

# Religion and Ethics

Elective 11: Sacred Stories

Supporting Resources for  
the QCAA Applied Syllabus -  
Religion and Ethics

Support Resources for  
P-12 RE Curriculum, Years 11 and 12

# Sacred Stories

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dnUOrt4qvo&feature=emb\\_logo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dnUOrt4qvo&feature=emb_logo)

The purpose of story and story-telling is to help shape who we are, where we have come from and who we might become. In this unit, students will have opportunities to explore and appreciate the power of story and how it captures, recalls and preserves the life experiences of people no matter what age, period, culture or belief. This unit focuses on how, throughout the ages religion and in particular the Catholic Christian religion, has fulfilled the innate need of humans to hear and tell stories and to have a story to live by.

## Extending Knowledge: *The Story of Stories*

In this lesson students will explore the Brisbane Catholic Education ResourceLink Blog about changing modes of storytelling.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

- Read the **Teacher Background** about storytelling.
- Familiarise yourself with the ResourceLink Blog about technology and storytelling.

**Students:**

For students to analyse the ResourceLink Blog about technology and storytelling, complete the following activities:

1. Critically analyse the ResourceLink Blog entry about storytelling and technology.
2. Access the storytelling blog on the [ResourceLink Page](#)
  - Read the blog Technology and Storytelling: an evolving partnership, interacting with the technology embedded in the blog.
  - Create a comment on the blog entry stating your opinion about the place of technology in contemporary and future storytelling, particularly for the telling of sacred stories.

## Topic 1.1: The Sacredness of Story

### Core Content Area 1: My Stories

#### Lesson 1.1.1: Why Stories?

In this lesson students will explore the topic '*Sacred Stories*' and the fertile question: "*Why do I need a story to live by?*"

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

- Preview the movie clip for this unit.
- Read the **Teacher Background** on stories and storytelling.
- Consider beginning the unit by telling the students a story

**Students:**

For students to explore the topic, Sacred Stories, and the fertile question, select from the following activities:

1. Explore the importance of stories and storytelling to human beings.
  - Discuss the importance of stories to human beings.
    - List as many reasons as you can for the telling of stories. Compare your list with the list in **Useful Resources (at page 23 below)**. Discuss examples for each of the reasons given.

- Choose one of the reasons for telling a story from either list, and tell a story from your life experience in a small group that demonstrates the chosen reason. Identify for the group the origin and context for the story.
  - View the introductory movie clip for Sacred Stories. View the introductory movie clip for Sacred Stories.
    - Record questions, feelings or statements that occur to you during the movie clip.
  - Discuss the statements made in the movie clip regarding what makes a sacred story both within and outside religious traditions.
2. Explore the meaning of the fertile question: *Why do I need a story to live by?*
- Clarify the meaning of the fertile question as a class. ) Clarify the meaning of the fertile question as a class. ) Clarify the meaning of the fertile question as a class. ) Clarify the meaning of the fertile question as a class.
    - Complete a think/pair/share process to clarify the meaning of the question.
    - Share and synthesise the group meanings of the question as a class.
    - List and critique some of the types of stories that people have lived by and continue to live by. For example, stories with messages such as these:
      - Always do your best.
      - It's not my problem.
      - Treat others how you would like to be treated.
      - An eye for an eye.
      - Whatever makes you happy.
      - Just do it! Never put off until tomorrow what you could do today.
      - Forgive and forget.
  - Discuss and analyse the following statement from American theologian, Harvey Cox
    - *All human beings have an innate need to hear and tell stories and to have a story to live by. Religion, whatever else it has done, has provided one of the main ways of meeting this abiding need.*

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## Lesson 1.1.2 The Art of Storytelling

In this lesson students will explore the art of storytelling.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Read the **Teacher Background** on stories and storytelling.

**Students:**

For students to explore the art of story-telling, select from the following activities:

**Explore different modes of storytelling:**

1. Listen to the theme tune from the old TV series [Gilligan's Island](#)
  - Answer the following questions: Answer the following questions:
    - How effective is the song as a storytelling device?
    - Can you identify the beginning, the middle and the end of the story?

- At the end of the Gilligan's Island series, everyone is rescued. If they hadn't been, and the passengers and crew populated the island and lived there forever, how important might the story of the shipwreck become to the islanders?
    - Imagine if the story was real and you are the grandchild of the original skipper of the ship in 2013. (The shipwreck occurred in the 1960s.)
    - What storytelling devices would you use to tell the story to your son or daughter to make sure that the story survives?
  - Create your version of the story and share it with a partner.
    - Discuss the similarities and differences that there are between the new version and the old version of the story.
2. Examine the painting [The Boyhood of Raleigh](#) by Sir John Everett Millais.
- Write down what you see in the painting. Write down what you see in the painting. Comment on use of colour, objects, background and what you think the painting is about.
  - Answer the following questions by discussing with a partner or the class.
    - Describe the body language of the three characters in the painting.
    - How does the body language of the three characters tell you which character is the storyteller and who are the listeners?
    - What is the mood of the painting?
  - Discuss the effectiveness of visual art as a storytelling medium
3. View the [Digital Storytelling](#) of the birth of Jesus as told in the Christian faith tradition.
- Complete a SWOT analysis of this example of storytelling.
    - Consider in your analysis who the audience for this story might be.
    - How effective is this telling of the nativity story for Christians?
    - How effective is this telling of the nativity story for non-Christians?
    - Share with a partner.
  - Conclude this lesson by discussing and summarising the qualities of a good storyteller and a good storytelling experience.

### Lesson 1.1.3 Exploring Sacred Texts

In this lesson students will explore the variety of ways that sacred stories are passed on.

**Teachers:** Before you start!

Read the **Teacher Background** on sacred texts.

#### For Students

For students to explore the variety of ways in which sacred stories are passed on, select from the following activities:

1. Determine an agreed definition of what makes a story sacred.
  - Define the term 'Sacred'.
  - Use a dictionary or the computer to find definitions of the word 'Sacred'.
    - Share definitions with a partner and write a one sentence definition that captures the rich meaning of the word.
  - Consider the following statements: Consider the following statements:
    - A story is sacred if it links me with the story of others and with the story of all human existence.
    - A story is sacred if it challenges me to think about my place in the world.
    - A story is sacred if it somehow tells the story of the divine.
    - A story is sacred if it is a story to live by.
  - Choose one of the statements and recall an example of a story that illustrates the idea. Choose one of the statements and recall an example of a story that illustrates the idea.

- Share the stories in a small group with a short explanation about why you consider it to be a sacred story.
- 2. Explore the sacredness of certain texts in particular traditions.
  - Examine the place and importance of the sacred texts of Islam and Judaism in the lives of Muslims and Jews.
    - Read the **Background Information** about the [Torah](#) (Judaism) and the [Qur'an](#) (Islam)
    - View the [YouTube Clip](#) from a young Jewish girl's Bat Mitzvah, and using the descriptions from the **Background Information**, identify the various ways in which the sacredness of the Torah is demonstrate
    - Explore other ways of sharing sacred stories.
  - Find out about Buddhist monks and sand mandala. Rock art, body painting and dances of Indigenous Australians and the use of totems and totem poles to pass on sacred stories.

## Topic 1.2: Personal Stories

### Lesson 1.2.1 My Sacred Stories

In this lesson students will recall and illustrate a story that is sacred to them and refer to the fertile question: "Why do I need a story to live by?"

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

- Consider modelling for the students, one of your own family stories that is sacred to you.
- Ask students to research their family tree to complete the activities in the next lesson.

**Students:**

For students to explore and illustrate stories that are sacred to them, select from the following activities.

1. Reflect on the important stories and the storytellers in your family.
  - Recall significant events from your family story.
  - Construct a timeline that shows the history of your family as far back as you know about, either on paper or using [TimeToast](#). Include important events, births, deaths, marriages, change of country, state or town, significant family moments, first communion etc. Include important events, births, deaths, marriages, change of country, state or town, significant family moments, first communion etc.
  - Examine the created timeline and highlight events around which there are important stories that have been told to you about how you and your family came to be living in this time and place.
  - Choose one story from your family's past and create an illustrated version to share with the class. Use a medium that you are comfortable with. For example you could cartoon the story or use photos to tell a photo story using [Animoto](#); or you could create a story book with pictures or text.
2. Recall the storytellers in your family.
  - Retell one of your favourite family stories to a partner and discuss why it is special for you.
3. Identify the influence of your cultural background on your life so far.
  - Discuss with a partner family Christmas traditions. Ask each other questions about any points of difference between your two descriptions.
  - How much does your family's cultural background influence the way you celebrate significant family events and the telling of stories.

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### Lesson 1.2.2 Stories from the Past

In this lesson students will explore their family history and stories from the past.

**Teachers:** Before you start!

- Remind students they need information about their family tree for this lesson.

- Be aware of the variety of family circumstances of students and adjust the activities to be sensitive to this.

## Students

For students to explore the importance of family history, select from the following activities:

1. Examine and reflect on the importance of knowing where you come from.
  - Explore the importance of knowing about your place in the world by examining family history.
    - View one or more stories of [separation](#) from the [Eternity Exhibition](#) in the Australian Museum and answer the following questions:
      - How did forced separation from family, family history, home or land affect the people in the stories?
      - What attempts were made to resolve the consequences of the separation?
      - What are some other examples where people have been forcibly separated from people, land, culture, religion?
      - View an episode of, or excerpt from, the series Who do you think you are? (One example is American Talk show host [Jerry Springer's](#) search for how his German Jewish ancestry has impacted his life story.)
      - Research your family history and record details of at least three generations if the information is available.
      - Locate the places, dates of birth, occupations and family details of your parents or carers, their parents and if possible their grandparents.
      - Use an online family tree builder such as [My Heritage](#) or draw on paper your family tree.
  - Research the importance of objects/artefacts from the past and the importance of family memories.
    - Ask a parent or relative about an object or artefact that has been in the family for a long time. It may be a piece of jewellery, furniture, recipe, photograph, rosary beads, antique, saying etc.
    - Take a photograph of the item and create a fact file for your item using [BigHugeLabs Motivator](#).
    - Discuss with a partner why you think people pass on/keep items of significance.

## Lesson 1.3.1 Story Telling

In this lesson students will analyse and reflect on their own storytelling, the stories they tell, repeat and enjoy as well as learn some storytelling techniques.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Familiarise yourself with the article referred to in this lesson.

**Students:**

For students to analyse and reflect on their own storytelling, select from the following activities:

1. Reflect on the types of stories that you like to tell.
  - Consider the following ideas and identify which of these triggers a story memory for you:
    - Car accident,
    - Wedding,
    - Friends,
    - Family,
    - Holidays,
    - etc.
  - Reflect on how important the story was for you, who you told it to or will tell it to in the future and why you would tell the story.
  - Have any of these stories shaped the way you live/act/behave?
2. Explore different storytelling techniques as a way of engaging an audience.
  - Identify the characteristics of successful story telling.
    - Research the internet to find out the characteristics of good storytelling. Here is a [good article](#) to get you started.

- Share your findings to create a list of the top five tips for good storytelling.
- Listen to some storytellers, noting the presence of the techniques identified earlier. Here are some examples:
  - [The Seanachai](#)
  - [Tiddalick the Frog](#)
  - [Lazy Jack](#)
- 3. Explore the telling of sacred stories.
  - Investigate the presence of storytelling devices in ancient stories.
  - Read the story of creation found in the Old Testament ([Genesis I](#) and [Genesis II](#)) and complete the following:
    - List the devices of storytelling used in this story.
    - How does the language used assist the listener to imagine what is happening in the story?
    - Why might repetition or patterning have been used in the telling of ancient sacred stories?

### Lesson 1.3.2 Symbols and Stories

In this lesson students will investigate the power of symbols to make multiple meanings in stories for listeners.

**Teachers:** Before you start!

Familiarise yourself with the resources used in this lesson.

#### Students

For students to investigate the power of symbols, select from the following activities:

1. Explore the power of symbols.
  - Test your knowledge of common symbols and their meanings. Test your knowledge of common symbols and their meanings.
    - Name the religious traditions that each of the symbols below are associated with.



Find the answers at [Religious.symbols.net](http://Religious.symbols.net).

- View the [short video](#) about symbols and their different meanings for different groups.
- Write a ten to fifteen-word statement that synthesises the key message in the movie clip.
- Explore the power of symbols to make multiple meanings for diverse groups. Explore the power of symbols to make multiple meanings for diverse groups.



- Choose a common symbol such as the ones below and explore how the symbol could have different meanings and associations for different groups of people.



### Lesson 1.3.3 Stories through The Arts

In this lesson students will explore how the arts have been used to express the stories of people and or communities.

**Teachers:** Before you start!

Familiarise yourself with the resources used in this lesson.

#### Students

For students to explore how the arts have been used to express stories, select from the following activities:

1. Explore how the arts have been used to express personal stories.
  - Explore how personal stories have been expressed through various art forms.
2. Explore how the arts have been used to express community stories.
  - View the clip of choreographer Travis Wall discussing the story behind the contemporary dance piece '[Fix You](#)' followed by the dance and comments by the judges.
    - Reflect on the power of dance as a way of expressing stories that are difficult to tell. Why did the dance produce an emotional response in so many different people?
    - Locate examples of contemporary musicians who have expressed personal stories through their work. Share the examples with the class with a short explanation about how the song illustrates an aspect of the artist's life story.
  - View the clip of the contemporary dance called '[Resurrection](#)' and read the information provided about the piece.
    - The dance is an interpretation of a foundational Christian mystery. Compare the experience of a non-Christian with a Christian viewing the same dance.
    - Discuss the importance of the arts as a way of making meaning of complex themes for both insiders and outsiders of religious traditions.

#### Deepening Understanding: *Genealogy and Oral Tradition*

In this lesson students will explore the use of genealogy in storytelling and the importance of the oral storytelling tradition.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

- Read the **Teacher Background** about storytelling.
- Familiarise yourself with the Bible references referred to in this lesson.

#### Students:

For students to explore the use of genealogy in storytelling and the importance of the oral storytelling tradition, select from the following activities:

1. Reflect on the importance of oral storytelling in religious traditions.



- Research the importance of oral storytelling in a particular faith tradition. Research the importance of oral storytelling in a particular faith tradition.
  - Choose from one of the big world religions and investigate the place of oral storytelling in the history of the tradition.
  - Design a retrieval chart to record information. iii Conclude your research with a statement about the importance of the oral storytelling tradition in the chosen religious tradition.
- 2. Explore the genealogy of Jesus Christ in the New Testament of the Christian scriptures.
  - Read the genealogy of Jesus Christ as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew 1:1-17.
    - Identify the storytelling devices used in the genealogy that would have assisted oral storytellers to remember the genealogy.
    - Consider the Jewish background of many of the early Christians and explore the following questions in relation to the social context and beliefs of the people.
      - What is the importance of Jesus being known as the Son of King David?
      - What is a Messiah and why would it be important for Jews that Jesus is named as the Messiah?
      - Why do you think the authors of Matthew have gone to so much trouble to name Jesus' ancestors?
      - What meaning does the genealogy of Jesus have for Christians today?
  - Explore [Westminster Cathedral](#) as a keeper of genealogies and story.as a keeper of genealogies and story.

### Extending Knowledge: *Interpreting Biblical Texts*

In this lesson students will use tools for interpreting biblical texts.

**Teachers:** Before you start!

- Read the **Teacher Background** about storytelling.
- Familiarise yourself with [Psalm 23](#)

### Students

For students to use tools for interpreting biblical texts, select from the following activities:

1. Explore the use of narrative criticism as a device for understanding biblical text.
  - Examine the text of Psalm 23 using narrative criticism.
  - Read the following introduction to Narrative Criticism as described by Dr Peta Goldberg (2009) in Investigating Religion. Narrative criticism invites readers to question the way the story is told and from whose perspective. This type of criticism encourages readers to note how they are positioned as readers. (page 65)
  - Locate Psalm 23 in the Bible and complete the following questions and activities. Where is this text located within the Bible? Read the whole Psalm. Apply narrative criticism to analyse the text using the retrieval chart below.

(Narrative Criticism (paraphrased from Dr Peta Goldberg (2009). Investigating Religion: Study of Religion for Senior Secondary Students. Cambridge University Press: Melbourne)

Text	Location of the text in the bible
Analytical Questions	Answers

## Events

How is the text ordered?

## Characters

Who is the text about?

What happens?

## Narrator

Whose voice is being heard?

What values are presented?

Is the Narrators perspective reliable?

## Literary Form

What literary devices are used to tell the story?

How important is imagery in the text?

## Implied Readers and the World of the Text

What are the implied readers of the text? are the

implied readers of the text?

How is the text meant to be read?

## What is the meaning of the text for you?

## Topic 2.1: Stories from the Great Traditions

### Core Content Area 2: The Big Stories

#### Lesson 2.1.1 Of Gods and Mythology

In this lesson students will explore some of the stories that the ancients lived by.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Provide a brief introduction to this lesson about the myths and legends of mythology. An example is given in **Useful Resources**.

**Students:**

For students to explore stories that ancient people lived by, select from the following activities:

1. Investigate the connection between gods/goddesses, worship, buildings, festivals and daily life for people of ancient times.
  - Choose a civilization: Greek, Roman, Egyptian or Mesopotamian to explore. See **Useful Resources** for quality resources.
    - Collect information about the main gods/goddesses, beliefs of the people and how these beliefs impacted on the festivals and daily lives of the people.
    - Choose one story that was a story to live by for the ancient people from your chosen civilisation and work in groups to create a storytelling for your classmates.
    - The story could be acted, read, presented as an e-book etc. The story chosen must depict in some way how the religious beliefs impacted on the daily lives of the ancient people.
    - Decide as a group the main theme or message of the story, the key characters and the mode with which you will tell the story. Allocate tasks.
    - Share the stories with the class.

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#### Lesson 2.1.2 Founders and Followers

In this lesson students will explore the importance of foundational stories for followers of religious traditions.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Familiarise yourself with the resources referred to in this lesson. (**Note:** The YouTube clip about Muhammad is one of a seven-part series. Each clip is 9-10 mins long and all are suitable as research material on the origins of Islam.)

**Students:**

Explore the importance of foundational stories for followers of religious traditions, select from the following activities:

1. Research the story of Muhammad, the founder of Islam.
  - Listen to the story about Muhammad and his importance to Muslims.
    - Answer the following questions:
      - How old is the story about Muhammad?
      - Where was he born?
      - What does the story of the founder provide for adherents of Islam?
    - How is the story of Muhammad a story to live by for the American fire fighter?
  - Research further the story of how Muhammad received the revelation from Allah (God) and the importance of the Qur'an.

- Research information about the Qur'an and its importance for Muslims and record interesting facts from your research to share with the class
  - 2. Research the story of Siddhartha Gautama, the founder of Buddhism.
    - Use the internet to research the story of the life and key teachings of Siddhartha Gautama.
      - Create a storyboard using one of the key moments in the life of Siddhartha Gautama.
      - How has the story and teachings of the founder of Buddhism been a story to live by for Buddhist followers?
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### Lesson 2.1.3 Baskets and Mandalas

In this lesson students will explore how the teachings of Buddhism are stories to live by for followers.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Familiarise yourself with the [BuddhaNet](http://BuddhaNet) website.

**Students:**

For students to explore the teachings of Buddhism, select from the following activities:

1. Explore the basic teachings of Buddhism and how they create stories to live by for followers.
  - Research the major beliefs and teachings of Buddhism. Research the major beliefs and teachings of Buddhism.
    - Read the [five minute introduction](#) to Buddhism to gain a basic understanding about Buddhism.
    - Create a fact card to share in a group that explains one interesting fact about Buddhism.
  - Explore the [BuddhaNet](#) Website
    - Read the summary of [Buddhist Ethics](#): How do the five precepts provide a story to live by for followers?
    - Consider the Buddhist teaching about peace as an example of how to follow the first precept:

*"The first precept refers to the training to abstain from harming living beings. Although history records conflicts involving the so-called Buddhist nations, these wars have been fought for economic or similar reasons. However, history does not record wars fought in the name of propagating Buddhism. Buddhism and perhaps Jainism, are unique in this regard. His Holiness, the Dalai Lama has never suggested armed conflict to overcome the persecution and cruelty perpetrated by the Communist Chinese occupation forces. He has always advocated a peaceful and non-violent solution. Venerable Maha Ghosananda, the Supreme Patriarch of Cambodia has urged Cambodians to put aside their anger for the genocide of the Khmer Rouge and to unify to re-establish their nation. He has written: The suffering of Cambodia has been deep. From this suffering comes great compassion. Great compassion makes a peaceful heart. A peaceful heart makes a peaceful person. A peaceful person makes a peaceful family. A peaceful family makes a peaceful community. A peaceful community makes a peaceful nation. A peaceful nation makes a peaceful world."*

- Create a drawing or diagram to represent the teaching about peace for Cambodian people. You may like to create a mandala using the four components of peace described above:
  - Use Heart/Person, Family, Community and Nation/World as the building blocks for the mandala. An example of the creation of a mandala about compassion in time lapse video can be found on Heart/Person, Family, Community and Nation/World as the building blocks for the mandala. An example of the creation of a mandala about compassion in time lapse video can be found on [YouTube](#)
  - If you are interested in the practice of creating sand mandalas, read [If you are interested in the practice of creating sand mandalas](#), read [here](#) about why the Dalai Lama has made the practice public and what the elements of a Kalachakra Sand Mandala are.

## Topic 2.2: The Jewish story

### Core Content Area 2: The Big Stories

#### Lesson 2.2.1 The People of the Book/Covenant

In this lesson students will investigate the importance of the sacred texts of Judaism.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Familiarise yourself with resources provided in this lesson.

**Students:**

For students to investigate the importance of the sacred texts of Judaism, select from the following activities:

1. Investigate the importance of sacred texts to followers of Judaism.
    - Identify the Sacred texts of Judaism.
      - Listen to a [brief introduction](#) to the basics of Judaism:
        - How do the holidays and special celebrations of Judaism reflect the sacred stories of Judaism?
      - Research the various sacred texts of Judaism. One example of an informative site is found [here](#).
      - Find out the relationship between Oral Torah, written Torah, Tanakh, Mishnah, Gemara and Talmud.
    - Explore the treatment of the Torah in Jewish ceremonies.
      - View the [clip](#) about how the Torah is treated in Jewish ceremonies.
      - Discuss with a partner any experience you have had that seems similar to this in your own or another faith tradition. Why might sacred texts be treated with such reverence?
      - Investigate the Festival of Torah, Shimchat Torah. [View this Youtube Clip](#) as an introduction.
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#### Lesson 2.2.2 Liberation and salvation

In this lesson, students will examine some of the stories important to the followers of Judaism.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Familiarise yourself with the resources used in this lesson. Extra activities can be found at the [Together at One Alter Website](#).

**Students**

For students to examine some of the stories important to the followers of Judaism, complete the following activities:

1. Explore how followers of Judaism live by sacred stories of their tradition.
  - Explore major stories of liberation and salvation in the Jewish tradition.
    - Choose one of the major festivals of Judaism and investigate the sacred stories linked to the festival. Examples of festivals/religious holidays include Passover, Hanukkah and Purim.
    - Research the key elements of the chosen festival including: time and timing of the festival, the purpose of the festival, how it is celebrated and the sacred story of the festival.

- Present your research to the class in a suitable way. You may choose to re-enact certain parts of the festival or read the story associated with the festival with an explanation about how the festival celebrates one of the key story narratives of salvation, freedom, journey etc.
- Explore the meaning and relevance of the Seder meal for followers of Judaism.
  - Learn about the elements of the Seder meal using the interactive animation on the [Together at One Alter Website](#).
  - Explore the internet to learn about how important the festival of Passover is to Jewish families and how the festival impacts on their daily lives.

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### Lesson 2.2.3 Ruth and Naomi

In this lesson, students will examine the story of Ruth as a story to live by.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Familiarise yourself with the story in the [Book Of Ruth](#) and read the introduction given in **Useful Resources**.

**Students:**

For students to examine the story of Ruth as a story to live by, select from the following activities:

1. Explore a story of friendship, loyalty, family and love in the Hebrew Scriptures.
  - [Read](#) the story of Ruth and her mother in-law Naomi in the [Book Of Ruth](#)
    - Reflect on the significance of this story for Jewish women. Use the article [Women in Judaism](#) to assist you to make sense of the story. (One way to do this is to form a group of four and divide the article up and present a summary of the key message from the paragraphs to the group.)
    - Identify the key themes of the story. How is the story of Ruth a story to live by for Jews? For Jewish women? For women? For Christians? Discuss.
2. Create an artwork either physically or digitally, inspired by one of the themes of the story of Ruth.
  - View artworks that depict the story of Ruth either through a Google image search.
  - Choose a preferred medium and create an artwork that represents one of the main themes of the story, either for the story's original audience or for a modern audience. (You may choose to cartoon the theme using a cartooning tool such as Choose a preferred medium and create an artwork that represents one of the main themes of the story, either for the story's original audience or for a modern audience. (You may choose to cartoon the theme)

## Core Content Area 2: The Big Stories

### Topic 2.3: The Jesus story

#### Lesson 2.3.1 The Early Christian Story

In this lesson, students will investigate early Christian Church history.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Familiarise yourself with the [Together at One Altar](#)

**Students:**

For students to investigate the story of the early Christian Church, select from the following activities:

1. Research the story of the major "characters" of the early Christian Church. One useful resource about the early Christian Church can be found at the [Together at One Altar](#)
  - Form groups of seven to investigate a variety of "characters" and characteristics of the early Christian story.

- Allocate each person in the group a person or event to research from the following list:
    - Jesus,
    - St Peter (the Apostle),
    - Pentecost,
    - the conversion of Paul of Tarsus,
    - Nero,
    - the conversion of the Roman Emperor Constantine,
    - the Edict of Milan.
  - Research your allocated person or event recording information that relates to the story of the early Christian Church.
  - Report your information to the group.
  - As a group, construct a timeline of events from the beginning of the Christian story to the Edict of Milan.
  - Research the history of Christian Martyrs and their role in the sacred stories of Christianity. Research the history of Christian Martyrs and their role in the sacred stories of Christianity.
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## Lesson 2.3.2 The Kingdom is like...

In this lesson students will explore some of the parables Jesus taught during his ministry.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Read the introduction to Parables given below.

### Students

For students to explore the parables taught by Jesus, select from the following activities:

1. Explore the sacred stories of Christianity as told through the parables of Jesus.
  - Investigate how parables are structured.
    - Read the following Introduction to Parables.

"The English word 'parable' comes from the Greek word 'parabole' which literally means 'to place alongside'. So, a parable compares one thing to another. Jesus' parables found in the Gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke in the New Testament usually compare an aspect of everyday life with a truth about the kingdom of God. "The kingdom of God is like ...". Another common characteristic of Jesus' parables is the use of the rule of three to tell the story. For example, in the Good Samaritan there is a priest, a Levite and a Samaritan. Parables also contain a 'twist' which would have been totally unexpected by the original listeners. The twist would not only be unexpected but could even contradict or question lifelong held assumptions or beliefs. The original Jewish audience would most certainly not have expected the foreigner Samaritan to be the hero in that story. This technique of Jesus as a storyteller would have helped grab the attention of the audience and challenged them to find the hidden meaning. However, parables also communicate beyond their original audience. Although set in the life and times of Jesus, the message in the parables transcends time and culture and is still powerful for today's listeners."

- Choose a parable from the list in **Useful Resources**. Locate it in a Bible or using [Bible Gateway](#). Read the parable and complete the following activities:
  - What images came to mind as you read the parable?
  - Draw or describe them in your notebook.
  - How was the rule of three used in the parable?
  - List the three main characters and/or events in the parable.
  - Identify the twist in the parable. (Sometimes you can tell what the twist is if you feel slightly uncomfortable about a part of the story.)
  - What has Jesus contrasted to help the listener to make meaning?



- What real-life situation has Jesus used to transform people's perceptions throughout the parable?
  - Share your answers with a partner or the class.
  - Determine the way that the parables of Jesus could be stories to live by for Christians?
    - Choose a parable and re-contextualise it for today's audience by using a modern setting, events and circumstances, but keeping the same meaning. Share with a partner or small group and discuss why contextualising a story for an audience is an important part of storytelling.
- 

### Lesson 2.3.3 Stories to Live By

In this lesson students will explore significant Christian stories that Christians try to live by.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Read the **Teacher Background** about stories to live by.

**Students**

For students to explore significant stories that Christians try to live by, select from the following activities:

1. Investigate codes for living found in the Bible.
  - Explore the connection between the Ten Commandments and the Beatitudes with the common laws and social norms of western society.
    - Read the short article in Useful Resources that describes the structure of the Supreme Court building in Washington D.C. Give an example from the text of the article that is evidence that the author believes that the Ten Commandments have influenced the laws of western society.
    - Read the list of Commandments in the [Book of Exodus \(Chapter 20:1-17\)](#) and [The Beatitudes in Matthew 5: 1-11](#)
    - Choose one Commandment or one Beatitude that you try to live by.
    - Create a motivational poster to promote your chosen guideline using [BigHugeLabs Motivator](#). Share with the class and perhaps consider printing the posters and creating a Stories to live by wall in your classroom or school.
2. Explore how important teachings of Christianity are revealed in stories.
  - Examine stories that reflect the themes of forgiveness, repentance, mercy and compassion.
    - Read the story of the Prodigal son in [Luke 15:11-32](#).
    - What does the story teach about repentance and forgiveness?
    - Examine the depiction of the prodigal son in the artwork "Return of the Prodigal Son" by [Rembrandt](#).
    - How has the artist captured the themes of repentance and forgiveness in the artwork?
    - Read the story of the Good Samaritan in [Luke 10: 25-37](#). What does this story teach about unconditional love, compassion, accepting diversity and challenging racism?
    - Discuss the healing stories in the Gospels. How is Jesus' teaching about the option for the poor/weak and marginalised lived out by Christian individuals and organisations today?
    - Explore other Christian stories and aphorisms to live by. (For example: The Proverbs and Micah 6:8, 'And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly, to love tenderly and to walk humbly with your God')

**Deepening Understanding:** *Stories in Glass and Stone*

In this lesson students will explore the sacred stories in stained glass and cemeteries.

**Teachers:** Before you start!

- Read the **Teacher Background** regarding visual representations of Sacred Stories.

- Suggest to students that when they next visit a cemetery with family, they might like to complete activity one.

## Students

For students to explore the sacred stories in stained glass and cemeteries, select from the following activities:

1. Explore and imagine the stories represented by gravestones.
  - Visit a cemetery and examine different gravestones.
    - Choose one that interests you to examine closely.
    - Draw the headstone and write a paragraph about the person based on the information obtained from the gravestone.
  - Examine images of gravestones.
    - Choose one of the images below and write a paragraph about the person or people based on the information obtained from the gravestone:
      - [Dunkley Tombstone](#)
      - [Soldier Tombstone](#)
      - [Millard Tombstone](#)
      - or one of your own choice.
        - Discuss how sacred stories can be presented and preserved in gravestones.
  - 2. Explore stained glass as a method of sacred storytelling.
    - Explore the use of stained glass in Christian churches as a storytelling device.
    - Explore the [Awesome Stories](#) website about the Christian stories told in stained glass windows.
    - What reasons are given for using stained glass windows to tell stories in Medieval cathedrals?
    - View the stained-glass windows displayed under the beautiful examples link and discuss as a class Christian stories that you recognise in the stained-glass windows.
      - Design a family stained glass window that includes the family's sacred stories.

## Extending Knowledge: *Faith and Imagination*

In this lesson students explore the power of imagination and how it has been used by storytellers to capture beliefs and values of sacred stories.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Familiarise yourself with the resources referred to in this lesson.

## Students:

For students to explore the power of imagination and how it has been used by storytellers to capture beliefs and values of sacred stories, select from the following activities:

1. Explore how C.S. Lewis used his imagination to capture important elements of the Jesus story and transformed them to create a new story for the children of his time.
  - Identify the parallels between *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S Lewis and the Christian story about Jesus' life, betrayal, death and resurrection. Identify the parallels between *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe* by C.S Lewis and the Christian story about Jesus' life, betrayal, death and resurrection.
    - Read the one page [summary](#) of the themes of *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*.
    - How has the author used the power of imagination to engage the children of his time to understand themes such as temptation, betrayal, redemption, and the power of good vs evil?
    - Imagine and create a short story or an outline of a story for today's children that would help them to expand their understanding of a concept like betrayal. What characters would you use? How would you portray beliefs about good and evil?
    - Save your story as a word document and share your stories with the class either online on a class LIFE or Moodle or in small groups.

## Topic 3.1: Community stories

### Core Content Area 3: Shared Stories

#### Lesson 3.1.1 Sacred School Stories

In this lesson students will investigate the stories that are sacred to their school.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

- Gather resources for students to use to research sacred school stories.
- Ensure the school community is aware that your students may ask to interview members of the community.

**Students:**

For students to investigate the important stories for their local community, select from the following activities:

1. Research the local community to determine the important stories, significant people and events that make up the community's history.
    - Research the school library and local library to find out information about significant community stories.
      - Record information regarding how the town got its name, Aboriginal or Torres Strait islanders who lived there in the past, how the town or community was settled by European or other ethnic groups, local heroes or stories of heroism, famous people who came from the area, sporting legends etc.
      - Share information with the class and analyse the material found to determine how commonly known the information is. In other words, how important are the people, stories or legacy that has been left today? Have the stories endured or were they only important for the people of the time? Are there any stories to live by in the local community?
    - Create a storytelling about a significant Brisbane event. Create a storytelling about a significant Brisbane event.
      - Choose a significant Brisbane/Queensland event that had a significant impact on the people of the city/state/world. Examples include The Commonwealth Games of 1982, World Expo 88, the floods of 1974 and 2011, winning a State of Origin Rugby League tournament etc. Research the event to find out the basic facts of what happened.
      - Create a story about the event or a person, people or aspect of the event using only four or six photographic images. Use a photo database such as Flickr or Google Images to locate images of or about the event and save the images. Remember, when choosing the images, the story told must have a beginning, a middle and an end. (The story doesn't have to be true but must be connected to the chosen event in some way.) Finish your story with Brisbane/Queensland was forever changed that day because...
      - Create a story board with the images using [BigHugeLabs Mosaic Maker](#) [JT1] or a simple slide show with PowerPoint.
      - Share your story with a partner.
-

### Lesson 3.1.2 Local Heroes and Legends

In this lesson, students will investigate the stories that are important to the local community.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Check with your librarian and the history department in your school for resources about the local community.

**Students:**

For students to investigate the important stories for their local community, select from the following activities:

1. Research the local community to determine the important stories, significant people and events that make up the community's history.
    - Research the school library and local library to find out information about significant community stories.
      - Record information regarding how the town got its name, Aboriginal or Torres Strait islanders who lived there in the past, how the town or community was settled by European or other ethnic groups, local heroes or stories of heroism, famous people who came from the area, sporting legends etc.
      - Share information with the class and analyse the material found to determine how commonly known the information is. In other words, how important are the people, stories or legacy that has been left today? Have the stories endured or were they only important for the people of the time? Are there any stories to live by in the local community?
    - Create a storytelling about a significant Brisbane event.
      - Choose a significant Brisbane/Queensland event that had a significant impact on the people of the city/state/world. (Examples include The Commonwealth Games of 1982, World Expo 88, the floods of 1974 and 2011, winning a State of Origin Rugby League tournament etc.)
      - Research the event to find out the basic facts of what happened?
      - Create a story about the event or a person, people or aspect of the event using only four or six photographic images. Use a photo database such as Flickr or Google Images to locate images of or about the event and save the images. Remember, when choosing the images, the story told must have a beginning, a middle and an end. (The story doesn't have to be true but must be connected to the chosen event in some way.) Finish your story with Brisbane/Queensland was forever changed that day because...
      - Create a story board with the images using [BigHugeLabs Mosaic Maker](#) or a simple slide show with PowerPoint.
      - Share your story with a partner.
- 

### Lesson 3.1.3 The Local Church Story

In this lesson students will explore the important stories/events and people from the local Catholic Church.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Consider organising a visit from a priest or parishioner from the local Catholic Church to speak about important people, stories and events in the Church's history.

**Students:**

For students to explore the important stories from the local Catholic Church, select from the following activities:

1. Investigate local church history.
  - Invite a priest or a known storytelling parishioner/teacher to share stories about local parish history.
  - Construct questions to ask your guest about stories and characters of the local parish. Examples might include how the church began, how it got its name, church events such as fetes, or notorious/colourful members of the community.
2. Explore the theology associated with the church's name.
  - Research the theology associated with the church's name. For example, research the life and work of the saint associated with the church. Check this comprehensive [website](#) for information about saints.
  - Hypothesise whether the saint's life has been a story to live by for the parish community.

## Topic 3.2: Australian Stories

### Core Content Area 3: Shared Stories

#### Lesson 3.2.1 In the Beginning

In this lesson students will investigate sacred stories associated with the creation of Australia and stories sacred to the first Australians.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Familiarise yourself with the resources referred to in this lesson.

**Students:**

For students to investigate sacred stories associated with the creation of Australia and stories sacred to the first Australians, select from the following activities:

1. Explore creation stories from Australian Indigenous people.
  - Analyse the story of the creation of the earth,
    - View the story of the Rainbow Serpent and answer the following questions.
    - How effective was the storytelling?
    - What devices were used to assist the listener make meaning?
    - What are the main ideas presented in the story?
    - What beliefs and points of view were presented in the story?
    - How might this story be a story to live by?
  - Explore how dance was used as a way to tell stories for Australian Indigenous people.
    - View the [short clip](#) that shows songs and dances of the Lardil people of Mornington Island and the Borroloola community. That shows songs and dances of the Lardil people of Mornington Island and the Borroloola community.
    - Speculate why dance might have been used to tell stories.
    - Investigate how dance is being used to help people understand Aboriginal culture. The [Indigenous.gov.au website](#) may provide helpful links to resources. Check out the [Colli Crew](#), a hip hop group from Collarenebri Central School NSW, the Gowrie Boys and the [PI Boyz](#) from Palm Island, as examples of how modern dance and rap are being used to preserve stories for future generations.

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#### Lesson 3.2.2 Legendary tales

In this lesson, students will explore events, stories and people that have become part of sacred Australian stories.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Familiarise yourself with the resources referred to in this lesson, particularly the [Australian War Memorial website](#). This is an excellent resource with many educational activities for students.

**Students:**

For students to explore events, stories and people that have become part of sacred Australian stories, select from the following activities:

1. Explore stories that Australians hold sacred.
  - Explore the celebrations of Anzac Day as a sacred story to Australians.
    - Explore the booklet [Their Spirit Our History](#) found on the Australian War Memorial website.
    - Examine the photograph on page two and read the introduction on page three of the booklet.
    - What thoughts and feelings come to mind when viewing the photograph? Reflect on the sacredness of the ANZAC story to you.
    - Share with a partner.
    - View the enlistment posters from World War II on page thirty-three and complete the activity on that page.
  - Investigate some of the legendary characters who have contributed to stories Australians hold sacred. Investigate some of the legendary characters who have contributed to stories Australians hold sacred.
    - Choose a legendary character of Australian history who inspires you in some way and research their contribution to Australia's story.
    - Present your information in an appropriate way. For example: as a storytelling, photo story or multimodal presentation. Examples of characters to choose might be war heroes, prime ministers, musicians/artists, healers, environmentalists, sports people etc. Include in your presentation why you find this person inspiring.

## Topic 3.3: Stories from the Asia Pacific

### Core Content Area 3: Shared Stories

#### Lesson 3.3.1 Stories from New Zealand

In this lesson students will explore some of the sacred stories of New Zealand.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

- Familiarise yourself with the resources available in your school regarding this topic and those referred to in this lesson.
- Consider watching scenes from the New Zealand film *Whale Rider* as a way to introduce students to sacred stories of New Zealand.

**Students:**

For students to explore some of the sacred stories of New Zealand, select from the following activities:

1. Explore and engage with some of the sacred stories from New Zealand.
  - View the Trailer of the film [Whale Rider](#).
    - Reflect on the content of the story of the Whale Rider and make connections between the film and the knowledge gained throughout this unit. For example: genealogy and sacred stories, the fertile question for this unit, storytelling and the passing on from one generation to the next etc.
  - Engage with the Maori Creation myth: [Ti Ika a Maui and the creation of the North Island](#) or one of the other stories on the Rotorua web page.
    - Read the story either individually or as a class.
    - What does the myth suggest that you believe or consider about creation?
    - Create a story board for each of the main parts of the story.
2. Explore the Maori art of carving (Te Toi Whakairo) as a way of storytelling.
  - Find out about the symbolic carving on Maori Meeting Houses. One source of information can be found on this [website](#).

- Choose one symbol to investigate and read about its meaning. Locate another resource on the web that supports the information given on the first website.
  - Create a Fact Card by either drawing the symbol and recording its meaning, or digitally using an image of the symbol and typing its meaning. [Motivator from BigHugeLabs](#) could be used to do this.
3. Explore the Haka and its part in New Zealand culture.
- Explore the history of the Haka and its connections to New Zealand Rugby.
    - View this [short film](#) about the Haka and the history of its association with New Zealand Rugby.

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### Lesson 3.3.2 Sacred stories of Bali

In this lesson students will explore how sacred Balinese stories are traditionally told.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

- Familiarise yourself with the resources referred to in this lesson.
- Explore resources available in the school community on this topic (Indonesian Teacher for example).

**Students:**

For students to explore some of the ways sacred Balinese stories are told, select from the following activities:

1. Explore Balinese dance as a way of storytelling.
  - Investigate the connection between religion, art, music and dance in Balinese dance.
    - View the [short movie clip](#) that explains many of the elements of Balinese dance.
    - Research one or more of the dances mentioned in the clip, for example the Legong or Topeng. Research the elements of the dance and the significance of the masks, movements and storytelling of the dance. Share information with the class. One website that provides some information about the dances and Balinese religion is [Wikipedia](#). Scroll down the page to the section on Dance and Drama.
2. Explore Wayang Kulit (Shadow Puppet), one of the great storytelling traditions of the Balinese.
  - Read about the tradition of Shadow Puppet storytelling in Bali and other parts of Indonesia.
    - View the short movie clip about [Balinese Shadow Puppets](#).
    - What is the purpose of a shadow play? How is Balinese spirituality linked with shadow puppet storytelling?

### Deepening Understanding: *Dreaming Stories*

In this lesson students will further explore the sacred dreaming stories of Australian Indigenous people.

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

Explore the Dreaming Stories and choose activities suitable for your students.

**Students:**

For students to further explore the sacred Dreaming stories of Australian Indigenous people, select from the following activities:

1. Explore Dreaming stories of the Australian Indigenous people.
  - A) Explore Dreaming stories.
    - Complete activities as directed by your teacher.
    - Reflect on how the Dreaming stories represent sacred stories for Australian Indigenous people.



## Elective Unit: *Sacred Stories*

Fertile Question: *Why do I need a story to live by?*

**Teachers:** *Before you start!*

The assessment technique for this elective unit utilises the **Project Technique** which is detailed in the [RAE Syllabus](#) (see Section 4.4.1, p.34)

**Students:** *Getting Started!*

Create a story telling experience that represents a story that you live by, a story that is sacred to you and a story that is based on a Gospel story. Your story may use any, or a combination of, the following to enhance the telling of Gospel story: an existing story, an original story, artefacts/symbols, a piece of music or art, a scene or line from a movie or a play.

**Task:** You are to develop a project that involves developing a story and performing the story to a chosen audience. You are to choose a Gospel story and develop a story based on that text that you will present to a Year 4 class at a local primary school. Your story needs to give consideration to the audience and the message of the story. Your Project will represent a considered response to the Fertile Question: *Why do I need a story to live by?*

**Suggested process:** Reflect on the variety of stories that you have encountered during this unit. Your response will consider your response to the Fertile Question: *Why do I need a story to live by?*

### Product Component:

- Choose a theme that reflects a story that you try to live by. Choose a theme that reflects a story that you try to live by.
- Collect / create illustrations to support the chosen theme or aspects of the story. These could include songs, movie clips, newspaper articles, cartoons, drawings, photographs or objects.
- Select a Gospel story to base your story upon.
- Research your Gospel story by examining the Worlds of the Text.
- Write your story and connect your support material to your story.

### Performance Component

- Choose a method by which you will tell your story.
- Practise telling your story frequently.
- Tell your story – using the aids that you have developed to the Year 4 class.

### Response type:

It is suggested that the response types of this Project include a Product component and a Performance component. The Product component will be evidenced by an illustrated story that has been developed from a Gospel story; the Performance component will be evidenced by a telling of the story to a specific audience – in this instance a Year 4 class. Students will be responding to the Fertile Question: *Why do I need a story to live by?*

Assessment conditions	Semesters 1-2	Semesters 3-4
Product component	Story development	Story development

Performance component	The length of the performance will depend on the length of the story	The length of the performance will depend on the length of the story – longer for Year 12
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### Syllabus considerations:

This project is designed to provide students with an opportunity to answer the fertile question: Why do I need a story to live by? This will allow students to demonstrate the three exit dimensions found in section 4.6 of the *Religion and Ethics Subject Area Syllabus 2014*:

#### Knowing and understanding:

- In this Dimension students will be able to show that they understand sacred texts and their purpose and can speak about them using appropriate language. They will be able to show how their chosen text touches various aspects of life and be able to explore differences in the way an audience understands the story.

#### Applying and examining:

- In this Dimension students will be able to demonstrate their ability to organise their materials. They will be able to analyse a variety of different opinions related to sacred texts and they will be able to communicate this understanding.

#### Producing and evaluating:

- In this Dimension students will inquire about a specific sacred in a manner that allows them to communicate the story to a particular audience effectively.

In completing this assessment technique at least two core perspectives must be covered within the project (see Section 3.3 Core, p.9). This example covers all three perspectives: the **personal** perspective, the **relational** perspective and the **spiritual** perspective.

In responding to this technique schools may wish to consider student responses that are not solely written. This can disadvantage students who know their work but have difficulty expressing it in writing. Students can be given a choice of response type.

Remember, schools must submit your own study plan for approval to QCAA.

## Useful Resources

### Core Content 1: My Stories

### Core Content 2: The Big Stories

#### Lesson 1.1.1

Reasons for telling stories (Bausch, W., 1988) Storytelling: Imagination and Faith. Connecticut: Twenty-Third Publications.)

Stories:

- provoke curiosity and compel repetition
- unite us in a holistic way to nature, our common stuff of existence

- are a bridge to one's culture, one's roots
- bind us to all of humankind, to the universal human family (every story is our story)
- help us to remember
- use a special language
- restore the original power of the word
- provide escape
- evoke in us right brained imagination, tenderness and therefore wholeness
- promote healing
- provide a basis for hope and morality
- are a basis for religious ministry.

### Lesson 1.2.1

[TimeToast](#) is an online tool for creating timelines. It is free to register and allows you to illustrate timelines with images and video.

[Animoto](#) is a tool for turning photographs into photostories using digital images, music and text. It is free to register with an email and password.

### Lesson 1.2.2

[BigHugeLabs](#) is a suite of online tools for managing and manipulating digital photographs . It is free to use, and final projects can be printed or saved. It is most efficient when using personal stored images but if using with Flickr or Google images, be sure to choose images that have a high resolution, or the results can be blurry.

### Lesson 2.2.3

#### Ruth and Naomi

The book of Ruth in the Hebrew Scriptures is one of the shortest stories presented in the Torah and is one of only a few books that centres on the life of women in the late centuries BCE. The first part of the story of Ruth and Naomi, set in the time of the Judges, presents an image of two women who leave the country they have known and travel to a distant land where they will be seen as foreigners. Naomi, Ruth's mother-in-law, tries to persuade Ruth to stay with her family in the land in which she was born, but Ruth eloquently states her argument for staying with Naomi:

Do not press me to leave you  
or to turn back from following you!  
Where you go, I will go;  
where you lodge, I will lodge;  
your people shall be my people,  
and your God my God  
where you die, I will die –  
there will I be buried.  
May the Lord do thus and so to me,  
and more as well,  
if even death parts me from you.

Naomi is bitter on returning to her homeland, as she feels that God has abandoned her and her family. Ruth though, supports Naomi by working in the fields of Boaz, a kinsman of Naomi, and she finds favour through her hard work. Eventually Naomi instructs Ruth on how to behave towards Boaz in order to secure his support for them legally, and Ruth does as Naomi suggests . Boaz then goes through the particular rituals related to the bequeathing of Naomi's land and also the claim to Ruth. Naomi then rejoices that the Lord has blessed them both.

### Lesson 2.3.2

- The Parable of The Prodigal Son: Luke 15:11-32
- The Parable of The Mustard Seed Matthew: 13:31-32, Mark 4:30-32, Luke 13:18-19

- The Rich Man and Lazarus: Luke 16:19-31
- The Master and the Servant: Luke 17:7-10
- The Parable of the Widow and the Judge: Luke 18:1-8
- The Unmerciful Servant: Matthew 18:23-35
- The Rich Fool: Luke 12:16-21
- The Faithful Servant: Luke 12:35-48
- The Parable of The Barren Fig Tree: Luke 13:6-9
- The Guests: Luke 14:7-15
- The Parable of The Wedding Feast: Matthew 22:1-14, Luke 14:16-24
- Lost Money: Luke 15:8-10
- The Parable of The Lost Sheep: Matthew 18:12-14, Luke 15:1-7

## THE FOUNT OF EVERYTHING JUST AND RIGHT? THE TEN COMMANDMENTS AS A SOURCE OF AMERICAN LAW

*Steven K. Green* <sup>†</sup>

One of the more beautiful and impressive structures in Washington, D.C., is the neo-classical Supreme Court building, located just east of the Capitol. Upon entering the marble columned courtroom, a hallowed place where notions of law and justice have been defined for more than sixty years, one's eyes are inevitably drawn to the frieze that borders the ceiling some fifty feet above. Encircling the courtroom from a lofty perch, as if symbolizing a heavenly host, are the carved images of eighteen great law-givers, ranging from Hammurabi and Justinian to Blackstone. In the very center of the relief, high over the seat of the Chief Justice, is a symbolic figure balancing a rounded tablet containing ten Roman numerals. The image is as unmistakable as the message it portrays: the Ten Commandments, a religious document central to Jewish and Christian faiths, is being offered as a primary source of American law.<sup>1</sup>

It is axiomatic that many of the principles contained in the Ten Commandments are fundamental to the Western legal tradition. Prohibitions on murder, theft, and perjury are found in nearly every legal code. Notions of respect for one's parents and admonitions against adultery are also implicit, if not explicit, in the quasi-legal realm of normative rules that order many societies. Few people, if any, would dispute that the Ten Commandments—and its parallels from other ancient cultures—as well as other directives contained in the Pentateuch of the Hebrew and Christian Scriptures, inform our notions of right and wrong and, as such, have influenced the development of Western law of which the American legal system is part.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>†</sup> JD, University of Texas School of Law; MA, PhD, University of North Carolina. By way of disclosure, I have participated as counsel or amicus in several Ten Commandments cases. My thanks to Prof. Robert S. Alley who read an earlier draft of this article.

1. *Lawgivers*, Wash Post, March 11, 1998, at H1, H4-5.

2. See Harold J. Berman, *Law and Logos*, 44 DePaul L Rev 143, 159-60 (1994); Stephen



