

## LESSON 29: Ecumenism



REFERENCE

Page 484 [ECUMENISM]



### WHAT YOU NEED

- (1)(2) TSM: 'Charts'
- (3) LSM: 'The Christian Church'
- (4)(5) LSM: 'Ecumenism and You'

### AIM

- To introduce learners to ecumenism and to encourage them to find ways in which they can be involved in this

### OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners identify small ecumenical actions they can take in relation to those from churches other than their own.
- DAP Learners grow in understanding, tolerance, and appreciation towards those from church (or faith) backgrounds other than their own.

### TEACHER'S NOTE

This lesson introduces the learners to ecumenism – how different churches might relate to each other, and the call to Christian unity. Lesson 30, on the other hand, looks at how Christians might relate to those of other faiths. It is important in this lesson to ensure that nobody ridicules any other person or faith.

### LESSON OUTLINE

#### 1 Preparation

Look at the charts on the Lesson Materials page, 'Charts on World Religions'. Copy these onto newsprint so that you will be able to display them to your class during Lessons 29 and 30. Note that the charts deal with world religions as well as with different branches of Christianity. The accompanying text might provide you with some useful pointers to providing a quick introduction to them at the start of the lesson. (Alternatively, you may decide to make copies of this material for each learner.)

#### 2 Introduction

Place the three charts on the classroom wall. Quickly introduce the lesson by showing the beginnings of Christianity in relation to other major world religions. Then, briefly use the other charts to give the learners a sense of the main branches of Christian churches, as well as an impression of the relative size (i.e. numbers of adherents) of both Christian branches and various major world religions. However, be clear that this lesson will focus on the question of ecumenical relationships between the various Christian churches, and that the relationship of Christians to those of other religions will be the subject of Lesson 8.

#### 3 The Christian Church

- Provide each learner with the Lesson Materials page 'The Christian Church'. Ask the learners to read the first two sections, 'On Catholics and other Christians' and 'On

- Ecumenism', and to then answer the questions that follow.
- ii. Invite learners to share their responses with class as whole.
  - iii. Using the same Lesson Materials page, conclude this section by giving the learners a bit of the background regarding some important Protestant Church denominations by reading the last passage 'Three Major Protestant Streams'.
  - iv. Take few comments and questions from learners.

#### 4 One Church?

- i. Provide learners with the Lesson Materials page 'Ecumenism and You'. (The activity will challenge learners to get involved in small ecumenical actions of their own.)
- ii. Explain to the learners the meaning of the word 'ecumenism' and then ask them to read and answer the questions.
- iii. Then ask them, in groups, to discuss the last three questions.
- iv. Conclude the section by taking feedback from the learners and answering questions where necessary.

#### 5 Conclusion

- i. Conclude the lesson by asking learners to reflect on 'Ecumenism – points to keep in mind', on the Lesson Materials page 'Ecumenism and You'.
- ii. Clarify any questions and comments that may arise from this reflection.

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### OTHER IDEAS

#### 6 Action Project

You could arrange for your class to visit an Orthodox Church, and to report on its liturgy and artwork. They note similarities and differences. If there is no Orthodox Church in your area, visit an Anglican Church, Dutch Reformed Church, Presbyterian Church, Methodist Church, or a Lutheran Church.

#### MATERIALS

##### TEACHER

- Kieran Sawyer. 1982. 'Historical and Worldwide Perspective' in *Confirming Faith: Director's Manual*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 122 – 124

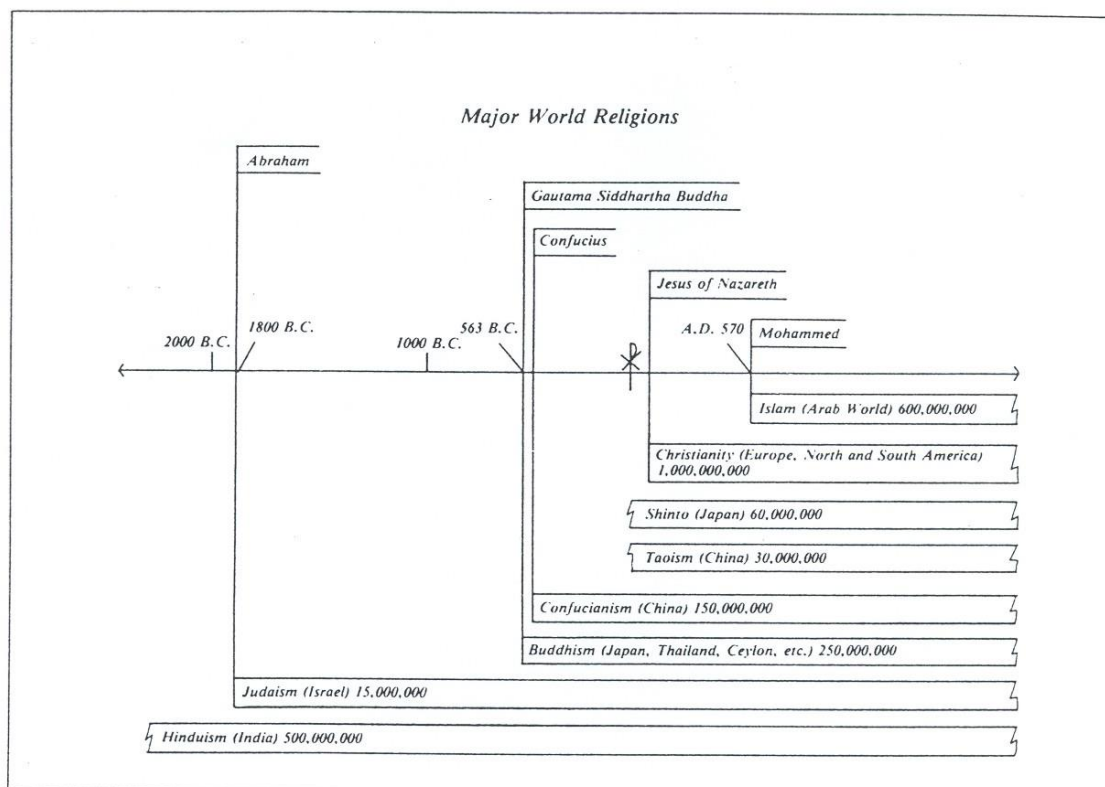
##### LEARNER

- Michael Pennock. 1984. 'On Catholics and other Christians' and 'On Ecumenism' in *Your Church and You*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 187 – 188
- Michael Pennock. 1984. 'Three Major Protestant Streams' in *Your Church and You*, Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 177
- Michael Pennock. 1984. 'Ecumenism' in *Your Church and You*, Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 137
- Michael Burke. 1991. 'Ecumenism - points to keep in mind', 110 in *Connections*. Pietermaritzburg: Centaur Publications, p 129



# Lesson Materials

## Charts



**Chart 1: MAJOR WORLD RELIGIONS**

Notice that Christianity, which is almost 2000 years old, is a relatively new religion. The oldest religion, Hinduism, dates back more than 4000 years. Hinduism is found mostly in India.

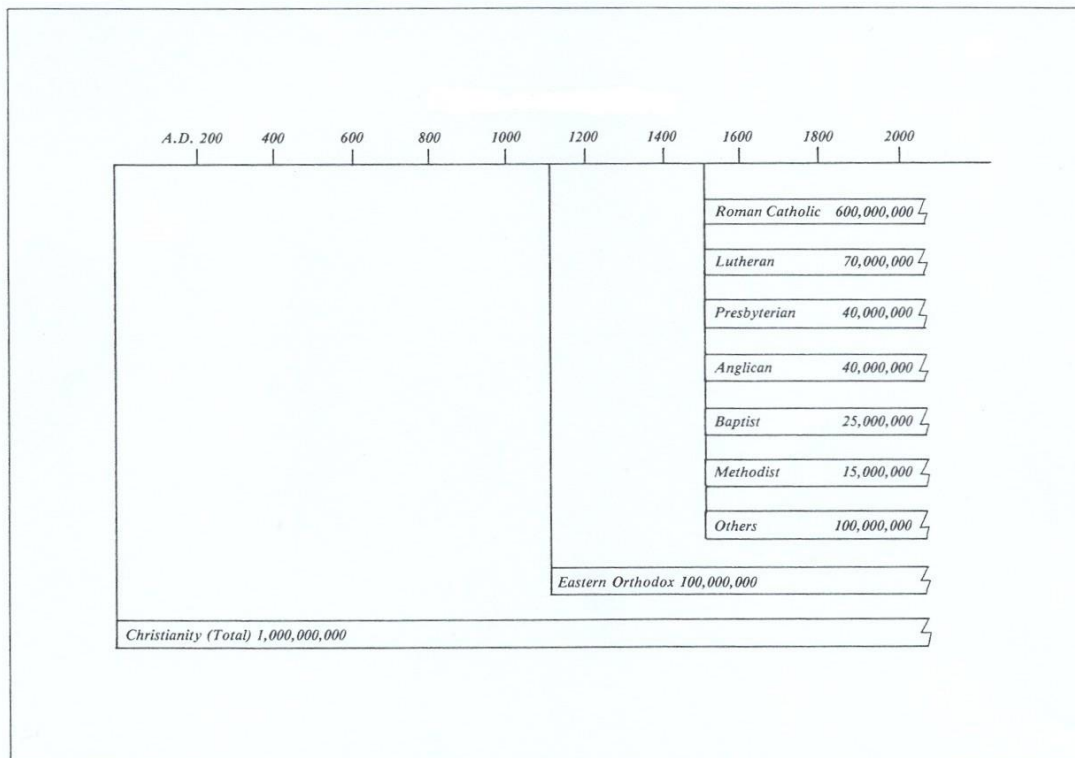
Most of the Far East other than India adheres to an ancient religion known as Buddhism. The religion of China is a mixture of Buddhism, Confucianism and Taoism. Shinto is the religion of Japan, although there are also many Japanese who are Buddhist.

Judaism is the ancient religion we know best because of its close ties to Christianity. Judaism begins with God's revelation of himself to Abraham about 1800 BC. Its story is unfolded in the Old Testament. Jesus himself was a Jew. Christianity, the religion he started, is understood by his followers to be the fulfillment of the Covenant God made with the Jews through Abraham. Christianity and Judaism differ from most of the other world religions chiefly in their belief in one God.

Islam (followers are called Muslims) is one of the largest religions of the world. Islam combines some of the teachings of Judaism and Christianity with its own sacred scriptures, the Koran.

# Lesson Materials

## CHARTS (cont)



**Chart 2: DIVISIONS IN CHRISTIANITY**

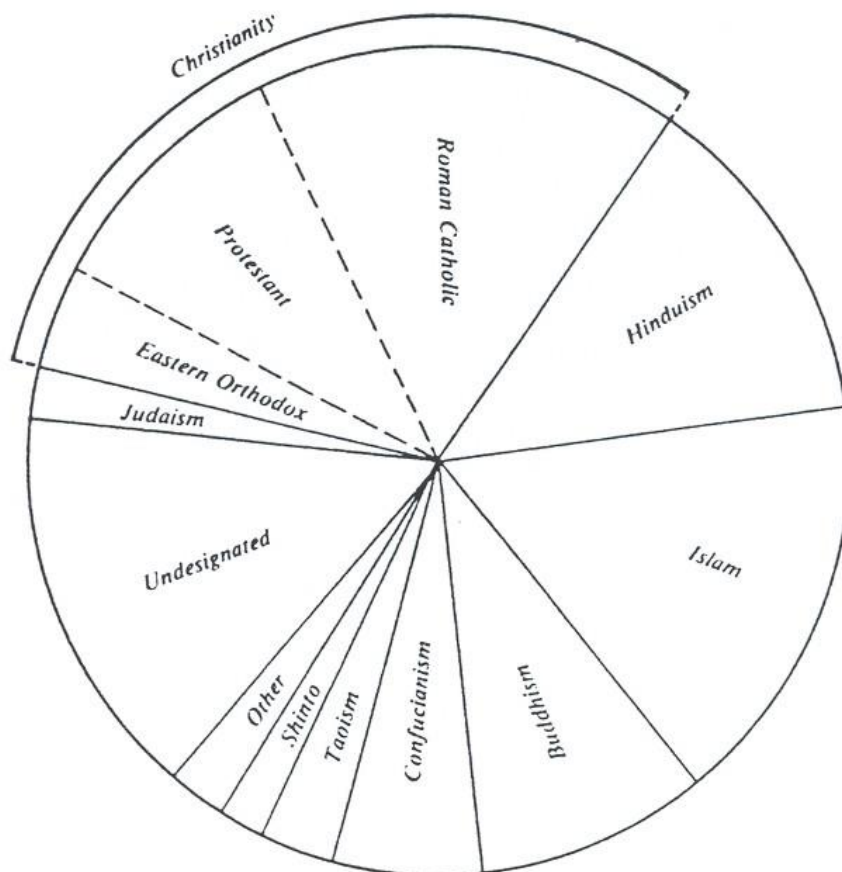
The chart shows the main divisions of Christianity. One major split (or schism) occurred in the 11th century when several of the ancient churches in the Middle East separated from the Eastern Orthodox churches. They have basically the same doctrines, moral code, Mass, sacraments and devotions as the Roman Catholic church, but they do not accept the pope as a universal authority in the church.

Another rupture in Christian unity was the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. At this time several church leaders protested against some widespread abuses and evils in the church – scandals in the lives of churchmen, the buying and selling of religious graces, political manoeuvrings for positions of power, superstitious overemphasis on externals. The first to protest was a Catholic priest from Germany named Martin Luther. Others included John Calvin in Switzerland and John Knox in Scotland. These men broke away from the authority of the pope and began separate branches of Christianity whose followers came to be known as Lutherans, Calvinists, Presbyterians. The churches which continued to accept papal authority came to be known as Roman Catholic; those which did not were called Protestant.

## Lesson Materials

### CHARTS (cont)

*Approximate Division of the World Population  
According to Religious Affiliation*



**Chart 3: FOLLOWERS OF THE WORLD RELIGIONS**

The circle graph shows the relative size of the major world religions.

## Lesson Materials



# The Christian Church

Read carefully the following passages from the documents of Vatican II. Then answer the questions which follow.

### *On Catholics and Other Christians*

The Church recognises that in many ways she is linked with those who, being baptized, are honored with the name Christian, though they do not profess the faith in its entirety or do not preserve unity of communion with the successor of Peter. For there are many who honor sacred Scripture, taking it as a norm of belief and of action, and who show a true religious zeal. They lovingly believe in God the Father Almighty and in Christ, Son of God and Savior. They are consecrated by baptism, through which they are united with Christ. They also recognize and receive other sacraments within their own Churches or ecclesial communities. Many of them rejoice in the episcopate, celebrate the Holy Eucharist, and cultivate devotion toward the Virgin Mother of God. They also share with us in prayer and other spiritual benefits.

Likewise, we can say that in some real way they are joined with us in the Holy Spirit, for to them also He gives His gifts and graces, and is thereby operative among them with His sanctifying power. Some indeed He has strengthened to the extent of the shedding of their blood. In all of Christ's disciples the Spirit arouses the desire to be peacefully united, in the manner determined by Christ, as one flock under one shepherd, and He prompts them to pursue this goal. Mother Church never ceases to pray, hope, and work that they may gain this blessing. She exhorts her sons to purify and renew themselves so that the sign of Christ may shine more brightly over the face of the Church.

- *Constitution on the Church, No. 15*

### *On Ecumenism*

There can be no ecumenism worthy of the name without a change of heart. For it is from newness of attitudes (cf. Eph. 4:23), from self-denial and unstinted love, that yearnings for unity take their rise and grow toward maturity. We should therefore pray to the divine Spirit for the grace to be genuinely self-denying, humble, gentle in the service of others and to have an attitude of brotherly generosity toward them.

Let all Christ's faithful remember that the more purely they strive to live according to the gospel, the more they are fostering and even practicing Christian unity. For they can achieve depth and ease in strengthening mutual brotherhood to the degree they enjoy profound communion with the Father, the Word, and the Spirit.

- *Catholic Principles on Ecumenism, No. 7*

*Questions/...*

## Lesson Materials

### THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (CONT.)

Questions:

1. Answer in your own words: Who is a Catholic? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Name four things Catholics have in common with other Christians:

(a) \_\_\_\_\_

(b) \_\_\_\_\_

(c) \_\_\_\_\_

(d) \_\_\_\_\_

3. According to the *Constitution on the Church*, what unites all Christians to Christ?

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4. Is the Catholic Church in need of purification and renewal before reunion with other Christians can take place? Explain your answer.

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5. What is the key to Christian unity? \_\_\_\_\_

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Discuss: As a class, list 10 ways you can live the gospel in relation to other Christians and thus promote Christian unity.

© Michael Pennock.1984. *Your Church and You*. Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 187-8 (adapted)

## Lesson Materials

### THE CHRISTIAN CHURCH (CONT.)

#### Three Major Protestant Streams

The word *protest* means: (1) to object to, especially formally, and (2) to promise or affirm. Protestants got their name because they protested ("disagreed") with some of the abuses in the Catholic Church and because they *protested* ("proclaimed") certain new beliefs. *Protestant* is an all-encompassing term, which includes many sects. Here is a bird's-eye view of the three major Protestant streams which arose in the 16th century.

Luther	Calvin	Anglicanism
key event: 95 Theses posted in 1571	key event: <i>Institutes of the Christian Religion</i> published in 1536	key event: Henry VIII established Church of England in 1534
1. Humans are depraved. Faith alone justifies.	1. Human nature since Adam's fall is utterly depraved.	1. The pope is not the universal authority over the whole church.
2. The Bible, not the pope, is the center of authority. Individual interpretation of the bible.	2. Some are predestined for salvation; others for hell; Christ died only for the elect who cannot resist God's grace or backslide once elected.	2. The king (queen) is the head of the church in England.
3. Accepts baptism and the Eucharist. Belief in the Real Presence – consubstantiation – bread and wine and the body and blood of Christ coexist in the elements.	3. Accepts only baptism and the Eucharist. Belief that Christ is only spiritually present in the eucharistic elements. Encourages bible reading, sobriety, thrift, capitalism, a strict Sabbath. All believers are priests – emphasis on political and church democracy.	3. Belief in seven sacraments, including the priesthood. <i>Book of common prayer</i> .
4. <i>Rejects</i> : holy days, fast days, honoring of saints, indulgences, the rosary, monasticism, other five sacraments.	4. <i>Rejects</i> : whatever cannot be found in the Bible: vestments, altar, images, paintings, organs, hymns.	4. <i>Accepts</i> : most Roman Catholic beliefs and practices.

© Michael Pennock. 1984. 'Three Major Protestant Streams' in *Your Church and You*, Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 177



## Lesson Materials



### Ecumenism and You

#### Ecumenism

One of the major documents of Vatican II is the *Decree on Ecumenism*. It wholeheartedly endorses the spirit of *ecumenism*, the movement which seeks to achieve the unity of Christians within the church and ultimately of all of humanity. The document recognizes that both sides were to blame for the schism between East and West and also at the time of the Protestant Reformation in the 16th century. In addition, the document affirms the ecclesial elements of other Christian churches: the same Bible; the same life of grace; the same faith, hope and charity; the same gifts of the Spirit; the same baptism and faith in the Lord; and the many other common elements which make up the church. In the case of the Orthodox churches, there is a very close relationship to the Catholic Church. They possess true sacraments and a true priesthood traceable to the apostles.

*The Ecumenical Movement and You.* Many church documents in recent years teach that all Catholics must work towards unity. Here is a checklist of some of the things Catholics can do to help foster Christian unity. Check off those which a young Catholic can do.

- ☐ Know your faith so that you can explain it to others
- ☐ Pray for union
- ☐ Refrain from judging those who have a different religion
- ☐ Learn about the beliefs of others
- ☐ Engage in common projects of service with members of different religions
- ☐ Approach others and tell them what you believe
- ☐ Join in common prayer services for Christian unity with members of other Christian groups
- ☐ Live your faith to show you truly believe it
- ☐ Study the Bible in ecumenical sharing groups
- ☐ Engage in ecumenical study groups

#### Discuss

1. Add to the preceding list.
2. Which of these are you working on now?
3. In striving for Christian unity, should the Catholic Church compromise on its beliefs concerning the role of the papacy? Why or why not?

## Lesson Materials

### ECUMENISM AND YOU (cont)

Ecumenism - points to keep in mind

- that the unity of the Church is something that Jesus strongly desired and prayed for (at the Last Supper), and therefore something that we should similarly desire and pray for;
- that the essential foundation for Ecumenism is an informed and loyally-critical appreciation of one's own faith-family (denomination);
- that the key to the advancement of Ecumenism is an attitude of respect-and-appreciation for other faith-families;
- that the history behind the present-day divisions in Christianity is very complex - only a superficial Ecumenism will overlook this;
- that the differences between the Churches today are probably less significant than those between the Church of Paul and the Church of the Beloved Disciple in the Earliest days of Christianity;
- that Ecumenism has undergone a change in our times: earlier in this century, Ecumenism was a matter of the Churches trying to get together, but by the 60s the World Council of Churches was coming out with statements remarkably similar to those of the Catholic Church, and today the new Ecumenism is a matter of the Churches working together to turn the Word into flesh in our world.

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## LESSON 30: Attitude to Other Religions



REFERENCE

Page 485 [BEYOND CHRISTIANITY]



### WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) TSM: 'Charts' (Lesson 7)
- (2) TSM: 'Reacting to the Strange'
- (3)(5) LSM: 'Vatican II Documents'
- (4) LSM: 'World Religions'
- (5) Candle & Music

### AIM

- To encourage learners to acquire some knowledge of and respect for religions other than their own

### OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners know of ways to relate to people of religion other than their own.
- DAP Learners appreciate that all believers value their own religion.

### TEACHER'S NOTE

This is an all-inclusive lesson. Be positive towards all, even though you, or some learners, may initially find the religious beliefs and practices of others strange. The prayer service at the end should be a positive experience for all.

### LESSON OUTLINE

#### 1 Introduction

Briefly refer to the three charts that you displayed during Lesson 29. However, in this lesson the focus is on (Catholic) Christian attitudes towards people of other religions. Because one still finds a lot of ignorance and prejudice concerning other religions by many Christians, it is important to note that both the Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches encourage respectful dialogue and working relationships between Christians and those of other faiths, particularly in the normal course of everyday life, but also on questions of social justice since these pertain to the common good for the whole of society.

#### 2 Judgmental Attitudes

- i. Display the bulleted list below. Add any others you think might arouse strong feelings and judgmental attitudes. Ask the learners – in silence – to quickly identify their feelings and attitudes towards these items. (The point is for each learner to honestly register their initial response.)
  - Old people driving cars
  - Girls/women playing rugby
  - Men pushing a pram
  - Youth giving a talk at Church
  - A person from Europe speaking isiXhosa or Setswana fluently
- ii. Then take some (controlled) feedback on the feelings and attitudes that these items may have aroused.

- iii. Use the Lesson Materials page 'Reacting to the Strange', to provide quick input for the learners in connection with their 'gut' responses: We react in a normal predictable way when we are in our comfort zone. But when some thing from outside enters that circle, how do we react? We become judgmental, we react defensively, and we raise all the barriers, emotional and intellectual and physical to keep them out.
- iv. After giving this input tell the learners that in the remainder of this lesson they are going to explore, share, and reflect on the attitudes they have towards people who belong to other religions in their community and society, and examine very closely what the (Catholic) Church teaches about our relationship with people of other religions.

### **3 The Church's Stand**

- ii. Tell the learners that Vatican II brought about a number of changes regarding our attitudes towards other people of other religions. Three of the seven documents of the Vatican II Council have something to say to us on these issues.
- iii. Provide them with the Lesson Materials 'Vatican II Documents'.
- iv. Ask learners to read the passages on the handout and, then, to discuss the questions that follow.
- v. Take some comment from the learners on these questions, and allow some time for general questions and discussion.

### **4 World Religions**

Distribute the Learner Support material 'World Religions'. Ask learners, in groups, to try to complete as much as can be done.

### **5 Prayer Service**

Conclude this lesson by having a prayer session with the learners. Play some quiet music, or use a time of silence to settle the class. Light a candle. Avoid any symbols, which are exclusively Christian. Arrange for 11 learners to read the 11 statements from the summary of the documents given on the Lesson Materials page 'Vatican II Documents'. Allow for some personal reflection and then invite for prayers or sharing as is appropriate for the class.

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## **OTHER IDEAS**

### **6 Invite a Speaker**

Invite a church or faith leader to talk to the class on the issue of our attitudes towards people who belong to other faiths and religions.

### **7 Class Sharing**

Ask learners of different faiths to share a few thoughts about their religions. Be careful not to embarrass them or expect them to know all the answers. Catholic learners certainly don't!

## **MATERIALS**

### **TEACHER**

- CIE. 2005. 'Reacting to the Strange'

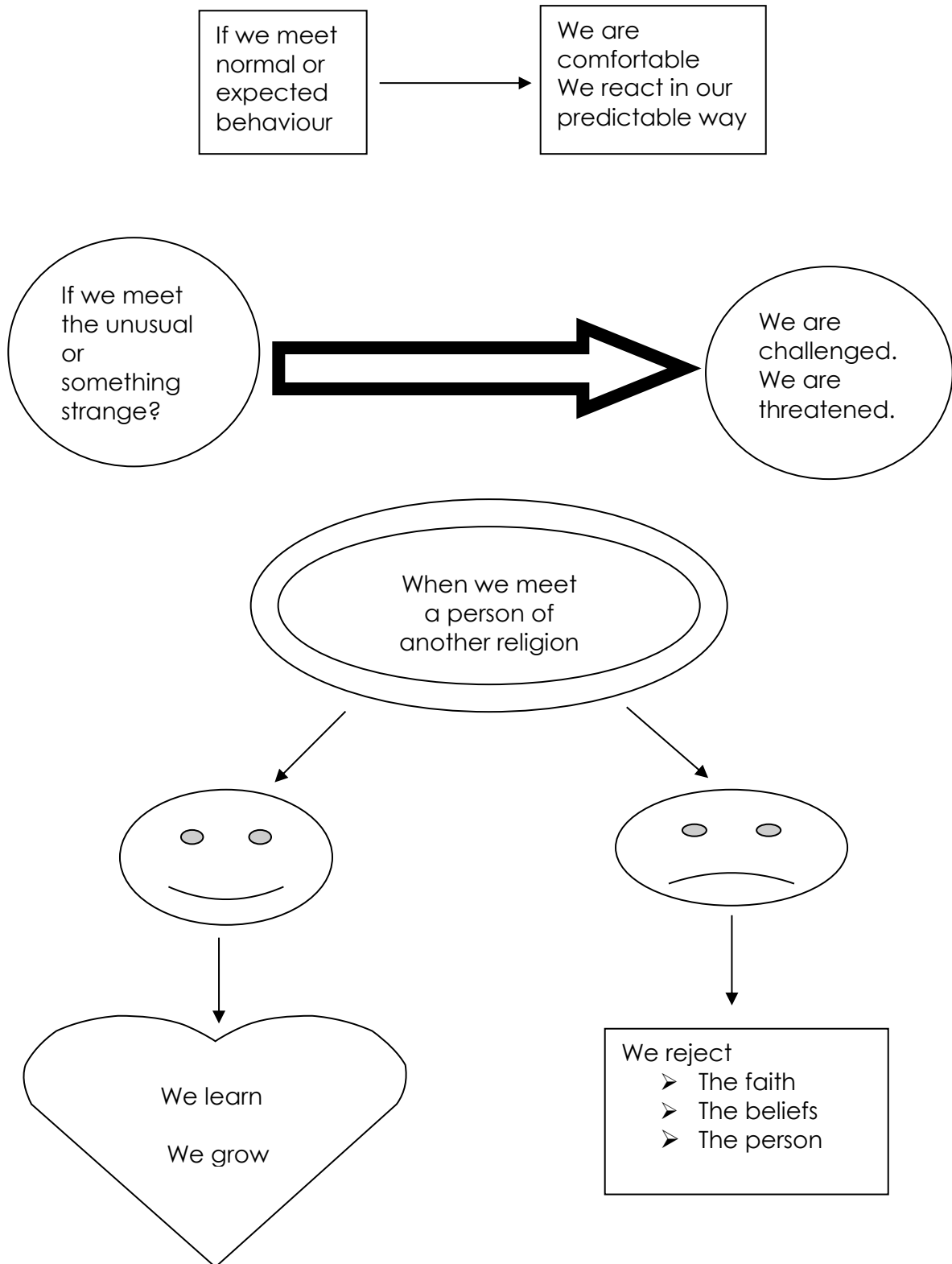
### **LEARNER**

- Michael Pennock. 1984. 'Vatican II Documents', *Your Church and You*, Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 249 – 251
- Kieran Sawyer. 1978. 'World Religions'. *Confirming Faith Participant Book*, Notre Dame, Indiana: Ave Maria Press, p 65



## Lesson Materials

### Reacting to the Strange



## Lesson Materials



# Vatican II Documents

### Decree on Ecumenism

- Gives support to the ecumenical movement
- Talks of restoring Christian unity, rather than a return of fallen-away Christians to Roman Catholicism
- Admits both sides to blame at the time of the Reformation
- Teaches that other Christian communities have many elements which help constitute the church

### Decree on Religious Freedom

- In effect, repudiates Pius IX's *Syllabus of Errors*
- The dignity of the human person and our faith demand that everyone should be free from coercion in matters of religious belief and practice
- No one can be compelled to be a Christian

### Declaration of the Relationship of the Church to Non-Christian Religions

- The church rejects nothing that is good and true in other religious faiths
- Encourages dialogue in the search for spiritual and moral values
- Special respect and understanding should be given to the Jews; they are not to be blamed for the death of Jesus Christ
- All kinds of persecution and discrimination are condemned

### Questions

- a) What do you think non-Catholics notice most about the Catholic Church? In other words, what external activity or image of the church comes to mind when they think *Catholic Church*?
- b) Would you say this image is positive or negative? Why or why not?

# Lesson Materials



## World Religions

Every good encyclopedia contains information about the great world religions. Filling out this chart will help you to get a comparative understanding of these religions.

	Hinduism	Buddhism	Islam	Christianity
God (or gods)				
Goals				
Beliefs				
Scriptures				
Religious Practices				
Leaders				
Moral Code				
Belief in Afterlife				
Festivals				
Founder(s)				