



Protestants  
in  
Encounter

TEACHER'S BOOK



Funded by  
the European Union



# **FACE2FACE**

# **PROTESTANTS IN ENCOUNTER**

TEACHER'S BOOK



EDUC8

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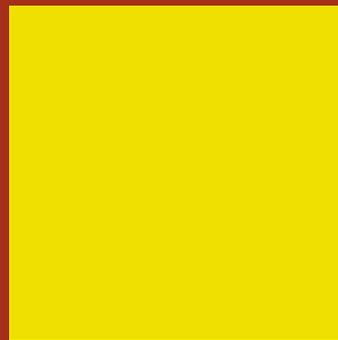
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# INTRODUCTION

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## INTRODUCTION

# EDUC8 TO BUILD RESILIENCE

Terrorism, war, authoritarianism, poverty, natural disasters, violence... The world does not seem to be doing well. Young people today are growing up in a diverse world in which religion is all too often misused to condone violence. Indeed, religion and violence are often linked together. How can we make young people look beyond such forms of polarization and radicalization?

EDUC8 is a religious education project created for secondary schools and extracurricular contexts. This project aims to build resilience against polarization and radicalization among young people, and to demonstrate how they can find resilience and resistance (to this) in their own religious tradition. This initiative has been funded by the European Union's Internal Security Fund.

EDUC8 focuses on six different worldviews, namely Judaism, Catholicism, Islam, Orthodoxy, Protestantism, and a non-confessional (ethical) perspective. Each worldview departs from its own tradition on different topics in order to build resistance to polarization and radicalization. Several didactic packages have been developed for 13- to 15-year-old students. This textbook starts from a Protestant perspective.

This textbook is divided into four chapters, also called deep modules. Specifically, it covers the following four topics:

1. Encounter with the other: dealing with diversity
2. Encounter with sacred texts: texts of violence
3. Encounter with the environment: social and ecological issues
4. When encounter becomes conflict: just war and just peace

Figure 1  
Video Clip



In the first module on our encounter with others, we examine the way in which Christians interact with others, with other believers and with non-believers. In other words, how can Christians cope with the existing diversity in our societies and what are potential stumbling blocks and positive features here?

The second module focuses on how to deal with Bible texts that seem to teach violence against others. How can we interpret and apply these texts in our own lives?

The third module shifts the attention to the relationship between the actions of Christians and the impact on the earth. What is the relationship between our visions of the future and the natural and social environment? How can we still hold on to the hope in a new heaven and earth without losing sight of what is happening in the world today?

The fourth and final module deals with violent conflicts on the scale of nations and social groups. How might you approach this issue as a Christian? What can we learn about this issue from Protestant thinkers? Which different views on this issue are there and what can we learn from Jesus about it?

The four deep modules each consist of the following three learning materials:

1. Each deep module starts with a video clip in which a possible real-life situation is presented. The video clip also contains some quiz questions, which make the students think about different aspects of the story. Next, the students can work individually, or with guidance, on the student textbook. The choice is yours. Basically, the student textbook is set up so that they can go through all the exercises individually.

2. The student textbook contains a short introduction to the video clip and continues with the basic learning material of each deep module, focusing on philosophical/religious knowledge, reflection, and communication. The basic material and the video clip together form a single unit for approaching a specific ideological topic concerning polarization and radicalization. The whole lesson normally takes one-hour.

3. The teacher textbook discusses the basic subject matter of the student textbook and provides additional information for the teacher. The teacher textbook also contains supplementary in-depth material with corresponding impulses and didactic suggestions. In this way, the facilitator can select the most appropriate impulses and didactic suggestions for their own learning group to further complement the basic material.

In line with the protestant tradition each module has attention for the interpretation of Bible texts. A simple model of interpretation that works well for young people is the Inductive Bible study method. In this method, a text is studied in three steps:

**Step 1:** Observation - A Bible text is read to discover the content. This phase, the students ask questions about a text. The aim is to discover structures, imagery, arguments, remarkable words in the text. It is important that at this stage attention is not yet focused on the significance of a particular observation.

**Step 2:** Interpretation - In this phase, the information from the observation phase is used to understand what a Bible text means. To achieve this, students in this phase should ask questions about the relationships in a text and its context and try to find out the purpose behind the texts.

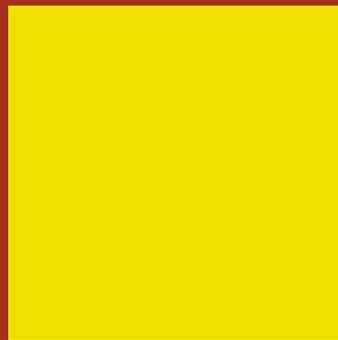
**Step 3:** Application - The purpose of this phase is to see what a Bible text means for the reader. The difference with step 2 is that instead of looking for the meaning of a text in general, the meaning of a text is related to the person's own context. In this phase, students compare the 21st-century world with that of the text. In other words, learn what the text means for today? This does not necessarily need to yield practical steps. It can also be that the application is in the form of a new perspective or insight. For this reason, this step can also be described as the evaluation phase in which a Bible text is evaluated based on one's own life experience, culture, and world view.

The phases of this method recur in different ways throughout all the modules.

We hope that these teaching materials may inspire and motivate you to work with your students from within their own philosophical and religious tradition to create resilience against polarization and violent abuse of religion.

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ENCOUNTER WITH THE OTHER:  
DEALING WITH DIVERSITY

# DEALING WITH DIVERSITY

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In this part of the curriculum, the following theme is elaborated: ‘the encounter with the other: dealing with diversity’. 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 one’s own 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 sections 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 Luke 10:25-37 ('The man who was attacked by robbers'). This section belongs to the basic learning material for the students.
- Second, the Bible story (Luke 10:25-37) itself is discussed. How can this intriguing story from the Christian tradition be understood? What meaning can we get from this story, and is this story still relevant today? This section introduces the students to the Bible story and its underlying meaning. This section is part of the basic learning material for the students.
- The third section of this teacher's book is about the diversity in representations of Jesus and the diversity in the church. This is an in-depth section.

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.

## 1.1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE LESSON

1. The student is able to study a (possibly) polarizing Bible text by asking questions about the story step-by-step.
2. The student will be able to describe why it is important to study the Bible in its historical context.
3. The student is willing to relate his or her own point of view on diversity to the story of the Bible.
4. The student displays a willingness to handle Bible texts beyond a mere one-time reading.
5. The student listens to other points of view without wanting to convince the other of his or her own point of view.

### 1.1.2 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

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

- **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.

#### 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 student's book.

### 1.1.3 PLANNING

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 learning material is developed for a 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-minute lesson.

1. 4 minutes: Opening + Introduce scenario
2. 5 minutes: View scenario
3. 3 minutes to discuss scenario)
4. 10 minutes: Students make independent section 1: The world of the Bible
5. 3 minutes Discuss section 1
6. 20 minutes: Students make independent section 2: Introducing the world of the story
7. 5 minutes: Review section 2 / Review lesson

## 1.2 VIDEO



Figure 1.1  
The Video Clip

*The image of the video shows David and Sarah walking down the street. They just bought a new game. The day before, Sarah got very angry about the anti-racism movement. When they come across an anti-racism poster along the way, she gets angry again and pulls it off the wall. Out of nowhere, a mysterious figure appears behind them. He points them to a strange door. When they reach the door, the man has suddenly disappears again. On the door there is a mysterious text: 'Looking for answers? Those who go through this door are surprised.' As they step through the door, they learn a lesson about a man who was ambushed by robbers.*

## DISCUSSION OF VIDEO

### Discuss the video with the students in class: what did they see?

The following questions are suggestions of things you could ask.

Introductory questions for the first section of this module: 'The World of the Bible'

- Before moving on to the interpretation of the story, it is important to learn more about Jesus' world. When and where did he live?
- What was the religion of the strange man in the video?
- What is a Samaritan?
- In the video there is a reference to Priests and Levites, what were they?

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

- Class discussion of the Bible story that was discussed in the video fragment. 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 section of this module: 'Jesus in plurality'

- What do you imagine that Jesus looks like?
- What is diversity?
- How would you describe the church, especially concerning diversity?

# 1.3 LESSON INTRODUCTION

## 1.3.1 PURPOSE AND CONTENT

This section serves as an introduction to the lesson. The goal is to allow the students to explore the Bible text (Luke 10:25-37) and to let them recall their prior knowledge.

## 1.3.2 RESPONSES

### Exercise 1

**Read the parable of the man who was attacked by robbers below. You may already know this story. Write below what you think it means.**

The purpose of this exercise is to appeal to the prior knowledge of the students. Answering this exercise quickly and extensively requires that the Bible text is already known. Collect the answers from different students get an idea of the level of understanding that the students have.

### Exercise 2

**The term 'neighbor' occurs several times in the Bible. How would you define this concept?**

The purpose of this exercise is for the students to think about the concept of neighbor before extensively discussing the Bible text. The students have to formulate their own definition of neighbor. Later in the lesson, students will reflect on this definition.

### Exercise 3

**Look at the images below. For each picture, give two words properly describing the person in the picture. Or describe the situation you observe in a short story. The pictures can be found in the student book.**

The purpose of this exercise is to confront the students with their own stereotypes. The images always contain a person or two persons who can be described in the situation shown with a group indication based on origin, social status or gender. At the same time, the person or persons can also be described based on work or the activity or situation displayed.

### 1.3.3 BIBLE TEXT

#### Luke 10:25-37

On one occasion an expert in the law stood up to test Jesus. “Teacher,” he asked, “what must I do to inherit eternal life?” “What is written in the Law?” he replied. “How do you read it?” He answered, ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength and with all your mind’; and, ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ “You have answered correctly,” Jesus replied. “Do this and you will live.” But he wanted to justify himself, so he asked Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” In reply Jesus said: “A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, when he was attacked by robbers. They stripped him of his clothes, beat him and went away, leaving him half dead. A priest happened to be going down the same road, and when he saw the man, he passed by on the other side. So too, a Levite, when he came to the place and saw him, passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan, as he traveled, came where the man was; and when he saw him, he took pity on him. He went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. Then he put the man on his own donkey, brought him to an inn and took care of him. The next day he took out two denarii and gave them to the innkeeper. ‘Look after him,’ he said, ‘and when I return, I will reimburse you for any extra expense you may have.’ “Which of these three do you think was a neighbor to the man who fell into the hands of robbers?” The expert in the law replied, “The one who had mercy on him.” Jesus told him, “Go and do likewise.”



Figure 1.2  
Source: ©Aaron Burden  
Unsplash

# 1.4 THE WORLD OF THE BIBLE

## 1.4.1 PURPOSE

This section contains an explanation of 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 will be able to describe why it is important to study the Bible in its historical context.

## 1.4.2 CONTENT

This section explains the concepts of Samaritan, Jew, and Gentile in Jesus' day. This teacher's book provides a more detailed explanation of these terms.

## 1.4.3 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

### Exercise 4

Which statements are incorrect?

- a. Jesus was a Jew who lived 2000 years ago.
- b. Jews and Samaritans got along well.
- c. Jews and Samaritans both claimed to be the people of God.
- d. Gentile is a term referring to the enemies of the Jews.
- e. Jesus spoke only to people of his own folk.

The purpose of this exercise is to let the students actively process the teaching material from the previous text. Statements a, d and e are incorrect.

#### 1.4.4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

#### Jews and Samaritans

Etymologically, the word '**Jew**' comes from the word 'Judah' and refers to the two-tribe kingdom of Judah. Originally, it was also used for the inhabitants of this region. In the first century, the meaning had already changed to include all descendants of Israel who followed the law. So, it has come to describe a broader group than it originally encompassed. Traditionally, the term 'Jew' is seen as originating from the name of Judah the son of Jacob. The origin of 'Jew' as a group designation is assumed by some researchers to be derived from a geographic feature in the **region of Judea** and therefore not on the basis of a religion or tribe. Others see it as a possibility that the term 'Judah' is based on a concept that indicates the worship of Yahweh.

Describing who the **Samaritans** were and how they came to be is a delicate topic, as the available sources are biased. There are no clear objective sources available that can provide a definitive answer. The term Samaritan can be defined in three ways: (1) As the **residents** of the area of Samaria; (2) as an ethnic group living in Samaria; (3) as a **religious** group. These three distinctions may overlap. Archaeological evidence suggests, for example, that there were also secular Hellenists living in Samaria. Thus definition 1 and 3 are not necessarily overlapping. The author of Luke used 'Samaritan' mainly for a combination of definitions 1 and 3. The emphasis was mainly on the religious group.

The **origin of the group designation 'Samaritan'** was traditionally laid in the division between the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. Already in this separation, tensions arose between the two kingdoms. The religious differences between the later Jews and Samaritans may have slowly become visible as early as this time. It is only after the conquest of both kingdoms by the Babylonians and the Assyrians respectively, that a clearer division between the two areas would have arisen. The Samaritans had built their own religious center on Mount Gerizim. Here they had also built their own temple. The religious center for the Jews, on the other hand, was the temple in Jerusalem. In the second century BC at the time of the Hasmonean dynasty, tensions between Jews and Samaritans began to increase. Eventually, the Jews also destroyed the temple of the Samaritans. Some Jews strongly disliked the Samaritans.

### 1.4.5 DIDACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are only helpful if the lesson is taught through classroom instruction.

#### **Suggestions for questions to ask**

- What is the difference between Jew and Samaritan?
- When is someone a Jew?
- What different designations for groups of people are there in the New Testament?
- What makes a Jew and a non-Jew different?

#### **Alternative assignments and instruction methods**

**Assignment:** Have students answer one of the following questions in pairs or groups:

- What is the difference between Jew and Samaritan?
- Where did the Samaritans live?
- Where does the difference between Samaritans and Jews come from?
- What different designations for groups of people are there in the New Testament?

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

**Assignment.** Read Jesus' meeting with the expert in the law and the parable of the man who was attacked by robbers. 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:

- *An expert in the law addresses Jesus.*
  - Where are you?
  - Who all is there?
  - What clothes are you wearing?
  - What are the people around you doing?
  - Is it quiet or busy?
- *During the telling of the parable*
  - What do you see?
  - What do you notice about the man?
  - How do the priest and Levite react?
  - What does the Samaritan look like?
  - Which emotion describes how you feel at the moment?
- *After the reply from the expert in the law*
  - What does the man look like while he answers?
  - How do the bystanders react?

# 1.5 THE WORLD OF THE STORY

## 1.5.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to have the students study the content of the Bible text. During this process the students are taught a number of skills for studying the Bible. In this lesson the emphasis is on the interpretation and application of a Bible text. Application also refers to the reconsideration of one's own opinions and positions in relation to diversity. The following learning objectives are specifically addressed in this section:

2. The student is able to study a (possibly) polarizing Bible text by asking questions about the story step by step.
3. The student is willing to relate his own point of view on diversity to the story of the Bible.
4. The student displays a willingness to handle Bible texts beyond a mere one-time reading.

## 1.5.2 CONTENT

The Bible text is treated in two parts. The **first part** (Luke 10:25-28) concerns the interaction between Jesus and the expert in the law that follows his question about gaining eternal life. The students are made aware of the possible motivation behind the question of the expert in the law.

The **second part** (Luke 10:29-37) concerns the parable itself. This parable is in response to the expert in the law's question as to who his neighbor is. The students receive an analysis of the story from the perspective of both man who was attacked by robbers and the Samaritan who helped the man. The disciples should discover that by using this parable, Jesus wanted to show that brotherly love is broader than just loving those in one's own group.

Afterwards, there are two exercise in which the students are confronted with their own prejudices and groupthink.

### 1.5.3 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

#### Exercise 5

##### **After hearing the question, what does Jesus do?**

The purpose of this exercise is for the students to study the text attentively. The correct answer is B. He himself asks the expert in the law a question.

#### Exercise 6

##### **What must the expert in the law do to receive eternal life?**

The purpose of this assignment is to help the students understand for themselves the core of the answer to the first question of the expert in the law.

The correct answer is C. He has to love God with all his heart, strength and mind and his neighbor as himself.

#### Exercise 7

##### **Several characters appear in the parable. Indicate for each of the characters below their role in the story. Use the roles of hero, enemy, victim and helper.**

The purpose of this exercise is to allow students to approach the parable as a story, and in this way to discover something about the meaning. This approach to a Bible text is called 'narrative reading.'

- **Robbers:** The robbers are the characters who have truly done wrong, robbing a man and leaving him for dead along the road. Their role in the story is minor, yet they are important in creating the setting in which the story takes place.
- **Robbed man:** The robbed man is the victim in the story. He is unjustly treated by the priest and Levite. He gets help from the Samaritan. For most of the story, he undergoes everything without actively doing anything himself.
- **Priest and Levite:** These two characters play a role in clarifying that a neighbor could not be found among the man's own people. The robbers can be seen as an antagonist, but a better solution is to see the Priest and Levite as an antagonist, because they are placed opposite the Samaritan in action.
- **Samaritan:** The Samaritan can be seen as the hero of the story. He helps the robbed man by taking care of him and taking him to a safe place.
- **Innkeeper:** Is a character used to show that the Samaritan gave as much help as possible to the man. His role could be indicated as helper.

### Exercise 8

**At the end, Jesus says to the expert in the law: “Go and do likewise.” What exactly does Jesus tell the man to do? What does this lesson mean to you?**

The purpose of this exercise is for the students to think about how to apply the lesson interpretation in their own lives.

### Exercise 9

**Go back to exercise 3. Look at the pictures again and answer the following questions. For the questions and pictures, see the student’s book.**

The purpose of this exercise is to have the students to answers with their first impressions about the people in the pictures. The underlying idea is for them to discover that they also discriminate against people without necessarily realizing it.

### Exercise 10

**Look again at your definition of neighbor (exercise 2). Compare your definition with the lesson Jesus gave to the expert in the law.**

The purpose of this exercise is to have the students reflect on their definition in light of the lesson of Jesus.

### 1.5.4 COMMENTARY ON LUKE 10:25-37

Luke 10:25-37 can be divided into two parts. The first section (10:25-27) includes the expert in the law’s question, Jesus’ counter question, the expert in the law’s response, and Jesus’ appeal. The second section begins with the expert in the law asking who his neighbor is, to which Jesus responds with the parable of the man who was attacked by robbers. This section ends with Jesus’ last question, the expert in the law’s response, and the second commission Jesus gives to the expert in the law.

The **first question** of the expert in the law is central to this Bible text. While the emphasis is usually placed on the question about the neighbor, it is actually an extension of the first question. The expert in the law’s question is focused on doing an act. The follow-up question ties in with this question, because the expert in the law wants to have a determination of who the neighbor is whom a person must love.

The expert in the law has a rich knowledge of the law and thus will have an idea of what the law says about eternal life. The expert in the law may have disagreed with Jesus’ teaching about the law and Jesus’ association with the poor and sinners. It is clear in the Bible text that the expert in the law asked the question in order to test Jesus. Perhaps the expert in the law was trying to have Jesus proclaim his own way of attaining eternal life that was contrary to the law. The expert in the law probably expected that Jesus

would say something that would provoke the anger of the religious leaders against him.

Instead of answering the question, Jesus puts a **question back** to the expert in the law. Jesus' question causes the man to answer his own question. He combines two texts from the Old Testament. He quotes Deuteronomy 6:5 where it says, "*Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength*". He also quotes Leviticus 19 verse 18: "*Love your neighbor as yourself*". Both texts played an important role in the context of Judaism at the time. Deuteronomy 6:5 is part of it '**Sh'ma Yisrael**', which is a Jewish prayer that was said every day in the morning and in the evening. This prayer was intended to remind the people of the greatness of the God of Israel and that they should continue to serve this God in full submission.

The text from Leviticus 19:18 comes from a section that provides rules for how the people of Israel should live together. These rules mainly concern how to interact with others (the elderly, the poor, strangers, loved ones, neighbors). While the Hebrew word for neighbor can be translated into a generic term that reflects every other human being, the context shows that what is meant is a neighbor from out of one's own people and not a foreigner. This interpretation of the text was generally used at the time of Jesus.

Jesus says to the expert in the law: "*Do this and you will live.*" Jesus clarifies that in order to have eternal life, these two commandments of love must be applied in one's own life. Quoting these two texts together was not common in Jesus' day. Although there are earlier Jewish texts that seem to make a connection between the texts, the citation together has not happened before.

The expert in the law is not satisfied with Jesus' answer and asks a **follow-up question**. The text clarifies that the expert in the law wanted to justify himself by asking this question. On the basis of the testing, it may be thought that the expert in the law wanted to test Jesus even further. Justifying can also indicate finding confirmation. If Jesus' answer confirms what the man believes the law says, Jesus would confirm that he is already following the law and is thus righteous.

Jesus answers the question by telling a parable. The man's question and Jesus' answer suggest that there was a discussion about the scope of what is meant by 'neighbor' in Jesus' time. In the parable, Jesus changes the expert in the law's question, 'who is my neighbor?' to 'how should I be a good neighbor to others?'. This change of focus shows that Jesus is shifting the emphasis in the question from a discussion of 'neighbor' to one of loving.

The student's book describes how the parable can be read in two different ways. These two points of view are useful to describe, as the text is often discussed from the point of view of the Samaritans. For the hearers in the time of Jesus, an identification with the robbed man will have just taken place. This seems to be a deliberate choice, because in this way the expert in the law himself is placed in the story. He himself could easily be the man who was injured on the ground.

Jesus is at that moment holding up a mirror to the expert in the law. It's not about the **scope** of who one's neighbor is, but about **acting** when others need help. By changing the focus, Jesus indirectly answers the expert in the law's question. By focusing on helping, there is no longer any distinction between people. In this way, Jesus gives the hearer a new perspective on the attainment of eternal life. Do not merely follow a strict law, but live full of love for the other.

### 1.5.5 DIDACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are only helpful if the lesson is taught through classroom instruction.

#### Suggestions for questions to ask

- What is an expert in the law?
- Who knows where the expert in the law's answer comes from?
- Why does the expert in the law ask Jesus who his neighbor is?
- What do you notice about the help the Samaritan offered?
- When is someone a neighbor to you?

#### Alternative assignments and instruction methods

**Role play.** Have students act out the story of Jesus in the classroom. Let them turn the story into a script themselves. Add a commentator whose role is to explain what exactly happened in a scene at three moments during the script. The moments are: (1) after the expert in the law answers Jesus' question, verses 13-16; (2) After the parable, before Jesus asks the expert in the law the last question, verses 17-20; (3) At the end of the text, verse 21.

As you create the script, ask students the following questions:

- What motivates Jesus to tell this story?
- Who was there during the meeting with the expert in the law?
- Why do the priest and Levite avoid the man?
- Why does Jesus use a Samaritan as the helper?

**Assignment.** The students are instructed to translate the story to the present time. This can be shaped in three different ways:

- Dropping the story into the present day. The students make a story in which all elements of the Bible text come to the fore.
- Translate the content of the story to the present day. All lessons from the story are translated to this time.
- Translate the disjunction. The absurd feeling of Jesus breaking normal business with his teaching is translated to this time.

**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.

# 1.6 JESUS IN PLURALITY

*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.*

## 1.6.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to show how differently Jesus has been portrayed throughout the ages and that this diversity is an important part of Christianity. The following learning objective is mainly discussed in this section:

The student is willing to relate his or her own point of view on diversity to the story of the Bible.

## 1.6.2 CONTENTS

The students are given information about how different representations of Jesus and different cultures relate to each other. The different representations of Jesus arise from connecting the Bible with one's own culture. In addition, 1 Corinthians 12 reflects on the diversity in the church. Afterwards, students need to think about diversity and humanity in general.

## 1.6.3 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

### Exercise 1

#### **What did / does Jesus look like in your opinion?**

The purpose of this assignment is for the students to describe their own image of Jesus. In this way, their own representation of Jesus is made explicit.

### Exercise 2

**Students have to study a number of paintings and answer the following questions:**

- **What do you notice?**
- **In what ways do the paintings differ from the story in the Bible?**
- **Which painting appeals to you the most? Why?**
- **Which portrayal of Jesus best suits your image of him?**

The purpose of this assignment is for the students to study the various ways in which Jesus is represented. In addition, they should also consider the specific choices made in depicting the encounter with the Samaritan woman (John 4:1-29).

### Exercise 3

#### Why is Jesus depicted in such diverse ways in the paintings?

The purpose of this assignment is for the students to think about why there are different representations of Jesus. The correct answer is that this is because of the different cultures and art styles that Christianity is intertwined with.

### Exercise 4

#### What does this Bible text say about the church / believers? What do you think of this image? What does this image say about the diversity of all people?

The purpose of this assignment is to get the students to think about diversity in the church. The diversity of the church shows that differences in people are seen by God as something positive, because without diversity in humanity there is no diversity in the church.

#### 1.6.4 ADDITIONAL INFO

#### Contextualization and depictions of Jesus

The diversity in how Jesus is portrayed stems from the history of Christianity. Although the books of the Bible and other early church literature do not describe the appearance of Jesus, what we know about Jesus does allow some things to be said. Jesus most likely had a middle eastern appearance. Already 2 centuries after Christianity began to spread across Europe, it became visible that the images of Jesus were beginning to adapt to the appearance of local cultures. This adaptation is called **contextualization**. This means that religious practices, teachings and traditions are adapted to the cultural environment in which Christianity settles. These adjustments have resulted in a diversity of images of Jesus.

#### 1.6.5 DIDACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are only helpful if the lesson is taught through classroom instruction.

#### Suggestions for questions to ask

- What does Jesus look like to you?
- What would Jesus certainly not have looked like, in your opinion?
- What word describes Jesus for you?
- How would you describe your own church?
- What does the Bible say about what Jesus looked like?

## Alternative assignments and instruction methods

**Assignment.** The students draw a picture of Jesus themselves. Give them the opportunity to look up examples, since not everyone can draw or paint well. Instruct the students to choose a situation or story that best represents who Jesus is for them. Afterwards, have the students show each other their drawings in groups and explain why they made certain choices. At the end, discuss which differences the students encountered and why they arose.

**Assignment.** In pairs the students search on the internet for images of Jesus through the ages.

Give them the following assignments:

- Search for 'Jesus' and 'painting' or 'drawing' in combination with search terms such as African, Asian, Native Americans, Russian, Polish, Ethiopian, modern etc. Choose at least 5 pictures that differ a lot from each other. Describe what differences you see in the paintings or drawings.
  - Answer the following questions:
    - What do you think of the differences?
    - Which picture appeals to you the most?
    - Why do these pictures differ in how they depict Jesus?

# 1.7 JESUS IN PLURALITY

## 1.7.1 JESUS IN PLURALITY

The appearance of people often determines how we feel about them. That is why artists sometimes dare to be free in the way they portray someone. That is very clear with paintings of Jesus. What did he look like, how is he portrayed and what do we think about it?

### Exercise 1

What did/does Jesus look like in your opinion?

### Exercise 2

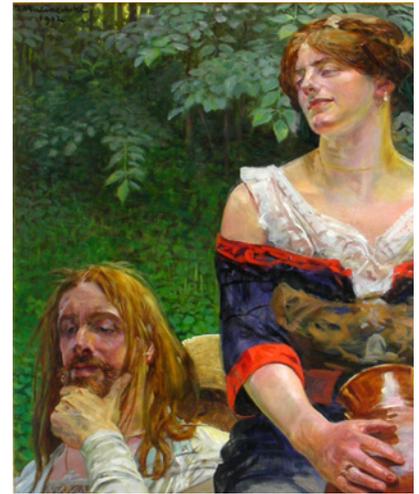
The Samaritans often play a role in the life of Jesus. In another story, Jesus is on his way to Galilee and decides to travel through the area of Samaria, where the Samaritans live. On the way, he stops for food and water. He sits down at a well and a Samaritan woman comes to the well. Against all customs and expectations, Jesus has a conversation with this woman. Various paintings have been made of this story throughout history. On the next page you will find a number of these paintings. Discuss them with your neighbor and answer the following questions each time:

- What do you notice?
- In what ways do the paintings differ from the story in the Bible?
- Which painting appeals to you the most? Why?
- Which portrayal of Jesus best suits your image of him?

1. Christ and the Samaritan woman at the well, Angelika Kaufmann, 1796, Source: Cybershot800i, via Wikimedia Commons: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Angelika\\_Kauffmann\\_-\\_Christ\\_und\\_die\\_Samariterin\\_am\\_Brunnen\\_-1796.jpeg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Angelika_Kauffmann_-_Christ_und_die_Samariterin_am_Brunnen_-1796.jpeg)



1. Angelika Kaufmann



2. Jacek Malczewski

2. Christ and the Samaritan Woman, Jacek Malczewski, 1912, photo by Jan Mehlich, via Wikimedia Commons: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lwowska\\_Galeria\\_Sztuki\\_-\\_Jacek\\_Malczewski\\_-\\_Christ\\_and\\_the\\_Samaritan\\_Woman.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Lwowska_Galeria_Sztuki_-_Jacek_Malczewski_-_Christ_and_the_Samaritan_Woman.jpg)

3. Photina, Samaritan woman, meets Jesus (Orthodox icon), painting by Nadahnuti ikonopisac via Wikimedia Commons [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St\\_Photina.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:St_Photina.jpg)



3. Photina

4. Christ and the Samaritan Woman, Duccio di Buoninsegna, 1310, Source: Thyssen-Bornemisza Museum via Wikimedia Commons: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Duccio\\_di\\_Buoninsegna\\_-\\_Christ\\_and\\_the\\_Samaritan\\_Woman\\_-\\_Google\\_Art\\_Project.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Duccio_di_Buoninsegna_-_Christ_and_the_Samaritan_Woman_-_Google_Art_Project.jpg)



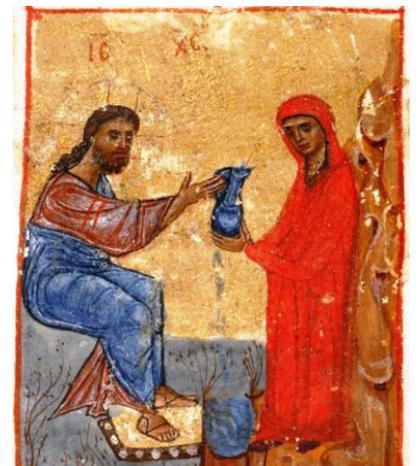
4. Duccio di Buoninsegna

5. JESUS MAFA. Jesus and the Samaritan Woman, 1973, from Art in the Christian Tradition, a project of the Vanderbilt Divinity Library, Nashville, TN. <https://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/act-imagelink.pl?RC=48282> [retrieved August 26, 2021]. Original source: <http://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr> (contact page: <https://www.librairie-emmanuel.fr/contact>).



5. JESUS MAFA

6. Jesus and the Samaritan woman, Author Unknown, 12th century, Source: Center of Manuscripts (Tbilisi, Georgia) via Wikimedia Commons: [https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jesus\\_and\\_the\\_Samaritan\\_woman\\_\(Jruchi\\_Gospels\\_II\\_MSS\\_Georgia\\_12th\\_cent.\)jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Jesus_and_the_Samaritan_woman_(Jruchi_Gospels_II_MSS_Georgia_12th_cent.)jpg)



6. Unknown, 12th century



Figure 1.3  
The Video Clip

In the parable of the man who was attacked by robbers, Jesus speaks of two different groups of people: Jews and Samaritans. Another term that is common in the Bible is 'Gentile'. This was used to describe non-Jews. Jesus was a Jew because he was born of Mary, who was a Jewess. He grew up among Jews and preached to Jews. If you look at the pictures above, you can see a **diversity** of how Jesus is depicted. In most cases, he does not look like what a Jew in the first century would have looked like.

### Exercise 3

Why is Jesus depicted in such diverse ways in the paintings?

Images of Jesus often reflect the culture of the artist or client. As a result, Jesus resembles the people of their own culture and people can better identify with Jesus and his story. Such adjustments to bring something more in line with one's own culture are called '**contextualization**.' Contextualization makes it possible to connect with the great diversity of people and cultures. It makes it possible for people to get to know Jesus in a way that they recognize.

## 1.8 GLOSSARY

In this glossary, you will find more information and clarification of certain terms. Behind each word it is indicated in brackets which section it belongs to.

### **Contextualization (6)**

Contextualization is the adaptation of traditions, doctrines, and images to make Christianity more consistent with a particular culture.

### **Diversity (6)**

Diversity is a concept by which we indicate that people, cultures, animals, ideas and many other things differ from each other. Diversity between people can be caused, among other things, by origin, religion, personality, personal preferences and external characteristics.

### **Gentile (5)**

“Gentile” was an umbrella term used by the Jews to describe all non-Jews.

### **Greeks (4)**

In the time of Jesus and the early church, “Greeks” referred to the inhabitants of Greece. Greece at that time was part of the Roman Empire. The culture of the Greeks spread throughout the Mediterranean Sea in the centuries before the birth of Jesus

### **Jerusalem (4)**

In the time of Jesus, Jerusalem was the capital of Palestine. Jerusalem had a temple and many synagogues where Jews came to worship and pray. Today, Jerusalem is still an important city for Jews around 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.

### **Jews (4)**

The Jews are a people who believe in one God and had a temple in Jerusalem. Today the Jews live all over the world.

### **Judea (4)**

Judea was at the time of the Jesus and his apostles a region south of Samaria. The city of Jerusalem was located in this region.

### **Parable (5)**

A parable is a short story in which a lesson is hidden. Jesus often used parables to illustrate a principle of the Kingdom of God. It is up to the listener to discover the meaning of the parable.

**Romans (4)**

The Romans were a people who originally lived in Italy, mainly in Rome. Later when the Romans expanded their empire it also became a designation for persons who were citizens of the Roman Empire. At the time of Jesus' life and of the apostles, the Romans ruled the area where Jesus lived.

**Samaria (4)**

In the first century, Samaria was both a place and a region north of Judea. This is the region where the people of the Samaritans got their name from.

**Samaritan (4)**

Samaritans were a people who lived in the area of Samaria and were very different from the Jews in a number of ways. The Jews considered them unclean and their worship in Shechem illegal.

**Shema Israel (5)**

The Shema Israel is a prayer that is recited twice a day by observant Jews and serves as a centerpiece of the morning and evening Jewish prayer services. The text of the prayer comes from Deuteronomy 6:4–9, 11:13–21, and Numbers 15:37–41.

**Temple of Jerusalem (4)**

When Jesus was alive, the temple of Jerusalem was the heart of Judaism: all devout Jews came here to pray and sacrifice. Only Jews were allowed to enter the temple. Jesus also came to Jerusalem regularly. The temple used to be Jerusalem's most important building.

# 1.9 TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

## 1 EXT/INT CAR

Sarah and her dad are driving in a car. Sarah wears a shirt with a logo on it.

*Radio: Protests inspired by the Black Lives Matter movement are still impacting society all over the World. In New York hundreds of protesters went on the street again. In our country people are protesting today against discrimination and racism....*

Dad turns down the radio and the voice on the radio fades away.

*Dad: So, Sarah are you ready for the tournament?*

*Sarah: Yeah, we are definitely going to win.*

*Dad: I hope you will*

Father has to slow down because a road has been blocked due to a protest.

*Dad: Oh, I think we have to drive around this.*

*Sarah: oh, god we are going to be late! I don't want to miss the game!*

## 2 INT LIVING ROOM

Sarah stomps angrily into the living room.

*Sarah (angry): It is so unfair, that stupid protest made us late and now our team lost because I wasn't there. These protesters should really stop. All lives matter, yeah we get it.*

*Dad: Sarah calm down. I know you are upset but think about what you are saying...*

*Sarah: Well I mean what I said. It is unfair that I could not play because of them.*

Sarah walks out of the room.

## 3 INT

Sarah sits in front of a computer screen.

*Computer voice: So-called anti-racist groups are themselves racist and are out to destroy our European society. They are creating problems that don't exist. We as a country treat all foreigners very well and they don't have anything to complain about. This is a threat to our way of living and they should be stopped.*

Pop-up appears on the screen: "Anti-racism" protest escalates.

*Sarah mumbles to herself: Well, see there is the evidence. These groups are crazy.*

## 4 EXT SCHOOLYARD DAY

David and Sarah are walking down the schoolyard.

*David: Pff what a boring day again. I really need something fun.*

*Sarah: Yeah we do. Well, Let's go to the mall. I am going to buy that new game. We could try that later.*

*David: Sure. Hopefully, that will cheer us up.*

## 5 EXT STREET DAY

David and Sarah walk out of the game store with a new 'iChrist adventures' game. Then they see a poster hanging on a tree. Sarah walks towards it.

*Sarah: well will you look at this. They are now even polluting our trees...*

David and Sarah look at a poster hung on a wall. The Poster Reads Stop Racism in this country now. A man is approaching them in the background.

*Sarah (angrily): And it is such a garbage... Anti-Racism poster. Like they have so much to complain about...*

*David: Calm Down Sarah, it just a poster...*

While speaking Sarah tears the poster down from the wall.

*Sarah: These nasty people should stop. If one of them gets hit by a bus I will not help them. They always complain.*

*David: Uhm what?! I never expected you to say that. I thought Jesus said we should love our neighbours as ourselves. Come on that should include these activists, right?*

*Sarah: No. Jesus only thought that we should love those that will help us. Like in the story of the Samaritan: he is a stranger, but Jesus praises him because he helps a Jew.*

*Stranger: Mmh, is that what Jesus meant by the story?*

*David: Wow... Hello, what do you mean?*

*Stranger: Well, I heard you two talking,... and uhm... well.. I think maybe you should go and check whether she is right. See the door there? If you go through it,*

*you may be surprised by what you discover.*

Stranger points with his finger at a door down the street. Sarah and David turn their head to the door. After the man is finished talking, Sarah and David turn around again. The man is gone.

*David: What? Uhm, where is he? Weird. Should we go and check the door?*

*Sarah and David walk to the door.*

## **6 INT INN ANCIENT ISRAEL DAY**

Sarah and David walk into an old Inn (1st century Israel). David and Sarah look surprised around them.

*Sarah: Where the hell are we? This doesn't look like any building from our town.*

*David: Yeah*

Sarah and David are still looking around. They notice a man gesturing them to come to him. The man has a bandage over his head and his arm is in a bandage too. They go to the man.

*Stranger: Hey, you two seem a bit lost. Join me at my table.*

David and Sarah join the man at the table.

*Stranger: Do you know who I am?*

*Sarah: No, we don't. We do not even know where or when we are.*

*Stranger: Well, I think you may well know me. Two weeks ago, I was travelling from Jerusalem to Jericho. A nice walk as I often have done. I was thinking of what to do that evening, when out of blue a band of robbers appeared on the road. They robbed me of everything I had. They even beat me up really hard. I was laying on the ground and could do a single think..*

*David: What!! That is terrible. Did someone call the police?*

*Stranger: Police? Uhm don't know what that is. Well, I was just laying there, and a priest walked by. I know he saw me, but instead of helping me he passed by on the other side the road. Later I heard footsteps again and a Levite was approaching me. I swear that he also saw me and he immediately went to the other side of the road. I think I laid there for another 30 minutes until a Samaritan with a donkey neared me. He bandaged me and put me on his donkey and brought me to this inn. He paid for all the expenses for me to recover.*

*Sarah: Wow, I think I do know this story already. But*

*this cannot be real. We were just talking about it.*

*Stranger: What were you saying?*

*David: Sarah said that you should only love the Samaritan as a neighbour because he helped you. But I do not think she understood the story correctly.*

*Stranger: Really? Well, let me ask you this. What do you think I would have done if I was walking down this road and I would find a man on the ground who looked like a Samaritan?*

*Sarah: Mmh help him of course.*

*Stranger: No, I probably would have walked past him just as the priest and the Levite did.*

*David: Why?*

*Stranger: Because I didn't trust any Samaritan. Why would I help them? They are ruining everything we stand for and believe in.*

*David: But your own people did not help you, and the Samaritan did!*

*Stranger: Yeah, you are right. I have been thinking about that constantly for two weeks. While my countrymen ignored me, he took care of me. How can I then speak so badly about Samaritans?*

Stranger looks at the setting sun. David and Sarah look perplexed. The stranger starts to get up.

*Stranger: Oh, it is getting late. I think we must go.*

David and Sarah also stand up. They walk to the door and step through it.

## **7 EXT STREET DAY**

David and Sarah step on to the street. The stranger is gone.

*David: That was really weird. What do you think he meant?*

*Sarah: Well, I think he wanted me to rethink the story. What he said is precisely the way I am thinking about the anti-racist movement. I keep saying that they are ruining our country, similar to how he thought about the Samaritan. But in the end, it seemed he was quite mistaken about the Samaritan.*

*David: Yeah you might be right on that one*

*Sarah: I need to talk to my dad about it. Let us go to my house.*

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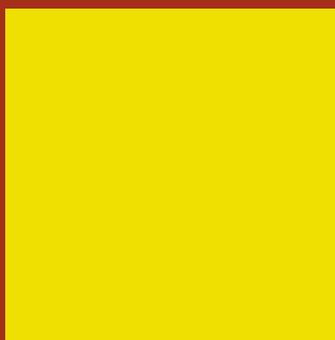
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## Source of the images

- Pictures exercise 2
  - 1-4, 6 Wikimedia Commons in Public Domain
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    - <http://diglib.library.vanderbilt.edu/diglib-fulldisplay.pl?SID=20200717367392516&code=act&RC=48282&Row=12>

# 2

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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:

<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Term</b>
<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 merchant<sup>1</sup> 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.

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<sup>1</sup> 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.<sup>1</sup>

<b>Violence 1</b>	<b>Violence 2</b>	<b>Violence 3</b>	<b>Violence 4</b>	<b>Violence 5</b>
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

<sup>1</sup> 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](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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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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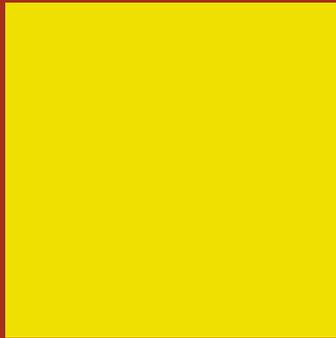
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## Source of the images

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

# 3

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ENCOUNTER WITH THE ENVIRONMENT:  
SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

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## MODULE THREE

# SOCIAL AND ECOLOGICAL ISSUES

## 3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this part of the curriculum, the following theme is elaborated: 'encounter with the environment: social and ecological issues'. 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 one's own 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 an extra section with accompanying information and didactic suggestions provided in this book.

In this lesson, the following chapters will be discussed:

- First, a general sketch of the garden of Eden is given. This chapter is part of the basic learning material for the students.
- Second, the Bible text itself (Revelation 21:1-22:5) is discussed. What does this story mean for the lives of Christians? What do we learn about the future, the past and especially the present through this text? This chapter is one of the basic teaching materials for the students.
- The third chapter of this manual deals with social justice in relation to climate change. This is an in-depth 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.

### 3.1.1 LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE LESSON

1. The student can describe why it is important to study a Bible text in its context.
2. The student asks questions about a text while reading a (possibly violent, discriminating and / or polarizing) Bible text without giving direct answers.
3. The student is prepared to relate his/her point of view on social and ecological environment to the story of the Bible.
4. The student is willing to use the Bible when thinking about current problems in society.
5. The student displays a willingness to handle Bible texts beyond a mere one-time reading.

### 3.1.2 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

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

- **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. 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.

#### 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 student's book.

### 3.1.3 PLANNING

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 learning material is developed for 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. 4 minutes: Opening + Introduce scenario
2. 5 minutes: View scenario
3. 3 minutes to discuss scenario)
4. 5 minutes: Students make independent section 1: The world of the Bible
5. 3 minutes Discuss section 1
6. 5 minutes: Students make independent section 2: Introducing the world of the story
7. 5 minutes: Review section 2 / Review lesson

## 3.2. VIDEO



Figure 3.1  
The Video Clip

*Sarah and David are waiting in line for lunch at school. Sarah shows her new smartphone to David. When they arrive at the counter Sarah gets angry, because from that moment on only vegetarian meals are served. Eva pushes Sarah over and says during an altercation that Sarah is worried about the wrong things. After school, Sarah explains to David that she is not worried about the current world, because eventually there will be a new one. A little later they follow Eva to a building where Eva comes every day. In the building they find Eva, a woman and a child. They enter into a conversation with Eva. By looking into the eyes of a child, Sarah learns an important lesson about life.*

## 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.'

- What is the garden of Eden?
- What happened in the garden of Eden according to the Bible?

Introductory questions for the second chapter of this module: 'The world of the story'

- What does your ideal world look like?
- What do you think will happen to the world in the future?
- What is an ideal image or utopia?

Introductory questions for the second chapter of this module: 'Today or tomorrow'

- What is justice?
- How do we make the world a better place?

## 3.3 JESUS AND THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

### 3.3.1 PURPOSE AND CONTENT

This section serves as an introduction to the lesson. The goal is to allow the students to explore the Bible text (Revelation 21:1-22:5) and to let them recall their prior knowledge.

### 3.3.2 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

#### Exercise 1

##### **What does your ideal world look like?**

The aim of this assignment is to have the students to think about the concept of the 'ideal world' before they start working on this subject.

#### Exercise 2

**Read the text about the new heaven and the new earth on the next page. Maybe you already know this text, then write down what you think it means.**

The aim of this assignment is to appeal to the students' prior knowledge. To answer this task quickly and comprehensively, the Bible text must already be known. Gather the answers from different students to get an idea of the level of the group.

### 3.3.3 BIBLE TEXT

#### *Revelations 21:1-22:5 (partially)*

In the Bible text, some verses have been omitted to make the text shorter. These omissions do not affect the message of the text.

Then I saw “a new heaven and a new earth,” for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and there was no longer any sea. I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, “Look! God’s dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. ‘He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away.’”

He who was seated on the throne said, “I am making everything new!” Then he said, “Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.” He said to me: “It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life. Those who are victorious will inherit all this, and I will be their God and they will be my children. But the cowardly, the unbelieving, the vile, the murderers, the sexually immoral, those who practice magic arts, the idolaters and all liars—they will be consigned to the fiery lake of burning sulfur. This is the second death.” - *omitted verses 9-10* - It shone with the glory of God, and its brilliance was like that of a very precious jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. It had a great, high wall with twelve gates, and with twelve angels at the gates. On the gates were written the names of the twelve tribes of Israel. There were three gates on the east, three on the north, three on the south and three on the west. The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb. - *omitted verses 15-21* - I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. *Omitted verses 24-25*. The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it. Nothing impure will ever enter it, nor will anyone who does what is shameful or deceitful, but only those whose names are written in the Lamb’s book of life.

Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, as clear as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb down the middle of the great street of the city. On each side of the river stood the tree of life, bearing twelve crops of fruit, yielding its fruit every month. And the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. No longer will there be any curse. The throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his servants will serve him. They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. There will be no more night. They will not need the light of a lamp or the light of the sun, for the Lord God will give them light. And they will reign for ever and ever.

## 3.4 JESUS AND THE CLEANSING OF THE TEMPLE

**3.4.1 PURPOSE** This section contains an explanation of some aspects of the context of the book Revelation of John. The goal is to teach the students something about the world of the first Christians. This knowledge is relevant to better understand the central Bible text of this lesson. The following learning objectives are specifically addressed in this section:

2. The student can describe why it is important to study a Bible text in its context.

**3.4.2 CONTENTS** In this section, the garden of Eden is discussed. Additionally, the garden of Eden as an ideal image to which it is longing to return is shortly discussed.

### **3.4.3 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS**

#### **Exercise 3**

**What makes the garden of Eden an ideal place?**

- A. The garden of Eden was a beautiful oasis.**
- B. In the garden of Eden, God lived together with people.**
- C. In the garden of Eden animals could talk.**
- D. The garden of Eden was made by God.**

The goal of this assignment is for the students to actively process the text. The correct answers are B and D.

### 3.4.4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

#### Garden of Eden

The garden of Eden is described in Genesis 2. It is part of the second origin story in Genesis. This story focuses mainly on the creation of man. The fall described in Genesis 3 should also be included in this story. This story is briefly explained in the student book. Three important aspects of this story are relevant for this lesson: (1) The garden of Eden is a concept that later in history has been equated with the concept of paradise; (2) The exile of humans from the garden marks the loss of this paradise; (3) The garden of Eden is often used to strengthen the fall of those in power and of the rich. The Fall can be viewed as the disappearance of a paradise and as a story explaining why people live in a world filled with hardship and suffering.. To put in perspective the longing of many Christians for the end time, the three described insights are important. This longing can be traced back to the story of the garden of Eden.

### 3.4.5 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are only helpful if the lesson is taught through classroom instruction.

#### Suggestions for introductory questions

- What is the garden of Eden?
- What is paradise?
- Why is the garden of Eden often described as a paradise?
- What happened to the garden of Eden according to the Bible?



Figure 3.2  
Painting Adam and Eve  
in the earth paradise by  
Johann Wenzel Peter  
Source : news.  
stlpublicradio.org via  
Wikimedia Commons:  
[https://commons.  
wikimedia.org/wiki/  
File:Johann\\_Wenzel\\_  
Peter\\_-\\_Adam\\_and\\_Eve\\_  
in\\_the\\_earthly\\_paradise.  
jpg.](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Johann_Wenzel_Peter_-_Adam_and_Eve_in_the_earthly_paradise.jpg)

## Alternative assignments and instruction methods

**Assignment.** Divide the class into pairs or groups. Let the students look for more information about the garden of Eden. The pairs or groups should present the meaning of Eden in an artistic, funny or poetic way. For example, the students can use the following artistic forms: a poem, a drawing, a poster, a play, or a song. The goal is that the students can indicate which aspects of the meaning of the garden of Eden are visible in their results. Give the students the following questions:

- What is the garden of Eden?
- What makes that garden of Eden a place to which people long to return?
- What does your garden of Eden look like?
- What do you find difficult to understand about the garden of Eden?
- For whom is the garden of Eden intended?
- What in the garden of Eden are we missing in our world?

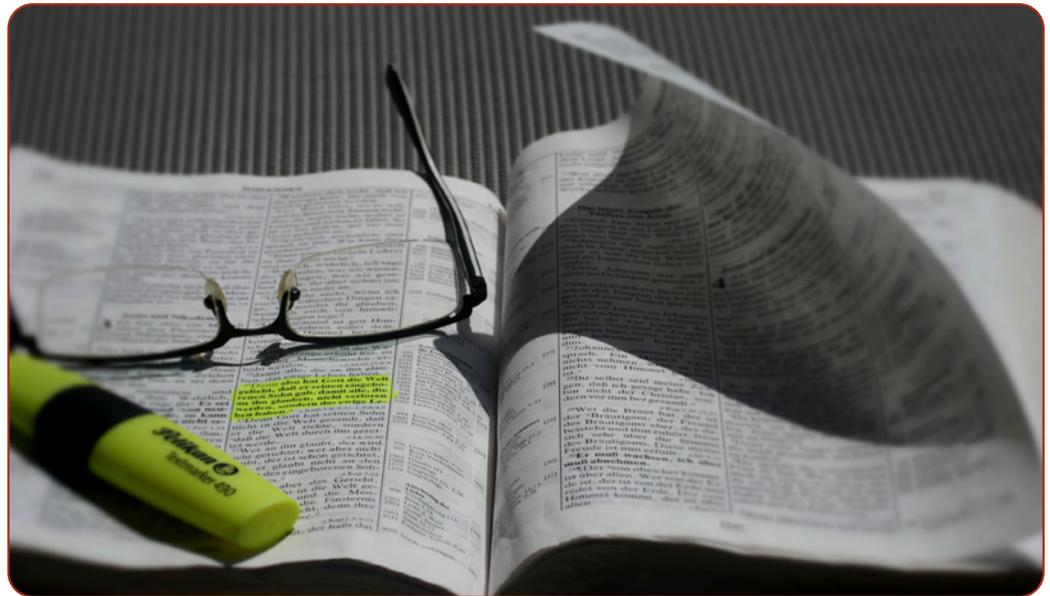


Figure 3.3  
Source: © 1045373  
Pixabay

## 3.5 THE WORLD OF THE STORY

### 3.5.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to have the students study the content of the Bible text. During this process, the students are taught several skills for studying the Bible. In this lesson, the emphasis is on the observation and application of a Bible text. This application aims to connect the text with ideal images. The following learning objectives are specifically addressed in this section:

1. The student can describe why it is important to study a Bible text in its context.
2. The student asks questions about a text while reading a (possibly violent, discriminating and / or polarizing) Bible text without giving direct answers.
3. The student is prepared to relate his own point of view on the social and ecological environment to the story of the Bible.
4. The student displays a willingness to handle Bible texts beyond a mere one-time reading.

### 3.5.2 CONTENTS

In this lesson, we will focus on a **smaller, more specific portion** of the Bible text. This smaller section (Revelation 21:1-7) describes how a new heaven and earth appears and how God dwells among humans. The students are compelled to explore the connection between a desire for the garden of Eden and the image outlined in Revelation.

Next, the **concept of ideal image** is used to reflect on the image presented in Revelation 21:1-22:5. By using this concept we want to make students aware that their actions still matter in the world, even if they believe that the present earth will be replaced by a better one. This is achieved by making students reflect on a number of ideologies known in the modern world. These ideologies prioritize certain ways of acting to realize this ideal image. The students will have to compare these ideologies and discover that they are not so different from Christian ideas about an ideal society. At the same time, the goal is for the students to understand that these ideologies differ in how they are pursued and that these actions have consequences for society and the world. This insight also applies to how Christians behave in the world.

### 3.5.3 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

#### Exercise 4

**Read the excerpt from the Bible text below. What do you notice? Which words stand out to you? What do you find strange? What attracts your attention?**

The aim of this assignment is that the students study the Bible fragment attentively. This question fits with the observation phase of the inductive Bible study method.

#### Exercise 5

**The garden of Eden is seen as an ideal, but lost place. The new heaven and new earth, as described here, can also be seen as an ideal place. Thus, in Revelation 21 an ideal world is presented. Describe in your own words what this world looks like.**

The goal of this assignment is that the students once again study the main message of the Bible text.

The correct answer is that God and humans will live together in the new Jerusalem, just as they did in Eden.

#### Exercise 6

**Read the following statements. Indicate which one you agree with.**

1. Achieving the ideal world is something that people have to try.
2. To reach the perfect world, we may use violence.
3. To achieve an ideal world, tackling climate change is actually not important.
4. People cannot really contribute to achieving the ideal world.
5. It is my job to make people think the same as me, then the ideal world will get closer by itself.

This assignment is designed to encourage the students to think about their own viewpoints. These statements are deliberately diversified, forcing students to think about different aspects of striving for an ideal world or the lack thereof.

### **Exercise 7**

**Compare the different ideal images. What do you notice? What are the similarities and differences?**

The aim of this assignment is for the students to compare the ideal image of the different ideologies. By comparing these ideologies, we want the students to realize that at their core, most ideologies strive to achieve a society in which everyone can participate and there is no injustice or inequality.

### **Exercise 8**

**An important question is whether we are able to reach the ideal world. What is the role we play in achieving an ideal world? Table 1 also contains some actions which followers of an ideology have in mind to reach their ideal world. Compare the different ideologies in what they try to do to reach their ideal image. What do you notice? What are the similarities and differences?**

The aim of this assignment is for the students to compare the different ideologies in the way they try to achieve their ideal image. During this comparison, the students should understand that although the ideologies are very similar, the means by which the ideologies try to reach them are very different.

### **Exercise 9**

**What do you do to reach your ideal world?**

The aim of this assignment is that the students start thinking about what they do themselves in order to achieve an ideal image.

### 3.5.4 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

The term 'utopia' was used by Thomas More in 1516 as the title for a book. This book is about an imaginary island where power structures have disappeared, and private property no longer exists. The term 'utopia' was later used in literature, visions of the future and philosophy for descriptions of a supposedly perfect society. It is not necessary for utopian images to be achievable. Alternatively, it may function as a contrast with the situation in a specific setting and time.

The term '**ideal image**' is simpler and reflects part of the concept of utopia. An ideal image represents a person or an object or a society in a manner that can be described as perfect according to a person. For a better understanding, we prefer the term 'ideal image' to 'utopia'.

The term '**ideology**' is a much-debated concept. There are several ways in which it can be defined. In this lesson, we have chosen to fit in with the concept of ideal image.

#### *Interpretation and Relevance Revelation 21:1-22:5*

Revelation 21 describes the vision of a **new earth and a new heaven**. This text is often used in discourses about the end of time. The **end of time** refers to the end of the present world and the dawning of a new world. In this lesson, the different visions and ideas about the end time are not discussed. However, it mentioned that this text is central to the various visions of the end of time. It is therefore to be expected that the hope that emanates from this text will also become important in the religious experience of young people.

Revelation 21 comprehensively describes a vision in which it becomes clear how God lets heaven and earth merge and a time of peace and righteousness emerge. In addition, the splendor of the new Jerusalem is described in detail. The vision creates an image of a place that transcends the dreams of its readers. The most important image is the indwelling of God in the new Jerusalem. This image is further emphasized with the statement that no sunlight is needed anymore, because the lamb is the light for the people. In addition, it is also specifically mentioned that there is no temple, because God Himself is present. This makes it clear that peace and justice come about because God lives in the city together with humans. The image describes an ideal of what a world looks like in which God and humans are reunited. The means to achieve this ideal image therefore lies in the presence of God in the world. In practice, this means that we have to live as followers of Christ.

### 3.5.5 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are only helpful if the lesson is taught through classroom instruction.

#### Suggestions for introductory questions

- What is an ideal image?
- How to make the world a better place?

#### Alternative assignments and instruction methods

**Assignment.** Divide the class into pairs or groups. Students are instructed to imagine their ideal world. As a pair or group, the students must come to a consensus about their shared ideal world. Then the students have to come up with 5 action points that are necessary to make their ideal world become reality.

**Assignment.** Divide the class into pairs. The students are instructed to look up more information about a specific ideology and/or religion.

The students have to determine what the starting points of an ideology and/or religion are, what their ideal image is, and how this ideology and/or religion is already visible in the world. The students should consider whether this visibility is positive or negative for people's lives in general. Additionally, they can examine the differences between the ideal images of this ideology and that of Christianity. For example, the following ideologies and/or religions can be listed: capitalism, Marxism, ecologism, technologism (techno-utopia), anarchism, libertarianism, Buddhism, Islam, Judaism.

In order to prevent 'us-them' rhetoric in the responses, you should make sure you give students clear guidance on how to assess the actions based on their ideologies and/or religions.

The students make a poster on which they answer the questions and briefly present them to each other.

**Assignment.** Students read the Bible text 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 Bible text.

## 3.6 JUSTICE FOR TODAY OR TOMORROW?

**3.6.1 PURPOSE** *This educational 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 the appendices.*

In this section, students study the connections between the social and ecological environment. The goal is for the students to understand that paying attention to both social and ecological environment is part of the task Jesus gave to the church. The following learning goals are specifically addressed in this section:

1. The student is prepared to relate his own point of view about the social and ecological environment to the story of the Bible.
2. The student is willing to use the Bible when thinking about current problems in society.

**3.6.2 CONTENTS** This chapter focuses on the concepts of social justice and climate change. It is a short section that aims to connect these concepts.



Figure 3.4  
14th-century tapestry  
of John watching  
the descending New  
Jerusalem.  
Source: Kimon Berlin via  
Wikimedia Commons:  
[https://commons.  
wikimedia.org/wiki/  
File:La\\_nouvelle\\_  
Jérusalem.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:La_nouvelle_Jerusalem.jpg).

### 3.6.3 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

#### Exercise 1

##### **What big problems do you find important to give attention to?**

The aim of this assignment is for the students to apply the concept of major problems to their own lives.

#### Exercise 2

##### **Read the following Bible texts:**

- **Matthew 6:33 But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.**
- **Matthew 5:6 Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.**
- **2 Peter 3:13 But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.**

##### **What do you notice? Which commands to people are given in the Bible texts?**

The aim of this assignment is that the students connect the 'big' problems with the Bible and especially with the concept of justice.

Answer: A notable feature of all three texts is the use of the concept of righteousness. The commands are: Seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness; Long for righteousness; Trust in God.

#### Exercise 3

##### **Compare the two types of justice. What are the differences and similarities between these types of justice?**

The aim of this assignment is for the students to actively process the concepts of social and ecological justice.

The similarity between the two types is that both are about a fair distribution. In addition, both types emphasize that it is about every human being. The difference between the two types is that social justice emphasizes living in dignity and that everyone is allowed to take part in society and that ecological justice emphasizes the use of nature and the consequences of this use for all people.

## Exercise 4

**According to many people, bringing justice into the world is connected with taking care of the earth. How can you contribute both socially and ecologically to bringing justice through your own life?**

This question is tricky for the students to answer. It is best answered in pairs or small groups. The goal is for the students to think about how they themselves can contribute to bringing social and ecological justice.

Example answer: I can look better at the origins of my clothes. I can also help with cleaning up of my neighborhood. Finally, I can also point out to my parents the importance of taking shorter showers.

### 3.6.4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

The categorization of the students in the world into social and ecological in the student book is logically done to work towards the concepts of social and ecological justice. Other categories are of course also valid to use, for example social-political and medical problems.

#### Justice defined

The concept of **justice**, also called righteousness, has over the centuries been applied to different domains and defined in several ways. A widely used classification distinguishes justice as distribution and justice as recognition. Distribution means that the resources in society are distributed fairly among all persons. The concept of resources does not only refer to physical goods, but can also refer to jobs, social positions and physical places. With recognition is meant that by unequal treatment of groups in society injustice can arise and justice can only be accomplished by recognizing these problems.<sup>1</sup>

The concepts of social and ecological justice give further substance to the application of the concept of justice. **Social justice** concerns the distribution of wealth in a society from the perspective of the relationship between individuals and society as a whole. This can be translated into the following goal: *Letting every human being live to his full potential and in dignity. To achieve this, every human being must have fair access to the resources necessary for this, have a voice in society's decision-making and be able to live in a loving community.*

For an ever-growing group of Christians this has become an important concept often referred to as "the social gospel".

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<sup>1</sup> More information can be found in the article on "Justice" in the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy at <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/justice/> of June 26, 2017, written by David Miller.

**Ecological justice** clarifies the relationship between people's actions and the environment. The concept can be applied both broadly and narrowly. In a narrow sense, the concept refers to the fair participation of all people in real use of natural resources and equally distributing the pros and cons associated with this use. In a broad sense, the concept means extending the pursuit of fairness for all living beings on earth. This means that the interests of non-human beings play a role in the fair distribution. In this sense, bringing justice means recognizing how humans affect the ecosystems on earth.

From a Christian perspective, the stewardship of man is often discussed in this context. This means that God has given the earth to humankind to be steward of it. Humans should thus not live as an owner, but as a caregiver and handle the earth carefully.

### **Connection Social and environmental justice**

In 2015, the encyclical *Laudato Si'* written by Pope Francis was published. In this encyclical, Pope Francis presents the image of the earth as a **common home**, which everyone must take care of together. In this publication he poses the following key question: "What kind of world do we want to leave behind to those who come after us, to children who are growing up now?"

Pope Francis reflects on where mankind is today and where mankind needs to head towards. He describes the relationship between **poverty** and the **fragility** of the earth. For him, both these subjects are directly linked. He speaks about an **integral ecology**, which means that all aspects of existence are connected. It is not possible to talk about improving the climate without also discussing all other aspects of existence. At the same time, one cannot talk about helping people in need without talking about pollution. Pope Francis calls for a change of culture by entering into **dialogue** with each other.

The connection between social and ecological problems that Pope Francis addresses fits with an emphasis that has been placed within the Christian world for a longer period of time. As early as 2002, the World Council of Churches called for justice and ecological sustainability not to be dealt in isolation, but as a whole. The Lausanne Movement wrote in the Cape Town Commitment of 2010: "World Poverty and climate change must be tackled together and with the same urgency."<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The Lausanne Movement. 2010. "The Cape Town Commitment." <https://www.lausanne.org/docs/CapeTownCommitment.pdf>. p. 31

In addition, outside of Christianity, the connection has also been made clear. The fourth report of the UN climate panel states that social problems can both be caused by and are the cause of ecological problems. For example, an increase in refugee numbers can lead to water scarcity, which in turn can lead to social unrest. This example shows how both social problems (large numbers of refugees and social unrest) and ecological problems (lack of water supply) are connected.

### 3.6.5 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are only helpful if the lesson is taught through classroom instruction.

#### **Suggestions for introductory questions**

- What is justice?
- What is injustice?
- What do climate change and injustice have to do with each other?

#### **Alternative assignments and instruction methods**

**Assignment.** Make space in the classroom. The students stand on an imaginary or real line that consists of two poles. Let the students determine their position on the line between the two poles of statements. Examples of opposite statements:

- I can play an important role in combating climate change. <-> I can play no role at all in combating climate change.
- Violence can be used to combat climate change. <-> To combat climate change, violence may not be used.
- If nature worsens, people's lives will also worsen. <-> If nature is worse, people still can live good lives.

After each pair of opposite statements, ask a number of students to explain their position.

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<sup>3</sup>IPCC. 2007. "Climate Change 2007: Synthesis Report." IPCC, Geneva, Switzerland, [https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/ar4\\_syr\\_full\\_report.pdf](https://www.ipcc.ch/site/assets/uploads/2018/02/ar4_syr_full_report.pdf). p. 26.

## 3.7 STUDENT PAGES: JUSTICE FOR TODAY OR TOMORROW?

The day before the start of a new millennium, many people were counting down in suspense. The century preceding this new millennium was full of great and difficult events. For example, two World Wars had taken place in this century. In addition, a hole in the ozone layer threatened the balance of life on earth. The beginning of this new millennium was a moment of **hope**, hope for a change for all people on earth.

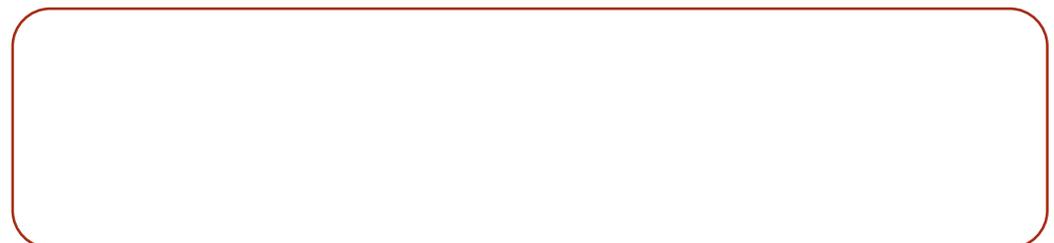
This hope was enshrined in the Millennium Development Goals signed by the United Nations in September 2000. These goals were aimed at eradicating poverty, hunger and abuse. However, the optimism seems to have diminished in recent years, because the goals require a lot of effort and many other major **problems** have arisen. Consider problems such as climate change, the rise of societal polarization worldwide, fake news and the problems surrounding privacy.

Many of these problems often seem recent and very urgent. When we look at history, however, we soon discover that 'big' problems occur in all ages. For example, there was far more widespread poverty during the middle ages than we have now. Also, in the Bible some big problems are visible in the stories. For example, the slavery of the people of Israel in Egypt (Exodus 1). Furthermore, in the time of Jesus there was exploitation by tax collectors who took a lot of money from people (Luke 19).

We can categorize the big problems into two categories. **Social** problems relate to how people live together, such as the increase in societal polarization. **Ecological** problems relate to how people interact with nature, such as the deforestation of the rainforest.

### Exercise 1

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



Big problems are of all times. The Bible not only contains examples of 'such big' problems but also gives clues on how to deal with these problems. In various books of the Bible God gives directions that people should not only get along well with each other but also actively try to do so. For example, the people of Israel were instructed to pay attention to widows, orphans and foreigners.

## Exercise 2

Read the following Bible texts:

### **MATTHEW 10:34-39**

But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.

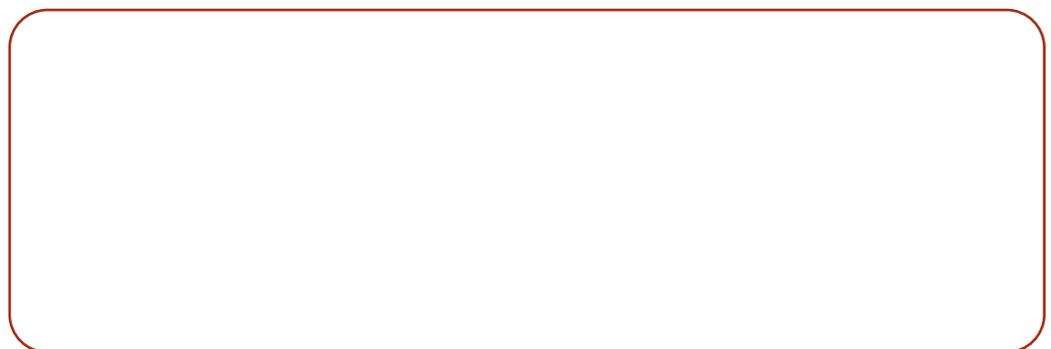
### **MATTHEW 5:6**

Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.

### **2 PETER 3:13**

But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.

What do you notice? Which commands to people are given in the Bible texts?



All the Bible texts of exercise 2 contain the word 'righteousness'. The image of the future of the new and heaven and earth in 2 Peter 3:13 means that righteousness is only for the future. Indeed, the other texts make it clear that we may long for righteousness already now.

**Righteousness** is often also called justice. Justice has to do with the problems in the world and those in your own life. Think, for example, of being wrongfully punished for something that someone else has done or getting poor grades because you do not have a good teacher. Justice is the recognition and appreciation of persons and giving (back) to them what belongs to them. We can apply this concept of justice to the two major categories of problems:

 **Social justice** is making it possible for all people to live in dignity and realize their full potential through a fair distribution of resources.

 **Ecological justice** is the fair participation of all groups of people in the use and protection of *natural resources*. Natural resources include wood, fields, lakes, mines and so on.

### Exercise 3

Compare the two types of justice. What are the differences and similarities between these types of justice? Which do you think Jesus was: a peacemaker or someone who sowed division?



Figure 3.5  
Image of the Sermon on the Mount from Matthew 5-7.  
Source: ©geralt / Pixabay

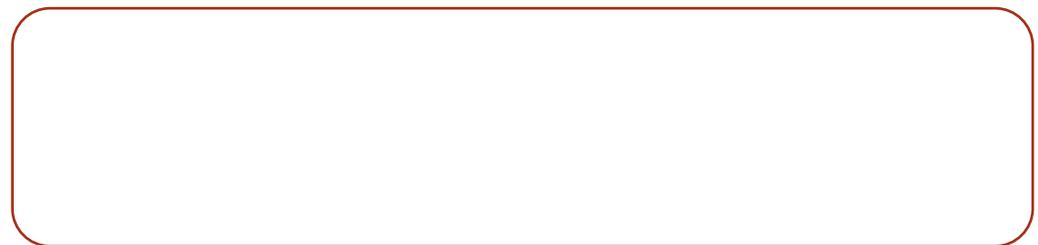
In 2015, the Pope of the Roman Catholic Church wrote that social and ecological justice are inextricably linked. This means that social problems can lead to ecological problems and ecological to social problems. An example of this linkage is a factory that, in order to save money, pollutes a lake, causing the fish in the lake to die. Because of this pollution, the fishermen who earn their money from fishing can no longer catch fish in this lake. As a result, they can no longer buy food for their families.

It is not only Pope Francis who sees the connection between social and ecological problems. Already in 2002, the World Council of Churches called for the integration of social justice with ecological sustainability. In 2015, the Protestant Lausanne Movement called for global poverty and climate change to be tackled jointly.

Christians shouldn't give up hope in this world because of the big problems that exist. On the contrary, there is much that Christians can do in the world. Jesus clearly says that the desire for righteousness is recognized by God (Matthew 5:6). This should not just remain desire but may turn into loving one's neighbor by dedicating oneself to one's neighbor. **Loving** one's neighbor means that one not only cares about social problems but also about ecological problems. After all, these are inextricably connected to each other. **Commitment** to improve the world must therefore be done from a combined social and ecological points of view.

#### **Exercise 4**

According to many people, bringing justice into the world is connected with taking care of the earth. How can you contribute both socially and ecologically to bringing justice through your own life?



## 3.8 GLOSSARY

This glossary from the glossary of the students' book provides more information and interpretation of certain terms. Behind each word, the sections to which it belongs is indicated in brackets.

### **Context (5)**

The context of a text is the environment that determines what a text means. This can be what kind of book a piece of Bible text is part of. In addition, it can be about what is written before or after a Bible text. Finally, context also refers to the historical and cultural world of the author of the Bible text.

### **Earth (5)**

Earth is the name of the planet on which humankind lives. In the Bible, earth stands in contrasts to heaven, because earth is the dwelling place of man and heaven is the dwelling place of God.

### **Garden of Eden (4)**

The garden of Eden is a garden that according to Genesis 2 was created by God. The first people according to one of the two origin story of Genesis, Adam and Eve, originally lived in the garden. After a big mistake they were evicted out of the garden by God and the garden was closed to mankind.

### **Genesis (4)**

Genesis is the first book of the Bible and describes, among others, in two stories the creation of mankind.

### **Genre (5)**

A genre is categorization of texts that have the same kind of structure and style. Different texts differ in form, length and certain word usage. Genres are often flexible, so a text can fall into several genres.

Different genres can be distinguished in modern and ancient texts. Examples of modern genres are thriller, horror and biography. Examples of ancient genres are tragedy, epistle and comedy.

### **Heaven (5)**

The word heaven refers to the place where God dwells. Many people see heaven as the place where people go after their death. This is not what is meant by heaven in the Bible. Heaven stands in contrasts to earth, because heaven is the place of God and earth is the place of man.

### **Ideal image (5)**

An ideal image is an image that someone has of something that is perfect. An ideal image can be about how according to a person the world would be perfect.

### **Ideology (5)**

An ideology is a collection of ideas that someone has about the world, people and what society should look like. An ideology is the basis from which different people imagine a perfect world and make choices in life.

**Jerusalem (5)**

In the time of Jesus, Jerusalem was the capital of Palestine. Jerusalem had a temple and many synagogues where Jews came to worship and pray. Today, Jerusalem is still an important city for Jews around 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 stories of Jesus in Jerusalem. According to the Islamic tradition, the Prophet Mohammed ascended to heaven from Jerusalem.

**Justice (6)**

Justice means a person receives what this person deserves.

**New heaven and new earth (5)**

The New Heaven and New Earth is about a vision from the Revelation of John. In this vision, John saw how the world ends and a new earth comes. At the same time, he also saw a new heaven from which a new Jerusalem descended on the new earth.

**Revelation (5)**

A revelation is a way in which God reveals something about Himself to people.

**Revelation of John (5)**

The Revelation of John is the title of the last book of the Bible. According to the book itself, a certain John received visions from Jesus when he was imprisoned on the island of Patmos.

**Satan (4)**

Satan is a Hebrew word that means 'opponent'. In the Christian world it has become a proper name for the devil. The devil is a figure who is evil in the form of a personality.

**Vision (5)**

A vision is a secret or image revealed to a person. Other people cannot perceive this revelation. The experiences of John in the book of Revelation are often described as visions.

## 3.9 TRANSCRIPT

### 1 INT STREET

Eva is walking down a street and going into an abandoned building. Sarah is watching from the other side of the street. Eva does not notice Sarah.

### 2 INT CANTEEN

Sarah and David are standing in line in the canteen of the school. Sarah is holding a phone in her hand and is showing it to David. Behind them Eva is visibly looking at them.

*Sarah: Cool isn't it? Look at what I can do with it.*

Sarah takes a picture of an object with the phone. Afterward, they step forward to the counter.

*David: Wow, that is awesome! You're so lucky. My parents said since my phone is not broken, I do not need a new one.*

*Sarah: That's a shame!*

Sarah and David look at the menu above the counter. Sarah becomes turns angry.

*Sarah: Hey, what kind of nonsense is this.*

*David: What's wrong*

Sarah says with a raised voice: Well, this vegan nonsense served here today. I don't like it and I want to have real good food.

*Eva: What the hell Sarah. Why do you have to be such a brat?*

*Sarah: Shut up miss snoop.*

*Eva: I have to snoop. You are such an uncaring person. You always complain about trivial things, while not paying attention to things you should really care about. Look at how the world we are living in becomes more and more dirty and uninhabitable. Do you want to live in a hellish world?*

*David: That was really not necessary.*

*Miss...: Kids, kids ....*

*Eva: It is obvious she doesn't care. Look how she paraded with a new phone, while children suffer and even die elsewhere so she can have one.*

*Sarah: Shut up*

Mister shouts: Girls, Girls that's enough. Or there will be consequences.

### 3 INT Street

Sarah and David are walking down the same street.

*David: Pff, what a long day. Why were you so angry with Eva?*

*Sarah: Well, I think she makes a big deal out of nothing. The Bible tells us this world will one day be replaced by something better, so why not enjoy what we have now.*

Sarah sees Eva walking down the street and going into an abandoned building.

*Sarah says with a smile on her face: Look, there she is! I am wondering what miss Perfect is doing there every day. Let's follow her.*

*David: Uhm Sarah, is that a good idea?*

Sarah runs to the building and David reluctantly follows her. They enter the building Eva went into.

### 4 INT ROOM

Sarah and David are in a room. There they find Sarah, a woman, and a child. Eva turns around to look at them.

*Eva whispers: Hey, what you... uhm, how did ... Did you follow me?*

*Sarah: Uhm, yeah, I was...*

*Eva: You should not have come here.*

*Sarah whispers: Why not?*

*You would not care anyway. Just stop bothering us and leave us be?*

*Sarah: Uhm what? I don't bother anyone. It is you who bothered me this morning. So, just tell me what is going on here?*

*Eva: I come here every day to help this people. This is Malacia and her mother.*

Eva points to the woman and the child.

*Eva: They do not have many things to do since her mother cannot find a decent job sadly. We meet at this place to have some fun and I help Malacia learn our language. She struggles at school and I try to help her. I know her from school.*

*Sarah: Oh, okay but should others like the government not help them? And what does this have to do with me?*

*Eva is annoyed and says: You really do not understand the real world. That is what I meant this morning when I said you don't care about really important issues.*

*Sarah raises her voice: What is your problem?*

*Eva: Shh...*

*David: Well, she does have a point. You just said you do not care for this world, since you believe it will be replaced by a new one someday*

*Sarah: Yeah, the Bible tells us there will be a time that a New Heaven and a New Earth will appear and that there will be a New Jerusalem where mankind will live in peace and harmony together with God in their midst.*

*Eva: Yeah, I know that passage, but what has that to do with these people? Or what about eating meat? Or buying a new phone every year? Do you know what these things can lead to? Come take a moment to look in the eyes of Malacia.*

Eva leads Sarah to Malacia. Sarah looks Malacia in the eye. The shot zooms into Malacia's eyes. The shot changes to the girl and the parents standing on a farm field, while the plants around them the plants are turning from green to brown and eventually the goats around them die. Next, we see the little girl and her family in a mine while holding an axe. Then her father walks away and falls dead to ground. Then we see a map where a line is drawn from Democratic Republic of Congo to China. In the next frame, we see new phones being boxed. The last frame is of Sarah looking at her new phone. The images are repeated several times and speeded up.

Finally, the image zooms out back through the eyes into the shot of Sarah looking at the girl.

## **6 INT ROOM**

*Sarah: Uhm, what happened? Uhm, what does this mean?*

*Eva: It means that it does not matter that there will be a new world. Your behavior right now influences the lives of others. Eating meat, for instance, leads to more CO2 emissions, which leads to rising temperatures, which can lead to droughts and thus people leaving their dried out farms to work in violent mines so that metals for phones can be delved. And when they want to leave those mines, they can get shot, just like how Malacia's father was killed.*

*Sarah: Oh, I did not know that. Is Bible wrong then? What has this to do with me again?Eva: I did not say the Bible is wrong.*

*Believing and having hope in a new and better world does not mean that you should not care about the present world we live in. It is just that you still can be aware of the problems in our world.*

*Sarah: Maybe you are right. Sorry, I reacted so harshly to you this morning. I am just... I'm just wondering what to do now.*

*Eva: You could read again what Jesus says. He says to love our neighbor as ourselves, thus maybe we should also think of the lives of others and of the earth when we making decisions and doing things.*

*Sarah: Yeah, just like the story of the Good Samaritan I have been thinking of lately. I am going to look in the bible again tonight.*

## **7 INT ROOM**

We see Sarah giving clothes and toys to Malacia

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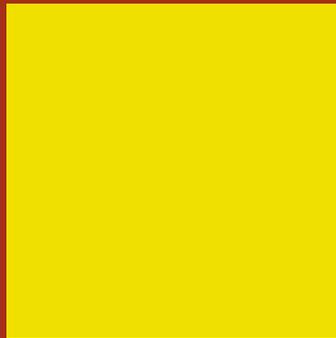
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WHEN ENCOUNTER  
BECOMES CONFLICT: JUST  
WAR AND JUST PEACE

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## MODULE FOUR

# JUST WAR AND JUST PEACE

## 4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this part of the curriculum, the following theme is elaborated: 'when encounter becomes conflict: just war and just peace'. This package has been developed for secondary school and offers the teacher or supervisor of a learning group the opportunity to develop this theme at the level of one's own 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 class session to complete. In addition, the teacher has the option to further deepen the students' knowledge by employing an extra section with accompanying information and didactic suggestions provided in this book.

This class consists of the following lesson sections:

- First, the content of the book of Revelation of John is discussed. This chapter is part of the basic learning material for the students.
- Second, some Bible texts (Luke 6:27-32 and Revelation 21:1-22:5) are discussed. This section addresses the question of how Christians can deal with violent conflict. This chapter is part of the basic learning material for the students.
- The third chapter detail the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. I discusses his ideas on war and violence and his role in the German resistance. This is an in-depth 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.

## 4.1.2 LEARNING OBJECTIVES OF THE LESSON

1. The student can describe why it is important to study a Bible text in its context.
2. The student asks questions about a text while reading a (possibly violent, discriminating and / or polarizing) Bible text without giving direct answers.
3. The student is willing to relate his/her point of view on violence and war to the story of the Bible.
4. The student can describe the concepts of pacifism, just war, and peace.
5. The student displays a willingness to handle Bible texts beyond a mere one-time reading.
6. The student can name important elements of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life and thought.

### 4.1.3 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

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

- *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. 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.

### 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 student's book.

### 4.1.4 PLANNING

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 learning material is developed for 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-minute lesson.

1. 4 minutes: Opening + Introduce the scenario
2. 5 minutes: View the video
3. 3 minutes: Discuss the video
4. 5 minutes: Students make independent section 1: The world of the Bible
5. 3 minutes Discuss section 1
6. 25 minutes: Students make independent section 2: Introducing the world of the story
7. 5 minutes: Review section 2 / Review lesson

## 4.2 VIDEO



Figure 4.1  
The video clip

*David, Sarah and Anna are watching TV together. On the TV, we see tanks driving down a road. A reporter explains that troops from one country have crossed the border into their neighboring country. According to the president of this country, the neighboring nation violates the rights of its citizens. Contrary to this, the prime minister of this neighboring country claims that his president intends to only expand his power. Sarah, David, and Anna talk about whether or not their own government ought to help the invaded country. They also discuss whether Christians can approve of a war. In the midst of their discussion, the reporter on the TV interrupts them and helps them to think more deeply about these issues.*

## Discussion of the video

### Discuss the image clip with the students in-class: what did they see?

The following questions are suggestions of things you could ask.

Introductory questions for the first chapter of this module: 'The World of the Bible'

- The video refers to an image of Jesus appearing as a warrior in the book of Revelation of John. What does book of "Revelation of John" contain?
- In the video the teens talk about loving your neighbor. Jesus takes it one step further and also speaks of loving an enemy. What does Jesus mean by an "enemy" in Luke 6:27-32?

Introductory questions for the second chapter of this module: 'The world of the story'

- The teens in the video are talking about war. How would you define "war"?
- What historical or ongoing wars do you know of?
- How would you define 'peace'?
- The video talks about bringing peace. Can war be used as a means to bring peace? What do you think?

Introductory questions for the second chapter of this module: 'Discipleship with a Price: The Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer'

- Someone who thought about using violence and was directly confronted with it himself is Dietrich Bonhoeffer. What can you tell about him?
- Bonhoeffer talked a lot about "discipleship. What do you think a disciple of Jesus is?

## 4.3 OPENING

### 4.3.1 PURPOSE AND CONTENT

This section serves as an introduction to the lesson. The goal is to allow the students to explore the Bible texts (Luke 6:27-32 and Revelation 19:11-16, 19) and to let them recall their prior knowledge.

### 4.3.2 EXERCISE

#### Exercise 2

Read the text about loving your enemies and a white horse rider on the next page. You may already know these texts. Write down what you think it means.

The aim of this exercise is to appeal to the students' prior knowledge. To answer this task quickly and comprehensively, the Bible text must already be known. Gather the answers from different students to get an idea of the level of the group.

### 4.4.3.3 BIBLE TEXT

#### Luke 6:27-32

But to you who are listening I say: Love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, bless those who curse you, pray for those who mistreat you. If someone slaps you on one cheek, turn to them the other also. If someone takes your coat, do not withhold your shirt from them. Give to everyone who asks you, and if anyone takes what belongs to you, do not demand it back. Do to others as you would have them do to you. If you love those who love you, what credit is that to you? Even sinners love those who love them.

#### Revelation of John 19:11-16, 19

I saw heaven standing open and there before me was a white horse, whose rider is called Faithful and True. With justice he judges and wages war. His eyes are like blazing fire, and on his head are many crowns. He has a name written on him that no one knows but he himself. He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the Word of God. The armies of heaven were following him, riding on white horses and dressed in fine linen, white and clean. Coming out of his mouth is a sharp sword with which to strike down the nations. "He will rule them with an iron scepter." He treads the winepress of the fury of the wrath of God Almighty. On his robe and on his thigh he has this name written: KING OF KINGS AND LORD OF LORDS. ...

Then I saw the beast and the kings of the earth and their armies gathered together to wage war against the rider on the horse and his army.

## 4.4 THE WORLD OF THE BIBLE

### 4.4.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this section of the lesson is to introduce students to certain aspects of the book of Revelation of John. The goal is to clarify the context of Revelation 19:11-19 and thereby make it clear that the rider on a white horse in this chapter represents Jesus. This knowledge is relevant to better understand the Bible text that is the focus of this lesson. The following learning objective is specifically addressed in this subchapter:

1. The student can describe why it is important to study a Bible text in its context.

### 4.4.2 CONTENT

This lesson section explains how the Revelation of John is put together to make it clear that the white diamonds are an image of Jesus.

### 4.4.3 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

#### Exercise 3

**Who is the rider on the white horse in Revelation 19:11-19.**

- A. King David**
- B. Prophet Elijah**
- C. Jesus**
- D. Archangel Gabriel**

The aim of this exercise is for the students to recognize that the rider on a white horse is Jesus.

#### 4.4.4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Revelation of John

The content and interpretation of this book is a difficult topic and hotly debated among Bible scholars. There are several major theological lines of interpretation by which the book can be approached. Gregory Beale presents a helpful classification into futurism, historicism, preterism, and idealism. (1) The **preterist** interpretation assumes that the events described in the book already happened in the first century. (2) The **futurist** interpretation assumes that the book describes future events just before the return of Jesus. (3) The **historical** interpretation assumes that the text wants to say something about the course of history up to the coming of Jesus, as well as the reader's time. (4) The **idealist** interpretation assumes that the imagery in the text is not related to past or future events but seeks to symbolically represent the ongoing struggle between God and evil. A combination of these four lines can also be applied. The exact interpretation of the book is not important for the purpose of this lesson. When discussing the Book of Revelation, it is important to keep these lines of interpretation in mind. During reading this book, students may refer to one or more of these interpretations.

The Book of Revelation consists of a series of visions. To understand Revelation 19 properly, it is important to study the structure of the book. The structure and content are briefly summarized below:

- 1:1-20 - This text serves as an introduction to the book.
- 1:20-3:21 - This section contains seven letters addressed to seven Christian communities in Asia Minor.
- 4:1-5:14 - This section describes a picture of a heavenly throne room where God is worshipped. There is a sealed scroll here that no one can open.
- 6:1-8:1 - A lamb appears and is able to break the seals of the scroll. After each seal is broken, something special happens in heaven or on earth. The lamb is a picture of Jesus.
- 8:2-11:19 - Seven angels with trumpets are described. These angels blow their trumpets one by one. After each trumpet sound, something special happens in heaven or on earth.
- 12:1-14:20 - It describes how a pregnant woman gives birth to a son. After the birth, a dragon appears and tries to kill the woman and the child. The child is often interpreted as referring to Jesus.

- 15:1-16:21 This section describes how seven sacrificial bowls are poured out on the earth. After each bowl is poured out, something special happens on the earth.
- 17:1-19:10 - This section describes the judgment that is pronounced on Babylon.
- 19:11-21 - In this section, a white horseman goes to war with Satan and achieves victory.
- 21:1-22:5 - This section contains the picture of a New Heaven and a New Earth.
- 22:6-21 - This section contains the last words given to John.

It is evident from the imagery used in the book that the rider on a white horse in chapter 19 is an **image of Jesus**. Although Jesus is previously depicted as a slaughtered lamb, in chapter 19 he is described as a violent man and an army commander. After this description, the image of Jesus as a lamb appears again.

#### 4.4.5 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are only helpful if the lesson is taught through classroom instruction.

#### Suggestions for introductory questions

- What is the Book of Revelation of John about?
- The Book of Revelation often speaks of a lamb. Who is this lamb?
- What do you notice about the white rider?

#### Alternative assignments and instructional methods

**Assignment.** Have the students read Revelation 19 and 20 or read it together as a group. Discuss what they observe in the text. See if you can include the whole of the Book of Revelation in the discussion as well. Additionally, ask questions such as:

- Why do you think imagery is used in the Book of Revelation?
- How does Jesus appear in the text?
- Why is there fighting in the text?

## 4.5 THE WORLD OF STORY

### 4.5.1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this section is to have the students think about the use of war and violence. This is done on the basis of two Bible texts. The students are given a number of skills for this purpose. The emphasis in this lesson is on the interpretation and application of the Bible text. The following learning objectives will be addressed in this lesson section:

2. The student asks questions about a text while reading a (possibly violent, discriminating and / or polarizing) Bible text without giving direct answers.
3. The student is willing to relate his/her point of view on violence and war to the story of the Bible.
4. The student can describe the concepts of pacifism, just war, and peace.
5. The student displays a willingness to handle Bible texts beyond a mere one-time reading.

### 4.5.2 CONTENT

In this section of the lesson, we explore how Christians deal with war and violence. **The first part** of this section discusses the concepts of pacifism, just war, and holy war. Students should think about exactly what the concepts mean and what their opinion of these concepts is.

The **second part** of this section discusses the views of four Protestant thinkers on violence and war. *Dietrich Bonhoeffer* presented a pacifist thought from a Protestant reflection on discipleship. *Daniel Bell* presented an alternative perspective on just war from Christian discipleship. *Walter Wink* presented active nonviolent resistance, which he saw as an alternative to both just war and pacifism. *Reinhold Niebuhr* presented an argument against pacifism and argues why war can sometimes be necessary.

### 4.5.3 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

#### Exercise 3

**In both Bible passages, a relationship is made between the person of Jesus and violence. What strikes you about this?**

The purpose of this exercise is for students to study the Bible text again and name the apparent contradiction between the two texts.

Example answers:

1. In Revelation 19:11-19, Jesus seems very energetic, whereas in Luke 6:27-32, Jesus actually requires his followers to remain calm.
2. In Revelation 19:11-19, Jesus appears combative, but in Luke 6:27-32, he appears rather passive.
3. In Revelation 19:11-19, Jesus appears combative, but in Luke 6:27-32, he appears rather passive.

#### Exercise 4

**Read the statements below.**

- 4. According to Jesus, you cannot not use violence to defend yourself, but you may use it to defend others.**
- 5. When it is necessary, Christians may fight in wars to make the world a better place.**
- 6. Loving your enemies means never using violence.**
- 7. Following Jesus means taking up your cross. Thus, you can be a victim of violence, but never a perpetrator of violence.**

**Which statements do you agree with? Explain why, using at least the two biblical texts.**

The purpose of this response is for students to interpret the texts and compare them with the statements. In addition, they are forced to apply the texts in practice. In this sense, they are moved to place the Bible texts in a theological context.

## Exercise 5

### **Compare the concepts of “pacifism,” “just war,” and “holy war. How do the three concepts differ and how are they similar?**

The purpose of this exercise is for students to process the concepts of pacifism, just war, and holy war by highlighting the differences and similarities. In addition, the main similarity, just peace, has already been named in the text. This exercise also serves to bring this clearly to the students' attention.

Sample Answers:

- These three terms emphasize that achieving goals is an important motivation behind our behavior.
- The terms give different perspectives on how a goal may be achieved.
- Both pacifism and the just war tradition favor peaceful solutions, but just war argues that sometimes violent interventions/wars cannot be avoided.

## Exercise 6

### **What would just peace look like in today's world?**

The purpose of this exercise is for students to apply the concept of just peace in today's society and thereby critically analyze today's society as well.

Example answer:

Just peace would mean that there would be no more poverty. Also, everyone would be able to do fun things without money being a factor. Additionally, we would be surrounded by much more nature to enjoy and we would need fewer factories. Furthermore, the government would do everything in its power to ensure that people in other countries have it as good as we do in this country.

## Exercise 7

### What can you do to ensure peace?

The purpose of this exercise is for students to think about their possible role in bringing about a more just and peaceful society.

Sample answer:

I can ensure a more just world by treating everyone equally. I can also think about how my choices affect the lives of others. In addition, I could do volunteer work to make the lives of others more pleasant that way. Last but not least, I can organize an afternoon for sports and games in my class so that we will start getting to know each other better and thus fight less.

## Exercise 8

### Which thinker appeals to you the most and which does not? Why? Try to use the two Bible texts from this lesson in your answer.

The purpose of this exercise is for students to evaluate pacifism and just war from a Protestant perspective. Even though the Catholic tradition has clearer views on just war, Protestants have also written about it. By pointing out Protestant thinkers, students are also made aware of the diversity within Protestantism.

## Exercise 9

### Jesus thus tells to love one's enemies. What does this mean to you? How do you apply this in your own life?

The purpose of this assignment is to help students evaluate the meaning of loving your enemies so that they can relate this question to themselves. By answering this question at the end of the lesson, they have the opportunity to incorporate Protestant ideas and concepts into their response.

## 4.5.4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### War and armed conflict defined

War can be defined as an armed conflict between countries and people groups, but it can also have a broader meaning. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy defines war as "an actual, intentional, and widespread armed conflict." This definition presupposes several conditions before one can speak of war. In addition, this definition does not limit war only to armed conflicts between nations. It can also refer to armed conflicts based on **other group divisions**. Consider, for instance, **people** and religious **groups**.

This broad definition more accurately reflects the reality of war throughout history.

When thinking about war, it is useful to discuss the **spectrum of war conflicts in the modern era** developed by Jill Long (2016). On this spectrum, unrestricted armed conflict and world peace are at the extremes. This spectrum illustrates that conflicts exist in various degrees. It also demonstrates that true peace is more than the absence of brute force and conflict in a country. There are many different intermediary forms between waging war and having world peace, in which peace is achieved to a certain degree. An example of an intermediate form is “subcutaneous tensions” between countries, which may create or sustain a threat of war. Another example is an unequal balance of power in which one country promotes its own interests at the expense of the inhabitants of another country, but without violence.

In the **modern legal order**, war is a means of promoting peace that can only be used under strict conditions. War as a means of conquest, retaliation, or pressure is consequently prohibited. War is permissible under international law only if all other means have been exhausted and there is an international mandate for it. This international legal order has its origins in the “just war” tradition. The Christian tradition has played an important role in the development of these concepts.

## **Pacifism**

**Pacifism** is an attitude that certain people adopt, rejecting violence and/or war as a means that may be used to reach an end. The word “pacifism” is derived from the Latin *pax* meaning “peace” and *facere* meaning “to make.” Pacifism is thus the making of peace. Modern pacifism is truly diverse. People reject war for different reasons and have different opinions about when violence is or is not permissible.

Many Christian pacifists consider the **core message** of the Bible to be love, peace, and compassion. This is directly related to Jesus’ call to love one’s neighbour and even one’s enemy. It also emphasizes the exercise of authority through love and humility rather than punishment and violence. This vision implies an optimistic view of human potential. After all, following Jesus then gives the possibility to make his message of peace a reality in the here and now. Critics often describe this optimism as (naïve) idealism.

## Just war theory

**Just war theory** is concerned with the moral justification for when and how wars may be fought. These theories constitute an important **tradition** within political, religious, and military ethics. In this tradition, war can be considered in specific cases as a means of preventing more serious violence and more casualties.

The tradition has its origins already in antiquity amongst the Greek and Roman philosophers. It was Cicero who, as early as 44 B.C., laid out a comprehensive consideration of conditions to justify warfare. It was not until the fourth century, after the Emperor Constantine, that the tradition began to develop within Christian theology. Two distinct phases of warfare in which the question of justification comes into play have been distinguished: *Jus ad Bellum* and *Jus in Bello*.

**'Jus ad Bellum'** concerns the question of when a group is entitled to start a war on just grounds. The following conditions apply in the modern just war tradition: (a) just cause, (b) as a last resort, (c) by a proper and competent authority, (d) with the right intention, (e) with probability of success, (f) with proportionality. The student book further explains these conditions.

**'Jus in bello'** concerns how war can be just during combat. The following conditions apply in modern just war theory:

- *Distinction*: The applied violence may only be directed at armed combatants of the enemy and not at bystanders.
- *Proportionality*: The combatants must ensure that the harm done to unarmed civilians from the violence used is proportionate to the benefits to unarmed civilians.
- *Necessity*: The objective of all military decisions should be aimed at defeating the enemy and minimizing harm to ordinary citizens.

Nowadays, many scholars also add a third phase. **'Jus post bellum'**, and this concerns justice after the end of a war.

Within Christian thought, just war theory is often defended by arguing that it is consistent with the realities of the world. It can also be argued that there is a moral obligation to use all means to bring about justice, just as in the Bible God also allowed violence to work toward a more just world.

## Holy Wars

A final form of justification for war, which can also be discussed within the Christian tradition, is '**holy war**'. Holy war means that a war is justified by the approval or involvement of a divinity. In practice, this means that at least one of the parties in a war acts on the belief that the war represents a divine purpose or mission. In a wider application, we can speak of '**religious wars**'. This means that war is waged in which religious goals play a major role. An example of so-called 'holy wars' are the Crusades.

## Just Peace

The concept of just peace represents an important concept when discussing just war theory and pacifism is the concept of **just peace**. Peace is a concept used primarily to describe the absence of conflict, wars, and violence. However, peace can also be applied more broadly and then refers to a state of completeness and harmony between people, as well as within persons themselves. This application of 'peace' aligns with the Hebrew 'shalom'. Just peace is a concept which directly links to the broader use of peace with justice. For a just peace to truly exist, one can only speak of a harmonious existence of people if there is also justice in that society.

Both pacifists and adherents of the just war tradition **strive to achieve peace**. Most of the Protestant thinkers described below will also highlight peace as the primary goal of their approach. Thus, talking about violence and war cannot be done without thinking about peace. Based on biblical texts such as Revelation 19 and Isaiah 11:6-9, the concept of just peace may be considered an important concept to Christians.

## Protestant thinkers

This lesson specifically addresses the question of how Christians should deal with war and violence. Two main viewpoints are explained, pacifism and just war theory. No answer is given as to which of these views would be better. In the breadth of Protestant traditions, both views are defended. Although certain church traditions are known to be pacifist or non-pacifist, shifts within denominations are also evident. For example, throughout the 20th century there was a shift within Pentecostal denominations, from being predominantly pacifist to have a greater emphasis on just war. Notable Protestant pacifists include John Howard Yoder, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, and Jean Lassare. Notable Protestants within the just war tradition are Oliver O'Donovan and Reinhold Niebuhr.

This lesson focuses on the ideas of four Protestant writers. Below, some brief information about these writers is given.

## **Dietrich Bonhoeffer**

This additional material of this module is about Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906-1945). More information about Bonhoeffer can be found [there](#).

## **Daniel Bell**

Daniel Bell is a theologian and ethicist. He has written about the topics just war and economics. He was a professor of ethics at Lutheran Theological Seminary in Columbia, Florida. He also served as an elder in the United Methodist Church. In 2009, his book *Just War as Christian Discipleship* was published.

In this book, Bell presents an **alternative approach** to the just war tradition for Christians. He calls the traditional approach the **Public Policy Checklist**. According to Bell, this approach consists primarily of checking off a checklist to make decisions about war. This rules-based approach aims to force people to abide by the rules when approving war.

Bell believes that the (un)justice of war should be judged primarily from the standpoint of **character and virtue**. The aim is to develop a **character and virtues** that allow one to always approach problematic situations with the conviction that justice and peace must be the only outcome in these situations. In this sense, the individual places just peace at the center of all reflections and decision-making. Thus, an important part of this approach is that violence is not considered as an end or means of power, but rather as a means to bring about justice. According to Bell, this can only be properly developed through **Christian discipleship**. Through discipleship, a person can learn to deal with the complexity of the world and allow the justice of the gospel to be the basis for the public realm.

Bell thus seeks to exchange the completion of a checklist for the development of a certain attitude to life and mindset. The disciple is formed to be able to participate in the social debate about conflict, injustice and war. For the church, this means that not political connections are the key to success, but the key is a reverence for God. God wants the believer to pursue justice, and in this pursuit, war can sometimes be judged as a just means.

## **Walter Wink**

Walter Wink (1935-2012) advocated as a theologian for **active nonviolence**. Wink was a professor at Auburn Theological Seminary in New York. Wink is well-known for his four-part series "The Powers", in which he develops his position on active nonviolence.

Wink defends the thesis that Christians should pursue nonviolence. This nonviolence is not passive but presupposes the **active commitment** against violence. Wink rejects what he calls the 'myth of redemptive violence'. This is the notion that violence can be just and necessary. This is a myth that Wink believes pervades modern society.

According to Wink, Jesus revealed a God who rejects violence and is inherently nonviolent. The reign of God means the utter **destruction** of all forms of violence. Through Jesus, God contradicted man's belief that violence is a solution to problems. Such destruction cannot be achieved by taking over violence from evil. By doing so, you yourself become the evil you are fighting against. In Jesus, God contradicted man's belief in violence as a solution to problems. **Nonviolent resistance** to violence is a way to break with this violence. Creating nonviolent alternatives is a spiritual practice because it demands, first of all, the courage to fight the evil within ourselves.

Wink uses the "turning of the other cheek" as an example of creating a political and cultural context of resistance. Instead of standing up to violent humiliation, which is expected in a violent culture, you turn the other cheek. Wink calls the attitude of seeking nonviolent alternatives the third way. In searching for the **third way**, Wink places your enemy at the center.

### ***Reinhold Niebuhr***

Reinhold Niebuhr (1882-1971) was a reformed theologian who has written extensively about the relation between Christianity and politics. After the First World War, he developed pacifist beliefs, in the period leading up to the Second World War he abandoned them. He is one of the founders of the tradition of Christian Realism. This tradition presupposes three things: (1) the sinfulness of humanity; (2) the freedom of humanity; (3) the truth and seriousness of the 'great commandment'.

Niebuhr does not reject pacifism as a whole, but he does reject the practical pacifism of the liberal Christianity of his day. Niebuhr contended that the **ethic of the gospel** is pure love and nonviolence. It is due to the nature of humankind that this pacifism is an ideal that cannot be realized. For this reason, Niebuhr completely rejects any form of **idealism**. While it is possible for an individual to live out the ideal of the gospel in their own life, it is impossible for societies.

Niebuhr argues that war may be necessary and somewhat justifiable. At the same time, he does reject the just war tradition. According to him, this tradition is based on the notion of **natural laws** and aims to reach morally normative decisions on war and peace. In doing so, Niebuhr argues, this

tradition places too much faith in human **reason**. He argues that people do not make decisions based on reason, but rather on **passions and interests**. This is why an objectively “just” war is not possible.

Niebuhr describes war as “a final revelation of the character of humanity”. Wars are full of **tragedy** and **human suffering**. Niebuhr therefore does not think lightly of war. In all considerations of war in academia and politics, this tragedy has to be front and center. Although for Niebuhr wars can never be condoned, he believes that because of human nature war is a necessary means of sustaining societies. As he saw it, Christians’ job in the present state of the world is to use every means in order to create a **peaceful society**. If you do not do this, according to Niebuhr, you cannot be called a true peacemaker.

It is important to note that Niebuhr did not really engage with the tradition in his discussions of the just war tradition. Various thinkers had already discussed many of his objections during his life. Ultimately, an important contribution to (Christian) politics has been his emphasis on passion and interests in decision-making.

#### 4.5.5 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS

The following suggestions are useful only if the lesson is covered through classroom instruction.

##### **Suggestions for introductory questions**

- How would you define 'war'?
- What is pacifism and what are your views on it?
- Does something like a 'just war' exist?
- Thesis: Violence and war are never good.

##### **Alternative assignments and instructional methods**

**Assignment.** Divide the class into small groups. Have each group discuss whether or not war may sometimes be allowed. They may also set terms for when it is permissible or list arguments for why it cannot be. Ask the students to reflect on the concept of peace through these conversations as well. Give them the following questions to consider:

- Who determines whether war may be waged? How can such a person, group, or agency actually determine this?
- What are the conditions under which a just war can be declared?
- What is your opinion on the idea that war may be necessary?
- What does peace look like?
- Can war and a desire for peace go hand in hand?

Students will create a poster answering the questions and present it briefly to each other.

**Assignment.** Divide the class into pairs. Students are instructed to search for more information on pacifism, just war, and holy war.

The assignment is to find out what the terms mean. The objective is that the students to arrive at a definition of the three terms and describe the differences and similarities between the terms. All pairs briefly present their definitions and together as a class work towards one definition per term.

**Assignment.** Make space in the classroom. The students position themselves on an imaginary or real line that consists of two poles. Let the students determine their position on the line between the two poles of statements. Examples of opposite statements:

- Resorting to war is often permissible. <-> Resorting to war is never permissible.
- Violence can be a means to help others. <-> Violence can never be used to help others.
- Pacifism is an ideal image that we should strive for in our society. <-> Pacifism is an ideal image that is not realistic for our contemporary society.
- Jesus had pacifist ideas. <-> Jesus had no pacifist ideas.
- God uses war as a means to bring about peace. <-> God is completely nonviolent.

After each pair of opposing statements, ask a number of students to explain their position.



Figure 4.2  
A consequence of war  
Source: Pxhere

## 4.6 DISCIPLESHIP WITH A PRICE: THE LIFE OF DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

**4.6.1 PURPOSE** In this section, the students are introduced to the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. The following learning objectives are specifically addressed in this subchapter:

6. The student can name the most important elements of Dietrich Bonhoeffer's life and thought.

**4.6.2 CONTENT** This lesson section provides a representation of the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. A brief outline of Bonhoeffer's life is given, then Bonhoeffer's vision of discipleship and pacifism is discussed.

### 4.6.3 EXERCISES AND ANSWERS

#### Exercise 1

**What does the concept of 'being a disciple of Jesus' mean to you?**

The purpose of this exercise is for the students to reflect on what following Jesus means and means to them.

#### Exercise 2

**Bonhoeffer says that to follow Jesus means to resist nonviolently. Do you think effective nonviolent resistance is possible? If so, what do you think this nonviolent resistance might look like? If not, why?**

The purpose of this assignment is for students to reflect on the idea of nonviolent resistance. They are asked to reflect on the practicalities of this resistance. In addition, students are encouraged to further develop their own opinions on this topic.

Sample answer:

- Yes, we can obey laws as best we can, but sometimes you have to use the loopholes in a law as much as possible to achieve a good goal.
- No, even by chanting slogans on the street, for example, you are using a form of (verbal) violence.

### Exercise 3

**Bonhoeffer is also sometimes called a martyr and a Protestant saint.**

**What in Bonhoeffer's life speaks to you? How can you try to elicit this yourself?**

The purpose of this exercise is for students to draw lessons of their own from the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer.

#### 4.6.4 ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

##### Biography

Dietrich Bonhoeffer was born on 4 February 1906 in Breslau, then Germany now Poland, along with his twin sister Sabine. He grew up in a household of eight children. His father, Karl, was a neurologist and psychiatrist and his mother, Paula, was a teacher. Besides Dietrich, also his brother Klaus died during the Second World War. His brother Walter had already died during the First World War. Furthermore, the husbands of his older sisters Ursula and Christel were executed during the war. Christel herself was also imprisoned during the war but survived. His brother Karl became a chemist and was one of the discoverers of the spin isomers of hydrogen.

Dietrich surprised his family when he announced that he was going to study **theology**. Although the family was Christian, they did not attend church. A visit to Rome in 1924 impressed him greatly and changed his vision of the church. In 1928, he graduated with a thesis in which he argued that the church should be a community of saints. He started his pastoral career in 1928, when he became a chaplain in a German church in Barcelona. It was here that his pastoral talents became evident, and Bonhoeffer consequently breathed new life into the community.

In 1930, he left for a **postdoctoral** fellowship in the US. There he worked at Union Theological Seminary and gained a new understanding of **social justice** through visiting black churches. After returning from the US, he held various pastoral positions in different places in Europe.

In 1933, he left Germany to become the pastor of some small German-speaking congregations in London. Although he was not present when the Confessing Church was established, he mobilized German pastors in England against Nazism and organized aid for German refugees.

In 1935, he returned to Germany to work at a **seminary of the Confessing Church**. It was during his work at this seminary that he wrote his two best-known works, “Living Together” and “Cost of Discipleship”. After all seminaries were shut down under the pressure of the SS, Bonhoeffer moved to go to the US to avoid conscription. However, in the US he felt the desire to help his fellow German believers on the ground in Germany itself. In 1939, he thus returned to Germany.

He applied to be a military chaplain to carry on his pastoral work, but that job was rejected. He eventually got a job as a **counterintelligence officer** with the Abwehr where he had to gather information as a pastoral worker abroad. In reality, he was a double agent who used his position to help the German resistance and support Christians throughout Europe. He used the various trips he made for this position to share information about the resistance to the Allies.

Bonhoeffer played a **key role** in a nonviolent plan to help 14 Jewish men and women flee to Switzerland. He was arrested in April 1943 after it was discovered that he had arranged the money to make this escape plan possible. Official documents show that he was convicted of using his position to avoid service in the army and of giving other people the opportunity to do the same.



Figure 4.3  
Concentration camp  
Flossenbürg  
Source: Wikimedia  
Commons: <https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Flossenburg.jpg>.

After the failed **coup** on July 20, 1944, in which an attempt was made to assassinate Adolf Hitler as well, his contacts with the conspirators were revealed. He eventually ended up at concentration camp Flossenbürg. It seems impossible that Bonhoeffer was actually involved in the preparation of

this coup attempt since he had already been imprisoned for a year. When Hitler ordered the death of the conspirators in April 1945, Bonhoeffer was sentenced to death by SS Judge Otto Thorbeck on April 8. The sentence was carried out on April 9, 1945, barely two weeks before the camp was liberated by U.S. soldiers.

### **Bonhoeffer and Discipleship**

The book ‘Cost of Discipleship’ outlines Bonhoeffer’s vision of what it means to follow Jesus. The two concepts underlying his vision are cheap and costly grace. According to Bonhoeffer, cheap grace is simply receiving forgiveness and comfort without any real meaning. It is a system that is lifeless and makes the church dead. Cheap grace is something offered as a quick fix without transforming a person into a true follower of Jesus.

In contrast to this cheap grace stands costly grace, which demands that as a believer you submit to a higher good. This higher good is the work of Jesus. Following Jesus is costly because it involves that a person is willing to give up everything and, if necessary, break ties with the world. The risk associated with this decision is that this person is vulnerable and may be rejected by the world. This may also mean that a person must suffer.

For Bonhoeffer, the church is not a place of retribution in the world because it does not have any political status. The church has to patiently endure the aggression of the world. The calling of the church is to become one with Jesus rather than to eradicate all evil from the world. For a follower of Jesus, this means enduring and not resisting violence and aggression. This also means not trying to justify one's own use of violence. Because a person resists nonviolently, it can actually overcome the evil done by others.

An important question is how Bonhoeffer ended up participating in a conspiracy. Opinions differ on the question. Some scholars claim that Bonhoeffer abandoned his earlier pacifist views, yet a 2013 biography shows that he likely always held on to his ideas.<sup>1</sup> There is no evidence that he joined the Abwehr to help assassinate Hitler. On the contrary, the reason appears to have been his determination to help the church. Moreover, no evidence was found of direct involvement in coup attempts and attacks against Hitler.

#### **4.6.5 DIDACTIC SUGGESTIONS**

The following suggestions are useful only if the lesson is covered through classroom instruction.

#### **Suggestions for introductory questions**

- What does the word discipleship mean?
- What makes following Jesus precious?
- What was the professing church?
- How can you resist violence and war?

#### **Alternative assignments and instructional methods**

**Video.** Watch a documentary or a movie about the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer with the students. Since documentaries and movies can take longer than a lesson will allow, it is best to select a fragment. Examples of films and documentaries are Bonhoeffer: Agent of Grace (2000), Bonhoeffer (2003), Hanged on a Twisted Cross (1996) and Heroes of Conscience (1993).

<sup>1</sup> Mark Nation, Anthony G Siegrist, and Daniel P Umbel, Bonhoeffer the Assassin?: Challenging the Myth, Recovering His Call to Peacemaking, 2013, Accessed March 30, 2021, <http://site.ebrary.com/id/10805947>.

## 4.7 STUDENT PAGES: DISCIPLESHIP WITH A PRICE: THE LIFE OF DIETRICH BONHOEFFER

When you are confronted with a government that goes against everything that you believe, what do you do? What if this government threatens the lives of innocent people and divides society? What if your fellow believers start running after this government? These questions should be asked when you look at the life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer. Dietrich is one of the most influential **church leaders** of the 21st century. He was born on February 4, 1906 in what was then Breslau, Germany. On April 9, 1945 he was executed by the Nazis. In 1937 he published the book "The cost of discipleship". In this book, he reflects on what it means to follow Jesus.

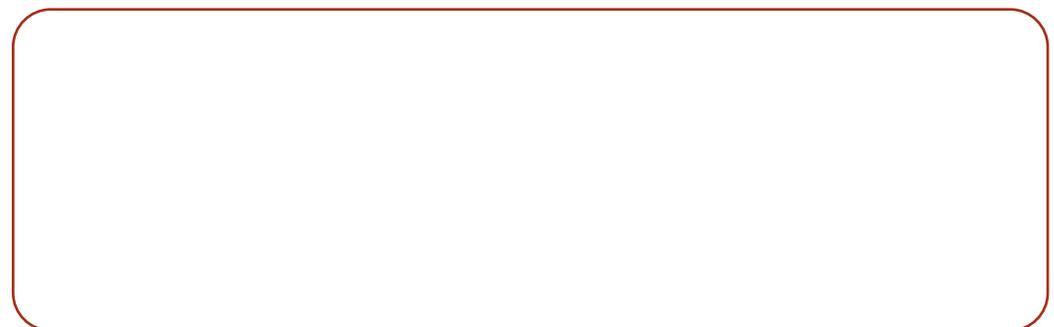
### The Life of Dietrich Bonhoeffer

Dietrich was the son of psychiatrist and neurologist Karl and of teacher Paula. He grew up in a family that described itself as 'Christian' but did not attend church. His mother taught the children about the Bible at home. It still came as a surprise when Dietrich decided to study theology and become a **pastor**. After his studies in Tübingen, he left for the USA to continue his studies. There he became friends with Reinhold Niebuhr and the French pacifist Jean Lassere. In the US, Bonhoeffer also learned the perspective of the oppressed.

When Bonhoeffer returned to Germany in 1931, he went to work at the University of Berlin. During the rise of Nazism, a part of the German church favored this ideology. Bonhoeffer resisted this and became part of a countermovement that would eventually form the 'Confessing Church'. In the years leading up to the war, he taught at a school of this Confessing Church. During this period, he developed his ideas about **following** Jesus.

### Exercise 1

What does it mean to you to follow Jesus?



## Following Jesus

The work of Bonhoeffer offers a form of pacifism which does not conform to common meanings. His pacifism is a form of **faith expression** that is based upon following Jesus. To this end, Bonhoeffer distinguishes between cheap and costly grace.



**Cheap grace**, according to Bonhoeffer, emphasizes the beautiful and enjoyable aspects of Christianity without talking about the less pleasant sides. This means that a person says he or she is a Christian without really putting any effort into it.



**Costly grace** is a grace that calls to truly imitate and follow Jesus. This imitation is costly because it involves being willing to give up everything and sever connections with the world. The risk of such a choice is that you become vulnerable and may be rejected by the world. This may also mean experiencing suffering.

For Bonhoeffer, the church is not a place of severe intervention to deal with injustices in the world. The church does not participate in the normal political affairs of society. The church must patiently **endure** the aggression and violence of the world. Its calling is to become one with Jesus and not to rid the world of evil. For followers of Jesus, this means enduring aggression and evil and not **resisting**. It also means not condoning one's own use of violence. Nonviolent resistance can overcome the evil of the other.

### Exercise 2

Bonhoeffer says that to follow Jesus means to resist nonviolently. Do you think effective nonviolent resistance is possible? If so, what do you think this nonviolent resistance might look like? If not, why?

## Conspiracy

Figure 4.4  
Bonhoeffer together with  
students, 21 March 1932.  
Source: The German  
Federal Archive via  
Wikimedia Commons:  
[https://commons.  
wikimedia.org/wiki/  
File:Bundesarchiv\\_  
Bild\\_183-R0211-316\\_  
Dietrich\\_Bonhoeffer\\_  
mit\\_Schülern.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Bundesarchiv_Bild_183-R0211-316_Dietrich_Bonhoeffer_mit_Schülern.jpg)



In 1941 he applied for the position of chaplain in the German army. He was rejected for this position, so he went to work as a **counterintelligence officer** with the *Abwehr*, the German spy agency of the time. In this position, he continued to support church leaders during the trips he had to make for his job.

He was arrested in 1943 for his participation in **Operation 7**, which was a plot to allow 14 Jewish men and women to escape from Germany without the use of any violence. He was convicted for evading military service and for helping others to escape service as well. In 1944, his name came up in a **failed plot** to assassinate Hitler. He was sent to a higher security prison. He eventually ended up in concentration camp Flossenbürg and was executed two weeks before the camp was liberated. His last words before he was executed were, *"This is the end, for me the beginning of life."*

Bonhoeffer thus seems to have changed his **mind**. Where he was first a pacifist, he now seemed to be actively participating in a struggle against Hitler. Yet this is not definitely the case. There is no evidence that Bonhoeffer actually participated in the coup and attack attempts. In the resistance, he continued to serve primarily as a **spiritual worker**. He was thus active in the resistance, but probably did so mainly to avoid fighting in the German army.

### Exercise 3

Bonhoeffer is also sometimes called a martyr and a Protestant saint. What in Bonhoeffer's life speaks to you? How can you try to elicit this yourself?

## 4.8 GLOSSARY

This glossary from the student booklet supplemented by the extra lesson section provides more information and interpretation for certain terms. Behind each word is indicated in brackets to which lesson section it belongs.

### **Disciple (5)**

A disciple is a follower of Jesus.

### **Enemy (5)**

An enemy is a term used to indicate that an individual or a group is the opponent against whom someone is fighting.

### **Evil (5)**

Evil is a term that describes what people perceive as be negative and wrong.

### **Just (5)**

Just means that something is right or fair.

### **Just War (5)**

A just war is a war that aims to establish peace and meets several preconditions. To start a war, the following preconditions need to be met: (4) have a just cause; (5) have the right intention; (6) use war as a last resort; (4) the war needs to have a high probability of success; (5) be proportionate to combatted evil; (6) be started by a proper and competent authority. The preconditions during a war are: (4) discrimination; (5) proportionality; and (6) necessity.

### **Pacifism (5)**

Pacifism is the rejection of war and violence to achieve one's goals. Pacifists thus seek peace without the use of armed struggle.

### **Peace (5)**

Peace is a term used to describe both the absence of conflict and the well-being of a person or society.

### **Revelation (4)**

A revelation is a way in which God makes something about Himself known to people.

### **War (5)**

War is an armed conflict between social groups, such as countries, people groups or religious groups.

## 4.9 TRANSCRIPT OF THE VIDEO

### 1 INT ROOM

Sarah, David and Anna are sitting in front of a TV. The TV screen shows tanks driving on a road.

Voice over: Troops have crossed the border to intervene in the conflict that has been stirring up the country.

David: *Wow, what is going on there...*

We see a man is talking on the TV screen.

Voice over continues: *Their president said in a speech earlier today that the neighboring country has been violating international law and human rights.*

The prime minister of that country responded angrily in return. She said that lies are being spread about a domestic conflict and that they are just as much under attack by this lying president.

We focus on the Sarah, David and Anna talking. Sarah looks sad, Anna looks angry.

Sarah: *That is very terrible news.*

Anna: *Yeah, it is. I believe that our government should take action and help this invaded country even though it is far away! We must protect and help those in need.*

Sarah: *Yes, we need to help those in need, but in this situation that means partaking in a war.*

David: *Yeah, why do you immediately say that we have to get involved in this war?*

Anna: *Well, this president wants to invade another country, on top of that he has repeatedly used violence against his own people. It is nonsense that he wants to go to war to rescue people in another country. He just wants to take over their land! It is our duty to help those in need.*

Sarah: *Yeah, but even if this invasion is wrong, Jesus tells us to love our neighbors and that we should not strike back when we are beaten but turn the other cheek. Why should we then take up arms and go to war?*

Anna: *Yeah, I know, but we cannot sit still and let this happen.*

David: *Well, don't you think Jesus is opposed to all wars?*

Anna: *Yeah, that may look like it, but God also commanded several times to go to war in the Old Testament. Does this not mean that war is sometimes a part of God's will?*

Sarah: *I don't know if I agree with you.*

The frame focuses on the TV. A news presenter on the TV screen turns his head and looks directly at the teens.

Presenter: *Uhm, hey hello over here, I noticed you are talking about a difficult topic. I think you three may need some help. I have some questions that may assist you in thinking about this. You want to hear them, or not?*

We focus on Sarah, David and Anna talking

David: *Is he talking to us?*

Sarah: *Uhm, yes, how..., this is very weird, but why not?*

Anna: *Yeah, it is weird, but let's do it.*

We focus on the TV.

Presenter: *Okay, Some Christians do not want to be part of any war. How are people who do not want to take part in any war called?*

We focus on Sarah, David and Anna talking

David: *Uhm, is it not pacifist.*

Sarah: *Indeed, it is.*

Anna: *Yeah, but they are on the wrong side.*

Sarah: *Why? Aren't they listening to Jesus? He was also a pacifist, wasn't he?*

David: *Yeah, as Sarah already said he told us to turn the other cheek.*

Anna: *Yes, he did, but it is more complicated. For instance, he did not reject soldiers as bad people.*

We focus on the TV.

Presenter: *The correct answer is indeed a pacifist. Not all Christians are pacifists. Some Christians can also believe in what is called just war theory. Do you know what 'just war is?'*

We focus on Sarah, David and Anna talking

David: *Uh well I do not know.*

*Anna: It is the idea that if a country has a just cause and fights in a just manner with the goal to bring peace, then a war can be called just.*

*David: But isn't war always violent and therefore bad? I remember talking to your father about using violence.*

*Sarah: You are right, it is. Jesus himself showed this to us in his own example. He never used violence but forgave those who were violent towards him. Instead of fighting, we should humble ourselves and be merciful to others too.*

We focus on the TV.

*Presenter: Yes, you explained it correctly, these are the essentials of just war theory. What do you think of the following statement: Jesus is depicted as a warrior in the Bible.*

We focus on Sarah, David and Anna talking

*Sarah: That is definitely not true, I cannot imagine Jesus being depicted as a warrior.*

David nods his head.

*David: Yeah, neither can I.*

*Anna: But it is true. Jesus is depicted as a warrior in the Book of Revelation.*

David looks surprised.

*David: What? I thought Jesus was a pacifist.*

*Anna: No, he is not. Since Jesus is depicted as taking up arms, then it may be fine for us to do that in certain circumstances as well.*

*Sarah: Which circumstances? Where do we draw the line? I think we cannot do that fairly. So, we should not take risks and not go to war at all.*

*David: I was thinking something similar. An image of Jesus as warrior doesn't necessarily justify war.*

*Anna: Yeah, but Jesus also praises the peacemakers. Maybe war can be used as a final means to bring peace as well, don't you think?*

*Sarah: Mm, that could be true. I am still not sure.*

We focus on the TV.

*Presenter: Oh, the connection is getting bad.... Let us return to the core question. Should we help in this war?*

We focus on Sarah, David and Anna talking

*Anna: MM, it is more complicated than I thought, but I still think that as Christians we may approve some armed conflicts. To protect those in need and to prevent further violence is a just cause. Thus, in this case, yes.*

*Sarah: I still do not know. War or other armed conflicts lead to too much suffering. That can never be described as good. However, the Allies helped liberate Europe in World War II. On the other hand, Jesus seems to be telling us not to take up arms.*

*David: Well, I believe we cannot say that as Christians, we should always help others even by fighting in an armed conflict. Maybe we should do other things instead you know to alleviate the suffering or to help stop the violence.*

We focus on the TV.

*Presenter: Yes, what you are saying is all valuable. It is not simple indeed. There are a lot of other questions that you have to think about while talking about this topic. Let's agree that we reached no agreement. But that should not keep us from further thinking and talking about this topic.*

We focus on Sarah, David and Anna talking

*David: Yeah, maybe we should accept our different opinions for now.*

*Sarah: Yeah, but do we agree that following Jesus means bringing hope in difficult situations, including potential wars.*

*Anna: Yeah, I agree with that.*

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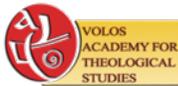


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