



Theological Education

REFERENCE *The Christian Story* (Page 113-132)

INTRODUCTION

Theology is a fundamental activity, which we engage in from our earliest years. It simply means seeking to understand the things we believe about God, about ourselves, and about creation, so that we can discover what they have to do with our lives. It means forming an overall picture of life that makes sense in the light of our faith and of our own experience.

How do we teach theology? That will depend on our aim. In Theological Education we want to help learners achieve theological literacy, or, in other words, gain some command over the concepts the community uses to describe its faith. What do we mean when we speak of Trinity, saying that God is one, yet three? When we affirm that each human person is affected by original sin, how do we understand this? When we call God Creator of heaven and earth, how does this affect the way we treat others and the Earth on which we live? Or again, how do we understand the words of Jesus recalled in the Eucharist: "This is my body; this is my blood"? How do we answer the spaceman who, having gone to 'heaven', announces on his return that he now knows there is no God?

While there is one faith, there are many ways of understanding it and many different depths at which it is revealed. Mysteries of faith are like diamonds which reveal new beauty the more we work with them. In different times and places, theologians - ourselves among them - receive new light on the ancient mysteries of our faith. We might say that theology is the activity of polishing these mysteries in order to keep them sparkling, and able to reflect the light of truth.

AIMS

- to help the students achieve theological literacy, whereby they learn to own their inheritance of the Church's developing vision and vocabulary
- to help them play their part in developing that vision and vocabulary further by learning to do theology creatively and from a sound base.
- to help them experience the flow of Revelation as it has come to God's People over the ages, where each development has prepared the way for the next.
- to help them form an overall picture that shows the connections between Jesus Christ and everything involved in following him.

LESSON IDEAS

The ideas for lessons presented in the following pages are based on a reading of *The Christian Story* (Cluster Publications, Pietermaritzburg, 2007), a text designed with high school students in mind.¹ The Grade 11 lessons deal with Part IV, 'Go out to all the world', which explores important aspects of the Church's life and its mission of bringing God's Good News to all people.






There are six lessons in Grade 11:

¹ This text is available from the Catholic Institute of Education as well as from the publisher.

1. The Church's Mission
2. The Paschal Mystery
3. The Church in the World
4. Light of the Nations
5. Future Church
6. My Part?

LESSON MODELS

The lessons are designed as variations on four basic models or approaches.

1.  ⇒ The text is studied and then unpacked.
2. ⇒  The topic is covered and then the text is read.
3. ⇒  ⇒ The students are prepared, the text is read, and then followed up.
4. ⇒  ⇒  ⇒ There is repeated movement into and out of the text.

The Church's Mission



REFERENCE	<i>The Christian Story</i> (Chapter 28)
FOCUS	Mission of the Church (Evangelisation, Inter-religious Dialogue)
GLOSSARY	Grace; Mission; Salvation

LESSON SUGGESTIONS [📖 ⇨ ⇨ ⇨]

📖 Text

Read the chapter together with Luke 4:16-21 before the lesson, each person preparing a short (two-minute), written reflection titled, 'This is what Jesus came to do.'

⇨ Sharing

In small groups the written reflections are shared without discussion, but with focused listening.

⇨ Responding

Individuals are invited to rewrite their reflection in the light of what they have heard in their groups.

⇨ Discussion

- How did listening to others increase or clarify your understanding of the mission of Jesus?
- How does dialogue help us to arrive at a clearer expression of truth?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

- Have you ever spoken to people of another religion? Do you find some things attractive about their religion?
- Have you ever found something in another religion confirming you in your own religious beliefs or practices?
- How can the Church be Good News in today's world? Has it ever been in any sense, in your experience, bad news? (See *The Christian Story*, p 63)

The Paschal Mystery



- REFERENCE** *The Christian Story* (Chapter 29)
- FOCUS** The Transformation of the Universe
- GLOSSARY** Paschal Mystery, Body of Christ

LESSON SUGGESTIONS [⇒📖⇒⇒⇒]

⇒ **Presentation**

Unpack the idea of Passover or Pasch from which the title of the lesson comes. One way of doing this would be to present the following table, inviting learners to suggest the items in the right hand column.

WHO OR WHAT IS PASSING OVER	FROM	TO	COMMENT
seed	planting (burial)	germination, flower & fruit	Note that there is always a passage to new life, more life, abundant life
Israel	Egypt (slavery)	Canaan (freedom)	
Jesus	death	the risen life	
We and the Universe	sin & confusion	integrity & peace	
	the world of space & time	a new heaven and a new earth	
BAPTISM IS THE SYMBOL OF OUR PASSING OVER			

📖 **Text**

Read the chapter.

⇒ **Reflection**

The Paschal Mystery is a paradox. Explore what this means. Parallel lines are lines which run straight next to each other but never meet. A paradox is two teachings or ideas whose meanings seem not to agree, yet both are true. Here are a few references to think of:

- Even though he dies he will live (John 11:25)
- Unless a wheat grain falls on the ground and dies.... (John 12:24)
- Anyone who loves his life loses it; ...anyone who hates his life will keep it (Jn 12:25)
- It is in dying that we are born to eternal life (St Francis of Assisi)

⇒ **Reflection**

Say the Lord's Prayer. Note the words "your will be done on earth as it is in heaven". Doing God's will is our call to 'bury' ourselves in the way of God so that we may rise into the life of God.

⇒ **Response**

Using any art medium express an understanding of the Paschal Mystery, the transition or transformation of the Universe from the world of space and time to 'a new heaven and a new earth'.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

- What do you think it means to God's will as it is (done) in heaven? Can you relate this to some personal experiences of self-sacrifice?
- How do the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit participate in the Paschal Mystery?

The Church in the World



REFERENCE	<i>The Christian Story</i> (Chapter 30)
FOCUS	Community Serving Humanity (Priest, prophet, leader roles)
GRADE 11 LINKS	Religious Community

LESSON SUGGESTIONS [⇒ 📖 ⇨ ⇨]

⇒ Exploration

Ask learners to look up the following biblical references: Leviticus 4:3-5; 1 Samuel 16:13; 1 Kings 19:16; 1 Chronicles 16:22; Psalm 132:10; Psalm 105:15. They take note of who in Israel was anointed. (Prophet, priests and kings)

📖 Text

You could divide the class into three or six groups and assign one of the three roles to read on p 119-120: the priestly task, the prophetic, and leadership roles.

⇒ Response

Remind the learners that the Church is wider than the visible structure. (See chapter 15, p 67.). Jesus said: "Anyone who is not against us is for us." (Mark 9:40) Ask each group to identify people, either in the visible Church or beyond its borders, who perform in society the role they have read about.

OR

Ask individuals to identify these roles – maybe only in small ways – in their own lives.

⇒ Presentation

Show how the three roles come together in the mission of Jesus.

PROPHET (Jn 18:37)

PRIEST (Jn 3:17)

LEADER (Mt 20:28)

Since the mission of the Church is the mission of Jesus, the same three roles are performed by the Body of Christ, the Church. The roles are manifested in the following activities. The words in italics are Greek words used in the Bible to describe these functions:

PROPHETIC *kerygma* – proclaiming, preaching, heralding; *didache* - teaching, catechesis

PRIESTLY *leitourgia* – liturgy, worship, prayer, sacrifice

LEADERSHIP *koinonia* – fellowship; *diakonia* - service

FURTHER SUGGESTION

Present the following understanding of the three roles applied to different institutions within the Church. The ideas come from Cardinal Henry Newman, a 19th century theologian and writer.

- The PROPHET function in the Church is located in the universities and schools of theology. When unchecked by the other two, it leads to arid intellectualism.
- The PRIEST function resides in the SACRAMENTAL dimension of the Church located in the parish. Its distortion is superstition.
- The function of KING or LEADER resides typically in the hierarchy. When unchecked, ambition and tyranny can arise.

Light of the Nations



REFERENCE	<i>The Christian Story</i> (Chapter 31)
FOCUS	Church, a Sacrament to Humanity (Social Justice, Fruits of the Spirit)
GLOSSARY	Sacrament, Liturgy
GRADE 11 LINKS	Structural Morality

LESSON SUGGESTIONS [⇒⇒📖⇒⇒⇒]

⇒ Reflection

Invite learners to reflect on the key scripture passage suggested, namely Matthew 5:14&16. Can they identify the ways in which the world experiences inner darkness?

⇒ Revision

Make sure the learners understand the concept of 'sacrament'. Refer to the glossary and to p 80 to revise.



Text

Learners now read the chapter.

⇒ Presentation/Discussion

What does it mean, then, to say that the Church is a sacrament to humanity? The Church's mission is to be a visible sign of an invisible reality – the transformation of the world and all that is in it into the Kingdom of God.

⇒ Response

Ask learners in groups to discuss and suggest:

- (1) What transformations are desirable in the social and cosmic dimensions?
- (2) What role should the Church play in bringing these transformations about?
- (3) What role could they, as individuals or as a group, play?

⇒ Activity

Using any art medium illustrate how the world would be transformed through experiencing the twelve fruits of the Spirit.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

- When did you first become aware the earth's ecological crisis? What kind of responses have you made?
- With a group of friends, take a walk in your neighbourhood. What signs of environmental damage do you see? What resources are there in your community for educating people on ecological issues?

Future Church



REFERENCE	<i>The Christian Story</i> (Chapter 32)
FOCUS	Church of the Future (Signs of the Times, Four Marks of the Church, Inculturation)
GLOSSARY	Evangelisation, Inculturation
GRADE 11 LINKS	Religious Community

LESSON SUGGESTIONS [⇒⇒⇒📖⇒]

⇒ **Reflection**

Read Matthew 16:2-3. The signs of the times, if we can read them, reveal the present and point us to the future. Invite learners to reflect on the signs of the times in our world today. What issues are crying out for our attention?

⇒ **Revision**

Briefly revisit the four marks of the Church. You will find short descriptions on page 63 and again on page 70 of *The Christian Story*.

⇒ **Discussion**

If the Church is to grow in terms of the four marks recalled above, what are the most urgent matters the Church needs to attend to in the world today?

📖 **Text**

Learners now read the chapter.

⇒ **Presentation**

Walbert Bulmann, in a book called *With Eyes to See: The Church and the World in the Third Millennium* presents a new decalogue or ten commandments for the Church in our day. See over the page.

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

- What values in African traditional culture should be reflected in Christian theology?

**THE "NEW" TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOD:
A DECALOGUE BASED ON THE SIGNS OF THE TIMES**

I

You will allow common sense to prevail
Autonomy of the Sciences

II

You will take yourselves seriously as People of God
The Laity in the Church

III

You will extend your hand to your fellow Christians
Ecumenism

IV

You will take sides with the poor
Justice

V

You will wonder at the breadth of the Creator
Inculturation

VI

You will acknowledge that the "I Am Here" is present among all peoples
Dialogue with other Religions

VII

You will accompany religious nomads
Secularisation

VIII

You will swell the ranks of the peacemakers
Justice and Peace

IX

You will make the Earth a Paradise
Ecology and Eschatology

X

You will encounter the God of History
Spirituality and Politics

Walbert Buhmann. 1990 *With Eyes to See: Church and World in the Third Millennium*. Maryknoll: Orbis

My Part?



REFERENCE	<i>The Christian Story</i> (Chapter 33)
FOCUS	My part in God's Plan (Vocation, Confirmation)
GLOSSARY	Confirmation

LESSON SUGGESTIONS [⇒ 📖 ⇒⇒]

⇒ **Introduction**

Read the opening sentence of the chapter, "If I am a member of the Church or ..." Discuss this to make sure that all learners feel included in the lesson.

📖 **Text**

Learners now read the chapter.

⇒ **Response**

Learners go back to Chapter 32 and look at the bulleted items under the four marks of the Church. Invite them to identify one which they feel drawn to – one which may, at least at this time of their lives, indicate what their future role might be in the world. Call for voluntary sharing.

⇒ **Exercise**

Give some time at the end of the lesson to an imaginative prayer session. Imagine a single flower coming to bloom in a desert scene. Contrast the following lines from Thomas [Gray's *Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard*](#)

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathom'd caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

With the following passage from the gospel of Luke (12:27-28)

Notice how the flowers grow. They do not toil or spin. But I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendor was dressed like one of them. If God so clothes the grass in the field that grows today and is thrown into the oven tomorrow, will he not much more provide for you, O you of little faith?

QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER DISCUSSION

Reflect on a major decision that you have made in the last few years. How has the decision been lived out? What have been its fruits?