Fertile Question: **Being spiritual: What’s in it for me?**

Core Content Area 2: Ritual and Spirituality

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**TOPIC 2.1: RITUAL - OUR COMMON LANGUAGE**

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**TOPIC 2.2: RITUAL PRAYER AND MEDITATION**

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Fertile Question: *Being spiritual: What’s in it for me?*

Core Content Area 2: Ritual and Spirituality

**TOPIC 2.1: RITUAL - OUR COMMON LANGUAGE**

**Lesson 2.1.1 Why Ritual?**

In this lesson students will explore the place of ritual in society.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

1. Read the *Teacher Background* about ritual.

For students to increase understanding about the place of ritual in society select from the following activities:

1. Define the word “ritual”.
   a. As a class or individually, discuss the word “ritual”. Some examples of framing questions include: What is a ritual? Are rituals always religious? Why do humans ritualise events? What are some examples of rituals?
   b. Consider the following definition:

   *Ritual is part of a society’s communication code for transmitting messages to one another about matters of ultimate concern to the members of that society.* (Adapted from Victor Turner.)

   c. Create a five column table with the following headings: Category, Example, Purpose of Ritual, Characterised by, Like the definition/Not like the definition. Enter the following into the Category column: national rituals, state rituals, religious rituals, sporting rituals, school rituals, family rituals, personal rituals. Complete the table. (An example is given in *Useful Resources*.)

   d. Discuss as a class the various examples of ritual from the five column tables. Conclude whether Turner’s definition is adequate. Choose one national ritual and one religious ritual and determine the messages of ultimate concern that are transmitted to participants in the ritual.

2. Identify a ritual that had some meaning for you. (eg funeral, birthday, marriage, Christmas, leaving primary school, pet burial, memorial for victims of a disaster, first communion, ANZAC Day)
   a. Who was there? What was the purpose of the ritual? Why was/is it meaningful to you? Share your memory with a partner and then with the class to create a list of rituals that are meaningful to this group. (This may be useful for assessment.)

3. Investigate pet memorials on *You Tube*. Critique these digital expressions of memorial in the light of Turner’s definition of ritual given above. Why do you think the pet owners have ritualised the death of their pet in such a way?

4. Explain to a partner why you think people ritualise major tragedies that are difficult to understand or explain eg Bali bombing, bushfire/flood victim memorials, scenes of fatal car accidents.

5. Conclude this lesson by synthesising an ending to this sentence: Humans need ritual because...
Fertile Question: **Being spiritual: What’s in it for me?**

Core Content Area 2: Ritual and Spirituality

**TOPIC 2.1: RITUAL - OUR COMMON LANGUAGE**

**Lesson 2.1.2 Ritual Deconstruction**

In this lesson, students will examine the structure of religious ritual and the meaning of signs and symbols.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

1. Read the teacher background on ritual and signs and symbols.
2. Consider taking students to a Catholic Mass or encourage them to attend a religious service in their area.
3. Familiarise yourself with Picnik

**For students to examine the structure of religious ritual and the meaning of signs and symbols select from the following activities:**

1. Discuss as a class the difference between secular ritual and sacred or religious ritual.
   - Religious rituals use signs and symbols and dramatic actions to invoke feelings of belonging and transition. Rituals demonstrate that religion is not only about what people believe in, but it is also about what people do to practise and enhance their beliefs. (Adapted from Peta Goldberg, 2009, Investigating Religion).

2. Examine the structure of a religious ritual and the levels of meaning for participants.
   - a. View a suitable clip of a Catholic Baptism. Complete a 5Ws+H for the ritual including the roles, signs and symbols evident in the ritual.
   - b. Discuss and interpret Terence Lovat’s five stages for participants in a ritual (See Useful Resources).
   - c. Using evidence from the clip, or your own experience, name the parts of the ritual that align with Lovat’s five stages for participants.
   - d. Determine how and why, that in any given ritual, participants could experience different levels of engagement in, and meaning from, the ritual.
   - e. Draw a cartoon or use ToonDoo to create a cartoon to recreate the event of your own Baptism or the baptism shown in the clip. Use name/role tags and speech bubbles to identify the role of the participant and their level of engagement in the ritual. Share and justify your cartoon in groups.

3. Investigate the difference between signs and symbols.
   - a. Consider that signs are usually seen as giving a clear unambiguous message, eg a stop sign means stop. Symbols however are much more complex and have layers of meaning.
   - b. Investigate the signs and symbols in the classroom or your bedroom, eg is someone wearing a significant item of jewellery that for them is a symbol of something else? Notice that the symbols of our lives are a reflection of those things that are important to us and express mystery and meaning beyond words.

4. Examine the significance and rationale for the use of common symbols in Catholicism, Hinduism, Buddhism, Judaism or Islam. Religion Facts is a good starting point.
   - a. Create a collage of symbols and their use and meaning for each of the religions investigated using Powerpoint or Picnik.
Fertile Question: *Being spiritual: What’s in it for me?*

**Core Content Area 2: Ritual and Spirituality**

**TOPIC 2.1: RITUAL - OUR COMMON LANGUAGE**

**Lesson 2.1.3 Rituals of the World**

In this lesson students will have the opportunity to investigate ritual as a common language throughout the world and the importance of cultural context for participants.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

1. Read the Teacher Background about *Rites of Death and Burial within World Religions*.
2. Set up a *Wallwisher* page.

**For students to investigate ritual in world religions select from the following activities:**

1. View an excerpt from the film *Baraka* (13 minutes)
   a. Discuss the elements of the film excerpt. What is the purpose of the film? What was used to help convey the purpose? What film techniques and content were used to evoke emotion? Were the film producers successful in achieving the purpose? What common purposes, symbols and actions were evident?
2. Research one ritual that impacts on humans. For example: birth, death, marriage, and investigate how the event is ritualised in one of the world faith traditions.
   a. Record your information using the following headings: Time, place, participants, who the leader was, structure, the possible meanings of the ritual for the individual participants and the community in which the ritual occurred, the signs, symbols and actions that occurred, religious beliefs (of the religion and event chosen).

   YouTube is a good source of visual information, eg Hindu *Wedding*.

   Websites for some of the faith traditions are given below. Always validate information by using more than one source and checking the reliability of the source:

   - Catholic Marriage, Catholic Funerals, Catholic Baptism
   - Hindu Funerals, Hindu Marriage
   - Buddhist Marriage and Funeral rites
   - Jewish Wedding
   - Islamic Funeral

   Report two interesting facts to the class from your investigation.

   b. Discuss as a class the connection between the ritual’s capacity to make meaning and the beliefs of the participants.
   c. Draw conclusions about how ritual could make meaning for you during significant times of your life.
Fertile Question: **Being spiritual: What’s in it for me?**

Core Content Area 2: Ritual and Spirituality

**TOPIC 2.2: RITUAL PRAYER AND MEDITATION**

**Lesson 2.2.1 Silence, Stillness and Simplicity**

In this lesson students will examine the origins and purpose of meditative practices. Students may also have an experience of meditation.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

1. Read the BCE brochure and view the DVD *Silence Stillness Simplicity* or Teacher Background on *Meditation and Contemplation*.
2. Consider organising an experience of yoga with a practitioner aware of the Christian context of the school.
3. Prepare the classroom for a meditation experience. (Candle, matches etc)

For students to examine the origins and purpose of meditative practices select from the following activities:

1. Explore the question: why do people engage in meditative practices? Listen to Laurence Freeman’s explanation of [Christian Mediation](#).
2. Experience the Christian meditative practice described by Fr Laurence Freeman:
   a. Sit down. Sit still and upright. Close your eyes lightly. Sit relaxed but alert. Silently, interiorly begin to say a single word. The prayer phrase, Ma-ra-na-tha is a suggestion. Listen to it as you say it, gently but continuously. Do not think or imagine anything spiritual or otherwise. If thoughts and images come, these are distractions at the time of meditation, so keep returning to simply saying the word. Ideally this type of meditation should continue for twenty to thirty minutes. Begin with 5-10 minutes.
   b. Reflect on the practice afterwards, sharing thoughts with a partner.
3. Explore the Meditation Society of Australia [website](#) for free downloads and information about meditation.
   a. Individually or as a class take part in a guided meditation experience. Examples of guided meditations can be found [here](#) and [here](#) or choose from the index at [http://freemeditate.org/downloads/](http://freemeditate.org/downloads/).
4. Experience other forms of meditation using art, music, poetry or reading at [Explore faith.org](#).
5. View the [YouTube](#) clip regarding Yoga and meditation. (10 minutes).
6. Reflect on your own experience of the meditation practices that you took part in. (May be useful for assessment.)

Note: Consider creating a prayer journal to record reflections on the spiritual practices that you participate in either on paper or as your own blog.
Fertile Question: *Being spiritual: What’s in it for me?*

Core Content Area 2: Ritual and Spirituality

**TOPIC 2.2: RITUAL PRAYER AND MEDITATION**

**Lesson 2.2.2 Daily Spiritual Practices**

In this lesson students will explore and experience different Christian spiritual practices.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

1. Consider how you will introduce students to different spiritual practices over the duration of the course.
2. Read the Teacher Background on Meditation and Contemplation.

**For students to experience different Christian spiritual practices select from the following activities:**

1. Explore Ignatian Spirituality by going to the Australian Jesuits’ website.  
   a. With a partner create a ten word statement that captures the essence of Ignatian spirituality. Copying and pasting the text of the *Introduction to Ignatian Spirituality* into Wordle may help.
   b. Explore the Prayer page of the site.
   c. Practise the Awareness examen. Prepare by putting both feet flat on the floor, sitting up straight and closing your eyes.
   d. Reflect on the examen experience.
2. Explore Franciscan spirituality by going to the Australian Franciscans’ website.  
   a. List the three key components of Franciscan spirituality.
   b. Read *Canticle of Brother Sun* from the Prayers page.
   c. Make a reflective response to this prayer, eg create an artistic response using a mandala or write a short poem or prayer for the environment.
   d. View the St Francis Prayer for peace.
3. Explore Benedictine spirituality by viewing the article on Benedictine Values. A summary is given at the left of the page.  
   a. Participate in an experience of the ancient practice of Lectio Divina. Praying using scriptures is an essential part of Benedictine spirituality. A guided experience of Lectio can be found here.
   b. Complete the reflection questions on the experience.
4. Explore Marist spirituality through the lived experience of a Marist Missionary sister.  
   a. Read the *Litany* of Mary of Nazareth as a class or individually.
   b. Choose one of the descriptions of Mary in the Litany that you relate to personally (boys replace Mother with Father and Woman with Man). Create a Haiku poem or create a toon in ToonDoo to express your connection to the description.
5. Prepare a prayer experience (or action) for the class based on a Christian spirituality.  
   a. Divide the class into four groups and assign a Christian spirituality to each group.
   b. Research as a group, the spirituality and associated prayer experiences. Resources are given in the above activities.
   c. Design a prayer experience for the class that is contemporary, but based on the spirituality that has been researched. (The length of time may vary depending on what is chosen.)
   d. Participate in the class prayer experiences and reflect on its meaning for you.
Fertile Question: *Being spiritual: What’s in it for me?*

Core Content Area 2: Ritual and Spirituality

**TOPIC 2.2: RITUAL PRAYER AND MEDITATION**

**Lesson 2.2.3 The Journey of the Mystic**

In this lesson students will examine the concepts of journey and the mystic.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

1. **Read the Teacher Background on Contemplation.**

**For students to explore the concepts of mystics, mysticism and journey select from the following activities:**

1. Prepare for the lesson with a short breathing exercise and prayer. See *Useful resources.*

2. Research the life and journey of one of the mystics listed:

   St John of the Cross, St Catherine of Siena, St Teresa of Avila, St Ignatius, Siddhartha Gautama, St Benedict, Julian of Norwich, Rumi, Mother Theresa, Thomas Merton.

   a. Form learning teams of four and research the life and journey of the allocated mystic. Use a Retrieval chart with the following headings to record your information: Birth place and date, childhood experiences, significant life events, significant spiritual moments, significant writings/teachings.

   b. Form four *expert groups* with one member from each of the original learning teams in each group. Each member delivers their information to the group.

   c. Listen to each person’s presentation and identify themes that emerge. For example: suffering, love, contemplation, community.

   d. Complete a Frayer’s concept model on *mysticism.*

3. Conclude the lesson by reflecting on the quote by Karl Rahner below. Predict what the mystic of the future might look like.

   *The Christian of the future will be a mystic or will not exist at all.* (Karl Rahner)
Fertile Question: Being spiritual: What's in it for me?

Core Content Area 2: Ritual and Spirituality

TOPIC 2.3: MAKING MEANING

Lesson 2.3.1 The Art of Prayer

In this lesson students will engage with various forms of prayer to expand knowledge through experience.

Teachers: Before You Start!

1. Read the Teacher Background on the Rosary, Blessing and Inspirational prayers.
2. Create an atmosphere of prayer in the classroom using candles, music, etc.

For students to experience various prayer forms select from the following activities:

1. Participate in a prayer using beads.
   a. Select or construct a string of smooth beads. (Instructions) The beads are used as a physical reminder to pray certain prayers you have memorised and that are meaningful to you. Many different religious traditions use them. The most commonly used prayer with beads in the Catholic religion is the Rosary. The length of beads you choose to make should depend on how many prayers you will use it for.
   b. Use the beads to pray. Click here for instructions on how to pray the rosary, or you may choose to pray your school prayer, recite the Ten Commandments or St Francis Prayer for Peace etc.
2. Participate in a Prayer walk.
   a. Decide where you will walk. Set out with a spiritual intention (not just for a stroll). Using all of your senses become aware of the sights, smells, sounds that you experience as you walk. Become aware of the rhythm of your breathing and how it is attached to your pace. Look carefully as you walk to notice the insects, lizards and plants and let the noticing be acknowledgement of their existence. If words come to mind let them flow through you. At the end of the walk stretch your body and think gratefully for the gift of this day.
3. Participate in a Labyrinth prayer.
   a. Participate in a labyrinth walk if you have a labyrinth in your school yard. For information about this go to http://www.jillgeoffrion.com/christuses.html.
   b. Make a hand held labyrinth by drawing or using wood or clay. The path is traced mindfully with a finger. For a virtual labyrinth experience click here.
   c. Pray with a hand held labyrinth. Pause at the beginning and ask God to walk with you on this journey. As you walk or move toward the centre, breathe mindfully and allow the release of any worries or stresses that you have. Let go of the need to be in control. At the centre, stand or kneel or sit and pause to meditate or pray. As you leave the centre, be mindful of any insight you have gained. Be grateful for this time. Another option is to focus on a question. An example from the Christian Bible is in John 1:38 - What are you looking for?
4. Construct a set of prayer flags similar to traditional Tibetan flags. For two examples and an explanation of the symbolism of the flags click here or here.
5. Reflect on the prayer experiences that you have engaged in. Were you able to connect with your spiritual self during the prayer experience? Which experience did you find most meaningful?
Fertile Question:  *Being spiritual: What’s in it for me?*

Core Content Area 2: Ritual and Spirituality

**TOPIC 2.3: MAKING MEANING**

**Lesson 2.3.2 The Power of Story**

In this lesson students will explore the importance of sacred stories from different traditions and real life for making meaning of life and mystery.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

1. Read the teacher background on Sacred Texts.

**STUDENTS**

For students to understand the importance of story for making meaning select from the following activities:

1. Share as a class or reflect individually on important stories in your life. It may be an important family story, club story, retreat story, camping story, heroic story, story of suffering, endurance or survival or even a favourite story that you reread often.
   a. Answer the following questions:
      i. How often is the story told or reread?
      ii. What is the purpose of retelling the story?
      iii. Who is honoured in the story?
      iv. Why is the story told?

2. Read and review a selection of stories as a class or individually. Examples are given here from different religious traditions:
   - The Ramayana (one of the most important Hindu myths) [abridged version](#)
   - The Fox in the Vineyard - A Jewish tale
   - [The Greedy Sons](#) by Anthony de Mello (Catholic Jesuit born in India)

3. Discuss as a class the question: What is it about story that resonates with people of all ages across time and culture?

4. Choose one of the following passages from scripture or one of your own and reflect on possible meanings for you and your present life journey: A time for everything [Ecclesiastes 3:1-11](#), Love [1 Corinthians:1-13](#), the Lord is my Shepherd [Psalm 23:1-6](#), Worry [Matthew 6:25-34](#).
   a. Synthesise a statement that expresses your thinking on the value of scripture and story for the spiritual journey.
**Fertile Question:** Being spiritual: What’s in it for me?

**Core Content Area 2:** Ritual and Spirituality

**TOPIC 2.3: MAKING MEANING**

**Lesson 2.3.3 Designing Rituals**

In this lesson students will have the opportunity to design a ritual for a specific purpose.

**Teachers: Before You Start!**

1. Read the Teacher background on Sacred Spaces for Sacred Rituals.
2. If you are planning for your students to complete Option Two of the Assessment Task, plan how you will introduce the task. This lesson could be used to model or begin the assessment task.

**For students to learn how to design rituals complete the following activities:**

1. Select a purpose for which you will design a ritual. Examples include: welcoming/farewelling a class member, to encourage reconciliation/peace in the class, to comfort or remember those involved in a sad event, to commission school leaders, a memories ritual for year 12s, ANZAC day, Harmony day, World Environment day etc.
2. Brainstorm how you will create an atmosphere that aligns with the purpose of the ritual and engages the senses and heightens the spiritual experience for participants. For example: colours, textures, time and space, movement and sound, light and darkness, silence and stillness.
3. Review Terence Lovat’s 5 stages of a ritual and view the Ritual template in Useful Resources. Design the ritual: Task cards are available in Useful Resources if the class is divided into groups. See also Ritualising Everyday life.
   a. Discuss as a class the signs and symbols that should be present and how the environment should be prepared.
   b. Describe how people will gather, how chairs will be arranged, whether music will be used.
   c. Prepare the Scripture or story to be shared.
   d. Prepare how the group will respond. For example action, prayers, meditation, etc
   e. Decide how the group will give thanks.
   f. Decide how the ritual will end and participants will be sent out.
   g. Choose the Leader and allocate roles for the various parts of the ritual.
   h. Perform the ritual.
4. Analyse the ritual using Lovat’s five stages for participants and write a brief evaluation including what worked and what was missing. Consider whether or not the ritual was meaningful for yourself and/or the other participants.
Lesson 2.1.1

Ritual Definition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Example of ritual</th>
<th>Purpose of ritual</th>
<th>Characterised by</th>
<th>Like/Not like the definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National rituals</td>
<td>Australia Day</td>
<td>Celebrate the achievements of Australia</td>
<td>Marches, Prime Minister’s address, Citizenship awards, Australian of the Year announcements, family BBQs, fireworks</td>
<td>Like the definition because it is prescribed by the tradition, and reflects changes in cultural context and understanding.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State rituals</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Religious rituals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sporting rituals</td>
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<tr>
<td>School rituals</td>
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<td>Family rituals</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal rituals</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

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Lesson 2.1.2

Terence Lovat’s five stages of a ritual


The participant:

- Leaves the ordinary or mundane world and enters the ritual
- Engages in some type of preparatory rite
- Experiences a central or high point of the ritual
- Joins in some form of celebration in the ritual
- Leaves the ritual and returns to the ordinary world.

Picnik

*Picnik* is a free photo editing tool. It allows you to create collages, posters, postcards etc using photos and templates.

Lesson 2.1.3

Baraka

For information about Baraka, see [http://www.spiritofbaraka.com/baraka](http://www.spiritofbaraka.com/baraka)

Wallwisher

An online noticeboard. *[Wallwisher]* is free to register using an email and password.

Lesson 2.2.2

ToonDoo

*ToonDoo* is an online cartooning tool. Free to register with an email and password.
Lesson 2.2.2

Haiku

Haiku is a short 3 line poem with the total number of syllables reaching only 17. One form has each line having a set number of syllables, 5, 7, 5.

Example:

Settle my worry

Mary the wellspring of peace

The world is at war.

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Lesson 2.2.3

Breathing Exercise

- Place feet flat on the floor, sit up straight and close your eyes. Breathe naturally becoming aware of the breath moving in and out of your body.
- On the next exhalation say to yourself **Be still and know I am God.** Breathe freely letting the words rest in you.
- On the next exhalation say to yourself **Be still and know.** Breathe freely letting the words rest in you.
- On the next exhalation say to yourself **Be still.** Breathe freely letting the words rest in you.
- On the next exhalation say to yourself **Be.** Breathe freely letting the words rest in you.

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Lesson 2.3.3

Ritual Design Template

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ritual:</th>
<th>Purpose of the ritual:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Participants:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parts of the Ritual</th>
<th>Suggested ideas and materials needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gather and Prepare</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Setting the Scene</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome</td>
<td>Song or Hymns (optional)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating the space considering the senses, eg the visual, the auditory, the olfactory - taste and smell, texture and touch</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Listen and Respond</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sacred Words/Wisdom Words, Prayers, Scripture, Stories, Sacred Actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respond: Word, Songs, Prayers and Actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Share and Give Thanks</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sharing and thanking actions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Go and Tell</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Blessing and/or Prayer of Commissioning or Hymn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farewell, tell others about the celebration</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Lesson 2.3.3

Ritual Task Cards

1. Gather and Prepare Task Cards

   **Task Card for Creators of the sacred space**
   - What visual symbols could be used?
   - What music or sounds could be used?
   - What tastes and/or smells could be incorporated?
   - What textural materials could be used to touch?

   **Task Card for the Welcome**
   - Who will be welcomed?
   - How will you welcome them?

   **Task Card the Introduction**
   - How will you introduce the theme?
   - What hymns/songs could be sung?
   - What needs to be said?

2. Listen and Respond Task Cards

   **Task Card for Choosing Readings**
   - What Scripture could be used?
   - What stories could be used?
   - What prayers could be used?
   - What ritualistic actions could be used?

   **Task Card for Preparing a Response**
   - What prayers could be used?
   - What hymn/song could be used?
   - What ritualistic actions could be used?

3. Share and Give Thanks Task Card

   **Task Card for designing the sharing and thanking element**
   - What could take place?
   - What might be given, shared and said?
   - What ritualistic actions could be used?

4. Go and Tell Task Card

   **Task Card for Designing the Go and Tell Element**
   - What prayers could be used?
   - What hymn/song could be used?
   - What ritualistic actions could be used?
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