

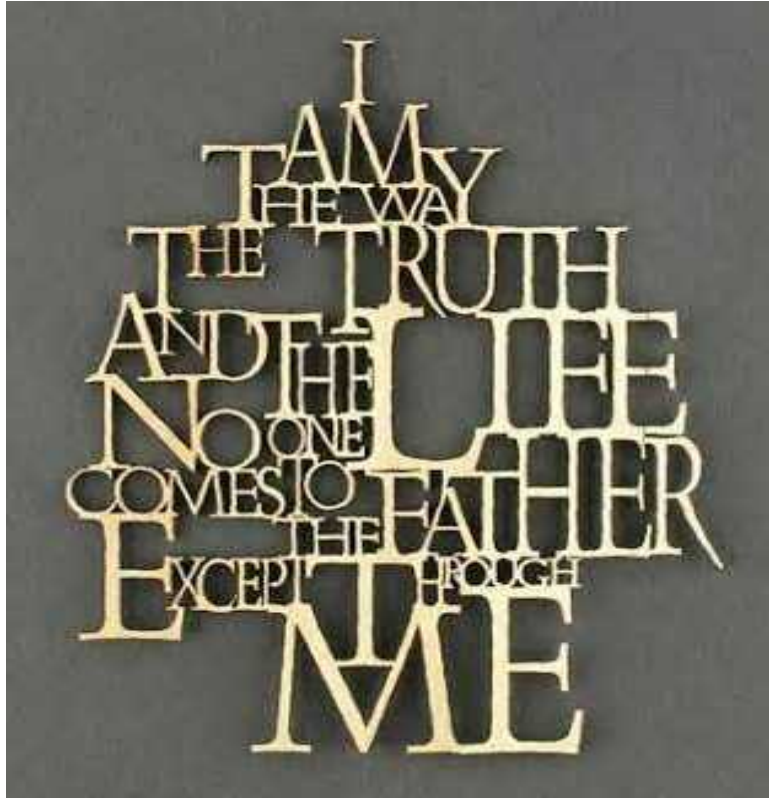
Name: _____

Tutor Group _____

Date: (circle) June/ September/October/January

Teacher _____

2012-13



The Douay Martyrs School
**Seeking God
Handbook**

Year 13: Level 2

Introduction to the General RE Course

This is a one year course in Religious & Moral Education. This qualification is accredited by the National Open College Network and each student that successfully passes the course will receive an NOCN certificate.

This is a nationally recognised qualification which demonstrates that you have successfully completed a course in Religious & Moral Education.

AIMS

The key aims of this course are as follows:

- To provide students with the opportunity to reflect upon and develop their own faith position.
- Enable students to use a range of skills that will be valuable during their time in school and beyond.
- Promote the moral, spiritual, and cultural development of each student.
- Explore ethical and religious matters in regards to advances in technology, changes in attitudes towards religion and their own spirituality.
- Provide students with the opportunity to learn about the wider community and other faiths.

EXPECTATIONS

Successful completion of the course is determined by:

Regular attendance - You must ensure that you are present for every lesson unless you are absent from school due to illness or any other authorised reason. General RE lessons will continue as normal during the exam period in January.

Attitude to Lessons – You will be expected to engage actively in lessons through participation in class discussion and group work.

Written Evidence – You will be provided with a course booklet which will serve as written evidence that you have successfully met the assessment criteria outlined on page 2 of this booklet.

Introduction to the “Searching for God” Unit

The lesson objectives in the “Searching for God” course are:

- To consider ways in which we can find and experience God
- To recognise the difference that seeking God can make to our lives

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LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning Outcomes	Assessment Criteria
Learners Will	Learners Can
Develop an understanding of spirituality, ethics and theology	1.1 Discuss the nature of spirituality, theology and ethics and how they link and manifest in society today. 1.2 Explain a current affairs issue by using spiritual and ethical principles
Understand the demands of religious commitment in everyday life	2.1 Describe how a religious commitment is demonstrated in everyday life 2.2 Evaluate some demands of religious commitment
Reflect on the questions of life	3.1 Compare how the meaning of life and death are explained in at least two religious traditions. 3.2 Discuss how this relates to their own understanding.
Understand the methods of engaging in religious practice.	4.1 Describe key elements of practice within religious faith
Understand different faith positions in contemporary society.	5.1 Describe elements of three faith traditions commonly observed in contemporary society
Develop their own faith position	6.1 Explain their individual position with regards to two key issues within religious debate
Understand the relationship between religious belief, personal faith and lived experience.	7.1 Describe a relationship between religious belief, personal faith and lived experience in a specific context.
Develop skills to be able to respond to opportunities and responsibilities of life experiences	8.1 Describe their use of theological and ethical thinking as a response to their own personal experience.



Record of Achievement

Task	Assessment Criteria	Description	Pass	Assessed by	Date Assessed
1.	1.1	Discuss the nature of spirituality, theology and ethics and how they link and manifest in society today.			
	1.2	Explain a current affairs issue by using spiritual and ethical principles.			
2.	2.1	Describe how a religious commitment is demonstrated in everyday life.			
	2.2	Evaluate some of the demands of religious commitment			
3	3.1	Compare how the meaning of life and death are explained in at least two religious traditions			
	3.2	Discuss how this relates to their own understanding			
4.	4.1	Describe key elements of practice within religious faith			
5.	5.1	Describe elements of three faith traditions commonly observed in contemporary society			
6.	6.1	Explain their individual position with regards to two key issues within religious debate			
7.	7.1	Describe a relationship between religious belief, personal faith and lived experience in a specific context			
8.	8.1	Describe their use of theological and ethical thinking as a response to their own personal experience			

I can confirm that _____ has successfully achieved the learning outcomes above at Level One.

Signature of RME teacher _____

Date _____

LESSON 1 : HAVING FAITH?

Lesson Aim:

- To explore where we are on our spiritual journey
- To understand the link between personal fulfilment and the spiritual life

Activity 1

Discuss: what makes having faith difficult?
Bullet point your ideas below.

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Activity 2:

Listen to the song by Kendrick Lamar "Faith".

1. What reasons does Lamar give for what makes faith hard ?

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Kendrick Lamar "Faith". , vs.4

This for my people that stressing whenever times is hard
Your mind's slipping, wondering, "Is there really a God?"
Knowing you shouldn't think that way and trying to freeze
your brain
But whenever there's pain, that feeling forever remains
We can't believe what we can't see and reality seems
stronger than prayer
Cause you tried to change your life, and now you live in a
wheelchair
And your son was born with cancer and he live in urgent
care
At the tender age of 12, and you feel that no one cares
Searching for answers, that's human nature, you ain't in
the wrong
Just know when you feeling that way spirit's in the room
I watched people I know pray and catch the Holy Ghost
And wonder why I ain't ever caught that feeling before
Maybe they know Him better, or I don't know no better
But what I do know, is that He's real and He lives forever
So the next time you feel like your world's about to end
I hope you studied because He's testing your faith again

I'd rather not live like there isn't a God
Than die and find out there really is
Think about it

2. What is Lamar's advice for why you should keep your faith?

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3. Do you agree with his point of view? Should you struggle to keep your faith? Why/ why not?

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Activity 3: Where Am I?

Do you ever think about your spiritual journey? Circle one of the statements below which best describes you. (if you can't find one which describes you, write your own statement next to No.10).

1. I don't believe in God and I'm not really interested in trying to look for him.
2. I believe I have found God and he's important to me.
3. I believe that God exists but I wouldn't say he's an important part of my life.
4. I'd like to have a strong belief in God but at the moment my faith is weak.
5. I can say that I love God, and my faith is the most important thing in my life.
6. I don't know whether God exists or not.
7. I believe in God and I think I know a lot about him, but I can't say I love him.
8. God's there but I hardly ever give him another thought.
9. I'm too busy at the moment, maybe when I'm older I'll give God a bit more thought.
10. Other:

Activity 4: Reflective Log:

Write down the most important thing you have learnt from this lesson.

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Task 1	A.C.	Pass	A.C.	Pass	Assessed by	Date
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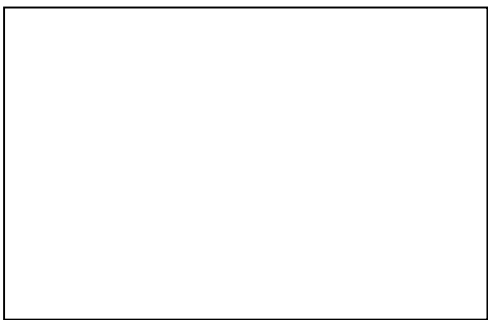
LESSON 2: WHO IS GOD?

Lesson Aim:

- To consider childhood and current understanding of God
- To identify and evaluate misconceptions about God

Activity 1: Childhood God

As we grow up our relationships change, including our relationship with God. In the box below **draw then explain** how you visualised God when you were a child (about 7 years old).



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What made you change your mind that God was like this? Has this changed the way you pray?

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Share with your neighbour.

Activity 2: What is God like to you now?

Match the headings on the cards to their description. Put them in order from top to bottom of what God is like for you. Use your list to describe what God is like for you.

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Activity 3: Misconceptions

Tick the ones you agree with. Cross the ones you don't agree with.

God has made up a lot of rules and regulations to stop people having too much fun	God is a kind of life-force, not a real person, capable of knowing and loving us	God can be found in churches, mosques and temples more than anywhere else
It doesn't matter what you believe in as long as you believe in something	People made up the idea of God, based on their culture. He does not really exist.	God loves good people more than sinners
God is no more than a psychological crutch that we turn to in times of trouble	God is a...(insert your religion here) Muslim? Catholic? Hindu?	The world is a mess. God is not a God who cares for us.
God is mainly for old people who are afraid of death	Nobody can ever really know what God is like, if He even exists.	God doesn't show Himself to people nowadays, so the stories in the Bible can't be true.
God is a virus-idea to stop people taking responsibility for themselves and their world. "Religion is the opiate of the masses" (Marx)	Now that we have science to explain the world to us, we can get rid of the silly idea there is a fairy-spirit in the sky guiding all things.	There is nothing beyond this physical world. God is meant to be "non-physical", so He cannot exist.

Now challenge your partner about any that they have marked different to yours.

Activity 4: Reflective Log:

Write down the most important thing you have learnt from this lesson.

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Task 1	A.C.	Pass	A.C.	Pass	Assessed by	Date
	1.1		8.1			

LESSON 3: FINDING GOD

Lesson Aim:

To identify and evaluate ways of finding God

Activity 1

What advice would you give to someone who said they wanted to “find God”?

Activity 2: Article by Rabbi Yoffie.

What are the 4 ways the Rabbi recommends for finding God?

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2.
3.
4.
5.

Which of these would you find most helpful? Why? What do you get out of doing it?

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Which other ways of finding God might you consider? Why? What might you get out of doing it?

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Are there other ways of “finding God” that the Rabbi has not mentioned but could be helpful to someone?

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Activity 3: Looking for Answers.

Write your answer to Joey’s question here.

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Activity 4: Reflective Log:

Write down the most important thing you have learnt from this lesson.

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Task 1	A.C.	Pass	A.C.	Pass	Assessed by	Date
	1.1		7.1			



Resource: from the blog of Rabbi Eric H. Yoffie, Huff Post.

The Frustrating, Difficult, Never-Ending Search for God

For most of us, the hunt for God never stops. We deny God, curse God and demand proofs of God's existence that we will never get. But the search continues, motivated by a sense -- often just a hunch, or the slimmest instinct -- that there is holiness in our world that only God's presence can account for. We know that what we believe about God may be wrong, but we prefer the possibility of false belief to no belief at all.

I have long struggled with how to best answer the question: "Rabbi, how do I connect with God?" The obvious place to begin is prayer, but I have learned that for many, prayer is something unfamiliar. These seekers are looking for other paths.

1. Begin, I suggest, **with a new openness to the world around you.** Reawaken your capacity for wonderment. Make room for the sense of awe that you felt as a child when you considered the beauty and the mystery of the natural world. There are divine sparks there, if you will allow yourself to experience them.
2. Turn next to the sacred texts of our tradition. They are important because our religious feelings can come and go. A hunger for the holy may overwhelm us one minute and disappear the next. For most of us, God is not available "on demand." The Bible texts are important because they are a record of how others before us, were faced with the same questions and doubts that we face, but they made their way to God and to faith. When we are lonely or isolated, because we cannot feel God's presence, we can find reassurance, inspiration, and guidance in studying how others navigated this course, connecting with God in ways that -- at this moment, at least -- we cannot.
3. Remember, too, that God is not only a noun but a verb, not only a presence but a process. We may not know precisely what God is, but our tradition clearly tells us what God does: God heals the sick, clothes the naked, houses the homeless and pursues peace. We cannot be God; we are weak and imperfect human beings. But we can, within the limitations of the human condition, imitate God's behaviour, and, in this way, bring God into our lives. Of course we don't have to be aware of God's presence before we can do a good action. There is, thankfully, much "do-goodism" in our society. But those who pursue justice because they want to bear witness to God's love for the world, will find the greatest satisfaction in their actions and are least likely to fall victim to exhaustion and despair.
4. And finally, experiment with religious rituals, including those that you may have earlier discarded. Rituals give structure to the holy. They help us to cultivate a sense of the sacred within ourselves and in our midst. They are a means for us to relive the momentous encounters with God -- the Exodus from Egypt, the revelation at Sinai, the wondering in the desert, (for Christians - the words and actions of Jesus, God incarnate*) -- that our ancestors experienced and that shape our history and our religious lives. Almost always, a craving for God goes together with a craving for meaningful ritual, which binds us together and affirms our common values, shared joys and deep faith as a religious community.

All of this might be a little overwhelming, I say. But start somewhere. The search for God is frustrating and difficult, and it is never done. But with God, our lives have meaning and purpose; without God, we are reduced to being no more than a tiny speck in a vast universe.

*editors comment

LESSON 4: DOES GOD WANT RELIGION?

Lesson Aim:

- To reflect whether religion is by God's design or by man's
- To respond to the challenge that religion is not needed

Activity 1: Discussion

What do you think about organised religion? What is your experience of it ? Have you found it helpful, inspiring for your spiritual life, or hypocritical and false? Discuss with your partner.

Activity 2: Video "Why I Love Jesus but Hate Religion" by Jeffrey Bethke

Why does Jefferson reject organised religion ? What sort of things does he criticise religion for?

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What do you think about organised religion? Is it a mistaken, man-made invention?

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Activity 3: Response to the Video

How does the priest answer Jeffrey's objections?

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Do you agree with any of his points? Why/ why not?

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Activity 4: Do your own video response, to either video.

Activity 5: Reflective Log:

Write down the most important thing you have learnt from this lesson.

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Task 1	A.C.	Pass	A.C.	Pass	Assessed by	Date
	1.1		8.1			

LESSON 5 : PRAYER

Lesson Aim:

- To reflect on what prayer is
- To consider the different types of prayer

Activity 1: Prayer Questionnaire

You will get into groups of 4. Ask and answer the questions you are given.

Activity 2: From your discussion, write up your answers to the following:

What do you think would be a good definition of prayer?

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What is the best way of praying, in your opinion?

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Activity 3: Article

Adapted from the book "Prayer" by Dom. Henri Le Saux, OSB.

'Jesus commanded his disciples to pray always. He himself was constantly in prayer, remembering the name of the Father at all times and spending the nights, according to St Luke, *'in prayer to God'* (Lk 6:12). He constantly reminded his disciples that they must "remain awake", "watch and pray", so that they will always be ready for his coming (Mk 13:33). St Paul gives us the same teaching: *'Pray constantly'* (1Thess. 5:17).

How do we "pray constantly"? Surely no-one can put their daily life on hold with all its needs and demands, and simply pray all day? And yet what Jesus and St Paul are saying, is that there are no "part-time" Christians, any more than there are part-time human beings. Prayer is who we are meant to be, full-time.

From the day when we begin to believe in Christ and acknowledge him as our Lord, there is not a single moment of our time – waking, sleeping, walking, sitting, working, teaching, eating, playing, - which is not marked by the claim of God upon us and which has not to be lived in the name of Jesus, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, to the glory of the Father.

To live in constant prayer, to lead a “contemplative” life, is nothing else than to live in the actual presence of God. Every person by the very fact that they exist, is already in the presence of God. This is especially true of Christians who have been called to know the ultimate secrets of divine life, and who, by baptism, have become sharers in the divine sonship of Jesus, their Master.

To live in the presence of God should be as natural for a Christian as the air they breathe. Prayer should never be a “duty” performed in obedience to some external law. No, for a Christian to live in the presence of the Almighty is a birth-right; it is the deepest aspiration of their nature, it is the spontaneous expression of their love for the Lord when they know that they are children of God.’

1. How does Dom Henri define prayer differently from what people normally understand by prayer?

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2. Do you think his understanding of prayer is true ? Why/ why not?

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3. What would it take for someone to live in “constant prayer”, always conscious of living their life in the presence of God, as he suggests?

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4. Is this a form of prayer you would like to practice?

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Activity 5: Reflective Log:

Write down the most important thing you have learnt from this lesson.

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Task 1	A.C.	Pass	A.C.	Pass	Assessed by	Date
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LESSON 6: TYPES OF PRAYER

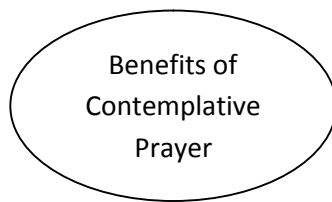
Lesson Aims:

- To describe types of prayer
- To consider and experience the benefits of contemplative prayer

Activity 1: Looking with depth

Study the painting, not only with your eyes or your mind but with your heart. Get “inside” of the painting, feel its colours, its warmth, the scene it is evoking. Feel and hear the sounds, and the beauty it is evoking.

Activity 2: Why meditate?



Activity 3: Guided Meditation

You will need to choose a mantra to say over to yourself and keep focussing on, when you mind starts to wander. If that happens, don't worry, just go back to your mantra as best you can. Examples of mantras are “Jesus”, “Come...and I will give you rest”, “Come, Lord Jesus”, “Lord Jesus, have mercy on me a sinner”, “maranatha”, “Come Holy Spirit”, “Be still and know that I am God”,

Activity 4: Reflective Log:

Write down the most important thing you have learnt from this lesson.

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Relax, breathe, be aware, invite the spirit, rest in God.

Task 1	A.C.	Pass	A.C.	Pass	Assessed by	Date
	2.1		4.1			

LESSON 7 : DISCERNMENT

Lesson Aim:

- To explain the purpose and importance of discernment
- To reflect on how you can practice discernment in your own life

Activity 1: What helps you to make the right decisions in your life? Discuss.

Write up your list here.

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Activity 2: St Ignatius of Loyola

Summarise some key points about his life from the video.

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What is Consolation? Give some examples of it.

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What is Desolation? Give some examples of it.

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How can you use these feelings to help you in your spiritual life?

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Can you remember ever having experiences of consolation or desolation when faced with a decision?

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Try this exercise for yourself at home.

- In the first half of the meditation, imagine yourself doing some amazing, glorious things that would really make everyone admire you.
- In the second half of the meditation, imagine yourself doing something “good”, something perhaps Jesus himself might do, or want you to do.

Activity 3: Examination of Conscience.

After watching the video, spend a few minutes thinking about your answer to the questions, which the teacher will read out to you.

- What good things happened to me today?
- Where did I find God in these events?
- What choices brought me consolation or happiness today?
- What choices brought me desolation or sadness today?
- Were there any missed opportunities I didn't take? To help someone? To show generosity?
- Who wore God's face for me today?
- Was I the face of Christ for anyone today?
- Where did I get in the way of Christ for someone today?
- What would it be for me to be the face of Christ for someone tomorrow?

Activity 5: Reflective Log:

Write down the most important thing you have learnt from this lesson.

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Task 1	A.C.	Pass	A.C.	Pass	Assessed by	Date
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THE IGNATIAN SPIRITUAL EXERCISES

St Ignatius of Loyola discovered a way of discerning the will of God in our lives. This is called the “Ignatian Exercises for Discernment of Spirits”.

He found in his own experience that when he daydreamed about fame, being popular and adored, winning medals, it made him very happy during the daydream, but afterwards, left him feeling low and tired.

But he found that when he daydreamed about following in the footsteps of the Saints, eg giving up his life to care for the sick, or leaving all his wealth behind to set off and find God, he not only enjoyed these daydreams, but afterwards, his mood remained upbeat and joyful.

TAKING DECISIONS

If you are thinking about taking a decision, and you think about it at a deep level (eg in prayer), try and discern whether it leads to consolation or desolation feelings. This can give you a pretty good idea whether your choice was something God wanted for you, and was right for you, or not.

- **Consolation:** feeling peaceful, connected, joyful, relieved, connected, happy.
- **Desolation:** feeling heavy, low, depressed, confused, dark, upset.

Consolation and desolation are also important because these feelings can give you a clue as to whether you are moving away from God or closer to God in your life.

- **The experience of spiritual consolation** leads you to greater openness to God, generosity, trust and love of God – in other words, it is a gift leading you to greater happiness.
- **The experience of spiritual desolation** leads you away from God, away from peace, harmony and love – it is you shutting yourself off from God, closing you in on yourself.

NB not all consolation/ desolation feelings are spiritually meaningful. “Ordinary” or non-spiritual consolations and desolations could include looking at a sunset and feeling caught up in its beauty, or waking up low and depressed as part of ordinary life.

When you go and see a spiritual guide or spiritual director, they help you to recognise experiences of spiritual consolation and desolation in your own life, so you can reflect on where God has been in your life, and how you can find God’s will, so that you will draw closer to Him in the decisions you make.

LESSON 8: FAITH IN ACTION

Lesson Aims:

- To consider why it is important to live out faith
- To reflect on how people can live out their faith

Activity 1: Faith without deeds?

“Faith by itself, if it is not accompanied by action, is dead.

Show me your faith without deeds, and I will show you my faith by my deeds.” James 2: 17-18

Can you be a Christian in thought only, but not in action?

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Activity 2: Examples of faith in action

Match the personalities to their deeds.

- Which example of “faith in action” do you find most inspiring? Put them in order with your partner.
- Which type of “faith in action” might be closest to your way of expressing your faith?

Why is it important to show faith in action?

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Which type of “faith in action” are you most inspired/ drawn towards? Why?

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Activity 3: God's gifts

God gives us "gifts" in the Holy Spirit, breathing them into our hearts, to give us the help we need to live as Christians, and put our faith into action. We can't really "create" them for ourselves.

1. Which in the list below is a gift of God (rather than something you learn from life)? Circle them.

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|-------------------|---------------|-------------------|
| 1. INTEGRITY | 2. JOY | 3. KINDNESS |
| 4. FAITH | 5. COURAGE | 6. HOPE |
| 7. CHARITY | 8. AGAPE LOVE | 9. PATIENCE |
| 10. DETERMINATION | 11. GRATITUDE | 12. HUMILITY |
| 13. FORGIVENESS | 14. PEACE | 15. WISDOM |
| 16. SENSITIVITY | 17. ENERGY | 18. PRAYERFULNESS |

2. Which gifts make the most difference to your life, if you have them? What could it, should they, spur you on to do/ change in the world?

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Activity 4: Video: Bill Maher <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gx7hJp1BsBw>

Activity 5: Reflective Log:

Write down the most important thing you have learnt from this lesson.

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Task 1	A.C.	Pass	A.C.	Pass	Assessed by	Date
	2.1,2.2		4.1			

Guest Speaker 1

Name:.....

Organisation:

Date:

Topic the speaker spoke about:

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Summarise what the speaker said

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What could have been controversial/ challenging about what the speaker said?

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Guest Speaker 2

Name:.....

Organisation:

Date:

Topic the speaker spoke about:

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Summarise what the speaker said

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What could have been controversial/ challenging about what the speaker said?

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