
The Jewish Context of the Life and Words of Jesus

TEACHER NOTES



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Jewish Context of the Life and Words of Jesus is a program created by the Jewish Museum of Australia which directly connects to the topic of the same name that is taught in Catholic schools across Victoria. This program is designed so the Jewish Museum of Australia can serve as a primary resource for teaching about Judaism in the 1st century. It also includes support materials upon which teachers can rely in the delivery of this topic.

Our program incorporates:

1. An excursion to the Museum
2. Activities for students to do in the classroom before and/or after the visit
3. A student booklet which could form the foundation for the delivery of this whole unit of work and be the excursion activity task
4. Additional resources for teachers (in our teaching notes – Appendix D p23 of this document) which include complete and detailed answers to the questions in the student booklet
5. Activities for students to complete both at the Museum and in the classroom are provided in a beautifully designed and printed **Student Booklet**, which is included in the cost of the excursion or can be purchased separately from the Museum (see further details below). Additional resources for teachers are provided in the Teachers' Notes which are freely available online via the Jewish Museum of Australia website.

2. PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The Jewish Museum of Australia's program has been developed in direct response to the Year 8 curriculum unit outlined in *Coming to Know, Worship and Love: A Religious Education Curriculum Framework for Catholic Schools in the Archdiocese of Melbourne* (published by the Catholic Education Office, Melbourne 2005).

The aims of the program are to develop students' knowledge and understanding of:

- the religious life of Jewish people in the Land of Israel (Israel) in the 1st century;
- the political influence the Romans had on life in Israel in the 1st century;
- the social groupings in Jewish society at that time;
- the changes to Judaism since the 1st century and the nature of Jewish life and practice today.

The table below shows how the Museum's program supports the specific learning outcomes outlined in the *Coming to Know, Worship and Love* curriculum document:

Indicators of learning (knowledge & skills)	Museum visit	Classroom activities – in Student Booklet
KNOWLEDGE – Understand how knowledge of Jesus' Jewish background is essential to the way he lived his life	✓	✓
SKILLS – Analyse the Gospel story for references to Jesus' identification with his Jewish background	✓	✓
SKILLS – Locate on a map significant towns in Israel and indicate how they featured in Jesus' ministry		✓
KNOWLEDGE – Have some understanding of the political situation in Israel at the time of Jesus		✓
KNOWLEDGE – Identify and describe the religious/social grouping which were active during Jesus ministry		✓
KNOWLEDGE – Characterise daily life in Israel in 30AD (CE)	✓	✓

Student Booklet

The Student Booklet is a professionally designed and produced workbook, which contains activities for students to complete during their visit to the Museum, as well as additional activities which may be used in the classroom or set for homework prior to, or following the Museum visit.

The Student Booklet is included in the cost of the excursion, and a copy will be provided to each student when they visit. However, in order to take full advantage of this innovative resource it is highly recommended that teachers arrange pick-up or delivery of the booklets prior to the visit – ideally, before teaching this unit. Please discuss this with Museum Education staff when booking or inquiring about your visit.

*Note, if you are unable to visit the museum, the booklet is still highly appropriate and relevant and could be purchased as a classroom companion for students learning the unit of the same name

3. PRE-VISIT PREPARATION AND CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES

Research has shown that students get the most from museum excursions if they have been involved in pre-visit preparation. Therefore, while schools may visit the Jewish Museum at any time, it is highly recommended that at least some key concepts integral to the “Jewish Context of the Life and Words of Jesus” curriculum have been introduced in class prior to the visit. In particular, it is advisable that students:

- are aware that Jesus was Jewish;
- have a basic understanding of who Jews are and what they believe, the centrality of Torah, and the significance of the Temple for religious observance in 1st century Judea, Galilee, and the Diaspora
- have been exposed to Gospel texts and understand what they can tell us about the historical and religious context of Jesus’ life.

Pre-visit resources for use in the classroom

Introduction to the Gospels – the “Jewish context of the Life of Jesus” unit relies in part on students’ ability to analyse Gospel texts for references to Jesus’ Jewish background. These activities, developed by Sacred Heart College, Kyneton, give students a general introduction to the Gospels, their composition and their purpose. They explore how stories are told to present a particular perspective, the way in which the Gospels were written, and the impact of writers’ opinions on the final text (see Appendix A; also, see no. 3 below).

Introduction to Torah – an activity to introduce students to Torah and its importance in Jewish tradition (Appendix B). In particular, it explains the distinction between the “Written Law” and the “Oral Law” and the significance of “the Law” to Jews. There are many references in the Gospels to Jews’ (especially Pharisees’) adherence to “the Law”, which can give rise to misconceptions about Judaism as a “legalistic” tradition. A proper understanding of this concept is essential to understanding Judaism and the context of Jesus’ teachings.

Gospel passages referring to Jesus’ Jewish background –

During the Museum visit, students will be exposed to a number of Gospel texts that refer to Jewish religious practices and various groups that existed in Jewish society in the 1st century. Rather than encounter these for first time at the Museum, teachers may wish to introduce students to some of these texts prior to their visit. (Indeed, analysis of the Gospel story for references to Jesus’ Jewish background is a key learning indicator for this curriculum unit.) We have provided a copy of the texts that will be used in the Museum learning program in these Teachers’ Notes, together with some sources from the Hebrew Bible (see Appendix C).

Classroom-based activities in the Museum’s Student Booklet

– activities in the Student Booklet may assist you with teaching various aspects of the “Jewish Context of the Life and Words of Jesus” curriculum, some of which you may cover prior to your visit to the Museum. Topics covered by these activities include:

- geography of Israel and how various locations featured in Jesus’ ministry;
- daily life in 1st century Israel;
- political situation in Israel at the time of Jesus;
- religious/social grouping in Israel during the 1st century.

In Appendix D you will find teaching notes to accompany the student booklet.

Please speak to Museum staff if you wish to receive copies of the booklet for your students prior to your visit.

4. THE MUSEUM VISIT

During their visit to the Museum, students will explore the Museum with the support of our education guides using the framework contained in our Student Booklet. This is a structured and directed program; location and timing of the periods in the galleries is controlled by our guides in order to prevent crowding in the museum.

Please note:

Group size: 50–55 students maximum

Length of visit: 120 minutes

Teachers may wish to familiarise themselves with the Museum and our program prior to the student visit. You may visit the Museum at any time and receive free admission by showing your VIT card. You may also contact the School Education Coordinator at the Museum to discuss the program further.

What to bring

All students should bring a clipboard and pencil with them (pens are not permitted in the galleries). We will provide each student with a copy of the Student Booklet. However, if booklets have been purchased by the school prior to the visit, each student should bring their own booklet with them.

Please do not bring school bags or drink bottles as they cannot be brought into the galleries.

The program

1. **General Introduction** – clarification of the fact that Jesus was Jewish and questioning regarding 1st century Judaism as compared to 21st century Judaism, similarities and differences, to reinforce the idea that the details of life, both in the 1st century and today are determined by the Torah. Then, students are divided into groups of between 15–18 students and allocated a guide.
2. **Investigation in the exhibitions** – led and assisted by their guide, students use the booklet provided to explore the Museum’s permanent exhibitions. They will discover artifacts from 1st century Judea and learn about Jewish religious practices and customs from ancient times through to the present day.
3. **Additional activities** – students visit the St Kilda Synagogue and participate in a Sabbath welcoming ceremony.

5. POST-VISIT CLASSROOM ACTIVITIES AND RESOURCES

In order to reinforce your students' learning experience at the Jewish Museum, it is recommended that you do some follow-up in the classroom, even if you have completed the unit "Jewish Context of the Life and Words of Jesus". The following resources are provided as part of our program to assist you with post-visit activities:

- 1. Classroom-based activities in the Student Booklet**— activities in the Student Booklet may assist you with teaching various aspects of the "Jewish context of the life of Jesus" curriculum, some of which you may cover following your visit to the Museum. Topics covered by these activities include:
 - Geography of Israel and how various locations featured in Jesus' ministry;
 - Daily life in 1st century Israel;
 - Political situation in Israel at the time of Jesus;
 - Religious/social grouping in Israel during the 1st century.
- 2. Teaching notes to accompany Museum activities in the Student Booklet** – even if you have completed the "Jewish context of the life of Jesus" unit, it may be useful to review and discuss the activities and investigations that students undertook at the Museum to reinforce their learning. Responses to the questions in the Student Booklet are provided as part of this document (Appendix D).
- 3. Creative final projects** – we have provided a number of ideas for creative final projects to conclude your students' experience of "The Jewish context of the life of Jesus" unit, which will offer an experiential and memorable learning experience (see Appendix E).

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7. APPENDICES

Appendix A **P 9–15**

Pre-visit activities relating to the development of the Gospels, and Jesus in history as referenced by ancient historians and record keepers.

Appendix B **P 16–20**

Pre-visit activity relating to the Torah and the way it is applied to contemporary Jewish life.

Appendix C **P 21**

We provide for your convenience a comprehensive list of passages from the New Testament and the Jewish Bible that are used in the delivery of this program.

Appendix D **P 22–39**

Teaching notes to accompany student booklet

Appendix E **P 40**

Suggested follow up activities. You might want to use one of these in school to finish the unit on a high note.

Appendix A

It is suggested that some or all of these activities, are completed by the students before they visit the Museum.

The Jewish Context of the Life and Words of Jesus

**JEWISH
MUSEUM OF
AUSTRALIA**
Gandel Centre of Judaica

INTRODUCTION TO THE GOSPELS

1. Discuss events from the holidays which everyone in the class would be aware of. Eg. Tennis, fires, floods, local events. List these for students then ask them to move into the groups based on the topic about which they know most.
2. In groups on a large sheet of paper write answers to the following:
 - What happened?
 - Who was involved?
 - What were people thinking, saying about it?
 - Tell one story which emerged from it?
 - Are there any lessons we could learn as a community from the event or the way it was handled?
3. Bring groups together to present their coverage.
4. As each group finishes, call on people in the class who might be able to add something, or who disagree with some of the information – record their reasons.
5. Lead students to look for discrepancies, bias, expert opinion, facts vs hearsay.

If you wanted to know more about each event where would you go? Who would you ask? Why?

Compare the bushfires in Victoria with the floods in Queensland. Look for Newspaper reports from Brisbane, Townsville etc and compare them on both topics with our own local papers. Write down the differences.

ARRANGING STORIES

Imagine you are writing a biography of a famous hero. You have a collection of fifteen stories about the person that you will put into a single narrative.

Cut out the boxes with the story outlines in them and paste them into an order which will make the point that this person is a real hero, someone to be emulated.

A story about their grandfather dying and how sad they were	A story about how they grew up on a farm	A story about some of the hardships they endured growing up in a poor family
The time they intervened for a small boy when he was being harassed outside a shop	A story about them being really helpful at school	Their first day at work at the local pool
Saving a girl who was drowning	A story about them talking to a group of children about water safety	Winning the life-saving prize at the local school
A story about their friends gathering to celebrate their birthday	Their wedding day	The time they got their licence and took their friend for a ride
The birth of their first child	The opening of their charity to help kids who can't swim	Being named Australian of the Year

As you arrange the stories, become conscious of what your criteria for selection are - why does one story belong before or after another?

When you have finished, compare your story line with that of someone else.

This process mirrors that taken by the Evangelists - except that they did not all have the same stories about Jesus. It explains why some stories are in a different place in the gospels

A SYNOPTIC GOSPEL: OVERVIEW OF THE GOSPEL OF MARK

WHAT is a Gospel?

WHY would someone write a gospel?

WHO was Mark? WHAT do we think we know about him?

WHEN do we think he wrote?

WHERE do we think Mark was when he wrote? What was the city like then?

WHAT do we think his community was like?

HOW might Mark's community have affected what he wrote?

WHAT are Mark's special interests?

The Jewish Context of the Life and Words of Jesus

Mark's Gospel has priority...that means we think it was written first.

Use what you have learned about the three stage process and how we think Matthew and Luke used Mark's gospel to draw a timeline in picture format of the events.

Stage 1: Jesus in his lifetime.

Stage 2: The disciples

Stage 3: The Evangelists write down what they have heard

Matthew uses Mark's Gospel

Luke uses Mark's Gospel

Historical Evidence

There is no doubt that the person known in his lifetime as Jesus of Nazareth actually lived and died. Religious and historical records record his existence and his death, although none of these are contemporary.

Josephus

Titus Flavius Josephus was a 1st century Jewish historian. Josephus was a priest in the Temple who fought against the Romans in the Jewish uprising around 70 CE. Josephus wrote five works – one of them, Jewish Antiquities, contains two references to Jesus.

Antiquities 18.3.3

"Now there was about this time Jesus, a wise man, (if it be lawful to call him a man,) for he was a doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews, and many of the Gentiles. (He was the Christ) and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men amongst us, had condemned him to the cross, those that loved him at the first did not forsake him, (for he appeared to them alive again the third day,) as the divine prophets had foretold these and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct to this day."

Antiquities 20.9.1

So he assembled the sanhedrim of judges, and brought before them the brother of Jesus, who was called Christ, whose name was James, and some others; and when he had formed an accusation against them as breakers of the law, he delivered them to be stoned....."

Antiquities 18.3.3

The authenticity of this passage has been strongly questioned: most scholars doubt that Josephus actually wrote the first reference as it appears; generally the view is that someone else has tampered with it. The sections that are thought to have been written at a later date are in brackets. Nowhere else, including in his autobiography, does Josephus express any belief in Jesus as the Messiah. The works of Josephus were preserved by Christian scribes.

Antiquities 20.9.1

The second reference by Josephus describes the condemnation of someone called James by the Jewish Sanhedrin (Supreme Court and council of the Jews). James, according to Josephus, was 'the brother of Jesus the so-called Christ.'

Christ (/kraɪst/) (ancient Greek: Χριστός, Christós, meaning 'anointed') is a translation of the Hebrew מָשִׁיחַ (Māšîaḥ), the Messiah, and is used as a title for Jesus in the New Testament. In common usage, "Christ" is generally treated as synonymous with Jesus of Nazareth.

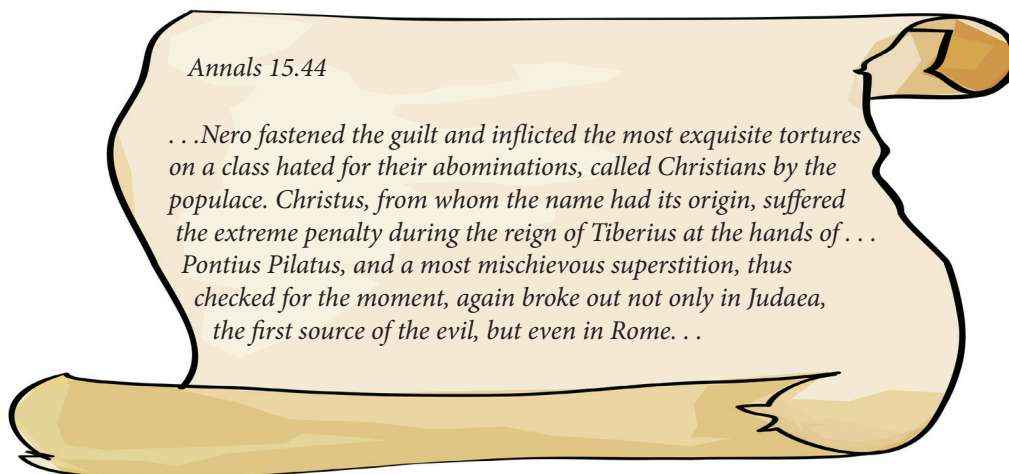
Jesus came to be called "Jesus Christ", meaning "Jesus the Christos", by his followers after his death and believed resurrection. Before, Jesus was usually referred to as "Jesus of Nazareth" or "Jesus son of Joseph".

1. Read the above passages from Antiquities carefully and decide if they express the same opinion about Jesus. Why do people doubt that a 1st century Jewish priest would have written the first quote in such glowing terms?

2. If you agree it is possible that some parts of this text were added later – what might the motivation have been?

Tacitus

In 64 CE Gaius Cornelius Tacitus was another Roman historian. Tacitus wrote during a time of persecution of Christians in Rome. The Roman Emperor Nero blamed the Christians living in Rome for starting fires throughout the city – fires that eventually destroyed the city in CE 64. Tacitus records Nero's blame-laying.



3. Read the quote from Tacitus' Annals. What is his view of the person of Jesus?

4. What is it that gives you clues as to his view on Jesus?

5. What authority do these documents have, given the position and stance of their writers?

6. How does the authority of these documents compare to that of the Gospels – from where most of our information about Jesus comes?

This activity was provided by Sacred Heart College Kyneton and has been added to by the Jewish Museum of Australia

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Appendix B

TEACHER RESOURCE

Torah and “the Law” in Jewish tradition

Objectives of this resource

Understanding the concept of Torah and “the Law” is essential to acquiring an understanding of Judaism – both historically and today. This resource provides teachers with introductory information, texts and suggested discussion questions and activities for students that:

- explain the definition of Torah and the concept of the Oral Law;
- demonstrate how the Torah provides instruction and laws that have become central to daily life for Jewish people;
- demonstrate how interpretation of the Torah helps Jews to understand how to put it into practice in their daily lives;
- provide an example of rabbinic interpretation of a Torah law;
- demonstrate through texts from the Gospels that Jesus was part of a conversation in 1st century Judaism about the meaning of Torah – not outside of, or opposed to it;
- show how Jews continue to practice the laws of Torah today;
- make clear that Jewish law is not considered a burden by Jews, but something that enriches their lives and brings holiness into daily existence.

The example used to illustrate these points is that of Shabbat (Hebrew – “the Sabbath”). Texts from the Torah, the rabbinic tradition and the New Testament are provided.

Introduction

The *Torah* (Hebrew for “the teachings”) is the name given to the Five Books of Moses, which come at the beginning of the Bible. According to tradition, the Torah was given to the people of Israel by God at Mount Sinai. (Note, for Jews, the concept of “Torah” is often understood in a sense that is much broader than these books themselves, and refers to the whole body of traditional Jewish texts and learning.)

The Torah tells the story of God’s creation of the world; of Abraham, Sarah and their family and their covenant with God; the enslavement of the people of Israel from Egypt and their eventual redemption; and their travels through the desert until they return to the “promised land”, the land of Canaan. Along the way, the people of Israel enter into a covenant with God, and God tells them the rules for worship and for establishing and maintaining a just society. The Torah, therefore, forms the basis of all Jewish law and practice.

In addition to the written Torah, there is a vast body of Jewish texts and learning that provides commentary on and interpretation of the Torah, as well as further detail about the laws and customs of everyday Jewish life – from ethical conduct to diet, religious ceremony, agriculture and the laws of damages.

This body of literature is called the “Oral Law” or “Oral Torah”, because it was originally an oral tradition. Around the year 200CE, the first collection of Oral Law was compiled and written down. This was called the *Mishnah*. Later, further commentaries and interpretations of the Mishnah developed by the rabbis were compiled in a collection known as the Gemara. Together, the Mishnah and Gemara form the Talmud – the most authoritative body of Jewish law.

Sometimes it is claimed that Jesus rejected the Oral Law, and that this was the reason that many Jews confronted and debated with him. However, the Oral Law is diverse and presents a variety of viewpoints. Indeed, during the time of Jesus, Jews had many different interpretations of Torah and disagreed amongst themselves about how many aspects of Judaism should be practiced. (They still do today!) The scholar Amy-Jill Levine explains that Jesus was not “out of step with his fellow Jews” in most aspects of Jewish practice, and he certainly did not reject the Oral Law completely.

In some cases he would have agreed with the majority views; in other cases he'd have sided with the minority; and in a few cases, such as his forbidding of divorce, he would have been well outside of it.

Jesus would have expected to be challenged, and he would have issued his own challenges. That he was willing to engage in discussion of how to follow the commandments shows that he cared about them, deeply. In his teaching, he shows enormous respect for the mitzvot, the commandments, so much so that he debates how they are best to be understood and enacted.

Ref Amy-Jill Levine *The Misunderstood Jew* P29 Harper One 2006 New York

In other words, Jesus was very much part of a conversation in the 1st century Jewish community about the meaning of Torah and how it should be applied to everyday life, not outside of or opposed to it.

One of the areas of Jewish law about which Jesus engaged in discussion was the laws of Shabbat (Hebrew “the Sabbath”) – one of the most central aspects of Jewish life and religious practice.

Texts – discussion questions & activities

1. Torah

One of the places in the Torah that refers to Shabbat is:

Exodus 20: 8 – 11 Jewish Publication Society

8 Remember the sabbath day and keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labour, and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is a sabbath of the LORD your God: you shall not do any work - you, your son or daughter, your male or female slave, or your cattle, or the stranger who is within your settlements. 11 For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth and sea, and all that is in them, and He rested on the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it.

1. In your own words explain what this commandment is telling you?
2. What do you think the word “work” means? Discuss this with your teacher and classmates.

2. Oral Law

The quote below is an example of how the ancient rabbis interpreted the meaning of “work” in the context of the laws of the Sabbath, it is from the Mishnah compiled around 200CE. The Temple had been destroyed, the Bar Kochba rebellion had been defeated and the scholars of the day were afraid that they were losing the Oral Torah. Rabbi Judah collected and edited a version the Oral Laws/Oral Torah in the Mishnah. These categories of work were considered by the rabbis to represent all the possible types of purposeful, creative labour that human beings could do. In other words, in their view, the “work” which we must not do on Shabbat is anything that involves purposeful creation – just as God stopped creating on the seventh day.

Examples of Work as explained in the Mishnah

Reference: http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ritual/Shabbat_The_Sabbath/At_Home/work.shtml?PRRI

Activities that cannot be performed on the Sabbath are basic tasks connected with preparing the showbread (sowing, ploughing, reaping, binding, threshing, winnowing, selecting, grinding, sifting, kneading, baking), work related to making the coverings in the Tabernacle and the vestments used by the priests, (shearing sheep), bleaching, carding (changing tangled or compressed material into separate fibres), dyeing, spinning, stretching (material), making two loops (meshes), threading needles, weaving, separating, tying (a knot), untying (a knot), sewing, tearing, activities concerned with writing and the preparation of parchment from animal skin (trapping or hunting), slaughtering, flaying (skinning), treating skins (curing hides), scraping pelts, marking out (to make ready for cutting), cutting (to shape), writing, erasing, construction (building, demolishing), kindling a flame (lighting, extinguishing), carrying (from private to public domain, and vice versa), and putting the finishing touches to a piece of work already begun before the Sabbath.

3. Compare your ideas about work (in Q2) with the definitions of work provided by the rabbis – what do you notice?
4. Look up what some of these activities are.

3. Jesus and Shabbat

Like all Jews of his time, Jesus observed the Shabbat and discussed the Shabbat rules.

Luke 13: 10-17 New Revised Standard Version

Now he (Jesus) was teaching in one of the synagogues on the sabbath. And just then there appeared a woman with a spirit that had crippled her for eighteen years. She was bent over and was quite unable to stand up straight. When Jesus saw her, he called her over and said, "Woman, you are set free from your ailment." When he laid his hands on her, immediately she stood up straight and began praising God. But the leader of the synagogue, indignant because Jesus had cured on the sabbath, kept saying to the crowd, "There are six days on which work ought to be done; come on those days and be cured, and not on the sabbath day." But the Lord answered him and said, "You hypocrites! Does not each of you on the sabbath untie his ox or his donkey from the manger, and lead it away to give it water? And ought not this woman, a daughter of Abraham whom Satan bound for eighteen long years, be set free from this bondage on the sabbath day?" When he said this, all his opponents were put to shame; and the entire crowd was rejoicing at all the wonderful things that he was doing.

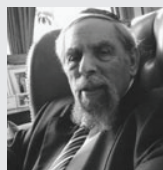
5. What did Jesus do to heal the woman?
6. Do you think he did anything to break any of the laws of Shabbat? Did he do anything that would be considered "work"?
7. What did the leader of the synagogue think about what Jesus did? Why do you think he thought this? Can you think of any examples of when healing the sick might involve doing "work" that is not permitted on Shabbat?
8. What did most of the rest of the people in the synagogue think about what Jesus did?
9. What do you learn from this text about how Jesus felt about Jewish law?

4. Shabbat for modern Jews eg. electricity on shabbat

Reference http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ritual/Shabbat_The_Sabbath/At_Home/work/electricity-shabbat.shtml

Why did the rabbis forbid electricity to be used on Shabbat? That wasn't in the Torah!

By Rabbi Louis Jacobs



Rabbi Dr. Louis Jacobs (1920-2006) was a Masorti rabbi, the first leader of Masorti Judaism (also known as Conservative Judaism) in the United Kingdom, and a leading writer and thinker on Judaism.

The Hebrew word *hashmal*, used in Ezekiel's vision of the Chariot (Ezekiel 1:4, 27), is usually translated as 'amber' or 'electrum' and may be based on the recognition by the ancients that rubbing amber produces sparks. This word is, in fact, used for 'electricity' in modern Hebrew.

Israeli children are astonished to find, as they think, that the prophet knew of electricity! Once this mysterious power was discovered and harnessed to cater to human needs, a host of problems became acute in connection with Jewish religious law. With regard to the Sabbath, for instance, on which the law forbids kindling fire (Exodus 35: 3), the question arose of whether this meant that it was wrong to switch on an electric light on the Sabbath.

In the early days [of discussions about the use of electricity on the Sabbath], some Rabbis tried to argue that electric lights may be switched on on the Sabbath, since there is no combustion in the filament and, in any event, the electric power is already present, the switching-on of the light being only an indirect cause. Conservative Jews accept this argument and permit the switching-on of electric lights but do not allow cooking by electricity on the Sabbath, since to cook food is a separate prohibition. In the Reform system there is generally a relaxation of the strict Sabbath laws. Orthodox Judaism today does not permit any use of electricity on the Sabbath. Orthodoxy sees it as wrong not only to switch on electric lights but even to open the door of a refrigerator so that the light will come on. However, timeclocks may be used, they are pre set prior to the Sabbath and thus lights may turn on automatically. Certain fridges have modified designs so that opening the door does not affect either the motor or the light. Most Orthodox authorities today also ban the use of a microphone or a telephone on the Sabbath on the grounds that sparks are produced and the flow of the electrical current is changed through the speaking voice.

10. Use the article by Dr Louis Jacobs to explain the steps that show how electricity and the ruling about its use on the Sabbath is determined in the context of the Sabbath rules.
11. Explain the positions of the various sections of the Jewish community regarding religious observance generally and the use of electricity on the shabbat specifically.
12. Try to get a sense of how religious Jewish people feel about the Sabbath - go online and visit some of these YouTube links:

Shabbat is the best day of the week

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J2C-flir7n0>

Shabbat the Rest of the story

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jHtM6mDbUzM>

Is it shabbat yet? – a children's book

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=toRZ_7IXPPO

13. What is the current Jewish approach to health and the Sabbath?
14. What have you learned about how the Torah and the rabbi's commentaries affect Jewish life? What do you think some of the controversies are?

References

Levine, Amy-Jill (2007) *The Misunderstood Jew: the Church and the Scandal of the Jewish Jesus* HarperOne, New York

Hebrew – English Tanakh (1999) Jewish Publication Society Philadelphia 1999 http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ritual/Shabbat_The_Sabbath/At_Home/work.shtml <http://www.biblegateway.com> http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ritual/Shabbat_The_Sabbath.shtml http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ritual/Shabbat_The_Sabbath/At_Home/work/electricity-shabbat.shtml

Appendix C

Gospel passages with references to Jesus' Jewish background

Passages from the gospels are included in the student booklet that the students work on whilst they are in the museum. The idea behind this is that whilst students are looking at something in the museum that we understand from sources Jesus may have observed, the students can confirm this through reading the relevant passage.

Luke 21:37-38 New Revised Standard Version

Every day [Jesus] was teaching in the Temple, and at night he would go out and spend the night on the Mount of Olives, as it was called. And all the people would get up early in the morning to listen to him in the Temple.

Matthew 26: 17-19 New Revised Standard Version

On the first day of Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying, "Where do you want us to make the preparations for you to eat the Passover?" He said, "Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, My time is near; I will keep the Passover at your house with my disciples.'" So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them, and they prepared the Passover meal.

Luke 4: 16-20 New Revised Standard Version

When he came to Nazareth, where he had been brought up, he went to the synagogue on the sabbath day, as was his custom. He stood up to read, and the scroll of the prophet Isaiah was given to him. He unrolled the scroll and found the place where it was written: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor." And he rolled up the scroll, gave it back to the attendant, and sat down. The eyes of all in the synagogue were fixed on him.

Mark 7: 17-24 New Revised Standard Version

When [Jesus] had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. He said to them, "Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) And he said, "It is what comes out of a person that defiles. For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

Appendix D

Teaching notes to accompany the student booklet

The following material has been prepared for teachers to accompany the Jewish Museum of Australia's student booklet "The Jewish Context of the Life and Words of Jesus." Pages 1-7 of the booklet contain activities that students will be mostly able to complete by engaging with various exhibits at the Museum. The rest of the booklet contains activities that can be completed at school prior to the visit to the Museum and also by way of follow up. Refer to sections 3 and 5 above of these notes for advice regarding pre- and post- visit activities. Section 6 lists a number of references to support your teaching about the Jewish world of Jesus. A particularly useful and highly recommended resource is the PBS Frontline website "From Jesus to Christ" [<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/>]. An excellent text published as a companion to this website is also available: L. Michael White (2004), *From Jesus to Christianity*, Harper & Collins, San Francisco.

PAGE 1: WORK IT OUT – TALK TO YOUR GUIDE

This is the Second Temple

At the time of Jesus it was the centre of life and focus of religious, social and economic activity. As Shaya Cohen, remarks [<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/temple.html>]:

"The Temple played a large role in a collective religious mentality and a collective religion of the people, as a whole. Everybody realized that this was the most sacred place on earth, the one place on earth where somehow heaven and earth meet...So, even though it was a small institution, entirely run by a small caste of people and even though most people could never ever get inside the innermost precincts, nonetheless, the Temple as a whole, the institution, the values and the structure played a very important role in the society at large."

Thus, for certain festivals, individuals and community representatives would make a pilgrimage to the Temple to offer their sacrifices. When a woman gave birth, she would take her offering to the Temple before resuming her normal life. The Temple also reflected the structure of Jewish society inasmuch the Jewish people were divided into 3 groups: Priests (Hebrew: *Cohanim*), Levites and Israelites. The Priests were directly responsible for running the Temple and conducting the sacrifices, assisted by the Levites. The Israelites gave a portion of their produce (tithes) to support the Priests and Levites in the Temple.

Nowadays there is no Temple as it was destroyed in 70CE. Since then sacrifice has no longer been part of Jewish worship. However the three part division of the Jewish people that existed during Temple times continues to impact Jewish religious practice today. Thus those Jews whose ancestry is connected to Priestly and Levitical lineage are the first of those called to the centre of the congregation (in some orthodox synagogues) when the Torah reading takes place. In the Orthodox synagogues on certain festivals the *Cohanim* bless the community and the Levites assist them in getting ready to do this by washing their hands. Although the Temple sacrifices have been replaced by prayer there are many prayers that refer to the Temple and the sacrifices. There are also certain things that Jews do to remember the Temple. For example during a wedding ceremony the groom steps on a glass in remembrance of the destroyed Temple.

This is the High Priest

At the time of Jesus the High Priest was a most influential person. He was the only person who could enter a most secret and special section of the Temple called the Holy of Holies, and the person who controlled the workings of the Temple and its sacrifices. Caiaphas was the High Priest at the time of Jesus. He was appointed by the Roman governor and ruled over the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Court and Council of the Jews. The High Priest was assisted by other priests. As L. Michael White writes:

There were the High Priests, who were in charge. And those came from particular families. Around them, and serving as their helpers and their agents, were a number of orders of regular priests in various grades. We hear of them even in the New Testament. Priests and Levites, they're called. These other priests had a variety of duties of taking care of the Temple itself. Everything from cleaning house, to performing animal sacrifices and overseeing the activities that would have taken place on the Great Holy Day festivals. <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/temple.html>

Nowadays, due to the Temple's destruction and the changes in the religious practice that occurred after this event, there is no High Priest. There are some Chief Rabbis, but they are heads of the rabbis of particular areas, their powers being nothing like those of the High Priest of old. Also, as noted above, the three-part division of the Jewish people that existed during Temple times [Priests, Levites, Israelites] continues to impact on Jewish religious practice today

This is a Rabbi

At the time of Jesus there were no rabbis as we know them today, but there were Jewish religious leaders of various groups. The High Priest was in charge of the Temple and ruled over the Sanhedrin. Amongst the Pharisees there were some leading teachers of Torah and interpreters of Jewish law, such as Hillel, who was a famous contemporary of Jesus. The Essenes, a semi-monastic community who lived in the Dead Sea region, were led by the Teacher of Righteousness. John the Baptist may have come from such a community.

Nowadays, Rabbis are the religious leaders of Jewish communities. They are trained to teach and to make decisions concerning matters of Jewish law (a role not dissimilar to that of the ancient Pharisees). Professional rabbis also provide leadership to synagogue communities. In Orthodox communities only men can be Rabbis, but in non-Orthodox [Conservative and Reform] communities women can also serve in this role.

What is the Written Torah?

The Written Torah includes the first five books of the Bible. It is copied by a scribe onto a scroll made from the skin of a kosher animal and is housed inside the synagogue Ark which is the focal point of a synagogue, similar in importance to the place occupied by the Altar in a Church.

What is the Oral Torah?

The Oral Torah is a commentary on and interpretation of the Written Torah. Just as the Written Torah contains laws as well as non-legal writings [e.g., narratives, poetry, wisdom literature, prophecy] so too, the Oral Torah is divided into Halacha [law] and Aggadah [homiletic and non-legalistic texts].

The Written Torah, the five books of Moses, remains fixed; the Oral Law is alive and responds to changing conditions. It is this combination of Written and Oral Torah that governs the life of observant Jews.

Examples of Written and Oral Torah laws

An example of a law from the Written Torah is "If any harm follows you shall give...eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot, burn for burn, wound for wound, stripe for stripe. (Exodus 21:23-24). In relation to the "eye for an eye" ruling the Oral Law (Mishna Baba Kamma 8:1) explains that the verse must be understood as requiring monetary compensation: the value of an eye is what must be paid. In other words, compensatory justice and not revenge was the basis of this formula.

An example of a Written Torah law relating to ritual observance is "You shall not boil a young goat [a kid] in its mother's milk" (Exodus 23:1). In fact, the prohibition is repeated in Exodus 24:26 and Deuteronomy 14:21. Turning to Oral Torah law, the fact that the exact same verse is repeated three times gives rise to an extended discussion about the inferences that can be drawn from this three-fold repetition (Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Hullin, 113a ff.). Thus, according to Hullin 115b, the prohibition against boiling a kid in its mother's milk occurs three times to signify that the eating, cooking and deriving any benefit whatever from a mixture of milk and meat are forbidden.

PAGE 2: TIMELINE GALLERY

Q1a. According to the Timeline Jesus was born in 4CE

Regarding the date of Jesus' birth, L. Michael White writes (From Jesus to Christianity, p.12):

"The usual date for Jesus' birth is now typically placed between 7 and 4BCE. This conclusion is based on the fact that the Gospels of Matthew (2:1) and Luke (1:5) both place the birth of Jesus during the reign of Herod the Great, who died in March of 4BCE. In addition, Matthew 2:19-22 shows that the birth occurred at least a few years before Herod's death. Joseph and Mary are reported to have taken the infant Jesus away to Egypt, only to return after Herod's death and during the reign of his son Archelaus" (who was deposed in the year 6CE).

Q1b. The milestone on the Timeline before Jesus' birth is the revolt against Antiochus IV by Judah the Maccabee, beginning in 165BCE. The milestone after Jesus' birth is the destruction of the Second Temple by the Romans in 70CE.

Q2a. This quote from Luke 21:37-38 refers to Jesus' role as a teacher of the people, something for which the Pharisees were also renowned. The passage from Luke could be referring to informal learning groups that people established to discuss the Torah and matters of significance. On this occasion, Jesus is described as teaching in the Temple area.

Q2b & Q2c. Items in the timeline gallery that might have been present during Temple times and in the time of Jesus are:

Incense Shovel – see text in student booklet and refer also to Matthew 2.11; Mark 15.23 and John 19.39.

Coins - these coins are from Temple times. People travelling to Jerusalem on pilgrimage would need to be able to change their money to Temple currency so they could purchase their sacrificial animal. We understand from the New Testament that Jesus found all manner of trading in the Temple forecourts to be distasteful; it did not live up to his image of his people's holiest shrine. However this was an established part of the Temple's economic functions, which also included a facility where people could deposit their money for safekeeping in the Temple treasury.

Camels - were a mode of travel that was used in Jesus' time.

Pots - these have been dated to before the birth of Jesus. They could be used to hold perfumes or oil. Objects like these were frequently found by archaeologists and hence we know they were common in households. Jesus' father was a carpenter; the family would have had objects like these in their homes.

High Priest – during the life of Jesus the high priest was Joseph Caiaphas. The high priest had a significant position of authority

over the Jewish people, though at this time it was a position that was controlled by the Roman overlords. Moses' elder brother Aaron was the first High Priest. The High Priest was responsible for the overall administration of the Temple and conduct of the sacrifices. He also ruled as head of the Sanhedrin, the Supreme Jewish Council. [See also the note about the High Priest on the opening page of these notes].

Temple Model – this is a model of the Second Temple. The first Temple was built by King Solomon as a permanent home for the Ark of the Covenant but was destroyed by the Babylonians in 586BCE. The Jews received permission from the Persians to commence the rebuilding of the Temple in 538BCE, but it was not until 515BCE that it was completed. King Herod, who ruled from 37BCE–4BCE, undertook a major refurbishment and renovation of the second Temple [see also notes on Q.16].

The structure of Jewish society was influenced by the need for Temple priests and their helpers, with the rest of the Jewish people supporting those who worked in the Temple through payment of a Temple tax. Jews went to the Temple for various festivals and to participate in the sacrifices [see page 1 above for further comments on the importance of the Second Temple].

As far as Jesus' connection to the Temple is concerned, from the Gospel of Luke we get the impression that Jesus' family regularly made the pilgrimage to Jerusalem on Passover. The gospel of John gives Jesus a preaching career of two or three years during which he attended the Temple on several occasions for Passover, Sukkoth [Tabernacles] and Hanukkah [Feast of Dedication].

In addition to attending the Temple, we also read in the Gospels of Mark (1:21, 3:1) and Luke (4:16, 6:6, 13:10) that Jesus visited synagogues where he would teach the people.

PAGE 4: JEWISH YEAR GALLERY

Q3 Whilst students are encouraged to find objects in the Jewish Year gallery that interest them, two items are worth singling out in that they have a direct connection to Jesus' Jewish world.

Tzitzit [or tzitziyot]: these are the tassels or fringes on a four-cornered garment worn under the shirt by observant Jews in observance of the requirement in Numbers 15:38-40: "Speak to the Israelites, and tell them to make fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations...You have the fringe so that, when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them." So the *tzitzit* serve as a physical reminder of the Jews' connection to God and his commandments. *Tzitzit* also form part of the tallit, or prayer shawl, worn during times of prayer.

Tefillin: also referred to as "phylacteries" [from the Greek phylacterion]. *Tefillin* are a set of two small black leather boxes containing scrolls of parchment inscribed with verses from the Torah (Exodus 13:1-10, 11-16; Deuteronomy 6:4-9, 11:13-21). They are worn by observant Jews during weekday morning prayers – bound by leather straps, one on the forehead and one usually wrapped around the left arm with the box facing the heart. The source of this practice is Deuteronomy 11:18 – "You shall put these words of mine in your heart and soul, and you shall bind them as a sign on your arm, and fix them as an emblem between your eyes." Interestingly, this verse makes no reference to wearing boxes with leather straps. However, it is a good example of how the rabbis through the Oral Torah interpreted this ambiguous instruction in the Written Torah. After all, how does one place God's words in the heart, on the arm and between the eyes?

In an article dealing with Jesus' Jewish background, Roy Blizzard and David Bivin write:

Like all observant Jews of the first century, Jesus wore *tzitziyot*, ("tassels" or "fringes") on the four corners of his robe as commanded in Numbers 15:37-41...We see this dramatically illustrated in the story of the woman who, for twelve years, had suffered from a flow of blood. She was healed when she came up behind him and touched the "fringe of his garment" (Matthew 9:20, parallel to Luke 8:44). References to the fringed garment which Jesus wore can also be found in Mark 6:56 (parallel to Matthew 14:36). It is very likely that Jesus also wore tefillin...Actual phylacteries, or tefillin, dating from the first century [the time of Jesus], have been found in the Qumran caves along the shore of the Dead Sea. These ancient phylacteries are almost identical to those worn by Jews today. How can we be nearly certain that Jesus wore phylacteries, especially since the wearing of phylacteries is not specifically commanded in the Bible, but represents a rabbinic interpretation of the above four Scriptures? The answer is found in Matthew 23:5: "...they make their phylacteries [tefillin] broad and their fringes [tzitziyot] long..." Jesus is here criticizing certain of the Pharisees for their religious hypocrisy, enlarging their tefillin and lengthening their tzitziyot to demonstrate how "spiritual" they were. He was not criticizing the wearing of tefillin and tzitziyot. As we have already shown,

Jesus himself wore tzitziyot! Furthermore, notice that in the beginning of this passage in Matthew 23, Jesus, tells his followers to "practice and observe whatever they [the Pharisees] tell you, but not what they do, because they do not practice what they preach" (Matthew 23:2-3). Jesus never condemns the custom of wearing phylacteries. Further, had not Jesus worn phylacteries along with fringes, he would surely have been criticized for this by the Pharisees. We can only conclude that in his manner of dress Jesus was just like the other observant Jews of his day" [<http://www.biblescholars.org/2013/05/jesus-a-jew-says-who.html>].

The Shofar: is a curved ram's horn which is blown to make a loud sound. In synagogues today it is blown in the month leading up to the Jewish New Year (Rosh Hashanah) and on Rosh Hashanah itself. One of the explanations for the blowing of the Shofar at this time is that it serves as a wakeup call to amend past wrongs in preparation for a new year. As Maimonides, the 12th. century Jewish scholar wrote: "Awake, sleepers from your sleep, O slumberers, arouse and examine your deeds, return in repentance and remember your Creator!" The Rabbis taught that the Shofar is curved as a symbol that humans must bend to God's will.

The Shofar is first mentioned in Exodus (19-16) when it was blown to gather the Israelites at Mt. Sinai where they received the Ten Commandments. In ancient times it was used to rally the people and for significant public events. In Leviticus 23 and Numbers 9, the first day of the seventh month of the Jewish calendar is identified as a sacred day to be commemorated with "trumpet blasts." It was only after the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple in 70 that this "day of trumpet blasts" came to be associated with Rosh Hashanah.

In contrast to other biblical Jewish holidays like Passover or Sukkot (Tabernacles), the New Testament makes no mention of Jesus observing the "day of trumpet blasts."

Q5. This passage from Matthew 26:17-19 tells us that the celebration of the Passover was an important event for Jesus. Here he is described as instructing his disciples to make the necessary preparations for the Passover meal that evening.

Q6. Leavened products are not consumed for the duration of the eight days [seven in Israel] of Passover. In fact, the home is purged of all leavened products prior to the onset of Passover. Leavening occurs when flour and water have been combined and the flour commences to rise. According to the Talmud, leavening occurs 18 minutes after the water has been added. In making unleavened bread (Matzah), mixing of flour and water and baking must therefore be concluded before 18 minutes have passed - it will be flat and often crispy. Matzah symbolises the "bread of affliction" that the slaves ate. It is also a symbol of freedom, the bread which the Hebrew slaves took with them when they fled Egypt, not having sufficient time to bake regular bread. Refer also to http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Passover/The_Seder/Matzah.shtml <http://www.jewishfederations.org/page.aspx?id=42416>

Q7. Passover is a translation of the Hebrew Pesach and celebrates the liberation of the Hebrews from slavery in Egypt. The term refers to the last of the ten plagues – the death of Egypt's first born – when God “passed over” the houses of the Hebrews who had smeared the blood of the sacrificial Passover lamb on their doorposts. Passover is celebrated in the home and is based around a Seder service which includes rituals that symbolise various aspects of the Exodus story. The text which is used for the service is the Haggadah, a Hebrew word which means “telling.” In other words, the Seder involves a retelling and ritual re-enactment of the story of the Exodus and the liberation from slavery in Egypt. According to the Synoptic Gospels, Jesus' Last Supper was a Seder meal. In his day, this would have involved eating the flesh of the sacrificial lamb, matzah and bitter herbs, as ordained in Exodus 12:8. Jews who came on pilgrimage to Jerusalem would organise a place to stay in the city, cleanse themselves and take their lamb offering to the Temple where it would be sacrificed. A portion of the paschal lamb was left at the Temple and the rest was taken back home where it was eaten together with matzah and bitter herbs. Over time, however, the Passover Seder developed into a much more elaborate affair centred on the order of service and performance of various rituals laid out in the Haggadah.

Q8a. The holy days with which Jesus is connected in the Gospels are: Shabbat/Sabbath (Mark 1:21, 3:1; Luke 4:16, 6:6, 13:10), Pesach or Passover (Luke 2:41, John 2:13, 6:4, 13:1), Sukkot or Tabernacles (John 7:2), **Hanukkah or the Feast of Dedication** (John 10:22).

As a practising Jew, Jesus might have also observed Rosh Hashanah (Jewish New Year), Yom Kippur (Day of Atonement), Tisha B'Av (9th of **Av**).

Note: a very useful reference for the Jewish festivals, and their **connection to the time of Jesus and to later Christianity**, is Marianne Dacey's “Let Us Rejoice: The Jewish Roots of Christian Feasts.” Additional resources can be found at <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays.shtml> and <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/tools/calendar/faith.shtml?jewish>

Shabbat – (Sabbath in English) is designated in the Torah as a day of rest in recognition of the creation when God created the world in six days and rested on the seventh. It also serves as a remembrance of the Exodus. No “creative” activity is carried out; for example, lighting a fire, use of electricity, driving, writing, and cooking. Observant Jews therefore make food preparations for the Sabbath the day before. There are, however, differing degrees in the required level of Sabbath observance between Orthodox and Reform Jews. Shabbat is inaugurated on Friday evening with the lighting of candles, a blessing over wine and challah [the traditional Sabbath bread], as well as a festive meal. See also: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/holydays/sabbath.shtml>

Pesach – See 5, 6 and 7 above

Rosh Hashanah – translated from the Hebrew this means, “the head of the year”; in other words the Jewish New Year. In ancient times this was a festival of trumpets when the ram's horn (shofar) was blown in the Temple. The shofar is still sounded today as part of the synagogue service. On Rosh Hashanah, Jews commence a period of introspection and apology for the sins they have committed both towards God and other people. This period culminates 10 days later with the Day of Atonement. During each of these ten days, the shofar is also sounded, symbolising a wakeup call for Jews to repent of their sins.

Yom Kippur – this means “Day of Atonement.” It is regarded as the holiest day in the Jewish calendar when Jews fast for 25 hours – no food or drink. The day is spent in contemplation and prayer in the synagogue, seeking forgiveness from sins and asking to be rewarded by being written into the “Book of Life.” In Jesus’ time this festival was the time that the High Priest went into the Holy of Holies to pray for the salvation of the people.

Tisha B’av – translated from the Hebrew this means the 9th day of [the Hebrew month] of Av. It is a solemn occasion, commemorating a series of tragedies that have befallen the Jewish people over the years, many of which coincidentally happened on this day. These include the destruction of the first Temple in Jerusalem in 586 BCE by the Babylonians, as well as the destruction of the second Temple by the Romans in 70 CE. The day is commemorated as a 24 hour fast.

Sukkot – also known as the Feast of Tabernacles when Jews remember the 40 years when the Hebrews were wandering in the desert after the exodus from Egypt. To commemorate this, it is traditional to build a *sukkah*, [*Sukkah* actually means booth,] a temporary booth with palm fronds for a roof so that the sky can be seen. For the duration of the festival [lasting eight days, but seven in Israel] meals are eaten in the *sukkah*. Some people even sleep in it. The symbolism behind this practice is to remember how God provided for the Children of Israel during their desert wanderings.

Another ritual performed by Jews on Sukkot involves the waving of a palm frond [*lulav*] combined with myrtle leaves, willow branches and a citron [*etrog*] in accordance with the instruction in Leviticus 23:40 – “you shall take the product of goodly trees [the citron], branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees [myrtle], and willows of the brook, and you shall rejoice before the Lord God seven days.” This is reminiscent of the practice in many churches on Palm Sunday involving a procession of the assembled worshipers carrying palms, representative of the palm branches the crowd scattered in front of Jesus as he rode into Jerusalem.

In the time of Jesus, Sukkot was a colourful harvest festival when people went on pilgrimage to Jerusalem and sacrifices were offered in the Temple (John 7:2).

Shavuot – also known as Pentecost. In Hebrew the word means “weeks”, representing the end of a seven week period, the counting of which commences at Passover and culminates on Shavuot with a harvest festival. Shavuot also came to be associated with God’s revelation of the Torah to the Children of Israel at Mount Sinai. Today this festival is celebrated by eating dairy foods, especially cheese cake. In remembrance of the revelation at Mt Sinai, Jews also stay up late on Shavuot night studying sacred texts. In the time of Jesus this was celebrated by a pilgrimage to the Temple in Jerusalem and bringing the first

fruits of the harvest to the priests as an offering.

According to Acts 2:1-41, Pentecost marked a turning point in the early Christian church. Pentecost was celebrated fifty days after Passover and pilgrims had come to Jerusalem from all over the world to celebrate the event. The Twelve Apostles were gathered in a house when a terrific wind came from heaven and filled the place. They saw tongues that looked like fire that separated and came down on each of them. The apostles are described as immediately being filled with the Holy Spirit who caused them to speak in tongues. The crowds of visitors were astonished because every pilgrim heard the apostles speaking to him or her in their own foreign language.

Chanukah – translated as the Festival of Dedication. It celebrates the victorious revolt of Maccabees against the Syrian Greeks who desecrated the Temple. When the Maccabees recaptured the Temple they cleansed it and re-dedicated it as the house of God, hence the “Feast of Dedication.” In the Talmud, the story is told that when the Jews entered the Temple they found only enough oil to light the Menorah [the seven-branched candlestick in the Temple] for one day. Miraculously it lasted for eight days, the duration of which the festival is observed today. The celebration of Chanukah centres on the lighting of candles – one on the first night, two on the second and so forth. Special foods cooked in oil are eaten and children receive Chanukah gifts.

Yom Hashoah – a solemn day of remembrance of the six million European Jews murdered by the Nazis during the Holocaust. In Israel, since the early 1960s, a siren sounds at 11.00am. Traffic stops and people throughout the country observe a two minute silence to respect and remember. As this is a contemporary calendar event it has no relevance to Jesus’ time.

Yom Ha’atzma’ut – translated as [Israeli] Independence Day. The day celebrates the formal establishment of the modern State of Israel, when members of the provisional government read and signed a Declaration of Independence in Tel Aviv on May 14, 1948. This is a day of celebration and festivity for Jews both in Israel and the Diaspora. Yom Ha’atzma’ut is preceded by a national day of mourning [Yom Ha-Zikaron] for the fallen Israeli soldiers. As with Yom Hashoa this has no relevance to Jesus’ time.

*It should be noted that these holidays and fast days commence at sunset and end with the appearance of 3 stars the next evening (or when there ought to be 3 stars if the sky is cloudy).

PAGE 6: BELIEF AND RITUAL GALLERY

Q9a. This passage from Luke refers to Jesus' attendance at the synagogue in Nazareth on the Sabbath, noting that this "was his custom." (In fact, a number of other passages in the Gospels also place Jesus in a synagogue – Mark 1:21, 3:1 and Luke 6:6 and 13:10). On this particular occasion, Jesus is described as unrolling the scroll of the prophet Isaiah and locating a passage which describes the mission of God's "anointed" [Hebrew: *mashiach* = messiah]. This passage from Luke is a good example of how the Gospel writers drew on prophetic writings in the Hebrew Scriptures to represent Jesus' messianic status as a fulfillment of biblical prophecy.

Q9b. In present day synagogues, the reading of the Torah is punctuated by the recitation of blessings by individuals who are publicly honoured by being called to the Torah. In Orthodox synagogues, only males over 13 years [the age of Barmitzvah] are called to the Torah, whereas in non-Orthodox egalitarian congregations females over 12 years (the age of Batmitzvah) are also called to the Torah. However, a small number of more progressive Orthodox synagogues have developed some creative ways of enabling women to be called to the Torah as well.

In the passage from Luke, Jesus is described as reading from one of the prophetic books rather than the Torah. In synagogues today, the Torah reading is followed by a reading [known as the *Haftara*] taken from the second division of the Hebrew Bible, referred to as "Prophets" [Joshua, Judges, Samuel, Kings]. The reading from "Prophets" is thematically connected to the designated Torah reading. The tradition of reading from the Prophets is referred to not only in Luke 4:16-17, but also in the Book of Acts (13:14-15, 27). However the verses from Isaiah which were read by Jesus are not included in any of the *Haftara* readings in today's synagogues.

Q9c. Aspects of Jewish religious life mentioned in the New Testament and associated with Jesus' life as a Jew.

Brit Mila - this is the religious ceremony of circumcision which, beginning with Abraham, symbolises the covenant between God and Israel. Jewish boys are circumcised on the 8th day after their birth, just as Abraham circumcised his son, Isaac. It is at this ceremony that Jewish boys are named. Jesus was circumcised on his 8th day and also given his name (Luke 2:21). Refer also to:

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/life/Life_Events/Newborn_Ceremonies/Liturgy_Ritual_and_Customs/For_Boys.shtml

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Circumcision_of_Jesus

Kosher Food – the word "kosher" means "fit" [that is, fit for consumption]. Kosher foods are those that conform to Jewish dietary rules. A list of kosher foods is found in Leviticus 11:1-47 and Deuteronomy 14:3-20, as are also certain kosher

rules. Only certain kinds of animals are considered inherently kosher. For land animals, any creature that both chews its cud and has split hooves is kosher. For sea creatures, any fish that has both fins and scales is acceptable, and for birds, only those birds approved by the Torah (or others that later authorities have judged to be like them, a list that excludes scavengers and birds of prey). The rabbis in the Talmud further developed the kosher laws. Thus, in order to consume kosher land animals and birds, it is necessary to slaughter them in a ritually prescribed manner. For example, the animal must be in excellent physical condition and an extremely sharp knife must be used to cut the jugular vein. In addition, the prohibition of cooking a baby goat [a kid] in its own mother's milk [repeated three times in the Torah] forms the basis of the complete, physical separation of all milk and meat products as well as meat and milk dishes and cooking utensils. Salting and draining of the meat takes place to remove all blood which is not consumed. **Refer also to Q.24b below.** For further information: http://www.myjewishlearning.com/practices/Ritual/Kashrut_Dietary_Laws.shtml

Given that Jesus was a product of 1st century Judaism, where, both in Israel and the Diaspora, the food laws and Sabbath observance were central and defining aspects of Jewish life, one could reasonably assume that he abided by the kosher food laws of the time. What then is to be made of the statement in Mark 7:19b that Jesus "declared all foods clean"? After all, it would be difficult to imagine Jesus so casually abandoning the Jewish dietary laws. In the *Jewish Annotated New Testament* (edited by Amy-Jill Levine & Marc Zvi Brettler), Lawrence M. Wills writes: "The declaration may reflect Mark's rejection of Jewish food laws" (p.74). In other words, this declaration can be seen as **Mark's** extrapolation from what Jesus said. Wills also notes that "this may have been added when the Gospel was brought into an understanding of Jesus' teaching that was compatible with Paul." Moreover, he argues that "concerning Jesus' own teaching on this point, it is unlikely that the controversy over Torah among the early followers of Jesus would have been as intense if there had been a tradition going back to him that nullified Torah in this way." In this connection it should be noted that Peter and Paul debated the issue of food laws (Galatians) and the Jerusalem Council (Acts 15) had to adjudicate the question, with no one ever appealing to Jesus. Wills thus concludes that "v.19 likely goes beyond Jesus' own practice even if he had said v.15".

Synagogue – This is a place of worship, communal gathering and religious study. The focal point of the synagogue is the Ark where the Torah scrolls are housed. It can be said that the Ark is similar in importance to the place occupied by the Altar in a Church. There is evidence of synagogues in 1st century Israel, the most notable being a synagogue in Magdala near Capernaum, dated to the 1st century. There are, in fact, a number of references in the Gospels to Jesus attending the synagogue [Mark 1:21, 3:1 and Luke 4:16, 6:6 and 13:10]. Indeed, the reference

in Luke 4 notes that this “was his custom.” [See notes on 9a. and 9b. above]. See also: <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/14160-synagogue>

<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/14379b.htm>

Torah – narrowly defined this refers to “The Torah”, the first five books of the Hebrew Bible, copied by a scribe onto a scroll made from the skin of a kosher animal and placed inside the synagogue Ark. Judaism draws a distinction between the Written Torah and the Oral Torah, discussed more fully in the opening section of these notes. The term Torah can also be used to refer to the whole body of Jewish religious teaching.

According to traditional Jewish belief, “The Torah” is the word of God which was revealed to Moses at Mt Sinai. As the word of God, the commandments of the Torah [613 in number according to rabbinic interpretation] are therefore seen as authoritative and binding upon the lives of Jews. As a 1st century practising Jew, Jesus would have lived his life around the requirements of the Torah, a point emphasised in Matthew 5:17-18. It has already been noted that Jesus observed Jewish festivals [8a. above], attended the Temple [2b. & 2c. above], would have also worn *tzizit* and possibly *tefillin* [5.& 6. above]. Living as he did in the midst of a sectarian Jewish world that comprised a diverse range of religious beliefs and ideologies, Jesus necessarily took part in debates and discussions that various Jewish groups in his day had about the requirements of the Torah - what they meant and how they were to be applied to one’s life. In this connection, Martin Forward [Jesus – A Short Biography] writes:

Jesus treated the Law with sovereign freedom: tightening it in some respects (especially divorce), but relaxing it in others. The fact that he may have agreed with the Sadducees against the Pharisees on certain issues illustrates that interpreting the Law was as essential occupation for many Jewish intellectuals, so as to root it in the realities and possibilities of people’s lives. Nobody would have worried about the principle of interpreting the Law; some may have worried a great deal about the details of how it was interpreted.

PAGE 9: MAP ACTIVITIES

Q10. Significant places in the NT:

Mark 10:46 – Jericho – Where Jesus healed a blind man called Bartmaeus

Luke 7:11 – Nain – Jesus went from there to Capernaum, healing the slave of a centurion. Luke 4:16 – Nazareth – Where Jesus went to the synagogue

Mark 2:1 – Capernaum – Where Jesus healed the paralysed man and forgave him his sins Matthew 26:6 – Bethany – Where a woman poured a jar of ointment over Jesus. The disciples were annoyed with the poor woman and Jesus told them not to reprimand the woman.

Luke 24:13 – Emmaus - Was a site of a resurrection appearance. Two disciples, Cleopas and one other, walked from Jerusalem to Emmaus.

Q12. This map is approximately to scale. The walking distance measured is “as the crow flies” which is not necessarily what the walking route would be. However, the point here is not the exact distances, but more the idea that when we read about Jesus’ journeys, we understand them in terms of human effort and timing.

Bethany to Jerusalem	distance = 3 km	less than an hour to walk
Caesarea to Tiberias	distance = 70 km	15 hours of walking
Bethlehem to Jericho	distance = 25 km	5 hours of walking
Nazareth to Capernaum	distance = 30 km	6 hours of walking

PAGE 10: WHO IS THE BOSS

Missing Words: Italian **archaeologist** Dr Antonia Frova found a section of **inscribed** rock that mentions Pontius Pilate as a prefect of Judaea representing the Roman Emperor Tiberius. This rock was part of the ancient city of Caesarea which was named in honour of Emperor Augustus. This city was built by **Herod**. When Judaea was a province of the Roman Empire, Caesarea Maritima became its capital. This was where the Roman Legions lived as did Pontius **Pilate**.

Q16. Herod's building achievements:

Shaye D. Cohen: The actual building of the Temple could fit inside the infield of any baseball stadium. However, the large structure all around it, the large plaza, the porticos, the columns, the staircases, all of that, were built up by Herod the Great on a monumental scale, filling up, I think something like ten football fields... So we have then a very large, very conspicuous, grandiose, grand structure in the center of Jerusalem which attracted pilgrims from near and far, both Jews and Gentile.
<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/temple.html>

L. Michael White: Herod's building programs, both in Caesarea, and throughout the countryside are very extensive. And this is seen, especially in the city of Jerusalem itself. It appears that Herod thought of Jerusalem as his showpiece. He really wanted to make it a place where people would come, just as people would have gone to Athens or Rome, or the great cities of the Mediterranean world. And so, when Herod built the city, or helped to rebuild the city, he did so on a monumental scale. And this can be seen in the rebuilding of the Temple. If we move around the Temple complex, which we can still see standing today, at least on its foundation levels, you see the monumental size of it. You look up forty feet on certain sides. And yet, that wall is really just the foundation course. The Temple itself stood up above with gleaming pillars and lots of marble. And so, it was really quite impressive. It was meant to be a showplace.

See also <http://www.followtherabbi.com/world/article/herod-the-builder> and <http://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/102009327>

PAGE 12: RUNNING A COUNTRY

Q17. Roman decisions: to collect more taxes, to punish by crucifixion, to condemn a person to death, to create an army, to attend the chariot races in Caesarea, to decide on the rights of Jews.

Jewish decisions: to conduct a meeting of the Sanhedrin, to organise Temple affairs, to organise the education of the people, how to observe the Sabbath as a day of rest, to allow people to convert to Judaism.

Combined decisions: to build major cities and buildings, to build the aqueducts to supply fresh water, to punish rebellion.

Q18. Regarding the question of Jewish attitudes to Roman rule, Michael Avi-Yonah, in *The Jews of Palestine*, writes:

From the earliest days of their subjection to Roman government the Jews of Palestine evolved four attitudes towards foreign rule: one positive, one moderate, one neutral and one hostile.

Those who approved Roman rule outright were always a small minority among the Jews. They derived their importance from their superior social standing and from the fact that their Roman friends had confided to them the reins of government. This group included the House of Herod and its followers, and many of the high priestly families... The fateful decision whether the Jews should acquiesce in Roman rule or whether they continue to shake off its yoke depended mainly on the attitude of the neutral or middle party. This was due both to its middle stance between two extremes, and also because it included the mass of the common people, which kept away from politics and was almost exclusively interested in worshipping in freedom and making a living (p.64-65).

Lawrence Schiffman [<http://lawrenceschiffman.com/research/jesus/>] makes an interesting observation regarding the question of whether Jesus can be regarded as a rebel or revolutionary, Lawrence Schiffman's observation is:

There are some scholars who maintain that Jesus was actually an armed revolutionary, a so-called "social bandit," part of a class of rebels that existed throughout the Roman Empire, even in Judea. Following this theory, ABC put on its own competitor to "The Passion" called "Judas." In ABC's program, Judas turns in Jesus because he becomes disaffected with Jesus' refusal to lead an armed struggle. Although some scholars have argued for this theory, there is simply no evidence at all to support it.

To the Romans, Jesus was like all the other rebels. So the Romans put a sign over his head on the crucifix reading "King of the Jews." The reality is that Jesus was executed by the Romans because they mistakenly thought that his kingdom of God and the messianic ideas that he preached were going to set off a violent revolution, and Pilate was afraid that this would cost him his job.

In support of this view, Craig Keener in his study of *The Historical Jesus of the Gospels* notes that:

It is not difficult to see how some would have understood [Jesus'] popular appeal to the masses and open challenges to some social customs as potential political threats. Indeed, his preaching about God's "kingdom" could not but have some sort of political implications whether achieved in the present or the (possibly near) future, through human agents or without them" (p.10-11).

PAGE 13: GROUPS IN JEWISH SOCIETY

Q19. A number of very good sources of information about the various Jewish groups in 1st century Israel can be found at <http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/pages/frontline/shows/religion/portrait/judaism.html>, <https://bible.org/series/religious-world-jesus> and http://catholic-resources.org/Bible/Jewish_Groups.htm

Am-ha'aretz: According to Lawrence Schiffman, a leading scholar of the Second Temple period,

The largest number of Jews in the late Second Temple period was part of an amorphous group usually termed the *am ha-aretz* ["the people of the land"]. This group constituted the traditional Jewish peasantry who practice the "common Judaism" of the late Second Temple Period. They observed the Sabbath and festivals and basic purity regulations, worshipping on festival days in the Temple. But these Jews were not so strict in following the laws of tithing agricultural produce or in maintaining the Temple purity of non-sacral food. These Jews were uninvolved in the disputes of the elites, yet most seemed to have supported and followed the Pharisaic leaders and a small number entered the nascent Jesus movement in the mid-first century (Lawrence Schiffman, *At the Crossroads: the Jewish-Christian Schism*) http://www.jcrelations.net/At_the_Crossroads__The_Jewish-Christian_Schism.22170.html?L=3

Pharisees: Josephus reports that they were the most popular among the common people. They were lay teachers of the Torah and were the forerunners of the Rabbinic sages [after the destruction of the Temple in 70CE]. They specialized in biblical interpretation and Jewish law. Their basic approaches to the law and their attachment to the "traditions of the fathers" later termed the Oral Law, were considerably advanced. According to Schiffman [see above] "New Testament reports indicate that their social and ethical vision was that adopted by earliest Christianity although Jesus and his followers appear to have taken a more lenient view of certain aspects of Jewish law such as the Sabbath." The Pharisees' beliefs included the resurrection of the dead, reward and retribution in a life after death, a day of Judgment, and the coming of a Messiah at the end of days. They

also believed in angels and ministering spirits that linked God to men and women.

Sadducees: They represented the priestly group which, for much of the Second Temple Period, controlled the high priesthood. By the Herodian period, Sadducean priests represented those who were willing to accommodate Roman rule and often compromised religious strictures for reasons of personal appetite or political advantage. But originally the Sadducees had been pious priests who had sought to serve God in the Temple in accord with their traditions and legal rulings. Remnants of the pious Sadducees existed up until the destruction of the Temple in 70 C.E. and according to Lawrence Schiffman, other elements of this group may have constituted the core of what became the Dead Sea Qumran sect. The Sadducees rejected the Pharisees' attachment to the "traditions of the fathers" and accepted as authoritative only that which was contained in the [Written] Torah. They also rejected the Pharisaic belief in the resurrection of the body after death and the idea of rewards and punishment in the afterlife.

Essenes: This religious sect was founded during the Hasmonean period in the 2nd century BCE and flourished at the time of Jesus. They are commonly identified with the Dead Sea sect community of Qumran. The sect's members lived in isolated semi-monastic communities, though the question of whether they were celibate is a subject of debate. The Essenes lived lives of poverty and simplicity and held all property in common, though the community was a very hierarchical one, with Priests occupying the upper ranks. Their founder was known as the Teacher of Righteousness. The Essenes made Torah study central to their daily life and were meticulous in observing all the laws of ritual purity. The Essenes separated themselves from what they saw as the corrupted practices of the Temple establishment in Jerusalem and therefore did not bring their sacrifices to the Temple. Indeed, they believed that they alone were the true Israel who would triumph in an apocalyptic struggle of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness.

Zealots: The Zealots were an agglomeration of political/religious groups of rebels who emerged in the land of Israel during the Roman occupation. In terms of their religious beliefs, they were probably closest to the Pharisees. However, unlike the Pharisees they incited the people to stop paying taxes to the Roman authorities and to take up arms against their Roman overlords. They believed that no mortal (the Roman Emperor) should rule where God alone was Ruler and Master. Violent struggle was therefore seen as divinely ordained. The gathering of large crowds, especially in Galilee, was seen by the Romans as a threat to good order. The Zealots made their last stand against the Romans in 73CE at Masada where they committed suicide rather than surrender.

Scribes: The Scribes [Hebrew *soferim*] had the important skills of being able to read and write in a society that was

mainly illiterate. This meant that the Scribes were involved in many aspects of community life. They could be the village's nominated writer, or the transcribers of official documents, or the copyists whose skills were enlisted to create important religious articles such as Torah scrolls or the short pieces of text that were inserted in the *tefillin* or *mezuzoth* that were placed on the doorposts of a Jewish house. Scribes had a thorough understanding of the Torah's laws and they were also teachers of Torah. Within the Temple framework, the Scribes were occupied with recording, teaching, and ruling on points of law in the Sanhedrin, the Jewish Supreme Court. They were thus regarded as the learned guardians of the Law. At the same time, because they would have depended on the wealthy for their training and their positions, they were loyal to the chief priests and leaders. In later rabbinic texts, such as the Mishnah, they are presented as pre-rabbinic teachers with authority, but in the period following the destruction of the Temple in 70CE, the roles of the Scribe and the Sage were assimilated into the title of Rabbi.

In the New Testament, Mark portrays scribes as high officials, advisers to the chief priests, and teachers of the Law. Matthew presents them as the learned of Judaism, leaders of the community. Luke portrays them as an appendage of the Pharisees, learned men who were protecting Judaism and leaders who were associated with the Chief Priests. In the Gospels' depictions of their encounters with Jesus, they tend to be portrayed as opponents of Jesus together with the High Priests and Pharisees, though in Mark 12 a scribe approves of Jesus' teaching and Jesus also praises him.

Q 20. The groups represented by these pictures are:

- Man sitting on the floor cross legged in white – Essene
- Man standing proudly wearing red tunic with fringes - Sadducee
- Man sitting with scrolls – Scribe
- Man with a weapon in his hand – Zealot
- Man walking holding scroll – Pharisee
- Woman holding a farming implement – Am Ha'aretz

Q 21. The traditional Jewish system of naming is that a person is referred to by their given name and then their father's name – e.g., Solomon the son of David, Yeshu the son of Joseph. In Hebrew the term 'son of' is replaced by the Hebrew word *ben*, and 'daughter of' is replaced by the Hebrew word *bat*. However, people were also named according to their place of birth (Jesus of Nazareth, Mary Magdalene) or job (tax collector or scribe).

PAGE 15: LIFESTYLE

Housing and Buildings

Q 22a. We know from archaeological findings that stones were used for the building of the houses of ordinary people.

Q 22b. This was the case because there were plenty of stones available in Israel, many parts of which consisted of a rocky loose-stoned terrain.

Q 22c. There would have been no glass windows and no indoor plumbing/toilets. Water was collected at the well, though some wealthier homes had their own ritual bath which was filled using rainwater. Often there was a cooking fire in the main room.

Jobs

Q 23a. In the 1st century in Israel, just like today, there were certain jobs that would have located a person higher up the socio-economic ladder.

Lower class: included subsistence farmers as well as labourers who worked as stone carriers, farm workers, and fishermen. Slave ownership was an accepted part of society, though slaves in ancient Israel enjoyed greater rights than those in other parts of the ancient world. Since the family was the basic social unit and men were the breadwinners, widows and orphans formed a particularly vulnerable group within society; which is why the Bible emphasises the importance of caring for their needs. At the lowest end of the social spectrum were unemployable groups such as lepers and the disabled who may have been beggars. This was a recognized "job".

Middle class: largely concentrated in towns and urban centres and included those who earned their living as merchants, artisans and craftsmen [e.g., stone cutters, sculptors, metal and wood workers, cloth weavers and dyers, goldsmiths and silversmiths], builders, traders and merchants, butchers and bakers, money changers, and tax collectors. Lower-level priests, Scribes and Pharisees formed part of this socio-economic group.

Upper classes: included the upper echelons of the Temple hierarchy including the High Priest and the landed aristocracy who included many Sadducees within their ranks.

Q 23b. Jesus' father worked as a carpenter which was a respected job. If Joseph's carpentry shop benefited from the boom in the construction industry at the time in Sepphoris near Nazareth, Jesus and his family might have moved up the ladder from the poor people they seemed to be at his birth (compare Leviticus 12:7-8 and Luke 2:24) into the lower end of the middle class. According to Mark, Jesus was a carpenter too. It was common for parents to teach their trade to their children.

Food

Q 24a. Jewish food rules are called kosher food rules. Kosher means “fit” that is, fit for consumption. Many of these rules are found in the Torah, but others are part of the Oral Law developed by the ancient Rabbis. Jews living during the time of Jesus would have followed the food laws as set out in the Bible and possibly those that resulted from the traditions of the Pharisees.

Q 24b. See note on “Kosher food” under Q9c. as well as the following points:

- Before being consumed, meat is salted and drained to make sure all blood is removed in keeping with the prohibition against consuming blood in Genesis 9:4.
- Birds are treated as meat products and as such cannot be served with dairy foods.
- Due to the required separation between meat and milk, observant Jews wait one to six hours [depending on local custom] between eating meat and dairy products, and 30 minutes between dairy and meat products [this was not the practice at the time of Jesus].
- A religious supervisory organisation [in Melbourne, “Kosher Australia”] oversees the production of kosher foods and many foods that are deemed acceptable these days have a small logo of the supervising authority on their packaging.
- The separation of meat and milk extends to the way a kosher kitchen is organised.. Thus, households which follow kosher have separate cooking pots, cutlery and plates for use with dairy and meat meals respectively. Separate tea towels, washing up sinks and sponges are also used.

Q 25a. Refer to the discussion of Mark 7:19 in the section on “kosher food” under Q9c.

Q 25b. This approach would have resulted in a separation between those loyal to Jewish Law and members of the nascent early Christian churches who might have seen in Mark’s declaration an abrogation of Jewish dietary laws. This would have resulted in Jews and these early Christians no longer eating together because of their different food practices.

Q 26. Food that would have available in this region in Jesus’ time are: dates, olives and olive oil, grapes, lamb spit, pita bread, water, honey, milk, cheese and wine

Women and Marriage

Q 27a. For a description of women in Jesus’ life see <http://www.gci.org/church/ministry/women6b>

Q 27b. The question of Jesus’ attitude to women is a complex one. Thus, a Google search of “women in the life of Jesus” leads to various websites which suggest that Jesus’ dealings with and his attitude to women was revolutionary, representing a radical departure from the Judaism of his day. For example, one of the authors cited in the above website [Q27a.] writes:

Although the gospel texts contain no special sayings repudiating the view of the day about women, their uniform testimony to the presence of women among the followers of Jesus and to his serious teaching of them constitutes a break with tradition which has been described as being ‘without precedent in [then] contemporary Judaism.’

On the other hand, in an interview with “U.S. Catholic”, Amy-Jill Levine argues:

The error here is the idea that 1st century Judaism was the equivalent of the Taliban and that Jesus invented feminism. I find that not only historically incorrect but also highly problematic, in part because it creates a sense of Jewish women as disempowered...

...The problem is, when one looks in the New Testament for Jesus being proactive on women, there’s precious little there.

He summons no woman from the community even as he summons Peter, Andrew, James, and John from the boats. There’s no woman at the Last Supper, there’s no woman at Gethsemane. There’s no woman among the Twelve.

Women may have been there and just got written out of the history. But you can’t make an argument on absence of evidence, so what did feminists do? They drop the bar on first-century Judaism: By making first-century Judaism appear to epitomize misogyny, then any time Jesus says anything good about women, he must be progressive. Jesus had women followers and women patrons; women were teachers and prophets and deacons and apostles and leaders of congregations in the movement that developed in his name. None of this should be surprising, since women had comparable roles in Jewish circles as well.

<http://www.uscatholic.org/church/2012/09/jewish-take-jesus-amy-jill-levine-talks-gospels>

For other interviews with Amy-Jill Levine regarding this issue see: http://www.explorefaith.org/resources/books/author_interviews/an_interview_with_amy-jill_levine.php <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2012/april/jesus-through-jewish-eyes.html?start=2>

Q 27c. In traditional Jewish thought marriage is regarded as the ideal human state and is considered a basic social institution established by God at the time of creation. Although procreation is not the sole purpose, a Jewish marriage is also traditionally expected to fulfill the commandment to have children (Genesis 1:28). However, some Jewish denominations such as Reform and Conservative Judaism, recognize same-sex marriage and deemphasize procreation, focusing on marriage as a bond between a couple.

Within the framework of Jewish law, marriage is, in fact, a contractual relationship, the conditions of which are set out in a marriage contract known as the *Ketubah*.

The marriage ceremony begins when the bride and groom sign the marriage contract before two witnesses. Then, supported by their parents, the groom and then the bride are escorted to stand beneath the marriage canopy (chuppah). The bride then circles the groom 7 times, though this is increasingly less practised outside of orthodoxy. The ceremony is divided into two parts, the blessings of betrothal are recited, the groom gives the bride a ring and wine is sipped. The text of the *Ketubah* is read out in Aramaic and English. The second part of the ceremony commences, and seven blessings are recited, wine is sipped again and the bridegroom smashes a glass underfoot in remembrance of the destruction of the Temple in Jerusalem.

See also http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/judaism/rites/weddings_1.shtml

Q 27d. Historically the *Ketubah* is a development from the scenario where the groom paid the bride's father what he wanted in return for the bride. The *Ketubah* obligates a husband to care for the bride to a certain standard; she is entitled unconditionally to receive food, clothing, and sexual satisfaction. It also specifies that in the event of the husband divorcing his wife he has to pay her a certain amount of money. To our modern eyes these things are suggestive of male superiority. However, from a historical point of view they represented a clear commitment to the rights of women and their protection.

Death and Burial

Q 28a. According to Jewish law, a dead person must be buried as quickly as possible. Once a person has died, their body is washed and dressed in a simple white gown; a man is also wrapped in his prayer shawl. In present day Israel, as in ancient times, bodies are placed directly into the ground, in keeping with the verse in Genesis 3:19, "you are dust and to dust you shall return." As for Jewish burials outside Israel, a simple wooden coffin is used, symbolic of the idea that in death there are no distinctions between rich and poor. The formal mourning period, in which no work is done, lasts for 7 days for immediate family: parent, wife, sibling or child. The mourners stay at home and visitors deliver food so as to enable the mourners to focus their minds on the memory of their departed. Prayers for the dead eg the *Kaddish* are recited during regular prayer sessions.

As Jewish burial and mourning traditions evolved over time, it is difficult to be precise as to which of these were followed in Jesus' day. However, biblical law which was observed at the time, calls for a speedy burial. Contact with a corpse rendered one ritually impure and required immersion in a ritual bath. Consequently, priests were prohibited from having contact with the dead. In the 1st century people were often buried in caves or crypts, and after about 12 months the family would go to the crypt and remove the bones which would then be placed in an ossuary.

See also <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/rs/death/judeathritesrev1.shtml>

Q 28b. According to the chronology of the Synoptic Gospels [Mark, Matthew, Luke], Jesus' Last Supper was celebrated at night [a Thursday] as a Seder meal, which also marked the commencement of the Passover festival. His trial and crucifixion took place the next day, Friday, the first day of the Passover festival. According to the chronology in John, Jesus' crucifixion also took place on the Friday, but at the very moment when the Passover lamb was being sacrificed in the Temple. This occurred **prior** to the commencement of the actual Passover festival that evening. The distinction is an important one, because as noted above [Q28a], biblical tradition called for a speedy burial. However, a burial could not take place on a Sabbath or a festival day. Consequently, John's chronology is a more likely one, since the Passover festival had not yet commenced, thus allowing for the burial to proceed. However, the Synoptic chronology is problematic, as the Friday would have been the first day of the Passover festival when a burial could not proceed; nor, for that matter, on the following day which would have been the Sabbath. Moreover, since a Jewish court could not be convened on the Sabbath or during a festival, the idea of the Sanhedrin coming together on the night of Passover to try Jesus [as per the Synoptic accounts] seems most unlikely.

Language

Q 29a. In 1st century Israel, people spoke Aramaic. We know this from the inscriptional data discovered by archaeologists, and from reports of Roman and Jewish historians.

Q 29b. Jewish Palestinian Aramaic, also called Galilean Aramaic, was a Western Aramaic language spoken by the Jews in Israel in the 1st century. Its closest relatives are Samaritan Aramaic and Christian Palestinian Aramaic. The language is notable for being that spoken by Jesus. According to Dead Sea Scrolls archaeologist, Yigael Yadin, Aramaic was the spoken language of Jews until Simon bar Kokhba tried to restore Hebrew as the short-lived official language of Jews during the anti-Roman Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135 CE). Yigael Yadin noticed the shift from Aramaic to Hebrew during the time of Bar Kokhba revolt (132-135 CE). In the New Testament there are several names accompanied by the term "Bar" – for example, Bar'abbas. The Aramaic word bar means "son of", which is equivalent to the Hebrew ben. For information about the Aramaic alphabet see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aramaic_alphabet - Scroll down to the chart titled "Imperial Aramaic alphabet."

Education

Q 29c. In Australia, before schooling was compulsory, whether or not one received an education was entirely at the discretion of a child's parents or guardians. If a family had the means, they would educate their children by employing tutors. Traditionally more emphasis was placed on the education of the boys; however girls were often taught things like reading, writing, languages, sewing, music and art. Boys would be taught reading, writing, mathematics and languages.

Q 29d. It is unlikely that there was a formal education system at the time of Jesus. This was not the way that society was structured. Life was hard, people needed to work to have enough food on their plates and children had an important role – they were working too. If a family had money they might organise for a teacher to come and teach the children.

Q 29e. There is no evidence of a system of public schooling in the 1st century in Israel. If Jewish children were familiar with the laws of Moses, this was most likely because of the public readings of the Torah in public spaces. The education of children of the rich could have involved learning to read and write and receiving a classical education from a private tutor. But for the majority of children education probably would have only extended to parental instruction in some craft. Thus it may be that Jesus was taught some carpentry skills by his father. However, there were some individuals who would get together to learn. They would meet regularly and would have a master teacher who would instruct them – This was a disciple circle. In the gospels we read that Jesus was respected on an intellectual level by many including the Priests and some Pharisees. It was most likely that he participated in a disciple circle and had heard the Torah being read in public places. Interestingly, we read in Luke 2:46-47 that when Jesus was twelve years old, "They (Jesus' parents) found him in the Temple courts, sitting among the teachers, listening to them and asking them questions. Everyone who heard him was amazed at his understanding and his answers." (Luke 2:46-47)

Appendix E

Creative final project ideas

You may wish to consider one of the following projects to conclude your study of “The Jewish Context of the Life and Words of Jesus”. Each of these will provide an experiential and memorable experience for your students.

Movie making: students will put together a series of scenes about Jesus’ life. Some will act, others will design costumes, others will work on scenery and camera. The logistics of group sizes etc will be up to you but aim for a film festival where all the students will watch and enjoy each other’s efforts.

Fashion parade: students to research clothing for the different groups of people in 1st century Jerusalem. Students can design and create their own costumes to be worn for their first century fashion parade. This could be performed for the whole school and involve some students/ teachers acting as the host of the event.

1st century Israeli lunch: students research the foods from that part of the world. They can explore recipes and then student could bring part of the meal for a communal feast. It would be good if they also looked into the furniture of the time and tried to make their lunch look as authentic as possible.

1st century Jerusalem day at school: this would involve both the fashion parade and the lunch – a year for all.

Geography map/picture lesson: invite students to research using internet, library, travel booklets, travel guides etc – anything they can find out about Israel. Each student will then create a unique slide which will be combined to form a class PowerPoint presentation. The teacher might need to give additional guidance and direction here. so that there is no “doubling up” .

Group trip to Israel: wouldn’t this be great? OK to dream.....!!