

Religious Studies 25 – Unit Three

INTRODUCTION TO CHRISTIANITY AND ITS ROOTS

In this unit students will:

G.O. 4 - The student will study the Bible as a source of Christian belief.

D1. How does the Catholic community understand the Bible?

D2. What is the significance of story?

S.O. 4.1 -- To understand that Catholics interpret the Bible in a unique way.

a. Composition

b. Interpretation

S.O. 4.2 -- To understand the Bible as story.

a. Significance of the core narratives as Christian story • Exodus • Death • Resurrection

b. The role of biblical personalities

G.O. 5 - The student will understand the message of Jesus.

E1. Why is Jesus important? *S.O. 5.1 -- To understand how God is revealed to us in our lives. a. Old Testament*

Connections between Christianity and Narnia

Christianity	Narnia

Narnia, Christianity, and Sacrifice

All sin is an offense against God and must be atoned for. Atonement requires the blood of the sinner.

In the Old Testament, people would sacrifice animals (often sheep or goats) as an offering for their sins. These animals would take on the sins of the people. This is from where the term scapegoat came.

The penitent would tell the priest his sins and the sins would be transferred to the animal and the animal would then be killed on the altar.

The blood of the animal would then be spread on the altar as well the people would be covered with the blood. In the New Testament we hear the phrase "washed in the blood of the lamb" (Rev 7:14). This was a sign of the forgiveness of sins.

The animal sacrifice was insufficient since sins against an eternal God required an eternal/immortal sacrifice.

God, in the person of Jesus becomes the "Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world" (Jn 1:29). Jesus, the eternal God, now becomes the eternal sacrifice.

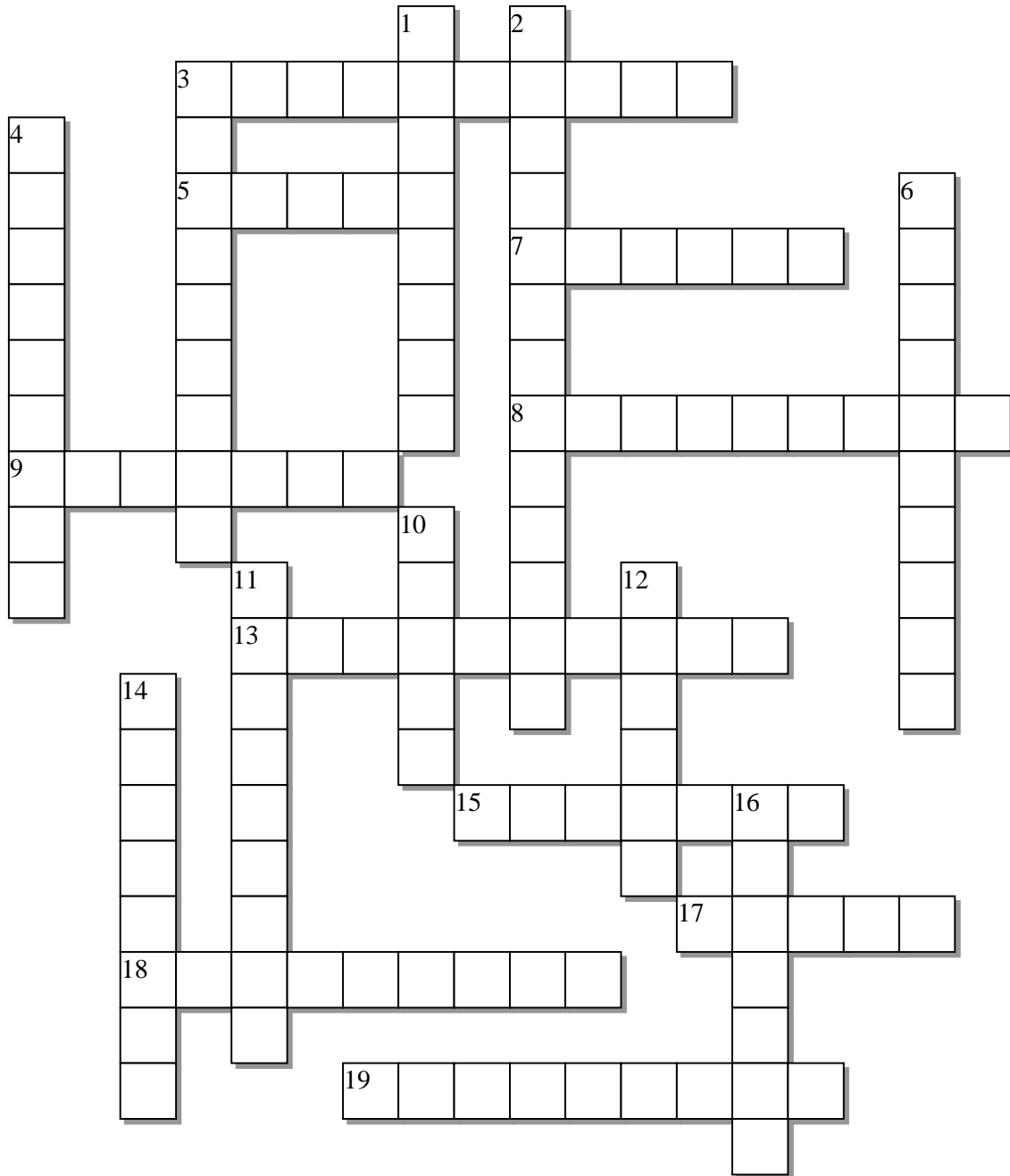
At the Mass we offer a general confession of our sins: "I confess to all mighty God and to you brothers and sisters..." We also go directly to the priest and tell him our sins in the Sacrament of Reconciliation.

In the Mass the gifts of bread and wine are brought forward to the altar and given to the priest who will then offer them as a sacrifice. Recall his words, "Pray my brothers and sisters, that my sacrifice and yours may be acceptable to God, the almighty Father" The faithful respond, " May the Lord accept this sacrifice at your hands, for the praise and glory of His name, for our good and the good of all his Holy Church."

The bread and wine is offered as a sacrifice or sin offering after the Order of Melchizedek (Heb 5:1-10, Gen 14:18).

Catholics believe according to Scripture that at the altar the bread and wine become Jesus' body and his blood and that the original sacrifice, the crucifixion, is represented at the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass.

Narnia, Christianity, and the Gospel



Across:

- 3 - The sacrifice in Narnia was killed on the _____
- 5 - The sacrifice was killed on the _____
- 7 - Animal sacrifices were inadequate because they were _____
- 8 - In the Apostles Creed, Jesus _____ to the dead before his resurrection
- 9 - All sin is an _____ against God
- 13 - Lucy's healing potion might represent the Sacrament of the _____ of the sick
- 15 - In Old Testament times people were _____ with the blood of the sacrifice
- 17 - _____ is the eternal sacrifice
- 18 - Aslan leaving at the end after his resurrection is comparable to Jesus'
- 19 - The name given to the animal that the one's sin was transferred to

Down:

- 1 - Edmund might be compared with Judas because of his _____
- 2 - At Aslan's death, Lucy might represent _____
- 3 - Jesus and Aslan go to their death like a lamb to _____
- 4 - In Narnia Peter represents the _____
- 6 - Edmund's private discussion with Aslan could represent the Sacrament of _____
- 10 - Sin requires the _____ of the sinner
- 11 - At the Mass the priest offers a _____ for sin
- 12 - True punishment for sin was the death of the _____
- 14 - At Aslan's death, Susan might represent _____
- 16 - Sin against an eternal God required an _____ sacrifice for reconciliation

D1. How does the Catholic community understand the Bible?

D2. What is the significance of story?

S.O. 4.1 -- To understand that Catholics interpret the Bible in a unique way.

a. Composition

b. Interpretation

Reflection

Ask either a parent or, preferably, a grandparent to describe to you a significant event that took place in their childhood. Ask them to include as many details as possible. Who was involved?

Where did it happen? Why did it happen? What impact did it have on them or their family? Try to get as many details as possible. *This reflection will be handed in on a separate sheet of paper.*

Due next class.

Oral Tradition

It may seem strange to us that people through word of mouth could consistently and accurately pass on information from one generation to the next. However, in a world without electronic recording devices and where paper was scarce, this was the case. For instance, Rabbi's would have committed the entire Old Testament to memory. This may seem remarkable to us mostly because the art of memorization is a skill that we rarely use. There was a time when the development of the skill was necessary and did take place.

Catholic monks would memorize and on a daily basis, pray all 150 Psalms.

Scripture and the Telephone Game

Some who are less informed suggest that the Telephone Game is a good analogy to describe the development of Scripture. The problem is that the intended purpose of the telephone game is to see just how ridiculous the message will end up. The first person whispers something into the second person's ear without the opportunity to clarify any misunderstandings. This continues from one person to the next throughout the entire group with the message becoming less and less like the original, often retaining none of the original by the end.

A more accurate description of how Scripture was handed down would be having the third person in the telephone chain asking the first person if the second person had passed on the correct message. The first person would then correct any errors in the message. This would continue throughout the group. In fact, to be more specifically like the development of Scripture, the second person would actually write down what the first person had said and not only tell the others but also pass on the written word as well.

How do we know if the New Testament we have today is an accurate replica of the original?

As some people have been influenced by the 'telephone game' the question of the accuracy of our modern translations of the bible comes up. How do we know if our Bible, and in particular, the New Testament are anything like the early translations? To determine the accuracy of the Bible we have today, we would have to compare it with ancient manuscripts. It is true that the original documents no longer exist however there are in existence today manuscripts that span the last 1700 years, many of which go back as far as the fourth century. In existence today, there are 5000 whole or partial ancient manuscript copies of the New Testament. There is no other historical document in the world that can make such a claim. Records of ancient liturgies (prior to 350 AD) of the early Christians contain excerpts of the New Testament that are consistent with the account we have from the fourth century and today.

Inconsistencies in Scripture

Some claim that certain inconsistencies in Scripture demonstrate that Scripture is in error. Consider the following scenario. In a brazen attack, a student walks into a classroom filled with students shouting, “If no one moves, no one will get hurt!” He then proceeds to steal the computer. After everyone gets over the initial shock the police are called and the crime is reported. The police ask each person to complete a witness statement, and they do. After the statements have been collected, the police take them down to the station to review them. The first written by the small girl in the front row describes how this extremely tall man came in and threatened the class and then stole the computer. The next statement written by the boy in the back of the room near the door reported that there were three others just outside the door keeping watch for the guy in the room. The next student, a star basketball player, indicated that the guy who came into the room was about average height and was carrying a gun that he quickly put into his pocket when started to undo the computer. A student in the middle of the classroom reported that she saw the first guy walk into the class and that there was one person standing at the door waiting. The students, who had headphones on when the guy walked into the class, reported that some guy, not saying a word, walked into the classroom, unhooked the computer and walked out.

As the police read through the statements they find that some report that there was one person involved, possibly two and as many as four. They learn that person who walked in was tall, but also of average height. One person said he had a gun, but no one else indicated this. Others said he made a comment about not hurting anyone others reported that he didn’t say anything at all. With all of these inconsistencies, would it be reasonable for the police to conclude that none of this actually took place? What if all of the statements were practically carbon copies of one another? Would this make them more legitimate? Consider the account in **Daniel 13**. The wise Daniel ensures that those who accused Susanna don’t have a chance to conspire together.

Scripture may have inconsistencies in number or location. For instance, did Judas hang himself or did he fall down and his guts burst out? It was likely both; he hung himself, later the rope broke and he fell to the ground and his guts burst out. The account of the angels at the tomb had some notice two angels and someone else only see one angel.¹ As we have seen in the reference to the stolen computer, this doesn’t invalidate claim.

Regardless of the inconsistencies that one might find within the New Testament, what isn’t found are alternate endings such as Jesus and Mary Magdalene getting married and having

¹ Kreeft, Peter & Ronald K. Tacelli. (1994). *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*. Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, pg. 216.

children. There is simply no historical basis for this claim and is the product either an overactive imagination or wishful thinking. I could say that I believe the Edmonton Oilers won the Stanley Cup in 2011. Jesus did say that the first will be last and the last will be first. Regardless of how I spin it, the fact is, the Oilers did not win the Stanley Cup and neither did Jesus get married to or have children with Mary Magdalene.

Development of the Gospels

The Gospel of Mark is the earliest recorded Gospel. Mark was not an apostle but was a close companion of Peter who was definitely part of the inner circle of apostles. Mark would have received his information from Peter. The Gospels, Matthew, Mark, and Luke are referred to as synoptic Gospels. Synoptic means “to see together”². The Gospel of Mark is typically considered the source for a significant portion of Matthew and Luke. Another source, that has since been lost in its original form, is referred to as “Q” which comes from the German *quelle* which means source has been attributed to the non-Markan portions of Matthew and Luke.³ See pages 39-

Gospels	By Whom?	When?	For Whom?	Why?
Mark	John Mark	Sometime between 65 and 70	Seems to have been written in Rome for Gentile (non Jewish readers.	Stresses the human suffering of Jesus in his Passion and death to encourage those who were suffering at the time. Jesus’ death is the central point of the Gospel. Explains that suffering is an essential part of Christian life. There is also an emphasis on the humanity of Jesus
Luke	Luke was a non-Jewish Gentile doctor who was a companion of St. Paul	The Gospel of Luke is thought to have been written during the 80s. 85 is the date used in the text.	Luke was most likely writing to an audience made up of Gentiles and well-to-do Christians	Luke stresses Jesus’ mercy and compassion. As well, Luke emphasizes the understanding is for everyone, Jews and Gentiles, men and women, rich and poor. He demonstrates that God through Jesus accepts the persons who are least expected to receive God’s favour (social outcasts and women). Reminds the reader of the joy that is shared by those who experience God’s forgiving live in Jesus.
Matthew	Traditionally held to be Matthew an Apostle of Jesus	The Gospel of Matthew was written sometime between 80 and 100. 90 is the date used in the text.	The Gospel of Matthew was written for a Jewish audience.	This is indicated by the many references to the Old Testament particularly of Jesus as the new Moses. Jesus is presented as the true teacher of the Jewish Law. Often referred to as the Gospel of the Church, Matthew speaks specifically of the Church as well its organization.
John	The Apostle John is the author of the this Gospel	Thought to have been written between 90 and 100.	John’s Gospel would have been written for all followers of Christ whether they were of Jewish or Gentile origin.	It is in the Gospel of John that we see a strong attempt to explain and define the divinity of Christ. The emphasis of John’s Gospel is more deeply theological rather than historical.

² Jesus of History Christ of Faith pg. 45

³ Bruce, F.F. (1981). *The New Testament Documents: Are they reliable?* Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, IL, pg. 34.

The Remarkable Call of God

Consider the call of Moses Exodus 3-4.

What are Moses' objections to God?

What are the excuses he gives to not accept God's call?

What was Moses doing when he was called by God?

Consider Samuel's call of Saul, 1 Samuel 9.

What was Saul's response to Samuel's request?

Call of David 1 Samuel 1.

Was David the first one considered?

What was David doing when he was called by Samuel to be King?

The Matching Search for a Messiah

Read through the following passages from the Old Testament and match with the appropriate prophecy:

- | | | |
|-------------------------|-------|--|
| 1. 2 Samuel 7:16 | _____ | a. <u>God's servant would be "numbered with the transgressors"</u> |
| 2. Deuteronomy 18:15-18 | _____ | b. <u>God's salvation would reach the ends of the earth</u> |
| 3. Isaiah 7:14 | _____ | c. <u>He would perform miracles</u> |
| 4. Isaiah 9:6-7 | _____ | d. <u>The Messiah would be preceded by a messenger</u> |
| 5. Isaiah 35:4-6 | _____ | e. <u>Isaiah foreshadowed the virgin birth of Jesus</u> |
| 6. Isaiah 40:1-5,9 | _____ | f. <u>Jesus was betrayed by a friend</u> |
| 7. Isaiah 49:6 | _____ | g. <u>God promised another prophet like Moses</u> |
| 8. Isaiah 50:6 | _____ | h. <u>There would be a son called God</u> |
| 9. Isaiah 53:1-3 | _____ | i. <u>God's servant would die for our sins</u> |
| 10. Isaiah 53:4-6 | _____ | j. <u>Jesus was spat upon and beaten</u> |
| 11. Isaiah 53:7 | _____ | k. <u>The Messiah would be born in Bethlehem</u> |
| 12. Isaiah 53:9 | _____ | l. <u>King David's throne would be established forever</u> |
| 13. Isaiah 53:12 | _____ | m. <u>The Messiah would enter Jerusalem while riding on a donkey</u> |
| 14. Jeremiah 23:5 | _____ | n. <u>God's servant would be silent before his accusers</u> |
| 15. Micah 5:1-2 | _____ | o. <u>God's servant would be buried in a rich man's tomb</u> |
| 16. Psalm 41:9-10 | _____ | p. <u>The Messiah would be rejected</u> |
| 17. Zechariah 9:9 | _____ | q. <u>The Messiah would be a descendant of King David</u> |
| 18. Zechariah 12:10 | _____ | r. <u>Zechariah foreshadowed the crucifixion of Jesus</u> |

Jesus: The Word Became Flesh

God created Adam and Eve in a state of perfection. But sin separated man from God and brought about death. But God mounted a rescue mission, used prophets to prepare the way, and in the fullness of time sent his Son Jesus to redeem the world. The 2nd person of the Trinity took on human flesh—God became man—born of a virgin in Bethlehem. King Herod’s attempt to kill any rival sent the Holy Family fleeing to Egypt. Returning to Nazareth with his mother Mary and legal father Joseph, Jesus was a carpenter until the age of thirty. We know very little about these “30 silent years”, but Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature, and in favor with God and man, obedient to his parents and the Law of Moses.

Questions for further discussion and study:

1. Explain how the story of salvation began with a man, a woman and a serpent (Gen 3:1-24). Who was deceived by the serpent’s lies resulting in sin (Gen 3:6, 17; 2 Cor 11:3)?

2. How does the story of salvation end with a man, a woman and a serpent (Rev 12:1-11; CCC 410-11)? Who or what was the serpent (Rev 12:9; CCC 414, 2852)?

Why was God the only one who could remedy the situation (CCC 616)?

CCC 616 It is love "to the end" that confers on Christ's sacrifice its value as redemption and reparation, as atonement and satisfaction. He knew and loved us all when he offered his life. Now "the love of Christ controls us, because we are convinced that one has died for all; therefore all have died." No man, not even the holiest, was ever able to take on himself the sins of all men and offer himself as a sacrifice for all. The existence in Christ of the divine person of the Son, who at once surpasses and embraces all human persons, and constitutes himself as the Head of all mankind, makes possible his redemptive sacrifice for all.

3. What is the result of Adam's disobedience (Gen 3:17-19; CCC 399-401; 1707)?

4. What is the first prophecy that God would set things right (Gen 3:15; CCC 70, 410-411, 489)?

5. How are all people affected by sin through Adam's choice (Rom 5:12-19; 1 Cor 15:21, 56; CCC 402-406)? What is the sting of death (1 Cor 15:56)?

What is the Incarnation? (CCC 461)

CCC 461 Taking up St. John's expression, "The Word became flesh", the Church calls "Incarnation" the fact that the Son of God assumed a human nature in order to accomplish our salvation in it. In a hymn cited by St. Paul, the Church sings the mystery of the Incarnation:

Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men. And being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross.

6. Explain how and why Jesus' birth was unique and unusual (Mt 1:20-25; CCC 497). How was his birth explained to Mary (Lk 1:26-38)?

7. Who were the first to be notified of the savior's birth (Lk 2:8-20)?

8. Who visited the baby and honored him as a king (Mt 2:1-12)?

9. Who was king of Judea when Jesus was born (Mt 2:1; CCC 423)?

10. What did Isaiah prophesy about Christ (Is 7:14)?

11. What does Immanuel mean (Mt 1:23)?

12. Who had come to visit the world (Jn 1:1, 14; Phil 2:5-8; CCC 454)? How do we understand the two natures of Jesus Christ—for example, is he only God or only a man? Or, is he part God and part man (Col 1:19; 2:9; Jn 1:1, 14; CCC 464, 469, 479)?

CCC 530 The *flight into Egypt* and the massacre of the innocents make manifest the opposition of darkness to the light: "He came to his own home, and his own people received him not." Christ's whole life was lived under the sign of persecution. His own share it with him. Jesus' departure from Egypt recalls the exodus and presents him as the definitive liberator of God's people.

13. Read the story of Herod and his slaughter of the innocents (Mt 2:1-19). Why do you think King Herod was afraid of baby Jesus?

14. How did Joseph respond (Mt 2:13-15)?

15. How was Our Lord's salvation from slaughter similar to that of Moses (Ex 1:8-9, 22; 2:1-3)?

16. How might this be a hint that Jesus is the new Moses?
