

# Religion and Ethics

Elective 6: Meaning and Purpose

Supporting Resources for  
the QCAA Applied Syllabus -  
Religion and Ethics

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

For all of time, human beings have pondered the meaning of their existence. All religions in some way or other, attempt to explain concepts of origins, purpose and destiny; Who am I? Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? In this unit, students will have the opportunity to explore these questions for themselves by examining how religion has an interplay with philosophy and science.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dZQ-VfAOUQ&feature=emb\\_title](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5dZQ-VfAOUQ&feature=emb_title)

## Topic 1.1: The search for meaning and the spiritual quest

### Core Content Area 1: Where do we come from?

#### Lesson 1.1.1 Making sense of Who I Am

In this lesson students will explore ideas and questions about what constitutes a meaningful existence.

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

- Elements from the elective topics Exploring the meaning of life and World religions have been included in this unit.

#### Students

For students to explore ideas and questions about what constitutes a meaningful existence, select from the following activities:

1. Explore ideas and questions about the big questions of life and the search for meaning.
  - Explore the unit topic: Origins purpose and destiny and the fertile question for the unit: Is my existence part of a bigger plan?
    - View the [introductory movie clip](#), *The Meaning of Life*, on YouTube. Reflect on and discuss the images and the questions used in the film including the fertile question for the unit: *Is my existence a part of a bigger plan?*
      - What other questions come to mind?
      - What images would you have included?
      - Why do you think this style of film technique was used for this topic?
    - Create a list of questions that the class has about origins, purpose, destiny, free will, existence, non-existence, plans, the meaning of life and the search for meaning. Record the questions using a collaborative tool such as OneNote so that the list can be retained to add to and refer back to throughout the unit.
2. Explore ways that humans have searched for meaning in life.
  - Examine a variety of philosophical views about the meaning of life.
    - View the short YouTube clip for an interesting response to the big question: What is the meaning of life? Discuss reactions to the clip.
    - Understanding life's meaning can be a life-long quest. At every stage as new understandings are gained, new mysteries arise. Philosophers and theologians have for centuries attempted to analyse and point towards answers to life's big questions. The following descriptions represent an attempt to define four widely recognised belief positions about life and its meaning:
      - Supernaturalism: God exists. God is necessary and sufficient for guaranteeing a meaningful life.
      - Objective naturalism: a meaningful life is possible, but it is not necessary for God or a supernatural element to exist. Meaning comes from certain worthwhile valuable conditions that are entirely natural and independent of the mind, that confer meaning for anyone whether believed to be meaningful by the individual or not. In other words, some things are intrinsically meaningful whether you believe them to be or not and some things are not meaningful also regardless of whether you believe it or not.
      - Subjective naturalism: a meaningful life is possible. God or the supernatural are not necessary for a meaningful life. What is meaningful may vary from person to person

and is often a function of getting what one strongly wants or by accomplishing what one believes to be extremely important.

- Pessimistic naturalism (nihilism): a meaningful life is not possible because nothing has any value. Nothing we do matters or has any meaning.
- Find a meme or a cartoon that expresses one of the above positions. Share your selection with the class of how the image and text reflect the chosen position. Some examples are given in **Useful Resources**.

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## Topic 1.1: The search for meaning and the spiritual quest

### Core Content Area 1: Where do we come from?

#### Lesson 1.1.2 The search for meaning

In this lesson students will explore concepts of mystery, tragedy, awe, wonder and hope as they relate to a human search for meaning.

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

- Read the **Teacher Background** on the search for meaning.

#### Students

For students to explore concepts of mystery, tragedy, awe, wonder and hope, select from the following activities:

1. Explore events and experiences that cause people to question why.
  - Investigate ways in which people deal with difficult or tragic events.
    - Choose a recent event that was difficult to explain or understand. Examples might include the Cinema massacre at a Batman movie in 2012, mass killings in Syria in 2012 by the Syrian government, the sudden death of a friend or family member, Australian soldiers killed in war.
    - Research the event and describe briefly what happened, people's reactions, and actions taken by people as they tried to make sense of the event. Record the information in a retrieval chart. See Useful Resources.
    - Share findings with the class and discuss. Why do you think that people quickly respond by performing ritualistic actions at the site of a tragic event such as laying flowers or lighting candles?
    - View the [Spirituality and ritual movie clip](#) and answer the following questions. How does the movie position the viewer to link spirituality and ritual with making sense of life? How might a person's spirituality affect the way they speak about the meaning of life?
  - Share understandings about mystery, beauty, awe and love.
    - Locate 20 images that represent for you a concept of beauty, mystery, wonder, hope, awe, imagination or love.
    - Create a pecha kucha style presentation using one of the [presentation products](#) available and the twenty images you have located. Add voice or text depending on the product chosen. (Pecha kucha is a presentation style in which twenty slides are shown for twenty seconds each. Words or text are minimised to allow the image time to speak for itself. Select images that speak about mystery beauty, wonder etc.).
    - Share the presentations throughout the course of the unit allowing a short time for reflection at the end.
  - Reflect on words by Victor Frankl from his book *Man's Search for Meaning*, written after his survival from concentration camps in World War II. "For the meaning of life differs from 'person' to 'person', from day to day and from hour to hour. What matters, therefore, is not the meaning of life in general but rather the specific meaning of a person's life at a given moment."
    - Conclude this lesson by sharing with the class your favourite life saying or experience of a film, song or book that transformed your thinking about life and its meaning.

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## Topic 1.1: The search for meaning and the spiritual quest

### Core Content Area 1: Where do we come from?

#### Lesson 1.1.3 Tools for the journey

In this lesson, students will explore and experience some of the tools humans use and have used to search for or discern meaning in their lives.

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

- Consider setting up a contemplative atmosphere with candles and music for the contemplative experiences in this lesson.
- Consider viewing the Laurence Freeman [movie clip about Christian meditation](#).

#### Students

For students to explore and experience some of the tool's humans use and have used to search for or discern meaning, select from the following activities:

1. Participate in and evaluate a variety of contemplative experiences.
  - Participate in an experience of Christian meditation.
    - Prepare to participate in an experience of mediation by viewing either the [movie clip about meditation](#) or by listening to [Be Still and Know by Steve Curtis Chapman](#).
    - Sit down. Sit still and upright. Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert. Silently, interiorly, begin to say a single word. The prayer phrase, Ma-ra-na-tha is a suggestion. Listen to it as you say it, gently but continuously. Do not think or imagine anything spiritual or otherwise. If thoughts and images come, these are distractions at the time of meditation, so keep returning to simply saying the word. Ideally this type of meditation should continue for twenty to thirty minutes. Begin with 5-10 minutes.
    - Reflect on the practice afterwards, sharing thoughts with a partner about how regular stillness and meditation might assist with living a good and meaningful life.
  - Complete a practise of Dadirri which is a practice in stillness and deep listening, a spiritual gift from the Indigenous peoples of Australia.
    - Access the lesson on Dadirri in the Spirituality and Ritual unit and complete an experience of Dadirri. Why might deep listening be helpful in a time of meaning making?
2. Explore other methods of searching and seeking meaning.
  - Investigate one of the method of seeking meaning practised throughout history by human beings.
    - Choose one of the following to investigate further how the practice assists participants: prayer, yoga, spiritual quests/journey, pilgrimage, astrology, tarot etc. Report back to the class about the following: a description of the practice, the purpose of the practice, the popularity and demographic of the practice.
    - Create an interactive advertising poster promoting the chosen practice. [Glogster](#) or [BigHugeLabs Magazine Cover](#) are two possible tools.

## Topic 1.2: Life, the Universe and Everything

### Core Content Area 1: Where do we come from?

#### Lesson 1.2.1 In God's Image

In this lesson students will investigate Christian teachings about the origins of the universe.

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

- Read the **Teacher Background** on Origins. Be prepared for very diverse views on this topic. Be clear about the Catholic Christian teaching.
- Consider setting up a [Typewith.me](https://typewith.me) pad for students to share ideas from this lesson.

## Students

For students to investigate Christian teachings about the origins of the universe, select from the following activities:

1. Investigate different beliefs about the origins of the universe.
  - Explore the variety of Christian understandings about the origins of the universe in the class.
    - Contribute as many ideas about the origins of the universe as you have heard of (not necessarily what you believe) either in a discussion or on a Typewith.me pad. Distinguish between ideas about origins of the universe, origins of life, and origins of human life.
    - Discuss as a class the various ideas and express your opinion by labelling each idea as somewhat possible, probable, somewhat unlikely, impossible. (This could be done on the Typewith.me pad. Remember that you are simply stating an opinion and that each person is entitled to do so. (For a general summary of the differing views [read this article](#)) or check the briefer summary table in **Useful Resources**.
  - Examine the Abrahamic religious teachings about the origins of the universe.
    - Read the following Catholic teachings about origins and create a brief credo statement that outlines your own beliefs about the creation of the earth and life on earth.
      - God is the source of all existence.
      - God is revealed in the person of Jesus and through all of creation.
      - God created the human person in the image of God; as body animated by a spiritual soul.
      - God is present in the whole process of the creation of the universe and the evolution of all forms of life including humans as described by the sciences, working through the laws of nature, respecting the integrity of natural processes over immense lengths of time.
    - Research in pairs, the teachings about creation from Islam and from Judaism. Framing questions could include: What do Muslims/Jews believe about evolution? What do Muslims/Jews believe about the creation of the earth? etc. Present your findings using [Voki](#).

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## Topic 1.2: Life, the Universe and Everything

### Core Content Area 1: Where do we come from?

#### Lesson 1.2.2 Dreaming

In this lesson students will explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spiritualities and beliefs about origins.

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

- Consider inviting a local elder to speak to students about Aboriginal or Torres Strait spiritualities.
- Read the **Teacher Background** about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander spiritualities.

## Students

For students to explore Aboriginal and Torres Strait spiritualities and beliefs about origins, select from the following activities:

1. Australian Indigenous people describe their origins as coming from their ancestor spirits and particular spirit beings of their family groups which are unique to the area to which they belong. Note that the term Dreaming is not an Indigenous word and that the use of one word does not reflect the diversity of Aboriginal groups .
    - Access and explore the [Indigenous Australia Website](#) to read stories of Dreaming from different areas of Australia.
      - Read the [Dreaming](#) stories from the website.
      - Choose one of the creation stories from one area of Australia and create an artwork to illustrate the story. You might like to choose a web tool from the BCE [webpage](#), use [ToonDoo](#) or work on a group drawing using [FlockDraw](#).
    - Read the story about the [Rainbow Serpent](#) as a beautiful example of a creation story.
      - Share with a partner how you think this story illustrates that group's relationship with the land and their spirit being.
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## Topic 1.2: Life, the Universe and Everything

### Core Content Area 1: Where do we come from?

#### Lesson 1.2.3 No beginning and No End

In this lesson students will explore the Hindu and Buddhist teachings about creation and origins.

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

- Read the **Teacher Background** about Hindu and Buddhist teachings about creation and origins
- Note that a lesson dedicated to the Samsara or Wheel of Life can be found in Core Content Area Two.

#### Students

For students to explore the Hindu and Buddhist teachings about creation, select from the following activities:

1. Explore Hindu beliefs about creation.
  - Research Hindu concepts about creation.
    - Form groups of four and allocate one or more of the following Hindu concepts to each member to locate and record information about Creation, Atman, Reincarnation, Samsara and Moksha. The heart of [Hinduism website](#) is one good source of information. You might like to set up a [Typewith.me](#) pad so that you can share your information in real time in one collaborative space. See Useful Resources if you are unsure how to do this.
    - Share information with each other to complete a retrieval chart for all of the concepts.
    - View and analyse the short film [Becoming me: a story of creation](#) and as you are viewing, identify when the concept that you researched is illustrated in either word or image. Share your understandings about how the film depicted the concept that you researched. (You might like to watch the film again after the discussion so that you can take in the overall story.)
    - Discuss together the following: To what extent does the film illustrate your understanding of the researched Hindu concepts? How might a Hindu who holds the beliefs about the origins of human beings as depicted in the film see their existence as a part of a bigger plan?
2. Explore Buddhist beliefs about the creation of the universe.
  - Access the BBC religion page about [the Buddhist Universe](#).
    - Use the page to answer any questions you have about Buddhist teachings about the universe, life, reincarnation, suffering and human existence.

## Topic 1.3: The human quest for understanding

### Core Content Area 1: Where do we come from?

#### Lesson 1.3.1 The Ancients Making Sense

In this lesson students will explore ancient cosmology to further understandings about the creation stories in the book of Genesis.

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

- Read the **Teacher Background** about Creation. Ensure that students understand the purpose of the Creation myths in Genesis as the teaching and remembering of deep theological truths about God as creator. They are not meant to be read as historical, chronological or scientific fact.
- Read the article about ancient cosmology and its links to human understanding about universe.

#### Students

For students to explore ancient cosmology to further understandings about the creation stories in the book of Genesis, select from the following activities:

1. Explore the links between ancient cosmology, origin myths and science.
    - Investigate ancient understandings about cosmology.
      - Locate definitions for the following terms: cosmology, myth.
      - View a resource about the link between the structure of the pyramids of Egypt and the stars. One example is [The Great Pyramids - gateway to the stars](#). (46:40 in total but the first ten minutes provides good stimulus for discussion). How does the construction of the pyramids relate to the ancient Egyptian beliefs about the universe, creation and the afterlife?
    - Explore the ways in which the creation stories in Genesis represent the ancient cosmology of the Hebrews.
      - Examine the infogram of the ancient Hebrew cosmology in Useful Resources. Derive an understanding of the Ancient Hebrew concept of firmament. (One way is to search The King James version of Genesis 1 through [Bible Gateway](#).)
      - How might the Hebrew world view of the cosmos affect their understandings about the earth, heaven and their origins?
    - Examine the Genesis creation stories in light of the functions of origin myths.
      - Consider the following: A literal interpretation of the stories of creation has been used variously over history to justify male domination over women, human domination over the earth and the rejection of the scientific geological timescale.
      - Reflect on the following contemporary statements from Australian theologian Denis Edwards about the Genesis creation stories. He states: The ancient authors of the two accounts of creation in the book of Genesis like so many other authors of the ancient world, assumed a completely different cosmology from the contemporary scientific one that Christians learn from today.
      - The two accounts (of creation in Genesis 1 and 2) seem to be a construct aimed at teaching and remembering deep theological truths. Humans are made in the image of God as creatures capable of interpersonal love and called into personal relationship with the living God. They are called to work with and care for God's creation as God does.
      - Using your own knowledge, the contemporary theological statements above, and knowledge about the cosmology of the ancient Hebrews, complete the table in **Useful Resources** to demonstrate how the Genesis stories function as sacred stories for contemporary Catholic Christians.
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## Topic 1.3: The human quest for understanding

### Core Content Area 1: Where do we come from?

#### Lesson 1.3.2 Universal Origins

In this lesson students will explore the human quest to understand the origins of the universe.

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

- Read the **Teacher Background** on Christianity in the section on Origins.
- Consider setting up a Typewith.me pad for students to share and answer questions.

#### Students

For students to explore the human quest to understand the origins of the universe, select from the following activities:

1. Investigate the human quest to understand the place of human beings in the universe. People have searched the night sky for thousands of years to answer the question What is life? Throughout history, the patterns made by stars, planets, comets and asteroids have traced our origins, destinies and futures. The night sky has indicated the mood of the gods and provided a vast storybook for people around the world. The desire to know, to understand, and to search beyond the confines of our planet is part of what makes us human. From the time humans first stood upright, they have gazed at the stars and wondered about the place of humanity in the grand scheme of things.
    - Explore the history and nature of the human quest to understand the origins of the universe.
      - View the [360 degree panorama shot of Mars](#) taken by the Curiosity. Share reactions with a partner.
      - Compile a list of questions that you have about space and enter them onto a Type with me pad.
      - Explore the [NASA website](#) to search for answers to the questions posed by the class. Post contributions of answers or further questions to the Typewith.me pad.
      - Complete a short poem, piece of prose or small artwork that represents your beliefs or understandings about the place of human beings in the universe.
    - Explore interactions between the Catholic Church and science over time.
      - Access the article [How the Church aided "heretical" astronomy](#) and complete the following activities.
      - Choose an issue that the article raises about the Church and the pursuit of knowledge to research further. Examples include: the arrest of Galileo, the structure of cathedrals as solar observatories, the Gregorian calendar, Pope John Paul II's apology for the Church's wrongful arrest of Galileo, Vatican Scientists etc.
      - Create at least three questions that you will seek the answers to.
      - Locate three resources including one image to assist you to answer your questions.
      - Use the image to create a fun fact poster with the title: It might surprise you to know that ... and complete the text with information about your issue.
      - Reflect on the following: Why have thinkers, visionaries, and others with challenging new ways and ideas that bring into question the status quo or deeply held beliefs and positions been (and continue to be) persecuted by institutions such as religions and political regimes? Discuss.
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## Topic 1.3: The human quest for understanding

### Core Content Area 1: Where do we come from?

#### Lesson 1.3.3 Human Origins and Evolution

In this lesson students will explore contemporary scientific theory about the origins of life.

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

1. Familiarise yourself with the resource pack *To Mars and beyond: search for the origins of life* to determine which activities might be suitable for your class.
2. For further Teacher Background, read *Jesus and the natural world* by Australian theologian Denis Edwards, available from ResourceLink.

#### Students

For students to explore contemporary scientific theory about the origins of life, select from the following activities:

1. Explore the mystery of the diversity of life on earth.
  - Examine the scientific evidence that supports the theory of evolution.
    - Listen to the opening theme tune for the [Big Bang Theory](#). Discuss with a partner the message of the clip.
    - Access the resource pack ["To Mars and beyond: search for the origins of life"](#) and read pages 9-10 about the scientific teaching about the origins of life on earth. (You might like to copy and paste the text into WordSift and use the dictionary and thesaurus functions to assist with understanding.) Complete the first activity on page ten about the [Geological Time scale](#).
  - Explore understandings of human evolution.
    - View the [evolution of Homer](#). Compare your knowledge of evolution with this version.
    - View this short clip that describes the environmental changes that favoured the development of modern humans.
    - Research the internet to determine the Catholic Church's position on the theory of evolution of life on earth. One avenue of research might be to compare the views of two past Popes, Pius XII and John Paul II.
    - Share findings as a discussion or in a collaborative space such as Typewith.me or Stixy.
  - Explore the diversity of life on earth.
    - View the movie clip of the [Beauty of Nature](#).
    - Imagine you have to write a promotional advertisement for the short film, *Beauty of Nature*. Create a one sentence promotion tag for each of the following audiences: a group of atheists, a group of fundamentalist creationists, a biology club and an environmental protection group. This could be done individually or in groups.)

#### Deepening Understanding: *Pilgrimage*

In this lesson students will explore the place of pilgrimage in the lives of religious adherents.

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

- Familiarise yourself with the resources referred to in this lesson.

#### Students

For students to explore the place of pilgrimage in the lives of religious adherents and their search for meaning, select from the following activities:

In religion and spirituality, a pilgrimage is a long journey or search of great moral significance. Sometimes, it is a journey to a sacred place or shrine of importance to a person's beliefs and faith. Members of every major religion participate in pilgrimages. A person who makes such a journey is called a pilgrim. Zanzig and others identify four stages of the pilgrimage: restlessness or yearning, separation or journey, awakening or transformation and response or return.

1. Explore various experiences of pilgrimage.
  - Explore the importance of the Haj in the life of a Muslim.
    - View this short [movie clip](#) of the pilgrimage to Mecca. Write down any questions which you have.
    - Search for answers to the questions using a resource such as the [BBC religion website](#). Share interesting facts with a partner.
  - Explore examples of pilgrimage that have arisen from the Christian tradition.
    - Read a story of Jesus' journey and return. Examples include Matthew 4, Luke 4:1-20, Mark 1:12-14. Identify the stages of pilgrimage in the story. Share with a partner.
    - View the trailer of the movie [The Way](#) which depicts one man's experience of a Camino Santiago pilgrimage as he tries to understand his son better. Identify the stages of pilgrimage as you are viewing.
    - Why might a physical challenge be a part of a pilgrimage? Discuss.
  - Plan a pilgrimage.
    - People often journey to the spiritual heart of Australia, the Land of the Holy Spirit, where they experience a deep sense of ecological conversion. Imagine yourself as one such pilgrim. Research trips to the Red Centre from where you live and create a complete travel itinerary including real time costs and time spent.
2. Useful Websites:
  - [Flight Centre](#)
  - [One Pilgrim's Experience](#)

### Extending Knowledge: *I think therefore I am. Is that it?*

In this lesson students will explore various aspects of humanity and what it means to be human.

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

1. Set up a [Typewithme](#) page for students to add their views to the discussion.
2. Allow enough time to download the YouTube clips referred to in this lesson. Buffering times vary from computer to computer.

### Students

For students to explore aspects of humanity and what it means to be human, complete the following activities:

1. Rene Descartes was a sixteenth century French philosopher who coined the famous phrase "I think therefore I am". He has frequently been labelled as having a dualistic view of life promoting one good above another. For example, Descartes' separates the mind and body, rationality and emotion.
  - Critique the phrase from Descartes: I think therefore I am. Is thinking the one thing, the most important thing that makes us exist as human beings? Will thinking alone secure the future of the human race and the earth?
    - Discuss the statement with a partner.
    - Post your thoughts about the question to a OneNote page. Read the posts of others and comment or ask questions to clarify your thinking.
  - Explore other aspects of being human.
    - View the short movie clip [Caring makes us human](#). What does this story contribute to the discussion about what makes us human?
    - View the short [movie clip](#) about the human desire to be taken seriously. In Australian sociologist Hugh Mackay's book *What makes us tick?*, he lists ten desires that drive the choices that human's make: The desire to be taken seriously, to have a place, for something to believe

in, to connect, to be useful, to belong, for more, to have control, for something to happen and for love. He says they are not independent of each other, good or bad, they just exist and cause our decision making sometimes to not be as life giving as it should be. Can you relate to these desires? Can you think of a time when you felt that you were not taken seriously? How did you react? How do you respond to this summary of humanity? Is there anything missing? Add thoughts to the collaborative space.

- Create your own version of Descartes' phrase.

## Topic 2.1: Being the Best You Can

### Core Content Area 2: Why are we here?

#### Lesson 2.1.1 Living a life of purpose

In this lesson students will explore a Christian view of what it means to live a life of purpose and being the best, you can be.

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

- Read the **Teacher Background** about purpose and the Christian search for meaning.
- Consider setting up a OneNote page for collaboration.

#### Students

For students to explore a Christian view of what it means to live a life of purpose, select from the following activities:

1. Explore a Christian view of a purposeful life.
  - Share ideas about purpose and a purposeful life.
    - View the brief clip about revelation from the Monty Python film [The Holy Grail](#) (1min 9sec) and answer the following questions. How is God portrayed in the clip? The film declares the quest for the Grail to be Arthur's purpose, Does this suggest that before that point Arthur was living a life without purpose?
    - Create a [Wordle](#) with as many words, phrases, and sentences as you can that describe or give meaning for the word 'purpose'. Share with the class.
    - Recall significant times in your life so far when you have felt called or driven with a clear purpose and intention to do a particular thing. Compare how you felt in those times with times when you have been directed to do something and you didn't feel there was a clear purpose. How important is it therefore to identify the reasons or purpose for your actions? Discuss.
  - Explore the Christian concept of living life to the full and being the best, you can be.
    - View the short film [The Butterfly Circus](#) (20min). Discuss the following with a partner: What do you think is the message of the film? How did a sense of purpose change the lives of the circus performers? What was it that had to change in order for Wil to begin to reach his full potential? Are there negative things that you believe about yourself that might be stopping you from reaching your full potential? What is the significance of the butterfly in the film?
    - Research the life of [Nick Vujicic](#), the man who plays the role of Wil in the Butterfly Circus. Share one of his messages about potential, faith or purpose by [creating a motivational poster](#).
    - Conclude this lesson with a short time of meditation or reflection on your own sense of purpose. Are you making decisions at the moment about school, relationships, work, sport, drinking alcohol etc? Or are you just letting things happen? What is one thing you could change today that could energise your life and might help you live your life with more purpose?

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## Topic 2.1: Being the Best You Can

### Core Content Area 2: Why are we here?

#### Lesson 2.1.2 Buddhism and the Wheel of Life

In this lesson students will explore the Buddhist beliefs about the purpose of life by creating a class sized Wheel of Life (Bhavacakra).

Teachers: Before you start!

- Read the **Teacher Background** on Buddhism and purpose.
- Decide how the class will complete the class Bhavacakra. Perhaps use a large sheet of butcher's paper and draw a large circle divided into the segments indicated in **Useful Resources**.

Students

For students to explore Buddhist beliefs about the purpose of life, select from the following activities:

1. Create a class representation of the Wheel of Life.
  - Familiarise yourself with the realms of the Buddhist universe.
    - Read the following introduction: The great tragedy of existence, from a Buddhist point of view, is that it is both endless and subject to impermanence, suffering and uncertainty. These three are called the tilakhana or three signs of existence. Existence is endless because individuals are reincarnated over and over again, experiencing suffering throughout many lives. It is impermanent because no state, good or bad, lasts forever. Our mistaken belief that things can last is a chief cause of suffering. It is uncertain because when we examine our experience, no knower can be defined, and no enduring essence of experience can be located. Only achieving liberation, or nirvana, can free a being from the cycle of life, death and rebirth.
    - Examine carefully the Bhavacakra or Buddhist Wheel of Life, noting carefully the various twenty-two parts described: the centre (roots of all evil); the inner rim composed of two parts, the dark path and the light path; the six symbolic and transitory worlds; and the outer rim of the twelve interdependent causes and their effects, all being held by the monster of impermanence (Yama).
    - Create a class Bhavacakra by dividing the class so that one or two people have responsibility for each of the twenty-two parts described. Each person then researches his or her part or parts making sure they are able to describe the meaning of their section of the wheel. Locate or create images that represent their understanding of that section. The size of the wheel will need to be set beforehand perhaps by drawing a template onto a large piece of butcher's paper or similar.
    - Construct the Bhavacakra wheel beginning with the images for the centre. It doesn't matter if they have been drawn or printed. Glue them onto the group circle. Explain why the image or images have been chosen. Continue with the inner rim of the dark and light paths, followed by the six realms or worlds etc.
    - Reflect on the activity and the structure of the Buddhist Wheel of life. What does it suggest to you about a Buddhist perspective of the purpose of existence? Does it suggest some kind of plan for human existence? Share with a partner.

## Topic 2.1: Being the Best You Can

### Core Content Area 2: Why are we here?

#### Lesson 2.1.3 Judaism and Living a Good Life

In this lesson students will examine a Jewish perspective about the purpose of life.

Teachers: Before you start!

- Read the **Teacher Background** regarding Jewish beliefs about life's purpose.
- Consider organising a visit to the Brisbane Synagogue. Contact details [here](#).

Students

For students to investigate a Jewish perspective on the purpose of life, select from the following activities:

1. Explore Jewish teachings about leading a purposeful life.
  - Explore one point of view about living a good life as a Jewish person from a Jewish boy band called the Maccabeats.
    - **Useful Resources** as you view attentively the song [The Book of good life by the Maccabeats](#). Create a list of actions that the song illustrates to the viewer about a good life for an observant Jew. Compare your list with a partner.
  - Explore everyday life for observant Jews.
    - Read the brief description of Jewish beliefs outlined on the [BBC religion website](#).
    - Copy and paste the text down to, but not including The Jewish View of God into a [Wordle](#).
    - Choose one aspect of Jewish beliefs about living a holy life from the Wordle that you would like to explore further. Examples include relationship, community, holiness, family, acts etc. If you hover over a word and right click the mouse you have the option of removing a word. It is helpful to remove the obvious words like Jews, Jew, Judaism and God to identify important concepts.
    - Access the website of the [Brisbane Synagogue](#) and the Brisbane Hebrew community.
    - Read a Monthly Newsletter from the Rabbi. One example is from [November 2019](#). Find examples, events or activities from the Newsletter that illustrate your chosen aspect.
    - Share findings with a partner. Discuss with a partner your opinion of the effectiveness of these activities as a way of identifying Jewish beliefs about living a life of purpose. Suggest alternative ideas. Share as a class, and if possible and agreeable, increase understanding by completing some alternative activities. One example if you have a Twitter account is to follow @AskARabbiBoston.

## Topic 2.2: The Getting of Wisdom

### Core Content Area 2: Why are we here?

#### Lesson 2.2.1 What the philosophers say

In this lesson students will explore what some philosophers have said about the ultimate purpose of life.

Teachers: *Before you start!*

- Review the resources referred to in this lesson. Please note that the Meme generator may not be suitable if students are easily distracted. See **Useful Resources**.

Students

For students to explore what philosophy has contributed to understanding about the meaning of life, select from the following activities:

1. Philosophy is the study of general and fundamental life questions, such as those connected with reality, existence, knowledge, values, reason, mind and language. Explore the contribution that philosophy has made to understanding what the purpose of life for a human being is.
    - Research philosophical arguments regarding the meaning and purpose of life for a human.
      - Choose one of the following branches of philosophy to investigate: Nicomachean Ethics, Epicureanism, Stoicism, Classical Liberalism, Kantianism, Utilitarianism, Nihilism, Pragmatism, Existentialism, Absurdism, Logical positivism, Postmodernism, Mohism, Confucianism. Work either individually or with a partner to locate information regarding the main ideas about the meaning of life, one key philosopher who held or holds the ideas, one quote from the philosopher and the major criticism of the philosophy. One article to start with is [here](#).
      - Create a [Fakebook](#) page for the philosopher. Upload an image, at least one friend and two comments that the philosopher might post about the meaning of life. Include one more post from a critic who dislikes the post.
      - Create a philosophy [meme](#) using the information you have found to pose a question to the philosopher about something you would like more information about. You will need to locate a digital image to upload. An example is given in Useful Resources.
    - Explore answers to the question: What makes us happy?
      - View philosopher Alain de Botton's short film about what makes us happy: [Epicurus on happiness](#) -Philosophy: a guide to happiness. What are the three ingredients for a happy life according to Epicurus? What is the Epicurean explanation as to why many people are not happy?
      - Construct an advertisement to portray Epicurean thinking with regard to living a happy life. Use one of the products from [BigHugeLabs](#). Share advertisements with the class and consider sharing with the wider school community.
- 

## Topic 2.2: The Getting of Wisdom

### Core Content Area 2: Why are we here?

#### Lesson 2.2.2 Discerning purpose

In this lesson students will explore specific Christian teachings about living a life of purpose.

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

Set up a class OneNote share page or similar share page that all students can access and post comments to.

**Students:**

For students to explore specific Christian teachings about living a life of purpose, complete the following activities:

1. Explore scripture passages that teach Christians about the characteristics of a meaningful life.
  - Allocate one piece of scripture from the list below to read and reflect on. They can be accessed online through [Bible Gateway](#). Post to a OneNote page or similar share page the Scripture reference and what you think the passage is suggesting to Christians about how they ought to live.
    - Genesis 1:26, 28 Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, according to our likeness; and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea...God blessed them, and God said to them "Be fruitful and multiply..."
    - Exodus 20:4-17 The Ten Commandments.
    - John 10:10 I have come so that they may have life and have it abundantly.

- Matthew 5:3-11 The Beatitudes.
- Matthew 5:16 Let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to your father in heaven.
- Matthew 22:36 You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind...You shall love your neighbour as yourself.
- Matthew 25:34-40 The Judgement of the Nations.
- Luke 17:1-4 Some sayings of Jesus.
- Reflect as a group about what you think is essential to living a purposeful life as a Christian and construct a Twitter type response (150 characters or less) to share with the rest of the class.

## Topic 2.2: The Getting of Wisdom

### Core Content Area 2: Why are we here?

#### Lesson 2.2.3 Learning by example

In this lesson students will explore what is best about being human.

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

- Create a collaboration wall. (Reminder: Stixy requires Firefox or Google Chrome to open)
- Explore the [lesson plans](#) on the My Hero website for extra activities on this topic.

#### Students

For students to explore other wisdom about the purpose of human existence and what is best about being human, complete the following activities:

1. Explore examples of the best aspects of humanity.
  - Investigate the common values that heroes have.
    - Choose three or four people from different life-categories on the [My Hero website](#). Read their brief biographies and create a list of the positive human values that each person possesses. Save the lists as a word document that can be shared with the class. If possible upload to a class Stixy wall.
    - Read the contributions from all of the class members. Compare and contrast the lists as a class. What are the most common values mentioned? (A cut and paste into Wordle will help you determine this quickly) What other values are missing that represent the best aspects of being human? Is it possible to say which field makes the most important contribution to creating the best possible world?
    - Read and critique the following: "What we need is an international organization that identifies, spotlights and promotes heroes from around the world who personify values that strengthen the fabric of the global village in which we live." Discuss the ideas presented in the statement clarifying unfamiliar words or concepts. What questions, positives or negatives come to mind? Complete a SWOT analysis of the existence of such an organization. Share with a partner and the class.
  - Analyse other wisdom contributions to add to understanding about life purpose.
    - Read the following statements about life purpose:
      - "The purpose of life is a life of purpose"-Robert Byrne
      - "As far as we can discern, the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being."-Carl Jung
      - "If you can't find your purpose find your passion. Our prime purpose in life is to help others. And if you can't help them, at least don't hurt them."-Dalai Lama
      - "The purpose of life is to be defeated by greater and greater things."-Mainer Maria Rilke



- "The writer must earn money in order to be able to live and write, but he must by no means live and write for the purpose of making money."-Karl Marx
- **Create** a list of phrases or statements from religion, philosophy and wisdom texts that resonate with you about what it means to live a happy life.

## Topic 2.3: Leaving a legacy

### Core Content Area 2: Why are we here?

#### Lesson 2.3.1 Living sustainably

In this lesson students will investigate how living sustainably might contribute to a better world.

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

- Divide the class into six groups for this lesson so that each group reports on the responsibilities for sustainable patterns of living for one of the following: Individual, Class, School, Town, Country and World.

#### Students

For students to explore the concept of living sustainably, select from the following activities:

1. The next few lessons allow students to explore the idea that it might be each generation's purpose to leave a legacy to future generations for a better world.
    - Investigate the concept of sustainable living and how it is connected to legacy and purpose.
      - Form six groups. In your group, share understandings about the word legacy. If necessary check the dictionary to be sure the group understands the word.
      - Read the following from the Australian Curriculum: Embedding *Sustainability as a cross curriculum priority will allow all young Australians to develop an appreciation of the need for more sustainable patterns of living, and to build the capacities for thinking and acting that are necessary to create a more sustainable future.* Discuss the following in your group: Why would sustainability be a part of the Australian Curriculum? How might embedding sustainability as a cross curriculum priority in the Australian curriculum contribute to a legacy for future generations?
      - As a group, discuss what might be meant by the phrase sustainable patterns of living remembering that there are both human and natural aspects to sustainable living. Complete a Frayer concept chart for one of the six categories: Individual, Class, School, Town, Country or World. You should refer to the ten key themes of s a group, discuss what might be meant by the phrase sustainable patterns of living remembering that there are both human and natural aspects to sustainable living. Complete a Frayer concept chart for one of the six categories: Individual, Class, School, Town, Country or World. You should refer to the ten key themes of [Catholic Social Teaching](#) to help you with your task. Select one person to present your chart to the class.
      - Discuss as a class how living sustainably might contribute to a purposeful life.
-

## Topic 2.3: Leaving a Legacy

### Core Content Area 2: Why are we here?

#### Lesson 2.3.2 Leaving the World a Better Place

In this lesson students will explore creative and inspiring ways of leaving the world a better place.

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

1. View the short movie clip of Bruce Mau explaining the usefulness of entrepreneurship in education.

#### Students

For students to explore creative ways of leaving the world a better place, select from the following activities:

1. Explore the power of the individual to influence and change the world.
  - Explore a variety of people who have left the world a better place by spending their lives alleviating the suffering of others.
    - View the movie clip about the life of [Mother Teresa](#) (5mins 30s) and answer the following questions: What do you understand from the film about the life purpose? How did the director describe the legacy of Mother Teresa? What actions are mentioned in the film that led to her increasing her influence on the world? How is the individual challenged by Mother Teresa's words to participate in making the world a better place?
    - View the [movie clip](#) (4mins 20s) about the contribution of Australian doctor Fred Hollows to the lives of people who suffer blindness and answer the following questions: How would you describe the legacy of Fred Hollows? How can individuals contribute to this legacy?
    - View the [movie clip](#) of Bono inviting the viewer to participate in the legacy of making poverty history and answer the following questions: What was the moment that Bono described that impacted on his decision to work for this cause? How do you respond personally to his question: What does your generation want to be remembered for?
  - Explore the power of design thinking as a way of making the world a better place.
    - View the [movie clip](#) that explains how design thinking can help the individual to create a better future and use the ideas from the clip of expanding the conversation about climate change to complete the following task.
      - Form groups of four. One person is to create a [Typewith.me](#) page where everyone can share their ideas and share the page address with the group.
      - Imagine a world in the future where a problem of significance to your community, state, country or the world has been solved. Some examples include reconciliation with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, refugees arriving in Australia safely, obesity in Australian children, homelessness in Brisbane, human impact on climate change halted, world peace, crime, etc. Create a list of as many questions as possible that you need answers to about how the solution came about. What changed?
      - Reflect on all of the questions that the group has asked. Imagine possibilities as answers for the questions and record your suggestions. Remember, solutions to these problems don't yet exist, so let your imagination run wild. Share group solutions as a class.
      - Reflect on this task by discussing the value of intentionally living one's life with a goal of leaving the world a better place.

#### Depthing Understanding: A case study in purpose

In this lesson students will explore stories about purpose, change and disappointment.

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

- Review the resources referred to in this lesson.

## Students:

For students to explore stories about purpose, change and dealing with disappointment, complete the following activities:

1. Explore stories of purpose, change and dealing with disappointment.
  - Explore the story of 1968 Australian Olympian Peter Norman.
    - Read the story of Peter Norman below and complete the following activities:
      - View the [YouTube clip](#) which shows Carlos speaking about Norman at an Occupy rally in 2011.
      - View the [statue of the podium](#) at San Jose University.
      - Discuss with a partner how Peter Norman's life changed after the 1968 Olympics. Peter Norman's life was changed in a split second when he made an instinctive decision to stand in solidarity with his fellow athletes against racism. This decision in many ways altered his destiny, challenging the world to reflect on injustices. How might this story be an example of how life purpose, freedom of choice and destiny are connected?
      - Reflect on the words of Peter Norman "I'll stand with you". How were these words and his actions an example of Christian purpose in action. Compare the words and actions of Norman with the actions and lack of acknowledgment by Hitler of black African American sprint star [Jesse Owens in the 1938 Berlin Olympics](#).
    - Olympic gold medallists seem to represent what is considered to be the epitome or best of human physical capability. Explore the story of one Olympic or Paralympic athlete.
      - Research the story of one Olympic or Paralympic athlete. Locate information about their early years, their hopes and dreams, disappointments or difficulties they have overcome, and identify values you admire. Locate a digital image of the person or a symbol to represent that person.
      - Use the information to create a [motivational poster](#) that embodies one of the best human values.

## Peter Norman

In August 2012, the Australian Parliament delivered an apology posthumously to an Australian athlete who died in 2006. Peter Norman was an outstanding sprinter who won the silver medal for the 200-metre event at the 1968 Mexico City Olympics in a time of 20.06 seconds. This remains an Australian record and, in fact, had he competed in the Sydney 2000 Olympics, he would have won the gold medal. The 1968 Gold and Bronze medals were won by two black American athletes, John Carlos and Tommie Smith.

1968 was a tumultuous time for the Olympic movement. Ten days before the opening ceremony, Mexican government special forces machine-gunned crowds protesting against the extravagance of the games. Martin Luther King's assassination had polarised the United States and some of the American athletes, including Carlos and Smith, had joined the Olympic Project for Human Rights. As the three runners prepared for the medal presentation, Carlos and Smith discussed their plan to make a political gesture on the podium. They brought Norman into their conversation, letting him know their intentions. "I'll stand with you," Norman told them, and asked for one of the Olympic Project for Human Rights badges the Americans were wearing. Carlos said he expected to see fear in Norman's eyes. He didn't. "I saw love." They'd also planned to wear black gloves, but Carlos had left his pair at the athletes' village. Norman suggested they split Smith's pair and wear one each on alternate hands.

The medals were handed out and the three turned toward the flags for the US national anthem. As his track rivals stood shoeless with arms upraised in the Black Power salute and the crowd fell silent, Norman didn't move a muscle. He stared forward, their willing accomplice, an Olympic Project for Human Rights badge pinned over his heart.

Peter Norman returned home but was effectively written out of Australian sporting history, ostracised by the Australian media and reprimanded by the AOC. Despite record times in the trials for the 1972 Munich Olympics,

the Australian Olympic Committee refused to allow Peter Norman to compete. In fact, they sent no male sprinters at all.

However, Peter Norman has not been forgotten. Following his death from a heart attack in 2006, Carlos and Smith returned to honour him as pallbearers at his funeral and to deliver the eulogy. On 17 October 2003 San Jose State University unveiled a statue commemorating the 1968 Olympic protest. Norman was not included as part of the statue itself — his empty podium spot intended for others viewing the statue to "stand in the place of a great man".

Independent MP Rob Oakeshott said Norman's actions remain relevant for reconciliation in contemporary Australian society.

"His words when approached by Carlos and Smith 'I will stand with you' are outstanding words in the immediate circumstances following the race and the timeless legacy that we celebrate tonight," he said. "These five words in my view speak as loudly to the challenges of reconciliation today in Australia as they did to racial equality in the US in the late 60s."

### Extending Knowledge: *Art and the end times*

In this lesson students will explore the way artists have depicted life after death.

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

- Familiarise yourself with [BigHugeLabs](#) slideshow.

### Students

For students to explore the way artists have depicted life after death, complete the following activities:

1. Explore artworks that depict ideas associated with life after death.
  - Create a gallery of artworks that depict concepts associated with life after death.
    - Research artists who have created works depicting scenes of the afterlife: resurrection, judgement day, the last judgement, heaven and hell. Some examples are Hieronymous Bosche, Raphael, Michelangelo, El Greco, Murillo, Ribera, Titian, Caravaggio, John Coburn. Locate 5-8 images and save in a folder where they can be retrieved. Examine each piece for symbols of the afterlife, the use of colour and illumination, symbols and separation of heaven and hell. One source of images is the [Google Art Project](#). (Requires Google Chrome)
    - Create a slideshow of the images you have located using [BigHugeLabs slideshow](#). Write a description of your collection and the themes of life on earth and the afterlife for Christians that the collection represents.
    - Conduct a class display of the collections. Identify key themes that the artists have depicted. Discuss as a class the value of art as a way of expressing complex ideas about the mysteries of life such as life after death.

## Topic 3.1: Freedom and responsibility

### Core Content Area 3: Where are we going?

#### Lesson 3.1.1 Is there a bigger plan?

In this lesson students will explore Christian teachings about freedom and destiny.

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

- Read the **Teacher Background** on freedom and destiny.

#### Students

For students to explore religious teachings about freedom and destiny, select from the following activities:

1. Explore ideas about destiny, plan and freedom of choice.
  - Reflect on your own life in light of the fertile question for this unit: Is my existence part of a bigger plan?
    - View the YouTube clip from the movie [Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban](#). Discuss with a partner in what ways this part of Harry's story illustrates the struggle of the fertile question. What is Dumbledore's conclusion about destiny and freedom?
    - Consider the following questions in your own mind: How free do you feel to make your own decisions? What is limiting your freedom at this point in your life? Are the limitations coming from within yourself or outside? How might this change when you leave school, when you leave home, get a job, go to university, get married? How are the two ideas of freedom and responsibility connected? Do you feel guided towards a particular destiny? Do you feel guided towards making particular choices in your life? If so who or what is guiding you? How will you know you have chosen a path that is life giving for you? What might you do if you found yourself on a path that wasn't life giving for you? Do you think people have any impact on their destiny, or is it all to do with luck?
    - Create an artistic response to the questions in the previous activity. (This could form part of your assessment task if you are using the suggested item for this unit.) Your response could be from any genre of the arts: art, music, dance, poetry, photography etc.
  - Examine religious teachings about freedom and destiny.
    - Identify the key messages about freedom and human existence in the quotes below from Catholic theologian Richard McBrien and the Catholic Catechism.
      - "If we are not free, we are not responsible. And if we are not responsible, human existence is reduced to mechanical existence. Without freedom and responsibility there is no love, no faith, no hope, no trust, no compassion, no friendship, no justice. Everything is calculated, predetermined, subject only to accident and /or miscalculation."- (McBrien, 1994)
      - 1731 Freedom is the power, rooted in reason and will, to act or not to act, to do this or that, and so to perform deliberate actions on one's own responsibility. By free will one shapes one's own life. Human freedom is a force for growth and maturity in truth and goodness; it attains its perfection when directed toward God, our beatitude. Catechism of the Catholic Church.
    - Judaism, Christianity and Islam are religions in which people believe that their lives are part of a divine plan; but people are also considered to be unique individuals who need to develop and follow a moral code which is prescribed by God. Christians believe that God's plan is for all humans to become fully human and to bring about God's reign (or the Kingdom of God) on earth. Thomas Groome writes Judaism, Christianity and Islam are religions in which people believe that their lives are part of a divine plan; but people are also considered to be unique individuals who need to develop and follow a moral code which is prescribed by God. Christians believe that God's plan is for all humans to become fully human and to bring about God's reign (or the Kingdom of God) on earth. Thomas Groome writes: *"Looking to the actual life of Jesus, we recognise that becoming fully alive includes becoming free and responsible, just and peace-able, merciful and compassionate,*

*kind and respectful, hospitable and inclusive, prayerful and centred, balanced and integrated, hopeful and faith-filled, and above all loving."*

- In light of this quote what personal responsibilities do Christians have in bringing about the Kingdom of God on earth? How do these ideas compare with ideas about fate, luck and God's will? Discuss.

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## Topic 3.1: Freedom and Responsibility

### Core Content Area 3: Where are we going?

#### Lesson 3.1.2 Follow your dreams

In this lesson students explore the importance of dreams and goals and their impact on individual and universal change.

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

- Familiarise yourself with the resources referred to in this lesson.

#### Students

For students to explore the importance of dreams and their impact on individual and universal change, select from the following activities:

1. Explore examples of how dreams and ideas have changed the world.
  - Choose one important change that has happened in the world and investigate how the change came about.
    - Research one invention or idea that has had a major impact on the world. Record information about how the idea for change came about, one or more key people involved in the change, and a brief summary of how the idea or invention has changed the destiny of the people affected. Examples include: the end of Apartheid in South Africa, International Peace day, the discovery and invention of vaccinations or antibiotics, the right to vote in Australia for woman or Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, the invention of the aeroplane or the internet etc.
    - Present your findings in a word cloud using [Tagxedo](#). Choose a shape for your cloud that represents the person or idea. Check out the [Tagxedo](#) gallery for examples. Choose a piece of music that aligns with the richness of the idea. Share with the class your justification for your choices.
      - Complete a consequences chart to explore what might have happened if the idea or invention had never occurred. Share with a partner. See **Useful Resources** for a chart example.
    - Explore the connection between freedom, choice, dreams and destiny.
      - View the [short movie clip](#) of a speech to students about freedom of choice, dreams, values and destiny.
      - Reflect on people in your life (including yourself) who you know have pursued a dream. It doesn't have to be a huge dream, just an intentional pursuit of some higher good or particular way of being or to achieve a particular goal.
      - Create a list of questions that you would like to ask that person about their experiences of success and failure, joy and disappointment in the pursuit of their dreams. If possible conduct an interview with that person using your questions. This could be done face to face, by phone or by email or letter. Explain that you are interested in how following dreams impacts on your life.
      - Share responses in a small group and identify common themes.

- Conclude this lesson by reflecting on the part that choice has to play in a person's destiny.

## Topic 3.2: Destiny and the arts

### Core Content Area 3: Where are we going?

#### Lesson 3.2.1 Art and the meaning of life

In this lesson students will explore the way artists have contributed to the human search for meaning.

##### Students

For students to explore the way artists have contributed to the human search for meaning, select from the following activities:

1. Explore ways in which artists have contributed to the human search for meaning.
  - Examine works of art that depict human understandings about origins, purpose and destiny.
    - Examine Paul Gauguin's painting [Where do we come from? What are we? Where are we going?](#) It is meant to be viewed from left to right. What do you see? How has the artist represented the three questions? What evidence of religious ideas is present in the painting? Is there evidence of philosophical perspectives? Comment on the use of colour. Research the context of the artist and the painting. How does this new knowledge help you to interpret the work?
    - View the [Scream by Edvard Munch](#) and then read the following poem that Munch himself wrote of his work. *I was walking along a path with two friends – the sun was setting – suddenly the sky turned blood red – I paused, feeling exhausted, and leaned on the fence – there was blood and tongues of fire above the blue-black fjord and the city – my friends walked on, and I stood there trembling with anxiety – and I sensed an infinite scream passing through nature.* Compare the experience of viewing the painting to the experience of reading a description of it. What was similar and what was different? Which do you prefer?
    - View and critique the strengths and weaknesses of the short film [A story for tomorrow by Dan Riordan and Dana Saint](#) (gnarly bay productions). The introduction to this film claims it is a meditation on the secrets of happiness and what it means to be human. Suggest some themes on this topic about the purpose and destiny of humans that you think might be missing from the film.
2. Explore the Assessment task that is suggested for this unit.

## Topic 3.2: Destiny and the arts

### Core Content Area 3: Where are we going?

#### Lesson 3.2.2 Music and destiny

In this lesson students will explore how musicians have expressed their beliefs or positions about aspects of life meaning, purpose and destiny.

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

- Invite students to bring in their favourite inspirational song to share, that says something about life meaning, purpose, or destiny.

##### Students



For students to explore how musicians have presented ideas about life meaning, purpose and destiny, select from the following activities:

1. Explore songs and music that present ideas about life meaning, purpose and destiny.
  - Share favourite songs that speak to you about life, its meaning, purpose or destiny.
    - Locate a song that speaks to you about life, its meaning, purpose or destiny.
    - Share the songs in a small group with a short justification about what the song means to you.
    - Reflect on the way music assists people to make sense of experiences or feelings.
  - Create a poem or song about origins, purpose and destiny.
    - Individually, or in pairs, write a song that expresses your ideas about origins, purpose and destiny. (Note: a song of three verses written by an individual could be used as part of the triptych assessment task).

## Topic 3.3: Life after death

### Core Content Area 3: Where are we going?

#### Lesson 3.3.1 Beliefs about the afterlife

In this lesson students will explore the way that religious beliefs about the afterlife are connected to funeral and burial rituals.

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

- Read the **Teacher Background** on life after death.

#### Students

For students to explore the way that religious beliefs about the afterlife are connected to funeral and burial rituals, select from the following activities:

1. Investigate the ways religions connect beliefs about life after death with funeral and burial rites.
  - Explore ideas about the afterlife.
    - Create a collaborative drawing that depicts ideas about the afterlife. Form a group of four. Create a [Flockdraw](#) canvas and divide the canvas into four quadrants. Each person draws their ideas about the afterlife in their space. Share your explanation of the drawing with the group.
    - Discuss as a class the various themes of the drawings and look for common and uncommon elements. Where do people generally get their ideas about life after death?
  - Investigate the funeral rites of the following traditions: Catholic Christian, Jewish and Islamic.
    - Read the information in **Useful Resources** about the beliefs about life after death of the three faith traditions.
    - Form groups of three to investigate the funeral rites of one each of the three traditions mentioned above.
    - Complete a retrieval chart to record the symbols, actions, words in prayers in the rites and their meanings about life on earth and life after death. See **Useful Resources**. The following websites will provide the information needed to complete the Retrieval Chart.
      - [Catholic funeral symbols](#) and [Catholic Funerals](#), Catholic Funeral prayers (Download the booklet from this [site](#)), [Jewish funeral customs](#), [comprehensive description of Jewish funeral customs](#), [Islam Death Rites](#), [Funeral rites and regulations in Islam](#).
    - Share findings with the other members of your group and discuss the ways in which the funeral rites reflect the beliefs about the afterlife of these religious traditions.
    - Read and reflect on the following from American theologian Harvey Cox:
      - *"However advanced other animals might be — chimpanzees use tools, and dolphins exhibit the rudiments of speech and empathy — only humans marked the spots where they placed the remains of their dead, at first only with a small pile of stones. Already*

*they were trying to wrench meaning from mystery, and this is what set them apart from the other creatures. The awareness of one's own mortality raises the question of the meaning of life, and this eventually spawned philosophy, religion, and culture."*

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## Topic 3.3: Life after death

### Core Content Area 3: Where are we going?

#### Lesson 3.3.2 Predictions about the end of times

In this lesson students will examine ideas about the end of time.

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

- Be sure to end this lesson on a note of hope!

#### Students

For students to examine ideas about the end of time, select from the following activities:

1. Explore the ways groups within the society (from the past and from today) have wrestled with the idea of an afterlife and preparing for the end of time.
  - Explore ideas and predictions about the end of time.
    - Share ideas past and present about predictions of the end of time.
    - Read about the [Mayan calendar](#) and the modern interpretation of the end of the world.
    - Explore the [story of Nostradamus](#) and discuss how his predictions have been used to interpret world events. View the clip and read the article on [Assassination and World War predictions](#). How does the popularity of his predictions highlight the human need for finding order in the midst of chaos?
  - Complete a SWOT analysis of a secular view of the end of the world and life after death, and a SWOT analysis of the Catholic Christian view. Possible sources include the [Nicene Creed of the Catholic Church](#).
2. Review the philosopher's positions discussed and analysed in the first lesson of this unit.
  - Reflect on the learnings you have gained during this unit. Complete a KWL chart to record what you knew before, what you have learnt and what you still would like to know.

#### Depthing Understanding: *More about symbol and ritual*

In this lesson students will explore the importance of symbol and ritual for human understanding of death and the afterlife.

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

- Familiarise yourself with the resources referred to in this lesson.

#### Students

For students to explore the importance of symbol and ritual for human understanding of death and the afterlife, select from the following activities:

1. Explore the importance of symbol and ritual for human understanding of death and the afterlife.
  - Examine a death ritual from an Aboriginal group in the Northern Territory of Australia.
    - View the death scene of an ancient Aboriginal warrior from the film [Ten Canoes](#). Complete the following table by listing the meaning of the actions that take place in the ceremony. What beliefs about death and the afterlife are evident in this ceremony?

- Explore the importance of Totems and Totemic Beings for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people.
  - Research the importance of Totems for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people. Here are two possible starting points [Totemic and Ancestral beings](#) or this article about [Totems and birth rites](#).
  - How does a person's totem affect their relationship with the land, with others and with ancestral beings? Report findings to the class.

## Useful Resources

Core Content Area 1: Where do we come from?

Core Content Area 2: Why are we here?

Core Content Area 3: Where are we going?

### Lesson 1.1.1

[Typewith.me](#) is a free online collaborative tool that can be used with class groups of students to share ideas in real time.

Sample cartoons that represent different philosophical positions about the meaning of life.

- [Cartoon - Subjective naturalism](#)

### Lesson 1.2.1

Retrieval Chart

Event	People's reactions, questions asked, blame placed etc.	Actions taken in response to the event

### Lesson 1.2.1

A summary of views regarding Creation by a god, the age of the earth and the use of scientific evidence.

OLD EARTH CREATIONISM	Geology	Biology
<b>Theistic Evolution: Evolution by natural processes is the tool God used</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Evolutionary Creationism: Adam and Eve were the first spiritually aware humans</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Progressive Creationism: Humans were a special creation event</b>	Yes	Most
<b>Day-Age Creationism: Six days of creation were six geological epochs</b>	Yes	Some
<b>Gap Creationism: 4.5-Billion-year gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2</b>	Yes	Some
YOUNG EARTH CREATIONISM	Geology	Biology
<b>Omphalism: Earth was created with the appearance of age and of evolution</b>	Yes	Yes
<b>Young Earth Fundamentalism: Invented versions of all-natural sciences to explain Earth's age as 6,000 years</b>	No	No

### Lesson 1.2.2

[FlockDraw](#) is a collaborative drawing tool where a group of students can create a single drawing together in real time. It is free and simple to

use and provides all of the benefits of other collaborative activities: decision making, creativity, logic, planning etc.

### Lesson 1.2.3

[Typewith.me](https://www.typewith.me) is a free online collaborative tool where groups can share information at the same time. One member of the group accesses

the website, names the pad and then shares the URL with the other group members. The work can be saved or take a screen shot and save it in a file for later use.

### Lesson 1.3.1

#### Two Accounts of Creation

Genesis 1-2 New International Version (NIV)

The Beginning

1 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

2

Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

3

And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

4

God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness.

5

God

called the light "day," and the darkness he called "night." And there was evening, and there was morning — the first day.

6

And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water."

7

So, God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so.

8

God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning — the second day.

9

And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so.

10

God called the dry ground

"land," and the gathered waters he called "seas." And God saw that it was good.

11

Then God said, "Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds. " And it was so.

12

The land produced vegetation: plants bearing seed according to their kinds and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good.

13

And there was evening, and there was morning — the third day.

14

And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years,

15

and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so.

16

God made two great  
 lights — the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars.  
 17  
 God set them in the vault of the  
 sky to give light on the earth,  
 18  
 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good.  
 19  
 And  
 there was evening, and there was morning — the fourth day.  
 20  
 And God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the vault of  
 the sky."  
 21  
 So God created the  
 great creatures of the sea and every living thing with which the water teems and that moves about in it,  
 according to their kinds, and every  
 winged bird according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.  
 22  
 God blessed them and said, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the  
 water in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth."  
 23  
 And there was evening, and there was morning — the fifth day.  
 24  
 And God said, "Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: the livestock, the creatures  
 that move along the ground, and  
 the wild animals, each according to its kind." And it was so.  
 25  
 God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to  
 their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it  
 was good.  
 26  
 Then God said, "Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in  
 the sea and the birds in the sky,  
 over the livestock and all the wild animals,  
 [a]  
 and over all the creatures that move along the ground."  
 27  
 So God created mankind in his own image,  
 in the image of God he created them;  
 male and female he created them.  
 28  
 God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule  
 over the fish in the sea and the  
 birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground. "  
 29  
 Then God said, "I give you every seed-bearing plant on the face of the whole earth and every tree that has  
 fruit with seed in it. They will be  
 yours for food.  
 30  
 And to all the beasts of the earth and all the birds in the sky and all the creatures that move along the  
 ground — everything  
 that has the breath of life in it — I give every green plant for food. " And it was so.  
 31  
 God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning — the  
 sixth day.  
 2 Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array.  
 2  
 By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all  
 his work.

3

Then God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it he rested from all the work of creating that he had done.

## Genesis 2

Adam and Eve

4

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.

5

Now no shrub had yet appeared on the earth

[b]

and no plant had yet sprung up, for the LORD God had not sent rain on the earth and there was no one to work the ground,

6

but streams

[c]

came up from the earth and watered the whole surface of the ground.

7

Then the LORD God

formed a man

[d]

from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.

8

Now the LORD God had planted a garden in the east, in Eden; and there he put the man he had formed.

9

The LORD God made all kinds of

trees grow out of the ground — trees that were pleasing to the eye and good for food. In the middle of the garden were the tree of life and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

10

A river watering the garden flowed from Eden; from there it was separated into four headwaters.

11

The name of the first is the Pishon; it

winds through the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold.

12

(The gold of that land is good; aromatic resin

[e]

and onyx are also there.)

13

The

name of the second river is the Gihon; it winds through the entire land of Cush.

[f] 14

The name of the third river is the Tigris; it runs along the east side of Ashur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

15

The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it.

16

And the LORD God commanded the man,

"You are free to eat from any tree in the garden;

17

but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."

18

The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper suitable for him."

19

Now the LORD God had formed out of the ground all the wild animals and all the birds in the sky. He brought them to the man to see what he would name them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name.

20

So the man gave names to all the livestock, the birds in the sky and all the wild animals.

But for Adam

[g]

no suitable helper was found.

21

So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep; and while he was sleeping, he took one of the man's ribs

[h]

and then closed up the place with flesh.

22

Then the LORD God made a woman from the rib

[i]

he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.

23

The man said,

"This is now bone of my bones

and flesh of my flesh;

she shall be called 'woman,'

for she was taken out of man."

24

That is why a man leaves his father and mother and is united to his wife, and they become one flesh.

25

Adam and his wife were both naked, and they felt no shame.

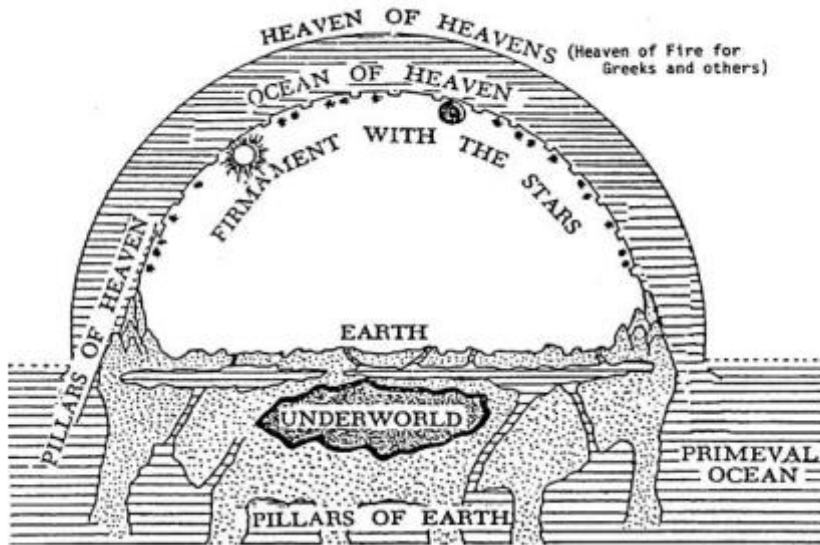
### Lesson 1.3.1

The functions of a culture's origin myths	Examples from and about the Creation stories in Genesis Chapters 1 and 2	Contemporary Catholic Church interpretation
<b>Cosmogenic: Speak about or describe foundations or origins of the universe and important elements in their culture.</b>		Modern Cosmologists describe the first second of existence of the observable universe at 13.7 billion years ago. All living species have evolved from the first microbial forms of life. It is all God's created work.
<b>Sacred: Intimately connected with the faith system of the culture</b>	Included in the sacred oral storytelling tradition.	Included in the modern Bible.
<b>Reflective of social values: Story represents or reflects important social values within the culture.</b>	Subdue and have dominion over the earth.	Act as co-creators with God to care for the earth.
<b>Organiser of thoughts: Provides a framework by which to organise through, often using dualities or opposites. For</b>		



example: day/night, light/dark, good/evil.		
Reflects the relationship between a culture and its god or gods/goddesses: Shows how humans related to their god/s.		

### Ancient Hebrew Cosmology



## Lesson 2.1.2



## Lesson 2.2.1

[Fakebook](#) is an enjoyable online tool that can be used to generate Facebook style pages without accessing Facebook. The free version has advertisements for the creator of the app. Classnet tools as well as many examples of created pages to view but if you scroll below the ads you have full access to the tool.

[LOLcat generator](#) is a free online tool in the Big huge labs suite for generating memes such as the one below. Students simply upload an image that they already have stored or located online and apply the captions top and bottom. Useful for posing philosophical questions. Creative Commons is a good source for images. Be sure to follow copyright rules.

Example



Acknowledgment: Image by Jacob Boetter, January 17, 2009, via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution

### Lesson 2.1.3

#### Book of Good Life - Maccabeats

Woke up and realized yesterday  
Think it's a bummer end of the summer  
Kinda nervous that we're almost there  
At the days of awe  
Prayers in a language that I don't know  
Standing for hours and hours more  
I wish that someone would please tell me-e-e-e  
What it is we're praying for  
Oh put me in the book of good life

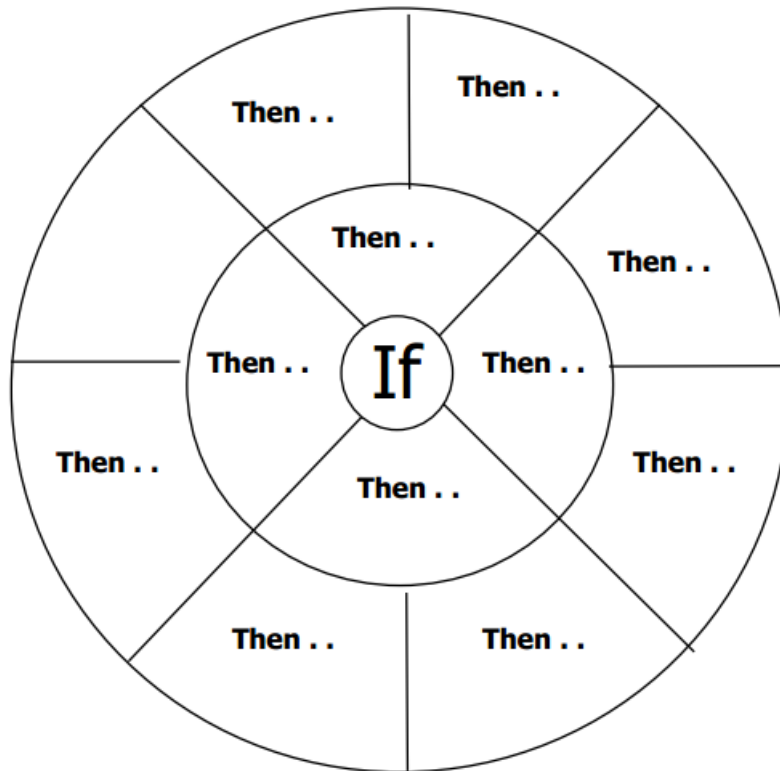
#### This could really be a good life, good life

Say oh, we've got feelings that we should fight  
Make sure that we're choosing right  
Gotta earn my own place in  
The book of good life  
Time for reflection on the past year  
Time to figure out what we're doing here  
Replace the guilt with inspiration  
And everything is clear  
Life in the present, the here and now  
Easier than regret and planning out  
Living in the moment, lasts for a moment  
Got my future to think about  
When you're sitting there in shul

Wishing it was over  
You gotta take a beat  
And let it all sink in  
Oh put me in the book of good life  
I just wanna live the good life  
This could really be a good life, good life  
Say oh, we've got feelings that we should fight  
Make sure that we're choosing right  
Gotta earn my own place in  
The book of good life  
Hopefully  
This year will bring us happiness and peace  
Hopefully  
Sensitivity to others will increase  
Hopefully  
We'll open our eyes and think more consciously  
Cuz Hopefully  
We'll go from where we are to where we want to be  
Oh put me in the book of good life  
I just wanna live the good life  
This could really be a good life, good life  
Say oh, we've got feelings that we should fight  
Make sure that we're choosing right  
Gotta earn my own place in  
The book of good life  
Oh yeah  
Book of Good life  
Ooh  
Listen  
Time for reflection on the past year  
Time to figure out what we're doing here  
Replace the guilt with inspiration  
And everything is clear  
Life in the present seems more fun  
Easier than regret, what's done is done  
Living in the moment, lasts for a moment  
Shana Tova to everyone

Lyrics By: Immanuel Shalev and David Block

### Lesson 3.1.2



### Lesson 3.3.1

#### Life after death

##### Judaism

Many Jews believe that human life continues beyond death and that the final destiny of a person is olam haba, the world to come. Olam haba is a state of spiritual perfection beyond what we can imagine. Most people have to be purified at a place called Gehi nom after they die before entering olam haba. The predominant view of destiny for Jewish people is that you live and die only once and that purification takes place after death, thereby expressing a linear eschatology.

Traditional Jews have always insisted on burying a dead body. It is considered to be a more respectful way of treating the body. It also takes account of the beliefs of some streams of Jewish theology that human existence beyond death is not only of an immortal soul but of a resurrected body. Orthodox Jews insist that the body must be preserved for final resurrection. Reform Jews reject the literal understanding of bodily resurrection and have adjusted the blessing prayer in the light of that.

##### Christian funeral rites and life after death

The Paschal Mystery, Jesus' Life, Death and Resurrection, is a living reality for Christians.

It is not just an event that happened 2000 years ago; it is the presence of the Risen Jesus, his Spirit and his Kingdom, today and always. The Paschal Mystery is the promise of life beyond death for Christians which we receive at Baptism. - Together at one Altar.

Christianity, like Judaism and Islam, has a linear view of human existence with one final judgement based on a single lifetime, and a temporary post-mortem purification that prepares the person for final communion with God. The important difference is the belief that Jesus has already been resurrected on the third day after his crucifixion. Because of Jesus' resurrection, Christian funeral rites focus on the theme of Jesus' victory over death and the promise it holds for those who die in faith in Jesus. The use of gestures and symbols during Christian funerals include objects also associated with baptism. Water, a white pall and the Easter candle form a sacramental link between birth and death, the candle symbolising the hope that the deceased person is now present in the light of God. Incense is used as a sign of reverence for the body that is considered to have been the temple of the Holy Spirit since baptism.

### Muslim funeral rites and life after death

Symbols used	Meaning for life on earth	Meaning for life after death
Actions	Meaning for life on earth	Meaning for life after death
Words spoken	Meaning for life on earth	Meaning for life after death

According to Islamic belief, the immortal soul separates from the body at death and the soul is questioned by two angels to see if the person has led a good, moral and religious life. The answers determine the soul's destiny at the end of the world. As they wait for the last day, the souls of the dead are pressed down into the grave in proportion to the weight of their sins. The body should not be cremated because it is believed that the soul could sense the destruction of its former body by fire. The body is considered an essential part of the human person and is required for resurrection of the body at the end of time when the person will be completely restored body and soul. According to the Qur'an, there will be a final Day of Judgement when everyone will be judged according to the life led: those who have followed the will of Allah will go to paradise and those who have not will be punished and condemned to hell.

### Lesson 3.3.1 - Retrieval Chart

Religion Investigated: \_\_\_\_\_



