

JUNIOR CERTIFICATE RELIGIOUS EDUCATION SUPPORT SERVICE

SAMPLE LESSON PLAN RESOURCE MATERIALS FOR ELEMENTS OF SYLLABUS

SECTION B: FOUNDATIONS OF RELIGION - CHRISTIANITY

PART I: THE CONTEXT

Syllabus Aim	To explore the context into which Jesus was born. (Syllabus page 14)
Syllabus Objectives	As a result of studying this section the students should have an understanding of the context into which Jesus of Nazareth was born. (Syllabus page 15)
Key Concepts	The Holy Land, Ancient Judaism, Messianic expectation.
Description of Content	The historical and geographical background to life in Palestine at the time of Jesus. The impact of these historical and geographical factors on the lives of the people. The political and religious structures at the time of Jesus
Methodology	These Lesson Plan Resource Materials are designed using a variety of methods. These include interpretation of data, role-play and group work which are used to help students explore the context into which Jesus was born by giving them an opportunity to explore and clarify the concepts and to elaborate on their existing knowledge and understanding of the content.

Procedure

Introduction

By way of introduction to the study of Christianity the following exercises may help students become familiar with using the Bible. Each student should have access to a copy of the Bible.

Explain that the Bible is a collection of Books divided into two sections called the Old Testament / Hebrew Scriptures and New Testament.

As there are many different versions of the Bible, when looking up something we do not go by the page but by the reference. i.e. chapter and verse.

First there is an abbreviated form of the title of the book e.g. Gen. = Genesis. The abbreviations can be found in the Contents page at the beginning of your bible.

Then there are numbers e.g. Gen. 1:31. The first figure indicates the Chapter (in large print) and the second number, separated from the first by a colon or full stop indicates the verse.

So in Good News Bible Genesis Chapter 1, verse 31 we read: "God looked at everything he had made and he was very pleased. Evening passed and morning came - that was the sixth day".

Written Assignment: How many books are there in the Old and New Testaments?

Number of books = Old Testament / Hebrew Scriptures _____ New Testament _____

Look up and write out the following references: Gen. 20: 6; Ps 25: 6-7; Ex. 34: 6; Is. 54: 8

The historical and geographical background to life in Palestine at the time of Jesus.

Give students copies of the *Student Work*: PALESTINE. Identify the seas, river, provinces, towns associated with events in Jesus' life.

Give students time to look up the bible references and enter their answers on the Student Work.
Give students time to correct their answers.

Map Exercise – Display for students a map of the world and discuss:

1. Where on the map are we situated?
2. Can you identify any other place on the map?
3. Where are Europe, Asia and Africa on the map?
4. Where is Palestine?
5. Where would the Roman Empire have been as it was at the time of Jesus?

Follow-up Student Assignments: (Students draw or are given an outline copy of a map of the world)

1. Mark in Palestine on the map.
2. Mark in on the map the names of the three continents that surround the Mediterranean Sea.
3. Colour in on the map the location of the Roman Empire as it was at the time of Jesus.
4. Write a paragraph explaining why control of Palestine would have been important in the Roman Empire.

Film / Video Exercise - Students view appropriate clips from one of the following films/videos:

- Jesus of Nazareth
- Ben Hur
- Gladiator
- Son of God – BBC Easter 2001
- Discovering the New Testament - Veritas
- Visions of the Holy Land - Veritas
- One Land Three Religions – Veritas

Follow-up Student Assignments:

1. Write a paragraph describing the lifestyle of the people of Palestine at the time of Jesus as seen in this film/video.
2. Imagine you lived in Palestine at the time of Jesus. Write a letter to a pen pal describing a day in the life of a Jewish boy / girl.
3. Imagine you are a reporter with “The Jerusalem News”. Write an account of an interview with two Jewish people describing how they feel about living under Roman rule at the time of Jesus.
4. Produce a brochure for visitors to Palestine at the time of Jesus giving information about its:
 - ® History
 - ® Geography
 - ® Politics
 - ® Religion

Group Work - Divide the students into groups and give each either a Bible or Bible Stories retold in word or pictures containing an account of the life of one of the following people:

<i>Person</i>	<i>Scripture Reference</i>
Abraham	Genesis 12:1-18;15:1-8
Isaac	Genesis 22:1-18
Jacob	Genesis 28:1-22
Joseph	Genesis 37: 1-36
Moses	Exodus 3:1-12
Joshua	Joshua 1:1-9
Ruth	Ruth 1:1-22; 4:9-22

<i>Person</i>	<i>Scripture Reference</i>
David	1 Samuel 16:17-23
Solomon	2 Chronicles 7:11-22
Isaiah	Isaiah 35:1-10
Jeremiah	Jeremiah 1:1-10
Ezekiel	Ezekiel 11:14-25
Daniel	Daniel 3: 1-97
Etc.	

Students are given time to read the life story of the person they have been assigned. When students have completed reading they are to produce a storyboard (one-page account in words or pictures) of the life of the person that they studied. When all the students have completed this they present their storyboard to the rest of the class, describing in words or picture the life story of a person from Ancient Judaism. The life stories of the people are presented in the following order: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Ruth, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel. As each life story is presented the storyboard is mounted on a

wall of the classroom. As each student presents the life story they have been studying gradually the story of the people of ancient Judaism unfolds.

Questioning of students regarding similarities / differences between the storyboards. The storyboard display can be used as a reference point for further development in other parts of the syllabus.

Written Assignment: Present Students with a number of drawings depicting scenes from the lives of people in ancient Judaism (e.g. their Storyboards with the names concealed). Ask students to match each scene with the correct name from the following list: Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, Ruth, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel.

or

Introduce the students to the concept of a *Jesse Tree* by explaining that we usually associate “Family Trees” with royal families who need to be able to determine rights of succession. They keep detailed records of all members of the family - births, marriages and inter-relationships between branches of the family. The Jewish people considered family records to be very important. They knew which tribe they belonged to and were proud of the purity of their Jewish blood. A Jewish priest had to trace his ancestry back to Aaron and the woman he married would have to have at least five generations of Jewish lineage. Not all Jewish families had written records but many had their genealogy off by heart, worked out in a way which could be easily be remembered and passed on. So Matthew's Gospel being true to Jewish tradition starts with a genealogy, tracing Jesus' ancestry back through David to Abraham.

Student Assignment: Using the *Student Work: JESUS' FAMILY TREE* students read the gospel of Matthew chapter 1 and fill in the missing names. When students have completed the assignment, correct their answers.

The Jesse Tree traces the royal ‘roots’ of Christ from Jesse, David’s father (Matthew 1:1-7). The image of a tree comes from the prophet Isaiah's reference to Jesse the father of King David (Is.11:1-2):

"And there shall come forth a shoot from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots.

And the spirit of the Lord shall rest upon him."

During the celebration of Advent the Christian tradition is to mount a tree and place symbols on it that represent the events or persons from the Old and New Testaments which prepared the way for the birth of Jesus Christ. The Jesse tree can be made either as a wall chart with drawings painted on it, or a real tree on which symbols are mounted.

Student Assignments:

- Using the *Student Work: THE JESSE TREE* give students time to make symbols for a Jesse Tree.
- When the symbols are complete mount them on a classroom Jesse Tree with each student explaining in their own words how Christians believe that the person or event that they are depicting on the tree prepared the way for the birth of Jesus Christ.

The impact of these historical and geographical factors on the lives of the people.

Discuss: At what times in their history were the Jewish people enslaved in foreign lands?

Referring to the students' Story board display explain that in the years following their return from slavery in Babylon the Jewish people suffered many setbacks at the hands of successive conquerors (Persians, Greeks and Romans) and even divided into rival groups themselves. They needed a leader and the prophets told them that God had promised to send them one. They gave this promised leader the title *Messiah* which comes from the Hebrew *Moshiach*, meaning *anointed one*. In ancient Judaism, kings and high priests were anointed with oil to show that they had been chosen by God to fulfil an important task.

Assignment: Look up the Bible reference 1 Samuel 16:13 and see what it says about the anointing of King David. Take feedback from the students. Continuing to refer to the students' Story board display explain that the Jewish people looked back to David’s time as a ‘golden age’ when they were a free and respected nation. By the time of Jesus most Jewish people hoped that the Messiah would be a warrior king who would:

- bring God’s peace and justice among them
- free them from foreign domination
- set up a new Jewish kingdom even more glorious than that of David.

Some Jewish people daily recited the prayer: ‘I believe with perfect faith in the coming of the Messiah and, even if he delay, still will I await his coming every day.’ The prophets told the people that they must actively prepare for the coming of the Messiah.

Written Assignment: Look up the following Bible references and write out in your own words what the prophets had to say about the promised Messiah:

Zephaniah 3:1;2;11	Isaiah 9:5-6	Micha 5:1	Isaiah 35:1
Malachi 3:1	Isaiah 35:4-6	Jeremiah 33:14-16	Isaiah 7:14
Isaiah 40:3			

Which references could be placed under the following headings?

- ✓ a time of rejoicing when the Messiah comes
- ✓ actively prepare for the coming of the Messiah
- ✓ things the Messiah would do when he comes

Take feedback from the students and discuss:

1. Why did the Jews believe they needed a great leader?
2. What did their prophets tell them about this?
3. What title did they give this great leader?
4. What is the meaning of the title *Messiah*.
5. What was the importance of anointing with oil?
6. What kind of Messiah did most Jewish people hope God would send?

Assignment: Put the following words into a paragraph that explains the Jews hope for a leader/Messiah.

Slavery in Babylon	Returned home	Persians, Greeks, Romans
A leader, <i>Messiah</i>	Anointed one	Bring God's peace and justice
Free them from foreign domination	Set up a new Jewish kingdom	

The political and religious structures at the time of Jesus

Recall the students' knowledge and understanding of the Political and Religious Groups in Jesus' Time e.g.

Pharisees Pharisees did not support Rome. As the religious leaders of the people throughout the country, they developed a religion centred on the Law. Lay people not priests.

Sadducees This party of priests and wealthy laymen supported Rome because it was in their own interests to do so. They were based in Jerusalem and concerned with the temple worship. Lived strictly by the Torah.

Essenes They regarded conventional Judaism as corrupt and broke with temple worship. Believing a Day of Judgement was coming many withdrew into desert communities to await the end.

Zealots Radicals and militant they were convinced that the first step toward the Kingdom of God was to drive the Romans out of Israel. After Jesus' death they organised a revolt against Rome. The uprising was stamped out and ended with Jerusalem's destruction in Q.D. 70. They were an organisation of Jews who vowed to destroy the Roman power through open rebellion. They had their principle bases in Galilee. In 66 A.D. a rebellion broke out. The Romans were victorious and in 70 A.D. the great temple of Jerusalem was destroyed along with most of the city.

Samaritans The Jews treated these as outcasts. They mixed with conquering forces after the destruction of Solomon's Temple and were refused the right to participate in the building of the 2nd Temple after the return from exile.

Role Play: Introduce role-play to the whole class. The situation is - A Jewish Village in Jesus' time. A group of people meet at an Inn (one from each of the religious and social groups). They sit in a circle and tell each other: who they are and what are their concerns.

Divide students into groups representing each of the political and religious groups in Jesus' time. Each group is asked to get into their part by being able to say:

- Who I (Pharisee etc.) am?
- What are my concerns for our country (Israel in Jesus' time) at the moment?
- What are my hopes for the future.

From each group ask one student to volunteer to represent their viewpoint. Distribute role cards to the student from each group. Recall for the whole class the setting of the role-play:

The situation is A Jewish village in Jesus' time A group of people meet at an Inn (one from each of the religious and social groups)

The role play group of students sit in a circle and tell each other: who they are and what are their concerns. Introduce Jesus (teacher etc.) to the group and says to each member in turn "I am Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah, you are (a Pharisee, a Jewish woman etc.) What can I do for you?"

Allow the group to respond to the question. When the role-play has concluded discuss the following questions with the participants in the role-play:

How did you feel about acting in this role?

How did others treat you in this role?

How did you feel when Jesus appeared and asked you the question?

Discuss the following questions with the whole class:

How true were the participants to the role they were playing?

How does this role-play give us an insight into the political and religious groupings in the society into which Jesus was born?

Written Assignment: Match the names of the following political and religious groupings in the society into which Jesus was born with the descriptions given below -

Pharisees Sadducees Zealots Essenes Samaritans

	They regarded conventional Judaism as corrupt and broke with temple worship. Believing a Day of Judgement was coming many withdrew into desert communities to await the end.
	This party of priests and wealthy laymen supported Rome because it was in their own interests to do so. They were based in Jerusalem and concerned with the temple worship. Lived strictly by the Torah.
	Radicals and militant they were convinced that the first step toward the Kingdom of God was to drive the Romans out of Israel. After Jesus' death they organised a revolt against Rome. The uprising was stamped out and ended with Jerusalem's destruction in Q.D. 70. They were an organisation of Jews who vowed to destroy the Roman power through open rebellion. They had their principle bases in Galilee. In 66 AD a rebellion broke out. The Romans were victorious and in 70 AD the great temple of Jerusalem was destroyed along with most of the city.
	The Jews treated these as outcasts. They mixed with conquering forces after the destruction of Solomon's Temple and were refused the right to participate in the building of the 2nd Temple after the return from exile.
	This group did not support Rome. As the religious leaders of the people throughout the country, they developed a religion centred on the Law. Lay people not priests.

Resources teachers have suggested include:

A Time to Live New Christian Way Series 3 Veritas, pages 111-113.

All About Faith 1 Gill and Macmillan Series, pages 22-35, 36-38, and 50-69.

Community of Faith Veritas, pages 21-32.

Community of Hope Veritas, pages 23-25 and 33-34.

Cyberclass Manual Scholastech Disk 1 Section B Part 1& Scholastech Text- junior certificate year one pages 20-25, and 40-43.

Logos.

Love One Another New Christian Way Series 1, Veritas, pages 82, and 94-100.

Teach Me Your Ways The Light of the World Series 3 – Gill and Macmillan Chapter 18

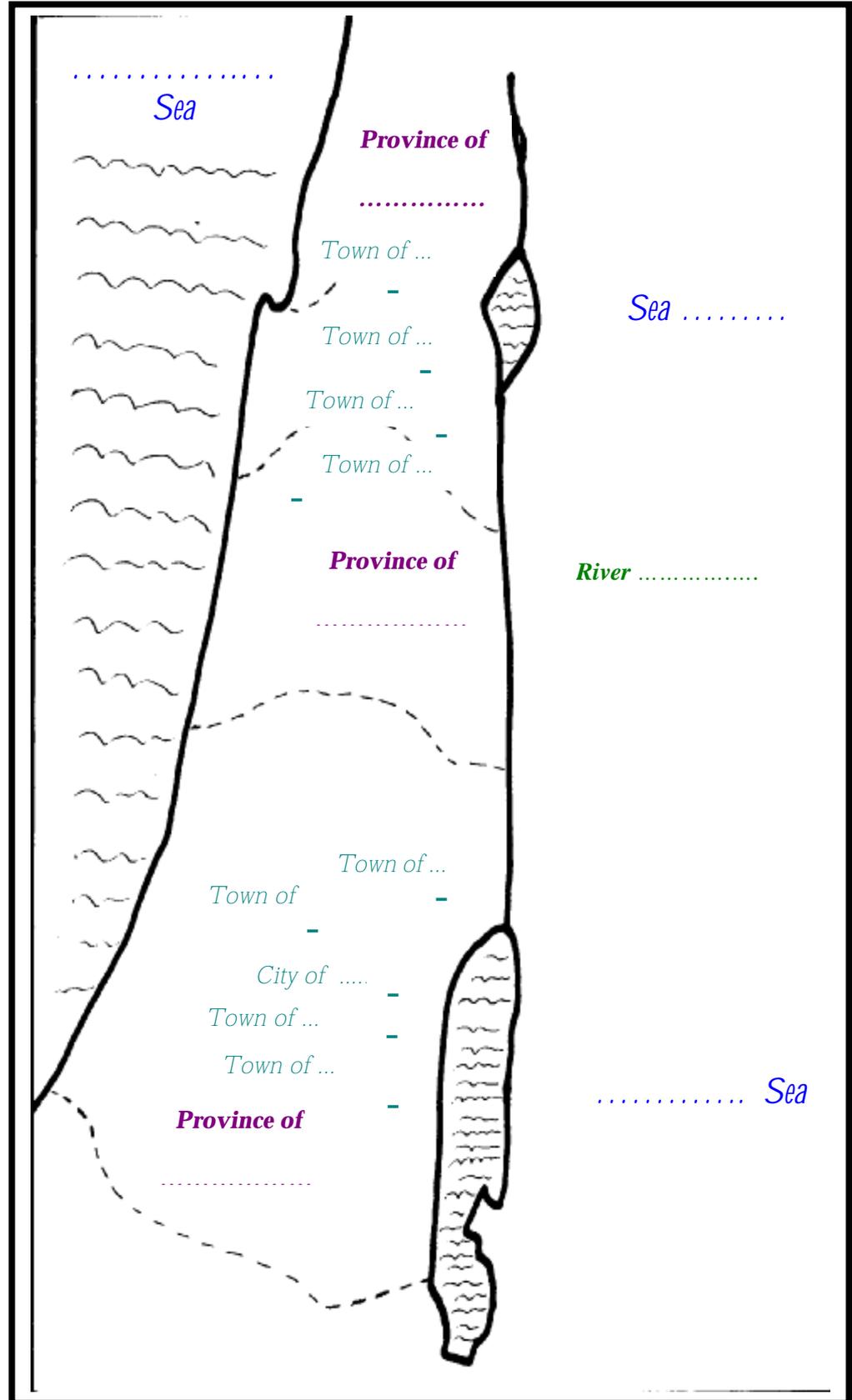
PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF JESUS

Assignment:

Fill in the names of the following places on this map of Palestine, using the Scripture references below as a guide.

- ◆ The town where Jesus lived with Joseph and Mary. (Luke 2:39-40)
- ◆ Where Jesus raised Lazarus from the dead. (John 11:1-44)
- ◆ The town where Jesus was born. (Matthew 2:1)
- ◆ Jesus performed a miracle at a wedding in this town. (John 2:1-11)
- ◆ Jesus came to this city to visit the temple. (Luke 2:22)
- ◆ A widow's son was raised to life here. (Luke 7: 11-17)
- ◆ Two men were on the road to this town when Jesus joined them but they did not recognise him. (Luke 24:13-35)
- ◆ A town where Jesus healed a blind man. (Mark 10:46)
- ◆ A town where Philip went preaching the Good News (Acts 8:40)

- ◆ The province where Jesus was born. (Luke 2:4)
- ◆ The province where Jacobs Well is situated. (John 4:4-6)
- ◆ The province where Jesus lived for most of his life. (Luke 2:39-40)



- ◆ A sea which is very salty.
- ◆ A Lake where the apostles used to go fishing. (Mark 7:31)
- ◆ The sea which connects Europe, Asia and Africa.
- ◆ The river where Jesus was baptised by John. (Mark 1:9)

Student Work: JESUS' FAMILY TREE

Using the Gospel of Matthew Chapter 1 fill in the missing names on the Family Tree:

<i>From the time of Abraham to David.</i>	<i>From the time of David to when the People of Israel were taken into exile in Babylon.</i>	<i>From after the exile to the birth of Jesus.</i>
Abraham	David	Jehoiachin
Isaac	Solomon	Shealtiel
		Jerubbabel
Judah & brothers	Abijah	Abiud
	Asa	Eliakim
Hezron	Jehoshaphat	Azor
Ram	Jehoram	Zadok
Amminadab	Uzziah	
Nahshon	Jotham	Eliud
Salmon		Eleazar
Boaz	Hezekiah	Matthan
Obed	Manasseh	
		Joseph
David	Josiah	
	Jehoiachin	

The Family Tree is divided into three groups of how many generations?

Student Work: THE JESSE TREE

Make symbols for a Jesse Tree:

- Pick a person or event from the Old or New Testaments as listed below.
- Read the Scripture references about that person or event.
- Draw / make a symbol which could represent the story of that person or event on the Jesse Tree.
- Explain in your own words how Christians believe that this person or event prepared the way for the birth of Jesus Christ.

<i>Events/Persons:</i>	<i>Scripture References:</i>	<i>Possible Symbols:</i>
Creation	Genesis 1&2	Sun;World
Adam& Eve	Genesis 3:1-24	Apple;Serpent
Noah	Genesis 6 -10	Ark;Rainbow
Abraham	Genesis 12:1-18;15:1-8	Tent; Stars
Sarah	Genesis 21:1-8	Baby
Isaac	Genesis 22:1-18	Wood; Knife
Rebecca	Genesis 24:13-20	Water Jug
Jacob	Genesis 28:1-22	Ladder
Rachel	Genesis 29:15-20	Number 7
Judah	Genesis 37:25-28	Coins
Joseph	Genesis 37:1-36	Colourful Coat
Moses	Exodus 3:1-12	Burning Bush
Paschal Lamb	Exodus 12:1-14	Lamb
Pillar of Fire	Exodus 13:17-22	Fire
Manna in Desert	Exodus 16:1-16,35	Bread
Commandments	Exodus 20:1-17	Stone Tablets
Joshua	Joshua 1:1 - 9	Trumpet
Ruth	Ruth 1:1-22, 4:9-22	Sheaf of Grain
Boaz	Ruth 4:1-18	Sandel
Jesse	1 Samuel 16:4-13	House
David	1 Samuel 16:17-23	Harp; Crown
Solomon	2 Chronicles 7:11-22	Temple
Amos	Amos 2: 6 -16	Shepherd
Micah	Micah 6: 6 - 8	Peasant
Hosea	Hosea2 :13-17	Heart
Isaiah	Isaiah 35:1-10	Scroll
Jeremiah	Jeremiah 1:1-10	Hand
Ezekiel	Ezekiel 11:14-25	Angel; Wings
Daniel	Daniel 3:1-97	Lions
Job	Job 42: 1-6	Scales of Justice
Holy Spirit	Luke 1:35	Dove; Light
Gabriel	Luke 1:26-38	Angel
Zechariah	Luke 1:5-25	Incense
Elizabeth	Luke 1:39-45	Old woman & Baby
John the Baptist	Luke 3:1-20	Preacher
St.Joseph	Matthew 1:18-25	Carpenter's Tools
Our Lady	Luke 1:26-56	Lily
Jesus	Luke 2:1-7	Manger Scene

Priscilla the Prostitute

I am one of the many prostitutes in this town. There are many of us in the country and most, like me are the youngest daughters of large families. You see by the time I came to a marrying age, my parents had died and my sisters and brothers had their own households and had moved away from the town I had no money, no home and no options. Prostitution means survival.

I have many customers: Romans, traders, merchants, and farmers. When they make a good deal, I know that I am a sinner and that my punishment will be great, but I don't pay that much attention to religion anyway. I am not allowed into the synagogue and with all the religious customers I have, I think there is a lot of hypocrisy in all religion.

I have no friends. When I walk in the market, people turn their heads away and small children call me names.

Lorenzo the Leper

I am a leper and live on the edge of town with all the other sick and disabled people. I was a prosperous merchant and lived in a fine house until the first signs of the disease appeared. At first I denied what was happening to me. I was a good man! God had blessed me with good health and fortune. I prayed regularly and fulfilled all the requirements of the Faith I paid my taxes. I gave to the poor- Yet here was this horrible disease, advertising to all that I was a sinner! To this day I have no idea what I did to offend God, that I should be punished with this disease. My family and associates no longer have anything to do with me and I depend on the charity of others who leave food at the outskirts of the town for us to collect. I find it hard to pray now. I am not allowed into the synagogue of course, but that is not the reason. I feel that God has let me down.

Philip the Pharisee

I am a Pharisee a member of a Jewish religious group. We organise the synagogue. The most important thing in our lives is God's law. We live by the law and we want others to do the same. We spend much of our time studying the law so that we can guide others in their lives and help them to keep the law. People have a lot of respect for us because we are people of influence.

We help people by pointing out how they can avoid breaking the law in all the details of their lives, by not working on the Sabbath day for example. We fast regularly and expect everyone to do the same- We also teach that people who break the law are to be avoided at all costs by good religious people. Being holy means keeping God's law and keeping away from those who are sinners.

We would like the Romans to leave because they do not obey the laws of God. They may be a bad influence on the people but I suppose we have to live with them for the present.

Samuel the Sadducee

I am a priest and I work in the temple. My father was a priest and his father was before him. We are considered to be a very powerful and blessed family because of this. We collect the temple taxes which must be paid by everyone who visits the temple in Jerusalem. This money is used for the upkeep of the temple and for the support of our families. My family lives well, but that is as it should be.

When it comes to the Pharisees...well they try their best but they are peasants after all and in some ways are not strict enough.

We try to get along with the Romans because if we didn't they might close the temple and that would be a disaster for the people and the Jewish religion. It wouldn't do us my good either.

Jane the Jewish Woman

Thank you for allowing me to speak! I am a very lucky woman - I have a husband and two fine sons. My life is spent looking after them - fetching water and keeping a fire going in our house. Some women I know from going to the well, have been divorced by their husbands because they did not please them. But my husband is very pleased with me! I am proud to walk behind him in the street to show that I am a good wife. I have given him the sons he prays for. He would have been disappointed with daughters. He thanks God every day that he wasn't born a woman. I pray to God and thank him that I am blessed, and say the special blessing on the eve of the Sabbath. When we go to the synagogue I sit in the place reserved for the women. We are not allowed to take part in the official prayers.

Zachary the Zealot

I try to keep a low profile. It's important that people don't find out too much about me because you never know who might betray you. We zealots have one goal in mind - to get the Romans out of our country at all costs, We will use any tactics necessary including violence. After all the Roman army isn't interested in peaceful methods. We are often called Iscariots a word which comes from the name given to the small daggers we sometimes use in our work. We try to be good Jews - and we want the Jewish race to be pure - no foreigners here. This is God's land and we are God's people. That is what we struggle for.

Bartholomew the Beggar

I beg every day at the temple for a few coins or some scraps of food. My family once owned some land but they had to sell it to pay taxes so all that was left for me was the life of a beggar. It is not easy. People don't like seeing us and are always trying to move us on. They tell us that we must have sinned to be so poor but I know some sinners who are rich! It is hard to have faith in a God who seems to be so unfair.

(Adapted from Partners in Faith - K. Early & G. McKenna)