

LESSON 7: Christianity Comes to Africa



REFERENCE

Page 471 [THE CHURCH IN AFRICA]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) TSM: 'The Catholic Church in Southern Africa'
- (2) Articles from the Southern Cross and other Church newspapers
- (2) LSM: 'Work of the Church in Africa'

AIMS

- To give learners an historical background to the development of the Church in (South) Africa
- To give learners an understanding of and an appreciation for the work being done by the church in (South) Africa.

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners are aware of how the Church in Africa has developed.
- DAP Learners appreciate the amount and variety of the work being done by the Church.

TEACHER'S NOTE

Many people are not aware of the large amount of work being done by the churches in South Africa - education, welfare, hospitals, and social issues, HIV/AIDS, etc. This work is being done by both professed religious and lay people. Through reading church literature one gets a wider perspective. The lesson outline suggests using the Southern Cross. But any church paper could be used – or better still, have a variety at your disposal. Don't forget to include the adverts - even those for the religious life show another important aspect of the work of the church.

LESSON OUTLINE

1 Development of the Church

- i. Use the Lesson Materials page 'The Catholic Church in Southern Africa' to give the learners a broad idea of how the Church has developed in Africa and South Africa, giving examples of the three phases mentioned.
- ii. Learners could be asked to identify which phase they think their parish is in. Encourage them to give sound reasons.
- iii. Conclude this part of the lesson by clarifying any questions and misunderstandings that learners may have.

2 Work of the Church

- Divide the learners into groups of about 5, depending on the number of learners in your class. Give each group a selection of three or four articles or adverts. Possible sources for these articles are:
 - The Southern Cross <https://www.scross.co.za/category/news/>
 - La Croix International <https://international.la-croix.com/countries>
 - National Catholic Reporter <https://www.ncronline.org/channel/world>

- The selection should be as wide as possible: from all parts of Africa and the world, telling of different works on different themes.
- The group is to study the selected articles and then answer the questions on the Lesson Material page 'Work of the Church in Africa' provided for each article.

3 Feedback

Invite learners to give a very brief feedback on what they have found from the different materials they were studying. This feedback needs to show the vast array of work being done by the churches, and the benefits to the people of our country and Africa. as a continent.

OTHER IDEAS

4 Group Discussion

Divide learners into groups and ask them to discuss the following or a similar question: What are some of the issues facing the church today? Learners are expected to identify an issue and discuss how the church is trying to deal with that particular issue. After some time invite groups to provide feedback on what they were discussing

5 Invite a Speaker

Invite in a speaker whose experience of church differs significantly from that of the learners to come and address the class on the work of the church in Africa.

6 Tour or Excursions

Organise a day trip in which learners visit one of the following church institution(s): hospitals, seminary, social work etc, to find out what they are doing and the challenges they are facing in their mission.

MATERIALS



TEACHER

- SACBC. 1987. 'The Catholic Church in Southern Africa' in *Community Serving Humanity Theme Paper for the Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in South Africa*, p 10 – 12.

LEARNER

- CIE. 2005. 'Work of the Church in Africa'

Lesson Materials



The Catholic Church in Southern Africa

The Catholic Church came late upon the scene in Southern Africa but has been associated with the last century and half of its history.

Although Portuguese explorers were the first Catholics we know of to land on the shores of Southern Africa they made no permanent settlement. Between two British occupations there was a short-lived Dutch Catholic foundation. Finally the Catholic Church as we know it now took root in Cape Town in 1837. In its subsequent growth it often accommodated itself to the prevailing social scene. In this it may now - with hindsight - possibly be faulted for not being sufficiently critical of colonial policy and practice.

Three main phases can be distinguished in the history of the Catholic Church in Southern Africa.

It needs to be emphasized that these divisions are somewhat artificial and do scant justice to the richness of the past. However, they do give one a broad overview that is basically correct.

The *first phase* can be called that of the 'Settler Church'. The Church's organizational structures were initially brought to our region in order to minister to the relatively few Catholics who had settled there. The Church saw its main purpose as being to preserve the Catholic faith of the settlers.

This phase was extended to cope with the increasing number of immigrants who later came to the new mining areas. Central to this kind of Catholicism was living a decent personal and family life and being regularly nourished by the sacraments. Its outlook was in harmony with, or at least did not seriously challenge, the values of an immigrant society whose members were seeking success for themselves.

The *second phase* was a decidedly missionary one. It can therefore be called that of the 'Missionary Church'. Great efforts were made to convert African people.

The success of this missionary work depended on how accommodating both traditional and government authorities were, and on the tolerance of other Christian denominations that had arrived earlier. Since various missionary congregations largely initiated this work, their different approaches and methods have produced a wide variety within the Church today.

Besides the heroic leaders, such as Père Gerard among the Basotho, Abbot Pfanner of Mariannhill and Bishop Simon in Namaqualand, there were thousands of dedicated priests, religious sisters and brothers, who all contributed to the establishment of the Church, often under trying conditions. Their access frequently depended upon the cooperation of lay helpers, particularly the many catechists who brought instruction to distant areas.

The type of Church that the missionaries brought/...

Lesson Materials



The Catholic Church in Southern Africa (cont.)

The type of Church that the missionaries brought and planted in Africa was the one they knew from Europe: a Church shaped by the issues, conflict and experiences of 1500 years of European history. Though ready to adapt in various non-essential ways, it was a Church confident of its own correctness, an attitude that accompanies a restricted theological outlook.

This made it practically impossible to show efficient respect for traditional African beliefs or to help transform the social conditions under which its new converts lived. Nevertheless, its schools, training colleges, clinics, hospitals and basic welfare services did provide a definite witness to its care for the whole person.

The full story of missionary endeavour in South Africa is still to be written.

The marvel is that despite many difficulties and their own restricted theological outlook, the early missionaries achieved so much. Although numbers alone cannot tell the whole story, due to God's graces their missionary efforts flourished and Church membership increased from around 2 000 in 1943 to about 2 500 000 by 1985.

The *third phase*, which has developed in recent years, is one of social involvement. Of course, ministering to the Church's members (the focus of the first phase) and making converts (the focus of the second phase) continue to be part of the Church's life. However, Church life has undeniably found a new emphasis: that of social involvement.

Interest in the relevance of the gospel to social issues is a worldwide phenomenon. However, the conflicts of our region have contributed in no small measure to the extent to which such issues have come to absorb the energies of the Church here. Church interest in social issues in Southern Africa goes back at least to 1 939 when Bishop Hennemann wrote to all priests-in-charge in the Western Vicariate (of the Cape). He warned them of the dangers of segregation. As both national and international awareness of the Southern African situation have grown, the joint pastoral letters of the Bishops' Conference from 1952 onwards have gradually stimulated a greater concern for social justice and a significant network of Catholic groups dedicated to this cause has down up around the country.

© SACBC. 1987. 'The Catholic Church in Southern Africa' in *Community Serving Humanity Theme Paper for the Pastoral Plan of the Catholic Church in South Africa*, p 10 – 12

Lesson Materials



Work of the Church in Africa

Select three or four items from the material given to you. It could be an article, photo or an advert. It should say something about the work of the church in Africa. For each of the items that you have chosen answer the following questions:

	ARTICLE 1	ARTICLE 2	ARTICLE 3	ARTICLE 4
Who is the church involved / mentioned in the article?				
What is the church doing?				
Why?				
Who is benefiting?				
How?				
Are there other challenges listed / mentioned which need to be overcome?				

LESSON 8: Owning Christianity



REFERENCE

Page 471 [THE CHURCH IN AFRICA]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) Prepared table
- (4) Bible

AIM

- To give learners an understanding of the of the idea of inculturation and what it means in practice

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners understand the meaning of inculturation and its implications for Church life.
- DAP Learners appreciate the rich differences in the cultures and traditions of the peoples of South Africa.

TEACHER'S NOTE

In treating the issue of inculturation we need to avoid two extremes: (i) that Western European culture has nothing to offer Africa, and (ii) that African cultures cannot give anything of value to the Church. The reality is better expressed as follows:

Western European culture embodies a particular way of life and religion. It has been developed over centuries and served people well. African culture and religion is another way of life. It too has served peoples for many centuries. In both these cultures and in others too, there is a God who is speaking to the people, in their own way and in their own traditions. All are valuable. All have something to offer. The gospel (good news) of Jesus is offered to all peoples. The question is how best can we express this gospel in any given culture? Or, in other words, what visible expression will the seed of God's Word take when planted in that culture?

In the lesson we determine what is essential (and what non-essential) to the Good News as it is expressed in Western European culture? We ask, How can African culture enrich the Church's manner of expression in (South) Africa? What elements of African culture are at odds with the Good News?

LESSON OUTLINE

I What Is Essential?

The table below is arranged for a discussion on the game of football. Guide the learners through the questions to help them discern what is essential to the game, and what could be changed without being untrue to its nature. You will need to prepare this table on the board or on newsprint. Do not give the table a title, as this may detract from the discussion. Do not reveal all the questions at the same time: rather keep the learners' thinking focused on the question at hand. Note that the game of football is incidental: you could choose any other activity to help the learners to distinguish between essentials and non-essentials. The questions may be treated from top to bottom, or in reverse.

WHAT IS ESSENTIAL?	
You are organizing the world soccer cup. List some of the things you will need?	
You are organizing the u/19 SA soccer championship: What do you need?	
You are arranging an interschool soccer competition: What do you need?	
You are planning to have a game of soccer in the road, what do you need?	

What are the essential items for a game of soccer? _____

2 The European Church Comes to Africa

The western European church has come to Africa, and South Africa in particular. Guide the learners through the following questions without going into too much detail:

- (a) Within which culture(s) was the Church first established?
- (b) From which culture(s) did the first missionaries come to Africa?
- (c) What characteristics does the Church of South Africa have as a result of (a) and (b)?
- (d) What are some of the good things we find within African cultures?
- (e) Which characteristics named in (c) could be better expressed in terms of African culture – the good things identified in (d)?
- (f) What beliefs and practices within African tradition may be at odds with the gospel?
- (g) What are the essentials of Christianity – those things about its beliefs and practices that cannot be changed no matter in which culture it finds itself?

3 Inculturation

- i. In the previous part of the lesson, the learners have been engaged in the sort of questions raised by the idea of *inculturation*, which may be understood as the planting of the Good News of Jesus in a particular culture so that the way in which it is expressed and understood comes from within that culture and not from outside as something foreign. Share this with the class.
- ii. Referring to the broad historical development dealt with in Lesson 1, help the learners to perceive the broad pattern - in particular, highlight the shift from the missiology (missionary approach) of yesteryear - namely, the transplanting of something grown and cultivated in faraway Europe, to the missiology of today - namely, an implanting of the Gospel seed in the soil of another culture.
- iii. Help the students explore the implications of inculturation. Here are some points to bring home:
 - much of what the European tradition regards as basic to Christianity is in fact European culture - valid of course in its context, but only as one expression of Christianity, not as a norm for all people;
 - an understanding that liturgy, spirituality, and theology in different parts of the world must develop in varied ways according to the classic principle, 'In essentials, unity; in non-essentials, diversity', with the role of Rome changing from legislator-of-detailed-uniformity to touchstone and compass and centre-of-sharing;
 - a realisation that the word has not just to be brought to other cultures, but also discovered (and fostered) wherever it has already become enfolded through the action of God's Spirit blowing wherever it wills... (e.g. there is much in traditional African cultures that is in remarkable harmony with Christ). (CORD p 471)

Summarise by pointing out that we have two good traditions. We need to accept both critically, and allow the good in each to be integrated into the way we express our faith.

4 Reflection

Conclude this lesson by asking learners to reflect on one of the following scripture readings: Acts 11: 1 – 18, or Acts 15: 1 – 21. Both readings deal with inculturation issues in the very early Church.

OTHER IDEAS

5 Class Discussion

Discuss: Two people get married. They each come from a family with its own traditions and ways of doing things, e.g. celebrating birthdays, Christmas, holidays etc. How can they live out their lives with these differences? What is essential for the marriage to last?

6 Invite a person

Invite a person - perhaps a priest or deacon - from an African cultural background to talk about his experience of Church.

7 Experience

Take the class to experience a Mass in a different cultural background.

8 Common Hymns

Encourage the learners to familiarise themselves with some of the common hymns from other language groups frequently used in their diocese.

MATERIALS



- There are no further materials provided for this lesson.

LESSON 9: Founding Orders and Congregations



REFERENCE

Page 473 [THE CHURCH IN SOUTHERN AFRICA]



WHAT YOU NEED

- (1) Information about the congregation and the school
- (1) TSM: 'Founders and Saints'
- (2) Congregation Mission Statement

AIM

- To give learners a basic knowledge of the school's founding order or congregation, its history and its mission

OUTCOMES

- KUI Learners know the general history of the school's founding order or congregation.

TEACHER'S NOTE

This lesson is intended for those schools that were founded by a religious congregation. The idea is to show the learners that its work is part of the wider work of the Church - the establishment of the kingdom of God. For schools that were not founded in this way, the lesson could be aimed at an exploration of a religious congregation or order that works in the local community in some ministry.

You will need to gather materials that are relevant to your school. In most cases the founding congregation will still be in touch with the school, and this should not be a difficult task.

LESSON OUTLINE

I Presentation

Begin the lesson by giving a brief overview of the founding order or congregation. It should contain the following details:

- Founding of the Congregation: Where? When? By whom? For what purpose?
- The Congregation's motto and charism
- Arrival and start in South Africa: Where? When? To do what?
- Our School: Began in? For What reason?
- Present work of the congregation in SA.

All this must be quick, and light. Intersperse the presentation with some stories and interesting events. Visuals like photographs, magazines, posters, charts, or even a short video will increase the impact of your presentation. The Lesson Materials page 'Founders and Saints' provides some information on the founders of the better-known congregations.

Instead of your presentation, the learners could be given some guided reading if you have managed to secure some relevant and interesting documentation.

2 Mission Statement

Present learners with the congregation's Mission Statement. Ask them to read it reflectively and to consider the following:

- How does this statement relate to the congregation's motto?
- What is the congregation's special gift or charism?
- In what ways is the congregation living out its motto and/or charism?

3 Scenario

Invite learners to think about the neighbourhood within which they live and to list the most pressing needs that their community experiences. They then consider the following scenario: If I were founding a religious congregation to serve the needs of my community, what would its mission be? Ask them to name their congregation and to invent a motto for its work.

OTHER IDEAS

4 Talk

Invite a member of the Congregation to talk to the class.

5 Visit

Visit another work of the Congregation in your parish or diocese.

6 Interviews

Learners are encouraged to interview a member of their founding congregation to find out what inspired their choice of vocation, and what experiences they've had in participating in the congregation's mission.

MATERIALS

TEACHER

CIE. 2005. 'Founders and Saints'



Lesson Materials

Founders and Saints

Here is a list of founders and saints of significance to education.

Feast Day	Name	Significance
23 January	Mary Ward	Founder of Loreto Sisters
27 January	Angela Merici	Saint and founder of Ursuline Sisters
28 January	Thomas Aquinas	Patron saint of students and Catholic schools
31 January	John Bosco	Founder of the Salesians and patron saint of boys
7 April	John Baptist de la Salle	Patron saint of teachers and founder of the de la Salle Brothers
5 May	Edmund Rice	Founder of the Christian Brothers
6 June	Marcellin Champagnat	Saint and founder of the Marist Brothers
5 August	Dominic	Saint and founder of the Dominican Order
15 October	Teresa of Avila	Founder of the Carmelites; patron saint of Sisters of Mercy
11 November	Catherine McAuley	Founder of Sisters of Mercy