simple marking criteria to assess a partner's Fact File.</p> |

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| <p><b>3.</b></p> <p><b>It is intended that students will be able to:</b></p> <p><b>V</b> consider how the political context of Australia has shaped their lives in some form</p> <p><b>K</b> have some understanding of the political situation in Israel at the time of Jesus</p> <p><b>S</b> use source material to identify political figures and conflicts which entered into Jesus' ministry.</p> | <p><b>Political Situation in 1st Century Israel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Against the political backdrop of Roman oppression and the ineffective rule of the Herodian dynasty, Jesus lived out his ministry. It was a period of history fraught with tension and frustration which encouraged nationalist feelings to grow. In 63 BC Rome conquered Israel and implemented its administration policy of local rule. Consequently, from 37–4BAD Herod the Great maintained the unity of Israel. On his death the territory of Israel was divided into three regions. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Each of Herod's sons inherited part of the country: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Philip ruled the extreme NE region. He built Caesarea Philippi.</li> <li>Herod Antipas ruled Jesus' home region of Galilee and Perea. At the time of Jesus' trial, Antipas was visiting Jerusalem. Pontius Pilate referred Jesus to him for examination.</li> <li>Herod Archelaus ruled over Idumea, Judea and Samaria. In 6 AD he was exiled to Gaul by the Romans. From this date onwards the key districts of Judea were governed directly by Roman Procurators/Governors.</li> </ul> </li> <li>Pontius Pilate was the governor of Judea from 26–36 AD. He ruled the territory during Jesus' public ministry and oversaw the administration of his trial in Jerusalem.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Give students information on significant political characters of this time, e.g. Tiberius, Augustus, Pontius Pilate, Herod the Great, Herod Antipas, Caiaphas and Annas, and the Sanhedrin. Using this information and the following Gospel references develop a CLOZE activity on the political situation in first century Palestine. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Matthew 2:1–6</li> <li>Matthew 2:7–12</li> <li>Matthew 2:13–15</li> <li>Matthew 2:16–18</li> <li>Matthew 2:19–23</li> </ul> </li> </ul> | <p><b>Teacher and/or Peer and or/ Self-assessment</b></p> <p>Students present role plays and provide criteria for peer and/or self-assessment.</p> <p><b>Peer Assessment</b></p> <p>In pairs, students check their dictogloss and discuss meaning.</p> |
| <p><b>4.</b></p> <p><b>It is intended that students will be able to:</b></p> <p><b>V</b> recognise the difficulties, the prejudices and stereotyping experienced by different groups in both Jesus' time and today</p>   | <p><b>Religious/Social Groupings in 1st Century Israel</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Pharisees</b> <p>The Pharisees were a religious reform group in Judaism. Their concern was to implement God's will, in every aspect of their lives. They were well known for their debates over the interpretation of the Torah and on occasion challenged Jesus to join them in debate. Pharisaic oral traditions were eventually written as a body of teachings in the Talmud.</p> </li> </ul>   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>KWL p. 9 – groups in Jewish society at the time of Jesus. Some other groups can be added such as the Priests (Levites), Sanhedrin, Samaritans, Poor, Outcasts, Women (widows), Diseased. Research using REsource website, &lt;<a href="http://www.resource.melb.catholic.edu.au">www.resource.melb.catholic.edu.au</a>&gt; other notes, websites, etc.</li> <li>Multiple Intelligence (MI) research task: Groups at the time of Jesus. The following site provides an overview of MI in the classroom:</li> </ul>     | <p><b>Peer Assessment</b></p> <p>MI task: Groups at the time of Jesus.</p> <p><b>Self Assessment</b></p> <p>Groups that are discriminated against today.</p>   |

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| <p><b>K</b> identify and describe the religious/social groupings which were active during Jesus' ministry</p> <p><b>S</b> describe some of the main groupings and locate Gospel passages which portray encounters between Jesus and these groups.</p>   | <p>Although the Gospels tend to give a negative picture of the Pharisees, most of them were sincere, devout people who shared many central religious convictions with Jesus.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Sadducees</b><br/>The members of this religious/social group were drawn mainly from priestly families and wealthy citizens of the community. They worked in cooperation with the Roman occupation forces to ensure the status quo. They differed from the Pharisees on a number of theological points, in particular, on resurrection (Acts 23:69) and the Pharisaic interpretation of the Torah.</li> <li>• <b>Essenes</b><br/>Although the Essenes are not mentioned in the New Testament, it is more than likely that Jesus knew of their existence. As a group they withdrew from ordinary life to monastic isolation, where they remained faithful to the Law. Their aim was to prepare for the coming of God's Messiah. Many scholars suggest that one commune of Essenes was located at Qumran, where the Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered in 1947.</li> <li>• <b>Scribes</b><br/>The Scribes were considered an authoritative group on the Torah (Jewish law). They were the keepers and interpreters of the Jewish religious tradition. They appear frequently with the elders, high priests and Pharisees in the New Testament.</li> <li>• <b>Zealots</b><br/>The Zealots were more politically oriented. They advocated violent rebellion against Rome and thought that Jewish independence could only be achieved through military action. It was their belief that the coming Messiah would be a great military leader who would overthrow the Roman oppressors. Consequently, they perceived Jesus as a political Messiah.</li> </ul> | <p><b>Teacher Assessment</b><br/>Journal response to guest speaker/speakers.</p> |
| <p>&lt;<a href="http://www.otrnet.com.au">http://www.otrnet.com.au</a>&gt; (online Teachers' RESource network) then click on the Pedagogy Weblink.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Small groups are allocated one of the headings from Essential Reading. The aim of the group work is to research and present information to the class in a manner that will help students remember identifying characteristics of the religious/social groupings at the time of Jesus. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– musical-rhythmic: The group prepares a song or uses a rhythmic beat to accompany a spoken presentation. They can incorporate a response or chorus that the class joins in.</li> <li>– intra-personal: This is an appropriate style for presenting the Essenes. The small group can develop a prayer space and through the use of mantra emphasise the lifestyle of the Essenes – prayer, fasting and silence.</li> <li>– visual-literate: Students can use this style to create 'props' for a variety of presentations.</li> <li>– mathematical-logical: Students develop puzzles which members of the class solve to discover the information.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Once given the guidelines for research tasks, students are required to develop methods of sharing their researched information.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Locate passages from the New Testament portraying encounters between Jesus and these groups. Analyse the passages: What was important to Jesus? What was important to the groups?</li> <li>• Invite a Jewish guest speaker or students from Jewish schools, to discuss their faith, its traditions and current practices with the class.</li> <li>• Students identify some contemporary stereo-typical, discriminated and persecuted groups, etc. Students discuss/write about personal or group experiences. Students reflect and discuss ways these can be challenged/changed.</li> </ul> |  |  |

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| <p><b>5.</b> <b>It is intended that students will be able to:</b></p> <p><b>V</b> recognise the influence of social, agricultural and economic customs in shaping Jesus’ ministry and teaching</p> <p><b>K</b> characterise daily life in Israel of 30 AD</p> <p><b>S</b> identify Gospel stories (such as parables) according to their illustration of daily life and practices in Israel.</p> | <p><b>Daily Life, Customs and Practices</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aramaic was the spoken language of the ordinary people, whereas those who were more educated, and non-Jews, tended to speak Greek. The Scriptures were read and recorded in Hebrew, the ancestral language of the people.</li> <li>• Israelites lived mostly as an agricultural community. Occupations tended to be either farming, herding, fishing or village crafts such as carpentry, pottery or masonry.</li> <li>• The poor lived in one-room houses built of mud brick on a stone foundation. External steps led up to the flat roof which provided storage space and somewhere to sit. Inside the house a raised platform at one end of the room provided quarters for eating and sleeping. The lower level was used mainly as a stable. The staple diet of the poor was probably goat’s milk, olives and barley bread.</li> <li>• The Synagogue was the local place of worship, but it also served as a community centre, school and law court. The role of men in the Synagogue was counter-balanced by the role of women in worship in the home. The home was to reflect worship in the Synagogue, by introducing and reinforcing religious belief among the young.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• KWL p. 10 – Occupations at the time of Jesus.</li> <li>• Jigsaw Activity – Daily Life of the People in the Time of Jesus. See explanation at the end of this unit.</li> <li>• Who wants to be a Millionaire? Information and questions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Topics:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Language</li> <li>Death and Burial</li> <li>Marriage</li> <li>Homes and Home Life</li> <li>Children and Education</li> <li>Occupation (the life of a carpenter account)</li> <li>Temple and Synagogue</li> </ul> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A manual for Jewish life. You are transported back in time to first century Palestine. You have to produce a manual using PowerPoint/Publisher, etc. to aid your setting in.</li> <li>• Film making with roles: Script, Director, Props, Set, Actors, Costumes, Music, Key grip. This could become the major assessment for the unit.</li> <li>• A Roman soldier writing to his wife/family about his experience in Palestine.</li> <li>• Using Scripture (such as parables) build up a picture of how people lived in the time of Jesus. Make a poster image which illustrates some aspects of this daily life.</li> <li>• Working in groups, research the lives of women in first century Palestine. What tasks did they perform? (Read Proverbs 31:10–31). What tasks in Proverbs 31 might Mary of Nazareth have performed?</li> </ul> | <p><b>Peer Assessment</b></p> <p>Students present their visual summaries to the class or read each other’s ‘Roman Soldier’ writing to his wife or family about life in Palestine.</p> <p><b>Teacher Assessment</b></p> <p>Observation of students correctly completing the jigsaw activity.</p> <p>Teacher marks the students’ reports or film on the daily life of the people in the time of Jesus.</p> <p>Mark ‘Manual for Jewish life.’</p> <p>Mark the research of the lives of women in first-century Palestine. This could be a peer assessment.</p> |
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## Celebration: Prayer and Liturgy

- It may be useful to research ways in which the Church's prayer and liturgy have been inspired and draw on Jewish tradition. (Refer to *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, n. 1096).
- The Shema (Deut 6:4-9) is a prayer that links Jewish-Christian spirituality in its profession of faith in One God. It was one of the most important prayers recited daily by Jesus and his contemporaries. Students should be encouraged to become familiar with it so that it could be used in their own prayer life.

### Suggested celebration based on Matthew 5:17-19

Students' work throughout the unit can contribute to this liturgy. A selection of images representing people, places and events from the time of Jesus can provide a strong visual expression as the focus for the prayer.

Depending on your situation, this prayer could be held in the open air in an area free from distraction. Alternatively, it could be held in a quiet room where you could show a series of images relating to this topic. When preparing for this liturgy, explain to students it will involve a quiet, reflective time.

**Leader:** In our prayer today we remember that Jesus came into the world at a certain time and place in history. He used the ordinary things of peoples' lives to help them understand his message. Jesus talked about shepherds with their flocks and about farmers planting and harvesting their crops. He told stories while sitting on mountains and in the boats of fishermen. He knew how to connect with peoples' deepest needs and longings.

During his life Jesus enjoyed the companionship of others, but there were times when he needed to be alone. Often he slipped away on his own to pray for the strength to keep going.

We will now prepare ourselves to hear the words of Jesus in the Gospel.

*This time of preparation could involve sitting in silence for a few moments, or you could play a Taizé chant.*

A suitably prepared student proclaims Matthew 5:17-19, concluding with:

The Gospel of the Lord.

**All:** **Praise to you, Lord Jesus Christ.**

**Leader:** In this passage Jesus stresses that the duty of his followers is to be true to God's Commandments. Jesus has summarised these in the Great Commandment, when he said that we should love God and love others. How can we respond to this challenge of Jesus in our life?

Pause after each question.

- If Jesus were to enter your world today, what are the things he would praise you for?
- What aspects of your life would Jesus challenge you to change?
- What reaction would Jesus have to our society?
- What are some of the things he might ask you to do to improve our society?

Jesus told the people of his time to put their needs before God, and this is what we do today.

**Conclusion:** *The teacher or a student concludes with a blessing.*

As we strive to love God more fully  
As we strive to love others more openly  
As we pray for the needs of our lives  
As we pray for the needs of the world

**Response: Jesus be with us.**  
**Response: Jesus be with us.**  
**Response: Jesus be with us.**  
**Response: Jesus be with us.**

We make our prayer in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.

**Response: Amen.**

## Possible Assessment Tasks

### TASK 1: Dictogloss – Israel at the Time of Jesus

#### PURPOSE

To assist with students' listening skills in relation to Herod and his family.

#### ACTIVITY

Israel at the time of Jesus was under Roman control and had been since 63 BC. There was much tension and frustration, and nationalist feeling was growing.

The Romans established the family of Herod as the local rulers. Herod the Great ruled and maintained the unity of all his territory from 37–4 BC.

When Herod the Great died the territory of Israel was divided into three regions. Each of Herod's sons inherited a part:

- Philip inherited the north east region called Caesarea Philippi
- Herod Antipas ruled Jesus' home region of Galilee and Perea
- Herod Archelaus ruled Idumea, Judea and Samaria. In 6 AD the Romans exiled him to Gaul, and Judea was governed directly by the Romans.

In Herod Archelaus' place, the Romans appointed a procurator (sub-governor). In the time of Jesus, the Roman procurator was Pontius Pilate.

#### ASSESSMENT

After reading to students set this as a cloze passage for them to fill in the blanks.

### TASK 2: Daily Life in the Time of Jesus

#### PURPOSE

For students to become familiar with the life and times of Jesus.

#### ACTIVITY

The following contains basic information about particular areas. The teacher could use this as a starting point. Students in groups research a particular topic, then report their findings to the whole class.

- **Language:** The language of the ordinary people at the time of Jesus was Aramaic, which was similar to Hebrew. Jesus and his friends spoke Aramaic. Greek and Latin were also spoken by the Jewish people, particularly those people living in the cities.
- **Focus questions:** What was the language that Jesus and his friends would have spoken? What other languages were also spoken by the Jewish people at the time of Jesus? Who would have spoken these languages?
- **Death and Burial:** The women of the family washed and anointed the body and wrapped it in a shroud. They covered the face and tied the feet with strips of linen cloth. Burial of the body happened on the day of the death, or the next day. The men recited a ritual prayer, and close relatives tore their clothes to show their grief. The typical burial place was an excavation or cave in a rock face, which was later sealed.
- **Focus questions:** Who prepared the body for burial? How was the dead person's body prepared? Why would close relatives of the dead person tear their clothes? Where and when would the dead person be buried?

- **Marriage:** Boys married at about eighteen and girls around twelve to thirteen years of age. The groom would publicly profess his love and this would bind the couple in matrimony. After a twelve-month betrothal period, in which the couple did not live together, the bride was taken to the groom's house. After the blessing by the groom's parents the wedding was completed by a week-long celebration.
- **Focus questions:** At what ages did boys and girls marry? Describe the events that would lead up to the marriage.
- **Homes and Home Life:** Most Jewish homes were one room, mud-brick dwellings with a walled courtyard. Water was precious and was normally drawn from the village well. The diet of the people was mainly bread and vegetables. Food was shared from a common bowl.
- **Focus questions:** Describe what a village home would look like. What was the diet of the people? Why was water precious?
- **Children and Education:** Children were considered a blessing from God. The first important religious ceremony for a boy was eight days after birth when he was circumcised as a mark of his Jewishness. The father would name his son. The initial education of a son was the responsibility of his mother who taught him the stories and customs of the Hebrew people. Later, Jewish boys were taught to read and write in the synagogue schools. By the time he attained his Bar Mitzvah at the age of thirteen he was expected to know the Law. Girls were educated at home in the complex responsibilities of a Jewish woman (see Proverbs 31 for a full list of these responsibilities).
- **Focus questions:** What were the two religious ceremonies for boys? What skills was a young Jewish girl expected to learn?

## ASSESSMENT

Report to class.

## Resources

### Essential Reading

#### Recommended editions of the Bible are:

Catholic Bible Press 1993, *The New Revised Standard Version: Catholic Edition*. Catholic Bible Press, a division of Thomas Nelson Inc., Nashville, Tennessee.

Darton, Longman & Todd 1985, *The New Jerusalem Bible*. Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd and Doubleday, London.

### Teacher Resources

Barker, K 2001, *Inside the Bible*. Ignatius Press, San Francisco.

Carswell, M & Fleming, J 2000, *Sabbath of Sabbaths*. Harper Collins Religious, Melbourne.

Carswell, M 2001, *Teaching Scripture, The Gospel of Mark*. Harper Collins Religious, Melbourne.

Charpentier, E 1992, *How to Read the New Testament*. SCM Press, Canterbury.

Liddy, S & Welbourne, L 1999, *Strategies for Teaching Religious Education*. Social Science Press, Sydney.

Mohi, M (ed.) 2000, *The Many Faces of Christ*. Addwall, Sydney.

Ryan, M 1998, *Mark: A Synoptic Gospel, Teacher's Manual*. Social Science Press, Sydney.

Ryan, M 2002, *Teaching the Bible, A Manual of Teaching Activities, Commentary and Blackline Master*. Social Science Press, Sydney.

Ryan, M 2003, *Reading the Bible, an Introduction for Students*. Social Science Press, Sydney.

Twork, C 1999, *I Want To Be Jesus: 150 easy-to-use Gospel plays for children*. Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Wintour, R 2001, *Just Imagine Creative Ways of Presenting Scripture*. Mountjoy Enterprises, Brisbane.

### Classroom Resources

Goosen, G & Tomlinson, M 2001, *Studying the Gospels: an Introduction*. Harper Collins Religious, Melbourne.

Morrissey, J et al. 1997, *Out of the Desert*, Book 1, Ch. 3. Longman, Melbourne.

Ryan, M 1998, *Mark: A Synoptic Gospel*. Social Science Press, Sydney.

### Websites

<[www.resource.melb.catholic.edu.au](http://www.resource.melb.catholic.edu.au)> (social and cultural background to life of Jesus)

<<http://www.otrnet.com.au>> (pedagogy on multiple intelligences)

## Unit Evaluation

In evaluating the indicators of learning the teacher could consider the following:

- To what extent have students appreciated the regional diversity of Israel at the time of Jesus?
- How well have students identified the geography, customs and social groups at the time of Jesus?
- How effectively did students analyse stories about Jesus in terms of their cultural and historical background?
- To what extent did students demonstrate achievement of the standards?
- Are there standards that were not achieved?
- What changes (if any) would you make if you were teaching this unit again?