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Key words

Prophecy, Immanuel, disfigured, blasphemy, hypocrisy, execution.

In the Bible, we learn that God used prophets to communicate to His people. Prophets were used by God to prophesy or foretell future events, leading people in worship and warning people against their sinful life.

The term prophecy means a prediction or an utterance that is made by a prophet through God's inspiration. In the Old Testament, there are many prophecies concerning the coming of the Messiah. The title 'Messiah' in Hebrew or Christ in Greek means the anointed one of God.

The Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah

Read Isaiah 7:14, 42:1-4, 52:14, 53, 62:1-2, Micah 5:2-5, Jeremiah 23:5-6.

Psalms 110:1-2, 118:22-23



Angel Gabriel appearing to Mary

The Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah were foretold by the prophets of God. The following are the prophecies from the Old Testament about the Messiah.

1. Isaiah's Prophecies

The Messiah would be born of a young virgin woman, this means that the birth of the Messiah would be extraordinary, (Isaiah 7:14).

The Messiah would be the Lord's servant who would be the chosen one. God would be delighted in him. God's spirit would be upon him. He would bring justice to the nations, (Isaiah 42:1-4).

Isaiah 42: 1-4

"Here is my servant, whom I strengthen the one I have chosen, with whom I am pleased. I have filled him with my Spirit, and he will bring justice to every nation. He will not shout or raise his voice or make loud speeches in the streets. He will not break off a bent reed or put out a flickering lamp. He will bring lasting justice to all. He will not lose hope or courage; he will establish justice on the earth. Distant lands eagerly wait for his teaching."

The Messiah would act in the wisdom of God. He would be raised and highly exalted. His appearance would be so disfigured beyond that of any person, (Isaiah 52:12-15).

The Messiah would not have any dignity or beauty to attract him to others. He would be despised, rejected and suffer so much pain. The Messiah would faithfully endure the suffering that he would be subjected to.

The Messiah's suffering would bring healing to people and forgiveness of sins. He would be arrested and sentenced to death. The Messiah would be very faithful in his work to God and that is why he would be honoured. God would make the Messiah a gift offering and bear the sins of people (*Isaiah 53*).

The Messiah would be anointed by God and therefore have the Spirit of God. He would preach Good News to the poor. He would set the captives free. The captives here refer to those who are sinners. He would mend the broken hearts. He would also proclaim the year of the Lord's favour and bring joy to many who have been in mourning, (*Isaiah 61:1-2*).

In his prophetic mission, prophet Isaiah referred to the coming Messiah with distinguished titles. He referred to him as: Suffering servant, The Mighty God, Wonderful Counsellor, Immanuel, Prince of peace, Everlasting Father, Just and Righteous ruler and a son of Jesse's stamp.

Isaiah 61: 1-2

The Sovereign LORD has filled me with his Spirit. He has chosen me and sent me To bring good news to the poor; To heal the broken-hearted, To announce release to captives And freedom to those in prison.² Mt 5.4 He has sent me to proclaim That the time has come When the LORD will save his people And defeat their enemies. He has sent me to comfort all who mourn, *isaiah 61: 1-2* "Bethlehem Ephrathah, you are one of the smallest towns in Judah, but out of you I will bring a ruler for Israel, whose family line goes back to ancient times."

³So the LORD will abandon his people to their enemies until the woman who is to give birth has her son. Then those Israelites who are in exile will be reunited with their own people. ⁴When he comes, he will rule his people with the strength that comes from the LORD and with the majesty of the LORD God himself. His people will live in safety because people all over the earth will acknowledge his greatness, ⁵and he will bring peace.,

Jeremiah 23: 5-6

Jer 33.14–16 The LORD says, “The time is coming when I will choose as king a righteous descendant of David. That king will rule wisely and do what is right and just throughout the land. 6When he is king, the people of Judah will be safe, and the people of Israel will live in peace. He will be called ‘The LORD Our Salvation’.

Psalms 110: 1-2

The LORD said to my lord, “Sit here at my right until I put your enemies under your feet.” 2From Zion the LORD will extend your royal power: “Rule over your enemies,” he says. psalms 118: 22-23 The stone which the builders rejected as worthless turned out to be the most important of all. 23This was done by the LORD; what a wonderful sight it is!

Activity 1.1

1. *Define the word prophet.*
2. *Discuss Prophet Isaiah’s prophecies concerning the Messiah.*

The concept of the Messiah in the New Testament

Read Matthew 2:2, John 6:15, Luke 1:67-74, 2:11, 2:28-32, 9:20, 23:38.

Activity 1.2

1. *In groups, identify the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah in Isaiah and show how they were fulfilled in the New Testament.*
2. *Share your answers with the rest of the class.*

The concept of the Messiah in the New Testament is the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah. The fulfillment would come in ways such as the Messiah being born in the town of Bethlehem, by establishing the everlasting Kingdom, coming from the lineage of David and he would bring salvation to human race.

Prophet Micah prophesied that the Messiah would be born in a small town in Judah called Bethlehem. (Micah 5: 2-5)



Baby Jesus in a manger

micah 5: 2-5

Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David

The Messiah would establish an everlasting kingdom. After Jesus performed the miracle of feeding the five thousand, people were amazed. Jesus knew that they wanted to make him king by force, (*John 6:15*). However, Jesus withdrew from them because he did not come to establish an earthly temporal kingdom. He came to establish an everlasting Kingdom to fulfil Isaiah's prophecy. The Messiah would be from the lineage of David (*Jeremiah 23:5-6*). In Zechariah's song when he praised God for bringing salvation through the house of David (*Luke 1:67-70*).

The Psalmist prophesied that the Messiah would bring salvation to the people. In Zechariah's song of praise he mentioned that salvation and power had come through the Lord's Servant (*Luke 1:69*).

Angels revealed to the shepherds that a saviour had been born in Bethlehem who is Christ the Lord (*Luke 2:11*).



Angels singing Hossanah

God had promised Simeon that he would not die until he saw the promised Messiah. During presentation and dedication of Jesus in the temple, Simeon praised God because he had now seen the Messiah.

Luke 2:28-32

Simeon took the child in his arms and gave thanks to God: 29“Now, Lord, you have kept your promise, and you may let your servant go in peace. 30With my own eyes I have seen your salvation, 31which you have prepared in the presence of all peoples:32 A light to reveal your will to the Gentilesand bring glory to your people Israel.”

Simeon prophesied that Jesus would bring light and salvation to the Gentiles (Luke 2:28-32). This was prophesied in his Nunc dimithis during presentation and dedication of Jesus in the temple.

When Jesus asked his disciples about his identity, Simon Peter identified him as ‘Christ son of God’ (Luke 9:20). This fulfills what Prophet Isaiah prophesied about the Messiah. That the spirit of God would be upon him (Isaiah 42:1).

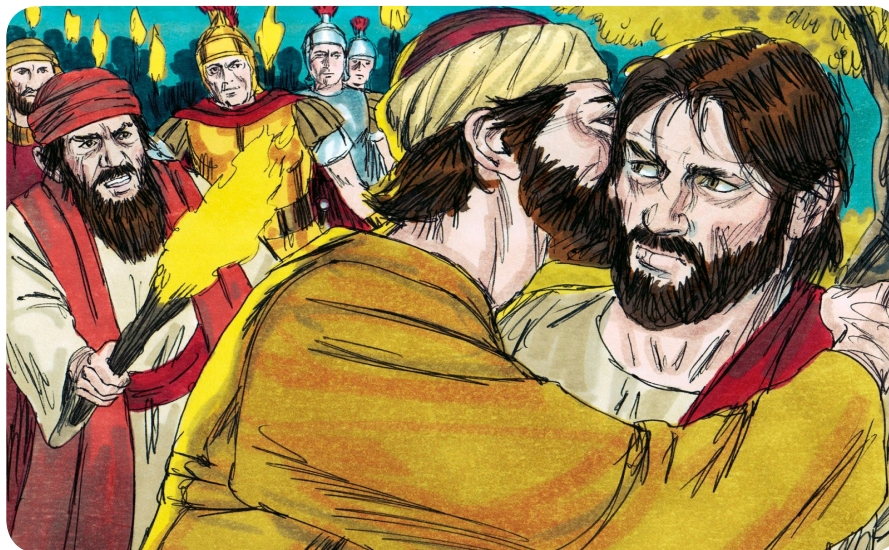
Isaiah 42: 1

“Here is my servant, whom I strengthen the one I have chosen, with whom I am pleased. I have filled him with my Spirit, and he will bring justice to every nation.

During the trial of Jesus before Pilate, one of the accusations against Jesus was that he claimed to be the King of the Jews. Jesus did not deny nor accept this claim. Therefore when Jesus was crucified, the soldiers put a notice above his head on the cross. The notice read ‘This is Jesus of Nazareth the King of the Jews’ (INRI) (Luke 23:38).

Prophet Isaiah prophesied about the suffering servant (Isaiah 53). Jesus was despised and rejected by his own people, the Jews. He was accused of blasphemy and accepting to be the king. This fulfills what Isaiah had prophesied about the Messiah to suffer in the hands of his own people.

During the last supper, Jesus mentioned that one of the disciples would betray him. He was referring to Judas Iscariot who betrayed him to the chief priests, the officers of the temple guard and the elders during the arrest in the Garden of Gethsamene.



Judas betraying Jesus

The Messiah would be called a Nazarene. Isaiah mentioned that Jesus would be from Nazareth. (*Isaiah 9:1*). The prophesy records that the Messiah would honour Galilee of the nations, by the way of the sea, beyond Jordan. Jesus indeed was brought up in Nazareth, a town in Galilee. During his mission, he began his ministry in Galilee and later expanded to Capernaum.

Activity 1.3

1. Describe how Jesus fulfilled the Old Testament Prophecies about the Messiah.
2. Which lessons do Christians learn from the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies concerning the Messiah in the New Testament.

The differences between the Old Testament prophecies and the Jewish expectations of the Messiah in the New Testament

Jesus was born at a time when the Jews were expecting the fulfillment of the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah. The Roman Empire controlled the Palestine region where Jews lived. The Jews therefore wanted their own freedom and they expected a strong earthly leader armed with strong army to help them overthrow the Roman government. They expected a powerful Messiah to help them conquer the Romans in Palestine. However, their expectations of the Messiah were different and that is why many of them did not recognise Jesus as the Messiah.

Jews expected the Messiah that would be a great leader that is; anointed by God, filled with the Spirit of God and be a descendant of King David and would rule from Jerusalem, the city of King David. They expected an earthly king as David was. He would be a political leader who would conquer the enemies of Israel, including the Romans.

They thought that the Messiah would follow the Mosaic Law and not associate with sinners and non-Jews (Gentiles) who were perceived as outcasts. They also thought he would be born in a noble family. He would also be royal and would bring restoration of the Kingdom of Israel.

Despite the Jews expectations, Jesus was the Messiah anointed by God and

had the Spirit of God. He came from the lineage of David and he established an everlasting Kingdom. Jesus came to save those who would accept him, especially the Gentiles.

However, Jesus did not fulfil the Jewish expectations. Jesus' ordinary family background made Jews to despise him. He failed to be a political leader to drive away the Romans. Jesus mixed freely with the Gentiles which aroused rejection by Jewish community. He accused the Pharisees of their hypocrisy and injusticeness in matters relating to religion and the society. Jesus openly accused the Jews that their forefathers had killed God's prophets. Therefore by rejecting and persecuting God's prophets, the kingdom of God had been taken away from the Jews and given to the Gentiles.

Jesus acts of performing miracles on sabbath attracted despise and rejection from the Jews. The Pharisees and Scribes were strict followers of the Mosaic Law. Therefore anyone who went against the Mosaic Law was persecuted.

The pharisees, scribes and the Sadducees feared opposition from Jesus. This around anger and the satanic act of crucifying Jesus.

Activity 1.4

1. *Read the following Scripture Luke 4: 16-30.*
2. *Explain why Jesus was rejected in Nazareth.*
3. *State the Jewish expectations about the Messiah.*

Luke 4:16-30.

Then Jesus went to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, and on the Sabbath he went as usual to the synagogue. He stood up to read the Scriptures and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it is written:

18 "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has chosen me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind; to set free the oppressed and announce that the time has come when the Lord will save his people." 20 Jesus rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. All the people in the synagogue had their eyes fixed on him, 21 as he said to them, "This passage of scripture has come true today, as you heard it being read."

22 They were all well impressed with him and marvelled at the eloquent words that he spoke. They said, "Isn't he the son of Joseph?"

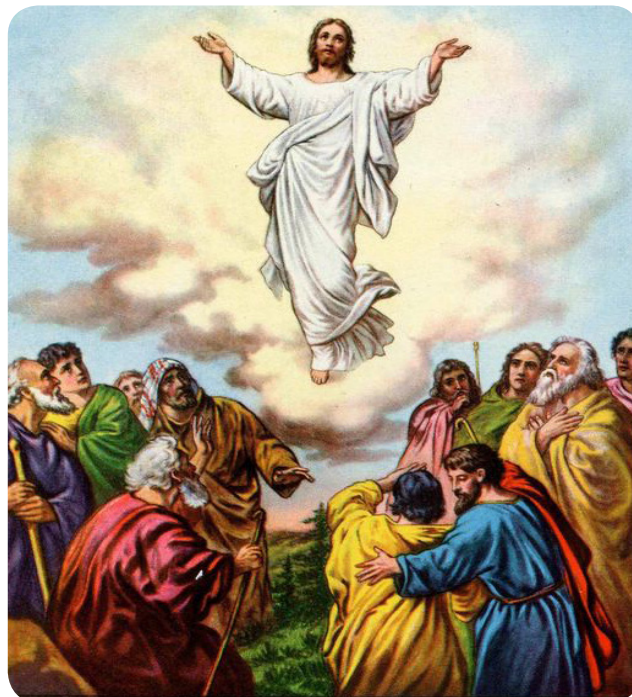
23He said to them, "I am sure that you will quote this proverb to me, 'Doctor, heal yourself.' You will also tell me to do here in my home town the same things you heard were done in Capernaum. 24 tell you this," Jesus added, "prophets are never welcomed in their home town.

25 "Listen to me: it is true that there were many widows in Israel during the time of Elijah, when there was no rain for 3.5 years and a severe famine spread throughout the whole land. 261 Kgs 17:8-16Yet Elijah was not sent to anyone in Israel, but only to a widow living in Zarephath in the territory of Sidon. 27And there were many people suffering from a dreaded skin disease who lived in Israel during the time of the prophet Elisha; yet not one of them was healed, but only Naaman the Syrian."

28When the people in the synagogue heard this, they were filled with anger. 29They rose up, dragged Jesus out of the town, and took him to the top of the hill on which their town was built. They meant to throw him over the cliff, 30but he walked through the middle of the crowd and went his way.

The relevance of the prophecies to Christian's belief today

The Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah are important to Christians. The prophecies encourage Christians in various ways such as believing that God uses prophets to communicate His will.



Jesus ascending to heaven

The Old Testament prophecies are important in understanding the New Testament scriptures. They provide chronological events in historic times linking the two testaments. Christians also believe that Jesus is the Messiah who fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies. They believe that as Jesus obeyed God by fulfilling His wills on earth, they should obey His commandments and honour God. Christians believe that

Jesus is the suffering servant who underwent rejection, betrayal, humiliation and execution to redeem sins. They should strive to live righteous lives to honor the cost of their redemption. Through the Old Testament prophecies, Christians believe that Jesus came to establish the Kingdom of God that is everlasting. Christians believe that Jesus, the son of God, will come back.

Activity 1.5

- 1. Discuss the significance of the Old Testament Prophecies in the Christian faith.*
- 2. Compare and contrast the Old Testament prophecies and the Jewish expectations of the Messiah in the New Testament.*

Glossary

Prophecy: Is the prediction a prophet through God's inspiration.

Immanuel: God is with us.

Disfigured: Change in appearance.

Blasphemy: great disrespect shown to God.

Hypocrisy: This is the practice of claiming to have higher standards than is really the case.

Execution: Sentence of death on somebody who is condemned.

UNIT 2

The Redemption

Key words

Redemption, magnificat, benedictus, forerunner, salvation, incestuous.

The word redemption comes from the verb redeem which means to buy or pay off. Redemption therefore means the act of delivering, atoning, pay up a debt or purchasing something back. In the Bible context, Jesus is referred to as the redeemer who came to redeem or atone for the sins of humankind. The task of redeeming humankind was very enormous and God through the Old Testament prophets promised that there would be a forerunner who would come before the Messiah. This forerunner was John the Baptist. The annunciation and birth of John the Baptist therefore, becomes important in the study of God's redemption because he prepared the way for the Messiah through his teaching.

The annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist

Activity 2.1

1. Read *John 1:5*.
2. Explain the reading in respect to the following picture.



Angel Gabriel appearing to Zechariah

Group work

1. Identify what angel Gabriel told Zechariah about his son John.
2. Why did Zechariah doubt angel Gabriel's messages?
3. Explain the role of John as the announced Angel Gabriel in the redemption of humankind..

The significance of the annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist to Christians today

- i. The annunciation of the birth of John the Baptist is important because it fulfilled the Old Testament prophecies about the forerunner of the Messiah. In *Isaiah 40:3-5* the prophecy describes the forerunner as the voice calling out of the desert for others to prepare the way for the Lord.
- ii. The annunciation showed that God was concerned with the good relationship between Him and humankind. God desires righteousness.
- iii. It also signified that God was about to send the Messiah who would redeem humankind. In addition, the annunciation brought joy to Zechariah and Elizabeth. God answered their prayer and removed the disgrace they had.

The annunciation of the birth of Jesus to Mary

Activity 2.1

1. Read *Luke 1:26-38*.
2. Explain the reading.

Luke 1: 26-38

In the sixth month of Elizabeth's pregnancy God sent the angel Gabriel to a town in Galilee named Nazareth. 27 He had a message for a young woman promised in marriage to a man named Joseph, who was a descendant of King David. Her name was Mary. 28The angel came to her and said, "Peace be with you! The Lord is with you and has greatly blessed you!"

29Mary was deeply troubled by the angel's message, and she wondered what his words meant. 30The angel said to her, "Don't be afraid, Mary; God has been gracious to you. 31Mt 1.21You will become pregnant and give birth to a son, and you will name him Jesus. He will be great and will be called the Son of the Most High God. The Lord God will make him a king, as his ancestor David was, 33and he will be the king of the descendants of Jacob for ever; his kingdom will never end!"

34Mary said to the angel, “I am a virgin. How, then, can this be?”

35The angel answered, “The Holy Spirit will come on you, and God’s power will rest upon you. For this reason the holy child will be called the Son of God. 36Remember your relative Elizabeth. It is said that she cannot have children, but she herself is now six months pregnant, even though she is very old. 37Gen 18.14For there is nothing that God cannot do.”38“I am the Lord’s servant,” said Mary; “may it happen to me as you have said.” And the angel left her.

“Greetings to you who is highly favoured.The Lord is with you.”



Angel Gabriel appearing to Mary

Activity 2.3

1. *Have you ever received good news about something?*
2. *What was your reaction when you heard the news?*
3. *If you were Mary, how could you react on if the angel appeared to you?*

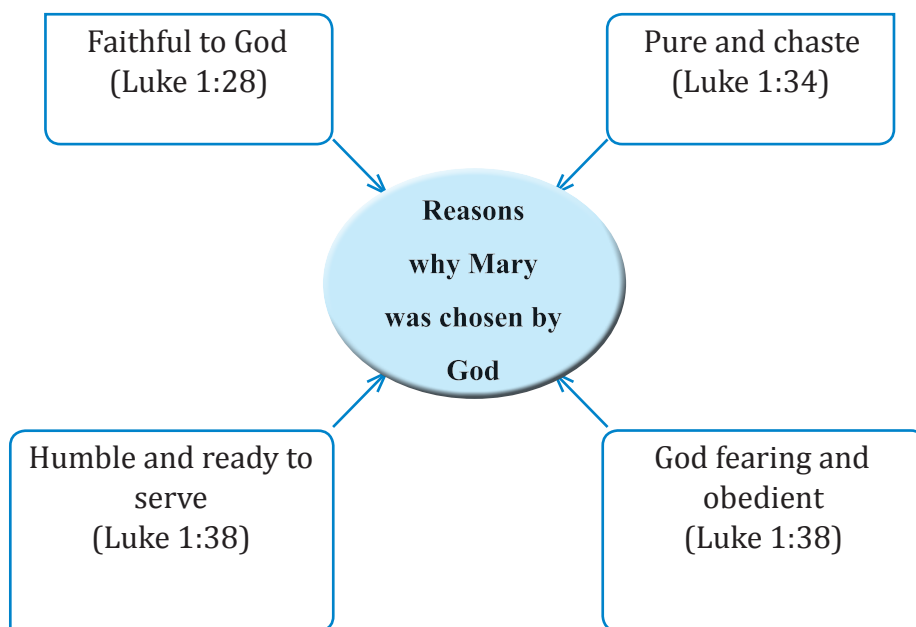
God sent angel Gabriel was sent again by God to deliver a message to Mary. Mary was a young woman from a humble background in a town called Nazareth in the province of Galilee. She was engaged to Joseph who was a descendant of David. The angel greeted her and told her that she had been favoured by God.

The angel announced to Mary what was going to happen concerning Jesus; that is through the power of the Holy Spirit, she would conceive and give birth to a son. His name would be Jesus, he would be great, he would be called the Son of the Most High God, God will give him the throne of David and that his reign would last forever.

This message troubled Mary since she was a virgin. The angel assured her that the Holy Spirit would overshadow her and then she would conceive. The angel further informed Mary that her relative Elizabeth was already pregnant despite her old age and that nothing was impossible with God. Finally, Mary accepted the angel's message with humility and obedience.

The reasons why God chose Mary to be the mother of Jesus

God chose Mary because of her character. She had the following attributes:



Mary visits Elizabeth

Group work

1. Read Luke 1:39-56 .

luke 1:39-56

9Soon afterwards Mary got ready and hurried off to a town in the hill country of Judea. 40She went into Zechariah's house and greeted Elizabeth. 41When Elizabeth heard Mary's greeting, the baby moved within her. Elizabeth was filled with the Holy Spirit 42and said in a loud voice, "You are the most blessed of all women, and blessed is the child you will bear! 43Why should this great thing happen to me, that my Lord's mother comes to visit me? 44For as soon as I heard your greeting, the baby within me jumped with gladness. 45How happy you are to believe that the Lord's message to you will come true!" Mary's Song of Praise 46 1 Sam 2.1-10 Mary said, "My heart praises the Lord;

7my soul is glad because of God my Saviour, 48 1 Sam 1.11 for he has remembered me, his lowly servant! From now on all people will call me happy, 49because of the great things the Mighty God has done for me. His name is holy; 50from one generation to another he shows mercy to those who honour him. 51He has stretched out his mighty arm and scattered the proud with all their plans. 52 He has brought down mighty kings from their thrones, and lifted up the lowly. 53He has filled the hungry with good things, and sent the rich away with empty hands.

54He has kept the promise he made to our ancestors, and has come to the help of his servant Israel. 55 He has remembered to show mercy to Abraham and to all his descendants for ever!"

56Mary stayed about three months with Elizabeth and then went back home.

2. *Why do you think Mary visited Elizabeth?*

3. *Discuss the relevance of the Magnificat.*

During visitation, Mary chanted a song of Praise to Almighty God for remembering her. Elizabeth was six month pregnant of John the Baptist. Mary and Elizabeth were cousins. Elizabeth praised Mary for her faith as the Magnificat. The magnificat alludes to the song of Hannah for rejoice after God had blessed her with Samuel.



Mary visits Elizabeth

The components of the Magnificat

Activity 2.3

1. Read the song of Mary and compose a song that is similar to it.
(Luke 1:46-56)
2. State the significance of the Magnificat to Christians today.

Mary praised God in a song referred to as the **Magnificat**. Literally **Magnificat** means **My soul**.

In this song Mary said the following about God:

- i. God is the saviour.
- ii. God remembers the humble and exalts them.
- iii. God is the mighty one who does great things.
- iv. God is Holy.

The birth of John the Baptist

Luke 1:57-80

When Elizabeth was due to give birth, the neighbours and relatives were very delighted because they realised that Elizabeth and Zechariah were blessed by God. The child was circumcised on the eighth day according to the Jewish culture and their relatives were about to name him Zechariah as it was the tradition of naming. However, Elizabeth said that he should be named John. They made signs to Zechariah asking him what he wanted his son to be called. Zechariah asked for a writing tablet and he wrote:

His
name
is
John
(Luke 1:63)

Immediately after this, Zechariah began to speak just as the angel had said, *Luke 1:20*. The neighbours were filled with joy about this and the news spread throughout Judea.

Zechariah was filled with the Holy Spirit and began to prophesy in the form of a hymn. This particular hymn is referred to as the “*Benedictus*” which means praise, *Luke 1:68-79*. This hymn can be divided into two.

Part one of the benedictus

Luke 1: 68-75

“Let us praise the Lord, the God of Israel! He has come to the help of His people and has set them free. 69He has provided for us a mighty Saviour, a descendant of his servant David.

70He promised through his holy prophets long ago 71that he would save us from our enemies, from the power of all those who hate us. 72He said he would show mercy to our ancestors and remember his sacred covenant. 73-74With a solemn oath to our ancestor Abraham He promised to rescue us from our enemies and allow us to serve Him without fear, 75so that we might be holy and righteous before Him all the days of our life. 56Mary stayed about three months with Elizabeth and then went back home

Activity 2.4

1. Read *Luke 1: 68-75*.
2. Discuss what Zechariah said about God as in part one.
3. What is the significance of the *Benedictus* to Christian today?

Part one of the benedictus

Luke 1:76-79

“You, my child, will be called a prophet of the Most High God. You will go ahead of the Lord to prepare his road for him, 77to tell his people that they will be saved by having their sins forgiven. 78Our God is merciful and tender. He will cause the bright dawn of salvation to rise on us 79 Is 9.2 and to shine from heaven on all those who live in the dark shadow of death, to guide our steps into the path of peace.”

The Benedictus is a song or canticle of Zechariah. The Benedictus was a song of thanks giving uttered by Zechariah on the occasion of circumcision of his son, John the Baptist. Zechariah thanked God for the realisation of Messianic hopes of the Jewish nation.

Moreover Zechariah addressed his own son, who was going to be very important in the scheme of redemption. John was to be a prophet and preach the remission of sins before the coming of the Messiah.

Activity 2.5

1. Discuss the two key parts addressed by Zechariah in Benedictus.
2. Find out the mission of John the Baptism from the Benedictus.
3. Discuss the significance of the birth of John the Baptist to Christian today.

The birth of Jesus

Activity 2.6

1. Read Luke 2:1-20.
2. Describe the birth of Jesus.
3. Explain the relevance of the birth of Jesus both to Jews and Christians.

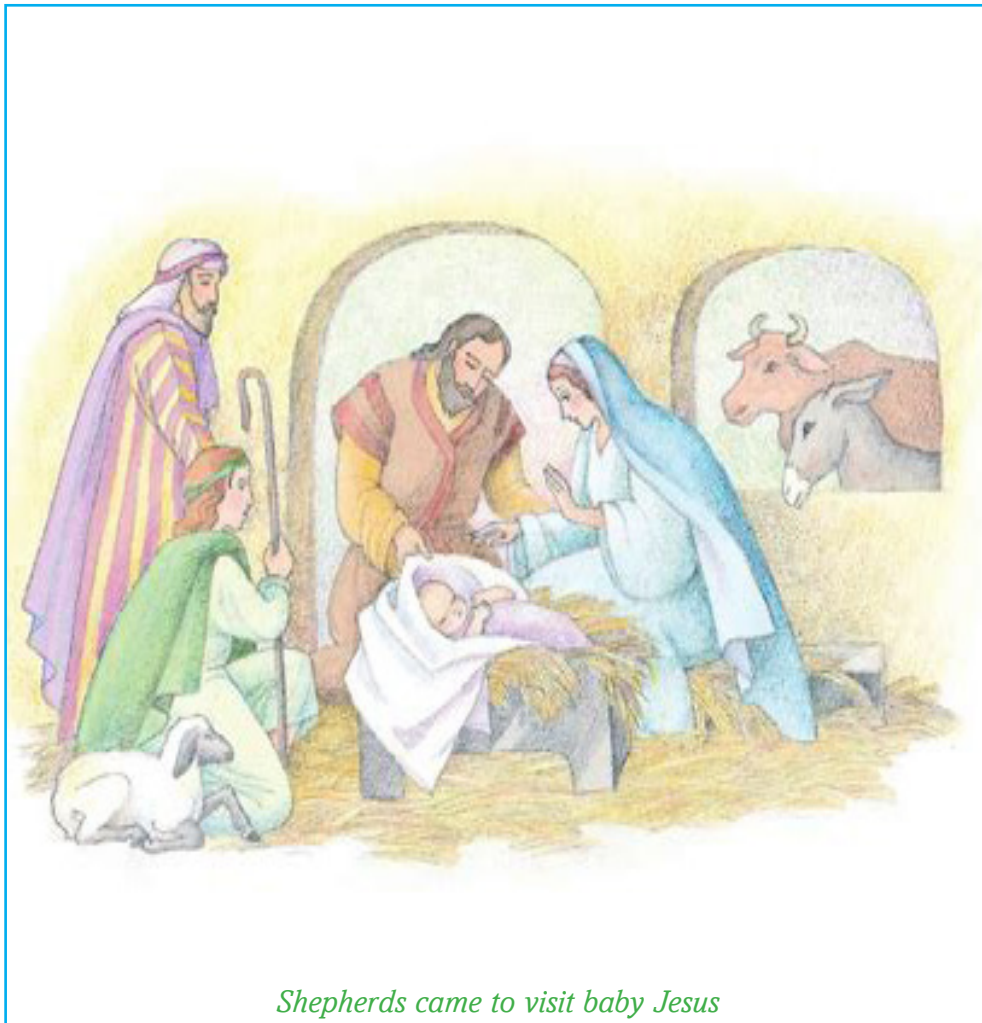
Luke 2: 1-20

At that time the Emperor Augustus ordered a census to be taken throughout the Roman Empire. ²When this first census took place, Quirinius was the governor of Syria. ³Everyone, then, went to register himself, each to his own town.

⁴Joseph went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to the town of Bethlehem in Judea, the birthplace of King David. Joseph went there because he was a descendant of David. ⁵He went to register with Mary, who was promised in marriage to him. She was pregnant, ⁶and while they were in Bethlehem, the time came for her to have her baby. ⁷She gave birth to her first son, wrapped him in strips of cloth and laid him in a manger — there was no room for them to stay in the inn.

⁸There were some shepherds in that part of the country who were spending the night in the fields, taking care of their flocks. ⁹An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone over them. They were terribly afraid, ¹⁰but the angel said to them, “Don’t be afraid! I am here with good news for you, which will bring great joy to all the people. ¹¹This very day in David’s town your Saviour was born — Christ the Lord! ¹²And this is what will prove it to you: you will find a baby wrapped in strips of cloth and lying in a manger.”

¹³Suddenly a great army of heaven’s angels appeared with the angel, singing praises to God. ¹⁴“Glory to God in the highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom he is pleased!” ¹⁵When the angels went away from them back into heaven, the shepherds said to one another, “Let’s go to Bethlehem and see this thing that has happened, which the Lord has told us.” ¹⁶So they hurried off and found Mary and Joseph and saw the baby lying in the manger. ¹⁷When the shepherds saw him, they told them what the angel had said about the child. ¹⁸All who heard it were amazed at what the shepherds said. ¹⁹Mary remembered all these things and thought deeply about them. ²⁰The shepherds went back, singing praises to God for all they had heard and seen; it had been just as the angel had told them. may it happen to me as you have said.” And the angel left her.



Shepherds came to visit baby Jesus

Group work

- 1. Give names of the first people who witnessed the birth of Jesus.*
- 2. Identify the lessons Christians learn from the birth of Jesus.*
- 3. What lessons Christians learn from the shepherds.*

The infancy life of Jesus

The presentation and dedication of Jesus

Read Luke 2:21-40



Dedication of baby Jesus in the temple

Jesus was circumcised on the eighth day according to the Jewish tradition. Circumcision was a sign of identity for God's people. He was given the name Jesus as the angel Gabriel had pronounced during annunciation. Jesus was presented to the temple where two important ceremonies took place; the *purification* and the *dedication* rites.

According to the Jewish custom, a woman who had given birth was considered unclean until the purification rite was done (Leviticus 12:1-8). She was required to bring the priest a lamb that was a year old to be sacrificed as a burnt offering. If she could not afford this, then she was to bring an offering of two young pigeons. Mary offered two doves and two young pigeons showing that they were not rich.

Apart from the purification ceremony, the dedication rite was also performed. Dedication of first born animals and sons was a must for the Jewish people. The important rite was to remind them of how God spared them from the Angel of death and rescued them from slavery while in Egypt, (*Exodus 13:1-15*). Therefore, Jesus was dedicated to God as the first born in accordance to the Law of Moses.

When Joseph and Mary went to the temple to perform these rites, they found a man named Simeon. This man was faithful to God and the Holy Spirit had revealed to him that he would not die until he sees the promised Messiah. When he saw Jesus, he identified him as the promise had been fulfilled. Simeon took the baby into his arms and praised God as he prophesied about Jesus. He uttered a song of praise and thanksgiving to God known as “Nunc dimittis). Moreover, there was prophetess Anna in the temple who received Jesus, gave thanks to God and blessed Him.

Group work

1. Read Simeon's *Nunc dimittis* as in *Luke 2:28-32*.
2. Explain the relevance of the hymn to the dawn of the Messiah.
3. Discuss the relevance of purification and dedication ceremony in the Jewish tradition.

Luke 2: 1-20

28Then took he him up in his arms, and blessed God, and said, 29Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: 30For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, 31Which thou hast prepared before the face of all people; 32A light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of thy people Israel.

The role of Mary in God's plan for the redemption of humankind

Activity 2.7

1. Read the story of Alam and her son, Bol

When Alam was married in our village, most people said that she was shy and could not speak well before people. However, this was only because she was a stammer. Her husband, Kenyi loved her very much because she was a hard working and brilliant woman in the family. Two years into marriage she gave birth to a baby boy and they named him Bol. Everybody who came to visit the new born baby admired his good health. People brought many gifts to celebrate his birth. His parents took him to church for dedication. Our priest jokingly said, "This young one will be a great servant of God!" And the congregation applauded.

God enabled the young family to bring up Bol in a strong Christian foundation. As Kenyi was away from the family on his job duties, Alam taught Bol good morals. He was very kind and obedient to all people. He participated in all church activities as a youth. Even the church elders recognised his conviction in doing God's work together with other youths. The elders spoke blessings to them as they worked tirelessly to promote their local church.

2. Do you admire the story of Alam and her son?

3. Explain what you learn from the story.

Mary obeyed the will of God when the angel Gabriel brought the message about the birth of Jesus. Being humble and obedience girl, she accepted God's message as an instrument to bring redemption. She agreed (Luke 2:38). She fulfilled the Mosaic Law as a mother with all righteousness in preparing Jesus for his future task of redemption. Mary brought the child Jesus to

the temple for naming, circumcision and dedication as the as in the Jewish tradition. (Luke 2:21-39)

Mary was a caring mother. She took care of Jesus, nurtured and protected him according to the will of God. At the age of 12 years, Mary and Joseph brought Jesus to the temple to celebrate the Passover Festival. The Passover Festival was a Jewish celebration to mark their salvation from slavery in Egypt. (Luke 2:41-52)

The boy Jesus in the temple

Activity 2.8

1. (Read Luke 2:41-52.)
2. Describe the presence of Jesus before the Jewish teachers of the law.
3. What lessons do Christians learn from the presence of Jesus before the Jewish teachers of the law?

Luke 2: 1-20

Every year the parents of Jesus went to Jerusalem for the Passover Festival. 42When Jesus was twelve years old, they went to the festival as usual. 43When the festival was over, they started back home, but the boy Jesus stayed in Jerusalem. His parents did not know this; 44they thought that he was with the group, so they travelled a whole day and then started looking for him among their relatives and friends. 45They did not find him, so they went back to Jerusalem looking for him. 46On the third day they found him in the Temple, sitting with the Jewish teachers, listening to them and asking questions. 47All who heard him were amazed at his intelligent answers. 48His parents were astonished when they saw him, and his mother said to him, "My son, why have you done this to us? Your father and I have been terribly worried trying to find you."

49He answered them, "Why did you have to look for me? Didn't you know that I had to be in my Father's house?" 50But they did not understand his answer.

51So Jesus went back with them to Nazareth, where he was obedient to them. His mother treasured all these things in her heart. 52Jesus grew both in body and in wisdom, gaining favour with God and people.



Jesus with the teachers of the law



Jesus with his parents at the temple entrance

The role of John the Baptist in God's plan of the redemption of humankind

Activity 2.9

1. Read Luke 3:1-20
2. Explain how John the Baptist played a link between the Old and the New Testament.
3. Discuss the role of John the Baptist in preparing for the coming of Messiah.

Luke describes John's activities as follows:

So he came into all the country around the Jordan, preaching baptism of repentance for forgiveness of sins, just as it is written in the book of the words of Isaiah the prophet: 'Listen! Someone is crying out in the wilderness: Prepare the way of the Lord, you people, make his roads straight. Every gully must be filled up, and every mountain and hill leveled down, and the curves must become straight ways and the rough places smooth ways. And all flesh will see the saving means of God.' Therefore he began to say to the crowds coming out to be baptised by him: You offspring of vipers, who has intimated to you to flee from the coming wrath. Therefore produce fruits that befit repentance. And do not start saying within yourselves: As a father we have Abraham. For I say to you that God has power to raise up children to Abraham from these stones

The word of God came to John in the wilderness to go and preach to the people. He began preaching in the area around River Jordan. His main message was centred on repentance and forgiveness. He aimed to prepare the way for the coming of the Messiah.



John at the River Jordan preaching to people

John the Baptist emulated the life of prophet Elijah in the Old Testament. He stayed in the desert eating locust and honey. The wilderness experience gave John time to retreat on the word of God. He therefore, had a chance to reflect on his role as a forerunner/ precursor for the Messiah.

He rebuked sin without fear (Luke 3:19-20). John the Baptist also rebuked Herod the Tetrarch and Herodias his brother's wife for having an incestuous relationship and also other evil things that Herod did. He was imprisoned for rebuking Herod thus sentenced to prison.

Incest refers to sexual relations between people who are closely related by blood.

Group work

1. Read and explain Luke 3:1-18.
2. Identify the groups of people John the Baptist addressed during his mission.
3. Identify the groups of people John the Baptist addressed during his mission

Luke 3: 1-18

In the fifteenth year of the reign of Emperor Tiberius, when Pontius Pilate was governor of Judea, and Herod was ruler of Galilee, and his brother Philip ruler of the region of Ituraea and Trachonitis, and Lysanias ruler of Abilene, during the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas, the word of God came to John son of Zechariah in the wilderness.

He went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins, as it is written in the book of the words of the prophet Isaiah, "The voice of one crying out in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight. Every valley shall be filled, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made straight, and the rough ways made smooth; and all flesh shall see the salvation of God.'" John said to the crowds that came out to be baptised by him, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come? Bear fruits worthy of repentance. Do not begin to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our ancestor'; for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children to Abraham. Even now the axe is lying at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire." And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." Even tax collectors came to be baptized, and they asked him, "Teacher, what should we do?" He said to them, "Collect no more than the amount prescribed for you." Soldiers also asked him, "And we, what should we do?" He said to them, "Do not extort money from anyone by threats or false accusation, and be satisfied with your wages." As the people were filled with expectation, and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John, whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, "I baptize you with water; but one who is more powerful than I is coming; I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand, to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his granary; but the chaff he will burn with unquenchable fire." So, with many other exhortations, he proclaimed the good news to the people.

Preaching of John the Baptist

- i. John the Baptist administered baptism on River Jordan. He preached repentance and forgives to those who were ready to be baptised. The baptism was as a sign of accepting renewal of hearts in order to receive the promised Messiah.
- ii. He preached on compassion and sharing in the society. John the Baptist intended to have an equal society regardless of material possession ready to receive the Messiah. He encouraged his listeners to share the

what they had.

- iii. He preached on the final judgment. John the Baptist referred to Jesus as a winnowing fork to separate the holy from the sinners. He identified Jesus as a powerful person whose thongs of his sandals cannot be untied by ordinary person.
- iv. He condemned evils and social injustices in the society. He told the tax collectors not to collect excess, and to the soldiers were to satisfied with their wages.
- v. He preached the baptism by fire. John the Baptist taught his listeners that as he Baptist them with water, the Messiah will baptize by fire. He referred to the baptism by the Holy Spirit.
- vi. He courageously rebuked sin without fear. John the Baptist condemned Herod Antipas for committing incest by marrying his brother's wife. This made him imprisoned and later beheaded.

Early Christian preaching started with the witness of John the Baptist (Acts 1.22; 10.37). This situated Jesus in the expectations and hopes of the Old Testament. What follows dawns out of the past in John the Baptist? John was the only son of a priest whose name was Zechariah. Zechariah ministered in the temple of Jerusalem and was married to Elizabeth, a cousin of Mary. The Gospel of St. Luke tells us of the circumstances of John's birth and the visit of Mary.

The only son of a priest had the duty to follow his father's footsteps and marry to ensure that the priestly succession is continued. The adult John forsook all this, retired to the desert and eventually emerged into the public scene like a thunderbolt as an anti-establishment prophet. He caused immense excitement. The Gospels record the huge numbers who went out into the desert to see him, "Then the people of Jerusalem and all Judea were going out to him, And all the region along the Jordan" (Matthew.3.5). John rejected the priestly vocation for that of a prophet. He reminded people of the prophet Elijah (2 Kings.1:8. Matthew.17:11-13). Clothed in a camel hair tunic and eating rough from the countryside, locusts and wild honey,

i) God's prophecy will surely come to pass

The appearance of John the Baptist has long been prophesied in the Old Testament. The Bible tells us that God is the One who can declare a prophecy and has the power to bring it to pass even hundreds or thousands of years after proclaiming it. Isaiah 40:3 foretold about the work of John: "The voice of him that cries in the wilderness, Prepare the way of the LORD, make straight in the desert a highway for our God."

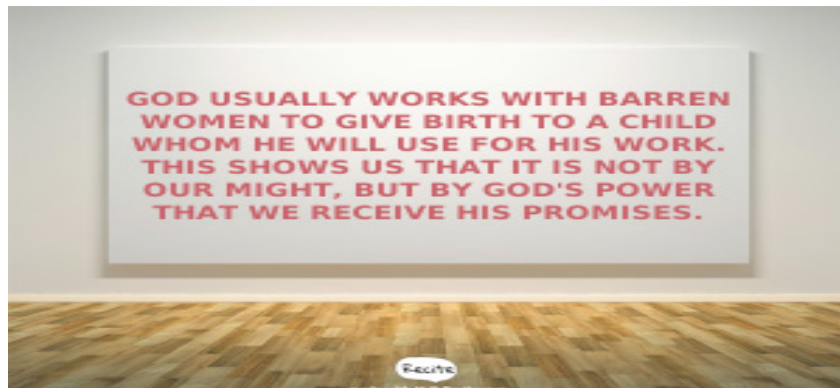
Matthew 3:1-3

And we read the fulfillment of this prophecy in Matthew 3:1-3:

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand. For this is he that was spoken by the prophet Isaiah, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, prepare the way of the Lord, make his paths straight.

From these fulfilled prophecies, we can have the confidence that God is truly the Living God who will do what He pleases. With these prophecies and many others fulfilled, we can be sure that the unfulfilled prophecies will also come to pass according to God's perfect timing.

God does the impossible to fulfill His purpose. John's parents were well advanced in years. His parents were Zechariah and Elizabeth, both from the priestly family of Aaron. The Bible tells us that Elizabeth was barren and wasn't able to bear a child. One day, while Zechariah was burning incense in the Temple, an angel announced that he will have a child and this child should be set for a special purpose.



Here's an interesting point: God usually works with barren women to give birth to a child whom He will use for His work. This shows us that it is not by our might, but by God's power that we receive His promises. Remember Hannah and her son Samuel and the wife of Manoah and her son Samson. All of them were barren, and yet God opened their womb and bore a child.

God demonstrated here that He is the One who does great wonders and miracles. Sometimes, God causes women to conceive and shows everyone that He has caused it to happen. Therefore, any accomplishment that child will achieve in his life should give glory to God and all credit should come back to Him.

i) Christians need to be zealous in doing God's work

We read in Matthew 3:1-2 that John was very enthusiastic and motivated to preach the Kingdom of God.

"In those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judaea, and saying, Repent ye: for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."

Just like John the Baptist, we need to have the burning desire to preach the Gospel to this dying world. From his early life, John already knew what he needs to do. He made it his lifetime commitment to really put God's work first in his life.

As Christians, we must make God's work as our top priority. Though there are a lot of things that may distract us from our mission, we must have the vision and heart to stay on course and never let anything come between God and us.

ii) Christians must always be ready and prepared

One of the primary missions of John was to prepare people for the coming of the Messiah. By preaching about repentance and baptising people in the water, John was fulfilling the work set before him right before his birth.

In the same way, it is our Christian duty to be prepared for the second coming of our Lord and Savior Jesus . We don't have the guarantee that we will still be alive tomorrow, next week, next month, or next year. Thus, it is a must that we should be prepared anytime.

Not only that, but the signs of the end time are right before our eyes. Christ's second coming is at hand, and we need to put our houses to ensure that we will be counted worthy to escape the great tribulation (Luke21:36).

v) Let Christ live in us

There's one statement made by John the Baptist that we must all take heed. He said in John 3:30: "He must increase, but I must decrease."

We need to ask ourselves,
"How much of ourselves have
we really buried down the
watery grave and how much of
Christ is really living in us?"

This is the mindset that we must all have. We need to make sure that we are decreasing and Christ is increasing in us. We need to ask ourselves, "How much of ourselves have we really buried down the watery grave and how much of Christ is really living in us?"

Galatians 2:20:

"I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."

When we made a lifetime commitment through baptism, it is not us who no longer live. We are supposed to be dead already, and Christ should be the one who is now alive in us.

vi) Christians should not be afraid to stand for what's right

There's no doubt that standing on the truth can bring you into trouble. This is certainly what happened to John the Baptist. He called sin a sin. When King Herod married his brother's wife, John did the right thing to do. He corrected the king for his sinful act.

For most of us, it might be tough to do what John did. It took a lot of courage. Yes, doing the right thing can help you live a blessed life. However, there are times that it will surely get you into trouble.

After criticizing the king, he was imprisoned and ultimately executed. This should rather inspire us and be more resilient and brave even in the face of death.

Though John's life heartbreakingly ended so soon, we know that he will be one of the kings and priests who will rule in the future Kingdom of God to be established here on earth (Rev. 5:10).

vii) Our good deeds should point to God and Christ

The story about John the Baptist is recorded in our Bible today. When we read about his life, we can see that the ministry of John the Baptist was pointing us to God and Christ. From the moment of his miraculous conception to the message and work he did, John indeed magnified the power and love of our heavenly Father and our Brother, Jesus Christ. When he does something good, he didn't do it to gain recognition or attain a higher social status. He did it all to the glory of God.

viii) The need to live a humble and obedient life

John the Baptist had made an excellent reputation for himself. Jesus even considered him a great man. However, when it was time for Jesus to enter the scene, he was humble enough to step aside and let Christ's ministry begin. There was no power struggle, no argument, no ill-feeling or bitterness. There were only complete surrender and unpretentiousness.

Matthew 3:11

"I indeed baptise you with water to repentance: but he that comes after me is mightier than I, whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: he shall baptise you with the Holy Spirit, and with fire."

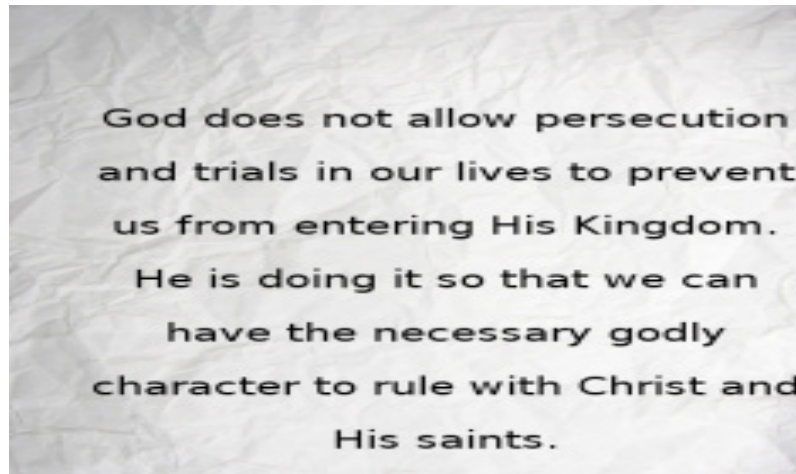
We see from this passage the great humility of John. Carrying sandals was a task given to the lowest of all slaves. Though he has already made a significant following, John didn't even consider himself to be worthy to carry the sandals of Jesus. John wasn't jealous of Christ. For Him, his life is not important, and it was all about Christ. It was not about him. He didn't feel any envy when people are starting to flock around Christ instead of him. He knew that his mission and that is to prepare the people for the coming of the Messiah.

ix) Our faith will surely be put to test

Some of us might even be living an affluent life. Nothing to challenge our faith. However, bear this in mind; time will come that our faith will be tested to the limit.

Peter 1:7:

“That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perish, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ.”



God does not allow persecution and trials in our lives to prevent us from entering His Kingdom. He is doing it so that we can have the necessary godly character to rule with Christ and His saints. Just like John whose faith was fiercely tested, we will also come to the point when everything will seem to be so challenging and impossible to overcome. However, we can have the confidence that God will surely be there with us to go through trials and persecution.

xi) John served as a good example to others

The godly character of John inevitably made him a good example to others. With zeal and passion in doing God's work, people were drawn to praise and glorify God. Jesus said that John "was a burning and a shining light" (John 5:35). With this description, we can see that John was an excellent example

of Christ's commandment to be a light of the world. We read:

(Matthew 5:14

"Ye are the light of the world... Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven"

Group work

1. *Identify the teachings of John the Baptist.*
2. *What is the relevance of John the Baptist's teachings to Christians today?*
3. *Compare and contrast the role of John the Baptist and the church leaders (clergies) in preparing for the way of Jesus.*

Glossary

Redemption: Is the act of delivering, atoning or purchasing some thing back.

Magnificat: This is the song that Mary sung to praise God.

Benedictus : This was Zechariah's prophecy in form of a hymn to praise and thank God.

Forerunner : A person or thing that comes before someone or something else.

Salvation : Deliverance from sin and its consequences that Christians believe was brought about by Jesus Christ.

UNIT
3

The Passion, Death, Resurrection and Ascension

Key words

Resurrection, ascension, transfiguration, last supper

This unit deals with the passion which means the suffering that Jesus underwent to fulfil the Old Testament scriptures about him. It also deals with the betrayal, death and the resurrection to glory.

The Last Supper

Activity 3.1

1. What do you understand by the word Last Supper?.
2. Briefly explain the events during the Passover Feast(Exodus).
3. Compare and contrast between the Passover Feast and the Last Supper..



Jesus and his disciples during the Last Supper

The Last Supper that Jesus had with his disciples was celebrated during the Passover Feast. The Jewish people celebrated it to remember God's saving power over them while he saved them from slavery in Egypt. The **Holy Eucharist** as it referred to today, was instituted by Jesus Christ during the Last Supper with his disciples.

When Jesus celebrated this feast with his disciples, he changed it into a feast that would be for remembrance of God's deliverance of his people from the slavery of sin. Jesus became the sacrificial lamb without blemish (sin) that was given by God to deliver humankind.

Before the celebrations of the Passover Feast, the chief priests and the scribes were looking for ways to arrest Jesus. They were afraid that the people would revolt if they knew their plans. To their pleasure, Judas Iscariot one of the disciples, was possessed by Satan and he agreed with the elders to betray Jesus. Judas Iscariot was offered money to betray Jesus.

Preparation for the Last Supper

Activity 3.2

- 1. Read and explain Luke 22:8-13.*
- 2. List the items required for the Last Supper.*
- 3. Explain the relevance of the Last Supper to Christians.*

Luke 22: 8-13

Jesus sent off Peter and John with these instructions: "Go and get the Passover meal ready for us to eat."⁹"Where do you want us to get it ready?" they asked him.¹⁰He answered, "As you go into the city, a man carrying a jar of water will meet you. Follow him into the house that he enters, ¹¹and say to the owner of the house: 'The Teacher says to you, Where is the room where my disciples and I will eat the Passover meal?' ¹²He will show you a large furnished room upstairs, where you will get everything ready."¹³They went off and found everything just as Jesus had told them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

The celebration of the Last Supper and the institution of the Holy Eucharist

Read Luke 22:14-38

When the hour came, Jesus together with his disciples sat at the table. Jesus told them that he desired to eat the Passover meal before he suffered. Jesus then took the cup and gave thanks to God and said;

“Take this and divide it among you. For I tell you I will not drink again from the fruit of the vine until the kingdom of God comes.”
And he took bread, gave thanks and broke it, and gave it to them, saying, “This is my body given for you; do this in remembrance of me.” In the same way, after the supper he took the cup, saying, “This cup is the new covenant in my blood, which is poured out for you.”
(Luke 22:17-20)

During the Last Supper, Jesus foretold of his betrayal and pronounced judgment upon the one who would betray him.

There was also the dispute that arose among them as to which of them was going to be the greatest among them. Jesus solved this dispute by telling them that the greatest one amongst them is the one who serves.

Jesus foretold the denial of Peter three times but that he had prayed for him. Jesus cautioned his disciples to be careful because they would encounter hostility. Jesus informed them that what was written about him had to be fulfilled, (Isaiah 53:12).

Therefore I will give him a portion among the great, and he will divide the spoils with the strong, because he poured out his life unto death, and was numbered with the transgressors. For he bore the sin of many, and made intercession for the transgressors. Isaiah 53:2



The Holy Eucharist

The apostles were given a command to celebrate the Holy Eucharist in remembrance of Jesus. This meant that they were to continue celebrating the 'Lord's Table'. The Holy Eucharist would therefore replace the Old Passover festival celebration. Jesus became the new sacrificial Lamb that replaced the old way of sacrificing lambs.

Activity 3.3

1. *Describe the events that took place during the celebration of the Last Supper.*
2. *What lessons do Christians learn from the Last Supper?*

The institution of the Holy Eucharist and its significance

The Holy Eucharist is also referred to as the Holy Communion, the Lord's table or the Lord's Supper. This is a Christian ceremony or rite that is considered as a very important celebration in most churches among other celebrations. According to the New Testament, it was instituted by Jesus during his Last Supper with his twelve disciples. Jesus gave the celebration a new meaning that Christians value today.

The Holy Eucharist is important because the bread represents the body of Jesus that was given to the church as a sacrificial lamb. Christians remember the sacrifice of Jesus on the cross. There is the bread of life through his word that he spoke. All those who believe in this word receive life. The wine represents the blood of Jesus which was shed on the cross for the salvation of the human race in the same way the blood of the sacrificial lamb saved the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. Those whose door frames were smeared by the blood were spared from destruction. Christians believe that by the blood of Jesus they are saved from sin.

Partaking of the Holy Eucharist enables Christians to repent their sins. The cup represents God's new covenant that Jesus established through his suffering and death. It is a binding agreement between the church and God. Through the celebration of the Holy Eucharist the Christians are reminded to be united in fellowship just like Jesus celebrated together with his disciples. Christians partake of the Holy Eucharist in obedience to the command Jesus gave to the disciples. The disciples were commanded to celebrate the Lord's Table in remembrance of Jesus. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist is a time of thanksgiving to God for the salvation of humankind through Jesus.

Activity 3.4

1. Explain the significance of the Last Supper to the Apostles and to Christians today.
2. Explain how the Holy Eucharist is practised in your church?

The story of Jesus on the Mount Olives

Read Luke 22:39-46

After celebrating the Last Supper with his disciples, Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives with his disciples to the Garden of Gethsemane to pray.



Jesus and his disciples on Mt Olives

Luke 22: 39-44

39 Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives, and his disciples followed him. 40 On reaching the place, he said to them, "Pray that you will not fall into temptation." 41 He withdrew about a stone's throw beyond them, knelt down and prayed, 42 "Father, if you are willing, take this cup from me; yet not my will, but yours be done." 43 An angel from heaven appeared to him and strengthened him. 44 And being in anguish, he prayed more earnestly, and his sweat was like drops of blood falling to the ground.

The Transfiguration of Jesus occurred while on the Mount of Olives. After praying, Jesus' body became radiant in glory, His body begun to shine with bright rays of light. In the gospels, Jesus takes Peter, James, son of Zebedee and his brother John the Apostle with him and goes up to a mountain, which is not named. Once on the mountain, Matthew 17:2 states that Jesus "was transfigured before them; his face shining as the sun, and his garments became white as the light." At that point the prophets Elijah and Moses appear and Jesus begins to talk to them. Luke states that they spoke of Jesus' exodus which he was about to accomplish in Jerusalem.(Luke 9:31) Luke is also specific in describing Jesus in a state of glory. Then the prophets Moses and Elijah appear next to him and he speaks with them. Jesus is then called "Son" by a voice in the sky, assumed to be God the Father, as in the Baptism of Jesus.



Jesus on Mt Olives

The relevance of the story of Jesus on Mount Olives to Christians today

Christians should follow the example of Jesus by praying in order to overcome temptations. Prayer is an important and daily Christian routine. Jesus went out as usual to the Mount of Olives to pray.

Christians should ask God for His will to be done in prayer. Jesus prayed to God for His will to be done. God is able to strengthen Christians who seek Him earnestly in prayer. An angel of God appeared and strengthened him as he prayed. It is important to have individual private prayer with God. Jesus withdrew from his disciples to have a private prayer moment with God. In prayer, Christians should honour and recognise the authority of God. Jesus addressed God as his Father. Jesus also knelt down to honour God. In the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus restored the need for people to obey the will of God unlike what happened in the Garden of Eden where humankind sinned.

Betrayal and arrest of Jesus

Read Luke 22:47-53



Betraying and arrest of Jesus

While Jesus was speaking with his disciples, that crowd came towards them. They were led by Judas Iscariot one of the disciples, Judas came to betray Jesus.

Read the following Bible passage and find out what happened.

luke22:47-53

47 Jesus was still speaking when a crowd arrived, led by Judas, one of the twelve disciples. He came up to Jesus to kiss him. 48 But Jesus said, "Judas, is it with a kiss that you betray the Son of Man?"

49 When the disciples who were with Jesus saw what was going to happen, they asked, "Shall we use our swords, Lord?" 50 And one of them struck the High Priest's slave and cut off his right ear.

51 But Jesus said, "Enough of this!" He touched the man's ear and healed him.

52 Then Jesus said to the chief priests and the officers of the temple guard and the elders who had come there to get him, "Did you have to come with swords and clubs, as though I were an outlaw? 53 Lk 19:47; 21:37 I was with you in the Temple every day, and you did not try to arrest me. But this is your hour to act, when the power of darkness rules."

Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial

Read Luke 22:54-62

Activity 3.5

Role play

Servant woman: This man too was with Jesus!

Peter: Woman, I don't even know him!

Man 1: You are one of them, too!

Peter: Man, I am not!

Man 2: There isn't any doubt that this man was with Jesus, because he is also a Galilean!

Peter: Man, I don't know what you are talking about!

The Lord: (*Looking straight at Peter*).

Peter: (*Remembering what the Lord had said, "Before the cock crows tonight, you will say three times that you do not know me." He went out and wept bitterly*).

After the arrest of Jesus, many activities happened. One of these activities was that Jesus' prediction of Peter's denial fulfilled to details.

During the celebration of the Last Supper with his disciples, Jesus had cautioned Simon Peter that the devil was going to tempt him. He told Simon Peter that;

"Simon, Simon! Listen! Satan has received permission to test all of you. But I have prayed for you Simon that your faith may not fail..." Luke 22:31-32.

Simon Peter however responded that he was ready to go with Jesus to prison and even to death. Jesus then predicted that Simon Peter would deny him three times before the cock crows on that very day.

After the arrest of Jesus, Simon Peter followed at a distance and joined the people who had sat around a fire that had been lit in the middle of the courtyard. A servant girl saw him seated there and she looked intently at Simon Peter and said that Simon Peter was with Jesus. Simon Peter denied by saying:

"Woman, I don't know him." Luke 22:57A while later, someone else saw Simon Peter and told him that he was one of the disciples of Jesus. Peter replied by saying:



Peter demies Jesus

“Man, I am not!” (Luke 22:58); About an hour later, another person insisted that Simon Peter was certainly with Jesus because he was from Galilee. Simon Peter again denied by saying: “Man, I don’t know what you’re talking about!” (Luke 22:60).

Immediately as Peter said this, the cock crowed and Jesus turned and looked straight at Peter. Peter remembered the prediction Jesus had spoken to him. When Peter realised that he had denied Jesus. He left the courtyard and went outside weeping with sorrow.

Activity 3.6

1. Give reasons why Peter may have denied Jesus.
2. Describe the events during the arrest and trial of Jesus.

The trial of Jesus

Jesus was tried before the Sanhedrin, Pontius Pilate and Herod after his arrest:

i) The trial of Jesus before the Sanhedrin

Read Luke 22:66-71

The Sanhedrin was also referred to as the Council of Elders. It comprised of chief priests and the teachers of the law. The Sanhedrin determined cases relating to the Jewish Mosaic Law.

luke22:66-71

When day came, the elders, the chief priests, and the teachers of the Law met together, and Jesus was brought before the Council. 67“Tell us,” they said, “are you the Messiah?”

He answered, “If I tell you, you will not believe me; 68and if I ask you a question, you will not answer. 69But from now on the Son of Man will be seated on the right of Almighty God.”

70They all said, “Are you, then, the Son of God?”

He answered them, “You say that I am.”

71And they said, “We don’t need any witnesses! We ourselves have heard what he said!”

Jesus was brought before the Sanhedrin and was asked whether he was the Christ. Jesus answered them by saying they would not believe him even if he answered them, (Luke 22:67-69). The High Priest was Caiphas who was the Son-in-law to Annas, the predecessor. Annas wielded the power behind the scenes after his removal by the Romans.



Jesus before the Sanhedrin

The Sanhedrin concluded by saying that they needed no more proof. They heard Jesus' testimony and to them Jesus had committed blasphemy. When he claimed to be the Son of God. Blasphemy is an act of disrespect towards God or showing contempt in speech concerning the sacredness of God. According to Jewish law, blasphemy is punishable by death.

The Sanhedrin had no authority to pass a death sentence on Jesus because the Jewish nation was under the Roman rule at this time. The Roman Government allowed them to exercise their religion and the Jews were expected to also obey authority.

The Sanhedrin therefore took Jesus before Pontius Pilate who was the Roman Governor in Jerusalem at that time.

ii) The trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate

Read Luke 23:2-7

Jesus was brought before Pontius Pilate by the Sanhedrin. He was accused of political crimes before the Roman Governor.



Jesus trial before Pilate

“Then the Jews led Jesus from Caiaphas [the High Priest] to the palace of the Roman governor (Pilate). By now it was early morning, and to avoid ceremonial uncleanness the Jews did not enter the palace; they wanted to be able to eat the Passover. So Pilate came out of his palace to them and asked, What charges are you bringing against this man? If he were not a criminal,

they replied, we would not have handed him over to you. Pilate said, Take him yourselves and judge him by your own law. But we have no right to execute anyone, the Jews objected. This (response) happened so that the words Jesus had spoken [Luke 18:31-33] indicating the kind of death he was going to die would be fulfilled.

Pilate then went back inside the palace, summoned Jesus and asked him, Are you the king of the Jews? Is that your own idea, Jesus asked, or did others talk to you about me? Am I a Jew (that I should care)? Pilate replied. It was your people and your chief priests who handed you over to me. What is it you have done? Jesus said, My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place. You are a king, then! said Pilate. Jesus answered, You are right in saying I am a king. In fact, for this reason I was born, and for this I came into the world, to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me. What is truth? Pilate asked. With this he went out again to the Jews and said, I find no basis for a charge against him.”

Pilate’s fairness is seen in his first report to the Jews. Pilate knew of Jesus reputation. He had heard of His miracles and in a secular way, he quickly decided that Jesus was not a common criminal or rabble rouser. Pilate did not have a religious heart, Therefore the teachings of Jesus, which infuriated the Jews, did not personally offend him. After listening to Jesus for a few moments, Pilate sensed the Jewish leaders and Jesus were embroiled in a religious squabble “over words” and he really did not want to get involved. Pilate returned to the waiting crowd and boldly declared Jesus to be innocent. However, they insisted that Jesus stirs up the people all over Judea by his teaching. He started in Galilee and has come all the way here. On hearing this, Pilate asked if the man was a Galilean. When he learned that Jesus was under Herod’s jurisdiction (Herod Antipas), Pilate conveniently recued himself on this civil matter and sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time to observe Passover.

Pilate and Herod Antipas had a long history as political enemies and in the quicksand of this situation, Pilate saw a golden opportunity. By sending Jesus to Antipas, Pilate flattered the king's ego by showing respect, but Pilate also had a political motive. He was trying to escape further confrontation with his contentious subjects, the Jews.

luke23:2-7

Where they began to accuse him: "We caught this man misleading our people, telling them not to pay taxes to the Emperor and claiming that he himself is the Messiah, a king."

3Pilate asked him, "Are you the king of the Jews?"

"So you say," answered Jesus.

4Then Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowds, "I find no reason to condemn this man."

5But they insisted even more strongly, "With his teaching he is starting a riot among the people all through Judea. He began in Galilee and now has come here."

Jesus is Sent to Herod

6When Pilate heard this, he asked, "Is this man a Galilean?" 7When he learnt that Jesus was from the region ruled by Herod, he sent him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time.

iii) The trial of Jesus before Herod

Read Luke 23:8-12

When Herod saw Jesus, he was greatly pleased, because for a long time he had wanted to see him. From what he had heard about him, he hoped to see him perform a miracle. He plied him with many questions, but Jesus gave him no answer.

The chief priests and the teachers of the law were standing there, vehemently accusing him. Then Herod and his soldiers ridiculed and mocked him. Dressing him in an elegant robe, they sent him back to Pilate because Antipas did not want to offend the high priest and because of possible political repercussions, Herod made sure Jesus was Pilate's problem. That day Herod and Pilate became friends before this they had been enemies."

Luke 23:8-12

Herod was very pleased when he saw Jesus, because he had heard about him and had been wanting to see him for a long time. He was hoping to see Jesus perform some miracle. 9 So Herod asked Jesus many questions, but Jesus made no answer. 10 The chief priests and the teachers of the Law stepped forward and made strong accusations against Jesus. 11 Herod and his soldiers mocked Jesus and treated him with contempt; then they put a fine robe on him and sent him back to Pilate. 12 On that very day Herod and Pilate became friends; before this they had been enemies.



Jesus trial before Herod

iv) The trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate for the second time

Read Luke 23:13-25

Jesus was then taken back to Pontius Pilate for the second time.



Jesus standing before Pilate

Activity 3.5

1. *Dramatise the trial of Jesus before Pontius Pilate.*
2. *Discuss lessons Christians learn from the trial of Jesus.*

He sent him back to us; as you can see, he has done nothing to deserve death. Therefore, in an effort to please you, how about punishing him for stirring up trouble and then release him?(Luke 23:5-16). Asked Pilate.

Pilate declared Jesus was innocent a second time. Now it was the governor's custom at the Passover Feast to gain the favor of the Jews and release a prisoner chosen by the crowd. At that time they had a notorious prisoner, called Jesus Barabbas or just Barabbas. So when the crowd had gathered at his palace, Pilate sought to set Jesus free through negotiation. So he asked them; "Which one do you want me to release to you? Jesus who is called Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ? For he knew it was out of envy that they had handed Jesus over to him."

At this point, Pilate was convinced that Jesus was innocent of all the charges that the Jewish leaders had brought against him. So, Pilate attempted to reason with them, comparing the worst of society (Barabbas) with the best (Jesus). The hostility directed toward this innocent man amazed Pilate. Pilate sensed there was something supernatural about the intensity of the clamor. "While Pilate was sitting on the judge's seat, his wife sent him this message: Don't have anything to do with that innocent man, for I have suffered a great deal today in a dream because of him. But the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to have Jesus executed. Which of the two do you want me to release to you? Asked the governor. "Barabbas"they answered. What shall I do, then, with Jesus who is called Christ? Pilate asked. They all answered, Crucify Why? What crime has he committed? asked Pilate. But they shouted all the louder, Crucify him!

The note Pilate received from his wife stunned him. After reading her comments, the truth planted in his mind by the Holy Spirit was confirmed. No ordinary trial. Jesus was the Son of God, the predicted Messiah. At that moment, the tables turned. Pilate suddenly found himself on trial. Pilate had the power to set Jesus free and he had the power to crucify Him. If Pilate set Jesus free, the mob would go crazy and Caesar would question his ability to govern.

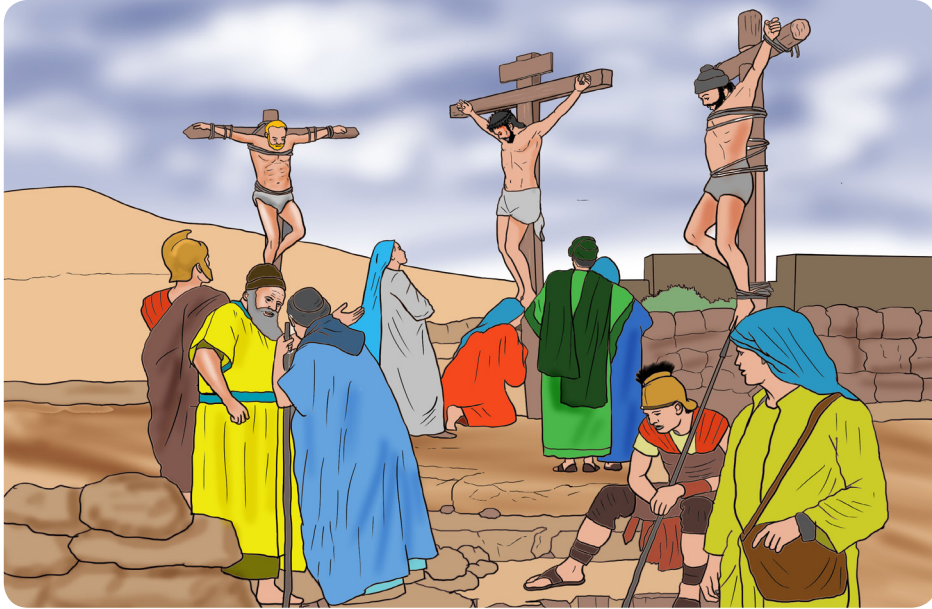
If he crucified Jesus, Pilate knew Jesus was an innocent man, . Pilate had to make a choice! In exasperation, Pilate uttered a sentence that every sinner who comes under the convicting power of the Holy Spirit has had to ask: “What shall I do then, with Jesus, who is called Christ?” The mob’s reaction became unreasonable. Pilate raised his voice above the noise of the crowd asking, “What crime has He committed?” The response was deafening. Pilate discovered an awful truth: There is no reason in rebellion.

When Pilate saw that he was getting nowhere and he had no political options left], but that instead uproar was starting, he took water and washed his hands in front of the crowd. to prove his innocence in Jesus’ blood. It is your responsibility! All the people answered. Let his blood be on us and on our children! Then he released Barabbas to them. But he had Jesus flogged, and after further discussion with the Jews, Pilate handed him over to be crucified (Matthew 27:15-26).

The crucifixion of Jesus

Read Luke 28:26-43

Jesus was led away to be executed after Pontius Pilate surrendered to the demands of the Sanhedrin and the crowd. As Jesus was led away, the authorities seized Simon of Cyrene who was forced to carry the cross that would be used to crucify Jesus.



Jesus on the cross

The death of Jesus

Read Luke 23:44-49

Luke 23:26-43

It was about twelve o'clock when the sun stopped shining and darkness covered the whole country until three o'clock; and the curtain hanging in the Temple was torn in two. 46Ps 31.5 Jesus cried out in a loud voice, "Father! In your hands I place my spirit!" He said this and died.

47The army officer saw what had happened, and he praised God, saying, "Certainly he was a good man!"

48When the people who had gathered there to watch the spectacle saw what happened, they all went back home, beating their breasts in sorrow. 49Lk 8.2-3 All those who knew Jesus personally, including the women who had followed him from Galilee, stood at a distance to watch.

Activity 3.6

1. Identify the extraordinary events that happened during the death of Jesus.
2. Discuss the symbolic meaning of these events.

The burial of Jesus

Read Luke 23:50-56

Jesus was buried by a man called Joseph who came from Arimathea, a town in Judea. Joseph was a member of the Sanhedrin but he did not agree with their decision they made against Jesus. He went to Pilate and requested for the body of Jesus so that he would bury before the Sabbath began.

Pilate gave Joseph of Arimathea the consent to bury. He then went and took the body down from the cross. He wrapped the body in the linen cloth and then took it to a tomb that had been cut in the rock. This tomb had not been used before. This fulfilled what Prophet Isaiah had prophesied in Isaiah 53:9. There were women who had come with Jesus from Galilee, they followed closely and saw the tomb where the body was laid.

The women went home and prepared spices and perfumes that they hoped would embalm Jesus with after the Sabbath.

The significance of the crucifixion and death of Jesus

The crucifixion of Jesus was important in many ways. For instance, it showed that Jesus came to fulfill the Old Testament prophecies about the Messiah who is the Suffering Servant, Isaiah 53. Through this suffering and crucifixion, Christians believe that it brought them redemption. Through the crucifixion, Christians learn that they too can persevere in their difficult mission of spreading the gospel.

The crucifixion also teaches Christians that price or cost of salvation for their redemption was very costly because Jesus suffered much pain and even death. Therefore, it is their duty to be righteous, avoid wickedness and follow the example of Jesus.

The resurrection of Jesus

Read Luke 24:1-53

Jesus resurrected from death after three days. He rose back to life. The following people witnessed and testified Jesus who had resurrected back to life.:

i) The testimony of the holy women

Read Luke 24:1-12

The first people to know that Jesus had resurrected were women. The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna and Mary the mother of James. They had prepared spices and they went to the tomb and found the stone rolled away from the tomb and the tomb was empty.

Luke 23:26-43

so they went in; but they did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. 4They stood there puzzled about this, when suddenly two men in bright shining clothes stood by them. 5Full of fear, the women bowed down to the ground, as the men said to them, "Why are you looking among the dead for one who is alive? 6He is not here; he has been raised. Remember what he said to you while he was in Galilee: 7'The Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, be crucified, and three days later rise to life.' "

8Then the women remembered his words, 9returned from the tomb, and told all these things to the eleven disciples and all the rest. 10The women were Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James; Mary and the other women told these things to the apostles. 11But the apostles thought that what the women said was nonsense, and they did not believe them. 12But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; he bent down and saw the linen wrappings but nothing else. Then he went back home amazed at what had happened.



Angels and Mary

The women then went and told the eleven apostles their experience while at the tomb. The apostles did not believe them. Peter had to get up and ran to the tomb to explore for himself. Peter found an empty tomb and strips of lying clothes without the body of Jesus. He wondered to himself what had happened.

ii) The appearance to disciples on the way to Emmaus

Read Luke 24:13-35

On this same day, there were two disciples who were going to a village called Emmaus near the city of Jerusalem. The two disciples were discussing about everything that had happened in Jerusalem concerning Jesus. As they continued discussing, Jesus joined them but they were not able to recognise him as Jesus at that point.

Luke 24: 17-35

Jesus said to them, "What are you talking about to each other, as you walk along?"

They stood still, with sad faces. 18 One of them, named Cleopas, asked him, "Are you the only visitor in Jerusalem who doesn't know the things that have been happening there these last few days?"

19 "What things?" he asked.

"The things that happened to Jesus of Nazareth," they answered. "This man was a prophet and was considered by God and by all the people to be powerful in everything he said and did. 20 Our chief priests and rulers handed him over to be sentenced to death, and he was crucified. 21 And we had hoped that he would be the one who was going to set Israel free! Besides all that, this is now the third day since it happened. 22 Some of the women of our group surprised us; they went at dawn to the tomb, 23 but could not find his body. They came back saying they had seen a vision of angels who told them that he is alive. 24 Some of our group went to the tomb and found it exactly as the women had said, but they did not see him."

25 Then Jesus said to them, "How foolish you are, how slow you are to believe everything the prophets said! 26 Was it not necessary for the Messiah to suffer these things and then to enter his glory?" 27 And Jesus explained to them what was said about himself in all the Scriptures, beginning with the books of Moses and the writings of all the prophets.

28 As they came near the village to which they were going, Jesus acted as if he were going farther; 29 but they held him back, saying, "Stay with us; the day is almost over and it is getting dark." So he went in to stay with them. 30 He sat down to eat with them, took the bread, and said the blessing; then he broke the bread and gave it to them. 31 Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, but he disappeared from their sight. 32 They said to each other, "Wasn't it like a fire burning in us when he talked to us on the road and explained the Scriptures to us?"

33 They got up at once and went back to Jerusalem, where they found the eleven disciples gathered together with the others 34 and saying, "The Lord is risen indeed! He has appeared to Simon!"

35 The two then explained to them what had happened on the road, and how they had recognized the Lord when he broke the bread.



Jesus and the two disciples on their way to Emmaus

iii) Jesus appears to his disciples at Bethany

Read Luke 24:36-49

Luke 24: 36-49

36While the two were telling them this, suddenly the Lord himself stood among them and said to them, "Peace be with you."24.36 Some manuscripts do not have and said to them, "Peace be with you."37They were terrified, thinking that they were seeing a ghost. 38But he said to them, "Why are you alarmed? Why are these doubts coming up in your minds? 39Look at my hands and my feet, and see that it is I myself. Feel me, and you will know, for a ghost doesn't have flesh and bones, as you can see I have."

40He said this and showed them his hands and his feet.24.40 Some manuscripts do not have verse 40. 41They still could not believe, they were so full of joy and wonder; so he asked them, "Have you anything here to eat?" 42They gave him a piece of cooked fish, 43which he took and ate in their presence.

44Then he said to them, "These are the very things I told you about while I was still with you: everything written about me in the Law of Moses, the writings of the prophets, and the Psalms had to come true."

45Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, 46and said to them, "This is what is written: the Messiah must suffer and must rise from death three days later, 47and in his name the message about repentance and the forgiveness of sins must be preached to all nations, beginning in Jerusalem. 48You are witnesses of these things. 49Acts 1.4And I myself will send upon you what my Father has promised. But you must wait in the city until the power from above comes down upon you."



The disciples touching Jesus' scars

The ascension of Jesus

Read Luke 24:50-53

After fellowship with his disciples, Jesus led them to a village called Bethany. He then lifted up his hands and blessed them. While he was blessing them, he ascended up into heaven. The disciples worshipped him and returned to Jerusalem with so much joy. They stayed at the temple praising God.

Importance of the resurrection of Jesus from the tomb to Christians

The resurrection of Jesus is important to Christians because it inspires Christians to be confident and fearless in the face of persecution. The resurrection of Jesus encouraged the disciples to do the will of God and ready to die for the sake of the gospel. Christians believe that they too will be raised from the dead to the glory of God just like Jesus was raised from the dead. The resurrection of Jesus confirms that he is the Son of God who conquered death. Death has no victory anymore, 1 Corinthians 15:15. Through the resurrection of Jesus, their faith in God is strengthened. Christians believe that they too have received the power of the Holy Spirit like the disciples received after the resurrection and his ascension.

Glossary

Resurrection: This means the rising back to life.

Ascension: This is the act of going up into heaven.

Transfiguration: Change in appearance.

Last Supper: The last meal Jesus had with his disciples.

UNIT
4

African Religious Morals and Cultural Values

Key words

Morals, values, loyalty, incorporation, venerate, immanent, eternal life.

African religious morals refers to the acts or behaviours which are acceptable in the society. These morals are upheld as sacred and are believed to have come from God and the ancestral spirits. In the African communities, there are many laws, *customs*, taboos and practices that make up the moral code of conduct which determine how people relate with each other. Anyone who acts immorality in the community is therefore punished to correct behaviour. African cultural values on the other hand are all aspects of the African religions, way of life of people that are passed from one generation to another. African religious morals result into cultural values that are practised in all aspects of life in the community.

African Religious morals and cultural values

Activity 4.1

1. *List your school rules. How are the school rules significant to the learners?*
2. *Discuss the repercussions of breaking school rules.*

Relevance of African religious morals and cultural values in day to day life

The following are examples of religious moral and cultural values:

i) Respect: This refers to a state of showing honour to others and treating them with high esteem. It involves being considerate to others and using polite language when talking to others. Children are taught to use proper titles when addressing elders. Traditional Africans also show respect to the ancestral spirits by pouring libations to them.

ii) Cooperation: To cooperate is the action of working together for a common purpose. Life in the traditional African communities is communal. They unite when observing the rites of passage. Selfishness is discouraged and they recognise the need to pull their resources to help each other.

iii) Hospitality: Hospitality refers to the friendliness, generosity and kindness shown to visitors and strangers. Traditional Africans share with others what they have. They welcome them to their homes and serve them the best food available. In some cases a goat is slaughtered as a sign of respect to the guests who have visited.

iv) Hardwork: In the Traditional African Communities, people are encouraged to work hard in accomplishing daily chores or tasks. Laziness is discouraged and those who are lazy are ridiculed. Children are taught by their parents to appreciate hard work and they are punished when they do not complete the tasks they are given. Hard work also enables people to attend to those who are in need such as the old widows and those who are physically challenged.



Children helping their mother

v) Honesty: This is ability to say the truth and dealing fairly with others. Honesty is valued as it enables people to live with others in harmony. When a dispute arises, amongst people in the community, it is expected that the truth is told so that the dispute is solved. Cheating is discouraged because it denies people their rights.

vii) Obedience: This moral value involve the willingness to carry out the wishes of others for the common good in the community. Children are expected to comply to the instructions of those in authority. The religious leaders in the community also expect that the instruction they give are followed. Obedience enables those in authority to manage the activities in the community with harmony.

viii) Loyalty: Traditional Africans are encouraged to be loyal. This involves being faithful and devoted to one's family and community and not to betray. Loyalty builds strong bonds among family members and they are able to overcome the challenges they may face. Loyalty promotes unity in the community as people are taught to be devoted to what the community upholds.

The rites of passage and their significance in the African community

Activity 4.2

1. Identify the different events you have celebrated in your life.
2. Why did you celebrate the events you have mentioned above?
3. Share your experiences in class.

Definition of rites of passage

Rites of passage are important events in a person's life according to the Traditional African Communities. The important stages or events are birth, naming, initiation, marriage and death.

There are ceremonies that accompany every event. These ceremonies may vary from one community to another. The ceremonies involve the participation of the family and community members. The rites of passage have the following characteristics:

1. Separation/ Seclusion

Separation happens when the individual is taken away from the rest of the community to undergo accompanying rituals. For example, those who are to undergo initiation are separated from their families. The initiates then stay together in seclusion before they undergo initiation.

2. Transition

In this stage, an individual undergoes training. For example, in the case of birth rituals, a mother is taught how to nurse her baby and what foods to eat so that she is able to gain her strength. Similarly, initiation marks a transitional stage from childhood to adulthood.

3. Incorporation

After seclusion, the individual is brought back to the community. The individual is welcomed back into the community with prayers and celebrations.

These characteristics are demonstrated in the stated rites of passage.

The rites of passage

1. Birth and naming

In the traditional African community, life starts at conception. Pregnancy is a sign that shows that a new member of the community is about to be seen. The expectant mother receives special attention and treatment from her husband, relatives, friends and the entire community in order to ensure that life is nurtured and protected.

The pregnant woman must observe specified rules and prohibitions which may vary from one community to another. For instance, she should refrain from eating certain foods such as eggs and fatty foods. She should also refrain from heavy work for example carrying heavy loads. Pregnant women were also given medicine for the good health of the baby. They were also supposed to wear protective charms to protect them from witches who are likely to harm the unborn child. They were also not allowed to engage in sexual intercourse.

Should the expectant mother experience difficulties during the pregnancy, the medicine people or diviners are consulted to find out the cause and take the necessary steps to cure the problem. Therefore, all precautions are observed during pregnancy to protect and ensure good well-being of the mother and the unborn child. Those who do not respect a pregnant woman or cause harm to her are rebuked.

(a) Birth rite



A child born in a traditional set up

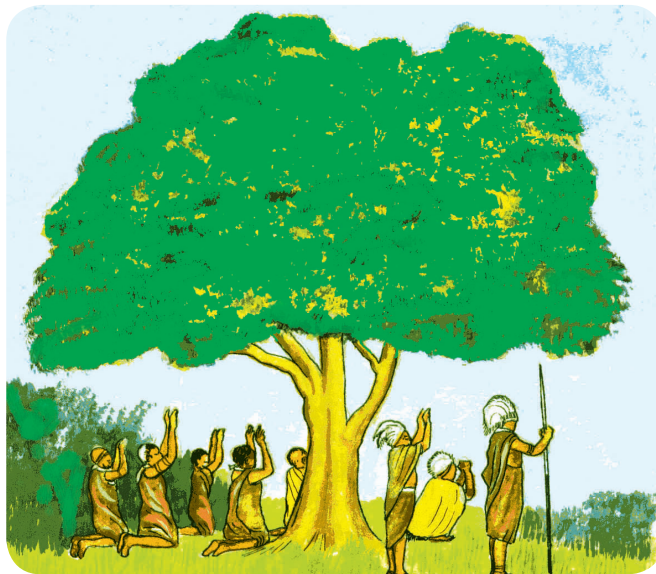
In the traditional African community, it is the women who are called upon to act as midwives during the time of delivery. Delivery takes place in different places depending on the community. For example, a special hut or the house of the woman's mother.

There are many rituals or ceremonies that accompany birth. These include;
i. Disposal of placenta and umbilical cord: In some communities the placenta and the umbilical cord is thrown into a running river, in some communities it is buried in a fertile land to signify confirmed fertility. In some cases, the mother preserves the umbilical cord to symbolise the link between her and the baby.

ii. Purification ceremony: Many communities believe that the delivery process causes impurity. The mother has to undergo cleansing rituals so as to prepare her for the next child.

iii. Protection ceremony: Other ceremonies are performed to give protection to the baby against witchcraft, diseases and evil spirits that may harm the child. This ritual of protection is performed by a religious specialist such as medicine people. In many cases, something is tied around the neck, waist or arm of the baby as a physical sign of God's protection.

iv. Thanksgiving ceremony: This ceremony is done to offer thanks to God for the safe delivery of the baby and to pray for God's blessing. Prayers are said to recognise God as the creator.



Traditional people praying under a tree

v. Seclusion: The mother and the baby are separated from the rest of the community for some days. During this seclusion period, the mother is given time to rest and heal. She is also fed properly to ensure that she is healthy enough to feed the baby. First time mothers are taught on how to breast feed the child.

vi. Annunciation of the baby's gender: The gender of the baby is announced to the people outside using various ways such as shouts or ululations. The gender of the child determines the number of shouts or ululations to be made.

Activity 4.3

1. Explain how your family prepare for a baby.
2. Discuss how you receive a new born baby in your family
3. Discuss the significance of observing birth rites in African community.

(b) Naming

Activity 4.4

1. How is naming of a baby conducted in your community?
2. Identify South Sudanese names that reflect their tradition
3. Discuss the significance of names in the African traditional communities.

There are many naming customs in Africa. Naming systems differ from one community to another. In most cases the naming ceremony is attended by the family, relatives and even friends. This ceremony is taken seriously as the name chosen will reflect the character of the child through childhood, adulthood till death. Names have meaning and the following customs are followed:

i. The time of birth: Names are given depending on the time or season that the child is born. Some names reflect the conditions of the weather at the time of birth.

ii. The names of ancestors and elder relatives: In some cases, a child is given a name after ancestors or elder relatives. This naming custom ensures that the living dead are present among the living.

iii. The place of delivery: A child may also be named depending on where the delivery took place. Among the Dinka of South Sudan, the name 'Nyasing' is given to a girl born while people are on the run.

iv. Names that show religious feelings: The name of God is also made part of the child's name. This shows how people depend on God for their sustenance and confirmation of life.

v. Special delivery or more than one child: Special names are given to twins, triplets or multiple births because such children are believed to have special powers from God. However in many cases, when such children are born they were considered as misfortune. In the past such children were killed. Allowing them to live would cause a calamity to happen.

vi. The names reflecting the challenges of the parents: Some names reflect the challenges parents may have faced. For example, a special name is given to a child who has been born after many years in a childless marriage. Other names reflect the difficult time the mother experienced during delivery.

Children are given other names as they grow up to reflect special characteristics. For example, a child who is hardworking is given a special name. Other names also reflect the physical characteristics a child may develop.

Group work

1. *Discuss how the following events influence naming in your community.*
 - a). *Calamities like floods and droughts*
 - b). *Planting*
 - c). *War season*
 - d). *Harvesting season*
2. *Share in class.*

2. Initiation

Initiation is an important stage in the life of an individual in the traditional African community. During initiation, an individual moves from childhood to adulthood. In Africa, there are many forms of initiation. These include circumcision for boys, while in other communities, six of the lower front teeth are removed and others tattoo their skins.

Traditionally, every individual is expected to undergo initiation and failure to which one is regarded as an outcast and cannot enjoy certain privileges and rights. As children approach their time of initiation, they are psychologically prepared by their parents and relatives on what is expected of them. They are taught the customs and moral values of the community to prepare them for the initiation ceremony. In most cases, the initiations is done to groups of young people who are in the teenage years between thirteen to eighteen years old. Those circumcised at the same age form an age-set.

In the traditional African community, initiation is an important ritual because it is a sign of courage and bravery. It is a painful process and the initiate is not expected to cry. Crying is a sign of cowardice. This courage prepares the initiates to face challenges in their future. The initiates acquire a higher status in life. One moves from childhood to adulthood and is now recognised as a respected member of the community. The initiate bears a mark or scar to remind one of their new status. They receive special education during the seclusion period. They are taught the traditions of the community and the expectations of the community

from them. They are instructed to uphold moral values that will help them as they prepare to marry.

Initiation ceremony allow the family, relatives and the community in general to come together and celebrate. This helps in strengthening kinship ties as it provides an opportunity for relatives to know each other and help when there is a crisis. Those who undergo initiation acquire new privileges and rights. For example, one can now prepare to marry. The man is also allowed to own property and may also inherit his father's property when he dies.

During initiations ceremonies, the community gets and opportunity to congregate and pray to God for blessings upon the initiates and the community. The shedding of blood that the initiates experience during part of the initiation ritual binds one with the living dead. There is now a link between the initiate and the living dead. Sacrifices and pouring of libations are also made to appease the ancestral spirits

Activity 4.5

1. *Give the practices done during initiation rites.*
2. *Identify the moral values learnt during initiation celebrations.*
3. *Discuss the relevance of initiation rites in African traditional society.*
4. *Discuss factors influencing initiation rites in your community.*

3. Death

Death is a mysterious experience. Traditional Africans describe it as a journey from the physical world to the spiritual world. It marks the end of life physically yet the beginning of life as the living dead.

When death occurs, it brings relatives, friends and the community together in the period of mourning and performing of the burial rituals. The rhythm of human life and activity is disrupted to honour the one who has died.

Traditional Africans communities have different explanations as to how death came about. There are various myths all across Africa to explain how death came. In one of the myths, it is believed that God sent a message to the first human beings that they would live forever. This message was given to one of the animals to deliver. The animal is often said to have been a chameleon. Unfortunately the chameleon delayed in delivering the message. Meanwhile God sent another but faster animal believed to be a bird with another message that people would die. This message was received before the earlier one that was sent by the chameleon. Since then, death came into being.

There are however other causes that are believed to cause death. These are:

i. Death by breaking taboos or oaths: Traditional Africans believe that when one disregards taboos and prohibitions and breaks an oath then one would die.

ii. Death by witchcraft: People believe that witchcraft and use of magic causes death. Therefore when one dies, the people often investigate to find out the cause of his or her death. Once identified then the person who used witchcraft is beaten to death and his or her property burned to ashes.

iii. Death caused by spirits: Some believe that spirits of people who died when they were complaining about ill treatment by family members or those whose bodies were not handled properly may curse death to befall people.

iv. Natural causes: Death is also blamed on sickness and old age. However, people will still try to establish the cause of the death by consulting diviners and medicine people.

A period of mourning is observed by family members and the relatives. Death rituals are observed and practised to ensure harmony between the living and the ancestral spirits. Funeral rituals are also determined by the status, gender and the age of the person being buried.

Group work

1. *Compare and contrast traditional African perception of death and modern news on death.*
2. *Discuss the cause of death in the modern society.*

Life after death in the traditional African community

In many communities, Africans believe that there is life after death. People continue to live on in spirit form. These spirits are referred to as ancestral spirits or living dead. These spirits are believed to be able to see what the living are doing and they also participate in the activities of the people such as during the celebration of the rites of passage.

Africans also believe that the departed remain within the homestead and their graves are treated with respect.

Africans perform the following rituals to show that there is life after death. For instance, in some communities, the dead are buried with their belongings such as foodstuffs because it is believed that the departed will need such things in the spirit world. The dead are buried in a selected place within the homestead so that the spirits continues to be close to the family.

In many communities, the heads of families pour libations such as beer, water and milk to the spirits of the family and even place foodstuffs on a daily basis. It is believed that these offerings appease them not to cause harm to the living. During family celebrations such as birth, naming, initiation, marriage and death, the departed are remembered. They are invited to take part in the celebrations by the religious specialists. It is also a custom by many African communities to name their children after the departed. So as to remember them. In some cases, animals such as bulls and goats may be offered to the departed.



They are slaughtered for them when it is believed that the departed may need them. The names of the departed are mentioned in prayer. It is believed that the departed members of the family will relay their prayers to God.

These rituals are performed by the living to allow harmony to exist between them and the departed.

The Christian understanding of the eternal life

From the Bible context, Christians understand that death came about as a consequence of disobedience by the first human beings, Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:19). God pronounced the death sentence as a punishment.

However with the coming of the Messiah, hope was restored for human beings. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ gives hope to Christians that even though death happens, there is life after death. Through the resurrection of Jesus, Christians share in the hope of their own resurrection if they die.

Eternal life means life without end. Christians believe that there are two eternities. Eternal life in heaven and eternal life in hell. Those who live in sin and refuse the repentant life that Jesus taught will be condemned to eternal hell. However, those who believe in Jesus Christ and are obedient to the word of God will receive eternal life (John 3:36).

The wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord, Romans 6:23.

Activity 4.6

1. *Identify the teaching of Jesus in Luke 6:17-19 that may help Christians to obtain eternal life.*
2. *Write in your books and share with the rest of the groups.*

Similarities and differences between Traditional Africans and Christians about life after death

There are some similarities between traditional Africans and Christians about death and life after death. For instance, both traditional Africans and Christians believe that death is not the end. Traditional Africans believe that after death, one becomes the living dead while Christians believe that after one dies, there will be resurrection. In both cases, the dead are given decent burials. In both, death was caused by disobedience.

However, there are also some cases where the two do not agree. For instance, Christians believe in resurrection unlike the Traditional Africans who do not believe in resurrection. They believe in the existence of the living dead. Christians do not believe in the existence of the living dead.

To them, when one dies, one is in a state of resting awaiting resurrection. However Traditional Africans believe that after death, one becomes part of the living dead. Christians believe in the existence of heaven and hell where people will go depending on how they lived on earth. Traditional Africans however, do not believe in heaven or hell.

Activity 4.7

1. *Compare and contrast between Traditional African Communities and Christians about life after death.*
2. *What is the relevance to eternal life to Christians?*
3. *Explain how Christians can obtain eternal life.*

Spiritual Beings

All traditional African communities believe in the existence of spiritual beings. God, divinities and ancestors are examples of these spiritual beings. They are highly valued by Africans who believe that spiritual beings possess powers that control their activities. Different Traditional Africans have myths about these spiritual beings and how they are supposed to relate with them. Most mythical narratives uphold that God is the Supreme Being who created the universe including the spiritual beings such as the divinities. The following are attributes of these spiritual beings.

a) God

Traditional African Communities believe in God as the Supreme Being. Different communities have different names for their God. In general, it is believed that God has the following eternal, intrinsic and moral attributes.

i. God is the creator: All African communities believe that the world was created by God. God existed from the beginning and is the source of life. There are numerous myths which describe God's work of creation. Some Africans believe that God created things then made assistants (divinities) who he put in charge of creating other things under His direction. Therefore, God is described as the molder, maker and potter among other descriptions.

ii. God is the sustainer: God is believed to sustain or uphold what he has created. God looks after all his creations by providing their means of survival. God enables the plants to grow as food for both some animals and human beings.

iii. God is everywhere or omnipotent: God is always present everywhere. This is the reason why traditional Africans believe that they can pray anywhere at any time when necessary because God is with them. Africans may gather at sacred places to worship God.

iv. God is all powerful or omnipotent: God is believed to be very powerful and mighty. There is nothing that can defeat the power of God. No one can contest with God and win. He has so much power, strength and authority. He is the one who makes the sun rise and set.

v. God is all knowing or omniscient: God knows everything unlike human beings whose knowledge is limited. He is referred to as the wise one and nothing can be hidden from Him. He sees everything and hears everything.

vi. God is eternal: God existed before creation and cannot die. He lives forever. He is from eternity to eternity. The Baganda of Uganda refer to God as the 'Eternal One'. He has no end.

v. God is Holy: God does not make mistakes, evil is not found in him. He is pure, he has to be approached with honor and fear. When Africans need to give an animal offering to God, the religious leaders meticulously choose animals without blemish for sacrifice. Places associated with God such as mountains, rivers and certain trees are considered sacred and there are regulations observed by Africans when approaching such places.

vi. God is good: Traditional Africans believe that God is good towards all people. He answers the prayers of his people by providing for their needs. God causes the sun to shine and the rain to pour in their gardens.

vii. God is merciful: He is the source of all mercy when people are facing danger and calamity. Africans believe that God helps them to overcome the challenges in life. People are expected also to show mercy to others by forgiving them.

viii. God is just: God deals with those who commit evil by disciplining them yet He blesses those who are good. Africans fear the punishment God accords to those who are not fair to others. They encourage each other to live in harmony with others.

ix. God is immanent: Africans believe that God is immanent or close like a friend. God is involved in the affairs of human beings. Africans therefore approach God in prayers and offerings to seek his divine help.

Activity 4.8

1. *Explain the intrinsic attributes of God.*
2. *What have you learnt from the moral attributes of God.*
3. *Present your points in class for comparison*

b) Spirits

Spirits are spiritual beings. They are invisible beings. Some of the spirits are believed to have been created by God while others are spirits of people who died. It is believed that God sometimes used the spirits to cause lighting, floods and other calamities.

- **Nature spirits.** These are believed to be associated with the forces of nature and they are categorised into two:

i. Nature spirits of the sky. These are spirits associated with the forces of the sky such as the sun, the moon, stars, rainbows, storms, rain, winds, thunder and lightning. There are some sky spirits that are believed to be stronger than others and they are referred to as divinities.

ii. Nature spirits of the earth. These are spirits that are associated with the forces of the earth. They are connected to the mountains, rocks, caves, trees, forests, lakes, waterfalls and the sea. Some Africans believe that there are also earth spirits which have a higher status than others and they are referred to as divinities. However, not all Africans believe in the existence of these spirits.



People praying facing the moon

- **Divinities.** These type of spirits have a higher stage or stronger status than other spirits. They are believed to have been created by God. They are also associated with the forces of the sky and earth.

Most Africans have beliefs about the role of divinities as spiritual beings. For instance, most of the Africans believe that divinities were created by God and have certain powers. They also believe that God uses divinities to carry out various activities. Among the Igbo, the divinity of the earth is responsible to ensure fertility of the soil. Divinities act as intermediaries between human beings and God. The people channel their prayers to God through the divinities. It is also believed that divinities protect the people and provide them with their daily needs such as food and water. Divinities are also believed to be messengers of God. They reveal the messages of God to the religious specialists such as prophets and diviners.

- **Human Spirits.** These are spirits that were once ordinary people. These spirits are believed to be involved in the affairs of people. They are further categorised into two:

i. Spirits of those who died a long time ago. Most of these spirits can no longer be remembered by the living. These spirits are also referred to as ghosts and they are feared because they can harm and possess people.

ii. The spirits of those who died recently. The spirits of people who died recently are referred to as the living dead or ancestors. They are believed to be part of their families, that is, the living dead visit their families in dreams or visions and relay information.

The role of spirits

The spirits referred here are those who died long time ago. Also known as ghosts or common spirits. Traditional Africans believe that spirits play very important roles. For example, they convey God's message to human beings through dreams and visions. They also assist the medicine people and the diviners in their work. The spirits possess these religious specialists and

give them the knowledge on how to handle people's problems. Some of these spirits may be used by human beings to cause harm to others. They are mostly believed to cause madness.

The spirits of people who were once leaders, heroes and clan founders are honoured. It is believed that when the living consult them they are able to assist.

It is also believed that some of these spirits control the forces of nature such as the wind and the rain.

The role of the ancestors

The ancestors are also referred to as the living dead. They belong to the category of spirits of people who recently died and are still remembered. The role of the ancestors include welcoming those who have died to the realm of the spirit.

They also participate in celebrations of the rites of passage such as birth, initiation and marriage. The living dead visit the living relatives in dreams and visions and request for something from them for example an offering. They are consulted by the religious specialists and give advice on what is to be done. For example, a medicine person may get advise on the medicine to dispense for a particular ailment.

The living dead are also intermediaries between human beings and God. Since the living dead speak the language of the living, they understand their wishes and relay them to God. God also uses these spirits to convey his message to the people. They are the custodians of the customary law. When the living disobey these laws, the ancestors punish them. They therefore ensure that law and order is maintained in the community.

Activity 4.9

- 1 State the role of the living dead.
- 2 Compare and contrast the role of spirits and ancestors.
- 3 Are spirits and ancestors relevant in the modern society? Discuss.

Traditional African religious specialists

Religious specialists refer to the people who possess special knowledge and skills and have authority from spiritual beings to perform certain duties. In the traditional African communities, religious specialists include medicine people (healers), prophets, diviners, priests, rainmakers and elders.

Activity 4.10

1. *In your groups, research the role of each religious specialist.*
2. *Write down your points and compare with the rest of the groups.*
3. *Show your teacher what you have written.*

Africans believe that religious specialists acquire their skills through various ways. For instance, through training process that involves observation and practise. Through spiritual beings who give them power and authority to execute their duties. They also acquire their skills through inheritance. Religious power is handed over from old members to the younger ones.

The role of specialists

a) **Medicine people (healers) or herbalists**

They include both men and women who are regarded as the friends of the community. They seek divine intervention in their work in playing various roles. For instance, healers investigate and find out the religious causes of an illness or complaints from their clients.



Traditional medicine

Specialists prescribe a cure for illness, this may include herbs and they may advise the religious rituals and observance of certain prohibitions to be done.

Healers administer protective charms that help in preventing misfortunes. They also offer training to those who want to be healers in the community. They may be called upon to perform religious rituals such as offering sacrifices and prayers to God. Healers act as counselors. They listen to people's challenges and offer advice.

(b) Prophets

They are also referred to as seers. Prophets may be either men or women. They receive revelation through visions and dreams. Some of the roles the prophets do include receiving revelations from spiritual beings and relay the messages to the people. They foretell the future. They also warn people of any danger that is about to happen and advise on what is to be done. They act as mediators between God and the people. In addition, they pray on behalf of the people and seek divine intervention from God. They also advise people on issues affecting them and help them in conducting religious ceremonies in the community.

Activity 4.11

1. Find out the traditional prophets in South Sudan.
2. Discuss the role of traditional prophets in South Sudan.
3. Compare and contrast between the traditional specialists in South Sudan to the modern society specialists.

(c) Diviners

They have the skill to find out hidden knowledge and relay to those who seek their services. For example, diviners are able to tell their clients the causes of their illness or curses, who has bewitched them, also who has stolen their property among other issues.

The diviners use the method of divination. Such as reading palms, shaking gourds filled with shells or seeds then pouring them out on the ground to interpret a divine message. In their work, they use a spiritual language that an ordinary person may not understand. Diviners closely work with mediums whose main work is to communicate with the spirits of the living dead and get information for their clients.

Diviners reveal hidden secrets and expose those with evil intentions. They advice people on what to do when they face challenges, for example those with marital problems. They are also called upon to preside over religious celebrations in the community for example during initiation. They interpret messages from the spiritual beings to the people. In addition, they act as mediators between the people and the spiritual beings.

(d) Priests

Priests are people who have authority to perform religious duties. For instance, they take care of sacred places where prayers and offerings are made to God. Priests also conduct religious ceremonies such as prayers. In many occasions people depend on them to perform cleansing and

purification ceremonies. They also act as counselors and advice people on the expected moral standards. They cast out evil spirits that have possessed people. Priests act as mediators between people and the spiritual beings. They also receive offerings on behalf of God or other spiritual beings. They pray for the kings and the chiefs in the society before they assume office.

(e) Rainmakers

Rainmakers are highly respected in the community because they are believed to have the ability to bring or stop rain. Many rainmakers also act as chiefs or priests. Rainmakers acquire their skill through inheritance, formal training and by being called to do it through messages and dreams from the spirits. Their training involves learning to perform rain making rituals, observing and interpreting the changes in the vegetation.

Rainmakers spend time praying to God to give rain or stop rain when it is too much. They officiate religious functions such as praying for the community. They also spend time observing weather conditions and the animals and advice on when to plant their crops. They act as intermediaries between the people and the spiritual beings. Some of them act as chiefs and priests. Rainmakers conduct the rituals to pray for rain.

(f) Elders

Elders are elderly people in the community who have passed the stage of child bearing. They are appointed to office because they are people with upright moral standing in the community who are also known for the wise counsel and fairness when dealing with people. They are experienced and knowledgeable on matters of the laws of the community.

Their responsibilities include settling disputes within the community. They negotiate for peace with neighbouring communities when there is war. They also offer guidance and counseling to the people, for example to those intending to marry. Elders are custodians of the community law and are consulted before decisions are made. They preside over religious functions

in the community such as prayers and the offering of sacrifices. In addition to these other responsibilities they are consulted in regard to inheritance of property and distribution of communal property. They protect family shrines and also participate in performing the rites of passage.

In conclusion, although these religious specialists play an important role, in modern Africa, their functions have been greatly affected by Christianity, advancements in technology and the establishment of political government and constitution.

Activity 4.12

1. *In your groups, list the roles of elders and rainmakers from the text.*
2. *Compare and contrast the roles of the priests and prophets.*
3. *Compare and contrast the roles of diviners and prophets.*

Glossary

Morals : The acts or behaviour which is acceptable in the society.

Values : Principles or standards of behaviour that are accepted.

Incorporation : A process where an individual is welcomed back to the community with prayers and celebrations.

Venerate : Regarding someone or something with great respect.

Immanent : God being close to human beings as a friend.

Eternal life : Refers to continued life after death.

UNIT 5

Non-violence

Key words

Violence, non-violence, arbitration

Violence refers to the use of intentional physical force so as to cause harm to oneself, another person or a group of people. Violence leads to injury, death, trauma, displacement of people and poverty among other effects.

On the other hand, non-violence is the state of avoiding violence in solving a conflict. Those who are for non-violence believe that there are many ways of bringing about change rather than using violence.

Activity 5.1

1. Recite these verses

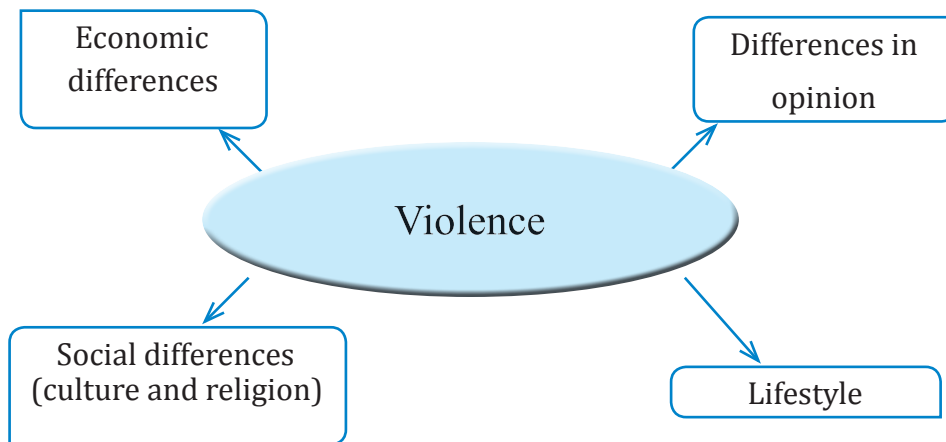
- (a) *A city becomes great when the righteous give it their blessing but a city is brought to ruin by the words of the wicked, (Proverbs 11:11).*
- (b) *Reckless words pierce like a sword but the tongue of the wise brings healing. (Proverbs 12:18).*
- (c) *There is deceit in the hearts of those who plot evil but joy for those who promote peace. (Proverbs 12:20).*

2. Discuss the relevance of the above texts to peace and violence.

Types of violence

a) Violence at local level

At the local level, violence can be between family members, friends and in the neighborhood. This form of violence can be derived from misunderstanding in the family, hatred, unemployment, poverty, cultural practices of disciplining family members and the abuse of illegal drugs.



Effects of violence at the local level

The effects of violence at the local level are as follows: Leads to separation and divorce, drop out of school, leads to the spread of sexually transmitted diseases including the spread of HIV and AIDS, causes poor health as children become traumatised, bodily injury and scars that remain permanent and violence also leads to death.

b) Violence at national level

At national level, violence can be between different ethnic communities within the nation or religious conflict between different religious groups. The causes of this form of violence may include: Ethnicity whereby some ethnic groups domineer others over public resources. Violence can erupt over the outcome of Presidential Elections, lack of tolerance between different religious groups, marginalisation of communities by the government in power and lack of respect of the human rights.

The effects of violence at national level

Violence at national level can lead to the following:

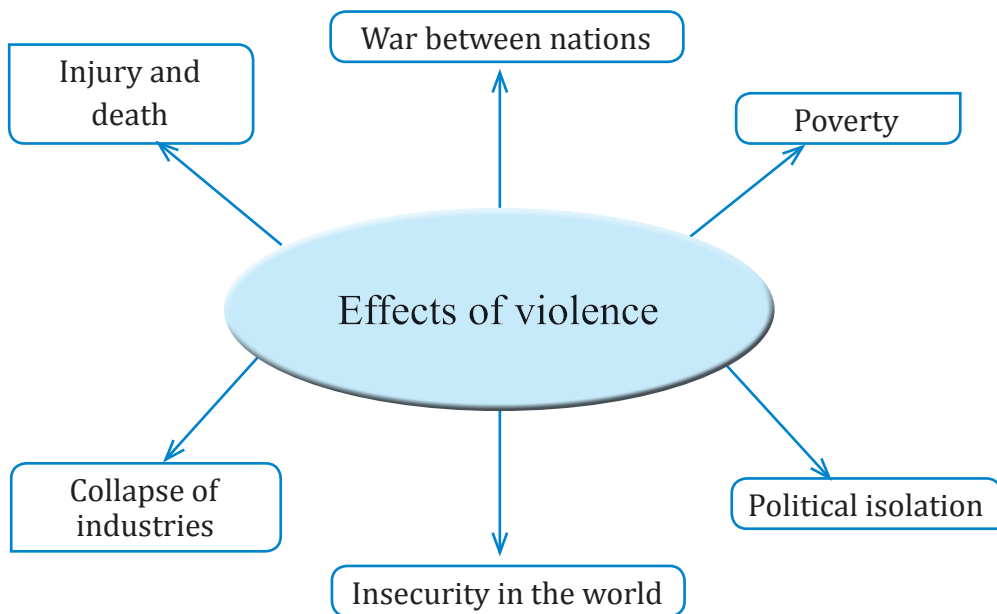
Hatred and suspicion among the different ethnic groups. Insecurity within the nation. Injury and death. Civil war may erupt leading to displacement of people and violence disrupts the economic activities of people and in turn leads to poverty.

c) Violence at international level

Nations can be in conflict with each other due to the following:

Boundary disputes whereby national governments accuse each other of moving boundaries. Religious conflicts between neighbouring nations over religious differences. Freedom from colonial rule misunderstanding between nations over the control of territories.

The effects of violence at international level



Activity 5.2

1. Recite these words
2. Explain the quote on peace and violence.
3. Discuss paths to peace in our society.

“Peace is a precious gift, which must be promoted and protected.

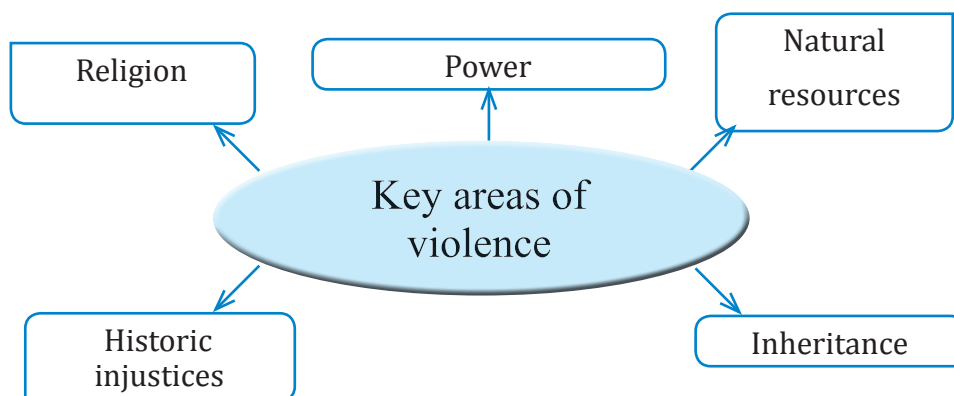
Never has the use of violence brought peace in its wake.

War begets war, violence begets violence.”

(Pope Francis)

Group work

1. Discuss in, the effects of violence on children. Share your answers with the rest of the class.
2. Identify a country in Africa where the citizens have experienced civil challenges in the recent past. Explain the causes of civil violence in the country.



Non-violence

This is the state or condition of avoiding violence in solving a conflict or when one wants to bring about change. The people who value non-violence believe that there are alternative ways of bringing about change instead of using violence.

The tools used in non-violence

The tools used in non-violence refer to the methods that can be used to bring about social and political changes instead of using violence. These tools can be used at local, national and international levels. The tools include:

a) Negotiation

This refers to dialogues or discussions between people with the intention of solving a dispute or disagreement. In the discussions, the people involve a negotiator who acts as a link between the parties.

The negotiator cultivates a friendly environment for discussion to take place so that solutions can be reached.

The parties involved are assisted by the negotiator to bargain and reach an agreement. Each party or group must be willing to compromise so that a solution is reached. For example, the Sudanese North and South sought to end the 22 years civil war after lengthy negotiations. This was enabled by the terms of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) of January 9, 2005.

b) Arbitration

In this method, a disagreement is solved by an arbitrator who is an expert in the law. The different groups are to bring their issue before the arbitrator instead of going to court. The arbitrator then listens to both sides, allows the groups to respond to the complaints raised, looks at the evidence presented and then determines the solution for those in disagreement. The arbitrator makes the final decision.

The method of arbitration is preferred by some people who want to avoid the court expenses and the delay sometimes experienced in court proceedings.

c) Mediation

This is a process in which people who have disagreed involve a mediator to help them reach an agreement. The mediator encourages the people

concerned to have a face to face discussion. So that each one of them is able to narrate how the problem started. The mediator listens to both sides, gets the relevant information that will help the people to develop a solution for both parties.

When both parties reach an agreement, they agree to have it written down and signed to show commitment.

d) Peace building workshops

This is the bringing together of people who are influential in creating peace. This is a non-violent tool that enables people who discuss the causes of violence and the possible solutions.

The peace builders then design activities and programs that will address the problems in the society.

e) Religious processions of peace

Religious leaders also organise peaceful marches in the streets of villages and towns praying for peace and communicating the need to solve a problem using banners and posters.



Religious peace procession in South Sudan

f) The use of public speeches

Leaders in the community, nation and the world also use public speeches to inspire their audience and transform them. Such leaders have contributed greatly in motivation and persuading others against violence and instead choose peaceful ways of causing change. One such speaker was Martin Luther King Junior who was a church leader and a civil rights activist in America. On the 28th of August in 1963 he gave a public speech titled, "I have a dream" that caught the attention of the world. Part of the speech was as follows;

Activity 5.3

1. Recite Martin Luthers words

"I have dream that four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character".

2. Explain the quote above in relevance to today's society.
3. Identify prominet leaders who have advocated for peace in South Sudan..

Activity 5.4

In groups, identify the tools of non-violence to solve the following cases:

1. *Misunderstanding between a husband and wife who are about to divorce.*
2. *Two communities who have disagreed over grazing land. One community has killed cows that belonged to another community.*
3. *Two political parties that have disagreed after presidential elections.*

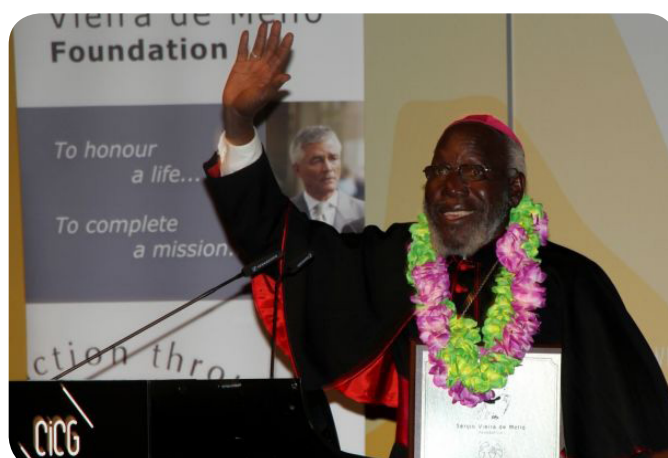
Religious people who have advocated for non-violence in South Sudan

1. Bishop Emeritus Paride Taban

Bishop Taban is a beacon of hope to millions of people in South Sudan and beyond. He is a rare figure in a fractured country, someone who has excellent contact with leaders on all sides and is not afraid to call them to account. He discusses the road to peace with government leaders as well as leaders of armed groups. Bishop Taban has been actively involved in peace work for more than 60 years. At one point, he was held by the Sudan People's Liberation Army (when they were still freedom fighters) because they disapproved of his work.

During his mission in advocating for non-violence, Bishop Emeritus Paride received major world's awards in recognition of his religious role in South Sudan.

In February 2013 - The United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) extended its warm congratulations to Bishop Emeritus Paride Taban on the award of the 2013 Sergio Vieira de Mello Peace Prize. Bishop Paride, prominent South Sudanese actor for peace was given a richly-deserved recognition of his efforts and accomplishments in building trust and peace between different communities in the Holy Trinity Peace Village in Kuron, in the Eastern Equatorial State.



Bishop Taban giving speech during the award

In May 2018, South Sudanese Bishop Paride Taban received the Freedom of Worship Award, one of the Four Freedoms Awards presented every other year in Middelburg, the Netherlands, Han Polman. The chairman of the Roosevelt Foundation, awarded Bishop Taban the award for his extraordinary efforts toward bringing peace to war-torn South Sudan.

The Four Freedoms Award are one of the most prestigious awards recognising work defending fundamental human rights. Earlier recipients include Nelson Mandela, Bishop Desmond Tutu (South Africa), Malala Yousafzai and Angela Merkel (UK). The Four Freedoms Awards are presented each year to men and women whose achievements have demonstrated a commitment to US President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Four Freedoms: freedom of speech and expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want, and freedom from fear.



Bishop Taban during a non-violence meeting

When Bishop Taban retired from his official role in the church, he founded Kuron Peace Village in 2005 in Eastern Equatorial, a thinly populated area in the southeast of the country. Here, far from the unrest, young people and community leaders learn how to live peacefully together and acquire skills in how to resolve conflict. They bring these skills with them when they return to their communities. The Dutch peace-building organisation PAX helped establish the Kuron peace village and remains active in an advisory role with the peace work in the village and in supporting local peace committees.

Archbishop Paul Yugusuk

Archbishop Paul Yugusuk was a leader of the Church of South Sudan's internal Central Province called on the government and opposition groups to declare an end to violence. The continuation of phase two of the talks which took place in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. During the negotiations, the parties discussed the formation of a transitional government and permanent ceasefire and security arrangements; but the delegates did not reach a consensus.

Archbishop Paul said all the parties must conclude with signing a peace deal during the upcoming round of negotiations. "Our delegation is going to IGAD and as they go there and before they go there, let the government and opposition say it is finished," he said. "Let us bring everything to an end. We open a new page and let us come back home and live."

The second phase of the revitalisation forum, held in February, was riddled with disagreements over a number of issues in chapters I and II of the 2015 peace agreement. After the second round of talks, Archbishop Paul together with his counterparts; Bishop Enoch Tombe, the retired bishop of Rajaf and leader of the religious team in the peace talks, influenced the parties to take a people-centred approach in peace negotiation.

Bishop Daniel Adeng Bul

Daniel Deng Bul was appointed in April 2013, with Republican Decree by President Kiir, as South Sudan Healing, Peace and National Reconciliation Committee's Chairperson. Deputized by South Sudan admired Bishop Paride Taban. The National Reconciliation Committee under Daniel Deng Bul was given a tremendous task to reconcile South Sudanese people. To relief the twenty one years war trauma which might have had affected and twisted the thinking of certain elements in different communities across South Sudan. Daniel Deng Bul, three years before this similar task but in a state level, had been once sequentially or simultaneously mediating Peace between George Athor and GoSS, among the Murle, Lou Nuer and Bor Dinka as well as between David Yau Yau and GRSS



Bishop Deng Bul, praying with South Sudan political leaders in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Primarily, all these peace mediations were, under the auspice of Daniel Deng Bul, in Jonglei state level started right from mid-2010 to 2012. When Daniel Deng Bul was sworn into office and set to leave Juba for Jonglei in order to reconcile the aforementioned communities. He immediately started the work as soon as he could reach the state. Initially, Deng Bul in the state called for an inclusive conference, he said. Unfortunately, the people who were present in that meeting held in Bor, intended by Deng Bul, were all from one side of the conflict. The inhabitants of Bor County.

The same became also the case in GRSS and SSDM/A- Cobra Faction peace process under the Chairmanship of Deng Bul himself. Perhaps because of his deeds, Daniel Deng was seen partial throughout. That might be the reason why he attempted to mediate peace in Jonglei state. Let's return to South Sudan Healing, Peace and National Reconciliation Committee's role. Daniel Deng Bul was tasked to reconcile South Sudanese people before this current turmoil could erupt. Daniel Deng Bul's Committee attempted to solve communal conflicts in Lakes state.

Archbishop John Baptist Odama

Archbishop John Baptist Odama is a long-term advocate for peace in northern Uganda extending to South Sudan. His trial at the ICC opened on December 6, 2016.



Bishop Odama

Archbishop Odama is the pontifical leader of Gulu Archdiocese, in northern Uganda. Following his ordination as Archbishop in April 1999, he dedicated his efforts to advocating and working for the return of peace in northern Uganda. In 2002, he was instrumental in organising a series of meetings between the government and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). He was the chairperson of the interfaith organisation Acholi Religious Leaders Peace Initiative (ARLPI) from 2002 to 2010. The organization was involved in peace building efforts in Northern Uganda. Through ARLPI he played a significant role in advocating for blanket amnesty and forgiveness to ex-soldiers of the LRA. As a result of pressure from him and other prominent local leaders in northern Uganda extending to South Sudan, the Amnesty Act of 2000 was passed, which offered pardon to Ugandans who had been engaged in rebellion. During the Juba Peace talks, which started in 2006, Archbishop Odama was among the religious leaders who travelled frequently to the jungles of the Central African Republic (CAR) to meet with the LRA.

In 2012, Archbishop Odama was awarded the World Vision International Peace Prize, for his role in northern Uganda. In December 2016, the ICC,

in collaboration with the Danish Embassy in Uganda, invited Archbishop Odama and other community leaders from northern Uganda to travel to The Hague for the opening of Ongwen's trial.

Moreover, the archbishop has been involved in mediating between South Sudan's warring parties. Under Archbishop Odama, Uganda currently hosts over a million refugees who have fled South Sudan out of fear of being killed by fighters from either side of the conflict inside South Sudan, as well as out of hunger and lack of social services. The archbishop has been able to negotiate for peace in South Sudan.

Odama points out that South Sudan is not only a neighbour, but a brother in need: "When your brother's house is burning you should feel concerned; even just to get some water and to pour it over the burning house is a good gesture. Therefore, receiving the refugees who are running, escaping from the war is a sign of our solidarity with South Sudan" he said.

Activity 5.5

1. In groups, state the activities of people you know who have advocate for non-violence in South Sudan.
2. Share your findings with other groups.

Major world religions and what they say about non-violence

There are many religions in the world today that teach about non-violence, they are:

a) Jainism

This is one of the ancient religions in India. Followers of Jainism take five main vows which include non-violence, truth, not stealing, chastity and non-attachment. This means that the religion teaches that one must abandon any form of violent activity. One must not kill another human being. Jainists believe that causing harm to another affects one's future life (rebirth) and will cause great suffering.

5 Principles of Living (Vows)

- ♦ Ahimsa: non violence
- ♦ Satya: Only speak the truth
- ♦ Asteya: Do not steal
- ♦ Brahma-charya: Sexually monogamous
- ♦ Aparigraha: Detach from material things, people, and places.

b) Buddhism

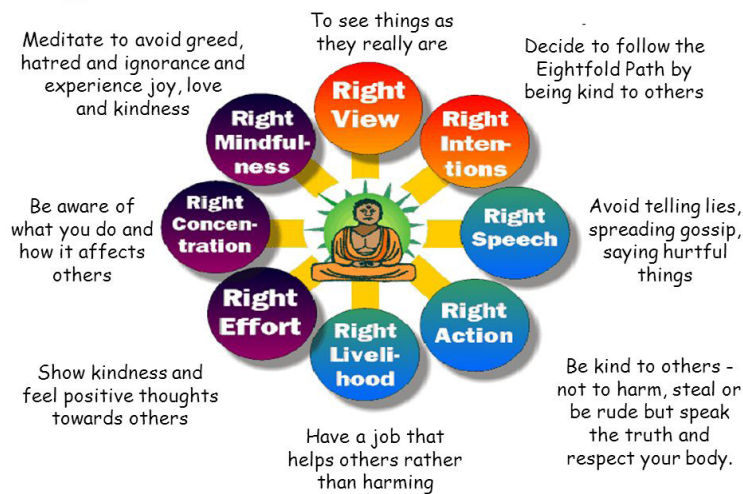
Buddhism has many followers in Asia. They believe in Buddha who is the founder of this religion. Buddhists follow five main principles which are; do not kill, do not steal, do not lie, do not misuse sex and do not consume alcohol. These principles guide them not to be involved in violent activities.

Buddhism

Five Basic Precepts of Buddhism:

1. Abstain from killing living beings—practice love
2. Abstain from taking the not-given—practice generosity and giving
3. Abstain from sexual misconduct—practice contentment
4. Abstain from false speech—practice truthfulness
5. Abstain from taking intoxicating substances—practice awareness and mental clarity

Eightfold Path



c) Islam

Muslims believe in one God (Allah) and that he communicates his guidance through human prophets.

In Islam, worship is part of the daily life of the Muslims. They also observe five pillars of Iman which are, Faith in God (Allah) Daily Prayer, Giving charity, Fasting in the month of Ramadhan and Hajj (Pilgrimage to Mecca).

Islam Spreads the Message of Peace, Justice and Equality

Peace

“ Let there be no compulsion in religion. Truth has been made clear from error. Whoever rejects false worship and believes in Allah has grasped the most trustworthy handhold that never breaks. And Allah hears and knows all things ” (2:256)

Justice

“O My slaves, I have forbidden injustice for Myself and forbade it also for you. So avoid being unjust to one another.”
(Muslim)

Equality

“O mankind, We have created you from a male and a female and have made you into nations and tribes for you to know one another. Truly, the noblest of you with God is the most pious. Truly, God is All-Knowing, All-Aware.”
(49:13)



Muslims believe in the Sharia Law which is in the Qur'an which helps them on how to relate with others and on how to solve any conflict.

d) Hinduism

This religion is most practised in India. It has a wide range of beliefs. These beliefs include; that the truth is eternal, the scriptures (Vedas) that everyone should achieve Dharma (right conduct) and that life is sacred and that it should be protected.

The Hindu believe that when they observe right conduct, their souls will be liberated eventually to join their creator. Therefore, the Hindu value life as sacred.

e) Christianity

Christians believe in one God, the creator, who gave the scriptures to people. The inspired scriptures, the word of God, helps Christians to have the right attitude towards God and the right attitude towards others. For example, the Ten Commandments are highly valued by Christians who observe them.

The word of God is against violence. Instead Christians are encouraged to forgive, pray, love, be patient and repent as ways of solving disputes.



The decalogues guide Christians to live in peace

Activity 5.6

Identify the Ten Commandments and discuss why each is important.

The disparity between religious messages about non-violence and religious conflict

It is however unfortunate that religious conflicts have been reported around the world which have caused millions of deaths and untold suffering yet world religious advocate for peace. Between 1933 to 1939, for example, many Jews were killed when German Chancellor, Adolf Hitler came to power. Adolf Hitler believed that the Jewish people were an inferior race who should be wiped out. Most of these Jews practised Judaism as a religion. Over six million Jews died during this time. In Africa during the 19th Century, most parts were colonised by European powers.

Colonial European governments encouraged white settlers to come to Africa among whom were Christian Missionaries. These missionaries spread Christianity in Africa and the Africans who did not accept Christianity were discriminated and mistreated. These are a few examples that explain the lack of tolerance among people when dealing with those who belong to another

religion.

Other causes of religious conflicts in the world include:

Other people believe that it is their duty to God to kill others who do not have their same beliefs. Differences in religious beliefs and arguments by one group to another who the true God is. Leadership wrangles within a religion causing division or factions to emerge.

These religious conflicts therefore can be avoided. People should instead evangelise with wisdom, be tolerant, respect others and avoid discrimination.

Glossary

- Violence:** Refers to the use of intentional physical force so as to cause harm to oneself, another person or a group of people.
- Non-violence:** Refers to the state or condition of avoiding violence in solving a conflict or when one wants to bring about change.
- Arbitration:** This is a method where a disagreement is solved by an arbitrator who is an expert in the law.



South Sudan

Secondary CRE

2

Student's Book

Secondary CRE has been written and developed by Ministry of General Education and Instruction, Government of South Sudan in conjunction with Subjects experts. This course book provides a fun and practical approach to the subject of Christian Religious Education, and at the same time imparting life long skills to the students.

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- Clear presentation and explanation of learning points.
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- Stimulating illustrations.



All the courses in this secondary series were developed by the Ministry of General Education and Instruction, Republic of South Sudan. The books have been designed to meet the secondary school syllabus, and at the same time equipping the students with skills to fit in the modern day global society.

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