

Scripture forms the foundations of our Catholic faith today. The Jewish scriptures recall the faith journey of the Israelites whereas the Gospels and Pauline literature are testament to the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ (Pascal Mystery). Comprised of many stories, the Jewish scriptures and the New Testament were combined into one source called the Bible in the fourth century. Inspired by the Holy Spirit, scripture is the heartbeat of our faith that comes alive when we make connections between these ancient and intriguing stories with our personal lives today. Contemplating scripture, asking questions and exploring the original context is like having a window through which we can create meaning, make decisions and experience God's love for all of creation in the modern world. Scripture matters in Catholic education because it provides students with a way of life that celebrates human spirituality, inclusion, justice, love and God's presence. In the Catholic faith, scripture becomes authentic and relevant when explored in the midst of the multi faith and multi belief context that makes up today's complex and beautiful cosmos.

This tool celebrates the many choices we have when it comes to using scripture. To create a rich and engaging Catholic pedagogy it is important to be diverse with the texts offered to our students and staff. Choose the ones that suit your context and students' age and abilities.

Scripture Text	Life to Faith Faith to Life Key Themes	Contextual Elements Geographic, historical, religious & social terminology in each text <i>(see attached glossary for further detail)</i>
Infancy Narrative Lk 1: 26- 2: 20	Birth Gift Trust New life Promise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • shepherds • angels • Galilee • Son of David/Son of God • Holy Spirit • Judaea • Bethlehem • Caesar Augustus • census
Infancy Narrative Mtt 1: 18-2:12	Giving and receiving Messages Birth New life Gift Journey Trust in creation Reverence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wise Men • stars • angels • Holy Spirit • Son of David • Bethlehem • King Herod • Jerusalem • Gold, frankincense and myrrh

Jesus Visits the Temple Luke 2: 22-35	Sacrifice Family relationships Ritual Blessing Human destiny	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Law • Moses • Jerusalem • sacrifice • Holy Spirit • Temple
John is Baptised Matt 3: 1-12	Humility Leadership Responsibility God's love Spiritual Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerusalem • Judea • River Jordan • Pharisees • Sadducees • Holy Spirit
Jesus' Baptism Mk 1: 9-11 <i>(Mtt 3: 13-17, Lk 3: 21-22 & Jn 1: 29-34)</i>	Responsibility Loving Relationship Spirit Filled	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nazareth • Jordan River • Holy Spirit
Jesus in the Wilderness Mk 1: 12-13 <i>(Mtt 4:1-11 & Lk 4: 1-13)</i>	Spiritual wilderness Deep listening Discernment/Choice Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wilderness • forty • Satan
Jesus Calls 1st Disciples Mk 1: 16-20 <i>(Mtt 4: 18-22 & Lk 5: 1-11)</i>	Call and Response Trust Role Model	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea of Galilee • fishing
Man With an Unclean Spirit Mk 1: 21-28 <i>(Lk 4: 31-37)</i>	Courage Healing Transformation Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capernaum • Synagogue • scribes • unclean spirit
Jesus Cleanses a Leper Mk 1: 40-45 <i>(Mtt 8: 1-4 & Lk 5: 12-16)</i>	Courage Healing Transformation Restoration Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • leper • Moses
Jesus Heals a Paralytic Mk 2: 1-12 <i>(Mtt 9: 2-8 & Lk 5: 17-26)</i>	Ostracization Healing Wellbeing Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capernaum • scribes
The Man With a Withered Hand Mk 3: 1-6 <i>(Mtt 12: 9-14 & Lk 6: 6-11)</i>	Ostracization Healing Courage Restoration Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • synagogue • Sabbath • Pharisees

You are the Light of the World Mtt 5: 14-16 (Jn 8: 12-13)	Light Influence Fear Responsibility Gift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • salt • light
Eating With Levi Luke 5: 29-32	Hospitality Meal Sharing Forgiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tax collector • Pharisees • disciples • sin
Jesus Appoints the Twelve Mk 3: 13-19 (Mtt 10: 1-4, Lk 6: 12-16 & Lk 9: 1-6)	Recognizing potential Responsibility Mission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • twelve
Compassion and Generosity Luke 6: 36-38	Compassion Generosity Judgement Gift	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • compassion
Parable of the Sower Mk 4: 1-9 (Mtt 13: 1-23 & Lk 8: 4-15)	Growth Potential for Life Presence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parable
3 Parables about The Kingdom of God Mk 4: 21-32 (Matt 13: 31-32 & Lk 8: 16-18)	Presence Transformation Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kingdom of God • mustard seed
Parable of the Yeast Matt 13: 31-32 (Lk 13: 20-21)	Kingdom of God Growth Simplicity Humility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • parable • Kingdom of God
Parable of the Pearl Matt 13: 44-46	Beauty Growth Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kingdom of God
Teaching in the Temple Matt 13: 53-58	Teaching Wisdom Strength Power	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Synagogue • Faith
Prayer Matt 6: 5-6	Trust Spirituality Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • synagogue
Jesus Stills the Storm Mk 4: 35-41 (Mtt 8: 23-27 & Lk 8: 22-25)	Trust Fear	

Feeding of the 5000 Mk 6: 30-44 <i>(Mtt 14: 13-21, Lk 9: 10-17 & Jn 6: 1-14)</i>	Listening Nourishment Giving Generosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • twelve
Jesus Walks on Water Mk 6: 45-52 <i>(Mtt 14: 22-33 & Jn 6: 15-21)</i>	Solitude Contemplation Resilience Fortitude Fear & Trust Courage Power Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bethsaida
Jesus Cures a Deaf Man Mk 7: 31-37 <i>(Mtt 15: 29-31)</i>	Healing Empowerment Justice Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • District of Tyre • Sea of Galilee • Decapolis region
A Vulnerable Woman Luke 7: 36-50	Love Anoint Hospitality Forgiveness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharisee • ointment • Denari • sin
The Good Samaritan Luke 10: 29-37	Neighbor Abandonment Love	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerusalem • Jericho • Levite • Samaritan • Priest • Oil • Denari
Martha and Mary Luke 10: 38-42	Service Discernment	
A Crippled Woman Healed Luke 13: 10-17	Courage Transformation Healing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sabbath • Synagogue
Man With Dropsey Healed Luke 14: 1-6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundaries • Morality • Healing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sabbath • Pharisee • dropsy • Law
Three Parables Celebrating God's Mercy A Lost Sheep A Lost Drachma A Lost Son Luke 15: 1-32	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mercy • Forgiveness • Love & Trust • Search • Lost and found 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drachma • Pigs • Servant

The Ten Lepers Luke 17: 11-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Healing • Cure • Vulnerability • Faith 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leper • Jerusalem • Samaritan • Galilee
Jesus and the Children Luke 18: 15-17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Love • Breaking boundaries 	
Feeding the Hungry Matt 14: 13-21	Hunger Need Abundance Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • twelve
Feeding of the 4000 Mk 8: 1-10 <i>(Mtt 15: 32-39 & Jn 6: 1-15)</i>	Listening Nourishment Generosity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • disciples
Canaanite Woman's Daughter Healed (Matt 15: 21-28)	Healing Faith Courage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tyre • Canaanite • Son of David • Devil • Disciples
Jesus Cures a Blind Man Mk 8: 22-26 <i>(Matt 9: 27-31)</i>	Healing Empowerment Justice Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bethsaida
Lakeside Cures Matt 15: 29-31	Healing Empowerment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea of Galilee
Jesus Cures a Paralytic Matt 9: 1-8	Courage Healing Trust Forgiveness Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sin
A Dumb Demoniac Cured Matt 9: 32-34	Healing Encounter Touch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demoniac • Pharisees • devil
Eating With Sinners Matt 9: 10-13	Courage Hospitality Table fellowship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tax collector • Pharisees • mercy

Eating With Zacchaeus Luke 19: 1-10	Sin Conversion Hospitality Meal Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tax collector • Jericho
A Hemorrhaging Woman Cured A Daughter Raised to Life <i>(Mk 5: 21-43 & Lk 8: 40-56)</i>	Healing Hope Transformation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blood • twelve • faith
The Transfiguration Mk 9: 2-8 <i>(Mtt 17:1-8 & Lk 9: 28-36)</i>	Identity Presence Awe and Wonder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mountain • Moses • Elijah • cloud
Who is the Greatest? Mk 9: 33-37 <i>(Mtt 18: 1-5 & Lk 9: 46-48)</i>	Leadership Service Humility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capernaum
Request of James and John Mk 10: 35-45 <i>(Mtt 20: 20-28)</i>	Humility Leadership Service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cup • baptism • pagans • servant
Healing of Blind Bartimaeus Mk 10: 46-52 <i>(Mtt 20: 29-34 & Lk 18: 35-43)</i>	Healing Courage Justice Vulnerability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jericho • blindness • Son of David
The Lost Sheep Matt 18: 12-14	Care Nurture Dignity	
The Blind Men of Jericho Matt 20: 29-34	Outreach Healing Breaking Boundaries Perseverance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jericho • Son of David
Jesus Enters Jerusalem Mk 11: 1-11 <i>(Mtt 21: 1-11, Lk19: 28-38 & Jn 12: 12-19)</i>	Leadership Fame Heroism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerusalem • Mount of Olives • Colt

Jesus Cleanses the Temple Mk 11: 15-19 <i>(Mtt 21: 12-17, Lk 19: 45-48 & Jn 2: 13-22)</i>	Justice & Injustice Emotional Expression Corruption Truth Restoration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerusalem • Temple • Money Changers • Chief Priest • Scribes
The Anointing at Bethany Mk 14: 3-9 <i>(Mtt 26: 6-13 & Jn 12: 1-8)</i>	Leadership Love Sacrifice Generosity Anoint	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bethany • leper • alabaster jar • nard • denarii
Widow's Mite Mark 12: 41-44 <i>(Lk 21: 1-4)</i>	Generosity Poverty Complete Offering	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Treasury • widow • disciples
The Passover Mk 14: 12-21 <i>(Mtt 26: 17-25, Lk 22: 7-13 & Jn 13: 21-30)</i>	Community Friendship Celebration Ritual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unleavened bread • Passover • Sacrifice • Son of man
The Lord's Supper Mk 14: 22- 25 <i>(Mtt 26: 26-29 & Lk 22: 14-23)</i>	Generosity Farewell Friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • blood • covenant • Kingdom of God
Jesus Prays at Gethsemane Mk 14: 32-42 <i>(Mtt 26: 36-46 & Lk 22: 39-46)</i>	Fear Vulnerability Encounter with God	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gethsemane • cup • Son of Man
Jesus is arrested, crucified, dies and is buried Mk 15: 21- 47 <i>(Mtt 26: 47 - 27: 44, Lk 22: 47-23:56 & Jn 18: 1 – 19: 42)</i>	Death Letting go Injustice Human Dignity Betrayal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • crucifixion • cross • Golgotha • Temple • Chief priests • Scribes • Elijah • Centurion • Jerusalem
The Empty Tomb Mk 16: 1-8 <i>(Mtt 28: 1-10, Lk 24: 1-12 & Jn 20: 1-10)</i>	New Life Hope Joy Promise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sabbath • spices • Galilee

Jesus Appears to his Followers Mk 16: 9-20 <i>(Matt 28: 9-10 & Jn 20: 19-29)</i>	Affirmation Relationships Friendship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • heaven • Devil
Road To Emmaus Luke 24: 13-35	Anguish Loss Confusion Grief Transformation Awakening Presence and Absence Spiritual Companionship Breaking Bread Hospitality Trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emmaus • Jerusalem • Nazareth • Jesus Christ • Moses • Scripture
Jesus Appears at the Shore Luke 24: 36-43	Presence and Absence Peace Trust Signs of life Courage and Doubt	
Cleansing of the Temple John 2: 13-22	Justice Voice Breaking Boundaries Courage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Temple • Passover • Jerusalem
Thirst Quenched John 4: 1-22	Justice Commitment Courage Thirst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pharisees • Samaritan • Judea and Galilee • Samaria • Jacob's Well
A Cure at the Pool of Bethesda John 5: 1-19	Healing Vulnerability Justice Outreach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jerusalem • sheep Pool • Sabbath • Temple
Jesus' Promise John 7: 37-39	Promise Invitation Belief Thirst Fulfilment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scripture • Holy Spirit
The Good Shepherd John 10: 1- 5	Trust Invitation Hospitality Care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shepherd

Washing of the Feet John 13: 1-13	Service Leadership Generosity Friendship Cleansing Doubt & Trust Welcome	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passover • Devil
Jesus Appears to Mary of Magdala John 20: 11-18	Sorrow Grief Awakening Mistaken Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rabbouni
Jesus Appears by the Sea of Tiberius John 21: 1-17	Awakening Abundance Intimacy Trust Identity Hospitality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sea of Tiberias • fishing • bread

See John McKinnon's scripture website for further detail regarding text reflections and contextual information:

<http://johnmckinnon.org/index.php/matthew-gospel>

See NCEC (National Catholic Education Commission) website for further support with scripture

<https://scripture.catholic.edu.au>

'The revised "Source of Life" RE Curriculum highlights again the importance of Scripture in RE learning and teaching in our schools. This guide to the use of Scripture passages in the curriculum is comprehensive, offers clear steps and suggestions, and relates the biblical stories and passages well to preparation for learning and teaching.

Teachers using the guide in RE planning will have meaning and context clearly explained, so giving them confidence to teach the Bible. I commend this guide to our school communities: teachers will get to know the scriptures and teach them well. '



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See glossary below:

GLOSSARY

Angel:

Angels are important figures in Scripture. They refer to spiritual beings sent as messengers by God to humanity. In Greek, *angelos* means messenger. In scripture they speak for God as they go about protecting and serving humanity.

Baptism:

This is an important religious ritual of initiation where individuals are welcomed into community by being submerged into water or having water poured over them. This symbolizes new life arising from death. Baptism was a common practice in the ancient world of Jesus' time. Today, it is one of the seven sacraments.

Bethany:

The original meaning of Bethany is *house of figs*. It was a village on the south east slope of the Mount of Olives which featured as home to Mary, Martha and Lazarus in the Gospels. It is also the geographic locations of several significant encounters Jesus had with those in need (Simon the Leper, Lazarus and the disciples).

Bethlehem:

This is a city five miles south of Jerusalem. In Hebrew it means *house of bread*. It was the birth place of King David and the birthplace of Jesus (Mt 2:1).

Bethsaida:

This is a Galilean town west of the Sea of Tiberias at the mouth of the Jordon River. In the Gospels it is stated that it was the home to several apostles, the site where Jesus fed the 5000 and the site where Jesus healed a blind man.

Blindness:

In the ancient world blindness was understood as a condition brought upon an individual as a result of their personal sin or that of his or her relatives. Blind people lived in dire poverty due to their condition.

Blood:

Blood plays a significant role in the Hebrew and Christian scriptures. It equates to life and is that which is shed in the name of sacrifice. Animal sacrifice was a common practice in Judaism that symbolized an individual's desire to offer themselves to God. The resultant blood was used for ritual atonement and the cleansing of sin. In Jewish tradition, women who bled were considered unclean and needed to be separated from society. In the Gospels, blood plays a very significant role in helping us understand Jesus' reality. It is central to the Last Supper story where Jesus turns it into wine. Jesus' crucifixion is also a key demonstration of the outpouring of blood that accompanies death.

Bread:

As one of the most basic but essential sources of food in the ancient world, bread was made from wheat or barley. For the Israelites, hard bread was taken on long journeys. Unleavened bread is famously connected to the story about the Jews escaping from slavery into freedom. Throughout the Jewish scriptures and the Gospels bread takes on very significant meaning related to life, sustenance and God's presence in the world. Bread finds its highpoint in the stories of The Last Supper where Jesus breaks bread and offers wine to his disciples before his death. Over the following centuries this forms the foundations for Eucharist as we know it today.

Caesar Augustus:

Caesar was the name given to Roman emperors. All Jews paid taxes to Caesar. Numerous Caesars ruled during the writing of the Christian scriptures including Caesar Augustus.

Canaanite:

Canaanites live in a region called Canaan. This is the home God promised to Abraham. Today, it is known as Israel. They were called idolaters because they worshipped other Gods (Baal and Asherah). They were not well accepted by Jewish authorities.

Capernaum:

This is a town on the western shore of the Sea of Galilee. It is a well known location on the highway from Damascus to Tyre.

Centurion:

A centurion is an officer in the Roman army who commanded 100 soldiers. In Latin *centuria* means a division of 100.

Chief Priest:

In Judaism, the chief priests were a specific group of temple priests, administrators of the temple's liturgy, buildings, and finances. The Greek plural for chief priests occurs 62 times in the New Testament and often in Josephus (an historian).

Cloud:

In the Jewish and Christian scriptures clouds became important symbols of God's presence. Episodes involving cloud symbolism include Yahweh leading the Israelites to the promised land, Moses at Mount Sinai and the Jesus' Transfiguration.

Colt:

In the ancient world colts symbolized simplicity and the common class of society as opposed to a horse that symbolized the upper class and wealth. This was Jesus' mode of transport as he headed towards Jerusalem during the final days of his life.

Compassion:

In Hebrew this term translates as the womb. To be compassionate is to feel very deeply from within like a mother does for her unborn child. In Latin it means to be with those who suffer and feel pain. Jesus teaches us that God is ultimately compassionate in a complete way.

Covenant:

This refers to a binding agreement between two individuals or groups. In the ancient world they were not made in writing like today. Covenants were sealed with a significant ceremony which bound the promise made. God made a covenant with the Israelites as they were the chosen ones. Jesus Christ is known as the new covenant.

Cross:

The cross is a very significant symbol of the Christian faith. There are many variations of the cross that reflect various cultures and historical periods. The historical Jesus was crucified on a cross. In Latin the term *crux* means cross. Today, we make the sign of the cross to demonstrate our faith and commitment to Christ.

Crucifixion:

This was a common form of punishment in the Roman Empire. Invented by the Persians, it became a form of execution for individuals guilty of serious crimes. All criminals were stripped then roped or nailed to a wooden cross and left to die from exposure, hunger, thirst and suffocation. Jesus' crucifixion is detailed in all 4 Gospels.

Cup:

This refers to the sacrifice experienced by Jesus at the Last Supper. It accompanies the offering of bread as a symbol of Jesus' life.

Demoniac:

This refers to a person possessed by an unclean spirit. Physical and psychological illnesses were linked to the possession of demons. People of the ancient world believed that human illness was caused by demons that entered the human body and mind.

Denarii:

This is a Roman silver coin. In Jesus' time it was worth a day's pay for a laborer.

Drachma:

The drachma was the currency used in Greece during several periods in its history. It was an ancient Greek currency unit issued by many Greek city states during a period of ten centuries, from the Archaic period throughout the Classical period, the Hellenistic period up to the Roman period under Greek Imperial Coinage.

Disciple:

A disciple was a person who followed a teacher. In the ancient world most religious teachers and philosophers had disciples. It is also the term for those who followed Jesus during his life. Today, we understand ourselves to be disciples if we are committed Christians.

Decapolis region:

This is known as the ten cities, a Greek area on the south east side of the Sea of Galilee. The Romans rebuilt this area in 65BCE (Mk 5:20).

Dropsey:

This is a term from the ancient world that refers to the swelling of the soft tissue due to the accumulation of excess water. One with dropsy would have become an outcast in society.

Elijah:

Elijah is a ninth century mystical prophet who was sent by God. In Jewish scripture Elijah was fed by ravens, housed by widows, fed the drought ravaged and raised individuals to life. He was portrayed as an outstanding prophet in Jewish scriptures and the Gospels.

Faith:

Faith is one of the key building blocks of Christianity. Faith is understood as a grace that opens life to unimaginable possibilities. Faith is a key element found in the Israelites' covenant relationship with God and in the many individuals healed by Christ. In the Gospels, faith is usually a prerequisite for healing and transformation.

Fishing:

Fish were a very important source of food in Palestine during Jesus' life. As an industry, fishing was central to the local economy of this region. Fish hold significance in the Gospels as they symbolize miracles and important meals Jesus had, in particular after his resurrection. Jesus' disciples are depicted as ordinary fishermen in the Gospels.

Galilee:

This is a small region in northern Palestine, west and north of the Sea of Galilee. As this place was far from Jerusalem the inhabitants became marginalized peasants without resident authority. In Jesus' time it was the headquarters of Herod Antipas and controlled by the Romans who found the Galileans to be rather difficult as they proclaimed vigilant loyalty to Judaism.

Gethsemane:

This is the olive grove just outside the walls of Jerusalem where Jesus prayed after the Last Supper. It is also the place of his arrest, according to the Gospels.

Gold, Frankincense and Myrrh:

These gifts presented to Jesus at his birth symbolize his importance and status before God. Frankincense is a perfumed resin collected from trees that gives off a magnificent perfume when burnt. In the ancient

world it was often burnt as a sacrifice to God. Myrrh is a natural resin extracted from trees. In the ancient world it was also used for medicinal purposes. Like today, gold was a precious metal and very prized in the ancient world.

Golgotha:

This is a Hebrew word meaning *place of the skull*. It was an execution site outside the walls of Jerusalem where the Roman crucified insurgents and criminals. This was the site of Jesus' crucifixion.

Heaven:

This is a state of complete fulfilment and a state of being at one with God. It is understood as the place where our spirit arrives after death.

Holy Spirit:

In Christianity, this refers to the third person of the Holy Trinity (Father, Son and Holy Spirit). The Spirit takes centre stage in the Hebrew scriptures and the New Testament. In Hebrew the term *ruah* (Spirit) refers to the wind or breath and is used to describe God. The Spirit is a dynamic force that moves through creation and brings life to all. This same Spirit is central to the historical Jesus and his mission, from the time of his baptism up until his death. Today, we believe that the Holy Spirit is present in our lives and guides us towards truth, justice and love.

Jacob's Well:

Jacob's Well is a deep well constructed from rock that has been associated in religious tradition with Jacob for roughly two millennia. It is situated a short distance from the archaeological site of Tell Balata, which is thought to be the site of biblical Shechem.

Jesus Christ:

Jesus Christ is the central figure of Christianity. In Greek, *Christos* means anointed one. This is a translation from the Hebrew term, *Messiah*, a title given to the kings of Israel who were anointed with olive oil as a sign of being chosen by God. Jesus Christ is presented in the New Testament as the one who breaks open the Kingdom of God in the here and now. He is understood as the ultimate fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. Most importantly, his humanity and divinity are key expressions of his identity that emerges out of his relationship with a loving, forgiving God.

Jericho:

This is one of the oldest cities in the ancient world. It is located six miles north of the Dead Sea and five miles west of the Jordan River.

Jerusalem:

This was an important city in the ancient world, from about 8000 BCE. Built in the hills of Judea, it was captured by King David and became the capital of the Jewish Kingdom. The Romans destroyed Jerusalem and the Temple in 70 CE. It is to Jerusalem where Jesus heads for his life's end.

Jordan River:

The Jordan River, also known as Nahr Al Sharieat, is a 251-kilometre-long river in the Middle East that flows roughly north to south through the Sea of Galilee and on to the Dead Sea. Jordan and the Golan Heights border the river to the east, while the West Bank and Israel lie to its west.

Judea:

In Hebrew Judea means *praise the Lord*. It finds its roots in the tribe of Judah, one of Israel's most powerful tribes. Judah and its capital Jerusalem became the administration headquarters for Judaism.

Kingdom of God:

This is not an actual place but a state of being and an attitude for life that reflects one being in harmony with God. It is where God is truly present. Jesus' whole vision and ministry centered on bringing about the Kingdom of God. Jesus used parables in particular to teach others about this Kingdom. Jesus proclaimed this Kingdom as breaking open in and through human life in the world and something to experience in the future.

King Herod:

As King of Judea from 37-4 BCE Herod brought about prosperity, social stability and a major building campaign. He constructed many cities and had the Temple rebuilt. In scripture he is remembered as a cruel tyrant. He died as a result of worms eating away his interior.

Law:

The Law of Moses, also called the Mosaic Law, primarily refers to the Torah or the first five books of the Hebrew Bible. Traditionally believed to have been written by Moses, most academics now believe these books had many authors.

Leper:

A leper is a person who has contracted leprosy. It covers a wide spectrum of skin disorders. A person with leprosy was covered in sores and ulcers with their hair turning white. Leprosy was contagious and without a cure in the ancient world. Lepers were forced to live in isolation due to their condition. In the ancient world it was understood as to result from sin.

Levite:

A Levite is a Jewish male descended from the Tribe of Levi. The Tribe of Levi descended from Levi, the third son of Jacob and Leah.

Light:

Essentially, light is a symbol of God's presence. Jesus is portrayed in scripture as 'light' and his disciples are called to be the light of the world. The dramatic play between darkness and light is a constant theme that threads its way through the Jewish scriptures and the New testament.

Mercy:

Mercy is a key element of Jesus' mission. It is synonymous with compassion. It features throughout scripture. In the Gospels unwell individuals would often reach out to Jesus seeking mercy and healing.

Money Changers:

These individuals had offices at the city gates or within the Temple complex. They acted as bankers and were an essential part of Jewish life in Jesus' time. Their main role was to exchange Roman currency for Jewish currency. Only Jewish currency could be used to buy sacrificial objects at the Temple. Jesus clashed with these individuals because they began to charge excessive fees for their work.

Moses:

Moses is a key figure in Judaism as a liberator, teacher and law giver to Israel. He takes centre stage in the Exodus story with his life beginning floating down the Nile River in a woven basket. His main claim to fame is his delivery of the Israelites out of slavery and into freedom. God is central to Moses' experience and story as outlined in Scripture.

Mount of Olives:

The Mount of Olives is a mountain ridge east of and adjacent to Jerusalem's Old City. It is named for the olive groves that once covered its slopes. The southern part of the Mount was the Silwan necropolis, attributed to the ancient Judean kingdom.

Mountain:

Mountains hold a special place in scripture as they symbolize a place where one can come into union with God.

Mustard seed:

Mustard seeds are the small round seeds of various mustard plants. The seeds are usually about 1 to 2 millimeters in diameter and may be colored from yellowish white to black. Jesus used the mustard seed on several occasions to assist in his teaching regarding the Kingdom of God because greatness emerged from something so small.

Nard:

This was an incredibly expensive perfume in the ancient world. Women like the one who anoints Jesus would most likely, not have had access to this excessive item or the alabaster jar it came in.

Nazareth:

This is a small farming village in the hills of modern day Lebanon. It is understood that Jesus' home was in Nazareth and he was named a Nazarene. In the Gospels, Jesus often returned to Nazareth. People from this village were distrusted by the Roman and Jewish authorities.

Oil:

In Judaism oil held special relevance in ritual and custom. It signified kingship, anointing and blessing. It also became an important ingredient for healing and balms. In the Judaic world oil would have come from olive trees.

Pagan

This is an individual who was not a Christian in the time of the early Church. They believed in several deities at once.

Parable:

A parable is a story used to illustrate a teaching. The majority of Jesus' teachings took place through parables. Jesus used ordinary symbols such as pearls, mustard seeds and yeast to explain the nature of the Kingdom of God to his followers. By the very nature of parables, there is no one way of understanding their meaning.

Passover:

In Judaism Passover was the chief celebratory festival. Every year, this ritual marks the delivery of the Israelites from slavery (Ex 12: 21-28). During this ritual lamb, bitter herbs, flat bread and wine are consumed as the story is being recalled. At the Last Supper a very significant link is made between this event and Jesus' life.

Pharisees:

The Pharisees were a social movement and a school of thought in the Levant during the time of Second Temple Judaism. After the destruction of the Second Temple in 70 CE, Pharisaic beliefs became the foundational, liturgical and ritualistic basis for Rabbinic Judaism. In the Gospels Jesus is presented as clashing with this group on several occasions.

Pigs:

In Judaism and Jewish Law pigs were reviled. It is stated in the Law that pigs were unclean and therefore, could not be consumed in any form or kept as animals.

Priest:

A Priest was an important role in Judaism. A significant part of this role was to know the Torah and to offer sacrifice to God on behalf of the religious community.

Rabbouni:

This is the term used for an honored teacher in the Judean tradition. It translates as master, teacher or most great one.

Sabbath:

In Hebrew the term *shabbat* means to stop. The seventh day of the week is a holy day of rest and prayer for Jewish people. Sabbath is observed from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday.

Sacrifice:

Sacrifice refers to the offering of something to a divine being to receive favor or forgiveness. In Judaism, crops and animals were offered as sacrifice. This brought Jewish people closer to God. Christ's death on the cross is understood as the ultimate sacrifice that builds on that experienced in Judaism. This sacrifice was underpinned by his love and self-emptying for the sake of God's Kingdom.

Sadducees:

The Sadducees were a sect or group of Jews who were active in Judea during the Second Temple period, starting from the second century BCE through the destruction of the Temple in 70 CE. The Sadducees are often compared to other contemporaneous sects, including the Pharisees and the Essenes.

Salt:

In the ancient world salt was a prized possession as it was essential to preserve food and bring about life. It was more expensive than gold and it was used to pay Roman soldiers their wages. In the Gospels salt is used in a significant way to assist Jesus in his teaching about God's Kingdom. He describes humanity as the salt of the earth.

Samaritan:

Samaritans were despised by Jews. This ethnic hatred emerged as a result of a deep rift regarding an historical site for worship. In the Gospels Jesus is found in the company of Samaritans and criticized for it. This would have been unheard of in the world in which he lived.

Satan/Devil:

In Hebrew this term means the opposition. In the Hebrew scriptures Satan is a mythical character whose power tests human beings. Satan appears in various New Testament texts as the one in opposition to Jesus and his mission. Satan symbolized evil and all that makes up the bad spirit in the world as he tries to breakdown God's loving presence in people.

Scribes:

Scribes were the official writers of documents in the ancient world who had the rare skill of being able to read and write. Jewish scribes were highly educated individuals who also interpreted the Law. They were viewed as leaders in their community. In the Gospels they are portrayed in hostile contact with Jesus. Many scribes were also Pharisees. Their role within Judaism went without pay.

Scripture:

The Bible is made up of various books that reflect various genres. The term Bible means books. These books are also referred to as scripture. The Jewish scriptures contain the story of the Israelites' journey, history and their relationship with God. The New Testament that is made up of the Gospels and Pauline literature refers to Jesus Christ as the fulfilment of Old Testament prophecy. Although these were all written by human beings, it is understood that they were all inspired by the Spirit of God. Overall, scripture can be described as history, wisdom, spiritual insight and theology. Essentially, they contain stories of faith that can inspire us today and assist us in making life giving decisions for our life.

Sea of Galilee:

The Sea of Galilee, is a freshwater lake in Israel. It is the lowest freshwater lake on earth and the second-lowest lake in the world, at levels between 215 metres and 209 metres below sea level. It is approximately 53 km in circumference, about 21 km long, and 13 km wide. This was a significant geographical location for the historical Jesus.

Servant:

In the ancient world servants were a common class in society. They were not slaves. Servants performed functions for households. Reference to them is made in the Jewish scriptures, the Gospels and the Pauline literature.

Shepherds:

In the ancient world shepherds took care of sheep. They made up one of the lowest social class during Jesus' time. In Luke's Gospel they are the ones who first encounter the new born Jesus. This is very significant for Luke's theology that focuses on the poor and the marginalized as heroes of God's Kingdom. In the Gospels Jesus is portrayed as the Good Shepherd. This understanding builds on the place of the shepherd in Israelite theology.

Sin:

Sin means to miss the mark and fall short of God's will for human life and all of creation. In the Gospels, Jesus refers to sin as action and attitude. Sin causes the break down of relationships and social dysfunction. Jesus promotes God's forgiving nature as central to the Kingdom of God.

Son of David:

Seventeen verses in the New Testament describe Jesus as the "son of David." Christ was the fulfillment of the prophecy of the seed of David. Jesus is the promised Messiah, which means he had to be of the lineage of David. Matt 1 gives the genealogical heritage that Jesus, in his humanity, was a direct descendant of Abraham and David through Joseph.

Son of God:

In the Hebrew scriptures the kings of Israel were called sons of God because they were specially chosen to lead the Israelites. In the early church Jesus Christ was understood as the Son of God because of his unique relationship with God. Amongst other titles used to describe Jesus Christ in the Gospels, Son of God is probably the most important because it identifies his divinity (alongside his humanity) and unique relationship with God.

Son of man:

This title first appears in the book of Daniel in the Jewish scriptures. It describes a figure who symbolizes the true people of God who will be given everlasting power. In the Gospels Jesus is called the Son of man amongst several other titles as he was given special honour and power.

Spices:

As the ancient world did not have the good fortune of high levels of hygiene, spices became an important element of daily living. Spices like Cumin, Mint, Balm and Dill could be purchased in Israel whereas more exotic spices could be obtained through the caravan trading routes of the time. In death, spices held a very important role in the preparation of corpses for burial.

Stars:

In the ancient world, stars became important for navigation. In Matthew the wise men follow a significant star to find Jesus.

Synagogue:

In Greek *synagein* means to gather together. It is a Jewish place of assembly, prayer and study. Synagogues came into existence in places that could not access the Temple. If Jews lived in Jerusalem they would have gathered for prayer at the Temple.

Tax Collector:

In the ancient world tax collectors were despised because they were often corrupt in their behaviours and took advantage of the poor and marginalised. They were usually positioned at a toll booth and were responsible for collecting tolls, tariffs and customs duties. In the Gospels tax collectors are equated with sinners. Jesus reached out to tax collectors in his desire to break down barriers and bring about inclusion and love.

Temple:

A temple is a building where individuals worship God. In Judaism the Temple of Solomon held pride of place. It became a sign of God's presence for the chosen people

(Ps 83 & 121). The most sacred part of the Temple was divided in two by a veil. It was called the Holy of Holies. This temple was destroyed by the Babylonians in 587 BCE. In the 6th century BCE a second temple was constructed. The Romans destroyed it in 70 CE. In the Gospels Jesus is referred to as the New Temple. This reflects his unique relationship with God.

Treasury:

The Treasury was an important storehouse for the Israelites' money.

Twelve:

The number 12 is very significant in scripture. Any reference to this number in the Gospels (disciples & hemorrhaging woman) provides a direct link to the twelve tribes of Israel in the Jewish scriptures. This link provides a continuity between Jesus Christ and Judaism.

Tyre:

This was a Phoenician city south of Sidon. It had an ancient reputation for commerce. Its merchants had legendary skills on the sea and built trade centres throughout the Mediterranean.

Unclean spirit:

This is a term used specifically in the Gospels. It describes a malevolent being that serves the devil and is dedicated to destroying humanity, goodness and truth. These spirits were portrayed as taking over someone's mind and body with overpowering force. In the Gospels Jesus had several interactions with unclean spirits that were always in a battle of power with him. Ironically, they are also characters that recognize Jesus' true identity when others could not.

Unleavened bread:

These are breads or cakes baked without yeast. They hold a particular place of importance for Jewish people in the context of worship. It is a reminder of a significant time in Judaic history when the Jews did not have time to let the bread rise before fleeing to freedom.

Widow:

In Judaism widows and orphans were amongst the poorest individuals in society. In the Jewish Scriptures there are several references to the protection of widows who could have been taken advantage of by the powerful and rich. When a widow's husband died none of his property or wealth was passed down to her. This is what caused their dire poverty.

Wise men:

Another term for the wise men is the Magi. The Magi were wise men, seers and diviners of wisdom from Persia, Babylon, Syria and Arabia. Their only mention is in Matthew's infancy narrative. They are portrayed as men following a particular star to reach the new born Jesus. It does not say how many wise men were present, just that there were three gifts.

'Prayer should accompany the reading of Sacred Scripture, so that God and humanity may talk together; For we speak to God when we pray; we hear God when we read the divine sayings' (25).

Dei Verbum (1965)

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