Level: 4
Title: DISCOVERING OUR CHRISTIAN HERITAGE
Strand: RELIGION AND SOCIETY: Religious traditions in Australian society
Suggested Duration: 4-6 Weeks

Unit Focus
Students explore Christianity in the context of its origins in Judaism. Students will also be made aware that there are strong links among the basic beliefs of the world’s three monotheistic faiths – Christianity, Judaism and Islam.

Level Outcome
By the end of Level Four students should be able to:

Identify and explore Christianity, appreciating the similarities and differences with other world religions.

Unit Outcomes
By the end of this unit students should be able to:

1. Understand that Christianity has its roots in Judaism.
2. Recognise and articulate the common beliefs and understandings across Christianity, Judaism and Islam.
3. Identify the rituals and symbols, customs and practices of these religions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STRAND</th>
<th>DOCTRINAL CONCEPTS</th>
<th>CATECHISM REFERENCE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scripture</td>
<td>2. The Old Testament tells the story of the people of Israel’s covenant relationship with God.</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. The New Testament teaches us about Jesus and the early Christian communities.</td>
<td>121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Christian Life</td>
<td>3. We respond to God’s commandments by treating each other with respect, love and compassion.</td>
<td>1878</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion &amp; Society</td>
<td>1. The Church recognises a direct link with the Jewish people.</td>
<td>839 - 840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. The Church recognises that whatever is good or true in other religions comes from God and is a reflection of God’s truth.</td>
<td>841-845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Humanity gives expression to our search for God in our religious beliefs and behaviour.</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key Understandings for Students
- Christianity has its roots in Judaism.
- There are different ways of expressing our belief in God.
- There are three monotheistic religions in the world – Christianity, Judaism and Islam.
- There are many commonalities among these religions.
- The elements of religion include rules or laws, sacred texts, rituals, symbols, sacred places, beliefs, stories and experience.
- Understanding of other religious communities enhances our understanding of religious practices.
- Christians accept and respect peoples of other religious traditions.

Curriculum Links - VELS
Victorian Essential Learning Standards
The unit *Discovering Our Christian Heritage* can be used to assess a range of VELS. The table below gives examples of how Level 4 standards could be assessed. Those Standards identified with (P) are possible outcomes depending on the work undertaken by students.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strand</th>
<th>Domain</th>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Key elements of Standards Students…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Physical, Personal and Social Learning</td>
<td>Interpersonal Development</td>
<td>Building Social Relationships</td>
<td>“demonstrate, through their interactions in social situations, respect for a diverse range of people and groups.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Civics and Citizenship</td>
<td>Community Engagement</td>
<td></td>
<td>“present a point of view on a significant current issue or issues and include recommendations about the actions that individuals and governments can take to resolve issues. They demonstrate understanding that there are different viewpoints on an issue, and contribute to group and class decision making.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interdisciplinary Learning</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Presenting</td>
<td>“summarise ideas and organise ideas and information logically and clearly in a range of presentations” “identify features of an effective presentation and adapt elements of their own presentation to reflect them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Responding</td>
<td>“summarise and organise ideas and information, logically and clearly in a range of presentations.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thinking</td>
<td>Reasoning, processing and inquiry</td>
<td></td>
<td>“develop their own questions for investigation. They collect relevant information from a range of sources and make judgements about its worth”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“generate imaginative solutions when solving problems”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection, evaluation and meta-cognition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“use a broad range of thinking processes and tools and reflect on and evaluate their effectiveness.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information, Communication and Technology</td>
<td>Visual Thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td>“…Use ICT tools and techniques that support the organisation and analysis of concepts, issues and ideas and that allow relationships to be identified and inferences drawn from them.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“safely and independently use a range of skills, procedures, equipment and functions to process different data types and produce accurate and suitably formatted products to suit different purposes and audiences.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“use email, websites and frequently asked question facilities to acquire from, or share information with, peers and known and unknown experts.”</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum Framework Context</th>
<th>Level 3</th>
<th>Level 4</th>
<th>Level 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Discovering Our Christian Heritage</td>
<td></td>
<td>Why Are There Differences in the World?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student Context**  
Level Four students see themselves as members of a community that extends beyond their family and immediate surroundings therefore they are ready to explore further God’s love for us and respond generously as Christians to all creation.  
At this stage of their schooling students in upper primary can enter into the perspectives of others to gain meaning for life. By being introduced to other religions, children can begin their journey of
understanding their Christian faith whilst appreciating and respecting people of other faiths.

Students at this level are becoming capable of abstract thinking, critical analysis and operational thought. They have some sense of history and enjoy stories of past events. Students have an increasing notion of other times, other places and other types of societies.

Theological Background for Teachers

- “In its origins Christianity is deeply rooted in Judaism. Jesus is fully Jewish, the apostles are Jewish, and one cannot doubt their attachment to the traditions of their forefathers.” (Charlesworth in Martini 1990)
- Basic Christian beliefs are strongly linked to prevailing Jewish ideas about God, religious leadership, ethics, worship, and the structure of the religious assembly. There are also important links between Jewish festivals and subsequent Christian liturgical celebrations. (Anna Marie Erst 1996 p3)
- Judaism is the parent religion to Islam and Christianity and so it has an indirect effect on hundreds of millions of people.
- Judaism is not a missionary religion although people can be converted to it through a lengthy process of learning and commitment. People born to Jewish mothers are recognised as Jews.
- The foundational theological tenet of Judaism is the belief that God is one. Ethics and ritual are very important to Jews as they are laid down in the Torah. Bound up in the nature of Judaism is the corporate identity of its people which is social and political as well as religious.
- The main tenet of Islam is the absolute oneness of God (Allah) and that his truth has been revealed to humans in the Qur’an, which also outlines the various duties that believers must carry out. It may be taken that the God referred to by Muslims is that referred to by Jews and Christians, though there may be debate about the nature and will of God.
- The figure of Abraham is central to three religions, Judaism, Christianity and Islam. In the documents of Vatican II the Catholic Church recognised the role and significance of Abraham and the implications of his place in fostering religious understanding and harmony. The faith of Abraham in “one God, living and enduring merciful and all powerful, Maker of heaven and earth, and Speaker to humans.” is shared by all three religions (Nostra Aetate, par 3). Abraham’s faith is seen as a unifying feature of the three “religions of the book”. While Catholic teaching recognises that there are many things not shared between the three religions, especially the belief in Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah, still Abraham appears in the Scriptures of each and has a special place of reverence and pre-eminence for all three religions. (M Ryan, 2003, Book 3, p 36)

Scripture

Student and Teacher References NRSV

Deut 6:4-9

Hear, O Israel: The LORD is our God, the LORD alone. You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your might. Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise. Bind them as a sign on your hand, fix them as an emblem on your forehead, and write them on the doorposts of your house and on your gates.

Gen 17:1-27

When Abram was ninety-nine years old, the LORD appeared to Abram, and said to him, ‘I am God Almighty; walk before me, and be blameless. And I will make my covenant between me and you, and will make you exceedingly numerous.’ Then Abram fell on his face; and God said to him, ‘As for me, this is my covenant with you: You shall be the ancestor of a multitude of nations. No longer shall your name be Abram, but your name shall be Abraham; for I have made you the ancestor of a multitude of nations. I will make you exceedingly fruitful; and I will make nations of you, and kings shall come from you. I will establish my covenant between me and you, and your offspring after you throughout their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and to your offspring after you. And I will give to you, and to your offspring after you, the land where you are now an alien, all the land of Canaan, for a perpetual holding; and I will be their God.’

God said to Abraham, ‘As for you, you shall keep my covenant, you and your offspring after you throughout their generations. This is my covenant, which you shall keep, between me and you and your offspring after you: Every male among you shall be circumcised. You shall circumcise the flesh of your foreskins, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and you. Throughout your generations every male among you shall be circumcised when he is eight days old, including the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money from any foreigner who is not of your offspring. Both the slave born in your house and the one bought with your money must be
circumcised. So shall my covenant be in your flesh an everlasting covenant. Any uncircumcised male
who is not circumcised in the flesh of his foreskin shall be cut off from his people; he has broken my
covenant.'

God said to Abraham, ‘As for Sarai your wife, you shall not call her Sarai, but Sarah shall be her
name. I will bless her, and moreover I will give you a son by her. I will bless her, and she shall give
rise to nations; kings of peoples shall come from her.’ Then Abraham fell on his face and laughed,
and said to himself, ‘Can a child be born to a man who is a hundred years old? Can Sarah, who is
ninety years old, bear a child?’ And Abraham said to God, ‘O that Ishmael might live in your sight!'
God said, ‘No, but your wife Sarah shall bear you a son, and you shall name him Isaac. I will establish
my covenant with him as an everlasting covenant for his offspring after him. As for Ishmael, I have
heard you; I will bless him and make him fruitful and exceedingly numerous; he shall be the father of
double princes, and I will make him a great nation. But my covenant I will establish with Isaac, whom
Sarah shall bear to you at this season next year.’ And when he had finished talking with him, God
went up from Abraham.

Then Abraham took his son Ishmael and all the slaves born in his house or bought with his money,
every male among the men of Abraham’s house, and he circumcised the flesh of their foreskins that
very day, as God had said to him. Abraham was ninety-nine years old when he was circumcised in
the flesh of his foreskin. And his son Ishmael was thirteen years old when he was circumcised in the
flesh of his foreskin. That very day Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised; and all the men
of his house, slaves born in the house and those bought with money from a foreigner, were
circumcised with him.

1 Jn 4:8 - God is love.
Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love.

Suggested Assessment Tasks

1. Understand that Christianity has its roots in Judaism.

2. Recognise and articulate the common beliefs and understandings across Christianity, Judaism and
   Islam.

3. Identify some of the rituals and symbols, customs and practices of these religions.

Assessment Task:
Set up a scenario for the students to work either individually or in small groups: Two schools in our town are closing, one
is a Jewish school the other Muslim. As a result several new families are coming to our school next term and our aim is to
make them very welcome.

The task is to educate our new school community, students, teachers and parents, about Christianity, Judaism and Islam,
the similarities, rituals, symbols, customs and practices of these three monotheistic religions.

This information is to be presented in such a way that it is accessible to the whole school community. Maybe an ‘Expo’
type presentation where parents, students and teachers are invited.

Assessment Rubric:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Well Above Expected Level</th>
<th>Above Expected Level</th>
<th>Expected Level</th>
<th>Below Expected Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Presentation showed a comprehensive understanding of the link between Christianity and Judaism.</td>
<td>Presentation showed clear understanding of the link between Christianity and Judaism.</td>
<td>Presentation showed some understanding of the link between Christianity and Judaism.</td>
<td>Information showing some understanding of the link between Christianity and Judaism was presented, with assistance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The common beliefs and understandings of all three religions were comprehensively articulated.</td>
<td>Common beliefs and understandings in all three religions were clearly articulated.</td>
<td>Some common beliefs and understandings in the three religions were articulated.</td>
<td>At least one belief and understanding common to the three religions was articulated.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The major rituals, symbols, customs and practices were identified and</td>
<td>Rituals, symbols, customs and practices were identified and presented</td>
<td>Some rituals, symbols, customs and practices were identified and</td>
<td>Some rituals symbols customs and practices were identified, with</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
presented in an interactive way. visually. illustrated. assistance.

N.B All of the above Outcomes lend themselves to reporting in the dimension of Knowledge and Understanding

### Suggested Teaching & Learning Experiences

**Focusing Activity:**

Use 100 beads/counter to represent the population of Australia. Divide the beads to represent the three monotheistic religions and ‘others’. Of total Australian population ….. % are Christians, …..% are Muslim and ….. are Jews.  
*NB: Australian Bureau of Statistics Website has this information*

**OR**

Using a selection of Christian, Jewish and Islamic ritual objects/illustrations  
eg **Christian** - Cross, Bible, Rosary beads, Easter Candle, Sacramental Stole.  
**Judaism** – Tallit, Torah Scroll, Tefillin, Menorah, Kippah, Mezuzah  
**Islam** – Sajjadah, Subhah,  
Discuss in what context these objects may be used and by whom.  
*(Refer to Glossary for explanations of ritual objects)*

- Read Genesis Chapter 17. Abraham is seen as the common ancestor of Judaism, Christianity and Islam.  
  “God revealed himself to Abram, entrusted to him knowledge about himself, and gave him the task of passing on that truth to his descendants. God changed Abram’s name to Abraham, which means “father of many nations.”  
  Erst, 1996. p 64.  
  Create a simple ‘family tree’ of Abraham’s descendants showing the connection to Judaism, Christianity and Islam.

- In small groups complete a grid for each of the three monotheistic religions using the following headings:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious Symbols</th>
<th>Sacred Writings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prayer</td>
<td>Celebration Meals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Places of Worship</td>
<td>Holy Days</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can you find out something about each of these features?


- For Catholic Christians the Creed is a statement of beliefs. Create a mural depicting some of the beliefs stated in the Apostles’ creed.

- Create a poster outlining the Five Pillars of Islam.

- Children copy the Shema onto a miniature scroll.

- Make a Tefillin and place the words of the Shema inside. *(P 62, Book 5 Expressions, M Ryan.)*

- Islamic design is very special because it is a way for humans to reflect the glory of nature as created by Allah. Look at some Islamic styles i.e. mosaic tiles within a mosque and create a design for a tile.

- Many Christian churches have stained glass windows that tell a Scripture story or teach about the Saints. Design a stained glass window. *If you are visiting St Patrick’s Cathedral in Ballarat, each of the stained glass windows along the sides of the cathedral tell a Gospel story.*

- Make a Mezuzah. *(Refer to Teaching the Bible M Ryan, p 28)*

- Gen 17:1-22 To PREPARE TO HEAR the Word - this is a story about being totally faithful to God, even with Abraham being willing to sacrifice his Son, Isaac. God can do anything, as extenuated in the ages of Abraham and Sarah. This is the second covenant agreement that God makes, the first being with Noah. In Genesis 12 onwards, the history of Israel from the time of the ancestors is told.

- Gen 17:1-22 To ENCOUNTER the Word after reading the text from the Bible, students complete “Abraham’s and Sarah’s Families” from Expressions 3 pg 42

- Gen 17:1-22 To ENCOUNTER the Word after reading the text from the Bible, students write at least one fact about the following: God, Abram, Sarai, Ishmael, Isaac and Hagar

- Gen 17:1-22 To RESPOND to the Word – students complete a Dictagloss using the extract following the Glossary of terms in the Unit Outline.

Resources

For resources to support this unit, refer to the online planning tool. For additional resources, refer to the Resource Centre Catalogue: http://www.ceoballarat.catholic.edu.au and follow links to Resource Centre.

Glossary of Terms

Five Pillars of Islam

Five obligations, outlined in the Qur’an, essential to the lives of Muslims. They include: confession of one’s faith of God and in his prophet Muhammad, ritual worship, almsgiving, fasting and pilgrimage.

Menorah a Jewish candlestick with seven branches.

Mezuzah a small box that Jews fix to the doorposts of their homes. The box contains a tiny piece of parchment on which is written a Jewish prayer called the Shema.

Monotheistic belief in one God

Qur’an For Muslims the Qur’an is the Word of God, whose instrument was the prophet Muhammad

Ramadan The name of a month of the year and a period of religious observance when Muslims embark on a rigidly observed period of abstinence, reflection, and purification

Sajjadah a prayer mat used by Muslims to kneel on when they pray, also called a musallah.

Shema the most important Jewish prayer.

Subhah Muslim prayer beads

Talit prayer shawl worn by Jewish males when they pray.

Tasbih prayer beads that consist of either 33 beads divided into sections of 11 or 99 beads divided into sections of 33. They are used by Muslims as the recite the 99 names of Allah.

Tefillan two small leather boxes. One is placed on the forehead; the other tied to the arm and kept in place with a strap. Inside the boxes are tiny scrolls on which passages from the Torah are written. Jewish.

Torah The scroll containing the Five Books of Moses; also in a broader sense, the accumulated sacred Jewish writings of the centuries. These Five Books, or Pentateuch, begin both the Hebrew and Christian Bibles.

Yarmulke a skull cap, can also be called a Kippah, worn by Jewish males.

Abraham is a prime link between the three monotheistic religions – Judaism, Islam and Christianity. Abraham is a model of true human response to God as the ancestor of all believers. The faith of Abraham in one all powerful God – maker of heaven and earth is common to all three religions. For the Jews Abraham is an example of one who was obedient to God’s commandments. For Muslims Abraham demonstrates islam, unconditional submission to the will of God, as in his willingness to sacrifice his son. For Christians Abraham is a model of one who has complete faith in God.