Fertile Question: *How could I live the life of a true hero?*

Core Content Area 3: Religion, role models and heroes

**TOPIC 3.1: Saints and martyrs**

- Lesson 3.1.1 The road to sainthood
- Lesson 3.1.2 Catholic saints and mystics
- Lesson 3.1.3 Modern day saints and role models

**TOPIC 3.2: Religious heroes and role models**

- Lesson 3.2.1 Jesus as a role model
- Lesson 3.2.2 Bodhisattvas in Buddhism

**TOPIC 3.3: Heroic spirituality**

- Lesson 3.3.1 Heroic spirituality
- Lesson 3.3.2 Choosing to be a true hero

Extending Knowledge: Why Mary MacKillop?

Depthing Understanding: Heroes in Islam
Fertile Question: *How could I live the life of a true hero?*

Core Content Area 3: Religion, role models and heroes

**TOPIC 3.1: Saints and martyrs**

**Lesson 3.1.1 The road to sainthood**

In this lesson students will learn about the importance of saints in the Catholic faith tradition and the formal process of canonisation.

**Teachers: Before You Start.**

1. Read the Teacher Background on saints.
2. The online Catholic Encyclopaedia is a useful resource for this lesson.

**For students to learn about the importance of saints in the Catholic faith tradition and the formal process of canonisation, select from the following activities:**

1. Reflect on the role of saints in the Catholic tradition.

   *The saints are those who, in some partial way, embody, literally incarnate the challenge of faith in their time and place. In doing so, they open a path that others might follow.*

   Robert Ellisberg

   a. Explore the role of Saints in the lives of adherents of the Catholic faith tradition.

      i. Listen to the [Saint Song](#) (1min 50secs) by way of introduction.
      
      ii. Share thoughts, questions and knowledge with the class about saints in the Catholic Church.
      
      iii. Examine the [article](#) about All Saints Day. Locate five facts about the ways that Catholics engage with the saints. Report findings to the class, including examples from your own experience.

   b. Explore the formal process of canonisation in the Catholic faith tradition.

      i. Read the steps to becoming a recognised saint in the Catholic canon of saints followed since 1983 in [Useful Resources](#) and complete the following activity.

      Research and discuss points of interest about the process of canonisation. Framing questions could include: What is heroic virtue? What is a relic and what is its purpose? What is a martyr? What is intercession? What is a feast day? Share new knowledge with the class.

      ii. Complete the Extending Knowledge lesson on Mary MacKillop for further information about canonisation.
Fertile Question: *How could I live the life of a true hero?*

**Core Content Area 3: Religion, role models and heroes**

**TOPIC 3.1: Saints and martyrs**

**Lesson 3.1.2 Catholic saints, venerables and blesseds**

In this lesson, students will explore how saints and other holy people can be role models for contemporary Christians today.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**


2. Establish a class Wallisher page or similar for students to post their research.

**For students to explore how the lives of the saints and other holy people can be role models, select from the following activities:**

1. Examine the ways that holy men and women of the Catholic Church exemplify the way Catholic Christians could live their life.
   a. Investigate and share information about the lives of holy men and women, critiquing their value as role models for contemporary Christian life.
      i. Work in pairs to research the life of one of the following: Dorothy Day, Pope John XXIII, Damien of Molokai, Frederic Ozanam, Hildegard of Bingen, St Melania the younger, Padre Pio, Bd. Angela of Foligno, Catherine of Siena, Pier Giorgio Frassati, Mother Theresa or other. (Choose one that you don’t know anything about.)
      ii. Record information about the chosen person: life circumstances and cultural context, actions and achievements, motivation and challenges that were overcome in an information retrieval chart.
      iii. Analyse their actions and motivation in the light of the heroic virtues of faith, hope, charity (love), fortitude (courage), justice, prudence (right judgement) and temperance (restraint from doing what is wrong).
      iv. Evaluate how the person might be a role model for young people today. Post your evaluation as a post on a class Wallisher. For example: John XXIII was a great example of …and therefore …
Fertile Question: How could I live the life of a true hero?

Core Content Area 3: Religion, role models and heroes

TOPIC 3.1: Saints and martyrs

Lesson 3.1.3  Modern day saints and role models

In this lesson students will look at how other key figures, not necessarily recognised formally by the Catholic Church, are heroes and role models for a contemporary world.

Teachers: Before You Start!

1. Read the Teacher Background on saints.

For students to look at how other key figures, not necessarily recognised formally by the Catholic Church, are heroes and role models for a contemporary world, select from the following activities:

1. Recognise the extraordinary witness of those past and present who exemplify the characteristics of great role models.
   a  Reflect on the lives of other holy men and women.
      i  Consider the question: Is it likely that the Catholic Church has been able to canonise all of the holy men and women who have lived lives of heroic virtue? Read the following:
      
      Robert Ellsberg, in his book All Saints: Daily reflections on saints, prophets and witnesses for our time, suggests a wider understanding of heroic sanctity or holiness. He says that “quite apart from any official process … there are certain people whose lives in some extraordinary fashion, proclaim the mystery of the Gospel”. He includes in his book, non-Catholics and non-Christians who, he says, also point in the direction of God.
      
      ii  Listen to the rap about Mohandas K. Ghandi, and answer the following questions: What are some of the virtues that Ghandi lived, according to the lyrics of the rap? What aspects of Ghandi’s life sound heroic to you? How was Ghandi a role model and a hero for his people? How was Ghandi a hero or a role model for the world? Why do you think the songwriter created this rap?

      iii  Choose a person who you think is deserving of the title Religious hero or Religious role model. The person should be or have been a model of heroic virtue: a person of faith, hope, charity (love), fortitude (courage), justice, prudence (right judgement) and temperance (restraint from doing what is wrong). Some examples include: Martin Luther King, Rumi (Sufi mystic), Edith Stein, Thomas Merton, the Righteous Among the Nations, Aung San Suu Kyi, Moira Kelly.

      iv  Create a trading card for that person with a photo or symbol and a short biography that illustrates their heroic virtue using BigHugeLabs Trading Card or similar.
Fertile Question: *How could I live the life of a true hero?*

Core Content Area 3: *Religion, role models and heroes*

**TOPIC 3.2: Religious heroes and role models**

**Lesson 3.2.1 Jesus as a role model**

In this lesson students will explore common themes in Jesus’ life and teachings as recorded in the Gospels and how Jesus’ words and actions influence the lives, values and lifestyles of Christians today.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

1. Read the Teacher Background about Jesus as a role model.
2. Show students how to search Bible Gateway and use Wordle.

For students to explore common themes in Jesus’ life and teachings and how Jesus’ words and actions influence the lives, values and lifestyles of Christians today, select from the following activities:

*And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfector of faith.*

1. Examine common themes of Jesus’ life and teachings.
   
   
   i. Choose one of the Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke or John as the basis for this study.
   
   ii. Allocate each student a chapter from the chosen Gospel. (Start at chapter 3 for Matthew and Luke and chapter 1 for Mark and John to avoid the infancy narratives.)
   
   iii. Locate your chapter in the online Bible BibleGateway by typing the name of the Gospel and chapter number in the search bar.
   
   iv. Create a Wordle of the text by copying the chapter, excluding footnotes, and pasting into Wordle. Adjust the layout of the Wordle so that it is easy to read.
   
   v. Compare your created Wordle with a partner and then in a group of four. List the similarities and differences between the Wordles. Is it possible to gain some insight into Jesus’ life and teachings from the Wordles? Discuss as a class.

b. Evaluate how Jesus might be a role model for young people today.
   
   i. Examine some of the words and actions of Jesus as examples for how to live as he did, by completing the following activities: Locate and read the following Scriptural texts and reflect on possible meanings. Record the possible meanings in the table in Useful Resources: John13:12-16, John 13:34-35, Matthew 6:9-15, Matthew 6:25, Matthew 7:1-2, Luke 6:46-49. Locate at least two other texts from the Gospels that give an indication of how followers of Jesus should live their lives. This activity could be done in pairs.

   ii. Create a message for Christians today based on the words and actions of Jesus. Possible ways of displaying these messages could include: a graffiti wall, thought for the day in daily notices, bumper bar stickers etc.
Fertile Question: How could I live the life of a true hero?

Core Content Area 3: Religion, role models and heroes

TOPIC 3.2: Religious heroes and role models

Lesson 3.2.2 Bodhisattvas in Buddhism

In this lesson, students will explore the role of Bodhisattvas in Buddhism.

Teachers: Before You Start!

1. Familiarise yourself with the resources used in this lesson. A quick guide to the basics of Buddhism is given in this article.

For students to explore some of the religious heroes and role models in Buddhism, select from the following activities:

1. Explore information about bodhisattvas in Mahayana Buddhism.
   a. Investigate the bodhisattvas and celestial bodhisattvas of Mahayana Buddhism in order to gain knowledge about religious role models in Buddhism.
      i. Read the introduction to Mahayana Buddhism here.
      ii. Work in pairs to locate information regarding bodhisattvas in Mahayana Buddhism.
      iii. Share information with the class and discuss the bodhisattvas as role models for Mahayana Buddhists.
   b. Examine artistic representations of bodhisattvas.
      i. Locate information and images of bodhisattvas: Avalokitesvara, Akasagarbha, Vasudhara, and Maitreya.
      ii. Create a Glogster of images and information about the bodhisattvas emphasising the way bodhisattvas are religious role models.
Fertile Question: *How could I live the life of a true hero?*

Core Content Area 3: Religion, role models and heroes

**TOPIC 3.3: An heroic spirituality**

**Lesson 3.3.1 Heroic spirituality**

In this lesson, students will explore the virtuous qualities of true heroes.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

1. Familiarise yourself with the article about heroic virtue in the Catholic Encyclopaedia.

**For students to explore the virtuous qualities of true heroes, complete the following activities:**

“*The goal of a virtuous life is to become like God.*” — St. Gregory of Nyssa

1. Explore the virtuous characteristics of true heroes.
   a. Research teachings about virtue in the major world religions of Christianity, Islam and Hinduism.
      i. Form learning teams of three and allocate each member a religion from the list above. Research the teachings in your allocated religion about virtue. List the virtues espoused by the religion in one column of a three column table. (Be sure to use more than one source to verify your research.)
      ii. Share the information with each group member and complete your table for the other two world religions.
      iii. View the introductory movie clip for Heroes and Role models again and identify any virtues that are mentioned from the three lists.
      iv. Read the definition of heroic virtue taken from the Catholic Encyclopedia.
         *An heroic virtue, then, is a habit of good conduct that has become a second nature, a new motive power stronger than all corresponding inborn inclinations, capable of rendering easy a series of acts each of which, for the ordinary man, would be beset with very great, if not insurmountable, difficulties.*
         Discuss as a class what is implied in the definition about the difference between a person of virtue and a person of heroic virtue.
      v. Revisit your understanding of the nature of a true hero. List some examples of the actions of a true hero that typify an extraordinary example of a virtue or virtues.
      vi. Reflect on the relationship between a virtuous life and the life of a true hero and what it might mean to have an heroic spirituality. Write or draw a response to this reflection.
Fertile Question: *How could I live the life of a true hero?*

Core Content Area 3: Religion, role models and heroes

**TOPIC 3.3: An heroic spirituality**

**Lesson 3.3.2 Choosing to be a true hero**

In this lesson students will imagine themselves as living the life of a true hero.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

1. Review the Ron Rolheiser article *On being one with saints in praising God* referred to in this lesson.

**For students to imagine themselves as living the life of a true hero complete the following activities:**

1. Develop understanding about living like a true hero with an heroic spirituality.
   
   a. Explore further dimensions of an heroic spirituality.
      
      i. Work in pairs to read and discuss the Ron Rolheiser article. What does the author suggest about ways to live lives like the saints? Which characteristics listed by the author would you consider to be characteristics of an heroic spirituality?
      
      ii. Identify which of the characteristics listed from the article that you believe you possess and list characteristics that you would like to possess and would like to develop further in yourself.
   
   b. Imagine yourself living the life of a true hero.
      
      i. Imagine you have won this year’s Australian Local Hero of the Year. Review the criteria for the award and the criteria for heroes and true heroes developed in earlier lessons. Write an acceptance speech that outlines briefly what you might have done to receive the award and who you would thank for the person you have become and are becoming.
Lesson 3.1.1

Steps to Catholic Sainthood

- A person considered worthy is identified.
- The local bishop (or ordinary person) gives permission to open an investigation into the virtues of the person, now referred to as a “Servant of God”.
- Once sufficient information on the person’s life has been gathered, it is presented to the Roman Curia (the group at the Vatican responsible for the Causes of Saints).
- A person called a postulator is appointed to investigate further.
- Permission is given to exhume the body to make sure it hasn’t been the subject of improper worship and relics are taken.
- A proclamation is made that the Servant of God was a person of heroic virtue and they are given the title of Venerable.
- If the person was a martyr for the faith, the Pope must make a declaration of martyrdom that the venerable gave up his or her life voluntarily for the faith or in an act of heroic charity for others. If not a martyr, it must be determined that a miracle has occurred due to the intercession of the venerable. Usually these days, the miracle is in the form of a cure that is unexplainable by doctors and compete and long lasting. The venerable is now beatified and called Blessed.
- Once a second miracle has been attributed to the individual, the person can be canonized as a saint. A feast day is assigned which may be celebrated within the Catholic Church, churches can be named in their honour and the faithful can freely celebrate and honour the saint.

Lesson 3.1.2

Wallwisher is an online collaborative wall. It is useful for small groups to collaborate and share media and ideas. To set up a group page, a person needs to register (free) and then invite the other users using their email address.

Lesson 3.1.3

BigHugeLabs Trading Card is an online tool to manipulate image and text to create an attractive trading card. Cards can be printed and shared with others. Useful for creating a set of biographies.
### Lesson 3.2.1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scripture Reference</th>
<th>Possible meaning and example of how to live</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>John 13:12-16</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>John 13:34-35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 6:9-15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 6:25</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Matthew 7:1-2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Luke 6:46-49</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Back to Lesson**
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Jan Smith, October 17, 2010, via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution.

Kashif Mardani, October 27, 2008, via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution.

New York World- Telegram and Sun Collection, Wikimedia Commons, Creative Commons Attribution.

Serikotek1970, June 17, 2009, via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution.

Loozrboy, May 24, 2009, via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution.

Waldopics, May 21, 2005, via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution.

Secretlondon123, August 4, 2010, via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution.

Mynameisharsha, June 5, 2011, via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution.

Geodesic, July 2, 2005, via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution.

Cliff, August 26, 2008, via Flickr, Creative Commons Attribution.