An Introduction to the Gospel of Luke
Unit AS 1

Specification Section

- Understanding the Gospel of Luke 2
- Key Narratives in Luke's Gospel 8
- The Kingdom of God in the parables and miracles in Luke's Gospel 12
- Key Themes in Luke's Gospel 18
- Other Aspects of Human Experience 23
- Glossary 34
Understanding the Gospel of Luke

Learning Objective – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate the background to the Gospel, including an overview of the religious and political situation in Palestine at the time of Jesus with reference to the beliefs and practices of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

This section requires students to explore:
1. The political background in Palestine at the time of Jesus.
2. The religious background in Palestine at the time of Jesus.
3. The beliefs and practices of the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

The political background at the time of Jesus was heavily influenced by the fact that Palestine was occupied by the Roman Empire. The key political players were Herod the Great, his sons and the Roman Empire represented in the Passion Narrative by Pontius Pilate. Palestine was important geographically and had been occupied by one major power after another for many centuries. At each time the Jews were exiled and began to hope for a Messiah who would come and save them from their enemies. At the time of Jesus the Romans were in control. Most Jews did not like the Roman occupation and groups, such as the Zealots, had led armed uprisings against the Roman occupation for many years. It is thought that at least two of the twelve apostles may have been Zealots. However, the peace of Rome had some advantages. The Jews were allowed a degree of religious and political autonomy; for example the Sanhedrin controlled religious and political matters relating to Judaism and was a judicial court for such. As long as the Romans received the taxes due to them they were relatively tolerant. Herod the Great was the King at the time of Jesus' birth. He acquired the position as his father Antipater had advantageously allied himself to Julius Caesar and, as a reward for the family's loyalty; they had risen to positions of power within the Empire. It also helped that Herod was
considered Jewish and the Romans believed that this would help to integrate the Jewish population into the Roman Empire. Though most historians consider his reign to have been successful, he had a reputation for being cruel and unbalanced even towards his own family. Putting to death his favourite wife Mariamne and three of his sons, who he believed threatened his leadership. When he died, Palestine was divided between three of his sons, Herod Antipas, Philip and Archelaus. Archelaus proved to be such a bad leader that he was deposed and the Romans put a Governor in place. Pilate was the third of these Governors and is most famous in the New Testament for the part he played in the death of Jesus. History paints a picture of Pilate often at odds with the New Testament portrayal of him.

The religious background surrounds the Temple in Jerusalem and the Sanhedrin. The Temple was central to the Jewish faith. Prayers said there were believed to be the most efficacious. It was central to Jewish belief and practice and it was in the Temple that the presence of God was to be found. The Sanhedrin was made up of seventy members drawn from the parties of the Pharisees and the Sadducees. The number seventy was symbolic of the seventy men Moses had chosen to lead the Israelites. The high Priest was the leader of the Sanhedrin and at the time of Jesus’ death it was Caiaphas, but his father in law Annas was still very influential. The Sanhedrin was the highest court of Jewish law both religious and political, but the Romans limited the power of the Sanhedrin somewhat; for example they could pronounce the death sentence but they couldn’t carry it out. The main groups that made up the Sanhedrin were the Pharisees who were the largest party of Judaism and were popular with the common people. The Sadducees were the priestly and aristocratic party of Judaism and they held control in the Temple. They were happy to collaborate with the Romans as they could maintain positions of power. Another religious group which existed in first century Palestine were the Essenes who were a communal group who followed quite an austere way of life. They could almost be compared to later monastic living. They were located at Qumran and it has been speculated by some scholars that John the Baptist may have been one of their number.

The Pharisees and the Sadducees were the main parties of Judaism and they had varied beliefs and practices. The Pharisees believed in life after death, angels and resurrection. They loved the Law and accepted the rules written down in the Mishna and Talmud. They were power brokers between the Romans and the Jewish populace. The Pharisees came into conflict with Jesus over their hypocrisy and their adherence to the letter of the law and in particular Sabbath observances. The Sadducees only accepted the first five books of the Old Testament and not the oral law. They did not believe in resurrection or the afterlife or the existence of angels and demons. They were religiously conservative and were often more concerned with politics than religion. They collaborated with the Romans in order to maintain their status and were connected to the Temple. They ceased to exist after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D. They were not really interested in Jesus until it became clear that he may rock the boat with the Romans and threaten their status. Most modern Jews are descended from Pharisaic Judaism.

The following links may also help your research:

https://bible.org/series/religious-world-jesus
www.bethinking.org/is-the-bible-reliable/pontius-pilate-have-the-gospels-got-it-right
www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/history/herod.shtml
Activity

After researching the beliefs and practices of the Pharisees and the Sadducees complete the following Worksheet.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Pharisees</th>
<th>Sadducees</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Background/Origins</td>
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<td>Key Beliefs</td>
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<td>Practices/Rituals</td>
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<td>Reasons for conflict with Jesus</td>
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Learning Objective – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate the making of Luke’s Gospel including:
- How and why the Gospel of Luke was written: Luke/Acts as a two volume Christian Apology;
- The authorship, date, purposes and characteristics of Luke’s Gospel; and

In this section students will look at the background and construction of Luke’s Gospel.

Luke is recognized as the author of the third Gospel and Acts of the Apostles. Luke’s Gospel was written using several sources, these are stated in the four source hypothesis proposed by Streeter. Luke is generally accepted to have used Mark’s Gospel “Q”, an unknown written or oral source also shared by Matthew and “L”, his own unique material. Scholars have also proposed that Luke used the “I” and “R” sources to provide information for his Infancy and the Resurrection narratives.

All the Gospels were eventually written down after the oral period for many reasons such as:
- The apostles were dying and therefore authentic witness could no longer be called upon to verify the Gospel message.
- There was the need for a guidebook as numbers converting to Christianity were rising.
- Missionary work and the spread of Christianity also meant that written accounts were valuable to leave behind.
- Luke also had specific purposes in mind when writing his own Gospel such as to address the needs of his Gentile audience.

Luke and his second volume Acts are often recognized as a Christian apology to show that Christianity was no threat to the Roman Empire. Luke wanted Christianity to be given the same standing and exemptions as Judaism and he did this through his two volume work. Luke, for example, is at pains to point out the innocence of Jesus and indeed minimize Pilate’s and therefore Rome’s place in the death of Jesus.

Luke’s authorship can be discovered through a variety of external sources such as the Anti-Marcionite Prologue, the Muratorian canon and the testimonies of various Church Fathers. Internal sources such as the “We” passages in Acts also shed light on why Luke, the physician and companion of Paul, is attributed to writing the third Gospel. The date of Luke’s Gospel can be discovered through examination of the arguments put forward for early, late and intermediate dates of Luke’s Gospel. The intermediate date is generally accepted due to Luke’s presentation of the siege of Jerusalem and his detail in
comparison to Mark’s vague account. This would suggest Luke wrote after 70 A.D. and the upper limit of 90 A.D. is suggested as Luke is used by Clement of Rome. Luke’s purposes for writing too can be examined using both internal and external sources, such as his evangelical and pastoral purposes in writing and his address to Theophilus. Theophilus’ identity also gives valuable insight into Luke’s motives for writing. Theophilus means “Lover of God” so it has been suggested the Gospel was written for all Christians; thus stressing Luke’s universal purpose in writing. Luke has many characteristic themes unique to his Gospel. One of these is Universalism and also in particular his care for the treatment of women and the outcast. Luke’s Gospel has often been called the Gospel of the Holy Spirit. Concern for the poor, Gentiles and Samaritans also feature as Luke’s unique themes. Luke also contains the themes of joy and salvation. All these themes express Luke’s interests and concerns. Many believe that his Gentile and medical background has also influenced his writing.

Luke has often been described as both a theologian and historian. The Scottish Professor I. H. Marshall suggests he is both. There is no doubt that Luke is historically minded in his writing of his Gospel. However, there are issues with addressing Luke as a historian when one looks to the reliability of his census in the infancy narrative or his geography of Palestine. It is also important to remember that Luke was writing religious truth. Luke’s main aim was to write to profess faith in the ministry and resurrection of Jesus as the saviour of all.

**Activity**

Divide the class into groups and ask each group to prepare a PowerPoint presentation on one of the characteristics listed. Students should include some background on the characteristic/theme and also specific examples from the text. The inclusion of scholarly opinion would also be of benefit. This list is not exhaustive and can be adapted.

1. Universalism
2. Women
3. Holy Spirit
4. Joy
5. Prayer
6. Mercy and forgiveness
7. Wealth and poverty
8. Gentiles
9. Samaritans
10. Outcasts
11. Historical and most comprehensive Gospel
The resulting PowerPoints can be put together and distributed to all the class as notes on the characteristics of Luke’s Gospel.

The following links may help to introduce the topic of the Characteristics of Luke’s Gospel.

https://bible.org/article/introduction-gospel-luke

www.youtube.com/watch?v=cgwamy-Pq58

www.youtube.com/watch?v=mHUaqPkAVMg&list=PLmM8cUvBYXhLqOikV-cwjX2ytPs1p54hr&index=3
Key Narratives in Luke’s Gospel

**Learning Objective** – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate, the Infancy Narrative including:
- The importance of the opening two chapters of the Gospel (1:5 – 2:52)
- The annunciation of the births of Jesus and John (1:5-38)
- The birth stories of Jesus and John (1:57 – 2:7)
- The visit of the shepherds (2:2-20) and
- The Presentation in the Temple (2:21-40) and the boy Jesus at the Temple (2:41-52)

In this section candidates could explore the significance of Luke’s Infancy Narrative. Luke opens his Gospel with the annunciation of the birth of John, but stressing that John is the forerunner. He then parallels the annunciation of the birth of Jesus with that of John. There are however, many points in Luke’s annunciation stories that reflect his interests and concerns. For example:

- Male/female pairing is evident. To the credit of the female – Mary is portrayed as the model disciple while Zechariah is punished for his lack of faith.
- Elizabeth and Zechariah evoke the Old Testament figures of Abraham and Sarah.
- Luke shows concern for women and Mary says “yes” to God’s plan. Unlike Matthew’s annunciation where Joseph receives the request on behalf of Mary.
- Luke includes canticles of joy, one of his main themes.
- The theme of the Holy Spirit is evident.
- Mary’s Magnificat reflects Luke’s theme of reversal. The lowly will be raised.

John’s birth is an occasion of joy for Elizabeth and Zechariah and finally God has removed Elizabeth’s disgrace i.e. her barrenness. The naming of John causes consternation among his relatives, but the announcement of his name by Zechariah is the show of faith necessary to return his voice. There is a concentration on the destiny of John and what he would become. The births of John and Jesus continue to reflect some of Luke’s main concerns and none more clearly than the visit of the shepherds to observe the birth of Jesus. Luke has this group, who were considered outcasts by Orthodox Judaism. They were people of the land and unable to keep the Sabbath through the nature of their work and yet they are the first witnesses of the child Jesus. Luke portrays Jesus as the universal Saviour.
Matthew is the only other Gospel writer to have an infancy narrative and their differences further emphasise their own concerns and redaction. Luke continues his infancy narrative with two accounts of the early life of Jesus. His presentation and circumcision in the Temple in accordance with Jewish law and his finding in the Temple after one Passover visit. Both these incidents clearly display the family’s adherence and loyalty to the Jewish Law. The presentation in the Temple is also an occasion for Mary’s purification. It is notable that she makes the offering of the poor. For Luke this further emphasises Jesus’ humble origins. In the finding in the Temple we have the proclamation by Simeon which has its pairing in that of Anna the Prophetess. The infancy narrative ends with the focus still on Mary, which is perhaps not surprising when traditional evidence suggests that Luke got this information from Mary. We are told that “His mother treasured all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in years, and in divine and human favour.”

**Activity**

When studying narratives one important skill is exegesis – this is critical evaluation of a piece of scripture looking in particular at its significance and importance.

Take the annunciation of the births of John and Jesus in Luke 1:5 -38. Using some of the key points mentioned above explore the significance of these two accounts.

Look in particular for any details that are unique to Luke or any details that reflect Luke’s interests.

Research the accounts thoroughly using commentaries and produce notes on the significance of the annunciation accounts.

The following links may help your research.


[www.bethinking.org/jesus/q-was-jesus-born-of-a-virgin](http://www.bethinking.org/jesus/q-was-jesus-born-of-a-virgin)
Learning Objective – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate, the early ministry of Jesus in Luke, including the theological significance of narratives recorded in Luke:

- The baptism and temptation of Jesus (3:21-22, 4:1-13)
- The rejection at Nazareth (4:14-30) and
- Controversy with the religious authorities (5:17-26, 6:1-11)

The Baptism of Jesus marks the beginning of Jesus’ ministry. Jesus was baptised by John in the Jordan to align himself with those who had their sins forgiven by John. Three main signs happened at the Baptism.

1. The heavens opened to symbolise the presence of God.
2. The Holy Spirit came down in the form of a dove and,
3. God spoke from heaven to confirm Jesus as his son.

Jesus then went into the wilderness where he was tempted by the devil. The temptations show the humanity of Jesus as it is perfectly human to be tempted. Jesus faced the tests the devil was putting before him, as he prepared to begin his mission.

The rejection at Nazareth emphasises the point “no prophet is accepted in the prophet’s hometown.” Jesus is rejected by the people who ask “is this Joseph’s son?” In Luke the rejection is so severe that they plan to kill Jesus but clearly think better of it and Jesus walks away.

The healing of the paralysed man clearly causes conflict with the religious authorities as

Jesus forgives sins and behaves as though he were God. The Jews believed only God could forgive sins. The question about the Sabbath and the healing of the man with the withered hand again emphasise Jesus at odds with the strict adherence to religious law. Jesus always viewed the spirit of the law taking precedence over the letter of the law. Jesus saw that human need was more important than religious law particularly when it came to the Sabbath.
Activity

Divide the class into two. Prepare a debate on the following topic:

“Jesus provoked conflict with the Jewish religious authorities through his words and actions.”

Suggestions for exploration:

One side could take the viewpoint that Jesus consciously challenged and provoked the Jewish religious leadership through his controversial actions such as healing on the Sabbath or acting as though he were God when forgiving the sins of the sick. In the rejection at Nazareth Jesus consciously chose the passage as he knew it may be interpreted as a criticism of the Jews.

The other side could refute this claim and argue that Jesus was putting human need ahead of religious law. Jesus’ actions were part of God’s plan to challenge the attitudes of the religious authorities to change their ways before it was too late. The religious authorities were jealous of the contest Jesus posed to their popularity and position.

The following links may help with this section of the course:

www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/holydays/sabbath.shtml

The Kingdom of God in the parables and miracles in Luke’s Gospel

Learning Objective – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate parables including:
- The meaning, purpose, characteristics and theological interpretation of parables in Luke;
- Parables of mercy: the Good Samaritan (10:25-37), the Forgiving Father (15:11-32), the Rich Man and Lazarus (16:19-31) and
- Parables of the Kingdom: the Sower (8:4-15); the Great Banquet (14:12-24).

Parables were well established in Jewish culture and so was a teaching method Jesus was familiar with. Jesus used parables to make abstract ideas clearer, in particular, the nature of the Kingdom of God and the qualities needed to enter it. Many scholars have tried to reach a definitive list as to the types of parables in the New Testament but there is no singular agreement. Parables can be classed as allegories, similitudes, proverbs or exemplar in nature. However, one of the main purposes of parables was to provoke and challenge the hearer into action. Working out the message of the parable was part of the experience.

Parable is derived from the Greek “parobole” which means to put side by side or comparison. Parables existed in the ancient world in formats such as Aesop's fables. There are surprisingly few parables in the Old Testament but some, such as the poor man's lamb (2 Samuel 12:1-4) directed towards King David, are vivid and meaningful. In this case, the Prophet Nathan used the parable to drive home a moral teaching about David’s sin. In the New Testament they are an integral part of Jesus' ministry. The early Church tended to allegorise parables but with the advent of biblical criticism came a new consciousness that parables may simply have one moral message. For many of the parables that is the Kingdom but also mercy, discipleship and crisis; for example. C.H. Dodd put forward the view that to truly understand any parable one must seek to understand their Sitz im Leben that is the context in which they were told in first century Palestine.

The parables of mercy present the nature of God as loving and compassionate. In the Forgiving Father we see the empathetic and merciful nature of God, ready and waiting for the return of the sinner. The Rich Man and Lazarus likewise tell of the need to be mindful and sympathetic towards the poor.

When looking at the parables it is important to reflect on their significance and teaching. Like the first followers of Jesus, it is necessary to seek out the deeper meaning when studying the parables. For example, in the parable of the Good Samaritan the following points could be explored further:
- St. Augustine’s allegorisation of the parable about man’s descent into sin through the Fall. The following article may help with your study.
  https://bible.org/article/interpretation-parables-exploring-%E2%80%9Cimaginary-gardens-real-toads%E2%80%9D
- The nature of discipleship portrayed in the parable e.g. respecting and showing mercy towards fellow human beings regardless of race, religion or ethnicity.
The lawyers question – was it genuine? If not what was his motivation?

The Jewish interpretation of love of neighbour – was viewed in a nationalistic way?

The theme of reversal in Luke – the hero of the parable is a Samaritan. The Jews would have considered Samaritans outcast – why?

The status of the Priest and the Levite – why did they avoid the injured man? – Ritual cleanliness, the possibility that the man was a decoy – were their reasons selfish?

The merciful treatment of the man by the Samaritan.

Type of parable? – The message of the parable “Go and do likewise” and the significance of this.

How is mercy shown in the parable?

The message of this parable in modern society e.g.

www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-12043294
www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-12122809

The parables of the Sower and the Great Banquet also teach about the nature of the Kingdom of God. The Kingdom of God is present as Jesus inaugurated it when he came to earth but it is also something in the future which will involve judgement. It is the reign of God and not an earthly establishment. The parable of the Sower is an allegory which outlines the various responses to the word of God. Some ignore God’s message. Some chose to respond actively but their faith is not deep enough or they are too troubled by worldly possessions to stay fast to their faith. Some act on God’s word and it develops into productive actions. The Great Banquet displays a message close to Luke’s heart and that is the universalistic nature of God’s Kingdom.
Activity:

Using the Specimen Assessment Materials provided by CCEA, prepare an essay plan to answer Question 2a.


Before you start your plan it is a good idea to look at the performance descriptors provided with the Mark Scheme. Focus in particular on what is needed to achieve a Band 5 answer e.g. comprehensive understanding, very high degree of relevant evidence and examples, clear and coherent structure. Keep this in mind as you prepare your Essay Plan.

Look at the Mark Scheme provided. The Mark Scheme suggests what answers may include but it is not exhaustive, so do not take the Mark Scheme answer as a plan of what needs to go in but use it as a starting point to formulate your own answer based on your own research, knowledge and understanding.

- Remember an introduction sets up your essay so try and include a biblical or scholarly quote.
- In the main body of the essay make sure you address the question. This is one of the commonest mistakes addressed in the Chief Examiners Report.
- Your conclusion should recap on the content of your essay.

You may then want to submit the essay plan to your teacher for correction before writing up the essay.

Learning Objective – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate miracles including:
- The meaning, purpose, theology and credibility of miracles in Luke;
- Healing miracles: The Centurions Servant (7:1-10), the Ten Lepers (17:11-19);
- Raising to life: The Widow’s Son (7:11-17)
- Nature miracles: Calming of the Storm (8:22-25); and
- Feeding of the Five Thousand (9:10-17).
Miracles are defined as extraordinary events that defy the laws of nature. Their purpose is often seen to be:

1. To explain the identity of Jesus and point to his divine nature.
2. To show Jesus’ compassion and his merciful nature towards humanity.
3. To demonstrate that Jesus fulfilled Old Testament prophecies. Many miracles e.g. the nature miracles are inextricably connected to the Old Testament and show Jesus acting as though he were God, having control over the natural world.
4. Signs of the Kingdom of God and in particular the nature of the Kingdom.
5. To display the importance of faith.

Like parables, some of miracles cannot be categorised, but most scholars recognise healing, exorcism, raising from the dead and nature miracles to form the basis of all miracle types in the New Testament.

Healing miracles such as the Centurions Servant and the Healing of the Ten Lepers show Luke’s universal purpose. Both these miracles see outcasts being praised for their faith. The Centurion is an exemplary character who cares for his servant in an era where servants were not held in high regard. An ancient farming manual from around this time suggested inspecting farm implements twice a year and throwing out anything that was not working, slaves were included on the list! The Centurion also showed great respect for Jesus and understood the cultural differences prevalent at the time and was careful not to offend Jesus. However, the greatest quality of the Centurion was his faith that Jesus had the power to heal just by a command. The Ten Lepers also displays the need for faith and gratitude for healing. It is also a favourite twist in Luke’s Gospel to show the foreigner, the outcast to be the one on whom behaviour is modelled upon. In both these miracles this is the case. The theology of such miracles is to display Jesus as the universal saviour and to express the universal nature of God’s Kingdom.

The Raising of the Widows Son is the only miracle in Luke where we hear that Jesus healed out of pity, “When the Lord saw her, he had compassion for her...” This raising from the dead miracle is theologically significant as it shows Jesus’ power over evil and death and displays foresight of his own resurrection.

The nature miracles of the Calming of the Storm and the Feeding of the Five Thousand are heavy with Old Testament imagery. They show Jesus controlling nature and providing spiritual and physical nourishment for the masses. The Feeding of the Five Thousand is the only miracle that occurs in all four Gospels. It has also faced much critique on its credibility. Some scholars interpret the miracle in a literal sense saying Jesus fed exactly that number in the way it is described. Others see the miracle in a more liberal sense and say that Jesus and the Disciples shared what little food they had with the crowd and seeing this generosity the crowd followed their example and shared what they had. The real miracle was the sense of community and sharing that occurred. Jesus never performed miracles to bring about faith or for his own promotion. In John’s
Gospel miracles are called signs and this is what they were. Signs that God's Kingdom had arrived and that Jesus was fulfilling Old Testament prophecy such as Isaiah 35: 5 “Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened and the ears of the deaf unstopped.”

When looking at the question did Jesus perform miracles? Evidence certainly favours the positive. Even Jewish literature such as the Babylonian Talmud and Josephus’ Antiquities of the Jews do not question Jesus’ ability to perform miracles. The credibility of miracles in modern society is an altogether different question. Many people today, even people of faith question the miraculous.

**Activity:**

Performance Descriptors for AO2 answers highlight the importance of critical analysis, balanced and well informed argument, personal insight and independent thought.

The following table may help to clarify your ideas. One example has been done for you:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Arguments for the existence of miracles</th>
<th>Arguments against the existence of miracles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Babylonian Talmud stated that Jesus performed miracles. If a Jewish document confirmed Jesus performed miracles and not evidence from his supporters then it gives the evidence more weight.</td>
<td>Some scholars would argue that the Feeding of the Five Thousand did not happen. The real miracle was that everyone seeing Jesus and the disciples sharing their food did the same. It was not a physical miracle but simply the act of sharing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The following links may also help with your research:

www.bethinking.org/jesus/jesus-myths-vol1-3-jesus-miracles

www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ail0OS3Icak

www.bethinking.org/jesus/jesus-myths-vol1-2-are-miracles-possible
Key Themes in Luke’s Gospel

Learning Objective – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically evaluate discipleship including:

- The call to discipleship (5:1-11, 27-31, 6:12-16)
- The nature of mission (9:1-6, 10:1-16)
- The demands of discipleship (9:18-27, 57-62, 14:25-33)
- Teachings to disciples (11:1-13, 12:8-12, 22-34) and
- The role of Peter (22:31-34, 22:54-62)

Discipleship is a key theme in Luke’s Gospel. Throughout history the teacher/disciple relationship existed and was well established in Jewish culture. The Pharisees and Rabbi’s had disciples as did John the Baptist. “Disciple” means one who follows, “Apostle” means one who is sent and is more commonly used by the evangelists when speaking of the Twelve. Luke uses the term disciple to apply to the followers of Jesus and in his Gospel the Twelve are chosen from this larger group of followers. Luke teaches comprehensively on the theme of discipleship in his Gospel and Acts.

The call to discipleship is issued in 5:1-11 and 27-31 to Simon, Andrew, James, John and Levi. Their response was immediate. Luke is the only evangelist to include the great catch of fish miracle in the call of the four fishermen. Perhaps Luke was trying to explain a reason for this instantaneous response. They are called to a new vocation and are required to leave behind their old life and begin anew following Jesus. Discipleship involves demands and a new set of values and one cannot look back when one has set out on the path of discipleship. “Anyone who starts to plough and then keeps looking back is of no use to the Kingdom of God.” (9:62). Another unique feature of discipleship in Luke is that Jesus takes the initiative and calls the disciples to him after a night in prayer (another Lucan theme). In Jewish society the pupil teacher relationship was the opposite. A pupil would request to join the master who would take them on and teach them all that they knew, trying to imitate the master rather than formulate any new thinking of their own. Universalism is also seen in Jesus’ choice of disciples 6:12-16, he does not choose the elite in society, the most educated or the wealthiest. They are a mixed bag like the human race and representative of the Kingdom of God.
Jesus then sent the twelve he had chosen out on a mission. They were to join in the ministry of Jesus by driving out demons and healing the sick. The mission was under difficult conditions and they were to rely on the kindness of others and God for their survival. When offered hospitality they were to take it and not abuse the generosity offered to them. Luke also is careful not to exclude the Gentiles in the ministry of Jesus and has the mission of the seventy two. The number was symbolic of the Gentile nations of the world. The conditions were similar but Luke emphasises the inclusiveness of God’s Kingdom. Jesus states “There is a large harvest, but few workers to gather it in.” (10:2) thus emphasising that the kingdom of God requires disciples both Jew and Gentile alike.

The demands of discipleship vary with the individual. For some like James and John it was giving up their livelihood as fishermen, for the rich young ruler it was giving up his entire wealth. Discipleship demands costs but it also has rewards. Various passages speak of the cost of discipleship – the lack of security of a home, leaving behind family, persecution and even death.

Jesus taught the disciples many things. In chapter 11 of Luke’s Gospel Jesus focuses on prayer. Jesus teaches the disciples how to pray the Lord’s Prayer. Prayer is the main way that we communicate with God and Jesus saw the importance of prayer for encouragement and strength throughout his ministry. He encouraged the disciples to pray to God in an intimate way as though he was their father. This was not a way of prayer Jews would have been familiar with. He urged the disciples to forgive others and pray that they do not fall into temptation. He gave the example of the Friend at Midnight as an example of persistence in prayer. Jesus told the disciples that the Holy Spirit would remain with them after he was gone to strengthen them in their trials. The Holy Spirit is another characteristic of Luke’s Gospel and it is this same Holy Spirit that Conzelmann sees at work in the third era of salvation history. He reminded them of their value and the importance of trusting in God to provide. These teachings on the nature of discipleship were to sustain the disciples in the time to come and have sustained disciples in the present age.

Peter was called first and always leads the list of the twelve Apostles. It is often said that Peter was the first among equals which of course, while a paradox, appears to be true. He often took on the role of leader and spokesman for the rest of the group. He is traditionally given the assignation of the first leader of the Church in Rome, a position now given by Roman Catholics to the designation of the Pope. Peter is also held up as a model of
repentance and faith. While he failed Jesus through his denials, Luke has the unique and
touching moment where Jesus gives him a forgiving glance. This appears to fortify Peter
who acknowledges his failure and with renewed vigour goes out to preach the Gospel
message.

The following links may help with this topic area:

www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/history/disciples_1.shtml
www.youtube.com/watch?v=WrNTVrtXPAU
www.biblegateway.com/resources/commentaries/IVP-NT/Luke/Gathering-Disciples

Activity: Peer Assessment

Peer Assessment is a valuable exercise as it can make a student more aware
of their own strengths and weaknesses. Students will get the chance to
find out more about the assessment culture by gaining familiarity with the
assessment descriptors used to assess them. Students can learn from the
successes of others but they can also learn from other’s mistakes.

1. Students should complete Question 3a from the Specimen Assessment Materials.
2. In class students should swap essays and using a copy of the specimen Mark Scheme
   and Assessment Descriptors provided mark the given essay.
3. Students should provide annotation, make a final observation and suggestions for
   improvement, if any at the end of the essay.
4. Students should give a final mark to the essay.
5. The class teacher will then remark the essay and concur or change the final mark and
   comment.

It may be valuable to distribute copies of essays placed in Band 5 to the class for further
discussion.

Learning Objective – demonstrate knowledge and understanding of, and critically
evaluate Salvation History, including:

- An overview of the concept of Salvation History;
- Luke’s portrayal of Salvation History; and
- Contribution and critique of the work of relevant scholars.

Salvation History is the story of God and man and how God has saved man. Salvation
History begins with the story of creation in the book of Genesis. Furthermore the historical
books in the Old Testament follow the history of the relationship between God and
man. Salvation History seeks to understand the redemptive activity of God through his
intervention in human history where God clearly reveals his presence.

In Christian theology, Salvation History recognises events such as the Fall, the covenant
established between God and Noah, Moses and the events of the Exodus as pivotal
moments in the history of mankind. They were also essential happenings and part of
God’s plan for the salvation of all through Jesus’ death on the cross and his triumphant
resurrection.
In Luke's Gospel salvation is part of God's plan. Jesus' actions fulfil scripture and his words and actions reflect God's plan of salvation for all mankind because in Luke salvation is universal. Luke in his Gospel is clear that Jesus offers the Kingdom to Gentiles, the sick, the poor and those on the margins of society. Luke also has a religious view of history which includes visions, angels and miracles. However, Luke presents his story of Jesus and the early Church as part of the flow of salvation history.

Conzelmann is the main proponent of the theory that Luke presents salvation history in three eras:

1. **The Period of Israel.** This is the time from creation to the appearance of John the Baptist.
2. **The Period of Jesus.** This is the time from the beginning of the ministry of Jesus to the ascension.
3. **The Period of the Church.** This is the time of the spread of the word of God and the period of time we are existing in.

He would argue that Luke's structure of Salvation History was an attempt to deal with a crisis in the first century Church. That crisis was the delay of the Parousia. Initially the Church expected an imminent return of Jesus. As time passed there was a realisation that the Parousia had been delayed and this became disillusioning for many in the Church. Luke's solution, according to Conzelmann, was to revise this expectation of an imminent return and exchange it with an on-going Salvation History. For Luke the Holy Spirit was now with the Church as a replacement for the second coming.

Conzelmann's theory has been critiqued on some points such as the Holy Spirit is active in all three eras and therefore the idea of the holy Spirit replacing the Parousia does not fully hold as an argument. Conzelmann rejects the Infancy Narratives as Lucan which some scholars find unacceptable. Conzelmann characterises the era of Jesus as Satan free but for some Scholars this is difficult to accept as there are many demonic possessions evident throughout the ministry of Jesus.
Activity:

After reading the general commentary above, research some of the key points further and make notes on Salvation History, using the following headings:

1. What is Salvation History?
2. Salvation History in the Old Testament
4. How does Luke portray Salvation History:
   a. Universal in nature
   b. Fulfilment of prophecy
   c. God’s plan
   d. Reinterpretation of the Parousia
   e. Ongoing salvation History
5. Conzelmann’s theory of Salvation History
6. Critique of the theory

The following links may help with further study:

www.understandchristianity.com/timelines/timeline-of-salvation-history/

www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/beliefs/whydidjesusdie_1.shtml
Other Aspects of Human Experience

In Section B, part B of the question it is important to note that candidates may if they wish, refer briefly to references from Luke’s gospel, but they must be aware that ‘other aspects of human experience’ refers specifically to content that lies outside the taught unit.

Learning Objective – demonstrate critical evaluation of the problems posed by religious divisions and the opportunities for religious and ethical enrichment.

Throughout history religious divisions have posed problems and contributed to conflicts throughout the world. Religion is important to people, it is part of how they live and for that reason people can be passionate about defending their faith. While religious divisions can have negative consequences, they can also help unite communities and provide opportunities for enrichment of relationships.

Religious division has occurred between different religions throughout history such as the Crusades between the Christian Church and Islam. It constituted what was called a Holy War. People were so convinced they were on the side of right they fought to maintain and defend Christianity in the face of opposition from Islam. There are also examples of religious division continuing in the world today for example between Muslims and Hindu’s in India.

Religious division also occurs within the same religion such as Sectarianism in Northern Ireland or the conflict between Sunni and Shia Muslims.

Strictly speaking a study of the Pharisees and Sadducees could not form part of ‘other aspects of human experience’. There may be some comparisons between divisions in Jesus’ day and later times, which might be briefly referred to by candidates.

Candidates could compare these with the problems posed by religious differences today.
• Are there any similarities or differences?
• Did they pose any particular problems?
• Did these problems lead to conflict or violence?
• Could this conflict have been avoided? If so how?
• The place of tolerance and mutual respect and understanding.

The following links explore religious divisions and investigate the problems that these religious divisions have posed for both individuals and the community. You could perhaps explore these examples using the questions on the previous page.


www.youtube.com/watch?v=dBIm4MaQKA
Northern Ireland in more recent times has provided an excellent example of religious enrichment at work, e.g. in the Corrymeela Community through inter-faith and ecumenical cooperation and endeavour. Explore their website which provides examples of their work.

www.corrymeela.org

They also produce a DVD entitled Upstanding – stories of courage from Northern Ireland.

www.storiesofcourage.net

This contains 10 varied case studies from Northern Ireland showing how individuals have made a stand against prejudice and violence. You may wish to explore some of these case studies and discuss in groups how these individuals have overcome the problems that religious divisions pose.

**Sample Activity**

Read the following article:


Make notes on how Northern Ireland has overcome problems in its past. Note the examples described of opportunities for religious and ethical enrichment. Note the work done by Corrymeela and other likeminded organisations.

**Learning Objective** – demonstrate critical evaluation of the role of sacred texts for religious believers in any age.

Sacred texts are an important part of many religions. They document history and religious truths that form part of many religions' ritual and worship. Sacred texts play a role in many religions. In Christianity, e.g. believers hold the Bible in high regard and because of this it is often central to worship. They also believe that the Bible holds the history and development of Christianity and the words and teachings of Jesus are enshrined in the New Testament. Christians try to live by and up to these teachings of Jesus. They find encouragement in Jesus’ instructions to love one another, to welcome strangers and to care for the sick and dying.

Students could consider:

• The place of sacred texts for religious believers within a variety of religions
• Their role in the life of believers
• How they interpret them and their place within religious ritual

www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/texts/quran_1.shtml
www.islam-guide.com
• How believers interpret their sacred texts can also influence religious belief and practice. Some religious believers take a very literal view of some passages in the Bible and live their life accordingly for example creationists believe literally in the Genesis Creation account and counter the views of science, such as the big bang theory and the theory of evolution. The following is a link to some information on the beliefs of creationism.

[www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/beliefs/creationism_1.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/christianity/beliefs/creationism_1.shtml)

• Churches and religious denominations can differ markedly in their approach to the interpretation of sacred text, e.g. a literal (possibly Fundamentalist) as against a more liberal or scholarly interpretation of scripture. Candidates could examine two churches/denominations with different approaches and refer to examples of issues where these differences can lead to very different moral and theological positions being adopted.

• Find historical or contemporaneous examples of religious laws and consider how they can be reinterpreted in the modern day e.g. Sunday trading laws, wearing religious emblems or religious practice in the workplace.

• Candidates could examine the role of text at the Reformation in the 16th century and the differences of interpretation that were central to the religious polemics of the period, e.g. the text of the Last Supper in the Gospels and how this was understood by Catholics and Protestants, both then and since. Candidates are quite at liberty to choose other verses and passages that have continued to divide religious groups.

The following links may be a starting point for exploration:

[www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/should-christians-right-refuse-work-2474345](http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/should-christians-right-refuse-work-2474345)


[www.personneltoday.com/hr/religious-dress-workplace-five-key-employment-cases-uk/](http://www.personneltoday.com/hr/religious-dress-workplace-five-key-employment-cases-uk/)

**Learning Objective** – demonstrate critical evaluation of the importance of Christian outreach to those who are marginalised.

Candidates could initially refer briefly to Luke’s Gospel on the theme of universalism which demonstrates Jesus’ concern for those on the margins of society. There are numerous examples in Luke’s Gospel of Jesus treating those for whom society saw as outcasts with reverence and respect. He sought out contact with outcasts, ate with them, treated them as equals and even held them up as models of right attitude and behaviour e.g. The Roman Centurion.
• Part of the Christian faith has always been to imitate Jesus’ words and deeds of care and compassion to those who are marginalised. There are many examples throughout history and today of both individuals and groups who have continued to follow Jesus’ teaching through practical means and modern methods to care for the outsider.

• Candidates could e.g. explore the work of the Salvation Army, the Jesuit Fr Peter Mc Verry, Mother Teresa of Calcutta’s congregation and the work that such people and groups do for the destitute and marginalised.

• Candidates could examine groups that were in the past and some, still in the present that are shunned, marginalised and possibly persecuted because of their religion, ethnicity or sexuality; the consequences for such groups and more recent attitudes of Christians to such groups.

Class/Group Research Activity

1. Make a list of those who are often marginalised in society today e.g. the homeless, women, migrants, travellers, physically and mentally disabled people and those from different racial, religious or ethnic groups. Share this list with the class, so that there is a wide and varied list.
2. In your group choose 3 from the list generated by the class.
3. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation using the following headings:
   a. Name the Christian groups or individuals who are reaching out and helping the groups you have chosen to integrate back into society or the nature of the help given.
   b. Examples of the work of these groups/individuals are doing.
   c. Jesus’ teaching in relation to Christian outreach to this group/link to the group in Jesus’ day.
4. Make a presentation to your class and take questions from the floor.
5. Share a copy of your presentation with your class so that all the class now have notes for revision on the various evaluations of Christian outreach to the marginalised.

The following links may help get you started:

www.concern.net
www.trocaire.org
www.salvationarmy.org.uk
www.habitatforhumanity.org.uk
www.christianaid.org.uk

Students may also like to look at the issue of prejudice and discrimination in society which relates to the marginalised. There are many historical and contemporary examples of both prejudice and discrimination in society. The following links are a starting point for exploring this objective.

www.embraceni.org
Learning Objective – demonstrate critical evaluation of the relevance of initiation and ritual in religion.

Ritual is an important part of religious practice and most of the world’s major religions have some form of ritual practice including ritual initiation rites. In Luke’s Gospel we see Jesus and John in the Infancy Narrative circumcised on the eighth day after birth. Their parents are seen as devout Jews following religious ritual and having their children initiated into the Jewish faith. The Christian equivalent is of course baptism. Within Christianity there are also several different beliefs about baptism as an initiation rite. Some denominations believe in infant baptism while others have adult or believer’s baptism.

• Students may wish to consider some of the different initiation rites and rituals that take place in the world’s key religions today for example Baptism, Bar Mitzvah or Confirmation. The following links explore Initiation rites in Judaism and Islam.

  www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/rites/birth.shtml
  www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/islam/ritesrituals/birth.shtml

It may help to consider the following:
1. What form does the rite take?
2. What is the history/background of the rite?
3. What is the significance of this ritual?
4. Is it still relevant in contemporary society?

Using the points above and your research you could produce a mind map of the various initiation rites and rituals of the world’s major religions.

Within Christianity Baptism as an initiation rite can vary. The following links help explain the differences between infant and Believers baptism and also the reasons for the practice in various denominations.

• Candidates could investigate the importance, nature and impact of ritual in some churches or religious faiths, e.g. ritual used in worship and religious festivals.

• Candidates could investigate the impact of the Reformation on ritual and evaluate of the position of some Christians who suggest that ritual is a distraction in worship and perhaps even a form of idolatry; that what matters is the proclamation of the word. The reasons and results of some denominations abandoning ritual and the continuing impact on the churches today in Northern Ireland.

http://request.org.uk/teachers/teaching-resources/life-resources/baptism-dedication/2014/06/30/believers-baptism-2/
Learning Objective – demonstrate critical evaluation of the importance of mercy in the life of the religious believer.

Mercy is to show love, compassion and forgiveness even to those who are our enemies or indeed those who in the eyes of some may not deserve it. When we are compassionate to others we look beyond our own wishes and worries in order to help others. Mercy is needed because we live in a world that it is not perfect and at some point we all need mercy and forgiveness. God expects us to show forgiveness to others.

Mercy or compassion towards others is a vital part of religious belief and practice in most religions. In Luke’s Gospel the parables of mercy are clear in their teaching that if we want to be shown mercy by God then we must show mercy to others. Jesus teaches of the importance of mercy through his miracles by having pity and showing compassion on those who were sick and on the margins of society.

The following link provides some case studies of an individual who has shown mercy and compassion in their life towards others. They provide a good example of mercy in action and are a working examples of Jesus’ teaching on forgiveness.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/20257328

www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-25359135


• Candidates could investigate and critically examine the difficulties, both personal and otherwise, encountered by those who endeavour to practice mercy, e.g. in terms of forgiveness.
• Mercy as central to Christian life and practice, e.g. recent ideas of the present Pope for whom the subject is of central importance and has received much attention in the media. The thinking of other religious figures/leaders on the issue.
• An investigation and critical examination of the suggestion that mercy runs counter to human emotion and experience and is thus counter intuitive. Philosophers like Nietzsche in his attack on Christianity enunciated such views.

Sample Activity

Research two examples of individuals who have shown mercy towards others. They should be someone you consider to be an example Jesus’ message of forgiveness and reconciliation in action. They can be a historical or contemporary individual.

Produce a one page report on the individual.

You may wish to include the following:
1. Their background.
2. The event.
3. Their actions and how they imitate or are an example of Jesus’ message of mercy – linked to Luke’s Gospel.
4. Others reactions/opinions.

In this section students might also consider further links such as:

- Charitable organisations that show mercy to others through financial and practical means.
- Is Jesus’ message too challenging – does charity begin at home? How far should mercy and compassion spread?
- Mercy linked with forgiveness in the past and present.

A good example of mercy in action in modern society is restorative justice. The following website:

www.restorativejustice.org.uk/

Explores the work of the restorative justice council. It explains what restorative justice is and some examples of restorative justice in action. It may help you explore the theme of restorative justice in relation to mercy. You may also wish to link this with the Christian aim of reform.

**Learning Objective** – demonstrate critical evaluation of the debate about the validity and relevance of miracles.

- Candidates could begin their investigation by seeking a definition of miracle which is sometimes defined as an event which is contrary to the laws of nature and to the laws of science as they are presently understood. Miracles can also be defined as events within the present known laws of nature, which may be unlikely, but which may never the less occur. Almost all non-believers and some religious believers find it difficult to believe in the possibility of miracles while others believe it is a matter of faith. Christians will argue that if they truly believe in the love, power and providence of God in the World and the events described in the Gospels, such as the miracles of Jesus and the greatest miracle of all, the one which confounds even death, namely the resurrection then surely, believing in the possibility of miraculous events is a central part of Christian faith and belief.

- Candidates could examine the crucial ideas and influence of the Enlightenment which put an ever increasing stress on the necessity of proof and rational and scientific explanation for almost everything. Many people thus began to question the validity of miracles. Also miracles don’t fit into the vast majority of people’s experience of life. A secular culture, like ours, has a tendency towards scepticism which would immediately suggest that the possibility of miracles is quite unlikely. The Dutch philosopher on rational grounds doubted their possibility. The Scottish empiricist philosopher
David Hume in the 18th century argued that miracles belong to an era of religious superstition. Further he argued that with better education, it will become evident that reports of miracles will become rarer and will be increasingly more likely to be disbelieved.

The validity of miracles can also be affected by your interpretation of the Bible. When we look at the feeding of the 5000, some scholars would say the real miracle is that everyone shared what provisions they had while literalists would feel Jesus fed 5000 and that is factual.

There are many documented miracles today and to believe in a miracle does not mean automatic belief in God. Many people have faith in alternative therapies and medicine and some people just have to believe in their doctor rather than God to be healed.

Students can also explore some of the following in relation to this topic:
- Lourdes and Healing Ministries within various Christian denominations.
- Do we need miracles to prove Jesus was the Messiah?
- The relationship between faith and miracles.
- Are miracles relevant in secular society?

The following links may be helpful to start your research:
- www.davidhume.org/
- https://carm.org/miracles-cannot-happen
- www.catholic.com/tracts/do-miracles-still-occur
- www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-31965758

Learning Objective – demonstrate critical evaluation of the demands of discipleship in any age.

The concept of Discipleship goes back to the Old Testament. By the time of Jesus, it was common for different groups of leaders to have disciples for example John the Baptist and the Pharisees had disciples. Disciple means “follower”. In the first century the teacher-pupil relationship was a personal one as the learning was by oral instruction.

The demands of discipleship may vary with the individual. Some must sell all they have as in the case of The Rich Young Man which was not the case for Zacchaeus. Those who accept the calling must make a lifelong commitment

“No one who puts his hands to the plough and looks back is fit for the Kingdom of God.”

Luke 9:62

The disciple must “take up his cross, daily”. Discipleship involves burdens and the real possibility of death. The disciple must be prepared to give up family relationships, property and employment. Commitment to worldly ties will impede effective discipleship, but willingness to give them second place will lead to rewards. Persecution is the ultimate demand of discipleship.
There are many examples in Luke’s Gospel of effective discipleship. For some Christians Mary is the perfect model of faith and discipleship and an example of acceptance of God’s will. Despite her public disgrace she is willing to face the consequences as she has faith in what God has promised.

Students could consider the following when researching this topic:

- Is the notion of a disciple as we have it in the Gospel only relevant to the time of Jesus?

- Are there still people in the world willing to take a stand despite the consequences to their own reputation or personal safety?

- Martyrs who laid down their lives as part of their discipleship either historically or today could be examined. More recent examples like Dietrich Bonhoeffer or Oscar Romero could be studied.

- Candidates could examine the example of discipleship as is understood by the early Christians, many of whom felt that an important feature of discipleship to Christ was non-violence which led to a refusal on the part of many to fight in the Roman army. Quakers and other Christians suffered for the same beliefs in more recent times. For them discipleship meant defending the principle of non-violence. In light of this, what does discipleship demand of the Christian today?

- Are there people who are unable to live up to the demands of discipleship and how is this to be understood by Christians?

- Can you relate the challenges facing the early Church to examples today? E.g. persecution

- Is the Church’s mission of discipleship still relevant?

The following links may help discuss some of the above guided research questions:

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-32722155

www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-32777639

www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/christians-the-worlds-most-persecuted-people-9630774.html

www.persecution.com/

www.youtube.com/watch?v=rk8ERxqCZqQ

www.youtube.com/watch?v=4OOkBIrW60w

www.malala.org/

www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-asia-pacific-11685977
Sample Activity:
Debate the following:

“Discipleship is too demanding for modern society”

Learning Objective – demonstrate critical evaluation of the relevance of the claims of the Gospel in a multi-religious world to both Salvation and Resurrection.

We are living in a progressively secular and multi – religious world. In the west most faiths are respected and tolerated and freedom to practice religion and free assembly are enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Religious persecution of the type that existed in the early Church is relatively rare in western countries, though it has been on the rise in countries like Egypt, Indonesia, Iraq, Syria and Iran. It is a particular challenge for modern society to accommodate all religious beliefs in a secular and also multi-faith setting. Also we have to remember that many people are atheist, agnostic or are just indifferent to religious faith of any sort.

There are many challenges to the gospel message in contemporary society, particularly whether we should still believe in exclusively Christian views in a secular or multi religious society.

Sample Activity

Compose an answer to the following question siting relevant historical or contemporary examples:

Is it right to impose Christian teachings on an increasingly secular world?

The following links may be a useful start:

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-20321741

www.bethinking.org/truth/religious-pluralism

www.theguardian.com/world/2015/nov/20-abortion-laws-ireland-doctors-countries-call-relax

www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-northern-ireland-32913283


Students could also consider the following when researching this topic area:

• The theological problems that are posed by many counter-claims to the uniqueness of Christian salvation, e.g. Islamic, Christian, Protestant, Orthodox or Catholic. In the past and even still, many faiths/denominations are of the opinion that their route to
salvation is the only one. This sometimes had the effect of creating highly charged argument and even fuelling conflict and violence.

- Do the gospel teachings fundamentally clash with those who belong to the religions of e.g. Hinduism, Buddhism or Islam?

- The nature of salvation as it was understood in the past and today - can we, eg. accept any concept of final judgment?

- Do we need to follow exclusively the teachings of Christ to be saved?

- What might an Atheist or Humanist say about these issues and do their views matter?

- An investigation and critical evaluation of the concept of the resurrection in what is for many a very largely secular, rational and post-religious age.

- An investigation and evaluation into the historicity of the resurrection event. Contemporary understanding and some attempts at reinterpretation and the continuing relevance of this event for Christians.

The following links may help start you thinking:

www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b040hyvg

www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/atheism/people/dawkins.shtml


www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/pope-francis-assures-atheists-you-don-t-have-to-believe-in-god-to-go-to-heaven-8810062.html
Glossary

Allegory – a type of parable where the meaning is hidden in a type of code.
Annunciation – The message to Mary from the Angel Gabriel that she was to have a son by the power of the Holy Spirit.
Apology – explanation and defence of the Christian religion.
Baptism – initiation rite in the Christian religion. Can take place as an infant or adult.
Characteristics – key themes, features which distinguish Luke’s Gospel from the other synoptic Gospels.
Controversy – disagreement or debate over varying points of view.
Credibility – trustworthy, reliable, to have belief in the authenticity of something.
Critique – analysis or constructive criticism of a concept.
Demand – requests made of a person.
Disciple – “Follower”, someone who follows a leader or teaching.
Divine – denoting God or things associated with heaven.
Doctrine – a body of teachings of a particular group religious, political or philosophical.
Era – a span of time marking a division of history.
Ethical – relates to right or wrong conduct and morality in general.
Evangelist – the writer of one of the four Gospels.
Exorcism – casting out of an evil spirit.
Gospel – translated as “Good News”, contains the life and ministry of Jesus Christ.
Healing – The restoration of health, physical, emotional, spiritual.
Infancy – the stories of the birth and early childhood of Jesus.
Initiation – the act of admitting someone into the Christian faith.
Judaism – one of the major world religions, monotheistic in character.
Kingdom of God – a future event and present reality, God’s reign on earth.
Marginalised – those on the periphery of society.
Mercy – compassion, pity or forgiveness towards another.
Messiah – In the Old Testament it denoted the expected saviour of the Jews. It translates in English as “Anointed one”. In the New Testament it refers to the identity of Jesus.
Miracle – an extraordinary event that cannot be explained by natural or scientific laws.
Mission – an assignment given to carry out a task. In the religious sense, to spread the word of God.
Narrative – a written account of a story.
Parable – a story with a meaning, usually the Kingdom of God.
Peter – Apostle, leader of the Church after the resurrection of Jesus.
Pharisees – political and religious party of Judaism, concerned with ritualistic adherence to the Torah.
Portrayal – a depiction or description.
Sacred Text – a term used to denote a holy book in a particular religion.
Sadducees – Priestly party of Judaism who were connected to the Temple and ceased to exist after its destruction in 70 A.D.
Salvation History – the study of God’s intervention into human history and his redemptive action.
Secular – non religious matters.
**Teaching** – standards or beliefs taught by an expert.

**Temple** – centre of the Jewish religion in Jerusalem, destroyed in 70 A.D. and never rebuilt.

**Temptation** – in religion it is the proclivity to sin or encouraging someone to do wrong.

**Theological** – study of God and religion, often defined as “faith seeking understanding”.