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**religious education** module  
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# Interpreting Scripture: Critical Approaches



Level 6



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# Religious Education Modules

Levels 1 - 6

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
Beliefs	Thinking about God and Life		Christian Beliefs and Teachings		Beliefs and Believers	Christianity: Preferred Futures
	Who is Jesus?	Teachings and Actions of Jesus		Jesus and Christianity		
	Who is the Church?		Church Community: Words and Actions	Church: Unity and Diversity	Church: Challenges and Choices	
Celebration and Prayer	Sacraments and the Lives of Believers		Sacramental Celebrations: Origins and Practices		Sacraments: Past, Present and Future	
	Prayers and Rituals: Mystery and Wonder	Expressions of Prayer and Ritual		Making Meaning through Prayer and Ritual		Prayers and Rituals across Faith Traditions
		Spirituality and Personal Identity	Spirituality in the Christian Tradition		Spirituality and the Human Quest for Meaning	
Morality	Morality: Stories and Messages		Morality: Values and Pathways		Moral Issues	
	Acting Justly		Perspectives on Morality		Moral Integrity	
	Peaceful Relationships		People of Justice	Justice in the Local Community	Social Action of the Church	
Scripture	Introducing Scripture	Exploring the Texts		Images, Symbols and Language	Textual Features in Scripture	
		Scripture: Making Meaning	Scripture: Historical, Social and Cultural Contexts		Scripture: Contemporary Applications	
			Bible Tools	Interpreting Scripture		Interpreting Scripture: Critical Approaches

## Interpreting Scripture: Critical Approaches

### Scripture Strand

#### □ Purpose

This module provides students with opportunities to demonstrate the core learning outcome by exploring two broad approaches to the interpretation of scriptural texts, namely, the historical-critical approach and the literary-critical approach. Students are introduced to the features and application of methods associated with each approach. They interpret a range of scriptural texts using these methods.

#### □ Overview

Teaching and learning activities in this module are based on a Model for Developing Religious Literacy and the Roles for Lifelong Learners in the Brisbane Catholic Education Learning Framework. They are designed around *Module Organisers* with three *Organising Ideas* for each module organiser.

<b>Roles for Lifelong Learners</b>	<b>Core Learning Outcome</b>
Reflective, Self Directed Learner Active Investigator Effective Communicator	S6.3 Students investigate critical approaches used in the interpretation of scriptural texts
<b>Module Organisers</b>	<b>Organising Ideas</b>
<b>Historical-Critical Approach</b> <i>p.7</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Source Criticism <input type="checkbox"/> Form Criticism <input type="checkbox"/> Redaction Criticism <input type="checkbox"/> Socio-Historical Criticism
<b>Literary-Critical Approach</b> <i>p.33</i>	<input type="checkbox"/> Narrative Criticism <input type="checkbox"/> Rhetorical Criticism <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy Criticism

## □ Module Activities Map

This module activities map provides a scope and sequence chart of activities listed under specific organising ideas. In some modules, preliminary activities have been included and are indicated in *italics*. Preliminary activities are designed to build background knowledge and skills prior to student engagement with the other activities listed under each organising idea. The page on which each activity is located is also indicated for quick reference.

# Interpreting Scripture: Critical Approaches

## Historical-Critical Approach

### Source Criticism activities [p.7](#)

Sourcing the Sources [p.8](#)

Homer's Guide to the Bible [p.10](#)

Clues on Q [p.11](#)

Penning the Pentateuch [p.12](#)

### Form Criticism activities [p.16](#)

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### Redaction Criticism activities [p.21](#)

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### Socio-Historical Criticism activities [p.25](#)

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Class Context Pizza [p.29](#)

## Literary-Critical Approach

### Narrative Criticism activities [p.33](#)

Narrative Notes [p.34](#)

Narrative Wheels [p.34](#)

### Rhetorical Criticism activities [p.36](#)

Peter's Speech to the Crowd [p.36](#)

Camel Through the Eye of a Needle [p.38](#)

### Advocacy Criticism activities [p.39](#)

Provocative One Liners [p.41](#)

Women in the Bible [p.42](#)

A suggested culminating activity has been included at the end of this module. This activity could be used for summative assessment purposes.

It appears on pages [43-45](#).

## □ Connections to Syllabus Content

The core learning outcomes in this module connect with syllabus references in *A Syllabus for Religious Education for Catholic Schools* (Archdiocese of Brisbane, 1997). Teachers are encouraged to consult the syllabus for further explanation of these connections.

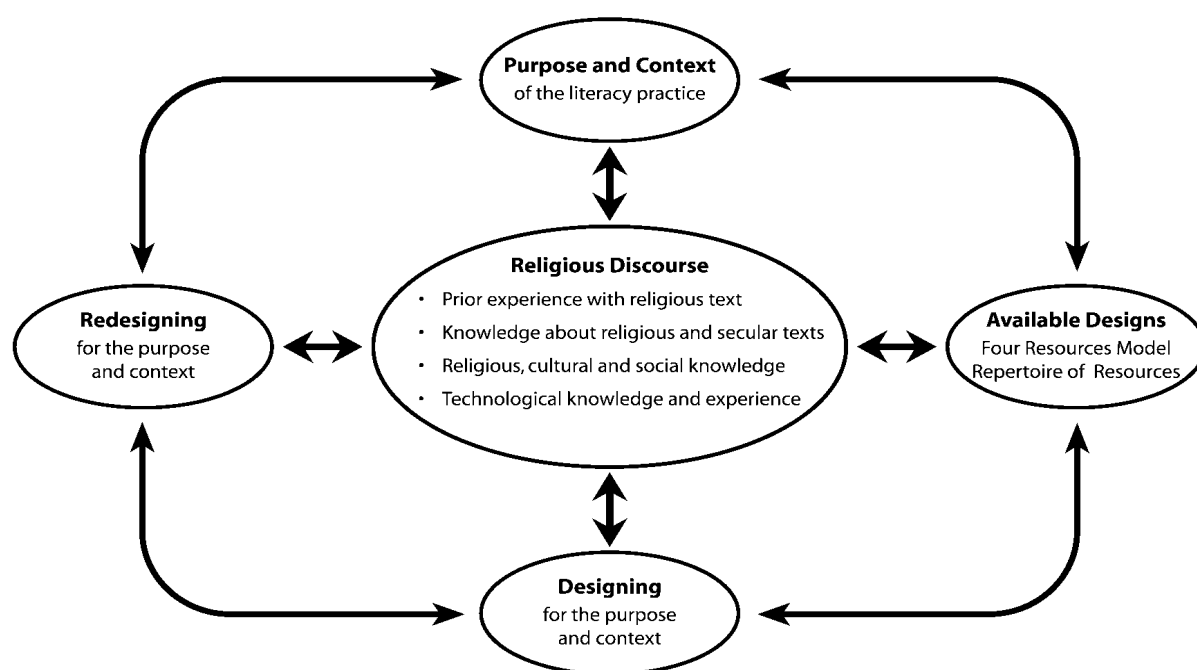
Scripture Strand	Level 6
Conceptual Organiser	Students know about:
Scriptural texts are interpreted critically using a range of processes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>□ Principles of biblical interpretation (S43)</li> <li>□ Biblical criticism such as form and redaction criticism (S14)</li> </ul>

## □ Religious Literacy Model

The Model for Developing Religious Literacy has a distinctly educational focus describing the core practices of religiously literate people. It supports the aim of the subject Religious Education, which is "to develop students' religious literacy in the light of the Catholic tradition, so that they may participate critically and effectively in the life of their faith communities and wider society." (*A Syllabus for Religious Education for Catholic Schools*, Archdiocese of Brisbane, 1997)

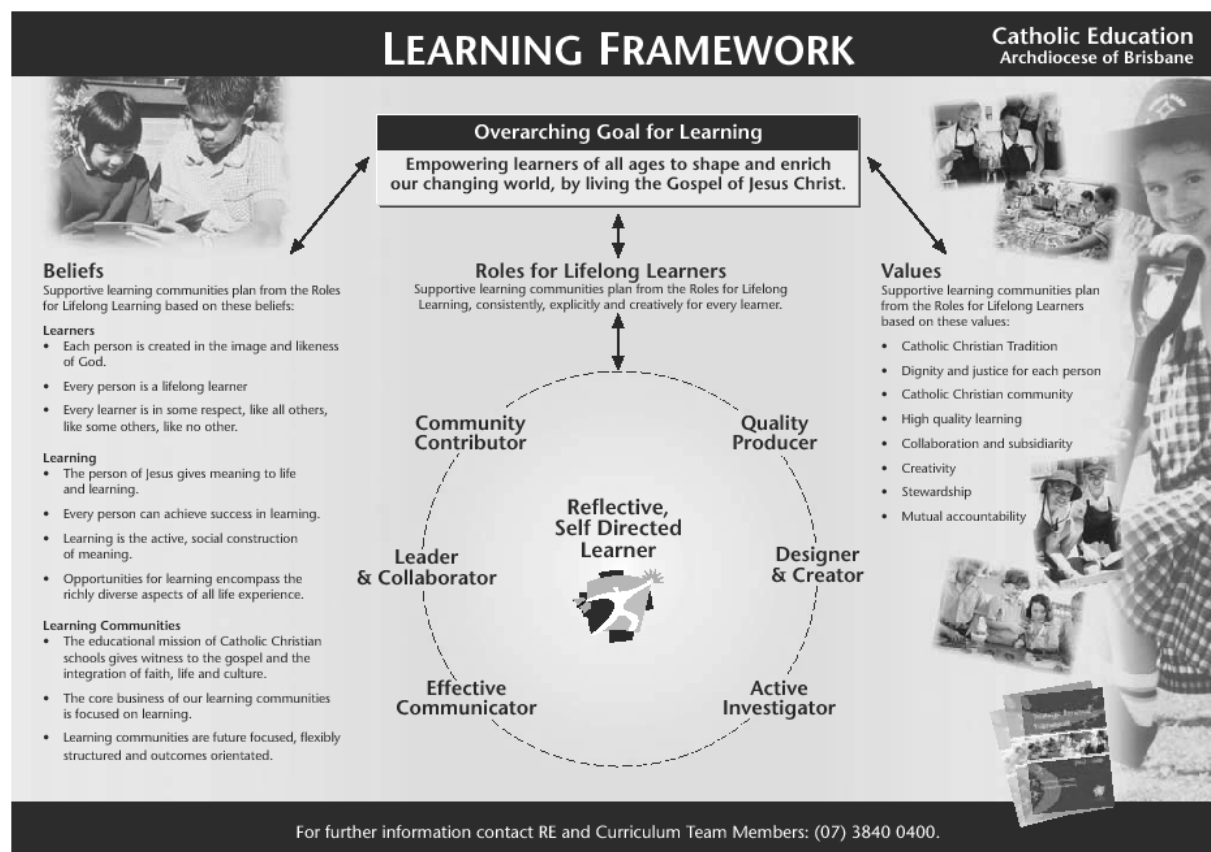
Religious Literacy can be defined as the flexible and sustainable mastery of a repertoire of practices related to the discourse of Religion using spoken, written and multimedia texts of traditional and new communications technologies. (Adapted from *Literate Futures Qld* p.9)

In this module the discourse of Religion incorporates particular language and a set of ongoing activities and interactions of a religious nature around critical approaches and methods of criticism used in the interpretation of scriptural texts.



## □ Learning Framework and Roles for Lifelong Learners

This module has been designed using the Brisbane Catholic Education Learning Framework and in particular the Roles for Lifelong Learners. Every module places emphasis on the central role, namely, **Reflective, Self Directed Learner**. In the discourse of Religious Education, a central thinking process is reflection and this in turn provides learners with direction and purpose. Additionally, this module has been specifically designed to include activities that align with the following roles: **Active Investigator** and **Effective Communicator**.



## □ Assessment

The Assessment Icon ⓘ is located throughout this module. This icon indicates that the accompanying learning activity could be used in part, or in conjunction with other activities to assess students' demonstration of the learning outcome. Some students may require more time and/or other contexts in which to demonstrate this learning outcome.

Assessment opportunities may need to be modified or created in order to assess learning outcomes at different levels. This may involve increasing the sophistication of concepts and processes. This will enable students to demonstrate core learning outcomes preceding or beyond the target level outcomes.

The following table provides examples for gathering evidence and making judgements about student demonstration of the core learning outcome on which this module is based. The table is neither exhaustive nor mandatory. Assessment opportunities should be negotiated with students to maximise their demonstrations of this outcome in a variety of ways. Teachers should reflect with students on evidence gathered for making judgements about their demonstrations.

Outcomes	Gathering Evidence	Making Judgements
<b>S6.3</b> <b>Students investigate critical approaches used in the interpretation of scriptural texts</b>	<p><b>Level 6</b>  <b>Students may for example:</b>  Students identify how elements from a variety of different critical methods have been applied to make meaning of a scripture text:</p> <p><i>The Healing of the Syrophenician Woman</i> (Mark 7:24-30).</p> <p>A worksheet containing this scripture text has been provided. Additionally, a summary page has been included that provides a synopsis of each method. The following process is suggested:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students are provided with both resources: the scripture worksheet and the summary page. Both appear at the end of this activity.</li> <li>2. Students identify the critical method that has been applied to elaborate and explain each of the highlighted parts of the scripture text.</li> <li>3. Students provide a summary of the scripture text using some of the information provided.</li> </ol> <p><b>The teacher may use:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Observation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consultation</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Focused analysis</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Peer assessment</li> </ul> <p><b>Recorded in:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Criteria sheet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Consultation notes</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Anecdotal records</li> </ul> <p><b>A full description of this activity has been provided on pages 43-45</b></p>	<p><b>Level 6</b>  <b>Can students:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Identify some elements from each of the critical methods?</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Indicate how elements from different critical methods can be used to elaborate and explain a scripture text?</li> </ul>

## ☐ Evaluation

During and after completion of units of work developed from this module, teachers may decide to collect information and make judgements about:

- ☐ teaching strategies and activities used to progress student learning towards demonstrations of core learning outcomes
- ☐ opportunities provided to gather evidence about students' demonstrations of core learning outcomes
- ☐ future learning opportunities for students who have not yet demonstrated the core learning outcomes and ways to challenge and extend those students who have already demonstrated the core learning outcomes
- ☐ the appropriateness of time allocations for particular activities
- ☐ the appropriateness of resources used

Information from this evaluation process can be used to plan subsequent units of work so that they build on and support student learning.



## □ Learning Strategies

Throughout this module a variety of learning strategies have been suggested that contribute towards those Roles for Lifelong Learners emphasised within the module. The **Strategies Icon** ① indicates that explanatory notes on a learning strategy will be found at the end of the module.

The following table provides examples of how specific strategies may contribute to the development of the Roles for Lifelong Learners for this module, namely; **Reflective, Self Directed Learner**, **Active Investigator** and **Effective Communicator**. Teachers also need to consider how the practices and policies in the classroom (e.g. the way students go about their learning; access to resources; and negotiation of the curriculum) might also contribute to the development of these roles.

Role for Lifelong Learners	Learning Strategies
Reflective, Self Directed Learner	Graphic Organiser; 3:2:1 Strategy; I:4:Publish:Circle:Refine Strategy; Reader's Circle; Story Probe; Story Wheel; Three Level Lighthouse
Active Investigator	Compare/Contrast Strategy; Retrieval Chart; Five Ws + H Strategy; Graphic Outline; Linear Flowchart; Concept Web; Jigsaw Strategy
Effective Communicator	Story Board; Cartoon Strip; Lit Circle Strategy; Think Pad; Concept Pyramid; Context Pizza; Social Ladder; Ten Word Strategy

## □ Classroom Snapshots

At times a snapshot of classroom practice will accompany a learning activity. These snapshots provide a brief descriptor of how a classroom teacher might put a particular activity into practice in the religion classroom. Classroom snapshots are found wherever the **Snapshots Icon** is located.



## □ Connections with other Key Learning Areas

This module has been designed around module organisers that may be used as discrete components when planning a unit of work. It is not intended that this module be viewed as a unit of work in its entirety. Teachers may choose to connect with other Key Learning Areas. The following sample connections are suggested for consideration. Teachers are encouraged to consult the various QSA syllabus documents for other outcomes. The Queensland Studies Authority website can be located at: [www.qsa.qld.edu.au](http://www.qsa.qld.edu.au)

KLA	Core Learning Outcomes
<b>The Arts</b> Drama	DR 6.3 Students evaluate the forms, styles and processes used in dramatic action and performance, identifying the influence of purpose and context.
Media	ME 6.3b Students evaluate social, political and economic influences operating on the production of public, commercial and independent media.
<b>Studies of Society and Environment</b> Culture and Identity	CI 6.5 Students analyse ways in which social construction of gender in different cultures and socio-economic circumstances affects adolescent identities.

<b>Technology</b>	INF 6.1
Information	Students analyse issues related to the ownership and control of information in societies.
	INF6.2
	Students use specialised techniques for managing and organising the presentation of information to meet detailed specifications.

## Learning Activities

## Historical-Critical Approach

The following learning activities, when used in conjunction with others in this module, support the outcome indicated in the table below. The activities are focused on each of the three organising ideas for the module organiser **Historical-Critical Approach**. Teacher background information precedes the learning activities.

<b>Roles for Lifelong Learners</b>	<b>Core Learning Outcome</b>
Reflective, Self Directed Learner Active Investigator Effective Communicator	S6.3 Students investigate critical approaches used in the interpretation of scriptural texts
<b>Module Organisers</b>	<b>Organising Ideas</b>
<b>Historical-Critical Approach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Source Criticism</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Form Criticism</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Redaction Criticism</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Socio-Historical Criticism</li> </ul>

### ☐ Source Criticism

#### Teacher Background

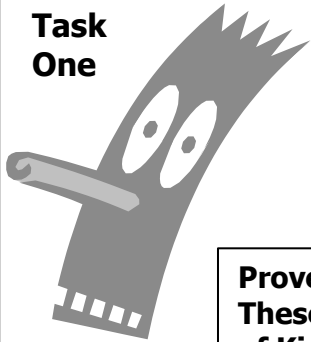
Source criticism focuses on the study of the different components of a biblical text, based on the assumption that particular Biblical texts are composite works whose components originated in different historical periods and exhibit a variety of features and themes reflective of their composite historical sources. In antiquity, authors were not worried about copyright privileges; sources were never footnoted or otherwise acknowledged. The task of the source critic is to filter out the various ideological strains, to locate these in their historical settings and to evaluate the meaning of the complete text in light of the results. Source criticism attempts to uncover the origins or "sources" of ancient texts of the Bible. Source criticism assumes that particular Biblical texts underwent a complex oral and written process in their composition. Close study of many Biblical texts suggests that no one person wrote them. Some Biblical texts exhibit a complexity and variability and even "inconsistency" that suggest composition from a number of sources and thus a multi-source theory is needed to explain and interpret such texts.

Source criticism is used mainly in the study of the Pentateuch (the term Christians give to the first five books of the Bible) and the Synoptic Gospels. A so-called "documentary hypothesis" assumes four strands of tradition in the composition of the Pentateuch. These strands of tradition are named the Jahwist (J), the Elohist (E), the Priestly (P) and the Deuteronomist (D). Characteristic vocabulary, concerns, themes, biases, theological perspectives and so on, distinguishes each tradition. Source critics also focus on an examination of the Synoptic Gospels Matthew, Mark and Luke. For the most part, scholars claim that Mark is the earliest written Gospel and that Matthew and Luke used Mark's text as a basis for their own Gospels. Scholars also believe that Matthew and Luke share a source that was unknown to Mark. Scholars name this shared source of Mark and Luke "Q", which probably comes from the German word *Quelle* meaning "source". In addition, Matthew and Luke have their own independent materials - their own source or sources that none of the other Synoptics uses.

The core learning of this activity is for students to clarify the reasons why scripture scholars view many texts as composite works. Four reasons are provided. Students are encouraged to explore and discuss secular texts for evidence of composite sourcing and editing so that they have a better understanding of source criticism both within and beyond religious contexts.

Students explore four main reasons to believe that many Biblical texts come to us in an edited and adapted form. Once they have completed the four tasks below, students create a three level **Concept Web** ① that synthesises their understanding of Source Criticism. The tasks below could be copied for use by students.

### Task One



Some scripture text authors make it clear to the reader that they have used material from other sources.

Students explore the following extracts from The Book of Proverbs where the Biblical text tells us where new collections of material begin.

**Proverbs 1:1**  
These are the proverbs of King Solomon of Israel, the son of David.

**Proverbs 10:1**  
Here are some proverbs of Solomon: Children with good sense make their parents happy, but foolish children make them sad.

Students use their Bible or the Bible Gateway website to locate the following verses from proverbs which similarly acknowledge material from other sources. The Bible Gateway website is located at:

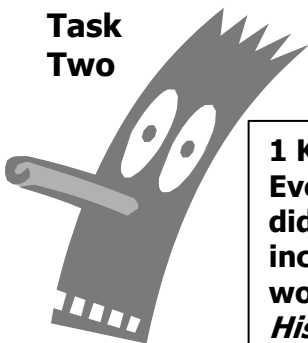
[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

**Proverbs 22:7**  
**Proverbs 31:1**

**Proverbs 25:1**

**Proverbs 30:1**

### Task Two



Sometimes Biblical texts tell us that their author made use of existing words without specifying in what way they did. For example,

**1 Kings 14:19**  
Everything else Jeroboam did while he was king, including the battles he won, is written in *The History of the Kings of Israel*.

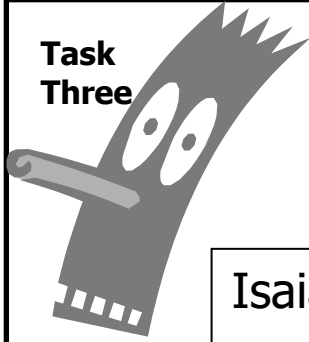
**1 Kings 11:41**  
Everything else Solomon did while he was king is written in the book about him and his wisdom.

Students locate the following texts as examples:

**1 Kings 14:29**

**1 Chronicles 29:29**

### Task Three



On some occasions two books share the same text (this device is often referred to as intertextuality), or have text which differs only a little. Students locate the following texts and using a **Compare/Contrast Strategy** ⓘ look for similarities and differences in the following texts.

Isaiah 2:2-4

Micah 4:1-5

Psalms 108:1-5

Psalms 57:7-11

Psalms 60:5-12

Psalms 108:6-13

Isaiah 39:1-8

2 Kings 20:12-19

### Task Four

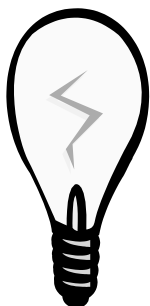


It is clear that the culture which the Old Testament describes is strongly marked by features of tribal life. Tribal cultures give a high value to tradition and to traditional expression of stories, songs and ideas. In the context the Bible describes, its writers would naturally have made use of the traditional material handed on to them, while adapting it to the needs of their own day.

Students locate the following scripture texts that show how tribal practices developed into religious practices.

**Exodus 29:38-43**

**Genesis 17:9-13**



As an extension activity, students can explore the concept of source criticism (intertextuality) as it applies to other texts. For example, Tolkien, in writing *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy, relies heavily on other sources for ideas and content. Experts in source-criticism now know that *The Lord of the Rings* is a redaction of sources ranging from the Red Book of Westmarch (W), to Elvish Chronicles (E), to Gondorian records (G) and to orally transmitted tales of the Rohirrim (R). The conflicting ethnic, social and religious groups, which preserved these stories, all had their own agendas, as did the "Tolkien" (T). Students can conduct an internet search to locate information. Similarly, students might apply source criticism analysis of Shakespeare's plays. A variety of websites can be located through a *Google* search.

**The core learning of this activity is demonstrating an understanding of the three stages in the formation of the Gospels.**

*Oh, everything's too damned expensive these days. This bible costs 15 bucks! And talk about a preachy book! Everybody's a sinner except this guy. (Homer)*



Students work in small learning teams to create a **Story Board** ① for part of a forthcoming episode of *The Simpsons* in which Homer tries to explain a theory about the formation of the Gospels. Some basic information has been provided below. Each learning team records its story board on butcher's paper and makes a brief presentation to the class using the story board on the butcher's paper as a point of reference. Students then engage in class discussion to clarify meanings on the information about the formation of the Gospels.

(used with permission, Animfactory.com)

Alternatively, students may choose to work independently to create a **Cartoon Strip** ① based on the same idea. Students might choose to use quotes from the television program within their cartoon strip. The following websites are helpful in this regard:

[www.snpp.com](http://www.snpp.com) (The Simpsons Archive)

[www.snpp.com/guides/religion.html](http://www.snpp.com/guides/religion.html) (episodes with religious themes)

[www.thesimpsons.com](http://www.thesimpsons.com) (The official Simpsons website)

[www.duffgardens.net](http://www.duffgardens.net) (The Springfield Weekly – Simpsons website)

[www.moskalyuk.com/shutki/2001/simpson\\_on\\_religion.htm](http://www.moskalyuk.com/shutki/2001/simpson_on_religion.htm)

(Quotes on religion from The Simpsons)

[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion\\_in\\_The\\_Simpsons](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Religion_in_The_Simpsons) (Wikipedia page)

[www.thesimpsonsquotes.com/themes/religion-quotes.html](http://www.thesimpsonsquotes.com/themes/religion-quotes.html) (Simpsons religion quotes)

### ***The Formation of the Gospels***

Scripture scholars in more recent times have come to recognise that the four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke and John were all written several decades after the death of Jesus in approximately 30 C.E. (Common Era). Scripture scholars assert that the Gospels as we now have them were the final text form of a long process of development. Scripture scholars divide this process of development into three overlapping stages.

The first stage encompassed the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. Scripture scholars date this first stage from approximately 4 B.C.E. to 30 C.E. This initial stage covers the period of approximately thirty-four years of the life of Jesus on earth. This stage includes the words and actions of Jesus during his earthly life.

The second stage includes the telling and re-telling of the events of Jesus' life and his teachings in the early Christian communities. Included in this telling and re-telling was the preaching and teaching of the apostles and the disciples of Jesus to the early Christian communities. Telling and re-telling the events of Jesus' life and his teaching also took place in the context of liturgy as groups of early Christians gathered to celebrate the life, death and resurrection of Jesus. This second stage covers a period between the death of Jesus in approximately 30CE to around 50CE.

The third stage consisted of the writing of the Gospel texts themselves. This third stage occurred over a period of time in the second half of the first century CE. Scripture scholars are generally agreed that the first Gospel published was that of Mark. While there is no consensus among scholars about the publication date of Mark's Gospel, many scholars think that a date during or shortly after the fall of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. is likely. Scholars assume that the Gospels of Matthew and Luke were published before that of John. Many scholars date the Gospel of Matthew and Luke around 90 C.E. and John around 100 C.E. The written Gospels were the end product of a long process of development.

## Activity

## Clues on Q © S6.3

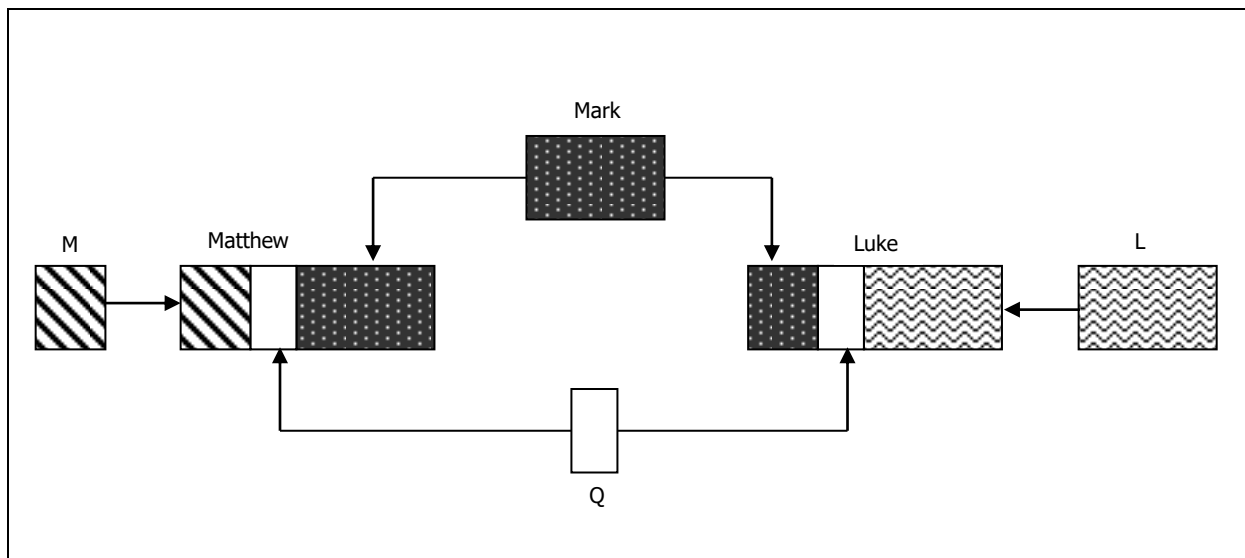
**The core learning of this activity is to demonstrate an understanding of the interrelationships between the four Gospels. The theory offered is called the Four Document Hypothesis. Students demonstrate their understanding by adding additional detail and information to a graphic organiser that describes this theory.**

Students provide additional detail and information to a **Graphic Organiser** ⓘ that visually represents an explanation of what is known as *The Four Document Hypothesis*. This theory proposes outlines an argument about the textual relationship between the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke. The explanation is provided below. The following process is suggested for use by students in engaging with this learning task:

1. Students individually read the explanation of the *Four Document Hypothesis* provided below. They can draw or scribble as they read if it assists them to understand the material more easily.

The Synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke were written between 70 C.E. and 90 C.E. They are very similar in their literary form and content. In its raw form, Mark's gospel was probably a collection of stories and sayings, oral and written that were remembered and valued within Mark's community. The Gospel of Mark was written around 70 C.E. and became a major source for the material in both Matthew and Luke. These gospels were written between 80-90 C.E. An examination of texts from Matthew and Luke make it clear that they not only used material from Mark, but have a second common source of the words and actions of Jesus from a hypothetical source scripture scholars call, 'Q'. 'Q' is an abbreviation of a German word *Quelle* which simply means *source*. In addition, Matthew and Luke have quite a bit of material of their own that is not found in other synoptic gospels. This suggests that Luke had access to oral and written material from a specific source that has been designated 'L'. Matthew also had access to different oral and written material from a source designated 'M'.

2. Students now form small learning teams to interpret this information using the graphic organiser provided below. Every member of each team should be able to use the graphic organiser to explain their understanding of the Four Document Hypothesis. After a reasonable period of time, some students are selected at random to give a brief explanation using the Graphic Organiser.



- Each student is now required to reproduce the graphic organiser either by hand or using a computer. Students label each segment of each box and where possible provide dates and any other information that might be relevant.

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

The Bible Gateway with Biblical texts available in multiple translations

[www.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis](http://www.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis)

Five Gospel Parallels with parallel texts of the Gospels available in a range of combinations.

## Activity

## Penning the Pentateuch © S6.3

**The core learning of this activity is for students to demonstrate an understanding of the theological slant of each of the four authors of the Pentateuch (this is the title used by Christians for the first five books of the Bible; Jews refer to these books as the Torah).**

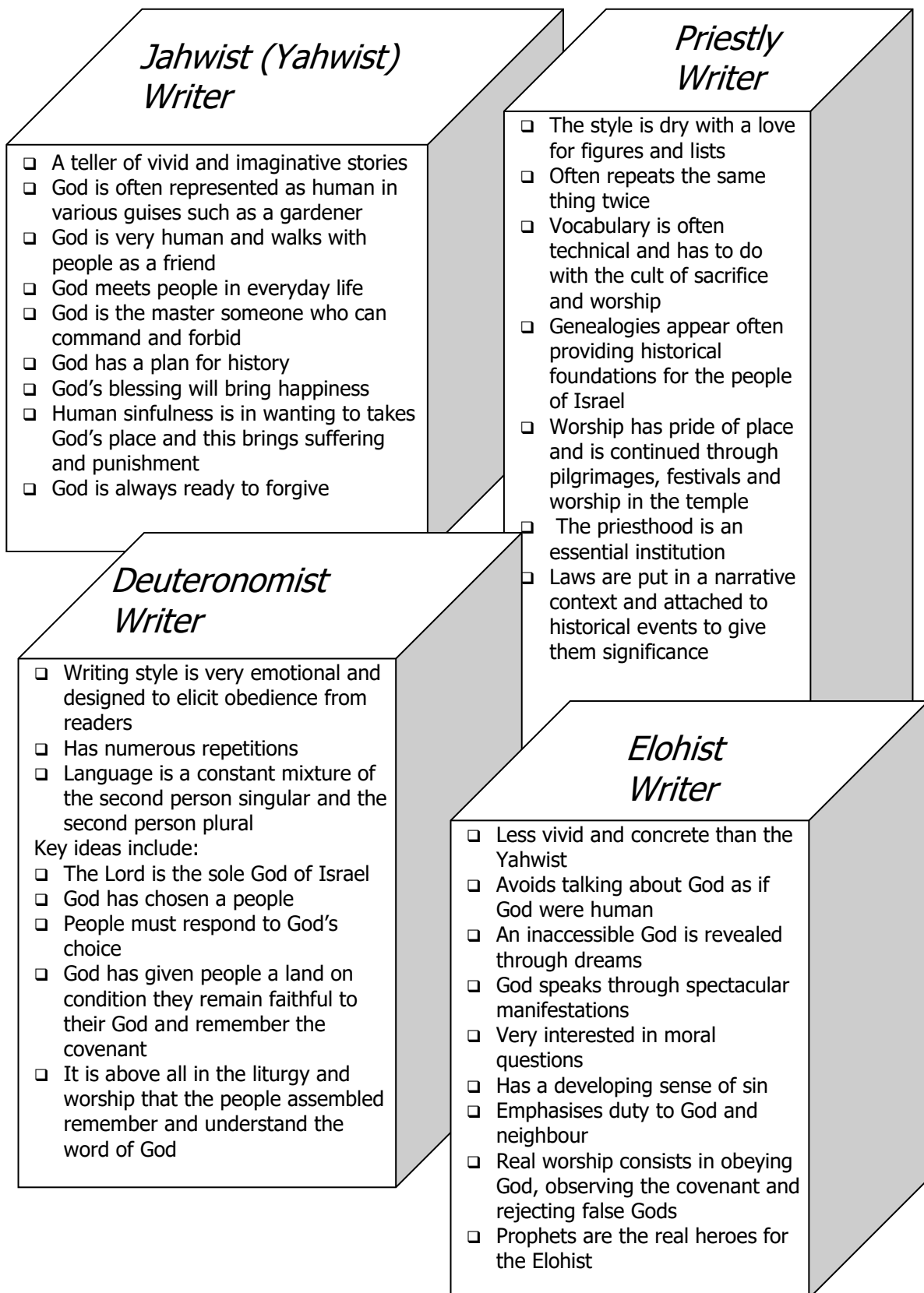
Students use a **Lit Circle Strategy** ① to discuss the material below about *Authorship of the Pentateuch*. Students then complete a **3:2:1 Strategy** ① to quickly share key ideas associated with *Authorship of the Pentateuch*.

### ***Authorship of the Pentateuch***

The term *Pentateuch* refers to the first five books of the Old Testament or Hebrew Scriptures. The Pentateuch includes the biblical books of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. A so-called "documentary hypothesis" or theory assumes that four strands of tradition or four general sources have contributed in the composition of the Pentateuch. These strands of tradition are named the Jahwist (J), the Elohist (E), the Priestly (P) and the Deuteronomist (D).

The Jahwist (Yahwist) tradition comes from the time of Solomon about 950 B.C.E. and originates in royal circles in Jerusalem. The king has an important place in this tradition as the one who gives unity to the faith of the people. The Elohist tradition calls God *Elohim*. It came into being in the northern kingdom after the kingdom of David and Solomon had split into two. The Elohist attaches great importance to prophets and the prophetic message. The Priestly tradition came into being during the Babylonian exile in the years 587 –538 B.C.E. and later. After the deportation of many of the people of Israel to Babylon, the priests re-read and re-interpreted the traditions of the Pentateuch to sustain the faith and hope of an exiled people. The Deuteronomist tradition was begun in the northern kingdom and completed in Jerusalem.

Certain features are characteristic of each tradition and assist scripture scholars in identifying particular traditions when they are studying texts from the various books of the Pentateuch. Major characteristics of each of the four strands of tradition are set out below:



Students form small learning teams. Each team is allocated one of the scripture texts provided below. Each team studies their allocated text and identifies which tradition is best exemplified through the text. Teams share their findings with the whole class.



**Genesis 1:1-2, 4**

<sup>1</sup> In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

<sup>2</sup> 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. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good and he separated the light from the darkness.

**Deuteronomy 4:32-40**

32 Ask now about the former days, long before your time, from the day God created man on the earth; ask from one end of the heavens to the other. Has anything so great as this ever happened, or has anything like it ever been heard of?

33 Has any other people heard the voice of God speaking out of fire, as you have and lived? 34 Has any god ever tried to take for himself one nation out of another nation, by testings, by miraculous signs and wonders, by war, by a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, or by great and awesome deeds, like all the things the Lord your God did for you in Egypt before your very eyes?

35 You were shown these things so that you might know that the Lord is God; besides him there is no other. 36 From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you. On earth he showed you his great fire and you heard his words from out of the fire. 37 Because he loved your forefathers and chose their descendants after them, he brought you out of Egypt by his Presence and his great strength, 38 to drive out before you nations greater and stronger than you and to bring you into their land to give it to you for your inheritance, as it is today.

39 Acknowledge and take to heart this day that the Lord is God in heaven above and on the earth below. There is no other. 40 Keep his decrees and commands, which I am giving you today, so that it may go well with you and your children after you and that you may live long in the land the Lord your God gives you for all time.

**Genesis 5:1-11**

<sup>1</sup> This is the written account of Adam's line.

When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God. <sup>2</sup> He created them male and female and blessed them. And when they were created, he called them "man. "

<sup>3</sup> When Adam had lived 130 years, he had a son in his own likeness, in his own image; and he named him Seth. <sup>4</sup> After Seth was born, Adam lived 800 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>5</sup> Altogether, Adam lived 930 years and then he died.

<sup>6</sup> When Seth had lived 105 years, he became the father of Enosh. <sup>7</sup> And after he became the father of Enosh, Seth lived 807 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>8</sup> Altogether, Seth lived 912 years and then he died.

<sup>9</sup> When Enosh had lived 90 years, he became the father of Kenan. <sup>10</sup> And after he became the father of Kenan, Enosh lived 815 years and had other sons and daughters. <sup>11</sup> Altogether, Enosh lived 905 years and then he died.

## **Exodus 11:1-12**

### *The Plague on the Firstborn*

<sup>1</sup> Now the Lord had said to Moses, "I will bring one more plague on Pharaoh and on Egypt. After that, he will let you go from here and when he does, he will drive you out completely. <sup>2</sup> Tell the people that men and women alike are to ask their neighbours for articles of silver and gold." <sup>3</sup> (The Lord made the Egyptians favourably disposed toward the people and Moses himself was highly regarded in Egypt by Pharaoh's officials and by the people.)

<sup>4</sup> So Moses said, "This is what the Lord says: 'About midnight I will go throughout Egypt. <sup>5</sup> Every firstborn son in Egypt will die, from the firstborn son of Pharaoh, who sits on the throne, to the firstborn son of the slave girl, who is at her hand mill and all the firstborn of the cattle as well. <sup>6</sup> There will be loud wailing throughout Egypt-worse than there has ever been or ever will be again. <sup>7</sup> But among the Israelites not a dog will bark at any man or animal.' Then you will know that the Lord makes a distinction between Egypt and Israel. <sup>8</sup> All these officials of yours will come to me, bowing down before me and saying, 'Go, you and all the people who follow you!' After that I will leave." Then Moses, hot with anger, left Pharaoh.

<sup>9</sup> The Lord had said to Moses, "Pharaoh will refuse to listen to you-so that my wonders may be multiplied in Egypt." <sup>10</sup> Moses and Aaron performed all these wonders before Pharaoh, but the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart and he would not let the Israelites go out of his country.

## **Numbers 1:1-16**

<sup>1</sup> The Lord spoke to Moses in the Tent of Meeting in the Desert of Sinai on the first day of the second month of the second year after the Israelites came out of Egypt. He said: <sup>2</sup> "Take a census of the whole Israelite community by their clans and families, listing every man by name, one by one. <sup>3</sup> You and Aaron are to number by their divisions all the men in Israel twenty years old or more who are able to serve in the army. <sup>4</sup> One man from each tribe, each the head of his family, is to help you.

<sup>5</sup> These are the names of the men who are to assist you:

from Reuben, Elizur son of Shedeur;

<sup>6</sup> from Simeon, Shelumiel son of Zurishaddai;

<sup>7</sup> from Judah, Nahshon son of Amminadab;

<sup>8</sup> from Issachar, Nethanel son of Zuar;

<sup>9</sup> from Zebulun, Eliab son of Helon;

<sup>10</sup> from the sons of Joseph:

from Ephraim, Elishama son of Ammihud;

from Manasseh, Gamaliel son of Pedahzur;

<sup>11</sup> from Benjamin, Abidan son of Gideoni;

<sup>12</sup> from Dan, Ahiezer son of Ammishaddai;

<sup>13</sup> from Asher, Pagiel son of Ocran;

<sup>14</sup> from Gad, Eliasaph son of Deuel;

<sup>15</sup> from Naphtali, Ahira son of Enan."

<sup>16</sup> These were the men appointed from the community, the leaders of their ancestral tribes. They were the heads of the clans of Israel.

Other scripture passages useful for this task include:

Deuteronomy 18:15-22; Exodus 19:3-20 and Deuteronomy 30:15-20.

## □ Form Criticism

### Teacher Background

Form criticism points out identifies the variety of text types (genre, literary forms), that are present in the Bible such as poetry, law, narrative, letters, homilies, songs, letters and so on. Form criticism operates at the level of an entire work and of the discrete parts of that work. For example, while the letters of Paul belong to the text type “epistle” they contain within them other text types such as hymns and lists. The Book of Numbers, which at first sight seems to be an historical narrative, contains within it text types such as legal codes, poetry and liturgical rubrics.

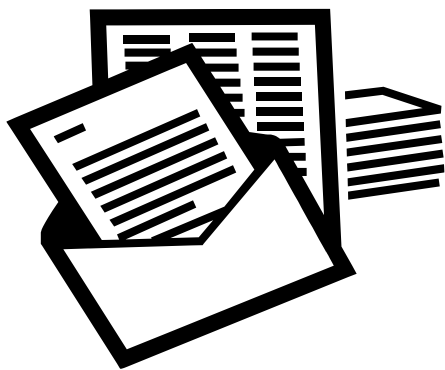
Form critics, having identified the text type employed to develop a given scriptural text, interpret the text in the light of the rules and functions of the text type. For example, the creation account in Genesis 1: 1 –2:4a is a poem and possibly a poem meant to be sung or performed by many voices in a liturgical assembly. Thus, it would be a mistake to interpret the account as if it was a scientific account.

In applying form criticism to the interpretation of scriptural texts, it is necessary to recognise the text type/s and the textual features, generic structure/s codes and conventions that make up the text type/s. Form critics recognise ways in which text type and the associated text features direct, open up, reinforce, limit and otherwise influence interpretation. Thus a legal code is composed in precise form and language to limit possibilities of ambiguity and misunderstanding. On the other hand, a poem is likely to contain text features such as metaphor, simile, imagery and evocative and emotive language designed to open up a diversity of interpretation and response. In applying form criticism it is also useful to imagine a social location for a given text type such as liturgical or worship setting, preaching, law courts, royal court, school, marketplace or the domestic setting of a home.

### Activity

### Paul’s Letters © S6.3

**The core learning of this activity is for students to demonstrate an understanding of the textual features of letters, both secular and Biblical. Students apply this knowledge in interpreting aspects of Paul’s Letter to the Galatians.**



Students gather a collection of letters from sources such as popular magazines, daily newspapers, suburban newspapers, religious newspapers, business letters, letters from local politicians, personal letters and so on.

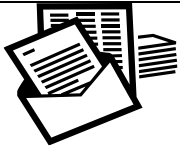
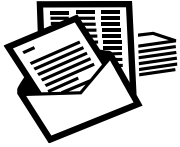
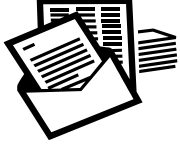
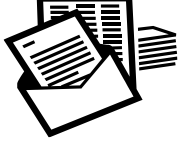


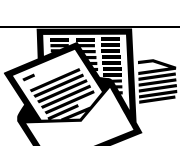
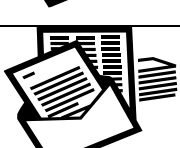
Students form small learning teams and using two of the collected letters, try to identify textual features using colour coding. For example,

Opening Greeting	Green
Farewell	Yellow
Persuasive language	Red
Personal anecdotes	Blue
Reference to previous correspondence	Orange
Orientation and purpose of the letter	Brown
Closing summary/request	Pink
Structured argument	Purple

On a class **Retrieval Chart** [🔗](#), students record the identified textual features located for each letter. Ticks are placed in appropriate boxes to indicate which features could be found.

Students read *Galatians* and, using a retrieval chart similar to the one provided below, locate examples for each textual feature. Brief notes are written in the appropriate boxes.

An example of a Retrieval Chart has been provided below.

Textual Features	Letter of St Paul to the Galatians
 Opening Greeting	
 Use of persuasive language	
 Personal anecdotes	
 Structured argument	
 Reference to previous correspondence	
 Orientation and purpose of the letter	
 Closing summary/request	
 Farewell	

Students use the information recorded in the retrieval chart to draw some inferences about Paul's purpose in writing to the Galatians about the issues raised.




Students now use selected elements from the structure of a letter listed on the retrieval chart to create an email for a contemporary Christian community in an Australian context.

The core learning of this activity is to clarify the two key tasks of the Form Critic: namely, to identify the text type and then to interpret that text in light of the rules and functions of the text type. In this activity, students investigate the variety of forms and purposes of the Psalms and use that knowledge to present a creative, contemporary interpretation of one or more selected psalms. In this way, students demonstrate how psalms need to be viewed as poems put to song, which was their intended purpose.

Students form learning pairs to investigate different psalm forms and the purpose of each. These have been listed on the chart provided below. Each learning pair is allocated a specific form to investigate. They need to read at least three of the psalms that match the form allocated. As they read, students use the **Think Pad Strategy** ① to record words, images, feelings, emotions, colours and ideas that exhibit the form. For example, one learning pair might investigate the following three psalms:

Psalm Form	Purpose	Psalms
Imprecatory	Asking for judgements on wicked people	Psalms 35, 58 and 7

As they read each psalm students write and draw on their Think Pad.

<h2>Words</h2> <p><i>Tear me to pieces like a lion</i>  <i>Slay my enemies</i>  <i>Condemn the wicked</i>  <i>God will sharpen the sword, take up his deadly weapon and aim his burning arrows</i></p>	<h2>Symbols</h2> <p><i>Snakes and cobras</i>  <i>Lions in wait</i>  <i>Snails dissolving into slime</i>  <i>Burning house</i>  <i>Weeds on a path</i></p>
 <h2>Pictures</h2>	<p><i>(Students record names of songs and movies that reflect similar themes and images to the psalms read)</i></p> <h2>Connections to Life</h2>

Each learning pair now plans a presentation of one or more psalms from their allocated classification in a form that includes music with some combination of words, movement and visual image that reflects important elements of the original psalm. The development of a PowerPoint with accompanying music is one possibility. Other possibilities include music, words and still image where members of the learning team take up different poses to construct a picture that shows physically their interpretation of a chosen psalm. An extension of still image is a freeze frame in which students devise a series of linked still images that describe important moments within the chosen psalm text.

The chart of psalm forms appears below.

PSALM FORM	PURPOSE	PSALM EXAMPLES
Devotional/Teaching	Formal instruction and exhortation	1, 5, 7, 15, 17, 50, 73, 94, 101
Praise	Praise of God and the divine works	106, 111-113, 115-117, 135, 146-150
Historical	Reflecting on God's dealings with the nation of Israel	78, 105, 106, 136
Nature	God's handiwork in creation	8, 19, 29, 33, 65, 104
Penitential	Sorrowing over sin	6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, 143
Imprecatory*	Asking for judgment on wicked people	7, 35, 52, 55, 58, 59, 69, 79, 83, 109, 137, 140
Messianic	Speaking of the person and the work of the Messiah	2, 8, 16, 20-24, 31, 34, 35, 40, 41, 45, 68, 69, 102, 110, 118

\*this word is related to the act or calling down or invoking evil against another. This is a device used frequently throughout the Old Testament.

## Activity

## Rorts and Torts © S6.3

**The core learning of this activity is for students to demonstrate an understanding of the purposes and identifiable features of Covenant Law in Old Testament times. They apply text analyst questioning to interpret aspects of given Scriptural texts that are exemplars of Covenant Law.**

Students, working in learning teams, use a **Readers Circle Strategy** ① to analyse the textual features of one of the texts provided from the Pentateuch that provide examples of the text type *Covenant Law*. The following questions provide a guide to reading each text.

- ☐ What are the purposes of this text type *Covenant Law*?
- ☐ What are some identifiable text features of this text type *Covenant Law*?
- ☐ In what ways do the text features help the text type *Covenant Law* achieve its purposes?
- ☐ How does the text express the nature of the relationship between God and God's people?

Each learning team then compares their exploration of the text with another team investigating a different text.

### Deuteronomy 5:1- 22

<sup>1</sup> Moses summoned all Israel and said:

Hear, O Israel, the decrees and laws I declare in your hearing today. Learn them and be sure to follow them. <sup>2</sup> The Lord our God made a covenant with us at Horeb. <sup>3</sup> It was not with our fathers that the Lord made this covenant, but with us, with all of us who are alive here today. <sup>4</sup> The Lord spoke to you face to face out of the fire on the mountain.

<sup>5</sup>(At that time I stood between the Lord and you to declare to you the word of the Lord, because you were afraid of the fire and did not go up the mountain.) And he said:

<sup>6</sup> "I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt, out of the land of slavery.

<sup>7</sup> "You shall have no other gods before me.

<sup>8</sup> "You shall not make for yourself an idol in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. <sup>9</sup> You shall not bow down to them or worship them; for I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate me, <sup>10</sup> but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love me and keep my commandments.

<sup>11</sup> "You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name.

<sup>12</sup> "Observe the Sabbath day by keeping it holy, as the Lord your God has commanded you. <sup>13</sup> Six days you shall labour and do all your work, <sup>14</sup> but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord your God. On it you shall not do any work, neither you, nor your son or daughter, nor your manservant or maidservant, nor your ox, your donkey or any of

your animals, nor the alien within your gates, so that your manservant and maidservant may rest, as you do. <sup>15</sup> Remember that you were slaves in Egypt and that the Lord your God brought you out of there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the Lord your God has commanded you to observe the Sabbath day.

<sup>16</sup> "Honour your father and your mother, as the Lord your God has commanded you, so that you may live long and that it may go well with you in the land the Lord your God is giving you.

<sup>17</sup> "You shall not murder.

<sup>18</sup> "You shall not commit adultery.

<sup>19</sup> "You shall not steal.

<sup>20</sup> "You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.

<sup>21</sup> "You shall not covet your neighbour's wife. You shall not set your desire on your neighbour's house or land, his manservant or maidservant, his ox or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbour."

<sup>22</sup> These are the commandments the Lord proclaimed in a loud voice to your whole assembly there on the mountain from out of the fire, the cloud and the deep darkness; and he added nothing more. Then he wrote them on two stone tablets and gave them to me.

## **Exodus 23:1- 9**

### *Laws of Justice and Mercy*

<sup>1</sup> "Do not spread false reports. Do not help a wicked man by being a malicious witness.

<sup>2</sup> "Do not follow the crowd in doing wrong. When you give testimony in a lawsuit, do not pervert justice by siding with the crowd, <sup>3</sup> and do not show favouritism to a poor man in his lawsuit.

<sup>4</sup> "If you come across your enemy's ox or donkey wandering off, be sure to take it back to him. <sup>5</sup> If you see the donkey of someone who hates you fallen down under its load, do not leave it there; be sure you help him with it.

<sup>6</sup> "Do not deny justice to your poor people in their lawsuits. <sup>7</sup> Have nothing to do with a false charge and do not put an innocent or honest person to death, for I will not acquit the guilty.

<sup>8</sup> "Do not accept a bribe, for a bribe blinds those who see and twists the words of the righteous.

<sup>9</sup> "Do not oppress an alien; you yourselves know how it feels to be aliens, because you were aliens in Egypt.

## **Leviticus 1:1- 9**

### *The Burnt Offering*

<sup>1</sup> The Lord called to Moses and spoke to him from the Tent of Meeting. He said, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When any of you brings an offering to the Lord, bring as your offering an animal from either the herd or the flock.

<sup>3</sup> " 'If the offering is a burnt offering from the herd, he is to offer a male without defect. He must present it at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting so that it will be acceptable to the Lord. <sup>4</sup> He is to lay his hand on the head of the burnt offering and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. <sup>5</sup> He is to slaughter the young bull before the Lord and then Aaron's sons the priests shall bring the blood and sprinkle it against the altar on all sides at the entrance to the Tent of Meeting. <sup>6</sup> He is to skin the burnt offering and cut it into pieces. <sup>7</sup> The sons of Aaron the priest are to put fire on the altar and arrange wood on the fire. <sup>8</sup> Then Aaron's sons the priests shall arrange the pieces, including the head and the fat, on the burning wood that is on the altar. <sup>9</sup> He is to wash the inner parts and the legs with water and the priest is to burn all of it on the altar. It is a burnt offering, an offering made by fire, an aroma pleasing to the Lord.

## **Leviticus 25: 1-7**

### *The Sabbath Year*

<sup>1</sup> The Lord said to Moses on Mount Sinai, <sup>2</sup> "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'When you enter the land I am going to give you, the land itself must observe a Sabbath to the Lord. <sup>3</sup> For six years sow your fields and for six years prune your vineyards and gather their crops. <sup>4</sup> But in the seventh year the land is to have a Sabbath of rest, a Sabbath to the Lord. Do not sow your fields or prune your vineyards. <sup>5</sup> Do not reap what grows of itself or harvest the grapes of your untended vines. The land is to have a year of rest. <sup>6</sup> Whatever the land yields during the Sabbath year will be food for you—for yourself, your manservant and maidservant and the hired worker and temporary resident who live among you, <sup>7</sup> as well as for your livestock and the wild animals in your land. Whatever the land produces may be eaten.

Students consider some of the following questions in discussing the texts supplied.

- ☐ What kind of person and with what interests and values might have produced these texts?
- ☐ What are the texts trying to make people believe and do?
- ☐ What beliefs and positions are dominant in the texts?
- ☐ What beliefs are silenced or absent in the texts?
- ☐ What do you think of the way these texts present these ideas and what alternatives are there?

## ☐ **Redaction Criticism**

Redaction criticism is the study of the ways in which theological perspective of a Biblical text is evident in its collection, arrangement, editing and modification of the sources from which the text was composed. A redactor's editorial activity is easiest to discern when we have several parallel versions of the same story, as we do in the four gospels. The redaction critic examines such parallel texts to determine what material is shared amongst them, what material is unique to each and how each author shapes the material for his/her own community. Insofar as we can discern this shaping activity, we can begin to reconstruct the life and perspective of the original community for which the text was composed.

In considering redaction criticism it is important to understand that the idea of "authorship" of a text is a very modern idea. Today we expect as a matter of course to see the name/s of the author/s attached to the texts they have written. But pre-modern people did not have this idea of the writer/s of a text as "author". A writer was seen as the channel for a longstanding and valued tradition handed down from a number of authoritative sources. For most Biblical texts, a single author is not likely and so scholars suggest a creative editorial process (redaction). The final redaction of a biblical text is therefore attributed to some few creative redactors (editors or compilers). Thus, redaction criticism focuses on the editorial process that produced a text we now have in the Bible.

For example, in interpreting parallel texts in the Synoptic Gospels, Mark, Matthew and Luke, a redaction critic first compares a selected text against parallel texts in the other synoptics. Then the critic identifies material that is shared and not shared across the parallel texts, listing similarities and differences. Third, the redaction critic isolates and lists material unique to a particular gospel. Finally the redaction critic, drawing on background resource materials, accounts for the similarities and differences between the parallel gospel texts in terms of the literary relationship between the Synoptic Gospels, the communities for whom each gospel was originally composed and the theological focus and themes of Matthew, Mark and Luke.







**The core learning of this activity is for students to understand how each of the Gospels is theologically positioned and how a knowledge of this can assist in interpreting specific Gospel texts.**

Students form small learning teams and select one of the four Gospels to investigate. They gather and record their data using a class **Retrieval Chart Strategy** ⓘ that summarises the essential, distinctive features of each of the four Gospels. A sample retrieval chart has been provided below. Students research information from standard texts, from Biblical commentaries, or from the Internet. The following website may be useful in this task:

[http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Four\\_Gospel\\_Chart.htm](http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Four_Gospel_Chart.htm)

(This site contains a variety of excellent, user-friendly tables of information)

The retrieval chart below suggests categories under which information may be summarised.

	 <b>Matthew</b>	 <b>Mark</b>	 <b>Luke</b>	 <b>John</b>
<b>Author</b>				
<b>Date</b>				
<b>Place</b>				
<b>Intended community and its background</b>				
<b>Sources of the text</b>				
<b>Structure of the Gospel</b>				
<b>Literary Style of the Gospel</b>				

Students now examine the theological slant of the authors/editors of each Gospel. The following Fact Cards will support this activity.



### Mark's Gospel

- ☐ Jesus is seen as the suffering Messiah
- ☐ Passion and resurrection is the key to understanding Jesus
- ☐ Uses geography with a theological purpose
- ☐ Gives a very human portrait of Jesus



### Matthew's Gospel

- ☐ Jesus is a teacher
- ☐ Jesus is seen as the new Moses
- ☐ Jesus is seen as a law giver and Messiah
- ☐ Use of Old Testament references
- ☐ Jesus as fulfilment of the Law
- ☐ Criticises the Scribes and Pharisees
- ☐ Highlights 'Church' and Peter's role
- ☐ Galilee is seen as important for Jesus' ministry



### Luke's Gospel

- ☐ Jesus is seen as a prophet and saviour of the oppressed
- ☐ Concerned with the gentiles and marginalised
- ☐ Prominence of the Holy Spirit
- ☐ Greater prominence given to women and other evangelists
- ☐ Emphasises proper stewardship of wealth
- ☐ A gospel of compassion, mercy and universal salvation



### John's Gospel

- ☐ Jesus seen as the Word
- ☐ Jesus seen as Son of Man, Light of the World, the Way, the Truth and Life
- ☐ Emphasises community
- ☐ Signs and symbols used
- ☐ Theme of eternal life
- ☐ Shows some reflection over time because it was last to be written
- ☐ More complex in style and content than other Gospels
- ☐ Use of metaphoric language

Students divide into four learning teams. Each team is allocated one of the four Gospels. Each team consults the relevant Fact Card provided and using their Bible or the Bible Gateway website locates scripture passages that provide evidence of the theological concerns listed on the card. These are then discussed at the whole class level. The Bible Gateway website is located at:

[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

## Activity

## Silenced Voices © S6.3

**The core learning of this activity is for students to explore ways women are depicted in the Resurrection accounts. Students use contextual information to make inferences about the general role of women depicted in scripture.**

Students read the parallel accounts provided below that describe the role of the women in the resurrection of Jesus. Students form learning teams of four. Each student is allocated a specific Gospel text (e.g. Matthew 28, Mark 16, Luke 24 and John 20). Students use a **Five Ws + H Strategy** ① to investigate the words and actions of the women depicted in their allocated account as well as the words and actions directed to women in their allocated account. They then share their findings with the other members of the learning team.

The four accounts have been provided below. Alternatively, students can easily access the Gospel Parallels website located at:  
[www.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis](http://www.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis)

**Luke 24:9-11**

<sup>9</sup>When they came back from the tomb, they told all these things to the Eleven and to all the others. <sup>10</sup>It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James and the others with them who told this to the apostles. <sup>11</sup>But they did not believe the women, because their words seemed to them like nonsense.

**Matthew 28:1-15**

<sup>1</sup>After the Sabbath, at dawn on the first day of the week, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to look at the tomb.  
<sup>2</sup>There was a violent earthquake, for an angel of the Lord came down from heaven and, going to the tomb, rolled back the stone and sat on it. <sup>3</sup>His appearance was like lightning and his clothes were white as snow. <sup>4</sup>The guards were so afraid of him that they shook and became like dead men.  
<sup>5</sup>The angel said to the women, "Do not be afraid, for I know that you are looking for Jesus, who was crucified. <sup>6</sup>He is not here; he has risen, just as he said. Come and see the place where he lay. <sup>7</sup>Then go quickly and tell his disciples: 'He has risen from the dead and is going ahead of you into Galilee. There you will see him.' Now I have told you."  
<sup>8</sup>So the women hurried away from the tomb, afraid yet filled with joy and ran to tell his disciples. <sup>9</sup>Suddenly Jesus met them. "Greetings," he said. They came to him, clasped his feet and worshiped him. <sup>10</sup>Then Jesus said to them, "Do not be afraid. Go and tell my brothers to go to Galilee; there they will see me."

*The Guards' Report*

<sup>11</sup>While the women were on their way, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. <sup>12</sup>When the chief priests had met with the elders and devised a plan, they gave the soldiers a large sum of money, <sup>13</sup>telling them, "You are to say, 'His disciples came during the night and stole him away while we were asleep.' <sup>14</sup>If this report gets to the governor, we will satisfy him and keep you out of trouble." <sup>15</sup>So the soldiers took the money and did as they were instructed. And this story has been widely circulated among the Jews to this very day.

**Mark 16:9-11**

<sup>9</sup>When Jesus rose early on the first day of the week, he appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom he had driven seven demons. <sup>10</sup>She went and told those who had been with him and who were mourning and weeping. <sup>11</sup>When they heard that Jesus was alive and that she had seen him, they did not believe it.

**John 20:11-18**

<sup>11</sup>but Mary stood outside the tomb crying. As she wept, she bent over to look into the tomb <sup>12</sup>and saw two angels in white, seated where Jesus' body had been, one at the head and the other at the foot.  
<sup>13</sup>They asked her, "Woman, why are you crying?"  
<sup>14</sup>"They have taken my Lord away," she said, "and I don't know where they have put him." At this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing there, but she did not realise that it was Jesus.  
<sup>15</sup>"Woman," he said, "why are you crying? Who is it you are looking for?"  
Thinking he was the gardener, she said, "Sir, if you have carried him away, tell me where you have put him and I will get him."  
<sup>16</sup>Jesus said to her, "Mary."  
She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, "Rabboni!" (which means Teacher).  
<sup>17</sup>Jesus said, "Do not hold on to me, for I have not yet returned to the Father. Go instead to my brothers and tell them, 'I am returning to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.'"  
<sup>18</sup>Mary Magdalene went to the disciples with the news: "I have seen the Lord!" And she told them that he had said these things to her.

Students use the information gathered to make inferences in written form about the role of women as depicted in each of the Gospels.

**The core learning in this activity is for students to explore similarities and differences in parallel accounts of gospel texts and to account for the distinctive differences between accounts using contextual information as a guide.**

Students use a **Graphic Outline Strategy** ① to identify to highlight similarities and differences in the parallel accounts in Matthew, Mark and Luke of the healing of the leper. Initially students read each account and use four highlighting pens. One colour is chosen to highlight similarities in the three texts. One colour is used to highlight text that is distinctive to Matthew. One colour is used to highlight text that is distinctive to Luke. One colour is used to highlight text that is distinctive to Mark.

<b>Matthew 8:1-4</b>	<b>Mark 1:40-45</b>	<b>Luke 5:12-16</b>
When he came down from the mountain, great crowds followed him; <sup>8.2</sup> and behold, a leper came to him and knelt before him, saying, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." <sup>8.3</sup> And he stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately his leprosy was cleansed. <sup>8.4</sup> And Jesus said to him, "See that you say nothing to any one; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a proof to the people."	<sup>1.40</sup> And a leper came to him beseeching him and kneeling said to him, "If you will, you can make me clean." <sup>1.41</sup> Moved with pity, he stretched out his hand and touched him and said to him, "I will; be clean." <sup>1.42</sup> And immediately the leprosy left him and he was made clean. <sup>1.43</sup> And he sternly charged him and sent him away at once, <sup>1.44</sup> and said to him, "See that you say nothing to any one; but go, show yourself to the priest and offer for your cleansing what Moses commanded, for a proof to the people." <sup>1.45</sup> But he went out and began to talk freely about it and to spread the news, so that Jesus could no longer openly enter a town, but was out in the country; and people came to him from every quarter.	<sup>5.12</sup> While he was in one of the cities, there came a man full of leprosy; and when he saw Jesus, he fell on his face and besought him, "Lord, if you will, you can make me clean." <sup>5.13</sup> And he stretched out his hand and touched him, saying, "I will; be clean." And immediately the leprosy left him. <sup>5.14</sup> And he charged him to tell no one; but "go and show yourself to the priest and make an offering for your cleansing, as Moses commanded, for a proof to the people." <sup>5.15</sup> But so much the more the report went abroad concerning him; and great multitudes gathered to hear and to be healed of their infirmities. <sup>5.16</sup> But he withdrew to the wilderness and prayed.

Students select those aspects that are distinctive to each account and, using the contextual information contained in the Fact Cards provided in the previous activity, draw inferences about each aspect. These are shared with other students.

## □ **Socio-Historical Criticism**

Socio-historical criticism focuses on the social context of the world behind the text, whether this is the world referred to in the text or the world in which the text was actually written. Socio-historical criticism is an extension of a focus on the "situation in life" that form critics have traditionally spoken about. The aim of socio-historical criticism is to provide information about the context of a scriptural text, thus providing data and parameters for determining the probable original meaning of the text and a guide to the intention/s of the author of the text. Socio-historical criticism views religion as a social entity. This critical method assumes a reciprocal interaction between the religious dimension of society and economic, ecological, political, historical and cultural social factors.

Socio-historical criticism as a method focuses on social, economic, legal, cultural and religious factors impacting on a text. There are a number of lines of study within this approach:

- ❑ Studying the social environment – occupations, houses, roads, means of travel, money economic realities, political realities, architecture, villages and cities, laws, social classes, markets, cloths, foodstuffs, cooking practices and so on.
- ❑ Focusing on social history, attempting to trace the social changes that took place over time, class conflicts in community, marginalised groups and so on.
- ❑ Using anthropological theory to reflect on patterns of thought and behaviour in a culture, its symbols, its artefacts and institutions and the basic ideas that hold a society together and give meaning to its members.

Socio-historical criticism relies heavily on archaeological and historical scholarship to clarify the historical likelihood of events described in texts, the possible ways the texts were understood by original audiences and the influence/s of the text at the time of writing.

## Activity

## Pyramid of Power © S6.3

**The core learning in this activity is for students to represent in visual form the social order of life in first century Palestine and then apply those understandings to the interpretation of a selected scripture text.**

Students use a three level **Concept Pyramid** ① to visually depict the social order in first century Palestine. A variety of excellent websites provide information on the social strata for life during Bible times. Recommended sites include:

[www.jesuscentral.com/ji/historical-jesus/jesus-firstcenturycontext.php](http://www.jesuscentral.com/ji/historical-jesus/jesus-firstcenturycontext.php)

(The *economic setting* section of this site lists the social classes and who belonged to each.)

[www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/order.html](http://www.pbs.org/empires/romans/empire/order.html)

(This site gives clear information about social order during the time of the Roman Empire.)

[www.cbhs.org/rmartin/contents/palestine\\_outline.htm](http://www.cbhs.org/rmartin/contents/palestine_outline.htm)

(Social order in first century Palestine)

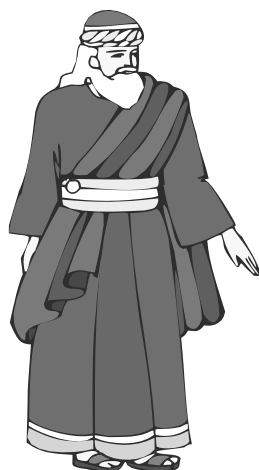
[www.loretonh.nsw.edu.au/religion/Year7\\_Units/Year7\\_Life\\_timeof\\_Jesus\\_unit/Index.htm](http://www.loretonh.nsw.edu.au/religion/Year7_Units/Year7_Life_timeof_Jesus_unit/Index.htm)

(Excellent site dedicated to life in the time of Jesus supplied by Loreto College, NSW)

Students will need to use three levels to depict the social order. Some examples of groups belonging to each level are provided below. These pictures could be used to represent each level for a pictorial pyramid of power.



*High stratum:* civil and religious leaders; those with education and power; people of noble birth; those who were able to travel and owned a large house.



*Middle stratum:* artisans; fishermen; tax collectors; landowning peasants with smallholdings; women with inherited land.



*Low stratum:* tenant farmers; day labourers; servants; slaves; women – wives, widows, female slaves and beggars; orphaned children.

Students form learning pairs and select one of the Scripture texts provided. They identify information in the text relating to the social order during first century Palestine. Students suggest reasons how knowledge of the social order and the groups that belong at each level, assists in understanding the text selected. Students design and create a **Graphic Organiser** ① to represent their findings. The Graphic Organiser is then used as part of a brief oral presentation about the text.

### **Matthew 4: 18-22**

#### *The Calling of the First Disciples*

<sup>18</sup>As Jesus was walking beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw two brothers, Simon called Peter and his brother Andrew. They were casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. <sup>19</sup>"Come, follow me," Jesus said, "and I will make you fishers of men." <sup>20</sup>At once they left their nets and followed him.

<sup>21</sup>Going on from there, he saw two other brothers, James son of Zebedee and his brother John. They were in a boat with their father Zebedee, preparing their nets. Jesus called them, <sup>22</sup>and immediately they left the boat and their father and followed him.

### **Matthew 27: 57-61**

#### *The Burial of Jesus*

<sup>57</sup>As evening approached, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who had himself become a disciple of Jesus. <sup>58</sup>Going to Pilate, he asked for Jesus' body and Pilate ordered that it be given to him. <sup>59</sup>Joseph took the body, wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, <sup>60</sup>and placed it in his own new tomb that he had cut out of the rock. He rolled a big stone in front of the entrance to the tomb and went away. <sup>61</sup>Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting there opposite the tomb.

### **Mark 2: 15-17**

<sup>15</sup>While Jesus was having dinner at Levi's house, many tax collectors and "sinners" were eating with him and his disciples, for there were many who followed him. <sup>16</sup>When the teachers of the law who were Pharisees saw him eating with the "sinners" and tax collectors, they asked his disciples: "Why does he eat with tax collectors and 'sinners'?" <sup>17</sup>On hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."

### **Luke 19: 1-10**

#### *Zacchaeus the Tax Collector*

<sup>1</sup>Jesus entered Jericho and was passing through. <sup>2</sup>A man was there by the name of Zacchaeus; he was a chief tax collector and was wealthy. <sup>3</sup>He wanted to see who Jesus was, but being a short man he could not, because of the crowd. <sup>4</sup>So he ran ahead and climbed a sycamore-fig tree to see him, since Jesus was coming that way.

<sup>5</sup>When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, "Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today." <sup>6</sup>So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly.

<sup>7</sup>All the people saw this and began to mutter, "He has gone to be the guest of a 'sinner.' "

<sup>8</sup>But Zacchaeus stood up and said to the Lord, "Look, Lord! Here and now I give half of my possessions to the poor and if I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount."

<sup>9</sup>Jesus said to him, "Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. <sup>10</sup>For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost."



### **Luke 5: 27-28**

#### The Calling of Levi

<sup>27</sup>After this, Jesus went out and saw a tax collector by the name of Levi sitting at his tax booth. "Follow me," Jesus said to him, <sup>28</sup>and Levi got up, left everything and followed him.

### **Luke 7: 36-50**

#### *Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman*

<sup>36</sup>Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. <sup>37</sup>When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, <sup>38</sup>and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

<sup>39</sup>When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is--that she is a sinner."

<sup>40</sup>Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

<sup>41</sup>"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup>Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he cancelled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

<sup>43</sup>Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt cancelled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

<sup>44</sup>Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. <sup>45</sup>You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. <sup>46</sup>You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. <sup>47</sup>Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

<sup>48</sup>Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

<sup>49</sup>The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

<sup>50</sup>Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

### **Luke 8: 1-3**

#### The Parable of the Sower

<sup>1</sup>After this, Jesus travelled about from one town and village to another, proclaiming the good news of the kingdom of God. The Twelve were with him, <sup>2</sup>and also some women who had been cured of evil spirits and diseases: Mary (called Magdalene) from whom seven demons had come out; <sup>3</sup>Joanna the wife of Cuza, the manager of Herod's household; Susanna; and many others. These women were helping to support them out of their own means.

## **Activity**

## **Social Ladder © S6.3**

**The core learning of this activity is for students to depth their understanding of a well known story, *The Good Samaritan*, using contextual information concerning the social order of life in first century Palestine.**

Students use a **Social Ladder Strategy** ① to explore the story of the Good Samaritan (Luke 10: 25-37). This parable will be well known to many students. Students form small learning teams and

arrange the character cards provided to form a social ladder that depicts the social order that existed in first century Palestine.

Samaritan	The Man
Priest	Levite
Robbers	Innkeeper

Once the learning team has agreed on their social ladder, they are able to visit the social ladders of other groups seeking clarification where necessary. Each team is given time to present their Social Ladders to the class providing oral justification and explanation for the arrangement chosen.

The following core information might assist students in developing their social ladder.

### ***Priests***

*They were worship leaders in the nation of Israel who represented the people before God and conducted various rituals to atone for their sins. A core function was offering sacrifices. They were responsible for ensuring offerings were carried out correctly so that people could be cleansed of their sin.*

### ***Levites***

*These were assistants to the priest in the worship practices. They took care of the tabernacle and the temple and performed other menial tasks such as providing music, serving as doorkeepers and preparing sacrifices for offering by the priests.*

### ***Samaritans***

*From the perspective of mainstream Jews, Samaritans were a mixed race contaminated by foreign blood and false worship. They broke away from mainstream Judaism by building a rival temple on Mt Gerizim. During the time of Jesus, their religion began to prosper, having been made legal in the empire.*

## **Activity**

## **Class Context Pizza © S6.3**

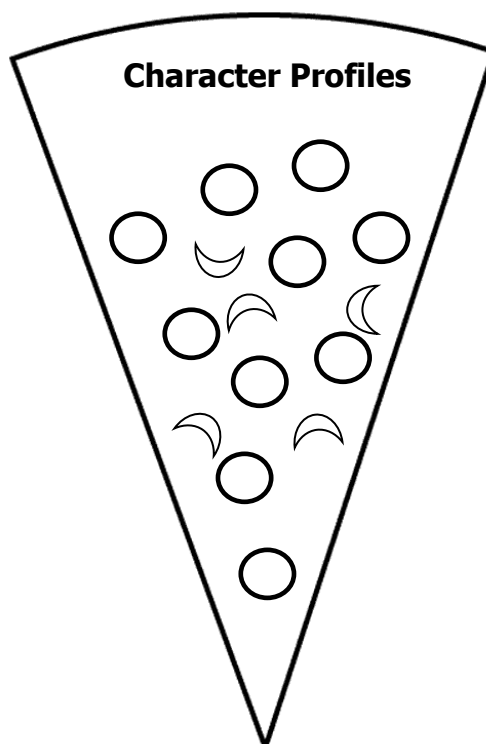
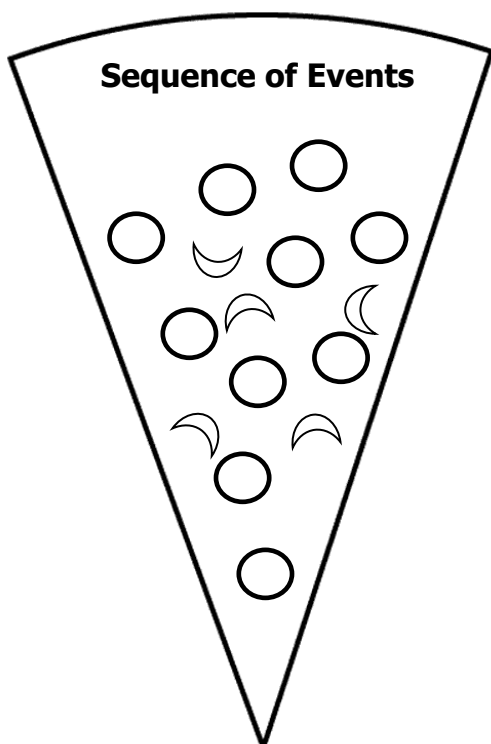
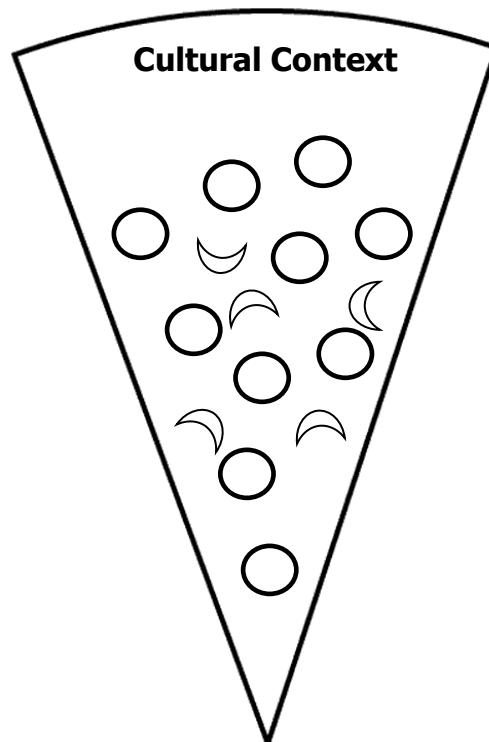
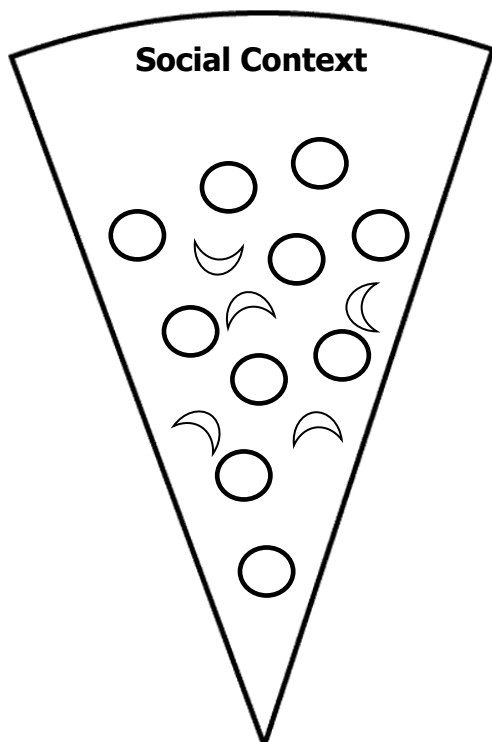
**The core learning of this activity is for students to explore a scriptural text by applying and combining inferences and understandings of contextual information related to the text.**

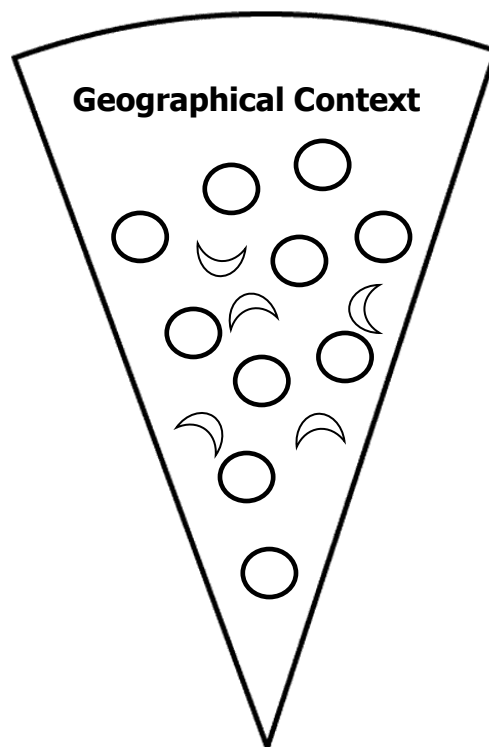
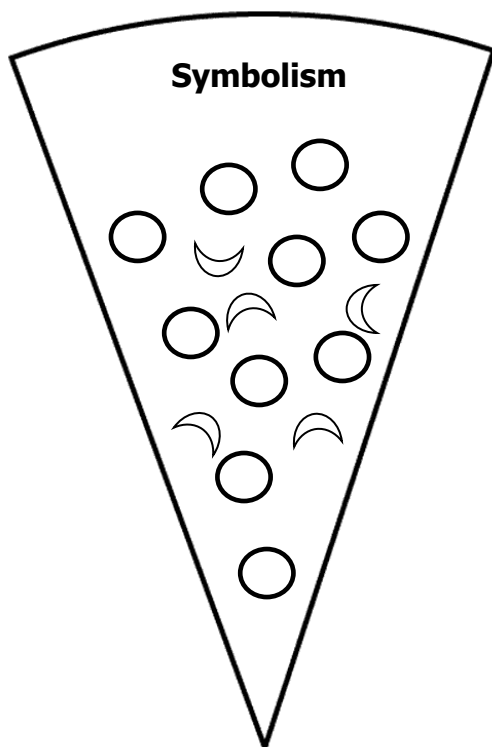
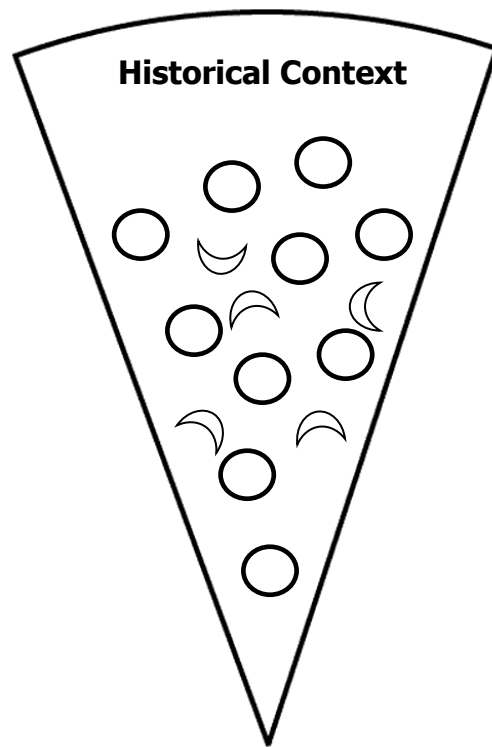
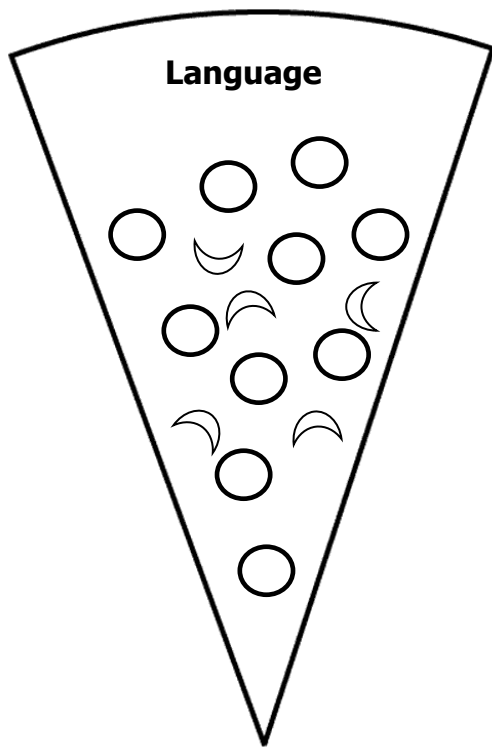
Students form learning teams of three and use the **Context Pizza Strategy** ⓘ to explore the scripture text provided. This activity is designed for a class of 30 students but can be adapted for any number. It is suggested that students use the following process:

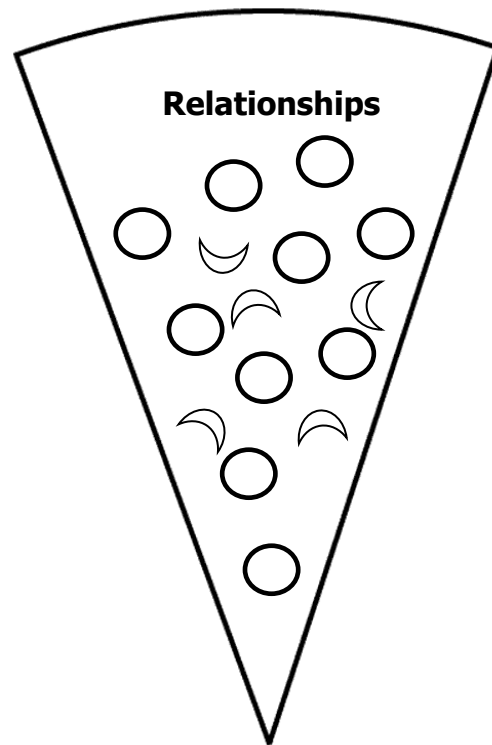
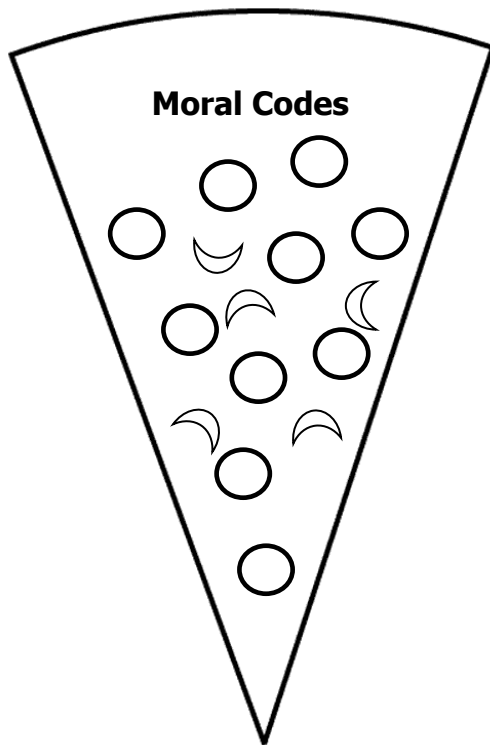


1. Students form learning teams of three. Each team takes a slice of the Context Pizza.
2. In their teams, students jointly read the scripture text: Labourers in the Vineyard (Matthew 20:1-16).
3. Individually and in silence, students re-read the text from the perspective of their Context Pizza slice (see focus questions cards for each slice below).
4. Students discuss the text using the focus question as a guide.
5. One student from the team (the reporter) jots brief notes on the reverse of their slice of pizza.
6. Students sit in a circle around the room. Each team's reporter is given 45 seconds to share a learning about the scripture text using their focus question and notes as a guide. As they speak they add their slice of pizza to the middle of the room. Ten slices are needed to complete the class Context Pizza.

The Pizza slices below could be enlarged so that the class Context Pizza is easily visible.







### Social Context

What social codes are evidenced in this scripture text (e.g. the way people went about their business during the time of Jesus)?

### Cultural Context

What evidence is there in this text that is specific to the culture of this time and place?

### Sequence of Events

What are the key events in this text and in what order do they occur?

### Character Profiles

What inferences can be drawn about each of the key characters in this text (e.g. their personality, motivation etc)?

### Language

What core words can you locate that are needed to be understood in order to interpret this text?

### Historical Context

When and where is this text set? How does an understanding of setting help you understand the text?

<b>Moral Codes</b>  What moral codes are being challenged in this text? What moral codes are being advocated in this text?	<b>Relationships</b>  What is the nature of the relationships between key characters in this text?
<b>Symbolism</b>  How and where is symbolism used to enhance the meaning of this text?	<b>Geographical Context</b>  How does the geographical context of this text assist you to make meaning of the text?

## Learning Activities

## Literary-Critical Approach

The following learning activities, when used in conjunction with others in this module, support the outcome indicated in the table below. The activities are focused on each of the three organising ideas for the module organiser **Literary-Critical Approach**. Teacher background information precedes the learning activities.

<b>Roles for Lifelong Learners</b>	<b>Core Learning Outcome</b>
Reflective, Self Directed Learner Active Investigator Effective Communicator	S6.3  Students investigate critical approaches used in the interpretation of scriptural texts
<b>Module Organisers</b>	<b>Organising Ideas</b>
<b>Literary-Critical Approach</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> Narrative Criticism <input type="checkbox"/> Rhetorical Criticism <input type="checkbox"/> Advocacy Criticism

### ☐ Narrative Criticism

Narrative criticism is one of the critical methods associated with a literary-critical approach to the interpretation of scriptural texts. The literary critical approach and its associated critical methods study the final text of a given biblical book or extended text and differ from historical-critical approaches that focus on the historical origins and development of parts of a text that together form a final extended biblical text or book.

Narrative Criticism focuses primarily on the exploration of the world *within* the text being studied. The method of narrative criticism explores the story world created within narrative texts in the Bible. Narrative critics employ a range of questions such as the following in interpreting the story world within the narrative text being studied. What is the author's purpose in this narrative? What are the characteristics of the people depicted in this narrative? What are the relationships among the people

in this narrative? How does the author of this text make use of language and to what purpose? What are the possible meanings of this narrative? In longer narratives such as a Gospel, book of the Bible or extended text, the narrative critic also considers elements such as plot development, conflict, foreshadowing of future developments, themes, character development and so on.

Narrative texts in the Bible exhibit text types such as biography, epic, argumentative dialogues, folklore, history, legend, myth and saga that influence the way a narrative is understood and interpreted. Structural features in a narrative text such as flashback, foreshadowing, plot, setting and theme also need to be taken into account in the interpretive process. In relation to characterisation in narrative texts, identification of the protagonist/s or leading figure/s and the antagonist/s who oppose the leading figure are important for interpretation, as is an analysis of the motivation of the various characters. Narrative perspective in a text may be explored through consideration of the perspective/s established by the author who may relate the story in the first person, or through assuming the posture of an omniscient narrator- knowing everything that is in the minds of the characters and revealing such knowledge selectively as the text progresses.

## Activity

## Narrative Notes © S6.3

**The core learning of this activity is for students to explore a short biblical narrative using the focus questions provided. These questions include many of the concerns of a narrative critic in analysing a piece of text whether it is secular or religious in nature.**



Students form learning pairs to explore the infancy narratives (Matthew 1:18-2:12 and Luke 2:1-20). One student selects Matthew's account and the other selects Luke's account. They use a **Linear Flowchart Strategy** ① to illustrate the flow of events in their chosen story. The flowcharts are compared to identify similarities and differences between the two accounts.

Students then find a new learning partner who explored the same account. They discuss the focus questions provided below.


- ☐ What are the author's purposes in writing this narrative?
- ☐ How has the author described the events in this narrative?
- ☐ How has the author described people in terms of their actions, reactions and emotions?
- ☐ How do the people in this narrative relate to one another?
- ☐ What are some characteristics of the words, images and language used in this narrative?
- ☐ In what ways has the author used events, people and language in this narrative to reinforce his purpose?

Students use the **Story Probe Strategy** ① to summarise their findings.

## Activity

## Narrative Wheels © S6.3

**The core learning of this activity is for students to apply some of the elements of narrative criticism to a specific scriptural text and then retell that text for a contemporary context, setting and audience.**

Students use the **Story Wheel Strategy**  depicted below to analyse the narrative structure of one of the New Testament narratives provided below. Students share their findings in small learning teams.

### **The Adulterous Woman (John 8: 2-11)**

<sup>2</sup>At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him and he sat down to teach them. <sup>3</sup>The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group <sup>4</sup>and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. <sup>5</sup>In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" <sup>6</sup>They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

<sup>7</sup>But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." <sup>8</sup>Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

<sup>9</sup>At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. <sup>10</sup>Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

<sup>11</sup>"No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

### **The Faith of a Syrophenician Woman (Mark 7:24-30)**

He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. <sup>25</sup>In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. <sup>26</sup>The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter.

<sup>27</sup>"First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not right to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs."

<sup>28</sup>"Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs."

<sup>29</sup>Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter."

<sup>30</sup>She went home and found her child lying on the bed and the demon gone.

### **The Boy Jesus at the Temple (Luke 2:42-52)**

<sup>42</sup>When he was twelve years old, they went up to the Feast, according to the custom.

<sup>43</sup>After the Feast was over, while his parents were returning home, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem, but they were unaware of it. <sup>44</sup>Thinking he was in their company, they travelled on for a day. Then they began looking for him among their relatives and friends. <sup>45</sup>When they did not find him, they went back to Jerusalem to look for him.

<sup>46</sup>After three days they found him in the temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. <sup>47</sup>Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers. <sup>48</sup>When his parents saw him, they were astonished. His mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us like this? Your father and I have been anxiously searching for you."

<sup>49</sup>"Why were you searching for me?" he asked. "Didn't you know I had to be in my Father's house?" <sup>50</sup>But they did not understand what he was saying to them.

<sup>51</sup>Then he went down to Nazareth with them and was obedient to them. But his mother treasured all these things in her heart. <sup>52</sup>And Jesus grew in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and men.

Students form small learning teams to design and create a contemporary portrayal of their selected story. This might include making a movie, drama, PowerPoint presentation, or a short play or mime.



### Classroom snapshot

Three students in a Year 10 class shared the storyboards each had developed on the narrative text of Luke 2: 41–52 *The Boy Jesus in the Temple*. They agreed that Luke's purpose in writing the narrative was to portray Jesus as a young man, searching for the meaning and purpose of, and needing to be with, a group beyond his family that he believed he could gain insight from and bounce ideas off. The three of them agreed that they would like to make a short movie re-interpreting Luke's narrative in a contemporary context. They would be able to incorporate some material from their own original storyboards in an updated context to develop a storyboard for their movie. One of the trio mentioned a newspaper story he had read recently about a runaway teenager that he thought might be a good stimulus for ideas.

## □ Rhetorical Criticism

### Teacher Background

Rhetoric is the ancient art of persuasive discourse. Most discourse, whether it is written or spoken, aims to persuade or at least to affect those who read or listen to it. The underlying assumption of rhetorical criticism is that texts are structured according to patterns of what one might call "persuasive speech". The rhetorical critic seeks to uncover the patterns and strategies of "persuasive speech" to interpret the text and uncover its intended meaning and likely impact. Rhetorical criticism assumes that the final composer of a particular scriptural text has a perspective informed by the culture of the time and seeks to persuade his/her contemporaries of that perspective. Rhetorical criticism identifies the rhetorical devices used in the construction of a text and analyses the likely impact of the text on readers and hearers.

Rhetorical critics use procedures such as the following in analysing and interpreting texts. Identify the problem/s to which the text is responding. Find major theme/s and supporting arguments. Isolate supporting arguments and the language, images, similes and metaphors used to enhance the theme/s and make the arguments persuasive. Analyse the argument/s in terms of authorities invoked, the progression of the argument and the use of rhetorical techniques.

Common rhetorical techniques include the following: repetition of the same word or phrase; stating ideas both negatively and positively; pretending doubt; statement or assertion followed by a supporting reason; use of rhetorical questions; hyperbole or exaggeration; metaphors and similes drawn from a variety of familiar contexts; combining two or more terms that are normally contradictory; use of examples from myth, nature and life; strings of parallel phrases; pretence of passing over a point in silence, while in fact emphasising that very point; accumulation of connectives.

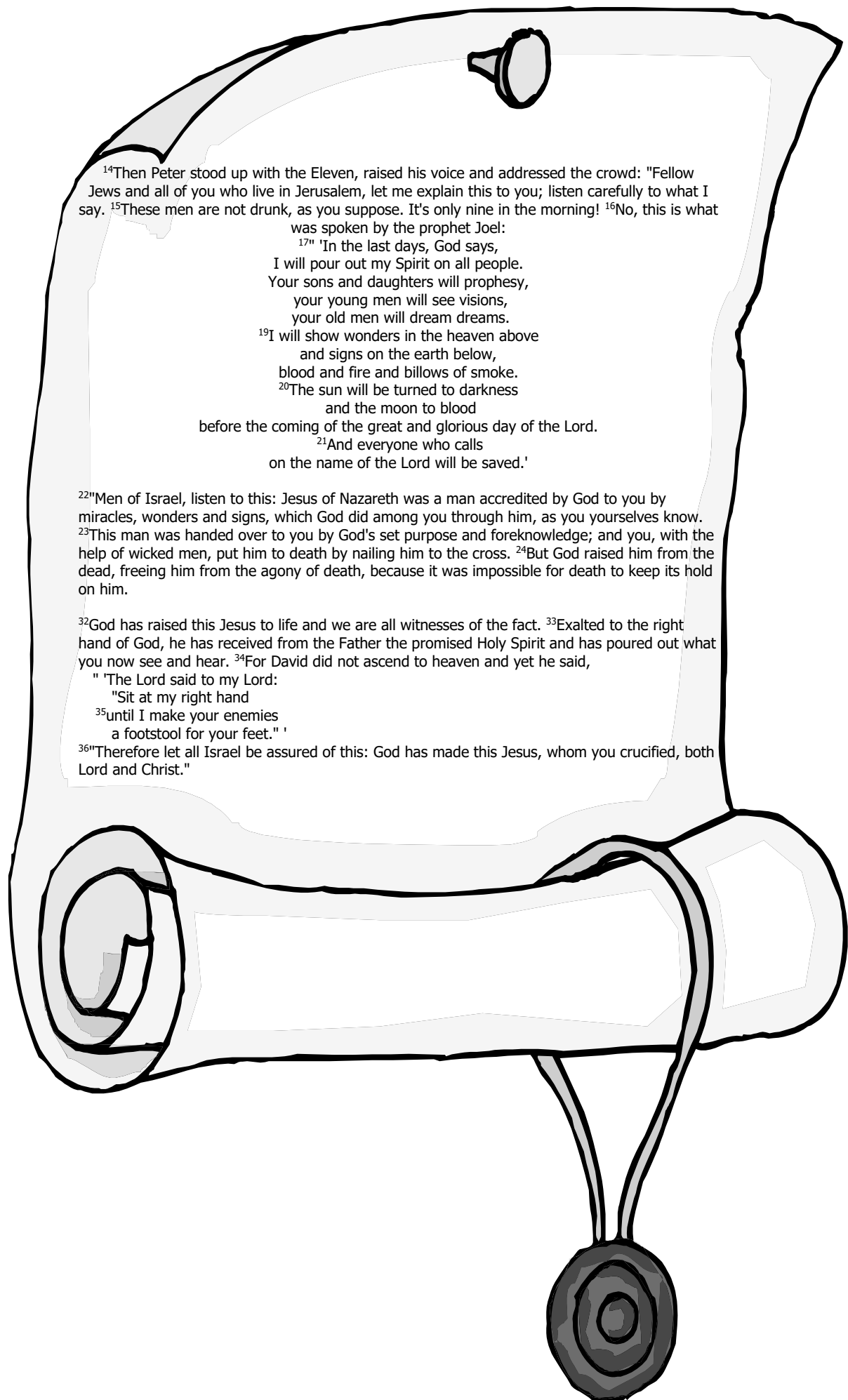
### Activity

### Peter's Speech to the Crowd © S6.3

**The core learning of this activity is for students to identify some of the elements of rhetorical criticism to a specific scriptural text.**

Students identify examples of rhetoric in the adapted version of the text of *Peter's Address to the Crowd* (Acts 2). Students highlight examples and write the rhetorical technique in the margin near the example. Rhetorical techniques include:

- repetition of the same word or phrase;
- stating ideas both negatively and positively;
- pretending doubt;
- statement or assertion followed by a supporting reason;
- hyperbole or exaggeration;
- metaphors and similes drawn from a variety of familiar contexts;
- combining two or more terms that are normally contradictory;
- use of examples from myth, nature and life;
- strings of parallel phrases; pretence of passing over a point in silence while in fact emphasising that very point.



<sup>14</sup>Then Peter stood up with the Eleven, raised his voice and addressed the crowd: "Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. <sup>15</sup>These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! <sup>16</sup>No, this is what

was spoken by the prophet Joel:

<sup>17</sup>" 'In the last days, God says,  
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.  
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,  
your young men will see visions,  
your old men will dream dreams.

<sup>19</sup>I will show wonders in the heaven above  
and signs on the earth below,  
blood and fire and billows of smoke.

<sup>20</sup>The sun will be turned to darkness  
and the moon to blood  
before the coming of the great and glorious day of the Lord.

<sup>21</sup>And everyone who calls  
on the name of the Lord will be saved.'

<sup>22</sup>"Men of Israel, listen to this: Jesus of Nazareth was a man accredited by God to you by miracles, wonders and signs, which God did among you through him, as you yourselves know.

<sup>23</sup>This man was handed over to you by God's set purpose and foreknowledge; and you, with the help of wicked men, put him to death by nailing him to the cross. <sup>24</sup>But God raised him from the dead, freeing him from the agony of death, because it was impossible for death to keep its hold on him.

<sup>32</sup>God has raised this Jesus to life and we are all witnesses of the fact. <sup>33</sup>Exalted to the right hand of God, he has received from the Father the promised Holy Spirit and has poured out what you now see and hear. <sup>34</sup>For David did not ascend to heaven and yet he said,

" 'The Lord said to my Lord:

"Sit at my right hand

<sup>35</sup>until I make your enemies  
a footstool for your feet." ' "

<sup>36</sup>"Therefore let all Israel be assured of this: God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ."



Students now use the rhetorical techniques listed to create their own persuasive discourse based on a real life issue or topic. The discourse might be presented orally, in written form, or through the use of multimedia and the visual arts.

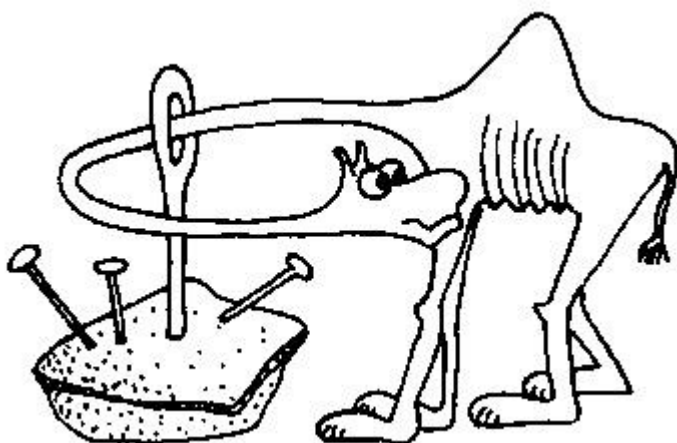
Some issues/topics students might consider using include:

- ☐ stopping a friend from taking up smoking
- ☐ speaking out against drug abuse
- ☐ an advertisement for a fictional product

## Activity

## Camel Through the Eye of a Needle © S6.3

Students use the *Bible Gateway* website or the *Gospel Parallels* website to locate the following scripture texts:



The camel and the eye of the needle  
(Matthew 19:24, Mark 10:25, Luke 18:25)

The *Bible Gateway* website is located at:  
[www.biblegateway.com](http://www.biblegateway.com)

The *Gospel Parallels* website is located at:  
[www.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis](http://www.utoronto.ca/religion/synopsis)

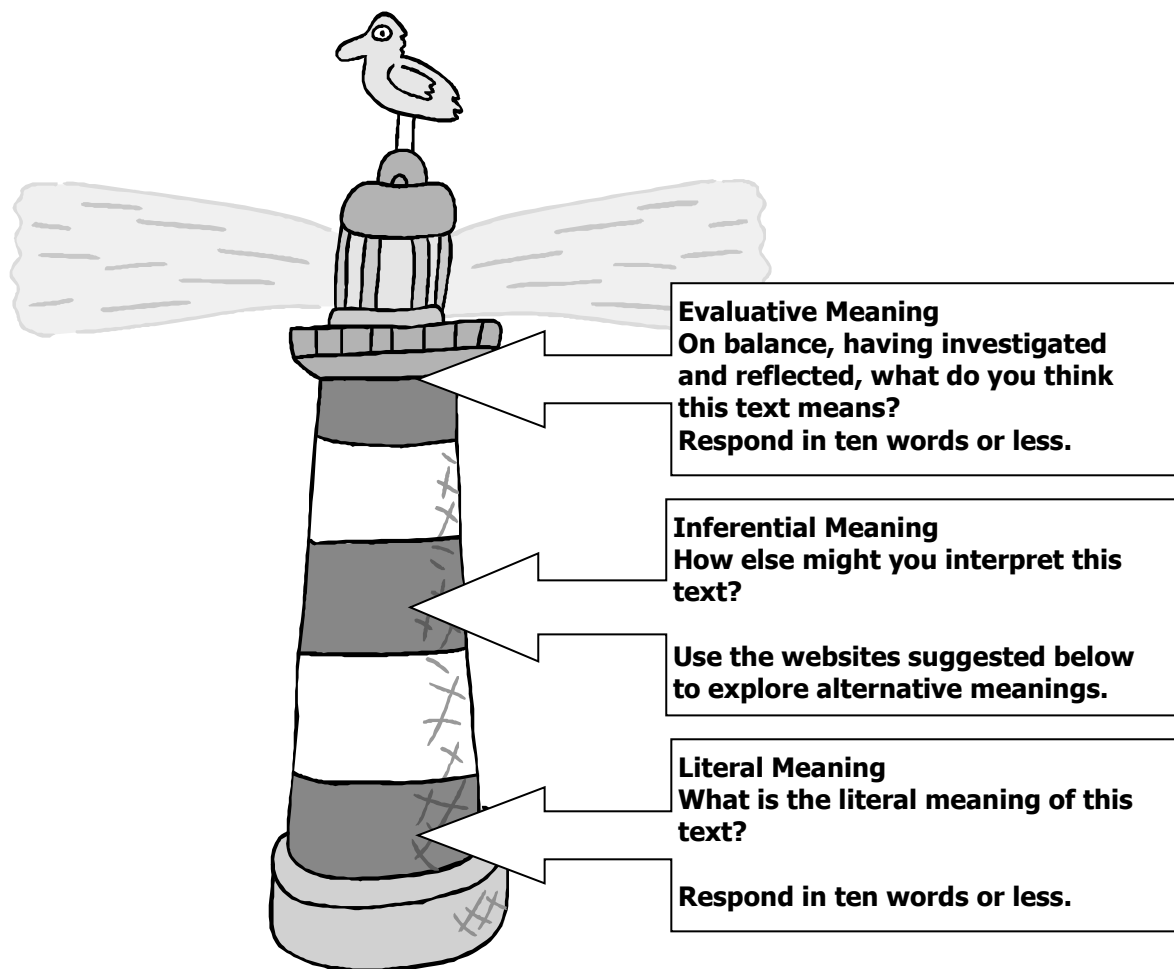
Alternatively, the three versions of this text are provided below.

Matthew 19:24	Mark 10:25	Luke 18:25
Again I tell you, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.	It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.	For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.

Students identify the context in which these words are located. For all three accounts, the story that precedes it is the story of the rich young man. Students select one of the versions and read the full story. Students form small learning teams to discuss the story and its implications for the lives of contemporary Christians.

Students now return to the initial text about the camel and the eye of the needle. They use a **Three Level Lighthouse Strategy** ① to explore the story. They begin at the bottom of the lighthouse. This strategy encourages students to examine a text at three levels:

- ☐ **Literal meaning**  
What do the words say?  
What is the surface level meaning of this text?
- ☐ **Inferential meaning**  
How else might I understand these words to mean?  
What do other people understand this text to mean?  
What background information would help me understand this text beyond just the surface level?
- ☐ **Evaluative meaning**  
What do experts from the area say about this text?  
How do I interpret this text in light of diverse views and understandings?



The following websites propose some theories about the Camel and the Eye of the Needle text.

Website	Notes/Conclusions
<a href="http://www.stmatthew-ucc.org/sermon-TheConfusingChristCamelThroughaNeedlesEye.htm">www.stmatthew-ucc.org/sermon-TheConfusingChristCamelThroughaNeedlesEye.htm</a>	
<a href="http://www.raptureready.com/faq/faq369.html">www.raptureready.com/faq/faq369.html</a>	
<a href="http://www.ibiblio.org/bgreek/archives/greek-1/msg00222.html">www.ibiblio.org/bgreek/archives/greek-1/msg00222.html</a>	
<a href="http://www.biblicalhebrew.com/nt/camelneedle.htm">www.biblicalhebrew.com/nt/camelneedle.htm</a>	

## □ Advocacy Criticism

### Teacher Background

The term “advocacy criticism” (advocacy hermeneutics) refers to various ways of reading Biblical texts that draw on and advocate for particular ideologies or sets of values and ideas to which someone is committed. Advocacy criticism openly asserts and espouses a particular worldview/ideology which in turn informs the orientation which the advocacy critic takes to a given Biblical text. Feminist hermeneutics or interpretation and political hermeneutics or interpretations are two common examples of advocacy criticism. Advocacy criticism whether exemplified through feminist or political hermeneutics utilise other critical methods such as source criticism or narrative criticism using and

refining critical methods such as these in the light of their particular ideological orientation to a biblical text.

Feminist hermeneutics analyses Biblical texts seeking to recover the experience of women in antiquity and to critique norms and interpretations whereby that experience was and is marginalised. The feminist critic begins with the observation that ancient Biblical texts were mostly written by men and thus communicate a male view of reality. Women's perspectives, insofar as these differ/ed from men's perspectives, are rarely visible in biblical texts. Thus women often appear in the Biblical texts as the objects rather than the subjects of religious experience and debate. To remedy this imbalance, the feminist critic reconstructs and emphasises women's experience as it is indirectly revealed in the text.

Feminist criticism as a method does not stand alone. Feminist critics approach various text types differently, depending on the most appropriate method for the text type. They then add a layer of feminist questions to their analysis of the text. For example, if a feminist critic is analysing a narrative text, they might use narrative criticism and/or socio-historical criticism to explore the background and structural elements of the narrative and then add questions such as the following relating to their feminist orientation and advocacy. Is there a women's point of view in this text? How are women portrayed in this text? Do they speak? Are we given access to their point of view? Who has the power in this text? How is power distributed? How do women get what they want (if they do)? What do women want in this text? How does the text represent uniquely female experiences such as childbearing, menstruation or traditional female experiences such as child rearing, homemaking? How have women's lives and voices been suppressed by this text? Are women made to speak and act against their own interests? What hidden gender assumptions lie behind this text? Is the passage reinforcing or altering gender roles? Does the text betray anxiety about changing gender roles? Whose interests are being served in this text?

The feminist mode of advocacy criticism is called a "hermeneutics (or interpretive strategy) of suspicion". First, it seeks by definition, something the texts unconsciously disregarded or actively repressed and so it approaches scriptural texts suspicious of ancient motives. Second, it is self-critical, aware of its own role in the activity of interpreting texts. The feminist critic is conscious that every reading of texts is an interpretation and every interpretation has contemporary political implications.

Feminist hermeneutics can be placed along a spectrum from feminist scholars who see the Bible as a tool of patriarchal oppression to be rejected outright, to other feminist scholars, whose position is more ambiguous, recognising as they do, the oppressive nature of Biblical texts but wanting to expose such oppression and subvert patriarchal interpretations. Others wish to recover the perspective and voice of women in the scriptural text by focusing on the powerful and important women in the Bible or on the importance given in some texts to poor women, widows, foreigners, prostitutes and so on. A further complexity is added by the realisation that "rich women's feminism" differs from "poor women's feminism" and that "black and coloured women's feminism" can enrich and challenge the feminism of white women and so on.

Political hermeneutics, as with feminist hermeneutics, has as a major component of its ideology/worldview the idea of liberation from oppression. In the case of political hermeneutics, the oppression could be related to repressive political systems, unjust and exploitative economic arrangements, discrimination on racial or ethnic grounds, or some combination of these factors. Liberation theology, for example, critiques prevailing socio-political situations in Latin America. Liberation theologians applying a political hermeneutic to the interpretation of Biblical texts in order to illuminate contemporary situations of oppression and inspire solidarity and action to bring about change. Black Theology, as another example, approaches Biblical texts from the perspective of an often-oppressed African-American people seeking similar illumination, solidarity and action.

A further example of *Advocacy Criticism* is the canonical-critical approach to interpreting biblical texts. This approach explicitly advocates a religious and theological approach to the biblical text, as part of the Christian Canon of the Bible- that is, those writings from the Jewish tradition and from the Christian tradition that the Church has judged should be included in the Bible. A canonical critical approach advocates a Christian reading of the Biblical text. Each Biblical text is interpreted within the context of the Bible as a whole and from an explicitly *Christian* perspective. Texts from the prophet Isaiah, for example, are read in the context not only of the other prophetic books in the Hebrew Bible, but in the context of the entire Old Testament and New Testament as well. An explicitly *Christian* perspective is brought to bear when, for example, texts from Isaiah referring to "a suffering servant" are interpreted as referring to the passion and death of Jesus. A canonical-critical interpretation of the

Bible extends beyond the Biblical text itself into the creeds, dogmas and traditions of the Church and even further into literature and art.

## Activity

## Provocative One Liners © 6.3

Students form learning teams of three and participate in a **Jigsaw Strategy** ① to explore the following scriptural texts. It is suggested that the following process be used:

1. Each learning team member is allocated a scripture one liner. Using their Bible they locate the wider context for the one liner. What is the story in which the one liner appears? Students read the story.
2. Students now leave their *home teams* to form *expert teams* based on students allocated the same one liner. Expert teams read the story in which their one liner appears.
3. They respond to two three questions provided on the cards below:

Who is the advocate in this story?

What is being advocated?

On whose behalf is the advocating being done?

4. Students return to their *home teams* to share and discuss their findings.
5. Students select one of the one liners and create a creative response to it. This may include an artwork, sculpture, PowerPoint presentation, poem, collage etc.

The three scripture one liners are provided below.

### **Luke 18:14b**

**For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled and he who humbles himself will be exalted."**

### **Luke 18:25**

**Indeed, it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God."**

### **Matthew 25:45**

**I tell you the truth, whatever you did not do for one of the least of these, you did not do for me.**

Students form learning teams and use a **Ten Word Strategy** ① to synthesise and summarise their understandings of the following description of a feminist approach to interpreting biblical texts. Learning teams then pair off to share their summary and understandings. Class discussion then follows.

*A feminist approach to interpreting texts in the Bible analyses these texts from the point of view of women. A feminist approach seeks to recover and re-emphasise the experience of women that was often marginalised, minimised or left out of Biblical texts altogether. The feminist critic begins with the observation that ancient Biblical texts were mostly written by men and thus communicate a male view of reality. Women's perspectives, insofar as these differ/ed from men's perspectives, are rarely visible in Biblical texts. Thus women often appear in the Biblical texts as passive spectators, or objects of the actions of others. They are rarely seen as active in their own right. To remedy this imbalance, the feminist critic reconstructs and places emphasis on the experience and women's point of view. In some Biblical texts women are presented through male eyes and in other texts women and their point of view are absent altogether.*

Each student then uses the following questions to analyse the texts below from the perspective of a feminist approach to the interpretation of Biblical texts. Students use the following questions to assist them in analysing the texts.

- How are male perspectives dominant in this text?
- How are female perspectives silenced or marginalised?
- What do I think about the way this text presents male and female perspectives?

### **1 Timothy 2: 9-15**

<sup>9</sup>I also want women to dress modestly, with decency and propriety, not with braided hair or gold or pearls or expensive clothes, <sup>10</sup>but with good deeds, appropriate for women who profess to worship God.

<sup>11</sup>A woman should learn in quietness and full submission. <sup>12</sup>I do not permit a woman to teach or to have authority over a man; she must be silent. <sup>13</sup>For Adam was formed first, then Eve. <sup>14</sup>And Adam was not the one deceived; it was the woman who was deceived and became a sinner. <sup>15</sup>But women will be saved through childbearing - if they continue in faith, love and holiness with propriety.

### **John 8: 1-11**

<sup>1</sup>But Jesus went to the Mount of Olives. <sup>2</sup>At dawn he appeared again in the temple courts, where all the people gathered around him and he sat down to teach them.

<sup>3</sup>The teachers of the law and the Pharisees brought in a woman caught in adultery. They made her stand before the group <sup>4</sup>and said to Jesus, "Teacher, this woman was caught in the act of adultery. <sup>5</sup>In the Law Moses commanded us to stone such women. Now what do you say?" <sup>6</sup>They were using this question as a trap, in order to have a basis for accusing him.

<sup>7</sup>But Jesus bent down and started to write on the ground with his finger. When they kept on questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, "If any one of you is without sin, let him be the first to throw a stone at her." <sup>8</sup>Again he stooped down and wrote on the ground.

<sup>9</sup>At this, those who heard began to go away one at a time, the older ones first, until only Jesus was left, with the woman still standing there. <sup>10</sup>Jesus straightened up and asked her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?"

<sup>11</sup>"No one, sir," she said.

"Then neither do I condemn you," Jesus declared. "Go now and leave your life of sin."

## **Luke 7: 36-50**

### *Jesus Anointed by a Sinful Woman*

<sup>36</sup>Now one of the Pharisees invited Jesus to have dinner with him, so he went to the Pharisee's house and reclined at the table. <sup>37</sup>When a woman who had lived a sinful life in that town learned that Jesus was eating at the Pharisee's house, she brought an alabaster jar of perfume, <sup>38</sup>and as she stood behind him at his feet weeping, she began to wet his feet with her tears. Then she wiped them with her hair, kissed them and poured perfume on them.

<sup>39</sup>When the Pharisee who had invited him saw this, he said to himself, "If this man were a prophet, he would know who is touching him and what kind of woman she is--that she is a sinner."

<sup>40</sup>Jesus answered him, "Simon, I have something to tell you."

"Tell me, teacher," he said.

<sup>41</sup>"Two men owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii and the other fifty. <sup>42</sup>Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he cancelled the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?"

<sup>43</sup>Simon replied, "I suppose the one who had the bigger debt cancelled."

"You have judged correctly," Jesus said.

<sup>44</sup>Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, "Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. <sup>45</sup>You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. <sup>46</sup>You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. <sup>47</sup>Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven--for she loved much. But he who has been forgiven little loves little."

<sup>48</sup>Then Jesus said to her, "Your sins are forgiven."

<sup>49</sup>The other guests began to say among themselves, "Who is this who even forgives sins?"

<sup>50</sup>Jesus said to the woman, "Your faith has saved you; go in peace."

## **Significant Activity**

## **Context Web © 6.3**

**This learning activity has been designed as a culminating task that could be used for the purposes of summative assessment.**

In this task, students identify how elements from a variety of different critical methods have been applied to make meaning of a scripture text:

*The Healing of the Syrophenician Woman (Mark 7:24-30).*

A worksheet containing this scripture text has been provided. Additionally, a summary page has been included that provides a synopsis of each method. The following process is suggested:

1. Students are provided with both resources: the scripture worksheet and the summary page. Both appear at the end of this activity.
2. Students identify the critical method that has been applied to elaborate and explain each of the highlighted parts of the scripture text.
3. Students provide a summary of the scripture text using some of the information provided.

Tyre, along with Sidon, were the two leading cities of ancient Phoenicia. The city itself is located on an island that has been connected to the mainland by a siege ramp constructed by Alexander the Great (late 4th century B.C.E.). However, we aren't told if Jesus actually went into this city, or sought to seclude himself in the region around this city. In either case, he is in Gentile territory. This area was part of the Roman province of Syria, thus the title Syrophoenician. The woman was a Gentile.

Here Jesus ignores the taboo of a man speaking to a woman in public. A woman was expected to remain unobserved. What this woman does: coming to Jesus, perhaps touching him as she falls at his feet, speaking to him in public - were all taboos in the ancient society. These gender rules are in addition to the racial taboos that kept Jews separated from Gentiles.

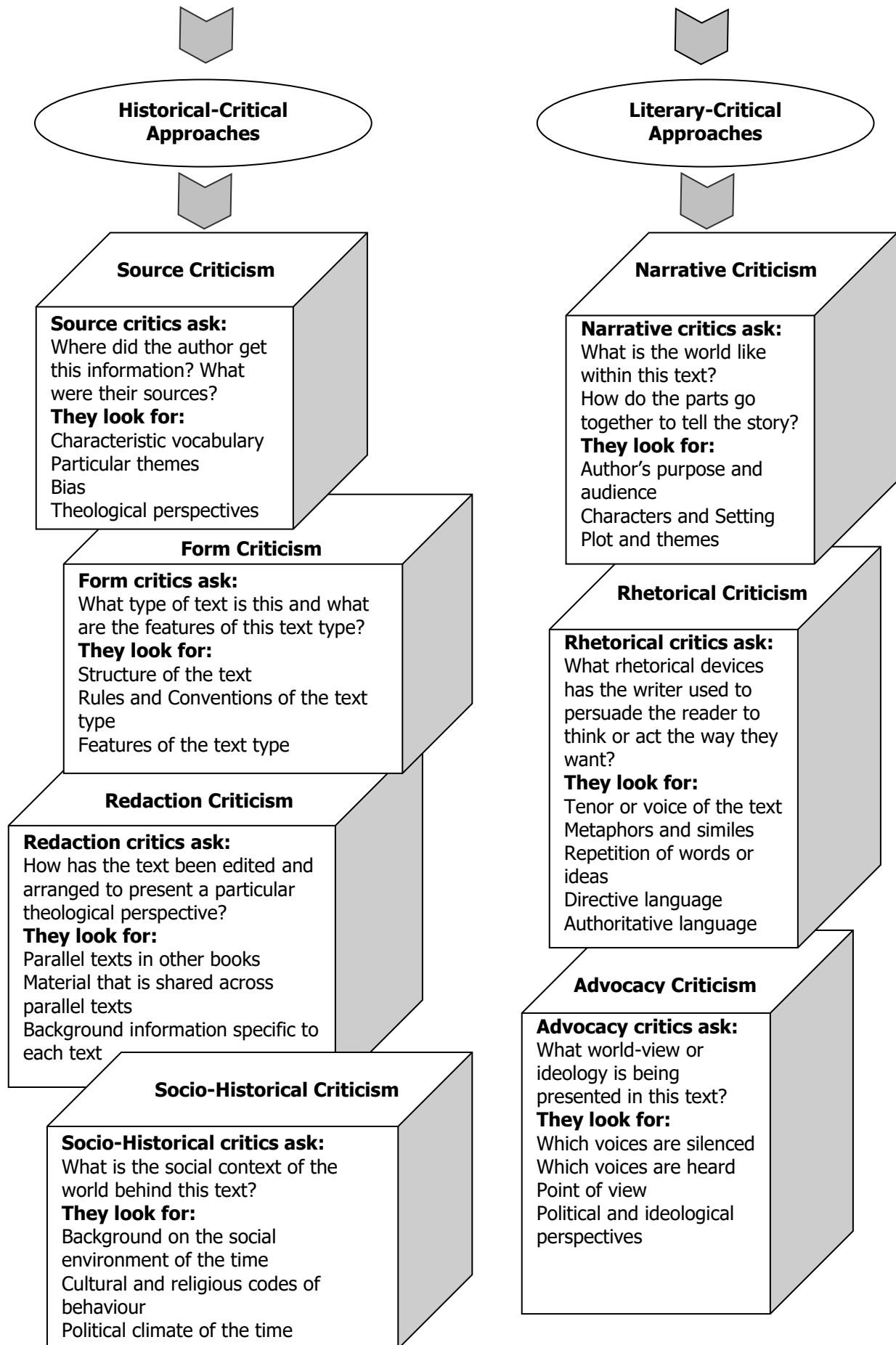
**<sup>24</sup>Jesus left that place and went to the vicinity of Tyre. He entered a house and did not want anyone to know it; yet he could not keep his presence secret. <sup>25</sup>In fact, as soon as she heard about him, a woman whose little daughter was possessed by an evil spirit came and fell at his feet. <sup>26</sup>The woman was a Greek, born in Syrian Phoenicia. She begged Jesus to drive the demon out of her daughter. <sup>27</sup>"First let the children eat all they want," he told her, "for it is not fair to take the children's bread and toss it to their dogs." <sup>28</sup>"Yes, Lord," she replied, "but even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." <sup>29</sup>Then he told her, "For such a reply, you may go; the demon has left your daughter." <sup>30</sup>She went home and found her child lying on the bed and the demon gone.**

Whatever Jesus might have meant by his statement, the lady agrees with him. One way to disarm criticism is to agree with the critic. "You're a dog," implies Jesus. She agrees! "I am a dog, but even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from their master's table." Or, perhaps in other words, "I know I don't deserve a thing from you. I am no better than a dog, but even dogs receive better treatment than you're giving me. Can't you spare a few crumbs of grace? I'm not asking for myself, but for my daughter."

The word for "fair" (*kalos*), can imply "morally right". It is a question of morals. It is not morally right to let children starve while dogs eat their fill. The word translated "dog" (*kynarion*) is a diminutive form of *kyon*. There is some question about what this form might mean in our text.

Jesus says in Matthew 7:6: "Do not give what is holy to dogs; and do not throw your pearls before swine, or they will trample them under foot and turn and maul you." So, the term "dog" could range from being a simple household metaphor (like a pet dog) without "slamming" the woman, to being a term that suggests that she is an unclean, sexually promiscuous woman. (This second, extreme interpretation, could be supported by her willingness to come to Jesus and speak to him in public. For the most part, only prostitutes spoke to men in public.)

# Critical Approaches to Scripture





**That is the final activity in this module.**

**Learning Strategies featured in this module and identified by the Learning Strategies Icon ⓘ are detailed in the pages following resources and appear on the following pages:**

Ten Word Strategy	<a href="#">p. 47</a>	Story Wheel	<a href="#">p. 58</a>
1:4 Publish Circle Refine	<a href="#">p. 47</a>	Reader's Circle	<a href="#">p. 53</a>
Lit Circle Strategy	<a href="#">p. 48</a>	Three Level Lighthouse	<a href="#">p. 67</a>
3:2:1 Strategy	<a href="#">p. 49</a>	Compare/Contrast	<a href="#">p. 50</a>
Jigsaw Strategy	<a href="#">p. 51</a>	Context Pizza	<a href="#">p. 65</a>
Retrieval Chart	<a href="#">p. 52</a>	Linear Flowchart	<a href="#">p. 54</a>
Graphic Organiser	<a href="#">p. 61</a>	Story Board	<a href="#">p. 55</a>
Story Probe	<a href="#">p. 57</a>	Concept Web	<a href="#">p. 56</a>
Five Ws + H	<a href="#">p. 59</a>	Graphic Outline	<a href="#">p. 66</a>
Cartoon Strip	<a href="#">p. 62</a>	Think Pad	<a href="#">p. 64</a>
Concept Pyramid	<a href="#">p. 60</a>		
Social Ladder	<a href="#">p. 63</a>		

## ❑ Multimedia Centre

### Multimedia Resources

The Brisbane Catholic Education Multimedia Centre has a wide range of multimedia resources available for loan to schools. Teachers are encouraged to consult with the staff of the centre regarding suitable multimedia resources to enhance units of work developed from this module. Contact details for the Brisbane Catholic Education Multimedia Centre:

Telephone (07) 3840 0405

Alternatively, teachers are able to conduct a Multimedia Centre online search through the BCE Intranet. Religious Institute schools are able to access the BCE intranet through the public site located at: [www.bne.catholic.edu.au](http://www.bne.catholic.edu.au)

## ① Ten Word Strategy

A Ten Word Strategy encourages students in small learning teams to collaboratively synthesise meanings of paragraphs or sections of texts. Students read or view a paragraph or section of static print text or dynamic text e.g. multimodal/ multimedia texts and jointly construct a ten word meaning for that paragraph or section. This strategy relies on the students' capacity to make meaning, collaborate, interpret and synthesise texts.

Process for the Ten Word Strategy:

- ❑ Clarify with the students that the purpose of this strategy is to develop students' capacity to make meaning and interpret text in learning teams.
- ❑ Students read or view a paragraph or section of static or dynamic text.
- ❑ In learning teams students discuss the meaning of the paragraph or section. Each team member should provide a meaning.

The learning team then negotiates a ten-word meaning for the paragraph or section. One student should record the meaning. All students should be involved in creating the ten-word meaning. No more than ten words can be used for each meaning.

## ① 1:4 Publish Circle Refine Strategy

This is a co-operative learning process that calls for creative thinking and critical reflection. It involves both interpersonal and intrapersonal intelligence.

### Process

In groups of four:

Students write a statement about or around a topic

Students share ideas with other members of the learning team and discuss their statements. The learning team then creates one synthesised statement.

Students write the one synthesised statement onto a large sheet of paper (Publish)

The large paper is posted on the wall. One member remains with the sheet as the *Explainer* while the other three members move around the room discussing and reading the contents of the statements and possibly asking questions of *Explainers* from other learning teams. As they do this they take notes. (Circle)

Students return to their home learning team and discuss the notes they made. Students consider ways of improving their team's synthesised statement. The learning team refines their statement and shares it with the class. (Refine)

# Lit Circle Strategy

Literature Circle is a structure for encouraging students to talk about a text with their peers as they read it together. Students are in charge of the discussion. There are between four to six students in each literature circle and each member rotates one of the following jobs throughout the project:

- ☐ Discussion Director
- ☐ Literary Luminary
- ☐ Character Captain
- ☐ Connector
- ☐ Artistic Adventurer
- ☐ Vocabulary Enricher

Not all of the roles need to be used all the time. Students may, for example, form learning teams of three and are allocated only three of the above roles.

## **Discussion Director/Facilitator**

This student is responsible for writing down 5 thought-provoking questions for the purpose of group discussion based on that day's text. As the group Facilitator, it is also this student's job to direct the group discussion.

## **Literary Luminary/Alternate Facilitator**

This student is responsible for choosing parts of the text that he/she wants to read out loud to the group. The idea is to help students remember some interesting, powerful, puzzling, or important sections of the text being read. The Literary Luminary must decide which passages or paragraphs are worth reading aloud and justify the reason for selecting them. Additionally, if the Discussion Director is absent, this student will serve as the Facilitator.

## **Connector**

This student is responsible for finding connections between the text his/her group is reading and the outside world. This means connecting the reading to the following: his/her own life, happenings at school or in the community, similar events at other times and places, other books or stories, other writings on the same topic, or other writings by the same author.

## **Character Captain**

This student is responsible for revealing specific personality traits of the character(s) within the novel. This means he/she will find examples in the text of behaviours/actions that help group members to know the character(s).

## **Artful Adventurer**

This student is responsible for sharing an artistic representation of the text read. Avenues for expression may include: artwork in any medium, music, poetry, collage, music, mobile or anything else which represents an aspect of the material read.

## **Vocabulary Enricher**

This student is responsible for finding especially important vocabulary in the text. Vocabulary selected should focus on words that are unfamiliar, interesting, important, repetitive, funny, puzzling, descriptive, vivid or those used in an unusual way.

## ① 3:2:1 Strategy

**3:2:1** is a strategy for quickly assessing student attainment of concepts during a lesson. Students capture or summarise their thinking about a main idea by writing down three ideas about one aspect of the concept, two aspects of another related aspect of the concept and one idea of a third aspect.

For example after a class discussion on Jesus, ask students to write down:  
Three examples of actions of Jesus in his lifetime.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_

Two examples of actions of Christians today.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_



One way people in society are affected by the actions of Christians who are modelling the actions of Jesus.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

## Compare / Contrast Strategy

Compare / Contrast Charts do just about what you'd expect them to with a name like that: they're useful for looking at two quantities and determining in what ways they are similar and in what ways they are different. The chart pictured here is one way to approach this comparison. First you look at the similarities. Then you consider the differences, making sure to indicate on what criteria you are drawing out the dissimilarities.

### Compare and Contrast Diagram

Concept 1		Concept 2						
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around; align-items: center;">  <div style="background-color: black; color: white; padding: 5px 15px; font-weight: bold;">HOW ALIKE?</div>  </div>								
<table border="1" style="margin: 0 auto; width: 80%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> <tr><td style="height: 20px;"></td></tr> </table>								

### HOW DIFFERENT?

	<i>with regard to</i>	

# **i Jig Saw Strategy**

The Jigsaw strategy is a co-operative learning strategy that enables each student of a group to specialise in one aspect of the learning unit. Students meet with members from other groups who are assigned the same aspect and after mastering the material, return to the original group and teach the material to the group members.

## **Step 1 Form home groups**

First, organise your class into heterogeneous groups of four. These groups are your "home groups". Students need to understand that ultimately they are responsible to and dependent upon their home groups for their learning. Students take a number from one to four.

## **Step 2 Form Expert Groups**

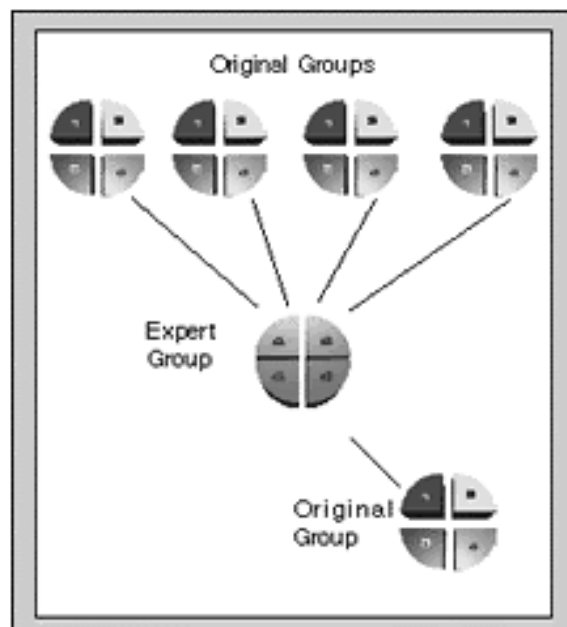
After the home groups are established, separate the students into "expert groups" whose composition is arranged according to number (Number one students gather together, number two students gather together etc.). Students physically leave their home groups and join their expert groups to complete tasks that will give them expertise. Each expert group has its own task. As soon as the class has settled into its expert groups, work begins on acquiring the expertise students will carry back to their home groups.

## **Step 3 Reform Home Groups**

Once the expert groups have acquired their expertise, they return to their home groups and teach their skills to the home group. It is important for each home group to appoint a timekeeper.

## **Step 4 Reflecting on Learning**

One way of assisting students to reflect on their learning within the group setting is to use a numbered heads strategy. In each home group, students count off from 1-4. The teacher asks questions from a quiz they have constructed. Each group then has one minute to confer and make sure that everyone knows and can explain the correct answer. When time is up, the teacher randomly chooses a number from 1-4 and calls on a home group. The student in the home group with that number must answer the question. If the question is answered correctly, the whole group gets one point. In this manner, teachers can assess each student's knowledge of content and concepts without disadvantage those students who lack sufficient literacy.



An excellent web site containing detailed information about this strategy will be located at:  
[www.jigsaw.org/steps.htm](http://www.jigsaw.org/steps.htm)

## ① Retrieval Chart Strategy

A Retrieval Chart is a graphic organiser used for organising and categorising data using headings or key concepts. Retrieval Charts are useful for:

- ☐ Presenting information in an easily accessible way
- ☐ Comparing and contrasting attributes
- ☐ Organising data for use in research projects
- ☐ Note taking in a systematic way

Examples of retrieval charts follow.

The Stolen Generations

From the perspective of.....

Topic focus	Source	Description	Critical Analysis	My knowledge & understanding

Five Inventions I would choose to take back to my planet

Invention	Date of Invention	Description	Use	Contribution to Society
One				
Two				
Three				
Four				
Five				

# Readers Circle Strategy

## Overview

Readers Circles involve small groups of students gathered together to discuss a piece of text (written or visual) in depth. It is a teaching method that allows students to become critical thinkers as they engage in ongoing dialogue with a text. Readers circles provide a way for students to engage in critical thinking and reflection as they read, discuss and respond to the text. Collaboration is at the heart of this approach. Through structured discussion and extended written and artistic response, this strategy guides the students to a deeper understanding of the text.

## Skills

- ☐ Reading and discussing text
- ☐ Connecting with text
- ☐ Taking responsibility as readers and constructing meaning together
- ☐ Debating and challenging one another
- ☐ Making drawings and notes that reflect readers' ideas
- ☐ Asking open-ended questions
- ☐ Revisiting the text constantly
- ☐ Proving points and settling differences by using specific passages
- ☐ Thinking critically

## Process for the Readers Circle Strategy

1. Select members for the Readers Circles (discussion groups).
2. Assign roles for the members of each circle (clarifier, summariser, timekeeper etc).
3. Assign text to be completed by the circles inside or outside of class.
4. Help students prepare for their roles in their circle.
5. Act as a facilitator for the circles.

## Self and Peer Assessment

A criteria sheet for student use is provided below.

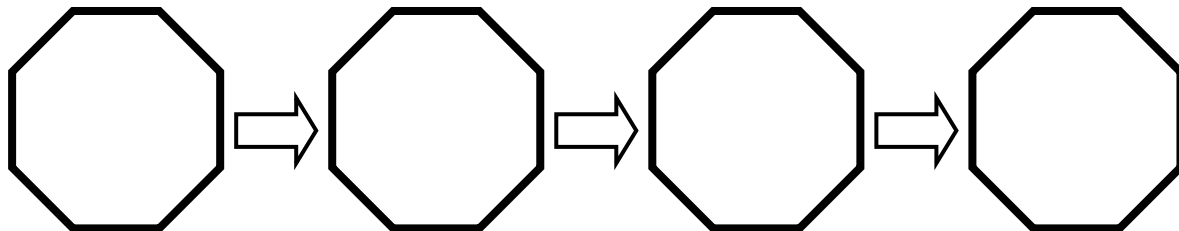
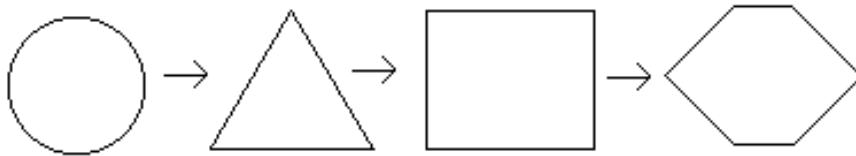
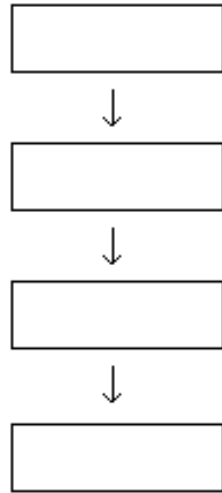
	Yes	No	Some-times	Evidence
Everyone participates and shares in the discussion process. Communication is interactive.				
The group is supportive of its individual members. Group climate promotes friendliness.				
Group members often ask questions for clarification or elaboration.				
The group discussion stays on topic or on directly related issues.				
The group is energetic and enthusiastic.				

What was the best thing about the way this group worked together?



## ① Linear Flowchart Strategy

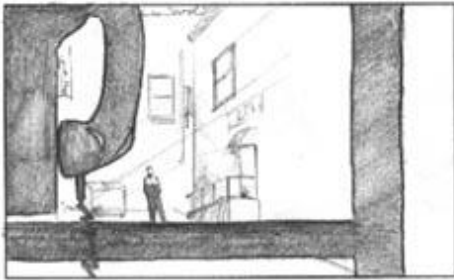
Information or phenomena related in a non-circular manner is best represented by linear flow charts. With this type of flow chart, the phenomena have a beginning point and an end point, with intervening steps or things in between. Arrows indicate relationships. Linear flow charts may be arranged top-down or left right. One or several geometric shapes may be used to represent the information.



## ① Story Board Strategy

**Storyboards** are used primarily in film making to design individual shots before filming. They are also common in comic strip, animation, TV commercials and multimedia design, but can be used for many other sorts of projects. Whereas a flowchart focuses on movement through a system, a storyboard or "content flowchart" allows far more detailed illustration of the contents of each element.

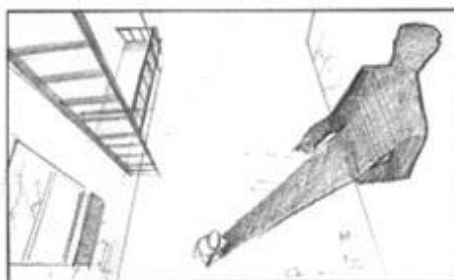
The storyboard should contain a sketch of the visual aspect of the screen, information which will be present, descriptions of animations, interactions (e.g. dialog boxes), sounds and any other media. Students can create storyboards as a preparation for puppet play scripts, as a visual aid in retelling a story or a written retell of a story.



EDEN WALKS OUT OF  
BUILDING & HEARS  
THUNDER BLOW  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



THERE'S THE THUNDER  
THUNDER  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Page 1

# ❶ Concept Web Strategy

A concept web is a diagram that indicates relationships between concepts. Put simply, webs are visual maps that show how different categories of information relate to one another. Webs provide structure for concepts, ideas and facts and give students a flexible framework for organising and prioritising information.

Typically, major topics or central concepts are at the centre of the web. Links from the centre connect supporting details or ideas with the core concept or topic. Concept webs are more effective in aiding comprehension and retrieval if the connection lines are labelled as well.

Teachers and students alike use webs to brainstorm, organise information for writing (pre-writing), as well as to analyse stories, events and characterisation. Classroom teachers use that webbing as an effective technique in small group settings. As students work cooperatively they can build collaborative webs, incorporating the thoughts and contributions of each group member.

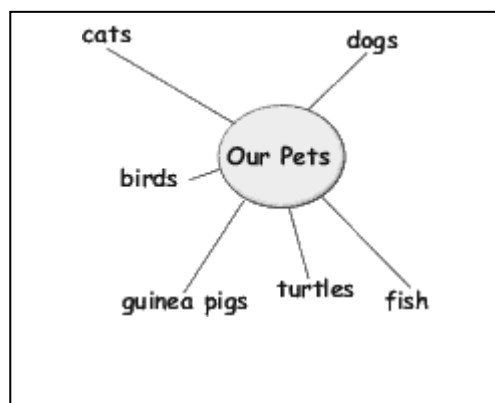
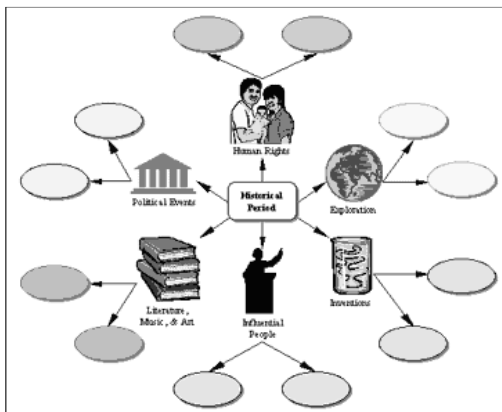
As an assessment tool, a concept web can be used to:

- ❑ Assess content knowledge and show hierarchy and relationships among concepts
- ❑ Provide teachers with insight into a student's understanding and reasoning
- ❑ Pre-assess student understanding of an area of study.

There are a variety of elements that students need to consider in designing a concept web. These include:

- ❑ The quantity and depth of terms used
- ❑ The accuracy of relationships
- ❑ The levels of hierarchy generated
- ❑ The number of branches and the number of cross links and how these are labelled.

Typical concept webs look something like these:



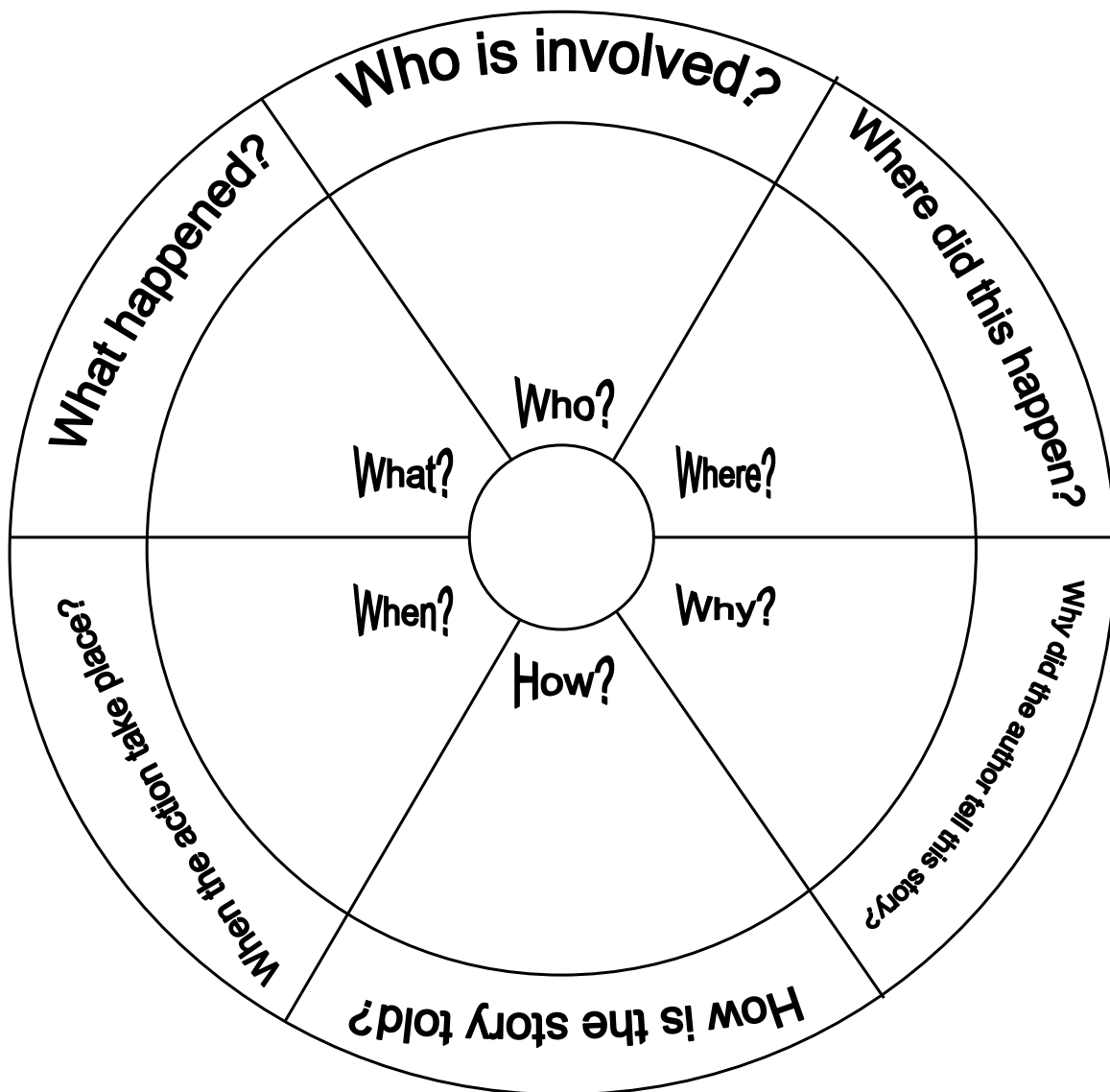
## ① Story Probe Strategy

Story Probe is a strategy that provides students with a guided process to unravel the deeper meaning behind a text. When students examine a number of contextual clues to a text they often discover insights into the purpose and meaning of the text.

The following worksheet can assist students to probe deeper into a text.

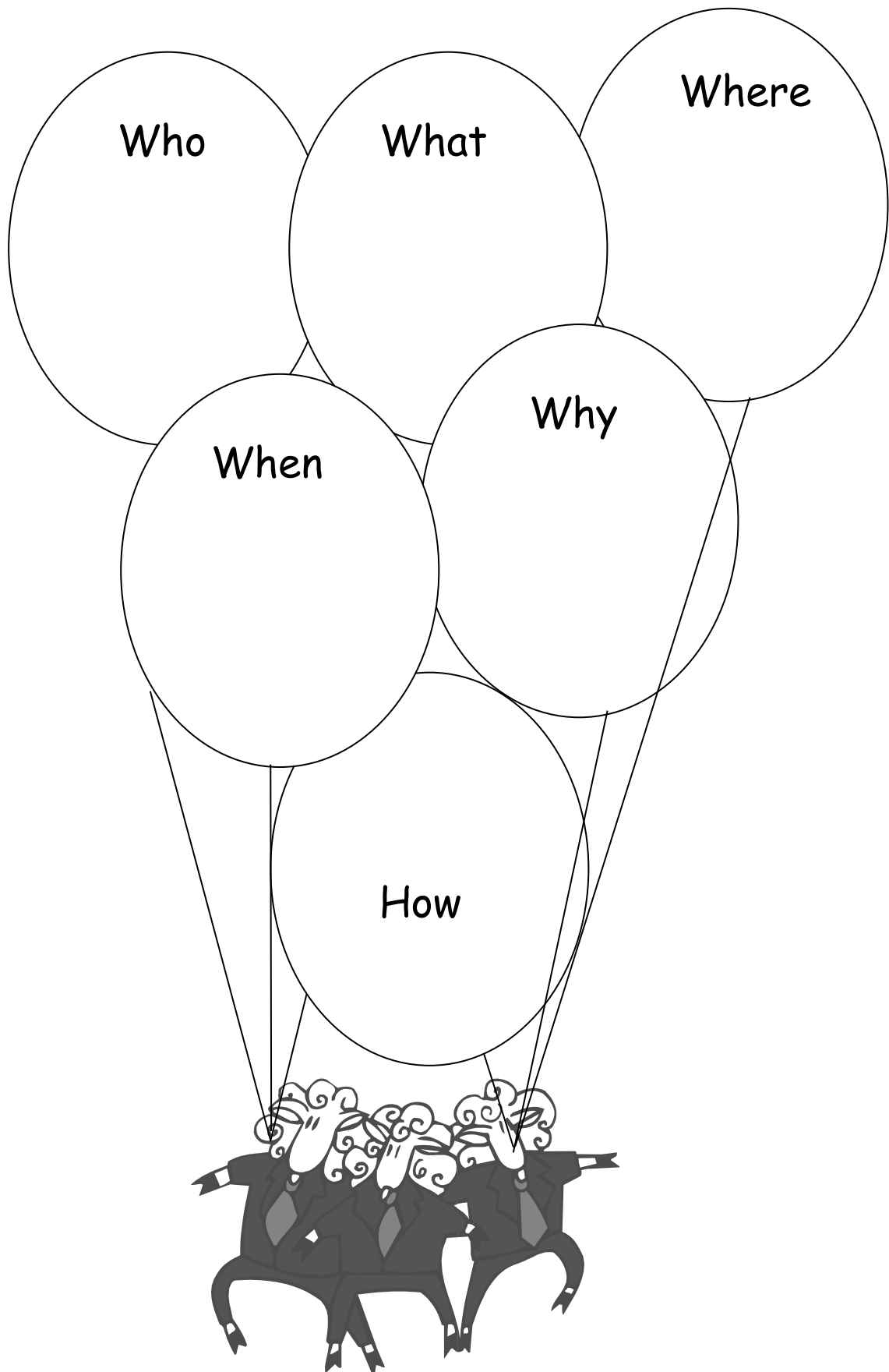
<i>Questions</i>	<i>Responses</i>
Who are the main characters in this text?	
What event/story came before this text?	
Are there any repeated words or phrases? What are they?	
What is the setting of the story? What was happening at the time?	
What are the main symbols or images used in this story?	
What are your thoughts and feelings as you read the story?	
What mind pictures do you get when you read this story?	
What do you think the author is like? Is there any message they are trying to get across in this story?	
What are some key words or phrases you like in this story?	

## ① Story Wheel



## ① 5Ws + H Strategy

The 5 Ws + H Strategy provides a simple checklist to help students think through issues: What, When, Why, Who, Where and How.

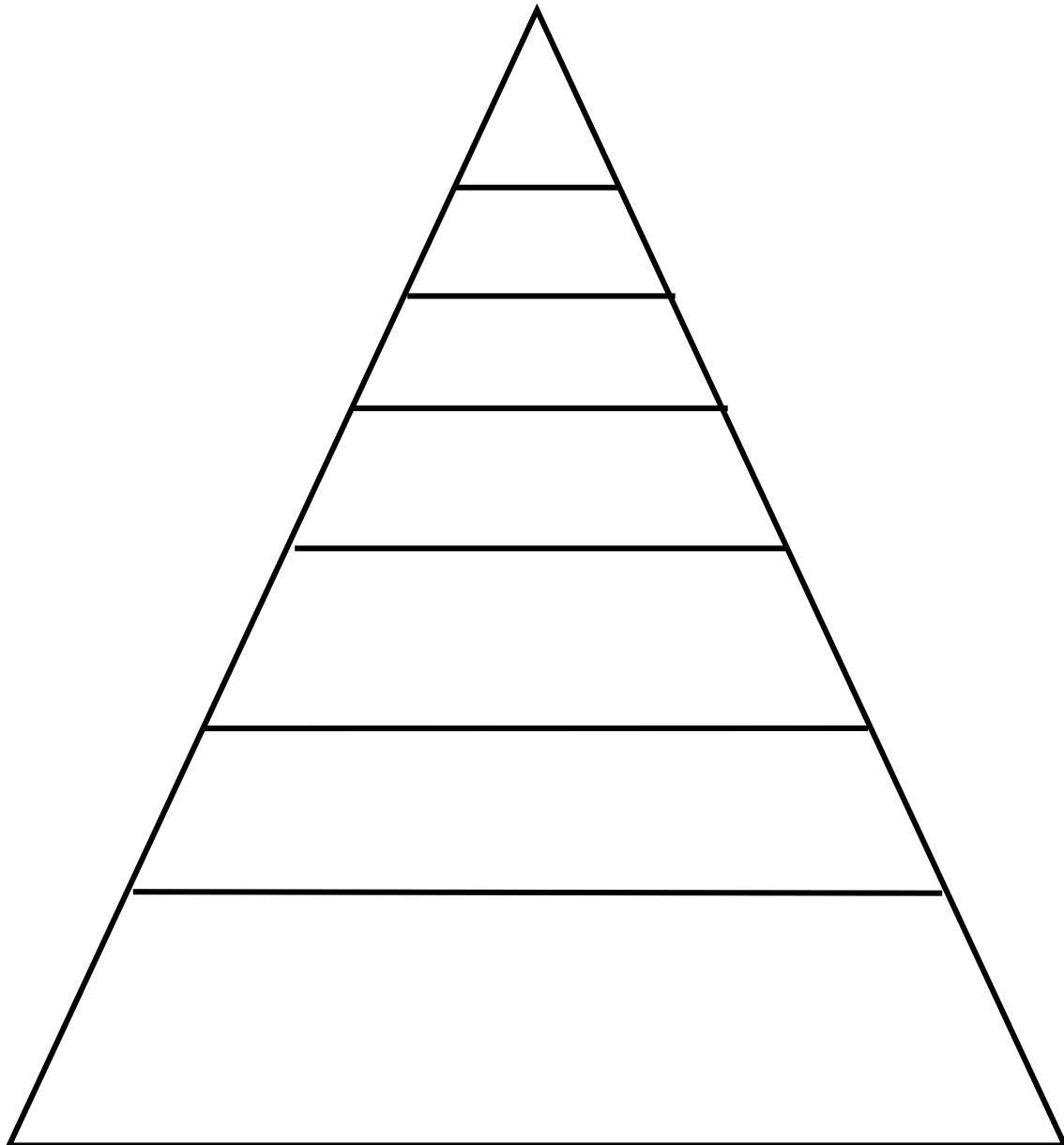


## ① Concept Pyramid Strategy

A Concept Pyramid is a simple way of brainstorming concepts and arranging them in a sequence or negotiated hierarchical order. In some concept pyramids, concepts are placed in order of preference or hierarchy. Alternatively, a concept pyramid might be used to identify specific elements or components in much the same way as a concept web might.

In using a Concept Pyramid within a group discussion a useful process might proceed as follows:

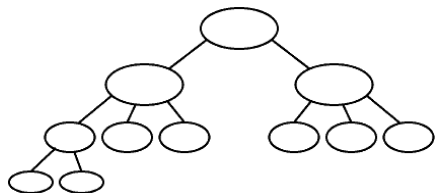
1. Provide each group with a blank concept pyramid printed on a sheet of A4 paper.
2. The Concept Pyramid is divided into levels of any number. Students brainstorm elements or components and record each on separate sheets of paper. They jointly construct the concept pyramid by negotiating on the hierarchical order in which the separate pieces of paper will be placed on the concept pyramid.



# Graphic Organisers

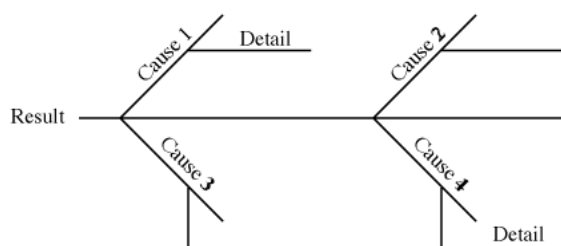
A graphic organiser is any visual tool used to represent a student's knowledge or investigation of a topic. Graphic organisers are intended to assist students to gather and record information in a structured way. They are a means to an end not an end in themselves.

There is a wide range of graphic organisers. This page depicts a small selection.



## Network Tree

Used to show causal information (causes of poverty), a hierarchy (types of insects), or branching procedures (the circulatory system). Key frame questions: What is the superordinate category? What are the subordinate categories? How are they related? How many levels are there?



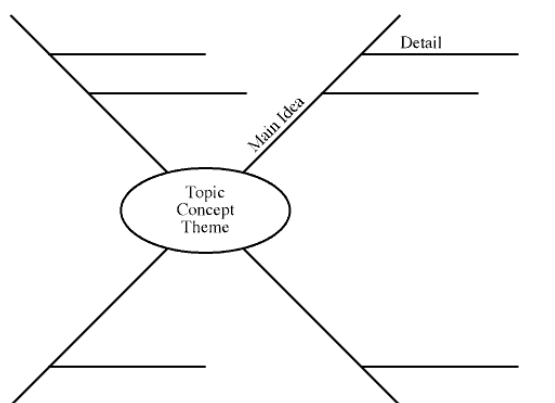
## Fishbone Map

Used to show the causal interaction of a complex event or complex phenomenon. Key frame questions: What are the factors that cause X? How do they interrelate? Are the factors that cause X the same as those that cause X to persist?

	Name 1	Name 2
Attribute 1		
Attribute 2		
Attribute 3		

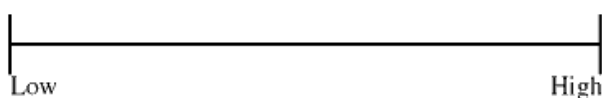
## Compare/Contrast Matrix

Used to show similarities and differences between two things (people, places, events, ideas, etc.). Key frame question: What things are being compared? How are they similar? How are they different?



## Spider Map

Used to describe a central idea: a thing (a geographic region), process, concept (compassion), or proposition with support (experimental drugs should be available to AIDS victims). Key frame questions: What is the central idea? What are its attributes? What are its functions?



## Continuum Scale

Used for time lines showing historical events or ages (grade levels in school), degrees of something (weight), shades of meaning, or ratings scales (achievement in school). Key frame questions: What is being scaled? What are the end points?



# ① Cartoon Strips

## ***Cartoon Draft Thumbnail Sketches***


### **Cartoonist techniques include:**

***Expression Heads*** Simple dots to which a line or a circle or both have been added to create expression  
Shape and size

Mouths - look at the different styles and the moods they create

Noses, eyes, eyebrows and hair come in an endless variety

***Bodies***

Shape and size

Neck or no neck

Arms and legs - moving or still

Clothing - how does it determine age, gender, occupation, or social status? How are different textures and patterns created?

Hands - How do they add to the action of the drawing? How many fingers? Life-like or squiggles? Nails or hand creases?

Feet and shoes - different styles

***Animals, fruits and plants and inanimate objects***

See the notes under expressions, heads and bodies above

***Cartoonists' Cliché***

Commas around a character to show movement

Squiggle or a shadowy shape beneath the character, which shows he/she is in mid-air

A light bulb suggesting the character has an idea

Droplets around the character showing perspiration or crying

Stars and planets indicating a crash or a collision or a punch

Eyeballs or pupils outside their sockets suggesting the character was startled or terrified

Clouds behind a running character

Shading in the cheek area suggesting the character is embarrassed or hot

Streaky lines behind a running character suggesting speed

Stars, rings and circles around a character suggesting he/she is dazed or stunned

Sparks and puffs of dust suggesting the character has stopped suddenly

"S" lines showing the character has been zigzagging

ZZZZ showing the universal sign for sleeping and snoring

Hearts showing a character in love or smitten

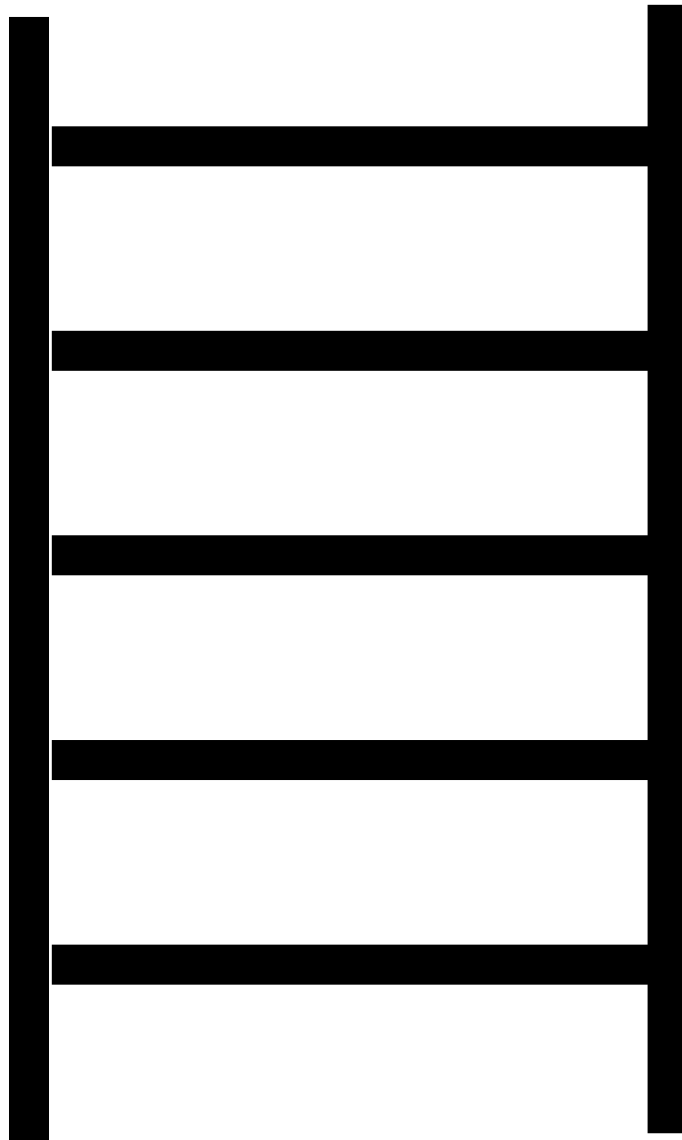
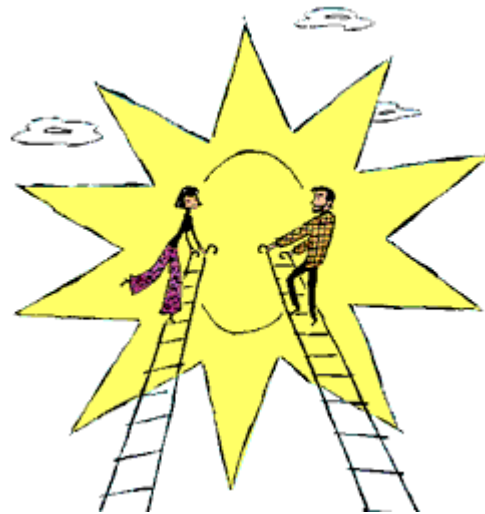
## ① Social Ladder Strategy

Story ladders and social ladders are based on the same principle except that in the case of a Social Ladder, the student indicates the social hierarchy of the characters within the story.

A Story Ladder is simply drawings and text relating to the key sequences in a story. Story ladders can be drawn like ladders, showing at each step, the title and author, the key characters, the setting, the situation, the problem and conflict, the resolution and the reader's personal impressions.

Alternatively, a story ladder can be used to sequence the key events by drawing a picture of each event between the rungs on the ladder. The text can be written beside each picture. Story ladders can then be cut up and reassembled by students to demonstrate correct sequencing of events.

The following template could be useful.



## ① Think Pad Strategy

A Think Pad is essentially a reflective activity designed to nurture *connected knowing*. This form of knowing focuses on discerning relationships within parts of the information to be learned as well as forming relationships between the information and one's own knowledge and experience.

There are four dimensions to a Think Pad:

- ❑ **Words**  
Students describe in one or two sentences the meaning of a text.
- ❑ **Pictures**  
Students draw a sequence of pictures depicting the events described in a text.
- ❑ **Connections to Life**  
Students write or illustrate how the text might apply to a real life situation in the contemporary world.
- ❑ **Symbols**  
Students draw one or more symbols that might capture the key themes of a text.

<i>Words</i>	<i>Symbols</i>
<i>Pictures</i>	<i>Connections to Life</i>

This strategy is one of many provided by Dan White (et al) in the following book:

White, D; O'Brien, K and Todd, S., ***Into the Deep: Rich teaching Strategies for the Religious Education Classroom***. (Marayong, NSW: K.D. Publications). Phone 0414 826837

# ① Context Pizza Strategy

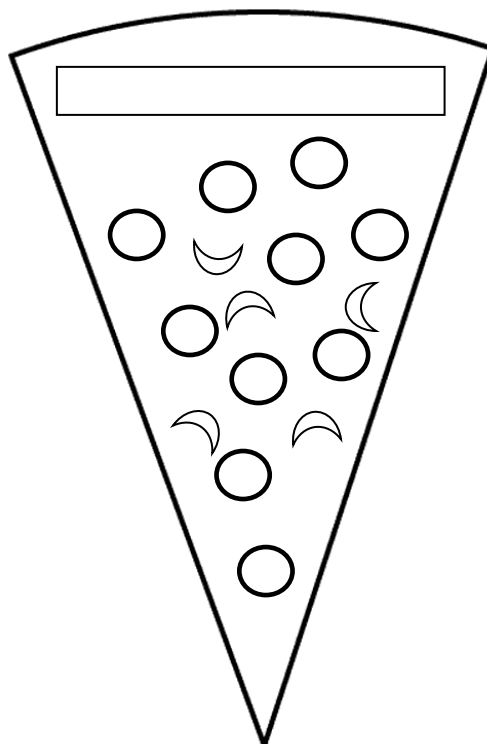
The concept pizza strategy allows students to complete a simple biblical exegesis on a parable or other scriptural text using contextual clues.

A suggested process for using this strategy is provided below:

1. Students read the text
2. Students form learning teams of a specified number depending on how many contextual clues are being investigated. Students take a slice of pizza (see resources below) and write the name of the contextual clue they will be investigation. This might, for example, be a characters name, or a geographic feature. The contextual clues provided below are based on teams of six with each student in the team investigating a different clue:

Social Context	What social codes are evidenced in this text?
Political Context	What is the implied political agenda in and behind this text?
Cultural Context	What evidence is there is this text that is specific to the culture of the time and place?
Symbolic Context	How and where is symbolism used to enhance the meaning of this text?
Historical Context	When are / where was this text set? How does that inform the meaning of the text?
Literary Context	What literary techniques and textual features have been used in this text? How does knowledge of them help you understand the text?

3. Students now re-read their text paying attention to the contextual clue they are investigating. Students write context clues on the back of their pizza slice.
4. Student now take turns in sharing information gathered. As they do say they place their pizza slice into the middle of the story upside down. As the discussion proceeds, a class context pizza forms. Students can then use the data to write a group report.



## ① Graphic Outline

Graphic Outline Strategy			
Matthew	Mark	Luke	John
Features common to all accounts			

## ① Three Level Lighthouse

