

reap

Religious Education
Accreditation Program

Life in first century Palestine



**Brisbane
Catholic
Education**

teaching • challenging • transforming

Groups

1. Scribes
2. Pharisees
3. Essenes
4. Zealots
5. The Temple people (the Priests, High Priest, Chief Priests, Levites)
6. The Sadducees
7. The Herodians
8. The Samaritans

You can find information about your group from one of the links below:

http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Jewish_Groups.htm (Groups 1-7 below)

http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Ethnic_Groups.htm (Samaritans)

Your Task Reviewed

Working in small groups, your group needs to become a group living in first century Palestine. You need to:

1. Read the information provided to find out about your group.
2. Talk with your group members. What did you discover about what life is like for you? What do you do? What do you believe? What's really important to you? What really irritates you?
3. Ask people to look up one text where your group is mentioned and highlight how understanding your group brings new meaning to the text.

Your Task

4. Find a NT text that mentions your group. What new meaning can you bring to this text from what you've learnt?
5. Present back to the whole group and provide the following information:
 - Who are you?
 - What do you want everyone to understand about you?
 - What's important to your group?
 - What do you think about Jesus?

Presentation Time

Introduce your group, what's important to you and what you think of Jesus.

Show us texts in the Bible (or about the Bible, Essenes) that talk about your group and tell us what they reveal.

You are the groups of first century Palestine – put forward your case clearly and show people who you are! (Maybe some people will want to join your group by the end of today!)

So what do you mean Jesus was a Jew?

Which group do you think Jesus most likely belonged to (or none of them!?)

And the Surprising Answer Is...

Some scholars think that Jesus could have been a Pharisee.

Why? Because Jesus came to reform Judaism, not to start Catholicism. In fact, Jesus knew nothing about Catholicism in his lifetime. Sometimes the people you argue most with are your own people, because they are the ones you're trying to change.

It's unclear whether Jesus actually belonged to any of these groups, but there are scholars giving serious consideration to Jesus being a Pharisee.

What Happened After Jesus Died?

The war with the Romans did eventuate, and Jerusalem and the Temple burned for days. This was catastrophic for the Jewish people. How could they continue to be Jewish if they no longer had a Temple?

The place of Temple worship ceased and Rabbinic Judaism developed.

To understand the size of the Temple choose one of the following videos (for 7 or 12 minutes on this site:

<https://religiouseducation0.wixsite.com/thegospels/the-destruction-of-the-temple>

Now to find deeper meaning

Luke 6:12-16

New American Bible (Revised Edition)

¹² In those days he departed to the mountain to pray, and he spent the night in prayer^[a] to God. ¹³ When day came, he called his disciples to himself, and from them he chose Twelve,^[b] whom he also named apostles: ¹⁴ Simon, whom he named Peter,^[c] and his brother Andrew, James, John, Philip, Bartholomew, ¹⁵ Matthew, Thomas, James the son of Alphaeus, **Simon who was called a Zealot,**^[d] ¹⁶ and Judas the son of James, and Judas Iscariot,^[e] who became a traitor.

What type of people did Jesus call to work with him?

A question a year 1 teacher asked which led to deep reflection and rich dialogue:

What type of people have you called to be your friends?



The *Good Samaritan* (editor bias!)

Luke 10:25-37 New American Bible (Revised Edition)

²⁵ **There was a scholar of the law** who stood up to test him and said, “Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?” ²⁶ Jesus said to him, “What is written in the law? How do you read it?” ²⁷ He said in reply, “You shall love the Lord, your God, with all your heart, with all your being, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself.” ²⁸ He replied to him, “You have answered correctly; do this and you will live.”

The Parable of the Good Samaritan. ²⁹ But because he wished to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” ³⁰ Jesus replied, “A man fell victim to robbers as he went down from Jerusalem to Jericho. They stripped and beat him and went off leaving him half-dead. ³¹ **A priest happened to be going down that road, but when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.** ³² **Likewise a Levite came to the place, and when he saw him, he passed by on the opposite side.** ³³ **But a Samaritan traveler who came upon him was moved with compassion at the sight.** ³⁴ He approached the victim, poured oil and wine over his wounds and bandaged them. Then he lifted him up on his own animal, took him to an inn and cared for him. ³⁵ The next day he took out two silver coins and gave them to the innkeeper with the instruction, ‘Take care of him. If you spend more than what I have given you, I shall repay you on my way back.’ ³⁶ Which of these three, in your opinion, was neighbor to the robbers’ victim?” ³⁷ He answered, “The one who treated him with mercy.” Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

Who would be a scholar of the law? (Why would he be trying to "test" Jesus?)

Would a Jewish audience listening to this story have expected the priest and Levite to stop? (Yes!)

A parable – the rule of 3 – who would a Jewish audience expect to be the 3rd person coming along? (Presumably a good upright Jew, like themselves – and shock – along comes a *Samaritan!*)

This text exposes people's prejudices, and invites us to think about: Have I ever walked past a challenging situation and hoped the next person would deal with it? How would the world would be if we only looked after those we liked, rather than those in need? When do our biases get in the way?



Thank you

Thank you for bringing first century Palestine to life!



For more information

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