

## **STAGE 2 RELIGION STUDIES**

### **Assessment Type 1: Sources Analysis**

#### **Previous Benchmark Materials**

#### **STAGE 2 RELIGION STUDIES :**

#### **ASSESSMENT TASK: SOURCE ANALYSIS**

#### **ECOLOGY & FAITH (CHRISTIANITY TOPIC)**

**PURPOSE:** To apply your knowledge and understanding of Catholic Ecological Theology to critically analyse and evaluate, and personally reflect on, a variety of ecological sources in Australian traditional and contemporary contexts.

#### **DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT TASK**

- Listen to guest speakers (primary source) talk about how ecology and faith are connected.
  - Use the power point from class as a resource – taken from Denis Edward's 'Ecology at the Heart of Faith'
  - Refer to the On Holy Ground document.
  - Also, use the handouts Pope John Paul II World Day of Peace message (1990), US Catholic Conference document (Catholic Social Teaching & Environmental Ethics)
1. What can we learn from Jesus' life and ministry about connections between ecology and faith?
  2. How is the Trinity a model for valuing ecological inter-relationships?
  3. How is the ecological crisis a moral problem?
  4. Thomas Berry says, "the future can exist only when we understand the universe as composed of subjects to be communed with, not as objects to be exploited"  
In light of the primary and secondary sources included in this task, what is your understanding of this statement?
  5. What can we learn from Australian Indigenous Spirituality, about how to best 'cultivate and take care of' creation?
  6. PJP II speaks of an 'urgent need for a new solidarity'. Based on what you have learnt about eco-spirituality, and drawing on the secondary sources, explain what this 'new solidarity' might involve.

#### **Assessment conditions**

Your sources analysis should be a maximum of 800 words if written or a maximum of 5 minutes if oral, or the equivalent in multimodal form.

Refer to both primary and secondary sources to support your discussion of ecology and faith.

## Ecology & Faith Source Analysis

### 1. What can we learn from Jesus' life and ministry about connections between ecology and faith?

Jesus grew up surrounded by beauty: trees, flowers and birds in Nazareth and the Galilean hills and these natural images are evident in his parables and prayer. Most often he would pray in natural settings such as the Garden of Gethsemane and it was in the wilderness with its creatures that he would find God. Jesus' peacefulness with nature provides a context for God's love for His creations. Images such as birds of the air, rain falling, children playing and large growth from a tiny seed are included in his teachings of the Kingdom of God and he saw creation as the gift of God. "He was with the wild beasts" and "the angels ministered to him" (Mark 1:13). This signifies Jesus' harmony with the animals and provides a perspective for interpreting Jesus' beliefs about creation. He saw God as a God for human beings and also for all creatures, therefore he saw nature with loving eyes and saw it as loved by God. So too can we.

### 2. How is the Trinity a model for valuing ecological inter-relationships?

The three forms of God are interconnected and make up the trinity, one God, and in the same way that there is a relational God, we live in a relational universe whereby every part of creation is interconnected, meaning everything is one. Indigenous Australians saw the world as divided into three inter-related aspects: the physical, human, and sacred world. This is equivalent to the trinity: the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit. Each small system shapes the system of the universe and if any part is removed, then the overall ecosystem cannot function properly and similarly, if the 'creator' Father was removed from the trinity, a whole, sustainable explanation of God would not exist. In fact, the diversity of creatures on Earth can be described as a self-expression of the trinity.

### 3. How is the ecological crisis a moral problem?

As human beings develop, science and technology advances are brought forth that interfere with the ecosystem and that can have long-term effects on the well-being of future generations. Human actions such as burning fossil fuels, unrestricted deforestation and creating industrial waste harm the atmosphere and the environment, and in turn, all of life itself. The most crucial moral consequence underlying the ecological crisis is the lack of respect for life apparent in the multiplicity of environmental pollutions, much of which is driven by economical benefits (greed). It is to our disadvantage that the ecosystem is disrupted by the unrestrained destruction of animal and plant life and it is inequitable that while some have excessive amounts of resources, they are recklessly exploited and wasted while others are living with a lack of these. This indicates our lack of respect for people and nature.

4. Thomas Berry says, "the future can exist only when we understand the universe as composed of subjects to be communed with, not as objects to be exploited." In light of the primary and secondary sources included in this task, what is your understanding of this statement?

In our current world, domination and subordination exist rather than a network of relationships at equal value, including with people, the moon, the sun, plants and animals and with the kingdom of God. The universe is composed of subjects to be communed with rather than 'to utilize' and take advantage of. This means that a healthy and peaceful future can only exist when people stop treating these subjects as objects that are 'separate' to themselves, because respect for nature and for human life are always inextricably related. If we continue to deem ourselves as 'greatest' on a hierarchy of natural existence, negative matters such as pollution and the unjust exploitation of resources will persist and increase with the population.

5. What can we learn from Australian Indigenous Spirituality, about how to best 'cultivate and take care of' creation?

Indigenous Australians view all things as their brothers and sisters, rather than separate. They also see themselves as related to all of creation, thereby respecting nature, especially Mother Earth herself. "My mother's land can be dry and harsh. Yet every cluster of rocks, mountain, waterhole, river, cave is sacred – every feature" (Maisie Cavanagh, 1998). Traditionally, Indigenous Australians were taught to focus more on similarities than differences in order to create a spiritual connection and unity with every part of life. They believe that everything has one thing in common – it all comes from the land. From indigenous spirituality, we can learn to shift our views about creation from a human-centred perspective to a more Earth community perspective and thereby cultivate and treat all of creation with care.

6. PJP speaks of an 'urgent need for a new solidarity.' Based on what you have learnt about eco-spirituality, and drawing on the secondary sources, explain what this 'new solidarity' might involve.

This new solidarity means that we are all responsible for each other. We are called to a kinship with God's creatures and to find in them what God sees as "good." We have a sacred responsibility to ensure that future generations will see our single ecosystem undiminished. The ecological crisis reveals the moral need for a new solidarity and this involves the determination to commit oneself to the common good, a willingness to sacrifice our own-self interest for the earth we share rather than exploiting it. This will mean finding effective solutions to the poor treatment of the atmosphere and living in a world of equality and harmony with all of creation.

Words: 800.

## Assessment Type 1: Sources Analysis

### Previous Benchmark Materials

#### STAGE 2 RELIGION STUDIES

#### ASSESSMENT TASK: SOURCE ANALYSIS

#### ANALYSIS OF THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SACRED SPACE (CORE TOPIC)

**PURPOSE:** Students are asked to describe and analyse sacred space. Students should show their knowledge and understanding of this phenomena, and what it is that defines this space as 'sacred'.

#### DESCRIPTION OF ASSESSMENT TASK

From your knowledge this term and also from the information that you gathered during our visits to the sacred spaces outlined in Source 1 and 2, and from the information given in Source 3, answer the following questions:

1. According to Joseph F Kelly (in his article on "The Basic Ideas of Mircea Eliade's *The Sacred and the Profane*" found at <http://www.jcu.edu/bible/101/Readings/Ritual/EliadeSacredSpace.htm>),

"Your room will reflect your value... In the same way, groups of people (nations, tribes, religious communities) create a cosmos to reflect the values they hold important. For "primitives" and religious communities, these are the values they received from the Gods."

Compare the places of worship for the Islamic and Greek Orthodox faith traditions. How do *their* places of worship reflect the values (*symbols, beliefs, traditions*) of each religious tradition? Highlight any similarities and differences between the two.

2. Discuss each of the three sources in your response to the following:

In sacred spaces, it is usual to find **gradations of the sacred space**. That is, some areas in the place of worship are 'more sacred' than others.

- a) To what extent is this evident in the mosque, the Greek Church and in the gurdwara?
- b) Identify what you consider to be the most significant part of the mosque. Explain its significance to the Islamic faith and how it contributes to the 'sacredness' of the mosque.
- c) Outline any significant preparations or practices that occur as part of the transition from the ordinary (profane) world into the sacred world for each of the three places of worship.

**WORDS REQUIRED: 800 maximum**

**DUE DATE:**

## Analysis of the significance of Sacred Space

1. Compare the places of worship for the Islamic and Greek Orthodox faith traditions. How do *their* places of worship reflect the values (*symbols, beliefs, traditions*) of each religious tradition? Highlight any similarities and differences between the two.

The Islamic mosque is not decorated in *any* way, which is reflective of their monotheistic belief of complete and utter submission to Allah, as learned from the first of the Ten Commandments 'You shall have no other Gods but me.' The mosque's simplicity can be explained by the fact that it is merely seen as a communal 'building' for Islamic prostration. Consequently, any distractions from prayer are eliminated. Similarly to the mosque, there are no statues in the Greek Orthodox Church, as their faith also believes that one should not worship 'idols', and statues are considered 'idols' - a distraction from their faith. Both the mosque and Greek Church have an upstairs section for worship. For Muslims, this section is a space for women to pray, so that men are not distracted from their prayer - emphasizing the *absolute* importance of prayer to the Islamic faith. In the Greek Orthodox Church, this section is simply extra space available for worshippers of both genders. Like the mosque, this area was historically only for women, but for a different reason: so that they were not visible to Turkish horsemen who would snatch women from the Church.

In contrast to the mosque, the walls of the Greek Orthodox Church are highly decorated with icons of significant events in Jesus' life. These were traditionally there to help followers who could not read to grasp the Bible stories through images. Even today they are significant in assisting followers to connect with Jesus and his life. The candles in the Church are made from bees wax, soft and pliable like one's soul: God can shape anything he wants from it. There is a dome on the ceiling, symbolizing the universe and in the centre there is an image of Jesus, representing him as the 'centre of the universe' which is what their faith believes him to be. This signifies the importance of Jesus in their faith.

2. In sacred spaces, it is usual to find gradations of the sacred space. That is, some areas in the place of worship are 'more sacred' than others.

- a) To what extent is this evident in the mosque, the Greek Church and in the gurdwara?

The mosque is not considered sacred. It is, however, appreciated as a convenient place for the congregation. In comparison, the Greek Orthodox Church is divided into three parts, some more 'sacred' than others. The first part is where historically, those who weren't baptized would be required to gather; the main part of the Church was for the 'faithful' and baptized; and the third part, the Sanctuary, or Holy altar is the most sacred space in the church. It is considered so sacred that only priests and their assistants can enter. The Sikh place of worship, the gurdwara also has a gradation of sacred space. There is a room specifically for the Holy Book, which holds their teachings. This is the most 'sacred' space in the gurdwara, because The Holy Book is so significant to their faith that it is rested on a raised platform covered in layers of cloth, with a cloth canopy on top.

- b) Identify what you consider to be the most significant part of the mosque. Explain its significance to the Islamic faith and how it contributes to the 'sacredness' of the mosque.

Although there is no part considered 'sacred' in a mosque, there is a *significant* feature of each mosque. That is, the mihrab. The mihrab is a semi-circular niche in the wall which has been intentionally positioned to face the direction of The Ka'aba in Mecca - the most sacred site in the Islamic faith. According to the Qur'an, the Ka'aba was built by Abraham and his son Ishmael, thus why it is extremely sacred. Every mosque in the world contains a mihrab which faces the Ka'aba, meaning that even Muslims praying in Australia are able to be united with other Muslims, universally. This gives direction to worshipers' prostration and therefore contributes to the 'sacredness' of the mosque.

- c) Outline any significant preparations or practices that occur as part of the transition from the ordinary (profane) world into the sacred world for each of the three places of worship.

Before any person enters a mosque, they must be washed either at home or at the site and must remove their shoes to maintain the cleanliness of the building for Allah. Similarly to Muslims, Sikhs must be bathed prior to entering the gurdwara. They must cover their heads and have bare feet. It is forbidden that they consume alcohol or hold any tobacco before entering the gurdwara. Again, this is for their God. These preparations for prayer allow the worshipper to transfer from everyday thinking and into a more respectful and dedicated state of being. Before one enters the Greek Orthodox Church, they receive candles which they light; symbolic of the 'light of Christ.' This immediately brings awareness that while in their sacred space, they will be considering Jesus' teachings, which illuminates their lives. They also kiss the icon of a saint when entering, as a sign of reverence. As they enter, they make the sign of the cross with three fingers, which represents the trinity. Although each faith may have their own distinct practices, there is an overall similarity between them; they are all processes that assist in the cross over from the profane world to the sacred world that reflects and reminds them of their beliefs.

Word count: 800.

## **Assessment Comments**

This Sources Analysis comprises 2 tasks:

- Task 1: Ecology and Faith (Christianity Topic)
- Task 2: Analysis of the significance of sacred space (Core Topic)

## **Knowledge and Understanding**

In Task 1 there is 'insightful explanation' of the Catholic understanding of environment and the capacity to link this to the concept of 'Trinity' (KU1). There is also an insightful link established across traditions between the concept of Trinity and Australian Indigenous Spirituality. In Task 2, similarly, there is 'insightful explanation of beliefs, perspectives and experiences' regarding 'sacred space' across the three traditions – Islamic, Greek Orthodox and Sikh.

In Task 2 'places of worship' in the Islamic, Greek Orthodox and Sikh traditions are treated as 'sources' and there is 'clear and in-depth knowledge' evident of the ways the different 'sacred spaces' represent religious and spiritual ideas and their links with historical and cultural, as well as spiritual, traditions (KU2). In Task 1, whilst the sources are not identified as such within each response, there is clear and in-depth knowledge of the ways in which the sources used for the task relate to 'spiritual and religious ideas and concepts' regarding the natural environment and the human uses to which it is put.

## **Analysis and Evaluation**

In Task 1 a 'perceptive analysis' is evident, especially in Question 2 where the concept of Trinity is linked to the diversity of creatures on the earth (AE1). Similarly, there is 'perceptive analysis' evident in the response to Question 5 that relates indigenous beliefs to caring for the earth. In Task 2 'perceptive and critical analysis' is shown, for example, in the response to Question 1 that articulates how places of worship reflect the values of the two religious traditions: Islam and Greek Orthodoxy. There is a similar level of analysis in the response to Question 2 (c) which explores the ways in which the 'sacred spaces' both reflect the different beliefs and practices of the three religions and also, at the same time, their similarities as places that assist in the 'cross over from the profane world to the sacred world'.

In Task 1 there is 'in-depth and well-informed analysis' of ways in which religion and spirituality in the Catholic tradition in Australia link with indigenous spirituality through the contemporary Catholic concern for the natural environment (AE2). In Task 2 in the consideration of three sacred spaces relevant to contemporary religious practice in Australia there is a 'well-informed analysis' of how each connects to the traditions and history of each set of practices.

## **Overall Grade: A**

Performance in the two Tasks shows insightful knowledge and understanding as well as the capacity to analyse material, and synthesise responses and interpretations, in a well-informed and thoughtful manner. Responses are clearly written and ideas are expressed articulately.

## Performance Standards for Stage 2 Religion Studies

	Knowledge and Understanding	Investigation and Application	Analysis and Evaluation	Reflection
<b>A</b>	<p>Insightful explanation of different religious beliefs, perspectives, and experiences, within and across traditions.</p> <p>Clear and in-depth knowledge and perceptive understanding of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources.</p>	<p>Sustained and logical development and application of appropriate investigation methods, including highly productive use of inquiry skills.</p> <p>Insightful and appropriate application of knowledge and understanding of religions and spiritualities in local and global contexts.</p> <p>In-depth investigation and detailed explanation of a range of religious and spiritual phenomena.</p> <p>Well-informed, clear, and well-structured communication, and well-reasoned presentation of conclusions.</p>	<p>Perceptive and critical analysis of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources.</p> <p>In-depth and well-informed analysis of the various ways in which religion and spirituality in Australia have an impact on, and are influenced by, sociocultural, historical, and/or political events and attitudes.</p> <p>Insightful and critical evaluation of definitions of religion and spirituality.</p>	<p>Insightful and critical reflection on the personal significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies.</p> <p>Well-informed and perceptive consideration and explanation of the social significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies.</p> <p>Well-informed and perceptive exploration of the relevance of religions and spiritualities in contemporary Australia.</p>
<b>B</b>	<p>Well-considered explanation of different religious beliefs, perspectives, and experiences, within and across traditions.</p> <p>Mostly clear and detailed knowledge and well-informed understanding of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources.</p>	<p>Clear development and application of appropriate investigation methods, including productive use of inquiry skills.</p> <p>Well-considered and appropriate application of knowledge and understanding of religions and spiritualities in local and global contexts.</p> <p>Some depth of investigation and accurate explanation of a range of religious and spiritual phenomena.</p> <p>Mostly well-informed, clear and structured communication, and reasoned presentation of conclusions.</p>	<p>Clear and critical analysis of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources.</p> <p>Detailed and well-informed analysis of the various ways in which religion and spirituality in Australia have an impact on, and are influenced by, sociocultural, historical, and/or political events and attitudes.</p> <p>Considered and critical evaluation of definitions of religion and spirituality.</p>	<p>Thoughtful and critical reflection on the personal significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies.</p> <p>Well-informed consideration and explanation of the social significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies.</p> <p>Well-informed exploration of the relevance of religions and spiritualities in contemporary Australia.</p>
<b>C</b>	<p>Some considered explanation of different religious beliefs, perspectives, and experiences, within and across traditions.</p> <p>Generally relevant knowledge and informed understanding of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources.</p>	<p>Competent development and application of appropriate investigation methods, including generally productive use of inquiry skills.</p> <p>Appropriate application of knowledge and understanding of religions and spiritualities in local and global contexts.</p> <p>Competent investigation and explanation of a range of religious and spiritual phenomena. Explanation may include some inaccuracies.</p> <p>Generally informed, clear, and structured communication, with some reasoned conclusions.</p>	<p>Generally clear analysis of religious and spiritual ideas, concepts, and issues in selected sources.</p> <p>Informed analysis of some of the ways in which religion and spirituality in Australia have an impact on, and are influenced by, sociocultural, historical, and/or political events and attitudes.</p> <p>Some critical evaluation of definitions of religion and spirituality, tending towards description.</p>	<p>Considered reflection on the personal significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies.</p> <p>Generally informed consideration and explanation of the social significance of religions and spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies.</p> <p>Informed exploration of the relevance of religions or spiritualities in contemporary Australia.</p>
<b>D</b>	<p>Description of aspects of more than one religious belief, perspective, or experience, within or across traditions.</p> <p>Identification and some consideration of one or more religious and/or spiritual ideas, concepts, or issues in a selected source or sources.</p>	<p>Application of aspects of an investigation method, including inconsistent use of some inquiry skills.</p> <p>Application of some basic knowledge of religions or spiritualities in local and global contexts.</p> <p>Partial investigation and explanation of aspects of religious and spiritual phenomena, with limited detail and some inaccuracies.</p> <p>Disjointed and partly informed communication, with inclusion of some summary comments.</p>	<p>Description and some attempted analysis or consideration of aspects of religious or spiritual ideas, concepts and issues, with partial reference to sources.</p> <p>Description and some attempted analysis or consideration of one or more ways in which religion and spirituality in Australia have an impact on, and are influenced by, events or attitudes.</p> <p>Some recognition and description of definitions of religion or spirituality.</p>	<p>Some reflection on the personal significance of religions or spiritualities in traditional and contemporary societies.</p> <p>Some basic consideration and description of the social significance of a religion or spirituality in a traditional and contemporary society.</p> <p>Partial exploration of the relevance of religions or spiritualities in contemporary Australia.</p>
<b>E</b>	<p>Identification of one or more beliefs, perspectives, or experiences, in a religious tradition.</p> <p>Limited consideration of any religious or spiritual ideas, concepts, or issues in a selected source.</p>	<p>Attempted application of aspects of an investigation method, including identification of one or more sources of information.</p> <p>Attempted application of some emerging awareness of religions or spiritualities.</p> <p>Communication of some awareness of a religious phenomenon.</p> <p>Attempted communication of limited information.</p>	<p>Attempted description of a religious or spiritual idea, concept, or issue, with limited reference to any sources of information.</p> <p>Description of limited aspects of religion or spirituality in Australia.</p> <p>Listing of some definitions of religion or spirituality.</p>	<p>Recognition of the personal significance of an aspect of religion or spirituality in traditional or contemporary societies.</p> <p>Limited consideration of the social significance of religions or spiritualities in traditional or contemporary societies.</p> <p>Attempted exploration of an aspect of the relevance of religion or spirituality in contemporary Australia.</p>