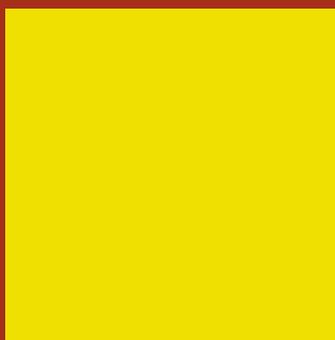


2



ENCOUNTER WITH SACRED TEXTS:
TEXTS OF VIOLENCE

TEXTS OF VIOLENCE

2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this part of the curriculum the following theme is elaborated: 'Encounter with sacred texts: texts of violence'. This package has been developed for the 12- to 18-year-old age group and offers the teacher or supervisor of a learning group the opportunity to develop this theme at the level of their particular class.

This lesson starts with a biblical text related to this topic. This text serves as the main thread for the core of this lesson. This teacher's book details how the student's book is structured. In addition, extra information about topics covered in the student's book and didactic suggestions are given. This is in the form of alternative assignments and how they could be structured. All this information serves adequately as inspiration for preparing and structuring the lesson.

This teacher's book distinguishes between *'basic learning material'* and *'deeper learning material'*. Basic learning material is covered in the student's book and takes 1 hour to complete. In addition, the teacher has the option to further deepen the students' knowledge by employing extra section with accompanying information and didactic suggestions provided in this book.

This lesson consists of the following sections:

- First, a general historical overview of Jesus' world is presented. The context of the biblical story provides an important basis for learners to better understand and interpret John 2:12-17 ('The cleansing of the temple'). This section is part of the basic learning material for the students.
- Second, the biblical story (John 2:12-17) itself is discussed. How can this intriguing story from Christian tradition be understood? What meanings can we derive from this story, and is this story still relevant today? This section introduces the students to this biblical story and its underlying meaning. This chapter is part of the basic learning material for the students.
- The third section of this teacher's book takes a closer look at Jesus and violence in his own life and the larger story of Christianity. In this chapter, the students learn how to study the story of Jesus in the context of violence and peace. This is a deepening chapter.

This teacher's book concludes with a glossary in which all difficult terms are explained simply and concisely at the level of the students. This is followed by a bibliography per section of this teaching package.

At the beginning of each section, explanations are given about the purpose and content of the section. After that didactic suggestions are given. These suggestions include the following aspects:

2.1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE LESSON

1. The student is able to study a (possibly) violent Bible text by asking questions about the story step-by-step.
2. The student is able to describe why it is important to study the Bible in its historical context
3. The student is able to place violence within the context of a Bible text.
4. The student is prepared to relate his/her point of view on violence to the story of Jesus.
5. The student displays a willingness to handle Bible texts beyond a mere one-time reading.

2.1.2 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

- **Questions:** These are additional questions that can be used to discuss the lesson in class, without the students working through the student's book independently. Moreover, some of the questions can be used to introduce the lesson.
- **Alternative teaching methods and assignments:** These are teaching methods and assignments that can be used to replace parts of the lesson or to supplement (parts of) the lesson.

2.1.2 GENERAL SUGGESTIONS

The different parts of the lesson can be implemented in two ways: individually or in class. These implementations can be combined with having students go through part of the teaching material or assignments as homework in advance. 'Individual' means that the students go through the course material independently.

Regarding in-class implementation, two variants appear in this teacher's book.

- The course material is read together. Throughout the reading, several questions are asked of the students. If necessary, an alternative assignment is used as a conclusion to the lesson.
- The material is implemented by using alternative assignments instead of reading through the textbook.

2.1.3 SCHEDULE

You can choose to have the students go through the lesson digitally or you can use the printed version of the students' textbook. In both cases, the students can individually complete the lesson independently. The basic material is 1 class session. If the lesson is **done in class**, you can go through the lessons in parts. Below is an **example** schedule for a 50-minutes lesson:

1. 5 minutes: Opening + Introduction video
2. 5 minutes: View the video
3. 3 minutes: Discuss the video
4. 10 minutes: Students independently work on section 1: The world of the Bible
5. 3 minutes: Discuss section 1
6. 40 minutes: Students independently work on section 1: The world of the story
7. 5 minutes: Discuss section 2 and the whole class.

2.2 VIDEO



Figure 2.1
Video Clip

This video clip is set in the context of two students, David and Sarah, playing a video game. They are just starting a new chapter of the game. This chapter of the game iChrist is about Jesus going to the temple and noticing the merchants and money changers there. The players must empty the temple court with a whip. David and Sarah discuss this chapter after completion. David indicates that he thinks this is a violent chapter and does not like it at all. Then there is a notification that Ahmed wants to join the group of David and Sarah have for this game. Sarah indicates that Ahmed is not welcome in the group because he is a Muslim and that just as in the story of Jesus cleaning the temple, he should not play a Christian game. Together with Sarah's father, the two teenagers explore what this story can mean.

DISCUSSION OF THE VIDEO

Discuss the image fragment in class with the students: what did they see?

The following questions are suggestions of questions you could ask. Introductory questions to the first part of this module: 'The world of the Bible.'

- Before we move on to the interpretation of the story, it is important to learn more about Jesus' own world. When and where did he live?
- What was the religion of Jesus?
- The video talks about the Temple, what was that?

Introductory questions to the second part of this module: 'The world of the story'

- Ask the students if they can summarize the story.
- Where does the story take place? What does this mean?
- How should you apply the story of Jesus to your own life?

Introductory questions to the third part of this module: 'Jesus as an example'

- How was Jesus depicted in the video?
- What does this say about Jesus?
- Is Jesus a peacemaker or divisive in this story?
- What do you think of how Jesus eventually died—on a cross?

2.3 JESUS AND THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

2.3.1 GOAL AND CONTENT

This section functions as an introduction to the lesson. The goal is to let the students explore the text and to recall their prior knowledge.

2.3.2 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

Exercise 1

Read the story about Jesus on the Temple court below. Did you already know this story and what do you think it means? Write this down below.

The purpose of this assignment is to use the students' prior knowledge.

Answering this exercise quickly and comprehensively requires that the Bible text is already known. Collect different views that the students have about the Bible text and use this to get an idea of the level of understanding that the students have.

2.3.3 BIBLE TEXT

John 2: 13-21

When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So, he made a whip out of cords, and drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the money changers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!" His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?" Jesus answered them, "Destroy this temple, and I will raise it again in three days." They replied, "It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?"

2.4 THE WORLD OF THE BIBLE

2.4.1 GOAL This section contains an explanation about some aspects of the context in which Jesus lived. The goal is to teach students something about the world of Jesus. This knowledge is relevant to understand the central story of this lesson. The following learning objective is specifically addressed in this section:

2. The student is able to describe why it is important to study the Bible in its historical context.

2.4.2 CONTENT This section zooms in on the Temple in Jerusalem. This topic plays a role in the story of Jesus cleansing the temple. It is important to see the concept of temple during this lesson not only in relation to Judaism but also to the broader concept found in other religions. In part of the lesson, the foundation is laid to teach students how to understand a Bible text. This lesson focuses on the observation phase of the inductive bible study method. See for a detailed explanation of the inductive Bible study method in the introduction of this book.

2.4.3 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

Exercise 2

Imagine that there is a time machine at school. You are lucky and allowed to travel to the time of Jesus. What would you like to learn about the time when Jesus lived?

The purpose of this exercise is that the students investigate their own questions, interest and doubt about Jesus and his world. For this exercise, no prior knowledge is necessary.

Use answers from this exercise as a starting point for possible further deepening of certain subjects.

Exercise 3

Enter the correct term on the lines. Look in the text to find the correct answers.

The purpose of this exercise is to *process the teaching material of this section*.

Answers:

Meaning	Term
<i>A place of worship and sacrifice</i>	<i>Temple</i>
<i>The temple at the time of Jesus' life</i>	<i>Temple of Herod</i>
<i>The temple built at the time of Ezra and Nehemiah</i>	<i>Second Temple</i>
<i>Forced to live in another country, because you are not allowed to live in your own country.</i>	<i>Exile</i>
<i>Name of the region where Jesus grew up.</i>	<i>Palestine</i>
<i>Capital of Palestine</i>	<i>Jerusalem</i>
<i>Empire that destroyed the temple in 586 BC.</i>	<i>Babylonians</i>
<i>The court around the Temple building where non-Jews were welcome.</i>	<i>Court of Gentiles</i>

2.4.4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Exegesis and context

This lesson focuses on the observation phase of the inductive bible study method as detailed in the introduction. For the inductive Bible study method, the concept of context is important to understand. The book explains this concept intending to teach the students that a Bible text should be read with the context in view. Context ensures that a framework is created in which a text can be interpreted. **The purpose of this framework is to ensure that the interpretation of a text only reflects what the text actually says.** Different types of contexts can be studied. In these lessons we distinguish three:

- The **literary context** concerns the genre of a Bible text and how the text should be read according to the principles of that genre.
- The **historical context** refers to historical events present in the background of a Bible text.
- The **cultural context** concerns the ways of life and thinking of the writer and the first readers.

In this lesson, context refers to the historical context. However, the other two types of contexts will come back in the other lessons.

Jerusalem and the Temple: Temple, Judaism and Passover

The **Temple** plays a crucial role in Judaism. This can be seen in the narrative of the people's history. Soon after the exodus from Egypt, according to Exodus, the Tabernacle was erected. This was the central place for the religious practices of the people. The tabernacle, according to the description in Exodus, consisted of a tent and fence with various parts. In 1 Samuel it became clear that soon after the establishment of the monarchy there was a desire to give the tabernacle a permanent place. The Temple built according to 1 Kings by Solomon is based on the earlier tabernacle.

The most important festival for the Jews in the time of Jesus was **Passover**, which is still the case for Jews today. The Passover feast commemorates the **end of slavery in Egypt** and the exodus from Egypt by the Israelites, as described in the Bible book of Exodus. Passover is also called the Jewish Easter festival. Passover is celebrated on the 14th day of the first month of the Jewish calendar and lasts seven or eight days. The Passover celebration is usually observed together with the family and consists of several rituals. These rituals are described in the Bible and each ritual refers to an aspect of the **exodus** from Egypt. During Second Temple Judaism, the annual Passover feast was accompanied by a massive influx of people to Jerusalem.

The feast of unleavened bread followed Passover. It was also already called Passover at the beginning of the first century. The Feast of Unleavened Bread served as a reminder of this first day of the exodus. The bread was unleavened because, according to Exodus, it had to be prepared and eaten in haste.

The name Passover refers to the last **plague** described in Exodus. The associated Passover meal stands for the meal that the Israelites according to Exodus (12:12) ate the night before the Exodus. During this night, God visited the Egyptians and let their firstborn die. The Israelites received the instructions to smear blood of a sacrificed lamb as a sign during a special meal in the preceding evening. God passed over the homes of the Israelites who had this sign. According to Exodus, this plague allowed the people to leave Egypt. In the Passover feast, the story of the exodus is remembered step by step. In preparation for the Passover meal, a lamb was slaughtered and subsequently roasted. Today it has taken shape in the **Passover Seder meal**, which, due to the absence of the Temple, has taken on a different shape.



Figure 3.2
First Passover
Source: Wannapik Studio

2.4.5 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

These didactic suggestions are only useful if the lesson is conducted using classroom teaching.

Suggested questions to ask:

- What can you tell about the world Jesus lived in?
- What do you know about temples?
 - Think of what you have learned about the Greeks and the Romans in history.
- Who has ever been to Jerusalem? Or has anyone ever seen a documentary about the Wailing Wall? What do you know about the Wailing Wall?
 - Have you seen the Wailing Wall?
 - What did you think about visiting it?
- Who can tell what the story in the Bible book of Exodus is about? Why would this story be important to the Jews?
- Who knows what Passover is? Has anyone ever celebrated Passover? How did you experience this?
- You have the statement: Freedom speaks with a Jewish accent. What do you think is meant by this?

Alternative assignments and instructional methods

Assignment. Let the students sit in pairs or small groups. Each pair or small group answers one of the following questions:

- What did the Temple mean to the Jews in the time of Jesus?
- What did the Temple look like?
- Why do Jews celebrate Passover?
- Why was the Temple a central place for Jews?

Try to give some suggestions for websites that the students can use to find additional information not covered in the student's book. Have students create a poster on which they answer their question.

Game. Create a quiz with the different terms covered in this section. Divide the class into groups. Have the students write down the answer to a question in the groups. Afterwards, check the answers of each of the groups. To let the students process the material more deeply, you can ask several open questions, which the students must actively try to answer.

Assignment. Read the story of Jesus cleansing the Temple court out loud. The students have their eyes closed and are instructed to imagine being in the story. As you read the text, ask the students questions about their experiences while listening to the story. These questions are aimed at infusing the student into the world of the story. Examples of questions:

- *When Jesus enters the temple:*
 - What do you hear around you? Do you hear the animals?
 - What do you smell?
 - What do you see?
 - What does the Temple look like?
 - What clothes are you wearing?
 - What are the people around you doing?
 - Is it quiet or busy?
- *When Jesus chases the sellers and moneychangers from the court:*
 - What is happening in the court?
 - What does the commotion do to you?
 - Is there something strange you notice?
- *During the questioning by the leaders:*
 - Do you feel tension or restful?
 - Which emotion describes how you feel right now?

2.5 THE WORLD OF THE STORY

2.5.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to guide the students step by step through the Bible text. The students read the story in parts. A combination of explanations and assignments follows each section. The students slowly learn several skills for studying the Bible. The purpose of this is that students learn that while reading the Bible, they need to pay careful attention to whether something is in the text or it is an interpretation of the reader. The following learning objectives are specifically addressed in this section:

1. The student is able to study a (possibly violent) Bible text by asking questions about the story using a stepwise procedure.
3. The student is able to situate violence within the context of a Bible text.
4. The student is prepared to relate his/her point of view on violence to the story of Jesus.
5. The student displays a willingness to handle Bible texts beyond a mere one-time reading.

2.5.2 CONTENT

The students go through the Bible text in four parts:

- The first part is about Jesus travelling to Jerusalem and **arriving at the Temple**. The information and exercises focus on a gaining a better understanding of the beginning situation of the story.
- The second part is about how Jesus **made a whip** and expelled the sellers and money changers from the Temple court. The exercises immediately after the text focus on how Jesus' actions are often described. Describing Jesus as angry can be done based on the text, but this is not explicitly stated in the text. Other descriptions are also appropriate.
- The third part is about Jesus **interacting with the leaders** of the Jews. This interaction is about legitimizing the action of Jesus.
- The fourth section deals with what **Jesus meant** by his answer. The goal is to find an interpretation of Jesus's action and words.

At the end of this section, a detailed commentary on the Bible text (John 2:13-21) is given.

2.5.3 EXERCISES WITH ANSWERS

Exercise 4

At the beginning of the story, Jesus traveled to Jerusalem. According to the text, why did Jesus go to Jerusalem?

- A. To visit a friend**
- B. To preach in Jerusalem**
- C. To celebrate Passover**
- D. To buy cattle, sheep and doves.**

The purpose of this exercise is for the students to read the Bible text and the explanation attentively. The correct answer is C.

Exercise 5

How did Jesus respond to what he saw in the Temple? What do you think of this response? How would you describe Jesus' actions?

The purpose of this exercise is for the students to express their first reaction to what Jesus did. Students will likely talk about Jesus getting angry. It is not surprising, of course, if the students already see this story as something positive through previous religious instruction. The goal is that students label Jesus as acting violently or aggressively.

Exercise 6

What other descriptions of the reaction of Jesus can you think of?

The purpose of this exercise for students to name alternatives to angry, such as passionate, driven, bewildered, upset, irritated or sad.

Exercise 7

Jesus calls the Temple his father's house. Who is Jesus referring to? Why would he do this?

The purpose of this exercise is for the students to consider what Jesus may have meant.

Exercise 8

Think about what Jesus' reaction is doing to you. Write down some words that come to mind. What do these words say about how you look at the story?

This exercise aims to stimulate self-reflection and self-awareness about the students' own questions and doubts.

Exercise 9

Why does Jesus not want the Temple court to be a marketplace?

Students need to process the text they have previously read to understand that Jesus is primarily concerned with the Temple as a place of worship.

Possible answers:

- Jesus wants to emphasize the sanctity of the temple.
- Jesus wants to draw attention to who he is.

Jesus wants to show that the old temple will no longer be needed in the future.

Exercise 10

What do you think of this story? Do you think Jesus was violent?

The purpose of this exercise is to compare the story with one's own life and way of thinking. At the same time, it is a moment to reflect on what the students have now learned about the text.

2.5.4 COMMENTARY ON JOHN 2:13-21

The story of Jesus cleansing the temple is placed at the beginning of the Gospel of John. This Gospel differs from the other three in style and content. It contains several stories and sayings of Jesus that the other three do not contain. It begins in a striking way with an account of who Jesus is. After this exposition follows the story of the wedding at Cana, where Jesus turned water into wine, which is the first reported miracle that Jesus performed in the Gospel of John. In this story, Jesus makes it clear that his time had not yet come. Immediately after this follows the story of the temple cleansing. This is striking, because after saying that his time has not yet come, according to the writer of John, Jesus immediately went to the Temple and drew attention to himself. The stories that follow the temple cleansing are the dialogue with Nicodemus and the encounter with the Samaritan woman.

Comments

According to John, Jesus travels from Galilee to Jerusalem to **celebrate the Passover feast**. The celebration of Passover caused the city of Jerusalem to become packed with crowds. Estimates indicate that the city may have increased fivefold in the number of people staying there during the Passover period. Of course, this crowdedness made the leaders extremely nervous. This meant that during the Passover festival and the subsequent Feast of Unleavened Bread, they were on the lookout for possible disturbances.

Due to the celebrations, the court of the Gentiles would also have been packed. When Jesus arrives in this court, he finds, next to the many people, a very **well-functioning market**. Because of the Passover festival, this market was especially important for travelers who came from outside the city. On the market they could buy a sacrificial animal for the sacrifices. This was necessary for the travelers to participate in the Passover feast. In addition, the moneychangers made it possible for travelers to exchange their own coins, depicting the face of the emperor, into coins suitable for the temple tax.

The sales took place in the **court of the Gentiles**. This was the court where the Gentiles were allowed to come. However, further entry into the inner courtyards of the Temple was forbidden to Gentiles. The presence of the merchants and moneychangers in the court of the Gentiles might have prevented the court from becoming a place of worship for the Gentiles.

When Jesus saw the market in the court, he **made a whip** and drove the sellers from the court. What is important to observe is that it is not described that Jesus actually used the whip to hurt people. This shows that the violent

image this text evokes is not due to a **literal act** of physical violence but is due to the situation suggested by the **description** that Jesus made a whip. Furthermore, Jesus urgently and impressively send the vendors and moneychangers away. What these insights point out is that the violent nature is evident in all of Jesus' actions and not only in the whipping with a whip. Acting Jesus had an effect as the sellers, money changer and even the cattle left the square. Jesus' actions had an effect because the sellers, money changers and even the cattle left the square. The question remains what the deeper meaning of these described actions is.

As the **reason for his action**, Jesus seems to indicate that he finds the temple an important place. He sees it as his Father's house since he clearly calls the temple "his" Father's House. Jesus makes a messianic statement using "his" in combination with father. The house of Jesus' Father must be stripped of the merchants and money changers. The statement that Jesus makes about his Father's house seems to be inspired by Zechariah 14: 21b: "And on that day there will no longer be a merchant¹ in the house of the LORD Almighty." This text refers to a future situation of complete purity in Jerusalem and Judah, in which no more merchants are needed in the temple. The disciples realize this when they consider Psalm 69:10. It is not clear when they understood this, but this is probably after Jesus was crucified.

After driving the merchants and moneychangers out of the court, Jesus was addressed by the leaders of the Jews. They indicated that they wanted a **sign** from Jesus. They acted in line with the legitimate practice of the Jews to investigate prophets. Jesus acted outrageously and made a messianic claim. The leaders act from the authority of the Temple and thus felt they had the right to dispute Jesus' authority. We are thus dealing with an authority question. Does Jesus have the authority to do and say what he did or do the leaders have the authority to punish Jesus for his action? Therefore, Jesus had to demonstrate that his action is justified.

Jesus' response is **not a direct answer** to the question. He gave the leaders a simile. In the response he gave, Jesus compared himself to the Temple. By referring to the Temple, Jesus is directly connecting himself with to the ministry of the Temple. Jesus challenges that if the Temple is broken down, he will raise it up again. The leaders do not understand the comparison. They subsequently ask a logical question with a skeptical undertone. Three days is absurd compared to the length it took to build the temple as it was then. Jesus thus reacted to the leaders with a shocking statement.

¹ The NIV uses the literal translation of Canaanite here. For clarity it is changed to merchant in this book, because that is the meaning of Canaanite in this instance.

The leaders did not understand what Jesus meant by his words at the time. As a result, the answer of Jesus could not have been satisfactory. Yet the **scandalous nature** of the claim likely surpassed the surprise of his earlier action. This is a possible reason why all four accounts of this story contain no further elaboration on the previous action of Jesus. In the Gospels of Mark and Matthew, the importance of Jesus' statement becomes clear when referred to during the trial in front of the high priests and the Sanhedrin, but the disturbing of the market in the Temple itself is not referred to.

Not only did the Jews not understand what Jesus meant by his words, the **disciples** did not directly understand this. The text makes it clear that it was only after the resurrection that they understood what Jesus meant here. This makes it clear that the words Jesus used are not obviously understandable.

Interpretation

Several interpretations of this Bible text are possible. For this lesson, there are two relevant interpretations of this Bible text:

1. With his action, Jesus showed he **rejected the entire Temple ministry**. This interpretation is based on the importance the market had for the functioning of the Temple. Dislodging the market from the Temple court effectively stopped the operation of the Temple. His actions and his response to the leaders serve to predict that the Temple ministry, with all sacrifices, will be replaced by a new system. He suggests that this new system will come into existence through his death.
2. The second interpretation is **eschatological**, which means that it is about the end times. In this case, it is about the future of the Temple. This future is related to an essential characteristic of the temple, namely is the Divine presence. In line with Zechariah 14:21, Jesus emphasizes the sanctity of the temple through the action. This holiness arises from the Divine presence. John uses the comparison of Jesus' body with the temple to speak of the end of the old temple. This ancient temple and ministry will be demolished by the Jewish leaders, which indicates the death of Jesus. Jesus is the new temple to which the Divine presence moves. John seems to point in a new way that God deals with the people and is present in the world.

What should we do with the text?

The history of the interpretation of temple cleansing in the Gospel of John makes it clear that a violent reading of this text did not begin until Augustine. In the first centuries, the text was never actually used as an argument for the use of violence. The text was used during the Crusades to justify the violence used. However, this interpretation has not remained the primary interpretation. The current consensus based on linguistic research is that according to John Jesus did not use the whip against humans or animals. Thus, it is clear that he did not use direct physical violence.

2.5.5 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

These didactic suggestions are only useful if the lesson is conducted using classroom teaching.

Suggestions of questions to ask

- Jesus goes to the Temple. What does he see there?
- The text says that Jesus made a whip. What did Jesus do with the whip?
- What do the leaders of the Jews ask Jesus?
- What are the disciples of Jesus doing in this story?
- What does Jesus mean by “breaking down the Temple”?
- How do Jesus’ disciples respond to what he said?

Alternative assignments and instructional methods

Assignment. The students are divided into groups. Each student is numbered according to the number of students in the groups. The tables in the room are arranged in groups. This assignment has three rounds:

- Round 1: Each group sits at a different group of tables. Each group gets a large sheet of paper that shows the story in images. The students are given the assignment to study what they all notice about the story. Each student has an A4 to take notes of what is being discussed.
- Round 2: The students go and sit in the groups of their number. They are instructed to discuss what they think the story means. They can use what they discovered in round 1 for this discussion.
- Round 3: The students return to the original groups. They first discuss what they discussed and have learned in round 2. Thereafter, they must think about what the story means for today.

As a teacher, try to give some instructions to both individual groups and the whole class. In the debriefing, it can be useful to discuss parts of the student's book.

Roleplay. Have students act out the story of Jesus in the classroom. Let them turn the story into a script themselves and give the space the shape of the Temple court with a market. Add an interpreter whose role is to explain what exactly happened in a scene at three moments during the script. The moments are: (1) When Jesus uses the whip, verses 13-16; (2) After Jesus has been questioned, verses 17-20; (3) When the disciples understand what Jesus meant, verse 21.

Ask the students the following questions while they create the script:

- What makes Jesus react that way?
- What would the other people in the court do?
- What do the disciples of Jesus do?
- What is meant by the Jews?
 - Explain that this refers to the leaders of the Jews in the Gospel of John.

Assignment. Students read the story in at least three different translations, for example, New King James Version, English Standard Version and New Living Translation. The students are asked to describe the differences. Then they should think about what the differences in the story make clear and what questions these differences raise about the story.

Assignment. The students read this story in the different accounts in the Bible: Matthew 21:12-13, Mark 11:15-19, and Luke 19:45-48. The students are asked to describe the differences. Then they should think about what the differences in the story make clear and what questions these differences raise about the story.

2.6 JESUS AS AN EXAMPLE?

This teaching package distinguishes between 'basic learning material' and 'going deeper'. This section can be used by the teacher to give the students a deeper understanding of the lesson's content and is not part of the standard package for the students. You can find the student pages in 2.7.

2.6.1 PURPOSE The purpose of this section is to familiarize students with the issue of violence and the Bible. The purpose of this lesson is to show that violence and the story of Jesus are not easily separated. Not only are some of Jesus' statements radical, but the purpose of his life is usually linked to the violent image of the cross. The following learning objectives are specifically addressed in this chapter:

3. The student is able to situate violence within the context of a Bible text.
4. The student is prepared to relate his/her point of view on violence to the story of Jesus.

2.6.2 CONTENT First, the students receive some explanation of images of Jesus and must reflect on them. The concept of the 'image of Jesus' will then be further elaborated in the contrast between Jesus as a peacemaker and as a sower of division. To understand this contrast better, the meaning of peace and violence is elaborated upon. Students should reflect on their image of Jesus. Thereafter, three Bible texts are discussed which contain statements from Jesus. These are compared in light of the contrast. The last section discusses what the violence of the cross means to various Christians.

2.6.3 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

Exercise 1

What does Jesus mean to you?

The purpose of this question is for the students to reflect on their own image of Jesus.

Exercise 2

Read the following two messages and answer these questions:

You can find the two messages on the student's pages.

- **Indicate how the messages differ in the image of Jesus they contain.**
- **What do you think of these images of Jesus?**
- **What do you think Jesus would do?**

The purpose of this question is for the students by reading the messages two different Jesus' images. Furthermore, the goal is that they discover how these Jesus images provide a completely different interpretation of who Jesus is.

Exercise 3

Which do you think Jesus was: a peacemaker or someone who sowed division?

The purpose of this exercise is to let students reflect on their own image of Jesus critically before reading the Bible texts in the next section.

Exercise 4

Compare the three Bible texts and answer the following questions:

- **What do the texts say about Jesus?**
- **What do the texts mean?**
- **What do you think of the statements of Jesus?**
- **How does this affect you?**

The purpose of this exercise is for students to study the Bible texts to learn more about how Jesus is depicted.

2.6.4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Images of Jesus and Images of God

The concept **'image of God'** is used to describe how people imagine God. These are ideas that a person has about God. An image of God determines how a person speaks about God. It also influences how a person approaches and interprets a Bible text. For example, by having a negative image of the concept of God, a person can also highlight negative aspects of a Bible text. Thus, images of God can have an effect on Bible reading and interpretation.

The concept **'image of Jesus'** used in this lesson is derived from the concept 'image of God'. A study into how normal, not trained, believers look at Jesus has revealed that people have differing views of Jesus. After interviewing normal believers about whether they see Jesus as god, the researchers found that people saw Jesus as only God in his work (functional view), God in all aspects (ontological view) or as doubting the Godliness of Jesus completely (skeptical view). A **majority** of normal believers had a **functional**, contrary to the more traditional ontological views in the Christian tradition. This shows that the label Christian does not determine what kind of image of Jesus a person has.

The study also found that images of Jesus were related to how persons viewed what the cross means and what the purpose of Jesus' life was. Images of Jesus are important to discuss in class. By showing students that images of Jesus, just like images of God, influence how a Bible text is approached, space is created to critically reflect on the images of Jesus themselves. The formation of an image of Jesus and the image of God is influenced by the culture and society of persons, studying the bible and tradition and by personal experiences.

Violence defined

Violence is a difficult concept to define properly and may seem best to be understood subjectively. In this **subjective** use of the term violence, a text is violent because it appears violent according to the reader's own perception. This subjective approach does have its problems. First, it can lead to endless discussion of what is and is not violent. Second, it could cause certain violent situations to be normalized in a group. Finally, it can lead to a non-critical approach to potentially violent images and texts.

Although violence is difficult to define, various approaches have been drawn up attempting to do so. The World Health Organization defines violence as: "The **intentional** use of physical force or power, threatened or actual, against oneself, another person, or against a group or community, that either results in or has a high **likelihood** of resulting in injury, death, psychological harm,

maldevelopment or deprivation.” This definition makes clear that violence also occurs when the possibility of physical damage is absent. This broad definition shows that texts can be violent without actual physical violence being displayed in the text

A useful addition is the **spiral of violence** born out the liberation theology. The idea of the spiral of violence is that man uses violence through the propensity for revenge and retribution. Simply summarized by action and counterreaction to violence, the world is increasingly experiencing violence. Jack Nelson-Pallmeyer’s added two additional categories in addition to the first three types from liberation theology. The table below shows the five categories. The spiral of violence is a useful concept because it shows that many topics that which are not direct physical violence can still be seen as violent. Jesus speaks much more often about reducing violence than may seem at first sight.¹

Violence 1	Violence 2	Violence 3	Violence 4	Violence 5
Hunger, Poverty, Oppression	Rebellion, Armed Resistance, Fighting back	Repression, State Terror, Death Squads, Military Oppression	Dysfunctional- Deflective, Community Breakdown, Crime	Spiritual and Divine Threats, Awaiting God’s violence, Human violence in God’s name

Table 2.1
Spiral of Violence
Source:
Jack Nelson - Pallmeyer
Is Religion Killing Us

¹ Rutherford et al. (2007). Violence: a glossary. Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health 61 (8), page 676.

Interpretation of the three Bible texts

Matthew 10:34-39

At first glance, this text seems to speak of division. Yet this text is about the **mission** that Jesus speaks of in Matthew 10:16. Jesus continues to indicate in the following text that after being sent, the disciples will face opposition and persecution. The text about the sword should be read with this background. Jesus expects his disciples to make a choice. Jesus indicates that there is a separation not because he makes it, but because a choice must be made for or against him. In this text, Jesus speaks about the price that following him has for his disciples.

Matthew 5:38-40

This text is easily applied to the current age. We feel that Jesus teaches something about **retribution** and **revenge** in this text. However, the interpretation of the text is more complicated. The text refers to the well-known **law of retribution** that can be found throughout the entire Near East. Simply put, this law says that revenge is not allowed by itself. Retaliation for a crime must be in line with the crime. This meant that there was no unrestrained revenge. Another important observation is that this was a **legal principle**. Retribution was not possible of one's own accord but happened in a community of law and order. With his statement Jesus is putting this system of justice in another light. Instead of using a judicial right, a follower of Jesus should shove it aside. He elaborates on this by referring to turning the other cheek. Being slapped on the cheek was a gross humiliation in the Near Eastern context. Instead of retaliating and resolve a humiliation, you humble yourself further. The main point is to live in **selfless love for one another**.

Matthew 7:7-12

This Bible passage has two parts and serves as the conclusion of a larger section of the Sermon on the Mount (7:1-12). This larger section focusses on the question how a person should live. In the first part (7-11), Jesus speaks about prayer and that **God provides**. This part is about how the goodness of God does not turn away from mankind. The words search, knock and ask convey the central message of the passage. When a person turns to God, God will not disappoint this person.

In the second part (12), Jesus talks about how people should treat others. The first part is added to show a relationship between the preceding lessons in the sermon on the mount and the so-called **Golden Rule** in this second

part. This relationship can be seen as a conclusion of all the things a person has to do in life. The Golden rule was often before this text phrased similar to “What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow.” Jesus uses the **positive phrasing** of saying which emphasis that a person must do something to others, instead of a negative phrasing that emphasis not doing something to others. Jesus shows that just as God has goodness for man, his followers should learn that they need to live in goodness with others.

Figure 2.3
Painting The Sermon on the Mountain by Arsène Robert, 1870
Source: Didier Descouens via Wikimedia Commons, licenced under the Creative Commons [Attribution-Share Alike 4.0 International](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Église_Saint-Martin_de_Castelnau-d%27Estrétefonds_-_Le_Sermon_sur_la_montagne_par_Robert_Arsène_IM31000073.jpg) license. No change has been made to the picture. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Église_Saint-Martin_de_Castelnau-d%27Estrétefonds_-_Le_Sermon_sur_la_montagne_par_Robert_Arsène_IM31000073.jpg



2.6.5 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

These didactic suggestions are only useful if the lesson is conducted using classroom teaching.

Suggestions of questions to ask

- Who exactly do you think Jesus was?
- Have you ever heard the statement “What would Jesus do”? Why do people use this phrase?
- Two political parties disagree on whether to participate in a war. Which of the two would Jesus join?
- Do you know statements by Jesus that you find difficult?
- Proposition: Jesus was a person who was divisive. Do you agree with this statement?
- How would you explain the concept of violence?
- What does the word peace mean?

Alternative assignments and instructional methods

Assignment. As a group, the class will jointly define the concepts of violence and peace. Here is an example of how you could give shape to this:

- There are five rounds in which group work is alternated with class work.
 1. First, have the students brainstorm in groups about both concepts.
 2. Discuss what has been brainstormed in class.
 3. Students should compare examples of violence and the situation of peace to what was said in the previous two rounds.
 - As a teacher, try to find some concrete examples of violence and peace that are in a grey area.
 4. Change the composition of the groups. In these new groups, students should attempt to define the concepts of violence and peace.
 5. A common definition of the second concepts is drawn up in class. As a class, compare this with the definition of violence with that of the World Health Organization given in the teacher’s book earlier in this section or with a definition from the Internet.

Assignment. Select some excerpts from films and series about Jesus. Students should discuss how Jesus is depicted in the films. The fragments should not only show Jesus when he is a person who teaches alone, but also travels around and encounters people.

2.7 STUDENT PAGES: JESUS AS AN EXAMPLE

Jesus is an important person for Christians who taught them how to live. For many of these Christians Jesus and his teaching are a very important part of their daily lives. A principle that is well known within the Protestant churches is **Solus Christus** which means 'Christ alone'. This principle marks the role that Jesus plays in the church. Because Jesus is so important, statements have emerged that connect Jesus with our own lives. A modern example of this is the often-used question '**What would Jesus do?**'. An example can be found in the Christian song *Revolutionary* by Josh Wilson, in which he replies to this question 'Jesus would love first'.

The answer to the question 'what would Jesus do?' will differ for each person. This is because there are different opinions about who Jesus exactly is. For some people, Jesus is merely an exemplar of how to live, while for others, Jesus was God in human form. These different views of Jesus are called **images of Jesus**. Each image shows a different Jesus. These images give direction to how people deal with the story of Jesus. Especially in one's own life, an image of Jesus will determine how people ultimately apply the stories in their own lives. These different images spark a lot of discussion about what Jesus taught and how we should deal with this today.

Exercise 1

What does Jesus mean to you?



Exercise 2

Read the following two messages and answer these questions:

- Indicate how the messages differ in the image of Jesus they contain.
- What do you think of these images of Jesus?
- What do you think Jesus would do?

If Jesus were alive now, he would join us. We have the right on our hand. Just like Jesus, we resist the rulers of the world. Jesus is with us, for he said that he came to bring the sword. Today, Jesus would bring guns to help people. Jesus was a warrior for justice, as we are now. He was even crucified for it. This further demonstrates the radicality of Jesus.

- A warrior from the Lord's
Resistance Army

If Jesus were living now, he would sit next to us. The world is full of injustice caused by greed and selfishness. Just as we fight against capitalism, Jesus fought against the greedy machine in the Temple. We do that like Jesus without fighting, but by turning the other cheek. Like us, Jesus fought for a better world by protesting peacefully. When he was arrested, he went without a fight and even on the cross he thought of others.

- A demonstrator of Occupy
Wallstreet

Jesus peacemaker or sower of division

The writers of the above messages both have different images of Jesus. The images are in line with their own expectations. These expectations which differ in whether Jesus himself used violence and whether he would approve using violence. There are different opinions about how Jesus dealt with violence. Was Jesus a person who spread love and peace? Or was he a person who came to divide and approved violence himself? These different opinions are caused by different images of Jesus.



Violence is any act that a person performs that damages another person or group physically, mentally, or emotionally. It is not just about physically hurting someone but can also be mentally hurting someone by threatening or bullying that person. **Peace** means both the absence of struggle and a state of rest and harmony. Violence and peace are two concepts that for many people cannot go together. A person cannot be violent and at the same time bring rest and harmony. Yet many wars have been fought with the idea of bringing peace.

Exercise 3

Which do you think Jesus was: a peacemaker or someone who sowed division?

In the story of the cleansing of the Temple, Jesus appears to be a violent visitor to the Temple. Other texts in the Bible also show a radical side of Jesus. An example of such a text is Matthew 10:34-39, in which Jesus says that he has come to bring the sword and to divide.

MATTHEW 10:34-39

“Do not suppose that I have come to bring peace to the earth. I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. For I have come to turn ‘a man against his father, a daughter against her mother, a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law — a man’s enemies will be the members of his own household.’ “Anyone who loves their father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; anyone who loves their son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. Whoever does not take up their cross and follow me is not worthy of me. Whoever finds their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life for my sake will find it.

At the same time, there are other texts in the Bible where Jesus calls not to be violent. An example of such a text is the famous Sermon on the Mount, where Jesus asks to turn the other cheek if one is hit on a cheek. In the same speech, Jesus also talks about treating other persons in the same way as you yourself want to be treated.

MATTHEW 5:38-40

“You have heard that it was said, ‘Eye for eye, and tooth for tooth.’ But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also.

MATTHEW 7:7-12

“Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened. “Which of you, if your son asks for bread, will give him a stone? Or if he asks for a fish, will give him a snake? If you, then, though you are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good gifts to those who ask him! So, in everything, do to others what you would have them do to you, for this sums up the Law and the Prophets.

Exercise 4

Compare the three Bible texts and answer the following questions:

- What do the texts say about Jesus?
- What do the texts mean?
- What do you think of the statements of Jesus?
- How does this affect you?

Two different persons seem to be visible in the three Bible texts. Yet all three texts are placed in the story about Jesus by the author of the Gospel of Matthew. For the author, the statements belong to Jesus. Thus, it seems that the depicted Jesus is both radical and peaceful.

2.8 GLOSSARY

In this glossary, you will find more information and an explanation of certain terms. After each word is indicated to which section it belongs.

Cana (5)

In ancient times, Cana was a small village in Galilee. Galilee was a Jewish region in what was then Palestine (a region of the Middle East). According to the New Testament, Jesus was present at a wedding in Cana, where he turned water into wine.

Capernaum (5)

In ancient times, Capernaum was a small village in Galilee. Galilee was a Jewish region in what was then Palestine (a region of the Middle East). According to the New Testament, Jesus lived in Capernaum. He taught in the synagogue of Capernaum.

Exile (4)

Exile means that a large part of a people group is forced to live in a different place, far away from where they grew up.

Galilee (4)

At the time of Jesus, Galilee was a Jewish region in what was then Palestine. This area was slightly smaller than Belgium today. Jesus spent most of his life in the region of Galilee.

Herod the Great (4)

Herod the Great was a vassal king under the Romans who ruled over the region of Judea from 37 BC to 4 BC. Herod the Great did not have the favor of the people. By starting a renovation of the Temple in 19 BC, he hoped to gain the favor of the people.

Holy (4)

Holy is a concept that indicates purity and the separate status of God and everything that belongs to the divine. Holiness was an important concept in Judaism. The most important building of the Temple whole complex was called 'The Holy Place'.

Image of Jesus (6)

An image of Jesus is the collection of all the ideas, imaginations, and expectations that a person has about who Jesus was/is. An image of Jesus is what comes to someone's mind as he or she thinks about the name. Interpretation

Interpretation is the act or process of explaining or understanding the meaning of something. When you read the Bible, interpretation occurs when you try to understand what the text means.

Jerusalem (4)

In the time of Jesus, Jerusalem was the capital of Palestine. Jerusalem had not only a temple but also synagogues: this is where the Jews came to pray. Even today, Jerusalem remains an important city for Jews all over the world.

Jerusalem is also an important city for Christians and Muslims. In Jerusalem, Jesus was condemned, crucified and buried. Christians also believe he was resurrected here. The apostles first began to tell the stories of Jesus in Jerusalem. According to the Islamic tradition, the Prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven from Jerusalem.

Middle East (4)

Jesus lived in the Middle East. That is why Christianity has its origins in this region. The term 'Middle East' refers to the countries of Southwest Asia and some parts of North Africa, such as Iran, Iraq, Syria, Egypt, and so on.

Passover (4)

Passover is a Jewish festival that commemorates the end of slavery in Egypt and the exodus out of Egypt. It is a celebration that commemorates the liberation of the Jewish people from slavery. It is celebrated on the 14th day of the first month of the Jewish calendar and lasts seven or eight days.

Palestine (4)

In the time of Jesus, Palestine was a region in the Middle East. After Herod the Great became vassal ruler of this area, it was enlarged. As a result, Jesus lived in Palestine because Bethlehem, Nazareth and Galilee all lie in Palestine.

Peace (6)

Peace means both the absence of struggle and a state of rest and harmony.

Peacemaker (6)

A peacemaker is a person who wants to ensure that a fight, conflict or war ends, and peace arrives.

Solus Christus (6)

Solus Christus is a statement that arose during the Reformation. Literally, it means 'Christ alone'. This statement is part of 5 similar statements called the five Solas.

Second Temple (4)

The second Temple is the name for the Temple of Jerusalem built at the end of the Exile. It was continuously remodeled from 19 BC to about 64 AD. In 70 AD, the Romans destroyed this Temple. Only one wall of the Temple remained: the western one. This wall / place is now known as the Wailing Wall.

Temple (4)

A temple is a building devoted to the worship of a god or gods. Temples have been built throughout the whole world by different societies for a wide variety of different religions.

Violence (6)

Violence is any act that a person performs which damages another person or group physically, mentally, or emotionally. It is not just about physically hurting someone, but also threatening or bullying someone.

2.9 TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

1 INT LIVING ROOM DAY

Sarah is playing a video game with David on the computer. We see them playing with controllers in their hands.

David: Ha, this time Ill beat you!

Sarah: Never! God is always on my side, you can't beat me!

2 INT SCHOOL DAY

We see the title of the game appearing.

iChrist's adventures chapter 6 - The Cleansing of the Temple

We see a 2D 8bit video game with a Character representing Jesus in a temple filled with people: sellers of cattle, sheep and doves, Coin exchangers... (small texts in image)

In voice over we hear the computer speaking.

Computer: When it was almost time for the Jewish Passover, Jesus went up to Jerusalem... In the temple courts he found people selling cattle, sheep and doves, and others sitting at tables exchanging money. So, he made a whip out of cords, ...

We see an 8-bit Christ with a whip entering a temple.

Sarah: ah one of my favorite chapters!

David: Pff, I dont know, this one is a bit violent for Jesus, I think.

Sarah: no, it's just cleansing the temple!

We see a count down 3...2...1... Cleanse!

3 INT LIVING ROOM DAY

We see Sarah and David heavily using the controllers, tapping buttons and pulling on the cords a bit.

Computer (off): He drove all from the temple courts, both sheep and cattle; he scattered the coins of the moneychangers and overturned their tables. To those who sold doves he said, "Get these out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!"

4 IN-SCREEN VIDEOGAME

We see iChrist 8bit version with a text in image 'get out of here! Stop turning my Father's house into a market!'

Computer: His disciples remembered that it is written: "Zeal for your house will consume me." The Jews then responded to him, "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

We see some followers of Jesus with a text 'Zeal for your house will consume me' and then some Jews with 'What signs can you show us to prove you authority to do this all?'

Then we see title screen with 'End of Chapter 6' Then we see 2 scores counting up: Guest loses to Sarah 4360 to 11575pts.

5 INT LIVING ROOM DAY

David: Ah I'm so bad at this game... and I don't like to be so aggressive towards others...

Sarah: You're not bad, just a noob but you have great potential! You just need to practise a bit more.

David: Don't you think this chapter is a bit violent? I mean, thought Jesus was a peaceful person.

Sarah: Well I think Jesus is just disgusted with the people who do not, belong in the temple... So that's why is acting like that.

Suddenly the computer gives an alert. Sarah walks to the computer.

6 IN-SCREEN COMPUTER

We see a notification:

Ahmed want to join your group 'iChrist's Adventures'

Sarah: What is this? Once again, Ahmed wants to join our community online about iChrist's Adventures.

David: Uhm, Oh? What's the problem I told him about this game, he is a classmate.

Sarah: Yeah, I know, but he is a Muslim, he shouldn't be playing our Christian game. Maybe I need to teach him a lesson.

7 INT LIVING ROOM DAY

David: Why not?

Sarah: It's just like the chapter we just played. The sellers that don't belong in the temple is just like other believers. They shouldnt play our Christian game, either!

Sarah's father Adam enters the room

Adam: What makes you say that, Sarah?

Sarah: Ah Father! Well Jesus taught us that we should clear Gods place of false believers. Ahmed is a Muslim so he wouldn't belong in the temple either, so why would we accept him in our online community?

Adam: but the story doesn't say if the sellers in the temple were of another religion.

Sarah: uhm... yeah...that's true but why would Jesus be angry then? I think Jesus wants to emphasise his disgust with the people who don't belong there. That is why he throws them out of the temple.

8. INT LIVING ROOM DAY

We see the 3 characters around the computer pointing at the screen.

Adam: Was he really angry? Maybe he was just upset by what he saw. I'm sure the sellers would not been thrown out if they were there to pray.

David: uhm... I don't get that...

9. IN-SCREEN COMPUTER

We see some of the details of the temple in 2D that show people praying.

Adam: The temple was an important place, where Jews in that period went for rituals, such as animal sacrifices. Why do you think Jesus went to the temple?

Sarah: Well, he also says it is his father house. So maybe he wanted to be there to pray to his father.

10 IN-SCREEN COMPUTER

We see the crowd again with the text "What sign can you show us to prove your authority to do all this?"

Adam: What does the crowd think of the action of Jesus later on?

Sarah: They are wondering why he is doing this.

11 INT LIVING ROOM DAY

David points at the screen.

David adds: And questioning Jesus's right to do that. So they condemn what Jesus did.

Sarah (confused): Yeah, I guess that's right ... so maybe the crowd didn't mind those sellers.

Adam: indeed, and just maybe Jesus was also acting because he had another reason. We can't be sure.

Sarah: Yeah, I that could be the case. Maybe he was talking about that the temple was primarily a place for prayer and worship. Prayer was important for Him, that is why he gave us the Lord's prayer... Maybe I need re-think how I look at that story.

David: Yeah, you should. I think a game is not the same as a temple

Adam: Now. Why don't you try to talk to Ahmed and see why he likes this game? And there is definitely no need to teach him a lesson.

Sarah: Yeah, that may be a good idea! Thanks, Dad!

12 IN-SCREEN COMPUTER

We see a text 'Message to Ahmed sent'.

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Source of the images

Image of the passover of the Angel of Death. From Wannapik Studio relased under CC BY-NC: <https://www.wannapik.com/vectors/52143>

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Source of the images

2.1 Photo of the painting depicting the crucifixion by Peter Rubens. This is in public domain.

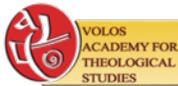


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EDUC8 Consortium



This book was funded by the European Union's Internal Security Fund – Police.

