

Year 8: Unit 5b

Living the Christian Life

Standards

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

- values the relevance of the teaching of Jesus to contemporary society and life experiences.
- identify ways in which Christians live lives of discipleship in accordance with the ideals and values of Jesus.
- apply the teachings and values of Jesus to contemporary life situations.

Indicators of Learning

	Values and Attitudes	Knowledge	Skills
	<i>It is intended that students will be able to:</i>		
1	select aspects of Jesus' life and teaching which they consider to be the most significant for Christian living	understand that the teachings and actions of Jesus serve as models for Christian living	categorise a range of attitudes and actions which exemplify a life of discipleship
2	discuss the power of compassion to transform the lives of individuals	judge how works of mercy are part of a Christian lifestyle	apply the implications of Jesus' teaching on mercy and compassion to aspects of contemporary society
3	articulate challenges faced by Christians in today's world	understand ways in which the Christian life is counter-cultural	classify challenges that may arise for an individual or group following the way of Jesus
4	propose ideas for Christian service in everyday school and family life	appreciate and identify circumstances calling for Christian service in everyday school, family and social life	analyse everyday situations in terms of Christian principles of service
5	comment on case studies of Christian service in the local community	be aware of case studies of individuals or groups purposefully living out Christian discipleship in the local community	research and report on the actions of individuals or groups working in the service of others

Spiritual Reflection for Teachers

Many in the early Church were converted to Christianity through the example of the early Christians.

Look back over the past few days. When did the way you acted have a positive impact on others, perhaps without you even being aware of it? How have the words and actions of others impacted on your life in this same period of time?

This unit may be about events long past, but the message is timeless. Its challenge is to encourage students to develop an awareness of the difference they can make by living out the Christian lifestyle in today's world.

What difference can you make in the week ahead?

Links with Students' Life Experience

The value of Christianity in their lives

- The students themselves will be a useful resource when teaching this unit. Their experiences in living as Christians could be a starting point for discussion.
- Ask the students to discuss aspects of Christianity that they most admire and to which they aspire. Sharing with other members of the class helps students appreciate the value of Christianity. Explore with students their knowledge of saints and great people within the Church's tradition. Discuss why students chose their particular Confirmation name.
- Students could develop personal strategies/guidelines for dealing with the difficulties experienced in living Christianity.

The Church's Teaching and Lived Tradition

To become a living witness

- In his 1990 Encyclical, *Mission of the Redeemer (Redemptoris Missio)*, John Paul II stressed that every baptised person has an ongoing responsibility to become a living witness and example of the Christian way of life.
- Personal witness can take many forms, intentional/indirect and formal/informal, for example through
 - living out the traditional works of mercy
 - living an exemplary life inspired by the good news of the Gospel
 - participating in social justice projects
 - using prayer and celebration of the sacraments and other forms of worship
 - choosing morally responsible attitudes and actions
 - interacting with family and friends and in other everyday relationships
 - living out the Christian faith at school, work, home
 - participating in various areas of service within the community.

Catechism of the Catholic Church

Love of neighbour is inseparable from love for God

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

Part One, Section One: 'I Believe' - 'We Believe'

1691-1698 Preamble to Life in Christ

1877-1927 Participation in Society

1878 All men are called to the same end: God himself. There is a certain resemblance between the union of the divine persons and the fraternity that men are to establish among themselves in truth and love. Love of neighbour is inseparable from love for God.

1889 Without the help of grace, man would not know how to discern the often narrow path between the cowardice which gives in to evil, and the violence which under the illusion of fighting evil only makes it worse. This is the path of charity, that is, of the love of God and of neighbour. Charity is the greatest social commandment. It respects others and their rights. It requires the practice of justice, and it alone makes us capable of it. Charity inspires a life of self-giving. 'Whoever seeks to gain his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life will preserve it.'

Explanation of Scripture used in this unit

- This unit requires extensive use of Scripture. The passages outlined below are foundational to the Christian way of life.
- Further passages which offer guidance, encouragement and inspiration:
 - Matthew: 5:3–11; 5:43–44; 7:12
 - Luke: 7:36–50; 18:24–27; 21:1–4
 - John: 20:24–29
 - 1 Corinthians 16:13
 - 2 Corinthians 6:14–16
 - James 2:1–4
 - Acts 5:33–42

Matthew 18.1–4 *Who is the greatest?* (Indicator 1)

When the disciples ask 'Who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven?' Jesus takes a little child as a symbol of the smallest and least significant of human beings. Placing the child 'among them' he instructs them that they must change and become child-like.

Jesus encourages the disciples to share his absolute and total trust in God. Being in the kingdom means accepting God as a loving Father (Matthew 3:17, 17:5). The great quality of being child-like is to be humble. This means a genuine realisation that all we are and all we have is a gift, and that we rely on God for everything. This idea is especially reflected in the opening verses of Psalm 131.

Matthew 25:31–46 *Final Judgment* (Indicator 2)

In this text, Matthew sets out the core moral teachings of Jesus. It has no other parallel in the other Gospels. The scene is the 'parousia' (the appearance of Christ at the end of time), and it sets out the standards by which all will be judged. It is clear that faith must propel the disciple into practical, loving action.

Jesus identifies himself with those to whom service is given or refused. Serving the basic needs of others is the basis of judgment. In the last analysis, it is love that determines how we are judged. Judgment in this matter is not ours to make.

Acts 5:27–42 *Christian response to Persecution*

For a short period in the early 40s, the early Jewish-Christians were harassed and imprisoned by the Sanhedrin, the Council responsible for maintaining order in the Jewish world. In this passage, the disciples are brought before the Council, scourged and warned never to preach in the name of Jesus. They respond by rejoicing, and go straight back to preaching about Jesus.

It is an extraordinary example of hope, faith and commitment. The prisons at the time were horrific: underground pits, stinking and wet, with a hole at the top through which prisoners were thrust. Yet the disciples willingly faced re-imprisonment, rather than be silent about Jesus.

Eventually, they gained tolerance and respect, especially from the Pharisees; Gamaliel, mentioned in 5:34–39, was one of the great Jewish teachers of this period.

James 2:14–26 *Faith without Good Works* (Indicator 5)

This passage has caused extensive theological debate over the centuries. The importance of good works is essential to Christianity and indeed to any major religion. Faith, of course, is necessary too for the religious person, but according to James a living faith needs good works, as they support and help each other. A lively discussion with students on the values of both might be possible!

The introduction of Abraham may need some explanation. James seems to see Abraham's obedience to God as a good work motivated by his faith. It is a fine line. Abraham sacrificing his son Isaac to God is a horrifying notion and did not actually take place. He was willing to do it because of his complete faith in God. James uses the story to draw a clear distinction between faith and doing something as a result of that faith. He says that faith must be demonstrated by good deeds.

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STANDARDS

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

- values the relevance of the teaching of Jesus to contemporary society and life experiences.
- identify ways in which Christians live lives of discipleship in accordance with the ideals and values of Jesus.
- apply the teachings and values of Jesus to contemporary life situations.

Indicators of Learning (Incorporating Values, Knowledge and Skills)	Essential Reading for Teachers	Suggested Learning/Teaching Strategies	Possible Assessment
<p>I.</p> <p><i>It is intended that students will be able to:</i></p> <p>V select aspects of Jesus' life and teaching which they consider to be the most significant for Christian living</p> <p>K understand that the teachings and actions of Jesus serve as models for Christian living</p> <p>S categorise a range of attitudes and actions which exemplify a life of discipleship.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Christian is one who accepts Jesus' call to a life of ongoing conversion and discipleship. Jesus called his followers to a change of mind and heart (conversion) that becomes evident in a particular way of living and acting (discipleship). • At its core discipleship is an identification with the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. It is a life of imitation of Jesus (John 13:15). • This can be seen in the Gospels where the disciple is to act as Jesus does: with compassion, humility, generosity, self-sacrifice and service of others (Mark 9:33–50; 10:42–45), and above all with love (John 13:34–35). • Jesus sent his disciples to act in his name (Matthew 10:1–42) and to make disciples of all nations (Matthew 28:18–20). <p>With the guidance of the Holy Spirit, Christians have a capacity to influence and change the lives of others through the example of their own lives. By loving others as Jesus loved them and actively responding to their needs, Christians are living the challenge of Christianity.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Analyse and discuss what is happening in the diagram on KWL p. 212 • Develop a definition of justice using designs on KWL p.213 • Students sketch an architectural design for a just society; foundations, beams and walls incorporate words and actions. Share these in groups of four. Select examples to present to the class. Following presentations and discussion, students categorise the attitudes and actions in the designs that reflect the life and teachings of Jesus. • In the same groups students read the following Scripture passages: Matthew 18:1–14, 5:3–11, Luke 10:25–37, 18:9–14, Mark 5:21–34, 10:42–45 a) What do these passages show us about Jesus? b) How do they relate to the group's designs for a just society? • KWL p.214:A Just Society and the Teachings and Actions of Jesus. • Role play an imaginary situation where an individual or a group is guided/not guided by Christian principles. You could choose a scenario from KWL p.212 to develop the role play. 	<p>Teacher Assessment</p> <p>Observation of individual and group designs for a just society.</p> <p>Peer Assessment</p> <p>Presentation of role plays. Students use common criteria to assess each other's presentations.</p>

<p>2.</p> <p><i>It is intended that students will be able to:</i></p> <p>V discuss the power of compassion to transform the lives of individuals</p> <p>K judge how works of mercy are part of a Christian lifestyle</p> <p>S apply the implications of Jesus' teaching on mercy and compassion to aspects of contemporary society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One of the main characteristics of Christian living is the demonstration of solidarity with and action for those who suffer. In the same way Jesus transformed the lives of many, through his compassionate presence. Christians are called to help alleviate the suffering of others. • Tradition has listed a number of ways of acting with mercy and compassion. They are known as the Corporal Works of Mercy: feeding the hungry, giving drink to the thirsty, clothing the naked, visiting the imprisoned, sheltering the homeless, visiting the sick, and burying the dead. • Most of these have their basis in Jesus' account of the Last Judgment in Matthew 25:31–46 (compare with Isaiah 58:6–8). Burying the dead relates to Tobit 1:16–20; 12:12 and was added out of respect for the sanctity of the body as a temple of the Holy Spirit (1 Corinthians 3:16). • The list is relevant to this study because it demonstrates what followers of Jesus have always done in his name. Parish and local Church life today in all Christian denominations continues to be geared to doing these works of mercy. • There are many opportunities available in the everyday life of students to imitate the example of Jesus and show compassion in their attitudes and actions, e.g. among friends and family at school and at work. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Matthew 25:31–46 is a rich source for exploring Jesus' teaching on mercy and compassion. To complement a reading of the text use artistic representations to explore its meaning. • KWL p. 222 connects Scripture and the Corporal Works of Mercy. Schools may wish to pursue this with a view to their individual charism. • Journal – reflect in either a written or pictorial form on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – compassion – what is it? – a personal experience of compassion: describe one example – the power of compassion: how can it transform the lives of individuals? – compassion towards others: when have you shown it? – what are the implications of Jesus' teaching on mercy and compassion in my life? • Do a search through current newspapers for stories of compassion and write a reflection on these. 	<p>Teacher and/or Peer Assessment</p> <p>Students present their understanding of Matthew 25:31–46 using written and visual material.</p> <p>Self-assessment</p> <p>Journal/reflection on compassion.</p>
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<p>3.</p> <p><i>It is intended that students will be able to:</i></p> <p>V articulate challenges faced by Christians in today's world</p> <p>K understand ways in which the Christian life is counter-cultural</p> <p>S classify challenges that may arise for an individual or group following the way of Jesus.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jesus recognised the challenges his followers would encounter in living the Christian teaching: Happy are you when people hate you, drive you out, abuse you, denounce your name as criminal, on account of the Son of Man. Rejoice when that day comes and dance for joy, for then your reward will be great in heaven (Luke 6:22). • Today the challenge of living Christianity is just as demanding as it was in the time of Jesus. The message and values of Jesus in the Gospel are in many ways counter-cultural. • Christian living stands as a prophetic challenge to a society that tends to pursue individual success and material gain at any cost. Students, parents and teachers alike are highly influenced by these pursuits, which at times seem more attractive than the call to discipleship. • Jesus' focus on love, service and self-sacrifice prove difficult at times for many individuals. In contemporary society courage is required to live out Christian virtues such as humility, patience, forgiveness, tolerance, self-respect, modesty and chastity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the problem solving activity to analyse how 'the Christian life is counter-cultural'. Working in the same small groups, students: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – propose definitions of the term 'counter-cultural'. – use common experiences to clarify their understanding, eg actions at school, in peer group, in sporting teams and other associations. – apply this understanding to the topics discussed in the problem solving activity. How is Catholic teaching in this area 'counter-cultural'? • Response task: What challenges do the words and works of Jesus present to us today? 	<p>Peer Assessment</p> <p>Students present their information using a structured overview.</p> <p>Teacher Assessment</p> <p>Participation in group work for the structured overview.</p> <p>Observation of responses when analysing 'the Christian life as counter-cultural'.</p> <p>Marking of response task.</p>
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<p>4.</p> <p>It is intended that students will be able to:</p> <p>V propose ideas for Christian service in everyday school and family life</p> <p>K appreciate and identify circumstances calling for Christian service in everyday school, family and social life</p> <p>S analyse everyday situations in terms of Christian principles of service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discipleship is lived in simple ways in every aspect of daily life. The module must include an exploration of practical ways of living the Christian life in the everyday life of students. • Students are the best resource for identifying the various circumstances of everyday Christian living: relationships with parents and siblings, school friends and fellow students; team members and opponents at sport; neighbours of all ages; friends and people they meet outside of school. • Practical Christian living does not exist in isolation: it is fortified by prayer and regular celebration of the sacraments, most especially weekly participation in the Eucharist. • Hence the Church has certain precepts for Christian living, nourished by liturgical life. These are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – to participate in Mass on Sundays and holy days of obligation – to lead a sacramental life; minimally, this means confessing grave sin at least once a year, and receiving communion at least once a year between Ash Wednesday and Trinity Sunday – to do penance, including observing the days of penance (each Friday, through prayer, self denial or helping others) and of fasting and abstinence (Ash Wednesday and Good Friday) – to strengthen and support the work of the Church, including providing for its material needs according to one's abilities. 	<p>Teacher Assessment</p> <p>Marking of letter explaining what it means to 'live' Christianity.</p> <p>Self-assessment</p> <p>Letter to a friend.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students brainstorm ways that works of compassion can be carried out in their own lives, e.g. seeking our students who are isolated; publishing the school's bullying policy; assisting in the school's environmental group, etc. • As a class/form, students work together to offer assistance to Catholic organisations. Examples could include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – local needs identified by parishes, e.g. single parent families, elderly people. This is an excellent means of promoting a connection between high schools and parishes – Christmas Hampers for Centacare or St Vincent de Paul – raising money to donate to Project Compassion. • Students write a letter to a friend who is not Christian, explaining what it means to 'live' Christianity. • Share the 'good news' of student action in school and at home in response to this unit by publishing stories and photos in the school newsletter, local parish bulletins and, where applicable, local newspapers.
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<p>5.</p> <p>It is intended that students will be able to:</p> <p>V comment on case studies of Christian service in the local community</p> <p>K be aware of case studies of individuals or groups purposefully living out Christian discipleship in the local community</p> <p>S research and report on the actions of individuals or groups working in the service of others.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The necessity of translating faith into action is central to Christian living. Faith without good works is dead (James 2:14–26). • In washing the feet of his apostles (John 13:1–17), Jesus demonstrated the importance of serving others. In Baptism, individuals become Christ's disciples, commissioned to be in the service of others. The Sacraments of Confirmation and the Eucharist consolidate the call to service for initiated Christians. • Many individuals and groups choose to put the teachings of Jesus to work in their own lives, by carrying out a wide range of ministries. Through their actions they give witness to the Christian faith expressed in love of neighbour. For example Christian witness can be given through: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – voluntary work in the community/charitable organisations – social justice projects – family interactions/friendships, pastoral care ministries – caring for the sick and elderly in hospital and homes for the aged – work in drug/alcohol treatment centres 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invite a guest speaker from a Catholic organisation to address the class. Use local groups where possible. Examples include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – St Vincent de Paul – Mary MacKillop Institute – Centacare – Caritas Australia • Students prepare questions to ask guest speaker; for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – What services does their organisation offer the local community? – What can we do to help? • Work through activities in Project Compassion Secondary Schools' kit. • KWL p. 225–229, Special Study: Society of St Vincent de Paul. • KWL p. 251–255, Reaching Out Across the World: the Work of Catholic Mission. This could be used as the basis of individual or group research. 	<p>Teacher Assessment</p> <p>Observation of student response to guest speaker.</p> <p>Inquiring during special study on Society of St Vincent de Paul.</p> <p>Peer Assessment</p> <p>Students use criteria to assess presentations on Catholic Mission in reference to KWL p. 251–255.</p>
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Celebration: Prayer and Liturgy

- Prior to the meditation, discuss the various ways of praying. Our spiritual life can be nourished in a variety of ways: being open to the Word, listening to a moving song, or simply sitting quietly and praying. These things can help us live the Christian life more fully.
- The students could take time to reflect on their own prayer life, using examples from the Gospels of the significance of prayer to Jesus.
- Students could search the Bible for passages/prayers or Psalms which encourage and reassure them when Christian living proves difficult. Proclaiming the Word of God helps students to know and understand the message of God.

Suggested celebration based on Matthew 25:31–46

Preparation: Quiet instrumental music should be playing in the background to help students settle into this special time. Students should be in a posture conducive to prayer, with backs straight, feet flat on the floor, eyes closed and all parts of the body relaxed.

Gathering: Invite the students to imagine that God's presence surrounds and envelops them. Ask them to imagine that each time they breathe in, they breathe in the presence of God. Each time they breathe out, they push out any negative feelings that prevent them from encountering God's presence within themselves.

Once they have done this for a couple of minutes, ask them to imagine that with each breath they breathe in God's love and peace. The more they breathe in God's spirit of love, hope and peace, the more they are aware of God's presence within themselves. Continue this for a few minutes until a deep silence is felt within the room.

The Word: A Reading from the Gospel of Matthew 25: 31–46 (Final Judgment). The reading concludes with the words: *The Word of the Lord*.

All: **Thanks be to God.**

Reflection: After a few minutes of silence, the teacher guides the students to silently reflect on times when they have lived the Christian life. They have seen the face of God in others and been the face of God to others. Who did they help? What did they do? How did they feel? They should then reflect on those times when they failed to see the face of God in others and failed to be the face of God to others. Who did they hurt? What did they do? How did it feel? What would Christ have done? They may wish to silently pray for the courage, strength and faith to live the Christian life.

Concluding Prayer:

Together students pray the Prayer of St Theresa:

All: **Christ has
no other hands but my hands to do his work today;
no other feet but my feet to guide them on his way;
no other lips but my lips to tell them why he died;
no other love but my love to win them to his side. Amen.**

The liturgy could conclude with the hymn by John Michael Talbot, 'St Theresa's Prayer', on CD *Quiet Reflections* or some other appropriate hymn.

Possible Assessment Tasks

TASK 1: Problem-solving Activity

PURPOSE

Students to analyse some ethical dimensions of living in society.

ACTIVITY

1. The teacher places students in small groups.
2. Each group is given one of the following topics:
 - Why should volunteer work be a part of Catholic secondary education?
 - Should access to gambling venues be restricted?
 - How can the poor in our society be helped?
3. Students are guided in their discussion by exploring the following points:

Brainstorm:	What is the task? What do we know about the situation?
Explanation/discuss:	Why/how did the situation come about?
Action:	What action can we take immediately? What long-term actions could be planned?
Evaluation:	What are the good points about our suggestions? What are the difficulties and dangers?
Emotions:	How do we feel? What do we know about the situation? What are the alternatives? What is the conclusion? Are we satisfied with the conclusion?

ASSESSMENT

In groups students then present their information in a structured overview. This can be set out as a graphic outline or mind map which introduces and summarises the main points of the activity.

TASK 2: Poem or Prayer

PURPOSE

Students to reflect on living the Christian life.

ACTIVITY

Using the following key words, write either a poem or prayer for guidance in living the Christian life:

Key words:

Faith	Beliefs	Compassion
Generosity	Happiness	Justice
Courage	Strength	Patience

ASSESSMENT

An appropriate use of key words and an understanding of living the Christian life.

Resources

Essential Reading

Australian Catholic Social Justice Council 2003, *A Fair Society? Common Wealth for the Common Good: Ten Years On*. Australian Catholic Social Justice Council, North Sydney.

Byrne, B 2000, *The Hospitality of God*. St Pauls Publications, Strathfield.

Teacher Resources

Caritas Australia produces a range of teaching material (Asia: Our Neighbour, One World One Family, Project Compassion, Lenten program, etc).

Charles, R 2000, *An Introduction to Catholic Social Teaching*. Ignatius Press, San Francisco.

Hogan, M 1993, *Australian Catholic: The Social Justice Tradition*. Collins Dove, Melbourne.

Ryan, M 1998, *Striving for Justice, Teacher's Manual*. Social Science Press, Sydney.

Ryan, M 2000, *Relationships and Sexuality, Teachers' Manual*. Social Science Press, Sydney.

Classroom Resources

Glavich, K 2000, *Called to Love: Your Christian Vocation*. Ave Maria Press, Notre Dame, Indiana.

Morrissey, J et al. 1998, *Out of the Desert*, Book 2, Ch. 9. Longman, Melbourne.

Murray, K 1999, *Tough Stuff, True Stories About Kids and Courage*. Allen & Unwin, Sydney.

Ryan, M 1998, *Striving for Justice*. Social Science Press, Sydney.

Ryan, M 2000, *Relationships and Sexuality*. Social Science Press, Sydney.

Websites

<www.resource.melb.catholic.edu.au> (RESource Website – Ethics)

<www.vinnies.org.au> (St Vincent de Paul Society)

<www.abs.gov.au> (Australian Bureau of Statistics)

<www.afho.org.au> (Australian Federation of Homelessness Societies)

<www.ozspirit.info> (Magazine of Caritas)

<www.caritas.org.au> (Catholic Aid Organisation)

Unit Evaluation

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

- To what extent did students value the relevance of the teachings of Jesus to contemporary society and life experiences?
- How effectively did students identify ways in which Christians can be disciples in accordance with the ideals and values of Jesus?
- How well did students apply the teachings and values of Jesus to contemporary life situations?
- To what extent did students demonstrate achievement of standards
- Are there standards that were not achieved?
- What changes (if any) would you make if you were teaching this unit again?