

Presenting the New Testament

A Manual of Teaching Activities,
Commentary and Blackline Masters

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Introduction

Presenting the New Testament has been written for teachers in primary and secondary schools who teach the New Testament in classrooms. Those who work with New Testament students and readers in other settings will also find support for their work in these pages. The attempt has been to present options for teachers designing their programs that are broad and deep, to account for teacher preference, student diversity and the rich variety of texts contained in the New Testament. No one size can ever fit every class group, so this book has drawn on a range of approaches to presenting the biblical texts to contemporary students and readers.

The idea that supports the selection and presentation of material in this book has been, as far as possible, the principle: “show me, don’t tell me”. Explanations for the teacher of how to implement the ideas in this book have been kept to a minimum. The intention is that each teacher is likely to “recognise” the strategy or activity that best suits their purpose in any given context. So, if one teaching and learning idea does not seem to suit, or is not immediately obvious on first encounter, you might choose to move on to other options. Teachers are encouraged to approach this book as a spur to their own creativity. An idea that is seen in this book may be a catalyst to fresh and vibrant ideas drawn from the teacher’s own storehouse of educational possibilities. Where appropriate, a website address is provided for teachers who might wish to seek further information on an idea they read about in this book.

Another consequence of the act of showing is the hope that an idea or insight that is specifically presented in relation to one topic, might feasibly be applied just as effectively - the necessary changes being made - to an unrelated topic, another year level or even some other curriculum area. The idea that the teaching and learning approaches used in the religion classroom might match and be interchangeable with other curriculum areas is conscious and intentional. The aims of a school’s classroom religion program match those of the school’s other curriculum areas. The classroom religion program ought to fit into the school’s total classroom curriculum offering. It should look and feel the same as other classroom programs; the nature of the teaching and learning activities employed in the classroom religion program will help to reinforce this perception.

The focus of all efforts to teach the New Testament ought to be students’ learning. The broad intention of all classroom programs, including the classroom religion program, is to increase a student’s understanding. How students deploy that understanding in their own lives is a matter for them. Some students may want to become mathematicians or art critics as a result of their classroom experiences; some may wish to become biblical scholars as a consequence of their classroom studies. What the effect of any of their school studies might have on their personal religious faith is not a matter for the classroom teacher. It should be clear that faith development and personal sharing of faith is a noble goal. The limitations of the compulsory school classroom to achieve these faith development aims must be acknowledged and respected.

The materials provided in this book do not presume on the part of students a personal response in faith to the study of the New Testament. If students who study the New Testament come to know and cherish these scriptures, then that outcome is applauded but is not the primary intention of this book. Students can be invited to study the New Testament in a disciplined manner that increases their understanding and appreciation of these texts and their importance for culture, religion, law, literature, politics and more. They can become more articulate in their references to biblical material and make their own contribution to a world in great need of clear thought and intelligent discussion about religion.

The hope for this book is that it may offer some support to teachers seeking to design interesting and engaging classroom programs. Each chapter contains background information, teaching and learning ideas and strategies, classroom ready materials that can be implemented into programs with minimal modification, and suggestions for further exploration of ideas on relevant websites. Of course, the fundamental aim of this book is to show how teachers and students can engage with the biblical texts. This book is an adjunct to the other resources at the service of biblical study: bible dictionaries and commentaries, bible atlases, concordances, scholarly reports and books and more besides. This book seeks to provide educational resources at the teacher’s fingertips that shape and guide the material provided in these other texts.

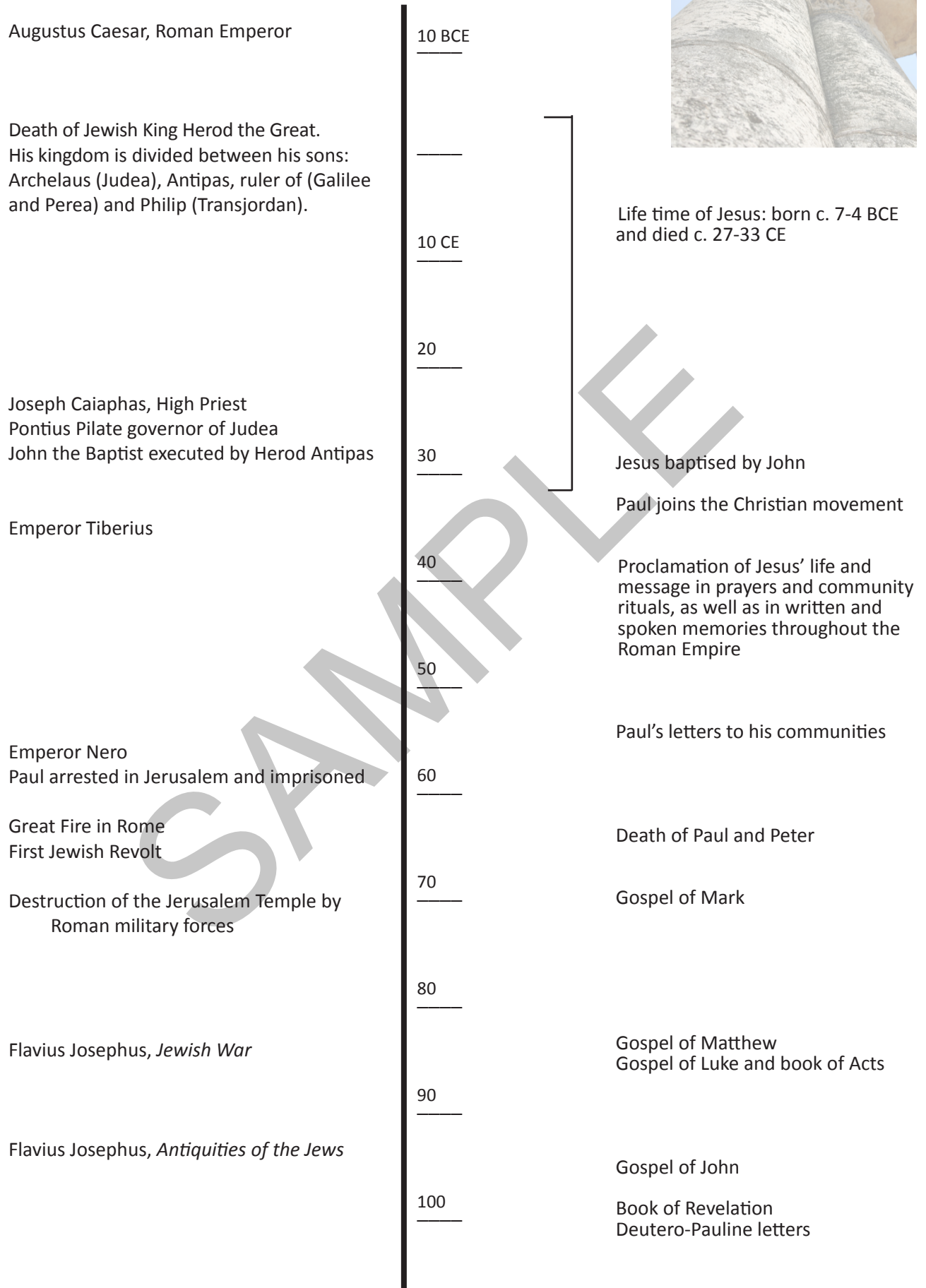
The sincere wish is that teachers find support for their work and encouragement in their search for inventive ways to appeal to the disciplined curiosity of students who seek to understand the New Testament texts.

Teaching the New Testament: Ten Drama Activities



ACTIVITY	EXPLANATION	WEB RESOURCES
Thought Tracking	Freeze the group of actors and invite everyone watching to provide the thoughts of one or more of the characters.	http://dramaresource.com/strategies/thought-tracking
Hot Seat Interview	A volunteer agrees to represent a character who responds to questions posed by the class.	http://dramaresource.com/strategies/hot-seating
Freeze Frame	The action in a scene is frozen as in a photograph. Audience members can be invited to comment on the image that is presented in still life.	http://dramaresource.com/strategies/still-images-a-freeze-frames
Conscience Alley	Students form into two facing lines. A character walks down the alley hearing advice from those lined up in the alley.	http://dramaresource.com/strategies/conscience-alley
Role Playing	Students suspend disbelief by stepping into the shoes of another character from the past, present or future.	http://dramaresource.com/strategies/role-play
Improvisation	Dialogue and action created in a spontaneous and continuous manner.	http://esldrama.weebly.com/what-is-improvisation.html
Forum Theatre	An audience advises actors how to tackle a scene. The actors re-run the scene following the advice.	http://dramaresource.com/strategies/forum-theatre
Flashback/ Flashforward	Performers improvise scenes that take place seconds, minutes, days or years before or after a dramatic moment.	http://dramaresource.com/strategies/flashbacks-and-flash-forwards
Narration	The teacher narrates a line or two from a story to begin the action or move it along and create atmosphere and direction.	http://dramaresource.com/strategies/narration
Teacher in Role	The teacher works with students as a fellow artist to set up, prompt, support and challenge the class in its role- playing.	http://artspop.org.au/drama-teacher_in_role_guide

Timeline of the New Testament



Writing, Projects and Multimedia Compositions

WRITING ASSIGNMENTS	MULTIMEDIA COMPOSITIONS	PUBLIC PROJECTS
Letters to the Editor	Create a website based on the topic	Host a public debate/Q&A/Hypothetical
Create Big Books for junior readers	Produce a photo book	Night of the Notables
Pamphlets	Multimedia Personality Profiles	Assemble a photo gallery display
Short story writing	Write digital stories	Readers Theatre
Travelogues and guides	Write a blog and post it online	Compile and produce a magazine
Case studies	Film a video documentary	Lead a school assembly
How-to Guides	Compose a WebQuest	Arrange a Guest Speakers' Series
Compose poems using set forms	Create a virtual museum tour	Arrange a partner school/class
Publish a newspaper/feature articles	Construct an online timeline	Write a column in the local paper
Create dictionary/glossary/encyclopedia	Compile a picture dictionary	Construct a public mural
Design advertising brochures	Design a screen saver	Design a statue, monument, artwork
Radio plays	Create a podcast	Design a logo and brand image
Narrative re-tellings	Build a database	Conduct a survey
Six Word Stories	Make a MTV video of a poem/song	Conduct <i>A Day in Ancient Israel</i>
Picture books	Produce a website theme index	Curate a museum display of artifacts
Write a play script	Contact email/pen-pals	Produce and perform a play
Collect, edit, compile and publish a book of poems/sayings/texts....	Design and create a virtual field trip and virtual tour	Public Performance: concert, recital, painting, fashion show....

Prayers in the New Testament

Elizabeth's blessing for Mary LUKE 1:42
Blessed are you among women and blessed is the fruit of your womb.

Song of the angels LUKE 2:14
Glorify to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favours.

Prayer of the blind man at Jericho LUKE 18:38
Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!

Prayer of the repentant thief LUKE 23:42
Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom.

Prayer of the centurion at Capernaum MATTHEW 8:8
Lord, I am not worthy to have you come under my roof, but only speak the word and my servant will be healed.

Triumphal entry into Jerusalem MATTHEW 21:9
Hosanna to the son of David! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord! Hosanna in the highest heaven!

The father of a spirit-possessed child MARK 9:24
I believe, Lord, help my unbelief.

Jesus in the garden of Gethsemane MARK 14:36
Abba, Father, for you all things are possible; remove this cup from me; yet not what I want, but what you want.

Paul's blessing of glory ROMANS 15:5-6
May the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in harmony with one another, in accordance with Christ Jesus, so that together you may with one voice glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Paul's blessing of peace PHILIPPIANS 4:7-9
And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

Paul's prayer of thanksgiving 1 CORINTHIANS 1:4-5, 8
I give thanks to my God always for you because of the grace of God that has been given you in Christ Jesus, for in every way you have been enriched in him, in speech and knowledge of every kind. He will also strengthen you to the end, so that you may be blameless on the day of our Lord Jesus Christ.

LONGER PRAYERS

The Beatitudes	MATTHEW 5:3-11	The Magnificat	LUKE 1:46-55
Prayer of Simeon (<i>Nunc Dimittis</i>)	LUKE 2:29-32	Song of Zechariah	LUKE 1:68-79
Christ, first born of the dead	COLOSSIANS 1:11-20	Paul's blessings	EPHESIANS 1:3-10
Song of the suffering Christ	1 PETER 2:21-24	Song of Moses	REVELATION 15:3-4

Jesus' Place and Time

2

Jesus was Jewish. He lived his life in a Jewish milieu during a time when his community experienced memories of generations of colonial rule. But this title, "Jewish" is still too general, even vague, to describe someone who lived an observant life in a rural community in the northern region of Roman Palestine. We need to gain an understanding of a person who was shaped by multiple commitments, including his own family and kinship networks, his social class, his religious involvements and political outlook, and his understanding of male and female roles and responsibilities.

His home region of Galilee had been subject to successive military conquerors over many centuries who had imposed their rule upon the local people. Jesus shared with our own time at least one similarity. Just as our age is experiencing "globalisation" where cultures and people are encountering each other in ways never before witnessed in human history, the people of Jesus' era witnessed the unification of the Mediterranean world under the military-backed power of, first Greek, and then Roman rulers. This "globalisation" added a Greco-Roman veneer to all life in the Mediterranean world - language, architecture, religion, trade, commerce and cultural identity all were influenced. With the conquests of Alexander the Great in the fourth century BCE, many Jews and their neighbours began a thousand-year attraction towards Greek culture.

Jews from all walks of life adopted aspects of Greco-Roman culture, which, for many, promised a way to political influence and improved social standing. Many wrote in Greek, decorated their houses with the latest styles from the main urban centres and some even adopted Greek names in addition to their Jewish names. You might think of the apostle to the Gentiles, Paul, whose Jewish name was Saul. Despite the invasion of Greco-Roman culture, many aspects of Jewish life remained distinctive and we should not imagine Greco-Roman culture completely over-running Jesus' home. Most Jews maintained observance of the commandments and laws of the Torah, especially dietary laws, the observance of sacred days and festivals and they refused to make graven images - a common feature of Greco-Roman art and architecture. Just how far Greco-Roman influence permeated village life in the Galilee during Jesus' lifetime is the source of on-going research and discussion.

Jesus in the Land of Galilee

According to the gospels, Jesus lived most of his life in Galilee. Galilee was and is a fertile agricultural region whose most dominant geographical features are a high mountain range in the north and a freshwater lake in the south. The lake, or inland sea, is small - about 20 kilometres long and around 12 kilometres at its widest point. The freshwater lake is home to significant fish stocks and is fed by rain and springs as well as streams of melting snow from the high ranges to the north in Upper Galilee. The terrain of Lower Galilee is contrary to modern popular images of a dry, stony desert. Images of Galilee as a desert have been fuelled by Hollywood movie scenes of Jesus travelling in arid zones among the dust and stones.

Certainly, the regions around Jerusalem in Judea were more arid and desert-like. But Judea and Jerusalem to the south of the Galilee were not Jesus' home and, according to the synoptic gospels, he spent only limited time there. It may be more instructive to recall Jesus' mention of the lilies of the field, the birds of the air and the grass of

the field (Matthew 6:26-33) as an indication of the kind of environment that shaped his consciousness. As a faithful, observant Jew, Jesus is remembered as someone who saw the natural world as the place of God. Jesus inherited his religion's belief that God's presence was available to people in the plants, animals, natural environment and the agricultural and aquacultural cycles. Although the gospel authors lived in a different time and probably a different place from Jesus and wrote their accounts for people who lived in mostly urban environments, still it is possible to see in what they wrote the importance of the natural environment for Jesus and his followers. Jesus was not an urban dweller. He grew up in a small village and seems to have avoided larger urban centres whenever he could, if we accept the gospel accounts about him.

To the extent possible, we need to imagine as we read the gospels the stories and events unfolding in a particular landscape whose ecology is an influence on the action. We can imagine, in this sense, the land as the "fifth gospel, torn but still legible" to use the phrase coined by the nineteenth century scholar, Ernest Renan.

The Jewish Identity of Jesus

The gospel authors provide clues to the nature of Jesus' Jewish identity. Mark 6:56 recounts this episode: "And wherever he went, into villages or cities or farms, they laid the sick in the market-places, and begged him that they might touch even the fringe of his cloak; and all who touched it were healed." According to this account, Jesus was wearing a fringed garment - a *tallith* - worn by observant Jewish men who followed the guidance of Torah to wear such clothing as a sign of their faithfulness. The ruling is given in the book of Numbers 15:37-40: "The Lord said to Moses: 'Speak to the Israelites, and tell them to make fringes on the corners of their garments throughout their generations and to put a blue cord on the fringe at each corner. You have the fringe so that, when you see it, you will remember all the commandments of the Lord and do them, and not follow the lust of your own heart and your own eyes. So you shall remember and do all my commandments, and you shall be holy to your God.'" The fringes are called *tzitzit*. They remind Jews of the 613 commandments (*mitzvot*) of the Torah.

Such distinctive Jewish features as food and clothing have been among the particular items upon which scholars have focused who have attempted to describe the *identity* of Jesus and not merely the *idea* of Jesus - the real, historical person who lived and died in a particular cultural context. A long tradition has emerged which has attempted to remove Jesus from his context as a Jewish male of the first century CE. In Christian tradition, artists have rendered Jesus in the likeness and image of their own context. Jesus looked, thought and acted like anyone who might have been walking past the artist's studio on the day of the painting.

Village Life in Galilee

According to the gospels, Jesus was born and lived in small Galilean villages, most notably Nazareth and Capernaum, both of which will be discussed below. We gain some sense from the gospels of what daily life was like for the people whom Jesus encountered in these villages. In the gospels we hear about day labourers and absentee landlords, widows, farm stewards, hired servants, scribal scholars, country priests, disabled beggars, and many more besides. But we need supplementary information provided by archaeologists and historians to provide a sharper focus to our view of the life and times in which Jesus pursued his dreams for a revitalised community.

Nazareth

The most enduring place associated with Jesus is Nazareth. The gospels identify him as Jesus of Nazareth, and this appellation has endured throughout Christian history. Given this prominence, we should probably be surprised at how little we know of this place as it was experienced by Jesus. It was a small village - somewhere around 200-400 people - in lower Galilee, in the hill country away from the Galilee lake. Despite the fact that both Matthew and Luke tell of him being born in Bethlehem, a southern village in Judea, he is referred to in the gospels and forever after as Jesus of Nazareth, but never as Jesus of Bethlehem. According to the gospels, he grew up in Nazareth with his parents, Mary and Joseph. Little is known about Nazareth at the time of Jesus. The village is not mentioned in the Hebrew bible, the literature of the rabbis, nor by the historian Josephus. It was not located on a major road. In no sense was it a prominent settlement.

Nazareth is mentioned only briefly in the gospels. The synoptic authors consider it to be Jesus' home town (Luke 4:16; Matthew 13:54; Mark 6.1). In John 1:45, Philip identifies Jesus as the "son of Joseph of Nazareth". The synoptic authors say that Jesus had relatives who lived in Nazareth but they and the towns-folk rejected Jesus and his

message in a direct and forceful manner (Matthew 13:54-58; Luke 4:16-30; Mark 6:1-6). Mark claims that Nazareth had a synagogue (Mark 6:2) but provides no details of its size, location or style of construction.

Capernaum

In adulthood, Jesus seems to have relocated to a small village - Capernaum - on the shores of the Galilee lake. Matthew says that he "made his home in Capernaum by the sea" after he left his childhood home village of Nazareth upon hearing news of the arrest of John the Baptist (Matthew 4:13). Matthew informs us that this relocation to a village by the Sea of Galilee fulfils the words of the prophet Isaiah who predicted that God "will make glorious the way of the sea, the land beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the nations" (Isaiah 9:1). Matthew thought that Jesus' location in a village next to the "Sea" of Galilee was a direct sign of Isaiah's predictions about the coming messiah, though it is likely Isaiah was thinking more about the Mediterranean Sea than the Galilee lake.

Mark 1:33 calls Capernaum a city, but this is certainly overstatement if we rely on the archaeological evidence. While larger than his home village of Nazareth, the Capernaum Jesus knew was small - maybe 1,000-1,500 people, though estimates vary - and possibly not as prosperous as other Galilean villages. It did have a toll house for the collection of customs and taxes. The location of a permanent centurion there may have been due to the fact that its location as a Galilean border town meant that some military muscle was required to ensure the efficient collection of taxes and customs duties (Luke 7:2). The Capernaum toll booth also is the setting for the story of Jesus calling Matthew in Matthew 9:9. Jesus was not from the established urban centres of Galilee. He lived in small, Jewish villages all of his life. The gospels have no record of him even visiting the large Galilean cities of Tiberias, Sepphoris or the self-governing, pagan city of Beth-Shean (Scythopolis) on the southern Galilean border. The gospels lead us to perceive his mission as directed to people like himself: Jews from the small villages and towns of Galilee. Images of rural life are liberally distributed throughout the gospels.

Herod Antipas

Herod Antipas ruled Galilee from 4 BCE until he was deposed in 39 CE. He was the son of Herod the Great who died in 4 BCE. Upon his father's death, he was appointed to rule the northern regions of Galilee and Perea. His father was a king, but he was appointed a tetrarch - a prince, as we might understand the term. While Luke 3:1 supplies this accurate term for his appointment, he is customarily described as King Herod in some gospel passages (see, for example, Mark 6:14). He certainly wanted to be a king, and petitioned Emperor Augustus for the right to be granted that title. In this and all things, Herod Antipas was dependent upon his client masters in Rome: he ruled Galilee on their say so. We gain a sense of the relationship between Antipas and his Roman masters from his action in founding the capital city of Galilee on the lake and calling it Tiberias. Josephus says that after this, Antipas rose to become one of the greatest friends of Emperor Tiberius.

The Herods were reliable contributors to the Roman treasuries, but exactly how much and how often these tributes were paid to Rome is not well documented and is consequently the subject of ongoing discussion by scholars. In any case, the money for their imperial bequests and civic works was extracted from the people who from time to time registered their displeasure at the financial burdens imposed on them. This does not mean that all Galileans rejected Herod Antipas. He was the first local ruler that Galilee had experienced in many years, and some welcomed the legal and administrative focus it brought to their region. Antipas was a Jewish buffer against the excesses of Roman provincial governors such as Pontius Pilate. He might not have been universally loved by the people he ruled, but most probably preferred him to be in charge of Galilee rather than a Roman governor with military back-up.

Like his father, Antipas was a builder. Josephus called Antipas "a lover of luxury". After his father's death he re-built his initial capital Sepphoris into a city that Josephus described as "the ornament of all Galilee". Its grand facades and elaborate decorations in the Greco-Roman style paid homage to the Roman aristocracy whose approval he craved and by whose grace and favour he ruled his people. But by 20 CE his attentions turned to Lake Galilee where he built his new capital at Tiberias. He forced people to live there, a task made difficult by its location above a former cemetery that rendered it unsuitable to its Jewish residents due to concerns about ritual purity and corpse contamination. The extravagant building program he established in Tiberias placed burdens on the physical and financial resources of the Galilean population. On the other hand, it provided stable employment for locals employed on the various public works programs.

Ten Activities for Teaching Jesus' Place and Time

SCALE MODEL OF GALILEE

Make a scale model of Roman Palestine. Basic requirements are a plywood board base, large quantities of papier maché, paints to indicate water and land features, labels for towns and other geographic features and a topographical map for reference.

DESIGN A GALILEAN VILLAGE

Design a village in Galilee from the time of Jesus. Imagine a village of 700-900 people. Take into account: water supply and storage, housing, family/clan/tribe loyalties and associations, economic production (crops, flocks, pottery making, fish salting...), religious needs, security and safety issues.

MUSEUM VISIT

Visit the Israel Museum, located in Jerusalem and review their current displays as well as their extensive archival material. The web address is: www.english.imjnet.org.il

ILLUSTRATED MAP

Make a copy of the map of Roman Palestine and glue it to a large cardboard sheet. Illustrate map features by gluing pictures, images and fact files to the cardboard sheet. Use string to connect the illustrations with areas on the map. Images can be found on the web, from tourist brochures and in encyclopedias.

TAILORED MAPS

Provide students with a blank map of Roman Palestine and assign them the task of creating specific versions such as: "Mary in the Holy Land" or "A Tour of John's Gospel". Students can research specific places and events related to their appointed theme and create a map that highlights those aspects.

MODEL OF THE TEMPLE

Students can research the Jerusalem Temple in Jesus' time. Read the gospel accounts of Jesus' visits to the Temple. Make a model of the Temple using media such as clay. Younger students can use wooden blocks.

FOOD AND DIET

Students can research the foods available to people in Jesus' time and the typical diets of people - rich and poor. This activity could conclude with students sharing a Galilean meal. For resources on food, cooking and diet in biblical times see: www.womeninthebible.net/food.htm

WALL DISPLAY

Make a wall display of images, words and pictures related to the topic of Jesus' time and place. One possibility is to construct a giant timeline around the classroom walls that can be augmented as the topic develops.

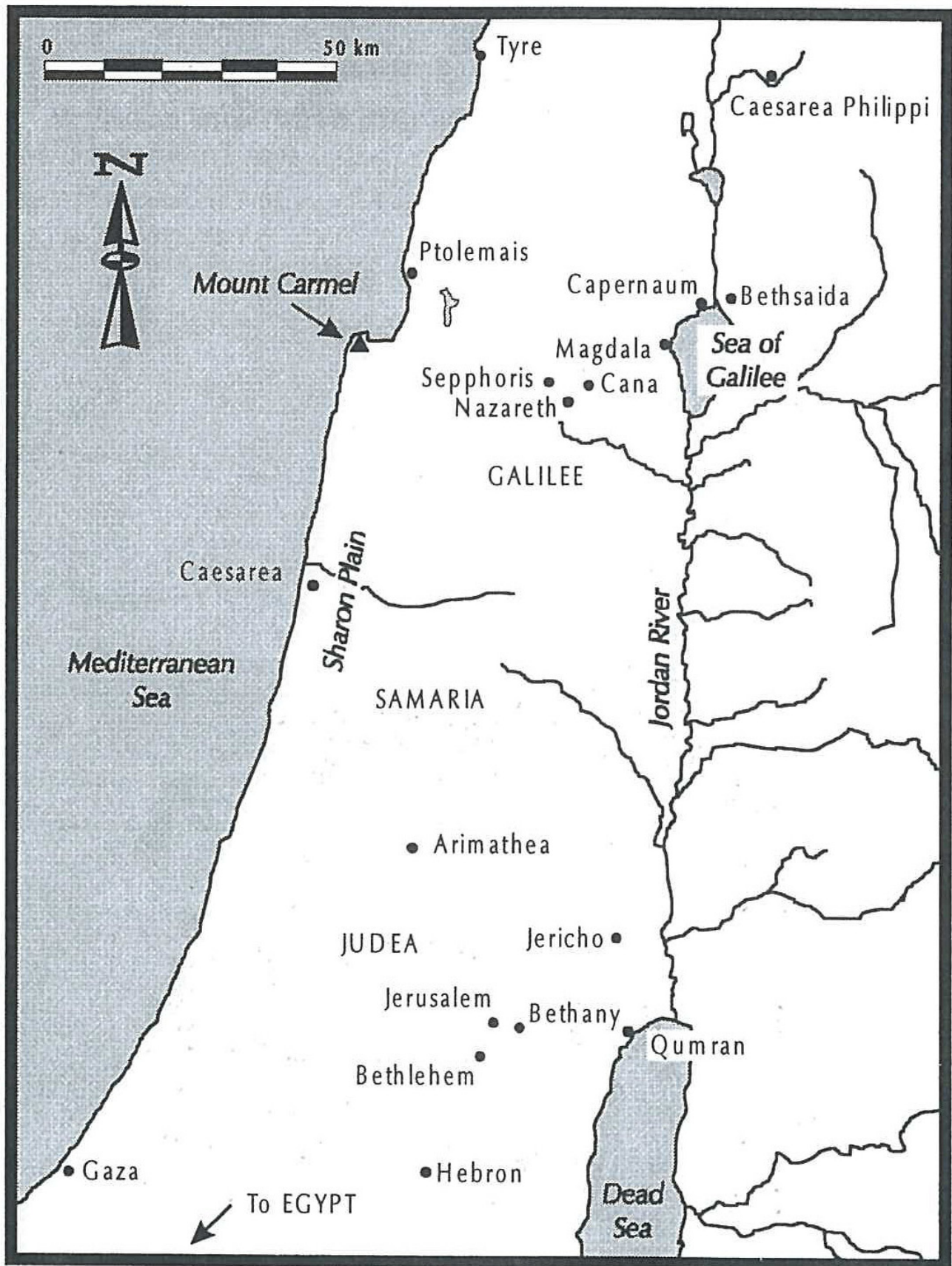
FOR SALE ADVERTISEMENT

Research houses and/or public buildings in ancient Galilee. Assign students the task of writing a real estate advertisement for the building in the style of a modern agent. Show and analyse examples of estate agents' brochures and advertising.

DUSTBIN ARCHAEOLOGY

Place artifacts in a bin that relate to a family in a Galilean village in Jesus' time. Explain that while dustbins may not have existed then, people used refuse pits for their rubbish and the dustbin can represent that. If artifacts are not available or replicated, place photographs in the bin. Remove items from the bin and ask students to interpret, as an archaeologist would, the significance of the items for understanding life in those days.

Map of Roman Palestine



Images of Jesus

Consider the following pairs of descriptions of Jesus and his mission. On the dotted line between each pair, place an X to indicate the extent of your opinion on each description. When you have responded to each pair, use your results to write a paragraph on your own image of Jesus in the space below.

Political revolutionary who aimed to bring about social change - - - - - Calm defender of traditional Jewish religion and life

Religious mystic focused on spiritual matters - - - - - Social reformer focused on earthly matters

Wild-eyed prophet who proclaimed the end of the world was near - - - - - Gentle teacher of love and care and preacher of parables

Introduced a new approach to the inclusion of women in the community - - - - - Continued to follow the dominant approach to the place of women in the community

A wandering philosopher of Greek ideas urging detachment from worldly concerns - - - - - A simple carpenter from Nazareth who shared his life with his friends

Concerned for future, other-worldly realities - - - - - Concerned for her-and-now, present realities

A preacher who proclaimed a new message about God's kingdom - - - - - A preacher who shared many ideas in common with other Jewish groups and individuals

Jesus the Jew

- Born of a Jewish mother named Miriam (=Mary), the same name as Moses' sister and King Herod the Great's wife (Luke 2).
- Born during a census (Luke 2:1) in accordance with predictions in Psalm 87.
- Named Yeshua (=Jesus) in honour of Joshua, a conquering hero leader of the Jewish people after Moses.
- Circumcised on the eighth day (Luke 2:21) and presented in the Temple (Luke 2:22-4) according to Jewish Law (Genesis 17; Exodus 13:1).
- Wrapped in swaddling cloths (Luke 2:7) in accordance with the Wisdom of Solomon 7:1-6 which described the way Jewish kings were born.
- Raised in the Jewish village of Nazareth in the Jewish region of Galilee (Mark 6:1). Lived in the Jewish village of Capernaum on Lake Galilee (Matthew 4:13).
- Affirmed and taught the Jewish commandments (Mark 12:28-34 - Deuteronomy 6:4-5 and Leviticus 19:18).
- Extolled respect for the Jewish Law (Matthew 5:17-20).
- Taught the Golden Rule ("Do to others as you would have them do to you") (Matthew 7:12). Following Leviticus 19:18 and Tobit 4:15.
- Wore fringed clothing (*tallith*) (Luke 8:44, Matthew 9:20, Mark 6:56) according to the practice of observant Jews who maintained loyalty and fidelity to the covenant (Numbers 15:37-41).
- Prayed to and worshipped the God of Israel (Mark 14:36).
- Observed kosher food laws. So did his followers (Acts 10:9-14).
- Had Jewish friends and followers (Mark 1:16-20; Luke 8:1-3).
- Travelled to the Temple in Jerusalem for pilgrimage festivals (John 10:22; Mark 14:12).
- Studied and recited the Jewish scriptures (Luke 4:16-21).
- Prayed the Psalms (Luke 23:46 - Psalm 31:5)
- Taught in synagogues (Matthew 4:23; 9:35; Luke 4:14-18; John 18:20) and in the Jerusalem Temple (John 18:20).
- Shared a common belief in some teachings with other Jewish groups such as the Pharisees: resurrection of the body, alms-giving, prayer, fasting, and the practice of addressing God as Father. Praised Pharisees (Mark 12:34) and shared meals with them (Luke 7:36, 11:37, 14:1).
- Was buried according to Jewish custom (John 19:40).

Ten New Testament Word Games

SPELLING BEE

Using the Word Game Board on the following page, cut the individual words into separate cards and place them in a hat. Draw out the cards one at a time and ask the class to spell the word. The traditional spelling bee format can be conducted in a range of formats. Students can write down their words on a piece of paper; they can be invited to stand in their place and spell the word out loud.

CONCENTRATION

Photocopy two sets of words from the Word Game Board. Cut the words into separate cards, so that there are two cards for every word. Shuffle the cards and lay them out face down on the table. In turn, students turn over two cards in order to find matching pairs of words. If they find a successful match, they remove the matching pair from the table. The game continues until all cards are successfully matched. The winner is the one with the most matching pairs of word cards.

CHARADES

Students can mime New Testament people, themes and events using the popular parlour game format.

PICTIONARY

In groups of four, each player requires a pencil and several sheets of A-4 paper. Pictionary is played when pairs compete against each other to guess the name of words that are drawn by their partner. Select words from the Word Game Board and make up 60 cards each with a single word. Pictures only; no words or numbers.

TRUE OR FALSE QUIZ

Students use the words from the Word Game Board to create individual answers to true-false questions. For example: Jesus was born in Jerusalem. False. The New Testament books were originally written in Greek. True. Students test their classmates using their True-False Quizzes.

JUMBLE WORDS

Students create word jumbles associated with clues that can be used to unscramble the words. For example: hmltbeehe (Village near Jerusalem); rdpshhehes (They came to visit the baby Jesus).

SCRAMBLE

Work in groups of four or five. Choose three or four words from the Word Game Board. Against the clock, (one or two minutes) students must write down as many new words from the letters contained in these words. Words are worth two points each, but only one point if someone else has the same word. The winner is the one with the most points after the appointed number of rounds.

TONGUE TWISTERS

Use words from the Word Game Board to create tongue-twisters. Students can invite their classmates to say their tongue twisters out loud. Students vote on the most creative tongue twister. For example:

Moses knows his roses grow

Paul falls and crawls down walls

WHAT'S MY LINE?

Player selects a character and follows the format of the 1960s TV game show: www.tv.com/shows/whats-my-line

SCATTEGORIES

Choose three categories related to the topic. Place 26 cards in a bag each with a letter of the alphabet. Draw out a letter from the bag. Students have a set time to write as many single words starting with that letter that relate to each of the three categories. Play for five rounds (or letters). The winner has the most words.

Word Game Board

Nazareth	Pilate	Scribes	Spirit	David	Teacher	Bethlehem	Preaching
Elders	Magdalene	Passover	Judas	Devil	Temple	Christian	Sanhedrin
Satan	Epistle	Judea	Bible	Capernaum	Joseph	Sermon	Scripture
James	Barabbas	Paul	Moses	Tabernacle	Easter	John	Beatitudes
Crucifixion	Miracle	Hebrew	Parable	Galilee	Jesus	Testament	Synagogue
Scourging	Luke	Judaism	Fasting	Caiaphas	Aramaic	Samaritan	Treasure
Passion	Disciple	Pentecost	Jerusalem	Christmas	Herod	Exodus	Gentiles
Vineyard	Abraham	Sadducees	Baptism	Mark	Prayer	Torah	Leper
Christ	Greek	Repentance	Gospel	Priest	Pentateuch	Resurrection	Apostle
Kingdom	Prophet	Palestine	Heaven	Mary	Pharisees	Emperor	Tomb
Israel	Matthew	God	Rabbi	Healing	Egypt	Zealot	Papyrus
Jordan	Census	Jews	Bethsaida	Elizabeth	Demons	Cornerstone	Golgotha
Sabbath	Manger	Shepherd	Divine	Zacchaeus	Angels	Cana	Lazarus
Servant	Pagan	Magi	Messiah	Holy	Latin	Exorcism	Ministry

Flat Stanley Adventures

Author Jeff Brown created a character called Flat Stanley whose “real” name is Stanley Lambchop. In a series of books he details Flat Stanley’s adventures. Stanley was a normal young boy who had the misfortune to become flattened when a bulletin board fell on him. Stanley makes the most of his altered state, entering locked rooms by sliding under the door and being mailed in the post to places of interest. The original character and story has been adopted by students and teachers around the world over many years. Flat Stanley has been a surprising participant in many important events: on the dais at Olympic medal presentations; in the office of Presidents of the United States and in a multitude of other important events and places.

ACTIVITIES

Students create their own Flat Stanley using the template available on the Flat Stanley Project website.

Students can draw scenes from the New Testament featuring their Flat Stanley creation.

Students can write stories or create journal entries describing Flat Stanley’s adventures related to the New Testament and its characters, such as:

- Flat Stanley present at the feeding of the 5,000 (Mark 6:30-44)
- Flat Stanley helping James and John mend their fishing nets (Mark 1:16-20)
- Flat Stanley among the children whom Jesus blesses (Mark 10:13-16)
- Flat Stanley in the crowd when Jesus enters Jerusalem riding on a colt (Mark 11:1-11)
- Flat Stanley dealing with the money-changers in the Jerusalem Temple (Mark 11:15-19)

Students can create their own ideas for Flat Stanley adventures in the New Testament.

RESOURCES

- Jeff Brown, *Flat Stanley* is the first of a number of titles that introduced the Flat Stanley story.
- The Flat Stanley Project website provides comprehensive resources for teachers and students. Students can download a template for the creation of their own Flat Stanley. The site also contains an extensive photo gallery of Flat Stanley adventures with famous people and events. A sign-up section allows for class exchanges. The address is: www.flatstanleyproject.com

Archaeologists in Capernaum

The gospels indicate that the small village of Capernaum on the shore of Lake Galilee may have been the base for Jesus' public ministry (Matthew 4:13). This village has been extensively researched by archaeologists looking for clues to life in Jesus' time. Imagine you are an archaeologist researching material discovered in Capernaum. You can read about archaeological excavations at Capernaum: www.capernaum.custodia.org/default.asp?id=5363 Use the table below to imagine what you would find out about Jesus from the archaeological evidence.

ARTIFACT	EXPLANATION	WEBSITES	TASKS
coins	Coins were dropped, lost, placed in graves and left behind in settlements. They help to date an area, identify key people and issues, systems of government and much more.	www.archaeological.org/news/advocacy/112	List the things that a coin can tell us about the people who used them: their wealth, admired people and events, beliefs and values...
pottery fragments	Known as sherds, broken pieces of pottery can help to date surrounding finds due to the distinctive pottery styles in different eras and their widespread use in ancient societies.	http://biblehub.com/topical/p/pottery.htm	Research and draw outlines for two pottery vases used in Jesus' time. Explain how these can be used to tell the date of their manufacture.
documents	Texts written on papyrus or vellum (animal skins) were composed by wealthy and powerful individuals. Religious texts were composed and stored in secure environments.	www.csntm.com	Why would people want to safely store a copy of the bible? Where might they store it?
inscriptions	Signs, titles and directions were written on burial markers, temple walls, public buildings, pottery... They reveal names, dates, places and events of interest.	http://christiananswers.net/dictionary/capernaum.html	Few inscriptions have been found in Capernaum from Jesus' time. What might this tell us about the reading and writing skills of the local population?
stone cooking pots	In observant Jewish families, stone cooking implements were used since they were impervious to liquids and could therefore assist in observing purity laws.	http://asorblog.org/cooking-in-the-hebrew-bible	Stone cooking pots have been found in Capernaum, mostly made by hand, not by a machine. What might this indicate about the people in Capernaum?
oil lamps	Pottery oil lamps were common and provided light to houses. Vegetable oil and linen wicks provided the fuel.	www.coinart.net/Lamps.htm	If no foreign designs or decorations are found on the oil lamps, what does that suggest about the people who used them and where they were made?
kitchen scraps	The absence of pig bones in rubbish piles indicates that people observed prohibitions in the Jewish law on eating pork.	www.jewfaq.org/kashrut.htm	Pork bones are not common in ancient sites in Galilee. What does this tell us about the people's religious beliefs and practices?
burial chambers	In Jesus' time, Jewish people adopted the burial practice of placing a person's bones in a stone box (ossuary) and placing it in a burial chamber or cave.	http://sbl-site.org/publications/article.aspx?articleId=335	If an ossuary box was discovered in Capernaum with multiple sets of bones, what might we conclude about this discovery?

Jesus Under Pressure

Jesus undertook a challenging task in leading a reform movement. Make a judgment of how much pressure he would have experienced in his role. As a result of your test, write a report on the level of stress Jesus would have experienced in his public ministry.

Score each statement according to the scale: 1 (almost always), 2 (often), 3 (sometimes), 4 (rarely), 5 (never).

- I eat at least one healthy meal daily
- I receive adequate sleep
- I am able to give and receive affection
- I have at least one family member who lives nearby and upon whom I can rely
- I exercise strenuously at least twice a week
- I consume fewer than five alcoholic drinks each week
- I am the correct weight for my height
- I do not worry about money. I have sufficient income in order to meet my basic needs
- I draw strength and support from my religious beliefs
- I attend social activities and celebrations
- I have a strong network of close companions
- I have some friends with whom I can speak confidentially about personal matters
- I enjoy good physical and mental health
- I can express my feelings openly when I am angry or upset
- I do something fun and interesting once a week
- I am able to get away and find quiet time to myself

TOTAL

Add up the total score. A score over 30 shows some vulnerability to stress. A score between 45 and 65 means serious stress is experienced. A score over 65 indicates an extremely dangerous vulnerability to stress.

Stress Report on: _____ Examiner: _____

Jewish Festivals and New Testament References

FESTIVAL	DESCRIPTION	BIBLE
* Passover (Pesach)	The Festival of Unleavened Bread - a festival of redemption and deliverance. Celebrates the escape of the Hebrew slaves from Pharaoh in Egypt under the leadership of Moses, Aaron and Miriam. Celebrated in (northern hemisphere) spring.	John 12:1 Mark 14:12 Matthew 26:17 Luke 22:15
* Pentecost (Shavu'ot)	Also called the Festival of Weeks, or First Fruits. A (northern hemisphere) spring festival of thanksgiving and covenant renewal. It celebrates the giving of the Torah, the guide for life.	Acts 2:1
* Tabernacles (Sukkot)	Also called the Festival of Ingathering or Booths. Celebrates the (northern hemisphere) autumn harvest with thanks, joyfulness and merry-making. A focus of the celebration is the making of a <i>sukkah</i> (booth or hut) and to make it a home for the time of the festival.	John 7:2, 37
Trumpets (Rosh Hashanah)	The Day of Awe. The Jewish New Year. A time of contrition and sorrow, it begins the most solemn month on the Jewish calendar. Celebrated in (northern hemisphere) autumn, begun with the blowing of the trumpet - the <i>shofar</i> , or rams horn.	John 5:1 (?)
Day of Atonement (Yom Kippur)	The Great Day of the Year. A day of fasting in order to focus minds on repentance. Celebrated in (northern hemisphere) autumn.	Acts 27:9
Festival of Lights (Hanukkah)	Also known as Dedication. Commemorates the revolt and victory of the Maccabees over the Greek Seleucids in Syria. A celebration of religious liberty and patriotism. Celebrated in (northern hemisphere) winter with a focus on lighting of candles.	John 10:22
Purim (Lots)	Celebrates Jewish deliverance, conducted with pageantry and satire, commemorating the deliverance of Jews from death by the bravery of the Persian queen, Esther.	John 5:1(?)

* The three major festivals for which all males of Israel were required to travel to the Temple in Jerusalem. Also known collectively as *regalim*, the foot festivals.

The synoptic gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) do not mention the Jewish festivals, apart from the festival of Passover, as indicated in the above table. John mentions the Passover festival three times (John 2:13; 6:4; 18:28). These mentions of the yearly festival have encouraged Christians to imagine that Jesus' public ministry lasted for three years. The time-scale for Jesus' public ministry in the synoptic gospels is under one year. John's mention of "a festival" in John 5:1 is inconclusive as to which specific festival might be the one intended.

Ten Project Roles

The following project roles engage students' problem-solving skills, imagination and drama skills. They are based on the Mantle of the Expert approach to classroom teaching and learning pioneered by British drama educator Dorothy Heathcote. Students gradually take responsibility for running an enterprise in a fictional world. For more information on the Mantle of the Expert approach see the following websites:

- www.mantleoftheexpert.com
- <http://dramaresource.com/strategies/mantle-of-the-expert>

ARCHITECTS

Enrolled as architects, students can design spaces for various functions for Jesus and his followers.

TOY MANUFACTURER

Students can design and create a series of toys based on biblical themes. They can create a marketing plan for the sale and distribution of the toys to an identified market.

T-SHIRT SLOGAN WRITERS

Design T-Shirts for different market segments, based on biblical themes.

ARTISTS

Students enrolled as artists have been invited to submit art works depicting their favourite events from history. Scaffold their masterpieces by asking them to imagine being in the actual setting and to use their senses: What would you see, hear, smell, touch, taste, if you were in that setting at that time?

FILM PRODUCERS

Students can design the outline for a treatment of selected stories from the New Testament designed for a range of audiences.

POLICE DETECTIVES

The gospels provide many examples of crimes and misdemeanours that require investigation and the apprehension of suspects. Assign students to specific cases with instructions on investigating the who, what, when, where, how and why in each case.

MASTER CHEF

Following a focus on a story involving food, ask students to investigate food in biblical times and to plan a meal that could be served. They must make a menu and list all ingredients required. They will need some understanding of foods available in the ancient Mediterranean world.

DOCTORS

These modern doctors can examine the "cold case" healings of people by Jesus in the gospels. They can determine the likely diagnosis in each case, the possible cures and ongoing prognosis for these patients.

TOURIST OPERATORS

Students can plan an itinerary for tourists to follow in the footsteps of a character they have been studying. Include places, activities, mode of transport, as well as other characters to visit.

WORRIED PARENTS

Students can take the role of parents of young men and young women who have joined the Jesus movement and have travelled to other towns and villages with Jesus' travelling entourage.